

Title: On Reading Capital as a Monetary Theory of Production

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Abstract

A notion of monetary production implicit in Marx's account of the capitalist process is argued to be the best foundation for reinstating his abstract labour theory of value. The key to this is to purge the commodity theory of money (developed in volume I) in favour of a theory of money as initial finance to capitalist production (hinted at in volume III). I show that this 'macro-monetary' approach has advantages in reframing the link between value, money and exploitation. First, it connects value to money through the circuit of capital, overcoming any relegation of exchange to the status of epiphenomenon; second, it establishes the capitalist character of exploitation not as capital's appropriation of surplus labour but as hypostatisation - capital's production of money out of living labour throughout the working day. Situating money within the capital-labour relation shifts the focus of attention. In particular, Marx's quantitative value analysis is usefully read not as a theory of price determination but as a theory of technical change, arising from specifically capitalist imperatives of valorisation.