

The Origin of the Value-Form Appendix in the First Edition of *Capital I*

SUMMARY: Among the differences between the first edition of *Capital I* and subsequent editions is that the crucially important “value-form” presentation, which forms the third section of the first chapter in subsequent editions, appears as an appendix to the volume, rather than being integrated into the main text. In fact, it was not Marx’s original intention to include this in the volume at all; it was only at the stage of the checking of the final printer’s proofs that Marx decided to write, and include, the “value-form” appendix. It is at first sight unclear whose idea the writing of the appendix was: Marx credits his friend Louis Kugelmann, with whom he was staying in Germany when the proofs were being prepared, in the Afterword to the second edition, although it is also clear from his correspondence that Engels too was unhappy with the original textual presentation of the value-form. The evidence in fact seems to suggest that in some way Marx followed the advice of both men—Engels and Kugelmann—when, right at the very last minute, he set himself to write the appendix.

KEYWORDS: Marx, *Capital I*, value-form, Engels, Kugelmann, *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*

I

As is well known, chapter one of *Capital I* contains as extended section (the third section) on the “forms of value” (*Die Wertformen*), in which Marx, in painstaking fashion, shows how the socially necessary labour time embodied in one commodity finds its expression in the physical form of another. (Marx, 1976a, 138-63.) Marx’s exposition unfolds itself over steps of increasing dialectical sophistication and is intended to show how the *private* labours involved in the production of commodities find *social* expression in exchange, and, ultimately, to explain the nature of money and its role in the whole reproductive process.

In the first edition of the volume (published in 1867) a significant part of this exposition was relegated to an appendix—entitled “*Die Wertform*”—at the volume’s end; the exposition of the forms of value in the book’s main body was here, by contrast, logical and textual, rather than didactic and quasi-algebraic.¹ In the second (1872) and subsequent editions of the volume, however, this appendix would

¹ The original text of the first edition of *Capital I* is published as Marx (1983); the appendix (“Anhang zu Kapitel I, 1. Die Wertform”) is Marx (1983, 626-49). The first chapter of the first edition was divided into three sections: “*Die Ware*”, “The commodity”; “*Der Austauschprozeß der Waren*”, “The process of exchange of commodities”; and “*Das Geld oder die Warenzirkulation*”, “Money, or the circulation of commodities”. In subsequent editions these three subsections were arranged as the first three chapters of the volume. The first of these sections (“*Die Ware*”, “The commodity”), i.e. that part of the first edition equivalent to the first chapter of subsequent editions, can be found in English translation as Marx (1976b, 1-40), and the appendix as Marx (1976b, 49-70). An alternative English translation of the appendix is Marx (1978a). This last text is also available online as Marx (1978b).

be incorporated into the text of the first chapter, giving us the presentation that most readers of Marx are familiar with.

Marx's exposition of the value-form holds a critical place in his whole theoretical structure: it is the foundation of the concept of "exchange value", and of the distinction Marx made between this and that of "value", respectively that of manifestation and substance, of form of appearance and essence. Given that "price" itself, in all its particular forms in Marx, is in turn a given category of exchange value, a grasp of the category of the "value-form" is evidently preconditional to an understanding of the subsequent theoretical unfolding of the work. It is perhaps then surprising to discover that the appendix that appears in the volume's first edition was actually written in haste and at the very last minute, when the book was already being put to press, and as Marx and Engels were checking the first proofs of the work.

I had always been under the impression that it was Engels, unhappy at what he saw as Marx's "abstract" presentation as he began to read through the first printer's proofs, who was responsible for Marx's drafting of the appendix; I was surprised, therefore, to read in Arthur (1979, 66) that it had in fact been Marx's (and Engels') friend Louis Kugelmann, with whom Marx had been staying in Germany as the first proofs were being printed, who had urged Marx to write the appendix, on the grounds, in Arthur's words, that "readers needed a supplementary, more didactic, exposition of the form of value, because they lacked dialectics."²

My curiosity piqued, I decided to investigate further; the fruits of that investigation follow below.

