
HM 304

Semiotics



Understanding "Mythologies" -Roland Barthes

Assignment 1

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1 Introduction

This is about understanding the very important aspect that we see in the semiotics which is regarding the mythologies that prevail in our surrounding and the society. Here in this assignment we will uncover the meaning of the given mythology with a view of a semiotician.

2 Mythologies

2.1 The Blue Guide

We start with the very well-known book "The Blue Guide." This book is an essential thing for people who want to travel to Europe, more specifically the United Kingdom. From old times, it was noticed that people used to carry travel guides to find their destination or to choose the best one, as they comprised of famous and beautiful places and also indicated the culture that prevailed in that region. But this is a matter of question because no one has ever questioned the naturalness or innocence that the author and editor of such books want to show us. In the present day too, if we are not using a travel guide and going with the World Wide Web, we will find the most famous thing about that place, and such things mainly include mountains, old or historic monuments, rivers if any, temples if you visit countries like India, Bali, Indonesia, etc. We see a lot of things hidden behind the references we get from the travel guide or, in modern days, the Internet, and they include things like the current situation, the culture that prevails in that decora, and the ideology that is followed among a group of people living there. All things are always missing. In the first half itself, Barthes highlights that why should one always see the mountains, gorges, and torrents? Why cannot we see other scenery, such as the plains or plateaus, in that region? We don't talk about the soil in that region. We only consider that point if there is something particular about the fertility and crops of that soil, which seems quite natural. Barthes motive was not to hinder the thought process that we consider natural, but it is just that one should be aware of how that person is influenced, maybe knowingly or unknowingly. We consider the travel guides to be labor-saving as they reduce our efforts to find places to visit and learn more about those places.

Further, apart from the monuments, we should consider other aspects, like the fact that in the book Blue Guide, it is stated that men exist as "types." He gives some examples by considering Basque the sailor, Catalan the tradesman, and Cantabrian the highlander. This all makes the very common bourgeois mythology, which is made when people like the ones above have capitalist thinking. This reduces the reality that Spain has, apart from just having those ancient monuments. The author indicates the myth that is carried by the book; this only shows that Spain is a country full of churches, crosses, spires, Romanesque porches, etc. This strongly tells us that the author is biased toward one religion, which is Christianity. From his or her perception, all the art and monuments are built with reference to this one religion, moreover, Catholicism. This not only indicates that the book is not able to support secularism, but it may also hurt the sentiments of people from other minority groups or castes. This makes a person encounter Spanish history, which is primarily formed by Christianity, which suppresses the Muslim civilization or any other religion of that region. Thus, the author suggests that the book is lacking in phenomenology and its explanation for such a view that cultivates in one individual. This proves that for a modern traveler, it would be difficult to cross even the present countryside with that old, historic evaluation of thoughts. This shows that the book is not hiding the truth but rather the present culture of the region, as well as the economics, sociology, and some town planning of that region. This creates an alibi for its culture by

not showcasing the key aspects that one should have while traveling through that place. Though we may find that this old-fashioned approach to the book is better to use, there are some books, like the “Michelin Guide,” that indicate the facilities of those places nearby in addition to their historic or natural aspects. At last, the guide does not mention the extremists or the nationalist moments that took place in the past. So we would conclude that The Blue Guide seems to be natural as it is, but it has this nature of bias toward some myths in the region.

2.2 Neither-Nor Criticism

Hello

2.3 The Great Family man