

Who was Roland Barthes?

- Full name *Roland Gerard Barthes*.
- Born on November 12, 1915.
- Died in March 25, 1980.
- He was a French essayist and social and literary critic.
- His writings on semiotics, the formal study of symbols and signs pioneered by **Ferdinand de Saussure**, helped establish **structuralism** and the **New Criticism** as leading intellectual movements.



Mythologies

- In 1957, *Roland Barthes* published his book "*Mythologies*". .
- This is actually a collection of essays which were taken from *Les Lettres nouvelles*.
- Examining the tendency of contemporary social value systems to create modern myths.
- Barthes also looks at the **semiology** of the process of myth creation, which is the study of sign process (**semiosis**), that is any form of activity, conduct, or any process that involves signs, including the production of meaning.
- Updated *Ferdinand de Saussure's* system of **sign analyses** by adding a second level where signs are elevated to the level of myth.

1. Mythologies

- The first section of Mythologies describes a selection of modern cultural phenomena, chosen for their status as modern myths and for the added meaning that has been conferred upon them.
- Each short chapter analyses one such myth, ranging from *Einstein's Brain* to *Soap Powders and Detergents*.
- They were originally written as a series of bi-monthly essays for the magazine *Les Lettres Nouvelles*.

1. Mythologies

➤ EXAMPLE 1:

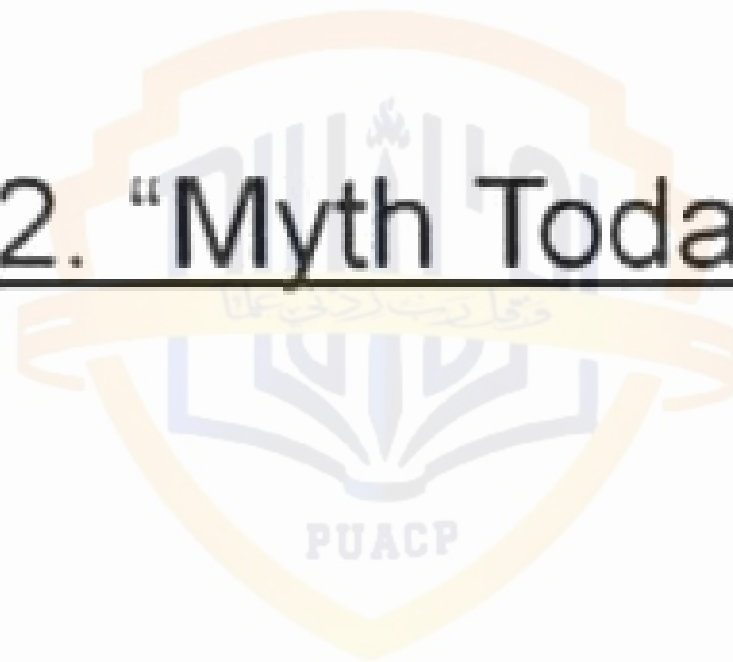
In a typical example, Barthes describes the image that has been built up around red wine and how it has been adopted as a French national drink, how it is seen as a social equaliser and the drink of the proletariat, partly because it is seen as blood-like (as in Holy Communion) and points out that very little attention is paid to red wine's harmful effects to health, but that it is instead viewed as life-giving and refreshing — 'in cold weather, it is associated with all the myths of becoming warm, and at the height of summer, with all the images of shade, with all things cool and sparkling.'

1. Mythologies

➤ EXAMPLE 2:

In another chapter, Barthes explores the myth of professional wrestling. He describes how, unlike in the sport of boxing, the aim of theatrical stunt fighting is not to discover who will win or 'a demonstration of excellence'. [2] it is a staged spectacle acting out society's basic concepts of good and evil, of 'Suffering, Defeat and Justice'. [3] The actors pretending to be wrestlers, like characters in a pantomime, portray grossly-exaggerated stereotypes of human weakness: the traitor, the conceited, the 'effeminate teddy-boy'. The audience expects to watch them suffer and be punished for their own transgressions of wrestling's rules in a theatrical version of society's ideology of justice.

2. "Myth Today"



Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Windows.

Significance of Myth

- Myth hides nothing.
- Myth naturalise particular world views.
- Myth makes the people to believe.
- Myths have an imperative button holding character.
- Myths remove our understanding of concepts.
- Myth motivates.