

6-2001

## Coffee Breaks and Coffee Connections: The Lived Experience of a Commodity in Tanzanian and European Worlds

Brad Weiss  
College of William and Mary, blweis@wm.edu

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### Recommended Citation

Weiss, B. (2001). Coffee Breaks and Coffee Connections: The Lived Experience of a Commodity in Tanzanian and European Worlds. Daniel Miller (Ed.), *Consumption: Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences* (pp. 38-51). Routledge. <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/asbookchapters/64>

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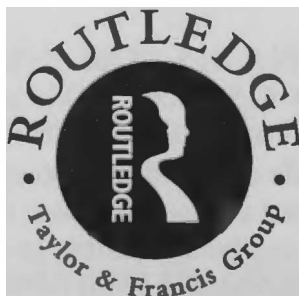
# CONSUMPTION

Critical concepts in the social sciences

*Edited by Daniel Miller*

**Volume II**

The history and regional development of consumption



London and New York

First published 2001  
by Routledge

11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada  
by Routledge

29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group*

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Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

Consumption : critical concepts in the social sciences / edited by  
Daniel Miller.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-415-24266-5 (set) – ISBN 0-415-24267-3 (v. 1) –

ISBN 0-415-24268-1 (v. 2) – ISBN 0-415-24269-X (v. 3) –

ISBN 0-415-24270-3 (v. 4)

1. Consumption (Economics) 2. Consumers. I. Miller, Daniel, 1954-

HB820 .C655 2001

339.4'7 – dc21 2001016016

ISBN 0-415-24266-5 (Set)

ISBN 0-415-24268-1 (Volume II)

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Social Sciences*. This has not been possible in every case, however, and  
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References within each chapter are as they appeared in the  
original complete work.

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# COFFEE BREAKS AND COFFEE CONNECTIONS

The lived experience of a commodity in  
Tanzanian and European worlds

*Brad Weiss*

Source: D. Howes (ed.) *Cross-Cultural Consumption: Global Markets, Local Realities*, London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 93–105

The history of colonial and neo-colonial relations as they are experienced in Northwest Tanzania is intimately entwined with coffee. Efforts to develop and expand coffee production in Haya communities of this region have been the concern of a wide array of international and local agencies – from turn-of-the-century missionaries who introduced new varieties to Haya farmers to contemporary Field Extension Officers (*Bwana Shamba*) who promulgate new cultivation techniques. Coffee is also a substantial medium through which Haya men and women concretely experience their relation to the wider world of international markets and commodity exchanges. Fluctuations in the price of coffee (in recent years, less in flux than in precipitous decline) bring home the marginal position of rural Haya farmers relative to the global economy.

Yet, in spite of the fact that the flow of coffee as a commodity and the everexpanding international market seem increasingly to appropriate and incorporate communities like the Haya into an encompassing order of values, there are also important disjunctures in this process. For example, many Haya men and women said to me: ‘We Haya grow this coffee, we harvest it, and then we sell it to you in Europe. But what do you Europeans do with it?’ This uncertainty about the ultimate use of Haya produce should raise important questions about the values of a ‘global economy’ and the extent to which it effectively integrates regional worlds. This query is also indicative of the extent to which coffee continues to be produced and consumed – and hence imbued with values – within Haya communities in ways

which are quite distinct from the presuppositions of a global economy. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the dynamic relation of certain regional, national, and transnational meanings of coffee, and to demonstrate how an investigation of the varied interpretations and uses of this product can provide critical insight into the nature and significance of colonial and post-colonial encounters.

My research on coffee forms part of a larger research project on the semantic dimensions of commodity forms in Haya communities from the perspective of lived experience. This perspective focuses on the integration of material forms, commodities among them, into the wider socio-cultural processes through which the Haya construct a lived world. The lived world of the Haya is an order of concrete spatial and temporal relations that is both *imbued* with cultural meanings and serves to *direct* creative cultural activities. To inhabit a world in this way – to construct its orientations in the course of ongoing collective action and interaction – is, at the same time, to objectify the values that guide, restrain, enable, and motivate the agents of these actions. The significance of commoditization processes and the value of particular commodity forms can only be understood, I would argue, in relation to such encompassing socio-cultural processes of action and objectification.

