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Review

Marx, Communism and Degrowth

- Reviews section -

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Kohei Saito has done it again. In *Karl Marx's Ecosocialism. An unfinished critique of the political economy*, the Japanese Marxologist showed how the mature Marx had broken with productivism. [1] His new book, *Marx in the Anthropocene. Towards the Idea of Degrowth communism*, continues the reflection. [2]

This book is remarkable and useful in particular on four points: the fundamentally destructive class nature of capitalist productive forces; the social and ecological superiority of (so-called) “primitive” societies, without classes; the debate on nature and culture with Bruno Latour and Jason Moore, in particular; and finally, the great mistake of the “accelerationists” who invoke Marx in order to deny the imperative necessity of degrowth. These four points are of major political importance today, not only for Marxists anxious to rise to the ecosocial challenge posed by the systemic crisis of capitalism, but also for environmental activists. The book has the same qualities as the previous one: it is erudite, well-constructed, subtle, and illuminating in its presentation of Marx’s intellectual evolution after 1868. Unfortunately, it also has the same flaw: it takes for granted what is only hypothetical. Once again, Saito forces the line to try to find in Marx the perfect theoretical anticipation of today’s struggles.

In the beginning was the “metabolic rift”

The first part of “Marx in the Anthropocene” deepens the exploration of Marx’s concept of the “metabolic rift” in *Capital*. Saito follows in the footsteps of John B. Foster and Paul Burkett, who have shown the immense importance of this notion. [3] Saito enriches the discussion by highlighting three manifestations of the phenomenon - disruption of natural processes, spatial fault, hiatus between the temporalities of nature and capital - to which three capitalist strategies of avoidance correspond - pseudo-technological solutions, the relocation of disasters to dominated countries, and the transfer of their consequences to future generations (p.29 et seq.).

Chapter 1 focuses on the contribution to the debate by the Hungarian Marxist István Mészáros, whom Saito considers decisive in the reappropriation of the concept of metabolism at the end of the 20th century. Chapter 2 focuses on the responsibility of Engels who, in editing volumes II and III of “Capital”, is said to have disseminated a truncated definition of the “metabolic rift”, significantly different from that of Marx. For Saito, this shift, far from being fortuitous, would reflect a divergence between Engels’ ecological vision - limited to the fear of “nature’s revenge” - and Marx’s - centred on the necessary “rational management of metabolism” through the reduction of working time. Chapter 3, while recalling György Lukács’ ambiguities, pays homage to his vision of the historical development of human-nature metabolism as both continuity and rupture. For Saito, this dialectic, inspired by Hegel (“identity of identity and non-identity”) is indispensable to differentiate both from Cartesian dualism - which exaggerates the discontinuity between nature and society - and from social constructivism - which exaggerates the continuity (identity) between these two poles and cannot, therefore, “reveal the uniqueness of the capitalist way of organizing human metabolism with their environment” (p. 91).

Dualism, Constructivism and Dialectics

The second part of the book takes a very (over?) critical look at other Marxist-inspired ecologies. Saito distinguishes himself from David Harvey, whom he accuses of a “surprising negative reaction to the ecological turn in Marxism.” *Marx in the Anthropocene* quotes some “surprising” quotes from the American geographer: Harvey seems convinced

of “capital’s ability to convert any ‘limits’ to mere ‘barriers’”. He confesses that “the invocation of limits and ‘ecoscarcity’ (...) makes (him) as politically nervous as it makes (him) theoretically suspicious”; “a socialist politics that rests on the view that environmental catastrophe is imminent is a sign of weakness” for him. A geographer like Harvey, Neil Smith “shows the same hesitation before environmentalism,” which he calls “apocalypism.” Smith is known for his theory of the “social production of nature.” Saito rejects it, arguing that it encourages the denial of the existence of nature as an autonomous entity, independent of humans: this is what he deduces from Smith’s assertion that “nature is nothing if it is not social” (p. 111). More generally, Saito tracks constructivist conceptions by positing that “nature is an objective presupposition of production.” There is no doubt that this vision was also Marx’s. The indisputable fact that humanity is part of nature does not mean that everything it does is dictated by its “nature,” nor that everything that nature does is built by “society.”

Ecological destruction: “actants” or profit?

