The Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability: Human Flourishing in a Climate Changed, Carbon Constrained World

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Preface and Acknowledgements

We are living in a time of great change and challenge. I feel that those of us who have the privilege of having the time to learn, think, teach and write about these challenges – whether in social science, humanities, natural science, engineering, the arts – have an obligation to both communicate these issues to the wider public, and to take action based on our empirically informed or ethically/politically informed judgements as to the great question of our time: 'what is to be done?' This should not be read as somehow indicating academics should abandon their 'internal' practices of knowledge-production and dissemination, pedagogy, peer-review and so on. But it does bring to front and centre the issue of what is the public duty and responsibility of the academic (to use an idiom very much associated with the civic republican tradition discussed later in the book) i.e. the academic as citizen in relation to the academic as 'knowledge producer'.

It is salutary in this case to note what Richard Rorty has identified as the dereliction of this public duty on behalf of many academics (Rorty, 2000), a point echoed by Brennan in arguing that for many academics, "at precisely the historical point where we confront a totalizing process in practice [neoliberal globalised capitalism], have chosen to oppose it by saying we cannot totalize in theory" (Brennan, 2000: 14). This means that they abandon the intellectual effort to offer alternatives to the 'empire' of capitalism. I believe we are living through extraordinary times, facing challenges and opportunities of such magnitude, scale and urgency that academics need, as this book indicates, internal reforms to create and encourage greater interdisciplinarity in studying sustainability and unsustainability issues (something that is woefully lacking within the UK and Irish university systems for example). But this internal reform must also address the fact that, "at present most of our universities are still leading the way in advancing the kind of thinking, teaching and research that…accelerates un-sustainability" (Wals, 2008: 31).

It seems to me that in reflecting on the issue of what ought the role of universities and institutions of higher education be in these times we have to take a cold, hard look at whether the modern university is 'fit for purpose'? As David Orr asks, "Can organisations that purport to advance learning themselves learn to recalibrate their missions and operations to the larger facts of global ecological change?" (Orr, 2004: 160). What, in other words, is the role of universities in answering the 21st century version of Lenin's ever-relevant question 'What is to be done?' We are living in turbulent times; extraordinary times when we do need to rethink so much. Perhaps what is required is a revival of the tradition of the 'public intellectual' alongside a greater acceptance and encouragement of 'academic activism', that is, academics (such as myself) who seek to bring their knowledge gained within the academy to their fellow citizens, policy-makers, politicians, the media etc. through the medium of a specific political party (in my case the Green Party) or social movement. We stand, I believe on a precipice and I am not certain that the transition will be either smooth nor not involve a considerable amount of human and nonhuman suffering, suffering that could be greatly minimised if decisive action and leadership were taken now. Sadly, in looking around at governments around the world, dominant political parties, cultural institutions, we find little evidence of the scale and urgency with which we need to act. Nor any sense of the

great potential of this moment, the opportunity to create a better economic and social order, a point that will be made constantly in this book. That it, is not so much what we will lose in any transition to less unsustainable societies, but rather what we are currently 'losing' but do not recognise or insufficiency recognise, and also what we have to 'gain' in making and managing that transition.

I would like to thank the following who in different ways have helped me in writing and thinking about this book. I particularly wish to single out Marius de Geus who not only read the entire manuscript but also gave me helpful and extremely detailed comments. In this there is continuity with my first book, *Rethinking Green Politics*, which Marius also helped me to greatly improve. Sam Alexander also provided me with appropriate, detailed and extremely fast feedback on chapters 1-5. I would also like to acknowledge the help and support from other colleagues who read and commented on the manuscript: Tony Buckley, Sean Byrne, Phil Cafaro, Peter Cannavò, Molly Scott-Cato, Andy Dobson, Peter Doran, Dan Greenwood, Iseult Honahan, Philip Orr, and Rupert Read. I would also like to acknowledge my thanks to Kim Smith who not only invited me to come to Carleton College in Minnesota in 2007 where many of the ideas contained in this book were first developed and presented, but who also co-authored some publications, which have been build upon and can be found in chapters 6 and 7. John Dryzek and the Centre for Deliberative Democracy at the Australian National University provided me with the perfect intellectual space to tenable me to complete the book, and I would like to thank both him and his family for making me and my family so welcome in Canberra.

The three anonymous reviewers commissioned by Oxford University Press offered some excellent suggestions for improving the book, and I hope they see some of their suggestions reflected in the final product. My colleague at Queen's University Belfast, Geraint Ellis, has over the past years provided me with some of the material and arguments you find in this book, and I have thoroughly enjoyed our research and publication relationship over the past decade. I would also like to thank Peadar Kirby whose work and activism as a public intellectual in Ireland has done so much to inspire me and give me confidence that this public aspect of academic work needs to be more prominent at this present moment in time.

My presentation of the ideas contained in this book at various conferences over the past number of years has offered me the opportunity to sharpen and shift my argument, receive some excellent feedback and lines of thought to pursue. Some of these conferences have been of course academic ones, and I would like to particularly thank the Environmental Political Theory (EPT) specialist group of the Western Political Science Association. The EPT section not only provided a challenging and intellectually robust but also convivial space, to present some of the ideas of this book in Portland (2005), Albuquerque (2006), Las Vegas (2007) and Vancouver (2009). And in various settings, academic, political and civil society, in Ireland, the UK, North America, China, Japan, India and Australia, I have had the opportunity of presenting, discussing and developing many of the ideas contained in this book with a wide variety of audiences. And I would like to thank all of those who took part in those valuable exchanges.

In Ireland I have greatly enjoyed my involvement in both Holywood Transition Town and the Holywood Steiner School, and the various discussions I have had with Mike Harper, Tim Kerr, Sacha Workman, John Woods, Martyn Rawson, Linda McKeown, Heidi Steffen, Judith Matthews, Patricia McIlhone, Lindesay Dawe and Francis Murphy and the late Ollie Baker and Ed Galloway. My friend, famer and provider of most of my family's vegetables, John McCormick, and I have had many intense conversations over the past 9 years or so, and I greatly appreciated his 'earth-based' wisdom and reflections on everything from the global financial crisis to peak oil, and what a 'just transition' to a low carbon, high quality of life might look like in our community. I have found inspiration, perspiration (and sometimes frustration!) in my involvement in my daughters' school, the Holywood Steiner School, and am convinced that its character-building and child-centred philosophy and practice of education is what has given me hope for my children to be resilience and flourish as we embark on the transition to a climate changed, carbon constrained world. I think above all else, Steiner education has given my children the ability to learn how to learn, to be adaptable and has given them a sense both of themselves as unique individuals but has also cultivated in them a respect for people, planet and the place we live in. And for that I am truly grateful.

I have also participated and benefited from talking to people and a number of non-academic workshops and events associated with the Transition movement on the island of Ireland. Davie Phillip from the Cultivate Centre and the Cloughjordan ecovillage in Co. Tipperary in Ireland has provided me with many opportunities for presenting and thinking through some of the practical issues of creating more resilient communities. I have also benefitted from professional and personal friendship with James Orr now at Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland and formerly of Castle Espie Wetland and Wildfowl Trust; Bonnie Horsman of Friends of the Earth and Transition towns; Jim Kitchen (Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Commission); Sharon Turner, School of Law, Queen's University Belfast.

My involvement with the Green Party in Ireland (North and South) has also to be acknowledged as an important context and experience in forming some of the ideas developed in this book. It was and is through my participation in the Green Party, standing for elections and dealing with the media etc. that some of the ideas here were 'applied' and 'road tested' as it were. My involvement in promoting Green politics in the extremely 'tough' political soil of a post-conflict society such as Northern Ireland has only served to strengthen not diminish both my belief in Green politics, and also more importantly the 'good' of politics and political activism. It was my privilege and honour to lead the Green Party in Northern Ireland during its 're-launch' in 2003 until 2009, and to have played a small part in some of its most significant recent achievements, its securing of its first elected representative in Councillor Raymond Blaney in 2003; its evolution to being an 'all island' party in 2006; and its electoral breakthrough in 2007 in securing its first Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) in Brian Wilson; and the election of Steven Agnew in 2011 to the Northern Ireland Assembly. But success in such political ventures should not be only measured by these standard electoral or organisational achievements, important though they are. For me I count my involvement in Green Party politics as worthwhile in giving me the opportunity in public meetings,

door to door canvassing, in print, radio or television, in election materials, newsletters, casual conversations in the street etc. to explain, defend and try and persuade my fellow citizens (and opponents in other political parties), of why I am convinced of the rightness of Green politics. And why one way we can help ensure a 'just transition' is through the election of Green party politicians and the implementation of Green Party policies.

And to my wife Yvonne and two children, Saoirse and Dearbhla, I owe not just thanks for supporting me in writing this book in terms of putting up with my many absences, but also gratitude for being the inspiration behind much of what this book is about.

At times, and fully aware of the negative interpretations of this, I have felt like the philosopher/prisoner released from Plato's cave, who returns, having seen the world outside the cave, to tell fellow cave dwellers that what they take to be real (the shadows on the wall cast by a fire behind them which they cannot see) are not real. That one is convinced – absolutely convinced – and has empirical and ethical arguments and evidence to back it up, that the ways of life we live, the current capitalist structure and organisation of the economy, the cultural narratives by which we make meaning of our lives, are all undermining human flourishing, perpetuating injustice and inequalities within and between societies and are systematically unpicking the web of live on the planet, is no guarantee of electoral or other success. In fact having 'the facts' and 'the evidence' is not even a guarantee that fellow citizens will even understand what it is you are saying or trying to say to them. And one of the things my political experience has taught me is that people will listen to positive not negative stories and 'facts' alone (even positive facts nitrated into a coherent argument) will not persuade people to your point of view. I have found the hard way that (regrettably perhaps?) political life is not like an academic seminar, does not come even close to an 'ideal speech situation', and its 'rough and tumble' is filled with strategic, irrational and deceitful discourse and manipulation. But for all that, politics and political activism are not only necessary but also good, and given there is, as this book suggests, no technological or non-political transition to a less unsustainable economic and social order and more resilient communities, what is needed is considerably more, not less, democratic political engagement and activism. It is to those engaged in such political work that I dedicate this book.

Chapter 1
Introduction: The Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy" - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Setting out

This book has been a long time in coming. My last major work on green political theory was over a decade ago in *Rethinking Green Politics: Nature, Virtue and Progress* (Barry, 1999a), which was based on PhD thesis research from the early 1990s. How the field has expanded and what a different biophysical, social, political and intellectual landscape green politics now inhabits! Peak oil, the transition to a low carbon economy, Green New Deals, 'collapsonomics' and 'green collar jobs' are all new additions to the debate about the politics of sustainability, and all over-shadowed and connected to the greatest challenge and opportunity of the 21st century, namely climate change.

The background against which this book has been written seems not just a different landscape but a different world, form that which provided the background to *Rethinking Green Politics*. For example, the scientific evidence for anthropogenic climate change has accumulated to the extent that we could be the first species to accurately document our own demise. To quote that most unlikely of green politicians, Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Governor of California, 'The debate is over. We know the science. We see the threat. And we know that the time for action is now' (California Energy Commission, 2007: 1). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has been a regular source of post-normal (Hulme, 2009) scientific evidence for climate change (and public debate and media-generated controversy), and its conclusions are that things are getting worse and faster that they previously thought. However, the gap between awareness, discussion and knowledge of ecological damage and ameliorative action by politicians, governments or individuals grows. At times it seems we are witness a type of 'simulative' politics of concern around sustainability, ecological degradation and climate change (Blühdorn, 2000; Blühdorn and Welsh, 2008). We witness a political response in which we have 'normalised crisis' (Buell, 2004) to the extent that the most we can hope for is a type of 'gesture politics', where people only seem too happy to change to using energy saving light bulbs, but not to curbing their overall carbon footprint – such as eating less meat or flying less, or other significant reductions in their consumption patterns and more significant changes to their lifestyles.

And the battle for hearts and minds over climate change has truly begun with the 2009 'climategate' and a resurgent climate sceptical movement. The climate change propaganda dirty war was the ideological background against which the Copenhagen climate change conference so spectacularly failed to deliver in December 2009, and also marked the extremely weak 2010 Cancun agreement. And all the while we see the

emergence of new (and deeply troubling) issues such as the securitising and militarising of the environment and climate change. We see wars for resources like the invasion and occupation of Iraq, or Russia using Europe's dependence on its natural gas to assert its geopolitical muscle through threatening to turn off the tap. Or the extraordinary manner in which China seems to be systematically trawling the globe to source, secure or otherwise ensure supplies of resources, food and influence (while withholding or threatening to withhold resources such as rare earth metals).

My own intellectual trajectory since writing *Rethinking Green Politics* is such that the position from which I write this book is one that is much more interdisciplinary, much more applied in its political theorising, much more evidence-based and concerned with the real world applicability of whatever prescriptions I suggest to being implemented. That I have developed an explicitly and self-consciously interdisciplinary approach to green politics and the politics of sustainability, is, I am sad to say, in spite of, rather than because of the institutionalised organisation of knowledge within the higher education system in the United Kingdom and Ireland – the two systems within which I work. Interdisciplinary research and teaching is, while not impossible, difficult to do within the rigid discipline-based organisation of most universities and associated funding bodies.

Coupled with the disincentives, lack of opportunities and support for interdisciplinary research and publications, and the necessity for multiple authored work, it is little wonder that there is a marked difference in genuinely interdisciplinary research, publications and breakthroughs from the UK higher education system, in comparison to say North America or Scandinavia. For example, 'environmental studies' does not exist as a recognised area of study within the UK and Irish university contexts. And sadly, career advancement is linked to strong, if not exclusive, disciplinary-based research, where one is rewarded for specialising and 'owning' a small patch of an area, rather than seeking to integrate and synthesise across a number of disciplines and bodies of knowledge, while all the time working, researching and publishing with others (Barry and Farrell, 2012/forthcoming).

I place this current book as a contribution to 'third generation' green political thought. What is particularly noticeable about 'third generation' scholarship on green politics and sustainability is its explicitly interdisciplinary and applied focus.[1] Indeed, on one level it is intellectually difficult to reflect on green political theory without venturing into and combining disciplines and bodies of knowledge outside political theory. Sustainability is such a multi-faceted and complex and complicated set of inter-related issues that even taking a green political theory approach to this complex requires using other disciplines.

[1] 'First wave' green political theory was primarily concerned with articulating the distinctiveness of 'ecologism' as an ideology and green political theory as a distinctive approach to politics (Porritt, 1984; Pepper, 1984; Spretnak and Capra, 1985; Dryzek, 1987; Dobson, 1990; Eckersley, 1992; Paehlke, 1989; Hayward, 1990; 1995). 'Second wave' ecological thought was characterised by a shift debates between green political theory and other schools of thought such as liberalism, feminism and socialist, and focusing on specific issues such as democracy, justice and citizenship (Mellor, 1997; Salleh, 1999; Wissenburg, 1998; de-Shalit, 1996, 1997; Pepper, 1993; Doherty and De Geus, 1996; Dobson, 2003; Sakar, 1999; Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 1996).

Related to this interdisciplinary focus, scholarship on green politics and sustainability outside of the UK and Ireland, even if it about green political theory, tends to be informed by a much wider range of disciplines integrated with practical, empirical research. Books such as David Schlosberg's *Environmental Justice and the New Pluralism* (Schlosberg, 1999), and his later *Defining Environmental Justice* (Schlosberg, 2007); Peter Cannavò's *The Working Landscape: Founding, Preservation, and the Politics of Place* (Cannavò, 2007); Sherilyn MacGregor's *Beyond Mothering Earth: Ecological Citizenship And the Politics of Care* (Macgregor, 2006); Mat Paterson's *Automobile Politics: Ecology and Cultural Political Economy* (Paterson, 2008); Ariel Salleh's *Ecofeminism as Politics* (Salleh, 1997); Marius De Geus's *The End of Over-Consumption* (De Geus, 2003), John Dryzek's *The Politics of the Earth* (Dryzek, 2005); Robyn Eckersley's *The Green State* (Eckersley, 2003); Tim Luke's *Capitalism, Democracy and Ecology: Departing from Marx* (Luke 1999); Dryzek et al's *Green States and Social Movements Environmentalism in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and Norway* (Dryzek et al, 2003), Avner De Shalit's *The Environment between Theory and Practice* (De Shalit, 2000), all contain high-level reflection on political and ethical arguments and sophisticated conceptual theorising. But they are also practical and empirically informed accounts of, *inter alia*, the sociology of environmental justice movements; the impacts of urban planning; the causes and consequences of Hurricane Katrina from a green political perspective; the importance of adopting a 'historical sociological' approach to analysing green politics.

However, there is hope for UK and Irish based green scholarship (my own modest effort here excepted). I think here of Molly Scott-Cato's *Green Economics* (Scott-Cato, 2008) and its lucid account of the evolution and origins of green economics, its main principles and the policies and practices of a sustainable green economy. Other examples include Andy Dobson's *Environmental Citizenship* (Dobson, 2003); Mathew Humphrey's *Ecological Politics and Democratic Theory* (Humphrey, 2008); Graham Smith's *Deliberative Democracy and the Environment* (Smith, 2003), Simon Hailwood's *How to be Green Liberal* (Hailwood, 2004), or Tim Hayward's *Constitutional Environmental Rights* (Hayward, 2005). Tim Jackson's *Prosperity without Growth* (Jackson, 2009), which has received an enormous amount of deserved national and international publicity, and has done much to publicise long articulated green economic ideas (especially in relation to questioning conventional 'economic growth'), at a time when such ideas are needed more than ever in our public debate about and responses to the current global economic recession. Or the research, publications and policy briefs from think tanks such as the new economic foundation - the incubator of many green political and economic ideas, ranging from its prescient and path breaking *Green New Deal* report in 2008 (Green New deal Group, 2008), to the more recent publication of Boyle and Simms on *The New Economics* (Boyle and Simms, 2009).

While rooted in normative theorising, as outlined in the following two chapters, in this book I am self-consciously placing myself within what can be termed an 'applied' mode of political theorising, one that is aware of the 'real-world' applicability and relevance of political theorising. Of course it is for the reader to decide whether what I suggest can or ought to be applied and implemented! Here I follow a similar path to my (unrelated)

name-sake, Brian Barry (Barry, 2005)[2] in seeking to ground normative political analysis within the empirical and scientific (including social scientific) evidence base around, *inter alia*, (un)sustainability, ecological degradation, climate change, behavioural economics and psychology, neo-classical economics, ecological economics, cultural studies, international political economy, the sociology of environmental movements and public policy and governance for sustainable development.

The Politics of *Actually Existing Unsustainability*

Like Barry, I take it that the task of an applied approach to political theory is to analyse some basic political or ethical principles – democracy, justice, citizenship for example – and see what follows from those principles given the empirical 'reality of the situation' that faces humanity today. That is to explore how best public policy can be implemented consistent with both principles and empirical facts as well as figuring out how best to institutionalise the achievement of those principles. In particular, this institutional focus of an applied political theory approach focuses on the appropriate ordering and respective roles and relationships between what I take to be the three basic institutions of modern societies, namely the state, the market and community in terms of the transition away from unsustainability.

It is for this interest in applied political theorising that I have always felt more comfortable with the label of being a 'social theorist' rather than a political philosopher or political theorist (Barry 1999b). Not only does the term 'social theory' imply a broader approach to understanding the world – that is it brings together a variety of disciplines from within the social sciences and humanities and beyond – and therefore presents a better foundation for interdisciplinary research and thinking. But social theory also carries with it a sociological approach focusing one's attention on understanding the 'facts on the ground' as the context within which and against which any normative theorising takes place.[3] While completely accepting the need for and importance of more abstract, conceptually based theorising, there is a difference, a major difference I would contend, between debates about a *theory or theories of justice* (which dominate contemporary (liberal) political theory post-Rawls) and the fact that sociologically speaking it is *injustice not justice* that characterises the world.[4] Part of my reason for

[2] Barry is also one of the few mainstream political theorists to take green issues seriously – see for example, his work on the ethics of resource depletion, energy and intergenerational justice (Barry, 1977, 1978, 1983, 1989, 1999). Other mainstream political theorists who like Barry have an applied political approach, and who have also written on green themes would include Bob Goodin (1992), David Miller (1999), Iris Marion Young (1983, 1984, 1998) and Martha Nussbaum (2004).

[3] I would like here to thank a former colleague from my time at Keele University, Rosemary O'Kane, who always insisted I was a political sociologist (not political theorist) at heart!

[4] Here part of what concerns me in articulating an applied approach to political theory (standing in opposition to much contemporary liberal theorising) is similar (but not the same) as Raymond Geuss' argument for a 'realist' approach to political philosophy. For him a realist approach means that, 'roughly speaking, that it must start from and be concerned in the first instance not with how people ought ideally (or ought "rationally") to act, what they ought to desire, or value, the kind of people they ought to be, etc., but, rather, with the way the social, economic, political, etc., institutions actually operate in some society at some given time, and what really does move human beings to act in given circumstances' (Geuss, 2008: 9). Now while I would draw short of Geuss's overly 'international relations' realist approach (which comes

labouring this point is that one gets a very different form of theorising when one begins from where we are in conditions of injustice, rather than seeking to develop compelling and intellectually coherent – but abstract – benchmarks or criteria against which we can judge present day, real world conditions of injustice. The fight against injustices is not necessarily the same as a fight for some positive conception of justice. As Simon righty suggests, 'injustice has a different phenomenology from justice. Understanding injustice constitutes a separate theoretical enterprise from constructing a theory of justice....injustice takes priority over justice' (Simon, 1995: xvii; Shklar, 1990; Wolgast, 1987). Using a similar line of argument perhaps I outline in this book why perhaps there are good reasons for recasting green political theory as a *politics of actually existing unsustainability* rather than a *politics for (future) sustainability*. And also to see that the analysis of actually existing unsustainability should take priority over the analysis of sustainability.

Before I proceed, I wish to briefly note how I differ here from some recent sociologically-informed analyses of green politics as a 'politics of unsustainability' (Blühdorn, 2008; Blühdorn and Welsh, Humphrey, 2009). From my reading of this literature, one of its main claims is that green politics in advanced consumer capitalist societies become a form of 'simulative politics', a 'rhetorical politics' which is unable or unwilling to actually confront the economic, cultural and political causes of unsustainability. I accept, though there seems to be some debate about its descriptive, explanatory and/or prescriptive claims (Barry, , Humphrey, 2009), that what this conceptualisation of a politics of unsustainability focuses on is a sociological *description* of green politics rather than a political and critical analysis, such as I am offering. Thus, as used in this book, what I mean by presenting green politics as a *politics of actually existing unsustainability* is rather the opposite of what these theorists of simulative green politics suggest. That is, a politics of unsustainability addresses our attention to the reality of what can be called *actually existing unsustainability*, and the identification of those underlying causes for the continuation of that unsustainability or unsustainabilities. From my perspective then, the first aim of green politics therefore ought to be to identify and reduce existing unsustainabilities as a precondition for, and prior to, any aim to articulating and achieving future sustainability or some future sustainable development path.

Indeed, we may have done better over the past twenty or so years since the 1992Rio Earth Summit and the first international articulation of 'sustainability 'and 'sustainable development' if we had focused attention on a politics of actually existing unsustainability rather than sustainability. The time and debate taken to develop an agreed conception of sustainability has actually 'sustained unsustainability' as it were. One could be forgiven for thinking that from the point of view of those profiting and benefitting from the continuation of actually existing unsustainability, that the ideal way

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close a times to advancing a conservative *realpolitik*), his critique of the 'empirical abstemiousness' of most contemporary political theory (including green political theorising) is spot on. Equally valuable for my later purposes in advancing a defence of a 'green republicanism' is his injunction that any account of politics must be historically located and informed.

for this system to continue relatively unchanged, while acknowledging its unsustainability, would be to focus on the pressing and urgent need to develop a workable and agreed conception of sustainability and sustainable development to guide us, and associated policies and strategies. This rather cynical/realistic is where I think the work of Blühdorn and others on 'simulative green politics' does connect to my analysis here. What Blühdorn's analysis offers is a rather bleak assessment from a normative standpoint (though here we need to distinguish its descriptive from prescriptive aspects), but its bleakness (like that of the 'hard greens' outlined below) is not a reason for not taking it seriously, even if one does not agree with it. It suggests that just as the rich will do everything to help the poor except get off their backs, likewise those benefitting from unsustainability (which *is* the exploitation of people and planet), are willing to do everything to realise sustainability, except stop their unsustainable lifestyles and transform the underlying social and economic dynamics that cause unsustainability. Think of the proliferation of the growing number of academic, government, NGO and corporate documents about 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development'. What would such documents contain if instead of being framed and focused around the future achievement of some understanding of sustainability, they were framed and focused around the reduction of unsustainability here and now instead? What would the policy implications be of a strategy for reducing unsustainable development? This book will attempt to provide some answers to these questions.

In this book, I offer an account of green republicanism as an appropriate way to think about a green politics of actually existing unsustainability. As will be seen in chapters 7 and 8, I am attracted to a 'neo-Roman' conception for normative and strategic reasons. On the one hand, this conception of republicanism seems a more appropriate for a modern pluralist political context in that it is not wedded to the promotion of one conception of the 'good life'. On the other, its pragmatic disposition towards using or discarding particular intuitions or mechanisms, depending on whether these help or hinder the achievement of central republican values and goals, is something that also has considerable merit. And yet, in large part arising from the focus on actually existing unsustainability, this is in tension (hopefully creative and not incompatible or irresolvable) with what I call a 'negative Aristotelian' account of human flourishing which is at the heart of this green republican vision.[5] This negative Aristotelianism centres on the urgent need to identify and remove those institutional (including cultural) features of modern consumer capitalism, which systematically undermine for example meaningful work, free time and human

[5] As argued throughout the book, and here I am not being original at all in so viewing green politics, I see green politics as a politics of protecting and enhancing life (human and nonhuman), a politics that is both life-affirming and life-celebrating. This book articulates a broadly 'enlightened anthropocentric' ethical and metaphysical perspective, and in this way represents a continuity of my thought (Barry, 1999a, 2009a). I do not devote much space in this book on examining the ethical status of the nonhuman community of life or of how humans ought to respectfully think about and interact with that community, its constitutive members and collectives. However, I do outline enough to indicate that just as the implementation of a green republican politics of actually existing unsustainability would require major structural changes to ensure what I call a 'just transition' to a less unsustainable future, likewise a fuller consideration of the ethical argument would require major changes, at the very least the transition from a narrow, arrogant and instrumental anthropocentrism to an enlightened anthropocentrism.

relationships (as opposed to possessions and consumption), as constitutive elements of a pluralistic (but quasi-objective) account of human flourishing.

To return to my inspiration for this focus on actually existing unsustainability, that is in the argument for the priority of an account of injustice over any theory of justice for a moment. According to Simon, we can identify injustice without recourse to a theory of justice (that is injustice cannot be reduced to meaning the lack or absence of justice), largely through the ideas of suffering and harm. As he puts it, 'It makes a difference whether we describe our political actions as part of a *fight against injustice, against other people's suffering*, or as a contest for justice. The two labels do not constitute different ways of talking about the same thing...Justice beckons us to create the positive in the future whereas injustice frantically yells at us to eradicate the negative in the present' (Simon, 1995: 1; emphasis added).[6] As he notes, it is the identification of harm (which does not have to have any referent to a theory of justice or what a person is due under such a theory), that enables one to develop an account of injustice conceived as independent from and a separate project from an account of justice. He is explicit in seeing the importance of the acceptance of a 'health metaphor' in defending a theory of injustice. For him, 'Justice relates to injustice in the same way that health relates to disease. We cannot have informative definitions or analyses of each specific disease only according to what form of health the disease rules out. Each disease has its own causative etiology' (ibid: 12). It is because we can identify harm and suffering without recourse to a theory of justice, that we can say the experience of injustice cannot be reduce to the absence of being treated in accordance to some account of justice. To me this focus on harm and suffering makes a lot of sense, and I develop some of my thinking on these issues in the following chapter in terms of vulnerability and dependency.[7]

[6] An interesting point Simon makes in this regard concerning this separation of considerations of injustice from their attachment to justice, is that from an environmental perspective a critique of the current unsustainable economic system does not and should not depend for its validity on the specification of some positive sustainable alternative. While from a political point of view of persuading people of one's position, one might wish to develop a worked out alternative, this should not be a requirement for the critique to be politically considered and taken seriously in public policy debate. As he notes 'the negative recommendation stands on its own, without the inclusion of a positive alternative...*Requiring that negative recommendations depend upon positive alternatives has the effect of undermining the negative recommendations*. We need to listen to the negative recommendations, irrespective of whether the negative criticisms also contain positive proposals' (Simon, 1995: 14; emphasis added). This connects to many green arguments around needing to challenge practices and institutions promoting unsustainability on the grounds that it is their responsibility to disprove the charge of unsustainability, as opposed to green objectors having to prove unsustainability (usually based on some notion of sustainability). This is of course a central issue of the precautionary principle, the application of which is compatible with the politics of unsustainability outlined here in 'turning the tables' as it were in the debate – requiring the status quo to disprove unsustainability. On the precautionary principle and its application to green politics see Dobson (2005), O'Riordan and Jordan (1995).

[7] This way of thinking also has the added advantage (given some of my previous work which explicitly ruled out the possibility of including non-humans within a theory of justice (Barry, 1999a)) of including the non-human world within a theory of injustice. We may not be able to specify what we 'owe' animals for example in the same way we may be able to do for humans, but we can (and have seen historically) how a focus on their capacity to suffer as theorists from Bentham to Peter Singer have argued (not their possession of 'rights' than can be violated and therefore need protection) provides both a ethically compelling as well as politically powerful way to address their ill-treatment in obliging humans to change how we treat and use them.

If we accept this health metaphor, and acknowledging the centrality of suffering, harm and vulnerability which together constitute an appropriate normative standpoint to understand the person, this represents a distinctive way to develop a view of ethics and politics. It gives us a powerful way to address the urgency of actually existing unsustainability and its associated exploitation of people, abuse of the planet and the non-human world.[8] One of the features of this health/suffering/flourishing perspective, and perhaps the one that results in some being critical of its use, is its potential for abuse by whoever or whatever authority determines what is and what is not 'human flourishing'. This is a legitimate concern since anyone or any institution that determines your health can potentially do so without any reference to you – that is such objective forms of determining what is good for people can fall foul of the 'shoe pinching objection'. Namely that only the person wearing the shoe can know if and where it pinches, this cannot be determined by some external authority. It can have non-democratic results in that relations between people governed on the basis of 'expert knowledge' are usually (and often legitimately) non-democratic. The classic example here is a patient's relationship to her doctor – we do not typically view this relationship as one that necessarily has to be structured by democratic norms. The application of democratic norms is usually viewed as inappropriate in this (and other similar cases). However, notwithstanding these important considerations, I do not think that making a health or suffering or harm focus central to one's political position necessarily leads to such undemocratic and unjust results. Another concern is 'perfectionism', which as I understand the concern is the idea that such a quasi-objectively determined sense of human flourishing could result in non-democratic, individual-insensitive intrusions which would 'force' people to 'flourish' along a particular pattern over which they had not control or do not give their consent or approval.

A final concern is that this account of the human person and associated conception of human flourishing is homogenous, that is there is one, determinate view of the 'good life' for humans. This would mean a politics based on the centrality of the realisation of this form of human flourishing would reduce the variety of views of the good life available to individuals and groups. One response to this (liberal) objection would be to point out the empirical experience of how contemporary liberal capitalist societies promote one dominant view of the good (a consumerist one) while tolerating others. Against the backdrop of the crushing uniformity and homogeneity often attendant upon contemporary consumerist culture, my contention is that there would be *more, not less variety* in views of the good in a post-growth, post-capitalist social order. A shift away from the dominance of what Peter Doran has termed the 'goods life' (Doran, 2006), could open up more not less possibilities for human a variety of forms of human flourishing. Another response would be to say that since what a green republicanism requires is not that people 'be or think green', or 'be sustainable' in some determinate sense, but rather than people stop or reduce 'being unsustainable', this is both less contentious and problematic, and

[8] It is interesting and entirely appropriate perhaps, that I, like others (supporters and detractors alike) have always viewed green politics and the green movement as a 'public health' movement. This may explain my interest in social psychology and an affinity with environmental planning (which also has a public health origin).

does not have the liberty or pluralism-reducing effects of 'forcing people to be sustainable'. At the same time, given the focus on structures and political economy dynamics that underpin a green republicanism, the issue in respect to unsustainability and its reduction is argued to be primarily structural and political, not necessarily to do with individual agents. Therefore, while of course having an impact on individuals (how could it not be given the focus is on human flourishing), a green republicanism is less interested (though of course not uninterested) in the behaviour of individuals, than in ensuring what Rawls called the 'basic structure of society' does not contain structures that enable, encourage or oblige/force individuals to engage in actions and practices which perpetuate actually existing unsustainability.

However, from the negative Aristotelian perspective outlined here, what a focus on human flourishing denotes is the determination, on a quasi-objective basis, of those features which undermine the range within which human flourishing, of being a healthy person, viewed holistically, is possible. The aim therefore of a green republican politics of actually existing unsustainability is the removal as quickly as possible of those features, structures, cultural norms, institutional arrangements of the present social order, which are preventing the realisation of this range of human flourishing for as many people as possible. Thus, the negative Aristotelianism here is not about the promotion of some narrow and determinate sense of the human good, that the good life for example necessarily requires active citizenship for example. Rather it is, on the basis of our best available knowledge (from as wide a range as possible to include, for example health, including mental and public health, epidemiology, psychology, traditional forms of wisdom, faith or spiritual knowledge, the social and natural sciences etc.), we can specify those aspects of an individual's particular social structure (social context, milieu, environment) that are actively undermining their realisation of that range of human flourishing. Thus, this negative Aristotelianism tries to avoid or minimise the charge of 'perfectionism' while retaining a quasi-objective account of the conditions of human flourishing to enable the determination and hopefully removal or reduction of those obstacles reducing more people realising that range of human flourishing. That is, the aim of a green republicanism of actually existing unsustainability is primarily negative and defensive, to reduce as much as possible those external and internal features preventing people from flourishing.[9] Here, as will be clear throughout the book, this green republican vision I outline has affinities with both the emancipatory politics of critical theory and the utopianism of early green politics (though re-cast as outlined below as a 'concrete utopianism').

I argue in this book that we should view human flourishing in a quasi-objective manner as akin to trying to specify those features that together constitute a 'healthy human'. And

[9] An interesting policy application of this thinking is 'choice editing' (Levett, 2003), that is the deliberate removal of and reduction of choice in an area motivated by a desire to both removal socially or environmentally 'bad' options, but which also removes the stress most people feel when faced with a bewildering range of choices in a single area or product. As he puts it, '*Contrary to current rhetoric, an important job of government is to restrict choice*. The state stops us assaulting, robbing or cheating each other, with the great benefit that we can live in peace and security and do deals with strangers of unknown morals' (Levett, 2008:11; emphasis added). This s remarkably green republican way of putting it and the role of the state in regulating the economy will be outlined in more detail in chapter 8.

a green politics of actually existing unsustainability suggests we need to begin out search by developing a view of the human person as someone who is both socially and ecologically embedded, biologically embodied and dependent biographically at different points in his or her life. And in the 'circumstances of unsustainability' that currently prevail we need a conception of human flourishing, what it means to be a healthy human viewed holistically, that is cognisant of the finite planet and its resources. This is what I mean by talking in short-hand throughout the book about 'low carbon, high quality of life' as the primary objective of green republicanism, and why we need to improve the 'resource and eco-efficiency' of human flourishing, not the eco-efficiency of conventional economic productivity and orthodox economic growth. Or rather we can only make decisions and judgements about productivity and economic growth in relation to how they contribute to the primary goal of human flourishing. How can we in short get maximum human flourishing while staying within the regenerative capacities and thresholds of the sustainable use of the various ecological resources of our finite planet?

Thus, a key goal of this negative Aristotelianism and green republicanism is the removal of those external and internal obstacles preventing human flourishing. So what are these? In the book I identify the following: the narrowing of human identity and interests by debt-based consumerism; the axiomatic presentation of economic growth as a permanent rather than contingent feature of an economy; increasing levels of socio-economy inequality; the sequestering of our dependence natures and needs; the corralling of 'work' into formally paid 'employment' and the imperatives for economic growth; the gender inequality of necessary reproductive work; the 'crowding out' of socially embedded forms of provisioning by the state and market. Removing these givens the outlines of a green republican conception of human flourishing – based on 'post-consumerist', but not anti-materialist, forms of human identity; the centrality of public policy based on the identification of thresholds beyond which specific macro-economic policies, such as economic growth diminish rather than add to meeting human needs and flourishing; establishing a band of 'rough equality' between people; fully recognising our vulnerable and dependence natures as they change over a lifetime; focusing on promoting work and not just orthodox 'employment'; greater recognition and support for more gender equal reproductive work; and the enhancing of the social economy/convivial economy and solidarity, alongside reformed state and market forms of economic production and provisioning.

This focus on actually existing unsustainability can also be connected to the view presented here of green politics as a form of 'concrete utopianism' – a politics of hope of a self-transforming present, one orientated towards the here and now (hence the 'applied theory' character). The movement away from unsustainability is perhaps more practical as there is more chance of agreement on what is unsustainable than what is 'sustainable' much in the same way that Simon notes, 'We can find agreement more readily over what constitutes injustice than over what constitutes justice' (Simon, 2995: xvii).[10] Thus there may be strategic reasons why we might want to consider re-casting green politics as a politics of actually existing unsustainability, thus improving its chances of making a

[10] Simon's argument for a 'negative utopia' is similar to the idea of a concrete utopia (Simon, 1995: 259-260).

political difference. Part of my motivation to case green politics in this manner is also that (in part from my own political experience, as much as reflection on academic debates on the matter) there always a danger in oppositional politics for its impatience for change to connect with its desire for implementing some view of a better society to result in 'the perfect becoming the enemy of the good'. Translated into the terms I am using here, what this means is that aiming for the 'perfect' is aiming for some sense of sustainability where all the inter-related issues of the internal relations between people, between people, place and planet have been 'solved'. The 'good' here is the 'good enough', the identification and removal or reduction of those external-structural and internal features of the human condition in the here and now, that are systematically causing harm, suffering and exploitation and thus preventing human (and non-human) flourishing.

On the one hand, as will be argued in the book (chapter 3 in particular), there is no 'solution' that 'sustainability' represents, in that (especially from an ecological perspective) any balance, equilibrium 'solution' will always be provisional and dynamic. On the other, a politics of sustainability is liable to, as indicated above, spend too long and too much energy on developing some agreed account of sustainability, to the detriment of devoting time and attention to tackling unsustainability. That is, a politics of sustainability can 'hold back' movement on reducing currently existing unsustainability, since this way of thinking means we cannot tackle unsustainability until we have a clear and agreed sense of sustainability. While harsh, I think this is a reasonable overview of the debate and politics around 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' since the Rio Earth Summit almost two decades ago. Here I think that the Transition movement is of particular interest (chapter 3). It can be viewed as a localised green political response to actually existing unsustainability, in which the primary aim is to reduce local unsustainability as much as possible and enhance local resilience, rather than engage in some much wider political project to realise sustainability. As a localised politics of actually existing unsustainability we can understand its pragmatism on the here and now, 'digging where your stand', and a disavowal of any big 'P' and 'ideological' politics of sustainability.

A politics of actually existing unsustainability as opposed to some future sustainability also seems to have the advantage of perhaps mobilising people. What I mean by this is that often when both the realities and causal dynamics of actually existing unsustainability are revealed to people, they connect more easily to the emotional and motivational resources of injustice, than the more distant and cold dispositions of both sustainability and justice. A major issue here, and one of central concern to the argument of this book, is that in the contemporary world the realities of unsustainability, and their causal relations, are systematically 'sequestered' and occluded under contemporary patterns of industrial globalisation.[11] In chapter 2 I argue for the importance of 'de-sequestering' such relations. In 'seeing' the realities and causal relations of unsustainability, the exploitation of vulnerable people in other parts of the world, the suffering of people or animals, the sheer injustice of needless deaths etc., the emotional and psychological response to these need little encouragement. Sympathy and empathy

[11] The deliberate sequestering and occlusion here is similar to Lukes' 'third dimension of power' (Lukes, 1974).

are entirely ethically appropriate and much needed ways of looking at the world, especially a world so full of needless suffering as ours is. In industrial societies, there are reasons other than cost, aesthetics and health and safety why abattoirs do not have glass walls. We may have a better chance of mobilising people around a politics of actually exiting unsustainability than appealing to a sense of sustainability.

But, as will be agued and hopefully clear in the book, the movement away from unsustainability is more 'practical' in another sense. It may turn out that making societies less unsustainable is a matter of *not doing something* than doing something new, such as consuming *less* commodities and energy. This of course does not mean that such a transition is easy, but it does indicate that of more concern for a politics of actually existing unsustainability are that the state and public discourse should be perhaps directed more towards eliminating existing forms of consumer 'lock-in' to unsustainable and perhaps non-well-being enhancing practices, than necessarily to unleashing the power of the wind or the atom. That is, reducing actually existing unsustainability may be more about 'letting go' or reducing existing practices than proposing something new.

Context

In some ways this present book continues the line of argument outlined in *Rethinking Green Politics*, where I was less interested in developing 'greenprints' of a future, ideal 'sustainable society', and more interested in what 'sustainability' actually meant and how it applied. However, this book moves beyond a concern with 'sustainability' to focus on unsustainability, and associated terms such as 'vulnerability' and 'resilience', but continues my applied theoretical focus on the here and now, beginning from where we are now in the unsustainable present. This does not of course imply one completely abandons abstract and conceptual work on 'a theory sustainability' or 'theory of justice'. But it does mean that how one approaches thinking about these issues is different, considerably different I would argue. What I mean by this is the requirement of constantly grounding one's analysis in the reality of actually existing unsustainability in the here and now, thinking through how this or that argument could be played out in democratic politics, how it would translate into actual policy, or as part of a wider political strategy with the current arrangement of political forces, institutional arrangements and so on.

While I have always worked with a sociologically- and historically-informed frame, coupled with a practically orientated interdisciplinary approach to green politics, my thinking in the past decade has been coloured and informed by practical political experience. Unlike the vast majority of political theorists or political scientists (or for that matter most academics), I also have direct and first-hand experience of political life, community activism and the 'rough and tumble' of democratic politics as a political party activist, officer and public representative. From 2003 to 2009 I was co-leader of the Green Party in Northern Ireland, stood for elections at regional and local levels and been heavily involved in Green Party developments, the most notable of which was the creation of an all-island Green Party in 2006. Northern Ireland is a tough, very tough political environment, and to publicly stand for a party the values of which were removed

from the dominant ethno-nationalist issue between 'nationalists' and 'unionists', takes a high degree of commitment, not to say some degree of courage , and perhaps more than a touch of idealism or madness (Barry, 2004). But articulating my political beliefs in such a harsh environment means that I had a 'baptism of fire'. An I am happy to report to have come out the other side even more convinced of green political principles and values, though with significantly altered views about how best to communicate these and seek to have them taken seriously as 'realisable' and attractive, not just as necessary.

Thus, it is inevitable that my thinking in this book is strongly informed by that experience (but not determined by it I hasten to add). I would like to think this experience will enrich what I have to say here, help and not hinder my political thinking. Others of course may disagree seeing my political activism as tainting and undermining the 'scholarly objectivity' and necessary 'ideological neutrality' of what I have to say. In some ways, I don't really care since I have always been sceptical of the 'objectivity' in political analyses in the first place, and prefer honesty about one's normative or ideological position, to the thin veneer of respectable academic 'objectivity', 'neutrality' and 'balance'. My experiences of the realities of modern democratic political life not only brings one face to face (literally) with the gap between what we as academics write about politics, and ideas such as justice and citizenship, and also the powerful role of the media. But this practical political experience also exposes one to the painful at times but, basic truth of what Max Weber, in the concluding paragraph to his classic book *Politics as Vocation*, famously termed 'the slow drilling through hard boards' (Weber, 1919/2008: 207), in relation to the normal (and normalising) political and policy-making process within modern liberal democracies.[12]

This book is therefore a reflection on the many different paths I have journeyed down over the past decade or so and an attempt to synthesise them in a coherent manner and to integrate the various interdisciplinary intellectual pursuits, publication and projects I have undertaken. These range from continuing my interest in green political theory, notably around exploring the relationship between green politics, human-nature relations and social theory broadly conceived (Barry, 2007); green conceptions of citizenship (Barry, 200; Barry 2005); and more recently in developing and defending a form of 'green republicanism' (Barry, 2008; Barry and Smith, 2008) – which will be developed later in chapters 7 and 8; to contributions to developing a green political economy to challenge the dominant neo-classical economic model (Barry, 2009a; Barry, 2007a; Barry and Doran, 2006), based on my earlier work in this field (Barry, 1999a) developed in chapters 4, 5 and 6; and continuing work on 'ecological modernisation' (Barry, 2003a; 2006a; 2006b) ; Barry and Patterson, 2002); Q methodology studies of the discourses of people

[12] However, it is important (especially against overly 'realpolitik' interpretations of applied political theory and political activism) to note that Weber went on in the next sentence to note that politics 'takes both passion and judgement. *Certainly all historical experience confirms the truth - that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible*' (Weber, 1919/2008: 207, emphasis added). Often, both from my political experience and political theorising, the implementation and realisation of the principle of sustainability seems a very impossible task given the array of forces aligned against it, ranging from political inertia, and economic opposition to cultural ignorance.

who support or object to renewable energy projects such as off-shore wind farms (Ellis, Barry and Robinson, 2007; Barry, Ellis and Robinson, 2008); and the relationship between public acceptance and involvement in the transition to a low carbon so city and economy (Barry and Ellis, 2010) ; analyses of governance for sustainable development in Northern Ireland (Barry, 2009b); to critical analyses of green politics on the island of Ireland (Barry, 2011; Barry, 2010; Barry and Doran, 2009).

My intellectual curiosity (what some might term just plain promiscuity!) and appetite for reaching out across established boundaries of knowledge has given me a perspective on green politics and unsustainability which is I think unique. But unique only within the context of the narrow silos of modern discipline-based knowledge organisation within institutions of higher education. Thus this book is, if you have not ascertained already, a plea for and encouragement of interdisciplinary and applied forms of political theory and social science research on actually existing unsustainability. Apart from the fact that it takes multiple disciplines to fully explain and understand the causes and drivers of unsustainability; equally it is through interdisciplinary research that the innovations and breakthroughs required will come. And this interdisciplinary innovation will not, indeed cannot, be confined to technological innovation but will necessarily require social and economic innovation in social provisioning, decision-making, organisation, oriented towards progressively reducing the current patterns of life, institutions and structures underpinning unsustainability.

‘People Cannot Stand Too Much Reality’: The Emergence of ‘Hard Green’ Ecological Realism

The anthropologist Marshall Sahlins pointed out that every human culture (or indeed non-human culture for that matter) is a “gamble played with nature” (Sahlins, 1985: ix), and like any gamble can be won or lost. It seems to me that one of the contemporary *Zeitgeists* we can see in existence today is a complex inter-weaving of a growing sense of anxiety about the future. This *Zeitgeist* is principally driven by fears about life in a climate changed and carbon constrained world in the aftermath of ‘peak oil’, dangerous climate change, and multiplied under the current global economic crisis since 2008 It is an anxiety that our current globalised carbon-fuelled capitalist system is coming to the end of the line.

This book is written against the backdrop of a profound (and disturbing) sense of growing doom and frustration at the lack of progress on the social mobilisation, or institutional planning, for the inevitable transition to a low-carbon, or post-carbon society and economy. *And I absolutely see this transition as inevitable*. However, least this depress too many readers too soon, I should say, and will explain more throughout the book, how this sense of foreboding is mitigated by the conviction that humanity can rise to the multiple challenges and opportunities that face us. But this is based not on some starry eyed greenprint of how the world looks from the Olympian heights of abstract theory, but informed by the limits and ineradicable facts of the contemporary human condition within the context of actually existing unsustainability. Not so much the ‘facts on the ground’ but the ‘ground of our facts’ as it were.

While I am by personal disposition and intellectual outlook, what one might call an 'aggressive optimist', I have been struck and indeed drawn to those voices, discourses and works which one might term 'ecological realism' which, on the whole tend often to paint the near-future of large sections of humanity in stark terms. Think Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, together with the peer-reviewed science of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and mix in the complete failure of political leadership by the majority of the most powerful countries on the planet and mainstream political parties. This hard green discourse is peppered with terms such as 'peak oil', 'climate chaos', life in a 'carbon constrained world', 'climate and food (in)security', climate-imposed 'triage', and gripped by a profound sense of urgency, such as the new economics foundation announcement in October 2008, that we had '100 months to save the planet' (new economics foundation, 2008a). This ecological realist analysis articulates a green storyline which, on the face of it, could not be more removed from the idealist, utopian-inspired green political and ethical theory I had analysed and contributed to in the 1990s.

In public speeches, lectures and in the numerous private conversations I have had over the past decade, I found myself saying that in reading these scientific and social scientific reports about our deteriorating ecological systems one needs either a razor-blade and/or a bottle of whiskey, and a religious book of your choice. The sheer scale, rapidity and incontrovertible evidence of humanity becoming more 'locked-into' unsustainability, the liquidation of the planet's life support systems and the negative impact on the nonhuman community of life on the planet, is matched only by the prevarication of governments and other influential groups. In particular, we could point to large corporations and other key sectors of the business community who have actively lobbied against policies and legislation to reduce our ecological impact, have funded climate change denial, engaged in 'greenwash' instead of cleaning up their production processes, and therefore have continued to maintaining unsustainability. Or, and again relating it to Blühdorn's work discussed above, we could examine the 'cognitive dissonance' displayed by millions of citizens who proclaim to know about and accept that their energy-intense, high-consumption and high-mobility lifestyles (and associated economic system and technological infrastructure) are the root causes of global and local ecological breakdown, but who either refuse or are unable to change their lifestyles to enable 'one planet living'. As Schellenberger and Nordhaus put it, 'while public support for action on global warming is wide it is also frighteningly shallow' (Schellenberger and Nordhaus, 2006: 9). As George Monbiot, echoing Galbraith's analysis of the 'culture of contentment' to some degree (Galbraith, 1993), has perceptively observed in relation to climate change:

> As people in the rich countries – even the professional classes – begin to wake up to what science is saying, climate change denial will look as stupid as Holocaust denial or the insistence that AIDS can be cured by beetroot. But our response will be to demand that the government acts while hoping it doesn't. *We will wish our governments to pretend to act*. We get the moral satisfaction of saying what we know to be right, without the discomfort of doing it. My fear is that the political parties in most rich nation countries have already recognized this. They know we

> want tough targets, but that we also want those targets to be missed. They know that we will grumble about their failure to curb climate change, but that we will not take to the streets. *They know that nobody ever rioted for austerity* (Monbiot, 1997: 41-42; emphasis added).[13]

So far, so good for 'simulative green politics' (Blühdorn and Welsh, 2008; Blühdorn, 2000), which constitutes an updated version of St. Augustine's request that 'God grant me chastity and temperance, but not just yet'.

But in response to Monbiot's reasonable observation, this book does suggest that people may 'riot for their own happiness'.[14] But from a negative Aristotelianism perspective, they may riot for the removal of demonstrable obstacles to human flourishing. As indicated earlier, this book argues the case for 'post-growth' rests on the argument that it is possible to simultaneously achieve a 'low carbon', low resource use but 'high well-being' society. And this offers a far more positive and attractive vision of a sustainable society than those (invariably non-greens) who present a sustainable society in terms of a discourse of 'loss', 'sacrifice' and/or 'regress' (Meyer and Maniates, 2010). In many respects, this book seeks to promote the serious consideration that orthodox 'economic growth' has largely 'done its job' in the developed world (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). Its continuation as an uncontested cultural myth, state imperative, or as the underpinning of our modern 'social contact' in high carbon, high consumption societies, is systematically undermining human well-being, as well as liquidating the life-supporting systems of the planet. What a post-growth position needs to present is a vision of a better, improved and more advanced society. One in which social innovation is as important as technological innovation, where time begins to replace money and commodities, where sufficiency replaces maximisation and where 'economic security' for all replaces unequally distributed economic growth. It is a better world, not some impoverished, regressive or indeed abstract utopian/dystopian vision of the future. It is the outworkings of a self-transforming present, hence its 'concrete utopian' character, with most of the technological, social and indeed economic practices and innovations needed already existing and ready to be mobilised. That most of these are small-scale, under-recognised, or un-recognised (and therefore could be consider as 'seeds'), does not take away from their importance and the powerful fact that they exist. All that is required, and of course this is a big 'all', is the political will, personal and collective courage, to learn about and experiment with them, and explore new ways of living more lightly on the planet. Particularly for those in the 'overdeveloped' world, we are asked to slim down not starve ourselves in order to address actually existing unsustainability. The issue is this: in the context of the inevitable (and hopefully 'just') transition to a less unsustainable society, it is not what we may lose that is moot, but what we gain.

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[13] Ivan Illich had also diagnosed this hypocrisy before Monbiot, but called it 'sentimentalism' when he wrote that, 'the values that an industrial society's activities deny are precisely those that it cherishes. It asserts that the values now attributed to subsistence – subsistence which economic growth inevitably destroys – are precisely those for the sake of which growth must continue…This sentimentalism is a dishonesty for which there is no know substitute in a society that has ravished its own environment for subsistence' (Illich, 1981: 116).

[14] I owe this point to Sam Alexander.

Yet, despite the sneaking sense that some writers of this ecological realist genre (overwhelming American it has to be said), welcome or indeed celebrate the coming 'ecological reckoning', and some seem a little too enthusiastic in outlining the horrors to come, there is also something admirable in these bold, provocative thinkers, writers and activists. Like John the Baptist they shout in the wilderness, pointing out the catastrophe that is about to befall carbon-fuelled capitalism. In part, the uncompromising and courageous articulation of this scientifically supported diagnosis of the predicament (and opportunity) facing humanity as a species in the 21st century motivates my gravitation towards a distinctly republican conceptualisation of green politics outlined in chapters 7 and 8.

As outlined in that chapter, a green republican and gender informed analysis outlines an account of green politics which starts from a clear, ecologically informed and grounded analysis of the human condition and potential, free from the beguiling distractions of both neo-classical economic myths of endless growth, consumerism and technological fixes, to inconvenient ecological truths standing in the way of those comfortable myths. As that most unlikely of supporters of this green republicanism, Ayn Rand noted, 'We can evade reality, but we cannot evade the consequences of evading reality' (in Cribb, 2010: 119). This 'ecological realist' perspective also forms the basis of my interest in the complex of issues denoted by 'vulnerability' (chapter 2), and 'resilience' and the thinking and analysis offered by grassroots movements such as Transition Towns (chapter 3).

As someone who always saw the 'limits to growth' as central to any understanding of green politics, this ecological realist discourse could be viewed as the return of or vindication of that earlier green analysis and discourse in a new guise. While some critics at the time dismissed the limits to growth report as 'Malthus with a computer' (Freeman, 1973), this new and improved ecological realist perspective could be viewed as limits to growth with PowerPoint (and matching Oscar-winning and Nobel Prize-winning film), and improved earth systems science. This new ecological realism I have witnessed both through my academic work, and though my involvement both with the Green Party in Ireland, and the Irish branch of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil, and more recently within the Transition Towns movement which has spread across the UK and Ireland and beyond in the last few years. Popular books such as Jared Diamond's *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Succeed or Fail* (Diamond, 2006), Thomas-Homer Dixon's *The Upside of Down* (Homer-Dixon, 2006), Alister McIntosh's *Hell and High Water: Climate Change, Hope and the Human Condition* (McIntosh, 2008), Derrick Jensen's *The Culture of Make-Believe* (Jensen, 2002), the Odums' *A Prosperous Way Down* (Odum and Odum, 2001), James Howard-Kunstler's *The Long Emergency* (Howard-Kunstler, 2005) and Thomas Friedman's *Hot, Flat and Crowded* (Friedman, 2008), have complemented documentaries such as Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, Leonardo di-Capro's *Eleventh Hour*, to less well know ones such as *What a Way to Go: Life at the End of Empire*, *The End of Suburbia*, *Escape from Suburbia* and *A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash* or documentaries such as the 2009 UK based Channel 4 one *Life after People*.

Other indications of this ecological realism include (in the UK and Ireland) the emergence of initiatives' such as the 'Dark Mountain' project (Hine and Kingsnorth, 2010), the growth and more general acceptance of the analyses of the once marginal 'peak oil movement', to the Institute for Collapsonomics (Gupta, 2009), and the emergence of what may be termed 'collapse' authors and thinkers such as Vinay Gupta, Dimity Orlov (Orlov, 2011), David Korowicz (Korowicz, 2010) and Jay Hanson (founder and coordinator of the peak oil focused dieoff.org and America2.0 websites) amongst others.[15] As that recent convert to green ideas, Thomas Friedman, notes, 'The world also has a problem: It is getting hot, flat, and crowded...In particular, the convergence of hot, flat, and crowded is tightening energy supplies, intensifying the extinction of plants and animals, deepening energy poverty, strengthening petrodictatorship, and accelerating climate change. How we address these interwoven global trends will determine a lot about the quality of life on earth in the twenty-first century' (Friedman, 2008: 5). It's not just raining reports about our rapidly deteriorating ecological life-support system, it is also raining films, documentaries, pod casts, blogs and YouTube clips. While they all are basically concerned with much the same thing, namely that our current carbon-fuelled capitalist, consumer culture is the root cause of the unsustainability crisis, they do differ on their prescriptions. These range from Jensen's rejection of modern western civilisation itself as a necessary precondition for getting us beyond unsustainability (Jensen, 2002, 2010), to more technological and reformist approaches outlined by Friedman (Friedman, 2008).

While this corpus of books and films have popularised green thinking and certainty raised awareness of our the unsustainability and ecological crisis, they have also contributed to rendering green politics in an negative and unappealing frame as outlined in Schellenberger and Nordhaus' provocative *The Death of Environmentalism* (Schellenberger and Nordhaus, 2006). One of the main points they make in their 'immanent critique' of the US environmental movement is how counter-productive it is to stress and amplify environmental problems (particularly within a technocratic or technological frame), without seeking to outline an attractive and compelling vision which attaches itself to peoples' values and aspirations. Simply put, Schellenberger and Nordhaus, and others such as Compton and Kasser (Compton, 2010; Compton and Kasser, 2009), indicate that the green movement has been and continues to be extremely good at highlighting the problems (and indeed finding innovative ways to do so), but not so good at articulating its vision for a sustainable society, or how the principle of 'sustainability' can relate to a positive future. Perhaps, one answer lies, as suggested above, in the green movement moving beyond a 'sustainability' frame to focusing on becoming a politics of 'actually existing unsustainability'.

James Lovelock is perhaps the most well-know environmentalist to capture this ecological realist mood. His most recent view, in his latest book, *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning* (Lovelock, 2009), claims that there is no point in trying

[15] There is also a sub-genre of imaginative fiction corresponding to this 'ecological realist' perspective, Cormac McCarthy's harrowing *The Road*, Ian McEwan's *Solar*, or Kurt Cobb's *Prelude: A story about secrets, treachery and the arrival of peak oil*.

renewable energy, CO2 emissions trading systems or attempts to negotiate international treaties on reducing CO2, recycling or any of the other usual components of 'sustainable development'. Lovelock foresees crop failures, drought, death on an enormous scale and massive social disruption right across the globe. The population of this hot, barren world could shrink from about seven billion to one billion by 2100 as people compete for ever-scarcer resources. As he put it in an interview, 'It will be death on a grand scale from famine and lack of water. It could be a reduction to a billion (people) or less' (Griffiths, 2009). According to Lovelock the human species should be ideally adopting a clear 'survivalist' perspective and investing in efforts to create safe havens in areas which will escape the worst effects of climate change. He puts it bluntly: "we have to stop pretending that there is any possible way of returning to that lush, comfortable and beautiful Earth we left behind some time in the 20th century" (Lovelock, 2009: 68). And in an even more chilling statement: 'The Earth, *in it's but not our interests* may be forced to move to a hot epoch, one where it can survive, though in a diminished and less habitable state. If, as is likely, this happens, we will have been the cause' (ibid: 3; emphasis added).

Other, more 'post-humanist' but equally pessimistic writers (or realistic, depending on one's view), such as John Gray, have rushed to celebrate and endorse Lovelock. Gray in a review of Lovelock's book writes that, 'Gaia has no particular concern for humans, and will not be propitiated by empty gestures such as carbon trading or limits on air traffic. What is needed, in fact, is virtually the opposite of the standard Green mix of wind turbines and organic farms, which could at best enable an overblown human population to eke a precarious living from an overtaxed Earth. If there is a sustainable future it is in a compact, high-tech civilisation with far fewer people' (Gray, 2009: 1). Lovelock's well-known support for nuclear power (and one that more prominent greens such as Mark Lynas and George Monbiot in the UK are now endorsing), goes hand in hand with his focus on population growth (also enthusiastically taken up by John Gray), something which has never really left green thinking though suppressed for a long period, with exceptions such as Jonathan Porritt (Porritt, 2009). We can discern here the outlines of a new vision of a 'sustainable society', and one markedly at odds with the various accounts that pepper green political theory.

Gray's curt and cursory dismissal of 'sustainable development' and green politics as wildly utopian and therefore useless to guiding out action and thinking – is matched by an equally provocative suggestion that what we should be concentrating on are policies for a 'sustainable retreat' in the face of inevitable ecological degradation and resource collapse (Lovelock, 2005; Gray, 2006). This vision is a 'hard ecological' view and has clear resonances with the Malthusian strain of green politics (Barry, 2007a; 1999b). It is a vision of a technological 'survivalist' society, one which is orientated towards saving what elements of civilisation we can. It is basically a vision of sustainable society in which we have nuclear power, energy from waste incinerators, genetically engineered crops and medicines, centralised power production, big cities and urban conurbations (though perhaps relocated inland to escape the rising seas), but at the price of social progress, justice and democracy. It is a techno-optimistic progressive sustainable society

that is at one and the same time socially regressive. A low carbon China in 100 years perhaps.

Others like the prominent sociologist, political advisor, and former director of the London School of Economics, Anthony Giddens, though not necessarily as pessimistic and 'hard green' as Lovelock or Gray, are equally dismissive of green politics. In his latest book, *The Politics of Climate Change*, Giddens has a chapter entitled 'The Greens and After' (Giddens, 2009, 49-72), in which he continues an argument outlined in *Beyond Left and Right* (Giddens, 1994), dismissing greens as pessimistic, anti-innovation, romantic conservative-cum-traditionalists, and claiming that the 'sensible' aspects of green politics have become mainstream thus leaving greens without a clear identity or purpose (Giddens, 2009: 56). Like Gray and Lovelock (all interestingly male English-based writers and thinkers), Giddens is an enthusiastic supporter of nuclear power, and its promise to enable the continuation of contemporary lifestyles and ways of life without radical disruption, or inviting major changes in the organisation of the economy, our relationship to technology, or the transformation of political structures. If for Stalin communism was Soviets plus the electrification of the whole country, then for Giddens sustainability is current structures and lifestyles plus nuclear power on a global scale. In some ways this is little different that Arnold Schwarzenegger pithy view of sustainability as 'bio-fuelling the hummer'.

Another prominent author here is Jeffrey Sachs, director of Columbia University's Earth Institute, who in his 2007 BBC Reith Lectures he follows Giddens, Gray and Lovelock (and Al Gore), in promoting a techno-centric and techno-optimistic vision for approaching the challenges we face. For Sachs, the solution to our current 'triple crunch' of climate crisis, economic meltdown and energy insecurity (Green New Deal Group, 2008), is not "a massive cutback in our consumption levels or our living standards" but "smarter living...to find a way for the rest of the world...to raise their own material conditions as well" (Sachs, 2007). At times it is hard to know which is the more unsettling – the cosy and comforting accounts of reformist 'optimists' such as Sachs, Gore and Giddens, or the shocking and frightening views of radical 'pessimists' such as Lovelock, Demitri Orlov (Orlov, 2011), James Howard Kunstler (Kunstler, 200) and David Kowowicz (2010).

Though the solutions suggested by such 'hard ecologists' such as Lovelock, Gray and others are ones that I do not necessarily accept as either following from the analysis they offer (much of which I would broadly accept), nor as normatively attractive, there is a very significant issue all these writers raise, and one central to this book, with which I agree. *That issue in a word is vulnerability*. What all of these gloomy/realist/hard ecological analyses share is a profound sense of the vulnerability of humanity, particular human lifestyles and ways of life to natural limits and resource or sink scarcities. For this reason, the theme of vulnerability is central to this book and its interpretation and implication for the politics of sustainability are outlined in chapter 2. In brief, and to anticipate the discussion in that chapter, what we can say is that the analyses outlined by the new 'ecological realism' exposes the fundamental vulnerability of modern technologically-advanced industrial societies to a spectrum of problems ranging from

climate change, food production, water and energy insecurity to the epidemics of obesity and mental health within an increasingly climate changed, crowded and carbon constrained world (apologies for the alliteration!). Yet unlike hard greens (and therefore perhaps presenting myself as a 'soft' green'), I see absolutely little to be gained from the continuing autistic pursuit of the 'malestream' technological fantasy of invulnerability, control and mastery. This project and orientation to the world based on control, human invulnerability and domination of the earth, as critical theorists such as Horkheimer, Adorno, Fromm and Marcuse, have long since pointed out, leads not to liberation and emancipation but wage and consumer enslavement (of self) and exploitation (of others, including nonhuman others). The fantasy of invulnerably, control and conquest culminates in what Marcuse brilliantly diagnosed as the 'repressive tolerance' and disfigured subjectivities of liberal democracy within capitalism.

In relation to climate change the problem can be seen in the failure and counterproductive efforts of the green movement and many governments in pointing to climate change as the most serious threat to human welfare, and then giving people a long-lasting LED light-bulb as a viable solution. The issue here is not simply the immense gap between problem and solution – the scale issue. But what people gain in control in terms of making a positive contribution to addressing the problem (something not to be easily dismissed in terms of mobilising people), they lose in terms of making a fundamental difference to dealing with the problem. *Climate change will not be solved by energy saving light-bulbs alone* and it needs to be framed as a crisis of actually existing unsustainability and associated injustices and suffering of both humans and nonhumans. This is why the 'climate justice' approach to framing the issue has more normative (and practical) potential in terms of mobilising people. Such a framing enables the overcoming of one of major problems with these technological approaches. This is their failure to engagement with people's values and collective narratives (Compton and Kasser, 2009), alongside the lack, as will be pointed out later in the book, of effective leadership, including but going beyond usual political senses of leadership (Parkin, 2010).

In many respects the position I adopt in this book is close to that of Thomas Homer-Dixon, and his contention in a *New York Times* op-ed article in 2010, that

> *Policy makers need to accept that societies won't make drastic changes to address climate change until such a crisis hits*. But that doesn't mean there's nothing for them to do in the meantime. When a crisis does occur, the societies with response plans on the shelf will be far better off than those that are blindsided. The task for national and regional leaders, then, is to develop a set of contingency plans for possible climate shocks — what we might call, collectively, Plan Z. We need a much more deliberate Plan Z, with detailed scenarios of plausible climate shocks; close analyses of options for emergency response by governments, corporations and nongovernmental groups; and clear specifics about what resources — financial, technological and organizational — we will need to cope with different types of crises. (Homer-Dixon, 2010; emphasis added)

We are facing inevitable ecological, resource and socio-economic challenges and we are singularly unprepared for them. At the very least we should be thankful for these 'hard greens' for both reminding us of the fragility and contingency of our current civilisation and ways of life, and for forcing a response to the often grim and tough issues and scenarios they raise. Above all else, they do a great service in drawing attention to the importance, as indicated in the quote from Homer-Dixon above, of the need for societies to plan for a number of future scenarios as well as taking steps to avoid the most negative ones. This is the promise of recasting green politics as a politics of actually existing unsustainability. In some ways, this take on the 'hard greens' is actually closer to the 'soft green' position outlined by E.F. Schumacher when he wrote, 'We never know when the winds of change will blow, but when they do we must always have our sails at the ready' (in Rosen, 2002: 181). Or to continue this line of thought, in part anticipating the differences perhaps between the broad position outlined in this book and some of the darker aspects of the hard green position, we might do well to take heed of the Chinese proverb, 'When the winds of change come some people build walls, others build windmills'.

Outline of the Book

This book is composed of 9 chapters. Chapters 2-8 are interlinked in the sense that there are three 'sets' of ' chapters (2 and 3 on vulnerability and resilience; 4, 5 and 6 on the critique of neo-classical economics and its green political economy alternative; and 7 and 8 on green republicanism), and a conclusion (chapter 9).

Chapter 2 on 'Vulnerability' seeks to follow through a line of argument something I briefly sketched out but did not develop in my *Rethinking Green Politics* (Barry, 1999a; 2002). Vulnerability and associated concepts such as dependency, are relatively little used terms within mainstream political theory, outside of feminism and eco-feminism who both have long researched this topic. Self-consciously trying to work within an eco-feminist perspective, this chapter indicates there are a variety of sources and authors who can inform our thinking on this topic. Issues of unsustainability – whether it is climate change, energy insecurity or other forms of insecurity – have brought considerations of vulnerability centre stage in modern politics and contemporary political thinking. Alongside vulnerability, another key concept outlined in this chapter which runs throughout the book is 'sequestration' and 'de-sequestration'. I take this term from Anthony Giddens (and here acknowledge the work of a former PhD student, Dr. Iorwerth Griffiths in first introducing me to the concept), to denote the deliberate and necessary 'hiding away' of 'existentially troubling' aspects of modern living. These principally concern those experiences, relationships, practices and ideas that remind us of our vulnerability and dependency upon the natural world, and on one another and perhaps above all remind us of our own vulnerable, fragile natures. I then proceed to examine one of the few mainstream political thinkers to take vulnerability and dependency seriously, Alastair MacIntyre, and offer an analysis of his ideas – especially in his book, *Dependent Rational Animals* (MacIntyre, 1999).

In discussing MacIntyre I am interested in what his neo-Aristotelianism (with his focus on the virtues, character, narratives and account of human flourishing – as well as his critical attitude to modernity), offers green politics, and also, anticipating the later chapters (7 and 8) how such an interpretation of MacIntyre can help provide an ethical basis for my later argument for green republicanism. Shifting from MacIntyre's reflections on vulnerability, this chapter then turns to an analysis of 'cultural vulnerability' through a discussion of Jonathan's Lear's book *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*. The discussion here focuses on the 'limiting case' of the cultural devastation experienced by the Crow Nation in the 19th century, and what this tells us about this form of vulnerability, and what we can learn about resilience and adaptability – themes taken up in the following chapter. The final section of this chapter offers what may seem at first a rather unexpected detour on illness, death and human flourishing, focusing in part on the work of Susan Sontag, as well as Freud, Adorno and Marcuse. Here, linking to the discussion of MacIntyre, I seek to make the case for a more explicit acknowledgement and integration of illness, disability and death into our conceptualisations about a normal human life i.e. these are *not* deviations from such a life, and more than that, a full account of a flourishing human life requires it.

Chapter 3 'Resilience , Transition and Creative Adaptability' moves on from the discussion of vulnerability to an examination of 'resilience' as a response – conceptual, political and practical – to human vulnerability. It views resilience both as a form of coping with vulnerability – since as indicated in chapter 2 'invulnerability' is both impossible and undesirable – and also as representing a different, but related way to conceptualise a path to reduce 'unsustainability'. This path involves the integration of key permaculture and resilience thinking concepts such as 'in-built redundancy', 'slack' ands principles such as 'sub-optimality' and 'sufficiency' to guide the design and re-design of socio-ecological systems. Through an examination of the Transition movement, its permaculture origins as well as clear green political focus on peak oil, climate change and localisation, this chapter outlines a 'creative adaptive management' approach to building less unsustainable, more resilient communities. This chapter also discusses the extremely useful 'addiction' analysis which characterises the Transition movement's perspective, which brings in cultural and psychological dimensions often left out of unsustainability research. Drawing on the disaster and risk literature, as well as the Transition movement literature, a resilient community is argued to be one which has high levels of solidarity, low levels of socio-economic inequality, empowered citizens. These are features of the civic republic tradition, discussed in more detail in chapters 7 and 8. Also anticipating later chapters, this chapter discusses the centrality of creativity and leadership; here I examine Transition towns as 'pioneers' in new ways of thinking and living. In part, these initiatives can be seen to be animated by the voluntary simplicity movement's slogan of 'being pioneers once more'.[16]

This chapter also explores the political and cultural importance what I call 'rituals', collective practices (not necessarily religious) organised around generosity and gratitude, non-consumption, and, as suggested in chapter 7, political memory and remembrance. These I suggest are important for acknowledging our dependence upon the nonhuman

[16] I owe this point to Sam Alexander.

world and each other, and are important elements in re-affirming and strengthening community. I would ask those who by now have jumped to the conclusion that what I am proposing is some new kind of earth-based 'civic religion' to hold that interpretation until reading more fully what I propose. I am not seeking to 'green Rousseau' as it were. Linking back to the concept of 'sequestration' in the previous chapter, I advance the argument that the Transition movement can be read (as can eco-feminist arguments around 'reproductive labour') as an attempt to 'de-sequester' and render explicit those forms of relations of dependence on nature and fellow humans which have been occluded, forgotten or otherwise hidden away in modernity. These include relations (material as well as symbolic) around food, the land and the links between production, reproduction and consumption.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 turn our attention to the economy. **Chapter 4** 'A critique of neo-classical economics as a regime of 'truth': empire and emperors with no clothes', offers a critical analysis of the dominant conception of political economy which underpins the unsustainability of modern societies – namely neo-classical economics. While greens have been long time critics of this dominant theory and practice of political economy, this chapter seeks to explore and explain its attraction and dominance by looking at its 'mythic' and ideological character more closely. Starting from a Foucauldian and Marxist inspired analysis, while also drawing on the recent work of green economists such as Molly Scott-Cato, I begin my critique of neo-classical economics by portraying it as form of power/knowledge which constitutes a 'regime of truth'.

As a 'regime of truth' I argue it has systematically eroded pluralism within thinking about the economy. The question motivating the analysis here is this: if no one seriously accepts that there is 'one truth' in relation to how the polity should be organised, why then (and how then) do we witness the imposition of 'one truth' in how the economy should be organised? I offer '12 theses on bourgeois economics' before proceeding to examine (making use of Adorno and the heterodox economics tradition) the 'mythic' and thoroughly ideological character of modern economics in general, and the imperative for 'economic growth' in particular. Continuing with the heterodox economic position, I paint a picture of neo-classical economics within the academy and discipline of 'economics' as a hegemonic, oppressive and anti-pluralist form of power/knowledge. I explore how this dominance by the neo-classical orthodoxy has led to an ideological battle for hearts and minds as those voices and positions 'crowded out' by the neo-classical orthodoxy engage in various forms of resistance, ranging from the 'toxic textbooks' campaign, to demands (initially by students) for much greater pluralism in the teaching of economics at universities. The reason for this extended critique of the economic orthodoxy is explained in terms of the 'real-world' impact of neo-classical economics as constituting not simply the dominant language of public policy (given the privileged position economics has in public policy making within liberal democracies), but constituting an even more powerful general 'grammar' of public policy. That is, as denoting the 'rules of the game' of public policy and indeed political debate.

Chapter 5, 'Green Political Economy I: Sufficiency and Security' offers a green alternative to neo-classical economics based on ecological considerations as well as eco-

feminist, ecological economics, and heterodox economic insights. Picking up on the discussion of economic growth in the previous chapter where it was discussed in terms of its mythic and ideological status, here I critically interrogate it, following John McMurtry, as denoting 'the cancer stage of capitalism' (with references back to the earlier discussion of cancer and illness by Susan Sontag in chapter 2). I then proceed to offer an alternative to economic growth – namely 'economic security' in which quality of life and well-being (especially free time) become central objectives of macro-economic policy and the way we think about a sustainable economy. Key to this notion of economic security (which is suggested as appropriate only for 'over-developed' economies in the minority world) is the need to reduce socio-economic equality.

Here I draw upon the recent work of Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) and Tim Jackson (2009a, 2009b), in outlining some of the features of a green political economy of sustainability. Other features of this green political economic alternative to the neo-classical orthodoxy include the centrality of principles such as sufficiency and moderation over efficiency and maximisation (here linking back to the permacultural-inspired idea of resilience being a function of 'slack' and in-built redundancy i.e. deliberative deviations from the norm of efficiency).

Chapter 6, 'Green Political Economy II: Solidarity and Sharing', continues the 'fleshing out' of an alternative green political economy within a 'post-economic growth' context. This chapter looks at the importance of the values and practices of solidarity and sharing as a mode of economic production and consumption, often typically expressed in the 'social economy' – in part anticipating the later discussion in chapter 8 on how a sustainable and resilient economy could be organised consistent with a green republican agenda.

This chapter also outlines what I call an 'economy of sustainable desire' in which I seek to go beyond the usual descriptions of a resilient, green economy as one defined by ascetic puritanism, denial and scarcity. In looking beyond the 'scarcity principle' as a ordering and organising feature of orthodox (and some heterodox) economics, I attempt to present the type of economy and society consistent with the principles of green political economy as one of abundance. But if, and only if, we abandon conceptions of orthodox economic growth, consumerism and replace these with meaningful free time, creativity and the internal goods of work and creative labour And above all abandon the confusion and problems related to collapsing the distinction between 'formally paid employment' and 'work', including 'socially necessary work'.

Chapters 7 and 8, sketch out an argument for a green republican politics of actually existing unsustainability. **Chapter 7,** 'Greening Civic Republicanism I' turns our attention to politics and discusses the potential for a 'green republicanism' as a viable, attractive and pragmatic basis for green politics in the 21st century. As indicated above, it contains elements of 'ecological realism' but does so in a way which many long-standing, non-ecological green values, such as a commitment to diversity/pluralism, democracy, equality, respect for the non-human world and sustainability can be incorporated within a new political frame. In particular, this and the following chapter seek to defence a version

of green politics, green republicanism, that is 'fit for purpose' from a resilience point of view – referring back to the earlier discussion of resilience in chapter 3.

The chapter begins by outlining, using classic civic republican sources – such as Machiavelli, Rousseau, Samuel Adams and Thomas Jefferson – how the republic account of the human political condition takes full cognisance of the vulnerability or all human projects – such as founding and sustaining a republic – to the vicissitudes of the natural world (as well as the threat of 'corruption' of the republic from within). The civic republican perspective is argued to have an inherent concern with unsustainability and the longevity of the republic. Its promotion of, *inter alia*, civic virtue, active and empowered citizenship, the accountability of public authorities, the promotion of 'rough equality', the creation of social solidarity and a politics of the common good, has many of the features identified as constitutive of resilient communities as outlined in chapter 3. I also spend some time discussing how the civic republican focus on memorialisation and remembrance resonates with the discussion in chapter 3 of the role of rituals, such as festivals and public holidays for example. These public rituals both foster solidarity, but also acting against the constant danger that both civic republicanism and green politics perceive in people and societies 'forgetting' their vulnerability and dependence on the nonhuman world and one another. Against the dangers of 'sequestration' raised first in chapter 2, a green republicanism consciously seeks to bring to the fore those features of human life which are prone to be suppressed and sublated and in so doing rendering that which is often viewed as non or pre-political, such as human-nature relations or gendered reproductive work, political.

Chapter 8, 'Greening Civic Republicanism II', continues the dialogue as it were between green and republican political thinking through exploring specific issues such as citizenship – the organisation and management of the economy from a green republican perspective – here linking back to some of the issues raised in chapters 4 and 5. This chapter also explains why contemporary debt-based consumerism ought to be of more concern for modern republicans, and *a fortiori* for green republicans in terms of the threats such relations of asymmetrical power and practices. I then develop and defend one specific green republican policy, the idea of 'compulsory sustainability service' in part motivated by eco-feminist concerns about the gender inequality that results from existing necessary reproductive labour, and also as a way to realise active citizenship and the fair contribution of all to the project of lessening unsustainability as a common good. I then proceed to outline how pluralism is accommodated with a green republican vision, through an examination of the agonistic democratic politics favoured by republicanism, here taking as a guiding thought the claim that republicanism favours contestation over consensus.

The book's concluding **Chapter 9**, 'Dissident Thinking in Turbulent Times', summarises the book's main arguments. It offers, despite the chapter's rather airy and worthy-sounding title, some hard-nosed reflections on the centrality of leadership, courage – both moral and political, individual and collective – and vision as key elements of the collective political action and transformations required to 'cope with' the inevitable transition to a low-carbon economy and the impacts of living in a climate-changed world.

A lot of this chapter is taken up with the thought of Vaclav Havel, whom, I interpret as a thinker whose ideas are largely compatible with green republican politics. I approach Havel as offering a unique 'dissident' perspective and use the concept of dissident and dissent as a way of describing green politics as an oppositional politics within consumer capitalism. Dissident offers an interesting and fruitful way in which to capture a variety of green forms of resistance, from the resolute and 'can do' pragmatism of the Transition Movement (chapter 3), to those who question the sense of self and subjectivity given by the standard Enlightenment storyline which neglects a focus on vulnerability, illness and death (chapter 2), and to those like the heterodox economics movement and associated 'Toxic Textbooks' campaign (chapter 4). This chapter ends with a discussion of the importance of generating new myths and stories to live by and stresses the importance of creativity and imagination as essential elements of successful 'coping mechanisms' in which learning and experimentation, innovation and deliberation are central.

The book is extremely wide-ranging in its scope and the range of disciplines, ideas and thinkers it covers. Perhaps too wide and comprehensive in the sense that it covers such a lot of ground that there are points along the journey that I signal towards but do not pursue in detail, or perhaps insufficiently discuss and defend points in the argument. For this I beg the reader's indulgence, for while it may come across as a weak response to this reasonable critique or observation, I have explicitly set out in this book to step back somewhat from debates in green political theory and offer a 'big picture' analysis. This is part a 'stock-taking' exercise and attempt at synthesising and integrating different dimensions of the green argument – particularly in relation to its economic analysis and 'post-growth' arguments. The books is also a 'ground clearing', 'prospecting' and 'mapping' exercise in the sense of raising a number of new issues, areas and ideas (vulnerability, collapse and 'hard green' thinking, republicanism, 'actually existing unsustainability', 'just transition', for example) that I hope others may pursue and develop in more detail, responding to my own initial take on these and offering their own alternatives. So in part, and perhaps rather immodestly on my behalf, I have deliberately set out to provide green political theory with a new research agenda, one that builds but extends its already solid foundation of scholarship. These motivations explain the length of this book, and also the length of time it has taken to come to fruition. For both, but especially the former, I beg the reader's indulgence and thank them for their patience.

Chapter 2: Vulnerability

'[I]f one were successful at walling oneself off from injury, one would become inhuman' (Judith Butler, 2003: 60).

'The peculiar beauty of human excellence just is its vulnerability' (Martha Nussbaum, 2001: 2).

