Aeration and Truth: Reading *Mourning Diary* as Fragment, Haiku

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In her biography of Roland Barthes, Tiphaine Samoyault describes Barthes' own description of 25 February 1980, the day he was struck by a van, the incident that led to his death on 26 March: 'It was a "cold, yellow" day he had noted in his desk diary before leaving. He survived for another month. He received visits, but he could no longer relate to anyone. He did nothing, he wrote nothing'.[1] Samoyault provides the reader with a photograph of the page of the desk diary, where Barthes writes in French the word 'Froid' above the word 'jaune'. He also writes, 'Préparation' (in relation to other academic work).[2] Unbeknownst to Barthes, the day would ultimately be the last day of productive preparation before his death. While a terse scribble of words on a desk diary should not be considered more than what it is, as a quick recording of the moment (not unlike a blurry photograph), it does constitute the last bit of output from Barthes. It is a fragment of writing that contributes to the collection of more substantial fragments written before Barthes' death. Those 'fragments' include some of Barthes' later work, specifically *Mourning Diary*, written throughout the period of 1977 to 1979 and ending around six months before Barthes' death. They could include the later lectures as well, published in English as *The Preparation of the Novel*, delivered between 1978 and 1980, also ending a short time before his death. Concepts presented in the lectures are important to understand the contents of *Mourning Diary* and how it prepares the reader for both Barthes' death and posthumous 'new life'.

After the death of his mother Henriette in late 1977, Roland Barthes began to regularly commit to small cards sparse notes that reflect his deep mourning during this time, as a sort of 'mourning diary'.

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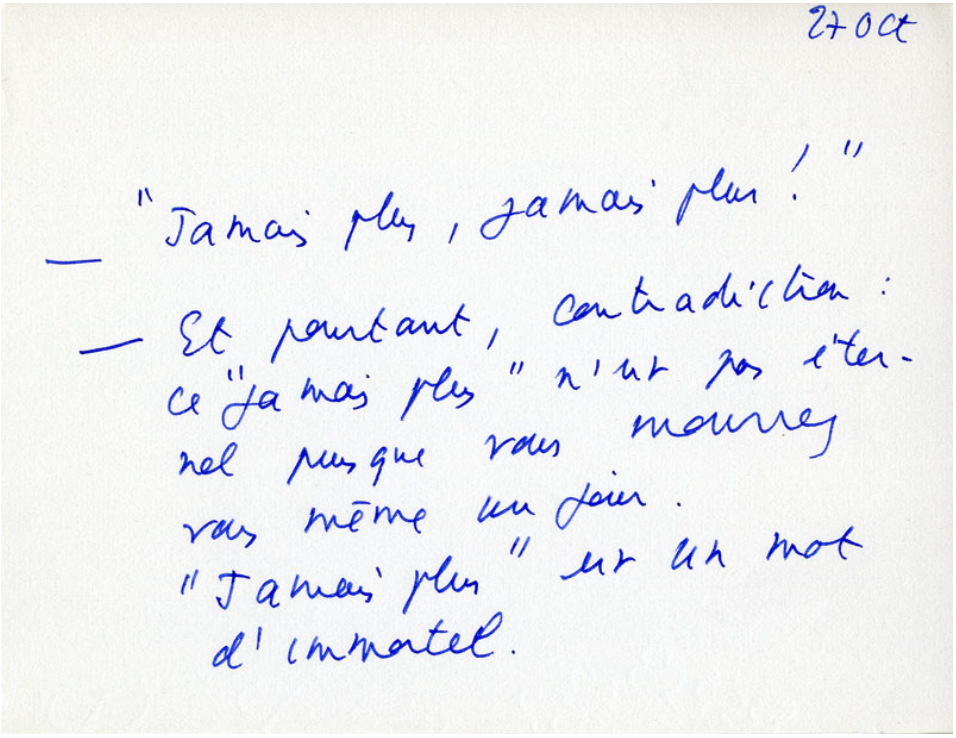

Diary entry from 27 October 1977. Image used with permission.

