What is *Safe*? Cultural Citizenship, Representation and Risk.

'those trees, those useless trees produce the air that I'm breathing' (Pulp: The Trees 2001)

Through the development of the idea of 'cultural' citizenship, we can make connections between issues of belonging, rights and responsibilities to questions of cultural power (Stevenson 2001, 2003). The capacity to control the flow of information, make meanings stick and enforce powerful ideological strategies remains one of the main structural divides in the world today. Cultural citizenship is concerned with a form of politics that seeks to investigate struggles over the power to define. Further, cultural understandings of citizenship are concerned not only with 'formal' processes such as who is entitled to vote and the maintenance of an active civil society, but with whose cultural practices are disrespected. Cultural versions of citizenship need to ask who is silenced, marginalized, stereotyped and rendered invisible? As Renato Rosaldo (1999:260) argues cultural citizenship is concerned with 'who needs to be visible, to be heard, and to belong'. What is defining here is the demand for cultural respect. Whereas liberalism commonly recognises that a political

community can generate disrespect by forms of practical mistreatment (such as torture or rape) and by withholding formal rights (such as the right to vote) notions of cultural citizenship point to the importance of the symbolic dimension of community. Cultural citizenship is concerned with 'the degree of self esteem accorded to his or her manner of self-realisation within a society's inherited cultural horizon' (Honneth 1995:134). These aspects might be linked to whose language is given public acceptance, what history is taught in schools, which sexual activities are confined to the private, or who is permitted to move securely through public space. Cultural citizenship becomes defined through a site of struggle that is concerned with the marginalisation and the normalisation of social practices (Miller 2002). The point is not so much to formulate a revolutionary strategy that might propel us into a radically different society, but to interrupt a multiplicity of discourses and strategies that seek to structure the field of cultural representation (Halperin 1995). While cultural citizenship is connected to notions of cultural power, respect and normalisation it also raises the demand for a revised model of the public sphere (Habermas 1989). As we shall see, perspectives linked to cultural citizenship seek to press the case for the recognition of new public spaces of dialogue where 'minorities' are protected and inter-cultural exchanges are promoted (Tourraine 2000). In this respect, cultural citizenship can be defined through a dual strategy in seeking to disrupt the discursive construction of dominant cultures while promoting the conditions for civilized dialogue. With these features in mind this paper seeks to draw from a range of debates between sociology, political theory and cultural studies in understanding the nature of the political in modern society.

Here I seek to apply ideas of cultural citizenship to ecological questions. While cultural citizenship is more readily applied to questions of cultural policy, multiculturalism and the media here I want to try to connect its dimensions to those related to the struggle for ecological citizenship (Giddens 1994, Steward 1991, Van Steebergen 1994). In the first section, I seek to argue that ecological questions should be understood in the context of the economic and scientific development of modernity. In particular, I seek to concentrate the discussion on the argument that ecological perspectives need to avoid being positioned as a disciplinary force within modernity encompassing a moralistic reaction against the pleasures of consumption. That is, while being sympathetic with a green agenda that seeks to politicise systematic over consumption, this needs to be sensitive to a number of strategic traps. In the second part of the discussion I look at some of the arguments in respect of the relationship between questions of risk and citizenship that seeks to avoid some of the limitations of other approaches. As we shall see, these arguments are dependent on the development of new forms of political and cultural engagement. Finally, I argue that the debate on risk and citizenship remains limited in respect of a cultural politics of representation. In this section, I discuss a recent popular film (*Safe*) and argue that it raises difficult questions for a 'politics of nature' in the context of a consumer society. Here I aim to deconstruct the idea that popular culture and politics are opposed to one another, and that the study of popular forms allows us to investigate more affective dimensions absent from rationalistic debates connected to questions of risk.

