

Barthes's Places: *Les lieux*

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In the 1973-74 seminar during which Barthes prepared the book that would be his 1975 *Roland Barthes*, he introduced the concept of *lieux* in the sense I am considering here: 'Dès qu'on lit une continuité un peu ample, évidence de *lieux* qui se répètent, se transforment. Ces lieux (de pensée): attachés à des mots [When one reads a somewhat ample continuity, an evidence of *places* that repeat, are transformed. These places (of thinking): attached to words].'¹ In 1995, teaching a seminar I called 'Roland Barthes: For the Love of Books', I had asked post-graduate students to track eight such *lieux* throughout their ample readings of Barthes, thus initiating students, without knowing it – because the notes for that 1973-74 seminar were not yet published – into precisely the practice Barthes had said he needed. As he said – to himself, in a sense – in those notes: '*profiter* de ce qu'on doit relire tout pour repérer, enregistrer les lieux, les références (au sens philologique) des idées, des thèmes, des sujets [...] *là où ça a été dit* [*take advantage* of the fact that one has to reread everything to locate, register the places, the references (in the philological sense) of ideas, themes, subjects [...] *where the thing was said*]' (*Lexique*, p. 107). The *lieux* are places where things, having been said, can be catalogued, tagged, and used: the motors of Barthes's thinking.

The eight 'places' I proposed in 1995 represent an idiosyncratic though motivated selection from a number of possibilities: they are *le vaseux*, *la moire*, *le scintillement*, *le blanc*, *le poreux*, *l'onde*, *l'ombre*, *le point*. These broad 'locative' instruments include variants (such as *l'empoisement* for *le vaseux*) on which others have reflected (in particular Bernard Comment and Jean-Pierre Richard). Here I will develop my thinking attached to the first four of these words as it emerges from a rereading of the corpus, now including the published courses. These are a few of the terms of Barthes's rhetoric – and the rhetorical richness of Barthes's prose deserves more attention, I feel. Each 'place', provisional but above all strategic, is the center of an area of expansion and application.

We may think of places in Barthes's life. The house in Urt, his favourite place, from which stem narratives of his personal life and other insights; China, which he did not care for, and Japan, which he did,

finding there a flux of meanings; the dark of the cinema, conducive to any desire, of which he said, in the 1973-74 course, that it is a location where something can occur, a place that can be filled – with *jouissance*: ‘le lieu par élection: le lieu *indirect* [the chosen place: the *indirect* place]’ (*Lexique*, p. 173); his position speaking to the influx of listeners at the École pratique des hautes études and then at the Collège de France, which he mentioned in interviews and wrote about in essays; the Éditions du Seuil, where he had friends (Genette, Sollers, François Wahl, others). All of those were places of thinking and speaking, and Barthes does use the word *lieu* for a place of discourse: a place from which one speaks, a locus of meaning and intent, because after all, ‘le langage vient toujours de quelque lieu [language always comes from some place]’.² Samoyault in her biography notes the importance of a place one does not usually think of as productive – the sanatorium – as the source of an ‘écart,’ a gap or split, marking his publications from the start with ‘une forme d’atopie, d’absence de lieu fixe, qui est ce qui définit son œuvre et sa surprise [a type of atopia, of absence of a fixed place, which is what defines his work and his surprise]’.³

But, as Barthes notes about Loyola’s meditative practice, ‘le lieu, pour matériel qu’il soit, a cette fonction logique: il a une force associative [however material it may be, the place has this logical function: it has an associative power]’, and it is those logical associations, rather than the material ones, that can be exploited to produce significance (*OC II*, p. 1080). Ultimately, the place from which he speaks is the place of literature. In his preface to Renaud Camus’s *Tricks*, as Samoyault writes, by recalling the difference between the stereotyped social discourse and literary discourse, which is capable of saying things ‘simply’, of displaying their being and of subtly diffusing their meanings, ‘Barthes réaffirme à cette occasion quel est, depuis toujours et sur n’importe quel sujet, son lieu, l’endroit d’où il parle [Barthes reaffirms on this occasion what has always and on any subject been his place, the place from which he speaks]’ (*Biographie*, pp. 664-65).

The quasi-concepts I want to examine are thought-words; each *lieu* is ‘une pensée-mot’, a place where a particular thinking took place in Barthes’s writing and expanded into broader associations. If material places mean a great deal to Barthes, and they are mentioned quite often in his writing as hosting and fostering his work, or sometimes impeding it, it is this more subtle sense of *place* (as opposed, perhaps, to *space*) in which the man Barthes finds his thinking and from which he speaks that has value for his own understanding of his thinking, and ours in his wake.

As we can read in *Le Lexique de l’auteur*, Barthes had the idea of

an index to his writing which would at last allow him to envision the ‘par lui-même’ book he wanted to write: ‘Repérage systématique de ces lieux: constitution d’un *Index (rerum)* pour répondre à la question “Où ai-je parlé de cela?” [Systematic tracking of these places: creation of an *Index (rerum)* to answer the question: “Where did I speak about that?”]’ (*Lexique*, p. 102). This book would be autonomous, adult, and new because its form would be *lexical*: ‘Je tenais de plus en plus le visionnement recherché, et cette fois-ci: un visionnement de travail, de production [I was more and more sure of the sought-after visioning, and this time, a working, productive visioning]’ (p. 103). So it is *productive* to have identified the *lieux*. However, Barthes came to realize that working toward this book by establishing a glossary put him off course: ‘le Glossaire n’est qu’un faux instrument [the Glossary is just a sham instrument]’ (p. 115). It was simply too huge, and he finished only the letters A, B, and C. In short, that approach led him astray, to the point where he thought his book would no longer fit in the required format. Then he met again with Denis Roche, editor of the series, and the result was a new departure, without glossary (p. 130). But the instrumentality of the concept of *lieux* did not leave him: ‘[L’index] n’est plus statistique, comptable, mais instrument *locatif*: relevé des lieux où il est traité de certains sujets [[The index] is no longer statistical, countable, rather it is a *locative* instrument: survey of the places where certain subjects are treated]’ (p. 112). And the hallucinated form – the visioning – of his book takes on the inspired quality of a cartography, a mapping of places (p. 126).

He will also use *lieux* in a passage from the course on *Le Neutre* to situate himself with respect to the Saussurian distinction between *langue* and *parole*, which he fears has been outmoded or ‘evacuated’. For Barthes there is something unshakable in this opposition, and he notes: ‘besoin de deux lieux, deux espaces en rapport dialectique [need for two places, two spaces in a dialectical relationship]’.⁴ He sees the *langue* as a reserve or sort of tabernacle, within which *la parole* is a moment of actualization or selection taken from this reserve. The word *lieux* in his thinking adds weight to this familiar dialectic, by giving him a place to locate effects of meaning: the places hold meaning all the more because they are in a dialectical relation, and because Barthes needs them to place himself in the dialectic.

