The affirmative’s production-oriented approach is unethical and legitimizes unending consumption

**Lack 11**

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Martin, “What’s wrong with Clean Coal?,” http://lackofenvironment.wordpress.com/category/carbon-capture-and-storage/

The concept of Clean Coal is almost certainly an invention of the marketing departments of coal mining companies (analagous to “safe cigarettes“). In most cases, coal-burning power stations have already cleaned-up their act as much as they can (as a result of the 30-yr old UN Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP) – which continues to help humanity minimise the effects of acid rain). Therefore coal cannot be made any cleaner than it already is! Similarly, the idea of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is almost certainly a ruse to make the continuance of “business as usual” seem acceptable and, the truly remarkable thing is that, governments around the world seem to have been duped by it. However, in addition to this, it would be inherently dangerous because, in order to be an effective mitigation strategy, the burried CO2 must never escape (see my earlier posts ‘The tough guide to climate denial‘ and ‘Five questions for Chris Huhne‘). Why is this so hard for our politicians to grasp? Why do they continue to insist that coal-burning power stations are acceptable? When we discovered that airborne asbestos dust was dangerous, we stopped mining it. When we discovered that inhaling smoke was dangerous, most of us stopped smoking. Now that our governments know (or at least they claim they know) that CO2 emissions endanger our stable climate, why are they falling over themselves to find ways to permit the continuance of business as usual? Could it be that, as Hansen suggests, the fossil fuel lobby is just too powerful? But I digress… This week I intend to look at Coal, Gas, Oil, and the alternatives to fossil fuels, to examine our options. However, my focus today was supposed to be CCS because it is not a mitigation strategy, it is not even an attempt to tackle the cause of the problem. On the contrary, it is an attempt to treat the symptoms; and it is an abdication of our responsibility for causing the problem. The solution to littering is not to employ more litter-pickers, it is to educate people to make them better citizens who do not despoil their environment. When the early European settlers of North America began to move west in search of new lands and new opportunities, a Frontier mentality was understandable. However, to retain such an attitude today is socially unacceptable and morally irresponsible: When you live in a wilderness, it is probably safe to treat a passing river as your source of drinking water, washing room, and toilet. However, if you are unfortunate enough to live in a Mumbai slum, this will almost certainly contribute to causing your premature death. As a parent, I had to learn to discriminate between childish irresponsibility and disobedience. However, if, as a species, we go down the CCS route (and/or pursue many of the other forms of geo-engineering) as a solution, we will be crossing the line from one to the other: That is to say, now that we know (or at least the vast majority accept that we know) that burning fossil fuels is changing our global climate, to find ways to excuse our behaviour rather than modify it is no longer just irresponsible; it is morally reprehensible. It is, as Hansen has said, a gross case of intergenerational injustice.