Beyond Climate Justice

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We are living through End Times. Or so we are told. The clock is running out. The climate crisis brings the apocalypse: "I am talking about the slaughter, death, and starvation of 6 billion people this century—that's what the science predicts," Roger Hallam, Extinction Rebellion's co-founder, told the BBC in the summer of 2019.[1] The statement should surprise no one with its originality or its urgency. It's been recycled endlessly since 1968. Its roots run deep, especially in the American imagination, which has shaped the world's Environmental Imaginary from its origins, and to its core. Americans love the apocalypse as no others in the modern world—perhaps because the British and Americans have brought End Times to so many peoples in that modern world history.[2]

One or another version of the End of the World has been a staple of Environmentalism as we've known it since 1968. That year, Paul R. and Anne H. Ehrlich delivered an arresting view of the decade to come: The "Population Bomb" was exploding. "Hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death [over the next decade] in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now."[3] We are, the Ehrlichs argued, in a state of emergency. Authoritarian measures—including compulsory abortions and forced sterilization—are necessary.[4] The authoritarian vision of emergency politics was reinforced that same year, when the biologist Garrett Hardin published "The Tragedy of the Commons"—the most influential environmental studies article ever written. Coercive measures, Hardin insisted (and Ehrlich agreed), must be taken to prevent an otherwise inevitable crisis.[5] Hardin and the Ehrlichs were not shy about the implications, of which anti-immigrant politics was among its leading expressions.[6] In an intellectual move perfectly consonant with the neoliberal turn, the mobility of labor was to be restricted. As for the mobility of capital: *that*, apparently, was beyond the remit of emergency politics. Work and working-class environmental problems were at best incidental to the New Environmentalism; at worst, workers were part of the problem.

The continuities between 1968 Environmentalism and today's Environmentalism are striking. Ideas of going "beyond politics," of apocalyptic warnings coupled with incrementalist reform, of "listening to the science," of an eternal conflict between Man and Nature fixed by "billions of years of evolution"—these unify a half-century of *this* Environmentalism.[7] At all turns, such threads have been woven with an ideological material that says: Whatever you do, please don't name the system! Of course, there have always been dissenters and exceptions to the dominant Environmentalism. But these have been no match for the sprawling eco-industrial complex of government ministries, think tanks, academic programs, foundation-financed NGOs, and Green parties. Even the governing metaphors are largely unchanged: yesterday's Spaceship Earth is, with only modest discursive shifts, today's Popular Anthropocene, reformulating the "limits to growth" and the disruption of "life support systems" in terms that would be readily grasped by participants in the first Earth Day (1970).[8]

There *are* differences—but in form rather than substance. Although the Ehrlichs still cling to an unabashed Populationism, new themes dominate in the 21st century. *Economic growth* and *consumption* are typically favored over imperial and ethnocentric Populationism. But these are neo-Malthusian stalking horses in their dominant forms. Growth and consumption are separated from their class dynamics, militarism, and the endless accumulation of capital.

The long arc of Malthusian thought—and its long cycle of Malthusian moments—is only superficially about "too many people."[9] It is principally about removing questions of human-

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[1] *Forthcoming* (2022), *The Way Out of the Climate Crisis* (Walther König Press). Address correspondence to: Jason W. Moore, jwmoore@binghamton.ed.

initiated power and profit from the history of humans in the web of life. Poverty? Inequality? These can be explained in terms of "natural law"—and the lack of moral restraint by peasants and workers.[10] It's worth noting that such neo-Malthusianism underpinned the American New Right's demonization of the Black working class in the 1980s—"babies having babies"—even while it repudiated mainstream Environmentalism. In this mindset, war, poverty, inequality—all flow from natural law, not the conflict-riven character of capitalism's class, capital, and geopolitical relations. In the 1970s, the proximate cause—we were told—was overpopulation. Today, it's growth and overconsumption.

