**Notes for Lecture on Capitalism and Climate Catastrophe (2020)**

**Introduction**

In this lecture we will explore the relationship between capitalism as project and process, on the one hand, and the unfolding climate catastrophe, on the other. The lecture will be structured around two main questions, in relation to a host of core readings on the topic. The two questions are:

1. Is it right to blame capitalism for climate catastrophe? and
2. What would fending off climate catastrophe require?

The core readings which we will review in order to bring these questions into focus include a long, two-part essay by Jason Moore, one of the most influential voices in the so-called World Ecology paradigm. Moore’s World Ecology perspective will be supplemented, its intersectional credentials reinforced, by Johanna Oksala’s article on “Feminism, Capitalism, and Ecology,” and by Françoise Vergès’s essay on “Racial Capitalocene,” respectively. The overt anti-capitalism, and perhaps especially the centering of capitalism interpreted, or diagnosed, as the driving force underpinning climate catastrophe, will then be critically interrogated through a consideration of Dipesh Chakrabarty’s polemical rejoinder, “The Politics of Climate Change Is More than the Politics of Capitalism.” We will then turn to consider the obstacles to addressing the climate crisis within capitalism as laid out by the head of policy and advocacy at the UK-based organization, *Global Justice Now*, Dolores Guerrero, who provides unabashedly anti-systemic prescriptions in “The Limits of Capitalist Solutions to the Climate Crisis.” Finally, and crucially, the issue of what is to be done will be further addressed through attention to Lola Seaton’s overview, in “Green Questions,” of recent debates in the *New Left Review* around tactics and strategy for mitigating climate catastrophe.

**Rethinking Capitalism in the Web of Life**

As Wikipedia defines it, the label World Ecology stands for “a global conversation of academics, activists, and artists committed to understanding human relations of power, production, and environment-making in the web of life … [T]he world-ecology approach is unified by a critique of Nature-Society dualisms, a world-historical interpretation of today’s planetary crisis, and an emphasis on the intersection of race, class, and gender in capitalism’s environmental history” (Wikipedia, “World Ecology”).

According to Jason Moore, one of the most prominent voices within the World Ecology paradigm, the perspective is distinguished by its reinterpretation of capitalism as embedded in what he refers to as “the web of life.” As he explains, and complains: “While it is now commonplace to invoke – quite properly – ‘system change, not climate change,’ we should take care with how we think that system. A critique of capitalism that accepts its self-definition – as a market or social system abstracted from the web of life – is unlikely to guide us helpfully towards sustainability and liberation. We should be therefore wary of views of capitalism reduced to their economic and social moments: the practice of ‘human exceptionalism’. Exceptionalisms are always dangerous; especially so when it comes to Humanity, a real abstraction active in a long history of racialized, gendered, and colonial violence” (<https://jasonwmoore.wordpress.com/tag/capitalist-world-ecology/>).

The World Ecology perspective, by contrast, is committed to the view that “capitalism develops through the web of life.” As such, in Moore’s words, “in this movement, human sociality has been brutally reshaped through [the separation between] Nature [and] Society as real abstractions, enabling modernity’s successive racialized and gendered orders” (<https://jasonwmoore.wordpress.com/tag/capitalist-world-ecology/>).

Moore’s framework and understanding of modern capitalism is highly indebted to the world-system theory first proposed by Immanuel Wallerstein. But Moore’s approach goes beyond the work of Wallerstein, insofar as he argues that to take capitalism seriously requires “understanding [that] it [is] not just … an economic system but … a way of organizing the relations between humans and the rest of the web of life on earth” (Patel and Moore, p.3). Indeed, as Moore puts it in a book with Raj Patel, “[c]apitalism is not just part of an ecology but is an ecology—a set of relationships integrating power, capital, and nature” (p.38).

The world-ecological approach thus seeks to interpret the dynamics of capitalism as a danger for what they refer to as “the web of life,” the basic trouble being “that capital supposes infinite expansion within a finite web of life” (p.27). At the core of Moore’s argument is the importance of the dichotomous split between Nature and Society, a split they associate with the rise of capitalism. In their words, “[i]f profit was to govern life, a significant intellectual state shift had to occur: a conceptual split between Nature and Society” (p.24).

Moreover, Moore goes on to relate this conceptual split to the process of subjugation of women, Indigenous Peoples, slaves, and colonized peoples. For, according to Moore, “[t]he rise of capitalism gave us the idea not only that society was relatively independent of the web of life but also that most women, Indigenous Peoples, slaves, and colonized peoples everywhere were not fully human and thus not full members of society. These were people who were not—or were only barely—human. They were part of Nature, treated as social outcasts—they were cheapened” (p.24).

What’s more, Moore continues: “The cleaving of Nature from Society, of savage from civilized, set the stage for the creation of … other cheap things … Capitalism’s practices of cheap nature would define whose lives and whose work mattered—and whose did not. Its dominant ideas Nature and Society (in upper case because of their mythic and bloody power) would determine whose work was valued and whose work—care for young and old, for the sick and those with special needs, agricultural work, and the work of extrahuman natures (animals, soils, forests, fuels)— was rendered largely invisible” (pp.24-25).

The world-ecological approach espoused by Moore thus brings into focus how the dynamics of domination of *nature by humans* is systematically related to the domination of *humans* *by humans*. Moore seeks to “show how relations of power, production, and reproduction work through the web of life,” always stressing that “the modern world’s violent and exploitative relationships are rooted in five centuries of capitalism” (p.38).

The world-ecological approach advocated by Moore also emphasizes the ubiquity of violence and bloodshed. In his words: “World-ecology allows us to see how concepts we take for granted—like Nature and Society—are problems not just because they obscure actual life and history but because they emerged out of the violence of colonial and capitalist practice … These master concepts were not only formed in close relation to the dispossession of peasants in the colonies and in Europe but also themselves used as instruments of dispossession and genocide. The Nature/Society split was fundamental to a new, modern cosmology in which space was flat, time was linear, and nature was external. That we are usually unaware of this bloody history—one that includes the early modern expulsions of most women, Indigenous Peoples, and Africans from humanity—is testimony to modernity’s extraordinary capacity to make us forget” (p.39).