Modernity, Progress and Consumption

The idea of 'progress' is both normative and tied up with the economic, political and cultural development of modernity. In terms of Western societies it can be connected to our ability to develop technologies to control an 'outer' nature, the belief that 'experts' will necessarily solve our problems, and that cultural differences will fade away once people discover the benefits of Western science/culture (Norgaard 1994). Such views are now widely discredited and perceived to be ethno-centric. Western ideas of progress have legitimated both the destruction of the environment and privileged the production of Western forms of control and production of knowledge. The power relations signified by notions of 'progress' and 'development' seemingly silence different approaches to culture and the economy that do not seek to legitimise current patterns of economic growth and relations of expertise (Tucker 1999). The systematic exclusion and 'Othering' of different perspectives on issues of progress and development have until now sought to run the world in the interests of the powerful. Yet there is no easy escape from Western modernity. The recovery of questions of 'difference' and 'Otherness' which has been so important in contemporary social theory does not present us with easily defined paths to follow. While we may wish to break with the binary logic that categorises the world into developed/underdeveloped, traditional/modern and backward/advanced, no other alternative model seems to be readily available. Traditionally ideas of progress and development offer the notion of human progress through economic growth and cultural homogeneity. If we are to decouple the idea that success = money + power we will need to develop a

substantial ethical vision that recognizes the continued power of this equation. This ethical vision, however, should not attempt to identify new universal rules of progress regulating our social lives under a revised set of hierarchies and controls. Such a project is likely to be perceived (mostly correctly) as authoritarian. Rather, the question ecological politics must be able to answer is, how we might live sustainably without a parallel increase in the control and surveillance of citizens (Newby 1995)? As Touraine (2000:147) observes: "Our late modernity is primarily worried about its survival and the risks it is running. It aspires to being neither a society of order nor a society of progress, but a communications-based society, and it is therefore more afraid of intolerance than of poverty or illegality."

There are then good reasons to think about the ethical limits of more traditional forms of development and to seek to develop a global society along sustainable lines. Yet there are evident dangers if such discussions are allowed to breed moralist enclaves and authoritarian reactions. A cultural citizenship based approach seeks to develop a society based upon collective and self-limitation, where the values of democracy are regenerated, while opening up a dialogue across different civilizations and cultures. In this respect, cultural citizenship pursues a strategy that seeks to create new spaces and opportunities for dialogic engagement while interrupting normalising assumptions. Cultural citizenship then seeks to make space for the Other.

A key problem with ecological concerns, as I have indicated, that they often sound like demands for collective austerity. Whereas the market offers fun, pleasure and choice, ecological viewpoints suggest restraint, punishment for our previous excesses and insecurity. Considered globally, according to

Sachs (1999), 'the best one can say is that development has created a global middle class with cars, bank accounts and career aspirations'. If we were to enter a more sustainable century then by these calculations the small proportion of humanity who benefit from these lifestyles would need to be transformed. Yet such pronouncements are usually built upon the idea that processes of everyday consumption involve the satisfaction of false or at least manipulated needs. Dobson (1994) argues that the green argument is built upon the idea that we are ethically stunted by the growth economy's refusal to acknowledge the loss in the quality of life for our own and future generations. The ecological case is not helped by labelling the evident pleasures of fashion, music, cinema and the rest as the 'specious satisfactions of consumption' (Dobson 1994:90). For example, some ecological groups have argued that drastic cuts in the consumption of key resources and polluting goods are required within modern industrial societies. The radical nature of this demand becomes apparent if we consider that governments of the Left and Right regard high levels of consumer expenditure as a key policy objective. The ecological argument here is the need for 'downshifting' which involves the emergence of new lifestyle patterns emphasising second hand goods, cycling instead of driving, recycling waste and the buying of durable goods. As Michael Jacobs (1997) has argued such measures often presume a neo-liberal assumption that the consumer acts as an atomised individual. While individualisation processes open up the question of responsibility necessary for ecological reflection, they simultaneously contribute to environmental dangers given that the meanings involved in consumption are important sources of modern identity (Ropke 1999).