This emphasis on lived experience poses a direct challenge to a long tradition of anthropological analysis that proceeds from a classification of different types of objects and exchanges, and then attempts to elucidate the different practical contexts in which they figure, as well as the symbolic characteristics and qualities attributed to them. The now classic distinction between gifts and commodities, for example, has become emblematic of contrasting orders of economy and sociality (Gregory 1982; Taylor 1991; cf. Carrier 1992 for critique of this essentialist distinction). Moreover, this division provides a teleological model of cultural transformation, as (to use Gregory's terms) the 'reciprocal dependence' of social agents transacting the 'inalienable objects' of a highly personalized gift economy progressively gives way to conditions of 'reciprocal independence' between agents transacting wholly 'alienable objects' in an impersonal economy of commodities. The position I develop in the following pages eschews any such presumed distinctions between 'types' of goods, relationships, or exchanges, to focus on the concrete social practices through which material forms are integrated in social life, and thereby become endowed with specific local values and meanings. In this way, the presence of alternative objects and transactions introduced by processes like commoditization need not be understood as distinct from, or an anathema to, meaningful practices and personalized relations, but as cultural transformations which entail distinct symbolic qualities and potentials for constituting a lived world.

Cultures differ in their assumptions about the ways in which value is generated and secured through the flow of goods. A detailed examination of a single transnational commodity, such as coffee, which has differential



meanings in interpenetrating worlds of transaction, provides a means of comparing these various ways of objectifying value.

### Coffee production in Kagera

While the kingdoms (*engoma*) of Buhaya (now the Kagera Region of Tanzania) were highly stratified hierarchical systems, since the turn of the century class differences (and the processes of production and commoditization that enable them) have emerged principally in relation to the intensive growth and marketing of coffee.<sup>1</sup> The potential for producing and marketing coffee for cash in this region was first exploited by the White Fathers. *Arabica* varieties of coffee were first introduced in 1904 as a part of their missionizing project. Planting and marketing coffee as a means of providing cash for individual Haya landholders to pay taxes was first made compulsory in 1911 (Curtis 1989: 89). In addition to the agricultural development of this cash crop, Haya coffee marketeers contributed to the expansion of commoditization while reaping tremendous profits from the early boom in coffee prices (*ibid.*: 72). As Haya farmers began to grow and market *arabica* as well as indigenous *robusta* varieties on a commercial scale, coffee exports from the region increased steadily, from 234 tons in 1905, to 681 tons in 1912 and over 12,000 tons in 1939.

Coffee remains the single greatest source of income for the vast majority of Haya households (Smith and Stevens 1988: 557). Moreover, coffee is, and has long been, central to the structure of class relations in Kagera. This claim is well illustrated by the fact that an overwhelming percentage of the coffee grown in Kagera today is marketed by an extremely small percentage of the total number of 'farmers' (*wakulima*, the Swahili term used by coffee co-operatives for its members) who sell coffee to the co-operatives.<sup>2</sup> The development of these extreme class divisions was facilitated by the marketing system that flourished in Kagera in the 1920s.<sup>3</sup> Haya coffee traders (known colloquially as *wachuluzi*, from the Swahili *kuchuluzi* – 'to trickle down') were able to make substantial profits by paying out advances to coffee farmers strapped for cash between harvests. The marketeers would thereby receive the right to harvest and market the farmer's coffee crop, often at a rate of two to three times the amount of the cash advance. With independence and the eventual implementation of 'African Socialism', such marketeering became illegal, but (as the contemporary co-operative records indicate) continues to thrive as a black market. Indeed, the system has become more nuanced and volatile with its illegalization. Marketeers will now offer advances based on the harvest of a single tree, for example, or advance the price of a given number of 'bowls' – *bakuli*, a standard measure of coffee that must be paid to the marketeer at harvest. In the 1980s, a decade with widely fluctuating currency rates, marketeers could realize a return of up to ten times the amount of their advance. Many coffee farmers that I spoke to,

however, preferred the assurance of cash in advance from the black market, to the ever-delayed and occasionally non-existent payments offered by the state.

