

ICOHTEC

NEWSLETTER



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Newsletter of the International Committee for the History of Technology ICOHTEC

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Editorial

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Christopher Neumaier received ICOHTEC's Young Scholar Price 2011 for his book on diesel cars in Germany and in the United States. Thus the Newsletter gives a portrait of the author, paragraphs of the laudation and a summary of his book.

Our president James Williams, in cooperation with Mark Clark, is stepping in as interim editor of our refereed journal ICON. They explain the changes in this newsletter.

If you think about a paper or a session for our next symposium in Barcelona (10-14 July 2012) or if you have someone in your mind, which you want give the advice to apply for an ICOHTEC Prize please keep the following deadlines in your mind:

- 1) Application for the Young Scholar Prize (Monographs): **23 January 2012**
- 2) Application for the Maurice Daumas Prize (Articles): **23 January 2012**
- 3) Call for papers of our symposium in Barcelona: **31 January 2012**

Please find ICOHTEC's announcements on our homepage www.icohtec.org or in the ICOHTEC Newsletter, no 78, September 2011.

Best wishes for Advent
Yours Stefan Poser

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I. Christopher Neumaier – a Portrait

I.1 Diesel Cars in Germany and in the USA, 1949-2005

My doctoral thesis analyzes the different cultural perception of diesel cars in Germany and in the USA between 1949 and 2005. American car drivers claim that diesel cars are an oddity. They clearly favor gasoline-powered cars and SUVs over diesel vehicles. German consumers, in contrast, have started to purchase an increasing number of diesel automobiles in recent years. Up to now, these developments have merely been explained economically. The deficit in this line of argumentation, however, is that it neglects technology itself, as well as environmental policy, and the users' perception.

In my doctoral thesis, I argue that consumers do not solely act on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis. They do not act rational like a *homo oeconomicus* when purchasing diesel automobiles. They also take other aspects into consideration such as the technological properties, the perception of diesel cars or environmental concerns. I was able to show when and to what degree these factors contributed to the rise and fall of diesel car sales in both reviewed countries during the second half of the 20th century. Moreover, I was able to demonstrate that consumers do not follow scientific objective patterns when buying consumer products. They rather interpret scientific facts in culture-specific ways. While the same diesel technology had been available in both countries, a diametrically opposed perception was established during my period of investigation. Nowadays, Americans consider diesel cars to be noisy, sluggish, unreliable, dirty and cancer-causing, while Germans, in contrast, label them as fuel-efficient, durable, powerful, reliable and environmentally friendly.

In my analysis on the cultural perception of diesel cars, I refer to Uwe Schimank's sociological concept of "rationality constructs" (*Rationalitätsfiktionen*). They act as "social strategy of rationalization" and reduce or trivialize the complexity of technological artifacts and the scientific nexus. Hence, rationality constructs enable consumers to make normative assertions on scientized products such as the automobile.

In my dissertation, a wide variety of case studies give evidence of when and why consumers either opposed the purchase of diesel cars or opted for diesels. The first chapter covers the period from 1949 until 1973/74. It investigates the behaviors of diesel cars produced by Mercedes-Benz, Peugeot, and Opel on the road as well as how consumers perceived these automobiles. In general, the diesel car remained a niche product in both countries up to the mid-1970s. The majority of car owners fulminated against diesels. In the USA, diesels were

more marginalized than in Germany or simply regarded as a “cultural oddity” of Europe. However, there were two external factors that initiated a change: the environmental policy of the 1970s as well as the public debate on pollution and the oil crisis of 1973. These events contributed to the fact that the popularity of diesel cars increased by the mid-1970s.

The second chapter on the rise and fall of diesel cars first portrays four different models that dominated the diesel market in Germany and in the USA: the Mercedes-Benz 300 D, the luxurious S-class turbo diesel sedan Mercedes-Benz 300 SD, the Volkswagen Golf/Rabbit Diesel and the first diesel car produced by GM, the Oldsmobile Diesel. Besides the technological features of these diesel cars, I analyzed the culture-specific characteristics of each model and how car drivers perceived these models. In the USA, however, the public started questioning the reliability of GM Diesel cars by 1981 because most of the GM diesels showed severe engine problems such as blown head gaskets. While struggling with numerous technological setbacks, the diesel's very existence was threatened, when particulate emissions of diesel cars were denounced as a cancer-causing agent in the USA during the early 1980s as well as in Germany in the second half of the 1980s. My dissertation revealed that in the USA car manufacturers were not able to introduce a technological solution that would reduce particle emissions of diesel cars to a minimum. Hence, diesel cars continued to be stigmatized.

In Germany the situation was different: Diesel cars did not show a poor quality. In fact quite the reverse was true, since the ADAC regularly voted diesel cars produced by Mercedes and Volkswagen among the most reliable cars. Moreover, when so-called eco-friendly diesel cars entered the market in 1989, automakers, car magazines and some scientists praised their clean exhaust fumes. Thereby, the positive image of the diesel car in Germany was revived. This change also coincided with another shift in public discourse. Climate warming became a topical issue. Thus, the impact of the automobiles' carbon dioxide emissions on the greenhouse effect was discussed in the media. Particles and their cancer-causing potential, in contrast, evolved into a non-issue. As automakers introduced more fuel-efficient diesel engines in the early 1990s, diesel cars appeared in an even more favorable light. Finally, when more powerful, fuel efficient and eco-friendly Common-Rail- and pump-injector-diesel engines hit the market around 1997, an unprecedented diesel boom commenced in Germany. Yet, these changes passed unnoticed by US consumers. So far, any attempt, mostly by German automakers, to reintroduce the diesel car or the diesel SUV in the USA has failed.

