



Power, Profit, and Prometheanism, Part II¹ Superexploitation in the Web of Life

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In the hustle and bustle of climate scholarship it's easy to lose sight of something fundamental about the climate crisis: it's the direct outcome of the bourgeoisie's drive to turn all life into profit-making opportunities. The climate crisis is a class struggle. But it begs some questions: What kind of class struggle is it? And what kind of class analysis is called for?

Nearly a half-century of neoliberal triumph has silenced this line of inquiry. Within the knowledge factory, the realignment of the Western intelligentsia after the 1970s—when a minority tendency broke with its historic allegiance to the ruling class (Chomsky 2017)—embraced a democratic theory of causation. For mainstream and left-ish thinkers alike, causal pluralism returned with a vengeance. For the former, Marxism was simply unscientific; for the latter, it was a “Western construction” (e.g., Robinson 1983; Mignolo 2012; see San Juan, Jr. 2002; Moore 2022a). Marxism became something more than bad scholarship that could cost you a career. It was politically retrograde to pursue dialectical syntheses of capitalism in the web of life. In diverse academic movements—from poststructuralism to globalization—“progressive neoliberalism” won the day (Fraser 2019). “ABC [anything-but-class] leftism” prevailed, defined by the refusal

¹ “Power, Profit, and Prometheanism, Part I: Method, Ideology, and the Violence of the Civilizing Project” can be found in the *Journal of World-Systems Research* 28(2): 415–426 <https://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2022.1140>



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of progressive intellectuals to countenance any theory of class exploitation (Vieux 1994; Parenti 1997). In its place were manifold and mushy notions of general interactivity.

But if everything is connected, all is not connected equally. The “point of view of totality” is not—as sometimes supposed—a revanchist “God trick” (Haraway 1988). It’s an emancipatory methodological procedure (Lukács 1971; Moore 2022b). As we learned in Part I (Moore 2022e), that method seeks to develop a revolutionary *praxis*. Allowing for sophisticated reassessments of *specific* moments of class struggle according to the level of abstraction, geographical and temporal resolution, and angle of vision, dialectical materialism equips the socialist movement with the capacity to discern *specific* ensembles of “primary” and “secondary” contradictions (Ollman 1993; Mao 2007).

This alternative speaks directly to the tasks of the world socialist movement in the era of climate crisis. Geohistorical materialism’s great contribution is to reveal the ideological character of causal pluralism and its assemblages of “chaotic conceptions” (Marx 1973: 100). Its dialectical counterpoint is the “standpoint of the proletariat” (Lukács 1971). In this, revolutionary materialism joins the “historical life process” and “physical life process” of capitalism (Marx and Engels 2010: 36). Its differentiated unity is a contradiction of “mode of production” and “mode of life” (Marx and Engels 2010: 58).

The goal is not a “better” understanding of capitalism in some abstracted empirical fashion—an academic confusion of basic and historical facts (Carr 1961). Geohistorical materialism commits to the “theoretical struggle”—*internal* to class politics and struggles (Engels 1926; Lenin 1961). A materialist dialectics is therefore a “philosophy of praxis”—a method of investigation internal to the method of revolutionary praxis (Gramsci 1971).

For Marx, capital accumulation, riven by the contradiction of its constant and variable moments, is also a class struggle, riven by the conflict of bourgeois and proletarian. Just as the class struggle assumes an economic expression in the circuit of capital, it also finds expression in work-centered “social metabolisms” (Marx 1981: 949). These include webs of life beyond the control of any human formation (Marx and Engels 2010). Within such metabolisms, proximate webs of life subject to social transformation and exhaustion are also shaped by non-dialectical antagonisms. Witness the contribution of 2022’s Hunga Tonga eruption to global warming (Besl 2023). Solar cycles, volcanism, orbital variations, and the wobble of the Earth: all shape the geohistorical dialectics of class metabolisms (Moore 2015). Finally, Marx’s materialism is a *political* conception. It recognizes that the bourgeoisie reproduces its class power through the organized violence of the modern state, deployed against the re/producing classes in the interests of a “good business environment.”

Within any class society, this “rich totality of many determinations” (Marx 1973: 100) is animated by a fundamental socio-ecological ontology. That ontology is premised on the labor process as “reciprocal codetermination” in the web of life (Engels 1987; Levins and Lewontin 1997; Moore and Antonacci 2023). Class society—and capitalism in particular—possesses a “twofold character... on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relation” (Marx and Engels 2010: 43). This socio-ecological tension is the “production of life” through which the

everyday production of subsistence meshes with the intergenerational production of “fresh life in procreation[:] social in the sense that it denotes the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end” (Marx and Engels 2010: 43; see esp. Seccombe 1992).

This is a necessary insight as we envision socialist reconstruction in the wake of capitalogenic ecocide. *Cooperation* is a “productive force” (Marx and Engels 2010: 43; see O’Connor 1998). As a “source of wealth” and as historical man’s “inorganic body,” extra-human webs of life are internal to the proletarian struggle to de-alienate the relations of “the soil” and “the worker” (see respectively, Marx 1970, 1975: 275, 1977: 283). Put simply, the class struggle is a multispecies affair through which “the soil” and “the worker” interpenetrate. Proletarian emancipation and biotarian liberation are two moments in the journey towards the communist horizon (Collis 2014; Moore 2018b, 2022c).

This is not for some warm-and-fuzzy ecocentric reason. No indeed! The socialist development of the productive forces can *only* be realized through such cooperation.² Extra-human life is not outside but immanent to the cooperative potentialities that may be awakened by the revolutionary struggles of the “associated producers” (and reproducers) (Marx 1977: 283, 1981: 959). A praxis of biotarian/proletarian unity would advance a *Red* Prometheanism, not as a bourgeois logic of domination but as the spark of a really revolutionary road—one that develops the productive forces *through* the liberation of life. “The creatures too must become free” (Thomas Münzer quoted in Marx 1978a: 51; Moore 2018b; Salvage Collective 2021).

This provides a guiding thread for two tasks. The first is the critique of capitalism’s “twofold character,” centering the reproduction of life and power. This shapes the geohistorical logic of modern class struggle. For Marx and Engels, it’s a break with vulgar materialism; they weave together ruling class “material” domination with the production of “ruling ideas” (Marx and Engels 2010: 59). Primitive accumulation is therefore class formation that integrates the ideological and material moments. Class societies entwine material relations with the “means of mental production” (Marx and Engels 2010: 59). It’s this second moment that generates a bourgeois Prometheanism, enfolding an “abstractly material” science and ideology, blurring the lines between them (Marx 1975: 303). That blurring could not be more relevant to an era in which climate science and Good Science as ideology are tightly bound – and their relations deeply mystified (Moore 2021c).

