Wildflower mural in Un

ion City by Mona Caron.   PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MONA CARON.

MIRIAM GREENBERG

What on Earth Is Sustainable?

Toward critical sustainability studies

Sustainability is a futuristic, even utopian, project *par excellence*. As with all utopian projects, sustainability offers a vision of the future to galvanize us to imagine our world otherwise and engage in the work necessary to change it.

Sustainability asks us to define those things of greatest value in our present that ought to be sustained in order to achieve this utopian vision of the future. Simultaneously, it forces us to consider those things that are not of value, and should not be sustained. Sustainability is thus a striking example of the power and limits of utopian ideals.

This dream of a sustainable future, in all its complexity is deeply rooted in California. Sustainability is now a global discourse. But California has played an out-sized role over the last century in promoting the discourse, as well as in embodying sustainability in the eyes of the world. This has especially been the case in California's most famous green zone, the Bay Area, which has been at the forefront of eco-oriented lifestyles, cultural experiments, and politics for over a half century.[1]

Indeed, the Bay Area is often imagined as the heartland of "ecotopia." Ernest Callenbach coined the term in his 1975 cult novel of the same name, in which an Edenic Northern California, with San Francisco as its capital and the Sierra Nevada as its defensible border, has seceded from the rest of the nation. *Ecotopia* helped establish a futurist mythos in which sustainability is identifiably Californian, and California itself becomes less a place than an ideal—one that others around the world can only dream of attaining.[2]

This ecotopian vision has had remarkably wide and enduring influence. Given the global cultural, media, and economic influence of California, as well as the dramatic natural attributes of the West Coast, sustainability projects hatched in the Golden State have had something of a branding advantage.[3] Green Californian vistas have been reimagined through advertising, product design, regional vision plans, lifestyle magazines, architectural experiments, films, and literature. They have also had a profound impact on modern, eco-oriented organizations and social movements—from the Sierra Club to the alternative food movement—that remain associated with the state's unique landscape and supposedly unique state of mind.

This has had the effect of reifying a dominant vision of sustainability, providing authentically "Californian" images, experiences, faces, and products to ground this inherently abstract notion, and has thereby solidified the state's reputation—and in particular iconic cities, regions, and landscapes—as the spatial and cultural embodiments of our sustainable future. California, and especially Northern California, have become a sustainable mecca to make pilgrimage to, gain inspiration from, and seek to emulate.

If Northern California is cast as the capital of our sustainable imaginary, Southern California is its inverse: a dystopian nightmare of sprawl, smog, and reckless over-consumption. *Ecotopia*'s promised land was based on a regional binary of North/South, with the dividing line drawn somewhere below San Jose. The Central Valley, meanwhile, is erased altogether. As explored through Kristin Miller's photo essay in this volume, this binary has been rooted in, and an inspiration for, science fiction fantasies of film, television, and literature since the 1960s, preoccupied as this genre has been with the prospect of imminent environmental and social collapse.

To scholars of utopia, this juxtaposition of expansive dreams and rigid boundaries will be familiar. For as with all utopian projects, visions of sustainability are both vitally hopeful and frought with contradictions. Collective "wish images" of our idealized future have long been presented as universal and all-inclusive across lines of class, race, and geography, while also drawing boundaries that exclude. They have been portrayed as monolithic and consensual, while necessarily being shaped by multiple and often competing imaginings. And while appearing as visions of an ideal future world, these visions are inevitably cobbled together from past experiences and ways of knowing, which themselves go unacknowledged.[4]

In everyday life, these contradictions lead to real dilemmas for all of us working in the field of sustainability—as teachers, scholars, practitioners, activists, and citizens. As urgent as our current situation is, and as pressing as our desire is to push for a sustainable future now, if we are to overcome these dilemmas we first need to step back and ask some very basic questions about the nature of our goal. Namely, what is to be sustained and what is not? And who gets to choose and who does not?