To conclude, the diesel car evolved into an equivalent alternative to the gasoline car in Germany between 1949 and 2005; whereas in the USA an adverse attitude has prevailed since 1981. I was able to demonstrate that, besides costs, several other important factors such as diesel technology, environmental concerns and the public's perception of the diesel car greatly influences the hostility toward diesel cars in the USA and the growing consumer demand in Germany.

My PhD thesis was published in 2010: Christopher Neumaier, *Dieselautos in Deutschland und den USA: Zum Verhältnis von Technologie, Konsum und Politik, 1949-2005* (=Transatlantische Historische Studien. Bd. 43. Franz Steiner: Stuttgart 2010).

I. 2 Christopher Neumaier

I studied Modern European History, Social and Economic History as well as Sociology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich and European Studies at the University of Cambridge. From 2004 to 2007, I worked at the Munich Center for the History of Science and Technology. I was also a Doctoral Fellow at the German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C. between February and April 2007. In 2008, I received my PhD from the Munich University of Technology. Since April 2008, I have been working as a postdoctoral researcher at the Johannes Gutenberg-University in Mainz. My current research project analyzes the changing of family values in Germany since the late 19th century.

In October 2008, I presented the results of my research project on the cultural acceptance of diesel cars in Germany and in the USA at my first ICOHTEC Symposium "Crossing Borders in the History of Technology" in Victoria, Canada. I very much enjoyed ICOHTEC's vibrant and pleasant scientific community. I was fascinated to see that the members of ICOHTEC not only come from various countries around the globe but are also strongly engaged in international research projects. It felt like being home. When I received the news that I would be awarded this year's ICOHTEC Prize for Young Scholars, I felt truly honored. At the annual conference in Glasgow, I met old friends and made new friends. It was a wonderful experience.

I.3 Paragraphs of the Laudation for Neumaier

Neumaier's book is essentially about human choices in a high tech society: we have to choose from products of which we do not know how exactly they work and what the impact of their production and use upon the environment and our health is. True, there is a lot of information available that might help us make a rational decision. But this information is often contradictory, it is difficult to understand, thus takes time to absorb, and therefore we make shortcuts: we follow trendsetters, or people whom we trust, for example. Still, Neumaier argues, we want to be able to explain our choices to ourselves and others as rational. Therefore, we tend to rely on what the sociologist Schimank called 'rationality constructs': arguments which select from and simplify the more complicated knowledge that is available about the product we are considering. This selection process is guided by moral, political, even emotional trends, which change over time and can differ greatly by country and social group. Neumaier has done a magnificent job in reconstructing these changing constructs in two very different societies [the US and West-Germany] over the second half of the twentieth century.

Dick van Lente

ICOHTEC's Vice president and chair of the prize committee of the Young Scholar Prize

II. Changes in *ICON*'s Editorial Team

As members know, *ICON* has fallen seriously behind in its publication schedule. Unfortunately this has been aggravated by serious personal issues facing our editor Mark Clark. Therefore, in consultation with our secretary general, vice president and past-president Hans-Joachim Braun, Mark and I have worked out a solution that we feel will take the pressure off of Mark and ultimately get us caught up and back on track.

Effective immediately, I will become "interim editor" of *ICON*, taking lead responsibility for getting out three issues by the end of 2013 and working on a special topic issue. Mark will become "associate editor," continuing to handle relations with our press in the UK, soliciting books for review and book reviewers and continuing to work with EBSCO on *ICON*'s digital presence.

Moreover, in order to prevent falling so far behind again in the future, we will be working to restructure the editorial process for *ICON*, possibly adding a book review editor and/or an associate editor as well as building a solid editorial board and list of article referees.

Issue 15, which comprises largely papers from our symposium in Budapest, is in press now and you should receive your copy sometime soon after the New Year. Issue 16 is a special issue being edited by Timo Myllyntaus, and we are pressing to get this issue done.

Issue 17 will consist largely of papers from our Tampere symposium. We have a couple of articles in hand, and we urge members who presented papers at Tampere to submit them for consideration.

Issue 18, which we would like to go to press in the summer 2013, will focus on our Glasgow symposium, and we are eager to receive papers from participants at that fine symposium in Scotland.

Issue 19 will be based on our forthcoming Barcelona symposium. Please consider developing, along with your symposium presentation, a full-length paper for submission to *ICON*.

Finally, please consider *ICON* for articles other than those based on our symposia. You need not be a member of ICOHTEC to submit an article, we always welcome articles that come from other work being done. Guidelines for submitted manuscripts are printed elsewhere in this newsletter.

