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***Green Political Theory:
Nature, Virtue and Progress***

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submitted in fulfilment for PhD in Political Theory

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ABSTRACT

This thesis offers an immanent critique and reconstruction of green moral and political theory. In chapter 1, the critical-reconstructive approach and spirit of the thesis is outlined in terms of contributing to the process of developing a green political theory that is different from 'ecologism' or ideological accounts of green politics. In chapter 2, deep ecology is critically interrogated in terms of its metaphysical (2.3) and psychological claims (2.4). Its view of the 'ecological crisis' as a 'crisis' of western culture is criticised, as is its *a priori* defence of environmental preservation over the human productive use of nature. While its ecocentrism is rejected as the normative basis for green politics, its concern with virtue ethics is held to be an important contribution. In chapter 3, a self-reflexive version of anthropocentrism is developed as the most appropriate moral basis for green politics. Some naturalistic arguments are presented in order to support 'speciesism', and defend it from claims of arbitrariness and as being akin to sexism or racism. Arguments centring on demonstrating the tenuous character of the *differences* between humans and nonhumans are argued to neglect the fundamental moral significance of the *difference* between 'human' and 'nonhuman'. I argue that an ethic of use, understood as a reflexive mode of interaction with the nonhuman world, is a defensible form of anthropocentrism for green political purposes. The basis of this reflexive anthropocentrism turns on the claim that while human interests are a necessary condition for justifying a particular human use of nature, it is not a satisfactory one. Issues pertaining to the 'seriousness' of the human interest which is fulfilled are held to be important in distinguishing 'use' from 'abuse'.

In chapters 4 to 7, I outline a particular conception of green political theory. In chapter 4, the eco-anarchist position is examined by focusing on two versions: bioregionalism (4.3) and social ecology (4.4). While rejecting the eco-anarchist position, I conclude that it be thought of as a constitutive rather than a regulative ideal of green politics, on the basis that the transformation rather than the abolition of the state is consistent with green values and principles. Chapter 5 builds on the latter and presents an institutional version of green politics, which I call collective ecological management. This understanding of green politics, in which both the 'nation' and the 'state' have key roles, is developed from a critique of ecological modernisation (5.5), and Leopold's 'land ethic' (5.8). In chapter 6, I outline a theory of green political economy. Criticising both neoclassical environmental economics and free market environmentalism, I present an alternative green political economy which sees the 're-embedding' of the economy in society as a necessary part of the process of harmonising the human and natural economies. Issues around the 'formal' and 'informal' economy, local and global markets, self-sufficiency and self-reliance are discussed as well the relationship between consumption, production and ecological virtue. In chapter 7, the democratic dimensions of green political theory are examined. Here, green democratic theory and practice is held to centre on a view of democracy as a form of society in which 'green citizenship' as an integrative mode of action and identity is central to the cultivation of 'ecological stewardship'. Chapter 8 concludes with a discussion of 'progress', virtue and ecological stewardship.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Although it would not be completely accurate to proclaim that we are all greens now, it is true to say that green politics has become an established perspective in political and moral debates, both within the academy and within society at large. Green politics in this sense is no longer 'green'. As I write, the 'mad cow' disease crisis has erupted, the latest in a long line of social-environmental problems which has provided further evidence (if evidence were needed) to demonstrate the increasing sensitivity of democratic populations to environmental risks. Such dilemmas, their occurrence, frequency and public perception also consolidate green politics, its values, principles and concerns as an established analytical perspective on contemporary democratic politics. A critical analysis of the political theory underpinning this perspective is the aim of this thesis.

This thesis sets out to examine current conceptualisations of green political theory, and presents an alternative conceptualisation of green political theory, one which, I argue, accords better with its central informing principles and values. To a large extent this thesis attempts to focus more on green political *theory* rather than green political *ideology*. That is, it tries to develop an alternative understanding of green politics which is, at times, markedly at odds with dominant views of green ideology. For example, the conception of green political theory outlined and defended in this thesis takes issue with the ecocentric and anarchistic tendencies which are often taken as central in defining green ideology. Instead a naturalistic anthropocentric moral base (chapter 3) is argued to underpin an ecological political arrangement termed collective ecological management (chapter 5), a central component of which involves the transformation as opposed to the abolition of the nation-state. A major difference between green political theory and green political ideology is the modesty of the former. While both green ideology and theory share a common critical stance, they differ in that green political theory is less marked by a

utopian style of critique. Instead an immanent critique characterises green political theory. The immanence of green political theory is in two respects. On the one hand, the conceptualisation of green theory which is offered in this thesis is itself the product of an immanent critique and reconstruction of existing conceptualisations of green ideology and theory. On the other the particular conceptualisation of green political theory defended is one for which the resolution of social-environmental problems must at least start from an immanent (as opposed from an 'external') critique of existing patterns and modes of social-environmental interaction.

The critical aspects of the thesis are not ends in themselves, but ought to be read as a necessary part of the process to develop a more coherent, plausible and attractive version of green political theory. These critical aspects are to be understood as part of the general strategy of the thesis which attempts to reconstruct green political theory via a process of immanent critique. The alternative understanding of green politics developed in the thesis comes from within green political theory, broadly understood. Thus, throughout the thesis I take issue with many 'sacred cows' of green political theory, such as ecocentrism (chapters 2 and 3), eco-anarchism (chapters 4 and 5), post-materialism (chapter 6), anti-urbanism (chapter 4), anti-market (chapter 6), and direct democracy (chapter 7). My concern is not to dispose of these sacred cows (an act that would be singularly problematic given the vegetarian and vegan predilections of many greens!), but rather by critically interrogating them to extract a defensible kernel, and to integrate the latter into a alternative understanding of green political theory. This critical-reconstructive aim is part and parcel of developing a green political theory from within the various discourses of green political ideology. This aim is to critically assess the main understandings and accounts of green ideology and translate the principles and values they embody into an alternative political idiom. For example, deep ecology's ecocentrism is understood as an argument concerning the necessity to regulate and reformulate anthropocentric moral reasoning. Ecocentrism, on this gloss, is a warning against a complacent and potentially arrogant anthropocentrism. As argued in chapters 2 and 3, the normative claims of green political theory do not require the rejection of anthropocentric moral reasoning in favour of a putative non-anthropocentric ecocentrism. Likewise eco-anarchism (chapter 4) is

viewed as a 'regulative' as opposed to a 'constitutive' ideal of green politics. That is, eco-anarchism expresses the green concern for democratisation, decentralisation and appropriate scale, and acts as a reminder of the ecological and democratic dangers of centralised and hierarchical political authority and economic organisation.

While this translation of dominant understandings of green moral and political theory will doubtless be criticised and/or rejected by those who conceive of green politics in terms of 'deep/radical' versus 'shallow/reformist' (that is a profoundly *ideological* perspective), the alternative understanding of green political theory which emerges from this thesis cannot be rejected on the grounds that the political theory it defends is not 'green' in a generic sense. The argument of the thesis is thus premised on a rejection of understandings of green politics based around distinguishing 'deep' from 'shallow' green thinking, or 'ecologism' from 'environmentalism'. These accounts of green politics, while of course important and valuable, often obscure as much as they reveal. This ideological approach tends to highlight the differences rather than the connections, overlapping principles and themes between various conceptualisations of normative green theory. As suggested in chapter 4 (4.5), such ideological views of green politics were perhaps an inevitable and positive aspect of its early development. Looking back on the development of green politics since the 1960s, one is keenly aware of how its critical, radical and often uncompromising character underpins this ideological account.

Ideological accounts of green politics are also characterised by a tendency to neglect the difficult task of working out the theoretical and practical implications of green principles and values. Green ideology, in common with most other ideologies, assumes the harmony of its principles by positing a future social order in which these principles are realised. In the case of green theory, ideological accounts of 'ecologism' focus on describing the 'sustainable society' to the neglect of working out the implications of the principle of sustainability, for example. Working out, and through, the principles and values of green politics is a primary aim of this thesis. As such, it seeks to establish the rationality and persuasiveness of the green case independently of the attractiveness of green visions of the sustainable society. The problem with ideological interpretations of green politics is the 'external' quality of their diagnostic and prescriptive elements. They

offer a ‘view from nowhere’ as a guide to get from ‘here’ (the unsustainable present) to ‘there’ (the ‘sustainable society’). Thus for example, deep ecology’s (ideological) view of the ‘ecological crisis’ as a *crisis of* western culture is contrasted with a view of ecological problems as a *contradiction within* culture (chapter 2). As a crisis of western culture, the deep ecological ‘solution’ is premised on an external critique: the rejection of anthropocentrism and the adoption of ecocentrism. If anthropocentrism, which is a core cultural orientation of western societies, is the cause of the ‘ecological crisis’, then an immanent critique of anthropocentrism is insufficient. Nothing short of a cultural ‘paradigm-shift’ and a ‘new ethic’ is required, since western culture and anthropocentrism are insufficient to resolve the crisis they have caused. This understanding I argue is a major reason why deep ecology is to be viewed as a ‘redemptive politics’, for which an ecocentric ‘reverence for nature’ as opposed to a ‘respect for nature’, is a necessary condition for the resolution of the ecological crisis (2.3.1). This ideological view is rejected on the grounds that the ecological crisis is not a crisis of civilisation in the way some radical greens think, but is better viewed as a cultural contradiction which is resolvable from within the resources of western, anthropocentric culture. Hence the adoption of an immanent style of critique throughout the thesis. That is, to adequately understand the ensemble of social-environmental problems, dilemmas and risks faced by contemporary western societies, one must analyse this ensemble in terms of its *causes* rather than just its *effects*. In short, one must look for the causes of social-environmental problems *within* society and culture first, in order to properly address their effects as manifested in problematic relations *between* the human and the nonhuman worlds.

Recent developments within green political thought, to which this thesis is intended to be a contribution, indicate a certain ‘maturing’ of green politics, or what Hayward has termed “theoretical consolidation” (1995: 6). This has been marked by a shift from criticising the status quo and advocating a moral ‘paradigm shift’ and/or a vision of the future ‘sustainable society’, to a concern with formulating feasible and attractive solutions, policies and institutional designs to present social-environmental dilemmas. One of the aims of this thesis is to demonstrate that translating green normative and political principles into policies, does not necessarily rob green politics of its radical and

transformative character. While utopian visions of a better society and ecocentric forms of moral reasoning are transgressive and contribute enormously to the imaginative and innovative spirit of green thinking, it is a mistake to think that only these forms of thinking are 'radical'. It is just as radical (if not more) to transcend the dualistic and dichotomous grammar of conventional understandings of green politics. One of the reasons behind the 'critical-reconstructive' approach adopted in the thesis is a belief that the theoretical consolidation and development of green thought, is now as much about getting rid of the unnecessary as it is about developing additional insights. The critical-reconstructive approach can be viewed as an attempt to get the green theoretical house in order, as it were. My starting point is that the elaboration of an alternative conceptualisation of green theory is a necessary prelude in order that it take its proper place within contemporary debates within political theory. Part of this immanent critique involves elaborating key terms and principles used in political theory from a green perspective. Thus alongside discussing 'green' principles such as 'sustainability' and green concerns with establishing morally symbiotic relations with the nonhuman world, green political theory is also characterised by its understanding of 'standard' political theory terms such as 'liberty' (chapter 6), 'interests' and 'preferences' (chapters 3, 5, 6, 7), 'the state' (chapters 4, 5, 7), 'progress' (chapters 7, 8) and 'democracy' (chapter 7).

One approach to this in the thesis is to focus on the types of policies greens, of various hues, do or would, endorse, given their values and principles. This is in keeping with the aim suggested above which focuses on areas of overlap. Often, in practice, the difference between 'radicals', 'ecocentrics' and so-called 'shallow ecologists' or 'reformists', is one of degree rather than kind. This is particularly the case with policy proposals concerning environmental protection and preservation. What one often finds is substantive agreement on policies or institutional reform but disagreement on the reasons given for supporting policies. Thus one of the major arguments of the thesis is that there is a large area of agreement between different conceptualisations of green ideology. For example, in respect to the 'ecocentric-anthropocentric' dichotomy, following Norton's 'convergence hypothesis' (1991); I argue that a reformed 'naturalistic humanism' (chapter 3) can support a 'stewardship ethic' (chapters 3, 5, 7), which can integrate green demands for

symbiotic and sustainable relations between human societies and their environments (chapter 3). This stewardship position, based on an 'ethics of use' for the environment in which human interests and nonhuman interests can be harmonised to some extent (3.5), can also be developed from contemporary discourses around 'ecological modernisation' (5.5), and a less eccentric (mis)interpretation of Leopold's 'land ethic' (5.8). This stewardship position can be understood as suggesting a mode of human interaction within which the human interest in managing and transforming the environment, which is vital to the fulfilling of other human interests, is characterised by moral and ecological concerns. The advantage of the stewardship position is that it is politically (as well as philosophically) superior to ecocentrism, since it holds that care for the environment cannot be independent from human interests. Indeed, stewardship is interpreted as an ecologically rational mode of individual and collective behaviour and interaction, in which long-term human interests are secured. Ecological stewardship, unlike ecocentrism, seeks to emphasise that a self-reflexive, long-term, anthropocentrism, as opposed to an 'arrogant' or 'strong' anthropocentrism, can secure many of the policy objectives of ecocentrism, in terms of environmental preservation and conservation. A central aspect of this is that the concern for the nonhuman world which underpins stewardship is not disinterested or impartial (chapter 3). As argued in chapter 3 (3.5.1, 3.6), this reformed, reflexive anthropocentrism is premised on critically evaluating human uses of the nonhuman world, and distinguishing 'permissible' from 'impermissible' uses. That is, an 'ethics of use', though anthropocentric and rooted in human interests, seeks to regulate human interaction with the environment in terms of 'use' and 'abuse'. The premise for this defence of anthropocentric moral reasoning is that an immanent critique of 'arrogant humanism' is a much more defensible way to express green moral concerns, than rejecting anthropocentrism and developing a 'new ecocentric ethic'. As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, ecocentric demands are premised on an over-hasty dismissal of anthropocentrism which precludes a recognition of the positive resources within anthropocentrism for developing an appropriate and practicable moral idiom to cover social-environmental interaction. Anthropocentric moral reasoning has never sanctioned a purely instrumental view of this interaction. The history of western philosophy and culture is testament to the various

ways in which the moral dimensions of the relationship between the human and the nonhuman worlds have been analysed, recognised and created.

A central part of developing an alternative language for green political theory involves a concern with 'virtue' and 'progress'. Although there are no specific chapters devoted to either of these, they are constant points of reference throughout the thesis. The concern with ecological virtue is a recurrent theme throughout the thesis from chapter 2 where it is suggested as an alternative ethical idiom by which to express ecocentric moral concerns, to chapter 7 (7.8) where it is used to integrate green democratic concerns of citizenship with ecological stewardship. Picking up on the deep ecological point about the centrality of character to morality in chapter 2, a virtue ethics approach is used throughout the thesis as a way to establish the connection between green moral and political theory. As developed in chapter 3 (3.6), a virtue ethics approach views the moral dimension of green concerns as having less to do with finding the correct set of moral rules by which we are to interact with nature, than with cultivating respectful, less 'arrogant' modes of interaction with the nonhuman world. Another advantage of a virtue ethics approach to green moral and political theory is that central to virtue is the idea of flourishing, or well-being, rather than 'welfare'. Virtue ethics can furnish a much needed sense of proportion and humility to guard against the constant vice of hubris, indifference and disrespect to the nonhuman world. By cultivating ecologically sensitive modes of relating to the world, particularly human transformative relations and practices, the normative change that greens argue for acquires a cultural as well as a political character. This cultural dimension is stressed throughout the thesis as another way in which the green political theory I defend is to be distinguished from other forms. Thus throughout the thesis reference is made to human modes of action and interaction such as 'production', 'consumption', and 'citizenship' which are central to social-environmental affairs. Green political theory, centred on the cultivation of 'ecological stewardship' becomes a matter of integrating these modes of interaction so that together they constitute a stewardship mode. Taking a virtue-orientated position implies that a concern of green politics is to create modes of human interaction with the nonhuman world which are ecologically sustainable and morally symbiotic. The latter refers to fostering self-reflexive modes of human

behaviour in which human interests, for which particular human uses of the nonhuman world are carried out, are considered as necessary but not sufficient to justify that use. Green political theory thus becomes concerned with discriminating legitimate, worthy, or serious human interests from illegitimate, unworthy or trivial ones. The concern with virtue is thus related to discriminating 'symbiotic' from 'parasitic' human modes of interaction, and to foster the former as a (ecologically) virtuous mode. At the same time, the classical view of virtue as a mean between extremes, is also evident in the reflexive form of anthropocentrism developed in chapter 3. This reformed anthropocentrism is a mean between the extremes (vices) of deep ecological 'submissiveness' in respect to nature, and the 'arrogance' of 'strong anthropocentrism'.

In a similar fashion the discussion of 'progress' also shadows the thesis. While specific issues around progress understood as 'economic development' and 'modernisation' are directly addressed in chapters 6 (6.8) and 7 (7.5) respectively, the force of the term progress in the title of the thesis is intended to guide how it should be read. This focus on progress is in keeping with the reconstructive intention of the thesis, namely that green political theory is not anti-progress, anti-modern or anti-Enlightenment. Rather green political theory is to be understood as an immanent critique of progress, suggesting an alternative understanding of it based on its view of social and social-environmental relations. A reason why progress is chosen as a pivotal issue through which green political theory is discussed, is a conviction that what green politics represents is analogous to the challenges and opportunities that marked the Enlightenment or the advent of 'modernity'. In common with recent writers on green politics, I argue that the central aims of green politics coalesce around the necessity and desirability of 'ecological enlightenment' (Beck, 1995a; Hayward, 1995). Thus the debate around ecological modernisation (5.5) and its extension to what I call collective ecological management (5.6), should be read as a debate concerning the basis, form and meaning of 'ecological enlightenment' and what constitutes progress within this debate.

1.2 Thesis Structure and Overview of Chapters

The thesis is broadly structured into two parts: the first focusing on the moral and the other on the political dimensions of green political theory. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the former, while 4 through to 7 examine the latter.

In chapter 2, a critique of deep ecology is outlined. Although deep ecology, its values, principles and positions are criticised, the main focus of chapter 2 is on its shortcomings as a moral basis for a political theory. Its appeal to the necessity for the widespread adoption of an ‘ecological consciousness’, to replace anthropocentrism, is argued to be both unnecessary (since as argued in chapter 3, anthropocentrism or humanism is sufficient to furnish an adequate ethic to govern social-environmental relations) and undesirable since its ecocentric moral base is insufficient to support a **political** theory of social-environmental relations. Its appeal to metaphysical (2.3) and psychological change (2.4) as the only way for the ‘ecological crisis’ to be resolved are internally problematic and insufficient to provide a normative basis for political agreement (2.5). Deep ecology as the moral basis for green politics compromises the connection between its political and ethical dimensions. Deep ecology is argued to be largely a matter of faith, based on an assumption that political and institutional change will somehow ‘follow on’ from the ‘deeper’ level metaphysical/psychological changes it proposes. Since for deep ecology the cause of the ecological crisis is ‘anthropocentrism’, deep ecology proposes an alternative non-anthropocentric worldview. Deep ecology ‘dissolves’ the distinctly political problems of social-environmental relations by reducing those problems to metaphysical and psychological ones. At the same time deep ecology’s ecocentrism is argued to be premised on privileging the protection or preservation of the environment over human use of the environment. Deep ecology’s ecocentrism attempts to reverse the situation where the case for environmental preservation has to be justified or proved, while human use of the environment goes unquestioned. It seeks to replace an anthropocentric *a priori* which is held to justify *any* human use of the environment (which follows from deep ecology’s (false) view of anthropocentrism), with an ecocentric *a priori* in favour of the preservation of the environment from human use. This chapter, partly with an eye to the democratic

credentials of green politics discussed in chapter 7, argues against the assumption of either an *a priori* disposition in favour of any human use of the environment or preservation. The point is that the normative status of social-environmental relations cannot be determined *a priori*. However, having said that, the discussion in this chapter does indicate that any normative account of social-environmental relations must include human productive and transformative relations with the environment. That is, how we ought to treat nature must start from and be consistent with a recognition of the fact that humans must use nature to survive and flourish and that this is part of what it means to be human. This is related to the argument in the next chapter where the ‘environment’ with which human societies interact is argued to be a ‘humanised one’ (3.4.1).

However, in keeping with the reconstructive aim of the thesis, I argue that there is a notion of ‘ecological virtue’ within deep ecology which can be integrated within a more defensible version of green political theory. In 2.7, I use deep ecology’s focus on moral character and the cultivation of ecological habits and disposition as a more defensible way in which to present its key ethical contribution to green moral theory. The moral idiom of ‘virtue ethics’ is a more appropriate way to understand deep ecology, particularly its emphasis on the self. In 2.7.1, I discuss the advantages of this virtue approach in terms of a view of virtues as moral traits which are indispensable for dealing with the contingency, uncertainty and ever-changing character of the ‘environments’, social, social-environmental and natural, humans inhabit. Unlike, deep ecology which I argue seeks to find a determinate and final answer to the ‘truth’ of human-nature relations, a virtue-ethics approach can be viewed as an attempt not to eradicate or ‘solve’ the problems and challenges of the ‘human condition’ (2.7.2). Rather a virtue-ethics approach is to be seen as cultivating a mode of being and behaviour which helps us to cope and adapt to, rather than eliminate, the contingencies and uncertainties of the human condition in relation to our environment. At the same time, virtue understood as a mean between extremes, suggests a conception of green moral theory which is a mean between an ‘arrogant’ anthropocentrism and an equally problematic ‘naive’ ecocentrism. The ‘quietism’ or submergence of human interests within the natural order, just as much as an arrogant anthropocentrism, is argued to be an ecological ‘vice’ to be avoided.

In chapter 3, this recognition of the centrality of human use of the environment is developed within the context of a broadly naturalistic ethical understanding of social-environmental relations. While there is a recognition that any normative theory of social-environmental relations must be consistent with human productive use, this *does not* mean that *any and all* human transformations or uses of the environment are morally justifiable or equally justifiable. This chapter seeks to demonstrate that an immanent critique of anthropocentrism can furnish an ‘ethics of use’ for social-environmental affairs which can underpin green political theory. It is also aimed at demonstrating that in terms of practical policies and actual social-environmental interaction, an ethics of use can achieve many of the ends desired by ecocentrics. This ethics of use is used as one way in which the interests of the nonhuman and the human worlds can be compatible, or that an ethical concern for the world is consistent with our productive use of it. In short, the problem is not with humanism but the *arrogance* and *narrowness* that the latter may express. The problem is with a particular conception of anthropocentrism, which is usually understood as ‘strong’ anthropocentrism, not anthropocentrism per se (3.5). In this chapter a middle path between the extremes of strong anthropocentrism and ecocentrism is outlined. This middle path, or virtue, between these two ‘ecological vices’, denotes a mode of human interaction with the nonhuman world such that the social metabolism with nature is morally symbiotic as well as ecologically *sustainable*. The point about an ethics of use is to allow us to distinguish *parasitic* or morally unworthy or unjustifiable uses of nature from permissible forms of interaction and transformation. Chief amongst these parasitic forms include factory farming and industrialised forms of agriculture and animal husbandry (3.5). Anticipating the critique of economic rationality and economic conceptions of social-environmental relations discussed later in chapter 5 and 6, a conclusion of this chapter is that underlying the strong and arrogant anthropocentrism criticised by deep ecology and other forms of ecocentric environmental ethics, is a particular economic view of social-environmental relations which systematically narrows human interests in the world. One way of looking at this is to argue that such narrow economic relations with the world ‘crowd out’ ethical considerations with regard to productive social-environmental relations. The distinction between ‘consumer’ and ‘citizen’ (3.6.1) is

employed to examine the issue of productive relations being regulated *purely* by economic considerations of efficiency or profit. On this gloss, green politics is about providing a wider political-normative context within which human productive relations with nature are not governed solely by human economic interests. In keeping with this chapter's defence of a reformulated anthropocentrism, an ethics of use can be viewed as arguing that not all human interests, simply because they are human, are sufficient to justify *any* social-environmental relation. When viewed as a virtue ethics position (3.6), green moral theory becomes a matter of determining 'worthy' from 'unworthy', 'serious' from 'trivial' human productive interests in the world.

In chapter 4, I critically examine the common view of green political theory as a modern version of anarchism or 'anarchistic' in some constitutive sense. While taking issue with the assumed pre-eminence of eco-anarchism within green political theory, this chapter seeks to understand its place within green theory in terms of its positive contributions. That is, while eco-anarchism is rejected as a feasible or desirable view of green politics, the values and concerns that underpin it are taken seriously. Two eco-anarchist political theories are examined, bioregionalism (4.3) and social ecology (4.4). Bioregionalism, which is understood as the closest political complement to deep ecology, is criticised as insufficient to work as an adequate political theory for social-environmental relations. However, its distinction between 'ecosphere' and 'biosphere' is an important contribution to green politics, and something that both the institutional arrangements of green politics (chapter 5) and green political economy (chapter 6) can incorporate. The aims of social ecology's 'libertarian municipalism' (4.4) is argued to be more coherently expressed as an argument for the democratisation and decentralisation, rather than the abolition, of the state. In 4.5 the notion of the 'sustainable society' is used as a way in which we can understand the pre-eminence accorded to the eco-anarchist vision within green political debate. The chapter concludes with the argument that eco-anarchism is best seen as a regulative rather than a constitutive ideal of green politics, that is informing and influencing, but not determining its aims, policies and institutional theory.

Chapter 5 builds on the critique of eco-anarchism by developing a conception of green politics in which there is a positive and key role to be played by the nation-state in the

creation of sustainable and symbiotic social-environmental relations. The central aim of this chapter is to provide the institutional basis that coheres with green moral and political values. 5.2 discusses green political theory in terms of its principles and proposals relating to structural and agent-level change. 5.3 introduces 'ecological rationality' as a criteria^{on} and way of expressing the argument in the last chapter concerning the idea of sustainable and symbiotic social-environmental relations. 5.4 gives a brief overview of the centrality of the state within the literature. In 5.5, I offer a critical-reconstructive analysis of ecological modernisation, with a view to using it as a basis for developing a view of green politics as collective ecological management. Although ecological modernisation is criticised, particularly with regard to its statist, corporatist, and rather 'minimalist' democratic character, it does provide a starting point for a more radical politics of ecological management. For example, when ecological modernisation moves from dealing with the effects of social-environmental problems (pollution for example), to the causes of these problems, there is an opportunity for a different institutional response and policy-process, which I term collective ecological management (5.6). Distinguishing features of collective ecological management include its explicitly normative dimension, its focus on the cultural context as central in dealing with the causes of social-environmental problems, and its concern with finding symbiotic as well as sustainable social-environmental relations. One way of looking at ecological modernisation is to see it as going some way towards integrating economy and ecology, particularly the role of the state in creating and maintaining a more ecologically sustainable metabolism between the two. However, the main criticism of it comes from its lack of concern with symbiotic concerns, its democratic character, and its focus on the means rather than the ends of the economy-ecology metabolism. While it does represent an institutional move towards responsible stewardship, particularly with its stress on citizenship and environmental planning/governance, it does not go far enough from a green point of view. In part, this is due to its focus on economy-ecology interaction rather than placing the latter within a broader social-environmental perspective. Collective ecological management is thus to be understood as a development or radicalisation of ecological modernisation. In this sense collective ecological management stresses cultural as well as institutional factors. The

cultural aspects of collective ecological management are discussed in 5.7. on ‘nationhood’ and the ‘land ethic’ as a culturally-informed theory of environmental management in 5.8. 5.9 examines the issue of planning and ‘governance’ within collective ecological management.

Whereas chapter 3 sought to highlight the issue of *what* parts of nature are permissible and impermissible, chapters 5 and 6 are concerned partly with the related issue of conceptualising *how* social-environmental interaction can be carried out. The concern of these chapters is with outlining the issue of distinguishing permissible and impermissible as well as sustainable and unsustainable forms of social-environmental interaction. Chapter 6 develops a green political economy compatible with green political theory. It begins with a critique of the two dominant orthodox economic approaches to environmental problems, namely neoclassical environmental economics (6.2.1) and free market environmentalism (6.2.2). Both are criticised on the grounds that, *inter alia*, they ignore or systematically preclude the intersubjective context of environmental valuation, assume preferences to be exogenous and fixed, and crowd out the public goods dimension of social-environmental issues. However, it is not the case that these approaches are rejected completely. In keeping with the reconstructive aim of the thesis as a whole, the positive elements of both are also acknowledged. In the next section (6.3), the positive elements of both orthodox economic approaches are incorporated and integrated within an alternative green political economy. One of the distinguishing features of this green political economy is its explicitly normative character. Further developing the ‘ethics of use’ position developed in chapters 3 and 5, green political economy is argued to be concerned with the moral issue of distinguishing ‘proscribed resources’ from ‘permissible resources’ (6.3). This is particularly the case with regard to the ability of technology to expand the range of ‘resources’ potentially available to the human economy. Green political economy is thus concerned with the issue of whether potential resources ought to be considered permissible or not. In this respect green political economy is concerned with the problems of human technology in terms of human material use of the nonhuman world. It is explicitly moral in that it is concerned with establishing a symbiotic as well as a sustainable economy-ecology metabolism. I also outline the green economic critique of the categories

of orthodox economic thinking, especially with regard to what counts as an 'economic activity', measurements of welfare, and the more general green argument that the 'formal economy' is parasitic (in the sense outlined in chapter 3) on the 'informal human economy' and 'nature's economy'. 6.4 argues that while green political economy may be anti-capitalist, this should be distinguished from being anti-market. Building on this distinction 6.5 presents green political economy in terms of its emphasis on what I call the 'local market economy'. In this section I discuss LETS (Local Employment and Trading Systems), and Agenda 21 initiatives, as ways in which local ecological stewardship can be institutionalised. This emphasis on the local economy is argued to represent one way of understanding the 'ecosystem' as opposed to 'biosphere' context for economy-ecology relations. Green political economy is argued to emphasise self-reliance (as opposed to self-sufficiency), and to limit trade where possible, while not ruling out trading relations. A central distinction green political economy 'deconstructs' is that between 'production' and 'reproduction'. At the same time, green political economy is concerned with 'social limits to growth' (Hirsch, 1977), and it suggests a view of ecological problems in which excess demand, and not just limited supplies ('physical limits to growth' in terms of shortages of resources and sinks) are central. 6.6 examines the relationship between money and economy-ecology interaction. It is argued that the centrality of money within the modern economy, disembeds it from its social context and also disembeds it from its ecological context. In 6.7 there is a discussion of the relationship between 'production' and 'consumption' within green political economy in terms of the character of 'producer' and 'consumer'.

The relationship between green politics and democracy in general, and what are the features of a green theory of democracy in particular, are the focus of chapter 7. In 7.2, I offer a critique of the most developed and infamous account of non-democratic green politics: eco-authoritarianism. Eco-authoritarianism is argued to be presaged on a particular understanding of the relationship between material economic growth and political stability and a democratic polity. Simply put, the eco-authoritarian argument is premised on a view that 'material scarcity', which is held to be a key implication of green politics, is incompatible with a stable democratic political order. This connection between

material affluence and democratic politics is questioned. On the one hand it is traced back to Tocqueville and his view of the *early* development of democracy in America. On the other, I suggest that it is 'liberal' democratic practice which is the real object of the eco-authoritarian critique. That is, it is a particular *conception* of democracy not democracy per se that underwrites the eco-authoritarian position. In 7.3 the relationship between science, as a central form of knowledge within environmental decision-making, and democracy is examined. Here the claims of green politics for a new 'science-policy' relationship is discussed, as well as the democratic dangers of leaving environmental decision-making to 'experts'. In 7.4. a distinction is drawn between 'democratic institutions' and a 'democratic society', as a way to elaborate the institutional and extra-institutional, cultural dimension of green democratic theory. Green democracy is viewed as concerned with creating a democratic culture as much as a democratic system to deal with social-environmental problems. In 7.5, the issue of modernisation and development which was raised in chapter 6, is examined. The green argument for a less complex society is cashed out in terms of a desire for increasing opportunities for democratic accountability and participation. At the same time, green scepticism of modernisation in terms of demands for and justifications of increasing economic growth, are argued to be premised on a desire to decrease socio-economic inequalities, which are often defended on the grounds that they are necessary to produce economic growth. A related argument is that the green democratic position implies that the end of 'social progress' or modernisation, and not just the means to secure some 'given' conceptualisation of that end, be open to democratic debate and accountability. 7.6 introduces discursive or deliberative democracy as the most appropriate form of democracy for green politics. Deliberative democratic institutions, which are regarded as supplements to rather than substitutions for, existing representative democratic forms, are presented as more suitable than aggregative democratic institutions for environmental decision-making. The reason for this is the public goods character of environmental issues, and the claim that environmental preferences therefore require a public, deliberative rather than a private, aggregative context. Following on from the latter, 7.7 focuses on the institutions and principles for collective ecological management. Against the common assumption that

green democracy must be some form of direct democracy, I argue that representative institutions have much to commend them. The advantage of representative institutions for green politics is discussed by looking at three classes of ‘non-citizens’ which are commonly held to be central to the green position concerning the appropriate approach to environmental decision-making. These classes and interests are affected foreigners, future generations, and nonhumans. In all three cases, but particularly the latter two, representative institutions are argued to be indispensable to the green democratic cause. In this section the precautionary principle and the importance of openness and reflexivity in environmental decision-making are discussed as decision-making principles which green politics contributes to democratic environmental decision-making. 7.8 represents the core green democratic theory. Here I present ‘green citizenship’ as a key social practice for ecological stewardship. Set within the context of state-citizen nexus of rights and duties, green citizenship is argued to be the dominant manner in which the virtues of stewardship may be realised in the absence of actual ownership of or transformative relationship to ‘the land’. Green citizenship qua stewardship is understood as not only the necessary counterpart to a ‘green’ state, but also as the most appropriate social practice by which urban populations can cultivate the ecological virtues of prudent, long-term environmental management. Green citizenship is argued to present a way in which roles of producer, consumer and parent can be integrated in an ecologically rational manner. In 7.9 the part of civil society within green democratic theory and practice is examined. Starting from a view of democracy as requiring the separation of state and civil society, I argue that green democracy can be viewed as a demand for decision-making spheres which are independent of both state and market. Another way of looking at this is to argue that green political theory is premised on an instrumental view of both state and market. In 7.9.1, I examine work as a key policy-making area for the ‘greening of society’. Work as a social practice, with an emphasis on its internal goods, is argued to be a necessary part of the realisation of green aims.

Chapter Two

A Critique and Reinterpretation of Deep Ecology

2.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at deep ecology as the pre-eminent ecocentric moral theory within green moral theory. The aim is not to offer an in-depth and comprehensive overview of deep ecology, but to argue that as it stands deep ecology is insufficient to ground green political claims and policy prescriptions. My basic argument is that deep ecology is unable to provide the necessary moral basis for green political theory. A central reason for this is that deep ecology's non-anthropocentrism is premised on a false understanding of anthropocentrism. Allied to this is the particular understanding of morality and ethics within deep ecology, an understanding which gives little attention to the collective, intersubjective character of the ethical as a sphere of human action. This chapter clears the ground for the defence of anthropocentrism in the next chapter.

The starting point for this critique of deep ecology is given by Dobson who points out that there is a rupture between ecophilosophy (by which he means deep ecology) and green politics, concluding that, "the politics of ecology does not follow the same ground rules as its philosophy" (1990: 68). That is, to all intents and purposes they seem to be two independent discourses which are contingently rather than inherently connected. This lack of internal normative coherence between the political and the moral level is of course a serious deficiency. So long as deep ecology is considered as the moral basis of green politics, this unhelpful and unnecessary separation will continue, and that anthropocentric moral reasoning is not only perfectly legitimate but fundamentally necessary to green politics if that gap is to be overcome. This chapter will seek to provide reasons why we must seriously question the view that, "There must be no doubt that Deep Ecology is indeed the Green Movement's philosophical basis" (Dobson, 1989: 41) or that 'ecocentrism' is the normative underpinning for green politics (Eckersley, 1992a: 26-31).

That deep ecology does provide the normative basis of certain strands of green politics, such as that associated with such radical ecological movements ~~such~~ as *Earth First!* and bioregional theory (4.3), is not in question. This however, should not be taken to mean that the general principles of green political theory are underwritten by deep ecology. As suggested in the following chapter, a reformed anthropocentrism better ensures that green claims relating to the moral considerability of the nonhuman world will not undermine or be at odds with green political principles. Such an alternative moral foundation allows for a more mutually supportive coupling of green moral and political principles. What I want to demonstrate is that ultimately the ecocentric/anthropocentric division is a false and damaging dichotomy which severs the continuity between green moral and political theory. Part of this discontinuity has to do with the difficulty of securing political agreement on the basis of the substantive metaphysical commitments that characterise deep ecology. In other words, if deep ecology is the normative core of green political theory then it may actually undermine the political relevance of green politics, in terms of securing general agreement for green policies.

In section 2.2, I sketch the development and principal dimensions of deep ecology. Following Dobson (1989), particular emphasis is laid on the shift within deep ecology from attempting to formulate an environmental ethics based on the intrinsic value of nature to ontological concerns. This ontological shift is then broken down into two inter-related aspects of contemporary deep ecology, the metaphysical and the psychological dimensions of its non-anthropocentrism. The metaphysical component is discussed in sections 2.3, where deep ecology is argued to focus on a *metaphysical* critique to the detriment of a *normative* critique of anthropocentrism. It is metaphysical ecocentrism that is the real focus of the deep ecology position, which partly explains the emphasis many deep ecology writers place on 're-enchanting nature' as the way to remoralise human-nature relations in favour of nature (2.3.1). In 2.4, the other component of deep ecology's ontological turn, its understanding of the ontology of the self, is discussed. Taken together, the metaphysical and the psychological dimensions of deep ecology's ontological turn are argued to 'erase' or 'dissolve' the distinctly 'ethical' problem of nature, by displacing the

normative question of social-environmental relations into the metaphysical and psychological realms. In 2.5, the distinction between a 'metaphysical' and 'political' base for widespread normative agreement is used both to criticise deep ecology as the normative grounding for green politics, as well as to indicate the general outlines of an alternative normative basis. 2.6 presents a summary of the critique.

However, deep ecology does offer something which green political theory can use. This is the reconstructive aim of this chapter, which focuses on an interpretation of deep ecology as virtue-ethics (2.7). Here it is argued that a moral theory sufficient to ground green politics should start from an understanding of morality which sees morality as a *practical* human affair. Deep ecology as a theory of ecological virtue emphasising moral character may go some way to fleshing out a green theory of the good and the extent to which green political theory is dependent upon this view of the good. The importance of making character and dispositions central to moral theorising is that it allows a strong connection between ethics and politics. In this way aspects of deep ecology can be incorporated within a reformulated green normative position.¹

The overall aim then of this chapter is to highlight the fact that the normative basis of green political theory consists of two 'moral spheres': one relating to intrahuman relations and the other concerning human-nature interaction. What needs to be ascertained is the relationship between these two distinct but related spheres of moral action. Establishing this would go some way in bringing out the composite moral basis upon which green political theory prescribes particular ways in which human social life ought to be organised.² While the novelty of green political theory may lie in its concern with social-environmental issues, as a normative political theory it is social relations which are primary and from which the character of the former can be determined. Thus the critique of deep

¹ Of particular significance is that this interpretation of deep ecology highlights the notion of 'ecological culture' and its place within green political theory, as the mediating context between political institutions and individuals, an issue developed in more detail in chapters 5 and 7.

² Both Goodin (1992) and Eckersley (1992a) overstate the case by privileging the ecocentric agenda relating to the regulation of human-nature affairs over the social one relating to intrahuman relations. Starting from these premises, it is little wonder that values and practices such as democracy are regarded by some as contingent rather than necessary features of green politics, despite the latter's self-perception as being radically democratic.

ecology in the chapter suggests that gap between green philosophy and green politics can be overcome by focusing on the composite moral basis of green politics.

2.2. Overview of Deep Ecology ³

In his critical overview Dobson (1989), describes the development of deep ecology in terms of two 'turns'. The first turn refers to the fact that in its initial stages of development deep ecology was an environmental ethical theory concerned with the notion of 'intrinsic value' of the nonhuman world (*ibid.*: 42). Its second turn was a movement away from axiology to ontology (*ibid.*: 44-6). Both are different aspects of the enduring deep ecology goal of replacing anthropocentric moral reasoning with an ecocentric moral sensibility. It is worth noting that in its second turn, deep ecology not only reaffirmed and deepened its critique of anthropocentrism, but also broke with those environmental philosophers attempting to develop an environmental ethics based on the intrinsic value of nature, such as Rolston (1979, 1982), Callicott (1982), and Taylor (1981, 1986).

The basic aims of deep ecology are spelt out in greater detail in the 'eight point platform'.

The eight point platform of deep ecology

- (1) the well-being and flourishing of nonhuman life has intrinsic value, independent of human usefulness,
- (2) richness and diversity of life contribute to the realisation of these values and are values in themselves,
- (3) humans have no right to reduce this diversity except to satisfy vital needs,

³ Deep ecology as used here denotes not just those who self-consciously call themselves deep ecologists but others, such as Skolimowski (1981, 1988, 1993) whose 'eco-philosophy' is almost identical to the deep ecological position.

- (4) the flourishing of human life and culture is compatible with a substantial decrease in the human population, while the flourishing of nonhuman life requires this decrease,
- (5) present human interference in the world is excessive, and the situation is worsening,
- (6) policies affecting basic economic, technological and ideological structures must change,
- (7) the ideological change is mainly that of appreciating *life quality* (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living,
- (8) those who subscribe to the above have an obligation to implement the necessary changes. (Devall and Sessions, 1985: 70).

The general goals of deep ecology can be stated as the preservation of nature ‘wild and free’ and to limit the human impact on nature as the way to achieve this. Breaking this down we can group deep ecology proposals under three broad headings; (a) wilderness preservation, (b) human population control, and (c) simple living. These concerns are echoed by others seeking to defend an ‘ecocentric’ green politics.⁴ These three general concerns can thus be taken as the hall mark of deep ecology.

This ontological shift away from environmental ethics within deep ecology has been described by Naess. According to him, “The attempt to shift the *primary* focus of environmental philosophical concern from ethics to ontology clearly constitutes a fundamental or revolutionary challenge to normal environmental philosophy. It is (and should be) deep ecology’s guiding star” (1984: 204; emphasis in original). Environmental ethics qua axiology was viewed as the search for a convincing theory of the intrinsic value of nature. While worthy in its own way, deep ecologists felt it was not radical enough or sufficient to effect the types of change they thought were necessary. Leading deep

⁴ For example, Eckersley claims that responses to two salient ‘litmus’ issues distinguishes anthropocentric from ecocentric green politics: “human population growth and wilderness preservation” (1992a: 29).

ecologists argued that it was more effective to work on the way people conceive of their identity and their understanding of themselves in the greater scheme of things. For Sessions, “The search then, as I understand it, is not for environmental ethics but ecological consciousness” (in Fox, 1990: 225), or “cosmological consciousness” (Fox, 1990: 255).

A central part in this shift from axiology and environmental ethics to wider issues concerning consciousness reflects deep ecology’s contention that the ‘ecological crisis’ is, at root, a crisis of self-understanding and culture. One of the reasons given as to why deep ecology is deeper than other green moral positions is that it claims to deal with the root causes of the crisis rather than its effects. The root causes for deep ecology are located in the uninformed moral ontology of the self and a related anthropocentric culture which sees the world as dead, valueless and there for human consumption. From this ecocentric perspective the ecological crisis is first and foremost a crisis of culture and self (Eckersley, 1992a: 29). References to the need for a cultural ‘paradigm shift’ (Capra, 1983), based on alternative world-views which affirm the unity of humans with and dependence upon nature, are part and parcel of the deep ecology claim that only a widespread change in consciousness will solve the ecological crisis.

Part of this shift from axiology to ontology can be argued to be due to the problem of motivation or a perceived moral ‘implementation deficit’. Following O’Neill (1993), one can ask in what way does the intrinsic value in nature compel us to act in a certain manner towards it. According to him, “while it is the case that natural entities have intrinsic value in the strongest sense of the term, i.e. in the sense of value that exists independent of human valuations, such value does not entail any obligations on the part of human beings” (1993: 8). In this way the ‘ontological turn’ can be seen as deep ecology’s attempt to couple motivation and ‘right action’ by basing the latter on ecological consciousness rather than the moral discourse of the intrinsic value of nature. To appeal to hearts rather than minds, as it were.

Various other reasons can be found for this shift to ontological questions. For some deep ecologists the reason for this lack of attention to ‘normal’ ethical theorising is that

the crisis we face is too severe and deep. For Devall, “Our ontological crisis is so severe that we cannot wait for the perfect intellectual theory to provide us with the answers. We need earth-bonding experiences” (1988: 57). In other words, the shift from environmental ethics to ecological consciousness is partly driven by its perception of the causes and severity of the ‘ecological crisis’. Deep ecology’s evolution into an informing framework for ‘living simply’, and ‘walking lighter on the earth’, can be seen as a central aspect of its shift from environmental ethics to ontology, both at the level of an alternative understanding of the self and an ecological way of ‘being in the world’ (Zimmerman, 1993). Another reason for this lack of concern with environmental ethics is the non-academic nature of much of deep ecology writing and concerns (McLaughlin, 1995). For many, deep ecology is an activist-orientated theory as exhibited in the relationship between it and the radical environmentalist group *Earth First!* Perhaps a more telling explanation of the shift concerns the common perception within deep ecology that ‘ethics’, including environmental ethics, is understood as primarily concerned with moral prohibitions, duties and obligations (Naess, 1989; Fox, 1990). For deep ecologists, duty is equated with sacrifice which is understood as the opposite to self-interest and action based on inclination.

Thus deep ecology as it presently stands concerns itself with the articulation of an alternative ontology of the self, and its place in the order of nature as given by an alternative cosmology (discussed in section 2.3). A clear example of this is Mathews’ contention that, “Deep ecology is concerned with the metaphysics of nature, and of the relation of self to nature. It sets up ecology as a model for the basic metaphysical structure of the world” (in Fox. 1990: 236). It is to the metaphysics of deep ecology that we turn to next.

2.3 Deep Ecology as Metaphysics

In many respects it is unsurprising that deep ecology often comes across as a metaphysical theory, given its concerns with shifting paradigms and tying its critique of

anthropocentrism closely to the historical emergence of particular forms of rationality, knowledge and practices in the west. The latter refer generally to the change in human-nature relations as a result of the Enlightenment. Thus, deep ecology's critique of anthropocentrism is sometimes an expression of its more general critique of 'modernity' (Zimmerman, 1993; Oelschlaeger, 1991, 1993). Within deep ecology therefore it is often difficult to separate out the critique of anthropocentric moral reasoning from this different, and in many ways more contentious critique, of modernity. This equation of modernity with anthropocentrism can be readily seen in deep ecology's standard historical account of the 'disenchantment of nature'; the transformation of nature from a realm of meaningful normative significance, into a collection of resources for human instrumental use and exploitation (Barry, 1993a; Fox, 1990). The historical shift to a mechanistic, reductionist, instrumentalist worldview concerning human-nature relations is what deep ecology means by 'anthropocentrism', as suggested later (2.4.1). Anthropocentrism thus refers to a complete metaphysical worldview, a worldview deep ecologists claim as the root of the ecological crisis. This worldview is held to underpin all dominant moral theories and political ideologies, apart from the deep ecological one. From this deep ecological viewpoint, "the Green movement...is self-consciously seeking to call into question an entire world view rather than tinker with one that already exists" (Dobson, 1990: 8). Hence the necessity for a 'new metaphysics' to underpin human-nature relations, premised on transcending anthropocentrism and replacing it with 'ecocentrism'. However, as argued in 2.6, this rules out the *politically* powerful strategy of basing green politics on the *immanent critique* and reformulation of anthropocentrism (and by implication 'modernity').⁵ Thus while a reformulated anthropocentrism is more defensible philosophically as argued in the next chapter, it is, *a fortiori*, more defensible *politically* as suggested in 2.5.

⁵ This idea of immanent critique is further developed in chapters 3 and 4 where it is used as the basis for a green critique and reformulation of anthropocentrism and the nation-state, respectively. In chapters 5, 6 and 7, green politics as collective ecological management and stewardship is explicitly premised on such an immanent critique.

2.3.1. Deep Ecology and the 'Re-enchantment of Nature'

This section looks at some salient aspects of deep ecology metaphysics understood as the re-enchantment of nature. There are three main issues that this re-enchantment theme highlights. The first is the role of re-enchantment within deep ecology's critique of modernity, based on deep ecology's diagnosis of the 'ecological crisis'. The second is the spiritual complexion this concern with re-enchanting nature lends to deep ecology. The third issue relates to deep ecology as a 'politics of redemption', related to the need for 'enchanted cosmologies'.

One way to understand deep ecology can be found in a seminal essay by Lynn White on 'The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis'. He concluded that, "Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not. We must rethink and re-feel our nature and destiny" (1967: 1207).⁶ This demand for a metaphysical 'paradigm-shift' is one of the enduring features of deep ecology (Capra, 1983, 1995; Mathews, 1991: 40-1, Naess, 1989: 20), which can be seen as a critical reaction to the 'disenchantment' of nature. Deep ecology follows Horkheimer and Adorno's argument that, "the program of the Enlightenment was the disenchantment of the world, the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy" (1973: 3). In short, science and technology, as the 'modern' and dominant ways of understanding and interacting with the world, disenchanted and desacralised nature.⁷ In setting its face against this disenchantment, deep ecology rejects the idea that it was either an inevitable

⁶ Snyder echoes White, but locates the problem much further back than the Enlightenment, stating that, "our troubles began with the invention of male deities located off the planet" (in Eckersley, 1992a: 64). Others such as Shepard (1993) locate the 'second fall' in the transition from hunter-gatherer society to settled, agricultural society. For a critique of this 'paleo-ecologism', see Barry (1995b).

⁷ The tension between scientific forms of knowledge and those forms necessary for 're-enchantment' is often resolved by rejecting science in favour of more enchanting forms of knowledge. Hence the common misperception of green politics as anti-science (Yearley, 1991; O'Neill, 1993: 148-55). Mathews' (1991) theory of deep ecology is interesting because she argues, following Capra (1983), that there is a scientific basis for an enchanting cosmology. Recognising that, "if a cosmology is to gain currency at all within our culture it must possess scientific credibility" (1991: 50), she argues that 'geometro-dynamics' offers a scientific basis for a deep ecological cosmology of the ultimate oneness of everything. Science as a basis for metaphysical agreement is discussed in 2.5.1.

or a worthwhile cost to be paid for the ‘benefits’ of modernity. The thrust of deep ecology follows the logic of White’s argument suggesting that if the cause of the ecological crisis is to be found in the disenchantment of nature then the solution lies in its re-enchantment.

A common interpretation of deep ecology is that its solution to the ecological crisis lies in a widespread quasi-religious conversion along the lines suggested by Clark for whom “Only a ‘religious spirit’, a willed and eager commitment to a larger whole, can easily sustain us through adversity let alone through prosperity” (1994: 114). Seen from this general framework deep ecology is a spiritual/religious answer to the ecological dilemmas facing humanity as a result of modernity and its attendant world-view. If this is the case then deep ecology renders green politics as spirituality by other means. That is, concerned not with coping with the ensemble of ecological problems facing us, but with discovering the ‘truth’ of our metaphysical relation to the nonhuman world as the normative basis for resolving the ‘ecological crisis’. Rather than elaborating the context within which agreement on the normative rightness of social-environmental affairs can be created, deep ecology appears to seek a determinate answer to the existentialist riddle of the ‘human condition’.⁸ The importance of this spiritual self-understanding within deep ecology is that this has been taken to excuse its lack of a political dimension. For example, according to Devall, “The deep, long-range ecology movement...is only partly political. It is primarily a spiritual-religious movement” (1988: 160).⁹ The ‘ecological crisis’ for deep ecology is thus a ‘crisis of civilisation’, rather than a contradiction within present cultures that can be potentially resolved within those cultures.

One way of highlighting this aspect of deep ecology is to ask what does the resolution of the ecological crisis mean for it? Within its terms of reference, it seems that only a final

⁸ These related distinctions between ‘truth’ and ‘agreement’, ‘discovery’ and ‘creation’ will be central themes of this thesis, used as an over-arching analytical guide to assessing the moral and political dimensions of green politics. This analytical distinction is most prominent in the next chapter where it is used to flesh out the difference between ‘proprietary’ and ‘relational’ accounts of morality (section 3.3) and in chapter 7 on some democratic implications of green politics.

⁹ Naess offers the fact that many deep ecologists find “politics boring and distasteful” (1995a: 261) as a possible reason for their lack of interest in the political implications of deep ecology.

solving of the relationship between humanity and the world constitutes a solution. From the deep ecology position any solution to the ecological crisis must be premised on ‘re-enchanting’ the world. Solutions which prevent the destruction of the natural world but are not motivated by a reverence for nature fall short of a real and lasting solution to the ever-worsening crisis. This is clear from Seed’s contention that, “Deep ecology recognises that nothing short of a total revolution in consciousness will be of lasting use in preserving the life-support systems of our planet” (1988: 9). To paraphrase Dobson, for deep ecology the reasons for care for the world are as important as the care itself (1989: 46). Care motivated by anthropocentric reasons falls short of the deep ecology ideal, and does not constitute a ‘proper’ or lasting solution to the crisis. However, this ‘solution’ goes well beyond that needed to function as a normative agreement for the achievement of green social and political values and environmental policies. In conceiving of the problem in this light, deep ecology prioritises discovering some putative philosophical *truth* of the ‘human condition’, over the political task of constructing a public and normative basis for *social co-operation* to achieve ecological sustainability within a moral framework for human-nonhuman affairs.

In part, one may say that deep ecology seeks a *permanent* solution to human-nature relations, which may account for the frequency with which a return to the values (if not the practices) of hunter-gatherers can be found in some deep ecology writing (Shepard, 1993). Thus the argument for wilderness protection, population control and simple living mentioned above as litmus areas for deep ecology (2.2), can be explained, at least in part, by a sense that hunter-gatherer society represents the ‘ideal’ form of human society which we moderns must emulate. A good example of this type of thinking is Gowdy’s claim that, “a strong case can be made that the most ethical societies, both environmentally and socially, were hunting and gathering societies, the kind humans lived in for the first 99 per cent of their existence on Earth. In terms of social equality and environmental sustainability, we seem to be getting further and further away from the standard set by these societies” (1994: 51). Hunter-gatherer, and aboriginal societies in general, fascinate the deep ecological imagination as ‘proof’ or ‘living proof’ of the feasibility, necessity or

desirability of the societal-wide ‘paradigm shift’ for which they argue. In such low-impact societies, a sustainable relationship emerges ‘naturally’ as a constitutive feature. In hunter-gatherer societies, therefore, we have a permanent and lasting resolution of the ‘ecological crisis’.¹⁰ However in opposition to this, green politics as I understand it, is not committed to such a perspective. As will become clearer later on in the discussion of ‘ecological virtue’ (2.7), green theory is not motivated by a desire to find a permanent and lasting solution to social-environmental relations. Rather, its focus is on finding ‘coping strategies’, ‘correctives’, ‘adaptive strategies’ and modes of behaviour for social-environmental interaction. Against the deep ecology notion of finding a permanent solution, green politics, I argue, accepts that social-environmental relations will always be characterised by uncertainty, contingency and possible catastrophe, partly as a result of human transformative interests, and partly because of the limits to human knowledge of the world used in fulfilling those interests. If the term ‘ecological crisis’ is to be used, then I would suggest that green politics is in the business of ‘ecological crisis management’, rather than ‘ecological crisis solution’. Green politics as a form ‘environmental management’ is a constant theme in this thesis and is discussed later (chapters 3, 5, 6, 7).

One implication of deep ecology’s search for a permanent solution is that normative agreement sought by deep ecology goes beyond a shared *respect* for nature to a much stronger argument concerning the necessity for a shared *reverence* for nature. That deep ecology is more concerned with reverence than respect, can be seen in Mathews’ statement that, “When our culturally-endorsed cosmology represents the world as inert, blind, bereft of worth or purpose, indifferent to our attitudes towards it, *then our natural urge to celebrate Nature may be thwarted*” (1991: 162-3, emphasis added). This idea of a

¹⁰ Such a permanent solution is captured by Arendt’s view of the ideal of human ‘labour’ in which we can “swing contentedly in nature’s prescribed cycle, toiling and resting, labouring and consuming” (1959: 92), based on the idea of nature as the “great provider” (*ibid.*: 116). However, as suggested below, a major problem with this view is that it tends to downplay the uniqueness of humanity and the ‘human condition’, and often lapses into a position where social relations are simply ‘read off’ from nature. One consequence of this is the erosion of the distinction between the two moral spheres mentioned in the introduction; the human-only and the social-environmental one. In the next chapter I defend the idea that while the *differences* between humans and (some) nonhumans may not be as great as sometimes thought, it still remains the case that the *difference* between ‘human’ and ‘nonhuman’ is of fundamental moral significance (3.4).

'natural urge to celebrate Nature' is also tied up with the pathology of the modern self which becomes 'ill' when such 'natural' urges are repressed. This is dealt with in section 2.4. The deep ecology aim to re-enchant the world is understood as a return to a 'natural' (sic) harmony between humans and nature. It would not be out of place to claim that clarifying deep ecology along this line highlights its character as a 'politics of redemption'. As a redemptive politics deep ecology can be seen as a critique of modernity which views the Enlightenment as humanity's 'second falling'. This would certainly tie in with the view that the ecological crisis is nothing short of a total crisis for humanity, and it would also go some way to explaining the spiritual overtones of much deep ecology writing as well as its anti-urban, pastoralism.¹¹ Finding normative agreement for saving the planet does not demand that green politics tie this to saving souls or finding the answer to the meaning of human life written in the text of nature, or a permanent solution to social-environmental relations to be equally 'read off' from nature. A final interpretation of the re-enchantment theme is that it refers to the resolution of the alienation of humans from nature, that is the result of a worldview which stresses the separation of humans from nature. Re-enchantment is here related to a therapeutic, healing concern for the damaged or immature modern self. This will be dealt with in the next section.

The ontological re-orientation of deep ecology is thus largely to do with a qualitatively different metaphysical understanding of the world (and the cosmos), and the place of humans within it. Despite the claims of Naess and others who claim that there are many different metaphysical and cosmological 'ultimate premises' that are compatible with the 'deep ecology platform' (Naess, 1988: 129; McLaughlin, 1995), it is clear that deep ecology is committed to 'enchancing' rather than disenchanting cosmologies (Mathews, 1991). A good example of this is Fox's claim that, "deep ecology recognizes that an ecologically effective ethics can only arise within the context of a more persuasive and more enchanting cosmology than that of mechanistic materialism" (1984: 195). On this

¹¹ Apart from its clear metaphysical disposition, other examples of this quasi-religious character include the importance of ritual for many leading deep ecologists such as LaChapelle (1995), Seed *et al* (1988). According to Lucardie, "In the end...ecological consciousness requires a religious or (at least) a transpersonal perspective" (1993: 33).

account, we abuse nature, take it for granted, and conceive of ourselves as above it, not because of any wilful wrongdoing. Rather, having no direct contact with nature or a culture-wide 'ecological cosmology', we have 'forgotten' that we too are natural and are subject to, rather than outside, the order of nature.¹² Within deep ecology, metaphysical reconstruction provides a standard by which to judge 'beautiful actions' of the 'ecological self', the other major dimension of deep ecology's ontological turn discussed in the next section.

2.4. Deep Ecology and Psychological Health

Consonant with its general drift, for deep ecology the ecological crisis is tied up with western culture's pathological understanding of the self as a result of its disenchanting, anthropocentric worldview (Naess, 1989; Fox, 1990; Kidner, 1994). For deep ecology the ecological crisis is due, in part, to a misconceived notion of the 'self', which unnecessarily limits the scope of moral concern and care. The anthropocentrism inherent within dominant western conceptions of the self is held to set up a subject/object dualism which both reduces subjecthood to a narrowly conceived human self, and reduces nonhuman nature to the status of pure object. For Naess (1989), a reconceptualisation of the human self is a necessary precondition for a less anthropocentric perspective. In psychological terms, the modern, unecological self is viewed as immature, sick or underdeveloped. Warwick Fox goes much further in his criticism and asserts that, "Anthropocentrism represents not only a deluded but also a dangerous orientation toward the world" (1990: 13); dangerous in terms of the health of the self as well as the health of the planet.

¹² Given this overarching theme within deep ecology it is not surprising that many deep ecologists have embraced Heidegger's notion of 'forgetfulness of Being' or Huxley's 'perennial philosophy' as capturing the spirit of what they are about (Zimmerman, 1993; Kohák, 1993; Devall, 1988). Deep ecology expresses a desire to return to those 'perennial', more 'natural' modes of human metabolism with nature which modernity destroyed. This explains why deep ecology cites 'aboriginal' modes of thought and action as living examples of what it is about. For a critique of the disenchantment of nature theme within deep ecology on the grounds that it gives rise to an anti-science position see O'Neill (1993: 151).

The psychological turn of deep ecology can be expressed in the following schema:

- (1) The 'self' within western moral thinking is narrowly conceived, it is not false but incomplete/immature/unhealthy.
- (2) This view of the self expresses an anthropocentric view of the world and our place in it, and is one of the main causes of the ecological crisis.
- (3) What is needed is a more expansive notion of the 'self', an understanding that is premised on the *inclusion* as opposed to the *exclusion* of the nonhuman world.
- (4) This ecocentric 'sense of self' can be cultivated by a process of 'identification' with the nonhuman world.
- (5) This sense of self involves an orientation of care to the nonhuman world.
- (6) Injunctions, rules and principles, i.e. deontological ethics, become superfluous to ensure morally appropriate human interaction with the nonhuman world.

The Kantian distinction between 'beautiful' and 'moral' actions is used by Naess (1989) to explain the consequences once the 'ecological' self has been realised. For him, this means that,

Moral actions are motivated by acceptance of a moral law, and manifest themselves clearly when acting against inclination. A person acts beautifully when acting benevolently from inclination. Environment is then not felt to be something strange or hostile which we must unfortunately adapt ourselves to, but something valuable which we are *inclined* to treat with joy and respect. (1989: 85)

The solution of the moral dilemma consists not in the formulation of 'environmental ethics' (understood as a system of moral 'oughts' coming from an environmentally-informed axiology). Although acknowledged as having a role to play, the latter is regarded as inferior to encouraging ecocentric habits and dispositions so that 'beautiful' ecological actions follow 'naturally'. This process of 'ecological identification' (point 4) is part of the 'maturing' of the self according to Naess (1989: 86). It is the 'immaturity' of the self and the type of ethics associated with that view of the self, which results in a

dis-valuing of nature and a simultaneous underestimation of the individual. In treating nature disrespectfully we simply reveal our misunderstanding of what it means to be a 'mature' self. We treat nature as we do because we have 'forgotten' our place in nature, "we do not understand who we are" (Dodson-Gray, 1981: 84).¹³

This psychological theme and concern with the ontology of the self will be looked at through an examination of the work of Naess and Fox. For Fox, the central ideas of deep ecology are to be understood within a psychological framework. His 'transpersonal ecology' is an extension of Maslow's work on 'transpersonal psychology' (Indeed, Maslow's theory of a 'hierarchy of needs' which culminates in 'self-realisation' is another key aspect of the psychological perspective of deep ecology (1990: appendix B; Naess, 1989, 1995b)). For Fox, "the response of being inclined to care for the unfolding of the world in all its aspects follows 'naturally'-not as a *logical* consequence but as a *psychological* consequence; as an expression of the spontaneous unfolding (developing, maturing) of the self" (1990: 247). Echoing Naess, he states that this view of the self has the,

highly interesting, even startling, consequence that ethics (conceived as being concerned with moral 'oughts') is rendered superfluous! The reason for this is that if one has a wide, expansive, field-like sense of self then...one will naturally (i.e. spontaneously) protect the natural (spontaneous) unfolding of the expansive self (the ecosphere, the cosmos) in all its aspects. (*ibid.*: 217).

Basically, ecological selves do not harm their environment because the process of identification with it highlights their continuity with the environment. This sets up an

¹³ This touches on the theme raised in the previous section that for deep ecology it is through 'ignorance' rather than innate 'sinfulness' that we treat the nonhuman world as we do. This ignorance can be taken to include both scientific and metaphysical dimensions. For example, for some green ethicists, an increased knowledge of the natural world, our continuity with and dependence upon it, is a necessary prerequisite for any 'environmental ethic' (Rolston, 1982; Callicott, 1982). For deep greens, our ignorance needs to be remedied by returning to 'The Way', a form of knowing and acting which is the 'natural', perennial, harmonious path of human-nonhuman interaction (Goldsmith, 1992).

expanded conception of the self such that the environment is constitutive of their ecological sense of self. To diminish or degrade the environment with which they identify would be to diminish or degrade themselves. Consonant with an expanded notion of self, there is an equally expanded notion of self-interest such that acting in one's self-interest, from desire and inclination will not result in the disrespectful treatment of nature. Behind the stress on 'identification' and the ecological self is a belief that 'natural' self-interest can be suitably altered so that positive ecological benefits result from this ecological way of 'being the world'.¹⁴

However, there is a potentially unresolvable tension within this approach, that between means (beautiful actions of the ecological self) and ends (the preservation and protection of wilderness for example). Behind the stress on 'beautiful action' there is an objectivist assumption that all will think and act in the same way. We can ask why beautiful action in regard to the environment is not simply in the eye of the beholder? Extending selfhood to include the nonhuman world and encouraging action based on inclination and desire rather than self-sacrifice and obeying the 'moral law', is equally compatible with the preservation of nature or its development depending on how the 'ecological self' views its self-interest. What guarantees that the ecological self will absorb the needs of nature, and thereby incorporate them as its own, is the deep ecology metaphysic, which is unlikely to command widespread support. One can conclude by saying that focusing on the 'ecological self' is insufficient to understand the deep ecology position. Ultimately it is its metaphysics which is the final arbiter of what constitutes 'beautiful actions'. Re-enchantment of nature goes hand in hand with psychological re-connection and the overcoming of the self's alienated state. It is the metaphysical vision of deep ecology which furnishes the objective criteria by which ecological selves are to be judged.

¹⁴ A similar idea whereby individuals are encouraged to take the interests of others into account when making environmental decisions is presented in chapter 7 (7.8).

2.4.1 Knowledge, Ontology and Metaphysics

Deep ecology's general frame of reference is the restoration of something that has been lost, a return to the true path from which we have diverged. For example, aboriginal cultures are often held up as the exemplars of good ecological behaviour for deep ecology. 'Wilderness experience' and the adoption of the insights of ecology are regarded as close approximations to these ancient and 'true' human ways of 'being in the world'. This can explain much about deep ecology. For one, it explains the stress placed on the direct experience of nature, rather than reasoning about nature. Via the direct apprehension of the natural world, either by living close to nature or by wilderness experience, we may relearn and recover our place in the natural order of things, rediscover the perennial rhythms of the earth, and once again be in harmony with the world (LaChapelle, 1993; Kohák, 1984).

The use of such terms 'health', 'well-being', and 'maturity' within deep ecology writing indicates that there is an 'objective' standard against which we can assess the development of the self. For example, the emphasis on the 'maturing of the self' implies that Fox (1990) has some conception of the self and its 'proper' development. From the deep ecology point of view those who do not adopt its position (or rather have *yet* to adopt it) are 'immature' or 'undeveloped'. Another interpretation, and one more consonant with the 'psychological' component of deep ecology's 'ontological turn', is the idea that for deep ecology the ecological crisis is an expression of a deep-seated 'pathology', that must be overcome "if we are to develop a healthier relation to the natural world" (Kidner, 1994: 45). Within this 'therapeutic discourse', the resolution of the ecological crisis is intimately tied up with the simultaneous resolution of the 'psychological crisis' induced by the 'modern worldview', or 'dominant paradigm'.¹⁵ This is of course

¹⁵ This 'psychological turn' of deep ecology is marked by an increased use of psychological terminology and theories. Although more explicit in Fox's writings, the use of gestalt theory by Naess (1989: 57-63) demonstrates this general movement within deep ecology as a whole. Within deep ecology this turn has also had the effect of rendering the 'ecological crisis' into a 'total crisis' in which nothing is unaffected, as discussed earlier in section 2.3. Evidence of the ecological crisis as a crisis of the self, according to Kidner (1994), relates to the increase in mental illness, drug addiction, family break-up etc., which can, in

related to the deep ecological view of the ecological crisis as a 'total crisis'; a constitutive part of this 'total crisis' is a crisis of self-understanding.

The problem with this 'psychological' turn of deep ecology is the objectivism and essentialism associated with its theory of the self. What deep ecology attempts to provide is a classificatory schema by which to judge and rank self-understandings. Self-understandings that depart from its standards are misconceived, incomplete or 'sick'. My point is not that there are no standards by which we can judge understandings of the self, but rather that such standards are not 'given' or 'discovered' in some objective fashion to be 'read off' from some metaphysical-cum-spiritual schema. They are the product of an ongoing process of intersubjective negotiation and discourse, premised on the shared activities of human beings. As Taylor notes, the self is "a being who exists in a space of concerns" (1992: 51), and this space is created with others within a particular moral community. He goes on to state that "To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide me with the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good" (*ibid.*: 27). In other words, one's sense of self as a moral agent is formed against a background of intersubjective activity, a collectively created narrative which furnishes one with the moral language and set of meanings with which to understand oneself and one's relations to others, whether these others be human or nonhuman. Morality, on this view can be seen as an on-going collective discourse of meanings, values and discernment of what is 'serious' and what is not in human affairs, a point taken up in the next chapter.

By construing the issue as one of 'moral health and development', the implication is that there are discernible qualities that 'healthy' and 'mature' selves exhibit. The paradigm case of this is 'wilderness experience': a transformative act which simultaneously 'reveals', in a manner that is not always clear, a mode of human experience and moral reasoning 'superior' to anthropocentrism. Such earth-bonding experiences are at the heart of deep ecology. Communing with nature by working one's allotment does not carry the same

part at least, be traced to the separation of humans from nature, and the 'unnatural' (read 'unhealthy') character of modern urban life.

transformative power. 'Unhumanised' nature i.e. wilderness alone has this capacity. Selves which do not identify with the nonhuman world are alienated, unhappy selves. Thus, deep ecology's view of the 'unhealthy self' fits with its view of modernity as the 'disenchantment of nature', and Fox's (1990) view of anthropocentrism as a 'dangerous orientation to the world' mentioned in 2.4.¹⁶

Deep ecology, in articulating its proposals within a psychological theory of moral development, reformulates the normative 'ought' in respect to nature to become a matter of discerning what 'is' in the enlightened interest of the ecologically expanded self. And this is discovered metaphysically in an *a priori* fashion, rather as an outcome of intersubjective discourse. The displacement of 'moral action' by 'beautiful action' could never be anything more than temporary or apparent, given the irreducibly plural (and thus conflict-prone) nature of the 'moral sphere' as a generic space of human action, and mode of being.¹⁷ Within deep ecology we '(re)-discover' the 'ecological self' rather than intersubjectively 'create' it through a shared ethical discourse. It is discovered either by reference to the metaphysic of oneness and/or by reference to the practices and belief-systems of surviving human societies which express the deep ecology metaphysical sensibility. One example of the problems created by this mode of reasoning is the critique of anthropocentrism.

¹⁶ The paradox of modernity from a deep ecological point of view is that the lonely, alienated modern self has lost touch with the one source of guidance she needs for 'true' well-being. Instead she comforts herself with the temporary relief to be gained from the consumption of material goods and services. Yet the more she engages in the latter the faster is this eternal realm of meaning destroyed. This relates to a view of deep ecology in which its main aim is to preserve a particular *meaning* of nature, rather than nature *per se* (Barry, 1995b). An example of this is McKibben's (1989) lament for the 'end of nature', understood as a natural context outside human control and manipulation. For him, the advent of global warming has destroyed the meaning and idea of nature's independence. This idea of nature's dependence on humans, the reverse of the usual way greens see the issue, is examined in 5.9.1 where I discuss 'ecological restoration'.

¹⁷ In deep ecology the social as a constitutive aspect of morality is often undertheorised, and may explain why it seems to favour a 'quietist' non-interference position vis-à-vis nature (Wissenburg, 1993) and displays more concern with individual relations in regard to the world than collective relations. 'Quietist' human-nature relations is thus another way to understand the appeal of hunter-gatherer social forms within deep ecology. This desire to submerge human interests in nature, to deduce social life from the natural order, is also found in bioregionalism, discussed in 4.3.

Sensitivity to the various gradations within anthropocentrism is blunted by the definition of anthropocentrism used by deep ecologists. Eckersley defines it as “the belief that there is a clear and morally relevant dividing line between humankind and the rest of nature, that humankind is the only or principal source of value and meaning in the world, *and that nonhuman nature is there for no other purpose but to serve humankind*” (1992a: 51: emphasis added). Breaking this statement down into three propositions, we can discern different views of the ecocentric critique of anthropocentrism.

First, that there is a morally relevant divide between humans and nonhumans is a statement that all except committed biospheric egalitarians would agree with. As explained in the next chapter (3.4.1), being human counts for something in a way which the charge that anthropocentrism is simply ‘ungrounded speciesism’ fails to register (Routley and Routley, 1979). There is nothing inherently ecologically unfriendly about the fact that humans, as far as we know, are the only species with a moral sense. That this may be a difference of degree rather than kind does not deflate the importance of this basic distinction between how humans interact with each other and how they interact with the rest of the world. As will be recalled, in the introduction I argued that the moral basis of green political theory is a composite one, made up of two moral spheres, one human only and the other concerning social-environmental relations. The second statement, that humans are the only morally relevant beings in the world, does not follow from the first. Accepting our status as the only or main source of value and meaning in the world can ground widely different attitudes to the world. From this perspective anything from the complete and unhindered exploitation of the world (the third statement) to the widespread protection of vast tracts of nature from human interference can be forthcoming. For purely human reasons, informed by the idea that we produce and attribute value in an otherwise valueless world, our action in the world can be either extensive or minimal, and is not incompatible with extending moral considerations to cover human interaction with the nonhuman world.

It is the third statement that goes to the heart of the deep ecology position, where anthropocentrism is understood as expressing a strong instrumentalist conception of the

world. However, it does not follow, either logically or in practice, that the first two positions lead to this instrumentalist position. This hypothesis is a metaphysical claim, one that resonates more with the idea of the ‘great chain of being’, than with any ethical claims about the nonhuman world. Without such a metaphysical context it is difficult to see how this statement can be meaningful. Unlike the previous two arguments which can be thought of as expressing general features about the ethical experience, the presumption that the nonhuman world is there purely for human use is a meta-ethical claim. The problem with anthropocentrism is not how it operates as an ethical theory, since ethics is meaningless outside an anthropocentric context, but as a metaphysical position about the place of humans in nature. The real reason why deep ecologists are suspicious of reformed anthropocentrism is that the status of the nonhuman world remains contingent: *it does not enjoy a permanently protected status*. This suspicion rests on the fact that deep ecology has at its heart an *a priori* which privileges the *preservation* of nature over the human use of nature (see below).¹⁸

2.5 The Normative Basis for Political Agreement

A strong argument against deep ecology is that it is much easier to secure agreement about the normative rightness of an action or practice at the level of applied ethics, than at the metaphysical or philosophical level, which is the main focus of deep ecology. At the applied ethics level agents may have different reasons for agreeing to the same policies. And ultimately we must ask which is more important, achieving social agreement around green policies and practices, or seeking consensus on the reasons for those changes?

¹⁸ While obliged to recognise that humans must use, consume and transform the nonhuman world to survive and flourish, points 4, 5 and 7 of the deep ecology platform (2.3) are clearly aimed at maximising preservation and minimising human impact, based, as argued, on the *a priori* status of the former. An alternative view is to maximise human well-being compatible with maximum environmental protection or minimal environmental impact. It is perfectly reasonable to ask as Young does “how much industrial growth can our natural surrounding survive? Or, conversely, how much environmental protection can our economy afford?” (1979: 242). The point, as suggested in the next chapter, is that there should be no *a priori* privileging of either development or preservation, but that social-environmental relations have to be worked out in practice.

Dryzek (1987) notes that environmental issues are such that it is often the case that agreement on the policies for pollution abatement or sustainability can be achieved, despite different reasons that may be advanced for those policies. In a later work he argues that, “disagreement on the fundamental principles of morality (pure ethics) often proves compatible with consensus on the moral side of practical issues (applied ethics). In other words, *prudential, context-specific* moral reasoning can overcome differences in abstract commitments” (1990:17; emphasis added). Agreement around *what* should be done can be independent from *why* it should be done. This is also echoed in Norton’s (1991) ‘convergence hypothesis’ which will be mentioned throughout the thesis. According to him, the fact that greens (of whatever hue) increasingly agree on policy, while disagreeing on ultimate principles is a positive advancement, and one that can be used to overcome the ecocentric-anthropocentric dichotomy beyond the environmental movement. That is, green arguments and policy proposals would receive a better hearing by the public if environmental policies were cast in terms of extended human interests, rather than emphasising nonhuman interests. A clear example of this is environmental policy based on a concern for future generations, which will be discussed in the next chapter (3.4.3) and in chapter 7 (7.7).

However, deep ecology’s demand that “the reasons for the care of the nonhuman world are at least as important as the care itself” (Dobson, 1989: 46) greatly diminishes the probability of deep ecology securing sufficient normative agreement publicly for green principles. The question that needs to be asked is: can deep ecology function as the shared political basis of normative agreement between citizens upon whom such policies will be binding? Will deep ecology secure public agreement for green policy prescriptions? Given the major changes that the resolution of ecological problems may require and the consequent disruption of citizens’ lives, the issue of securing agreement for such change is obviously crucial.¹⁹ The problem is that it is unlikely that deep ecology can perform this function for green political theory.

¹⁹ It is also important from the point of view of the democratic credentials of green politics as discussed in chapter 7.

Employing Rawls' distinction between 'political' and 'metaphysical' bases of political morality, deep ecology is 'metaphysical' not 'political', and as such cannot underwrite a political agreement around green political ends. According to Rawls, "as a practical political matter no general moral conception can provide a publicly recognized basis for a conception of justice in a modern democratic state" (1985: 225).²⁰ But this is precisely what deep ecology attempts to do. It seeks to secure agreement and support for green principles and policies on the basis of its particular philosophical understanding of the self, the world and the relation between the two. And what is more it states that social restructuring aimed at securing ecological sustainability will fail if not based on its prescriptions. 'Fail' in the sense that political prescriptions and policies that have not come out of a process of 'metaphysical reconstruction' will be 'unworthy', or fall short of deep ecology ideals, even if successful by other criteria, such as ecological sustainability. Deep ecological arguments for altering the basic institutions of society will not succeed in gaining sufficient normative support. The point is that it is unlikely that deep ecology will succeed as a stable basis for normative agreement. It is perhaps an awareness of this that accounts for the non- or even anti-political character of some deep ecological writing. It knows that its position is simply too demanding, too radical to stand a chance in the public sphere or it is convinced that such political argument is beside the point and the real battle is for hearts rather than votes. If, as Dobson notes, this leads to a view of green politics in which the "changes that need to take place are too profound to be dealt with in the political arena, and that the proper territory for action is the psyche rather than the parliamentary chamber" (1990: 143), then green politics is a means at best, or simply an add-on, to its spiritual project. Alternatively, it can be a combination of both political and spiritual elements- green politics as an 'eco-theology' (Spretnak and Capra, 1986; Skolimowski, 1993; Bahro, 1994). A clear example of this is Skolimowski's conviction that,

²⁰ Here we can understand justice as the normative agreement upon which social harmony and social co-operation is based. See Rawls (1972: 2).

the Greens have not yet reached maturity...Political maturity means the realization that a true alternative to the present decaying political system lies...in evolving new *spiritual structures* as the foundation for a new politics. It is a condition *sine qua non* for Green politics to acquire a spiritual dimension. Green politics to be a genuine alternative, must see in politics a spiritual pursuit...*The shadow of secularism still clouds the thinking and axiology of Green politicians* (1993: 43-4; emphasis in original).

