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978-0-521-62630-9 - Shelf Life: Supermarkets and the Changing Cultures of Consumption

Kim Humphery

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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'.

Kim Humphery is currently a Senior Research Fellow at the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health in Darwin. He has taught politics and cultural theory at Melbourne University, Monash University and La Trobe University, and has completed extensive social research at La Trobe University, King's College London and the Northern Territory Department of Health. His numerous journal publications have appeared in *Arena*, *Labour History*, *Australian Historical Studies* and *Meanjin*.

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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK <http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA <http://www.cup.org>
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

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First published 1998

Printed in Australia by Australian Print Group

Typeset in Adobe New Aster 9/12pt

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library**National Library of Australia Cataloguing in Publication data*

Humphery, Kim, 1958- .

Shelf life: supermarkets and the changing cultures of consumption.

Bibliography.

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 62316 2.

ISBN 0 521 62630 7 (pbk.)

1. Supermarkets – Australia – History. 2. Supermarkets – Social aspects – Australia. 3. Shopping – Australia – History. 4. Shopping – Social aspects – Australia. 5. Retail trade – Australia – History. 6. Retail trade – Social aspects – Australia. 7. Consumers – Australia. I. Title.

381.1480994

ISBN 0 521 62316 2 hardback

ISBN 0 521 62630 7 paperback

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Acknowledgements

There are many people to thank, and in many instances for things way beyond those connected with this particular project. Yet hours of scribbling away have convinced me that too many words simply rob gratitude of its clearest meaning. So with an economy of ink but much appreciation, I thank Stuart Macintyre for his engaged and insightful guidance during the long final stages of the thesis upon which this book is based, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Geoff Sharp for early assistance and encouragement, and Judy Brett, Paul James and, in particular, Dennis Altman for giving me opportunities to teach, research and learn. Thanks also to Gail Reekie, Peter Spearritt and Ruth Barcan for some excellent advice on redrafting the manuscript for publication. I am especially grateful to Phillipa McGuinness at Cambridge University Press, who showed constant faith in my ability to deliver a text – despite alarming indications to the contrary – and also to Sally Paxton, my copy-editor.

Much of the research for this book relied on the collections and generous assistance of staff at the British Library, London, the State Library of Victoria, the University of Melbourne Archives and the Benga Oral History Centre at Heritage Hill, Dandenong. I am especially indebted to Benga for facilitating the oral history and immensely grateful to all of the people who agreed to be interviewed for this study. Those interviews gave an invaluable insight into the meanings surrounding everyday shopping and proved to be one of the most enjoyable aspects of the research.

Over many years, and at various stages, a number of close friends have inspired, humoured, critiqued and supported me in relation to this project and with myriad other things. I am hardly going to do justice to these

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friendships in a sentence but I do want some people to know the depth of my gratitude. Thanks then to Mandy Brett, Julia Cabassi, Steve Cowden, Tim Jordan, Sue Miller and particularly Sandra Plant. To Alison Ravenscroft I owe a special debt not least for her warmth, constant advice and wonderful conversation. Lucy and Ivy Broadhead were a tangible presence throughout the writing of this book; so too were my sisters Gill, Jan and Rob and, in unfathomable ways, my late father Jim Humphery. I am, as ever, very deeply indebted to Mandy Paul for her conviction, her grasp of the world and our unbreakable friendship. Finally, and with all I have, I thank Sarah MacLean for her gentle intelligence, her enthusiasm and every moment of her company. To Nicky Humphery, my mother, I dedicate this book.

A note on the research. For useful information and illustrations I am grateful to Michael Collins (Australian Centre for Retail Studies), Greg Every (Coles Myer), Ken Henrick (Australian Supermarket Institute), Malcolm Taylor (Woolworths Limited), David Parker (formerly of Coles Myer), Amanda Sinclair (University of Melbourne Business School), J. Sainsbury plc and the Sainsbury's Archives, Tesco plc, Argyll Group plc, ASDA Stores Ltd, Kroger Co., Safeway Inc. and Jon Brenneis Photography, Woolworths Limited, Ladybird Books Limited and the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association (Victorian Branch). Many of these people/organisations will not agree with the critique offered here but were nevertheless generous in providing assistance. Various paragraphs in this book appeared in slightly different form in *Meanjin* (Autumn 1994), and *Arena Magazine* (October–November 1995), and I thank the editors of these publications for permission to use these words again. Thanks also to Linda Brainwood (Image Library, State Library of New South Wales) and John Yovanches (Coles Myer Archives) for last minute assistance with the illustrations.

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For Nicky Humphery