In the context of this controversy, the author devotes some very strong pages to Jason Moore. He admits that the Capitalocene notion “marks a theoretical advance compared with the “production of nature”” because it emphasizes human/environmental interactions. However, he reproaches Moore for arguing that humans and non-humans are “actants” working in a network to produce an entangled whole – “hybrid” as Bruno Latour puts it. This is an important point. Indeed, Moore believes that distinguishing a “metabolic rift” within the network-whole is a misunderstanding, the product of a dualistic vision. The notion of “metabolism” refers to the way in which the different organs of the same organism specifically contribute to the functioning of the whole. It is therefore the antithesis of dualism (as well as of monism, for that matter) and we come back to Hegel’s formula: there is “identity of identity and non-identity.” *Marx in the Anthropocene* also attacks Moore’s theses from another angle - that of work. For Moore, capitalism is driven by an obsession with “Cheap Nature,” which he believes encompasses labour power, energy, food, and raw materials. Moore claims to be Marx’s follower, but it is clear that his “Cheap Nature” glosses over the exclusive role of abstract labour in the creation of (surplus) value, as well as the key role of the race for surplus-value in ecological destruction. However, value is not a “hybrid actant” among others. As Saito puts it, it is a “purely social form” and it is through it that capitalism “dominates the metabolic processes of nature” (pp. 121-122).

It is clear that it is the race for profit that is widening the metabolic rift, in particular by demanding ever more energy, labour, agricultural products and “cheap” raw materials. Of all the natural resources that capital transforms into commodities, “anthropogenic” labour-power is obviously the only one capable of creating an index as purely “anthropogenic” as abstract value. As Saito puts it: it is “precisely because nature exists independently of and prior to those social categories and continues to retain non-identity with the logic of value, (that) the primacy of profit maximization results in a series of disharmonies within natural metabolism.” Therefore, the “rift is not a metaphor, as Moore argues. Rift exists between the social metabolism of commodities and money and the universal metabolism of nature” (ibid). It was not by Cartesian dualism that Marx described in a dualistic way the flaw between social metabolism and natural metabolism - as well as the flaw between productive and unproductive labour. “He did so consciously because the uniquely social relations of capitalism do exert an alien power in reality. A critical analysis of this social power inevitably requires separating the social and the natural respectively as independent realms of investigation and analysing their entanglement thereafter.” (p. 123) Unstoppable. There is no doubt, once again, that this vision of the “interlocking” of the social with the environmental was Marx’s.

Accelerationism vs. anti-productivism

Chapter 5 polemicizes with another variety of Marxist: the “Left Accelerationists.” According to these authors, ecological challenges can only be met by multiplying technological development, automation and so on. This strategy, for them, is in line with the Marxian project: it is necessary to break down the capitalist obstacles to the

growth of the productive forces in order to make a society of abundance possible. This part of the book is particularly interesting because it sheds light on the break with productivism and Prometheism of the youthful years. The break is probably not as sharp as Saito claims, but there is definitely a turning point. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels explain that the “the proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State (...) and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible.” It is striking that the perspective of this text is resolutely statist and that the productive forces are considered as socially neutral; they form a set of things that must change hands (be “wrested by degrees from the bourgeoisie”) in order to grow quantitatively.

Are the accelerationists justified in claiming continuity with Marx? No, because Marx abandoned the conception set forth in the *Manifesto*. Saito draws attention to the fact that his major work, *Capital*, no longer deals with “productive forces” in general (ahistorical), but with historically determined productive forces – the capitalist productive forces. The lengthy Chapter XV of volume 1 (“Machinery and Modern Industry”) dissects the destructive effects of these forces, both socially and environmentally. We might add this: it is no coincidence that it is precisely this chapter that ends with the following sentence, worthy of a modern ecosocialist manifesto: “Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth — the soil and the labourer.” [4] It is no longer a question of technology neutrality. Capital is no longer grasped as a thing but as a social relation of exploitation and destruction, which must be destroyed (“negation of the negation”). It should be noted that Marx, after the Paris Commune, specified that breaking with productivism also required breaking with statism.

