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Article

Redefining the oppressed: The biotariat, ecolinguistics, and world-ecology

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Abstract

This article attempts to strengthen an existing argument that for ecolinguistics to fulfill its critical potential, it must move beyond "shallow environmentalism". This may be done by adopting a historical-materialist framework to identify the actual agents of ecological harm, as well as properly attribute agency to the oppressed. The article proposes Jason W. Moore's world-ecology as an innovative "ecosophy" for this purpose, as it posits capitalism not as a social or economic system, but an ecological regime that develops through the web of life. To demonstrate this approach in practice, the paper uses the term "biotariat" as a central case study. Originally coined by the poet and scholar Stephen Collis, the term was adopted by Moore and transformed from a poetic into a powerful theoretical and analytical tool that redefines class struggle as a "multispecies affair". Through an analysis of the term's etymology, discursive functions and potential political impact, the article shows how the "biotariat" linguistically unifies the exploitation of human and non-human life and makes the unseen "unpaid work" of nature visible. The conclusion of the article is that there is more to ecolinguistics than deconstructing dominant narratives and proposing new econarratives. By grounding its analysis in historical materialism, the field can not only help reveal capitalist exploitation and appropriation of all life, but also facilitate construction of liberating counter-narratives that connect "proletarian emancipation and biotarian liberation" as a single journey toward a just and truly sustainable future.

Keywords: world-ecology; ecolinguistics; biotariat; Capitalocene; class struggle; ecosophy

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1. Introduction

In the era of a crisis that is as much ecological as it is cognitive and communicative, ecolinguistics has an important role to play. For a relatively young (trans-/meta-)discipline, it has already gone through a series of "turns" and developed into distinct approaches within the broader framework. Most of these developments are made on conceptual, epistemological, or methodological grounds (Zhou, 2022; Steciąg, 2023). However, one can also find calls — mostly yet unanswered or not expanded upon — for a rethinking of the discipline according to its political potential. Diego L. Forte (2020) made one such call on the pages of *Language & Ecology*. Forte postulates a return to Marxian roots of critique to avoid losing ecolinguistics' political effectiveness. This loss may result from adopting a kind of shallow environmentalism that obscures the agents responsible for ecological harm — a practice common within the broader Green Thought that tries to avoid "naming the system" and instead blurs the responsibility by placing it on an abstract Humanity (Moore, 2022a).

While Zhou (2022, p. 483) envisions an ecolinguistics that "can transcend both linguistic and old ecolinguistic dogmas to pursue a wider range of ecological and linguistic problems", Forte (2020) postulates a new, truly critical and class-oriented direction for the field. He argues for a return to the Marxist logic of class struggle and highlighting the unequal culpability of actors in causing the environmental crises. He calls for animals to be noticed as a voiceless workforce, exploited in the same way as human workforce under capitalism. This requires a rethinking of all oppressed groups, both human and non-human, and acknowledging the intersectionality of their struggles. This must be followed by reclaiming animal agency, especially as it unfolds within the human-driven economy. According to Forte, integrating fundamental critique with a search for positive alternatives would refuel ecolinguistics' potential to effect real change.

This ambitious goal will not be achieved by way of simply "calling things by their names" (Solnit, 2018). After all, "one can only go so far with the common sense that capitalism is bad for the environment" (Shapiro, 2013). Boldly acknowledging capitalism, instead of tabooing it, or re-introducing terms like class or exploitation of labor will probably not suffice. What is needed is *new* ways of telling stories about the world that reveal existing injustices and show us a way forward. If so, one potential example for redefining class struggle through both critique and a specific new econarrative is the "biotariat", introduced in a poem by Stephen Collis (2013). The poem is part of a larger project and found its place in the 2013 book of poems called *To the Barricades*. The project is not only a literary text of avant-garde poetics, but also a tangible act of resistance through direct political and social critique. In a poem called "Almost Islands", Collis (2013) explores the interconnectedness of all life that we need to acknowledge in the face of shared crises. He not only reveals the new term, but also extensively defines it and explains his motivations in an extended blog post (Collis, 2014). He builds a whole new storyworld that teaches us the totality of capitalist exploitation of all life, but also gives us motivation for

collective resistance. The biotariat as an entity becomes a new political subject, encompassing all exploited life forms which are enclosed and commodified by global capitalism.