The text which follows has three sections. In the first, I assemble the "facts" as best as I have been able to ascertain them. In the second, I speculate, on the basis of the "facts", about who, with respect to the appendix, would have said exactly what to whom. Then in the final section I reproduce, translated into English, an excerpt from the *Apparat* section of the volume of the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA, 1983) in which the first edition of *Capital* I is published which deals with the matter.

II

In the Afterword to the second German edition of *Capital* I Marx noted, detailing the revisions he had made to the text from the first edition, that the "twofold presentation" of the "form of value" contained in the first edition (i.e. the verbal discussion and the appendix) had been "occasioned by my friend Dr L Kugelmann, in Hanover. I was visiting him in the spring of 1867 when the first proof-sheets arrived from Hamburg, and he convinced me that for most readers a subsequent [*nachträgliche*], more didactic discussion [*Auseinandersetzung*] of the form of value was necessary." (Marx, 1976a, 94; translation modified according to Marx, 1987a, 700.)

² "The difficulty in presenting the material [related to the development of the value-form] in scientific form is indicated by Marx in a letter of 1866 to Kugelmann where he states that *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) ought to be summarised at the beginning of *Capital*: 'not only for completeness, but because even good brains did not comprehend the thing completely correctly; therefore there must be something defective in the first presentation, particularly the analysis of the commodity'. Yet the problem emerged again with *Capital* (1867) itself. When the first proofs reached Marx he was staying with Kugelmann in Hanover and the latter convinced him that readers needed a supplementary, more didactic, exposition of the form of value, because they lacked dialectics. Marx therefore wrote a special Appendix for the First Volume, for—he explains to Engels—'the matter is too decisive for the whole book'. (*Selected Correspondence*, p. 189 [Marx, 1987d, 384]). For the second edition Marx rewrote the whole first chapter again, thus making any appendix redundant." (Arthur, 1979, 66.)

Marx had worked on the first volume of *Capital* from the summer of 1863 to the summer of 1864, and then from the end of 1865 to the beginning of 1867. Once he had assured himself that the volume was ready for publication, he decided to deliver the manuscript himself to the publisher, Otto Meissner, based in Hamburg, by hand. While he was there, Marx had planned to take up an offer to stay with Louis Kugelmann and his family in (relatively nearby) Hannover. Marx travelled to Hamburg (by ship) from 10 to 12 April;³ on 13 April he wrote to Engels to tell him he had arrived in Hamburg safely and had delivered the manuscript, which was now sitting in Meissner's safe. On 16 April Marx arrived at the Kugelmanns', from where (on 24 April) he wrote to Engels to inform him how the matter was progressing. Meissner, Marx said, had told him that he wanted him (Marx) to stay in or near Hamburg for the duration of the printing process (which, for logistical reasons, was taking place in Leipzig, at a printing firm belonging to one Otto Wigand) and which Meissner anticipated would take four or five weeks;⁴ Meissner needed Marx on hand to correct the proofs.

Marx received the first proofs to correct on 5 May (his forty-ninth birthday). Two days later he wrote again to Engels. After grumbling about how long it had taken Wigand, the printer in Leipzig, to start producing the proofs, Marx stated that he would not in fact be able to remain in Germany while the printing was being undertaken because, first, as the book was turning out to be longer than he had anticipated it to be (!), the printing of it would take too long, and, second, that he was not able to correct the proofs to his satisfaction because he did not have his "home manuscript" at hand to check them against. (We have to presume here then that there were *two* manuscripts for the volume: the one Marx had taken with him to Germany, and which was now with the printer in Leipzig, and another—the "home manuscript"—back in London.⁵)

Marx's tone was upbeat, however. "[M]y time here has not been wasted," he said. "Letters have been written to all and sundry, and preliminary notices [for the volume] have appeared in most German papers." (Marx, 1987b, 371.) We should note here that there is no evidence up to this point of Marx working on, or even having decided to write, an appendix on the "value-form".

Marx returned to Britain around two weeks after writing this letter, arriving in London on 19 May. He then travelled to Manchester to visit Engels, with whom he stayed from 22 May to 2 June.

