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Using a postmodern theory of close readings, I investigated three artifacts: the KitchenAid Stand Mixer, the George Foreman Grill, and the Keurig Coffee Maker to trace the changing values imbedded in kitchens in the early twenty-first century. The kitchen indicates a space in the home filled with hidden symbols and ideologies that reflect the identities of its owners. Historically, the kitchen has primarily been associated with feminine qualities, but today I see it as a hybrid space, intertwining masculine and feminine genders. I observe this gender dichotomy in the layout and design of the kitchen, but most significantly in the objects placed there. In addition, I characterized a set of wedding registries from Belk Department Store and investigated a set of floor plans from *Better Homes and Gardens* to further investigate the gender stratification of the kitchen in the late twentieth century. In doing so, I raise important issues for designers and others as they contemplate the wide breadth of built resources in suburban neighborhoods throughout the United States. By seeing these gendered spaces in this new hybridized way, I shed light on an important issue in the re-use of suburban residential structures, of import for designers who face the opportunities and challenges contained within these buildings.

GENDER DICHOTOMIES IN THE KITCHEN:
FEMININE AND MASCULINE QUALITIES
OF SPACES AND ARTIFACTS

by

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Outside of University of North Carolina at Greensboro, I recognize the genesis of this project among many of my friends from my undergraduate studies. Many of these young women, newly engaged, inspired this thesis as I looked at their wedding registries, which listed many products they would never use in their kitchens. As an avid foodie and cook, these lists sparked a fire that began this work.

Finally, this project would have been impossible without my parents, Connie and Carl Johnson, who have supported me, from Paducah, Kentucky, in another two years of school.

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CHAPTER I

KITCHENS AS SOCIAL MAPS

When we design a home for a family, we do not create a neutral framework but a social map that instructs how the family should act.

-Havenhand, 2002

American culture has taught us to consume to satisfy unfulfilled needs (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and in no other domestic space does this over-consumption show up more completely than in the kitchen. As early as the mid-twentieth century, suburban women identified with the products and decoration of their kitchen, and peers judged accordingly (Havenhand, 2002). In truth, this question of identity stretches historically across many decades and perhaps centuries as fashion, technology, and products constantly move through our domestic spaces, defining who we are and who we hope to be (Cuba & Hummon, 1993). But in the face of media presence and focus centered on food preparation, eating, and entertaining, the open plan kitchen/great room now serves a central function as the space to understand some of the dynamics of the American family. Given the historic use of this space under the domain of women, these open-plan kitchens give us significant insight into the evolving lifestyles of both women and men. Curiously, though, as gender roles elide in the later part of the twentieth century, these traditionally feminine spaces receive masculinized products in the form of kitchen equipment. The dichotomies of gender that play out in kitchens of the late twentieth century result from a process where designers increasingly insert hyper-masculine products in this primary domestic space. As designers, we must be

able to understand the projected identities of people who occupy domestic space from any period of time, because these constructed social behaviors influence future generations.

For this research, then, I investigate kitchens as social maps, (Havenhand, 2002) linking three artifacts and their design features to the kitchens in which they may be found. Using material and visual culture analysis, and by looking directly at the KitchenAid mixer, the George Foreman Grill, and the Keurig Coffeemaker, I confront the gendered qualities of these machines. In addition, I undertake a visual analysis of images projected through magazine publications and the media to center an understanding of kitchens as spaces with feminine qualities. Finally, I tap into bridal registries as a source of evidence to understand the products present in these domestic spaces, and thus gaining some sense about the pervasiveness of masculine objects in feminine spaces in the present. I hypothesize that in establishing a new home after marriage, the objects purchased for use in the kitchen reveals the identity and desires of young couples to hybridize their kitchen spaces to accommodate both genders. In charting the map of several artifacts, I demonstrate a means for designers to come to a more complete understanding of the complexities in the social maps of these spaces.

Wedding registries, a list of objects for the home that newlyweds chose to receive as gifts, provide an incredibly instructive source for this work, reflecting the hopes and aspirations of young couples as regards their household (and kitchen) set up. Today, the registries underscore ideas about American consumerism, with people over registering for highly specialized objects that they do not truly need: Caphalon cookware, de Buyer mandolin, KitchenAid stand mixer, and Shun knives. From personal experiences, my friends from college, now getting married, caused me to look at their

registries in a different light. One asked for 14 different small kitchen electrical appliances with brand names, many with overlapping functions. In regard to this over-consumption, I believe the whole wedding process has become a theatrical spectacle blown out of proportion in the last 30 years. When my parents married in 1978, they did it so quickly and quietly in a ceremony and celebration they paid for themselves. Without an extensive registry, the only thing they only desired sterling silver tableware, which they bought themselves. Today couples register for objects to populate their entire home.

The increase of the amount of items found on registries could also reflect the continual change in the overall design of the kitchen, as this space moved from periphery to center of the home. With dramatic changes in size and placement in the house due to industrialization and mass production of goods (Cowan, 1985), the kitchen has also responded to consumerism and changes in gender, class, and racial roles (Freeman, 2004). Manufacturers of kitchen appliances and gadgets promote the demand of these items in the kitchen by promising an easier cooking experience or a fine dining experience. Innumerable products have changed not only the design of the kitchen, but have promised a reprieve from the laborious tasks of cooking, all the while symbolizing status and identity through their possession. In this thesis, then, I investigate just a few of these material artifacts to unlock some of their meanings. In doing so, I expose the changing values of American women and men, and their perceptions about the kitchen that result. In order to appreciate the evolution of the kitchen, I first unfold a brief history of its design and the evolution of kitchen culture as the background for the study. Following that overview, I recount a visual and material

culture methodology for investigating three artifacts, and then I speculate about some readings of those artifacts and their kitchen context.

CHAPTER II
EVOLUTION IN KITCHEN DESIGN, CONSUMERISM, AND GENDER

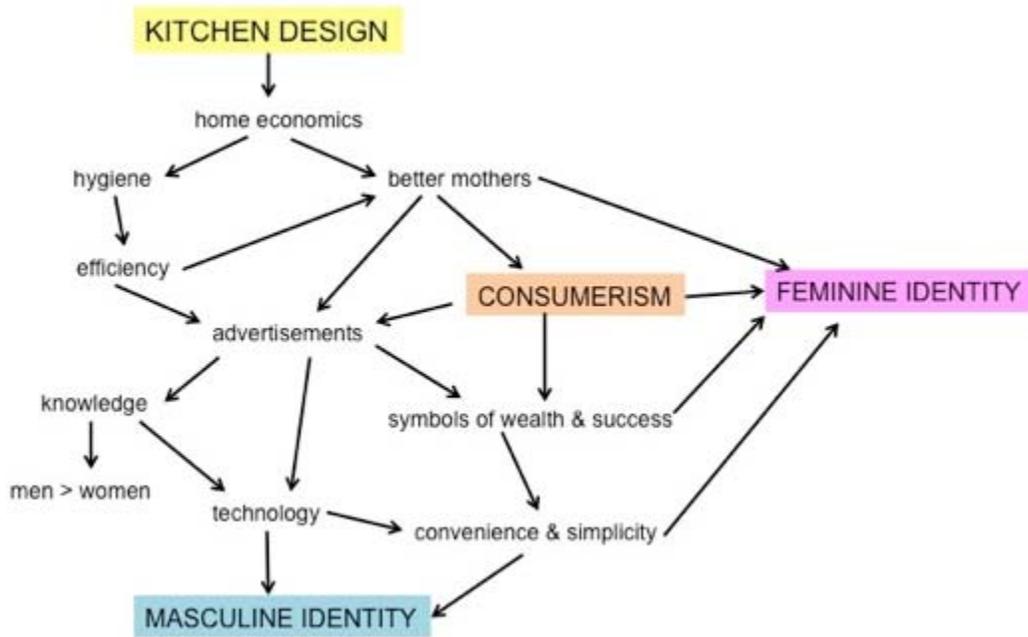


Figure 1: Literature Review Map

It is hard to look at only kitchen design without talking about the consumption of objects and how it reflects the identity of both feminine and masculine roles.

The kitchen as a social map defines the ideals and relationships between women and men. This story touches on a variety of literature in kitchen design, consumerism, and gender identity.

Traditionally, designers have designed kitchens to make a woman's work in that space more efficient and quicker. In the mid-twentieth century, homeowners and designers removed walls in kitchens to transform them into more open places to observe the surroundings and inhabitants in the rest of the home. Today, designers focus not only on this woman's perspective and use of the kitchen but also integrate masculine features, drawing men into the space through technological innovation in appliances and gadgets. To understand the gender stratification of this particular space, the evolution of the design of the kitchen, including the arrangement and the introduction of high-tech appliances, elucidates where this more hybridized space develops (Figure 1).

Throughout history in varying cultures, gender has influenced the spatial organization within the home, primarily spaces occupied by women, as well as the image of the home when viewed from outside, a more masculine view of the domestic environment. Spain (1992) believes that such segregated spaces and different views of the home spring from male superiority to women because of increased access to knowledge. This gender stratification reflected throughout the home actually results from social and cultural constructions by humans, which vary over time and throughout different cultures, bringing us to a variety of subcultural meanings for the domestic sphere (Havenhand, 2002; Spain, 1992). Outside the home, cultural ideas generate certain gender hierarchies, then reproduced within the home. Over time, as these gender-status distinctions continue to change, owners and visitors redefine them, resulting in a change of the overall design of the home and of the kitchen within.

The layout of almost every American house changed drastically between 1860 and 1960 due to industrialization (Cowan, 1985) and the development of suburban living spaces (Clark, 1986). Bringing the kitchen into the main house signaled a major

alteration in the design of this space, including its size, location, objects and appliances, social qualities and users. Before the twentieth century, many viewed the kitchen as a hazardous place because of fires and smoke, resulting in its placement in a separate building behind the house (Herman, 2005). Not uncommon in the south, the removal of the cooking fire from the bulk of the house distanced the heat source and smells from the remainder of the house and separated slaves and later domestics, who predominantly worked in this space (Sharpless, 2010). Most of the time, laborers rather than owners used this space (Johnson, 2006). Even in the South, with the decline of servants in the late nineteenth century, owners and builders began attaching kitchens to homes but they remained in the rear, away from social public areas (Johnson, 2006). Since the early twentieth century, house designers and builders increasingly located the kitchen in a more integrated relationship within the home, eventually serving as a major selling point of a contemporary dwelling (Rybczynski, 1987).

Women learned of appropriate features for kitchens and methods for running households through a variety of printed sources, including books like *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* [1841] and *The American Woman's Home* [1869] written by Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catherine Beecher, who helped modernize the domestic sphere (Gallagher, 2007). Through these represented nineteenth-century sources, housewives continued to read them well into the twentieth century, along with a wide range of periodicals. All of these printed sources, along with educational systems based on a home economics approach to running a household, led to transformations of the kitchen (Gallagher, 2007). In magazines, such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Southern Living*, and *Ladies Home Journal*, women found additional advice about household

management, increasingly linked to the “science” espoused in a home economics approach to housekeeping.

The introduction of home economics as a discipline that could be studied at a University to better family life also led to the shift in the kitchen becoming more of an experimental laboratory (Gallagher, 2007). To echo the tenets of the home economics movement, (Cieraad, 2002) notes that efficiency increased in the design of kitchens, as well as their relocation from the back of house, or even detached from the main building, to an integrated position within the house plan. In addition, home economics paradigms designated that kitchens should be retooled as hygienic, safer places to work (Cowan, 1985). The development of the work triangle began, using a mathematical perspective of the three major work centers in the kitchen-sink, food storage and cooking (Johnson, 2006). Researchers “scientifically” delineated the kitchen into six different layouts, which Johnson (2006) defines as: “one-wall single-line kitchen, the parallel or gallery kitchen, the U-, L-, and F-shaped kitchen and the island kitchen” (Figure 2) (p. 126). Though many home economists believed the triangle design suggested the most efficient kitchen, writer Christine Fredrick proposed an alternative for the space, with one side for cooking and the other for cleaning (Cieraad, 2002).

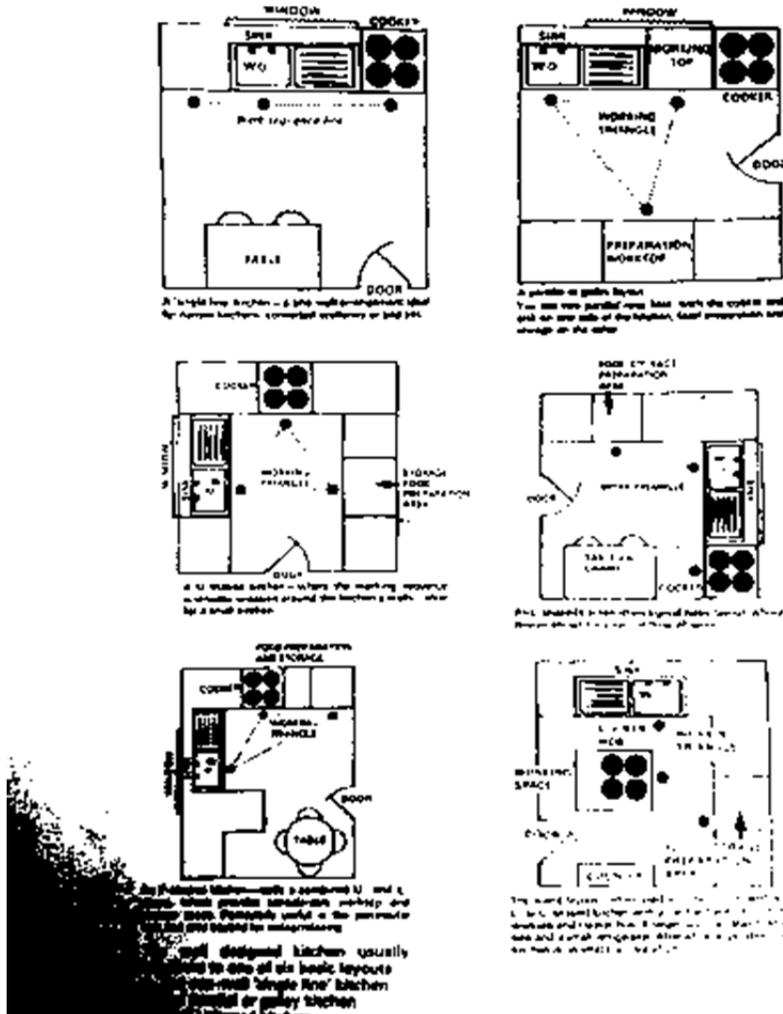


Figure 2: Kitchen Layouts
Source: Johnson, 2006

With the introduction of the study of home economics as science, researchers discovered the work triangle (stovetop, prep area, and food storage) in kitchen design. The triangle can be found in six different layouts: Gallery, one-wall, U-shaped, L-shaped, and island (Johnson 2006).

