

KŌHEI SAITŌ'S ECOLOGICAL MARXISM AND DEGROWTH COMMUNISM: A REVIEW ESSAY

Toni Ruuska and Campbell Jones

ABSTRACT: While editing and studying Marx's excerpts and notes of 1864-1872 which were published in 2019 as part of the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA²), Kōhei Saitō found the 'last Marx'. From these notes Saitō has produced novel pathways to contemporary readings of Marx in the form of two scholarly works and a political manifesto articulating an evolution in late Marx of the rudiments of what he calls 'degrowth communism'. This review essay reconstructs Saitō's position across his published work, paying particular attention to the rich and diverse contexts from which Saitō develops his non-productivist eco-Marxism and eco-communist politics. We deal firstly with Saitō's method and theoretical construction of concepts such as metabolism and the human-nature dualism, while remaining puzzled by his attempt to exorcise philosophy from Marx. Secondly, we celebrate Saitō's politics, while arguing that degrowth communism is more material, more real, and more revolutionary than he admits. In any case, Saitō has done an invaluable service by meticulously revisiting the writings of Marx and others, and in doing so opening new and important ways to combine ecology, degrowth, and communism.

KEYWORDS: Ecological Marxism; Degrowth communism; Ecosocialism; *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA²); Metabolism; New Marx-Reading

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade Kōhei Saitō has become one of the most well-known Marxist intellectuals in the world. However, the scope and profundity of his work has often invited ungrounded and one-sided interpretations. While Saitō calls for close reading of Marx and others, many have not extended that spirit of generosity to Saitō's writings and to the contexts from which it arises. This essay

is an extensive review of the entire body of Kōhei Saitō's work, which seeks to respond to three requirements. First, we seek to develop the understanding of Saitō by offering a systematic reconstruction of his thought. Second, this reconstruction places Saitō's discourse in the specific, but not always immediately apparent, contexts from which it emerges. Third, based on this reconstruction and contextualization, we propose to take Saitō's degrowth communism further, and to other places than he dares to venture.

Saitō's work is informed by important developments in Marxian and ecological thinking and politics that have been unfolding since the 1960s and have critical urgency today. Saitō (2017a; 2026) presents his work as a critique of 'traditional Marxism', to which he attaches three problematic dimensions: class reductionism, Promethenianism and ethnocentrism (Saitō 2026, 4-5).¹ Saitō traces traditional Marxism's 'trinity' back to Marx's own writings, and explains how these points turned to socialist dogmatism after Marx's passing (Saitō, 2026, 6-7; cf. e.g., Althusser, 2005). The designation of 'traditional Marxism' also indexes the distinction between 'traditional' and 'critical theory' made by Max Horkheimer in 1937 (Horkheimer, 1972) and forms the basis of many new critical readings of Marx (Elbe, 2010). Important in these new readings of Marx have been the efforts to develop Marx's unpublished and often scattered late writings, in particular those which were underestimated by Friedrich Engels and by David Rianazov, as the lead editor of the first attempt at the *Complete Works* (or MEGA¹). Among these later texts are the crucial correspondence between Marx and Vera Zasulich dealing with the question of capitalist transition (Marx, 1992a; Shanin, 1983; 2018), Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* (Marx, 1974), and Marx's writings on precapitalist societies (Marx, 1973; Anderson, 2016; 2025; Harootunian, 2015, cf. Saitō 2016a). However, Saitō's 'Marxology' is not just about the late writings of Marx; *Karl Marx's Ecosocialism* (Saitō, 2017a), for instance, also contains detailed

¹ As Saitō (2026, 4) explains, class reductionism narrows problems of inequality and exploitation to the single issue of class, while privileging the industrial working class and/or the white male worker, over peasants, women and indigenous peoples, for instance (see also Federici 2018). Prometheanism, Saitō (2026, 5) continues, connects human emancipation to the development of the productive forces, to perpetual economic growth, and productivism, where technological optimism and a unilinear conception of history prevail along with the human domination of nature (see also Salleh 2017). Finally, Saitō (2026, 5) argues that ethnocentrism coupled with Eurocentrism, in traditional Marxism, has imposed a productivist vision of human emancipation onto non-Western societies, denoting a normative development model grounded in Western science and technology, which leaves very little room to recognize, for instance, peasants as revolutionary agents.

and systematic readings of Marx's early writings. Nonetheless, what emerges from the careful reading of late Marx is a 'new', 'richer' and 'better' Marx(ism), freed from the standard attributions to productivism, Eurocentrism, and ethnocentrism.

We propose that Saitō's work can be organized into three parts, which can be analytically distinguished even if they often overlap in his writings and in particular in his talks and interviews. In the first place we would place his archival, editorial and translation work, as forms of scholarly labour that are routinely overlooked. On Saitō's part this involves his efforts in co-editing volume 18 of section four of the MEGA² dedicated to Marx's excerpts and notes from 1864 to 1872 (Marx, 2019). Here should also be placed his translation from German into Japanese of Michael Heinrich's *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital* (Heinrich, 2004; 2012; 2014). Second, are his scholarly writings on Marx and on ecological Marxism, which bear the mode of university discourse and involves his doctoral dissertation completed in German in 2016 at the Humbolt University in Frankfurt (Saitō, 2016c) and his two major scholarly books (Saito, 2017a; 2023a), and articles (2014; 2016b; 2017c; 2020; 2026). Third, are his political interventions, journalism, public lectures, and his bestselling political manifesto for degrowth communism (2024b).

Perhaps the most common critical response to Saitō is to claim that he bases his arguments on a few scattered remarks in unpublished and therefore insignificant recently discovered texts (see e.g., Huber & Phillips, 2024). Rather, Saitō's goal is to systematically reconstruct Marx's ecology on the basis of *all* of Marx's writings both published within his lifetime and more recently. He, therefore, directly contrasts his project with the second generation of ecosocialists, such as John Bellamy Foster and Paul Burkett, whose work, he maintains, "sometimes gives a false impression that Marx did not deal with the topic [ecology] in a systematic but only in a sporadic and marginal way", against which he develops "a more systematic and complete presentation of Marx's ecological critique" of capitalism (Saitō, 2017a, 12). While this would be a significant achievement in itself, Saitō's revolution in ecological Marxism is to be finally done with capitalist and socialist productivism and linear conceptions of history. If this great turn would one day be completed then it would become clear that for Marx and Marxism there are many communisms and many pathways

there, and that communism is not as such premised on economic growth or the development of the productive forces. In so many words, Saitō's revolution is not about technological optimism and industrial hubris, but rather represents the maturation of Marx and Marxism, which involves a controlled and planned slowdown of the economy and life and a radical reorganization of work and the human metabolism with the rest of nature.

Consequently, Saitō's contribution to radical theory and politics, in a time of ecological crisis, is to discover Marx as a degrowth communist, and consequently to bridge two key fields of anti-capitalist scholarship and political agency. For Marxism, degrowth carries an extensive critique of productivism and a sense of limits and finitude (see e.g., Heikkurinen 2024). For degrowth, the last Marx supports the pluriverse of anti-capitalist struggles and critique of capitalism in the 21st century. This 'new' outfit of Marx, Marxism and degrowth is no small contribution, but among the key alliances for the 21st century struggles against capital, from the local to the international, and from industrial workers to indigenous peoples.

Needless to say, this is a lot and will take a lot of time to work through, time which we do not have, given the urgency of the current global ecocide. Perhaps paradoxically we need to think carefully and slowly, while acting decisively and without delay. This situation generates a number of difficulties and complexities through which we need to engage with the important work of thinkers such as Saitō. We therefore will offer a critique of Saitō, not in order to score points, or to reduce him in any way, but to extend, develop, and to elaborate the many important things he has brought into the conversation.