Upon trying to answer these simple questions, one soon realizes the inherently political nature of the pursuit of

Mural in Noe Valley, San Francisco by Mona Caron. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MONA CARON.

sustainability. The complexity of these politics assert themselves even though—perhaps especially because—sustainability's adherents and promoters tend to view and present the concept as so common sense and unquestionably good as to be "post-political."[5] This is an alluring proposition—who doesn't want to sustain something, and who doesn't want their ideal future to be easily achieved? Moreover, any argument against sustainability can seem like one for the forces of the apocalypse. Yet, seeking answers to these questions, one sees that in fact sustainability is neither simple nor singular. Rather, multiple sustainabilities are in circulation, and in competition. What's more, these different versions reflect the particular values of the individuals, communities, industries, cities, nations, and so on, that are in position to define the term. Hence, the sustainable future we seek to build depends entirely upon whose sustainability we are talking about.

Critical Sustainabilities

This past year I convened an interdisciplinary group of University of California faculty and graduate students, all of whose work is concerned in different ways with the contemporary dilemmas of sustainability in California.[6] Our research project—called "critical sustainabilities"—is based on the premise that to keep alive and advance toward dreams of a sustainable future, it is first necessary to grapple with underlying tensions and contradictions of the term—in terms of inclusion and exclusion, of diversity and contestation, and of the role of history and geography in shaping its divergent meanings. We take a dialectical approach to our research, arguing that when we engage with contradictions critically and creatively they can be generative, and indeed that meaningful progress toward a sustainable future won't happen unless we do.

One of the first things we considered was the role of competing values in the construction of multiple sustainability discourses. Discourse operates through the forging of seemingly natural linkages—or articulations—between values and people, places, and things.[7] In the case of "sustainability," a normative concept that makes claims on what should be sustained, arguments are forged with particular environments imagined as having the greatest value and, therefore, worthy of sustaining. This might be the natural environment of biological habitats and ecosystems; the cultural environment of human creation and experience; the political economic environment of social relations of class, power, and access to resources; or the competitive

The sustainable future we seek to build depends entirely upon whose sustainability we are talking about.

> It is a generative fantasy—merging the environmental with the futuristic, the earthy with the high tech.

environment for capital, which privileges the logics and needs of the market.

We believe there is no better place for this critical, creative engagement with the competing values of sustainability than here in California. From the *Whole Earth Catalogue* to Google Green, the organics movement to "locavore" cuisine, "whole architecture" to "eco-city" planning, and *Sunset* to *Dwell* magazines—all of which were born in the state— it is possible to trace California's role in the genealogy of a dominant sustainability discourse and aesthetics, one bridging the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s with the tech and consumer culture of the current era.[8] Upon closer analysis of iconic figures associated with different eras, this genealogy reveals a significant value shift. For California's countercultural eco-gurus of the sixties— mostly young, white, middle-class men living off the grid—the ecotopian future was earthy, sexually liberated, and cybernetically linked. Here the natural environment, aided by ingenious, do-it-yourself technology, would nourish all human needs—and render political questions of class and power, race and gender, obsolete. Today's generation of eco-gurus are still mostly white, male, and young, though more commonly to be found in the 1 percent and working in Silicon Valley and similar tech glens around the world. For them ecotopian principles are still upheld, and *Whole Earth Catalogs*, venerated as an analog precursor to the Web—as evident by their frequent sightings on desks and boardroom walls, from Facebook to Google. Yet for this eco-sensitive creative class, facing an age of mounting crisis and uncertainty, "sustainability" has become a strategic branding device more than an ideal. It has been instrumentalized to sustain the competitive environment for capital. In the process, a new, market-oriented variant of eco-modernism—embodied in Silicon Valley's tech companies, brands, and worker habitats—has become one of today's dominant sustainability discourses, in California and beyond.

