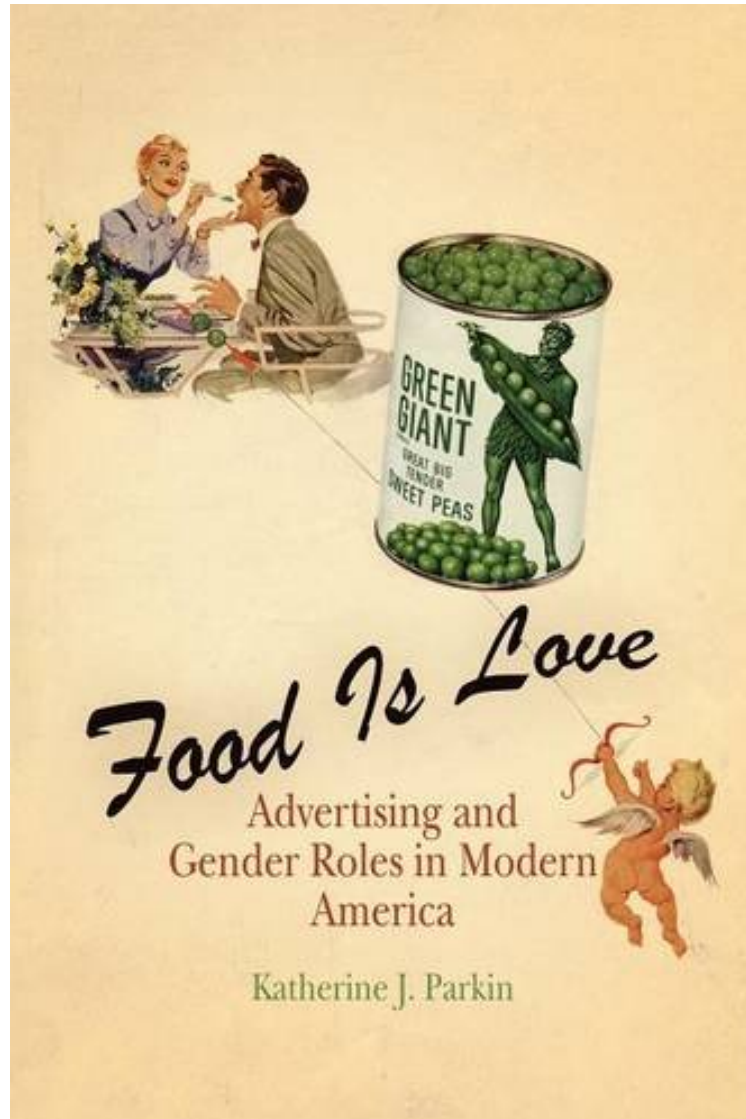


(Download pdf ebook) Food Is Love: Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America

Food Is Love: Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America

Katherine J. Parkin

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Katherine J. Parkin : Food Is Love: Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Food Is Love: Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Food is Love is a singularly revealing insight into this consumptive and surprisingly constant dimension By Midwest Book Review Written by Katherine J. Parkin, Food is Love: Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America is a scholarly examination of the American cultural precept that

women should express love by serving food to their families (regardless of the actual amount of work involved in its preparation). In particular, the concept that women could use food preparation to give themselves sexual allure, make their marriage happy, and improve their family's social standings and prospects became the favored revolving theme of advertisers. Food advertisements at once both celebrated women's homemaking talents, and threatened women's insecurities to coerce the female demographic to buy the right products - their products. Heavily researched, with extensive notes and an index, *Food is Love* is a singularly revealing insight into this consumptive and surprisingly constant dimension of the American female and cultural psyche.⁴ of 4 people found the following review helpful. Opens up the debate about gender roles and advertising