A new term for this concept, already mentioned, refines this dialectical *lieu*. The ‘pensée-mot’ (*Lexique*, p. 128) as produced in his writing is neither just the word nor just the thought. Philosophers in contrast are stuck in the mode of the ‘pensée-pensée’, except for

Nietzsche (pp. 62, 128). The ‘pensée-mot’ is a *place* for the subject to imagine himself (p. 302); it refuses the system, science, philosophy, ‘tente de défaire son répertoire au profit de langages malaisément repérables [attempts to dismantle his repertoire in favour of languages difficult to locate]’ (p. 302); it withdraws from ‘la pensée’ (p. 62); it is a way to avoid the hated ‘dissertation’ (p. 339). As Bernard Comment writes, ‘Le sujet Barthes trouve son lieu (ou son non-lieu) dans le paradoxe, cherchant toujours, et tel un habile “surfer”, à se maintenir sur la crête de la vague, pour en chercher une nouvelle dès que celle-ci vient à s’épuiser [Barthes the subject finds his place (or his non-place) in the paradox, always seeking to maintain his position on the crest of the wave like a skillful “surfer”, ready to find a new one as soon as this one comes to an end]’.⁵

Closely related to this refusal of the thought that takes itself for thought and the word that takes itself for the word is the concept of *lieu* as expressed in the course on *Le Discours amoureux*, where Barthes goes so far as to interpolate this parenthesis: ‘(sais-je moi-même d’où je parle?) [(do I even know where I’m speaking from?)].’⁶ What he has in mind here is the intersubjectivity of the course situation, the active *écoute* that produces the subject (of Love, in this case): ‘le lieu d’où je parle vous renvoie au lieu d’où vous écoutez [the place from which I speak refers you to the place from which you listen]’ (p. 285). The place defines both the speaking and the listening in a perpetual exchange: all the places of speaking and listening take place in language, in this case the language of love (as opposed to a particular narrative of it). The lover’s discourse should not be considered as an allocution but rather as a matter of places – again, what we might call a mapping of discourse or what he also calls *situations de langage* (pp. 294-95): ‘Tout au plus pourrait-on esquisser une typologie des *lieux* où le discours se tient [The best one could do would be to sketch a typology of the *places* where discourse takes place]’ (*Discours*, p. 56). He suggests four such places, ranging outward from a solitary discourse to a zero place, which is a metalanguage – the place of analysis, for instance Barthes’s. There is a moving topology of the places of the subject.

In a passage not included in the published *Fragments d’un discours amoureux*, he specifies that the places from which he speaks are what he has loved: ‘livres, phrases, auteurs, amis, pêle-mêle, forment les lieux aimables, plaisants (*loci amoeni*) [books, sentences, authors, friends, all thrown together, constitute the loveable, pleasing places (*loci amoeni*)]’, all more or less fetishized (*Discours*, p. 694). Even more clearly, in the course but not in the *Fragments d’un discours amoureux* in so many words,

Barthes mutates the much-used concept of code into *régions*, defined as ‘les lieux, les sites d’où viennent les morceaux du texte [the places, the sites from which the pieces of the text come]’ (*Discours*, p. 690). This is a refinement on the codes in *S/Z* as places of knowledge, symbol, meaning, etc.: regions are ‘très exactement les espaces matériels d’où ma main extrait le livre [que j’écris], les lieux privés d’où me parvient l’information, l’idée [quite precisely the material spaces from which my hand extracts the book [I’m writing], the private places from which the information, the idea, come to me]’ (*Discours*, p. 690). As Barthes makes clear in another section, ‘C’est comme s’il y avait une Topique amoureuse, dont la figure fût un lieu (*topos*); or le propre d’une topique, c’est d’être un peu vide [It’s as if there were a Topic of love, the figure of which would be a place (*topos*); but the proper feature of a topic is that it’s somewhat empty]’ (p. 682); it can be filled as needed. The *lieu* is more supple than the code; it is a code that has nuances. What’s important here is the definition of the figure as a *lieu*, thus adding to this interpretation of the Barthesian *lieu* all the richness of the Barthesian *figure*, this important instrumental and analytical concept.

Of course there are ‘greater’ Barthesian terms, concepts, or operators that many others have already written about, weighty topics like Writing, the Neutral, the Drift, the Incident, the Novelistic, the Fragment, and many others. But asking my students to trace the places I identified put them in the position of Barthes as he wrote and gave his courses, as has since become apparent with the publication of the five books of courses. There would be repetitions: internal intertextualities and echoes among the places, I told my students in 1995 – because there are obsessions. Reading through the corpus would accumulate instances, cases, versions, variants, building to something new, something quite personal. In the end, not all my students were up to the challenge of ‘doing a Barthes on Barthes’.

Jean-Pierre Richard’s 2006 *Roland Barthes, dernier paysage*, is a remarkable book whose mere sixty-one pages manage to treat four of my 1995 *lieux*, eleven years later, namely *poreux*, *vaseux*, *moiré*, and *scintillement*. Richard also wrote an article with a similar attention to the idea of some other *pensées-mots*; the title of that article, in a 1981 issue of *Poétique*, is ‘Nappe, charnière, interstice, point’. In *Dernier paysage* he calls attention to such places and provides a method and a strategy of analysis in these terms: ‘le déploiement d’un nuancier personnel de qualités [the deployment of a personal nuance-catalog of qualities]’, a phrase in which all of the terms are strategic.⁷ A *deployment*, because marshalling the inventory of instances, cases, etc., will unfold knowledge

and build new connections; a *record or inventory of nuances*, because reading Barthes always takes us from one nuance to another – the *lieux* interconnect because they are nuanced, as all sixty-one pages of *Dernier paysage* demonstrate; *personal*, inevitably, as is typical of Barthes; and *qualities*, a generic term for what we are looking at.

Le vaseux

Nuances of what I first called *le vaseux* include *le poisseux*, *l'empoissement*, *l'engluement*, and related ideas: something troubling that takes over and doesn't let go. *La vase* is of course the kind of mud that sticks, that engulfs, provoking anxiety and above all a desire to get loose. This is organic material decomposing at the bottom of rivers or lakes – or in the Paris sewers when Jean Valjean stumbled through them. Less materially, something that is *vaseux* is obscure and confused, and a *vaseux* person would be in a state of numb weakness, the result of being sunk in *la vase*, *la poix*, or *la poisse*.

