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Interaction between Human Experience, Landscape, and Coffee Production in the Blue Mountain Region of Jamaica

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INTERACTION BETWEEN HUMAN EXPERIENCE, LANDSCAPE, AND COFFEE PRODUCTION IN THE BLUE MOUNTAIN REGION OF JAMAICA

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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In today's coffee industry, individual farmers’ identities are hardly visible from the products we buy. Each coffee farmer has different lifestyles and methods of coffee farming. Such information about farmers can make each cup of coffee potentially unique in consumers’ experience. However, there are barriers which make consumers blind from the identities of the farmers making their coffee. I will explain about the barriers, and introduce the way to make consumers associate individual farmers’ identities with each cup of coffee they drink. This thesis mainly consists of two parts: a theoretical part and a poetry part. There is a small section of background information of Blue Mountain before the part of poetry. The theoretical part is written to give readers an objective perspective on the coffee industry, especially on the financial and image hierarchy inside the industry. I will discuss the single origin coffee approach as the potential solution for the issue. The poetry part examines how coffee is made from the coffee growers’ perspective. The theoretical part utilizes information gleaned from documents and other records about the farmers’ living circumstances and the structures and mechanisms of local and international coffee industries. The poetry part utilizes information acquired from documents about the history of coffee growing in the Blue Mountain area in Jamaica and inspiration acquired through interviews and observation of the farmers in the Blue Mountain area.
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I promise you, after having read this document, every cup of coffee you drink from now on are going to taste much more unique for you. The coffees from Nicaragua, Columbia, and Jamaica have a taste unique to their birthplace. According to coffee farmers, the coffee made from the beans grown on their farms has a distinct flavor. This distinctiveness is fundamental to the farmer’s brand, making it easier for the farmer to negotiate prices with intermediaries, and leads to fairer prices for coffee beans. The coffee produced from beans obtained from these single farms is referred to as “single origin” coffee. To better understand this concept, think about food items grown by an individual farmer. Those food items (e.g., vegetables) are unique to the farmer who grew them. A cabbage grown by one farmer might be distinct from a cabbage grown by another farmer, differing in taste, appearance, and personal background stories farmers have on the cabbages. However, once they are sold to market, this cabbage is likely to be mixed with other cabbages grown in other farms, and the customer may be unable to distinguish one from the other. Supermarkets, for example, present a homogenous product in which growers are anonymous or at best shown only by states or countries. However, if the identity of the grower were recognized by the consumer, it might change the consumers’ experience of the product in some way. This research, therefore, explores single origin coffee as a potential informative bridge to acknowledge identities. In addition, this research explores the financial and image barriers that make the identification of coffee beans harder to recognize.

This theoretical part of my thesis comprises of three sections. In the first section, I explain how the financial inequalities between farmers and intermediaries are created and how
these inequalities ensure that the identity of coffee beans remains invisible. In the second section, I describe how the identities of coffee farmers are reshaped into modern commercial coffee products. In the third section, I explore single origin coffees as a potential solution to the issue of distance between the experiences of farmers and consumers.

**Historical Backgrounds of Economic Inequality in the Coffee Industry**

Since the 1990s, the coffee industry has developed and by the early 2000s, it had doubled in size. However, during the same period, the farmer’s share of the profit had kept falling until it became half the size of what it used to be. The cause of the problem has to be understood through the explanations of historical events in the international coffee industry. The two main events we need to focus on are the suspension of the ICA and the Fair Trade movement. The clause about exporting the quota in the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) was suspended in 1989 and was completely removed in 1994. After the exporting quota set by the ICA lost its power, it led to an increased number of coffee fruits in the market, which was followed by the price breakdown of coffee beans. The loss of growers’ earnings following the ICA’s suspension of the quota system was significant, and it was apparent the growers played the role to cover the profit loss caused by the lower price of beans. The Fair Trade movement developed as the consumers’ response to an unfair relationship between distributors and farmers. High quality coffee beans certified by the Fair Trade certifiers unexpectedly led to the trend of enjoying selected and luxurious coffee beans rather than mass produced products. Eventually, it would be the cause of high-end coffee beverage movements symbolized in the success of Starbucks and third wave coffee. Although trends made free trading and the farmers’ poverty well known, the trend itself was mostly driven by manufacturers and retailers. The trend could not change the hierarchical financial problems that exist in the coffee industry.
Before I discuss the International Coffee Agreement and the Fair Trade movement, I will explain a bit about the categories of workers in the coffee industry. Coffee “growers” grow coffee plants and harvest red coffee berries. “Processors” remove the flesh of the coffee berries and dry the seeds inside. After the seeds are dry, they are called green beans. They are exported by the “exporters” in the producing countries and imported by the “importers” in the consuming countries. The imported green beans are roasted and processed depended on their use by the “manufactures,” which are eventually bagged to get ready for distribution. The processed beans are sent to the “distributers” such as cafes or supermarkets and are consumed. Of course there are many exceptions, but this is the basic flow of coffee as a commodity. Now we are ready to move on to talking about the history of the International Coffee Agreement.

The exporting quota of coffee beans had been set by the International Coffee Agreement since 1962. The quota system regulated the amount of coffee beans in the market, and in many cases, quota regulation led to the higher price of coffee beans. The relationship between the price of the coffee beans and the amount of coffee beans in the market is clear when we look at the historical record. John Talbot, a sociologist who wrote a number of articles about the international coffee industry, makes a comparison to clearly show the relationship between price and quantity of coffee beans in the market. He uses two severe frosts as examples, which hit in Brazil in June and July in 1994. The coffee trees are sensitive to the frost, and sometimes the plants can be damaged or they can die. Once the plants are damaged, it takes at least one or two years to recover and bear fruit again. Once the tree is dead, it takes three to five years for the newly replanted tree to mature. In 1994, after the frosts, the price of coffee beans more than doubled in a few weeks. When the quota system was suspended in 1989, the farmers’ countries’
share of the profit in the coffee industry decreased tremendously. Their share was 8.3 percent in 1988-89, and it went down to 2.7 percent in 1989-90.\textsuperscript{48}

Talbot’s (1997) study found the following:

Most econometric analyses of the world coffee market have concluded that the quotas increased world market prices above equilibrium levels (Edwards and Parikh 1976, Vogelvang 1988, Herrmann 1986, Akiyama and Varangis 1990, Bohman and Jarvis 1990). Thus, we would expect producers to get higher shares of the total income when quotas are in effect than when they are suspended. (p. 67)

The regulation on the quantity of coffee beans has kept the share of the farmers at a relatively high level. The International Coffee Agreement was responsible for controlling quantity regulation.