Introduction

When one beings to search for sources on vulnerability one is struck by the fact that the majority of reports, books, articles and other published material are not in the social sciences by and large – with the notable exception of drama and imaginative fiction in the humanities. Rather it is within medical science, psychology and psychiatry, risk analysis and ecology that one tends to initially find research on vulnerability. And within the social sciences it is to work on disaster management that one is most often directed, or sociological work on the body and suffering. Yet within contemporary political theory vulnerability is not a central theme. Rather it is 'invulnerability' and associated ideas of independence, self-sufficiency and autonomy that we find (Dobson, 2009). While of course there is political theory work which does touch upon vulnerability, largely by feminists (such as the work of Judith Butler and Martha Nussbaum and ecofeminist theory) – it receives considerably less attention than other concerns such as the on-going development of liberal theories of justice for example. Vulnerability does not loom large within green political theory. Indeed, for analyses of vulnerability within political theory one has to look backwards into the history of political thought and then by looking out for associated and related concepts such as harm, frailty, luck and contingency.[17]

Vulnerability has its roots in the verb 'to wound' from the Latin *vulnerabilis*, *vulnerare* meaning 'to wound', related to *vulner, vulnus* meaning 'wound'. This immediately links vulnerability to notions such as harm. A revealing early exploration of vulnerability can be found in the story of the Greek hero Achilles. In particular there are two interesting links to the Greek mythical hero here. On the one hand there is the familiar relationship

[17] In the history of political theory issues of vulnerability and how to cope with it seem to figure more centrally. Associated ideas of *security* and *order* can be found in Hobbes for instance, *contingency* in classical thought and civic republicanism (in Machiavelli for instance), as well as conservative thought (Edmund Burke), or Enlightenment inspired ideas of overcoming or minimising vulnerability (whether in Marx or the French *philosophes*). Concerns with *human dependency* on the non-human world and one another and *risk*, like vulnerability, have been pervasive features of political theorising from the ancient Greeks to the more modern work of Hans Jonas (and the more sociological work of Ulrich Beck on 'risk society', or Mary Douglas's anthropological approach to risk). Notions of uncertainty, *luck* and *providence* can be found in pre-modern and religious thinking while in respect to *frailty*, perhaps conservative thinkers are most compelling here, as are Freud and psychologists demonstrating the frailty and mistakes of human reasoning as well as frailty of body, while *harm* (and its avoidance) can be found in the history of political theory, most recently perhaps in John Stuart Mill's exposition of the 'harm principle'. Ideas of *suffering, pain* and *death* are not absent from the history of political thought, most noticeably perhaps in Christian thinking or more recent thinkers such as Simone Weil.

between 'vulnerability' and 'Achilles heel', the latter signifying his only weak spot. On the other hand there is perhaps the less well know myth of Achilles Lance, a lance that heals the wounds it inflicts. In previous work I have described support for (the myth of) orthodox economic growth, even when acknowledged as causing environmental damage, as similar to Achilles lance (Barry, 1999a; 2007a). This is the idea that the environmental (and social) damage caused by economic growth can be 'cured', 'restored' 'offset' or 'compensated for' by the extra economic and other human resources (or capital) created by economic growth (Light, 2007; Barry, 1999a). Later in chapters 4 and 5 the mythic character of economic growth will be explored in more detail.

This chapter uses Alastair MacIntyre's book *Dependent Rational Animals* (MacIntyre, 1999), as a starting point for outlining the significance of this absence within contemporary political theorising, while also sketching out a possible argument for viewing MacIntyre as a putative 'green' thinker and/or a thinker green theorists should engage more with. It then explores a diverse range of thinkers such as Thomas Homer-Dixon, Anthony Giddens, Jonathan Lear and Susan Sontag, and how their very different theoretical insights into vulnerability, dependence and related ideas such as contingency, suffering, pain and death can, paradoxically perhaps, enrich green thinking.[18] Paradoxically, in the sense that discussion of such 'dark' issues can strengthen the fundamental life-enhancing and life-supporting objectives of green moral, political and economic thinking (Barry, 2009b).[19] This chapter (like much of this book) draws widely from a diverse and eclectic set of authors, disciplines and bodies of knowledge. A major aim of this chapter is to establish the importance of vulnerability for understanding and responding to the current 'human condition' to develop new conceptual tools or foreground underused conceptual tools to help analyse and appropriately respond to the conditions facing humanity in the 21st century.

Vulnerability and Sequestration

One reason for focusing on vulnerability is that green politics and the discourse/s around the transition away from unsustainability abound with references (often *sotto voce* and implicit) to human vulnerability. Exploring green politics and unsustainability therefore brings us not only 'back down to earth' as it were, but also face to face with our

[18] There is of course a well-established body of knowledge and debate on 'risk' in relation to green politics and sustainability, associated with the work of Mary Douglas, Ulrich Beck, Barbara Adam and Aaron Wildavsky amongst others (Beck, 1992, 2008; Adam, Beck and Van Loon, 2000; Douglas and Wildavsky, 1983). I have discussed risk and green politics elsewhere (Barry, 2007a: 242-271), and while acknowledging the link between vulnerability and risk, I am focused in this chapter on examining the implications of this lesser researched issue of vulnerability (and associated notions of dependency, suffering and death).

[19] William Connolly, drawing on the work of Nietzsche and Foucault has also explored what might also be called the 'life-affirming' potential of a full recognition and examination, as opposed to rejection or silence around death and morality. He also, as do I in this book, links the quest for economic compensation to issues of human insecurity and the denial of death's significance (Connolly, 2005: 878). As will be developed later in the discussion of 'green republicanism', there is I think a connection between an acceptance and integration of death, illness and morality (including the morality of civilisations and societies, as 'hard greens' remind us), and a sensitivity towards and appreciation of the importance of *history*, something which is a characteristic feature of a republican political disposition.

ineliminable vulnerability, that is the ineliminable vulnerable (and dependent) character of the human condition itself.[20] It also offers a counter-position to the 'domination of nature' narrative and imperative than characterises modernity's approach to human-nature relations (Barry, 2007a, Merchant, 1980). I suggest in the following chapter that the most appropriate response is to enhance resilience and coping mechanisms, rather than respond with only technological or other policies which seek to eliminate our vulnerability. This latter response I argue is both *ontologically impossible*; given the types of beings we are, as well as *ethically undesirable*, given the negative consequences of attempts to eliminate human vulnerability. Thus, one of the cardinal principles of a green political perspective, namely highlighting our dependence on the non-human world, goes hand in hand with emphasising the significance of human vulnerability to action.

There is also an argument to be made that vulnerability is intimately connected to our understanding of what it means to be human, that is, to *be vulnerable is constitutive of what it means to be human*, meaning that a human who is invulnerable is not human or at least not comprehensible as human.[21] This universality of vulnerability has been used by a number of scholars recently from a broadly international relations perspective, using vulnerability to underpin a broadly cosmopolitan political vision, including arguments for a shared solidarity amongst strangers based on commonly shared vulnerability and suffering (Sanchez-Flores, 2010; Linklater, 2007; Schick, 2009; Beattie 2010; Erskine, 2009, Kirby, 2006; Fineman, 2008). As the quote from Judith Butler above indicates, and as Martha Nussbaum has noted, invulnerability would be 'purchased…at too high a price [in] a life bereft of…important values' (Nussbaum, 2001: 322). The delusions of invulnerability are nowhere more evident than in what Lifton calls the 'super-power syndrome' (which bears some connection to MacIntyre's discussion of the *megalopsychos* later in this chapter):

> At the heart of the superpower syndrome then is the need to eliminate a vulnerability that, as the antithesis of omnipotence, contains the basic contradiction of the syndrome. *For vulnerability can never be eliminated, either by a nation or an individual. In seeking its elimination, the superpower finds itself on a psychological treadmill. The idea of vulnerability is intolerable, the fact of it irrefutabl*e. One solution is to maintain an *illusion of invulnerability*. But the superpower then runs the danger of taking increasingly draconian actions to sustain that illusion. For to do otherwise would be to surrender the cherished status of superpower. (Lifton 2003, 133; emphasis added).

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[20] Another reason for focusing on vulnerability in this chapter is to create some conceptual and ethical foundations for the later discussion of green republicanism, preparing some of the ground for the argument that civic republican thinking is centrally attuned to issues of dependence and vulnerability. It is for its attentiveness and sensitivity to the issue of human vulnerability that the civic republican tradition unlike other political traditions, such as liberalism or Marxism for instance, can integrate vulnerability into its analytical frame not simply as an optional 'bolt-on' but as something of foundational significance.

[21] Human vulnerability can be seen through the lens of an evolutionary or anthropological understanding of our species and the ubiquity and centrality of 'ordering rituals' around birth, death, sex, reproduction and food, all of which can be characterised or understood as involving different aspects of vulnerability. For further reading see Ted Benton (Benton, 1993).

However, as Carse notes, and also developed in the discussion of MacIntyre and Anderson and Honneth below:

> It is a fascinating and significant fact that much of philosophical history, notoriously, though not solely, in Western, post-Enlightenment thought has embraced a view of human agency that has underplayed our vulnerability. The predominant model of agency in terms of which our flourishing is conceived, and to which our dignitary status is attached, is one highlighting *self-sufficiency, independence, a capacity for deliberation and rational transcendence of emotion* – that is effective self-determination and self control-, grounded in our capacity as 'willers'…*This is the dream of autonomy and 'invincibility' that has held us captive.* (Carse, 2006: 35-6; emphasis added).[22]

There is something (perhaps a lot) in Carse's focus on post-Enlightenment thought as indicating the point at which vulnerability becomes a sublated (or 'sequestered' to anticipate a concept outlined in more detail below) concept and associated reality. There is a clear strand of Enlightenment thinking, and not just the techno-optimistic strand, but includes dominant liberal political accounts, especially around the idea of human autonomy (Dobson, 2009) which is, at the very least, in tension with fully acknowledging the significance of human vulnerability. Vulnerability perhaps conveys too much connection with the body, suffering, notions of unchosen limits, and connotations of human dependency on nature, other human beings, or supernatural beings, sufficient to offend the central Enlightenment belief in mastery of both human and nonhuman nature. But the related point she raises is seeing that 'autonomy', the standard and objective of most liberal political thinking, may not be appropriate in light of an acceptance of human vulnerability and a view that it should be viewed as more fundamental than autonomy. For unlike autonomy, which has to be socially and institutionally created and supported, vulnerability is a basic and ineliminable and universal feature of the 'human condition'.

Dependency is intimately and constitutively related to vulnerability. On the one hand dependency exacerbates vulnerability. This dependency and vulnerability can be found in pre-modern and agricultural worldviews with their careful and often fearful propriation rites and ceremonies orientated towards ensuring a capricious nature or God/s would ensure a bountiful harvest or protect them from harm. While these clearly represent non-scientific and sometimes arational attitudes and practices (which I hasten to add does not necessarily mean they are either 'wrong' or 'inferior' as guides to action), they do illustrate the limits that operated on keeping any impulse to 'dominate nature' in check.

On the other hand, one can find this vulnerability-dependency relationship revealed in the cultural and psychological aftermath of people who have experienced some calamitous natural disaster. The impact is much greater for those whose dominant culture,

[22] Brennan makes a similar point connecting vulnerability and departures from the 'autonomous norm' and flourishing when she remarks that "Depression, if it is experienced only cyclically, or contextually for an hour here or there...is [not] always bad. It can be the moment at which the empowered subject becomes human, alert to the suffering of others" (Brennan, 2000: 186).

institutional arrangements as associated psychological disposition have eroded, hidden or 'sequestered', to use Giddens' term (Giddens, 1991; Griffiths, 2006), their own and their societies' acknowledged dependency upon, and therefore vulnerability to, the natural world. As Margrit Shildrick puts it, 'vulnerability must be managed, covered over in the self, and repositioned as a quality of the other' (Shildrick, 2002: 68).[23] Societies or people for whom there is little acknowledged awareness of their dependence upon the natural world for example, such as those in most advanced industrial societies, are more vulnerable in one sense to the impacts of natural disasters or resource problems. The managing of and planning for such disruptions to those dependent relations, are neither constant nor central features of their social and political systems. These are not, as will be developed in the next chapter, features of a resilient socio-ecological system.

Hence the profound shock societies which operate 'as if' they had mastered nature, had somehow 'risen above' or 'solved' dependence upon the natural world (usually though economic or technological means), experience whenever there is a natural or resource problem. Modern societies do not operate with a full acknowledgement of how dependent they are on nature – indeed the very renunciation, denial or concealment of this fact is a mark of their being modern. This 'forgetfulness' or human dependence upon nature can morph into a 'Promethean' view, especially dominant in modern consumer capitalist societies that these societies have, *unlike every other previous human society*, 'overcome nature'. This Prometheanism is particularly prevalent in modern economic thinking (Dryzek, 2005). While I discuss modern economics in more detail later, two quotes from economists will suffice here to indicate its attitude towards human dependence upon nature. In 1993, one year after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, Murray Adelman asserted that, '*Minerals are inexhaustible and will never be depleted*. A stream of investment creates additions to proved reserves, a very large in-ground inventory, constantly renewed as it is extracted… *How much was in the ground at the start and how much will be left at the end are unknown and irrelevant*… There are plenty of fossil fuels and no limit to potential electrical capacity. It is all a matter of money' (Adelman, 1993: xi, emphasis added). In this he was merely echoing the dominant view within neo-classical economics, which we can also see here in this statement from Nobel winner Robert Solow in 1974, soon after the publication of the 'Limits to Growth' report (Meadows et al, 1973), where he stated that, 'the world can, in effect, get along without natural resources… at some finite cost, production can be freed of dependence on exhaustible resources altogether' (Solow, 1974: 11).[24]

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[23] Shildrick's work focuses on the corporeally embodied self and the related notions of 'vulnerability' and 'monstrosity', which clearly has potential to be linked to green thinking on the interrelationship between the ecologically embedded and socially constituted self and the embodied self. Such relations are sketched out in Barry (1999a: chapter 2). Her critique of the Enlightenment notion of the 'sovereign' 'autonomous' and 'bounded' self, complements green critiques of Enlightenment notions of the ecologically disembedded self and reducing the conception of 'the economy' to 'production' within 'malesteam' economic and political thinking as eco-feminists have pointed out (Mellor, 1997; Salleh, 1999; MacGregor, 2006).

[24] In response to Solow, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, one of the founders of 'ecological economics' commented that, 'One must have a very erroneous view of the economic process as a whole not to see that there are no material factors other than natural resources. To maintain further that "the world can, in effect, get along without natural resources", *is to ignore the difference between the actual world and the Garden of Eden*' (Georgescu-Roegen, 1975: 361; emphasis added). His reference to the 'Garden of Eden' worldview

I will leave a fuller analysis of the mythic and ecologically ignorant character of modern economics until later, but for now simply suggest that the assertion within modern economics that this generation of humanity has 'escaped' our dependence upon nature is neither unusual or controversial, but merely expresses in a very clear and unambiguous form, the 'commonsense' of our modern culture. It is as if the brief experience of living in urban, human made environments, powered by electricity and illuminated by neon lights, is somehow 'proof' that such societies have 'escaped', 'transcended' or 'evolved' from human dependence on nature. Giddens' point about 'sequestering' can be extended to mean that since 'reminders' of this dependence trouble this narrative of being 'beyond nature' or 'post-natural' (and associated ways of life and identity), ways have to be found to minimise or conceal such reminders.

Giddens' concept of 'sequestration' is important here, and since the concept comes up throughout this book, it is worth briefly outlining what Giddens means by the concept. For him, 'ontological security' within modernity is a function of the ability to sequester, or partition out, interferences which challenge or undermine our sense of what can be called the 'post-natural' normality of quintessentially modern forms of 'being in the world'. As Giddens puts it, 'The term "sequestration of experience" refers ... to *connected processes of concealment* which set apart the routines of ordinary life from the following phenomena: madness; criminality; *sickness and death; sexuality; and nature*…the ontological security which modernity has purchased, on the level of day-to-day routines, depends on *institutional exclusion of social life from fundamental existential issues which raise certain moral dilemmas for human beings*' (Giddens, 1991: 156; emphases added).[25] It is the systematic concealment of 'sickness', 'death' and 'nature' that are of particular interest to my purposes in this chapter: namely, to 'de-sequester' and foreground the importance of the body, human corporality, and what can be called the ineliminable dependencies of 'internal' human nature and associated forms of reproductive labour, care and support, as well as acknowledging and accepting human dependency upon 'external' nonhuman nature (Barry, 2007a). Giddens' list of sequestered phenomena should also include other dimensions of dependent relations, such as food production (especially in relation to animals), manual labour, old age (related to death and sickness), and perhaps above all, the gendered reproductive work in the private/domestic sphere.

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of modern economics is telling, as is his analytical point about neo-classical economics not integrating energy into its methodology.

[25] As Griffiths puts it, 'Sequestration refers to the hiding away from the public gaze of existentially troubling features of life into different locales. The elderly are kept in homes as are the insane, hospitals hideaway the sick and dying whereas in traditional societies all these people mingled in the same locale but they were less existentially troubling due to the presence of religious/mythic understandings. *The sequestration of such experiences helps to maintain ontological security by keeping them from intruding on the routines of daily life.* Despite sequestration creating spaces of ontological security, ontological security in modernity remains fragile being based on empty routines. The fragility of ontological security in modern societies makes it vulnerable when existential issues normally suppressed by sequestration come to the fore or when routines become substantially disrupted' (Griffiths, 2006: 165, emphasis added).

Some, but of course not all, of the *resistance to* green ideas (by which I mean much more than the criticism of), and the arguments against green politics from liberalism, though also Marxism, can be understood to be motivated, I think, by a resistance to the imputed 'pre-political' (and 'pre-modern') concerns of green politics. In seeking to literally bring thinking about politics 'back down to earth', in making central to politics our fundamental relations (material as well as mental) with the nonhuman world, my sense is post-Enlightenment forms of thinking instinctively rebel and resist what they perceive as an anti-Enlightenment attempt to 'pull us back' to the past. How else can we explain the frequency (and predictability) with which discussions of green politics descend into it being viewed (and dismissed) as a romantic-inspired attempt to revive some pre-modern, Arcadian, craft-based idyll? Being brought 'back down to earth' (and back to the body), is interpreted to mean being brought back to a pre-modern past, and therefore is essentially regressive. This is certainly how Giddens' (mis)understands green politics in my view (Giddens, 1994, 2009; Barry, 2007a), viewing it as he does as a reactive and reactionary conservative-cum-traditional political stance. While there are what one could describe as reactionary 'Luddite', primitivist' and conservative strains of *ecological* thinking (Sale, ; Zerzan; Gray,), these are not versions of *green* politics understood as an analysis of 'actually existing unsustainability', since they focus almost exclusively on the material, metabolic, ecological dimension, with little or no analysis of the social injustices, inequalities and exploitation of people and diminished human flourishing.[26]

As discussed in the next chapter, the Transition movement, as a grassroots expression of green political practice, can be seen as seeking to explicitly reinstate at the level of everyday awareness some, if not all, practices which foreground dependencies on internal or external nature, which modernity has sequestered. As an example of green political practice, it seeks to do this in the name of an alternative sense of ontological security and human flourishing, than sequestration and the avoidance of the ethical and existential dilemmas thrown up by relations of human dependency and vulnerability. Thus I interpret sequestration as one way, the dominant modernist way, to respond to vulnerability. Sequestration does not seek, as other aspects of modernity do, to directly create and maintain a sense 'human invulnerability', such as one finds in the techno-optimistic, Promethean narrative of modern economic for example. However, sequestration in denying, occluding or hiding vulnerability and dependency away as so many 'inconvenient truths', actively contributes to this cultural sense of invulnerability

[26] As an aside, just as Giddens misunderstands green thinking by focusing only on those 'ecological' (including 'hard green') streams of thought, John Gray likewise completely misunderstands green politics by following Giddens in focusing on those ecological lines of thought, but compounds this by reducing green ethical thinking to 'ecocentrism' (Barry, 2006a). Green politics in general, and the green republican politics of actually existing unsustainability as outlined in this book, while critical of modern industrial society does not seek the rejection of the many advances and improvements in human life they represent. While greens seek to simplify complex systems where needed, to re-structure for example the economy to enable a greater role for the social and convivial economy, none of these suggestions should be viewed as implying a regressive 'return to the pre-modern'. As will become clear in this book, greens are concerned with identifying thresholds and negative feedback mechanisms to help us re-structure (sometimes radically) and refine modern complex social and economic systems, but this does not automatically imply their rejection.

and narrative of being beyond dependency.[27] It constitutes a form of 'cognitive dissonance', the aim of which is often (and literally) to adopt an 'out of sight, out of mind' attitude towards realities, experiences and relationships which threaten the ontological security and identity of post-natural, autonomous, independent selves.

By way of illustration, the cultural and psychological impact of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans in 2002 was arguably much greater than in other cultures and communities already attuned to, aware of, and therefore more resilient to, external shocks and trauma (Cannavò, 2008). To experience such a natural disaster and to be witness to how ill-prepared one's community was to expecting and dealing with it, exposes one to an 'ontological insecurity' (to use Giddens concepts) and the vulnerability of one's society. This is troubling since modern citizens of 'advanced' societies do not generally expect or plan for such vulnerabilities and contingencies. Their identities, ways of life, cultural frames of reference do no routinely include these vulnerabilities. Or where these vulnerabilities are recognised (usually in relation to 'hostile natural' environments) they are immediately cast as 'technological problems' or risks which can be solved and 'dealt with' by either the state or the market. *Ceteris paribus*, a culture, society or individual for whom nature is perceived as distant, and for whom their dependence upon nature and human-nature interaction is occluded, mediated and very often 'forgotten', is one which experiences an exaggerated form of conscious vulnerability and associated harm when suddenly they are brought 'back down to earth' as it were, due to some natural disaster. An even more extreme form of cultural vulnerability will be explored below through Jonathan Lear's study of the Crow nation in the 19th and 20th centuries as it faced not simply physical annihilation but a form of existential destruction.

Such is the situation for most of those who live in so-called western advanced industrial/post-industrial societies when that which has been sequestered, the story-line of having conquered our dependence upon nature through technological and socio-economic innovation, is suddenly revealed to be false or at least contingent, temporary and provisional. For the minority world (i.e. those who live in the high-income, high-consumption industrialised nations of the earth), the dominant worldview is one where this privileged section of humanity have escaped and over-come their dependence on the earth. In this worldview there are no nature-imposed 'limits to economic growth' or 'personal consumption', and technological solutions can be deployed to deal with any difficulties or problems that the non-human world may throw up in relation to it providing to meet human desires and aspirations. But such worldviews and associated ways of life and thinking, in fostering the idea of invulnerability (by deliberately occluding dependency and vulnerability), thus foster mal-adaptive forms of thinking and acting. Mal-adaptive in the simple sense of not being grounded in those ineliminable relations of dependency and vulnerability, and therefore not useful from a resilience perspective.

[27] As will be suggested in the rest of the book, a related issue to sequestration that greens find problematic in modernity is the separation of production, reproduction and consumption in time and/or space or conceptually. This separation tends to erode moral responsibility within globalised and patriarchal industrial modes of production and consumption.

In this context, there is another key issue in relation to vulnerability that also needs stressing. *Neither vulnerability nor the harm that arises from it, nor indeed the resilience in coping with or mitigating harm or injury, are equally distributed*. Simply put, some people and communities are more vulnerable than others and some people and communities are more resilient than others in the face of those vulnerabilities. Therefore issues of equity, justice and the unevenly distributed capacity to cope with and be resilient in the face of vulnerability and harm are at the heart of any ethical or political account of vulnerability. Again, the differential impact of Hurricane Katrina amply demonstrates how unevenly vulnerability and resilience were distributed amongst the citizens of New Orleans. It was the poor and largely African American citizens who were most vulnerable and who suffered most both during and after the hurricane (Cutter, 2006, Landphair, 2007). In this way there is indeed a direct link between discussions of vulnerability, resilience, unsustainability and injustice within the 'environmental justice' perspective (Schlosberg, 1999; 2007). Thus there is a link between vulnerability, power and equity: resilience and the ability to withstand injury and harm are inextricably bound up with issues of distributive justice (including but going beyond socio-economic concerns to include voice, respect, identity and recognition) and the uneven distribution of power (Hathaway and Boff, 2009).

MacIntyre as a Green Thinker: Vulnerability in Political and Moral Theory

With the exception of green political theory and feminist and ecofeminist thinking, issues of human (and nonhuman) vulnerability and associated ideas of dependence do not loom large in the canons of contemporary western moral or political thinking.[28] As Alastair MacIntyre has put it "an acknowledgement of anything like the full extent of that dependence and of the ways in which it stems from our vulnerability and our afflictions in generally absent [from western thinking]" (1999: 3).[29] Indeed much like the treatment of animals or the natural world within most books on contemporary political theory, vulnerability is either absent, warrants only the most brief of discussions (and then usually in terms of the 'standard special cases' or aberrations from the 'norm' of moral and political independence or autonomy); or comes last in the discussion.[30] MacIntyre

[28] Political and ethical theorists have examined the normative status and treatment of 'vulnerable' individuals and groups, usually the standard 'moral patients' of the young, future generations, non-human animals, those in a vegetative state or with diminished capacity for reasoning and action. A noticeable exception here is Robert Goodin's *Protecting the Vulnerable* (Goodin, 1985).

[29] Prentice, from a psychological perspective put this denial of dependency even more starkly: "Is the human species suicidal? Apparently so – engaging in behaviour that is destructive to everything on which it depends, but apparently in serious denial of this…..Unresolved dependency needs? Absolutely! We act as though we are not totally dependent on these others, as though can afford to abuse everything...of which our world is made…We seem to have an overweening narcissism, such that all other species and elements of the world appear to be there to please and gratify our every whim" (Prentice, 2001:7).

[30] I cannot be the only person struck by the pattern one finds in reading political theory books in which words like 'environment/environmental', 'nature/natural world', 'animals' and 'nonhumanity', are either absent from the index, or invariably (if it's a textbook usually) placed at the end of the work in question. It is as if the priority accorded to these issues can be seen not only in the number of words devoted to discussing them but also in the place/order they are presented. While one cannot judge a book by its cover,

has not only acknowledged vulnerability and dependency as important moral and political issues, but has gone further and made the argument that vulnerability and dependency are constitutive of the human condition, the non-acknowledgement of which compromises the practices and associated collective forms of life required for human individual flourishing and the realisation of common goods (MacIntyre, 1999: 63-81).

It is surprising, given MacIntyre's acknowledgement of human vulnerability and dependence, and his more recent embracing of an understanding of the animal natures of humans – including the recognition of the affinity between humans as 'practical reasoners', and non-human species such as dolphins and great apes – not to mention his critique of capitalism, economic growth and embracing of a localist political perspective, that up to now there has not been more engagement with or use of his insights within green political theory.[31] Indeed, his book *Dependent Rational Animals* (MacIntyre, 1999) can be viewed as outlining a 'green' perspective, or at least a vision of moral and political life which is compatible with the main contours of green political theory. He begins with an all too rare acknowledgement of intellectual error. As he puts it in the preface, he admits that he,

> was in error in supposing an ethics independent of biology to be possible…and this for two distinct, but related reasons. The first is that no account of the goods, rules ands virtues that are definitive of our moral life can be adequate that does not explain…how that form of life is possible for beings who are biologically constituted as we are, by providing us with an account of our development towards and into that form of life. That development has as its starting point our initial animal condition. Secondly, a failure to understand that condition and the light thrown upon it by a comparison between humans and members of other intelligent animal species will obscure crucial features of that development. *One such failure, of immense importance on its own account, is the nature and extent of human vulnerability and disability*. (MacIntyre, 1999: x; emphasis added).

In pointing out these two salient facts – that humans are not just *like* animals, but *are* animals, and also the ineliminable vulnerability and dependence of human beings – MacIntyre articulates arguments central to green normative thinking. Green thinking has as a central orientating theme the need to transcend the species barrier in our moral and political thinking. It also holds that humans are dependent in all sorts of ways (on fellow humans and the nonhuman world), and that this dependence is normatively significant, as well as politically salient. Against dominant strands of political thought and prevailing European culture, an acceptance of human vulnerability and dependence is viewed not as some 'abnormal' or deviation from the moral or political norm we should expect or strive towards for human beings, but as fundamentally constitutive of what it means to be human.[32]

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its table of contents or index (as any hard-pressed academic or researcher knows!) can tell you a lot about it.

[31] Exceptions include Dobson (2009) and Calder (2009).

[32] Brennan makes a similar point, but sees this impulse towards denying our vulnerability and dependence or seeing it as something to be overcome and resented, not as something particular to western post-

The dominance of the self-sufficient, independent human being as the 'norm' of the 'free and rational person', which has been at the centre of Western moral and political theorising, has of course already been challenged, notably by feminists, who have pointed out the existence of unequal and unjust gender and power relations which permits this fiction of the free and rational independent 'man' to exist. It is only under conditions where bodily, corporeal and basic human needs have been met, by others, that modern Enlightenment man can emerge into the public sphere, as a free, autonomous individual, safe in the knowledge that the 'messiness' of reproductive and domestic life and labour, the life and labour associated with children, birth, food, sex, home-making etc. has been 'taken care of' by others, safely (though always never completely) sequestered away.

As Ariel Salleh (1999) and other eco-feminists such as Mary Mellor (Mellor, 1992; 1997) and Sherilyn MacGregor (2006), have pointed out, the 'embodied debt' (Salleh, 2009: 5), gendered caring/care work, and other unpaid labour necessary for the functioning of both the formal capitalist economy, and the liberal democratic political system (including liberal political theory) are occluded and missing. If they are acknowledged they are generally viewed as marginal within mainstream political discourse and discussion, and not central to its concerns, and often viewed as 'pre-political'. By 'embodied debt' Salleh means 'the debt owed North and South to unpaid reproductive workers who provide use values and regenerate the conditions of production, including the future labour force of capitalism' (2009: 5). Like other aspects of modern life, such as death, aging, dependency on nature, gendered labour is another set of relations and realities that are often conveniently 'sequestered' away from public inspection and debate. These eco-feminist and ecofeminist insights will be developed further in the next chapter and also chapter 6.

MacIntyre argues that dominant paradigms of modern thinking are characterised by the 'refusal to acknowledge adequately the bodily dimensions of our existence. This failure or refusal is perhaps rooted in, and certainly reinforced by the extent to which we conceive of ourselves and imagine ourselves as other than animal, as exempt from the hazardous condition of "mere" animality' (1999: 5). In so acknowledging and recognising the moral import of the corporeality of human existence and the human condition, MacIntyre is in the company of theorists such as Ted Benton who remind us of the fact that, 'Humans are necessarily *embodied* and also doubly, ecologically and socially *embedded*, and these aspects of their being are indissolubly bound up with their sense of self and with their capacity for the pursuit of the good for themselves' (1993: 103; emphasis in original). And this also connects with long-standing ecofeminist

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Enlightenment culture, but something that is at the centre of the human psyche. According to her, while discussing the meaning of the Biblical account of the origin of the Devil, 'He was driven by, very simply, by the desire to be boss. From this desire comes a fantasy from which all paranoia and its attendant miseries are born. In this fantasy, the state of being created by another, and dependant on that other, is interpreted as the state of being controlled. The other or others want to keep you in your place. They created you to feel superior. If not for their ignoble ambition, you could be, well, God. This fantasy founds the psyche. In the fullest sense of the word, it is foundational' (Brennan, 2000: 7). From this fantasy and impulse of control, mastery and domination come many demons from hubris, pride, to the arrogance of humanism.

arguments concerning the unrecognised and unpaid gendered labour and exploitation (Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies, 1999) required to meet those embodied and embedded needs. Being so constituted not only is a 'brute fact' of the human condition but means that, as both MacIntyre and green thinking point out, constitute a range of limits (which are morally and politically significant) that need to be attended and comprehended for any realistic moral or political theory. We depend on other humans not simply for the meeting of biological and other species- and culturally-specific needs, but also as MacInytre points out, to sustain us in our practical reasoning (MacIntyre, 1999: 96). It is as a species of 'reasoning animals', since this embodied account of humanity explicitly sees the continuity and connection between other animals and humans, that MacIntyre invites us to view ourselves.

It is as if dominant strands of western thinking conceive of our bodily and ecological existence as either a threat to some ideal or recently achieved notion of 'human subjecthood' (hence the knee-jerk and all too predictable reaction to quickly dismiss attempts to acknowledge and re-introduce bodily and ecological issues as signalling a regressive 'return to the past').[33] Or that talk of the body, vulnerability, reproduction and reproductive labour and our dependence on the non-human world, are essentially pre-political or non-political and resolutely 'non-ethical'. It is for this reason that the Greeks viewed the sphere of the home as one governed by violence and domination not freedom, and non-political rules which rendered the domestic sphere a sphere of 'idiocy' (Berry, 1989). For similar reasons political theorists such as Hannah Arendt are adamant that what she called the 'social' sphere be kept out of 'politics', least these 'pre-political' concerns 'contaminate' the proper and limited sphere of 'politics', understood as a sphere of autonomy, of 'action' not 'labour' (Arendt, 1958).

In this manner, to bring bodily concerns and those of our ecological embeddedness into the ethical-political realm is to commit a 'category mistake'. For example, like Arendt before him, Habermas is keen to establish clear boundaries between the 'political' and 'non-political', the 'ethical and non-ethical' or technological realms of human action, and to ensure that ethical concerns only relate to intra-human affairs. For Habermas, the only relation we have with the natural environment is an instrumental one, governed by productive, prudential and technical concerns about how best we can exploit it. His main concern, relating to what he sees as one of the dangers of modernity, is to prevent human social relations from being reduced to instrumental norms which are appropriate to the sphere of human technological manipulation of the natural world. That is, he does not want how humans treat and view each other to be within the same category of how we treat and view the nonhuman environment (Barry, 2007a: 92-116).[34]

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[33] Exceptions in the western philosophical tradition would include Merleau-Ponty, William James, John Dewey, and the contemporary writer on somaesthetics, Richard Shusterman (Shusterman, 2008). I owe this point to Peter Doran.

[34] This aversion to human vulnerability and dependence is particularly acute in liberal thinking (as well as in an exaggerated form in thinkers such as Nietzsche, Sorel and far-right libertarians such as Ayn Rand, all possessed in different ways of a 'heroic' conception of the 'free' human individual). The stress on independence and invulnerability within liberalism explains its focus on the individual, as well as the common critique of the ontological and epistemological atomism within dominant strands of liberal thinking. This liberal disposition may explain some of the extreme aversion to green thinking by thinkers

A key issue to recall here is that the separation that vulnerability and dependency marks within humanity is not simply between different categories of humans – viz., the able-bodied and 'fully rational' as distinct from the disabled and those possessed of less than full rationality – the familiar 'special cases' of applied ethical and philosophical thinking. *But more importantly it delineates a division within the person*. That is, being vulnerable and dependent is not simply the possibility of belonging to a particular category of 'unfortunate' or 'defective' humans. Being vulnerable and dependent is something that happens to us all, to different degrees and at different stages and points in our lives. In other words, vulnerability and dependence are constant features of our lives, but having particular salience at certain times more than others (when we are young, sick, old or have children or older adults to care for). And they are constant and universal since they are constitutive and ineliminable aspects of what it means to be human. There is thus a biographical element to our inherent dependence and vulnerability – we simply cannot escape from it. As novelist and critic Susan Sontag puts it, 'Illness is the night-side of life, a more onerous citizenship. *Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick*. Although we prefer to use only the good passport, sooner or later each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of that other place' (Sontag, 1978: 3; emphasis added). Illness here is of course indicative of an identity and experience of vulnerability and dependence and Sontag's important insights are discussed more fully below.

The fact that we are a species of primate (and all that implies in terms of instincts, evolutionarily elaborated forms of human unfolding – and flourishing - from infancy to adulthood and so on), is not a normatively unimportant issue in articulating and developing moral and political theories.[35] Not only is it essential to ground one's normative theory in an accurate rather than inaccurate account of what type of beings human beings are – to see ourselves as phenomenal rather than noumenal beings in the Kantian sense (we are material, corporeal, embodied beings not 'brains in vats'). But it is therefore also the case that any prescriptive theory – using the principle that 'ought' implies 'can' – needs to be based on an awareness of whether it is possible for beings so constituted as we are to live or act in the manner implied by the theory.[36] Finally, it is also significant that it is from having an accurate description or understanding of the type of beings we are, that we can have a plausible account of human flourishing, of what it means for human beings individuals and collectively to 'live well' (O'Neill, 1993). As Andrew Brennan suggest, 'in order to discover what sort of human life is valuable we must first consider what kind of a thing a human being is. Although there is, in my view, no complete answer to this question, we can...grasp one important aspect of human nature

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such as John Gray and Anthony Giddens, based not simply on their suspicion that greens are authoritarian and therefore a threat to freedom and the individual, but also – especially in Giddens case – on the grounds that greens transgress the species boundary in a manner that liberal ordering principles cannot cope with.

[35] See Benton (1993; 2002), Barry (1999: chapter 3; 2007a: chapter 10), Dryzek and Schlosberg (1995) and Baxter (2007), for analyses of the ethical and political implications of evolutionary biology. Others such as Mary Midgley (1994; 1995) and Stephen Clark (1977; 1982; 1999) have done much over a long time to demonstrate the significance of biology, ecology and evolution for moral theorising.

[36] This is another dimension of the 'applied' approach to political theory outlined in the introduction.

by reflecting on what are essentially ecological considerations' (1988: xii). And one would add, biological and biographical considerations of vulnerability and dependence.

Returning to MacIntyre, he states that contemporary normative theorising, and everyday discourse and thinking are informed by dominant cultural narratives and ideas that actively encourage a forgetfulness and/or minimising of our biological and animal natures. As he puts it, 'there are too many contexts in which we allow ourselves to forget [our Darwinian evolutionary history], a cultural tendency that is reinforced by too exclusive an attention to and exaggeration of what does indeed distinguish human beings from members of all other species' (1999: 12). One implication of this is the danger of morally objectionable forms of treatment and misrecognition of the natures of non-human animals. As animal rights and welfare theorists have pointed out, some of this misrecognition and associated ill-treatment of animals can be traced to an ignorance (wilful or other) of the similarities (and indeed solidarities) that do exist across the species boundary between humans and non-human animals (Singer, 1990; Midgley, 1995; Clark, 1977). Another implication of this forgetfulness is a fundamental misrecognition of the essentially dependent and vulnerable character of humans, and the contingency that surrounds them and which together constitute their circumstances of flourishing.[37] Here, one could point out that the 'arrogance of humanism' (Ehrenfeld, 1978) which marks much of western thinking and culture, is based on the strong sense of *invulnerability* that pervades Enlightenment anthropocentric thinking in general, and dominant strands of liberal thinking in particular.

It is also worth noting the connection between the eradication or downplaying of dependence and vulnerability and how these concepts of invulnerability, independence and individualism have become central to the dominant Western linear view of 'progress'. In the 'western imaginary' (cultural and normative) vulnerability signifies not just something to be overcome, but also something which was dominant at an earlier stage of human evolution and history. It is an unwelcome 'reminder', representing an earlier stage of human evolution. It is in this respect that the Enlightenment vision of progress (itself based on an Augustinian notion of progress) is the heroic story of human reason overcoming the pre-modern human condition of ignorance, poverty, want and superstition. Echoing the premise of the founding of the welfare state and the slaying of the 'five giants' (squalor, disease, idleness, want and ignorance), *vulnerability is something to be eradicated, or sequestered, not a condition to be acknowledged*. In Susan Sontag's analysis of illness as a metaphor in modern society (Sontag, 1978), discussed further below, notions of vulnerability and dependency are akin to (curable) diseases, reminders of 'lower' and 'ruder' stages of social evolution (in the terms used by eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson), and therefore constitute things to be transcended and overcome.

[37] Dobson makes a valid point in his discussion of MacIntyre, noting that 'MacIntyre's understanding of "dependence" falls short of what is required for a full understanding of our condition as biological (better, "ecological") beings' (Dobson, 2009: 158), on the grounds that he foregrounds social over ecological relations of dependency.

There does seem to be some (albeit limited) acknowledgement of this blind spot in contemporary political theorising around human vulnerability. One form it takes – which does not make the link to the essentially biological and animal character of humans as outlined above – is given by Anderson and Honneth (2005), who focus on the excessive attention given to individual independence as the proto-typical example of autonomy within liberal theory. As they put it,

> the idea that individuals realize their autonomy by gaining independence from their consociates…within culture at large, the images that accompany the emergence of this conception of autonomy suggest that *any* constraints reduce an individual's autonomy. As part of this development, however, an individualistic conception of personal autonomy has crept into modern theories of social justice. The point of creating a just society comes to be seen as allowing people to be as little dependent on others as possible. The conceptual consequences of this individualistic strain have been massive. *They include not only the idea, for example, that autonomy increases with wealth but also the idea that unchosen membership in a community represents a threat to personal autonomy* (Anderson and Honneth, 2005: 128: emphasis added).[38]

The connection they make here between 'autonomy' and 'wealth' is important and will be taken up in later chapters where I try to 'unpack' and analyse those ideological, mythic and normative support structures for 'economic growth' which operate alongside more structural drivers. Whole leaving that discussion until later, at this point, I would say that the point Anderson and Honneth make here about this moral dimension to economic growth and wealth creation under capitalism is one that others have made. Perhaps one of the most eloquent of these is Benjamin Friedman's *The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth* (Friedman, 2006), who presents a strong case for the positive moral benefits of orthodox economic growth. Indeed, he argues that the growing incivility and intolerance within America are a direct consequence of the decline in middle class living standards (ibid: 5-6). If this were true this would represent a serious challenge to the argument I make later for a 'post-growth' society, and associated argument of less consumerist forms of human flourishing. However, I note in passing here that Friedman pays little attention to growing socio-economic inequality and the decline in community in recent decades, as perhaps being a greater cause of the growing political incivility, intolerance and declining openness and generosity within American society. Nor does he consider that perhaps what the rise in incivility and intolerance in America signals is that orthodox economic growth has passed a threshold where it is now 'uneconomic growth'.

[38] Much has been made of the latter point in terms of the threat to (liberal) conceptions of autonomy from community membership in terms of debates between liberals and more communitarian orientated political theory, the connection between wealth accumulation and autonomy has typically been an object of critique by Marxist-inspired political theory and more latterly green political theory in offering a profound critique of the economic growth imperative at the heart not just of capitalist economic logic, but also dominant strands of western political thinking such as liberalism (Barry, 2001). This green critique of economic growth will loom large in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Anderson and Honneth continue their analysis by suggesting that, 'If, by contrast, we recognize that individuals – including autonomous individuals – are much more vulnerable and needy than the liberal model has traditionally represented them as being, *a very different picture of the demands of social justice emerges*' (ibid: 129; emphasis added). This is an extremely significant issue they raise. For them, 'one's autonomy is vulnerable to disruptions in one's relationship to others…agents' social vulnerability in the ways in which being able to lead one's own life is dependent upon one's being supported by relations of recognition' (ibid.: 130). This leads to more explicit integration of concerns about institutional support for respectful recognition (which can only arise in the context of social relations rather than individual self-reflection) as constitutive of the achievement of autonomy within liberal theories of justice. Thus Anderson and Honneth thus go some way to recognising the inter/dependent social nature of human beings.

Unfortunately they do not examine potentially 'unhealthy' forms of recognition seeking, through 'status competition' for example, or excessively consumerist identities (Kasser, 2008; Jackson, 2009a), or that, as I will argue throughout this book, there are healthy forms of human identity and flourishing which are possible beyond orthodox economic growth and consumerism. Equally unfortunately they do not, as is characteristic of most contemporary political theorising, directly relate this to our distinctly *ecological* dependencies. This neglect of ecological dependencies is a point also made by Dobson in his analysis of MacIntyre's focus on social as opposed to ecological dependencies (Dobson, 2009). Anderson and Honneth do not explore the possibilities for a theory of justice based on a full recognition of our multiple vulnerabilities and dependencies. As Fineman notes, 'Understanding the significance, universality, and constancy of vulnerability mandates that politics, ethics, and law be fashioned around a complete, comprehensive vision of the human experience if they are to meet the needs of real-life subjects. Currently, dominant political and legal theories are built around a universal human subject defined in the liberal tradition' (Fineman, 2008: 10), indicating that a 'post-liberal' political vision is required.

The acknowledgment of the human need for recognition as arising only in the context of social relations does have a biological and evolutionary basis. Humans are after all social beings (a species of social primate), and as such require not just to live in the *presence* of other humans. But also the *participation* of and *ongoing interaction* with other humans beings is required for developing central human capacities (such as language use or practical reasoning), but also as major contributors to (or negative influences on) human well-being and flourishing. Anderson and Honneth underestimate the significance for the development of a theory of justice of a full acceptance and acknowledgement of human vulnerability and dependence. A theory of justice which is based on something like MacIntyre's notion of 'rationally acknowledged dependence' (MacIntyre, 1999: 119-129), as opposed to striving for (ir)rational (?) independence would be different, perhaps very different, from the dominant accounts of justice within contemporary (liberal) political theory.

It is beyond the present study to provide an answer to the question raised above in terms of what a full theory of injustice and associated account of social order would like if they

fully acknowledge and embrace human vulnerability. MacIntyre suggests a starting point in holding that what is needed is to, 'envision…*a form of political society in which it is taken for granted that disability and dependence on others are something that all of us experience*...and that consequently our interest in how the needs of the disabled are adequately voiced and met *is not a special interest…but rather the interest of the whole political society*, an interest that is integral to their conception of the common good' (MacIntyre, 1999: 130; emphasis added). Apart from undermining the usual categorising of people with disabilities as 'special cases', and breaching the ethical boundary between 'human' and nonhuman', a theory of justice and society based on human vulnerability and dependence rather than invulnerability, self-sufficiency and independence moves us, I would suggest, in the direction of an (eco) feminist 'ethic of care' perspective (Salleh, 2009; Mellor, 1992; Macgregor, 2006), combined with an acknowledgement both of the value and ineliminable normative presence of nature's 'otherness' in our deliberations about justice (Smith, 2006, 2008; Baxter, 2005; Nussbaum, 2004; Schlosberg, 2007; Cripps, 2010). While I am now (in a way I previously was not) persuaded that it is possible to include human-nature exchanges within an account of justice, that it 'nature counts', I am less sure about how and in ways it does, and how its inclusion affects the architecture of justice and politics. However, I do think an account of justice and politics based on vulnerability and dependency would give us a more thickly relational, contextually embedded theory of justice, and a more embodied one too (Carolan, 2009, Gabrielson, 2008; Gabrielson and Parady, 2010). It would deliver an account of associated notions of human flourishing and the good life which are much more collective than those offered by dominant accounts of liberalism (or some existing accounts of green politics). At the very least, such an conception of justice and politics would also take a 'whole life cycle' view of the individual rather than, as most liberal accounts do, take one period of that life cycle (i.e.. healthy adulthood) and makes this paradigmatic and representative of what it means to be a flourishing and 'normal' human subject.

Illustrative here is MacIntyre's use of Aristotle's discussion of the vice of the *megalopsychos* – an unwillingness to acknowledge what one has received on the grounds that this would compromise one's superior sense of self-sufficiency, independence, close to the sense of enlightenment/liberal 'autonomy' as outlined by Anderson and Honneth above. According to Aristotle the *megalopsychos,* 'is ashamed to receive benefits, because it is a mark of a superior to confer benefits, of an inferior to receive them' (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1124b 9-10). In this manner Aristotle might have been bemused at the dominant liberal view that, to repeat Anderson and Honneth, '*The point of creating a just society comes to be seen as allowing people to be as little dependent on others as possible*' (2005: 128), when such dependence and interdependence, and the relations and practices that flow from them, are both constitutive not just of being human or the human condition, but indeed central features that need to be taken account of in achieving human flourishing. According to MacIntyre:

> So the *megalopsychos* is forgetful of what he has received, but remembers what he has given, and is not pleased to be reminded of the former, but hears the latter recalled with pleasure. *We recognize here an illusion of self-sufficiency, an*

> *illusion apparently shared by Aristotle, that is all too characteristic of the rich and powerful in many times and places*, an illusion that plays no small part in excluding them from certain types of communal relationship. For like the virtues of giving, those of receiving are needed in order to sustain just those types of communal relationships through which the exercise of those virtues first has to be learned. (MacIntyre, 1999: 27; emphasis added).[39]

The point here is not to somehow celebrate or exacerbate our multiple vulnerabilities and dependent natures. Or to eschew all modern efforts to minimise harmful vulnerabilities, in the name of some 'authenticity' linked to a disavowal of the multiple benefits of modernity and modern forms of life, technology and its other achievements. Thus, it is important here to state that an acknowledgement of vulnerability and dependence should not be read as endorsing all of MacIntyre's ideas. Such as, for example, his anti-industrial tendencies in gravitating towards parochial and distinctly 'pre-modern' forms of social life, and his predilection for Donegal farming cooperatives, 'traditional' and non-industrial forms of collective production as the only exemplars of meaningful work practices (Breen, 2007: 411). Even though there is much in MacIntyre's localist vision which does have merit and is compatible, in a reworked form I would suggest with key aspects of a green political vision. Neither should it be read as supporting that 'primitivist' strand of 'hard green' political theorising (Somma, 2009; Humphrey, 2007; Jensen, 2002).

In short, what greens and MacIntyre seem to be asking are the following questions:

1. What forms of social and economic life are possible which fully acknowledge human vulnerability and dependence, and which see these as constitutive of the human good (since they are constitutive of what it means to be human) and not as aberrations to be eradicated?

2. Are conceptions of humanity and the human good, and political theories based on them, which fail to acknowledge vulnerability and dependence, 'fit for purpose' as practical guides to action?

A normative or social-scientific study of the relationship between society and the natural environment requires that we address the following question: 'how do we open up to investigation the relationships between humans and the rest of nature, without letting in the "Trojan horse" of biological determinism?' (Benton and Redclift, 1994: 4). That is, how, on the one hand, are we to study the ecological and biological aspects of the relationship of the human species to its natural environment and human evolutionary biology? While avoiding, on the other hand, thinking about and studying humans as if they were simply another species, and thus explaining human behaviour using the same biological and ecological models and conceptual analysis used in the case of other species? It is quite obvious that humans are a particular species, living in particular

[39] A similar point is made by David Suzuki (Suzuki, 1997) and will also be developed later in terms of the 'socially embedded' character of the 'social economy' and its associated modes of provisioning as an 'economy of regard' as Offer puts it (Offer, 2006).

environments like other species on the planet, and thus it seems inappropriate to reject a biological or ecological approach to the study of human society and behaviour. As Benton puts it,

> We can, and, I think, we should, continue to view humans as a species of living organism, comparable in many important respects with other social species, as bound together with those other species and their bio-physical conditions of existence in immensely complex webs of interdependence, and as united, also, by a common coevolutionary ancestry. To say this much *is* to be committed to a naturalistic approach, but not necessarily to a reductionist one. It is to be committed to recognizing the *relevance* of evolutionary theory, physiology, genetics and, especially ecology itself, as disciplines whose insights and findings are pertinent to our understanding of ourselves. (Benton, 1994: 40; emphasis in original).

Benton I think offers a response to Dobson's critique of MacIntyre, in acknowledging that we need to attend to both biological and ecological dimensions of human vulnerability and dependency as constitutive elements of what it means to be human. He argues that we should not confuse the *relevance* of the natural sciences in investigating social phenomena with these sciences offering a *full* explanation of those phenomena. This is the mistaken path taken by socio-biology and other deterministic accounts of 'reading off' and prescribing human behaviour from human evolutionary biology (the idea of the 'selfish gene' for example), or from the observed behaviour of other nonhuman animals (Barry, 2007a). The point Benton makes, here following Marx to a large extent, is that we need to generate a conception of our species-specific forms of knowledge pertinent to identifying our species-specific modes of flourishing. Though sharing with other nonhuman species similar problems and similar characteristics, the biological need for food, for example, humans are *not* the same as other species. Our particular species-specific natures, needs and modes of flourishing are such that we are different from other species, not least in the (not unlimited) cultural variation of how we satisfy those needs and flourish. But being different does not mean that we as a species are somehow radically separate or 'superior' to other species. In this way, Benton, seeks to transcend the dichotomy between 'environment' and 'society', as an important step in developing a more ecologically sensitive form of social theorising, necessary for developing and thinking about vulnerability. And in this he offers an analysis of human-nonhuman dependency and continuity, which compliments that of MacIntyre and his focus on intra-human dependency and vulnerability. And both present challenges to the dominant Enlightenment notion of the post-natural, and radically independent and autonomous self.

Cultural Vulnerability, Courage and Radical Hope

An extremely eloquent and thought-provoking rumination on cultural vulnerability can be found in Jonathan Lear's extraordinary book, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation* (Lear, 2006). Lear's book is a philosophical-cultural analysis of the

ending of the traditional way of life of the Crow Nation in the United States of America as seen through its last great chief, Plenty Coups in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Discussing this book in relation to green political concerns would only seem to make sense, on the face of it, if one accepted the gloomy prognoses of the 'hard greens' discussed in the Introduction such as Lovelock, Gray or Howard-Kunstler about preparing ourselves for civilisational collapse and catastrophe. While I do not accept the extremely negative analyses offered by some of these 'hard greens', I do think it is both important and fruitful to take stock of what Lear's analysis has to say in terms of orientating ourselves and our culture to the type of cultural, psychological and aspirational changes that living in less unsustainable, low-impact, low carbon resilient economy may require. Lear's study asks what surely has to be regarded as a profound (if deeply troubling) existential question, what Lear calls 'an extreme possibility of human existence' (2006: 10), namely, 'if our way of life collapsed, things would cease to happen. What could this mean?...*What would it be to be a witness to this breakdown?*' (ibid: 6; emphasis added).

For those who say we are now on a trajectory towards the 'end of suburbia' and the end of modern life as we know it (Kunstler, 2005, Korowicz, 2010; Hine and Kingsnorth, 2010), Lear's study could be understood as another in the list of salutary historical examples that stand as 'wake up calls' to contemporary societies to 'get their ecological acts together' as it were. However, Lear's book is not concerned, as these other writers are, with the material or ecological aspects of putative societal collapse or breakdown, but rather in the equally significant cultural and psycho-social dimensions of such breakdown. Lear's study points to the complex of issues involved when settled and established ways of life, modes of thinking and acting collapse, leaving people with a devastating 'intelligibility gap'. This gap or rupture is one in which the narratives by which those lives were understood and rendered meaningful disappear or are fatally compromised. The 'narrative rupture' that concerns Lear's study, points to the non-material, cultural and psychological dimensions of a sudden and externally imposed disruption – an unintentional and involuntary transition from one social context to another. And the point here in using Lear's work is that just as greens need to attend to boosting ecological resilience – complex adaptive management as outlined in the next chapter – attention also needs to be paid to cultural vulnerability and therefore to ways of cultivating cultural and indeed psychological resilience – also explored in more detail in the next chapter. That is, it is not just about preparing ourselves for the 'worst' but actively seeking to prevent that from happening, as well as cultivating adaptive responses. To use the language of climate change politics, it is a matter of both adaptation and mitigation.

I agree with Lear that one way of beginning this process is to ask, 'How ought we to live with this possibility of collapse?' (2006: 9), and further perhaps, that this is a necessary question for greens before proceeding to ask 'What is to be done?' Or as Andy Dobson has noted 'How do we prepare for a 'soft landing' as opposed to a 'hard landing''? (personal communication). While Lear's book is focused on the drawing to a close of the Crow nation's traditional culture and way of life, he is aware of the wider relevance of his analysis for our contemporary age. As he puts it, 'We live at a time of a heightened

sense that civilizations are themselves vulnerable. Events around the world – terrorist attacks, violent social upheavals, and even natural catastrophes – have left us with an uncanny sense of menace. We seem to be aware of a shared vulnerability that we cannot quite name…*Perhaps if we could give a name to our shared sense of vulnerability, we could find better ways to live with it*' (Lear, 2006: 7; emphasis added). This complements my argument that we need to recognise and name this shared sense of vulnerability and develop ways of responding to it, in the sense of 'coping mechanisms'. It must be noted that Lear does not talk of ways of 'eliminating' this shared sense of vulnerability. It is important to stress here that he talks of *living with vulnerability*. And to ask the question he does is not to somehow invite or welcome collapse, or to somehow thrill in our vulnerability in some perverse way. Rather what Lear offers is a limiting analysis of how 'cultural change/shift', the common talk of 'winners and losers', compensation and socio-economic impacts from any major societal shift (or the once popular idea of 'paradigm shift'), can gloss over and underestimate the cultural profundity of the transformations that may be at stake in any transition towards sustainability, or becoming more resilient as a way of coping with unsustainability. [40] Echoing the point made above about the resistance of Enlightenment thinking to acknowledging vulnerability, Lear notes that, 'The inability to conceive of its own devastation is the blind spot of any culture' (ibid.: 83). As he suggests most cultures do not teach their young the possibility of cultural destruction, 'By and large a culture will not teach its young: "These are the ways in which you can succeed, and these are the ways in which you will fail; these are the dangers you might face, and here are opportunities; these acts are shameful, and these are worthy of honour – and, *oh yes, one more thing, this entire structure of evaluating the world might cease to make sense*"' (ibid.: 83; emphasis added).

While clearly a limiting case of vulnerability – namely complete cultural devastation – Lear's point here also underscores the importance of recognising the ineradicable contingency of existing ways of life. It invites us to accept that our contemporary ways of life have only been relatively recently established, and that regardless of these seeming to be immutable and permanent, they are rather neither, but are entirely contingent and vulnerable. However, to do this is at one and the same time both extremely difficult and absolutely necessary. Such thinking and acting are difficult because one is swimming against the tide of modernity's own self-understanding, its normal and expected patterns and valued and promoted forms of life, leaving oneself open to ridicule and being viewed as 'anti-modern'. Yet, such thinking is also necessary in that confronted with the unprecedented set of challenges facing humanity in the 21st century, to base our analyses on the assumption that there is something inevitable about our current ways of life, cultural or other values and practices is not merely unwarranted but also extremely

[40] One of the lessons from Lear's analysis are that any viable response to such a devastating existential collapse can only come from with the cultural group itself, and requires a level of creative and innovative thinking and a strong sense of empowering and empowered leadership to create new frames of meaning and cultural identity after the collapse. These themes of creativity and leadership will be developed in more detail in the final chapter (chapter 9). It is interesting and suggestive that in Lear's analysis he points out that the only way to think and act in the context of the cultural devastation of the Crow was through creativity and imagination. This took the form of dreaming, in the case of the last Crow leader, Plenty Coups.

dangerous. *Which informs our thinking better – assuming our current ways of life are inevitable, secure and permanent, or that they are contingent and transient?* Key here, I would suggest, is the necessity to separate out the values expressed or embodied in current ways of life from their particular instantiations in the present moment. Which type of thinking actually better serves the goal of preserving and protecting, and indeed advancing that which we want to preserve of our current modes of living and associated values? Distinguishing the values and principles from their particular and current practices is, I would suggest, an outcome of being able to look at the modern predicament and seeing (however dimly), or at least hoping for their instantiation in new forms in the future. Thus, mobility is the value, cars one of its practices – what forms of sustainable mobilities are possible in a climate changed and post-oil world? *In short, the issue here is that we may have to let go of the (current) practice in order to preserve and sustain the (future) value*.

An example of my interpretation of Lear as indicating for green thinking is the centrality of arguing for new forms of 'sustainable subjectivities'. In relation to the issue of mobility, Mat Paterson's critique of automobility begins from the assumption that 'to *be* modern is to *be* mobile' (Paterson, 2007: 121: emphasis in original), thus what is needed, according to him, are new mobile subjectivities. He goes on to suggest that 'the normative prognosis suggests, on the one hand, the need to attempt to detach automobility from dominant forms of subjectivity, but on the other, to accept that further 'greening' necessarily involves *governmentality* – a reshaping of what sort of people people are' (Lear, 2006: 195). This is similar to Lear's point regarding how the Crow managed to reshape themselves in the light of their traditional way of life coming to an end and adapt as best they could to their new changed existential (and material) conditions. In many respects what greens ask – through their analyses of citizenship for example (Dobson, 2003; MacGregor, 2006; Barry 2005) – is what sort of subjectivities are required for resilience and living in less unsustainable societies, to face the possibility (and prepare themselves for) potentially radical ruptures in and changes to dominant ways of living?

Charles Taylor in his review of Lear's book notes that to contemplate and live through cultural devastation, '"*is a terrible reality, and it is one that we have trouble understanding*, but it is a fate that we in 'advanced', more 'complex' societies have been imposing for many centuries on 'indigenous' or 'tribal' peoples' (Taylor, 2007; emphasis added). One of the central issues for green thinking raised by Lear's analysis lies in the space between thinking about (or planning for) the complete (or almost complete) collapse of a meaningful way of life (as it was for the Crow, many survived but their way of life was devastated), and the more partial and less devastating disappearance of significant (but potentially replaceable) elements of a once meaningful and valued way of life. Here Lear's analysis of the fate of the Crow seems to bear an uncanny resemblance to the 'hard green' analyses outlined above which predict the end of the western industrialised, (sub)urban world as we know it, and in some cases the values of western culture such as individualism, liberalism and democracy. At the same time, and anticipating the discussion in the next chapter, Lear's analysis opens up the possibility to see the disappearance of elements of a way of life as not necessarily negative. *The*

possibility of their disappearance – a deep consideration of their contingent character – opens up an evaluative space which enables (or perhaps forces us) to assess, for example, whether or not these elements of a way of life actual contribute to human flourishing. A crisis after all can be seen as an opportunity to re-evaluate and reflect on 'what really matters'. What if shopping in an out of town supermarket, accessible only by private car, is now both simply impossible (given the collapse of such centralised supermarkets and/or the ending of private car mobility) and meaningless (in that the evaluative and cultural frames of reference for such activities have disappeared)? That is, the physical attempt to 'go shopping' in the 'traditional' manner is from now on seen as a pathetic attempt at nostalgia? But what if we see that the ending of this practice, when judged within the context of other elements of a valued way of life and human flourishing, while doubtless disruptive, is not a 'disaster' but actually represents an improvement?[41]

Some of the key questions Lear's study asks include: What should a people do in such a situation – when for a number of historical contingent reasons, a traditional way of life comes to an end? How should one face the possibility that one's culture might collapse? How should we live with this vulnerability? Can we make any sense of facing up to such a challenge with 'courage'? What conception of 'courage' is required? Can Lear's account of 'radical hope', which he offers as vital to understanding how the Crow made the painful and traumatic, but ultimately successful, transition from one way of meaningful life to another, be applicable to our current situation? What can we take from this notion of 'radical hope' as part of the on-going political and cultural conversation about the necessity and desirability of the transition to slower, less globalised, low carbon and sustainable societies?

Lear defines radical hope as follows: 'What makes this hope radical is that it is directed toward a future goodness that transcends the current ability to understand what it is. Radical hope anticipates a good for which those who have the hope as yet lack the appropriate concepts with which to understand it' (2006: 103). For Taylor, hope is intimately connected to creativity and the absolute necessity of preventing what might be termed the internalisation of anxiety and acceptance of contingency from sliding into negative and destructive despair and apathy. This creativity can only come from within the culture itself, as opposed to being imposed from outside. As Taylor notes, 'the avoidance of despair [is] the indispensable condition in which a community can respond creatively to the plight of culture death. And it is only this kind of creative response from within—one that draws on the community's resources and traditions to come up with a new understanding of the ends of life—that can avoid the spiral of apathy and social decay which is the lot of *so many such societies*' (Taylor, 2007; emphasis added). It is a missed opportunity that Taylor, or indeed other reviewers of Lear's book, does not draw lessons from Lear's book for contemporary western culture. It is as if Taylor presumes the predicament outlined in Lear's analysis is only possible for non-western, non-modern cultures. For Taylor, 'The hope comes from Lear's account of Crow society: that human

[41] As pointed out in the next chapter, this is a broad strategy adopted by the Transition movement who see the ending of carbon-dependent modern lifestyles as a result of 'energy descent' as leading to better lives and improved well-being.

beings can find the resources to come back from a virtual dead end, and invent a new way of life in some creative continuity with the one that has been condemned, as the Crow did in embracing settled agriculture' (Taylor, 2007).[42] Ultimately, as Lear notes, 'radical hope' is above all characterised by the expectation that 'something good will emerge even if it outstrips [one's] present limited capacity for understanding what that good is' (Lear, 2006: 94). In some ways this is close to a statement I regularly make in presentations about peak oil and climate change, namely that '*The end of the world as we know it is not the same as the end of the world*'.[43]

If the Crow managed to make the transition from one way of life (nomadic, hunting, constantly engaging in battles with rival tribes) to another (settled, agricultural and pacified), does this not indicate it is possible for modern high-consumption, centralised and globalised societies to make a transition to another way or ways of life (low consumption, low carbon, decentralised and localised)?[44] This theme will be taken up later in the discussion of the Transition movement (chapter 3), but one of Lear's central insights, so pertinent in relation to the societal transformations heralded by peak oil and climate change, *is that only by recognising the contingency (and therefore possible mortality) of a particular way of life can the ground be cleared for the creation of new kinds of possibilities*. But more than that. As indicated above, another dimension of this sense of contingency is to recognise the conditional link between material modes and practices and the values underpinning those practices. This moves us to recognise the priority of the values over the practices, seeing the latter as disposal and contingent.

Lear observes that a group needs to find something new from within its own cultural resources, values, tradition or myths that can help it to draw new meanings from old definitions and concepts that are no longer appropriate. This requires imagining of a new way of being that will continue in a yet to be defined new form. As a matter of fact, in Lear's analysis this requires new subjectivities appropriate in the altered existential circumstances, and an acceptance to change which means 'letting go' of ingrained habits, expectations, practices or indeed modes of thinking. In such changed and changing circumstances, dogmatism and an unwillingness or inability to change and be more flexible leads, as the next chapter argues, to maladaptive thinking and decision-making and identities and practices that undermine rather than enhance human flourishing. That we can find it hard to 'let go' of established ways and embrace new modes of thinking is problematic. For this reason, as discussed in the next chapter, an 'addiction model of change' (as well as one rooted in viewing change as a grieving process) is extremely

[42] The Crow embracing settled agriculture represented a major shift from their previous nomadic, war-like and warrior-focused way of life, and while worthy of further discussion, it is a pity Taylor's analysis here adopts a standard 'modernisation' or 'westernisation' narrative, namely of 'pre-modern' and non-western cultures successfully adapting to/adopting, after a painful transition, a 'western' and 'modern' ways of life.

[43] Here it is worth noting that while cultural devastation and collapse are (limiting) possibilities, and therefore cannot be simply and lazily dismissed as not worth considering, the usual outcome of a severe societal disruption (even from 'hard greens') is not so much collapse as a decomplexification and simplification of society, as outlined in the work of Joseph Tainter (Tainter, 1988), or Homer-Dixon discussed in the next section.

[44] It also perhaps suggests that non-western ways of life and cultures may fare better in any sudden disruption to high-carbon energy, consumption based ways of life.

useful. We need an addiction model of change since we are in many complex ways 'locked into' our current high-consumption, high-carbon lifestyles (Jackson, 2009a, 2009b; Levett, 2003, 2008). We also need a model of change that is based on the grieving process, since in choosing a radically different lifestyle for ourselves, our children and communities will often involve psychologically mourning for a lost way of life. But what is it that we are being asked to 'let go'? Sharon Astyk, perhaps one of the most perceptive and pragmatic writers on the transition to a low energy, low impact lifestyle, puts it best:

> Empires and eras end. Ways of life end. But people mostly go on. And much of what is required to keep going on, to prevent the worse outcomes is simply to come to terms with the notion that *a radical change in your way of life is not the same thing as the end of the world*. We have always been wealthy and comfortable and lucky here in the west and the loss of some or all of those things seems like a disaster of unimaginable proportions. But it doesn't have to be – that's a way of thinking we can choose to discard, recognizing that those who live less comfortable lives often value them equally. The truth is that we need to find a way to find pleasure and hope and joy in a much simpler, less consumptive lifestyle. That means sacrificing some things we care about. It also means getting back some things that truly matter. (Astyk, 2008: 49; emphasis added).[45]

Thomas Homer-Dixon and Synchronous Failure

Another theorist on societal vulnerability is Thomas Homer-Dixon (Homer-Dixon, 2006), though unlike Lear is more generalist and does not focus on a single case study. Like other theorists of societal vulnerability such as Jared Diamond (Diamond, 2004) and Joseph Tainter (Tainter, 1988), his work is illustrated with and his analysis based on historical examples of previous civilisations and cultures that have collapsed in the wake

[45] It is worth recalling throughout this book, that what we are being asked to sacrifice or let go in the transition to less unsustainable ways of life are not hard-won democratic freedoms, democratic government or the achievements of our scientific and artistic culture, but rather certain problematic ways we have grown accustomed to providing particular 'comforts' and non-necessary 'wants', and a rather recent affection for shopping. This goes against the view of both 'old' hard greens like Ophuls and Hardin and 'new' hard greens outlined in the introduction, those for whom there is a necessary connection between modern freedoms and democracy and high energy, high consumption ways of life and associated infrastructure. Dobson asks an extremely pertinent question here: 'Could liberalism be born today, in the closed world we are coming to understand we inhabit?' (Dobson, 2009: 171). Although an adequate answer to this is impossible here, it does seem that there is no *necessary* connection between liberal principles of individual freedom of speech, of rights to participation in government, the separation of powers, habeas corpus etc. and material affluence and high energy levels. I do think there would be difficulty in establishing other features such as the legal and political standing of private property and the legal personhood of the corporation. Given the minimal welfare and resource distribution commitments of 'classical liberalism' – as opposed to the later evolution of one strand of liberalism into 'social liberalism' (de-Shalit, 1996, Barry 2001) – I think it is the case that we can answer Dobson's question with a (suitably qualified) yes. An equally significant additional question we could add to Dobson's one about liberalism and for which I think we would want to answer in the negative is the following: 'could capitalism be born today?'

of ecological, military, economic or energy related calamities.[46] In reference to the downfall of the Roman Empire he notes, 'Rome's story reveals that civilizations, including our own, can change catastrophically. It also suggests the dark possibility that our human projects are so evanescent that they're essentially meaningless' (Homer-Dixon, 2006: 5).

Turning his gaze to contemporary society he identifies a common source of modern vulnerability, 'Most of us in cities are now so specialized in our skills and so utterly dependent upon complex technologies that we're quickly in desperate straits when things go really wrong. When we can't drive, catch a cab, or take the subway, we have to fall back on such age-old methods as walking to meet our immediate needs' (Homer-Dixon, 2006: 11). Complexity and specialisation increase both dependence, on one another as well as technologies, and vulnerability, revealed starkly when our systems of specialisation and complexity break down. And the response is usually one of decomplexification and simplification – walking rather than driving a car. The great productive benefits of a specialised division of labour (nationally and now globally), come at a cost (ecological and social) as well as a heightened vulnerability. The displacing of communal provisioning by the market (and state), as indicated in chapters 5 and 6 on the social economy, has played an enormous role in complicating society and deskilling people at one and the same time. One of these, related to but different from the one Homer-Dixon articulates, is what we can call a 'great de-skilling' (Hopkins, 2008). Simply put many – if not most – modern citizens of advanced industrial societies do not have the basic skills of how to meet the most basic human needs such as shelter, food, warmth and clothing. Outside our advanced, industrially organised and logistically globally integrated systems of work for pay to enable people to buy or rent these basic needs, most people would not be able to meet these basic human needs. The point here, as indicated earlier, is to state that calls for decomplexifying and simplifying modern complex societies is not necessarily or automatically regressive.

How many of us could grow our own food? Build a house/shelter? Keep ourselves warm? Make our own clothes? It is perhaps one of the ironies (of which of course there are many) of modern, urban civilisation that the time spent working to buy (another) celebrity cookery book is longer than the actual time we spend cooking (and sometimes eating).[47] At the very time when less and less people are cooking meals we witness the explosion of sales of cookbooks and the ever increasing popularity of cookery TV shows. Increasingly, we watch and pay for people to cook for us, rather than doing it ourselves. Indeed, having other people cook (and clean) for us, are central features of the modern 'good life', and a constitutive element of the 'modern subject' created and sustained in

[46] Here we can point out that this focus on societal vulnerability and the contingency of human projects can also be found in classical republican theorists such as Machiavelli, who also looked to history as lessons for the present and future. The contribution of and relevance of civic republicanism to green thinking will be discussed in more detail is chapters 6 and 7.

[47] A related issue here is how while contemporary industrialised societies are increasingly technologically dependent, there are two significant aspects of this which should be noted. The first is that scientific and technological expertise and knowledge is increasingly specialised, and therefore only available to a small minority. The second is the disjuncture between our increasingly technological societies and the scientific illiteracy (even of basic scientific principles and ideas) amongst the populations of those societies.

contemporary societies. Under these circumstances in which the skills associated with these basic forms of provisioning are devalued these skills tend to atrophy and are forgotten. Why bother to learn how to cook when one can buy one's meals?

The core issue here is not that everyone has to grow their own food and cook their own meals. This is the mistake conclusion drawn by some 'self-sufficiency' and 'peak oil' advocates, especially in America it seems, who predict the coming collapse of industrial civilisation and literally see the solution in 'taking to the hills', stocking up on food, seeds and weapons, and cutting themselves off from wider society. This will be developed in more detail later, but it suffices to say here that what the upshot of Homer-Dixon's point – and one with which feminists and ecofeminists would agree – is the need to value and acknowledge skills and forms of labour – such as growing and preparing food, child-rearing – that are neglected and marginalised within the modern economy and political thinking (largely since these are not within the formally paid economy, or if they are, are lowly paid). This ecofeminist point will be developed further in chapter 6. The point to emphasise here is that in the face of external shocks and cultural threats – up to and including the extreme or limiting case that Lear outlines – the skills, forms of labour and practices needed for human resilience and flourishing, are often precisely those that have been so disvalued and marginalised, such as the gendered labour of women (Salleh, 1997; 2009; Scott Cato, 2008), 'traditional' forms of knowledge or the skills and experience of the 'social/core' economy.

Homer-Dixon outlines what he calls five inter-related 'tectonic stresses' that are accumulating underneath modern societies. These are:

1. population stress arising from differences in the population growth rates between rich and poor societies, and from the spiralling growth of megacities in poor countries;
2. energy stress – above all from the increasing scarcity of conventional oil;
3. environmental stresses from worsening damage to our land, forests and fisheries;
4. climate stresses from changes in the makeup of our atmosphere;
5. and finally, economic stress resulting from instabilities in the global economic system and ever-widening income gaps between rich and poor people (Homer-Dixon, 2006: 11)

He talks of the dangers of what he calls synchronous failure – a 'convergence of stresses' – climate change, global terrorism, water shortages, food scarcity, global economic instability all at once – and in this way he accepts some of the assumptions of the 'hard green' position. The standard response to warnings of synchronous failure is usually denial, to dismiss these negative scenarios and possible futures as simply wrongheaded and baseless 'doom and gloom' predictions. Here one can see both a link to the 'sequestration' move discussed above, and the utility of the 'addiction model' of analysis advanced by the Transition perspective discussed in the next chapter.[48] A second strategy

[48] There is also a clear link here to dismissals of the 'limits to growth' argument which have existed since the limits thesis was advanced over 40 years ago, on both the right (Simon and Kahn, 1984) and the left (Enzensberger, 1974).

is to try and manage the problems, to essentially deal with the effects of the crises without addressing the under-lying causes, because to do so would require major economic, political, institutional and cultural changes (Homer-Dixon, 2006: 19). This is perhaps most clearly seen in 'ecological modernisation' strategies which represent the attempt to 'green' current political and economic structures in order to reduce the incompatibility between continuing economic growth and capital accumulation and growing resource and energy scarcities and pollution externalities (Barry, 2003a). In short, ecological modernisation represents a techno-optimistic reformist strategy to 'green capitalism'. In contrast to either of these, and in terms I have used elsewhere, what Homer-Dixon stresses is the need to develop 'coping mechanisms' (Barry, 1999a) to enable societies, communities and individuals to 'cope with' (as opposed to eliminate or eradicate) stresses and breakdowns and the always provisional equilibria in human relationship with the nonhuman world. These coping mechanisms can be understood therefore as forms of resilience and will be outlined in the next chapter in terms of collective forms of adaptive management. For Homer-Dixon the issue facing humanity is quite simple: 'When breakdown happens, our challenge will be to keep it from becoming synchronous failure, while at the same time exploiting the opportunities it provides to promote deep reform' (Homer-Dixon, 2006: 20). And his hope is that from 'breakdown can come breakthrough'.

In a manner similar to Freud's view that the role of psychoanalysis is to transform 'neurotic misery into ordinary unhappiness', the development of resilience is to prevent, for example, a climate change disaster from becoming a full spectrum and disastrous societal crisis, and also to prevent decomplexification from sliding into societal collapse. The seeming modesty of this aim may of course offend many greens and other progressive thinkers and activists with its sense of self-accepted limits on our ability to control or negotiate a permanent 'sustainability' state. However, given the ineliminable contingency, complexity and uncertainty in our dealings with the natural world, the search for such a 'permanent solution' is not only impossible and in many respects utopian and self-indulgent, but also dangerous in being based on a erroneous perspective about human-nonhuman exchange.

The coming decades, from a sustainability perspective, may well be marked by concerns with *resilience* as an over-riding virtue and concern of individuals, communities, economies and systems of production and consumption. Resilience, as developed in the next chapter, can be seen as a prime 'sustainability virtue' in helping us cope with vulnerability and dependency. It does not promise or aim towards the impossibilities of invulnerability and complete independence nor a passive acceptance of whatever nature throws at us. As will be shown, resilience is also very much in keeping with a republican sensibility and its reading of the sustainability challenge –further developed in chapter 6. It is also telling that one of the main forms of system-level resilience Homer-Dixon stresses is a shift away from 'a monomaniacal focus on greater economic productivity, efficiency and growth' (2006: 21). This issue will be discussed further in chapters 4 and 5.

Death, Illness...Life and Flourishing

Another writer, albeit on that would not immediately be viewed as connected to such big picture debates about the vulnerability of cultures and peoples, or with green politics, is the literary critic Susan Sontag. Her particular contribution to the present discussion about vulnerability relates to her analysis of illness and death as constitutive aspects of human vulnerability. As she puts it in her discussion of cancer in *Illness as Metaphor*, 'All this lying to and by cancer patients is a measure of how much harder it has become in advanced industrial societies to come to terms with death. As death is now an offensively meaningless event, so *that disease widely considered a synonym for death is experienced as something to hide*' (Sontag, 1978: 8; emphasis added). Her starting point is that we (in the west that is) live in a culture that finds it difficult to acknowledge death and illness. Instead death and illness, following Giddens' argument earlier, are 'sequestered'.[49]

Our culture focuses on celebrating and promoting a culture of youth, image and presentation, usually associated with a sense of heightened personal experience ('I'm worth it'). To be 'modern' is to defy death, to live in world where illness has been if not eradicated, then curable, and if not curable then to be 'hidden away'. Least I be misunderstood on this point – just as with vulnerability above – here I am not seeking to 'rehabilitate' death, suffering and illness as necessarily 'good' in themselves, or that human beings should somehow not seek to minimise illness and pain and avoid death. But it is to merely point out that death, pain and illness are all part of the human condition. They are meaningful and meaning-imparting, constitutive elements of what it means to be human. Therefore there does seem to be something inherently wrong when a culture or an individual persists in avoiding according these their proper place in the human experience. Equally wrong is an attitude which regards them with such unmitigated and unqualified horror that we respond with an unhealthy denial of these features. A healthier attitude to the relationship between vulnerability and flourishing is given by Carse who from a psychological perspective, points out that:

> our flourishing is subject to the vicissitudes of fortune, to disease and disability, to the powers of nature, and to the choices and conduct of others – in short, to a world that is, in many ways, beyond our control…while our flourishing can be imperilled by our vulnerability, it also *requires us to be vulnerable* – that is, our flourishing is in crucial ways *constituted* by vulnerability. Being open, flexible, and tender, being emotionally invested in relationships or committed to undertakings, being capable of nurturing or being nurtured, of loving and growing are necessary to realizing some of the most profound 'goods' of human life. *Flourishing entails the capacity to let down our guard, relax a rigid agenda-driven orientation, take off our armour, and allow ourselves to be 'raw' – exposed in our needfulness, dependency, attachment, and passions*. (Carse, 2006: 35; emphasis added)

[49] It is perhaps more that revealing that one of the main 'mega techno-fixes' offered to tackle climate change and increase energy production through continuing to burn carbon is carbon capture and sequestration. To continue 'business as usual' we sequester.

Carse's point here is as simple as it is profound. To understand what it means to be human, to understand and orientate oneself towards realising human flourishing necessitates the integration of vulnerability and dependence as non-eliminable features of the self. It is to abandon the counterproductive search for control and mastery. It is to disabuse ourselves of the notion that asymmetrical relations of dependence (and therefore inequality) are to be avoided at all costs, and to be viewed as deviations from the 'normal' standards for human flourishing and dignity. Indeed, as Carse goes on to point out, this obsession with control can compromise our capacity to flourish, 'Our attachment to impoverished paradigms of control and self-determination in human life diminishes our potential to join with others in meaningful forms of connection essential to human forms of flourishing' (Carse, 2006: 47). This rehabilitation of vulnerability and dependency, does mean integrating pain, illness and death into our everyday consciousness and practices – that is, reversing the attempts to deliberately sequester and hide them.

Another psychological-cultural analysis which highlights the negative impacts of this 'sequestering' of death is given by Hockey. He notes that one of the salient characteristics of contemporary British culture is its inability to deal with death, stating that, '*The living are seen to have no direct relationship with death*. It stands apart, separated off by boundaries...medical, social and conceptual' (Hockey 1990: 27; emphasis added).[50] Hockey suggests that separation of the living from the dying and from death is both spatial and conceptual. For example, there is a distinct boundary maintained by the medical profession, as well as through the creation of distinct categories of people and of groups which are perceived as marginal, such as the 'elderly' and the 'diseased', which are kept separate from 'normal' society.

One example of this creation of boundaries which Hockey cites is the practice of housing elderly people in old people's homes, which places them conceptually as well as spatially, at the margins of society. Another case of 'out of sight, out of mind'. The separation of the 'old' from the rest of society is for Hockey, 'a way of controlling and distancing physical deterioration which falls outside the powerful curative scope of the medical model' (Hockey 1990: 155), with the 'medical model' here standing in for Enlightenment-based, technologically orientated imperatives of mastery over illness and aging. Yet, old age is inevitable, and despite advances in medical science, technology, and cosmetic surgery, is, like death, something we cannot 'cure'. To recall a point made earlier, this is a feature within each person. Hence perhaps the unease felt whenever there is a scandal around an old people's home, which draws public attention. Along with the expected concern with the welfare or rights of those affected, such scandals are also tinged with being an unwelcome reminder of a familiar 'other' which had been

[50] This is not of course true of all aspects of British society and is not true of all Western or European societies. There are societies, such as Ireland where there persists a different, and in many respects healthier, and more open attitude and cultural appreciation of death and dying. While it is in decline the tradition of the Irish wake still persists and the continuation of this cultural practice stands in marked contrast to the British 'haste' with which to bury the dead. And, as will be developed later in the discussion of green republicanism, an important feature of this perspective is the explicit and public recognition of the connection between the living and the dead and the yet to be born.

thought to safely sequestered away, returning like a ghost at the feast to trouble and disrupt.[51]

Age, illness and the slow decline from beauty, fitness, mental agility and so on are viewed like so much 'dead weight' that they have to be jettisoned away, least they slow down the 'normal' and desired patterns of living within modern societies. Looking after the elderly is a burden on the socially sanctioned patterns of modern life. Mobility, speed, consumption and accumulation, are all potentially compromised by such a burden. This burden is not simply the fact of having to look after the elderly (usually elderly relatives or parents) but culturally the presence of old and ill people in our lives serves as (unwelcome) reminder of our own vulnerability, death and dependence. Hockey suggests that people in Western societies stress death as the end point, at which a limit which cannot be surpassed has been reached. She sets this in contrast to societies which emphasise continuance and transcendence in relationship to death, where death symbolism is often included in rites of passage which mark and celebrate the changes in the life cycle (Hockey 1990: 39). This is an issue taken up later in the next chapter in terms of the importance of rituals of 'non-consumption', and in later chapters on green republicanism in terms of the importance of memorialisation.

Denying death as inevitable and meaning-imparting can lead to culturally and psychologically unhealthy attitudes thus to how we conceive and evaluate life.[52] As Lawlor notes, 'When we deny death's inevitable role in our lives, *it saturates our sense of being as a threat to life*' (Lawlor 1991: 364; emphasis added). To seek to sequester death (and illness) can be regarded as diminishing our evaluative frame of reference, robbing ourselves of important ethical and culturally shared standpoints. This does not mean it is easy, but neither does it rule out the important forms of solidarity and meaning that can be found in such relationships. This relationship between death, illness and flourishing has also been noted by Ivan Illich who points out that, 'In every society, the dominant idea of death determines the prevalent concept of health' (Illich 1976: 174). And as he has argued in many of his books, part of this diminishing or robbing of our cultural frames, and indeed our freedom in modern industrial society, is that professionals take over to administer what was once an integral, autonomously organised and everyday normal element of daily life. Illness and death in industrial societies becomes a matter for professional competence and expertise rather than lay knowledge in that it is medical professionals who have the right and authority to determine what constitutes health,

[51] This focus here on old age is important in not only denoting a form of vulnerability and dependency, but also a specific class of vulnerable humans. This is important for later discussions of alternative measures or progress beyond economic growth which focus on the treatment and recognition of the vulnerable as a measure of progress in a society.