It is astonishing that Saito does not recall the sentence of the *Manifesto* quoted above, where the proletariat is exhorted to take power in order to “increase the total productive forces as quickly as possible.” This would have given even more prominence to his highlighting of the subsequent change. But it doesn’t matter: the fact is that the turning point is real and leads to a magnificent perspective of permanent revolution, resolutely anti-productivist and anti-technocratic: “Freedom in this field can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite.” [5] The evolution is clear. The paradigm of human emancipation has changed: it no longer consists in the growth of the productive forces but in the rational management of exchanges with nature and between humans.

Formal and real subsumption of work

The richest pages of *Marx in the Anthropocene*, in my opinion, are those in which Saito shows that the new Marxian paradigm of emancipation is the result of a broad effort to critique the successive forms that capital has imposed on labour. Although it was part of the preparatory work for *Capital*, this criticism was not published until later (*Economic Manuscripts of 1861-1863*). Its keystone is the important notion of the *subsumption* of labour to capital. Let us emphasize this in passing: subsumption is more than submission: subsuming implies integrating what is subject to what submits. Capital subsumes wage labour since it integrates labour power as variable capital. But, for Marx, there is subsumption and subsumption: the passage from manufacture to machinery and large-scale industry implies the passage from “formal subsumption” to “real subsumption.” The first simply means that capital takes control of the labour process that existed before, without making any changes either in its organization or in its technological character. The second takes hold from the moment when capital completely and continuously revolutionises the process of production – not only on the technological level but also on the level of cooperation – that is, of the productive relations between workers and between workers and capitalists. Thus, a specific, unprecedented mode of production is created, entirely adapted to the imperatives of capital accumulation. A mode in which, unlike the

previous one, “capitalist command develops into a requirement for carrying on the labour process itself, into a real condition of production” (p. 148).

Saito is not the first to point out the class nature of the technologies. Daniel Bensaïd stressed the need for the productive forces themselves to be subjected to a critical examination. Michaël Löwy argues that it is not enough to destroy the bourgeois state apparatus – the capitalist productive apparatus must also be dismantled. However, we are grateful to Saito for sticking as closely as possible to Marx’s text to summarize the cascading implications of the real subsumption of labour: it “greatly increases worker’s dependence upon capital”; “the objective conditions for the realization of the workers’ abilities appear to them more and more as a foreign, independent power”; “insofar capital as objectified labour - means of production - employs living labour, the relation of subject and object is inverted in the labour process”; “since labour is embodied in capital, the role of the worker is reduced to a mere bearer of the reified thing, that is, the means of preserving and valorizing capital next to the machines, and the reified thing attains the appearance of the subjectivity that controls as an alien power the behaviour and the will of the person”; “Since the increase of the productive forces is possible only under capital’s initiative and responsibility, the new productive forces of worker’s social labour do not appear as their own productive forces but as the ‘productive forces of capital’”; “Living labour (thus) becomes a power of capital, all development of the productive forces of labour is development of the productive forces of capital.” Two non-productivist and non-technocratic conclusions are then forcefully imposed: 1) “since the development of the productive forces under capitalism only increases the alien power of capital by depriving workers of their subjective skills, knowledge and insights, it does not automatically open up the possibility of a clear bright future”; 2) “Marx’s concept of productive forces is actually broader” than that of capitalist productive forces – “it includes human productive capacities such as skill, knowledge and strength” and is “in this sense, both quantitative and qualitative” (pp. 149-150).

What historical materialism? What abundance?

These developments lead Saito to re-examine historical materialism. It is well known that the “Preface to the Critique of Political Economy” contains Marx’s only summary of his theory. It states:

At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. [\[6\]](#)

It seems clear that Marx could no longer adhere literally to this formulation – let alone to that of the *Manifesto* on the quantitative increase of the productive forces – since his analysis led him to conclude that the development of these forces strengthens the grip of capital and mutilates the agency of those it exploits. As Saito puts it:

One can no longer assume that a socialist revolution could simply replace the relations of production with other ones after reaching a certain level of productive forces. Since the 'productive forces of capital' that emerge through the real subsumption are materialized and crystallized in the capitalist mode of production, they disappear together with the capitalist mode of production." Transferring the ownership of capital to the state would not change the problem: since the productive forces would remain unchanged, (1) the tasks of design would have to be carried out by a "bureaucratic class", (2) ecological destruction would continue. The author concludes that "the real subsumption poses a difficult problem of 'free socialist management' for which the traditional view of historical materialism does not provide any clue" and "Marx was not able to provide a definitive answer to these problems even in "Capital," so we must go beyond it (pp. 157-158).