To the Barricades has had rather limited direct popular impact, although it has received some successful critical and academic reception. However, the biotariat itself does not seem to have attracted much scholarly or cultural attention with one notable exception — the works of environmental historian Jason W. Moore (e.g., Moore, 2021a, 2021b, 2022b). Moore (2003) is known as the author of the complex and compelling concept of world-ecology that synthesizes the thought of Marx, Braudel and Wallerstein with a focus on capitalism as an ecological project. Collis (2017) even stated that Moore's writings have become one of his later inspirations, as he himself has always tried to blend Marxist analysis with ecology. Thus, in the concept of the "biotariat", science and poetry inspire and enrich each other in a linguistic act of rebellion which attempts to both reveal the exploitation of all nature under capitalism, as well as further real political goals of ending this exploitation. This completes an interesting conceptual loop that meshes with Forte's (2020) goals and presents a compelling case that utilizing Marxist perspectives as the ecosophical foundation for ecolinguistics can acknowledge the relational agency of all human and extra-human natures (Stibbe, 2012; Moore, 2015). Collis' and Moore's story of the biotariat provides an econarrative that not only critiques and reveals the existing injustices, but also shows us a way forward towards emancipation of all beings by organizing and "resisting capitalism from the position of life itself" (Collis, 2014). And while naming the global collective of life exploited under capitalism does not help us construct a language for a sustainable future — after all, in an ideal future the biotariat simply would not exist — it may help us work through the stagnation of the present (Steciąg, 2023).

The article begins with presenting the case for using the world-ecology paradigm as an ecosophy. It lays the foundational ideas of the approach — the *Oikeios* and relational agency, dialectics versus dualisms, capitalism as a world-ecology, the Capitalocene and the idea of "cheapening" — with a focus on how they relate to language use. The next part introduces the "biotariat" and places it within the larger context of Collis' works. The term is then deconstructed ecolinguistically and politically. The last section contains an analysis of how the term lives on in the academic works of Moore and how it develops linguistically, theoretically and politically. The conclusion reiterates the need for a redefinition of the oppressed and calls for more openness when searching for new, radical ecosophies one can use in ecolinguistic endeavors.

2. World-ecology as ecosophy: Life, capital and agency in the *Oikeios*

According to Stibbe (2015), ecosophies are subjective and dynamic and as numerous as the analysts themselves. They are ethical frameworks or sets of philosophical principles used for evaluating discourses. In this multiplicity, an ecosophy formed on the basis of world-ecology would place closer to the ecosophy of Guattari (2000) rather than to that of Naess

(1989). These two visions are sometimes considered complementary, although each brings its own set of strengths and weaknesses (Levesque, 2016). Naess formed his concept of ecosophy from a blend of pantheism, an intuitive, personal relationship with nature, as well as from ethical principles drawn from non-Western thinkers. His approach has proven to be widely accessible and morally resonant, but lacks a meaningful political theory of power and systemic change. Guattari formulated his ecosophy from a critique of capitalism and institutions, with a focus on the inextricability of the ecological crisis from social and psychological pathologies. His ecosophy is politically charged and focuses our attention on the multi-level workings of capitalism within our minds, the society, and the environment, although his overly abstract academic language is the most probable cause for why his approach remains an exclusive intellectual-only pursuit. Importantly, both the introduction of relational holism as well as the conceptualization of capitalism as a relation of humans with the rest of nature have made it possible to come up with new philosophical positions, such as the one comprising the paradigm of world-ecology (Moore, 2015).

World-ecology is not a rigid, monolithic theory, but rather a flexible framework with deliberate philosophical and methodological foundations. It has been called a "conversation" or "discussion", which reveals its intersubjective evolution within the works of scholars from a plethora of disciplines from geography, through environmental humanities, history, sociology, to literary studies. It is an intellectually *and* politically charged paradigm which "unfolds from a rich mosaic of relational thinking about capitalism, nature, power, and history", as well as revealing how "power, production, and perception entwine" (Moore, 2015). It directly counters the "shallow environmentalism" of the mainstream "sustainable development" discourse (Forte, 2020). Moore's paradigm consists of several elements working together, all of which are necessary to be able to treat world-ecological thinking as a kind of ecosophy. These are the *Oikeios*, the deconstruction of the nature–society dualism, capitalism as world-ecology, the Capitalocene, and the "Cheap Things".

