Means and Motives: The Mystification of Mountaineering Discourse

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Abstract

Mountaineers rely on technologies both to make the ascent of mountains physically possible, and to aid in structuring representations of ascents as the means of subjective consolidation. Insofar as they are cyborgs, they are incapable of purity (of either means or motives); and, insofar as they are unwilling to recognize their impurity, they are perpetuating a system of dominance. This essay will examine the agonistic relation between discourses of purity and discourses of technology in three mountaineering texts, with the aim of showing their interconnectedness and irreconcilability. While mountaineering seeks to affirm agential subjectivity, it mystifies the motives for doing so, covering over impure motives by representing pure ones.

Keywords

Mountaineering Literature; the Liberal Subject

Full Text:

PDF

ISSN 1705-9100

methods of critical discourse analysis. The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is con-stitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Marx used the concept of mystification to mean a plausible misrepresentation of what is going on (process) or what is being done (praxis) in the service of the interests of one socioeconomic class (the exploiters) over or against another class (the exploited). By representing forms of exploitation as forms of benevolence, the exploiters bemuse the exploited into feeling at one with their exploiters, or into feeling gratitude for what (unrealized by them) in their exploitation, and, not least, into feeling bad or mad even to think of rebellion. A certain amount of mystification occurs in everyday life. a theory developed elsewhere [Laing. His own motives and intentions are discounted or minimized and replaced by others. who looked and could not see it. fantasy.