James Williams
ICOHTEC President and *ICON* Interim Editor

Mark Clark
ICON Associate Editor

III. Conference Announcements

1 – 3 December 2011

Neuro-Reality-Check. Scrutinizing the 'neuro-turn' in the humanities and natural sciences.
Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science, Berlin

Today, few developments in the world of science and technology would seem to draw comparable degrees of attention, commentary and sheer excitement than the neurosciences. Within and beyond academia it has become routine to celebrate or alternatively, to castigate, the purportedly palpable effects and consequences – social, political, cultural and intellectual - of the recent expansions of the neurosciences. Whether we witness art historians finding fault with neuro-enthusiastic colleagues, linguists warning of a 'new biologism', ethicists, science policy strategists and anthropologists pondering the future impacts of neuroscience, literary critics and artists dabbling in mirror-neurons, or media-savvy neuroscientists forming a new kind of public intellectual, the neurosciences have, without question, inspired a great deal of scholarly and not-so-scholarly action. Indeed, so familiar have these discourses become, so seemingly self-evident their significance, that the problematisations of the neurosciences rarely appear to move beyond elaborations of the already familiar or, at best, partisan polemics.

More problematic, on closer inspection the majority of these diverse neuro-discourses would seem to operate on a very thin evidential basis. Claims being made about neuroscience's societal impacts more often than not possess the same kind of impressionistic qualities as the growing alarmism on the part of Geisteswissenschaftler lamenting the neuro-induced loss of cultural capital and contracting research budgets. The conspicuous absence of a solid evidential basis in these matters is the working hypothesis of our upcoming workshop: Neuro-Reality Check.

The workshop brings together scholars from a diversity of disciplinary backgrounds with the aim of stepping back a little - and of probing deeper into the alleged effects and actual causes of the ongoing neurohype. Our aim, in other words, is to encourage a more de-centred kind of analysis than the one typically pursued: Why, for instance, is it that art historians or political theorists choose to eschew 'theory' in favour of neuroscientific wisdom? Which ideological sea-changes reside behind the frequently proclaimed 'crisis' in the humanities, and how do they resonate with the turn to the 'neuro'? What are the interests and economic conditions driving the mushrooming of interdisciplinary neuro-X academic subfields in the contemporary academic landscape? Or again, is it really – empirically - the case that we are on the verge on of a 'neuro-revolution', our life-worlds, language and habits already being subtly transformed?

Please contact us if you wish to attend (schoudhury@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de or mstadler@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de). Attendance is open, but spaces are limited.

16 March 2012

Public Policies and the Direction of Financial Flows, 3rd EABH Workshop for Young Scholars of the European Association for Banking and Financial History
GRETha Research Centre, University of Bordeaux
CFP – Deadline **30 January 2012**

Please find the cfp on http://www.eabh.info/pdf/CFP_Young_Scholars_2012.pdf

23 – 25 March 2012

Midwest Junto for the History of Science, 55th Annual Meeting

Rolla, Missouri

CFP – Deadline **23 January 2012**

The Midwest Junto for the History of Science and Missouri University of Science and Technology invite students, faculty, and independent scholars to the 55th Annual Meeting of the Midwest Junto, to be held on the Missouri S&T campus in Rolla, Missouri, from Friday, 23 March to Sunday, 25 March 2012. The Midwest Junto retains its founders' vision that it should be informal and congenial.

Short papers (about 15-20 minutes) on any topic in the history of science, technology, and medicine, or the philosophy of science and technology, are welcome. A brief abstract (one-page maximum) and short CV should be submitted electronically (preferred) or via post to: Midwest Junto c/o Jeff Schramm, junto@mst.edu

Submissions must be received by 9am Monday, 23 January 2012.

Questions only may be directed to Jeff Schramm at schrammj@mst.edu or Kathleen Sheppard at sheppardka@mst.edu. Both are attending HSS/SHOT/4S in Cleveland 3-6 Nov. 2011 and welcome questions.

Abstracts including the presenters' institutional affiliation and status may be submitted electronically in an e-mail message or as an attachment (Word or pdf preferred), or in paper format. Graduate students are especially encouraged to participate. Acceptance notifications will follow around 10 February. Graduate students who present a paper may request a partial subsidy for lodging from the Midwest Junto.

On Friday evening, 23 March, there will be a reception for all registered participants. On Saturday, 24 March and on Sunday, 25 March (until noon), the conference proper will be held on the Missouri S&T campus (in Butler-Carlton Hall). Coffee, tea, and other refreshments will be served throughout the conference. The cost of registration, which includes the reception and the conference, is \$40. On Saturday evening, there will be a banquet with a cost of \$25. This year's Stuart Pierson Memorial Lecturer will be Marilyn Ogilvie of the University of Oklahoma.

Full Registration information will be available shortly.

Please contact: Jeff Schramm at schrammj@mst.edu and Kathleen Sheppard at sheppardka@mst.edu.

