

# Marx and the Production-Organism

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## **Biography**

John Filling is the Andrew Fraser Junior Research Fellow in Political Philosophy at St John's College, Oxford. Prior to this he spent a year at Brasenose College, Oxford as Lecturer in Politics. And before that he was at Corpus Christi College, Oxford where he read for a BA in PPE, and stayed on for an MPhil in Political Theory followed by doctoral research. He works on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century political philosophy. Thus far his research has focused on Hegel and Marx, comparing their views on freedom, capitalism and the state. He is about to begin a project on progress and providence in the Scottish Enlightenment, paying particular attention to Adam Ferguson, William Robertson, and John Millar.

## **Description of the Paper**

In the central chapters of the first volume of *Capital* – the chapters on ‘Co-operation’, ‘Division of Labour and Manufacture’, and ‘Machinery and Large-Scale Industry’ – Marx employs a variety of organic and corporeal metaphors. This paper examines these metaphors to gain a better sense of Marx's social organicism. Comparison is made with G. W. F. Hegel, Andrew Ure, and Moses Hess. Marx abandoned a broadly Hegelian organicism in 1843 and began to construct his own conception around the start of 1858 (roughly halfway through the writing of the *Grundrisse*). By the time *Capital* was published in 1867, Marx had a sophisticated theory of social organicism. He distinguished two types of production-organism in capitalism: the ‘elementary’ organism of the division of labour in manufacture; and the ‘objective’ organism of the machine system in large-scale industry. Through a detailed comparison of these different organisms, new light is shed on some familiar themes in Marx scholarship: first, the difference between alienation through the division of labour, on the one

hand, and alienation in the automatic factory, on the other; second, the suggestion that machines will render human labour unnecessary in communism; and third, Marx's teratology, in which large-scale industry is said to be a 'mechanical monster' or 'Cyclops', and capital a 'vampire' or 'werewolf'.

## **Bibliography**

### Primary Texts: Marx

The most important primary text is, of course, *Capital*:

- Karl Marx, *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Erster Band, in *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels-Werke*, 42 vols. (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1957-68), vol. 23.
- Translated as: *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Volume 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976).
- See in particular the chapters on 'Kooperation' ('Co-operation'), 'Teilung der Arbeit und Manufaktur' ('The Division of Labour and Manufacture'), and 'Maschinerie und große Industrie' ('Machinery and Large-Scale Industry').

In order to get a sense of the development in Marx's position, the following sections of his economic manuscripts are recommended:

- Karl Marx, *Ökonomische Manuskripte 1857/1858: Grundrissen der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (1857-58), in *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels-Werke*, 42 vols. (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1957-68), vol. 42.
- Translated as: *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).
- See in particular pp. 95-97/161-63, 382-423/469-515, 446-49/540-43, 511-14/611-14, 600-3/704-7, 722-24/831-33. (Page references are to the German and English editions respectively, divided by a forward slash.)

- Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Manuskript 1861-1863)*, 6 vols., in *Karl Marx Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1975-98; and Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998-) [MEGA], series II, vols. 3.1-3.6.
- Translated as *Economic Manuscripts of 1861-63. A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 5 vols., in *Karl Marx Frederick Engels Collected Works*, 50 vols. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975-2005) [MECW], vols. 30-34.
- See in particular MEGA II vol. 3.1, pp. 83-99; vol. 3.4, pp. 1526-1538; and vol. 3.6, pp. 1935-49, 1981-88, 1996, 2029-36, 2062-2071. Translated in MECW vol. 30, pp. 93-113; vol. 32, pp. 531-41; vol. 33, pp. 410-22, 449-57, 462, 496-501; vol. 34, pp. 35-44.
- Karl Marx, *Ökonomische Manuskripte 1863-1867*, 2 vols., in MEGA II, vols. 4.1-4.2.
- A portion of this text (MEGA II, vol. 4.1, pp. 6-135: ‘Sechstes Kapitel. Resultate des unmittelbaren Produktionsprozesses’) is translated as ‘Results of the Immediate Process of Production’, in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Volume 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp. 948-1084.
- See in particular MEGA II, vol. 4.1, pp. 58-62 (Fowkes trans. pp. 982-86), 80-82 (Fowkes trans. pp. 1006-8), 91-111 (Fowkes trans. pp. 1019-41)

#### Primary Texts: Hegel, Ure, Hess

- G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821), in *Hegel: Werke: Theorie Werkausgabe*, 20 vols., eds. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), vol. 7.
- Translated as *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- See in particular §§142-157, 183, 239-246, 269-276, 286, 290, 302-3.
- G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* vol. 1 (1817, rev. 1827, 1830), in *Werke* vol. 8.
- Translated as *Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

- See in particular §§216-222.
- Andrew Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures: or, An Exposition of the Scientific, Moral, and Commercial Economy of the Factory System of Great Britain* (London: Charles Knight, 1835).
- Moses Hess, 'Über das Geldwesen', in Moses Hess, *Philosophische und Sozialistische Schriften, 1837-1850* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), eds. Auguste Cornu and Wolfgang Mönke, pp. 329-348.

### Secondary Reading

- Mark Neocleous, 'The Political Economy of the Dead: Marx's Vampires', *History of Political Thought* 24, 4 (2003), pp. 668-84.
- Frederick Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory: Actualizing Freedom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), ch. 4.
- Michael Rosen, *On Voluntary Servitude: False Consciousness and the Theory of Ideology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), pp. 133-145 and 200-222.
- Susan Meld Shell, 'Organizing the State: Transformations of the Body Politic in Rousseau, Kant, and Fichte', *Internationales Jahrbuch des Deutschen Idealismus/International Yearbook of German Idealism* vol. 2 (2004), pp. 49-75.
- Timothy Shiell, 'On Marx's Holism', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 2, 4 (1987), pp. 235-46.
- Robert R. Williams, *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition* (London: University of California Press, 1997), ch. 13.
- Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx* (London: Routledge, 2004), chs. 13-15.