



The 2009-2010 Klopsteg seminar series in SCIENCE IN HUMAN CULTURE presents:

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ANTHROPOLOGY, U CHICAGO

## “THE MARKET AS AN OBJECT OF ATTACHMENT: WHAT TYPE OF AGENT IS A FINANCIAL MARKET?”

MONDAY  
FEBRUARY 22, 2010  
4:00 - 5:30 PM

HAGSTRUM ROOM  
UNIVERSITY HALL 201  
EVANSTON CAMPUS

RECEPTION TO  
FOLLOW

**ABSTRACT:** In this paper, I consider the foreign exchange market from a particular perspective: I will not focus on market participants and their activities, but rather on the object in which they are participating—on the market and how it engages participants and ensnares them in its project. What sort of ‘party’ is the market and how can it be understood to be independent of market participants on whom it would seem to depend? How do we have to imagine an engagement with the market works—if we mean more by this than that investors and speculators hold positions in the market and depend on it for profit? In answering these questions, I will illustrate how traders think of the market and how it is an independent entity. I will also take apart this object, the market, and differentiate between various levels of the presentation of its self—to be able to see how an object is encountered and engaged with we will need to know how it passes itself up in interaction. It is through the various pathways for involvements and attachment these levels offer that the engagement process works—and the market becomes more than a medium of profit making, it becomes a captivating being and an object of attachment. I will also identify some of the agency dimensions of markets. Markets appear to be not only a type of object, but a type of agent—one that is synthetic, cultural, spectacular. Traders experience the market as the central ‘other’ of their world. I see the various agency-dimensions of the market—the action milieu it provides—as one of the main reasons for its spectacular and captivating character.