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# PLENITUDE

*Juliet B. Schor*

*“Plenitude is a commitment to enjoying—not exploiting—nature’s richness, to envisioning environmental, economic, and psychological health as braided and capable of growing symbiotically and more securely than the ‘business as usual’ practices that imploded in 2008...It might be utopian, but it’s also fresh, persuasive, and passionately argued, speaking to the individual and the collective.” —Publishers Weekly*

*“Juliet Schor has been the most perceptive and prescient writer on economics this country has had for the last two decades. Here she looks forward once again, clearing a path through the wreckage of our economic collapse toward something more durable and maybe even more fun.”—Bill McKibben, author *Eaarth: Making A Life on a Tough New Planet**

*"Plenitude is a meticulously researched dissection of the roots of our economic crisis. Instead of offering familiar nostrums—fantasy gerbil wheels offering endless GDP growth—Schor presents a documented and timely inversion of conventional economic logic that cultivates growth in what we so badly need, including discretionary time, dignified work, vibrant communities, and a secure sense of well-being." —Paul Hawken, author of *Blessed Unrest**

*“Read this book. It may change your life and help to save the planet. Paying special attention to the fallout from the crash of ’08, Juliet Schor explores lucidly and accessibly the limits of economic growth. Rightly, Schor comes down hard on economics as the handmaiden of growth. But *Plenitude* doesn’t stop with diagnosis. It provides a roadmap for individuals and families, for businesses, and for society, not just for surviving the failures of the economy and economics but for achieving real prosperity—plenitude—in the twenty-first century.” —Stephen A Marglin, Walter S. Barker Professor of Economics at Harvard University and author of *The Dismal Science: How Thinking Like an Economist Undermines Community*.*

We are living in a new ecological and economic reality. Humans are using this planet’s resources faster than we are regenerating them. Eco-systems are shutting down, turning oceans into dead zones and farmland into desert. As a result, food, energy, and transport are becoming increasingly expensive. The current recession has led to another type of scarcity: incomes, jobs, and credit are also in short supply. As economist and bestselling author Juliet Schor persuasively argues in her eye-opening, urgent new book, **PLENITUDE: The New Economics of True**

**Wealth** (The Penguin Press; May 17, 2010; \$25.95), the old way out of an economic downturn—a debt-financed consumer boom—is no longer a viable option.

Suggesting a radical shift in how we think about consumer goods, value, and ways to live, **PLENITUDE** is a necessary primer for transitioning toward a sustainable economy as well as a richer, more balanced life. Though Schor stresses making environmentally sound choices, she has not written a polemic on sacrifice: rather she contends that through new sources of wealth, green technologies, and different lifestyles, individuals and the country as a whole can actually be better off and more economically secure.

**PLENITUDE** relies on recent developments in economic theory, social analysis, and ecological design to reveal how innovation, macroeconomic balance, and a new attention to multiple sources of wealth (such as time, creativity, and community) can lead to a healthier environment and higher quality of life. As Schor observes, plenitude is already emerging. Schor introduces us to individuals and communities who have created lifestyles that offer a way out of the work-and-spend cycle. Urban farmers, do-it-yourself renovators, craigslist users—all are spreading their risk and establishing novel sources of income and outlets for procuring consumer goods. Taken together, these trends represent a movement away from the conventional market and offer a way toward an efficient, rewarding life in an era of high prices and traditional-resource scarcity.

Fascinating and mobilizing, **PLENITUDE** is both a ground-breaking intellectual statement about the economics and sociology of ecological decline and a road map for achieving real prosperity.

**About the Author:**

Juliet B. Schor's research has focused on the economics of work, spending, environment, and the consumer culture. She is the author of *Born to Buy*, *The Overworked American*, and *The Overspent American*. Schor is a professor of sociology at Boston College, a former member of the Harvard economics department, and a Guggenheim Fellowship recipient. She is also a cofounder of the Center for a New American Dream, an organization devoted to ecologically and socially sustainable lifestyles.

**PLENITUDE**  
**by Juliet B. Schor**  
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