

# What is *Capital*?

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the evolution of Karl Marx's plans for his critique of political economy. It explores three main types of plans discussed by Marx. The first is a six-book plan; comprising capital, labour, landed property, the state, foreign trade and the world market and crises. The second is a four-book plan relating to capital; including the production process of capital, the circulation process, the process of capital as a whole, and the history of the theory. The third plan is also a four-book plan; comprising capital, the state, international trade, and the world market and crises. These three plans are scrutinised from the perspective of which, if any, was likely to have been eventually chosen by Marx as the one for him to follow, as distinct from that which was ultimately necessary to complete. It is difficult to make any clear judgements about these questions, but overall it is likely that *Capital* is an unfinished work of ambiguous dimensions, possibly culminating in an investigation of the state, foreign trade and world market and crises.

## 1 Introduction

It is especially appropriate in the centenary year of the death of Karl Marx [1983] to reconsider the evolution and scope of his contribution to intellectual history. This comprised, of course, his critico-theoretical exposure of the essential nature and dynamics of nineteenth-century capitalism and his repudiation of its incomplete and misleading reflection in the political economy of his antecedents. I have undertaken such a reconsideration in some detail elsewhere (Oakley 1983, 1984-85). In this paper, I present an analysis of one issue raised by this work, namely that of the bibliographical and implied substantive status of Marx's *magnum opus*, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, as the culmination of his critico-theoretical endeavours.

It is well known that Marx's death came before he could 'complete' *Capital* and that it was through the editorial efforts of his long-time benefactor and friend, Friedrich Engels, that the work appears in three, more or less readable volumes today. In preparing Books II and III for publication, Engels faced the formidable task of sorting out the mass of manuscripts left by Marx. Engels' work required that he be selective between different versions of the material and apply his judgement in arranging the analyses. The results have been questioned (see Rubel 1981), and, of course, alternative selections and arrangements are possible for Marx left so little guidance in this respect.<sup>1</sup> For scholars, the publication of the *Capital* manuscripts *in toto*, as they were drafted by Marx, would be extremely helpful and may provide some additional insights into the issue raised in the present paper.

Irrespective of the form in which *Capital* is now available to us, my concern is with the status of the work as Marx conceived it in the context of serving his critico-theoretical objectives. *It is my contention that 'Capital' must be*

*recognised as the unfinished climax to an ambiguous critico-theoretical project of uncertain dimensions.*

If this contention is correct, and I believe that the evidence elicited below strongly suggests that it is, then Marx's work presents exceptional problems of interpretation. It becomes important for readers of *Capital*, over and above any puzzles about Engels' role in preparing Books II and III, to be aware of the uncertain status of the work in Marx's own project. To interpret *Capital* as a definitive and axiomatic statement of the full extent of his critique of political economy and capitalism is simply not in accordance with the available bibliographical evidence.

## 2 The Critique of Political Economy Project and *Capital*

Let me begin by sketching in some of the background of bibliographical facts concerning Marx's planned critico-theoretical project and the emergence of *Capital* as its 'ultimate' form.

Marx stated quite explicitly in the Preface to his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, published in June 1859, that his critical project involved six Books dealing respectively with Capital, Landed Property, Wage Labour, the State, Foreign Trade and the World Market and Crises (Marx 1859, p. 19).

This structure for the critique of political economy and capitalism evolved over a period of some fifteen years, from the time in 1843-44 when Marx's attention was drawn to the crucial human significance of political economy by Engels' (1844) seminal article 'Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy'. It is possible, though, to situate the emergence of the particular six-Book format in those productive two years from mid-1857 to mid-1859 during which Marx drafted what we know as the *Grundrisse* manuscripts (Marx 1857-58) and published the *Contribution* (1859). The following composite plan represents Marx's intentions at this time and has been gleaned from his manuscript writings and correspondence during the period.<sup>2</sup>