Marx’s socio-ecological ontology enables the critique of capitalism’s peculiar logic of domination, pivoting on the divorce of the direct producer and reproducer from the means of production and reproduction. (And subsequently reified as the conflict of Man and Nature, Man and Woman, Civilized and Savage, etc.) In contrast to precapitalist ideologies, it ruptures rather than affirms holism (e.g., feudalism’s Great Chain of Being) (Moore 2017a, 2019). That fragmentation’s material basis is alienation under the law of value, understood as an unevenly

² Here is agro-ecology’s vital contribution to socialist reconstruction (e.g. Altieri 1989; Altieri and Funes-Monzote 2012).

combined synthesis of economic valuation and geocultural devaluation (Moore 2017c). Its mechanical worldview, closely linked to imperialism, derived from the same impulses as those driving enclosures from England to Brazil (Merchant 1980; Moore 2018a, 2021b). Here's an underappreciated element of Marx and Engels' materialism: their sociology of knowledge and ideology, and the "means of mental production" (2010: 59). They lay bare modern class antagonisms as encompassing—and alienating—multiple domains: production and reproduction; ideology, science and class; cooperation as a productive force; the irrepressible conflict between capitalism's mode of production and the "modes of life" on which it depends.

From this, a second task follows: the socio-ecological and world-historical movements of capitalist development underpin the possibility for proletarian unity grasped as a rich totality of many determinations. Dialectical totality is *eductive*: a method that draws out complexity and seeks out its connective tissues in the interest of a "higher synthesis" (Marx 1977: 637). This is the counter-tendency not only to ABC leftism but also to the renaissance of class formalism (e.g., Malm 2016; Huber 2022). Against such formalisms, the dialectical method explores the possibilities for a class unity praxis that takes the unevenly combined character of the planetary proletariat as its point of departure. As we saw in Part I, dialectical interpretation and socialist praxis flow through—not despite—variation (Moore 2022e).

Prometheanism, Bourgeois Naturalism, and the Problem of Superexploitation

Among the thorniest problems of twentieth century socialism was the great divide between analytics and strategies premised on the "most exploited" and the "most oppressed" (Wallerstein 1973). These dilemmas have not disappeared; they have merely been driven underground by the political triumph of the neoliberal bourgeoisie and its cadres. The anti-imperialist Marxism that informed Fanon (1963), Wallerstein (1974), and Rodney (1972) is rarely seen. In its place are multiple species of race and civilizational reductionisms: the racial capitalocene, decolonial approaches, the ungainly plantationocene. Each typically deploys radical-sounding rhetoric, at the end day preaching some combination of woke bourgeois nationalism, tepid social democracy, and a healthy dose of anti-communism (Moore 2022b).

In the climate crisis debate, this methodological and political "groupism" (Brubaker 2004) manifests a curious neoliberalization of the Capitalocene thesis—the ecosocialist alternative to the bourgeois antics of the Anthropocene (Moore 2017a, 2018a). Accepting that all humans are not responsible for the climate crisis, some prefer that we discuss the Capitalocene without class. This re-signifies the villain of climate crisis: from an abstract Man to an abstract Europe or metaphysical Whiteness. Class may be mentioned in passing, as description or formal category; class analysis as *dialectics* is apparently unthinkable.

The "racial capitalocene" is a case in point. Even so insightful an analyst as Françoise Vergès (2017) invokes the Capitalocene thesis cleansed of its Marxist critique. She obeys the neoliberal *diktat* that one can speak of work and race but not class. Banished is a pillar of the Capitalocene thesis: the claim that race is a class project of bourgeois naturalism and imperial power rooted in

the “climate fix” of the long, cold seventeenth century (Moore 2021c). Climate apartheid is rendered a consequence rather than cause of capitalogenic climate crisis.

For Vergès and cognate ABC leftisms, the opportunity to confront big “E” Environmentalism—and its class project of race- and class-blind politics of “saving nature”—is lost (Moore 2022f). So too the possibility of situating environmental justice movements within the “racialized nature of the class struggle” (Pulido 1996: 196). Indicative of her ABC leftism, Vergès (2019) invokes the great Communist Party USA theorist Claudia Jones, while scrubbing out Jones’s Marxism-Leninism. That’s argument worth exploring. Jones pushed the CPUSA’s theory of racialized superexploitation and super profits to incorporate the Woman Question from the standpoint of the worldwide class struggle (Davies 2007). She highlighted the centrality of imperialism, racism, and sexism in surplus value production and the reproduction of labor-power (Jones 2010). To erase the class relation at the core of Jones’ thinking, and replace it with a fragmented conception of work and race, falsifies her contribution. In this anti-communist scrub job, Vergès also erases the Capitalocene’s arguments on the very issues she cares about: the unpaid work of “women, nature, and colonies” (Mies 1986: 77); the centrality of socially-necessary *unpaid* work; racialized and gendered class struggles in the making of climate crisis.

Pushing in the other direction are workerist critiques, encompassing a spectrum of Trotskyist and leftwing social-democratic perspectives (Malm 2016; Huber 2022). These rightly foreground class arguments against the chaotic pluralisms of the academic left; they correctly argue that no political sense can be made of capitalism without class. But in their “orthodox” posturing to define class at the point of production (Huber 2022), they miss its wider interpretive and political implications. In short, they do not carry the class struggle method *far enough*. Their formalism reduces class to a “basic unit” of capitalism rather than, as for Marx and Engels, its ontological basis. This distinguishes a formal and dialectical method; the latter takes the socio-ecological core of class relations as a guiding thread, an *eductive* approach to capitalism’s manifold expressions of exploitation and domination in the web of life (Moore 2022e).

Here we encounter a curious situation. Workerist approaches share with race reductionism a reluctance to pursue the Holy Grail of twentieth century revolutionary Marxism: unifying capitalism’s dynamics of exploitation and domination. Each takes one pole of the dialectic as a prime mover rather than grappling with the whole relation. The class formalists are therefore unable to see, empirically or theoretically, how the proletariat depends on unpaid work/energy delivered by the femitariat and biotariat. The groupists are unable to see the rich totality of racial and gender formation within world accumulation and class structure. As a consequence, neither is able to conceptualize environment-making as a class struggle, conditioned by geocultural domination, shaped by dialectical and non-dialectical antagonisms. They cannot see how the worldwide class struggle and its meshes of domination and exploitation always unfold through webs of life, themselves dominated, and today in open revolt (Moore 2021d).