Last week of March 2012

Workshop: Environmental History in Lusophone Countries

Coimbra, Portugal

(No deadline mentioned)

We are seeking contributors for a workshop on Environmental History in Lusophone countries (Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Timor Leste, São Tomé and Príncipe), to be held in Coimbra (PT) in the last week of March 2012. We would appreciate any suggestions on possible speakers and/or prospective participants. Graduate students in advanced stages of their dissertations are particularly welcome. The workshop will be in Portuguese and English, and we plan to publish the proceedings shortly after. Anyone interested in participating, or willing to help, may contact:

Please contact:

Stefania Barca, Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra,

sbarca@ces.uc.pt

Inês Amorim, University of Porto, Faculty of Arts, Department of History, Political and International Studies, Transdisciplinary Research Center: Culture, Space and Memory,

inesamorimflup@gmail.com

18 – 19 April 2012

Consuming the Country House: from acquisition to presentation

University of Northampton

CFP – Deadline **15 December 2011**

The country house can be seen as a palimpsest: generations of owners adding their own material objects and layers of meaning. This presents challenges to both historians and curators – how to understand the relationship between new and old goods; how to assess the meaning of goods in different contexts, and how to present a coherent narrative of the house and its contents to the visitor today. Linked to this is the need to see the country house as dynamic: a lived and living space which was consciously transformed according to fashion or personal taste, but which was also changed by accident, decay and dispersal. Moreover, the country house was a nexus of flows as goods were brought in from the estate, the surrounding area and more distant centres – most notably London. How do these links shape our understanding and interpretation of the country house? In paying more attention to the processes of consumption, attention is focused on social and economic aspects of the country house – a broadening of perspective which can offer a more rounded view of the elite. The country house is often seen as a symbol of wealth and power, but the economics of running such properties (in the present as well as the past) and the experience of everyday life (of owners as well as servants) deserve more attention.

This conference seeks to address such questions, drawing on comparisons with other European countries to throw new light on our understanding of consumption and the country house. More broadly, it seeks to bridge the persistent divide between historians'

interpretations of elite consumption and the material culture of the country house, and attempts by owners, managers and curators to interpret and present the country house to visitors.

We invite papers discussing any aspect of consumption, material culture and the country house, both in the past and the present. However, we would especially welcome those focusing on:

- Supplying the country house: food and drink, furniture, local and imported goods, etc.
- The country house as lived/living space – room use (then) and using rooms (now); the (different?) role of men and women; the relationships between and spaces of masters and servants
- Collecting or consuming – motivations to consume; the economics of acquisition; European and oriental influences
- Old and new – the role of fashion; buying second-hand; the emerging taste for antiques; the country house as palimpsest; rearranging the furniture (by owners and for presentation)
- Material culture and the country house interior – aesthetics of interior design; the meaning of goods and their arrangement (past and present)
- Continuities and contrasts: comparisons between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; of London and provinces; across Europe
- The impact of the country house visitor in the past and present: changing attitudes; national differences; broadening markets and access to houses
- Interpreting and presenting the country house: using new technologies and approaches (e.g. live interpretation); different approaches across space and time

If you would like to present a paper, then please send a c.300 word abstract to: Prof Jon Stobart: jon.stobart@northampton.ac.uk by 15 December 2011.

Please contact: Prof Jon Stobart: jon.stobart@northampton.ac.uk

4 – 5 May 2012

Linnaean Worlds: Global Scientific Practice during the Great Divergence, 1750 – 1850

First Annual Conference in the World History of Science

University of Pittsburgh

CFP – Deadline **2 January 2012**

The thesis that a "great divergence" abruptly separated East from West after centuries of economic parity has been extensively debated by world historians over the past decade. Whereas proto-industrial England looked surprisingly similar to southern China in 1750, the argument goes, by 1850 England's technological, economic, and military prowess had attained truly exceptional heights. Advantageous trade with the slave societies of the Americas, it turns out, was decisive in enabling Western Europe to become the center of the world economy.

Recent historians of science, meanwhile, have begun to reconstruct what one might call "a worldwide division of scientific labor" that mirrored and reinforced the economic division of

labor between metropole and colony. This hierarchical arrangement, however, was riven with contradictions.

Scholars of the past five or ten years have explored, 1), how non-western scientific practitioners creatively reinterpreted authoritative western texts; 2), how anonymous knowers of nature who were often Amerindian, Afro-American, female, and enslaved contributed to an allegedly European body of knowledge about the colonial world; and 3), how colonial naturalists in the New World developed their own theory of scientific practice which prioritized direct observation of natural phenomena.

These two groups of scholars (world historians and historians of science), unfortunately, have been working in separate silos. While colonial, global, and Atlantic historians of science often mention researchers scouring the globe for potentially profitable new plants, the connections between scientific endeavor and capital accumulation in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries remain vague. Conversely, to the extent that world historians have considered science as a factor in the shifting power relations among different parts of the globe, they have mostly argued over how far the West's love of knowledge can go in explaining its hegemony.

Much remains to be considered. A more sustained dialogue between world historians and global historians of science will be of great benefit to both groups of scholars. It is our hope that the meeting will provide the initial grounding for a coherent, global narrative of scientific, economic, and technological change during the Great Divergence.

In this spirit, the first annual conference in the World History of Science invites proposals that explore the connections between the Great Divergence and changes in the worldwide division of scientific labor between approximately 1750 and 1850. The two-day meeting will provide a forum for established as well as junior scholars in both fields to discuss how the radical economic transformations that marked this period redefined "science" as well as membership in a global community of savants. Conversely, we will ask how new, globalist research in the history of science might fill out, affirm, or complicate world historians' picture of the fateful century between 1750 and 1850. Many other issues will be up for debate, and panels or papers may be proposed for the following categories.

