RESEARCH ARTICLE

Complex green citizenship and the necessity of judgment

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ABSTRACT *The term 'green citizenship' is used by a wide range of competing conceptions of political action toward environmental goals. But different conceptions in fact address different environmental and institutional circumstances. Green citizenship should thus be understood as complex, and should be conceived as the ability to judge what forms of political activity are called for, given the details of context. The theory of green citizenship therefore ought to provide and explain exemplary cases of the exercise of green political judgment.*

What is the task of green political theory? Plausibly, it is to help answer the core question for green, like any, political action: What is to be done? We might think, specifically, that the task of a theory of green citizenship is to set forth and explain what is to be done by green citizens, i.e. to provide guidance for green civic activity, by way of an account of how certain behaviors and attitudes lead to the promotion of environmental values through politics.

This paper, however, suggests a more modest role for green citizenship theory. I start with the observation that the term 'green citizenship' has come to refer to a wide range of competing conceptions since it gained currency in the early 1990's (Valencia Sáiz 2005:164).[1] This observation prompts the proposal that green citizenship is inherently complex – that the types of behaviors favored by different conceptions in fact are appropriate to widely different environmental and institutional circumstances. I thus undertake to identify the kind of complexity I have in mind, and its source, by presenting two contrasting models of green citizenship.[2]

In response to this complexity I then offer a broadly Aristotelian proposal, namely, that the theory of green citizenship should focus on judgment. In the face of complexity it seems plainly wrong to valorize one specific set of behaviors and attitudes as defining green citizenship. Rather, we best accommodate the fact of complexity by characterizing the green citizen as a person possessed of practical wisdom, or what I shall call judgment: the ability to discern the salient features of a particular situation, and to choose the political action that will best advance his or her environmental values. I will follow recent interpreters of Aristotle to argue that the focus on judgment alters the role given to theory in support of the practice of green citizenship. Because judgment is cultivated not by the codification of rules but through the assimilation of examples, I conclude that the theory of green citizenship ought to provide and explain exemplary cases where green political judgment is exercised.

Two Models of Green Citizenship

My strategy for establishing that green citizenship is complex is to present two conceptions of it that are poles apart, in order to suggest the structure of the space occupied by alternative formulations. I derive the opposing conceptions by considering two substantial works in the field: Andrew Dobson's *Citizenship and the Environment* and Edward Weber's *Bringing Society Back In* (both 2003). My aim is to treat their works as representatives of starkly different views of what citizenship means in the environmental domain, in order to illuminate the range of possibilities for green citizenship. Reflection on their views suggests that they can be distinguished in three separate though interrelated ways: in terms of the scale of civic membership; in terms of

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the moral characterization of the problems to be addressed through green citizenship; and in terms of the social locus of political activity, i.e. the arena in which citizenship is exercised. Note that I offer these modes of description merely as heuristics: their value is that they help us appreciate the variety of emphases across varying conceptions of green citizenship. I will proceed by differentiating the two positions I draw out of Dobson and Weber in these terms. To make clear that my purpose here is not exegetical but classificatory, I will identify the two positions (arbitrarily) as GC_1 and GC_2.

Considerations regarding scale

The first way of distinguishing the two conceptions of citizenship is in terms of the scale of the political communities of fellow-citizens they imagine. Let us begin with GC_1, which I base on Dobson's proposal for 'post-cosmopolitan ecological citizenship'. For GC_1 citizenship is global in scale: like classical cosmopolitanism, it holds that the borders of existing political communities ought not occlude the global political community that transcends them all. However, it does not rely on an abstract sense of the community of all human beings. Rather, it insists that we can identify specific communities, containing specific individuals, that nonetheless overlap national boundaries. These communities are constituted by the material processes of globalization, i.e. the flows of materials across the world due to economic activity; depending on the activities involved, they might be genuinely planetary in scope (Bryner 2004:70–71). Thus, green citizens (on this first account) recognize the ecological linkages between themselves and others all over the world, who they think of as fellow citizens; their sense of citizenship is thereby global.

The second account, GC_2, I base on Weber's case studies of what he calls Grass Roots Environmental Management ('GREM'), defined as 'an ongoing, collaborative governance arrangement . . . [formed] to resolve policy problems affecting the environment, economy, and community (or communities) of a particular place' (2003: 3).[3] Note that GREM is an institutional innovation; I construct GC_2 by considering the kinds of activities such institutions encourage. GREM activities are local, or at most regional, in scale: they seek to foster local stakeholder partnerships charged with developing and implementing resource management policies. GC_2, that is, is rooted in place (John 2004:219, Landy et al. 1999:5). Exercised within small-scale institutions, it attends to local conditions, and the consequences of policy choices on local residents. GC_2 strengthens the connections of citizens to their locality as they learn more about the place in which they live – its natural environment, as well as its economic and social conditions (Light 2002:157–158,166–167). The characteristic activities in GREM – collaborative deliberation on policies and projects, and then implementation – thus are place-based: meetings are held in the community, about work to be carried out in that area (Light 2002:167–170, Leach and Sabatier 2005:240, Sabatier et al. 2005:47). Participants in GREM are likely to know each other, know of each other, or know people in common, from other social contexts. In sum, under GC_2, citizenship is associated with attachment to a particular community.