And yet, dominant as market-oriented sustainability may be, it is not alone in the universe. Rather it exists in competition and often outright conflict with other sustainabilities that value a different kind of environment. In what follows, I will lay out three other, equally Californian ways of thinking about our sustainable future, including: eco-oriented sustainabilities privileging biological nature, vernacular sustainabilities privileging cultural and livelihood needs, and justice-oriented sustainabilities seeking an environment of economic and racial equity. By critically analyzing these different discourses of sustainability, my goal, and that of our critical sustainabilities group, is to destabilize monolithic understandings of the term, as well as to highlight the importance of articulating the forms of sustainability we might collectively seek.

Eco-Oriented Sustainabilities

What are the roots of our ecotopian longings? Since the late nineteenth century, the California landscape has figured among the most iconic spaces in the modern American environmental imagination—a history that has heavily shaped eco-centered sustainability discourses in the state and beyond. One root of this discourse is the California pastoral tradition as pictured on postcards and fruit crates, view-books and booster literature, and since the 1960s, in the pages of lifestyle magazines such as *Sunset* and *Dwell*. Here emphasis has been placed on the effortlessness and classlessness of the "California lifestyle," furnished by bountiful harvests untouched by the hand of labor—and powerfully critiqued by John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath* and Don Mitchell in the *Lie of Land*.[9] Another root is that of the California wilderness tradition. Here we see the veneration of the sublime, natural qualities of western landscapes when contrasted with the "fallen," more civilized East. It was this apotheosis, found in the upper meadows of Yosemite Valley, that inspired John Muir, "flower child of the Gilded Age," to launch the modern conservation, national parks, and Sierra Club movements.[10] Yet this romantic flight from history both legitimized and excluded from view the eviction of native peoples and exploitation of generations of farm laborers, both of which were preconditions for the production of California's nature as both promised land and rightful prize of manifest destiny. Subsequent understandings of eco-oriented sustainability had to grapple

with these early imaginings of California's pastoral and wild landscapes, and their underlying, unacknowledged relations of power.
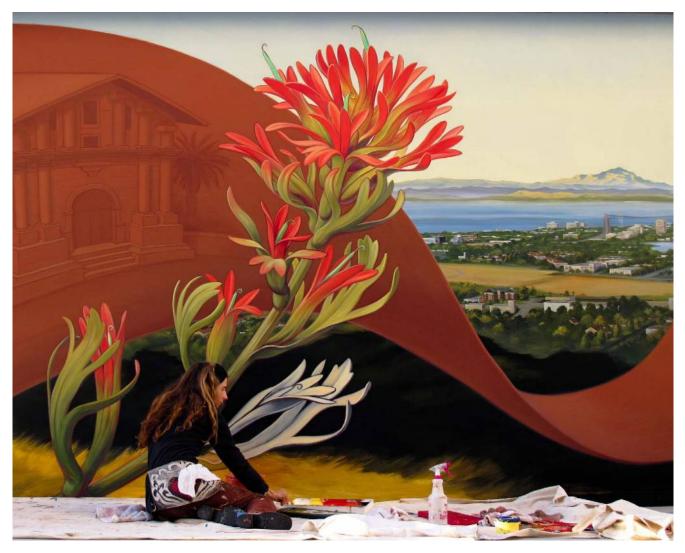
These same landscapes became a mecca for successive generations of ecotopian seekers, from the collective farmers of the 1930s to the back-to-the-land counterculture of the late 1960s and 1970s. For the latter era, key texts such as the *Whole Earth Catalogue,* launched by entrepreneur and visionary Stewart Brand, and key sites such as the Esalen retreat on the Big Sur coast, became iconic. Brand's "whole systems" framework—influenced by anthropologist Gregory Bateson—in which all human and nonhuman animals, cultural and market systems, co-evolved with one another on "Spaceship Earth," and were kept in planetary balance through cybernetic regulation—became the closest thing to a cosmology for the era.[11] California's sublime terrain now promised personal liberation and enlightenment, while helping to reify an individualist, lifestyle-oriented stance.

Transformative change, it was imagined, happened through finding "oneness" with nature, technology, and each other, rather than through organizing to build power through contentious social movements.