The problem with deep ecology is that it brings green politics into irresolvable conflict with settled convictions, giving it a 'fundamentalist' complexion which is a hindrance to convincing people to support its political aims. This does not imply that green politics must simply accept the prevailing anthropocentrism as 'given' and beyond change. Far from it. *The defining feature of green moral theory is not the acceptance of ecocentrism but a critical attitude to anthropocentrism.* However, the process by which such change is secured is a political matter, doing moral theory in public, accepting that persuasion must start from some degree of underlying agreement. That such activity is purely human-centred does not mean that it is purely concerned with human welfare or interests. As argued in the next chapter, an acceptance of the appropriateness of an anthropocentric 'moral extensionism' (3.3) is a more secure basis upon which to argue for green politics, not only because it is conceptually a more defensible moral position, but because politically it seeks to persuade within a generally accepted discourse. Its strength lies in its *immanent* character as opposed to the *external* nature of non-anthropocentrism. If the public justification of green politics is derived from deep ecology, it is unlikely to be accepted by a majority of the audience to whom it is addressed. And while there may be some psychological satisfaction to be gained from being lone but sane 'voices in the wilderness', this is unlikely to advance politically the cause of preserving actual wilderness.

If deep ecology is correct and the ecological crisis cannot be resolved without a reconceptualisation of the self along the lines of the 'ecological self' within a more

widespread change in cultural self-understanding then green politics is in trouble (or from the deep ecology perspective superfluous or not a priority). This is because as understood here, green political theory *does not* see the ecological crisis as fundamentally an ‘ego-crisis of humanity’, as opposed to presenting a constellation of moral and material contradictions which can be resolved *within* the present culture and its forms of normative reasoning. Rather than demanding ~~that~~ a “change in the context in which the [ethical rule] book is written” (Dobson, 1989: 44), my supposition is that an *immanent critique* of conventional (i.e. anthropocentric) moral reasoning is sufficient to establish the normative claims of green politics. This is a basic difference between deep ecology and other environmental theories. Deep ecology is premised on viewing the ecological crisis as a ‘total crisis’, a fundamental ‘crisis of civilisation’ (Bahro, 1994). From this perspective, it is only by transcending anthropocentrism (as a form of moral reasoning and culture) that this ‘total crisis’ can be resolved. Ethical theory is accordingly viewed as so embedded within the prevailing ‘modernist’ or ‘industrial’ anthropocentric culture that it simply cannot escape and formulate sufficient alternative ethical guidelines and modes of interaction. McLaughlin (1994), in a chapter tellingly entitled ‘Beyond Ethics to Deep Ecology’, highlights this aspect of deep ecology. According to him,

The social dependency of ethical theory is a serious problem for any attempt to develop a non-anthropocentric environmental ethic. If the issues posed by ecological crises go to the very roots of industrial society, then it is unlikely that any ethical theory that is grounded in reflection on current social practice will penetrate deeply enough...Thus, the possibility of grounding ethical argument for any radical transformation of humanity’s relations with the rest of nature requires going far beyond ordinary ethical discourse (1994: 169).

McLaughlin’s claim that an immanent critique of anthropocentrism and its cultural manifestation ‘will not penetrate deeply enough’ is premised on a presumption that the

only solution must be an ecocentric one.²¹ Alternatives, both from non-anthropocentric environmental ethics, and more importantly, from within anthropocentrism, are dismissed. This, as suggested in the next chapter, is to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The argument that ethical reflection is constrained by contemporary social practices is both misleading and self-serving. That conventional ethical theory may be grounded in reflecting on those social practices does not prove that the former is determined by the latter or that it cannot radically change practices. One has only to survey the recent history of moral and legal theory to see the effect it has had on social practices from women's rights to the legal protection of some nonhumans, including most famously trees having 'standing' in the US (Stone, 1974). In common with radical theories, deep ecology is simply too *impatient* to work within the conventional moral discourse on human-nature relations. Thus its ontological turn is motivated partly by a desire for rapid cultural change. Ethical debate and discussion as to the proper treatment of nonhuman nature is simply fiddling while Rome burns.

It is more likely that agreement will be reached concerning an ethics of use for social-environmental relations rather than agreement on a metaphysical truth of the place of humans in the wider natural order. In this sense Rawls is wrong when he claims that, "A correct conception of our relations to animals and to nature would seem to depend upon a theory of the natural order and our place in it. One of the tasks of metaphysics is to work out a view of world suited for this purpose; it should identify and systematize the truths decisive for these questions" (1972: 512). From the point of view of green politics, Rawls can be criticised for viewing social-environmental relations as a metaphysical issue, which seems to rule out agreement on environmental matters as part of a wider normative agreement on social co-operation, given the quote from him earlier. The green argument is that these relations can be viewed as a normative issue upon which it is possible to find some degree of political agreement at the level of applied ethics and policy. In conclusion, green political theory ought to reject the conversion of large sections of the population to

²¹ This is the same logic which argues that an 'authentic' or genuine moral principle to govern social-environmental relations is one which, *a priori*, accords independent moral standing or intrinsic value to the environment (Regan, 1982: chapter 9).

a deep ecological worldview as a key political aim. However, if some level of metaphysical agreement is needed, then science offers the best basis for that agreement.

2.5.1 Science as a Basis for Metaphysical Agreement

If green politics is to base itself upon some metaphysical footing, then science rather than an earth-centred spirituality may be a much better way of going about it. As Grey notes, “A purely secular, scientific naturalism can provide a thoroughly satisfying way of realizing our unity with the non-human world” (1986: 212). Thus modern science, itself a product of modernity, can help to contextualise the difference between humans and nature. That is, modern forms of scientific knowledge can help displace the arrogance of humanism, without rejecting anthropocentrism. One way in which science, including ecological science, can do this is by demonstrating that the relationship between ‘human’ and ‘nonhuman’ is characterised by both *difference* and *differentiation*. That is, science can promote a worldview in which the human condition is marked by being *a part of yet apart from* the natural order (Barry, 1995c).

Norton in his plea for unity among environmentalists demonstrates the significance of science within green politics. According to him, “Environmentalists’ emerging consensus, it will turn out, is based more on scientific principles than on shared metaphysical and moral axioms” (1991: 92). He then goes on to point out that,

The attack on human arrogance, which was mounted as a response to anthropocentrism, was well motivated but badly directed. One need not posit interests contrary to human ones in order to recognize our finitude. If the target is arrogance, a scientifically informed contextualism that sees us as one animal species existing derivatively, even parasitically, as part of a larger, awesomely wonderful whole should cut us down to size (1991: 237).

Within contemporary western society it is more likely that a non-spiritualised scientific understanding of the world and our species' place in it can provide basic metaphysical agreement. Scientific knowledge can contextualise anthropocentrism, lessening its tendencies to hubris and pride. It can also demonstrate our dependence upon the environment, which as argued later is vital for underpinning the virtues of ecological stewardship (chapters 3, 6 and 7). It is also obvious that, "Scientific theory and evidence are a necessary condition for a rational ecological policy" (O'Neill, 1993: 145). By this he means that scientific verification of ecological problems will be a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for social recognition that there is a problem.²² At the same time agreement on the scientific nature of ecological problems can be useful in forging a politically workable normative agreement on social-environmental issues. The place of scientific knowledge within green moral and political theory will be further developed in the next chapter and chapters 5 and 7. All I wish to note here is that a possible metaphysical basis for green political theory can be found within a secular scientific naturalism.

2.6 Summary of the Critique

A major problem with deep ecology is its conception of morality. Quite apart from its professed non-anthropocentrism, what makes it unsuitable as a normative basis for green politics is that between its metaphysical concerns with 're-enchanting the world' on the one hand, and its psychological concerns with the 'ecological self', there is no space for an understanding of ethics as a discursively created and contested realm.

The metaphysical drift of much of deep ecology makes it very abstract since its concern is with the general philosophical question as to the relationship between 'humanity' and 'nature'. Deep ecology tends to have little to say about ethical guidance or actual

²² However, as I argue later in chapter 7 (7.3), while science can identify environmental problems, the political response to, and normative characterisation of, environmental problems cannot be left to science alone.

interactions between human societies and their environments. As Sylvan notes, "The guidelines as regards day-to-day living and action for a follower of deep ecology remain unduly and unfortunately obscure" (1984: 13). To the extent that it does offer guidance, for example, when human and nonhuman interests conflict, what it has to offer is often little different from that given by a reformed and enlightened anthropocentrism (Naess, 1979).

Related to this is the psychological aspect of deep ecology. This has had the unfortunate effect of construing the normative issue as a matter of individual not collective concern. In other words, the ethics associated with ecological self is premised on non-plurality. Much of the criticism levelled at deep ecology in this section is consistent with the eco-feminist critique of deep ecology based on its denial of difference and particularity. According to Plumwood, "Since ethics is normally viewed as concerned with the relation between self to other, Naess's substitution of the 'maxim of self-realization' for an account of ethical relations is a symptom of the death of the other in the framework of deep ecology" (1994: 174). It is almost as if the ethical question concerning the proper treatment of the nonhuman world can be reduced to an inward-looking contemplative 'ecological self'. The conflict and tension normally associated with normative questions is missing. In going beyond (McLaughlin, 1994: 169) or 'dissolving' ethics (Plumwood, 1993: 181), deep ecology also dissolves the 'social' as the basic normative context for dealing with human-nature affairs. The deep ecology view of green moral theory is that it is concerned with the relationship between 'self' and 'nature' rather than human beings, their social relations and particular 'environments'. Lacking such an intersubjective understanding of the moral context within which normative principles are raised, leaves deep ecology bereft of any sense of interaction and dynamism in the formulation of the moral sense of human dealings with the nonhuman world.

Deep ecology is primarily concerned with the self, self-understandings and self-development in relation to the nonhuman world. However, as a political theory, green politics is concerned with social institutions, public policies, the relationship between individuals within society, as part of the process of analysing the relations between society

and environment. Deep ecology addresses *selves* as philosophical and/or psychological entities *within the natural world* whereas green politics focuses on moral agents as *citizens within pluralist societies within environments*. As indicated in section 2.5, normative agreement on public policy requires a moral discourse derived from an immanent critique of anthropocentric moral theory, rather than the wholesale adoption of ecocentrism that deep ecology recommends. And if metaphysical agreement is to be sought for green political theory, then a scientific naturalism is sufficient, as I argued in 2.5.1.

In the end, for deep ecology, an appeal for an ‘ethical’ articulation of human relations to nature is to admit falling short of being in harmony with it. An environmental ethics signifies a lack within human-nature relations of sensitivity; a lack of compassion, of sensitivity on behalf of humans. In this respect, the deep ecology critique of environmental ethics is similar to the communitarian critique of justice. From the communitarian position, the appeal to justice as the normative basis of social relations signifies a lack of solidarity and fellow-feeling within society as a whole. On this account, justice is, at best, a ‘remedial virtue’ (Kymlicka, 1993). In a similar fashion, deep ecology criticises environmental ethics on the grounds that it is an inferior or second-best normative basis for regulating social-environmental relations. This can be seen in Naess’s comment that, “We need not say today man’s relation to the nonhuman world is *immoral*. It is enough to say that it lacks generosity, fortitude, and love” (in Fox, 1990: 221). It is for this reason that identification is so important within deep ecology since as Naess again points out, “there must be identification in order for there to be compassion, and amongst humans, solidarity” (1995b: 227). The ethical is unnecessary, and may indeed be unhelpful, while the political is something which can be derived from discovering our place in the sun and the order of nature. As Eckersley states, “In terms of fundamental priorities, an ecocentric approach regards the question of our proper place in the rest of nature as logically prior to the question of what are the most appropriate social and political arrangements for human communities” (1992a: 28). This again construes human-nature relations as primarily a metaphysical as opposed to an ethical matter, as well as privileging human-nature relations over intrahuman ones.

The development of an ethical anthropocentrism divorced from a metaphysical one is the common ground between deep and non-deep green moral theory. It is the *arrogance* of humanism (Ehrenfeld, 1978), rather than humanism itself that is, or ought to be, the proper object of the deep ecology critique. This is in keeping with Naess's point, in the last paragraph, which argued that it was sufficient to criticise human treatment of the environment on the grounds that it lacked generosity, compassion or love. In other words, one could say that the deep ecology argument is against an uncaring, economic, narrow-minded humanism rather than against humanism itself. A humanism which 'honoured' the spirit of deep ecology would appear to be compatible with much of what deep ecology seeks to achieve. Indeed, as outlined in the next section, deep ecology's emphasis on virtue offers a way in which it can be incorporated within an alternative, but still anthropocentric, basis for green politics. Virtue can act as a bridge between deep ecology and a reformulated anthropocentric ethical theory.

2.7 From Deep Ecology to 'Ecological Virtue'

For deep ecologists the 'ecological crisis' is partly due to the 'illusion' of human technological and epistemological prowess vis-à-vis the natural order. Crudely put, the ecosystems upon which all life is dependent are beyond human comprehension and the idea of human control over the ecological conditions of life is a dangerous fiction. According to Naess, "Such complexity [of ecosystems] makes thinking in terms of vast systems inevitable. It also makes for a keen, steady perception of the profound human ignorance of biospherical relationships and therefore of the effect of disturbances" (1973: 245). The overarching idea of deep ecology could be summed up by saying what we cannot understand we cannot control, and in regard to nature the appropriate attitude towards that which we cannot control is humility, awe and reverence. A typical example is Devall and Sessions who note that the deep ecology movement is concerned with "cultivating the human *virtues* of modesty and humility" (1985: 110; emphasis added).

Deep ecology's concern with moral character and habits can be integrated within a reformed anthropocentric green moral theory.

In stressing the significance of identity within moral experience, deep ecology has something positive to bring to green politics in terms of a critique of the lack of 'concreteness' in 'rationalist' accounts of ethics, which I discuss in more detail in the next chapter (3.3). Interpreted as a form of virtue-ethics, deep ecology makes the valuable contribution that care for the environment and nature can be related to self in a way which bypasses many of the problems associated with attempts to ground care in the intrinsic value of nature. Stressing the cultivation of certain virtues as indispensable action-guiding qualities, allows aspects of the 'ecological self' to be incorporated within green political theory, divested of the limitations mentioned above. Virtue-ethics, in short, offers a less contentious way in which human identity and character can be made more central to the understanding of moral experience than the metaphysical or psychological views of the ecological self.

For example, unlike the deep ecology account of the 'ecological self', a virtue-based account of how we ought to treat the nonhuman environment would make the social and cultural dimension of such treatment explicit. That is, a virtue-based account of the moral treatment of the nonhuman world makes sense if it is informed by and consonant with some socially constituted valuation of the nonhuman world. Thus, a virtue-based account, unlike 'rationalist' accounts of ethics, focuses on the character of the individual agent. It highlights the particular cultural valuations of the natural world which form the background and framework within which character-formation and individual moral action takes place. Such accounts of ethics are therefore typified by a sensitivity to the context and particularity of actual, concrete social-environment relations. It follows from this that where virtue-ethics is accepted as the moral template for constructing this new relationship, any attempt to re-orientate the moral relationship between humans and the natural world automatically involves reference to social relations. Virtue-based accounts of ethics are thus *political* in a way which the 'ecological self' of deep ecology is not, while sharing the latter's concern with relating ethics to character.

Adopting a virtue-ethics-perspective recasts the critique of anthropocentrism. From this perspective the arrogance, hubris and inflated self-importance that can characterise the latter are vices, that is, unworthy moral attributes or dispositions of character. Thus a virtue approach can enable green moral criticism to find the correct target: the ‘arrogance’ rather than the ‘humanism’ as indicated above. Virtue ethics also allows the positive attributes of the ecological self to be understood as specific environmental virtues. For example, we can say that deep ecology suggests a degree of humility and compassion to counter the excesses, i.e. vices, of anthropocentrism. However, if we accept the Aristotelian definition of a virtue as the mean between two vices/extremes, deep ecology can be criticised for sometimes lapsing into the opposite extreme of ‘arrogant humanism’, namely a complete submersion within, and total acceptance of, the order of nature. The latter according to Frasz, is typical of “someone who has lost all sense of individuality when confronted with the vastness and sublimity of nature” (1993: 274). This is the danger of both ‘wilderness experience’ and a desire to return to or recapture the values of a hunter-gatherer form of society. This opposite extreme of ‘arrogant anthropocentrism’ typifies many unreflective sentimental or romantic views of human-nature relations which pepper green moral and political discourse, sometimes expressing itself as ‘quietism’ (Wissenburg, 1993: 9). And as an extreme this moral disposition is thus not an environmental virtue, but rather an environmental vice. Sentimentality in regard to human-nature relations does not give nature or humans their proper regard since it often occludes ‘negative’ aspects of this relationship, such as predation, use, consumption, labour and death, but which are, in reality, inescapable ‘facts of life’.²³ For humility to be a virtue which deep ecology supposes it to be it must be understood as a mean between a timid ecocentrism and an arrogant anthropocentrism. As I argue in the next chapter, weak anthropocentrism occupies this mean between these two extremes.

²³ This refers to the standard division between the ‘intellectual virtues’ (knowledge) and those associated with character (such as humility, generosity, friendship), what Aristotle called the ‘moral virtues’. At the same time, ignorance of our dependence on nature, as given by ecological and other sciences, which tells us that we are, for example, social animals evolved from primates, and that we are a part of the natural order, such ignorance is a vice, and *a fortiori* an environmental vice. Thus knowledge of ecological facts is an environmental virtue to be cultivated. See chapter 3 (3.6.2).

2.7.1 Ecological Virtues and the 'Human Condition'

Virtues are qualities of character enabling their possessor to be responsive to the inherently contingent and contextual character of human experience. That is, virtues, such as courage for example, are dispositions which humans need or find useful in order to live because of the type of beings they are and the type of world(s) they inhabit. It is important to point out that virtues are commonly held to help human beings *cope* rather than to *eliminate* the problems and contingencies of the 'human condition', such as death, luck, conflict, human plurality, and alienation amongst others. As suggested earlier (2.3.1), green politics can, in part, be viewed as concerned with 'environmental crisis management', that is cultivating modes of behaviour and character which helps us realise our interests, and as suggested in the next chapter, encourages us to reflect on those interests as part of this process (3.5). Environmental virtue ethics differs greatly from deep ecology in that it does not seek to answer or solve the existential riddle of human existence, or discover a permanent solution to social-environmental relations. At the same time they are also said to be required in order to live well. According to Aristotle, "The good of man is an activity of soul in accordance with virtue" (1948: 1220a). In the classical formulation virtues are also integral aspects of the 'good life', that is the cultivating virtues, such as courage, prudence, charity and justice are not simply instrumentally valuable but also constitutive elements of the good and human well-being. Thus, one cannot propose an account of ethics centred on virtue without also indicating what is the 'good' around which these virtues are orientated. However, as indicated in the conclusion and later in chapter 7, an account of the environmental virtues is compatible with a 'thinner' theory of the good than that usually associated with virtue ethics, such as that advanced by MacIntyre (1984) for example. A starting point for a 'modern' and green appropriation of the virtue ethics tradition is given by Geach who points out that, "A specific answer to the question of what men are for and what end they should aim themselves at is not required in order to show the need for the cardinal virtues" (1977:

45). As a praxis-orientated view of morality, a virtue-ethics casts the green theory of the good in terms of being and ‘doing’ and not simple as ‘having’. That is, the good of which green virtues partake is one in which human well-being is understood as constituted by action rather than possession or consumption. This theme is developed later in chapters 6 (6.7) and 7 (7.9.1).

The attractiveness of basing green moral claims within the idiom of virtue-ethics comes partly as a reaction to the common misperception of green politics as requiring a large degree of self-denial and a puritanical asceticism (Goodin, 1992: 18; Allison, 1991: 170-8). While rejecting the claim that green political theory calls for the complete disavowal of materialistic lifestyles, it is true that green politics does require the collective re-assessment of such lifestyles, and may require a degree of shared sacrifice.²⁴ Some green policies, particularly in their initial stages, may be matters of necessity rather than being intrinsically desirable. Initially therefore these policies have to do with things that are difficult for people, getting people to do things that they might not otherwise want to do, but can be demonstrated to be in their long-term interests. This is where virtue comes in, since as Foot notes, “virtues are about what is difficult for men” (1978: 8), i.e., correctives to human frailty, and weakness of will. Virtues, let it be clear, are *not* concerned with the elimination of human weakness. That is while virtues do promote a mode of being and way of acting which will help individuals attain and discern their good, it is not part of the argument for virtues that they perfect the ‘human condition’. To use ecological terminology, virtues may be thought of as character traits, modes of being which help to find the best ‘adaptive fit’ between the individual and her interests and the environment (both social and natural) she inhabits. The importance of virtues for the green position may be viewed as residing in the necessity of such virtues as self-restraint, prudence and foresight so that long-term i.e. sustainable, well-being is not sacrificed or

²⁴ It is possible of course to follow communitarian writers and present shared sacrifice as a formative and important aspect of life within a ‘constitutive community’, or a community of distinction (Cochran, 1989). Other, less strongly communitarian interpretations of shared sacrifice will be canvassed in chapter 7 within the context of ‘ecological citizenship’ and its associated civic virtues. In chapter 5 I discuss the place of ‘nationhood’ as a source of shared identity (5.7).

undermined by desires to satisfy immediate self-interest. This, as argued throughout the thesis is the essence of ecological stewardship, action in which human interest and the interests of the nonhuman world coincide.

At the same time, as argued in more detail in the next chapter, the cultivation of ecological virtue may be thought of as a cultivation of those modes of character and acting in the world which encourage social-environmental relations that are symbiotic rather than parasitic. In other words, ecological virtues are related to social-environmental relations in which human self-interest and well-being are fulfilled by modes of interaction which minimise harm to the interests of the nonhuman world as much as possible.

As argued later in chapters 6 and 7, a virtue account of morality can add another supporting aspect to the argument concerning the centrality of transforming preferences within green politics. Here it is enough to say that the self-reflective emphasis that virtue brings to the ethical experience can be viewed as one way in which green ethical theory is concerned with encouraging the movement from behaviour based on what Norton calls 'felt preferences' to action based on 'considered preferences' (1984: 134-8). Part of this movement for many greens, not just deep ecologists, involves the integration of ecological knowledge and ecological moral action, that is, the concern to ensure that ecological science informs (as opposed to determines) environmental ethical practice. Another dimension to this is Kohák's argument that what deep ecology is concerned with is the development of new *perceptions* of nature rather than new *conceptions* of nature (1993). Here we may think of environmental virtue as having to do with the refinement of moral discernment in regard to the place of nature as a constitutive aspect of the human good. The cultivation of environmental virtues can then be regarded as a matter of discerning the place nature has within some particular human good or interest.²⁵ A more positive statement would be to say that those who destroy nature are motivated by an unnecessarily narrow view of the human good, and that "what they count as important is too narrowly confined" (Hill, 1983: 219). That is, forms of anthropocentrism which

²⁵ For a similar argument, which relates human care for the environment to human well-being, see O'Neill (1993).

narrow the human good and human interests, can be criticised as vices, or potential vices. However, to reject anthropocentrism is not the solution, but is rather itself a vice of which we need to be aware.²⁶ A virtue approach is thus anthropocentric in that its reference point is some human good or interest, but as argued in the next chapter, this ethical (as oppose to metaphysical) anthropocentrism is compatible with including considerations of nonhuman interests and welfare.

2.7.2. Stewardship and Berry's 'Ecology of the Virtues'

Wendell Berry's 'ecology of the virtues' (Thompson, 1995: 81) offers a good example of the role virtue ethics can play within green political theory. Although writing specifically on agriculture and the virtues of 'stewardship' associated with the 'good farmer', Berry's analysis can be extended to other dimensions of green politics. Berry's main contribution concerns the fact that 'good farming practice' is a matter of integrating various specific virtues, associated with work, community, citizenship and care for the land. For Berry, the 'ecology of the virtues' refers both to the to the interrelation of the virtues, and the idea that one cannot attain one virtue without the others. Just as in the ecology of nature, so in the moral sphere, everything is connected. The constellation of these virtues constitutes 'stewardship' (Thompson, 1995: 82), which will be a central theme running the analysis of green politics presented in this thesis. Berry's main point is that the displacement of agriculture by 'agribusiness' has destroyed stewardship as a virtue. Basically put, contemporary farm life is qualitatively different from that which preceded it, thus making the virtue of stewardship more difficult to sustain, because the role of farmer has changed and with it the collection of interrelated practices and virtues which went along with this role. In short, Berry's complaint is that contemporary agriculture is ecologically unsustainable and socially destructive as farmers become agri-business

²⁶ It is true to say that as vices, an excessive anthropocentrism is worse than an excessive ecocentrism, but the point is that it is between these two extremes (human domination on the one and human quietism on the other) that we find the mean. As argued here and in the next chapter, a naturalistic, reflexive anthropocentrism represents just such a intermediary path.

managers, and thus import practices, norms and ways of thinking which systematically undercut the pattern of life associated with what it means to be a farmer. As Thompson points out,

In place of well-balanced and ecologically sensitive yeoman farmers, the technologized farm tends to produce individuals with a moral psychology very much like that of impersonal leisure societies, common in urban centres. Farming loses its special moral character, and Berry would argue that a decline in agricultural stewardship is hardly surprizing under those conditions (1995: 85).

Farming in the modern world is now simply another business and Berry's critique is that this shift causes a damaging rupture to those nature-regarding and community-regarding norms which are essential to good farming practice, that is farming as the practice of land stewardship. One way of looking at this transformation of farming is to see it as a clear example of how social practices can be undermined by external institutions, in this case the globalising market and to a lesser extent the state.²⁷ On this view, technological advances, increased specialisation, and an ethos of food production for profit divorced from any long-term considerations of the effect of this production on the fertility of the land, have all conspired to destroy the integrated moral harmony that characterised farming life. With the decline of the 'family farm', the central linchpin which held the ecology of the virtues together is destroyed, allowing farming to become simply another business offering its wares on the open market. If there is no one to continue the farm after one's death, then it is less likely that norms of stewardship which require maintaining the long-term fertility and productivity of the land will apply. Farming as a particular way of life and a social practice is thus dissolved.

Apart from the centrality of virtues, Berry's argument that farmers are 'stewards of the land' is a clear example of an 'ethics of use' concerning social-environment interaction

²⁷ This contrast between institutions and social practices will form the background to much of the discussion in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

discussed in the conclusion and the next chapter. The importance of stewardship is that it stresses the part played by human intentionality and labour within human-nature relations. Stewardship in being fundamentally related to human interests introduces human transformational activity as an irreducibly basic aspect of human-nature interaction. It thus acts as a corrective to the presumption that a 'hands off' approach to nature is necessarily the aim of green politics. However, stewardship is also a corrective to a view of social-environmental interaction in which human self-interest necessarily means precluding those of the nonhuman world. Stewardship as a practice which combines different ecological virtues, is a mode of being in which long-term human self-interest, is not undermined by short-run, intemperate desires. Thus acting as a steward is not inimical to long-run or sustainable human productive interests. Stewardship is a sustainable mode of human interaction in an ever-changing nonhuman world, where human and nonhuman interests are not viewed in terms of a zero-sum game. As such it also represents a symbiotic mode of human metabolism with the environment. We need ecological virtues in order both to cope with that world as well as to educate and integrate the legitimate human desire to live a little better within a realistic and informed view of human interests in the long-run.

2.8. Conclusion

The general view of deep ecology presented here is that its concerns relate to seeking answers at the metaphysical level pertaining to the proper relationship between 'humanity' and 'nature'. However, one could argue that deep ecology starts out from a particular understanding of that relationship and then works backwards, as it were, to provide various arguments for that *a priori* position. So the strong critique of deep ecology is that it assumes a particular metaphysical understanding of the way in which humans and nature ought to interact. Crudely put, deep ecology seeks to persuade us that there ought to be a *prima facie* disposition in favour of non-interference with nature by humans. Dobson succinctly expresses this fundamental deep ecology position as seeking to "turn the tables

in favour of the environment, such that the onus of persuasion is on those who want to destroy, rather than those who want to preserve” (1990: 69). The developments within deep ecology from its initial concern with defending the intrinsic value of nature to its more recent ontological and psychological turn can be seen partly as different ways to provide justifications for this *a priori* position which privileges, *ceteris paribus*, the preservation of nature over its use by humans. However, deep ecology is also found wanting from the point of view of providing a basis for normative agreement for green politics. Simply put, it is unlikely that deep ecology can function as the basis for normative agreement within contemporary societies.

However, what can be taken from deep ecology and incorporated within green moral theory is its emphasis on the dispositional aspects of morality. Deep ecology viewed as a form of virtue-ethics does have something to offer in establishing the normative basis of green politics. The idea of stewardship as a mode of productive interaction with the nonhuman world which is sustainable and symbiotic, while anthropocentric, is compatible with the policy implications of ecocentrism. It therefore represents a more defensible moral basis for green politics. This anthropocentric virtue account of morality in which character as a mode of being, and a way of interacting in the world (both social and natural), is further developed in the next chapter.

As the relationship with our artistic heritage

Chapter Three

Naturalism and the Ethical Basis for Green Political Theory

3.1 Introduction

One of the most distinctive features of green politics is its insistence that human relations with the nonhuman world are a legitimate object of moral concern, a concern which some greens claim has been largely neglected within contemporary moral theory. This neglect has typically been argued to stem from the human-centredness that characterises western moral thinking, which lends ethical legitimacy to human-nature practices which are exploitative and morally unjustified. The strongest expression of this rejection is the claim that anthropocentrism represents little more than arbitrary prejudice in favour of our species, as the deep ecology critique holds. Anthropocentrism is held similar to sexism and racism, i.e. a form of 'human chauvinism' (Routley and Routley, 1979) or 'speciesism' (Singer, 1990), an indefensible and arbitrary bias in our treatment of other species simply because they are not human.¹

As discussed in the last chapter many green theorists and activists see the transcendence of this human-centredness as the only way in which the 'moralisation' of human-nature relations can occur. In this chapter I further develop the defence of anthropocentrism, briefly indicated in the last chapter, as the strongest and most appropriate ethical foundation for green politics. It is not my concern to enter into detailed discussion of 'environmental ethics', although reference will be made to salient

¹ As will be made clear later on, distinguishing between the concept of anthropocentrism and particular conceptions, open up the possibility that some conceptions of anthropocentrism are compatible with green moral claims concerning the treatment of the non-human world. What critics of anthropocentrism need to demonstrate is that this type of moral reasoning *necessarily* leads to the devaluation of nature in theory and its mistreatment in practice. Together with the last chapter, the position adopted in this chapter is that this link between anthropocentrism and ecological destruction or the mistreatment of nature has yet to be established.

debates and issues. The principal task of this chapter is more limited: to outline a moral theory consistent with green politics. That is, I am concerned with the relationship between the moral and the political aspects of green theory, as opposed to environmental ethics considered independently of green politics.

The starting point of the defence of a revised form of anthropocentrism as the most suitable ethical basis of green politics turns on a threefold distinction between arguments which state that;

1. there is an ethical dimension to social-environmental interaction,
2. there are a variety of reasons that can be given for this, and
3. similar treatment of the environment can be premised on different reasons.

Outlining these distinctions and the different arguments they express opens up a space within green moral theory between 'anthropocentrism' and 'ecocentrism', a space for an alternative position in which this perceived opposition may be overcome. This position, which is a naturalistic form of 'weak anthropocentrism' is sufficiently flexible to accommodate the normative thrust of the ecocentric concern with protecting the interests of the nonhuman world. Following Passmore (1980) and Holland (1984), I argue that calls for the necessity of a non-anthropocentric 'new ethic' upon which to ground green normative claims are misplaced. To a large extent familiar moral language and what one may call the conventional anthropocentric 'grammar of morality' are sufficient to the green task. The naturalistic position developed in this chapter can be seen to draw on traditions of western ethical thought which demonstrate that, contrary to some green critics, western philosophy and culture is not uniformly anti-nature. The working assumption of this chapter (and of the thesis as a whole) is that western thought in general, and that associated with the enlightenment in particular, is not as ecologically bankrupt as some greens think. A 'new ethic' such as ecocentrism is not required. As suggested

towards the end of the last chapter, a reformed anthropocentric ethic, based on stewardship as a mode of interaction with the world is sufficient.²

The argument of this chapter is organised as follows. In 3.2 the political dimension of green normative claims is outlined, with green politics best understood as an immanent moral critique of contemporary moral theory and culture. As such green politics can be seen as an attempt to initiate an ecological 'reflective equilibrium' process by which the ecological contradictions of contemporary society may be resolved. This is to set the context for the argument developed in 3.6.1 where the political resolution of the ecological crisis is expressed in terms of a contradiction between human interests in nature associated with 'consumers' and 'citizens'.

In 3.3 the strengths of a 'moral extensionist' view are canvassed and found to be the best interpretation of what environmental ethical theory seeks to achieve in *practice*. That is, such a position expresses the practical implications of environmental ethics as a guide to action, and a normative basis for environmental policy proposals. However, current formulations of environmental ethical theory, I argue, are dominated by a problematic understanding of ethics, a 'proprietary' one based on the assumption that the main issue concerning the ethical status of human-nature relations is discovering criteria for 'moral considerability'. This view, which sees considerability as dependent on the possession of a few morally relevant capacities or properties, is argued to constitute a one-sided and partial understanding of morality and the moral life. An alternative view which sees the *relations* of human moral agents as the essence of morality is developed.

Section 3.4 presents a naturalistic conception of anthropocentrism, which regards the examination of what it means to be human to be crucial in the moral evaluation of human-nonhuman interaction. Anthropocentrism is defended from charges of 'speciesism' by rejecting the idea that it is an irrational or arbitrary bias towards fellow conspecifics.

² It also represents, as Passmore has suggested, a long tradition within western culture and thought (1980: 28-43). In using the moral idiom of stewardship, green politics would thus be using the culture's own resources to solve and cope with the ecological problems within the culture. Tapping into this moral tradition is thus a positive implication of seeing these problems as evidence of a 'cultural contradiction' rather than a 'cultural crisis', as suggested in the last chapter (2.3.1).

Focusing on human nature, anthropocentrism is argued to be perfectly rational and non-arbitrary, while the coevolutionary development of the human species with other species cannot sustain a radical moral separation between humans and the rest of nature.

In 3.5 'environmental ethics' is presented as distinct from 'human ethics', in that they are two interrelated spheres of the human moral realm, with different concerns and priorities. I argue that norms regulating human-nature relations *supplement* rather than *replace* those regulating human relations. At the same time, green ethical naturalism is cashed out as an *ethic for the use of the environment* as opposed to an *environmental ethic*. As indicated in the last chapter, seeking to establish the *a priori* protection of nature from human behaviour is wrongheaded and unnecessary. The 'moralisation' of human-nature exchanges does not preclude purposive-instrumental relations. An 'ethic of use' which recognises the moral considerability of parts of nature, can act as a side-constraint not only on *how* humans can use nature, but also on *whether* we ought to use nature.³ In 3.6 the centrality of human interests in moralising human-nature relations is developed as an ecological form of virtue-ethics. Excellences of character (as indicated in the previous chapter, 2.7) are argued to be important to the green moral position.

3.2 The Political Context of Green Normative Theory

That human-nature interaction is a matter of ethical concern I shall take as self-evidently true. Firstly, it makes sense to talk of an ethical dimension to human-nature affairs i.e. it is *intelligible* to talk of such a dimension. Secondly, that the human treatment of nature is an ethical, and a political, matter is something for which there is both historical and contemporary evidence in terms of human-nature practices in the west.⁴ From the point of

³ Later in chapter 6 (6.3), the issue of whether to use certain parts of the natural world is discussed in terms of 'permissible' and 'impermissible' resources, which is argued to be a central concern of green political economy.

⁴ That human-nature relations always had an ethical dimension is a theme developed by many writers in what I call the 'naturalistic tradition' such as Midgley (1983a, 1995) and Benton (1993) whose work I draw upon in this chapter. For evidence of this feature of human dealings with nature see O'Neill, who argues that the high number of 'protest bids' (where individuals place an extremely high value on preservation of some part of the environment), recorded during environmental cost-benefit analyses,

view adopted here, viz. elaborating an ethical theory sufficient to support a political one, the issue is not that people do not regard human-nature relations as an ethical matter, but rather the different *reasons* given, or that can be given, that can explain, justify and perhaps extend such concern. As I hope to demonstrate, there need not be one overriding reason for the moral treatment of nature (such as it possessing intrinsic value, or nature as enchanted or sacred) but a variety which, taken together, constitute an ethical basis for green arguments.

Additionally, I also assume that there are a number areas on which nearly all participants in the debate concur. For example, the greatest area of agreement between ecocentric and anthropocentric positions concerns the welfare of domestic animals. Both ‘animal liberationists’, environmental ethicists and green humanists are united in their condemnation of basic and widespread social-environmental practices. These include factory-farming, intensive rearing practices such as battery hen ‘production’, hunting for sport, the use of animals for human entertainment, and animal experimentation for the testing of cosmetics. The ‘humane’ treatment of animals and the reduction of ‘unnecessary suffering’ is something all sides can and do agree upon. Thus there is agreement in practice while diversity and disagreement at the level of justification (see 2.5.1).

At the level of ethical theory there is also widespread agreement between the two positions. For example, the distinction between moral agents and moral subjects is widely used within the literature. Regardless of the initial starting point, most theorists when suggesting guides to action maintain an ethically relevant distinction between moral agents (typically, but not exclusively, humans) and moral subjects (some humans, nonhuman

demonstrates ‘ethical commitment’ (1993: 120). See also Brennan (1992: 17). Other more intuitive grounds for the ethical framing of human-nature relations is given by the ‘last-person argument’ which demonstrates that faced with the hypothetical situation of being the last person on earth (Lee, 1993) or the only human on a deserted island (Midgley, 1983b) most people feel that the destruction of the earth or the island would be morally wrong. However, the hypothetical and abstract nature of such reasoning is often of little help in assessing actual, concrete human-nature relations which are rarely related to such exotic examples. Later, in 3.5.1, the moral censure attached to forms of human use of the world characterised as ‘wanton’, ‘unnecessary’ or not fulfilling a serious human interest, is used to flesh out the reflexive nature of weak anthropocentrism. This is held to consist in holding that human interests are necessary but not sufficient to justify human uses of the nonhuman world.

animals and other parts of nature incapable of being held morally responsible for their actions).⁵ The usefulness of this distinction is further developed in section 3.5, but here I simply want to stress that despite their critique of anthropocentrism and the ‘speciesist’ charges of unjustified partiality to our own kind, even the most ecocentric of deep ecologists cannot avoid concluding that the fact of being human does have evaluative importance and that ‘species impartiality’ is impossible to achieve in practice and constitutes an extremely morally dubious guide to action.⁶ The main point I wish to draw from these areas of theoretical and practical agreement is that an effective green ethical perspective sufficient to sustain green political principles and policies ought to start from the position where most of the other environmental ethical theories end, namely how ethical principles are translated into practice. It is the emphasis on environmental ethical *practice* that both makes for the advantage of adopting an anthropocentric as opposed to an ecocentric position as well as signifying the importance of the political background against which this practice takes place.

3.2.1 The Necessity for Immanent Critique

Rather than develop an ethic in isolation from the political context in which it will be applied and its effects felt, as given by specific environmental policies or altered socio-

⁵ The focus of this chapter is on the political as opposed to the purely philosophical dimensions of normative relations between humans and nature. That some nonhumans may be moral agents as some suggest (Clark, 1982; De Waal, 1982; Singer, 1994; Goodall, 1986) is beside the point, since it is the activities of citizens (i.e. humans in particular social relations) that constitutes the audience and focus of green politics. In short, even if some nonhumans (principally fellow primates such as chimpanzees and perhaps other social animals such as dolphins) qualify as moral agents it is not the intention of green politics to police their behaviour. It is the behaviour and social practices of human agents that is of primary concern to green politics.

⁶ Generally speaking, something like a ‘great chain of being’ perspective is usually (albeit tacitly) accepted as, *ceteris paribus*, the most appropriate moral framework within which *actual* human-nature relations can and ought to be judged. Even deep ecology has long dropped the counterintuitive idea of ‘biospheric egalitarianism, in principle’ and accepts that there is an axiological hierarchy within nature, with humans (though not all their interests) at the top (Fox, 1984). Given that the actual recommendations given by non-anthropocentric theorists in terms of guiding action are at root anthropocentric, this chapter sets out to explain and defend it as the only defensible moral grounding for green politics.

economic practices for example, sensitivity to the political context is central to the ethical position developed in this chapter. This political dimension can be partly explained by the centrality of human interests (section 3.5) to the ethical position being defended, which stresses the way in which human interests can and ought to frame human-nature relations. Here however, the political dimension has to do with the more practical fact that green arguments seek to persuade citizens, governments and other political actors of the normative rightness of these arguments, and to ensure popular support for whatever environmental policies or practices follow from these moral principles. Thus attention to the 'political environment' has to do with both the securing of normative agreement for green claims and also with the practical impact of green policies on the nonhuman world as the 'measure' to judge the success of green politics.

Sensitivity to the political ends toward which green normative arguments are ultimately addressed has in general not received the attention it deserves within the literature on green politics. This political dimension has its origin in certain 'framing features' of green politics. On the one hand there is the idea that the latter ought to be aimed at a public securing of normative agreement for green policies and practices. On the other hand any agreement must begin from an awareness of the political nature of many of the existing moral parameters concerning human-nature relations. A prime example is the various laws prohibiting cruelty to animals. Building on what was suggested in the last chapter, I wish to make the argument that the heart of the green political project lies in the exposition of the *contradictions* within contemporary moral thought and culture, rather than proclaiming the '*total crisis*' of western culture and the bankruptcy of its anthropocentric moral tradition. It is the supposed bankruptcy, coupled with arguments concerning the 'dangerousness', of anthropocentrism that leads to calls for a 'new' (i.e. external) non-anthropocentric environmental ethic. However, since anthropocentrism has not been demonstrated to be either bankrupt nor 'dangerous' in the sense implied by Fox (1990), there is less reason to search beyond anthropocentrism for an appropriate moral idiom and approach to social-environmental problems. An immanent critique of anthropocentrism ought therefore to be the strategy adopted in order to achieve public support for the

normative ends of green politics. For example, it would seem more likely that greens would secure normative agreement for their position by identifying discrepancies within the present normative underpinning of current human-nature interaction. By presenting their normative case in terms of the contradictory and/or the incomplete nature of the current dominant moral consensus on human-nature relations, the *immanence* of the green position means that it would be both stronger (because non-anthropocentric accounts do not hold up under scrutiny) and expressed in a language readily understood by those to whom its message is addressed.

Green politics can be seen as an attempt to show the internal contradictions of current norms and as an attempt to persuade people of the rightness of an alternative perspective on society's received attitudes to human-nature affairs. A good example of this contradiction lies in what Midgley has termed a "discrepancy in the sensibilities of our age" (1992: 29). An example of this discrepancy, according to her, is,

The steady growth of callous exploitation is occurring at a time when our response both to individual animals and nature as a whole is becoming ever more active and sensitive. There is accordingly now a much greater gap between the way in which most of us will let a particular animal be treated if we can see it in front of us and the way in which we let masses of animals be treated out of our sight than has arisen in any previous state of culture (1992: 29).

In this respect the green moral argument is not simply a call for the *extension*, but ultimately the *deepening* of moral concern and understanding. Green politics is thus concerned with the task of political negotiation with regard to the moral as well as the practical status of social-environmental interaction within the social order.⁷ It is an

⁷ It may be worthwhile indicating here that although the ethical position defended here seems less radical than standard non-anthropocentric positions, this does not imply that changes in the treatment of nature sanctioned by this immanent critique may not require large scale, and sometimes radical, alteration of human social practices. Ethical 'reformism' is perfectly compatible with political radicalism.

attempt to resolve what it takes to be salient contradictions within the existing social order concerning the treatment of the nonhuman world.

My strong suspicion is that the various forms of environmental ethics, from animal rights to deep ecology, influence how individuals behave *not because of* but *in spite of* their central arguments. What I mean by this is that a non-anthropocentric ethic ‘works’ because it is regarded by individuals as congruent with and understandable within, the ‘speciesist’ moral ‘grammar’ of contemporary society and moral reasoning. Environmentalism has political resonance because it is largely seen as complementary and additional to conventional human-centred reasoning. And as argued in the discussion of naturalism below, viewing environmental ethics through the prism of human interests and human-centredness is not merely ‘conventional’ (in that it is capable of fundamental change), but is also partly a ‘given’ which any effective ethic that proposes to alter human behaviour must take into account. For example, the intelligibility and effectiveness of appeals to ‘animal rights’ lies largely in the *rhetorical* impact of rights talk as a readily recognisable way in which to convey demands for certain expected kinds of human behaviour in the treatment of animals.⁸ As Singer states, “the question of whether animals have rights [is] less important than...how we think they ought to be treated” (1979: 197). It is not animal *rights* but human treatment or *duties* that underpins this attempt at moral persuasion. In a similar manner arguments for the ‘intrinsic value’ of nature can be understood as expressing the *strength* of a particular human interest in nature being communicated, i.e. the human interest in preserving the nonhuman world for its own sake. Placing the question of green normative claims within a political context highlights the fact that these claims are attached to humans and addressed to other humans. And part of what it means where someone claims that human-nature affairs is an ethical matter, is that

⁸ Thus rights-talk represents a moral idiom through which moral arguments can be communicated to others. I have discussed elsewhere the usefulness of the rhetoric of rights (Barry, 1996b). Another issue of the intelligibility of environmental ethical claims is related to Hayward’s emphasis on the limits of human knowledge of the nonhuman world. “Thus moderate anthropocentrists argue that beings other than humans may be of value in and for themselves, but if they are, this value is not the possible object of human knowledge...What anthropocentrists question is whether moral agents will generally have sufficient access to the experiences of nonhuman beings to pronounce on their value” (Hayward, 1995: 60).

we understand that that person is proposing that these affairs are a *serious* matter, not just for them but for society as a whole. Assessing this seriousness is at the heart of the process of political negotiation mentioned above. I hope to show that the seriousness of environmental ethical claims can only be understood, and made intelligible and effective in influencing action, by being passed through the filter of human-centredness and translated into the language of human interests.

3.3 Moral Extensionism and Moral Reasoning

‘Moral extensionism’ is the dominant practical strategy that non-anthropocentric environmental ethics offers as a guide to action. This is usually expressed in terms of the extension of the ‘moral community’ to include nonhuman entities. This understanding of extensionism is based on what I call a ‘proprietary’ notion of morality in contrast to a ‘relational’ conception of morality which I defend in the rest of the chapter. The proprietary view sees morality turning on the possession or non-possession of morally relevant properties (e.g. sentience, rationality, consciousness, intrinsic value). A relational view, as its name suggests, sees relations as central to morality, and as having priority over proprietary considerations.

From the political point of view, extensionism does not imply the application of intrahuman moral reasoning to the nonhuman world. Rather, as the relational view argues, there are parts of the nonhuman world which are already embedded within existing moral relations, and that such relations are constitutive of the moral life. Extensionism is a process by which the range of human-nature relations which are subject to moral considerations can be extended outwards as a result of critical deliberation. The political force of extensionism comes from the fact that the recognition of a moral dimension to human-nature affairs is an accepted aspect of moral life. There is nothing new about the *process* of including certain parts of the nonhuman world within the remit of morality, it is a perfectly natural feature of all human societies (see 3.5.2). ‘Natural’ in the sense of being uniformly present in all human cultures. What is new about environmental ethics are

the particular entities, and categories of entities, to which they propose to extend moral consideration, and the type of consideration extended. The issue is not whether to include human-nonhuman relations as coming under the category of moral action, but rather which relations and to what extent they are to be so included. It is important to point out that whereas proprietarian extensionism follows an 'outside-in' strategy (from the non-moral to the moral, on the basis of an external, non-anthropocentric ethic), relational accounts move in the opposite direction. The latter seeks to include nonhumans by reflecting on existing social-environmental practices and their moral components, rather than basing the treatment of nonhumans on the possession of capacities alone.

Unfortunately, current formulations of extensionism are narrowly focused on looking for morally relevant properties, such as intrinsic value, or capacities, such as consciousness or sentience, and then using these as the basis for deciding who or what is to be included in the moral community. This motif of the 'expanding circle' of moral concern is common currency within the literature (Singer, 1979, 1990; Regan, 1982, 1983; Nash, 1989; Rolston, 1988). On this gloss, environmental ethics sees itself as the modern heir of the struggle to expand the moral community. The historical evolution of morality is regarded as one in which those owed equal moral consideration progressively transcend tribal, national, male, white criteria, and reaches its fullest expression in the declaration of universal human rights. Both animal rights theorists and environmental ethicists claim they are simply carrying on this expansion to its logical conclusion (Nash, 1989: 16). Just as blacks and women were 'liberated', accorded equal human rights and included as full members of the moral community, so too will nature (or significant parts of it) be 'liberated' by the process of extending rights and the equal consideration of interests (Singer, 1990; Rodman, 1995).⁹

⁹ This is the position adopted by Eckersley's ecocentric interpretation of green political theory in which the liberation of nature or what she calls 'emancipation writ large' (1992a: 95), is the basic normative aim of green politics. In line with what has been said above about the intelligibility of non-anthropocentric claims such as intrinsic value, or the rights of nonhumans, the 'emancipation of nature' is more defensible on rhetorical than conceptual grounds. Indeed, I must confess to not knowing what the 'emancipation of nature' means or would look like in practice.

Such an understanding of morality holds that the most important issue is the specification of the 'moral community', and that it can be explained by reference to one or a set of characteristics. By adopting an *a priori* anti-anthropocentrism as the only secure basis for the moralisation of social-environmental affairs, proprietary extensionism moves in the wrong direction, from the nonhuman in, rather than from the human outwards. A good example of this type of reasoning is Westra (1989) who argues for the subsumption of intrahuman and social-environmental affairs under a single comprehensive ethic. For her, "rather than start with a 'humans only' ethical perspective and then strive to broaden its basis to cover other entities...it seems preferable to start with an all-encompassing ethics, and agree that other, more specific (perhaps stricter) sets of ethical principles may well govern each group's interaction (including our own)" (1989: 224). This is a clear example of the 'outside-in' extensionism that characterises proprietary views of morality, nicely expressed by Rolston's declaration that "we must move from the natural to the moral" (1992: 135). Other examples include Singer's (1990) utilitarian argument concerning the equal consideration of human and animal interests, or Regan's (1983) deontological ascription of rights to animals on the basis that some of them are 'subjects-of-a-life' with interests that ought to be respected and protected. These extensionist positions turn on the claim that what unites us in a morally significant sense is not that we are 'natural beings' like other creatures, with our own particular nature. Rather, what we are argued to share with other species are particular capacities such as sentience, or being 'subjects-of-a-life'. The problem with this form of extensionism is that the complexity and richness of moral experience is reduced in the name of expanding the moral community.¹⁰

According to current extensionist arguments, moral relations should be species-impartial and capacity-sensitive. It is important to point out that what I wish to criticise is not the latter but the former. It is not my argument that the possession of certain

¹⁰ Current extensionist arguments choose the class of nonhuman to be protected, and then go about furnishing reasons why they be considered as moral subjects. The strategy appears to be driven by the need to whittle down the 'entrance criteria' for admission to the 'moral club'. Proprietarianism leads to a sufficiently 'thin' theory of morality so that particularity as well as partiality are transcended.

capacities is a matter of moral indifference in the determination of proper treatment. Rather it is that a view of morality in which having these capacities is of paramount significance offers a problematic conception of morality, one based on species-impartiality. This has to do with the link between proprietary accounts of morality and 'discovering' rather than 'creating' moral relationships in a similar manner to that described in the last chapter in criticising deep ecology. Morally relevant properties are already in the world, waiting to be 'discovered' by human agents, whereas relations are created and maintained by humans. Hence its 'outside-in' logic. Thus proprietaryism is a central plank in the attempt to move away from anthropocentric partiality.

The reason for the prevalence of proprietary accounts of morality within non-anthropocentric ethics is that they secure impartiality in a way in which a relational account cannot. Relational accounts are accused of 'speciesism' i.e. partiality to members of our own species. However, for capacities to come into play as side-constraints on the treatment of nonhumans, there must be a prior judgement about how we relate to bearers of these morally relevant properties. An awareness of properties humans and nonhumans share can help to diminish the separateness between the two. However, decreasing the *differences* between humans and nonhumans in this way cannot erode the fundamental moral *difference* between 'human' and 'nonhuman'. That is, a proprietary account cannot fully capture the distinction that we stand in a qualitatively different set of relations to others of our kind than we do to nonhumans. It is only by starting from a relational view that the various differences and similarities between humans and nonhumans can be accorded their proper weight in moral deliberation on the conduct of relations between them.

The distinction between moral agents and subjects or patients is at the heart of moral extensionist arguments. The extensionist proposition is to increase the class of moral subjects deserving of moral consideration. On the whole extensionism does not question the fact that only human beings can be moral agents, and thus held responsible for their actions. One of the standard extensionist arguments is the 'defective humans' argument popular within the animal liberation literature. This argument, holds that if we accord

some 'defective' humans the status of moral subjects (i.e. morally considerable but incapable of full moral agency), and wish to avoid the charge of arbitrarily tying treatment to species membership, then it follows that it is the possession of capacities rather than species membership that widens the class of moral subjects and thus the moral community. There is no one capacity, or set of capacities that can be found which will include all humans and exclude all nonhumans. In this way it purports to deflate the moral relevance of being a member of the human species, while still maintaining that only humans can be moral agents. It works by separating humans into agents and subjects and implicitly constructing morality as composed of three sets of relations: those between human agents and other agents, human agents and human subjects and finally human agents and nonhuman subjects. Impartiality or equal consideration is the rule that governs the totality of relations between moral agents and subjects. To treat a human moral subject who in terms of capacities, is similar to a nonhuman, differently from the latter, is argued to betray a 'speciesist' attitude, akin to sexism or racism. A serious problem with this proprietarian view is its abstract, cold and calculative quality. In the end, moral practice, the phenomenology of the moral life is not constituted by impartial relations between two sets of 'capacity-holders', moral agents (some humans) and moral subjects (humans and some nonhumans). Rather the richness and texture of morality requires seeing it as rooted in determinate social relations between humans, which include social-environmental interaction. To be a human being means (constitutively) relating to other humans (both agents and subjects) in ways not shared with the nonhuman world (subjects or otherwise). The fundamental moral relation humans stand to each other is thus irrespective of the possession of capacities as argued in 3.4.3.

3.3.1 Rationalism and Moral Reasoning

Ultimately, what moral extensionist arguments share is a common critique of that dominant strand in western moral thinking which makes *reason* and the capacity for rational deliberation of cardinal significance in moral affairs. It is their attack on what one

can call the 'rationalist' tradition within moral theory which leads them to search for alternative properties not exclusive to humans (such as sentience) by which the 'moral community' can be extended. Yet while criticising the excessive rationalism of contemporary ethics, the latter's proprietarian logic is maintained. Moral extensionism criticises merely the choice of rationality as the capacity, the possession of which imparts moral considerability and constitutes the core of morality, not that the specification of capacities is that core. It is also the case that 'animal liberation' theories of the deontological or utilitarian sort, actually end up endorsing the primacy of reason. This is because these theories work by rejecting particularity, but also non-rational aspects of moral reasoning such as sympathy, so as to ground species impartiality. Singer is at pains to point out that the inclusion of animals within the moral community is based on reason not emotion. As he notes in the preface to the 1975 edition of *Animal Liberation*, "The ultimate justification for opposition to both these kind of experiments [Nazi experiments on concentration camp victims and contemporary ones on animals]...is not emotion. It is an appeal to basic moral principles which we all accept, and the application of these principles to the victims of both kinds of experiment is demanded by reason not emotion" (1990: iii). As will become clear in the next and subsequent sections, the role sympathy plays in moral life in general, and in the operation of that part concerning our dealings with the nonhuman world in particular, is argued to be of central importance in moral deliberation. It is the integration of reason and emotion that a naturalistic ethic seeks. Singer's rejection of sympathy as a basis upon which to extend moral consideration to animals can be explained by his earlier confusion of 'sympathy' with 'sentimentality' as when he states that, "This book makes no sentimental appeals for sympathy toward 'cute' animals" (1990: iii). Sympathy is not just a disposition towards 'cute' or 'attractive' animals/humans, but is also a mode of being, of being able to comprehend another's situation and to a certain extent see the world from their perspective.¹¹ Thus Singer, and other proprietarian non-anthropocentrists, end up with reason remaining the prime feature

¹¹ As Gruen notes, "sympathy is fundamental to moral theory because it helps to determine who the proper recipients of moral care are" (1993: 351).

of morality, although one which is sensitive to capacities such as sentience or properties such as intrinsic value. However, the non-anthropocentric critique of the dominance of rationality together with the extensionist logic are positive aspects of the proprietarian moral position. In particular the critique of rationalism is something that can be built upon. In the next section I attempt to show how this critique can be worked up within a naturalistic ethical theory, which while being speciesist can accomplish much of what extensionism hopes to achieve.

The problem with the way in which the extensionist argument progresses is that it often does not make clear that it is *rationalism* and the use of reason as the exclusive demarcation between 'human' and 'nonhuman', and as marking the border between the 'moral' and the 'non-moral', as opposed to *anthropocentrism*, that is really at the heart of their critique. Rationalism and anthropocentrism are seen as synonymous rather than the former being seen as a particular conception of the latter.¹² In opposition to the rationalist tradition, those who write on the morality of human-animal affairs from a 'Humean' perspective which stresses the role of sentiments, emotions and instincts, offer a more convincing moral outlook for green politics.¹³ Rather than decentre the human from an

¹² This conflation is less marked within one strand the 'animal liberation' literature where there is greater sensitivity to the non-rational (which is not to say irrational) dimensions of morality. This strand does not fall into the deontological animal rights approach (Regan, 1983) or Singer's utilitarian theory (1990), but emphasises the role of sympathy and actual contact between humans and animals. This includes Midgley (1983a, 1992), Clark (1982) and others in what can be called the 'Humean tradition', and more recent manifestations in the form of extending the feminist 'ethic of care' argument to the treatment of animals (Gruen, 1993; Plumwood, 1993).

¹³ A full account of a Humean-inspired naturalism would have to include a critique of the pre-eminence of 'human autonomy' and 'voluntarism' within Kantian moral theory, from the point of view of the significant part played by those non-chosen and given aspects of human nature and human relations from which the former abstracts, yet which play a pivotal part in human experience and relations. That moral obligations are a product of past voluntary acts see Hart (1955). Our neediness, vulnerability and dependence on others is something that has only recently been suggested as at the heart of moral life by feminist moral theorists, amongst others. A naturalistic view also shares the feminist concern with 'embodying' autonomy in the sense implied by Benton's statement below, as well as opening the way toward modifying the view that moral duties are paradigmatically 'chosen' or arise from previous voluntary acts as suggested by Hart (1955). See O'Neill (1991: 298-9) on the moral significance of human neediness, and Goodin (1985) for an attempt to develop a theory of morality based on the centrality of 'vulnerability'. Later (7.8), that environmental considerations heighten mutual vulnerability is taken as one reason why democracy ought to encourage the consideration of the interests of others and not just one's own interests.

alternative account of morality, what is decentred and placed within its proper perspective, is the role of reason within moral reasoning. What can be termed the contextualisation of reason, reconceptualises morality such that the insuperable barrier between the 'rational' world of humanity and the 'irrational' or non-rational natural world is not so much transcended (since the naturalism developed below holds that being human is of central moral importance) as placed within its proper context. Whereas standard extensionist positions seek to demonstrate the continuity between human and nonhuman by the use of the various trans-human properties mentioned above, and standard rationalist accounts of morality are premised on the radical separation between human and nonhuman, the naturalistic position defended below attempts to reconcile the thrust of these positions by demonstrating that humans are a *differentiation within* rather than a *separation from* nature.

3.4 Naturalism and a Defence of 'Speciesism'

If we reject, as I believe we must, claims of a single definition of ethics, and instead focus on ethics as a practice, embedded in human social life, we will be in a better position to account for the inclusion of social-environmental relations within the scope of morality. This will also be the case if we reject the argument that the moralisation of social-environmental relations requires the discovery of a single ethical code. One of the problems with proprietarian extensionism is that it is insufficiently sensitive to the myriad of ways in which humans interact with the nonhuman world, and to the varieties of human moral experience *vis-à-vis* that world. At the same time it cannot be supposed that there are no limits to moral extensionism. Constraints on the practical scope of extending moral consideration to the nonhuman world are expressed by Brennan as implying that, "Even if morality succeeds as a device for counteracting limited sympathies within the human community, it is unlikely to succeed as a device that will enable us to yield priority over human concerns and interests to the good of things 'natural, wild and free'" (1988: 30). Naturalism, in starting from general 'givens' of the human condition, works with an

explicit awareness of the restrictions, boundaries and contingency that marks all human experience, including moral experience. It was these features of the human condition, it will be recalled (2.3.1), that made a virtue-ethics approach the most appropriate one to take (2.7.1). Here we can supplement this view by holding that attention to what it means to be human not only shows the continuity between the human and nonhuman worlds (thus overcoming the standard argument levelled at anthropocentrism concerning the separation between ‘nonhuman’ and ‘human’), but also delimits the effective range of moralised human-nature relations. The naturalistic meta-ethical position adopted turns on the idea that being human counts for something and that speciesism or *prima facie* favouritism towards members of one's own species is neither an ‘irrational bias’ or akin to sexism or racism as typically held by non-anthropocentric theorists (Routley & Routley, 1979). Rather, it is at the centre of any workable moral theory covering social-environmental interaction.

Naturalism implies attention to how the moral treatment of nonhumans relates to what it means to be human, with the supposition that the particular type of ‘natural being’ we are impinges on how we ought to treat nonhumans. Ought, after all, implies can. Our nature circumscribes the range of choices, ethical and non-ethical open to us. Here the working assumption is that before we can ‘ecologise’ ethics in the way most environmental ethicists and other moral extensionists intend, we must first ‘biologise’ ethics. The supposition is that the inclusion of human nature within ethics is a realistic manner in which to argue for the inclusion of other parts of nature. In the following subsection I defend the argument that being human *is* of central moral importance. The reason for this is that the use of the predicate ‘human’ to describe a being is not simply descriptive but carries prescriptive force. Cicero's remark that “The mere fact that someone is a man makes it incumbent ^{on} another man not to regard him as alien” (in Clark, 1995: 318) captures the essence of this argument. In *describing* a being as ‘human’ one is also *prescribing* the general type of treatment owed to such a being.

3.4.1 Human Nature, Nurture and Culture

In presenting arguments about how we ought to treat nonhuman nature, the matter of human nature must also be addressed. The two are, as I hope to show, inextricably linked. If green politics is the ‘politics of nature’, as a recent book indicated (Dobson and Lucardie, 1993), then *human nature* must have a central place in its analysis. This aspect of ‘nature’ has not received much attention within the literature, and may account for the incoherence between green moral and political claims. When greens emphasise limits and point out that we cannot transcend certain ‘givens’ of external nature, they often forget that the same caution applies to the nature of humans themselves.

This concern with the part of human nature within moral affairs is motivated by Brennan’s suggestion that, “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 by reflecting on what are essentially ecological considerations” (1988: xii). In adopting a naturalistic ethical position, it is not implied that the moral foundation of green politics rests on a strong and determinate account of ‘human nature’. Rather, it highlights certain salient features of human beings that are more or less ‘givens’, that any ethical theory must take into account. This understanding of ‘human nature’ is *a posteriori*, based on anthropological and other empirical evidence, from which a naturalistic understanding of the human species can be inferred. Thinkers who adopt such a naturalistic perspective include Midgley (1983a, 1995), Hampshire (1983, 1989), Benton (1993) and Clark (1979, 1982). One reason for adopting this approach is that it is appropriate to talk initially of the *human species* when discussing the questions of interspecies interaction. We are products of evolution as much as culture and convention, and as such our range of realistic choices are ‘framed’ not just by culturally defined norms, if only because these cultural norms are ‘informed’ by, for want of a better word, our innate dispositions as social animals. *Ex hypothesi*, ‘we’ are adapted to ‘our’ culture, which in turn is, at least temporarily, adapted to its environment.

The first level of our nature turns on certain universals of human biological/physiological constitution. These distinguish us as a species from the rest of nature. For example, that we are vulnerable to harm from certain nonhumans and not from others is important. We do not and cannot stand in the same relationship to all parts of nature. For example, trees, unlike snakes or viruses, do not present the same kind of danger to us. At this basic level, our treatment of trees will consequently be different from how we treat snakes. Given our make-up, it is simply inconceivable that all of nonhuman nature can be treated and viewed in accordance with one master principle. Humans do not face an undifferentiated 'nature' but specific parts of it.

The second level of our nature relates to the centrality of culture in the determination of human nature. A human without a culture is not a human, just as a bee without a hive is not a bee. It is not 'humanity' but specific groups/societies that interact with determinate parts of nature. An example of this cultural dimension is that need-fulfilment for humans goes beyond mere biological subsistence. As Benton points out, "Proper human feeding-activity is symbolically, culturally mediated" (1993: 50). Culture is our species-specific mode of expressing our nature, or species-being.¹⁴ As it is continuous with our nature as social beings, human culture does not represent a radical separation from nature, but can be viewed as our 'second nature' (Bookchin, 1986), emerging from, but situated within, the natural order. The importance of this has been expressed by Kohák who notes that, "Were culture a negation of nature, no integration of humans and

¹⁴ Hayward proposes a much stronger relation between culture and human nature claiming that, "Culture is an intrinsic component of human nature as such; and it is not possible to specify *human* nature in purely biological terms even in principle, for the human biological organism itself did not reach its final evolutionary form before the introduction of culture" (1995: 76). Hayward's reason for emphasising this cultural dimension as separate from biological dimensions of human nature is his desire to stress the uniqueness of human needs and flourishing which he claims a naturalistic account cannot articulate. Maintaining this would seem to depend largely on empirical evidence concerning the evolution of *Homo Sapiens* as a distinct sub-species of primate. Hayward's position would need to specify the difference between *social relations* upon which culture is built, which can be given biological and evolutionary explanation, and *human culture per se*. Given the plausibility of the evolution of culture from more fundamental social instincts, that is, 'culture' as a particular evolutionary form of human social relations, at which point can we say social relations end and culture begins? Another criticism is the ethnological evidence that other species also have forms of social relations which are akin to human culture (De Waal, 1982). In this sense, 'culture' may be understood as an 'emergent property' of social relations, and as such not limited to the human species.

nature would follow” (1984: 90). Culture can thus be seen as a collective capacity of the human species to adapt to the particular contingent conditions of their collective existence, including the environments they face. Thus, culture is in part the particular mode by which humans adapt to their ‘ecological niche’, but not simply in the sense that cultures are somehow ‘determined’ by environments. Rather, in the additional sense that the mode of human adaptation to their ‘ecological niche’, and the expression of their ‘species being’, involves the *active transformation of their environment*. As Lewontin puts it,

We cannot regard evolution as the ‘solution’ by species of some predetermined environmental ‘problems’ because it is the life activities of the species themselves that determine both the problems and the solutions simultaneously...Organisms within their individual lifetimes and in the course of their evolution as a species do not *adapt* to environments: they *construct* them. They are not simply *objects* of the laws of nature, altering themselves to the inevitable, but active *subjects*, transforming nature according to its laws (in Harvey, 1993: 28).

Part of the reason for this is that the ‘ecological niche’ for the human species is extremely wide, as can be readily seen in the success of our species’ colonisation of the earth’s surface. As the species nature did not specialise, we are unique in the range of ecological niches in which we can flourish, present ecological problems notwithstanding. At the same time, membership of a culture, also expresses our distinction from others of our kind. It is not an undifferentiated ‘nature’ that we face at the first level, while at the second level it is not the ‘human species’ that is the proper subject of analysis. Rather what we should be concerned with are determinate social practices and individuals within particular cultural contexts facing more or less determinate parts of the environment. These environments cannot be taken to be ‘natural’ i.e. independent of human influence, since often they have been transformed by past and current human behaviour.¹⁵ The

¹⁵ There is thus an ontological basis to the claim that the ‘environment’ is socially constructed. It is not just that our understanding of the environment is mediated by human social relations, but ontologically the environment faced by human culture is often partly the ‘product’ of previous social modification. It is

significance of this cultural dimension, raised earlier in the previous chapter, is that what green politics seeks is a cultural adaptation to altered ecological conditions. In other words, the human 'ecological niche' is both culturally and biologically determined. These aspects of human being (biological, cultural and ecological) have been expressed by Benton as implying that "Humans are necessarily *embodied* and also, doubly, ecologically and socially, *embedded*" (1993: 103). We must use nature to live and to flourish, but we do not react uniformly to it, either in our instrumental-productive or in our moral relations.

An important naturalistic indication of this is the presence of various morally significant categories in almost all human societies for describing the nonhuman world. Just as in the use of the predicate 'human', some of these descriptions of the nonhuman world carry prescriptive intent. For example, Diamond gives this explanation of designating particular animals as 'vermin'. For her, "the notion of vermin makes sense against the background of the idea of animals in general as not mere things. Certain groups of animals are then signalled out as *not* to be treated fully as the rest are, where the idea might be that the rest are to be hunted only fairly and not meanly poisoned" (1978: 476; emphasis in original). Similarly we can think of other animal categories such as 'pet' or 'food animal', which like 'vermin' both describe the particular relation in which that animal stands to us as well as prescribing the appropriate response. Morally relevant categories in regard to the inanimate world are less common but conceptualisations such as 'private property', 'garden', 'national park', 'city' and in less enlightened times 'forest', 'uncharted lands', 'wasteland' and 'wilderness', are testament to the ubiquity and naturalness of human

frequently difficult to maintain a strict division between a 'natural' environment and one which is the outcome of human-purposive action in conjunction with that natural or given environment. The ecological niche for humans is as much a 'humanised' as a 'natural' one. Since this transformative activity is central to human culture, and human nature, the moral regulation of this transformative activity is vital green politics. This is discussed later where an 'ethics of use' regulating this transformative activity is proposed as the moral basis for green politics in its attempt to find the best cultural 'adaptive fit' between society and environment. It is also discussed in chapter 5 (5.3 and 5.8) in terms of this humanised environment as an 'anthropogenic subclimax', and Leopold's 'land ethic' as a suggested cultural 'adaptive fit' in which responsible stewardship is central.

moral relations with the external world.¹⁶ This human concern with categorising the natural world demonstrates that because we do not interact with an entity called ‘nature’ or the ‘environment’, there can be no single moral principle to govern this multifaceted and complex relation. In short, such moral categories and the process of categorisation are *constitutive* of that relation.¹⁷

We do not react to the world as disembodied centres of rationality, as rationalist accounts of moral experience suppose. Neither, on the other hand, do we react to the world in the same way as other animals do, this is one of the mistaken assumptions of strong sociobiological arguments. The complex of human reactions to the world cannot be reduced to either of these positions. We are unique in the range and variety of possibilities open to us. It is precisely this self-reflexively grounded capacity for choice that allows the possibility of moral concerns to be a factor permeating social-environmental exchanges. One way of looking at this from a naturalistic perspective is to note the difference between ‘open’ and ‘closed’ instincts (Midgley, 1995: 52-7). Closed instincts are fixed, while open ones are tendencies for certain general kinds of behaviour which are learnt by experience. It is the relative openness of our instincts with regard to how we flourish and interact that permits the possibility of non-instrumental considerations. Closed instincts refer to a limited but crucial set of ‘givens’. Chief among these closed instincts is a preference for others of our kind, i.e. ‘speciesism’ is a feature of human nature. Midgley rightly rejects the common argument equating speciesism with racism and sexism in arguing that, “The natural preference for one’s own species does

¹⁶ For anthropological accounts of the various cultural and mythical meanings attributed to such categories, particularly the notion of ‘wilderness’, see Rennie-Short (1991). What I intend to convey by the qualifier ‘in less enlightened times’ is the sense that the usual negative moral resonance associated with the second set of terms are difficult to sustain in the contemporary world. On the one hand the ‘disenchantment of the world’ has largely drained such terms of their negative and often threatening character, while on the other, ecological science has shown us that what looks like a ‘barren wasteland’ is in fact a rich ecosystem supporting a multitude of life-forms. To think of it as ‘barren’ (valueless) is a mistaken judgement, based on ignorance and therefore is an example of an ecological vice. The link between ecological science and environmental virtue is discussed in section 3.6.2.

¹⁷ That there are also more culturally specific, more narrowly construed, symbolic categorisations of nature has been emphasised by environmental theorists such as Sagoff who argues that, “the destruction of symbols is a step towards ignorance of the qualities these symbols express” (in Norton, 1987: 198).

exist. It is not, like race-prejudice, a product of culture. It is found in all human cultures” (1983a: 104). Thus speciesism is not a product of western culture or enlightenment thought: it is a ubiquitous (and complex) feature of human life. However, even as a closed instinct, the preference for one’s own kind does not imply, in the human case, a callous disregard for other species.

Ironically, although environmental philosophers have traditionally urged us to recognise the continuities between ourselves and other animals, they have often underestimated the double-edged implications of this. Rolston, for example, in stating that, “We do not derive ought from what is, but what ought must not be contrary to what is in nature” (1979: 25), seems unaware that this ‘nature’ includes human nature. Acknowledging the similarities between humans and the rest of the natural order does not guarantee the outcomes these theorists propose. Attempting to dissolve our uniqueness is the wrong way to go about analysing the question of the moral sense of human-nonhuman interaction. If we were to take seriously the environmental argument stressing our animal nature, adopting a purely instrumental attitude to nature, which is the ‘natural’ attitude of all other species, unconstrained by anything more than prudence and efficiency qualifications, would be justified. It is our uniqueness in being both *a part of*, and *apart from* nature that allows space for ethical concerns to influence social-environmental affairs (Barry, 1995c). Although it is important to stress our continuities with the natural order, as soon as we allow moral evaluations of our behaviour (and our behaviour alone) we set ourselves off from the rest of nature (Williams, 1992).

3.4.2 ‘She Does Not Know Humanity who Only Humanity Knows’

To read some arguments for the extension of moral concern to include the nonhuman world, one would think that these writers believe they are suggesting something completely original (and that explains the resistance of the anthropocentric ‘status quo’ to their propositions, and hence the need for an external rather than an internal critique). That the relationship between humans and the nonhuman world has never been completely non-

moral plays little part in their condemnation of speciesism, thus effectively precluding them from exploiting the possibility that this feature of human society could serve to bolster the extension of moral concerns to further dimensions of social-environmental relations. As even a cursory knowledge of the evolution of human society and the histories of human societies indicate, relations between humans and parts of their environment, particularly domesticated animals, has never been entirely devoid of moral content. For example, in every human society we find social relations co-existing alongside productive relations between humans and nonhuman animals. A strong interpretation of this is Benton's statement that, "Humans and animals stand in social relationships to one another...It implies that nonhuman animals are in part *constitutive* of human societies" (1993: 68). We need not accept this strong version to see that human culture goes beyond relations between humans. Indeed one could go far as to say that to interact with other species according to criteria other than those pertaining to material consumption is itself constitutive of human nature and culture. A person who, or a human culture which, treated other species as other species treat and interact with each other, i.e. with no moral dimensions whatsoever, would be strange to us.

This coevolutionary character of the human species is a powerful basis upon which to argue for the moralisation of human dealings with the natural world, and to argue for the extension of moral reasoning to more of these dealings. It is not the case that our moral dealings with the nonhuman world demands a non-anthropocentric 'new ethic' (Passmore, 1980: 187). One reason for this is that the extension of sympathy and consideration to the nonhuman world, such that our use or non-use of that world is conditioned by ethical considerations, is part of what it means to be human. Midgley asserts that, "Our social life, our interests and our sympathy can and must extend outside our own species, but they do so with a difference" (1983a: 19). Sympathy, which requires contact with, and/or awareness of, others, is a powerful source of moral concern, a source which can operate over the whole range of human action, both with her own kind and with other species. In other words, a human being who displayed no sympathy at all for nonhumans, would be strange to us, i.e. atypical. As Callicott notes, "a certain modicum of sympathy, concern

and benevolence is humanly normal, very little or none at all is aberrant” (1992: 191). An ethical dimension to human dealings with nature is not something unusual or novel. Like other ineliminable aspects of the moral life (some of which are set out below in 3.5), an ethical concern for regulating the use or non-use of (parts of) the natural world is a feature of all human cultures. That this can take a variety of forms within different cultural settings does not in any way count against its significance. As outlined above, the variety of human uses of the nonhuman world demonstrates the manner in which relations with that world are doubly constitutive for human beings. First, these relations mark the (moral) difference between ‘human’ and ‘nonhuman’ (dealt in more detail in the following subsection), while they are also constitutive of the (cultural) difference between groups of humans, discussed in 3.6.1.

An argument for ethical extensionism would therefore be less difficult and more in keeping with some basic and morally crucial facts of human moral life if it took into account and sought to build upon this constitutive role played by the social dimension to human uses of the natural world. An awareness that, to paraphrase, ‘she does not know humanity who only humanity knows’ would go some way to integrating the ecocentric demand to overcome the human/nonhuman, culture/nature dichotomy with a more defensible naturalistic alternative ethical position. However, for this to be achieved the emphasis on the continuity between human and nonhuman needs to be placed within its proper context. And as argued in the next subsection, this context is the fundamental difference between ‘human’ and ‘nonhuman’.

3.4.3 ‘Being Human Counts for Something’

One of the motivations for arguing that the fact of being ‘human’ carries with it evaluative import is to deal with the standard argument within proprietarian moral extensionism (and animal liberation in particular) which equates ‘speciesism’ with sexism and racism, and thus equally morally unjustifiable. As indicated above, I think the obsession with finding properties upon which to ascribe moral considerability (often in the form of the ‘rights’ of

nonhuman animals and other parts of nature), represents a narrow and incomplete view of morality. One way in which this view of morality is incomplete is, as mentioned earlier, its lack of attention to the role and function of feelings as motives and guides to action. As Gruen notes, "If reason were the sole motivator of ethical behaviour, one might wonder why there are people who are familiar with the reasoning of Singer's work [on animal rights], for example, but who nonetheless continue to eat animals...reason is only one element in decision-making. Feelings of outrage, revulsion, sympathy or compassion are important to the development of concrete moral sensibilities" (1993: 151).