Considerations regarding morality

The next way of distinguishing GC_1 and GC_2 is in terms of their respective characterizations of the moral significance of environmental problems. Broadly, whereas GC_1 identifies situations as morally problematic when there is a violation of moral principle, GC_2 is concerned with threats to the stability of a community.

I follow Dobson to develop a picture of how GC_1 attends to principle. He declares that 'the first virtue of ecological citizenship is justice' (2003:132); let us see what that entails. As noted, GC_1 takes communities to be constituted by the material connections between people linked by the economic processes of globalization. Dobson appeals to the device of the 'ecological footprint' (Wackernagel and Rees 1996) to give content to the notion of a community created by globalization: typically, the footprints of people in developed regions reveal that they require more of Earth's ecological capacity (to provide resources or absorb waste) than is provided

by the area they themselves inhabit (Dobson 2003:106). That shortfall must be made up by capacity drawn from elsewhere on the globe – hence those people are linked to the inhabitants of the other regions on which they depend. But this poses a problem regarding distribution: the former people's use of more than their fair share entails that others around the world have less than theirs (see, e.g., Hammond 1998). There is, as well, the further distributive problem that the external costs associated with the consumption of goods are often not borne by the consumers themselves. Dobson's reference to anthropogenic climate change here is correct: 'some people contribute more to this phenomenon than others, and . . . some people suffer more from the unpredictability this brings in its train than others' (2003:104). Observing the differences in distributive advantage here calls for a moral recognition; GC_1 sees in these situations violations of principles of justice. It thus foregrounds moral duties, rooted in justice, owed to those individuals across the globe who are harmed as a result of one's activities (Dobson 2003:132). To the extent that people in developed nations draw more than their fair share of the Earth's biological productivity, they owe a duty of equity to individuals across the globe whose share of the planet's productivity is diminished. To the extent that people in developed nations do not bear the external costs of their consumption practices, they owe a duty of compensation to individuals across the globe on whom those costs are imposed. In sum, GC_1 is a citizenship of commitment; its core commitment to the ideal of justice makes it see that the environmental connections between people across the world constitute moral problems.

Now this description of GC_1 is not meant to suggest that GC_2 is, by contrast, *un*principled. I mean rather to stress that at GC_2's core is the more communitarian project of sustaining relationships among a particular group of people and between them and the place they inhabit. My account notes that the impetus for Weber's GREM initiatives is the presence, or imminent threat, of conflict – even overt violence – among different interest-groups over the management of local natural resources. In response to community-damaging conflict, local stakeholder partnerships emerge for the purpose of developing mutually acceptable management policies and projects. Note, first, that a key feature of GREM is that the objectives for management are quite broad, encompassing economic and social, as well as environmental goals (Weber 2003:5). Weber's accounts underscore the way participants in GREM integrate environmental, economic, and social concerns in their understanding both of the problem they seek to solve, and of what would count as a solution. Second, the deliberative character of GREM institutions encourages participants to interact closely with one another in ways that prompt them to reveal, and perhaps change, their own values. Moreover, it encourages them to respect the value positions of others – leading them, ideally, to increase their trust of one another (Barry 1996:122–124, Leach and Sabatier 2005:250). In sum, GREM calls on participants to attend to a broad range of factors about their locality, and to be aware of and responsive to the range of values held by others. Taking participants in GREM as exemplars of GC_2 prompts the stipulation that this form of green citizenship ultimately involves citizens' commitment to a common vision of the good for their own community. The focus of GC_2 is thus the promotion of that fairly localized vision of the good.

The difference in moral outlook between the two models of environmental citizenship is consonant with the difference in the scale of their respective civic communities: scale is associated, at least intuitively, with the 'thickness' of the moral outlook.[4] The intimate scale of GC_2 makes preserving the thick interpersonal relationships of fellow citizens a morally salient demand; with GC_1's global-scale community these relationships are highly attenuated, and the morally salient demand is to treat even unknown fellow citizens in line with well articulated but thin standards.