On 3 June, Marx, now back in London, wrote to Engels to tell him, amongst other matters, that he (Marx) was sending him (Engels) the first five of the pre-print proof sheets [*Abziehbogen*] that Marx had received. "You can keep them about 8-10 days," he said, "but then you must let me know exactly which points in the exposition of the form of value you think should be specially popularised for the philistines in the supplement [*Nachtrag*]." ⁶ (Marx, 1987c, 378.) This is the first mention in written form by any of the participants concerned of the value-form "appendix".

On 16 June, Engels (now evidently having read the proofs) wrote back to Marx:

³ All chronology related to 1867 is taken from the correspondence collected in MECW (1987).

⁴ In part this was due to the fact that it was Easter: Easter Sunday of 1867 fell on 21 April.

⁵ My suspicion is that the manuscript Marx took to Hamburg was a "fair copy" of the original manuscript (which remained in London), probably made by Jenny Marx. Nothing from either of these manuscripts seems to have survived, save some fragments, and volume's chapter six, "*Resultate des unmittelbaren Produktionsprozesses*" ("The Results of the Immediate Process of Production"), that was not in the end included in the final version of the volume.

⁶ Astonishingly given the two men's relationship, this appears to be the first time that Engels had seen any of the text of *Capital*.

I have been so distracted by all manner of bother [...] for the past week that I seldom had the leisure to study the form of value. Otherwise, I would have sent the sheets back to you long ago.

Sheet 2 [pages 17 to 32 inclusive of the volume,⁷ i.e. the bulk of Marx's account of the forms of value in the original main text] in particular has the marks of your carbuncles rather firmly stamped upon it, but there is not much that can be done about it now and I think you should not deal with it any further in the supplement [*Nachtrag*], as your philistine really is not accustomed to this kind of abstract thinking and will certainly not torment himself for the sake of the form of value. At most, you could provide rather more extensive historical evidence for the conclusions you have here reached dialectically, you could, so to speak, apply the test of history, although you have already made the most essential points in that respect; but you have so much material that you can surely still write quite a good excursus on it, which will by historical means demonstrate to the philistine the need for the development of money and the process by which this takes place.

It was a serious mistake not to have made the development of these rather abstract arguments clearer by means of a larger number of short sections with their own headings. You ought to have treated this part in the manner of Hegel's Encyclopaedia, with short paragraphs, each dialectical transition emphasised by means of a special heading and, as far as possible, all the excurses or merely illustrative material printed in special type. The thing would have looked somewhat like a school text-book, but a very large class of readers would have found it considerably easier to understand. The populus, even the scholars, just are no longer at all accustomed to this way of thinking, and one has to make it as easy for them as one possibly can.

Compared with your earlier presentation (Duncker [Engels is referring to the *Contribution*; Duncker being the publisher of that work]), the dialectic of the argument has been greatly sharpened, but with regard to the actual exposition there are a number of things I like better in the first version. It is a great pity that the carbuncles have left their mark on the important second sheet in particular.

However, there is nothing to be done about it now, and those who are capable of thinking dialectically will understand it, nevertheless.

The other sheets are very good, and I was delighted by them. (Engels, 1987, 381-2.)

On 22 June Marx wrote back. "With regard to the development of the *form of value*, I have both followed and *not* followed your advice [...]. That is to say, 1. I have written an *appendix* [*Anhang*] in which I set out *the same subject* again as simply and as much in the manner of a school text-book as possible,

⁷ In the normal printing of books, large sheets of paper are used, which are, after printing, folded and bound. Multiple pages are thus printed on the same sheet; exactly how many will depend on the type of press used, the size of the book to be printed, and the finishing (folding and binding) process used. In the type of machinery that would have been used to print *Capital*, either eight, sixteen or thirty-two pages would have been printed on (both sides of) the same sheet. (The technical term for the number of pages that a single sheet will yield is its "signature".) Given that when Marx wrote to Kugelman on 13 July 1867 he estimated that when typeset *Capital* volume one amounted to "about 50 sheets" (Marx, 1987f, 396), then we can assume that each sheet would consist of sixteen finished pages: the first edition of *Capital* I ran to 784 pages of text, excluding front-matter, i.e. 49 sheets. (The numbering of the sheets can be seen clearly in the facsimile of the first edition available at Internet Archive (2012). At the bottom of the first page of the first chapter, the number 1 at the bottom of the page indicates that this is the first page of the first sheet. The number 2 in the same position on page 17 indicates the beginning of the second sheet (the 1 offset to the left indicating the first page of the sheet). The pattern is repeated on pages 33, 49, etc. The pagination is calculated working from the bottom right panel of each signature (this is the first page of the sheet). The numbers with asterisks at the bottom of pages 3, 19, 35, etc. indicate the "first" page of the corresponding signature on the reverse side of the sheet. (The pagination pattern can be seen clearly at PrintNinja (N.d.).))

