

Brewing Popular Culture: A Reading of Select Tea Advertisements

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Abstract :

Advertisements have become an everyday presence in our lives, proliferating through mass media and new media platforms. They are shaped out of a social logic reflecting the capitalist ideologies that define the consumerist society. The ads create semantic worlds to be deciphered by the potential consumers, who in turn are expected to develop a distinct taste for the commodity. Among the multitude of objects commodified and marketed through television advertisements, tea is an important item from the everyday cultural practice in India, the history of which can be traced back to the colonial times. The image economy enabled through television made it easier for the tea manufacturers to use ads to attribute brand values to their commodity. Along with enhancing the visual experience of the prospective consumers, these ads also enticed them towards building their self-images through the purchase of specific brands of a commodity. This paper intends to look into the practice of drinking tea as a part of our popular culture and its representations through a discursive reading of select advertisements of Taj Mahal Tea.

Keywords: Popular Culture, Advertisements, Mass Media, Taste, Women