UC Davis design historian Simon Sadler has analyzed the powerfully creative impact of these ideas on California's "whole architecture" movement—the first and still most recognized movement in sustainable building practice. The movement was pioneered in the 1970s by Sim Van Der Ryn, a UC Berkeley professor, Jerry Brown's state architect, during his first stint as governor, and another acolyte, with Brand, of Bateson's co-evolutionary theory.[12] Van Der Ryn's work was epitomized by the landmark Bateson state office building in Sacramento, which anticipated a built environment using recycled energy, carefully regulated temperature, and spaces designed for optimal social interaction. Richard Register extended this sensibility into the urban planning realm through "eco-city"

San Francisco utility box painted by Mona Caron. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MONA CARON.

El Camino mural in Hillsdale by Mona Caron. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MONA CARON.

design, introduced in his small, ground-breaking book, *Eco-City Berkeley*.[13] Here the hippie capital's future urban grid was symbiotically interwoven with its ecosystem, enabling buildings, creeks, and roads to harmoniously sustain both human and nonhuman life. For decades hence, and as Sadler notes, this eco-vanguard helped propagate what the great literary critic Raymond Williams called a "structure of feeling": do-it-yourself innovation, anti-institutional informality, and in the realm of design, the playful interaction between high and low tech, the futuristic and the premodern.[14]

Together with romantic visions of pastoral and wild California, this tech-futurism came to infuse a particularly Californian strain of eco-oriented sustainability discourse and politics. In addition to the state's role as national incubator for environmental organizations and design movements, this discourse influenced California's role as pioneer in environmental policy—from the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 to the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006—as well as the University of California's support for some of the nation's first programs in environmental studies. Alongside a well-endowed, post–World War II public sector, this idealistic, iconoclastic image contributed to California's ability to attract future generations of visionaries, who would go on to create "whole systems" of their own—from Apple Computers in the late 1970s to Facebook and Google in the 2000s.

Vernacular Sustainabilities

Despite its promise of universality, much remains excluded from ecotopian visions of our sustainable future. This includes quotidian yet still unnamed forms of sustainability, or what might be called vernacular sustainabilities. Throughout history, people have depended upon sustainable ways of living and working with nature—from architecture, to agriculture, to transportation—that enabled them to earn a living and express their culture while preserving a necessary degree of ecological balance. While involving some market exchange, these forms tend to be based in what might be thought of as pre-capitalist, subsistence, or collectivist economic models—for example, family business, barter, and the informal or underground economy. As practiced by indigenous peoples, immigrant groups, rural-to-urban migrants, and the rural and urban poor, they are labor-intensive strategies that often emerge more out of necessity and tradition than theory or ideology. They are passed down orally and through collective memory, and recorded, if at all, through ethnographic accounts. Therefore, they tend not to rise to the level of formal discourse, and usually are not called "sustainability" as such. Nonetheless, they are among the most common forms of actually-existing sustainability, historically and in the present, in California and elsewhere.

Thus successive waves of immigrants, refugees, and internal migrants have found California's soil and climate well suited to sustaining traditional farming practices, and with them, lifeways. This has included Portuguese and Italian grape growers in Napa; Japanese flower cultivators in the East Bay; socialist Jewish chicken farmers in Petaluma; Sikh peach and almond growers in the Central Valley; and South East Asians (Hmong, Vietnamese, and others) working throughout the state, cultivating Chinese long beans, sugar peas, lemongrass, bitter melon, and bok choy. Dustbowl-era migrants and successive waves of immigrants from the Philippines, Mexico, and Central America largely toiled on the farms of others. African American migrants from the American South were largely incorporated into other, non-agricultural industries. These groups have also long cultivated crops in California's fertile backyards and urban commons.