“Going beyond” is what is proposed in the third part of his book, and it is this that raises the most controversy. The starting question is simple: if emancipation does not come through the free growth of the productive forces, and therefore through what Daniel Bensaid called the “joker of abundance”, how could it happen? Therefore “the need to downscale and slowdown production,” according to Saito (p. 166). For the author, in essence, abundance must be understood not as a plethora of private material goods - on the model that is both consumerist and exclusionary of the accumulation of commodities accessible only to solvent demand - but as a profusion of common social and natural wealth. Without this, “the remaining option then becomes the bureaucratic control of social production, which led to the failure of this Soviet path” (p. 166).

Degrowth, stationary economy and transition

Marx in the Anthropocene therefore intends to plead for a profoundly egalitarian “degrowth communism” focused on satisfying real needs. According to Saito, this communism was that of the so-called “archaic” communities, some of whose features survived for a long time in more or less degraded forms in agrarian systems based on collective ownership of land, notably in Russia. For the mature Marx, it is much more than a matter of survivals of a bygone past: these communities indicate that after having “expropriated the expropriators,” society, in order to abolish all domination, will have to advance towards a higher form of “archaic” community. I fully subscribe to this perspective, but with one caveat: Saito is seriously exaggerating by claiming that Marx arrived in 1881 at “the idea of degrowth communism” “after seriously studying natural sciences and pre-capitalist societies after 1868” (p. 242). Taken literally, it is not based on any known document. So that it still has an ounce of plausibility (and again: as long as it is formulated as a hypothesis, not as a certainty!) Saito is forced to resort to a succession of amalgams: to act as if Marx’s radical critique of capitalist accumulation were the same as (a plea for?) the stationary economy, as if the “archaic” communities were stationary, and as if the stationary economy were the same as degrowth. That’s a lot of “ifs,” neglects essential differences and does not make us progress in the debate on the stakes of degrowth in the sense in which it is being discussed today among anti-capitalists, i.e. in the literal sense of the reduction of production objectively imposed by the climatic constraint. Let’s take a closer look.

Let us leave GDP aside and consider only material production: a post-capitalist society in a very poor country would break with capitalist growth but would have to increase production for a certain period of time to meet the enormous mass of real unsatisfied needs; a stationary economy would use the same amount of natural resources every year to produce the same amount of use-values with the same productive forces. A degrowth economy, on the other hand, would reduce extractivism and production. By putting a sign of equality between these forms, Saito maintains an unfortunate confusion. “It should be clear by now,” he writes, “that socialism promotes a social transition to a degrowth economy” (p.242). This is very badly worded, because degrowth is not a social project, just a constraint that weighs on the transition. A “degrowth economy,” as such, means nothing. Some productions must increase and others decrease within a decreasing overall envelope. To stick to the scientific diagnosis of climate change, we have to say something like this: democratically planning a just degrowth is the only way to rationally transition to ecosocialism. Indeed, given that a new 100% renewable energy system must necessarily be built with the energy of the current system (which is 80% fossil fuel, therefore a source of CO₂), there are basically only two possible strategies to eliminate emissions: either we radically reduce final energy consumption (which implies producing and transporting less overall) by taking strong anti-capitalist measures (against the 10%, and especially the richest 1%); or we bet on carbon offsetting and on the massive deployment in the future of hypothetical carbon capture-sequestration, capture-use or geoengineering technologies, i.e. on sorcerer’s apprentice solutions leading to even more dispossession, social inequalities and ecological destruction. We propose the expression “just degrowth” as the strategic axis of today’s anti-productivist Marxists. Making degrowth synonymous with the stationary economy is not an option because it is equivalent to lowering the volume of the fire alarm.

