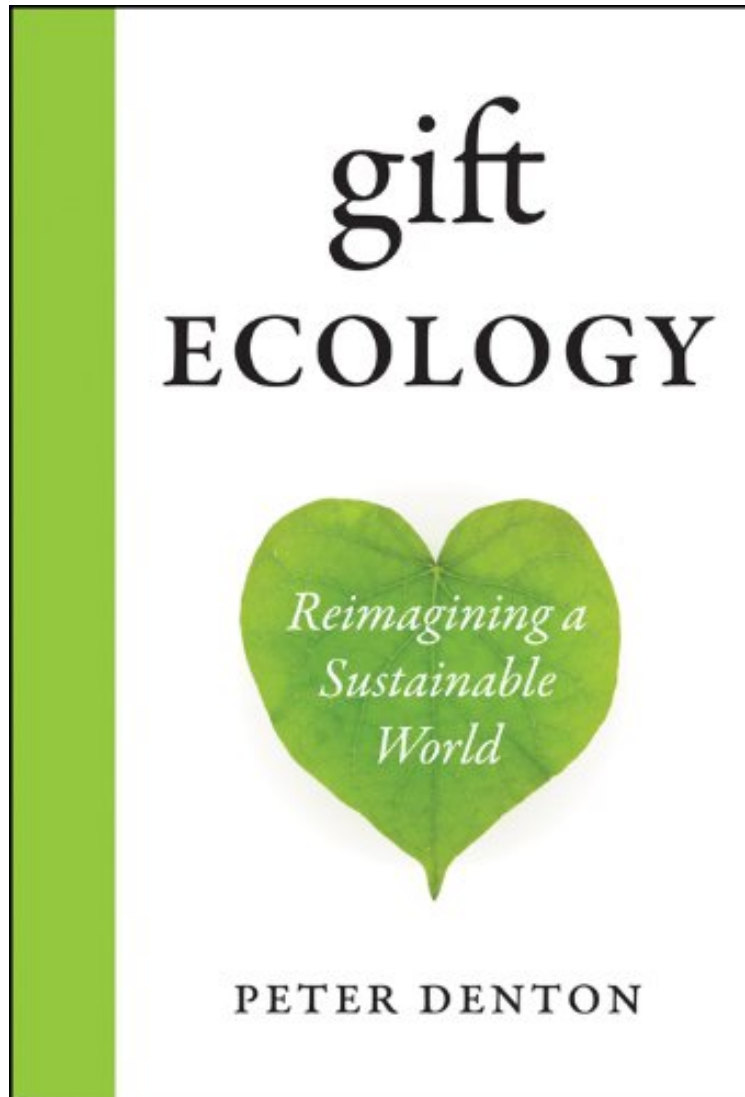


[Free pdf] Gift Ecology: Reimagining a Sustainable World (An RMB Manifesto)

Gift Ecology: Reimagining a Sustainable World (An RMB Manifesto)

Peter Denton

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Peter Denton : Gift Ecology: Reimagining a Sustainable World (An RMB Manifesto) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gift Ecology: Reimagining a Sustainable World (An RMB Manifesto):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great bookBy John R. CraynonI loved this book....easy and understandable, but deep. I met the author last year and his understand of the heart of how we should live is incredibly simple and direct.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Review of "Gift Ecology" by Peter DentonBy Roberto De VogliDenton's book is a balanced, well-researched, articulated analysis of the present ecological crisis and

its interconnections with "the systems within which we live." Denton does not embrace a "doom-and-gloom" view of the ecological crisis. He also steers away from naive optimism and cornucopian views of economic development and the future of modern society. Yet, he calls for major changes toward a sustainable future, and argues that in order to promote an ecological transition we first need to understand the major forces that shape our society and our lives. As he perspicaciously put it: "Our problems of achieving sustainability are neither scientific nor technological... We have all the science and technology we need, right now, to make the changes we need to create a sustainable future." The real causes for the present global ecological crisis are social and cultural. The root cause of ecological problems is inequality, he explains. In effect, when you think about why rich and poor countries find it hard to agree on environmental treaties, it is easier to understand the association between inequality and ecological problems. As long as countries continue to operate within an "atmosphere of injustice" and unequal participation to global affairs, there is little hope to reach any significant international agreement to stop climate change. But Denton goes even deeper in his analysis and examines the inconsistency of our model of economic development and what he called the "exchange mentality." Our socioeconomic system and the philosophy of modern society, he says, are based on the idea that market exchanges are the best regulators of social and human affairs. Adam Smith's theory of the invisible hand has been used and abused by free market economists and neo-conservatives think tanks to advance regressive policies that promote the commodification of people, social relationships and the ecosystem. According to free market economists, every single entity in our world must be turned into a commodity for market exchange and profit. Several authors have criticized these positions deep enough to conclude that a society solely governed by unlimited profit and self-regulating markets is destined, sooner or later, to destroy itself. Simply stated, the ecosystem cannot sustain the infinite and unrestrained exploitation of its natural resources, pollution and the environment devastation caused by unregulated global economic activities. As Frank Buchman once put it (a quote also attributed to Gandhi): "there is enough in the world for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed." As the global economy is now facing the prospects of reaching its ecological limits and is spinning out of control in a hysteric flooding of speculation, economic instability and political inertia, the importance of searching for alternative models of development cannot be overestimated. What is to be done? What is the solution to the global crisis of modern civilization? Denton provides a simple, uncontroversial, powerful and even poetic answer: "a sustainable future requires a radical shift in metrics... the answer to the problem... is to be found in the significance of a gift." Many would argue that a radical transformation of our society and social relationships toward a system based on gifts is utopian. Yet, the real utopia is the delusional belief that current economic practices can continue forever. In fact, there is ample evidence that they cannot. The world is facing unprecedented ecological crises such as climate change, peak oil and the depletion of natural resources including water, food and fish. A radical transformation of our social and cultural way of living will occur anyways: it is up to us to decide whether we want to govern our transition by creating a new world that consumes less, and concentrates on quality of life, rather than letting the global economic system reaching its breakdown point. The prospect of a collapse of global civilization was once confined to a few lone wolves. Even today the idea seems unimaginable among the general public. Yet, the number of scientists that have warned us that the current model of development is unsustainable is growing exponentially. We need political changes soon. Far from being utopian, Denton's suggestion to re-imagine and create a sustainable world is more pragmatic and realistic than ever.

Provocative, passionate and populist, RMB Manifestos are short and concise non-fiction books of literary, critical, and cultural studies. Global sustainability in the 21st century seems to be an elusive goal. There are too many issues, too many problems—and, increasingly, too many people—to make the major changes required in the time various experts tell us we have left before it's too late. To create a sustainable future, we need to change the game itself. We cannot simply try to solve our problems one at a time. Instead, we need to reimagine sustainability in all its dimensions—social, cultural, environmental and economic—to create a global system that reflects how we should be living together, one that generates both hope and possibility. In this thought-provoking work, Peter Denton argues that the attitudes and values associated with the economics of exchange are in part to blame for our current situation. We need to rediscover what it means to live in a universe of relations, not merely in one that can be counted and measured. The more we are able to replace an economy based on transactions with an ecology based on gifts, the more likely a sustainable future becomes for all of Earth's children.

About the Author Peter Denton has spent the last 30 years exploring the interrelationships of science, technology, religion and society. He is an instructor in ethics and sustainability at Red River College of Applied Arts, Science Technology in Winnipeg, associate professor of history at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston and an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada. Peter lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Gift Ecology is his fourth book.