When we focus on the process and the reason for the ICA’s quota system’s suspension, the power balance between the growers’ country and the manufacturing and retailing countries will be clear. The quota system was suspended between 1973 and 1980, and after 1989 until it was completely terminated in 1994.\textsuperscript{48} The suspension occurred due to the disagreements from the member countries including producing and consuming countries. Especially in 1989, consuming countries such as the U.S. played the opposition role to the quota system. As Talbot explains, the abundant quantity of coffee beans after the suspension was related to the declining price of coffee beans. We are also able to see there was a power shift between grower’s countries and the consumer’s country during the period. Based on the data from the International Coffee Organization in 1992, the market of coffee industry was worth $30 billion and the grower’ countries’ share was $10 billion.\textsuperscript{46, 35} After ten years, the farming countries’ share shrunk to less than $6 billion, although the international coffee market more than doubled in size.\textsuperscript{46, 48, 35} There
is also the comparison between the retail prices of coffee products and the price of raw materials for the manufacturing of the products. In 1984, green bean costs were 64 percent of the retail price in the U.S. However in 2001, the number fell to 18 percent.\textsuperscript{46} It is hard to say the suspension of the quota system was the main reason for the declined green bean price. However, the power transition between the growers’ countries and the consuming countries rapidly occurred over the period of the quota system suspension.

The Fair Trade coffee movement occurred in the early 1990s as a response to an unfair power balance between distributors and growers.\textsuperscript{23, 29} The Fair Trade coffee movement successfully raised the retail price of coffee beans. The Fair Trade movement was established as a reaction to the declining price of green beans after the suspension of the quota system. At first, the trend was led by Christian communities purchasing crops directly from poor farmers and selling them in stores owned by the buyers.\textsuperscript{23} The products were promoted not only as a way to help impoverished farmers, but the movement also became associated with quality food.\textsuperscript{45} Laura Raynolds, a professor in the Sociology department at Colorado State University, believes that the Fair Trade movement not only demonstrated to consumers that their purchases could change society, but it also generated a new business model for the coffee industry. In the 1990s, the coffee industry faced the issue of not being popular among young consumers. The breakthrough was the Fair Trade movement, followed by the specialty coffee movement, which was symbolized by the success of Starbucks. Starbucks existed as a company before then, but the Fair Trade trend took it much further. Social anthropologist, Dr. Peter Luetchford, judges that the Fair Trade business model became too successful.\textsuperscript{23} The model was slowly taken over by the retailers as a marketing model, and the religious aspects of helping the poor were rapidly abandoned.\textsuperscript{23}

Although the Fair Trade movement played a significant role in the specialty coffee
movement, the Fair Trade’s impact on economically weak coffee farmers is still limited. Fair Traded coffee is only a fraction of the huge coffee industry. In 2013, Jennifer Gallegos, Fair Trade USA’s Director of Coffee commented, “while coffee imports grew almost 20 percent last year, Fair Trade makes up just five percent of the U.S. coffee market. That’s why we’re focused on increasing the value and relevancy of Fair Trade, and ensuring that people – farmers and workers – are at the heart of every company’s sustainability strategy.” Internationally five to eight percent of all coffee smallholders are involved in Fair Trade. Fair Trade coffee farmers sell about 20 percent of their coffee in the Fair Trade market. The other 80 percent of their coffee beans are sold to conventional markets. The Fair Trade Labeling Organization (FLO) is an umbrella organization which united major three Fair Trade certifiers in 1997 and became a leading organization in the world of Fair Trade. The FLO has been successful at providing farmers a stable price for their green beans as well as social benefits such as access to scholarship programs and support from international development organizations. However, the annual requirements, including inspections and certifications, which cost between $2,500 and $10,000 for each cooperative, are obstacles for the farmers. In addition, many coffee farmers are afraid of entering the competitive Fair Trade market, where the requested quality of beans is very high. Thus the Fair Trade market is seen as a market only for quality beans, and many poor farmers can’t enter the market. Professor William Locker from California State University states that buyers have a high expectation to Fair Trade coffee to be good, not only socially, but also in quality. He further explains it causes a situation when Honduran Coffee sellers have a hard time finding buyers in Fair Trade market because of its low reputation compared with the more famous Guatemalan or Costa Rican Coffee. Although it offers a lot of benefits, Fair Trade certification is still not a system that benefits a majority of coffee farmers.
The Image Hierarchy in the Coffee Industry

The weak standing position of growers is in part, caused by their physical, economic, and cultural differences from the consumers’ world. The distance and the difference keeps farmers away from knowing anything about how much their coffee beans are sold for in the end, and what the consumers’ taste preferences are. Also, their distance easily leads to the ignorance of consumers for the unequal distribution of the wealth. However, efforts to make them familiar with each other are not made often. The two are intermediated by processors, exporters, importers, manufacturers and retailers. The people in each role have a purpose that is different from that of farmers or consumers. The cultural, financial, and physical distance is the river that divides the consumers and the growers. The middlemen trade the coffee using their own boats. Everything consumers hear about the other side comes from the middlemen. The middlemen not only do not speak about the other side, but they also manipulate the information of the other side. Of all the middlemen, I will focus on manufactures and retailers around the specialty coffee movement; they are the two role players who rapidly developed image marketing of the coffee business.

In the U.S, Germany, France, and Japan, half of the exported coffee in the world is consumed. For consumers in these countries, it is hard to imagine what the lives of the farmers making their coffee are like. Even after small farmers’ markets became popular in the Western world and communication with farmers became more frequent, coffee farmers hardly fit in there. The physical difference is one of the biggest reasons that kept the consumers and the coffee growers apart. This can be attributed to the restrictions of the coffee plants, which can be grown in environments with little fluctuation in temperature throughout the year. It also needs relatively warm weather, a dry and rainy season, and a high altitude—from 1,700 to 8,000 feet. Such an
environment can be commonly found around the equator. Roughly the area spanning latitudes from Mexico to Brazil is known as the coffee belt and is ideal for coffee farming. Such environmental restrictions are some of the obstacles which have kept the consumers away from the growers.

Many growers in the world are facing the hard time to learn about the consumers of their coffee beans. Learning how much their beans are sold for, or what their consumers’ favorite ways to enjoy coffee are, can be unimaginable for many of them. Distance is of course one of the major problems here. However, there are other problems such as the difference in financial levels and the cultural differences. Many coffee farmers do not drink coffee in the same way as consumers in Western countries. A lot of growers only drink the coffee brewed from the defect beans, which does not taste anything like the good beans, or they simply do not drink any coffee at all. Taylor Clark says in his book “Starbucked,” that in the 2005-2006 crop year, 14.3 billion pounds of coffee beans were produced worldwide. However, developing countries consumed only a small portion of it; the main developed countries consumed 80 percent of the supply. For many farmers making $10 a day it will be hard to imagine the feeling of consumers buying a $5 Starbucks Frappuccino. Also, few people know how much their coffee beans are sold for overseas.