There's a slogan from the late 1960s that helps us counteract the learned hopelessness cultivated by big "E" Environmentalism: "the issue is not the issue." While Ehrlich's *Population Bomb* was the subject of lavish media attention, a very different figure from 1968 provides an antidote to the neo-Malthusian cosmology. When Martin Luther King Jr. turned publicly against the Vietnam War, he did so in a landmark 1967 speech at Riverside Church in New York City. It was entitled "Beyond Vietnam." *Beyond* meant everything. King was breaking with the liberal establishment, which saw the War as separate from the problem of racism. (He was pilloried by liberals as a consequence.) The problem, King underscored, was not merely the American war in Vietnam. Nor was the problem limited to American militarism, which had made it "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today."[11] *The issue was not the issue*. In a synthesis that joined classical Marxism, the New Left's radical turn, and the Black Communist tradition of W. E. B Du Bois, King formulated a first cut of the "triple evils" theory:

> We must rapidly begin . . . the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.[12]

King did not stop there. Told to shut up and stay in his lane, he responded acidly: "For those who are telling me to keep my mouth shut, I can't do that. I'm against segregation at lunch counters, and I'm not going to segregate my moral concerns."[13] In a series of speeches delivered the year before his death, he argued for a revolutionary critique that was also a revolutionary strategy. In his final address to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, in late summer 1967, he shared the parable of Jesus and Nicodemus. The latter had come to Jesus and

> wanted to know what he could do to be saved. *Jesus didn't get bogged down in the kind of isolated approach of what he shouldn't do.* Jesus didn't say, Now Nicodemus, you must stop lying. He didn't say, Nicodemus, you must stop cheating if you are doing that. He didn't say, Nicodemus, you must not commit adultery. He didn't say, Nicodemus, now you must stop drinking liquor if you are doing that excessively. *He said something altogether different*, because Jesus realized something basic—that if a man will lie, he will steal. And if a man will steal, he will kill. *So instead of just getting bogged down in one thing, Jesus looked at him and said, Nicodemus, you must be born again*.[14]

Many of the New Environmentalists would come to say something similar—and at the same time very different. They would emphasize holism and connectivity and harmony, even love. But they would not name the system. (Those who did, like Barry Commoner and Murray Bookchin, never gained popular traction.) King, who had from his days in seminary believed that "capitalism has outlived its usefulness," was not afraid to name the system—nor to name the specific mechanisms of capitalist power.[15] The parable he shared with the SCLC focused on the need to cultivate a revolutionary imagination—the problems were not segregated; they could not be fixed one at a time. "The whole society" must be "born again." This required seeing how "the problem of racism, the problem of exploitation, and the problem of war are all tied together.

These are the triple evils that are interrelated."[16] It was nothing short of an argument for a *triple alliance*: for working-class justice, an end to America's forever wars, and the abolition of the color line. It threatened a radical coalition of the civil rights, labor, and antiwar movements.

Today's Environmentalism owes everything to what happened in the years immediately following King's radical turn and his subsequent murder, likely enabled by the American security state. Let us recall the situation by summer 1968. Every year between 1964 and 1969 witnessed significant working-class insurrections — "race riots" in the language of the times — in major American cities. King's 1967 Riverside speech was followed by another "long, hot summer," with more than 150 so-called riots. That fall, during the October anti-war demo in Washington, D. C., William Yarborough, assistant chief of staff for Army intelligence, thought "the empire was coming apart at the seams."[17] Should social unrest radicalize, there were too few reliable units at home to contain revolt—and too few reliable units to fight the war in Vietnam. Meanwhile, the New Left deepened the critique of the knowledge factory initiated by Mario Savio and the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in 1964. In a radical shift, New Left radicals were outlining a fresh analysis of the American working class, transformed through the massive expansion of its white-collar ranks.[18] The danger was that New Left radicalism would sink its roots deep into the demographic bastion of postwar liberalism: the "professionals." Competition for these voters would shape the entirety of American neoliberal politics, unifying the Reagan-Clinton-Bush-Obama decades.

Environmentalism came to the rescue of an American ruling class beset by a legitimation crisis that, at least culturally, went far beyond the Great Depression. One or another version of the Environmental Imaginary that took shape between 1968 and 1974—*Population Bomb* Malthusianism, the Spaceship Earth imaginary focused by the iconic *Earthrise* and *Blue Marble* photographs, the insistence on virtuous civic behaviour as a meaningful "politics," the notion of "natural limits"—had been around for a long time. As an imaginary—but also as a concrete practice of modern imperialism and financiers—its origins reach back to the dawn of capitalism in the century or so after 1492.[19] As a geocultural order, however, it dates from the time of Thomas Malthus, whose *First Essay* appeared in 1798.

