Cooking Their Culture: The Relationship Between Cookbooks and the Societal Roles of the Women Who Owned Them (1940s and 1950s)

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Abstract
My research explores the idea that the women of America's past used cookbooks as life manuals and not just as collections of recipes. This project involves American gender roles and will be an important contribution to our women's studies deficient academic community. I chose two different eras that have contrasting roles for women: World War II and the subsequent period of suburban growth. Next, I did a broad survey of as many cookbooks as I could that were published between 1942 and 1960, nationally distributed, and not regionally or ethnically focused. From this survey, I chose three books from each era that best represented these common characteristics to do a close reading of each text not as literature, but as an artifact of material culture.

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In many cases, women who work full time are still perceived as having the primary responsibility of caring for the children and home. If one of the children is sick, the mother leaves the office to pick up the child. Women still do more housework than their husbands, although men now do more chores than their fathers did, according to Faqs.org. Women tend to do most of the food shopping, laundry, cooking and decorating. There have been great changes in equality in the workplace, but men still earn more money. Modern family continues to challenge gender roles. Men also have a tendency to handle more of the caring for their children than in past decades. Due to the many changes, the gap is shrinking between how both men and women view traditional roles in the family. Society can't separate from their own culture. Because culture the result of human thought to meet the needs of his life. Culture created by three ways (according Peter L. Berger) such as externalization, objectivation and internalization. The relationship between the two is therefore very much present. Basically, they are two aspects of the same thing. We each one of us live somewhere (in “our own” society) and we behave in the ways we have learned (from our parents, family, friends, neighbours, -all of these, in differing degrees) -which is the culture we have received. Both are extremely nebulous, and difficult to define in all their richness and complexity and beauty and utility. ...The Changing Roles of Women in the 1920s In the 1920s, women were becoming more independent. This could be seen in all walks of life. Changes could be seen in their home lives, as well as in the choices available to them in fashion, employment and politics. Women went from being second class citizens – and almost being the property of men – to having the right to vote (“Winning the Vote: A History of Voting Rights.” Winning the Vote: A History of Voting Rights. N.p., n.d. Web. 31 Mar. The introduction of the oral contraceptive pill in 1961 gave women the chance to achieve their potential. It gave them the freedom to choose when and if to bear a child.