Consider how a person described by GC_1 would regard the people in his or her footprint. They would be personally unknown, recognized not as specific individuals but rather under the general description of members of a class to which he or she owes some defined obligations of equity or compensatory justice. The key here is the constructed character of the ecological footprint, which GC_1 uses to express the global scope of green citizenship. A footprint is a strictly virtual portion of Earth's surface – not a particular patch, but an

indeterminate aggregation that could be drawn from anyplace on the globe with the proper ecological characteristics (Wackernagel and Rees 1996:53 cited Dobson 2003:105). Thus it is practically impossible to disaggregate the contributions to a given footprint, to identify any actual places or – crucially – people involved. The virtual character of the footprint community entails that one *cannot* be aware of concrete others – one can only construct them in one's imagination, and only in terms of a fairly abstract theory (c.f. Dobson 2003:106). Hence one can think of one's obligation to them *only* in the thin terms of abstract moral principle.

By contrast, GC_2 rests on a thick civic bond, in which fellow community members are recognized not under a morally relevant description, but as specific, identifiable people. A person described by GC_2 experiences him- or herself as living in communal relationships with those people, prompting a feeling of membership in a particular, located community (c.f. Kemmis 1990:79–82). The relatively small scale associated with GC_2 allows us to foreground the notion of place in articulating it. I take place to be by definition a thick concept: it refers to the meaningfulness of a locale to its inhabitants (and others). Thus, the protection of place is the moral basis of the political project I associate with GC_2. To borrow a formulation from Daniel Kemmis, for GC_2 'politics emerges as the set of practices which enables these people to dwell together in this place' (1990:122).

Considerations regarding arena

By arena I mean the social sphere in which the activities of green citizenship are conducted. Although GC_1 and GC_2 are both exercised in the sphere of civil society, in rough terms I take them to emphasize action that is more private and more public in character, respectively. To make this contrast more precise I will borrow from Benjamin Constant's famous opposition between modern and ancient liberty.

For Constant, a distinctive feature of the ancient Greek world was a dedication to political self-determination, or 'political' liberty. Ancient political liberty involved a robust form of citizenship, in which citizens played a direct and on-going role in the management of their states' affairs. In modern societies, by contrast, private activities – commerce in particular – have assumed the central role in providing value to people's lives. Modern (or civil) liberty is the freedom people have to choose and engage in activities in the private sphere. But the rights Constant has in mind are not claims to state services, as in T.H. Marshall's broadly accepted formulation, whereby liberal citizenship incorporates the idea that citizens have rights to certain services from the state (Dobson 2003:41). Rather, they are protections against interventions by the state in individuals' private activities. The rationale Constant offers for rights of this sort – rights that protect civil liberties – is that, in a way that was not possible in ancient societies, it is possible for people in modern societies to gain human fulfilment in the private sphere: 'contentment, for most men, is now based on private relationships' (2003: 363–64).

I use this sense of 'modern' to characterize GC_1 as a form of citizenship in which individuals see their private activities as ways they can realize their public values regarding the environment (Bell 2005:190–191). This is not to propose that an individual's personal experience of nature counts as an instance of citizenship. Rather, it is to associate GC_1 with the notion that the environment has an essentially public character, so that actions that affect it have an inherently civic significance. Thus, actions in the private sphere – e.g. personal consumption and waste disposal – can be carried out with environmental goals in mind. This inclusion of private activities under the rubric of citizenship is indeed part of Dobson's aim; he offers a substantial and persuasive discussion of this point, concluding that 'some of the things we do in the private sphere have citizenly characteristics' (2003:54). Describing GC_1 as 'modern' is thus a way of highlighting the notion that the private sphere can be a site for activities which, by aiming to improve the (inherently public) environment, thereby count as examples of green citizenship.

What then would it mean to characterize GC_2 as 'ancient'? For Constant, the distinctive feature of ancient freedom was the opportunity it afforded citizens to participate in *governance*; for the ancients, liberty

'consisted in exercising collectively, but directly, several parts of the complete sovereignty' (1988:311).[5] He argues that one reason people under conditions of modernity seek modern over ancient liberty is that the vast scale of modern states makes meaningful participation in self-governance impossible. However, what we might call the 'modern system' for managing natural resources, in which general policies are formulated by distant officials and then implemented by agency personnel, has led to widespread dissatisfaction in local communities where resources are found (Sabatier et al. 2005:37–38).

Indeed, Weber's GREM can be seen as a reaction to precisely that institutional structure, motivated by a desire, among other things, to bring stakeholders – the people affected by decision-making – directly into the decision-making process. That is, GREM seeks to involve local people directly in the creation of rules by which they themselves will be bound, i.e. in self-governance. This does not, of course, constitute 'complete sovereignty'; it concerns only some aspects of the life of their communities, and, crucially, it is constrained by a larger framework of law and institutional authority. And note the 'modern' cast to these initiatives' 'ancient' character: GREM occupies space within civil society, in the middle ground between formal public institutions of government and the strictly private sphere, involving partnerships or alliances between a variety of private organizations and public agencies.