The Russian rural commune, revolution and ecology

The prospect of a just degrowth owes much to Marx's enormous pioneering work, but it makes no sense to claim that he was the designer of it, because Marx never explicitly argued for a net decrease in production. To make him the father of "degrowth communism", Saito bases himself almost exclusively on a famous and exceptionally important text: the letter to Vera Zasulich. [7] In 1881, the Russian populist had asked Marx by letter for his opinion on the possibility of relying on the peasant commune in Russia to build socialism directly – without going through capitalism. The Russian translation of *Capital* had sparked a debate on this question among opponents of tsarism. Marx wrote three drafts of a response. They attest to his profound break with the linear vision of historical development, and therefore also with the idea that the most advanced capitalist countries are the closest to socialism. In this regard, the last sentence is crystal clear: "If the revolution takes place in time, if it concentrates all its forces [if the intelligent part of Russian society] [if the Russian intelligentsia (l'intelligence russe) concentrates all the living forces of the country] to ensure the unfettered rise of the rural commune, the latter will soon develop as a regenerating element of Russian society and an element of superiority over the countries enslaved by the capitalist regime." [8]

For Saito, this text means that capitalist environmental degradation had led Marx, after 1868, to "(abandon) his earlier scheme of historical materialism. It was not an easy task for him, he says. His worldview was in crisis. In this sense, (his) intensive research in his last years [on the natural sciences and pre-capitalist societies, D.T.] was a desperate attempt to reconstruct and reformulate his materialist conception of history from an entirely new perspective, resulting in a radically new conception of the alternative society" (p. 173). "Fourteen years of research," had led Marx to "conclude that sustainability and equality based on a steady-state economy is the the source of power to resist capitalism." He therefore seized "the opportunity to formulate a new form of rational regulation of human metabolism with nature in Western Europe and the United States": "the stationary and circular economy without economic growth, which Marx once dismissed as the regressive steadiness of primitive societies without history" (pp. 206-208).

What are we to make of this reconstruction of the path of Marxian thought in an ecological way? The narrative has a lot of appeal to in some contemporary circles, that's obvious. But why did Marx wait until 1881 to express himself on this key point? Why did he do it only by letter? Why did this letter require three successive drafts? If Marx really had begun to "reconsider his earlier theoretical schema in the 1860s due to the ecological degradation brought about by capitalist development" (p. 204), and if the concept of the metabolic rift had really served as a "mediation" in his efforts to break with Eurocentrism and productivism (p. 200), why is the *ecological* superiority of the rural commune is not mentioned *once* in the reply to Zasulich? Last but not least: while it cannot be ruled out that the last sentence of this answer projects the vision of a stationary post-capitalist economy for Western Europe and the United States, this is not the case for Russia; Marx strongly insists that it is only by benefiting from the level of development of the developed capitalist countries that socialism in Russia can "ensure the unfettered rise of the rural commune." In the end, Marx's intervention in the Russian debate seems to stem much more from his admiration for the superiority of social relations in "archaic" societies and his militant commitment to the internationalization of the revolution than from the centrality of the ecological crisis and the idea of "degrowth communism."

“Offering something positive”

The categorical assertion that Marx invented this "degrowth communism" to repair the "metabolic rift" is so excessive that one wonders why Saito formulates it at the conclusion of a work that contains so many excellent things. The answer is given in the first pages of Chapter 6. Faced with the ecological emergency, the author posits the need for an anti-capitalist response, deems productivist interpretations of Marxism to be "untenable", notes that historical materialism is "unpopular today" among environmentalists, and considers this to be "a pity considering their shared interest in criticizing capital's insatiable desire for accumulation, though from different perspectives" (p. 172). For

Saito, the work that shows that Marx turned away from linear conceptions of historical progress, or became interested in ecology, “are not sufficient to demonstrate why non-Marxists still need to care about Marx’s interest in ecology today,” (p. 173). “Only by looking at the problems of both Eurocentrism and productivism does a completely new interpretation of the late Marx become compelling” (p. 199). “Marxian scholars need to offer something positive here,” “elaborate on his positive vision of post-capitalist society” (p. 173). Is it, then, in order to compellingly give this “completely new” interpretation that Saito describes Marx founding successively and at a distance of a few years “ecosocialism” and then “degrowth communism”? It seems to me closer to the truth, and therefore more compelling, to consider that Marx was neither ecosocialist nor degrowthist in the contemporary sense of these terms. This does not detract from the fact that his penetrating critique of capitalist productivism and his concept of the “metabolic rift” are decisive in grasping the urgent need for a “just degrowth.”