Such distance between the consumers and the growers can be one of the causes of inequality in the coffee industry. Jenny Goldstein, a researcher of the Rwandan coffee industry, argues that the symbolic quality of the beans—the general image consumers get from a specific brand of beans—is one of the main qualities of the beans that determines one’s impression of the coffee. If the symbolic quality is solely made by the manufacturers or the retailers because of the gap between the consumers and the growers, growers identities will not be part of the
symbolic quality.

With regards to the inequality caused by distance and cultural or economic differences, the growers have an extremely hard time imagining the marketing trend of where the coffee beans are consumed. Sarah Lyon, an anthropological professor at the University of Kentucky, talks about the coffee farmers in Guatemala.

Lyon (2011) stated the following:

*However, the view from the opposite end of the fair-trade coffee network is not quite as crystal clear: members of La Voz had great difficulty imagining the consumers who ultimately drank their coffee. In their eyes, the fair-trade network by and large begins and ends with the importers and roasters who buy their coffee. (p. 189)*

The distance between farmers and consumers makes it not only hard for farmers to correctly understand the quality or flavor of their beans and to negotiate with buyers, but it also causes farmers to completely lose the possibility to market their own coffee beans. Since many farmers do not know the last price of the coffee beans in overseas, it will be hard for them to even understand whether or not they are receiving an unequal price or not on a large scale. The cultural, financial, and physical distance between consumers and growers make it easier for growers to remain in the weak position in the coffee industry.

The manufacturers and the retailers are making use of their position as middlemen mostly for either giving customers a good impression of the products or for sharing the ideal manufacturers’ or the retailers’ images with the consumers. The recent expansion of the coffee industry in the last ten years was mainly due to the branding methods of retailers and the manufactures including sophisticated images of cafes, flavors, and different recipes to prepare coffee; these have no relationship with the growers.
Anthropologist Peter Luetchford (2008) says:

*If the consumers are looking for the fairer way for growers to sell their coffee beans, the direct trading between farmers and consumers makes the most sense. However, the distributors hold the strong right to decide branding as package designs, and price settings. Distributors are monopolizing the right to give what kind of values they put on the products. On the other hand, individual farmers don’t have any rights over the marketing on what kind of value is presented to consumers. (p. 184)*

The new recipes of coffee symbolized in Starbucks made the whole industry vibrant. However, phrases such as “flavor,” “style,” and “blend,” which are written on many bags of coffee, do not signify where the beans were grown. Words and phrases such as Columbian or Blue Mountain style do not require the distributors to use beans from those areas. In many cases, different beans were mixed to make bags of different names. William Roseberry points out this problem in his article in *American Anthropologist*. He makes it clear that a variety of coffee beans, which includes important elements for branding, such as taste, flavor, and style of beans, can be controlled and recreated by retailers.

*Roseberry (1998) stated the following:*

*Critically important, however, is that the variety is controllable. To the extent that roasters and retailers are able to create criteria of variability and quality that are removed from the "natural" characteristics and qualities of the coffee beans themselves, they generate for themselves extraordinary flexibility. (p. 770)*

Even if the names of famous coffee growing areas show up on a bag of coffee, they often come with words such as “style” or “blend” (ex: “Blue Mountain style,” “Columbian blend.”) In adding such phrases, it becomes unnecessary for companies to purchase beans from
these famous growing places. Such tactics predate the recent coffee boom. However, the introduction of different flavorings and new recipes, such as “caramel macchiato,” has made it easier for distributors to use them instead of names that would signify the coffee’s origins. This situation has made it difficult for farmers to negotiate with distributors. If farmers do not want to sell beans at the price the mediators ask for, distributors can choose to buy beans from growers in the other areas and market them with any names they like. The distance between farmers and the consumers is being used to the advantage of manufactures and retailers to develop the image hierarchy.

The specialty coffee movement, the modern high-end coffee trend symbolized through Starbucks, can be seen as an important turning point when the image marketing methods developed tremendously, which allowed the manufactures and the retailers to fully take advantage of the image hierarchy. In the specialty coffee movement, Starbucks played an especially important role in establishing the methods. In the coffee industry, where the budget of image marketing was mainly used for the advertisement on media, Starbucks was successful in spreading the ascetics of coffee through their own stores. Taylor Clark, the author of “Starbucked,” says until recently, Starbucks designed each store independently rather than making any templates. The narrative or worldview was carefully built. For example, they called employees making coffee beverage baristas, to make customers focus on the craftsmanship of coffee. We are able to buy the coffee beans of Starbucks in the supermarkets, but the image of the products is always based on the experience in their cafes. Recently, many bags of coffee beans in the supermarket have become products of specialty coffee cafes including Starbucks and other cafes where they serve high-end coffee beverages as the main part of their menu rather than as something additional to the food menu. The success in image branding by Starbucks caused
many specialty coffee cafes to be opened in the U.S. However, in many specialty coffee cafes, the branding was mainly done to emphasize the image of the cafes and the craftsmanship, and not the farmers who grow the beans. Paige West, an anthropologist researching the coffee industry of Papua New Guinea, says the primitiveness and the poverty of the farmers is overly emphasized for marketing purposes. The Specialty Coffee movement and the developed marketing methods raised the price of coffee products tremendously. However, with the methods, the images of the farmers were hidden behind the images of the cafes with the dramatic ascetics.

The low standing position of the farmers in the image hierarchy is mainly due to the distance and the difference in the cultures or the economical levels. However, we would have to say the middlemen as manufacturers and the retailers are responsible for not being able to be the informative bridge between the two. In this particular situation in the coffee industry, a third person is mostly likely necessary to shorten the familiarity distance between farmers and the consumers.

**Single Origin Coffee**

I explained the financial inequality of the coffee fruit growers in Section one. In Section two, image inequality was discussed. In this section, I would like to introduce single origin coffee, which is the potential solution for the both issues. The most beans traded in the world are gathered in local factories and mixed up to be processed altogether to be the green beans. It is quite rare for the beans to be separated depending on the farms where they were grown. In a way, they lose their identity and are exported. Single origin coffee uses the non-blended beans and delivers the beans of each farm instead. This way, the consumers can enjoy the unique taste of beans grown in different farms around the world. Nonetheless, there are many problems with this approach.
In the single origin coffee approach, essentially, the beans are not mixed up with beans from other farms before being made into coffee. The farmers who have grown the beans will be clearly presented in the package. This way, the consumers can enjoy the taste of each farm in the same way that they can enjoy wine from different wineries. Different producers use the words single origin, which refers to the beans from a single cooperative or even from single coffee growing areas. For the purposes of this essay, when I use the phrase single origin coffee, I specifically mean beans from the “single farm.” Such coffee beans are also called estate coffee. In this approach, the beans from each farm are seasonal and limited in number. That makes it more difficult for consumers to get the same kind of coffee all year around. However, marketing specialist Niksik Melissa says the limited number of beans can be the buyers’ motivations. The coffee beans’ harvesting seasons are different depending on the rainy and dry seasons in the areas in the world. For example, after the coffee season of Papua New Guinea ends, the coffee season of Mexico comes. That makes consumers wait for the different harvesting seasons of coffees from their favorite coffee farms. Consumers connection to each bag of coffee beans also increases the direct trade with farmers by contacting each farmers. It does not mean we do not need any middleman anymore. It will be an opportunity for customers and farmers to understand each other more. The single origin coffee approach is a way to allow each bag of beans to maintain its unique taste and story by keeping the origin of the beans.