The Popular Anthropocene—the wide-ranging "Man and Nature" conversation over the origins and development of modern environmental crisis—is the grandchild of Malthus, and a continuation of 1968 Environmentalism. Neo-Malthusianism is widely understood as an argument about population. That's part of it. But the real action lies elsewhere. It is fundamentally an ideological procedure that reframes capitalism's antagonisms as the outcome of deviations from—and adjustments to—"natural law." For Malthus, runaway social inequality in late eighteenth-century England was the outcome of too many people and not enough nature—not enclosure and exploitation. It was no coincidence that Malthus was writing in a moment of unprecedented social revolt: Haiti and France were fundamental, but so too were Spencean protosocialism within England and Wolf Tone's anti-colonial revolt in Ireland.

This was the first of three major Malthusian moments—the most recent of which begins in 1968. These occur in eras of worldwide revolt. They are a form of geocultural counterrevolution as ruling classes scramble to reconstruct the "natural" character of extreme inequality and the desirability of Progress at moments of profound challenge. In Malthus's time, this was the "world revolution of the West"—dramatized by the French, Haitian, and American revolutions, but including social revolts from Peru to Russia. A century later, Malthusianism returned, this time pivoting on eugenics and Social Darwinism. Again, it was a moment of industrialization and rising working-class power in the richest countries, who were also busily partitioning Africa. Importantly for 1968 Environmentalism, eugenics and "scientific racism" found especially fertile soil in the US, whose multiracial and multi-ethnic working class organized at a furious pace at the turn of the 19th century.

A third Malthusian moment—with us still in the Popular Anthropocene—crystallized after 1968. Historians tell us that Americans thronged to the New Environmentalism because they

were suddenly affluent, or because *Earthrise* reminded them of their oneness with Spaceship Earth, or because of environmental disasters like the Santa Barbara oil spill and the Cuyahoga River fire in 1969. More pivotal was *The Population Bomb*. It provided a tailor-made narrative conducive to politics-as-usual. The New Environmental Imaginary was a problem with no enemies—save for "us," as cartoonist Walt Kelly's famous Pogo character made clear at the first Earth Day. That easy narrative—again, like the Anthropocene—made possible a frenzy of media coverage delivered by a propaganda machine happy to explain all the world's problems as the result of "too many people" and overconsumption. It was an attractive way to look at America's problems at a time of unprecedented legitimation crisis—and an American world order under unprecedented challenge. Environmentalism was a good palate-cleanser after the Tet Offensive, urban riots, wildcat strikes, and campus revolts

If today's Environmentalism is stuck in 1968, it's also stuck in 1798. The *first* Malthusian moment was constitutive of a geocultural order that most of us take for granted. This was centrist liberalism. Such liberalism was a "metastrategy" of bourgeois rule that assumed the normality and indeed desirability of Progress.[20] It's worth noting that the New Left foregrounded the complicity of centrist liberalism in the war machine. While the New Environmentalism seemed to reject Progress, it was a shallow rejection principally focused on individual behaviour, a narrow localism, and radical-sounding generalities. After the first Earth Day, it became clear—unfortunately in relation to the war machine—that Environmentalism would have little to do with its radical contemporaries. It *ideologically* erased the New left critique and *practically* embraced centrist liberalism as a political strategy that readily made its peace with corporate power in the 1980s.[21]

Centrist liberalism emerged in and through the first Malthusian moment, roughly in the "age of revolution" between 1789 and 1848. Over the next century, it killed two birds with one stone. Centrist liberalism "tamed" the radical impulse that stressed the right to subsistence and a fundamental overturn of capitalist relations, but also the conservative impulse to roll back the political and juridical gains made by (big and small) bourgeois strata.[22] Finally, it installed at the heart of modern politics the geocultural premise that it "was necessary to engage in conscious, continual, intelligent reformism," shaped by imperial states and their networks of power and privilege.[23] Among its pillars was *Scientism*—an ideology characterized by the continuous invocation of Good Science as the basis for understanding *and managing* social problems under capitalism.[24] Good Science established the (allegedly) value-neutrality of bourgeois knowledge, mobilizing its "objective" findings to justify centrist-liberal managerialism and to discredit anti-systemic movements as irrational.[25]