Similarly, Rosalind Williams (1982) has argued that the positive collective morale needed to counter the narcissism and pleasant illusions of consumption should be found in the re-energisation of collective bonds. The reforging of community would require a 'shared austerity' that sought to distinquish different levels of destruction that can be connected to the various practices of consumption. The problem being that such measures would be difficult to enforce within an increasingly individualised and global society. What would start as an attempt by the community to pull together is likely to end in the demonisation of some groups rather than others (usually the least powerful) and the imposition of technocratic or statist rather than civil solutions. The attempt to separate 'real' from 'false' needs as previous generations of social theorists have discovered is extremely complex even given democratic procedures. This is not to underestimate the extent to which global capitalism is currently seeking to present itself as the saviour of the environment. 'Nature' has become part of an accumulation strategy on the part of corporate interests. Industrial capitalism has progressively 'sentimentalised' nature as something to be consumed during vacations or at the end of the working day (Pred 1998). Corporations take on the guise of ecological concern while acting to privatise public environments. For example, the development of 'World Wildlife Zones' by cordoning off a preservation area can both promote the idea of nature as a luxury consumer product and can detract attention from the environmental degradation outside of special sites (Katz 1998). A citizenship based approach to questions of ecological sensitivity and consumption might be better served in arguing that we need to balance the evident pleasures (and indeed dangers) of mass consumption against judgements and assessments

that can be related to the survival of the planet and the various life forms that inhabit it. This is more likely to be achieved through the constitution of a substantial ethical domain rather than attempts to demonise everyday consumption. As Raymond Williams (1998:220) argues new forms of resource allocation 'can only be very carefully negotiated'. Indeed, as much work in masculinity and feminist studies has explicitly acknowledged, people are much more likely to change their orientations coming from a position of engagement rather than imposed guilt and defensiveness (Brod 2002). A critical politics in respect of consumer society would need to both recognise that consumption brings pleasures, but also accepting that a capitalist driven economic system is unsustainable. In this respect, we would do well to consider that consumer society acts as a key component of social control given the obligation to consume (Baudrillard 1998). Viewed from this perspective, the question of citizenship needs to evolve new strategies to encounter such issues. The important question is how to develop a politics of citizenship that neither retreats into a celebration of consumption nor moralistic reaction.

Risk, Science and Democracy

Pondering this question, I want to introduce issues of risk and reflexivity into the debate. Living in the contemporary world means learning to live with the possibility of large scale hazards that throw into question attempts at bureaucratic normalisation, the imperatives of the economic system and the assurances of scientific experts. Not only are we learning to live in a post-

traditional society, but are currently haunted by the possibility of large scale hazards like Chernobyl. Despite the end of the Cold War we are currently living within the shadow of our own annihilation. No one really knows what the long term consequences of ecological destruction will be and the level of risk that is environmentally sustainable. Politics and economics in such a society can no longer be conceptualised as a struggle over resources, and environmental degradation is not easily dismissed as a partial side effect. The international production of harmful substances, the pollution of the seas, and the dangers of nuclear power all call into question the mechanisms of national governance and our relations of trust with society's central institutions. The consequence of definition struggles which seek a primary 'cause' often end up hiding the pervasive ways in which modern society has become a scientific laboratory. Ulrich Beck writes on the escalating risks of the modern era:

"The more pollutants are put in circulation, the more acceptable levels related to individual substances are set, the more liberally this occurs, the more insane the entire hocus-pocus becomes, because the overall toxic threat to the population grows - presuming the simple equation that the total volume of various toxic substances means a higher degree of overall toxicity " (Beck 1992: 66)