This review essay is divided into two sections. In the first section we situate Kōhei Saitō in relation to Western Marxism, the New Marx-Reading, and the MEGA² project, commending Saitō's methodological protocols for the careful and extensive reading of Marx and others. After this we highlight his key philosophical formulations regarding metabolism and the dialectic of humans and nature, while stressing our reservations about Saitō's idea that Marx, or 'we', could or should depart from philosophy. In the second section, we turn to Saitō's politics, and his reading of the late Marx's degrowth communist vision by bringing him into conversation with other ecosocialisms and degrowth communisms, as we acknowledge that Saitō's most important contribution is

bridging the fields and movements of ecological Marxism and degrowth. Furthermore, and while for some Saitō's call for degrowth communism will sound surprising and new, we argue on the contrary that degrowth communism is already a real movement, and much larger and more diverse than most imagine.

METHOD AND THEORY

Perhaps the most conspicuous feature of Saitō's two scholarly books *Karl Marx's Ecosocialism* (2017a) and *Marx in the Anthropocene* (2023a) is the overwhelmingly textual nature of the argumentation. Saitō is keen to stress that there is nothing arbitrary about the conclusions that he reaches, almost as if they follow from the simple task of close reading. At times it seems like the answer to the most urgent ecological catastrophes facing life on this planet require little more than a careful reading of the complete works of Marx line by line. In this way, Saitō's method rests on two intertwined elements: first, new textual evidence of Marx's writings on ecology, and second, new ways of reading and interpreting these texts.

This can usefully be compared to Alfred Schmidt's efforts fifty years before Saitō's to trace down Marx's ecological arguments and their origins. Schmidt's *The Concept of Nature in Marx* (1971) was also originally a dissertation at Frankfurt, conducted under the supervision of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. In his study, Schmidt managed to assemble all of the textual materials by Marx that he could at that time. Still, on several key points, such as the influence of Justin Liebig on Marx, Schmidt could only speculate (Schmidt, 1971, 218n129). Schmidt was one of the first to draw in detail from the *Grundrisse*, which had only recently become available at the time. By contrast, Saitō had access to many more texts, and many of them have become available in several languages.

One of the key reasons for the availability of the new texts is the massive collective labour of the second attempt to prepare a *Complete Edition* of the writings of Marx and Engels, that is, the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*, the second iteration of which is known as MEGA². This project has been underway since the publication of the first volume in 1975 and is the collective work of an impressive team of international researchers coordinated by the Internationale Marx-Engels Stiftung in Amsterdam under the general direction of Gerald Hubmann (for details of this project see e.g., van der Linden and Hubmann, 2018; Musto, 2020b). The project is a vast international collaboration, which the editors have described as one of

‘philological drudgery’ (van der Linden and Hubmann, 2018, 23). The editors of MEGA² joked on completion of the enormous work of editing and publishing Marx’s economic writings in 2013 – section two of MEGA² – that Marx’s economic writings nevertheless still remain ‘unfinished’. Tellingly, Saitō (2018) is very explicit about this incompleteness and this joke also appears in the subtitle of Saitō’s *Karl Marx’s Ecosocialism: Capital, Nature, and the Unfinished Critique of Political Economy* (2017a).

The new MEGA² edition and its translation has made seminal contributions in establishing the actual letter of Marx’s and Engels’ writings. Today it is clear that Marx’s unpublished writings greatly exceed in magnitude the works that he published during his lifetime. For the purposes of understanding the place of nature in Marx, perhaps the most important are the various fragments that comprise the fourth section of the MEGA². While we already had Marx’s 1878 notes on geology, mineralogy and agricultural chemistry for some years (Marx, 2011), Saitō worked on editing volume 18 of section four with Tim Graßmann and his mentor Teinosuke Otani on the ‘excerpts and notes’ Marx prepared between 1864 and 1872 (Marx, 2019).

MEGA² establishes the material corpus of Marx’s writings, and this is a key aspect of Saitō’s contributions to ecological thought, Marxian thought, and to ecological Marxism. The second pillar of Saitō’s method relates to the new patterns of reading these texts. In this sense, it is important to be sensitive to how we place Saitō within the crowded field of the new ways of reading Marx. Although the history of reading Marx has been a history of invention and caricature, since at least the 1960s, Western Marxism has in many ways become little more than a glorified reading group with its own conferences and scholarly publications. Along with the rise of new forms of anti-capitalist struggle, and the heightened awareness of the contradictions of capital, it is nevertheless plausible to speak today of a ‘Marx revival’ (Musto, 2020a). Crucially, the Marx that has ‘come back to life’ will be unrecognisable to many.

There are two key influences on Saitō’s method of reading Marx, both of which insist on textual fidelity to the highest level. The first of these arises from the German tradition of the New Marx-Reading (*Neue Marx-Lektüre*) that developed from the 1960s. Saitō explicitly places himself as an heir to the New Marx-Reading, which he identifies in the work of Helmut Reichelt and Hans-

Georg Backhaus (Saito, 2017a, 15). He is less interested in seeing the New Marx-Reading or much of Marx in the writings of Schmidt (1971) or in Adorno (Adorno, 2018, see also O’Kane, 2018), and stands singularly opposed to both. Beyond the foundational work in the 1960s and 1970s, Saitō points to a second generation of the New Marx-Reading that has been “put forward with more depth and rigor by Michael Heinrich, Ingo Elbe and Werner Bonefeld” (Saitō, 2017a: 15; see Bonefeld, 2014; Elbe, 2010; Heinrich, 2008; 2012; 2022). This New Marx-Reading has produced stratospheric levels of textual reconstruction, as well as seeking to develop a critical theory of society in which the critique of political economy has a central role (Bellofiore and Riva, 2015; Best, Bonefeld and O’Kane, 2018).

The second key influence on Saitō’s way of reading Marx comes from the twentieth century reception of Marx in Japan, which reflects “one of the deepest, most prolific and most variegated linguistic repositories of the Marxist tradition” (Walker, 2019: 467). This includes the monumental work of Kōzō Uno (1980; 2018; 2021) and his school in the post-war period through to today (Sekine, 2023; Walker, 2013), and all of the critical responses to Uno since then. Saitō is clear about his debts to Japanese Marxism and his own rejection of Uno (Sasaki and Saitō, 2021). Saitō is generous with his praise and admiration for his mentor Teinosuke Otani (2002; 2016) who also worked for many years in the MEGA² archives. He also credits his teacher Samezō Kuruma (2018; 2024) and the Kuruma School, on whom he bases some of the more contentious arguments in *Karl Marx’s Ecosocialism* (Saitō, 2017a: 104–113). His thinking also develops alongside his collaborator Ryuji Sasaki (2021) with whom Saitō’s has also published several papers (see Sasaki and Saitō 2013a; 2013b; 2021; Saitō and Sasaki 2025).