If the workerists insist (rightly) on the primacy of the climate class divide, the other camp underlines (rightly) the domination inscribed in climate apartheid and the racial capitalocene (e.g., Vergès 2017; Tuana 2019). Alas! Rarely the twain shall meet. Both tendencies keep their distance

from Marx's labor-metabolic ontology. Class formalism and race reductionism are conceptualized independently of webs of life. Both default to Feuerbach's illusion of abstract Man, so roundly criticized by Marx. From a geohistorical perspective, neither class exploitation nor geocultural domination is independent—of each other, of the webs of life in which they're embedded, and of the ideological infrastructure of capitalism's ruling ideas, manifested in the geocultural trinity of Man, Nature, and Civilization.

The challenge of unifying exploitation and domination was a priority of anti-imperialist thinkers in the long 1970s. They recognized the interdependence of class exploitation, geopolitical power, and shifting forms of geocultural domination, primarily ethnonationalism, racism, and sexism. This led them to experiments with the superexploitation concept, viewing coercive labor market segmentation and the geocultural ruses of *divide et impera* as viciously reinforcing.³ In so doing, they suggested elements of a world-historical theory that might explain how capital accumulation *requires* geocultural domination and how modern geoculture is shaped by class exploitation. Radical groupism and Marxist workerism might then begin a fruitful dialogue.

This implicates a theory of superexploitation with a twist. On the one hand, these thinkers focused on the quantitative extension of the working day, paid and unpaid, dirty and dangerous. On the other hand, often just under the surface, was an emphasis on the *qualitative* appropriation of unpaid work/energy—to which the “creation of fresh life in procreation” is indispensable. This twist challenges class formalism and race reductionism. It joins proletarianization to regimes of socially-necessary unpaid work, performed by humans and the rest of life: the femitariat and biotariat. Such unpaid work/energy is the dialectical inverse and enabling condition of the wage-labor relation; it is to wage-labor what use-value is to exchange-value. That value relation is disproportionate (Altvater 1993).

Value accumulation implies a rising material throughput. And yet, the qualitative contradiction is not eclipsed but intensified. In its gendered moment, the ecological surplus is always qualitative, even as capital demands *disproportionately* more and more of its abstractly material mass (Moore 2015). As Federici emphasizes (2004), bourgeois domination is a perverse form of securing “cooperation” as a productive force. Such geocultural domination—amplified by institutional power and organized violence—is consequently fundamental to capital's expanded reproduction. Its successive eras of “economic equivalence” demanded new forms of “natural distinctness” through which to fix previous accumulation crises (Marx 1973: 141; Moore 2015).

Geocultural domination is essential to this world dialectic of equivalence and distinctness. It's manufactured with the ideological raw material of *Nature*. Nature is the most dangerous word in the language for this reason. Prometheanism is its extractive motor (Moore 2023b), wresting one-sided materialisms from Nature in the interests of bourgeois hegemony. As we learned in Part I (Moore 2022e), the long history of “natural law” ideologies—today recognizable as environmental neo-Malthusian—yield Nature and Naturalized ideological material, reworked into

³ Experiments with superexploitation included Goldberg 1970; Gorz 1970; Harris 1972; Marini 1973, 1974; Dixon 1977; Amin 1980; Frank 1981; Dixon et al. 1983.

modern racism and sexism after 1492. Everywhere in the capitalist world-ecology, bourgeois forces set in motion a grand ideological offensive with the onset of the long, cold seventeenth century (1550–1700) (Ladurie and Daux 2008; Moore 2021c, 2023c). This was when the Naturalized fetishes Man/Woman and Black/White were forged—not coincidentally, the exact moment of capitalism’s epoch-making class formation (Seccombe 1992; Federici 2004; Bethencourt 2014).

This was also the dawn of the Civilizing Project—an uneven yet intimately connected structure of domination that invented “savagery” as a geocultural logic (Moore 2023c). The bourgeois geopoetics of *Man, Society, Civilization, Nature, Savagery* were tentpoles of this imperial Prometheanism. They took shape *not* in an era of market expansion narrowly conceived, but during the climate-class crisis of world power, world money, and world nature after 1550 (Parker 2013). For an ascendant capitalist world-ecology, the turning point was reached in the years following the great financial crisis of 1557. Virtually everything we associate with modern capitalism crystallized in this era. Rapid proletarianization, the plantation system, large-scale extractivism, formal colonial empires, the military revolution, Cartesian rationality and Promethean Science, the feminization of unpaid work, the world color line, the development of robust state-machineries, a growing dependence on fossil fuels, and by 1648, modern geopolitics. These combined to produce the greatest environment-making revolution since the mid-Holocene’s urban and agricultural revolutions. Landscapes were transformed at a pace unprecedented in human history. What took medieval and other tributary civilizations centuries to achieve—in forest clearance and the far-flung movements and reorganization of human populations—was realized in mere decades (Moore 2017a, 2018a; Patel and Moore 2017).

Two necessary implications can be drawn. First, the “transhistoric racialism” thesis now widely embraced by the academic left is historically untenable and politically dangerous. It reinforces racialism’s petite bourgeois and *divide et impera* tendencies (e.g., Robinson 1983; see Briggs 1931; Reed 2018; Robinson, Rangel, and Watson 2022). Second, the capitalogenic trinity—the climate class divide, climate apartheid, climate patriarchy—is neither abstractly “intersectional” nor the result of today’s planetary inferno; it’s a rich totality that coalesced during capitalism’s first climate crisis—and reinvented through successive terrestrial, aquatic, and atmospheric enclosures ever since (Moore 2019, 2022a).

Identifying the geohistorical logic and its relevant geohistorical patterns is crucial. The mystification of capitalism’s world history is a central task of bourgeois ideology; the academic left’s flight from history and its preference for Young Hegelian-style theoreticist theory speaks volumes to its surrender to neoliberal ideology (Moore 2022b). Only a world-historical imagination can enable a socialist critique of how the planetary proletariat was cohered—and how it’s been set against itself. Such a critique allows us to overcome the tyranny of Cartesian naturalism: to reveal those ideologies of divide and conquer as not only illusory—but pivotal to the politics of accumulation in the web of life.

Prometheanism, Cheap Labor, and Capitalogenesis

The unfolding climate crisis is not anthropogenic; it's *capitalogenic*. The climate crisis is, in other words, a product of the worldwide class struggle. *But climate history also produces the conditions of struggle*. To paraphrase Marx, a class and class structure that does not find "its nature outside itself" is not a class (1975: 337).