The black market in coffee, then, is most effective in taking advantage of the need for ready cash. Those who have access to cash are able to purchase the prospective coffee harvests of their clients who cannot wait for the state's payments. In this way, control of the annual procedures (and proceeds) of coffee cultivation is cut short in favour of the immediate requirement of money. These practices have interesting implications for economic theories of social transformation. For example, it has been argued that the development of commerce has a 'disenchanted' effect on cultural forms of temporality, as the commodity form, especially money itself, makes possible a 'rational calculation' of future outcomes (Bourdieu 1979: 17). In Haya experience, however, money seems to confuse and distort temporal processing itself. This propensity of money is well expressed in a phrase the Haya commonly use to describe the evanescence of their economy: *Ebyo mbwenu ti bya nyenkya, n'ekibi kya mpya* – 'The things of today are not those of tomorrow, that's the evil of money'. It is not, therefore, the rational calculus of money that 'forecasts' the future, but the potential of the money form in relation to the commoditization of coffee that makes that future intractable.

The expansion of coffee production throughout this century should not be taken as evidence of whole-hearted support on the part of Haya men and women for cash-cropping activities, or for colonial and post-colonial forms of commoditization. In the 1930s, for example, rural farmers openly resisted 'innovative' agricultural policies and techniques designed to stave off coffee blight, saying *Twaiyanga!* ('We refuse!') to allow agricultural extension officers on to our farms (Curtis 1989: 220 ff.). Some Haya men and women I knew were thankful for the marketeers providing them with access to cash in times of crisis; others, however, told me that the traders were called *wachuluzi* because they made tears (not profits) 'trickle down'. The expansion of cash-cropping coupled with reluctance (and occasional hostility) towards adopting its very means, indicate that the production of coffee in Kagera did more than provide a source of monetary income to Haya farmers and traders: it transformed the very signs and practices through which Haya communities constitute the world they inhabit.

### Coffee and sociality

In order to appreciate the ways in which transformations in coffee commerce entailed transformations in the meanings and values of Haya socio-cultural activity we need to understand the place of coffee in the *pre-colonial* culture and political economy of the region. *Robusta* coffee grown in Haya communities was an important crop – as well as an important trade good – in this part of Africa throughout the nineteenth century. Coffee was transacted

between polities – especially from Bahama kingdoms to Baganda in the north – in exchange for bark cloth and ivories.

Most scholarship has asserted that coffee in the Haya kingdoms was held as a royal monopoly (Austen 1968: 95; Curtis 1989: 54; Hartwig 1976: 111), but there is also evidence to suggest that coffee was harvested and transacted by Haya commoners for their own purposes. Individual coffee trees were also strongly associated with both the well-being of those who cultivated and inherited them, and the productivity of the family farms on which they were situated. A person's *amagala*, their 'life-force' was bound up with their coffee, to such an extent that the death of a coffee tree was an omen of its owner's death (Hyden 1968: 82).

*Robusta* coffee cherries were dried and cooked with spices to be offered as informal gifts to friends and guests – much as they are to this day. These cherries (*akamwani*, a diminutive of *amwani*, the Haya term for any coffee) are prized as a masticatory, and are chewed in the course of the day as a small snack, much as betel and kola nut are taken in other parts of the world. Moreover, such coffee cherries were central to Haya rites and relations of blood-brotherhood, since (according to my own informants) the two seeds within the single pod provide an agricultural icon of this assertion of common clanship (cf. Beattie 1958). Coffee, then, was and continues to be central to a number of everyday and ceremonial practices that facilitate the construction of Haya sociality.

The ways in which coffee transactions figure in the creation of Haya sociality, and especially the spatial dimensions of this creative process, further suggest important links between coffee as a cash crop and a masticatory. *Akamwani* is often used in rites that serve to establish and secure a recognizable place. In house opening ceremonies, for example, the propitiant will often toss coffee cherries in four directions: in front of her, behind her, to her right, and to her left. I was also told that a person preparing for, or returning from, a long trip would toss *akamwani* in these cardinal directions in order to secure the journey.

