Humphery

Shelf Life

Supermarkets and the Changing Cultures of Consumption

Supermarkets, in all their everyday mundanity, embody something of the enormous complexity of living and consuming in late twentieth century western societies. Shelf Life explores the supermarket as a retail space and as an arena of everyday consumption in Australia. It historically situates and critically discusses the everyday food products we buy, the retail environments in which we do so, the attitudes of the retailers who construct such environments, and the diverse ways in which all of us undertake and think about supermarket shopping. Yet this book is more than narrative history. It engages with broader issues of the nature of Australian modernity, the globalisation of retail forms, the connection between consumption and self-autonomy, and the highly gendered nature of retailing and shopping. It interrogates also the work of cultural critics, and questions recent attempts to grasp what it means to consume and to be a 'consumer'.

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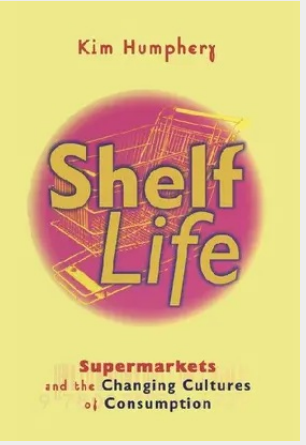

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