The *Oikeios* is the paradigm's foundational concept. Derived from the Greek phrase *oikeios topos* (meaning "favorable place"), it is a shorthand for the "creative, historical, and dialectical relation between, and also always within, human and extra-human natures" (Moore, 2015, "The Oikeios: Interaction…" section). The concept is mostly an ontological claim that acknowledges the mutually constitutive relation of species and environments, with the boundaries between the organic and inorganic continuously shifting. One profound implication of the *Oikeios* is Moore's reconceptualization of agency that challenges the dualist assumption that agency is a property of a singular entity, such as "Humanity" or "Nature". Instead, agency becomes a bundled and emergent property of the "definite configurations of human activity with the rest of life" (Moore, 2015, "The Oikeios: Interaction…" section). Moore uses the example of climate change, which is neither a simple consequence of human activity, nor a historical agent in and of itself, but rather a mutually constitutive relation between the climate and civilization. What this means is that civilizational development has always been affected by the climate, but the climate is also being affected by civilization. Thus when a dualist approach might see a

phenomenon like animal farming as consisting of separate ecological (e.g., species, disease, water use) and social (e.g., labor organization, consumer choice) elements, the perspective of the *Oikeios* understands it as co-constitutive bundles of human and extra-human natures.

The world-ecology paradigm is also a fundamental critique of Cartesian dualism and whatever other dualisms have emerged from it. This has not only philosophical, but also political significance, as Moore (2015, "The Double Internality…" section) directs the critique towards the 17th-century thinker as well as the mainstream of contemporary environmental thought which follows the "Green Arithmetic", where "political economy plus Nature equals converging crises". Moore (2015, "Historical Nature…" section) shows how the nature–society dualism, despite being empirically false, possesses a "real historical force". This force became a tool of power, continued after Descartes by Bacon, the Enlightenment and other similar projects, and has been fundamental to the symbolic and material conquest, transformation, commodification, control, domination, and appropriation of certain populations and landscapes.

It is upon these intellectual foundations that capitalism has become a "world-ecology of capital, power, and re/production in the web of life" (Moore, 2015, "The Oikeios: Towards…" section). Moore argues that capitalism is neither an economic, nor social, nor socio-economic system, but first and foremost an ecological regime that turns everything, from photosynthesis to childbearing, into value. In this lens, the unfolding crisis of neoliberalism and the planetary ecological crisis are not separate, converging phenomena, but manifestations of a single world-ecological crisis co-produced through the *Oikeios*.

The great capitalist transformation began in what Moore calls the long sixteenth century, ushering a new era — the Capitalocene. The authorship of the term is attributed to the Swedish human ecologist Andreas Malm in 2009, and its first publication attributed to a 2011 blog post by the economist David Ruccio. Moore calls this "an ugly word in an ugly system", revealing once again that, for him, words do matter and should be used consciously (Moore, 2015, Chapter 7, Endnote 13.). Moore's (2017) take on the Capitalocene is mostly a critique of the "Popular Anthropocene" and focused on emphasizing the capitalogenic nature of the planetary crisis. Through nuanced historical analysis he shows how the "environment-making revolution" began not during the Industrial Revolution nor the Great Acceleration, but circa 1450. It was then that capitalism emerged as a new way of organizing nature and acknowledging this provides us with the necessary intellectual framework for a politics of liberation rooted in a reimagination of history and power. Importantly, for Moore (2015, "Acknowledgments") it needs to be "the politics of liberation for *all* life".

This new ecological regime which, with time, expanded over the whole planet (and even beyond it), operates on a central logic of "cheapening". Here cheapness is not simply a matter of low cost, but is a "set of strategies to manage relations between capitalism and the web of life by temporarily fixing capitalism's crises" (Patel & Moore, 2017, "Frontiers and Cheapness" section). It manifests through a dialectic between exploitation and appropriation. The extraction of surplus value from commodified wage-labor is dependent

on an even greater act of identifying, securing, and channeling unpaid work from outside the commodity system into the flow of capital. Different waves of capitalist expansion had happened through the cheapening of different things: cheap nature, cheap money, cheap work, cheap care, cheap food, cheap energy, and cheap lives (Patel & Moore, 2017). With this framework Moore postulates a re-imagination of work, as the exploitation of labor-power is inseparable from the appropriation of both extra-human nature and the unpaid work of women.

