

**prep·ar·ation** /,prepə'reɪʃn/ *noun* **1** [U] ~ (for sth) the act or process of getting ready for sth or making sth ready: *Preparation for the party started early.* ◊ *food preparation* ◊ *Careful preparation for the exam is essential.* ◊ *The third book in the series is currently in preparation.* ◊ *The team has been training hard in preparation for the big game.* **2** [C, usually pl.] ~ (for sth) | ~ (to do sth) things that you do to get ready for sth or make sth ready: *The country is making preparations for war.* ◊ *We made preparations to move to new offices.* ◊ *Christmas/wedding preparations* ◊ *Was going to college a good preparation for your career?* **3** [C] a substance that has been specially prepared for use as a medicine, COSMETIC, etc: *a pharmaceutical preparation* ◊ *preparations for the hair and skin*

# Preparations

## Call for Papers

Deadline: 30 June

Special Issue of *Barthes Studies*

Issue Editors: Kate Briggs and Sunil Manghani

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'A mass of notes, of unconnected thoughts, forms an Album; but that mass can be collected together with the Book in view; the future of the Album, then, is the Book; but the author can die in the process...'

– Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*.

**Expressions of interest** welcome for participation in an online seminar on 10 November 2023. The seminar will form part of the 'preparation' for a special issue of *Barthes Studies* (November 2024), which will collate critical and creative reflections on Roland Barthes' late work, particularly the final lecture course, *The Preparation of the Novel*. NB. Contributions do not need to be solely about writing or literature, but can use Barthes' work as an impetus to think about other forms and processes of preparatory work.

*The Preparation of the Novel* brings together the materials of a lecture course held over two years (completed just weeks before his death in 1980), in which Roland Barthes declared his intention to write a novel. What unfolds is a unique pedagogical experiment combining teaching and writing to simulate the trials of writing. The lectures begin with ruminations upon the *desire* to write a long form, the life-circumstances that provoked it, and a sequence of reflections on notes, habits of note-taking, and haiku. Later, they engage with practices of planning and envisaging by writers, philosophers and musicians, and speculate on how the shift from projection to decision-making and the material act of producing a novel might actually take place.

Through the open format of the lecture course, Barthes raises many questions about the nature of preparation, and how it relates to a final work. What does it mean to prepare for a creative endeavour? How do Barthes' metaphors – the references to cooking, and dressmaking – shape our understanding of 'when' and 'how' preparation takes place? How does the work of preparation play into the final production (or take its place) and how does it influence its reception? Is preparation a private, individual act or part of a wider collaborative process?

Contributions are encouraged that engage with these and other questions that arise from Barthes' work. Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Barthes' understanding of the relationship between preparation and creativity;
- The relations between preparation and other forms of planning, projection and readying: conceptualization, drafting, rehearsal, simulation, model-making, and – in Barthes's case –teaching.
- The role of chance and accident in the creative process;
- Finishedness, unfinishedness and the novel.
- The timings and durations of preparation, and the life circumstances that support it.
- The (inter-)subjectivity of writing/making;
- The connection between preparatory work and the final production in other art forms such as music, film, or visual art;
- Works which exist solely as projections, the forms of engagement they enable or disallow, and the relations between conception and actualization.
- The influence of preparatory work on critical theory or other forms of academic writing;
- The role of research and note-taking in the writing/making process;
- The situatedness of creative work and how it relates to preparation.

**Please email an expression of interest in the form of an abstract (of no more than 500 words) by 30 June 2023 to [s.manghani@soton.ac.uk](mailto:s.manghani@soton.ac.uk).** Contributors will be invited to present their work at an online seminar on 10 November 2023. Following which, contributors will be invited to prepare final papers for a special issue of *Barthes Studies*. NB. All papers will enter the journal's standard review process (submission required by April 2024), in lead-up to publishing the collection in November 2024. We encourage contributors to read past papers of the journal to get a sense of the format & type of work published.



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*Barthes Studies* is an open-access, independent, peer-reviewed journal for research in English on the work of Roland Barthes. The inaugural volume appeared on 12 November 2015 – Barthes's 100th birthday. New volumes published on 12 November of each year. Available online: <http://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/barthes/>