The risk society is predicated on the ambivalence that science has both produced and legitimised these risks, while being the primary force, other than popular protest, through which these dimensions can be made visible. In this respect, the ecological movement can not afford to be anti-scientific, but rather has to turn science back on itself. Scientific rationality and judgement needs to be open to the community as a whole as modernity is revealed to be a more

uncertain and fragile construction than was previously assumed to be the case. The pervasive power of technical reason has given birth to a new form of politics that Beck (1997) calls 'sub-politics'. The humanity-wide project of saving the environment has actually been brought about through the destruction of nature as well as the accompanying culture of risk and uncertainty that are wrapped around human conceptions of well-being. The politicisation of science and technology is rapidly introducing a reflexive culture whereby politics and morality is interrupting the knowledge base of scientific experts. A shared environment of global risk enables the formation of an ecological politics that seeks to recover democratic exchange. Whereas struggles for citizenship have historically been organised in material settings like the work-place, sub-politics is much more likely to be symbolically shaped through the domains of consumption, television media and the repoliticisation of science. In this new political arena it is cultural symbols that determine who are the winners and losers in the world of risk politics. Beck argues that disputes over risk involve consumers in a form of direct political particpation. As the public attend to the daily mediation of risk products are boycotted and postions quickly adopted and discarded in what Beck (1999:46) calls 'the world fairground of symbolic politics'. In this the ecological movement has sought to develop a 'cultural Red Cross consciousness' (Beck 1999:44). Organisations like Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth have fostered a sense of public trust in their own declarations, taking a moral stance that is seemingly above the daily scraps of political parties. In this world of 'judo politics' yesterday's winners soon become tomorrow's losers as unpredictable spirals of information are circulated on a twenty four hour basis. The speed at which different

viewpoints and perspectives are literally turned over means that the cultural definition of risk plays a central part within these disputes.

If the ecological movement asks us to attend to the obligations we have to the earth it also raises the question of the regeneration of public spaces and democratic dialogue. This is particularly pressing given some of Beck's remarks in respect of the fast moving world of media defined risk. Beck (1995) exhibits an awareness of these dimensions through a discussion of the possible emergence of an 'authoritarian technocracy'. Here he argues that industrial society responded to the problem of ecological risk through the formal development of certain laws, belief in 'cleaner' technology and more informed experts. The deep uncertainty that is fostered by media spirals of information could mean that states seek to close down areas of debate and discussion, and give their citizens false feelings of certitude. That is, states may decide to protect the public from contestation and debate. For Beck what is required is a repoliticisation of these domains. Citizenship we should remember is cancelled if politics is subservient to the market, becomes defined by the state or presents the world as a confrontation between fixed interests (Leca 1992). In this view, citizenship becomes possible through the development of republican institutions and civic forms of engagement. Democratic dialogue needs to introduce into its repertoires the principles of doubt and uncertainty. Only through the consideration of worst case scenarios and the idea that technical rationality is dangerous can we begin an appropriately educated dialogue. In this setting Beck (1995:179) argues 'caution would be the mother in the kitchen of toxins'.

Both Bauman (1993) and Smart (1999) have argued that the 'revival of reason' offered by reflexive modernisation will do little to offer a future more riven by doubt and ethical complexity. That is, as Beck defines it in his early work, the recovery of reason is just as likely to foster rather than undermine what Bauman (1993: 204) calls 'the suicidal tendency of technological rule'. Beck's analysis remains dependent upon the continued domination of scientific reason, rather than engaging in a more ethical politics. Bauman expands this point by arguing that the most likely response to public expressions of risk is the systematic privatisation of risk, not the re-moralisation of public space. For Bauman, Beck seems to presume that more not less modernity would necessarily undermine attempts by 'private' consumers to avoid public risks. Bauman points that privatised risk-fighting, from attempts to lose weight to taking vitamin tablets, are all big business. In a consumer society there is a strong temptation to buy oneself out of the debate privately rather than publicly engaging in the construction of shared moral and ethical norms. There is no direct connection between the public acceptance of risk and the political action necessary to deal with these questions. In their different ways both Bauman and Smart point to the need for a wider ethical recovery, which is not addressed but undermined by the new individualism and scientific reason.