In many respects the standard argument comparing human 'defectives' to animals, for example by arguing that one should not experiment on animals unless one is prepared to see it carried out on a similarly placed human defective, is to have one thought too many. While rightly pointing out that the *differences* between humans and animals in terms of some morally relevant capacities and powers possessed by one and not by the other cannot sustain a clear and permanent boundary between the two, such accounts do not register the fundamental moral importance of the *difference* between 'human' and 'nonhuman'. When we use the prefix 'human' what this conveys is that certain basic types of treatment are called for. Using the term 'human' with prescriptive intent is thus non-arbitrary. There is typically a limited, but nevertheless significant, number of duties, usually negative, owed to another human being that are not owed to other beings. This is why denying another person as 'human' is usually a central part of radical discrimination against perceived 'aliens' and 'outsiders', and they receive treatment according to moral codes fit for human-nonhuman relations. In many tribal societies, the appellation 'human' was often tied exclusively to the tribe, even when contact was made with other humans. A good example of this is in the film *Little Big Man*, where the native American Indians understand themselves to be 'the human beings' and the 'white man' as something different, or Amazonian tribes who while including some nonhumans within their moral community, have little compunction about killing members of another tribe because they are not seen as fellow human beings, like themselves. And as history has witnessed, when humans are regarded as non- or sub-humans, evil follows.

For example, the moral abhorrence of cannibalism, the fact that humans do not eat their dead, or amputated limbs, can only be explained and fully understood by the distinction between 'human' and 'nonhuman' (or perhaps 'not human enough' in the case of eating one's enemies). Cannibalism is an activity in which those that are eaten are ipso facto not 'human'. As Diamond points out, "what underlines our attitude to dining on ourselves is the view that *a person is not something to eat*" (1978: 468, emphasis in original). And from this perspective, it is beside the point that the person in question is 'normal' or 'defective', the so-called *mere* fact of being a zoological human is not so inconsiderable after all. Being human counts for something, it is to be a kind of being to which others of the same species stand in a foundational moral relationship. As Pickering-Francis and Norman point out, "human beings may justifiably attach more weight to human interests than to animal interests, not in virtue of the supposed differentiating properties, *but because human beings have certain relations to other human beings they do not have with animals*" (1978: 127; emphasis added). The reason why humans do not usually eat or experiment on each other, 'human defectives' included, is not typically out of a concern for their (lack of) capacities or interests. Rather it is a basic moral fact of life that under normal circumstances relations between 'human beings' are founded upon a set of moral considerations. These moral considerations are limited to duties such as not eating another human (alive or dead), non-interference, mutual aid, as well as other less precise concerns relating to some degree of sympathy and empathy, particularly with another's suffering, and perhaps most importantly a recognition that the other is a fellow human being with all that that entails.¹⁸ In this way the 'otherness' of the other, like 'merely' being human, is not really the case. The strangeness of another human is never total. We can move towards and understand them in a way in which we can never understand and move towards the nonhuman world.¹⁹ As Midgley notes, "It is never true that in order to

¹⁸ Other morally relevant characteristics (i.e. not properties) of being human include the central ethical importance of sex, birth, death and collective subsistence within all human societies (Benton 1993).

¹⁹ The 'otherness' of nature as the appropriate perspective within which to place human-nature relations is I think correct, not least because it follows from the naturalistic position outlined here, but also because it tempers one aspect of the 'arrogance of humanism' concerning the ascribed conviction of the latter in the ultimate transparency of the natural world to human reason. On the point about limits to human

know how to treat a human being, you must first find out what race he belongs to” (1983a: 98). In the last analysis what separates the ‘human’ from the ‘nonhuman’, morally speaking, is a difference of kind and not just of degree.

This latter point simply emphasises the limits to any proposed moralisation of human-nonhuman relations. If it is accepted that morality is premised on, and framed within, certain facts about what it means to be human, this is the framework within which any extension of morality must be placed. Diamond captures the essence of this in holding that, “The ways in which we mark what human life is belong to the source of moral life, and no appeal to the prevention of suffering which is blind to this can in the end be anything but self-destructive” (1978: 471). And of course one of the ways in which we mark human life is the various ways in which we use the nonhuman world. Although it may seem that the stress a naturalistic ethical standpoint lays on the limits of any environmental ethic simply reinforces the status quo, this is not the case. In claiming that the core of moral life concerns human interests in marking what it means to be human and that this involves using the natural world in various ways, there is a strong and increasingly supported argument turning on ethically justifiable and unjustifiable uses of the natural world in the service of that end. As I argue below in the next section, green politics based on the type of naturalistic meta-ethic outlined in this section, can be cashed out in terms of an ‘ethics of use’ to make the distinction between ‘use’ and ‘abuse’ of central importance to the green political case. Green moral theory is thus partly about determining ‘serious’ from ‘non-serious’ and ‘worthy’ from ‘unworthy’ modes of human interaction with the nonhuman world.

At the same time, a naturalistic understanding of human beings carries with it the claim that it is natural for humans to care about their descendents in particular and future generations in general. One way of looking at this is to see care and obligations to the future as a ‘natural duty’. This feature of human nature is another ‘given’, non-chosen

knowledge of the world see Hayward (1995). As O’Neill notes in reference to the centrality of science in demonstrating the indifference and strangeness of nature, “The assumption that the discovery of nature’s impersonality and strangeness is something to be regretted, a cause of the ‘disenchantment of the world’, needs to be rejected” (1993: 151).

feature of human nature, but one that can and does work in favour of environmental arguments for sustainability and ecological stewardship. This care for future generations, as Norton (1991) and de-Shalit (1995) demonstrate, does have positive environmental implications in terms of acting as a side-constraint on present courses of action. This 'convergence hypothesis', in which long-term human interests are consistent with and indeed require some measure of environmental protection, is one way of expressing the ecological stewardship position outlined in the last chapter.

3.5 Human Interests and an Ecological Ethics of Use

Despite appearances to the contrary, the common environmentalist critique of anthropocentrism is not that it denies *any* moral considerations being taken into account in human dealings with the nonhuman world. Even a crude anthropocentrism, i.e., one that sees no independent value in nature and values nature purely in economic/materialist terms, can be compatible with the imposition of *some* ethical limits on that instrumental exchange. That treatment is tied to human interests and concerns does not mean that the relationship is *ipso facto* non-ethical. The common misconception of non-anthropocentrism is to suppose that independent moral standing is a requirement for morally motivated treatment. Most commonly this independent moral standing is argued to reside in the intrinsic value of the non-human world. This underwrites a view of green politics for which, "The important point...is that it seeks to persuade us that the natural world has intrinsic value: that we should care for it not simply because this may be of benefit to us" (Dobson, 1990: 49). The crucial terms here are 'not simply' and 'benefit'. Care for nature may be independent of human benefit but it cannot be independent of human interests. Equally, that this care may involve considerations of human benefit does not drain that caring relationship of its moral character.

For example, by claiming part of nature as property people are obliged to treat it differently than if it were unowned. They now stand in a different relation to that part of nature, because they now stand in a different relation to other humans. Thus, the

treatment of nature viewed purely as a human resource can be guided, at least in part, by ethical considerations.²⁰ In discussing the question of how ought we to treat the nonhuman world the focus should be on the evaluation of the *reasons* given for particular types of usage. Much of environmental ethics concerns itself with establishing that treatment be on the premise of the independent moral status of nonhumans, rather than focusing on the primacy of the relational character of human-nonhuman affairs.—One possible reason for this proprietary view was suggested in the last chapter, namely the non-anthropocentric conviction that a human-centred environmental ethic, resting on human interests in and valuations of nature, cannot guarantee the *a priori* preservation of nature from human use that many deep ecologists and environmental ethicists see as the mark of any ‘true’ environmental ethic. Anthropocentric moral reasoning is held to be a precarious and insufficient ethical basis for the protection of nature. If however we reject the notion that an environmental ethic must be judged by whether or not it secures this *a priori* protection for the natural world, and instead see the job of any environmental ethic as regulating *actual* human uses of nature and identifying abuses, then anthropocentrism *per se* (as opposed to particular conceptions of it) need not stand accused of being part of the problem rather than part of the solution. It is the conviction of those who believe that non-anthropocentrism is necessary for an environmental ethic that leads to an emphasis on the non-anthropocentric powers, values or capacities, and which marks much of what I have earlier called the *proprietary* strand of environmental ethics. This non-anthropocentric ethic presents us with a picture of the world in which humans are disinterested valuers. The naturalistic anthropocentrism of an ethic of use sees humans as ‘interested and partial valuers’, and active transformers of that world. Because a relational view ultimately turns on human interests and concerns, it is viewed as capable only of an ‘ethic for the use of the environment’ as opposed to a genuine ‘environmental ethic’

²⁰ That the designation of nature as human property carries with it often strong prohibitions against certain uses of it is most clearly seen in the medieval Christian idea of nature as ‘God’s creation’. Since the earth was God’s property and not humanity’s, they had no right to destroy or abuse what was not theirs. Rather than the earth being made for humans, i.e. the metaphysical anthropocentrism canvassed in the previous chapter, the Christian doctrine of stewardship held the opposite, that we were made for the earth, as the stewards and custodians of God’s creation.

(Regan, 1982) defined as an ethic which gives non-anthropocentric reasons for the protection of nature. What I wish to do in this section is to argue that an 'ethics of use' which regulates social-environmental interaction is a sensible ethical platform upon which actual, concrete human-nature conflicts and decisions can be resolved.

The central claim of an ethics of use is that an extension of human interests can achieve many of the practical outcomes desired by non-anthropocentrists but on a more secure basis, that of critically interrogating human interests in the world. This position starts from Norton's observation that, "A narrow view of human values...encourages environmentalists to look to nonhuman sources of value to justify their preservationist policies" (1987: 222). A broader view of human values and interests in the world thus obviates the necessity for non-anthropocentric sources of moral concern. Part of this broadening process involves the examination of human interests. The reason for this is that this critical and self-reflexive process opens up the possibility of new *moral relations* between humans and nature within anthropocentric moral reasoning. The problem with most critiques of anthropocentrism and speciesism is that they are insufficiently sensitive to its environmental possibilities, especially in relation to the political defence and articulation of green policies and ideas. Although an ethics of use is by definition human-centred and related to human interests, it seeks to argue the green position on the basis of qualitative moral distinctions within human interests. The justification of a particular practice on the grounds that it fulfils a human interest is no longer considered as acceptable simply because it is a *human* interest. In other words, the fact that a particular use of nature fulfils a human interest cannot be taken as a decisive reason for either its initiation, continuation, or its continuation in the same manner. It is this understanding of speciesism/anthropocentrism that deserves to be criticised as 'arrogant humanism', the idea that the mere reference to human interests is sufficient to justify morally any human use of nature. *An ecological ethic of use argues on the other hand that human interests are a necessary but not sufficient condition for the justification of human-nature relations.* For any human-nature relation to be fully morally justified the particular interests which that relation fulfils must be justified. This position begins from Midgley's

conviction that, “however far down the queue animals may be placed, it is still possible in principle for their urgent needs to take precedence over people’s trivial ones” (1983a: 17). In short, not all human interests, simply by virtue of being human, are equally acceptable. That we must consume parts of nature to flourish, and use it in other ways to mark human life, does not mean that all uses are equally justified. Some are more morally defensible than others. The aim of green politics then becomes centred on determining defensible or permissible human uses of the environment.

3.5.1 Human Preferences and Interests: The Good the Trivial and the Wanton

Adapting to my own purposes a distinction Norton (1984) draws between ‘strong anthropocentrism’ and ‘weak anthropocentrism’ I now wish to outline the way in which the ecological ethic of use turns upon the distinction between human preferences and interests as well as the extension of human interests. According to Norton, “A value theory is *strongly anthropocentric* if all value countenanced by it is explained by reference to satisfactions of *felt preferences* of human individuals” (1984: 134; second emphasis added). For my purposes the distinguishing feature of strong anthropocentrism is the claim that human-nature relations can be justified by reference to felt or ‘given’ *preferences alone*.²¹ From the strong anthropocentric position it does not make sense to talk about moral judgement derived independently from human preference-fulfilment. It is the reductive character of strong anthropocentrism in conceiving of human-nature relations in purely instrumental terms (typically economic), that ‘crowds out’ both the need for their justification and the requirement that moral considerations ought to act as side-constraints on how relations are managed. Strong anthropocentrism in holding that the moral justification of human uses of the natural world need not go beyond reference to preference-fulfilment reduces the various human interests that extend (or could extend)

²¹ A similar argument can be found in point 3 of the deep ecology platform which holds that, “humans have no right to reduce the diversity of life except to satisfy vital needs”. See last chapter 2.2. However, as pointed out below ‘vital needs satisfaction’ *does not* set the limit on the justifiable human use of the environment.

over our relations with nature to preferences humans happen to have.²² According to Norton, if preferences are insulated from critical appraisal, human interests in the nonhuman world are narrower than they would otherwise be. This type of reasoning is most commonly used in economic cost benefit analysis, where individuals are asked to place an economic value on some part of the environment as a way to ‘reveal’ their environmental preferences (Jacobs, 1994; O’Neill, 1993). The common green critique to such an approach in assessing human-nature relations is precisely that cost-benefit analysis ‘crowds out’ any critical reflection on whether economic preferences *by themselves* are strong enough to justify an economic understanding of the relationship or practice. This issue of economic valuation of the environment is discussed in more detail in chapters 6 and 7.

At root this green critique shares with critical theory the view that economic reasoning, if unchecked, can lead to the ‘demoralisation’ of human-nature exchanges.²³ Green politics is thus not against economic reasoning but rather seeks to place it within its proper context, as one amongst other modes of human interaction. From a green point of view, the aim must be to assess preferences by reference to the ‘seriousness’ or ‘worthiness’ of the human interest it is related to. The conception of anthropocentrism as presented by an ethics of use, is thus a form of ‘weak anthropocentrism’, which acknowledges a plurality of human interests in the natural world and thus a variety of possible relations to that world.

As far as human-nature affairs go the capacities of nonhumans do count for something for they partly identify what a being is, and are indispensable in guiding us in how to treat it, but as argued above, in the human case it is the *relations* between individuals that mark

²² It is also the case that strong anthropocentrism is intimately tied up with ‘rationalist’ accounts of ethics which not only set humans above nature in a moral sense, but on this questionable basis proceed to make humans the be-all-and-end-all of the world. In other words there seems to be a connection between rationalist accounts of ethics and the ‘arrogant’ anthropocentric metaphysics discussed in the last chapter. It does not make sense to talk of the ‘moral superiority’ of humans over nonhumans since they are not moral.

²³ Later in chapters 6 and 7, the critique of the imputed ‘demoralisation’ of human-nonhuman relations on account of economic reasoning actually concerns the argument that the moral theory underpinning the latter form of reasoning is the real target. The normative underpinning of economic thinking is inappropriate when dealing with the moral relations people feel or have with nature.

the difference between human and nonhuman. Therefore while a proprietary account is important for knowing how to treat a nonhuman, it is only one among a number of considerations in the human case. Proprietary considerations, discussed in the next subsection, are largely parasitic on the prior justification of the particular practice in question. Even where a practice is deemed to be morally justified, attention to such considerations may require an alteration to the way in which it is carried out. Relational considerations, which hinge on assessing interests, address the issue of *whether* specific human uses should continue, while proprietary ones generally bring up issues around *how* that relation ought to be conducted. An ethics of use is concerned with establishing the contested boundary between legitimate use and abuse, as well as the often more complex issue of when use cannot be morally justified, i.e. the line between use and non-use.²⁴ These boundaries can never be fixed in the manner that a commitment to the *a priori* preservation of nature would require, but are ineliminably contingent. This relative indeterminacy of the ethics of use will not satisfy those who seek cast iron protection of the nonhuman world. There is simply no remedy for this and the most we can do is to acknowledge it and make it explicit. This is the responsibility of green politics, in that the implementation of green policies is partly a matter of 'policing' this indeterminacy and identifying when and why human use of the environment becomes unjustified abuse.

In environmental ethical discussions phrases like 'for no good reason' or adjectives such as 'wanton' are of critical importance because they indicate that morally wrong acts against nonhumans are wrong because they cannot be justified by reference to good reasons. For example, common sense moral reasoning holds that one ought not cause unnecessary suffering or avoidable harm. The keywords here are not only 'suffering' and 'harm' which pick out the relevant nonhumans that are morally considerable, but also the

²⁴ In many respects the distinctions drawn between use/abuse use/non-use are similar to Kantian concerns relating to treating humans always as 'ends in themselves' and never purely as means. The Kantian injunction is not that we ought to never treat humans (or at least rational ones) as means, but rather than we should always regard them as ends in themselves as well. This implies that any 'use' of one human by another (for example, employment) ought to be tempered by moral considerations not related to that use. In a comparable fashion, an ethics of use seeks to persuade us that some human uses of nature ought to be governed by wider human interests which 'temper' 'narrow' considerations of economic efficiency, for example.

intentional or voluntary dimension of the description as expressed by terms such as 'unnecessary' and 'avoidable'. Here the question is with the motive of the action. Typically, it is the 'wantonness' or 'triviality' of an act that merits moral censure. The capacity to suffer or be harmed is important in specifying the injured party, but it is the character of the act and/or the actor, that is the focus of moral judgement. For example, slaughtering an animal may seem wrong but if given the circumstances, it can be shown that it possesses ritualistic significance, is absolutely necessary for a group's sense of identity, and it does not cause the animal an excess of pain and suffering, then it may be justified. But the same act carried out for 'fun' would not carry the same weight.

One of the distinguishing features of the ethics of use is that it stresses the rather obvious idea that the participants involved are not an undifferentiated 'humanity' facing an equally undifferentiated 'nature'. In respect to the latter, there are morally relevant distinctions between domesticated animals, other animals, other living beings, plants, and inanimate nature. There is no one overarching principle which will cover all human relations to these various parts of the nonhuman world. Nor can it be expected that we can treat all natural entities within a particular category in a similar manner, as indicated above in section 3.4.1 on human nature.

An ethics of use is particularly suited to issues relating to human dealings with domesticated animals, where 'abuse' can take on the more visible and readily identified form of suffering. It is within this category of human relations with animals that sympathy is strongest, and where we may expect greatest political agreement for altering these relations. This is because we can sympathise with other social animals, their pain and suffering in a way which is not possible with other animals and the vegetable world. Another important factor in the extension of sympathy to domesticated animals is the (relative) publicness or visibility of our treatment of them. Although the majority of people do not have day-to-day contact with domesticated animals (except of course as ready-wrapped meat, milk or leather products), there is some, although incomplete, awareness concerning the relationship. And as the last two decades of animal welfare

activism demonstrates, the more people know about 'food' animals and how they are treated, the greater the sympathy with them, often independent of moral arguments.

A good example of the application of an ethics of use is the practice of factory farming. The latter reduces animals to the status of pure resources and denies them any opportunity to express their social, i.e. 'natural' character. It can be, and increasingly is, judged as morally wrong. As Benton argues, "This form of 'humanism' [factory farming] conceptualizes the needs of animals as instinctual and fixed in a way which simply leaves no room for morally significant differences to emerge between existence and thriving or living well" (1993: 59). There are alternatives available that would permit meat eating to continue but under more 'humane' production conditions. As indicated in the last chapter (2.7.2), animal rearing viewed as a social practice which contributes to stewardship, represents a forms of human productive relation with nonhumans which is less 'abusive' than factory farming. From an ethics of use position, the suffering inflicted upon such animals cannot be justified simply by appealing to the higher economic costs associated with alternative husbandry methods. The human interest in food, and indeed, meat as food, can be satisfied in other, more humane ways. In other words, the suffering of these creatures is unnecessary. Factory-farming as a particular form of productive relation between humans and animals is abusive, and their suffering unjustified.²⁵ In the case of factory farming the appeal to human interests in profit-making or having cheaper meat is insufficient. For Benson the case against factory-farming is that, "the wholesale torture of animals that goes on in the name of nothing that could be regarded as a serious human purpose" (1978: 530).²⁶ Thus in some circumstances human preferences (and perhaps in

²⁵ The same external pressure which transformed the social practice of farming qua stewardship (outlined in the last chapter) into another business also accounts for the transformation of animal husbandry into factory-farming. Both can be said to be the victims of the application of industrial-economic criteria to agricultural-economic practices.

²⁶ Because the abolition of factory-farming will have distributive effects, in terms of higher prices for meat for those now no longer able to afford it, a complete account of the political implications of an ethics of use needs to be supplemented with a theory of distributive justice.

more limited set of situations, interests) ought to be accorded less weight, such that the welfare of nonhumans may be considered to be of more pressing moral importance.²⁷

Morality and moral reasoning have to do with something serious (Foot, 1978; Midgley, 1983a, 1983b). It is this quality of 'seriousness' in relation to human interests that is crucial in the reordering of human priorities that moral extensionism entails. Some reasons for using nature in particular ways simply do not carry as much weight as others. Uses of nature which involve its material consumption, that are not for serious reasons deserve to be morally condemned. Thus in regard to the factory-farming example above, what makes it morally wrong is not that it is justified in terms of *human* reasons, as the deep ecologist and non-anthropocentrist hold. Rather it is wrong because the particular set of circumstances surrounding its operation render its justification on *economic* considerations less deserving to count as a *serious* human interest.²⁸ There are alternative ways in which such preferences may be fulfilled, and although it is possible that some preferences will not be satisfied, it is not the case that abolishing this particular practice would result in great harm to central human interests such as political liberty, social justice, need-fulfilment above subsistence, or the minimisation of human suffering.

Thus an ethics of use indicates another important division pertaining to an additional set of limiting conditions on the operation of any green framework or process regulating our dealings with nature. This is the division between possible effects of policies and altered practices issuing from this green process on human welfare on the one hand and considerations relating to human liberty on the other. This is discussed later in chapter 6 (section 6.6). Without going too deeply into the issue, what I wish to signal here is that environmental policies which negatively affect human welfare are more defensible than those which compromise human liberty. This distinction is useful because it not only

²⁷ This does not mean nonhumans gain rights. It is more accurate to say that humans acquire obligations to treat them in certain ways, including of course, the possible obligation not to use them.

²⁸ The question we must ask is whether or not deep ecology associates green politics with a view of the good that unnecessarily constrains it in terms of the balance between the right and the good in its political principles. Is the deep ecology vision simply too tightly tied to particular social practices that it limits the range of positions, lifestyles, uses of nature that can be described as 'green'? How tolerant in other words would a green politics premised on the deep view of the 'good life' be of other views of the good? Just as Plato banished the artists, would green politics banish the economists?

reinforces that there are different spheres of ethical inquiry (human-only and human-nature) but suggests some (admittedly inexact) 'rules of engagement' in the case of conflict between the two spheres. Thus social-environmental relations concern the trade-off between human and nonhuman welfare alone.²⁹ Rawls' priority rule which ranks the principle of equal liberty lexically higher than the difference principle is one obvious example of this priority rule (1972: 302-303). What this means is that environmental policies which threaten central human liberties, such as the right to elect and influence government, or formative elements of human identity, for example need-fulfilment beyond subsistence, are deemed illegitimate and prohibited in any but the most pressing of circumstances.³⁰ In this manner green politics accepts that trade-offs in any conflict between the two ethical spheres are limited to possible sacrifices in human economic welfare and what Norton calls 'consumptive values' (1984: 135). This priority rule is widely endorsed even within non-anthropocentric positions when it comes down to questions of implementation and actual policy proposals. Unfortunately, as this rule is usually acknowledged at the conclusion rather than the start of most environmental ethical deliberation, its importance goes largely unnoticed. In the terms outlined above, in the case of these sets of human interests the question is *how* nature is used rather than *whether* it is used at all. On the other hand an ethics of use attempts to delineate the ethical threshold beyond which the human use of nature becomes abuse.³¹ In other words, the fulfilment of human liberty and welfare interests is compatible with ecologically sensitive

²⁹ Later, in chapter 7, this argument is developed into a defence of the non-contingent place of democracy within green politics, premised on grounding democracy on 'liberty' interests as opposed to 'welfare' interests (7.2).

³⁰ In this way the 'eco-authoritarian' solution to the 'ecological crisis' is ruled out as a reasonable conception of green politics since it requires the sacrifice of democratic practices, the severe curbing of freedom, and the acceptance of an authoritarian regime. This is discussed at greater length in chapter 7 (7.2).

³¹ Lee encapsulates the central issue in asking, "moral philosophers surely would not regard abstinence from over-consumption as a supererogatory matter. Or would they?" (1989: 22). In a similar vein it is no injustice to be denied that to which one has no right. This similarity may explain why some greens wish to extend considerations of distributive justice to human-nature affairs, a feature most prominent in arguments for 'animal rights'.

use as well as principled non-use. The point of the ethics of use is to find symbiotic rather than parasitic social-environmental relations.

It is in the distinction between serious and not-so-serious human interests that we can find the essence of the normative green critique of undifferentiated economic growth. It is the assumption that human preferences for ‘trivial’ comforts or minor additions to welfare are good enough reasons for the suffering and destruction of the natural world and its living entities that is the real target, not that they ought to be criticised for being human preferences. It is the moral *quality* of the reasons given rather than the *source* that underpins the critique. This is what is meant by the claim that although humans are the only *measurers* of value in the world, this does not mean that they are the only *measure* of value. Further investigation of the green critique reveals that it is not only deeply critical of undifferentiated *economic growth* but perhaps more radically it is suspicious of the uncritical primacy accorded to *economic reasoning* in articulating human interests in the nonhuman world.³² And the main reason for this, I suggest, is that economic reasoning, in its attempt to be ‘value-free’, simply takes preferences as ‘given’, exogenous variables outside economic analysis and therefore beyond critical reflection and moral judgement. This is dealt with in more detail in chapter 7 (7.6 & 7.8)

3.6 Ethics of Use and Ecological Virtue

Having derived a more focused ethic of use from a naturalistic perspective, we finally come to looking at how this ethic of use relates to green politics. In this section the idea of ‘ecological virtue’ (indicated in the last chapter section 2.7), captures the general thrust of the part such an ethic can play within green political theory and practice. Unlike environmental ethicists like Westra (1989) who argue for a ‘new ethic’ sufficiently broad-ranging to include intrahuman as well as human-nature relations, an ethic of use for the

³² Williams suggests that there may be values expressed in human-nature relations constitutive of a worthwhile life but that, “It may well be that our ways of honouring such values cannot take an economic form” (1992: 68). For further discussion of the green critique of economic reasoning, with special attention to cost-benefit analysis, see O’Neill (1993).

environment maintains that there is a fundamental distinction between these two sets of relations and spheres of moral life. Her position (which typifies much of American environmental ethics) is that, “the main thrust of any ecological ethic is that it refuses to accept different sets of values, one for an isolated community of human beings and another ranging only in the wilds...we *can* have *one* extremely broad ethic” (1989: 224; emphasis in original). Quite apart from what she means by an ethic which ranges in the wilds, which seems to suggest that relations between nonhumans are ethical, this section seeks to develop further the argument that the search for one ecological ethic is both theoretically impossible to sustain and unnecessary for green political prescriptions.

As set out below, separating out moral concern into intrahuman and human-nature spheres is a necessary precondition for establishing the normative claims of green politics. This separation is not a simplistic and regressive rephrasing of the human/nature duality, but represents part of a wider process to transcend that duality. Green politics in basing itself upon a view of morality in which virtues are central, seeks to create what may be called ‘symbiotic’ rather than ‘parasitic’ social-environmental relations: the cultivation of a particular human mode of interaction with the environment. The border between *symbiotic* and *parasitic* relations denotes the ethical border between use and abuse.³³ Certain dispositions of character, and their social requirements, are held to be constitutive aspects of human-nature relations. Some of these virtues are peculiar to this domain of moral life, but some, perhaps the most important, such as sympathy or humanity, range over all aspects of morality.

The point about the virtues is that they are both partly *constitutive* of human well-being, while also being instrumentally valuable to human well-being. The claim that the practice of ecological virtues are constitutive of well-being helps to offset the notion that green politics necessitates sacrificing human welfare, a common view premised on the idea

³³ ‘Symbiosis’ and ‘parasitism’ convey the general moral nature of social-environmental relations, while sustainability and unsustainability convey the productive relations between society and environment. There is no assumed ‘mapping’ of these two sets of criteria such that morally symbiotic social-environmental relations are also sustainable and vice versa. It is perfectly possible for a society to be morally parasitic and ecologically sustainable. These issues are further discussed in chapter 5 (5.3).

that the relationship between humans and nature is necessarily a zero-sum game. This leads to parasitic forms of social-environmental relations. Green politics in the search for symbiotic relations, can take inspiration from the deep ecology notion that while human flourishing is compatible with decreasing human impact on the world, the flourishing of the natural world requires such a decrease.

A related issue concerns the common misperception regarding an apparent conflict of obligations between those in the human-nature ethical sphere and those in the human sphere. The usual way in which this is presented is that a moral concern for nonhumans, particularly animals, means that there is less concern, compassion, or sympathy 'left over' for humans. However, a virtue ethics perspective can easily demonstrate the wrongheadedness of this assumption. The practice of ecological virtue does not decrease compassion and concern for humans but rather the opposite. As Midgley points out, "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). It is also the case that 'serious' human interests are non-tradable. Therefore the trade-off between humans and nonhumans within social-environmental relations governed by an ethics of use, is limited to (some) human welfare interests and not human 'liberty' interests.

3.6.1 Citizens, Consumers and Ecological Virtue

The political interpretation of the ethics of use turns partly on a shift within the 'human' part of the human-nature relation. Green politics, if it is to have any purchase on the real world, any input into aiding the complex process of how real environmental problems are to be resolved, must take as its subject matter the actual, tangible relations and practices between particular humans and particular environments. Naturalism indicates the general background and limiting conditions of social-environment relations, while an ethics of use indicates that a 'citizen-environment' perspective is the most appropriate standpoint from which to judge *politically* the normative standing of the nonhuman world.

This perspective introduces what can be called a 'green conception of citizenship', dealt with in more detail in chapter 7 where it is presented as a key issue in the relationship between green politics, democracy and the state. For the moment, all I wish to register here is that from the ethical standpoint the practice of the 'ecological virtues' is constitutive of this green conception of citizenship. The importance of this conception is that the practice of green citizenship can be regarded as the process by which individual preferences may be transformed not just as a result of reflection, justification and debate, but also because the virtues educate and refine preferences. This is one way of expressing Norton's shift from 'felt' to 'considered' preferences mentioned in 3.5.1.

In part this process has to do with the idea that individuals as *consumers* have interests which are different to those they have (or potentially have) as *citizens*, and that on the whole, 'ecological interests' are not well served by the former.³⁴ Ecological interests here encompass both the interests of the nonhuman world, and human interests in that world. As noted above, economic considerations and reasoning *if left to itself*, in simply taking preferences as given and beyond evaluation, is more likely to result in practices which will unnecessarily affect non-human interests. At the same time if economic preferences are the sole or primary way in which human interest in the environment is expressed, non-economic ecological interests are less likely to be articulated. In other words, qua consumers, individuals have a narrower set of ecological interests than would be the case qua citizens since, as citizens, preferences are only provisionally 'given', are not immune from critical debate and discussion and are capable of being transformed. Simply put, as consumers people have a more limited range of interests in the environment than as citizens.³⁵ In part, 'citizens' and 'consumers' are used as shorthand for distinguishing

³⁴ This discrimination between consumer and citizen is common in green politics, and attention to the relationship and possible reconciliation between them has increasingly occupied centre-stage in debates. The most obvious example of this is the 'sustainable development' debate which, at root, can be seen as an attempt to reconcile the interests of consumers in economic growth, with their interests as concerned 'green citizens' in ecological sustainability. Sustainable development is thus, in part, a deeply normative issue in which culturally, that is locally defined, values and relationships, economic on the one hand and normative-environmental on the other, can, in principle, be reconciled. See Sagoff (1988), Brennan (1992) and Keat (1994).

³⁵ A deeper understanding of this citizen/consumer distinction can be found in Arendt. Anticipating green concerns, Arendt argued that the growth of appetite, expressed as exponential economic growth

market and political approaches to environmental problems. Aggregative approaches to social-environmental problems often fail to register the 'public goods' dimension of the environment. That is, one cannot ascertain the value of the environment as public good simply by aggregating private valuations, since these valuations will be dependent upon other people's valuations and the mechanism through which the public good is delivered. Consumer approaches to environmental issues also fail to correctly register the ethical dimension of social-environmental issues. The consumer mode of acting, the consumer character, is inappropriate to articulate, never mind integrate, the range of human interests in the nonhuman world. The appropriate idiom, according to Jacobs is one in which "what is done to it [the environment] can be discussed in terms, not simply of costs and benefits (whether private or public), but of right and wrong" (1996: 1).³⁶ Part of this relates to the fact that within modern society, new forms of social-environmental relations as a result of technological improvement, have outstripped our moral capacity to deal with them. In this sense green politics seeks to point out that this power needs to be balanced and regulated by a collective sense of moral responsibility. That consumer-centred, or market-based approaches to social-environmental problems restrict the range of operand human interests and indeed reduce interests to preferences, is a fairly standard critique within the literature (O'Neill, 1993; Jacobs, 1994, 1996; Norton, 1994; Dryzek, 1987, 1996).³⁷

The articulation and creation of expanded interests is tied up with the collective political deliberation on the 'ecological common good'. And there is no reason why this common good, a central concern of 'classical' views of citizenship, should be narrowly restricted to the human good. It is an openness, and a willingness, to search for ways in which human interests can be fulfilled with minimum harm to the interests of the

within a consumer-driven economy, "harbours the grave danger that eventually no object of the world will be safe from consumption and annihilation through consumption" (1959: 115). Here citizenship, while obviously premised on human consumption, sets parameters on the latter in the interests of realising the ideals of the *vita activa*, or human action.

³⁶ This is related to the discussion in 7.8 where, within the context of the issue of endogenous preferences, the choice of policy instrument used by government (market-based or legal) affects preferences and how individuals regard the environmental problem (i.e. as a consumer or as a citizen, in terms of costs and benefits or in terms of right or wrong).

³⁷ This debate between 'consumer' and 'citizen' as modes of action is dealt with in more detail in chapters 6 and 7.

nonhuman world that is one of the traits of green citizenship.³⁸ This is discussed later in chapter 7 (7.8).

The importance of adopting a citizen as opposed to a consumer perspective, from the point of view of green politics, is that a *moralisation* of human-nature relations is directly related to their *politicisation*. It may well be that there will never be consensus on the philosophical basis of our moral dealings with nature. From a political point of view pitching one's argument at this philosophical level is neither necessary nor helpful, since it sets green politics an unrealistic task to achieve, as argued in the last chapter. As a political theory seeking to persuade others of the normative rightness of adopting symbiotic (as well as sustainable) forms of social-environmental relations, green politics does not need to insist on convincing people of the intrinsic value or rights of nature. Rather there are a variety of ways in which we can explore the moral dimensions of our dealings with nature and the search for one, overarching 'environmental ethic', is unhelpful to green politics. The issue of the moral status of collective relations to the environment cannot be resolved at a philosophical level, it can only be resolved politically.

3.6.2 Ecological Virtues and Moral Character

The majority of the ecological virtues concern avoiding ecological vices. Such vices include familiar ones like inflicting unnecessary harm or suffering to animals, particularly domesticated animals,³⁹ and wanton and irreversible destruction of other parts of nature such as ecosystems. Ecological virtues are thus aimed at encouraging that the human use of nature stays within morally justifiable limits and does not become morally unjustifiable abuse. The cultivation of the ecological virtues, the creation of 'ecological character', and dispositions, helps create and maintain a proper balance within social-environmental

³⁸ This 'willingness' to experiment is itself a virtue of the mode of behaviour green politics seeks to cultivate, it is also related to the vibrancy of a democratic society (7.4).

³⁹ As Williams points out, "A concern for nonhuman animals is indeed a proper part of human life, but we can acquire it, cultivate it, and teach it only in terms of our understanding of ourselves" (1985: 118). In terms of the present discussion, ecological virtue cannot be derived independently of the naturalistic ethical outlook.

relations. The emphasis on character is to cultivate dispositions and modes of action which will discourage acting from 'wantonness' or ignorance.

This discriminating aspect of the ecological virtues picks up that stream of environmental ethical theory which emphasises the relation between ecological science and environmental ethics (see Callicott (1992), Rolston (1982, 1988) and Norton (1984, 1987, 1991)). Although the attempt to 'read off' how we should treat nature from ecological observations has largely been acknowledged as fundamentally flawed, the ways in which ecological science and environmental ethics have been connected leave much to be desired. Ecological virtue suggests a possible way of reconciling this issue by making the virtues appropriate to human-nature exchanges a matter of moral character. Thus, following the traditional approach, we can say that the ecological virtues are a combination of 'intellectual' and moral virtues which together combine to foster character. Both contribute to the cultivation and development of moral character. Green moral theory then becomes a theory of 'ecological character', a particular mode of behaviour, a way of knowing, feeling and acting. For example, we would expect an ecologically virtuous individual to be sympathetic, as opposed to sentimental, towards the nonhuman world, and to act from knowledge and experience rather than ignorance.

This division of the ecological virtues pertaining to moral character along traditional lines reinforces the central moral importance of adopting a discriminating attitude to the natural world. Depending on which part of that world is under consideration, either and in some cases both sets of virtue will be called for. For example, it is perhaps with those nonhuman animals closest to us, both in terms of familiarity and/or proximity, and especially in their social nature, that the virtues of character will be strongest, as indicated earlier. In these cases, 'reason' or moral reasoning does not need to inform us that such creatures and their suffering are proper objects of our sympathy. It is simply the case that with such animals as domesticated cats, dogs, cattle, horses and non-domesticated animals such as apes, dolphins, whales and elephants, their social nature makes their lives intelligible, however dimly, to us and their sufferings more recognisable, such that it is usually quite easy to sympathise with them. Such extended empathy becomes

progressively more difficult to sustain, as we move to other living creatures such as slugs, insects, or rats, to plants and finally to the inanimate world of rivers, seas, mountains, rocks, ecosystems and bioregions. Although not discounting the possibility of empathy with the inanimate world, for example, there are those who attempt to follow Leopold's advice and 'think like a mountain' (Seed *et al*, 1988), it is more likely that as we move through the various categories of nature the virtues that inform appropriate treatment will emphasise those pertaining to the intellect. A lack of sympathy with the inanimate world is not an insuperable obstacle in terms of cultivating a proper regard towards it. It may not be felt as intensely as moral sentiments in respect to fellow social mammals, but ecological science as a component of intellectual ecological virtue can extend our moral interests (if not our sympathy) beyond the animal boundary. Science can thus inform us of new and proper objects of moral sympathy and concern and thus of new moral relationships with wider and more distant parts of the natural world. For example, ecological science can inform us that what on first sight looks like a 'barren' wasteland is in fact a rich and thriving ecosystem. Indeed, to see it as 'barren' is to look at it purely from a particularly narrow perspective. Scientific knowledge can thus expand and refine our perspective and, perhaps, our interests in the world. That is, scientific knowledge can be a corrective (a virtue) to the vice of seeing nature from an unduly narrow and uninformed viewpoint.

One example of ecological vice can be found in the increasing gap between human transformative relations with the environment and the consumption of the goods and services created by those relations. It seems that the greater the gap between production and consumption the greater is the likelihood of parasitic rather than symbiotic productive relations. Such a view is consistent with the 'corruption' of social-environmental practices, such as farming, and animal husbandry, as a result of the imposition of external institutional norms, as a result of the transformation of farming into a business. Once this occurs the internal norms and excellences which regulated the treatment of their nonhuman subjects, are no longer operable. Equally, these parasitic i.e. abusive, forms of productive relations arise and continue partly because consumers are largely unaware of

them, and their lack of direct experience or awareness of animals within these productive relations limits their sympathies and thus their moral concern. At the same time unsustainable forms of productive relations come about partly because of the physical distance between the site of production and consumption. This latter point is developed in more detail in chapter 6 (6.6). An important aspect therefore of ecological moral character refers to attempting as far as possible to bridge this gap, both materially (in terms of 'prosuming' and self-reliance as discussed in 6.6), and morally (by extending moral sympathy and humane treatment to nonhumans involved in these productive relations).

3.7 Conclusion

The position outlined in this chapter not only presents an alternative green ethical theory from those advanced by non-anthropocentrists, but also an alternative understanding of morality and the moral life to that found in non-anthropocentrism. The main features of this alternative view is that morality has to do with action and experience, relates to character, and is divided into two broad spheres, one pertaining to humans only and the other to human-nonhuman relations. This *relational* view of morality is indispensable to the development of a feasible green moral theory concerning human-nature affairs. Unlike a proprietarian view it begins from where we are now, and through an immanent critique and engagement with humanism seeks to develop a more reflexive, less arrogant form. Thus the ethical dimension of green politics can be viewed as a form of 'moral extensionism' (3.3), characterised as (a) weakly or reflexively anthropocentric (b) naturalistic, (c) premised on an understanding of morality which sees it in relational terms, (d) turns on the importance of human and nonhuman interests, (e) does not seek 'one new ethic' to cover all spheres of human action, and (f) stresses the cultivation of moral character as the best way in which to integrate this reflexive anthropocentrism.

The relational view suggests that morality is to be understood as a practice rather than a catalogue of principles. In a sense there can never be a complete rendering of the

‘ethical’. Following Aristotle, we can say it cannot be completely systematised (Clark, 1982). Principles cannot therefore ‘map out’ the ethical realm in full: it is something to be created in and through experience, rather than discovered. However, this is not to say that morality is created *ab nihilo*, or that it can be about anything. From the naturalistic point of view (3.4), our status as a particular species standing in certain relations to each other, not shared with nonhumans, is constitutive of what morality is about. Of particular significance is the naturalistic claim that humans do care about future generations. This future-orientated concern can be seen as a central part of responsible stewardship. The strength of the naturalistic perspective may be said to lie not so much in the ability to provide definite answers to moral predicaments between the human and the nonhuman worlds. Rather it provides the appropriate ‘moral grammar’ in which to articulate those questions.

The ethics of use position (3.5), stresses what one may call the ‘ecological management’ concern of green politics. The normative commitment of green politics in terms of human-nature relations can be understood as placing individual human interaction with, and transformation of, the environment within a moral context. The apparent overtones of hubris and arrogance associated with the idea of ‘ecological management’ are just that. An ethic of use is consistent with principled non-interventionist solutions to human-nature conflicts. Thus, it can realise the ‘hands-off’ goal of deep ecology, as discussed in the last chapter. Set within this moral context, green politics is concerned with the provision of informed, ethically appropriate, and flexible social ‘coping strategies’ in relation to the ever shifting horizons of the relationship between the human and the nonhuman worlds. Human use of the nonhuman world, to mark as well as maintain human life, does not necessarily lead to the degradation of that world, and that, despite local conflicts of interests, in the round, there can be a large degree of harmony between human and nonhuman interests.⁴⁰ The point of ecological virtue and the cultivation of an

⁴⁰This is similar to Hayward’s defence of ‘humanism’ understood as enlightened self-interest which he claims “amounts to an assumption of an underlying rational harmony between the interests of human and non-human beings.” (1995: 63). However, as indicated in chapter 5, this harmony is dynamic not static and has to be collectively created and maintained.

ecological moral character is that this harmony of interests *ought to be*. However, as suggested in 3.4.1, and later in chapter 5 (5.6), any harmony between human and nonhuman interests, must be congruent with the fact that the human 'ecological niche' is the outcome of a metabolic, transformative relation between culture and nature. Thus any harmony between the human and the nonhuman worlds is 'created' not 'discovered', a product of culture, not a natural process of nature. The character traits that most fit with this view are those of stewardship, a mode of transformative interaction with the nonhuman world in which this harmony is realised. However, as a mode of interaction it is not based on ignorance, arrogance or 'quietism'. It seeks to avoid these ecological vices through the cultivation of ecological virtues, adaptive dispositions and habits which recognise the legitimacy of human transformation of the nonhuman world, but encourages a self-reflexive, discriminating attitude as regards that transformation. Simply because some human interest is fulfilled is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to justify any use or transformation of the nonhuman world.

Green theory is premised on the normative rightness of transforming morally wrong or unworthy 'parasitic' social-environmental practices into 'symbiotic' ones. The 'ethic of use' complements weak anthropocentrism by acting as a first line of defence for nonhuman welfare in the clash between human and nonhuman interests. Or rather, in this clash human interests are reorganised in such a way as to create a space for the moral considerability of nonhumans and a recognition that human life (including the 'good life'), does not require the insensitive or inhumane treatment of those with whom we share the planet. As Watson avers, "It is nice that human survival is compatible with the preservation of a rich planetary ecology, but I think it a mistake to try and cover up the fact that human survival and the good life for man is some part of what we are interested in" (1983: 256). This is precisely the point of the ethics of use position. It is not against human interests to acknowledge moral considerations in respect to our dealings with nature. This recognition does not preclude our purposive use of it. In terms of practical outcome, there is an increasing convergence between human interests and nonhuman welfare. Policies based on ecocentric or animal rights moral arguments often lead to

similar treatment of nonhumans as that grounded in human interests. This is especially so in regard to future human generations, where we can say that our continued flourishing demands the type of habitat and ecosystem protection that would result from a concern with nonhuman welfare.

In rejecting the notion that green normative arguments must be understood as the proposition of a 'new ethic', and insisting that the spheres of human-nature and intrahuman action must be kept separate, I conclude that there *are* resources within the western moral tradition, and within existing western culture, that greens can tap into and use. Demands for a 'new ethic' because the existing one is 'speciesist' are misplaced. Conventional moral reasoning can, like Achilles lance, heal the ecological wounds it has inflicted. According to Holland, "opponents of speciesism are right about the shabby treatment of other animals meted out by humans, and also about the need for a radical reformation of human attitudes. But I am not convinced that speciesism is the villain of the piece, and am more inclined to suspect some of the more old-fashioned vices such as cruelty, lack of sensitivity and lack of understanding" (1984: 291). And to combat these and other ever-present ecological vices we need ecological virtues. In the end then what green politics comes down to is the claim that the normative roots of our ecological crisis lie in the rather familiar moral territory of greed, short-sightedness, intemperance and ignorance. As Passmore remarks, "What it [the west] needs, for the most part, is not so much a 'new ethic' as a more general adherence to a perfectly familiar ethic" (1980: 187).

Aquinas wisely pointed out that it is better for a blind horse to be slow. Likewise it would be better for contemporary society, given the uncertainty that marks our dealings with the environment, coupled with the technological capacity to alter the conditions of life on earth as we know it, to moderate its demands for material consumption (ends), and adopt a more prudent disposition in the employment of its means. After all, we do not have exclusive ownership of the earth (as argued in 2.4.1), but share it with other species and future generations of humans, and while we transform it to fulfil our interests, we must be ever wary that we do not unjustifiably harm the interests of other species or those who will come after us. The earth was not made for us, but neither were we made for the

earth. Finding a mean between these extremes of ‘arrogant humanism’ on the one hand and ‘ecological quietism’ on the other, is I hope to have shown in this and the previous chapter, the goal of green politics as ecological stewardship. These themes will be pursued in more detail in chapters 6 and 7.

Having outlined a what I hope is a defensible anthropocentric moral basis for green politics, the chapters 4 to 7 seek to develop a conception of green politics consistent with that ethical basis. However, before moving onto outlining this alternative conception, the next chapter takes a critical look at eco-anarchism, which in many ways stands to green political theory in much the same status as deep ecology did to green moral theory.

Chapter Four

A Critique of Eco-Anarchism

4.1 Introduction

The characterisation of green politics as either ‘anarchistic’ (Dobson, 1990: 83-4; Freedon, 1995: 16-18) or a modern form of anarchism (Bookchin, 1992a) has wide currency. Both within and without the green movement, its distinctiveness is held to reside in its embodiment of traditional anarchist values expressed within a contemporary ecological political idiom. This self-understanding is particularly evident in the almost complete monopolisation of the green political imagination by an anarchist vision of the society greens would like to create. The many pastoral utopias that litter green political literature, pay eloquent testimony to the common view that, “greens are basically libertarians-cum-anarchists” (Goodin, 1992: 152). While ‘soviets plus electrification’ equalled socialism for Lenin, it seems that for many green theorists, activists and commentators, stateless, self-governing communities plus solar power equals the ‘sustainable society’. Although ‘small is beautiful’, beauty, as already suggested in 2.4, is often in the eye of the beholder. And in the case of the eco-anarchist vision, the disproportionate attention given to describing the future society blinds greens to the necessity of developing a critical analysis of the present situation, and of paying attention to the problems of political transformation, that is, getting from the unecological present to an ecological future. The aim of this chapter is not to banish the eco-anarchist vision from the green pantheon, but rather to critically interrogate it with a view to integrating its insights within the conception of green political theory being developed in this thesis.¹

Several reasons can be given for the negative attitude of greens to the state. First, the strong influence of anarchism on the early development of green political theory

¹ This ‘reconstructive-integrative’ approach has already been applied in chapter 2 in reference to deep ecology.

underwrites a rejection of the state on the grounds that it is inextricably bound up with the ecological, political, social, and ethical problems that greens are concerned with solving. Thus the state's continued existence simply exacerbates the fundamental, underlying cause of which the ecological crisis is an effect. The state is regarded as protecting an 'environmentally hazardous dynamic' (Carter, 1993: 45-9), or the embodiment of "materialism, institutionalized violence, centralization, hierarchy", values and practices antithetical to the green perspective (Porritt, 1984: 216-17).²

Second, a suspicion of approaches that give a prominent place to formal political and legal institutions is tied up with the authoritarian nature of previous green defences of the state, which stand at odds with its self-professed libertarian and democratic character. The undemocratic character of 'realist' solutions to the ecological crisis, as in the authoritarian proposals of Ophuls (1977), Heilbroner (1980), and Hardin (1977), have made greens weary of state-centred approaches to environmental problems.³

Third, more 'benign' readings of the liberal state's role in dealing with ecological problems are held to invariably favour 'technocratic' and administrative, as opposed to 'democratic', solutions (Dryzek, 1995). In other words, only a 'technocentric' outlook (O'Riordan, 1981: 11-19), premised on an instrumentalist valuation of nature and a reductionist problem-solving methodology, is compatible with the bureaucratic-administrative logic of state agencies. Common to these arguments against the state is that talk of the state having a positive role in green theory and practice belies an 'environmental' rather than an 'ecological' perspective (Bookchin, 1980a: 70; Dobson, 1990: 13). That is, talk of a 'green state' is an oxymoron at best, or a betrayal of the

² It is also the case that for many greens the nation-state represents one of the central achievements of the enlightenment. The state represents the institutionalisation of instrumental rationality, in the guise of state bureaucracies, and supports an instrumental view of nature and a predominantly materialist or consumptive conception of human well-being. Thus the state is seen as the engine of 'modernisation', the pursuit of 'economic growth' which leaves nature bereft of intrinsic value. At the same time the nation-state systematically destroys local communities, historically by usurping the ecological 'commons' which grounded the (relative) autonomy of such communities. Thus, in the eyes of many greens, the state stands accused of destroying not only nature, but also local communities, colonising and transforming both into homogenised categories. Hence from the anarchist perspective the state is a permanent threat to 'difference' and communal self-determination.

³ The eco-authoritarian solution is discussed in chapter 7 (7.2).

radical promise of green politics, at worst. The strength of feeling generated by the place of the state within green politics can be most dramatically seen in the ideological division within the green movement between *'fundi'* and *'realo'* elements (Doherty, 1992). This division parallels, and is related to, the distinction between 'ecological' and 'environmental' perspectives on green ideology. Environmentalism is typically presented as a reformist strategy whose principal focus is the 'greening' of contemporary liberal democracies, particularly the instrumental use of nature, rather than seeking widespread social and economic change to create a particular vision or blueprint of the 'sustainable society', which is the aim of 'ecologism' (Dobson, 1990: 73-130). For present purposes this distinction between environmentalism and ecologism will be assumed to centre mainly around opposing attitudes to the state, with ecologism being unequivocally anti-state and environmentalism more agnostic.

Fourth, and following on from the above, proposing state-centred solutions to the ecological crisis are not only 'reformist' in political but also in ethical terms. Articulations of the ecological crisis which give a prominent role to the state 'crowd out' the need for radical moral change. In other words, the technocentric outlook which favours reformist as opposed to more radical institutional change also underwrites a continuation of the anthropocentric moral outlook in general and the treatment of nature as a stock of raw materials in particular.

Two anti-state eco-anarchist theories will be examined in this chapter; bioregionalism (4.3), and social ecology (4.4). After critically analysing these two theories and finding them wanting in their rejection of the state, I then move on in 4.5 to argue that the *transformation* rather than the *abolition* of the state and civil society is compatible with green values. The argument of this chapter is that as one moves along the green political continuum from bioregionalism to social ecology, the eco-anarchist position 'shades into' an understanding of green politics which sees its primary goal as the democratic transformation of the state and civil society. This chapter seeks to establish a role for the state within green political theory by utilising the analytic distinction between the state and civil society, which is further developed in chapter 7. At the same time it is also hoped

that this critical analysis may integrate eco-anarchist insights within green political theory. This sees the eco-anarchist contribution to green politics as resting in *honouring* as opposed to *realising* eco-anarchist values. The chapter's overall aim is to forge a workable synthesis between the anti-state and pro-state positions within green political theory.

4.2 Eco-Anarchism: Strong and Weak Versions

What O'Riordan has called the 'anarchist solution' (1981: 307) has been an enduring part of the green ideological spectrum. It is not difficult to see why anarchist forms of social organisation have appealed to greens. Anarchism argues that if left to themselves human beings will naturally cohere into 'organic' communities regulated by principles of mutual aid and sociality. As such it coheres well with the 'naive naturalism', the idea that we can 'read off' social relations from nature, that peppers green politics. The quality of social relations within stateless communities is such that the laws, procedures and institutions of the state are unnecessary for governance. In short, the traditional defence of the state, that it alone can provide 'public goods', particularly social order and environmental quality, is undermined.⁴

Green political theory is usually thought of as representing an inherently anti-state position. Most green writers and commentators seem to agree that its general anarchistic complexion is one of its unifying features. Green theorists as different as Naess and Bookchin, both agree on the basic stateless nature of the type of society they envisage. Naess can say that, "supporters of the deep ecology movement seem to move more in the direction of non-violent anarchism than toward communism" (1989: 156); while Bookchin claims that his social ecology theory is premised on the abolition of the state (1992b: 95-

⁴ For some deep greens, eco-anarchism is understood as a return to the 'natural' social organisation for humans. This type of argument is prominent within 'neo-primitivist' shades of green theory, and others who stress the political significance of stateless societies being the social order within which the human species evolved (Shepard, 1993). Here the ascription of positive moral value upon such societies is presaged on a simplistic identification of the 'natural' with the 'good'.

6). That a commitment to this ‘anarchist solution’ may actually undermine crucial aspects of green political theory is rarely fully addressed, although some green theorists and commentators are aware of the problems raised by green anti-state arguments (Eckersley, 1992a: 175, 181-6; Young, 1992; Dobson, 1990: 183-6).

Bioregionalism begins from the argument that the resolution of the ecological crisis calls for greater integration of human communities with their immediate environment, with natural rather than human-political (read state) boundaries delimiting the appropriate human social unit. This claim that the state is unnecessary for securing and enjoying public goods, I call the ‘weak’ version of eco-anarchism, to distinguish it from the stronger claims made by social ecology. While bioregionalism envisages an ecological stateless society, roughly along the lines of the traditional anarchist vision of a ‘commune of communes’, it does not base its claims on a critical assessment of the state in political theory and practice. Social ecology, on the other hand, does.

For social ecologists, “The state consolidates and protects the family of hierarchies [class, gender, race, age, mind-body] becoming a hierarchy in its own right” (Kossoff, 1992: 8). Carter (1993) develops a comprehensive green anarchist theory, which highlights many of the concerns of social ecology. Beginning from a view of the state as “an autonomous agent” (45), he claims the state cannot, nor ever could, be used to serve civil society (42). This discounting of the dominant ‘instrumentalist’ view of the state, that is, seeing the state in functional terms as an ‘enabler’ to civil society, is the hallmark of what I want to call the ‘pure’ anarchist position.⁵ On a pure anarchist reading the state has its own interests and agenda, and its sole *raison d’être* is the systematic exploitation of society as a whole. Adding a feminist perspective, Bookchin holds that, “The institutionalized apex of male civilization was the state” (1990: 66). Social ecology advances what I call a ‘strong’ version of eco-anarchism. It goes beyond claiming that the state is *unnecessary* for ensuring the public goods of social order and environmental protection, to stipulating that it is positively *undesirable*. It is undesirable because by its

⁵ Later in 7.5 green politics and a green state are described in terms of restructuring the relations between state, market and civil society, in which the former are in the service of the latter.

very nature the state is a coercive institution which curbs human freedom. Thus from the strong or pure anarchist position, the state is not just part of the ecological problem; it *is* the problem. It is the Gordian knot, the severing of which is a necessary condition for the creation of an emancipated, ecologically rational society.

Central to both the strong and weak versions of eco-anarchism then is the conviction that only the transcendence of state institutions, and their replacement with informal, community-based social mechanisms, will produce the social conditions for the realisation of green values. The argument for stateless self-determination is summed up by Taylor, "If we want to do without the state or substantially reduce its role, we have to revive and rebuild communities" (1982: 4). This distinction between strong and weak versions of eco-anarchism is significant. The strong version of anarchism is problematic, particularly as regards the lack of empirical evidence to support its claims, while theoretically it can be criticised as dependent upon an ahistorical explanatory schema which confuses the *concept* of the state with particular *conceptions*. The pure anarchist position in which the state is an intrinsically exploitative institution is both unnecessary and unhelpful to green politics.⁶ At the same time the traditional anarchist demand that social relations be transparent is neither a necessary nor a desirable political aim of green politics. Indeed, as argued below, a close analysis of the social ecology position, is compatible with the democratisation and decentralisation rather than the abolition of the state.

4.3 Bioregionalism

Bioregionalists place a premium on the necessity of strong, affective senses of community and communal identity, and see the ecological problems we face as due in no small part to the demise of community. Although this decline in community is a common observation

⁶ The eco-anarchist goal of transparent social relations is similar to the deep ecology goal of transparent moral relations with nature. This attempt at transparency is also a vice of enlightenment science and technology, based on the Baconian hubris that human reason can fully comprehend that which it has not created. As suggested in the last chapter, there are limits to human knowledge of the world. The issue of social transparency in relation to representative versus direct democracy is discussed in chapter 7 (7.7).

of communitarian critiques of 'modernity' and the process of 'modernisation', bioregionalists locate one of the roots of its decline in the disengagement of people from a specific land-base. With no enduring link to the land, community is 'rootless' and individuals vulnerable to the anomie and alienation of 'mass society'. The movement of people from the land into the cities, which is one of the chief characteristics of the process of modernisation, also marks a decisive increase in ecological degradation and a shift in ecological consciousness. On the one hand, with less people in agriculture, there is a shift towards capitalisation of agriculture production, with pesticides, heavy machinery etc. increasing the (short-lived) productivity of the land. This process leads to ecological degradation as more and more pesticides, fossil fuel, etc. have to be used to keep the land fertile and productive. This was discussed in chapter 2 (2.7.2) in terms of the shift from agriculture as a social practice and way of life, to an industrial business. On the other hand, the demographic shift from rural, agricultural lifestyle to an urban, industrial one means that for most people, the 'environment' becomes the human, built one, while the nonhuman environment is simply not part of their lived experience. Thus there is an increasing gap (both actual and cognitive) between the environment as a sphere of human production and the environment as a resource for human consumption, as a result of altered social-environmental relations.

People in modern society according to bioregionalism have 'forgotten' that the economy and all its works is a subset and dependent upon the wider ecosystem. Bioregionalists argue is that whereas it may be possible to have a 'post-industrial society' we cannot have a 'post-agricultural society'. Yet this is precisely the misperception of the majority of citizens in the western world. Modern citizens have not only lost contact with the land, and their sense of embeddedness in the land, but at the same time they have lost that elemental social form of more or less intimate and relatively transparent social relations. Thus a basic aim of bioregionalism is to get people back in touch with the land, and constitutive of that process involves the recreation of community in a strong sense, This sense of community is close to the *gemeinschaft* view of community, in opposition to a looser sense of *gesellschaft* or 'association'. Here bioregionalism is close to deep

ecology, indeed it would be fair to say that bioregionalism is the politics of deep ecology. For example, according to Sessions, “Many supporters of the Deep ecology movement believe that human habitation on Earth, including the cities, should ultimately be bioregional” (1995a: 416) . Both share the belief that only a radical transformation of society, at the economic, social, political and cultural levels, can resolve the ‘total crisis’ of contemporary societies as discussed in chapter 2.

This return to the land ethos is eloquently expressed by DH Lawrence: “We must get back into relation, vivid and nourishing relation to the cosmos and the universe...Vitality, the human race is dying. It is like a great uprooted tree with its roots in the air. We must plant ourselves again in the universe” (1968: 410). Bioregionalism sees itself as offering a way in which we can return to the ‘land’ and ‘replant’ ourselves again in the natural world. In the words of Kirkpatrick Sale, we must become “dwellers in the land” (1984a: 224) if we are to resolve the ecological crisis.

4.3.1 Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

For the nineteenth century sociologist Tönnies, the emergence of the modern social world was marked by a movement from ‘community’ or *gemeinschaft*, to a looser sense of ‘society/association’ or *gesellschaft* (1957: 33). Instead of individuals collectively regulating themselves through various traditional community structures, (external) institutions (state and market) became necessary to ‘order’ an emerging ‘civil society’ of individual competitive wills. From a bioregional point of view this movement also accounts for the ecological crisis. The emergence of civil society in the modern age, particularly the movement from the land to the city, the creation of extensive trade and other relations which went beyond the local or national hinterland, as well as the evolution of ‘mass society’, have all contributed to severing the link between human community and the land. Hence its concern with recreating *gemeinschaftlich* communities along ecological or bioregional lines. This is well expressed by Jones who declares that, “If a future society based on the Gaian principles of interdependence, mutuality and inter-

relatedness is to be achieved, a re-emergence of some form of *gemeinschaft* is essential” (1990: 109).

One of the earliest and most consistent green proponents of strong communities is Goldsmith who as long ago as 1972 declared that, “cultural and economic heterogeneity is associated with a state-like political structure...Only an elaborate bureaucracy run by a shameless autocrat can hope to control a mass of people deprived of a common culture and a sense of duty to their society” (Goldsmith, 1972: 253).⁷ The corollary is clear; if we seek to do without state institutions, forms of social life with a ‘common culture’ and a ‘sense of duty’ derived from that culture are the only alternative. Since the state is a historical, contingent/artificial, social form, there is nothing inevitable about the continuation of state-centred societies. Therefore, non-state forms of social organisation are always possible. The logic of Goldsmith’s position is that a non-state social regulation requires not only the recreation of community, as Taylor indicated above, but requires a particular type of community, a prominent characteristic of which is a low degree of plurality.

Taylor spells out why anarchism demands communities of this type. For him, stateless social order requires that the community display (a) strongly shared beliefs, (b) relations between members that are direct and many-sided, and (c) social interaction characterised by reciprocity and mutual aid (1982: 26-30). It is the *quality* of relations within such communities that allow the operation of non-state coercive mechanisms to get people to do things they would not voluntarily do, yet are necessary for social order. This addresses two common misunderstandings of anarchism, namely that it implies social ‘chaos’ and relies on a ‘myth of collective harmony’. The former misunderstanding is typically expressed in the pejorative connotations of the term ‘anarchy’, a term which owes much to the Hobbesian conception of the ‘state of nature’ as the description of stateless

⁷ This association of cultural heterogeneity with state-regulated social organisation seems to fly in the face of the earlier anarchist critique of the state on the grounds that it denied difference. It would seem on this point that a distinction needs to be made between ‘libertarian’ and ‘conservative’ forms of eco-anarchism with Goldsmith (1991) falling into the latter category on the basis of his emphasis on homogeneity. This conservatism is also shared with other bioregional theorists such as Sale (1980: 501), discussed later.

disorder. Anarchism as opposed to anarchy does not imply social chaos and it explicitly rejects the Hobbesian vision of social life without the state. To those who claim that human nature undermines the anarchist case for voluntary social co-operation and the provision of public goods without the state, anarchists reply that, “The assumptions made by Hobbes and Hume were supposed to characterise human behaviour in the absence of the state; but perhaps they more accurately describe what human behaviour would be like immediately after the state has been removed from a *society whose members had for a long time lived under states*” (Taylor, 1976: 141). In other words, with the decline of ‘community’ and the rise of the state, individuals have lost the capacity to govern themselves without the state.⁸ As he argues elsewhere, “the state is like an addictive drug: the more we have of it, the more we ‘need’ it and the more we come to depend on it” (1976: 134). However, in opposition to this extreme view, one may view the state instrumentally, as a prosthesis rather than as an addictive and dangerous drug.

The second misunderstanding is the assumption that anarchism posits that once the state has been abolished, individuals will ‘automatically’ or ‘naturally’ be in harmony with one another. This ‘myth of social harmony’ is rejected by realist anarchist theorists such as Taylor and eco-anarchists such as Goldsmith and bioregionalists such as Sale.⁹ All these anarchist theorists agree that the provision of the public goods such as social order and environmental protection depends on getting people to do things they might not want

⁸ According to Taylor, “the liberal theory of the state critically depends on the assumption that individuals are pure egoists or at least are ‘insufficiently’ altruistic; with enough altruism, this rationale for the state evaporates” (1982: 55-6). As I argue in chapter 7 (7.8), a more limited form of this can be defended in terms of environmental considerations leading to a view of democracy in which individuals take the interests of others into account. However, while this can be seen as an attempt to encourage people to be less ‘unecological’ (or less ‘knavish’ in Hume’s term (5.2)), this is viewed not in terms of abolishing the state, but rather in terms of a virtuous green citizenry to complement the state.

⁹ Yet it is upon this very idea of the ‘natural harmony’ of society that many greens, implicitly or explicitly, base their argument when they wax lyrical about the social and ecological balance of pre-modern peoples, and hold them up as examples of how we moderns should behave and construct our social relations. The logic of this position is analogous to the Marxist idea that with the withering away of the state social conflict will cease, except that the logic seems to run in the reverse order. Equanimity is an ever present possibility (existing prior to the state), therefore the state is superfluous, indeed it is perceived as detrimental to the ‘natural’ harmony of society. This is similar to the deep ecology argument that our ‘natural urge’ to celebrate nature is thwarted by anthropocentrism, viewed as part of the ‘natural’ harmony between society and environment (2.3.1).

to do. Hence 'realistic' anarchists do not argue for the abolition of social coercion, but rather one particular form of it, namely the forms of institutionalised coercion employed by the state. Socialisation, the internalisation of communal norms and conventions together with informal forms of social sanction such as public ridicule and shaming, perform the necessary coercive functions within stateless communities (Taylor, 1982: 80-7; Goldsmith *et al*, 1972). Thus the prevention of 'free riding', a precondition for the provision of collective goods, can be achieved without recourse to the state, but not without the employment of social, non-state forms of coercion. The state may be abolished within an anarchist society but coercion and power are not.

Recovering such communal principles from a bioregional point of view requires 'rehabitation', the conscious re-integration of human communities within their local bioregion (Eckersley, 1992a: 167). This is not just on the grounds that small-scale communities dependent upon and living in close contact with 'their' local environment are less ecologically destructive than large societies dependent on the biosphere as a whole, or a collection of ecosystems. This argument is discussed below. Reinhabitation, becoming 'native' to a place, is also held to be an identity-constituting ecological condition. *Who* you are is a question of *where* you are, the types and quality of relations you find yourself in, both social and ecological. Reinhabitation of the land is not only necessary on ecological grounds but also on moral grounds. Part of the latter involves the creation of a bioregional community, a central aspect of which is knowing one's bioregion through experience, as a way of becoming 'rooted' once again in the land.¹⁰

The basic bioregional vision is of a patchwork of self-sufficient, small-scale, ecologically harmonious communities, organised according to their own normative standards (Sale, 1984a: 233). Bioregionalists (as with many greens) discourage trade and stress the ecological and social benefits of communal autarky.¹¹ One of the main reasons

¹⁰ Often this is underwritten by Heideggerian concerns of 'dwelling in place', and a rejection of existentialist views of the inhospitality of the earth to human concerns. That is, bioregionalism is premised on a view of the bioregion in particular, and the earth in general, as 'home', i.e. a convivial place to which humans are suited and 'welcome', if only they would 'follow' the natural order.

¹¹ The issue of trade within green political economy is discussed later in chapter 6 (6.6), where a distinction is drawn between self-sufficiency which is what bioregionalism implies, and self-reliance.

given for this is to encourage people to live within the limits set by their local environment rather than depending on the planet as a whole. Dasmann's distinction between 'ecosystem people' and 'biosphere people' captures the basic bioregional position. According to him, "Biosphere people draw their support, not from the resources of any one ecosystem, but from the biosphere...[They] can exert incredible pressure upon an ecosystem they wish to exploit...something that would be impossible or unthinkable for people who were dependent upon that particular ecosystem" (in Sessions, 1993: 121). Each ecosystem is unique, and thus demands a particular way of life. In this way the community's distinctiveness is intimately related to how it interacts with its local ecosystem or bioregion. This interaction, the metabolism between community and environment, and thus the community's identity, is co-determined by the bioregional ecological context. Defending biodiversity and cultural diversity thus go hand in hand.

From the bioregional position, it is trade between disparate parts of the world as a result of the global market, that has created the impression, particularly in those western nations who benefit most from such planetary-wide exchange, that escaping the confines of their particular ecological context is evidence of transcending 'natural limits' as a whole.¹² This is the ecological slant on the historical necessity for the imperial expansion of western societies, and the ecological reason for present day neo-colonial trade practices, which from the green perspective underwrites current North-South inequalities. Simply put, countries such as Britain, France and the United States, could never have achieved the rates of material economic growth and affluence they did and continue to enjoy if they were dependent upon their own native natural resources. The affluent lifestyle enjoyed in these countries is dependent on a disproportionate consumption of

¹² According to Georgescu-Roegen "the absence of any difficulty in securing raw materials by those countries where modern economics flourished was yet another reason for economists to remain blind to this crucial economic factor [nature's perennial contribution]" (1971: 2). This logic of displacement, whereby the necessities for economic development are provided not by one's own local ecosystem but by non-local ecosystems continues in the modern age with the advent of the global market where the planet's resources are traded as commodities, and thus in theory available to any society. In the contemporary world, 'effective demand' (purchasing power), rather than 'local supply' (nearness of resources) determines the ecological inputs available to any particular economic system. Thus the link between the local economy and the local ecosystem is broken.

world resources. To many greens these economies are, in strict ecological terms, unsustainable, in the sense that their models and modes of development are physically impossible to achieve on a global scale (Whiteside, 1994: 340; Goodland, 1995). Bioregionalists encourage economic self-sufficiency, which by rendering the community completely dependent upon its local ecosystem, encourages prudence, and the adoption of a long-run time perspective. One way of looking at this is to say that a bioregional view encourages us to see the productivity of the earth in terms of a renewable (but limited) flow of 'income' rather than as 'capital' (Daly, 1973). In this way bioregionalism proposes to save the whole (the global biosphere) by saving the parts (individual ecosystems), as well as fostering the independence and cultural uniqueness of bioregional communities.

There are several positive aspects which can be drawn from bioregionalism. These include, the emphasis on economic/ecological independence, on ecosystem sensitivity, and on the environmental destruction and social exploitation attendant upon global trade. However, the bioregional vision is also flawed in some significant ways. The first refers to issues arising from the lack of interaction between bioregions in the context of the distribution of resources across the face of the planet. Simply put, the autarky imperative coupled with strict ecosystem dependence, implies that those living in resource poor ecosystems are condemned to their fate as there is no provision for the redistribution of resources between bioregions. The redistribution of resources across the planet, regarded by many as a core part of any green or environmentally-informed theory of justice (Pasek, 1994; Attfield & Wilkins (eds.), 1992), seems to go against the communitarianism which underwrites much of bioregionalism. Transfers, whether from trade or charity, may compromise the distinctiveness of bioregional communities, since their identity as a community is tied up with how they live within and use 'their' ecosystem. The wholesale global redistribution of resources is based on prioritising a universal 'biosphere-human species' relationship, over any particular 'ecosystem-culture' one, that is, that sees the biosphere rather than the ecosystem as the 'resource-base' for human welfare.

At the same time redistribution on any large scale, like trade, seems to be ruled out as a homogenising process, destructive of cultural difference and diversity. According to Berg, “Global Monoculture dictates English lawns in the desert, orange juice in Siberia and hamburgers in New Delhi. It overwhelms local cultures and ‘raises’ them regardless of the effects on cultural coherency or capacities of local natural systems” (1981: 25). Even ‘cultural’ exchange, expressed in such practices as tourism, even if ecologically sensitive, is discouraged as being destructive of rootedness and communal distinctiveness (Mills, 1981: 5). As such bioregionalism is arguably the most communitarian strand within contemporary communitarian theory.¹³ An extreme interpretation would be that resource-poor bioregions and communities have to simply survive and flourish as best they can on their own without any (or much) external exchange.

The bioregional vision of a world made up of self-sufficient, ecologically harmonious bioregions, harks back to a pre-modern era before exploration, trade, and cultural exchanges brought people from different parts of the world together and gave tangible expression to the idea of the ‘human species’. In place of the global village, with its communications networks, global political and economic institutions (*inter alia*, a world market, the World Bank and United Nations), bioregionalism implies a ‘refeudalisation’, or ‘Balkanization’ of the world into ecologically defined political and economic units (Sale, 1984b: 171).

Other problems with bioregionalism can be grouped under two headings; those relating to internal relations within, and those relating to external relations between, bioregional communities. On the former, Dobson points out that there is no guarantee that bioregional communities will be democratic or just (1990: 122). Indeed according to Sale, “truly autonomous bioregions will likely go their own separate ways” (1984b: 170). The reason for this is that bioregionalists place the communal right to self-legislate as the highest social value. The affirmation of communal solidarity is prioritised over contingent

¹³ A further objection to bioregionalism relates to dangers inherent in presaging communal identity and membership on the strong affinity between the community and ‘the land’. This is the ‘brown’ possibility of ‘reinhabitation’. This *völkisch* tendency within certain strands of green theory has been noted by Vincent (1993: 266) and Coates (1993).

values such as equality, fairness or democracy. This communitarianism together with the assumption that the root of social and ecological problems are rooted in 'bigness' (Sale, 1980: 82), or a lack of appropriate or 'human' scale, are the two principles around which bioregionalism is woven. However, small is not always beautiful, and small-scale, although an important consideration, is not a panacea for all social and ecological ills.

An examination of how bioregionalism copes with internal differences brings into sharp relief its problematic place in green theory. Conflict within bioregional communities, according to Sale (1980), should not require recourse to formal principles of justice or political institutions external to the community. For example, the 'natural' way to deal with disputes between an aggrieved minority and an implacable majority is for the community to divide, with the minority free to settle elsewhere. From the bioregional point of view "The commodious solution is not *minority rights but minority settlements*" (1980: 480; emphasis added). This 'fissioning' of communities when they get too large or develop tensions incompatible with communal consensus, is according to Taylor "a normal part of the life of stateless societies" (1982: 92; Sale, 1984b: 170). But in a non-Lockean world, that is where there is no unsettled territory, this 'solution' to conflicts within societies is simply unworkable. In a closed world, there is no 'away' to which the displaced can go without entering the territorial jurisdiction of another political community, unless the existing territory is divided between the two sides. This recourse to fissioning and relocating is surprising given the strong link made between communal and personal identity and the land. Perhaps the bioregional point is that people must make a choice between exile (and thus compromising one's identity) and putting up with the discomfort of being in serious disagreement with the rest of society. In other words, individuals are required to rank community membership relative to other values. However, one has only to look at the conflict within such divided societies as Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia and USSR, to see that 'minority settlements' do not constitute a realistic, never mind a just, solution. Whether eco-anarchists like it or not, the history of the nation-state (and not necessarily the liberal-constitutional version either) provides ample evidence that it can protect the rights of minorities and individuals, as

much as it can hinder them. The instrumental view of the state, namely that it can serve the interests of civil society, contra the strong anarchist thesis, is not completely mistaken.

This 'justice as displacement' argument, is premised on protecting the community's sense of identity and solidarity from those who argue for a different understanding of communal identity, shared goods, history or meanings. Hence the distrust of appeals to justice as an entrenched system of individual rights and liberties, which transcend local norms. Justice as an ethical perspective that transcends communal conventions, is either incompatible with complete communal autonomy, or is unnecessary for social order. Like other communitarians, bioregionalists (and some social ecologists)¹⁴ regard justice as a remedial virtue, useful for remedying flaws in social life (Kymlicka, 1993: 367): flaws that are the result of a decline in community.¹⁵ That bioregional communities would tend to be conservative is accepted by bioregionalists as the necessary price to maintain what Kumar (1978) has called the 'intimacy of scale'. According to Sale, "To be sure...consensual communities will tend towards conservatism...but it will by the same token make them more stable, more predictable, more 'comfortable', and less prone to ill-considered decisions" (1980: 501).¹⁶ However, one does not need consensus in order to make collectively prudent decisions.

The danger here is not just the threat to individual liberty within extreme forms of communitarianism, where the individual as an 'organic part' of the wider collectivity can have her interests sacrificed for the benefit of the 'common good'. Rather the conservative possibility inherent in aspects of the green position illuminates the threat to

¹⁴ For an example of Bookchin's critique of justice contrasted with 'freedom' see (1990: 97-100; 1991: chapter 6).

¹⁵ A similar view was canvassed in chapter 2 in examining deep ecology's view of an appeal to 'ethics' as second-best solution, to a solution based on ecological consciousness (2.6).

¹⁶ At this point green theory leaves itself open to appropriation by conservatives, and for critics to claim that the 'progressive' nature of green politics is more apparent than real. A recent example of the former is the attempt by Gray to present green politics as compatible with a conservative agenda, stressing the moral importance of preserving settled habits and conventions, deferring to the authority of tradition, and the imperative to maintain a shared way of life as the context for the realisation of human goods and values (1993: chapter 4). According to him, "Both conservatism and Green thinkers repudiate the shibboleth of liberal individualism, the sovereign subject, the autonomous agent whose choices are the origin of all that has value" (1993: 136), in that both affirm communal 'forms of life' as the true bearer of value.

plurality and social diversity and thus the preconditions for democratic politics. A clear example of the conservatism expressed in some versions of bioregionalism can be seen in the emphasis placed on communal self-identity being constituted by a religious or quasi-religious outlook. In bioregionalism this outlook is provided by deep ecology and the 'rehabitation' process, and has affinities with the 'ecomonastic' strategy associated with Rudolf Bahro (1994, also Eckersley, 1992a: 163-7). In both bioregionalism and ecomonasticism, it is a strong possibility that the community is held together by a shared metaphysical view (usually spiritual or mystical) of the natural world in general and local ecosystem in particular, and the community's relationship to it (Sale, 1984a).¹⁷ Bioregionalism seems to endorse cultural diversity between bioregional communities and favours homogeneity within them.

