This excerpt is about the weekly magazine Elle, which Barthes claims is a real mythological treasure. This magazine comes with a wide number of photographs of prepared dishes like golden partridges, chicken chaudfroid, mold crayfish, and many more. He says all these dishes have a smooth coating. This makes us gaze at the surface of the food with endeavor, though the food is buried under this luxurious coating. Barthes uses semiotic tools to identify the myth behind this ornamental cooking from Elle magazine; he uses signifiers and signified, connotation and denotation to bifurcate the very obvious. It is clearly seen that the magazine emphasizes the upper class over the working class. Cookery is a very essential and basic thing for each individual in the world, but just by applying some icing, jellies, and creams, it now becomes a thing to gaze at for the upper class, and the essential nutrition gets sedimented beneath this coating. Barthes says for the editors of Elle magazine, cooking is for the eye alone, as it has this genteel sense. It is seen that Elle is a valuable journal from the perspective of the legends. Thus, the cookery made with such a coating disguises the primary nature of the food, and in this way, the motive of a country dish vanishes. From the view of semiotics, we can see that the signifiers are the glossy photographs that the magazine carries, and the signified is the food for the upper class, which has sophistication. Though the food denotes the literal meaning as a healthy item to eat, the connotation it possesses is that it has the essence of its cultural association, which adds a layer to the ordinary dish. Further, in addition to this, Barthes called this major development of genteel cookery an ornamentation to food, as he gave some examples such as chiseled mushrooms, motifs of carved lemon, silver pastilles, and arabesques of glace fruit. This was the reason that Barthes called them sediments, as the food itself becomes a kind of bedrock, and at the surface level all these ornaments take place. He also mentions that there seems to be some partiality for the pinkish color. The passage has two contradictory ways of ornamentation: fleeing from nature and reconstituting nature. In fleeing from nature, the approach involves manipulation of food’s natural appearance, for example, making chicken look pink and serving grapefruit hot. In reconstituting nature, the author uses artificial elements to represent them as natural, for example, strewing meringue mushrooms and holly leaves on a Christmas cake. This whole idea is compared with the Petit-Bourgeois Trinkets, as both the food and the trinkets exhibit to be real and want to have clever ideas. For example, saddles and lighters are shaped like cigarettes. They have a clever idea to represent, but at the same time they want to look more natural. Ultimately, we can say that the appearance of a appearance of a food  is more important than its taste. Barthes put his argument as follows: this way of mimicking upper-class sophistication has superficial means. Barthes gave the example of L’Express magazine, which is a journal related to women. There, the idea of cooking is confined more to a fairy land and is only applied to the garnishing of food items.

Barthes, in the last passage, highlights the disconnection between mythical economics and reality for its working-class audience. In mythical economies, ornamental cooking is just a fantasy rather than having practical implications. The ingredients used seem more expensive, which leads to the myth that good cooking needs fancy techniques and expensive ingredients. He focuses on the point that this cookery is dream-like, as all the photographs are taken from a high angle, which is visually appealing, but one cannot consume it. This further seems more like an advertisement. Barthes makes a good comparison with L’Express as it is capable of providing featured recipes like “salade nicoise,” which is handy to make. Thus, Elle offers fiction more than reality and perpetuates social hierarchy by reinforcing the idea that good food and sophisticated taste come to the wealthy, leaving the middle class feeling excluded from this world.