[52]As Tippett puts it, "By attempting to create boundaries between death and life and distance ourselves from processes of decay, I feel that we cut ourselves off from process of life" (Tippett, nd). It is also interesting to note that Huxley's *Brave New World* contains a prescient discussion of this issue in the final exchange between the Director and John the Savage about the value of a life of 'natural pain' over the anesthetised, illness free existence in the technological dystopia, or how in a similar dystopian novel (and film) *Solyent Green*, death is hidden (and also industrially managed). The latter also brilliantly (if disturbingly) demonstrates the connection between death and life in that the basic foodstuff of society 'solyent green' is the collected and condensed proteins of the dead.

illness and who have control over the 'administration' of death. For Illich there is 'irreparable' cultural damage, 'when medically sponsored behaviour and delusions restrict the vital autonomy of people by undermining their competence in growing up, caring for each other, and aging, or when medical intervention cripples personal responses to pain, disability, impairment, anguish and death' (Illich, 1976: 271). He goes on to suggest that, 'The well being of men and women increases with their ability to assume personal responsibility for pain, impairment, and in their attitude to death' (ibid: 87). Part of his argument, supporting that of Lawlor, is a rather simple and uncomplicated one, but nonetheless profound for that. Namely, that in making death and illness professional matters, something outside the normal routines, competencies, frames of reference and evaluation of everyday life, we have not only failed to effectively 'sequester' them, but in fact succeed in making them loom much larger and in a distorted fashion than warranted.

Our attitudes to death can also be found to be connected to one aspect of the phobia around death – namely the 'natural' or ecological connection between death, decomposition, fertility and (re)birth. For Brennan this implies that, 'In general, after death, an organism re-enters the flow of life, generating other life through its own decomposition' (Brennan, 2000: 1). This point in relation to death and decomposition has also been perceptively discussed by Wendell Berry. He points out that to be modern means we have a linear and non-cyclical relationship to our waste products. Our waste is removed and put out of sight and mind; it is a linear flow from initial purchase, consumption to waste product – our 'take, make and throw away' consumer culture. Sewage is flushed away and disappears, it is usually not conceived of as a source of fertility, growth and life, but rather of pollution and contamination (Sargisson, 2000), something 'negative' to be sequestered and hidden rather than viewed as necessary, normal, natural and potentially useful.

This separation between people and decomposition can have very harmful consequences and suggests that the divisions we create between rotting and fertility have sexual and ecological implications. For Wendell Berry, 'It is apparently the nature of division sooner or later to destroy what is divided; the principle of durability is unity. The divisions flowing from the division of body and soil are first sexual and then ecological' (Berry 1991: 36). Put simply, our dominant attitude to death is to view it as 'pollution' – something wholly negative – rather than as 'fertility' – in the sense of being meaningful and constitutive of human life and not something alien to a healthy human condition or part of a flourishing human life. In a similar manner, 'soil', synonymous with the earth, the ground, the land which is the source of our food, becomes culturally associated with negative connotations such as 'soiled' as in dirty, defiled and unclean. It is no co-incidence that the Latin term for pride, *superbia* is a translation of the Greek *huperbios* from where we get 'hubris' – meaning 'above life' (with affinities to the argument above about 'post-natural' or 'post-nature' within modernity). Against this we have *humilitas*

(humility) which suggests a connection with and closeness or affinity to *humus* i.e. the ground or soil (van Wensveen, 2000: 98).[53]

This separation from death is structurally similar to our separation from non-human life, the source of the products we consume (food, clothes, energy) and the labour and practices of the reproductive sphere. This is particularly the case with food, which is a direct predation on life and the ways in which we – again in the west – conceptually and physically seek to separate, hide, and sequester the death and unpaid labour that provide us with nourishment, support and comfort. Women's reproductive work goes unpaid, unknown and unacknowledged, while animal flesh is named in a way which distances or occludes its origins – 'sirloin', 'pork', 'rump' etc. And abattoirs do not have glass walls.

The denial of death, illness and vulnerability denies a horizon of reflection from which to ascertain our decisions, judge our actions and our life, and those of others and be seen as the basis of building and sustaining relationships with others.[54] In the context of a culture of constant and compulsory consumption, of accumulation, of endless youth, enforced mobility, mandatory speed, such a perspective is never more needed in equal measure as it is ruthlessly eroded and denigrated and conveniently sequestered into our busy schedules as a couple of hours off work to attend the occasional funeral. As Sontag notes, 'For those who live neither with religious consolations about death nor with a sense of death (or of anything else) as natural, death is the obscene mystery, the ultimate affront, *the thing than cannot be controlled. It can only be denied*' (Sontag, 1978: 55; emphasis added). And a vulnerability denied cannot be understood. Attempts therefore to sequester, to occlude and hide vulnerability are always inadequate, since what we need are narratives to help us understand and make sense of death and illness as 'normal' and 'natural', not as exceptional states or horrors to be denied. [55]

For us moderns it is not *death* but *life* that has become the great mystery (Jonas, 1966). In the context of a stress on 'life before death' this is all the more acutely felt, where the meaning-imparting dimensions of death are missing in helping us render life meaningful. That is one cannot possibility have a full account of life and its meaning, without having an account of death and illness. And as suggested in the previous chapter in relation to the underlying principles of a politics of 'actually existing unsustainability', the life-

[53] van Wensveen also points out that 'earthiness' – feeling at home with the earth, being 'grounded', and comfortable with the contingency, messiness and imperfection of life – is a quintessential 'ecological virtue' (2000: 34).

[54] Simone Weil springs to mind here as someone who sought to rehabilitate and elevate mutually recognised vulnerability and the imperative to compassion as a basis for healthy human relationships. Weil speaks of compassionate attention when she refers to the 'vulnerability of precious things', which she regards as 'beautiful because vulnerability is a mark of existence' (Weil, 2002: 108). As Biles notes, 'Opening her eyes onto the wounds of her fellow humans, Weil understood that it was precisely their vulnerability which made them precious, and that only an impassioned will to vulnerability could provide an adequate response to what she saw, even to the point of blindness' (2003: 34).

[55] Much like the uncontrollable elements of our relationship to the non-human world which can be sequestered or rendered opaque through modern systems of production, distribution and consumption or denied (as in the policing of the boundaries between 'human' and 'animal' we find in moral and cultural discourse).

affirming goals of green politics are enhanced when it is guided towards progressively identifying and removing those features which diminish flourishing. But this does not mean continuing the project to 'eliminate' death and suffering (which is impossible and results in multiple negative consequences), even as we seek to minimise them.

As Campbell has noted, 'Jonas shows that just as death remains inexplicable and mythic in the panvitalist mindset, life has remained essentially inexplicable according to the modern scientific one' (Campbell, 2011: 148-9). A related Freudian insight that Campbell perceptively highlights is that 'Eros' and 'Thanatos' (life and death) are inextricably intertwined. The life and death imperatives are not and cannot be separated, meaning that it is impossible to simply seek to 'supplant' Thanatos with Eros. As he notes, 'Eros, the fundamental urge of self-preservation, appears to be *hopelessly intertwined* with Thanatos, the death instinct. It is an unhappy truth that the idea of an undifferentiated, purely positive 'life force' is a myth' (ibid.: 155; emphasis added). Campbell goes on to suggest that, 'the upshot of the historical intertwinement of life and death is *guilt*. The attainment of the security of advanced civilization, built on the channeling of aggressive energy pursuant to the domination of nature, has exacted a price in terms of renunciation of the erotic instincts, not only on the non-human nature we have dominated, but on the human organism itself' (ibid.: 156; emphasis in original).

As a 'collapsed Catholic' myself, I am only too familiar with and can accept the point here about guilt. From this Freudian/critical theory perspective, guilt can be viewed as a manifestation or effect of an *unhealthy* corralling of the life-instincts which achieves a certain degree of material comfort and control over one's life and surroundings but at the cost of denying and suppressing non-comfort and non-control, non-economic related life-affirming energies, desires and impulses. A worker, qua worker, cannot be a lover....or parent. Under modern conditions an individual must not only 'schedule' and 'compartmentalise' these identities and associated desires and impulses, but rank them as lower in order of priorities. *To put the point bluntly, our primary identity under capitalism is not as parents, lovers or citizens...but workers and consumers (investors and entrepreneurs)*. It is for this reason, as pointed out in chapter 4, that the dominance and influence of the imperative of economic growth, is criticised by greens as inevitably negating, downplaying and potentially corrupting other 'non-economic growth related' identities (principally those not related to formal economic production and consumption). These are the interests and impulses associated with being parents, lovers, citizens, game-players, being engaged in productive but 'non-economic activity' and so on. It seems to me, both as a green political theorist and activist, that it is the defence of these (life-affirming) identities and interests that greens are concerned with – echoing of course Habermas' concern with defending the 'lifeworld' from the potentially corrosive instrumental rationality of the 'system' (Habermas, 1981, Barry, 2007a).

One of the upshots of this line of thinking is that (counter-intuitively) the denial and attempts at sequestering death, illness and pain in modernity actually diminishes the erotic impulses, those imperatives, and associated practices and identities, which affirm

and celebrate life.[56] Or rather, the latter become corrupted or expressed in unhealthy (or diminished) forms. Here mass and mandatory consumerism predicated as it is on creating insecurity and scarcity exists within a generalised context of security and plenty within modernity (Xenos, 2010), represents a obviously example of the unhealthy expression of life impulses. Consumerism offers a simulacrum of health, youth and vitality (for a price), while ruthlessly banishing any scintilla of the presence of death, aging, vulnerability and illness (and any possibility of non-commoditised forms of human flourishing). This corruption of life-affirming Eros can be argued to be due, following critical theory here, to the corralling of these life forces into economic production (and the domination of nature and the exploitation of other humans, including women and their unpaid and unrecognised reproductive labour). It is also the organised cultural attempts to deny Thanatos that we must also attend to as causes of this corruption.

Perhaps Giddens' idea of sequestration (along with other strategies of concealment, for example in relation to the killing of animals for meat) can be seen as a way to (inadequately) deal with this existential guilt. As Marcuse puts it, drawing on Freud's insights, 'Civilization plunges into a destructive dialectic: the perpetual restrictions on Eros ultimately weaken the life instincts and this strengthen and release the very forces against which they were called up – those of destruction' (Marcuse, 1987: 44). For critical theorists such as Adorno, anticipating later green thinkers, an important aspect of analysing the nature and extent of our dysfunctional and problematic relation to nature, is to acknowledge and recognise the real suffering of and pain within the natural and human world, particularly the suffering caused by human intentional actions.[57] Suffering is therefore inseparable from accepting our own vulnerability and that of others reciprocally to our action and inaction, care or callousness. As Adorno put it 'What would happiness be that is not measured by the immeasurable grief at what is? *For the world is deeply ailing*' (Adorno, 1974: 200; emphasis added). This recognition of the *tragic* nature of our predicament is something that greens – and non-greens such as John Gray (Gray, 1995, 1999, 2002, 2009) – have been raising for decades, bringing to consciousness the suffering which is hidden and sequestered in modern society in our dealings with the non-human world. This can be done through the standard trope of listing the species lost or threatened with extinction; the degradation of the soils by chemicalised industrial agriculture; to the pain and suffering of animals in modern factory farming; the number of people who needlessly suffer and die or have blighted lives due to malnutrition or lack of basic necessities and so on. Sontag concludes her study by connecting these attempts

[56] It is partly for this reason that I argue in favour of rituals and public holidays in the next chapter – as designated times outside the rhythms and demands of 'economic growth' – many of which have their origins and essence as explicitly life-affirming celebrations (as well as, following Mikhail Bahtkin in his analysis of carnival and the grotesque), opportunities to challenge authority and the established social order). There are also, or so I will seek to argue, republican reasons to support rituals and frequent public celebrations and holidays.

[57] It also needs emphasising that it is ecofeminists that have been to the forefront in stressing the suffering of the non-human world. Early ecofeminists stressed the need *to heal the wounds* inflicted on the earth by male-dominated industrial practices (Plant, 1989), while direct action ecofeminist activists such as Joanna Macy speak of the need to acknowledge and get in touch with the suffering of the earth and our own corporeality as a necessary part of environmental activism and effective mobilisation (Macy, 1995).

to deny or underplay death and consumerism, 'Our views about cancer, and the metaphors we have imposed on it, are so much a vehicle for the large insufficiencies of this culture: *for our shallow attitude towards death*, for our anxieties about feeling, for our reckless improvident responses to our real 'problems of growth', for our inability to construct an advanced industrial society that properly regulates consumption' (Sontag, 1978: 87; emphasis added).

In terms of what one might call the existential aspect of vulnerability, it might be said that a fully human life cannot be contemplated without vulnerability viewed as an intrinsic part of a quintessentially human life – as something that offers a much needed chance of self-reflection – rather than viewing vulnerability as something terrible to be eradicated or hidden away. And while we try to diminish the negative effects of certain aspects of vulnerability, the attempt to render ourselves invulnerable or to construct compelling and comforting myths which attach 'progress' to increased invulnerability, is itself a source of danger and a stripping away of sources of human well-being and to deny a vital aspect of the human condition. An invulnerable human is not a human being but a fiction or a god.

Conclusion

This chapter's interest in vulnerability and how by examining vulnerability one is inexorably led to reflections on that which has been repressed, sublated, sequestered (to use Giddens' term), or hidden in the 'shadow side' of life (to use Sontag's term) – including pain, loss, suffering and ultimately death – aims to demonstrate that honestly reflecting on these themes can enhance the essential life- affirming and life-protecting goals of green political thinking and acting.[58] The *erotic* impulse of green politics (erotic in the life-affirming sense used by Freud and Marcuse) cannot be fully explicated or articulated without seeing it in relation to *thanatos*. In other words the ultimate life-affirming orientation of green politics (focusing on the flourishing of human and non-human life) finds its fullest expression in integrating an analysis of the 'shadow side' of life and flourishing which a systematic exploration of vulnerability can bring.[59]

After all, it is often only by recognising the precariousness of something that one comes to a full appreciation of its preciousness. Recognising the vulnerability of life in general or our particular way of life should heighten our valuation of it, and the care with which we ought to give to it, and the gratitude which should make this acknowledgement. Accepting the vulnerability of life through recognising death, pain and illness as normal parts of life, does not diminish but rather increases the enjoyment of life. The desire for invulnerability and a distancing from the shadow side of life replaces care with

[58] A good account of the life-affirming character of green politics can be found in what Joanna Macy calls its focus on protecting and enhancing 'the life-sustaining society' (Macy, 1991) or Alastair McIntosh's focus on 'reclaiming that which gives life' (McIntosh, 2008: 210) .

[59] McIntosh, in a chapter entitled 'Colonised by Death: The Consumer Psychology of Climate Change', makes a connection between consumerism and an unhealthy, parasitic form of anti-life, in a manner not dissimilar to McMurtry's 'cancerous' analysis of capitalism. As he puts it, consumerism 'Perverts all that is most sacred in humanity. That's the meaning of 'vice'. It grips and squeezes out the lifeblood' (McIntosh, 2008: 179).

carelessness, and an unwarranted and false notion that things will always and should always be thus. In short, lacking the perspective of the precariousness of life means we find it difficult to see life as a gift for which we should be consciously and knowingly grateful. A more dramatic sense of gratitude can be found in Val Plumwood's reflection on her life after surviving a near death experience of being attacked by a crocodile. For her, 'For the first year, the experience of existence as an unexpected blessing cast a golden glow over my life, despite the injuries and the pain. The glow has slowly faded, but some of that new gratitude for life endures, even if I remain unsure whom I should thank' (Plumwood, 1995: 30).[60] Yet, Plumwood's exceptional case notwithstanding, where in the modern worldview is there room for and an acceptance of the normality of gratitude?

Greens often of suggest that the true or real measure of progress is measured by how the most vulnerable are looked after or fare, not conventional measures of success such as size of GDP/GNP or the size of a society's military forces. Rather genuine progress should be measured against how a society looks after the old, young, sick, non-human. In this began my own interest in vulnerability (Barry, 2002; 2009a). The putative unsettling as well as critical potentials of an analysis of vulnerability for interrogating conventional modes of political and economic thinking are enough to warrant its serious study. Can vulnerability be viewed as a horizon of interpretation that modern forms of thinking have consistently sought to downgrade, hide and 'defeat', or at least 'sequester'? Thus it stands in need of recovery as a context for understanding actually existing unsustainability and actually existing injustice. It is the claim here that recovering vulnerability as a sequestered element of the human condition to be valued is a necessary part in the creation of more sustainable modes of thinking and acting.

Vulnerability also connects to the long-standing and foundational green discourse about limits – whether it is the enduring green *lemotif* of 'limits to growth' (Meadows et al, 1972), or the universal endorsement of a precautionary approach to technological innovation or macro-level policy decisions on the basis of the limits to human knowledge and predictive capacities. Vulnerability is also, as Nussbaum (2001) and others[61] – particularly ecofeminists – have indicated, a key part in motivating or shaping another common green ethical discourse – namely care and compassion for human and non-human others and a linked concern for the capacities, institutions and resources needed by others (human and nonhuman) for flourishing. Recognising and accepting our vulnerability also acts, or can act, as an antidote to an 'arrogant humanism' (Ehrenfeld, 1978) and sense of superiority over and invulnerability to the non-human world.

[60] According to Plumwood our conventional conception of human identity, 'positions humans outside and above the food chain, not as part of the feast in a chain of reciprocity but as external manipulators and masters of it: *Animals can be our food, but we can never be their food*' (Plumwood, 1995: 31; emphasis added). Plumwood's suggestion here of a conception of the human as food, as prey, troubles the conventional view of humanity as 'non-food' and also re-inserts humanity back into the natural order, but not in a romantic or harmonious sense but in a much harsher and ecologically real sense. The troubling dimension of Plumwood's reflections also have to do with the sense of humans being food/prey for other animals harks back to 'hunter-gatherer' stages of human evolution and therefore senses of what it means to be human in this case are regressive, pre-modern, backward looking etc.

[61] See Tessman (2005).

Whether it is the dramatic and shocking realisation that humans are 'food' and prey to some non-humans (as in ecofeminist Val Plumwood's account of her survival of a crocodile attack in the Australian outback (Plumwood, 2000)) or that like other corporeal and finite creatures we have limits (including limits to our endeavours or systems), or that human creations are fragile and contingent creations (as outlined by the insights of civic republicanism discussed later), and therefore are in constant need of care and attention.

However, we also need to ask what are the dangers of 'vulnerability thinking and acting'? Is it, as some would suggest, an invitation for conservative and reactionary thinking, a 'slippery slope' leading to a risk-averse, frightened, anxiety-ridden and essentially regressive (and perhaps even reactionary) disposition (Furedi, 2005)? Can we evoke talk of the essential vulnerability of humanity without the conservative impulse to justify authoritarian forms of disciplining to protect us from attempts to 'master' and 'control' nature – the 'Promethean conceit' of our technological domination of the planet (Dryzek, 2005), much criticised by both greens, and to less extent some conservatives? If we are vulnerable to the myth of mastering nature, then how do we guard against this without lapsing into conservative warnings against attempting to make progressive or radical change? While mindful of this possibility, we need to dissociate notions of progress and regress from any necessary or automatic connection with ideas of simplification or complexification, growth and post-growth, and to focus our attention on identifying thresholds beyond which growth (or post-growth) undermine rather than enhance human flourishing, or support rather than remove the conditions of actually existing unsustainability.

Vulnerability, as this chapter has hopefully suggested, stands as a critique of, or a critical standpoint from which to assess the dominant conception of 'autonomy', 'individuality' and the 'good life' within modernity. The examination of vulnerability is done with critical intent. A central element of this is to highlight that only a culture which 'sequesters' or 'denies' vulnerability can promote type of selfhoods and identities we routinely see as desirable or normal, but which however are deeply problematic and (adopting and signalling a broadly neo-Aristotelian conception of human flourishing), I would suggest, are ultimately damaging to ourselves as human beings (given the types of beings we are). Modern conceptions of the self promote ultimately damaging myths of 'autonomy' and freedom understood as denoting greater and greater independence of the individual from others and society, culturally powerful narratives of 'eternal youth' and an abhorrence of aging. Thus vulnerability is invoked partly as a destabilising concept, challenging the normative ordering of dominant modes of thinking and acting, but also as rehabilitating or re-affirming both a constitutive aspect of what it means to be human, and also a valuable mode of thinking or position from which to judge. Not least, one of the benefits of a focus on vulnerability as a pervasive and enduring feature of human life and what it means to be human, is to bring into sharper relief the fragility of both human life and the goods (especially relationships) needed to sustain and constitute a flourishing human life. As Furrow suggests, 'vulnerability to loss is crucial to the development of awareness of what has value' (2005: 100). It is from this sense of awareness of vulnerability that we find the source of such commonplace sentiments such as only

realising the value or significance of something or someone at the point where it or s/he or they are in danger of being 'lost' in some form.

Equally the related concept of dependence is a destabilising and troubling concept within the dominant western worldview, for it foregrounds something that had been sequestered in the modern narrative and social order, but yet is an ineliminable and constitutive aspect of what it means to be human. Astyk notes the inevitability of dependence but suggests ways of coping with it that are very much in keeping with green ideals and the position outlined in this chapter. As she puts it, 'None of us like the idea of dependency, but we will all be dependent no matter what. Someday, unable to work, we will either be dependent on a collection of machines, the industrial economy and professional people doing a lousy job for minimum wage, or we will be dependent upon the children we loved and raised and the grandchildren we adore. Which is better? I know which one I would choose' (Astyk, 2008: 118). The necessity of coping with vulnerability and dependence – since they are both ineliminable and inevitable – as well as consciously and collectively planning to minimise its negative effects, will be developed in the next chapter, when we turn our attention to one important way of coping with vulnerability – namely by developing resilience.

Chapter 3

Resilience, Transition and Creative Adaptability

'That the way down can be prosperous is the exciting viewpoint whose time has come. Descent is a new frontier to approach with zeal' (Odum and Odum, 2001:4)

Introduction

In this chapter we continue the analysis of vulnerability outlined in the previous chapter, but focus on way/s to respond and 'cope with' vulnerability. I begin my analysis by noting that the appropriate response to vulnerability is not invulnerability, which would be impossible, and indeed undesirable. *Impossible* because given the types of creatures humans are living in the types of environments and contexts (natural, human made and hybrid) the live in, it is inconceivable to think of any human being invulnerable to the contingencies and vicissitudes of life as a human on this planet. It is *undesirable* to attempt invulnerability, following on from some of the points made in the previous chapter, given the centrality of vulnerability to what it means to be human. That is an invulnerable human would not be human at all, but a supernatural being or God. It is also normatively undesirable for the reason that seeking to sequester vulnerabilities and dependencies, as the last chapter demonstrated, is never effective and leads to potentially false and unhealthy attitudes to death and illness, and conceptions of human flourishing.

So what then is the appropriate response to vulnerability? I canvass one possible candidate in this chapter; namely resilience. An orientating question for this chapter is the following: what does resilience look like in the face of the multiple levels and types of vulnerability outlined in the previous chapter and the various crises outlined by green politics? Another reason for focusing on resilience is that its salience and popularity have increased over the last number of years – sometimes as a replacement for 'sustainability', sometimes as a particular understanding of sustainability (Adger, 2003). Its prominence in both academic and policy literature – especially, but not exclusively in relation to adaptation to climate change (and peak oil/energy security concerns) – is striking. At the same time, the concept of resilience and adaptation can be found to figure prominently in a grassroots movement which has grown rapidly in the last number of years. This is the Transition Towns' movement (or Transition movement) which has recently emerged in the UK, Ireland and elsewhere (Hopkins, 2008a; 2010; Quilley and Barry, 2008; Barry 2010). Academic, policy and Transition movement approaches to resilience all explore 'adaptability', and this chapter will seek to integrate the three sources (though with an emphasis on the theory and practice of the Transition movement) in outlining the dimensions of 'complex adaptive management'. This analysis of resilience and adaptation also anticipates and builds some of the arguments which follow in the chapters

on green political economy (chapters 4, 5 and 6) and green republicanism (chapters 7 and 8).

In this chapter I offer a somewhat uncritical account of Transition and this must be explained and defended. While like many other green thinkers and activists I see much promise in this new initiative, I do not think it is a panacea for addressing actually existing unsustainability. However, nor do the main proponents of the Transition movement perspective. There is a large gap between what transition ideally is about and what people write about Transition movement, and what happens on the ground, as I know only too well as a member of this movement. I have offered a more critical analysis of it elsewhere (Barry and Quilley, 2009). There is also a growing literature critically analysing the movements ideas, strategies and practices and I would direct the reader there for a less uncritical account (Cato and Hillier, 2010; North, 2010; Read, 2008; Chatterton and Cutler, 2008). In other words, I am here not offering either a sociological analysis of the Transition movement, nor making a contribution to debates critically analysing it.

Rather, for the purposes of this chapter and the larger argument I make in the book, I am primarily interested in the ideas and theory behind Transition. In a way which will be (rightly perhaps) criticised by others, I am viewing the Transition movement as a form of 'prefigurative green politics', a form of green political theorising which draws on ideas from outside its usual 'normative hinterland'. Here, as will be seen in the chapter, I am particularly interested in the movement's integration of the insights of permaculture, peak oil and concepts such as 'resilience' and complex adaptive management into its analysis and prescription. In particular, concepts such as 'slack', 'in-built redundancy' and how the Transition movement foregrounds creativity (that goes beyond mere intellectual approaches to creativity and includes emotional and affective responses) are also of interest to me and indicate, as I suggest, important avenues for green political theory to explore. I also highlight and analyse the cultural and psychological dimensions of the Transition movement's analysis and its reaffirmation of the importance of a localist, place-specificity as both a core element of a less unsustainable community, and a major aspect of any transition away from actually existing unsustainability.

Resilience, Permaculture and Sustainability

The concept of resilience can find its roots in a number of bodies of knonwledge. In engineering it denotes the ability of a substance or entity to return to its original state. Within ecological science it describes the capacity of an ecosystem to cope with an external shock, such as a forest fire or earthquake. Resilience also shares with the analysis of vulnerability of being associated with disaster studies in relation to the capacity of societies or communities to withstand and recover from human or natural hazards (Cutter, 2006). It can also be found in the psychological literature (Masten, Best & Garmezy 1990). Psychological research suggests that that dealing with danger and risk, and therefore being exposed to and bouncing back or learning from adversity is

usually good for us.[62] This conception of resilience fits with the underlying conception of vulnerability – namely that just as we cannot eliminate vulnerability, resilience must be the capacity to withstand and recover from 'wounding' and forms of 'harm' we cannot eliminate.

Therefore resilience as a capacity has to be a necessary part of what it means to be a healthy human and a healthy human community. To be resilient means, at the most basic level, to live, to be able to continue living in the face of often negative changes in circumstances and those *inevitable* and often unpredictable challenges all human beings and all human societies face. Chip Ward defines resilience thus 'A resilient system is adaptable and diverse. *It has some redundancy built in*. A resilient perspective acknowledges that change is constant and prediction difficult in a world that is complex and dynamic' (Ward, 2007: 5; emphasis added). A similar articulation is advanced by Folke et al, 'In contrast to an efficiency-driven, command-and-control approach, management that *accepts uncertainty* and seeks to build resilience can sustain social-ecological systems, especially during periods of transformation following disturbance' (Folke et al, 2002: 3; emphasis added). The notions of 'built in redundancy' or 'slack' and the acceptance of uncertainty are key features of resilience in relation to socio-ecological management. They also resonate with some key civic republican themes around contingency, action, uncertainty, *virtú* and *fortuna* as articulated by Machiavelli and others.

The approach to resilience or the body of knowledge and experience from which the analysis develops – namely permaculture and the Transition movement, though with some discussion of how the climate change adaptation literature also uses it – means that resilience as understood here is different from how others have conceptualised it. For example, one of the most eminent theorists of risk Aaron Wildavsky has suggested that:

> *Resilience, therefore, requires the accumulation of large amounts of generalizable resources—such as organizational capacity, knowledge, wealth, energy, and communication*—that can be used to craft solutions to problems that the people involved did not know would occur. Thus, a strategy of resilience requires *much less predictive capacity but much more growth*, not only in wealth, but also in knowledge. Hence it is not surprising that systems such as capitalism, based on incessant and decentralized trial and error, accumulate the most

[62] A recent report from the World Health Organisation (Friedli, 2009) suggests a positive link between socio-economic inequality, mental illness and compromised psychological resilience. It suggests that: 'Inequalities in the distribution of economic and social resources explain health and other outcomes in the vast majority of studies. There is overwhelming evidence that inequality is a key cause of stress and also exacerbates the stress of coping with material deprivation. The adverse impact of stress is greater in societies where greater inequalities exist' (Friedli, 2009: 2). This empirical connection between inequality, injustice and compromised resilience or created vulnerability, complements the work of Cutter who also makes the same connections from the perspective of cultural geography (Cutter, 2006) and Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) who also show the psychological impacts of inequality expressed and experienced in terms of shame for example. The issue of inequality (and economic growth) will be taken up in the next two chapters.

> resources. Strong evidence from around the world demonstrates that such societies are richer and produce healthier people and a more vibrant natural environment. (Wildavsky and Wildavsky, 2005; emphasis added).

Now, as will rather quickly become clear, there a many differences between his understanding of resilience and the conditions he suggests that are required to create it at the social level. For example, the analysis presented here takes issue with his stress on growth and the accumulation of wealth (but not knowledge) as functional for resilience. Indeed, the counter-argument is presented, namely that orthodox economic growth undermines resilience and creates socio-ecological instability. Both the permaculture and Transition perspectives promote the view that energy descent, not greater energy use are central to a resilient society. And finally, while developed in more detail in the following three chapters, this chapter questions both the claim that capitalism is a more resilient system and that it has produced healthier people and a 'vibrant natural environment'.

Permaculture offers an extremely fruitful knowledge and practice-based for the design of resilient and sustainable societies, not least in that it follows natural design principles (Holmgren, 2008; Mollison, 2004). However it differs significantly from other depolitical, or non-transformative approaches that also follow natural principles such as 'natural capitalism' (Hawken, Lovins and Lovins, 1999) and 'cradle to cradle' (McDonough and Braungart, 2002). Permaculture thinking is also a holistic and systems-based approach to understanding and designing human-nature relations. Rob Hopkins in his comparison of 'Conventional Environmentalism' and 'The Transition Approach' contrasts 'sustainable development' with 'resilience/relocalisation' (Hopkins, 2008a: 135) and while he does admit he sets up a straw person in the description of 'conventional environmentalism', it is interesting that he, and others, are consciously seeking to distinguish the politics and approach of sustainable development from that of the Transition movement. David Holmgren, one of the founders of permaculture thinking and originator of the concept of 'energy descent', contends, like Hopkins, that, 'Mainstream approaches to sustainability tend to assume *stability if not expansion* in the energy flows available to humanity even if there are major transitions in the nature of the energy sources. Consequently, continuity of many of the structures underpinning current social and economic systems is assumed' (Holmgren, 2008: emphasis added). This issue of energy and its absolutely central and determining role in a post-carbon transition away from unsustainability will be developed in this chapter and later. This feature of a permaculture understanding of resilience, namely not assuming system stability (whether that system be ecological, resource based or socio-economic or political), is an extremely valuable insight given the context of issues and debate around inevitable transitions away from oil, and the likelihood of possible collapse.

Holmgren's book *Permaculture: Principles and Pathways beyond Sustainability* draws on the work of Howard Odum, co-author of *A Prosperous Way Down* (Odum and Odum, 2001), and both books and authors present 'energy descent' as the driving force of future human development. This also forms the basis for the Transition view that a sustainable/resilient future relies on *less not more or the same* energy consumption patterns of today. It is fair, I think, that by 'sustainable development', Hopkins and

Holmgren are really referring to something like 'ecological modernisation' (Barry, 2005) or green version of 'business as usual'. That is, a conception of 'sustainable development' based on combining environmental protection with continuing orthodox economic growth and competiveness, de-coupling energy from growth and the creation of a 'cleantech' green economy and 'sustainable wealth creation' (Mayoh, 2009) or 'natural capitalism' (Hawken et al, 1999) . However, all these definitional debates may simply be an issue of semantics and/or emphasis since sustainability, sustainable development, and resilience all inter-relate and overlap. At one level one could see resilience and the refusal to be branded as 'sustainability' as a completely rational response to the self-evident dangers of cooption and 'domestication' that can be observed with the mainstreaming of 'sustainable development' and green politics (Barry, 2001).

One way perhaps of reconciling sustainability and permaculture is to see permaculture as locally based and robustly contextualised implementations of sustainability, based on the notion that there is no 'one size fits all' model of sustainability. Permaculture, though rightly wary of more mainstream, reformist and 'business as usual' accounts of sustainability can be viewed as a particular localised, and resilience-based conceptualisation of sustainable living and the creation of 'sustainable communities'. It is significant that this term is increasingly viewed, in the UK at least, as part of the mainstream policy response to the transition to a low carbon, sustainable future (HMSO, 2007). It is however contested by alternative conceptions of what 'sustainable communities' are or could be, such as those articulated within the Transition movement, which is the focus of this chapter.

While I would argue there is obvious connection and complementarity between resilience and sustainable development (and one could make the argument that 'resilience' draws attention to specific dimensions of sustainability – i.e. resilience as a sub-set of sustainability in some respects), I do not think it particularly fruitful to embark on a detailed exploration of whether 'resilience' is essentially the same as 'sustainability'. I take it that they are closely related, but am more interested in resilience as, in part, a 're-branding' or 'up-grading' of sustainability, and an re-focusing on the limits to growth perspective. And one can understand why this move would be motivated by a desire to dissociate what Transition initiatives and others that use resilience, from the worn out, co-opted and compromised connotations of orthodox 'sustainable development'. Perhaps as Molly Cato has helpfully noted, 'Sustainability is a feature of the system; resilience is the guiding design principle; permaculture is the design manual' (personal correspondence).

Resilience does however have a tougher feel and character to it, and as viewed here represents both a critical analysis of and stands in opposition to actually existing unsustainability. There are interpretations of resilience that overlap with some key aspects of the 'hard green' analyses and diagnoses. Resilience can be used to frame the ecological crisis facing humanity as a recognition of the failure of sustainability and sustainable development and/or that it is 'too late' for sustainability. This is the position one finds for example in authors such as Lovelock and Korowicz. For them, humanity has already passed a tipping point and we are inexorably on a downward trajectory in

terms of energy use, social complexity, orthodox economic growth and population growth etc. Here resilience comes close to 'survialism', how we save as much as we can of civilisation and as many people as we can, rather than about shifting societies towards 'sustainable' trajectories though changes in technology, the economy and governance.

Perhaps the most significant difference between sustainable development/sustainability and hard-green resilience, is on the issue of societal collapse and crisis. Whereas sustainable development does see and responds to a variety of inter-connected socio-ecological *problems*, some influential accounts of resilience take as given both the *inevitability* and scale of what could be called a 'full-spectrum' civilisational *crisis*. Problems can be (potentially) solved (hence the dominant techno-centric problem-solution approach one finds within mainstream sustainable development discourse), whereas an inevitable crisis can only be 'coped with' (assuming one is prepared), but not 'solved'. Going over the rapids when one is past the point of no return is considerably different that choosing a different branch of the river which avoids the rapids when one is upstream. Such 'hard-green' accounts of resilience seem to share a focus on backcasting from some predicted (near) future '*end-state'* which cannot be avoided, and making prescriptions about how best to plan for minimising the impact of the transition to this state.[63]

However, there are other (more technical and *'means-orientated'* in some respects) understandings of resilience which do allow one to talk of a 'resilience approach' to sustainability. A good instance of their essential interconnection and complementarity is in the following argument from Folke et al, 'The resilience perspective shifts policies from those that aspire to control change in systems assumed to be stable, to managing the capacity of social–ecological systems to cope with, adapt to, and shape change. *It is argued that managing for resilience enhances the likelihood of sustaining desirable pathways for development in changing environments where the future is unpredictable and surprise is likely*' (Folke, 2006: 254; emphasis added). Both these conceptions of resilience and their relationship to sustainability will be the focus of this chapter, looking at the Transition movement and how it has understood and sought to operationalise resilience at the community level. We will also consider mainstream policy discussions of resilience and the growing academic work on resilience in relation to socio-economic relations.

Resilience, Sustainability and Creative Adaptive Management

So what are the differences between 'traditional' sustainable development/sustainability discourse and 'resilience' or a resilience approach to sustainability? There are at least four differences I wish to highlight. **The first** is that there is a certain quality of toughness in the concept of resilience, since it takes as given that there will be stresses

[63] This end-state conception of resilience could also be thought of as 'sustainable development/ sustainability' viewed from the point of view of climate change and peak oil, the impact of the latter meaning that sustainable development is no longer possible.

and shocks that people, communities and systems will have to cope with.[64] That is, these shocks cannot be avoided or eliminated. 'Toughness' here should be understood as closer to flexibility and an ability to change and adapt, rather than 'indominatable', 'dogmatic' or 'unyielding'. This quality of toughness of which I speak is perhaps best expressed in the saying that, 'The tree that bends in the wind does not break'. The following fable 'The Oak and the Reed' nicely brings this out:

The Oak spoke one day to the Reed
'You have good reason to complain;
A Wren for you is a load indeed;
The smallest wind bends you in twain.
You are forced to bend your head;
While my crown faces the plains
And not content to block the sun
Braves the efforts of the rains.
What for you is a North Wind is for me but a zephyr.
Were you to grow within my shade
Which covers the whole neighbourhood
You'd have no reason to be afraid
For I would keep you from the storm.
Instead you usually grow
In places humid, where the winds doth blow.
Nature to thee hath been unkind'.
'Your compassion', replied the Reed
'Shows a noble character indeed;
But do not worry: the winds for me
Are much less dangerous than for thee;
I bend, not break. You have 'til now
Resisted their great force unbowed,
But beware'.
As he said these very words
A violent angry storm arose.
The tree held strong; the Reed he bent.
The wind redoubled and did not relent,
Until finally it uprooted the poor Oak
Whose head had been in the heavens
And roots among the dead folk.

Jean de la Fontaine (1621-1695).

[64] This quality of toughness obviously has echoes of the 'hard greens' discussed in the last chapter and also anticipates the complementarity between this approach to sustainability and civic republican thinking as outlined in chapter 6. In some of the psychological literature resilience is related to mental toughness and the capacity to withstand short-term discomfort for long-term benefit but also accepting discomfort and stress as normal part of life. It is interesting that this not only harks back to the discussion in the previous chapter on acknowledging vulnerability and associated concepts of pain, harm and ultimately death, but also that the psychological capacity for resilience is an indication of a healthy, mature as opposed to an immature or unhealthy person.

The *dramatis personae* are as follows: the wind represents (take your pick) climate change, peak oil, or 'ecological and resource crises'; the Oak represents inflexible, dogmatic social thinking and associated large-scale and centralised systems; while the Reed denotes, more local and flexible forms of social thinking and organisation. The toughness of resilience may also have something to do with the fact that the discourse of resilience within sustainability/green politics has arisen, as in the Transition movement, against the backdrop of climate change and peak oil, two huge, challenging and inter-related issues. Resilience discourse or a resilience approach to sustainable development can, when examined in the practices of the Transition movement, be viewed as akin to undertaking a SWOT analysis of one's community, an informed examination of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This sense of resilience also expresses itself in terms of practicality and concern with implementing and testing changes and new ways of doing things. Again, this focus on the practical (as opposed to the ideological and oppositional) typifies Transition initiatives.[65]

The second – and motivating/driving/underpinning the toughness above – is that resilience brings the environment (specifically energy and resources) back centre-stage to the politics of sustainability. It recalls the early 'limits to growth' analysis in general and the energy informed analysis of early green thinker Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen (Georgescu-Roegen, 1971; Cato, 2008: 25-26; Barry, 2007a). It also explicitly builds on the systems and cybernetic thinking and methodological approach of the original 'limits to growth' report and its subsequent development over the last 3 decades (Meadows, et al, 1972; Meadows et al, 1993; Meadows et al, 2004; Holling, 1973, 1993).

That this is the case should come as no surprise given the origins of resilience in ecological science and its concern with energy and resource stocks and flows within ecosystems and how the availability of resources and energy determine the scale of an ecosystem or specific sub-systems or the population of specific species. Ecosystem resilience is a function of available energy and resources coupled with ecosystem diversity and the capacity of the ecosystem to adapt to a new state, modelling via a 'complex adaptive systems' approach (Webb, 2007: 470). This adaptive focus based on energy and resource constraints, clearly fits with the view articulated by Folke et al above as well as harking back to the limits to growth thesis.[66] Extending this resource and energy analysis to socio-ecological systems is a key character of the focus on resilience, such as we find in the Transition movement. For example, the Transition movement is explicitly built upon permaculture foundations (Hopkins, 2008), which itself has its roots in the limits to growth and first oil shock experience of the early 1970s, and a central insight of permaculture is constant adaptation and the need to create resilience within socio-ecological productive systems (Holmgren, 2009).

[65] It also relates to the argument made later in this chapter of Transition initiatives as forms of 'concrete utopian' experiments in new ways of living.

[66] This adaptive focus will also be developed in the following chapters on green political economy and green republicanism.

A third, and perhaps one of the most significant differences (or difference in emphases) between sustainable development/sustainability and resilience, is the explicit 'inner' focus and psychological dimensions of resilience and the transition to sustainability. This aspect of resilience can be seen to have its origins in the psychological conceptualisations of resilience and vulnerability (as indicated in the opening section of the previous chapter). Instances of this psychological approach are emerging in relation to climate change. Edwards and Buzzell for example, note, 'Few of us are eager to contemplate, let alone truly face, these looming changes. Just the threat of losing chunks of the comfortable way of life we're accustomed to (or aspiring to) is a frightening-enough prospect. But there's no avoiding the current facts and trends of the human and planetary situation. And as the edges of our familiar reality begin to unravel, more and more people are reacting psychologically' (Edwards and Buzzell, 2008).

Other examples include the work of UK eco-psychologist Mary-Jane Rust, whose work has been acknowledged as central to the Transition vision (Hopkins, 2008). For her, 'Of the many important messages within this movement [Transition], local resilience seems particularly useful, especially in the light of the current financial crash. If we get on with visioning and planning for a future that is possible, one step at a time, we can achieve that resilience' (Rust, 2008: 11). One could take Rust's point further and link it back to the some points made in the last chapter. The local, incremental, 'coping mechanism' approach of the Transition movement, addresses a need to respond to the issues of climate change, peak oil, food insecurity, quality of life etc. (with an explicit recognition of the uncertainty in terms of effectiveness and outcomes). And it does so, in large part, in a 'learning by doing', bootstrapping manner (at this stage largely outside the state and formal market economy), and so constitutes a path of local (and therefore limited) empowerment, but empowerment nonetheless. This is an important point in terms of the Transition movement's focus on 're-skilling people'. Encouraging collective action and forms of provisioning outside the state and capitalist economy, provides a practical response to what Michael Lerner calls 'surplus powerlessness' (Lerner, 1986), the 'learned helplessness' that theorists such as Illich and Marcuse identified as a result of modern industrial (state and formal market) institutions (Illich, 1972; Marcuse, 1964). Such small-scale initiatives, thus can be seen to constitute utopian/anticipatory moves by collectives (a 'concrete utopianism') that combine an existential commitment to open-ended hope, with a scale-appropriate and realistic intervention, even though there is full acknowledgement of the limits of such localised interventions as a 'solution' to global ecological problems. But as forms of innovative, collective responses to issues like climate change, they are superior to the 'LED light bulb' solution, and can be viewed as necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for wider social and economic transformation. [67]

In fact Rust makes an explicit connection with the need for 'coping strategies' in relation to ecological challenges (and thus to adaptation), as opposed to 'problem-solution' ones. As she argues, 'If the mission is to 'save the planet' we may indeed feel, at times, that our mission is futile. But if our intention is more aligned with the therapeutic intention of healing, then perhaps a different picture emerges. *Whereas saving implies a mission that will succeed or fail, healing can happen right to the end of life in all of our relationships,*

[67] I owe the points made in this paragraph to Peter Doran.

human and more' (Rust, 2008: 12; emphasis added). This resonates with casting green politics as a politics of actually existing unsustainability, and focusing attention on reducing unsustainability in the here and now, that is reduce suffering and obstacles to human (and non-human) flourishing now as best we can, with the tools and institutions we have now, as opposed to achieving sustainability in a future 'sustainable society' with tools and institutions as yet created. A key feature here of this therapeutic/psychological dimension is its focus on relationships as foundational to our understanding of the causes of unsustainable, non-resilient/vulnerable forms of in/action. It also gestures towards the view that in re/building relationships (with and between communities and people, with place and with planet) lies recovery and our capacity to cope with the challenges of the transition away from unsustainability. As Rust puts it, 'the journey towards sustainable living [is] a therapeutic journey' (Rust, 2008: 19).[68]

A fourth, and most obvious, difference about resilience over sustainable development, is the way in which issues of vulnerability, provisionality/impermanence and associated notions of 'harm', 'protection' and the idea of 'coping mechanisms' (as outlined in the last chapter and Barry (1999a)) fit with the concern with adaptation between human and non-human complex systems. Flexibility and creativity seem to be constituent elements of resilience in a way which they are not so prominent within 'sustainability' discourse. The focus on provisionality/impermanence – in part a reflection of the dynamic character of the interaction between human and non-human systems – also finds it counterpart in the vulnerability discourse's concern with exploring what makes for resilient and non-resilient human cultures and systems (the topic of many 'hard greens').

The notion of resilience seems to call for or necessitate creativity and innovation along the lines of the old adage of 'necessity being the mother of invention', but also due to the greater attention to provisionality, impermanence and temporary balance/equilibria – in part based on the insights of far from equilibrium systems that one finds in ecological science and ecological economics, as will be discussed in chapter 6. It therefore seems to denote greater scepticism about the applicability of simply 'greening' business as usual, of viewing the creation of a more sustainable society as a mere technological 'add on' rather than requiring something significantly more imaginative and far-reaching. Creativity and imagination across social, economic and cultural levels, will be argued to be central to creating more resilient communities, since these communities have to be seen as forms of social learning, and their members viewed as active learners – or pioneers as I suggest later in the chapter.

A fifth and related characteristic worth mentioning (and one that links to the discussions of the previous chapter) is the way in which resilience denotes a form of character and

[68] It is also worth pointing out again that this focus on healing is one central to eco-feminism as indicated in the previous chapter. This is important since it demonstrates that not all therapeutic approaches to (green) politics are conservative or individualistic and apolitical. There are of course strands in green politics which do promote this 'change yourself and not the society/world', individual lifestyle change and not structural change etc. Elsewhere, I criticised deep ecology for doing precisely that (Barry, 1994, 1999). Others such as Michael Maniates, have also identified the deep flaws of this individualistic, depoliticised approach (Maniates, 2001).

associated virtues. Resilience can be regarded itself as a virtue, linked to older virtues of fortitude and also expressing elements of courage, foresight and prudence.

Energy and Resilience: Government, Industry and Transition movement Perspectives

The Transition movement is a growing network of towns, villages and local communities in the UK, Ireland and beyond, preparing themselves for the twin challenges and opportunities of 'peak oil' and 'climate change'. I focus here on the way its perspective combines peak oil, energy descent, adaptation to climate change, and permaculture (Quilley and Barry, 2008). Before proceeding it is worth pointing out that another unique feature of the Transition movement is its upbeat, inclusive and positive character. It explicitly sets out to be as positive as possible about future prospects for communities as we face the end of the age of peak oil and the impacts of a climate changed world. I say this because it distinguishes the Transition movement view from the pessimistic diagnosis and prognosis one finds particularly in much 'peak oil' discourse.

One of the main, and often under-emphasised, aspects of a future renewable energy economy (viewed globally), is that it is one with *less* not the same or more energy than we enjoy at present. Ruling out nuclear power and large-scale biofuels, if we wish to create a renewable energy economy, this means an economy with *less* energy.[69] This is why a, if not the, key aspect of the Transition process is for each community to create what is called an Energy Descent Action Plan (EDAP). Hopkins describes energy descent as, 'the continual decline in net energy supporting humanity, a decline which mirrors the ascent in net energy that has taken place since the Industrial Revolution. It also refers to a future scenario in which humanity has successfully adapted to the declining net energy availability and has become more localised and self-reliant. It is a term favoured by people looking towards energy peak as an opportunity for positive change rather than an inevitable disaster' (Hopkins, 2006: 19). As Ted Trainer has pointed out, a completely renewable energy economy cannot sustain our consumer culture (Trainer, 2007).

For Hopkins, 'An EDAP sets out a vision of a powered-down, resilient, relocalised future, and then backcasts, in a series of practical steps, creating a map for getting from here to there' (Hopkins, 2008: 172). Thus, the Transition process is about reducing

[69] A powerful and revealing way to think about this issue of the energy basis of contemporary industrial societies, and the energy basis of a renewable post-carbon future, is Richard Heinberg's concept of 'energy slaves' (Heinberg, 2007). 'Energy slave' conveys the amount of energy individuals in those societies can command converted into the 'work' an individual would have to do (by cycling for 24 hours a day) to produce an equivalent amount of carbon energy. It turns out that on average each person in the industrialised minority world commands around 150 energy slaves. This way of thinking not only 'de-sequesters' or re-frames how we think about the energy basis of society (something the ecological economist pioneer Georgescu-Rogen tried and failed to persuade the neo-classical economics discipline to take seriously and integrate into its analytical frame). It also begins to sketch out some of the broad outlines of a renewable energy society. If we no longer have 150 energy slaves, then we are going to have to imagine and be creative about envisioning very different sorts of lives, societies, leisure pursuits, forms of transport etc. to ensure high levels of human well-being and flourishing.

present unsustainability while also preparing communities for less unsustainable lives with less energy within the context of a climate changed world. Most governments and politicians do not explicitly accept the notion of 'peak oil', though there are countries in Europe such as Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and the Republic of Ireland (Barry, 2011a) that seem to be moving in that direction. However, there is an emerging, complex and often compromised manner in which both government and economic actors are engaging with this idea of energy descent- largely though the 'energy (in)security' frame. Such engagements serve both to underscore the essential energy descent insight of Transition, as well as how a concern with declining energy supplies does not translate in any straightforward manner i.e. strictly as the Transition vision sees it, into other contexts.

Two 2008 reports on energy futures for the UK will be considered here, to illustrate the 'state of the debate' on transition to a low carbon economy and the issue of translation. One is from the UK government, and the other from the newly formed Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security. The UK Government report, entitled, *Powering our Lives Sustainable Energy Management and the Built Environment* concludes that the key strategic challenges for the UK are: 'overcoming the lock-in to current centralised systems; enabling greater activity at a wider range of scales; exploiting an improved understanding of social and psychological components of energy behaviours to encourage engagement with decarbonisation; assessing security and resilience matters in an appropriately integrated way. (Foresight, 2008: 5). As such it offers a standard focus on energy production and security as the main issues to be considered.

However, the report does reference Transition Towns twice (Foresight, 2008: 92 and 115), and also in one of its four scenarios, 'Sunshine State', convey some aspects of the Transition vision. The other scenarios are 'Resourceful Regions', 'Carbon Creativity' and 'Green Growth' (Foresight, 2008: 11-12). In the 'Sunshine State' scenario:

> International solidarity has fallen by the wayside in response to climate change and expensive energy. Instead the Government has fostered an emphasis on localism to respond to energy problems supported by a shift in social values after a period of outages and fuel shortages. A Sunshine Index is the main metric of progress, not Gross Domestic Product. Home insulation and other energy efficiency measures are universal following strong regulation. Retrofitting is sometimes done alongside adaptation work to help buildings cope with warmer and wetter conditions. Green roofs and parks are common as part of comprehensive local sustainable drainage systems to counter flooding. There are more local shopping streets and other community resources, partly because of planning decisions intended to promote local autonomy and partly because of municipal enterprise. New build commonly uses off-site construction methods, often from overseas. (Foresight, 2008: 71)

However, unlike the Transition movement analysis, the Foresight study has the 'Sunshine State' scenario involving greater not less fossil fuel use (ibid.: 75), but like Transition, it

notes that 'a community approach, *relatively uncommon in the UK today*, becomes increasingly prevalent' (ibid.:92; emphasis added). This community approach has also been suggested by Jörg Friedrichs based on his historical studies of how societies in the past have reacted to a sharp decline in oil, as one possible response to peak oil (Friedrichs, 2010). Alongside what he calls 'socio-economic adaptation' (with Cuba in the early 1990s being the historical example), the other possible responses he lists are 'predatory militarism' (Japan prior to WWII) and 'totalitarian retrenchment' (North Korea, 1990s). In the Foresight report, there is also an intriguing mention (nothing more) to what the report terms 'An Energy Reduction Strategy' (ibid: 174).

> It was a world away from the 'live for the present' consumerism of the last part of the 20th century, and the shock has led to the emergence of new social values, which reinforce the importance of self-direction and self-determination, but also the need to try new ideas to resolve problems. *Although there is technological innovation in this world, the principal driver of change is the development of new social institutions, many of which are about better ways of sharing limited resources at a local or community level*. One of the motivations for this has been deteriorating mental health outcomes, worsened by climate change anxieties, which could have had huge public health costs if not addressed. Many of the new social institutions consider tackling mental health to be their priority, particularly in terms of the impact it has on the isolated and more vulnerable members of society who perhaps do not have strong family support structures in place. This is a world where almost anything which can be decentralised has been…. Expectations have shifted from the turn of the century, this world is slower and it is different, *but it is still an affluent world by any historical standards*. (ibid.: 2008: 171; 175; emphases added).

This is the nearest we have to the UK government officially endorsing the reality of peak oil. It also outlines a positive hopeful and empowering possible energy future, and one that would not look out of place in a Green Party manifesto, or the outcome of a Transition Town 'open space' event. Indeed this 'Sunshine State' scenario is largely compatible with much of what this book argues in its suggestion of a future in which consumerism has less of a hold, where social innovation drives technological innovation, its identification of vulnerability and psychological health, and the statement at the end that despite this being very different from current high consumer societies, this society is '*still an affluent world by any historical standards'*. However, despite that, it is clear from this report's findings that *energy decarbonisation is preferred to energy descent* – a strategy for using more low carbon energy rather than low energy as it were. In part, this is due to the main focus of this report, and the principal driver for energy innovation, being located in climate change rather than peak oil and the imperative of economic and energy growth. The report does however strongly recommend the decentralisation of energy production and consumption, which obviously is in keeping with the Transition vision and that of green politics (ibid: 153).

The report, while in many respects offering some welcome insights in terms of challenging the 'lock-in' to centralised systems of energy production, does not deal with

'lock-in' to patterns of development, land-use or lifestyles which require and demand high carbon energy use.[70] And while it does talk of 'integrated resilience planning' at the local and regional level, it does so on the basis of 'energy efficiency and carbon reductions' (ibid: 158), rather than 'energy reduction and carbon efficiency'. Thus the report echoes the view of the then minister for Climate Change and Energy, Ed Miliband, who denied peak oil as a problem for the UK, or indeed that unlimited low carbon economic growth is impossible (Miliband, Hopkins, Lipman, 2009). In his view it is firmly climate change, not peak oil which is the primary and most important energy policy challenge facing the UK, presumably on the reasoning that the UK has ample sources of domestic coal. While there is much to criticise in the report, it is remarkable and welcome that the state is envisioning a broad range of possible transition scenarios, including some radical options for the future.

On the other hand, the recently established UK Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security, flatly contradicts and challenges the attitude of the UK government in regards to planning for the country's energy future. While not neglecting climate change, the Taskforce sees peak oil as a reality, a major risk and argues for a concerted focus on planning for a low-carbon and post-oil future. As its first report, *The Oil Crunch*, puts it, 'The speed with which the UK would need to mobilise for a 'descent' peak oil scenario, much less a 'collapse' scenario, *exceeds anything that has yet been considered in the climate-change policy-response arena*' (Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security, 2008: 6; emphasis added). In other words, a focus on climate change and reducing carbon emissions without an equal if not more focus on this risks from peak oil, leaves the UK economy extremely unprepared and therefore extremely vulnerable. As the report puts it, 'On balance, having reviewed the state of play in global oil production, the taskforce considers that the 'descent' scenario is a highly probable global outcome' (ibid.: p.25), against the worrying backdrop that, as the authors of the report see it, 'Neither the government, nor the public, nor many companies, seem to be aware of the dangers the UK economy faces from imminent peak oil. Big as emerging economic problems are as a result of the credit crunch, *peak oil means a very high probability of worse problems to come. The risks to UK society from peak oil are greater than those routinely on the government's risk-radar at present, including terrorism*' (ibid.: 29; emphasis added).[71]

Unlike the government, both the Industry taskforce and the Transition movement, avoid the problems of only focusing on climate change as a driver for a new low-carbon economy. But unlike the Industry Taskforce, the Transition movement accepts energy

[70] The report does offer some interesting comments on vulnerability: 'Vulnerability to energy security threats is not uniformly distributed across society. In addition, new sources of vulnerability, linked to the capacity to cope with the impacts of a changing climate, are likely to emerge. *The future will require a more sophisticated understanding of vulnerability than that captured by the current concept of fuel poverty*' (ibid.: 157; emphasis added).

[71] The reference here to peak oil being greater to the UK than the threat of terrorism is a direct echo of the statement by the UK's former Chief Scientist, King who famously stated that 'climate change was a bigger threat than global terrorism'. In many ways it can be seen as a public expression, though from a very different source, of both the 'peak oil' discourse and the Transition one which seeks to 're-balance' the dominance of the climate change frame within public and political debate.

descent not just carbon energy descent or decarbonisation as a key feature of the transition. However, like the UK government, the Taskforce comes down to supporting l nuclear power (as a low carbon energy source) as an inevitable part of the future energy mix (ibid.: 30), since like the government the Taskforce assumes continual increases in energy use, something explicitly rejected by the Transition movement.

Permaculture, 'Built in Redundancy' for Adaptive Management and the Transition movement

Molly Scott-Cato defines permaculture as follows, 'Permaculture is not a set of rules; it is a process of design based around principles found in the natural world, of co-operation and mutually beneficial relationships, and translating these principles into actions' (Scott-Cato, 2011: 176), a key feature of which is 'considered' or 'slow thinking' before you act. Permaculture uses the diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems to provide a framework and guidance for people to develop their own sustainable solutions to the problems facing their world, on a local, national or global scale. It is based on the philosophy of co-operation with nature and caring for both planet and people. But it is not about any simplistic or prescriptive 'reading off' of how we should organise social systems from nature. It is about observing natural design principles and seeing if they 'work' for managing human-nature relations, not about applying such principles in some unreflective manner.

Following this permaculture ethos, Transition initiatives can be seen as grassroots attempts to self-consciously enhance local adaptive capacity. They seek to do this particularly though increasing self-organisation and self-management at the local, community level. That is, a key, if not the key to local resilience is the rebuilding of community – discussed in more detail below – and the protection and promotion of liberty, diversity and pluralism. This resilience understanding of Transition initiatives views them as forms of localised adaptive and creative co-management processes. As forms of localised adaptive forms of socio-ecological management, Transition movement initiatives have resonances with some earlier work of mine on 'collective ecological management' (Barry, 1999a). This form of management I viewed as culturally embedded, and unlike traditional state (hierarchical, centralised), or market forms (private, preference aggregating) forms of management and decision-making, explicitly included normative questions. Collective ecological management I also viewed as orientated towards flexible and open-ended adaptation rather than the imposition of fixed goals or objectives (which would prioritise efficiency over adaptation) on socio-ecological systems.[72] I thus viewed collective ecological management as a 'coping mechanism' (Barry, 1999a: 115), and one I think that is compatible with the notion of complex adaptive management.

[72] A similar approach, but one which develops this concept in much more detail and also is more grounded in applying theoretical insights, is Peter Cannavò s book *The Working Landscape* (Cannavò, 2007). As discussed in more detail in chapter 5 on Green political economy, while *adaptation* is one of the preferred goals over *efficiency* in terms of productive relations between social and ecological systems, *sufficiency* over *maximisation* is the preferred goal in terms of consumption.

The Transition movement's focus on adaptation as an appropriate response to climate change and peak oil is similar to Hulme's suggestion for 'clumsy solutions' (Hulme, 2009: 337-340). His argument is that we need to see climate change as a 'wicked problem', and disabuse ourselves of the attraction/temptation to define it as a 'mega-problem' with universal and unitary 'solutions'. Instead, he suggests we need to accept that clumsy, contradictory, pluralist and multi-level approaches are required. Hulme's rejection of a simplistic 'problem-solution' view makes his approach similar to recommending 'coping with' rather than 'solving' dilemmas. As he suggests, 'Clumsiness suggests that we construct our problems in such a way as to *make them fit our capabilities for solution-making* rather than imagine that our human ingenuity can find solutions to whatever problems we casually invent' (ibid: 338; emphasis added). His admission that such clumsy solutions are 'sub-optimal' both in design and outcome, can be read as another way of expressing the important permaculture (Holmgren, 2008) and resilience theory (Thompkins and Adger, 2004) insight of the need to design 'slack' and 'redundancy' into any resilient system or intervention. Thompkins and Adger (2004) call this 'head room' – that systems are so designed with sufficient room for manoeuvre so that there is enough space and time for adapting and changing tack as needs be. As Thomas and Twyman put it, and in a manner very much consistent with permaculture and the Transition movement's analysis, 'policy responses to climate change should be oriented towards creating or facilitating the emergence of "head room" thus enabling, rather than inhibiting, local and regional level adaptation options' (2005: 121).

A more elaboration of this idea of 'head room' is contained in the argument from Rockström et al in their widely cited 2009 paper, 'Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Operating Space for Humanity' (Rockström et al, 2009). That paper argues that the identification of thresholds is central to help us reduce unsustainability and associated vulnerability and potential and actual harm for humanity. For them, the concept of '"planetary boundaries" lays the groundwork for shifting our approach to governance and management, away from the essentially sectoral analyses of limits to growth aimed at minimizing negative externalities, toward the estimation of the safe space for human development' (ibid: 472). While accepting the underlying reality of 'limits to growth', they accept that these planetary thresholds are not well understood and 'fuzzy', but argue that of the nine planetary boundaries they have identified, humanity has already passed three (climate change, the rate of biodiversity loss, and the rate of interference with the nitrogen cycle).

I think Hulme's injunction for 'clumsy' solutions is compatible with the findings of the Rockström et al paper. Hulme's suggestion should be read as indicating an adaptive (and creative) approach to climate change, much along the lines indicated by the Transition movement (which adds the peak oil insight), and permaculture principles and 'adaptive management' approaches to human-nature relations. An obvious, but nonetheless significant, starting point for the Transition perspective is brought into sharper relief here, namely the *inevitability of the transition* to a low energy, carbon-constrained and climate

changed future.[73] It can be viewed as indicating adapting to the inevitable, in much the same way that in the last chapter vulnerability and dependence were also seen as ineliminable and therefore inevitable. In both circumstances what is needed are creative forms of adaptation and developing strategies of how to cope and manage change effectively.

Resilience, Virtue and Creativity

Resilience to recap is a way of coping with rather than eliminating vulnerability and contingency. In many respects, it can be seen as a modern idiom for what once was termed one of the virtues. For example, the cardinal virtue of 'fortitude' or 'courage' in classical thought would seem closely related to what resilience at the level of the individual means - the capacity to overcome adversity, not in the sense of destroying or eliminating adversity, but 'coping' or coming through successfully. This much is clear from the psychological resilience research and literature.[74] It can also be found in more ethical discussions, as outlined in the previous chapter where resilience have be viewed as, 'Soberly facing the limitations of self-sufficiency and self-determination [as] a crucial dimension of sustaining (and sometimes regaining) a felt sense of dignity through genuine communion with others in the face of life's unpredictability and risks, its hardships and tragic turns' (Carse, 2006: 48). That is, the vulnerabilities we face, even as individuals, are often such that we cannot cope with them on our own, but need the help and support of others.

The concept of resilience has a double-meaning in the discussion here. On the one hand it denotes the capacity or quality of communities and individuals to cope with various external shocks (principally resource and environmental shocks such as peak oil or climate change). But it also has a cultural and psychological dimension in that resilient individuals or communities are ones that demonstrate certain virtues or characteristics, such as flexibility, adaptability, and adeptness in responding, willingness to change, including especially one's views or previously held beliefs or values, and foresight to plan ahead for contingencies, envisage different scenarios and the ability to make informed judgements. As Buell argues, echoing a point made earlier, 'crisis, even at its darkest, is necessary to face. Even more, it is not just necessary to face; it is actually good to think with, especially as people realize how deeply it is woven into their daily lives' (Buell, 2004: 23).

If, as suggested throughout this book, the world is facing a period of unprecedented change in relation to energy, the global economy, climate, water, biodiversity etc., then as suggested in the last chapter, those who are psychologically and intellectually prepared

[73] As Hopkins puts it, 'In my opinion, the shift in focus from the global to the local will not be a choice, nor is it something we have to campaign and protest for, it is utterly inevitable. Without cheap oil it becomes unfeasible, and we are already starting to see this' (Hopkins, 2008b: 4).

[74] Both vulnerability and resilience can be viewed as connected to human capabilities (as in Sen's approach and that of Nussbaum), and therefore may lead in a neo-Aristotelian direction in terms of denoting a particular view of human flourishing, and might we strengthen basic human capacities in order to promote resilience, diminish vulnerability and so enhance human flourishing?

for those challenges are, *ceteris paribus*, not only pioneers (in the sense indicated below), but also better equipped in terms of being braced and prepared mentally for the change or shock. But they are also probably better prepared to adapt to the shock – either through changing their behaviour, habits or ideas, or materially changing their social and/or environmental conditions to ensure perseverance and maintain the conditions for flourishing. Hence, dogmatic and inflexible thinking, world-views and thought processes are generally mal-adaptive and can compromise resilience.[75] This is the lesson of the fable of the Oak and the Reed. Thus, if as suggested in the critique of neo-classical economics later, this form of thinking is (or has become) a dogmatic ideology, this gives us even more reason (apart from the substance of many of its prescriptions and analyses) to seek to move beyond it. This is *a fortiori* if, as I will demonstrate, this one way of thinking about the economy has 'crowded out' other possible alternatives.

In other words, resilience is about what happens *before a crisis or shock in terms of institutional capacity and cultivating appropriate dispositions habits and virtues,* as well as how a person or community responds to an external shock, and how they cope with it and come out the other side. There is always a potential creative dimension to resilience and the ability to cope with vulnerabilities and overcome or adapt to dilemmas. It is for this reason that in the Transition movement literature we find 'breakthrough' being promoted as a creative response to perceived or actual 'breakdown', or in the title of Homer-Dixon's book *The Upside of Down*. Here resilience cannot be understood as the capacity for a system, individual or community to withstand a shock and return to its *original* state. Rather, it denotes also the capacity to evolve or develop or move to a *different* state – better (however judged) if successful, worse (however judged) if unsuccessful. Hence the utopian or emergent possibilities for change and development are contained within the concept and practices of resilience as articulated by the Transition movement. Here notions such as improvisation, responsible and informed risk-taking are appropriate to attach to resilience, as well as viewing it as spontaneous, creative, messy and unpredictable. That is, it is an open-ended process aimed to reduce unsustainability as much as possible, and is both disruptive and transgressive.

A similar argument for viewing ecological threats as creative opportunities can also be found in Mike Hulme's book, *Why We Disagree About Climate Change*. In the concluding chapter, he writes, in a manner very much in keeping with Homer-Dixon above, and the 'creative, positive' ethos of the Transition movement, as follows:

> climate change is not a problem that can be solved in the sense that, for example, technical and political resources were mobilised to solve the problem of stratospheric ozone depletion. Instead, I suggest a different starting point for coming to terms with the idea of climate change. I believe that human beings are more than material objects and that climate is more than a physical category. *I suggest we need to reveal the creative psychological, ethical and spiritual work that climate change is doing for us. Understanding the ways in which climate*

[75] Though it also has to be admitted that having a compelling and coherent narrative, such as strong, if dogmatic religious belief system for example, which explains, if not predicts, an external shock, can promote resilience but usually without development or learning.

> *change connects with foundational human instincts opens up possibilities for re-situating culture and the human spirit at the heart of our understanding of our changing climate. Rather than catalysing disagreements about how, when and where to tackle climate change, the idea of climate change should be seen as an intellectual resource around which our collective and personal identities and projects can form and take shape*. We need to ask not what we can do for climate change, but to ask what climate change can do for us. (Hulme, 2009: 326; emphasis added).

Viewing climate change (like peak oil in the Transition movement) not as a biophysical threat to be 'defeated' or 'solved', but as an imaginative call for cultural creativity in how we adapt in the process of 'coping with' this dynamic socio-cultural-material process is, I would suggest based on psychological, political, organisational and systems research, a more productive and fruitful (not to say hopeful) way to approach interpreting and understanding anthropogenic climate change. As both Hulme and Hopkins, and others such as Alastair McIntosh (McIntosh, 2008) put it, we need culturally-grounded narratives about our responses to and meanings of climate change as much as scientific evidence of its causes and effects.[76]

This creative approach can be extended to recognition of the utility of narrative approaches to peak oil and climate change. This narrative framing can be found in Hopkins' support and encouragement for 'Transition Tales' in terms of envisioning futures for communities in a post-oil, climate changed word (Hopkins, 2008:). It can also been seen in Hulme's work, 'We will continue to create and tell new stories about climate change and mobilise them in support of our projects. These stories may teach us to embark on different projects' (Hulme, 2009: 327). As the Alliance of Religions and Conservation has noted (and referred to by Hulme, 2009: 356), 'Without … these areas [of narrative, myth and metaphor], policies will have very few real roots … the climate change 'activist' world and indeed the environmental world has all too often sought refuges in random use of apocalyptic imagery without seeking to harness the power of narrative. *Without narrative, few people are ever moved to change or adapt*' (Alliance of Religions and Conservation 2007; emphasis added)

This focus on narratives links to some of the deeper questions of identity which not only touches upon the role of character and virtue within the transition away from actually existing unsustainability (Barry, 1999a), but which are at the heart of the Transition movement. An indication of more radical possibilities are where the latter explicitly calls

[76] When Hulme writes that 'Climate change can help us bring the physical and the cultural, the material and spiritual, into a new realignment…Climate change thus becomes a mirror into which we can look and see exposed both our individual selves and our collective societies. We can use the stories we tell about climate change – the myths we construct – to rethink the ways in which we connect our cultural, spiritual and material pursuits' (Hulme, 2009: 357), he is within the same creative, positive discourse characterised by the Transition movement, though more in keeping with the overtly spiritual inclinations of McIntosh or a deep ecological position. The recognition of the need to engage with cultural and explicitly normative issues such as peoples' values has also been the subject of a major piece of work commissioned by WWF, entitled *Common Cause: The Case for Working with our Cultural Values* (Compton, 2010).

for new subjectivities to cope with the challenges and opportunities of the inevitable transition away from unsustainability, climate change, and envisaging a post- growth economy and society (Barry, 2009a). It has long been a truism of more radical conceptions of green politics is that to live in a less unsustainable society is to live in a *different type of society* not simply the 'greening' of the existing one (Barry, 1999a), given the scale of change required for addressing unsustainability. However, what we are faced with here is the challenge that to live in that different type of society requires different collective narratives by which to live, but which also includes different self-understandings. The capacity to respond imaginatively to a threat, to see its creative possibilities for personal and well as collective change, while also recognising its evident dangers. Like the inflexibility of the doomed oak tree that did not bend in the wind in the fable above, it is 'concrete thinking' and a dogged resistance to change, as much as actual concrete, which stands in the way of responding imaginatively and positively to the challenges of peak oil and climate change. To the extent that the flexibility expressed within resilience can be viewed as an ecological virtue, to the same extent we can view dogmatic, inflexible thinking as an ecological vice.

This creative capacity is usually, though not necessarily, connected to notions such as hope (also a virtue), and a positive view of the future or of future potentialities – hence the utopian dimension (and linking back to Lear's notion of 'radical hope' in the previous chapter (Lear, 2006)). There is also a connection here between this idea of a 'concrete utopia', (radical) hope and what Duncombe calls 'political dreaming'. By 'political dreaming' he means not mere abstract and passive 'wish fulfilment' or the realisation of the impossible. Duncombe distinguishes between 'dreaming' and pursuing what he calls the 'unconditional impossible demand' (the insistence that no compromise can be tolerated in the pursuit of the achievement of social justice or sustainability). For Duncombe, 'political dreams, if they are ethical [that is, if they are honest in what they communicate] are always recognisable as dreams...*The problem with the 'unconditional impossible demand' is not that it is a dream, but that it is a fantasy masquerading as a possible reality*' (Duncombe, 2007:168-169).[77] Transition initiatives could be viewed as utopian practices grounded not in abstract blue or green prints, but much more focused and localised possibilities for new ways of living and flourishing. In many respects, as outlined in chapter 1, they could be viewed as localised examples of people taking action against actually existing unsustainability, and seeking to remove obstacles in the way of living less unsustainably as much as motivated by a coherent and worked out sense of what a future sustainable community at the local level may look like. That is they are political dreams in Dunscombe's terms, not fantasies.

Hence Transition initiatives can be viewed as 'concrete utopian' as opposed to 'abstract utopian' experiments (Barry, 2006b), which directly connects them to the issue of over-coming powerlessness as noted above as well as Frankel's observation that, 'We often forget that the mere achievement of a peaceful world, free of starvation, homelessness and poverty, is a radical utopia that is practically feasible at this very moment' (Frankel, 1987: 55). Here the Transition movement's use of open space technology and world café

[77] Duncombe's ideas are discussed in Compton (2010).

for collective meetings, to processes of imagineering and collective visioning (Hopkins, 2008: chapter 7), ensure that whatever vision, policies or proposals emerge from such collective processes are (usually) grounded, practicable, doable and related to what people themselves want or desire for themselves and their specific communities. This 'concrete utopianism' can be seen not only in the realism and honesty with which the Transition movement public acknowledges that a *low energy* not simply a *low carbon* future is the only one that is sustainable, but also in how it sees the prospect of 'energy descent' as something positive, creative and exciting not something to be viewed with dread. A life with less energy (not no energy it should be noted) is not viewed as regressive, negative or something to be resisted, but rather viewed as an opportunity for the creative exploration of new ways of living that try to achieve high quality of life with less energy and resources. In this way, Transition initiatives grounded in encouraging a creative response to limits to growth, peak oil and climate change offer a way to re-claim *innovation* from an overly narrow and techno centric interpretation. For the Transition movement perspective, innovation is viewed primarily in social and cultural innovation (Cato and Hillier, 2010), exploring new ways of living and relating to one another (Jackson, 2009a).

Transition Towns, Therapy and Addiction

This focus within the Transition movement on cultural and psychological dimensions of change, and as sources of resistance to change, is invaluable and places the Transition movement at the forefront of what could be termed the cultural and psychological 'turn' in green politics and the politics of unsustainability.[78] In particular, it uses an addiction model to analyse and understand cultural/institutional as well as individual addiction to fossil-based ways of life, and resistance to projected post-oil futures and calls for changes to make this transition happen. Typically the argument claims that the first response people make when informed of peak oil and climate change and the inevitable transition at some near point in the future to a post-oil, transformed economy and society in the 21st century is, like an addict being confronted with their addiction, one of denial. Then comes anger, negotiation/compromise, before – if all goes well – acceptance, reflection, change and action to a post-addiction state. It is in this sense that resilience is not simply about returning a person, community or system to its pre-change or pre-shock state, but to a new and hopefully 'better/improved' state (however understood).

Hopkins points to the stages approach of addiction to explain people's reaction to peak oil and the iterative process by which they move (usually non-sequentially) through pre-contemplative (awareness of the need for change), contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance of change based on the 'Stages of Change' model developed by DiClemente and Proschaska (Hopkins, 2008: chapter 6), and also related to the Kübler-Ross model of

[78] This cultural and psychological turn can be found in explicitly psychological and social psychological work of, *inter alia*, Tim Jackson on human flourishing within environmental limits and the dynamics of pro-environmental behaviour (2009), the new economics foundation's work on behavioural economics (2005), Dobson's analysis of pro-environmental value-change and behaviour change within conceptions of 'environmental citizenship (2010), to Paterson's adoption of an explicitly cultural political economy analysis of automobility and car dependency (Paterson, 2007).

grief and grieving (Kübler-Ross, 2005).[79] Similar psychological stage models can also be found in the work of others such as Edwards and Buzzell who talk of the following stages of what they call 'The Waking Up Syndrome': 'Denial; Semi-consciousness; The moment of realization; Point of No Return; Despair, guilt, hopelessness, powerlessness; Acceptance, empowerment, action' (Edwards and Buzzell, 2008).[80] An extremely interesting point made by Edwards and Buzzell is that the despair stage, 'is similar to the traditional grief process, and indeed, this is a time of grieving. But there is a significant difference between this awakening and the normal experience of grief. Grief that occurs after a loss usually ends with acceptance of what's been lost and then one adjusts and goes on. *But this is more like the process of accepting a degenerative illness. It's not a one-time loss one can accommodate and simply move on*' (Edwards and Buzzell, 2008; emphasis added).

If Edwards and Buzzell are right in their description of the transformation of our existing carbon-fuelled, climate changing ways of life as like becoming reconciled to a degenerative illness, an on-going (and uneven) *process* of 'decline' rather than an identifiable *crisis event*, then this may help explain and understand knee-jerk denial responses. Their analysis may also help us in understanding that *creatively adapting* to and seeking to manage and cope with the inevitable trajectory of this process, is perhaps the most rationale course of action to take. This is certainly how Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition movement views the transition to a post-carbon, sustainable world. For him, this transition is inevitable, therefore there is little point resisting it, best to adapt and create as many positive opportunities from the transition as possible (Hopkins, 2008; 2010).

Other culturally and psychologically interesting approaches can be found in those who make the connection between the disorders of eating in modern societies and our ecological crisis based on excessive consumption and the culture of consumerism (Rust, 2008). Drawing on a broadly feminist approach on the relationship between gender, power, food and eating disorders, Rust states that:

> For many years now I have been noticing the parallels between eating problems and our collective desire to consume (I am using 'consumerism' here in the widest sense – everything that we take from the earth: food, energy, material objects and so on). It's as if we are stuck in a giant eating problem...Now we must rein ourselves in, go on a green diet, measure our ecological footprints,

[79] It is interesting here that while the Stages of Change model (unlike the Alcoholics Anonymous 12 step model) allows for a continuum of change (reducing one's addiction by degrees rather than simply removing it completely or staying addicted) this is not mentioned in the Hopkins book. However, it is clear from the argument made elsewhere in the book and from others in the Transition movement that the post-oil energy economy will and can only be built using oil. This fits with the Stages of Change model in that it explicitly calls for different uses or purposes of the addictive substance (oil) with complete non-use only one, not the only option available.

[80] Others, such as the writer and activist, Alastair McIntosh also propose variations on a 'stages' approach. See his outline of 'A 12 Step Programme' based on what he calls a 'cultural psychotherapy' (McIntosh, 2008: 218-244), the beginning of which is 'to confess complicity in the problems and get beyond stage one – denial – in the planetary version of the Kübler-Ross grief cycle' (ibid.: 211).

> count our carbon calories, and watch carefully how much we consume. But this green diet won't work unless we also address the emotional hunger underneath the drive to consume (Rust, 2008: 2).[81]

This therapeutic approach can also be found in popular works such as *Affluenza* both a very popular Public Service Broadcasting series in America and associated book (de Graaf, Wann and Naylor, 2005) and similarly named works by prominent psychologist Oliver James in the UK (James, 2007) and Clive Hamilton in Australia (Hamilton and Denniss, 2005). These works use psychological theories to demonstrate how consumerism is deliberately mobilised by psychological drivers, needs, triggers and techniques (for individual self-affirmation, self-esteem, belonging etc.). They also shown how, after a threshold, it does not make us happy, and how one needs to understand excessive consumption as something requiring a therapeutic, to focus on its effects on the individual, as well as a political perspective, given consumerism is a collective practice with collective impacts (Keat, 1994).

This therapeutic dimension to Transition Initiatives is explicit in a number of ways. **Firstly** there is a recognition of the need for 'Heart and Soul' groups to enable people involved in the transition process to have a space to voice concerns, fears and seek help and support from others. Hopkins for example talks of 'Post-Petroleum Stress Disorder' (Hopkins, 2008: 80) when people realise the implications of a post-oil world. This provides a context for individuals 'to be the change they want to see in the world', to see that the scale and type of change envisaged requires profound individual psychological preparation in a supportive network. As noted in Hopkins' book 'Transition Initiatives are strengthened when they take account of both inner and outer dimensions of change' (Hopkins, 2008: 89). **Secondly**, and related to the first, is that such interactions between people, often people who don't know one another, but who live in the same area. **Thirdly**, Transition Initiatives also provide people not simply with information and awareness but also practical training and tools for coping with life in the context of energy descent and a post-oil society (through processes like collectively designing an Energy Descent Action Plan, taking part in a 'Skilling up for Powerdown' training, or local businesses engaging in an oil vulnerability auditing process). Fundamentally it helps to instil 'a community-wide belief that we can actually do this' (Hopkins, 2008: 93), thus addressing the issue of 'surplus powerlessness' discussed earlier.

Transition Towns as Resilience Pioneers

In this section I wish to drawn attention to and dwell on an aspect of the Transition movement related to the notion of those involved in them as pioneers and indeed the movement as a whole being best thought of as a form of pioneering. The word 'pioneer'

81 Others have also invoked (albeit implicitly) the discourse of food/eating and dieting, such as Lovelock and Rapley's talk of 'carbon dieting' (Lovelock and Rapley, 2007: 403), or calls for a Gandhian-inspired 'Climate Emergency Fast' (Glick, Locke and Lunberg, 2009). Rust also notes, in relation to the previous chapter's discussion of vulnerability, that 'When a man projects his vulnerability, intuition and emotional side onto women, he is left in a cut-off autistic world, unable to relate' (Rust, 2008: 9), thus drawing attention to the gendered construction of vulnerability and resilience.

is derived from the old French *peonier*, meaning 'foot soldier', so its rather appropriate to view those involved in the Transition movement as 'foot soldiers' for new ways of living (while also touching upon the wartime mobilisation narrative with which the Transition movement is sometimes associated). A pioneer is one who goes before others, leads and prepares the way for others to follow, and this is a perfect description of the Transition movement as it pioneers new ways of thinking and living.[82] As Sharon Astyk notes, 'We talk a good game about wanting a better world for the next generation, but we aren't living our lives as though we love our own kids, much less anyone else's. *It seems to me that the only way to give the next generation a decent shot at life is for those of us who care most about them to take things into our own hands and prepare for the changes ahead*' (Astyk, 2008: 7; emphasis added).

She is explicit in recognising the pioneering aspects of low energy and low carbon living, suggesting that 'instead of everyone picking up and moving to a farm, or building some new society, what we need is a 'Little House in the Suburbs' model – a way of making what we already have usable in a much lower-energy and – emissions world' (Astyk, 2008: 147).[83] Of course there are other groups and movements which can also be viewed as pioneers both now and historically, so it's not that somehow the Transition movement is unique in being pioneers. In particular, apart from the long-standing commitment to a less consumerist society within Green political parties and elements of the environmental movement, we should also highlight how the voluntary simplicity movement (Alexander, 2011) can also be seen as anticipating aspects of the Transition movement, and has much to contribute to it. However, what I am interested in here is interpreting and understanding Transition initiatives as pioneers and also the extent to which people and communities involved in them identify and see themselves as pioneers.[84]

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[82] As pioneers the Transition movement prepares rather than determines or dictates the way for others, I do not think (as others perhaps might) view this movement as a 'vanguard' in the classic Marxist-Leninist sense.