Possible Panel or Paper Themes

- The natural history expeditions organized by biologists like Linnaeus, Humboldt, and Darwin
- The rise of geology and notions of "deep time"
- Scientific agriculture
- Training/Education of scientists
- Transport engineering (railways, steamship technology)
- Hygienic movements; public health in the colonies
- Tropical medicine; indigenous, enslaved, or non-western healing practices
- Oceanography, meteorology, and climate sciences
- Rational, precise systems of quantification, eg the metric system, cost accounting
- Linguistics, Anthropology, and Race
- Geography, Cartography, Geodesy
- African and Asian sites for the emergence of new scientific knowledge (which have

received less attention from scholars than Atlantic ones)

- Social science (political economy, labor management, etc.) in the eras of slavery and abolition
- Science and nationalism/republicanism/de-colonization in the Americas
- Electro-magnetism, telegraphy, and communications
- Any other themes related to the guiding questions of the conference

Expected Results

An edited volume published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in its new World History of Science series, to be co-edited by conference organizers Patrick Manning and Daniel Rood. The book will consist of a short preface explaining the motivations behind the conference, as well as an Introduction co-authored by Manning and Rood explaining the state of the field in World History of Science, and how the book chapters point out new directions for scholarship. The main body of the text will consist of 12-15 chapters (revised versions of the conference papers). While we will not be able to publish every conference paper, participants should expect to leave the conference with an article of publishable quality or a chapter for a book of their own.

Guidelines for Submission

Individual proposals and panel proposals are both accepted. If applying individually, please submit an abstract of fewer than 300 words that clearly explains the topic, the sources used, and the argument made, as well as a synopsis of the scholarly debates in which the paper intervenes.

Please include detailed contact information and a brief curriculum vita (2 pages maximum) with your abstract. If proposing a panel, please include with the individual proposals and curriculum vitae a 300-word synopsis of the panel theme. Materials should be sent, as attachments, to rood@Pitt.edu by January 2, 2011. Applicants will be notified whether or not their paper has been accepted to the conference within a couple of weeks, and can begin writing up a draft of their paper (which should be fewer than 9000 words, notes included), which will be due on April 1, one month before the conference. This will give participants ample time to read the drafts, which will be distributed via e-mail by the conveners.

At the conference itself, you will present a 20-minute version of the longer paper. Pre-circulation of the papers will enable each of the presenters to reframe his or her own scholarship in light of the other papers, promoting a general dialogue and even a convergence of major research questions. These emergent themes will be further fleshed out in discussions taking place over the course of the conference, and will help shape the book.

While the organizers plan on inviting commentators that fit each of the panel topics, we also welcome your suggestions as to suitable commentators.

Please contact rood@Pitt.edu.

6 – 8 June 2012

The Sociedad Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Historia Ambiental (SOLCHA) 6th Symposium

Villa de Leyva, Colombia
CFP – Deadline **12 December 2011**

The Sociedad Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Historia Ambiental (SOLCHA) is pleased to announce its 6th Symposium, which will take place in Villa de Leyva, Colombia, from June 6 to June 8, 2012. The conference is being organized by the research group Historia, Ambiente y Política with the help of the Universidad de los Andes, the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt, and El Colegio Verde de Villa de Leyva. The Villa de Leyva Symposium follows those held in Santiago (Chile, 2003), Havana (Cuba, 2004), Carmona (Spain, 2006), Belo Horizonte (Brazil, 2008), and La Paz (Mexico, 2010).

The invitation to participate is open to anyone who examines environment-society relations from an historical perspective. Whenever possible, we encourage people who are interested in participating to organize thematic panels rather than submit individual papers. The following general themes are suggested. They were selected only to facilitate the organization of panels and are not intended to be exhaustive or exclude any proposal. All proposals will be considered and new thematic groups could emerge based on accepted abstracts.

1. Cities and the environment
2. Agrarian, forest, and mining topics
3. Methods, new directions, and debates
4. Landscape change
5. Political ecology
6. Biodiversity and conservation
7. Others

Please visit <http://visimposiosolcha.uniandes.edu.co/index.php?ac=inicio&idi=en>

9 – 13 July 2012

Early Mechanization in Global Perspective, a Session at the World Economic History Congress

Stellenbosch, South Africa

CFP – Deadline **31 December 2011**

Early Mechanization in Global Perspective

One of the salient features of the first industrial revolution was the mechanization of production processes in a wide range of industries. However, mechanization was not an unprecedented phenomenon. Historians of technology have found evidence in different historical contexts, well before the eighteenth century, of the development and adoption of machines or systems of machinery that, in terms of technical sophistication, are fully comparable to the “gadgets” of the industrial revolution. Significant examples of early mechanization have been observed in the ancient world, in the middle ages, and in the early modern period. Moreover, these examples emerged in very different civilizations in Europe and Asia. Interestingly enough, before the industrial revolution these episodes of mechanization remained peculiar to specific segments of the economy and did not spread

across sectors. In some cases (such as Renaissance Italy or fourteenth century China) the restricted diffusion of mechanical technologies has prompted economic historians to talk of “failed transitions” to the modern industrial world. In the literature, several hypotheses have been put forward for explaining both the emergence of new mechanical technologies and their limited diffusion before the industrial revolution. Several authors have pointed to the role played by economic factors (especially by high wages) in inducing the invention and diffusion of new machines. Others have drawn attention to the resistance to mechanization maintained by those social groups whose skills were going to be replaced by the new machines. Finally, another stream of literature has emphasized the role played by broader social and cultural factors.