These ritualized uses of coffee are exemplary of practices called *okuzinga* – 'to bind, or surround' (cf. Weiss 1996). As the direction of the rites suggests, the binding achieved by this action implies the creation of certain spatial orientations. To begin with, the rites serve to establish a *central* position relative to which the four directions are co-ordinated. The propitiant, that is, defines a centre that lies at the intersection of these directions, and in this way secures, or 'binds' that position. However, as the fact that these rites are often performed in recognition of a long-distance journey indicates, this secured centre is a relational place. The centre bound by these rites creates a relationship between different places: between the 'here' defined by these acts and the distant destination of the trip, and between the 'inside' position at the intersection of these directions and the regions that lie beyond and 'surround' them.<sup>4</sup>

These spatial orientations also have implications for the significance of the coffee that is used to produce them. *Akamwani*, as I have indicated, is among the most pervasive substances in Kagera, and figures in manifold acts of exchange and encounter. When, for example, guests arrive in a Haya household the host or hostess will, almost immediately, offer them some coffee to chew, and if none is available hosts usually apologize for their lack of hospitality. Suffice it to say, these coffee cherries are the quintessential Haya 'objects for guests', and their transaction continues to mark the establishment of a vast array of social relations, from simple neighbourliness to inheritance and installation practices. The many contexts in which coffee cherries figure suggest that they are a medium that helps to realize and objectify a relationship and *contrast* between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. As 'objects for guests' the use of coffee is premised on the difference between insiders and outsiders, while such tokens simultaneously attempt to overcome that difference by mediating between insiders and outsiders.

The tensions and paradoxes posed by this fusion of intentions – the fact that coffee transactions conjoin through separation – are worth considering in greater depth for they reveal crucial connections between coffee produced for export and coffee cherries cooked for local purposes. The act of presenting coffee to guests, for example, is made to 'represent' a Haya meal. Most Haya households offer coffee cherries to their guests in a small woven plate which is covered by some twisted strands of papyrus. Similarly, a plate of bananas offered as a common meal is also covered (but by a banana leaf) when it is served. Guests take the papyrus and stroke their fingers with it prior to picking up coffee cherries. This is called 'washing' – *okunaba*, the same verb used for cleaning one's hands prior to taking a meal.

These similarities between serving a meal and serving coffee, however, can also be seen to throw into relief the ways in which these two activities are different. As Haya friends often told me, you offer guests coffee because coffee can never fill them up – it is, thus, unmistakably distinct from good food. Haya meals – at which (if successful) thoroughly *filling* food is offered – are consumed only by members of a household, behind closed doors, and definitively separated from neighbours and other more distant outsiders (cf. Weiss 1992 and Weiss 1996). Eating a meal in these ways demonstrates the integrity and self-sufficiency of the household that is able to provide for itself; yet coffee cherries can and should be offered to guests because they are not filling. The point of this contrast is that coffee can establish both connections and separations in social relationships. In effect, the use of coffee in such instances works to transform outsiders into *guests*, a gesture that asserts a relationship, but definitively not an *identity*, between those who give and receive. This dialectic of intimacy and distance, relatedness and separation, is also demonstrated by the fact that a man's father-in-law is the stereotypic recipient of coffee as a guest in one's home; affinal relations embody the kinds of ambiguities characteristic of the contexts in which coffee is offered.<sup>5</sup>

### Coffee marketing in Kagera

Negotiating tensions between intimacy and distance, insiders and outsiders, in terms of both sociality and spatiality is also a feature of coffee *marketing* in Kagera. There are, for example, concrete connections between coffee as a commodity form and the system of roads and automotive transport that link this commodity to a wider political economy. At all levels of the local political economy, among both wealthy coffee entrepreneurs and poor cultivators, the transport system is inextricably linked to coffee as a commodity form because, in everyday parlance, cars and lorries are what might be called a 'standard measure' of coffee volume. That is, when speaking of an amount of coffee produced for sale to the state-run co-operatives, the Haya with whom I spoke would always refer to, for example, 'one lorry', or 'three cars' of coffee as a measure of total volume. The use of cars and lorries as standard measures indicates that the very logic and means of commoditization have certain spatial implications that are embedded in the concrete forms (i.e. the automotive means referred to) through which this historical process is evaluated. Cars and lorries as units of measurement make clear the fact that coffee as a commodity is *defined by* its movement from more local relations to distant ones.