In his long and eloquent, two-part essay, “The Capitalocene, Part One: On the Nature and Origins of Our Ecological Crisis,” and “Part Two: Accumulation by Appropriation and the Centrality of Unpaid Work/Energy,” Moore further elaborates and articulates this argument in considerable depth, making the case “for the centrality of historical thinking in coming to grips with capitalism’s planetary crises of the twenty-first century.” He criticizes the discourse of the Anthropocene for being “shallow” in its “historicization,” and insists upon naming the climate crisis, instead of the Anthropocene, the **Capitalocene**, which he understands “as a system of power, profit and re/production in the web of life.”

In the first part of the essay, Moore sets out to accomplish two tasks: the first is to “situate the Anthropocene discourse within Green Thought’s uneasy relationship to the Human/Nature binary, and its reluctance to consider human organizations like capitalism as part of nature” (p.594). According to Moore, “recognizing humans as part of nature whilst separating Humanity from Nature, troubles Anthropocene thinking at every turn” (p.597). Along such lines, Moore denounces: “In the dominant Anthropocene presentation, the human species becomes a mighty, largely homogeneous, acting unit: the ‘human enterprise’.” He goes on to ask: “Could a more neoliberal turn of phrase be found?” This before continuing: “Inequality, commodification, imperialism, patriarchy, racism and much more all have been cleansed from ‘Humanity’, the Anthropocene’s point of departure” (pp.596-597).

Anthropocene discourse, Moore contends, “tend[s] to view humanity (or ‘human societies’ in the abstract) as responsible for the transgression of planetary thresholds.” Such a view, Moore insists, relies upon a dualistic notion, a binary, dividing humans from nature. But this kind of binary, Moore argues, “obscures our vistas of power, production and profit in the web of life. It prevents us from seeing the accumulation of capital as a powerful web of interspecies dependencies; it prevents us from seeing how those interdependencies are not only shaped by capital, but also shape it; and it prevents us from seeing how the terms of that producer/product relation change over time” (p.598).

According to Moore, Anthropocene discourse in this respect tends to reflect and reify the very premises and assumptions of capitalism. For indeed, Moore contends, “capitalism is premised on the separation of Humanity and Nature.” Moreover, this separation has been inscribed with violence from the start. Moore insists: “One moment was the expulsion of many humans from their homes during the rise of capitalism (and many times thereafter). This provided a material condition for seeing nature as external (as Nature). Another was the expulsion of many humans, probably the majority within the orbit of early capitalist power, from Humanity” (p.600). Furthermore, he continues: “[t]his era of primitive accumulation gave rise not only to the ‘accumulation of capital’ and the ‘accumulation of men’, but also a new world-praxis: Cheap Nature.”

In sum, for Moore, the rise of capitalism thus came with “a new ontology of Society and Nature,” one “that assigns value to some work, and some lives, while excluding the vast majority” (p.600). The separation between Humanity and Nature proved not only analytically but also “practically violent in enabling capitalism’s world-historical praxis – a praxis of cheapening the lives and work of many humans and most non-human natures.” And indeed, “[c]apitalism’s governing conceit is that it may do with Nature as it pleases, that Nature is external and may be fragmented, quantified and rationalized to serve economic growth, social development or some other higher good” (p.601).

Anthropocene discourse, however, tends to ignore the fact that “[h]umans produce intra-species differentiations which are ontologically fundamental to our species-being: inequalities of class especially, inflected by all manner of gendered and racialized cosmologies” (p.603).

What is needed to correct such tendencies, Moore argues, is “a mode of analysis at once deeply historical and deeply reflexive, one that recognizes how our guiding concepts contest and correspond with capitalism’s governing abstractions” (p.603). The World Ecological paradigm provides just such a perspective. Its point of departure, as summarized by Moore: World Ecology “emphasizes the rise of capitalism as a new way of organizing nature, organizing new relations between work, reproduction and the conditions of life. That ‘way’ is a two-way street; capitalism is co-produced by and within the web of life at every turn. Manifold extra-human natures – diseases, soils, ‘new’ crops like maize and the potato, draught animals – were active participants in the new ontological formation. Markets, class struggle, states and empires are still important – hugely important – in this frame. Th[is] alternative allows us to start looking at how every state, class and colonial project, every revolt and strike, and every movement and accumulation of money has been bundled with extra-human nature” (p.607).

The second main line of argument that Moore advances in the first part of his two-part essay is a critique of “the Anthropocene’s dominant periodization, which meets up with a longstanding environmentalist argument about the Industrial Revolution as the origin of ecological crisis” (p.594). Such a periodization, Moore contends, “ignores early capitalism’s environment-making revolution, greater than any watershed since the rise of agriculture and the first cities.” This is not to say that Moore downplays the significance of the Industrial revolution. He does not. He simply insists: “While there is no question that environmental change accelerated sharply after 1850, and especially after 1945, it seems equally fruitless to explain these transformations without identifying how they fit into patterns of power, capital and nature established four centuries earlier” (p.594).

Moore’s alternative periodization thus stretches back close to six hundred years, all the way back to 1450. He writes: “Between 1450 and 1750, a new era of human relations in the web of life begins: the Age of Capital” (p.610). Likewise, he insists: “[i]f we wish to explain the origins and development of capitalism as world-ecology – crucial to understanding the politics of the twenty-first century – we need a conversation over the ways that relations of power, capital and nature crystallized in the centuries after 1450” (p.608). One of the main features of this new crystallization was a landscape revolution. With the onset of the Age of Capital, Moore contends, over the course of the so-called “long sixteenth century,” “[a] radical shift in the scale, speed and scope of landscape change occurred” (p.609).

Meanwhile, the landscape revolution was accompanied by a revolution in productivity, as well as a revolution in technics of appropriation. Moore explains: “[a]longside new technologies, there was a new technics – a new repertoire of science, power and machinery – that aimed at ‘discovering’ and appropriating new Cheap Natures” (p.610). With primitive accumulation came “the origins of Cheap Nature as an accumulation strategy” (p.611).

In sum, for Moore, “the early modern landscape revolution represented an early modern revolution in labor productivity.” He insists that “[t]his revolution in the zone of commodification was rendered possible by a revolution in the technics of appropriating Cheap Natures, especially the Four Cheaps of food, labor, energy and raw materials.” Moreover, and crucially, “[t]his was realized not only through the immediate practices and structures of European imperialism. More fundamentally, the ‘new’ imperialism of early modernity was impossible without a new way of seeing and ordering reality” (p.620).