I have constructed GC_2 as the form of citizenship appropriate to GREM. One 'ancient' feature of GC_2 stems from the fact that typically GREM institutions carry out initiatives, e.g. habitat restoration projects, they have developed (Light, 2002: 167 ff.). Just as ancient citizenship did not involve simply attending the assembly, but also holding office, GC_2 encompasses the activity of directly providing service to the community. I call GC_2 'ancient' precisely to highlight the notion that it is exercised in a different social arena than GC_1. Specifically, GC_2 takes people beyond their respective private activities into a common forum shared with others across the community who have disparate interests and values. It helps to note that the activities of GC_1 can be thought of under the rubric of collective action; it grasps that an individual's private actions have political significance in virtue of the fact that when aggregated across society, private actions have public consequences. By contrast, the activities of GC_2 are not, in the same sense as with GC_1, one's *own* actions: they involve one's participation in a collaborative effort, with other citizens, on the joint project of community governance.

Complex green citizenship

An entirely reasonable response to the two models I have just sketched out is that although neither is evidently false, both are glaringly incomplete. I take it that both GC_1 and GC_2 have normatively appealing features, and both seem to capture some bit of descriptive truth about phenomena gathered under the rubric of green citizenship. The problem, of course, is that neither presents a full picture.[6]

Further, it can quite reasonably be asked whether the comparisons I have made between GC_1 and GC_2 are valid – indeed, whether the two versions of green citizenship can even be compared in a meaningful way. For, after all, the circumstances from which they are derived are strikingly different. I constructed GC_2 from Weber's case studies of the activities of people in small communities in rural areas whose (threatened) economies are based on natural resource extraction. I constructed GC_1 from Dobson's case for a 'post-cosmopolitan ecological citizenship'. Note that Dobson's picture of citizenship is itself a conceptual construction rather than a description of given activities. However, based on his suggestions, it is not hard to imagine the likely scenario for the practice of GC_1: residents of urbanized areas in the developed world would engage in GC_1 through their private consumption and waste disposal, and their participation in organizations active on environmental issues.

The deep differences between these two paradigms might challenge the idea that it is possible to consider them as instances of a single phenomenon, green citizenship. But it is, in fact, no wonder at all that green citizenship has such profoundly dissimilar manifestations. Our time offers a bewildering assortment of

options for political engagement. There is a vast array of state and civil-society institutions, providing a tremendous variety of opportunities for involvement; our sophisticated understanding of the aggregated impact of individual actions makes more and more of the private sphere a matter for political conceptualization. These considerations alone make it unsurprising that the term 'green citizenship' should cover such a range of activities. It is perhaps implausible that the term would *not* have so varied an extension when we reflect that environmental problems occur over different geographical scales, from wider (e.g. global climate change) to narrower (e.g. point-source pollution in a single watershed). The political response to problems of different scale will involve different institutions – and will thus demand different kinds of activities on the part of the people who wish to participate in them.

In sum, the source of the complexity I attribute to green citizenship is the intensely complex structure of contemporary political life. Acknowledging that there are many different types of activity reasonably classed together encourages us to embrace this rich diversity by endorsing a conception of green citizenship that foregrounds its complexity. The notion of complex green citizenship is based on the simple recognition that different kinds of political activities are possible and effective, in a word *appropriate*, in different contexts: green citizenship is complex precisely because different circumstances call for different kinds of responses.

With GC_1 and GC_2 the erstwhile green citizen has two broad patterns to follow, but is not always obvious which he or she should choose. The rural settings described by Weber, for example, make GC_2 seem like the appropriate form of green citizenship in those cases; for the urbanites envisioned by Dobson, GC_2 seems inappropriate but GC_1 entirely fitting. However, I do not think it is correct to understand the structure of complex green citizenship strictly in terms of location. The type and especially the scale of the environmental problem of concern also determines what form of green citizenship is called for. In general, wider scale problems evoke activities that look more like GC_1; narrower scale problems evoke GC_2. Thus, for example, individuals in a rural community who are concerned about global climate change would appropriately act in ways characteristic of GC_1, while city-dwellers concerned about pollution of a neighbourhood stream can productively act in ways characteristic of GC_2 (Light 2002:168–169).

But even within a movement addressing a given environmental problem, different participants are likely to employ different styles of citizenship. For example, while the leaders of a national movement to lower carbon emissions engage in robustly collaborative (GC_2-like) activities such as organizing mass rallies, other people who wish to take action but to limit their involvement engage in collective (GC_1-like) actions such as attending them. And, of course, given individuals, in light of their personal circumstances and commitments, can display both sorts of citizenship – participating intensively (GC_2) with fellow activists at some times in some campaigns and taking more individualized actions (GC_1) on other occasions on other issues.