As I argued in chapter 2 (2.5), it is extremely unlikely that a spiritualised view of the natural world (as opposed to a moral view informed by science) would succeed in 'converting' western citizens to the green cause. More damaging to green theory in terms of its 'progressive' self-understanding is that societies infused with a strong shared religious sense have typically functioned as fertile breeding grounds for intolerance. A possible response to this is that the spiritualised worldview put forward by bioregionalists and deep ecologists is inclusionary, welcoming difference and otherness. However, it remains to be seen if such a flexible, non-dogmatic shared spiritual vision is sufficiently robust to furnish the community with a strong sense of shared identity in the sense required for stateless social mechanisms to work. Baldly put, there is every reason to believe that the tolerance proclaimed for green metaphysics may be undermined by the emphasis on 'tribalism' (Sale, 1984b), and the requisite degree of social homogeneity that is required.

¹⁷ This emphasis on the self and the constituent conditions for identity-formation make bioregionalism close to the deep ecology position in this regard. In affirming a contextual understanding of self and community, with the ultimate context being the environment, bioregionalism states albeit, in a rather extreme form, one of the central goals of green politics. This is to conceive of the self as 'self-in-society-in-environment', a central part of the naturalistic view presented in the last chapter.

It is perhaps at the external level that the shortcomings of bioregionalism are most apparent. Given the on-going impact of globalisation on human societies, drawing them into an increasingly complex web of interrelations, the complete realisation of the bioregional vision, that is complete bioregional autarky, is impossible. When we look at the global nature of ecological problems such as ozone depletion and global warming, there is a need for more not less co-operation and interaction between societies. From a global ecological point of view, the fragmentation of the world as propounded by bioregionalism may exacerbate ecosystemic problems. The strategy of saving the whole by saving the parts, only works if there is some degree of trans-communal co-operation and co-ordination. This is because when it comes to ecosystems, Commoner's first law of ecology holds; "everything is connected to everything else" (1971: 29), saving the part involves knowing what is happening to other parts and to the whole. Co-operation may be possible in a world of bioregions, but reaching agreement may be more difficult under stateless conditions because of the increase in the number of parties to the agreement (Goodin, 1992).

Although economic autarky may be possible, ecosystem independence is not. Trans-bioregional problems render the emphasis on individual ecosystem protection short-sighted. Simply withdrawing from the global economy does not address how to solve existing commons problems (although it may prevent them getting any worse). Bioregionalism may work to maintain global ecosystem health but it is debatable whether it would actually create the conditions required to reach social-environmental balance. Given that trans-societal co-ordination and communication is more important within such a context, decisions taken within bioregional communities are only meaningful within that context. Unfortunately, as Taylor admits, "the controls which can be effective within the small community cannot generally have a great impact on relations between people of different communities" (1982: 167). Added to this is Goodin's observation that, "decentralization gives each member of the community more control over that community's decisions. But the smaller the community, the less and less the community's decisions will ordinarily matter to the ultimate outcome. People are being given more and

more power over less and less (1992: 150). So the multiplication of decision-making units within the context of reaching agreement and co-operation, may compromise the self-determination imperative. It is perhaps because of the compromises that trans-communal co-operation necessitate, either due to economic trade and exchange, shared political-normative commitments, or ecological commons issues, that bioregionalism is so keen on autarky and linking community tightly to the local ecosystem. Being self-sufficient allows bioregional communities the freedom to determine their own destiny and character.

In this sense Dasmann's conclusion that, "the future belongs to...[ecosystem people]" overstates the bioregional case to say the least (in Sessions, 1993: 121). While not wishing to undermine the positive values expressed by the bioregional position, it is not a perspective greens need take *in toto*. There are three main aspects that can be taken from bioregionalism which can be integrated within green politics. Firstly, the importance of 'place' and its role as an identity-forming condition, which is discussed in the next chapter (5.7). Secondly, the emphasis on decentralisation and appropriate scale, discussed in chapters 5 and 6. And finally the extremely useful distinction between 'ecosystem' and 'biosphere' perspectives which is examined in chapter 6 in more detail.

4.4 Social Ecology

Social ecology, although generally sympathetic to, and sharing much with, bioregionalism, offers a different and, in many respects, a more coherent eco-anarchist political vision. Bookchin, the founder and leading theorist of social ecology, calls the social ecology vision of stateless social order 'libertarian municipalism' (1986: 37-44; 1990: 179-85; 1992b). This is defined as, "a confederal society based on the co-ordination of municipalities in a bottom-up system of administration as distinguished from the top-down rule of the nation-state" (Bookchin, 1992b: 94-5). It differs from bioregionalism in its concern with the issue of interaction between communities and the rejection of the bioregional model of small-scale, self-sufficient communities (Bookchin, 1992a: xix). The

confederal nature of the arrangement means it is a voluntary political association of autonomous communities with sovereignty retained at that level. Yet, the relativism that typified bioregionalism, is explicitly ruled out by Bookchin; “parochialism can...be checked not only by the compelling realities of economic interdependence but by the commitment of municipal minorities to defer to the majority wishes of participating communities” (1992b: 97). Here economic-ecological interdependence goes hand in hand with political autonomy and self-determination. Unlike bioregionalism, autarky is not a central principle of social ecology.

Libertarian municipalism as an eco-anarchist theory can be argued to represent a novel form of anarchism. Limiting the scope of communities to simply go their own way marks a decisive break with traditional anarchist thought, which took the communal right to self-governance as its principal and highest political norm. This distinction between libertarian municipalism and other forms of anarchism (including bioregionalism) can be seen in their different understandings of community. Whereas for bioregionalists (Jones, 1990; Sale, 1980, 1984a), and ‘pure’ anarchists (Taylor, 1982), community is understood as some version of ‘*gemeinschaft*’, libertarian municipalism is presaged on the idea of a ‘democratic community’. Community is defined politically not ecologically. Within libertarian municipalism the aim is to recapture the values of the *polis*, and ‘authentic’ politics, in opposition to the ‘inauthentic’ politics of ‘statecraft’ (Bookchin, 1992a: chapter 6).

Another difference is that libertarian municipalism is urban rather than rural based (Bookchin, 1992a). His understanding of community is thus less ‘organic’ than traditional anarchist and bioregional views. This marks significant development in social ecology thought away from earlier formulations which accorded normative significance to *gemeinschaft*, and praised the authenticity of organic forms of social life (Whitebook, 1981/2). One could question whether libertarian municipalism, is an ‘anarchist’ theory in the traditional sense of the term. The suggestion here is that it may be better viewed as an attempt to spell out what a more democratised and decentralised society would look like with a continuing role for the state, particularly at the local level.

His drift away from pure anarchism is further evidenced by his assertion that there is a “shared agreement by all [communities] to recognize civil liberties and maintain the ecological integrity of the region” (1992b: 97-8). The contractual and legal-constitutional overtones of confederalism is more usually associated with liberal not anarchist discourse and practice. And his description of the confederal council as composed of elected representatives, with legitimate right to use coercion within a specified ecological territory, to ensure compliance with a shared agreement, could be taken as a traditional Weberian analysis of a state-like political entity, legitimated along standard, but beefed up, liberal lines (*ibid.*: 99). His assertion that the confederal council, made up of deputies elected in direct democratic elections, are purely administrative with no mandated policy-making powers, which is retained at lower levels (1992a: 297; 1992b: 97), is no more than that, i.e. an assertion. Given the interconnectedness of communities, the existence of a binding confederal agreement relating to human rights and ecological imperatives, and the description of this social arrangement as a ‘Community of communities’, one can imagine the confederal council taking a more pro-active role than Bookchin assigns to it. Goodin’s criticism made in reference to bioregionalism above applies *a fortiori* in this instance, since inter-community relations go beyond trade, or the maintenance of ecological integrity, and consist of substantive normative principles and practices.

A weak criticism of Bookchin’s position would be that he has failed to clearly and convincingly demonstrate the stateless nature of libertarian municipalism. Indeed, by recasting the problem in terms of ‘degrees of statehood’, rather than in monolithic terms of ‘*the state*’, Bookchin’s reformed eco-anarchism is close to themes within recent non-anarchistic radical democratic theory, concerning the importance of plural and decentralised sites of political and social power independent from the state (and the market) (Keane, 1988; Bobbio, 1989) This is particularly evident when Bookchin asserts that, “‘the state’ can be less pronounced as a constellation of institutions at the municipal level, and more pronounced at the provincial or regional level, and most pronounced at the

national level” (1992a: 137), and seems to recommend city and local government levels as appropriate sites for green activism which will not compromise its ends (*ibid.*: 303-4).¹⁸

The emphasis on appropriate scale, which as we saw above is also a bioregional concern, is a principle supported by almost all greens. It is usually taken as expressing the need for ‘appropriate scale’ in political decision-making procedures and especially the sphere of production within which the particular economy-ecology metabolism of the community is located. According to Porritt, “In terms of restoring power to the community nothing should be done at a higher level than can be done at a lower” (1984: 166). This principle is compatible with state institutions because for some things, particularly international negotiation on global commons issues, it is the lowest level. The very term ‘municipal’, with its strongly urban character, resonates and is compatible with the demand to strengthen local and regional tiers of government/governance away from the centre. The principles of libertarian municipalism seem to accord with T.H. Green’s assessment of those sceptical of the state. According to him, “The outcry against state interference is often raised by men whose real objection is not to state interference but to centralisation, to the constant aggression of the central executive upon local authorities” (1974: 217). Thus the critique of the state is in large part a critique of centralisation, and conversely eco-anarchism can be translated as a demand for decentralisation and devolved decision-making powers. This demand will be discussed later (chapters 6 and 7) in terms of the local political, economic and ecological levels as often the most appropriate level for dealing with social-environmental relations.

One can interpret Bookchin’s argument for devolving power to municipal levels, yet maintaining a legitimate right for the ‘confederal council’ to intervene in municipal affairs, as bestowing state-like institutionalised powers on the council. These powers of the

¹⁸ A possible defence open to Bookchin’s qualified anarchism is that it is a strategic step towards pure anarchism. According to Sylvan, “A committed anarchist can quite well also be committed, as an intermediate goal amongst others, to achieving more sumpathico states. That, in turn, may involve political activity, conventional or unconventional” (1993: 241). On this view, recent policy initiatives such as Local Agenda 21 which sees the local state as the most appropriate level for achieving sustainability and the emergence of new local, non-monetary market exchange systems such as LETS, can be argued to ‘honour’, rather than ‘realise’, some eco-anarchist values. These are discussed in the chapter 6 (6.2.2, 6.5 and 6.6).

council could be regarded as underwritten by ‘the shared agreement’ (1992b: 98). From this it is not stretching things too far to suggest that this agreement functions as an ‘ecological social contract’, which on familiar contractarian grounds legitimises the state. In the manner of a decentralised (and a democratised) state, the confederal council circumscribes communal rights to complete self-legislation, since upholding the ecological compact depends on such circumspection. Political power is *shared* rather than completely *devolved* to local levels, which do not seem possessed of sufficiently strong senses of common *gemeinschaftlich* identity, which could underwrite complete communal self-governance in the manner of pure anarchism or bioregionalism. What I want to suggest then is that the libertarian municipal agenda, the content of which most greens would accept, such as participatory democratic structures, local empowerment, social justice, and human rights, is more consistent with a political project aimed at *democratising the state and civil society*. The efficacy of adopting this state/civil society framework will be defended in chapters 5 and 6 while the democratic content of this project will be spelt out in chapter 7.

4.5 Eco-Anarchism: From Constitutive to Regulative Ideal¹⁹

Why has the eco-anarchist vision of a federated community of small-scale, face-to-face communities living in harmony with the environment been such an enduring feature of green politics? To answer this question, one must focus on the ideological roots of early green politics.

Firstly, the eco-anarchist vision of the future ‘sustainable society’ vividly encapsulated, in shorthand form, the basic principles and values of green politics; i.e., *inter alia*, ecological and social harmony, decentralisation, simple living, quality of life, community, and direct democracy. Within the context of the early development of green theory, it was

¹⁹ The distinction between constitutive and regulative ideals is taken from Kant who held that, “A principle is ‘regulative’ when it merely guides our thinking by indicating the goal towards which investigation should be directed...it is ‘constitutive’ when it makes definite assertions regarding the existence and nature of the objectively real” (1957: 211).

simply assumed that an ecological transformation of society required anarchism updated for the age of ecological limits. Secondly, the dominance of the eco-anarchist vision has to do with the dichotomous style adopted by green theorists and commentators. The most influential instance of this is O’Riordan’s fourfold typology of the institutional choices open to green politics; (1) new global order, (2) authoritarian commune, (3) centralised authoritarianism, or (4) the anarchist solution (1981: 404-7). In reality the choice comes down to the anarchist solution or the rest, given that it was the only one which, *a priori*, embodied the green values and principles noted above. As green political theory developed therefore, it was assumed that the ‘sustainable society’ was ‘anarchistic’ (Dobson, 1990: 83-4).

In a way this utopia-building was prompted, in part, by the need for greens to adopt a strongly critical edge in their analysis of contemporary industrial societies. As Goodwin points out, “the process of imagining an ideal community, which necessarily rests on the negation of the non-ideal aspects of existing societies, gives utopian theory a certain distance from reality which makes it a sharper critical tool than much orthodox political theory” (1991: 537). One could say that its initial reaction to the contemporary social world was so antithetical, so radical in questioning almost every aspect, that utopianism was the only form of theorising which could contain and convey the green message. If asked for proof for the ecological superiority of stateless social order, aboriginal societies and their harmonious social-environmental metabolism, could be presented to vindicate the eco-anarchist argument.

This anticipatory-utopian form of political critique is directly related to the evolution of the green movement, and its roots are manifold. Firstly, the practical requirement as a ‘new social movement’ to maintain its distinct identity, to prevent existing ideologies from stealing their ideas and proposals, presented a good case for accentuating the radical, the utopian. Secondly, in common with other new social movements, greens seemed to be particularly obsessed with questions of self-identity, to demonstrate (to themselves as much as to anyone else) their ‘newness’. Thus the green movement was at pains to portray itself as a completely new type of politics, ‘neither left nor right, but in front’. For

example, Porritt declared that, “For an ecologist, the debate between the protagonists of capitalism and communism is about as uplifting as the dialogue between Tweedledum and Tweedledee” (1984: 44), a statement noteworthy for lumping these alternatives together as different versions of the super-ideology of ‘industrialism’. Green politics was ‘post’ or ‘anti-industrial’, which cast greens as the vanguard of the future society (Milbrath, 1984), and green politics as the politics of the 21st century (Sessions (ed.), 1995).

Thirdly, added to these internal dynamics was the simple fact that, as a new social actor, it had little or no access to the policy-making process, and therefore did not need to outline programmes, budgets or detailed policies in the language of that process. Broad-brush strokes rather than attention to the fine print characterised early green discourse. The overriding imperative was to distance itself theoretically from the reality surrounding it, and in the case of the ‘eco-monastic’ strand of eco-anarchism, to turn one’s back on the existing social order and create ‘liberated zones’ from the ‘industrial mega-machine’ (Eckersley, 1992: 163-67; Bahro, 1994). This formative experience, like all formative experiences still exerts an influence on green politics.

Fourthly, this concern with outlining its diametric opposition to the status quo, was underpinned by the rather naive belief that the green case was so obvious and so compelling, that all that was needed was simply publicly to outline its critique and proposed solutions (Dobson, 1990: 131). Finally, following the ‘doom and gloom’ that typified the post-*Limits to Growth* (Meadows *et al*, 1972) ecology movement, there was clearly a need for greens to outline an image of a better future. As Paehlke points out, “The Malthusian perspective is neither necessary nor helpful in engendering positive change. An environmental perspective and policies must seek to create a *preferable world*” (1989: 55: emphasis in original). Like a skilled preacher the early green movement had threatened apocalypse if its warnings were not heeded, now it also promised the eco-anarchist, liberated society, if people changed their ways in time.²⁰

²⁰ The Marxian critique of utopian socialism is an obvious analogy here, and indeed many Marxists have criticised green politics, or some conceptions of it, as a modern day version of utopian critical theory (Pepper, 1993). The basic Marxist critique of green theory is that it lacks a political economy, a theory of transition to the ‘sustainable society’. Engels’ rejection of the utopian socialists expresses one of the basic

A cursory review of green literature will quickly highlight the extent to which green theorists and commentators are obsessed with presenting the green case in an either/or format. Almost ubiquitous is the habit of drawing lists distinguishing the green from non-green. Examples include Porritt's two 29 item lists differentiating 'The politics of industrialism' from 'The politics of ecology' (1984: 216-7), O'Riordan's technocentric/ecocentric dichotomy (1981: ch.1), Dobson's distinction between 'ecologism' and 'environmentalism' (1990: 13), to Capra's 'paradigm shift' from 'The Newton World-Machine' to 'The New Physics' (1983: part II). Surprise that this dualistic methodology is so widespread within a political theory that is supposed to be holistic, is only surpassed by the fact that it persists to frame its concerns. This dualistic thinking (also noted in the discussions of deep ecology and non-anthropocentrism) is clearly evident in the debate about the role of the state within green politics. From the eco-anarchist perspective there is a simple (and simplistic) choice: *either* centralisation *or* decentralisation, anarchism *or* the nation-state, ecology *or* industrialism (Carter, 1993). That green political theory could attempt to combine elements of both is pre-emptively dismissed as reformist and therefore not 'really' green.²¹

It is from this dualistic methodology coupled with the utopian-critical demands of the early green movement, that eco-anarchism became the dominant political theory of greens. Three steps can be identified in this process;

1. The concern with what a 'sustainable society' would look like to highlight the unsustainable nature of existing society led to,
2. A focus on mapping 'the sustainable society', that is describing, often in great detail, a generally agreed picture/blueprint of that society,

Marxist problems with green politics, "To all these [utopian socialists] socialism is the expression of absolute truth, reason, and justice, and has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power" (in Tucker, 1978: 693).

²¹ It is here, as in other places, that the difference between green political theory and ecologism as a political ideology is evident. Ecologism is a subset of interpreted principles, values and practices drawn from a wider set that make up green political theory. In other words, ecologisms represent particular *conceptions* or derivations of green theory, and are less flexible, being more ideologically-driven, than the set of values and principles that make up green political theory.

3. Finally the assumption of the sustainable society as ‘anarchistic’, to rule out eco-authoritarian dystopias, and to act as the benchmark against which ‘greenness’ could be judged.

It is the particular historical development of green theory (both internal debates, and between it and other theories such as socialism and liberalism), and green political practice (*fundilrealos*), that largely account for the prevalence of the eco-anarchist solution. These factors produce a marked tendency within green theory to work backwards, as it were, from utopia to theory, with practical engagement in the political realities surrounding it reduced to publicly articulating the utopian-theoretical synthesis.²² Although there is nothing wrong with outlining a vision of a better society, indeed this prescriptive dimension is the mark of any ideology worth its salt, this tendency unfortunately resulted in the description of the future society becoming a substitute for the task of specifying and spelling out green principles. These principles were held to be self-evident and could be ‘read off’ from the description of the future eco-anarchistic society. If however we start from green principles and values, some of which are shared with other political theories, such as democratisation, social and global justice, there is no reason to believe that a society consistent with them (assuming that these values are compatible), will necessarily be ‘anarchistic’. It is perhaps more than coincidence that the common ‘reading off’ social principles from nature often occurs together with ‘reading’ them off from the anarchistic society: one reinforces the other (Dobson, 1990: 24-5; Sale, 1980: 329-35; Bookchin, 1991: 75-86).

According to Dobson, “the Green sustainable society can be negatively defined by saying that it will not be reached by transnational global co-operation, it will not be principally organized through the institutions of the nation-state, and it is not

²² This tendency to work backwards was also noted in reference to non-anthropocentrism in general and deep ecology in particular. In chapter 2 (2.4.1), it was argued that deep ecology was premised on an a priori disposition in favour of preservation, while in chapter 3 (3.3), I suggested that non-anthropocentrism was driven primarily by a desire to include nonhumans in the moral community, which helps explain proprietarian extensionism.

authoritarian” (1990: 84). However, if one starts from green principles, it may be that some of these institutions, values and practices are required for the realisation of green political goals. This view will be defended in the rest of this thesis. Ultimately, determining what a green society would look like is a poor substitute for articulating and justifying green political principles.

4.6 Conclusion

What this chapter hopes to have shown is that eco-anarchism, as a constitutive ideal of green politics, is not an essential component in that the values greens espouse may be institutionalised in non-anarchistic ways. For example, the eco-anarchist concern with autonomy and self-determination is something which as a green value can be realised in non-anarchist ways. The green concern with autonomy is discussed later in chapter 6 (6.7) where an ecological virtue perspective on human flourishing is argued to hinge on the relationship between human autonomy and welfare. Nor is it desirable that, as it stands, the eco-anarchist utopia acts as a fetter on the future development of green theory, unnecessarily precluding its positive engagement with the state. It is perhaps not completely contingent that a reassessment of eco-anarchism within green theory is occurring at a time when greens are serious contenders for political power, when the minds of greens are turning from ideals to principles, and from principles to practice. This is not to say that eco-anarchism is to be rejected from the green political canon: the integration of its insights within the context of green theory moving from negative criticism to positive proposals calls for it to become a regulative rather than a constitutive ideal for green politics. That is, informing and guiding, but not determining its goals.

Institutional arrangements are thus to be judged instrumentally in terms of whether they hinder or promote green practices and values, the sum of which I term ‘collective ecological management’. On this reading it is the ‘essentialist’ view of the state held by eco-anarchists like Sale (1980) and Bookchin (1991) who regard the state as *intrinsically* inimical to the ecological and other social values espoused by greens that grounds their

rejection of the state as a part of the green political project. A good example of this is Khor's argument that "under state control the environment necessarily suffers" (in Goldsmith *et al*, 1992: 128).²³ This is especially clear in Bookchin's thought. The originating thesis of social ecology is that the ecological crisis is due to hierarchy. The domination of humans over nature is the first level of this hierarchy but Bookchin argues that this hierarchical relationship itself stems from the domination of humans by other humans (1991: 2-12). For him, as the state is the highest contemporary expression of social hierarchy, it is the ultimate cause of the present ecological crisis.²⁴ Added to this is his view that the 'State' is not just a set of institutional arrangements but also a psychological disposition. According to Bookchin, "the State is not merely a constellation of bureaucratic and coercive institutions. It is also a state of mind, an instilled mentality for ordering reality" (1991: 94).²⁵ For Bookchin, as for others in the anarchist political tradition, this 'instilled mentality' is a combination of unreflective subservience, apathy and powerlessness. These are extremely strong claims, to say the least, the plausibility of which really depends upon accepting the anarchist analysis as a whole, particularly its version of the historical origins and evolution of the state (Carter, 1993). It is on this

²³ A similar anti-state argument is also proposed by free market environmentalism (6.2).

²⁴ One may add the Weberian idea that as society increases in size and complexity there is a need for more formal, bureaucratic forms of social regulation. That is as we move from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*, the increasing complexity of civil society, especially in respect to the social division of labour, requires some degree of state co-ordination. 'Modernisation' therefore goes hand in hand with increased state administration and regulation as the classical sociologists first pointed out. See chapter 7 (7.5).

²⁵ Despite their many and profound disagreements, and Bookchin's often vicious criticisms of deep ecology, social and deep ecology do share some central positions. Firstly, both accept the centrality of psychological transformation to the green project; deep ecology emphasises the shift from an anthropocentric conception of self to a wider ecological sense of self (see chapter 2, section 2.4), while social ecology the substitution of an unreflective obedience to state authority with a rational belief in one's capacity for self-determination and autonomy. Secondly, both base their respective critiques of the status quo on the *artificiality* of contemporary institutions and ways of thought and life. Deep ecology (and bioregionalism) claims that modern social life is 'divorced' from its 'natural context', and out of touch with the rhythms of the natural world. In a similar vein, social ecology makes much of the 'artificiality' of the nation-state in opposition to the 'natural' forms of human sociality expressed in stateless forms of human organisation. Thirdly, both work with an explanatory ideological framework within which the idea of 'the fall' and the possibility of 'redemption' are central orientating concepts. For deep ecology the enlightenment/modernity/industrialisation constitutes humanity's 'second fall' while for social ecology the State is society's 'original sin' (Bookchin, 1991: 2).

essentialist conception of the state that eco-anarchists such as Bookchin (1991, 1992a) argue that the resolution of the ecological crisis is simply *impossible* while the nation-state exists. But more than that, on traditional anarchist grounds the state is also deemed to be both *unnecessary* as well as *undesirable* to its resolution. The plausibility or otherwise of the anarchist position need not detain us, since as argued in the previous chapter, the eco-anarchist perspective is to be thought of as a *constitutive* as opposed to a *regulative* ideal of green political theory (4.5). It is the ‘essentialist’ view of the state that explains its rejection on eco-anarchist grounds. If this essentialist view is rejected, then the eco-anarchist solution does not constitute an insuperable barrier to a positive green engagement with the state.

The conclusion of this chapter, that an immanent critique of the state rather than its rejection is more appropriate to green political theory, is similar to the immanent critique of the enlightenment and anthropocentrism suggested in previous chapters. The problem of eco-anarchism’s ‘utopian’ critique is that it is a ‘view from nowhere’. That is to say, the values and principles it represents are not widespread within the existing culture. As Hayward puts it, “critique [becomes] mere criticism [when it] appeals to a utopian vision that others may not share, which is not rooted in the norms and values of the culture, and so is an abstract ‘ought’” (1995: 51). The point about immanent critique is that it starts from where we are now, rather than adopting a view from nowhere, a view from the past or a view from the future. That is, we can only approach the ‘new’ via a critique of the old, rather than simply think up wonderful blueprints for the future. Immanent critique represents a qualitatively different kind of theorising from utopian critique. While it is less ‘radical’ in the sense that it is committed to the possible and not just the desirable, it is all the more radical in the sense of being a realisable alternative to the status quo.

One may view eco-anarchism as a permanent reminder of the dangers and problems involved in the state having a role in social affairs and ecological management. At the same time eco-anarchism also emphasises the state’s role in ecological governance is a *necessary* rather than a *sufficient* condition for achieving green goals, reflecting its instrumental as opposed to intrinsic role and value. However, the public goods argument

for the state having a key role in providing such environmental public goods has not been undermined. It is to an examination of the nation-state that we turn to next.

Chapter Five

The Nation-State, Governance and the Politics of Collective Ecological Management

5.1 Introduction

Having discussed and raised some doubts concerning the centrality and role of eco-anarchism within green political theory, this chapter seeks to outline an alternative institutional programme for green politics. A central aspect of this alternative view is the positive role given to the nation-state in the resolution of the various ecological, economic and ethical dilemmas raised by the ecological crisis. In what follows I propose an instrumental view of the state within the context of what I term 'collective ecological management'. That is, the state should be seen not as a *green value itself* but rather as one particular institutional *means* which can realise green values and practices.

In chapter 3 (3.4.1), it was argued that the 'ecological niche' for humans is created rather than given. That is, a 'humanised' or transformed environment, is our 'natural' habitat. The collective management, manipulation and transformation of the environment is thus a universal feature of all human societies. As a universal requirement it is, in a sense, pre-political. It is *how* human societies create their humanised ecological niches, the various institutional mechanisms used to maintain a stable metabolism between the social and the natural system, that are moot political questions. In this chapter, 'collective ecological management', is presented as an institutional form regulating this metabolism based on green values and principles. This idea of active ecological management cuts across the deep-shallow, radical-reformist continuum within green theory. What conceptions of green political theory differ over are the scale, type, institutional structure and normative side-constraints operative upon social-environmental metabolic states, not the necessity for environmental management and transformation. For example, even deep ecologists, for whom a pre-emptive 'hands off-cum-nature knows best' position

constitutes a central principle, accept that preserving wilderness requires active social, and particularly institutional, intervention. In other words, preservation from development as much as conservation for (future) development or ecological restoration, all take place within the broad framework of 'ecological management'. The deep ecology ideal of wilderness preservation, the preservation of the nonhuman world from a certain type of collective human transformation, in the form of 'development', paradoxically necessitates another form of human management, in the form of institutional structures, practices, etc. which function as a form of social governance to limit and/or transform development, such that wilderness is preserved. What appears as non-management at one level is at another level simply another form of management. 'Walking lighter on the earth' is as much a form of ecological management as economic development, the political and normative issue is that collective purposive-transformative interaction with the environment can simply be more or less extensive, have a different character or be more or less sustainable.

In chapter 3, the normative issues relating to social-environmental interaction were argued to concern the boundary between 'use' and 'abuse'. This chapter builds on that position, a position which sees the normative core of green politics as concerned with an 'ethics of use'. The political issue for green politics is over the type, scale, and institutional structures for managing social-environmental interaction which best concur with green values and principles. What this chapter sets out to explore is the role the state may play in this process, it does *not* set out to provide green justifications for the nation-state. Rather the institutional focus of this chapter should be taken as an attempt to widen the parameters of the debate around the political, economic and cultural structures of a sustainable society beyond that offered by a stark choice between the status quo or eco-anarchism.

More precisely, the aim of this chapter is to further develop this understanding of green political theory by discussing the nation-state as a particular institutional form, and its role and limitations in realising green goals. These goals can be summarised as ecological sustainability and morally regulated collective interaction with nature. The institutionalisation of green values within collective ecological management should be

thought of in terms of ‘governance’ as opposed to ‘government’. That is, while the state has a role to play in creating and maintaining a sustainable and ethically-informed metabolism with the environment, it is not the only or the pre-eminent institution. Although aspects of a theory of a ‘green state’ may be gleaned from this chapter, the instrumental view of the state from which governance starts, which sees the state as one amongst other institutional forms that regulate a specific social-environmental metabolism, ought to temper an interpretation of the position being defended here as overly ‘statist’ (Wall, 1994; Paterson, 1996). Such an interpretation reveals the dualistic thinking that characterises the eco-anarchist standpoint, where the choices for green politics are either ‘statism’ or ‘eco-anarchism’, the state or community, and so on. The principle of *appropriateness* with regard to institutional design, scope, scale, co-ordination and internal regulation, is the touchstone of collective ecological management. Institutional arrangements ought to be judged by their appropriateness for achieving green values and practices. There is nothing new here since ‘appropriateness’ is a well-established green institutional principle (Porritt, 1984: 164-5; Dobson, 1990: 125; Martell, 1994: 54-8). As in the search for a conception of green moral theory which transcends the non-anthropocentrism-anthropocentrism dualism (chapter 3), this chapter seeks to widen out the issue of institutional arrangements within green politics beyond the opposition between ‘eco-anarchism’ and ‘eco-statism’. A good example of this is Wall’s claim that, “The debate...over the governance of Green societies has been a debate between eco-anarchists and eco-statists, while one party claims that the creation and maintenance of Green imperatives demands centralised restraint, the other argues that such imperatives are served by greater freedom, participation and self-government” (1994: 13). In this chapter, like Wall, I will discuss the question of institutional design and organisation within green politics in terms of ‘governance’. However, unlike him, institutions are here discussed in the light of their efficacy in realising green values and principles, such as sustainability, rather than how they fit into some ideal of the ‘sustainable society’.¹ At the same time, the

¹ This issue of the eco-anarchist concern with mapping out the contours of the future ‘sustainable society’ to the detriment of spelling out the principle of sustainability, was raised in the last chapter (4.5).

supposition that the only means available to state governance is ‘centralised restraint’ (with the implicit suggestion that non-state forms of ‘decentralised restraint’ are either impossible or not really forms of restraint at all)² will be challenged, as well as the simplistic binary presentation of the institutional options available to green political theory.

In some respects the instrumental view of institutions, including the state, adopted in this chapter is close to Goodin’s (1992) division of green political theory into a ‘green theory of value’ and a ‘green theory of agency’. For him, these two aspects of green politics are logically independent, so that accepting green arguments concerning the intrinsic value of the natural world, for example, does not imply accepting green arguments concerning political arrangements. As he puts it, “we can, and probably should, accept green policy prescriptions without necessarily adopting green ideas about how to reform political structures and processes” (1992: 5). While rejecting the thrust of Goodin’s particular dualistic analysis of green political theory, I do wish to draw a similar means-ends distinction for purposes of exposition. The heuristic distinction I wish to make is between green values and aims (such as sustainability, democratisation, the moralisation of social-environmental interaction) and the various institutional arrangements and social practices that may frame, articulate, embody, prioritise or otherwise realise these values in determinate social and social-environmental relations. On the one hand, green values are perhaps compatible with a narrower range of institutional arrangements than Goodin allows, such that accepting green values does commit one to adopting some distinctively ‘green’ political and economic structures. On the other, in opposition to so-called ‘radical greens’, it is also possible that green values are compatible with a wider range of institutional arrangements than they acknowledge. This chapter looks at the institutional options available to achieve green goals in the area between these two positions. Again in opposition to Goodin, this chapter by building on the ethical arguments raised in chapters 2 and 3, seeks to present a conception of green politics in

² As mentioned in the last chapter, realistic eco-anarchistic theories do not suppose that non-state forms of governance are non-coercive, they simply require different, less formal forms of coercion as Taylor points out (1982). A good example of ‘decentralised restraint’, what O’Riordan (1981: 306) classifies as an ‘authoritarian communal’ solution, can be found in Goldsmith *et al* (1972), and Heilbroner (1980).

which its ethical and political commitments are both directly rather than contingently related *and* mutually supporting.

The organisation of this chapter is as follows. In section 5.2 there is a brief discussion of structure/agency within green politics. In section 5.3, the idea of ecological rationality is introduced as the standard against which institutional responses to social-environmental are to be judged from a green perspective. Following on from this section 5.4 the role of the nation-state within green politics is examined as a way of introducing collective ecological management (5.6) by way of a reconstructive critique of 'ecological modernisation' (5.5). In 5.7 the dimensions of collective ecological management are further fleshed out by looking at its cultural and normative dimensions. In 5.8 this cultural dimension is expressed as a political interpretation of Leopold's 'land ethic'. In 5.9 the role, scope and institutional forms of regulation and planning within collective ecological management is discussed while in 5.9.1 ecological restoration is briefly presented as an issue where environmental planning and management are central.

5.2. Structure and Agency within Green Politics

From the point of view of green political theory, the resolution of the ecological crisis is not simply a matter of structural reorganisation, either of the economy and the scale of technology and production, or of changing the level of legislative or policy-making power. For many of the issues that green political theory deals with, particularly those related to its moral claims, attention needs to be focused on changing people's attitudes and interests, as discussed in chapter 3. To put it simply, many of the questions raised by greens are matters of individual and collective will as much as institutional transformation. They are of course related, and the specific manner in which agents are related to structures will constitute a particular understanding of green theory. For example, we can understand deep ecology as a theory which emphasises agent-level change (consciousness raising) which works on the assumption that the appropriate structures will 'follow' from

this deeper-level change.³ For green politics, institutional change must be placed within a wider cultural context.

As we have seen in chapters 2 and 3, a non-anthropocentric green politics aims to alter the prevailing *attitudes* to nature. On this account, green politics is a moral crusade seeking to win ‘converts’ away from anthropocentrism and its worldview. These approaches have much in common with what Dobson calls the ‘religious approach’ to green change which holds that, “the changes that need to take place are *too profound to be dealt with in the political arena*, and that the proper territory for action is the psyche rather than the parliamentary chamber” (1990: 143; emphasis added). On the other hand, reformist environmentalism focuses mainly on ‘greening’ existing structures, rather than reflecting on the structures themselves in the light of ecological considerations, and the relationship between structures and the behaviour and attitudes of agents. This relationship between agents and structure will be further discussed in chapters 6 and 7, where I offer a critique of ‘economistic’ forms of environmental valuation based on the phenomenon of ‘endogenous preferences’.

The conception of green political theory being developed in this thesis seeks to combine both agency and structural approaches. Indeed, as I hope to show in this and the following chapters, the values, principles, and goals that are central to the green political project depend upon combining both agent and structural level change. Collective ecological management therefore has to do with both preferences and policies, agents and structures. In this respect, unlike market approaches to ecological issues, collective ecological management is a problem-solving rather than a preference-aggregating process. For green politics, understood as a form of collective ecological management, resolving environmental problems requires *cultural* and not just institutional change. Because the roots of ecological problems do not lie exclusively in either cultural norms or institutional structures, neither do the solutions. From the point of view of green politics defended

³ This understanding of deep ecology is similar to Dobson’s critique of the lack of reflection upon green principles within the early green movement due to the fact, “that the message was so obvious that it only needed to be given for it to be acted upon” (1990: 23).

here, the long-run resolution of social-environmental problems requires a politics based on an *immanent critique* of the prevailing cultural as well as institutional order.

In chapter 2 (2.3.1), it was suggested that aspects of deep ecology as a ‘radical ecologism’ are premised on the conviction that the ‘ecological crisis’ is ultimately a ‘total crisis’ of contemporary western civilization, its core cultural values and institutions. If it is indeed the case that we are faced with a complete crisis, then reforming or transforming structures is of secondary importance at best, or at worst simply ‘fiddling while Rome burns’. If we add to this belief the eco-anarchist contention that it is these very structures themselves which have caused this crisis, then we can easily see why for many radical greens the real battle is for the hearts and minds of people rather than their votes.⁴ But to see attempts to change people’s attitudes to nature as somehow separate from structural, especially political and economic, arrangements is problematic. If one does not accept that the ecological crisis represents a complete *crisis of civilisation*, but rather expresses a *contradiction within contemporary societies*, then it is possible that structural transformation rather than abolition and reconstruction, may be necessary (if not sufficient) for cultural transformation. Structural and agent-level change are thus not mutually incompatible, but potentially mutually reinforcing and supporting.

From a green point of view, social practices form an important connection between structures and agents, as well as between agents themselves. MacIntyre describes a practice as, “any coherent and complex form of socially established co-operative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to and partially definitive of, that form of activity” (1984: 187). In terms of the analysis of virtue in chapter 2 (2.7), it is clear that MacIntyre’s ‘standards of excellence’ are another way of spelling out virtues, although I do not subscribe to his interpretation of virtue. At the

⁴ An alternative conclusion that can be drawn from the ‘total crisis’ position is that offered by the eco-authoritarians for whom it is the beliefs and lifestyles of liberal democratic populations that have brought these societies close to ecological annihilation. They suggest that strong, effective and authoritarian political structures are required to regulate the unruly and unecological desires of the populace. See chapter 7 (7.2).

same time, I want to suggest that a green examination of the institutional structure appropriate to its values, requires attention to the way in which practices are related to institutions. As O'Neill points out, "Institutions, however, not only sustain practices, they can also corrupt them. The pursuit of external goods- wealth, power and status- may come into conflict with the pursuit of internal goods and practices" (1993: 127).⁵ Social practices, such as Berry's view of the social-environmental practice of farming discussed in chapter 2 (2.7.1), are therefore central to green institutional arrangements. However, it is not the case that green institutional arrangements are to be determined by social practices. Rather it is that institutions are to be judged to the extent that they support rather than undermine practices which embody green values, principles and modes of behaviour. At the same time it is not only practices, in the strong sense implied by MacIntyre, which can express values or be partly constituted by normative considerations. Institutional change can also signal profound changes in modes of behaviour. As Dryzek notes, "in remaking our institutions we also remake ourselves: who we are, what we value, how we interact, and what we can accomplish" (1987: 247). While it is the case that green institutional arguments favour structural change which enhance ecological social-environmental practices (which focus on 'internal goods'), this does not rule out social-environmental exchanges which are governed by 'external goods' (such as wealth creation). Both internal and external goods can contribute to human well-being. Recalling the discussion of an 'ethics of use' in chapter 3, it is not the case that all social-environmental practices are automatically exempt from criticism, and all institutionally-regulated social-environmental exchanges ethically wrong. That is, not all social practices are assumed to be symbiotic, nor are all institutional activities assumed to be parasitic. Rather, an ethics of use, as a publicly agreed set of normative codes which distinguishes

⁵ Recalling the stress on virtue in chapters 2 and 3, it is interesting to note that O'Neill (1993) defines virtue in relation to practices. According to him, "A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession of which (and exercise of) tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods" (*ibid.*: 178). This relationship between social practices and virtues has already been alluded to in the discussion of Berry's 'ecology of the virtues' in relation to farming in chapter 2. This chapter will seek to build upon this by examining the institutional arrangements which can support social-environmental practices and their associated ecological virtues and modes of behaviour.

‘use’ from ‘abuse’, is to range over all social-environmental exchanges, whether they be institutional, individual or carried out within social practices.

Thus, even if we allow for the importance of ‘ecological consciousness’ as an essential aspect of green politics, as deep ecologists and eco-anarchists claim, the state does not necessarily stand in the way of the spread of such mores.⁶ The point is that it is through altered relationships between individuals as citizens, consumers, producers and parents, within the spheres of the nation-state, civil society, and the economy, that ecological modes of action and thought will be expressed. It is in social practices and social institutions, that green norms and ecological modes of behaviour will be located. The point about collective ecological management is that it is not simply to do with finding more effective social institutions to deal with environmental problems. Rather, it seeks to deal with the causes and not just the effects of social-environmental problems, by expanding the criterion of ‘effective’ to include normative as well as ‘instrumental’ or utilitarian considerations. Crucially, it has to do with meshing the activity of structures and agents in such a way that the collective outcome is ecologically rational and socially acceptable.⁷ In other words, structures and agents must be seen as dialectically related, such that agents (collectively) can have some input at the level of structures which themselves influence the behaviour of agents by affecting the conditions under which they make decisions.

⁶ One way of looking at it would be to argue that eco-anarchistic values may be expressed through social practices supported by state institutions. That is, they could be *honoured* as opposed to *realised*. What is meant by this is that the values and practices of eco-anarchism, including *inter alia*, communal self-determination, care for a particular environment, liberty, equality and well-being, may be *represented within and influence* the institutional structures of society. In short, honouring eco-anarchistic values does not involve the wholesale rejection of state institutions as would be the case if these particular values and practices were to be realised. Eco-anarchistic values and practices are, after all, simply *alternative conceptions* of green values and practices. This is an implication of seeing eco-anarchism as a regulative as opposed to a constitutive ideal.

⁷ One of the most important social practices from this point of view is citizenship, the outlines of which will be presented below and developed further in the chapter 7. Other social practices which impinge directly on social-environmental transformative activities include science, technology, as well as more direct forms of interaction such as farming, animal husbandry, forestry, and work. Work are discussed in more detail in chapter 7 (7.9.1).

Green politics in the last analysis is not simply about macro-level changes, but is also about choosing to live in a different manner at the micro-level of individuals and communities. Building on the discussion of virtue (chapters 2 and 3), within collective ecological management, individuals are faced not just with the question of ‘what ought I to do?’, but more importantly have to ask themselves ‘what sort of person do I wish to be?’ and ultimately, ‘what sort of society do I wish to be in?’. In response to Hume’s adage that we ought to ‘design institutions for knaves’, one desired aim of green politics is to discourage people from being knavish in the first place. This requires designing institutional structures to sustain ‘ecologically rational’ modes of behaviour by supporting rather than undermining ecological social practices. It is my contention that ecologically rational modes of interaction involves, in part, cultivating ecological virtue at the individual level in the various roles they occupy and identities they have as consumers, producers, citizens and parents. At the social level, ecologically rational social-environmental relations, ultimately requires the creation of an ecologically adapted and adaptive culture, supported by an institutional structure in which the state and market are restructured so that they are instrumental to social life and democracy as popular sovereignty. It is to this criterion of ecological rationality that we turn to next.

5.3 Ecological Rationality

In order to assess what institutional forms best concur with the conception of green politics being developed here a criterion or standard by which they can be judged is required. To this end I wish to adapt Dryzek’s criterion of ‘ecological rationality’ to my own purposes in order to develop a workable, heuristic device by which to rank alternative institutional arrangements for dealing with social-environmental relations. According to Dryzek ecological rationality can be understood as, “the capability of ecosystems consistently and effectively to provide the good of *human* life support...From the perspective of ecological rationality...what one is interested in is the capacity of human systems and natural systems *in combination* to cope with human-induced problems”

(1987: 36; emphasis in original). This idea of ecological rationality, which captures the essence of ecological sustainability, will be used as one of the criteria against which to judge different institutional arrangements. However, ecological rationality, as Dryzek defines it, is problematic from the green point of view defended here, since it refers only to 'human life support' with no reference to other values such as democracy, autonomy or social justice. Nor does it refer to the well-being or interests of the nonhuman world. Dryzek's view of ecological rationality may be said to be a 'pure ecological sustainability' conception, concerned simply with maintaining a stable and productive entropic metabolism between social and ecological systems. That is, ecological rationality for Dryzek is a form of functional rationality (1987: 34-5). This is not surprising since he discusses social-environmental interaction in terms of the 'human system' interacting with the 'natural system', with the aim of securing long-run human 'life-support'. Within collective ecological management the appropriate criterion is a conception of ecological rationality which includes Dryzek's 'sustainability' conception but expands it to include the normative as well as the 'functional' dimensions of social-environmental problems.⁸ That is, this expanded view of ecological rationality refers to communicative (i.e. parasitic and symbiotic, use and abuse, just and unjust) as well as functional (sustainable and unsustainable, productive and unproductive) criteria by which to judge social-environmental relations.

This expanded understanding of ecological rationality is therefore one which addresses the totality of social-environment metabolism, not just the material aspect of this relationship. The expanded conception refers to the impact of human and natural systems upon nonhuman welfare as well as being concerned with values other than long-term life support. As used in this thesis, ecological rationality also refers to both ends and means. That is, in sum, an ecologically rational social-environmental metabolism must fulfil three inter-related criteria. Firstly, this metabolism needs to be sustainable, in the sense

⁸ There may be a link between Dryzek's functional conception of ecological rationality and 'weak sustainability', which is premised on the substitutability of social and natural capital and is concerned solely with maintaining a non-declining overall capital stock over time, defined in relation to human welfare (Pearce *et al*, 1989).

indicated by Dryzek. Secondly, it must be symbiotic, in the sense indicated in chapter 3 (3.6). And finally, it must be socially acceptable i.e. decided democratically rather than undemocratically, extended to a point where the ends as well as the means of social-environmental exchanges are on the agenda. The latter is discussed in chapter 7. The range of issues covered by the expanded conception of ecological rationality is therefore greater than that covered by a pure sustainability conception. Whereas the instrumental view judges social arrangements in terms of their ability, in conjunction with ecosystems, to produce long-term sustainability of a given view of human well-being/life support, the substantive view judges arrangements with respect to values other than human well-being.⁹

The resolution of environmental problems from a green point of view involves normative as well as practical considerations. Environmental problems, even when presented as economic problems of scarcity, underpricing, or political problems of legitimacy, competence or whatever, are at root deeply normative as well as technical problems. That is, these problems are not just about problems in respect to the social-environmental means which sustain human welfare, but are also about what human welfare means, and whether considerations of human welfare alone ought to regulate social-environmental relations. The aim of green politics is concerned with initiating a public debate over the ends of the social-environmental metabolism, rather than debate the most effective means to given ends. It is the green contention that much of the environmental crisis stems from the depoliticisation of the ends of social-environmental interaction, the prime example of which is the central place accorded to undifferentiated economic growth and consumption within western societies, politically, economically and culturally (Barry, 1990).

⁹ These values include those pertaining to social justice, democratic norms as well as those relating to social-environmental interactions. In other words, the communicative aspects of ecological rationality cover both intrahuman and human-nonhuman aspects of social-environmental relations. However, in this chapter I focus on ecological rationality as concerned with sustainability and symbiosis. Democracy and green politics is discussed in chapter 7.

The point is that from the green point of view the ecological crisis is not just a technical problem which requires the adoption of a specific set of institutional arrangements or social choice mechanisms (although these are of course crucial). From the point of view of green political theory, the 'ecological crisis' is not only a crisis *for* society but also a crisis *of* society in the sense of stemming from contradictions *within* society. As a normative problem the appropriate criterion against which any 'solution' should be judged calls for substantive and not instrumental rationality. It is for this reason that economic solutions to environmental problems were questioned in chapter 3 (sections 3.5 and 3.6 and in the next chapter).¹⁰ For example, both economic rationality and ecological rationality qua sustainability are governed by the principle of efficiency geared towards maximisation, without any normative consideration of ends or the impact on nonhuman welfare. Ecological rationality as a communicative form of rationality in respect to the economy-ecology metabolism is not geared towards the long-term maximisation of human material welfare alone. In terms of the argument presented later (5.6.1), societies do manage their environments so that ecosystems are constrained to an 'anthropogenic sub-climax' (Odum, 1983: 473).¹¹ According to Dryzek, "*in the absence of human interests, ecological rationality may be recognized in terms of an ecosystem's provision of life support to itself. Left to its own devices, ecological succession tends toward the production of climax ecosystems*" (1987: 44; emphasis in original). Thus

¹⁰ As argued in the next chapter, the elevation of sufficiency as a principle regulating the economy-ecology metabolism necessitates the re-embedding the economy within society in Latouche's (1993) terms, the collective self-conscious limiting of economic imperatives. For Gorz this stems from the inability of economic rationality to define and adhere to its own limits. As he puts it, "Capitalism has been the expression of economic rationality finally set free of all restraint" (1989: 122). Sufficiency as a culturally and politically defined category represents an important feature of collective ecological management, namely as the process by which society imposes limits upon itself. The clash between maximisation and sufficiency can be readily observed in the debates over competing conceptions of development and progress between green critiques of economic growth and competing visions of 'sustainable development'. Another aspect of this has to do with the value of self-reliance within green political theory, discussed in the next chapter.

¹¹ An 'anthropogenic sub-climax' is an ecological state which is different from that which would have been the case in the absence of human intervention. One way of understanding this concept is that this anthropogenic sub-climatic state is the 'humanised environment' which constitutes our 'ecological niche'. Thus, it is only in the absence of human interests does it make sense to argue, as Commoner (1971) does, that 'nature knows best'. It is discussed in more detail below in 5.8.

within sustainable social-environmental relations, ecosystems are characterised by stable sub-climatic states and unsustainable relations by unstable sub-climatic states. However, symbiotic-sustainable relations will be characterised by sub-climatic ecological states within which long-run sustainability (in terms of human material welfare) will be less than that given by a pure sustainability conception of ecological rationality. In other words, whereas sustainability implies human society constraining and managing the natural progression of ecosystems for its own interests in maximising long-run human material welfare, symbiosis implies society imposing extra normative limits on itself in the sustainable use of ecosystems. For collective ecological management, functional rationality is not sufficient by itself (though it is necessary) for resolving ecological problems. From the point of view of green politics, resolving the ecological problems facing society requires deliberative processes within which the normative content and ends of social-environment relations may be discussed, debated and possibly reconstituted. However, this is not to say that the expanded conception of ecological rationality outlined here will *guarantee* sustainable and symbiotic social-environmental relations. Nothing can guarantee the latter and seeking to frame green politics in those terms is counterproductive. It was the desire to guarantee green values that helps us understand the odd position of early green theorising being either utopian (as discussed in the last chapter and parts of the critique of deep ecology) or authoritarian (discussed in chapter 7). All one can reasonably hope to achieve is to create the context within which it is *more likely* that the social-environmental metabolism will be ecologically rational.

A final way in which to understand ecological rationality is to see it as an indication of the learning and adaptive capacities of social institutions to cope with the material and moral dimensions of the social-environment metabolism. Ecological rationality referring as it does to the normative as well as material aspects of social-environment interaction is in part concerned with the inter-relationships between the various parts that together constitute a particular pattern of social interaction with the nonhuman world. As such, collective ecological management (which has ecological rationality as its principal criterion) is about the ways in which economic, political, normative and cultural valuations

of the environment, the particular social-environmental relationships they indicate, and the human interests evoked, relate to one another. In the next section, the state as one of the institutions of collective ecological management is examined.

5.4 The State and Ecological Management within Green Politics

Some green theorists and commentators have sought to argue that the election of a 'green government' be seen as an interim measure, an intermediate stage on the way to the future sustainable society (Young, 1994; Spretnak and Capra, 1985). This strategic commitment to state-institutions, and the political aim of 'greening the nation-state' is often found in debates around strategy within the green movement. For example, Irvine and Ponton explicitly state that the aim of their book, tellingly entitled *A Green Manifesto*, is to "explore how governments might begin to move towards this [Green] goal, and away from the present slide into ecological and social chaos" (1988: 16), and go on to offer detailed policy prescriptions for an incoming 'Green government' (*ibid.*: 30). Other examples of this strategic aim to greening the state can be found in Porritt (1984: 165-7), and the programme of the German Green Party (*Die Grünen*, 1983). Sometimes the use of 'statist' short-term measures to achieve non-statist, long-term ends is argued to be compatible with eco-anarchism. A case was made for such an interpretation of Bookchin's libertarian municipalism in the last chapter. A similar view may be found in Begg's argument that, "Complete rejection [of the state system] would clearly be a mistake, little of this [green political change] is possible without the incapacitation and *internal transformation* of the centralized state" (1991:29; emphasis added). This instrumental-strategic view of the state as a stepping stone to, and a possible institutional part of, the sustainable society is one that will be examined in this section.

There are also more directly policy-orientated conceptions of green politics which work with the assumption of state institutions as given, often in an uncritical fashion. The policy orientation almost by definition means these approaches have to frame their proposals with the assumption of the continuing importance of the nation-state, since state

institutions are the primary policy-making and implementing agencies (Weale, 1992; Young, 1992, 1993; Kemball-Cook *et al*, 1991). A recent example of this is 'ecological modernisation' which is discussed in the next section. The centrality of the state is perhaps most obvious in policy-orientated debates on the international dimensions of environmental problems where the nation-state is simply accepted as the appropriate institutional subject of analysis (Goodin, 1992: 146-68). Together with the strategic acceptance of the state outlined above, the tensions caused by the pragmatism of policy-orientated green political action are readily seen in the division between 'realos' and 'fundis' within the green movement (Doherty, 1992). This division is partly a debate concerning different means to shared ends. Realos defend the 'greening of the state' as an intermediate step to the end of the sustainable society, while fundis claim that one cannot use statist means to non-statist ends. A variation of this argument concerns those who place the role of the state in environmental affairs within the context of the multi-institutional 'governance' that reaching and maintaining a sustainable development path for society requires (Jacobs, 1995). The latter is close to the collective ecological management position being developed in this chapter.

A third reason for 'green statism' can be found in the writings of those for whom the green endorsement of state regulation is a mark of their scepticism, if not outright rejection, of market-based approaches to environmental problems. These range from the 'green social democracy' of Eckersley (1992a, 1992b) and De Geus (1996), to the eco-socialist proposals of Stretton (1976), Pepper (1993), Mulberg (1992, 1993), Weston (1986) and Ryle (1988). Such arguments for the state can be traced back to the initial political debate on the environmental crisis in the 1970s. Typical of this early green suspicion of market-based approaches is Ashby's statement that, "The future of man's environment cannot be left to private enterprise...Therefore governments have to take responsibility" (1974: 6). Here much of the argument focuses on either the limited ecological rationality of the market (Dryzek, 1987), the inability of the market to deal with the question of the optimum scale of the economy relative to the environment (Daly and Cobb, 1990), or to cope with the scale of the structural changes that sustainability requires

(Jacobs, 1994, 1995). A related critique developed in the next chapter concerns the suitability of market approaches to articulate the normative and political dimensions posed by ecological problems.¹²

A related argument in favour of the state turns on the green recognition of the utility of state-institutions with regard to social justice. An early example of this is Daly's (1973) argument that a steady-state economy, which is characterised by a fixed amount of wealth, increases the necessity and desirability for state redistribution. More contemporary arguments in favour of the state in terms of distributive justice have to do with the incapacity of market and/or anarchistic institutional arrangements to ensure an equitable distributive pattern from a green point of view (Eckersley, 1992a: 175-8; Goodin, 1992: 150; Gorz, 1982).¹³

A final argument in favour of there being some role for the state within green politics comes from those writers concerned about the status of democratic norms and practices within green political theory. Typical of this position is Frankel who argues, from an eco-socialist position, that, "any post-industrial society is going to fall far short of achieving greater equity, social justice and genuine popular sovereignty, without the construction of a democratic state structure" (1987: 51-2). A similar position is held by theorists such as Saward (1993), for whom representative democracy and the liberal democratic state can achieve green goals. In the latter case, the retention of the state for achieving sustainability is a retention of representative forms of democracy. This is a point further developed in chapter 7 (7.7).

¹² Scepticism concerning market approaches to the normative dimensions of social-environmental issues has already been introduced in chapter 3 (3.6.1). However, as argued in the next chapter, the green critique of the market makes a distinction between the 'global capitalist market' and the market as a social institution for uncoerced exchange (6.4). Later in chapter 7, I suggest that while the normative issues surrounding social-environmental interaction are not best dealt with by market approaches (or policy instruments), this view does not suggest that a market economy is necessarily ecologically irrational, or that the market cannot function as an institution of collective ecological management. The latter concerns the issue of the regulation or 'steering' of the market in the interests of sustainability, discussed in 5.9.

¹³ More contemporary analyses of the distributive implications of green politics also emphasise that any putative 'green theory of social justice' must take into account that what is to be fairly distributed includes social and environmental costs or risks as well as environmental and social benefits. See for example Beck (1992).

Some proposals for a 'green state' are naive in the sense that they see the institution of the state as a neutral mechanism which can be used unproblematically to forward the green policy, and in some cases, its normative agendas. For the most part, however, advocates of the 'green state' are pragmatists who accept that the state is an institution without which green proposals cannot be realised. That is, most of those who emphasise the role of the state within 'ecological governance' see it as one of the primary institutions with the capacity and legitimacy to carry out, either directly or indirectly, the type of changes greens call for (Jacobs, 1995). According to Young, in his overview of green political ideology, 'serious greens' are not arguing for the abolition of the state, but rather for its transformation (1992: 21).

Alongside management strategies which have a role for the state are those which emphasise community-based strategies such as those advocated by proponents of the 'commons' (Goldsmith *et al*, 1992), which have much in common with the eco-anarchist position outlined in the last chapter. There are also those who put forward market-based solutions in which community and the state have relatively little role to play in effective ecological management (Anderson and Leal, 1991), discussed in the next chapter (6.2).

The place of the state within green political theory is thus to be assessed from its functional value in implementing the various green goals that together make up 'collective ecological management'. There is widespread agreement within the green political programme concerning the necessity and desirability of collective strategies for managing the environment. The debate within green political theory is essentially over the appropriate level (global, national or local), institutional form (state, market, or community), procedural content (democratic, technocratic), normative composition (ecocentric, anthropocentric), and forms of knowledge (vernacular, local, scientific-universal) appropriate to collective ecological management. In the next section I outline an interpretation of this ecological management perspective as one way in which the idea of a 'green state' can be fleshed out.

5.5 A Reconstructive Critique of Ecological Modernisation

This section begins with a critical examination of attempts to ‘green the machinery of government’, focusing on what has become known as ‘ecological modernisation’ (i.e. existing state-initiated environmental political practice). I then consider how this approach can be used to advance a more radical conception of green politics, collective ecological management, within which the state has a key role (i.e. possible environmental governance).

Although criticised for betraying an environmentalist or green reformist outlook, because it works within the existing institutions of modern societies, and does not seem over receptive to anything other than an economic view of the non-human world, ‘ecological modernisation’ does represent a ‘realistic’ theory of dealing with ecological problems and suggests one path for sustainable development. The transformations it demands, although not as radical as those proposed by eco-anarchists, are not as reformist and limited as critics often suppose.

The basic tenet of ecological modernisation is that the zero-sum character of environment-economic trade-offs is more apparent than real. Ecological modernisation challenges the idea that improvements in environmental quality or the protection of nature are necessarily inimical to economic welfare, the fundamental position which dominated the early response to the ‘environmental crisis’. In this earlier debate the green position was that a steady-state economy, in conjunction with zero-population growth, was the only economy-ecology relationship which could ensure long-term sustainability (Daly, 1973, 1985; Olson & Landsberg, 1975; Kerry-Smith, 1979).¹⁴ In opposition to this idea,

¹⁴ It is worth noting that although the steady-state economy position is at odds with the underlying principles of ecological modernisation, both agree on the importance of an interventionist, pro-active state. For example, Daly (1987), a leading proponent of the steady-state economy, argues that the advent of a society premised on the minimisation rather than the maximisation of ‘economic throughput’ has as a corollary the need for the state to manage ecological resources and distribute the available wealth. The latter justification for the state comes from his argument, with which most green theorists and activists would agree, that economic growth is a substitute for tackling the problem of socio-economic inequality. To limit inequalities he has proposed, “a minimum income coupled with a maximum income and a

ecological modernisation suggests that economic competitiveness is not incompatible with environmental protection, indeed as Weale points out, “environmental protection [is] a...potential source for future growth” (1992: 76). Future economic prospects increasingly depend on achieving and maintaining high standards of environmental protection. In general terms then, ecological modernisation can be viewed as an account of how existing political and economic institutions have responded to public pressure for governments to ‘do something’ about environmental problems. In terms of the ends/means distinction drawn above (5.2), it is concerned mainly (but not exclusively) with finding more sustainable means (technical, economic) to the same ends (continuing increases in material goods and services). As an ideology and approach to dealing with environmental problems it clearly originates from *within* the state system, rather than from within civil society, which is the usual source of green ideas. This is demonstrated by Weale’s analysis of it as a policy approach to pollution control, originating in a critical rejection of early policy approaches (1992: 75), what have been described as ‘first wave environmental problems’ (Goodin, 1992: 3).¹⁵ Ecological modernisation as an ideology is largely constituted by government programmes and policy styles and traditions, particularly those of Germany (Weale, 1992: 79-85) and The Netherlands (Weale, 1992: ch.5), European Union environmental programmes, particularly the *Fourth Environmental Action Programme* (Weale, 1992: 76-7). Thus one can say that the origins of ecological modernisation lies in the environmental discourse of policy elites . However, seeing it purely as a legitimising ideology for ‘business as usual’, would be a mistake, as argued below.

Ecological modernisation for Weale is understood both as a legitimating ideology within certain liberal states’ response to environmental problems, and as a new departure in environmental policy principles (1992: 79). As such it can be viewed as marking a new environmental policy discourse from within the existing institutions of the liberal state. Its

maximum on wealth - a limited band of inequalities necessary for incentives, for rewarding work of varying irksomeness and intensity, yet ruling out extreme inequality” (1985: 125).

¹⁵ ‘First-wave’ environmental problems were largely national and localised, unlike the international and global dimensions of ‘second-wave’ problems.

emergence and strength as an ideology lies mainly in its capacity to render the imperative for economic growth compatible with the imperative to protect environmental quality. The evolution of this perspective has been described by Potier; “By the mid-70s it had become clear that it is both environmentally and economically sound to anticipate the possible negative effects of an activity such as an industrial plant and to design it in such a way as to prevent pollution before it occurs” (1990: 69). At the same time in the 1980s there developed a sizeable market for ‘green’ or ‘environmentally-friendly’ products (Elkington & Burke, 1990). Finally there was greater public pressure for governments to tackle environmental problems (Young, 1993: 53-6; Weale, 1992: 167-70), as well as the legitimacy of government being increasingly tied up with providing environmental protection (Weale, 1992: 1, 26; Walker, 1989: 38). The congruence of these two factors, one from the demand and the other from the supply-side, represents the context within which ecological modernisation developed. To use economic terminology, one could say that ecological modernisation represents an ‘equilibrium’ policy position: a point at which supply (of ecologically-friendly goods and services) and demand (for those goods and greater levels of environmental quality) met. Thus it acts as an institutional (and ideological) compromise between economic and ecological interests, and as Weale suggests, a compromise between the economic imperative for capital accumulation and political legitimacy (1992: 89).¹⁶

On this view the state policy-elites act as brokers and primary movers in encouraging interest groups, trades unions, industry, consumer groups and the environmental lobby, to adopt and accept the agenda (and language) of ecological modernisation. This character of the ecologically modernising state, pro-active, agenda-setting and interventionist, has

¹⁶ In this respect, ecological modernisation as an ideology at the national/regional level is similar both in terms of its origin and function, to ‘sustainable development’ at the international level. Both depend for their success on rephrasing the economy-ecology debate in a language which harmonises ecological sustainability with continuing economic development. This is done by translating the environment into the language of orthodox neoclassical economic theory (Pearce *et al*, 1989, 1993) so that the environment is recast as an ‘economic’ problem which can crowd out its political-normative dimensions. Both ecological modernisation and sustainable development are state or supra-state level responses, and thus find their origins in the policy discourse of bureaucratic management. See Barry (1996c), Dryzek (1995), Sachs (1995) and Richardson (1994).

led some commentators to view ecological modernisation as an environmental neo-corporatist political arrangement (Young, 1993: 88-90; 1994: 16-18). This is particularly so with regard to the centrality of some degree of economic planning within ecological modernisation discussed in section 5.6. Ecological modernisation is to be distinguished from radical accounts of 'sustainable development' and 'green economics', which argue that the compatibility of environmental protection and the economy depends on the transformation of 'economic growth' into 'social development' (Eckersley, 1992b, *World Commission on Environment and Development*, 1987). Ecological modernisation does not, for example, require alternative measurements of human welfare as does green political economy (see 6.5). Ecological modernisation reconciles environmental and economic imperatives perhaps because it shares with the ideology of 'sustainable development' an essentially ambiguous character, which reconciles erstwhile opposing interests i.e. 'environmental' ones on the one hand, and 'industrial' ones on the other (Richardson, 1994; Sachs, 1995; Barry, 1996c). And while from an ideological green position this is a problem, from a practical political point of view it is a positive advantage. Thus ecological modernisation can be viewed as dealing with one aspect of social-environmental problems from a state-centred 'administrative' perspective. It is not so much a political theory as an ideology of environmental public policy. However, despite its state-centred origins, ecological modernisation can be used as a basis for a more radical position, which I outline in the next section.

For Weale, "The challenge of ecological modernisation extends beyond the economic point that a sound environment is a necessary condition for long-term prosperity and it comes to embrace changes in the relationships between the state, its citizens and private corporations, as well as changes in the relationship between states" (1992: 31-2). As argued below ecological modernisation shades into collective ecological management when other considerations are posited alongside the institutions of ecological modernisation. As Weale argues (1992: 78), ecological modernisation is in many respects a coping strategy adopted by states in the face of demands for higher environmental protection, which may become radicalised in terms of policy outcomes, when its focus

shifts from dealing with the *effects* of environmental problems to their *causes*. Ecological modernisation, particularly when placed within the context of a 'green welfarism' or green social democracy, may, like the emergence of the welfare state before it, be construed as an attempt to politically regulate production, via state planning and regulation, in response to the socialisation of the (environmental) costs of production as a result of 'market failure'. 'Polluter-pays' legislation, the precautionary principle, mandatory environmental impact assessments etc., all of which are central to ecological modernisation, can be regarded as ways in which the environmental costs of production are either prevented or 'internalised' to some extent.

Another way of putting it would be to say that ecological modernisation becomes radical when the institutional focus moves from one of problem displacement to problem solution (Dryzek, 1987: 11).¹⁷ As Weale suggests, "the stress upon setting emissions standards implies a focus on effects rather than causes and hence a focus on end-of-pipe solutions. We should not expect a great deal of emphasis, then, in policy discourse on the need for structural changes in production and consumption to reduce pollution" (1992: 84). In other words, focusing on *ex ante*, preventative measures, rather than *ex post*, compensatory adjustments, may move one in the direction of structural change in the organisation of the economy.

¹⁷ One way of looking at this issue is to see that the more environmental policy-making becomes a matter of 'solving' environmental problems (which includes preventing them), the more structural change will be required. For example, solving pollution problems would no longer be a matter of 'exporting' pollution on this model, since this simply displaces it from one place, time or medium to another. This may be *politically* rational, but *ecologically* irrational. Dealing with pollution at its point of production rather than its point of 'consumption' may involve the idea that pollution be limited to the assimilative capacity of the immediate environment. Thus, there may be room for a bioregional-type argument that production be premised on the idea that any environmental impact be absorbed by the local as opposed to the global environmental commons. In other words, economic activity in some sectors which give rise to pollution ought to be regulated by 'ecosystem' rather than 'biosphere' principles (4.2). Such principles regulating ecological-economic exchanges are perhaps demanded by a very strong conception of sustainability. This localising of economic-ecological activity is close to green concerns about economic self-reliance and green arguments against extensive trade, discussed in the next chapter (6.7). Note that this constraint only applies to pollution (negative economic-ecological output) not resources. In some ways this is an expanded ecological version of the 'polluter pays' principle, and is one interpretation of Weale's observation that, "pollution control has to be as much concerned with *where* pollution occurs as with the *total volume* of a pollutant emitted" (1992: 165; emphasis in original).

The green critique of ecological modernisation is largely that it does not go far enough in terms of the type, level, and manner in which the changes it proposes are decided and implemented. That is, on its own, ecological modernisation stands in danger of being a state-dominated and initiated process of ecological management which is heavily weighted in favour of 'industrial' interests. Ecological modernisation can thus be viewed as an extension of the 'crisis management' function of the modern state to include social-environment relations. However, ecological modernisation does, as Weale suggests, imply a virtue-based conception of citizenship (1992: 150-1), and some degree of public participation in environmental policy implementation. Nevertheless a very state-centred position. An example of ecological modernisation's commitment to participation is given by Weale, "An important aspect of project development is that there is typically a process of public consultation necessary before the project is allowed to proceed" (1992: 171). *Whether* the proposed development should go ahead is not on the agenda; participation is limited to influencing the *manner* in which it proceeds. In other words, consultation is restricted to discussing means not ends. While not agreeing fully with Beck's assessment, his critique of state-centred responses to ecological problems does bring out some of the basic problems with ecological modernisation. According to him, "The dangers of such an eco-orientated state interventionism can be derived from the parallels to the welfare state: *scientific authoritarianism* and an *excessive bureaucracy*" (1992: 230). Ecological modernisation, from a green point of view, does not go far enough, since it remains at the level of means and is unable to articulate the full range of normative issues relating to social-environmental affairs. When environmental problems become not just a matter of the most cost-effective legislative or market-based means by which they can be dealt with, environmental degradation may come to be seen not just as an economic externality requiring economic or scientific/technocratic answers, but also as a normative question requiring moral and political answers. That is, environmental problems are also questions of 'right and wrong'. At this point we may say that ecological modernisation has shaded into the political-normative process of collective ecological management, that is, a transformation within the political regulation of social-environmental interaction has

occurred. The mark of this transformation is the politicisation (and not simply their bureaucratisation or 'marketisation') and moralisation of environmental problems. While collective ecological management is different in kind from ecological modernisation, this should not blind us to the areas of continuity between them. Within collective ecological management this requires radicalising the institutional potentials of ecological modernisation, particularly in respect to the transformation of the nation-state, and the relationships between state, market and civil society.

5.6 Towards Collective Ecological Management

Whereas ecological modernisation, at least in part, is premised on a neo-corporatist consensus between trades unions, the state, business, consumer groups and the formal environmental lobby, collective ecological management is not corporatist. It is not corporatist because a premium is placed on democratising the decision-making processes, as opposed to elite bargaining over policy. In opposition to elite bargaining we have popular participation through a variety of institutional mechanisms in which citizens are given more control over decision-making relating to social-environmental interaction. Thus collective ecological management can be viewed as a democratised and more radical form of ecological modernisation. While there is a continuing role for the institutions of the nation-state, collective ecological management manifests a healthy degree of scepticism with regard to extensive state involvement. At the same time, collective ecological management favours decentralising decision-making, *where appropriate*, to the local state level. Ecological modernisation, on the whole, focuses on the national level. Collective ecological management is concerned with the political-normative processes by which the totality of the social-environmental metabolism may be articulated, it is not concerned purely with establishing ecologically efficient i.e. materially productive relations between economy and environment. It is because ecological modernisation takes as its subject of analysis the relationship between the economy and ecology, rather than society and ecology, that the state occupies a central role. Ecological modernisation is about

enhanced economic-environmental material exchanges in the name of 'economic growth', or the 'competitiveness' of the national economy within a global market. Collective ecological management on the other hand, while not completely ruling out international trade, is concerned with shifting the orientation of the economy towards the national and local market, and viewing economic growth as one amongst other social goals. Ends and means are, within reason, open for democratic scrutiny and decision. These issues are dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

What stands out about ecological modernisation is its constraining nature. There are at least three ways in which ecological modernisation is constraining. Firstly, it focuses on elites, many of which do not have any democratic mandate. Secondly, it limits the type of interests that can be brought to bear in establishing environmental policy. Those interests that can be articulated as economic values, or established scientifically, or matters of pressing political expediency are favoured. As indicated above, the onus of 'proof' is on those who wish to protect the environment, rather than those who wish to develop it. Interests pertaining to social metabolism with the external world are reduced to political bargaining between elites and the assignation of economic values to environmental resources. This is related to a third limitation, namely, the fact that ecological modernisation is premised largely on bargaining and trade-offs between vested interests. It is an interest-aggregating system rather than an interest-transforming system, where the interests articulated is a function of power, influence and access. 'Voice' is limited to powerful, established interests, hence the difficulty the environmental movement has had in gaining access to the policy-making process (Jahn, 1993; Aguilar, 1993; Robinson, 1992).

At root, ecological modernisation works because the interests it balances are couched in the language of economic rationality. Environmental interests get a look in only to the extent that these interests can be translated into the language of cost-benefit calculation. In order to protect the environment, it must first be demonstrated to be a 'resource', and preferably a resource with direct and immediate economic benefits. In this manner one can say that the grammar of ecological modernisation, and one of the main reasons for its success, is its use of neoclassical environmental economics. As indicated in the next

chapter, neoclassical environmental economics, reinforces not only the state-centred, bureaucratic nature of ecological modernisation, but also the latter's choice of the market as the central organising institution of economy (6.2). The point is not that economic interests are not a legitimate form of human valuation of the environment, but that under ecological modernisation it becomes the dominant form of valuation. This not only 'crowds out' non-economic forms of valuation, but indeed obliges the latter to present themselves as economic forms of valuation. Against this view, the logic of collective ecological management in raising economic, ethical, scientific dimensions of the ecological crisis is close to Daly's view of 'green economics'. According to him green economics, "[relies] on market allocation of an aggregate resource throughput whose total is not set by the market, but rather fixed collectively on the basis of ecological criterion of sustainability and ethical criterion of stewardship" (1987: 7). Daly's emphasis on collective decision making, identifying institutions (the market), and especially the combination of ethical and ecological criteria, is close to the aims of collective ecological management, viewed as a form of stewardship.

However, what both ecological modernisation and collective ecological management share is a concern with the political regulation of human material interaction with the environment. Collective ecological management widens out the ecological modernisation approach by viewing the totality of the economy-ecology metabolism as the appropriate context within which problems in the material interaction between economy and environment, as manifested in the 'formal' or money economy, can be placed. The latter issue is dealt with in the next chapter (6.6).

In a sense the collective ecological management strategy is on one level a democratic political procedure within which various ways of valuing the environment (and thus various relations and interests to and in the environment) can be raised, deliberated and incorporated into policy recommendations. The green political case is thus not for a pre-emptive 'hands off' approach, but it does recognise that an adequate solution to the environmental crisis demands a wider context than that provided by economic or technical valuations of the nonhuman world. This can be taken to mean that in the case of social-

environmental interaction, 'problem identification' is not be left up to market processes alone. However, this is compatible with holding market processes as having a role to play in the management or resolution of social-environmental problems. In other words, markets are not the appropriate institutional setting for defining and thinking about social-environmental problems.

As indicated in chapter 3, the green normative argument is for the *moralisation* of society-environment relations *not* for a 'hands off' approach, i.e. one particular view of this moralisation (3.1). In other words, whereas ecological modernisation places the onus of justification on those objecting to development, and a deep ecology view of green politics demands that the onus of justification be shifted to those who wish to use the environment (Dobson, 1990: 61), collective ecological management requires that there be no presupposition in favour of either preservation or development. Rather such issues must be resolved politically, which can be understood as implying that no form of environmental valuation or human interest in the world is exempt from public criticism and justification, particularly in the case of major land-use proposals, for example, road-building, mining and dam-building. The onus of justification falls equally on all who propose particular social-environmental relations. From a democratic point of view, we simply cannot say in advance whether 'use' or 'non-use' will be the outcome, although a public 'ethics of use', institutionalised perhaps in law, maps the border between morally justified 'use' and illegitimate 'abuse'. That is, an ethics of use can function as a guide, an institutional representation of a society's collective moral assessment of *permissible* and *impermissible* uses of nature.¹⁸

¹⁸ While there are similarities between a public 'ethics of use' and certain understandings of justice, it is not my view that such an ethics of use should be thought of as a green theory of justice which extends considerations of justice to the nonhuman world. A more appropriate view of the ethics of use would be to see it as a legal side-constraint on social-environmental interaction, perhaps institutionalised within the constitution of a democratic polity. That is, the law can, and already does, express collective moral judgements which are not considerations of justice. If our relations to the nonhuman world are not matters of justice, but nevertheless require moral deliberation as green politics suggests, then it may be that the most appropriate institutional form for an ethics of use is a legal one. See Barry (1996b), and Eckersley (1996a) for an examination of this legal option, and Norton (1994) and Seward (1996) for constitutional interpretations.

The most important part of social-environmental interaction is the economy-ecology metabolism. To a large extent it is the *type* of governance of this metabolism which differentiates ecological modernisation from collective ecological management, since both are based on the necessity for such management. Collective ecological management differs in institutionalising opportunities and fora in which social-environmental relations viewed in terms of right and wrong are not disadvantaged relative to positions in which they are viewed in terms of costs and benefits. It is not that 'moral' accounts of social-environment relations are superior to 'economic' accounts, but rather that economic and technical accounts themselves embody normative presuppositions. Starting from the position that there are no value-neutral conceptions of the proper relation between society and environment, collective ecological management can be regarded as raising the normative character of different views of the society-environment metabolism to the level of public and political debate. For example, whereas ecological modernisation, largely underwritten by neoclassical environmental economics, seeks to monetise environmental preferences (which are exogenously given), and then calculate policy proposals based on information gained from their aggregation, collective ecological management focuses on the process of preference formation and transformation within deliberative fora. The making of environmental public policy decisions within collective ecological management is not a matter of aggregating pre-formed, given consumer 'environmental preferences'. Rather, the point is that the public good character of environmental issues requires a decision-making procedure in which individuals make judgements about the public good in question and not just private calculations. Attitudes to public goods are formed from given preferences when individuals are brought together within a public rather than a private setting. In other words, individual preferences are important as the starting point not the conclusion of decision-making about public goods. The appropriate setting for public goods is a 'forum' rather than a 'market' (Elster, 1986).

