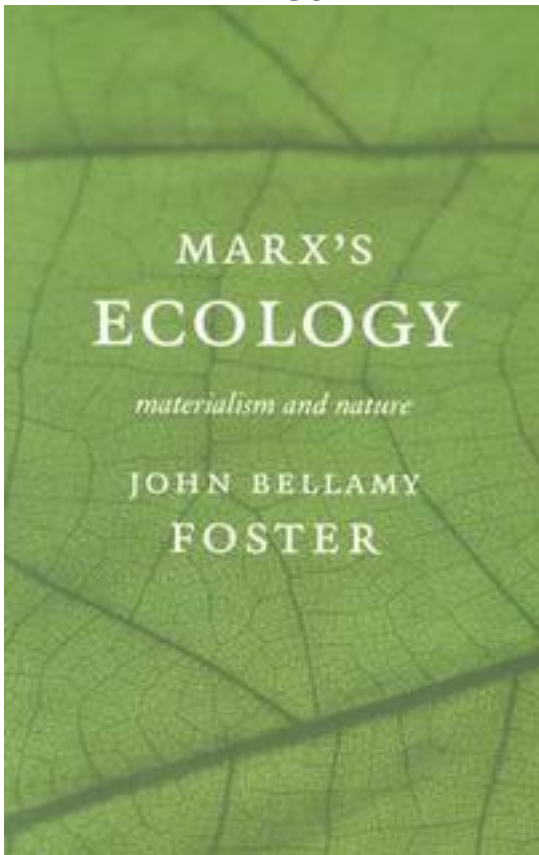


Marx's Ecology *Materialism and Nature*



John Bellamy Foster
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Progress requires the conquest of nature. Or does it? This new account overturns conventional interpretations of Marx and in the process outlines a more rational approach to the current environmental crisis.

Marx, it is often assumed, cared only about industrial growth and the development of economic forces. John Bellamy Foster examines Marx's neglected writings on capitalist agriculture and soil ecology, philosophical naturalism, and evolutionary theory. He shows that Marx, known as a powerful critic of capitalist society, was also deeply concerned with the changing human relationship to nature.

Marx's Ecology covers many other thinkers, including Epicurus, Charles Darwin, Thomas Malthus, Ludwig Feuerbach, P. J. Proudhon, and William Paley.

By reconstructing a materialist conception of nature and society, *Marx's Ecology* challenges the spiritualism prevalent in the modern Green movement, pointing toward a method that offers more lasting and sustainable solutions to the ecological crisis.

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About the Author

JOHN BELLAMY FOSTER is associate professor of sociology at the University of Oregon. He is the author of

[*Profit*](#)

(2000),

Capitalism and the Information Age

(1998), and

In Defense of History

(1996).

[*The Vulnerable Planet*](#) and co-editor of [*Hungry for*](#)

REVIEWS

“In the best tradition of Marxist scholarship, John Bellamy Foster uses the history of ideas not

as a courtesy to the past but as an integral part of current issues. He demonstrates the centrality of ecology for a materialist conception of history, and of historical materialism for an ecological movement.”

— **RICHARD LEVINS**, Harvard University

“*Marx's Ecology* is a bold, exciting interpretation of the historical background and context of Marx's ecological thought and a fascinating exploration of environmental history. Should be of interest to all who care about the fate of our `vulnerable planet.’”

— **CAROLYN MERCHANT**, University of California, Berkeley

“When I first saw John Bellamy Foster's new book I thought, `Oh no, not another great, thick, fat book on Marx!' But as soon as I started to read, I found it hard to put down. It has given me a new understanding of the totality of Marx's materialism and his development of the dialectic of human society and nature.” — **R.C. LEWONTIN**, Harvard University

“In *Marx's Ecology*, John Bellamy Foster brilliantly expands our understanding of Marx's thought, proving that Marx understood alienation to encompass human estrangement from the natural world. Foster criticizes the current version of environmentalism that equates Marxism and modernity with the degradation of nature and points towards a sophisticated and less nostalgic environmentalism which sees capitalism, not modernity, as the essential problem to be addressed.”

— **BARBARA EPSTEIN**, University of California, Santa Cruz

“Highly sophisticated, stated in lavish detail that historians of thought will find to be vital to their trade. Yet those of us who are not historians of thought will still find Foster's basic theses about Darwin and Marx and ecology to be fascinating and clearly stated. This is an important book.”

— **HOWARD J. SHERMAN**, *JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC ISSUES*

“*Marx's Ecology* is a compelling, thought-provoking read that effectively and authoritatively pries open a space in the rather over-published realm of Marxist theory for a debate concerning the relationship between materialism and ecology. It should offer a catalyst to a serious reconsideration of the common assumption that Marx's work has little to offer ecological discourse, beyond novel and sporadic secondary observations of the environmental effects of capitalist development.”

— **J. CHRISTOPHER KOVATS-BERNAT**, *HUMAN ECOLOGY REVIEW*

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