During the early twentieth century, world-renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright influenced home design and shifted away from the standard of placing the fireplace and living room as the heart of the house, opening the floor plan and, in some instances,

inserting the kitchen in a central position (O’Gorman, 1991). At mid-century, Eichler and other mid-century builders introduced homeowners to a fully open floor plan (Figure 3), to create an observatory station for housewives to multi-task in cooking, watching children, and observing good order throughout the household (Gallagher, 2007). As the critical heart of the home, the kitchen by the mid-1970s had progressed from a small space at the back of the house to a more central and meaningful locus of activity in the floor plan (Adams, 1995; Marsh, 1989; Spain, 1992). The design of the great room allowed the kitchen to become a space for all these interactions (Hayden, 2002), and results in a shared space where men, women, and children all interact (Spain, 1992).

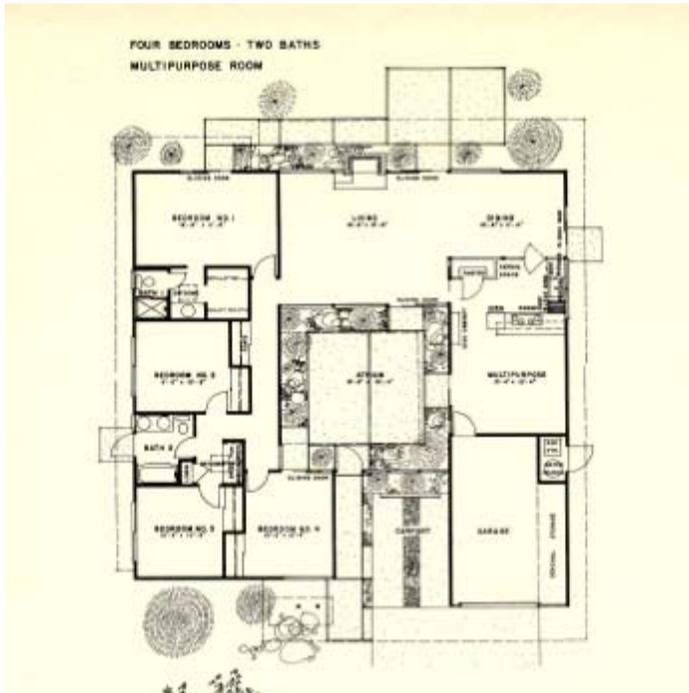


Figure 3: Eichler Home Floor Plan

Source: The Modern Home, www.themodernhome.com, 2010

The open house plan by Joseph Eichler carried a premise that the kitchen served as an observatory station for wives and mothers.

The late twentieth-century kitchen includes spaces not just for eating and dining, but now places for interaction and other domestic practices (Brown & Cropper, 2001). Other than the connections to other spaces and the open plan of the kitchen, changes in the equipment used to prepare food in an efficient and reliable way represent an additional shift (Freeman, 2004). In today's kitchen, the space allotted to the kitchen and the complexity of the room have increased so much that many elements and appliances there do not contribute to essential daily food preparation (Hasell & Peatross, 1991; Spain, 1992). Architectural historian and author Witold Rybczynski concurs with these notions, and in a recent interview (Geddes, 2005) stated that "Today, kitchens are huge, not so much because we spend more time cooking, but because the kitchen has

become the social place where we entertain. In the process, formal living rooms have almost disappeared” (p. 58-59). To receive the ever-growing number of appliances, the number of cabinets in the kitchen has increased tenfold, providing a home to store new gadgets, mixing bowls, pots and pans, and much more (Arnold & Lang, 2007).

Scholars continue to view the whole kitchen, including gadgets, appliances and overall layout, as a single artifact read to reflect a family’s or owner’s identity. Freeman (2004) states that the kitchen can symbolize different “career aspirations, humanitarian concerns and views on parenthood and the family” (p. 7) and Havenhand (2002) reminds that: “When we design a home for a family, we do not create a neutral framework but a social map that instructs how the family should act” (p. 3).

Gestation of Objects within the Kitchen

Without question, the kitchen changed dramatically over the course of the twentieth century, mostly as a result of American consumerism (Wright, 1981). The major change towards the modern kitchen included the increasing amount of equipment located there, requiring more space and storage (Freeman, 2004). Kitchen layouts, based off the work triangle, were grounded around the placement of appliances and gadgets making the cooking process more convenient. Southerton (2001) suggested that the introduction of the refrigerator, oven, stovetop, dishwasher, and other smaller kitchen appliances influenced the kitchen’s overall design – a consumption of objects that began not by choice, but as a way of expressing identity in a social setting. Identities of women – defined by their appliances and reflected in the newest designs and latest styles – symbolically tied consumerism to socio-economic status. Because

the appliances of the kitchen are an integral part of the design, are used by the consumer, and are symbolic, they cannot be overlooked in the analysis of kitchen.

Though consumerism studies did not rise as a discrete academic subject until the late twentieth century (Gram-Hanssen & Bech-Danielsen, 2004), objects reflecting feminine identities and qualities existed as early as the Victorian Era (Domosh & Seager, 2001). Adams (1995) characterized the open kitchen area as an “observation station,” where large windows oriented towards the backyard allowed a woman to carefully watch her children while continuing motherly chores. In the last two decades of the twentieth century, this open room evolved as the great room, or multipurpose room. Defined as a space where the family interacted, watched television, listened to the radio, ate family meals, and children played; it doubled as a place for entertaining guests. According to Marsh (1989) when walls divided the rooms, the hostess excluded herself from her guests to prepare the food or drinks. With this open area, women could be “perfect” hostesses, preparing the food and drinks in the kitchen, while still entertaining their guests (Hayden, 2002). Arnold & Lang (2006) indicated that this type of open plan resulted in less privacy for the family, as the kitchen became a place of gathering. Designers reflected this thinking in kitchen layouts, and housewives populated the open space with appliances, dishes and cutlery, and additional accouterment for daily cooking and more sporadic entertaining.

After the Great Depression of the 1930s and the rationing of World War II, department store and freestanding grocery store owners targeted women as leaders of consumption in the household. Suddenly, additional income allowed new access to fashions, appliances, kitchen tools, and other products (Cohen, 1996). During the post-war years, income levels of many middle class families increased, which promoted a

surplus of kitchen appliances and gadgets. Designers and homeowners integrated the larger kitchen technologies into their designs because of the shift in the roles of family members and the decrease in domestic help throughout the post-war years. Many future homeowners sought fully equipped kitchens that featured built-in appliances so that mortgages would include the appliances instead of paying for them individually (Hine, 2007). The 1960s Eichler Home incorporated state-of-the-art appliances – brand name dishwashers, disposals, and ovens – to help promote their kitchens as a point of sale.

By century's end, with the availability of so many products and appliances, women needed more space (Southerton, 2001). Kitchens correspondingly grew larger because of physical constraints tied to the addition of new appliances that were promoted as status symbols of wealth and success (Hasell & Peatross, 1991). Realtors touted mega-kitchens that included excessive appliances as necessary and desirable qualities of a kitchen space so that home chefs could accomplish the tasks of a four-star restaurant chef. Excessively single-action appliances, such as bread makers, waffle makers, and espresso machines, supposedly designed with efficiency in mind, have actually spurred the development, purchase, and use of "power" tools in the space, resulting in more "gender-neutral" kitchens (Gallagher, 2006).

Gender and the Kitchen

The mediated images of appliances, through advertisements and commercials, reveal masculine and feminine qualities that can be examined within these artifacts. The targeted audience, whether men or women, maintain different views of the product and advertisers focuses on particular aspects that will draw specific consumers towards

particular products. Advertisements of features in these media forms about or related to the kitchen more often than not feature images, phrases, or indications of women in those places. Like the hybridization of the kitchen itself, though, advertisers have shifted focus from women to one that targets both men and women as consumers.

Twentieth-century media outlets have tapped women as the main audience for kitchen appliance advertisements because most characterized the work in the kitchen as women's work (Cowen, 1983). The advertisements for kitchen gadgets and electrical appliances, such as refrigerators and dish washing machines, suggested, "how women might become better mothers" through the use of such devices (Clark, 1986, p. 215). Havenhand (2002) characterized print advertisements that included women depicted doing housework or prepping in the kitchen while the men rest outside of the woman's working space. In the 1950s, with the introduction of the television in the home, firms introduced a new way of advertising these different appliances, which permitted families to allocate more money to the purchase of food (Hine, 2007). The media in the mid-twentieth century treated everyone as consumers; commercials and magazine advertisements influenced how these middle class should live (Hine, 2007). During the postwar period, advertisers gained appreciation for the study of psychology to appeal not just to women but to men as well. The emphasis on a man's love for gadgets led them into the kitchen, as well as the basement workshop and the backyard deck/patio, the latter two places as nearly exclusively male-gendered due to a strong technological presence (Adams, 1995).

In the later twentieth century, with the help of celebrity male chefs such as Emeril Lagasse, Bobby Flay, and Mario Batali, men increasingly drew themselves into the kitchen (Gallagher, 2006). Today, advertisers target men as well as women in the

hopeful sale of these material objects for the kitchen, and Ockman (2005) connects the representation with both women and men consumers, showing their identities through various objects and technological gadgets. Over the years technology has had a “...common identification...as a masculine pursuit – ‘technology is what women don’t do’” and must “come under scrutiny” (Lerman, Mohun, & Oldenziel, 1997). Though a stereotype, other scholars such as Cowan (1983) and Goldstein (1997) argue that the technological and industrial advances in the twentieth century equate with gendered feminine identities as well. Many of the advances of technology began with the introduction of electricity, which allowed for companies to design electrical appliances that assisted women with their housework, appliances like dishwashers, vacuums, and refrigerators (Freeman, 2004). Lerman, Mohun, and Oldenziel (1997) believe that “gender analysis...is a useful tool for exploring the history of technology...” because gender analysis challenges assumptions and stereotypes about what “is and is not ‘technology’ and about which technologies are or are not important to study” (pg. 3).

The study of home economics helped to blend understanding of the gender of technology. Many utility companies in the early twentieth century hired women as home economists to help develop educational programs for women to promote the benefits and sale of these new gas and electric utilities (Goldstein, 1997). The interaction of manufactures and female home economists elided male and female spaces (Goldstein, 1997). In the house, the kitchen, once primarily gendered towards women, now crossed gender boundaries to include major shapers and users of the space.

Advertisements declared technology the protector of housewives from difficult and dirty housework (Hine, 1986). New technologies in the kitchen changed women’s housework dramatically. Introductions of larger new appliances such as, dishwashers,

refrigerators and smaller appliances (microwaves and stand mixers), assisted women in the cooking process. In the late 1950s, more abundant kitchen appliances resulted in simpler, more efficient, and cleaner ways of cooking. Hine (1986) defines as the “push-button age,” which allowed “products...to offer something more, something magical, something that could only be achieved at the press of a button” (pg. 123).

These different gadgets, intended to simplify kitchen duties, reflected women’s identities from their introduction (Domosh & Seager, 2001). Both Csikszentmihalyi (1993) and Maquet (1993) believed that objects symbolized identity and contained meanings as social instruments. In consumer analysis, a balance emerged between the aesthetics and lifestyles demands of the kitchen (Hanssen and Bech-Danielson, 2004; Gram-Hanssen & Bech-Danielsen, 2004). These messages reflected different “career aspirations, humanitarian concerns, views on parenthood and the family” (Freeman, 2004, pg 7).

The presence or absence of domestic help and the direction given by home economists influenced the placement of appliances within the kitchen layout, particularly during the suburban expansion at mid-century and the corresponding development of single-story Ranch houses. After World War II, major changes in the design of the single family home resulted from young families moving to the suburbs into mass produced homes and neighborhoods built by developers (Wright, 1981). In large part, the design of these homes influenced and reflected the way a family lived; the husband/father would leave home to work during the day and the wife/mother would stay home, keep house, and look after the children. Primarily designed with the woman in mind, these suburban homes featured kitchens with a woman as the “perfect mother and wife,” who used the kitchen as the observation station. Here she could observe the entire house,

watch children playing outside, and assume the role of the perfect hostess (Adams, 1995).

Just as the kitchen shifted in priority from a marginalized space to a central crossroads for household activity, the place of women has transformed within the household – ranging from life as full-time housewife to the dual role of working mother. Increasingly true over the latter half of the twentieth century, women held employment outside the home in addition to the “motherly” role of raising a family (Brewis, 2004). Until the last decades of the twentieth century, Domosh & Seager (2001) postulate that the others viewed women as happy homemakers, eager to work for and please their family. This false image throughout history also inferred a woman’s character by how well they could manage a household and family and how they expressed “proper” domestic activities (Edwards, 2006).

As early as the mid 1850s, Marsh (1989) notes that the house remained divided into masculine and feminine with distinctive spaces declared as rooms for men or women. Herman (2005) suggests that parlors, drawing rooms, and sitting rooms provided places for either sex to gather separately. By the mid-twentieth century, scholars indicate that these patterns began dissolving as women and men intermingled in similar domestic spaces. In postwar homes, separate rooms disappeared, particularly with the evolution of the great room/multipurpose room in the last third of the century (Hayden, 2002; Arnold & Lang, 2006). But even though walls did not divide the overall plan of the house, the suburban home still contained specific gendered spaces. Feminine spaces included the kitchen and the utility room, while the basement, barbeque area, and office correlated with masculine occupation (Hayden, 2002). Spain (1992) indicates that men had specific rooms that were for their personal needs, but that

women never had their own personal space, relying instead on spaces like the kitchen to express their identities, what Joan Ockman (1996) characterized: “the ‘male’ culture of production [which] found its complement in the ‘female’ culture of consumption” (p.158).