Obviously, world-ecology-as-ecosophy diverges from the ecosophies of Naess or Guattari. While it shares a holistic outlook with Naess' deep ecology, its focus is not on individual spiritual and philosophical transformation, but on structural, historical, and material analysis of civilization. With Guattari's ecosophy it shares the rejection of traditional dualisms, but does not go into the psychological/psychoanalytic. It also shares a focus on the systemic nature of the crisis, but does it through historical-materialist, not psycho-political critique.

In summary, the world-ecology paradigm synthesizes the philosophical, historical, and economic dimensions of the planetary ecological crisis into a powerful narrative. Even though his approach is not linguistic at all, Moore (2015) understands that "how we tell stories of our past, and how we respond to the challenges of the present, are intimately connected". He emphasizes the obsoleteness of the foundations of a large part of our language — namely the Nature/Society dualism — and acknowledges the need for a new vocabulary. And if a world-ecological approach is useful in literary and cultural studies to analyze how "cultural forms are historical agents in environment-making, not merely *reflective* of re-organizations of capitalist nature, but *co-productive* of them", then it should also be of great use at the level of ecolinguistics (Deckard, 2019, p. 111; Niblett, 2012; Deckard et al., 2024). What world-ecology thinking does is allow us to judge discourses on the merit of how they either further mystify or reveal capitalist exploitation of the web of life. And without understanding why and how capitalism organizes nature, we are powerless to stop it from absorbing, watering down or inverting all the econarratives we introduce. To talk about language in an ecological dimension is necessarily to acknowledge that language itself is world-ecological and since the long sixteenth century has been continuously subjugated by capitalism. With all this said, the paradigm as a whole can be used as the ecosophical foundation for ecolinguistic analysis and seems a good match to tackle the revolutionary linguistic act that is the "biotariat".

3. The "biotariat": An ecolinguistic and political deconstruction

The creator of the term "biotariat", Stephen Collis, is an award-winning Canadian poet, a professor of English, but also a committed activist. His work is firmly rooted in practice intertwining intellectual inquiry with direct political engagement, as exemplified by his writings on the Occupy movement collected in *Dispatches from the Occupation* (Collis, 2012) or his later lawsuit filed by an energy corporation, whose legal team used Collis' (2016)

poems as evidence in court. *To the Barricades*, where the biotariat appears for the first time, is part of a three-book project described by Collis as a "life-long poem" (Sarojini Saklikar, 2016). They are not discrete collections of poems, but rather an evolving conversation about revolution, resistance and change. The publisher of *To the Barricades* describes it as "at once elegy (poems dedicated 'to' past revolutionary figures and scenes) and a call for renewed struggle in the here and now" (Talonbooks, n.d.). The poems create a storyworld from accounts of past and present revolutions, from 19th-century Paris to the 21st-century Occupy movement. They have a clear political and activist character, focusing on themes of resistance and collective action. Critics suggest that *To the Barricades* is a significant work of political and engaged poetics, although its popular impact is limited (Vaisius, n.d.).

"Biotariat" first appears in the poem called "Almost Islands", which is a fusion of ecopoetics, history, political philosophy and actual active social engagement. Its storyworld is grounded in the landscape of the Fraser River delta in Canada, where no place is safe from capital's global reach and all life is equally vulnerable to a global system of exploitation. Collis describes the "peninsular" character of contemporary reality, where all environmental and social crises are interconnected, and there are no "islands" to hide on anymore. In the context of Collis' broader "Barricades Project", the poem closing the last book of the installment is indeed a barricade built from language, as well as a call to action. Collis reframes isolation as a political construct and shows that interconnectedness is a collective fate. He convinces the reader that the contemporary crises require a "peninsular" consciousness and a solidarity that extends to all life. It is on this ground that biotariat as a concept gets introduced in the poem — Collis (2014) himself suggests to read this part as a whole:

> People of earth
> there are no islands now
> the planet is peninsular
> jutting in space
> one blue-green growing
> brown orb attached to
> disease we've made in
> threshold song no
> isolato on genetic shores
>
> How does the predator
> become the trustee?
> Musk gesture pheromone
> or mode of socio-economic
> production — no species
> no island for flit
> of swallow's blue-green

back rustle of genetics
in the ditch we probably dug

The next revolution
is what culture will teach
we can and can't do
as system's feedback loop
grabbing the red flag
spore poppy claw
of the biotariat
and heading off into
the weeds developers
left back of decay