The problem aggregative approaches to social-environmental problems partly lies in the priority given to 'felt' over 'considered' preferences. As suggested in chapter 3 (3.5.1, 3.6.1), decision-making based on economic preferences, while appropriate to private

goods, is not appropriate to decision-making in respect of public goods, such as the environment. After all, for the majority of social-environmental issues, the 'environment' in question is not a private good, although as indicated in the next chapter there are those who propose privatisation as the appropriate solution (6.2.2). That is, environmental public-policy decisions should not be made on the basis of aggregating preferences, but rather should be made on the basis of some conception of the common good. As critics of cost-benefit analysis (CBA) point out, there is a real problem in attempting to reduce individual values to preferences and make them commensurate by assigning them a monetary figure (O'Neill, 1993; Jacobs, 1996). Such preference-aggregating techniques, like market-based public decision-making, are not value neutral. As Jacobs puts it, "It encourages a particular approach to the valuation of environmental public goods, namely a 'consumer' one in which private income is exchanged of personal benefit" (1996: 6). The point about a 'citizen valuation' approach is that the public good dimension is explicit. Faced with the classic choice between 'development' and 'environmental protection', the question that ought to be put to individuals is 'what should be done in the interests of society?' and not merely 'how much will it cost/benefit me?' Jacobs goes on to demonstrate the difference between 'citizen' and 'consumer' approaches to environmental issues by pointing out that in relation to the former question the appropriate payment vehicle is a tax, which all are required to pay, or more realistically, shifting tax revenues from one area of public policy to environmental protection. In other words, asking people how much additional tax they would be willing to pay to preserve the environment, knowing that the tax burden (cost) will be borne by society as a whole (i.e. which minimises the free-rider problem), will generate qualitatively different answers if they are asked how much of their own private income they would be willing to pay to preserve the environment.¹⁹ In other words, if the good is public, its costs should be borne by all, just

¹⁹ It is also likely that reversing the question and asking how much individuals would require to be adequately compensated for the loss of some environmental amenity, would lead to monetary amounts far in excess of that when asked how much they would be willing to pay to prevent such a loss. The discrepancy between *ex ante* and *ex post* amounts may be due to self-interest, since compensation is paid by someone else, the public authority. In other words, compensatory approaches encourage 'free-riding' since the costs are borne by all, but the benefits are enjoyed by the individual. However, the same

as its benefits are available to all. Asking individuals as citizens to value environmental goods is thus markedly different from asking people as consumers to value them.

Part of this immanent critique involves the radicalising and transformation of existing institutional responses to environmental problems, such as ecological modernisation. As discussed in the next chapter, neoclassical environmental economics underpins much of ecological modernisation. The former employs proxy-market techniques, such as contingent valuation exercises and cost-benefit analysis, which while based on aggregating the consumer preferences of a sample, are then used by state officials as the public or collective valuation of society as a whole (7.2). Once a sample has been collected in which individuals are asked to reveal their (hypothetical) consumer preferences in an equally hypothetical market situation, this is all the 'input' from 'society' that environmental economists and state officials require.

As has been suggested throughout the previous chapters, the conception of green political theory being defended here does not imply *wholesale* cultural and metaphysical reconstruction.²⁰ The resolution of the ecological crisis in a manner which would accord with green values and principles *does not* imply the ethical rejection of anthropocentrism (as argued in chapters 2 and 3), a central shared normative orientation of Western culture. Nor does it imply the political rejection of state institutions (as argued in this and last chapter), or the complete rejection of consumerism (as suggested in 6.7). But it does imply a process of *transformation* in these areas. Both these observations may be taken to back Goodin's statement that, "we can presumably live more or less in harmony with nature even in advanced industrial and post-industrial societies, without necessarily dropping out of those societies altogether", adding in a footnote, "Indeed, the green political agenda would be even more pointless that its worse critic imagines were that not

compensatory approach applied to citizen as opposed to consumer decision-making, would not have the same free-riding problems since the appropriate compensation might be either a decrease in the tax rate, an increase in welfare benefits, or perhaps a public holiday or festival or some other public benefit. Asked as a citizen, the individual knows that the compensation will be shared by all. This point is related to the argument in chapter 7, where democratic decision-making based on encouraging the incorporation of the interests of affected others, best coheres with green aims (7.7 & 7.8).

²⁰ Or if some degree of metaphysical transformation is required, it is far more likely to come through changed perceptions of the environment as a result of scientific knowledge (3.6.2).

the case” (1992: 119). In other words, green political theory conceived here as concerned with the political-normative process of institutionalising an effective and ethically informed collective ecological management, works with the idea that part of this process involves the *immanent critique and transformation* as opposed to the *abolition* of existing institutional structures (eco-anarchism) and/or its cultural mediations of social-environmental relations (deep ecology).²¹

That the other traditional counterpart of the state as a modern form of political association, namely the ‘nation’, may have an equally legitimate place within green political theory will be briefly examined below as a way to flesh out the cultural dimensions of green politics as collective ecological management.

5.7 Nation, Nature and Cultural Identity

That conceptions of nature have played a part as an identity forming condition for human societies and collectives is undeniable. Nature in many respects is the original ‘other’ against which collective forms of identity are formed and maintained. As was indicated in the brief discussion on human nature and culture in chapter 3 (3.4.2), and in the analysis of bioregionalism in chapter 4 (4.3), particular understandings of social-environment relations are partly constitutive of a society’s sense of itself and form a core aspect of its culture. This is a feature of all human societies from tribal to contemporary nation-states. ✕

Attention to the cultural dimension underpins the suggestion made in the last chapter that the ecological crisis can be described as a *contradiction* within Western culture as opposed to a *total crisis* of that culture. Examples of this include Sagoff (1988) and Keat (1994) who argue that the environmental crisis can be viewed as a tension between the

²¹ This point is clearly related to the rejection of the ‘utopian-anticipatory’ critique of eco-anarchism in favour of an immanent critique, discussed in the conclusion to the last chapter, and in chapter 2 where it was suggested that green politics is compatible with an immanent critique and reconstruction of the enlightenment rather than its rejection. This idea of immanent critique and reformation has been explored with regard to the relationship between green theory and the enlightenment by Hayward (1995). He argues that green theory is best seen as an immanent critique of the ecological and social excesses of the enlightenment while working with the goal that the enlightenment can be ‘ecologised’. In this way the solution to the ecological crisis does not require the abandonment of the enlightenment and its ideals.

interests of individuals as consumers on the one hand and as citizens on the other (see 3.7 and 7.6). The resolution of this tension can only come from within the culture itself. As such the plausibility of the green message is dependent upon its ability to either 'tap into' the existing culture, or to extend or alter the existing one in new directions, not its rejection and the creation of a completely new one. Thus part of the cultural aim of green politics involves the possibilities and necessity for transforming the existing national 'bioculture'.²² This is in keeping with the argument in chapter 3 concerning the efficacy of adopting an 'inside-out' version of moral extensionism, rather than an 'outside-in' based on some external critique and proposed 'new ecocentric ethic'. That is, start from existing social-environmental relations and their moral character and extend or transform the latter, rather than adopting a 'view from nowhere' and proposing sweeping changes in a moral idiom which is alien to the culture.

The 'bioculture' is defined by Taylor as, "that aspect of any human culture in which humans create and regulate the environment of living things and systematically exploit them for human benefit" (1986: 269-70). Without this attention to acting but also *thinking* locally about the environment, green politics, while not being completely unintelligible to these national audiences, would be hampered because it would be speaking in a language which had no or little currency within the prevailing culture. While it is doubtless true that for many environmental problems, especially pollution, a purely national response is inadequate, this does not preclude the importance of framing the 'ecological crisis' within a national cultural (as well as political) context. At the same time the language and methods of scientific analysis do offer a trans-national discourse within which trans-national environmental problems may be expressed and can serve as the main epistemic basis for policy-making at this level. That is, as a way of 'thinking globally'.

If as suggested in the previous chapter (4.3) we reject as inadequate the bioregional argument that the boundaries of the political community be determined by natural as opposed to political territories, then green political theory finds itself in the company of

²² As argued later (chapter 7), this requires a view of 'green citizenship' as a key social practice to integrate various modes of human action and roles (especially those of producer, consumer and parent) such that a stewardship mode of character and action is cultivated.

contemporary political theory in relation to the question of nationhood and the nation-state. The novelty and radicalness of the bioregional position, it will be recalled, lies in its determination of community which is 'given' or 'read off' from the natural world. As Sale states, "A bioregion is a part of the earth's surface whose rough boundaries are determined by natural rather than human dictates" and "Political principles on a bioregional scale are grounded in the dictates presented by nature" (1984a: 226, 231). Bioregions are determined naturally not politically, and as such the political problems of determining the boundaries of the polity, its territory and members are removed from the political agenda. They are simply 'given'. In becoming 'dwellers of the land' one of the most central issues in political theory, namely the process by which the political community is determined, is a non-issue. Bioregional polities are thus spared the vexed process of determining 'us' and 'them' because these categories of 'insider' and 'outsider' are, at least initially, settled by nature. This naturalness of bioregional communities is something shared with those who claim that 'nationhood' is also an assumed, natural background phenomenon (Canovan, 1994). According to Canovan, "it is of the essence of nationhood to seem natural, to the point, in the most well-established cases, of becoming unobtrusive" (1994: 9). However, while the imputed 'naturalness' of nationhood is testament to the fact that the latter has been around sufficiently long enough to become an assumed 'background condition' of political life and political theorising, the 'naturalness' of the bioregional polity is material rather than metaphorical. That is, while a nation may be, "a contingent historical product that feels like part of the order of nature" (Canovan, 1994: 10), the bioregion *is* part of the natural order. Indeed, this is one of the aims of bioregionalism: to achieve a balance between the human and nonhuman worlds, by integrating humanity back into that world through humans becoming dwellers in the land on a bioregional basis. In contrast to the imputed 'naturalness' of nation-states, bioregionalists as well as other eco-anarchists hold the nation-state as an 'unnatural' form of human sociality and organisation, in that it requires the coercive force of the state, laws, and legislation, together with ongoing and intensive socialisation to maintain itself. Bioregionalism, like other forms of eco-anarchism, maintains that the 'we' denoted by

nationhood is an artificial construction, an ideological cloak behind which the exploitative activities of the state and those classes and groups which gain most from the state-system can continue under the guise of the 'national interest'. Although this may be true, it is also the case that no form of social organisation can make itself immune to the possibility of particular interests masking themselves as general interests. This issue of the 'intrinsic' exploitative nature of the state has already been discussed and criticised in the last chapter.

Although bioregionalism shares certain similarities with nationhood, it is nearer the mark to compare it to patriotism. While nationalism presupposes the existence of nations, patriotism "may simply involve attachment to a physical locality or a way of life, and need not involve any abstract idea of 'country'" (Miller, 1991: 369). Given that bioregional communities are delineated by, and find their collective sense of identity partly derived from, determinate, tangible ecological regions, bioregional loyalty is not to an abstract human collectivity. Indeed, one could go further and say that what marks bioregionalism qua 'green patriotism' from contemporary forms of nationhood, and arguably traditional conceptions of patriotism, is that the corporate unity which makes up the community to which one is loyal transcends the human members of the bioregion. A fully fledged bioregional polity demands a collective identification with the bioregion. As Sale puts it, "We must somehow live as close to it [the land] as possible, be in touch with its particular soils, its waters, its winds; we must learn its ways, its capacities, its limits; we must make its rhythms our patterns, its laws our guide, its fruits our bounty" (1984a: 224). Thus, from the bioregional perspective a deep-rooted 'sense of place' is a major constituent of collective (and individual) senses of identity. In marked contrast to the dominant 'arrogant' version of humanism which has typified the attitude of Western culture to the non-human world, bioregionalism involves seeing humans as belonging to the land rather than the land belonging to humans. At the same time the tightly circumscribed account of collective identity in relation to the land also accounts for the accusations of racism, ethnic purity and conservatism and other ways of achieving and maintaining the high degree of social homogeneity as a principal feature of bioregionalism, as argued in 4.3.

This 'patriotic' attachment to the local and the particular is something that may be integrated into the green political vision, expressing as it does central green values such as decentralisation, solidarity beyond humans and the cultural importance of a sense of place. However the inclusion of bioregional patriotism within ecological governance needs to be placed within the context of wider forms of collective identity, solidarity and shared institutions, values and practices. As pointed out in section 5.7 on the 'Land ethic', green patriotic attachment to particular environments can be integrated within the cultural aspects of collective ecological management if this attachment is not simply to the 'land' but to the land with a particular historical or cultural significance. That the land to which green patriotism relates has cultural as well as natural importance is simply another dimension of the more general premise of ecological governance mentioned above, namely, that the environment humans interact with is a humanised environment.

The relationship between this putative 'green patriotism' divested of some of its contentious bioregional baggage, and the mainly national-level political and cultural process of 'collective ecological management', will be the primary focus of this section. This relationship between the particular and the general, the local and non-local, is part of the process of fleshing out how and in what manner the green slogan of 'act locally, think globally' may be integrated within green political theory as something more than a slogan. In what follows I suggest that both the state *and* the nation can have roles as mediating between the local and the global.

It is not supposed that national culture and national identity are fixed or settled, or that they need to be 'deep' in the sense that membership of a nation-state is a sufficient, as opposed to a necessary, constituent of personal identity. On the contrary, the terrain of what defines a nation's identity, its sense of self as a corporate entity, is always, to some degree, contested. There is rarely a final or closed understanding of 'national identity'. However this is not to say that attempts have not been made to close the debate and concretise understandings of national identity. Often this has been effected by stressing a particular understanding of the link between '*the* people' and '*the* land'. One has only to think of the Nazi doctrine of 'blood and soil' to see the regressive and totalitarian

possibilities of associating national self-understanding with a particular view of the relations (particularly historical or genealogical) between members and 'the land' (Bramwell, 1989; Vincent, 1993). Other negative examples include the backward-looking, racist discourse of contemporary far-right nationalist movements who strongly tie a particular conception of the nation to the nation's environment in such a way as to exclude immigrants and other 'outsiders' who do not partake of this relationship. For such groups the preservation of the land is at the same time the preservation of a particular understanding of the nation.²³ At the same time more positive examples of this association between national and more local cultural identity, cultural values and the environment can also be found (Grødeland, 1995; Sagoff, 1988: 124-145; Norton, 1991). In the end, the green argument turns on the plausibility of a public ecological culture, consistent and supportive of an ethics of use, under which a variety of private cultural ecological valuations may exist. An examination of this difficult issue is not something that I address here, but the commitment to viewing the ecological crisis as a contradiction within contemporary Western societies, does suggest that an examination of nationhood may provide some resources with which these societies may cope and resolve their environmental dilemmas.

The main point I wish to get across here is that one cannot simply abandon the national cultural dimension when analysing either social understandings of or reactions to environmental issues. For better or worse it is through the filter of national political

²³ For further discussion of right-wing nationalist environmentalism see Coates (1993, 1995), Bramwell (1989, 1994), Hay (1988), Vincent (1993), and Gray (1993: chapter 4). In Britain this discourse is typically concerned with the relationship between English nationalism and an idealised pastoral past, which yields an understanding of England as a 'green and pleasant land'. A more general critique of the ideological/symbolic dimensions of the 'pastoral' is given by Rennie-Short who argues that, "The pastoral was a view of the countryside from the town...In the contrast with city, court and market, the countryside is seen as the last remnant of a golden age. The countryside is the nostalgic past, providing a glimpse of a simpler, purer age" (1991: 28, 31). To the extent this characterises some conceptions of green politics, it shares an affinity with anti-modernist, backward-looking, conservative-nationalism, as Coates argues (1995: 72-3). A rather extreme example of how far back some greens are prepared to go is Shepard (1993), who represents a position I have elsewhere termed 'paleo-conservatism' (Barry, 1995b), in reference to the fact that the past to which he looks to is not simply the pre-modern rural idyll but the pre-agricultural hunter-gather stage of human evolution. For a critique of this 'neo-primitivism' see Bookchin (1995).

culture that green ideas will need to pass in order to be effective and find a response. In other words, the national cultural level marks one of the main points from which green politics can, and indeed does, *begin from*. There is no contradiction in saying this and in having a commitment to transnational or global principles on the one hand and sub-national, more 'patriotic' levels of attachment on the other. In many respects care for the national environment will in all probability increase awareness of and sensitivity to the global aspects of the environment.²⁴ Analogous to the argument presented in 3.6, caring for particular others does not diminish care for unfamiliar, but like a muscle strengthens with exercise. In a similar fashion, it is through caring for particular environments that we initially show care for nature as a whole. These particular environments need not necessarily be national, we can imagine regional, local and even neighbourhood levels where care can be practised. Green politics then is also about the institutionalisation of a culturally mediated (thus normatively informed), ecological (thus scientifically informed) modes of managing 'the land', to use Leopold's phrase. The national culture may be said to function as an overarching, macro-level background against which more local and even more particular forms of care for the land can be effected.

Such macro-level care is clearly seen in the English case of linking 'national heritage' and the 'national environment' as embodied in institutions such as the *National Trust*, *The Council for the Preservation of Rural England*, and *The Ramblers' Association*, each with often competing understandings of the relationship between 'the people' and the land, and thus with competing views on nationhood and national identity. Equally important are critiques of these institutions and their conception of what constitutes the 'national heritage' (Coates, 1995), and autonomous movements such as the recent 'This Land is Ours' campaign to reclaim the English commons with a different vision of the

²⁴ It is perhaps not a contingent fact that those societies which display a high regard for global environmental issues are also societies which have a heightened awareness of their own environments, as can be gauged from their ecological practices and institutions and the attitudes and behaviour of their citizens. Examples include the Nordic countries, Germany and the Netherlands, in the North and India, and perhaps Costa Rica in the South.

relationship between nation and 'the land'.²⁵ The significance of this type of analysis is that attention to the cultural dimension of collective ecological management extends the notion of the 'environment' beyond the immediate nonhuman world to include the human, urban, social environment. A full account of collective ecological management would have to address these aspects of the human environment.

5.8 The Land Ethic and Collective Ecological Management

According to Norton,

if we are to break a new path, we must set our sights between artificiality- the choice to extinguish nature, to control it everywhere- and primitivism- the choice to isolate and save nature for its own sake: we must escape the environmentalist's dilemma by creating a culture that values nature independent of human demands, *but not independently of culture itself*. If there is to be a middle path, we must give up the idea that something must be either natural or artificial. Naturalness (wildness, too) must admit of degrees. (Norton, 1991: 156; emphasis added).

²⁵ The recent anti-veal protests may have elements of both 'green patriotism' and 'green nationalism' to them in the sense that it may be that some of the protest is motivated by a perception that it is 'our' (read English) calves that are being shipped to be butchered to fulfil a 'foreign' and repugnant demand for meat (practices and values alien to the 'English way of life'). Although aware of the dangers of simplifying what is doubtless a complex issue, it does not seem completely wide of the mark to suggest that the anti-veal protests can be partly explained by reference to the way in which food is produced and consumed partly constitutes collective and personal identity. To a large degree we are what we eat. Englishness no less than being a vegetarian or vegan is to be understood, in part, by the particular relationship it expresses to food, which parts of the nonhuman world we consider fit as food, how it is prepared, cooked and consumed. Indeed a fuller examination of this cultural attitude to food would perhaps involve seeing this attitude to food as the archetypal manner by which 'nature' (the raw) is introduced and transformed into 'culture' (the cooked), as Levi-Strauss (1986) argued. As Benton points out, "Proper human feeding-activity is symbolically, culturally-mediated need-satisfaction" (1993: 50). However with the rise of trans-cultural culinary habits "The boundaries of edibility no longer follow the old national frontiers but fall rather along moral or aesthetic or ecological lines: We take sides as vegetarians versus carnivores or favour organic or whole food in contrast to processed or fast food" (Martin, 1995).

In claiming that “naturalness must admit of degrees”, Norton’s position is close to the position being defended here for collective management of the environment, and is compatible with a non-anthropocentric ‘ethics of use’. This section focuses on Norton’s work since it brings out the cultural dimensions of collective ecological management.

Although a much disputed topic, following Norton, one can find in Leopold’s ‘land ethic’ an endorsement of what I have called collective ecological management. In Leopold’s critique of the dominance of economic thinking in determining social relations to the environment one can find strong intimations of what Norton terms an ‘integrated theory of environmental management’ (1991: chapter 3).²⁶ One reason for drawing this interpretation of what many deep ecologists regard as the first modern expression of their position, is that Leopold was critical of the way in which economic valuation of the natural world ‘crowded out’ alternative valuations, i.e., social, scientific, aesthetic, ethical. Leopold did not reject economic interests in nature so much as to put them in their proper context and prevent them from dominating social relations to the land. A clear expression of this is his statement that,

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).

²⁶ This focus on an integrated approach to environmental problems is something which is shared with ecological modernisation and its emphasis on integrated policy approaches to pollution problems (Weale, 1992: 93-118). Collective ecological management can be viewed as the extension of this integrated approach to the wider political and normative aspects of social-environmental relations.

Unfortunately, it is the phrase sandwiched between the italicised sentences that have received most attention in green discussions of Leopold's 'land ethic'. Placing his famous statement within context, Leopold's position has less in common with deep ecology than is generally assumed. Leopold's 'land ethic' did not envisage a 'hands off' approach to social-environmental relations of the type favoured by most deep ecologists. According to Norton, "Leopold never questioned the *right* of humans to manage [the environment]: he questioned, rather, our *ability* to manage" (1991: 53; emphasis in original). Equally significant is Leopold's suggestion to, "examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right *as well* as what is economically expedient". In other words, economic considerations are not to be abandoned within environmental management, but rather placed alongside other non-economic considerations such as ecological sustainability or cultural valuations of the environment.

In agreement with Norton, we ought to see the 'land ethic' not as a proto-deep ecology statement of the 'intrinsic value' of the nonhuman world, or as a defence of 'biocentric egalitarianism'. Rather we should interpret it as an attempt to develop a theory of collective ecological management, in which culture plays a central role. That is, the land ethic holds that the values of nature are culturally defined, and cannot be independent of that cultural context. As Norton puts it, "Leopold saw the search for such an ethic as one culture's search for a workable, adaptive approach to living with the land" (1991: 58). The land ethic, although it does argue for harmony between society and its environment, begins from an environmental management perspective which recognises that harmony is created rather than discovered or given. The social construction of this harmony is the purpose of collective environmental management, and the aim of green politics is to argue for an integrated form of environmental management in which aesthetic, scientific, normative, democratic as well as economic considerations can be brought to bear. The aim is to find the best 'adaptive fit' between particular cultures and their environments. As such, collective ecological management and ecological culture are to be seen as part of a process by which the changing relationship between culture and environment can be brought to an equilibrium position. However *there is no fixed point, but a variety of*

possible equilibrium positions. That is, for green politics qua collective ecological management, there is no static social-environmental metabolism. This is based on the distinction made earlier (3.4) and above (5.3), between wide and narrow ecological rationality, in terms of parasitic and symbiotic as well as sustainable and unsustainable social-environmental relations. The aim of green politics is obviously to encourage sustainable and symbiotic forms of social-environmental interaction. The latter is a metabolism which seeks to ensure that both human and nonhuman interests are made as compatible as possible, understood as maximising long term human welfare interests compatible with permitting the nonhuman world to flourish.

In ecological terms what environmental management implies is human intervention in natural systems to attain what Odum calls an “anthropogenic sub-climax” (1983: 473). This is an ecological state which is different from that which would have been attained in the absence of human intervention. In other words, this sub-climax state is the ‘humanised environment’ mentioned earlier (5.3) and in chapter 3 (3.4.1).²⁷ Human intervention prevents the ‘natural succession’ of ecosystems to climax states, instead transforming and maintaining ecosystems in accordance with human interests. An indication of the political significance of this is given by studies in the UK which show that, “public opinion favours a conserved and planned landscape, rather than the one allowed to revert to a more natural, climax state” (Pearce *et al*, 1993: 107-8). In the UK context, the issue is not whether natural climax states ought to be permitted to emerge because they are somehow morally superior (because they are ‘natural’) to socially managed sub-climax states, but rather over the particular sub-climax state to choose. In terms of the distinction often used in ecological debates, the UK environment, and that of Western Europe more generally, is more of a ‘garden’ (i.e., a humanised environment) than a ‘wilderness’. Allowing natural ecological succession to resume within the context of an environment that has been intensively managed for hundreds of years would not only cause extensive and unnecessary social disruption and upheaval, but also cause suffering or harm to those natural entities which have carved out niches within this humanised ecosystem. Natural

²⁷ The range of sub-climax states thus specifies the range within which stewardship is operative.

succession and the attainment of a climax state is only one possible equilibrium metabolic rate between society and its environment. In terms of ecological rationality there are other possible equilibria which do not require the 'quietism' involved in the prioritisation of natural over human induced ecological succession. 'Ecological climax states' can be taken as the polar opposite to the complete human management of the environment to the point of replicating its functions within the 'technosphere'.²⁸ On this account, collective ecological management is located between 'non-interference' and 'substitution', or to recall Norton's words, between 'primitivism' and 'artificiality'. The advantage of this view of the 'Land ethic' is that 'ecosystem health' and integrity, *includes* human activities which either do not threaten or actively promote the critical threshold levels of the chosen 'anthropogenic sub-climax'.

The cultural dimension of green politics qua collective ecological management, can also be explained in reference to forms of knowledge. Similar to the green principle of decentralisation, understood as meaning that nothing should be done at a higher level if it can be done at a lower one, it is also the case that different forms of knowledge may be more appropriate as we move from global, national to local levels of social-environmental relations. At the global level normative concern for 'nature' as a whole is rather abstract. As Rolston notes, "A duty to a species is more like being responsible to a cause than to a person" (1988: 144).²⁹ Corresponding to this abstract ethical commitment, at the global level of 'thinking about nature' (Brennan, 1988), it is likely that ecological and other disciplines of science may be the most appropriate forms of knowledge at this level, and upon which transnational agreement may be reached as how to deal with global environmental problems. As we move down to the national level, ethical concern becomes more culture-specific as 'nature' becomes 'the land' or a determinate environment. At these levels the modes of interaction appropriate to regulating human action, while still having a place for science, are likely to have a 'thicker' normative texture. That is,

²⁸ For some deep ecologists the replacement of nature by technologically replicating its functions is, at worst, the logical outcome, or at best, a permanent possibility within anthropocentrism. See Sessions (1995b) and Mander (1995) for typical examples.

²⁹ Or it may take the form of a lament as in McKibben's (1989) eloquent elegy on the 'end of nature'.

interacting with a determinate and familiar aspect of the environment is more likely to involve strong and concrete moral commitments. This is particularly so if one takes sympathy as an essential component of moralising social-environmental dealings as suggested in chapter 3. The moral experience of nature is richer since it is more partial at the level of particular, familiar parts of the environment. This is because we *experience* nature in the particular, rather than in the abstract, as suggested in chapter 2 (2.6). Knowledge of the world gained from direct experience of determinate parts of the environment will have a different effect on our ethical treatment of the nonhuman world, than abstract knowledge of that world. However as Plumwood points out, “Special relationships with, care for, or empathy with particular aspects of nature as experienced, rather than with nature as abstraction, are essential to provide a depth of concern...experience of and care and responsibility for particular animals, trees, rivers, places and ecosystems which are known well...enhance rather than hinder a wider, more generalised concern for the wider global environment” (1993: 187). It is interesting to note that both moral sympathy and science can be understood as universal modes of human experience. The difference between them is that science is universal and impartial, sympathy is universal but partial. That is, sympathy is a natural feature of what it means to be human, which makes it universal. However, sympathy is directed largely to partial rather than impartial objects of concern. Stewardship as a virtuous mode of interaction, a social practice with internal standards of excellence, may be said to be a combination of sympathy and science. Sympathy without knowledge may lapse into ‘sentimentality’, while knowledge without sympathy may lead to an ‘arrogant humanism’. Both are ecological vices to be avoided.

The importance of science (as a non-local form of knowledge) in the establishment of effective collective management strategies cannot be overestimated. Not only is it the case that science is required in the elaboration of effective solutions to national environmental problems but scientific understanding is also indispensable in dealing with transnational and global environmental problems. Without going into an analysis of the sociology and politics of science, and aware of that ‘science’ is not a monolithic body of

agreed knowledge, and that it can be used to support privileged groups (Sachs, 1995; Thompson, 1995), all I wish to suggest here is the potential role scientific discourse can play as a common language for dealing with international and global environmental problems.

At the local or micro level we arrive at ethically richer and stronger attachments to parks, gardens, allotments, forests, watersheds, mountains, particular animals and species.³⁰ At the local level more vernacular idioms of knowledge relating to ecological management may be appropriate. This emphasis on the importance of the vernacular has been a constant theme within green politics beginning with Illich's critique of the dominant western model of development as the 'modernisation of poverty' (1974) and the destruction of local, autonomous social practices as a result of the rise of 'disabling professions' (1977). In more recent years, the defence of the vernacular, the local and the traditional, has been a dominant theme within Southern green politics as a response to globalisation (Shiva, 1988). These issues are dealt with in more detail in the next chapter (6.7).

As we move from the local to the global, ethical concern for the nonhuman world becomes more abstract, while the forms of knowledge appropriate to the regulation of human interaction with that world become more 'objective', universalistic and impartial. But without the meso-level of national ecological culture, situated between the macro-level of the global biosphere (where 'humanity' interacts with 'nature') and the micro-level of particular environments (where individuals and communities interact with particular animals, parks, urban spaces), to mediate between these two levels, the connection between them would be to a large degree opaque culturally and politically speaking. It is through the shared and contested grammar of national culture that the ecological narratives of the local and the global may be created and transmitted while individuals can place themselves within wider and wider ecological contexts. In this sense the green political project as given by collective ecological management does not involve arguing for

³⁰ In this respect then tending one's garden may be just as effective in demonstrating and developing the 'ecological virtues' as 'wilderness experience'. 'Authentic' care of the non-human world does not reside solely in wilderness protection, or the protection of endangered species.

a 'return to the land' in some pre-modern sense of recovering a lost rural and more harmonious and 'natural' way of life (Ferris, 1992), but rather for the re-integration of the 'land' both ethically and ecologically within western cultures.

To return to a bioregional point made in the last chapter (section 4.4), given the present global reach of human activities (which is not to say that *all* humans are responsible), a full understanding of the metabolic interaction between human societies and the nonhuman world requires placing them in relation to ecosystemic levels from their local 'ecological hinterland' and through more remote ecosystems right up to the global biospheric level. The majority of presently existing societies interact with the nonhuman world on both 'ecosystemic' as well as 'biospheric' levels. The latter can be taken to mean that the 'human impact' at this biospheric level is the sum total of global national interactions, that is, the aggregate 'total biospheric impact' of human metabolic activities organised on a national basis.³¹

5.9 Ecological Management, Planning and Governance

For many writers on green issues, it seems almost inevitable that dealing effectively with environmental problems requires institutional responses in which there is some degree of planning. This is particularly so, as one would expect, with eco-socialist positions (Stretton, 1976; Mulberg, 1992, 1993). It is also an integral part of green social democratic proposals (Eckersley, 1992a; De Geus, 1991), and ecological modernisation (Weale, 1992; Young, 1994). In the last few years national environmental plans have been drawn up across a number of western democracies from the Canadian 'Green Plan' (Selman, 1994), the Dutch National Environmental Policy Plan (Van Der Straaten, 1992), to the Norwegian 'Samla Plan' for the management of water resources (Rothenberg, 1992). At the same time issues around 'environmental management' have been at the

³¹ This idea has been developed by the Wuppertal institute as a basis for calculating sustainability for different regions and countries (Friends of the Earth Europe, 1995). The basic premise of their calculation is that each region and country be allowed that proportion of global carrying capacity (or 'environmental space') which corresponds to its proportion of the global population.

heart of discussions attempting to spell out the policy implications of sustainable development (Pearce *et al*, 1989; Carley & Christie, 1992). While the adoption of a planned approach to ecological management is often an indication of the level of public concern, and the extent of social support and commitment to protecting the environment, there are a variety of other reasons why some degree of public planning or 'steering' (Jacobs, 1995), is an essential aspect of green politics.

The attraction and necessity of planning and co-ordination can be seen as partly to do with the search for *integrated policy approaches* to dealing with environmental problems (Weale, 1992: 93-118). Following Dryzek, the problem is that a purely political or economic 'solution' to an environmental problem more often than not simply *displaces* it rather than solves it (1987: 10-11). Displacement can cross media (water pollution to solid waste pollution), in space (exporting pollution), time (to future generations), or from one institution to another (externalities from the economy being passed to the political sphere), or within an institution (from one department to another). There is thus a gap between these 'solutions' to ecological problems and ecological solutions. Thus while it may be economically or politically rational, in the short-term, to pollute the environment in excess of its ability to assimilate that level of pollution, it is clearly not ecologically rational in terms of the environment's capacity to sustain non-decreasing levels of human (and nonhuman) welfare. Norton (1991) argues that the nature of many ecological problems is such that they demand an integrated, holistic and flexible problem-solving approach. That is, the *solution* as opposed to the *displacement* of pollution problems, for example, requires some degree of public regulation and planning.

Planning within the context of collective ecological management can be thought of as analogous to collective choice under conditions of uncertainty. Planning within this context is more about the maintenance of a process than the achievement of any particular outcome. Given the uncertainty which characterises environmental problems, any environmental planning will necessarily have to be flexible, sensitive to ecological feedback and not cause irreversible ecological changes. To use Beck's terminology, what is required is a 'reflexive' and flexible form of collective regulation understood as a social

learning process as well as a exercise in social-ecological adaptation. This is what Eckersley means when she claims that, “The task of integrating environmental and economic decision-making requires a new (and yet to be developed) administrative framework that is considerably more flexible, collegial and consultative than the traditional model” (1993: 22). This can also be understood from an ecological modernisation perspective, which uses a modified version of the traditional model, but with the recognition that, “If national planning is shunned, its alternative will have to be invented” (Weale, 1992: 149).

As used within the context of ecological governance, planning refers to conscious, collective determination and co-ordination of social activities in the pursuit of the maintenance of some chosen rate of metabolic exchange. Planning therefore does not refer to social reorganisation in accordance with some state-imposed blueprint. That is, the planning process within collective ecological management is not about wholesale ‘social engineering’ (Popper, 1974: 158-67). But nor is it ‘piecemeal’, discrete policy change. Some, like Jacobs (1995), have sought to see the issue not in terms of planning *versus* the market since the achievement of sustainability requires governmental intervention, particularly with regard to the economic sphere; as he puts it, “The opposition between ‘market mechanisms’ and ‘regulations’ is overstated, missing the common requirement for hands-on government intervention” (1995: 1).³² It would be more accurate to describe environmental planning as involving a process of ‘ecological restructuring’, altering and re-integrating the relationships between state, society, economy and environment on ecologically altered principles. This macro-level, institutional change parallels the micro-level change the virtues of stewardship seeks to realise in integrating the different roles individuals and groups have as citizens, producers, and consumers.

³² A more radical view is given by O’Neill who claims to “Find it difficult to see how environmental goods could be realised without planning within the economic sphere itself. The question is not one of market or plan, but rather what forms of planning are compatible with other goods, in particular, that of autonomy” (1993: 175). O’Neill’s point is that a democratically planned economy is not necessarily a prelude to totalitarianism. This issue is discussed in the chapter 7 (7.9).

An example of the role of planning and the state within ecological governance is the precautionary principle. The precautionary principle, together with the 'polluter pays' principle, is the most important green policy principle. The precautionary principle holds that the onus of proof is on those who propose social-environmental change rather than those who oppose it. It is a principle of prudence, particularly under conditions of uncertainty. As Boehmer-Christiansen (1994) argues, the precautionary principle evolved out of the German socio-legal tradition and was explicitly set within the context of state-management and planning. Thus the precautionary principle is an interventionist measure, a justification of state involvement in the economy in the name of good government (De Geus, 1996). It thus has much in common with the interpretation of ecological modernisation given by Weale (1992), which is unsurprising since both can be placed within the German *Rechtsstaat* tradition. The significance of the precautionary principle lies in the fact that it serves to justify state management of resource use because one of the central aspects of this principle is the idea that the onus of proof is on those who propose major social-environmental change.³³ The operation of the precautionary principle makes the state the guarantor of the environmental status quo. This principle expresses in a modern legal form the virtue of prudence in respect to development demands on the environment. Although the precautionary principle seems to re-introduce the rejected idea of a 'hands off' policy regulating social-environmental exchanges (5.7), this is not the case, although it does strengthen the case for environmental preservation when compared with the current regulation of social-environmental interaction. The precautionary principle and the role of the state in implementing it, typically within the context of environment vs. development disputes, stress the need for discrimination and careful consideration when faced with development proposals. Thus the precautionary principle is not anti-development per se, nor is it pro-preservation, since development is always

³³ A fuller exploration of the precautionary principle would require placing it within the context of the 'risk society' analysis (Beck, 1992, 1995a, 1995b). For example, Beck's analysis of risk society explicitly endorses this presumption in favour of non-action with regard to risky environmental developments by arguing that, "insisting on the *purity* of the scientific analysis leads to the *pollution and contamination* of air, foodstuffs, water, soil, plants, animals and people" (1992: 62; emphasis in original).

possible so long as it is in accordance with the precautionary principle. However, the main point here is that solving environmental problems as part of a collective ecological management strategy requires such *ex ante* policy principles, like the precautionary one, an aim of which is to possibly prevent environmental problems from arising in the first place. And such *ex ante*, preventative measures require some degree of democratic, public management, accountability, consent and state enforcement.

Another reason for some degree of conscious planning as part of a wider collective ecological management comes from the idea that the standard green reading of ecology which sees ecosystems as self-regulating and harmonious is a disputed claim within ecological science. As Brennan points out, “the whole issue of whether ecosystems are generally self-maintaining diverse systems or simply fortuitous groupings of populations that at least for a time are not lethal for one another is very much undecided in ecology. It is striking, and unfortunate, that many conservationists operate with ideas of balance and diversity in nature that were more prevalent in the nineteenth century than among contemporary ecologists” (1992: 16-17). As indicated in the last section, ecological diversity within social-environment relations requires active social intervention, and maintenance.

Added to this is the controversy over whole idea that diversity and ecosystem complexity are positively related to ecosystem stability. According to Clark contrary to popular perception, “The highest diversity of species tends to occur not in most stable systems, but in those subject to constant disturbance, e.g. rainforests subject to destruction by storm, and rocky intertidal regions buffeted by heavy surf” (1992: 42). One implication of this that if biodiversity is a top value this may imply human intervention in ecosystems to maintain high degrees of biodiversity, perhaps by disturbing ecosystems in the requisite manner. Of the many conclusions one can draw from this perhaps the most important is that a ‘hands off’ approach cannot be said to guarantee the types of ecosystems that many deep greens desire. Ecosystems characterised by diversity, balance and complexity may

have to be actively created and managed.³⁴ The normative standpoint from which to view social impacts on the environment is not a 'hands off' position which frames the issue of the relation between society and environment in terms of 'use' and 'non-use', but rather that proposed in the last chapter as the 'ethics of use' which attempts to distinguish 'use' from 'abuse'. Once this ethical issue has been settled, ecological science can then be used to help distinguish 'good' from 'bad' ecological management, i.e. sustainability from unsustainability. The type of social regulation implied by collective ecological management involves the normative constraining of permissible policy options. We could imagine this as what is meant by the democratic character of collective ecological management. It is not that each social-environmental issue is to be dealt with by all citizens taking a vote on the issue, rather it is that citizens (as opposed to bureaucrats and experts) can participate in what Jacobs calls 'decision-recommending' rather than decision-making institutions (1996: 13). That is, such forms of popular democratic participation lay out the parameters of 'use' and 'abuse' in particular cases, that is, the normative bounds of environmental management which can then be carried out through state institutions. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

In this way the idea of political ecological management begins with normative issues and then moves to employ ecological science, and other more local and particular forms of knowledge where appropriate, to help in the formulation of an effective strategy for managing the ecological commons.³⁵ From the point of view of collective ecological

³⁴ Clark makes a related point concerning the determinants of an equilibrium ecological state. She maintains that, "the equilibrium state of an ecosystem seems not to be determined by the total mix of species present, but by the presence - or absence- of a very few 'keystone' species...the presence or absence of but one or two species may determine the texture of an entire ecosystem" (1992: 42). That humans may be one of these 'keystone' species within certain ecosystems is something that seems intuitively appealing, although it may offend the ecocentric sensibilities of some greens. If humans are a keystone species, then it is not the case that the relationship between humans and nature is non-reciprocal with humans dependent upon nature. In the context of maintaining a particular ecosystem in which humans are a keystone species, 'nature' and 'ecosystem health' is dependent upon humans. Another situation where the mutual dependence of social and ecosystems can be seen concerns 'ecological restoration' discussed below.

³⁵ Given that the search for a collective strategy/process for managing the commons involves moral, scientific, cultural as well as more obvious political and economic inputs, there is a sense in which this process requires that *all* forms of valuation and understandings of the environment and social relations to it are given 'voice'. Hence science is not privileged relative to indigenous forms of knowledge and

management, planning and management will be informed by the cultural valuations of nature of the society in which it operates. A good example of this is presented by Rothenberg (1992) who contrasts the Norwegian 'Samla plan' with the American Endangered Species Act as expressing two different cultural valuations of an relationships to the environment. Whereas the Samla plan (a management plan for Norway's water resources) assesses costs and benefits of damming rivers which is sensitive to the claims of ecological communities of wildlife and ecosystems, the US Endangered Species Act is individualistic in identifying particular species rather than ecological communities as the object of environmental management and legislation. Rothenberg argues that this individualistic-community difference is due to the different cultural contexts of the two countries. Tellingly he notes that

One might argue that the Samla Plan only works because the ideal of Norway is sufficiently unified in people's minds to agree that each part of the society needs to compromise to serve the whole. *The belief that a common goal is important makes the system singular, not pluralistic.* Perhaps the individually-centred American system is even more pluralistic, as it admits no common ground save 'don't tread on me!'- respect for the rights of other individuals waiting to be conceived and tagged (1992: 131; emphasis added).

The sensitivity to ecological communities is thus an extension of Norwegian political culture in which community and the idea of the environment as an overarching national collective good are central. Such a political culture is lacking in multi-cultural, pluralistic America, hence the individualistic ethos of its environmental legislation, where concern is not for the 'national environment' as such but for particular threatened individual species or ecosystems.

traditional commons-type, i.e. non-state, ecological management, which still exist in many parts of the world (Goldsmith *et al*, 1992; Shiva, 1988)

However, though state-planning and co-ordination may be invaluable in dealing with *ad hoc* contingencies, such as oil spills, it is unlikely that hierarchical bureaucracies will be completely effective in dealing with the complexity and uncertainty associated with all environmental problems. As Dryzek notes, “Highly structured organizations are at a loss, though, when it comes to dealing with high degrees of uncertainty, variability, and complexity- circumstances that are, of course, ubiquitous in the ecological realm” (1987: 108). In other words, centralised, bureaucratic organisation such as that associated with the contemporary nation-state, may be ecologically rational only across a specific range of environmental problems. This is not so much an argument against the state *per se*, but against centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratised planning and administration in general. An alternative conception of the state, that of a flexible, enabling state with minimal centralisation and bureaucratisation is one that concurs with the goals of collective ecological management. Hence the focus on the local state as the appropriate level for sustainability in Agenda 21 of the Rio Declaration, which will be discussed in the next chapter (6.2.2). It is not the state that manages society’s metabolism with nature on society’s behalf (the extension of the welfare state to the ecological sphere) but rather that a democratised state is a necessary institution which in conjunction with other non-state forms of governance contributes to the overall goal of collective ecological management. If we widen out the context of solving environmental problems as a matter of governance then the state may be less ecologically irrational in its acts since it becomes one institutional aspect of a much wider social process. Within the context of ecological governance the state does not stand completely condemned on ecological grounds, particularly if flexible forms of administration and decentralised forms of co-ordination, control and feedback are employed.³⁶

³⁶ In this restructuring of the state within the context of ecological governance, many of the issues pertaining to the shape and form of an ‘enabling state’ are raised. That is to say that the type of state required by the process of collective ecological management is an enabling one.

5.9.1 Ecological Restoration

Whereas the majority of environmental problems with which collective ecological management has to deal concern direct ecological inputs to human welfare, such as ecological resources necessary to economic activity, there is another type of social-nature relation which equally calls for large-scale social organisation and co-ordination. While most environmental problems have to do with immediate supply problems or discrete ecological goods and services, 'ecological restoration' has to do with repairing degraded ecosystems or landscapes. In some cases this involves returning a disturbed ecosystem to the *status quo ante*, that is, either its stage of ecological succession prior to human interference, or its ecological state as a 'humanised environment' prior to industrial forms of human interaction. The basic premise of ecological restoration is that human interference can, to some extent, cure the wounds it inflicts. Part of restoration ecology involves, "returning a site to some previous state, with the species richness and diversity and physical, biological and aesthetic characteristics of that site before human settlement and the accompanying disturbances" (Morrison, 1987: 160). The novelty of ecological restoration lies in that it is an example of social-environmental interaction where the environmental is dependent upon social agency, rather than the non-reciprocal manner in which relations between society and environment are usually understood.

The large and growing philosophical debate and controversy around ecological restoration will not be entered into here.³⁷ One point that may be raised concerns the fact

³⁷ Much of the debate around ecological restoration centres on the practical and philosophical implications of attempting to 'fake nature' (Elliot, 1982). For example, Goodin (1992) holds that a restored landscape is less 'valuable' (in terms of his green theory of value) than a 'natural' one, since the former is analogous to a copy of the latter. Goodin's green theory of value holds that what is valuable about natural entities is their nonhuman origin, once humans restore landscapes their value is diminished relative to the 'original'. The reason for this value differential between original and restored nature is that the basis of nature's intrinsic value, namely its 'naturalness', is present in the former and not in the latter (Elliot, 1994: 40-43). However, while there is philosophical debate concerning ecological restoration, there is no suggestion that it ought not to be done. Where there is doubt as to whether it ought to be done is where claims of future restoration of ecosystems or landscapes are used to justify present ecological disruption. See Goodin (1992: 31-41). However, if we seek to realise values other than the intrinsic value of nature based on its 'naturalness', there may be less objection to the diminished value of restored ecosystems/landscapes relative to the original. For example, if what we wish is to maximise biodiversity

that ecological restoration perhaps more than any other social-environmental relations highlights the potentially symbiotic (and sustainable) as opposed to parasitic quality of social interaction with the environment. In the case of restored ecosystems, and to a lesser degree in other managed ecosystems, there is a mutual reciprocity in the metabolic relation that is often missed in green talk of the dependence of humans on nature. Restored ecosystems are a stark reminder that there are situations where nature is dependent upon society. Of course this 'nature', or more technically the particular ecological succession state achieved by social intervention, is human-determined, this does not mean it does not partake of 'naturalness'. Recalling Norton's statement, 'naturalness admits of degrees'.

For present purposes it is assumed that the restoration of degraded ecosystems and landscapes is both possible and desirable, perhaps even necessary.³⁸ The main point I wish to make concerning ecological restoration is that on both these counts, its desirability and possibility, it requires large-scale social organisation, regulation and intervention. It is because of the costs involved in ecosystem rehabilitation that the nation-state and its agencies are often the appropriate institutions to carry it out. The state with its tax revenues, administrative and co-ordinating ability, together with its access to the relevant ecological knowledge (not necessarily that given by ecological science), and its legitimacy, is clearly in a strong position to restore ecosystem health. Indeed, it may have a statutory duty to restore ecosystems as part of fulfilling its obligations under both national and international law, to preserve biodiversity for example.

It may also be that repairing environmental damage requires institutions other than those appropriate to environmental preservation. Extending the subsidiarity idea that decisions ought to be taken at the lowest possible level, we may also add that institutions should be relative to the particular issue at hand. It is because of the range and type of social-environmental issues that ecological governance deals with that no one institution,

then it is clear that a restored ecosystem which had a greater number and diversity of species than had been there before human interference, would be more valuable than the original.

³⁸ Extensive ecological restoration will be necessary if global sustainability is to be achieved, in the sense that biodiversity will have to be increased. For example, according to a Friends of the Earth Europe report, if the European Union is to achieve sustainability there needs to be a ten-fold increase in protected land so as to support the levels of biodiversity required (1995).

such as the nation-state, will be sufficient to cope with them all. That is, the various social-environmental interactions and relations that together make up the totality of a society's metabolism with its environment, demand different institutional forms, principles and modes of operation. And while I hope to have demonstrated why the nation-state will still have a role to play within collective ecological management, I also hope to have shown that the latter can only be understood in terms of 'governance' rather than government.

5.10 Conclusion

The main question this chapter has addressed is the issue of the most appropriate institutional structure for green politics. In section 5.2 it was argued that the long-run concern of green politics is with institutional and agent-level transformation. Green politics is understood as a political theory with wider cultural ambitions. In 5.3 the idea of 'ecological rationality' was introduced. Ecological rationality was discussed as a way of expressing the moral and material dimensions of the green view of social-environmental interaction. Using Dryzek's 'sustainability' view of ecological rationality, the distinction between 'symbiotic' and 'parasitic' forms of social-environmental metabolism, introduced in chapter 3, was argued to articulate this moral dimension. An ecologically rational social-environmental metabolism is one which is both sustainable and symbiotic. The use of 'ecological rationality' as a criterion by which to judge the institutional structure of society is an attempt to synthesise the 'ecological' imperative of green politics, with the contention that there can never be a purely objective, non-normative conception of this.

In 5.4 through to 5.9, the general contours of collective ecological management, understood as an appropriate institutional structure for green values and principles, were sketched. In 5.4 the positive role played by the state within green political theory was outlined, as a way of introducing one of the most recent and popular state-centred approaches to social-environmental management, namely ecological modernisation. In 5.5. a reconstructive explication and critique of ecological modernisation was developed.

Ecological modernisation was criticised for being overly state-centred, top-down, bureaucratic and generally constraining. However, it was also suggested that aspects of ecological modernisation, which was understood as a policy-based ideology rather than a worked out political theory, could be used as a stepping stone to collective ecological management. In 5.6 collective ecological management was examined. Here it was argued that ecological modernisation could become radicalised when the focus of political attention shifts from causes to effects, from *ex post*, compensatory, policy approaches to social-environmental problems to *ex ante*, preventative, structural approaches. In 5.7 the role the 'nation' and 'nationhood' may play within collective ecological management was discussed as a way to flesh out the cultural dimension of the conception of green politics being defended. Leading on from that, Norton's interpretation of Leopold's 'land ethic' as a form of environmental management within which cultural adaptation was central was discussed in 5.8. The 'land ethic' was argued not to be a 'hands off', deep ecological position, but rather represents an ideal-type of collective ecological management in which social-environmental relations are sustainable and symbiotic. Within Leopold's view of collective ecological management, there is a pluralist assumption in respect to social-environmental relations; pluralist in the sense that no one form of valuation should have a privileged position to any other. In 5.9 the role of regulation and governance within collective ecological management was discussed. This was related to the idea that the political and normative issue with regard to social-environmental affairs is not *whether* we should manage, but rather *how* we manage the environment. While anxious to distinguish 'planning' from state-enforced planning, it was argued that the governance of social-environmental affairs, requires some degree of collective, democratic regulation.

This chapter amounts to an admittedly incomplete defence of a form of green politics which seems to break with most of the touchstones which are used to determine whether or not a theory is 'really' green. Firstly, it is anthropocentric, but a self-reflexive anthropocentrism which does not suppose that any human reason, simply by being human, justifies any use of nature. Secondly, and following on from the latter, it pitches the political-normative debate at the level of an immanent critique of western culture.

Leopold's 'land ethic' for example, does not require widespread metaphysical reconstruction. Thirdly, it does not reject economic valuations but rather seeks to integrate them within a wider political process. Finally, it is committed to the state as a key institutional feature for the governance of a sustainable and symbiotic metabolism with the nonhuman world.

Collective ecological management is not simply about institutional changes, but is at its heart a normative political process for deciding on a social-environment metabolism, which, in part, is to choose to live in a different sort of society. Collective ecological management is *not* about state management of the environmental affairs of civil society, that is the state taking care of the public issues of policy-making and implementation. Ecological management as understood here includes but goes beyond this image to encompass forms of collective action, deliberation and implementation which go beyond existing liberal democratic theory and practice. Issues of the democratic character of collective ecological management are dealt with in chapter 7. However, before moving on to discuss the relationship between democracy and green politics, we turn to green political economy.

Chapter Six

Green Political Economy

6.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines a green political economy to underwrite the collective ecological management argument presented in the previous chapter. In section 6.2 two current political economy approaches to environmental issues, neoclassical environmental economics (6.2.1) and free market environmentalism (6.2.2), are criticised. In raising doubts about their ability to deal with environmental issues an alternative green political economy position is put forward that is consistent with the aims of collective ecological management as outlined in the last chapter. In section 6.3, this green political economy position is introduced. It is developed in 6.4 by drawing a distinction between the capitalist or free-market economy and an alternative, more local and limited conception of the market and economy. In section 6.5 the Local Employment and Trading System (LETS) is used to illustrate some principal dimensions of this local view of the economy, while in 6.6 the role of money and how it separates the economy from nature and disembeds the economy from wider social relations is considered. In section 6.7, the relationship between green political economy and ecological virtue is examined. Together with the green principle of 'meeting local needs locally', the idea of self-reliance is used to outline a green understanding of liberty in terms of self-determination and autonomy. This section also briefly discusses 'development' and the way in which green political economy differs from orthodox conceptions of political economy.

6.2 A Critique of Neoclassical Environmental Economics and Free Market Environmentalism

Before moving on to present a green political economy which concurs with collective ecological management, I wish to discuss and criticise two of the prominent political economic theories used to address ecological issues.

6.2.1 Neoclassical Environmental Economics

Although often equated, neoclassical environmental economics and free market environmentalism represent quite distinct political economic perspectives, assumptions and aims. Despite sharing a broad concern with finding ‘economic’ and ‘market-based’ solutions to environmental problems, these two theories of political economy lead to radically different forms of economic organisation both of which, from a green point of view, are problematic.

Following Mulberg (1992), neoclassical economics’ methodological commitment to positive science, although ostensibly in favour of the ‘free market’, actually constitutes a justification for economic planning rather than laissez-faire economics. According to him, “the logic of positive economics leads to a notion of economic planning...In fact, the solutions based upon orthodox theory apply a sort of planning ‘supplement’ to a market analysis” (1992: 335). Within neoclassical environmental economics, this planning supplement is arrived at by using various non-market techniques, such as cost-benefit analysis and contingent valuation exercises, to discover individual economic valuations of environmental resources, that is, their economic benefits and costs to the individual. Economic values are arrived at via the creation of *hypothetical* markets in which individuals are asked to trade non-tradable environmental goods. For example, a neoclassical environmental economics approach to dealing with a proposal to develop a particular environment, would involve conducting survey research, in order to determine the individual’s ‘willingness to pay’ to prevent the proposed development or ascertaining the monetary amount they would require as compensation. In other words the neoclassical approach is to conduct a cost-benefit

analysis, aggregate individual preferences as expressed in the exercise and make recommendations as to the 'adjustment' of the price mechanism depending on the balance of 'benefits' and 'costs'. The neoclassical approach is one which attempts to ascertain the price of unpriced and non-traded environmental goods and services (Pearce *et al*, 1989, 1993). Its starting point is that many environmental problems are due to the unpriced character of environmental goods and services, such as clean air, drinkable water and unspoilt countryside. To combat the misperception of environmental public goods being 'free' it proposes to put a price on them so as to internalise a potential externality. In the language of economics, the lack of a market price for such goods means that market behaviour will lead to a sub-optimal, or Pareto-inefficient, allocation of these particular resources.¹ In plain words, because these environmental resources do not presently have a price, the operation of the market will tend to overuse and over-exploit them, hence pollution and other forms of environmental degradation. By giving the environment a price tag, markets will ensure that the many resources and services it provides to the economy and society in general will be 'protected', that is sustainably exploited. Ascribing a price to environmental goods and services makes them 'visible' within the market and nature's contribution to economic activity is thereby acknowledged. For free market environmentalism, environmental problems are largely due to open access. Hence they propose private property rights as a solution to over-exploitation and degradation of the commons. Thus neoclassical environment economics and free market environmentalism can be distinguished by the different aspect of the 'public goods' problem of the environment each stresses. Free market environmentalism stresses the non-excludable character of environmental public goods, while neoclassical environmental economics emphasises their unpriced, 'free' character.

¹The Pareto criterion has conservative implications since it rules out any allocative pattern in which some would lose and others gain. This principle can thus be seen as an important part of the growth imperative at the heart of orthodox economic theory. Economic growth, as opposed to redistribution from the rich to the poor, satisfies the Pareto criterion that there is no alternative allocative pattern in which everybody gains. This criterion thus constitutes one of the primary stumbling blocks against redistributive arguments. The relationship between justifications of economic inequality and economic growth will be discussed in the next chapter (7.5).

Unlike the free market environmentalist solution, environmental economics does not hold that the value of a given environmental resource or amenity can only be revealed in actual market exchange. This fundamental difference can be seen in the distinction drawn by Pearce *et al* between the privatisation of natural resources and the creation of new 'environmental markets' (the free market environmentalist approach) and the, "modification of markets by *centrally deciding* the value of the environmental services and ensuring that those values are incorporated into the prices of goods and services" (1989: 155; emphasis added). The state or regulatory body using the survey tools of neoclassical environmental economics ascertains the 'social cost' of pollution, for example, and from there the 'economic price' of pollution can be determined. Using this information, the market can be altered by the state to ensure that environmental externalities such as pollution are 'internalised' by market actors.²

For free market environmentalism, following the Austrian school of economic theory, the creation of actual rather than hypothetical markets is the only way in which the 'real' or 'true' economic value of an environmental resource can be revealed.³ They therefore argue for privatising environmental resources and allowing market exchange to determine the level and organisation of the material interaction between economy and environment. Neoclassical environmental economics on the other hand relies on survey research and other techniques such as contingent valuation exercises to cost people's environmental preferences within a hypothetical market situation.⁴ From a free market environmentalist perspective, "Opinion polls and surveys are used as proxies, but they do not provide reliable information about the value of environmental amenities because individuals are not faced with actual trade-offs. The respondents bear no actual costs" (Anderson and Leal, 1991: 92). The libertarian

² This state-centred, bureaucratic character of neoclassical environmental economics has already been alluded to in the discussion of ecological modernisation in the last chapter where it was suggested that neoclassical environmental economics functions as the political economy of ecological modernisation (5.6).

³ Free market environmentalism, and the Austrian tradition in economic theory from which it comes, unlike orthodox neoclassical economics, is explicitly political. It is a libertarian theory which makes judgements about the relationship between a particular conception of negative freedom, property rights, and the free market economy (Hayek, 1976). According to Mulberg (1992), it is a normative political economic theory not a positive one as neoclassical economics understands itself.

⁴ The reduction of values to preferences and assigning monetary amounts to them within cost-benefit analysis exercises is something which has been criticised in chapter 4. Also see O'Neill (1993).

economic view is that aggregate data is useless, since all costs and values are known at the individual level and only in actual exchange can they be disclosed. Another way in which we can distinguish the free market environmentalism and environmental economics approaches is to say that the former seeks the creation of actual markets for private and privatised environmental goods, while the latter creates proxy markets for public environmental goods.⁵ Free market environmentalism decomposes the public goods dimension of environmental problems into discrete private goods problems which can be 'solved' either on the open market or through private litigation. As will be argued below, it depoliticises environmental problems as a consequence of its distrust of the state and its unbounded faith in the environmental virtues of the free market.

Neoclassical environmental economics has been criticised on the grounds that the separation of the economy into planned and non-planned sectors is arbitrary (Mulberg, 1992). If the economic value of environmental resources can be determined in hypothetical markets, why not extend this process to other sectors of the economy? If there is no need for the market to determine the appropriate price structure in respect of environmental resources, why not dissolve the necessity for the market and introduce planning on the basis of objective economic valuations in other areas? The objectivity of the neoclassical 'hypothetical market' approach lies in the fact that the initial generation of price/monetary value is centrally decided which is then used in exercises such as cost-benefit analysis and contingent valuation. The aggregate of these *individual valuations* are then assumed to approximate the *social or collective valuation* of these environmental goods and bads (See figure 6.1).⁶ Yet, as suggested in earlier chapters (3.6.1 & 5.6), the public goods character of the environment, implies that what public policy-making requires are judgements about the public good, rather than private calculation about it as if it were a private good.

⁵ I owe this point to John Proops.

⁶ Another 'objective' account of the value of the environment is one where purely scientific considerations are used. Such an objective valuation of the environment can be seen at the heart of the eco-authoritarian position, where environment-social problems are considered simply as technical dilemmas resolvable by the application of expert knowledge and implemented by authoritarian institutions. On this model, the organisation of environment-social relations are not matters of judgement which require public deliberation, but technical matters best left to expert determination (7.2).

Once this is done these objective valuations are used as the basis of environmental policy making by the state or its agencies.⁷ The institutional theory underpinning the neoclassical model is one which leaves the state and its agencies in the pre-eminent position to both determine the economy-ecology metabolism and implement the policies required to achieve that chosen rate of metabolic exchange. The argument here is not against the attempt to regulate socially environmental resource use, but rather the particular way in which neoclassical environmental economics conceives of environmental management, and picks out the appropriate decision-making institution. In short, the institutional dimension of environmental economics is very state-centred with little meaningful input by citizens in the decision-making process. In many respects it represents the economic theory underpinning ecological modernisation, as suggested in the last chapter (5.5).⁸ It is the state and its experts, rather than citizens, which determine the content of environmental management, through the manipulation of the price mechanism. It is important to point out that within this model the question is about 'fine-tuning' the market, the options available do not include questioning the market itself as the most appropriate institution for managing environmental resources.

In contingent valuation experiments people are asked as private consumers rather than citizens to reveal the private cost/benefit to them of particular environments, species or some environmental amenity (Sagoff, 1988; Jacobs, 1996; Keat, 1994; O'Neill, 1993). The assumption here as Jacobs (1996) has pointed out is that individuals' preferences are exogenous, the aim of contingent valuation is to 'reveal' these already formed and given preferences. That preferences for environmental goods are not given, but rather are unformed and require an intersubjective context within which individuals attempt to value environmental resources as *public goods*, is ruled

⁷ These exercises are also objective in the sense that the options open to respondents are limited. Respondents are obliged to value environmental goods purely in monetary terms. As is the tendency with neoclassical economics, values are reduced to prices, via the reduction of values to preferences (O'Neill, 1993; Keat, 1994). See 3.6.1 & 5.6.

⁸ Pearce (1992), defends the neoclassical economic approach to environmental decision-making precisely on the grounds that it presents environmental issues in a form (i.e. in economic terms) which existing institutions of public policy-making can readily and easily assimilate. As he puts it, "Defending the environment means presenting the arguments in terms of units that politicians understand" (1992: 8). This brings out clearly the institutional context of neoclassical economics, and how one cannot understand the latter without being sensitive to the institutional background against which it takes place.

out on *a priori*, methodological grounds. That is, neoclassical environmental economics misrepresents how people think about environmental issues by using an economic methodology developed for assessing individual preferences for privately produced and consumed goods and services and applying it to a set of issues to which it is inappropriate (Jacobs, 1996). Contingent valuation gives us the wrong information upon which to make environmental decisions. According to Jacobs, contingent valuation “asks the wrong question. Asking the personal question ‘how much are you willing to pay?’ encourages people into a self-interested stance. This is the appropriate question in a market for a private good” (1996:6). But since the environment and its services are not produced by anyone and are public goods, their social valuation demands a process of citizen deliberation rather than the state and its experts using consumer preferences to determine environmental values (i.e. prices). The neoclassical model of political economy uses an objective rather than an intersubjective method to ‘discover’ the ‘social valuation’ of environmental resources. Consequently the relationship between economy and environment is determined *for* individuals qua consumers (by the state manipulating the price mechanism on the basis of information regarding consumer preferences) rather than *by* individuals themselves qua citizens.

Attitudes to public goods can only be ascertained through fora rather than through market or quasi-market techniques. For it is only within fora that individuals can actually be said to formulate their judgements about the public good. As private consumers they only need to consider *their* own calculation of the costs and benefits to *themselves*. However, with regard to public goods, decision-making requires a setting within which a *variety of possible* calculations concerning the possible effects (costs and benefits) on the *collective* can be considered. In short, decisions about issues such as pollution prevention (which is a public good), require political not market institutional settings for public policy-making. Environmental public policy decisions ought to be based on asking people as *citizens* for their *judgements* concerning the public good, and not as consumers interested only in their own good. As citizens, individuals are not asked to take a principled non-self-interested stance, rather they are asked to ascertain a wider sense of self-interest than that appropriate as consumers.

The point is that it is simply not appropriate to ask people to think and act as private consumers when dealing with environmental public goods.

Figure 6.1 Three Models of Political Economy

Value-formation	Theory	Institutions	Causes of Ecological Problems
<i>Subjective</i>	Free Market Environmentalism	Free Market	Policy failure, ‘tragedy of the commons’. Lack of clear, enforceable & tradable private property rights
	Libertarianism/Austrian school	Organic institutions	
<i>Objective</i>	Neoclassical Environmental Economics	State planning	Market-failure
	Green Social Democracy	supplement	
	Ecological Modernisation		
<i>Intersubjective</i>	Green Political Economy	Collective ecological management	Hegemony of economic interests Environmental preferences viewed as private and given.

Self-interest qua consumer is not the same as self-interest qua citizen. The more one's decisions affects others (fellow citizens, nonhumans, future generations, non-citizens) the less appropriate is a market or economic approach to deciding the fundamental nature of environmental problems. While many environmental problems are also economic ones, this does not exhaust the scope of human interests that pertain to the issue. Since environmental decision-making does affect the interests of those who are often not a party to the decision-making process, it is reasonable that individuals be asked to consider the likely effects of environmental change on the interests of others.⁹

At the same time there is the argument that it is not appropriate to reduce normative claims or valuations to monetary values. Here market, or quasi-market approaches to environmental public policy-making can be criticised on the grounds of the incommensurability of valuations one can make in respect to the environment. As Keat (1994) notes, it is simply inappropriate to reduce moral valuations to monetary sums. Treating judgements about what is right as individual preferences is inappropriate (Keat, 1994: 338). That is, one cannot reduce moral judgements to economic criteria. Asking someone to put a monetary amount on their friendships or her relationship with her dog, or the cash value of a landscape, seriously misrepresents the relationship. Evidence suggests that people do not find it easy or desirable to express their views about environmental issues in monetary terms. The widespread phenomenon of 'protest bids' within contingent valuation exercises, where individuals either refuse to put a monetary amount on an ecosystem for example, or place an astronomically high monetary value on it, is evidence of 'ethical commitment' rather than economic calculation (Vadnjal & O'Connor, 1994; O'Neill, 1993: chapter 7; Splash & Hanley, 1995). Protest bids indicate that people refuse to view the environment as simply another commodity to be consumed. Yet the aim of neoclassical environmental economics is to commodify the environment, so that its 'economic value' may be discovered and used by the public authority to correct market imperfections (Pearce *et al*, 1989, 1993). The claim of neoclassical environmental

⁹ In the next chapter, the idea that green citizenship implies considering the interests of others will be examined (7.6 & 7.7).

economics is that treating the environment as 'natural capital' provides the strongest case for environmental protection.¹⁰

What can be adduced from protest bids is that to assume the commensurability of economic preferences and moral judgements is to commit a serious category mistake. The normative dimension of social-environmental issues can be illustrated by comparing the argument in chapter 3 where I suggested that the use of 'rights' within environmental discourse can be understood as a way in which the moral intensity with which some individuals feel about the treatment of the nonhuman world can be communicated (3.2.1). This communicative dimension is crucial. Now whether or not one agrees with those who argue for the rights of animals, ecosystems etc., one can at least be sure that what is being communicated is a *moral* argument. One may not agree with those who use this particular moral idiom to argue for certain treatment of the nonhuman world, but one is at least sure that what is at issue is a moral one. In the case of treating moral judgements as economic preferences, a category mistake is committed. The criticism of aggregative/consumer approaches to environmental public policy is simply that they are not the appropriate idiom and do not provide the appropriate information, for dealing with these issues. Normative questions demand normative contexts. To use the consumer/citizen distinction, the point is *not* that consumer preferences are rejected as inappropriate and substituted by citizen judgements when making environmental decisions. This would, as Keat (1994) points out, neglect to see that consumer preferences themselves have evaluative significance, and that the market/economistic approach to environmental valuation is not, as neoclassical economics itself holds, 'value-neutral' or 'positive'. Criticising those who simply reject a 'consumer' approach to environmental issues in favour of 'citizen' one, Keat holds that,

The impression is thereby created that the economistic approach does *not* express or reply upon any such ethical or evaluative principles. Yet this is

¹⁰ Holland (1994) rejects this assumption, arguing that thinking of nature as 'natural capital' does not present the strongest or most appropriate case for its preservation.

misleading. For, whatever its defects, it seems clear that there is *some* such theory involved- a broadly utilitarian one according to which the right action is that which maximises aggregative human well-being, where the latter is itself understood as consisting in the satisfaction of preferences (1994: 340).

The point is that the normative underpinnings of the neoclassical perspective is what is to be contrasted with alternative normative perspectives. This is a reason why it was suggested in chapters 3 and 5 that an adequate understanding of the normative dimensions of social-environmental affairs does not require the rejection of economic valuations of the environment. What is required is the *translation* of economic valuations (preferences) into normative claims. Unearthing the normative underpinnings of preferences was, it will be recalled, the central aim of the ethics of use (3.5.1 & 3.6). There it was argued that only by finding the values which ground preferences normatively can the distinction between 'serious' and 'non-serious' human interests be made, and legitimate human use of the environment be distinguished from illegitimate abuse. Preferences within the context of social-environmental affairs are necessary but insufficient to fully justify particular human uses of the environment. One way of looking at this has been suggested by Norton (1994). He suggests that, "preference models provide only one approach to the valuation problem and the usefulness of preference explanations is actually enhanced if they are regarded as describing only one aspect of environmental valuation. When the study of preferences is supplemented with a broader, more comprehensive treatment of other aspects of environmental values, the overall picture of environmental valuation is clarified" (Norton, 1994: 314). Rather than seeking a single commensurable unit (money values) upon which to base environmental decision-making, we ought to search for a common framework within which all valuations can be articulated. The information generated from this exercise can then be used to make decisions. Rather than make decisions on the basis of counting and comparing monetised environmental preferences, publicly comparing options in terms of their desirability directly is often more appropriate. A shorthand version of this for environmental decision-making might therefore be: 'Think

of the issue in terms of right and wrong first, and then in terms of costs and benefits once a decision has been made on the former question’.

The point is that one needs to be sensitive to the processes and contexts within which preferences are formed and re-formed; accepting them as ‘given’ and/or ‘fixed’ is inappropriate. Since people behave and value differently under different institutional contexts, preferences are therefore not exogenous but, in part, formed under specific institutional contexts. The root of the economic, market-based approach is that it assumes we ought not criticise individual preferences, since to do so would be to violate its professed value-neutrality. It is the positivism of neoclassical economic theory which needs to be criticised as much as its assumption of the commensurability of values. Reducing values to prices is to distort those values. Whereas according to Wilde the “cynic knows the price of everything and the value of nothing”, the economist knows the ‘value’ of everything because she reduces ‘value’ to the common denominator of money.

6.2.2 Free Market Environmentalism

In contrast to the neoclassical view, the free market environmentalist approaches environmental problems as stemming from a lack of clear, enforceable and tradable property rights. Environmental problems result from the ‘tragedy of the commons’, the overuse of a resource which no-one owns (the seas) or everyone owns (state regulated resources). It is important to point out that the ‘tragedy of the commons’, as famously expressed by Hardin (1968), actually represents an open-access system *not* a commons regime. As many ecologists have pointed out, commons regimes do regulate access to and use of commons resources, but do so without recourse to either the state or the market (Goldsmith *et al*, 1992; Wall, 1994). Commons regimes do not necessarily lead to resource over-exploitation such that privatising them is the only or most appropriate solution. The argument that only the creation of a market in environmental goods (and bads) will ensure a socially optimal level of environmental protection and sustainability thus begins from a debatable conceptualisation of the

problem. As mentioned earlier, a problem with the free market environmentalist approach is that it regards environmental problems as allocative ones relating to *private* environmental goods. While market logic may be appropriate in deciding issues concerning private goods and services, it is not appropriate with regard to public goods, such as environmental quality and protection.

In terms of the social valuation of environmental resources, the market-based approach is the standard one that market exchange will reveal the 'true' value of the environment. By aggregating individual preferences for environmental resources, as 'revealed' by supply and demand intersecting at the equilibrium price the 'efficient' economy-ecology metabolism will be determined. The problem with the free market environmentalist approach is that, in common with the neoclassical approach, it misrepresents the issue by reducing the question of economy-ecology interaction to a matter of market efficient allocation of environmental resources. Values are reduced to preferences and aggregated to approximate the social valuation of environmental resources (understood in economic terms). That preferences for environmental resources may not be 'given' to be 'revealed' in market exchange, but rather created and subject to how others value the environment, is not considered. However, as indicated above, there is evidence that individuals do not subjectively value the environment in terms of private costs and benefits to them, but rather perceive environmental resources as public goods and express this in moral not economic terms. In terms of figure 6.1 free market environmentalism is premised on a subjective account of value, here it is the aggregative activity of private individuals qua consumers and producers which determines the economy-ecology metabolism. Pure economic rationality is assumed to lead to an ecologically rational outcome. For many environmental public goods, for which no market can exist, such as biodiversity protection and pollution prevention, it is clear that the free market environmentalist approach is fundamentally flawed. That is, there are environmental problems (e.g. pollution) whose nature is such that they cannot be disaggregated into component parts which can be solved by exchange on the open market between property holders. Such a reductionist approach to environmental problems as Dryzek (1987) points out,

cannot deal with the integrated, interdependent character of social-ecological problems.

What is missing from the free market environmentalist perspective, is the intersubjective nature of environmental valuation, based on the idea that the environment is seen as a public goods question and not a matter for private, economic calculation. It is important to point out that not only the institution (the market) but also the language and type of information used within free market environmentalism to determine the economy-ecology metabolism that can be questioned. As pointed out in respect to ecological modernisation, for free market environmentalism, economic valuations are the only admissible forms of valuation, and prices in the market the only form of signalling used to manage environmental resources. In reducing values to preferences, free market environmentalism also 'crowds out' non-economic forms of environmental valuation, such as political, cultural or moral considerations which require intersubjective and deliberative rather than subjective and aggregative institutions. In dealing with social-environmental interaction, the 'social' cannot be reduced to the 'economic', nor the 'environmental' to the category of 'economic resource' or 'commodity'.

Recalling the argument in chapter 3, free market environmentalism also displaces the political-normative question of determining 'use' from 'abuse'. It does this by simply assuming that an environmental good or service is a privately-owned resource without reference to whether it may be a 'proscribed' resource or public resource. An example of the former is the attempt by the global biotechnology industry to establish exclusive intellectual property rights over genetic material, within the international debate concerning biodiversity.¹¹ A clear example of the latter is the 'Wise Use' movement in America which has lobbied Congress to privatise federal land. This would transform these environmental goods from public goods in which their 'use' was limited to access and recreation, into private goods where use would be much more extensive, intrusive and ecologically damaging. 'Use' under a free market

¹¹ For an overview of the debate, with particular reference to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), see Purdue (1995).

environmentalist regime, implies forms of economic development, such as mining, logging, building, hunting and generally, “unrestricted access to all natural resources for [private] economic use, benefit and profit” (Callahan, 1992: 2). From a free market environmentalist point of view, objections to such ‘abuses’ can only take the form of other private agents, such as environmental protection organisations, purchasing these lands themselves and thus preserving them. This has the effect of making environmental protection a function of wealth, where only those with sufficient purchasing power can afford environmental protection. For Eckersley, the fact that free market environmentalists are not interested in the distribution of private environmental property rights, “must be seen as a thinly disguised endorsement of the existing distribution of property rights and income...Indeed, the long-term consequence of zealously pursuing the privatisation of environmental resources...is likely to be the intensification of the already wide gap between the propertied and the propertyless, and the rich and the poor, both within and between nations” (1993b: 15).

However, just as there are positive aspects of the orthodox neoclassical solution, namely the idea of environmental regulation, likewise there may be some positive aspects that may be taken from free market environmentalism. One is the notion of stewardship and care implicit in the emphasis on private property. As Anderson and Leal (1991: 3) point out the idea of having property, a claim of ownership, to the land or some environmental resource involves a commitment to look after it, since it is in one’s interest to do so. However, as pointed out above with reference to the ‘tragedy of the commons’, the stewardship ideal implicit in the idea of property is not confined to *private* ownership. *Common* ownership can also deliver the virtues of stewardship and careful husbanding. As Goldsmith *et al* (1992) argue, there is plenty of empirical evidence from around the world that commons regimes can deliver sustainable levels of resource exploitation. As suggested above the ‘tragedy of the commons’ is as a result of ‘open access’ to an environmental resource, a commons regime is not a ‘free-for-all’ (Goldsmith *et al*, 1992: 127). Indeed, according to this line of argument, so-called environmental tragedies of the commons are in fact the result of tragedies of enclosure (Bromley, 1991). It is only if one accepts the initial argument that environmental

problems are caused by common ownership, that private property in environmental resources can be regarded as the only solution. Commons regimes in which the commons are the property of all, or all members have an equal right of access, is a different form of collective ownership than state ownership, which is the real target of free market environmentalism. Under central state ownership, it is less likely that individuals will feel they, conjointly with others, actually own the resource. Under these conditions, it is truer to say that the resource is owned by nobody. Collective ownership and regulation of environmental resources (which is not the same as centralised state ownership and control) does not stand condemned on ecological grounds. For example, one could envisage a hybrid 'commons-type regime', where environmental resources were managed by a combination of local state co-ordination together with local community, including business, participation.

A real-world approximation to this is the Local Agenda 21 initiative, which on one level can be seen as an attempt to include the local citizens as 'stakeholders' in the regulation and management of local social-environmental affairs. Local Agenda 21 was signed at the Rio Earth Summit (UNCED, 1992) which proposed the local authority level as the central sphere of governance for the achievement of sustainable development. In short, Local Agenda 21 proposes that local authorities consult with the various stakeholders within their jurisdiction, industry, trades unions, non-governmental organisations, the local community and by 1996 come up with an environmental agenda for the local area for the next century (Gordon, 1993). Although still very much in its infancy, Local Agenda 21 does exhibit aspects of what many regard as key issues central to the achievement of sustainability as a policy goal. These issues are community environmental education, democratisation, balanced partnerships and holistic policy-making (Agyeman and Evans, 1994: 20-22). Other aspects of Agenda 21 include the role of local government in mobilising citizens, land-use planning and increasing the role of local government in national and international environmental policy-making (Gordon, 1993: 152). Stated in these terms, Local Agenda 21 is close to some of the themes and aims of collective ecological management outlined in chapter 5. The emphasis on bottom-up, participatory forms of

decision-making, together with environmental education, does suggest that Local Agenda 21s can function as a form of democratic ecological governance. The emphasis in Agenda 21 on identifying ‘stakeholders’, which can be expanded to a broader concern with ‘stakeholding’ in which nonhumans and future generations can be considered stakeholders (Roddick and Dodds, 1993), highlights the role of local citizens together with the local authority, as stewards of the local environment. Coupling such local policy responses to environmental problems with local forms of economic activity such as LETS for example (discussed below, 6.5), is suggestive of a ‘commons-type’ regime which can secure an ecologically rational form of collective ecological management. Making people aware of the interconnectedness of human well-being (including economic considerations) and the environment, while also giving them a greater say in formulating local environmental policy, does highlight the connection between long-term human self-interest and environmental responsibility, which is a central aspect of ecological stewardship. Local Agenda 21, in conclusion, can encourage ecological stewardship since the virtues of stewardship need not be tied to ownership of, and direct productive relations with, the environment. Having a stake (qua citizen) in *managing* social-environmental relations is a more realistic way of thinking about how to create a sense of ecological stewardship than seeing the issue in terms of actual *ownership* of the environment (qua property-holder). Here the emphasis within the process of Local Agenda 21 on ‘empowering’ citizens (Young, 1993: 109) is as crucial as educating them. In the next chapter, I discuss how the greening of citizenship as ecological stewardship is a central aspect of ‘green’ democratic theory and practice (7.8).