Le vaseux or *l'empoissement*, also glossed as a smothering, stems from the *doxa*. The wrestler Thauvin, obese and ignoble, will engulf viewers in the essential viscosity of his physical being, Barthes noted already in the *Mythologies* (OC I, p. 570). Sade avoids *l'empoissement* by distancing himself from his writing; here *empoissement* implies the complicity of the writer with what he has written and will reread (OC II, p. 1135). The Racinian hero is stuck in the space of tragedy; blood, a substitute for the Father, anterior to the Father and more terrible than he, holds the Son in the *vase*: 'c'est un Être trans-temporel qui *tient*, à la façon d'un arbre: il tient, c'est-à-dire qu'il dure d'un seul bloc et qu'il possède, retient, englue [this is a trans-temporal Being who *seizes*, like a tree: he *seizes*, that is, he lasts monolithically, and he possesses, retains, sticks]' (OC I, p. 1015). Several are the Racinian heroes and heroines who find themselves *englués*, stuck (OC I, p. 994). 'Le héros éprouve à l'égard du Père l'horreur même d'un engluement: il est retenu dans sa propre antériorité comme dans une masse possessive qui l'étouffe [With respect to the Father, the hero suffers the very horror of being stuck: he is detained in his own anteriority as if in a possessive mass that smothers him]' (OC I, p. 1020) – so being *smothered* stems from the hero's fidelity to a mass of family ties. Roxane's *engluement* in *Bajazet* is spatial (OC I, p. 1055).

The *doxa* holds the subject in the *vaseux*, according to a section from the course on *Le Discours amoureux*:

La *Doxa* agresse le sujet amoureux sous [...] une forme plate, poisseuse, simplement oppressive (et non répressive): tel est le discours de la *Doxa* sur l'Amour, discours dérisoire du juste milieu, de la mesure, de la comptabilité, hostile à la Dépense et à la tension du héros amoureux.

[The *Doxa* aggresses the amorous subject [...] in a flat, sticky, simply oppressive (not repressive) manner: such is the discourse of the *Doxa* about Love, a paltry discourse of the happy medium, of moderation, of accountability, hostile to Expense and the tension of the amorous hero.] (*Discours*, p. 584)

As Barthes wrote in *Le Lexique de l'auteur*, 'la *Doxa* naturalise tout ce qu'elle touche, empoissé dans son discours [the *Doxa* naturalizes everything it touches, glued in its discourse]' (p. 271). Similarly, the adjective sticks to a noun and to the being and as such it is a 'powerful anti-Neutral', 'l'anti-Neutre même, comme s'il y avait une antipathie de droit entre le Neutre et l'adjectif [the anti-Neutral itself, as if there were an antipathy of law between the Neutral and the adjective]', according to the course on *Le Neutre* (p. 85). The act of nomination, analyzed in a section of *S/Z*, subjects language by an act of seizure, of appropriative violence that provokes nausea (*OC* II, pp. 641-42). We can also read a passage not included in the *Roland Barthes*, entitled 'Si j'étais petit-bourgeois' in which Barthes imagined himself being invaded by the *doxa*, as if he might let himself 'empoisser par l'information et la culture de masse [be glued in by information and mass culture]' (*Lexique*, p. 309).

This *pensée-mot* was an active place of Barthes's thinking as he prepared his *Roland Barthes*. A set of typed-up *fiches*, placed in order, as reproduced in *R/B Roland Barthes*, the catalog of the Pompidou Center exhibition, develops the image of the medusa:

5. Ce premier stéréotype induit à la figure de la Répétition, figure de l'Opacité panique du Social: Abgrund, Vertige, Méduse: la 'Masse'. Figures 'treublées': le Petit-bourgeois, le Discours de Droite, la Doxa, la Bêtise, la Science.

[5. This first stereotype induces the figure of Repetition, the figure of the panic Opacity of the Social: Abgrund, Vertigo, Medusa: the 'Mass'. 'Trembled' figures: the Petit-bourgeois, the Discourse of the Right, the Doxa, Stupidity, Science.]⁸

The medusa's mode of existence is domination (she reigns), and her attributes include 'L'Empoissement. L'Adiaphorie. L'Evidence, le Cela-

va-de-soi. Méduse produit une existentialité où je suis *englué* [Stickiness. Adiphoria. The Obvious, the It-goes-without-saying. Medusa produces an existentiality where I am *glued in*]’ (*R/B*, pp. 188-89). Around the same time, 1973, Barthes was defining the sociolect – language as it is spoken by society – as *poisseux* (‘La guerre des langages’, *OC II*, p. 1611). The disgust of repetition also characterizes the code of reference in *S/Z*, which has a ‘vomitive virtue’ (*OC II*, p. 648). The Medusa symbolizes the smothering and nauseating effect of *le vaseux*.

Le poisseux is the first deployment in Jean-Pierre Richard’s ‘nuancier personnel de qualités’. Richard speaks of Barthes’s disgust of viscosity, of the repetition required by the *doxa*. What I’ve called *le vaseux* Richard also calls *ensablement, prise, enlissement*. When you fall into quicksand, the best strategy is not to move: ‘On ne bougera pas d’un pouce dans les sables mouvants, seule façon de réussir à s’en extraire [One mustn’t move an inch in quicksand, only way to escape from it]’ (*Dernier paysage*, p. 9). And because someone who refuses to seize will not be seized, the ‘non-vouloir-saisir’ is a reaction to the *vaseux*. Richard also considers the *empoisement* that comes with the study of theme in Barthes’s Michelet book: ‘l’horreur, toujours si prête à surgir chez lui, de l’*empoisement*, ce mixte, tactilement subi, de rétention et d’itération: car la thématique répète, fatalement [...] la caresse peut y devenir collage; bref on y échappe mal à l’engluement par le même [the horror of being *glued in*, always so ready to resurface in him, this tactilely endured mixture of retention and iteration. For the theme repeats, it’s fatal [...] in it the caress can become collage; in short, one barely escapes being glued in by the sameness]’.⁹

Bernard Comment links the glue, the stickiness, to the Lacanian symbolic; to accede to the symbolic is to accept the sociolect, ideology; a complex network of meaning ‘empoisse le sujet dans son imaginaire [glues the subject in his imaginary]’ (p. 39). Comment has developed this complex by listing four ‘disgusts of meaning’: meaning added (a hidden signified), linked (giving an illusion of plenitude, against which Barthes proposes the fragment), leveled (synonymies, intimidations of language), and imposed (what language constrains one to say) (pp. 44ff). He reminds us how Barthes sought, in the context of the seminar, to avoid the position of mastery and to foster horizontal communication among the auditors (p. 265), a kind of ‘non-vouloir-saisir’.