Therefore, it is in the context of the Marx revival and equipped with the methodological rigor of the New Marx-Reading and Japanese Marx scholarship that Saitō approaches both traditional Marxism and also the ecological Marxism of the ‘Monthly Review school’ (see e.g., Burkett 1999; Foster 2000; Foster and Burkett 2016). Saitō (2020; 2023a) takes up, clarifies, and develops ideas such as Foster’s reading of Marx’s theory of ‘metabolic rift’. However, Saitō criticises the Monthly Review school on the methodological grounds that we have identified here. First, Saitō (2017, 12) finds that even the most developed forms of ecological Marxism are premised on insufficient textual evidence, which he proposes to

correct by returning to Marx's original writings. Second, current ecological Marxism stands accused of insufficient systematic rigor, being arbitrarily selective in the treatment of themes and failing to see important connections between moments in Marx's thought (Ibid., 12-14). This is nowhere more the case than with the category of 'metabolism,' of which Saitō pinpoints the origins and demonstrates the changes in the use of this concept across Marx's writings. Moreover, Saitō (2023a, Chapter 2) identifies the origins of these gaps and mistakes in ecological Marxism, and traces many of these back to Engels' editorial work on the posthumous volumes of *Capital*. Through this careful scholarship, Saitō (2023a, 53-54) shows how Engels, for instance, failed to grasp Marx's conception of metabolism, and argues that this was the reason for his dropping the expression 'natural metabolism' from his edition of volume three of *Capital* (Marx, 1991, 949; Marx, 2015, 798; cf. Marx, 1992b, 753).

At the same time, drawing on his MEGA² editorial work, Saitō takes up arguments from the New Marx-Reading to extend ecological Marxism, while also issuing an ecological challenge to the New Marx-Reading. He demonstrates that ecological questions are central in the late Marx, and he chides the New Marx-Reading for remaining silent on these matters (Saitō, 2017a, 15-16). Against the New Marx-Reading, and against Marxian scholarship broadly, he argues that "Marx's ecological critique possesses a systematic character and constitutes an essential moment within the totality of his project of *Capital*" (Saitō, 2017a, 13-14). Saitō also makes other criticisms of the New Marx-Reading, even if at certain critical points they would be better directed at Marx himself. Although Saitō hardly ever has anything critical to say about Marx – certainly there are also these moments (see, e.g., Saitō 2026, 6-7) – he does a great service to all readers of Marx by drawing the attention to the text and demanding to read it carefully.

Despite Saitō's critiques of the New Marx-Reading, at a deep level he develops the motifs in the New Marx-Reading regarding Marx's emphasis on the historical specificity of capitalist social forms (see Postone, 1993; Murray, 2016). This prepares the way for understanding Marx's mature critique of political economy as a critique of the false universalism, which takes categories specific to capital as if they were transhistorical. With Marx, he therefore rightly criticises approaches that identify "the appearance of capitalist society with the universal and transhistorical economic laws of nature" (Saitō, 2017a, 15). Among the form-

determinations specific to capital, Saitō (2017a) posits the centrality of contradictions in the metabolism between human beings and the rest of nature.

While Saitō insists upon a meticulous textual reading, a remarkable contrast arises between the way in which he applies this to different authors. He accounts in detail for the treatment of metabolism in the *Paris Notebooks* and *The German Ideology* (Saitō, 2017a, Chapter 1), volume one of *Capital* (2017a, Chapter 3), and in the *1864-1872 Ecological Notebooks* that he was responsible for editing. He also deals in detail with the questions of nature and metabolism in Engels (2023a, Chapter 2; 2019), Mézsáros (2023a, Chapter 1) and Lukács (2023a, Chapter 3; 2017b). In its own right, this is a significant piece of scholarship. Critical questions arise, however, regarding to whom and to what extent these protocols of close reading are applied to other authors. Isaac Rubin, for example, is dismissed as inadequate without admission of what is valuable in his essay of value written a century ago (Sasaki and Saitō, 2015; Saitō, 2017a, 282). Similarly, and despite the increasingly recognised fact of the centrality of nature and the critique of political economy in Adorno's work (Bonefeld and O'Kane, 2022; Braunstein, 2024; Cook, 2014; Cassegård, 2021), and again based on very little demonstration, Saitō bluntly informs us that "Adorno missed Marx's point from the start" (2023a, 84). As with his predecessors in the Monthly Review school, he piles scorn on Alfred Schmidt (Saitō 2023a, 79; see also Burkett 1997; Foster and Clark 2016), attacks Badiou and Žižek after taking them entirely out of context (Saitō, 2023a: 43), and entirely misconstrues Rancière's position on communism (Saitō 2019b: 55; cf. Rancière, 2020, 176). Having established the bibliophilic concern for the text and insisting on close reading and evidence, it is hard to see what justifies the arbitrary abandonment of these protocols when faced with ostensible 'enemies'. Contrast this with Marx, where we see the internal and immanent critique of his contemporaries, which is a ruthless criticism coupled with meticulous reading of almost everyone, including the ones who do not think like him.

For the most part, Saitō's enemies are the ones that are tarred with the brush of being called 'philosophical'. Indeed, Saitō's antipathy for philosophy runs so deep that he ends up interpreting Marx as someone who took a "non-philosophical position after *The German Ideology*" (2017a, 28). Relatedly, he bemoans "heavily philosophic discussions of Marx's texts" and against these proposes to "reconstruct the importance of the Paris Notebooks from the

standpoint of Marx's economic critique" (Saitō, 2017a, 26-27). The problem here is that philosophy and everything else are separated into different categories, and then we have to choose between them, whereas the point is rather that Marx engages at once with method, philosophy, theory, economy, and politics. In Marx the philosophical, economic, and political dimensions are mediated by each other (see Bidet, 2009). In other words, Marx's critique of the division of labour refuses the artificial separation of human beings from each other, and from the rest of nature. By contrast, modern bourgeois economics seeks to get rid of the philosophical and the political, only to smuggle its own very particular version of these in through the back door.

One of the distinctive features of the Frankfurt tradition of critical theory has been in the profound engagement with philosophy. Following the tradition of Adorno and Horkheimer, Schmidt was also a philosopher. Saitō's dissertation supervisor Andreas Arndt (2011; 2023) is a philosopher who has done important work on Hegel, Marx, and others. But what is Saitō's relation to philosophy and with this, to theory and conceptual, rather than merely reflective, thinking? The other thing to say about theory is that it is strange that Saitō seems to head away from theory, given that this is one of the most important things of the Frankfurt tradition. What remains important in this tradition includes the various efforts, always renewed, to speak both to the most philosophically deep and the most politically urgent. This means insisting that we can both think and act, and that thinking and being mediate each other, rather than lying artificially apart. The problem here is not with philosophy as such but with the various different forms that 'philosophy' takes.

While Marx was certainly engaged in a critique of Western philosophy, liberalism, and German idealism in particular, the idea that Marx broke with philosophy as such, that Marx was somehow able to step outside of philosophy, stands to eradicate from Marx the very mode of conceptual thinking that characterises almost every sentence he wrote. That Marx was a devastating critic of specific philosophical positions does not make him an anti-philosopher. That he transported the method of philosophical thinking from the starry heavens to the mundane world of everyday economic life, reflects an effort not to escape philosophy but to escape the abstract and partial forms of idealist and bourgeois philosophy. From our point of view, Marx's was not necessarily moving away

from philosophy to economics but rather contesting their separation in the first place, showing how the categories of Western philosophy relate to concrete economic matters, and the way that economic thought brings with it profoundly theological and metaphysical presumptions.

