



Semiotics of Drink and Drinking (Continuum Advances in Semiotics)

Paul Manning

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Drink, as an embodied semiotic and material form, mediates social life. This book examines the fundamental nature of drink through a series of modular but connected ethnographic discussions. It looks at the way the materiality of a specific drink (coffee, wine, water, beer) serves as the semiotic medium for a genre of sociability in a specific time and place.

As an explicitly comparative semiotic study, the book uses familiar and unfamiliar case studies to show how drinks with similar material properties are semiotically organized into very different drinking practices, including ethnographic examples as diverse as the relation of coffee to talk (in ordering at Starbucks). Further chapters look at the dryness of gin in relation to the modern cocktail party and the embedding of beer brands in the ethnographic imagination of the nation. Rather than treat drinks as mere props in the exclusively human drama of the social, the book promotes them to actors on the stage.

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