The relation between Big Science, Big Capital, and Big Empire is as old as capitalism. So too is the Environmental Imaginary. For previous civilizations, the notion that the web of life existed as a separate Nature apart from Civilization was, quite literally, unthinkable. Only with the rise of the capitalist world-ecology after 1492 does Nature appear as a cosmological domain separate from Civilized Man, and as a set of objects to be discovered, identified, and secured for endless capital accumulation. Nature was not merely a new "idea." It was a strategy of power. To be called Natural—like women in early modern Europe—was to be ruthlessly dominated and devalued. Nature, in this light, had very little directly to do with the birds and the bees, forests and fields, soils and streams. Rather, Nature became everything the bourgeoisie did not want to pay for. *Man*, in this way of seeing and dominating, had practically nothing to do with humankind. After 1492, the female and pigmented human majority was relocated to Nature, the better to avoid paying them. This move had everything to do with the bourgeoisie's fantasy of itself as the bearer of Progress: Christianizing, Civilizing, and Developmentalist in successive phases. The Environmental Imaginary was, therefore, far more than an imagination; it was a practical strategy of world power and profit.[26]

By 1945, this Environmental Imaginary—and its Scientism—crossed a threshold. Habermas famously called it the "scientization of politics," whereby capitalism's social contradictions were

increasingly converted into managerial problems amenable to "rational" governance.[27] Good Science became a pillar of American *world* hegemony. For the architects of Pax Americana,

> *the nonpolitical reputation of science was a critical political resource* . . . Science . . . [became] a critical, three-pronged weapon for waging a moral equivalent of war. First, in "man's" endless struggle against nature, technical know-how tipped the balance in favor of humanity. Second, scientific truth was derived from the universal laws of nature and so transcended political ideology. Finally, science revealed the unity in diversity of nature that made the interdependence of nations inevitable. Because natural phenomena such as river basins, ore deposits, and migratory routes paid no heed to "national boundaries," national progress depended on transnational cooperation. Science, therefore, ought to guide the integration of global society—the remaking of political geography—to match nature's "pattern of universal validity."[28]

This imperial sensibility was a key strand of the New Environmentalism's DNA. No finer expression of the problem could be found than in the first Earth Day (1970). Earth Day was organized by the neo-Malthusian Democratic Senator from Wisconsin, Gaylord Nelson, whose immediate inspiration came from Paul Ehrlich and a largely discredited (because ineffective) anti-war tactic: the teach-in. By 1969, American radicals were engaging in very different tactics: building occupations, firebombing Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) centers, mass civil disobedience, wildcat strikes, organizing GIs against the war, and other activities that aimed to disrupt the Liberal Establishment and its war machine. As anti-war, labor, and anti-racist organizing was "leading students off the campus and into the streets," Barry Weisberg observed in 1971, "the Earth Day teach-ins proposed that students should return to their campuses and engage in orderly, rational dialogue with industry."[29]

Earth Day was more akin to a national holiday than a nationwide mobilization. Both houses of Congress adjourned for the day. In the main, the Day's events were a tapestry of alternatively scientific and pious speeches woven with neo-Malthusian catastrophism and political theater. Some of the day's activities were delightfully banal: "trash-ins" in New York, bicycle rides in Eugene. Others were more creative: students organized a "die-in" to protest supersonic air travel at Boston's Logan Airport, leading to a dozen arrests. At one Earth Day event, radical folksinger Pete Seeger sang a delightful neo-Malthusian ditty: "We'll all be doublin' in 32 years."[30]

Earth Day speeches reflected that blend of radical sounding End Times rhetoric that has been recycled ever since. A few highlighted working-class, feminist, and anti-racist themes—Rennie Davis, of Chicago 8 fame, called for a movement to "tear this capitalism down and set us free"—but these were a tiny minority.[31] More common were the politics of Denis Hayes, the Day's key organizer, whose anodyne call for "transcending traditional political boundaries" ably expressed the Day's centrist liberalism. Notwithstanding Earth Day's overlap with Lenin's birthday, Hayes' praxeology was decidedly non-threatening. "Proxy fights, lawsuits, demonstrations, research, boycotts, ballots—whatever it takes."[32] It was hardly a Green reprise of King's triple evils. The political distance between Earth Day and King manifested in the Day's iconic image: Pogo gazes upon a forest filled with trash. The caption? "We have met the enemy and he is us."[33] Here indeed was a "cause," as President Nixon argued just three months earlier, "beyond party and factions."[34]