Whatever Saitō says about philosophy, many aspects of his own thought and writing are clearly deeply philosophical. This must be so, given that Saitō sets himself the task of elaborating the concept of nature in Marx. Saitō argues that as early as 1844 for Marx “there already exists a central theme of his critique of capitalism, that is, the separation and unity between humanity and nature” (2017a, 28; see also 2023a, Chapter 4). In doing so, he attempts to construct an ontology outside and beyond the ‘hybrid monism’ of thinkers like Latour (1993) and Moore (2015), while also avoiding naïve – what he calls Cartesian – dualisms, such as human-animal, or human-nature. This position confirms the unitedness and the embeddedness of humans in nature, but assigns different kinds of agency and responsibility to different kinds of agents. In Saitō’s (2023a) ontologically monist and analytically dualist position (see also Malm, 2018), nature is *materially modified* by humans through economic and technological practices, and *symbolically* constructed through cultural, social and scientific discourses (Görg, 2011, 49). In doing so, Saitō develops the idea of the identity of the identity and non-identity of nature from Schelling, Hegel and Adorno. The analytical separation of things, agents, and organisms that Saitō (2023a, 110) is arguing for does not, however, insist that they are somehow separate from the greater whole, but rather the point is to analyse and to understand “how each historical stage of society organizes its unique metabolic interchange with nature.”

In line with this argumentation, Saitō has made significant contributions to the development and elaboration of the metabolic rift theory, first in the article “Marx’s Theory of Metabolism in the Age of Global Ecological Crisis”, published in *Historical Materialism* (2020), and then in a modified, enlarged and updated form, as Chapter 1 of *Marx in the Anthropocene* (2023a). Importantly, in this work Saitō complements John Bellamy Foster’s vital groundwork in *Marx’s Ecology* (2000) by noting (Saitō, 2023a, 15) that Foster was able to explain that “Marx not only regarded the ‘metabolic rifts’ under capitalism as the inevitable consequence of the fatal distortion in the relationship between humans and nature but also highlighted the need for a qualitative transformation in social production in order

to repair the deep chasm in the universal metabolism of nature.” Moreover, through Saitō’s reading of the works of Luxemburg, Mészáros, Burkett, and Foster, and of course, Marx, he demonstrates that metabolism was a foundational concept in *Capital*, as “humans can never escape from being a part of the ‘universal metabolism of nature’” (Saitō, 2023a, 19).

Overall, Saitō’s contributions to the existing eco-Marxist scholarship in many ways reconfirm what the so-called second generation of ecosocialists have argued for the past 25 years. Today, there should be no doubt that Marx, and Marxist scholarship in general, does explore the questions of nature and ecology especially linked to capitalist exploitation and destruction in a rigorous and robust manner (Burkett 1999; Foster 1999; 2000; 2020; Saitō 2017; 2023a). However, and as Saitō (2023a: 115) notes, “the current controversy in Marxian political economy centres on the search for an adequate method to conceptualise the relationship between humans and nature under capitalism and its contradiction in the Anthropocene.” For Saitō this method is to understand the entire arc of Marx’s thinking; to see where he started, to comprehend how his thinking evolved, and most importantly, to see where it ‘landed’ in the final years of his life.

MARX’S DEGROWTH COMMUNISM

Having looked at Saitō’s method and theory, we now turn to his politics. In doing so, we do not want to give the impression of artificially separating theory and politics, nor assuming their unity, but rather to emphasize the necessity of thinking theory and politics together. Indeed, for Marx and Engels (1976a, 49), communism “is not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things”. This is exactly why their political manifesto begins with a recognition that something has been sensed in the spectre of communism and that so many forces stand opposed to communism. Marx and Engels’ point regarding the repudiation of communism is twofold. First, in their own context, that “communism is already acknowledged by all European powers to be itself a power” (Marx and Engels, 1976b, 481). Saitō (2024b, 222) himself argues that we need to understand the “concrete reasons” for international solidarity, and “we must turn our attention to the real resistance to exploitation that’s already occurring.” This is the sort of project that Marx embarked upon

since at least since he started reading Hegel (cf. Saitō, 2024b, 222). Marx and Engels' second point is that there were, at that time, a multitude of communisms on offer. Due to this fact "It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies" (Marx and Engels, 1976b, 481).

Saitō (2023a, 6; 2024b, 124-125) argues that after the publication of the first volume of *Capital* (1867), Marx went through a series of theoretical breakthroughs, which culminated in the 'last Marx' (Saitō 2023a, 190), which Saitō takes to be Marx's definitive position, expressing his 'last wish' (Saitō 2024b, 129). For Saitō, a great turn occurred in Marx's thinking beyond the growth and technology development -laden 'ecosocialism', towards what Saitō calls Marx's 'degrowth communism'. The concept of degrowth communism is developed in the last two chapters of *Marx in the Anthropocene* (2023a), where degrowth is derived from Marx, and in chapter four in *Slow Down* (Saitō 2024b; see also Saitō 2026). In both books, Saitō traces down the metamorphosis in the late Marx's thinking based on natural scientific concepts of metabolism, and precapitalist forms of labour, ownership, and relations to land. Saitō reads Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* (Marx 1974) and ecological excerpts (Marx 2019), in addition to correspondence from his final years, and numerous other unpublished manuscripts, some more and some less known (e.g., Marx 1973), as evidence of this set of developments. Based on this, Saitō showcases how Marx develops an argument for communisms that do not begin and end in Europe.

Saitō identifies and specifies this 'great transformation' (see Saitō 2023a: 171) in Marx's thinking, representing a turn away from productivism and linear conceptions of history. He (2023a; 2024b) argues this turn arose from Marx's reading of Georg Ludwig Maurer's and Karl Fraas's work on German Teutonic peoples (*Markgenossenschaft*), and Russian agrarian communes (cf. Shanin 1983, 110, 116-117; and Saitō 2023a, 195; 2024b, 114-118; see also Anderson 2025). Accordingly, Marx argued that communism, in Western Europe, would be established by returning to pre-capitalist societies, and "to a higher form of an archaic type" (Saitō 2023a, 205-206; Shanin 1983, 102; see also Saitō 2026).

In his most recent work Saitō (2026, 14) demonstrates the immense difference between these later writings and the Eurocentric elements in earlier Marx, leading to a definite break with Eurocentrism. As he shows, the late Marx argued that communities embodying the ethos of 'communism in living' were better at

balancing the metabolism with nature (Saitō 2023a, 208-210; 2026, 14). Marx's last vision of post-capitalism as degrowth communism thus envisaged a stable, circular, and communal economy (Ibid., 208-209), which had escaped the relentless drive for economic growth and the development of productive forces that are characteristic to the capitalist mode of production. Strikingly, the precapitalist modes of production Marx once dismissed for their regressive steadiness (Saitō, 2023a, 207) became from 1868 onwards the basis for his model of remedying the crisis of capitalism in the West and beyond.

Key evidence of this evolution is the correspondence with the Russian revolutionary Vera Zasulich in 1881. In his reply, which preoccupied Marx considerably, he assured Zasulich that he would not want Russia to embark on the road to modernisation, as it took place in the West via capitalism, and found in the Russian communes what he considered as "the fulcrum of social regeneration in Russia" (Marx, 1992a, 72; Shanin, 1983, 123-124; Saitō, 2024b, 116-117). For Saitō (2024b, 121-122), Marx's four draft letters and his actual response sent to Zasulich, complete the late Marx's turn. This leads not only to the recognition that "there are multiple roads that might lead to communism, but to the reimagination of – and therefore, a major transformation in – the communism towards which Western European capitalism must now aspire" (Saitō, 2024b, 122).

Saitō (2023a; 2024b) claims that he is the first to notice this turn in Marx, and that this went unnoticed in Marxian ecology ever since Engels' editorial work on *Capital*. This 'great miss' is of course tragic, since for over one hundred and fifty years from the publication of the first volume of *Capital* Marxism remained wedded to productivism, and was therefore "unable to analyse environmental problems as stemming from the ultimate contradiction within capitalism" (Saitō, 2024b, 125). It would probably be fairer to say that this situation has been in a process of change for several decades, although with Saitō's work the maturation of Marxian thinking concerning ecology is now unquestionable. At the same time, this is, of course, not the first time when scholars have insisted upon 'socialism without growth' (see Kallis, 2019) or for an 'ecosocialist degrowth' (see e.g., Löwy, et al. 2022; Pedregal and Bordera, 2022; Foster, 2023). However, what sets Saitō's work apart is the way he grounds degrowth communism firmly in Marx's texts, and also the role that precapitalist modes of production take in the

development of post-capitalist futures (see also Anderson 2025).