[83] To a large degree Astyk's view that a recovery of the 'expanded household' will be necessary in the creation of a post-carbon, post-growth economy (as new site for production, economic activity, sociality, cultural life as part of a greater community focus) echoes Illich's analysis of the centrality of the household as the main productive unit in most parts of Europe and America until the early part of the 19th century, as well as constituting the basic unit of production in many contemporary non-Western countries (Illich, 1981: 111). The issue here to me seems to be to avoid Astyk's argument (representative of other green proposals) being seen as a simplistic view that we need a wholesale return to a household-based economy giving it 'backward-looking', pre-modern intent. Rather, the real issue is the balance between and integration of such vernacular, core economic forms of production, consumption and organisation and modern institutional (including industrial) forms. This is a creative tension which runs throughout green politics, including the Transition movement. Equally, as Andy Dobson has pointed out there is an unresolved tension (which may be not so creative) between the intense localism of the Transition perspective and non-local demands of cosmopolitanism, global justice and concern for non-locals in other parts of the world (personal communication).

[84] In particular political and cultural contexts to explicitly view transition towns and the search for resilience in 'pioneering' terms might be beneficial in places, such as North America where this allows the transition initiative to attach itself to a longer historical narrative, part of the cultural stories of people and place. In North America pioneering transition initiatives can be and are presented as modern forms of 'storied residence' re-connecting people and place.

Pioneer is a more preferable term to the more common one of 'social entrepreneur' which is another interpretative frame for understanding innovative forms of social mobilisation and activity. For example, the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship in Oxford, states that, 'Social entrepreneurship can further be defined as any action that displays three key characteristics: sociality, innovation, and *market orientation*' (Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, 2009). Equally the descriptive term 'innovation', like 'entrepreneur' comes with baggage which is biased towards viewing it as a social activity which integrates with or does not challenge conventional economic progress and a 'business as usual' and techno-centric approach. At the same time, however, 'pioneer' as a concept is not completely free of this conventional economic connotation. Pioneers can also have a more economic/instrumental understand in the sense of 'pioneers' as 'first movers' in the emerging markets for green energy, waste and other forms of ecological infrastructure and production to capture competitive advantage – one of the dominant discourses of 'cleantech' and the ecological modernisation of the economy as in the Green New Deal (Barry, 2009a –GND articles; Mayoh, 2009). And of course, pioneers share many of the same character traits as entrepreneurs – risk-taking, experimentation, creativity, and as will be outlined below, courage to strike out in new directions, challenge conventional wisdom and structures and revise previously strongly held or well-established views. But in the sense used here pioneers are those whose vision and activism are potentially much more radical than the 'social entrepreneurship' concept (Parkin, 2010).

As already suggested, one of the many features or traits of a pioneer is courage. In the Transition movement it is clear that it takes courage to accept, embrace and internalise the implications of peak oil and climate change. It also takes courage to criticise the status quo and seek to create change, as the history of struggle for political and social change tells us. A key virtue or character trait of the pioneer is courage and it is, at least in terms of the argument developed here, significant that courage is one of the classical and enduring cardinal virtues. As Van Wensveen points out, 'Courage is needed to shake familiar, but unsustainable habits and to challenge ecologically harmful practices, in institutions and structures of power. Moreover, courage is needed to venture into the unknown, to make new beginnings. *Without courage, one would not have the ability to persist with good habits such as frugality and temperance in a world that is likely to welcome such habits with mockery and threats*' (2000: 131; emphasis added). She goes on to suggest that there is a link between courage and vulnerability, in a manner directly compatible with my own account of vulnerability in the previous chapter:

> True courage must somehow involve the ability to embrace fear…. This again requires a basic personal attitude, namely vulnerability. People who both accept their existential vulnerability and can make themselves vulnerable (i.e. open) will have the ability to experience fear without panic. This will enable them to respond to dangerous situations with maturity and without harmful side effects….Vulnerability in the context of an ecological worldview implies the ability to face our creaturely limits, especially death, and to accept our dependence on the web of life (2000: 138-9).

For Hopkins, this element of personal courage is central to the transition to a low energy, sustainable post-peak oil society. As he puts it, 'understanding that the scale of this transition requires particular inner resources, not just an abstract intellectual understanding' (Hopkins, 2008: 79), and fully acknowledges that to accept the inevitability of the transition to a life beyond cheap oil and a climate changed world requires considerable courage and fortitude. Holding such a disposition is doubly demanding in the context of the majority of one's fellow citizens and the dominant culture more generally, either being indifferent, ignorant or explicitly rejecting any argument about the coming of the end of our current high-energy unsustainable lifestyles and its associated socio-economic infrastructure. Hence the explicit concern within the Transition movement, as indicated above, with the psychological and emotional dimensions of change, both at the collective and individual levels.

The notion of a pioneer also conveys a sense of identifying and venturing into new horizons of possibility and new frontiers of creativity, whether this is in thinking or doing. For example, Richard Heinberg, one of the main thinkers in the 'peak oil' movement, in suggesting the creation of 'Post Carbon outposts' (Heinberg, 2007: 235) implicitly or explicitly evokes the image of the American West as a frontier in which 'empty lands/wilderness' are broken up with scattered outposts of a different type of society. In the Transition movement the 'empty lands/wilderness' is the dominant western consumer and high energy way of life (conventional civilisation) and the outposts are low/post-carbon experiments and local initiatives. But the analogy still stands whether pioneer outposts are viewed in terms of actual experiments in post-carbon ways of life, or in cultivating modes of thinking and analysis which challenge the dominant cultural and economic narrative. Objectives such as food and energy self-reliance and security, which are central to the Transition vision, resonate with a fairly traditional 'pioneer mentality' of people venturing into new lands and without the infrastructure of society, or a national or globalised economy, and who had to support and fend for themselves. The transition vision of a local economy progressively decoupling from the long supply chains of energy, materials and commodities of the globalised economy does herald a clearly more self-reliant economic and social vision.[85]

Transition towns exemplify the cultivation of new 'sustainability' subjectivities and characters in integrating reflection and action across intellectual, emotional and practical dimensions of the self. The Transition movement's focus on 'head, hand and heart' denotes its character building potentialities. The cultivation of ecological virtue allows

[85] But will these outposts be as violent and lawless as the original American ones? (Dobson, personal communication). I think it is fair to say that the positive/upbeat character of the Transition movement is largely dependent upon the assumption that the transition from oil to energy descent will be gradual, and adaptation to climate change impacts will be both gradual and planned. It is thus an optimistic assumption, which means for critics (including friendly critics) that much of its progressive character (support for socio-economic equality, justice, participatory democratic forms etc) may be vulnerable to a 'hard' and abrupt rather than 'soft' and gradual transition away from oil and coping with the impacts of climate change (Barry and Quilley, 2009: 5-9). Here arguments about the possible 'decivilising' impacts (Elias, 2000) of a transition to more local, low carbon communities need to be taken seriously, which is why hard green thinkers canvassed in the introduction such as Kunstler, Korowicz, Jensen, Kingsnorth and Hine need to be listened to and not dismissed out of hand as too pessimistic, doom-saying or regressive.

us and can be measured to the extent it allows the integration of thinking, feeling and action. In the Transition movement case this is geared towards or woven into the re-creation of community at its foundation, as the baseline from which collective and local resilience can be created and sustained. The cultivation of 'earthiness' in Van Wensveen's terminology is most evident in the Transition process, a sense of creating identities linked to the earth (either directly through practices such as food growing or land management or indirectly through heightened awareness of human dependence on the earth) but in a resolutely non-romantic sense. As Van Wensveen points out 'earthy' people 'are not romantic dreamers. They will get their hands dirty to do what needs to be done…*And they are not perfectionists either*…in order to balance their great love of life with the constant messiness of life, earthy people need a sense of humor' (2000: 34-5; emphasis added). This non-perfectionist element is worth stressing, since one of the central features of the Transition movement, in part drawing on its permacultural roots or inspiration, is its resolute pragmatism, of not being tied down to ideological issues and political debate but simply 'getting things done that need doing'.[86] This non-perfectionism is also worth stressing since it helps underscore the 'concrete utopian' characterisation of the Transition movement, in that in guarding against the 'perfect becoming the enemy of the good' the Transition perspective is wary of Duncombe's uncompromising and unrealisable 'unconditional impossible demand' while still remaining a 'political dream' (Duncombe, 2007), and form of grounded hope for a realisable but different way of living.

Rituals of Gratitude and Generosity

An important aspect of collective resilience and one that the Transition movement articulates is that of ritual. By ritual here I do not necessarily mean religious or spiritual-based ceremonial practices, but rather collective practices that express and through their expression; create communal solidarity, a sense of belonging and meaning. These rituals such as harvest time, or around specific daily events, such as eating, or significant episodes within the life of a community, family and individual, such as birth, marriage/partnership and death. Rituals bind people together and since strong bonds and the re-creation of community are central to resilience, rituals are vital. As Astyk puts it, 'The fact is that some things will be lost in our new way of life. It is useless to pretend that the transformation to a lower-energy, lower-consumption society will always be painless and easy. Thus, the only possible way we can bring it about is to replace some of the pleasures we are losing with new ones – *with rituals of non-consumption that offer us something to replace what is lost*' (Astyk, 2008: 33; emphasis added).

[86] Sometimes this pragmatism expresses itself as a non-political or even anti-political stance in that some within the Transition movement view 'political' and 'political activism' as at best pointless and at worse destructive and disruptive of building alliances and coalitions of the willing locally. It has been one of the consistent critiques of the Transition movement that it naively presents a view of social change without involving political struggle, or that small-scale local efforts are sufficient to make the transition to a low energy economy and society. See for an example of these 'friendly' criticisms, Cato and Hillier (2010) and Read (2008).

As outlined in the previous chapter, a full acknowledgement of humanity's dependence on the non-human world is, for modern human subjects, living in highly complex, technologically advanced societies, often unsettling and disturbing. It is partly for this reason that green arguments about 'limits to growth', human dependence on the natural world, talk of ecological embeddedness and so on, have fallen on deaf ears. While on the face of it the appropriate attitude or disposition to that which we depend upon and which we have not nor do not create, is gratitude, this disposition towards nature is one largely alien to modern cultures, surviving only in certain religious observance. Significantly however, even in western cultures there is still some thin and anaemic sense of a grateful attitude towards nature and those whose (gendered) labour has helped produce and prepare the food, in the ritual of saying grace before meals for example. However, this overall lack of gratitude towards and acknowledgement of nature and reproductive labour, is extremely telling, and it is not easy to find spaces in modern living where we so give thanks for what we receive. And in the case of gendered labour the issue is not just about gratitude (which conveys a sense of recognition) but rectifying injustice and exploitation (to convey its value as necessary work that ought to be distributed less unequally).

Part of the important of gratitude I would suggest has to do with guarding against the temptations of a 'culture of contentment' to use Galbraith's term (Galbraith, 1993), to encourage a collective sense of mindlessness and amnesia about the sources of that contentment. This 'careless' attitude which is a feature of this culture of contentment is, as Galbraith points out, ultimately self-defeating and therefore unsustainable. As he puts it, 'Contentment sets aside, that which in the longer view disturbs contentment, it holds firmly to the thought that the long run may never come' (Galbraith, 1993: 173). Thus rituals and practices of gratitude can be seen as necessary correctives against this amnesia, reminding us in giving thanks for what we have of the fragility (and therefore contingent) of what we have and the necessary care, attentiveness and labour required for its production and enjoyment. As Onora O'Neill argues, 'Universal indifference to the care and preservation of natural and man-made environments undermines and withers human life and capacities and capabilities for action...*lives and cultures will remain vulnerable if they depend on environments which, although not damaged, are also not cherished'* (1996: 203; emphasis added).

Rituals around food seem to be particularly suggestive of ways for people, place and planet to re-connect, and are also central to the Transition vision. Consider the suggestion made in 2008 by Rajendra Pachauri head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that one of the things people could do to combat climate change would be to eat less red meat and perhaps have a weekly red-meat free day (Pachauri, 2008). Given that meat production and consumption is both extremely energy and water intensive but also accounts for around 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions, not eating meat one day a week is an effective way of individuals 'doing their bit' to combat climate change.

As part of our 'carbon dieting' this weekly ritual has obvious echoes with more religiously-based practices such as the Catholic one of not eating meat on Fridays or other religious practices around fasting or limiting one's diet. Or how the Belgium town of Ghent as initiated a 'meat-free' day one day a week as part of the local council's effort

to reduce its carbon footprint (Traynor, 2009).[87] Within Transition initiatives it is often the food groups and projects that tend to attract the most people and local energies, since food is something we need on a daily basis and both the production, preparation and consumption of food lend themselves almost naturally to rhythms around which rituals and shared practices can be developed (Swabe, 2008). Similarly, Peter Doran has, using a Foucauldian conception of *askesis*, looked at how 'personal carbon trading' could be viewed as prefigurative practice or 'technology of the self' for positive pro-environmental behaviour, for a low carbon world that also contributes to high quality of life (Doran, 2010). This goal of simultaneously achieving a low carbon but high wellbeing socio-economic order will be explored in more detail in chapter 5, as vital for the success of any post-growth economic proposals.

The point of such rituals of thanks and generosity around food is that they stand as occasions to pause and reflect upon our connections with one another and the non-human world. It also evokes a sense of re-introducing 'mindfulness' into these everyday activities, and indeed re-introducing meaning into these practices so that, as Benton points out, proper human food eating is not utilitarian or instrumental but cultural, social and symbolic (Benton, 1993). As Benton puts it, echoing Levi-Strauss' argument in his book *The Raw and the Cooked*, 'Proper human feeding-activity is symbolically, culturally mediated' (1993: 50). It is not simple about nourishment. It is for this reason that the Transition movement consciously seeks to re-connect people with the land, the soil, the practices of food growing, and the labour that goes into food production, preparation and consumption. This is another example of the 'de-sequestering' of a key part of daily life which echoes the argument above and in the last chapter about the dangers of 'sequestering' (Giddens, 1991) central aspects of the human condition in modernity as outlined in the previous chapter.

The Transition movement's focus on food is also about the (re)creation of a local 'food culture' and a fundamental revaluing of food (Sage, 2003; 2011; Pollen, 2007).[88] And a part of that re-creation is about according more time to food preparation and consumption and having a greater awareness of and connection to where, how, and who has grown and prepared one's meals. It is at this point that the Transition movement connects with the Slow Food movement and the latter's concern with reclaiming a conception of food as something beyond 'fuel for the body' and of preserving and protecting local distinctiveness and pride in local food cultures from the predations of an industrialised, chemicalised, homogenising and mass production food system.

The import of ritual in understanding and coping with climate change has been highlighted by the International Alliance of Religions and Conservation:

[87] Ghent has since been joined by 6 other cities to officially endorse this campaign for the sake of human health, animal welfare and climate change. Other cities who have endorsed the campaign include Cape Town, Hasselt and Mechelen (all in Belgium); Sao Paulo (Brazil); and Bremen (Germany).

[88] In this the movement articulates a position which stresses that there is no such thing as a 'post-agricultural society'.

> Climate change and environment issues are often presented as scary, or at least doom-ridden and gloomy. Yet human psychology does not work well when only told how bad we are. *The need to celebrate in order to appreciate better why we need to care for our planet, is something the faiths understand well and can help the often over-earnest secular groups to appreciate. Understanding the cyclical nature of festivals and lives also assists in helping build a profound environmental awareness into yearly rituals. We can want to protect the world because it is beautiful, not simply because it is useful* – and with that as our value, we might perhaps protect it better. (Alliance of Religions and Conservation 2007)

The notion of following the seasons, of rituals to mark significant times of the year – spring, growing, harvest, light/equinox etc. – is something that Transition initiatives seek to re-establish. This involves the revaluation of time, work and play using natural/agricultural conceptions of time against unilinear economic/industrial-capitalist conceptions of 'clock time'. There is thus an intimate connection within the forms of resilience fostered by the transition process and advocated by the Transition movement and the aims of the 'Slow Food' (Petrini, 2001; Petrini and Watson, 2001) and 'Slow Cities' movements (Honore, 2004). Not only is life in a post-carbon world a life with less energy, but also a life with less involuntary speed and mobility, with a different and slower pace of life.

An important issue to consider here is the manner in which such rituals evoke a different temporal pace and rhythm which is in direct opposition to the '24/7/365' industrialised version of time in modernity. Whether at the scale of 'ecological time' (i.e. the seasons in relation to agriculture, or temporal durations of resource use and re-growth) or 'biological time' (i.e. the necessarity for periods of daily rest and recovery, or viewed over a life span periods of dependency on others) or 'political time' (periods of economically 'non-productive' reflection and celebration), this focus on rituals and ceremonials stands (and has always stood as the work of Mikhail Bhaktin (1984) has demonstrated) in an attitude of resistance to the homogenising, discipline of administered time organised around efficiency, productivity and maximisation.[89] The transgressive and emancipatory and indeed comedic potential of rituals (or parody and self-parody) have also been identified as necessary for the green movement itself by Torgerson (1999: 87). In permacultural and resilience terms, such pauses and periods of non-economic activity (which is not of course to say that 'work' as opposed to 'employment' is absent from these activities) are forms of 'slack' and 'in-built redundancy' which are necessary for resilient living and human flourishing in an age of limits.

Virtue, Character and New Sustainability Identities

One of the implications of the Transition movement is the 'de-sequestering' of central aspects of the 'modern condition', and the creation of new resilient subjectivities as preconditions for creating new forms of 'ontological security'. Perhaps, 'reclaiming',

[89] One could go further here indicating yet another 'cyclical' temporal arc in the arguments of some classic republicans (such as Machiavelli discussed in chapter 7) who held a cyclical-cum-organic view of the life of the republic as something would grow, mature, die and then start again.

'recovering' or 'revealing' are more accurate and convey the positive and powerful ways in which the focus on the self, and the potential for the (re)creation of new less-consumer based identities (as well as interests), are part of the Transition promise. And a key feature of these new forms of ontological security is that they are collective in nature. This would seem to be a logical outcome of the pivotal claim of the Transition perspective that at the heart of transition is the re/creating or reviving of community and forms of social solidarity. Ontological security and identities in a post-carbon, post-growth world will clearly be different and found on fundamentally different bases than the ontological security and identities of an affluent, high-carbon society.

As Heinberg puts it, 'True individual and family security will come only with community solidarity and interdependence. If you live in a community that is weathering the energy downslope well, your personal chances of survival and prospering will be greatly enhanced, regardless of the degree of your personal efforts at stockpiling tools or growing food' (Heinberg, 2007: 234). Hyper-individualism and the extreme forms of atomisation witnessed in 'modern' societies are simply unsustainable, unfeasible and impossible in a carbon constrained and climate changed world. One of the clear implications of a post-carbon world is a more communal, collective world, but one that does not necessarily imply threats to individual liberty or cherished ideals of justice and equality, as will be developed later. Nor should this be seen as necessarily regressive and 'backward'. This appeal to social solidarity and community in a non-romantic sense, is particularly important in relation to overcoming the challenge of the transition itself – our collective detoxing from fossil fuels and conventional economic growth. Here the sometimes subtle, sometimes explicit connection between the Transition vision and wartime mobilisation, mostly harking back to the Second World War, is as telling as it is widespread within the Transition movement. Witness Lester Brown's claim that, 'The challenge is to build a new economy and to do it at wartime speed before we miss so many of nature's deadlines that the economic system begins to unravel' (Brown 2008: 22).

In his book *Plan B 3.0,* Brown draws extensively on the US experience of the Second World War and how the economy was re-fashioned and government and citizens mobilised for the shared task of fighting Japan and then Germany. In the same way, it is quite natural that the Transition perspective should gravitate towards the Second World War as the most recent historical example of the type of large-scale collective mobilisation needed in order to both manage the transition to a low energy, post-carbon world. At the heart of such analyses is a call for forms of solidarity, common purpose, a sense of a shared societal project and the need to repel a common enemy threatening a valued way of life. And therein lies one of the main differences and challenges facing the modern appeal to that historical experience. The 'enemy' for the Transition process is not some external force, but the very 'way of life' we have come to enjoy and aspire to over the past 50 years or so. So 'we' are 'our' enemy in this regard – or rather the patterned interlocking of dominant institutions and desires within consumer capitalism. Here of course the addiction focus of the Transition perspective does some work in seeing that at root the transition process is a cultural and psychological change, as well as being one based on diagnosing the structural causes of unsustainability and

maldevelopment. A high energy, high consumption way of life, made possible by intensifying processes of economic globalisation and resource throughput, is something that is desired by and actively promoted to billions around the world as 'the good life'. And yet it is this very western, consumerist way of life that needs to be radically transformed to create more resilient economies, communities and societies.

But it is not simply that we need to examine that way of life, but also the forms of subjectivity and identity that sustain and are sustained by the practices of that unsustainable way of life. And herein perhaps lies the lessons from Jonathan Lear's analysis from the previous chapter about the coping mechanisms needed to be resilient in the face of potentially radical disruption, to endure, survive and hopefully flourish. How does a culture or individual 'let go' of a valued way of life for another one? What are the subjectivities called forth by or consistent with the transition vision? What is a 'transitioning' or 'transitioned' subjectivity and identity? It is of course for this very reason that the Transition movement adopts an addiction model to analyse unsustainability in which a key aspect is not to change nature but to change our relationship to nature. In this sense self-mastery can be seen as a key ecological virtue in context of resilience – *to see that what needs mastering is not nature or other people, but our relationships to nature and others*. As Rachel Carson has noted, 'The human race is challenged more than ever before to demonstrate our mastery – not over nature but of ourselves' (in Black, 2006: 125). These new identities and subjectivities while they cannot be authoritively prescribed – following the addiction model, these changed identities cannot be imposed but have to be actively, consciously and most importantly, freely, chosen – are at the same time not infinite in range. After all, and to underscore the innovative and pioneering aspect of the Transition perspective, it is an open-ended experiment and no one size fits all.

There is I think a call for humility within the Transition movement and one that also expresses itself as the need for adopting a more cautious and considered approach to decision-making and action. Here again the permaculture roots of Transition are evident in that the former regards contemplation of an issue as vital in making the right choice and sees deliberation as a necessary prelude to action. This approach is partly related to the self-conscious way in which permaculture thinking views itself as a form of 'design thinking' which necessarily requires forethought, and above all time for creative thinking of how general principles can be applied to specific cases and issues. Humility here is thus connected to contemplation and experimentation, and the latter are connected to a slower pace of decision-making and action and of allowing more time before action. Having more time is one of the key features of what the Transition vision sees as both an inevitable, but also desirable feature of a low energy, resilient and sustainable way of life. Slower, more contemplative and humble senses of identity and ways of thinking, are not incompatible with innovation and creativity.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to examine the idea of resilience as a response to vulnerability. With its permaculture roots, from which it gets it understanding of resilience, the

Transition Towns movement can be viewed as forms of 'concrete utopian' practices in the sense of being experiments within a self-transforming present as opposed to the creation of some new future based on abstract principles. The Transition focus on what is termed 'The Great Re-Skilling' (Hopkins, 2008) can be directly linked to the point made in this chapter about resilience as a capacity. And as such i.e. a capacity (or a virtue) it can be bolstered and supported (in both the individual and community), or it can be undermined and degraded (or un- or under-cultivated in virtue ethics terms). One of the reasons greens and those involved in the Transition movement suggest our current communities and societies are lacking in resilience is that our globalised, centralised economies and systems of governance and culture have systematically 'de-skilled' people and made us unable to meet almost all of our own basic needs. But more importantly it has undermined some of the most important resilience capacities, particularly solidarity and community and a basic belief that communities of people can shape the conditions (socio-ecological and social) for their own flourishing. And as suggested in this chapter one of the key features of a resilient community is both a sense of empowerment coupled with imagination of creative responses to how to achieve high quality of life with low carbon and resource use.

Thus the vulnerability or lack of resilience of our current energy or food system lies not just in the vulnerability of globalised supply chains connecting distance places of production with consumption (vulnerable to geopolitical unrest, terrorist attack, rise in the price and/or availability of oil, natural gas etc). But also in thereby promoting a division of labour globally which has systematically discouraged people and communities from possessing and practicing various skills and forms of self-provisioning and self-production. A form of 'learned helplessness' – well documented by pioneers in this area such as Ivan Illich (Illich, 1976, 1908) – can be said to characterise large swathes of western populations who believe they cannot change their situation, i.e. that success or failure nowadays is independent of and outside our own capacities for action.

The Transition vision reverses the ecological and socially disembedding and well-being reducing aspects of the division of labour, the hyper-specialisation and the progressive de-skilling of individuals and communities in modern societies. The Transition movement's emphasis on craft, re-skilling and focus on the 'head, heart and hand' of the human being, without rejecting modernity or modern technologies, open up the possibility that within the Transition process modern work can be rendered more 'practice like' in the MacIntyre sense of practice (Breen, 2007: 413). In some respects the Transition movement shares elements of Alastair MacIntyre's vision, as outlined in the previous chapter, but without the danger of it becoming another anti-modern, romantic, backward looking social experiment. This is especially so if, as will be suggested in Chapter 5 we begin seriously to question the confusion of formally paid 'employment' and 'work', including especially reproductive labour.

A central dimension of this 'concrete utopian' approach that I detect in the Transition movement lies in the shift from maximising productivity through efficiency to maximising adaptive capacity. As Folke at al point out, '*Thus a fundamental challenge is to change perceptions and mind-sets, among actors and across all sectors of society,*

from the over-riding goal of increasing productive capacity to one of increasing adaptive capacity, from the view of humanity as independent of nature to one of humanity and nature as co-evolving in a dynamic fashion within the biosphere' (Folke et al, 2002: 4; emphasis added). In this respect, permaculture insights about deliberately designing redundancy and slack into whatever system you are managing or working on (which may go against the goals of efficiency) are important since it turns out that maximising adaptive capacity i.e. resilience, is intimately related to having sufficient 'slack' and built-in redundancy within the system. Building in slack creates the space, the 'head room' for creative adaptive management, thus while 'redundant' and 'sup-optimal' from an orthodox economic view of efficiency (maximising returns while minimising resources or inputs), such decisions need to be viewed rather as necessary 'investments', required to create resilient, sustainable socio-ecological systems. The dominance of neo-classical economics represents perhaps one of the most deep-rooted obstacles to the transition away from unsustainability – being the source of a narrow focus on efficiency, maximisation, and generally undermining the capacity for resilience. Hence the following chapter examines this hegemonic mode both as a maladaptive way of thinking about the economy – which after all is the most significant dimension of our metabolic relationship with the environment – but also as a cultural, ideological and indeed 'mythic' mode of thinking, which enables it to maintain its dominance, crowding out alternatives, despite its evident maladaptiveness.

Chapter 4

A critique of neo-classical economics as a regime of 'truth': empire and emperors with no clothes

'Economics is an overall, absolute essential. The laws of supply and demand come pretty close to absolute truth – or to absolute reality – as you do in this world. If that's what you man by totalitarianism, then I plead guilty'. (Sir Mark Moody Stuart, former Director of Shell, in Hinton and Robinson, 2002).[90]

Introduction

As someone drawn to the arguments of what one can call the 'Marxist-Lentilist' wing of the green movement[91], I am by political nature (and activism) drawn to political economy as an essential part of any comprehensive explanation or interpretation of social phenomena and also as an equally crucial element of any practical action. It seems to me that without political economy one is left with abstract (albeit interesting) theorising without engaging in the (sometimes brutal) 'facts on the ground', the issues of injustice, inequality, powerlessness which are at the root of unsustainability and the undermining of human well-being and collective resilience. Thus, I see adopting a political economy as part of adopting an applied approach to political theory.

Political economy – by which I mean the overlap, complex interaction between what is conventionally called 'economics', the economy, the market and politics, political power, the state – is one (if not the) most powerful set of forces shaping, controlling, freeing, constructing and re-constructing human relations with one another as well. This chapter offers a critique of conventional economics (neo-classical economics) while the following two chapters outline a green political economy alternative.

As indicated in this chapter, I suggest that the current dominant version of political economy –neo-classical economics – disciplines, orders, and organises human social relations and socio-ecological relations. Political economy is important since it refers to that part of human society which more than any other element of human society, regulates the metabolism between human societies and the non-human world. In short,

[90] The quotation from Mark Moody Stuart is taken from the publication, *Words Misunderstood*, by Lucy Hinton and Jonathan Robinson (Somoho, Resurgence, new economics foundation, 2002). The publication was distributed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002.

[91] That is, the 'red-green' or eco-socialist end of the green movement. Or the 'watermelon' end – that is green on the outside and red/socialist in the middle, a perspective that also accommodates my political evolution from far left to green politics in Ireland.

our conceptions of political economy, how we think about 'the economy' and what constitutes 'economics', is a large determinant of the material i.e. resource, energy and ecological dimensions of sustainability or unsustainability, as well as shaping value-based and ideological understandings of those relations. This metabolic conception of the economy is a key element (along with acknowledging normative and political principles to govern the economy) of any green political economy, as developed in more detail in the next two chapters.

This chapter begins with a Foucauldian-cum-Marxist critique of neo-classical economics as a form of knowledge/power which functions as a hegemonic 'regime of truth' on the economic imaginary which crowds out all alternatives. I then present and interpret neo-classical economics as a form of ideology thus questioning the fiction of it as a value-neutral 'science' before proceeding to outline and defend the view that in certain aspects, particularly the foundational and axiomatic status of 'economic growth', orthodox economics actually constitutes a modern form of 'myth'. It then proceeds to outline and analyse this in practice in relation to the 'heterodox economics' resistance to the neo-classical hegemony, through both outlining some of the main elements of the heterodox critique and its appeal above all else for greater pluralism within the teaching and understanding of 'economics'.

The public policy and real world implications of neo-classical economics are then outlined in terms of how the axiomatic status of economic growth leads to what I call, following John McMurtry, 'the cancer stage of capitalism' (McMurtry, 1999). The chapter concludes with an analysis of another real world implication of neo-classical economic hegemony in terms of the latter functioning as the dominant 'grammar' i.e. 'rules of the game' of modern policy-making, giving it tremendous power and influence as an ideology. This ideology, as this chapter points out, has become so successfully ingrained and culturally embedded in terms of how we think about the economy and economics (not least through its exiling of alternatives within the academy and wider political discourse) that it is largely viewed as 'commonsense'.

A critique of neo-classical/bourgeois economics

Foucault (2008) in a recently published English translation of lectures on biopolitics and political economy from the late 1970s, connects political economy, specifically capitalist political economy to the modern liberal order and its need for 'docile bodies' to govern. By capitalist political economy I understand as denoting both the discipline/knowledge of 'neo-classical economics', and a configuration of state-market-community relations which seeks to disembed the market from both state and community, as articulated by Karl Polanyi in *The Great Transformation* (Polanyi, 1947), Foucault in these lectures sets out to trace the genealogy of the 'art of government' in bourgeois society, with its ever-expanding attempt to manage bodies, populations and resources. Foucault analyses the logic of liberal economics, and of the new version of subjectivity and identity (what can be termed '*Homo oeconomicus'*) that corresponds to this logic.

For Foucault, capitalist political economy within modernity becomes the 'major form of knowledge' (Foucault, 2007: 108) through which the new liberal order would know, appraise and order human (and non-human) life. Part of this process by which political economy becomes a master form of knowledge and power, is that the market comes to be interpreted as a naturally existing phenomenon which 'obeyed and had to obey 'natural', that is to say spontaneous mechanisms' of exchange and trade (Foucault, 2008: 31-32).[92] This *naturalising* of the market is of course not simply a way of empowering this economic order, but also crucially *depoliticises* the capitalist market, its relations and associated identities and subjectivities. This move thus effectively removes it from any critique which could potentially lead to its replacement or radical restructuring. As I put it elsewhere, the power of neo-classical/capitalist economic thinking and logic comes in large part because it has 'crowded out' alternatives (Barry, 1999a), and rendered itself as an objective, quasi-transcendental or 'naturalised truth' about not just how the economy operates but how it *ought* to operate. This is what Foucault means when he describes the regime of governmentality of the early liberal/bourgeois order as one oriented towards and based on a regime of 'economic truth' (Foucault, 2008: 43-44).

He also observes the growth and accumulation imperative at the heart of liberal/bourgeois political economy, a defining issue for a green political economy perspective and one which distinguishes it from both right-wing (capitalist, neoliberal and neoclassical economics) and left-wing (Marxist and Keynesian) perspectives. Foucault however, gives the imperative for economic growth a partly international relations/international political economy interpretation. He sees growing material affluence through global trade and economic competition as a functional requirement for securing peace between otherwise militarily rival European nations (ibid: 55).

An extremely important insight from Foucault is that economic growth is neoliberalism's 'one true social policy' (Foucault, 2008: 144). This is a useful way for green political economy to examine the issue since it highlights not just that economic growth is a functional imperative for neoliberalism (Dryzek, 2005; Dryzek et al, 2003). Much more than that, Foucault's insight points out that the entire edifice of the neoliberal project, its associated identity-constituting practices (from consumerism to competitive individualism), its mobilising of particular desires and suppression of others, its vision of 'market society', and what may be termed the 'neoliberal social contract', is entirely dependent upon continuing economic growth. Hence any critique of growth threatens this neoliberal social contract, which together with some of the points raised in the last chapter about the imputed 'regressive' and 'backward' character of green arguments against growth, may again explain why this critique from greens evinces such a strong and virulent negative response.

Unlike many Marxists, and some green thinkers, Foucault does not see the emergence of a naturalised, normalised market-based economy as one comprised of passive consumers and workers on the one hand, and a scheming state and capitalist class on the other. He acknowledges consumption and later excessive consumerism as key elements which

[92] Here Foucault's thinking links to Adam Smith's observation of the 'propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another' (Smith, 1776: 10).

discipline and help create 'docile bodies', but suggests capitalism and the liberal/market order does not simply pursue the creation of a mass society of consumers. Rather, and anticipating later work on social psychology and the cultural and identity-constitutive dimensions of consumption and consumerism (Doran, 2010; Jackson, 2009; Kasser, 2008), what the capitalist order requires is a proactive and self-motivated society of 'willing and wilful consumers' orientated around and by the norms and normalisation of market, competitive, calculative and specifically 'entrepreneurial' behaviour, values, identities and practices.

Ultimately, as Polanyi perceptively put it, this results in disembedding the market from non-market (political, cultural or religious) norms, and the ultimate creation (and continual recreation) of a distinct new society or social order – namely 'market society'. As Polanyi eloquently puts it:

> The market pattern...being related to a peculiar motive of its own, the motive of truck or barter, is capable of creating a specific institution, namely, the market. Ultimately, that is why the control of the economic system by the market is of overwhelming consequence to the whole organisation of society: it means no less than the running of society as an adjunct of the market. *Instead of economic relations being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the market*. (Polanyi, 1947: 57; emphasis added)

That market norms are dominant in market societies may seem like an oxymoron in recognising their ubiquity and widespread acceptance, endorsement and reinforcement in everyday practices, the media, advertising, popular culture etc. in most Western countries and others. However, it is nonetheless important to stop and acknowledge that, a) it was not always so (there were/are alternatives) and, b) this transformation is (historically speaking) relatively recent, and c) therefore the market and 'market society' under capitalism can be changed.

The Neo-Classical Model: Twelve Theses

I begin by outlining 'Twelve Theses on Neo-Classical Economics'.

1. the fact that the 'economy' is the material/metabolic foundation/bridge/link between the human and non-human worlds, also effects relations of power within human societies;

2. neo-classical economics' purported objectivity, 'scientific' status and 'value neutrality' is false since it is as value-laden and based on ethical and political judgements, as other ethical or political position and prescriptions;

3. related to that, this lends economics the illusion of being able to definitively establish the 'truth', mostly through its use of quantitative and numeric methods, what Marglin (2008: 136) calls the algorithmic 'ideology of knowledge' of economics, or what Foucault terms the 'economic truth';

4. modern economics regards itself as defined by its methodology and approach, which has (almost) universal application to all human affairs, rather than a subject matter, 'the economy' per se[93];

5. the 'naturalising' of the institutions of the modern market economy – such as 'the market', 'private property', 'competition', 'efficiency' etc. – in such a way that these are both 'natural' (beyond the capacity of humans to alter) and also 'good', if we want economic growth and material well-being;

6. which in turn establishes 'economics' and 'economists' as the professional 'experts' on how the economy works, thus 'crowding out' or marginalising 'non-economic' and 'non-expert' commentary or views about the economy;

7. allowing its analyses and aims – most crucially the concept and objective of orthodox 'economic growth' – to be accepted within a pluralist social context i.e. it is something different value positions can accept, endorse and support as a 'common good';

8. its capacity to deliver (albeit unequally) material benefits to enough people (by often hiding, externalising or sequestering the social and environmental costs of economic growth), but nevertheless it is regarded and promoted as a form of knowledge that 'works';

9. its supposed 'non-political' character –related to 2 above, which;

10. supports powerful interests, groups, forms of thinking and institutions within society, and allows the by-passing of ethical, political debate, and perhaps more crucially of all;

11. its position as the 'master discipline' or form of knowledge within policy-making and political decision-making by the state; such that all discourse and debate must ultimately be translated into a form acceptable to neo-classical economics.

12. which means that as well as 'crowding out' rival accounts of the economy, as well as political and ethical debate, neo-classical economics 'colonises' non-economic areas of life, such as health, family, the domestic sphere, community and politics i.e. it moves outside its own subject area.[94]

While all of these 'theses' are interlinked, it is the imputed 'value-free' (and therefore supposedly non-ethical and non-political) character of modern neo-classical economics that I particularly wish to focus on here. Simply put, economics is not, and can never be, either a political or ethical free zone. Indeed much of the criticism of economics in this

[93] As Levitt and Dubner put it, 'Since the science of economics is primarily a set of tools, as opposed to a subject matter, then no subject, however offbeat, need be beyond its reach' (Levitt and Dubner, 2006: 14).
[94] For an excellent historical account of 'economics imperialism', see Fine and Milonakis (2009).

book is motivated by a desire for supporters of neo-classical economics to 'come clean' about the value judgements and ethical positions that underpin it, rather than simply seeking its eradication or abolition. Any assessment of the place of modern economics in helping us address actually existing unsustainability must start from recognising it as being as ideological and value-based as feminist, conservative, nationalist, socialist or green approaches to economics. This is why 'political economy' is a far more accurate term to describe any approach to the economy, and this explicit political and ethical aspect is a fact that was understood in the history of economics by great economic thinkers from Adam Smith, Malthus, Mill, Marx to Keynes.[95] However, unlike these political positions modern economics has evolved to a 'mythic' status in its almost 'full spectrum' domination, its wide-spread acceptance and infiltration of many aspects of modern life and ways of thinking, within and way beyond the academy and official policy making. From a Foucaldian perspective, we observe neoliberal political economy as creating a social order which not only makes 'greed good', 'insecurity' necessary, and 'risk' both individual and natural, but also 'scarcity' ever present even amidst affluence and plenty. In this way it is not just that capitalism represents a 'disembedding' of the economy from society, but the insertion of prevailing economic (especially financial) norms within society and social relations themselves (Langley, 2008). As Panitch and Konings point out in relation to America, 'neoliberalism....embedded financial forms and principles more deeply in the fabric of American society' (Panitch and Konings, 2009: 68). These concepts and processes will be explored in this and the following two chapters.

For Tim Jackson, this quasi-transcendental, naturalised 'truth' of the dominant economic mindset expresses itself as myth. As he puts it, 'Every society clings to a myth by which it lives. Ours is the myth of economic growth' (Jackson, 2009a: 5). Evidence of both its mythic and hegemonic status is that to question 'economic growth' is to question the most fundamental, 'conventional' and therefore 'commonsensical' and 'natural' features of the modern political, cultural and economic worldview. Bolstered by the 'truths' of, *inter alia*, the 'efficient market hypothesis', 'dynamic stochastic general equilibrium', 'trickle down economics' and 'privatisation' (Quiggin, 2010), 'the market' is viewed as a self-regulating mechanism equipped with a built-in, immanent ability to correct itself. And giving it what 'it' wants, deregulation, reducing social protections, scaling back the welfare state etc. will ensure prosperity qua orthodox economic growth for all. This is the one true policy of neoliberalism. In the current economic crisis, reference to 'the markets' and 'what the markets will bear' etc. are all testimony to the naturalised and 'God-like' character of these extra-human forces. And since these are presented as largely beyond human control and 'perfect', this means, as Venn perceptively notes, that '*For neo-liberalism, then, it is not the system that fails; failure has become individualised* – itself an aspect of the model of enterprise society and enterprise man' (Venn, 2009:

[95] Indeed while there is a misperception that talking about 'political economy' automatically places whatever analysis that flows from this position as being on the left, it should be remembered that influential right wing thinking on the economy from von Mises, to Hayek to Friedman, and neo-conservatives such as Kristol, all accepted the inherently political dimension of economics, and indeed saw this as central to their 'political project' in creating 'free market societies' .

emphasis added). On this view the capitalist system and all its elements are naturalised, beyond human control and/or 'good', but in constant need of propriation.

Jackson continues by pointing out how, '*questioning growth is deemed to be the act of lunatics, idealists and revolutionaries*' (Jackson, 2009b: 14). Much like the Soviet state was compelled to imprison dissidents in mental health institutions and to have critics of the 'workers paradise' branded as 'lunatics', likewise those – such as greens – who have long criticised economic growth have been marginalised, ridiculed and viewed as 'irrational' and branded as 'dissidents'. Greens, as critics of growth were all three of Jackson's roles rolled into one. Greens were lunatics, revolutionaries and idealists all at the same time, which given that being any one of them was sufficient to be dismissed, explains quite a lot about how and why greens and their ideas have been marginalised by the state, mainstream society, and within the academy. In fact much more than simply being dismissed as crazy and utopian, criticising economic growth is tantamount to a fundamental act of *betrayal* in modern societies, a public act of *disloyalty* to the modern political economic order. While considered in more detail in the concluding chapter (chapter 8), here I wish to connect those 'dissidents' within regimes such as the former USSR, and communist eastern Europe, and contemporary critics of economic growth in modern liberal capitalist societies. As 'dissidents' those who critique orthodox economic growth threaten the entire edifice of the contemporary neoliberal social order and its regime made up of a 'property owning democracy', flexible security ('flexicurity') and security based on personal investment not collective risk sharing, 'active labour market policies', 'shareholder capitalism' night-watchman state etc. (Mellor, 2010: 58-81; Langley, 2008).

The enormous cultural, everyday and discursive power of conventional neo-classical economic thinking (even, as is most often the case, if it is not understood in those terms), can be seen in what Jonathan Aldred terms 'veto economics'. According to him, 'assertions about economics are used as a kind of veto to rule out new ideas and proposals without further discussion…In its most extreme form, veto economics rejects ideas and proposals with just one word, offering no further explanation. Favourite veto words include 'inefficient', 'irrational' and 'anti-competitive…as a last resort there is always the plain but vacuous condemnation "uneconomic"' (Aldred, 2008: 3-4). Indeed, how different is this method of dealing with criticism to the ways in which former communist states dismissed dissidents as irrational, 'unscientific', disloyal, 'un-patriotic' and 'trouble-makers', unsettling the harmony and stability of the regime and threatening the well-being of society with their heterodoxy? I note here that just as most of the dissident movements in former communist societies were arguing for democratic freedom and political pluralism, equally the 'heterodox economic movement' (discussed later), likewise does not seeking to abolish the existing orthodoxy, but rather to replace the domination of one model with greater pluralism, openness and the free exchange of different ideas and economic models.

This serves to distinguish the heterodox economics movement from some other political economic movements – most notably Marxism – which largely seek not to promote pluralism in economics, but replace the current capitalist, neo-classical orthodoxy with an

anti-capitalist, non-neo-classical alternative. It is telling that the main heterodox movement has evolved under the banner of 'pluralist economics' (Fullbrook, 2007; Reardon, 2009; Garnett, Olsen, and Starr, 2009). While each of the '12 theses' has something to offer in terms of summarising the critique of neo-classical economics I want to defend, it is the active promotion and development of greater pluralism within economic thinking that is the most essential. A simple but revealing question to ask here is this: while we rightly accept that pluralism is necessary and desirable as constitutive aspects of a democratic approach to organising and thinking about political life, why should we accept anything less when it comes to decision-making about the economy? *What is to be feared from greater pluralism in economics?* Apart from the undermining of the dominant economic orthodoxy that is?

'Technically Competent Barbarians' and the Mythic Status of Modern Economics

Renowned holocaust scholar and former director of the International Research Institute at Yad Vashem, Yehud Bauer in an address to the German Bundestag, mused on the reasons how the evils of the Nazi regime gained intellectual and cultural acceptance within Germany. For him, 'The major role in this was played by the universities, the academics. I keep returning to the question of whether we have indeed learnt anything, *whether we do not still keep producing technically competent barbarians in our universities*' (Bauer, 1998; emphasis added). When it comes to the teaching of economics at universities – and sadly many other forms of knowledge which have been influenced (or corrupted might be closer to the truth) by modern economics, such as large swathes of political science, sociology, law or planning for example – a provocative thought would be to ask whether Bauer is correct in his analysis. Rather than serving to weed out, transform or blunt the rougher edges off such 'barbaric', but perfectly rational forms of thinking and action, are universities in fact complicit in maintaining and increasing its reach?

Bo Rothstein, picking up on Bauer's argument, points to the dominance of empirical/quantitative focus in modern 'political science' (the term 'science' itself here of course immediately draws attention to the problem) which has increasingly drawn inspiration and methodological techniques from neo-classical economics, such as methodological individualism, utility maximisation and instrumental rationality. Like Bauer he wonders if the profession is producing 'technically competent barbarians' (Rothstein, 2005: 5). That is, highly trained and skilled professionals devoid of ethical reflexivity, trained to believe that ethical, normative thinking and argumentation are 'outside' and are not integral to, or part of, the 'proper' remit of their activity.

The criticism being developed here is not simply that the 'barbaric' logic of modern neo-classical economics is destroying people and planet. It is also that a large part of the reason for this barbaric and life-destroying logic is the failure and resistance of this way of thinking about the economy to integrate ethical and political-normative considerations as core features. In other words, it is possible to 'rescue' neo-classical economics from itself as it were, and to recover and establish its 'proper place' at the table amongst other

forms of knowledge and normative positions in discussing the economics: what the economy is, and how best it ought to be thought about and organised. An account of economics devoid or actively resistant to the integration of normative and ethical thinking (as much as being innocent of the implications of the second law of thermodynamics), paves the way to global-scale ecological degradation, human insecurity and misery. That is, production of actually existing unsustainability. A special report of *New Scientist* headlined 'The Folly of Economic Growth: How to Stop the Economy Killing the Planet' (New Scientist, 2008) says it all.

Economics does not merely describe and explain or predict the world; it actively creates and re-creates it in its own image and in line with its own value system and logic. One of the more interesting about neo-classical economics as an ideology is that it requires passive consent, empty displays of loyalty, rather than active belief. This is particularly related to boom periods when this model is seen to be 'delivering the goods' and citizens can be safely transformed into consumers. This fits perfectly with the classical liberal dictum of 'silence equalling happiness', in the sense that active citizenship, protesting, public debate and political activism, can be viewed as evidence of 'political system' failure. Citizens only protest or get involved in political life when there is a problem goes one liberal version of democratic politics (Berry, 1989). When citizens 'tend their gardens' and concern themselves with consumption, their private lives and so on, this can be viewed both as evidence that people in not being actively involved in politics are generally contented. Indeed, not being involved in politics is a 'right', and denotes a particular type of liberal citizenship which ought to be promoted and valued (Schumpeter, 1975) and is necessary for a neoliberal market order. Thus acceptance of neo-classical economics as an ideology is compatible with Adorno's point that under mass consumer capitalism, 'there are no more ideologies in the authentic sense of false consciousness, only advertisements for the world through its duplication and the provocative lie *which does not seek belief but commands silence*' (Adorno, 1981: 34; emphasis added). Silence and compliance are more important to supporting this view of the economy, since like in the story of the Emperor's new clothes; it is uncritical silence which allows the fiction to exist, for the 'lie' to be real and the fiction to be so actively desired by many.

In naturalising the economy and fetishising the market, neo-classical economics commands silence where there should be robust, public and on-going debate. In its naturalising impulses is revealed the essential mythic status of modern economics – rendering a human construction into a more than human almost 'natural process', and in so doing removing human agency from anything more than minor tinkering with the totem of the God-like 'market'. How different is the advice of mainstream economists in their 'predictions' of what 'the market will bear' from the advice of shamans and priests of old about what 'the Gods need'? How different are budgets in all their public symbolism, theatre and predictable scripts from ancient propriation rites? Or talk of the 'fundamentals being sound', being that much different from 'the gods are happy'? As Elliot and Atkinson put it in their book, *The Gods that Failed: How Blind Faith in Markets has Cost us our Future* (Elliott and Atkinson, 2009),

> They [the banking class] promised a 'transparent' future in which all costs and prices would be clearly laid out, allowing people to make informed choices in their lives. They have delivered a world of bizarre, occult financial knowledge, one in which everything from the true cost of a mobile-phone package to the real value of billions of pounds' worth of 'securistised' debt is impossible to gauge…*The circularity of the whole business is rather like a fabled perpetual motion machine of yesteryear*. Rising asset prices support increased borrowing which supports economic growth and rising asset prices. Everything runs smoothly as long as we keep on borrowing ever more money. (Elliott and Atkinson, 2009: 154; emphasis added)

What must be highlighted is not their particular analysis of the current economic crisis (though on the whole I would agree with it), but rather their emphasising the ideological, wish-fulfilment and mythic character of the economic thinking underpinning and justifying this 'perpetual economic growth machine'. The financial 'New Olympians', as Elliott and Atkinson call the banking elite, become the 'new gods', modern mythical heroes of economic success and glory, offering economic benefits to those willing to suspend their belief that economic growth, debt-based credit creation, and rising asset prices could not and cannot continue infinitely.

Modern economics communicated by authoritively detailed financial–mathematical algorithms, risk spreading formulae and software (here directly borrowing from the mathematisation within contemporary orthodox economics), has created for itself a sheen of unimpeachable 'expertise' and mathematical 'truth'. What this model really traded on, and what made it so compellingly attractive was its capacity to exploit the wish-fulfilment of the 'devotee', i.e. the investor, the speculative house-owner, property developer, pension fund manager and consumer, in convincing them of a trick not even alchemists of old would have dared pull off (Mellor, 2010). Securitising debt and thereby transforming 'debt' into an 'asset' on a massive scale is surely the modern equivalent of turning dross into gold.[96] Though perhaps there is another more recent (and related) example of political alchemy. I am thinking here of the strategy that most western governments have played in response to the 2008 global financial crisis – namely that the 'solution' to the private debt incurred by the risky behaviour of private banks is public sector cuts and austerity (Baker, 2010; Barry, 2011b). That the edifice of the world's financial bubble was revealed to be a massive Ponzi scheme when it crashed in 2008, is a story not merely of greedy bankers, sub-prime mortgages, financial speculation, lazy and complicit regulators and the widespread production and dissemination of 'weapons of financial mass destruction'. It is also a story of the compelling power of the myth of economic growth, and profit, of the comforting nostrums of orthodox economics trumping alternatives, and requiring from believers only their financial assets and acquiescence rather than their active understanding and engagement.

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[96] This mythic character of so-called 'rational' economics was also perceptively noted by Keynes who wrote: 'For at least another hundred years we must pretend to ourselves and to everyone that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice and usury and precaution must be our gods for a little longer still' (Keynes, 1931, 372; emphasis added).

Of course this critique is no new. The mythological dimensions of capitalism were noted by Marx. In writing of the 'entrepreneur' qua exploitative capitalist – exploitative in the sense of exciting the wants and fantasies of others and then using this for purposes of control and manipulation (and gain), he writes:

> Every man speculates upon creating a new need in another in order to force him to a new sacrifice, to place him in a new dependence, and to entice him into a new kind of pleasure and thereby into economic ruin. Everyone tries to establish over others an alien power in order to find there the satisfaction of his own egoistic need. With the increasing mass of objects, therefore, the realm of alien entities to which man is subjected also increases. Every new product is a new potentiality of mutual deceit and robbery. Man becomes increasingly poor as a man; he has increasing need of money in order to take possession of the hostile being. The power of his money diminishes directly with the growth of the quantity of production, i.e. his need increases with the increasing power of money. The expansion of production and of needs becomes an ingenious and always calculating subservience to inhuman, depraved, unnatural and imaginary appetites. Private property does not know how to change crude need into human need; its idealism is fantasy, caprice, and fancy. No eunuch flatters his tyrant more shamefully or seeks by more infamous means to stimulate his jaded appetite, in order to gain some favour, than does the eunuch of industry, the entrepreneur, in order to acquire a few silver coins or to charm the gold from the purse of his dearly beloved neighbour. *The entrepreneur accedes to the most depraved fancies of his neighbour, plays the role of pander between him and his needs, awakens unhealthy appetites in him, and watches for every weakness so that later on he may claim the remuneration for this labour of love*. (Marx, 1961: 113; emphasis added)

More recently one could see a similar argument in the work of MacIntyre on the dangers of the emergence of 'the manager' as the 'new hero' and archetype of modernity – or what MacIntyre calls a modern 'character' (MacIntyre, 1982: 26-27) – and its elevation of emotivist, relativist, 'bureaucratic individualism'. Thus the 'financial manager' can be seen as a particular sub-species which has evolved over the two decades since MacIntyre's initial exploration of the generic character of 'the manager' in modernity.

A human creation - 'the market' - is presented and understood as an alien and external power standing over us, determining our fate and to which our only course of action is propriate and adaptation since it is beyond our agency to alter or influence. Hence we are alienated from that which human beings have created and re-create on a daily basis through 'market exchange' and acts of production, consumption and distribution. As Vogel suggests, 'Prices are determined by social relations...but they appear instead as things that themselves determine those relations. The unemployment rate, the trade surplus, the performance of the Dow Jones Industrial Average... all *appear as things external to each of us that form the given and unchangeable context within which we act.*

They appear, that is, like facts of nature, not as the results of our own doings' (Vogel, 2011: 195; emphasis added).

That one of the main achievements of the dominance of neo-classical economics is public silence (and hence compliance) about economics – or to put it another way, economics is reduced to a 'technical' exercise in which only experts can participate – can be seen in the movement of departments of economics into 'management schools' in our universities and out of schools of social science. This act denotes the very creation of new orders and kinds of knowledge about economic management in a Foucauldian sense. It can only be on the assumption that there is one 'correct' or 'true' model of the economy and associated knowledge that allows such an audacious institutional development, and only the power of incumbency and inertia which allows its domination to continue virtually unchecked.[97] Lock-step with the ideological fantasy that we have reached the 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1992), orthodox neo-classical economics congratulates itself on having won the ideological battle and vanquished all rivals. Now alongside the 'end of history' we have the 'end of debate about the economy': this is exactly what Foucault means by a regime of 'economic truth'. Those who question this regime, such as dissident, heterodox economists base their counter-argument not simply on the 'falsity' of the neo-classical regime, but also couch their critiques on the grounds that the regime effectively 'crowds out' pluralism in economics, a putative economic pluralism which they are only too conscious of stressing includes neo-classical economics itself.

Part of the issue – indeed a benefit – in including ethical judgement within economic decision-making is that it debunks another element of the myth of modern economics – namely that of expertise based on knowledge giving those who 'possess it' (and have the credentials etc. to prove it) having automatic and justified superiority over 'non-experts'. However, this levelling of economic analysis – i.e. permitting non-economists and non-experts a role – undermines both the claim of modern economics to be able to produce and know the 'truth' about the economy, and also the desire for non-economists/non-experts for the latter to be the case. As Aldred notes, 'Often the truth is that economists don't know…*This kind of modesty is not what many of us want to hear*. We yearn for the comfort and security of definite answers. But an honest economic analysis can typically hope to do much less than this' (2008: 8; emphasis added). And the economist as contemporary shaman, speaking in suitability authoritative and reassuring 'tongues', delivers on this desire for definitiveness. Typically any comprehensive, honest approach to addressing economic issues requires recourse to democratic political and ethical debate, seeing the issue from a variety of positions – scientific, political, cultural, social, and ecological as well as 'economic'. Debates about the macro-economy are not and cannot be reduced 'technical' ones, such that a few so-called 'experts' can decide. While of course such macro-economic, strategic decisions do require technical knowledge to inform decision-making, they are such that they have to involve explicitly *political* forms of decision-making. And ideally where possible, democratically through forms of

[97] I owe this point to Molly Scott-Cato.

participatory economic planning and self-organisation, some of which will be canvassed in the following chapter.[98]

Added to this is the dogmatism and intellectual arrogance that modern economics exudes – its refusal to be more modest in its claims, own up to its limits or admit its flaws mistakes. This of course is a major problem when one thinks of the multiple negative consequences for people and planet of obediently following its prescriptions. Having an impressive looking mathematical formula for one's views does not either make those views 'the truth' and therefore superior or better than the views of others, nor does this algorithmic underpinning make those views attractive or desirable. It can often just mean that you have an impressive mathematical formula to represent your views. However the success of what Polanyi (1947) described as the progressive 'disembedding' of the economy from society, the logical outcome that the study of such 'the economy' is necessarily divorced from other aspects of human life and non-economic thinking and practices.

Ultimately, the economy is too important given its implications for human society and for the impact of human societies on the non-human world, for it to be left to self-appointed 'economic experts' alone. These 'experts', we need to remind ourselves, failed to predict the global economic crisis, a point I take up later in the chapter. Marglin rightly argues in a section entitled 'Economics as Myth', from his book, *The Dismal Science*., 'The assumptions about economics are only half-truths about people, even in the culture that gave birth to economics...*Economics encapsulates the myths of modernity*' (Marglin, 2008: 38; emphasis added). In many respects modern economics bears all the hall-marks of what physicist Richard Feynman once called a 'Cargo Cult Science' (Feynman, 1974); that is, a 'pseudo science' falsely trading on its imported and mimicked scientific status and integrity. And it it also needs to be remembered that neo-classical economics has failed, and is failing, even when judged by its own standards.

A prescient and apposite analysis of the ways in which so-called 'rational', 'scientific' and quintessentially 'modern' thinking such as orthodox economics reproduces rather than transcends 'myth' is Horkheimer and Adorno's observation that 'enlightenment' the supposed deposer and enemy of myth, itself becomes partial to myth-making: 'The more completely the machinery of thought subjugates existence, the more blindly it is satisfied with reproducing it. *Enlightenment thereby regresses to the mythology it has never been able to escape*' (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947: 20; emphasis added). Or as they write elsewhere: 'Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002: xviii). As Short notes, 'For Adorno and Horkheimer

[98] One reason is based on the fallibility of so-called economic (and other) experts. Tetlock's study of people who make prediction their business, i.e. people who appear as experts on television, get quoted in newspaper articles, advise governments and businesses and so on, is instructive here. It turns out that they are no better than the rest of us (Tetlock, 2003). When they're wrong, they're rarely held accountable, and they rarely admit it, either. This is abundantly the case when it comes to modern economics – how many economists predicated the current economic recession? How many of these so-called economic experts have come out publicly to say they got it wrong? In other words, even by its own criteria, neo-classical economics has failed.

even the most modern forms of thinking are closer to mythical doctrines than such forms can admit. Present-day economics, for instance, embraces the calculus of rationality...Behind this calculus lurks the 'barren wisdom' of the mythical' (Short, 2011: 260).[99] Here Adorno's notion of the primordial 'mythic fear' – and associated conceptions and institutions of domination/control of nature and productivity against natural scarcity – that characterises humanity's relationship to nature is crucial. While there might be some rational and material basis for this fearful attitude in earlier stages of human evolution, its continuation today is premised on the artificial creation and constant recreation of a 'scarcity economy' as the over-arching 'truth' of the economic situation humanity faces.

Much like the technical fact of a positive rate of interest being needed to propel and therefore realise continuous economic growth, the mythic or cultural-psychological 'fact' of scarcity, and associated notions of insecurity (job, body image, status), scarcity and anxiety, are also necessary features for the modern growth economy. As psychologist Oliver James (James, 2007) and other analysts of 'affluenza' and over-consumption (de Graaf et al, 2005; Hamilton and Denniss, 2005; De Geus, 2003) note, anxiety and insecurity are functional and necessary for consumerism, advertising, branding and so on to work. Happy, self-assured and contented people do not tend to become addicts of excessive consumption. Neither do they judge their self worth (or those of others), or construct their identities in terms of what they possess. And neither do they typically engage in ecologically and psychologically damaging forms of status competition (Hamilton, 2010: 66-69). Resilient and happy individuals are more likely to govern their behaviour and see themselves and their aspirations, through notions such as 'sufficiency' and 'enough', rather than 'maximisation' and 'more' and focus on 'flourishing' rather than accumulation. Happy and contended individuals do not make good and 'docile' consumers. The hope of course here is that happy, well-adjusted people will be more amenable to getting off the endless growth train, and be open to the gains from a 'post-growth' economy as opposed to focusing on what they 'sacrifice' or lose in the that transition.[100]

The Emperor has no Clothes: Toxic Textbooks and Heterodox Economics

The children's fairytale 'The Emperor's New Clothes' is useful (like Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*) for uncovering the ultimate psychological and cultural basis for how we think about economics, and economic practices and concepts such as money, credit, exchange, property, patents, etc. Something becomes real with power and potency not because of its own qualities but because enough people say it exists (as Adam Smith noted, all

[99] Michael Lipscomb makes a similar point when he writes, 'As the overcoming of myth, enlightenment is particularly convincing when it works, when it demonstrates an ability to translate nature into something of value. Ironically, the colonizing force of this mentality converts enlightenment back into myth, as a coherent, totalizing narrative that masks the irrationalities that it continues, more or less secretly, to convey' (Lipscomb, 2011: 296-297).

[100] I owe this point to Phil Cafaro.

money is a matter of belief and trust). Reciprocally, the economic imaginary creates and sustains its own subject – that is to say economics studies not the real economic world as it is, but bases its claims to knowledge on its deductive study of an axiomatic, abstract world – the 'economy' as constructed by this economic imaginary from its own assumptions and first principles. In large part this imaginary is made possible by the progressive disembedding of the economic from society (Polanyi, 1947). This imaginary world is peopled by perfectly rational, utility maximising individuals, the axiom that is also the myth of *homo economicus*, firms exist in perfect competition, and a market clears at a price when supply meets demand. And through this imaginary neo-classical economics seeks to deductively create the 'economy' in its own image, that is, creates and sustains the economic world it seeks to authoritively study (Quiggin, 2010; Mellor, 2010).

According to Gilles Raveaud, one of the co-founders of the 'post-autistic economics' movement in France, one of the main reasons for starting the movement was criticism of, 'the construction of 'imaginary worlds' by economists. *We no longer want to be taught such fairy tales*, the aim of which is not to explain 'reality', but just to show the ability of the writer to construct a 'nice model'. It may be fun for the authors, but we do not want to be part of the game' (Raveaud, 2000: 2). Now 'fairy-tales' and 'imaginary worlds' are not terms we usually associate with modern economics. The use of these terms seems to suggest a critique of economics that goes beyond its denial of its normative assumptions, and refusal to see itself as based on political and ethical value judgements. *And we need to be clear here that there is absolutely nothing wrong with this*! So long as there is openness and honesty about value positions and normative judgements, neo-classical economists have as much right as anyone else (but of course a strictly *equal* right), to make arguments around how the economy ought to be organised, what policies to pursue etc. This is the fundamental appeal for pluralism within economics that is at the heart of the heterodox and post-autistic economics movement.

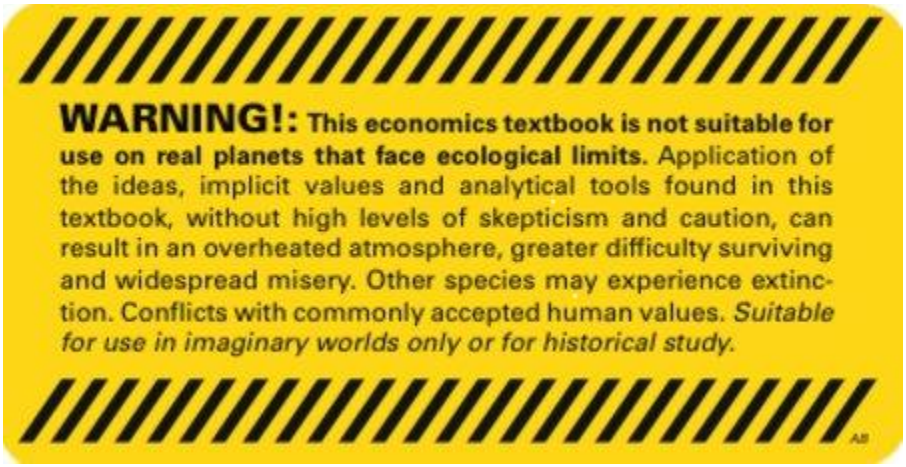

Figure 1. 'Toxic Textbook' sticker

A good example of how frustration with the dominance of the neo-classical orthodoxy is being expressed is the 'Toxic Textbooks' campaign. This is a campaign started by students in the Sorbonne in Paris in 2005 for greater pluralism within university courses on economics – a demand for greater democracy and debate within the teaching of economics. The 'Toxic Textbooks' campaign is on one level simply another front in the battle against the neo-classical orthodoxy. But it also reveals in a very public manner the fact that what is at stake here is an ideological battle for 'hearts and minds' and not simply an 'epistemological' demand for a paradigm shift in some Kuhnian sense (Kuhn, 1962).

One of those who have championed the campaign is the Australian heterodox economist Steve Keen. In a provocatively entitled article entitled 'What a load of bollocks', he notes how despite the current economic crisis, and the fact that neoclassical economists did not either predict it, they dominant prevailing paradigm does not see any need to correct some of its basic assumptions. As he argues,

> Two prominent economics textbook writers have recently written that the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) shows that the world needs more economics rather than less. Writing in the *New York Times*, Gregory Mankiw could see some need to modify economics courses, a bit in response to the GFC, but overall he felt that: 'Despite the enormity of recent events, the principles of economics are largely unchanged. Students still need to learn about the gains from trade, supply and demand, the efficiency properties of market outcomes, and so on. These topics will remain the bread-and-butter of introductory courses'. Writing on a blog The East Asia Forum, authors Doug McTaggart, Christopher Findlay and Michael Parkin wrote that: 'The crisis has also brought calls for the heads of economists for failing to anticipate and avoid it. That idea, too, is wrong: much economic research pointed to the emerging problem. More economic research (and teaching), not less, is the best hope of both emerging from the current crisis and of avoiding future ones'. *What a load of bollocks. The 'principles of economics' that Mankiw champions, and the 'More economic research (and teaching)' that McTaggart et al are calling for, are the major reasons why economists in general were oblivious to this crisis until well after it had broken out*. (Keen, 2009a; emphasis added)

We do find something that comes close to an apology (a precondition perhaps for a paradigm shift?) in the UK British Academy's letter to the British Queen in respond to her question as to why no (orthodox) economist had foreseen the financial crisis. In this letter we find the following, 'But against those who warned, most were convinced that banks knew what they were doing. They believed that *the financial wizards* had found new and clever ways of managing risks. Indeed, some claimed to have so dispersed them through an array of novel financial instruments that they had virtually removed them. *It is difficult to recall a greater example of wishful thinking combined with hubris*. There was a firm belief, too, that financial markets had changed. *And politicians of all types were charmed by the market*.' (British Academy, 2009: 2). Again we see 'mythical' terms such as 'wizards', 'wishful thinking' and 'charms'.

It is important to point out, for my purposes here, that at no point in the letter does the Royal Society suggest that neo-classical economics itself was faulty or in need of reform. Rather, the British Academy shifts the blame for the crisis to bankers and a (temporary) bout of 'wishful thinking', perhaps due to them assuming that the success of the giant Ponzi scheme that was the financial markets implied they had found the 'solution' to endless economic growth, on behalf of the mainstream economics profession. The letter goes on to blame, 'A generation of bankers and financiers deceived themselves and those who thought that they were the pace-making engineers of advanced economies' (ibid.: 2). Not a generation of economists and their models (the 'efficient market hypothesis', and so on), but bankers were to blame. In this the neo-classical economics profession was perfectly in tune with the public mood for heaping opprobrium on a discredited professional banking and financial elite. With a wonderful flourish which aptly displays the lack of self-reflexivity that one might have thought their failure to predict the economic crisis might have occasioned, the conclusion of the letter states that, 'Given the forecasting failure at the heart of your enquiry, the British Academy is giving some thought to how your Crown servants in the Treasury, the Cabinet Office and the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, as well as the Bank of England and the Financial Services Authority might develop a new, shared horizon-scanning capability *so that you never need to ask your question again'* (British Academy, 2009: 3; emphasis added). In other words: we failed to predict this crisis, the bankers are to blame, but don't worry, we are supremely confident that we are never again in this position, and will and can develop models that will predict all future economic crises. That the cause of the crash and failure to predict it might have something to do with the dominance of the economics profession by one model and form of economic thinking is not, unsurprisingly, considered. And thus we witness a missed opportunity for the reform of orthodox economics.

While of course the normal academic channels and modes of knowledge production should be used to develop and articulate critiques (such as academic journals, publications, research projects and conferences and so on), the heterodox, pluralist economics movement also felt there was a need for direct action as it were. As against an authoritarian regime, dissidents would be foolish to advance their arguments against the regime solely by the established 'rules of the game'. In the case of academic economics journals these are almost completely monopolised by the orthodoxy. Hence, heterodox economists have been forced by the lack of pluralism, to create their own publications, journals and associations to support and promote their work. In this way the 'Toxic Textbooks' campaign can be interpreted as a form of 'direct action'. Like an authoritarian political regime, the neo-classical intellectual regime is largely immune and deaf to critiques through the 'normal' channels – hence the 'move to the streets' by heterodox dissidents, such as via the 'Toxic Textbooks' campaign, and their explicit casting of the issue in terms of a battle for hearts, minds and curriculum (Hill and Myatt, 2010)[101].

[101] A similar intellectual dissident movement also happened within American political science against the dominance of the 'rational choice' approach to politics (taken from orthodox economics) within the

Keen in another article noted:

> The current economic meltdown is not the result of natural causes or human conspiracy, *but because society at all levels became infected with false beliefs regarding the nature of economic reality*. And the primary sources of this infection are the 'neoclassical' or 'mainstream' textbooks long used in introductory economics courses in universities throughout the world…If economics were in any sense a science, this dramatic failure would lead to a period of soul searching and intellectual ferment from which would emerge a more empirically grounded vision. *But with the essentially unscientific nature of economics, this development is unlikely unless enormous pressure is brought to bear on academic economics departments by their students, by business groups, unions, and community groups–in short by anyone whose welfare is affected by the economy*…The most immediate source of pressure will be students of economics, who can and should actively protest against being taught neoclassical dogma as the global economy goes into meltdown around them. (Keen, 2009b; emphasis added)

Undoubtedly, in order to move economics to what Kuhn (1962) termed the 'revolutionary science' stage of development and for it to experience a 'paradigm shift' in which the existing assumptions and frameworks of the discipline are questioned, and new principles established, direct action is required.[102] This says much about the obduracy and power of inertia within the intellectual orthodoxy within economics – that it takes direct action and protest to begin the process of a paradigm shift. And here we may see the demand for pluralism within economics, to open up room for debate and alternatives to the dominant mainstream, as a necessary pre-condition for this paradigm shift, clarifying or where appropriate rejecting the falsehoods of the dominant contemporary paradigm. This has echoes of J.S. Mill's 'collision' theory of the truth or knowledge and the necessity of the free exchange of different opinions. As Mill notes, 'The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error' (Mill, 1859: 20). Or consider more contemporary arguments of deliberative democratic theorists on the centrality of allowing as many voices, perspectives (even those which are false) as possible, to debate and engage with one another in an unconstrained deliberative setting (Dryzek, 2010). As an academic, it is hard to think of another discipline or knowledge base which required or requires such direct forms of action to provoke change. However, despite the courage and activities of the heterodox economics movement, it has yet to result in any significant reform or change in the dominant economics regime.

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profession's leading academic journal, the American Political Science Review (Jacobson, 2005; Monroe, 2005).

[102] There is a striking similarity here with the discussion in previous chapters about the difficulties in and obstacles to consciously adopting new ways of thinking and associated identities.

If nothing else, these forms of oppositional action, serve to justify why neo-classical economics is indeed a 'regime of truth', a form of power/knowledge that will not change or be reformed or transformed simply or easily by knowledge-based arguments. If ever there was a case of 'cognitive dissonance' then perhaps this is a classical, and one with significant overtones of 'groupthink'. Perhaps we should consider neo-classical economics in the face its multiple failures in the same way Hamilton analyses 'climate deniers' (Hamilton, 2010: 113). That is, as a form of knowledge which is resistant to change when evidence emerges that disconfirms its principles and underlying beliefs. As Hamilton notes, for climate denies their pre-existing values determine their beliefs, and inconvenient and disconfirming 'facts' are systematically filtered in a way to confirm (and indeed confirm strongly) the pre-existing belief and protect the underlying values. Is the value of 'economic growth' and the neo-classical belief system any different? Why, as will be discussed in the next chapter, does the orthodoxy stick doggedly to the view that economic growth is a permanent rather than a contingent and evolutionary specific feature of an economy? Why is it elevated as an 'axiom' rather than a theoretical principle to be subject to empirical analysis and testing to see if it is 'doing' what it is supposed to do? Why is it not measured and evaluated against actual business practices?

It is not only the inertia of the established orthodoxy that explains why one can understand this more 'direct action' approach being taken by the dissidents, but also because the stakes are so high. In short, because whoever controls the teaching of economics controls the policies that determine how the human economy operates, the stakes are enormous in terms of affecting well-being and survival of billions of people and the nonhuman community of life on this planet. The stakes are enormous also because the economy is the one human sphere which has the most direct, material and metabolic relationship with the non-human world which is the ultimate foundation for all life on the planet – human and non-human. If, as the dissidents believe (and I count myself amongst those dissidents) that the current economic orthodoxy is literally causing the liquidation of the vital life-supporting systems on the planet (and calling this 'progress'), then their direct action, using whatever means necessary, is both understandable and laudable. My own sense is that it is in defence of life and an earth-based economics supportive of life and well-being that the foundational motivation of the dissidents can be found. Ultimately, the 'Toxic Textbooks' campaign is about taking back control of economics from a powerful intellectual elite and their dominant paradigm which supports, justifies and gives intellectual credence to an economic system that is literally killing life on the planet (New Scientist, 2008).

Economic Growth and 'The Cancer Stage of Capitalism'

The critique of conventional economic growth and its denial or the implications of limits to growth has been a long-standing position of green thinking (Cato, 2008, 2011). Any plausibly 'green' and radical conception of political economy must begin from an articulate a 'limits to growth' perspective. A 'post-growth' economy is one that has featured prominently within green political and economic discourse, most usually associated with the environmental and non-environmental benefits of a less growth

orientated economy, or a different form of growth beyond orthodox GDP. But what replaces growth? Stagnation? Collapse? Regress? On first gloss the prospect of a non- or post-growth economy not only sounds odd and unfamiliar, but also negative, regressive and perhaps even dangerous and harmful. 'Growth' is normally something we perceive as 'good', something beneficial to be promoted, since it indicates maturity, unfolding and development. Children grow, plants grow etc. And growth therefore is normally and uncontroversially viewed as something to be promoted and encouraged.

In more technical terms growth is not just 'good' for the capitalist economy, but indeed constitutes a functional imperative i.e. a system requirement. As Jackson points out, 'modern economies are driven towards economic growth…in a growth-based economy, growth is functional for stability. The capitalist model has no easy route to a steady state position. *Its natural dynamics push it towards one of two states: expansion or collapse*' (2009: 64; emphasis added). In other words, within a capitalist growth-orientated economy, a shift away from growth necessarily leads to recession, socio-economic instability, job losses, investment uncertainty, disinvestment and a decline in living standards etc.[103] While there are a number of theories of growth, ones which stress the role of education, innovation, free trade etc., it is the existence of a debt-based money system and the imperative for capital accumulation, which is of fundamental importance (Mellor, 2010).

John McMurtry criticises economic growth in a highly provocative and indeed troubling manner. For him, economic growth under capitalism is understood as 'growth for growth's sake' and is therefore for him a form of 'cancerous growth', the logic of which constitutes a clear and present threat to 'life' on the planet (McMurtry, 1996).[104] For McMurtry, echoing Foucault in many respects,

> Barring the unlikely event of successful revolution across the word, the normative constraints of the rule of life-protective law are required to regulate on behalf of the common life interest. Yet if the market value programme is precisely structured to reject 'government interference' or accountability to law as barriers to its 'freedom', and seeks only more 'deregulation' and 'self-regulation' of its operations, then we confront a problem of incalculable gravity. *For there is no limit to the planetary life damage that can be done by such a closed system without accountability beyond itself. In such a predicament, we must connect the programme to the unseen harms which follow from its diagnosis resembling that*

[103] However, there is an argument that reducing economic inequality would, by reducing the imperative for continual economic growth, itself stabilise the economy (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009: 263), but it would not be a *capitalist* economy.

[104] What McMurtry calls the 'cancer stage of capitalism', Herman Daly terms 'illith' or uneconomic growth i.e. the opposite of economic growth viewed as necessary or healthy for a society (Daly, 2003). As he puts it: 'What we conventionally call 'economic growth' in the sense of 'growth of the economy' has ironically become 'uneconomic growth' in the literal sense of growth that increases costs by more than it increases benefits. I am thinking here of the North rather than the South, because in many poor countries where the majority lives close to subsistence the benefits of production growth, even if badly distributed, justify incurring large costs' (Daly, 2007: 191). A similar critique to McMurtry can also be found in the work of the social ecologist Murray Bookchin (Bookchin, 1980, 1990; White, 2008).

> *of the physician understanding a systemic disease invading and attacking a life-host* (1996: 34; emphasis added).[105]

In this respect, this diagnosis of the dominant economic model of course brings us back to Susan Sontag's analysis of cancer, and her linking of it to economic growth in chapter 2. It also stresses or underpins the 'life-affirming' and 'life-protecting' focus of green politics and green political economy. As Sontag notes, 'The language used to describe cancer evokes a different economic catastrophe: that of unregulated, abnormal, incoherent growth…*Cancer cells, according to the textbook account, are cells that have shed the mechanism which 'restrains' growth.* (The growth of normal cells is 'self-limiting'…). Cells without inhibitions, cancer cells will continue to grow and extrude in a 'chaotic' fashion, destroying the bodies' normal cells, architecture, and functions' (Sontag, 1978: 62; emphasis added). In precisely the same way McMurtry's main point is that unregulated capitalist economic growth is destroying and predating on life, and the life supporting mechanisms of both people and planet.[106] Echoing early critical theorists such as Herbert Marcuse and the early work of Jurgen Habermas, Ivan Illich and Murray Bookchin, both McMurtry and Sontag foreground how the 'normal' and 'mundane' operation of the capitalist economy undermines 'life' itself (human and nonhuman), as well compromising the human 'lifeworld'. This is also confirmed by the biological and ecological evidence underpinning the limits to growth analysis of the necessity for negative feedback mechanisms to ensure organic life does not exponentially growth beyond a threshold of unsustainability. There is no negative feedback mechanism within orthodox economic thinking, in part because it has a disembedded, non-ecological or energy-based conception of the economy, and a disembodied view of the individual, and no conception of human community (Hill and Myatt, 2010: 15-26).

The important point here is the notion that beyond a threshold, economic growth becomes unhealthy, unsustainable and therefore something to be viewed as potentially harmful rather than something to be actively sought after and uncritically promoted as a self-evident 'good'. *Orthodox, undifferentiated economic growth under capitalism is the dominant cause of actually existing unsustainability*. In the words of the ecological economist Herman Daly, there is such a thing as 'uneconomic growth' (Daly, 1999) and 'illith' (Daly, 2007). *Indeed much progress towards developing a 'macro-economics of sustainability' would come if neo-classical economic could internally reform itself*. Three possible reforms stand out, which would radically transform the neo-classical economic paradigm and bring it closer to being 'fit for purpose' for reducing actually existing unsustainability, and enhancing human well-being within the limits of a finite planet i.e. increasing the 'eco-efficiency' of human flourishing.

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[105] In somewhat similar terms, Marilyn Waring calls capitalism 'a pathological ideology' (Waring, 2009: 151), while Tim Jackson has also labelled consumerism as 'pathological' (Jackson, 2009a: 101).

[106] Teresa Brennan makes a similar point in her argument that commodities, profit and money – viewed psychoanalytically and from a broadly Marxist perspective – represent parasitic forms of 'non-life'. 'money appropriates nature's creativity, and does destroy...Marx's value-theory shows that profit depends on the fixed points of commodities proliferating at nature's expense' (Brennan, 2000: 75).

The first is by actually delivering on the promised paradigm shift by 'internalising' environmental and social externalities. This is accepted even within the orthodoxy yet has not been fully taken up, since if it was, neo-classical economics would be unrecognisable to what it currently is. **The second** and related o the first would be a full commitment to more appropriate macro-economic measures and objectives, such as the Genuine Progress Indictor, the Human Development Report/Index or the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW), of the new economics foundation's 'Happy Planet Index' (new economics foundation, 2009b). **The third** would be to be considerably more careful in extrapolating from prescriptions and analyses which hold at the micro-economic level, to the macro-economic one. Yet while we find for example widespread acceptance of the critique of the limitations of GDP as a measurement of human well-being, and the importance of internalising externalities, even within the orthodoxy, there is absolutely no sign of these being viewed as anything more than 'side-issues' to the 'core issues' of the discipline, as opposed to be foundational elements of a paradigm shift.

It is also important to point out that economic growth is not to be abandoned or rejected outright. Rather it is viewed as a process to be consciously and politically monitored and regulated, rather than unreflectively viewed as something that can be simply 'left on automatic' to a self-regulating economic system, or seen as an uncontested 'axiom' of how we should think about the economy. *In other words, economic growth should be seen as a stage in a society's development, not necessarily as a permanent feature of an economy. Relatedly, we need to have a differentiated rather than an undifferentiated understanding of 'economic growth' and judge it sector by sector not simply as an undifferentiated whole*. After all, growth in hospital beds or the number of acute nurses is not the same (in terms of contributions to human flourishing or ecological impact) as the growth in the armaments industry or sales of sugary, carbonated drinks. This is essential in terms of the common misunderstanding of those critical of economic growth as proposing that countries (mostly in the global South) that can benefit from economic growth (and trade) should be denied that opportunity. In general terms following one of the first modern thinkers to propose a 'post-growth' economy, John Stuart Mill (Barry, 2007a), green political economists are of the view that economic growth should be 'redistributed' from the 'over-developed' minority world to the majority world in the global south. In terms of the limits to growth, energy and ecological thresholds that cannot be breached, the development path of the 'global South' cannot be along the same model as those pursued by the already industrialised (over)developed world. It is for this reason that most of the debates about a post-growth economy tend to be orientated towards the developed world, largely based, in my view, on the application of the 'contraction and convergence' approach to climate change and carbon reductions (Meyer, 2001), as a principle to guide an egalitarian and sustainable distribution of 'development space' globally.

The Grammar of Public Policy: The Impact of Economics on Life, Lives and Livelihoods

The reasons why the stakes are so high in regards to the dangers posed by one paradigm dominating contemporary thinking about the economy should be obvious. Unlike other forms of knowledge, cultural studies or history for example, while these other forms of knowledge do have real world impacts, they are not on the same scale or with the same consequences as economics. Indeed, if economics were on a par with cultural studies or history, debates about it would not have the same political importance since these debates and controversies would be seen as 'internal' to the academy with little real-world implications. However, given that how we conceptualise 'economics' frames public policies, political manifestos and informs decision-making about the distribution of resources, taxation policy, the reform of a society's health or education system, international trade, the regulation of private enterprise, property relations and so on, how economics is constituted is one of the most important political issues within any society.