Moore highlights the importance of “[t]he conquests of the New World” in this regard, which “not only marked a vast appropriation of potentially Cheap Nature, but of the labor-power to transform it into capital.” To this end, he quotes Enrique Dussel, for whom “this was ‘the fundamental structure of the first modernity’” (p.613). He, furthermore, stresses, that “[t]he fact that early capitalism relied on global expansion as the principal means of advancing labor productivity and facilitating world accumulation reveals the remarkable precocity of early capitalism, not its premodern character” (p.620).

Moore thus identifies three revolutions that took place over the course of the “long sixteenth century” – revolutions “of landscape change, of labor productivity, [and] of the technics of global appropriation.” By relating these three revolutions to one another, Moore suggests, we come upon “a way of thinking capitalist crisis world-ecologically,” which, for Moore, means “putting nature at the center of thinking about work; putting work at the center of our thinking about nature; and setting aside the presumption that human organization of any kind (from family forms to transnational corporations) can be adequately understood abstracted from the web of life” (p.620).

Moore chastises Anthropocene discourse – that is, “arguments about global crisis under the sign of the Anthropocene” – for having “simultaneously embraced a strong narrative on the origins of ecological crisis and evaded the historical work necessary to excavate those origins” (p.621). He elaborates a narrative which emphasizes not the Industrial revolution as the point of origin of the current crisis, but rather, “the emergence of new relations of power, profit and re/production from the long sixteenth century.”

Moore is even willing to recognise that his own periodization is not beyond plausible contention. In fact, he appeals to the idea that multiple periodizations need not be viewed as mutually exclusive. To this end, he highlights the value of Andreas Malm’s “important study of nineteenth-century ‘fossil capital’,” which of course entails a different periodization. Yet, he adds: “The error is to see these periodizations as mutually exclusive. Fossil capital?,” he asks, to which he replies: “That is surely a crucial dimension of our reality since the nineteenth century. Capital, power and nature entwine.” However, he continues: “Just as we live in the era of fossil capital, do we not also live in the era of agrarian capitalism – characterized by punctuated revolutions in class struggle, nature, and the productive forces, so necessary to the expanded reproduction of labor power?” So too, he asks: “Are not these different interpretations premissed on distinctive angles of vision? Is not the story of fossil capital one amongst several narratives necessary to grasp the history of capitalism and its present crisis?” From there, he concludes: “Surely we are dealing with a massive reinvention of capitalism in the nineteenth century. So too – but under very different conditions – after World War II, after 1971, and today” (p.621).

**The Capitalocene and the Centrality of Unpaid Work/Energy**

Which brings us to Part Two of Moore’s essay on the Capitalocene, “Accumulation by Appropriation and the Centrality of Unpaid Work/Energy.” In this part of the essay, Moore seeks to “reconceptualise the past five centuries,” or “the age of capital,” as the Capitalocene. To do so, he makes “two interconnected arguments.” The first of these draws on the work of the Bielefield School Marxist-feminist scholar Maria Mies and her colleagues, who have contended ***that***, and sought to empirically demonstrate ***how***, “the exploitation of labor-power depends on a more expansive process: the appropriation of unpaid work/energy delivered by ‘women, nature, and colonies’” (p.1).

Moore follows Mies in arguing that, even if “[t]he paid work of (some) humans remains the economic pivot of capital – socially necessary labor-time,” it is nevertheless the case that “its necessary conditions of reproduction are found in the unpaid work of ‘women, nature, and colonies’.” Indeed, according to Moore (and Mies), “[c]apitalism thrives when islands of commodity production and exchange can appropriate oceans of potentially Cheap Natures – outside the circuit of capital but essential to its operation” (p.6).

Elsewhere, he puts the point even more bluntly. He writes: “The condition of some work being valued is that most work is not.” He claims here, again, that his theoretical inspiration on this crucial point is to be found in “the extraordinary Marxist feminist tradition.” According to Moore, “[o]nly now … is the potential of this critique becoming apparent.” This because it “points toward a conception of value relations as co-produced through exploitation (capital-labor) and appropriation (capital-unpaid work).” Moore continues by emphasizing: “Cheap Natures form through the relations of paid and unpaid work, and the knowledge-practices necessary to identify and to appropriate it.” He then goes on to conclude: “Unifying the historical entanglements of human and extra-human activity work inside and outside the circuit of capital may well prove useful in developing effective analytics and emancipatory politics as modernity unravels today” (p.7).

The second main argument that Moore advances in this second part of the essay has to do with the functioning of what he dubs the “state-capital-science” complexes. “Accumulation by appropriation,” he contends, “turns on the capacity of [such] complexes to make nature legible” (p.1).

In this vein, Moore highlights the importance of “two epoch-making inventions” that took place “in the long sixteenth century.” One was what he dubs, following the eminent decolonial theorist Walter Mignolo, “the invention of the New World.” Moore emphasizes that “[t]his invention begins not with the invasion of the Americas but with the colonization and conquest of the Atlantic islands and completion of the Reconquista in the half-century before 1492.” This amounted to “a new form of conquest, premised on new ‘technologies of distance’, beginning with the new cartography (portolan charts) and shipbuilding (caravels).” Moreover, according to Moore, the second epoch-making invention was that of “a progressively rationalized ‘cost-profit calculus’.” Here Moore follows Schumpeter in emphasizing the role of “[d]ouble-entry bookkeeping, [which] – like the mechanical clock – was invented in the late thirteenth century, becoming two centuries later an expressive moment of a calculative revolution that reshaped the world.” Moore admits that “its directly causal role in the rise of capitalism is open to debate,” but he nevertheless insists that “double-entry bookkeeping both as a practice – and as a wider epistemic mode – was unquestionably important in this calculative revolution.” Indeed, he points out, “[d]ouble-entry bookkeeping’s rapid diffusion from its north Italian hearth dates from – not coincidentally – the 1490s.” He, furthermore, points out that “[t]hat diffusion carried the accounting system to the Andes after 1531, where it was among the key ‘elements of Spanish civil administration and ecclesiastical practice’” (p.8).

Moore goes on to argue for the existence of a dialectical interdependence between the logic of accumulation by expanded reproduction of commodities, based on abstract social labor, on the one hand, and the logic of accumulation by appropriation of unpaid work and energy, based on abstract social nature, on the other. According to Moore, “[i]f the substance of abstract social labor is time, the substance of abstract social nature is space.” He continues: “While managerial procedures within commodity production aim to maximize productivity per quantum of labor-time, the geo-managerial capacities of states and empires identify and seek to maximize unpaid work/energy per ‘unit’ of abstract nature. Historically,” he argues, “successive state–capital–science complexes co-produce Cheap Natures that are located, or reproduce themselves, largely outside the cash nexus.” Furthermore, he insists, “Geo-managerialism’s preliminary forms emerged rapidly during the rise of capitalism. Its chief historical expressions comprise those processes through which capitalists and state-machineries map, identify, quantify and otherwise make natures legible to capital.” And from this analysis, he goes on to conclude that, in the present, “[a] radical politics of sustainability must recognize and seek to mobilize through a tripartite division of work under capitalism: labor-power, unpaid human work and the work of nature as a whole” (p.1).