These are substantial criticisms that are both right and wrong. The privatisation of risk within contemporary culture remains a real possibility. However the argument that a remoralised culture is dependent upon the jettisoning of science and scientific forms of evidence is surely false. As Donna Haraway (1991, 1997) argues the implosion of science, technology and nature especially within the post-war period has fundamentally altered the make-up of

contemporary society. The webs of knowledge and power connected to the development of technoscience has reshaped the boundaries between humans and non-humans. For example, the development of genetic engineering since the early 1970s has redefined the boundaries between culture and nature. The development of transgenetic organisms within life forms from tomatoes to fish provide a 'cross-cultural polyphony' that violates notions of natural integrity. This deconstructs ideas of genetic and species purity that can be found within racist discourses. To object to the 'unnaturalness' of these processes is both politically problematic, and fails to recognise the ways in which human and non human relations have already been transformed. The point is not to rid ourselves of science, but to seek to politicise the ways in which biotechnology is increasingly commodified and globally dominated by commercial interests. For example, the funding of science and research within the United States (the main global player) has significantly shifted in the direction of large corporations. This is not so much a conspiracy, but a way of severely limiting the public discussion and understandings of the ways in which science is reshaping our shared world. Such processes determine the current construction of science by the agendas of money and power, and disallow the public emergence of different areas of priority from less powerful sections of the population. Rather than allowing science to be determined by the state, capital and the military a voice needs to be found for the public. For Haraway this could be achieved by establishing citizens juries that seek to debate the ethics of animal research, genetically modified food or pollution. These newly invented public spaces would need to allow for both different and diverse knowledges. The aim being to include the ways in which science is contested,

determined and currently reshaping our common world in open forms of discussion. Invariably this would include a diversity of knowledges thereby helping to democratise the practice of science. As Haraway (1997:114) puts it, 'technoscience is civics'. Haraway's argument follows the dual strategy of cultural citizenship by creating new spaces for dialogue whilst seeking to deconstruct dominant definitions of 'science' legitimated by expert opinoin. These arguments do not so much depend upon moralism, but the possibility of new forms of dialogic engagement and the recognition of 'minority' viewpoints. By instituting a more diverse and participatory public sphere we only begin to address questions of risk by allowing space for the contestation of a number of radically different perspectives.

Cinematic Representations of Risk: *Safe*

Other critics of the risk society thesis have sought to investigate the ways in which 'risk' is translated into more popular forms of understanding. In short, the concern is that Beck's theories remain connected to an instrumental and technocratic agenda that seeks to 'manage' an environmental crisis. Beck describes the risk society as a social crisis demonstrating little concern with the way different populations, cultures and political movements might reinterpret and interrupt dominant conceptions of 'the natural'. According to Lash (1994) and Wynne (1996), Beck's analysis stays on the side of the technocratic professionals (including politicians, scientists and government bureaucrats) by failing to connect with the different frames and projections that are currently available to more grass-root organisations. As Mary Douglas (1992:48) has

argued, 'there is no intrinsic reason why the analysis of risk perception should not engage in comparisons of culture'. By failing to make this move Beck is accused of unintentionally reinforcing the divide between experts and lay opinion. Beck ends up producing a view of the subject that is not far from a calculative-rationalist approach in that he fails to problematise the complexity and cultural variability of different risk cultures within and between diverse social groups and societies. Rather than developing notions of reflexivity through an explicitly aesthetic set of concerns like Lash, or seeking to attend to many of the reservations and resistances that 'ordinary people' might have to the agendas and cultures of scientists, Beck is arguably more concerned to introduce the principle of responsibility into elite discussions.

Within these co-ordinates I want to briefly focus on the 1995 film *Safe* directed by Todd Haynes. Todd Haynes has more recently directed both *Velvet Goldmine* (1999) and *Far From Heaven* (2002). He is one of the most radical and self consciously political of the directors currently working within Hollywood, and most of his work concentrates on questions of class, gender and sexuality (Gross 1995). The film *Safe* was chosen as it seeks to address many of the complex issues related to science, risk and citizenship that I sought to discuss in the previous section. Recalling the arguments of Haraway discussed earlier, the introduction of popular film and visual culture into issues of citizenship raises questions as to which forms of knowledge are rendered legitimate. Such a move subverts the assumed dominance of scientific experts and the political establishment in controlling the dimensions of public discussion. Further, I would also argue that popular film is better equipped at exploring some of the more affective and troubling aspects of modern cultures

of risk that evade more 'rational' and 'scientific' forms of understanding. In this way, an analysis of popular film might offer a way of understanding some of the complex feelings, evasions and fears that are missing from theoretical discussions of risk.