This last verse is where we first come into contact with the "biotariat" as a word and a concept. The term itself is a powerful linguistic innovation combining two distinct morphemes to create a new, politically charged concept. Its etymology is rather easy to grasp for Collis' targeted readers. The "bio-" prefix, derived from the ancient Greek word for life, is not just descriptive here. It is a political act that is supposed to bring together all forms of life into a single category based on their shared experience of oppression and exploitation. The suffix ("-tariat") is clearly taken from the term "proletariat", which originally came from the Latin world *proletarius* describing a Roman citizen of the lowest class whose main purpose was to have offspring, not gather wealth. The term reappears in Marxist theory where it refers to the working class who do not own the means of production and are forced to sell their labor to survive. By merging these two elements Collis creates an argument for a fundamental re-conceptualization of class struggle, doing exactly what Forte (2020) calls for. The "biotariat" literally means "the life class", or in a more nuanced definition, "the exploited class of all living things". This linguistic move challenges the traditional, human-centric view of Marxism and class struggle and fits with the dialectic approach of world-ecology. Thus its main goal is to counter suppression, backgrounding, exclusion and erasure from discourse (Stibbe, 2015). Not only does it bring capitalism into our consciousness by linking with the "proletariat", but it also makes the oppressed class of all life visible.

According to Collis' (2014) own extensive explanation of the "biotariat" available on his blog, the biotariat is the collective of all life on Earth enclosed as a resource by a totalized system of global accumulation and then exploited. When looked at through the ecosophy of world-ecology, it directly correlates to the appropriation and exploitation of "Cheap Things" in the Capitalocene (Moore, 2015; Patel & Moore, 2017). The concept also expands the traditional Marxist idea of the proletariat to include not just human workers, but all life forms, doing exactly what Forte (2020) postulates ecolinguistics should do. Collis (2014) argues that this indiscriminate exploitation of life has created a new,

planet-wide class of "commoners without a commons", necessitating an eco-political solidarity among all living things in resistance to a system that imperils life itself.

Collis' new term serves both a narrative and a discursive function. First of all, the author uses it to construct a new story about the world, a story we can live by (Stibbe, 2024). "Biotariat" functions as a central element in a kind of a counter-narrative that, in the larger context of Collis' project, proposes a new story. In it the protagonists are no longer just human workers, the "people of Earth". Hawks, herons, orcas, caribou, elk, dunlin, American wigeon, tundra swan, white-fronted geese, fish, ducks, salmon, seeds, spikemoss, bracken, sweet gale, hardrack, hemlock, cedar, fiddlehead, charcoal, turf, lawn clippings, rivers and mountains — as well as all the entities that Collis does not explicitly mention in the poem — are all central actors belonging to the same class suffering under a common antagonist. This antagonist becomes unmasked as the capitalist "mechanism" which "grinds down" all life, the "spiderweb freeways", the "free-trade zones" and other metaphors for the exploitative system. Thus the "biotariat" ties everything together into the plot of this new story of a unified, multi-species class struggle against a common oppressor. It replaces the dominant narrative of consumption and endless growth with one of resistance and collective liberation (Forte, 2020).

The main discursive function of the "biotariat" seems to be re-establishing agency to actors usually erased by hegemonic discourses (Forte, 2020). Throughout the poem Collis names numerous elements of nature without framing them as resources (Stibbe, 2015). He either calls them by their names or describes the economy's destructive relation with them. The "biotariat" itself directly counters the erasure of agency of non-human nature by giving it back along with a collective identity. The frame used is not of resources, but of active "actors in their own history" (Forte, 2020). This is exactly the realization of Moore's (2015) relational agency that unfolds within the *Oikeios*. The biotariat itself becomes a new category distinct from both the human proletariat and nature as a whole. Thinking with this new category allows for moving beyond the traditional focus on "relations between people only", especially when discussing oppression and capitalist exploitation (Stibbe, 2012). Moreover, thinking of all non-human nature as suffering under capitalist exploitation as much as humans lets us break the Enlightenment dualisms that had reduced the world into categories and oppositions (Merchant, 1980). Understanding ourselves as part of the biotariat provides the long postulated identity narrative that is completely inclusive and open towards the continuity and commonality of experiences of *homo sapiens* and other species (Steciąg, 2023).