Kitchen and appliance design may seem far removed from studies in historic preservation, but Mason (2006) reminds us that: “Preservationists deal with more kinds of heritage today, representing a wider variety of narratives and historical moments and a wider range of places and object and scales” (p. 21). As the movement widens, and as more of the suburban landscape qualifies listing in the National Register of Historic Places, more values-centered studies help us to see the nuances of a building’s significance as a reflection of the society and people within these buildings (Mason, 2006). Rypkema (2010) believes, we must move away from mere preservation and look at this field in terms of heritage conservation, where we redefine historic significance - not just as a physical quality in a building or site - but as something that people feel through memories and in the objects that they possess (Striner, 1997). Thus, the home should be read not just through the architecture, but also through the objects placed in it and the values they possess for their owners. This makes preservation not just a study of buildings but a multidisciplinary study with interests in, among other fields, material culture and gender studies.

Methodologies

The study of kitchen design from the mid twentieth century to present day requires a multidisciplinary approach that addressed gender issues, consumerism, economics, and design. To study the kitchen and appliances within them as artifacts, a number of different methods and approaches apply to researching and reading the

space. The study of visual culture combines different methodologies, providing a more objective read of artifacts at various scales. Based on postmodern theories that “question the existence of objective knowledge,” arguing “that there is no pure, unmediated information.” Havenhand (2002) uses a “close reading” to look for hidden meanings in the feminist movement (p. 1). Resulting from this new approach, scholars have reconsidered women’s work and women’s design history as the two main analytical methods at work (Havenhand, 2002).

In post-modern visual analysis, Rose (2007) looks at places where researchers uncover meanings in advertisements, whether the place of production, the site, and the audiences perception of the site. These careful readings about the images bring out particular issues such as “class, gender, race, sexuality, able-bodiness and so on” (Rose, 2007, pg 7). To look more specifically at advertisements, Peracchio & Meyers-Levy (2005) analyze them by looking at the stylistic properties of the composition and orientation of the visual material depicted. An extended analysis gives light to subjectiveness inherent in objects with history, as these scholars assert.

In the later twentieth century, companies expanded product placement beyond the realm of advertisements into fully-blown television commercials and infomercials, bringing researchers to discover new meanings for objects exposed by producers and writers, at different stations (Bourdieu, 1998). In the 1950s, the introduction on the television “...opened private life on the sofa to the blandishment of advertisers, to allure of the beautiful and strange, to the political symbolism embedded in the charm bracelet or the washing machine” (Marling, 1996, p. 286). That same media, and the products placed there, still informs our world today on both television and on the Internet.

But what of analyzing the objects themselves? Another way of looking at the kitchens and objects within emanates from the field of material culture. Prown (1982) defines material culture as “the study through artifacts of the beliefs – values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions – of a particular community or society at a given time” (pg 18). Two main approaches to material culture provide useful interpretations when reading physical and visual objects. The most classic approach, referred to as the Prownian approach, finds the researcher using a three-stage approach of description, deduction and speculation to analyze the objects and depict primary cultural beliefs (Prown, 1982). Another approach to the study of material culture – a “subcultural” one – permits multiple meanings. Hebdige (1979) believes in more than one truth in an object. Multiple readings emerge from different cultures, outside viewers, and reserachers, who each define their own true meaning of the artifact, and permit understanding of the various ideologies and semiotic values that influence material production. When reading different kitchen appliances, as herein, the multiple meanings approach and the formal analysis allows duplicity in reading the artifact as the manufacturers intended and as perceived by the public.

By using methods from the study of both material and visual culture, I will read three artifacts from multiple views. To study and understand the kitchen I will look not only at the design of the kitchen but focus on how specialized appliances within this domestic space reflect identity. Havenhand (2002) suggests that the ideologies that designers and homeowners want to express, whether issues in gender or family life, require a close reading to “carefully interrogate texts in order to reveal multiple levels of meaning” (p.2). In this research, I plan to do just that.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGIES

The study of visual culture intertwines a variety of methodologies to provide as unbiased a read of artifacts as a possible. In this research, I utilized a mixed methods methodology, with a heavier emphasis on qualitative over quantitative research. Because both qualitative and quantitative methodologies have limitations, they both have certain biases, which I started to dissipate or eliminate prejudice. For this study, I used a sequential transformative strategy, defined by Creswell (2008) as “a two-phase project with a theoretical lens” (p. 212). In the first phase, I focused on qualitative analysis using visual and material culture methods, followed by a brief investigation of corresponding quantitative information to help further enhance the data of the first phase (Creswell, 2008). Though heavily skewed toward qualitative methodology, the theoretical perspective used for the study of objects reflected ideals of gender, a post-modern theory of “close-readings” to analyze how implications about gender can be inscribed within a design (Havenhand, 2002).

For my research, I analyzed the feminine and masculine qualities of three kitchen appliances: the KitchenAid Artisan Stand Mixer, the George Foreman Champ Grill, and the Keurig B40 Elite Coffee Maker. To counterbalance the qualitative analysis, I studied the quantitative data collection from wedding registries from Belk Department Store and kitchen floor plans from *Better Home and Gardens Magazine*, to investigate the gender ideologies of kitchens. In doing so, I speculated about the values of young couples as

they registered for highly specialized kitchen equipment and in terms of feminine and masculine traits embedded in the objects.

Qualitative Analysis

Following Havenhand (2002), I focused on feminine and masculine qualities of kitchen equipment in “close readings,” liberating these constructed views through material culture and visual analysis. Through the Prownian three-stage approach – description, deduction, and speculation – I defined the substantial evidence, the relationship of artifact to user, viewer, and surroundings, and hypothesized about the object, bringing to bear the literature on feminine and masculine traits in design as covered in Chapter Two of this thesis. I also considered “subcultural” readings of the same objects, based on Hebdige’s (1979) theory of alternative meanings embedded within the same objects. With these two different reads of artifacts, I observed and analyzed the objects with multiple viewpoints in mind. Instead of focusing on primarily the middle class, I looked beyond the dominant groups and the traditional ideologies that grew out of the postwar period, where gender trends shifted dramatically within the family.

In selecting objects to analyze, I divided kitchen electrical appliances into three different categories: highly specialized objects, multi-use appliances, and general appliances. For my study, I selected high-specialized appliances because I believed these appliances represented equipment more suitable for commercial use rather than residential application. I further refined the selection of the three from a longer list, each of the selected tools with a specific main purpose and with a well-recognized name brand. The KitchenAid stand mixer, the George Foreman Grill, and the Keurig coffee maker suggested three such overpowered and highly specialized objects in many

contemporary kitchens. As a variety of different grades of appliances exist in each brand markets, I chose the most common and moderately priced ones: the Artisan KitchenAid Stand Mixer, George Forman Champ Grill, and the Keurig B40 Elite Coffee Maker.

To further enhance my material cultural analysis, I conducted a visual analysis of the media and advertisements available that promoted the objects. Deploying the methods of Rose (2007), I traced connections between the images projected and their likely reception through a content analysis. In doing so, I questioned the dominant gender that appeared literally, through either images or text, and also the composition and stylistic qualities of the visual images. To counterbalance my analysis that came both out of personal interaction as well as previous scholars' research, I also collected quantitative data from 2010-2012 Belk wedding registries and information about the evolution of kitchen layout from postwar era to present, contained within *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine.

Quantitative Analysis

As a third step to the research, I sought the frequency of the key artifacts in wedding registries collected through the Belk Department Store. As a department store that offers moderately priced items for families, the Belk database provided significant insight for understanding the middle class kitchen. I collected 15 random registries (Figure 4) for couples with wedding dates between 2010-2012 in Alabama, with its central location in the southern states defined as Deep South, coinciding with the cotton belt region (Reed& Reed, 1997). In the wedding registries, I specifically collected data from the Kitchen Electric section (Table 1) in the following categories: the number of times the KitchenAid Stand Mixer, George Foreman Grill, or Keurig Coffee Maker appeared; the

attachments ordered with these items; the presence of similar items in their selections; and the total number of kitchen electric appliances for which the couples registered. With this information, I calculated the averages of the how many couples registered for each item and what the average number of kitchen electrical appliances were on the list. I tallied all of the appliances to see the quantity of the common appliances, like food processors, blenders, and waffle makers (Table 2).

Welcome to [REDACTED] & [REDACTED]'s Wedding Registry [Print Registry](#)

0 days until the big day
 June 05, 2010
 Registry ID: [REDACTED] 9697

A wedding registry is more than a wish list.
 It's a dream list—a couple's first step towards creating a new life together. To give a gift you know they'll appreciate, select the number of items next to each gift you'd like to purchase. Then click **Add to Shopping Bag**. *Imagine the joy your gifts will bring, each one making dreams come true.*

Kitchen Electrics		Requested	Still Needs	Purchase Now
	KitchenAid® Artisan Stand Mixer Mixer Everyday Free Shipping on all orders over \$99. Sale Price: \$299.99 Original Price: \$399.99 You Save: \$100.00 (25%) Size: No Size Color: Black UPC: 0050946872627	1	0	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Click image to zoom	Find in Store Available In-store and on Belk.com In Stock. Usually ships within 2 business days			
	Cuisinart Toaster Everyday Free Shipping on all orders over \$99. Sale Price: \$29.99 Original Price: \$39.99 You Save: \$10.00 (25%) Size: No Size Color: White UPC: 0086279003737	1	-1	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Click image to zoom	Find in Store Available In-store and on Belk.com In Stock. Usually ships within 2 business days			
	Bella Bella Cucina Rocket Blender Everyday Free Shipping on all orders over \$99. Sale Price: \$29.99 Original Price: \$39.99 You Save: \$10.00 (25%) Size: No Size Color: CHROME UPC: 0829486133305	1	1	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Click image to zoom	Find in Store Available In-store and on Belk.com In Stock. Usually ships within 2 business days			

Figure 4: Wedding Registry Example

Source: Belk Department Store, www.belk.com

Wedding registries are a dream list for couples to register for items that will allow them to live their ideal life. Items on the registries begin to reflect the identities of the couple through their design and placement in the kitchen.

From this data I inferred information about the couples and their ideal collection of objects. Because of my in-depth analysis of the three highly specialized kitchen machines, the gender influences of these items, from the qualitative study, provided an interesting data point for comparison. I then speculated about the impact of all of these meanings for appliances in the contemporary kitchen, using a content analysis of floor

plans and accompanying images in *Better Homes and Garden Magazine*. Since the 1920s, this popular magazine has recorded the popular plans of different eras. These plans visually trace the evolution of the interiors of homes, including the additions of new spaces and rooms and the dimensions of the ever-expanding kitchen. I created a database (Table 3) of plans every five years from the 1960s to 2010 and recorded: the size of the kitchen, the size of the home, the location of the kitchen, the open or closed characteristics of the kitchen, the shape of the kitchen, and additional qualities or characteristics of the space. With this information and the information from the wedding registries, I traced the abundance of objects as reflected in the expansion of the kitchen, applying my evolving theory about gender in the space and objects under scrutiny.

Limitations

Just as Hebdige reminds us of multiple meanings for each object or space, I brought biases to this research according to the personal experiences and previous knowledge that I have acquired over the years. Advertisers and commercial makers also strayed from neutral representation of the objects by specifically targeting a certain audience, while different camera angles and compositions reflect unrealistic or skewed qualities (Rose, 2007) creating simulacra, where we are uncertain of the real and the unreal (Baudrillard, 2005). True also of the *Better Homes and Gardens* data, editors did not always include floor plans and, when they did, they amended them for ease of readability. With couples today registering at many different stores, the wedding registries at Belk suggest less than full representations of all of the objects for which the couples registered. These limitations could all be addressed with further study by conducting interviews or distributing a questionnaire of other people's experiences with

the objects. In addition, I could look at the impact of the Internet has on the information found in magazines, along with documenting more registries from Belk as well as the other sites where couples' register. Yet, despite these limitations, I proceeded.

Mixing together these various threads permitted me the opportunity to both speculate and verify readings of masculine and feminine traits through an examination of material culture, through visual content analysis, and through quantitative speculation. In the end, I made connections to contemporary kitchen design to foster a dialogue about appropriate design strategies for today's home. Because objects and possessions serve as an extension of the self (Belk, 1988), to understand not only kitchens, but homes and places people inhabit, I undertook not only be a "close reading" of just the architecture and design of the space, but also of the objects.

CHAPTER IV

HYBRIDIZATION OF GENDER IN THE KITCHEN

In an increasingly hybridized kitchen of the later twentieth century, scholastic research provides much analysis for this change. Correspondingly, manufacturers and retailers have responded with commercials geared to this revolution. For example, in the 2009/2010 IKEA advertisement, a couple congratulates a personified kitchen “character” for help with a dinner party, much as a coach would congratulate a winning sports team in a locker room, a room gendered towards the masculine (“Funny IKEA commercial,” 2009). A second IKEA commercial, which aired in 2011, introduced a new line of cabinets. In this commercial, the wife selects a cabinet that reflects her style of entertainment and parties, while the husband chooses one that shows his love for a fine dining experience. In the end, they compromise on cabinets that combine their two ideals in a hybrid kitchen, one with both masculine and feminine qualities (“Cabinet Doors: Made by the Lees: Designed by IKEA,” 2011). While many other retailers and manufacturers have deployed blended gender identities and politics in the marketing of their products, IKEA specifically addresses this conflation and hybridization in the kitchen through design and appliances found there. And just as I deconstructed the IKEA commercials, I closely examine three specifically gendered and hyper-specialized appliances – the KitchenAid Stand mixer, the George Foreman Grill, and the Keurig Coffee Maker – in the traditionally viewed feminine space of the kitchen.

Stirring up Gender with the KitchenAid Stand Mixer



Figure 5: KitchenAid Artisan Stand Mixer

Source: KitchenAid, www.kitchenaid.com

The KitchenAid Artisan Stand Mixer, a power tool to ease cooking processes for women serves as the “Electric Maid,” being so named in the manufacturer’s advertisements. The overpowered, outsized, aggressive appliance brings masculine design to the kitchen as it assists in the preparation of meals.