Another vernacular example is found in the everyday survival tactics of low-income people living in California's unincorporated farming towns, inner-cities, and sprawling suburbs. Here services are limited, and distances between home, work, and affordable shopping are vast. In addition to simply consuming less, these communities have designed innovative systems of van-pooling, common kitchens, and second-hand stores. As a result, low-income communities have a smaller carbon footprint than do affluent Californians—even those buying hybrid cars and shopping at organic markets. Yet the practices of the former—emphasizing cultural and economic continuity over that of soils and species—rarely count as "sustainable."[15]

Justice-Oriented Sustainabilities

In the 1980s, the environmental justice movement emerged in the United States as a critique of what was perceived to be a largely white, middle class, and anti-urban mainstream environmental movement that excluded questions of race, class, and gender from its politics. Rooted in the discourse of civil rights, environmental justice activists privileged the human environment and with it issues of political economy, cultural survival, and social justice. Early environmental justice theorist Giovanna di Chiro presented people of color—with only some irony—as "endangered species" in the face of the public health crises.[16] This was due to the disproportionate environmental risks faced by communities of people of color, most notoriously the siting of toxic facilities on devalued lands disproportionately inhabited by the poor and nonwhite. This focus on race and hazard mitigation expanded in the 1990s to include concern for social class and environmental equity, as movements for

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> ## "Ecotopianism" has been tone-deaf to issues of power and difference.

"transportation justice" and "food justice" became prevalent in California and elsewhere.

California has played a key role in the environmental justice movement, in part due to role as a stronghold of "ecotopianism" that has been tone-deaf to issues of power and difference, but which has infused mainstream environmentalism more broadly. This can be seen in Callenbach's separatist Eden, in which black people self-segregated themselves in a grittier and less green "Soul City," leaving white, middle-class Ecotopians with all the resources and decision-making power. It can be found in Register's early eco-city Berkeley experiments, in which the sustainability needs of poor and low-income residents went largely unmentioned. Similarly, even very progressive California environmental policy often avoids language of social equity or class. Local policy that does, like "smart growth," typically defines it narrowly, limiting subsidies for nonmarket rate residents to civil sector workers like teachers and police.[17] Therefore, California's environmental justice organizations emerged in the heart of mainstream environmentalism. Often in collaboration with California's more radical green groups, they have increasingly entered into debates with established environmental movements and policy proposals, as they work to include their issues and communities in definitions of sustainability.

A case in point is food justice, which has developed something of a national center in low income and majority nonwhite cities of the Bay Area such as Oakland, East Palo Alto, and San Jose, where urban agricultural movements are now thriving. These movements emerged alongside of and were influenced by the "alternative food movement"—which has been mainly white and middle class, headquartered in Berkeley and San Francisco, and associated with California cuisine and locavore systems of distinction. Food justice advocates emphasize questions of equity, access, and diversity, and so often find themselves at odds with those concerned primarily with sustainable organic agriculture and consumption.[18]

Yet, as UC-Santa Cruz geographer Julie Guthman notes, while bringing different demographics and products to farmers markets, the movement pursues many of the same, relatively narrow sustainability goals as alternative food.[19] This includes a do-it-yourself focus on localism and small-scale farming, rather than on broader injustices within the California food system such as workers' exposure to toxic chemicals, chronically low wages, and expanding informal settlements in the agricultural belts of the Central Valley and Imperial Valleys—where the most rapid urbanization in the state is occurring.