Modern class formation's tipping point occurred in the long, cold seventeenth century (Tilly 1984). It was the coldest period of the Little Ice Age, and the coldest era of the past 8,000 years. Largely the result of natural forcing, this long, cold century was amplified by the slaving-induced genocides of the New World, an event that hothoused the trans-Atlantic slave trade and manifold forms of proletarianization, from the Andes to the English countryside (Lewis and Maslin 2015; Moore 2015; Wanner, Pfister, and Neukom 2022).

It was also the moment of violently gendered primitive accumulation across western Europe (Secombe 1992; Federici 2004). This was a climate-class conjuncture of the highest order. Its contradictions generated the capitalogenic trinity: the climate class divide, climate apartheid, climate patriarchy. These were differentiated moments in modern class formation under spectacular domination and an unprecedented environment-making revolution, knitting together paid and unpaid work under a new law of value. It was the birth of the planetary proletariat, human and extra-human. In capitalism's first great climate crisis, proletariat, biotariat, and femitariat developed as and through an organic whole—not as a taxonomical trinity. That distinction is crucial to capitalism's last great climate crisis. If the planetary proletariat orients us to biospheric revolution, the latter entrains the technocratic authoritarianism of planetary management. The choice is between a professional-managerial road, with its Orwellian slogans of "planetary stewardship" and "nature positive," and the liberation of the associated producers and reproducers in the web of life: the Proletarocene (Salvage Collective 2021; Moore 2021c).

One necessary step towards the Proletarocene involves reconstructing our world-historical past—which of course is not past, and never less so than in the present conjuncture. World history is not everything. But without it, the socialist movement is flying blind.

Historical capitalism emerged from the climate-class conjuncture at the dawn of the Little Ice Age. This was the epochal crisis of feudalism, when climate, disease, productive stagnation and popular revolt terminated the feudal logic of accumulation (Wallerstein 1974). The outcome was not a tributary restructuring but a capitalist revolution enabled by a novel form of geographical expansion: the Great Frontier (Moore 2023d). Paradoxically, the geographical conquests after 1492 were secondary to the subordination of labor. In one illuminating example, the *encomienda* was re-tooled by the Spanish invaders immediately upon arrival, shifting from a land grant to a labor grant (Elliot 1964). Conquering land was easy; organizing labor-power was another matter entirely (Patel and Moore 2017). The Great Frontier's "windfall profits" depended on it (Webb 1952).

Early capitalism's radical break with premodern civilizations was the drive to subordinate land to a new logic: the law of value and its peculiar prizing of labor productivity. That labor productivity was narrowly constructed to exclude the unpaid work/energy necessary for endless

accumulation. That narrow construction was enacted through a novel mix of monetary and coercive power—the latter variously entwining cultural, physical and legal force. A radically new mode of thought overdetermined these compulsions, joined at the hip to a Promethean geoculture. This was the rise of Man and Nature as capitalism’s pre-eminent ruling abstractions: the former becoming the imperial bourgeoisie’s over-represented fantasy of itself, the latter becoming everything that the imperial bourgeoisie did not wish to pay for (von Werlhof 1985; Wynter 2003; Moore 2022d).

Prometheanism cohered this imperial fantasy of Man and Nature. The word has circulated in environmentalist theory over the past few decades. It’s frequently assumed that Prometheanism is synonymous with the cyberneticist fantasy: Man’s total control over Nature.⁴ Green thinkers have promiscuously charged not only bourgeois but socialist regimes with Prometheanism, and Marx as a paradigmatic Promethean thinker (e.g., Clark 1989).

There is undoubtedly a bourgeois Prometheus, variously celebrated and denounced across the past two centuries. There is also a proletarian Prometheus. This is Prometheus the trickster, the rebel, the defier of Gods and the enabler of human creativity. This was the Prometheus that Marx admired. For good reasons, many socialists advocate a Red Prometheanism as we envision the revolutionary terraforming necessary to render late capitalism’s planetary hellscape livable in the coming centuries (Salvage Collective 2021).

These discussions have their place. They foreground Prometheanism as thought-abstraction. My argument moves in a different direction. I take Prometheanism as a specifically-capitalist geocultural formation, including its infrastructures for producing *ruling abstractions* (Sohn-Rethel 1978; Moore 2022d; Marx and Engels 2010). Every phase of capitalism reinvents that infrastructure: the means of mental production appropriate to the era’s instrumental and ideological tasks.

Prometheanism, the geohistorical formation, initially developed as a way of seeing, interpreting, and ordering reality through the rise of capitalism. It was certainly an impulse of domination, but not an abstract European or colonial “will to power.” Prometheanism does not sail under its own power. Its geocultural logic was directed towards resolving the feudal crisis: the economic stagnation of the long fourteenth century and a balance of class power that favored the direct re/producers (Moore 2003). Its key breakthrough was as technical as it was ideological: the Promethean Gaze directly joined cartographic and ocularocentric procedures with the Civilizing of the wild and savage Americas (Moore 2018a, 2023e).

That logic would evolve. But its emphasis on labor mobilization, Civilizing the Savage, and profit maximization would persist. In contrast to premodern commercialization, the novelty of early capitalist expansion was the primacy of conquest in securing the necessary conditions of surplus accumulation. Far from fixated on land, the core intention was to secure the tractable labor-power under conditions of formal colonial rule. Prefiguring Marx’s insight that the accumulation

⁴ Fluss and Frim (2022) provide an insightful survey. Sheasby (1999) offers a lucid survey of the environmentalist debates.

of capital is the multiplication of the proletariat, *colonialism* was the bourgeoisie's preferred mode of class formation. The *conquistadors* did not come to the New World to dig for metals, however precious they might have been. Without a proletariat, territory was worthless. Without Naturalization, the proletariat was too costly.

This meant that capitalism structured the world, ideologically and materially, around a thoroughly binarized “us versus them” logic. Simply: Prometheanism was the mode of thought that corresponded to the rise of capitalism. Successive incarnations would revise, but never alter, its essential logic: Cartesianism, Malthusianism, cybernetics (Moore 2021c). It *invented*—indeed sacralized—the categories of Man and Nature. The geocultural mediation of Man and Nature, which had little to do either with soils and streams or humans beings as such, was the Civilizing Project (Moore 2023c).