Moore confronts the argument that his centering of capitalism as the cause of climate catastrophe “elides the experience of Communist projects,” which had less than great track records when it comes to environmental sustainability in their own right, to say the least. Moore responds by arguing that his framework of the Capitalocene is “a dialectical, not generalizing, claim.” As such, he contends, “[i]n contrast to positivist generalization, dialectical arguments proceed through, not in spite of, variation.” What does he mean by this? He explains: “The Capitalocene names a historical process in Marx’s sense of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall: as a general law constituted through counter-acting tendencies.” From this, he goes on to claim: “To what degree either the Soviet or Chinese projects represented a fundamental break with previous waves of capitalist environment-making is an important question but beside the point.” Indeed, for Moore, “[t]he question is whether or not such partial moments overwhelmed the ‘developing tendencies of history’ reproduced through the longue durée of the capitalist world-ecology” (p.5).

**Feminism and World Ecology**

In the second part of his essay, Moore makes clear that the paradigm of World Ecology takes inspiration in Marxist feminism in general, and in the groundbreaking work of Maria Mies in particular. In her article on “Feminism, Capitalism, and Ecology,” the Finnish feminist Johanna Oksala emphasizes as well just how important Mies’s contribution is to helping think through the connection – indeed, the structural analogy and functional equivalence – between the domination of some humans over other humans and the domination of *humans over nature*. More specifically, Oksala highlights, “Mies forges a historical and structural link among the birth of capitalism, colonization, the subordination of nature through industrialization,” on the one hand, “and the simultaneous destruction of women’s autonomy over their bodies that characterized the witch-hunts in Europe,” on the other. She continues: “Colonies, nature, and women were thus dominated, controlled, and violently expropriated by white capitalist men in a structurally similar way and as part of the same historical process driven by the goal of capitalist accumulation” (p.221).

Nor, for Mies, is the subjugation of women in the capitalist process something limited to an original moment of primitive accumulation alone; instead, according to her, the process is ongoing. As Oksala puts the point, for Mies “the same process of expropriation that characterized early capitalism is still ongoing because it is a structural and necessary aspect of capitalism. The prevalence of both direct and structural violence against women, particularly in the global south, should be understood against the logic of ongoing primitive accumulation, which constitutes the precondition for capitalist exploitation. Mies’s examples range from such overt instances as slavery and sex trafficking to more complex phenomena such as mail-order brides, sweatshop labor, and sex tourism” (p.222). Likewise with the subjugation and domination of nature.

In a nutshell, the core contention of Mies and of Marxist-feminism more generally is that, “in addition to the appropriation of surplus value produced by wage-labor, capitalism relies on the ongoing and violent expropriation of women, indigenous peoples, nonhuman animals, and the biosphere.” As Oksala aptly summarizes, “[t]he expropriation of women’s reproductive labor is therefore structurally analogous to and historically contemporaneous with the extraction of natural resources.” She continues: “At various points in history and to varying degrees today, women have been violently forced to give up autonomy over their bodies and reproductive capacities, and these capacities and the labor connected with them have been extracted from them for free and put to the service of capital accumulation.” Moreover, she emphasizes: “This process is masked and legitimized by an essentially ideological process that ‘naturalizes’ women —understands them as being less civilized, less rational, and closer to nature” (p.222).

And yet, and this is crucial, “women and the colonies are not only conceived of as ‘nature’,” but they are also “expropriated as ‘nature’. For, as Oksala is careful to stress, “they occupy analogous positions in the logic of capitalist accumulation in which the mechanisms of exploitation are dependent on the invisible base of expropriation” (p.223).

Even so, Oksala also seeks to complement – to revise and update – Mies and Marxist feminism’s traditional focus on processes of ***externalization*** of what Moore refers to as ‘Cheap nature’ from commodity circulation. She does so by providing a supplementary account of two processes of ***internalization*** under the conditions of financialized neoliberalism: namely, the commodification of nature as nature, and the real subsumption of nature, respectively (p.223). Both of these processes can be seen occurring with women and with nature.

In terms of the commodification of nature as nature, Oksala notes that, “[a]ccording to neoliberal economic theory, marketization is a particularly effective means of speeding up economic growth given that GDP is measured in terms of market transactions. Hence, although we can today certainly still identify significant processes of externalization operating —the polluting of the atmosphere with excessive greenhouse gases, for example —we also have to identify mechanisms that seek to internalize the environment more fully into capitalist markets” (p.224).

And indeed, she continues: “we can identify a twin movement: capital externalizes costs – for example, by emitting pollution—which provides opportunities for capital accumulation through mechanisms of internalization by other firms (or sometimes even the same firms) in the form of pollution trading, for example” (p.224).

Likewise with women. In this vein, Oksala emphasizes that “today the reproductive labor of women is not so much externalized from the commodity markets into the private realm and then expropriated for free; it is increasingly internalized into the capitalist markets and exploited as productive labor.” As such, she contends, “[t]his has resulted in new forms of gender oppression, as it is often poor, immigrant women from ethnic minorities who now end up providing the commodified care services.” To this end, she concludes, “[t]he so-called ‘global care chains’ and the growth in the trafficking of women have become some of the gendered effects of this development” (p.225).

Oksala goes on to distinguish between the formal and real subsumption of nature in the capitalist process, and to again argue that under conditions of financialized neoliberalism, we have witnessed an increase in the real subsumption of nature both with respect to nature proper and with respect to women. The formal subsumption of nature refers to the process of primitive accumulation, or what Moore terms “accumulation by appropriation,” proper. By contrast, Oksala argues, “[t]he real subsumption of nature refers to strategies by which capital seeks to intentionally alter biophysical processes in order to overcome obstacles in production, gain competitive advantage, and increase profitability. The logic of extraction is replaced with a logic that seeks to enhance biological productivity itself” (p.227). Here she uses the example of the forest industry in her native Finland, and goes on to draw a parallel with “the emergence of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs),” which “has transformed the opportunities for the exploitation of women’s reproductive labor due to the ability of these technologies to alter radically the biological process of human reproduction” (p.228).