There are also real political implications of the usage of the "biotariat". By deploying new linguistic resources (i.e., introducing a new word), Collis aims to deliberately shape the future. The term is not just a critique, but also a constructive effort to assemble the means for a future-oriented agenda. The discourse around the biotariat is neither beneficial, nor destructive or ambivalent (Stibbe, 2015). It requires yet another category — discourse as an "act of resistance". It is a category between and within the other three, one that sets us on a path to a better future by pointing out the flaws of the present, but the realization of

the path is contingent on changes that will be strongly resisted by the *status quo* powers. It does align with the idea of "positive discourse analysis" of providing alternatives to damaging dominant discourses, but avoids the pitfall of losing the fundamentally critical nature and ignoring existing injustices (Forte, 2020).

4. From poetics to praxis: Moore's use of the "biotariat"

As mentioned, the "biotariat"'s popularity is rather limited. The term did appear again in a later book by Collis (2018), but its most interesting reproduction seems to be happening in the works of Jason W. Moore. This development is more than a mere conceptual connection and shows the term's evolution from a poetic concept into a theoretical tool. Moore's adoption of the "biotariat" is significant as it brings the concept into a formalized academic discourse, revealing that it has not only poetic and political, but also analytical power. In an interview from 2022, he admits that he had borrowed the term from Collis, because it adequately describes the unpaid work of nature within the capitalist system (Metabolism of Cities, 2022).

Since 2021, Moore has used the term in several of his texts whenever he discusses the capitalist regime of unpaid work. In an article from 2021, he puts the "biotariat" next to the "femitariat" — another neologism used by him — and defines both:

> As imperialist bourgeoisies spearheaded proletarianization through the cash nexus, they also created the conditions for a feminized and "ecological" regime of unpaid work: creating in the long seventeenth century a Femitariat (unpaid human reproductive work) and a Biotariat (unpaid and alienated webs of life put to work for capital). In this framing, the Proletariat conventionally understood depended on the expanded reproduction of politically- and culturally-enforced modes of domination, necessary to secure expanded supplies of unpaid work necessary for endless accumulation. (Moore, 2021a, p. 746)

By using the "biotariat" (along with the "femitariat", which deserves its separate analysis in a different article) Moore not only describes reality, but actively re-categorizes it. The phrase he uses for defining the "biotariat" has many important discursive features. It de-fetishizes what are actually active participants in the labor process instead of referring to them like a neoclassical economist would — as "natural resources" or "inputs" (Stibbe, 2015). By uniting the struggles of the oppressed and exploited women and nature he acknowledges their intersectionality (Forte, 2020). In the same article, Moore expands on the connection of the biotariat, femitariat, and proletariat in the context of the fast-paced capitalist environment-making revolution in the 17th century:

> The antagonism between capital's drive to reduce socially necessary turnover time systematically combined with imperialist projects to create the conditions for the

> appropriation of unpaid work — *accumulation by appropriation*. This marked the modern formation of the Femitariat and Biotariat — the specifically binarized moments of unpaid human and extra-human reproductive work necessary to capitalism's Cheap Nature regime. These were dialectically bound to an extraordinary acceleration of gendered, racialized, and colonial proletarianization […]. This Great Proletarianization — understood as the differentiated unity of Proletariat-Biotariat-Femitariat — depended on the era's two pivotal frontiers: commodity frontiers across the Americas and eastern Europe, and the Great Domestication, whose guiding thread held that Man stood before Woman as the Bourgeoisie stood before Nature. (Moore, 2021a, pp. 753–754)

Here Moore uses the innovative terms to basically rewrite the origin story of modernity. In this story the exploitation of nature and women are central to the narrative, rather than a side effect. It directly counters the discourse of the Brundtland Report (as well as the discourse of green capitalism, Good Anthropocene, or even neoclassical economics when it is given a "green" bend), where the exploitation of nature or vulnerable human populations is not the central plot of the narrative, but rather a byproduct of a system that can be made to work with some adjustments (Forte, 2020). It also counters the discourse of mainstream economics, where women's reproductive labor is regarded as a social or cultural issue that is outside of the economy, as are all the "inputs" or "externalities". Moreover, Moore directly addresses the problematic dualisms or binaries. With the powerful phrase "specifically binarized moments of unpaid human and extra-human reproductive work", he deconstructs the political meaning of these binaries, once again emphasizing the political character of ecology, gender, race, and colonialism that Forte (2020) wants us to notice. The "biotariat" co-develops into a "differentiated unity" along with the femitariat and the proletariat, giving it exactly the intellectual meaning and political significance that Collis (2014) had envisioned. At the same time, by equating the domination of women with the domination of nature, he follows the footsteps of Marxist ecofeminists like Silvia Federici (2004).