Let me emphasize that I am not suggesting that we regard GC_1 and GC_2 as two species of a genus, 'green citizenship proper', which possesses some essential characteristic in virtue of which the two examples have their common identity. On this conception, seeing the full picture that neither presents alone would involve grasping the necessary and sufficient conditions of green citizenship, as if a fuller comprehension of the phenomenon comes when we reach an abstract definition in virtue of which we recognize diverse instances. The advantage of this picture would be its conceptual simplicity – its reduction of complexity. By contrast, I see the complexity of green citizenship as its essential characteristic.[7] The full picture is created not by a definition, but by an accumulation of genuinely diverse but relevantly similar cases – where the criterion of relevant similarity is constructed as the accumulation proceeds. We should, in other words, think of 'green citizenship' as a family resemblance term: it gathers together phenomena that are clearly distinguishable, but nonetheless related – like variations on a theme which cannot be identified apart from its articulation in a given set of circumstances. Green citizenship is complex, in my view, because different examples of it really are different. That is the reality I seek to theorize.

Complexity and judgment

Recognizing the complexity of green citizenship, however, does not entail there is nothing univocal to be said about it. In my view, the theoretical challenge posed by the diversity of activities associated with green citizenship is to understand how green citizens choose appropriately from among the possibilities for action their circumstances present. For reasons that will, I hope, become clear, I will not offer formulae linking a given type of circumstance to a given pattern of action. Instead I will offer some reflections on the topic of green political judgment. For, the notion of judgment suggests that what characterizes green citizenship is the ability to determine, given detailed information about the environmental problem one faces, as well as one's own personal situation, just what political activities are appropriate for one to engage in. Therefore, we should not place at the core of the idea of green citizenship the notion that green citizens will act in a determinate way. Rather, we should hold that green citizens are able to judge how to act appropriately, in light of their circumstances, to advance their environmental values.[8]

To better present my understanding of judgment I will review the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis*. *Phronesis* is traditionally translated as prudence, or practical wisdom, but it is always associated with judgment, specifically judgment regarding practical matters (Larmore 1987:19, Beiner, 1983:passim). What draws me to Aristotle's account of *phronesis* is his argument that it is squarely directed toward action, more specifically, action in response to the particularities of a situation.

> Nor is [*phronesis*] a knowledge of general principles only: it must also take account of particular facts, since it is concerned with action, and action deals with particular things. This is why men who are ignorant of general principles are sometimes more successful in action than others who know them: . . . men of experience are more successful than theorists. And [*phronesis*] is concerned with action, so one requires . . . knowledge of particular facts even more than knowledge of general principles. (1968: 345–347 (1141b14–22))

The clear connection between *phronesis* and politics (where political judgment is *phronesis* in the public realm) is based on the fact that politics is a matter of particulars. 'This is why', Aristotle says, 'it is only those persons who deal with particular facts who are spoken of as "taking part in politics", because it is only they who perform actions' (1968: 347 (1141b27)). Judgment, that is, involves the assessment of the specific circumstances, in light of the value commitments in play – e.g. to determine what are the prospects for green civic action in *this* situation. Speaking of judgment foregrounds the idea that finally what is at stake in green citizenship is the choice of an appropriate course of action from the complex array of available alternatives.

My proposal, note, is distinct from the emphasis given in recent environmental political theory to deliberative democracy. Undoubtedly the notions of judgment and deliberation are closely related: an account of deliberation contributes to our understanding of judgment, insofar as we think of judgment as the product of (or rather, perhaps, as responsive to) deliberation. But while deliberation is a process which can result in judgment, the notion of judgment I favor is more closely connected with the idea of action. It is not simply that I prefer the connotation of one term over the other; I believe they highlight importantly different things. The 'deliberative turn' in political philosophy was motivated in large part by a search for an alternative to preference aggregation as the basis for collective action, in particular because such aggregative techniques as cost-benefit analysis take preferences to be 'exogenously given'. Critics of CBA, and market-based models of politics generally, took up the banner of deliberative democracy not least because deliberation offered a process by which preferences could be transformed, not simply aggregated (see, e.g., Barry 1996:122 ff.). Thus, discussions of deliberation typically highlight its public character, since it is through the encounter with other deliberators that one may be prompted to reevaluate one's own commitments. Indeed, a line of thinking leading back to Aristotle but associated closely with Hannah Arendt emphasizes the publicity of political judgment (see Beiner 1983:8).