and 2. I have divided each successive proposition into paras, etc., *each with its own heading*, as you advised. In the Preface I then tell the ‘non-dialectical’ reader to skip page x-y and instead read the appendix.”

By “not following” Engels’ advice Marx evidently meant that he had precisely addressed the value-form material in what he was now calling an “appendix” (*Anhang*); by “following” he referred to the manner of presentation: “with short paragraphs, each dialectical transition emphasised by means of a special heading and, as far as possible, all the excurses or merely illustrative material printed in special type,” as Engels had put it, with the appearance of “a school text-book”.

On 27 June Marx wrote again to Engels, enclosing him a schematic outline of the appendix (composed of headings, sub-headings and sub-sub-headings). “To show you how closely I have followed your advice in my treatment of the appendix,” he said, “I will now copy out for you the divisions, sections, headings, etc., of same appendix.” (Marx, 1987e, 392.) The scheme that Marx then laid out *exactly* follows the appendix’s final finished form.

Finally, on 13 July Marx wrote to Kugelman. “My book comprises about 50 sheets. You see how I had miscalculated as to its extent. A few days ago I sent the *Appendix*, entitled *The Form of Value, Appendix to Chapter I, 1*, to Leipzig. You know who was the *author of this plan*, and I herewith offer him my thanks for his suggestion.” (Marx, 1987f, 396.)

III

What I imagine to have happened then is this.

As Marx began to revise the first proofs in Germany, i.e. while he was still at the Kugelmans’, he showed Kugelman the proofs, and Kugelman made some comment to the effect that the value-form presentation in the first chapter really required additional explanation to make it easier to understand. This exchange is undocumented because it occurred face-to-face. Marx did no more about the matter at this point other than to keep the idea in mind.

When he returned to Britain, and went to stay with Engels in Manchester, he reported to Engels what Kugelman had said. Engels probably said something to the effect of: “Let me have a look at it, and I’ll tell you what I think” (Engels not having seen any of the text of the book at this point). Again, this occurred face-to-face, and is undocumented.

Marx, on returning to London, then sent Engels the proofs of the first part of the book. Engels wrote back (in the letter of 16 June), saying he could see Kugelman’s point, but that it was too late to rewrite the presentation in a more didactic form and not worth the effort to write an alternative exposition in the form of an appendix; if Marx was to draft anything, it might be a good idea to supplement the explanation with “historical” material (although it is unclear from Engels’ remarks whether he was suggesting this to be the content of an actual appendix or not). Marx considered the point, but, disregarding Engels, and without further discussion, decided that there indeed *was* value in a “school text book” presentation of the value-form, and went on to write an appendix on that basis. By 27 June Marx had the draft of this sufficiently worked out that he could summarise the contents for Engels in exact detail. Then at some point in early July, he was able to send the final draft of the appendix to the printer’s in Germany.

Finally, when then he revised the text for the second edition, Marx rewrote the first chapter, amongst other changes incorporating the appendix into the main body of the text, and credited Kugelman with the original idea for the appendix in the Afterword.

IV

The following is my translation of MEGA, 1983, 672-3.

From April 10 to 12, 1867, Marx travelled by ship to the publisher Otto Meissner in Hamburg to deliver the manuscript [of *Capital* volume 1 in person]. [...] The manuscript was [then] sent to Otto Wigand's printers in Leipzig on April 16. Marx was a guest of Louis Kugelmann in Hanover from April 16 to about May 14. Wigand began to print the proofs on April 29; on his birthday, May 5, 1867, Marx received the first proof sheets of *Capital* for revision in Hanover. [...].