Perhaps not surprisingly, environmental justice outside of the Bay Area—in eco-dystopian Southern California and the Central Valley—has been more linked to the labor movement and more engaged in farm worker and environmental health issues.[20] In Southern California, right-to-the-city movements that take up questions of the environment—like the Bus Riders Union and the Clean & Safe Ports campaign—have devised innovative strategies for low-income sustainability organizing around broader "spatial justice" issues.[21] A more socially oriented notion of *sustenabilidad* originating in Latin American cities has also found fertile ground in immigrant Los Angeles. One example is the ever-popular, Bogota-born CicLAvia movement currently remapping LA for bike travel linked to rapid transit, and taking over city streets for massive events. Meanwhile, throughout the state, activists and progressive planners increasingly demand that ecotopian and social justice categories be linked through regional notions of "just sustainability" encompassing public health, housing, urban density, and open space.[22] These challenges to the meaning of sustainability highlight its broader relevance for our urbanizing planet—and are also very much in the freewheeling California spirit.
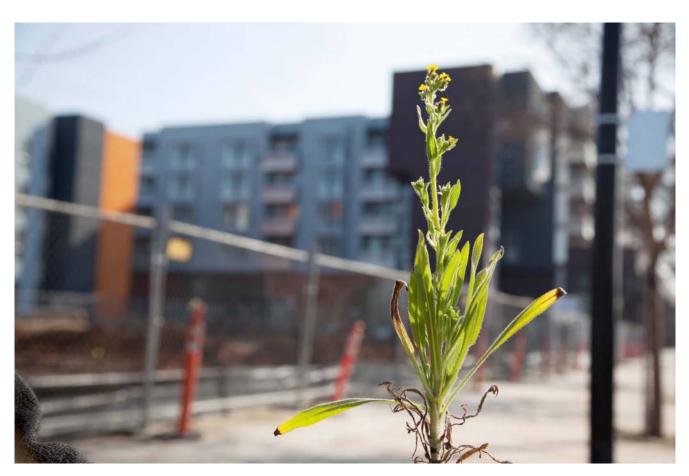
Market-Oriented Sustainabilities

Finally, over the last two decades the concept of "sustainability" has gone corporate, in California as elsewhere. This may seem a remarkable development for a concept that, as we've seen, was first deployed by countercultural and grassroots groups as a challenge to the status quo. Yet with notable exceptions, the concept is now embraced by the powers that be, from businesses to the political establishment, and has become a central tenet of a reigning "green capitalism."

Similarly, the use of sustainability discourse has exploded among "urban growth machines"—coalitions of local developers and business elites, aligned with entrepreneurial city government, who see place as a commodity, and growth in real estate value as an end in itself. These coalitions long treated any environmental impact of growth as externalities, but now see sustainability as internal to growth.[24] Facing real pressures of environmental strain and recognizing the unmatched ability of "sustainability" to communicate the future-proof credentials of a city, company, or product; urban and corporate managers realize they will lose their competitive edge if they don't incorporate sustainability in their brand.[25]

Once again, California appears at the vanguard. A simple search for "sustainability" in commercial image banks calls forth iconic California landscapes—from poppy-blanketed coastal slopes to the verdant wind farms of the Altamont Pass.[26] Apple's "Designed in California" campaign articulates the company's reputation for innovation, beauty, and transcendence with that of the state. Berkeley-like "eco-city" motifs pop up in the most rapidly urbanizing regions of Asia and the Middle East, while taking a massive, modernist, and upscale form that Richard Register would scarcely recognize.[27] These echoes are now returning to California. A Chinese investment bank and global developer recently sought to build a luxury Asian-style eco-city on Treasure Island in the San Francisco Bay. The project's financial fate remains undecided. But the plan itself reveals the cachet of California's ecotopian ideals on the global market, and the surprising effect of seeing them return from abroad transformed, a generation later, to their point of origin.

Meanwhile, should this emerald island be built, it would be the symbolic gateway to far larger transformation of the urban landscape: the redevelopment of Bayview Hunters

Wildflower in Union City. PHOTOGRAPH BY MONA CARON.

Whose utopia are we building toward?

Point, and the broader sustainable "smart growth" retrofit for all of southeastern San Francisco, from China Basin to the Mission. The plan is projected to build 85 percent market-rate green housing for 92,000 new residents, with 73,000 cars, fundamentally altering this semi-industrial, majority low-income, peri-urban neighborhood.