In sum, Oksala’s article helps us further understand the intimate connection between the domination of men over women and the domination of humans over nature, in relation to the process of capitalist accumulation. In this respect, Oksala’s article very much complements the ambitious World Ecology paradigm as sketched by Moore; but her article also identifies innovative mechanisms of exploitation through internalization in the contemporary period of financialised neoliberalism, with the rise of bio-capitalism, including both the commodification of nature as nature and the real subsumption of nature.

**Towards a Theory of the *Racial* Capitalocene**

If Oksala’s article helps further ground the connection between the process and project of the capitalocene and the subjugation of women, Françoise Vergès, in her chapter, “Racial Capitalocene: Is the Anthropocene Racial?,” included in a recent edited volume on *Futures of Black Radicalism*, published by Verso, helps clarify the connection between racial domination and the domination of humans over nature, which Moore was also at pains to stress.

To this end, Vergès quotes the historian Joachim Radkau, who has written that “the chief problem of colonialism seems to have been not so much its immediate ecological consequences as its long-term impact, the full extent of which became apparent only centuries later, in the era of modern technology, and many times only after the colonial states had acquired their independence.” Vergès goes on to add that the elaboration of a “narrative of the racial capitalocene” requires precisely the “integrat[ion of] this long memory of colonialism’s impact and the fact that destruction in the colonial era becomes visible in the postcolonial era.” This means supplementing the often-presentist discourse of environmental racism with a deeper historical consciousness and story about origins.

Such a story, Vergès contends, must also include “an analysis of capital, imperialism, gender, class, and race and a conception of nature and of being human that opposes the Western approach.” In such a vein, she points to the 1991 “Principles of Environmental Justice,” the first principle of which declared that “Environmental Justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.”

According to Vergès, such a principle “posits a new understanding of what it is to be human and challenges the international dialogue on climate change that focused on a strategy of adaptation. Adaptation through technology or the development of green capitalism has indeed been presented as a good strategy. Yet,” Vergès contends, “it does not thoroughly address the long history and memory of environmental destruction about which Radkau has written, nor the asymmetry of power.”

Vergès’s story of origins, it turns out, draws explicitly on Moore’s paradigm and account. In Vergès’s articulation, “[i]n the reconfiguration of the world that followed the colonization of the Americas and the Caribbean, nature was transformed into a cheap resource, as endlessly renewable as the bonded workforce.” Moreover, against a certain discourse of the Anthropocene, she adds, “[i]t is human praxis as labor and the global use of a color line in the division of labor that must be studied, and not a ‘human’ death drive.”

She, furthermore, continues, by referencing Moore directly, in arguing: “To unpack the different levels of racialized environment we need to go back to the long sixteenth century, the era of Western ‘discoveries,’ of the first colonial empires, of genocides, of the slave trade and slavery, the modern world mobilized the work of commodified human beings and uncommodified extra-human nature in order to advance labor productivity within commodity production.” She insists: “Racialized chattel were the capital that made capitalism. Africa was forced to share its social product — human beings — with the Atlantic slave system. But the slave trade consisted of not only the organized deportation of millions of Africans to continents and islands, but also a massive transfer of plants, animals, diseases, soil, techniques, and manufactured goods from Europe.” She concludes: “Capitalism relied for growth on an endless access to nature as excess, as a ‘bounty of extra-human biological systems and geological distribution: plants, silver, gold, iron, coal’.”

Towards the end of her chapter, Vergès broaches the radical emancipatory suggestion that “[w]orld citizenship and humanism must be brought in as decolonializing alternatives.” She concludes with an evocative quote by Fanon, who wrote in 1961 that “Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it,” to which she adds, “[w]e are at a critical juncture, a historical moment that sends us into our inheritances to find sources and references for the struggle ahead.” The story of origins, then, is for Vergès but a crucial grounding for a future-oriented fight for freedom, for an end to racial oppression, and for planetary survival.

**More than the Politics of Capitalism?**

If Moore, Oksala, and Vergès all converge on centering the five hundred year trajectory of capitalism as the driving force underpinning the unfolding climate catastrophe, the eminent postcolonial theorist Dipesh Chakrabarty registers a chord of at least partial dissent from such a narrative. For Chakrabarty, there is “no denying that climate change has profoundly to do with the history of capitalism,” but, he adds, it cannot “be reduced to the latter” (p.29).

Indeed, Chakrabarty sees the influence of “intellectual categories developed to address capitalism and globalization” on the discussion of global climate change to be a limitation. And, moreover, he adds, the debate remains very much “structured by the experiences and concepts of the developed world” (p.25).

For Chakrabarty, a five hundred year story simply will not suffice. It is not a long enough *durée*. For climate change is best viewed “as part of a complex family of interconnected problems, all adding up to the larger issue of a growing human footprint on the planet that has, over the last couple of centuries and especially since the end of the Second World War, seen a definite ecological overshoot on the part of humanity” (p.27).

There are many moments in Chakrabarty’s account, but the point of origin stretches back some 10,000 years. In his words: ““The problem of humans’ ecological footprint, we can say, was ratcheted up with the invention of agriculture (more than 10,000 years ago) and then again after the oceans found their present level about 6,000 years ago and we developed our ancient cities, empires, and urban orders.” These were the first ratchets, from which the story begins. The next moment, however, coincides with the World Ecology paradigm’s point of origin – since, for Chakrabarty, the problem of humans’ ecological footprint “was ratcheted up yet again over the last 500 years with European expansion and colonization of faraway lands inhabited by other peoples, and the subsequent rise of industrial civilization.” Finally, “a further ratcheting up by several significant notches happened after the end of the Second World War, when human numbers and consumption rose exponentially thanks to the widespread use of fossil fuels, not only in the transport sector but also in agriculture and medicine allowing, eventually, even the poor of the world to live longer – though not healthy – lives” (p.28).

According to Chakrabarty’s story, then, “climate change is only one manifestation of humanity’s varied and accelerating impact on the Earth System,” and perhaps more importantly, the rise of capitalism is but one ratcheting up in a longer series by which humanity’s ecological footprint became bigger and bigger, culminating in a definite ecological overshoot. “Viewed thus,” Chakrabarty insists, “the idea of the Anthropocene increasingly becomes more about the expanding ecological footprint of humanity as a whole – and,” he adds, apparently unafraid of the accusation of Malthusianism, that “this must include the question of human population, for while the poor do not have a direct carbon footprint, they contribute to the human footprint in other ways” (p.28).