The ultimate expression of the significance of this *pensée-mot* occurs in Barthes’s formulation of the basic, essential stance for him, as he put it in his *Comment vivre ensemble* course:

[L]e besoin de partir, dès qu'une structure a pris [...] lorsque autour de nous – même si nous y avons participé – un langage, une doctrine, un mouvement d'idées, un ensemble de positions commence à prendre, à se solidifier, à se cristalliser, à devenir une masse compacte d'habitudes, de complicités, de facilités (en termes langagiers: un sociolecte), nous pouvons avoir une impulsion de *Xéniteia*: aller ailleurs, vivre ainsi en état d'errance intellectuelle.

[The need to leave as soon as a structure has taken hold [...] when all around us – even if we have participated in it – a language, a doctrine, a movement of ideas, an ensemble of positions begins to seize up, to solidify, to crystalize, to become a compact mass of habits, of complicities, of easiness (in language terms, a sociolect), we may have a *Xeniteia* impulse: go somewhere else, thus live in a state of intellectual wandering.]¹⁰

La moire, le moiré

Jean-Pierre Richard has a fine explanation of *le moiré*. He calls it a sort of 'mana word', that is, 'un terme apte à recueillir [...] dans la terminologie de R.B., les fonctions ou les significations les plus diverses [a term capable of gathering together [...], in R.B.'s terminology, the most diverse functions or meanings]' (*Dernier paysage*, p. 9). Richard rightly underscores in this way the importance of this *lieu* as a word for thinking. The moiré effect results when superposed elements form an interference pattern: a matrix of crossing waves. New patterns emerge because of slight variations in the elements of its composition but also because of the changing position of the observer. 'C'est que la moire installe, dans le plan d'une étoffe donnée, la vie d'une luminosité changeante, légère, imprévisible, et donc le reflet d'un moi désordonné, ou, même, renversé [It's that, in the surface of a given fabric, the *moire* installs the life of a changeable, weightless, unpredictable luminosity, and therefore the reflection of a disordered or even reversed self]' (*Dernier paysage*, p. 10).

For his 'science des moires', Barthes invented the term 'diaphorologie'.

Combating fixity, the stick-in-the-mud of the *vaseux*, the *moire* brings plurality: it is important to Barthes to note that the course on the *Neutre* is 'une moire d'individuation' [a moiré of individuation] rather than a set of concepts taught magisterially (*Neutre*, p. 79); that there is 'une moire de forces [a moiré of forces]', a dialectic of intensities (p. 86);

that nuances, changes, states of mind belong to the science of *moires* (p. 111); that the *neutre* is a nuance, a *moire* (p. 119). For the frank opposition of colours (for instance), the *neutre* substitutes a nuance of differences – slight differences: ‘cet espace totalement et comme exhaustivement nuancé, c’est la moire [...]: le Neutre, c’est la moire: ce qui change finement d’aspect, peut-être de sens, selon l’inclinaison du regard du sujet [this totally and as if exhaustively nuanced space is the moiré [...]. The Neutral is the moiré – what discreetly changes appearance, perhaps changes meaning, according to the inclination of the gaze of the subject]’ (p. 83). Moreover, it opposes the fascism of language, discourse in the broadest sense: ‘(l’énonciation: littéraire, éthique, pathétique, mythique) ouvre un champ infini, moiré, de nuances, de mythes, qui peuvent rendre le Neutre [...] vivant [(the enunciation – literary, ethical, empathetic, mythical) opens an infinite, moiré-ed field of nuances, myths, that can bring life to the Neutral]’ (p. 238).

Or, as he put it in a *fiche* reproduced in the *R/B* catalog, ‘Pluriel, Miroitement, Moire, Poudre du Sens, Or dispersé du Signifiant, départs de Codes, Lecture plurielle. Et au loin (ou déjà): Texte, Signifiante [Plural, Shimmering, Moiré, Powder of Meanings, dispersed Gold of the Signifier, origins of Codes, plural Reading. And in the distance (or already): Text, Signifiante]’ (*R/B*, p. 193).

The *moire* implies movement of two or more things against each other, producing a variety of third terms. It has some effective links with *l’onde* or *l’oscillation*, because of the movement the moiré imposes on the eye. As Barthes discussed in *S/Z*, when the codes are superimposed new patterns result from a slight displacement from one code to the next; different wave lengths, in the moiré, produce an illusion of movement; in the case of *Sarrasine*, they produce the living, natural, moving portrait (of Zambinella) (*OC II*, pp. 595-96). The plurality of the classic text comes with the fading of voices, allowing us to listen to the text ‘comme un échange chatoyant de voix multiples, posées sur des ondes différentes et saisies par moments d’un *fading* brusque, dont la trouée permet à l’énonciation de migrer d’un point de vue à l’autre, sans prévenir: l’écriture s’établit à travers cette instabilité tonale [...] qui fait d’elle une moire brillante d’origines éphémères [like a sursuring exchange of multiple voices, posed on different wavelengths and seized at times with an abrupt *fading* the opening of which allows the enunciation to migrate from one point of view to the other without warning: writing is established through this tonal instability [...] which makes it into a brilliant moiré of ephemeral origins]’ (*OC II*, p. 582).

A similar action of displaced codes occurs in a 1977 text called 'Droit dans les yeux'. The vendor in a Moroccan souk naturally perceives him as a purchaser; but if Barthes insists a bit on looking him in the eyes, a different code – suggesting Barthes's personal interest in the vendor – rubs against the first: 'Si je sortais du premier code (celui de la tractation) pour entrer dans le second (celui de la complicité)? Or, ce frottement des deux codes, à mon tour je le lis dans son regard. Tout cela forme une moire fugitive de sens successifs [What if I were to leave the first code (the code of the transaction) to enter into the second (the code of complicity)? Now, I in turn can read this rubbing together of the two codes in his gaze. This creates a fleeting moiré of successive meanings]' (OC III, p. 740). The moiré, as a *pensée-mot*, multiplies possible meanings, and for a semiotician, 'rien n'est plus excitant que de voir dans un regard l'écllosion muette d'un sens [there is nothing more exciting than to see the soundless flowering of a meaning in a glance]' (OC III, p. 740).

This multiplying of codes applies as well to the question of personal pronouns in the *Roland Barthes*. It is a happy thing for this writer of biographemes that 'moi je' can be turned around, 'comme les reflets d'une moire [like the reflections of a moiré]', making the *je* not *moi* and vice versa, as needed (OC III, p. 223).