By S. Blanchard Katherine J. Parkin's study on gender roles in modern America analyzes the role of food advertising in creating and sustaining a connection between food and feminine gender roles. Using ads from a spectrum of mainstream magazines and insider records from advertising agencies, Parkin traces the commercial mechanisms that place women as the preparers, procurers, and servers of foods for their families. The meat of her argument contends that these unpaid roles of women in American families translate largely to the provisioning of love, and that advertisers sold the idea that this responsibility solely rests on the shoulders of women. Parkin, in this study, wanted to see how these ads create a mosaic of ideal behavior for the readers and to explore how the ads and the advertisers "sought to shape their vision" of femininity within in the roles of wife and mother. To accomplish this, Parkin includes copies of actual ads that illustrate the kinds of tactics used to create a vision of the woman who happily caters to her family's desires and who gets personal satisfaction by doing so. The ads are highly effective in creating and sustaining her thesis of the uniform targeting of women over time and prove to be interesting and often humorous vignettes of bygone eras, until it becomes obvious through Parkin's keen eye for subtlety that the message remains the same. Parkin uses a historical framework, outlining the demographic and ideological shifts in American population to juxtapose the startling sameness of food advertising. She shows that amidst all of this change, food was, and continues to be, marketed mainly to women. By showing their love with food, women fulfill their obligation to their families. It is this message that remains constant even as differing roles for women emerge because of suffrage and feminist movements. It's not to say, according to Parkin, that advertising did not change to accommodate the shift of more women in the workplace, it did. Ads changed as the food industry changed. Advertisers changed their methods to productively utilize this shift by campaigning to sell domestic duties as skills that must be managed effectively and knowingly. Parkin has written a convincing argument that food advertisers maintained and hoped to sell this vision of women as primary food providers, but in the argument, there is no discussion for why advertisers may have clung to this ideal. As a historical discussion of gendered advertising this is an excellent example of what can happen when one takes a critical eye to the world around you. These representations of gender in advertising are still prevalent in the food industry. While the reader can explicitly see these connections between ads and gender, the argument is lacking when connecting the ads to the shaping and reinforcing of the woman as primary consumer. Where are these gender divisions coming from? How is advertising related to culture? A discussion of the possible reasons for why women are often assumed to be domestic denizens as well as a more in depth discussion of media and its relation to culture would be excellent additions to this book. As framed, in a historical context, the text lacks the meaty critical discussion that one has come to expect from the current level of scholarship emerging in gender and media studies. That advertisers commodified these attitudes there is no doubt, but that these attitudes were consumed by women as voraciously as was the food they advertised, is still up for debate.

Modern advertising has changed dramatically since the early twentieth century, but when it comes to food, Katherine Parkin writes, the message has remained consistent. Advertisers have historically promoted food in distinctly gendered terms, returning repeatedly to themes that associated shopping and cooking with women. Foremost among them was that, regardless of the actual work involved, women should serve food to demonstrate love for their families. In identifying shopping and cooking as an expression of love, ads helped to both establish and reinforce the belief that kitchen work was women's work, even as women's participation in the labor force dramatically increased. Alternately flattering her skills as a homemaker and preying on her insecurities, advertisers suggested that using their products would give a woman irresistible sexual allure, a happy marriage, and healthy children. Ads also promised that by buying and making the right foods, a woman could help her family achieve social status, maintain its racial or ethnic identity, and assimilate into the American mainstream. Advertisers clung tenaciously to this paradigm throughout great upheavals in the patterns of American work, diet, and gender roles. To discover why, *Food Is Love* draws on thousands of ads that appeared in the most popular magazines of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, including the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ebony*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. The book also cites the records of one of the nation's preeminent advertising firms, as well as the motivational research advertisers utilized to reach their customers.

"A singularly revealing insight into this consumptive and surprisingly constant dimension of the American female and cultural psyche."-Midwest Book "Parkin delivers an engaging look at how food advertisements from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have both helped define and played up to the stereotypical gender roles prevalent in American

culture. . . . An enlightening study of gender roles in advertising."Library Journal"A delectable history of food advertising since the late nineteenth century. . . . A very readable book filled with significant information about advertising, gender roles, and consumerism."American Historical "The engagingly titled Food Is Love is also an engaging read. Its comprehensiveness, its clear organization, and the authority it commands through its evidence make this book a valuable resource for scholars, and it should be widely adopted in classes in advertising history, women's history, and American cultural history."Journal of American History"Food Is Love is well-written, comprehensive, and compelling, and makes a significant contribution to the literature on advertising history and women's studies."Jennifer Scanlon, Bowdoin CollegeFrom the PublisherKatherine Parkin teaches history at Monmouth University.About the AuthorKatherine J. Parkin teaches history at Monmouth University.