However, my emphasis on judgment is meant to highlight something else: the importance of particularity in political thinking.[9] As Aristotle notes, 'no one deliberates about . . . things that are not a means to some end,

and that end a good attainable by action' – but, again, 'action deals with particular things' (1968: 345 (1141b11)). That is, by emphasizing judgment I by no means want to discount the importance of deliberation – as an activity, or as a topic for theoretical discussion. Rather, I want to stress the importance of dealing with 'the facts on the ground'. Emphasizing judgment places a sensitivity to the world's messy complexity, and the ability to respond intelligently and in a principled way to it, at the center of our thinking about green citizenship.

Now a feature of accounts of judgment that foreground particularity is that they are characteristically negative – in Charles Larmore's words, 'We appear able to say only what judgment is *not*, not what it *is*' (1987:20). Thus judgment is described as *not* the mechanical application of a rule (Larmore 1987:19-21), or *not* the working through of an algorithm (Nussbaum 1990:73), or *not* the following of a blueprint (McDowell 1009:44). I admit, therefore, that the shift in focus from the multiplicity of political activities to the single faculty of judgment might seem glib, because it leaves the theory of green citizenship dissatisfyingly indefinite (c.f. Nussbaum 1990:93). Were we able to specify a rule, algorithm or blueprint for green citizenship we could give a substantive, content-laden answer to the question, 'What exactly must people do to be green citizens?' In my view, however, the most responsible answer is at the same time irreducibly vague: 'It depends on the circumstances'. We must simply accept the irony that an account which places particularity at the center of our understanding of judgment can have nothing particular to say about what any given judgment will hold.

But in lieu of specifying the actions of green citizens in advance, an account focused on judgment opens up a rich territory for green citizenship theory to explore. One question that presents itself is, do features of character or constellations of values dispose individuals to certain kinds of judgments, hence to certain patterns of political action: i.e. are individuals disposed to forms of citizenship closer to GC_1 or GC_2? Conversely, are the forms of citizenship self-reinforcing, so that once individuals begin to practice one or another form, their faculties are honed in a way that disposes them to continue with that form? Would such given or trained dispositions to engage in one form of citizenship constitute an obstacle to the management of the complexity I take as the fact of the matter for environmental politics? I am not able to address these questions here. Instead, I will conclude by considering how green citizenship theory can contribute to the cultivation of judgment, in particular by providing telling examples.

Judgment and green citizenship theory

To borrow a formulation John McDowell uses in a wider discussion of *phronesis*, 'The idea of the "blueprint" picture is that the content of a conception of [green citizenship] is in principle available, and assessable for correctness, in abstraction from the judgments or actions, in particular circumstances, that we want to see as applications of it' (McDowell 2009:44). Were the blueprint picture true, the task for green citizenship theory would be straightforward: sketch out a blueprint for green civic action (on the model of GC_1, GC_2, or something in between), assess it for correctness, and if correct offer it as a formula for being a green citizen. Citizenship would consist in implementing the plan, with judgment as the faculty that enabled citizens to apply the plan to their particular circumstances.

But this would be an instance of what judgment is not. As McDowell observes, Aristotle thinks of *phronesis* as 'a proper responsiveness to the details of situations – something . . . like, and even as a kind of, perception' (2009:44, see also Nussbaum 1990:74). Perception here is not the perception involved in seeing an object, but rather 'seeing that' it has a certain shape. The reference to perception suggests a more basic cognitive grasping than the quasi-deductive process suggested by the image of following a plan – something, indeed, that must occur *prior* to any process of deduction. Thus Larmore rejects the notion that moral judgment proceeds on the model of the practical syllogism, whereby an action is 'deduced' from premises regarding the moral duty we face in a given situation, and the best way to fulfill it. As he puts it, 'the exercise

of moral judgment *precedes* the inference from these premises; it consists in arriving at them in the first place' (1987:16 (my emphasis)). They are arrived at when the agent perceives that the given situation calls for that duty and that course of action, setting the stage for the decision to act in that way.

But placing the weight of the account of judgment onto notions like 'proper responsiveness' or 'perception' does little to reduce its indefiniteness. At a minimum, it begs for some details about those notions, for example, how people come to be able to recognize the relevant details of situations. In a moment I will conclude with some thoughts on that topic. Let me first observe that we can follow Larmore to suggest a modification to the blueprint picture: we can think of judgment as not simply a matter of following a plan, but rather as perceiving which plan is appropriate in the given circumstances (c.f. McDowell 2009:46).