Similarly, a section of *Sade Fourier Loyola* entitled 'La Moire' describes the multitude of diverse languages in Sade as forming 'un tissu damassé, un tapis de phrases, un éclat changeant, une apparence ondée et chatoyante de styles, une moire de langages: un pluriel discursif s'accomplit [a damasked cloth, a tapestry of sentences, a changing brilliance, a wavelike, shimmering appearance of styles, a moiré of languages: a discursive plural is achieved]' (OC II, p. 1157). The moiré avoids *ennui* by augmenting the plurality of text. But the interesting thing is that it allows one to follow one of the meanders of the text while ignoring the others, picking out one of the lines produced by the interference pattern created by the multitude of languages, much as one might pick out one of the motifs of a moiré fabric.

Barthes used this *lieu* frequently in elaborating the lover's discourse. The alphabetical order that is a dis-order, which alone satisfies Barthes, is a *moire*, and the 'bouffées de discours qui viennent au sujet amoureux [puffs of speech that come to the amorous subject]' come in the form of *moires* (*Discours*, p. 65). The moiré of the lover's discourse is related to the pulverisation and nebulisation of his speech, both terms implying dissemination (p. 94); all possible figures will be considered, so as to avoid a thematic organization with an inevitable order. The

alphabetical order maintains ‘la division, l’éparpillement, l’affolement du sujet amoureux en proie au langage’ [the division, the scattering, the panic of the amorous subject prey to language] (p. 295). The lover’s discourses form interference patterns; in a fragment Barthes omitted from the published book, ‘La Chaîne’, the idea of linear linkages is rejected in favor of ‘une *moire*, un tissu, c’est à dire une chaîne + trame (et va-et-vient) [a *moiré*, a fabric, that is a warp + weave (and back and forth)]’ (*Discours*, p. 110). And Barthes comes close to identifying the *moiré* of the lover’s discourse with the concept of Figure (rather than the *récit*): ‘Mais nos figures: ce n’est pas le tissu (la trame), c’en est la surface, ce qui est surimprimé à n’importe quel syntagme; mieux que *Tissu: Moire* [But our figures: it is not the fabric (the weft), it’s the surface of it, what is overprinted on any syntagm; better than *Fabric: Moiré*]’ (p. 295). Throughout the course on the lover’s discourse, the *moiré* is connected to styles, as in a somewhat curious section, part of the suppressed ‘Comment est fait ce livre’, which calls for the need to nuance language, ‘par exemple à mettre en scène tout un jeu de styles indirects; ce jeu peut se développer d’une façon si bien *moirée* (on le voit chez Zola) que [...] le référent devient incertain, irrepérable [for example to stage an entire play of indirect styles; this action can be developed in a manner so well *moiré-ed* (we see it in Zola) that [...] the referent becomes uncertain, unlocatable]’ – and to point out that in the lover’s language, one often does not know for sure if the lover is speaking (*Discours*, p. 705). The play of nuances can hide the referent of speech.

The aspiring novelist Roland Barthes also thought that a science of *moires* is necessary to pass from the Pleasure of Reading to the Desire to Write, much like Proust’s narrator.¹¹ He realized that the various ‘je’ that constitute the central character of *À la recherche du temps perdu* – *persona, scriptor, auctor, scribens* – are ‘tissés, moirés dans l’écriture, telle qu’on la lit, selon des dominances diverses [woven, *moiré-ed* in the writing as one reads it, according to various dominances]’ (*Préparation*, p. 280), implying the possibility of skipping or missing some of them. For Barthes, that would be the goal, an essential requirement for the novel he desires: a ‘je *moiré*’.

Bernard Comment identifies the variety of Barthes’s interests with the *moire*:

Lire ou relire ses livres, l’ensemble de ses écrits, c’est à chaque fois prendre le sentiment d’une *moire*, comme autant de coups de cœur et d’étonnements: une curiosité sans cesse attentive, qui sait s’emparer de tout, textes, gestes, événements, quotidienneté, pour sursauter aux appels du

monde, du temps.

[Reading or rereading his books, the totality of his writings, is to have a sense of a *moiré* each time, like so many infatuations and astonishments: a constantly attentive curiosity that can grab hold of everything, texts, gestures, events, everyday life, to leap up at the appeals of the world and time.] (p. 13)

The *moire* is the reader's place too, a 'moire de l'attention qui opérerait comme une ondulation du nappé par le désir [a *moire* of attention that can make desire operate an undulation of what is flat]' (Comment, p. 165). François Noudelman has a similar description:

Son approche du texte comme tissu aux multiples connexions participait aussi d'une lutte contre les modèles d'enracinement et de filiation. Cependant son imaginaire du déplacement tenait de la moire, du chatoiement d'étoffes aux reflets changeants plus que de l'hybridation entre éléments hétérogènes.

[His approach to the text as a fabric with multiple connections also participated in a struggle against the models of rootedness and filiation. However, he had an Imaginary of displacement that resembled a *moiré*, a shimmering of cloths with changeable reflections, rather than a hybridization of heterogeneous elements.]¹²

In all these aspects of the *moire*, what we must remember is that something different emerges that isn't available in the original items that compose it.

Le scintillement, la scintillation

Anything that shines, that flashes intermittently, a star, a brightness, *le scintillement* is opposed to *l'ombre*, not only for light versus dark, but also because, according to *Sur Racine*, the discontinuity of the shining sun, its daily appearance, counteracts the duration and tenacity of shadow: 'l'ombre se transperce de lumière [the shadow is pierced with light]' (*OC* I, p. 1003). This *lieu* includes discontinuity and dissemination, assuring the plurality of meanings.

Racine's plays bring together a constellation of heroes which makes the theater cohere. Barthes distributed the fifty or so characters of all eleven tragedies into a sort of constellation, bringing out the

similarities among them for which *Sur Racine* is famous (infamous for some grouchy readers). From these eleven tragedies, thanks to an idea of a place for stars to scintillate, Barthes was able to constitute a single, essential tragedy (OC I, p. 995).