To want to force degrowth into Marx’s thought is anachronistic. It’s not necessary. Of course, one cannot defend just degrowth and maintain in parallel the quantitative productivist version of historical materialism. On the other hand, just degrowth fits easily into a historical materialism that considers the productive forces in their quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Be that as it may, we do not need Marx’s endorsement, either to admit the necessity of a just degrowth, or more generally to broaden and deepen his “unfinished critique of political economy.”

The problem of apology

One may question the usefulness of a critique of Saito’s exaggerations. It can be said: the bottom line is that this book can “produce useful food for thought for socialists and environmental activists regardless of whether you think (or care!) if Marx was ‘really’ a degrowth communist or not.” [\[9\]](#) This is the main point, in fact, and it bears repeating: *Marx in the Anthropocene* is an excellent book, not least because its development on the four points mentioned in the introduction to this article is of major relevance and importance. However, the debate on what Marx said or did not say is not to be underestimated because it concerns the methodology to be practiced in the elaboration of the intellectual tools necessary for the ecosocialist struggle. However, this question also concerns non-Marxist activists.

Kohei Saito’s method has one flaw: it is apologetic. This trait was already perceptible in *Marx’s Ecosocialism*: while the subtitle of the book pointed to the “unfinished critique of political economy,” the author paradoxically devoted an entire chapter to acting as if Marx, after *Capital*, had developed a complete ecosocialist project. *Marx in the Anthropocene* follows the same path, but even more clearly. Taken together, the two works give the impression that Marx, in the 1870s, came to regard the disruption of the human-nature metabolism as the central contradiction of capitalism, that he first deduced from it a project of ecosocialist growth of the productive forces, and then abandoned it around 1880-81 to chart a new course: “degrowth communism.” I have tried to show that this narrative is highly questionable.

One of the problems of apology is that it greatly overestimates the importance of texts. For example, Saito gives disproportionate importance to Engels’ modification of the passage from *Capital*, volume III, where Marx speaks of the “metabolic rift.” The dominance of productivist interpretations of historical materialism in the course of the 20th century cannot be explained primarily by this modification: it stems mainly from the reformism of the big organizations and the subsumption of the proletariat to capital. Fighting against this situation, articulating social resistances to put the ideology of progress in crisis within the world of work itself, is today the major strategic task of ecosocialists. The answers are to be found in struggles and in the analysis of struggles much more than in Marx’s Notebooks.

More fundamentally, apology tends to flirt with dogmatism. “Marx said it” too easily becomes the mantra that prevents us from seeing and thinking as Marxists about what Marx did not say. Of course, he didn’t say everything. If there is one methodological lesson to be drawn from his monumental work, it is that criticism is fertile and dogma is sterile. Ecosocialism’s ability to meet the formidable challenges of the capitalist ecological catastrophe will depend not only

on its fidelity but also on its creativity and its ability to break with its own previous ideas, as Marx did when necessary. It is not only a question of carefully polishing Marx's ecology, but also, and above all, of developing and radicalising it.

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[1] *Karl Marx's Ecosocialism: Capital, Nature, and the Unfinished Critique of Political Economy*, Monthly Review Press, 2017.

[2] *Marx in the Anthropocene. Towards the Idea of Degrowth Communism*. Cambridge University Press, 2022.

[3] See in particular Paul Burkett, *Marx and Nature. A Red and Green Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1999. John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology. Materialism and Nature*, Monthly Review Press, 2000.

[4] In *The German Ideology* (1845-46) we read: "In the development of productive forces there comes a stage when productive forces and means of intercourse [...] are no longer productive but destructive forces (machinery and money)". Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* "[Part I: Feuerbach. Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook D. Proletarians and Communism](#)".

[5] Capital volume III [Part VII. Revenues and their Sources, Chapter 48. The Trinity Formula](#).

[6] Karl Marx, 1851, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* "[Preface](#)".

[7] Marx-Zasulich Correspondence 1881, "[K. Marx: Drafts of a reply](#)".

[8] Ibid [The 'First' Draft](#).

[9] Diana O'Dwyer, "[Was Marx a Degrowth Communist](#)".