Ecology and Historical Materialism

This book challenges the widely held view that Marxism is unable to deal adequately with environmental problems. Jonathan Hughes considers the nature of environmental problems and the evaluative perspectives that may be brought to bear on them. He examines Marx's critique of Malthus, his method, and his materialism, interpreting the latter as a recognition of human dependence on nature. Central to the book's argument is an interpretation of the 'development of the productive forces' which takes account of the differing ecological impacts of different productive technologies while remaining consistent with the normative and explanatory roles that this concept plays within Marx's theory. Turning finally to Marx's vision of a society founded on the communist principle 'to each according to his needs', the author concludes that the underlying notion of human need is one whose satisfaction presupposes only a modest and ecologically feasible expansion of productive output.

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Studies in Marxism and Social Theory

Edited by G. A. Cohen, John Roemer and Erik Olin Wright

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The books in the series are intended to exemplify a new paradigm in the study of Marxist social theory. They will not be dogmatic or purely exegetical in approach. Rather, they will examine and develop the theory pioneered by Marx, in the light of the intervening history, and with the tools of non-Marxist social science and philosophy. It is hoped that Marxist thought will thereby be freed from the increasingly discredited methods and presuppositions which are still widely regarded as essential to it, and that what is true and important in Marxism will be more firmly established.

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Ecology and Historical Materialism

Jonathan Hughes
For Katie and Laura
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