Economics is not a 'master discipline' because of its false (as argued above) claims to methodological superiority, value neutrality and objectivity in relation to other social sciences. It is a 'master discipline;' because it is functional for the interests of those who benefit most from the capitalist organisation of the economy. As a form of knowledge/power it is the most powerful form of knowledge in modern societies when it comes to public policy making. It is for this reason, the seriousness of the issues at stake in how we think about the economy and economics, that a critical analysis of economics is of vital political and ethical import. As Robert Heilbroner noted in his celebrated work *The Worldly Philosophers*, modern economists, 'sought to embrace in a scheme of philosophy the most worldly of all of man's activities – his drive for wealth. It is not, perhaps, the most elegant kind of philosophy, *but there is no more intriguing or important one*' (Heilbroner, 1967: 14; emphasis added).

Perhaps the greatest success of the neo-classical orthodoxy lies in it being both the dominant language and more significantly the *grammar* of policy making. That is, neo-classical economics has embedded itself so successfully within decision-making that it not only acts as 'gate-keeper' and agenda setter within state, corporate and even social and daily decision-making. More than that, it determines both the language and manner in which those wishing to influence or have input into public policy making must express their argument.[107] Economic theory functions as the dominant way in which policy-making is debated, framed, thought about and ultimately decided. In Foucault's thinking neo-classical economics becomes a 'truth regime' and constitutes the very 'rules of the game' in the same way as grammar provides the rules for the correct use of language. Thus, those who either do not know or refuse to accept this particular grammar (such as non-economic arguments for environmental preservation or those economic perspectives critical of the neo-classical framework), are at a severe political disadvantage.

Precisely because of the dominance of economic considerations in public policy-making, environmental issues are often translated into 'economic' problems and courses of action pursued on the basis of the economic costs or benefits of the environmental issue in question. For example, in the classic case of environmental protection versus

[107] Thus this reading of neo-classical economics sees it as confirming to Lukes' second and third faces of power (Lukes, 1974).

development, it is very often the case that environmental campaigners have to formulate their case in economic terms, and have an explicit *economic* reason for environmental preservation. So campaigns to save the rainforests have to be made on the basis of the unknown medicinal substances or genetic knowledge that may be lost. Or anti-roads protesters having to argue their case on the basis of the drop in tourism or decline in town shopping, or fall in the value of houses.[108] In this way a public policy-making process dominated by the grammar of conventional economics demands participants to adopt economic forms of reasoning and justification. Thus to base one's case for environmental protection on the intrinsic value of the environmental space or landscape in question (as opposed to some economic-instrumental value it may possess), is to adopt a strategy that would be difficult to persuade or influence policy-making.

For some, this means that there is little alternative but to accede to this neo-classical grammar. In other words, there is strategic advantage in using neo-classical economic forms of argumentation. One is speaking a language politicians and policy-makers understand and use themselves. Environmental economist David Pearce has defended this strategy by noting that 'politicians and their advisors are engaged in the activity of trading off environment against economic activity... *Defending the environment means presenting the arguments in terms of units that politicians understand*... adducing evidence that the environment does matter in economic terms is important, especially as the record of decision-making in the absence of such valuations is hardly encouraging for the environment' (Pearce, 1992: 8; emphasis added).[109]

It is for this reason that environmental economics can be viewed as an extension of the neo-classical economic paradigm to previously excluded environmental issues. Its main focus is on ways of including 'externalised' non-market costs and values, through the assigning of a monetary value to these. And to that extent, the rise of environmental economics is to be welcomed as part of the putative internal reform of the neo-classical orthodoxy. In this way neo-classical economics offers an internal response to the claim that what is not 'counted' i.e. given a monetary value, does not 'count' in the decision-making process. 'What gets measured gets done' as the common mantra puts it. What does not qualify for measurement, like gendered 'invisible labour' for example, still gets done, that is, is performed by individuals, but what happens in this case is that it does not get acknowledged or supported by the state or public discourse at large. It gets done but is not measured and therefore remains invisible, *sequestered* away to use that terms from Giddens introduced in chapter 2. However, the concerns of environmental economics and the internalisation of externalities, like the issue of alternative indicators to GDP, are not core concerns of the orthodox economics model, but rather interesting 'aberrations' or 'anomalies' from the general principles of market efficiency, as any cursory read of any introductory economics textbook will quickly reveal.

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[108] Note here how this demand for 'positive' alternatives can undermine the legitimacy of the negative critique, in that as Simon points out, the critique stands on its own merits regardless of any reference to a positive alternative (Simon, 1995: 13-14).

[109] Space precludes a fuller questioning of Pearce's authoritative and axiomatic assumption of 'fact' i.e. that policy-making **is** about trading the environment against the economy. That is, it is this 'fact' that has to change perhaps, not the metric under consideration.

None of this is to deny the value of neo-classical economic considerations (in terms of competing uses for scarce resources), but to underline how an economic approach to and understanding of social-environmental problems can (and systematically does) 'crowd out' non-economic forms of valuation and argumentation. The privileged position occupied by conventional economics in environmental policy-making has the effect of not just drowning out other 'voices', other forms of reasoning, valuing and thinking about the environment. In practice, conventional economics as a 'grammar of power' means other perspectives are impelled to translate their arguments and positions into neo-classical economic forms. Under the disciplinary logic of requiring one master metric – monetary valuation – neo-classical economics compels all to conform to this metric. In this context, the Weberian 'iron cage' of rationality finds its perfect expression in the irrationality of deeply held religious or ethical concerns being forced into a register/metric which systematically betrays and devalues them, for the sake of having them taken into account by a monetised public policy process. Here we note both the prevalence of 'protest bids' within contingent valuation techniques as testament to the resistance many feel when forced to express an ethical or political value position in monetary terms and also the way these bids are often simply ignored in the analysis (O'Neill, Holland and Light, 2008: 78; Halstead, Luloff, and Stevens, 1992; Barry, 1999a).[110]

At the same time we need to consider the view that modern liberal democracy 'requires numerate and calculating citizens, numericized civic discourse and a numericized programmatic of government' (Rose, 1991: 671), further reinforcing the 'fit' between neo-classical economics and neoliberal governmentality.[111] The monetising and quantitative thinking at the heart of neo-classical economics are in many respect ideal for a neoliberal political order based on a utilitarian 'public philosophy' (Goodin, 1995). One of the advantages of reducing values and political or ethical debate to monetary units is that it enables the orderly administration of public policy to be maintained while also permitting some degree of ethical and political plurality. However, while you can have any ethical or political views you like, if you want them to 'count' in public policy deliberation, they have to be translated into monetary terms. This strategy of ensuring order against a backdrop of plurality works, in large part, by effectively depoliticising

[110] However, having said that, this critique here should be seen not as leading to the abandonment of such monetised techniques to inform decision-making, since they can be used to establish ethical or political commitment. They can force people to 'put up or shut up' in the sense of obliging people to publicly state how much more tax they would be willing to pay for example for health care, carbon reduction etc. I owe this point to Phil Cafaro. What I would say on this issue is, a) such ethical/political commitment is better determined though a focus on taxes and subsidies than perhaps individual 'willingness to be compensated' techniques and b) should only be used as one element of a collective decision-making (or decision-recommending or decision-informing) process, so that the types of non-monetised ethical commitment indicated earlier can find their own voice, and be expressed in their own language and form as it were. Once again, we are brought back to the need for deliberative, political processes in which such monetised techniques could be used, perhaps informed and shaped by the outcomes of a deliberative process, rather than monetised value-revealing techniques themselves determining or informing the ultimate decision.

[111] Here I am thinking about the increasing 'statistical discourse' of modern politics in liberal democracies, the reduction of elections to 'beauty contests' about which party or coalition will manage the economy 'best', where 'best' is understood in terms of 'economic growth'.

public policy debates since all views and perspectives must express or be capable of being expressed in monetary terms. It is literally a form of 'rule by numbers'. Numbers, the quantification and reduction of life, movement, process and vitality to well defined neat, orderly quantities and precise measurements, is an extremely effective and subtle technology of neoliberal rule.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on criticising some of the most salient aspects of the dominant neo-classical economic paradigm. It has highlighted its hegemonic status as a regime of 'truth' about the economy which actively prevents greater pluralism in thinking about the economy and how 'economics' can be and could be understood. Not only does the dominance of neo-classical economics function to 'crowd out' and marginalise non-neo-classical approaches (hence my use of the term 'dissident' to characterise these other ways of thinking about economics), it also exhibits a clear imperialist or empire-like imperative to 'colonise' and extend its reach beyond the economy to non-economic relations and spheres of human life, such as the family. This chapter also examined the 'mythic' as well as value/normative and ideological features of this system of thought, not least the over-arching 'myth' of continuous economic growth. The chapter also discussed why fundamental analyses and debates about economics are so important, given on the one hand that the human economy is the most important determinant of our metabolic relationship to the natural world and on the other the power of economic thinking (at least under the regime of ne-classical economics) as the most powerful influence on public policy making (in economic and non-economic policy areas) and its impacts on the conditions for human (and nonhuman) flourishing.

According to Edward Fullbrook, one of the most prominent authors in the heterodox tradition, 'For half a century neoclassical economics has hidden its ideology behind the notion that it calls positive economics. This is the idea that it contains no value judgements because it mentions none. Of course such a notion belongs to an intellectually more naive age than today....the neoclassical insistence upon the utilitarian ideology legitimises a kind of "market ideology" and "consumerism" that increasingly appears dangerous to society, and sidelines the debate about sustainable development' (Fullbrook, 2006: 22). It is telling that rather than seeking the abolition of neo-classical economics, the heterodox economics movement merely seeks more pluralism, debate and the serious consideration of alternatives. A precondition for this however is the removal of one way of thinking about the economy – namely neo-classical economics – from its position of dominance and being a gatekeeper of the profession. To repeat a point I made earlier: if in discussing the best arrangement for the polity we require and actively encourage debate between different ideologies and views, and do not think there is necessarily 'one' best way such that it obviates the need for democratic argument and consideration of alternatives, why should we expect anything less when it comes to the organisation of the economy? But more than that, this critique of the dominant political economy suggests that what is needed is an explicit re-ethicisation and re-politicisation of 'the economy' is understood and collectively organised. If as Ulrich Beck revealingly puts it, contemporary economic growth is 'legitimate social change without democratic political

legitimation' (1992: 214), then what this chapter has provided are grounds for the necessity of seeking democratic legitimation for economic organisation and strategy.

However, as the British Academy letter to the British Queen idemonstrates in its deflecting any evidence of the limits of the current paradigm, the (so far) limited success of the heterodox economics movement, or the continuing 'marginal' status of both environmental economics and alternatives to GDP all demonstrate, it is a moot point as to whether this economic paradigm is simply too dogmatic and inflexible that it is not possible to reform. If this is the case, then it is clear that neo-classical economics is not only unable to cope with contemporary 21st century sustainability problems, but as it is currently configured, actually constitutes an obstacle to overcoming actually existing unsustainability and developing adequate analyses and ways of reducing it. Neo-classical economics simply put is not longer 'fit for purpose' for the issues humanity faces in the 21st century, but doggedly resists the 'paradigm shift' necessary (Nadeau, 2008). As Paul Krugman puts it 'When historians look back at 2008-10, what will puzzle them most, I believe, is the strange triumph of failed ideas. *Free-market fundamentalists have been wrong about everything — yet they now dominate the political scene more thoroughly than ever*' (Krugman, 2010).[112] And as noted in chapter 3, inflexibility and dogmatism are not useful for the point of view of promoting resilience. Thus, what this chapter has also demonstrated is that successful adaptation requires intellectual and cultural, as well as institutional, change.

A key feature of the power of neo-classical economics is its 'success' in terms of 'delivering the goods' (at least for periods of time), in creating what seemed to be a 'perpetual growth machine' supported by politicians, most political parties, state officials and the 'contented' citizens (Galbraith, 1993) of those societies in the minority, (over)developed world who have benefitted most (Mellor, 2010). The reality is that however much one can and ought to criticise this mode of thinking and policy-making about the economy, it did in fact lower prices for food and basic commodities. Of course we need to also note that this involved passing the full cost to workers in other parts of the world on low wages, or to local environments and ecosystems, other forms of non-human life, or the global climate system. This allowed more people in the developed world (and some in the developing world) to enjoy consumerist lifestyles that were once the preserve of the wealthy. But when the full 'on' as opposed to 'off-balance' sheet is reviewed, it is evident that this perpetual growth machine was, and is, maintained at tremendous environmental and human costs, and was literally fuelled by a 'windfall' of cheap, secure, and required enormous amounts of carbon energy.

[112] An interesting additional point to make here is that simply refusing to answer questions, staying silent against criticism is perhaps the clearest evidence of power. Whether it is a set of ideas or people, silence can communicate power. I recall vividly a public lecture at my university in Belfast, in late 2009, given by Tim Jackson (Jackson, 2009b) which was basically a damning critique of the existing neo-classical economic model. The audience was packed with academics, business people, senior policy makers, most of whom (I would suspect) would be supportive (actively or passively) of the existing economic orthodoxy (especially the policy makers). Yet not one of them responded to Jackson's critique. I found this puzzling at the time as I was looking forward to a robust exchange of ideas. But the silence of the incumbent orthodoxy was deafening. It simply ignored criticisms, and continued, and though challenged it remained utterly unchanged.

Here, as indicated in the chapter, much positive movement towards generating a macro-economics of sustainably could be made if some of the well-accepted and well-known 'immanent critiques' from within the neo-classical paradigm (the internalisation of externalities chief among them) were fully accepted and resulted in a paradigm shift. Ecological, pollution and resource 'chickens' are 'coming home to roost' and the reaching of 'peak oil' heralds the beginning of the end of carbon energy age. Now more than ever, we urgently need new modes of thinking about the economy which can help us for the challenges and opportunities of our current predicament. It is therefore nothing short of irresponsible that at the very time we need as many perspectives and views, and alternative political economies to the status quo, we find such a debate systematically closed down or shifted to the periphery within conventional economics. One such alternative to neo-classical economics, namely green political economy will be outlined in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Green Political Economy I: Sufficiency and Security

'The junk merchant doesn't sell his product to the consumer; he sells the consumer to the product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies the client.' (William Burroughs)

Introduction

Following on from the critique of neo-classical economics in the previous chapter, this and the next chapter sketches out some of the key principles for an alternative political economy, namely green political economy. It does so through a focus on the '4 Ss' – namely the principles of sufficiency and security (this chapter) and solidarity and shaping (the next one). While it seems I have been thinking, writing and giving talks on 'green political economy' for years, I have always been frustrated in never having the time (or discipline) to collate all my thoughts to produce one coherent account. From my very first published academic article in 1992 on 'Red Green Politics in Ireland' (Barry, 1992) for the journal *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism,* to my first book, *Rethinking Green Politics* (Barry, 1999a), to analyses of 'ecological modernisation' (Barry, 2005; Barry and Paterson, 2001; Barry and Doran, 2005), the 'social economy' (Barry and Smith, 200) to more recent publications on unsustainability on the island of Ireland (Barry, 2009a, Barry 2009b), issues of 'political economy' and the need for the development of a distinctive 'green political economy' have always been a main concern for me. While I hope what follows comes close to producing a coherent (if not definitive) account of a green political economy alternative to neo-classical economics. While there are some references to and discussion of specific policies, this analysis of this chapter is at the level of the underlying general principles which should guide policy-making for what might be called a 'macro-economics of sustainability' (Jackson, 2009b).

My position is informed by two important observations. As a sign of our times, the crises that we face under the banner of the transition from unsustainability to 'resilience'- as outlined in chapter 3 – renders the distinction between what is 'realistic' and what is 'radical' obsolete and unhelpful. In the context of 'not letting a good crisis go to waste', and fully mindful how 'crisis' can be used for progressive and regressive political projects (Klein, 2007), this chapter seeks to extend the analysis of the previous one in recognising the central role played by the dominant economic orthodoxy in organising, justifying and presiding over the liquidation of life and life-supporting systems of the planet. This chapter argues that one way we might think about developing a view of 'economics' and 'the economy' appropriate to the task/s facing us, is to revisit the most basic assumptions embedded within the dominant model of development and economics. Realistically, the only long-term, sustainable option available to us as far as the economy

goes is radical. Radical both in the sense of major, systemic changes that are needed in our thinking about and organisation of the human economy, and also in the other sense of 'radical' meaning 'returning to the root'. By this is meant that the green political economy outlined here is in part a move back to the origins of modern economics in the tradition of political economy in the 18th and 19th centuries before 'physics envy' infected economics in the late 19th century. As outlined in the previous chapter, economics became increasingly more about developing abstract mathematical and/or monetary models than about practical issues of the workings of the real economy.

Secondly, it is obvious that we cannot build or seek to create a sustainable, resilient economy *ex nihlo*, out of nothing, but must begin from where we are now, with the structures, institutions, modes of production, laws, regulations and so on that we have. We must dig where we stand. This does not mean simply accepting these as immutable or set in stone. After all, some of the current institutions, principles and structures underpinning the dominant economic model are among the very causes of actually existing unsustainability. But we do need to recognise that we must work with (and 'through' – in the terms of the original German Green Party's slogan of 'marching through the institutions') these existing structures, changing and reforming as needed, and in some cases abandoning them as necessary, where they are judged to be systematically harmful and prolonging unsustainability.

Moreover, we do have a particular responsibility under the current dominant economic trends to name the neo-liberal project as the hegemonic influence on economic thinking and practice, as outlined in the previous chapter. While I accept that there is no necessary connection between 'neo-classical economics' and 'neo-liberalism' as a political project, nevertheless in practice neo-classical economics provides much of the intellectual justification for neo-liberalism. In the words of Bourdieu and Loïc (2001), neoliberalism is the new 'planetary vulgate', which presides over actually existing unsustainability. The aim of this chapter, then, is to offer a draft of a realistic, but simultaneously critical, version of green political economy to underpin the wider concerns of this book in relation to resilience, vulnerability and resistance (intellectual as well as political). It is written explicitly with a view to encouraging others to respond to it in the necessary collaborative effort to think through the multi-faceted and complex economic aspects of the transition away from unsustainability.

This chapter begins with a potted overview and history of green political economy, outlining some its main thinkers, strains of thought and ideas. It then proceeds to examine the central role of economic growth within neo-classical economics and suggests that it is best viewed as an 'elite ideology', and intimately connected with the ideological justification or legitimation of contemporary capitalism. My contention here is that that the axiomatic and widespread inculcation of the idea of 'economic growth' as a *permanent feature of an economy* serves the interests of a minority not a majority in societies. I then propose the idea of 'economic security' (as first articulated by an International Labor Organization report) as a possible alternative to 'economic growth'. I outline some of the main features of economic security and its advantages for addressing existing unsustainability and as a way to think about how we can have high quality of life

with a low carbon and low resource economy. In the next section, I connect economic security to a long-standing green argument on the connection between orthodox economic growth and inequality. This argument suggests that economic growth *both causes and requires inequality*. However, economic security pushes in the opposite direction. Thus, while falling short of demands for complete equality, economic security as a strategy to increase human flourishing within ecological limits, does move us in the direction of a considerably less unequal society, one characterised by what one could call 'rough equality'. The final section discusses the notion of sufficiency, first introduced in chapter 3, and related ideas of thrift and frugality. I suggest that sufficiency as a 'sub-optimal' objective is, unlike orthodox notions of efficiency and maximisation, more conducive to promoting resilience and complex adaptive management between human and ecological systems, and therefore is a key principle of a less unsustainable economy.

Origins and Overview of Green Political Economy

This is not the place for a full explication of the historical evolution of green economic thinking, but my own list of significant figures and their contributions include: Aristotle for his distinction between '*oikonomia*' management of the household and '*chremastistics'* or money-making (Barry, 1999a; Hutchinson, Mello and Olsen, 2002: 226-229); the French Physiocrats in the 18th century in relation to their analysis of the importance of the land and agriculture to the economy (Cato, 2010); Thomas Malthus as an early proponent of 'limits to growth'; Karl Marx in relation to his foundational critique of capitalism, class exploitation and for his analysis of the inner workings of capital accumulation, amongst others; J.S. Mill's outlining of the 'stationary state' economy in the mid 19th century (a forerunner of Herman Daly's later work in the 1970s on the 'steady-state economy'); utopian socialists and anarchists such as William Morris and Peter Kropotkin; Rudolf Steiner and his conception of the 'threefold social order' (Houghton-Budd and Steiner, 1996; Steiner, 1993); Karl Polanyi and his account of 'The Great Transformation' from a pre-capitalist to a capitalist socio-economic order and the 'disembedding' of the economy from cultural, political and ethical constraints; Lewis Mumford, Patrick Geddes; J.M. Keynes, as much for his defence of localised economic activity as for state regulation of the market economy, M.K. Gandhi and his support for a more localised, self-reliant economic order within the context of a 'sufficiency' rather than 'maximisation' economy; Henry George, principally for his defence of a land valuation tax; Erich Fromm for his explorations of the economic, cultural and psychological drivers of 'having' rather than 'being' in modern industrial societies (Fromm, 1976); The Frankfurt school of critical theory (Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer), in explicating the 'dark side' of enlightenment rationality, the 'mythic' and ideological content of modern rationality such as neo-classical economics, and belief in human emancipation from capitalist industrialism; John Kenneth Galbraith's analysis of the 'affluent society' and its problematic 'culture of contentment' (Galbraith, 1958, 1993); E.F. Schumacher, for his 'small is beautiful' concept, 'Buddhist economics' and the injunction for 'an economics as if people mattered' (Schumacher, 1973); Ivan Illich for his trenchant critique of dehumanising institutions and defence of the convivial economy and 'right to useful unemployment' against the all pervasive demands of the modern 'performance' economy (Illich, 1973; 1977); Murray Bookchin for his early

articulation of a post-scarcity economy and later work on local, democratic modes of production and consumption (Bookchin, 1971, 1980; 1990).

But also, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegan for his work on demonstrating the foundational importance of energy and an understanding of thermodynamics to a full analysis of the economy, and as a founder of the 'ecological economics' school (Georgescu-Roegan, 1971, 1976); Herman Daly, for developing the idea of the 'steady state economy', demonstrating the fallacies of neo-classical economics and re-integrating ethical and politics within economic theorising (Daly, 1973, 2003); Kenneth Boulding for this contribution of the 'spaceship earth' concept anticipating the later 'limits to growth' analysis (Boulding, 1966); Ezra Mishan's work on the ecological costs of orthodox economic growth (Mishan, 1967); Dennis and Donella Meadows and the Club of Rome for their 'Limits to Growth' reports from the 1970s on (Meadows et al, 1972; Meadows et al, 1993; Meadows et al, 2004); Fred Hirsch for articulating the 'social limits to growth' thesis and 'positional' goods in high consumer societies (Hirsch, 1976); James Robertson for outlining the contours of 'full spectrum' green economic vision, from a citizens' income, reform of taxes, money, finance and trade (Robertson, 1983, 1985); Hazel Henderson for developing the vital insights of ecofeminist political economy and the financial and policy elements of a sustainable economy (Henderson, 1981) ; Marilyn Waring (2009); Vandana Shiva (Shiva, 1988, 1993); Arturo Escobar (Escobar, 1995); Richard Douthwaite (Douthwaite, 1992; 1996, 1999); Serge Latouche (Latouche, 1993); Juliet Schor (1998, 2010); Michael Jacobs (Jacobs, 1993); Molly Cato (2006, 2008, 2011); Tim Jackson (2009); Derek Wall (2005, 2006, 2010); Paul Ekins (Ekins, 1986, 1999; Ekins and Max-Neef, 1992); ecological economists such as Richard Norgaard (Norgaard, 1994); Peter Söderbaum (Söderbaum, 2008); Obviously the economic thinking and policies of the green movement are important sources, especially the Green Parties around the world and environmental NGOs such as Friends of the Earth International, Greenpeace, the Worldwide Fund for Nature, the Worldwatch Institute, and think tanks such as the new economics foundation.[113]

Some early analyses within this green political 'canon' were explicitly not only radical but also utopian, usually based on an argument for the complete transformation of society and economy as the only way to deal with ecological catastrophe. These were often linked to a critique of the socio-economic failings of capitalism that echoed a broadly radical Marxist/socialist or anarchist analysis. Recently, this gap within green thinking has been filled by a number of scholars (Cato, 2008. 2011; Boyle and Simms, 2009; Jackson, 2009a, 2009b), activists, think tanks (such as the new economics foundation in the UK and FEASTA in Ireland), Green Parties and environmental NGOs who have outlined various models of green political economy. As Boyle and Simms neatly put it what is needed is a new version of economics which 'reaches back to the origins of economics in moral philosophy, putting economics back in ...its proper place – embedded in ethics, or in biology, psychology and the sciences of the Earth' (Boyle and Simms, 2009: 19).

[113][113] Other sources or interpretations of the 'green economics canon' can be found in Cato (2008: 17-33); Kennett and Heinmann (2006); Barry (2007a) and Boyle and Simms (2009: 17-30).

There is a theoretical maturity within today's broad school of thinking that one can bring under the umbrella term of green political economy – whether judged by the growing number of professional associations and journals (*Ecological Economics*, *International Journal of Green Economics*, the *Realworld Economics Review*), conferences and books, movements such as the *decroissance* / 'de-growth' movement in France, or organisations such as the new economics foundation. Yet, as Molly Cato notes 'Green economics is not, as yet, an academic discipline with a major place in the universities' (Cato, 2008: 5), and there are very few self-declared 'green economists' or 'green political economists' within the academy or elsewhere. Given the analysis in the last chapter, we can perhaps begin to see why this might be the case. Much like those involved in the Transition movement, those who do regard themselves as green economists/political economists are pioneers, with all that entails. And it is as pioneers of a new approach to understanding the economy and its relationship to the non-human world, politics, ethics and human well-being, that we can explain the striking lack of visibility of this green economic approach. Add to that the fact that those holding this perspective are also by default 'dissidents' in relation to the ruling economic orthodoxy, as outlined in the last chapter, and one can easily understand why these dissident pioneers are invisible.

Nevertheless, there is certainly a greater confidence amongst green economists related not just to the cumulative effect of their work maturing into a distinct (though resolutely interdisciplinary) body of knowledge able to defend its approach against other rival ones. Apart from this, the weight of scientific evidence (in relation to the non-human world, climate change, peak oil, biodiversity loss, soil erosion and decarbonisation), and social scientific evidence (in relation to economic growth, inequality and human well-being, the psychological drivers of over-consumption, diminished human well-being and so on) has, over the last two decades, largely supported the position of green economics against their neo-classical rivals. But, as again the last chapter demonstrated, it would be naive in the extreme to think that 'facts' and 'evidence' alone are sufficient to result in either a paradigm shift within the dominant neo-classical model, or to lead to greater pluralism in thinking about economics.

An extremely important feature of green political economy and its spelling out of an economics of sustainability is its scientific basis, its integration of the insights of the natural sciences, especially ecology, thermodynamics and systems thinking. This concern has been there from the origins of modern green economics in the work of Georgescu-Roegen and Daly to contemporary scholars working within the 'ecological economics' and 'new economics' traditions. Yet, despite this accumulating evidence, the neo-classical economic paradigm still reigns dominant, perhaps best understood as Quiggin has provocatively suggested, as a form of 'zombie economics' (Quiggin, 2010), kept in place because it serves the interest of the powerful.

The Battle of Ideas over the Economy

The success of a body of knowledge is not only to be found in whether it 'trumps' other potential forms of knowledge in the pages of academic journals or conference panels, *or indeed in replacing one 'paradigm' with another*, but also in whether it exists, persists

and commands support in the 'real world'. Of course the one need not be related to the other. As we have seen in relation to neo-classical economics, even though this body of knowledge not only failed to predict the current global financial and economic crisis but also was the main cause of the policies which precipitated it, yet it is still neo-classical economists who continue to advise governments, and who are asked to offer 'expert' commentary in the media. Neo-classical economic derived business models have not by and large been transformed, and ordinary citizens have been offered no alternative to the neo-classical orthodoxy, as can be observed in the media coverage of the crisis.

Much like the 'Achilles lance' view of economic growth – namely it can heal the wounds (environmental and social) it inflicts – so likewise with the neo-classical orthodoxy. Thus we find that the solution to the problems caused by neo-classical economics is…more neo-classical economics prescriptions.[114] The intellectual debate between green political economy and neo-classical economics is one that lies partly within the framework of the academic production of knowledge, but is also a debate that goes far beyond the academy. As indicated in the previous chapter, this is also an ideological battle, only part of which occurs within the academy. Neo-classical economics supports a particular view of the economy and society, one which, with a few exceptions, is supportive of a capitalist organisation of the economy, private ownership of the means of production, production for profit, justifies an unequal distribution of income and wealth, promotes free trade, deregulation, economic globalisation, and above all is committed to promoting orthodox economic growth. *In short, neo-classical economics supports the prevailing capitalist status quo and therefore unpins actually existing unsustainability*. As Cato perceptively notes, part of the reason for the absence of green economics from the academy has to do with the sense that 'academic debate around economics and, some would argue, the role of the university itself, has been captured by the globalized economic system, whose dominance is a threat to the environment' (2008: 6). Conversely, viewed as an ideological battle, debates about economics cannot be confined to the academic sphere but must also be analysed and located in everyday life, from the public sphere, popular culture, the media, elections, party manifestos, protests, campaigns, commonsense perceptions about the economy, to public policy making and legislation.[115]

This is of course an old Marxist insight – namely that debates and conceptions about the economy and economics are, in part, about power relations within society, seeking ideological and intellectual hegemony. This ideological hegemony translates not simply into political power in determining state policies for example, but is equally a form of cultural hegemony informing how we 'commonsensically' think about, assess and

[114] It is for this reason that the term 'autistic' was used be some dissident political economists to describe the neo-classical orthodoxy, that is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting a different result.

[115] For example, the current dominant ideological narrative in relation to the economic crisis could be viewed as a collective wish-fulfilment of wanting to return to 2007 with governments around the world desperately employing whatever means necessary – quantitative easing, part and temporary nationalisation of finance, socialisation of financial risk (the NAMA legislation in the Republic of Ireland) – to return to growth, to resurrect a failed system, all on the advice of and within the confines of the economic orthodoxy (Barry, 2011b).

evaluate the economy and economic issues. Perhaps the most vivid expression of an ideological position that has achieved this preeminent position is that it neither presents itself as an ideological position, nor is it perceived as such by others. Rather it is viewed as 'commonsense' or 'normal'. Once a particular way of conceptualising and thinking about the economy is widely shared and commonsensical, alternative modes of thinking about the economy are by default deemed 'nonsensical', and indeed this has and continues to be the most common reaction to non-neo-classical economic perspectives – green or others. A telling example of how this commonsense is created, is given by Stanford who contends that:

> Curiously, even though capitalism dominates the world economy, the term 'capitalism' is not commonly used. Even more curiously, this word is almost *never* used by economists. Neoclassical economics is dedicated to the study of capitalism; in fact, other kinds of economies (that existed in the past, or that may exist in the future) are not even contemplated. Yet the term 'capitalism' does not appear in neoclassical economics textbooks. Instead, economists refer simply to 'the economy' – as if there is only one kind of economy, and hence no need to name or define it. This is wrong. … *'the economy' is simply where people work to produce the things we need and want. There are different ways to organize that work. Capitalism is just one of them*. (Stanford, 2008: 33; emphasis added)

In other words, a sign of the ideological success of neo-classical economics is that it has, by and large, managed to perform the sleight of hand of replacing 'capitalism' with 'the economy', such that, as indicated in the previous chapter, whenever we 'commonsensically' talk about 'the economy' we are in fact, usually, talking about a particular mode of economic organisation, namely capitalism. A category mistake has been made: the confusion and conflation of 'capitalism' with the 'economy'. Think of when an 'economist' is called to comment in the media, it is without exception a neo-classical economist, who will (generally speaking) talk about (and defend) capitalism. Rarely do we hear non neo-classical economists in our media, or if we do these are not accorded the label of 'economists' but 'political commentators', nicely eliding the fact that those called 'economic experts' are also political commentators.[116] This depoliticised account is a central element of the neo-classical vision of itself as a 'value-free', 'objective' and 'neutral' form of knowledge. While it sits most comfortably with right-wing and conservative political thinking, there are also left-wing versions of depoliticised approaches to the economy, often associated with 'systems thinking' such as that of Niklas Luhmann (Vetlesen, 1995).

Part of the reason why the Transition movement and permaculture are so fascinating is that they self-consciously seek not simply to 're-embed' the economy in the community, the local demos – through relocalisation (Cato, 2008; Cato and Hillier, 2010), or to extend the reach of social economic practices and forms of provisioning (that is neither

[116] Much the same of course occurs with other terms in modern societies such as 'democracy' being reduced to 'liberal' or representative democracy, other conceptions of democracy are marginalised and neglected or simply deemed 'abnormal' or otherwise suspect. Or think about how citizenship is reduced to 'voter' or 'liberty' to 'choice'.

market nor state based economic activities). This movement (like others before it) also seeks to actively encourage citizens to learn about and 'rethink' what is meant by 'the economy' and therefore 'economics'. It is a form of social learning by doing. Ultimately one could say it seeks to demonstrate that just as you make the road by walking it, you understand economics by actively participating in and governing economic activity, with 'experts' left on 'tap not on top' as it were. It is for this reason that non-monetary forms of exchange, local currency schemes, which are intrinsic to the 're-localisation' agenda of the Transition movement are so radical. They open up the possibility of both experiencing non-market and non-monetary forms of economic activity, and thereby creating the opportunity to debunk the myth that there is only one way to think about the economy, and just one way to think about economics (Mellor, 2010; Hill and Myatt, 2010; Barry and Proops, 1999).

Just as the state is first and foremost a 'state of mind' (the creation of Foucault's 'docile' and 'governable' bodies), likewise the economy is a state of mind, the active creation of particular types of thinking and subjectivities ('producing' and 'consuming' bodies and selves). The Transition movement as an example of green economics in practice, in revealing the carbon energy basis of the modern economy (thus 'de-sequestering' it), opens up an urgently needed space for rethinking economics. And in so doing challenges the notion that what the economy is (and ought to be), and what constitutes 'economics' is authoritively determined for us by 'experts'. Green economics thus could be understood as, in part, inspired by the idea of what Manfred Max-Neef calls 'barefoot economics' (Max-Neef, 1982).[117] Such grass-roots, 'barefoot', 'dissident economics' initiatives not only question the received wisdom and commonsense views about the economy, but equally important, seek to question the notion that the economy and economics is so complex a topic that only 'experts' can talk about it. Part of the ideological project of green political economy I would suggest lies in its aim to at one can the same time *repoliticise and democratise thinking about economics* as much as it is about democratising the economy through strategies of localisation or the promotion of social enterprises for example. This is the real meaning of Cato's view of green economics growing 'from the bottom up and from those building a sustainable economy in practice' (2008: 5).

This democratic impulse does not mean that a green political economy perspective does not recognise that complex aspects of the economy do require expertise and forms of knowledge only a few will possess. But this is compatible with requiring democratic oversight and transparency in respect of these complex aspects of managing the

[117] We live in an economically illiterate age in that there is a deliberate and organised process to keep people ignorant of possible alternatives to the dominant model. Consequently, in the context of economic power/knowledge, there is only one model. Other examples of the popular battle of ideas over economics and the economy that form part of the 'project' of green political economy, include the Center for Popular Economics in America and its book *Field Guide to the US Economy* (Teller-Elsberg et al, 2006) or the related US-focused educational project 'What's the economy for, anyway?' run by the Center for Civic Communication and Engagement. Both seek to educate citizens, communities, civil society groups etc., about the basic principles and values that frame how we think about the economy. Above all else, what these practical, pedagogical initiatives seek is to promote greater pluralism in our thinking about the economy in the face of the hegemony of the dominant neo-classical model.

economy. On the other hand, if we look at the ways in which the very complexity of certain types of economic activity, primarily but not limited to the financial sector, is partly to blame for creating the current economic crisis, then simplifying the economy and making it more transparent does make a lot of sense. So apart from the standard response of calling for more regulation in response to the current economic crisis, a green economic perspective makes the case for also de-complexifying the economy (and in the process making it more less unsustainable and more resilient). This imperative to de-complexify is a democratic impulse in which, *inter alia*, relocalisation, enhancing community self-reliance, reducing the distance between production and consumption, and reducing the material throughput of the economy are needed to create a 'human-scale' economy capable of being democratically controlled and regulated, embedded in, rather than disembedded from community (Cato, 2011; Hopkins, 2008; Hines, 2000; Woodin and Lucas, 2004). Here democratisation necessarily leads to less unsustainability.

Another aspect of the ideological battle of ideas about the economy from a green perspective is the claim that economic growth is an ideological belief that has to be imposed upon a society and is not something that people 'naturally' gravitate towards. Specifically, economic growth is the ideology of the elite within societies across the world – akin to Sklair's 'transnational capitalist class' (Sklair, 2009) – since it serves their interests, given of course that those at the top gain most from economic growth policies (especially over the last 30 years). Just as the IMF has to impose 'structural adjustment programmes' and the diktats of the Washington Consensus upon societies (though of course with the support of the elite class of those societies), so likewise I contend that economic growth has to be systemically imposed as an ideology, a myth or 'false consciousness' if you like, on the majority in any given society.

It is only by understanding economic growth as the ideology of the ruling classes that we can explain the paradox at the heart of the green critique of growth. Namely, why and how could economic growth be supported by the majority of people (not just the elites), given the abundant ethical, political and psychological arguments against it, and the wealth of empirical evidence demonstrating that (after a threshold) economic growth does not improve peoples' lives and goes against their interests in flourishing? How in short, can such a belief system continue past the point where it no longer contributes to real freedom, genuine prosperity or human well-being and flourishing? Harking back to the discussion of Sontag in chapter 2, and echoing McMurtry's analysis in the last one, how can such 'cancerous growth' continue to be not only supported but actively desired? How, reminding ourselves of the insights of the early Frankfurt school and Marcuse, in the midst of material abundance and plenty (in so-called 'developed' capitalist societies) can people be induced to believe that their lives are governed by its opposite, namely generalised scarcity, and thus be disciplined into wage labour and into producing and consuming more and more?

There is much to be gained by deploying standard Marxist or anarchist analyses (Carter, 1999; Fox, 2001), to interrogate economic growth as an ideology of the ruling elite. Yet, from my research there is actually very little work (theoretical or empirical) on analysing economic growth as an ideology used by a minority to dominate society. The most

common ideological characterisation of economic growth as 'growthmania', was coined and popularised by Ezra Mishan (1967) and later, Herman Daly (1974). This portrays 'growthmania' not as a deliberate strategy by a section of the population, but rather as a 'system' characteristic – almost as a technical or functional element of capitalism. Daly does come close to what I am getting at here in terms economic growth as a political strategy on behalf of a minority to control and dominate society in his allusion to the idea of perpetual economic growth as a chain letter swindle. As he puts it, 'The conceptual basis of the growth philosophy is equivalent to that of the chain letter swindle: there will always be five new resources for every depleted resource. *The beneficiaries of the swindle, those relatively few at the beginning of the chain*, try hard to keep up the illusion among those myriad doubters out at the ends who are beginning to wonder if it is really possible for the game to expand to the point where they too will receive more in dividends than they pay out in labor' (Daly, 1974: 150; emphasis added). Daly unfortunately does not suggest who the minority who benefit are, or how they maintain their position. While he correctly identifies the idea of infinite economic growth as a giant Ponzi scheme, he does not give us a clear sense of who in society is organising the scheme.

Another founder of green economics, James Robertson, gets nearer the matter when he notes that why the 'new economics' is so threatening, is that it challenges 'powerful established interests, and to call in [sic] question existing institutional structures, existing organisational values, and existing expansionist tendencies in government, business and the careerist professions, and conventional economic orthodoxy' (Robertson, 1997: 13). Yet Robertson's analysis is, like Daly's, somewhat abstract. So to fill this gap as I see it in the generally well-developed (if not generally accepted) green critique of orthodox economic growth, I wish here to touch upon four sources of evidence for the ideological and class character of economic growth – drawn from historical analysis, development studies, deliberative democracy and.... orthodox economics.

Firstly, some historical evidence. It is clear that Marx's view of capitalism emerging 'dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt' (Marx, 1967: 760) is, despite the overdramatic expression, basically true. There was massive popular and sustained resistance by peasants, craft guilds, and others, resulting in uprisings, revolutions, sabotage and other acts of resistance and opposition to the imposition from above of the discipline of wage-labour, enforced movement from the land to the city, the use of machine technology, the factory system etc. As Polanyi details the emergence of capitalism resulted in the spontaneous 'double movement' of social forces rising to resist and protect society, social relations from the unfettered free market (Polanyi, 1947). A large part of this was forcibly compelling people to produce more goods, more wealth, despite norms of pre-industrial, peasant culture being oriented towards of producing enough rather than accumulating a large surplus. The habit of accumulation or producing more and more, rather than enough, had to be imposed from above by those who benefitted most from it, the emerging capitalist class. A good example of this class-bias of economic growth is the way in which technological improvements have been since the emergence of capitalism (and continue to be today) used not to result in *more people working less, but less people working more* (recall Schumpeter's 'gales of

destruction').[118] Simply put, it is in the interests of the owners of capital to institute and maintain an economic system geared towards generating a *surplus*, whereas it had been in the interest of peasants to produce a *sufficient* amount.

Secondly, we have the evidence from development studies about the ways in which economic growth had to be forced upon and how it was and is resisted by people in non-western so- called 'underdeveloped' societies. It is interesting and telling that early green critiques such as Illich (1972), Latouche (1993), Shiva (1988, 2006) and Escobar (1995), drew much of their insights about the problems of global capitalism from their studies and experiences of the 'developing world'. On the one hand, there was the arrogance of using western experiences of development to categorise all other societies as 'developing', 'underdeveloped' or 'undeveloped' i.e. using western metrics to judge and rank all societies. On the other, is the documented resistance of non-western societies and people (mostly non-elites and peasants) to capitalism, the imperative of economic growth, factory-time and its work discipline and production for accumulation and consumerism for leisure. And there are clearly similarities between the forms of resistance to economic growth in the 'majority world', and the resistance historically to capitalism in Europe.

Thirdly, there is some evidence of the disjuncture between elites and citizens when it comes to certain risky technological policies in relation to promoting economic growth. That is, results from deliberative citizens' experiments seem to indicate that the public is more risk adverse and more inclined to support precautionary approaches than political and economic elites (Dryzek et al, 2009). As they note, 'If precautionary worldviews are as pervasive in reflective publics as we suggest, then the generally Promethean positions of governing elites cannot be legitimated by deliberative means – at least when it comes to issues of technological risk'. (Dryzek et al, 2009: 34). This is suggestive of the view that the more open and deliberative the political process the less likely we are to see policies for technologically risky economic growth policies. This suggests that alternatives to economic growth such s 'economic security' may enjoy more democratic support.

Finally, from conventional economic theory we have what is known as the 'backward bending labour supply curve'.[119] This is the rather simple hypothesis that beyond a

[118] In 'Anglo-capitalist' countries such as the UK and the US since the 1980s, we had the imperative of getting more people working more. Instead of technological innovation and the 'knowledge economy' ushering a new era of leisure and automated production, 'in the Anglophone countries that claim to be pioneering the 'new economy,' employment and the length and intensity of work have risen. Unemployment is kept down (at least compared with that in the non- Anglophone OECD) by intensifying production to match the rise in consumption. *Rather than enjoying more time to exercise more choice, much of the growth in consumption has been on time-saving devices to increase the opportunity and efficiency for work, and variety-creating devices to escape the monotony of mass-market products resulting from that work. U.S. and U.K. evidence points to longer hours, more intensive and more closely specified work schedules, consumption displaced and compressed in time to fit it around more demanding workdays for more people*' (Shipman, 2001: 342; emphasis added).

[119] I was first introduced to this hypothesis as an undergraduate economics student in University College Dublin in the mid 1980s, and was immediately intrigued by its heterodox implications, in that it seemed to go against the 'rational' behaviour of 'homo economicus' in it proposed that after a threshold (thresholds

threshold, further increases in wages will not lead people to work more. In other words, once workers have attained enough or sufficient wages, they prefer other things than working for a wage. The reason for less labour being supplied is argued to be due to the interaction of an 'income' and 'substitution' effect, as follows:

> As the wage rate rises, the price of leisure (a good) goes up. The substitution effect, in isolation, prompts the individual to purchase less leisure, which means that he works more hours. However, this may be more than offset, over certain ranges, by an income effect that operates in the opposing direction. As the individual's opportunities improve, he will demand more leisure, a superior good. This effect, in isolation, will generate a reduction in hours of work supplied. The combination of these two forces may yield the back bending portion of the curve (Buchanan, 1971: 385)

Thus the negative income effect (from an increase in wages) offsets the positive substitution effect resulting in less labour despite higher wages. Before moving on to outline why I think the backward bending supply of labour is essentially positive (for my purposes here), I want also use this opportunity to point out that how it is understood within neo-classical economics offers ample evidence of its utter oddness and misrecognition of humanity.

Firstly, we have the oddness of describing the individual as '*purchasing* less leisure' and leisure as a 'superior *good*', not as something that is different from an 'economic good'. This sense of the strange way economics sees the world and humans has never left me since I was first exposed to (micro) neo-classical economics. But of course operating with a 'homo economicus' view of the human being, coupled with the imperialist tendencies of economics (Fine and Milonakis, 2009), means that *everything* has to be commensurate, fungible and reducible to being explained in terms of supply and demand. And the orthodoxy views all human wants, as Daly points out, as the same and insatiable, despite the fact that all wants are *not* the same and some wants, such as basic wants *are* satiable (1974: 153). Secondly we have the fact that this hypothesis is routinely viewed as 'perverse', 'peculiar' and 'counter-intuitive', and therefore in need of special explanation, reveals much about how orthodox economics understands human beings. Why on earth would it be 'perverse' for someone to not take on work, forgo the income in order to spend more time with their family, read, walk, sleep, make love or any number of other activities? Why should the simple explanation for such behaviour – namely a) humans are more than employees and have other interests, identities and things they can do, and b) after earning 'enough' wage income, people may choose and prefer to engage in these non-employment related activities and a) those identities, interests and activities may be more important to the individual, even if it means considerably less wage income?[120] In much the same we discussed in the last chapter, that the economics

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again!), more wages did not lead to a greater supply of labour. Against this I should note, for the sake of balance, that I was also taught to be able to defend the proposition that 'bought sex produced less utility than sex with someone your love' using utility preference curves. It was at this I remember thinking there was something *deeply* wrong with neo-classical economics!

[120] In another statement, demonstrating the full horror of orthodox economics we find the following, 'He supplies leisure (which is desired by the market in its labor form) and demands dollars of income (other

orthodoxy does recognise that alternatives to GDP are valid and perhaps needed, or that the fact that externalities are not included in prices under the existing model, but does not result in an paradigm shift, likewise with the backward bending labour supply hypothesis.

The alternative model of green political economy developed here, while drawing inspiration from more radical accounts of 'green economics' such as that developed by the green economist Molly Cato (Scott-Cato, 2008), seeks to articulate the underlying aspirations, values and principles of green economics in a manner which is pragmatic, and more likely to be realised politically in the context of the reality of non-green voters and public opinion out-weighing green voters, parties and popular support. Given the defence of pluralism which such 'principled pragmatism' is difficult if not impossible to avoid. So, inevitably, it is a compromised, negotiable conception of green political economy that is outlined and defended one that can appeal to and may gain the support of those who are not ideologically 'green'.[121]

What is an Economy for? From Economic Growth to Economic Security

A long-standing green commitment is to re-orientate the economy towards enhancing and being judged by its capacity to promote 'quality of life', 'well-being' and 'happiness' rather than orthodox economic growth. As the new economics foundation (an organisation which perhaps more than any other has consistently lobbied and provided the evidence base for a post-growth green economic perspective within the UK) puts it, 'the purpose of economy should be to enhance the well-being of the citizens of the country, in a way that is socially just, and environmentally sustainable. That is, the level of economic growth achieved in an economy is not a sufficient measure of that economy's success or failure to deliver prosperity to society. This is because economic growth does not, in itself, tell us anything about our quality of life' (new economics foundation, 2008: 1-2). The economy and economic growth are, after all, means not ends in themselves. We live in societies with economies, not economies with societies, a view which profoundly challenges neo-classical economics and the neoliberal worldview.

I outline here how 'economic security' could be a replacement for economic growth, and present a green economic case for a new type of economy, in which redistribution and reducing socio-economic inequality are central (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). A model of green political economy cast in terms of 'economic security' has the advantage of presenting a positive and attractive discourse for addressing the problems of actually existing unsustainability. Using the language and analysis of economic security,

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goods)' (Buchanan, 1971: 389). So leisure is viewed as labour but what of the reverse? : 'He demands leisure (which is not desired by the market in its leisure form) and supplies ....' well what? Not income, not goods. So what does the person who does not supply labour supply? Economics cannot tell us.

[121] An example of this principled compromise might be the potentially powerful distinction (both conceptually and in policy debates) between 'the market' and 'capitalism' which has yet to be sufficiently explored and exploited as a starting point for the development of radical, viable and attractive conceptions of green political economy. In particular the role of the market as a voluntary exchange mechanism, in incentivising economic, technological and social innovation for lessening unsustainability can be separated from capitalism.

introduces way of arguing and presenting the case for a less growth-orientated economy and high consumption society, which at the same time aims to raise quality of life while lowering inequality. At the same time it is important (not least strategically) that a green critique of 'growth' should be viewed as a critique of orthodox and *undifferentiated growth* as measured by conventional economics. That is, least a critique of economic growth be viewed as a any and all types of growth, it is important to stress that greens reserve their critique for what Daly calls 'uneconomic growth' – the expansion of forms of activities which (after a threshold) undermine or compromise human flourishing. Thus it is perfectly consistent for greens to criticise economic growth yet support growth in for example, education, public health, public transport or subsidised organic farming, but criticise the growth of consumerism, the quantity of arms and weapons an economy produces and trades, the size of domestic/household credit card debt. *Thus, when I talk of 'economic growth' I am referring to 'undifferentiated, orthodox economic growth' as measured by conventional national accounting measurements such as GDP.*

One of the foci of analysis for green critiques of economic growth is consumerism, since consumerism has become a central driver and is functional for contemporary economic growth policies. As the current economic crisis aptly demonstrates, if (too many) people save rather than consume, the capitalist system becomes unstable and does not function. One of the critiques of consumerism is based on the notion that easy consumption 'devalues' that which is consumed – hence the disposable, banal and ephemeral, but constantly repetitious character of modern consumerism. There is no sense of the *fragility* (despite the evident ephemerality) or any associated sense of *preciousness* attached to the mass produced goods and services consumed. Consumerism denotes an attitude towards that consumed of indifference, repetition, with little connection or meaningful connection made – one good or service is as good as another. The 'repressive tolerance' which defines the consumer experience and its associated highly disciplined subjectivities, was outlined by Marcuse (and others) over 50 years ago as characterising modern western capitalist societies (Marcuse, 1964). This still has analytical purchase and remains an apt description today of those societies. As Murray Bookchin points out the judgement of a repressed psyche is not a good standard for determining what is 'good' and virtuous and what is not (Bookchin, 1982).

One of the upshots of the analysis of vulnerability, developed in chapter 2, for green politics is a reaffirmation of the need to examine issues of identity and the creation of new 'sustainability' and 'resilient' subjectivities, against the repressive tolerant consumer identities which demarcate the limit of 'normal' and hence 'possible' or 'desirable' identities. Whether it is the putative identities and practices one can discern within the Transition movement, or the cultivation of virtue and certain character traits for green political and economic practices (such as 'green citizenship'), vulnerability and resilience are suggestive of specific types of virtue (such as compassion, care, courage, prudence, temperance, self-assuredness, steadfastness, sensuality, humility and materiality – as opposed to 'materialism'). They also denote certain types of character traits, such as that of the 'pioneer' and 'dissident'. One thing is sure, in the creation of any sustainable and resilient economy, one that is adaptive, in the sense indicated in chapter 3, any putative 'greening' of production (through technology for example) has to go hand in hand with a

close reappraisal of consumption and consumerism, and the latter's function in being functional for and stimulating economic growth. As Princen et al. put it, 'Consumption becomes sacrosanct. If water supplies are tight, one must produce more water not consume less. If toxics accumulate, one must produce with fewer by-products – or even better, produce a cleanup technology – rather than forego the production itself...*Production reigns supreme because consumption is beyond scrutiny*' (Princen, Maniates and Conca, 2002: 5; emphasis added). Like the sequestration of vulnerability, dependence, illness and death, the growing opaqueness of the connections between production and consumption under global capitalism, globalised supply-chains and a global division of labour etc, are also in need of critical examination.

While there are many potential contenders for what replaces economic growth, that have been canvassed over the last 150 years – from John Stuart Mill's 'stationary state' (Mill, 1848), to more recent work on 'quality of life', 'well-being' and 'prosperity' (Jackson, 2009b) for example. All share a number of components and have a large degree of overlap – the one I wish to explore here is the notion of 'economic security' (Barry, 2009a). I take this term from a 2004 report by the International Labor Organization entitled *Economic Security for a Better World*, which found that 'economic security' coupled with democratic representation and equality were the main determinants of well-being, tolerance and social stability (International Labor Organization, 2004c). Of particular interest, given the arguments made in previous chapters about the connection between consumerism, irresponsibility and diminished human well-being, is the opening lines of the report:, 'All human beings need a sense of security, to give a sense of belonging, a sense of stability and a sense of direction. *People who lack basic security in themselves, in their families, in their workplaces and in their community tend to become socially irresponsible. They tend to behave opportunistically, and they tend to lose a sense of moderation.* Moreover, periods and areas of mass insecurity have, historically, always bred intolerance, extremism and violence' (International Labor Organization, 2004c: 3; emphasis added).[122]

The report defines economic security as follows:

> *Economic security* is composed of *basic social security*, defined by access to basic needs, infrastructure pertaining to health, education, dwelling, information, and social protection, as well as *work-related security*. The report delineates seven components of *work-related security*. ... two are essential for basic security: income security and voice representation security. Basic security means limiting the impact of uncertainties and risks people face daily while providing a social environment in which people can belong to a range of communities, have a fair opportunity to pursue a chosen occupation and develop their capacities via what

[122] This recalls Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1944 State of the Union address where in urging Congress to implement an 'economic bill of rights', he argued, 'We have come to a clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. 'Necessitous men are not free men'. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made' (Roosevelt, 1944).

> the International Labor Organization calls decent work. (International Labor Organization, 2004a: 1)

The report found that:

> People in countries that provide citizens with a high level of economic security have a higher level of happiness on average, as measured by surveys of national levels of life-satisfaction and happiness…*The most important determinant of national happiness is not income level – there is a positive association, but rising income seems to have little effect as wealthy countries grow more wealthier. Rather the key factor is the extent of income security, measured in terms of income protection and a low degree of income inequality*. (International Labor Organization, 2004b: 1; emphasis added).

Such findings, also echoed in the work of others such as Wilkinson and Pickett, (2008) and Standing (2002), give some empirical support to long-standing arguments stressing the need for policies to lower socio-economic inequality as necessary to enhance individual and collective socio-economic security and increase well-being. The link between economic security, well-being and equality will be explored in more detail below. The International Labor Organization report finds that 'welfare state' provision of social security for citizens is an important determinant of high economic security. The report also points out that insecurity is generated by patterns of economic globalisation, which produce endemic or structural insecurity in terms of employment, social welfare and income. The report indicates how the need to attract 'footloose' multinational capital, or the imperative of 'economic competitiveness', results in cuts to income protection or publicly provided goods and services such as education or health, all of which undermine economic insecurity. As forms of *structural*, manufactured vulnerability, the report suggests that existing 'social insurance' approaches to cover these risks are inadequate (International Labor Organization, 2004c: xvii). More wide-ranging and radical structural change in how the economy operates is required to minimise these threats to economic security.

It is also relevant to note other observed links between in/security, economic growth and well-being. One of the principal psychological determinants of excessive consumption has been found to be feelings of personal insecurity and vulnerability – whether about one's body shape, sensitivity to peer judgements, or externally generated and reinforced views of self-other relations that undermine personal or other forms of security and self-esteem (Chaplin and John, 2007; de Graff et al, 2005, Hamilton and Denniss, 2005).[123] Giddens, in a slightly different vein has written persuasively about the way modernity can undermine what the calls 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1994: 79), but does not connect this with patterns of 'defensive consumption' – those forms of consumption which do not add to quality of life, but are forced upon the individual as a necessary means for them to simply protect their existing material standard of living, identity or status position i.e. to

[123] It is telling that in the wake of the 9/11 attacks the then US President stated that, 'We can't let the terrorists succeed in their objective of frightening us to the point where we don't conduct business or *people don't shop*' (Bush, 2001; emphasis added).

run to stand still as it were. And it is precisely because we need to remove/edit out such 'defensive expenditure' that we need to move beyond orthodox GDP. In identifying these psychological and cultural forms of insecurity we can relate back to the discussion around vulnerability and insecurity in chapter 2.[124] For example, psychologist Tim Kasser points out that individuals in America when faced with short-term insecurity or pain (psychological or physical), increasingly turn to money and possessions as a way of coping with distress, rather than seeking comfort and support in social interaction and community or family relationships , since these have been eroded, in part, due to the pressures of economic globalisation and the imperative of orthodox economic growth (Kasser, 2008; Hamilton, 2010). Yet it is precisely those non-monetary, non-possessive relationships which have a greater impact on our overall levels of happiness and well-being.

Others, such as Alastair MacIntyre have also noted some psychological-cum-ethical impacts of economic growth, particularly in relation to the types of identities, subjectivities and character traits it requires and calls forth. According to MacIntyre, 'modern societies recognize that *acquisitiveness is a character trait indispensable to continuous and limitless economic growth, and one of their central beliefs is that continuous and limitless economic growth is a fundamental good*. That a systematically lower standard of living ought to be preferred to a systematically higher standard of living is a thought incompatible with either the economics or the politics of peculiarly modem societies' (MacIntyre, 1988: 112; emphasis added). This is an obvious but nonetheless important point. Namely, that a post-growth economy and society calls for 'non-acquisitive' identities and interests, or at least identities and interests ones that are not orientated towards orthodox economic growth and associated practices of passive consumerism.

Of course there are those for whom economic insecurity is a positive and indeed necessary feature of modern capitalism. Schumpeter for example famously noted capitalism's 'creative destruction' by which he meant that, 'This process of Creative Destruction is the essential fact about capitalism. It is what capitalism consists in and what every capitalist concern has got to live in' (Schumpeter, 1975: 82). But as the Foucauldian analysis in the last chapter suggested, this risk taking is no longer limited to the 'entrepreneur' but is now a feature of every neoliberal subject in contemporary capitalist societies (Mellor, 2010). For Schumpeter, and indeed other mainstream economists, a key feature of capitalism's productive dynamism is its inherent instability. It's very capacity to generate insecurity is a way of spurring innovation and entrepreneurialism; all with the aim of course of increasing productively, profitability and therefore economic growth.

[124] We can link ego insecurity to materialism which then is a main cause of consumerism and materialism, which according to psychologists such as Kasser lead to diminished well-being. According to Kasser's work, 'Materialistic people, from children to pensioners, are less satisfied with life, lack vitality, and suffer more anxiety, depression and addiction problems. Materialistic values make people more anti-social, less empathic, more competitive and less cooperative' (Kasser, 2008: 92).

Therefore, arguments for economic security run counter to this vision, both in questioning the means (creative destruction and manufactured and structurally maintained insecurity) and the ends (orthodox economic growth as measured by GDP). However, this does not necessarily mean (as critics are wont to point out) that a focus on economic security as a main objective of macro-economic policy means an end to entrepreneurialism or innovation. It is a fair comment to make, and one any alternative to our current economic growth focused model need to take seriously, is how to ensure that stagnation and regress will not be the outcome of a post-growth economy. However, we have reasons for thinking that development 'comes from innovation, from consuming different things, rather than more of the same things' (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009: 221). And once one begins to free up key economic goals – such as 'innovation' from its technological-economic straightjacket, 'growth' from it reduction to material wealth or capital accumulation, 'work' from being identified solely with formally paid 'employment' and so on – there is reason to suppose that *more, not less, innovation and creativity* and innovation beyond technological or institutional spheres, will be the result of living in such a society, rather than stagnation or regress. In fact, such forms of innovation and creativity are *necessary features and therefore 'required'* for low carbon, high well-being lives and communities, and not some 'added extra'. And they can be seen not only as forms of social innovation (Scott-Cato and Hillier, 2010) but can also take individual forms (Doran, 2010; Alexander, 2011).

The International Labor Organization report confirms the long-standing green critique that economic growth beyond a threshold need not necessarily contribute to well-being. It states that, 'there is only a weak impact of economic growth on security measured over the longer-term. In other words, rapid growth does not necessarily create better economic security, although it sometimes can do if it is accompanied by appropriate social policies' (International Labor Organization 2004c: 30). The report provides evidence of orthodox economic growth policies that undermine economic security. It finds that, 'being insecure has resonance in people's attitudes, which at times can be detrimental to their ideas of a decent society. In a recent survey taken by the Latino *barometro* in Latin America, 76% of the people surveyed were concerned about not having a job the following year, and a majority said that *they would not mind a non-democratic government if it could solve their unemployment problem'* (International Labor Organization, 2004b; 1-2; emphasis added). If not only states (Lauber, 1978; Barry, 1999a), but also citizens can contemplate embracing non-democratic ways in pursuit of orthodox economic growth objectives, then it is not just well-being that economic growth threatens. If one values democracy and associated values such as pluralism, freedom, tolerance and equality, then one has to seriously question the pursuit of policies aimed at promoting orthodox undifferentiated economic growth as a permanent economic objective. As the report goes on to note, 'economic insecurity fosters intolerance and stress, which contribute to social illness and ultimately may lead to social violence' (International Labor Organization, 2004b: 2). One could suggest that this support for non-democratic, and indeed injustice forms, of orthodox economic growth confirms its ideological character and capacity for capturing and limiting visions of what is socially and economically possible.

This problem of economic insecurity (experienced at an individual or collective level) can also be applied at the level of the existing economic system itself. An economic system that has only two options – continual growth or collapse – cannot be stable or secure (but for reasons different from Schumpeter). On the one hand, this economic system is unsustainable i.e. it is simply *biophysically impossible* to achieve continual economic growth. Although there is much hope put on the idea of 'decoupling' orthodox economic growth from energy, resource and pollution impacts, we have no evidence that this is either possible on the scale required or that there is any evidence for such 'ecological modernisation' within advanced industrial economies. For Jackson this decoupling is a 'myth' and 'assumptions that capitalism's propensity for efficiency will allow us to stabilise the climate and protect against resource scarcity are nothing short of delusional' (2009b: 7; also see Giampietro and Mayumi, 2009). This is the case even if growth is associated with more egalitarian and redistributive policies, that is within alternative views that less inequality does not undermine orthodox economic growth (Kirby and Murphy, 0210: Putterman, Roemer, and Silivestre, 1998).[125] So while clearly better from the point of view of equality and providing economic security, 'egalitarian growth' is, qua continuous economic growth, also biophysically impossible and therefore unsustainable.

On the other, capitalist stagnation brings with it its own dangers i.e. no-growth is *not socially desirable* or politically acceptable (Jackson, 2009b). Economic stagnation – as with the global economic crisis experienced since 2008 – is associated with high levels of unemployment, social dislocation, disinvestment and a lowering of well-being. This macro-level or system level critique of the capitalist economy represents an updated version of Marx's analysis of the endemic 'crisis-ridden' character of capitalism. Hence, more radical conceptions of green political economy often accept significant elements of the Marxist analysis of capitalism, though without necessarily going along with its proposed solutions for or alternatives to capitalism, since most (though not all)[126] streams of Marxism are committed to economic growth (Barry, 1999b). It is the 'myth' of exponential and permanent economic growth itself is the problem and needs to be abandoned. *Rather than focusing our energies on increasing the ecological and energy efficiency of capitalist production and orthodox economic growth, what we need to be doing is exploring ways of increasing the ecological and energy efficiency of human flourishing.*

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[125] 'Economic theory still provides no proof of the superiority, much less the necessity, of either unabridged private property or of its highly unequal distribution. Indeed, modern theories of asymmetric information and incentives provide numerous examples of equality-efficiency synergies, and post-war economic experience indicates that equality does not obviously conflict with growth. While the operation of unfettered markets engenders great inequalities of wealth, claims that markets would be inefficient without such inequalities are largely speculative' (Putterman, Roemer, and Silivestre, 1998: 866).

[126] In the past two decades a significant body of 'eco-socialist' and 'eco-Marxist' scholarship and political practice has developed. Examples include the journal *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, the work of James O'Connor (O'Connor, 1997), Ted Benton (Benton, 1993, 1994, 2000), Joel Kovel (Kovel, 2007), John Bellamy Foster (Bellamy-Foster, 2000, Bellamy-Foster, Clark and York, 2010), Saral Sakar (Sakar, 1999), David Pepper (Pepper, 1993, 2010), Paul Burkett (Burkett, 2009), Debal Deb (Deb, 2009) and Derek Wall (Wall, 2010), and eco-feminist thinkers such as Ariel Salleh (Salleh, 1999, 2009), Kate Soper (Soper, 1992, 1995, 2000), and Mary Mellor (Mellor, 1992, 1997, 2010).

Economic Security, Equality and Well-Being

One of the most significant impacts of a shift away from economic growth as a central goal would be the undermining of the justification of socio-economic inequalities. The latter are usually justified or tolerated on the grounds that inequalities are necessary 'incentives' to motivate people (via the promise of differential, unequal rewards) towards entrepreneurial activity, 'hard work' etc. and thus stimulate economic growth. As early proponents of the 'steady-state economy' pointed out, the shift from a society geared towards economic growth to a society where material growth is not a priority may lead to more extensive redistributive measures. This is a point made many years ago by forerunners of green economic thinking such as Herman Daly (Daly, 1973). That is, there are significant redistributive implications of moving beyond a growth paradigm. According to the orthodox growth view, growth is needed to eliminate poverty (by making the 'economic pie' bigger, not slicing it differently), and through the process of 'trickle down'. If, however, the option of baking a bigger pie is neither (ecologically) possible nor (socially) desirable, then poverty elimination can be solved only by more direct redistributive measures. And in so doing the link between poverty and inequality is explicitly revealed. That is, inequality causes poverty, not vice versa.

One of the reasons for focusing on lowering inequality is that socio-economic inequality is both a driver and a product of orthodox economic growth. *In this way economic growth manages rather than tackles or reduces inequality*. As Putterman, Roemer, and Silivestre note, 'The classical view is that inequality is necessary for growth: if income were equally distributed, most people would consume their entire income, with very little left for investment. As put most baldly by members of the Cambridge (England) school such as Joan Robinson and Nicholas Kaldor, *impoverishment of the masses is necessary for the accumulation of a surplus over present consumption*' (Putterman, Roemer, and Silivestre, 1998: 896; emphasis added).[127] And impoverishment and inequality undermines economic security.

As the authors of the International Labor Organization report note, 'Inequality is part of insecurity, particularly when that inequality is substantial. And the unequal distribution of insecurities is part of socio-economic inequality' (International Labor Organization, 2004c: 3). So if one argues for a post-growth economy, then it does mean that the traditional political strategy for simply managing inequalities is no longer an option. As Seabrook puts it (echoing Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) here), 'The heroic age of consumption is surely over. Eventual curbs on consumption, the result of an omnivorous and accelerating depletion of the natural world, are inevitable. This will bring to the fore the issue of distributive justice once more' (Seabrook, 2008: 6).

There are other problems with inequality in relation to human well-being that I wish to highlight here. **The first** is that the more unequal a society the greater there is status

[127] However they provide the east Asian Tiger economies as counter evidence to this inegalitarian orthodoxy, drawing on World Bank analyses. As they put it, 'The growth experiences of the East Asian 'tigers', however, which have involved substantial state intervention and have been relatively egalitarian, are often cited as contrary evidence' (Putterman, Roemer and Silivestre, 1998: 896).

competition and a diminution in overall well-being. As Wilkinson and Pickett note 'The problems in rich countries are not caused by society not being rich enough (or even by being too rich) *but by the scale of material differences between people within each society being too big*. What matters is where we stand in relation to others in our own society' (2009: 25; emphasis added).[128] This as Jackson contends, 'Unproductive status competition increases material throughput and creates distress' (Jackson, 2009b: 154), that is causes both ecological problems as the economic system uses up more resources and creates more pollution, *not* to meet basic human needs and increase human flourishing, but as a result of competition between individuals for social status. And in modern consumer- capitalist societies the main way in which social comparison is performed is through material goods and the 'mandatory' practices of consumerism and consumption.

Wilkinson and Pickett go on to state that, 'at the core of our interactions with strangers is our concern at the social judgements and evaluations they might make: how do they rate us, did we give a good account of ourselves? This vulnerability is part of the modern psychological condition and feeds directly into consumerism' (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009: 42-3).[129] Again we are led back to the foundational issue of providing policies and institutional structures (with incentive system to match) which minimise, if not eradicate, forms of unjustified evaluative vulnerability based on comparing social position and possessions i.e. which does not undermine security and self-esteem. While economic security does not guarantee self-esteem security, it is an important element, and enabling people to feel more secure and confident about themselves, within a less unequal social context, can be regarded as a key policy mechanism of eradicating the unproductive status competition Jackson refers to above. This, as I see it, is the centrality of ensuring that a less unsustainable society is a considerably less unequal society. In being less unequal, such a social order reduces the dangers of someone feeling *shame* in public, in the sense of not having the basic wherewithal to present, think, and feel oneself as an equal member of society.[130]

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[128] Of course when viewed from a global perspective, informed by limits to growth, this statement would need to be qualified, since it is possible that societies can become 'too rich', if that wealth required enormous amounts of carbon, ecological resources, pollution etc. In other words, many of the problems we face will not be solved simply by making rich nations more egalitarian. For example, if wealth were redistributed more equally in the United States of America, and enabled every citizen to have a conventional American middle-class lifestyle (i.e. without an underclass and without a superrich elite), then while the problem of inequality within America may subside, this by itself will not solve the problem of global ecological degradation (or global distributive justice). I owe this point to Sam Alexander. This is why something like the 'contraction and convergence' model is what is required globally, i.e. in this case for America to contract and become more egalitarian in the distribution of its available wealth, while allowing developing countries to develop and converge at a global sustainable threshold. But recall 'contraction' here only refers to those elements of lifestyles that have high energy and ecological 'footprints'. To recall what I said in the Introduction, we need to keep foremost in our minds that a 'post-growth' society is focused on *sufficiency in material consumption to enable the maximisation quality of life*.

[129] Or as Baudrillard more dramatically puts it, '[I]nnumerable individuals [are] pledged to a parody of sacrificial consumption, mobilized as consumers by the order of production'. (Baudrillard, 1981: 119).

[130] As L.T Hobhouse put it, 'Human happiness requires security – know what to expect in given circumstances' (Hobhouse, 1922:16). An excellent account of disadvantage, equality and shame is provided in (de-Shalit and Wolff, 2007).

The second is that, as Wilkinson and Pickett's research demonstrates; unequal societies almost always come out worse on a range of policy issues ranging from obesity, childhood mortality, drug use, literacy, social mobility, trust, teenage pregnancy and incidence of mental illness. As they put it, 'Economic growth, for so long the great engine of progress, has, in the rich countries, largely finished its work. Not only have measures of wellbeing and happiness ceased to rise with economic growth but, as affluent societies have grown richer, there have been long-term rises in rates of anxiety, depression and numerous other social problems. *The populations of rich countries have got to the end of a long historical journey*' (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009: 5-6; emphasis added). Thus, this suggests that economic growth is not to be somehow rejected 'in principle' as being 'intrinsically' bad or wrong, but is to be seen in terms of a society's evolution over time, and as a policy that needs to be periodically reviewed, rather than a 'locked-in' or permanent feature of a society. And one threshold (apart from obvious ecological ones) that can be identified to signal the point beyond which economic growth needs to be reconsidered, is when greater and greater levels of inequality is required for economic growth, which reduces the range of components central for human flourishing.[131] Other thresholds could be more directly related to human flourishing such as mental health, social trust or measurements of community and solidarity.

The third striking implication of inequality is its negative effect on social trust and social solidarity and sense of community (Lane, 2000). This has significant implications for democracy, based on the principles of both equality between citizens and fellow feeling as members of the same community. It is of particular concern for a green republican notion of politics (as will be outlined later). In short, large degrees of inequality undermines a sense of a community of equals. This can lead to the danger of hierarchical and paternalistic relations between supposedly equal citizens. This carries with it the possibility of relations of domination, including those based on internalised senses of inequality and inferiority. These include those centred around shame at one's social status and those where one believes oneself to be a 'second' or even 'third class' citizen (Wolff and De-Shalit, 2007). As Wilkinson and Pickett note 'The problem is that second-class goods make us look like second-class people' (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009: 222).[132] Such forms of social stratification (around race, class, ethnicity, sexuality or gender) are

[131] Of course Wilkinson and Pickett's thesis has not gone uncontested and there does seem to be a difference between affluent and less affluent countries which seems to be the main focus on some of the critics (Wolfers and Stevenson, 2008; Deaton, 2007). Layard, Mayraz and Nickell review the data from these two other studies and conclude that the importance of relative income in advanced societies for happiness still stands, such that more economic growth does not improve average happiness (Layard, Mayraz and Nickell, 2010). In relation to less affluent societies the findings of Wolfers ad Stevenson and Deaton stress my argument for redistributing development opportunities from the more to the less affluence along the logic of contraction and convergence.

[132] This is similar to the argument one often finds in the environmental justice movement where those marginalised communities who house a disproportionate amount of unwanted land uses (incinerators, waste dumps etc) often express the injustice and inequality of this in making the link that siting rubbish/waste so easily communicates that those who live there are equated and linked with rubbish and waste (Schlosberg, 1999).

not compatible with the equality required for democratic politics, and living in a democratic society of equals.[133]

A fourth and related problem with inequality is one particular to democratic politics, namely how inequality undermines and compromises democracy. Simply put, equality is a precondition for democracy. De Tocqueville saw that the 'rough equality' he observed in the United States in the early 19th century as key to the effectiveness of its democratic political system.[134] As he put it, 'The more I advanced in the study of American society, the more I perceived that the equality of condition is the fundamental fact from which all others seem to be derived, and the central point at which all my observations constantly terminated' (de Tocqueville, 1990: 3). This was also tied up for him (as it is for greens) with the necessity of seeing democracy not just as a political system but as a type of society, so that the egalitarian norms of democracy could be diffused throughout society and not simply confined to the formal political sphere. This is an eminently 'republican' view and one that will be taken up in later chapters in developing a 'green republicanism'. A more modern version of this problem for democracy of inequality is given by Stout who observes that, 'Wherever economic power is both concentrated in the hands of a few and easily convertible into unconstrained political power, it makes no sense to speak of political life as democratic. The power of the rich is unconstrained because too few people are bothering to constrain it. *Power is always accumulating in novel ways, posing new threats to liberty and justice*' (Stout, 2007: 6; emphasis added).

Much has been written about the corrosive effects of socio-economic and other forms of inequality on democracy, and here I direct the reader to those studies (Evans, 2010; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba, 2001; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995; Dahl, 1996), but point out three issues. **Firstly**, there is the violation of the basic democratic principle of 'each to count for one, none for more than one'. **Secondly**, inequality, in leading to the concentration of wealth and political power, means relations of inequality become relations of arbitrary power and dependence, which also has as a consequence the erosion of solidarity and mutual connection between the wealthy and powerful and the less wealthy and powerless. **Thirdly**, the empirical evidence is that as inequality increases in a society (as it has done over the past thirty years in most 'developed' countries), the rich become better able to shape the scope and nature of politics and determine the grammar of politics and economics, including promoting the ideology of economic growth. In that context, as work stretching from Goodin and Dryzek in the early 1980s (Goodin and

[133] Though developed in more detail in later in the book, part of the argument I make for green republicanism, is that this way of understanding politics stresses the point that democracy is not simply an institutional arrangement or rules for public decision-making, *but a way of life, a particular type of society, namely a democratic society* (Macpherson, 1973: 15-16; Barry, 1999a: 206-214)

[134] This notion of 'rough equality' attempts to track a realistic (and republican inspired) position which seeks to find a justifiable band of inequalities between individuals as opposed to unlimited socio-economic inequalities on the one hand (neoliberalism and libertarianism) and the achievement of universal equal outcomes on the other (idealistic egalitarianism, pure communism). The notion of rough equality is expressed by Herman Daly and John Cobb in the following quote: 'The goal for an economics of the community is *not equality, but limited inequality*. Complete equality is the collectivist's denial of true differences in community. Unlimited inequality is the individualist's denial of interdependence and true solidarity in community' (Daly and Cobb, 1990: 331; emphasis added).

Dryzek, 1980), to more recent work of Solt (Solt, 2008), we find that less well-off citizens, those most disadvantaged and marginalised in society due to inequality, give up on discussing political matters and effectively withdraw from politics. This of course leaves politics and the shaping of what politics means (like neo-classical economics in relation to economics) in fewer and fewer hands.

Sufficiency, Thrift and Frugality

A 'post-growth' economy is thus an economy that has either passed the threshold beyond which more undifferentiated, orthodox economic growth does not increase economic security and human flourishing, or is one that has transitioned to something like a 'steady state' macro-economics of sustainability (Victor, 2008). It seems to me that, and here relating back to the discussion about residence and complex adaptive systems in chapter 3, that the principle of sufficiency would have to be harnessed to our understanding of economic security, if the concept is to adequately service our needs for both social well being and socio-ecological resilience. Sufficiency and associated concepts of enough, thrift and frugality are commonly found in most green arguments of how to create human well-being within ecological limits. That is, how to achieve high quality of life in a low carbon and low energy economy (Boyle and Simms, 2009). Such notions pepper debates about creating resilient local communities (Astyk, 2008), are central to the vision developed by the Transition movement (Hopkins, 2008) and have long been part of a green political vision (de Geus, 2003, 2009; Cato, 2003; Barry, 1999a: 173-184). I note in passing that attempts have been made to implement it in Thailand though the Buddhist-based concept of the 'Sufficiency Economy' which stresses moderation as a vital aspect of achieving human well-being and enhancing community resilience to withstand external shocks (Boyce, Prayukvong and Puntasen, 2009), and one could also point to the Kingdom of Bhutan's government strategy to increase 'happiness' not economic growth (Ura, 2008). And perhaps, equally if not more significant, one could point to the ridicule and paternalistic amusement that characterised the western media coverage of these.

Unlike the concept of efficiency, Thomas Princen contends that sufficiency as a principle compels decision makers to ask when too much resource use or too little regeneration risks important values such as ecological integrity and social cohesion. For him the threshold beyond which sufficiency considerations should be deployed are, 'when material gains now preclude material gains in the future; when consumer gratification or investor reward threatens *economic security*; when benefits internalized depend on costs externalized' (Princen, 2005, 18: emphasis added). The principle of sufficiency expresses the dissident and heretical notion (viewed from the point of view of conventional economic and associated political thinking[135]) that we should organise production and consumption aimed at providing 'enough' goods and services, food and energy etc., and not trying to maximise production and consumption. This represents a direct head on challenge to the culture and political economy of capitalist consumerism.

[135] For example, as far as I can tell the vast majority of contemporary liberal political thinking uncritically assumes economic growth (and usually some variant of capitalism) as axiomatic rather than contingent features of the 'circumstances of justice'. From Rawls on, orthodox economic growth has simply been assumed within modern liberal thinking.

It does so not because sufficiency and 'enoughness' counter pose 'sacrifice' and 'restraint' to consumer capitalism's promise of living and consuming to excess and without limits. This is of course how defenders of the status quo will and have presented this challenge – as something entirely negative, requiring sacrifice, a 'retrograde' step, and a threat to valued ways of life and so on. Rather, the concepts of 'sufficiency' and 'enough' represent principles, the widespread acceptance and implementation of which, would seriously challenge consumer capitalism (Mellor, 2010: 9, 38). It would, for example, open up a space for considering ending the cycle which connects enforced consumption to mandatory production qua employment (Fitzpatrick, 1998). This is why one of the most radical acts in a consumer society is the refusal to consume or become formally employed.

There is also a direct connection between sufficiency as a principle and the permaculture and resilience concept of 'slack' outlined in chapter 3. If we take sufficiency to mean 'doing well by doing a little less than the most possible' as Princen puts it (Princen, 2010: 73), then sufficiency is an essential to reducing unsustainability, since it not only helps the long-term and on-going productive use of a resource, but also provides some in-built protection against overuse. Sufficiency also helps to enhance the resilience of that activity, as the conventionally 'sub-option' goal of not maximising productivity means that *sufficient* forms of production have 'spare capacity' to withstand and recover from disturbances. Herman Daly, while welcoming the idea of integrating the principle of sufficiency, also signals the difficulty of doing so. As he puts it, 'It will be very difficult to define sufficiency and build the concept [of sufficiency] into economic theory and practice. But I think it will prove far more difficult to continue to operate [as if] there is no such thing as enough' (Daly, 1993: 360-1). Sufficiency principles (as opposed to mere efficiency) such as those of restraint, respite, precaution, have the virtue of partially resurrecting well-established notions like moderation and thrift, ideas that have never completely disappeared, and will indeed be in need as guides to action in a less unsustainable and more resilient economy.

An important point here is raised by Astyk in correcting the common misperception of thrift and frugality being negatively viewed. As she rightly puts it, 'Thrift is not the opposite of generosity, the closed fist that holds one to what you have, but the enabler of generosity. A frugal life that does not waste and cares for what you have is what enables you to give away, to share, to open your hands and pour forth what you have preserved' (Astyk, 2008: 208). Frugality as a principle of economic thinking and acting has been regarded as a form of private 'accumulation strategy' due to the unfortunate association between thrift, saving and frugality with Scrooge-like motivations. In fact, investment and saving, when based on principles such as frugality and thrift, mean that the latter principles represent the antidote to debt-based private consumption and, as Astyk and others note, help us in the direction of a more solidaristic economy as outlined in the next chapter. Indeed, and without romanticising community or not recognising the many problems of social cooperation, the coming together of people in solidarity and cooperation has always been the default position for achieving security, mutual protection and human flourishing. This is the essence of Polanyi's point about the 'double movement' (Polanyi, 1947). And as Princen notes, '*Sufficiency thus aims at excess*. It is

not sacrifice in the negative sense of the term, not second best. It is first best when users want to do well now and into the indefinite future. It lies at the heart of an ecological order' (Princen, 2010: 74; emphasis added). This suggestive turn of phrase – 'excess' – will be taken up in the enxt chapter in terms of developing what I call an 'economy of sustainable desire', which directly challenges the standard dismissals of 'post-growth', non-materialistic based alternatives to the status quo and cast them in resolutely negative terms as sacrifice, denial and regressive.

Conclusion

One of the main concerns of this chapter was to embark on developing clearer, more useful and 'fit for purpose' understandings of key political economy concepts. 'Fit for purpose', that is, for developing an adequate conceptualisation of green political economy and the realisation of what Jackson calls a 'macro-economics of sustainability' (Jackson, 2009a, 2009b). What has been outlined here in this chapter goes well beyond the often technical and policy-orientated focus of his and other articulations of green alternatives to neo-classical economics. Green political economy can be thought of as motivated by creating an economy as if we mean to stay around to enjoy it, not as a process of liquidating the planet, exploiting people, unequally distributing the fruits of that economic growth, and calling it 'progress'.