In my discussion of the film I am not only seeking to demonstrate the fact that we are indeed living in a world of hazard and risk, but also that there are many different personal and collective narratives available to us as consumers and citizens in making sense of this world. This is not to argue that the film simply reflects a more popular domain, but that it provides a critical response to many of the questions related to the democratisation and privatization of risk that the analysis has traded upon so far. Here I shall investigate some of the ways 'risk' becomes signified, represented and made meaningful in our culture (Hall 1997). This is important as dominant discourses aim to 'rule in' and 'rule out' ways of perceiving risk. The film is centrally concerned with the ways in which we construct our identity through narratives of well-being and health. Haynes as an openly political and gay film maker seeks to open questions around the way that certain recovery and treatment therapies in relation to AIDS have become individualised. The film also seeks to target a specifically 'left wing' culture that argues that ideas of 'truth' can be read off from social positions within society. Finally, as I hope to demonstrate within the discussion, *Safe* also introduces the ways in which risk and safety are heavily gendered practices within modern societies.

The film is focused on Carol White who lives in the San Fernando Valley with her husband Greg and adopted son. In the early part of the narrative we see Carol going to the gym, talking to her domestic help, arranging the

delivery of a new sofa and discussing the possibility of a new fruit diet with a female friend. Carol's world seems extremely 'safe' given that she does not work and lives in a wealthy and exclusive part of the city. Yet the film's genre is probably closest to that of a horror film in that there is a powerful sense of impending doom which is mainly signified by the musical score and the way the film is shot. There are very few close-ups in the film which creates a sense of distance and coldness that is reflected in Carol's personal relations. In the first scene we see Carol having sex with her husband in such a way that draws attention to her emotional detachment. The cinematic effect is to individuate Carol and emphasise her vulnerability.

As the film progresses Carol becomes ill. The first sign that there may be anything wrong is when Carol has a coughing fit after driving behind a truck on the freeway, this is quickly followed by a nose bleed caused by a hair perm and her collapse after walking in on a dry cleaners while it is being sprayed. Despite Carol's frequent trips to see her doctor they cannot find anything medically wrong with her. Eventually Carol comes across a leaflet on 'environmental illness' while she is visiting the gym. After a series of meetings, she progressively learns to give her illness a name in that it is her everyday tolerance of chemical substances that is breaking down due to a general rise in the level of toxicity. The social movement that Carol joins is populated by a number of people who are suffering from similar illnesses which have defied explanation by the medical profession. The social movement is seemingly made up of marginalised groups including women, and people of different sexualities and ethnicities within American society.

The rest of the film is concerned with the ways in which Carol becomes socialised into a New Age group which lives in a remote place called Wrenwood. This alternative community asks that its residents dress moderately, restrain themselves from sexual activity and concentrate upon 'personal growth'. The sect that Carol joins offers a form of safety through fundamentalist certitude. The community ultimately rejects the complexities and ambiguities of the modern world and instead seeks to socialise its inhabitants into blaming themselves for their illnesses and to rid themselves of all negative thoughts. For example, 'the guru' of the retreat Peter stands up in front of the other members to proclaim that 'I have stopped reading the papers. I have stopped watching the news on TV'. Through group therapy sessions and personal reflection the members of Wrenwood are asked to rid themselves of any potentially negative stimuluses that might come to damage their immune system and hence impair their ability to fight disease. That the community rests upon a form of communalism is cleverly demonstrated when Carol is asked by Peter to share with the group; she uncertainly replies that she is 'still learning the words'. At this Peter replies 'the words are just a way of helping you get to what is true'. That Carol eventually 'learns the words' is made clear when on her birthday she gives a faltering speech that begins to mirror the sentiments of the group's leader Peter. However despite Carol's progressive socialisation into this alternative community she ends up as lonely and isolated as she was at the film's beginning. In this, Carol retains a constant concern with her own health in that her cabin is down wind of a highway, and she eventually moves into a purpose built toxically cleansed white igloo. The

final scene of the film shows Carol standing alone in front of a mirror in the igloo repeatedly telling herself 'I love you'.