Chakrabarty, furthermore, contends that the Anthropocene crisis differs from the crises of capitalism in one allegedly important way: namely, that “there are no lifeboats here for the rich and the privileged’ (p.29). This claim has provoked the ire of many on the left, including Vergès, who quotes Aaron Vansintjan’s denunciation of Chakrabarty for “defend[ing] a notion of the Anthropocene that … infers a ‘blanket humanity, a blanket history, a blanket geological record’ which relies on ‘apolitical and colonialist assumptions’ and ‘highlights the danger of using one framework (geology and climatology) to make universal claims about the world — it helps make only one world possible.”

But Chakrabarty would seem nonplussed, his postcolonial credentials perhaps protecting his confidence. He doubles down, indeed, quips back to the critics of his statement about the lifeboat with the acerbic retort: “I find it ironic that some scholars on the left should speak with an assumption similar to that made by many of the rich, who do not necessarily deny climate change but believe that, whatever the extent of the warming and destabilization of the climate, they will always be able to buy their way out of the problem!” (p.30). The spectre of a “climate tipping point,” Chakrabarty insists, “is unpredictable but real” (p.30).

What’s more, Chakrabarty continues: “the point of the lifeboat metaphor was not to deny that the rich, depending on how rich they are, will always have – compared to the poor – more resources at their disposal to deal with disasters and buy their way to relative safety. It is possible,” he admits, “that the lifeboat metaphor was too cryptic (and it clearly misfired for some readers);” yet he insists, nevertheless, that “my point was that climate change, potentially, has to do with changes in the boundary conditions needed for the sustenance of human and many other forms of life” (p.31).

Chakrabarty also makes a point about his line of argument as providing a good tactic for appealing to “rich nations and classes to act on climate change.” A better case than a discourse of the capitalocene and a centering of class conflict, he contends, can be made by appealing to powerful peoples’ “enlightened self-interest.” Not only because the prospect of an end to capitalism nowhere in sight, but also because “[t]he science of global warming allows us to … mak[e] the point that, for all its differential impact, it is a crisis for the rich and their descendants as well” (p.31).

For making such a case, such an appeal to common cause, Chakrabarty contends, the longer the view, the better. Indeed, he insists: “It is only when placing the problem of planetary climate change in a framework that is larger than the spatio-temporal scales involved in the analysis of capitalism or globalization that we begin to see in what sense climate change may be – if not a common responsibility – a common predicament” (p.31).

In this vein, Chakrabarty continues: “the ecological overshoot of humanity requires us to both zoom into the details of intra-human injustice – otherwise we do not see the suffering of many humans – and to zoom out of that history, or else we do not see the suffering of other species and, in a manner of speaking, the suffering of the planet.” This before concluding: “But my point is that the human story can no longer be told from the perspective of the 500 years (at most) of capitalism alone” (pp.33-34).

Chakrabarty defends the notion of the Anthropocene precisely from the perspective of other species; but he does not accept the charge that he thereby ignores capitalist oppression. To the contrary, he contends: “The ecological overshoot of humanity does not make sense without reference to the lives of other species. And in that story, humans are a species too, albeit a dominant one.” However, he is quick to add: “This does not cancel out the story of capitalist oppression” (p.34).

For Chakrabarty, the emphasis on the Anthropocene as a common predicament is not intended to occlude difficult questions of distributive justice. But the enormity of the phenomenon taxes our very vocabulary of politics. As he puts the point: “The common predicament that may be anticipated in the Anthropocene raises difficult questions of distributive justice – between rich and poor, developed and developing countries, the living and the yet unborn, and even the human and the non-human – and may pose a challenge to the categories on which our traditions of political thought are based” (p.25). In particular, he emphasizes, “[g]lobal warming accentuates the planetary tendency towards human-driven extinction of many other species, with some scientists suggesting that the planet may have already entered the beginnings of a long (in human terms) Great Extinction event … But our political and justice related thinking remains very human-focused” (p.32).

Chakrabarty ends his article with a warning about the Eurocentric confines of the debate about climate catastrophe. He writes: “Global warming is a planetary phenomenon. But as a subject of discussion, it seem[s] to be distributed very unequally in the world.” As a result, “our debates remain anchored primarily in the experiences, values, and desires of developed nations, that is, in the West (bracketing Japan for the moment), even when we think we are arguing against what we construe to be the selfish interests of ‘the West’” (p.35).

**Confronting Obstacles to Addressing the Crisis**

Despite his critique of the centering of capitalism in accounting for the unfolding climate catastrophe, Chakrabarty is willing to admit that capitalism is at least part of the problem. And as we have seen with Moore, Oksala, and Vergès, there is a considerable scholarly contingent willing to elaborate a rather sophisticated narrative about the intricate connections, indeed mutual interdependence, among dynamics of class, gender, and racial domination, on the one hand, and the domination of humans over nature, on the other.

These scholars are not operating in a vacuum. Indeed, as Dolores Guerrero, the head of policy and advocacy at the UK-based organization, *Global Justice Now*, argues in her chapter, “The Limits of Capitalist Solutions to the Climate Crisis,” published in 2018 in a volume edited by Vishwar Satgar on *The Climate Crisis. South Africa and Global Democratic Eco-Socialist Alternatives*, “[t]here is an increasing acceptance that capitalism is directly connected with climate change and that the apocalyptic consequences of it are already causing deaths, diseases, dislocations and destruction to ecology and people’s lives.” Moreover, these nefarious consequences are bound to continue so long as there remains “no decisive measure being taken to address the climate crisis.” According to Guerrero, it is important to understand the extent of structural dependence on a fundamentally extractive and ultimately collectively suicidal relations. She emphasizes in particular that “[t]he extraction of fossil fuels (oil, coal, natural gas), which is the biggest cause of climate change,” is what “enables large-scale production of goods, transportation systems and efficient distribution networks of products and services.” She also highlights the fact that “modern wars in the last three decades, as exemplified by the invasion of Iraq, were at least partially about access to and control of the production and distribution of oil.”

And yet, and this is the point of her intervention that is perhaps most worthy noting, “[a]s the impacts of climate change intensify, free-market ideology, big business and financial actors increasingly shape the strategies and priorities in addressing it” (p.30). Again and again, Guerrero stresses the ubiquity of corporate capture of attempts to address the climate crisis, as well as the systematic exclusion and marginalization of the voices of those most negatively affected by the climate crisis from climate negotiations.