Other aspects of the spatial form of coffee production and transaction in Haya lived experience demonstrate the links of commoditization to sociality. To begin with, coffee trees are always planted a good distance from the house that lies at the centre of a Haya farm (*ekibanja*). Banana plants (*engemu*) that provide the daily staple for almost all Haya households are, in contrast, planted throughout the farm, including among the coffee trees. Those banana plants most prized for preparing meals (as opposed to snacks, or sweets) are planted in the immediate vicinity of the house. Indeed, the best banana plants are said to thrive in the areas adjacent to a house where, according to the farmers I spoke to, they can share in the intimacy and productivity provided by the warmth of an active household.

Agricultural policy in colonial Tanganyika, and later Tanzania, has discouraged inter-cropping of coffee with bananas. Haya farmers are encouraged to plant new coffee trees by themselves, on a separate plot of land within the family farm (Rald and Rald 1975). This technique is now known as *kilimo cha kisasa* in Swahili, 'modern farming', but it has certainly not been widely adopted in most Haya villages. Keeping coffee trees at a distance from a house, yet interspersed with banana plants, allows Haya households to maintain the tension between intimacy and distance characteristic of coffee transaction. Coffee trees planted among bananas lends to them qualities of close association and attachment that are characteristic of a household's relationship to its staple crop. Yet, their simultaneous distance from the centre of the house equally embodies the *distance* that coffee, as both a food for guests and a crop intended for transport, connotes.

Interspersing coffee trees with bananas rather than rigorously segregating the two also points to the fact that the distinction between the two different kinds of coffee – the cash crop and the masticatory – is ambiguous. *Arabica* varieties of coffee must be sold to co-operatives, as only *robusta* varieties can be prepared as *akamwani*. However, even *robusta* coffee can, and indeed, *must* be marketed through the state's co-operatives.<sup>6</sup> Integrating *robusta* coffee trees into the landscape of the family farm can be seen, then, as a way of exerting control over the ultimate purpose of the coffee crop. When *robusta* cherries are harvested in and among the other produce of the farm, some can be diverted for use as *akamwani*, while the rest is prepared for the co-operatives. Again, these spatial arrangements allow for an interpenetration of purposes, an ambiguity that connects with, and is in some ways created by, the connection between cash crops and *akamwani*.

### Coffee and the Western world

The ways in which coffee trees are located and cultivated on household farms in Kagera speak to the kinds of connections this particular commodity establishes between local, regional and international worlds. In order for Haya farmers and families to control the effects of this cash crop, there is, I have suggested, a simultaneous attempt made to incorporate the coffee trees into certain intimate dimensions of domesticity and sociality on the one hand and, on the other, to keep them removed from the centres of everyday productivity so as to ensure some sort of independence and integrity. Thus, just as coffee is situated in the lived world of Haya communities, coffee also situates those Haya communities with respect to the wider world of which they are a part. It is a medium that is intrinsically translocal.

The coffee produced by Haya and other 'Third World' farmers also figures prominently in the social imagination of the Europeans and North Americans who are among its consumers. For these consumers it is also the case that coffee formulates and comments on experiences of the interconnections between regional worlds. Coffee provides a substance at once stimulating and sobering that carries with it a taste of the 'exotic' from which it originates. In particular, coffee consumption, like the use of other imported or 'domesticated' foodstuffs, from tea and sugar to pineapples and bananas (cf. Schivelbusch 1992; Sahlins 1988; Schama 1988; Mintz 1985; Austen and Smith 1990), has important implications for the meaningful and material order of class relations in the West, and for the implication of global relations in the construction of those relations. One crucial forum, for example, in and through which this order was concretized in Europe was the coffee-house, which Schivelbusch describes as '*the site for the public life of the eighteenth-century middle class, a place where the bourgeoisie developed new forms of commerce and culture*' (1992: 59).