Prometheanism is not defined by technology in the abstract, or spectacular technological vistas of terraforming, geoengineering, and other eco-fixes. It is best considered as the source code for capitalism's software, animating the hardware of epochal inventions like the shipbuilding-cartographical or steam engine revolutions (Moore 2023e). Capitalism's technological developments internalizes that Promethean source code. Its creative and dominating impulses created, dramatically by the seventeenth century, the ruling idea of *Nature* and its accumulation strategy: a project whereby most humans and the rest of life could be rendered into unpaid work-machines for capital. For every moment of surplus-value extraction, there would be a disproportionately greater *appropriation* of the unpaid work of humans and other webs of life: work/energy. For every proletariat, there would be a disproportionately greater biotariat and femitariat—not as separate categories, but as interpenetrating antagonisms of planetary work: a *planetary proletariat* (Moore 2015, 2021a).

Prometheanism justified two major processes. One was the Civilizing Project. The new empires saw the “civilizing” of “savage” humans as among their greatest responsibilities. Through *Nature*, Civilizers enclosed the lives and labors of most human beings along with new territorial frontiers. The ruling abstraction Nature served imperial claims to the unpaid work/energy of “women, nature and colonies” (Mies 1986). A second was the instrumentalization of Civilization and Nature into an imperial-managerial philosophy. To borrow from Descartes, “thinking things” managed “extended things” (including humans). Thence the bourgeoisie's epochal responsibility: “We must make ourselves the masters and possessors of nature” (Descartes 2006: 51; see Moore 2021c). *Nature became the bosses' view of the web of life.*

Superexploitation in the Web of Life

Superexploitation was initially formulated in the 1930s (Briggs 1931; Allen 1938). But it led a low-profile existence. That changed in the 1970s.⁵ It's been called the “most fundamental concept of the Marxist dependency school” (Antunes de Oliveira 2021). Readers are forgiven if that's

⁵ See footnote 3.

news. World-historical Marxists pioneered its elaboration within the imperial core (Dixon 1977; Mies 1986; but also Harris 1972). But world-systems analysts gave up on the idea by the 1980s. Lately, anything-but-class leftists have returned to the concept, predictably removing its class critique and Mies' (1986) attention to proletarianization (see, e.g., Collard and Dempsey 2020).

That's not gone unchallenged. Anti-imperialists have revisited superexploitation in recent years.⁶ *Monthly Review Press's* recent English translation of Marini's 1973 classic *Dialectics of Dependency* is sure to encourage debate. For all their diversity, these approaches highlight the "suppression of wages below the value of labour power" (Smith 2018).

A distinct but complementary reading of superexploitation, focusing on domination and labor markets, has also materialized. That move was prefigured by American Communists like Haywood (1933), Allen (1938) and Jones (2010). After 1968 the critique was renewed. Socialists investigated and debated race/class formations through labor markets, the Black "subproletariat," and internal colonialism (Baron 1971; Harris 1972; Oppenheimer 1974; Bush 1981–82; see Wood 2022). Other interventions, precociously, spotlighted transnational migration (Gorz 1970). All agreed on the importance of national, racial and gendered domination; that this domination implicated politically-constituted labor markets; and that there was something distinctive about the exploitation of surplus value. There was, sadly, little cross-fertilization between these tendencies—or dialogue with Marini's superexploitation thesis (but see Mies 1986; Maroney 1978).

There are, then, two moments of the superexploitation thesis. One is economic (but not economicist), emphasizing the value of labor-power. Let's call this Superexploitation I. The other focuses on the role of geocultural domination—race, gender, nation—in driving down wages, largely through labor market segmentation, enabled by ideologies of domination and reinforced by a ballooning "garrison economy" of cops, borders and prisons (Gordon et al. 1982; Bowles et al. 1992). Let's call it Superexploitation II.

The two moments are angles of vision on a singular world-historical dynamic. A synthesis adequate to the theoretical struggle must move beyond banal formulas of interactivity. Here the world-historical insistence on the household rather than the individual as the unit of class analysis is salient (Smith, Wallerstein, and Evers 1984; Smith and Wallerstein 1992). It broke the vise-like grip of methodological individualism on Marxism, refusing the notion that the male wage-worker belonged to one class, the housewife to another (Arrighi et al. 1979). Today, we use different language. But the heuristic value remains.

For Mies (1986), proletarianization and "housewifization" formed a *relation* of superexploitation under capitalist hegemony. Notwithstanding its Boomer inflection, Mies conceptualized housewifization as a relation of oppression that mobilized unpaid work *internal to proletarianization*. Proletarianization and housewifization are not colliding, autonomous processes. They are internal to each other: a differentiated unity of world class formation. Its contradictions formed and re-formed the semi-proletarian household over the *longue durée*,

⁶ See Bond 2021; Duque Garcia 2021; Portes Virginio et al. 2023; Pröbsting 2015; Smith 2016; Wood 2022; Valencia 2015; Selwyn 2020. Higginbottom (2023) provides a useful survey.

reshaping the ideological formations of naturalized gender and successive Cheap Labor regimes (Dunaway 2001). In establishing the household as a fundamental institution of world capitalism, world-historical Marxists installed unpaid work as immanent to the law of value, sustained by extra-economic coercion—legal, political, and cultural.

But they had not yet grappled with extra-human life as a source of unpaid work.

How to synthesize superexploitation's quantitative and qualitative moments? Superexploitation is indeed an accumulation strategy that seeks to suppress wages below reproduction costs. The balance obviously must be made good somewhere. That *somewhere* is the relation of unpaid human work mixed with the Earth: femitariat and biotariat. The Superexploitation I thesis unpacked by Marini and Smith finds its systemwide condition in a rising agricultural surplus wrested from the Earth according to the same logic: the suppression of reproduction requirements at the cost of long-run sustainability. As with Superexploitation II, the extra-economic appropriation of unpaid work/energy from the Earth relies on labor regimes entwined with bourgeois Prometheanism and its illusions of "mastery."

Given the law of value's tendency to induce rising costs—through exhaustion and popular resistance – superexploitation is immanent to capitalism's recurrent fixes, which pursue new and expanded sources of unpaid work/energy. Socially-necessary labor time stands on the pedestal of socially necessary unpaid work/energy, delivered by femitariat and biotariat. Such disproportionality counteracts the tendency of rising costs and the falling rate of profit by enabling a high (or rising) "ecological surplus": the ratio of (low) paid to (high) unpaid work. The rate of profit and therefore investment rises and falls in response to that world-ecological surplus. The rate of exploitation, in particular, is decisively shaped by point-of-production relations *and* the extra-economic appropriation of unpaid work (Moore 2015). The points of production and reproduction are also dialectically interpenetrated in class politics; in an example Huber (2022) might appreciate, proletarian women played a decisive role in the United Auto Workers' 1936–37 Flint sit-down strike—a turning point in American labor history (Dollinger 1996). Contra the workerist position, *proletarian struggles unfold within and across these domains*: production and reproduction, paid and unpaid, human and extra-human (O'Connor 1998; Federici 2004).