Single origin coffee could be solution for the financial inequality the coffee farmers are facing. Single origin coffee is specialty coffee, which means they are selected coffee beans for the coffee lovers who care about what they are drinking. It makes bags of coffee beans that are meant to be as expensive as other good coffee, around seven to ten dollars a pound. Of course, the delivery fees have to be considered; considering the Fair Trade (Fair Trade International)
price of green beans is 1.40 dollars per pound, it will be a much higher price for the farmers. Of course, not all of their coffee beans will be directly traded or sold as single origin coffee. Considering the share of single origin coffee, much of it would still need to be sold as cheaper coffee beans. However, even a few direct trades between farmers and consumers can let the farmers know how much their coffee beans can be worth. In the current situation, many farmers do not know how much their beans are sold for overseas. The increase in the direct trade for the coffee farmers in the world will lead to not only higher income, but a better understanding of economic inequality in the coffee industry.

I say this approach could potentially change the weak branding and image rights farmers are facing. The better connection between farmers and consumers can make each farmer in the industry more recognizable by the middlemen in the industry. Single origin coffee beans will raise awareness of the origin and the growers of coffee beans. When more consumers care about where and by whom the beans were grown, it would be harder for the producers to mix the beans from around the world and keep the origins of beans ambiguous. When the possibility of beans being sold without names decreases the uniqueness of each coffee growing area will be more recognized by the consumers. Franck Galtier, a researcher in CIRAD (the agricultural research organization in France), argues in the article presented to the Congress of the European Association of Agricultural Economists in 2008 that geographical indication helps to link the goods to “the terroir (physical and anthropic characteristics of the production area).” (Galtier2008, Page1). The high awareness of the origins of beans will lead the international farmers to possess more solid brands of each coffee growing place. Such brands will be a hard element for the middlemen to ignore in the negotiations with farmers.
However, there are still many problems that single origin beans have to overcome. One of the issues of the single origin coffee is how to deliver the identity or the uniqueness of the farmers to the consumers. Just writing the farmers information in the back of the bags of beans may not be enough. Many people would not read the stories of the farmers written on the bag, which are in very small letters. Also, if the sole producers are going to have full control over the output such as the packaging design, the farmers will be far from delivering their identity to the consumers. It will be necessary for the growers to work with the producers in their branding process, rather than leaving all of the responsibilities regarding the final products to the producers. For example, it will be helpful for both farmers and the consumers to have an internet platform, where consumers can shop their coffee directly from the growers and also communicate with them to talk about the coffee. Currently, it is hard to find such a website, but there are still many blog sites written by coffee farmers in English speaking areas such as Jamaican Blue Mountain or Hawaiian Kona. If readers like the blogs, they could contact the farmer and ask questions or buy coffee from them. Also there are websites to shop single origin beans from different farmers. A good example is “intelligentsia coffee.”

They use each page of their websites for every farm, which is filled with the visuals of each farmer and the sites grown. Also, the websites always say which beans are in season. Although most of the information is only about the coffee farming, the amount of visuals of farmers help customers attached to each farms. At the distributors’ level, such as cafes, the employees can explain to customers how and where the coffee was grown. In the café called “Houndstooth café,” it is mandatory for the employees to attend a coffee cupping (tasting) almost every week. There are many cafes already capable of sharing information about each cup of coffee. Currently, farmers’ information is not the common topic to be talked about in cafes. But single origin coffee can create more
opportunities to encourage consumers’ interests on each farmer making the coffee beans they enjoyed. As I discussed in the previous chapter, coffee farmers often live far away from the consumers. Also, as explained above, communicating on the Internet can be difficult with language differences. Although we always have ways to improve them, the lack of communication between two countries will always be a hard issue to overcome.

Another problem is the local farmers’ lack of the exporting and processing rights. Most of the coffee beans in the industry are processed and traded on the same rail everybody else is using. As Cari Coe, the associate professor in Lewis and Clark College argues in her article on the farmers’ limited political authority in the local coffee communities, many farmers have to follow local regulations on processing and trading of their beans.\(^1\) The regulators I am talking about are the local coffee farmer cooperatives and other local institutions regulating and certifying activities related to coffee beans. Cari Coe argues the regulations on coffee trading by the countries have been liberalized, but the local organizations are still working as the regulators of coffee farmers.\(^1\) For example, in Papua New Guinea, they have to be certified by the Papua New Guinea Coffee Industry Corporation Limited to export beans abroad.\(^\text{VII}\) Also it is not easy for many beans to be processed separately. It is not rare for middlemen to buy only fresh coffee beans and not any processed beans from local farmers. In this way, the big processors have the processing rights over fresh coffee fruits to make green beans ready to be exported overseas. Although they are not legal regulations, when the farmers do not follow the standard or local rules, the farmers have the potential to be singled out by the local community. The local regulations and standards symbolized in the exporting rights make it difficult for the farmers to process and export their own beans.

Single origin coffee is still not the solution for the inequality of the farmers. However it
could be a good starting point to solve their situation in the economical and image hierarchy. By being part of the activity, consumers would learn about individual farmers more. Also, farmers would learn about the consumers from the close connections as the direct trades. This is the method of spreading and sharing more information between the two. It can be done by drinking good coffee.

Conclusion

Single origin coffee has the potential to change the hierarchy between growers and middlemen in the coffee industry. This approach could be the solution because single origin coffee is the informative bridge between farmers and the consumers. By drinking each cup of coffee, you could think about a certain farmer who made the coffee beans. Before drinking the cup of coffee, the farmer didn’t exist for you. Or even if the person existed inside of you, maybe he or she is one of a bunch of farmers in the world. But after you drink the coffee, you know the person in that part of the world makes the coffee which has the distinct flavor and taste. In addition to it, if there is a slip of paper to introduce the farmer, maybe you know the farmer has a child whose age is same with yours. At that point, the farmer is not invisible anymore. It is a good start to fight against economic and image power balance in the industry.
ETHNOLOGICAL POETRY OF JAMAICAN BLUE MOUNTAIN COFFEE

Historical Background of Blue Mountain Coffee Farming

The coffee farming business in the Blue Mountain region was established during a period of slavery, at the beginning of the 19th century. The farmers experienced difficulties due to the steepness of the lands in the Blue Mountain region, although they recognized that this place had ideal conditions for coffee trees: the correct temperature, plus rain and mists to protect the berries from strong sunshine. The steep lands prevented the use of non-human labor, such as horses, on the farms. Since then, all work has needed to be performed by the hands of human laborers. Such a tradition continues to the present time. James Delle, an archaeologist, argues that planters were successful during the time of slavery when they could use low-cost human labor. According to records, many Jamaican planters forced their slaves to grow their own vegetables and to feed themselves. After the abolition of the slavery system, the increase in labor fees caused the planters financial hardship. Delle also wrote that during this era, many of the coffee plantations had a difficult time and could not compete with the coffee farms from the different parts of the world. This situation forced many of the farmers to close down their plantations.