One type of private ownership of environmental resources which might be seen as positive from a green point of view is the private ownership of the land as part of farming viewed as a social practice. According to Thompson, “Stewardship does not arise as a constraint on the farmer’s ownership and dominion of the land, but as a character trait, a virtue, that all farmers would hope to realise in service to the self-

interests created by ownership of the land” (1995: 74).¹² However, in this instance the argument for private ownership of the land is not for the same reasons as put forward by free market environmentalism. In the case of agricultural stewardship, private ownership is not justified on the grounds of economic productivity or private profit alone, nor is its content determined by market exchange. Indeed, according to Thompson, the family-owned farm properly speaking restrains the productivist imperative which would transform *agriculture* into ‘agri-business’ (1995: chapter 4). That is, private ownership (or secure tenure) of the land, within the context of farming as a way of life, may be justified from a green point of view. However, once the ‘biocultural’ context within which farming was a social practice of land stewardship becomes eroded, the issue of land ownership cannot be answered without raising the question of the ethical status of the transformative use of the land in terms of ‘use’ and ‘abuse’. Private ownership within the context of a social practice is not the same as private ownership within the context of a market system. As pointed out in the last chapter, collective ecological management is understood as a cultural and moral as much as an economic or political process concerning social-environmental interaction. Hence the green support for organic farming is not simply for the use of a particular ecologically-sensitive technique of agricultural husbandry, but at root a call for a return to farming as a social practice, a way of life which expresses particular biocultural values and virtues, *inter alia* ‘traditional’ forms of farming knowledge and techniques.¹³

¹² The political theory underlying this homesteading model of environmental management, which focuses on the metabolic relationship between ecology and agriculture (rather than ecology and economy), is a Jeffersonian-cum-Rousseauian vision of agrarian democracy. According to Jefferson, “cultivators of the earth are the most virtuous and independent of citizens”. Adding, in a statement which echoes the anti-urbanism and anti-commercialism of some green thinking, that, “Merchants have no country. The mere spot they stand on does not constitute so strong an attachment as that from which they draw their gains” (in Miller, 1988: 207, 210-11). As for some greens, Jefferson thought that to dwell in the country was to dwell in virtue, while living in the city was to risk corruption (Rennie-Short, 1991). For green defences of urban living, see Bookchin (1992a), Paehlke (1989) and Ferris (1992).

¹³ However, accepting the ecological rationality of concentrating human populations in cities implies that returning to farming as a social practice, at least in the short term, will be difficult. This is because of the almost complete dependence of urban populations on industrialised agriculture for their food supplies. Making cities less dependent upon industrialised agriculture will be a crucial aspect of making them more sustainable. Suggestions for way of dealing with this focus on ‘urban food

One way of looking at this is that any decision made on the economic use of the land, must be derived from, rather than independent from, a prior settling of the political-normative issue concerning social-environmental interaction. In other words, from a green point of view, ownership relations cannot be based purely on economic considerations. Within the context of collective ecological management, they must answer to political and moral considerations. There is nothing particularly novel in this. If property rights and markets themselves are politically created and maintained, they can, and from a green perspective ought to, be politically and morally constrained. Market-based solutions to social-environmental problems, such as that proposed by free market environmentalism, do not represent 'depoliticised' solutions. As contemporary political debates around environmental problems demonstrates, and as suggested in the last section, market-based approaches are as inherently political and just as normative as any of the alternatives.¹⁴ The fundamental debate is thus at the level of the moral values and political principles of free market environmentalism and its alternatives, environmental economics and collective ecological management, rather than at the level of institutional structures alone.

Having raised objections to both neoclassical environmental economics and free market environmentalism, in the next section I outline an alternative 'green political economy'.

production', as a central part of 'greening cities'. The principle of self-reliance will be discussed in 6.5 and 6.7.

¹⁴ At the end of the day one must conclude that free market environmentalism is transparently ideological, the latest phase of the right-wing libertarian political project. It is a reaction to the 'statist' implications of neoclassical environmental economics and any other solution to environmental problems in which the state has a central role or in which the market does not. This view is extended to the 'green movement' as a whole, which is perceived as a bulwark against the privatisation of environmental resources, another form of social resistance to the extension of the discipline and advantages of the free market. For most free market environmentalists, greens, whether deep or shallow, are simply another pressure group using the political process to undermine the advance of market principles. Seen within the historical context of the collapse of communism and the crisis within the western left, environmentalism is portrayed as an alternative legitimisation for socialist collectivism (Anderson & Leal, 1991; Cooper, 1989).

6.3 Green Political Economy

According to Mulberg's critique of neoclassical environmental economics, "Given that the non-traded environmental resources are not capable of objective valuation, what becomes important is the *process* whereby the subjective valuations are made known" (1992: 340). While agreeing with this, I wish to also suggest that environmental valuation is a matter of choosing institutions within which preference formulation is central, rather than aggregating given preferences. The social valuation of environmental resources (including such basic questions like what is to count as a 'resource') is thus, at root, a matter of choosing an institutional setting within which such valuations are formed.

Recalling the earlier discussion (3.4) of how being human carries with it broad ways of viewing and relating to the world, green political economy, unlike traditional theories of political economy, introduces debate as to what is to count as an economic resource. 'Resources' as much as 'preferences' within green political economy are not taken as exogenously given. This is a different, and more radical, sense of resources not being 'given', i.e. infinite in quantity and always available, which characterised the early 'limits to growth' green movement. Substituting 'resources' for 'food', Illich's statement that, "It is human to see the environment made up of three kinds of things: foods, proscribed edibles and non-food" (1981: 29), expresses this normative dimension of green political economy. In this way one can view the radical deep ecology argument for 'wilderness' as a call for transforming current resources into 'proscribed resources'. This is consistent with the 'ethics of use' (3.5) and the aim of collective ecological management to find symbiotic as well as sustainable relations between social and natural systems. Another example is how technological and scientific development bring what was previously a 'non-resource' into the realm of a possible resource. From a green political economy point of view, a collective judgement has to be made as to whether it is to count as a 'resource' or a 'proscribed resource'. An obvious example of this is biotechnology, where genetic information (non-resource) is now poised between those who see it as a legitimate new resource,

and those who raise normative objections to this development, and wish to either permit the technology to development but place genetic information in the category of 'proscribed resource', or abandon the technology completely and maintain genetic information as a 'non-resource'.¹⁵ A more historical example is the movement of slave labour from the category of 'resource' to that of 'proscribed resource'. The same argument is used by contemporary animal rights activists who in describing animals as 'slaves' seek to convey not only their moral condemnation of this situation, but do so by tapping into a well-established and intuitively appealing moral tradition and idiom. This is the idiom of 'rights' as discussed in chapter 3 (3.3)

Unlike both neoclassical environmental economics and free market environmentalism, green political economy is distinguished by holding that what environmental management requires, initially, is a political and deliberative process by which collective valuations of the environment can be articulated, and used as the basis of determining the economy-ecology metabolism. This is an intersubjective process of deliberation. What it ultimately comes down to is that institutional settings are required in which individuals are asked to make *judgements* about how *we* as a collective are to value/use the environment, as opposed to simply express 'willingness to pay' (neoclassical environmental economics) or private economic calculations of environmental resources (free market environmentalism). This is another way of saying that the rationality that characterises green political economy is, as indicated in the last chapter, ecological rationality (5.3). The rationality of green political economy

¹⁵ The reason why green political economy is self-consciously normative lies partly in the fact that it is premised on the idea that humans have no 'natural' niche (5.2, 5.8). If we add to the fact that humans create their own niche, through their technological capacities, then it becomes possible to see the moral and political dilemma that shadows green politics in all its starkness. This dilemma consists in seeing that almost everything on the planet (and other planets) can potentially become a resource. When science and technology proceed to transform previous non-resources into potential resources, the moral question is whether to place the latter into the category of 'proscribed resources', or forego the development and maintain the 'non-resource' status of the natural entity. This raises different issues from debates concerning turning current environmental resources into 'proscribed resources', such as vegetarianism and wilderness protection. Practically speaking, it may be easier to proscribe potential rather than current resources, since the former have yet to become embedded within particular ways of life. However, it would be a mistake to think that the only arguments in favour of permitting non-resources to be used as resources, such as genetic material, are predominantly economic, although this characterises most cases. There are also medical, scientific and other serious human interests at stake.

in seeking to establish sustainable and symbiotic social-environmental relations can be understood as a form of communicative rationality within which instrumental rationality is nested. That is, an instrumental orientation towards the nonhuman world is not rejected within green political economy. Rather it seeks to 're-calibrate' this orientation according to the (intra-human) communicative norms of an ethics of use. This as argued later (6.5) is what is meant by green political economy seeking to 're-embed' the economy within society, as a necessary prelude to re-integrating economy and ecology.

In keeping with the spirit of collective ecological management, arguing for the priority of an intersubjective approach to environmental valuation does not mean that this institutional structure will be applied over the full range of economy-ecology affairs. In other words, the wholesale politicisation of the economy is not envisaged. On the one hand, politicisation of economy-ecology interaction is not, pace free market environmentalism, equated with state administration. Rather there are a range of possible institutional designs which would democratise environmental management without meaning that each citizen has to vote or actively participate in determining every aspect of the economy-ecology metabolism. The idea that only direct democracy is consistent with green politics will be critically examined in the next chapter where a distinction is drawn between deliberative, direct and participatory forms of democracy (7.4.2). The real issues are democratic accountability and opportunities for citizen participation and input into the environmental decision-making process.

The institutional setting for determining the metabolism ought to be appropriate to the particular issue at hand. As green theorists and political economists have pointed out, there needs to be a distinction drawn between macro and micro level economic activity (Porritt, 1984; Daly and Cobb, 1990) and, as pointed out in the last chapter, between decision making and decision-recommending institutions. For example, macro-economic issues such as threshold levels for the environmental impact of the economy, and extra-economic, political-normative ones as to *what* is to count as a resource and *how* they are to be used, can be determined politically, not so much *by* the state as *through* political institutions. Clearly, the institution should be appropriate

to the type of social-environmental issue under consideration, as suggested by the implementation of Local Agenda 21s. Collective ecological management and green political economy do not suppose that the nation-state is the most appropriate institution for dealing with all environmental problems. As Lindblom has pointed out (1977: 76-89), centralised institutions have, “strong thumbs, no fingers”, but as Dryzek points out, ecological rationality demands ‘nimble green fingers’ (1987: 109), as much as regulatory powers. Institutional examples of such nimble fingers include public enquiries into land use which set their own agenda, with powers for example to set the parameters within which environmental management is to take place. That is, these deliberative, consultative bodies do not themselves make decisions concerning the actual details of environmental management, but are decision-recommending bodies, made up of various groups of ‘stakeholders’ (Jacobs, 1996). At the same time, where there are already existing commons regimes or the possibility of creating one, these regimes would also figure as another nimble and green finger to complement the thumbs of central government. Indeed, as suggested earlier, it may be possible to integrate local state environmental regulation within a commons regime as a form of ecological governance.

Actual economic organisation and micro-level decision making may be left to the market (Jacobs, 1991), or non-market institutions (O’Neill, 1993; Achterberg, 1996), including communities (Goldsmith *et al*, 1992; Fairlie *et al*, 1995), as well as local and national state institutions. Once the political-normative task of deciding which institutions are appropriate to which aspects of managing the economy-ecology metabolism, various institutional settings and principles at different levels may be used. In conjunction with the distinction between macro and micro levels it may be that an ecologically rational economy-ecology metabolism calls for the division of the economy along functional and ecological lines as a precondition for effective environmental management. In terms of the institutions for the governance of the economy-ecology metabolism, it may be expected that collective ecological management will make use of market, state and sub-state institutions and those associated with community, as well as combinations of them.

Within intersubjective valuation of environmental resources, the model of the relationship between state and civil society is more appropriate than that between state and market. In other words, the institutional focus of collective ecological management and green political economy lies in the relationship between state (local and national), non-state (market) as well as non-market civil institutions (O'Neill, 1993) and social practices. Green political economy, unlike orthodox economic theory, is an institutional economic theory (Jacobs 1994; Dryzek, 1996). That is, green political economy rejects the methodological individualism which underpins the neoclassical and free market environmentalist approaches, seeing as Jacobs suggests, "that economic behaviour is culturally determined, and that institutions in society (such as governments, regulations and property rights) are not 'market imperfections' but the very structures which allow markets to operate" (1994: 84). The Local Agenda 21 process discussed above, and ecological management at the level of the nation-state discussed in the last chapter (5.9), are examples of this institutional focus of green political economy. This institutional dimension also relates to the critique above of the neoclassical and free market environmentalism views of environmental valuation. Both assume the market as the appropriate institutional setting, one effect of which is the reduction of values to preferences. In part, this institutional focus marks green political economy as returning to the tradition of classical political economy via a critique of neoclassical economic theory. Other classical political economy themes include its focus on moral virtue (6.7), the question of the relationship between economic organisation and the social order, expanded to include the social-environmental order, as well as the explicit attention to the political-normative context of economy-ecology relations. Part of what this involves is a reconceptualisation of the sphere of the 'political', expanding it beyond a nation-state-centric view (Bookchin, 1992a), as well as a reconceptualisation not only of the 'economy' as suggested by Mellor (1992, 1995) and Hayward (1995), but also the 'market'.

6.4 The 'Market', Capitalism and Markets

The political economy of collective ecological management is characterised by an instrumental valuation of the state and market system.¹⁶ In this section the place and conception of the market within green political economy will be examined.

Following Polanyi, we may say that there is no such thing as *The* market, rather there is a 'market system' by which he meant a system of *self-regulating markets*. According to him, "Market economy implies a self-regulating system of markets; in slightly more technical terms, it is an economy directed by market prices and nothing but market prices" (1957: 43). In this way, both neoclassical environmental economics and free market environmentalism work within this market economy, since both seek to influence economy-ecology interaction by either manipulating the price mechanism or extending its scope. As should be clear by now, green political economy is sceptical of the claim that the material metabolism between economy and environment be regulated primarily by the market system and the price mechanism. With Polanyi and Mulberg, and against the Austrian school of economic theory, green political economy holds that the market system is not an 'organic' or spontaneous creation. Rather as Mulberg points out, "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" (1992: 340).¹⁷

It is the self-regulating principle of the pure 'free' market system which is problematic from a green political economy point of view. It removes political and other non-economic considerations from determining economy-ecology relations. As discussed further below (6.6), this self-regulating, self-referential aspect of the market economy also disembeds the economy from society. In the language of systems

¹⁶ The instrumental view of the state, outlined in the last chapter, will be further developed in the next one. There I argue that the idea of the state as separate from, and instrumental to, civil society is a starting point for green democratic theory.

¹⁷ The new right can be viewed as seeking to set the market free, paradoxically by the use of state power. The libertarian view is not simply rolling back the state, but using the state to put in place the legal and legislative infrastructure to permit and facilitate the extension of the market system. Hence the common 'free market, strong state' synopsis of its programme.

theory, the logic of the self-regulating market system is to separate itself from the wider social and political systems to become an autonomous sub-system in its own right (Habermas, 1974; Offe, 1984). The green suspicion of the modern market economy had been eloquently expressed by Polanyi, “the idea of a self-adjusting market implied a stark utopia. Such an institution could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society; it would have physically destroyed man and transformed his surroundings into a wilderness” (1957: 3). A society in which a system of self-regulating markets was the main social choice mechanism would be not just ecological irrational, but also socially destructive. Like the world of perfectly competitive markets which are used to justify and explain orthodox economic theory, a completely self-regulating market system is an equally abstract, if more dangerous, fiction. As Gorz notes, such a vision, which he claims is at the heart of capitalism, represents economic rationality finally set free of all restraint (1989: 122).

What I want to argue here is that it is not markets *per se* that greens object to, or ought to object to, but certain features of the contemporary capitalist market system which mitigate against the resolution of the ecological crisis and the realisation of green values. A revised understanding of the market, as an uncoerced mechanism of exchange, can and does find a legitimate place at the heart of green political economy as one institutional setting of collective ecological management. Structural features of the globalised capitalist market constitute the real obstacles to the integration of the economy and the wider economy of nature. On this reading, green politics is anti-capitalist in the sense that the imperative for capital accumulation as expressed in the imperative for economic growth and the operation of the global market economy is incompatible with the green assertion of ecological limits to growth and the importance of socially re-embedding the economy by democratically managing it. It is also anti-capitalist to the extent that it criticises the way in which values are reduced to prices within the operation of the capitalist market. But although it may be anti-capitalist, this does not necessarily mean that it is against the institution of the market. The question is rather in what ways this conceptualisation of the market as a social

institution for uncoerced economic exchange can be a part of collective ecological management. That is, finding ways in which the market can contribute to or at least not compromise an ecologically rational metabolism.

Addressing the global dimensions of the contemporary market system, Sachs outlines a good starting point for discussion. According to him, “we have to finally abandon the idea of a homogeneous unified market from the village to the global level, where the factors of production can be freely moved around, and to conceive of restricted markets, where political norms limit the scope and range of market activities without emasculating their potential for innovation and liberty” (1990: 336). Sach’s argument is concerned with presenting the green case for delinking from the world economy, discussed below, and thus largely a reactive or defensive argument for constraining the presently existing global market. However, alongside this defensive argument there is also a more positive sense of the market within green political economy. This is a conception of the market which is qualitatively as well as quantitatively different from the present market economy. At the same time this discussion of the market differs from those like Jacobs (1992, 1995), Eckersley (1992a, 1993a) and de Geus (1996), who are close to the ecological modernisation model on this issue. It differs by not taking the presently constructed market system as ‘given’ or the best means by which to realise ecological ends. As will become clear, this is partly to do with the idea that an ecological reconceptualisation of the ‘economy’, means that current conceptions of the ‘economy’, and thus the market, are incomplete from a green political economy viewpoint. Here I follow a theme within green political economy suggested by writers such as Illich (1981), Hayward (1995) and Mellor (1995), in which the relationship between the ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ economies, the spheres of production and reproduction are central to understanding the relationship between economy and ecology.

This ‘green’ conceptualisation of the market draws heavily on local, community-based economic practices and systems that one finds throughout the literature on green political economy. The non-capitalist market within green political economy is generally understood to refer to the operation of voluntary exchange primarily at the

level of the local economy. Examples of this market institution include local forms of money systems such as Local Employment and Trading Systems [LETS] (Greco, 1994; Lang, 1994; Williams, 1995), community economic development strategies (Shragge (ed.), 1993), co-operatives and alternative producer-consumer relations, and combinations of municipal economic and political governance of the local economy (Mellor, 1995). What all these local economic systems share, apart from their shared identity as examples of non-capitalist market institutions, is the decentralist aim of attempting to make local economies as self-reliant and self-determining as possible. This aim, to make local economies as autonomous as possible, is most often expressed within green literature as the idea that local needs should be met locally.¹⁸ In this understanding of the market economy, the primary virtue of the market rests in the voluntary exchange of goods and services it facilitates, and its role in encouraging innovation, rather than as facilitating the process of capital accumulation. A market whose primary purpose is to facilitate trade and exchange at the local level, keeping locally produced wealth locally, as well as meeting needs locally as much as possible, while not completely eroding the potential for capital accumulation at this level, does make a significant break with the economic logic of accumulation and extensive trade, which characterises the contemporary global capitalist system. However, quite apart from the tendency of *unregulated* markets to encourage an economy-ecology metabolism which is unlikely to be 'ecologically rational', in the narrow sense of sustainability, the green stress on local production and limiting trade is also advanced for other reasons to do with green views about autonomy and freedom as argued below (6.7).

¹⁸ It is worth pointing out that this has much in common with the bioregional distinction between 'ecosphere' and 'biosphere' perspectives and a central claim of social ecology, mentioned in chapter 4 (4.3). The non-capitalist market as a central part of local economic autonomy and self-reliance can be seen as a decoupling of the local economy from the global economy. That is, moving from a biospheric model of the relationship between the economy and the environment to an ecospheric model.

6.5 The Local Market Economy and Green Political Economy

Local Employment and Trading Systems [LETS] can be viewed as a non-capitalist market economy the main characteristic of which is that the medium of exchange is created and regulated at the local rather than the national level. It is geared towards exchange and trade rather than accumulation, and rather than representing an alternative currency system, it is closer to the mark to describe it as an extended or credit barter system. In a LETS system a local medium of exchange is created along with a directory of members offers and wants, which operates as an exchange system matching wants and offers facilitated by the local (nominal), exchange unit. In terms of the distinction drawn earlier between macro and micro-economic levels, the LETS economy is a market economy at the local level but one where there is no strict boundary between economic and social spheres. It represents the so-called 'informal' economy of everyday life, sometimes called the 'social economy', in which trade and exchange is neither related to or directly dependent upon the 'formal' market system or the state (Henderson *et al*, 1990; Illich, 1981; Latouche, 1993).¹⁹ In this section I wish to use LETS as a way to present some of the key aspects of green political economy and its conception of the market.

The LETS economy is a type of market economy unlike the formal market, in which the benefits of an uncoerced institutional mechanism for trade and exchange can be enjoyed by keeping the scope of the market within socially defined bounds. The economics of LETS is anti-accumulation in the sense that the main purpose of the system is to facilitate trade and exchange within a closed system. Trade is confined within a local network of individuals, since the medium of exchange is only valid within

¹⁹ Although LETS and other aspects of what one might call the green local market economy, have evolved and presently exist alongside the formal market system, there is a debate as to whether they supplement or actively undermine the formal market economy. The question of whether a LETS economy could exist without the formal market is not something that is addressed here. LETS may be viewed as both an alternative and a complement to the current global market, as the local economy becomes more established in meeting people's needs, the less dependent individuals will be upon the global economy. Therefore while it is not envisaged that the present global market economy will be abolished, the logic of the green local market economy is for the global economy to shrink in significance over time.

that system. The LETS local market economy is geared to encouraging the circulation of local currency within the local economy, thus stimulating exchange, employment, production and moderate consumption, rather than accumulating wealth in the form of local currency credits (Lang, 1994; Greco, 1994). It is a bounded economy, delimited by membership and place.²⁰

Meeting local needs locally, avoids the ecological degradation caused by global patterns of trade which require vast transport and infrastructure systems. In such an economy the 'externalities' of pollution and other forms of ecological degradation may be prevented from arising in the first place, because the scale of the economy modifies its environmental impact, while the move towards economic self-reliance also increases the local economy's dependence upon, and impact on, the local environment. While considerations such as economies of scale would of course be taken into consideration in deciding economic activities, the point is that these economic considerations would not automatically trump non-economic considerations. Rather, 'economies of scale' would have to be judged relative to ecological considerations of environmental impact, long-term sustainability etc., so that what seems an economy (i.e. a benefit) is not in fact an ecological cost. While it makes economic sense (in terms of efficiency and maximisation) to make economies of scale an important factor in making economic decisions, it may not make ecological sense (in terms of sustainability which involves considerations of *optimality* rather than *maximisation*). It may be that many economies of scale turn out to be ecologically irrational. One reason for this is that although a free market economy may deliver an optimum *allocation* of resources within the economy, it is unlikely to result in an optimum *scale* of the economy relative to its environment (Eckersley, 1991: 6). According to Daly and Cobb, "Environmental degradation must be shown to result from the *scale of the economy in general*, rather

²⁰ One way of looking at this view of the local market is to see it as an attempt to capture some of the features of the original pre-capitalist meaning of the market. Notwithstanding the nostalgia for a return to a simpler, less complex way of life which undoubtedly underpins some arguments for local forms of economic regulation and development, and also the many negative features of the pre-capitalist economy, nevertheless there are good reasons why greens have and ought to make this local market-based economy a central part of their political economy. Strategically speaking, the local market economy may be both a (short-term) complement to, as well as a possible (long-term) substitute for, the present arrangement of national and global economies.

than only from allocative mistakes that can be corrected while throughput continues to grow exponentially” (1990: 368: emphasis added). ‘Economies of scale’ may increase the scale of the economy beyond that which the environment can sustainably support. The problem with orthodox economic theory in this respect is that a Pareto-optimal allocation of resources does not say anything about the ecological sustainability of that scale of resource use.

Exporting pollution is less likely within a locally-based economy, since the scale and type of technology and production processes used are governed by ecological and not just economic considerations. It is in the interest of the local (human) community to ensure that its economy does not undermine its ecological basis. According to Dryzek, local control over economy-ecology metabolism is more efficient in terms of negative feedback than non-local control (1987: 225). Within the context of the present global economic system, the green local market economy perspective encourages local self-reliance as a positive benefit to be gained from delinking from the global economy (Sachs, 1990; Morris, 1990). Thus, this can be viewed as a ‘bioregional’ approach of ‘greening the whole by greening the parts’.

From an economic point of view, by far the biggest distinction between local market economy and capitalist market economy is the greater immobility of capital. Paradoxically this assumption of capital immobility is at the heart of orthodox economic arguments for the specialisation of production and international trade, as expressed in the law of comparative advantage. The problem is that capital is mobile at the global level, particularly since the early 1980s deregulation movement across the western economies. The international mobility of capital mean that, “investment is governed by absolute profitability and not by comparative advantage” (Daly & Cobb, 1990: 216). In encouraging capital immobility, so that industries as well as investment stay within the community, green political economy simply makes the assumptions of orthodox economic theory real rather than abstract. With capital immobility any trade that does take place, which from the ecological point of view should be progressively minimised as we move from local to regional to national and global levels, will be as a result of comparative advantage. This concurs with Adam Smith’s argument that

specialisation of production is limited by the extent of the market; the more specialised is production the larger the market and trade required to absorb it.

Specialisation within the contemporary global market offers an extreme example of the dangers of over-dependence on trade. An economy which has placed a large part of its domestic capital into some specialised area of production is vulnerable to the vagaries of the global market to secure the goods and services it needs, as countless 'developing' countries found to their cost in the 1980s. This example works all the way down from national economies operating within the global market, to local economies operating within national markets. It is not specialisation that is the problem but over-specialisation that leads to over-dependence upon imports and/or a dependence upon attracting footloose international capital. The green argument is against excessive trade on both ecological grounds (transport costs), outlined above, but also on the grounds that trade decreases local economic self-determination, because an over-reliance on trade weakens the ability of the local economy to meet its own needs from within. Keynes' thinking on the location of production is close to the green position. According to him, "Ideas, knowledge, science, hospitality, travel—these are the things which should of their nature be international. But let goods be homespun whenever it is reasonably and conveniently possible and, above all, let finance be primarily national" (in Morris, 1990: 195). Keynes' concern that the monetary dimension of the economy be localised is something with which green political economy fully agrees carrying it further as in LETS, by encouraging currency to be created and controlled at the local level of the community. The issue of money within the economy is dealt with below (6.6.1). The key to green political economy is its stress on decreasing, as far as possible, the gap between production and consumption, decreasing the need for extensive trade. Part of the green argument against global trade is that the existence of a global market with powerful economic actors such as multi-nationals and institutions such as the World Bank and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, mean that poor countries trade under disadvantageous conditions. Green political economy is thus not against trade, rather it is against unnecessary and forced trading relations.

Increased dependence upon trade and foreign investment is the price to be paid for enjoying the range of goods and services that access to the global market offers, given of course that one has 'effective demand', the money, to purchase these goods. The green alternative to the precarious benefits of this situation is increased economic self-reliance, where quality of life conceptions of welfare may compensate for a more limited range of goods and where increases in productivity may be 'cashed out' in more leisure time rather than increased wages.²¹ And as argued below, from the green point of view being locked into the global economy and dependence upon trade also implies weakening economic self-determination and cultural diversity.

It is important to point out that this view of the self-reliant economy differs from arguments for complete self-sufficiency which would lead to autarky. Extensive trade and exchange are discouraged, but, given the spread of resources on the planet, arguing for complete self-sufficiency would leave some resource-poor economies in a worse position than they need be in the absence of trade and redistribution. At the same time, green political economy as outlined here does not have an anti-materialist bias in the way that some green theories criticise the 'immorality' or 'spiritually corrupting' effects of consumerism and the consumer society. Martell's view that, "greens perhaps sometimes undervalue the extent to which material acquisition and consumption can be a source of personal fulfilment" and that, "advances in material standards of living are as likely as frugality to further intellectual and spiritual fulfilment" (1994: 49-50) is closer to the position being defended here than the anti-consumerism of some green positions. The case for decreasing dependence upon trade is not an attempt to smuggle in an anti-materialism at the level of green principle. Rather its basis is to found in the ecological arguments against trade and, as argued below (6.7), in the erosion of self-determination and a conception of liberty as

²¹ One of the standard observations of worker-owned firms and co-operatives has been that after a threshold income level has been reached, increases in productivity lead to a reduction in working hours. In neoclassical economics this is known as the 'backward bending labour supply curve', where after some threshold income level has been reached, increases in productivity mean more leisure rather than more production or income. As argued later in chapter 7 (7.9.1), this economic view is premised on an instrumental view of work engaged in for monetary reward. For an examination of the relationship between worker co-operatives and green theory, see Carter (1996).

independence and the balance between the claims of 'autonomy' and those of 'welfare'.

Together with the argument for self-reliance, not being geared primarily towards capital accumulation means the imperative as well as the ability of the local economy to grow after the manner of current national economies is absent. If we also add to this the regulative role of the state, both local and central, in implementing environmental standards, there is a strong case to be made that economic decentralisation of the type represented by local market economies may play a central part in ensuring both local and national economic-ecological harmony. If the economy's ability to expand is limited by the extent of the market, in ecological terms the smaller the market the less likely it is that the economy will expand beyond its ecological parameters. This is one way of interpreting what would be entailed by a move from a 'biosphere' view to a more 'ecosphere' one discussed in chapter 4 (4.3). Lessening dependence upon the whole world as one's 'ecological hinterland' implies a much closer link between economic activity and the ecological conditions which facilitate that activity. That is, the dependence of the economy on ecological goods and services, is more visible due to the shortened negative feed-back relations, when the economy is embedded in local rather than using the resources of distant ecosystems or the biosphere as a whole. However, the 'ecological basis' of the human economy lies somewhere between 'ecosystem' and 'biosphere', and therefore trade is not ruled out. But the more an economy moves from an ecospheric to a biospheric ecological base, the less likely is it that 'stewardship' will characterise its metabolism with nature.

At the same time this self-limiting character of local market economies harks back to an earlier tradition of political economy associated with Aristotle. This refers to the distinction Aristotle made between *chrematistics* and *oikonomia* within political economy. *Chrematistics* is defined as that branch of political economy relating to the manipulation of property, wealth and currency so as to maximise short-term returns to the property-owner. *Chrematistics*, in short, mistakes a means to be an end, and according to Aristotle it is characteristic of this form of acquisition that "there is no limit to the end it seeks; and the end it seeks is wealth of the sort we have mentioned

[i.e., wealth in the form of currency] and the mere acquisition of money” (1948: 1257b). *Oikonomia*, by contrast, is, according to Aristotle, a limited form of acquisition. Its central concern is the ‘management of the household’ geared towards long-term maintenance of the welfare for all household members. The limited nature of this form of acquisition is given by Aristotle thus: “the amount of household property which suffices for a good life is not unlimited” (1948: 1236b). It is clear that what sustainable development requires is integrating the ‘management of the household’ with the ‘economy of the household’; that is integrating economy and ecology. This division between *chrematistics* and *oikonomia* can be mapped on to the distinction being made here between the capitalist market system and local, non-capitalist economic organisation in which market exchange plays a part.²² This distinction represents the separation of the economy and the ‘economic motive’ (economic rationality) from social relations and other forms of rationality (Polanyi, 1957: 54), most notably in this case, ecological rationality (O’Neill, 1993: 169). In this distinction lies one of the principal origins of the ‘disembedding’ of the economy from the society its supports and within which it is located.

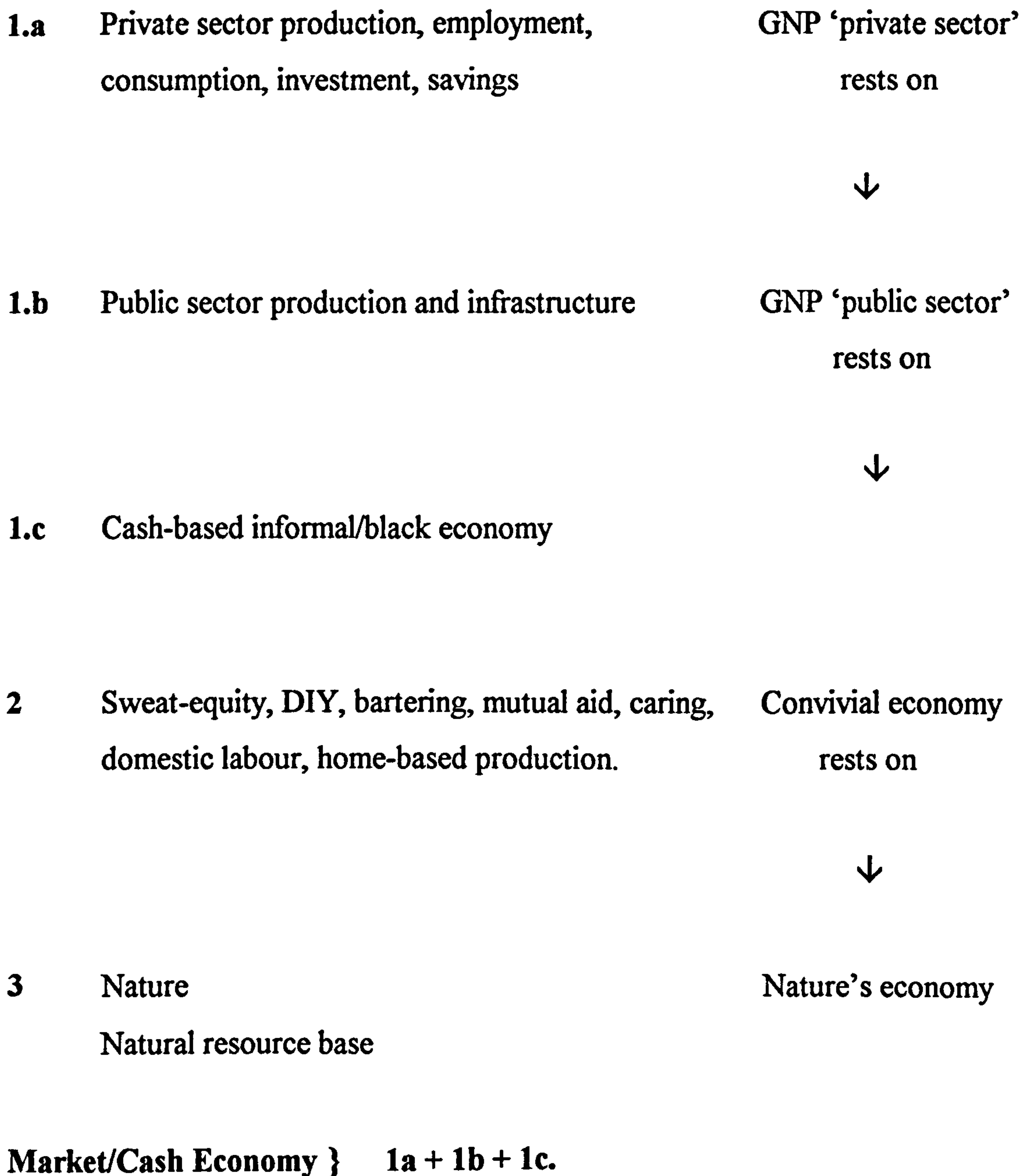
The local market economy is one which is not just quantitatively different (in terms of overall ecological impact) but also qualitatively different from the contemporary capitalist market economy. As a market system where individual producers and consumers meet face-to-face, a LETS economy may lead to the sort of many-sided relations between community members of the type argued for by eco-anarchists in chapter 4. LETS offers one way in which the local market system may re-integrate the economy and the wider social system as a necessary prelude to the re-harmonisation of society and environment. Re-embedding of the economy within society is thus a necessary step on the way to re-integrating the human economy and nature’s economy.

²² It may be that as we move from global, to national and local levels, the distinction between ‘capitalist’ and ‘non-capitalist’ becomes less acute. That is, once the self-limiting character and aim of self-reliance and trade rather than accumulation constitute the logic of the economy, whether the system is ‘capitalist’ in other respects, such as private property, or ownership of the means of production, may be irrelevant *from the ecological perspective of sustainability*. Of course, other, non-ecological, standard objections could be raised against the capitalist organisation of the local economy.

The local economy may also be said to display characteristics of a 'convivial economy' (Illich, 1975), a long-standing green view of a more 'human-scale' and sustainable economy, in which 'responsibly limited tools' and technology are used by people rather than vice versa. The economics of the local economy finds a counterpart in the 'soft technologies' of alternative energy production and the organisation of economic production. This also resonates with the 'small is beautiful' philosophy associated with Schumacher (1973), and his ambition to create an 'economics as if people really mattered'. As Latouche has pointed out, "One goal of many Green groups is to recreate a convivial society through deliberate construction of small-scale community and solidarity networks of all sorts" (1993: 237). Where this model of the local economy differs from Illich's 'convivial economy' is that although the economy as presented here includes, "activities of people when they are not motivated by thoughts of exchange...non-market related activities through which people satisfy everyday needs" (1981: 57), it also includes activities geared towards exchange, although as far as possible, within the local market as opposed to the global economy.²³ In terms of the distinction drawn in figure 6.2 between the shadow, convivial and formal economies, the green local economy and green political economy represent a redefinition of the 'economic sphere'. On one level, the local economy can be located within the informal economy, but between the convivial and the shadow or black economy. At another level, it may be argued to represent an alternative formal economy in that although it is geared towards exchange, it works with a different economic rationality as well as a different currency and financial substructure, than the formal or cash economy.

²³ Illich coins the term 'shadow economy' to describe those activities "which support the formal economy not social subsistence" (1981: 100), while the convivial economy comprises activities which are geared towards social subsistence. A fully convivial economy is perhaps only possible if the economy has not undergone modernisation, hence Illich's concern with warning developing countries about the dangers of what he calls the 'modernisation of poverty' and the 'radical monopolisation of needs' that modernisation brings.

Figure 6.2. Adaptation of Henderson's model of the 'total productive system of an industrial society' (Henderson *et al*, 1990).



From an ecological point of view, all purposive human activities which impact upon the environment can be considered as particular instances of the metabolism between the human and the natural economy. That is, from a green political economy perspective, the fact that one's activity does not command a price or is not registered within the formal market economy, does not make it any the less an economic-ecological activity. The logic of this position leads to the reconceptualisation of the 'human economy' within green politics, i.e., its extension to include all purposive activity which impacts upon the environment as part of the metabolism between society and nature. Here I follow Hayward's suggestion that, "If a unified theory of economics and ecology is to be possible, it will neither hypostatize (*sic*) an opposition between economy and ecology nor posit a straightforward identity of the two" (1995: 116). Green political economy is an attempt to construct a unified theory of economics and ecology.²⁴ Its aim is to argue that the resolution of the ecological crisis demands a redefinition of what we mean by the 'human economy' in order that the latter be brought into harmony with the environment.

In just the same way that non-monetised activities are considered a legitimate part of the metabolism between economy and ecology, it also follows that such non-monetised activities cannot be viewed as 'unproductive' or valueless.²⁵ As Hayward (1995), Mellor (1992, 1995) Sallah (1995) and feminist writers have argued, what is missing from orthodox theories of political economy is the whole realm of

²⁴ This search for a unified theory which would integrate economics and ecology has long been the goal of many early ecological economists, from Boulding (1966), Daly (1973), to Georgescu-Roegen (1971, 1976). The roots of this unified theory may be found as much in the application of economic ideas and concepts such as production, consumption, exchange and labour to the workings of the natural world, as to the more general ecological idea that the human economy be viewed as dependently embedded within the wider economy of nature. In its early development, as Worster points out, the science of ecology was viewed as the application of economic analysis to nature (1994: 291-94). This one-sided influence of economics on ecology had to wait until the 1950s and 1960s for the reverse, i.e. the application of ecological analysis to economics, to occur.

²⁵ In the same way that ecological activity cannot be viewed as valueless within the context of the social-environment metabolism. Although it is surely going too far as to demand recognition of 'nature's labour', it does not seem inappropriate to talk of recognising nature's contribution to the human economy. The latter is understood as going beyond nature as a set of resources to include a notion of nature as the natural 'conditions of production' (O'Connor, 1991) without which human productive activity would be impossible. One way of honouring 'nature's labour' may be to say that it is intrinsically valuable as well as instrumentally valuable, in the same way that green political economy proposes that human labour is intrinsically as well as instrumentally valuable.

‘reproduction’. Contemporary orthodox political economies, whether liberal, Marxist or social democratic, identify production in such a way as to exclude types of labour, and forms of intentional activity which are vital to the human economy as a whole, including that part co-extensive with commodity exchange. Just as nature’s economy would exist without the human economy, indeed it is the contention of radical deep ecologists that nature would be better off without human activity, so green political economy holds that the human economy can exist without the money/formal/market economy. However, green political economy differs from those for whom the only ecologically rational metabolism between society and environment is the complete rejection of the market economy and the return to a completely ‘convivial economy’. What green political economy attempts to highlight is the *desirability* (not the necessity) of a balance between the formal and informal parts of the human economy as a *necessary* part of creating a balance between the economy and the wider economy of nature. The reason for this is that the choice of a balance between the informal and formal economy, is a matter of collective choice to be made under the rubric of ‘freedom’ rather than ‘necessity’. That is, it is a democratic choice concerning the sort of society we wish to have. If the ‘choice’ of the metabolism is under the rubric of necessity, there is a greater chance that this political choice may be ‘technocratically constrained’ and undemocratic.²⁶

While orthodox theories of political economy focus almost exclusively on the formal or monetised economy, green political economy attempts to show the relationship between the ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ sectors of a society’s economy. This aim of green political economy is concerned with demonstrating how the formal, monetised economy is dependent upon the non-monetised economy which in turn is dependent upon the environment. Henderson’s model of the ‘total productive system of an industrial society’ (Figure 6.2) represents the main thrust of the green political economy perspective. In presenting and understanding the economy in this way, green

²⁶ While accepting the argument that the formal economy must be maintained politically, so as to prevent it undermining the natural and social conditions of the human economy, it is not the case that concerns of the human economy become co-extensive with politics. There needs to be a separation as well as a connection between economy and polity.

political economy attempts to overcome what it perceives as the inadequacies of contemporary economic thought. These weaknesses include the model of the economy as a closed system ecologically, creating the illusion that the human economy is separate from the natural world and self-generating, just as markets are assumed to be self-regulating. Another standard green argument is the critique of orthodox economic measurements of social welfare/wealth, such as GNP (Eckersley, 1992b, 1993a) in favour of alternative qualitative indicators or the radical alternative of abandoning the search for such indicators.²⁷ As such green political economy represents a demand for the radical reconceptualisation of economic theory. To some extent, it is part of a search for a 'post-industrial' (but not necessarily anti-industrial, as argued below in 6.7) political economy, premised on the critique of the industrial economics of contemporary economic theory. As such green political economy is consistent within Giarni's view that,

'economics' for the last two centuries has been the 'economics of industrialization' and not of the economy, which includes all assets and efforts that contribute to welfare...ecological and other current movements (e.g. women's liberation etc.) are all directed at the rehabilitation of non-monetized assets and activities which contribute to wealth and welfare and which have been marginalized or left out of account in the traditional economic (and socio-economic) system. (Giarni, 1980: 369)

²⁷ The radical view of abandoning trying to construct such indicators or measures of social welfare begins, like standard green arguments, from a critique of orthodox indicators such as GNP. However this radical view rejects GNP because it is a form of social accounting and, on this radical view, part of a surveillance imperative that is part and parcel of the present state system. Such critics point out that the state-centred nature of GNP can be seen in its origins, where it was used not so much as a measure of social welfare, or even of aggregate demand in the economy, but to enable state actors to determine the war-fighting capacity of society. From these origins, such indicators are usually held to develop into central components of state welfare policy, such measurements being used to weaken citizen input into what counted as welfare and how it was to be achieved (Keane, 1988), as well as being a central plank in the process of 'nation-building' as a constitutive part of modernisation (Latouche, 1993). Thus some greens reject orthodox indicators not just because they are inaccurate/meaningless, but because they empower the state to determine what counts as welfare as well as determining how best to achieve a given level of 'welfare', disempowering the individual to define their own conception of welfare (Keane, 1988; Illich, 1973).

The integration of economy and ecology requires a green political economy perspective which goes beyond the 'greening' of orthodox economic thought, as given by neoclassical environmental economics. The latter, while useful, does not capture the full *metabolic* character of the relationship between the human and the natural economies. Green political economy represents a move away from thinking about the metabolism with nature through monetised exchange on the formal market. While the latter will continue to be a major feature of most economies, it should not be viewed as the only or most appropriate model for the human economy when the latter's dependence upon ecological conditions increasingly raises questions of right and wrong, and not simply costs and benefits.

6.6 Money and Green Political Economy

Following the Aristotelian distinction between *oikonomia* and *chrematistics*, which gives rise to the 'household' and the 'market' as competing models of political economy, the LETS economy highlights a centrally important aspect of green political economy. This has to do with the critique of money in economic activity that has been developed by writers sympathetic to the green position, such as O'Neill (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c), Lee (1989) and Altvater (1993). According to Aristotle, chrematistic activity is concerned with accumulating currency, the means of exchange, while "economic acquisition, that of the household, considers acquisition only with respect to the objects primary use, as an object that satisfies a need" (O'Neill, 1995: 426). There is a limit to the accumulation of such goods according to Aristotle. On a 'householding' view of the economy, there are thus limits to wealth and property. This is not so with the acquisition of money as both Aristotle, Locke and early theorists of capitalism understood.

According to Lee (1989), the development of the money economy was central to the modern market economy, and laid the basis for the separation of the human economy from nature's economy. The separation of the economy from its ecological context also meant the increasing separation of the economy from wider non-economic

considerations. In ecological terms, Locke's argument in defence of money (and the inequality that a money economy requires and justifies), permitted the accumulation process that is at the heart of the capitalist market system. Until the creation of money and its widespread acceptance, wealth and accumulation were limited by natural constraints (the limits of a person's stomach or the length of time natural products would last without spoiling). With the widespread use of money as a non-putrefying store of wealth, limits to accumulation could be overcome. Locke's proviso that nobody should accumulate more than they could consume, that is accumulate no more than would not decay, was easily overcome by the use of money as a legitimate store of wealth as well as a means of exchange. As Gorz puts it, "once you begin to measure wealth *in cash*, enough doesn't exist. Whatever the sum, it could always be larger" (1989: 112; emphasis in original). With money not just as a medium of exchange but now a store of value, what Lee calls the 'organic' basis of human wealth was overcome. With the invention of money, "Accumulation of this non-putrefying object on the part of the individual can now be limitless and go on for ever, the accumulation process having being emancipated from the workings of Nature" (Lee, 1989: 164).²⁸ In terms of figure 6.2., it is money which is at the root of the separation of the formal economy from both the non-money economy and nature, and the separation of economic from ecological rationality.

While recognising the benefits of money as a medium of exchange, the operation of LETS seeks to counteract the transformation of this medium into a store of value. LETS 'currency' is a medium of exchange. There is no benefit to be gained from accumulating it, since the sole function of a LETS unit of exchange is to facilitate trade and exchange. The difference between the contemporary cash economy and the LETS economy is that in the latter, currency is purely a means of transmitting information to enable trade. That is why LETS is a non-monetary form or barter system of exchange

²⁸ It is of course no coincidence that the Lockean defence of money as a store of wealth arose at the historical transition from an agrarian economy to a commercial economy. The inherent self-limiting features of an agrarian society, in terms of its 'organic' conception of wealth and acquisition, as well as its obvious 'back to nature' qualities, may account for the predilection for a return to this type of society within some strands of green political theory. Such sentiments are clear in Georgescu-Roegen's statement that, "Agriculture teaches man to be patient - a reason why peasants have a philosophical attitude in life pronouncedly different from that of industrial communities" (1971: 297).

but without the disadvantages of barter. 'Wealth' in a LETS economy is limited to the amount of goods and services one can trade for within the LETS scheme. Although the accumulation of goods bought within the LETS market is possible, this type of accumulation is quantitatively and qualitatively different from the type of accumulation that Locke sanctioned and Aristotle criticised. The LETS economy brings out the central aspect of green political economy's emphasis on 'use value' as constitutive of wealth in opposition to accumulation of 'exchange value' which is the understanding of wealth within the money economy and its various theories of political economy. To put it another way, trade and exchange within a LETS economy is geared towards the satisfaction of needs and wants facilitated by a medium of exchange, and is not concerned with accumulating the means of exchange and transforming it into a store of value. The use of goods and services to fulfil needs and wants is the principal object of those who engage in trade in the LETS economy; trade is not seen as a 'moment' in accumulating money. Within LETS, 'debit' is understood as a promise or a 'commitment' to render services or products to the same value some time in the future. Whereas in the formal economy one needs money to buy the things one needs, which means that one must either work or receive welfare payments; within a LETS economy individuals 'create money' in the act of buying itself.²⁹

Precedents for the green critique of the role of money within the contemporary economy, and in particular the disproportionate power of finance in affecting production decisions, can be found in the work of Douglas on 'social credit'. Douglas' critique of production for production's sake, regardless of its social usefulness, is close to green concerns. According to this line of argument, production is driven by the imperative to generate enough money in order that there be sufficient monetary means with which to purchase the goods and services required to fulfil needs. As Hutchenson

²⁹ This seemingly odd statement brings out clearly the idea of LETS as a 'credit-barter' system rather than as simply an alternative money system. One can write a cheque in the local currency to pay for one's purchases without having to have 'sufficient funds' in one's LETS account. That is, one can go into 'commitment' on the understanding that one will render an equivalent value of goods or services in the future. And by going into commitment, one has effectively 'created' LETS money, in the form of the cheque lodged in the account of the seller. Essentially one has 'bartered' *future* goods and services that one intends to sell, in exchange for *present* goods and services purchased from other individuals within the system.

puts it in explaining the rise of the money economy, “Goods are produced as a means to an end - to secure the money with which to meet basic subsistence requirements since access to resources as a right from the commons has been denied through the enclosures” (1992: 6).³⁰ From Douglas’s ideas on ‘social credit’ one can trace key aspects of green arguments for a guaranteed citizens’ income. One of the main ecological reasons put forward for a citizens’ income is that divorcing income from work would undermine the ecological irrationality of having to increase production in order to generate sufficient purchasing power for the distribution of existing supplies. Together with the deregulation of currency within the LETS model, the citizens’ income are two of the main financial proposals found within the economic policies proposed by greens.

This idea of increasing production in order to pay for the things we need underpins some of the reasoning behind ecological modernisation, discussed in the last chapter. Ecological modernisation is consistent with the view that financial resources are required in order to pay for environmental protection, as well as holding environmental standards (not to be confused with protection) as a source of economic growth. Hence continued economic growth is a necessary prerequisite for achieving ecological sustainability. Rather than altering production and consumption patterns directly to be more ecologically rational, ecological modernisation encourages us to think of ways to increase production and consumption so as to generate the necessary financial revenue with which to pay for environmental improvements. Economic growth, like Achilles lance, can heal the environmental wounds it inflicts. Now whether or not ‘economic growth’ (however this is defined) can be reconciled with ecological demands is a moot question, and there may be more in the ecological modernisation idea of the ecological efficiency of *differentiated* growth than green critics allow (Jacobs, 1995). However, the main point here is that the elevation of economic growth, in terms of increased production and consumption, to the status of a ‘given’ is partly to be understood in

³⁰ The money economy and the enclosure of the commons are thus two sides of the same coin: they are, from a green point of view, potentially negative sides of ‘modernisation’. I say ‘potentially’ in order to distinguish the argument being defended in this thesis from arguments which portray the enclosure of common resources as always and everywhere counterproductive and morally unjustifiable.

terms of the central role of money within industrialised economic systems. In other words, it is not just the consumptionist lifestyle that drives the economic engine, but also a more fundamental relation between production and the generation of sufficient monetary purchasing power within the economy.

6.7 Virtue, Production and Consumption

While many green arguments concerning political economy are articulated in terms of economic-ecological relationships, there is also a moral dimension to green political economy. In this section I want to highlight those aspects of green political economy which pertain to moral virtue.

The goal of economic self-reliance is advocated as much a moral ideal as it is a particular means by which a more ecologically rational economy-ecology metabolism may be established. Self-sufficiency or *autarkeia*, was a virtue central to Stoic thought for example, where it was understood in terms of detachment from worldly concerns and care only for the cultivation of individual virtue and rationality (Slote, 1993: 645). On this gloss, to be self-sufficient was to be untroubled by temporal matters and to devote one's attentions and energies to the important spiritual matters of life. Although this spiritualised account of self-sufficiency does find its defenders within green theory, particularly amongst those who decry the 'materialism' and 'consumerism' of modern societies, there is another related virtue, that of self-reliance, which is a more attractive ecological virtue. Whereas self-sufficiency as a virtue implies a notion of detachment, and an inward-looking, almost contemplative disposition of inner contentment³¹, self-reliance does not imply any of these qualities,

³¹ The moral ideal of self-sufficiency, as understood by the Stoics, is thus close to the deep ecology view canvassed in chapter two as 'quietism'. It is rather ironic to think that the Jainist monks who are held as good ecological characters, because of their concern not to injure any living thing, do so for reasons which do not seem to square with the deep ecological reasons for 'walking lightly on the earth'. That these monks brush the path ahead of them, and wear surgical masks so as not to kill any living entity, is taken by many deep ecologists as evidence of a reverence for the earth and all its entities. Although this may be partly true, it is also the case that Jainism expresses a concern to minimise contact with the material world so as not to become 'polluted'. Thus their symbolic acts of minimising 'harm' to the nonhuman world are motivated not out of a reverence for nature, but rather the opposite.

but rather denotes a sense of relying on one's own steam. Self-reliance conveys a sense of autonomy, independence and self-determination.

Self-reliance is understood both as a constitutive characteristic of communities and as a character trait of individuals. On the community level, self-reliance is argued to increase awareness of the dependency of the human economy upon the nonhuman world (Goldsmith *et al*, 1992; Dryzek, 1987). At the same time, self-reliance decreases dependence on imports and trade to provide those goods and services we think of as constitutive of the 'good life' for us (Allaby and Bubyard, 1980).³² Thus the virtue of economic (and ecological) self-reliance is its enhancement of the capacity for self-determination. According to Benjamin Franklin, "The man who would trade independence for security deserves to wind up neither". The green argument is that extensive trade increasingly erodes both independence and economic security. This is often the underlying argument of green arguments against extensive trade, and is one of the main arguments used in favour of delinking from the global economy. From a green point of view, participation in the global economy ought to be presented as a choice between economic welfare through trade, and independence through increased self-reliance. It is not simply the fact that extensive global trade has damaging environmental effects in terms of transporting goods, resources and people, and the infrastructure (roads in particular) required to facilitate it. At the same time, such patterns of trade within the global economy lead to domestic economies, and the societies they support, becoming over-dependent upon trade and having to fit into the global division of labour. These economic-structural imperatives weaken the capacity of domestic economies to determine their own development path. In terms of welfare and autonomy considerations, the green argument for self-reliance is an attempt to redress the balance in favour of autonomy while avoiding the possibly welfare reducing effects of complete self-sufficiency. What the argument for self-reliance comes down

³² This awareness of our dependency, is from the green perspective itself a virtue, which helps to mitigate the tendency of humans thinking they are independent of the natural world. An added point is that conscious recognition of human vulnerability, and of our needy constitution, opens the way to feminist contributions to ecological thought. These relate to such central political concepts as autonomy, the economy, progress and production, some of which are considered below and in the proceeding chapters.

to is that collective self-determination within the global economy requires decreasing dependence on trade to fulfil collective welfare needs. In this way the green argument for self-reliance is an argument for a particular conception of liberty.

For Windass, “a community which uses local materials and its own skills in order to house itself, clothe itself, and feed itself...is ‘free’ in a much more radical sense than a community which draws a large income from the industrial treadmill and spends it all to buy necessities from outside” (1976: 574). While not completely agreeing with this, it is a good example of green arguments for self-reliance in terms of a particular conception of freedom as self-determination and autonomy. Here, as in other aspects, green political theory demonstrates a remarkable continuity with earlier classical and more modern republican concerns of the tension between liberty and luxury. Just as writers from Aristotle onwards to Machiavelli, Rousseau and Arendt (Whiteside, 1994), drew attention to the negative impact of excessive economic wealth on political society, encouraging *inter alia*, atomism, the elevation of consumption as the key component of the good life, a retreat into the private sphere, and dependence upon complete strangers and forces outside of one’s control, likewise green politics stresses the negative impact of trade within the context of a global market on both individual and collective self-determination. Greens argue for the moral as well as ecological benefits of self-reliance. As indicated earlier, part of the green argument is that beyond some threshold, the welfare benefits from active participation within the global market economy begin to undermine the conditions for autonomy, as well as the benefits themselves decreasing in their ability to deliver utility, or contribute to human welfare (Hirsch, 1977). Rather than seeing economy-ecology problems as stemming from a scarcity of resources, the moral underpinning of green political economy seeks to recast these problems as stemming, in part, from excess demand.³³ In line with the

³³ One way of looking at this is to see that the modern economy creates ‘scarcity’ where none existed before rather than overcoming scarcity. Within modernity, according to Xenos (1989) ‘scarcity’ is a function of excess demand, and as such, it can never be fully satisfied. In criticising the possible liberty-reducing effects of excess demand, the green position is close to Gellner’s contention that, “Liberty has ridden to victory on the back of consumerism...But it would be folly to be confident that all this must necessarily continue. There are dangers ahead for affluence-sustained liberty” (1995: 29). While agreeing with the idea that beyond some threshold, industrial production and consumption may begin to erode liberty-sustaining conditions, greens also point out that beyond some threshold

classical view, green political economy holds that temperance and the avoidance of excess is a virtue (Clark, 1994: 119), but adds that the satisfaction of those moderated wants, should as far as practicable, be in a manner which does not compromise self-determination.

Within the context of contemporary market economies, what greens are saying is neither complex nor all that new. People are offered a choice. On the one hand there is the current system of international trade, the global economy and economic interdependence. The green alternative suggests that people live more within their own local means and seek to provide the necessary goods and services they require without over-depending on external sources. This, in part, requires the moderation of desires. This is the model of self-defined needs: we choose to moderate our desires for the sake of autonomy (Slote, 1993). The alternative is to forego self-reliance and engage in 'truck and barter' on the open market, where using the medium of money one can buy the goods and services for the 'commodious life'. Individuals are asked to weigh up the benefits of externally, market produced commodities, against the loss in independence that follows from this. This connects with the green concern with preference transformation and its relation to autonomy. From a green point of view, autonomy is not equated with the satisfaction of preferences, but is also about ensuring autonomy in what Sunstein calls the "processes of preference formation" (1995: 205), which he claims is a goal of democracy. This issue will be further discussed in the next chapter (7.8).

(perhaps lower than the former?) increases in output may also begin to decrease welfare, as given in Hirsch's (1977) 'social limits to growth' thesis. One way of looking at the green position, both conceptually and historically, is to see it as woven from a reaction to the two great 'moments' of modernity, namely the French and Industrial Revolutions. The former can be said to represent the 'liberty' while the latter represents the 'welfare' aspects, values of the modern western world. The potential tension between these two dynamics of modernity is the arena and tradition from which central strands of green political theory come. While greens are happy to place themselves within a tradition that has its origins in the romantic reaction against the industrial revolution, they conveniently forget that this often went hand in hand with a conservative, not to say aristocratic, rejection of the ideals of the democratic revolution. Carlyle as much as Wordsworth can be placed within the broad tradition from which contemporary green theory developed. This conservative lineage is something which 'shadows' key aspects of green theory, particularly its historical development.

Also, as the classical economists noted, the scope of market exchange increases in line with people's desires beyond need-fulfilment. The human capacity for food may be limited by the capacity of our stomachs, but the capacity for luxuries has no such 'natural limit', as the classical economists were quick to observe. Thus the more the demand for luxuries grows, the more the market, that is the economic wherewithal to supply that demand in terms of production and exchange, will grow. It is here that we come to the green argument concerning the inverse relationship between economic growth and a particular view of democracy, a view which in some ways echoes the misgivings of those early commentators on capitalism concerning the detrimental effects of luxury on virtue. The more a society revolves around the pursuit of economic growth, the less is given to active citizen participation and involvement in the democratic life of the polity. This observation is one that has been a constant critique of capitalist liberal democracy from Smith, Jefferson and Tocqueville to contemporary radical democrats and greens. It is also present in Aristotle's critique of *pleonexia*, incontinence or weakness of will.³⁴

In this way green anti-materialism does not stem from a moral rejection of materialistic lifestyles on the grounds that, "lives in the growth economy will tend away from the elegant and towards the grubby and materialistic" (Dobson, 1990: 88). The green critique of economic growth, materialism and consumerism also has to do with its conception of liberty as self-determination. Indeed, the critique of consumerism from the point of view of its negative effects on liberty as self-determination is stronger than criticising it on the grounds that it falls short of a particular, and rather narrowly defined, 'green' conception of the good life.

Green political economy does not seek to reject individual material consumption as unworthy, or indeed as necessarily unecological. Stretton's argument that one cannot enjoy common goods, such as public spaces, without some minimal degree of private, individual goods (1976: 68) is an important one. Without private goods, according to

³⁴ Arendt's view that the immoderation of desire as a result of the dominance of economic rationality and ways of organising social life, "harbours the grave danger that eventually no object of the world will be safe from consumption and annihilation through consumption" (1959:115), concurs with green political economy.

him, individuals will use public ones inappropriately, i.e. degrade them.³⁵ Martell in his critical analysis of green politics points out that, “greens perhaps sometimes undervalue the extent to which material acquisition and consumption can be a source of personal fulfilment...acquisition is not always the shabby, personally impoverishing behaviour greens suppose it to be” (1994: 49). Although frugality and simplicity of lifestyle may have their own virtues, a *moderately* materialistic lifestyle need not be without its own inner rewards, and ecological virtue. But these virtues will not be realised unless consumption is integrated as an integral aspect of ecological stewardship. Material consumption becomes an ecological vice where it orientates itself by nothing other than consumption itself. The resolution of the tension between frugality and excessive consumption lies in a middle position of optimality or sufficiency. One can encourage ‘voluntary simplicity’ on ecological grounds, and on democratic grounds if the particular organisation of the economy which provides that consumption has the potential to compromise democratic practice. However, it needs to be stressed that a reduction in consumption is not across the board, but a reduction of consumption in some areas (such as private car use). In other words, the green anti-consumptionist argument is a selective reduction of consumption within the context of reorganised production and consumption patterns rather than a *carte blanche* rejection material consumption.³⁶

Allied to the green defence of economic self-reliance as a constitutive aspect of liberty as autonomy, is an argument which sees economic activity as intrinsically as

³⁵ This defence of the private sphere is also tied up with the argument against the creation of transparent social relations, which was argued to be an aim of eco-anarchism in chapter 4. In rejecting this as a central aim of green politics, the question then becomes one of constructing institutions and fostering practices that balance public and private spheres which will encourage ‘responsible’ use of the former. A practical example of this would be the folly of constructing a housing estate without gardens which may lead to a local park/woodland/nature reserve being overused and/or used inappropriately.

³⁶ One reason why it is important to stress the acceptance of individual consumption as a ‘good’ on principle, is to dispel any (liberal) suspicion of the erosion of the private sphere. The democratisation of the family is not sought, at least not at the intimate, micro-level. However, given the green concern with per capita consumption, macro-level regulation of reproduction is a legitimate policy area for democratic decision-making. Taxes and subsidies, as well as the promotion and spread of economic security (as argued in the next chapter, 7.2), can help the ‘demographic transition’, and achieve a lower rate of population growth.

well as instrumentally valuable.³⁷ The green conception of liberty is one which sees economic life and its concerns, not as a precondition for autonomy, but rather as a potential site of autonomy in its own right. An example of this is Allaby and Bunyard's view of the moral benefits of having one's own power supply. For them, "The family whose power supply comes from its own windmill or water turbine...feels it has *freed* itself from a situation in which the amount, form and method of supply of power is decided by an organization that presumes to know better than they what it is that they need and should have. *It is an escape from paternalism, a maturing*" (1980: 139; emphasis added). It is not suggested that an over-riding and immediate green economic aim is to decentralise energy production to the household level. Rather, we should interpret Allaby and Bunyard's position in terms of the desirability of searching for alternative, less 'disempowering' ways in which to organise economic life. This value may take a number of institutional forms, one of which is that each household or community have its own (sustainable) energy supply. The main point is that economic self-reliance is a virtue in the sense that it is not only a means to an end (autonomy) but itself a part of that end. This goes hand in hand with the green rejection of the neoclassical classification of 'work' as 'negative utility' and engaged in as a means of securing money.

In the global context of the contemporary world what this notion of self-reliance attempts to express is that the increase in the distance between the point of production and consumption is a good indication of the decrease in the capacity for individuals and collectives to be self-reliant economically. *A dominant principle of green political economy is thus to decrease the gap between production and consumption as much as possible.* This virtue of economic self-reliance is linked to the bioregional distinction

³⁷ Lasch's 'populist producerism' which aims for the "rehabilitation of work, not the democratization of consumption" (in Holmes, 1993: 134) is close to the position being developed here. However, this concern with re-valuing work as intrinsically valuable, is to be distinguished from the overlap between Lasch's critique of contemporary (US) industrial society and the 'deep green' one. Both share a nostalgic yearning for a pre-industrial rural society, where the 'vices' of the city, of industrial progress and affluence are held in check by the virtues of a society of independent household farmers and independent craft workers. Indeed, many deep greens take Lasch's complaint about the 'enfeebling of character' as a result of consumerism as an argument for recapturing the values of (if not returning to) a hunter-gatherer culture (Shepard, 1993). On this last point see chapter 2.

between 'ecosystem' and 'biosphere' people (4.3). Ecosystem people in being self-reliant (but not autarkic) are also ecologically rational. Being dependent upon a local ecosystem for the majority of the goods and services one consumes means that more attention will be paid to its health and continuing ability to supply those goods and services, including, most importantly, environmental goods and services that are essential to economic activity and human well-being. An ideal green economy might then be one where there was a market (with global, regional, national and local levels), but the majority of the things people required were either produced by themselves or at the local economy level. Of course not all goods and services can be produced locally, but the principle of appropriateness suggests that they should be produced at the lowest level possible. This would be in the spirit of the quote from Keynes above, which emphasised not only the local production of goods and services but also the trade and exchange of ideas and knowledge. It is not a contention of green political economy to locally constrain the production and free exchange of knowledge, information and science. As will be recalled, in chapter 5 (5.7), science was presented as a key form of knowledge necessary to cope with ecological problems, both locally and globally.

At the individual level, the closing of the gap between production and consumption can be understood as an attempt to recapture some of the internal goods of production that are largely missing from modern forms of production.³⁸ One option is to alter or restructure current productive conditions so as to allow the internal goods of work to be realised. This option includes worker participation schemes, flexi-time, multi-tasking, non-assembly line forms of production, working from home. Such schemes

³⁸ It is interesting to note that concerns with the virtues of self-production arise at a time when work is disappearing from the work-based society, in the same way that the origins of an aesthetic appreciation of nature arose historically precisely at the time when human ability to destroy it also arose. As Williams has pointed out, "An artistic reaffirmation of the separateness and fearfulness of nature became appropriate at the point at which for the first time the prospect of an ever-increasing control of it became obvious" (1992: 67). However, the difference in the case of the reaffirmation of the virtues and intrinsic value of self-production is that what is disappearing is formal paid employment, not 'work' as a purposive, transformative activity. In this sense, the self-production ideal is a 'post-full-employment' phenomenon. On post-full-employment as part of green sociological theory see Gorz (1983, 1989), Keane & Owens (1986), Robertson (1983, 1985).

can provide opportunities for the realisation of some internal goods of work such as autonomy, solidarity, creativity, education, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Another way to realise the internal goods of work is by encouraging self-production, both individually and collectively through economic practices such as LETS. Self-production, in weakening the link between money and production, opens up the possibility of production becoming a site of freedom and not simply a sphere of necessity. Part of the rationality of 'own-work', to use Robertson's (1983) term, is to permit criteria other than 'maximisation' and 'efficiency' into the sphere of production. As own-work is not engaged in primarily as a means to secure money, it conforms to the ideal of a craft rather than an industrial mode of production. While not wishing to endorse all that Lee (1989) says on this issue, her basic point concerning the 'internal goods' of self-production, as opposed to the instrumental view of 'industrial production', is something that concurs with the spirit of green political economy. According to her, "The pursuit of internal goods is said to constitute a morality of production or the artistic mode of production, while the pursuit of external material goods is said to constitute a morality of consumption" (1989: 222-23).³⁹ The understanding of 'work' is central to orthodox political economy and it is perhaps no coincidence that the common definition of work as 'disutility', something engaged in for monetary remuneration, is most marked in the Austrian school. Conceiving of work as disutility, to be entered into for monetary 'compensation' in the form of wages, further entrenches the central role of money within economic life. Not only is money, as Chesterton said, like a sixth sense necessary to make use of the other five, but added to this is the idea that money is the primary reason for engaging in productive activity. Indeed, as pointed out above, within orthodox economics only that which commands a monetary value, a price, is counted as 'productive'. Historically, the separation of people from resources, as result of the enclosure of the commons, made the acquisition of money a prerequisite for fulfilling needs. At the same time, the idea of work as 'disutility' entered into for monetary reward,

³⁹ The craft ideal of work and productive activity is an ideal not exclusive to greens but can be found in utopian socialism, particular the strongly 'aesthetic' versions of Morris, Ruskin and Wilde for example.

represented another act of enclosure. This enclosure may be understood as the transformation of 'work' into 'labour': the aim of economic efficiency coupled with the valuation of work primarily in monetary terms, implies that there is no point in re-organising work which would permit the introduction of internal goods.⁴⁰ This second enclosure was the enclosure of the informal economy by the formal, as outlined earlier. Within green political economy, self-production as an organising principle of the economic life of society is an opportunity for the practice of virtue, the realisation of internal goods.

At the same time, self-production within the context of economic self-reliance is also a matter of character formation. Self-production is consistent with a less 'consumerist' character typical of contemporary economic views of 'Homo economicus'. Part of the green critique of a consumerist economy is that in being directed towards consumption, it undermines the internal goods of production. Roberts interprets this as implying that, "Self-fulfilment in working time...is one of the 'goods' downgraded by consumerism" (1979: 44). On this view the 'productivism', so often criticised by greens, within contemporary forms of economic thinking, is at root a critique of 'consumerism', as Lee (1989) argues. Thus one can acknowledge the virtues of consumption but also reject consumption as the dominant or over-riding aim of economic activity. In doing so, green political economy sets its face against orthodox economic theory, which sets a premium on consumption. As Hirsch points out, from the orthodox view "Economy. growth...is interpreted as growth in the capacity of the economy to meet...individual and collective consumption demands" (1977: 18). Economic self-reliance is thus tied up with a shift to a less consumption-orientated economy, on the grounds that such an economy will allow a space for the virtues of production, including most importantly, the opportunity for self-production. While consumption may have its own virtues as suggested above, the green case is that

⁴⁰ Since work as labour was conceptually viewed as 'disutility', a necessary evil, one would have thought that the economic aim was to minimise work by improving efficiency of production. Historically, as many studies have shown, productive efficiency as a result of technological improvements or changes in the organisation of labour, has led to a decrease in the hours worked much lower than what could be achieved given the level of technological and other productive improvements (Hirsch, 1977; Gorz, 1983). On the whole, productive improvements have resulted in less people working harder, rather than less work per person (Gorz, 1983).

unless the consumer is also a producer, these virtues may become vices. The fate of the unemployed who consume but do not produce is a case in point. But, and this is the crux of the green argument, the increase in unemployment itself is a result of a consumption orientated society. That is, where production is primarily regarded as instrumental to the process of consumption, consumption itself may be said to be one of the underlying causes of increasing formal unemployment. Ironically, as thinkers from Arendt to Gorz and Hirsch have pointed out, the logic of a consumption-driven economy is to produce a class of 'permanent consumers'. These are excluded from a society in which 'production' (understood as formal, paid work) is central to one's identity, participation and membership. The green argument is for a redefinition of the economy away from an consumption-dominated one, and one in which there is a balance between the internal goods of production and the benefits of the existing system.

It is for this reason that LETS, as an example of a form of productive economic activity, offers what many consider as an ideal solution to unemployment in contemporary industrial societies. Such forms of activity do provide consumers with the opportunity to become producers, engage in productive economic activity, but without having to secure formal 'employment'. Some have argued that one of the most significant advantages of LETS-type activity is that it offers the unemployed the opportunity to become a contributing member of society, a 'full citizen' as it were. Participating in such informal activity helps overcome the social exclusion and dependency upon welfare benefits, which is one of the most damaging effects of formal unemployment. However, given that the value that LETS activity creates are not commensurate with those that dominate the larger, formal economy, the contribution it can make to overcoming social exclusion is dependent upon some other form of public recognition of its 'economic and social standing'. In part this is the reason for expanding the notion of the 'economy' to include such informal activities, so that at least conceptually these productive and socially useful activities are recognised as integral aspects of the human economy. If, as many predict, the 'post-industrial' future of contemporary societies will consist in an accelerated decrease in formal

employment, then LETS-type informal economy activity will become a key aspect of the future economy, if we wish to avoid creating a permanent group of consumers and socially excluded citizens. LETS can thus be viewed as a complementary (or alternative) way of resolving the standard conflict between ‘environmental protection’ and ‘employment’ to that suggested by ecological modernisation. If the sphere of socially valued productive work is expanded to the informal or social economy, then unemployment in the formal sector need not imply becoming dependent on the state to support one as a ‘compulsory consumer’.

In this re-orientation of the economy, a different set of character traits may be fostered, and ones that can affect production more generally and not just self-production. That is, production within the context of self-reliance, where production is not engaged in primarily for reasons of extensive trade for profit-maximisation within the global market, can be governed by internal rather than external criteria. The organisation of production within a global economy, is different from the organisation of production within a self-reliant economy. In short, it is more likely that production as, at least in part, a social practice will be fostered within a self-reliant economic context, rather than within a global economic one.

One example of the relationship between production and virtue is animal husbandry discussed in chapter 3 (3.6.1). As was suggested there, seeing production as a practice with its own internal rewards, puts the focus on the values involved in the relationship between the (human) producer and the animals. Seen from this point of view, the animal is a both an object of but also subject within production, rather than simply an object of consumption. The point is that if considerations of consumers are dominant, e.g. their interests in low-cost meat, then this will force animal-rearing to adopt factory-farming, industrialised methods. The mode of production is thus set up so that there is little possibility of ‘personal relations’ developing between animal and worker. As Benton notes, “Intensive stock-rearing is adopted in part *because* it reduces and de-skills human practical involvement, and the human labour which continues to be required takes forms which specifically exclude the establishment of any quasi-personal, subject-to-subject relationship to the ‘processed’ animals” (1993: 72). In this

case, sympathy, as a virtue internal to the practice of animal-rearing, the capacity to relate to animals as fellow sentient creatures, with interests, is systematically undermined, as a consequence of de-skilling. De-skilling reduces the human transformative 'input' into the process to a crudely instrumental mode of interaction. De-skilling also de-sensitises. Another, more standard critique of consumerism, which can be found in a diverse range of thinkers from Aristotle to Smith, Arendt, Marcuse and Fromm, is that it promotes a view of individual well-being in which 'consuming' rather than 'doing' or 'being' is central. The point is not that consumption has no part to play in cultivating ecological habits, or a green view of the good, but that consumption within an economy simply geared towards consumption, with no recognition of the internal goods of production, makes for the cultivation of unecological characters.⁴¹ Again it must be stressed that this is not the standard anti-materialist argument that is found in the many green critiques of contemporary society. Rather this position holds that consumption can become an ecological vice if it is not integrated within a mode of behaviour which recognises limits to consumption. The point is that limiting consumption is not done for its own sake, but rather it forms a part of a mode of action and character in which the goods of consumption are not to become vices by being pursued at the expense of other goods. In terms of character, a strong claim is that consumption of the world, divorced from other human interests, consumes the world even as it fails to recognise the dependence of consumption on the world. Consumption as a mode of interaction with the world, under modern conditions where there is an increasing gap between production and consumption (as a result of such processes as the social and global division of labour and unemployment), is a permanent danger unless it is integrated within a wider mode which can prevent it from becoming an ecological vice. This wider mode is that of stewardship, expressed through the practices and roles of ecologically responsible citizenship, sustainable and/or symbiotic production or work (including self-production). While not wishing to

⁴¹ As discussed in the next chapter, consumption is not simply a private activity, but also a social value (7.6). Thus, the green position is not simply a matter of rejecting consumption for either production or citizenship, but rather of finding the balance between consumption and production, a balance which can only be created by, and maintained, but not exclusively, through, the activity of democratic citizenship itself.

return to the type of metabolism with nature that was criticised in chapter 2, (in which we simply 'followed' nature), the *metabolic* character of social-environmental interaction has to be acknowledged. A consumption-driven and centred economy, particularly within the context of a global economy, in which consumption is placed within a biospheric as opposed to an ecospheric context, can create the impression that the human economy is 'closed' or independent from ecological limits, as suggested earlier in the critique of orthodox neoclassical economic models (6.5). Limits on consumption can of course be imposed, but the prescriptive aim of green political economy is to suggest responsible consumption (not just 'green consumerism') as a valued activity and basis for personal identity and privacy. Consumption must be prevented from being taken to excess and becoming an ecological vice. This requires that it is placed within the wider metabolic context of economy-ecology interaction, and not simply within the context of the human economy.

The virtue-based argument concerns the 'incontinence' and immoderation of the neoclassical view, which is the economic analysis underpinning this consumption-driven and centred view of the economy. Neoclassical economics encourages an immoderation of desires, which 'corrupts' consumption and makes it an ecological vice. As was suggested in 6.6, the existence of money as a store of value within the formal economy enables the immoderation of desires for material forms of wealth. The 'value-neutrality' of neoclassical economics distorts the fact that the institutional context within which it operates, i.e. formal/cash markets, has a powerful role in preference formation. Since the formal market system is geared towards consumption, economic preferences reflect this institutional goal. If preferences are endogenous, then the processes by which they are formed ought to be a legitimate object of economic analysis of environmental issues. This would, as suggested earlier (6.5), move economic analysis away from 'economics' towards 'political economy'. And one of the most challenging tasks facing the latter would be to include institutional dimensions which allowed the opportunity for a more self-reflexive approach to

preference formation, as suggested in chapter 3 (3.5 and 3.6).⁴² The point is that under different 'institutional' settings, preferences will differ, and that temperance rather than immoderation will characterise preference formation under alternative institutional settings, one of which is a more expansive view of the economy. As it stands, the only thing which acts as a restraint on desires within neoclassical economics is 'effective demand', i.e., sufficient income. From the point of view of the virtue of moderation, it may be better for individuals to limit preferences. Moderation is to be understood not simply as placing limits on desire but also involves the education of desire in one's long-term self-interest. This is at the heart of the stewardship argument. Temperance in the acquisition of material goods is a more accurate and attractive interpretation of the green argument against consumerism than its condemnation on the grounds of its intrinsic worthlessness. By couching the green argument for self-reliance and self-production in terms of moderation one avoids the popular parody of the green position as essentially a matter of ascetic self-denial and sacrifice. It can also be used to supplement the common green view that ecological problems are as a result of supply-side scarcities (resources and sinks). The critique of consumerism views the problem as also due to excess demand. Thus the green critique of *undifferentiated* economic growth can be linked with Hirsch's (1977) analysis of the 'social limits to growth' (Barry, 1990).