In terms of continuing the critique of economic growth, we refined our analysis somewhat in this chapter along the following lines. The first is that the critique is directed at *undifferentiated, orthodox GDP measurements of growth, where growth is viewed as permanent feature of an economic or a permanent economic objective*. The second is that the critique of orthodox economic growth is confined to the minority or overdeveloped societies of the world. Using the normatively and scientifically informed 'contraction and convergence' argument, the upshot of the analysis is for the redistribution of development opportunities from the 'overdeveloped' countries to the 'global South'. Economic growth was also presented as an ideology which serves the interests of elite, and its ideological promotion (by neo-classical economics) is intrinsically connected to the contemporary practices of global capitalism. Thus, as it stands the dominant model of contemporary neo-classical economics is an apologia for and legitimation of free market capitalism and neoliberalism. From a Foucauldian perspective it was argued that the 'commonsense' of this way of thinking about the economy and economics, has invaded everyday life under contemporary neoliberalism. The ideological character of economic growth was also suggested though an examination of the productive logic and discipline of growth having to be forcibly imposed on populations – historically in Europe, and more recently in non-western countries.

This chapter has also been an exercise in 'clearing the ground' for developing a green political economy. A large part of this involves replacing concepts, such as 'economic security' to replace 'economic growth', or 'sufficiency' and 'enough' to replace 'maximisation'. The chapter also canvassed the potential for neo-classical economics to reform itself. While we found evidence that the orthodoxy accepts the need for alternative indicators of national well-being other than GDP, recognises the importance

of internalising externalities, and indeed recognises the non-wage and non-employment related elements of human well-being (via the backward bending labour supply curve), there is absolutely not sign of these resulting in a paradigm shift within the dominant economic paradigm. Indeed, all these issues while (weakly) recognised as important within the orthodoxy are confined to the margins of the discipline rather than at the core. Also important is the notion of 'thresholds'. So, for example, a key threshold is that point above which a level of income or bundle of consumption leads to decreases in well-being, or the point beyond which economic growth becomes 'uneconomic growth' and undermines economic security or transgresses ecological thresholds. The following chapter continues the articulation of green political economy, building on the insights of sufficiency and security outlined here by looking at the role and function of solidarity and sharing as necessary for a post-growth, less unsustainable economy.

Chapter 6
Green Political Economy II: Solidarity and Sharing

"What's the point of a street of 50 houses all going to work to earn money to each buy a separate lawnmower, if you could work shorter hours, earn less money, then buy one lawnmower for the whole street to take turns to share it?" (Boyle and Simms, 2009: 44).

Introduction

This chapter continues the task begun in the previous one of fleshing out a green political economy to address actually existing unsustainability and serve as an appropriate political economy to underpin green republicanism outlined in the following two chapters. We here canvass a number of key ideas, institutions and further principles necessary to complete our outline of a post-growth political economy.

The first of these institutions is the social economy (sometimes also called the 'core', 'gift', 'informal' or 'convivial' economy). The social economy has long been a feature of green politics and promoted as a third form or way of institutionalising and organising human provisioning. It stands, alongside the formal economy and the state, as both the longest existing form of human provisioning (in that it predates the establishment of both the state and the formal market/capitalist system), and is generally viewed, by greens, as an essential part of the transition to a less unsustainable society. We explore the social economy in terms of its capacity to deliver on the aims of a post-growth economy – namely how to achieve high levels of human flourishing within the ecological, carbon and energy limits of 'one planet living'. That is, how and in what ways can the social economy (unlike either the capitalist market or state forms of provisioning) improve the 'ecological efficiency of flourishing'? We find that a key feature of the social economy is that it represents forms of provisioning activities in which the 'economic' is embedded in and often co-extensive with the 'social', such that social economic forms of provisioning are themselves constitutive and supportive of both community and solidarity. An added feature of the social economy is also that it is less likely to result in the types of socio-economic inequalities on finds within capitalist market forms of economic activity, provisioning and production and consumption.

One of the main reasons for supporting the extension of the social economy is that it acts as a site for citizen self-organisation, which in a post-growth context enables important citizenship skills and experiences to be developed. Thus, as outlined in more detail in chapter 8, the social economy is important for its moral and political benefits for a green republican conception of politics. In much the same way that Montesquieu noted the 'civilising' effects of commercial interaction in the formal capitalist market (Montesquieu, 1748/1989), or more recent defenders of the civilising effects of capitalism such as Benjamin (2005); we can also observe these 'extra-economic' effects within social economic interaction, such as in relation to the experience and practices of citizenship. Indeed, as will be argued there are much more of these positive extra-

economic benefits to a post-growth society from extending the social economy, than from either state or capitalist market forms of economic production and consumption.

It is important here to point out (once again to pre-empt the knee-jerk reaction to this suggestion for extending the range and size of the social economy as 'regressive', 'backward' and/or utopian/romantic etc.) that while it is argued than a post-growth economy aimed at enhancing human flourishing will have to increase the social economy, meaning a reduction where possible and necessary of both state and capitalist market forms of provisioning, this is done pragmatically. That is, it is not proposed that the social economy 'take over' both state and capitalist market activities, and as will be suggested in the chapter what emerges from this discussion is a new 'post-growth 'mixed economy' which combines elements of all three. And depending on the service or product or sector we are discussing will mean one form of provisioning being preferred over another or some combination of them. However, where possible and practicable, the social economy should be prioritised over both state and capitalist market.

This chapter continues the approach taken in the previous one by suggesting that in creating a more appropriate conception of the economy we need to more carefully distinguish often conflated concepts and ideas. One such example of confusion is the conflating of 'work' and 'employment' within both neo-classical economic thinking and everyday language. Formally paid employment subsumes 'work', is more public and visible (it appears in national accounts such as GDP for example) and more valued in both the orthodox view and everyday discourse. Where non-market forms of work and provisioning are recognised, they are invariably viewed as 'springboards' or 'incubators' for eventual 'formal commercialisation' within the formal market. That is, the social economy is not, despite the rhetoric, viewed as intrinsically valuable. This has far-reaching effects since it both downgrades a whole variety of non-market, non-remunerated labour (especially gendered reproductive labour) and elevates formally-paid employment as the main or only 'real' source of productive value. The separation of work from employment within a social economy context, also allows the possibility for the realisation of the emancipatory potentials of 'work' as a self-directed sphere of autonomy.

Alongside the previously outlined principle of sufficiency to replace maximisation, we also introduce in this chapter another principle beginning with 'S', namely 'sharing', as a principle governing economic consumption which can help move us towards the goal of a green political economy in terms of 'decoupling' higher well-being from carbon energy, resources and pollution. In this section I defend an argument for more collective forms of consumption as a complement to the socially cooperative forms of production within the social economy. In particular I offer 'libraries, light-rail and laundromats' as indicative of the types of collective consumption in which we see key features of post-growth provisioning such as separating ownership from use, collective in nature and have high levels of ecological efficiency of human well-being in comparison to other more privatised and individualisedforms.

The final section of the chapter sees to offer a direct response to those who would paint a green vision of a post-growth economy in entirely negative terms, as denoting ways of life that are governed by 'scarcity' and a self-denying asceticism. I deconstruct the notion of 'scarcity' and argue that it is an artificial/socially sustained and created concept which can only be understood, under consumer-capitalism, in relation to socially created and sustained desires and ends. Thus I contend it is possible to see a 'post-growth' society as a 'post-scarcity' society of abundance, but only if we abandon the naive idea of associating abundance and flourishing with consumption and embrace instead a conception of the person and their flourishing in terms of relationships rather than possessions. Thus, in opposition to erroneous negative views of human life and flourishing, I present a post-growth economy in terms of what I call 'an economy of sustainable desire'. Much of this positive vision for a high-well being vision rests on the idea that a post-growth economy will be one with less 'stuff' but more free time. The creative and life-affirming possibilities of how that free time can be used to enhance and realise new forms of human flourishing are in essence the promises of a post-growth economy and one that makes such an economy something to be positively anticipated, rather than as something to be regarded with dread, or grudgingly tolerated as necessary.

The Social Economy

One of the distinctive aspects of green political economy is the emphasis it places on the social economy as an essential element of a sustainable economy (Robertson, 1985; Jacobs, 1996; Barry and Doherty, 2001; Barry and Smith, 2005; Smith, 2005; Cato, 2008: 94; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009: 245-7, Jackson, 2009a, Jackson, 2009b; Stephens, Royle-Collins and Boyle, 2008; Mayo and Moore, 2001, Korten, 1996). Green political economy has long pointed out that a low-carbon, sustainable and less unequal economy (and one which aims to increase human well-being) is one which is necessarily going to have a large social economy sector, or what Edgar Cahn calls the 'core economy' (Cahn, 2000; Harris and Goodwin, 2009; Goodwin, Nelson, Ackerman, and Weisskopf, 2009: 383-392) or the 'solidarity economy' (Allard, Davidson and Matthaei, 2008). One can trace this green commitment back to arguments made by Ivan Illich in the 1960s and 1970s, long before formal definitions of the 'social economy', and the importance he attached to the revival of the 'vernacular' or 'convivial economy' (Illich, 1974, 1981), against both market and state forms of economic organisation. Other sources also include one strand of eco-feminist political economy analysis and its focus (often drawn from the lived experiences of women in the majority world) on 'sustainable livelihoods', the 'subsistence economy' (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999; Shiva, 1988), or more recently as the 'eco-sufficiency economy' (Salleh, 2009; Mellor, 2010).

While a complex issue, some handle on what is meant by the core or social economy can be gleaned from Shipman's view of how the 'community' economic sector can be diminished by the activities of both the market and the state. As he puts it, 'The mutually reinforcing expansion of paid production and commoditized consumption squeezes out a third area of human activity: those once-wide areas of artistic, cultural and knowledge production *for which people are not paid when they produce and do not pay when they consume (and where production and consumption are often closely linked in time and*

space)' (Shipman, 2001: 349; emphasis added). Another take on the centrality of the social economy is given by Jackson, who suggests that, 'whatever the new economy looks like, low-carbon economic activities that employ people in ways that contribute meaningfully to human flourishing have to be the basis for it. That much is clear. In fact, the seeds for such an economy may already exist in local or community-based social enterprises: community energy projects, local farmers markets, slow food cooperatives, sports clubs, libraries, community health and fitness centres' (Jackson, 2009: 130). One can quibble about Jackson's apparent conflating of meaningful *work* with formally paid *employment* in talking about 'employing people'. For example his list of low carbon, high well-being contributing economic activities do seem to be part of a reformed realm of paid employment in the cash economy. However, as outlined below in the next section, a less unsustainable economy is comprised not only of the social economy. That is, I am arguing here for a 'mixed economy' made up of the existing (but reformed) market economy and the existing (but reformed) public sector economy, part of the reforming of both is to allow the growth and development of the social economy. However, in relation to Jackson's list of putative sustainable economic activities, I draw on ecofeminist political economy insights in holding that it is vital that we conceptually separate employment from work. However, they do seem to be more in the public sector than the private/market economy, but do not seem to fall into what I am calling the core or social economy.

The social economy has long been recognised as being an intrinsic element of a more sustainable economy. As Barry and Smith point out, 'organizations within the social economy – cooperatives, mutuals and associations – have an advantage over other institutional forms in that their ethos and structure already reflect principles implicit within sustainable development… Productive/economic activity in the social economy is associated with a plurality of goods fundamental to the achievement of a vision of sustainable development' (Barry and Smith, 2005: 256). There are a number of reasons to think the social or core economy offers a better 'fit' with the objectives of a sustainable and resilient economy – a low carbon, high well-being economy. One is that social, community-based and informal economic activities such as those associated with the Transition movement, such as Time Banks and Local Exchange Trading Systems (Barry and Proops, 1999), aim to re-localise the economy, reduce material consumption, and are based on collective not individual forms of social learning and problem solving (Seyfang, 2006: 3, 2009).

Such social economic activities also include credit union activity, local currencies (Douthwaite, 1992) and cooperatives (Cato, 2004; Carter, 1996), which explicitly re-embed economic activity (understood as all forms of production, consumption, distribution, trading and exchange, and not just that recorded in the formal cash economy) within social relations. They do so in a manner virtually impossible with either free market or state based forms of economic organisation (Gibson-Graham, 2006). That is, such social economic activity creates and sustains community building and solidarity based on weak ties. As Jacobs rightly notes, 'Community-based organisations tangibly raise levels of hope and self-confidence and a sense of social participation. By enabling people to work together for one another, they give expression to feelings of

altruism and mutuality, and thereby help to regenerate a sense of community' (1996: 100).

The social economy, by virtue of its cooperative and democratic potentials, can also contribute to cultivating and supporting more active senses of citizenship (Barry and Smith, 2005: 257-9), which is central to the 'green republicanism' advanced in chapters 7 and 8.[136] That is, the social economy and principles of 'co-production' (Cahn, 2000; Stephens, Royle-Collins and Boyle, 2008) do foster a sense of the individual qua economic/productive agent as an *active citizen* rather than *passive consumer* (market economy) or *welfare recipient* (public sector economy).[137] As Iris Marion Young has argued, the self-organising and self-directed character of the social economy is such that '[d]emocracy and social justice would be enhanced in most societies if civic associations provided even more goods and services' (2000: 166), a point also echoed by Smith (2005: 276-1). The upshot of this is that such self-organising activity involves learning and practicing skills of conflict resolution, awareness of and resistance to prevailing power relations, and perhaps above all the experience that collective action works and does not need to be necessarily done with or through the state or formal market economy. But this is not an uncritical account and the social economy is neither a panacea for a post-growth economy, nor so unproblematic that is can simply be left alone i.e. without some degree of state (local or national) support and/or regulation or planning.[138]

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[136] The significance of the social economy has always been recognised by states – especially as a cost-effective means to deliver public services. This is always a potential danger for the social economy – being co-opted by the state particularly in times of economic crisis – as a cheap way to deliver services and goods. An example of this is the following from the European Union's INTERREG programme: 'It is therefore increasingly recognized and higher in the EU agenda that the third sector and social economy could be a new kind of economy that profoundly changes the future of public services as well of daily life of citizens. … Social economy brings together features which are very different from economy based on the production and consumption of commodities. The innovative way in which social economy is based on care and maintenance rather than consumption, can address some of the most intractable problems facing modern society, including climate change, globalization, ageing and inequality. It is now clear that this is the crisis of the real economy, of an old form of production, consumption and its sources of energy. A new transformation of infrastructures and institutions enabling the recognition of the value of social economy will be the precondition for a new qualitatively and different period of growth. To attend this change, social innovation has as well a central place, because it enables radical and creative new ways on which existing resources can be used.' (INTERREG, IVC, 2009: 3).

[137] It is salutary and appropriate to note that the Beveridge Report which laid the foundations for the British (and other) post-war welfare state was aware of the dangers of state provided welfare undermining the capacity of citizens to provide for themselves (Beveridge, 1942). The third principle underpinning the report was 'that social security must be achieved by co-operation between the State and the individual...*The State in organising security should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility; in establishing a national minimum, it should leave room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual* to provide more than that minimum for himself and his family' (Beveridge, 1942, 6-7; emphasis added). Who knows what this report (and the welfare state that followed its publication), may have looked like if it had as its 'subject' not just the male wage-earner, but women, children and communities?

[138] As well as supporting policies promoting job security (and job/skill satisfaction), and ones promoting income security within employment (such as minimum wage legislation), greens have been long-standing advocates for economic security outside the formal employment sphere, through a universal, rights-based provision of a basic citizen's income (Scott-Cato, 2009: 181-2; Boyle and Simms, 2009: 91-2).

Tim Jackson's work also provides some optimism of the potential of more participatory community-based approaches to changing patterns of over-consumption, and also attitudes contributing to human flourishing. According to him, 'The role of community in mediating and moderating individual behaviours is also clear. There are some strong suggestions that participatory community-based processes could offer effective avenues for exploring pro-environmental and pro-social behavioural change. *What is missing from this evidence base, at present, is unequivocal proof that community-based initiatives can achieve the level of behavioural change necessary to meet environmental and social objectives*' (Jackson, 2005: 133; emphasis added). In his latest work (Jackson, 2009a, 2009b), he has clearly found this evidence, since he identifies a leading role for the social economy, local and community-based enterprises as important loci for sustainable consumption. This suggests a 'happy marriage' between less unsustainable economic activity and the social economy. The emergence of grassroots initiatives such as the Transition movement do offer excellent case studies for testing this point, namely whether such community-based innovations do lead to sufficient behavioural change that move those communities away from unsustainability even as they increase human well-being (Hillier and Cato, 2010). It is significant to note that many aspects of the Transition ethos, echoing long-standing green principles and ideas, namely, relocalisation, rebuilding community, grassroots practical action, 'reskilling' people etc., converge with the list Jackson provides above. However, it is clear that a central element to the creation of a new account of economics for sustainability – and one that up to date does not figure greatly in Jackson's analysis – is the pressing need to avoid confusing formally paid employment and work. This is as important, I contend, as not confusing quality of life or flourishing with economic growth, or 'the economy' with 'capitalism'.

The Separation of Employment and Work, Production and Reproduction

Just as greens have long asked what would an economy look like designed by a scientist rather than an orthodox economist?, likewise they now ask what would social and economic policy look like if oriented away from achieving 'economic growth' towards achieving human well-being and human flourishing? And part of the answer they give to that is the need for policies aimed at providing meaningful *work* for people rather than only focusing on maximising formally paid *employment*. Separating work from employment does seem to offer an answer to Douglas Booth's observation that, 'Under existing macro-economic arrangements, *growth is the only real answer to unemployment – society is hooked on growth*' (Booth, 2004: 153; emphasis added). The replacing of work for employment, where possible and without eliminating formally paid market remunerated employment altogether, does seem a necessary corollary of replacing economic growth with economic security and well-being.

Thus the proposition is that the development a political economy appropriate to addressing actually existing unsustainable economic activity requires that we distinguish 'economic activity' and provisioning from both market and state based forms of provisioning and economic activity. This also requires distinguishing more clearly formally paid 'employment' from 'work' (Jacobs, 1996: 89). It constitutes a view of

political economy in which policy is focused on promoting human well-being directly rather than through the proxy of orthodox economic growth and/or formal employment. In simple terms, while employment is a form of work, and constitutes a particular form of provisioning, the reverse is not the case. That is, work should not be conflated with employment and denotes its own, more direct form of provisioning. Both employment and work are forms of provisioning and both involve human labour and the use of natural resources. But as Mellor notes, 'Provisioning in a capitalist economy based on wage labour is a two-step rather than a one-step process. Work is not undertaken directly for social benefit but to maximise profit' (Mellor, 2010: 155). In contrast to this, there are more direct forms of provisioning in non-market practices such as those associated with social economic activities, and care or reproductive work, usually in the domestic sphere. Thus, provisioning here denotes all economic activity aimed at meeting human needs and contributes to human well-being and flourishing. It is a corollary of an expansive view of the economy and includes all four types of economic activity, reproductive, social, market and state.

Ivan Illich makes a telling point here in arguing that alongside formally paid employment and what he calls 'vernacular' work, there is also the category of what he calls *'shadow work'*. This is unpaid labour done in the service of formally paid employment, to support the formal economy. As he puts it, shadow work is 'A kind of forced labor or industrial selfdom in the service of commodity-intensive economic, must be carefully distinguished from subsistence-orientated work lying outside the industrial system' (Illich, 1981: 13). The identification of this compulsory unpaid labour has been central to eco-feminist political economy in their analysis of 'care labour' as the 'embodied debt' of women (Salleh, 2009). Thus, while a post-growth economics seeks to increase social economic forms of provisioning, it seeks to minimise and eliminate this 'shadow work' and 'embodied debt'. To do this one must pay explicit attention to gender equality in two senses. On the one hand to eliminate gendered shadow work, but on the other to ensure that social economy work and forms of provisioning outside both market and state are not done in a gender unequal manner.

Analysing the separation of work and employment, and a critical analysis of how and why the latter has become elevated over the former has been done by feminist and eco-feminist writers and activists. One of the key features of this eco-feminist analysis, and its significant contribution to green political economy, is the gendered distinction between 'reproduction' and 'production' (Mellor, 1992, 1997; Salleh, 1999; Salleh, 2009; Merchant, 1992; Barry, 2007a; Langley and Mellor, 2002). In a contribution which has direct relevance for the project of 'de-sequestering' major elements of modern economic and social life, Ariel Salleh's notion of the varieties of 'debt' which go unrecognised and unpaid in the modern global economy is useful. She outlines three forms of debt (Salleh, 2009). The first is the *social debt* owed by capitalist employers for surplus value extracted from workers. The second is the *ecological debt* owed by the minority world (the North) to the majority world (the global South) direct extraction of the natural means of production. The third is the *embodied debt* owed by both majority and minority worlds to unpaid reproductive workers (mostly women) who produce use values and regenerate the capitalist economy's conditions of production. Women's reproductive

work is thus the basic work that makes other forms of activity possible. That is, it constitutes the basis for the other three types of provisioning activity in modern societies – market, state and social economy.

In terms of debates around the centrality of the social or core economy, the eco-feminist insight is that such forms of low carbon/resource economic activity which aims to meet human needs and therefore contributes to human well-being already exists. That is, moving to a less unsustainable economy is not as Mellor puts it a case of 'getting from here to there' (Mellor, 1999). The less unsustainable is already here but sequestered, unrecognised and exploited along gender lines. This latter point as eco-feminists such as Mellor and Salleh note, is important not just in terms of the normative claims for a 'just transition' (Speth, 2010; World Social Forum, 2011) to a less unsustainable economy. It is also important in that such *materialist* eco-feminist analysis highlight the importance of economic *practices* and lived non-market *activities* as necessary complements to critically rethinking and reclaiming *economics* (Cato, 2008). This would also include what Fairlie calls the 'rehabilitation of manual labour' (Fairlie, 2008), which is a central concern of the Transition movement vision in terms of both re-connecting people with making things (especially food) but also in the 'great reskilling' a central part of which is the recovery of craft and other manual skills. Fairlie's suggestion about the rehabilitation of manual labour echoes and touches upon the issue of gendered reproductive labour, since most of this type of labour is of this type i.e. it does not typically use capital or technology.

For Langley and Mellor, the economic activities of provisioning constitute:

> everyday forms of resistance based in domestic–local subsistence, and abandoned–informal provisioning practices need to be harnessed and developed through associational–voluntaristic practices...Transformative strategies based within economy itself require not just the theoretical *demystification and disaggregation of economy*, which arguably is the role of radical new political economists, but also the practical reclamation of economy itself through the ongoing struggles for sustainable livelihood that are taking place across the globe. (Langley and Mellor, 2002: 62; emphasis added).

This struggle for 'sustainable livelihoods', and the forms of provisioning that they provide, cannot be gender blind, least it is women who are left continuing to do the bulk of such social economy labour. Gender equal provisioning practices within an expanded role for the social economy in meeting human needs, is not automatically guaranteed and needs to be constantly and consciously foregrounded in any discussion of a 'just transition'. On this point, I am reminded of some arguments which suggest that some types of less carbon-intensive, low impact, more localised and less unsustainable economies might be ones with *less* not *more* gender equality labour (Somma, 2009; Barry and Quilley, 2009). This of course only highlights the need for a vigilant eco-feminist political analysis of any and all proposals for such a transition.

This theoretical (and ultimately policy-level) separation of employment and work is significant, and indeed a vital objective (along with the prioritisation of free time over money as a key economic goal), for the transition to a less unsustainable communities. As Fitzpatrick argues, 'The employment ethic dominates, to an overwhelming extent, the political and economic debates dealing with social policy. This ethic refers to the fact that wage-earning activity in the formal labour market tends to be valued over all other forms of human activity' (1998: 13). The distinction between employment and work then becomes a central part of the political economy of a less unsustainable economy and key feature of a 'macro-economics of sustainability' (Nadal, 2011; Jackson, 2009b).

The extension of what we mean by 'economic activity' to include non-monetary, non-formal, non-market forms of labour and work, opens up new sites for recovering what Breen (2007) calls the 'emancipatory' potentials of work. That is, a view of work as something done for its own internal benefits, which is completely contrary to the conventional neo-classical view of 'work' (qua 'paid employment') which is both valued instrumentally (principally for the wages it brings) but also viewed as something negative (but necessary) as a 'cost' (as can be viewed in the discussion of the backward bending labour supply curve in the previous chapter). Assuming that the extension and development of the social economy is viewed as a central policy goal in the transition away from unsustainable economic activity, a major macro-economic issue that would need to be tackled head on is to explicitly limit or tightly regulate forms of market and state economic provisioning/activity which can undermine or 'crowded out' social economic activity. And the dangers here are not completely related to what Breen calls 'managerial' conceptions of work (Breen, 2007), but from the very organisation and ordering of the economy, its attendant division of labour and creation of occupations and forms of employment under market capitalism and the state.

A major part of what the re-embedding of the economy within society means is that 'the economy', viewed expansively as including the social economy, and also market and state based forms of provisioning, should not be seen as devoid of non-economic norms. And all elements of this expansive conception of the economy should be subject to the democratic/political oversight of the community, and be oriented towards maximising the ecological efficiency of human flourishing. But note, human flourishing is not co-extensive with the social economy, and even though such productive activity in this sphere may constitute a large element of an individual's well-being, we are not here envisaging the abolition of formally paid employment. Rather what is suggested is its radical transformation, and while we need to recognise the negative ecological, social and gender potentials of the 'two-step provisioning' process Mellor talks about, we cannot abandon the benefits of formal economic activity, here keeping in mind that there are non-capitalist ways in which complex, mediated formal economic activity can be organised. For a post-growth political economy to seek to meet all human needs and provide all the goods, service and relationships required for a negative-Aristotelian account of human flourishing from within either the social economy together with the reproductive sphere would be a regressive move. Formal economic activity and employment, under capitalism and the imperative of economic growth, does have multiple flaws and makes less than its full contribution to human flourishing. However,

under different macro-economic principles (replacing growth with sufficiency for example), and different micro-economic principles (supplementing 'productivity' with 'worker autonomy' or 'workplace democracy'), even formal economic activity and employment can be less unsustainable and make a contribution (though perhaps small when compared with other elements) to human flourishing.

In relation to the formal market economy an important point here is the extent to which non-economic norms and practices can or ought to influence the operation and organisation of employment within formal economic enterprises. On the one hand, it is an open question as to 'whether people seeking economic betterment through profits and gains can form true community among themselves' (Danner, 1984: 232)?, That is, can formal employment deliver non-monetary and non-economic/instrumental values and goals? Clearly, to ensure this we need to reform the internal organisation of formal employment. It would also perhaps require reforming the extrinsic incentives and drivers which tend to undermine this capacity for formal employment to achieve non-economic objectives. Primary amongst these would include reform of the 'fiduciary duty' which gives legal force to the profit motive as the dominant imperative of orthodox, market-based economic activity (Kelly, 2003). Others could include the mandatory creation of workplace democratic procedures. This would usher in a radical transformation of the internal organisation of formal market economic organisations in order to promote the realisation of more meaningful work for example. This would represent a direct challenge to the orthodox economic conception of employment which it views as a) the opposite of 'leisure' (conceived of as 'doing nothing'), and b) a 'negative' experience in that people only undertake employment for wages. Integrating more positive and non-economic attributes to within formally paid employment offers us obviously a very different conception of formally paid employment than neo-classical economics. It also clearly means viewing the formal economy not as a self-regulating market, but as an institution which can be and ought to be politically governed. This attitude to the formal market is one that I suggest is perfectly in keeping with a green republican perspective, even though it clearly departs from both neo-classical economic and liberal political theory, since it holds that even formal economic practices are to be judged, evaluated and ordered from how they contribute to political as well as economic objectives .

Important here is that even though formally paid employment still exists in a post-growth economy, the macro-economic requirement for 'sub-optimality' as opposed to maximisation under a convention economic growth imperative, does create some 'head room' for non-economic considerations to shape the internal organisation of formally paid employment. Such non-economic considerations are not concerned with boosting labour productivity and output, and the associated organisation of the labour processes to ensure those strict economic, efficiency and maximisation objectives. There is reason to believe that a macro-economic objective of 'sufficiency' in a post-growth economy would also 'cascade down' to the micro-levels of the organisation of formal employment within firms, especially if those firms are more democratically governed or have more cooperative forms of internal decision-making, as I argue in more detail below. Thus, on the one hand we can say that it is *normatively desirable* to reform formal employment to enable it to realise *both* productive or strictly economic (instrumental) objectives as well

as some of the 'internal goods' of human collective (and individual) labour constitutive of human flourishing (Breen, 2007). But, on the other hand, from a post-growth perspective it may also be *necessary* that these reforms take place, as part of the individual firm contribution to realising a sufficient as opposed to a maximum economic output. And we keep at the back of our minds here the argument that the internal goods of human productive labour (and reproductive labour I would add), are not only to be found in formally paid employment, but also in social economic and reproductive provisioning activity.

However, there are limits to this in that we cannot insist that all formally paid employment must, or indeed can, be re-organised to realise certain important non-economic objectives. On pragmatic grounds we must allow both for forms of 'non-meaningful' work and employment. By meaningful work here I follow Arneson's definition as denoting 'employment in which the work for which pay is received is interesting, calling for intelligence and initiative, and in which the worker has considerable freedom to determine how the work is done and a genuinely democratic say over the character of the work process and the policies pursued by the employing enterprise' (Arneson, 1987: 517). Thus, *where possible and practicable*, non-economic norms and values such as community, democracy, equality and intrinsic values of work, such as worker autonomy should be embedded within *all* forms of provisioning across social economy, formal market and state sectors. This does not mean that all forms of work are within institutional contexts where these other values are realised. Only that work should be considered to be organised to realise these non-economic values first and only then organised in some other manner. This leads us in a clearly more cooperative direction in terms of production, a mutalist-based conception of economic provisioning, which complements collective forms of sharing in relation to consumption, as developed later in this chapter. However, at the same time we need to recognise that meaningful work is not the only constituent practice for human flourishing. On this point it is salutary to remind ourselves that other elements of human flourishing such as personal relationships and community membership rank higher than work in psychological studies of human flourishing (Jackson, 2009b).

While in large part an empirical issue, the argument in support of extending work in the social economy, is to seek to remove forms of provisioning that are either in the formal market or state sector and put them in the social economy i.e. transform what is currently 'employment' or 'welfare' into 'work'. But, as previously indicated, this does not necessarily require the collapse of either state or formal market/economic activity or of state transfers. A key issue here is that a post-growth economy, and indeed most contemporary concerns that people (not economists or politicians) have about a non-growing economy, is not necessarily related to a failure of GDP to increase. For example, and as developed in more detail in the next section, when this issue of lowering consumption (through sharing goods and moving away from private ownership of goods and towards a form of shared use of the services they give for example), the immediate reaction of most people is the spectre of 'joblessness' and 'unemployment' if we don't increase consumption and grow the economy. Thus most people, (apart from orthodox economists and most mainstream politicians), express this concern not as a threat to

'economic growth' per se, but a concern about the human cost of a decline in the economy in terms of the impacts on people, families and communities. *It is the threat of unemployment that concerns most people, not a decline in economic growth*. This concern needs to be taken seriously by any green political economy alternative to 'business as usual'. However, as outlined below, once we place non-monetary 'work', including reproductive labour, alongside and on an equal footing with formally paid employment some of those concerns can be addressed. A post-growth economy may result in less formally paid employment, as well as different employment opportunities due to a shift to low carbon and resource efficient sectors and the decline in carbon and resource intensive sectors. It could also result in differently arranged employment practices within formal economic activity. Thus, the 'compensation' for this decline in formally paid employment is both more free time (less formal employment), the reform of paid employment (to enable non-economic, intrinsic values associated with work), and also the maximisation of work opportunities (as what was previously 'employment' becomes 'work').

However, as Sayer points out, 'The corollary of sharing complex, interesting, rewarding tasks is of course that we share routine, tedious and unfulfilling tasks as well' (Sayer, 2009: 14). This links to the idea of 'socially necessary labour', as eco-feminists have suggested in relation to reproductive labour. The distribution of this reproductive form of labour needs to be on a considerably more gender equal basis. The organisation and fair distribution of 'socially necessary labour' within a post-growth economy, relates to what I have elsewhere described, with clear echoes of Marx, as 'socially necessary sustainability labour'. I have previously canvassed the idea of 'compulsory sustainability service' (Barry, 2005) as one way to think about how to distribute this labour. The fair and equitable sharing out of tedious (but socially necessary) labour, what Andre Gorz termer 'heteronymous labour' (Gorz, 1983), is something that is of central concern to a green republican conception of the economy and society, and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

The Emancipatory and Well-Being Potentials of Work

Thus, the key question for a post-growth political economy is how to maximise human flourishing while reducing energy, resources and inequality. One way of doing this, as indicated in the previous section, turns on separating 'work' from 'employment', and seeking to reform the latter so it becomes more 'work-like'. That is, less guided by and organised in alignment with the achievement of purely or only economic-cum instrumental criteria of productivity, maximisation of output or 'competiveness'. And while seeking to extend the social economy as much as practicable, together with this internal reform of formal economic activity, a guiding policy objective for a post-growth political economy is the maximisation of 'meaningful work' to enable those doing this work to develop their capacities, realise autonomy, and achieve what Keith Breen terms the 'emancipatory potential' of productive work (Breen, 2007: 392). Breen enlists MacIntyre's Aristotelian notion of 'practice' as indicative of an intersubjective and self-transformative productive process which is simultaneously both, in Habermassian terms, communicative and instrumental (Breen, 2007: 383-84). He modifies MacIntyre's notion

on the grounds that it tends to reject or neglect the creative and freedom providing potentials of modern forms of work. As he puts it, 'If we are to constructively employ MacIntyre's theory of practice to lessen the excision of meaning and purpose from our working lives, it has to be on the basis of modern social forms and institutions, not peripheral communities' (Breen, 2007: 413).[139] Breen does not rule out, as MacIntyre does, that reformed market and state economic institutions and organisations could deliver or create meaningful work, though it is a pity Breen does not sketch out what such reforms may entail. However, it is extremely doubtful that most capitalist economic organisations could offer more than a kind of tokenistic 'worker representation' and thus fall short of the degree of internal re-organisation of the labour process within formally paid employment.

The forms of productive activities encompassed under the banner of the 'social economy' would seem to offer an excellent, distinctly modern range of productive activities for realising Breen's MacIntyre-inspired conception of the 'emancipatory' potential of work. Initiatives such as time-banks, LETS systems, worker-run cooperatives, not-for-profit social enterprises and a host of other forms of social economic/productive activity do, on the face of it, offer conducive modes of potentially meaningful work. Reproductive work, re-organised to be less gender unequal, could also become a site for meaningful work. Though here the notion of 'meaningful' perhaps has less to do with this work being 'self-directed' and 'autonomous', since often this work is 'compulsory care' for young babies, children, the old and the sick. The sense of this reproductive work being 'meaningful' relates both to the fact that even though this work may not be self-directed, creative or especially complex and interesting, it nonetheless may be a central component of flourishing for the person performing these tasks. Of course like all work, it may at other times be tedious, boring and unfulfilling, hence the need to distribute such socially necessary labour as equally and fairly as possible. Although such work may contribute to human flourishing, it may not necessarily realise some 'emancipatory' potential, but I do not think this is necessarily a problem.

The reason for this is what is key, I think, in the relationship between human flourishing, and meaningful work is on the one hand a sense of the individual as (ideally) working across a number of areas of this expanded conception of the economy (that is social economy, state, formal/market economy, and the reproductive sphere). On the other, this perspective advances a view of the individual conceived over a lifetime as opposed to one moment in time. Thus, the proportion of an individual's work in each of the four sectors may vary over time. The vital issue (only part of which is an empirical issue), is, I think, the *proportion of meaningful work* within an individual's total work experience that is important for human flourishing. Unless one thinks that **ALL** human productive work needs to be emancipatory, meaningful, intersubjective, transformative etc., then it seems

[139] Here we can think of the debates about how modern forms of technology – especially communications such as peer to peer, social networking and the internet and wireless/mobile communications technology more broadly – are often condemned as either 'inferior' to 'old-fashioned' face to face communication or viewed as dangerous and inimical to well-being and flourishing. A large part of what is missing from these debates, and in some of Breen's analysis, is recognition of the *complementarity* of these innovations to already existing forms of communication and modes of human flourishing.

reasonable to suggest that a modified version of Marx's romanticised notion of a 'day in the life of a communist worker' is perhaps required. I do not think that all work needs to be meaningful, in the sense that there will also be what Marx called 'socially necessary labour', forms of labour which may be difficult to render meaningful, or as meaningful as fully autonomous, self-directed work (Gorz, 1982: 5), but without which community or social life would be either impossible or severely impoverished. What this means is that productive activity maximised for human flourishing is balanced with tedious, non-meaningful even heteronymous work. One could, *ceteris paribus*, work within a technocratic-managerial work setting with limited potential for autonomy, self-realisation etc., so long as this a) did not constitute the only or the main form of productive work available; b) was equally shared with others; and c) was performed alongside or together with other meaningful forms of work. Such forms of work need to be distributed justly, and this issue is taken up in chapter 8 in defending – from a green republican perceptive – what I call 'compulsory sustainability labour'. Once again, as in previous discussions what is important is the identification of threshold's beyond which the balance between meaningful and non-meaningful work (which may also relate to the proportion of work an individual has across the four spheres of provisioning), has a detrimental rather than a positive effect on their capacity for flourishing.

In sum, we can see a fourfold division of work in three spheres social, market and state together with two types of work – meaningful and non-meaningful. With meaningful work roughly equating to Gorz's distinction between 'autonomous labour' and non-meaningful corresponding to what he calls 'heteronymous labour'.

	Meaningful work	**Non-Meaningful work**
Reproductive	Caring for others	
Social socially	Non-paid community project work	Collective labouring – necessary labour
Market	Internal reorganisation of work practices	Status quo, managerial/technocratic
State socially (compulsory &	Public service Nursing – reorganised	Collective labouring – necessary labour shared sustainability service)

A major macro-economic decision for the creation of a sustainable economy would seem to be the relative division of economic activity (meaningful and 'socially necessary') between the four economic modes or modalities i.e. reproductive, state, market and social. Another decision would similarly revolve around the reduction of non-meaningful work to its absolute minimum required for individual and collective conditions for flourishing. A third would have to be around the fair distribution of that socially

necessary labour. Above all what is required in the relationship between employment and work, production and reproduction, the formal cash economy and the core economy is 'a redefinition of work to include the full diversity of what is necessary for life. It requires we find new ways of valuing parenting, caring and community building as much as paid work' (Boyle and Simms, 2009: 89).[140] It is significant (and a hopeful sign perhaps of greater cooperation and links between green politics, sustainability and the trades union movement), that the International Labor Organization report discussed above, explicitly states that its conception of 'economic security' extends to **ALL** productive work,

> The security espoused in this report is for work, *all forms of work, not just labour*, or even just all forms of income earning activity, including so-called informal economy activity. In other words, all legitimate productive and reproductive work should be given equal basic security, including such work as caring for children and the elderly, voluntary work and community work, as well as service activities that may not have the moral approval of a majority, as long as they do no harm to others and are chosen in real freedom. (International Labor Organization, 2004c: 15).

I realise that this discussion raises as many questions as answers in terms of giving more 'shape' to the principles regulating a post-growth economy. How do we organise the economy to ensure a 'fair' distribution of meaningful and non-meaningful work for each individual across a lifetime in a manner which reduces work-related obstacles to human flourishing? How are meaningful and non-meaningful work to be balanced as those non-work related elements of human flourishing? What policies are required to ensure a fair distribution of reproductive work? What is the role of the state in regulating formal economic/market, social economy and reproductive work and activity? These and other issues need answering, but for my purposes here in further fleshing out some of the principles of a post-growth economy, the important issues are the necessity of separating 'work' from formally paid 'employment', extending the conception of 'the economy' to include reproductive and social economic work, and establishing the argument (in terms of human flourishing) for favouring the promotion where possible of meaningful over non-meaningful work, even if this means lower economic productivity and output, as viewed by orthodox economics.

Sharing and the Social Economy: Libraries, Laundromats and Light Rail

A post-growth economics presents multiple problems, not least the legitimate challenge from defenders of the economic status quo about how a post-growth economy would meet human needs, provide jobs (and work), stability, a money system within a complex socio-economic institutional setting. In terms of meeting human needs, a feature of the

[140] A similar sentiment is expressed by Mahatma Gandhi when he wrote 'The truth is that man needs work even more than he needs a wage...For the object of work is not so much to make objects as to make men. A man makes himself by making something useful' (in Astyk, 2008: 107).

green political economy perspective is a focus on sharing, and a defence of adopting forms of social and collective provisioning (Mellor, 1997, 2010). Some of the latter can be done through community and other social organisations i.e. outside both the state and the market within the social economy, and the view outlined here is that the social economy will have a much greater role to play in any post-growth, post-carbon economy. Social economy provisioning is understood to be different from reproductive, market and state forms of provisioning and offers one of the central institutional features for a green political economy. Sharing as a modality of production and consumption is something that both market and state forms of provisioning and associated incentive structures (money/profit or compulsion) can undermine. Overall, while prone to erosion from both state and market, sharing as a modality of production and consumption is most at risk from and in need of protection from market modes of economic activity (again echoes of Polanyi's 'double movement').

While seeking to expand this non-market and non-state economic realm, it is also clear that any policy which seeks to maintain and expand 'economic security' (as previously defined) needs to focus on defending the welfare state and its public goods, even as it is reformed and restructured to enable social provisioning and the social economy to expand. As Seabrook notes, 'much of the modest security enjoyed by people depend[s] upon public goods – health care, social security, unemployment and sickness pay and old age pensions' (Seabrook, 2008: 6). The welfare state (despite its many failings) does still stand as a Polanyian 'double movement' – a spontaneous, essentially defensive move by society to protect itself from the organised efforts to create an unfettered, disembedded market economy. And while greens are and should be critical of the welfare state (Barry and Doherty, 2001), they should also be pragmatic enough that, under current circumstances, it remains an absolutely necessary institution strong enough to regulate the market and indeed will also have a role in regulating social and reproductive provisionising, economic activity and work.[141] The impetus behind this green focus on economic security and the post-growth imperative for lowering socio-economic inequalities directly (rather than 'managing' them indirectly via economic growth and 'trickle down'), can be regarded as a contemporary Polanyian 'double movement', aiming to protect society, the non-human world and the most vulnerable and insecure members of both against the ravages of the 'neoliberal vulgate' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001).

In this section I want to use Yochai Benkler's fascinating article 'Sharing Nicely: On Shareable Goods and the Emergence of Sharing as a Modality of Economic Production' (Benkler, 2004), to flesh out this sharing economic modality of a less unsustainable

[141] Many of the green critiques of the welfare state relate to issues of paternalism, infringements on freedom, what one could call essentially 'republican' concerns about the dangers of (often well meaning) paternalistic and potentially dominating and demeaning experiences and relationships. I would argue that one of most long-standing of green economic policies – universal, non-means-tested basic income – is defended on grounds of avoiding the indignity and intrusion of the state means-testing citizens. It is significant I think in terms of the potential of a 'green republican' perspective (to be developed in the next two chapters) to provide a broad base for alliances between green and left positions, that the International Labor Organization study denotes as 'republican' what it calls 'basic income security' (International Labor Organization, 2004c: 15).

economy. Benkler suggests that contrary to the commonly held view of the decline of the 'gift economy', another term often used for the social economy (Offer, 1997, 2007), non-monetary based sharing and forms of social provisioning are ubiquitous. As Benkler puts it, 'There is a curious congruence between the anthropologists of the gift and mainstream economists today. Both treat the gift literature as being about the periphery, about societies starkly different from modern capitalist ones…*And yet, sharing is everywhere around us in the advanced economies*' (Benkler, 2004: 332; emphasis added).

He notes that 'the introduction of money, or prices, for an activity may in fact lower the level of that activity', which he terms 'the crowding-out effect' (Benkler, 2004: 323). The reason for this is that the introduction of money or prices into the equation is a direct appeal to the motivational power of extrinsic rather than intrinsic values and reasons for action – such as altruism or wanting to do good for others. As Benkler points out, such, 'Extrinsic motivations ... "crowd out" intrinsic motivations because they (a) impair self-determination—that is, a person feels pressured by an external force, and therefore feels overjustified in maintaining her intrinsic motivation rather than complying with the will of the source of the extrinsic reward; or (b) impair self-esteem—they cause an individual to feel that his internal motivation is rejected, not valued, leading him to reduce his self-esteem and thus to reduce effort' (Benkler, 2004: 324). The link to self-esteem is telling, given the centrality of maintaining high levels of self-esteem for human flourishing. While this observation from Benkler refers to the lowering of the quantity of the shared good, Tim Jackson makes a related point about this but in terms of quality. Jackson draws attention to the fact that, 'The pursuit of labour productivity in activities whose integrity depends on human interaction systematically undermines the quality of the output' (Jackson, 2009: 133). Something similar, was famously discovered by Richard Titmuss in his path breaking analysis of the 'gift economy'. He found that introducing money incentives into donating blood – as had been done in America and therefore commercialising it – led to *less* blood being available (both in terms of quantity and quality). This was in comparison to the case in Britain where donating blood was – and still is – regarded as a form of altruistic behaviour motivated by non-commercial concerns, such as citizenship or virtue (Titmuss, 1970).[142]

[142] Here I note in passing an article that perhaps deserves to be better know which encapsulates the ways in which conventional economics misdescribes and misunderstands the complex moral and psychological determinates of human behaviour. In Denis Robertson's 1954 article 'What Do Economists Economize On?', it turns out the answer is love, altruism and fellow feeling (Robertson, 1956). The point I make here is related to arguments about Humean-based ideas of 'limited altruism' or notions of 'limited virtue' (Brennan and Hamlin, 1995), but one which is more prescriptive in the sense of suggesting that we cannot simply take as 'given' a limited degree of altruism. Rather the point of a green political economy perspective in supporting the expansion of the social economy (and thus replacing where possible and practicable both market and state organised economic activity), is that a sustainable economy is one which aims to maximise and stimulate more altruism, as well as 'work from' some baseline level. As Mary Midgley puts in a different but related context of expanding one's scope of ethical concern to the non-human world, 'concern, like other feelings...is *something that grows and develops by being deployed, like our muscles, not a sort of small oil well that will run out shortly if it is used at all*' (1992: 35; emphasis added). The 'trade off' that green political economy posits is less economic productivity and 'economy growth' (as conventionally understood) for higher social solidarity and non-material, relational practices of human flourishing.

Benkler's analysis is based largely on the 'efficiency' of social provisioning/sharing where efficiency is viewed in the standard neo-classical sense. The solidarity and community enhancing effects of such sharing based forms of production and consumption are not considered by him (except where the maintenance of intrapersonal trust is functional for the efficient provision of the good in question). Hence his rather formal description of the strict technological conditions under which sharing becomes the preferred (i.e. *optimal* according to the precepts of orthodox economics) form of economic modality:[143]

> Under certain technological circumstances, practically feasible opportunities for action are distributed in such a pattern that they are amenable to execution by a class of approaches to organizing production that rely on sharing. These are typified by (1) radical decentralization of the capacity to contribute to effective action and the authority to decide on the contribution, and (2) reliance on social information flows, organizational approaches, and motivation structures, *rather than on prices or commands, to motivate and direct productive contributions*. (Benkler, 2004: 331; emphasis added).

The argument here is that as we go beyond Benkler's limited focus on 'efficiency' (as given by orthodox economics) and 'technology', so also does the range of goods and services that can be provided by sharing as an economic modality expand. Doing so would expand the size of social provisioning relative to market and state provisioning, larger than Benkler's account would indicate. However, doing so does not contradict his basic point about: a) the recognition of sharing as an economic modality; b) the existence of a fourfold provisioning model encompassing reproductive, state, market and civic/social economy models; c) the acknowledgement of the importance of a) and b) in policy decisions, especially where the impact of a policy may lead to a transition from one mode of provisioning to another, or the undermining of one form or modality of provisioning by another.[144]

Equally, the concept of sharing has wider ramifications. We can image that a less unsustainable economy is one in which goods are shared a lot more and where concepts like 'usufruct', 'mutuality' and 'reciprocity' characterises economic activity. Rather than orientated towards debt-based forms of private consumption and ownership, green political economy moves us in the direction where the promotion of shared goods

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[143] A clear indication that he is not interested in the solidarity enhancing aspects of sharing is his injunction that 'we invest greater effort in further research into the internal dynamics of social sharing and exchange systems, *focused not so much on their characteristics as modes of social reproduction* as on their characteristics as transactional frameworks and modes of economic production' (Benkler, 2005: 358; emphasis added).

[144] There would seem to be a structural similarity here between the size and relationship between these three modes of economic activity (state, market and community) and Michael Walzer's 'spheres of justice' (Walzer, 1983) argument in terms of different spheres having different distributive principles, and the need to guard against one sphere 'colonising' another. However, I do not have time to develop any such links but have touched upon this issue here (Barry and Dobson, 2004: 188).

becomes an object of public policy. What does public policy look like aimed to promote this type of mutualism and cooperative sharing? [145]

While this makes eminent sense, it does require some degree of community, trust, organisation and, (at least initially) some institutional support. What they do not discuss is that 'the point' – from an orthodox economics point of view – of each of the 50 households purchasing their own lawnmower, is that failing to do so would threaten lawnmower makers, and jobs in the lawnmower manufacturing industry. This would lead to these businesses having lower profits or perhaps going out of business, creating unemployment and leading to lower economic growth. But as indicated above, the concern of a post-growth green political economy is with maximising meaningful work opportunities not maximising orthodox economic growth.

Beyond sharing as an effective form of economic organisation, there are also other shareable goods and services that indicate forms of social provisioning which meet needs though public use and access rather than private ownership. This makes these forms of social provisioning compatible with, and indeed necessary for, a 'post-growth' economy. These can be summarised by the 'three Ls' – 'libraries, laundromats and light rail' – as denoting collective forms of service provision which meet needs, but are divorced from private ownership. And these forms of provisioning can exist across all three main forms of economic organisation – market/for profit; state/public service and social/non-profit. The attraction and interest in these forms of social provisioning is not simply that they offer forms of meeting needs which do not necessitate private consumption and ownership. They offer the prospect of meeting more needs in a less inegalitarian and less ecologically unsustainable, energy-intensive manner. If, as this book has stressed throughout, we are entering an era of declining carbon energy which implies (absent nuclear power) a era of less energy, then finding less energy hungry ways to meet needs and is necessary, even as finding ways that are less unequal is also desirable.

A central consideration here is the need to shift our thinking about meeting needs away from 'goods' and towards 'services'. The 'product of service' concept, outlined by green entrepreneurs like the designer Bill McDonough amongst others (McDonough and Baumgartner, 2004), is revolutionary and is perhaps the one element of the 'natural capitalism' literature (Hawken, Lovins and Lovins, 1999), that I would see as compatible with the broader green political economy vision outlined in this book. McDonough and Baumgartner define 'product of service' as follows, 'Products of service are durable goods, such as carpets and washing machines, designed by their manufacturer to be taken back and used again. The product provides a service to the customer while the manufacturer maintains ownership of the product's material assets. At the end of a defined period of use, the manufacturer takes back the product and reuses its materials in another high-quality product' (McDonough and Baumgartner, 2004). While they (rather like Benkler) confine their analysis within an 'orthodox' account of the economy, and

[145] Sharon Astyk also notes the connection between this urge for private ownership and economic growth, 'American culture is unusually solitary, with a heavy emphasis on individualism, privacy and not sharing things – and it no coincidence that these tend to be characteristics that the growth economy encourages. *If we don't share much we need more things*' (Astyk, 2008: 123; emphasis added).

focus on private and individual forms of use, the important point for my purposes here is the recognition of separating use and enjoyment from ownership, that is possible even within a market-based economic context.[146]

A more radical example of this separation of use from ownership (and more traditional in some respects in terms of being associated with the welfare state) but one which foregrounds sharing as an economic modality, in a way 'products of service' do not, are libraries. What libraries meet is not the need for owning a book – or for reading a book by owning it – but libraries meet our need to read a book (or listen to a CD or watch a DVD, or borrow and enjoy a piece of art), which once we have read it – and thus have our need met – we return, thus enabling someone else to enjoy it. In the case of libraries, use and enjoyment are divorced from possession, and available to all, free or at low cost. It is nothing short of amazing that the library as an institution has survived against the colonising dynamic of commodification and enclosure under neoliberalism (though of course such subsidised forms of goods and services are among the first to be threatened under public sector austerity cuts demands). What light rail and other public transportation systems like buses meet is again our need for mobility – not the need for private ownership of a vehicle for that purpose. Laundromats provide a washing service so that washing clothes is separated from having to own a washing machine. And as a rule of thumb the more a need can be met through a collective and shared facility, the less energy and resource intensive is the meeting of that need.[147]

All three – libraries, laundromats and light rail[148] – represent forms of socialised or collective consumption and provisioning, but allow for a variety of production modalities.[149] That is, one could think of state, market and community forms of

[146] Other examples of sharing from within a conventional economic and political frame, that are potentially compatible with the board position being developed here can be found in Botsman and Rogers' argument for 'collaborative consumption' (Botsman and Rogers, 2011).

[147] While complex, in terms of health-care, the American privatised system uses up a greater proportion of US GDP, and delivers a less universal system, than other nationalised or part-nationalised systems such as the French, Irish or British National Health Service. Indeed, a survey for the World Health Organisation found that the best health care system in the world judged in terms of value for money was the French one (Word Health Organisation, 2000). There is also the possibility of the private provision of collective goods which as Dobson (personal communication) suggests may be compatible with the various ecological and social objectives of a green and sustainable economy. There is nothing in principle to rule this out, especially, as suggested in the following two chapters, we adopt a pragmatic green republican position about the organisation of the economy.

[148] I was inspired to come up with these three Ls in response to Colin Hines' wonderfully provocative triumvirate he uses to describe the 'busted flush' of the economic model which caused the global economic crisis of 2008: 'buildings, banks and boutiques' (property speculation, financial deregulation and debt-based consumerism).

[149] Strictly speaking, ccollective consumption we should reserve for forms of forms of collective *use* i.e. collectively produced goods and services that are enjoyed by the cooperatively by the community as a whole, as opposed to collective *provision* of goods and services which can be individually enjoyed. Harking back to the discussion in chapter 3 about public holidays, these can be seen as perhaps examples par excellence of collective consumption. A good As the Green New Deal Group notes in discussing the UK experience of the second world war, as historical evidence for the types of public policies needed to help with the transition to a low carbon, high well-being economy, 'There was also a huge focus on enjoying low-consumption good times. *There were campaigns to holiday at home, and endless festivities*

providing them, though of course one may have a preference for one or another, or some combination or view one or a combination as more appropriate in a transitional phase. In this way, a sustainable economy is compatible with (restricted) market, state and community forms of production, even if socialised consumption and provision is a dominant (and perhaps permanent) feature of a sustainable society.[150] The 'three Ls' above do seem to offer examples of what Jackson calls 'low carbon economic activities that employ people in ways that contribute meaningfully to human flourishing' (Jackson, 2009: 130), which he regards as the basis for any new sustainable economy. In orthodox neo-classical economic terms such forms of social provisioning are non-excludable and non-rival , since my enjoyment of the service does not exclude your enjoyment, and it is impossible to privatise the service. Such forms of meeting needs – which of course extend beyond the 'three Ls' indicated here – represent inherently more sustainable and egalitarian modes of social and economic relations. These collective and shared forms of provisioning also have the added advantage of potentially enhancing social solidarity and strengthening community. What I mean by this is that a necessary feature of the enjoyment of the service is having to share with other people, and also having to be with other people as part of meeting one's own needs. One is reminded here of the former Conservative Party minister in the UK who disliked public transport, as using it meant having to come into contact with 'ordinary people'.

Thus, even if we observe individual consumption of collectively provided goods and services (i.e. rather than collective consumption per se), it is still the case that the individual (usually) has to interact, meet or otherwise be in the presence of their fellow citizens. Socialised provisioning thus has community-building potentials in a way that market (and to a lesser sense state-organised) economic activity does not. This sharing of public or socially provided goods and service is an important point from a republican perspective (outlined more fully in the next two chapters) in terms not only of the necessary levels of solidarity that a republican politics requires (lessening damaging class divisions), but also as underpinning the 'rough equality' between citizens that underpins the civic republican view.[151]

Beyond the 'Scarcity' Principle: Towards an Economy of Sustainable Desire

That a post-growth economy is one characterised by 'abundance', pleasure and desire, is not something that is immediately obvious or self-evident. Unfortunately it is ascetic notions of less unsustainable lifestyles, and the deliberate misrepresentation of a

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such as dances, concerts, boxing displays, swimming galas, and open-air theatre – all organised by local authorities with the express purpose of saving fuel by discouraging unnecessary travel. Over the course of the war, spending on relatively "weightless" entertainment went up, as classic consumption went down' (Green New Deal Group, 2008: 29; emphasis added).

[150] It is interesting in this regard to see the prominence of arguments for rationing, including discussion of the 'wartime' mobilisation and political context within which the last wide-spread experience of this mode and principle of distributing consumption, within recent work on designing policies for a sustainable economy (Simms, 2001; Brown, 2008; Green New Deal Group, 2008; Doran, 2010, Seyfang, 2009) .

[151] In this way a civic republican perspective defends both *public service* as well as *public services*.

sustainable society in terms of sacrifice, loss, regress and totalitarian, that tend to dominant discussions. Against these negative portrayals, I here argue that a post-growth green economy can be an economy of pleasure. Situated between the affluenza of modern consumerism and the puritanical self-denial of some visions of a sustainable economy lies what could be called an *economy of sustainable desire*.[152] A reason for so characterising a post-growth economy based on green political economic principles is to directly challenge and offer an alternative to what Steigler terms the 'libidinal economy of capitalism' (Steigler, 2008). To Steigler, 'Capitalism needs to control conduct and in order to achieve this, it develops techniques of capture or captation' (Steigler, 2008: 12). To counter this, strategies to 'release' people from this consumer discipline are therefore required. One strategy to counter this consumer driven capitalist economy of unsustainable desire, it is proposed here to replace it with an economy of sustainable desire.

Rejecting the disciplining notion of neo-classical economics which makes 'scarcity' the organising principle for the economy, an economy of sustainable desire is characterised by abundance and possibilities for pleasurable, life-affirming living. This economy of desire harks back and is explicitly built on the arguments greens and others made in the 1960s onwards to the effect that consumerist culture was not only not appreciably adding to human well-being and quality of life, but in many areas was positively detrimental to human well-being. An economy of abundance is based on the very simple notion that pleasure, life-affirming experiences and practices, do not have any necessary connection with either individualised and/or maximising material consumption. The best things in life do turn out to be free after all in that it is meaningful relations between people not possessions or income, that are the major determinate of human flourishing. The subjectivities created in and through these post-material forms of pleasurable living are necessarily different from the passive consumer subjectivities created by an increasingly obsolete carbon fuelled consumer capitalism.

It also begins from the (rather obvious) contention that 'scarcity', much like 'abundance', is socially created and politically negotiated, i.e. neither are 'given' but both are 'created'.[153] As Xenos succinctly notes, 'The simple fact of finitude of anything does not necessarily constitute a scarcity of that thing' (Xenos, 2010: 32). What 'transforms' finitude into 'scarcity' (and associated issues of rarity, price, use-value, possession, allocation, distributive mechanism and desire) are social relations, how human beings 'see', relate to and 'value' that which is finite. For the ancient Greeks (and contemporary greens) the problem in politics was not 'scarcity' in the sense of finitude and what orthodox economists would call 'limited supply', but rather the proliferation of desire beyond the satisfaction of need. Hence, *the solution of the ancients was to limit*

[152] There are also strategic reasons as well as intrinsic ones for greens to present what they're selling is better, more desirable than what is currently on offer. This represents a return to some of the utopian origins of green politics.

[153] Mehta offers a cautionary note in pointing to the ways in which 'scarcity' is deployed as an exploitative political economy of allocation (usually appealing to need for the free market as the allocative mechanism), by powerful groups against less powerful ones as a way to maintain their unjust position of privilege and power (Mehta, 2010: 2-3).

desire and acquisitiveness, not to 'overcome' scarcity as it was for modernity (Xenos, 2010: 33).[154]

The modern economic mobilisation of a power/knowledge discourse of 'scarcity' is vital to understanding both contemporary orthodox economics and modern capitalism. As Illich reminds us, 'Economics always implies the assumption of scarcity. *What is not scarce cannot be subject to economic control*...Scarcity....now seems to affect all values of public concern' (Illich, 1981: 123; emphasis added). Within modernity more generally, and under capitalism in particular, we find a similar situation in regards to scarcity as we did in relation to inequality as discussed above. That is, capitalism seeks not to eradicate scarcity in the sense of abolishing it as a concept (as the ancient Greeks did). Rather, it seeks to institutionalise scarcity as a permanent condition, as a 'management tool' to create and govern docile bodies (Sahlins, 1972: 4). It is the permanency of scarcity as Xenos points out that explains the paradox of highly affluent societies (the most materially affluent societies ever seen), also being characterised by the discipline and presence of 'general scarcity'.[155]

'Scarcity' (and related ideas of maximisation, efficiency, productivity, inequalities as incentives, zero-sum games etc.) has to be created and maintained for it to have its disciplining power as deployed thorough orthodox economic policies and internalised forms of 'commonsense' economic thinking and acting. For Deleuze and Guattari, 'Lack is created, planned and organized in and through social production. . . It is never primary; production is never organized on the basis of pre-existing need or lack...The deliberate creation of lack as a function of market economy is the art of the dominant class. *This involves deliberately organising wants and needs amid an abundance of production; making all desire teeter and fall victim to the great fear not having one's needs satisfied*' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 29–30; emphasis added). This fixation on scarcity is one of the main reasons orthodox economics and public policies based on it are skewed towards 'supply side' solutions (Goodin, 1983). Take the energy debate. The orthodox approach is to present this as largely an issue of the *security of supply* of low-carbon energy with support for nuclear power justified on the grounds that renewable sources of energy leave a dangerous 'energy gap', as the UK government energy report in chapter 3 demonstrated. Nowhere in this narrative is the simple point made that perhaps the issue is not so much *a shortage of supply but an excess demand* that is, we may be *using too much energy* rather than not having enough energy. While there is usually some obligatory references to 'energy efficiency' and 'energy conservation' as important, this framing of the public policy debate over energy futures does not include a space for reducing consumption or considering 'energy descent' as a possible an viable option (Barry and Ellis, 2010). This way of framing the debate would at one stroke enable us to

[154] This is why the contemporary 'voluntary simplicity' movement can be seen as echoing this ancient Greek insight and why modern thinkers in this transition such as Thoreau sound 'pre-modern'. For example, Thoreau's view that 'Man is rich in proportion to the things he can afford to let alone' goes completely against the principles of consumer capitalism, which is why such thinking is so politically radical.

[155] A simplistic 'scarcity narrative' (taking rising wants as given against a backdrop of limited ecological means to fulfil those wants), is often behind most (if not all) of the 'hard green' apocalyptic predictions of the future, canvassed in the Introduction.

see 'energy scarcity' for what it in fact is – an artificially and asymmetrically created 'gap' based on locking society into a perpetual struggle with exponential rising energy demand. The latter is viewed as 'given' and therefore depoliticised, and so we are presented with a 'Malthusian' situation of energy demand always outstripping (or better still 'threatening' to outstrip) energy production, which 'must' keep up. In short, in the energy debate as elsewhere, the idea of scarcity as the organising principle of industrial capitalism has to be manufactured and constantly reproduced. Simply put, not to do so would undermine the imperative for continual expansion and economic growth.[156]

The opposite of scarcity is not material abundance and productivity, as the neo-classical dogma has it. Rather, as Zadak has suggested in his book, *An Economics of Utopia*, it is 'a liberation from the constraints imposed on our understanding by social, political and other factors' (Zadak, 1993: 239). And I would suggest, going back to the concepts of sufficiency and 'redundancy' outlined in previous chapters, that these concepts are central in any liberation from the discipline of 'scarcity'. Sufficiency, making 'enough' rather than 'more and more' a central feature of economic activity, does not, as some might suggest, imply a diminution of desire and pleasure. They denote other desires and other ways of meeting and satisfying out desires. And notions of sufficiency and enoughness, redundancy, sub-optimality etc. are consistent with a claim that regular and temporary withdrawals from fulfilling desires, such as fasting, frugality (Cato, 2004), voluntary simplicity (Alexander, 2008), refusing to consume and buy and instead making or doing it oneself or with others, public holidays and festivals and other rituals of non-consumption (Astyk, 2008: 33), or simply slowing down (Berressem, 2009), can actually serve to liberate desire, and in so doing create a new post-scarcity, sustainable economy of desire.

I also think what Peter Doran has called an 'ecologically-motivated *askesis*' or care for the self, would also be prominent as one (amongst many possible) practices of a 'post-growth' sustainable economy of desire (Doran, 2010). In much the same way Astyk reclaimed and revalorised frugality above, so likewise it is possible to do the same with asceticism. This is a much misunderstood concept, usually viewed as denoting an otherworldly, poverty-is-a-virtue, self-denying attitude to material life. Indeed so bare is the life conveyed by asceticism that only a deep spiritual belief can sustain the practice. Yet, this is not an accurate understanding of asceticism. As Chryssavgis points out asceticism, 'aims at refinement, not detachment or destruction. Its goal is moderation, not repression. Its content is positive, not negative. It looks to service, not selfishness--to reconciliation, not renunciation or escape. Without asceticism, none of us is authentically human' (2003: 28-29). What he, Doran and Alexander, mean I think is that the practice of asceticism is akin to breathing, and closely associated to cultivating particular healthy

[156] It is disappointing that Mehta's analysis of scarcity dismisses the insights of the limits to growth perceptive, viewing it simplistically as 'neo-Malthusian' and placing it on an equal footing as 'cornucopian' techno-optimistic perspectives – both as problematic responses to 'scarcity' (Mehta, 2010b: 25-26). She does not engage in any critical deconstruction of 'economic growth'. Indeed it is telling that the volume of which she is editor, entitled *The Limits to Scarcity*, contains only one contribution in which we find any sustained critical analysis of economic growth (Luks, 2010). I find it difficult to see how one could advance *any* critical analysis of scarcity without relating it to the ideology and imperative of economic growth.

rhythms in one's life. It encourages one to periodically focus on resting from work, from consumption, from the myriad pressures of daily concerns, and look inwards to cultivate and take care of oneself without recourse to work, consumption etc. But, as I understand it, such advocates are not suggesting that people stay in that mode, only that it, like the social/core economy, should figure larger in people's lives in a post-growth sustainable society. That is, such practices of non-consumption are integrated within and regarded as part (not the whole) of a healthy life and community.

In traditional virtue ethics terms, sufficiency represents a balance between the extremes of privation on the one hand and excess on the other. Or perhaps more accurately, stressing the non-material, non-commodity character of sufficiency as understood here, sufficiency involves switching desire and pleasure from the consumption and accumulation of things to the enjoyment of experiences and relationships. Important here I think is to recognise the social dimension of desire for humans. Girard makes a fundamentally important point I think when he suggests that, 'Humankind is that creature who lost a part of its animal instinct in order to gain access to 'desire', as it is called. Once their natural needs are satisfied, humans desire intensely, but they don't know exactly what they desire, for no instinct guides them...*The essence of desire is to have no essential goal*. Truly to desire, we must have recourse to people about us; we have to borrow their desires' (Girard, 2001: 15; emphasis added). What he gestures at here is that desires for humans (beyond meeting basic needs which are satiable) are ineradicably socially created and sustained. We learn how to and what to desire, and these desires and their fulfilment are therefore not only political but also ethical. That is, they require an ethical context and regulatory frame within which to exist. Thus to question contemporary consumerist desire is always already to interrogate its ethical regulation (or lack thereof), as well as evaluate its normative content or contribution to human flourishing. And here we need to remember that arguing for no or a minimal regulatory framing of desire is itself an ethical and political decision. We can learn how to desire different things or the same things in different material ways. Indeed, this is expectation behind much of green political economy – to either provide new means to fulfil existing desires, or to provide new (or currently suppressed) desires to replace existing ones. And here green political economy fully accepts the point Girard and others such as Doran make – *namely that what desires people have and how they fulfil them are fundamentally political and ethical and their regulation is a legitimate political objective*.

While it is possible to imagine forms of 'abundance' which are considerably less resource and ecologically damaging than commodity consumption (at least to the extent that such non-materialist forms of pleasure are beyond the material bounds of the discipline of 'scarcity' under capitalism), there are of course non-ecological, ethical and political reasons why unregulated (and mindless) desire fulfilment is problematic (especially as outlined in the next chapters, from a civic republican perspective). However, as ecological vices go, pleasure seeking in terms of non-material experiences and relationships are *ceteris paribus*, less problematic than rampant consumerism and commodity accumulation, but not necessarily unproblematic simply because of that fact.

To develop the argument further, slack and redundancy could be understood as a mean between the extremes of under or non-utilisation on the one hand and maximisation on the other. What I find evocative about the concept of 'slack', is that it stands in opposition to 'tautness', a sense of being wound so tight, stiffly as to be in danger of snapping at any time. Maximisation understood in this way as tautness reminds us of the inflexibility and stiffness outlined in chapter 3, which were viewed as characteristics of non-resilient systems. This sense of maximisation could also be viewed as a form of vulnerability, harking back to the discussion in chapter 2 where redundancy is viewed as way to manage risk and reduce and respond to vulnerability.[157] Finally, maximisation of course also means growth and expansion, governed by principles of 'positive' rather than 'negative' feedback. We see this in everyday life in terms of the phrase 'maxed out' (especially and revealingly in relation to having exceeded credit card limits).

In much the same way the permaculture principle of 'slack' was viewed as essential in creating resilient socio-ecological relations and systems in chapter 3, here one can view these alternative economic principles of sufficiency and optimality as indicating the necessary slack and 'unproductiveness' that a sustainable economy needs to have 'built-in'. A good example of what this in-build 'slack' might entail is Jackson's discussion of the macro-economics of investment within a sustainable economy. He points out that 'Investments in ecosystem maintenance contribute to aggregate demand, but make no direct contribution to aggregate supply – at least under the assumptions of a conventional production function. They may be vital in protecting ecosystem integrity. And this, is in its turn, is vital for sustaining production at all over the long term. *But in the short-term, they appear to 'soak up' income without increasing economic output*' (Jackson, 2009: 140; emphasis added). As he puts it later in the book in reference to such investments, 'In conventional terms they are likely to be '*less productive"* (ibid.: 176; emphasis added), yet can contribute considerably to quality of life, as well as obviously protecting the basic ecological systems for human and non-human life. It is this 'soaking up' that we might also term the necessary in-built redundancy required for any economy moving from being unsustainable to being less so, to fulfil the demands of adaptive management and become more resilient.[158] What is suggested here is the reverse of an all too common reality within capitalist economies of 'jobless growth', that is, to focus on providing and working out policies which can deliver a 'work-rich' post-growth economic strategy.

But notice how this concept of 'unproductivity' also translates to the relationship between production and reproduction, 'employment' and 'work'. Once we begin to see that the point of public policy, or how we should judge the success or not of the economy, is how it provides meaningful work which contributes directly to social well-being, has forms of provisioning which meet peoples' needs, fairly distributes reproductive labour and socially necessary labour, and balances this with formally paid employment and the needs of the formal economy, we are entering a very different economic worldview, indeed in many respects a very old political economic worldview. While of course bound

[157] Redundancy and non-maximisation of production and use are features of the 'original affluent societies' in Sahlins' classic study (Sahlins, 1972: 17).

[158] As Deb comments, 'An adaptive economy that learns from experience of resource crunch and the loss of value can build caution in manufacturing happiness from exploitation of nature' (2009: 496).

to attract criticism, and not for one moment denying or minimising the devastating effects of losing one's job, in our current economic difficulties, I do think the time has come to seriously revisit Ivan Illich's wonderfully provocative notion of *The Right to Useful Unemployment* (Illich, 1978). In short, we need to ask ourselves what does 'unemployment' look like within the context of a different economy, one in which 'work', reproductive labour, forms of domestic and community care, and the social economy were objects of public policy, recognised and valued? Is 'unemployment' such a pressing problem in these circumstances? Indeed, there may be reasons to think that in a sustainable economy, unemployment is functionally necessary as yet another of 'in-built slack' for the achievement of key social goals. There may be considerable social and well-being costs to a policy of 'full employment'. As Boyle and Simms, point out, 'Full employment...is likely to be corrosive of social capital, if it leaves nobody available in communities' (Boyle and Simms, 2009: 87). Why would 'jobless growth' be preferred over 'work-rich degrowth'?

These principles of sufficiency and redundancy offers a greening if you will of George Bataille's 'general economy', unsurprising given the centrality of the 'unilateral gift' of solar energy, freely providing power for life on earth without every receiving anything in return within his thinking (Bataille, 1985). Or perhaps these principles involve a return to a conception of 'the original affluent society' one finds in Sahlins' classic work *Stone-Age Economics,* and his contention that there is what he calls a 'Zen road to affluence .... unparalleled material plenty – with a low standard of living' (Sahlins, 1972: 3). Either way, their general acceptance and use as principles by which to regulate the human 'economy' (understood expansively as denoting all forms of human labour and the activities associated with providing for human life, rather than narrowly confined to the cash economy) would, I suggest, represent a 'post-scarcity' economy, and the liberation from the discipline of scarcity.[159] They would also spell the end of capitalism. An economy organised along such lines would not mean the end, please note, of desire and pleasure or even of material consumption – thus dispelling both the tired condemnation and dismissal of a sustainable green economy as one of puritanical asceticism (Allison, 1991: 170-178), and those for whom denial and asceticism is viewed as somehow necessary or desirable elements of a green economy (see for e.g. Torgerson, 2002: 10; Goodin, 1992: 18).

I would suggest that life-affirming pleasures, practices and experiences are not simply good in themselves (in terms of being constitutive of a good life and human flourishing), but equally important are sources of resistance to consumer capitalism. If one of the most significant political acts one can do in a consumer culture is to resist and refuse to consume, deploying alternative sources of non-consumerist, non-commodified pleasure is a potentially radical politics of desire. It is not only a truism that the best things in life are free, but that these are also, usually, sustainable and renewable sources of abundant pleasure. Pleasure – like meeting some needs through sharing – does not need to be

[159] An early green analysis of 'post-scarcity' can be found in the work of Murray Bookchin in his classic eco-anarchist work *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (Bookchin, 1971). However, unlike the argument here, Bookchin's post-scarcity is premised (like classical Marxism) on the production of material abundance in a post-capitalist economy, rather than the elevation of non-material sources of pleasure.

individually possessed to be enjoyed. Equally concepts such as 'the commons', 'usufruct' (developed in more detail in chapter 8), mutuality, the moral economy, reciprocity, the enjoyment of public space, all point towards a 'post-scarcity' economy.[160]

What if the most important things in life really do turn out to be free? In a time of 'peak everything' (Heinberg, 2007) it is worth noting the many good things that are not close to exhaustion or depletion such as 'Community, personal autonomy, satisfaction from honest work well done, intergenerational solidarity, cooperation, leisure time, happiness, ingenuity, artistry, beauty of the built environment' (Heinberg, 2007: 14).[161] Hence, what is unique or defining about an economy of sustainable pleasure or desire is the centrality of an array shared means and collective practices. Unlike the 'one size fits all' straightjacket of consumerism, an economy of sustainable desire promises a greater not less variety and plurality of conceptions of the good, as people and communities experiment and find new post-consumer ways of being and doing. This is but another way of talking about the 'commons'. And while the benefits and pleasures derived from it may be free (in the sense of being unpriced and unpriceable), it does require work to defend and protect it, and manage it in the interests of all.

Note that absolutely central to all of this is the need to value free time over material possessions and to place *free time* at the centre of our political objectives for a sustainable society. A sustainable more resilient form of life is necessarily one with much more time and less money, and fewer commodities, but least I be accused by cynics as simply re-describing unemployment (forced free time and less money), let me make it clear. A society with more free time is a society with higher levels of 'unemployment' in the conventional sense. And that this is no bad thing, since once we re-focus public policy debate away from 'economic growth', 'competiveness' and 'full employment' towards the objectives of 'economic security,' 'well-being', 'work' and 'free time', then we begin to see the outlines of a low carbon, sustainable, high well-being economy. Equally important – and directly related to the discussion above about collective provisioning – is that such a economy of sustainable desire is one where *pleasure is elevated over possession*; and where we see the creation of what might be called 'a usufruct of the means of sustainable pleasure' through forms of collective provisioning. This would represent the return of the Eros and the erotic, the positively life-affirming over the life-denying and life-threatening 'possessive' character of modern commodity production and consumption.

Thus a sustainable economy of desire is one where free time is at its centre, in which relationships (between people and between people and the environment) and experiences are valued over individually owned and consumed possessions. Hence, for instance, the

[160] I would also include here practices and concepts such as 'meitheal', an Irish term meaning shared, reciprocal working between neighbours within the framework of mutual aid and the reciprocal gift economy.

[161] Similar sentiments can be found in Seabrook's suggestion that, 'A different narrative is required: the story of quiet satisfactions, contentment with sufficiency, admiration for those who declare how much humanity can do with little money and not how little we can achieve without more, another tale that celebrates the heroism of the everyday, that retrieves from darkness the acts of charity and kindness, the ample storehouse of human rather than material resources' (Seabrook, 2008: 7).

Slow Food movement is a clear example of this type of economy, the centre of which is the recovery of taste, enjoyment and the sensuality of food, and a celebration of local, seasonal foods. This movement attempts to protect or re-create a food culture in the face of the *mal bouffe*, of industrialised organised 'fast food'. The Slow Food movement in its explicit linking of enjoyment, pleasure, food cooking and eating within the context of family, friends and neighbours, is therefore an example of this sustainable economy of desire. It contains all the ingredients (excuse the pun!) of such an economy – pleasure seeking, collective in form, sustainable and renewable. Other examples or potentials of this sustainable economy of desire would be public festivals as collectively created and enjoyed 'free time'. Here, while linking back to the discussion about rituals in chapter 3, there is also much to be learnt from the history and political struggles around festival and fairs in Europe and elsewhere, particularly around their capacity to disrupt the disciplinary logic of industrial capitalism's scarcity-fuelled productivism and organised mass consumerism. The transgressive potential of festivals is as important as their status as collective experiences of exuberance and pleasure (Bakhtin, 1984).

Conclusion

This final chapter has completed 'clearing the ground' for articulating a green political economy. It has suggested that a major concern for a post-growth political economy, and what marks its distinctiveness in comparison to orthodox models of political economy, is the distinguishing of conflated concepts, most importantly distinguishing 'work' from 'employment', the identification of 'sequestered' experiences such as reproductive work, the tracing of post-growth principles such as sufficiency as opposed to maximisation, and the development or recovery of new and older principles such as 'sharing', 'mutuality' and 'usufruct'. Perhaps above all, a green political economy is defined by a much more expansive notion of 'the economy' than the narrow one offered in orthodox economic discourse. The identification and recognition of thresholds is also a characteristic of a post-growth political economy, even if there are difficulties in measuring or quantifying them. Lack of empirical or conceptual definiteness cannot undermine arguments for recognising the existence and importance of such thresholds. So, for example, a key threshold is that point above which a level of income or bundle of consumption leads to decreases in well-being, or the point beyond which economic growth becomes 'uneconomic growth' and undermines economic security or transgresses ecological thresholds. A green political economy recognises four forms of provisioning spheres (reproductive, social, market/formal and state), and therefore another threshold concern is the point beyond which a particular combination of reproductive, social, economic and market forms of work and employment undermines rather than enhances individual human well-being, is exploitative, unfair etc. In particular, the 'de-sequestering' of reproductive labour, fully acknowledging its foundational significance for all forms of provisioning, raises significant gender equality concerns for any post-growth conception of political economy.

Another key aim of green political economy is to 'reconnect' production and consumption, to reduce the separation (conceptual, or in time and space) between the making and using of a good or service. This explains the stress on localising economic

activity, seeking to 'de-complexify' production where possible with the aim of 're-embedding' the economic within the social (which is an inevitable result of the more expansive conception of the economic offered in this chapter). This chapter has sought to establish the social economy as a central element of the sustainable economy, alongside the market and state. This sphere is one which green political economy seeks to grow and expand, while at the same time seeking to reduce the size of both market exchange and the state/public sector, and in doing deliver upon the green promise of creating more people-centred and socially embedded economic practices. And part of the latter can be seen in green political economy's interest in promoting forms of economic modality such as sharing and collective provisioning (including collective consumption).[162]

Finally, what this chapter has sought to do is over-turn the idea of a sustainable economy as a deprived and joyless, that such an economy is necessarily a grim 'survivalist' one. Above all (and anticipating the discussion of a green republicanism in the following chapters), what stands out from this chapter's discussion of 'post-scarcity' and seeing a green economy as a sustainable economy of desire, not privation is its particular notion of human flourishing and well-being. What is foregrounded is a focus on providing the economic sufficiency, the wherewithal, necessary for human flourishing, a constitutive element of which is *freedom* (and not just 'free time'). Following Peter Doran, what is required is a progressive and imaginative delinking of what the 'good life' from the 'goods life' (Doran, 2006: 152). And to view this as a creative, emancipatory act freeing up rather of human possibilities limited by the 'false arrest' as he puts it of neoliberalism (ibid.: 152). Sahlins perceptively put it in relation to our commonly (and mistaken) view of hunter-gatherer communities as deprived, 'We are inclined to think of hunters and gatherers as *poor* because they don't have anything; *perhaps better to think of them for that reason as free*' (Sahlins, 1972: 14; second emphasis added). This perhaps is the choice, starkly put, that green political economy offers, *freedom or consumerism*. One answer to this, from civic republican political theory is outlined in the following two chapters.

[162] I have not touched upon what would seem like an obvious issue here which is the role of 'planning' in a sustainable economy. While I do think a sustainable economy is a (more) planned one that outr current unsustainable economy (that much I agree with eco-socialists and eco-Marxists), and also that the expansive social economy indicated in this chapter will require local and other levels of democratic planning, support and regulation, I do not think a sustainable, resilient economy is one that will either be of the type of 'economic planning' we have witnessed in the 20th century, nor that there will be the same type of planning in different contexts, policy areas or regions of the world. For some discussion of the role of planning and sustainability see Wheeler (2004), Kenny and Meadowcroft (1999).

Chapter 7
Greening Civic Republicanism I

'Judging from the main portions of the history of the world, so far, justice is always in jeopardy, peace walks amid hourly pitfalls, and of slavery, misery, meanness, the craft of tyrants and the credulity of the populace, in some of the protean forms, no voice can at any time say, They are not. The clouds break a little, and the sun shines out—but soon and certain the lowering darkness falls again, as if to last forever. Yet is there an immortal courage and prophecy in every sane soul that cannot, must not, under any circumstances, capitulate'. Walt Whitman, 1982: 952.

'Already long ago, from when we sold our vote to no man, the People have abdicated our duties...for the People who once upon a time handed out military command, high civil office, legions — *everything, now restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things: bread and circuses*' Juvenal.

Introduction

The civic republican tradition is not one that one finds in discussions and debates within green politics and related issues around the politics of unsustainability.[163] This is not just interesting but indeed remarkable given, as I hope to establish in this chapter and the next, the large areas of overlap between both. These areas of overlap include the compatibility of republican ideas and positions with key principles discussed in pervious chapters around vulnerability (chapter 2), resilience (chapter 3), and many of the key dimensions of a post-growth green political economy (chapters 4, 5 and 6), not least the political regulation of the economy for non-productive reasons and objectives.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the relationship and difference between classical civic republicanism and liberalism, stressing in particular the republican conception of liberty as 'non domination' as opposed to the liberal conception of liberty as 'non-interference'. It then offers a historically informed discussion and analysis of the classic civic republican account of our political condition. It discusses civic republicanism's particular sensitivity to issues around vulnerability and its acute sense of the fragility of political achievements, its awareness of the tendency to 'forget' these relations of vulnerability. The chapter also discusses how certain temporal aspects and practices of the republican vision make it compatible with central features of green thinking.

[163] There is some literature which has developed in the last couple of years (Cannavò, 2010; Barry; 2008; Barry and Smith, 2008; Dobson, 2003; Curry, 2000; Curtin, 1999), exploring the overlap and interrelationships between green and civic republican issues. However, by and large there has been more research on green politics in relation to other ideologies, especially liberalism (Patton, 2011; Wissenburg, 1998; Hailwood, 2004; Bell, 2002; de-Shalit, 1996, 1997; 2001; Barry and Wissenburg, 2001).