Guerrero begins by pointing out that, “[d]espite the inclusion of climate change in policies after the historic 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro that gave birth to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) [in 1994], and after more than two decades of meetings, the total global anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which cause climate change, have continued to increase” (p.31).

According to Guerrero, it should by now be obvious that “the climate negotiations are not generating appropriate solutions that match the scale of the crisis.” Among the reasons for this, she insists, is the fact that “the countries that are most affected by climate change, but have contributed the least to it, have very little say to influence climate politics due to the asymmetry of political and negotiating power between the global North and the global South” (p.31). Or, as she puts the point elsewhere: “global warming most threatens the poor and the unborn, the ‘two constituencies with little or no voice’ in governance” (p.38).

At the same time, crucially, “parties to the UNFCCC do not acknowledge that the capitalist economic model they espouse and rely on is based on plunder, waste and pollution” (p.31).

Guerrero stresses how successive rounds of climate negotiations have “set the trend for consolidating new markets and investment opportunities for big business in the name of climate solutions. These business-oriented and market-controlled climate policies and mechanisms differ widely from the just and sustainable solutions needed by the people and the planet” (p.33).

She laments that “[t]he challenges to democracy and development in general are increasing due to the corporate capture of UN climate processes and other policy arenas. From negotiating for binding commitments,” she contends, “the UNFCCC capitulated to the corporate agenda of voluntary pledges and market-based initiatives that will do more harm than good to the environment and the global climate system” (p.34).

In effect, these negotiations “allow business as usual and create corporate profits in the name of combating climate change” (p.34). As such, she insists, “neoliberal capitalism has fundamentally shaped global responses to climate change,” and she highlights “the need to challenge the entrenched power of many corporations, the culture of energy use and global inequalities in energy consumption” (p.36).

Easier said than done. Not only are current regulations woefully inadequate; they are being actively undermined. Very powerful actors, such as “the WTO, international financial institutions (IFIs), transnational corporations and other agents of neoliberal capitalism” are in fact “mov[ing] to eliminate environmental policies defined as ‘barriers to trade’ and to prevent governments from discriminating against polluting products through bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations” (p.39).

Meanwhile, “[p]owerful corporations, through their lobbyists,” have consistently influenc[ed] climate negotiations” (p.39). In a word, Guerrero insists, “[c]limate change will not be solved through negotiations dominated by corporate interests. The governments that are supposed to lead in climate change solutions are also the ones pushing corporate trade deals … that will benefit the fracking industry and support big agribusiness companies that undermine the ability of farmers to adapt to climate change, as well as various free trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties” (p.39).

So this is what we are up against – not only is the global capitalist political economy the driving force underpinning the unfolding climate catastrophe; but also, well-entrenched, vested capitalist interests are working systematically to actively undermine or otherwise coopt attempts to address the problem.

**What Is to Be Done?**

Given the urgency of the situation, it is well worth paying some close attention to debates about tactics and strategy for mitigating the climate catastrophe from within capitalism, even as we might wish to struggle to transcend it, as part of a transitional agenda, so to speak. To this end, there has been a quite interesting, albeit decidedly Eurocentric, on-going debate in the pages of the *New Left Review* over the past couple of years, of which Lola Seaton provides a useful overview of contending proposals in her article, “Green Questions.” She begins by comparing several contributions to the debate in relation to the different answers they provide to the question, “what does the world need to cut in order to avoid global disaster?” (p.106).

On the one side, there is Troy Vettese’s “eco-austere” answer, which “tak[es] land scarcity as the ‘fundamental metric’ for [an] ‘alternative green political economy’, and insists “that we must reduce our energy consumption and cut out meat and dairy” (p.106).

On the other side, there is Robert Pollin, who “takes issue with Vettese’s ‘fundamental metric’: he thinks Vettese’s estimates about how much land renewable-energy systems would require are inflated. With land scarcity not a limiting factor in Pollin’s account, cutting our energy consumption—beyond reducing energy wastage—becomes unnecessary” (p.107). According to Seaton, “Pollin is almost exclusively concerned with reducing not energy use but fossil-fuel use” (p.107).

In the middle, there is Herman Daly, who thinks “we need to reduce our use of resources, including, but not limited to, fossil fuels, and to limit population growth. To implement these reductions, he envisions some kind of cap-and-trade system. In the case of resources, there would be a ‘limit on the right to deplete what you own’, and that right would be purchasable ‘by auction from the government’” (p.106).

Then there are Mark Burton and Peter Somerville, who agree with Pollin’s emphasis on the switch to renewables, but disagree with respect to the level of economic sacrifice that such a switch would entail. Seaton points out that “whereas Pollin is wary about the political and economic viability of massively shrinking the economy—which he fears could result in ‘a green great depression’, featuring impossibly high unemployment and unacceptable drops in living standards—Burton and Somerville argue that a drastic contraction of the material size of the economy through cutting industrial production, construction, agriculture and distribution is the essential complement to a switch to renewables” (p.107).

Seaton notes that “Pollin’s answer stands out from the rest because his version of the transition to clean energy would mostly not be felt by individual consumers, whose energy use, unaffected by the change of provenance in quantitative terms, could continue as normal” (p.107). In her words, “the question of sacrifice in Pollin’s text is largely out of frame” (p.108). As such, “Pollin’s solutions [would] release us from significantly altering our lifestyles and call for little curtailment of individual freedom” (p.108).

Seaton continues: “Vettese’s solutions, by contrast, deprive everyone of meat and require many people in the world to use a lot less energy, especially Americans, who would have to reduce their energy consumption by more than 80 per cent” (p.108).

Seaton argues that “Daly’s proposals provide something of a bridge between Pollin’s technology-enabled unlimited consumption and Vettese’s non-optional austerity” (p.108). His steady-state cap-and-trade system would “combine aggregate control—over the total amount of carbon we collectively emit or the total number of children born—with as much personal autonomy as is compatible with such macro-restrictions” (p.109).

Nevertheless, in Seaton’s judgment, Pollin’s proposal “has a kind of prima facie plausibility that the others lack” (p.109). She reasons: “Intuitively one suspects that the consumption habits of American citizens—whether meat-eating or car-driving—would be tough to crack” (p.109). Moreover, she contends, “Pollin’s exclusion of sacrifice also appeals because it speaks to the scepticism some feel about the efficacy of small-scale, individual efforts to reduce humankind’s ecological footprint;” while, at the same time, “[h]is programme is attractive from certain angles on account of its narrow focus, too” (p.110).