Green political economy does criticise the excesses that characterise the consumer ideal, as well as the instrumentalisation of production (as a result of specialisation and the demands of the division of labour) that this ideal requires.⁴³ However, the alternative is not the abolition of consumption and the benefits derived from it, but rather the integration of consumption with production on the basis of self-reliance and moderation. The essential positive value underlying consumerism, that is, the desire to live a little better, its 'civilising' effects, and its contribution to personal identity, needs

⁴² As I argue in the next chapter, part of this self-reflexive process may involve considering the interests of others affected by a particular environmental decision as part of the decision-making process (7.8).

⁴³ A common observation of the recent history of western economies is that as economy grows, the 'natural rate of unemployment' also rises. But at the same time, as Hirsch points out, of the work that is available, there is a noticeable dearth of fulfilling, intrinsically-rewarding and well-paid occupations (1977: 41-51).

to be 'liberated' from its current conceptualisation which divorces consumption from production. It is the problems that arise from too great a separation of consumption from production, both in physical and conceptual terms, that explain why green political economy seeks to close the gap by integrating them as much as possible. Decreasing the discontinuity between production and consumption, increases the chances of securing the virtues of consumption. That is, the civilising, enriching and broadening effects of consumption, noted from Smith to Marx to modern liberals, demand a reciprocal relationship with production, which in turn requires a (largely asymmetric) relationship with the environment. Where green politics differs from other political theories such as liberalism or socialism is that whereas the latter view the link between production and consumption in terms of ensuring full employment in the formal economy, the green view is to encourage an ideal of self-provisioning, both individually and collectively, within the informal economy, as much as possible, and restructuring the 'formal' productive sphere so as to enhance the internal goods of work. Clearly not all needs and wants can be satisfied in this manner, but the green argument is that this sphere of productive activity should both be recognised as forming a significant part of the human economy and its metabolism with nature, and this informal economic sphere should be protected from the colonising tendencies of the formal sphere which seek to destroy it. Whether or not to work in the formal economic sphere, should, on a radical interpretation of green political economy, be a voluntary not a compulsory decision.⁴⁴ In other words, the choice should be *whether* to work in the formal economy rather than *where* to work.

The ideal-type model for green political economy is that of the 'household', and informal sectors of the economy working in conjunction with the formal market or cash economy. As O'Neill (1993: 172) argues, Aristotle's conception of the

⁴⁴ One of the policy suggestions put forward by greens (but also endorsed by others, Van Parijjs (ed.) 1992, White, 1995), is the guaranteed basic income scheme mentioned earlier (Eckersley, 1992a: 143; Goodin, 1992: 197-8; Dobson, 1990: 112-3; Kemball-Cook *et al*, 1991:19-23.). The aim of this policy is to decrease people's dependence upon paid work in the formal economy and to increase their opportunities to engage in informal economic activity and 'ownwork' (Robertson, 1985: x). This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter (7.9.1). The basic income scheme also fits more with the view of green politics as collective ecological management outlined in chapter 5, with a continuing role for administrative state institutions, than with the eco-anarchist view canvassed in chapter 4.

household as the model for political economy is one that concurs with many aspects of green political economy. In terms of the argument about decreasing the distance between production and consumption, the ideal of householding is to reverse the current situation where, according to Illich, the household becomes the sphere of “compulsory consumption” (1981: 112). Here the distinction between self-sufficiency and self-reliance is particularly important, for the aim of green political economy is not to make the domestic sphere a site of ‘compulsory production’. As such there will be a continuing role for the formal economy, but one in which it is not automatically the only, or the dominant/visible, site for meeting needs.

For green political economy, the ‘means of production’ go beyond the traditional definition of industrial plant, machinery, specialised knowledge, and the division of labour, to include the domestic sphere as a site of production as well as consumption and reproduction.⁴⁵ Within green political economy the aim is to facilitate as many modes of production (consistent with ecological modes of interaction) as required, rather than imposing one: the industrial one. At the same time, and once again going against the grain of radical green thought, green political economy does not seek to abolish the industrial mode of production. Rather, as Illich argues, what is aimed for is ‘technological maturity’, a situation where, “the industrial mode of production *complements* other autonomous forms of production” (1974: 86; emphasis added).⁴⁶

Perhaps the clearest example of the virtues green political economy attempts to realise is to be found in the agricultural ideal of homesteading, independent farmers as developed by Wendell Berry (1987, Thompson, 1995: 78-92), or the commons management regimes defended by others (Wall, 1994; Goldsmith *et al*, 1992). What both of these ideals of self-reliance share is that people, either individually or collectively, own or have access to and use of the resources to produce the things they

⁴⁵ Toffler’s (1970) idea of a ‘prosumer’ sphere of economic activity, where producers consume what they produce and produce what they need, fits with green economic and moral thinking.

⁴⁶ Illich’s vision of a convivial economy, in which engineered artefacts are geared towards “more effective use-value generation”, and where there is an equal “right to access to raw materials, tools and utilities” (1977: 94, 95), is a radical version of the aims of green political economy: the creation of a socially embedded, ecologically sustainable and ethically symbiotic economy.

need. As such they are both examples of the 'householding' model of the economy. Giving people direct access to the resources they require to fulfil their needs, the most important of which is access to land to grow food, would decrease the necessity for, and extent of, current trading patterns and economic organisation, and help create the practical basis for a viable sustainable economy. In terms of the Leopoldian 'land ethic', returning the land to the people would be a most effective way of reuniting the people to the land. However, this rural, agricultural ideal is largely that, an ideal which, at least within the context of industrialised western societies, does not represent a feasible option. Rather what green political economy aims for in the western context is the creation of forms of economic activity which both tend towards ecological rationality and honour, if not fully realise, the ecological virtues of self-reliance, moderation and self-production and the value of individual and collective autonomy. Urban forms of economic-ecological social practices, include LETS, 'ownwork', and other forms of collective subsistence (Mellor, 1995). However, these are not viewed as substitutes for formal economic activity, and the 'greening' of the formal economy, as suggested by ecological modernisation for example, will perhaps be the main focus of attention (at least in the industrialised world) in the movement towards sustainability and more responsible collective forms of ecological stewardship.

A related point has to do with the conception of 'development' within green political economy. In contrast to orthodox political economies, green political economy does not prescribe a particular view of 'development' or 'progress', but rather sees this as one of the most important expressions of communal autonomy, the right of communities to decide their own understanding of social and economic development. From the perspective of many radical and third world ecologists, a primary reason for delinking from the world economy is to prevent the imposition of the western model of socio-economic development on communities throughout the world (Illich, 1974; Shiva, 1988; Sachs, 1990, 1995; Latouche, 1993). According to Latouche the creation of the global market system can be seen as the 'westernisation of the world' (1993: 160), the hegemony not just of a particular economic system but also of a particular worldview and ethos. For many radical greens cultural autonomy is

threatened by the global market economy. In the words of Wolfgang Sachs, “No country today seems to be capable of controlling its own development” (1990: 336). The same global economic system that is threatening global biodiversity is also held to threaten global cultural diversity. The identification of the western model of development with progress signifies an inevitability and desirability which is used to silence any criticism. Progress is good, and after all, you can’t stop progress. A full understanding of the relationship between the virtue of self-reliance and autonomy would require investigating the notion of self-defined needs at the individual level, and ‘chosen’ rather than ‘imposed’ development paths, at the collective one.⁴⁷ Thus the ecological virtue of self-reliance has to do with the relationship between ‘autonomy’ and ‘welfare’, in which welfare considerations relate to moderated and self-defined needs being fulfilled as much as possible by agents themselves.

Self-reliance is to be understood as a virtue because it stands as a mean between full self-sufficiency or autarky, and complete dependence. Self-reliance as an economic aim attempts to acknowledge the positive role market and other forms of exchange may play in expanding the horizons of individuals and communities, while seeking to ensure that trade is the instrument of the community rather than the other way round.

6.8 Conclusion

The creation of a market economy represents the separation of economic rationality from other forms of rationality. Polanyi (1957), in his study of the emergence of the modern market economy as a distinct and self-governing sub-system, reminds us of the uniqueness of the modern economy by contrasting it with the role of the economy previous to the emergence of the market economy.

⁴⁷ Gorz uses the language of rationality to express the same point when he claims that, “Economic rationality is not applied when people are free to decide their own level of need and their own level of effort” (1989: 111). When people are not free to decide their own development paths, as many greens and third world activists maintain is the case within the context of the global economy, (western) economic rationality determines ‘progress’ and ‘development’ (Shiva, 1988; Latouche, 1993: 136).

For, if one conclusion stands out more clearly than another from the recent study of early societies it is the changelessness of man as a social being. His natural endowments reappear with a remarkable constancy in societies of all times and places; and the necessary preconditions of the survival of human society to be immutably the same. The outstanding discovery of recent historical and anthropological research is that *man's economy, as a rule, is submerged in his social relationships.* (1957: 46)

This aim of 're-embedding' the economy within society as a necessary part of reintegrating economy and environment is, the aim of collective ecological management. However, as was argued in 6.6, collective ecological management of the economy-ecology metabolism requires attention to be paid to specifically economic issues, such as the role and place of money within the formal economy. The material metabolism between economy and ecology is as much dependent upon the central role of finance, and its influence over the production decisions within the formal economy, as upon the technology of production.⁴⁸ This aspect of green political economy has been expressed by Altvater as implying that, "Today the further evolution of society is possible only if the economic rationality of market procedures is firmly embedded in a complex system of social, non-market regulation of money and nature" (1993: 260). The re-embedding of the formal economy within nature requires re-embedding it, as far as possible, within parameters set by social, non-market norms, and politically governing it, in a manner suggested in the last chapter. A clear, if extreme, example of this is Latouche's celebration of the 'informal economy' as the, "reinsertion of the economic within the larger social texture of life, to the point that sometimes the economic is *completely absorbed* within this texture" (1993: 127: emphasis added). The complete absorption of the economic by the social is neither necessary nor desirable. The point after all is not to dissolve economic rationality and the formal

⁴⁸ This interconnection between financial and natural systems leads Harvey to posit that, "Money and commodity movements, for example, have to be regarded as fundamental to contemporary ecosystems" (1993: 28). In other words it is not simply energy and material flows that affect ecosystem development, because ecosystems exist in relation to specific ecology-economic metabolisms.

economy completely, but to find their appropriate places and spheres of operation within a more ecologically rational mode of production.

Green political economy differs from contemporary forms of political economy in a number of significant ways. Firstly, it includes a central space for institutions and practices in the regulation of the economy and the behaviour of economic agents, and adopts an institutional approach to economic analysis (6.7). Examples include, non-money, market organisation of the economy, such as LETS, and commons regimes. At the same time, this institutional economic approach makes preference formation a key area of economic analysis. The summation of environmental preferences are regarded as an inappropriate way in which to gather information upon which to base public environmental decision-making. As a public good, environmental valuation requires public not private forms of information gathering (7.2.1). The more prescriptive aim of green political economy is to encourage self-reflexivity in preference formation, to base environmental decisions on 'considered' as opposed to felt preferences. A final concern of this institutional approach is to focus on the immoderation of desires as a possible cause of environmental problems, to focus on excess demand as much as supply-side shortages.

Secondly, green political economy questions the ends of development rather than simply querying the means. It has no one particular model of development, in the same way orthodox political economy has a particular conception of 'economic modernisation' as an animating principle. This is clearly related to the critique of consumerism, and the argument for production to be seen as more than an instrumental stage in the process of consumption (6.7). At its most radical green political economy is a political economy of 'post-development' (Latouche, 1993), and as suggested in 6.7, *post-* rather than *anti-* industrial. Thirdly, the normative dimension of green political economy extends to the thorny question of what is to count as a 'resource' and what is to be a 'proscribed resource'. What this expresses is that within green political economy, 'resources' are not exogenously 'given'. Rather the metabolism between economy and ecology is to be governed by considerations of human interests alongside those of ecological sustainability and ethical symbiosis.

Fourthly, green political economy has a radically different conception of the 'economy'. Whereas orthodox political economy analyses the formal or money economy, green political economy has a much wider understanding of the economy, one in which the informal, non-monetised economy is important (6.6). Thus while green politics seeks to responsibly limit economic rationality, it also sees this as occurring simultaneously with a reconceptualisation of economic theory. This reconceptualisation demands not simply a transformation of the content of economic theory, but also in the discipline of economics, away from abstract model building and its self-perception as a 'hard science', and a return to its roots in political economy.

A key part of this desire to expand the 'economy', and which relates to the normative concerns of green political economy, has to do with shifting economic analysis and organisation away from a consumption-driven, and consumption-centred, economy. While not rejecting the consumption of goods and services as a positive mode of human activity, my concern in this chapter has been to suggest that without a counterbalancing with other modes such as production, its lack of self-limitation leads to its tendency to become an ecological vice. Consumption needs to be integrated within a more expansive mode of acting and interacting which recognises the dependence of human productive activity on the creation and maintenance of a stable metabolism with nature. A consumption-driven economy, key features of which are production for the sake of consumption and the centrality of money, disembeds the economy from its ecological context. Money, as the argument in 6.6 suggests, is a crucial part of the formal economy by which production is at the service of consumption.

While some greens seek to return to past economic arrangements such as commons regimes, green political economy represents a more feasible approach to regulating economy-ecology exchanges. This approach includes the re-organisation of formal work to permit internal goods of production to be realised, self-production, LETS, the possible changes that a shift from a biosphere to an ecosphere economy would have on production, together with more recent developments such as the Local Agenda 21 process.

A necessary aspect of this return to political economy, particularly given the normative facets of green political economy, is the role of democratic decision-making and democratic accountability in 'governing' the economy-ecology metabolism. It is to the relationship between green politics as collective ecological management and democracy and the delineation of a green theory of democracy that we turn to next.

Chapter Seven

Democracy, Citizenship and Stewardship

“Our ecologic crisis is the product of an emerging, entirely novel, democratic culture. The issue is whether a democratized world can survive its own implications” (White, 1967: 1204).

7.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the relationship between democracy and green political theory in general and in particular green democratic theory and practice. In much the same way as Kymlicka (1990) argues that any plausible political theory embodies a commitment to the view of individuals as deserving of equal respect and concern, in a similar fashion one can posit democracy as a value to be considered as an essential part of all acceptable political theories. In this respect, green politics is no different in its claim to be part of the ‘democratic project’. However, beyond a shared commitment to democracy, political theories differ as to *what* they understand by democracy, the reasons *why* they advocate it, and *how* they envisage its institutionalisation. Although all theories worthy of respect and serious consideration endorse the general *concept* of democracy, they disagree over the different possible *conceptualisations* of democracy. On both these points, the concept and conceptualisation of democracy, questions have been raised as to their necessary connection to green politics.

In section 7.2 this claim that the green commitment to democracy is contingent rather than necessary is discussed by looking at eco-authoritarianism. This leads onto one of the central aspects of democracy and green politics, namely the relationship between material affluence and democratic theory and practice. Some epistemological considerations as to the necessary connection between green politics and democracy are raised in 7.3, with particular attention given to the recent work of Beck (1992) on ‘risk society’, and the

centrality of science in the resolution of social-environmental problems. 7.4 presents two related understandings of democracy; an institutional one which views democracy as a political decision-making procedure, and a social one in which democracy refers both to the latter, but sees democracy as a particular type of society. I argue that it is democracy in the second sense which is most compatible with green values. In section 7.5 the outlines of green democratic theory are sketched in terms of the relationship between 'modernisation', economic growth and democracy. That the most compatible form of democracy for green politics is a version of deliberative or discursive democracy is discussed in 7.6. In 7.7 the assumed connection between direct or radical democracy and green politics will be critically examined. Specifically it will be suggested that the democratic project of green politics involves representative democratic institutions in conjunction with more discursive forms and not that the latter replaces the former. 7.8 discusses the role of citizenship within green democratic theory and practice, paying particular attention to the relationship between 'citizen' and 'consumer' interests and roles raised in previous chapters. In 7.9 the distinction between state and civil society is explored as a central part of this green theory of democracy. The role of civil associations and social practices, particularly work and production, are examined in the light of their contribution to the creation of an ecological culture and the cultivation of ecological virtues.

However, it needs to be pointed out that in their practical political activity, environmental groups and the green movement have been at the forefront of efforts to 'democratise' state institutions, and help create a more democratic and accountable form of environmental decision-making. Examples include green efforts to open up access to information, particularly scientific data, and creating more open forms of public policy-making. This anti-bureaucratic strand of green thought also calls into question the ecological modernisation model, outlined in chapter 5, with its bureaucratic-corporatist overtones. Part of this green suspicion of bureaucracy is their concern for "greater openness and greater public involvement in administrative decision making" (Paehlke, 1988: 295). In this respect we can tentatively conclude that the practice of

environmental politics over the last 25 years or so, seems to provide evidence for Paehlke's argument that, "an answer to future economic, environmental and resource problems [may be found] in *more* rather than *less* democracy" (*ibid.*: 294; emphasis in original). The green movement's emphasis on grassroots activism, 'bottom-up' organisational principles and what Doherty has called its "complicated democratic project" (1992: 102), are further evidence of the democratic credentials of green political practice, or, at least, self-prioritisation. In a sense then although there may be a question as to the strict *theoretical* relationship between green political theory and democracy, in practice this tension is often more apparent than real.

7.2 The Eco-Authoritarian Argument

A good starting point for introducing this issue is De Tocqueville's suggestion that, "General prosperity is favourable to the stability of all governments, but more particularly of a democratic one, which depends upon the will of the majority, and especially upon the will of that portion of the community which is most exposed to want. When the people rule, they must be rendered happy or they will overturn the state: and misery stimulates them to those excesses to which ambition rouses kings" (1956: 129-30). This assumption of the positive correlation between material affluence and the stability of a democratic political order, is one which is closely associated with 'modernist' political traditions such as liberalism and Marxism.¹ In this section it is the negative corollary of this assumption, i.e. that material scarcity creates the conditions for political instability and a shift to authoritarianism that will be examined. This 'Hobbes-Malthus' position underpins the

¹ Classical liberals such as Tocqueville assumed a relationship between an affluent economy and political democracy. One aspect of Tocqueville's thought turns on the idea that "a flourishing economy is essential to the stability of democracy, since it gives defeated politicians an alternative, which makes them more likely to accept defeat rather than attempt to illegally to hold on to office" (Copp *et al*, 1995: 3). Classical Marxism, on the other hand, assumed a connection between 'emancipation', a central aspect of which was democratic political, social and economic relations, and material abundance. The roots of the different understandings of the connection between the two may lie in the inter-relationship between the Industrial and French Revolutions, understood as expressing the core values of modernity, one relating to economic abundance and the other to political democracy.

'eco-authoritarian' school of green thought, which in the literature is most closely associated with Ophuls (1977), Hardin (1968, 1977) and Heilbroner (1980).² The eco-authoritarian implication of the link between scarcity and political arrangements has been forcefully made by Ophuls. He begins from the assumption that, "The institution of government whether it takes the form of primitive taboo or parliamentary democracy...has its origins in the necessity to distribute scarce resources in an orderly fashion. It follows that assumptions about scarcity are absolutely central to any economic or political doctrine and that the relative scarcity or abundance of goods has a substantial and direct impact on the character of political, social and economic institutions" (1977: 8). Calling the affluence experienced by western societies over the last two hundred years or so 'abnormal', a material condition which has grounded liberty, democracy and stability (*ibid.*: 12), he concludes that with the advent of the ecological crisis, interpreted as a return to scarcity, "the golden age of individualism, liberty and democracy is all but over. In many important respects we shall be obliged to return to something resembling the pre-modern closed polity" (*ibid.*: 145). He interprets this, as discussed below, in terms of a (benign) technocratic and theocratic dictatorship. The justification of his anti-democratic stance is basically the traditional metaphor of 'the ship of state' requiring the best pilots, and the dangers of 'rule by the ignorant' when faced with such a complex and complicated issue as social-environmental relations.

Now while it is perhaps true that democracy does require some degree of material affluence, it is a completely different issue to argue that a diminution in general material prosperity heralds the end of democracy and all its fruits. Additionally, for Ophuls politics and government are understood primarily in terms of 'social survival' rather than other social goals such as 'progress' or flourishing. As such his understanding of politics is quantitative rather than qualitative, politics as administration or 'zoo-keeping' in Barber's memorable term (1984: ch. 1). To this extent Ophuls has not established his argument, namely, that a return to material scarcity implies that societies which have previously

² While the 'terrible trio' are routinely wheeled out for ritual condemnation within the literature (Eckersley, 1992a:11-17), other authoritarian aspects of green thinking, such as that which can be detected within aspects of deep ecology, go unnoticed. See Barry (1994: 377-8) and Vincent (1993: 266).

enjoyed democratic institutions and practices must necessarily revert to authoritarian forms. It is perhaps more accurate to say that what Ophuls, and the eco-authoritarian position in general, prescribe in terms of substantive political theory is premised and influenced by a) a focus on the *pace* of social change towards securing b) the over-riding social goal of *survival*. It is only by conceiving of the ecological crisis as a 'total crisis' of contemporary societies, in a manner analogous to that described as characteristic of deep ecology in chapter 2, which permits these theorists to construe ecological problems as a matter of social survival. Seen in these terms it is easy to see how from this perspective democratic norms and institutions are superfluous. The anti-democratic basis of eco-authoritarianism lies in their questionable analysis of the nature of the ecological crisis, which leads them to emphasise rapid and anti-democratic social disruption in the name of the over-riding goal of species, or societal survival. In the eco-authoritarian case, democracy is part of the problem, ill-suited to dealing with social problems which demand immediate and widespread social change. Democracy represents the unleashing of desires, of demands that cannot be satisfied and which have to be authoritatively restrained. Otherwise society as we know it (and perhaps western civilisation) will collapse, as have so many societies and civilisations before who ignored their dependence upon the environment.³

To judge democracy by its effectiveness in securing prosperity is another underpinning assumption of eco-authoritarianism which needs to be criticised. The idea that politics in general or democracy in particular is to be judged to the extent that it makes people happy, for example, either directly or indirectly, is to attribute to democracy something which is not in its gift to deliver. Therefore to assess democracy by these criteria is to commit a category mistake. Democracy as a political decision-making system, after all, is a procedure for making political decisions: that democratic decisions are to make people happy is not to judge the procedure but the product.⁴ If democracy is to be judged on the

³ An example of this is Goldsmith's (1988) essay outlining the ecological causes of the collapse of the Roman Empire.

⁴ As argued in the next section, 'democracy' can also be understood as a type of society as well as denoting a procedure for making political decisions.

basis of its ability to deliver material prosperity, it is easy to see how this can become an instrumental argument for democracy.⁵ If it is material affluence and the social and political stability which such affluence supposedly brings that is valued, it is always possible that a non-democratic form of political decision-making may be superior to democratic forms. Recalling the distinction between liberty and welfare arguments in chapter 6 (6.7), eco-authoritarianism is clearly premised on prioritising basic welfare i.e. 'social survival' over non-welfare considerations. The eco-authoritarian argument turns on the prioritisation of 'survival' and 'security' over ecologically unsustainable and crisis-producing material affluence and the democratic political arrangements that affluence sustains. If the link between affluence and democracy were to be eroded, or demonstrated to be weaker than assumed by the eco-authoritarians, one of the most serious, and common, anti-democratic arguments against green political theory would be, if not undermined, at least substantially reduced.

This is precisely the argument outlined in the previous chapter, which in drawing a distinction between 'welfare' and 'liberty' concerns, presented green arguments for social and economic changes, where any sacrifices or trade-offs were to be limited to those of welfare not liberty. Indeed, it was suggested that decreases in material affluence may be compensated by an increase in liberty as self-determination. If, following standard deontological arguments for democracy, we hold that democracy and liberty are mutually related, then the green argument for socio-economic changes which would have as a by-product a diminution in material standards of living, is not inherently anti-democratic. In other words, the green critique of affluence rejects the assumption made by Tocqueville and the eco-authoritarians that there is any necessary connection between democracy and material prosperity. Rather it is economic *security* rather than *affluence* which is important for democracy.⁶

⁵ An example of this distinction between instrumental and intrinsic arguments for democracy is Eckersley's (1996b) discussion of deontological and utilitarian arguments for democracy within liberalism. As I hope to demonstrate in this chapter, green politics has an intrinsic rather than an instrumental attachment to democracy.

⁶ There is a similar argument regarding the relationship between population growth and economic development. The 'demographic transition', which is usually understood as the decrease in population

There are at least two ways in which this can be understood. Firstly, against Tocqueville, the green argument may be said to highlight the difference between the relationship of affluence to the early development of democracy (the exact subject which Tocqueville was writing about), and the relationship between affluence and the maturing and later development of democracy. In this sense, the green critique of consumerism, for example, can be seen as an argument that beyond a threshold, affluence and the institutional arrangement of society to procure it, may begin to 'fetter' democracy and may even hold back further democratisation. On this interpretation green anti-consumerism and the arguments of green political economy in the last chapter, can be understood as premised on the idea that the further development of democratic institutions and norms, may require a less materially affluent society.⁷ Thus the relationship between affluence and democracy only holds for instrumental justifications of democracy. These instrumental views are usually utilitarian or economic in nature, from Bentham and James Mill to contemporary libertarians.⁸

Secondly, against the eco-authoritarians, the green argument for decreased material standards of living may be interpreted as a critique of *liberal* democracy, that is, a particular conception and practice of democracy, rather than democracy *per se*. This is related to the first interpretation. Here the green argument is that the theory and practice of liberal democracy, constructs a particular balance between 'welfare' and 'liberty' (premised on a particular conception of liberty), which may be inimical to the further development of democracy. It is liberal democracy which fits Tocqueville's argument of

growth as a result of economic growth, is more a function of economic security than growth and affluence. According to Sen (1981), it was not the wealth of capitalist societies which caused a drop in population and staved off famine, but their welfare systems, which guaranteed all citizens a minimum bundle of welfare goods and services. Similarly, one can argue that it is the *distribution* of wealth within society, not the *absolute level* of wealth, which is important in a democratic political system.

⁷ A similar argument can be found in Arendt's (1959) critique of the rise of the 'social' as the central political category, and the 'productivist' ideals of labour and work displacing the political sphere as a realm of public and collective deliberation. For an analysis of the connections between green critiques of consumerism and productivism and Arendt's political thought, see Whiteside (1994).

⁸ An example of the libertarian position is Osterfeld's rather startling view that, "*Provided that exit is not barred, a large democracy would be less responsive, and therefore provide less utility, to its citizens than a local dictatorship...the level of government tends to be much more important than its type*" (1989: 155; emphasis in original).

the necessary connection between affluence and democracy. Other conceptions of democracy which do not depend upon the high levels of affluence associated with contemporary liberal democracies are of course possible. In other words, if green politics is anti-democratic, it is only anti-democratic in the sense that it criticises the prevailing liberal democratic conception of democracy. As such green politics can be said to be part of a 'radical' democratic political tradition, a tradition that is not so much 'anti-liberal' as 'post-liberal'. Rather than being anti-democratic, green political theory likes to claim that it constitutes an alternative democratic theory and practice, one which while critical of liberalism, also builds on some of its core insights and values (Eckersley, 1992a: 30).

A further justification for the contingent relationship between green principles and democratic values and institutions lies in the 'technocratic' dimensions of the eco-authoritarian position. This is most obvious in the authoritative knowledge claims about the scope, severity and components of the ecological crisis which underpin much of the eco-authoritarian view. Invoking the authority of science, particularly ecological science, eco-authoritarianism claims to offer an 'objective' i.e. scientific, impartial, diagnosis of the ecological crisis and an equally 'objective' solution. A useful analogy here is to understand eco-authoritarians as doctors simply offering an objective, but non-negotiable, and authoritative, assessment of the 'ecological health' of society. Since the ecological crisis is presented in terms of expert knowledge, the implication is that democratic norms are not appropriate to deal with the diagnosis and prescriptions for the ecological health of society. As Saward notes, "All principled arguments favouring perpetual government of the many by the few are arguments from superior knowledge" (1996: 80). In terms of the social-environmental metabolism discussed in chapter 5, the eco-authoritarian view is that this metabolism is a 'technical' matter to be dealt with by experts, i.e. those with the appropriate knowledge.⁹ In other words, the ecological crisis, like the health of an individual's metabolism, is not a matter to which democratic decision-making is

⁹ Thus the oft-cited anti-scientism of green political theory may have more to do with the undemocratic implications of decision-making by experts than anything else. See O'Neill (1993: chapter 9), on the democratic preconditions for submitting to the authority of science. This issue is further discussed in the next section (7.3).

appropriate. As a matter of expert knowledge, not lay judgement, democratic forms of decision-making may be counter-productive to the ecological health of society. The resolution of the ecological crisis according to Ophuls requires that, “the steady-state society will not only be more authoritarian and less democratic than the industrial societies of today...but it will also in all likelihood be much more oligarchic as well, with only those possessing the ecological and other competencies necessary to make prudent decisions allowed full participation in the political process” (1977: 163).

On the face of it there seems to be little problem, democratically speaking, with assigning experts to deal with the environment as a technical problem. The point is that the overall character of the ‘problem’ must be ascertained before its ‘technical’ aspects can be identified. That is, the ‘technical’ and ‘non-technical’ dimensions cannot be made technically, but need to be determined politically, by the *demos* and its institutions. It is practical not instrumental reason which should determine the framework within which the latter can contribute to resolving or coping with social-environmental problems. The decision on the delineation of those aspects of social-environmental problems which are to be made by the few (requiring expertise) and those aspects to be decided by the many (requiring judgement) ought to be made by the many. Depending on how you define the problem, different solutions will suggest themselves, as was clear from the deep ecology view of the ‘ecological crisis’ as a ‘total crisis’ in chapter 2. In the same way viewing environmental problems as ‘technical’ or ‘economic’ leads to ‘technical’ or ‘economic’ solutions. But if, as suggested in the last chapter, standard economic approaches are flawed when it comes to providing information upon which to base environmental decisions, and leaves the determination of the issue in the hands of a few (6.2.1), then technical expertise will identify the ‘problem’ as well as the ‘solution’. Ecological problems are too important to be left up to economists and scientists alone. Identifying a problem as ‘technical’ leaves decision-making in the hands of the few rather than the many. This is not to deny the absolutely key role to be played by technical expertise in the resolution of social-environmental problems, but rather to stress that such expert

knowledge *alone* should not define the problem or possible solutions, or more worrying still, to determine the 'language' within which such issues are to be expressed.

The complex of issues involved in deciding the best way to attain an ecologically rational metabolism with the environment are such that making decisions about environmental policy will affect more lives (private and collective, present and future) and to a greater extent than, arguably, any other policy area. The main reason for this is that the economy-ecology material metabolism is the most important aspect of the social-environmental metabolism, upon which human flourishing depends. Thus even if we allow that one can view the social-environmental problems as 'technical' ones, and that there is a body of knowledge which, and experts who, can resolve them, this does not 'prove' that experts alone should deal with these problems. Even as a technical problem, there are good reasons why non-technical considerations ought to prevail politically in respect to environmental issues. Simply by virtue of the scope and impact of policies promoting ecological sustainability non-technical, democratic considerations ought to apply. Since central aspects of environmental policy-making will affect significant areas of private and collective life, it is only right that the *demos* as a whole decide these questions. This is not to deny the utility and indeed necessity of expert knowledge. Rather, the argument is that this knowledge should not be used to determine, as opposed to inform, either the 'problem' or the 'solution'. Once these major issues have been democratically decided, then technical considerations may be appropriate. Experts ought to be 'on tap, not on top', as it were.

The argument against this knowledge-based anti-democratic position lies in rejecting the assumption that social-environmental problems are primarily technical or scientific matters to be defined, analysed and resolved by experts on behalf of, or in the interests of, the wider society.¹⁰ As Seward (1996) argues, the 'political rightness' of an issue ought to be determined by the views and deliberations of the many as opposed to the few. As

¹⁰ There is a clear connection here between the *objectivity* of social-environmental solutions within eco-authoritarianism and the objectivity of environmental valuations within environmental economics as discussed in the last chapter. Both tend to leave the state in a dominant position with regard to regulating social-environmental interaction.

was pointed out in chapter 5, the ecological crisis and collective ecological management in response to that is from the green point of view both a matter of scientific and ethical consideration. As such the ecological crisis is not simply about diagnosing the ecological health of society, but requires placing this within the context of the totality of social-environmental metabolism. Providing this context is the democratic aim of collective ecological management. The technocratic basis of eco-authoritarianism comes down to privileging scientific knowledge over other forms of knowledge and understandings of the ecological crisis. The effect of this privileging is to reduce the regulation and assessment of the social-environmental metabolism to a matter of technical or instrumental rationality. Since the ecological crisis is not just a technical matter but requires both claims of knowledge and ethical judgement, it cannot be reduced to a question of instrumental or technocratic manipulation to be left to experts. If one accepts that knowledge is power, to leave the understanding and regulation of the social-environmental metabolism as the exclusive preserve of one form of expert knowledge crowds out democratic forms of decision-making. This is of course an old anti-democratic argument which can be traced back to Plato's disparaging view of democracy as 'mob rule' by the ignorant.¹¹ Whereas the democratic decision-making on environmental issues implies that these issues be viewed as part of a political-normative process by the demos as a whole, the eco-authoritarian solution requires viewing the regulation of the metabolism as something to be objectively 'deduced' from scientific principles by the competent. This is not to say that green politics is anti-science, but that scientific or technocratic assessments of social-environmental relations be placed within the wider political-normative context of those relations. The ecological crisis is not simply a combination of technical problems to be 'solved', but also, as chapters 2, 3 and 5 have suggested, a set of collective moral dilemmas that require it to be placed within a political-normative context.

A variation on this theme can be found in those analyses of ecological issues where solutions must partake of some definitive 'truth' in respect to social-environmental

¹¹ Democratic green citizenship, as discussed later (7.8), is proposed as a way in which to make people less ignorant. At the same time, recalling Hume's statement to create institutions for knaves (5.2), green citizenship is also concerned with making people less knavish (read 'unecological').

relations. From such perspectives a 'proper' social-environmental metabolism is derived not from objective scientific principles, as in the technocratic-authoritarian argument above, but from the revealed truth of some metaphysical or spiritual system of belief. As outlined in chapter 2, this analysis of the ecological crisis in terms of truth can be seen in the deep ecology position. Whereas the technocratic anti-democratic view prioritised the technical aspects of social-environmental relations over their normative context, a religious outlook on the ecological crisis views the normative context in religious terms. While not wishing to claim that deep ecological views are inherently anti-democratic, there is a potential tension between its spiritual/metaphysical view of the ecological crisis and its commitment to democratic forms of decision making. If the ecological crisis is a religious crisis, then the search for a solution must be a search for the 'true' solution which can only be deduced by revelation. In a manner similar to technocratic solutions to social-environmental relations, spiritual perspectives also see the resolution of ecological problems in terms of 'discovery' rather than 'creation'. It is not surprising to find that technocratic and spiritual views are often fused together in eco-authoritarian arguments. A good example of this is Ophuls' argument for a 'priesthood of responsible technologists' (1977: 159) to take charge of regulating the ecological health of society. From a deep ecological viewpoint, Devall's call for a spiritually-enthused 'eco-warriors' (1988: 196-302) to take care of degraded landscapes is also close to the fusion of spiritual and technocratic arguments which can underwrite non-democratic forms of resolving social-environmental problems. What both the spiritual and technocratic non-democratic perspectives share is a view of the ecological crisis in terms of a particular form of 'objective' knowledge. In the spiritual case the resolution of the ecological crisis as an issue of 'faith' is not open to democratic deliberation. As indicated in chapter 2, this spiritual dimension to deep ecology can be readily seen in its view of the resolution of the ecological crisis in terms of 'redemption' (2.3.1). In the technocratic case, it is the authority of science which makes democratic decision-making either inappropriate or counter-productive.

The general point to be taken from this overview of eco-authoritarianism is that there is a potential tension between green politics and democracy if there is a constitutive relationship between democracy and material affluence or if the ecological crisis is viewed primarily as either a matter of 'survival' or 'salvation'. In both cases democratic forms of decision-making are superfluous, counter-productive or in some way inappropriate to dealing with problems within the social-environmental metabolism. The next section discusses the issue of the role of science in democratic environmental decision-making in more detail.

7.3 Science, Knowledge and Democracy

To adequately address the technological and scientific roots of the ecological crisis demands that democratic norms and institutions be extended to what Beck calls "techno-economic sub-politics" (1992: 229). For Beck the resolution as opposed to the displacement of ecological problems calls for a proactive, *ex ante* perspective, as outlined in chapter 5. He interprets this *ex ante* position to imply the democratic regulation of technological development.¹² As he puts it, "The demand is that the consequences and organizational freedom of action of microelectronics or genetic technology belong in parliament *before* the fundamental decisions on their application have been taken" (*ibid.*: 229). This argument does not imply either a rejection of science and technology or that they are the sole causes of the ecological crisis as some early green critics such as Commoner (1971) did. Rather, in a manner analogous to Gorz's claim that the ecological crisis requires the democratic limitation of economic rationality (1989: 111-27), Beck's analysis calls for the democratic regulation of scientific and technological practice. In other words, one may interpret the green suspicion of technology and scientific knowledge as motivated from democratic concerns about expert-centred forms of decision-making.

¹² A similar argument was outlined in the last chapter where the normative dimension of green political economy was held to consist in the political-normative determination of 'resources' and 'proscribed resources' as a result of technological advances (6.7).

Central aspects of the green critique are thus not anti-science in the manner some observers have maintained (Yearley, 1991; O'Neill, 1993: 148-155). Rather, the green critique of science and expert forms of knowledge and practices, ought to be interpreted as claiming that expert knowledge is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for environmental decision-making (O'Neill, 1993: 147). Effective collective decision-making with regard to the determination and regulation of a social-environmental metabolism requires both expert knowledge and lay judgement. This point is further developed below (section 7.8), in terms of the lay and expert composition of the deliberative 'decision-recommending' bodies increasingly used to help make environmental policy. It was also explicit in the claim that one of the distinctions between ecological modernisation and collective ecological management was the greater opportunities for democratic involvement in environmental decision-making, and democratic accountability, in the latter relative to the former (5.6).

The imputed anti-scientific outlook of green political theory which is often used as evidence of its regressive, anti-modern stance is thus more apparent than real. While greens may be suspicious of an exclusive reliance on scientific knowledge on the basis that such forms of decision-making can lead to non-democratic results, as indicated above (7.2), science and technology are essential to the green position, as argued in chapter 3. Just as there are democratic reasons which can be advanced for the green critique of economic growth, likewise there are democratic considerations in the green critique of science and technology, as well as moral considerations as suggested in 6.7. The question to be addressed is the place of science within a democratic society and the place of science as part of the democratic political process of collective ecological management. Whereas techno-optimistic arguments are largely prefaced on the assumption that experts will find solutions to ecological problems with little or no input from the non-expert population, the incorporation of science within green politics assumes that the application of science is *within* rather than *beyond* democratic regulation. This has to do with the fact that scientific knowledge and its technological application can have effects on individuals and that those affected ought to have some say in how science is used. On this account the

green democratic argument is for people to have more say in more and more areas of their lives. Within the context of contemporary societies Beck (1992) uses the revealing metaphor of the 'experimental society' to describe how an unregulated, unaccountable technological and scientific establishment turns society into a laboratory without the consent of, and often unbeknown to, the individuals its products affect. In Beck's terminology the 'risk society' is a society in which scientific experiments are carried out on society.

Democracy can also be defended as the most appropriate collective decision-making procedure under conditions of uncertainty. Given the often high levels of uncertainty and risk that social-environmental interactions display it would seem that ecological rationality requires that institutions regulating these interactions be as self-reflexive and open-ended as possible. As Hayward points out, "Given the likelihood of uncertainty and disagreement about knowledge of means, let alone ends, it would therefore seem important that a degree of democracy be allowed into scientific processes in general; and this point would apply *a fortiori* to processes of policy-making" (1995: 186). While having doubts about the desirability of insisting on democratic norms *within* the production of scientific knowledge itself, I endorse Hayward's point that democracy can be justified on the grounds of uncertainty when such knowledge is used in policy-making. In contrast to the eco-authoritarian argument based on expert knowledge and certainty, general uncertainty and disagreement about the causes, extent and possible remedies for social-environmental problems underwrites the necessity for democratic, open-ended decision-making procedures. One aspect of this is the necessity for public debate and discussion based on the fullest information available, for it is only by such debate that possible solutions will emerge, since there is no expert system of knowledge which can be guaranteed to yield an ecologically rational social-environmental material metabolism. The argument for a democratic as opposed to a non or anti-democratic context for deciding the equilibrium social-environmental metabolism can be readily seen when one thinks of the disagreement within science itself about key environmental issues such as global warming, ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, pollution, energy and resource

depletion. Only a democratic, 'open society' can hope to make good (as opposed to 'true') decisions regarding the material interaction between society and its environment which can command widespread support. Hayward's suggestion for a 'degree of democracy' within science itself is perhaps best understood as an argument for the desirability of the free flow of information and informed debate within science, and not that scientific judgements are to be made on the basis of majority rule. However, the necessity for democratic norms when science is used in policy-making are clear. As Beck has argued, "Only when medicine opposes medicine, nuclear physics opposes nuclear physics...can the future that is being brewed up in the test-tube become intelligible and evaluable for the outside world" (1992: 234). For Beck, following Popper to some extent, democratic decision-making is a form of institutionalised self-criticism which he sees as, "the *only way* that the mistakes that would sooner or later destroy our world can be detected in advance" (1992: 234: emphasis in original). Hence the green stress on freedom of information to permit citizens to make informed choices, and also to combat the anti-democratic possibilities of 'scientism', i.e. science as ideology. This is discussed later in terms of the necessity for a new science-policy relationship or culture (7.7)

This argument for democracy qua decision-making under uncertainty, greatly alters Saward's (1993) suggestion that it is the imperative, end-orientated nature of green politics which implies an instrumental attachment to democracy. As indicated in chapter 2, one of the central arguments of this thesis is that green political theory is not geared towards the discovery of some scientific or metaphysical truth regarding social-environmental relations, but rather is concerned with the creation of agreement in respect to those relations. The connection between the experimental nature of social-environmental harmony and democracy also serves to underwrite a non-monistic view of ecological management. According to Norton, "Since we do not yet know what activities are consistent with protecting the complexity and energy flow in natural systems, and since these will vary from system to system, we do not have a single 'ideal' to guide management...Conservation biology becomes a part of a social experiment, a part of the search for a viable concept of the good life for human inhabitants of the landscape" (1991:

147-8). Ecological management must be rooted in a democratic, open and free society in which new forms of social-environmental adaptation, knowledge, can be developed. Thus Beck's argument for a democratic 'self-reflexive' society, may be seen as an ecologically updated version of Popper's 'open society'. Democracy, therefore, is accepted on principle as the best procedure for making decisions under conditions of often radical uncertainty. In other words, this conception of green politics does, "embrace uncertainty and...the need for constant self-interrogation" (Saward, 1993: 77) as non-negotiable values.¹³

This need for self-interrogation which underpins democratic decision-making is at the heart of Beck's ecological argument for 'reflexive modernisation' and a reconceptualisation of social progress. In Beck's analysis, 'social progress' (1992: 203) ought to be understood as institutionalised self-criticism (reflexivity). A major aspect of this involves increasing opportunities for citizens to deliberate and recalibrate the regulative *principles of modernisation*, and not just specific policies associated with it, or the means to achieve some 'given' conception of modernisation. The latter was the case made against ecological modernisation in chapter 5 (5.6). In other words, green arguments for democracy can be understood as arguments for a different type of social progress. This can be readily seen even within 'reformist' conceptions of 'sustainable development', where it is explicitly linked to improved democratic arrangements and the promotion of basic human rights. This is another example of how in practice green politics is not just compatible with but actively promotes democratic forms of decision-making. The tension between modernisation and democratisation outlined below (7.5) can, from a green perspective, be lessened if modernisation itself is partly understood as a process of democratisation as opposed to being mainly viewed in terms of increased material wealth. A good example of this revised understanding of social progress

¹³ This acceptance of uncertainty can also be seen as underwriting prudence as an ecological virtue. The persistence of uncertainty as a background condition, particularly within expert systems of knowledge, may be taken as a breakdown in the 'arrogance' of humanism discussed in chapters 2 and 3, and may indicate the emergence of a more humble (less 'arrogant') conception of the relationship between humans and nature. Accepting uncertainty as a permanent feature of social-environmental relations is one way of recognising the limits to human knowledge of the world.

concerns the green suspicion of technologically-led economic growth which is largely beyond democratic control but which has great and far-reaching effects on the citizens of the demos and indeed non-citizens (both human and nonhuman). A green commitment to democracy can be understood as expressing a desire that technological and scientific development be subject to the ultimate authority of the demos. Although the search for the truth is a good, it is not the only or the highest good. As O'Neill puts it, "A proper understanding of the value of scientific knowledge involves the acknowledgement of limits in the means to and objects of knowledge" (1993: 165).

An obvious example that green politics is concerned with matters of science as well as political and ethical issues is found in the ideas of sustainability and sustainable development. Both sustainability and sustainable development share a fundamental characteristic of having normative and scientific dimensions, as well as political and economic implications. That sustainability is a normative concept should be obvious. It embodies a particular moral attitude to the future, expressing for example, how much the present generation care for and are willing to make sacrifices for descendants and how, and to what degree, nonhumans figure in this process. Making sustainability a co-ordinating social value and practice cannot be left up to 'specialists', since it is not simply a matter of expertise but one that requires ethical consideration. Sustainability calls for judgement rather than uncovering any *ex cathedra* 'true' account of social-environmental relations. Arguments from sustainability usually propose wide-ranging changes in the present organisation of society, particularly the economy-ecology relationship, in the name of those yet to be born. The consequences of realising sustainability in social practices are so widespread, and the issues raised so important that it deserves democratic rather than non-democratic articulation, as indicated in the last section. Even if there is agreement on a general outline of sustainability that ought (for moral as well as prudential reasons) to be socially instantiated, we have only begun the fleshing out process. For a start, as it stands it is far too abstract, being silent on many things. How far in the future must we look? One, three or fifty generations hence? What are we to pass on? What sacrifices are ruled out?

Such questions cannot be answered purely scientifically or metaphysically (that is objectively given), but because of their normative content they can only be articulated politically (that is intersubjectively created). And for traditional reasons we can say that this political process ought to be a democratic one. In one sense greens can ask why they should find new grounds for their adherence to democracy that are different from those advanced by socialists or liberals? The indeterminacies thrown up by sustainability require political adjudication, and given that the policies flowing from any conception of sustainability are likely to have a widespread social impact, leaving few citizens' lives untouched, it is uncontroversial to hold that they should have some say in its articulation and formulation. That is to say the indeterminacy of the principle calls for citizen deliberation, while its translation into policies and laws call for their consent, and equally important, their participation, in achieving it.

7.4 Democratic Institutions and Democratic Society

While democracy can be understood in terms of certain types of institutions, such as representative government, and certain institutional arrangements, such as the division of powers and constitutional checks and balances, this focus on the institutional or procedural understanding of democracy does not capture the full normative force of what democracy is. As Macpherson notes, "Democracy is to be understood as a quality pervading the whole of common life...a kind of society" (1973: 15-16). This is also one of the understandings of democracy in Tocqueville's thought. According to Holmes, for Tocqueville, democracy specifies "on the one hand, a social arrangement and, on the other hand, a political system" (1995: 23). Democracy can thus be viewed as a society of equals, a type of social life in which there is an absence of legally maintained class hierarchies: a political decision-making procedure as well as a type of society. The two of course are related. It would be difficult to establish and maintain a democratic society

without democratic political institutions.¹⁴ Examples of accounts of democracy which embrace both democracy as a political and a social system include the classical liberal writings of Mill, as well as the more radical democratic tradition of Rousseau, Paine and Marx. One implication of democracy as a society is that it calls for virtues and values such as independence, openness, tolerance, reasonableness and equality to be spread over a wider range of issues and spheres of social life than is required within democracy viewed purely as an institutionalised decision-making procedure.¹⁵ As will be argued below (7.3), the link between green politics and democracy cannot be a purely institutional matter. Green democratic theory is thereby concerned with the creation of a democratic society and not just a more democratic political system. Evidence of this can be found in the green strategy of ‘marching through the institutions’, where a green party taking over the reins of the state is seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for creating a more democratic or green society. As Doherty puts it, “The greens have responded to new conditions and issues with a distinctively modern strategy based on accepting the limits of the state in guaranteeing social and political change” (1992: 102). However, as indicated in chapter 5 (5.7), a green view would also voice concerns over the desirability, and not just the possibility, of overly state-centred social and political change.

Offe and Preuss (1991) bring out this distinction between democracy as an institutional arrangement and as a conception of society in their discussion of the distinction between the American and French revolutions. The American democratic model was a classic example of what they refer to as a ‘political revolution’, while the French revolution and its model of democracy was rooted in a more fundamental ‘social revolution’. The American democratic model is the template ‘liberal democratic model’ in the sense that it

¹⁴ Notice that this ‘holistic’ (dare one use the term) view of democracy reinforces the critique of eco-authoritarianism above. That is, while it may be possible to destroy democratic institutions through a return to scarcity and a politics of social survival, in a well-established and long-standing democracy it is not likely that the democratic spirit of a society will be defeated by the destruction of democratic institutions. This is because it has not been shown that the maturation and further development of democracy requires a materially productive and growth orientated economic system.

¹⁵ While recent liberal theory has moved some way in this direction, putting forward the case for ‘liberal virtues’ (Macedo, 1990; Galston, 1991), for many radical democrats this beefed-up liberalism, still falls short of creating the basis for a vibrant democratic society. Whether it does or not is not a concern here.

relieved the sovereign people from the heavy burden of a nearly sacred task to define and implement the common good. Instead, the model restricted itself to the task of devising institutions (such as the natural right to private property and the division of powers) which (a) allowed the individuals to pursue their diverse interests and their particular notions of happiness, thereby at the same time (b) avoiding the danger of an omnipotent government imposing its notion of collective happiness upon the people. (1991: 149)

This model of democracy they point out, echoing other critical analyses of liberal democracy (Pateman, 1970, 1985; Barber, 1984; Macpherson, 1973), makes little demands upon individuals. Unlike the French or 'republican' vision of democracy, the liberal model is argued not to "enable citizens to be 'good' citizens, i.e. citizens committed to the common good" (Offe and Preuss, 1991: 153), but rather enable them to fulfil their individual interests.¹⁶ Democratic politics conceived instrumentally as a method for the pursuit of individual self-interest, cashed out (to use an appropriate term) as material consumption, may represent a danger to democracy. To some extent, democratic politics loses a lot when it becomes overwhelmingly concerned with 'managing the economy', and the securing of ever increasing levels of economic growth, to be privately consumed. The problems with an overly constitutional approach has been recognised by Kymlicka and Norman who argue that "it has become clear that procedural-institutional mechanisms to balance self-interest are not enough, and that some level of civic virtue and public-spiritedness is required" (1994: 360). To paraphrase Clausewitz, democratic politics as economics by other means, is bad for the democratic health of society.¹⁷ In this sense the

¹⁶ Tocqueville also noted this lack of a common purpose within US democracy, when he noted that, "The first thing that strikes the observer is an innumerable multitude of men all equal and all alike, incessantly endeavouring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut themselves. Each of them, living apart, is as a stranger to the fate of all the rest...Above this race of men stands an immense and titular power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications, and to watch over their fate" (quoted in Dahl, 1985: 32-3).

¹⁷ The danger of course, as liberals are right to point out, is that rejecting representative democracy as 'economic management for individual gain', may lead to a politics as 'morality by other means'. The

recent green concern with consumerism has roots in older debates around the dangers of commercial society to political democracy. Just as Mill and Tocqueville saw the dangers of commercial society for democracy in terms of its individualism and the elevation of private concerns over public ones, likewise contemporary greens inveigh against 'consumer society', for similar reasons. If the resolution of environmental problems requires a (moderate to strong) sense of collective purpose as green politics suggests (Achterberg, 1996), then *liberal* democracy may fall short of producing an ecologically rational social-environmental metabolism. This is a moot point, and although not a direct concern here, the critique of ecological modernisation in chapter 5 can be seen as partly stemming from a sense that it is too tied to an institutional democratic approach to social-environmental issues. The ecological deficits of liberal democracy does not underwrite the ecological superiority of anti-democratic approaches, as indicated above, nor non-democratic, economic approaches, as argued in the last chapter. In other words, democracy is not condemned on ecological grounds simply because of liberal democracy's imputed ecological failings.

Green politics as collective ecological management rests on the 'greening' of the democratic culture of liberal democratic societies. Thus collective ecological management can be seen as a development from and complement to ecological modernisation which works at the level of 'greening' the nation-state and the formal economy. This 'greening' of the democratic culture implies tapping into the energy of a democratic society and using it in the service of ecological goals. This energy stems in part from the free and open nature of democratic society, discussed below in 7.9.2 in terms of 'the spirit of association' and experimentation, as mentioned in 7.3. As Paehlke notes, "Democracy, participation, and open administration carry not only a danger of division and conflict, but

question of how cultural pluralism is to fit into any 'post-liberal' democratic theory has yet to be adequately addressed. It is difficult to see how sustainability can exist without some common cultural backing. It was for this reason that collective ecological management turns on cultural as well as political aspects. The issue seems to be whether sustainability can find support as a public culture which is compatible with a (limited) variety of private ones. It was partly for this reason that nationhood was examined in chapter 5, as a possible public cultural basis for green politics, since it is a public culture within which a number of 'private' ones can co-exist. This is also consistent with Thompson's view of the nation as a "community of interlocking communities" (1992: 180).

as well perhaps the best means of mobilizing educated and prosperous populations in difficult times” (1988: 294-5). In this way green politics seeks to transform not just the institutional structure of presently existing liberal democracies but also transforming the wider cultural context within which those institutions are both situated and also help create and sustain. As indicated in chapter 2, and outlined in the elaboration of green politics as collective ecological management (chapter 5), one of the defining aims of green politics is that it sees its ‘political project’ as involving wider cultural transformation. What is suggested here is that green democratic theory and practice is a central location from where this wider cultural transformation begins. In other words, the green focus on democracy has to do with the ‘greening’ of the existing democratic political culture as the starting point for the wider cultural transformation that green politics ultimately desires. Institutional restructuring from a green point of view must be understood as part of a deeper process of cultural transformation. At the same time political democracy provides a procedure within which cultural contradictions can be publicly raised and possibly resolved.

7.5 Modernisation and Democracy

For many greens, economic modernisation, whether in state or market form, has historically been associated with non- or anti-democratic political results. According to one version of this argument modernisation is premised on the enclosure of the commons in their various forms (Wall, 1994; Goldsmith *et al*, 1992). The green argument is that economic modernisation, the industrialisation of society and economy, which is typically equated with ‘progress’, is not unambiguously a positive development. There are serious costs which are either under- or misrepresented, and/or unjustly distributed. This neglect of the various social and ecological costs of industrial progress is the key to understanding the green critique of contemporary industrial societies.¹⁸ The green analysis of progress

¹⁸ In the eighteenth century market-led economic modernisation was defended and promoted on the grounds of its ‘civilising’ effects. The green critique may be viewed as holding that economic

also serves as a major guide to the green attitude toward, and assessment, of ‘modernity’. If we understand modernity in terms of its industrial and democratic components, then the green democratic position can be viewed as suggesting that there is a contradiction between the industrial modernisation of society and democratic modernisation.¹⁹

A less materially-orientated politics does seem to call for a major change in the role of the state. According to Weber (1968), there is a positive correlation between ‘modernisation’ of the socio-economic system, which calls for an increasing complex social division of labour, the growth of the state and an attendant increase in political centralisation and bureaucratisation. That is, economic modernisation has historically been associated with *both* market and state institutions regulating social affairs in general (Polanyi, 1957; Tilly, 1992), and social-environmental affairs in particular (Walker, 1989). The analysis outlined in the last chapter where modernisation was portrayed in terms of the ‘disembedding’ of economic relations from social relations (6.5, 6.6) is consistent with the Weberian thesis. What these perspectives on industrial modernisation point to is the dominant position of the state in relation to civil society within the context of a ‘modernising’ society. Clearly the opposite seems to hold, that is, ‘de-modernisation’ or ‘re-modernisation’ suggests a reduced role for the state and its bureaucracies. As Doherty puts it, “Once the faith in technological and unlimited growth has been challenged, the need for state-directed maximisation of productive potential falls away” (1992: 101). Equally, as suggested earlier in the critique of free market environmentalism (6.2), this would also diminish the need for free-market maximisation of production and consumption.²⁰ This line of argument is of course related to the argument in the last chapter concerning increased economic self-reliance as a central principle for the re-

modernisation, particularly in its present globalised form, may actually have a ‘barbarising’ effect on social relations, and an unsustainable and unsymbiotic effect on social-environmental relations. Also see 6.7.

¹⁹ As outlined in chapter 5, a tension may also exist between ‘ecological modernisation’ and popular sovereignty in environmental decision-making.

²⁰ An alternative argument for de-modernisation has been proposed by Lee (1993a), who argues that it is rational to argue for de-industrialisation on the grounds that it is not only ecologically beneficial in terms of sustainability but also positive in terms of restoring the worth of nonhuman world, the dignity of labour by permitting a more ‘artistic’ mode of production. See 6.7.

organisation of the economy. The more people do things for themselves, the less there is need for extensive state involvement or extensive market relations. It is important to point out that this does not lead to a rejection of the state or the market. As suggested in chapter 4, the conception of green politics being defended here, does not aim to create transparent social relations. So long as macro institutions such as the nation-state and impersonal market exist, social relations and social-environmental relations cannot be transparent. All that is being suggested here is that the green critique of material economic development can be understood and defended on democratic grounds. The latter has to do with the re-definition of the division and relationship between state and civil society, consistent with what was suggested in chapter 5 as regards the role of the state within collective ecological management.

A central element of this has to do with the re-constitution of the state as an enabling state within the context of this reformed relationship, and the distinction between capitalist economic organisation and a local market economy as indicated in the last chapter (6.4, 6.5). A re-definition of these relationships is a necessary but not sufficient condition for green democratic arguments. This re-definition partly requires a 'simplification' of economic life which would enhance the prospects for democratic decision-making and democratic norms throughout society as a whole. The less complex social life becomes the less there is a need for large-scale organisations such as current state agencies and economic units. At the same time a less complex social life is consistent with a material basis which is not as damaging and extensive as one which supports a complex one. While this should not be taken as an argument for rendering the whole of social life transparent through simplification, the creation of a less complex web of social relations has the potential to contribute to enhanced democratic practice through decentralisation and the development of more 'human-scale' organisations. This calls for a re-arrangement of the relationship between state and civil society and within civil society rather than a return to the *gemeinschaftlich* vision criticised in chapter 4. Social complexity cannot be eliminated completely without extensive social restructuring which would herald the break-up of contemporary national societies as they presently exist. The decentralisation rather than

the deconstruction of nation-states is more in keeping with the green political project of collective ecological management.

An additional factor is that although such an anarchistic arrangement may be ecologically rational in the sense of improving the sustainability of social-environmental material exchanges at some established metabolic rate, it is less likely that the establishment of this same social arrangement would be inherently superior to the presently existing system of nation-states in effecting ameliorative and restorative environmental changes. This is because many environmental problems are large-scale and inter-related and cannot be decomposed into smaller components (Martell, 1994; Goodin, 1992; Dryzek, 1987). Now while this issue of scale and complexity does not of itself indicate that large-scale arrangements necessarily require anti-democratic forms of collective decision-making as suggested by eco-authoritarianism, the question of scale and complexity does indicate that the form democracy takes will be different. This is related to the status of direct democracy within green political theory which is discussed in section 7.7, which suggests the ecological advantages of representative democratic institutions. The net effect of an eco-anarchist deconstruction of the system of nation-states and the creation of small-scale, bioregional units, is that the democratic 'rule of the people' with regard to social-environmental interaction may not be improved. The democratic character of green political theory may in fact be better preserved by retaining, but transforming, the nation-state as the basic 'management unit' rather than opting for a multiplicity of autonomous bioregional units. As was suggested in chapter 5, the democratisation of the nation-state may support green democratic arguments better than its abolition.²¹

That a democratic political system has no necessary connection with ever increasing levels of material consumption is a touchstone of green democratic arguments. More important to a democratic polity is a well developed 'democratic culture', a shared sense of citizenship, plurality and political equality. Plurality and equality are more significant

²¹ One way of looking at this is to say that collective ecological management while being state-based, is not state-centred, as it requires non-state institutions, such as the (local) formal and informal market (6.5).

than prosperity as preconditions for an ongoing and vibrant democracy. The advent of scarcity and limits is taken as an opportunity by green theory to redefine basic political concepts. It asks us to consider the possibility that human freedom and the good polity does not depend, in any fundamental sense, on increasing levels of material affluence. Indeed, there may be a trade-off between democracy and material well-being.²² Beyond a certain threshold, greater increases in the latter may be accompanied by decreases in the former. This is the logic of the prescient quote from Toqueville above. A less materially affluent lifestyle may be consistent with enhanced democratic practice since the decrease in complexity, social division of labour, inequality and hierarchy, allows the possibility of greater participation by individuals in the decisions that affect their lives and that of their communities. For example, a shift away from economic growth as a central social goal would undermine the justification of socio-economic inequalities on the grounds that they are necessary ‘incentives’ to achieve economic growth. At the same time, 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 (Daly, 1973). This redistributive aspect to the green critique of excessive material development echoes the socialist critique of the disparity between political equality and socio-economic inequality within capitalism.²³

²²According to Lauber (1978) there is evidence to show that the relatively liberal, and consequently less powerful, British state was an important determinant of the stagnation and decline of its economy since the second world war. Relying on the comparative studies of Schonfield (1965), he states that, “the governments that have been most successful in the pursuit of the new [economic] goals have been those which had few doubts about the extensive use of non-elected authority, for example, France. The more ‘timid’ governments were less successful” (1978: 209). Having ‘modernisation’ as one’s highest goal may lead to non-democratic, illiberal forms of state action. However limited its democratic credentials may be, ecological modernisation does at least differ from previous forms of state-centred modernisation, in being committed to democratic as opposed to authoritarian forms of implementation.

²³ In the last chapter I argued for a green conception of liberty qua self-determination, part of which involved self-reliance and self-provisioning. Here the green conception of equality, and equal liberty, may be thought of as requiring a distribution of the resources, and means of production, such that individuals (in communities?, families?) can, in part, satisfy their own needs. This may explain the green stress on returning the land to the people. In other words, there are ‘non-romantic’ reasons why many greens are attracted to the Jeffersonian ideal of a rural-based democracy of independent farming homesteads, or a return to commons regimes.

Unlike the socialist critique the green argument is against economic growth per se rather than simply against the capitalist organisation of an economy geared towards growth. One of the reasons for this is the green argument that economic growth and modernisation demands the creation of organisations, institutions and forms of social relations which may be inimical to democratic practice. Much of the green critique of contemporary society has to do with the contention that large-scale organisation and non-democratic forms of social relations are part and parcel of the modernisation process. The modernising imperative, whether it takes a socialist or capitalist form, has non- and potentially anti-democratic costs. Large-scale forms of production, mass consumption, individualism and a break-down in social solidarity as effects and conditions of modernisation sap the democratic vigour of a society even while maintaining democratic institutions. Modernisation in producing a mass society produces a limited and constrained form of democracy in which periodic elections become 'beauty contests' between different political parties, or elites, who are judged on their ability to produce economic growth. This 'protective' view of democracy is of course to be preferred to the authoritarian paths to modernisation taken by communist, fascist and other anti-democratic regimes.²⁴ At the same time protective democracy has its advantages as a procedural conception of democracy. The point however, is that such protective forms of democracy fall short of creating a more democratic society and enhanced democratic institutions. If the most democratic system economic modernisation permits, or is compatible with, is a liberal pluralist system, then those wishing to democratise the state and civil society, such as the green movement, have good reason to see modernisation as a fetter. If one accepts that selective de-modernisation may lead to popular pressure for more egalitarian distribution this in turn may strengthen the equality that is at the heart of democracy. In other words, the green democratic argument is that a well established democratic culture can provide a basis for the democratisation of political democratic institutions.

²⁴ More recent examples of non-democratic paths to economic modernisation can be seen in the Southeast Asian 'Tiger' economies which combine capitalist economic organisation with authoritarian and non-democratic, traditional political structures.

To return to the eco-authoritarian argument above, there is no necessary reason to suppose that a less materially affluent society must lead to a non-democratic politics. It is only if the present unequal distribution of socially produced wealth is maintained *in the face of greater pressure for a more egalitarian distribution* that this is so. One reason for greater pressure for a more egalitarian distribution of wealth is that, apart from an acknowledgement of social and ecological limits to growth, in an ecologically de-modernising society, wealth production and distribution are *more transparent* than in an economically modernising society.²⁵ In societies, such as the welfare states of the west, their legitimacy is, in part, on a commitment to lessen inequalities via redistributive measures. At the same time, providing ‘environmental quality’ or ‘environmental security’ is also proving to be a key feature in securing legitimacy. Now in a non-growing economy, it is highly unlikely that the majority of citizens will accept as legitimate the unequal distribution of a static economic pie. The justification of an unequal distribution of socially produced wealth cannot be that they are required for procuring greater wealth production. In short, with the shift to a less growth orientated society, the normative basis for social co-operation needs to be re-negotiated. Within an ecologically re-modernising society, ‘social progress’ is explicitly political. As Beck points out, within what he calls ‘industrial society’, “‘Progress’ can be understood as legitimate social change without democratic political legitimation” (1992: 214). Within ‘post-industrial’ society, such as the type of society green politics is concerned with, ‘progress’ may be more open to democratic deliberation in a way which is not possible in a society geared towards economic growth.

While not doubting the social disruption and problems that a drop in material standards of living may bring, social solidarity and order need not be threatened by this so long as the costs are shared equitably throughout the whole society. In all likelihood it is only if some members of society are forced to accept lower material standards relative to others

²⁵ In terms of the discussion of ecological modernisation in chapter 5, its ambiguous position may be viewed as relating to its potential to either be part of the further economic modernisation of society, but one which takes on board ecological considerations, or become radicalised as part of an ecological re-modernisation of society.

that severe social disharmony will emerge. As theorists of taxation have noted, it is not so much the imposition of a collective burden on a people that rankles them as the spread of the burden throughout society. At the same time, denying people the opportunity to make fundamental decisions regarding the content as well as distribution of these burdens would also make for social disharmony and a possible authoritarian reaction.²⁶ Demanding loyalty and compliance without 'voice' is not possible within a democracy, and as suggested later, compliance with laws and regulations will be enhanced if people themselves are the ones who shaped and/or agreed to them.

Ecological re-modernisation in depending for its success on creating a greater sense of common purpose, will clearly be strengthened by tapping into existing resources of shared identity, such as nationhood. As was argued in chapter 5, collective ecological management is compatible with a sense of nationhood which is partly constituted by particular national attachments to and relations with the 'national environment'. The premise of green democrats is the idea that those affected should be considered as the relevant demos. One could say that a green democracy needs to be issue-sensitive and boundary-indifferent. The boundaries refer to the demarcation of the different interests that green democratic theory seeks to include.²⁷ The challenge suggested by green politics for contemporary democratic nations is whether they have the foresight and courage to make the further extension of democratic norms and procedures a matter of necessity, as much as a matter of desirability, in the face of the ecological dilemmas facing them.

²⁶ One of the famous slogans of the American revolution 'No taxation without representation' aptly expresses this latter condition.

²⁷ Although beyond this chapter, there is reason to think that as well as different democratic institutions, there may be different democratic decision criteria that a comprehensive account of the democratic regulation of social-environmental relations would have to address. For example, it might be that simple majorities will not be acceptable for deciding a referendum on a national 'sustainability plan', where a two thirds or three quarters majority (or perhaps consensus) is more appropriate.

7.6 Discursive Democracy

There is a good deal of support in the literature that the view of democracy which best fits with green politics is a communicative or deliberative model (Saward, 1993; Dobson, 1996a; Eckersley, 1996; Jacobs, 1996; Barry, 1996a). Green arguments for democracy can be said to rest partly upon the integrative function of democracy. This refers to the manner in which democratic decision-making allows the (always provisional) determination of the social-environmental metabolism to be affected by arguments drawn from various sources of knowledge. As argued in chapter 5, green politics as collective ecological management is about the collective judgement of the totality of relations which constitute a society's metabolism with its environment. Only an open-ended communicative process such as democracy can call forth and possibly integrate the various forms of knowledge that an ecological rational metabolism will require to command widespread support. And the choice of deliberative democracy is that it offers a procedural rule for democratic decision-making, that of *communicative* as opposed to *instrumental* rationality (Dryzek, 1990: 54). In its operation its advocates also claim that it will increase the 'democratic' character of society in general. Here, the choice of deliberative democracy for deciding social-environmental problems is that it will lead to policies which are made up of that combination of *both* communicative (understood as ethical) and instrumental (understood as scientific/technical) rationality that together constitute ecological rationality in the sense defined in chapter 3. In dealing with social-environmental relations, as suggested in previous chapters, both instrumental and communicative rationality are appropriate. However, as the ethics of use argument demonstrates, it is communicative rationality which has priority and sets the parameters for the operation of instrumental rationality. This was the position in 7.2 and 7.3 where I argued that the technical dimensions of environmental problems requiring expert knowledge were to be determined by non-technical, democratic forms of decision-making.

The key to understanding the place of deliberative democracy within green political theory is that as a form of collective decision-making it stresses the 'community' over the

'market' or the 'state' as the appropriate location for first-order decisions concerning social-environmental relations.²⁸ That is, as indicated in the last chapter, a political decision-making procedure is often more appropriate than a non-political one i.e. the market, in collective decisions regarding the regulation of the social-environmental metabolism. At the same time a deliberative democratic decision-making process is to be preferred over the administrative state making social-environmental decisions for society as a whole (Dryzek, 1995). After all, it is social-environmental relations, not state-environmental relations, that is the subject of collective ecological management. Once the major decisions concerning social-environmental relations have been made democratically (via representative and deliberative institutions), then state or market institutions may be used to carry out those decisions. Discursive democracy in this sense attempts to transform the relationship between state, market and community, by seeking, as far as possible, to make both the state and the market instrumental to the democratic decisions of the community.

The choice of a discursive form of democracy within green political theory is closely associated with the public goods character of social-environmental issues. As Jacobs notes, environmental goods are not private, "Forming attitudes to them is therefore a different kind of process from forming attitudes (preferences) towards private goods. It involves reasoning about other people's interests and values (as well as one's own)" (1996: 8). This is at the heart of the green democratic argument, that only a deliberative or discursive political process will reflect the range of human interests and values in respect to social-environmental relations. Deliberative institutions reflect the public goods nature of environmental problems where individuals do, or ought to, think in terms of the 'public good'. Examples of deliberative institutions include citizens juries, 'Round Tables', public inquiries, and the Agenda 21 process as described in the last chapter. Citizens juries' are groups of citizens selected to represent the general public rather than a sectional interest, brought together to deliberate on some matter of public concern.

²⁸ This distinction between market, state and community as three possible mechanisms for the regulation of collective life is taken from Taylor (1982: 59).

Round Tables are a Canadian experiment in which the government chooses representatives from interest groups to try and come to some agreement on social or environmental issues, and to make recommendations (Gordon, 1994). Dryzek also lists “participatory models of planning, right-to-know legislation, public hearings...regulatory negotiation and environmental mediation” (1995: 188) as examples of ‘incipient discursive designs’. For him these are approximations of ideal deliberative institutions, because they are not autonomous ‘public spheres’ of free discourse since they are associated with the state. The point about these institutions in environmental public policy-making is that they are held to be more appropriate as representing the interests and values of the public on environmental public goods or bads.

These institutions are considered as supplements to, rather than substitutes for, existing environmental public policy-making institutions. Firstly, deliberative democratic institutions are compatible with existing liberal democratic institutions. While deliberative democracy does suggest a more participatory form of democratic decision-making, it is compatible with representative government, indeed some aspects of it are representative themselves. Secondly, they are confined to environmental policy-making, though most of the advocates of deliberative democracy believe that their widespread use will create an impetus for the democratisation of the state and other areas of policy-making (Dryzek, 1995; Christoff, 1996). Thirdly, in its real-world approximation, there is no reason to suppose that pure communicative rationality is the only or main procedural standard. Jacobs (1996) suggests that within deliberative decision-making there may be certain desired or proscribed outcomes. According to him, “society can constrain the deliberative process by imposing on it the requirement to fulfil particular end-values; that is, particular broad conceptions of the public good...Certain values (such as racism) could be ruled inadmissible; or the deliberative process could be asked to come to a decision in pursuit of particular ends” (1996: 17). Again this can be taken as evidence of the supplementary role that deliberative democratic institutions can play as part of the range of democratic institutions which constitute a democratic political system. Finally, the deliberative process could be required to decide using a range of decision-making procedures. For

some issues, consensus may be appropriate, for others simple majority rule, and for others a two-thirds majority rule may be suitable. As Tännsjö, in a different context, notes “In situations where we want to find out what to consider morally right or wrong, or where we want to reach a decision as to what we are to take as a matter of fact, majority democracy may seem appropriate, while in situations where we have to divide up between us (equals) some amount of money or other economic resources, it may seem appropriate to practice unanimous democracy” (1992: 43).

The essence of the deliberative view of democratic decision-making is its communicative character. It is not voting in private booths, but debate and discussion within something approaching a ‘public sphere’, which marks deliberative democracy. Since according to Jacobs, “Attitude formation towards public goods is...essentially a public not a private activity” (1996: 8), it follows that a public and deliberative procedure is required in order that these attitudes/preferences towards environmental public goods be created. The point is that policy-making based on aggregating privately-formed preferences will not be based on the appropriate information. This information can only be created within deliberative not aggregative contexts.

Within a deliberative rather than a aggregative context, participants are more likely to engage in ‘public good thinking’. Jacobs (1996: 8-9) suggests three reasons why deliberative institutions are likely to encourage this. The first is that arguments must be put in terms of the public good. Arguments in terms of private or sectional interests are unlikely to produce majority agreement. The second is that deliberative institutions expose participants to a wider range of perspectives that is likely with private contemplation. Here the representativeness of the participants is crucial, and the standard of communicative rationality which allows *all* arguments/points that participants wish to raise to be raised. The third is that the act of deliberation tends to create a community amongst participants. Communication and contact with others under conditions of respect and equality invites participants to a greater sense of mutuality, solidarity and sympathy. One may add that in cases of conflict, a deliberative setting may foster toleration and understanding if not agreement. Thus, one should not judge deliberative democracy solely

by its capacity to produce agreement (or consensus in Habermas's abstract account of the 'ideal speech situation'). Deliberative institutions may not themselves solve social-environmental problems in the sense of producing agreement on the right course of action, or policy to be implemented. However, their widespread use may create the conditions which result in agreement. At the same time, it is not proposed that deliberative democratic institutions replace existing representative ones. Rather the appeal to deliberative democracy is to suggest a supplement to existing democratic institutions. The discursive claim is that certain environmental problems, for example, major land-use proposals where 'preservation' conflicts with 'development', lend themselves to a deliberative rather than an aggregative democratic solution. Thus in the case of a public inquiry into a proposed development project, the remit of the inquiry should permit the possibility of suggesting that the development not proceed. In other words, unlike the position described in 5.6 where such participatory forms of public involvement are often limited to influencing *how* development proceeds; there ought to be the opportunity to influence the inquiry's findings based on arguments over *whether* it should go ahead.

The advantages of a deliberative approach can be seen by looking at the distinction made between the different environmental attitudes people have as citizens and as consumers made in chapters 3, 5 and 6. One way of viewing this distinction is Sagoff's (1988) argument that individuals as consumers are guided mainly by considerations of their own interests, whereas as citizens they have to, or ought to, place the latter within the context of a common good, which accommodates the interests of others as well as their own. While Sagoff's position brings out the public/private dilemma within environmental issues, it is based, as Keat (1994) points out, on an overly restricted conception of consumption as a purely private activity. According to Keat,

consumption...is not merely something that we pursue as individuals: it is also a major element of the shared values of the local culture. So when, as citizens, people debate the nature and implications of their conception of the good society, they will find that a central element in that conception itself concerns the value

attributed to consumption...Hence what Sagoff represents as a tension within individuals between their roles as consumers and citizens might better be seen as a tension within the culture between the values of consumption and of nature- one that they have to address as citizens. (1994: 343-4)

Sagoff seeks to replace consumer interests with those of the citizen, that is, replace economic valuations of the environment with political-normative ones. However if consumption is itself a social value and not simply a private activity, then, as Keat suggests, the resolution of social-environmental problems requires a wider cultural context. The green democratic argument is that this cultural contradiction can only be resolved democratically. And this is more likely to be achieved when deliberative democratic settings and institutions supplement existing representative ones. The point about deliberative democratic institutions is that they can bring out the intersubjective character of environmental values, and articulate publicly the different forms of human valuing and bring them to bear in the making of social-environmental decisions. The problem with economic forms of valuing the environment is not that they are necessarily wrong *per se*, or that they are non-moral,²⁹ but rather they are wrong when they monopolise the debate, 'crowd out' other forms of valuing, and human interests in nature, and are standardly used as the primary form of information upon which to make environmental decisions. Green political theory does not seek to abandon instrumental social-environmental interaction. The legitimacy of instrumental social-environmental relations, is, it will be recalled, at the heart of the argument in chapter 3 for an 'ethics of use'. There it was argued that the normative basis of green politics cannot be abstracted from the existential fact of human manipulation and use of the environment. It is the manner of this interaction with which the ethics of use as a central normative aspect of collective ecological management is concerned. Such a public ethic is the desired outcome of the deliberative democratic process reflecting, as accurately as possible, the collectively

²⁹ As indicated in chapter 3 (3.5.1), even a crude instrumentalist anthropocentrism is not incompatible with the imposition of some ethical limits on social-environmental exchanges.

agreed set of public and binding norms that are to regulate social-environmental affairs. These norms are the outcome of a deliberative process within which questions concerning both ends and means pertaining to them can and ought to be raised.

It is the normative indeterminacy and epistemological uncertainty associated with social-environmental interaction that calls for democratic political deliberation. It is important to bear in mind that this indeterminacy and uncertainty applies to both ends and means within the green political project. If green politics is concerned with securing normative agreement around an ecologically rational social-environmental metabolism, this implies, as indicated above, that green politics cannot guide itself by seeking to discover some 'true' social-environmental metabolism.³⁰ Any such notion of one 'true path' is both dangerous and potentially undemocratic since it can function as a way to close debate and discussion. While green politics is ultimately presaged on a belief that there is a rational harmony between human and non-human interests, it is not supposed that there is only one equilibrium pattern. Rather, as indicated in chapter 5, there are a (limited) number of such patterns which may secure an ecologically rational social-environmental metabolism. Choosing which pattern and rate can only be legitimate if it is democratic and involves not just questions about means but more fundamentally about the ends of social-environmental relations. In choosing a particular metabolism one is also choosing a particular pattern of social-environmental relations, a certain mode of collective being, and thus a particular type of society. Just as a virtue ethics view of social-environmental relations asks the question 'what sort of person should I become?' (3.6), the political analogue of this sees the choice of social-environmental metabolism as choosing to live in a different sort of society.