Barthes also famously underscored the plurality of Balzac's *Sarrasine*, calling it 'une galaxie de signifiants [a galaxy of signifiers]', in contrast to a structure of signifiés (OC II, p. 558), which Balzac had been held to exemplify. Connotation increases the plurality: 'la connotation assure une dissémination (limitée) des sens, répandue comme une poussière d'or sur la surface du texte [connotation assures the (limited) dissemination of meanings, strewn like golden dust on the surface of the text]' (OC II, p. 560). Connotted meanings are intermittent and scattered; limited meanings are like a shower of gold. The 'starry' text proceeds to demonstrate such dissemination and fragmentation, the opposite of the smooth, the flowing, the flat, and the fused, as does also fragmenting the text of *Sade Fourier Loyola* (OC II, pp. 1045-46), to rise up against the bourgeois ideology of language, as Barthes called it then (1971). Fourier's open, infinite language freed of any referential pretense appears not as a development but as 'la pulvérisation, la dissémination (la poussière d'or du signifiant) [the pulverization, the dissemination (the golden dust of the signifier)]' (OC II, p. 1119). His different types of discourse produce a book that is 'morcelé, articulé [...] mobile, soumis à un régime d'actualisation intermittente [broken into pieces, articulated [...] mobile, subject to a regime of intermittent actualization]' (OC II, p. 1105).

Connotation is also linked with *le scintillement* in *Comment vivre ensemble*, in a consideration of the sign's connection to the referent:

Dans certains mots, brille, comme un flash, une image, une idée du référent: je ne puis lire 'omelette' sans un mouvement fugitif d'appétit ou d'écœurement. → Dans tout récit, ou rapport, lire des menus, c'est se trouver à l'intersection de ces deux axes sémiologiques: la connotation et l'affect.

[In certain words, an image, an idea of the referent, shines like a flash: I cannot read 'omelet' without a fleeting sensation of appetite or disgust. → In any narrative or report, to read menus is to find oneself at the intersection of these two semiological axes: connotation and affect.] (*Vivre ensemble*, pp. 149-50)

As different meanings pop up, flash, or scintillate, plurality increases.

The most often cited example of this concept of scintillating intermittence comes from *Le Plaisir du texte*:

[C]'est l'intermittence, comme l'a bien dit la psychanalyse, qui est érotique: celle de la peau qui scintille entre deux pièces (le pantalon et le tricot), entre deux bords (la chemise entrouverte, le gant et la manche); c'est ce scintillement même qui séduit, ou encore: la mise en scène d'une apparition-disparition.

[It is intermittence that is erotic, as psychoanalysis has put it: the intermittence of the skin that scintillates between two items (the pants and the jersey), between two edges (the half-open shirt, the glove and the sleeve); it's this scintillation itself that seduces; or the staging of an appearance-disappearance.] (*OC II*, pp. 1498-99)

In the 1973-74 course on *Le Lexique de l'auteur*, he imagines a camera at his boutonniere capable of filming 'rien que des fulgurances de plans érotiques fugitifs; sorte de *Journal de désir* (une auto tourne la rue, dans la nuit de la ville: je filme *l'éclair* d'un corps, poitrine entrouverte, qui conduit raide l'auto) [nothing but the lightning flashes of fleeting erotic shots; a sort of *Diary of Desire* (a car turns a corner in the city at night: I film the *flash* of a body, chest exposed, driving hard, intense]' (p. 174) – another example of an erotic intermittence.

A rich set of synonyms of *le scintillement* is found in Roland Barthes, in the section 'Pluriel, différence, conflit': 'la différence est l'allure même d'un poudroiment, d'une dispersion, d'un miroitement; il ne s'agit plus de retrouver [...] des oppositions, mais des débordements, des empiètements, des fuites, des glissements, des déplacements, des dérapages [difference is the very action of a powdering, a dispersal, a glimmering: no longer is it a matter of finding [...] oppositions, but overflows, encroachments, leaks, slidings, displacements, skids]' (*OC III*, pp. 147-48). We also find 'la dispersion même, le miroitement des signifians [dispersal itself, the glimmering of the signifiers]' in the wonderful essay 'Écoute' from 1976 (*OC III*, p. 736). In Japan, with the sense of estrangement that Barthes experiences, infinitesimal things *happen*, he says – an incongruity, an anachronism, a loose behavior, an illogical itinerary, and so on; but, 'Recenser ces événements serait une entreprise sisyphéenne, car ils ne brillent qu'au moment où on les *lit*, dans l'écriture vive de la rue [To inventory these events would be a Sisyphian enterprise, for they shine only at the moment one *reads* them, in the lively writing of the street]' (*OC II*, p. 801). A westerner can only

see them as part of a system, but the exemption from meaning comes from the disappearance of the brilliant apparition, the *scintillement*.

In the course on the *Neutre*, the ‘Scintillations de la délicatesse’ refer to ‘ce qui brille par éclats, en désordre, fugitivement, successivement, dans le discours “anecdotique” [what shines in bursts, in disorder, fleetingly, successively, in “anecdotal” speech]’ (p. 59), like the minutiae of the Japanese tea ceremony. Methodologically, the figures of the *neutre* are not dictionary definitions, but ‘scintillations’ (p. 35) – discontinuous, disseminated. Each figure is like establishing a bridgehead: ‘ensuite que chacun s’égaille dans la campagne [then they should scatter in the countryside]’ (p. 35). The scintillations are brief strokes, mere traces; they insure a method for the *neutre*: ‘Toujours, à l’intérieur même de la figure, la méthode des “traits”: images brèves, scintillations, dont la liste n’est ni conduite logiquement, ni exhaustive, donc: des scintillations, des flashes “négatifs-actifs” (participant du désir de Neutre) [Always, within the figure itself, the method of short “strokes”: brief images, scintillations, the list of which is neither exhaustive nor done logically; therefore, scintillations, “negative-active” flashes (participating in the desire for the Neutral)]’ (p. 117). This concept of scintillations prepares nine paragraphs about the ‘assets’ of the *neutre*, such as *non-palmarès*, *banalité*, *rapport au présent*, *retenue*, *absence de correction* [non-award, banality, relation to the present, restraint, absence of correction] (pp. 117-21). Similarly, ‘la scintillation des pouvoirs [the scintillation of powers]’ would be progress, according to material in the *Discours amoureux* course (p. 707).

Jean-Pierre Richard’s section on ‘le scintillant’ associates this *lieu* with the moiré because of their common desire to ‘mettre en évidence la vie d’un pluriel imprévisible, faire éclater, sans commencement ni fin, les cadres d’une similitude [bring to the fore the life of an unpredictable plural, burst the frames of a similarity, without beginning or ending]’ (*Dernier paysage*, p. 14). The break and the surprise it generates are what make meaning – think of the multiple meanings of *éclat*, of which Richard writes: ‘c’est la principale qualité que R.B. découvre, par exemple, dans l’écriture-Sollers [that is the principal quality that R.B. discovers, for example, in the Sollers-writing]’ (p. 15).

Le blanc

Blanc has a wealth of possible translations into English; to focus on only one would be to lose the very plurality for which this *lieu* or *pensée-mot* deserves a closer look. Whiteness, blankness, emptiness, purity, simplicity, candor – all are included.