Without geopower, the web of life is only potential work/energy. Through geopower, the alliance of capital, empire, and science identifies, secures and otherwise enables the appropriation of webs of life. Imperial geopower—and all manner of environment-making territoriality—is therefore central to accumulation by appropriation, necessary to reproduce accumulation by capitalization in successive eras (Moore 2015, 2018a; Parenti 2015). Here is Superexploitation I and II as a rich totality. Every world hegemonic project created anew the world-historical unity of the proletariat, femitariat, and biotariat: the planetary proletariat. When one moment revolts—as in the biotariat's ongoing "general strike" under conditions of climate crisis—ruling classes must adjust and fix the conditions of these revolts, or pay the consequences (Moore 2021d).

This ratio of paid to unpaid work, determining the ecological surplus and therefore the conditions for superprofits, is quantitative only in appearance. As Marilyn Waring (1988) bemoaned three decades ago, economic quantism has a difficult time with qualitative labor outside

—but necessary to—the cash nexus. (Hence the significance of politically-dependent accumulation on frontiers.) Those new and expanded sources of unpaid work/energy that anchor every great capitalist fix also entail qualitative developments, including new *historical natures* inclusive of capitalism’s human socio-metabolic requirements (Moore 2015).

While the *result* of superexploitation is quantitative (driving wages below reproduction costs), the *relation* of superexploitation is a specific contradiction between “economic equivalence” and “natural distinctness.” The quantitative *results* of superexploitation depend on specific forms of oppression and coercion necessary to deliver indispensable qualitative forms of work that are not easily displaced by “normal” proletarianization. For human workers, this historically involves all manner of social reproductive and agro-extractive labor. Not coincidentally, every wave of capitalist development has created new fictions to justify the “natural” character of racialized and gendered proletarians’ confinement to these labor segments.

From here we can make sense of women’s oppression as a strategic relation of capitalism. The modern fetish, *Woman*, is a specific outcome of the class struggle in early modern Europe—with significant ramifications in the colonies. Prometheanism directly and intimately shaped this fetish. Defining women as the “savages of Europe,” the “sphere of reproduction” was “naturalized,” licensing women’s subordination (quotations Federici 2004: 100, 8; also Mies 1986: 68-69ff). This was not propelled by a masculinist will to power—a view that confuses cause and consequence. The gendered pillar of primitive accumulation was, rather, a class project necessary to resolve the era’s greatest structural crisis: the underproduction of labor-power (Moore 2017a). The breakneck pace of proletarianization by the later seventeenth century is testimony to the triumph of the bourgeois forces in resolving this crisis. The geocultural consolidation of Civilization/Savagery and Man/Woman within early capitalist social formations was essential to that triumph. There was no Great Proletarianization without the Great Domestication (Tilly 1984; Patel and Moore 2017). Women’s oppression was the dialectical tissue that bound this epochal shift. It turned on the qualitative character of the superexploitation relation and its Promethean Naturalism.

Nature allowed the bourgeoisie to avoid paying its costs of reproduction. From the standpoint of the law of value

there is... a tendency to maximize the range of resources, products and people (as bearers or possessors or labour power) to be treated as if they were nature and available gratis... The labour of these people therefore pronounced to be non-labor, to be biology:... their ability to work appears as a natural resource.... [Capitalism is defined by] a progressive extension of the concept of nature to cover all people. (von Werlhof 1985: 97)

Von Werlhof clarifies capitalism’s specific dependence on female biological capacity, giving teeth to Marx and Engels’ conception that modes of production are defined by a “twofold relation”: between the immediate conditions of production and the “creation of fresh life in procreation.” If the “accumulation of capital is therefore multiplication of the proletariat” (Marx 1977: 764), von Werlhof clarifies the socio-biological significance of women’s oppression in class formation:

Capital can... establish a relationship with non-human, external nature only via people... And the sole supplier of people are women and their wombs. But wombs cannot simply produce as many new human beings as might be demanded, even if they were to be transformed into child-producing machines. So far, [capital has] been unable... to liberate [itself] from their dependency on the uterus... [T]he capacity to bear children has probably never played such a central role in history as under our present system... As much as it would like to replace living with dead labour, no other system has been as radically dependent on such a massive depredation of nature and human labor-power. (von Werlhof 1985: 100)

Von Werlhof's insight can be dialectically situated. A one-sided biologism is always a temptation. This led some ecofeminists to see "woman" as somehow closer to "nature." (A cognate misrecognition has recently played out around indigenous peoples.) A one-sided biologism inverts the Baconian-Cartesian Prometheism, celebrating rather than demonizing Naturalism's oppressive character (Plumwood 1993). For von Werlhof, this biologist tendency led to a false prioritization of sexism over racism—to which we'll turn presently. There *is* a biological moment to gendered class regimes quite different from racialism, whose ideological relation to biology is purely idealist. But a retreat to biologism is interpretively unnecessary and unduly favorable to the ruling classes—as the history of "natural law" ideology testifies (Moore 2022e).

The mere imperative—"the accumulation of capital is the multiplication of the proletariat"—is analytically insufficient. As Federici shows, the fetish Woman took shape only when the biological and the social were alienated, and modern ruling abstractions imposed. The bourgeoisie's geocultural victory—crystallizing climate patriarchy—required Prometheism and its Naturalism. The modern fetishes, Man/Woman, could only be assembled through Nature, which had to be invented—*as it was*—immediately prior to the crescendo of gendered primitive accumulation. To paraphrase von Werlhof (1985), there was nothing natural about capitalist patriarchy; its specific biologized ideology created Woman as Natural. Not only gestation and birth, but all manner of domestic and care labor, were redefined as Natural: unworthy of remuneration. Cheap Labor was born.