The Nixonian possibilities of the new Environmentalism manifested without delay. A week after the first Earth Day, South Vietnamese and American forces, under Nixon's orders, rolled into Cambodia. The invasion sparked the greatest anti-war mobilization in American history. Over four million students—half the American university student population—poured onto the streets of 1,350 campuses. The University of California and California State University systems shut down. Governors mobilized National Guard units twenty-four times. In Ohio and Mississippi, they opened fire on students, killing four at Kent State and two at Jackson State

University.[35] These students *had* met the enemy. So had the inhabitants of Indochina. Their enemies looked remarkably similar.

The Earth Day infrastructure was nowhere to be found in this historic moment. The inaction wasn't from lack of awareness about ongoing ecocide. That word, *ecocide*, had been floating around for several years in New Left circles. Led by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), activists had been protesting Dow Chemical's role in Operation Ranch Hand—the American deployment of herbicides in Vietnam—since 1967. They explicitly linked the "war machine" to big capital and the knowledge factory: the "military-industrial-academic complex."[36]

The new Environmentalism elaborated a spectacularly partial holism. This holism directly aligned with Pax Americana—and therefore unable to challenge its ecocidal logic. Its iconic visual images—like 1968's *Earthrise* and 1972's *Blue Marble*—popularized Spaceship Earth metaphors, whose "life support system" trope is fundamental to the Popular Anthropocene. Like Spaceship Earth, the "earth system" is one scrubbed clean of the blood and dirt of empire, class exploitation, and racialized and gendered domination. This is *a* holism for sure. But it's one with many holes.

Let's called it the holism of the rich. Its practical consequences, just in the decade after 1968, were enormous. For the New Environmentalism, Nature was to be saved from workers, who were just as guilty as capitalists in producing "the" environmental crisis. Americans who suffered from the deadly political ecology of class exploitation were out of luck. Excluded from the new Environmentalist agenda were problems that devastated the industrial working class: Louisiana's notorious Cancer Alley, home to a robust petrochemical industry developed in the 1960s; Black Lung Disease suffered by coal miners; the poisoning of farmworkers.[37] Later, the anti-toxics movement, led by working-class women like Lois Gibbs, was similarly boxed out. The export of *these* environmental problems after 1968—the globalization of the dirtiest and most toxic industries to the Global South—was structurally deemphasized. The consequences of this deemphasis became horrifically evident in the early 1990s, as Big Green groups sabotaged grassroots environmentalist and labor opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).[38] Environmentalism, once again, was aligned with the priorities of American Empire, directly complicit in making neoliberal capitalism's socioecological hellscapes.

We have now come full circle, returning to King's essential insight: underpinning the problem of "the" environment, like racism, are the planetary relations of empire and capital. This is the enduring significance of the triple evils thesis. For King, Vietnam was not a mistake; it flowed logically from American world power and its pursuit of profitable investment opportunities. The imperial war machine was fundamentally bound to racism and class exploitation at home. A revolutionary ecological message—associated with figures like Herbert Marcuse and Murray Bookchin—could have been synthesized.[39] Indeed, King had already suggested as much in his Christmas 1967 sermon: "All life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly."[40] This is the ecological and internationalist expression of King's slogan: injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

As Earth Day's organizers and other Environmentalists sat on their hands during the invasion of Cambodia and that May's extraordinary revolt, they established a precedent—one that has shaped their failure to slow, much less halt, the capitalogenic drive to the planetary inferno. They drew the worst lesson possible: American military intervention was not environmental. The disconnect between the New Left and post-1968 Environmentalism was not simply "radicalism" and "liberalism"; it was bound to different, and unbridgeable, assessments of world power as the chief threat to planetary life.