The roots of this *lieu* run very deep in Barthes: the 1953 *Degré zéro de l'écriture*, to no one's surprise. In the section headed 'L'écriture et le silence', we find the famous notion of 'l'écriture blanche' [white writing], a new solution in the effort to disengage the language of literature from the bourgeois ideology. Here one finds probably the earliest use of the expression 'third term', so fruitful in Barthes's conceptualizations. The third term is neutral, it is the zero term, the term of absence, non-participatory in the optative or imperative forms that characterize journalistic writing. As the zero third term, 'white' or 'blank' writing is innocent, a basic writing, a transparent speaking, a non-style.

And I wonder if we cannot cite as examples of such an 'écriture blanche' the inside front and inside back covers of the original edition of the *Roland Barthes*, where we read 'Tout ceci doit être considéré comme dit par un personnage de roman [This should all be considered as spoken by a character in a novel]' and 'Et après? Quoi écrire, maintenant? Pourrez-vous encore écrire quelque chose? On écrit avec son désir, et je n'en finis pas de désirer [What's next? What to write now? Will you still be able to write something? One writes with one's desire, and I never stop desiring]' (OC III, pp. 81, 250) – because they are printed in white on a black background. Barthes may have been thinking of his idea of the zero term when he chose this presentation.

Garbo's face, in Barthes's *mythologie* about it, is 'plâtré [plastered]'; the make-up 'à l'épaisseur neigeuse d'un masque [has the snowy thickness of a mask]' (OC I, p. 604). Its very blankness implies that it can be the archetype of the human face, a pure Idea.

As a method of analysis in *S/Z*, the establishment of the five codes could signal a paradigm that can be reconstituted; but Barthes specifies that the code is 'une perspective de citations, un mirage de structures [a perspective of quotations, a mirage of structures]' and the units that constitute them are always 'des sorties du texte [escapes from the text]', 'des éclats [bursts]' (OC II, p. 568). They correspond to 'la fuite du texte [the fleeing of the text]' of which 'les blancs et les flous de l'analyse [the whites and the fuzziness of the analysis]' provide the traces, so that the method brings out that fluidity and blankness in the Balzac

text. A good example of such an analysis concerns beauty (the beauty of the daughter Marianina, in Balzac's tale): to say she is beautiful by comparing her to a Madonna or a Venus is to arrive at a 'blanc du comparé [blankness of the comparative]' that is an empty metaphor, a catachresis, a sort of aphasia, a code cut from any origin, eventually a *blanc* of the text (*OC II*, p. 577).

Of course the major *blanc* in *S/Z* is what Barthes called 'le blanc de la castration [the blank of castration]' (*OC II*, p. 580); in the distribution of sex roles, the two Lanty children figure the reconstituted female posterity of the castrato, his teleological essence recovered beyond the blankness of castration. The lack of origin also characterizes the emptiness of money (*OC II*, p. 581). The sparkling *blancheur* of Zambinella's chest as Sarrasine sees it, coquettishly arranged, not only dazzles by its whiteness but also by its emptiness, which the sculptor cannot see, and even projects a deceptive image of purity. Barthes calls this symbolic field 'la blancheur du manque [the whiteness of the lack]' (*OC II*, p. 651), doubling the meaning, here, of *le blanc*. Another kind of blank is the absence of the discourse of the other – the explanations of the reality of the castrato – which constitute 'un manque', 'un trou dans le tissu culturel', 'une lacune de savoir [a lack, a hole in the cultural fabric, a missing knowledge]', all expressions of a blank that kills Sarrasine (*OC II*, pp. 679-80).

Barthes sees Sade's language as arising from a blankness, an emptiness ('La langue nouvelle doit surgir d'un vide matériel [The new language must emerge from a material void]' [*OC II*, p. 1041]), and Sade will have nothing to say; his language will 'observer une vacance [observe a vacancy]' (*OC II*, p. 1043). The *logothèque* is not trying to say *something*, you cannot summarize what his language says; his signifier insists, it does not consist. The 'secret' of the Sadian act, real only in the narration, 'se confond entièrement avec le blanc du récit: le sens s'arrête [is entirely identified with the blank of the narrative: meaning stops]' (*OC II*, p. 1052). The blankness of the narrative has a material form in 'des pages coupées de blancs, d'alinéas, de point de suspension, d'exclamation, langage tendu, troué, vacillé [pages interrupted by white spaces, indents, ellipses, exclamation points; tense, perforated, vacillated language]' (*OC II*, p. 1144), the material form of the narrative of the orgy, the libidinous or criminal scene in the Sadian text.

Japan also represented the *blanc* very nicely for Barthes, in contrast to the West which 'moistens' everything with meaning, like a baptism (*OC II*, p. 794). We engage in a frantic effort to plug the emptiness of language, the 'vide du langage' (*OC II*, p. 796), but the

blankness of Zen combats the symbol, *stops* language or suspends it. The satori is perhaps ‘le blanc qui efface en nous le règne des Codes, la cassure de cette récitation intérieure qui constitue notre personne [the blankness that erases the reign of Codes within us, the fracturing of that interior recitation that constitutes our person]’; it is an ‘*a-langage*’ (OC II, p. 798). Barthes sees this blankness of language even in the white make-up of the Japanese actor, whose face is not ‘fardé’ [made up] but ‘écrit’ [written]: ‘le blanc du papier, le noir de l’inscription [the white of the paper, the black of the inscription]’ (OC II, p. 807). The purpose of this white ‘writing’ is ‘d’amener la figure à l’étendue vide d’une étoffe mate qu’aucune substance naturelle (farine, pâte, plâtre ou soie) ne vient métaphoriquement animer [turn the figure into the empty expanse of a dull fabric that no natural substance (flour, pastry, plaster, or silk) animates metaphorically]’ (OC II, p. 807).