As a public focus of 'commerce and culture', these eighteenth-century

coffee-houses are especially notable for the ways in which they contributed to the development and definition of socio-cultural practices that constitute 'the public sphere' of bourgeois society (Stallybrass and White 1986: 94 ff.). Conducting business in an atmosphere conducive to 'civil' discourse became a hallmark of these institutions. The emblematic example of these commercial and cultural possibilities is Lloyd's coffee-house, established at the end of the seventeenth century (Schivelbusch 1992: 49–51). Lloyd's not only trafficked in a prized medium of overseas commerce, but was especially popular with its agents – shipowners and captains, merchants and insurance brokers. The discussion of trade news characteristic of this clientele promoted the development of a news service that published 'Lloyd's News'. Indeed, coffee-houses in the early eighteenth century often housed offices of journalism, thus concretely linking cornerstones of the public sphere, mercantile commerce and print capitalism. Lloyd's interest in commerce beyond the sale of coffee and newspapers eventually led to its establishment as the renowned institution we know today as Lloyd's of London.

The coffee-house is a crucial institution, not simply because it was the place where commercial interests and public discourses developed, but because it was an especially appropriate site for inculcating the dispositions characteristic of the emergent public sphere through coffee consumption itself. As both a consumer good and a sobering drink, coffee contributes to the constitution of bourgeois selfhood, and the forms of subjectivity that are embedded in the public sphere. Clear-headed rationality, alertness, and restraint were often cited as the (Protestant) virtues of coffee, a 'wakeful and civil drink' (Howell, quoted in Stallybrass and White 1986: 97), virtues that were explicitly contrasted with the unseemly, 'rude', even corpulent, pleasures of ale. Coffee, then, becomes what it remains in many ways in the culture of advanced capitalism, both a sign *of*, and instrument *for* achievement, energy, invigoration, and effort – all essential features of the 'civilized' self. Through the short, sudden burst of energy and concentration it supplies, coffee is the original therapy for the micro-management of bourgeois personality.

Coffee further permits these attitudes, motivations, and dispositions to be objectified in the capitalist reconstruction of time, as 'coffee breaks' become means of temporal reckoning that are routinized in labour practices. Using coffee to mark and *make* time in this way thereby fulfils a capitalist fantasy, providing a respite from work undertaken for the sake of work itself – and thus the direct conversion of 'leisure' into 'productivity' – made possible through the medium of a highly desired, commodified stimulant.

Further, coffee being a commodity, these meanings, experiences, values, effects – in a word, tastes – with which it is imbued, are explicitly situated in the articulation of regional worlds. Coffee not only defines and characterizes critical new features of public interchange, it enters into these interchanges as an unmistakably international commodity. For example, the very word

'coffee', like *café* and *kaffee* (as well as the Swahili term *kahawa*), is derived from *qahveh*, the Turkish pronunciation of the Arabic *qahweh*.

It is also clear that coffee is marked as a distinctly foreign good, one that is differentiated, marketed, and indeed known through a symbolic code of internationalism. Variety, as it presents itself to the coffee consumer, is not formulated in terms of flavour, age, heritage, or botanical stocks, but of countries of origin. These selections and varieties correspond to what James in the previous chapter, 'Cooking the Books', has described as 'an urgent emphasizing of the heterogeneity of cuisines' that is one increasingly characteristic dimension of the globalization of consumption. The internationalism of coffee – especially for the connoisseur – reflects, as James says, 'not a homogenized food culture but, rather, a global familiarity with subtle distinctions . . . between regional specialties across the globe'. Whether downing a cup of Java, or lingering over a mug of Kenya AA, the coffee drinker always selects from among an array of place names that gives him or her a place in an international world of goods. The sensibilities of coffee drinking in the West, whether the desired effect is one of distinction, or camaraderie, are therefore inherently cosmopolitan. The social life of coffee – as commodity, stimulant, and lexical item – 'grounds' the forms and practices of the public sphere, and the subjective dispositions of its habitus, in a wider transnational nexus of signs and transactions.