The coffee business in the Blue Mountain seems to have become successful again after Japanese companies started to promote the coffee beans of this region as a luxury coffee from 1970 onward. The Japanese businesses paid a much higher price than had previously been commanded for the Blue Mountain coffee beans. With the demand outstripping the supply, the Japanese companies were paying as much as 15 to 20 times more than the price of average coffee beans. The high price of the beans was necessary for the farmers in the Blue Mountain region, since the labor costs were relatively higher than in the other coffee growing areas in the
Japanese companies began importing Jamaica Blue Mountain coffee beans in 1953. However, the trade of this product increased tremendously in the 1970s. Currently, over 90% of coffee beans produced in the Blue Mountain region are exported to Japan. The high labor costs to produce the beans eventually led the beans to become one of the first specialty coffee varieties in Japan. Blue Mountain coffee beans have remained one of the most famous specialty beans in the Japanese coffee market.

The farmers’ close connection to nature is another element that makes the Blue Mountain coffee beans unique. There is the example of coffee borer beetles, which are harmful for coffee berries. According to research conducted on the coffee farms in the Blue Mountain region, the rich habitat of the birds is keeping the coffee borer beetles’ numbers low in this region. The research was conducted on the four farms located on the Blue Mountain. The researchers used nets to keep the birds away from the part of the farmlands, and kept another part of the farmlands untouched. The research showed a 1% to 10% increase in the damage to the berries by the coffee borer beetles in all of these coffee farms. The researchers note that the positive influence of the birds is well known by the local farmers in the Blue Mountain region. The bird feeders maintained under the coffee trees in this region show the local farmers’ intention to invite more birds to their farmlands.

There has been one period of serious environmental pollution in the history of the Blue Mountain. The Japanese importers caused a sudden increase in the demand for Blue Mountain coffee. In the 1980s, the sudden expansion of coffee farmlands in this region caused environmental contamination. Chemicals sprayed on the farmlands contaminated the drinking water in rivers and streams. A sudden decrease in the number of river mullet and river shrimp occurred in this area. Before the 1980s, there had been no institutions to place restrictions on the
use of chemical fertilizers and the other polluting materials.\textsuperscript{17} From the lessons learned during that problematic period, the board created a “Code of Practice” regarding the use of pesticides and fertilizers.\textsuperscript{17} The problem of the pollution has been better understood in the Blue Mountain region since the 1980s, and the pollution levels have started to slowly decrease since then.\textsuperscript{17}

Although that period of severe environmental pollution occurred, the closeness between the farmers and nature is worth further research. The steepness of the Blue Mountain, where many coffee farms are located, has made it impossible for the farmers to use the many types of available machinery on their farmlands, even 100 years after coffee production was established in this region. This restriction forces the laborers in the Blue Mountain area to perform most of their labors by hand. In addition to the farmers’ appreciation of the birds’ rich habitat, the fact that most labor is still done manually in this region makes their process of coffee production uniquely intimate with nature.

\textbf{Introduction to the Poems}

I wrote these poems with the inspirations I had through the interviews and time I spent with coffee farmers in Blue Mountain. The all characters or events in the poems are fictional. There are three characters in the poems, and they are:

- \textbf{Paul-} He is an owner and a manager of the farm. He doesn’t do many physical jobs, but he makes important decisions and all desk works related to the farm. He came from one country in Europe (I don’t specify the country name for some reasons). He moved over to Jamaica 15 years ago and bought a retirement house, which came with the coffee farm he currently has.

- \textbf{Chad-} He is the only employee in the farm. He was born in the Blue Mountain, and both his father and grandfather are coffee farmers. He does most of the
physical jobs related to the coffee farm. He was hired by Paul three years ago.

- Shohei- He is a Japanese student in a college. He is visiting this farm in a
vacation from the college. He got to know Paul and Chad through the coffee he
bought online. It is his first to time to visit Jamaica or any coffee farms.

I am writing each poem from one of the three characters’ perspectives. Each
poem has the characters’ name next to the title to show who is talking in the poem. My
goal is not to show whole process of coffee farming. Rather, these poems are my
attempt to share the landscapes and life styles of coffee farmers in the Blue Mountain.
As single origin coffee approach is, my focus is in sharing with readers the world view
of each farmer in farmlands.
Poems about the Place of Blue Mountain

Standing with plantains on his head (Paul, owner)

You know,
There is something about Jamaicans.
Look.
There is a guy with a sack of plantains and a machete on his head.
He is smiling
Like he is smiling all day long,
And said “isn’t it nice today?”
“Yeah, if there is tea and a book.”
I asked him what he is going to do with plantains.
He said he would fry and eat them.
I think about Fried plantains.
Which is so nice, but very Jamaican.
And I saw him just standing,
Standing,
And not leaving.
And I asked
“Aren’t these plantains heavy?”
And he said
“Yahhh, they are soo heavy.”
And I think about
Why he is not leaving plantains on the ground or just walking away.
I don’t know what they are thinking about.

**Coffee Depot (Shohei, visitor)**

There are a few shacks standing by the side of a road.

If people look at them without knowing what they are, they might think they are the old bus stops with roofs.

They are coffee depots.

Here farmers sell red coffee berries to the processors.

Open from 3 to 5 pm.

A man in middle age with a sack of coffee berries on his head walks up the hill.

There is a lady in a shack who looks at his eyes and smile.

And he looks at her eyes and smile.

They are talking to each other.

And she takes all the berries out and put inside a box to scale.

The box has exactly same size with bee hive box.

She counts how many boxes of cherries he sold.

And she brings all the berries back into the sack, and put the paper with a number of box weight on it.

She brings the sack into the back corner of the room.

But she is still looking at his eyes

And smiling.

He is looking at her eyes too and talking.

In this entire process, was anybody looking at the coffee berries?
Nobody except me.

They are not in love.

Because that is what everybody does here

Unless they are all in love.

The price is same

no matter what the berries are.

They scale, talk and they go home.

So this place is a community space.

Is there anything more important than this?

It is open from 3 pm to 5 pm.

Figure 2.
Water (Paul, owner)

I and my neighbors thought about bringing fresh spring water into our houses.

It is not only because there is a really nice spring nearby.

It is mainly because there is no drinking water otherwise.

We can wait for raindrops to fill our water tank on top of our house.