The sleek, heavy, technical, industrial, and powerful KitchenAid Stand mixer defies common stereotypes of women in the kitchen. As a power tool, the outsized machine goes beyond day-to-day cooking needs, complete with an aggressive and powerful motor. It stands also as a symbol of scientific discovery and shifting gender stratification through the kitchen, simultaneously seeming out of place and at home in the kitchen. The KitchenAid Stand Mixer’s successful and appealing brand for over seventy years, further symbolizes the appliance’s stability and longevity in the ever

changing and expanding environment of kitchens, maintaining certain popularity there among multiple generations of housewives and, increasingly, their husbands.

Just as owners modified kitchen spaces as places of home science, designer Egmont Arens in 1936 re-tooled an earlier 1919 version of the design into the archetypal machine still in production today. Originally, in 1908 Herbert Johnston designed the stand mixer with the male gender in mind (“The KitchenAid Stand Mixer: Ninety Years of Quality,” 2009). Engineers of this earliest model designed the 80-quart stand mixer to alleviate laborious and intensive processes of kneading dough by hand by male bakers. Popularized by men because of its strength, weight, and power, this appliance took its place on all Navy ships in the early 1900s, highly masculine spaces. Johnston in 1919 re-designed the 80-quart mixer for residential purposes. The appliance, as an aid to women, helped reduce the time and drudgery of preparing a meal for a family. With domesticity in mind, the re-designed machine’s weight and overall appearance did not reflect femininity, but instead masculinity.

With a ten-speed control knob, motor head, attachment hub and knob, a head-locking lever, beater shaft, and beater height adjustment screw, the KitchenAid Artisan series mixer stands just under 14” in height as a formidable presence in the domestic environment (Figure 5). Made of heavy-gauge steel, the 26-pound tilt-head mixer contains a 325-watt motor, along with a provision to lock a 4-½ or 5 quart bowl into the clamping plate with a twisting motion, much like a machine in a factory. Peripheral parts also lock, but in this case onto the beater shaft pin (a dough hook, a flat beater, and a six-wire whip) or onto the bowl (pouring shield) (Figure 5). These interlocking components further underscore the industrial tool-like appearance and operation of this

kitchen appliance in a design that has remained for the most part unchanged since the first third of the twentieth century.

Nostalgia for that earlier time, along with an appreciation for the efficiency of the machine, brings buyers back to this iconic element in the contemporary kitchen, a piece of kitchen equipment worthy of use, and perhaps used by our grandparents, but still relevant today. The continual revival and re-gendering of the appliance, through color and attachments, keeps the historic, retro, and industrial appearance while implementing a “new” present-day aesthetic. The long history of the KitchenAid stand mixer reminds its users of the high quality, durability, and innovative technology of this machine. It is not necessarily about the object itself, but more about the aspirations the object presents (Lowenthal, 1985), which keeps the appliance popular even today. The long history and longevity of the appliance gives it a stable quality, which new appliances do not possess. Advertisements and the media keep in mind the nostalgic qualities of the mixer and implements these ideas into ways of promotion. As observed in present-day media, images of the device on television, in print, and in bridal registries at retail outlets, this kitchen artifact brings the cosmic to the everyday, just as it has for much of the twentieth century.

From the 1930s to present day, the mixer remained and remains an example of American design, beginning with the first versions of these products rolling off an assembly line in Greenville, Ohio. Designer Egmont Arens incorporated smooth, sleek lines and curves, as well as chrome details, linking to design features associated with the Art Moderne movement. With influences from aerodynamics in the automobile and aviation industries and the quest for speed in quantum science, Art Moderne objects came into the burgeoning consumer market of the 1920s and 1930s, impacting not only

product design, but the manufactures produced in architecture and transportation as well (Gelernter, 2001) (Figures 6 & 7).



Figure 6: Art Moderne toaster
Source: Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.com
The Art Moderne movement emphasized a sleek curvature design with chrome details, reflected in many kitchen appliances, such as this toaster.



Figure 7: Cleveland Greyhound Transit Station
Source: Art Deco Architecture, www.decoarchitecture.tumblr.com
In the 1930s the introduction of the Streamlined Art Moderne movement reflected aerodynamics and speed. The style also inspired large-scale architecture along with smaller buildings, product design, and new modes of transportation.

The 1936 model, based on its predecessor 1919 Model H-5, not only reflected contemporary design trends, but also linked to contemporary scientific study. The company retained the “planetary action” movement of the device of the earlier model, where the bowl and the beater moved in opposite directions, echoing the physical muscle movements of stirring and mixing unaided by machine. Many advertisements mention that one-of-a-kind technology allowing the “perfect machine controlled mixing” (Figure 8). The name “planetary action” to describe this revolutionary system likely reflected interest in contemporary scientific studies, linking to Albert Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity from the century prior, and a general interest in astronomy in the 1930s. By the latter 1920s in a series of articles and experiments, scientist Arthur

Eddington proved Einstein's theories and translated much of the earlier scientist's work into understandable English, thus placing the subject of astronomy in the minds of many the world around (Gron & Hervik, 2007). The KitchenAid Company traded on the popularity of these scientific developments and thus manufactured this universe in a bowl.



Figure 8: "More Power to You" advertisement

Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, December 1945

The advertisement focuses on the power of the women through a new technology of mixing that the KitchenAid Stand Mixer incorporates and introduces. The “planetary action,” of mixing the beater in one direction while the bowl moves in the opposite direction, reflects the scientific work of Albert Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity.

Early twentieth century advertisements suggested that tiring hours in the kitchen could be counter-balanced by the gift of a stand mixer as “magic in the kitchen” for aid in cooking preparation (Figure 9).

CONSIDERATE WIVES
 Will leave this advertisement where their husbands can't read it



If you could read your wife's mind . . .

This is the season of popularity for husbands . . . "What would the life be for Christmas" . . . The unanswered question haunts you.

You are wishing you could read your wife's mind . . . The next best thing is to put yourself in her place—as much of the 1,000 meals to be prepared during the coming year—as the long hours in the kitchen—of the difficulty of keeping help.

Logically, your mind turns to KitchenAid . . . At the top-of-a-catch, this Electric Mixer will do all the hand-and-out food-preparing work, better and more quickly than by hand—and with none of the exhausting labor. It is "magic in the kitchen"—a practical, practical magic that has won a place for itself in thousands of homes.

KitchenAid will prepare a cake for the oven in 3 minutes—whip pretzels in a snowy softness in one minute—blend ice cream in 15 minutes—mix without smooth measurement. Its versatility is amazing. It mixes . . . makes . . . bakes . . . whips . . . strains . . . serves . . . grinds . . . dices . . . chops . . . slices.

Recently a new model KitchenAid, at a substantially lower price, has been introduced. Now—by an read you its complete, fascinating story. The coupon below will bring it to you . . . and, if you desire, full details of our unusually liberal Household Budget Payment Plan.

The KitchenAid Manufacturing Company
 302 OLIVE STREET WILMINGTON, DELAWARE
 Sales agencies in principal cities. Consult your telephone directory.



KitchenAid
 Electrical Food Preparer for the Home

The KitchenAid Mfg. Co.
 302 Olive St., Wm., O.
 Let us impress in glowing terms about KitchenAid.
 Please send your business card.

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____

Figure 9: "If you could read your wife's mind..." advertisement
 Source: *National Geographic*, December 1928

The first KitchenAid Food Preparer (Stand Mixer) targeted women as the main consumer. The language and visuals of the advertisements however indicated the male superiority of the household. Specifically, the visual here has a very detailed male figure facing the viewer, while the woman is only seen from profile. The only time the women encounters the mixer is in the bottom corner image.

From the first KitchenAid Food Preparer in 1919, which would later be called a stand mixer, the manufacturers targeted women as the primary audience for this new product. At first, the company hired a sales force of women to market the product, the sales ladies lugging the 65-pound appliance door to door to demonstrate its operation. Amending this marketing strategy in the late 1920s, KitchenAid began to deploy magazine advertisements to demonstrate the product through both heavily word-based ads that include images of the product, as well as entourage and human figures KitchenAid to convey their messages.

The language of the advertisements indicates a gender disparity between men and women, with men maintaining the dominant status as the gift giver to ease the wife's burden. The patriarchal evidence, clear in the main images on each of the advertisements, features men's faces facing directly forward and two men with their backs to the viewer. Because of the higher knowledge that men obtained over women, by not being confined to the home, Advertisers drew in the consumer, linking to the idea of men with higher income levels as they centered a marketing campaign on the KitchenAid appliance. The copywriters for the advertisements (Figure 10), stress the importance of the "Dinner at Home." While the men enjoy a game of golf and relax, the women fret over the preparation of dinner for when the husband returned. The advertisements indicate that by bringing the magic of the KitchenAid Food Preparer into the home, women prepare and serve meals without hard work, actually enjoying dinner with the rest of the family. Before the introduction of this kitchen aid, women vigorously labored by watching their children, socializing, and preparing dinner simultaneously. Both advertisements include an inset photograph at the bottom of the page where a woman encounters the KitchenAid mixer directly. With the introduction of the "snap of

the switch" technology, the mixer reflected the social changes in society, with the decrease of servants and kitchen spaces evolved to include women of the household.

**"You bet, I'll be back
for DINNER
AT HOME"**

Here's a foursome that will have to step lively—and if three of them want to dally for bridge afterward, they'll have to look elsewhere for a fourth. In KitchenAid homes, "Dinner at Home" is a feature of the day not lightly to be missed.

You'll be a "golf-widow" far less often if dinner at your home is the happy family gathering it should be—and *can* be with KitchenAid. All the drudgery of food preparation—the beating—the mixing—the grinding—the slicing—the chopping—the straining—the hundred and one operations involved in cooking—is done by KitchenAid AT THE SNAP OF A SWITCH. You can serve delicious dinners on these warm summer evenings and still feel cool and rested—with KitchenAid to do the hard work.

Athletic husbands like to relax and take their ease after strenuous hours on the golf course. When "Dinner at Home" is a cheerful gathering, with Mother enjoying it as much as the rest of the family, it becomes the perfect sequel to an afternoon of sport.

We will gladly send you our interesting illustrated folder, "Dinner at Home," without obligation, of course. Just sign and mail coupon below.

KitchenAid
Electrical Food Preparer for the Home
EXECUTIVE OFFICES AND FACTORIES: TROY, OHIO

Sales Representation in Principal Cities. Distributing Agencies: 175 King St. East, Toronto, Canada; 38 Charterhouse St., London, E. C. 1 England

The KitchenAid Manufacturing Co.,
807 Olive Street, Troy, Ohio.

Please send, without obligation, your interesting folder, "Dinner at Home"

Name.....
Street.....
City..... State.....

Figure 10: "You bet, I'll be back for Dinner at Home" advertisement
Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, June 1933

Advertisements continued to show the patriarchal hierarchy with the male figure as the main subject. Once again the women is shown as less important to the man. This ad also reflects the women's place in the home, while the man gets to enjoy outdoor activities. Again, the only encounter with the mixer is in the bottom right hand corner, obviously not the main focus.

Knowledge and access to education often defined the distinction of men being more superior to women in Victorian society, and before. In the late nineteenth century,

women did not attend school as often as men. Only by the 1920s do we begin to see women as equal to men, with the passage of the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution, allowing women to vote (Spain, 1992), though even within this political process women's rights are far from complete or secure, even one hundred years later. Though a few women did attend co-educational higher education universities, higher education – and thus the possibility for higher status – remained in the hands of men for men. Men's access to knowledge gave them a higher status over women, a sub-theme of the advertisements of the KitchenAid Food Preparer (Stand Mixer).

The introduction of the mixer and other kitchen electrical appliances appeared in the mid twentieth century as the presence of domestic help dwindled, with many domestics finding jobs outside of the middle class white home (McGaw, 1982). The invention of these appliances helped middle class white women to prepare meals for their own family without the help of others, as indicated in various company advertisements from the 1930s. Thus, KitchenAid's marketers announced not only the universal reflection through 'planetary motion,; they also helped buyers to perceive the ability of the machine to reduce cooking preparation by naming the mixer the "Electric Maid." With this power appliance, as stated in early advertisements, the Electric Maid "will prepare a cake for the oven in 3 minutes – whip potatoes to a snowy fluffiness in one minute – freeze ice cream in 15 minutes – mix velvety smooth mayonnaise" (1928). In the subsequent eight decades, with the development of additional attachments placed on the hub, the time- and energy-saving KitchenAid mixer aided in the process of grinding meat, juicing citrus, making pasta, and opening cans, all without the necessity for hired help in the kitchen.

With the variety of attachments that can be placed on the hub of the KitchenAid stand mixer, this appliance transforms into a multifunctional device, allowing women to experiment with new ways of preparing meals. In the initial design, the attachments placed on the hub of the stand mixer expanded a woman's ability to only use one appliance for a number of kitchen tasks. The addition of attachments distances the KitchenAid from typical stand mixers and hand mixers, and adds to the multifunctionality of the appliance. Hand mixers, not multifunctional and not hands free, takes away precious preparation time. Moreover, the multifunctional device relates to a woman's need to uphold her status by changing appearances, whether through fashion or through culinary exploration. The attachments allowed her to create a wider variety of meals, and the attachments made that work move in a quick and efficient manner, which reflects the changes in the food-ways and preparations for the 1950s, when American families began to spend more on groceries and especially products that helped to remove the chore of cooking (Marling, 1996). Cookbooks, like Peg Bracken's *I Hate to Cook Book* and *Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book*, introduced women to simple, do-it-yourself instructions to creating beautiful and satisfying meals for their families.

To counterbalance this increase in the consumption of food, KitchenAid Stand Mixer ads of the mid-century expressed the new interest in food as an art. These advertisements incorporated compositions and texts as if they were in a cookbook (Figure 11). Like the 1930s ads, manufacturers still targeted women as consumers but now incorporated step-by-step-like visuals of idealized cartoon women using the mixer.



Figure 11: "to Women who are serious about their cooking!" advertisement

Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, June 1950

The food movement of meals seen as an art in the 1950s, influenced the design of advertisements for appliances. KitchenAid used this knowledge to create a composition that incorporates a recipe card visual ("Recipe for better cooking"), as well as text that mimics recipe steps. Instead of showing steps, the ad highlights the importance and cutting edge technology of the mixer.

Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book, introducing the concept of “eating with your eyes first” (Brainfood, 2009), included images that displayed beautiful and colorful Jell-o molds, cakes, salads, and main dishes for the reader to digest visually and physically.

Through these various publications, the consumption of food transformed as a multi-sensory activity, incorporating not only taste, but sound, smell, and vision.

Publishers utilized colors, textures, shapes, proportions and arrangements, to draw readers to visually taste the food. According to advertising campaigns, to achieve these masterpieces a proper cook must use the KitchenAid Food Preparer (now known as the stand mixer), complete with new features to bring all the advantages of the top chefs and bakers in preparing beautiful family meals.



Figure 12: Classic Eggs Benedict

Source: Simple Recipes,

www.simplerecipes.com/recipes/eggsbenedict

This depicts the classic plating of eggs benedict: toasted English muffin on bottom, poached egg on top, and topped off with hollandaise sauce. Though simple and beautiful, defining each element, molecular gastronomy defies this traditional look.



Figure 13: Molecular Gastronomy Eggs Benedict

Source: wd~50, Wylie Dufresne, www.wd-50.com

Wylie Dufresne, uses chemicals to defy the classic dish eggs benedict. Through these scientific chemical experiments, it creates a new phenomena of eating by incorporating different textures from the original. Chemicals and new technologies of cooking preparation help enhance this creation.

If the visual nature of these cooking publications signaled a change in the mid-twentieth century, the visual nature of the twenty-first century has taken on a transformative visual presence in print and on television, translating meal making into culinary experiences. The art of cooking, above and beyond just making pretty plates, for example, now includes investigations of molecular gastronomy, where chefs transform the culinary experience by creating sensory phenomena of eating (Hervé This, 2008). Chefs, like Wylie Dufresne, owner chef of wd~50 in New York City, known for incorporating culinary science into his menu, takes classic recipes, like eggs benedict (Figures 12 & 13) and a smoke salmon bagel, and through chemical changes creates beautiful experiences of eating. Chefs, like Dufresne, including Top Chef Season 2

contestant, Marcel Vigneron, incorporates different chemicals like dry ice to quick freeze a liquid and the combination of sodium alginate and calcium chloride to make a caviar-like substance (Hervé This, 2008). This culinary world, surprisingly as much shaped by visual matters as well as matters of taste, has transformed to a place where both the food itself and the equipment used to manipulate it dance in an easy way between aesthetic and scientific worlds. The tools for cooking, ever more than before, participate in the process fully, and they do so – as with the case of these male chefs – with men more in mind.

The visual world of the mid-twentieth century, reflected in the KitchenAid Stand Mixer, never stagnated. Though the design, function, and form of the machine remained the same through many decades, the manufacturer introduced only slight aesthetic changes. Generally, manufacturers attempt to constantly update the design of appliances to appeal to current consumers. With KitchenAid, we see a slowly morphing machine that maintains a consistent overall form through its century-long lifespan. With the introduction of color, we note the manufacturer's attempt to reinvent the product while maintaining its much-admired profile. While maintaining the iconic shape of the machine, the addition of color softened the industrial edge of the appliance, bringing it more comfortably into today's "mega kitchen." The addition of colors changed the imagery of the KitchenAid stand mixer, keeping it new, though the mechanics remained the same. In 1955, people could choose from five different colors: petal pink, satin chrome, island green, white, and antique copper. Though KitchenAid added more colors, the company remained true to the Art Moderne inspired shape, form and planetary action technology of the appliance for over 80 years. Today, users select from

over 20 different colors for the machine, including pistachio, blue willow, and majestic yellow (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Colors of the KitchenAid Artisan Stand Mixer

Source: Steamy Kitchen: Fast, Fresh, & Simple, <http://steamykitchen.com>, May 28, 2010.

Kitchen appliances not only assist in cooking, they become integral to the overall design of kitchens. With the choice from over 26 colors, the KitchenAid stand mixer reflects the mood and the identity of the owner, with both vibrant statements in Tangerine, subdued retro longings in Pistachio, or classic and clean with basic White. Significantly, the names of different colors reflect the interest in the visual presentation of various ingredients.

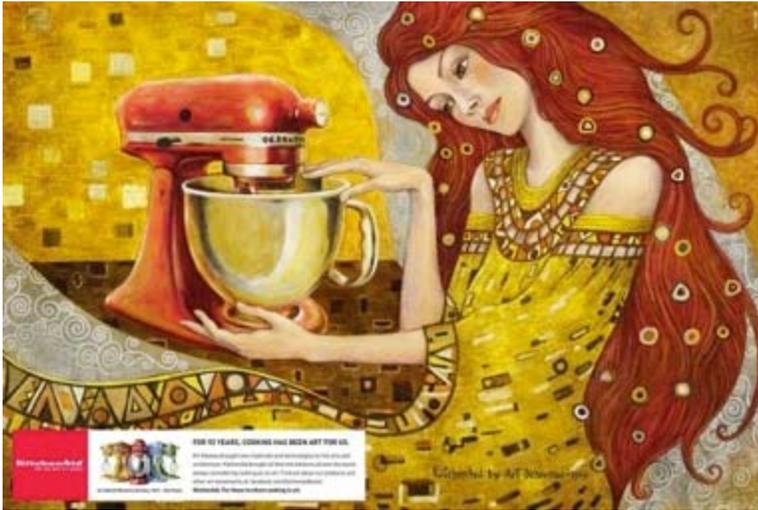


Figure 15: KitchenAid Art Nouveau advertisement

Source: KitchenAid Brasil Facebook page, www.facebook.com/KitchenAidBrasil

Over 92 years there has been 17 major art movements. Though popular styles have changed from whimsical of the Art Nouveau period, to bold and abstract during the Expressionism period, the Art Moderne, industrial design has not changed.

With the successful product now offered in an array of colors, the logical option to expand the market base has led KitchenAid to explore the use of social media as a new tactic in global marketing. “For 92 years, cooking has been an art for us,” a slogan from the company indicated in 2011, now the role has been reversed and the mixer becomes not a kitchen appliance alone, but a focus for art. Using KitchenAid Brazil’s Facebook page, the iconic mixer stands as the centerpiece in six different art styles from the past century, including Art Nouveau (Figure 15), Art Deco, Pop Art, Modernism, and Surrealism. The theme of cooking as art draws the viewer into the nostalgic quality of the mixer’s design as the highly specialized appliance demonstrates design flexibility through the styles of art. Since the introduction of the stand mixer in 1919, the world has experienced 17 different major art movements (Stokstad & Cothren, 2011) and 18 major architectural styles (MacAlester, 2002). Through it all, KitchenAid has clung to the iconic profile and design features.



Figure 16: "The serious mixer for serious cooks." Advertisement

Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, April 1985

Advertisements in the 1970s and 1980s begin to echo the industrial design of the KitchenAid stand mixer by using bold and machine-like fonts and text. Masculine words that describe the mixer, such as "heavy-duty," "strong," and "serious," gives the machine a power-tool feel as apposed to the 1930s ads pointing out the convenience and simplicity to attract women.

In contrast to the hybridization of art and kitchen appliance on the Facebook page, KitchenAid advertisements of the 1970s and 1980s depicted the bold and machine-like presence of the stand mixer in kitchen space (Figure 16). Where the colorful 1930s advertisements helped readers see the feminine in the object, the 1970s and 1980s advertisements neutralized gender through deployment of magazine spreads that incorporated black, bold, and caps fonts, incorporated masculine words, and the removed the female figure as part of the story. Copywriters described the mixer with words like "heavy-duty," "strong," "solid-state," and even "serious," in a more business like approach to the product. The 1930s advertisements, focused around efficiency and

convenience, have now yielded to more masculine attributes in both vocabulary and composition.



Figure 17: Personalized KitchenAid Stand Mixer

Source: FREEKitchenAidMIXER, <http://freekitchenaidmixer.com/2011>

Through graphic design the appliance becomes a blank canvas, where owners can begin to express their personality. Chef Ree Drummond custom designed this mixer as a give-away to promote her new cookbook “The Pioneer Woman: Black Heels to Tractor Wheels-A Love Story.” Her popularity comes from multiple cookbooks and her show on the *Food Network*. Though the winner did not personally design the mixer, it does reflect their interests.

Owners now tap into the iconography of the mixer and the status it has achieved over the years, shaping the identity of their kitchens and their own identities as portrayed to others in the process. Throughout a steady lifespan, the KitchenAid stand mixer continues to demonstrate tremendous meaning for its owners, what (Csikszentmihaly & Rochberg-Halton, 1989) characterize as “revealing continuity of self through time” by providing “concrete evidence of one’s place in a social network as symbols of valued relationships” (p. 23). This robust, heavy appliance represents a tool unhidden, one fully on display. At a cost of \$250 to \$900, a cook can add the KitchenAid mixer to the kitchen arsenal. The high cost of the product indicates only certain homeowners can afford such a device. Early advertisements also suggest an investment in the kitchen equipment could be possible by the creating a payment plan. Owners quite proudly

display the stand mixer on their kitchen counter, with personalization quite common by defining identity through the addition of graphic designs (Figure 17).



Figure 18: KitchenAid as an accent
Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, May 2005

Today, appliances become an integral part of the overall design of the kitchen. Instead of hiding them behind cabinets, they are left on the counter as a symbol of a housewife's identity. Using the color KitchenAid stand mixer to accent the rest of the design shows that not only is this tool to assist in cooking, but also enhance the overall space.

The KitchenAid stand mixer remains a staple on most bridal registries today, with greater choice in color variety to reflect thematic and design elements in kitchens of the present. *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine uses the mixers as props in photographs of kitchens within articles, because they add accent colors or compliment the design of spaces (Figure 18). Color and prominence in the kitchen space speak to the symbolic image of housewives constant need of re-inventing their identities, and echoing manufacturer's thoughts to do the same. But, the bulkiness of the object symbolizes a masculine quality of a power tool, with gentle additions of color and attachment for a woman to re-fashion the kitchen of this largely male product in the midst of a domestic

space. With its constant design that remains virtually unchanged, the appliance, through the media and advertisements, is re-gendered to appeal to a larger audience and still retain its longevity. Thus, the KitchenAid stand mixer reflects the social hierarchy of its owners not only through its ever-growing series of colors, but also through its bulk and weight.

Pressing New Meaning from the George Foreman Grill



Figure 19: George Foreman Champ Grill

Source: George Foreman, www.georgeforemancooking.com

Grilling, traditionally a male-oriented outdoor activity, leaves women in the kitchen. The George Foreman Grill brings this masculine activity into the women's space, the kitchen, through the hinged design making grilling more accessible to a diverse crowd.

The male tending to the barbeque has remained a traditional ideal for American fathers, perpetuated by images in television and media. In the mid-twentieth century, the popular sitcom *Leave it to Beaver*, aired an episode where Mr. Cleaver explained to his son why women don't barbeque: "Women do all right when they have all the modern conveniences, but us men are better at this rugged type outdoors cooking." Late in the twentieth century, the portable George Foreman Grill brought back this masculine view of the world of grilling outdoors into the kitchen in a convenient nonstick package. The George Foreman Champ Grill (Figure 19), a two serving, 36 square-inch, double nonstick-hinged grill, indicates a second highly specialized appliance that appeals to

both genders because of the reported health benefits put forth by its super macho spokesman, George Foreman, the Olympic heavyweight boxing champion.

Closed, the four pound machine sits on four feet with a sleek white exterior, in the center of which designers placed the slogan, “Lean Mean Fat Reducing Grilling Machine” above George Foreman’s signature and a preheat indicator light (Figure 19). Without an on/off switch, the user simply plugs into an outlet and the indicator light signals the optimal cooking temperature, all the while reminding the user of the product’s celebrity endorsement and the masculinity of grilling, albeit in much reduced circumstances at the kitchen counter rather than in the back yard. With no open flame, this appliance redefines the definition of grilling, and removes much of the dirtiness from the process. The George Foreman takes the basic design of a grill, with a hinged lid, and reinvents it for interior uses. The protrusion of the top plate enables the user to lift an integrated handle to expose the textured, dark grill teeth, slightly menacing and mouth-like in appearance, much like how one interacts with an outdoor grill (Figure 20). The clam shell design of the appliance, with its floating hinge system, allows the two-sided grill to adjust to different heights of food products cooked at the same time. The weight of the topside of the grill uses gravity to press excess fat and grease out of the food and drain it into the removable grease tray, which sits, unattached, beneath the grill extension.



Figure 20: George Foreman Champ Grill open

Source: George Foreman, www.georgeforemancooking.com

The simple clamshell design of the appliance incorporates a floating hinge system allowing it to easily adjust to different heights of foods. With the help of gravity and the slanted bottom plate, grease and excess fat drains away from the food, reflecting its slogan, “Lean Mean Fat Reducing Grilling Machine.”

Some may know George Foreman for his achievements in the boxing ring, but he found his true claim-to-fame in his second career as a spokesman for Salton, Inc.'s product the “lean mean fat-reducing grilling machine.” Foreman’s personal life and experiences, not just his boxing career, brought this product appeal to everyone. His guy-next-door personality and love for the product carried through his commercials and even non-boxing fans recognized his name on television and, later, on the Internet. The global appeal of the product, with ownership spreading to all ages, ethnicities, and genders, makes this product an ideal one for kitchens throughout the nation and around the globe. Designed by Michael Boehm, this 10.2 inch by 9.8 inch by 5.8 inch portable grill stands as a kitchen appliance that all types of people could own (Docherty, 2004).

Salton Incorporated, a company that experimented with highly specialized kitchen appliances, picked up and adapted Boehm's design of a “taco maker” in the mid 1900s for the grill (Cesary & Lynch, 2011). Resembling a waffle maker, with a closed

rectangular lid and a sloping grill surface to remove excess grease from meat, the designers intended the hinged appliance to be the location for grilling vegetables and meat, with easy access to add more ingredients during the cooking process. Salton recognized that in order for this product to be successful and stand out from similar appliances, they must have a spokesman who could target a diverse audience (Cesari & Lynch, 2011) and George Foreman seemed to fit the bill.