Although much of this chapter is concerned with themes and thinkers within the history of civil republicanism which I think are relevant for a green political theory, I am primarily concerned not with determining whether or classical republican thinking is 'green' or not. It is possible to use contemporary concerns of climate change and 'peak oil' as a way to 're-read' and interrogate some of the key texts and thinkers of the classical civic republican tradition. However, while an important issue, offering a 'green' interpretation of canonical texts and thinkers is a separate project from the one I am engaged in. Rather, and in a very republican manner I think, I am concerned in this chapter with a necessarily more selective reading of some key thinkers within the civic republican tradition. We therefore cannot unproblematically or uncritically 'bolt on' civic republicanism to green politics. The aim must be to see which ideas, arguments (elements of these) can be seen as 'useful' and therefore compatible with green political concerns, which elements or concerns are incompatible and therefore need to be edited or reformed. I see this as a necessary part of the ground-clearing and scoping process to proceed in this and the next chapter in articulating a 'green republicanism'.

On Republicanism and Liberalism

Comparing liberalism unfavourably with civic republicanism has become such a popular gambit that one is tempted to say that if civic republicanism didn't exist, it would have to be invented. The contrast between these traditions is easily overstated; after all, Locke' *Second Treatise of Government*, one of the founding texts of liberalism, was deeply engaged with Aristotle's *Politics*, one of the founding texts of republicanism. Liberalism grew out of and not just against this older tradition. Nevertheless, it is true that the social contract envisioned by contemporary liberal theorists no longer bears much resemblance to Aristotle's polis, or the northern Italian city-states of Machiavelli. Moreover, as liberalism evolves away from its republican origins, it seems to have lost touch with civic republicans' valuable insights into our current political condition. In particular in terms of the benefits of those insights for the challenges contemporary societies face in relation to the transition away from economic growth, inequality and unsustainability towards a 'just transition' (TUC, 2008; UNEP, 2008, new economics foundation, 2009). In this respect, there are good reasons why green theorists should support the recent revival of civic republicanism in general, and actively explore the advantages of integrating republican insights into green politics.

Liberalism undoubtedly gives us a rich stock of resources for reflecting upon the political problems raised by our relationship to the natural environment. The social contract tradition, beginning with Hobbes and Locke, and represented more recently by Rawls (and his numerous followers), is centrally concerned with the problems raised by resource scarcity and competition. It concerns itself with the just allocation of material resources, the form and bounds of competition, and the tension between individual self-interest and the public good, within the context of pluralism, and limited (or constrained) forms of social and political solidarity. Certainly, these are matters that green political theory must address. Liberal theorists rightly remind us that a post-growth social order must attend to individuals' need for justice and for an appropriate degree of autonomy and support for pluralism, and multiple conceptions of the 'good life' (Patton, 2011;

Wissenburg, 1998; Hailwood, 2004; Bell, 2002), some of which has been covered in previous chapters.

However, contemporary liberalism has its green detractors. Familiar complaints about liberalism include its emphasis on rights rather than duties, its affinity for methodological individualism, atomism and reductionism, and a strong (albeit contingent and historical) connection with free market capitalism in practice. These features tend to stack the deck in favour of individual self-interest when it comes into conflict with the claims of community, the non-human world and future generations. Perhaps even more problematically, from a green perspective, is that accounts of modern liberalism has become increasingly *abstract*, making the search for a just regime seem like a merely intellectual exercise in manipulating formal models. It is rather telling that the shibboleth of contemporary liberalism Rawls' 'veil of ignorance': To achieve justice we must forget virtually everything of interest and importance to us as particular human beings living a concrete, embodied, socially constituted, and ecologically embedded lives. To put it bluntly, this is not a promising beginning for thinking about environmental problems and creating resilient communities and sustainable societies. As Simon notes in his defence of a theory of injustice as both separate from an having priority over any theory of justice, 'A theory of injustice privileges the position of the disadvantaged in drawing upon their experiences and not on the imaginative powers of someone imaging what it would be like to be disadvantaged' (Simon, 1995: 22). He goes on, in a manner entirely consistent with a republican sensibility, to stress the importance of 'social and historical detail' (ibid: 22) to the development of an account of a theory of injustice. And, as indicated previously, the specification of these actual sociological and historical details for a theory of injustice holds likewise for a politics of actually existing unsustainability.

O'Riordan and Timmerman also note the abstract and abstracted character of dominant strands of liberal thought, particularly Rawls, but also note how:

> Much of Rawls's critics (the best known advocate being Alistair MacIntyre) belong to a resurgent political tradition know as the 'virtuous' or Aristotelian tradition, which deliberately invokes the pre-modern (or non-modern) interpretative schema...This tradition is based on a deliberate rooting of social and political theory in the practices and narratives of ordinary social and political life: it depends not upon an idealized social construct but upon learned, vernacular, and historical knowledge of actual societies in operation. *It is noteworthy that much of this tradition focuses on human vulnerability to processes and events beyond one's personal control*. (O'Riordan and Timmerman, 2001: 434; emphasis added).

Alongside the neo-Aristotelianism represented by MacIntyre, already discussed in Chapter 2, the civic republican tradition – with which it is often connected – offers a useful corrective to the abstractness of modern liberal theorising. And also to the latter's neglect of the importance of vulnerability. The republican tradition—conventionally defined as including Aristotle, Cicero, Polybius, Machiavelli, the seventeenth-century English Commonwealthmen, Rousseau and many of the American founders—is

famously concerned with duties and with the individual's dependence on a specific historical community. This is perceived as a constitutive not a contingent feature of their political identity (qua free citizen), and in turn specifies a range of interests and concerns to which the individual citizen must attend. As J.G.A. Pocock puts it, the classical republic was 'at once universal, in the sense that it existed to realize for its citizens all the values which men were capable of realizing in this life, and *particular, in the sense that it was finite and located in space and time*' (Pocock, 1975: 3, emphasis added).

Moreover, civic republicanism is vitally concerned with time, with contingent events and with the 'intelligibility of the sequences … of particular happenings' (ibid., Pocock, 1975). In this way, this tradition focuses on the challenge of sustainability, cast as a concern with extending the life of a specific historical community in a world ruled by forces beyond human control, and in full recognition of the 'human condition' as being characterised by ineliminable vulnerability, dependence and constituted by limits. These limits include environmental ones, limits of human knowledge and ignorance (in an Aristotelian, non-Rawlsian sense) in relation to accurately understanding the empirical basis of the metabolism and relations of dependence between human society and the environmental conditions for human existence and flourishing or foreseeing future events and threats. The human condition as understood by republicanism is one that is, in key respects, the same as the green one. Both acknowledge human dependence on natural forces outside our control, the complexity of those relations of dependence, and the limits to our understanding and comprehension of the non-human world. Both also share a concern with the regulation of the metabolic relationships between human and non-human worlds and an acceptance of the (relatively) fixed ecological limits which delimit the material range within which human society can exist and/or flourish. It is of course the case that most classic civic republican arguments were generally in favour of the necessity to 'dominate nature' (here sharing a similar instrumentalist-economic and thoroughly anthropocentric view of nature with liberalism). And it is equally clear that this is not compatible with green concerns about actually existing unsustainability and the creation of less unsustainable societies. However, taking the position that one can disaggregate civic republicanism, it is possible to selectively reform it – in this case by rejecting this 'domination of nature' imperative, without rejecting other more compatible elements.[164]

The civic republican tradition is attentive to the contingent, historical and ecological conditions and limits within which flourishing human societies are possible and is therefore in a better position to integrate the notion of vulnerability and its related concepts within its theoretical remit. This attentiveness to these conditions is a constitutive feature of republicanism and one which marks it out from other political traditions and approaches such as liberalism. In this respect, republicanism on first gloss is a more promising political position to deal with ecological concerns, in that unlike liberalism it is attuned to ecological limits and constraints thus making it, *ceteris paribus*, a 'post-exuberant' political vision (Catton and Dunlap, 1980). Therefore, it is more likely to be suitable as a political theory for the type of post-growth, post-carbon economy described in previous chapters. This recognition and animating concern within

[164] I owe this point to Peter Cannavò.

republicanism for contingency, limits and the non-political conditions for politics, the sustaining through time of a flourishing liberty-imparting political community, reveals republicanism as one of the few political traditions which accepts many of the same starting points as those which animate green political theory.

Republicanism also (echoing both Polanyi and green politics) rejects the view of society as a 'market society', the reduction politics to preference aggregation and the metaphor of the market. As Michelman (1989) puts it, republicanism proposes a dialogic conception of 'politics as a normative activity. It imagines politics as contestation over questions of value and not simply questions of preference. It envisions politics as a process of reason not just of will, of persuasion not just of power, directed toward agreement regarding a good or just, or at any rate acceptable, way to order those aspects of life that involve people's social relations and social natures' (Michelman, 1989: 456). And one could add social-nature relations to that list. The stress on contestation is important in terms of the agonistic conception of politics outlined in the next chapter and the republican stress on *contestation* being as, if not more, important than *consensus* for a vibrant and healthy democratic politics (Pettit, 1997).

Pettit refers to the republican conception of liberty as being 'non-domination' in contrast to the liberal notion of freedom as non-interference (1997: 51), which Steven Slaughter has summarised as follows:

> The guiding aspiration of republicanism is the construction of liberty through the exercise of public power. Public power is the state's authoritative capacity that is controlled by the public and limited in the aims it is able to pursue but focused on the common aims it must fulfil in order to constitute the liberty of the public. Republicanism makes the claim that the only way to avoid domination is to include as many voices as possible into the political sphere and to divide power to promote the common good and to prevent any single interest from dominating. (Slaughter, 2005: 211)

Thus, conscious, collective political activity on the part of citizens is viewed and valued instrumentally as a means to the establishment and maintenance of liberty, and the status of citizens as free from arbitrary rule or power. As Bellemy puts it in discussing Machiavelli, 'rather than trading on a moralistic conception of positive liberty, therefore, Machiavelli urged civic involvement to avoid the domination of tyrants or elites' (Bellemy, 1999: xii). The individual from a republican perspective is free insofar as she is not dependent upon the arbitrary will of another, but dependent upon the law, especially the constitution.[165] While being explicit about relations of dependence, there can be tendency for some civic republicans to follow the liberal imperative and see self-sufficiency and independence as the proper goal of politics and the achievement of

[165] Whereas as Constant famously noted in comparing modern (liberal) freedom and that of the ancients (republican) freedom: 'The aim of the ancients was the sharing of social power among citizens of the same fatherland: this is what they called liberty. The aim of the moderns is the enjoyment of liberty in private pleasures; and they call liberty the guarantees accorded by institutions to these pleasures' (Constant, 1820: 311).

freedom. Given what was said earlier in Chapter 2 about the importance and constitutive character and experience of vulnerability and dependence, this is another aspect of classic civic republican thinking that stands in need of updating or reform from a green political perspective.

According to Onuf, 'in a purely liberal world, sovereignty entails non-intervention; the republican legacy of concern for the common good affirms the propriety of intervention inspired by larger motivations than the intervenor's immediate advantage' (Onuf, 1998: 140). Thus, under some circumstances, intervention into the life of another can be justified if the aim is the 'larger motivation' of preventing domination. Hence republicans are more likely to support the type of state regulation and planning of the economy of the type consistent with achieving a low carbon high-wellbeing economy outlined in the previous chapter, than liberals (Pettit, 1997: 161-2). Key here is the republican state (or intervening body) tracks the interest of the citizen and the notion of non-arbitrary interference. As Pettit notes, 'An act of interference ... will not be an affront to freedom under almost any approach, so long as it is subject to the control of the person interfered with: so long as it is akin to the interference that his sailors practiced on Ulysses when they kept him tied to the mast' (Pettit, 2006: 135). He goes on to state that, 'Nonarbitrary interference, like a natural obstacle, may reduce the sphere in which people enjoy social freedom, but under the republican approach it will not take such freedom away' (Pettit, 2006: 136).

Another feature of this republican version of liberty is also worth highlighting. This is the interpretation of liberty as nondomination as a form of 'resilient liberty'. For Brennan and Hamlin, the 'idea of resilience is related to the idea of assurance – a resilient liberty is one that is assured in the sense that it is not contingent on circumstances, but rather is entrenched in the institutional structure' (Brennan and Hamlin, 2001: 47), especially the legal system and constitutional arrangements. In reference to previous chapters and discussions, while tempting to link this conception of liberty to the discussion of resilience in chapter 3, it is perhaps more appropriate to link this idea of 'resilient liberty' to the discussion about 'economic security' in the last chapter, since what it expresses is the centrality of the certainty and security of one's freedom and agency. Thus, from a republican perspective (and its conception of liberty and citizenship) insecurity can be the result of *paternalistic* and *clientelistic* relations (which are contingent and can be frequently arbitrary as well as potentially corrupt).[166] The International Labor Organization report on 'economic security' discussed previously picks up on this issue in respect to the negative relationships between clientelism, paternalism, insecurity and domination:

> paternalism should be seen as a form of insecurity and a mechanism for inducing a sense of insecurity. One form of paternalism is clientelism. It has often been said that the modern movement for human rights represents the painful evolution from clientelism to citizenship, where 'the citizen' is someone with individual and collective rights, rather than merely someone who relies on charity, welfare or paternalistic gestures.... Paternalism is often well-meaning. For example, the

[166] For outlines of a republican conception of political corruption and clientelism, see Kobayashi (2006).

> language of 'rights with responsibilities' is commonly used to justify imposing conditions on the poor for receiving state support. The trouble is that the directive nature of the imposed 'responsibility' effectively removes the recipient from the realm of responsibility or freedom to a realm of obligation. *Well-meaning paternalism easily blurs into discretionary and arbitrary coercion*. (International Labor Organization, 2004c: 7)

The avoidance and protection from arbitrary coercion and domination are key defining features the republican political vision.

The Classical Republican Vision of Our Political Condition

In *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli considered 'whether it is better to choose sterile places for the building of cities' since in such environments, "men, constrained to be industrious and less seized by idleness, live more united, having less cause for discord, because of the poverty of the site' (Machiavelli, 1986: 8). But he rejected that option:

> This choice would without doubt be wiser and more useful if men were content to live off their own and did not wish to seek to command others. Therefore, since men cannot secure themselves except with power, it is necessary to avoid this sterility in a country and to settle in the most fertile places, where, since [the city] can expand because of the abundance of the site, it can both defend itself from whoever might assault it and crush anyone who might oppose its greatness. (Machiavelli, 1996: 8).

In other words, and bracketing out the problematic 'domination of nature' imperative, civic republicanism acknowledges that environmental conditions shape both the character of the citizens and the possibilities for political action open to them. This discussion poses a stark contrast to Hobbes' and Locke's social contract theories. Social contract theorists invite us to imagine building a society from scratch against the background of an abstract, uniform natural world, generally featuring a universal condition of scarce resources (here thinking both of the previous chapter's discussion of 'scarcity' and also the foundational role of scare resources as a key dimension of liberal views of the 'circumstances of justice'). Machiavelli, on the other hand, begins with the specific environmental conditions of a particular locale. Some locations may offer more abundance than others, and this difference will naturally be relevant to the sort of regime one creates. But at the same time, like contemporary greens, republicans are also acutely aware of the dangers of excessive abundance and the temptation to exchange 'liberty' for 'wealth'. As Samuel Adams succinctly and famously states, '*If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude than the animated contest of freedom, go from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you*. May your chains sit lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that you were our countrymen! (Adams, 1776/1859: 328; emphasis added). This concern is not central to liberalism.

Machiavelli attends to such differences because of his understanding of the political project: Politics, for Machiavelli as for most republicans, is an attempt to build an enduring and safe home for human lives in a world ruled by contingency and filled with potentially hostile agents. Political values and conditions of liberty, honour, the common good and so on, have to be actively created and sustained (that is, these are artificial, conventional and human creations), and are not naturally given. This is particularly the case in relation to citizenship which republicans are explicit about being an identity and practice which is not 'given' – that is citizens are 'made' not born.

Like any construction project, building a city begins with choosing a site and specifying the needs of the inhabitants. It is not an abstract city we are creating; as Aristotle constantly reminds us, we are aiming not for an ideal regime but for the best *practicable* regime—practicable, that is, for imperfect and fallible creatures such as ourselves in the specific situations we are in. This understanding makes republican theorists particularly attentive to the contingent features of the natural and social environment that will determine a community's political possibilities—as opposed to liberals' tendency to focus on universal, abstract ideals that all communities should try to realise.

Republicans are equally attentive to the city's location in time as well as in place. The republic 'had a beginning and would consequently have an end' (Pocock, 1975: 3), which in part explains the non-linear, cyclical view of politics within republican thinkers such as Machiavelli, echoing Aristotelian concerns with cyclical temporal horizons and measures appropriate for political communities. Republicans are centrally concerned with how to maintain a city over several generations, given the 'instability and circumstantial disorder of its temporal life' (ibid). Citizens have a history and a future; this is the essential context of civic life, in the republican vision. History can be a problem, of course—the accumulation of decisions and happenings necessarily constrain the set of options open to one. But it can also be a resource: History provides a stock of experience, as well as reasons for taking action (to honour or redeem one's civic history) – hence Machiavelli's interest in the history of the Roman republic as an enduring source of principles for guiding action.[167] And the shadow of the future also looms large in the classical republic; the welfare of future generations and obligations towards them constitute another compelling set of reasons motivating civic virtue and ensuring the adaptability, vitality and robustness of the republic as an enduring liberty-imparting political entity in time.

Republican citizens are therefore specific, locally embedded and embodied persons with a particular history and location within specific republican polities. These all share in certain general features of the human condition. First, most human communities are threatened with unknown and unpredictable dangers. It is because we face unknown threats from nature and from other actors (human and nonhuman) that we must pay close attention to our natural resource base. A sterile site, as Machiavelli warns, is undesirable

[167] Here we also note that another indication of a putative 'republican turn' in green theorising (alongside the 'legal-constitutional' one previously mentioned) is the welcome growth in the number of historical studies by green political theorists such as John Meyer (Meyer, 2001), Andrew Biro (Biro, 2005), Piers Stephens (1999, 2001), LaFrenière (2008), or the explicit adoption of a historical sociological frame as in the work of Dryzek et al (2003).

because we will probably need resources to defend ourselves. But resources are relative to needs; citizens accustomed to economic sufficiency (as opposed to exponential growth for example) will not make as many demands on its resource base, as a people used to luxuries and material affluence. They will also be more unified, with less extremes between rich and poor, and so better able to defend their city. For Machiavelli, then, in choosing a site, we also have to consider the interaction between the relative abundance of the natural resources it offers, and the (historically formed) character of the people. Moreover, the ruler's traditional relationship with the people matters to this choice as well. Civic virtue can be produced even in a fertile location through the use of commonly agreed laws demanding austerity in the interest of sustaining practices such as active citizenship, itself constitutive of liberty as non-domination. But a new prince might have more difficulty imposing privations than would a hereditary prince. More generally, according to Machialli, as a regime accrues more legitimacy (whether through the character of the rulers, democratic elections, wise governance or being successful), it will have more opportunity to impose austerity measures on the people.

Here, we note the republican concern with the issue of political leadership, an issue notably absent in green political theory which eschews discussion of leadership in my opinion on the (false) grounds that leadership is inimical to a green vision of participatory, inclusive democracy. However, this neglect of analysis of political leadership within green political theory can be rectified through green thought engaging with republicanism. Leadership is not necessarily a danger to even radical forms of democratic politics. More to the point perhaps is that a transition to away from unsustainability and the creation of low carbon high quality of life societies and economies will require forms of facilitative and inspiring political leadership, without which this transition will most probably not take place. Machiavelli's founders of a republic, rather than forgetting what they know about themselves and their people, must take note of where they are located in time and space. We find a similar attention to local conditions in Aristotle's *Politics* and Rousseau's *The Social Contract*, which results in their characteristic refusal to prescribe the same political institutions and governance arrangements for all communities –one size does not fit all. In this they evince my characterising of them as both contextual thinkers, and one's attuned to contingency.

The American founders, of course, also engaged in intense debate over whether geography and environmental conditions, history and the character of the people would support a republican form of government (Wood, 1998: 93-97). Environmental and historical specifics play a large role in determining a community's political possibilities: A small, arid country with a lot of oil and historically ruled by a hereditary prince faces a different set of constraints than a large, historically democratic country rich in a variety of natural resources. Both countries may aim for a republic in which citizens can realise 'all the values that it is possible for men to realize in this life', but their institutions and practices must be designed to allow *this* particular group of people to manage the resource base at *their* disposal effectively and deal with the threats *they* face.

Curry (2000) is one of the few green thinkers who sees an 'elective affinity' between civic republicanism and green politics. He suggests that:

> It is fascinating to the extent to which the perspective derived from civic republicanism is amenable to an ecological interpretation and expansion. In so far as the common good of any human community is utterly dependent – not only ultimately but in many ways immediately – upon ecosystem integrity (both biotic and abiotic), that integrity must surely assume pride of place in its definition. And it is only maintained by practices and duties of active 'citizenship', whose larger goal is the health not only of the human public sphere but of the natural world which encloses, sustains and constitutes it. Civic *virtú* is thus a subset of ecological *virtú* (Curry, 2000: 1067).

This concern with particularity and place echoes the idea that there is no one model of sustainability or mode of political and economy life which while achieving resilience, is also one that is applicable to each and every human community. In short, a concern with particularity, context and locale provides some counter-argument to any presumption that there is 'one size' that is fit for purpose for each human community (Barry, 1999a). This strong contextual dimension of the civic republican tradition also fits with Alastair MacIntyre's conception of 'tradition' itself as something that is necessarily local and partial. According to MacIntyre, 'Traditions are always and ineradicably to some degree local, informed by particularities of language and social and natural environment' (MacIntyre, 1988: 361). In many respects, and here linking explicitly to the discussion of adaptive management in chapter 3 on resilience, traditions can be understood as locally specific and locally evolved practices, habits and customs adapted to specific local interests, identities and environmental conditions,

This brings us to the second general feature of our human condition: our vulnerability. Human vulnerability permeates republican thought; as Aristotle reminds us, we are neither beasts nor gods. We cannot survive alone in the wilderness and retain our distinctive humanity (Aristotle 1253a). Rousseau develops this argument in greater depth in the *Discourse on Inequality*, pointing out that it is humans' relative weakness, our vulnerability (compared to wild animals), that makes us interdependent on one another. This interdependence in turn creates the possibility of domination (particularly acute for a political theory orientated around the ideal of liberty as non-domination), and the problem of political inequality, which for Rousseau was caused the unequal distribution of private property. For classical republicans, because we depend on one another for survival in a dangerous world, we need political institutions to order our common life so as to preserve some measure of equality and civil (if not natural) freedom. This understanding of civic freedom as non-domination permeates seventeenth- and eighteenth-century republican thought, creating an important counterpoint to republicans' emphasis on civic duties; the republican project is to create a secure home for free men and women, not for slaves.

Of course, Rousseau was famously pessimistic about our ability to create a true and lasting republic. That pessimism is another striking feature of classic civic republican thought. The challenge of creating a stable republic in a dynamic and threatening world is overwhelmingly difficult. One is, after all, fighting the tendency of all naturally-

occurring and living things (a category that includes the city republic itself) to grow, mature, decline and eventually die. Such an organic and cyclical view is also central to Machiavelli's thought, and this sense of the inevitability of decline can be viewed as echoes of Machiavelli and Rousseau (via way of Malthus perhaps) in contemporary hard-green 'collapse' scenarios and thinking (Tainter, 1988; Homer-Dixon, 2008; Korowicz, 2010). On first gloss this conception of time and the future prospects for the republic would cohere well with aspects of green political theory for which organicism and such cyclical conceptions of time are equally constitutive features, such as certain aspects of deep ecology, ecocentric theory and political expression in groups such as Earth First! (Somma, 2009; Taylor, 1994); as well as some non-Western indigenous and first peoples' cultural perspectives (Barry, 2007).

Time, Obligation and Vulnerability

Very few classical republican theorists imagined that one could create a constitution and polity that would last *indefinitely*. Inevitably, as the republic grew strong, corruption would set in and weaken its foundations. Even periodic 'renewals' of civic virtue could not be counted on to forever halt decline. Eventually revolutions would ensue; the republic would become a tyranny, oligarchy or even the dreaded 'democracy' – understood as anarchic, unstable 'mob rule' (Wood 1998: 34-35). At best, classical republicans warn us, we can hope to create a *relatively* long-lived republic. There are clearly areas of overlap between aspects of classical republican and conservative thought (the cyclical view of human history), even this classic republican perspective is useful from a green perspective. It is useful in that it is acutely sensitised towards a) the need to attend to the sources and conditions of sustaining and maintaining the republic through time against the backdrop of contingency and events beyond its control; and b) the obligations of the present and founding generations to pass on the republic. In this way, republicanism has a sense of 'futurity' which is recognisable as expressing a sense of sustainability. But more than that. Republicanism not only embodies this sense of obligation to the future, in a manner which is familiar to green politics. Republicanism also embodies a sense of obligations to previous generations (with echoes of conservative thinking), and a sense of itself as having a duty to be remembered in history – to 'bear witness' to itself and also establish memorials to and of itself and its achievements – even if the republic itself dies.

In sum, even if we fully accept the organic, cyclical view that the republic will have a beginning, period of maturation and decline, republicanism in seeking a life for the republic, its citizens, its deeds and glories beyond its own life, offers a strong incentive to endure that the republic lives as long as possible in both glory and honour. Thus, a defining aspect of the republican mindset is this future orientation to ensure as far as possible, that the republic's achievements be passed on into historical record – that the republic be remembered and not forgotten, perhaps in part to inform and serve as a set of experiences and maxims for future republican leaders and citizens, in much the same way the Roman republic has served to inform and shape Machiavelli's thought.

This leads to the contention that sustainability is a central value for republicans. For republican theorists, the fundamental political problem is how to maintain a city over several generations (Pocock, 1975). Indeed, the challenge of creating a stable republic in a dynamic, complex and often-threatening world seems overwhelmingly difficult to virtually all republican theorists. One is, after all, fighting the tendency of all living things (including human communities) to grow, decline and die. In republican thought this cyclical view of time underscores the fragility of human creations. This sense of fragility makes the republican perspective acutely sensitised towards the need to attend to the sources and conditions of sustaining and maintaining the republic through time against the backdrop of contingency and events beyond its control. This sensitivity also involves obligations of the present and founding generations to pass on the republic. *Thus preventing the unsustainability of the republic is central to republicanism.*

However, republicanism's understanding of sustainability is not confined to defining our obligations to the future. In addition, republicanism embodies a sense of obligations to previous generations, of duties to remember and honour the past. Republicanism seeks a life for its citizens, their deeds and glories, beyond their own life, which in turns offers citizens a strong incentive to contribute to the republic's longevity. It also provides a much more expansive conception of 'the political community'. Here, interestingly, republicans offer a unique corrective to the dominant view of justice between generations which holds that the main issues to be considered in deciding intergenerational justice (or ethical relations between generations more generally) is the asymmetrical one between present living generations and as yet to be born future generations. As John O'Neill (1993) argues, in remarkably republican terms, the achievements and intentions a community do not end with either one phase or stage of its evolution. In a chapter entitled 'Future Generations and the Harms we do Ourselves', he argues that, ' The assumption that future generations cannot benefit or harm us entails that we can do no harm or good to the generations of the past. It is tied to the modern loss of any sense of a community with generations outside of our own times – of any sense of reciprocal action or dialogue with them… *Future generations can benefit or harm us*. The success or failure of our lives depends on them for it and that they are able to bring to fruition our projects' (1993: 28, 34; emphasis added). Here one can note the way in which American republicanism refers to the 'founding fathers', and how annually the US President invites citizens to remember them, the values they represent, and the achievements of the republic. The annual ritual of the 'State of the Union Address' is not simply a report card from the President on his or her administration's achievements and a reassurance that the union is strong and safe, but also a collective and public act of commemoration and recollection of the republic's political origins and foundational values and principles.

The centrality of this reciprocal, on-going and conscious connection between past, present and future generations helps explain why many of republicans (such as US founding father Thomas Jefferson) favoured an agrarian rather than manufacturing based economy. An agrarian society based on family and community connections to the land provides a direct and intimate link between generations who have lived and worked the land, creating a strong connection to place and an interest in caring for it — which interest is of course a central aspect of the contemporary green focus on sustainability.

Writers such as Wendell Berry and others have eloquently expressed this 'Jeffersonian agrarian republicanism' (Cannavò, 2010; Smith, 2003; Wirzba 2003). Again, O'Neill argues, that 'In contrast to the past, the present generation acts on the land in terms of a temporally local horizon without a sense of identity of projects spreading over time. It engages knowingly in resource depletion. To have a tie to a place is to have a tie with an environment which reveals a particular past history' (1993: 41). Certainly, I do not wish to promote a romanticised vision of agrarian society; even Jefferson's America was filled with dangers both natural and social, including environmental challenges and profound injustices such as slavery. However the point is that a republican sensibility is not romantic; it is resolutely based in 'realpolitik' – hence its 'tough' and often 'austere' character – and an empirical/scientific assessment of the dangers and challenges facing the republic. It is for this reason that it connects well with a 'resilience' conception of sustainability as outlined in chapter 3.

Like republicanism, green politics takes a realistic and empirically informed view of the challenges facing human societies, and of the possibilities for progressive social transformation towards building sustainable as societies (Barry, 2006). It is thus a politics of hope, though not neglecting in some Panglossian fashion those very real and looming threats we face, the foregrounding of which often means green politics is presented as a reactionary 'doom and gloom' form of 'fear-mongering'. The 'fear' that animates green politics is not some reactionary Malthusian concern with non-negotiable 'scarcity' – the standard critique of green politics from the liberal left as found in authors such as Anthony Giddens who fundamentally misunderstand green politics (Giddens, 1994, 2009; Barry, 2007a). The 'fear' is the loss of hard-won freedom and democracy and avoidable human suffering in the near future if corrective and anticipatory and adaptive measures are not put in place.

Republican theorists remind us that our vulnerability to natural disasters and our ultimate dependence on the natural world — and our concomitant dependence on one another — is the fundamental starting point for *any* sort of politics. This *is* the fundamental political problem. As Honohan notes, 'Civic republicanism addresses the problem of freedom among human beings who are necessarily interdependent. As a response it proposes that freedom, political and personal, may be realised through membership of a political community in which those who are mutually vulnerable and share a common fate may jointly be able to exercise some collective direction over their lives' (Honohan, 2003: 1). A political theory which does fails not only articulate this vulnerable and inter/dependent condition of humanity, but also does not see this as a foundational principle, is deficient as a realistic account of our political condition, and is to that extent weakened as an effective guide to action. This has led some green thinkers, such as Brian Baxter (1996) to ask whether in our contemporary age of ecology, unsustainability and climate change etc., *any* political theory which seeks to be relevant to the problems we now face must be 'green'? Within republicanism there is a hard-headed sense of respect for the non-human preconditions which makes political community possible. These non-human preconditions which we have not made ourselves, but upon which we are dependent, represent the foundations of the republic, along with the virtue of its citizens. And linking back to the discussion about gratitude (and its public acknowledgement and

enactment), in chapter 3, classical republicanism sometimes uses Christian thinking, or not as in Machiavelli's case, to acknowledge the care and gratitude required as the appropriate disposition towards that which one depends upon, but which one has not made. Civic republicans in this way do not take the foundations of the republic (social or natural) for granted. Hence the vigilance required to protect liberty and the need to 'remind' citizens of their obligations through the practices of citizenship virtue. And this sense of gratitude, care and attention can be extended to the non-human, environmental conditions of the republic's existence.

I am not claiming that only republicanism has this sense of integrative narrative connection between past, present and future, or indeed that an agrarian, direct productive and on-going relationship with the land is a necessary condition for forging the time of transgenerational bond that O'Neill and classical republicans such as Jefferson speak of.[168] Much of contemporary green and environmental ethical thought is concerned with aspects of this – particularly intergenerational justice (de-Shalit, 1993; Dobson, 1999; Norton, 1994). Equally, long-standing streams of conservative thought from Edmund Burke to Michael Oakeshott also express a concern with and reverence for 'tradition', and the link between the present and past generations in particular. Besides, there are other modes of political thought in which this bond between different generations is (to a greater or lesser extent) tied with particular relations to the land as 'our' land, which we find in the cultures of many first nations peoples such as Native American Indians, and other indigenous peoples, or indeed in African American environmental thinking (Smith, 2007).

Classic republican thinking was informed by a sense that even a relatively stable republic is extraordinarily difficult to achieve. Strikingly, republican theorists draw our attention to the extreme measures that may be necessary even to begin such an ambitious project. Most troubling to modern sensibilities, classic republicans emphasise the usefulness of terror as a political tool. Fear is the basis of law; rulers must have recourse to brutality and spectacular cruelty in order to achieve the necessary control over their enemies, the natural world and even their own people. Machiavelli is of course notorious for highlighting cruelty and deception as political devices, but they are as present in Aristotle's *Politics* and Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (and, for that matter, Hobbes' *Leviathan* and even Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, where we learn that political power is the power to impose capital punishment).

In my view it would be dishonest and disingenuous if it were not acknowledged that green politics is partly based on fear as well: fear of resource scarcity and environmental devastation and the collapse or severe compromising of valued forms of human life based around democratic government, equality, social justice and so on. The threat of impending catastrophe animates the green movement to greater or lesser extents. 'Hard greens' possessed of an eco-realist bent are not thin on the ground in contemporary political discourse as indicated in the Introduction. Contemporary 'hard greens' such as John Gray (Barry, 2006) or James Lovelock, or certain strands of 'eco-primitivism'

[168] Indeed, such transgenerational relationships are best seen in terms of 'stewardship', from the explicit perspective of 'ecological' rather than 'agricultural' contexts (Barry, 1999a).

(Somma, 2009; Zerzan, 1994; Jensen, 2002, 2010; Humphreys, 2007), which sometimes advocate authoritarian solutions, are testament to the vibrancy of this fear-based green politics. And it has to be recalled that early ecological thinkers such as Garrett Hardin, William Ophuls, Robert Heilbroner and others such as Edward Abbey and Teddy Goldsmith, were also motivated (either reluctantly or enthusiastically) by a sense that non-democratic politics was the only way to either avoid or cope with the impending ecological catastrophe. But this threat does not undermine the republican project, any more than it undermines the liberal project. And overall, while such eco-authoritarian positions are unrepresentative of the large body of green thinking, they ought to be acknowledged by greens as one strand of ecological political thinking. However, their existence does not undermine the essential democratic and democratising character of green political thinking (Barry, 1999a). In fact, the crisis of unsustainability may call for *more and different* forms of democratic politics and participation rather than *less of the same*, as the eco-authoritarians wrongly hold.

It is of course also the case that green politics is based on hope and not just fear, and it is one of the main advantages of using the nomclamature of 'green' as opposed to 'environmental' politics is that it explicitly speaks to the non-environmental principles of green politics around human rights, democracy, and citizenship and so on (Barry, 2007a). Green politics as a politics of hope and emancipation (Eckersley, 1992) is one which takes a realistic and empirically informed view of the limits and challenges facing human societies and the possibilities for progressive social transformation. That is, the 'fear' that animates green politics should not be viewed as some reactionary Malthusian concern with non-negotiable 'scarcity' (from external nature) – often a standard critique of green politics from the liberal left, based on a historically-informed misunderstanding of green politics (Barry, 1999b, 2007a). At the same time, the fear which characterises green politics should neither be understood as some equally reactionary conservative fear of dangerous and unchangeable features of 'human nature' which are driving us to ecological catastrophe.

Brutality and deception – which we find in classic republicanism – however, are not the only ways to confront the threats we face, even for classic republicans such as Machiavelli. Machiavelli's *The Prince* may be read not as a prescription but as a warning: the more we insist on 'mastering' nature and achieving total control, the more deeply we will be drawn into the extreme tactics described in *The Prince*.[169] Such measures never fully succeed in making us completely invulnerable, anyway; at most we can achieve only partial and imperfect control of our natural and social situation: 'Fortune is [still] the arbiter of half of our actions' (Machiavelli, 2007: 97). Machiavelli does not offer us an alternative approach, but contemporary scholars, such as Susan Cutter (2006) who studies how communities cope with disaster suggest that resilience—the capacity to recover from disaster—is as important as reducing vulnerability. On the one hand, we could decrease our vulnerability, as discussed in chapters 2 and 5, by reducing our demands on nature – through opting for a low energy and not simply a low carbon energy economy, thus reducing our dependence. On the other we can increase

[169] Here Machiavelli anticipates one of the central arguments of Horkheimer and Adorno that seeking control and domination over the non-human world leads to the domination of some humans by others.

resilience through community-building strategies that build trust, create rough socio-economic equality, robust but not necessarily extensive social capital networks, and concrete expressions and practices of solidarity through active, effective modes of citizen mobilisation and ensuring access to political power (Cutter, 2006). All these elements bear some resemblance to the key features of community life championed within the civic republican tradition. As Cutter puts it, ' Social vulnerability is partially a product of social inequalities…Social vulnerability involves the basic provision of health care, the liveability of places, overall indicators of quality of life, and accessibility to lifelines (power, water, emergency response personnel), capital and political representation' (2006: xxii-xxiii). This republican concern with promoting community resilience can thus be linked to the discussion of resilience and some of its practical manifestations, such as Transition movement, discussed earlier in chapter 3.

For republicans the cultivation of civic virtue is an essential resource for coping with external threats. For greens, too, civic virtue – which may include the willingness to pursue and even sacrifice one's self-interest for the public good – is critical to addressing the environmental problems we face (Barry, 1999a; Connolly, 2006; van Wesveen, 2000; Sandler, 2007). And it is important to note here that for both (greens and republicans) this is not seen as a 'sacrifice' understood in some 'zero-sum' manner as implying private loss but as a contribution, an offering, 'doing one's bit' towards a common endeavour (Cannavò, 2010; Sandel, 1998; Maniates and Meyer, 2010). At the same time, recalling the discussion in the previous chapter, these practices of virtue are both seen as constituting new identities and are also viewed as *increasing not diminishing wellbeing*. American republicans such as Thomas Jefferson suggested that citizens could develop a bond to the nation through owning land and working it. As 'cultivators of the earth' they are 'tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests, by the most lasting bonds', as well as defending it through military service (Jefferson, 1829: 291). Moreover, the republican tradition supports the use of the landscape as an *aide mémoire*, as the landscape, in the form of graves and monuments, street names, the naming of geographical locations, memorialises the nation's history, its struggle for independence and freedom. Equally, public rituals such as the Annual State of the Union Address or certain civic public festivals and holidays (a nation's independence day or national holiday), are deliberate pauses within the life of the body politic. The function, partly, to enable citizens to reflect on their republic's history, to recall the work and sacrifices of those who have gone before them in founding and sustaining the republic, to connect their citizenship to its principles, and ideally to be thankful for the freedoms enjoyed by living in a democratic republic. Rather than asking citizens to dodge behind a veil of ignorance when they make decisions, republicans embark on a project of strategic recollection, attempting to bring forward our identity as citizens of a particular community with a particular history. This memory both guides and motivates public-spirited behaviour, but of course does not determine debate and decision-making.

Connecting back to the earlier discussion in chapter 3 about ritual and gratitude, it is clear that the commemorative, memorialising features of civic republicanism function to bond citizens together as a historically-based (rather than ethnic-based) political community with shared values. As Maynor notes in discussing Machiavelli on this issue:

'Machiavelli equates citizenship and love of patria with the civil religion of Rome and argues that republics that wish to be free of corruption *should maintain and venerate these institutions and ceremonies*' (Maynor, 2003: 28; emphasis added). But these commemorative practices – which do not necessarily have to be religious or tied to a narrowly 'nationalist' expression – also remind citizens of the contingent nature of the freedoms they enjoy. Not necessarily in the sense of the potential oppression of citizens by the state, but rather based on the vulnerability of the republic like all human creations to external threats and internal sources of decay and corruption. In focusing attention on its own contingent character these civic republican practices stress the republic's fragility and therefore in constant need of the care and attention of citizens to work to sustain the republic through their vigilance.

A major source of internal decay and corruption of the republic for civic republicans is citizens forgetting their civic duty, and in particular allowing wealth accumulation to 'crowd out' their interests and identities as free citizens. While of course such commemorative practices by themselves are insufficient (though the number and regularity of them within existing democratic polities should give us pause for thought) and would need to be backed up with other citizenship practices, nevertheless, *civic holidays are breaks from being workers and consumers to enable us to reflect on our contingent and valued status as free citizens*. That such civic and commemorative events are today used mainly as occasions for consumption and a continuation of consumerism, not only misunderstands the reasons for these holidays, but constitute an overt betrayal, and indeed a form of 'defilement' of what these events stand for.

To some degree these commemorative practices function as 'commitment devices' to use Avner Offer's term (Offer, 2006: 49-50). That is, not only do such events and occasions 'remind' us of the republican character of the polity within which we live, and of our citizenship identity calling forth a sense of gratitude for living in a free and equal republic. More than that such events in calling our attention to specifically political and civic issues and in the process giving us a much longer time horizon (both forward and backward looking), act to constrain impulses which might place short-term gain over long term sustainability. Hence, even if backward looking in form, such commemorative practices can by and large function to stimulate both thinking about the future as well as concern for the future, in terms of intergenerational justice. Such reflective practices of commemoration also guard against a sense of the *uniqueness* of the present, by consciously working to place the current stage of the republic in its wider historical context and flow of obligations to the past. This historical sensitivity through memorialisation and commemorative practices serve as a wider historical context within which to place the present republic, and to be reminded of lessons that can be learnt from previous historical experience. In some respects regular and public reminders of the republic's contingent and historical character perform the function of the slave in the ancient Roman practice of the *triumphus* whose job it was to whisper in their ear of the hero being honoured, '*Respice te, hominem te memento',* 'Look behind you, remember you are only a man'. As much as ancient heroes, societies also need practices to guard against hubris.

In many respects this commemorative and memorial aspect of the civic republican tradition calls to mind Alastair MacIntyre's notion of 'tradition'. As MacIntyre notes – rejecting a conservative-Burkean view of tradition as an ahistorical, predetermined, fixed and inherited framework – a living tradition, one that is vital and healthy is marked by 'an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely about the goods which constitute that tradition' (MacIntyre, 1984: 222). Thus civic holidays and other associated practices of republican democracy – agonistic democratic citizenship and debate chief among them – ought to be viewed as opportunities for reflecting up the origins and founding principles of the republic certainly, remembering the sacrifices of those previous generation of citizens who founded and sustained the republic. But they should also be seen as opportunities for debating and updating what the republic stands for in the present time, and also thinking ahead in terms of preparing for future developments within and outside the republic.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to make the case for the compatibility of some classic republican ideas and concerns with green political theory, such that it is possible to talk of a possible 'green republicanism'. While clearly only offering a partial discussion of the classic civic republican tradition we can see areas of mutual concern, such as republicanism's attention to the environmental foundations of the polity, its concern with vulnerability and fragility and the contingency of the republic. This relates to a shared temporal perspective between green and republican thought (but also one shared with traditional conservatism) of the republic viewed as an institution connecting past, present and future generations of citizens. On the one hand, these republican concerns with commemoration and memorialisation are important in connecting the present republican citizenry to previous generations and connects to the discussion in chapter 3 about the importance of such practices of gratitude. On the other hand such commemorative practices provide a historical horizon and store of historical resources to guard against a potentially dangerous sense of the uniqueness of the current republic. Dangerous in the sense that the present generation of republican leaders and citizens either 'forget' the contingency of the republic or that the future planning for the republic should be based on a commitment to the permanent achievement of its recent or current experience of the republic. That is, commemorative and historical dimensions of the republic's political life are about providing necessary reflective practices intended to contribute to the need for a republican polity to be characterised by an awareness of its own contingency. This calls for flexibility and pragmatism in using, reforming or discarding practices as need be in order to maintain its status as a republic of free citizens, not the dogmatic, arrogant, and ahistorical orientation towards seeing its own historical moment as unique and everlasting.

The following chapter continues this dialogue between civic republicanism and green politics through looking at central issues such as citizenship, the organisation of the economy, the importance of the republican insistence on pluralism and agonistic contestation as potentially creative 'social learning' and collective coping mechanisms

Chapter 8
Greening Civic Republicanism II: A Green Republican Economy, Sustainability Service, and Agonistic Politics

'The most alarming sign of the state of our society now is that our leaders have the courage to sacrifice the lives of young people in war but not the courage to tell us that we must be less greedy and less wasteful'. (Wendell Berry, in Astyk, 2008: 19)

Introduction

Following one from the previous chapter which laid out some arguments for a 'green republicanism', we turn now in this chapter to fleshing out in some more detail this green republican perspective. This chapter focuses on three examples of green republicanism – a green republican approach to the regulation and management of the economy; including a critical analysis of why debt-based consumerism is of particular concern to green republicans; an outline and defence of a specific green republican practice, compulsory 'civic sustainability service' (something I have also discussed elsewhere, Barry, 2005, 2008a); and an account of the creative social learning and 'coping' mechanisms possible in terms of a green republican focus on agonistic politics, building on how from a republican democratic perspective, 'contestation is more important than consensus'.

I begin by exploring a green republican approach to the economy in general and a post-growth economy in particular. The discussion here rehearses some of the classic civic republican concerns about wealth-creation and luxury-seeking as potential threats to the republic, to establish the compatibility of its instrumental view of the economy, and economic growth, with green political economy concerns about the regulation of the economy and the need to make the transition to a 'post-growth' economy. It also discusses why republicans should be as concerned about debt-based consumerism as greens are.

I then move on to discuss the rather provocative idea of 'compulsory civic sustainability service'. This is motivated by an interest how the republican idea of 'civic duty' and active citizenship can be understood and realised in the modern era. While fully accepting how authoritarian and liberty-threatening talk of 'compulsory' citizen service sounds, I nonetheless proceed to outline and defend it – using liberal and republican arguments to show that the criticisms raised against it do not stack up. In part motivated by the discussion in chapter 5 on the centrality of the 'core' or 'social economy' within a post-growth economy, as well as the discussion about the distinction between 'formally paid employment' and 'work', this section can be read as a contribution to connecting the work necessary in a post-growth economy with the political sphere, through the practices of citizenship.

The final section unpacks the 'agonistic' and contestatory feature of civic republicanism, showing how although this stands in opposition to some green ideas about consensus and

that there may be good reasons for greens to abandon or at least supplement their long-standing commitment to consensus in favour of agonistic contestation. Apart from being more realistic and more fully welcoming of pluralism and difference, I also canvass the idea that such robust contestatory forms of politics can be viewed as promoting creative social learning and collective problem solving, of the type needed to generate adaptive coping mechanisms and creative solutions of the type outlined in chapter 2.

Green Republicanism and the Economy

A republican approach to the economy departs in several ways from both how orthodox economics and liberal political theory conceptualise the economy and suggest principles for its organisation. It on this issue that I depart somewhat from Philip Pettit's influential account of republicanism, in part because it, neglects both inequality as a social bad in itself (even if the outcome of a fair system of exchange etc), and also the structural features which can compromise freedom.[170] For him:

> the property system and property distribution envisaged, *however inegalitarian, is not inimical to freedom just on the grounds of being inegalitarian*... The reason why the property system or distribution will not be inimical as such to freedom is that, assuming as we have done that it does not license or issue from any form of domination, it will not entail that anyone is in dominating charge of another. *The property regime can have the aspect of an environment akin to the natural environment*. (2006: 139; emphasis added).

Petit does allow for readjustments in property arrangements if domination is a *contingent* outcome of an unequal distribution of property rights, going on to combine poverty and inequality to suggest that 'economic redistribution or restriction will be supported under a republican political theory, so far as material poverty or inequality is productive of non-domination' (ibid.: 141). There are a number responses to this. The first is that, going back to the point made throughout the book about beginning from the point of view of actually existing injustice (Simon, 1995), to argue that such a thoroughly depoliticised account of economic inequality is less than unless when confronting political power, and empowering forms of resistance against political economy power. The second is the refusal of Pettit's depoliticised analysis to accept that high degrees of social inequality is a social bad in itself, regardless of the unintended process which may or may not have led to that economic inequality, a point also raised by Andronache (2009) and White (2010) in their analyses of republicanism.[171] Thus insofar as I outline a green republican defence

[170] One of the reasons perhaps for Pettit's omission to focus on economic structural features of inequality may be his (mistaken) view that 'there is not much of interest that can be said about republican economic policy in the abstract' (Pettit, 1997: 163), which rules out outlining distinctly republican principles of political economy organisation. Thankfully others such as Richard Dagger (Dagger, 2006) and Stuart White (White, 2010) have filled this gap.

[171] Yet Pettit has argued elsewhere that unregulated capitalism is inherently a form of 'wage slavery', noting (and thus coming close to what I am calling the 'socialist' republicanism of White) that 'however little interference workers suffered, it was still the case that they lived under permanent exposure to interference, in particular arbitrary interference' (Pettit, 1997: 147), and he has suggested that it is legitimate that the state should legally regulate the decisions by corporations so that the liberty of employees and shareholders is not threatened (Pettit, 1996). .

of regulating and politically organising the economy, the more we move away from one aspect of Pettit's account of republicanism.

Pettit's attitude to the free market, seems altogether too relaxed on the compatibility of market and economic structural inequalities between individuals and classes in societies with a defence of a republican polity and the republican conception of freedom as non-domination. In this way what is offered here is much more attentive to the dangers of structural (non-agency based or independent of peoples' motivations or intentions) inequalities as potential of actual sources of unfreedom and domination. Thus the conception of republicanism and the economy outlined here is not only a distinctly 'green' understanding, but also considerably more socialistic in content than that outlined by Pettit. In this way my green republicanism does, in Gerald Gaus's judgement of republicanism, '[resurrect] long-standing socialist themes' in criticising market relations in part because these are 'thoroughly infected by power relations, false consciousness, and, so unfreedom' (Gaus, 2003: 82).

A republican political economy is one in which satisfying consumer preferences or achieving maximum economic growth, is less important than ensuring that these objectives are subject to political deliberation and decision, and do not undermine the non-economic objectives related to distinctly republican political goals. After all, from a republican point of view – here overlapping with green concerns – the economy is conceived a means to an end, not an end in itself. There is also the long-standing republican suspicion of wealth accumulation. For example, as Shi points out in this analysis of early American republicanism, there has always been a distinct 'moral' dimension to a republican account of the economy which is orientated towards sufficiency and not accumulation, and ideally, 'plain living' (Shi, 2007). The economy therefore is, from a republican perspective, viewed as a politically created and sustained arena of human activity, with an associated institutional infrastructure (such as the legal codes, tort, property rights, legal framework for economic enterprises, legal rules governing trade and exchange etc). It is not viewed as either 'self-regulating' or beyond legitimate political and democratic control and interference. As Dagger suggests, 'Neo-republicans may thus call for steps to relieve women from subjection to men, workers from subjection to employers, and members of some racial, ethnic, or cultural groups from subjection to others – all in the name of both equality and freedom' (Dagger, 2006: 155). That is, republicans are committed to interfering with market relations for republican non-economic, political reasons. They are concerned (as are greens) with ensuring the market is confined to its appropriate sphere, and that the 'economics imperialism' and the colonising and corrosive effects of the market (as outlined in earlier chapters) are limited as much as possible (Dagger, 2006: 159; Walzer, 1983). Here reconstructing our conception of the 'the economy' to include, for example *all* work and production, reproductive labour, the social economy, and not limiting our understanding of productive, economy activity to money-based formal exchanges within 'the market', would (while doubtless challenging) go a long way to addressing many quintessentially republican aims.

In relation to the regulation of the formal market economy (which is the main conception of 'the economy' for republicans), some non-economic objectives that would be of concern to green republicans would include, for example, workers being able to acquire or develop, through their work, the traits of self-governing citizens (Dagger, 2006: 162). Hence, departing from liberalism in a radical manner, a republican perspective on the economy is interested not simply in the efficiency or productivity or economic relations. As the discussion in chapter 6 suggested, a republican politics is also interested in the *types of work* available, how it is distributed, and whether the work itself contributes to or undermines republican goals in sustaining a self-governing democracy of free and equal citizens.

As Sandel puts it what distinguishes a 'republican political economy' aimed at providing citizens as workers with the opportunities to become self-governing from a liberal-capitalist political economy is that satisfying the preferences of consumers is not the main or most important objective of economic organisation (Sandel, 1996: 242), nor of maximising shareholder value. In many respects this accords with, or at least allows the possibility of integrating both the permaculture/Transition movement insight around building in 'slack' and 'redundancy' into the system – as outlined in chapter 3 (in this case allowing for 'sub-optimal' economic gains in terms of deviating from strict efficiency and maximisation). By the same token, a green republicanism would encourage criteria such as 'sufficiency' as an macro-economic economic objective, while encouraging the eco-efficiency of human flourishing. Deviations from orthodox economic efficiency and maximisation, viewed as non-permanent, contingent objectives, are thus viewed as a necessary preconditions for central green republican objectives – such as promoting active citizenship or enhancing socio-ecological resilience and adaptive capacity.

Thus for republicans and *a fortiori*, for green republicans, what is of interest in looking at the organisation and regulation of the formal market economy are the political and democratic citizenship skills, characters, competencies, habits and modes of thinking and acting that are fostered or not within the workplace itself. Thus green republicans would have little hesitation in interfering and regulating types of work which undermine the capacity of citizens doing these types of work to be competent, free and equal citizens able to take their places, as equals, in public debates about the governance of society. It is worth noting here that what distinguishes a green republican perspective from a civic republican one is its focus on 'work' not just formally paid employment. The principal focus of any putative green republican state regulating the formal economic realm is to ensure the types of work done are fairly distributed, their distribution does not compromise being a free and equal citizen, or fatally destabilise solidarity and community.

Another overlap between green and republican approaches to the economy is Dagger's point that civic republicans would be in favour of protecting local economic enterprises that are embedded within and part of local communities from outside competition, even though permitting the latter would reduce costs and create more choice for consumers (Dagger, 2006: 163) and may indeed require public subsidies. Here, in this preference

for and protection of the local economy, this republican view is perfectly in keeping with the localisation economic vision of green thinking and exemplified in the Transition movement outlined in chapter 3. This preference also stresses another shared green and republican approach in being motivated by a desire to protect a socially embedded conception of the economy and its associated practices, against the disembedding dynamics of the 'normal' operation of the formal market economy. Thus green republicans would be in favour of subsidising or otherwise protecting local economies since these are valued ways of life – not just economies – and therefore not simply to be viewed from the point of view of orthodox conceptions of profitability and economic rationality. Here such subsidies could be construed as forms of 'sub-optimal' public investment in order to establish and maintain these local economic enterprises as socially (and ecologically) necessary forms of 'slack' which cannot be judged by economic criteria alone. In much the same way as Jackson presents investment in ecological infrastructure as 'sub-optimal' but necessary (Jackson, 2009a), as discussed in Chapter 5, equally we can say a green republican polity would also not hesitate in investing in social infrastructure of the type local economic activity represents. What all this points to of course, as indicated in previous chapters, is nothing less than a new way of thinking about political economy and the economy, so that socially and ecologically necessary 'slack' are not viewed or presented as economically 'sub-optimal' and therefore to be rejected on narrow efficiency grounds. Rather, in the reversal of the hierarchy between economy, ecology and society that a green republican political economy points towards, these forms of public investment are regarded as socially and ecologically optimal, in relation to creating resilient communities and a well-being enhancing economy.

One of the reasons for green republicans to favour localisation, whilst not committing themselves to a policy of economic autarky, has to do with the dangers of oppression and domination due to trade relations. Boyle and Simms offer a salutary instance of this in pointing out that, 'If the UK consumes more than its fair share of the world's resources, or if it exports its sweatshops or the dangerous disassembly of its asbestos-ridden ships or its chemical-ridden computers, then that interdependence becomes a concern. *It becomes a type of exploitation of its superior economic might, distorting power relationships with suppliers*' (Boyle and Simms, 2009: 114; emphasis added). In a word, *in an unequal world, the poor sell cheap*. Given the republican concern with ending or minimising dominating power relations, there is much to be said in favour of the re-localisation of the economy and the replacement of 'free trade' with 'fair trade' norms and the governance of trade.

A citizen's income or basic income offers a policy issue which represents a 'natural' convergence of green and republican thought. It has been a long standing green political and economic policy, whether as a key element of most Green Parties manifestos, or a necessary corollary of steady state economic analyses (Daly, 1990). It is also a policy defended by some contemporary republican thinkers (Raventós, Birnbaum and Casassas, 2008; Cassassas, 2007, White, 2010). Basic income which would also include a maximum income, would establish the parameters of 'rough equality', namely the band of permissible and justifiable 'limited inequality' consistent for a republican polity, the realisation of its conception of freedom and vision of politics as self-government.

However, just as this brief outline of a green republican political economy differs from some leading civic republican views on the matter (such as Pettit's), there are some aspects of this conjoining of republican and green political economy which do mean a departure or at least a tension between the green and republican perspectives on the organisation of the economy. One has to do with the long-standing republican view of endorsing private property and the view as Dagger puts it that 'the neo-republican civic economy must be a property-owning democracy' (Dagger, 2006: 161). While he, like other contemporary civic republicans, are at pains to stress the importance of spreading property ownership as widely as possible to minimise the liberty-threatening effects of the consolidation of property by a minority (though often with little indication as to how this is to be done, or once done how it is to be maintained), the issue I wish to highlight here is how a *stress on private property in the formal market economy* may be in tension with both the extensive conception of the economy consistent with green political economy and also a more ecologically sensitive reading of private property.[172] In relation to latter issues it does seem that a green republican political economy is *less* committed to private property and its ownership and adopts a *different and much more pragmatic and instrumental view* of these as the basis for a free, equal and sustainable, democratic polity and a healthy democratic society.

The concept of *usufruct* is one which is more likely to characterise a green republican account of property than a republican one, even though some of the 'public good' aspects of property are contained in the republican account. Likewise the notion of *'the commons'* is one again that is less likely to figure as prominently within civic republican economic discourse than within green republican political economy. For example, and again in keeping with the injunction in the conclusion of chapter 5 to disentangle and disaggregate concepts and ideas as much as we can, in terms of land use and sustainability, a green republican would strongly question the notion of private property rights. Viewing property rights as a bundle of rights (ranging from use, ownership, enjoyment to the right to destroy the property), Sperling notes:

> *Ecological sustainability requires that the property rights bundle be untied. Ownership must be uncoupled from use.* Property rights in relation to land and natural resources are consistent with sustainability only where use respects the primacy of public interest considerations and public interest considerations are defined in terms of sustainability rather than narrow economic considerations and individual gain. The challenge is to design laws which bring about processes which are capable of identifying the public interest and ensuring that land use decision making is carried out in ways which respect that interest. (Sperling, 1997: 433; emphasis added).

[172] There may also be tensions generated from the 'libraries, laundromats and light-rail' economic vision outlined in previous chapters, which does move a sustainable economy in a more planned and public manner in a way which does seem at odds with the mixed economy model. In short, this element of green political economy is considerably more (eco-) socialist than most republican accounts.

Here, the notions of stewardship – meaning holding something in trust (Barry, 1999) – and the related idea of 'the public interest' are the main principles green republicans are likely to invoke to defend the restriction on private property, at least in relation to land ownership and spatial/land-use planning given the ecological, biological and climate change impacts of land use decisions (Varner, 1994; Barry, 2008a: 8-9).[173] Gary Varner offers such an ecologically informed view of private property in stating that:

> Increasingly, taking an ecological view of land forces us to treat it as a public resource that individuals hold only in stewardship (or trust) capacity. Any and every piece of land is involved in diverse ecological processes, and any and every form of land use affects those processes to some extent... *My conclusion is that the eclipse of land as private property is near at hand...in this age of ecological literacy we have discovered that land uses depend so heavily on ecological infrastructure—on processes that, if they are property at all, are inherently public property—that it hardly makes sense to conceive of land as private property*. (Varner, 1994: 158; emphasis added).[174]

While Varner could be criticised for going too far, he does express what I would term a quintessentially green and republican view, taking an ecologically informed and instrumental view of private property, which correlates with a civic republican instrumental view of the market itself. In some respects this departure or deployment of a new understanding of property does mean that the distinctly *Lockean* understanding of property which seems to be the principal one adhered to by contemporary civic republicans (and one which can be of course traced to classical republican thinking) simply has to abandoned and replaced with a updated understanding of private property in land, as suggested by green thinkers such as John Meyer (Meyer, 2009) and Piers Stephens (1999).[175]

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[173] There is a related body of knowledge and debate on 'takings', revolving around the state (usually) appropriating private property in the public interest and therefore obliged to offer adequate compensation to the deprived property owner (Sperling, 1997; Meyer, 2009; Varner, 1994). A lot of the debate on the takings issue revolves around the issue of compensation. I tend to support Sperling's view on the matter, where she suggests that, because 'achieving consistency between an unfettered property rights regime and sustainability could only be achieved at enormous financial cost to the community as a whole, through a massive transfer of resources from the public to the private sector in the form of compensation payments' (Sperling, 1997: 432), it would serve the public interest better to reform and restrain the property rights regime itself.

[174] Other support for this qualification on private property in land can also be found in Mill and later Henry George. For Mill, 'the essential principle of property being to assure to all persons what they have produced by their labour and accumulated by their abstinence, this principle cannot apply to what is not the produce of labour, the raw material of the earth.' (Mill, 1848: 108), while for George, 'To affirm that a man can rightfully claim exclusive ownership in his own labor when embodied in material things, is to deny that anyone can rightfully claim exclusive ownership in land. To affirm the rightfulness of property in land is to affirm a claim which has no warrant in nature, as against a claim founded in the organization of man and the laws of the material universe.' (George, 1879/2005: 239*)*

[175] Marcel Wissenburg from a 'green liberal' perspective offers a variation here, developing what he calls an 'inverse restraint principle' which holds that people are free to use but not destroy nature, and if they

Such a Lockean conception of private property is simply inappropriate for the modern ecological age, an age of limits, of a 'full' as opposed to 'empty' world (Stephens, 1999; Meyer, 2009). This seriously weakens if not undermines completely justifications of Lockean or absolutist conceptions of private property (Eckersley, 2003: 102). Also as Varner and Meyer point out an ecological reading of property identifies potential sources of harm as a result of land use decision, in that using one's property in a way which harms others is not among the bundle of rights that comprise property rights (Varner, 2003: 97; Meyer, 2009: 119). Ultimately, as John Meyer reminds us, private property is a relational entity; it is not 'natural' or 'pre-political' but deeply embedded in both social and ecological relations (Meyer, 2009: 116-121). His analysis, like Eckersley's (Eckersley. 2003: 101-3), highlights a feature of the dominant Lockean conception of property which ought to be of concern from a republican perspective, namely its *absolutist character* and therefore potential for dominating and limiting the freedom of others (extending 'harm' from a strict ecological account to a more social and political one). But while this conception of absolutist property claims carries with it this potential, seeing property rights as legally and politically established does mean we can protect against this domination or minimise its likelihood through government action. This once again is in keeping with both green and republican conceptualisations of the market economy as a *political creation*. As Jon Mulberg has put it, 'Markets are simply exchange mechanisms set up by the polity and governed through the legislature. To view the market as "free" or "natural" is reification' (Mulberg, 1992: 340). And likewise to continue the link between the economy and property – if the latter is *politically ordered in accordance with regulative principles focused on maintaining the economy as embedded in social and ecological relations*, then so likewise is a green republican conception of property viewed as socially and ecologically embedded and politically ordered (Meyer, 2009: 119).

Ironically a very old concept, namely usufruct, in separating use from ownership, may be more suitable from a green republican point of view. It is interesting that Meyer in his otherwise comprehensive treatment of the matter does not discuss usufruct as a potential green principle to regulate or conceptualise an ecologised account of property rights. Usufruct refers to the legal right to use and derive profit, enjoyment or benefit from property that belongs to another person, as long as the property is not damaged, and ideally is 'improved' in some manner.[176] In this respect usufruct is related to another equally old notion of 'stewardship' and both concepts overlap in their future orientation in terms of 'passing on' something (land, property, wealth, democratic institutions, the earth as a whole etc.) to future generations (Barry, 1999a). According Kovel, a modern

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have to destroy nature that it is replaced or if not replaced adequate compensation is forthcoming (1998: 166). Like the more 'republican' ecological analyses of Meyer and Stephens, Wissenburg's liberal re-articulation comes down to a similar position in 'exploding the classical Lockean defense of private property rights...and *absolute proprietorship* of land and natural resources' (Eckersley, 2003: 103; emphasis added).

[176] The concept of usufruct, according to Kovel (Kovel, 2007), has roots in the Code of Hammurabi and was first mentioned in Roman law where it applied to ambiguities between masters and slaves with respect to property and it also features in Islamic Sharia law, Aztec law and the Napoleonic Code. I think there is potential for Wissenburg's 'inverse restraint principle' to be extended in the direction of usufruct.

interpretation of the idea is that 'a usufructuary relationship is where one uses, enjoys—and through that, improves—another's property, as, for instance, community groups would use, enjoy, and improve an abandoned city lot by turning it into a garden' (Kovel, 2007: 271) but without owning that property. To anticipate the argument made later in this chapter, such oppositional political behaviour, which directly challenges existing conceptions and patterns of property ownership, but which also are practically orientated towards needs-meeting, constitute practical forms of 'resistance green citizenship'.

As Petersen notes, 'Unlike the social relationships of expropriation set up by capitalism, [usufruct] is a form of appropriation which can be a building block of sustainability. The value of *conserving* and *improving* our places for succeeding generations makes sustainability-via-usufruct a practical ideal' (Petersen, 2010: 10), thus denoting a form of 'respectful' as opposed to 'disrespectful appropriation (ibid.: 11). Key to the notion of usufruct in relation to the earth, land, is that is does not belong to anyone i.e. that it cannot be privately appropriated (as Locke and countless others after him defended) as private property, or indeed that it can be owned by the state or some collective. Rousseau perhaps put this point most eloquently and clearly when he argued that:

> The first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said 'This is mine,' and found people naive enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: *Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody*. (Rousseau, 2004/1755: 27; emphasis added)

This is of course an argument against private property we find later expressed by Marx who strongly argued against the notion of the earth being owned by humanity, never mind one class, when he wrote that 'Even a whole society, even a nation, or even all simultaneously existing societies are not the owners of the globe. They are only possessors, usufructaries, and, like *boni patres familias*, they must hand it down to succeeding generations in an improved condition' (Marx, 1993: 757). This perhaps explains why eco-socialist thinkers such as Kovel (2007) and Wall (2010) and eco-feminists inspired by Marx, such as Vandana Shiva (Shiva) and eco-anarchists such as Murray Bookchin (Bookchin, 1982) are prominent in using the concept of usufruct explicitly in their work.[177]

[177] For Bookchin, 'the principle of usufruct, *the freedom of individuals in a community to appropriate resources merely by the virtue of the fact they are using them*. . . Such resources belong to the user as long as they are being used. Function, in effect, replaces our hallowed concept of possession' (Bookchin, 1982: 50; emphasis added). The phrase 'appropriate resources merely by using them' brings to mind previous research I did on alternative currencies, specifically LETS (local exchange trading systems), a major challenge for participants was the notion of 'creating money' by spending, - going into commitment – which went completely about their socialisation and conventional behavioural which was that one had to have money in the first place before one could spend (Barry and Proops, 2000: 96). Such experiences in challenging and empowering people, and allowing them to experience exchange and trade in a completely different, communal manner, do point the way towards the radical transformative potential of such grassroots, social economic initiatives.

Shiva brings a non-Eurocentric perspective when she points out the significant differences between European and non-European notions of the relationship between people, resources and notions of ownership. She highlights not only the difference between European and non-European notions of ownership and use, but also how the European (Lockean, absolutist notion of property rights) is linked to returns to capital whereas usufructuary based claims on resources and use are based on returns to labour. As she points out:

> There are major differences between ownership of resources shaped in Europe during the enclosures movement and during colonial takeover, and 'ownership' as it has been practised by tribals and farmers throughout history across diverse societies. The former is based on ownership as private property, based on concepts of returns on investment for profits. The latter is based on entitlements through usufruct rights, based on concepts of return on labour to provide for ourselves, our children, our families, our communities. Usufruct rights can be privately held or held in common. When held in common, they define common property. Equity is built into usufruct rights since ownership is based on returns on labour. The poor have survived in India in spite of having no access to capital because they have had guaranteed access to the resource base needed for sustenance - common pastures, water, and biodiversity. Sustainability and justice is built into usufructuary rights since there are physical limits on how much one can labour and hence there are limits on returns on investment of labour and return on investment. Inequity is built into private property based on ownership of capital since there is no limit on how much capital one can own and control and invest. (Shiva, Jafri, and Bedi, 1997).

Along with usufruct a green republican political economy embraces the regulative and organising principle of 'the commons' (Ostrom, 1990; The Ecologist, 1994; Shiva, 2006).[178] The commons can be defined as resources that are accessible to and managed by and in the interests of a roughly defined community. There is a link between the commons and usufruct as demonstrated by Derek Wall, who from an eco-socialist perspective argues that the commons 'has an inbuilt ecological principle based on the concept of usufruct, that is, access to a resource is granted only if the resource is left in as good a form as it was when first found. By extending this concept of usufruct, we can provide the basis of an ecological economy. *By providing access, the commons enables prosperity without growth*; if we have access to the resources we need, we can reduce wasteful duplication' (Wall, 2010b: 16; emphasis added).

From a green republican point of view, the state can support and extend commons management of resources or it can (as it has done historically and continues to do so today) permit and encourage the enclosure of the commons via strategies of dispossession and privatisation. It will come as no surprise to find out that a green republican state will

[178] Note that the commons and 'commons regimes' are *not* the 'commons' as infamously and wrongly articulated in Hardin's 'Tragedy of the Commons' (Hardin, 1968). What Hardin described was an 'open access regime' not a commons regime (Barry, 1999: 150-153).

favour strengthening the commons where possible over either state or private/market ownership relations. This is a necessary corollary of the argument for extending the social economy to 'take over' or 'recover' practices and forms of work, exchange and provisioning that historically have been ceded or colonised by either state or private/market forms of provision. It is important I think to note here that a green republican account of economics, like civic republican accounts, tries to steer a path between extreme statist and free market accounts. But unlike republican views of the economy, is concerned to promote as far as possible the non-state and non-market economy – as denoted by the social/convivial economy, the importance of reproductive labour and the reproductive sphere. Thus it trades on a much more expansive notion of 'the economy', itself of course linked to the social economy 'taking back' provisioning from both the state and the market, where both possible and practicable.[179]

Another potential departure of a green from a civic republican perspective on the economy may be in relation the legal status of the corporation. The establishing of the legal identity of the modern corporation (in the United States in the aftermath of its Civil War) as a 'legal person' and therefore with the same rights (and responsibilities) as a citizen is something that is deeply problematic from a green republican perspective. There are grounds for thinking that a green republican polity would consider returning the corporation's legal identity to an older, more restricted sense (namely a semi-private body established for a specific purpose and usually for a limited time, to provide some good or service to the community). Thomas Jefferson was famously suspicious of corporations in the new American republic. As he wrote in a letter in 1816, 'I hope we shall... crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations which dare already to challenge our government in a trial of strength, and bid defiance to the laws of our country' (Jefferson, 1816: 151).

This was also echoed by Lincoln in 1864 where he worried that:

> I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of our country. As a result of the war, corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands, and the Republic is destroyed. I feel at this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of war. (Lincoln, 1864/1950: 40).

This line of Presidential 'republican' concern about corporations can also be seen in 20th century US leaders such as Roosevelt and Eisenhower. For example, Roosevelt in a speech to Congress in 1938, stated that

[179] Here there are fruitful links to be made with 'associationalism' of the type outlined by Paul Hirst (Hirst, 1994, 2002; Hirst and Bader, 2001), which not only fit with some of the civic republican themes outlined here in this chapter but with the argument from a green perspective to expand the social economy. For analyses of the conjoining of green and associational democratic politics and policies see Smith (2005), Fitzpatrick (1998).

> *The first truth is that the liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to a point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself*. That, in its essence, is fascism-ownership of government by an individual, by a group, or by any other controlling private power. The second truth is that the liberty of a democracy is not safe if its business system does not provide employment and produce and distribute goods in such a way as to sustain an acceptable standard of living. Both lessons hit home. Among us today a concentration of private power without equal in history is growing. *This concentration is seriously impairing the economic effectiveness of private enterprise as a way of providing employment for labor and capital and as a way of assuring a more equitable distribution of income and earnings among the people of the Nation as a whole*. (Roosevelt, 1938, 119; emphasis added)

Placed together like this it is both remarkable and somewhat inspiring to see such forthright republican views about the dangers of corporate power being expressed by formed Presidents of the world's pre-eminent 'capitalist' country. It is difficult to think of contemporary US or European political leaders thinking in these terms. Such an overtly critical perspective on corporations would place green republicanism alongside eco-socialists, eco-anarchists, global justice advocates and many indigenous and developing world activists. And this may explain why liberal critics of civic republicanism such as Gaus view it as a form of post-socialism (Gaus, 2003). And perhaps this ought to be the case, since whatever the merits of the particular arguments these groups make, they are all joined as one and stand with a green republican position in seeking to remove unjustified, unwanted and arbitrary forms of corporate domination. Just as I commented earlier about being surprised and disappointed in liberal political theorists being uninterested in actually existing injustice and the ecological crisis, likewise I can only report to being similarly surprised and disappointed to review the literature on contemporary civic republicanism, to see so little attention given to corporate power, one if not the (along with the state) most dangerous forms of potential and actual domination in the world today. It does not figure largely in the work of the main theorists of contemporary republicanism (Pettit, 1997, 2006; Dagger, 2002, 2006; Maynor, 2003; Honohan, 2002). However, it does figure in more socialist orientated civic republicanism such as the work of Stuart White (White, 2010, 2009), and to be fair to Pettit has co-authored book with José Luis Martí, *A Political Philosophy in Public Life: Civic Republicanism in Zapatero's Spain* (Martí and Pettit, 2010) does contain some (though passing and limited) comment on corporate power. Yet, given the potential for corporate power to become a dominating power par excellence, it does seem odd that former US Presidents such as Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt (or former Vice Presidents such as Al Gore (Gore, 2007: 158)) have more to say on the matter than modern republican thinkers seem to.

An example of both an eminently potential green political economic policy, but also of the corrupting and dominating power of corporations can be seen in the defeat the Swedish wage earner funds from the 1970s and 1980s. This was one of the few post-war attempts to effectively seek to socialise capital in order to give workers a share in capital formation and a say over corporate decision-making. They did so by requiring corporations to hand over part of their profits in the form of new shares to labour-managed, wage-earner investment funds (Rosen and Schweickart, 2006: 10). The basic idea was, according to Blackburn, that,

'workers and citizens should *tame the corporations by establishing control of financial instruments*' (Blackburn, 2005; emphasis added). This stands not only as a practical example of republican economic policy but also, in its focus on finance, prescient in the context of the demonstrable dangers of deregulated finance divorced from both the 'real economy' and the 'public interest' (Mellor, 2010).[180] In general, owners of capital can, if seriously pressed, use their considerable control over the mass media and the threat of a 'capital strike' to bend a government to their will. This is of course and old issue concerning the tension between capitalism and the functioning of a democratic polity And while the same can be said to be true of trades unions, given the potential for unions to represent workers as a whole, i.e. the majority in economic production. While a green republican polity would wish to guard against majority dictatorship, from a pragmatic point of view, union based political threats may be less harmful to the polity than those from corporations and owners of capital, but not unproblematic.

Extending this view, a green republican approach to regulating corporations could consider re-writing the legal rules of the corporation – such has 'fiduciary duty' – and to supplement the legal requirement for corporations to make profits with other 'bottom lines' pertaining to ecological, or social or other non-economic objectives as outlined various critics and reformers of corporations (Kelly, 2003; Henderson, 2006). And given the instrumental view of corporations from a green republican point of view, if it proved impossible or unnecessarily costly to reform corporations (such as via Corporate Social Responsibility), a green republican state could nationalise them completely or better still break them up into smaller worker managed enterprises, cognisant of economies of scale, expertise and technical requirements.

Indeed a mark of a successful combing of republican and green aims would be for a green republicanism to favour and support worker owed cooperatives where possible and where reasons could be established for the maintenance of privately owned, large corporations, a green republican state would be interested in seeking to democratise these enterprises where practicable. We must here remind out selves that the economy we are talking about here is a 'post-growth' one. Released from the imperative of growth, this opens up even the formal economy to be more conducive to worker corporations, basic and maximum income policies and stakeholder as opposed to shareholder models of ownership. It also creates more rationale for socialised investment markets, including a much greater proportion of available investment in ecosystem services, what Ekins calls 'environmental growth' (Ekins, 2002)

[180] As Robin Blackburn notes, 'Rudolf Meidner's share levy, unlike so many modern taxes, was extraordinarily difficult to evade. On the other hand it was not at all punitive. Unlike traditional corporate taxation, it did not subtract from the cash-flow or resources which the enterprise needed for investment. It diluted shareholder wealth without weakening the corporation as a productive concern. According to the original plan every company with more than fifty employees was obliged to issue new shares every year equivalent to 20 per cent of its profits. The newly issued shares -- which could not be sold -- were to be given to the network of 'wage earner funds', representing workplaces and local authorities. The latter would hold the shares, and reinvest the income they yielded from dividends, in order to finance future social expenditure. As the wage earner funds grew they would be able to play an increasing part in directing policy in the corporations which they owned' (Blackburn, 2005).

One strong reason for a green republican political economy to have a preference for worker-managed as opposed to conventional shareholder equity and management structures is the tendency for such cooperatively and democratically managed economic enterprises to plateau out once a threshold has been passed and to focus on maintaining market share, rather than struuggles of infinite growth, including the takeover of competitors.

> since worker-self-managed firms want to maximize profit-per worker rather than total profits, they are inherently less expansionary than are capitalist firms. In general, if expanding production means taking on more workers, worker self-managed firms are reluctant to do so, since the extra profits must be shared with the extra workers and might not raise the average incomes of the existing workforce at all…Increasing the number of employees also dilutes the democratic influence within the firm of the existing members. In general, democratic workplaces expand when economies of scale allow all employees to be better off, but not when returns to scale are constant. Indeed, democratic firms, when they reach a certain size, often choose to subdivide, or to have certain departments become independent, so as to avoid the bureaucratization and depersonalization that larger size often entails. (Rosen and Schweickart, 2006: 23)

In some respects this is the firm scale equivalent of the 'backward bending labour supply curve' discussed in chapter 6. That is, beyond a certain level of production and per capita profit, a worker managed firm will seek to limit its size and production capacity, as opposed to an inexorable competitive 'grow or die' business strategy. At the same time it is likely (and the evidence is there to demonstrate this) that worker managed firms will achieve 'work-life' balance patterns that encourage, rather than dampen, the operation of the individual backward bending labour supply dynamic. That is, it is more likely within worker managed firms and cooperatives that Schor's idea of a sustainable, post-growth economy being presaged on productivity gains being translated into more free time (Schor, 1998, 2010) as opposed to more wage income and consumption. Or to put it simply, *a green republican economy aims to have more people working less, rather than less people working more*.

The achievement of economic security will be a concern of a green republican state as well a focus on increasing overall levels of well-being within society – especially though not exclusively through increasing meaningful free time. Much can be done via policies such as a basic/citizens' income, welfare guarantees, and lowering socio-economic inequality. As Gaus notes in his critique of neo-republicanism, 'if freedom *means* having security, it is manifest that the market order cannot be a realm of freedom' (Gaus, 2003: 69). Since civic republicanism does not privilege economic growth over justice (Sullivan, 1986: 178), and is concerned with securing freedoms for all, it will be attentive to and (linking to green ideas of post-growth) make the achievement of 'economic security' an imperative for public policy, not economic growth.

In conclusion to this brief discussion of some of the headline aspects of a green republican political economy, and in keeping with the spirit of some of those

contemporary civic republican theorists discussed above, it can be said that pragmatism and a willingness to creatively experiment to see 'what works' in terms of balancing the various goals and principles of green republicanism, may be said to characterise the latter's policy approach towards the expanded economy. It will probably be the case that a 'mixed economy' is the likely outcome a settled and ordered green republican economy – but one that differs in a number of respects from how the idea of a 'mixed economy' is conventionally understood. Firstly we are working with an expanded notion of the economy, in which an objective is to grow the social economy as much as possible (and therefore shrink the public/state and market economies, though the latter will shrink more, while the former may stay at the same level but exhibit considerably more differentiation than at present within its sphere). Secondly and related to this, is that this reduction in both the market and state economic spheres is consistent with an overall post-growth economic imperative, within which we can see growth in some economic areas and a reduction in others – a growth in some public services and the social economy going hand in hand with a reduction in consumer-based private production and consumption and a reduction in some centralised state provided goods and services (such as military expenditure)

The pragmatism of a green republican approach to the economy can be seen in its willingness to use different principles of organisation for different sectors (state, social and market economic spheres) and different types of goods, services, industries and forms of provisioning. For example, there is a role for the principles of neo-classical economics in some consumer goods and services where it is inappropriate or impossible for either the social economy or the state to produce and distribute them, though ideally a green republican would prefer to see these private firms being worker managed of course. Where economies of scale are small enough to allow a number of firms to compete (usually ruling out large corporate or state enterprises), and the goods and services and forms of provisioning are such that the social economy or the state cannot provide them, there are grounds for allowing the regulated market to provide such goods and services.

Whereas when it comes to certain forms of infrastructural provision (such as broadband or telecommunications or electricity grid or the transportation network) it may be appropriate for public rather than private/market or social economic provision. As Quiggin notes, in such infrastructural provision there are frequently 'market failures' justifying (even on orthodox economic grounds) government intervention and direct provision. These market failures are namely, the problem of private providers of infrastructure being too short-termist in seeking profits rather than maximising long run benefits; the failure to capture of important 'positive externalities' from such infrastructural projects (here green policies for a land valuation tax are significant), and finally such infrastructural services usually give rise to natural monopolies best kept, *certeris paribus*, as state managed and publicly owned in the public interest (Quiggin, 2010: 202).

None of what has been indicated above should be taken as meaning that a green republican economic pays no heed to conventional economic concerns of efficiency, value for money, etc. After all a republican conception of politics is pragmatic and

materialist as outlined above. And this holds *a fortiori* for its conception of the economy consistent with that account of politics. All it means that is these narrow economic considerations are placed alongside non-economic principles and do not trump the latter, though these may condition their application of course. In some ways Leopold's famous quote (and to my mind infamous for usually being quoted completely out of context (Barry, 1999a: 124)) captures the essence of the political and ethical extra-economic concerns of green republicanism while not ignoring pragmatic and material aspects of the organisation of the human economy:

> *The 'key-log' which must be moved to release the evolutionary process of an ethic is simply this: quit thinking about decent land -use as solely an economic problem. Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right as well as what is economically expedient.* A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. *It of course goes without saying that economic feasibility limits the tether of what can or cannot be done for land. It always has and it always will*.
> (Leopold, 1968: 224; emphasis added).

A Green Republican Critique of Economic Growth and Debt-Based Consumerism

It should be clear from the analysis so far in this book that both greens and republicans have good reason to question and be weary of undifferentiated economic growth as a permanent fracture of a modern economy. I will not rehearse the common green critiques of economic growth which have been outlined in earlier chapters and in my own work elsewhere (Barry, 1999a; 2009a). From a republican perspective there is long tradition of its concern to ensure that economic activity did not lead to citizens 'forgetting' their public and civic duty, and become in-ward looking and only concerned with their private lives and pursuits; the 'corruption' within the republic as citizens focus on luxuries; as well as the dangers of factions and strife as a result of growing inequality and class struggle. On the latter, Michael Sandel notes that 'Growing inequality does damage to the sense in which democratic citizens share a common life' (Sandel, 2000: 121), thus undermining the solidarity and common good which are the bedrocks of a republican democracy.

