

Cosmopolitan Culture, Consumption and the Making of Taste: 1600-1770

Old Faculty Club, Healey Library 11th fl. rm 0011B, University of Massachusetts Boston
April 25-26, 2008

Both days of the conference are free and open to the public; no registration required

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the emergence of essentially new patterns of luxury consumption in Europe, fueled in part by a growth in upper class tourism, the expansion of global trading networks and the introduction of exotic Asian, African and American products. Consumer goods ranged from antiques, paintings and items of furniture to beverages and drugs, such as coffee, chocolate, tea, tobacco and opium, helped redefine fashionable culture. By the early eighteenth century the capacity to consume material culture properly, in keeping with modern fashion, was being described by a newly coined phrase, “good taste”.

We will explore the concept of taste within the comparative perspective of the consumer cultures of Europe and China. An opening session will deal specifically with an emerging fashion for chocolate and coffee, two non-European beverages that took the world of fashion by storm after their introduction in the seventeenth century. Saturday morning will be devoted to other forms of European consumer culture, involving aristocratic tourism, the collection of classical antiquities and the developing craze for exotic flowers and plants. In the afternoon the focus will shift to Chinese consumer culture in the same period in order to illuminate both similarities and differences. The concluding keynote will provide a broad comparative discussion of consumer culture in Asia and Europe.

Friday Evening April 25

4:45pm Coffee Tasting by Peet’s Coffee and Tea

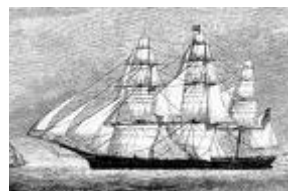
Evening Program: Tasting

5:15-7:30pm Session I: The Cultures of Chocolate and Coffee

Marcy Norton (George Washington University). “The Cultural Meanings of Chocolate”

Brian Cowan (McGill University). “New Worlds, New Tastes: Coffee and the Invention of Gastronomy in Early Modern Europe”

7:30 pm Reception with Chocolate Tasting by Sparrow Enterprises



Saturday April 26

Morning Program: The West and Taste

9:00-10:00 AM Keynote

Linda Levy Peck (George Washington University). "Aristocratic Tourism and Consumer Culture in England"

10:00-10:15 Coffee Break

10:15-11:45 AM Session II: Further Explorations in European Consumer Culture

Tamara Griggs (University of Chicago). "Forgery and the Antiquities Market in Grand Tour Rome"

Elizabeth Hyde (Kean University) "Reason and Taste in the Consumption of Flowers in Early Modern France."

Malcolm Smuts (University of Massachusetts Boston) Comment

12:00- 1:15 PM East Meets West: Buffet Lunch in Conference Room with Chinese dishes and French and Viennese Pastries

Afternoon Program: The East and Taste

1:30-3:00 PM Session III: Consumer Culture in China

Joanna Waley-Cohen (NYU): "Gastronomy and Consumption in China"

Timothy Brook (Oxford and University of British Columbia): "The Taste of Water: Consumer and Dealer in the Luxury Trade in China ca. 1610"

Nancy Berliner (Peabody- Essex Museum) Comment

3:15-4:15 PM Concluding Keynote

Kenneth Pomeranz (California Irvine), "The High, the Low and the Invisible: class, Gender and Consumption in China and Europe, ca. 1600-1770."

A Conference of the Research Center for Cultural History of the University of Massachusetts Boston. Co-sponsored by the Center, the History Department of University of Massachusetts Boston, The Confucius Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Peet's Coffee and Tea, and Chocolate by Sparrow