### **Producing domestic sensibilities**

The modes and objectifications of sociality and selfhood embedded in coffee are not restricted to the public sphere, but come to pervade the cultural practices of Western capitalism as coffee itself becomes pervasive. In Germany, which first developed a market for *arabica* in Kagera, coffee became especially important to the development of bourgeois domesticity and, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, linked that domesticity directly to the Prussian nation.<sup>7</sup> As the colonial plantations of France and Holland were the main sources of coffee in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the state imposed stiff taxes on coffee to curb the flow of Prussian funds to these colonial powers. Eventually, chicory, grown by 'good German peasants', was developed as a coffee substitute.

This alternative beverage, chicory, lent new meanings to class relations in Germany, as those who cultivated aristocratic tastes continued to brew what became known as real 'bean coffee', while the petty bourgeoisie suffered the indignities of blackened chicory. Moreover, Prussian tax collectors and customs officers in the nineteenth century were popularly known as 'coffee sniffers', an indication of the kinds of intimate scrutiny to which even household relations were subjected. This popular appellation is a testament to the fact that aromatic distinctions between 'bean coffee' and chicory, colonial imports and their domestic counterparts, became central to



connections between domestic intimacy and class distinctions. It further reveals the contradictory role of the state in promoting and fostering the development of privileged consumption within a domestic enclave through the intrusive policing of domesticity itself.

Without further research into the final destination of Haya coffee exports in the early twentieth century, it is difficult to say with certainty what its consequences were for colonial experiences of consumption. Still, the place of coffee in European and American social life – of coffee-houses in commercial enterprise, ‘bean coffee’ in the context of Prussian class relations, and coffee-breaks in the workplace – does suggest certain parallels with Haya concerns. In each case, forms of distinction in publicly recognized social status are demonstrated through the exchange of a medium that carries with it connotations of both familiarity and strangeness. Given these potentials and parallels, it is interesting to note that immigrants to America, especially immigrants from the peripheries of German colonialism within Europe (i.e. Czechs and Poles) took great pride in having a pot of coffee perpetually brewing on the stove – a source of prestige none could have hoped for in Europe at the time (Levenstein 1988: 106).

These possible connections of coffee production in Kagera to metropolitan households exemplify the ways in which, as the Comaroffs have noted, ‘colonialism was as much about making the centre as it was about making the periphery . . . . And the dialectic of domesticity was a vital element in this process’ (1992: 293). For just as Haya farming communities use coffee to negotiate their local position in a global economy in ways that have been constrained, but never simply determined, by the forces of the global market, so, too has the presence of coffee – a colonial and post-colonial commodity – in Europe and North America recast dimensions of the public and the private through the practices and experience of the cosmopolitan consumer.

This chapter has explored a series of dialectics, domestic and otherwise, that are characteristic of the production and consumption of coffee. As a central feature of both economy and everyday experience, coffee is a substance that embodies articulations within and across local and global orders. In the construction of class relations, social space, and even bodily intimacy, coffee provides a medium through which connections and disconnections, conjunctures and disjunctures, can be recognized and acted upon. While it is important to appreciate these broad parallels between Haya- and European-lived experiences of this commodity, it is also important to recognize the range of equally seminal differences. Thus, the links that coffee establishes both between rural Haya communities and urban European communities, and within each of those communities, are forged very differently. For example, coffee contributes to the bourgeois forms of selfhood I describe through the cultivation of inner states. Sobriety, work discipline, and self-control are valued cognitive and

affective states produced through, and experienced as, an individual's attempts at self-improvement.

Haya consumption of coffee is also concerned with selfhood and identity, in so far as aspects of the self, such as marital, clan and residential status, are constituted through transactions involving coffee. Yet the coffee itself produces these Haya forms of selfhood less through the production of inner states than through the ways in which coffee transactions allow persons effectively to differentiate themselves from those with whom they transact. In other words, coffee contributes to Haya forms of the self through the kinds of *relationships* it institutes with others. These persistent differences in Haya and European understandings of coffee as a medium of sociality and selfhood demonstrate that the increasing globalization of commodity forms does not entail the homogenization of cultural values and practices. It can no longer be presumed that global forces like commoditization lead inevitably to the eradication of specific local meanings, no matter how ostensibly powerful and seductive commodity forms might appear.

