Paradise Lost: the Making of Shangri-La

Russell Belk, York University, Canada
Rosa Llamas, University of León, Spain

Once upon a time, there was a peaceful Himalayan Fairyland that was a Garden of Eden, an earthly Paradise, and a Heaven on Earth. Its name was Shangri-La. And now the harried city dweller can vacation there. In 2002 the county of Zhongdian in China’s Yunan Province changed its name to Shangri-La. Based on fieldwork in 2009, we consider the positive and negative effects of this bid to attract tourists and transform the local economy.

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BRIEF ABSTRACTS

Beer Country
Caroline Graham Austin, Montana State University, USA
Since the first settlers arrived at the St. Mary’s mission in the mid-19th century, Montanans have loved beer — they love making it, sharing it, talking about it, and drinking it. In this film, we investigate the historic, economic, cultural and aesthetic values that make Montana America’s own Beer Country.

Retweet: A Digital Meditation on the Power of Twitter
Donna Hoffman, University of California, Riverside, USA
Thomas P. Novak, University of California, USA
The phenomenal growth of Twitter, a popular microblogging application, is testament to consumers’ desires to instantaneously connect with other consumers. Though many deride the seeming meaningless of the “twitter stream,” consumers are putting the application to use in surprisingly potent ways. This video offers a brief reflection on the recursive power of Twitter.

Talk The Walk, Walk the Talk
Marylouise Caldwell, University of Sydney, Australia
Ingeborg Kleppe, Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration
Stephen Watson, e+b media, University of Sydney, Australia
This documentary shows how HIV+ people in Botswana radically transform themselves from AIDS victims to become public role-models of Positive Living, a health lifestyle that prolongs infected people’s lives and prevents them from infecting others and reinfecting themselves. They learn to deal with stigma, ignorance and limited social or financial support.

Tea for Two: Luxury in Japanese Tea Ceremony
Hiroshi Tanaka, Chuo University, Japan
Junko Kimura, Hosei University, Japan
This study aims to anatomize the mechanism of luxury generation in the Japanese tea ceremony. Based on detailed interviews, we found that (1) Teamwork, (2) Theme-orientation, and (3) Game, are the three key concepts which depict the interactions between host and the guests and thus lead to generate sense of luxury.

Is Green?
Gary Bamossy, Georgetown University, USA
Basil Englis, Berry College, USA
This film examines consumers’ reactions to the marketing practices of “Green Washing” — representing products as being environmentally friendly in ways that result in consumers feeling confused, skeptical, and cynical about those claims, and more generally, about the green movement towards sustainable consumption practices. The public discourse around “environmentally friendly” offerings is becoming increasingly contentious, socially divisive, and politicized, and this film explores these dynamics.

Domains of Privacy in Arab Gulf Homes
Sobh Rana, Qatar University, Qatar
Russell Belk, York University, Canada
Globalization has both ameliorating and exacerbating effects on traditional cultural patterns. Based on ethnographic fieldwork over a three-year period, we analyze how local Islamic cultures affect consumption and marketing amid this swirl of new influences.

Paradise Lost: The Making of Shangri-La
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Rosa Llamas, University of León, Spain
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Sustainability: A New Consumer Movement
Adam Schmidt, Saint Joseph’s University, USA
Thomas Ferraro, Saint Joseph’s University, USA
Diane M. Phillips, Saint Joseph’s University, USA
Consumers define sustainability in different ways and enact a variety of different behaviors to construct, maintain, and enhance their sustainable lifestyles. Further, those resulting multi-dimensional lifestyles are clearly personal. They tap into deeply held values, connect to communities, and evoke strong emotions. Sustainability is a new consumer movement.