Safe is a complex film that offers many possible readings and interpretations. The film could be interpreted as a critique of the way HIV was dealt with in American society, an analysis of partriarchy, or even an ironic interpretation of environmentalism. My aim here is not to close down competing interpretations, but to use the film as a means of understanding the connections between risk and citizenship (Rose 2001).

Safe, as we saw, offers a critique of dominant heterosexual masculinity which through the family, science and social movements seeks to impose silence upon questions of power and difference. While *Safe* focuses on the experiences of Carol both the family and the New Age community are represented through the codes of hegemonic masculinity that institutes relations of power and privilege on the basis of gender (Connell 1997). Seemingly Carol exchanges a partner whose masculinity is structured through economic individualism (obsession with work, suppression of tenderness and evasion of domestic labour) for the more communally oriented fatherly masculinity of Peter who is equally disinterested in Carol's self perceptions. As the narrative progresses, the viewer is struck by Carol's husband's seeming indifference and emotional distance from her illness. The lack of intimacy between Carol and Greg being signified by the fact that his face remains hidden for the first part of the film. For Greg, Carol's illness is not allowed to disrupt his work schedule and is experienced as an inconvience given the restrictions it places upon his sexuality. Yet, as I have indicated, Peter's control of the New Age community through the regulation of sexuality, information

about the outside world, and the legitimate codes of expression offers an equally defining model of masculinity. Whereas the New Age community might have given up competitive individualism it has reverted to a more traditional form of patriarchy where the 'father' governs the discursive relations of the community.

The radical nature of the film is enhanced by the ironic way in which the social movement (that Carol joins before she enters Wrenwood) is represented. A number of 'minorities' are seen struggling to find a voice in opposition to mainstream media and scientific institutions. Yet the 'voice' or 'discourse' they discover is as 'certain' as the perspectives they oppose. Alberto Melucci (1996) argues that the risk of social movements converting themselves into sectarian organisations is a constant threat. Unless a particular sect is happy to operate 'outside' mainstream society then such fundamentalisms are likely to be self defeating in the long term. That is if the values and perspectives of a social movement become converted into fundamentalism then they are likely to obstruct their capacity to engage in the necessary labour of alliance building. In this *Safe* affirms a dual politics of intellectual apartheid. Carol is either represented as privatising risk or by trying a 'new' fruit diet or learning the communal certainties of Wrenwood. While both political positions are built upon a form of masculine hegemony neither allows for the possibility of a more critical politics. The possibilities of inter-cultural dialogue are cancelled by two different forms of political retreat. Despite the differences between a suburban privatised politics and a New Age communalism both are represented as depending upon masculine dominance and the withering of the public domain.

How might we relate these aspects to our discussion of risk and citizenship? *Safe* demonstrates how privatised escape attempts from shared cultures of risk can become converted into a communalist search for certitude. To return to the dialectic Beck unravels between modernity and counter-modernity, arguably individualisation processes have no necessary political trajectory. For example, counter forms of modernity can respond to uncertainty through a politics of privatisation or communalism. In this respect, Beck represents the key antagonism within 'reflexive' modernity between a politics that builds upon individualised forms of reflexivity and the re-inscription of fundamentalist certitude. Hence if Carol is intially involved in a forms of politics that seeks through a privatised lifestyle to distance herself from 'risk', by the film's closing 'risk' has been expelled from the community by finding 'certainty' in a new alternative lifestyle. The imaginative possibilities provided by cultural citizenship in respect of risk would have to compete with the lure of both privatised escape attempts and fundamentalist forms of certitude. More than anything else a critical politics of citizenship would need to offer ways of regenerating public space that enabled so called private anxieties and risks to be converted into public issues. An informed politics would seek to intervene in popular forms of understanding that takes public politics beyond either private forms of concern and confession or communalist guarantees. Such a politics would need to find spaces for anxieties that cannot be dismissed as anti-scientific, which if left unexpressed are likely to manifest themselves in privatised escape attempts or communalist forms of reaction. Only then would the attempt to introduce questions of responsibility into political discourse have the necessary impact. Cultural citizenship would need not only to critique the