In the light of this, the question then inevitably arises of how new and revolutionary is Saitō's degrowth communism based on his reading of late Marx? It is much to Saitō's credit that he seeks, and in many ways succeeds, in bridging together ecological Marxism and degrowth, which have historically been developed in isolation, and often held against each other (see e.g., Kallis, 2019; Gerber, 2020). But this time, and because of late Marx's new outfit, we witness how Saitō's degrowth communism speaks both to ecological Marxism (Mau 2023; Guillibert 2025) and anti-capitalist degrowth (see e.g., Schmelzer et al., 2022; Barlow et al., 2022). Taken as whole, Saitō's degrowth communism closely resembles the communal modes of labour and production that Marx-inspired ecofeminists (e.g., Mies & Shiva, 2014; Salleh, 2009; 2017; Barca 2019; 2020), have for decades made based on the examples of the cultures and practices of subsistence (see Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). We therefore turn for the remainder of this review essay to consider the relationship of the political vision of Saitō's degrowth communism in relation to other contemporary entries on anti-capitalism and communist politics.

Considering the questions of matter-energy throughput and fossil capitalism, Saitō says surprisingly little about the material flows of the global industrial capitalist economy. Recently, for instance, Pineault (2023) has convincingly combined Marxist critique of capital with social ecology, thermodynamics, and ecological economics, and in doing so has demonstrated the tremendous unsustainability of the unrenewable-stock based world economy. As is well known, the era of 'industrial growth' has been achieved by utilising fossil fuels and other non-renewable materials (Salminen and Vadén, 2015; Vadén, 2021; see also Spash, 2024). Although Saitō (2020; 2023a) discusses technological and spatial shifts via the metabolic rift theory, he does not connect these to the global processes of extractivism (Arboleda 2020; Dunlap & Jakobsen 2020). As a result, we might miss just how fossil fuel, resource, and land-intensive modern capitalist technology is (see e.g., Vadén, 2021; Hornborg, 2016; Roos, 2023; Roos and Hornborg, 2024).

More broadly, Saitō's silence on these matter points to a technological ambivalence in Marxism and beyond (Roos and Hornborg, 2024; Roos et al. 2026). What Saitō seems to miss is that technologies always have a technical and

a social aspect. These two aspects constitute and reinforce each other, but actual energy sources must always be available for exploitation whether we are about building pyramids in Egypt, or private automobiles under fossil capital (Hornborg, 2016, 9-10; Malm, 2016). Further, Saitō underplays the resource question concerning technology, namely where the resources that are used to develop, manufacture, and dispose technologies come from. As Wallerstein (2004; 2011) has argued and Hornborg (1998; 2016) demonstrated, the capitalist world economy rests on material load displacements that benefit an incredible small minority at the expense of the rest of the world (see also Ruuska 2026).

The social aspects that are missing in Saitō's discussions of technology include technology's path dependency (Bernes, 2018), alienation (Ruuska, 2021), and the inherent unsustainability of 'capitalist technology' (Heikkurinen and Ruuska, 2021; Roos and Hornborg, 2024). Furthermore, and Bernes (2018: 333) has convincingly demonstrated, many aspects of contemporary technology are inextricably bound to capitalism at the level of design, making it difficult to cherry pick the 'good' from the 'bad' (Ehrenfeld, 1981: 260), the 'convivial' from 'manipulative' (Illich, 1973; Samerski, 2018), or the 'open' from the 'locking' (Gorz, 1980; Saitō, 2024b: 144-145). This means, in general, that it is a mistake to treat "technology as a series of discrete tools, rather than an ensemble of interconnected systems" (Bernes, 2018: 333). Indeed, Saitō tends to treat technology as an ambivalent phenomenon, which is exactly the ideological form that technology takes under capital. Instead of ambivalence and agnosticism, we must ask as Bernes (2018; see also Roos and Hornborg, 2024) does: what if technology and its development do not lead to communism at all?

The technical and social aspect of technology converge critically not only in the discussion of the most advanced forms of technology, but also in the much more basic necessities, namely how we care for and reproduce life. While capitalism is premised on poverty amidst plenty and starvation amidst abundance, that is, the artificial production of scarcity, communism involves a refusal of systematic deprivation. As Adorno (1974, 156) once put it "there is tenderness only in the coarsest demand: that no-one shall go hungry anymore". For a properly materialist degrowth communism, the grounding assessment of capitalism today must be that the consent of billions is secured by the perpetual threat of starvation. This is why food security is always at the heart of the matter,

and why capitalism will never feed us all. As a corollary “revolutions will either provision themselves or die” (Bernes, 2018: 335; see also Hernández et al., 2022). Indeed, ‘the belly of the revolution’ (Bernes 2018) points to the actual places of provisioning, and towards spaces where communal modes of living are still possible, although the pull away from destructive modernity is not likely to be romantic, but a tough journey of enskilment, sweat, and tears for most. In any case, degrowth communism should start from the questions and struggles of food security, and centre on the issue of land ownership, access to land, and land use. Starting from social reproduction and the production of the means of life, entails not starting from the concerns of the technological savvy industrial working class, but involves the abolition of this class. This is why degrowth communism will not include the transhistorical necessity of work, but rather “*the abolition of work as such*, an activity separate from the rest of life” (Dauvé, 2015, 54, italics in original; see also e.g., Marx, 1985, 149).

If it is to be real and actual, degrowth communism involves something very different from choosing the best of capitalist technology, or hoping that the capitalist state will decide to abolish itself. As its foundation, degrowth communism involves protecting, securing and developing sustainable local livelihoods amidst the massive food security challenges of the present and the future. It is not about renewable energy or balancing the town-country relation but involves abolishing the distinction of town and country developed under capital. It is a movement *against* class societies, division of labour, work as a separate activity from reproduction and care, commodification, privatization, and monetized value. It is a movement *for* collective emancipation, care, reproductive labour, and communal production of a metabolic relation with the earth by the free associate producers.

Importantly, these kinds of movements are already here, but they need to be recognized, included, and supported by banners like degrowth communism, *buen vivir*, and the pluriverse. The global anti-capitalist movement is real, it is here, it is happening, and degrowth communism can help to make it stronger. In this sense, we must make efforts to clarify whether degrowth communism is principally an idea, or something more elaborate that can support and amplify social movements, and sparks revolutions. Understandably, while much weight has been put recently on re-building the idea of communism (e.g., Badiou, 2010;

Douzinas and Žižek, 2010; Lee and Žižek, 2016; Žižek, 2013; Dean, 2018; Guillibert, 2025), we should remember that a properly materialist sentiment must both see the value of the idea and also that communism is not a creation of philosophy but is, as we noted with Marx and Engels (1976a, 1976b) above, a real movement that already exists. If we turn our attention to degrowth, as a movement of eco-social transformation away from capitalism (e.g., Barlow et al., 2022), then we must start from the politics seeking to actualise degrowth transformations. We must act *on* and *in* the movements, rather than from the outside. But our task is also to bring to consciousness the demands of the movement. When we do this then we can see that the discontent with capitalism and politics of perpetual economic growth is much more widespread, even if diffuse, than is generally given attention. Refusal and discontent with capitalist expansion has always accompanied the growth of the capitalist mode of production, which is ultimately what we, degrowth communists, want to end.