But sometimes it is not enough.

It rains a lot here. And it is so green here. So you think we have plenty of water right?

We do have a lot of rain, but it doesn’t work like that.

We can take shower once in every two weeks.

At least I want to take shower once a week.

So we did our best.

First problem.

It had to go through the land of other farmers.

At first it sounded nice.

The farmer of the property offered to set up the pipes for us

if we prepare the equipment.

And they measured and gave us notes on what they need for setting up.

On the notes, they write the amount of cements

which will be enough to build Hoover dam.

After we set up the pipe, it was the introduction to the new problem.

One day, our water tank filled with 1200 gallons of water has disappeared.

It is impossible to disappear.

It was protected by concrete base.
We asked around about looked everywhere.
And sadly, we found the exactly same tank on top of our neighbor’s house.
Lie is something to cover up, but in here, they don’t even try to cover it up.
Do you know what happen to water?
Somehow my house has water from spring now.
Pipes and equipment sometimes disappear.
But still we don’t need to wait for rain to collect tap water.
And now, we can take shower once a week or even more.
It is not perfect, but kind of nice.

*My Favorite Season (Chad, employee)*

Somebody asked me
my Favorite season
It always lets me think a bit hard.
Look at coffee trees here and there.
Like the trees, things don’t change so much here.
People are, kind a same way.
Weather doesn’t change so much here.
Temperature doesn’t change so much here.
Well, when you think of it,
I don’t have my favorite season.
Flowers? You mean flowers of the seasons?
But it flowers all around year here.
Mist or cloud (Shohei, visitor)

When I am on this mountain,

since it is so high,

a cloud is sometimes in the same level with us.

What are the difference between cloud and mist?

In here

they look exactly the same.

When you are in a mist,

you are maybe in a cloud.

I ask people here if they are mist or cloud,

They can tell the difference.

But I can’t still.
They think it is not stealing (Paul, owner)

What is stealing?

If I go to your room and get your frying pan without letting you know,

and I never tell you unless you ask me,

is it stealing?

You may say yes

and people in here may say no.

You invite somebody to your house,

and you are drinking a bottle of rum.

He says “oh that looks like good rum,”

and you say do you want to try?

And he takes one shot out of a bottle,

and if that happens,

The bottle is his.

He can do whatever with the bottle.

He can drink the whole bottle right there.

And you may say it was mine.

No.

It was his when you gave a portion of it.

It is not stealing.

What is stealing?

When first time my television disappeared from my house,

I thought it was stolen,
and asked everybody if you see somebody stealing my TV.

And they said they didn’t see anybody stealing your TV.

But they saw somebody borrowing your TV.

In their definition,

it becomes stealing when they sold it.

When they use them only for yourself,

it is not stealing

Whether you get permission or not,

I went to see that “somebody”, who is my landlord.

Yes she had it.

She borrowed it.

She didn’t steal it.

Is it totally ok?

It is not ok for me at all.

Well, but I have to appreciate their tradition.

So,

I have a lot of small bottles of rum at my home.

In case somebody comes,

and say they want a little bit of rum.
Buy a goat (Chad, employee)

I buy a goat.

He buys a goat. She buys a goat.

You buy a goat they buy a goat. There are a lot.

Goat eats a plant.

Goat goat goat Eat eat eat

Plant plant plant grow grow grow

Next day, It rains rains rains, Plant growgrowgrow…

Goat eats eats eats

Never ending story.
Every Jamaican buy a goat.

Do you know why?

Because it is easy. And jungle grows faster than goat eats.

*Kaldi (Shohei, visitor)*

There are a lot of goats in Jamaica.

But I don’t see many goats in coffee farms.

So I asked Chad where they were.

Chad said goats are not here because they eat the coffee beans.

I was not sure if that is true.

But in the world of coffee, there is a famous story about goats.

Some people say coffee was first found 1100 years ago in Ethiopia.

One day, a boy called Kaldi came to a forest to take his goats a walk.

He felt sleepy, and took a nap in the forest.

When he opened his eyes, the goats were gone.

His parents will be furious if they find out he lost the goats.

So he looked for the goats desperately.

Then he found his goats,

They were eating red berries and dancing.

This is the first coffee found by people.

I am not sure if Chad knows about the story.

But coffee loving goats are kept away from the berries in Jamaica.
Figure 5.

_Duppy (Paul, owner)_

In Jamaica,

There is something they believe to exist.

And something I don’t believe to exist.

It is duppy.

When they say there is a duppy, they never work.

It is a bad spirit or a ghost in Jamaica.

Some people control duppies to curse people.

I asked a local guy to cut down tree in my farm.

And I saw anxiety in their face.
I asked “what is the problem?”

They said “there is obviously a duppy in the trees.”

And it might come out when he is cutting down a tree.

So he asked me for a bottle of rum.

I asked “for what?”

He said he will keep rum in his mouth and spit into the duppy tree.

His friend was nodding next to him.

He said that is necessary for the purification.

He had his chainsaw in his hand.

I was not sure about him drinking straight rum,
and cutting tree with chainsaw in my farm

But without solving the issue of duppy, he wouldn’t start working.

So I brought my handmade amulet and put it on the tree.

He thought that is going to work.

But he was not sure how strong that amulet is.

So he finishes his job as fast as he can.

A duppy sometimes helps to work faster.
Today is Thursday.

Chad took me to a bar at 1 pm.

Is it a bar?

They sell only one kind of rum

and two kinds of beers.

So you have three choices.

Is makes it a bar because people are drinking here.

The two kinds of cold beer are the only two air conditioning systems existing in the valley.

If three people sit in the counter, it is full.

And the bar looks like an old box hanging in the edge of the cliff.

In the season of hurricane, they have to be really careful.
The bar is standing next to the narrowest road.
But the road is the only road connecting places in the Blue Mountain.
They said they would make a party in the bar.
But the bar is too small.
So they made a dance hall in the middle of the road.
Every time the car comes,
they move the stage.
Am I the only person who thinks it is going to bother other people in here?
They were playing beautiful music literally people miles away can hear
at 3 am.
From the bar, I went back to the house which takes 30 minutes by car.
When I slept in my bed, I could hear their music from far away in my room
Like a bad BGM.
But it reminded me in the bed, how good the beer tasted.
Figure 7.

Figure 8.
Poems about Personal Life

Coffee Roasting (Chad, employee)

Today is the roasting day, you know.

Get small fires going.

Put fire woods around them.

And set the pot, you know.

It looks like cooking, doesn’t it?

But the fire in kitchen is too small you know?

So I made the handmade kitchen outside.

I do laundry, cleaning, cutting weed,

and the roasting.

I can’t survive just by doing coffee, you know?

So I burn garbage on the side and burn coffee beans here.

I go to laundry,

and come back to coffee,

and go do cleaning,

and come back to coffee.

I will go to bananas, plantains and yams.

And come back to coffee.