After its "golden age" in the 1970s, the New Environmentalism remained on the sidelines of domestic opposition to America's forever wars. In hindsight, Big Green's support for NAFTA was foreseeable. It had supported the New Democratic turn, led by pro-war figures like Clinton and Gore, the latter famous for 1992's *Earth in the Balance*.[41] Gore was a pro-war Democrat and

an early adopter of regime-change politics. The Environmentalist silence on imperialist war had, as we've seen, been established on the first Earth Day and the invasion of Cambodia. With the first Gulf War — "By God," George H. W. Bush proclaimed that March, "we've kicked the Vietnam Syndrome once and for all" — the silence became deafening. (Only Greenpeace among the major nationals organized against the first Iraq War.)

As the US recovered from the "Vietnam Syndrome" in the 1980s, Environmentalism had little to say about war, empire, and exploitation. The implications for contemporary Environmentalism are enormous. Conservation has become militarized across the Global South. Environmentalist luminaries call for new rounds of enclosure—as in E. O. Wilson's "Half-Earth," necessary to "save" the diversity of life.[42] Others, like James Lovelock, advocate the militarization of borders against dark-skinned immigrant workers—a position that has long haunted Environmentalism in the rich countries (see 1972's *Blueprint for Survival*).[43] Since 2001, the Anthropocene's popularity has reinforced this tendency. Its framing of planetary crisis removes from consideration the greatest threats to human and planetary well-being: capitalogenic climate change, financialization, and the militarized accumulation that makes the whole shit show possible. Such reckonings greenwash the dystopian movements of America's forever wars and wildly proliferating climate violence since 2002.

If we wonder why Environmentalism hasn't done anything to slow capitalism's rush to the planetary inferno, there's a good reason for that. It was never *supposed* to do anything. For all the talk about an environmentalist revolution in values—living simply, recycling, going organic, sacralizing dietary preferences—their political impact was always exceedingly marginal. At best it was a "march through the institutions" – law, big NGOs, regulatory agencies, and sometimes, political parties – by which Boomer professionals came to manage environmental problems. By the 1980s the New Environmentalism was increasingly in explicit alliance with corporate power and the pursuit of market-oriented solutions. Challengers have emerged since then—often narrated as Environmental Justice movements—but the basic tendency is unbroken.

What, then, is the radical way out of the climate crisis? I have no stone tablets with the Truth etched upon them. But all of us have access to *history*—the history of liberation movements, the history of Environmentalism, the history of capitalism. Among the great tragedies of the post-1968 Environmental Imaginary has been the marginalization of a radical historical imagination—one that might grasp the interrelated history of power, profit, and life in the modern world.

Among its consequences, as we've seen, is the hegemony of a Whole Earth holism—the holism of the rich—that pits Man against Nature. The argument that "the" environmental crisis stems from Man's violation of "natural law"—a thesis that runs in a direct line from Malthus to the Anthropocene—has been an ideological hammer in the hands of Empire and Capital for the past two centuries. Underneath it is a bloody and violent history of profit-seeking imperialism that stretches back to 1492. From the seventeenth century onwards, Civilizing Projects redefined Nature as everything the bourgeoisie did not wish to pay for, and relocated the vast majority of humankind into the realm of Nature—the better to cheapen them and to convert their lives and labor into capital. Neither Man nor Nature are innocent descriptions here, a reality that comes into focus only once we understand that capitalism is not merely an economic and political system, but a mode of thought and ideology that redefines the contradictions of power, profit, and life as collisions between Man and Nature. This is the history of successive Malthusian moments. In such a scheme, the task of Civilization was to manage the problems of Nature, which included the vast majority of humans, variously un-Christian, un-Civilized, and un-Developed. Today's Sustainable Development complex—well-financed by governments and Foundations—is but the latest expression of this long history.

The radical response since the 1990s has emphasized a laundry list diagnosis of the planetary crisis—race, gender, sexuality, indigeneity, environmentalism, and much beyond. All are crucial. The problem is that what binds their concrete interrelations is rarely specified, their historical development unexplored. The result is a democratic theory of causation in which "everything is

connected to everything." True enough, up to a point. But such connections are never equal, and effective radical politics involves exploiting the asymmetries: the weak links. Their asymmetries change in relation to the movement of the whole. And there's the rub, not just in assessing the Problem, but in forging a revolutionary politics of planetary justice. World history is indispensable because it tells us clearly that the history of civilizations is a history of humans *in* the web of life, actively making webs of life even as they are shaped *by* webs of life.[44] Viewed in this light, the history of class society is a history of asymmetries, producing and produced by webs of life. The genius of Marx and Engels was to understand how the very processes of domination and exploitation that created modern working classes—far more heterogenous than most Marxists admit—were those that would allow for the liberation of "the soil and the worker."[45]

