

CALL FOR PAPERS

OCTOBER 24 – 27, 2013
THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
WATERLOO, ONTARIO

Sponsored by the Canadian Association for American Studies

“Total Money Makeover”^{\$}: Culture and the Economization of Everything

Economic models now occupy a central place in the analysis of American culture. The “hegemony of economic explanations of cultural practices” (Koritz 1999) has been with us for some time. Concepts such as “cultural capital,” “the literary marketplace,” and “modes of exchange” are regularly deployed to demystify culture’s relationship with power and profit. As useful as economic models have been for opening up new avenues of analysis in American studies, we wonder if this turn to economy in American studies doesn’t privilege economic models in ways that ought to be scrutinized. Indeed, it can be argued that the recent financial crises in the United States and Europe are consequences of unquestioned faith in the explanatory and organizing power of economics as a field of knowledge. We must ask whether the economization of everything, along with the dominance of economic models for analysis, has deprived culture, and cultural study more generally, of modes of resistance and a distinctive field of action. Is it possible or desirable, without reverting to an untenable idealism, to recover a sense of culture as a privileged domain?

The 2013 CAAS conference invites proposals for papers on the topic of culture and economics, but especially papers that privilege culture as a field of knowledge and subject the economic to its critical gaze.

Papers on other topics relevant to the interdisciplinary study of American culture, history, and society are also welcome.

Please submit abstracts of 300-words, along with a brief bio, to the conference organizers, Victoria Lamont and Kevin McGuirk, Department of English, University of Waterloo, at caas2013@uwaterloo.ca by March 15, 2013. Presentation time for papers is 20 minutes maximum. Panel submissions will also be considered.

^{\$} With apologies to Dave Ramsey.

Some points of departure:

What is value?

economics as an art

materialisms (other than the economic)

alternative economics

ecologies versus economies

material culture between art and economics

art and commodification

art without money

art and class

art and philanthropy

“Money is a kind of poetry” (Wallace Stevens)/ Poetry is a kind of money

culture and economic anxiety

economic prosperity and cultural prosperity

figures of poverty and negation in culture

figures of the economic in culture (cultural capital, etc.)

the art market, the literary market

the artistic career as an economic phenomenon

economic metaphors we live by

making sense and making money

semiotics of money

culture and/as waste

the humanities, social sciences, and the commercialization of research

government and the subsidy of culture

stories of the economy in media and art

thematics of money, exchange, etc.

things, thingness and monetary value

histories of money

money and political cultures

labour and art/ leisure and art

“cultural work”/ cultural leisure

religion with and against profit

piety and/as resistance

“the creative class” and/or the uncreative

collecting culture for and against profit

idling, loafing and other unproductive activity