

***Resistance is Fertile: Failing Forward in the Academy and Politics and Sustaining Hope in a World on Fire / “The Greatest Story Never Told?: The Origins, Tyranny, and End of Ecocidal Economic Growth”***

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My project for my research stay at the RCC is to complete one book project and continue work on another. I am nearing the end of a monograph I have been trying to complete for a number of years now, entitled *Resistance is Fertile: Failing Forward in the Academy and Politics and Sustaining Hope in a World on Fire*. The book is a combination of reflections on my experience in the “molehills of power” as a Green Party politician for seven years at local council level here in Northern Ireland (2011–2018), as a political activist, and my three decades experience as an academic in a minority and niche area (post-growth/ecological political economy), what I have learnt from being an academic-activist, and the overlap and tensions between being an academic and an activist and politician. This book’s inspiration lies in green political economy and its critique of “economic growth,” from its central role in how we understand “the economy” to how growth and its promises are part of culture, identity, and ultimately a worldview and ideology. Economic growth I view as a “keystone” for other related elements of modern capitalist societies that are the root causes of our polycrisis. In questioning growth and critiquing it, one is automatically a dissident, a radical within society more generally and spaces like the academic and representative politics in particular, given how ubiquitous growth has become in shaping them, such that it is assumed growth is necessary, desirable, and normal.

The other book is provisionally entitled “The Greatest Story Never Told?: The Origins, Tyranny, and End of Ecocidal Economic Growth.” This book has been in gestation for quite some time, and so this monograph would in some ways be a statement of my position on the topic drawing on three decades of research as a heterodox, green, post-growth political economist. However, the more proximate reason is my more recent interest in the specifically ideological (including historical, cultural, and psychological) reasons for and justifications of economic growth as an unquestioned “good thing” as a permanent—as opposed to contingent—objective of an economy and polity. I feel it important, not just academically, but also in terms of the very real-world impacts, policies, and strategies to promote growth, to expose its ideological, mythic, and quasi-religious character. Part of the reason for this ground clearing is to set the scene for a conversation around what could or should replace economic growth, and here this monograph would join a small but growing body of scholarship contributing to an ongoing debate on growth, its problems, and how we can move beyond it.