

## Call for Papers/Appel à contributions: The Paradoxes of Value

**Date :** November 13, 2010

The on-line journal *Altérités* (<http://www.alterites.ca>) aims to generate debates related to the interests and current issues facing research in anthropology and social sciences. *Altérités* accepts original articles, research notes, and book reviews in English and French, from researchers and graduate students working in the various fields of anthropology, social sciences and humanities. The most recent call for papers, in English and French, is for the next issue of *Altérités*, « The paradoxes of value », edited by Léa Kalaora, Anne Lardeux and Suzanne Beth. This issue will be published in April 2011.

The deadline for the submission of papers for this upcoming issue is December 10th 2010.

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The paradoxes of value

Edited by Léa Kalaora, Anne Lardeux and Suzanne Beth

While many anthropologists refer to the concept of “value”, a systematic theory does not seem to have emerged in recent literature, which ranges from a radical relativism (things cannot be compared) to a totalitarian positivism (everything can be measured).

The publication of *The Social Life of Things* marks the displacement of the interest in identity and the constitution of subjects towards objects, movement and the development of concepts for thinking about value and exchange in social life. At the two poles of the current discussion on the subject, there is, on the one hand, the idea that value lies in exchange and circulation (Simmel, Appadurai), while, on the other, there is the theory that postulates the possibility of an “inalienable” value that would withstand exchange (Weiner 1992ii).

This issue of *Altérités* proposes to reexamine the question of value and exchange, and consequently measurement and its limits, by introducing symbolic relations, classifications of meaning and regimes of truth and knowledge into the horizon of analysis. Our desire is to consider the “incalculable” that modernity, as the paradigmatic instance of “everything is measurable,” has closed (Nancy 2008iii). It is not in our interest to present different values against one another and, thereby, to deliberate about identity; rather, our aim is to reflect on the question of value and its measurement in terms of their principles and processes of development.

The four following lines of thought are central to this issue of *Alterités*:

1. To conduct an inquiry into the epistemological point of view of the concepts of “value”, “classification,” “action,” “incalculable,” “inexchangeable” in the humanities and/or social sciences.
2. To illustrate and think about the modes of operation and the critique of classifications in particular: art, finance, communication, psychosis, narratives and narrative techniques, etc. We wish to analyze these ideas in terms of value or value-free, order or anomie or moments of crisis (the avant-garde, a financial crash, new technologies irrupting into the communications economy etc.).

3. To address practices of articulation, stakes of competition, points of friction, ruptures and modes of domination and destruction between different classification (colonization being the paradigmatic space par excellence). We want to show how the confrontation and the competitive value of various classifications are at the heart of many contemporary crises. This could include an analysis of the language used (barbarism, treachery, madness, corruption etc..) to discredit competing classifications.

4. To focus on the relationship between value, action and politics. For example, a consideration on communication led Gregory Bateson to develop a theory of action that notably emphasizes the reluctance of the right to influence, to exercise power over a person. Please send an electronic copy of your text and abstracts to [comite@alterites.ca](mailto:comite@alterites.ca). Presentation rules for submitted texts can be consulted at our website: <http://www.alterites.ca/politique.html>.

Altérités accepts texts in both English and French. We at Altérités encourage the publication of thematic issues. However, we strongly support the submission of off theme articles which we will publish with each issue. Please do not hesitate to send us book reviews or bibliographical essays. For further information, you may visit our web site at the following address:

<http://www.alterites.ca/ouvrages.html>.

i Appadurai, A. (ed.). 1986. The social life of things. Commodities in cultural perspective. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

ii Weiner, A. 2001. Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-while-Giving. Berkeley: University of California Press.

iii Nancy, J.-L. 2008. Vérité de la démocratie. Paris : Galilée.