In this sense while classical republicans did emphasise the instrumental value of wealth creation, as a means to sustain the glory of the republic through public monuments or to equip its citizen-soldiers, the point is economic growth is a means not an end in itself. Economic growth and the management of the economy from a republican perspective are set within the overall aim of the state to increase freedom as non-domination (Pettit, 1997: 163). Therefore, even within the classical civic republican tradition one finds references to the need for political criteria to make economic decisions – witness Thomas Jefferson deliberating about whether the American republic should adopt an agrarian or manufacturing mode of production, as outlined in the previous chapter, on the grounds of which would be more likely to create and sustain free and loyal citizens of the republic.

Thus, and in keeping with green thinking on this topic, civic republicans have no particular difficulty in either regulating the economy for political purposes nor, if the former require it, to countenance a 'post-growth', steady-state economy.

When it comes to a republican analysis of consumerism it would seem that first of republican concerns would be the deliberate stimulation of insecurities upon which consumerism preys. Not least in relation to advertising to young people – the future citizens of the republic – is something green republicans would have no hesitation in regulating. That is why the so-called consumer-citizen is, in traditional republican terms, a corruption of what a citizen should be. This corruption is compounded by the market-induced desire for more possessions and, especially, for luxury. As Dagger points out 'The desire to live luxuriously is, again in traditional republican terms, at best a distraction from the concerns of the public-spirited citizen; at worst, it is a weakening and divisive force that sets citizens against one another, for what counts as luxurious is determined in large part by its exclusivity. *To the extent that it fosters these consumerist tendencies, in sum, the market is the enemy of civic virtue*' (Dagger, 2006: 159; emphasis added). As Curry notes, from a green republican perspective, 'any community which values either aggressive private enterprise or passive personal salvation more than public service is well underway to disaster… and corruption' (Curry, 2000: 1062). Hence, green republicans would support and encourage the values and objectives of 'voluntary simplicity', not just on the ethical grounds that less materialistic lifestyles means the realising of 'living simply so that others may simply live'. But on the grounds that simple living (which does not mean poverty or some ascetic standard of living) guards against the dangers of debt-based consumerism leading to the compromising of liberty as non-domination and republican notions of active citizenship.

It is the relations of dependence, the deliberative fostering of insecurity – as much as the traditional republic view of 'luxury' and the purely private life as a threat to civic virtue and active citizenship –provides the grounds upon which green republicans would regulate, if not outright ban certain forms of advertising – as governments have done in Scandinavia in respect to 'junk food' and children's toys at certain times of the day. Another reason for green republicans to be weary of contemporary consumerism, is its dependence upon finite resources which are being rapidly depleted. Using the main thrust of the limits to growth thesis, the freedoms and enjoyment associated with consumerism are insecure, uncertain and therefore do not represent 'resilient' forms of liberty, consumer choice and 'consumer sovereignty' fall short of that republican notions freedom.

Consumerism can be linked to the ancient view of *pleonexia* or intemperance, itself linked to another ancient Greek vice of *akrasia* or weakness of will. Both of these qua vices are clearly not habits, identities, character traits and modes of thinking and acting that are likely to be encouraged by either greens or republicans and *a fortiori* green republicans. As Sunstein points out:

> While addiction is the most obvious case, it is part of a far broader category. Consider, for example, myopic behavior, defined as a refusal, because the short-

> term costs exceed the short-term benefits, to engage in activity having long-term benefits that dwarf long-term costs. Another kind of intrapersonal collective action problem is produced by habits, in which people engage in behavior because of the subjectively high costs of changing their behavior, regardless of the fact that the long-term benefits exceed the long-term costs. *Akrasia*, or weakness of the will, has a related structure. (Sunstein, 1997: 70).

Green republicanism can use both modern behavioural psychology and ancient thinking in arguing that consumerism cultivates these vices. It needs to be reined in since it encourages modes of subjectivity which are immature, infantile, and not fully expressive of a healthy mature ego or self. The ways in which consumer culture infantilises individuals has long been documented (De Graaf, Wann, and Naylor, 2002; Hamilton, and Denniss, 2005), though 'instant gratification', 'wish fulfilment' amongst others but what this does, from a republican perspective, is create potentially paternalistic and dominating relationships, and modes of thinking and acting. The demonstrated capacity for marketing and the types of thinking and action associated with consumerism to not only induce status anxiety and insecurity (Jackson, 2009a), but to severely limit both the capacity and interest of consumers to be mindful of long-term (as well as short-term) prudent decision-making and planning is a legitimate interest of a green republican polity.[181] As Manning has noted the cognitive connection between household earnings and consumption decision (spending only when you can afford it) has been broken by mass marketing campaigns promoting easy credit over the last two decades in particular, together with a sense of 'entitlement' that one does not need to earn money or save to spend, buy and consume (Manning, 2001). This is not a solid foundation for a republic conception of citizenship, severing as it does the link between earning and spending and therefore the link between work and entitlement. Easy credit (and therefore debt) is something republicans should be weary of, since in facilitating the speeding up of the process from desire to purchase/consumption, it can undermine the cultivation of virtues needed for green republican citizenship. In bypassing either having to save and therefore having to wait (patience is a virtue), or earning the money to engage in consumption, the availability of easy credit denies citizens the opportunity to be temperate (one of the cardinal virtues and much praised in classical republican thinking), or to feel that they deserve what they consume because they have earned the money to buy it in an autonomous manner i.e. under their own steam as it were.

A related problem to consumerism is that for an increasing number of people their consumerist practices and identities and experiences are based on debt. So, alongside the problems of consumerism, we also have the problems of *debt-based* consumerism. Being in debt and the encouragement of debt, should be a cause for concern for green republicanism. The republican aspect fears the domination and lack of self-mastery getting into debt entails and therefore being at the will of another – the person, organisation or institution to whom the debt is owed will restrict one's freedom. The green aspect fears also the lack of self-mastery and disregard for limits and restraint, but

[181] And here, as at other points in the argument, in offering such objectivist accounts of the human good, and clear perfectionist motivations, I have strayed into a more Aristotelian reading of republicanism which may stand in (hopefully creative) tension with the more instrument, neo-Roman one.

especially how the ethos of reckless license attendant upon such unearned credit, can and does lead to over-consumption. Note here that the issue is again about thresholds, about identifying the point beyond which consumption passes a tipping point to become over-consumption – it is not about seeing the consuming of goods and services per se as 'evils' or problematic.

Debt is problematic since in short, it shackles, enslaves, constrains and disciplines, narrowing the sphere of agency available to the debtor – whether than be an individual consumer or a highly indebted nation (Mellor, 2010). Debt, especially in economically difficult times (when people cannot pay back the debt), is a form of risk taking and therefore creates and exacerbates vulnerability. The dangers of debt-based consumption is captured by Tim Jackson, who argues that, 'People are encouraged into debt by a complex mix of factors, including their own desire for social status and the incentives put in place to boost high-street sales...The important point here is that when this strategy becomes unstable it places large sections of the population at risk of lasting financial hardship. Inevitably, that risk falls mainly on those who are most vulnerable already...Far from delivering prosperity, the culture of "borrow and spend" ends up detracting from it' (Jackson, 2009: 26).

Apart from the immediate threat to people's standard of living, jobs and spending power, a green republican concern with indebtedness also extends to seeing that another sort of 'harm' and injury is also present here. It is that those in debt are within a relationship of inequality and coercion in that they a) have to pay back the debt, plus interest and b) are constrained in choices – about what jobs to take or not, consumer decisions etc. – in order to fulfil the obligation to pay back the debt. When it comes to taking low paid, insecure jobs, 'beggars cannot be choosers' after all. This coercive and paternalistic element of debt was much clearer in the 19th century with 'debtors' prisons' as graphically outlined in the works of Charles Dickens with related 'poor houses' and the human misery and servitude that went along with it.[182] The nearest perhaps in the contemporary era we get to this coercive face of debt are 'loan sharks' and 'money lenders' and the fear, criminality, abuse and arbitrary power that characterises these forms of lending money and paying back debt, or bank's foreclosing on mortgages and forcibly dispossessing people from their homes. As Boyle and Simms point out conventional economics 'encourages and relies on *debt and indenture.* Most of the money that circulates around the world was created in the form of debt...this represents a huge demand, not just on the indebted populations of the Earth, but on the planet's ability to produce enough to meet this constantly increasing demand' (Boyle and Simms, 2009: 11; emphasis added). As they note later in their book, 'Most examples of slavery in the world today are related to debt in some way. The truth is that it isn't just the old imperialists and slave owners who prefer those they rule to be controlled by debt, it is our modern rulers today. *Because we need to pay off mortgages, we are more docile, more economically productive – but in*

[182] Though space precludes a fuller discussion, the emergence of debt-based consumerism and the rise of a credit-based consumer economy does represent an additional way in which labour can be disciplined from a Marxist perspective. Whereas standard Marxist analyses looked to the 'reserve army of unemployed' as functional to ensure lower wages and decrease union militancy, the pressures to pay back credit cards and mortgages can also have a similar disciplining effect.

the narrowest terms – and more exhausted, than we would be otherwise' (ibid.: 140; emphasis added). Therefore from a republican perspective and its conception of liberty as nondomination, and from a green perspective in promoting sufficiency, there are good reasons for limiting the place of credit and associated indebtedness as constitutive and functional features of an economy consistent with green republican principles.

The Green Republican Case for Compulsory 'Civic Sustainability Service'

One of the reasons for seeking to explore the civic republican tradition relates to discussions about the greening of citizenship and the greening of the state within green political theory. An obvious concern here is that the heavily duty-based conception of republican citizenship would be too burdensome, reducing the many other possible identities, interests and activities individuals have to a dominant or master identity. However, while republicanism certainly emphasises the importance of active citizens doing their duties, participating and defending the collective way of life of their free community (especially from external threats), green republican politics does not require that there be one commonly held view of the good life. Republicanism does not demand that private views of the good conform to some standard or master conceptualisation, and it is compatible with a variety of views of the good, so long as they do not threaten or undermine the freedoms and practices of the common public/political life of the community (Honahan, 2003). For republicanism, pluralism and contestation is as (if not more) importance for democratic politics than consensus and agreement (Pettit, 1997).

At the same time, prominent contemporary republican theorists such as Pettit are clear that the republican promotion of and stress upon active political citizenship is not based on the ethical or metaphysical superiority of politics and political activism over other modes of life. Nor do they accept that active citizenship represents the quintessentially highest excellence towards which all individuals should strive, or that citizenship sets the standards by which all other modes of human life are to be judged. Rather, political activity and citizenship are essential means towards securing liberty as non-domination not ends in themselves (Pettit, 1997). Thus perfectionist defences or views of active and participatory citizenship which value citizenship as an end in itself are eschewed by some contemporary republicans who rather view their promotion of active citizenship as the jealous guarding of hard-won freedoms and spheres of undominated action and opportunities. Green republicanism therefore sees no significant problem in holding a view of citizenship as both instrumentally and intrinsically valuable as it were.

A republican view of citizenship and the state can be defended on the grounds that it is consistent with cherishing and promoting individual liberty, and constitutive of the fulfilling of individual and collective long-term interests, values and goals. Taking the concern with promoting liberty as non-domination as the key issue for republicans – to enable people to 'live in the presence of people but at the mercy of none' (Pettit, 1997: 80), opens up the possibility for the role of the state in promoting and encouraging modes and practices of citizenship in the name of liberty (and sustainability), in ways that are legitimate and in keeping with the wishes and interests of citizens – especially their

interests in liberty and the maintenance of a free society made up of citizens practicing self-government.

Much of the objection to the idea of compulsory civic service arise from the sense that there is something inherently wrong and oppressive about the state obliging citizens to do things that they may not necessarily want to do. Here we can point to the wide variety of left and right wing positions (not necessarily libertarian but certainly within that broad philosophical perspective in which we would include the likes of thinkers like Robert Nozick and Ayn Rand on the right and Murray Bookchin on the left) which operate on the basis that the state is inherently oppressive and liberty-denying. Thus, state-backed obligations to perform certain duties or actions (such as paying tax or obeying laws) are therefore constraints on liberty. In this way a state which obliges certain forms of behaviour or action (or restraints individuals from certain behaviours or actions) is either actually or potentially authoritarian. This is of course a huge area of debate and scholarship but such views of the state and state action are misleading. While of course admitting that state power can be abusive, coercive and liberty-denying, there is nothing inherently oppressive in state power being used to oblige citizens to perform certain actions for the public or collective good or the maintenance of public or collective goods. This could include social order (a concern for classic republicans), a just system of liberties (a la Rawls), or the transition away from actually existing unsustainability. It is interested in that Honahan, one of the most eloquent of recent defenders of civic republicanism consistently, places 'green' or ecological issues as quintessential examples of republican common or shared goods, or more specifically as examples of the need to collectively recognise and self-organise in order to prevent certain ecological 'bads' (Honahan, 2003: 149, 156-7). In this way, and in keeping with a negative Aristotelianism, the issue from a green republican point of view is less about a particular view of the good life than of collectively avoiding commonly recognised 'bads', that is, about agreeing on the need to transition away from actually existing unsustainability.

There are many liberal arguments that can be employed to support some version of compulsory public service. In the liberal tradition as Dagger (2001: 13-16) points out, theorists as different as J.S. Mill to Rawls (Rawls, 1971: 380) have defended conscription and other forms of citizen/civic service, and saw no necessary contradiction with maintaining and developing an extensive system of individual liberty and freedoms. As Dagger notes (2001:14), Mill did not see any necessary contradiction between liberty and certain forms of compulsory behaviour. For example, in his, *On Liberty*, Mill states that there, 'are also many positive acts for the benefit of others, which [the individual] may rightfully be *compelled* to perform; such as, to give evidence in a court of justice; *to bear his fair share in the common defence*; *and to perform certain acts of individual beneficence* . . . , things which, whenever it is obviously a man's duty to do, he may rightfully be made responsible to society for not doing' (Mill, 1859: 14; emphasis added). So, in short, if one views taxation as unjustifiable coercion and the actions of an authoritarian state, then there is little I can say here about compulsory civic sustainability service which can convince you, since this form of compulsory service can be justified on

similar grounds as taxation.[183] Curbing certain liberties can be justified on the grounds of guaranteeing a greater system of liberties as Rawls and others have defended. There is another reason for adopting this positive view of the state and the exercise of public power. This relates to the role (indeed we would go so far as to say duty) of the state in regulating the private behaviour of economic organisations such as corporations. Indeed it is worth pointing out that the vast majority of green or sustainability-related support for state power in regulating behaviour *concerns corporate and business entities more than individual citizens and civil society groups*. Those on the right-wing libertarian spectrum would identify each and every state intervention in the market as oppressive and authoritarian (as well as inefficient and unproductive). However, unless one is possessed of the mirage that corporations will voluntarily regulate their behaviour to minimise ecological harm, or other social externalities and negative consequences of their operation, then there will need to be state regulation and monitoring of corporate activity.

The potential green republican practices of sustainability service – that is, forms of compulsory service (enforced by the state) for sustainable (including but not limited to strictly *ecological or environmental*) goals, is similar in form to the national service we find in many states today (or in Britain up until the 1950s). This service could take the form of all citizens having to give up some proportion of their time to engage in a range of sustainability activities. These activities could include cleaning up a polluted beach or river, working in community-based recycling schemes, working in socially deprived areas, assisting campaigns to decrease social inequality and social exclusion, participating in public information initiatives about sustainability or environmental education, working on community-farms or community wind-farms, becoming a development worker or human rights activist overseas and so on. The amount of time given up to sustainability service could range from one year (post-education) in the service of the common good, to a couple of hours each week over a longer period.

The republican overtones of compulsory sustainability service are obvious and one could relate them to the military (and thus male) character of classical republican conceptions of citizenship. The republican citizen was typically someone (i.e. a man) who was willing and able to bear arms and fight in defence of the republic of free citizens. This patriotism, defending the city-state, its way of life, land and people, is something one finds in civic republican thought. Equally, one might view it in terms of Marx's notion of 'socially necessary labour', that is labour which has to be done in order for society to

[183] There is an interesting link here between right-wing libertarian views of taxation as compulsory slavery and sustainability service. Given that much of the public policy debate about sustainable development revolves around green taxes, time-based notions of green citizenship might be usefully explicated based on time-dollar schemes or alternative time-based notions of currency – where currency is short-hand for or an approximation for publicly valuing someone's contribution. Equally, when one thinks about it, citizenship education is also, as part of the state education curriculum more generally, compulsory. Apart from some exceptions, such as home-schooling, primary and post-primary education is compulsory for our children. Therefore any move to green the curriculum by introducing an environmental dimension to citizenship studies, is also compulsory. Here an interesting issue concerns whether a parent or guardian (or child herself) has the right to opt out of citizenship studies, just as one is permitted to exempt children from compulsory religious studies. From a republican, though not perhaps from a liberal political perspective, this would not be an option.

flourish, and provide the goods and services that constitute the wherewithal/resources for fulfilling individual and collective needs, wants and views of the good. Or consider Michael Walzer's argument, updating Marx's point, in his *Spheres of Justice* where he argues that equal citizenship and the creation and sustaining of a healthy democratic community requires all citizens to play a part including an equal share of the gruelling work that makes society function (Walzer, 1983). The distribution of work in all its forms if of central concern for green political economy as indicated in previous chapters.

Therefore one could call sustainability service a form of 'sustainability necessary work': work or action that needs to be done in order to achieve a sustainability, the achievement of which provides the human/social and natural resources for fulfilling individual and collective needs, wants and views of the good. In many ways this suggestion for 'sustainability service' or 'sustainability necessary work' argues for making compulsory what already goes on voluntarily. There is already a tremendous amount of voluntary work done for environmental and other social and political causes. Making some of this work compulsory as mandatory forms of 'public service for the common good' will because more people will be engaged in them, make a large contribution to reducing unsustainability. However, it is possible that the positive democratic, social and ecological effects of sustainability service can of course be achieved through a system of voluntary rather than compulsory service (Dagger, 2001). A not insignificant advantage of preferring a compulsory to a voluntary scheme would be that it would enable distributive justice principles to be explicit in the distribution of such work, especially in relation to reproductive work.

The idea of compulsory sustainability service exhibits an obvious state-focused conception of green citizenship, which is perfectly in keeping with the republican tradition, which classically is very state-centric (or rather city-state centred).[184] More importantly, any positive connotations or potentials of such controversial, obligation-based/compulsory citizenship practices, seem to depend in part on whether the state which demands and enforces such obligatory work/time is a 'green' or 'greening' one or not (Eckersley, 2003). On the face of it, it does seem less objectionable (though of course not without other grounds for objection) if such compulsory forms of green citizenship are authorised by a green state that is working towards sustainability. For example, being obliged to work a couple of hours a week in a community city garden or allotments, formed in partnership between a green local authority and the local community, is quite different from being obliged to spend time on some environmental project on behalf of a state which has little or no interest in achieving sustainability.[185] As Dagger notes, 'To paraphrase Edmund Burke, we should be sure that our country is

[184] Thus another potential link between republicanism and green thinking concerns the local state focus of green citizenship which is of course in keeping with the long-standing green principle of decentralisation, and connects with work on municipal and local government forms of green politics (Mellor, 1995; Bookchin, 1992).

[185] An interesting case here is Mike Mills' comment that he would be willing 'to surrender some, if not most, of my democratic rights to a loving and trustworthy green council which would pursue ends with which I agreed and which would benefit me and my family' (Mills, 1996: 110). What is interesting here is that Mills focuses on a local council as oppose to the state, which of course is perfectly in keeping with green arguments for decentralising and democratising as opposed to abolishing the state (Barry, 1999a).

deserving of service before we require or recommend that someone serve it' (Dagger, 2001: 27). Dagger links this point with the choice about whether a system of civic service should be compulsory or voluntary, making the reasonable argument that the less just (or sustainable) a state is, the more arguments there are for preferring a voluntary rather than a compulsory form (ibid.,: 30, 37).

Equally, another possible objection to compulsory sustainability service is that in a grossly unequal society, the operation of such schemes would result in the unemployed, the poor and marginalised being the ones who do the bulk of this compulsory work. One has only to look at how in societies with compulsory military service, the rich and powerful can evade their obligations. Former US President George Bush Junior's posting to Texas rather than Vietnam during the Vietnam War springs to mind. Therefore a precondition for the justification of compulsory public service for sustainability ends requires the creation of a more equal society. That is, a precondition for such practices of 'green republican' citizenship is, as suggested in previous chapters, 'rough equality', which is not only in keeping with the egalitarian ethos of republicanism, but also of course a constitutive aspect of democratic citizenship itself.

As Tonge and Mycock, summarising the report of the UK Youth Citizenship Commission, put it, one of the problems for those proposing compulsory civic service in the UK, is this: 'will such programmes be egalitarian in their compulsion? Compulsory programmes have proven problematic in many countries because those with access to resources and/or influence have found ever more sophisticated ways of avoiding service. There is a great danger that compulsory programmes simply become short-hand for a 'Poor Corp'' (Tonge and Mycock, 2010: 196). But this is only a problem if one is not interested in the effects of such a system on equality between citizens, and simply underscores the egalitarian preconditions for any effective and normatively justifiable system of civic service (Gorham, 1992: 32).[186]

Another interesting issue they raise in questioning the idea of compulsory civic service is pertinent to (and in some respects supports) the proposal for increasing the social economy made in the last chapter. A concern they raise is that, 'There is little to suggest that the third sector at present has the capacity to provide enough opportunities to meet the demand of compulsory programmes regardless of their length' (Tonge and Mycock, 2010: 196). Crabtree and Field in their defence of compulsory civic service also note this, pointing out that, 'Britain's third sector would need to grow—perhaps even double in size—to provide the opportunities needed' (Crabtree and Field, 2009). Thus a link can be established between sustainability service and the need for the social economy to expand.

[186] In some respects this focus on socio-economic inequalities addresses one criticism of Pettit's conception of freedom as non-domination – namely its neglect of structural, especially economic ones of inequality, as forms of actual or potential domination and a focus largely on interpersonal relations (Andronache, 2009: 23-24). Stressing these economic forms of domination and the necessity for an less unequal distribution of wealth as a precondition of civic service (as well as the achievement of other green republican goals) also establishes greater distance between republican and liberal approaches to politics in general and the regulation of the economy in particular.

It is also important to note that some (though of course not all) of the problems they raise with compulsory civic service are based on the fact that they are not talking about a universal civic service proposal, but are focused specifically on young people.[187] If there was a wide-spread civic service scheme it may be that some (perhaps not all) of the problems they identify would be lessened if not solved. Another relevant issue Tonge and Mycock raise relates to a point made in chapter 3 in relation to rituals and ceremonies one that is also relevant from a republican point of view, 'we suggested that a civic service programme should end with a citizenship ceremony which is attended by local politicians etc. (which could be hosted at the school or town hall) involving registering on the electoral roll and a "passing out" citizenship award' (ibid.,: 197).[188]

There are imaginative ways in which notions of public service can be articulated. For example, one could imagine schemes whereby graduates could have their fees waived (of course dependent on the continuation of fees), or greatly reduced if they participated in some form of sustainability service (as is the case in the USA in the case of participating in foreign development work with the Peace Corps, though this is a voluntary not a compulsory scheme). Or decreases in one's income tax in proportion to the sustainability service one gives, or perhaps ideally, that the more unsustainable one's lifestyle is (such as ownership of Sports Utility Vehicles, SUVs, for example, or air miles per year or shares in fossil-fuel corporations), the more one should pay for this through either higher green taxes or more sustainability service. The point is that there are ways in which incentives could be developed to make ideas of sustainability service less authoritarian, though of course such overtones may still persist. But despite the legitimate concerns around the authoritarian potentials, we must ask ourselves, whether an obligation to contribute (either through taxes or forms of public service) is as liberty-denying as critics make out?[189] And think of the possible social and educative benefits of corporate and

[187] However, that civic service may be particularly beneficial for young people in terms of constituting a 'rite of passage' for managing the transition from child to adult is something that Tonge and Mycock overlook This socialisation and transition issue is taken up by Crabtree and Field and used to defend their idea of compulsory civic service. As they put it, 'The Good Childhood Inquiry, published by the Children's Society in February, detailed how today's teenagers leap ever earlier into an adult world of stress, consumerism and sexuality, without the traditional social structures or rites of passage that once helped them to cope' (Crabtree and Field, 2009).

[188] While clearly not a strong normative argument, it is worth pointing out that there is much public support for a form of compulsory civic or citizen service in the UK (Crabtree and Field, 2009).

[189] Contra right-wing libertarians, I do not think that the compulsory payment of taxes is liberty-denying (or, rather, is not *unjustly* liberty-denying) insofar as they are required by justice and a commitment to egalitarianism. In the same manner, I do not think this is true of forms of public service. A moot question is that 'apart from the educative effects (which might be enough) is there any reason for preferring public service to taxation? Wouldn't taxation be more efficient?' (Derek Bell, personal correspondence). If however one adopts a green political economy position which is critical of the orthodox economic growth model and the emphasis on formally paid employment (from which income taxation is raised), and instead embraces the need to shift from an exclusive focus on employment to work (understood as taking place outside the formal economy – such as child-rearing, caring etc.), then public service is preferable to taxation. At the same time, unlike taxation, civic service in bringing people from different backgrounds together can be an important element of creating and sustaining both a sense of community and a sense of a community of equals. However I do accept Bell's point that, 'It is worth emphasising that if public service and taxation are to be alternative ways of doing ones duty, economic equality is essential if we don't want to force the poor into public service' (personal correspondence). Indeed, one could say that shifting from

financial high-flyers (or green academics) having to help the unemployed or get their hands dirty digging on a community farm one day a week! Part of the (understandable) negative reaction to talk of compulsory civic service is that 'compulsory' carries with it negative connotations of liberty reducing or restricting forms of state behaviour. Yet, since the compulsory element is motivated to ensure universalism i.e. that all eligible citizens participate and do so equally, it may be that compulsory service – acknowledged as intrusions into the lives of citizens– be recognised from a republican view as legitimate forms of non-dominating interference. As Crabtree and Field suggest, 'A free society often makes claims on its people, from compulsory schooling to paying taxes and defending the nation in a time of peril. Civic service can be just such a legitimate demand' (Crabtree and Field, 2009).

Perhaps a less defensive and more progressive or proactive defence of civic sustainability service relates to forms of citizen action orientated around directly challenging the state and other powerful groups and interests in society. Thus, 'sustainability service' could also be interpreted as meaning that there is an obligation (and opportunity) within 'sustainability citizenship' to engage in forms of political and other forms of resistance and struggle against underlying structural causes of ecological degradation, socio-economic inequality, poverty, ill-health and other non-ecological components of unsustainability. In other words, one can think of the 'necessary work' that is a constitutive aspect of 'sustainability citizenship' as including politically orientated 'resistance work' and is not simply equated with 'compliance' to state-backed forms of sustainability service and work. In casting sustainability citizenship service in this contestatory form, we both move towards the agonistic politics of republicanism as well as the radical politics of green citizenship. Such contestatory forms of citizenship action fit within what Honohan outlines as republican notions of civic virtue – which she suggests 'takes various forms, from more passive self-restraint to active public service and even to resistance. It does not mean simply more *obedience or deference to authority* than in a liberal system. It should be noted that it is an obligation between citizens rather than to any central authority' (Honohan, 2002: 166; emphasis added).[190]

Arguing for a conception of what might be called '*sustainability necessary resistance work'* trades on the same argument often found in debates about injustice. Namely, in the face of prevailing injustices there is a need to both recognise these injustices as injustices, but also to seek to remedy through appropriate political action. That is, just as we can say that the first demand of justice is to fight against injustice, as well as comply with the demands of maintaining a system of justice, equally we can say that the first demand of sustainable development is to fight against unsustainable development as well as comply with the demands of sustainable development. Justice, politically speaking, arises as a central issue precisely because prevailing political and socio-economic circumstances are 'unjust' (either completely or in parts). That is why it is the main and dominant ethical-

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taxation (based on employment and the growth economy which is inherently unequal) to public service within a less growth orientated economy may be a better way of achieving and maintaining equality (Barry and Doherty, 2002; Jacobs, 1996).

[190] Other republican defences of civic service can be found in Barber (2000: 187-203) and Walzer, (1983: chapter 6).

political language and discourse within almost all societies. It is odd (to say the least) that while the language of justice dominates contemporary liberal political theory, this is largely divorced from the necessary political action needed to address, challenge and potentially change unjust social relations. I would suggest that one of the main reasons for this is that liberal political theory starts from (and some of it never escapes from) abstract conceptions of *'justice'* rather than from *'actually existing' injustices*. Unlike liberalism, the green republican position outlined here, begins its analysis recognising that it is injustice, not justice (or imperfectly implemented justice) that characterises the world as a whole and individual societies. Unlike liberalism therefore – and more in keeping with more radical political analyses of Marxism, anarchism or feminism – green republicanism does not accept that we begin from some imperfectly achieved system of justice and the job of political theory is to 'reform' and 'improve' it. Rather, if a sustainable, green post-growth economy is a post-capitalist one, similarly from a political point of view a sustainable, green post-growth polity is post-liberal one. Therefore in that context it is consistent with the latter that this resistance conception of civic service (viewed as a necessary component of green citizenship) is not one that necessary fits within a liberal political framework, or is compatible with actually existing liberal democracy.

Such resistance forms of sustainability work or service are forms of 'green citizenship' action which can range from social justice or environmental protestors engaging in non-violent direct action against state policy (Humphrey, 2007; Doherty, 2002; Seel, Paterson and Doherty, 2000); civil disobedience and non-violent direct action in relation to occupying a coal-fired power plant, to the 'subvertising' and 'culture jamming' activities of groups such as Adbusters (http://www.adbusters.org/). It rather telling that in official 'citizenship studies' within mainstream education in most countries, in official reviews of citizenship provision, (Tonge and Mycock, 2010), and in political analysis of the importance of citizenship in modern democracies (Crick, 2000, 2001), including arguments for greening the citizenship curriculum (Dobson, 2003), non-violent direct action as a form of legitimate and valued form of citizenship action is conspicuous by its absence. How different would both official bodies of the state, police and judiciary view democratic protest, if as a matter of course your citizens were taught the full range of their democratic options, including the responsible use of non-violent direct action and civil disobedience? While often the curricula of citizenship studies in various countries will talk about Gandhi or Martin-Luther King as political leaders who lead movements of non-violent direct action – this is done historically not with a view of encouraging students to learn the lessons from their struggles and most importantly to learn the techniques and uses (and abuses) of non-violent political action. That is, to be exposed to and learn how NVDA is not some interesting, historical, non-relevant and 'abnormal' form of citizenship, but denotes a set of practices which are consistent with the 'normal' work of being a citizen, a 'normal' understanding of citizen identity, and a 'normal' understanding of politics. And by extension, agonistic political action, contesting existing state or social norms or laws, comes to be seen as a normal and healthy element

of a vibrant democratic society.[191] This contestatory mode of citizenship becomes to be seen as something to be valued and encouraged (as opposed to being either neglected or reluctantly tolerated and endured). As Stuart White notes: 'republican democrats understand that nonviolent direct action often has a crucial role to play in increasing the public's awareness of a morally grievous issue. *It is a crucial stimulant to democratic debate, to a deeper consideration of citizen responsibilities. The law, and policing tactics, should be based around respect for such activity, not geared up to suppress it*' (White, 2010; emphasis added).

Ultimately perhaps the proof of the pudding is in the eating. That is, 'If one can produce good reasons to believe that compulsory civic service will do significant good, for those who serve as well as those who are served, then the compulsion may be justified' (Dagger, 2001: 26). I think there are grounds to think that a well-designed system of compulsory civic service can be good for participants, though challenging and empowering them, and providing opportunities for leadership development for example. A well-designed scheme could also play a vital role for the wider republican conception of democratic society. Reminding ourselves of the distinction, from Tocqueville, between democracy as a type of society and not simply a system of government, such compulsory service could promote civic virtue, redub the potentially corrosive effects of self-interest, enhance solidarity and cultivate at least expose individuals to an enlarged perspective, on top of requiring as a precondition for effective operation as well as legitimation a lowering of socio-economic inequalities, including gender inequalities.

Pluralism, Agonism, Contestation and Creativity

One of the features of civic republicanism yet to be discussed in any great detail is its 'agonistic' and contestatory character as features of the republican acceptance and indeed encouragement of political pluralism.[192] Chantal Mouffe, has defined it thus:

> I use the concept of agonistic pluralism to present a new way to think about democracy which is different from the traditional liberal conception of democracy as a negotiation among interests...the idea that the aim of the democratic society is the creation of a consensus, and that consensus is possible if people are only able to leave aside their particular interests and think as rational beings. However, while we desire an end to conflict, if we want people to be free we must always allow for the possibility that conflict may appear and to provide an arena where differences can be confronted. The democratic process should supply that arena. (Mouffe, 1998)

[191] Here we could case this green republican proposal as a modern and non-violent version of Thomas Jefferson's statement that 'The tree of liberty must from time to time be refreshed with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure' and de-militarising this quintessential republican sentiment.

[192] However, it is of course not the case that republicanism have a monopoly on this issue – see for example Leib's discussion of Richard Rorty's work as offering a similar contestation-consensus dynamic within the context of a liberal defence of (American) patriotism (Leib, 2004).

This agonistic approach to politics does on the face of it stand in sharp contrast to certain strands of green thinking in which consensus is the preferred or indeed procedurally required result of any decision-making process, often based on the consensual imperative found in political theorists such as Habermas and Rawls. My own long-standing view is that consensus as a long-standing green movement principle is a decision-making principle which stands at odds with a genuine acceptance of pluralism, difference and otherness. The idea that everyone must agree has always struck me as normatively suspect as well as practically unworkable.

However, it is important to not only distinguish agonism from consensus, but also *agonism* from *antagonism*. The latter denotes a situation of conflict or mutually opposing perspectives and interests with little prospect of any agreement in the sense that it represents a situation of a 'zero-sum' game in which the only two outcomes for the protagonists are either 'winning' – i.e. defeating one's opponent, or 'losing' i.e. your opponent wins. An antagonistic encounter is one (usually) that can be characterised by terms such as 'hostility', heightened dislike, active disrespect – in large part founded on a simplistic and radical 'self-other' relation, that is a relation which stresses or focuses on the differences rather than commonalities between agents. It is for this reason that antagonism and antagonistic relations can easily shade over into violence, or at least the high levels of distrust and defamation sometimes seen in the context of wind farm disputes. As Mouffe suggests, 'While antagonism is a we/they relation in which the two sides are enemies who do not share any common ground, agonism is a we/they relation where the conflicting parties, *although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognize the legitimacy of their opponents. They are 'adversaries' not 'enemies''* (2005: 20: emphasis added).

In this way an agonistic approach lies between 'consensus' and 'antagonism', and one could define it as being concerned (like 'consensus' approaches) in seeking agreement, settlement and decision to be made, but also concerned to achieve that in a manner which articulates and uses (and values) rather than suppresses (or devalues) opposing views and the ensuring antagonism, by transforming it into agonism[193]. An agonistic theory insists upon preserving democratic struggle as something both *inevitable* and indeed *intrinsically good* for the health of democracy and democratic citizenship. As Bonnie Honig puts it, 'to affirm the perpetuity of the contest is *not* to celebrate a world without points of stabilization; *it is to affirm the reality of perpetual contest, even within an ordered setting, and to identify the affirmative dimension of contestation*' (Honig, 1993:15; emphasis added).

An important reason for the affirmation of contestation over consensus within political life as modern republicans such as Pettit put it (Pettit, 1997) is that this way of thinking in so doing also affirms the priority of politics and values over technocentric, elite, administrative, economic or scientific decision-making processes. On the one hand, to affirm the centrality of political debate and contestation is to guard against reducing

[193] Just as Freud noted that the aim of psychoanalysis was to transform 'hysterical misery to ordinary unhappiness' (Freud and Breuer, 1895), likewise, agonistic and republican politics seeks to transform antagonism into agonism as opposed to either consensus or violence.

politics to economics by other means and therefore is an important element in resisting the 'colonising' power of orthodox economics. On the other hand, an agonistic view of politics also offers some protection from 'depoliticised' forms of decision making based on expertise or the technocratic and modernist impulse towards viewing politics as the 'administration of things'. Or as Chambers puts it, '[agonism] emphasizes the importance of contestation and conflict to politics, and *it resists the attempt to displace politics, to substitute administration and judgement for political battles*' (Chambers, 2001; emphasis added). And one may add agonism also guards against the reduction of politics to elections and citizens to voters, taxpayers or consumers.

It is important to emphasise the *provisionality* inherent in agonistic politics, which is in stark contrast to economistic and techno-centric proposals 'once and for all solutions' to unsustainability issues (Barry, 1999a) or 'once and for all solutions' to political differences. An agonistic perspective does not take such a definitive attitude. All agreements are revisable, settlements can be re-examined afresh, re-argued and re-negotiated in the light of new circumstances, empirical or scientific evidence or new normative or political claims.[194] Indeed without this provisionality the chances are we could move from agonism to antagonism as the stakes involved in the process are immediately so much higher (it's a 'once and for all' outcome, therefore its either 'win' or 'lose') than the case of a provisional agreement or settlement open to future re-negotiation. And going back to the discussion of resilience in chapter 2 and elsewhere, the provisionality and reversibility of decisions are key to ensure the capacity to chance tack if need be and therefore to be open and flexible for 'adaptive management' within a dynamic and ever changing environment (human and nonhuman).

There are a number of issues that I think are useful to keep in mind when discussing the republican account of our political condition, and a green republican account of the latter together with an account of our ecological condition. **Firstly,** republicanism accepts pluralism (in values, lifestyles, perspectives) as not only inevitable, but also is a positive feature of a free and democratic polity, leading Rescher (1995: 4) to suggest that we should learn how to live with dissensus. It is important to note that a republican politics *does not* require that there be one commonly held view of the 'good life'. From a negative Aristotelian position, the key issue is to determine those features of social life which impede flourishing such as socio-economic and gender inequalities, consumerism, endemic insecurities. It does it demand that private views of the good (or the sustainable) conform to some standard or master conceptualisation, and it is compatible with a variety of views of the good, so long as they do not threaten or undermine the freedoms and practices of the common public/political life of the community, including the ecological conditions for it s sustainability. That these thresholds may not be clearly or objectively definable does not mean we should not pay attention them. It simply means, as indicated above, there is no non-political way to establish these thresholds (Barry, 1996; Hulme,

[194] Here, agonistic politics shares crucial elements with the Aristotelian virtue tradition in ethics and politics, where virtue is understood to denote certain human qualities (excellences) which enable human beings to negotiate and re-negotiate their way against the backdrop of contingency, unforeseen events in both the human/social and non-human worlds they inhabit and in which they seek their flourishing (Barry, 1999a; Connolly, 2012).

2010). **Secondly**, republicanism emphasises the importance of active citizens, participating and defending their free community (especially from external threats) as well as participating in debating about their polity's goals, policies, reform and direction. Central here is the debate and communicative aspect of the contestation itself. For classical as well as modern republicans the 'watchwords are *audi alteram partem*, always listen to the other side' (Skinner, 1996: 15). In other words it is not only consensus, but respectful opposition, that can be characterised by communication and learning.

Thirdly, robust debate and exchange of different ideas can help social learning and can provide imaginative solutions to problems, as social liberals such as J.S. Mill amongst others noted (Barry, 2001). In keeping with a broadly deliberative approach to politics, or key macro aspects, such as constitutional issues or those pertaining to policies for the macro-economics of sustainability, a republican view accepts the potential of debate and argument to result in unexpected and unforeseen collectively created solutions, which administrative and technocratic forms of non-democratic decision-making typically do not. In part linked to the importance of provisionality perhaps, and adaptive management, a republican perspective in explicitly encouraging (up to and including perhaps requiring) open, public exchange of ideas and views, can almost be seen as building the capacity for surprise and the emergence of unlike sources of innovation within the democratic decision-making system.

A republican approach in not seeking consensus but rather non-violent and (hopefully) solidarity- and sustainability-enhancing solutions of allowing and encouraging people to honestly air their concerns and differences and to seek agreement (even if this is agreement to disagree). It adopts a pragmatic attitude in being willing to use majoritarian decision-making rules where necessary rather than seeking consensus. This approach actively promotes different voices and positively encourages the respectful engagement between differing perspectives, and while it does obviously encourage the identification of and search for common ground, the decision-making process is not contingent on it. Therefore, even if people remain in disagreement as to the particular decision made about, for example, the siting (or not) of a renewable energy proposal, both sides know or are aware of the background context of their respective positions, and some of these background contexts may be shared by protagonists with very different views on the proposal and ultimate decision. That is, a republican approach is marked by seeking to create a deliberative mechanism in which 'citizens of good faith can disagree and disagree robustly and honestly'. Such agonistic, republican processes may at least affirm/reaffirm the fact that *all involved are fellow citizens*, sharing political and other values and that this shared sense of citizenship (which unites them) should not be lost in the public articulation of their different views on the decision which divides them. Here the republican perspective is best articulated by Voltaire's famous statement, 'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it'.

A green republican approach to policy-making would involve the open and most importantly, the *meaningful engagement* of concerned and affected citizens, through public enquires, citizen juries, planning appeals and other deliberative innovations (Dryzek and Niemeyer, 2010) with relevant public bodies with the goal of seeking what

is in the best interest of the public as decided by the relevant public in question. As Squillace notes one of the advantages of a more agonistic and open debate on controversial issues (and one that relates to the social learning and problem solving issues mentioned above) is that, 'a free, fair, and open debate over controversial issues is the very essence of the civic republican ideal, and the publicity that often results from these meetings offers a great opportunity to identify public-minded citizens who might be willing to participate in meaningful discussions about the issues' (Squillace, 2008: 17). In other words, rather than fearing open debate on contentious proposals, these should be welcomed as opportunities for the discovery or creation of common ground, for negotiated agreement to emerge and to also elicit forms of engaged citizenship (Barry and Ellis, 2010).

If we see the promotion of innovation, creativity and imagination as central to the transition away from unsustainability, then welcoming rather than closing down conflict and vigorous debate, the calling into question of established ways of thinking and acting etc., would seem to be essential to that process. Indeed as Maynor notes, 'Internal conflict and tumults may cause republics to be unstable at times, but they require citizens to maintain maximum vigilance and attention which leads to the creation of good laws and institutions that can *offer innovative solutions to the often complex problems brought about by an active citizenry*' (Maynor, 2003: 27; emphasis added). And, as indicated elsewhere, one of those established ways of thinking and acting which is in urgent need of being called into question is the unthinking, almost 'automatic' commitment to orthodox economic growth. So, for a green republican what is needed are public mechanisms is to harness the energy created by an active, pluralist citizenry in the formulation of solutions and 'coping mechanisms' in relation to problems and threats facing the republic. Hence neither technocratic expertise nor the avoidance or suppression of dissent and discord are approaches favoured to structure collective problem solving and the encouragement of democratic politics as a non-violent way of dealing with difference and a social learning process at one and the same time.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to complete the outline of a 'green republicanism', one consistent with the economic and normative arguments laid out in previous chapters. While doubtless some of what has been suggested here will be viewed with some surprise and suspicion by greens – not least the case for compulsory 'civic sustainability service', which I fear may remain my own little hobby horse with little support from others – the argument for the compatibility of republicanism with generally accepted green perspectives on the economy, the critique of economic growth, the centrality of rough equality, the multiple dangers of debt-based consumerism and so on will perhaps be more palatable. I hope to have outlined reasons why both greens and modern civic republicans should pay greater attention to one another and that there are numerous areas of common analysis and broad agreement such that a 'green republicanism' is possible. What I have offered here, and in the previous chapter, is necessarily a partial analysis, a ground-clearing effort to stake out yet further new areas for others to follow. In this sense it is pioneering and also in being incomplete and silent on many issues – areas of

further compatibility and synergy I have not covered, or equally important those areas of tension and incompatibility between green and civic republican thinking. However, I can only state in my defence that just because I have not said or covered everything on the topic, does not mean I have not said or covered anything worthwhile or of interest. In particular I would draw the reader's attention to the case for placing creativity and innovative thinking (also taken up in the final concluding chapter) centre stage, and linking that case to a green republican agonistic and deliberative politics of contestation over consensus.

What might civic republicans make of the argument presented here? I hope that they can see the overlap of key concerns they have with those of greens, and how its view of liberty as non-domination, its more interventionist attitude towards the market, its broad conception of active citizenship can make a positive contribution to our thinking about the transition away from unsustainability. I hope to have also indicated possible areas for future work by republicans – such as the inter-related issues of debt-based consumerism, the organisation of the economy towards economic growth, and the positive potentials of a greater role for the social economy from a republican point of view. And, if I may be so bold to suggest to civic republicans: the lack of engagement with the issues of sustainability, the transition to life in a carbon constrained, climate changed world, means that their analyses, while doubtless interesting, are singularly incomplete as guides to action and thinking in the 'anthropocene age' of the 21st century.

Central I think to a green republican vision is the recovery of the 'good of politics' and to prevent politics and the political being reduced to administration, expertise or 'economics by other means'. Recalling Jonathan Lear's philosophical-anthropological argument for a politics of 'radical hope' in chapter 2, perhaps what a green republicanism can be seen to offer is not so much the 'solution' to the multiple dimensions of our unsustainability predicament. Rather, in its explicit encouragement of pluralism, a robust exchange of ideas unconstrained by being oriented towards reaching consensus, and the reversing and over-turning of existing and inherited ways of thinking and acting (here I would place the modern myth, imperative and 'commonsense' of orthodox economic growth top of the list), a green republicanism is a politics of hope for the future. But a clear-eyed, grounded and thoroughly pragmatic (if not to say tough) politics of hope which offers, to echo arguments outlined earlier, messy, thoroughly political 'coping mechanisms' for the 'wicked problems' of unsustainability and the transition away from unsustainability. Not depoliticised and 'neat' technological or economic solutions that easily fit within the existing administrative logic of bourgeois/liberal representative government. In recovering the good of politics as a realistic politics of hope, green republicanism also recovers the good of sustainability, as orientated towards reducing and eradicating actually existing unsustainability. It recovers the fact that the politics of sustainability is ultimately about choices to live in a different type of society, not some brief public consultation about how to 'green' business as usual and our existing societies. And this is a politics of resistance and struggle for transition and transformation not the continuation of what we currently have.

Chapter 9

Conclusion: Dissident Thinking in Turbulent Times

'Between the aims of the post-totalitarian system and the aims of life there is a yawning abyss: while life, in its essence moves towards plurality, diversity, independent self-constitution and self-organization, in short towards the fulfilment of its own freedom, the post-totalitarian system demands conformity, uniformity and discipline' (Havel, 1978: 43-4).

'What is to be Done?'

While we are certainly living in turbulent times, where at times to borrow that well-worn phrase of W.B. Yeats' 'the centre cannot hold', and the scale, number and connections between all the problems we face come close to overwhelming us, it is not the case that humans have not faced turbulent and troubling times before. It is undeniably the case that what we face is unprecedented in human history, nevertheless (and in a rather republican manner) we can look back in history (and learn about and hopefully from) previous tumultuous times and how people thought about them, analysed them and responded to them. A good example here is Höppner's suggestion of looking closely at 16th century political thought to inform our thinking about the present and future. As she puts it,

> Our world is also in transition, as the order that began to emerge 500 years ago faces a crisis it seems ill-designed to turn into an opportunity. Nation-states struggle to provide an adequate framework for an increasingly global economy. They regularly fail to meet environmental challenges and they crumble where identities diversify and de-territorialise. The system that provided stability and, indeed, progress, seems to have reached its limits. Our question, similar to that posed in the sixteenth century, is to determine how a new, more adequate order can emerge out of the old and failing order. Which elements of it will evolve to provide important pillars of a new order, and which others will disappear? (Höppner, 2010: 294).

Elements of this new political order have been outlined in this book largely though the introduction and elaboration of the principles and objectives which underpin a green, sustainable and resilient order. These include an awareness of and attentiveness to the multiple dimensions of vulnerability as a permanent feature of the human and political condition; removing the obstacles to human flourishing as a key objective of the state, such as lessening inequality; and re-constituting 'the economy' to include reproductive and social economic labour and practices, and also to increase the internal and non-economic goods of labour and production; the transition away from economic growth as a permanent feature of the economy, and a focus on enhancing community, cultural and psychological resilience and 'coping mechanisms' as central features of how we can

creatively adapt and imaginatively respond to a carbon constrained, climate changed world.

Thinking in turbulent times requires imagination and the courage to fundamentally rethink ways of thinking and doing, to 'let go' of unhelpful or mal-adaptive habits, institutions and ways of life. But all this is to be done aimed at how to secure human flourishing in this new and changed world context. And as this book has sought to convey, thinking in turbulent times from a green republican perspective requires the integration of both ecological and historical knowledge. The courage to go against the intellectual and political flow as it were cannot be underestimated, and explains why the green critique of capitalism has long been a minority pursuit. In this, as indicated below, greens can be rightly viewed as dissidents (as much as pioneers), speaking (scientific) truth to (economic and ideological) power as it were, and in a constant state of opposition to the prevailing regime of actually existing unsustainability.

In part both because of the turbulence and difficulties ahead, and the need for greens to hold their 'tender views in tough ways', I defend a distinctly republican form of green politics. I am convinced that the 'tough-mindedness' of civic republicanism makes it entirely appropriate to our current moment and the multiple challenges in the decades ahead in navigating this great transition. Part of this tough-mindedness relates to the fact that civic republicanism was itself born in, and in response to, the political instability and turbulence in Europe of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But its toughness is also on account of its realistic and clear-eyed understanding of the human condition, its foregrounding of vulnerability and the precariousness of human achievements, not least the distinctly political achievements of freedom and self-government. Unlike other forms of thinking about politics – such as most forms of liberalism, especially neo-liberalism and most versions of socialism, especially Marxism – civic republicanism (and here overlapping with elements of traditional conservatism) does not hold a view of human progress as either inevitable or linear. On the one hand, human societies regress and collapse as self-governing republics, a constant issue for civic republican thinkers such as Machiavelli and Rousseau. On the other, recovering and returning to elements of a previous stage of social and political development, such as making land, food, agriculture, manual labour, and energy production and consumption more central to socio-economic life as suggested by permacultural and Transition movement thinking, is not necessarily 'regressive' and 'backward'. If the rehabilitation of these features of human life is accompanied, as it must be for the type of green republican politics defended in this book, with a commitment to not only preserving but strengthening, deepening and extending hard-won freedoms, democratic rights and institutions of self-government, but also critically embracing technological innovation and other beneficial aspects of industrial civilisation, then, as suggested at various points in this book, the tired and all too predictable condemnation of green politics as wishing to bring modern societies 'back to the stone age' is as wrong as it is lazy. After all, as this book has argued, we need to identify the point beyond which economic growth under capitalism is not only compromising human flourishing, undermining the life-sustaining systems of the planet, but also see that a key aim of politics in the 21st century is how to achieve high levels of human flourishing with low energy and resource use. And, as this book has

argued, to achieve this requires fundamentally questioning the dominant narrative of 'progress' qua orthodox economic growth, greater resource use, energy growth, consumerism etc. In short, to movement beyond actually existing unsustainability requires a shift in towards a 'post-growth' economics of sufficiency and enough as suggested in chapters 2 and 5. And to emphasise, this transition is *not* regressive or simply motivated by ecological necessity, but in fact represents a much improved, as well as a more resilient social and political order/s.

This book has been written as both a contribution and an intervention in the current debates around the biggest transition that humanity has ever faced. This is the transition away from current unsustainable development trajectories ('actually existing unsustainability'), towards an inevitable future of life in a carbon constrained and climate changed world. This is the 'Great Transition' (new economics foundation, 2009) that is underway and which is and will continue to define politics in the 21st century, globally, nationally and locally. Of course in saying that this transition is inevitable does not mean there is not a whole range of political, economic, ethical and cultural choices to consider. After all, we cannot simply or unproblematically state that just because this transition is inevitable that this means there is 'one' way in which we can think about and manage that transition. Thus in presenting the transition as 'inevitable' this does not remove the issue of political debate, choice and decision-making between options. There are after all many ways to manage (or not) this transition, that is, there is no automatic, non-political way in which this can be done. To rather state the obvious, the transition away from actually existing unsustainability is a quintessentially *political* project, one that from the version of green politics outlined in this book requires specifically republican approach and sensibility. This transition is also an ethical and cultural project as this book hopes to have demonstrated.

On the one hand, it does mean removing some options. Clearly the various discussions and proposals of this book will be completely unconvincing (or merely of 'theoretical' interest) to anyone who thinks that this transition to a climate changed, carbon constrained future is *not* inevitable. If you are a climate change sceptic or denier, hold 'cornucopian' or 'Promethean' views about there being no serious or irresolvable resource, energy or pollution problems, or think we can 'decouple' economic growth from the latter, this book will be summarily dismissed. Thus, one set of options which this book dismisses are those associated with the claim that we (in the minority world) can continue with 'business as usual', an ever expanding economy as measured by GDP, while encouraging the majority world to follow our development model.

On the other hand, thinking here of non-ecological claims, the argument of this book will have fallen on deaf ears if you think that conventional economic growth is a permanent feature of an economy; think socio-economic inequalities are 'inevitable', 'necessary' or even 'good'; do not think that reproductive work needs recognition and included in an expanded conception of the economy; reject the notion that all theories of political economy, including modern neo-classical economics are normative and ideological; dismiss the claim that we need more pluralism about political economy and need to end the hegemony of neo-classical economics; or if you reject the idea that the non-human

world and its communities deserve respect. Thus, another set of options ruled out again relate to a continuation of 'business as usual', here reminding ourselves that 'business as usual' *is* the politics of actually existing unsustainability.

One way of summarising the book is to say that while the carbon, climate and other ecological pressures make this transition *inevitable*, the normative and political concerns outlined in this book make this transition *desirable*. This means that even in the absence of these ecological pressures there are non-ecological reasons that can be given for this transition to a post-growth, one planet living state. Thus while holding to the view of this inevitable transition does limit some options (i.e. we are limited to low carbon, less unsustainable trajectories), it also expands others, currently ruled out under actually existing unsustainability. Actually existing unsustainability rules out the wide-spread uptake of non-consumerist identities and practices, and a full recognition of how human flourishing depends more on human relationships, free time and non-employment work, than on income, formally paid employment and consumption. The underlying argument of this book is that removing the imperative for orthodox economic growth would create *more not less* options for human flourishing.

And while doubtless I have at times strayed from a strict 'negative Aristotelianism' in relation to human flourishing, and will stand accused of having a perfectionist as well as objective account of human flourishing, I have been motivated to present a view of green republican politics as focused on removing or limiting obstacles and imperatives as opposed to directly and positively trying to achieve human flourishing. If inequality is impeding human flourishing, or 'formally paid employment' narrows choices and options for people by denigrating or 'crowding out' non-paid 'work', or if economic growth beyond a point can be shown not to enhance human flourishing, then they need to be removed or reformed. This negative Aristotelianism in relation to human flourishing feeds into the green republican perspective sketched in chapters 7 and 8, in a manner which I think can be made compatible with a more neo-Roman or instrumentalist conception of civic republican thinking. That is, the extension of this negative injunction also has implications for any account of a green republican state, most noticeable, in that its primary function is to remove or lessen obstacles rather than positively providing opportunities or resources. In particular, one of the main functions of such a green republican state is to regulate the market in order protect the community from its corrosive effects, in order to enhance community resilience. In this we find the long-standing republican politics of the common good conjoined with a distinctly green and ecological conception of the common good. Green republicanism can therefore be understood as the recasting of civic republicanism as a theory of freedom, to one of freedom and flourishing within ecological, social and psychological, limits. In this manner, green republicanism is therefore civic republican politics updated for 'one planet living'. A key challenge for all political perspectives, green republican and other, is how to politically and economically respond to the 'macro-economics of sustainability' as determined by carbon, climate and resource limits and thresholds.

The 'negative Aristotelian' notion of human flourishing outlined in this book, is connected to another of its main insights, namely the centrality of identifying thresholds

for any transition from actually existing unsustainability. Thus, identifying thresholds and tipping points, balances beyond which human flourishing is compromised and damaged by further consumption, or when economic growth becomes 'uneconomic growth' (Daly, 1999) become key political issues for a green republican politics. Alongside and related to this question of identifying thresholds is the importance of being politically attentive to, and seek to institutionalise as a key 'coping mechanism', negative feedback, especially in relation to the human economy. Here, whether in relation to the scientific evidence for 'limits to growth', or the social psychological and other evidence for conventional economic growth, after a point, no longer contributing to human flourishing, we come to recognise the need for negative as opposed to positive feedback to ensure the economy stays within the bounds of ecological, carbon and human flourishing limits. And since there is neither no single equilibrium point, nor any automatic way to get to those equilibria (Barry, 1999a), nor even any permanent equilibrium state, constant attention is required to the management and organisation of the human economy. This is fitting for a green republicanism, since just as civic republicans remind us that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance, likewise the price of resilience requires constant vigilance and political attention. A final principle here, and one developed throughout the book and derived from both permaculture and the Transition movement (and the climate change adaptation literature), is that resilience and staying within acceptable bounds requires building 'slack' and 'redundancy' into our economic system. This represents a major challenge to conventional economic, political and everyday thinking, based as they all are on the 'commonsense' of the need to aim for maximisation and productivity. Yet it is the principle of maximisation (uncritically viewed as a systemic 'imperative' under capitalism) which is of course at the heart of the growth imperative and thus underpins actually existing unsustainability. Long-term sustainability and resilience requires the institutionalisation of the different principles of sufficiency and enough, in order to create enough 'head room' and slack needed to stay within ecological and human flourishing boundaries.

In deliberately straying from the discipline of politics and political theory, this book attempts to bring together insights from a wide range of areas seeking to demonstrate the available evidence and support that can be found for the main arguments of this book. This includes acknowledging and beginning any political project or analysis on a clear-eyed acceptance of human collective and individual vulnerability; to abandon the dangerous notion of securing our future on the basis of technological control, mastery and invulnerability; the need to begin (as climate change policy has already begun) to craft our thinking and acting in relation to ecological challenges in terms of creating resilience and 'coping mechanisms' and become more comfortable with messy solutions to complex and 'wicked problems'. We need to deliberately build 'slack' and 'redundancy' into socio-ecological systems as part of this adaptive management strategy, and as a way to reduce unsustainability and as a necessary mechanism to reclaim time and energy needed for human flourishing away from the disciplining objective of economic growth, We thus need to challenge the fixation on 'efficiency' and 'maximisation'; to see that the greatest threat to making this 'Great Transition' is the current dominance of one way of thinking about the economy and economics – namely neo-classical economics; and to stand for greater pluralism and debate in our economic thinking and policy-making. We

need to see that in the developed world we need to move towards a 'post-growth' economics, in which lowering inequalities and increasing quality of life become the main objectives of economic policy; to recognise the unacknowledged gendered labour and the sphere of reproduction in any new post-growth economics; and the need to move away from simplistic monetary metrics, even as we seek to reclaim finance as a 'public good' (Mellor, 2010); to see the potential advantages of re-examining older political traditions such as civil republicanism for what the politics of sustainability and resilience can learn.

While perhaps it might have been expected, especially since the issue of 'vulnerability' looms large in this book, I have not discussed directly the vulnerability of the non-human world to human action. I am certainly acutely aware of this, but I think there is more than enough work already on the ways in which and the causes of human despoliation of the planet and its living and non-living entities. Much of my earlier work focused on these aspects of human-nonhuman relations (Barry, 1999a). However, I do not accept the view that somehow the planet is in mortal danger such that it needs to be 'saved'. Gaia, as Lovelock and others have pointed out is 'tough' and has already witnessed 6 mass extinctions. My view is that 'the planet', 'nonhumanity', the 'environment' (all incredibly slippery terms) will survive, regardless of what we humans throw at it. I do not agree, for instance, with those campaigns that talk of '100 months to save the planet' (new economics foundation, 2009), however much I understand and agree with the underlying motivation.

I do not for one moment view the fact that we do not need to save the planet as offering any comfort or justification for the continuing wholesale industrialised liquidation of life on earth, or as providing a reason for not drawing attention to this. Nor can we maintain our focus solely fixed externally as it were on nature, we also have to turn our critical gaze inwards and see how there are linked 'internal', psychological and cultural aspects this external liquidation of life on the planet. Here, we need to see how modern capitalism is systematically obstructing the opportunities for human flourishing and well-being. Critically interrogating the ethically flawed basis for this liquidation of the nonhuman world, and the counter-productive consequences of this in terms of our own species flourishing, constitute the background against which this book is written. More attention is given to considerations about how humans and specific human societies, valued ways of life and principles can negotiate a way through the 'Great Transition', thus making this book a largely anthropocentric affair. That said, as a self-declared 'enlightened anthropocentric' (Barry, 1999a), but one who resolutely rejects an 'arrogant humanism', I do not think the main lines of argument outlined in this book contradict or are incompatible with some of the ethical, spiritual and metaphysical arguments advanced by green thinkers and activists over the recent decades. That is, I think on the following issues, a green republicanism of actually existing unsustainability supports and does not undermine: reducing the suffering and pain of sentient living creatures; accepting that the non-human world 'counts' morally and has its own interests and intrinsic value and that this should be considered in public policy when it comes to designing institutions and practices which regulate human-nonhuman relations. I also think the pragmatism of green republicanism is well-placed to address some of the ethical implications of the fact that 'life predates on life', which means humans must always consume and use the

nonhuman world. But this metabolic-cum-economic relation to the world does not either exhaust or necessarily trump non-material, non-economic considerations, and a key concern for a green republicanism is the policing of the line/s between human legitimate *use* of the nonhuman world and illegitimate *abuse*. Again we are brought back to the importance of identifying thresholds and setting boundaries.

It is the fact that we have choices in how we live, how we use/abuse the nonhuman world, what sort of society do we want to live in, what sort of world do we wish to pass onto the next generation etc, all of these choices – some personal and small, others 'big P' political and huge – that gives rise to ethical issues, and these lie at the heart of the 'Great Transition' away from actually existing unsustainability. As Wendell Berry eloquently put it, 'Rats and roaches live by competition under the laws of supply and demand. It is the privilege of human beings to live under the laws of justice and mercy' (in Astyk, 2008: 55). In other words, 'path dependency' notwithstanding, we need to resolutely reject TINA ('there is no alternative'), and attempts to 'green of business as usual'. As this book seeks to demonstrate, it is from the active encouragement of alternatives, of deliberately supporting and encouraging pluralism, deliberation, experiments; and perhaps above all stimulating creativity, imagination and innovation that the transition away from unsustainability may occur. Business as usual is not a viable option, the mere inevitability of this transition does not in and of itself provide us with a prescription (a 'greenprint' as it were) of how we ought to respond, prepare and plan. And indeed as this book hopes to show the focus should be on 'unsustainability' and injustice and making societies less unsustainable rather than necessarily developing new accounts of sustainability and justice.

This book suggests that green politics is fundamentally a life-centred and life-affirming politics, a defence of flourishing (both human and nonhuman) against a dominant capitalist system which has become dangerously parasitic and cancerous (to use McMurtry's evocative phrase) on both people and planet. This book has been written in 'troubling times' and about some depressing realities and possibilities for the future. And yet, for all that, I am more convinced that green politics, and *a fortiori*, the specific type of green republican politics sketched in the previous two chapters, is a politics of hope. But neither a form of hope that is basically wishful thinking or an abstract utopianism nor one based on some 'automatic transition' to a sustainable society. Green politics is a politics of hope based on a realistic (but not 'realist' in the international relations sense) assessment of our current condition and predicament, is one for which struggle, resistance and dissent are constitutive features. This, for me, means that green politics is the reaffirmation of understanding politics as transformative as well as contestatory, a recovery of the centrality of political action and social change (Torgerson, 1999). The version of green politics sketched here is a 'radical' in the sense that Mallory notes, "a radical green politics involves the transformation of the political and the subject of politics" (Mallory, 2009: 145). And central to that, as we have seen, is to transform not just politics but also economics, perhaps the 'keystone' form of knowledge and practice that needs radical transformation. So, the green political economy as developed and defended in this book not only firmly stresses the political (and ethical) underpinning of economic thinking, but in so doing also expands the definition of 'the economy' beyond

how it is conventionally (mis)understood. This expansive view of the economy includes sequestered productive activity such gendered reproductive labour and non-remunerated social economic activity, recalling here the important distinction made between 'employment' and 'work'. This view of the economy also focuses on those non-productive, specifically political and citizenship outcomes and lived experience of economic activity, specifically in relation how human labour is organised to achieve both productive and political/citizenship ends. This inclusive and integrative understanding of the economy, especially in the objective to grow the social economy, can be seen as providing a response to Polanyi's identification of the 'disembedding' of the market under capitalism as the main cause of ecological devastation and social distress. This understanding of the economy advanced by green political economists seeks to 're-embed' the economy within social relations and explicitly re-politicise the economy and how we think about economics. And finally, in adopting such a wide and embedded understanding of the human economy, green political economy contributes to eradicating the dangerous fiction of the separation of the human economy from nature's economy (ecology), and offers a more accurate view of the human economy as both a sub-system of the planet's ecosystems, and as utterly dependent upon that larger planetary ecosystem.

'Living in 'Truth': Dissent and Green Politics

In his posthumously published working notes, the Czech writer, politician and dissident activist Jan Patočka succinctly defines what he calls 'radical over-civilisation' (*Nadcivilisace* in Czech) as the 'clumping of all forms of life under the perilous form of industrial productivity' (Patočka 2007: 265). What he meant by this was that in modern industrial society all forms of life and of thought were becoming increasingly valued only in accordance with a scale of efficiency determined by the model of industrial productivity. Patočka's concern was that this principle of instrumental rationality had serious negative consequences to the extent that it threatened the very spirit of inquiry and philosophical introspection that he thought comprised the essence of Europe, its value and potential contribution to improving the world. In this – pointing out the negative consequences of a one-sided rationality and technological mastery of nature (and humans) – he was simply expressing a view long articulated by movements (such as the Green and earlier humanist Marxist) and schools of thinking such as critical theory, especially the Frankfurt school.

The struggle against Soviet communism by dissidents such as Patočka, Havel and Solzhenitsyn do contain important lessons for contemporary 'dissidents' (such as greens), who both stand to their cultures at a critical and oppositional angle, and who 'make their stand' on daring to state that the foundations upon which the entire edifice of modern western societies are based are crumbling. I would suggest that greens who point out the mythic, ideological character of economic growth, and propose preparing for a future beyond orthodox economic growth, are engaged in similar political work and struggle to Soviet era dissidents. Now, least I be accused of an unseemly comparison, while the moral courage needed by the likes of Havel and Solzhenitsyn were immeasurably greater than the courage needed to criticise economic growth and contemporary consumer society, and without seeking to place 'growth dissidents' on the same moral plane as

'Soviet dissidents', nevertheless I do contend the comparison can be made. In both cases courage was and is required, both sets of dissidents faced and face opposition and ridicule from entrenched loci of power – by the state, concentrations of economic power, dominant forms of thinking, the prevailing culture and the mainstream media. While I am resolutely not saying that consumer capitalism is the same as Soviet communism, there are sufficient similarities to justify such a comparison – from a green point of view both exhibit similar forms of control in the maintenance and extension of their social orders and regimes of truth. This comparison also emphasises that green politics differs from both old left and new right in being critical of both state-centric politics and market fundamentalism in championing community against both the state and the market. Thus, to describe greens as 'dissidents' is not to ascribe to them some heroic status to enable them to claim some reflected glory and enhanced moral capital from other, more readily recognisable dissident movements and individuals. Rather it is to examine a green political position through emphasising its dissenting and oppositional character.

Here, in part, this involves revisiting or reintegrating the countercultural origins of the modern green movement within its current political project. In fact, revisiting and reviving the countercultural dimension of green politics helps bring together the characterisation of greens (or green initiatives such as the Transition movement) as 'sustainability pioneers', (as outlined in chapter 3), and identifying them as self-conscious dissidents. By equal measure, the heterodox economic tradition, in which I place green political economy, as outlined in chapters 4 and 5, can also be seen as a form of dissident in its resistance to the 'regime of truth' of the neo-classical economics hegemony, the opposing of which as Deb points out is, 'far from easy, and likely to invite scorn and ridicule' (Deb, 2009: 510). As Peter Hay argues, and in reference to the discussion about the ideological and mythic character of the economic growth, 'The belief in the inevitability and desirability of [economic] growth is so deeply entrenched that insistence on the centrality of the goal of a steady-state within the green critique will consign environmental thought, in the eyes of John and Janet Citizen, to the land of the lunatic fringe' (Hay, 2002: 282). As I understand it then, to be a dissident and 'dissent' is to stand within one's society and political structure but not be of that social and political order in the sense of being reconciled and content with it. It is to be in a semi-permanent state of opposition to the culture and society within which one was born, raised and whose dominant values and objectives one now rejects or seeks to radically reform, based on an alternative or new set of values. *To be a green dissident then is to never be satisfied*. And, it has to be said, to be a green dissident is also to invite ridicule and dismissal in so standing against the prevailing culture and its myths.

'Dissident' is perhaps a better and more accurate term to apply to greens than 'revolutionary', since while both share an opposition to the prevailing social order, revolutionary is clearly more antagonistic rather than agonistic, to use the terms indicated in chapter 7. Dissidents seek to direct a self-transforming present in a more radical direction, whereas revolutionaries typically seek the complete destruction of the existing order and then the construction of a new one. Greens as dissidents also begin from an acceptance of the inevitability of key aspects of this transition – primarily around climate change and the end of the oil age – and thus (perhaps inevitably) see an answer to 'what

is to be done?' in terms of managing and shaping that inevitable transition, rather than building/re-building Dissident also seems less extreme and dogmatic in its critique and its demands, than those who advocate full-blow revolution. And given what was said in chapter 3 and elsewhere about the link between creativity, flexibility and adaptive fitness, it would be odd for green politics to be dogmatic revolutionaries animated by a sense of the hopelessness of working within and through contemporary institutions or that there was nothing worth preserving within and from the contemporary social order. Green dissent could perhaps be (wrongly) described as somewhere on a continuum between 'reformism' and 'revolution', a form of 'creative adaptive management' to create collective resilience in the face of actually existing unsustainability.[195]

In his essay 'The Power of the Powerless', Vaclav Havel uses the story of a greengrocer who unthinkingly displays his 'loyalty' to the regime by displaying a Communist Party slogan in his shop. This the greengrocer does 'ritualistically, since this is the only way the regime is capable of acknowledging his display of loyalty' (Havel, 1978: 45). In a similar way, being a dutiful consumer and not questioning economic growth could also perhaps be regarded as the way in which loyalty to a dominant capitalist, consumer regime is ritualistically displayed, enacted and affirmed. It is for this reason, if not only this reason, that one completely misunderstands consumerism, consumption and being a 'consumer', if one views it solely individualistically as some economic-cum-metabolic act. As a public display of loyalty, consuming is first and foremost a collective act, an individual joining others in a shared activity and associated identity. So while critics such as Fromm are correct in highlighting the distinction in consumer culture between 'being' and 'having' (Fromm, 1976), what these analyses often miss is that consumption is also an act of 'belonging' and identity affirmation (Keat, 1994; Jackson, 2009b). It is for this reason that a refusal to consume is so damaging to the modern political and economic order and why to consciously choose *not* to consume is perhaps one of the most politically significant acts one can do in a consumer society. And one that, the continual performance (or rather non-performance) of which, further marks one out as a dissident, part of 'the great refusal' to use Marcuse's term (Marcuse, 1964). That is, to question economic growth under consumer-capitalism is to be 'disloyal' to the prevailing order.

While for Havel living in what he calls the 'post-totalitarian' communist regime is a 'living a lie', I do not want to go so far and say that life in contemporary consumer capitalist democracies is in the same way to 'live a lie'. Rather what I would like to dwell upon is Havel's notion of 'living within the truth' and what this can offer for green dissidents. For Havel 'living within the truth…can be any means by which a person or group revolts against manipulation: anything from a letter by intellectuals to a workers' strike, from a rock concert to a student demonstration, from refusing to vote in the farcical elections, to making an open speech at some official congress, or even a hunger strike' (Havel, 1986: 59-60). Though clearly written with the then communist regime in

[195] It is also worth remembering here in talking of dissident, that ecology itself was once viewed as 'the subversive science'. As Murdoch and Connell note, an ecologically informed analysis 'has to be subversive or the ecologist will become merely subservient' (Murdoch and Connell, 1971: 323).

mind, Havel's call to 'live in truth' is equally pertinent to consumer capitalism. As he puts it:

> The profound crisis of human identity brought on by living within a lie, a crisis which in turn makes such a life possible, certainly possesses a moral dimension as well; it appears, among other things, as a deep moral crisis in society. *A person who has been seduced by the consumer value system, whose identity is dissolved in an amalgam of the accoutrements of mass civilization, and who has not roots in the order of being, no sense of responsibility for anything higher than his of her own personal survival, is a demoralized person*. The system depends on this demoralization, deepens it, is in fact a projection of it into society. (Havel, 1978: 62; emphasis added)

Silence is of course a consequence and precondition for this demoralisation, and what power requires under consumer capitalism is passive and silent acquiescent as much as active participation. For Havel the re-appropriation of individual responsibility is something to be actively striven for. This reverses or balances the usual focus on rights and freedoms with which often 'progressive' critiques of consumerism are couched. In Havel's response to what Tim Jackson amongst others has called 'The Age of Irresponsibility' (Jackson, 2009b), also connects with some of the green republican arguments outlined in chapters 6 and 7, not least the stress on both the recovery of the good of politics and the centrality of the individual citizen as a moral being and not just or only a consumer (or producer/worker or investor). As Jackson notes, 'the "age of irresponsibility" is not about casual oversight or individual greed. The economic crisis is not a consequence of isolated malpractice in selected parts of the banking sector. *If there has been irresponsibility, it has been much more systemic, sanctioned from the top, and with one clear aim in mind: the continuation and protection of economic growth*' (Jackson, 2009b: 26; emphasis added).

The struggle Havel describes from the 1968 'Prague spring' between 'the system' and 'the aims of life' (Havel, 1978: 66) resonate green concerns of the degradation of natural life-supporting systems and the undermining of conditions promoting human conviviality, quality of life and well-being (Barry, 2009b; De Geus, 2009, 2003; Jackson, 2009a). What Havel goes on to say about political change and strategy in the context of a consumer culture is pertinent and important for those seeking a transition away from unsustainability, 'Society is not sharply polarized on the level of actual political power, but…*the fundamental lines of conflict run right through each person*' (Havel, 1978: 91; emphasis added). This is a profound point, namely that it is difficult, if not impossible, to simply analyse actually existing unsustainability as an oppressive totalitarian regime in which there is an identifiable 'them' dominating 'us'. Under consumer capitalism, debt-based consumption etc. we who live in these societies are all implicated in its continuation. And while of course there are identifiable groups and institutions (such as large corporations, financial/wealth management firms, the leadership of mainstream political parties, key agencies of the nation-state such as Departments of Finance, global financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, and what Sklair has called the 'transnational capitalist class') who do benefit more from actually existing

unsustainability, we have to face up to the fact that 'ordinary people', i.e. everyone also contributes (unequally of course) to the 'mundane' operation of global capitalism and the exploitation of people and planet. The recognition of this is but another way of drawing attention to the fact that capitalism, the commonsense of neo-classical economics etc. have achieved 'full spectrum' domination of hearts and minds, such that capitalism, and realistic critiques of it, need to be viewed as cultural (and indeed psychological) projects. It is for this reason that I canvassed the Transition movement in chapter 3, since it adopts an explicitly cultural and psychological approach. Of course such cultural and psychological critical analyses are not exhausted by this movement and these cannot be a substitute for oppositional political struggle.

This 'cultural turn' in green politics is, to my mind, linked to the 'post-scarcity economics of sustainable desire' outlined in chapter 5, and is premised firmly on a notion of human flourishing that lies beyond production, 'supply side' solutions, 'competiveness' and increasing 'labour productivity'. This notion of flourishing is not anti-materialist. Let me make that abundantly clear, it is not an ascetic renunciation of materialism for its own sake, as if material life is intrinsically unworthy or does express valued modes of human being. Thus I do not accept the Fromm-inspired view that materialism or indeed material consumption is simply a mode of 'having' and not 'being'. After all, the critique should be directed at consumerism and overconsumption, not materialism or consumption per se.

At a basic level one can see how communism and consumerism are two 'regimes of truth' – to return to the Foucauldian language used in chapter 4 – imposing their version of the truth, exacting payment, compliance and subjectivity from their client populations, quelling, distracting and undermining dissidents, and using different but also some shared techniques to continue. And the appropriate dissident, progressive attitude and strategy against both is, for Havel, ultimately an ethical one, an ethical and political life-affirming 'reconstitution of society' (Havel, 1978: 115). That Havel conceives consumer-capitalist and communist societies as comparable can be seen in his view that:

> traditional parliamentary democracies can offer no fundamental opposition to the autonomism of technological civilisation, and the industrial-consumer society, for they, too, are being dragged helplessly along by it. People are manipulated in ways that are infinitely more subtle and refined than the brutal methods used in the post-totalitarian societies…*the omnipresent dictatorship of consumption, production, advertising, commerce, consumer culture, and all that flood of information*. (Havel, 1978: 116; emphasis added)

Some of the republican elements expressed in Havel's thought centre around 'responsibility' (Havel, 1986: 104). He maintains that the abdication of responsibility in the name of consumer choice – what I have elsewhere described as the reduction of political liberty to a consumer 'freedom of choice' (Barry, 2009a) – weakens the ethical and political capacities of citizens within liberal democracies. Liberal consumer–citizens then become 'victims of the same autonomism, and are incapable of *transcending concerns about their own personal survival to become proud and responsible members of*

the polis, making a genuine contribution to the creation of its destiny' (Havel, 1978: 116; emphasis added). In this Havel is articulating concerns very close to the type of green republicanism outlined in this book.

His concluding comments in 'The Power of the Powerless' also offer suggestive lines for interpreting the Transition movement. In a passage focusing the contours of what Havel calls the 'existential revolution' that is needed to re-new the relationship of humans to the 'human order and cosmopolitan responsibility', Havel notes that the structures needed to make this happen 'should naturally arise from below as a consequence of authentic "self-organization"; they should derive energy from a living dialogue with the genuine needs from which they arise, and when these needs are gone, the structures should also disappear…The decisive criterion of this "self-constitution" should be the structure's actual significance and not just a mere abstract norm' (Havel, 1978: 119). A better description of the Transition movement's aims, motivations and objectives would be hard to find. Havel goes on to describe these new, provisional and practical structures 'post-democratic'. He describes the outlines of these 'authentic' political structures in this manner:

> Do not these groups emerge, live and disappear under pressure from concrete and authentic needs, unburdened by the ballast of hollow traditions? Is not their attempt to create an articulate form of 'living within the truth' and to renew the feeling of higher responsibility in an apathetic society really a sign of some rudimentary moral reconstitution? In other words, are not these informed, non-bureaucratic dynamic and open communities that comprise the 'parallel polis' a kind of rudimentary prefiguration, a symbolic model of those more meaningful 'post-democratic' political structures that might become the foundation of a better society? (Havel, 1978: 120-121).

Fundamental here, I think, is Havel's call to responsibility and struggle against the prevailing political order when it undermines quality of life, perpetuates injustice or the denial or compromising of democratic norms. In a similar vein Carla Emery puts it eloquently, 'People have to choose what they're going to struggle for. Life is always a struggle, whether or not you're struggling for anything worthwhile, so it might as well be for something worthwhile' (in Astyk, 2008: 204). Or to phrase it differently: get busy living or get busy dying.

What if we are the people we've been waiting for?

As argued throughout this book in facing the many challenges of the present time – climate change, peak oil, diminishing forms social well-being, financial and economic crises and the ecological liquidation of the foundations of life on the planet – the most important response needed is one which explicitly focuses on imagination and creativity. As W.B. Yeats (long before Barak Obama used a version of these sentiments) suggested, what is needed is for us 'to seek a remedy...in audacity of speculation and creation' (Yeats, 1926). While 'another world is possible' it can only be possible if it is imagined, and perhaps one of the most persistent obstacles to the transition away from actually

existing unsustainability – apart from ignorance of the ecological and human costs of our capitalist-consumer way of life – is the stultifying grip of 'business as usual' and its limited and limiting horizons of possible futures for ourselves and our societies. In many respects, our collective inability to respond to 'limits to growth' is in large measure due to limits of creativity and imagination. We cannot, or find it very difficult, to imagine a different social order.

For Richard Norgaard the answer to our present ecological predicament is as difficult to achieve as it is simple to express, 'We need a new life story. We need an overarching story that respects a diversity of life stories. Living the story of economic development is destroying humanity and nature and a good many other species along with us. We need a master story that puts our hope, compassion, brains, sociality, and diversity to new and constructive ends' (in Deb, 2009: xxiii). And if we follow Havel, it may be that this new story we need is already here, in the same sense that the eco-feminist Mary Mellor (Mellor, 1995) has persuasively written that the sustainable world, society or mode of being is not some utopian 'there' but an already living, embodied, engendered 'here' in the reproductive and exploited labour of women, in the 'core' economic activity of caring and sharing and... flourishing. The Polanyian inspired attempt to 're-embed' the economy within human social relations (or to defend it from both formal market and the state), through *inter alia* the expansion of the social economy, or the efforts by the Transition movement in seeking to disrupt and slow down and localise exchange and reconceptualise the economy, all could be thought as seeking to defend and extend those sustainable practices, in the here and now, and already exist within 'actually existing unsustainability'. This is particularly the case with reproductive labour as outlined in this book.

Actually it is the neoclassical economic view that is 'utopian' in promoting a fictitious and dangerous imaginary of human life lived at 365/24/7 speed and a way of life completely out of synch not just with human biological but also ecological time. And, it must be recalled, 'mother nature does not do bailouts'. As Havel suggests, 'For the real question is whether the "brighter future" is really always so distant. What if, on the contrary, it has been here for a long time already, and only our own blindness and weakness has prevented us from seeing it around us and within us, and kept us from developing it?' (Havel, 1978: 122). Now there's an intriguing set of concluding thoughts – what if not only the resilient, sustainable way of life is 'always already here', present and available to us if we so choose: and also if it is indeed the case that 'we are the people we've been waiting for?'

And what of the hard greens, where do they and their analysis fit within this book? For it is fair to say that they have been shadowing the book. While I discussed them briefly in the Introduction and made some causal comments about them and their diverse positions and prescriptions throughout, I have not met them head on as it were. So it would be fitting for me to offer my thoughts on the place and status of the hard green position. Are they basically correct, do I agree with them (from the green republican acceptance of the time bound and contingent character of all human creations, including civilisations and societies) that they have identified the beginning of the end of our existing capitalist,

carbon based civilisation and societies? While I certainly admire their brutal honesty, I baulk at their jump from crisis to collapse, and then from collapse to violence and 'decivilisation' (Elias, 2000, Hine and Kingsnorth, 2010). Their political analyses echo (almost always unwittingly) the eco-authoritarian position of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The hard-green view in being so pessimistic means its pessimism precludes a view of politics as the 'art of the possible', and a view of the inevitability of collapse can and does lead to depoliticised or even anti-political responses. But surely the challenge, as outlined by the green republican project of this book, is to embrace new intelligibilities, ways of being, having and doing, new identities and subjectivities, and new arts of life, all must be part of a project to avert collapse?[196] This is as I see it the point of green republican politics as a form of 'anticipatory politics' to challenge the rule of the 'neoliberal vulgate'. At this present moment, on the cusp of this 'great transition', what greens need is to cultivate critical awareness, opposition and dissent, to have the courage it its convictions in analysing and resisting actually existing unsustainability, and outlining its vision for the transition to a better society, in part to engage, inform and prepare citizens for the coming changes that will characterise the decades ahead. Greens need to be realistic and clear-eyed in their disavowal of naive utopianism, but convinced of its basic conviction that another world is possible, necessary and desirable. And while on quiet mornings we may hear it coming, its arrival, like all major transitions in human history, will demand political struggle. The battle for hearts, minds and hands has begun, and my writing this book and you reading it are constitutive of that struggle.

[196] I owe this point to Peter Doran.

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