Male consumers related to and respected the spokesperson as an athlete, and Foreman's successes and comebacks made him a powerful representative on television and in print advertisements. At the 1968 Olympics, Foreman won the heavyweight gold medal in boxing and returned to the ring ten years later to reclaim his champion title (Foreman & Merydith, 2000). Cesari and Lynch (2011), successful entrepreneurs aiding the success of the George Foreman Grill, defined the targeted audience for this product as "college educated females in households earning \$55,000 each year" (p. 96). Though an ex-boxer, Foreman related to women by not only being personable, but communicating and endorsing the health benefits of the leaner and fat-reducing equipment and in his cookbooks. In their spokesman, Salton had the best of both worlds, appealing to both genders.

For the women consumer, the visual appeal draws them to certain appliances, just like the KitchenAid stand mixer's introduction of color. Though this appliance may not be attractive, the outcome of the product appeals to women. Without the mess of outdoor grilling, the George Foreman grill leaves chicken and steak with perfect grill marks. Also, by seeing the amount of excess fat and grease removed from the food and collected in the drip tray, women buy into the notion of a resultant healthier meal.

Personal stories and anecdotes in both commercials and cookbooks appealed to the female clientele. In *The George Foreman Lean Mean Fat Reducing Grilling Machine Cookbook* (2000), Foreman (and his ghostwriters and chefs) uses the appliance as the main cooking method for beef, lamb, pork, fish, and vegetables. After Foreman's first retirement, he experienced a major weight gain. Wanting to be healthier and more in-shape, he re-evaluated his eating habits to help him achieve his goal. In the publication, and at every turn in commercials and print media, Foreman points out the two-sided sloped design that allows excess fat and grease to run away from the meat into a drip tray to provide healthier, faster meals that retain a grilled appearance.

With much of the success of this project attributed to endorsement by Foreman, the advent of the infomercial age contributed as well to its immense success in the ever-competitive product design market. Infomercials – multiple minute commercials that have more in-depth information about a product (Beltramini, 1983) – demonstrate a significant impact on viewers, for more than the average 30-second commercial.

Because of the diversity of the consumers using this product, a variety of cultures participate in the material culture read here. Hebdige (1979) defined culture as both about process and product, where “objects are made to mean and mean again as style in subculture” (p. 3) and his central approach reminds users and readers that a multitude of possible readings exist for this object. The small size and relative low cost of the Foreman grill allows anyone to purchase one, even those with limited space and a limited income. With only one function, this small appliance has a different meaning to a wide range of people, primarily due to its convenience. To the target audience of middle white class females, the George Foreman Grill represents a quick and healthy way to cook meals. For the male consumer, the product appeals to the masculine traits of its

spokesperson, translated to the material object – a macho kitchen item. To college students living in dorm rooms with limited cooking facilities and limited space, the product provides a way to cook healthy meals and avoid the freshman fifteen, that notorious gain of weight due to enrollment on the college meal plan. To immigrants and lower-income consumers, this grill signals as a survival mechanism and an inexpensive cooking instrument.

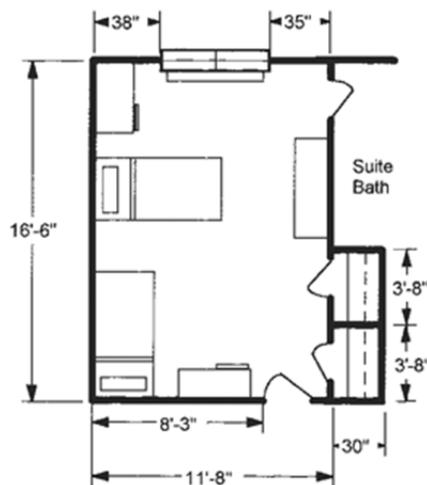


Figure 21: Auburn University, The Hill residence hall room

Source: Auburn University: Housing and Residence Life,

<http://fp.auburn.edu/housing/hill.asp>

Two people living in a room around 193 square feet allows little space to store kitchen appliances. The George Foreman Grill, with its clam-shaped design traps the smoke from escaping. The size made the grill easily stored and provided healthy meals that could be cooked fresh as appose to using the microwave. To college student this appliance means healthier food, while to others it might symbolize survival.

My roommate and I at Auburn University depended on the George Foreman Grill for survival at mealtime. At 187 square feet, our room (Figure 21) included prohibitions on toaster ovens, hot plates, toasters, and crock pots, but allowed the George Foreman Grill because the appliance didn't smoke when cooking food ("Guide to Residential

Living," 2011). Personally, my roommates and I appreciated an easily stored machine, allowing us to eat healthy even on a tight time frame either to get to class, an impromptu social event, or a football game. For me the product contains only one meaning, but for Jeffrey Newton, a homeless man in Chicago, a George Foreman grill means survival and warm meals.

Kitchen Sisters (2004) interviewed Jeffery Newton, for their NPR (National Public Radio) show, trying to find atypical "hidden kitchens." Newton was a homeless man who lived with other homeless individuals under the expressway of Wacker Drive in refrigerator boxes. As the reporters relate, Newton learned to love cooking from his Grandma and with his Foreman he cooked hamburgers and grilled cheese for himself and others living on the streets ("An Unexpected Kitchen: The George Foreman Grill," 2004). When the Kitchen Sisters interviewed Newton, he said that he used this product because a long extension cord made access possible to electrical outlets on the utility poles. To Newton this appliance provided an avenue of self-sustainability – a different outcome than that intended by the makers of the grill.

George Foreman, as an African American, resonates as a spokesperson who many admire; his status allowed the grill to be universal. The globalization of the George Foreman Grill has brought people into Foreman's society of cooking, where users worldwide link to one another in an imagined community (Anderson, 2006). That imagined community comes together at times like the Super Bowl, when more than 100 millions of Americans crowd around their television sets to watch the competition (Hiestand, 2010). Though many tune in for the sports aspect of the experience, others simply watch the commercials and join in the conviviality, their hands on calorie-laden treats. Advertisers, knowing this to represent a prime time to air commercials, designate

lavish marketing budgets to this major television event. For the 2006 Super Bowl (Figures 22-27), advertisers created a 30-second commercial for the George Foreman Grill, showing a variety of ages and diverse group of Americans, including Spanish (Figure 26) speaking, saying “I grill with George,” making the imagined community real (“George Foreman Grill 2006 Super Bowl Commercial,” 2006). By owning a George Foreman Grill with his signature on it and his ringing endorsement, people across racial, ethnic, and class lines come together around this appliance, as if cooking with the heavyweight champion.



Figure 22: George Foreman Super Bowl Commercial, at 8 seconds
 Source: ABC network, February 6, 2006
 The commercial begins with the traditional view of the white middle class man alone at the grill outdoors. George Foreman does make larger grills that can be used outdoors. The commercial will follow with a diverse group who also use the grill.



Figure 23: George Foreman Super Bowl Commercial, at 9 seconds
 Source: ABC network, February 6, 2006
 The next group, college women from all different ethnicities, select smaller grills in saturated colors, which seems to attract young women to the George Foreman Grill. Color begins to reflect the identity and individuality of each owner just as the KitchenAid stand mixer does.



Figure 24: George Foreman Super Bowl Commercial, at 11 seconds
 Source: ABC network, February 6, 2006
 This clip shows the family social interaction of the mother and son using the grill. Unlike in *Leave it to Beaver*, where the father and son grill as a masculine activity and bonding experience, here the television role reverses, where the mother provides knowledge of grilling in the kitchen.



Figure 25: George Foreman Super Bowl Commercial, at 12 seconds
 Source: ABC network, February 6, 2006
 Not only do Caucasian families using this product, but other ethnics as well. This Hispanic family comes together by using the George Foreman to prepare a birthday party meal. This reflects all the previous groups of people with a variety of ages and ethnicities.



Figure 26: George Foreman Super Bowl Commercial, at 14 seconds
 Source: ABC network, February 6, 2006
 The close up of the little boy from Figure 24, says in Spanish “I cook/grill with George.” The phrase, which each group says throughout the commercial, personifies the grill as it becomes George Foreman. The appliance here suggests his presence and personality while cooking with you.



Figure 27: George Foreman Super Bowl Grill Commercial, at 24 seconds
 Source: ABC network, February 6, 2006
 To conclude the commercial, a group of people, all different ages, races, and backgrounds, come together with George Foreman. This reflects the social aspect of grilling, bringing people together to socialize. The George Foreman Grill, though not outdoors, brings this same community quality into the interior.

Through many of his personal experiences, Foreman realized that food changes peoples’ attitudes towards life and in return gives them energy and inspiration to get out and experience new adventures and interact with others (“An Unexpected Kitchen: The George Foreman Grill,” 2004). Food has always been known to bring people together. Barbequing/grilling, in particular, has been known as a great way to socialize around food (Foreman & Merydith, 2000). This appliance allows people without an outdoor grill to continue to have the social experience of barbequing, but remain inside, without any of the mess of grilling. Instead of turning on the gas or heating up the charcoal, the meat griller simply has to plug in the four-pound “Lean Mean Fat Reducing Grilling Machine.”

Like the KitchenAid stand mixer, designers of the George Foreman Grill have provided multiple attachments and a wide variety of colors to meet consumer demand.

Because it “looks like a modern piece of furniture,” the grill takes on significant import as an object, a status symbol in any kitchen (*An Unexpected Kitchen: The George Foreman Grill*, 2004). Unlike the steady design of the KitchenAid stand mixer, though, designers have transformed this highly specialized appliance throughout the years, even though the elements remain the same: signature, slogan, floating hinge, two-sided grill, slant, and drip plate. The Champ series, still sold today remains at a serving size for two. In collateral product development, manufacturers have produced the George Foreman Grill in varying sizes up to one that serves seven with changeable plates provided in addition to the standard deeply-grooves grill plates.

Unlike the design of the KitchenAid stand mixer, which brings masculinity into the kitchen as a power tool, the grill has been objectified and conflated with the person of George Foreman. The presence of the appliance equates with the jovial George Foreman in the kitchen linking distinctively masculine qualities in the space. The role of a male oriented food preparation process of barbequing and grilling thus hybridizes masculine and feminine qualities, permitting women access to and authority over a masculine hobby in their own space. Like the KitchenAid mixer, the George Foreman Grill takes its place on the kitchen counters of American homes as an iconic and healthy material object, mediated through both television and the Internet. These objects do not sit alone, however, as a product developed just two years before the millennium brings additional cache to the counter as a highly specialized, class-oriented device for making coffee. Interestingly, this device features a marketing plan catered towards a male audience, further evidence of a masculine presence in the kitchen.

Expressing Gender in the Keurig Coffee Maker



Figure 28: Keurig Elite Brewing System B40

Source: Keurig, www.keurig.com/brewers

Originally the Keurig coffee maker was designed specifically for a corporate space, but this single-brew system then was redesigned for the home. This comfort of individual brewing allows men and women the comfort of gourmet coffee by just pressing a button and not having to drive to Starbucks or any other coffee café.

“Choose. Brew. Enjoy.” stands as the slogan that has encouraged coffee drinkers to enjoy gourmet coffee in the comfort of their home without going to high-end coffee houses for their morning brew. Like the KitchenAid Stand mixer, professionals designed the Keurig for commercial use and later incorporated this new technology for brewing coffee for the home, allowing men and women to have a perfect cup of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate by just pressing a button. The simplicity and the timesaving technology of this appliance and its appeal to consumers, particularly men, has opened the door to the male figure in the kitchen, giving women more time in the morning to relax and spend more time socializing with family.

The black and silver Keurig Elite Brewing System (Figure 28), unlike the typical 8-cup coffee maker, features a 48-ounce water reservoir from which hot liquid dispenses to brew an 8- or 10-ounce serving from a preferred K-Cup (Figure 29). With optional features and cup sizes, users access larger versions of the system by an extra button. With push button technology, the efficiency and promptness of a Keurig allows women and men to choose over 200 different types and flavors of beverages. This abundance of choices leads to waste in the manufacture and distribution of the disposable but not recyclable K-Cups. Despite this lack of environmental concern, acquiring a Keurig system apparently raises social status within households that contain one. (Strasser, 1999).



Figure 29: Keurig K-Cup

Source: Keurig Coffee Makers, www.keurigcoffeebrewers.com

Green Mountain Coffee Company is one of the primary brands of coffee made by the Keurig systems. Each K-Cup provides 8- to 10-ounce servings of the preferred beverage of choice. The K-cups allow the user to have a feeling of individuality through the single-brew process, while traditional coffee makers make people share only one type of coffee.

Introduced in 1998, after eight years of development, the Keurig became one of the first “industrial-strength, single-serving coffee machines that delivers a perfect cup of coffee or tea each time” (Leder, 2004). Co-founders, Peter Dragone and John Sylvan,

formed the Keurig Company in 1990 in reaction to the inadequacies in the market when attempting to serve a flawless single cup of coffee. They named the company Keurig, derived from the Dutch word “excellence,” to reflect the level of quality in an office coffee maker that could deliver a fresh, single serving at the perfect temperature throughout the day (“The Keurig Story - Keurig.com,” 2012). Before long, people who experienced the benefits of the system at work desired a machine at home, thus bringing the Keurig Coffee Maker to the countertops of upper and middle class households.

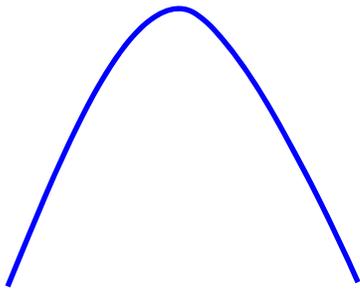


Figure 30: Parabola shape

The Parabola shape, based off a mathematical equation, influenced the design of a number of products in the twentieth century, including the Keurig brew systems.

The tilted parabolic shape (Figure 30) of the Keurig, weighing at 12-pounds, stands at a height of 13-inches, and a width of 9.8-inches, with a diameter of 13.3-inches. This organic shape of the appliance echoes design sensibilities of the Modernist period of the 1950s, where the curvilinear form inspired architects (Gellernter, 1999): Eero Saarien’s Gateway Arch, St. Louis, Missouri (Figure 31) and Félix Candela’s L’Ocenogràfic, Valencia, Spain (Figure 32). The form continues to inspire current design like the 2001 Alessi electric kettle designed by Michael Graves, and carried nationwide at Target retail stores (Figure 33).