What is most striking about these 'diary' entries is their brevity: many of the notes appear fragmentary, questioning and ultimately documenting a moment, 'a "truth" (not a conceptual truth, but of the *Instant*)'.[3]

Due to their brevity and the fact that the notes were written on small paper note cards, the pages in the published *Mourning Diary* are often bleak: there is a lot of white space on the page. When engaged in the act of reading the book, the reader can take time with Barthes' writing in its bleak format. In fact, the brevity seems to contribute to the sense of the passage of time in the book. One reads the dated 'fragment' and then notices the space around the text (there are instances of entries consisting of only one or two sentences, which leaves much white space on the printed page). Once read, there is the physical act of turning the page, an action which is not overshadowed by a rolling and engrossing narrative (what would be called a 'page turner'). Here, the page turn is a point of demarcation or of *spacing*. In *Mourning Diary*, Barthes recounts 'moments of truth', when he states what is happening at the

moment. These 'snapshots' can be brief and dark, expressing Barthes' emotions or reflecting a particular thought, *always* around the death of his mother.

For Barthes, one example of a 'moment of truth' is the haiku. In *The Preparation of the Novel*, Barthes struggles with the Japanese haiku in French translation. But where language fails to line up (Japanese to French, and here, in English), the 'aeration' of the printed page does: Barthes states, 'don't underestimate what the *layout* of speech on the page can do'.[4] Looking at haiku as an example, Barthes calls it 'a little aerated tome' and notes 'the *aeration* of the written form is part of the haiku's mode of being'.[5] He describes aeration as 'breaks: plugs of air, of white space'.[6] The sparseness of the text contributes to what Barthes calls 'spaced Time', or, to put it another way, 'spaced Truth'. In a practical way, Barthes suggests that the reader must see the haiku written down, with proper line breaks and so on. In a similar way, then, the breathing that happens around such an 'aerated' *Mourning Diary* text allows the reader to take in the 'unfinishedness' of the work, knowing that it points to the hard truth of Barthes' own 'finishedness' (in his death). But consider Barthes' description of the space in the text: he suggests it constitutes a 'respiratory drive, to be free from suffocation-anxiety, the fantasy of Oxygen, of Euphoric, Jubilatory Respiration'.[7] Thus, while the text is fundamentally one of mourning, it seems to exist in a third space that is *both* mourning and freedom from 'suffocation-anxiety'. The haiku and the 'diary entry' act like photographs for Barthes, moments of truth. Photography acts as 'a *shock* of consciousness: the shock (the anxiety) of "I'm certain that has been"'.[8] Like the photograph, the haiku 'gives the *impression* […] that what it says took place, *absolutely*. […] The haiku presents the life of the Event and its abolition simultaneously'.[9] This is the case with the note cards as well.

For instance, in the 'diary' entry for 10 August 1978, Barthes quotes a portion of the biblical text of John 11, seemingly remembering the times during his childhood when he and his mother would visit with a Protestant pastor friend who would read the Bible aloud at meal times.[10] Barthes notes that he is 'Struck by the fact that Jesus loved Lazarus and that before resuscitating him, he wept'.[11] Might it be that Barthes takes some comfort in the idea that Jesus – God in the biblical context – mourned? Barthes writes at the end of the entry, 'Jesus therefore again groaning in himself …', which seems to refer to Jesus' state of being as he approaches the tomb of Lazarus. The sentence fragment also suggests a present action, that Jesus is somehow

mourning along with Barthes himself who mourns. Barthes seems compelled by the notion of Jesus being in grief even though he is about to resuscitate the dead. The blank space on the page, including the ellipses themselves in this passage, allow for this action to be perceived in the present tense (perhaps an example of 'spaced Time'). The lack of a concluding action (on the part of Jesus, presumably in the form of resuscitation) forces the reader to wait. This constitutes a 'moment of truth', 'a sudden *bursting forth* of the uninterpretable, of the last degree of meaning, of the *after which there's nothing more to say*'.[12] The brevity of the entry allows one to live in the moment (of truth), like a photograph. The turning of the page moves the reader to the next moment, sometime later in the chronology of Barthes' mourning.[13]

For Barthes, the novel is a form that is made possible by 'notation', writing the present by making note of it. One of his primary examples of notation is the haiku, which he suggests can account for 'the differing music of each successive day'.[14] For Barthes, the haiku is the 'exemplary form of the Notation of the Present […] an atom of a sentence that *notes* (marks, delimits, glorifies: endows with a *fama* [renown or reputation]) a tiny element of the "real", present, concomitant life'. [15] He continues, 'the haiku is the conjunction of a "truth" (not a conceptual truth, but of the *Instant*) and a form'.[16] Also, the haiku works with time in interesting ways: it both displays the instant and the memory of the instant. The treasured instant ('something has just moved me', Barthes states) becomes a future memory, notated *and* recounted in the haiku.[17]

For Barthes, the haiku as a form is 'an inductor of truth'.[18] Except that these fragments or haiku constitute *hidden truth* until their publication in the book. In a sense, because of their private nature, these fragments in *Mourning Diary* are part of an unfinished work. They are finished in only two senses: as '*Instant*' truth; and as part of the compendium of the *Mourning Diary* 'novel'. The diary entries serve as a preparation for the posthumous publication; in fact, they serve as a kind of 'anterior trace' or *preparation* of Barthes' death, and as the ultimate 'inductor of truth'.

