

Reading Questions for *The Human Motor*, and Helmholtz's "On the Conservation of Force"

STS.038 Class Discussion: Wednesday, October 4, 2006

- 1) What does Helmholtz mean by "force?"
- 2) For whom is Helmholtz writing this paper? What is his argument?
- 3) Are scientific texts like other historical sources? How are they a particular kind of literary style? How are they different? How can we use them to study history?
- 4) Why does Helmholtz include appendices at the end of his article?
- 5) How does Helmholtz's conservation resemble that worked out by William Thompson and James Joule? How is it different?
- 6) What is the human motor?
- 7) What is labor power?
- 8) How did European thinkers connect natural science to social questions?
- 9) Why did thinkers shift from describing the "human machine" to the "human motor?"
- 10) How does Helmholtz appear in Marx? And why?