

## PREFACE

This book is a work of historical critical exegesis. It aims to establish the influence of G.W.F. Hegel's *Science of Logic* (SL) on the *Grundrisse* of Karl Marx. I demonstrate that the Hegelian logic guided Marx's doctrinal development, and that the ordering of economic categories in the *Grundrisse* reflects the ordering of the logical categories in the SL.

A historical critical exegesis can establish the influences on an author only in terms of probability. The exegesis can establish a particular influence with varying degrees of probability, but rarely with certitude. Thus, historical critical exegeses are limited in scope. This fact has advantages and disadvantages. Historical critical exegesis confines us to the particular texts under consideration and avoids the complexity often associated with other forms of textual exegesis, for example, structural exegesis. It must on occasion rely on such dubious evidence as phraseology.

Moreover, when one text is allegedly found in another as a subtext, the exegesis focuses on the subtext prescinding from all other content. This narrow focus poses a danger, because such an exercise is naturally reductive. It can appear to reduce the entire work under consideration to the subtext. This particular danger is heightened when the work under consideration was not published by the author, but is a series of manuscripts—a kind of laboratory. Because my exegesis focuses on the subtext, the *Grundrisse* appears smoother and more complete than it actually is. These manuscripts are more complete than is sometimes supposed, but they are nevertheless manuscripts.

The charge of reductionism, however, cannot be entirely avoided. Readers may think on the basis of this method that Marx simply deduced the content of the *Grundrisse* from the categories of Hegel's logic. But this

impression is misguided. It does not do justice to my exegesis, or to Marx. It is simplistic to suppose that Marx sat at his desk with a copy of the SL and simply translated logical categories into economic ones; I do not make such a claim. The *Grundrisse* manuscripts are a critique of political economy, and a critical appropriation of Hegel's SL.

The relationship of the *Grundrisse* to the SL is thus subtle and complex. Nevertheless, my exegesis does focus on Hegel's SL as a subtext. Though I prescind from the rich content of the *Grundrisse*, and sometimes give the impression that the text is smooth; in fact, the ordering of the economic categories often proceeds in fits and starts. Marx begins the exposition of a particular aspect of capital at one place, and picks it up later at another. He interrupts the logical development of a particular category when the content leads him to a consideration of its historical instantiation, or for reasons that we cannot readily discern and may never fully understand.

Readers familiar with the *Grundrisse* will know that I abstract from very rich content indeed to focus on the subtext of logical form. I do not intend to reduce the content of the *Grundrisse* to logical form, but the nature of the exegesis guides the selectivity of the study.

This particular form of historical critical exegesis relies on "concept exegesis" (*Begriffsexegese*). Concept exegesis demonstrates that the ideas found in one text are related to ideas in another; and, in this instance, that the logical form of a work is indebted to the logical form of another. The method is empirical. I begin by breaking the *Grundrisse* into its component parts, and further subdivide the text. I then isolate the logical form of each argument and compare it to the logical form of Hegel's SL for purposes of establishing indebtedness.

The logical forms of argument are expressed in language. Concept exegesis relies, therefore, on phraseology. I not only expose the form of an argument, but I also link developments in the *Grundrisse* to the SL based on similar terminology. Though I focus primarily on logical form, concept exegesis nevertheless depends on philological study to establish a relation of one text on another. Philological evidence must be accumulated until support for the conclusion is overwhelming.

Needless to say, the result is a complex and dense exposition. I have tried to alleviate some of the difficulty but not all difficulties associated with this methodology can be avoided. Some difficulties arise in the nature of history itself. The more the exact details of a particular historic event are told, the less the meaning of the event as historic is communicated. Similarly, the more I focus on the details of logical form and phraseology, the less I convey the meaning of the *Grundrisse* as a whole, its relative importance in the development of Marx's thought, and the context within which he wrote the

manuscripts. My hope is that readers will see that Marx was keenly aware of the reciprocal relation between form and content in Hegel's presentation of the logical development of the categories of science. Marx sought the complete exposition of capital as an organic unity. Because he recognized the scientific nature of such an exposition, Marx respected Hegel's ordering of the logical categories in the SL.

Over the long course of writing and preparing this book, I have benefited from the support of many persons and institutions. The book would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of Professor Joseph O'Malley. I had the privilege of preparing the first version under his supervision. Professor O'Malley's erudition rooted me in the text; his comprehension inspired me to learn; and his tolerance encouraged me to experiment. I am also grateful to him for introducing me to his friend and colleague Professor Burkhard Tuschling. I completed the first period of research for this book at the Institute for Philosophy in Marburg as Professor Tuschling's guest. My work has benefited enormously from his gentle criticisms and kind suggestions. A Smith Family Fellowship made possible my research in Marburg. I am grateful to Thaddeus Burch, S.J., for his administration of the fellowship. The Smith Family Fellowship also allowed me to spend time at the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam; I am grateful to this Institute and to Jurgen Rojahn for his kind attention and interest.

While in Marburg, I made a lasting friendship with Dieter Huning, with whom I spent many hours debating the premises and conclusions of this work. As a consequence, the work is so much the better for those discussions. I am grateful to Dieter for his comments and his friendship.

I am indebted to many people who read parts or all of various versions of this book and offered suggestions and encouragement over the years. Professor Howard Kainz has been unwavering in his support of my work. Professor Kainz read a number of versions, and offered numerous suggestions. George Khushf read a final draft and generously advocated on behalf of publication. For his friendship, financial support and warm encouragement, I am especially grateful to Anthony Boswell.

I would also like to thank the following people for their support and encouragement over the years: Gyorgy Andrassy, Curtis Carter, Terrell Carver, Robert Cohen, David Duquette, Laszlo Kiss, Jan Heller, Franz Hespe, David McClellan, Patrick Murray, Rachel Reeder, Michael Vater and Mehdi Zamani. Above all, I want to thank my wife, Elyse, for her patient support of my work, and for her friendship and love throughout the completion of this book.

Capital as Organic Unity  
The Role of Hegel's Science of Logic in Marx's  
Grundrisse

Meaney, M.E.

2002, XIII, 193 p. 1 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-4020-1037-8