



Toward An Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams

By D. Graeber

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This volume is the first comprehensive synthesis of economic, political, and cultural theories of value. David Graeber reexamines a century of anthropological thought about value and exchange, in large measure to find a way out of ongoing quandaries in current social theory, which have become critical at the present moment of ideological collapse in the face of Neoliberalism. Rooted in an engaged, dynamic realism, Graeber argues that projects of cultural comparison are in a sense necessarily revolutionary projects: He attempts to synthesize the best insights of Karl Marx and Marcel Mauss, arguing that these figures represent two extreme, but ultimately complementary, possibilities in the shape such a project might take. Graeber breathes new life into the classic anthropological texts on exchange, value, and economy. He rethinks the cases of Iroquois wampum, Pacific kula exchanges, and the Kwakiutl potlatch within the flow of world historical processes, and recasts value as a model of human meaning-making, which far exceeds rationalist/reductive economist paradigms.

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Editorial Review

Review

'I have not enjoyed or been so inspired by a work in anthropological theory for quite some time - I am convinced that this book is extremely important to the field of anthropology and to social theory more generally, offering alternatives to the relentlessly bleak theorizing of most post-structuralist and postmodernist critical theory - I think this book might well become a classic.' - Thomas Abercrombie, NYU

'David Graeber is probably the most exciting young anthropologist in the field today.' - Judith Friedlander, Dean of Social Sciences (Graduate Faculty), New School for Social Research

About the Author

DAVID GRAEBER received his doctorate from University of Chicago in 1996, based on two years of fieldwork in Madagascar. He has written a variety of articles for the journal *In These Times* and has taught at Haverford and Yale. Professor Graeber is currently working on an ethnography of direct action as well as working with the Direct Action Network, People's Global Action, and Ya Basta!.

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