

A circular wreath of various botanical illustrations surrounds a central white circle. The plants include green ferns, a red maple leaf, a green bell-shaped flower, a branch with small pink blossoms, a large green leaf, a red leaf, and purple flowers.

*Erik Lynch/ PHI 340/ Dr. Godoy/
24 March 2023*

**“Green Republicanism and a ‘Just
Transition’ from the Tyranny of
Economic Growth” John Barry (2019)**



“The Second Coming”

W.B. Yeats

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand

...

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?



What political theory is called forth by these troubling times?

To understand problems and root causes with realistic, robust response

Marxism – “Absolutely.” Class inequalities, crises, externalized costs for private gain.

Conservatism – “Yes.” Temporality & Spatiality.

Liberal/ism Democracy – Individual dignity & tolerance.

“Other” – Feminism, antiracism, decolonialism for uneven effects





Green Political Theory and Civic Republicanism

Civic **Republicanism** – Buttresses Liberal Democracy's shortcomings in active citizenship and public power towards common goods.

Green Political Theory – Calls public care towards ecological aspects of the common good.

Green **Republicanism** – a third Third Way to rescue liberal-capitalism?

Can we fundamentally change without changing fundamentally?

resilient*PRESERVATIVE.TRASCENDENCE*transformative





Green Republicanism

Hybrid of Civic Republicanism and Green Politics

I AM ASKING YOU QUESTIONS ANSWER MY QUESTIONS

Can political contestation answer division and climatic turbulence?

Can one reject 'ecocidal' liberal political-economy and deepen democratic decision making in one fell swoop?

"From climate breakdown can come democratic breakthrough?"





Justifying the Just Transition

Equitable distribution of burdens and benefits. We might call this *fairness*.

Broadening participation in decision making, doing right by displaced workers

Contestation over consensus (*so long as you aren't violent!*)

Policy: provisional and revisable

Wealth inequality and oligarchy as political (**republican**) problems

There will be losers, even in a just transition – **who should lose?**





Green Republican Just Transition

Social cohesion, liberty, equality, stability, resilience

Order discloses political resilience

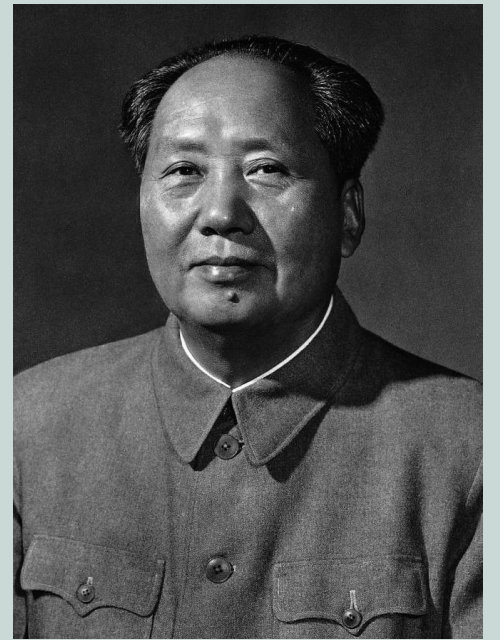
Resilience comes from 'collective learning and creativity'

Resilience allows for coping mechanisms where there are not solutions

Resilient systems can bounce back *and* forward (*the Great Bounce Forward?*)

Collective action towards mitigation and adaptation





Would John Barry have been happier embracing Mao Zedong Thought? **Discuss.**





The Tyranny of Economic Growth

GDP and economic development at large do not represent the totality of the common good

Connection between economic and social progress is arbitrary

Reflect what is good for 'the few' rather than 'the many'

"It can tell us everything about America except why we are proud that we are Americans (RFK)" For sake of argument, can you imagine a reason to be proud of being American? [What might it be?](#)





“Has now passed the threshold”

Short-termism and impairment of the common good

GDP-fetishism dovetails with neoliberal privatization and financialization

GDP-fetishism subordinates common goods to private goods

Neoliberal-financial capital growth pattern fuels right-wing populism

Skewed and risky perception

Is a pure and good metric possible? [What might it be?](#) How to measure
‘collective’ and ‘non-monetized goods?’





Threat to the republic

Economic growth is promoted by and for 'a minority' who benefit materially and in 'power over others.' Favors capital over labor. Legitimizes economic growth as the proper goal of policy-making.

Macroeconomic GDP-fetishism contributes to microeconomic workplace despotism.

GDP-fetishism 'depoliticizes' economic decision-making and avoids redistributive policies via 'rising tide' arguments, reproduces inequalities





Debt-based Consumerism: Green concerns are republican concerns

Debt-based consumerism undermines liberty and destabilizes society – thus
political in addition to economic question.

Debt leveraged by creditors over debtors to push creditors' interests

Financialization reinforces profit motive – to a death drive

However, Barry focuses on the fiction of demand generated by marketing.

Is Barry right to focus on advertisers? Does he miss a stronger analysis of
predatory creditors themselves rather than their Hitlerite running dogs in
marketing?





Non-democratic Workplaces

Fast and loose with the slavery analogies, both Barry and F. Engels
Proletarianization and precarity undermine democracy as non-domination
“The scope of unelected, arbitrary power ... that bosses have over workers
should be of pressing concern for republicans.”

To be republican is to be, on some level, anti-capitalist

Put on your Senator McCarthy hat – [is Barry a Red?](#) Why or why not?

[Where should democracy end?](#) The shop floor, the classroom, etc.?





Non-democratic Workplaces con't.

Workplace dictatorship fosters efficiency and maximizes production at the expense of democracy and workers' dignity and liberty

Such tyranny is in the interest of capital

Despite lowering productivity, democratizing workplaces would provide other goods that outweigh this loss, in flourishing and autonomy

Can our economy be 'freed from the shackles of ... endless growth' without explicitly moving away from the capitalist mode of production and ownership? What might this look like?





Beyond Carbon-addiction: a Just Transition from the tyranny of growth

Green republican perspective: economic policy beyond neoclassical thought;
economy beyond the market; work beyond employment

The productivity imperative (*inherent to the capitalist mode of production*) is
ecologically unsustainable at the macro and tramples upon liberty at the
microeconomic level

Towards a macro of sustainability, micro of democratization

Barry's contradiction – minimize instability while overturning central tendency of
actual economic organization. He wishes to have his cake and eat it too.



(Barry 2019, 12-3)



Barry's Contradiction



Barry calls for a thorough democratization of the economy, but also balks at political instability and violence. A bare fact is that our political order is inextricably rooted in the existing economic structure.

Which, then, should political ecologists tend towards – [stability or democratization?](#)



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