### A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

#### BOOK I: CAPITAL

##### Part 1: Capital in General

###### Chapter 1. Commodities

###### Chapter 2. Money

###### Chapter 3. Capital

###### Section 1. Production Process of Capital

###### (1) Transformation of money into capital

###### (2) Absolute surplus value

###### (3) Relative surplus value

###### (4) Original accumulation

###### (5) Wage-labour and capital

###### (6) Appearance of the law of appropriation in simple circulation

###### Section 2. Circulation Process of Capital

###### Section 3. Capital and Profit

##### Part 2: Competition of Capitals

##### Part 3: Credit as Capital

##### Part 4: Share Capital

BOOK II: LANDED-PROPERTY

BOOK III: WAGE-LABOUR

BOOK IV: THE STATE

BOOK V: FOREIGN TRADE

BOOK VI: WORLD MARKET AND CRISES

Now it is quite evident that Marx did not complete this massive undertaking. Given this, where does *Capital* stand in relation to it and what was the fate of the six-Book plan? This fundamental question suggests several others. Did Marx still *intend* to write six Books in order to present his critical theory in its *totality*? If not, did he still believe in the *necessity* of the scope provided by the six Books in order *adequately* to present such a totality? That is, was *Capital* seen by Marx as a sort of compromise version of the intellectual ideal that he had some chance of completing? Or was it the case that sometime after 1859, Marx changed his mind about the scope of the critical theory required to give effect to his revolutionary objectives?

These are complex questions and it is not possible to answer them definitively. The evidence available is just not adequate and this view is reflected in the central contention of my paper.

The first indication that we have of a possible change in Marx's intentions came at the end of 1862. After a break of about two years since the publication of the *Contribution*, Marx began work again in August 1861 on the ill-fated 'third chapter' on capital for Part I of Book I of his project. This work proceeded through five substantial notebooks (the equivalent of well over 300 printed pages<sup>3</sup>) until January 1862. Then, for some unknown reason, the effort to complete the 'third chapter' was abandoned again and Marx switched his attention to the drafting of a lengthy and detailed critique of antecedent writings on political economy, with particular reference to the theme 'Theories of Surplus Value' (Marx 1862-63).

By November-December of 1862, though, his thoughts began to turn back to the work on the 'third chapter' on capital. He drew together ideas on 'Revenue and its Sources' and 'Vulgar Political Economy' at the end of Notebook XV (Marx 1862-63, Part III, pp. 453-540) and these pieces were transitional in his return to the 'third chapter'. In Notebooks XVI to XVIII, we find a treatment of the themes of merchant capital, capital and profit, and only some brief digressions into the critical history of political economy.<sup>4</sup>

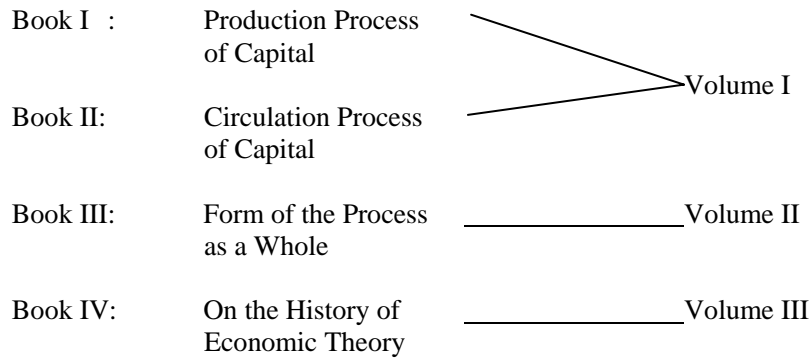
Then, while working on Notebook XVIII, Marx (1862, pp. 80-1) wrote to his friend Ludwig Kugelmann on 28 December 1862 and reported on his progress. In this letter, he included a reference to the title of his project: it was now to have *Capital* as its main title with *Critique of Political Economy*<sup>5</sup>, formerly the title given to the whole project, relegated to the status of a sub-title. The implications of this reference have puzzled Marx scholars ever since.

The possibility that Marx had revised the scope of his critical project was also suggested by his correspondence during the 1860s and 1870s and by the fact that he contracted and published the first Book of it under the title *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*.