Flour (Paul, owner)

My flour smells stale again.

And this is not my third or fourth time.

I know the mist brings moisture not only to coffee beans,
but also to this flour.

It is good for my coffee,

but not good for my bread.

Well, how cherries can ripen nicely without the help of moisturizing mist?

Yeah it makes my flour stale.

But it makes my coffee taste good.

So we have to bear with stale flour.

We can buy new flour in the supermarket.

But we can’t buy the perfect environment for coffee berries.

Figure 9.

When I first time saw Jamaica (Paul, owner)

I arrived at this airport.

There are no luxurious venders selling staff at over price.
It is not a gigantic airport in a big city.

Obviously, it is a small provincial airport
in Kingston, the biggest city in Jamaica.

The airport looks like a warehouse in middle of empty land.

But there are palm trees.

Palm trees.

When I saw palm trees,

it made me happy

and I was in excitement.

Have you felt

something like that to palm trees?

When I saw them,

They were nothing other than symbol of different life.
There are geckos everywhere in the house. Paul doesn’t get rid of them. He says they eat insects, so they and good for us. I mean he can’t get rid of them anyway. There are way too many of them in this house. In the morning they are quiet. But at night, they wake up and start geckoing. They are super noisy. And the problem is I am talking with Paul about coffee. And I can’t hear anything unless we stop them gecko-and-rolling. So we went to find them, and found one gecko. Paul said they are really hard to find, and it is miracle that we found him. And as soon as he said so, the gecko left to Paul’s bedroom, and he stopped playing music. Paul, good luck sleeping with him. A gecko eats insects. He is good for our life
Figure 11.

*Why his house looks like a jungle (Shohei, visitor)*

Paul needed to plant tangerine trees
because he would become hungry.

He planted fast growing banana trees too
because he needed some money to live
until baby coffee plants get matured.

He planted so many tall trees because he needed shades
to hide sensitive skin of coffee berries from sunshine.

He left bushes alone
because rain washes everything on the steep hill away.

And nothing will be left in the farm.

Ok, ok, ok
That is how
His vegetation kept growing
and he ended up living in a jungle.
So, he is in a jungle
because he decided to do coffee.

_Our roots (Shohei, visitor)_

This farm looks like a jungle filled with bushes.
I asked Chad
“Why you don’t clean up the bushes?”
He said he did,
but he is not allowed to clean up too much
If he clean up the every single bushes,
when strong rain comes
soil, trees, houses, houses and
everything will be washed away.
He said “Look at the steep hill where we are standing.”
We will be all washed away without the bushes.
They are the roots which are holding us on the ground.

_Doors and windows (Paul, owner)_

I was wandering why doors and windows are always wide open.
The more I stay here, the more I learned why Paul hardly close them.
First reason,
there are dogs.
They will bark if anybody comes up stairs.
So he doesn’t need to lock the doors.
And second reason,
you feel good.
because the wind is blowing into the any rooms in the house all the time
And third reason.
Maybe this is most important.
The garden is a part of his body.
And without keeping the doors open,
his garden will be cut off his body.
And he will not able to feel the sunshine and wind blowing against the steep hill.
Figure 12.

*Fungus (Paul, owner)*

Yes, if you look inside the plant. It contains water inside.

It is a type of fungus.

It grows on trees

and stay there.

It is like my house on the steep slope of the mountain.

There also have no roots,

and it sounds more like my house.

It just grows with sunshine and rain water.

Oh yes, we also keep rain water in the tank on top of our house.

But this plant looks similar to us and actually different.
This plant can be strong in heavy rain or typhoon.

Sometimes, typhoon washes our houses away.

When those funguses are still on the trees.

*Figure 13.*

*Picture of Glacier (Paul, owner)*

In here,

in my house,

there is a picture of a glacier.

I don’t know

since when
But I think
I remember
My friend gave it to me.
And it just fits here.
So it stays,
You know.
If it doesn’t fit,
Somebody takes it out.
If it fits, it stays.

Figure 14.
Poems about Coffee

*Why Jamaicans hardly drink their best coffee in the world (Shohei, visitor)*

Before I arrived Kingston airport,

I was wondering

why people in Jamaica don’t drink a lot of coffee.

They have one of the best coffees in the world.

But after I arrived in the airport,

I realized.

If you want to drink hot coffee,

I need air conditioned room.

And there is no Starbucks,
If you don’t want to pay for coffee and air conditioning,
a bottle of beer is much better.
There was really nice air conditioning inside the beer bottle.
And three times cheaper than the best coffee in the world.

*The age of coffee trees (Paul, owner)*

After you put the seed in the ground,
Coffee tree grows
Grows grows.
And after it grew for 5 years,
you can get nice red berries from it.
And it grows grows..
And around 15 years old,
It gets old
when it doesn’t produce as much as it used to.
So we cut down the tree.
After not so long time.
A new bud comes out from the bulk.
It is not an unknown plant growing on the dead bulk.
It is still the same old tree.
The roots are connected to the bulk and the bud is still connected to the bulk.
After a few years,
It looks just like a young tree 8 years ago.
So actually I don’t know
How old the coffee trees are.

It looks like a young tree every time I cut it down,

Maybe they are as old as I am.

Although I can’t cut myself and look younger every 15 years.
We harvest most of our beans from December to March.

But we can also harvest coffee in July.

Do you know what difference is?

Actually there is a big difference.

In July,

It is not as misty as spring.

It makes the huge difference.

Without the mist, the coffee fruits grow so fast,

Much much faster.

And it is not Blue Mountain coffee.

Mist screens the fruits from strong sunlight.
And it makes the fruits oversleep to stay on the tree for half a year.

The slower ripening in the sleepy mist makes Blue Mountain blue mountain.

Without them, they are not Blue Mountain.

*Look and learn coffee (Chad, employee)*

My dad always says

watch and learn you know. It is not difficult.

My grandma always says

watch and learn you know. It is not difficult.

I wonder who started this.

But I am doing that now to my kids.

So

I think it goes on.

So when you ask me how I grow coffee,

that is a bad question.

*Color of coffee (Chad, employee)*

Ya man.

If you ask me the color of coffee,

That is a colorful thing, man.

Red, white, and brown.

Don’t you think coffee is colorful?

If you ask yourself

the color of banana,

it is yellow for you.
It is yellow for me too.

But the coffee can be white, green, brown and red.

Oh and black when you drink.

Black can be their color.

But we don’t drink a lot of them.

*Singing a song to keep something (Chad, employee)*

There is something I hold on to while I am working.

When you sing it and pick berries by going from trees to trees,

you sing it and keep the thing.

Don’t let it go you know.

I don’t know what it is.

But you can’t let it go

until the end of the day comes.

I don’t know how to keep it without me singing.

The song I am singing?

It can be any, but many of them are Jamaican ones.

And in the end of the day,

With the sacks filled with red berries,

I will stop singing the song,

and let that go.