³⁰ It must be said however that other conceptions of green political theory which stress the superiority of the 'natural' over the 'unnatural' or 'artefactual' do seem to orientate themselves towards discovering some objective truth of human-natural relations, the 'proof' of which is to be found in the infinitely sustainable character of the metabolic relation which follows from that 'truth'. This was discussed in respect to deep ecology in chapter 2, and its submissive attitude to nature. For an example of a conception of green politics in which the value of the 'natural' is central see Goodin (1992).

7.7 Institutions and Principles for Collective Ecological Management

In this section the focus is on assessing the common perception that green democratic theory must be some variation of direct democracy. With the state and citizen playing such a central role, representative forms of democracy are perhaps more central to green concerns than is usually thought. Highlighting the role of representative institutions is also another way of expressing the 'post-liberal' complexion of green democratic theory.

One of the arguments in favour of representative democracy is that unlike participatory or direct forms, the 'politicisation of everyday life' is not one of its goals. The disputes that occur within representative democracy do not share the same intensity as those that may occur in the face-to-face context of 'strong democracy' (Barber, 1984), or the small-scale, decentralised, self-sufficient communities that pepper the green political literature. In such a context it is often difficult to distinguish a fellow citizen's opinions from her as an individual, and while respect should always be shown to the individual independent of her particular views, under direct democratic conditions this important distinction may become blurred or even broken. Maintaining a central place for representative institutions within green democratic theory entails rejecting the attempt to create transparent social relations. It also relates to the defence of the private sphere mentioned in 6.7.

For example, the private sphere of the family, as the primary site of consumption as well as the site of decisions concerning procreation, is of central significance in influencing social-environmental relations. However, it is not part of the theory of green politics being defended here that the familial sphere be democratised, by, for example, the abolition of the family and the creation of communal or state-controlled child-rearing institutions. Given the importance of population in affecting social-environmental relations, it is clear that it may be necessary to regulate population growth. This means that the decision to have children cannot be left to individual choice alone but has to be taken within the context of how it may affect social-environmental relations. However, there is a world of a difference between the democratic regulation of private decisions

concerning procreation, which is only one constitutive aspect of the family, and the abolition of the family as a social institution.³¹

Another reason for greens to endorse representative democratic institutions has to do with the green concern to give 'voice' to the interests of previously excluded others. Three different classes of affected interests, who do not at present have any direct democratic representation within the decision-making process, have been identified by green theorists and commentators. These are the interests of future generations, affected foreign nationals, and (parts of) the nonhuman world (Kavka and Warren, 1983; Goodin, 1996; Dobson, 1996b). Although democracy is necessarily *by* the people and *of* the people, it does not necessarily have to be *for* the people, where the 'people' is understood as a human community presently living within a nation-state. On the face of it, if, and of course this is a moot point, but if the political exclusion of the interests of these three classes of non-citizens is held to constitute a defect in democratic practice, then it is clear that representative institutions offer the most defensible and practical way of including them in the democratic process.

The appropriateness of representative over direct democratic forms is most obvious in the cases of the interests of future generations and those of the nonhuman world. These groups cannot themselves express and publicly defend their interests, either because they do not exist or cannot communicate their interests. It is therefore uncontroversial to

³¹ The underlying rationale is that the decision to have children cannot be taken to be a purely private matter, but because of the social-environmental impact of population growth it must be seen as a private act which will have public effects. As such the decision to have children can be viewed as a potential externality which raises issues concerning the balance between the protection of the individual from social coercion and the protection of the public good of a sustainable social-environmental metabolism. Although there are many precedents for the democratic regulation of ostensibly private behaviour, such as laws concerning driving and the production and consumption of certain goods and services, the regulation of population increases does pose some especially difficult problems. Being denied the right to drive as fast as one can is not the same as being denied the right to have as many children as one wishes. While the political regulation of private decisions concerning procreation will form a part of any green democracy, this need not be as large a problem as it seems if one views production and consumption decisions as having a greater or equal weight in affecting the environmental impact of social relations. On this account, it is ecologically rational, not to say more politically acceptable, to regulate production and consumption rather than population. However, as suggested in the last chapter (6.7), the aim of ecological stewardship as an ideal or virtue is to integrate one's role as parent, producer, consumer and citizen into a mode of character, of acting in the world, in which decisions to have children will be based on interests other than one's own. This is discussed in the next section.

suggest that the only sensible form that their inclusion in the democratic process can take is a representative rather than any direct form. It is only in the case of affected foreigners, that it is theoretically possible for their interests to be directly expressed and brought to bear in any direct democratic decision-making procedure. However it is important to bear in mind that in respect to these three classes of interests it is not true to say that they have no influence on the democratic decision-making process. Even without separate representative measures, the interests of these groups can be brought to bear if there are citizens who incorporate and consider their interests in making decisions and/or are willing to defend these interests publicly in an attempt to persuade fellow citizens to think likewise. To a greater or lesser degree, it is possible that *any* interest can be brought to bear and have an effect on the democratic process. The only stipulation is that there should [^]some citizens who incorporate these various interests and/or publicly represent ^x them, seeking to persuade their fellow citizens of the propriety or prudence of taking these interests into account. In many respects the argument for the democratic representation of the interests of nonhumans for example is a reflection of the failure of these interests to be reflected within the interests of citizens. In other words, the creation of democratic institutions to represent nonhuman interests arises partly from the lack of 'green citizenship' and a wider green culture. If as a matter of course citizens took the interests of nonhumans into account when making social-environmental decisions there would be less need for these interests to be directly democratically represented since they would already be incorporated by citizens themselves. Hence a public 'ethics of use' can be argued to function as a way in which the interests of nonhumans are taken into account, while acknowledging the human interest in transforming and using the nonhuman world.

Whatever interests are to be democratically considered what needs to be remembered is that it is not the interests per se of the future, nonhumans and foreigners that is at stake. Rather what is being considered are these interests as *perceived* by democratic actors in the course of democratic decision-making. To suppose otherwise would be to presume an infallibility and omnipotence which cannot be sustained. Even the most diligent ecologist cannot be said to be infallible in determining what is in the interests of nonhumans, or

indeed what their interests are. This leads to the question of *who* is best placed to represent the interests of nonhumans. Deep or shallow ecologists, economists, lay citizens, environmental managers? The democratic point is that no one group of citizens can be assumed to be the 'true representatives' of nonhumans. Rather there needs to be a democratic debate about what are their interests and how do they weigh against the interests of humans. Such issues are clearly the essence of normative debates once a particular use or development of nature has been sanctioned. That is, they are side-constraints on *how* we use the nonhuman world, rather than *whether* to use it. The question is not 'why take the interests of nonhumans into account?', but rather 'why not?' and 'how?'

To a greater or lesser extent it is true to say that the interests of all three classes are incorporated by citizens in democratic societies. This is particularly so with the interests of future generations. Consistent with the naturalistic moral perspective presented in chapter 3 (3.4.3), is the postulate that humans do care about their descendants, particularly proximate ones. In other words, the interests of future generations are already incorporated within the extended interests and considerations of the present generation. If this is the case, it may be that the interests of future generations can be brought to bear on the democratic deliberations of the present one by a procedural rule which makes it mandatory that decisions be made with the interests of the future in mind.³² And as many writers have sought to demonstrate, making environmental decisions which take the interests of future human generations into account, does go a long way in securing the types of policies proposed by those wishing to preserve and protect the nonhuman world for its own sake (de Shalit, 1995; Norton, 1991). For Norton this 'convergence thesis' undercuts much of the deep ecology position. He argues that,

³² The incorporation of the interests of the future would be akin to interests of children being entrusted to parents. Another model is that of many aboriginal peoples for whom each major social decision was to be assessed in the light of how it would affect future generations. Such sentiments are expressed in the Native American saying "We do not inherit the earth from our parents, but borrow it from our children".

introducing the idea that other species have intrinsic value, that humans should be 'fair' to all other species, provides no operationally recognizable constraints on human behaviour that are not already implicit in the generalized, cross-temporal obligations to protect a healthy, complex, and autonomously functioning systems for the benefit of future generations of humans. Deep ecologists, who cluster around the principle that nature has independent value, should therefore not differ from long-sighted anthropocentrists in their policy goals for the protection of biological diversity. (1991: 226-7)

Long-sighted anthropocentrism is of course a key aspect of ecological stewardship, which as argued in the next section forms the core of 'green citizenship'. The point here is that taking the interests of future generations into account will, as Norton suggests, converge with non-anthropocentrists on environmental policy goals. Policy agreement need not depend upon substantive normative agreement. As was suggested in 2.5, differences at the level of pure ethics can be compatible with agreement at the level of applied ethics, or in this case, policy goals. Insisting on agreement on the reasons for action can often be counter-productive. In terms of normative underpinning of environmental policy, contra deep ecology, consensus on the reasons for action are *not* as important as agreement for the action itself.

Whatever form it takes, the representation of the interests of these classes may act as a side-constraint on policy decisions that the present generation may take.³³ In giving voice to their interests there is no obligation on behalf of a green democracy to promote or positively enhance these interests. That the interests of these excluded groups were equally considered, publicly registered, and thus included in the democratic decision-making process, is enough. Equal consideration of interests does not guarantee that those

³³ The difference between the various classes is further highlighted when one comes to consider the model of representation that is appropriate in each case. In respect to the interests of future generations and the nonhuman world a non-delegate model of representation is the only practicable one. What the representatives of these two classes are required to do is to interpret both what their interests are as well as determining how they are best protected. In the case of affected foreigners it is possible that a delegate model could operate.

interests be equally satisfied or protected. As suggested earlier in the critique of eco-authoritarianism (7.2), the justification of democracy should not be based on its ability to secure the satisfaction of welfare interests.³⁴ However, in the case of future generations, viewed as descendants of the present generation and not as future generations of humanity as a whole, it is likely that decisions will attempt to promote and improve their situation. While democratic theory does not demand that their interests be positively secured as opposed to represented, it is likely that citizens will seek to promote and protect the interests of descendants and future citizens.

That these previously excluded interests are given 'voice' in the democratic process is sufficient to satisfy the demands of green democracy. The process of representing the interests of the nonhuman world, that they count for something, is a necessary aspect of the democratic determination of legitimate 'use' from illegitimate 'abuse' in respect to social interaction with the environment. At the same time the consideration of the interests of others is supplemented by citizens being encouraged to re-assess, re-evaluate and perhaps alter their own interests in the light of democratic debate and deliberation. This last point is discussed below. This argument for considering the interests of others in the determination of social-environmental affairs underwrites the argument in chapter 2 that there is not *a priori* disposition in favour of 'preservation' as opposed to 'development' (2.8). What green democratic theory requires is that the interests of the nonhuman world, for instance, are considered, not that they automatically 'trump' those of humans. Going against the grain of much green moral theory, the position defended here is that humans have no presumptive 'right' to development and nonhumans have no presumptive 'right' to preservation.

From a green view, representative democracy may be improved by institutional changes to its operation as well supplementing it with more institutionalised opportunities

³⁴ Recalling the distinction made in the last chapter between 'welfare' and 'liberty' considerations, democracy from a green perspective is justified on the grounds that it can secure basic liberty interests, particularly that of autonomy. In other words, green democracy is defended on deontological rather than utilitarian grounds. As such, democracy within green politics is conceived as an intrinsic rather than an instrumental practice. That is, it is valued as a procedure for making political decisions, including social-environmental ones.

for citizen participation. It is clear that Beck's (1992) argument for 'institutionalised self-criticism', will involve both changes to the workings of existing representative institutions as well as creating new forms of democratic participation. However, it is not the case that the latter requires creating democratic institutions in order to make social relations transparent. While the eco-anarchist position is generally marked by a desire to make social relations transparent to the individual by breaking society into smaller units and then constructing direct forms of democracy, it is fair to say that the retention of state institutions does imply a degree of opaqueness in social relations. The point however is that the institutional arrangements being suggested here, in conjunction with the arguments in the last chapter for self-reliance and reduced complexity, will create the conditions to make existing social arrangements less opaque and more open to democratic scrutiny and accountability.

Additional procedural demands of green politics is that democratic environmental decision-making be regulated by principles of reflexivity, openness and precaution. These can be taken as meaning that, when faced with large-scale environmental decisions, no decision be taken, the effects of which cannot be reversed in the future. This is one way in which to understand the idea that the social-environmental problems of democracy cannot be assumed to be solved simply by more democracy. What is required is 'better' democracy, which in part has to do with better informed democratic decision-making procedures. And one principle that has been a constant demand within the green movement is the demand for greater openness in environmental decision-making and greater freedom of and access to environmental information (Paehlke, 1988, Beck, 1995a). So while it is no part of green democratic theory to make all social relations transparent, a central aspect of it is to make environmental decision-making open to democratic scrutiny. For Beck this is one aspect of what he calls the "secret elective affinity between the ecologization and democratization of society...The long-term policy towards threats should be slowing down, revisability, accountability, and, therefore, the ability for consent as well; that is to say the expansion of democracy into previously

walled-off areas of science, technology, and industry...What is important is to exploit and develop the superiority of doubt against industrial dogmatism” (1995a: 17).

The significance of the precautionary principle lies in what commentators have called its challenge to “the established scientific method...the application of cost-benefit analysis...established legal principles and practices such as liability...politicians to begin thinking through longer time frames than the next election or economic recession” (O’Riordan and Jordan, 1995: 193). This principle carries with it notions of best practice in environmental management and good husbandry, values which are clearly compatible with ecological stewardship. As a procedural standard, the precautionary principle can be viewed as simply asserting that decision-makers should act to protect the environment in advance of scientific certainty on the issue (*ibid.*: 194). As mentioned earlier, prudence and precaution are rational procedural standards to adopt when making decisions under conditions of uncertainty. One way of looking at the application of the precautionary principle on democratic decision-making is to see it as specifying a range of outcomes which are impermissible, those that cannot be altered in the future. Thus applying this principle would require ruling out irreversible environmental changes for example. Not all options are available as potential comparators for environmental decision-making under conditions of uncertainty. In situations of uncertainty the onus of proof is on the risk creator, those who propose development rather than those who oppose it. The point is that democratic environmental decision-making where uncertainty and ecological vulnerability are high calls for prudence and self-limitation. This self-limiting aspect of the precautionary principle can be viewed as an additional self-binding character of democracy. It can also be viewed as a rational decision-making procedure for long-term collective interest. Thus the application of the precautionary principle can be viewed as the institutionalisation of the ecological virtue of prudence under uncertain conditions. To relate this to the points made earlier in reference to the authority of science, the precautionary principle works without the assumption that science will or can determine

or provide an agreed conceptualisation of the environmental issue at hand.³⁵ It is precisely because environmental problems are disputed (for example, global warming) within the scientific community, that the precautionary principle holds that decisions ought to be made in advance of scientific proof (consensus within the scientific community), which may not be forthcoming anyway. The significance of the precautionary principle has already been stressed in chapter 5 where it was argued to be a key feature of ecological modernisation upon which collective ecological management seeks to build. What the application of this principle indicates is a challenge to the accepted relationship between science and policy-making, or what O’Riordan and Jordan call the ‘science-policy culture’ (1995: 208). It calls for a more communicative, sensitive relationship between the two, and shifts environmental decision-making away from technical or expert determination based on known ‘facts’, and towards making public judgements in the face of uncertainty and controversy (Barry, 1996a).

7.8 Green Democracy, Citizenship and Stewardship

One of the questions green politics addresses, and upon which its practical success depends, is expressed in Elster’s statement that, “the central concern of politics should be the transformation of preferences rather than their aggregation” (1983: 35). This was raised earlier in chapters 5 (5.6) and 6 (6.2.1), where it was suggested that collective ecological management requires that individual environmental preferences cannot be taken as the basis for collective ecological decision-making.³⁶ This has to do with the problem

³⁵ One political implication of the precautionary principle for O’Riordan and Jordan is the necessity for a “‘civic science’ or the science of open public debate about determining uncertain futures” (1995: 207) as a crucial dimension of a ‘greener’ science-policy culture. This is also echoed in Beck’s call for a greater organisation of what he calls ‘public experiential science’ (1995a: 16), as a response to ecological problems. Also see Lee (1993).

³⁶ Part of the reasoning behind this is that behavioural changes motivated by the internalisation of norms is more effective and longer-lasting than behavioural changes based on external or coercive imposition. This suggests a critique of the eco-authoritarian position on the grounds of effectiveness, premised on the assumption that change motivated by an acceptance of its moral rightness is more effective in sustaining that change than if that change is grounded in fear or coercion. The state cannot do everything. As Cairns and Williams suggest in another context, “What the state needs from the citizenry cannot be

of endogenous preference, the fact that preferences are not 'given' or fixed, but unstable and malleable. Endogenous preferences highlight the institutional and contextual nature of preference origination and formation. According to Sunstein "The phenomenon of endogenous preferences casts doubt on the notion that a democratic government ought to respect private desires and beliefs in all or almost all contexts" (1995: 197). The institutional context within which preferences are formed was at the heart of the argument in the last chapter where green political economy was argued to be part of the tradition of institutional economics. It was also an argument that environmental preferences as preferences for a public good demand a public rather than a private institutional setting. To get the appropriate information as regards people's environmental preferences one needs to pay attention to the context within which preferences are formed. The green emphasis on preference formation, which was argued to be a central concern of the green conception of autonomy in the last chapter (6.7)³⁷, is thus related to preference transformation. Under different institutional conditions, information or rules, preferences will be different. However, the main point is that, "if the rules of allocation have preference shaping effects, it is hard to see how a government might even attempt to take preferences 'as give' in any global sense, or as the basis for social choice. When preferences are a function of legal rules, the rules cannot be justified by references to the preferences" (Sunstein, 1995: 202). One way of looking at the lack of any pre-political or pre-institutional preferences is to say that since preference formation is already political, to make it explicit rather than implicit.³⁸ Environmental preferences, as Jacobs (1996) suggested in the last chapter, are 'political' in this way, unlike preferences for private

secured by coercion, but only by co-operation and restraint in the exercise of private power" (1985: 43). Responsible citizenship in other words.

³⁷ This concern with autonomy in preference formation is of course a central notion in classical liberal thought, from Mill to Dewey, where it is expressed in terms of creating social institutions conducive to the development of 'individuality'.

³⁸ One example frequently given to demonstrate that the process of aggregating preferences cannot be extended to political decision-making is the widespread phenomenon of individuals supporting institutional forms from which they may receive no personal benefit. For example, many people support non-entertainment public broadcasting, the public support of so-called 'high culture', even though they will never enjoy these experiences, or they support strict environmental standards or the protection of species, despite the fact that they may not derive any benefit from such legislation. Such examples are evidence of 'public good thinking' discussed in 7.6.

goods.³⁹ Part of what this means is that existing environmental preferences cannot be taken as 'given' since they are the product of, for the most part, unecological background conditions. If it is accepted that preferences are in part 'created' by institutions, and if those institutions can be shown to have developed at a time when ecological considerations were neither important or known, then there is a case to be made that those institutions may not be appropriate in the face of altered environmental conditions. At the same time, preferences partly created by the latter cannot be taken as justification for environmental policy-making.⁴⁰ Are we obliged to satisfy a collective desire that may be based on faulty and mistaken information? If preferences are adapted, why not create a more extensive 'adaptive context' and opportunities for preference formation and transformation, rather than aggregating them?

One implication for this is that the state's adoption of particular institutions through which to implement policy will be important (Jansen and Osland, 1994). If it chooses market instruments such as those suggested by neo-classical environmental economics, it addresses individuals and groups in society as consumers, and the environmental problem is viewed in economic terms. If however the state uses legal instruments, the environmental problem is viewed in terms of right and wrong, permissible and impermissible, rather than costs and benefits. And individuals are addressed as democratic citizens under the law. According to Jansen and Osland, "in the case of laws against pollution, the citizens...are encouraged to take a stand on the values the imperative is supposed to promote. The citizens may of course act according to the law, and still disagree with the law and the values that law represents...But in doing so, they have to reflect on the discrepancy between their private preferences and interests, and the societal values" (1994: 13). The point is that in choosing an institution for environmental policy-

³⁹ Although even in the latter case private consumption is partly influenced by consumption as a collective rather than a purely individual activity and good.

⁴⁰ This critique of justifying action on the basis of endogenous preferences underlies the frequent radical green claim of the addiction to 'economic growth' or 'consumerism' (Irvine and Ponton, 1988: 62-5), and the claim that we need to 'abandon affluence' (Trainer, 1985). It also underpins the argument that consumer culture itself is a preference-shaping institution which 'causes' adaptive preferences such as drug and alcohol addiction (Goldsmith, 1988). This is also the position of the psychological turn of deep ecology which sees the 'ecological crisis' in terms of psychological pathology (2.4.1).

making one chooses a particular way of presenting the problem and addresses individuals in a particular role or identity. The point about political-legal approaches is that they encourage people to act and think as citizens, to see the environmental problem in normative terms and to assume responsibility for one's actions in terms of doing what is right. This attempt to construct the pattern of rights and duties between citizen and state has been made by Weale in reference to the Dutch National Environmental Policy Plan (1992: 150-1), and one may extend this argument to suggest that adopting a political approach to environmental problems implies, in part, encouraging citizens to become 'ecological stewards', responsible partners, along with the state, for the wise management of the environment.

The centrality of citizenship to green arguments for democracy comes from the belief that the achievement of sustainability will require more than institutional restructuring of contemporary Western liberal democracies (Achterberg, 1996). Such institutional changes are necessary, but not sufficient, from a green point of view. The green contention is that macro level reorganisation needs to be supplemented with changes in general values and practices. In short, institutional change must be complemented by wider cultural-level changes. Deliberative forms of democratic decision-making are preferred, because a deliberative conception of citizenship is more likely to result in political cultural change for which greens argue. Citizenship is understood as a mediating practice which connects the individual and the institutional levels of society, as well as constituting a common identity which links otherwise disparate individuals as members of a political entity. Within green democratic theory, citizenship is a practice within which ecological virtues such as self-reliance and self-restraint can be learnt. Although green citizenship is politically based, the activities, values and principles it embodies are not confined to the political sphere as conventionally understood. The virtues one would expect to be embodied in this green form of responsible citizenship, as a form of moral character, would be operative in other spheres of human action and roles.

The green claim to a principled as opposed to an instrumental adherence to democracy, is that deliberative forms of 'democratic will formation' permit the possibility of

sustainable and symbiotic human interests motivating social-environmental relations. In this sense green democratic citizenship may be understood as a form of social learning, with democratic deliberation as a public form of pedagogy. However unlike the epistemological arguments which underpinned some arguments for the non-democratic determination of social-environmental relations, the pedagogic nature of deliberative democracy is not about the internalisation by the populace of some given truth as determined by experts. Rather, the pedagogic effects of deliberative democracy is a process of mutual learning, the bringing together of various forms of knowledge (both expert and vernacular) and arguments (moral and non-moral) before citizens so that their deliberations can be as informed as possible. This view of citizenship as a form of social learning turns on the view of democracy as a communicative process. It is also related to such practices as LETS, discussed in the last chapter, which can be regarded as forms of social learning and adaptation to changed ecological and socio-economic conditions (Barry and Proops, 1995), as well as the ecological restructuring of the state and economy described in chapter 5.

It is also related to the claims of the last section where green democracy was identified as extending the range of interests to be included within the democratic process. Part of the green argument for deliberative forms of democracy is that the latter provides perhaps the best way in which citizens can be persuaded to take the interests of non-citizens into account. In other words, deliberative citizenship as a practice within which argument, debate and deliberation are central, may achieve by persuasion what the direct democratic representation of the interests of excluded classes may not. The working of the deliberative model of democracy within which green arguments could convince sufficient numbers of citizens of the normative rightness or prudence of considering the interests of non-humans, foreigners or future generations may obviate the need for separate institutional representation of their interests. This is the logic of deliberative democracy: rather than the individual being concerned with her own interests, she is encouraged to consider the interests of all those potentially affected by the democratic process. As Goodin suggests, "It might be empirically more realistic, as well as being morally and

politically preferable, to think...of democracy as a process in which we all come to internalize the interests of each other and indeed of the larger world around us" (1996: 18). This view of democracy as a process within which we recognise that we are, to a greater or lesser extent, each other's keeper, is clearly compatible with the ecological view which holds that the determination of social-environmental relations within one human society has effects which transcend that society, and species.⁴¹ It is also in keeping with the view that with the technological power at the disposal of the currently existing generation comes responsibility. It is appropriate that the democratic regulation of ecological risk be effected through internalising the interests of others. The internalisation of the interests of others (both fellow citizens and the classes of non-citizens identified above), as well as the transformation of preferences, as a result of democratic deliberation, will be indispensable to the achievement of an ecologically rational metabolism. The need for a deliberative democratic form within which the interests of others may be considered is that it is the interests of these silent others as perceived by fellow citizens that is internalised. It is only by encouraging the presentation of all possible interpretations of the interests of others that citizens may agree on a considered delimitation of what it is that they collectively owe the future, foreigners, nonhumans or each other. While it may be going too far to expect the internalisation of the interests of others, as Goodin (1996) suggests, the least we can expect from a green democracy is the consideration of the interests of others.⁴²

The introduction of communicative rationality to the co-ordination of individual action makes it less likely that the collective result will be ecologically irrational. Enhanced

⁴¹ It also echoes Barber's view that democratic citizenship is "the only legitimate form our natural dependency can take" (1984: 104). On this view the green argument is that democracy is the only defensible form our (human) dependence upon the nonhuman world can take.

⁴² Internalising the interests of others is central to deep ecological arguments for the 'Big Self', where self-realisation is the realisation of the interests of the world, as discussed in chapter 2. It was because of the problems with this view that an ethics of use was suggested as a way in which an expanded range of human interests in the world can be realised, while also giving due consideration to the interests of that world. A rather extreme way in which to consider the interests of nonhumans is the 'council of all beings' favoured by deep ecology (Seed *et al*, 1988). As its name suggests, the aim of the council is for humans to represent some part of the nonhuman world by 'becoming' (as best they can) that part of the nonhuman world. For a critical analysis see Barry (1993b).

democratic institutions which stress citizen participation and deliberation on collective issues, are more likely to avoid prisoners' dilemma in regard to environmental public goods and bads. The famous formulation of the paradigmatic ecological problem as the 'tragedy of the commons' can be criticised for not allowing purposeful communication between individual users of the commons. It simply assumes a prisoner's dilemma scenario with mutually disinterested and non-communicating 'rational individuals'. However, by introducing a communicative dimension, an intersubjective realm is created which permits the co-ordination of individual activity in such a way that the aggregate effect of individual behaviour is not, as in the tragedy scenario, both collectively and individually undesirable. Democracy understood as communication (Dryzek, 1990), together with democratic citizenship as part of a self-reflexive, social learning process (Beck, 1992), provides some evidence that they can deliver enhanced environmental public goods and avoid or limit environmental public bads (Paehlke, 1988). This is because deliberative or discursive democracy is based on preferences, expectations and behaviour being altered as a result of debate and persuasion, and as binding individual behaviour to conform to publicly agreed decisions. Democratic citizenship in short permits the possibility of the voluntary creation and maintenance of an ecologically rational social-nature interaction, informed by moral as well as scientific considerations. This is because *communicative* as well as *instrumental* rationality characterises ecological rationality, as defined in chapter 5.

Citizenship as a practice can also be used to cleave representative and more participatory democratic institutions. An invigorated, active citizenship is possible within a democratic system made up of both representative and participatory institutions. Unlike the demand for direct democracy which does require the transcendence of representative institutions, the demand for deliberative or participatory democracy does not. This has to do with the argument suggested above that green democratic theory and practice does not require transparent social relations. It also has to do with an acceptance of the idea that the problems of democracy (including ecological ones) cannot be solved simply by more democracy.

Citizenship, as viewed by green democratic theory, emphasises the duty of citizens to take responsibility for their actions and choices; the obligation to 'do one's bit' in the collective enterprise of achieving sustainability. There is thus a notion of 'civic virtue' at the heart of this green conception of citizenship. A part of this notion of civic virtue refers to consideration of the interests of others and an openness to debate and deliberation. This implies that the duties of being a citizen go beyond the formal political realm, including, for example, such activities as recycling and energy conservation. In these cases there are roles for both the formal institutions of local and central government, the constitution, the judiciary, as well as more informal institutions of community, the opinions of fellow citizens, to prevent 'free-riding' by individuals and groups. That is to say a green democratic society will also need to encourage a 'sustainability culture', resources for which are already present in the 'bioculture' of, and conceptions of 'nationhood' within, contemporary liberal societies, as argued in chapter 5 (5.7).

The notion of human stewardship in relation to the nonhuman world which was introduced earlier in chapter 2 is central to green citizenship. Recalling the discussion in chapter 3 about the importance of establishing when legitimate human use of the environment becomes unjustifiable abuse, green citizenship can be viewed as the practice of ecological stewardship. That is, green citizenship is a collective practice determining an 'ethics of use' which expresses a particular understanding of the stewardship ideal.⁴³ One may say that the 'good' green citizen is one who most approaches the ideal of the 'ecological steward', a central part of which involves considering the interests of fellow citizens, nonhumans, foreigners and future generations. For example, it may be in the interests of a particular collection of nonhumans that their habitat be preserved while it may be in the interests of citizens that it be developed. To be a good green citizen does not entail an obligation to actively promote the interests of nonhumans or others over one's own, but rather to justify and assess one's interests in the light of the interests of

⁴³ This account of green citizenship differs somewhat from that proposed by Christoff (1996). For him it is an "emancipatory project which is shaped by -and in turn constitutes- ecological citizens" (1996: 162). Now while not ruling out this possibility, green citizenship as developed here, has to do with the human-centred concerns of ecological stewardship, not the emancipation of nature.

others. In practice this implies that a virtue of responsible green citizenship is a willingness to accommodate the interests of others within an expanded conception of the 'ecological common good', a common good within which one's own good is located. When faced with social-environmental problems good ecological citizens are motivated to seek solutions in which human and nonhuman interests are rendered as compatible as possible. In order to satisfy as many interests as possible of course requires that there be a willingness to compromise as well as an openness to persuasion through public debate.⁴⁴ *Ceteris paribus*, the good of satisfying as many interests as possible is a key goal of green politics and ecological stewardship.

However, responsible citizenship as Held points out, in reference to socialism and the democratic empowerment of citizens, cannot be reduced to the problems of democratic participation (1991: 23). That is, simply increasing the participation of citizens in democratic decision-making is no guarantee that they will act responsibly, motivated by a concern for the ecological common good. While there is a greater chance that the quality of social-environmental decisions will be better in terms of ecological rationality under deliberative democratic conditions than under liberal democracy, as Dryzek (1987; 1992) and others argue (Dobson, 1996a; Christoff, 1996) there is no guarantee of this. Just as the problems of democracy cannot be solved simply by more democracy, the question concerning citizenship cannot be dissolved into those of democratic participation itself.⁴⁵ As Held notes elsewhere, "while the evidence certainly indicates that we learn to participate by participating, and that participation does help foster - as Rousseau, Wollstonecraft and J.S. Mill all contended - an active and *knowledgeable* citizenry, the evidence is by no means conclusive that increased participation *per se* will trigger a new

⁴⁴ This virtue of green citizenship is close to the liberal virtue of what Galston calls 'the virtue of public discourse' which he defines as including "the willingness to listen seriously to a range of views...The virtue of public discourse also includes the willingness to set forth one's own views intelligibly and candidly as a basis for a politics of persuasion rather than manipulation or coercion" (1991: 227). As it stands Galston's defence of liberal political theory, which in many ways harks back to the 'social liberal' tradition and a 'developmental' view of democracy, stands at odds with contemporary liberal democratic practice which is mainly concerned with the aggregation of individual preferences.

⁴⁵ At the same time, the issue of responsible citizenship for the maintenance of a democratic order cannot be deposed of by stressing how political institutions, such as the division of powers, checks and balances, and constitutional provisions alone can underpin a democratic social order.

renaissance in human development” (1987: 280; emphasis added). In this sense we may say that citizen participation and deliberation, while necessary, are by no means a panacea for solving social-environmental problems. Given the uncertainty which surrounds the latter, there is nothing which can guarantee their resolution, although the possibility of *transforming* unecological preferences in the light of debate is a necessary condition. Hence the concern with seeing ‘green citizenship’ as a form of moral character rather than purely a political role composed of a particular complex of rights and duties. As a form of moral character green citizenship becomes a responsible mode of acting which goes beyond the political sphere of relations between state and citizen.

As outlined in the next section, green citizenship is related to what Tocqueville called the ‘spirit of association’, those associations in civil society within which the virtues necessary for green citizenship can be learnt. It is also the case that responsible citizens need to be socialised not just within the associations of civil society but also within the public education system as Gutmann (1987), from a liberal perspective, argues. The virtues of green citizenship may be learnt and fostered within the public system of education. In the latter case a green state promotes, through public institutions, a green conception of citizenship, just as a liberal state promotes a liberal conception of citizenship. Other state-based forums for socialising green citizens include compulsory public service, as opposed to military service, which could include environmental projects as is the case in some European countries. Such republican type proposals would seek to create responsible citizens in a way in which public education can only encourage. In other words, there is a degree of compulsion within republican arguments for responsible citizenship which is greater than that found within liberal arguments. This is brought out clearly in Oldfield’s frank admission that, from a republican viewpoint, “The moral character which is appropriate for genuine citizenship does not generate itself; it has to be *authoritatively inculcated*” (1990: 164; emphasis added). Whether green politics goes as far as this is a contentious point, dependent upon empirical conditions. One of the most salient of the latter include the general social perception of the severity of social-environmental relations. It is easy to see how a general perception that these relations

have reached a point which threatens social survival may underpin eco-authoritarian arguments for the forcible creation of green citizens. The green democratic defence of responsible citizenship lies, as indicated above, in the normative indeterminacy and epistemological uncertainty which characterises social-environmental relations, and not just in the necessity for citizens to fulfil duties relating to those relations. Green citizenship refers to the fact that citizen activism, deliberation, participation, compliance and agreement are required and possible at both the 'input' and 'output' stage of the public policy process. The possibility of more citizen involvement in making decisions is related to the argument mentioned earlier concerning the diminished but still important role of the state within the context of an ecological re-definition of modernisation. Less complex social organisation as a necessary consequence of selective de-modernisation, implies less need for a centralised state with large bureaucracies and of increased opportunities for citizens to take responsibility for their own affairs.⁴⁶

To combat the 'arrogance' of an excessive anthropocentrism, green citizenship seeks to undermine the presumption that an appeal to human interests is sufficient to justify any environmental decision. That such decisions may affect the interests of nonhumans must, from a green democratic viewpoint, be taken into account. The point is not that green citizenship demands that humans give up their interests in deference to those of nonhumans. Rather, green citizenship is concerned with separating 'serious' from 'trivial' interests, and then to specify the agreed limits within which those interests may be realised. Thus an ethics of use is to be distinguished from 'strong anthropocentrism' which was defined as the claim that human-nature relations can be justified by references to human preferences alone. This point was made in chapter 3 (3.5.1) where it was argued that the problem with strong anthropocentrism is that it insulates preferences from critical appraisal. Green citizenship, by contrast, is the *praxis* of citizens critically evaluating

⁴⁶ A general reconfiguration of modernisation (Beck, 1992) or more radically a wholesale process of de-industrialisation (Lee, 1993a), which would undermine arguments for the necessity for a centralised, highly bureaucratic state, does not, as Carter (1993) argues, lead to the abolition of the nation-state and the establishment of an eco-anarchist political structure. An alternative, and one that will be canvassed in the section on civil society below, is that such an ecological re-orientation of contemporary society heralds a new relationship between state and civil society.

preferences and attempting to come to agreement on limits within which particular social-environmental relations may be pursued.⁴⁷ Thus citizenship within the context of green democratic theory and practice, is centrally concerned with the elaboration and internalisation of a publicly agreed 'ethic of use' for the environment, as opposed to a putative 'environmental ethic'.⁴⁸ This idea of green citizenship differs from that of Christoff who argues that, "To become *ecological* rather than narrowly anthropocentric citizens, existing humans must assume responsibility for future humans and other species, and 'represent' their rights and potential choices according to the duties of environmental stewardship" (1996: 159). The emphasis on the rights of nonhumans would seem to imply that Christoff's theory assumes an agreed environmental ethic which specifies the rights of nonhumans. Green citizenship on his understanding is partly constituted by the discharging of human duties related to those nonhuman rights. The view of green citizenship developed here, while stressing the importance of duties and obligations, is not premised on nonhumans having rights. Indeed within this conception of green politics, although anthropocentric, there is no right to development which may clash with any attributed rights of nonhumans. As suggested in chapter 3 (3.3), the emphasis on rights-talk within green moral theory expresses a proprietarian view of morality which is problematic. However, the appeal to rights in social-environmental moral deliberation may be taken as an indication of the seriousness with which certain views are held, and as such need to be taken seriously. That is, the use of the moral idiom of rights may *indicate* rather than itself *demonstrate or prove* the seriousness of the moral case under consideration. At the same time, it is not to say that rights and duties play no part within the green conception of citizenship. As indicated in chapter 5, collective ecological

⁴⁷ Although green citizenship as a form of ecological stewardship appears close to deep ecological notions of 'ecological selfhood', particularly with regard to the internalisation of the interests of nonhumans, there are significant and important differences. Ecological stewardship lies in the public, collective determination of the rights, duties and personal qualities of citizens with respect to the achievement of an ecologically rational social-environment metabolism. Ecological selfhood, as discussed in chapter 2, lies in the largely private sphere of intuition and revelation. It has little or no 'political' and by implication 'democratic' dimension, either in its determination or expression unlike ecological stewardship. The standards or virtues of stewardship are intersubjectively created not objectively given.

⁴⁸ On this distinction see chapter 3 (3.5).

management does, in building upon key aspects of ecological modernisation, require a transformed ensemble of rights and duties between citizen and state (Weale, 1992: 150). Viewed in this way the emphasis on deliberative citizenship here, can be seen as a necessary and desirable complement to the 'green state' outlined in that chapter.

The deliberative character of green citizenship can be understood as relating to the variety of forms of human valuing in relation to the environment, and the multiplicity of values that mark human-natural relations. The deliberative, communicative understanding of democracy and citizenship within green politics can be taken as a necessary consequence of its refusal to accept that one form of human valuing (such as an economic one) can regulate any social-environmental metabolism. It was partly for this reason that economistic views of social-environmental relations were criticised in chapter 3 (3.5.1), and the last chapter (6.2), since they narrow the range of human interests in the world, and simply assume preferences to be both unchanging and 'given'.⁴⁹

This is not to say that economistic reasoning and valuing is to be excluded from the determination of social-environmental interaction. In the case of nonhumans, the deliberative democratic process allows the *representation* of their interests as perceived by citizens or political institutions. Economistic forms of valuing typically narrow human interests in social-environmental affairs while also denying the interests of nonhumans to have any bearing on decision-making. As indicated in chapter 3, economistic forms of valuing in practice *demoralise* social-environmental interaction, seeing the latter purely in terms of a material-cum-economic transaction with the satisfaction of a narrow set of human interests as the only justification needed. Green citizenship is to be understood as a corrective practice to the 'vices' of an arrogant anthropocentrism. At the same time green democratic citizenship may also be considered as part of the process through which an expansion and re-definition of the 'economic' can be effected, as indicated in the last chapter. Green citizenship qua ecological stewardship cannot be confined to the 'political sphere', narrowly understood as referring to the nation-state. It denotes a particular

⁴⁹ The same holds for metaphysical and spiritual delimitations of 'proper' human interests in the nonhuman world, as outlined in chapter 2.

constellation of rights and duties which range over spheres of social and private life which impacts on the environment. Just as the conception of the 'economic' which is the main subject of analysis for green political economy is, as indicated in the last chapter, much broader than that given by 'formal' economic transactions, so green citizenship while based within the formal political sphere is not confined to that sphere. Being a good citizen from a green point of view does not consist merely in considering the interests of non-citizens in making environmental choices, but also in acting in a manner which promotes ecological stewardship.

As a practice, green citizenship is the ethical core of collective ecological management, the broad institutional framework that regulates social-environmental relations. And although the primary locus of green citizenship may be territorially defined within the nation-state, the latter does not delimit its scope. Given the transnational character of environmental problems, green citizenship is guided by the green slogan of 'act locally, think globally'. The ethical and prudential dimensions of stewardship are not and often cannot be expressed at the local level but demand an integrated approach which combines local, regional and global dimensions. The challenge that green political theory proposes for the contemporary arrangement of the global human community is to institutionalise politically the moral concerns expressed by ecological stewardship. This is related to the argument in chapter 3 where the idea of 'citizen-in-society-in-environment' was used as a way of expressing the shift in perspective registered by green politics. Since the environment not only includes, but also transcends the nation-state, green citizenship opens out new arenas for citizen activism. As Christoff notes, "The citizen's political community (which, for many other issues may remain that of the nation-state) is profoundly reshaped by an ecological emphasis which generates additional and occasionally alternative transnational allegiances ranging from the bio-regional to the global, as well as to other species and the survival of ecosystems" (1996: 159). The transnational character of green citizenship can be taken as a political expression of the increased ecologically-based interdependence that creates new relationships between otherwise unconnected individuals. While green citizenship is nation-state based, its

ecological stewardship aspects mean that it cannot be confined to the nation-state. To be a good green citizen requires one to place allegiance to one's nation within an ecological context which sometimes requires expanding one's sphere of action to transnational and even global levels.

7.9 Civil Society and Green Democratic Theory

In this section I discuss the place of civil society within green democratic theory. The incorporation of the concept of civil society into green political theory further distinguishes the conception of green theory being developed here from the eco-anarchist position. Firstly, the adoption of the state-civil society perspective explicitly rejects the retreat into *gemeinschaft* that typifies bioregional politics (chapter 4). To adopt a state-civil society perspective is to have an understanding of society as *gesellschaft*, society as 'corporate association' rather than as 'community' in the bioregional sense. Secondly, the concept of civil society stresses the organisation and regulation of the economy as central to determining the character of the connection between state and civil society. This was a central aspect of both ecological modernisation and collective ecological management, discussed in chapters 5 and 6. Regardless of which interpretation of civil society one takes, both 'liberal' and 'post-liberal' conceptions (outlined below) regard the organisation of the economy as of central political significance. The centrality of the economy to the green analysis is obvious, as it is within the economy that the material exchange between society and its environment occurs, and within which one can find the origins of most environmental problems. The material metabolism between economy and environment can thus be regarded as the primary site of the cultural contradiction that is the 'ecological crisis'.

The concept of 'civil society', like many other popularly used terms within political discourse, has a high level of usage but a marked level of disagreement as to its precise understanding. For present purposes, following O'Neill (1993: 177), we can outline two senses of civil society. On the one hand there is what one may call the 'traditional liberal'

understanding of civil society which identifies it with the market society that first emerged in the 18th century and developed throughout the industrial period of western societies. In this understanding of civil society, the market order is regarded as a key basis upon which the freedoms of civil society can be secured. An economy regulated by the market is seen not simply as the most efficient organisation of the economy, but also as a necessary bulwark against excessive state interference and totalitarianism. On this view, a planned economy expresses a collectivist totalitarianism, the negation of the liberal order and individual liberty (Hayek, 1976). The other conception of civil society, which may be called a 'post-liberal' view, regards it as referring to associations that are independent of the state and the market economy (Keane, 1988). On this view, the freedom of civil society is to be found in the autonomous practices of individuals and groups within civil associations, non-market institutions such as professional bodies, voluntary associations, clubs and societies, as well as institutions that are funded by the state but are not of the state such as universities, schools and hospitals (O'Neill, 1993: 179). On this view totalitarianism does not come about as the result of a planned economy, rather it is the state's abolition of civil associations and the 'public sphere' which secures totalitarianism. There is a presumption that such a conception of civil society needs to be protected not just from the state, but also from the corrosive effects of the market economy (O'Neill, 1993: 181). It is this second understanding of civil society that is closest to green concerns. This can be seen in the emphasis laid on the 'public sphere' within many discussions of green politics (Christoff, 1996; Eckersley, 1996; Dryzek, 1993; Dobson, 1996), the green movement's association with the 'new politics' of civil society (Doherty, 1992; Melucci, 1989), and the critique of the market developed in the last chapter, and the critique of overly statist, administrative, approaches in chapter 5.

Green democratic theory is concerned with the relationship between a democratic society and its political system a central aspect of which turns on the separation of the state and civil society. This is expressed by Keane as implying that, "the separation of the state and civil society must be a permanent feature of a fully democratic social and political order" (1988: 13). Without this division democracy is impossible and without

democracy this division becomes difficult, if not impossible, to sustain. The institutionalised separation of the state and civil society is therefore a constitutive part of any defensible democratic political order, green or otherwise. Since the separation of state and civil society is, as Held notes, a “fundamental liberal notion” (1987: 281), the acceptance of this division by greens is further evidence of the ‘post-liberal’ complexion of green democratic theory.

Part of the new pattern of relationships between state and civil society that concur with green thinking include suggestions for the state to, “‘lease back’ institutions of social policy to the community” (Held, 1987: 288; Keane, 1988). The institutions of collective ecological management are obviously open to such an option. Other welfare institutions which if leased back would concur with the central aims of green democratic theory include institutions of medicine, housing and education. Before the New Right and non-statist socialists adopted it, green theorists such as Illich (1971; 1973; 1974; 1975), Goldsmith *et al* (1972), Robertson (1983) and Gorz (1983), had articulated a critique of the contemporary welfare state on the grounds that it undermined individual and collective autonomy and self-reliance. Illich’s arguments concerning the ‘radical monopolisation’ of core areas of personal and social life by professional agencies was at root a critique of the expropriation of the definition of needs as part and parcel of the process of economic modernisation. Together with Gorz, Illich has been at the forefront of developing green arguments for the autonomy of civil society from both the market and the state and the restructuring of relations between them. A central part of this restructuring process from a green perspective involves shifting decision-making power in regard to ‘social welfare’ away from the market and the state and returning it to individuals and communities. This fundamental restructuring of the definition (ends) as well as the institutions (means) of welfare is at the heart of the green aim to place the market and the state at the service of civil society rather than vice versa. Thus the position outlined in the last chapter which stressed the significance of economic self-reliance, the local economy and definitions of welfare, can be regarded as the political economy underlying the restructuring of relations between state, market and civil society. This aspect of green theory could be viewed as

shifting from a 'politics of social welfare' in which the market and the state define and administer to the imputed needs of civil society, to a 'politics of well-being' in which individuals within civil society, define their own needs to a greater extent. Social well-being, from a green perspective, is concerned with individuals not as consumers or clients but as social beings, whether this sociality is expressed through membership of, and participation in, communities or civil associations. What is meant by this is that a green conception of individual well-being sees it not simply as set within a social context, but within social *practices*. In other words, human well-being consists in *doing* rather than consuming or having, as indicated in chapter 2 (2.7.1) and chapter 6 (6.7).⁵⁰ And while social practices do of course have a material impact on the environment, it is clear that a view of human well-being in which the emphasis is on social (which can include political) interaction as a major, though not the sole, component of the good life, will make less demands on the environment.

7.9.1 Work as Social Practice and Economic Activity

An example of the practice-based view of the good life is the green argument for work to be transformed into an intrinsically valuable social activity, done, as far as possible, for its intrinsic benefits rather than individual monetary remuneration and capital accumulation. This implies a restructuring of the economy which would transform the regulative goal of the economy away from narrow economic efficiency and accumulation, and seek to integrate these 'economic' goals within wider social, moral and ecological considerations. Part of this, as suggested in 6.7, would involve permitting internal goods of work to be realised, as well as expanding the 'economy' beyond the formal economy. According to Gorz (1989), the destruction of work as a social practice is tied up with the economic rationalisation of labour under capitalism. For him,

⁵⁰ This is the underlying argument of green critiques of contemporary mis-measurements of human well-being which attempt to quantify the irreducibly qualitative components and goods of the latter. See 6.5.

The economic rationalization of labour...was a revolution, a subversion of a way of life, the values, the social relations and relations to Nature, the *invention* in the full sense of the word of something which had never existed before. Productive activity was cut off from its meanings, its motivations and its objects became simply a *means* of earning a wage. It ceased to be a part of life and became the *means* of 'earning a living' (1989: 21-22).

In this way, reversing this process and viewing work as a social practice, rather than simply as the use of the factor of production 'labour' in the formal economy for the production of commodities, would contribute towards the creation of a more sustainable economy-ecology metabolism. This transformation of work is similar to Lee's arguments for a less productivist and more aesthetic or craft mode of labour (1989: chapter 8) within what she calls a necessary and desirable 'de-industrialising' process (1993a). It also draws upon Robertson's (1983) 'post-industrial' prediction of a future in which the proportion of economic activity made up of 'ownwork' will increase. This is because the prevailing definition of work as paid employment in the formal economy has now come to an end, and 'full employment' a thing of the past. Both Lee and Robertson provide arguments for the position outlined in the last chapter for the green ideal of self-reliant, 'prosuming': defining, producing and consuming what one needs outside the market and the state as much as possible, while not rejecting the opportunities for trade that the market affords, or the meeting of needs that the state can provide.

This re-definition of work is thus one important aspect of the green aim to 're-embed' the economy within society as a necessary step in the creation of an ecologically rational sustainable economy-ecology metabolism, as discussed in the last chapter (6.7). Recalling that ecological rationality has normative as well as material dimensions (5.3), this reconceptualisation of work concurs with the general green aim to 're-moralise' human-nonhuman interaction within the context of an ethics of use. This can be most clearly seen in relation to work which involves human interaction with animals. Here the green argument for the creation of more 'human scale' and personal forms of economic practice,

which is an underlying aim of the green restructuring of work, converges with the normative aim of re-moralising human-non-human relations. Supplementing and supporting the critique of intensive livestock rearing in chapter 3 on the grounds that it privileges economic over other human interests in the environment, we now have the argument that less 'industrial' forms of the human use of animals can permit moral considerations to regulate that usage.

While of course there is no guarantee that less industrial and large-scale human use of animals will result in a more 'humane' metabolism, or that this re-configuration of human-nature practices can be extended to other human uses of the nonhuman world, the green argument is that such a re-configuration is a necessary feature of the re-moralisation of human-nonhuman interaction. The green contention is that returning work to the category of a 'practice' which stresses the internal goods associated with it, may, in the case of human use of animals, permit the possible realisation of 'ecological virtues' associated with stewardship as discussed above and in chapter 2. In other words, viewing work as a practice would constitute the necessary social re-embedding of economic activity required for the latter's integration within its ecological context, as concluded in the last chapter. The more social-environmental purposive, transformative relations approach the ideal of a social practice, the more that use realises the goods of stewardship rather than exploitation.

At the same time, this view of work re-casts it as a central site for the cultivation of ecological virtue. That is, work is no longer an 'impersonal' activity in two senses. Firstly, this reconceptualisation of work is one form the 'repersonalisation' of human-animal productive relations that Benton seeks can take. Secondly, work is conceived as a site of character formation, within which habits and virtues can be cultivated, and not just an activity engaged in for monetary remuneration. Thirdly, in keeping with the argument in 6.7, work is to be regarded as a way in which citizens are socialised, or given a stake in society, and included as valued members of, and contributors to, society. In redefining the institutional boundaries of the relationships between market, state and civil society, the green argument for the reconceptualisation of work can be regarded as an attempt to

protect, as far as possible, the *practice* of work, its internal goods, and virtues, from *institutional* distortion in the form of market or state imposed external goals. As mentioned above, a principal external goal that greens are keen to restrict and reformulate is the imposition policies aimed at economic modernisation, whether they be state or market-based. In short, under economic modernisation ‘work’ as a *social* activity loses its internal goods, as a result of changes in scale, technology, de-skilling, the division of labour etc., and increasingly becomes an *economic* activity. This distinction between work as a social practice and as an economic market-regulated activity, and the tension between them is related to the issue raised earlier concerning whether a goal of green politics was social transparency. While it is obvious that some versions of green political theory seek the transparency of social relations, particularly eco-anarchism, the conception of green politics in this thesis does not. Rather, it accepts that there will be social-environmental productive relations within which the ideals of work as a social practice will be compromised by work as an economic-institutional activity. One way of looking at this is to see that those productive-transformative relations mark the sphere of social-environmental exchanges within which external goods and criteria, such as productivity and efficiency may be legitimately pursued without violating the ethics of use. As argued in chapter 3, human productive use of the environment beyond basic need-fulfilment is legitimate. However, such productive relations may mark the limits of acceptable instrumentality, for example, luxuries seem to occupy a permanent position on the border between ‘use’ and ‘abuse’.

This re-defining of work as a social practice embodying the purposive human transformation of the nonhuman world can also be seen as compatible with the argument outlined in the last chapter concerning how the gap between production and consumption, can be overcome by increasing the ‘prosuming’ sphere. The underlying normative justification of the re-conceptualisation of ‘work’ is that such a re-conceptualisation is the key-stone in the re-orientation of social-environmental relations. Work, perhaps along with eating and food production more generally, is the activity which expresses the central features of the social-environmental metabolism. Changing the normative parameters

within which this core social-environmental practice takes place is thus a, if not *the*, central political-normative goal of green politics, one that would have cultural as well as political and economic repercussions. That is the ‘greening of work’ is a keystone issue for green politics in that it is not only central to the creation of an ecologically rational economy-environment metabolism (the ‘greening of the economy’). Also, given the significance of work culturally and politically, it is, and will continue to be, a central aspect in the ‘greening of society’.

7.10 Conclusion

In terms of the quote which fronts this chapter, I conclude that a “democratized world *can* survive its own implications”. Contra the eco-authoritarian position, green politics is not necessarily, however regrettably, convinced of the necessity of an anti-democratic stance. At the same time, this chapter has also sought to establish that the complexity and difficulties associated with social-environmental problems does suggest that those greens who place their faith in direct democracy are equally mistaken. It is *not* the case that the ecological problems of democracy can be solved simply by *more* democracy. *Better* democracy may be a necessary condition for enhanced ecological rationality, but even this is insufficient to guarantee a sustainable economy-ecology metabolism, never mind a symbiotic social-environmental one. Better democracy is to be understood as having to do with the importance of democratically constructing a more ecologically rational culture which is partly constituted by green citizenship and ‘work’ as a social practice. Green citizenship views citizens as sharing responsibility for environmental protection, together with the state. At the same time, these duties are balanced by citizen rights with regard to environmental decision-making and the democratic accountability of the policy-making process. Only such a cultural transformation can provide anything approaching a ‘guarantee’ of sustainable and symbiotic social-environmental relations, which while aiding the transition from ecologically irrational modes of interaction, attempts to sustain the positive gains associated with those modes. The aim is not to save the world above all

else, or secure the infinite continuation of the human species, but rather to stop and reflect upon what it is we are doing to both ourselves and the world, and to search for a new way forward. The point is that our dependence upon the earth (and to an growing extent 'its' dependence upon us) is both increasingly obvious and makes a new, updated version of stewardship the most defensible form that dependence can take. The challenge is to achieve this while maintaining and adapting democracy as the most defensible form our dependence on each other can take.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion:

Nature, Virtue and Progress

It has been my aim in this thesis to outline the contours of a green political theory which while being consistent with the values and principles of green ideology, explores them in a broader, less constraining, context. In keeping with the critical-reconstructive approach, I hope to have suggested a conception of green political theory with which greens can identify, if not fully endorse. While by no means presenting a fully fledged, complete account of green political theory, this thesis is intended as a contribution to the 'theoretical consolidation' of green politics mentioned in the introduction.

One thing which this analysis demonstrates is how much more difficult it is when the centre of gravity of green politics moves from a rejection of the status quo in terms of a future social order, to a critique based on an analysis of the principles underlying the status quo and working through their implications from a green perspective. Part of this shift within green theory requires an engagement with standard topics and themes within political theory, such as democracy (chapter 7), equality (chapters 6 & 7), autonomy (chapter 6) and the nation-state (chapters 4 & 5). It also has to do with the character of green political theory being tied up with distinctively 'green' political issues such as ecological sustainability. That is, green political theory suggests legitimate new concerns for political theory, as well as reviving older ones, such as animal welfare, and giving them a new relevance.

As a nascent perspective within political theory, green political theory can be forgiven for not having answers to every or the majority of standard issues and debates within political theory. Although on a very steep learning curve, the green approach to the art of political theory, has many issues, central to the latter, with which to grapple. Of these, the issue of distributive justice, is clearly the most important. While distributive justice was

not directly addressed in the thesis, some of the parameters, if not the principles, of a putative green theory of justice can be gleaned from the analysis. These parameters relate to the extremely broad scope of a green theory of justice in terms of the recipients of justice. Three classes of recipients are central to a green theory of justice. These are the three classes indicated in the last chapter: nonhumans, future generations and foreigners. We can sketch the outlines of a putative green theory of justice in a negative manner. A green theory of justice is one which is characterised by *not* being limited to the distribution of socially produced benefits and burdens within the presently existing human population of nation-states. More positively, it is concerned with justice between species, between generations and within the present human generation considered globally. It is clear that a green theory of justice would have to address the extremely contentious issue of whether the human treatment of nonhumans ought to be considered under the category of justice. While the ‘ethics of use’ position developed in chapter 3 could be interpreted as arguing for the extension of justice to our treatment of nonhumans, I suggested that this would be difficult to sustain, and indeed unnecessary. While we ought to include our relations with nonhumans under the rubric of morality, this is not co-extensive with including these relations under the rubric of justice.

The intergenerational dimension of a green account of distributive justice is explicit in the idea of ecological stewardship, and its naturalistic anthropocentric basis. The global dimension can be found in the distinction between ‘ecosphere’ and ‘biosphere’ views of the economy-ecology metabolism (chapters 4 & 6). Further ‘seeds’ can be found in the green critique of economic growth (chapter 7) from the point of view of sanctioning economic inequalities, and the dominance of the Pareto-optimality criterion within economic thought (chapter 6). However, having uncovered some seeds of a green theory of distributive justice, I am happy to leave it to a later time (and to others) to plant and harvest whatever grows from them. I will be more than satisfied if this thesis has also helped prepare the soil for this next stage in the evolution of green political theory.

In the rest of this conclusion I want to focus on two aspects of the thesis which deserve to be highlighted. These are the question of 'progress' and ecological stewardship within green political theory.

8.1 Green Political Theory and Progress

One of the defining themes of green political theory, and one which is so obvious that it often goes unremarked, is its attitude towards and concern with 'progress'. One way to view green politics is to see it as a critical reaction to modernity. More specifically, one can view green politics in terms of its attitude to the two revolutions at the heart of modernity, namely the Industrial and French revolutions. It is the dialectic between these two that forms the historical origins and the theoretical dynamic of green political theory. In standard ideological accounts, green politics criticises and/or rejects the Industrial revolution and seeks to extend the 'democratic project' initiated by the French revolution. A full examination of this dialectic within green political theory would require a full investigation of its conservative historical antecedents and present intimations. The conservative reaction to the Enlightenment is a skeleton which would have to be brought out into the open and addressed as a central part of the continuing attempt to get the green theoretical house in order, as it were. As suggested in the introduction, this thesis is to be viewed as a contribution to this process. However, as a political theory concerned with the relationship between the Industrial and French revolutions, the question of progress is one that green political theory cannot avoid addressing. This is not simply in terms of substantiating its 'progressive' self-understanding. It is a key issue within the process of rounding and fleshing out the character of green political theory itself.

The whole tenor of early and ideological accounts of green politics resonate with a perception that the costs of modernity, the modern view of 'progress' and economic modernisation, outweigh the benefits, which are themselves suggested to be of questionable quality. From this position two equally unappealing understandings of green

politics can be advanced. On the one hand, green politics constitutes a rejection of modernity's legacy of progress in both the socio-economic and political spheres, that is, it is both anti-industrial society and anti-democratic. On the other, green politics implies a rejection of industrial progress but the acceptance and radicalisation of 'democratic progress'. This more popular view of green politics sees it as anti-industrial, but pro-democracy. Now while the latter has obviously more to commend it than the former, I have sought in the thesis to suggest that the anti-industrial tenor of green politics, within which is subsumed the common rejection of consumerism, materialism, science, technology, and the market economy that marks much green writing, needs to be questioned. Gowdy (1994) represents the type of green view of progress which I wish to criticise.¹ According to him, "there is no convincing evidence that past economic growth has led to unambiguous improvement in the human condition. Once we give up the idea of progress, we can concentrate on the making do with what we have rather than placing our hopes on some future material or ethical utopia" (1994: 55). His injunction to abandon the idea of progress would be a retrograde step. It is only if one equates progress with *undifferentiated* material economic growth that it makes sense from a green position to talk of abandoning progress. But progress does not necessarily equate with economic growth, as writers from Mill to more sensible contemporary green critics, have emphasised. Green politics, as argued in this thesis, is concerned with re-defining, re-calibrating and re-appropriating, rather than rejecting, the politically powerful idea of progress. Gowdy's extremely pessimistic advice to greens is that when they are accused of being 'anti-progress', to turn the tables on their opponents by rejecting the assumption "that progress has taken place" (1994: 55). This is not only foolish but dangerous advice; to claim that no progress has taken place since the Enlightenment is to throw the baby out with the bathwater, to say the least. Progress has taken place, albeit unevenly, unreflexively and, up until now, largely without concerns for sustainability or symbiotic moral relations with the nonhuman world. This rejection of progress is neither necessary

¹ A more extreme version of this position can be found in Lasch's (1991) recent work, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and its Critics*.

nor desirable for green arguments, and highlights the stark gulf between those who see the ecological crisis as a 'total crisis' and those who see it as a contradiction within contemporary advanced societies.

Against this view, I have sought to show that green political theory is premised on the re-definition of progress, that it is an immanent critique of modernity, not a politics seeking to either return to a romanticised pre-modern social order or a post-modern rejection of the present. While rightly highlighting the costs associated with the Industrial revolution and its legacy, to reject its benefits as 'false' would be churlish, not to say foolish. Thus while accepting the democratic claims of green theory, I have also sought to deepen the immanence (and relevance) of the green critique by seeking to present it as a critique of modernity's legacy of human progress in *both* the political and social spheres. Thus, I have argued that consumption, materialism, science and the market economy can, and ought, to have a place within green political theory. Particularly in respect to science, green political theory cannot consistently reject the Industrial revolution since modern science from ecology, conservation biology, to thermodynamics, have played, and continue to play, a central role in its evolution and development. While there may be genuine debates about the necessity or utility of enclosing the commons today, green political theory does not need to base this on an *a priori* rejection of enclosure whenever and wherever it occurs. The green point is that while progress was premised historically on enclosing the commons, arguments that future social progress necessitates either further enclosure or the continuation of the current pattern of social interaction with the environmental commons are debatable, to say the least. As I hope to have demonstrated, an important aspect of the theoretical consolidation of green political theory requires focusing on matters of institutional design. A central part of this requires seeing commons-type regimes as one institutional choice alongside other distinctively 'modern' institutional forms, namely those of the (formal) market and the nation-state (including transnational forms of political authority). There are alternatives, as I have suggested, to the idea that returning people to the land (and the land to the people) is the only or most appropriate manner in which to create and maintain an ecologically rational social-

environmental metabolism. While one can justify (ex post) the enclosures as a necessary precondition for the Industrial revolution, green political theory can be read as suggesting that further progress cannot be based on the patterns of past social development.

It is within this context that the green political economy argument in favour of a 'post-development' perspective in chapter 6 ought to be read. Green political theory can thus be understood as based on a critique of the linear, one-dimensional versions of social progress which equates it with 'economic modernisation' after the model of western industrial societies. Progress, can no longer be simply (and simplistically) equated with ever increasing material affluence, the multiplication of desires or market-based economic organisation. This is the point about the green political economy concern with sustainable development, and how it differs from ecological modernisation. Unlike the latter it proposes a different type of progress, a view of development which emphasises qualitative as well as quantitative indicators or criteria for judging social progress. Ecological modernisation is a positive step in the direction of this re-calibration of progress, but as argued in chapters 5 and 6 is still within the quantitative framework of 'economic modernisation'. Perhaps most importantly, ecological modernisation's emphasis on state regulation of the market can be read as indicative of the type of institutional innovation required if we are to map out the parameters of a new course for social progress. In this way one can view its contribution to the development of collective ecological management and ecological stewardship in terms of a shift from 'ecological *modernisation*' to something approaching 'ecological *enlightenment*'.

What I mean by this distinction is that progress under ecological modernisation follows, in essence, the past patterns of economic development, particularly the equation of economic growth with social progress. Now the point about the latter 'orthodox' model of progress is that while state-directed economic modernisation has always played a greater or lesser part, by and large the assumption of this model is that progress is the unintended outcome of social interaction between individuals and groups with different purposes. This has been the model of social progress which has held sway from the 18th century to the present day. As Ferguson noted, it is the fact that man (sic) is a scheming

and planning animal that the progress of civilisation does not proceed according to a single plan (1966: 122). Now this 'invisible hand' type theory of social progress is something that green political theory seeks to call into question, but not in the sense of implementing a single plan for social progress. Rather the green case rests on the observation that the various social and ecological problems associated with this view of social progress stem partly from the fact that progress is, increasingly, 'imposed' rather than a spontaneous outcome. Posing the issue of social progress as the outcome of either a 'single plan' versus a market (invisible hand) approach is a false dichotomy, which suggests that the two are mutually exclusive. The correct antonym to an invisible hand view is not a single plan but a deliberative approach to social progress in which the parameters of progress can be decided democratically. The green argument is that the invisible hand approach is no longer appropriate to our current situation. In terms of the relationship between the Industrial and French revolutions mentioned above, green political theory holds that social progress both requires, and is constituted by, the management of the former by the latter. That does not imply the imposition of a single plan, but rather relates to the issue of finding democratic means by which we can choose which forms of social progress we want and which forms we do not. Choosing forms of social progress on this view does not consist in collectively picking one form from amongst a set of possible options. Rather the green argument is that we ought to create democratic and democratically accountable institutions which function to rule out certain forms of progress. This is particularly important in the field of technological innovation as suggested in chapter 6, where technological developments increasingly raise moral issues concerning the distinction between 'permissible' and 'impermissible' resources. This negative injunction is also evident in the emphasis on the 'corrective' dimension of the ecological virtue of stewardship as a mode of human interaction which charts a course between ecological vices of an arrogant anthropocentrism and a submissive ecocentrism. Social progress then is, on the green view, concerned with establishing the (shifting) parameters of a *process* rather than determining the contents of a *product*.

What the green critique of progress represents is a questioning of what one can call the 'Augustinian' view of progress as somehow inevitable or necessary (Nisbet, 1991). The history and future of the human species as a linear and ever-continuing ascent from poverty, ignorance and fear to affluence, enlightenment and civilisation, cannot be taken for granted. Perhaps more than anything else green political theory raises fundamental questions concerning the belief in progress understood as the idea that things will inevitably be better in the future. When 'nature' can no longer be taken for granted, in the sense of an independent order and basis for human flourishing, neither can progress. However, not taking it for granted is not the same as abandoning it as a worthy social goal.

8.2 Ecological Stewardship and Citizenship

The emphasis of this thesis has been on defending a conception of green politics, the moral basis of which is characterised by an 'ethics of use' for the environment rather than an 'environmental ethic'. This basis is explicitly anthropocentric, seeing the fulfilment of human interests (particularly human productive or transformative interests) as central and legitimate, if green policy arguments are to have any chance of persuading democratic populations. One of the main claims I have made concerns the connection between a particular conception of citizenship as a constitutive aspect of a political process which I have termed collective ecological management, and the cultivation of a 'stewardship ethic' which consists in the cultivation of ecological virtues and the avoidance of ecological vices. Stewardship as a moral ideal, a form of human excellence, is most clearly expressed within the agricultural context within which this ethical tradition developed. Agricultural stewardship, as suggested in chapter 2 (2.7.2), represents a set of interconnected character traits that 'good farmers' would hope to cultivate. Stewardship as 'wise use' is not against human interests, but rather constitutes a mode of action in which future, long-term interests can be safeguarded against the 'temptation' of immediate, short-term ones.

Within the family-farm social milieu, in which this version of stewardship originates, relations between humans and nature are characterised by sustainable and symbiotic modes of interaction. While the land is used and animals consumed, the former is not 'mined' or 'exploited' for short-term profit, nor are the latter treated purely as 'food resources'. In contrast to modern factory-farming, 'personal' as well as 'productive' relations exist between animals and humans within the context of agricultural stewardship. As an ideal one can see why it has appealed to many radical green critics of modern, urban life, who see in this ideal a way of directly 're-connecting' the people and the 'land', which itself is seen as a necessary condition for resolving the 'ecological crisis'. Arguments for returning 'back to the land' have characterised green politics since its origins in the romantic backlash against the industrial revolution.

While seeking inspiration from this agricultural stewardship tradition, the realities of contemporary western societies are such that it is insufficient. Indeed it would be an ecological disaster if urban populations were to return to the land en mass. However, a selective and voluntary re-population of rural areas would be desirable for two main reasons, one social the other ecological. Firstly, such a policy would help to maintain farming as a form of stewardship and farming as a valuable way of life. Secondly, it would be a necessary component of encouraging less industrialised, oil-based forms of food and fibre production. That said, it is naive to suggest, as many greens do, that our ecological problems would be solved if only we were to move out of the cities. Starting from a position in which the majority of western populations are concentrated in cities and urban areas (those to whom green policy and institutional recommendations must be acceptable) the task facing green politics is how to translate or adapt the moral virtues of a stewardship ethic to a mode of life that, on the face of it, could not be more removed from an agricultural setting. The problem is this: if we reject ecocentrism, but the only acceptable form of an ethics of use is based on modes of human interaction and ways of life which are not the lived experiences of the majority, how can green politics be advanced in a manner which is not (a) a return to a 'pre-modern', agricultural stage of social development, or (b) undemocratic?

Since the agricultural setting within which stewardship developed is no longer available to most people, it is clear that virtues and character traits based on it will be difficult to cultivate, to use an appropriate term, within a different, urban mode of life. However, just because agricultural stewardship can only be experienced by a minority within an industrial or post-industrial society, it does not mean that it is unimportant in terms of green aims of creating an ecologically rational metabolism between society and environment. Two issues can be mentioned. On the one hand, although the numbers of those working on the land have steadily decreased, along with farming as a proportion of land-use, farming still accounts for a large proportion of land-use. Therefore, any movement to an ecologically rational form of ecological management, would have to take this fact into account. Farmers are, and will continue to be, *de facto* 'ecological stakeholders', if not *de jure* 'agricultural stewards', and thus an important constituency and interest group, as environmental policies from Agenda 21 to EU environmental programmes have acknowledged. On the other hand, while we can think of a 'post-industrial' society, understood as a stage of societal development coming after an industrial phase, the idea of a 'post-agricultural' society is, on the face of it, impossible. While it is of course possible to imagine future social stages where we can synthesise protein from rocks or genetically create food and fibre products in laboratories, for the foreseeable future, agriculture, as a mode of human-productive relations with the natural world which requires direct contact with nature, is here to stay. A focus on agriculture is thus not simply for inspirational reasons or finding resources for a modern stewardship ethic, but also for reasons of practicality in terms of environmental policy.

But even given the disproportional importance of farmers and agriculture in terms of social-environmental relations, the fact remains that the 'many' who have to accept and consent to environmental policies, if those policies are to be democratic, live in cities. The roles of individuals within urban modes of living are clearly different (in kind and degree) from those modes within the idealised agricultural setting of stewardship. Firstly, urban dwellers are consumers of goods and services, including those not made by humans, or as a result of human management of natural processes (e.g., air, water, sunlight). Secondly,

they are producers, making goods and services, some of which require natural raw materials, but mostly based on already processed natural inputs. They are also producers of pollution, understood as waste products which cannot be, or are not, part of the metabolic cycle between the human and natural economy. Pollution is therefore a (wrong) substance in the wrong place, either because its made up of inorganic material which cannot be broken down naturally (wrong substance), or it is organic material in the 'wrong' ecological place, such as animal manure in a river (wrong place). Finally, they are citizens, parents, members of various civil associations, clubs, groups etc.

Given the urban nature of contemporary life, and discounting green arguments which turn on the 'unnaturalness' or urban living, an *ecological* rather than an *agricultural* form, is the most appropriate form stewardship can take. While the majority of people in modern society have not direct, transformative experiences of nature, this does not mean that the dispositions and attitudes constitutive of stewardship as a mode of action, are impossible to cultivate in an urban setting. While ecological management within agricultural stewardship takes place within the context of farming as a social practice, urban-based forms of management must necessarily be mediated by social institutions and forms of knowledge not necessarily based on direct experience of the environment. The most important of these social institutions are the (formal) market economy and the nation-state, while scientific knowledge is the most important form of knowledge for ecological stewardship. As such these institutions will, and are, central in effecting urban forms of environmental management. Ecological modernisation, discussed in chapter 5, is a good example of an urban based form of environmental management. Because of the existence of this institutional dimension, the 're-embedding' of the economy in society cannot be complete (chapter 6). Transparency in economic life, while it can be enhanced by turning to non-formal economic spheres such as LETS or commons regimes, is simply impossible to achieve within a modern market society. Does this then mean that the 're-integration' of the human into the natural economy is also impossible? Transparency in economic or social life is not a precondition for an ecologically rational metabolism between economy and ecology. While it is true that small-scale, directly democratic

bioregional communities do have a lot to offer by way of ecological rationality, they are not the only form of ecologically rational social-environmental metabolism. We can establish a degree of harmony with nature and avoid ecological risks, without 'dropping out' of, or abandoning, contemporary society. Institutional (re)design and (re)orientation can deliver ecologically rational forms of social-environmental interaction, especially when institutional innovation is viewed as a necessary rather than as a sufficient condition.

Now while accepting the place of institutions in any feasible form of modern, urbanised environmental management, this neither counts against the desirability or necessity for institutions to be supplemented by social practices, nor for a division of management powers in favour of institutional office holders, rather than citizens. As far as modern forms of environmental management are concerned, the real issue concerns the choice of institution, its level, procedures, management issue, and most importantly, its democratic accountability. While the institutional framework is a necessary condition for modern environmental management, from a green perspective this needs to be supplemented with a focus on the individual's role in this process. A key aspect of the individual's role is a view of green citizenship as an integrating mode of human interaction. While green citizenship suggests a new combination of rights and duties, its integrative role relates to its function to integrate other modes of human interaction, particularly those of consumption and production, which together constitute 'ecological stewardship' as an overarching mode of interaction with the environment.

It is here that the idea of 'green citizenship' is vital to the green democratic position. On the one hand, green citizenship is argued to be a necessary and desirable feature of what I term collective ecological management (chapter 5). The nation-state and formal market cannot do all that is required for an ecologically rational form of environmental management, so citizenship is viewed as an activity, a particular mode of action in which the possible ecological vices of consumption may be mitigated or avoided. Citizenship as a mode of character thus transcends the purely 'political' or formal status and legal standing of citizenship, and comes to denote a way of acting which tends towards ecologically rational forms of action. Citizenship within the context of collective

ecological management becomes a way of transforming urban dwellers into ecological stewards, giving those who may have no direct experience of nature some responsibility for managing the metabolism between society and the environment. One of the most important aspects of green citizenship in this respect is to educate individuals of the dependence of society (which includes them) on the environment, and also the environment's dependence upon and vulnerability to society (including their actions). In this educative process, scientific knowledge of the world is essential. The 'ethic of use' is thus a particular way of acting in the world, which while being respectful of the nonhuman world, does not lapse into a submissive 'quietism'. On this reading, the emphasis on science within green politics is part of its pedagogic role in shaping this mode of interaction which *integrates* rather than *rejects* material consumption. The 'good' towards which the ecological virtues are orientated is pluralistic not singular. Thus the types of lives that are compatible with stewardship can (within limits) take many forms.² Ecological stewardship seeks to promote modes of human life which avoid the extremes (vices) of a 'submissive ecocentrism' and an 'arrogant anthropocentrism'.

In reference to the critique of a consumption-based economy, the task of green citizenship is to integrate consumption (of formal market commodities) within a stewardship mode of human action, such that it does not become an ecological vice (6.7). Consumption is not rejected outright, as it is in many conceptions of green ideology, but rather seen as only one role and activity amongst others (such as production and citizenship), of an ecologically rational character. As argued in chapter 7, consumption is not simply an individual activity but a shared social value and human mode of action. In raising questions about the status of this social value and its relationship to other social values, such as environmental protection, or a concern for future generations, one is also raising issues about the place of material consumption in human life. This is of course a central issue in the green critique of 'progress'. Consumption, particularly within an urban

² Though tempting I eschew an argument that can be advanced in favour of ecological limits on lifestyles which follows the liberal view of not tolerating the intolerant. The ecological version would be not to sustain the unsustainable. The interesting point about this is that ecological sustainability is in part a measure of ecological tolerance.

context, divorces the product from the ecological processes which have helped to create it. The connection between human consumption and the natural basis of that consumption becomes less clear, as the gap between production and consumption increases. The point is that what needs to be ascertained is that while consumption as a valued mode of human action is unproblematic within human social relations (critiques of materialism, notwithstanding), the green point is that we cannot pass judgement on it without seeing how it functions as a mode of human interaction with the world. This requires it to be harmonised and balanced within a more expansive mode of interaction denoted by an ethic of use, or stewardship, in which human productive and consumptive interests can be realised without compromising long-term ecological sustainability. Green politics argues that we should perhaps consume less rather than simply in a 'greener' manner. It is important to remember that 'consumption' here refers to consumption of commodities in the formal market. As was suggested in chapter 6, one way of consuming less, is to engage in ownwork, or LETS-type informal productive activity. Restructuring work so as to allow its internal goods to be realised, is a key policy area for green politics in creating a less consumption-driven economy and society (6.7 & 7.9.1).

Stewardship within modern age cannot refer, as it once did, to knowledge of the world gained from direct, productive experience of an engagement with the world. As a mode of interaction, modern ecological stewardship is premised on the assumption that sufficient knowledge of the world can emerge from the experience of being involved in the management of the environment. A key aspect of this knowledge, stressed throughout the thesis, is scientific knowledge, both as a possible metaphysical basis for agreement, but also as the basis for policy agreement. At the same time, in keeping with the self-reflexive nature of stewardship, there is also an awareness of the limits to that knowledge. Knowledge is power, but green political theory argues that with power (potentially over all life on earth) comes responsibility. Power without responsibility leads to an arrogant, self-centred humanism, while responsibility without power leads to a submissive timidity in the face of the immensity of the natural order.

Our situation is not so drastic that we require either a new ecocentric consciousness, or anti-democratic forms of environmental regulation; both are equally alien to our culture. Talk of 'ecological crisis' and 'saving the earth', while clearly motivated by a strong sense of the urgency and magnitude of our current and near-future ecological predicament, are over-reactions. They fail to focus our attention on the resources within our culture, political, institutional, and moral with which we can seek to cope with environmental risks. Without tapping into these resources, as I hope this thesis has shown, limits to green political theory will quickly assert themselves, and green politics will become a voice in the wilderness, unable to propose convincing political arguments as to why it should be preserved.

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