In the correspondence, Marx was quite explicit about his intentions. After having arranged the contract for the publication of *Capital* with the Hamburg publisher Otto Meissner in March 1865, Marx reported on his progress in a letter to Engels on 31 July of that year (Marx 1865, pp. 95-6). His plan was to write four Books in all, three dealing with critical theory and one with the critical history of

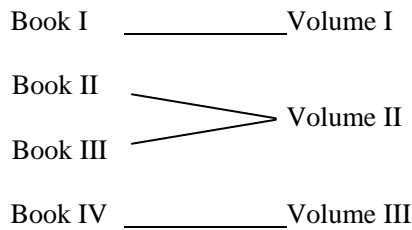
political economy. In this letter, there was also the statement that these four Books comprised ‘the whole thing’, and an ‘artistic whole’ at that. It seems that *Capital* was intended to be a self-contained work.

On 13 October 1866, Marx wrote to Kugelmann and gave him details of how *Capital* would be divided up *physically* for publication (Marx 1866a, pp. 99-100). The whole would comprise three *volumes* made up as follows:



Notice that the titles for the first two Books are the same as those suggested for Sections 1 and 2 of the ‘third chapter’ on capital of Book I under the six-Book plan.

When *Capital*, Volume I, was eventually published in September 1867, it included only the material for Book I. As Marx noted to Siegfried Meyer in a letter of 30 April 1867, this necessitated a revision of the physical format of the whole work (Marx 1867, pp. 101-2). It was subsequently to be divided as follows:



This outline of the planned structure for *Capital* was repeated *a decade later* when Marx wrote to Siegmund Schott on 3 November 1877 (Marx 1877, pp. 187-8).

Beyond the end of 1862, then, Marx’s critical theory appeared to involve only the four Books of *Capital*. In the next section, I consider some additional bibliographical evidence that relates to Marx’s intentions with respect to his critical project and the status of *Capital* in this context.

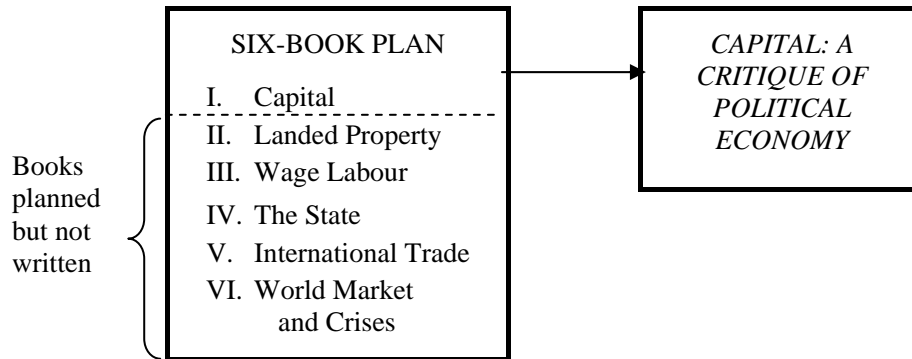
### 3 The Fate of the Six-Book Plan, or What is *Capital*?

There are three lines of opinion followed in the literature on Marx with respect to puzzles over the fate of the six-Book plan and the critico-theoretical status to be ascribed to *Capital*.

First, the view has been defended that the adoption by Marx of the title *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* had no significance at all with respect to the six-Book plan.<sup>6</sup> It is quite evident, runs this opinion, that Marx’s project merely changed its *proportions*.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, the first book, *Capital*, grew to a size that he just could not complete and any changes in textual organisation within the book reflected this uncertainty about how best to handle all the material. *Capital* is thus

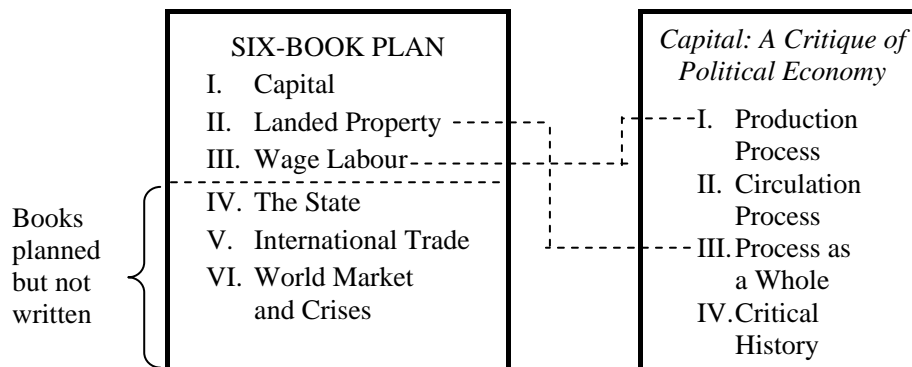
the incomplete first Book of a much larger unfinished project of critico-theoretical analysis. It is an open-ended work and cannot be read as definitive. This line of argument is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1