Most studies of colonialism and commoditization focus on the agency and symbolic creativity of metropolitan communities – who either impose their vision and values on passive consumers, or extract values and construct meanings from the otherwise inert 'raw materials' provided by the (Third) world's producers. My analysis of coffee has instead demonstrated that coffee 'producers' can also be 'consumers', and that the meanings of *both* production and consumption are mutually constitute and transformative – for coffee diverted from the world market in order to be prepared as an offering to an affine has obviously had its significance both defined and altered by being treated in this way. In short, the differing trajectories of coffee as a valued object demonstrate the difficulties of neatly distinguishing between producers and consumers, and suggest that the connection between production and consumption is less a clear-cut sequence in economic practice than a multi-stranded and reflexive cultural process. Clearly, *akamwani* offered to an affine and café latté sipped at a food court are not the same substance; but just as plainly, examining coffee as gift and commodity, or cash crop and fine food, as we have done, reveals a complicated dialectic of Haya and European symbolic constructions of the material world.

### Acknowledgements

The research upon which this chapter is based was made possible by a Fulbright-Hays doctoral dissertation fellowship. The Tanzanian National Institute for Science and Technology (UTAFITI) enabled me to live and work in Tanzania. I am also especially grateful for the tremendous generosity of Severian and Anatolia Ndyetabula. An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association, Toronto 1994, and has benefited from the comments and questions of that audience. I

must also give thanks to David Newbury, Ralph Austen, Katie Bragdon, Bill Fisher and Julie Corsaro for their valuable comments, as well as to David Howes for his editorial work. I am solely responsible for any remaining errors.

### Notes

- Just over one million Haya live in the Kagera Region, located in the north-west of Tanzania. The Haya form a part of the Interlacustrine socio-cultural area, that includes (among others) the Ganda and Nyoro in Uganda to the north, as well as the indigenous peoples of Rwanda and Burundi to the west and south-west. Haya villages (*ekyaro*) in the rural areas of Kagera, the primary site of the research on which this chapter is based, are composed of a number of family farms (*ekibanja*), which are also places of residence. All the farms within a village are situated immediately adjacent to one another, so that the village as a whole is a contiguous group of households on perennially cultivated land. These residential villages are dispersed across, and clearly contrast with, open grassland (*orweya*). The primary produce of Haya family farms are perennial tree crops, bananas that provide the edible staple, and coffee that provides the main source of money. While coffee remains the most significant (albeit declining) source of cash income in Kagera today, this cash is filtered through the Haya community in an informal economy (*biashara ndogo ndogo* in Kiswahili) of marketing local produce, beer, household commodities, as well as new and used textiles and clothing at local weekly markets.
- 2 My data for an admittedly small number of co-operatives suggest that less than one-quarter of the overall number of 'farmers' sell over three-quarters of the total volume of coffee marketed in Kagera. In my sample, of 122,342 kgs of coffee marketed by co-operatives with a total of 481 members, the 97 members (20.1 per cent of membership) marketing the highest volumes of coffee sold 91,823 kgs, or 75.1 per cent of the total volume. This figure, moreover, is skewed by the fact that those who market the greater volumes of coffee are much more likely to be registered as members of several co-operatives. Therefore, the 97 memberships cited above represent many fewer *individuals*, each of whom has multiple memberships. This, in turn, means that an even smaller percentage of individuals controls this share of coffee volume.
  - 3 See Curtis (1989) for a detailed discussion of Haya entrepreneurs in this period.
  - 4 When these rites are performed for ancestral propitiation they also establish a spatial connection between the places of the living and the dead.
  - 5 It could further be argued that the very purpose of blood-brotherhood, again facilitated by coffee cherries, is to mollify potentially hostile relations through an intentionally fabricated intimacy.
  - 6 According to my Haya informants, all coffee is considered the property of the state and must, by law, be sold to co-operatives for marketing. Preparing *akamwani* is a petty, if pervasive, offence.
  - 7 The following discussion of coffee in Germany is taken, in large part, from Schivelbusch (1992: 71–9).

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