boundaries of the nation-state, but also more cultural boundaries that attempt to both expel risk while reaffirming relations between insiders and outsiders and public and private. At the heart of the film is Carol's quest for a secure identity. The period of chronic uncertainty when Carol's illness seems to frustrate the attempts of psychoanalysis and medical science to pin it down are soon expelled once she enters the New Age community. *Safe* represents a world where illness is either medicalised, privatised or fundamentalised, but not politicised. The film powerfully evokes a lack of public spaces that might link an attempt to develop an alternative politics on questions of health, risk and the body. Further, *Safe* also seeks to represent risk through discourses of masculinity that seek to control the feminine 'other', and the possibility of a more dialogic form of politics without the certainties of the dominant logics of modernity. One of the key questions *Safe* asks us to engage with is what sort of gender and sexual politics becomes necessary in a world without certainties? In terms of cultural citizenship, this would require the deconstruction of the 'myths of manhood' and the development of new social spaces that allowed for new dialogic forms of politics (Seidler 1997).

Politics, Culture and Risk

My argumentative strategy in introducing a discussion of the film *Safe* has been to deconstruct the presumed opposition between a popular commercial culture and ecological concerns. As Barbara Adam and Joost Van Loon (2000:2) argue the idea the idea of risk, 'is not that it is happening, but that it might be happening'. Arguably such features deconstruct oppositions between

public and private and the 'serious' and popular. In this respect, we saw how the cultures of privatization and communalism are seeking to define a politics of risk in respect of the body and society. Questions of cultural citizenship need to pursue a dual strategy of both interrupting 'dominant' constructions of 'nature' whilst seeking to invest in a less certain, more dialogic politics. In this respect, Ulrich Beck's notion of the risk society offers a definite advance over ecological moralism. Beck's risk society thesis dispenses with the easy oppositions between culture and politics and offers the possibility of enhanced forms of reflexivity through a renewal of democracy. However, Beck's argument, as we saw, also has its shortcomings despite its seminal importance. Beck remains tied to a technocratic conception of politics that fails to connect with the ways that citizenship has become encoded within cultural texts and competing interpretations of risk. At this point, I argued that forming an understanding of the way that risk is popularly understood through codes and narratives becomes an essential feature of a more ecologically tuned cultural citizenship. By taking the 'cultural turn' in respect of risk sociological theory implicitly recognises that such questions cannot be viewed in abstraction from issues of power and representation. This is not the argument that sociology should be replaced by cultural studies, but more that a productive dialogue between the two disciplines is likely to enhance our shared understanding of these questions. In this respect, I have sought to locate popular representations of risk in a wider public sphere that might begin to discuss a variety of discourses and narratives in respect of risk. This has the advantage of both arguing that notions of the public are not singular and unified in their constitution while seeking to reveal the different ways in which

they operate. Critical questions of cultural citizenship move the debate between both normative understandings and critical forms of reflection upon the different discourses available within cultural texts. As I hope I have demonstrated, such an approach opens a number of possibilities for the study of citizenship in an inter-disciplinary context. The linking of consumer culture and citizenship can mutually draw upon debates in visual culture and citizenship studies, thereby productively connecting questions of representation and risk. If risk can no longer be understood outside of the way in which it becomes represented then we will need to rethink our shared conceptions of citizenship.

Acknowledgements

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