The second line of opinion is a modification of the first. The view is that Marx revised the original six-Book project by absorbing the material intended for the second and third Books on Landed Property and Wage Labour under the rubric *Capital*.<sup>8</sup> He now considered that these categories were appropriately treated in an integrated analysis with capital rather than in separate Books. In particular, see Figure 2, below (right-hand side); Landed Property was included under ‘III Process as a Whole’ and Wage Labour under ‘I Production Process’ in *Capital*. Implicit in this line of argument is the idea that Marx adopted a *four-Book* project and that *Capital* remains an incomplete first Book of a larger work on critical theory. In this case, though, the inference is that *Capital* had a more significant status than originally intended.

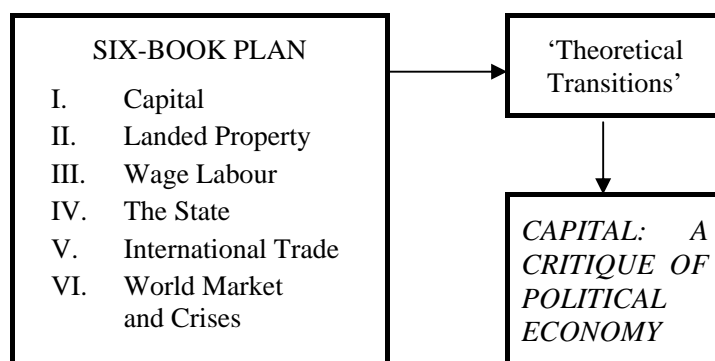
Figure 2



The third interpretation is that beyond the early 1860s, Marx’s intention was to work out the four Books of *Capital* only.<sup>9</sup> The topics as they were treated in the six-Book sequence were no longer part of his perception of a sufficient critical theory of capitalism. *Capital* is thus a *definitive* work and may be read as such. Moreover, its incomplete state *per se* is not expressly mentioned as a limitation in the defence of this opinion. In the diagrammatic illustration of this interpretation in

Figure 3, a ‘black box’ is invoked to represent the ‘theoretical transitions’ involved in formulating such an opinion.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 3



What, then, is the bibliographic evidence upon which these lines of opinion have been founded? As previously noted, the first indication that Marx had reconsidered the format and/or scope of his critical theory came in the 28 December 1862 letter to Kugelmann. The relevant passage from the letter reads:

The second part [of the critical theory] is finally finished now, that is, except for the final recopying and stylistic polishing for publication. ... This is the sequel to the first brochure [the *Contribution* of 1859] but will be published separately under the title: ‘*Capital*’ and [with] ‘*Critique of Political Economy*’ only as the sub-title. It contains in fact only the material for what was to have been the third chapter of the first part, namely ‘*Capital in General*’. It omits the competition of capitals and the credit system. This volume will contain what the English call ‘the principles of political economy’. Together with the first part it forms the quintessence, and its continuation would be easy for others to develop on the basis of what I have provided (except perhaps for the relationship between the various forms of the state and the different economic structure of society). (Marx 1862, p. 81)

This is a confusing passage containing several ambiguous and not altogether consistent points. There is no explicit change of *plan* mentioned here and *Capital* is tied directly back to the *Contribution*, a work written in the context of a six-Book project. Moreover, the project beyond *Capital* still has some explicit status as forming a ‘*contribution*’ to the work. The topic ‘The State’, the substance of Book IV, is cited as part of this continuation. The puzzle is that what was originally the *overall title* of what is known as the *Contribution* in its English translation, viz., *Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*, was now moved to the status of a *subtitle*. *Capital* is given the dominant position whereas it was previously referred to only as the first *Book* of the work. It is also worth noting that the ‘continuation’ was not specified as comprising any particular structure. Further *Books* were not mentioned. Furthermore, Marx endeavoured to provide *Capital* with a self-sufficient status as containing the ‘principles of political economy’ and the ‘quintessence’ of his work—although *Capital* did expand to encompass competition of capitals and the credit system. Marx’s intentions are simply not clear from this passage.