In another text from the same year, Moore (2021b) reiterates this take on the biotariat along with the femitariat, defining them as "the unpaid reproducers of capitalism as a 'mode of life'". He also shares his take on why the intersectionality of struggles needs a proper class lens to be understood correctly:

> Even most ecosocialists have yet to translate the socialist feminist synthesis of proletariat and femitariat to webs of life "put to work" for capital: the *biotariat*. When Maria Mies argues for the centrality of "women, nature, and colonies" in capital accumulation, she is not calling for an abstract "intersectionality". She is pointing to the imperial bourgeoisie's *class project*, one that yokes sexism, Prometheanism, and Civilizing Projects to proletarianization, superexploitation, and the "the immanent laws of capitalist production… and competition". (Moore,

> 2021b, p. 13)

Moore is not afraid to critique other progressive approaches like "abstract intersectionality", while establishing alliances with others at the same time, when citing Mies et al. (1988). He uses "abstract" as a pejorative term to differentiate the approach based on the biotariat and the femitariat from a form of analysis that merely lists oppressions, like race, class, gender, etc., without explaining how they are linked by a single "class project". This way the discourse on the biotariat gets more concrete and less abstract. Moore uses the term to bridge historical and contemporary debates, showcasing the "biotariat"'s critical and political potential. The latter is also shown in his use of the "biotariat" as an adjective to liberation in another article:

> 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). (Moore, 2022b, p. 560)

This ties together the historical, theoretical, and linguistic arguments into a single vision. By using the "biotariat" as an analytical concept and the biotariat as a political subject, Moore is not only analyzing what is wrong with the world (the "capitalogenic ecocide"), but is also strictly following Collis (and directly acknowledging him in the in-text citation) in building a new, liberating narrative. By treating the class struggle as a "multispecies affair" he is doing exactly what Forte (2020) wants ecolinguistics to do. He sets the "battlefield" for a new, politically effective ecolinguistics. The call for the "biotarian liberation" is exactly what Collis (2014) meant with his powerful statement: "Biotarians of the world unite — the only thing you have to lose is your chains!"

5. Conclusion

If Forte (2020, p. 13) is right that "the restitution of the agency in the discourses about other species […] can only be achieved through criticism, which supposes the Marxian concept of class struggle", then a more politically effective ecolinguistics requires a historical-materialist framework. Moore's world-ecology provides a comprehensive and effective ecosophy for this purpose. It allows us to move beyond the limitations of "shallow environmentalism" and problematic dualisms by deconstructing hegemonic narratives,

such as those of the Brundtland Report, neoclassical economics, green capitalism, Good Anthropocene, etc.

The "biotariat" serves as a powerful example of how such ecolinguistics with a historical-materialist foundation can be put into practice. Analyzing Collis' original poetic use of the term and Moore's subsequent adoption into his academic work can be more than a curiosity-driven case study. The linguistic act of resistance, which is the actual in-text use of the "biotariat", is a strategic re-conceptualization of class struggle itself and a "rethinking and updating Marxian class logic" (Forte, 2020, p. 13). Its etymology as a fusion of life and exploitation functions as a linguistic unification of the struggles of human and extra-human life, making visible the unpaid work fundamental to capitalist accumulation (Moore, 2015, 2021a).

If we live and die by stories, can we also emancipate and liberate ourselves by them? Forte (2020) suggests that new stories are the obvious way forward, but they will not win the fight by themselves. There needs to be an acknowledgment of the underlying class struggle and "the change from one narrative to another necessarily implies this struggle" (Forte, 2020, p. 14). Ecolinguistics can move from a descriptive discipline — or field of inquiry, to use a term less implicated in the practice of "disciplining" scientists into obedience (Metabolism of Cities, 2022) — to one capable of identifying and challenging the root causes of the planetary crisis. The new econarratives we construct must be, at least for the time being, not idealistic, but liberating "for *all* life" (Moore, 2015, "Acknowledgments").

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