The inherent property of the amorous discourse is to resist science and any discourse of unification, Barthes taught; it cannot be integrated into the sciences of society. There is thus an ‘espèce de *blanc mat*, de *béance* qui se creuse entre l’amour et les grands thèmes de la sociologie actuelle: le Pouvoir, le Politique, le Social, le Décentrement, le Changement historique [a sort of *dull whiteness*, a *gulf* that is dug between love and the great topics of current sociology: Power, the Political, the Social, the Decentering, Historical Change]’ (*Discours*, p. 334). In a sense, the unscientific blankness of the amorous discourse recalls ‘l’écriture blanche’ of *Le Degré zéro de l’écriture*: ‘Notre blanc est le degré zéro du *shifter*, le signifiant zéro à quoi se substituent d’autres signifiants [Our blank is the zero degree of the *shifter*, the zero signifier which substitutes for other signifiers]’ (*Discours*, p. 84). We are still in the region of the *neutre*, as also expressed in the course on that subject, where the *blanc* indicates a kind of pause, a break, a moment of silence, emptiness: ‘Temporalité du discours (de la conduite) sceptique: il y a des temps pour rien: temps du *tacet*, du blanc → il s’agit de défaire le temps du système, d’y mettre des moments de fuite, d’empêcher que le système prenne [Temporality of the skeptical discourse (conduct): there are times for nothing: times of the *tacet*, the blank → it’s a matter of undoing the time of systems, of inserting moments of escape, of preventing the system from seizing up]’ (*Neutre*, p. 216). Éric Marty has remarked: ‘Ce cours sur le neutre, c’est un neutre marqué par une sorte de blanc, de blancheur [This course on the neutral is a neutral marked by a sort of blank, a whiteness].¹³

In *La Préparation du roman*, in the section called the ‘Première épreuve’, which concerns choices and doubts, Barthes concludes by

admitting defeat. That section is titled ‘Blanc du Cours’. He says: ‘j’ai envie d’une Œuvre, mais je ne sais comment la choisir, la programmer [...]. Il y a donc, ici, à ce moment du Cours, un *blanc* → Je n’ai pas résolu la première épreuve [I have a desire for a Work, but I don’t know how to choose it, to program it [...]. So there is a *blank* here at this moment of the Course → I haven’t solved the first test]’ – and yet he has to continue to speak of other tests and preparations as if the blank didn’t exist (p. 266).

Philippe Sollers, in his inimitable assessment of ‘R.B.’ in the 47th issue of *Tel Quel* in 1971, recognized the *blanc* as central in Barthes: ‘Réserve, ténacité, flexion rentrante, voix neutre, qualité de blanc. Blanc aufklärung, blanc-marge-ironie, couleur de ce qu’il y a d’audible dans la couleur [Reserve, tenacity, an inward-turning inflection, neutral voice, quality of blank. Blank aufklärung, blank-margin-irony, colour of what is audible within colour]’.¹⁴

The inventory of these four ‘places’ in Barthes’s life-long itinerary in the world of signs serves to illustrate the usefulness of the concept for him and for those who read him. The concept of place is central in Barthes, as he himself realized. Interestingly, his biographer Tiphaine Samoyault remarks in a filmed interview about her subject that Barthes invented ‘des manières de penser la disposition du savoir et de l’écrit [ways of thinking of the disposition of knowledge and writing]’, a disposition she also calls the ‘nouvelles cartographies de la pensée et du savoir [new cartographies of thinking and knowledge]’.¹⁵ Such cartographies point to places as an inventory and localization of meanings. Adopting the idea of the *lieux (de pensée)* allows readers to follow a thread as they read and analyze, enriching the thread as it runs – like the ring in the *jeu du furet* of which Barthes wrote in *Roland Barthes*: ‘pour me créer à moi-même une sorte de *pensée-mot* qui va courir, tel l’anneau du furet, dans mon langage [to create for myself a sort of *thought-word* which will run like the ring in the game of the *furet*, in my language]’ (OC III, p. 198). It works as a method for reading Barthes; perhaps it would as well for other writers (what are Derrida’s *lieux*? Mallarmé’s? Sollers’s?). If the civil person of the author does not matter, as Barthes famously wrote, and the *figure* of the author behind the text does, perhaps the concept of *lieu* as a figure will help to illuminate where language comes from, and from there we may deduce where it is going.

Notes

¹ Roland Barthes, *Le Lexique de l'auteur. Séminaire à l'École pratique des hautes études 1973-1974. Suivi de Fragments inédits du Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*, ed. by Anne Herschberg Pierrot (Paris: Seuil, 2010), p. 102. Abbreviated in the text as *Lexique*. All translations from French in this essay are mine.

² Roland Barthes, *Le Plaisir du texte*, in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Éric Marty, 1st ed. (Paris: Seuil, 1993-95), 3 vols, vol. II, p. 1508. All quotations from Barthes's *Œuvres complètes* will be abbreviated in the text as *OC* and refer to the first edition.

³ Tiphaine Samoyault, *Roland Barthes, biographie* (Paris: Seuil, 2015), p. 177. Abbreviated in the text as *Biographie*.

⁴ Roland Barthes, *Le Neutre. Cours au Collège de France (1977-1978)*, ed. by Thomas Clerc (Paris: Seuil-IMEC, 2002), p. 72. Abbreviated in the text as *Neutre*.

⁵ Bernard Comment, *Roland Barthes, vers le neutre* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1991), p. 270. Abbreviated in the text as *Comment*.

⁶ Roland Barthes, *Le Discours amoureux. Séminaire à l'École pratique des hautes études 1974-1976. Suivi de Fragments d'un discours amoureux: inédits*, ed. by Claude Coste (Paris: Seuil, 2007), p. 285. Abbreviated in the text as *Discours*.

⁷ Jean-Pierre Richard, *Roland Barthes, dernier paysage* (Lagrasse: Éditions Verdier, 2006), p. 7. Abbreviated in the text as *Dernier paysage*.

⁸ *R/B Roland Barthes*, Catalog of the Pompidou Centre exhibition, ed. by Marianne Alphant and Nathalie Léger (Paris: Seuil-Centre Pompidou-IMEC, 2002), p. 188.

⁹ Jean-Pierre Richard, 'Nappe, charnière, interstice, point', *Poétique*, 47 (1981), 293-302 (p. 298).

¹⁰ Roland Barthes, *Comment vivre ensemble. Cours et séminaires au Collège de France (1976-1977)*, ed. by Claude Coste (Paris: Seuil-IMEC, 2002), p. 175. Abbreviated in the text as *Vivre ensemble*.

¹¹ Roland Barthes, *La Préparation du roman I et II. Cours et séminaires au Collège de France (1978-1979 et 1979-1980)*, ed. by Nathalie Léger (Paris: Seuil-IMEC, 2003), p. 188. Abbreviated in the text as *Préparation*.

¹² François Noudelman, *Le Toucher des philosophes. Sartre, Nietzsche et Barthes au piano* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), p. 138.

¹³ Raphaël Enthoven, ed., *Barthes* (Paris: Fayard, 2010), p. 48.

¹⁴ Philippe Sollers, 'R.B.', *Tel Quel*, 47 (1971), 19-26 (p. 20).

¹⁵ Tiphaine Samoyault, 'Roland Barthes, biographie', video, <http://www.mollat.com/livres/samoyault-tiphaine-roland-barthes-9782021010206.html> [accessed 31 May 2015].

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