In January 1863, Marx went on to draft out plans for Parts I and III of *Capital*. (Marx 1862-3, Part I, pp. 414-6). Part I was to comprise nine chapters, but instead of forming a continuation of the *Contribution*, the topics commodity and money were to be treated again in Chapter 1, along with an 'Introduction' of unspecified content. Marx later wrote to Kugelmann that he had decided to begin the project again in order to preserve the 'wholeness' of his work and because he felt that the original version had not been well understood (letter of 13 October 1866; Marx 1866a, pp. 99-100). This reinforces the stress on the 'wholeness' of *Capital* mentioned to Engels in the letter of 31 July 1865 (Marx 1865, pp. 95-6).

There was no plan for Part II at this stage and Part III, to comprise twelve chapters, again contradicted the outline mentioned to Kugelmann. Marx had known since Notebook X of the 1861-63 manuscripts that the treatment of competition between capitals involved some vital analytical developments beyond the category capital-in-general but necessarily articulated to it. The topic 'capital and profit' could not be included under capital-in-general and in order to preserve the analytical coherence of *Capital*, Marx had to bring the competition of capitals forward. So, far from the 'principles of political economy' in *Capital* excluding this step in the analysis, it became the very centrepiece of Part III. Moreover, the plan for this Part included the broader discussion of capital in its forms of money capital and merchant capital. The coverage also extended to include rent, but only in the context of the price of production analysis through which Marx established the category *absolute* rent. And, although the category *crisis* did not appear explicitly, the topic 'law of the fall of the rate of profit' at least broached the subject, even though under the six-Book plan it was not due to be considered until the very end of the project.

If any implication can be drawn from these plans, it is that the *tendency* was for the scope of *Capital per se* to increase. The ultimate significance of this tendency is unclear.

In several of the interpretations of the issues being considered, some importance is ascribed to Marx's remark to Engels in a letter of 15 August 1863 that he 'had to turn everything upside down' in preparing his critical theory.<sup>11</sup> Now it is not possible to be sure what Marx meant by this assertion. It *is* possible though, to get its *context* clear. At this point in the letter, Marx was deriding the apparent ease with which Ferdinand Lassalle had been able to write his work on political economy. Marx's opinion was that the reason for this was Lassalle's failure to move beyond trivialities, simple ideas that Marx and Engels had established 'ten times better 20 years ago' (*sic!*). It was with the apparent objective of explaining (or justifying) his own relative tardiness that Marx wrote: 'if I look at the whole work [*Machwerk*] now [I see] how I have had to turn everything upside down and how I also had to make the historical part only out of partly totally unknown material'. The most obvious assessment of this piece is that it was a passing remark with no significance beyond its immediate context. A wider view is possible, though, when other inferences and remarks by Marx are considered as well.

In general, the remark can be read as a reference to the revisions that Marx realised he would have to make in order to present *Capital* in a coherent form. Some of these revisions have been referred to in the context of the 1863 plan for *Capital*. On 2 August 1862, Marx wrote to Engels and foreshadowed that a chapter on rent theory would have to be included in the analysis of *Capital* (Marx 1862, pp. 74-8). This was an immediate logical extension of the analysis of the price of production. Beyond the inclusion of this chapter in the 1863 plan, the intention

emerged again in a later letter to Engels on 13 February 1866 (Marx 1866b, p. 98). But now, the treatment of rent had grown almost to book length on its own. The elaboration of the topic, then, appeared now to belong in *Capital* rather than in the separate Book devoted to landed property. A subsequent reference was made by Marx to this issue in a letter to Kugelmann on 6 March 1868 (Marx 1868, pp. 126-7). This time, the allusion was to landed property *per se* as having been transferred into Volume II (i.e., Books II and III) of *Capital*.