Seaton is, in a word, persuaded by Pollin’s “political realism, abetted by a sense of urgency” (p.112). To this end, she quotes him approvingly, as insisting, “we do not have the luxury to waste time on huge global efforts fighting for unattainable goals” (p.112).

Political strategy, Seaton contends, calls for “attempts to identify what kind of political obstacles sit in the way of implementing those technical solutions at the required speed and with the necessary thoroughness, with a view to asking how those obstacles might be overcome” (p.112). It requires us “to map the route between ‘how things are’ and ‘how things ought to be’” (p.112).

The problem with the more ambitious proposals, requiring greater levels of sacrifice, according to Seaton, is that the “risk political irrelevance, since we are left without any meaningful sense of how they would come to seem necessary to the people in a position to implement them” (p.113).

For that matter, “Pollin, too,” she notes, “fails to specify how the intergovernmental global bureaucracy his investment plan presumably requires would obtain enough political clout to override the interests of the fossil-fuel industries” (p.115).

One of the key features that distinguishes Pollin’s proposal is his commitment to continued growth. Seaton points out that a particularly contentious point of the debate was provoked by the affirmation by Benjamin Kunkel, who wrote that “‘fidelity to GDP amounts to the religion of the modern world’” (p.115). Others responded that “not growth, but ‘maximizing profit for business in order to deliver maximum incomes and wealth for the rich’,” (p.115) is what drives the capitalist system. Yet, as Burton and Somerville stress, growth is, at the very least, “an influential ‘cultural’ notion” (p.115). And they go on to make the point that “the GDP imaginary … also influences electoral politics” (p.115).

Indeed, as Seaton puts the point, “[t]he sine qua non of electoral viability, growth is thus not just a self-activating outcome of capitalism’s drive for profit, but the ideological cornerstone of its social legitimacy” (p.116). In this vein, she makes reference to “Michael Mann’s pithy formulations: GDP growth is why capitalism is seen as a great success story’, whilst ‘political success is actually measured by economic growth’” (p.116).

For his part, Daly counters that the “connection between profit and welfare—a connection institutionalized by GDP—hardly holds” (p.117). And furthermore, in such a vein, Seaton quotes Robert Brenner, who has argued, that over the past decades, under neoliberalism, “as growth has slowed, so has people’s belief in it” (p.117).

Burton and Somerville criticise Pollin’s proposal, with its attachment to growth, for being allegedly guilty of “‘misidentification of the villain(s)’—his blaming financialized neoliberalism and thus the stagnation of growth, rather than growth itself.” They claim that this “is what allows him to make ecological proposals that operate essentially within ‘mitigated capitalism’” (p.118).

Seaton continues: “[W]hereas Daly’s eco-friendly capitalism is ‘small-scale’ and stationary, under Pollin’s ‘green new deal’, a bigger economy may be better. This is a key difference” (p.118). She, furthermore, points out, that there are “two, connected reasons Pollin remains committed to growth. Firstly, he regards it as politically non-negotiable;” and “[c]orrespondingly, [his] central objection to degrowth is to its ‘immediate effect’: ‘huge job losses and declining living standards for working people and the poor’” (pp.119-120).

But is Pollin’s embrace of green growth within a mitigated capitalism in its own way a case of wishful thinking? Or, as Seaton poses the question, “is capitalism capable of ecological self-healing, or does it, as well as fossil-fuelled growth, need to be jettisoned if the planet is to remain habitable?” (p.122).

Here Seaton returns to the work of Michael Mann, who in the fourth volume of his *Sources of Social Power* has identified “three ‘fundamental social actors of our time’ whom he thinks are responsible for climate change: capitalism, nation-states and individual consumers” (p.123). For Mann, one of the key problems is systemic “short-termism;” the other, “nation-statism.”

According to Mann, “short-termism characterizes the thinking of both politicians, beholden to the rhythm of election cycles, and the capitalist classes, bound to the profit-making imperative, whilst the nation-state remains the fundamental political and jurisdictional unit, and the performance of the national economy, the overriding political priority” (p.123).

In terms of the problem of “nation-statism,” as Seaton puts the point: “Any viable green strategy would require “the existence of a global, intergovernmental body with genuine legislative capabilities and practical powers of implementation” (p.124). However, and this is crucial, “the geopolitical arrangements [capitalism] enshrines are what is preventing us from taking necessary action to save [the planet]” (p.124).

Ultimately, for Seaton, “[i]t is the problem of how to overcome … economic and ecological unevenness—and how to compel high-consuming countries to accept sacrifices on behalf of the safety and sustainability of low- consuming countries—that is so intractable” (p.125). Yet, “as Mann writes, though ‘eco-socialist arguments are morally valid, morality does not rule the world’” (p.125).

Seaton goes on to quote the Marxist literary critic Frederic Jameson’s claim that “it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism.” This may be true, Seaton contends, but she goes on to ask, “but can it be shown that we need to attempt the latter—the hardly imaginable—in order to prevent the former—the easily imaginable—from befalling us in reality?” (p.126). She continues: “Does pursuing the unimaginable or advocating the impossible paradoxically have a greater chance of effecting change at the magnitude and speed required?” (p.126).

Here she quotes the social historian Mike Davis, according to whom “[i]t can be reasonable and prudent to make overambitious, unrealistic demands … just because it is so drastic, it illuminates what is indispensable and essential” (p.127). In a nod to the notion of utopian realism, Seaton appeals to Davis’s lucid “**perception that reality—the all too real prospect of global disaster— has become, so to speak, unrealistic**” (p.127).

**Conclusion**

Let us, on this utopian realist point, conclude. In this lecture, we have focused on the relation between capitalism and climate catastrophe. To this end, we have considered in some depth the World Ecology paradigm as articulated by Jason Moore. We have also incorporated a feminist complement to the paradigm as provided by Johanna Oksala, as well as a decolonial, critical race complement to the paradigm as elaborated by Françoise Vergès. We have then considered a partial rejoinder to the centering of capitalism in accounting for climate catastrophe, as articulated by the eminent postcolonial theorist Dipesh Chakrabarty. We have concluded with a treatment of the systemic obstacles to addressing the climate crisis within capitalism as laid out by Dolores Guerrero, and with an overview of debates about what is to be done by Lola Seaton.