Clearly, Saitō's reading of the late Marx contains the possibility of building powerful ideas that spark resistance. In many ways, his contributions to ecological politics rest precisely in the confidence and boldness with which he presents his ideas. Explicitly naming capitalism as the problem and attaching degrowth to communism is a courageous and significant achievement itself. While we are more cautious than he is in seeing technology as any kind of solution, we see much merit in Saitō's call for radical break from capital. The solutions, however, cannot be found in a small and incremental changes, such as simply "shortening working hours" (Saitō, 2024b: 196-199), "democratizing of the production process" (Ibid.: 201-203), or "prioritizing essential work" (Ibid.: 203-204). Although pressing issues, Saitō's proposals ultimately seems abstract and ignore many of the material questions that we bring to focus here. For instance, how will we feed each other and care for each other now and in the future? Will there be money, and if so then what purposes will it serve? Whether there will be private ownership of land, and rent on properties? Whether fossil fuels will be lifted from the earth or left there? And of course, the practical means by which the present cartel of expropriators will be expropriated. Saitō (2026) is quite right in arguing that if we were to make any headway on these questions, it will rest on indigenous and feminist ecologies and valuably showing that Marx's was already in the 1870s grasping in this direction.

Degrowth communism is a powerful idea, and we are in desperate need of ideas, but we also need argumentation, concepts, and brave political action. The question of transformation surely also includes the question of wresting of power from the exploiting classes, but without an idea of how this might be achieved it is hard to see how success would even be judged, let alone achieved. There will always be many communisms, and many pathways to them.

REFERENCES

- Althusser Louis (2005) *For Marx*, trans. Brewster Ben. London: Verso.
- Arboleda Martin (2020) *Planetary Mine: Territories of Extraction under Late Capitalism*. London: Verso.
- Adorno Theodor W. (2018) Theodor W. Adorno on “Marx and the Basic Concepts of Sociological Theory”: From a Seminar Transcript in the Summer Semester of 1962. *Historical Materialism*, 26(1): 154-164.
- Arndt Andreas (2011) Karl Marx: *Versuch über den Zusammenhang seiner Theorie*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Arndt Andreas (2023) *Hegel in Marx: Studien zur dialektischen Kritik und zur Theorie der Befreiung*. Berlin: Karl Dietz.
- Anderson Kevin B. (2016) *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies* (Expanded Edition). Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Anderson Kevin B. (2025) *The Late Marx’s Revolutionary Roads: Colonialism, Gender, and Indigenous Communism*. London: Verso.
- Badiou Alain (2010) *The Communist Hypothesis*, trans. Macey D. & Corcoran S. London: Verso.
- Barca Stefania (2019) The Labor(s) of Degrowth. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 30(2): 207-216.
- Barca Stefania (2020) *Forces of Reproduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barlow Nathan, Regen Livia, Cadiou Noemie et al. (Eds.) (2022). *Degrowth & Strategy: How to Bring about Social-Ecological Transformation*. Mayfly Books.
- Bellofiore Riccardo and Tommaso Redolfi Riva (2015) The Neue Marx-Lektüre: Putting the critique of political economy back into the critique of society. *Radical Philosophy*, 189 (Jan-Feb): 24-36.
- Bernes Jasper (2018) The Belly of the Revolution: Agriculture, Energy, and the Future of Communism, Materialism and the Critique of Energy. *Mediations*, 31(2): 331-

375.

- Best Beverly, Bonefeld Werner and O'Kane Chris (Eds.) (2018) *The SAGE Handbook of Frankfurt School Critical Theory*. London: Sage.
- Bidet Jacques (2009) *Exploring Marx's Capital: Philosophical, Economic, and Political Dimensions*. Chicago: Haymarket.
- Bonefeld Werner (2014) *Critical Theory and the Critique of Political Economy: On Subversion and Negative Reason*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Bonefeld Werner and O'Kane Chris (Eds) (2022) *Adorno and Marx: Negative Dialectics and the Critique of Political Economy*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Braunstein, Dirk (2024) *Adorno and the Critique of Political Economy*. Chicago: Haymarket.
- Burkett Paul (1997) Nature in Marx Reconsidered: A Silver Anniversary Assessment of Alfred Schmidt's *Concept of Nature in Marx*. *Organization and Environment*, 10(2): 164-183.
- Burkett Paul (1999) *Marx and Nature: A Red and Green Perspective*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cassegård Carl (2021) *Towards a Critical Theory of Nature: Capital, Ecology, and Dialectics*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Cook Deborah (2011) *Adorno on Nature*. London: Routledge.
- Dauvé Gilles (2015) *Eclipse and Re-emergence of the Communist Movement*, Oakland: PM Press.
- Dean Jodi (2018) *The Communist Horizon*. London: Verso.
- Douzinas Costas and Žižek Slavoj (Eds.) (2010) *The Idea of Communism*. London: Verso.
- Dunlap Alexander and Jakobsen Jostein (2020) *The Violent Technologies of Extraction: Political Ecology, Critical Agrarian Studies and the Capitalist Worldeater*. London: Springer.
- Ehrenfeld David W. (1981) *The Arrogance of Humanism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Elbe Ingo (2010). *Marx im Western. Die neue Marx-Lektüre in der Bundesrepublik seit 1965* (2nd edition). Berlin: Akademie.
- Federici Silvia (2018) *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. New York: Penguin.
- Foster John Bellamy (1999) Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(2): 366-405.
- Foster John Bellamy (2000) *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Foster John Bellamy (2020) *The Return of Nature: Socialism and Ecology*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Foster John Bellamy (2023) Planned Degrowth: Ecosocialism and Sustainable Human Development. *Monthly Review*, 75(3), DOI:10.14452/MR-075-03-2023-07_1.
- Foster John Bellamy and Burkett Paul (2016) *Marx and the Earth: An Anti-Critique*. Leiden:

Brill.

- Foster John Bellamy and Clark Brett (2016) Marx's Ecology and the Left. *Monthly Review*, 68(2). DOI: 10.14452/MR-068-02-2016-06_1
- Gorz Andre (1980) *Ecology as Politics*. Boston: South End Press.
- Guillibert Paul (2025) *Anthropocene Communism: Land and Capital in the Age of Disaster*, trans. Reeck Matt. London: Verso.
- Görg Christoph (2011) Societal Relationships with Nature: A Dialectical Approach to Environmental Politics, in *Critical Ecologies: The Frankfurt School and Contemporary Environmental Crises*, Biro A (ed). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 43-72.
- Harootunian Harry (2015) *Marx After Marx: History and Time in the Expansion of Capitalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Heikkurinen Pasi (2024) *Degrowth: An Experience of Being Finite*. Mayfly Books.
- Heikkurinen Pasi and Ruuska Toni (2021) *Sustainability beyond Technology: Philosophy, Critique, and Implications for Human Organization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heinrich Michael (2004) *Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Eine Einführung in «Das Kapital» von Karl Marx*. Stuttgart: Schmetterling.
- Heinrich Michael (2012) *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital*, trans. Locasio A. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Heinrich Michael (2014) *Shihon-ron" no atarashi yomikata – 21 seiki no Marukusu Iri*, trans. Akashi H, Sasaki R, Saitō K and Sumida S. Tokyo: Horinouchi.
- Hernández Carol, Perales Hugo and Jaffee Daniel (2022) Without Food there is no Resistance: The Impact of the Zapatista Conflict on Agrobiodiversity and Seed Sovereignty in Chiapas, Mexico. *Geoforum*, 128: 236-250.
- Horkheimer Max (1972). Traditional and Critical Theory. In *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. O'Connell MJ et al. New York: Continuum.
- Hornborg Alf (1998) Towards an Ecological Theory of Unequal Exchange: Articulating World-System Theory and Ecological economics. *Ecological Economics*, 25(1): 127-136.
- Hornborg Alf (2016) *Global Magic: Technologies of Appropriation from Ancient Rome to Wall Street*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Huber Matt and Phillips Leigh (2024) Kohei Saito's "Start From Scratch" Degrowth Communism. *Jacobin*, March 9, available at: <https://jacobin.com/2024/03/kohei-saito-degrowth-communism-environment-marxism>
- Illich Ivan (1973) *Tools for Conviviality*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Kallis Giorgos (2019) Socialism Without Growth. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 30(2): 189-206.