When Marx came to write up *Capital*, Book I, for publication, it seemed appropriate to include a substantial discussion of aspects of the category wage labour. This, along with revised placement of the discussion of rent and landed property, represented a break with the methodology adumbrated earlier. It was argued in a letter to Engels on 2 April 1858 and in the *Grundrisse* manuscript that the order of treatment dictated by historical and logical-dialectical considerations was capital, landed property and then wage labour.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, in the letter to Engels just cited, Marx referred to the need to isolate the treatment of capital from the determination of wages and the analysis of landed property. Now, not only were these analyses to be part of *Capital*, but also the order of their treatment was to be reversed and they were left as unarticulated inclusions.

This treatment would tend to suggest that whatever Marx may have said about the revised placement of these categories, their inclusion in *Capital* represented only a partial elaboration necessitated by the context for the sake of immediate coherence. There are two *obiter dicta* in *Capital* that support this suggestion. At the beginning of Chapter XX of Book I dealing with wages, Marx wrote that: 'Wages themselves again take on many forms, ... An exposition of all these forms, however, belongs to the special study of labour, not therefore to this work. Nevertheless, we shall give a brief description of the two fundamental forms here' (Marx 1867, p. 508). In the manuscript for Book III dealing with ground-rent, Marx wrote a note of similar tenor: 'the analysis of landed property in its various historical forms is beyond the scope of this work. We shall be concerned with it only in so far as a portion of the surplus value produced by capital falls to the share of the landowner' (Marx 1894, p. 614). These pieces suggest that Marx realised that there was scope for more work to be done on these topics, but it is unreasonable to conclude that it would *necessarily* be done by him in accordance with the six-Book plan.

Other *obiter dicta* in the *Capital* manuscripts refer to the continuation of the work of formulating the critical theory of capitalism. The original plan for Book I, Chapter 3, on capital comprised four separate parts dealing with capital in general, competition of capitals, credit and share capital. As it later developed, the topic competition of capitals, the analysis of many sector capitals, became an immediate and integral part of the *Capital* format. The other two originally projected parts of the chapter on capital, credit and share capital, were to deal with extensions of the capital analysis to more specific forms. In subsequent analyses, during 1862-63 especially, it was merchant capital that Marx considered in some detail. Eventually, though, all three categories found some place in the manuscripts drafted for Book III.

In undertaking this reorganisation of the treatment of the category capital, Marx again appears to have been mindful of the limitations of the discussions by virtue of their inclusion in *Capital*. In particular, with respect to the credit system, he wrote:

An exhaustive analysis of the credit system and of the instruments which it creates for its own use (credit money, etc.) lies beyond our

plan. We merely wish to dwell here upon a few particular points, which are required to characterise the capitalist mode of production in general. (Marx 1894, p. 400)

Thus, the inclusion of the limited discussion of the credit system was motivated by Marx's desire to give the analyses of *Capital* a broader coherence. But, he recognised that a detailed consideration of the topic was not required for his immediate purpose and he went so far as to put it explicitly *beyond his plan*.

At another point in the *Capital*, Book III, manuscripts, Marx referred again to the perceived limitations on the scope of the project. In the section dealing with the effect of price fluctuations on capital, he wrote that:

The phenomena analysed in this chapter require for their full development the credit system and competition on the world market, the latter being the basis and the vital element of capitalist production. These more definite forms of capitalist production can only be comprehensively presented, however, after the general nature of capital is understood. Furthermore, they do not come within the scope of this work and belong to its eventual continuation. Nevertheless the phenomena ... may be discussed in a general way at this stage. (Marx 1894, p. 110)

The nature of the 'eventual continuation' is again not specified. But, in this passage, the idea that a *complete* critical theory would have to include the 'world market', 'the basis and the vital element of capitalist production', is reiterated. This scope for the project was that specified by Marx in the six-Book plan. The ultimate objective of the critical theory was, under this plan, to reveal the immanently crisis-prone nature of capitalism. The progressive analytical exposure of the nature and structure of the contradictions of the system was to culminate in the final Book with the theory of crises. This objective of the *complete* critical theory was most clearly explained in the final part of the second plan found in the *Grundrisse* manuscripts:

the world market [is] the conclusion, in which production is posited as a totality together with all its moments, but within which, at the same time, all contradictions come into play. The world market then, again, forms the presupposition of the whole as well as its substratum. Crises are then the general intimation which points beyond the presupposition, and the urge which drives towards the adoption of a new historic form. (Marx 1857-8, pp. 227-8)

*Capital* fell well short of the originally envisaged scope of the critical theory, but Marx adhered to the *intellectual ideal* of extending the analysis to the all-embracing world-market level through which the full comprehension of capitalist crises could be achieved.