The aim of this session is to shed new light on these episodes of early mechanization in a global perspective. In particular, we intend to provide a number of case-studies of early mechanization that will reappraise not only those factors responsible for the development and adoption of specific mechanical technologies in different economies but also those factors responsible for their limited diffusion.

If you are interested in participating to this session, please send an abstract to Christine MacLeod, c.macleod@bristol.ac.uk and to Alessandro Nuvolari, alessandro.nuvolari@sssup.it, preferably before December 31, 2011.

Please contact: Christine MacLeod, c.macleod@bristol.ac.uk; Alessandro Nuvolari, alessandro.nuvolari@sssup.it

23 – 25 July 2012

Third International Conference on Sport and Society

Murray Edwards College, Cambridge University

CFP – Deadline **8 December 2011**

We are excited to be holding the Third International on Sport and Society at the Cambridge University, one of the world’s oldest and most renowned universities. The conference commences just days before the start of the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. Participants can experience all of the excitement and anticipation of one of sport’s greatest events.

The International Conference on Sport and Society and its companion International Journal of Sport and Society provide a forum for wide-ranging and interdisciplinary examination of sport, including: the history, sociology and psychology of sport; sports medicine and health; physical and health education; and sports administration and management. This year’s conference will also offer a special stream on Disability in Sport.

In addition to an impressive line-up of international plenary speakers, the conference will include paper presentations, workshops, and colloquia submitted by practitioners, teachers and researchers. Please refer to the Call-for-Papers for proposal submission guidelines and descriptions of sessions. Presenters may also choose to submit written papers for publication in the fully refereed International Journal of Sport and Society. If you are unable to attend the conference in person, virtual registrations are also available.

Visit our website for more information about the conference, our submission process and this year's themes, to sign up for our monthly e-newsletter, and to become an active member of our community – all available at: <http://SportConference.com>.

The deadline for the next round in the call for papers (a title and short abstract) is 8 December 2011. Future deadlines will be announced on the conference website after this date.

Please visit: <http://SportConference.com>.

26 – 29 July 2012

Knowledge in a Box: How Mundane Things Shape Knowledge Production

Greece

CFP – Deadline **15 January 2012**

The topic: We invite proposals from scholars in the history of science, technology, and medicine, science and technology studies, the humanities, visual and performing arts, museum and cultural studies and other related disciplines for a workshop on the uses and meanings of mundane things such as boxes, packages, bottles, and vials in shaping knowledge production. In keeping with the conference theme, we are asking contributors to include specific references to the ways in which boxes have played arose—commercial, epistemic or otherwise—in their own particular disciplinary frameworks.

Boxes have always supported the significance of the objects they contained, allowing specific activities to arise. In the hands of natural historians and collectors, boxes functioned as a means of organizing their knowledge throughout the eighteenth century. They formed the material bases of the cabinet or established collection and accompanied the collector from the initial gathering of natural specimens to their final display. As “knowledge chests” or “magazine tools” the history of box-like containers also go back to book printing and the typographical culture. The artists’ boxes of the early nineteenth century were used to store the paraphernalia of a new fashionable trend. In the late nineteenth century the box became the pharmacist’s laboratory and a device for standardizing and controlling dosage of oral remedies. In the twentieth century radiotherapy the box was elevated to a multifunctional tool working as a memory aid to forgetful patients or as “knowledge package” that predetermined dosages, included equipment, and ready-made radium applicators.

Focusing on medicine, boxes have played a crucial role since the eighteenth century when doctors ought to bring instruments to their patient’s house for surgical or obstetrical interventions. In modern operating rooms boxes organize the workflow and build an essential part of the aseptically regime. Late twentieth century biomedical scientists store tissue samples in large-scale biobanks, where samples contained in straws are placed in vials, then the vials in boxes which in turn are stacked up in “elevators”. This storage system facilitates retrieval with barcodes, indexing each individual sample so that additional variables can be retrieved from a database. Thus the container and its content are tied up in a close epistemic and material relationship.

As it is usually the case the box embodies the knowledge that goes into the chemical laboratory and its function; it classifies objects into collections of natural history; it

meaningfully orders letters in a printer's composition or painting equipment for the artist 'convenience; it standardizes pharmaceutical dosage forms and allows pharmacists to control the production and consumption of their remedies; in the commercial world it misleads or informs customers; it persuades consumers for the integrity of the product that they enclose; it hides the identity of the object(s) that contains, it shapes professional identities and is essential for mobilizing, transporting, accumulating and circulating materials and the knowledge they produce and embody.

Furthermore, if we do understand matter and materiality not as given, solid, continuous, and stable but rather as something being done, performed, shaped and embedded in practices, then we should examine closer how bottles and boxes themselves materialize differently in a set of diverse practices. How do they change their ontologies by migrating from the kitchen to the laboratory, from the workshop to the operating room?