- Kothari Ashish, Demaria Federico and Acosta Alberto (2014) Buen Vivir, Degrowth and Ecological Swaraj: Alternatives to Sustainable Development and the Green Economy. *Development*, 57(3-4): 362-375.
- Kuruma Samezō (2018) *Marx's Theory of the Genesis of Money: How, Why, and Through What Is a Commodity Money?* trans. Schauerte Edward. Chicago: Haymarket.
- Kuruma Samezō (2024) *In Pursuit of Marx's Theory of Crisis*, trans. Schauerte Edward Michael. Brill: Leiden.
- Latour Bruno (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lee Alex Taek-Gwang and Žižek Slavoj (eds) (2016) *The Idea of Communism, 3: The Seoul Conference*. London: Verso.
- Löwy Michael, Akbulut Bengi, Fernandes Sabrina and Kallis Giorgos (2022) For an Ecosocialist Degrowth. *Monthly Review*, 73(11), <https://monthlyreview.org/2022/04/01/for-an-ecosocialist-degrowth/>
- Malm Andreas (2016) *Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam-Power and the Roots of Global Warming*. London: Verso.
- Malm Andreas (2018) *The Progress of this Storm: Nature and Society in a Warming World*. London: Verso.
- Marx, Karl (1973) *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. Nicolaus M. London: Penguin.
- Marx Karl (1974) *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx* (2nd edition), Krader L (ed). Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Marx Karl (1976) *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One*, trans. Fowkes Ben Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Marx Karl (1985) Value, Price and Profit. In *Karl Marx Frederick Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 20. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Marx Karl (1991) *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume Three*, trans. Fernbach D. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Marx Karl 1992a Marx to Vera Zasulich 8 March 1881. In *Karl Marx Frederick Engels Collected Works*, vol. 46. London: Lawrence & Wishart, pp. 70-71.
- Marx Karl (1992b) *Ökonomische Manuskripte 1863-1867 (Teil 2)*. In *Karl Marx Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)*, vol. II/4.2, Müller M, Jungnickel J, Lietz B, Sander C and Schnickmann A (eds). Berlin: Dietz.
- Marx Karl (2011) *Exzerpte und Notizen zur Geologie, Mineralogie und Agrikulturchemie, März bis September 1878*. In *Karl Marx Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)*, vol. IV/26, Griese A, Krüger P and Sperl R (eds). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Marx Karl (2015) *Marx's Economic Manuscript of 1864-1865*, Moseley F (ed), trans. Fowkes

- Ben. Chicago: Haymarket.
- Marx Karl (2019) *Exzerpte und Notizen Februar 1864 bis Oktober 1868, November 1869, März, April, Juni 1870, Dezember 1872*. In *Karl Marx Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)*, vol. IV/18, Otani T, Saitō K and Graßmann T (eds). Berlin: Akademie.
- Marx Karl and Engels Friedrich (1976a) *The German Ideology*. In *Marx Engels Collected Works*, vol. 6. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Marx Karl and Engels Friedrich (1976b) *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. In *Marx Engels Collected Works*, vol. 6. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Mies Maria and Bennholdt-Thomsen Veronika (1999) *The Subsistence Perspective: Beyond the Globalized Economy*. London: Zed Books.
- Mies Maria and Shiva Vandana (2014) *Ecofeminism* (2nd edition). London: Zed Books.
- Moore Jason W. (2015) *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*. London: Verso.
- Murray Patrick (2016) *The Mis-Measure of Wealth*. Chicago: Haymarket.
- Musto Marcello (2020a). *The Marx Revival: Key Concepts and New Interpretations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Musto Marcello (2020b) New profiles of Marx after the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe (MEGA²)*. *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews*, 49(5): 407-419.
- O’Kane Chris (2018) Introduction to “Theodor W. Adorno on Marx and the Basic Concepts of Sociological Theory”: From a Seminar Transcript in the Summer Semester of 1962”. *Historical Materialism* 26(1): 137-153.
- Otani Teinosuke (2002) *A Guide to Marxian Political Economy: What Kind of Social System is Capitalism?* Cham: Springer.
- Otani Teinosuke (2016) Acceptance speech for the World Marxian Economics Award. *World Review of Political Economy*, 7(4): 527-531.
- Parrique Timothee (2019) *The Political Economy of Degrowth, Economics and Finance*, Université Clermont Auvergne, Stockholm universitet.
- Pedregal Alejandro, Bordera Juan (2022) Toward an Ecosocialist Degrowth: From the Materially Inevitable to the Socially Desirable, *Mothly Review*, 74(2), <https://monthlyreview.org/2022/06/01/toward-an-ecosocialist-degrowth-from-the-materially-inevitable-to-the-socially-desirable/>
- Pineault Eric (2023) *A Social Ecology of Capital*, London: Pluto Press.
- Postone Moishe (1993) *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx’s Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rancière Jacques (2010) Communists without Communism? In Douzinas Costas and Žižek Slavoj (Eds.), *The Idea of Communism*. London: Verso
- Roos Andreas (2023) *Solar Technology and Global Environmental justice: The vision and the reality*,

- London: Routledge.
- Roos Andreas and Hornborg Alf (2024) Technology as Capital: Challenging the Illusion of the Green Machine, *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 35(2): 75-95.
- Roos Andreas, Ruuska Toni and Heikkurinen Pasi (2026) Technological ambivalence and Degrowth, *Environmental Values*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963271926145894>
- Rubin Isaac I. (1972) *Essays on Marx's Theory of Value*, trans. Samardžija Miloš and Perlman Fredy. Delhi: Aakar.
- Ruuska Toni (2021) Conditions for Alienation: Technological Development and Capital Accumulation, In *Sustainability beyond Technology: Philosophy, Critique, and Implications for Human Organization*, Heikkurinen Pasi and Ruuska Toni (Eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 138-160.
- Ruuska Toni. 2026. Affluence at the Expense of Others: from the Hegemony of Capitalism to Degrowth Transitions towards Sufficiency, in *Sufficiency – From Growth and Overshoot to Enoughness*, Ruuska Toni and Nyfors Tina (Eds.). Leiden: Brill, pp. 78-98.
- Salminen Antti and Vadén Tere (2015) *Energy and Experience: An Essay in Naftology*. Chicago: MCM Publishing.
- Saitō Kōhei (2014) The Emergence of Marx's Critique of Modern Agriculture: Ecological insights from his *Excerpt Notebooks*. *Monthly Review*, October: 25-46.
- Saitō Kōhei (2015a) Beyond Recognition in Capitalism: From Violence and Caprice to Recognition and Solidarity, in *Hegel and Capitalism*, Buchwalter Andrew (Ed.). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Saitō Kōhei (2015b) Reconstructing Marx's Critique of Political Economy from his *London Notebooks*: Review of Lucia Pradella, *Globalization and the Critique of Political Economy: New Insights from Marx's Writings*. *Monthly Review*, December: 57-61.
- Saitō Kōhei (2016a) Learning from late Marx: Review of Kevin Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity and Non-Western Societies (Expanded Edition)*. *Monthly Review*, October: 57-61.
- Saitō Kōhei (2016b), Marx's Ecological Notebooks. *Monthly Review*, February: 57-61.
- Saitō Kōhei (2016c), *Natur gegen Kapital: Marx' Ökologie in seiner unvollendeten Kritik des Kapitalismus*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.
- Saitō Kōhei (2016d), Why Ecosocialism Needs Marx: Review of John Bellamy Foster and Paul Burkett, *Marx and the Earth: An Anti-Critique*. *Monthly Review*, November: 57-61.
- Saitō Kōhei (2017a), *Karl Marx's Ecosocialism: Capital, Nature, and the Unfinished Critique of Political Economy*. New York: Monthly Review.