From this point of view, *Capital* and its limited treatment of crisis theory could be read as a compromise forced on Marx by his personal situation of ill-health and poverty. The inclusion of the crisis analysis in *Capital* was premature *vis-à-vis* the original intentions and it is difficult to align this decision by Marx with any intention to proceed to a six- or four-Book structure of the critical theory. In itself, the inclusion implies that Marx intended *Capital* to be a coherent and more or less self-sufficient totality. This is also suggested by the other revisions and inclusions cited above, where in each case the coherence of *Capital* was argued to depend on bringing the additional categories prematurely, albeit briefly, into the work. Recall that one of the merits that Marx himself perceived in his work was that it was to be presented as a *totality*, as an 'artistic whole'.

Further, on Marx's view of *Capital* as a self-sufficient totality, two more pieces of evidence must be cited. In his letter to Engels on 31 July 1865, Marx made the point that the fourth historical Book would be the easiest Book to write as it completed the work on *Capital* by repeating in historical form the critical theory formulation in the first three Books. In this context he wrote that 'all the problems are solved' prior to the fourth Book (Marx 1865, pp. 95-6). This could be read as inferring the self-contained status of the critical theory to be presented. Moreover, in the letter to Kugelmann of 13 October 1866 explaining the format of *Capital*, Book III carried the title 'Forms of the Entire Process' ('*Gestaltung des Gesamtprozesses*') (Marx 1866a, pp. 99-100). Again the inference seems to have been that Book III comprised an attempt to round off the critical theory, even if it was in a delimited, compromised form.

#### 4 Conclusion

There is, then, little specific bibliographical evidence for assessing Marx's intentions about the status of *Capital vis-à-vis* the original six-Book plan. Any summary must be inconclusive.

There is some evidence that Marx saw the analytical scope of *Capital* as less than ideal. He recognised the need to develop some of the categories included more fully than possible, perhaps necessary, within the confines of that work. There is no explicit reference, though, to the envisaged nature of the continuation of the analyses or to Marx's intention to undertake this work himself. It is certainly not clear that the continuation would still involve the five further Books originally projected or that Marx intended to write them. However, these possibilities cannot be ruled out.

The treatment of the categories landed property and wage labour in *Capital* was most probably partial relative to that intended for the separate Books in the original plan. This was recognised by Marx and again he expressed the idea of an eventual continuation of the analyses in an unspecified form. Whether the decision to include some treatment of these categories in *Capital* left three or five, indeed any, Books unwritten just cannot be ascertained from the available evidence.

There are some indications that Marx intended *Capital* to present a self-contained and self-sufficient exposition of his critical theory. The reorganisation of the categories treated relative to his original plans seems to have been directed towards that end. This is qualified by the suggestion that such self-sufficiency represented an intellectual compromise relative to the ideal of a much larger work such as the six-Book project. There can be no doubt that *Capital*, as it was left by Marx, was unfinished. And it is not clear just what the finished work would have included. In this respect, at least, the status of the work as it was eventually published must be assessed with caution. This difficulty is compounded in an irresolvable way by the lack of any definitive evidence as to how Marx ultimately perceived the work. Uncomfortable though it may be, the intellectually untidy situation that Marx scholars must face is that *Capital* is *the unfinished climax to an ambiguous critico-theoretical project of uncertain dimensions*.

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## Notes

1 Such an alternative selection and arrangement for Books II and III has been provided by Rubel in his French language edition of some of Marx's main writings (see Marx 1965).

2 The following chronological list of manuscript writings and correspondence is relevant here:

September 1857: first *Grundrisse* plan, Notebook M, *Grundrisse* (Allen Lane edn.), p. 108.