We welcome innovative understandings of the role that boxes and containers have played historically and continue to play in technology, medicine, and science. We see the workshop as contributing to an ongoing interest in science and technology studies on the importance of mundane things in scientific practice and technological innovations.

Deadline for proposals: 15 January 2012. Please submit a 300-words abstract along with your name, institutional affiliation, email and phone number as a word or pdf attachment to the organizers of the conference. Proposals will be reviewed and notification of the outcome will be made in 15 February 2012. We are pursuing publication outlets for selected papers from the workshop. Therefore we expect full papers from those that will participate by 30 May 2012. Details will be provided after notification.

Conference registration fee: 50 euros

Place: The venue of the conference is a wonderful tobacco warehouse renovated to host the tobacco museum of the city of Kavala in northern Greece.

Please contact: Susanne Bauer, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, Germany, sbauer@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de; Maria Rentetzi, National Technical University of Athens, Athens, Greece, mrentetz@vt.edu; Martina Schlünder, Justus-Liebig-University, Giessen, Germany, m.schluender@gmx.de

30 August – 1 September 2012

Business enterprises and the tensions between local and global, 16th annual conference of the European Business History Association (EBHA) and first joint conference with the Business History Society Japan (BHSJ)

Paris

CFP – Deadline **15 January 2012**

Over several centuries companies have pursued their business strategies on several dimensions, from the local to the global. This can be seen in the recruitment of personnel, their procurement, their financing, their R & D, their production or services, and their relations with consumers, social forces, intellectuals, public authorities, education and research systems. However, the process of adapting to these multiple dimensions is not

straightforward, even for large and experienced multinationals, and often results in tensions between global and local.

How do firms, individually or collectively, with or without the State, attempt to overcome these tensions? Do these tensions bring constraints or opportunities? How do they influence the ownership and management of firms? What are their consequences on society, on culture, on the environment, and on the relations between public and private? What are the effects of successive regulations or deregulations? How do tariff barriers impact these tensions? Are religions or scientific knowledge beyond these tensions? What is the part of actors other than firms (including non-governmental organisations, trade-unions and foundations)? How do regional organisations such as the EU, NAFTA and ASEAN, or international organisations such as the ILO, the OECD, the WTO, matter? What models and doctrines develop and are diffused? What is the role of geography, i. e. of locations where advantages can be developed locally with a world view? Are there lasting differences between sectors or regions? What are the characteristics and results of the successive waves of globalisation?

These questions demand to be explored in a historical perspective, and comparisons between regions and countries, branches of industry, single enterprises, and, of course, over time, are encouraged.

Submission of Papers:

Proposals for papers and or sessions related to the theme of the conference are welcome, although paper and/or session proposals not directly related to it will also be considered. For paper proposals, please submit a title and abstract of no more than 400 words (one A4 page) along with a one page CV to mail: ebha-bhsj.paris@ehess.fr

Session proposals should include a brief abstract of the session along with a one-page abstract and a one-page CV for each participant.

Deadline for all proposals is the 15th of January 2012.

IV. Call for Contributions

Objects in Motion. Globalizing Technology Artefacts: Studies in the History of Science and Technology, Vol. 8 (Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2013)

Deadline for Proposals: **12 December 2011**

We invite proposals from scholars in the history of science, technology, and medicine, science and technology studies, material culture, museum and cultural studies for innovative contributions that explore technological artefacts within the context of a history of globalization. The papers will be published in Volume 8 of the Artefacts Series by Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press. Publication is projected for late 2013.

Global movement of people, objects and ideas—the basis of the interconnectedness that makes up globalization—has only been possible because of myriad technologies. Technology has driven globalization and globalization has changed technology. To understand the intricate relationship of both, we need to go back to the artefacts and examine machines, appliances and large systems in the (global) networks through which

they have circulated. How have the dynamics of globalization been materialized in objects? Although technological consumer objects such as phones, PCs and frozen foods are frequently named when globalizing effects are described, artefacts often disappear in public and scholarly debates. Yet, by their double nature as both material entity and symbol, they produce, re-produce and react to globalizing effects. While generations of historians of technology have focused on the materiality of objects in the sense that they have analyzed their innovative technical character, their operation modes and 'improvements', recent paradigm shifts have resulted in a more integrative approach to technical material culture. Artefacts are increasingly understood as embodying both a material and immaterial side that goes beyond their mere modes of functioning into the social and cultural realm. Concurrent with that is the acknowledgment that technological objects need to be studied in view of increasingly globalized production and consumption cycles. While the globalized world has changed the ways that technological objects have been engineered, built and sold, it similarly has changed how they have been perceived and appropriated as consumer goods and symbols.

Successful contributions will focus on technological objects as the primary objects of inquiry and sources of evidence. We are currently accepting proposals for research papers (approx. 6,000 words), case studies (max. 3,000 words) and exhibition reviews/discussions (max.1,500 words). Due to the tight timeline for this project, please limit your proposals to projects that are already well advanced.

A topic as large as globalization and technology poses challenges for potential contributors wanting to ground their projects in a manageable framework. For this reason we are proposing a number of research themes. Researchers may wish to explore one or several of these.