Racism, too, grew from the soil of Naturalism. As with gendered class formation, it emerged during the long, cold seventeenth century. The geohistory of that first capitalogenic climate crisis is relevant. The genocides that followed 1492 were driven by imperialist slaving. Slave raiding and village "reductions" produced disease environments that decimated New World peoples (Moore 2021c, 2023c). Predictably, the underproduction of labor-power intensified. Depopulation led to a modest but significant atmospheric decarbonization—as forests regenerated and cultivation collapsed. This was the Orbis Spike (Lewis and Maslin 2015). Dramatic planetary cooling followed, and with it, political and economic instability from Paris to Beijing (Parker 2013). Unfortunately for us—but fortunately for capital—a climate fix beckoned: the decimation of indigenous labor-power called forth the trans-Atlantic slave trade after 1570 (Moore 2017a, 2021c).

Climate patriarchy and climate apartheid therefore emerged simultaneously and in response to the same crisis: the underproduction of labor-power. As an ideology and practice of class formation—the plantation proletariat (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000)—racism’s qualitative socio-ecological character was to render possible the profit-oriented appropriation of use-values in the Americas in a way that was impossible in Europe. Let us recall, with Marx, that use-values are not the abstract utility of bourgeois economics; they are geohistorically enabled by modes of re/production, themselves influenced by specific geographical and climate conditions (Smith 1984; Marx and Engels 2010). In the classic formula of resource economics: *resources become* (Zimmerman 1951).

So too modern racism. Its handmaiden is coercive semi-proletarianization, defined by the disproportionality of paid and unpaid work/energy at the points of production and reproduction. Capital fears that such disproportionality will falter—which can and does occur, often through political struggles in which class/race dynamics feature prominently (Wallerstein 1983). Capitalism thrives when islands of commodification unfold within oceans of potentially Cheap Nature (Moore 2017b). Superexploitation occurs when and where semi-proletarian relations re/produce qualitative use-values that are difficult or impossible to obtain except through a combination of geocultural domination in its modern forms: Prometheanism, sexism, and racism. Such domination necessitates the bourgeoisie’s use of “force as a permanent weapon” (Luxemburg 2003: 351)

In the Americas (and Ireland), superexploitation revealed the same logic as in Federici’s narrative—but this time with entire peoples. This inaugurated a bloody dynamic of ethnicization and the policing of Cheap Lives (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992; Patel and Moore 2017). Just as only women could deliver the necessary reproductive labor specific to capitalism’s imperatives, Prometheanism said that “only” indigenous peoples, redefined as *naturales*, could perform the qualitative labors necessary to sustain the era’s earliest commodity frontiers.

Let us recall the two major phases of capitalist invasion and conquest. A “plunder” economy lasting until the 1550s was followed by an epochal, productivist turn, moving at full throttle by the 1570s. This turn had three geographical loci: colonial Peru’s silver mining complex, northeastern Brazil’s sugar frontier, and New Spain’s mix of stockraising and silver mining. (These were also, horrifically, the loci of depopulation.) All set in motion new labor regimes of coercive semi-proletarianization, cohering by the late sixteenth century in colonial Peru’s *mita*. Until the turn of the century, indigenous labor was the only source of labor-power (Moore 2010). This was primitive accumulation on a continental scale. Racialized labor *becomes*: “A Negro is a Negro. Only under certain conditions does he become a slave” (Marx 1978b: 207).

The initial crystallizing of a vast but weak racial regime occurred during the transition from plunder to productivism. That shift was—not surprisingly—the beginning of a protracted underproduction crisis of tractable and cheap labor-power:

The incubation period for this [Naturalization]... of “the native” can be dated between... 1542 and 1590. During this period, the relationship between nature and the native begins to cohere in theological and scientific efforts to identify a primary

and continuous relationship between the two. That relationship is varyingly expressed in the respective terms *naturales* in Spanish and *naturall* inhabitants in English. Two figures ... [are] exemplary. For the Spanish empire, Bartolomé de Las Casas, the Dominican friar and Court-appointed “Protector of the Indians,” reshapes the meaning of the Castilian legal category *naturales*. In the English context, Thomas Harriot, the... navigator central to Sir Walter Raleigh’s initial efforts to colonize Virginia, inaugurates the usage of the term *naturall* inhabitants in his only published work, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*. (Vasko 2022: 9)

The flashpoints of capitalist transition—of commodification, proletarianization, and racial formation—were in the silver mining and sugar planting zones. Capitalism’s first silver mining boom had been cut short by class revolt and socio-ecological exhaustion after the German Peasants’ War (1525). Central Europe’s reserves of copper-silver ores were exhausted and much more modest than Potosi’s, the “rich mountain” whose use-values enabled early capitalism’s creation of a durable Cheap Money regime, an essential condition for smoothing out potentially troublesome “switching crises” in the circuit of capital (Patel and Moore 2017). Without the flood of American silver, the inter-regional division of labor knitting together Brazilian sugar, Polish cereals, Norwegian timber, Dutch shipbuilding, and Swedish copper could never have stabilized. All of it depended on imperial reforms in Peru after 1571 and the attendant ideological redefinition of indigenous peoples—conscripted under various *mitas*—as *naturales* (Moore 2010; Vasko 2022).

Sugar could only be cultivated, in its mature capitalist form, in tropical zones like Brazil. The New World’s sugar revolution began in Pernambuco during the 1570s. Indigenous slavery was by this point formally outlawed, but continued *de facto* in various forms of coercive semi-proletarianization. As with silver mining, only a modern infrastructure of culture, law, and organized violence could sustain this mode of labor mobilization, on the canefields and its regional division of labor. A byzantine racial taxonomy quickly developed as African slaves arrived in growing numbers by century’s end (Eichen 2020). Central to this superexploitation dynamic was the socio-ecology of sugarcane, which narrowed the conditions of its large-scale profitability to a racialized labor regime. The sugar complex could only contain these explosive contradictions—and maintain its strategic role as producer of the era’s definitive mass commodity—through superexploitation. This animates not only racism but bourgeois fantasies of dominating Nature, intimately joined throughout the early modern plantation complex. This superexploitative dynamic unfolded again, on yet a larger scale, two centuries later during the “second slavery” and ensuing cotton boom. Its qualitative contributions enabled Britain’s textile industrialization (Marx 1971; Tomich 2016; Patel and Moore 2017; Moore 2023a). Fossil capital was born of the plantation.

In both eras, the Civilizing Project fused “indigenous” and “racial” questions within its Promethean cosmology. Strategically necessary qualitative labor processes—including socio-biological reproduction—were redefined as Natural. Such Naturalism implied a spectrum of violent (and real) abstractions. That spectrum encompassed manifold gradations of Naturalized work, from the “non-work” of socio-biological reproduction to culturally devalued work, almost

always related to primary production and domestic labor. Not coincidentally, this spectrum of devaluation mapped perfectly onto the new mental and manual division of labor and its hierarchies (Marx and Engels 2010). At every turn, groups of workers—African, indigenous, female, Celtic—were said to be “naturally” predisposed to their assigned position in the division of labor. In these terms, we can grasp the Cartesian Revolution and its bourgeois Prometheanism as pivotal to the racialization and gendering of class and labor “market” segmentation. Thus Cheap Nature’s double register of economic and ethico-political devaluation.