The role of the state is key. As in other city-regions throughout California, San Francisco's market-oriented plan represents an effort to comply with the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, also known as SB 375. Hailed as the latest example of California's role as environmental trendsetter, the legislation mandates that regional planning boards devise land-use plans for now through 2040 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15 percent. Yet it devolves responsibility for this reduction to cash-strapped localities, while avoiding regulation or taxation of relevant industries—from the oil, gas, and auto industries, to real estate. [28] At the same time SB375 passed, the state legislature outlawed any effective anti-displacement laws that local governments can enact—rent controls on vacant apartments, commercial rent control, and eviction protections—and Governor Brown shuttered the state's redevelopment agencies, historically the only reliable source of money for affordable housing at the local level. By regional planners' own estimates, the San Francisco plan would lead to 36 percent displacement of the current population of southeastern San Francisco, which is majority low income and people of color, including from Bayview Hunters Point, the city's last remaining predominantly African American neighborhood.[29] Particularly "smart" developments would be eligible for complete waivers from CEQA, lifting environmental impact restrictions for building in sensitive baylands or tearing down historic buildings. For investors and developers, the plans offer a remarkable opportunity to develop entire neighborhoods on prized waterfront land while reaping tax credits and winning California's brand-enhancing imprimatur. Thus, the promise of emissions reductions may come at the expense of social, cultural, and ecological values that are not so easily marked.

Such strategic use of landscape is neither new nor exclusively Californian, of course. As UC Berkeley landscape design scholar Louise Mozingo has shown in her book *Pastoral Capitalism*, the captains of American business, together with local real estate developers and regional planning bodies, have long created elaborate "natural" settings for suburban corporate campuses, estates, and office parks, in hopes of ennobling their enterprises, inspiring white collar workers, and quelling dissent.[30] Nonetheless, combining the California pastoral tradition with the state's reputation for idealism and innovation, Silicon Valley has taken this design strategy to new levels. Googleplex, Facebook, and the new Apple headquarters, all of which will exacerbate sprawl, are said to be the most famous green office buildings in the world today—with the latter, rendered as a spaceship amidst a vast oak forest, imagined to be "the greenest building ever."[31] Google's environmental amenities are particularly renowned, spawning the "Google Green" neologism. From corporate bikes and organic cafeterias to free employee shuttles, all major Silicon Valley tech firms now copy the approach. Today an armada of unmarked corporate buses cover twice the mileage of under-funded public bus systems to shuttle tech workers from the outer reaches of the Bay Area to their jobs in the valley. A map of their routes made national news and became an instant symbol of the peculiar power dynamics and socio-spatial effects of elite-driven sustainability planning.

This is not to argue that the corporate embrace of sustainability produces no social benefits—oft-cited benefits include parks, philanthropy, and new technology itself—but it is to urge that we recognize their costs. Business leaders celebrate sustainability not as end in itself, but as a market strategy, seeking above all to sustain the competitive environment for capital. Absent countervailing force from the state or social movements, the unchecked growth of such market-oriented sustainability may render less profitable values—from community gardens to public transit to affordable housing—increasingly unsustainable.

Whose Sustainability?

While multiple forms of sustainability coexist and compete, they do not do so on an even playing field. Market-oriented sustainability has become dominant, and a new common sense. Aiding and naturalizing its ascendance has been its

association with ecotopian California landscapes: the wild, yurt-dotted hillsides of the Central Coast; the organic food-worlds of San Francisco; and the verdant corporate campuses of Silicon Valley. It is a generative fantasy—merging the environmental with the futuristic, the earthy with the high tech. Yet too often erased and even aided by this vision is the race and class-divided, sprawled, and crisis-prone reality of our state. A critical challenge facing a new generation of environmental scholars, activists, and practitioners will be to question this common sense. What do we seek to sustain? Whose utopia are we building toward? There is no better place to begin facing this challenge than right here in the Golden State. **B**

Notes:

1. Richard Walker, *The Country in the City: The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

2. For example, see Abraham F. Lowenthal, *Global California: Rising to the Cosmopolitan Challenge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009) and the program in Global Californian Studies at UC San Diego: http://globalcalifornia.ucsd.edu/.

