

CURRENT SCHOLARSHIP

[Recall This Buck I]: Chris Desan on Making Money

Recall this Book Podcast Talks with Christine Desan

Recall This Book is a podcast exploring important books on a pressing topic. Each episode focuses on a contemporary problem or event and zeroes in on a book or books that shed light on it. We look backwards to see into the future: we can understand things about the future by choosing texts that shed a sideways light on our present situation, and attempt to shake up the terms of present debate by showing how a topic was approached in earlier times when a different version of this question had come up before. We aim to have lively barstool discussions—a warm but involved and potentially argumentative hashing out of the best way to think through difficult present-day issues. We bring on writers to talk about their own books, or scholars to talk about the books that are helping them navigate best the world in which we live.

This is the first of several RTB episodes about the history of money. We are ranging from the earliest forms of labor IOUs to the modern world of bitcoin and electronically distributed value. Our idea is that forms matter, and matter in ways that those who profit from those forms often strive to keep hidden. Today, we begin by focusing on the rise of capitalism, the Bank of England, and how an explosion of liquidity changed everything.

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We are lucky to do so with Christine Desan of Harvard Law School, who recently published *Making Money: Coin, Currency, and the Coming of Capitalism* (Oxford University Press, 2014). She is also managing editor of JustMoney.org, a website that explores money as a critical site of governance. Desan's research explores money as a legal and political project. Her approach opens economic orthodoxy to question by widening the focus on money as an instrument, to examine the institutions and agreements through which resources are mobilized and tracked, by means of money. In doing so, she shows that particular forms of money, and the markets within which they circulate, are neither natural or inevitable.

You can find the episode here:
<https://recallthisbook.org/2020/03/20/23-recall-this-buck-i-chris-desan-on-making-money-ef-jp/>