

# Money Talks: Futures for the Economic Humanities

University of Edinburgh, 28–29 May 2025

Keynote Speakers:

Dr Devin Singh (Dartmouth College)

Dr Rachel O'Dwyer (National College of Art and Design, Dublin)

Over the past decade, growing numbers of researchers in the arts and humanities have turned their attention to questions of money, finance, and the economy. At the same time, social scientists have increasingly drawn on humanities-based methodologies in their analyses of economic phenomena. “Money Talks: Futures for the Economic Humanities” is a landmark conference dedicated to mapping this emerging interdisciplinary space and charting its multiple potential futures.

Much cutting-edge research into economics and the economy has coalesced around concepts and approaches conventionally associated with humanities scholarship. Theorists of money, for example, have sought to understand its nature and function historically (by investigating origins and patterns of development); philosophically (in light of money’s confounding of standard ontological and epistemological categories); literarily (as homologous to literary forms such as realism or modernism); narratively or hermeneutically (with attention to the powerfully charged myths and meanings bound up with monetary objects); materially and visually (considering the material cultures and semiotic dimensions of money); theologically (as an essentially sacred phenomenon that retains vestiges of its divine underpinnings); or performatively (in terms of money’s self-authorizing capacities, as spectacularly dramatized in recent years by the rise of cryptocurrencies).

Similar intellectual paradigms and frameworks have guided research into areas ranging from financial markets, central banks, digital and data economies, and accounting practices to cultural industries, labour and consumption dynamics, housing and construction sectors, and renewable and circular economies. This conference aims to bring together researchers working within and across such areas to explore common approaches and share empirical and theoretical insights. It will showcase the state of the art in the Economic Humanities and reflect on emerging tendencies and future directions.

The organizers encourage submissions from scholars based in arts and humanities disciplines, in social scientific fields (including economics, political economy, economic sociology and anthropology, economic geography, cultural economy, social studies of finance, and critical finance studies), and in all other relevant research areas. Creative or practice-based presentations are welcomed, as are papers exploring how arts and humanities research on money, finance, and the economy can have impact and influence beyond the academy.

Potential topics include (but are not limited to):

- **Knowledge:** What counts as economic knowledge, and how might such knowledge be expanded, deepened, enriched, and/or reconfigured?
- **Theory:** What meanings and assumptions are embedded in economic theories and models, and with what effects?
- **Practice:** How do cultural patterns of sense-making shape economic practices and the relation of economic models to real-world economies?
- **Power:** How is economic power exercised, and what capacity do humanities-based approaches have to critique, resist, or redistribute such power?

- **Histories:** What forms have money, finance, or markets taken in the past, and how might these forms defamiliarize or denaturalize taken-for-granted economic assumptions today?
- **Representation:** How are economic phenomena represented (in literature, theatre, film, art, popular culture, the media, and/or everyday life), and how do such representations shape vernacular economic knowledges?
- **Spaces:** How are economic lifeworlds constructed relationally across global space, and in particular via interactions between the Global North and Global South?
- **Temporalities:** What does it mean to think the past, present, and future in economic terms, and how do such conceptualizations relate to questions of sustainability, climate transition, intergenerational justice, or political strategy?
- **Identities:** How does economic life intersect with aspects of identity (including race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, religion, and dis/ability), and how are these intersections manifest ideologically, semiotically, and/or discursively?
- **Values:** What assumptions are embedded in prevailing conceptions of value and what resources (e.g. ethical, religious, imaginative, utopian) might be available to rethink them?
- **Faith:** How are money and other economic phenomena bound up with faith, belief, and the sacred, and what contributions can different faith traditions make to monetary and economic thought?
- **Rationality:** How should we understand recent challenges to long-prevailing assumptions of baseline rationality in mainstream economics (e.g. behavioural economics), and how might we expand and radicalize them?
- **Method:** What is at stake in bringing humanities methods to bear on economic questions, and how do we assemble rigorous and robust methodological frameworks for such research?
- **Pedagogy:** How is economic education currently constituted, and how might it be conducted differently?
- **Futures:** What new research paradigms should be pursued in the Economic Humanities, and how do they relate to the wider challenge of envisaging the economy of the future?

In addition to keynote lectures and panel presentations, the conference will experiment with an innovative “Laboratory of Economic Concepts,” consisting of workshops focused on keywords from the economic lexicon, and drawing on participants’ varied disciplinary and intellectual perspectives to illuminate the terms’ genealogies, meanings, and potential reinventions.

Please send proposals for individual papers (max. 250 words) or three-paper panels to [moneytalksconf@gmail.com](mailto:moneytalksconf@gmail.com) by **Friday 28 March 2025**. Notifications of acceptance will be issued by Friday 4 April.

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Organizers: Professor Paul Crosthwaite (Literatures, Languages, and Cultures) and Professor Rachel Muers (Divinity)