3. Ernest Callenbach, *Ecotopia* (Berkeley: Bantam Tree Books, 1975).

4. My approach to the study of utopian ideas is particularly influenced by Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*. For analysis of Benjamin's concept of dialectical "wish images," see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), chap. 5. For critical theories of utopia, see David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) and Frederick Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2005).

5. On the "post-political" uses of sustainability discourse, see Erik Swyngedouw, "The Antinomies of the Postpolitical City: In Search of a Democratic Politics of Environmental Production," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33 (2009): no. 3, 601–620; and Melissa Checker, "Wiped Out by the Greenwave: Environmental Gentrification and the Paradoxical Politics of Urban Sustainability," *City and Society* 23 (2011): no. 2, 210–229.

6. I am indebted to all the members of the Critical Sustainabilities Working Group, whose contributions to our workshops have informed my thinking on these issues. Members include: Lindsey Dillon, Michelle Glowa, Julie Guthman, Meenoo Kohli, Kristin Miller, Louise Mozingo, Tracy Perkins, Mary Beth Pudup, Kirsten Rudestam, Simon Sadler, Susannah Smith, Julie Sze, Maya Wagoner, Lewis Watts, and Chelsea Wills. I am particularly indebted to Julie Sze and Eric Porter for conversations that inspired the formation of the work group.

7. On articulation, see David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996).

8. These concepts will be explored as keywords on our Critical Sustainabilities website, coming online in 2014.

9. John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (New York: The Viking Press, 1939). Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). On the literary trope of "the pastoral," going back to the Bible, see Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973).

10. William Cronon, "The Trouble With Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature,* William Cronon, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995), 69–90; Tony Perrottet, "John Muir's Yosemite." *Smithsonian,* July 2008.

11. On the broader impacts of the *Whole Earth Catalogue,* see Andrew G. Kirk, *Counterculture Green: The Whole Earth Catalog and American Environmentalism* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas. 2007); Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

12. Simon Sadler, "Architecture of the Whole," *Journal of Architectural Education* (2009), 108–29

13. Richard Register, *Ecocity Berkeley: Building Cities for a Healthy Future* (Berkeley: North Atlantic, 1987).

14. On "structures of feeling," see Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

15. See Ali Modarres, "Immigrants Are 'Greening' our Cities, How About Giving Them a Break?" *New Geography,* 11 August 2009. Thanks to Maya Wagoner for this reference, and for her 2013 senior thesis "(Il)Legible Sustainabilities," on race, vanpooling, and transportation planning in Santa Cruz County, which influenced my thinking on this topic.

16. Giovanna Di Chiro, "Nature as Community: the Convergence of Environment and Social Justice" in William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (NY: W.W. Norton and Company. 1996), 302.

17. Jen Gray O'Connor, "Solutions in Search of Problems: The Construction of Urban Inequality in "Smart Growth" Discourse," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 53 (2009).

18. Collaborations between alternative food and food justice have been growing, as exemplified by Alice Waters' Edible Schoolyard project.

19 Julie Guthman, "Bringing Good Food to Others: Investigating the Subjects of Alternative Food Practice," *Cultural Geographies* 15 (2008): 431–447. See also her keyword "Food Justice" for Critical Sustainabilities.

20 Tracy Perkin's documents this new generation of leaders, largely women, in her "Voices from the Valley" project. http://www.voicesfromthevalley.org/. See also Tracy Perkins and Julie Sze, "Images from the Central Valley," *Boom: A Journal of California*, 1 (2011): no.1, 70–80.

21 On the "LA Model" of organizing, see Robert Gottlieb, Regina Freer, Mark Vallianatos, Peter Dreier, *The Next Los Angeles: The Struggle for a Livable City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). On spatial justice, and the busriders' union, see Edward Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

22 Julian Agyeman and Alison Alkon, *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011).

23 Thomas Friedman, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded 2.0: Why We Need a Green Revolution and How it Can Renew America* (New York: MacMillan, 2009).

24 John Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: Toward a Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

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