On this modified picture we might still wonder about the source of the alternatives among which judgment chooses. The standard Aristotelian answer is experience. McDowell stresses the notion of habituation: it is because of their upbringing that people have the capacity to recognize, as well as the disposition to perform, the fitting (i.e. virtuous) actions in the situations they face. The centrality of habituation has a crucial implication for the role of theory, according to McDowell: 'For Aristotle, substantive ethical content is in place already, the product of habituation, before philosophical ethics begins' (2009:58). That is, theory assumes a broad consensus on substantive issues, which it serves to articulate and render intelligible (McDowell 2009:55-57). Theory is thus a descriptive enterprise; it serves to help people better understand what they already know. In the terms of the (modified) blueprint picture, theory can articulate the various plans that a person's upbringing has disposed him or her to act on in accordance with the circumstances.

McDowell's observation points out the need for caution in applying Aristotle's account of *phronesis* to green citizenship. Habituation makes sense in his discussion because Aristotle was considering a relatively small-scale society with a relatively unified consensus on a vision of the good life as a whole. But as Alasdair MacIntyre reminds us, it is a mistake to deploy wholesale an apparatus of moral thinking whose meaning is rooted in a defunct social context (1981:236). It seems uncontentious to hold that, in the large, modern societies that advocates of green citizenship actually inhabit, there is no common vision of the good life, and indeed no consensus on the place of green among other values. I cannot defend this claim at length here; among many examples that make it plausible are the evident lack of social agreement over the proper trade-off between economic growth and environmental concerns, and disagreements over whether commitment to the environment demands a reconfiguration of society into small, frugal eco-communities, or instead a program of technological modernization that would allow for current levels of consumption. My strong intuition, therefore, is that it is not a promising venture for green citizenship theory to presume some actual consensus on a green version of the good life, inculcated by habituation in existing practices, and to articulate those aspects of it that highlight political participation.[10]

But that is not to say that we cannot use Aristotle's account as a model, drawing on useful features. First, we can treat green citizenship as the object of a delimited version of *phronesis* – delimited in the sense that it is not aimed at the good life as a whole. Then, we can characterize it as involving the perception of which plan for political action (by analogy to which virtue, in Aristotle's account) is called for in the given circumstances. The fact that these plans are not furnished by habituation opens up a role for theory that is perhaps more creative than Aristotle's own project of describing an existing practice.[11] Unlike the original blueprint picture, which aimed at a single 'correct' plan of action, we can now envision a more pluralistic role for green citizenship theory – one more in keeping with the complexity I take as the fact of the matter about the subject. The task for theory, on this view, is to provide a variety of blueprints, suited to a range of circumstances, and to offer them as candidates for civic action. Such theoretical articulations can stem from conceptual speculation or from generalizations based on particular cases. Indeed, my articulations of GC_1 and GC_2 above emerged, respectively, in those two ways. The idea here is not, of course, to present one course of

action as the correct one. For, on this view, a person acts as a citizen precisely through making the judgment about which course of action to take.

But is presenting alternatives all that green citizenship theory can do to support green citizenship? Can it contribute more directly to the cultivation of the capacity of judgment itself? With these questions we return to the topic we left a moment ago. For, if the core of judgment is a kind of perception or responsiveness, we are led to ask how theory might improve perception, how it can make people more properly responsive to their situations. Martha Nussbaum supplies the basis for a proposal: 'The Aristotelian . . . look[s] for instruction to exemplary, experienced models of practical wisdom' (1990:84-85). The way to cultivate judgment, that is, is with good examples. Thus, I conclude with a call for case studies of the good exercise of green political judgment.

Examples can be gathered from observation of existing practices, or created through the exercise of imagination. What would suit them to the task of training citizens is that they focused on the activity of judging. An instructive example would take its readers into the points of view of people making decisions – in order to give readers the sense of how those people perceived their circumstances. Thus it would treat the formal or informal institutional structure in which the people operated primarily in terms of their experience of making the judgments that institution gave them the opportunity to make. Altogether, a rich set of case studies would have the effect of answering the charge of indefiniteness, considered above, by showing in detail what is involved in the practice of green citizenship. As Nussbaum puts it, 'the content of rational choice must be supplied by nothing less messy than experience and stories of experience' (1990:74).

Just how would examples provided by case studies serve to enhance judgment? Larmore sees examples as the grounds for reasoned decision; he characterizes judgment as 'responding with reasons to the particularity of a given situation' (1987:20). Thus, certain features of our circumstances make us think that a given course of action is appropriate. But what is the basis of that response? Don't we need a reason for thinking that those features prompt that action? For Larmore 'this question wrongly supposes that to have reasons for a belief I must have reasons for those reasons. Reasons must come to an end somewhere . . .. The importance of moral examples . . . lies in their suitability as just such reasons, since they exemplify the exercise of moral judgment' (1987:8). That is, an example functions like a reason – as the basis – for seeing that a given feature of one's circumstances prompts a given action: it serves as a model of what it is to make a judgment in the given situation. By functioning as a pattern for imitation it can guide the person who seeks to make a judgment in a situation that is relevantly similar. Through exposure to fuller, more realistic examples, the person comes to appreciate the complicated ways given types of circumstances both do and do not render given types of action appropriate. A rich store of detailed case studies thus helps people move from simple imitation of models to the considered emulation of exemplars of good judgment.