Civilizing Projects, Climate Crisis, Class War: Towards the Proletarocene?

This outline of superexploitation orients us to modernity’s geocultural logic of domination as one moment of the evolving capitalist world-ecology. Such domination is the furthest thing from the transhistoric groupism that now pervades the academic left (e.g., Robinson 1983; see Robinson, Rangel, and Watson 2022). Capitalism’s geocultural domination begins with the invention of Nature as a ruling abstraction (Patel and Moore 2017). Its strategic orientation was labor, and the creation of Cheap Labor through imperialism as the necessary—if not sufficient—“fix” to the late feudal crisis. This was accomplished through bourgeois naturalism and capitalism’s original moment of domination: Prometheanism.

From this world-historical fact one can dispense with metaphysical explanations of domination, and explicitly and intimately see it as one moment of capitalism’s drive to turn webs of life into profit-making opportunities. Severing this trinity—power, profit and life—has been the accomplishment of the neoliberal turn in the academy, everywhere insisting on the priority of these fragments and their particularities. But on the ground of *real* historical specificity, I think of sugar frontiers in Bahia and Barbados, no such fracturing occurred. Racist domination, ruthless class exploitation, a ceaseless drive for profit, extraordinary deforestations—all were entangled in a capitalist world-ecology that rewarded competitive fitness and punished those who failed to advance the rate of profit. Frontiers were places where riches beckoned, precisely because frontiers were places where the possibilities for effective resistance were lowest, and “natural fertility” (soils, ores, forests, etc.) was highest. The Civilizing Project—from Columbus to Truman’s Point Developmentalism—provided the geocultural contribution to

an apartheid-like tendency... [animating] two very different types of development and two different types of capitalist sociality at the very core of exploitative capitalism. One is defined by a civilized, cosmopolitan, state-regulated, lawful, welfare-supported, ecologically concerned exploitation. The other is defined by a savage, anarchic capitalism, spatially or socially peripheral to the cosmopolitan center (this center-periphery logic can be international or intra-national...), and dominated by unchecked exploitation, theft, and pillage. One is regulated with a policing logic. The other is a space of war. (Hage 2017: 60)

Hage’s brilliant formulation of imperialism’s “apartheid-like” strategy crystallizes capitalism’s geocultural logic. It’s also a prime example of anything-but-class leftism. The apartheid metaphor

cannot reasonably be deployed abstracted from its class basis. South African apartheid was a class project intimately tied to imperial ambitions, internally and externally oriented towards securing Cheap Natures, labor above all. This implied and necessitated a racialized political regime premised on Superexploitation—I and II. It imposed strict controls on labor mobility and reproduced desperately insecure semi-proletarian households. Apartheid properly signifies an imperial-developmental accumulation strategy of superexploitation (Bond 2007). Across twentieth century southern Africa—but with parallels that reach back to early modern Ireland, Peru, and elsewhere—colonial rule committed to a “labor reserve” strategy to ensure dependable supplies of Cheap Labor (Meillassoux 1981). Racism and the Civilizing Project were reinvented to serve these priorities in each instance.

Historically, the chief difference between such “sub-imperial” and fully imperial states is the comparative ease with which labor-power can be secured; hence the illusion of “free labor” in the latter. Today, the deepening stagnation of population and productivity—in aggregate, and especially in agriculture and other outdoor work—portends a resurgence of superexploitation strategies in the imperialist centers. The increasingly violent policing of an imperial “climate wall” and immigrant workers everywhere is suggestive (Moore 2022b).

The imperial bourgeoisie’s victory in the neoliberal class war was a world-historical reversal (Wallerstein 1995). These conditions have intensified as productivity has stagnated, overaccumulation intensified, and the climate warmed (Moore 2021d). This conjuncture terminated the expensive “appeasement” of the working classes, marking a “return to the pre-1848 strategy of handling workers’ discontent by indifference plus repression” (Wallerstein 1995: 26). Just as Wallerstein predicted, militarized accumulation has intensified as stagnation deepened. One-third of U.S. foreign military interventions since Independence have occurred since 1999. American special forces operate in three-quarters of the world’s countries (Moore 2023f). As Wallerstein envisioned, most of those countries are on the “other” side of the world color line. Thus do the imperialist bourgeoisies set the planetary proletariat against itself: *divide et impera*.

The planetary crisis demands a politics of planetary justice premised on a singular critique, joining the exploitation of surplus value, the appropriation of unpaid work/energy, and the “mastery” of “external nature” (Engels 1987: 460, 105). All three moments are fused in the dynamics of superexploitation, enabled by capitalist Prometheanism and the Civilizing Project. Whether or not the precise contours of this formulation stand the test of time, the question of synthesis—of power, profit and life—is undoubtedly correct. The forces behind the capitalogenic trinity—the climate class divide, climate apartheid and climate patriarchy—will not go quietly into the night. The danger of a “decadent” transition to a post-capitalist order—one that preserves existing inequalities of wealth and power in a new mode of production—is real (Amin 2018).

Will a revolutionary alternative prevail? This will depend on the left’s capacity to identify common ground and to forge a general proletarian interest—something that will not happen absent a militant theoretical struggle, one premised on dialectical synthesis. The point of imperialism and its ruling ideas is to divide us and obscure its real relations. The point of geohistorical materialism is to identify those diverse yet connected relations, so that we may lay bare their weak links, and

advance the possibilities for the liberation of the planetary proletariat: the triumph of the associated producers and reproducers in the web of life.

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Acknowledgements: Very special thanks to Diana C. Gildea, Malcolm W. Moore, Andrej Grubačić, Christian Parenti, Marcie Smith, Raj Patel, John P. Antonacci, Marija Radovanovic, Anne Muha, Joshua Eichen, Jeremy Santora, and Neil Brenner for conversations on the themes explored in this essay. Its core formulations gestated with the brilliant graduate and undergraduate students in my seminars at Binghamton University. To them I am eternally grateful.

Disclosure Statement: Any conflicts of interest are reported in the acknowledgments section of the article's text. Otherwise, authors have indicated that they have no conflict of interests upon submission of the article to the journal.

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