Tomorrow I pick up the songs and keep the something by keep singing the songs.

I don’t know any other ways to explain it.
I want to make it organic

But,

how can I?

We are not so rich,

To bring the organic fertilizer for our coffee,

We have no money for gas and the fertilizer.

Too bad

I want to.

So we need chemicals they eat.

But I want to feed my coffee plants with real foods

So I always feed them with my left over dinner.
But they need more.

So I put fertilizer on each.

One by one.

Maybe in the future I can give organic fertilizer.

For each plant.

Figure 19.

_The bad ones make good ones (Chad, employee)_

Ya man.

They are bad beans.

They don’t taste good.

You know,

they have damages.
But bring them to dumpster and they do something.

I don’t throw them away.

I mean I throw them away into our dumpster.

But when you throw them in our dumpster,

They are not same with our left over French fries from last night.

Those bad beans,

they turn into the coffee bush.

This is the garden farm, and beans grow up with the French fries.

They never die.

You put them in the soil,

they grow.

They move buds and come out.

And I take them to the bigger and more real farm.

And they make good beans.

It is mysterious.
It has to be in a week of full moon you know.

That is true.

Paul doesn’t think so.

But that is true.

If you plant plants,

it grows better you know.

Oh yeah it is closer to the moon,

it makes sense.

It is closer to the moon, so,

big and close moon you know?

Yeah, in a week of full moon.
Figure 21.

*Pulped coffee juiceA (Paul)*

My puppies are hanging around the coffee juice

I made it with Chad.

It is not for drinking.

I mean it is for drinking good coffee later on.

After pulping, we leave both coffee fruits and beans in water

And leave it for days.

That gets rid of mucus around coffee beans and make them clean.

What does it? Fermentation does it.

It smells like alcohol. Maybe it tastes like really really bad wine.

Any creatures come close to smell it.

Not me. I and Chad loves alcohol, but not this nasty alcohol.
But my puppies, frogs, lizards or beetles, they don’t know about the taste of real beer, they come closer and sniff around.

Some beetles jumped right into the juice. Today is party.

You guys enjoy the drink. We will have other kinds of drink upstairs.

We can’t jump into the pool of alcohol, but we have plenty.

Our work is almost over for today, and I just wait for fermentation to take place.

A. Fresh red coffee berries collected in farms are pulped. All red pulps don’t have any commercial values usually. (Although they are sometimes sold as health products.) Seeds inside the pulps are the valuable coffee beans we usually buy in super markets. However pulps are not discarded right after pulping. Pulps are left inside a tray with coffee beans, which is soaked in water. In a few days, the mixture of pulps, coffee seeds (beans) and water ferment start fermenting because of high yeast contents inside coffee berries. Before the fermentation, coffee beans are a bit slimy outside. But the fermentation removes mucus around beans and make them smooth like stones in river banks. After the fermentation, beans are ready to be dried and become green beans.
Figure 22. Pulped coffee seeds (beans) and pulps
Figure 23. A lizard came over
Figure 24. And a frog stopped by

_Parchment Husks B (Shohei, visitor)_

Chad was working
in the dark room.
When outside is also dark,
I woke up with the sound
from the dark room.
It was Chad who was working.
And he was working on machine,
and trying to get rid of parchment husks.
It is still 5 am.
Well I woke up
with the sound he is letting beans go through presser and husks get cracked.
He collected all of them in a tray.
He put the tray in front of big fan.
And when he turned on the fan,
all the husks which were so light
flew all over the garden
And I never knew where they went after.
Also Chad didn’t know where they went.
And he surely care about them even a bit.
When Paul woke up, the husks were gone.
And he didn’t care about the husks either.

B. Parchment husk is a thin shell around green beans. Many green beans are stored with
the husks on to protect beans from molds. Right before the beans are sold, they are removed.
Figure 25.

*What is a peaberry. (Shohei, visitor)*

I asked Paul what peaberries are.

He said there are always two seeds inside a coffee berry,

and sometimes one seed get bigger than the other.

And it is called peaberry in a round shape,

which many people believe taste better than normal beans.

If one seed does it, another seed gets smaller

because he has no space to grow.

And eventually it will be a coffee bean which seems to be a piece of paper.

I asked him what the name of the bean is, and he said he didn’t know.

I felt sympathy with the skinny coffee bean somehow,

and the peaberry looked like a bad guy.
Figure 26.

Rich people (Chad, employee)

Well we don’t hate, you know.

They are rich you know.

And they are richer than us, you know..

Ah, they are fine people,

They take more money than we take.

Well,

that is a bit unfair, you know?

But that’s our coffee they are drinking.

That is the price they pay for coffee they think it is good.
And that is the price they pay,
you know.
Well, that is how it works you know

Figure 27.

*Why you roast (Paul, owner)*

I roast the beans.
Because when I chew the beans before roasting,
It tastes like everything.
The elements of a coffee bean,
which are a b c d e f
They have too much freedom.
And it is like a bad meeting where everybody is talking what they want to talk.
To make the meeting come together, we make beans roasted.

And after roasting,

you can taste it as one.

It is like a meeting with very careering members.

Everybody cares about the good timing to say their opinions.

I like coffee made in other countries.

But many of them,

they have some very smart members in the meeting.

And sometimes they say something which messes up the whole meeting.

It bothers me.

Good thing about Blue Mountain coffee is

everybody is caring about others.
Figure 28.

*My coffee (Chad, employee)*

I know I am drinking the best coffee.

That is the coffee I drink every day.

We have so-so coffee in our shelf.

It is instant coffee from Columbia.

It makes Paul mad

when I serve the coffee to our guest.

He says that is not our best coffee.

I totally agree

because our coffee is the best coffee in the world.

Hm, is it the best coffee?
I am not the one to answer.

But, can I tell you how I judge good coffee?

If it feels good,

if it is warm and nice,

that is good coffee.

I think Paul has different way to tell good coffee from bad coffee.

And I think

when I drink instant coffee,

I feel good and nice.

So can I call the coffee good coffee?

So Can I say the instant coffee is good coffee?

If it is warm and makes you feel good,

If I say that to Paul, he will get mad at me.

He would ask

“Then Blue Mountain and the instant coffee are the same things to you?”

So I think

What should I tell him?

Maybe I can say

“When I drink the best coffee I feel warmer than the instant.”

Because it is the coffee I made,

it feels warmer.

Maybe Paul won’t get mad at this kind of answer.
Taste of my coffee (Paul, owner)

This is the best coffee in the world.

I always drink this coffee.

So I don’t know how good this coffee is compared with other coffee in the world.

But if this coffee is this good, how can this coffee be second or third place?

This is the best coffee.

I drink this every day.

So I am not able to describe the taste anymore.

It is so hard for me to explain the taste.

So please try it.
Figure 29.
REFERENCES


Citation of the materials used as ethnological data