

Introduction to Anthropology

Ethnographic Assignment (5%)

Due: September 18, 2013

The Market: An Ethnographic Exercise

This exercise is designed to prepare you for the ethnographic film assignment to come. You have been given an introduction to anthropological fieldwork and seen how anthropologists perform their tasks in the field. In this exercise you will be given questions to ask and suggestions for observation but you should also not be timid to add onto those suggestions and questions as you see fit. Some of your own questions might better serve your individual experience. The final product, to be turned in with your essay, is to be written in the form of a story. That is, write your notes by hand during the exercise and type them up, concentrating on telling the story of your experience as if you were telling a friend.

You are to make a trip to a local outdoor market and observe and participate (you can even shop a little if you want) to include the following questions and ideas.

How does the outdoor market differ from a grocery store or supermarket?

Are there any special sounds or smells that particularly strike you?

Are you more tempted to buy here or in a supermarket? Why?

What are women doing in this public space? What are men doing? Children?

Who owns the stalls/kiosks where goods are sold? Who works at these same stalls?

Does there seem to be competition among the merchants at the market?

How do merchants try to attract customers?

How would you profile the customers you see? Are they wealthy, poor, of a particular ethnic group, young, old, male, female? What would account for this?

Ask some customers how they feel about the market. Ask the merchants how they feel.

The outdoor market is a public space where people are usually relaxed and talkative. You should have no trouble getting your “informants” to share their thoughts!

Here is a link which provides the addresses of outdoor markets in Montreal. If you have another outdoor market near you feel free to use that one for the exercise. <http://www.marchespublics-mtl.com/English>

The completion of this exercise is essential to the essay so please, no extensions! Have fun...