1. *From Technology Transfer to Reciprocity*. In contributing to a history of globalization, object-focused transfer studies will have most value where they address questions of dialogue and reciprocity in the transfer process, or where they problematize and historicize the concept of transfer itself.

2. *Modernity, Nation-States and Multinational Corporations*. Historians of technology need to analyze globalized technological artefacts in their relations to historical meta-narratives and concepts such as modernity and Westernization, imperialism and nationalism, colonialism and postcolonialism.

3. *Global and Local*. If we follow Madeleine Akrich's dictum of user scripts inscribed by producers of technology and de-scripted, modified or rejected by users, the relationship between global and local contexts of artefacts become important. What is the relationship between globalization and localization?

4. *Globalization as (Non-)Movement of People, Objects and Knowledge*. Studying globalization's effects on technology means to analyze the multidimensional network that is made up of subjects, objects and contexts. Who and what have moved in a globalized world? How have labor markets, international expert cultures, cooperation and knowledge transfer influenced globalization?

5. *Globalization and Museums*. Finally, the science and technology museum as medium between producers and consumers needs to be considered. How has globalization influenced the museum, its collections, its exhibitions, its research and its administration? How do we exhibit globalization?

Proposals should include a title and abstract (no more than 500 words), as well as the author's curriculum vitae. Please send all proposals electronically by December 12, 2011 to:

Bryan Dewalt, Canada Science and Technology Museum, bdewalt@technomuses.ca
AND

Nina Moellers, Deutsches Museum, n.moellers@deutsches-museum.de

V. Fellowships

2012-2013 Lemelson Center Fellowships

Application Deadline: **15 January 2012**

The Lemelson Center Fellowship Program and Travel to Collections Award Program support projects that present creative approaches to the study of invention and innovation in American society. These include, but are not limited to, historical research and documentation projects resulting in publications, exhibitions, educational initiatives, and multimedia products. The programs provide access to the expertise of the Institution's research staff and the vast invention and technology collections of the National Museum of American History (NMAH). The NMAH Archives Center documents both individuals and firms across a range of time periods and subject areas including railroads, musical instruments, television, radio, plastics, and sports equipment. Representative collections include the Western Union Telegraph Company Records, ca. 1840-1994; the Earl S. Tupper Papers, documenting Tupper, and his invention, Tupperware; and the Howard Head Papers, documenting the inventor of Head-brand fiberglass skis and Prince tennis rackets.

The Lemelson Center invites applications covering a broad spectrum of research topics that resonate with its mission to foster a greater understanding of invention and innovation, broadly defined. However, the Center especially encourages project proposals that will illuminate the role of women inventors; inventors with disabilities; inventors from diverse backgrounds; or any inventions and technologies associated with groups that are traditionally under-represented in the historical record. Pertinent NMAH collections include the papers of Victor L. Ochoa, a Mexican-American aeronautical inventor; the papers of Dr. Patricia Bath, an African-American inventor of a patented cataracts treatment; and the HIV/AIDS and LGBT Reference Collections, which document innovative public health programs and associated technologies. For a comprehensive list of Archives Center collections, see <http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives/d-10.htm>.

The Lemelson Center Fellowship Program annually awards 2 to 3 fellowships to pre-doctoral graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, and other professionals who have completed advanced training. Fellows are expected to reside in the Washington, D.C. area, to participate in the Center's activities, and to make a presentation of their work to colleagues at

the museum. Fellowship tenure is based upon the applicants' stated needs (and available funding) up to a maximum of ten weeks. Stipends for 2012-2013 will be \$575/week for pre-doctoral fellows and \$870/week for post-doctoral and professional fellows. Applications are due 15 January 2012; notifications will be made by 15 April 2012. For application procedures and additional information, please see http://invention.smithsonian.org/resources/research_fellowships.aspx. Researchers should consult with the fellowship coordinator prior to submitting a proposal - please contact historian Eric S. Hintz, Ph.D. at +1 202-633-3734 or hintze@si.edu.

VI. Recently Published Books

Yagou, Artemis: Fragile Innovation. Episodes in Greek Design History. CreateSpace, Charleston, Seattle 2011.

Fragile Innovation suggests a reading of Greek modernisation from a design history perspective. By focusing on selected examples from the 19th century until today, the book discusses the difficulties and controversies surrounding local design development and illustrates the "incomplete project" of Greek industrial design. The book concludes by highlighting the fact that design in the global, post-industrial, digital society is undergoing a transformation towards new directions, of which the re-emergence of crafts and the rise of service design are notable examples. Design has now moved far beyond aesthetics and the drafting of national design strategies may be crucial for the future. Here lies a great chance to re-invent design in Greece and turn it into a vital tool for the future. What could the role of design be in renewing local economy and revitalising society?

VII. Join ICOHTEC

An ICOHTEC membership makes you a member of the scholarly network of the UNESCO-based International Committee for the History of Technology, ICOHTEC.

The membership includes:

- Reduced fees for ICOHTEC's conferences
- ICOHTEC's reviewed journal ICON (published annually, ca. 200 pages)
- ICOHTEC's electronic Newsletter (published monthly – available via mailing list and on the homepage)

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