On May 7, 1867, Marx wrote to Engels from Hanover: "It is impossible to wait here until the printing is completed. In the first instance, I fear that the book will prove much fatter than I had originally calculated. Second, I am not getting the manuscript back, so that for many quotations, especially those involving figures or Greek, I need to have my home manuscript to hand [...]" [Marx, 1987b, 371.] [...]. Marx [then] travelled back to London via Hamburg, where he arrived on May 19, 1867.

On June 1, 1867, Otto Meissner published a prospectus in which the publication of *Capital* was announced for July.

While Marx was in Hanover, Louis Kugelmann had suggested that an appendix should present the problems of the form of value in a more popular way. This is indicated in Marx's letter to Kugelmann of July 13, 1867. Engels—who also received the proof sheets from Marx—replied to Marx on June 16, 1867 with a similar proposal [...].

By June 27, 1867 at the latest, Marx had completed the appendix on the form of value, which was printed in the first edition on pages 764-784 [...], because on that same day he wrote to Engels: "To show you how closely I have followed your advice in my treatment of the appendix, I will now copy out for you the divisions, sections, headings, etc., of same appendix. [Marx, 1987e, 392.] [...]. On July 13 he informed Kugelmann that he (Marx) had sent the appendix to Leipzig (i.e. to the printer) a "few days ago". [Marx, 1987f, 396.]

REFERENCES

- Arthur, C J. 1979. "The Dialectic of the Value-Form." In Diane Elson (ed.), *Value: The Representation of Labour in Capitalism*, 66-81. London: CSE Books.
- Engels, Friedrich. 1987. "Engels to Marx [16 June, 1867]." Pp. 381-3 in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 42. Translated by Christopher Upward. [London]: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Internet Archive. 2012. "Karl Marx: Das Kapital Erstaussgabe 1867."
<<https://archive.org/details/KarlMarxDasKapitalErstaussgabe1867/page/n11/mode/2up>>.
- Marx, Karl. 1976a (1867). *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1. Translated by Ben Fowkes. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Marx, Karl. 1976b (1867). *Value: Studies by Karl Marx*. Translated and edited by Albert Dragstedt. London: New Park.
- Marx, Karl. 1978a (1867). "The Value-Form." Translated by M Roth and W Suchting. *Capital and Class* 2:1 (Spring), 134-50.
- Marx, Karl. 1978b (1867). "The Value-Form: Appendix to the 1st German edition of *Capital*, Volume 1, 1867."
<<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/appendix.htm>>.
- Marx, Karl. 1983. (1867). "Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Erster Band. Hamburg 1867." Pp. 1-649 in *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*, Abteilung II, Bd. 5. Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- Marx, Karl. 1987a. (1872). "Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Erster Band. Hamburg. 1872." Pp. 57-719 in *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* Abteilung II, Bd. 6. Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- Marx, Karl. 1987b. "Marx to Engels [7 May, 1867]." Pp. 370-74 in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 42. Translated by Christopher Upward. [London]: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Marx, Karl. 1987c. "Marx to Engels [3 June, 1867]." Pp. 378-9 in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 42. Translated by Christopher Upward. [London]: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Marx, Karl. 1987d. "Marx to Engels [22 June, 1867]." Pp. 383-6 in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 42. Translated by Christopher Upward. [London]: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Marx, Karl. 1987e. "Marx to Engels [27 June, 1867]." Pp. 391-5 in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 42. Translated by Christopher Upward. [London]: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Marx, Karl. 1987f. "Marx to Kugelman [13 July, 1867]." Pp. 395-6 in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 42. Translated by Christopher Upward. [London]: Lawrence and Wishart.
- MECW (*Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*). 1987. *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. 42. [London]: Lawrence and Wishart.
- MEGA (*Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*). 1983. "Entstehung und Überlieferung [zum Karl Marx, Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Erster Band. Hamburg 1867]." Pp. 665-74 in *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*, Abteilung II, Bd. 5. Berlin: Dietz Verlag.
- PrintNinja. N.d. "Imposition and Pagination." <<https://printninja.com/printing-resource-center/printing-academy/pre-press-production/imposition-pagination/>>.