

22nd Annual Tufts University English Graduate Conference

Thursday, October 21, 2010

Bad Taste

Bad Taste: we know it when we see it, and yet we do not always know what to do with it. Sometimes celebrated and sometimes repudiated, the forms, genres, images, and topics associated with the category of bad taste are always provocative.

In celebration of our conference's 22nd Anniversary, we are interested in investigating **Bad Taste**. We seek to explore the ways in which bad taste is identified and utilized. How does the category of taste create and reify genres? What role does taste play in a consumer society? If bad taste can evoke shame or pride, how do we evaluate or classify it in terms of affect?

We challenge you to consider the political and ethical dimensions of aesthetic taste. How do groups create consensus about aesthetic norms? How can we historicize the concept of **Bad Taste**? Can theories of universality and particularity help us to understand aesthetic judgment?

Please submit a 250-500 word abstract, including your name, email address, and phone number, by July 16, 2010. Mail or email abstracts to:

Erin Kappeler
TEGO Conference
Department of English, East Hall 210
Tufts University
Medford, MA 02155
Erin.Kappeler@tufts.edu



Keynote Address by
Professor Martin Puchner
Harvard University

Professor Puchner's teaching and research interests range from drama to philosophy to world literature. His scholarship investigates the points of contact between theater and philosophy, as well as the geography of literature. He is currently working on a project that addresses low genres such as fantasy and science fiction and their relation to high literature. Professor Puchner is the author of *Stage Fright* (2002), *Poetry of the Revolution* (2006), and *The Drama of Ideas* (2010). He has also served as the co-editor of the *Norton Anthology of Drama* (2009) and as the general editor of the *Norton Anthology of World Literature* (in preparation) and the *Norton Anthology of Western Literature* (in preparation).

We encourage abstracts that explore the concept of **Bad Taste** from a wide range of fields and disciplines. Topics may include but are certainly not limited to:

Form and Genre
The Carnavalesque
Stylistics and Aesthetics
Camp and Kitsch
Dated Material
The Economics of Taste
Obscenity and Pornography
Shame, Humor, and Affect
Imitation and Distinction
Consumption and Consumerism
Bad Manners and Impropriety
High and Low
Nostalgia and Sentimentality
Science Fiction and the Paraliterary

For more information:

Erin Kappeler (Erin.Kappeler@tufts.edu)
Carla Mastraccio (Carla.Mastraccio@tufts.edu)

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