Figure 31: Eero Saarinen, Gateway Arch, St. Louis, Missouri, 1968
 Source: Perlut, Aaron. "St. Louis Doesn't Suck". Forbes, www.forbes.com. December 6, 2011.
 Through a modern design with a lasting impression, Saarinen deploys the parabola shape for The Gateway Arch Memorial (St. Louis Arch) as a symbol reflecting the surrounding landscape and the expansion westward. (Capps, n.d.) .



Figure 32: Félix Candela, L'Oceanogràfic, Valencia, Spain, 2002
 Source: "2002 – L'Oceanogràfic, Valencia, Spain. Archiseek. http://archiseek.com. Contemporary architecture today continues to use the shape, based off a mathematical equation, as a major focal point of the design. The design resembles a water lily, reflecting the program of the space as an oceanographic aquarium ("2002 – L'Oceanogràfic, Valencia, Spain," n.d.).



Figure 33: Michael Graves, Alessi electric kettle, 1985. The kettle rotates a parabola around a vertical axis to create the curved form. The teapot takes shape as the first product by an American designer manufactured by Alessi, an Italian company. The polished stainless steel and arch design also suggests an influence from the Art Moderne period.

The Keurig's parabolic shape creates a nurturing or cradling quality with the sides of the machine wrapping around the cup and the removable tray, embracing the cup as the focus of the machine is on the coffee making process. The drip tray prevents water damage on counter surfaces and includes a metal plate with a starburst design (Figure 34). The star might suggest an ideogram for independence, found on most national and state flags (Liungman, 2004). This independence of the consumer reflects in the product where drinkers select their own individual type of beverage, one by one.



Figure 34: Removable drip tray

Source: Aromacup.com, www.keurig.aromacup.com

The design of the starburst drip tray celebrates the independence of the consumer, centering the process of making the coffee, marked by the star and starburst piercings.

This quiet-brew technology encourages the user to assume a quiet function, however the machine sings out with each brew, disquieting the kitchen environment. Just as at a gourmet coffee shop, the Keurig's sound emulates the sound of a foam arm of an espresso maker, giving a "gourmet" effect to the coffee making process. Using their branded K-Cups with the highly specialized coffee maker simplifies the process of making coffee. The K-Cups (Figure 35) – small plastic cups including premeasured coffee, filter in a air tight container, eliminating the need to measure — bring over 200 varieties of flavors to the consumer, including Starbucks, Newman's Own, Millstone, Folgers, Dunkin Donuts, Caribou Coffee, Celestial Seasonings, Twinings, Tazo, famous chefs such as Wolfgang Puck and Emeril Lagasse, as well as Green Mountain Coffee Roasters (a 40% owner of Keurig brand) (Leder, 2004).

By choosing one of the blue highlighted buttons, either a small cup button or large cup button, the appliance begins the less-than-minute-long brewing process. In addition to the location of the cup size buttons, the right side of the machine features five small lights to advise of water needs, de-scaling, heat cycle indicator, auto off and

power. The power light also includes a power button, however the Keurig automatically powers itself off within two hours of being inactive.

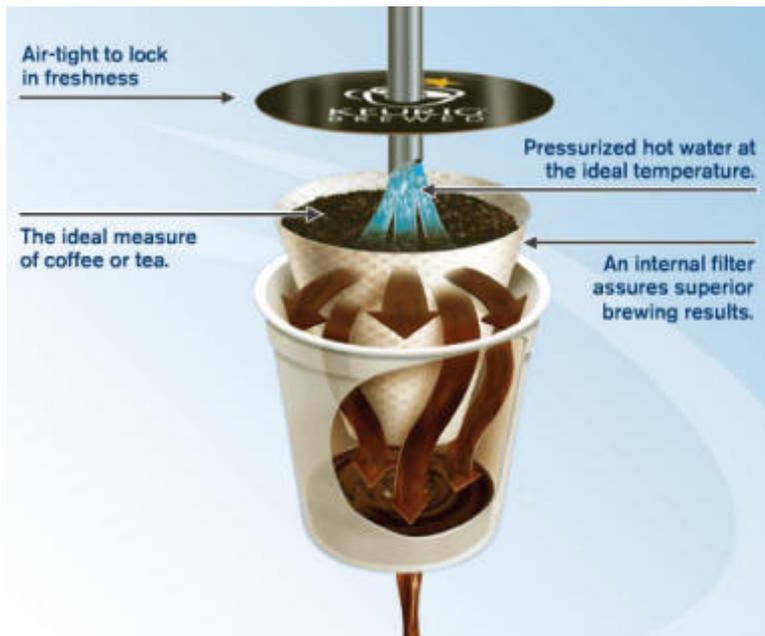


Figure 35: K-Cup Technology

Source: Squidoo. www.squidoo.com/Keurig-B60-information

The K-cup technology, advertised as economical and sustainable, includes a plastic cup with pre-measured coffee and a filter in an efficient, air tight container.

With assortment of K-cups and the ability to create your own beverage, this machine miniaturizes and mobilizes the coffee shop experience, bringing it to the suburban kitchen. With a simple touch of a button, the owners can effectively order a larger size without guilt or interruption to their daily routine. The center of the machine holds the “face” of the unit, including the silver handle to open and insert the K-Cup, and the push-button control center on the right side. The silver lip lifts up before the bottom in a double-hinged jaw motion, lending a certain anthropomorphic quality to the appliance (Figure 36), not unlike that of the George Foreman Grill. This fluid motion of the top that opens the unit simultaneously hinges the bottom cup holder at an appropriate angle,

solid engineering and product development significantly contributing to this design. The bottom lid tilts forward to make it easier to add the K-cup of your choice. Strasser (2000) states that “From the start, ‘disposability’” was promoted for its ability to make people feel rich: with throwaway products, they could obtain levels of cleanliness and convenience once available only to people with many servants” (p. 9). The popularity of this product, possibly due to the notion of disposability as an idea, contributes to the convenience and cleanliness espoused by the company, most especially the avoidance of cleaning coffee grinds from the maker. This convenience of a push-of-a-button luxury coffee shop in the home has allowed men and women freedom from the drudgery and mess of making coffee, a theme that the Keurig system shares with the George Foreman Grill.



Figure 36: Opening Keurig Brew System

Source: Keurig. www.keurig.com

The double-hinged jaw motion of the Keurig gives it an anthropomorphic quality. The ease of placing and removing the K-cup in the tilted bottom lip makes the clean up faster and convenient.

Push-button technology has had a major impact on the American culture starting in the late 1950s. Hine (2007) reminds us that our "...push-button age" seems the most comprehensive and evocative, the one that embraces the miracles and the menace of the time" (p 123). As new technologies transform people's perspectives towards the material world (Strasser, 2000). The Keurig Elite Brewing System offers a choice between pressing one of two buttons, greatly simplifying and streamlining a multi-step, complex series of tasks. The marketing for the Keurig Coffee indicates a simplifying of the brewing process and eliminating the drudgery of the task: grinding of the beans, measuring amounts of coffee, handling the filter and the clean up. Though simpler, this coffee maker takes up more space than the Brew Central 12-cup Programmable Coffeemaker, made by Cuisinart, and many other coffee models. Outside the coffee maker itself, the Keurig system also requires space for the storage of the unfortunately unstackable K-cups. Luckily, the company provided a solution by presenting an additional purchase option for a K-Cup Carousel and other manufacturers followed suit with similar products. Other than keeping the K-Cups in their original boxes, nothing is included with the coffee maker to provide storage options. The storage dispensers, like the K-Cup Carousel is 10-inches tall and has a 8-inch diameter. These storage containers take up more room on counters or in cabinets than standard filters and a bag of coffee. From the analysis thus far, the Keurig advertises to be efficient, sustainable, and convenient, none of which reflects the totality of the machine and its attendant supplies in its kitchen context.



Figure 37: Keurig Commercial 2010, at 2 seconds
 Source: Food Network, November 2010
 From the beginning of the commercial, the husband remains the focus. Here he prepares his wife's morning coffee, with her out of the shot and not in the kitchen.



Figure 38: Keurig Commercial 2010, at 4 seconds
 Source: Food Network, November 2010
 A close up of the push-button brew process emphasizes the effortlessness of coffee making without the drudgery of measuring coffee and water.



Figure 39: Keurig Commercial 2010, at 6 seconds
 Source: Food Network, November 2010
 The dad makes eye contact with the son declaring a "hey I can do this without your mom" feel. While eating his breakfast, it's important to note that the child already had his breakfast and, as viewers, we still have not seen the mother on screen.

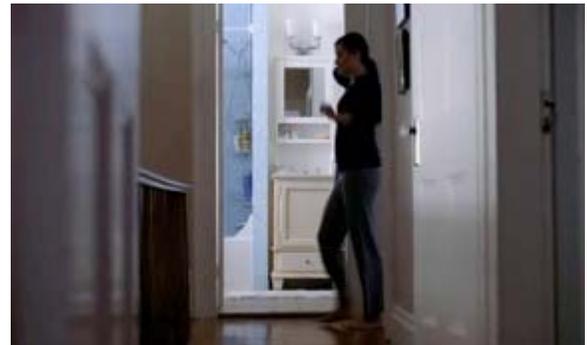


Figure 40: Keurig Commercial 2010, at 8 seconds
 Source: Food Network, November 2010.
 The woman, who typically waits on the man and children of the house, appears in the scene, just waking up and taking her time walking into the kitchen. The message: the simple technology of this appliance reverses the roles.



Figure 41: Keurig Commercial 2010, at 14 seconds
 Source: Food Network, November 2010
 As soon as the mother walks into the kitchen her husband greets her with her perfectly brewed cup of coffee. Warm cup trades from hand to hand as a symbol of comfort.



Figure 42: Keurig Commercial 2010, at 15 seconds
 Source: Food Network, November 2010
 With a high-five, the wife congratulates her husband on providing her coffee and feeding their son without her help. She then interacts with her son and relaxes in the morning, not a common prospect.

No matter who brews the coffee, the Keurig commercials depict the individuality and the effortlessness of using this machine. In a recent commercial in 2010 (Figures 37-42), the husband picks out the wife's K-Cup and brews her coffee as she comes to the kitchen. With a high-five the wife congratulates the husband on his success of brewing her the perfect coffee (Figure 42). The commercial reverses the traditional roles of the husband and wife. In this instance, the husband in the commercial has gotten up before his wife and has given his son breakfast, making sure her coffee awaits as she walks into the kitchen.

Fifty years earlier, morning routines stood distinctly different. A traditional housewife from Levittown discussed her usual morning routine, "Well, naturally, I get up first, make breakfast for my husband and put a load of clothes in my washer while breakfast cooks. Then I wake him up, give him his breakfast and he's off to work. Then I make breakfast for the children." (Carlisle, Nasardinov, & Pustz, 2008). By the latter part of the century, the push-button technology allows the male figure to move into the

kitchen and into the position of preparing breakfast. Hine (2007) states that the push button technology freed women from laborious work, which the Keurig incorporates to shorten and simplify the activity of coffee making. Now, as in the commercial, the wife seems relaxed and has the ability to sleep in longer and spend more time with her children than stressing over meal and beverage presentation.

Alongside the power tool of the KitchenAid Stand Mixer and the personified George Foreman Grill that transforms the kitchen into a domain for both women and men, the Keurig high-tech and highly specialized coffee appliance draws men further into the environment and more deeply situates them in rituals embedded in such spaces. With its scientific focus and the use of industrial materials, the Keurig Elite Brew Coffee Maker reflects a masculine quality along with the ease of use, bringing this third artifact into the realm of twenty-first century kitchen contents. All three appliances signal shifting understandings of gender in a highly charged space. All three appliances bring a hyper-specialization to the kitchen, where simpler, less complex tools might accomplish the same tasks. All three appliances bring to question consumer habits at many stages of a homeowner's life, including the establishment of households at marriage, a subject taken up in the brief foray on bridal registries that follows.

Something Old, Something New

Out of a selection of 15 Belk Department Store wedding registries from Belk Department Store, a newlywed couple on average registered for 10 electric kitchen appliances (Table 1). In the sample, no single couple registered for all three items.

Table 1: Wedding Registry Data Table

From 15 wedding registries from Belk Department Store, this table shows the data collected from the Kitchen Electric category. The KitchenAid Stand mixer was the most popular item out of the three that I chose to analyze, while the Keurig was the least common. Couples averaged at 9.87 kitchen electrics per list, one couple registered for 14 different appliances, many with overlapping features.

	KA	ALIKE	GF	ALIKE	KG	ALIKE	AVG TOTAL ITEMS	AVG OTHER ITEMS
	9/15	9/15	5/15	11/15	1/15	4/15	9.87	5.33
%	60%	60%	33.3%	73.3%	6.7%	26.7%		
GUIDE								
KA: KITCHENAID STAND MIXER				ALIKE: SIMILAR APPLIANCES				
GF: GEORGE FOREMAN GRILL				KG: KEURIG COFFEE MAKER				

Twenty per cent (3 out of the 15) of the couples registered for two brand names together, always the combination of the KitchenAid Stand Mixer and the George Foreman Grill. The KitchenAid Artisan Stand Mixer – the most popular of the three appliances – found its way onto the registry for sixty percent of the couples. Forty-four percent (4 out of 10) also registered for attachments, with the rotor slicer/shredder as the most popular. Respondents selected the KitchenAid 5-speed hand mixer or Black & Decker hand mixer, both of which can do almost everything the Artisan mixer can do. Only one couple registered for the Sunbeam Mix Master Stand Mixer, a constant source of competition for KitchenAid, products. One third of the couples (n=5) placed the George Foreman Grill on their register, all of them requesting the larger sized appliance. 11 of 15 couples registered for similar appliances to the grill, including electric skillet, griddles, Panini presses, quesadilla makers, and waffle makers. Only one couple registered for the B70 Platinum Keurig as well as the K-cup carousel storage device. 26.7 percent registered for alternative coffee makers and devices. The same 15 couples ordered other items for their registries, at an average number of 5.33 items per couple. The most popular additional items included griddles (n=14), food processors (n=12),

CrockPots (n=11) and blenders (n=10) (Table 2). The couples also ordered toasters and toaster ovens (n=8), linking to the Art Deco lines of the KitchenAid stand mixer.