October 1857: second *Grundrisse* plan, Notebook II, *Grundrisse* (Allen Lane edn.), p. 227.

November 1857: third *Grundrisse* plan, Notebook II, *Grundrisse* (Allen Lane edn.), p. 264.

November 1857: fourth *Grundrisse* plan, Notebook II, *Grundrisse* (Allen Lane edn.), p. 275.

22 February 1858: letter to Lassalle, K. Marx and F. Engels, *Werke*, Volume 29, (Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1963), pp. 549-52.

11 March 1858: letter to Lassalle, Marx and Engels, *Werke*, Volume 29, pp. 553-4.

2 April 1858: letter to Engels, Marx and Engels, *Werke*, Volume 29, pp. 311-18.

June 1858: indexes to the seven *Grundrisse* Notebooks, *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*, (Europäische Verlagsanstalt, Frankfurt, n.d.), pp. 855ff.

January 1859: Preface to the *Contribution*, *ed. cit.* p. 19.

1 February 1859: letter to Weydermeyer, Marx and Engels, *Werke*, Volume 29, pp. 570-3.

February-March 1859: plan for chapter on capital, unmarked *Grundrisse* Notebook, *Grundrisse*, (Europäische Verlagsanstalt edn), pp. 969ff.

3 See Marx and Engels (1976, Part 1, pp. 3ff).

4 Marx and Engels (1976, Section II, Volume 3, pp. 1545ff.).

5 The relevant German phrase is *Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*. In the English title for *Capital* it is usually translated as *A Critique of Political Economy* although the inclusion of 'A Contribution to' conveys Marx's meaning more fully.

6 The staunchest defender of this view is Maximilien Rubel: see his two essays 'A History of Marx's "Economics"' and 'The Plan and Method of the "Economics"', reprinted in Rubel (1981). A similar stance is implied by Martin Nicolaus (1973, pp. 54-5) in his Foreword to Marx, *Grundrisse*. Nicolaus' point is that Marx never abandoned the necessary logic of the complete six-Book plan even though the subsequent development of the project was 'uneven' with respect to the plan. In two places, David McLellan (1973a, p. 21; and 1973b, p. 249 n1) follows a similar interpretation.

7 Rubel (1981, pp. 154, 164, 206, 208, 215) reiterates this point several times.

8 For a creditable and credible defence of this position, see Roman Rosdolsky (1977, pp. 10ff. The same view is pursued by Ronald Meek in the 'Introduction' to *Studies in the Labour Theory of Value*, second edition, (Meek 1973, pp. ixff); by Ben Brewster (1972, pp. 236ff); by Salo Ryazanskaya in the Preface to Marx (1862-63, pp. 13ff); and somewhat inconsistently by David McLellan (1973b, p. 467).

9 It was evidently Karl Kautsky who first suggested that Marx changed his plan from the six Books to *Capital*. The possibility was explored in more detail in 1929 by Henryk Grossman who concluded on methodological and theoretical grounds that *Capital* was a work separate from and independent of any six-Book plan. For discussions of Grossman's and other early works on this theme see Rosdolsky (1977, pp. 23ff) and Keith Tribe (1974, especially pp. 198ff). Tribe is the most recent defender of the view that *Capital* is a self-sufficient and definitive work of critical theory; but see also Vitali Vygodski (1974, p. 118).

10 The idea that there was a distinct 'theoretical transition' from the six-Book plan to *Capital* is argued by Keith Tribe (1974). Tribe argues that the six-Book plan originates from the theoretically immature and deficient ideas of the *Grundrisse*: see also Tribe (1977, pp. 436ff). From this argument it follows, according to Tribe, that the theoretically superior and 'scientific' project reflected in *Capital* must be self-sufficient, although he grants that some of the *material* intended for Books I and II of the six-Book plan found its way into *Capital*.

11 Marx and Engels, *Werke*, Volume 30, 1961-70, p. 365.

12 See Marx and Engels, *Werke*, Volume 29, 1961-70, pp. 312-3, and Marx, *Grundrisse*, (Allen Lane edn), 1857-58 [1973], p. 276, respectively.

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