It is here that we can return to King, the triple evils thesis, and the parable of Nicodemus. The issue was not the issue. Why? Because for King "the triple evils . . . are interrelated." They are problems of the "whole society."[46] Militarism, racism, and class exploitation are problems of the "whole society": of capitalism as a whole. Just as Vietnam was a symptom of a deeper pathology that extended beyond American militarism, the climate crisis runs far beyond atmospheric carbonization and increasingly volatile weather. King refused to construct a laundry list of problems. Adding up was not sufficient. Militarism, racism, and exploitation: each was strategically related to the others; their world-historical meaning emerges through their interrelations. This is why I have taken to insisting that we move beyond climate justice. We must carry forth a message of a *concretely* interrelated climate crisis born of capitalism as a world-ecology of power, profit, and life five centuries ago. We live in the *Capitalocene*—the "age of capital"—not the Anthropocene.[47]

Atmospheric carbonization and the resulting demise of Holocene climatic stability must be situated geohistorically. To use the descriptive categories of the One Percent—abstract markets, population movements, or technologies—is to doom one's strategy from the start. Rather, we can make sense of planetary crisis as one in which the geophysical dimensions of climate change are fundamentally bound to the Capitalocene's trinity: climate class divide, climate patriarchy, and climate apartheid.[48] Such a historical perspective intimately informs socialist strategy in the planetary inferno, as we come to understand that capitalogenic trinity as the *cause*, and not only the consequence, of the climate crisis.

At every turn, we can move beyond Pogo's lament — "We have met the enemy and he is us" — and prioritize the *specific* political, economic, and cultural agents of capitalogenic climate change. It's not Man, but *Capital*, that is responsible for the planetary inferno. As the radical folksinger Utah Phillips liked to remind his audiences: "They have names and addresses."[49] The guilty can be held accountable for their crimes, and planetary justice delivered. The "whole society" with and within the web of life can be reinvented as if "all life [were] interrelated"—as if we were "all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny."[50]

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[1] "'Something Drastic Has to Happen' Roger Hallam | BBC HardTalk | Extinction Rebellion," YouTube video, August 17, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HyaxctatdA&t=993s, accessed January 4, 2021.
[2] Betsy Hartmann, *The America Syndrome: Apocalypse, War, and Our Call to Greatness* (San Francisco: Seven Stories, 2017).
[3] Paul R. Ehrlich [and Anne H. Ehrlich, uncredited], *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine, 1968), p. xi.
[4] Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich, *Population, Resources, Environment*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1972), p. 372.
[5] Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 162 (1968): pp. 1,243–8.
[6] Crystallized a decade later, in Paul R. Ehrlich, Loy Bilderback, and Anne H. Ehrlich, *The Golden Door: International Migration, Mexico, and the United States* (New York: Ballantine, 1979), but on display as early as 1972: Edward Goldsmith et al., "A Blueprint for Survival," *The Ecologist* 2, no. 1 (1972): pp. 2–43.

[7] The first two quotations are slogans of Extinction Rebellion, covered effectively by Colin Kinniburgh, "Can Extinction Rebellion Survive?" *Dissent* 67 (1, 2020): pp. 125–33; "billions of years" is from Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb*, p. 29.
[8] See respectively R. Buckminster Fuller, *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969); Donella H. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe, 1972); Jason W. Moore, "Confronting the Popular Anthropocene," *New Geographies* 9 (2017): pp. 186–91.
[9] Thomas R. Robertson, *The Malthusian Moment* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012); quotation from Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (see note 3), p. 17.
[10] David McNally, *Against the Market* (London: Verso, 1993).
[11] Martin Luther King Jr., "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break the Silence," public lecture, Riverside Church, New York, April 4, 1967, https://wilpfus.org/sites/default/files/docs/5-MLK-Beyond-Vietnam-speech-in-sections.pdf , accessed January 5, 2022.
[12] Ibid.; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America 1860–1880* (New York: Atheneum, 1935).
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