Table 2: Total items from registries

This table lists of the total number of kitchen appliances from all 15 registries. Many of the items overlap in similar features, such as items like the griddle and electric skillet. The majority of these items are not used for the preparation of every day use.

TOTALS	
ITEM	QUANTITY
Food Processor (FP)	12
Combo FP/Blender	3
Blender	10
CrockPot	11
Beverages	10
Stand Mixer	10
Miscellaneous	9
Griddle	14
Waffle Maker	9
Toaster/Toaster Oven	8
Deep Fryer	7
Coffee Makers	5
Electric Can Opener	5
Electric Knife	6
Electric Skillet	5
Electric Juicer	4
Panini Press	4

Armed with ten consumer kitchen appliances in their hypothetical kitchens of the wedding registries has a direct impact on the types of kitchens new couples might expect in their homes. Couples' ideal kitchens typically increase in size due to the excess amount and over consumption issues of today. Currently searching for an identity, through consumption of objects, houses, furniture, clothes, cars, etc. we define who we are (Gram-Hanssen & Bech-Danielsen, 2004). This surplus of items collected reflects the evolutionary change of the square footage of the kitchen space. In *Better*

Homes and Garden magazine, mid-century kitchens averaged 117.6 square-feet or 7.4% of the overall home floor plan (Table 3). By March 2000 issue, a family-fit kitchen measured at 425.5 square-feet in a L-shaped layout, with a large island in the center (Figure 43). In this latter kitchen, to enhance storage, kitchen designers included a series of pull out drawers and sliding trays to provide convenience and use every square inch efficiently.

Table 3: *Better Homes and Garden* data
Better Homes and Gardens magazine included different floor plans in each monthly issue. In 1970 the plans disappear and introduced back in the 1995 editions, however they are withdrawn again in 2000 to the present. These plans are evidence of the kitchen. The kitchen remains the approximately around the same percentage of the home, but as seen in 1995 the breakfast room becomes included and part of the kitchen space, increasing the overall size of the kitchen.

DATE	KITCHEN SIZE (sq feet)	HOUSE PLAN (sq feet)	KITCHEN % OF HOME
1960	115	1,568	7.3%
1965	133	2,077	6.4%
1970	146	1,918	7.6%
1975-1990 did not include square footage of both kitchen and house			
1995	173	2,448	7%
1995 with Breakfast Room	287	2,448	11.7%

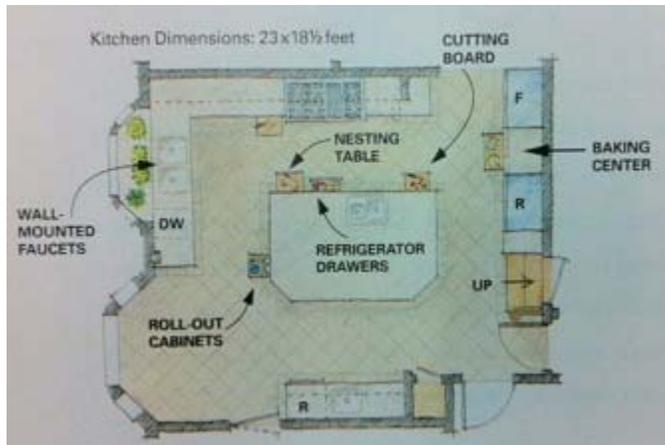


Figure 43: Contemporary Kitchen Plan

Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, March 2000

The ideal family kitchen, a 23 x 18 ½ foot kitchen space, incorporates many built-ins for maximum storage. This one even includes a baking center, where a KitchenAid Stand Mixer could be placed.

Just like the overall square footage, the amount of counter space continues to grow because people leave appliances out as if they represented works of art. The KitchenAid stand mixer, mentioned earlier, is one of these items that owners organize their kitchen spaces around and it often deeply influences the aesthetics of the kitchen. With various color appliances now available, appliances such as those studied for this thesis become accent and complimentary decorations. For example these two contrasting photographs (Figures 44) from *Better Homes and Garden* May 2005 magazine indicate different values for the homeowners. In Figure 18, the warm colors of the mixer, toaster, and teakettles contrast with the cool colors in the countertop and backsplash, sharpening and deepening the dialogue between the two. In Figure 44, the homeowner selected more neutral appliances to blend with the more traditional environment depicted there. Both embrace new tools for preparing and cooking, but

each treats these electrical appliances with different attitudes. In other words, generally the appliances reflect the individual identities of the homeowners.



Figure 44: Shabby Chic Kitchen Design

Source: *Better Homes and Gardens*, May 2005

Within magazines, photographs of kitchen designs incorporate appliances into the visual picture to emphasize popular items, allowing their design and color to enhance the design of the space.

Social Maps

Through material cultural and visual analysis of objects, media sources, registries, and advertisements, I constructed an ideal social map for a contemporary kitchens (Figure 45). While not every kitchen would necessarily contain all three objects subjected to close readings within this thesis, they stand as markers of an ever varying sense about who belongs in the kitchen and how the space of the kitchen serves the occupants of the house as a place embodying gender. By studying the kitchen objects closely, and by correlating other data, they reflect a gender hybridization of kitchen

designs today, where men and women – not just women alone – share in the work and the celebrations of such spaces within suburban homes.

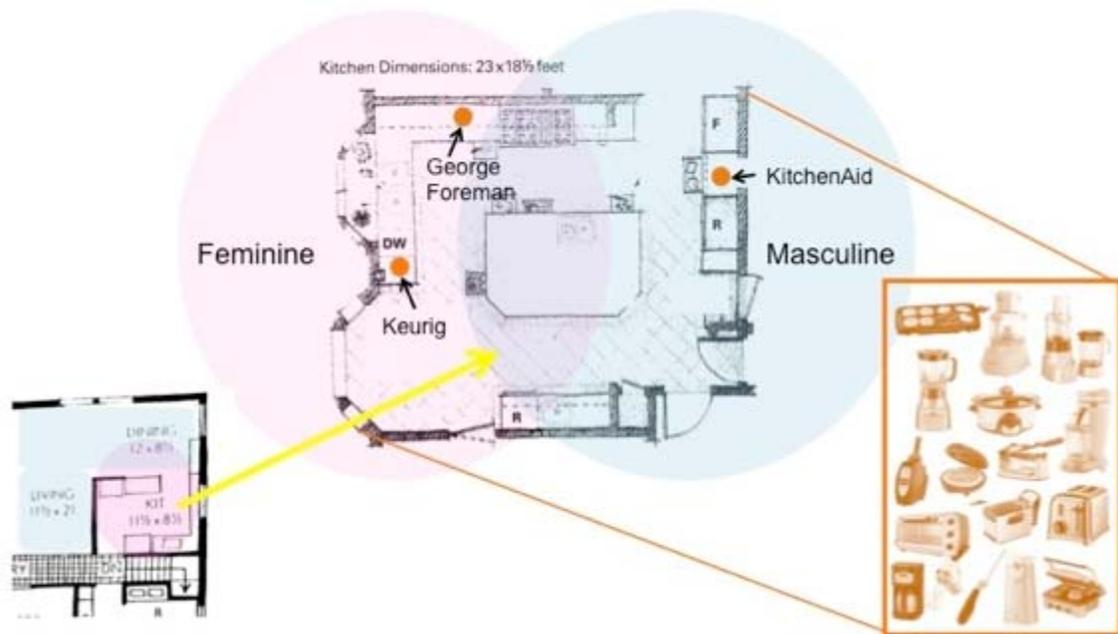


Figure 45: Combination Social Map

The layout and design of the kitchen, and the appliances found there, reflect gender. The objects placed within this space have increased the size and organization of the kitchen and have brought masculinity into the once feminized space.

From the beginning of the twentieth century to the present, the design of kitchen appliances reflects the ideals of consumers and manufacturers from each particular time period. The earliest appliance analyzed herein, the multifunctional KitchenAid Stand Mixer introduced in 1919, provides an example of a slowly evolving but relatively static design form over a number of decades, a recognizable product among generations that symbolizes social status, American ingenuity, and the presence of a male world entering the kitchen. The more recent appliances – or more accurately through advertisements for these appliances, the George Foreman Grill and the Keurig Coffeemaker, involve a

single function or a single user to reflect increasing masculinity in the kitchen. Where the former product links to celebrity personality and endorsement as a means of transporting men into the kitchen, the latter product implies the appropriateness of a man making coffee as an indication of shifting gender roles in the kitchen itself. Wedding registries underscore these changes, with many couples (not just the women) registering for a variety of kitchen appliances and equipment such as the three studies here. The increasingly singular function of these objects reflects, too, a hyper-specialization of such artifacts in the latter twentieth century. Regardless, the three as a collection demonstrate the shifting identities of their owners through their purchase and use in the kitchen space.

The abundance of kitchen appliances mirrors within media representations of kitchen spaces. From *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, we see a 4.4% increase in the size of kitchens since the mid-twentieth century, sometimes resulting in “mega kitchens” in today’s homes. In the contemporary kitchen, homeowners face a daunting challenge to store their cooking aids often equivalent to equipment used in four-star restaurants. In these large kitchens, the advanced technologies and designs implemented by manufacturers for these appliances have shifted the clear gender stratification of the kitchen of the earlier century. Though these appliances presumably ease and hasten the cooking experience, they trace the melding of American consumer identities for both men and women in domestic space.

CHAPTER V

COMING TO TERMS WITH GENDER IN THE KITCHEN

We need objects to magnify our power, enhance our beauty, and extend our memory into the future.

Csikszentmihalyi, 1993

In each research question and every methodology, successes, limitations and challenges need to be addressed. For this study, I suggest that the mixed methods methodology resulted in the most unbiased result as possible, though as the researcher, my personal experiences and previous knowledge influenced my outcomes. The multi-disciplinary approach helped me further reduce my prior expectations by looking at my thesis question from different backgrounds, including home design, media and material culture, preservation, consumerism, gender studies, and social and anthropologic studies, just as Hebdige suggests in the study of material culture.

My interest in preservation, design, cooking, consumerism, and feminist studies led me to this research. Looking back on my assumptions prior to this study, I have changed my opinion dramatically about the reflection of gender in the contemporary kitchen. Since I consider myself a feminist and an avid and critical foodie, I had to figure out a way to counteract my thoughts and belief and, through the investigation of literature, my perceptions began to change. From my early reading and research, I shifted my initial thesis of researching women's gender reflected in the kitchen to actually seeing how masculinity has entered into this space; gender neutralizing this once heavily feminized space.

My obsession with the culinary world has led to watching many hours of *Iron Chef America*, Ina Garten, Giada De Laurentiis, Anne Burrell, Bobby Flay, Mario Batali, Emeril Lagasse, Nigella Lawson, *Top Chef*, *Chopped*, and *The Chew*. Never again will I look at these shows as a critic just for their food and processes. I will now always view the appliances chosen and the spaces the shows take place in with a critical eye. Similarly, I will never view advertisements and commercials about these appliances in my study with my initial one-sided perspective. As a crucial component of my work, visual and material culture analysis allows me to look past the stereotypes to a broader analysis. This is also true of the data collected from *Better Homes and Gardens*, since this particular magazine has a targeted feminine audience.

In the analysis of the KitchenAid stand mixer, the George Foreman Grill, and the Keurig Coffee Maker, all three appliances resisted a pure reading to reflect gender in the kitchen. As I only analyzed three items in depth, and with the quick quantitative research of wedding registries, I learned that only three of the 15 couples had at least two of the studied items on their list, making it hard to fully read the space accurately. These assumptions should be researched further with analysis of all the items and appliances that make up the entire kitchen.

The new direction in preservation of a values-centered approach seems an appropriate one for a project such as this. From an initial review of wedding registries and with my background analysis underway, a distinct theme of masculinity seemed to emerge from the evidence. Throughout the entire research, I continued to see the change of the gender of objects being reflected in the kitchen, which surprised me. Never did I imagine the outcome of the masculine influence in these objects – it resulted from a project where I continued to be challenged by my peers to look further. Now

more than ever before, I believe the kitchen, and everything within it, stands a social map, filled with ideologies about gender. Just like the mid-twentieth century, the social maps of kitchens today dictate women's places within the space and the household. But, importantly, they share this space with husbands and partners. Today the hybridization of the kitchen takes place on a gendered social map, one populated by both women and men (Figure 46). To uncover even more meanings, should I decide to take on future research, I could use a similar methodology to look at the entire house as a whole and how objects begin to define gender roles within each residential space.

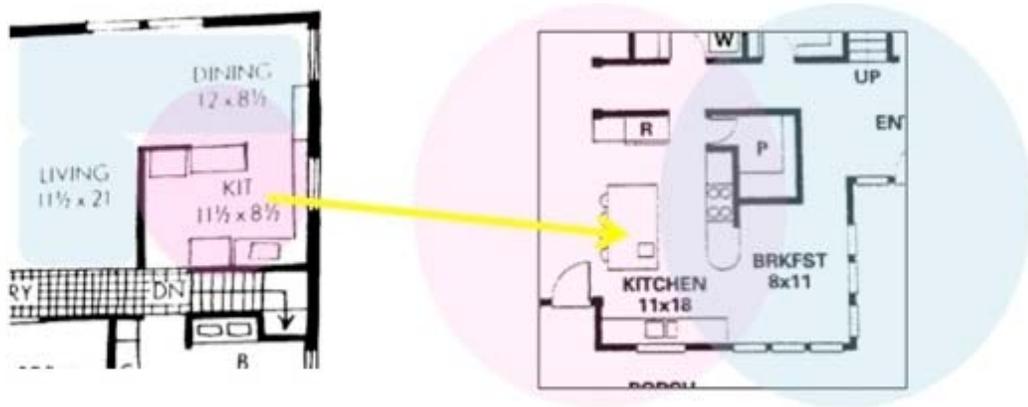


Figure 46: Gender map of 1960 floor plan to 2000 floor plan
The 1960s kitchen on the left depicts a heavily feminized, closed off kitchen. The more open plan of 2000, provides the possibility for a crossing of genders through kitchen and through the addition of masculine gendered appliances.

This study of the home as a social map would allow greater understanding of the social aspects, placing the home within the larger picture of the culture, reflect methods of understanding and ways to improve living conditions for the future.

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