Within the Anthropocene, beyond Capitalocene, towards the Ecocene

[Abstract]

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Politics of/in the Anthropocene

Within the Anthropocene, Beyond Capitalocene, Towards the Ecocene

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The global challenges of the Anthropocene demand shifts on an order of magnitude well beyond the trajectory of business-as-usual. Ecomodernists’ fantasies of technological salvation are unhelpful when they sideline work undoing the assumptions that created the conditions of the Anthropocene in the first place. Erroneous ideas are embedded in the cultural fabric: the laws, policies and practices that determine how we live and act upon our surrounding lifeworld. The inevitable contradictions are increasingly dysfunctional. The Capitalocene concept (Moore 2014) more helpfully highlights the specific socio-political dynamics that propel environmental crises. Yet there are limitations to this critical approach. While defining the problem, it is does less well envisioning viable alternatives. Ecological theorists Gregory Bateson and Felix Guattari offer a foundation for approaching these contradictions by thinking simultaneously about three interconnected domains: the self, the social and the ecological. Conjoining these three ecologies, this paper will describe the contours of an emergent ‘Ecocene’ (Boehnert 2018) as a generative alternative. Moving beyond the limitations of reductionist models of the human psyche and knowledge systems, design interventions must nurture relational perception and foster new sensibilities. As subjects opening inward, in participation with our surrounding lifeworlds, intersectional solidarity demands engaged encounters with oppressions that threaten collective futures. The Ecocene is a foundation for the redesign system structures that determine what is designed. Participant designers, well versed in ontological entanglements, are well poised to enable these emergent ways of seeing and knowing to make transitions to another world not only possible but desirable.

References