- Saitō Kōhei (2017b) Lukács's Theory of Metabolism as a Foundation of Ecosocialist Realism. *New German Critique*, 149 (August): 101-129.
- Saitō Kōhei (2017c) Marx in the Anthropocene: Value, Metabolic Rift, and Non-Cartesian Dualism. *Zeitschrift für kritische Sozialtheorie und Philosophie*, 4(1-2): 276-295.
- Saitō Kōhei (2018) Profit, Elasticity, and Nature. In Judith Dellheim and Frieder Otto Wol (eds), *The Unfinished System of Karl Marx: Critically Reading Capital as a Challenge for Our Times*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Saitō Kōhei (2019a) Marx and Engels: The Intellectual Relationship Revisited from an Ecological Perspective, in *Marx's Capital After 150 Years: Critique and Alternative to Capitalism*, Musto Marcello (Ed.). London: Routledge.
- Saitō Kōhei (2019b) Revolution and Radical democracy: Marx versus post-Marxism, in *Karl Marx's Life, Ideas and Influences: A Critical Examination on the Bicentenary*, Gupta Shaibal, Musto MARcello and Amini Babak (Eds.) Cham: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Saitō Kōhei (2020) Deutscher Prize Memorial Lecture: Marx's theory of Metabolism in the Age of Ecological Crisis. *Historical Materialism*, 28(2): 3-24.
- Saitō Kōhei (2021) Primitive Accumulation as the Cause of Economic and Ecological Disaster, in *Rethinking Alternatives with Marx: Economy, Ecology and Migration*, Musto Marcello (Ed.). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Saitō Kōhei (2022a) Agriculture, in *The SAGE Handbook of Marxism* vol. 2, Skeggs Beverly, Farris Sara R., Toscano Alberto and Bromberg Svenja (Eds.). London: Sage.
- Saitō Kōhei (2022b) The Legacy of Karl Marx's Ecosocialism in the Twenty-First Century, in *The Routledge Handbook on Ecosocialism*, Brownhill Leigh, Engel-Di Mauro Salvatore, Giacomini Terran, Isla Ana, Löwy Michael and Turner Terisa E. (Eds.). London: Routledge.
- Saitō Kōhei (2023a) *Marx in the Anthropocene: Towards the Idea of Degrowth Communism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Saitō Kōhei (2023b) *Systemsturz. Der Sieg der Natur über den Kapitalismus*, trans. Wakounig Gregor. Munich: DTV.
- Saitō Kōhei (2024a) Greening Marx in Japan. *New Left Review*, 145 (Jan-Feb): 1-14.
- Saitō Kōhei (2024b) *Slow Down: How Degrowth Communism Can Save the Earth*, trans. Bergstrom Brian. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Saitō Kōhei (2026) Ecosocialism and Critical agrarian studies, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2026.2614486>.
- Saitō Kōhei and Sasaki Ryuji (2025) Rentier Capitalism, Technofascism and the Destruction of the Common, *Area Development and Policy*, doi=10.1080/23792949.2025.2557911

- Sasaki Ryuji (2021) *A New Introduction to Karl Marx: New Materialism, Critique of Political Economy, and the Concept of Metabolism*. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Sasaki Ryuji and Saitō Kōhei (2013a), Abstrakte Arbeit und Stoffwechsel zwischen Mensch und Natur. *Beiträge zur Marx-Engels-Forschung Neue Folge*. Hamburg: Argument.
- Sasaki Ryuji and Saitō Kōhei (2013b) Il Marxismo giapponese del ventunesimo secolo e la rilettura di Marx attraverso la Mega. *Il Ponte. Rivista di politica economia e cultura fondata da Piero Calamandrei*, LXIX(5-6, maggio-giugno): 244-263.
- Sasaki Ryuji and Saitō Kōhei (2021) Kozo Uno (1897-1977), in *Routledge Handbook of Marxism and Post-Marxism*, Calinicos Alex, Kouvelakis Stathis and Pradella Lucia (Eds.). New York: Routledge.
- Salleh Ariel (2009) From Eco-Sufficiency to Global Justice, In *Eco-sufficiency & global Justice: Women Write political Ecology*, Salleh Ariel (Ed.). London: Pluto Press, pp. 291-312.
- Salleh Ariel (2017) *Ecofeminism as Politics: Nature, Marx and the Postmodern* (2nd edition). London: Zed Books.
- Samerski Silja (2018) Tools for Degrowth? Ivan Illich's Critique of Technology Revisited, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 197, 1637-46.
- Schmeltzer Matthias, Vetter Andrea and Vansintjan Aaron (2022) *The Future is Degrowth: A Guide to a World beyond Capitalism*. London: Verso.
- Schmidt Alfred (1971) *The Concept of Nature in Marx*. London: Verso.
- Sekine Thomas (2023) *Marx, Uno and the Critique of Economics: Towards an Ex-Capitalist Transition*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Shanin Theodor (1984) *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and the Peripheries of Capitalism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Shanin Theodor (2018) 1881 letters of Vera Zasulich and Karl Marx. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(7): 1183-1202.
- Spash Clive L. (2024) *Foundations of Social Ecological economics: The Fight for Revolutionary Change in Economic Thought*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Uno Kōzō (1980). *Principles of Political Economy: Theory of a Purely Capitalist Society*, trans. Sekine Thomas. Sussex: Harvester.
- Uno Kōzō (2018). *The Types of Economic Policies Under Capitalism*, trans. Sekine Thomas. Chicago: Haymarket.
- Uno Kōzō (2021). *Theory of Crisis*, trans. Kawashima Ken. Leiden: Brill.
- Vadén Tere (2021) What Does Fossil Energy Tell us about Energy?, in *Sustainability beyond Technology: Philosophy, Critique, and Implications for Human Organization*, Heikkurinen Pasi and Ruuska Toni (Eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 161-181.

- van der Linden Marcel and Gerald Hubmann (Eds.) 2018, *Marx's Capital: An Unfinishable Project?* Chicago: Haymarket.
- Walker Gavin (2013) The Absent Body of Labour Power: Uno Kōzō's logic of capital. *Historical Materialism*, 21(4): 201-234.
- Walker Gavin (2016) *The Sublime Perversion of Capital: Marxist Theory and the Politics of History in Modern Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Walker Gavin (2019) Japan, in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Marx*, Diamanti Jeff, Pendakis Andrew and Szeman Imre (Eds.). London: Bloomsbury.
- Wallerstein Immanuel (2004) *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Wallerstein Immanuel (2011). *Historical Capitalism*, London: Verso.
- Žižek Slavoj (Ed.) (2013) *The Idea of Communism, 2: The New York Conference*. London: Verso.