Because the enterprise of green citizenship theory is motivated by normative commitments, let me stress that the case studies I envision could be frankly evaluative, in at least three ways. First, they could attempt to direct the development of judgment by explicitly evaluating the responsiveness of the people they describe to their circumstances – not excluding an evaluation of their emotional responses (Nussbaum 1990:78-79). For example, people's love for or indifference to the beauty of a landscape can be considered as a matter of their perception of factors relevant to green political action. Second, case studies could evaluate institutions by commenting on the extent to which they encouraged or frustrated responsiveness, for example, by encouraging or frustrating a full consideration of what features of the circumstances counted as relevant to the decision at hand. Here is a place where an understanding of citizenship in general enters into the understanding of green citizenship, since features might be identified as relevant by reference to values that are not specifically environmental, but rather reflect other civic concerns. And third, case studies could evaluate the content of judgments made in the situation described. They could articulate how the actions

chosen were or were not appropriate to the circumstances, or indeed argue that actions the participants in the situation did not choose would have been more fitting.

Finally, note that case studies do not simply provide readers a vicarious experience, which trains their judgment by enabling them to imagine themselves in the situation of the people described. Working through a case study is itself an experience which can help train judgment. This is the role that Nussbaum sees for literature as a mode of moral thinking: 'We turn to stories of practical wisdom, both for representations of fine attention, and in order to be formed ourselves, as readers, into just such attentive and discriminating beings' (1990:97). Just as novels can lead their readers through a process of close observation of circumstances, we can imagine case studies written in a way that rehearses the process of perception. Such a body of work would convey to its readers the theoretical reflection on experience that is, on the Aristotelian view, the proper basis of education. It could, I hope, accomplish the task of cultivating judgment, by giving its readers practice at judging.

Notes

[1] For a discussion of the revival of interest in citizenship in political theory generally, see Kymlicka and Norman (1994).

[2] I will not, however, explore the further layer of complexity presented by the recognition that green citizens likely have a range of civic values, and certainly face a variety of civic imperatives. I do not consider the question of what it might mean to apply a green priority scheme to plural values, nor do I seek to reconceptualize citizenship as such in a way that internally binds green values to the definition of the citizen. Rather, I focus on the situation of people who seek to act in the political system (broadly construed) precisely to address their environmental concerns. I start from the question they might ask, namely, what sort of political action is best suited to that goal.

[3] Weber's GREM is reminiscent of the perhaps more familiar notion of civic environmentalism described by Shutkin (2000) and John (2004). For a discussion of civic environmentalism see Ageyman and Evans (2005:188–192).

[4] For an overview of the 'thick/thin' distinction see O'Neill (2007:134-39).

[5] C.f. Agyeman and Evans (2006), who argue for a closer connection between the themes of citizenship and governance.

[6] Even if they jointly conveyed a relatively complete picture of green citizenship, I do not claim that that would be a complete picture of citizenship as such. The question of how green citizenship stands in relation to, on the one hand, political action motivated by other specific moral concerns and, on the other, a more generalized account of membership in a political community, is well beyond the scope of this essay.

[7] For that matter, though I am restricting my discussion to green citizenship, I suspect that it would be useful to consider citizenship as such as essentially complex, i.e. not as some determinate condition, but instead as a collection of related but distinct activities.

[8] C.f. Norton (2005: 454 ff.) on 'multiscalar thinking' and Szerszynski (2006:94–95) on 'wayfinding'. In line with the previous note's suggestion, I also suspect that it would be useful to approach citizenship as such in terms of judgment, i.e. of choosing appropriate actions to advance values in given circumstances—where there is the further level of complexity created by the need to balance the variety of values relevant to civic life. Green political theory can address people who consider themselves citizens as such, i.e. not as specifically motivated by environmental values, by arguing for a

reconciliation of values that gives due weight to environmental concerns, e.g. by showing how sustainability would contribute to social justice.

[9] My view has affinities with Dancy's (2004) 'particularist' theory of moral reasoning, in that his claim that a reason for action in some circumstances is not a reason in other circumstances is likely true in the case of green politics.

[10] Though there is a crucial role for the speculative enterprise of *imagining* communities for which that venture would make sense.

[11] Though green citizenship theory can profitably draw on ideas about citizenship more generally into which, arguably, many people do in fact continue to be habituated.

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