Barthes' posthumously published writings are a kind of in-real-life foreshadowing of his own death, and something that points to new 'life' after death – what Barthes calls a *Vita Nova*. Barthes' diary entries after the death of his mother constitute then a posthumous 'novel' that includes moments of truth in the form of fragments not unlike haiku.

In *The Preparation of the Novel*, Barthes devotes several lectures on the

form of the haiku, which might seem a surprising move since the short and formal haiku seems antithetical to the long narrative of the novel (after all, it is the preparation of the 'long form' that Barthes seems to want to map out). Barthes is trying to stress the importance of notation in the preparation of the novel, the transcribing of everyday occurrences that then mean something. These individual examples of notation would then be sprinkled throughout the text and interweaved with the actual narrative since they would be too emotionally powerful to make up the totality of the text for the novel. For Barthes, the haiku is the most efficient and effective example of this 'notation'.

In a review of an exhibition on Barthes at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in 2015, Andrew Gallix outlines Barthes' own distinction between what he calls a 'Book' and an 'Album'.[19] For Barthes, a 'Book' is a 'complete work', an artefact that will ultimately be destroyed. While it might be a sort of monument that seems completely fixed, it is not a 'living' text or something with which a reader can interact or engage. Perhaps one can consider a 'Book' as a 'readerly' text, something that can only be consumed but not remade or rewritten. In opposition to this is the 'Album', or 'what lives in us'. This is the 'writerly' text, where meaning is not so fixed or determined. If the 'Book' fades, the 'Album' remains, integrated into the reader's imagination.

These fragments that Barthes commits to the note cards are particularly private (part of a private 'Book'), but they have now become public as part of the posthumously published *Mourning Diary* ('Album'), published in 2010. The 'Album' is what remains for the reader of Barthes after his death. For instance, with *Mourning Diary*, the reader engages with what might be considered a trace of Barthes' death (though the *Diary* itself recounts the death of his mother). The death of Barthes could be conceived as an Event, a moment that definitively breaks and transforms life. He calls death as such in *Mourning Diary,* in that death 'mobilizes, interests, activates, tetanizes'.[20] It is obvious to point out that death breaks life. However, the idea here is that Barthes' death *delineates* the states of his written work: first as 'book', collection of fragments; then as 'album', a resuscitation of the dead, of Barthes' mother (through his words of mourning) and of Barthes himself.

Further, the notes of mourning on note cards seem the preparation that ends with the Event of Barthes' death. Before the Event, there is the preparation, or 'anterior trace': *Mourning Diary* as a collection of writing not meant to be published. In other words, it is a trace of Barthes as he himself no longer exists: he has died. Due to the posthumous publication, though, it can

be thought of as something else: in the very (aerated) space of the text (sometimes one line or a few lines on a page), the text seems unfinished and with room to expand. The reader enters into these spaces, experiencing the 'moments of truth' as they happen, a recounting of the moments of a day. These traces are discovered after the Event of Barthes' death and thus point to that moment; their very posthumous-ness seems to strongly point to the fact that Barthes is dead. Thus, they prepare for that Event, and even for the posthumous publication. They act as a sort of photograph or haiku, a proof of existence at a *particular* time. He calls being written about for the sake of being remembered as 'Necessity of the "Monument"'.[21]He states, 'writing serves as a salvation, as a means to vanquish Death: not his own, but the death of loved ones; a way of bearing witness for them, of perpetuating them by drawing them out of non-Memory'.[22]

It is almost impossible for that scribbled note on the desk diary – 'Préparation' – to not evoke Barthes' series of lectures on the novel, *The Preparation of the Novel*. These lectures make up Barthes' last course at the Collège de France, delivered from 1978 to 1980, overlapping with his writing in *Mourning Diary*. The lectures can be considered commentary to the *Mourning Diary* in that Barthes would have had his lectures in mind as he mourned the death of his mother. The lectures inform the 'novel' that is published as *Mourning Diary*. While these lectures were his last, they constitute the middle of a trio of collections as they were published in 2010. The lectures were delivered after *The Neutral* (the middle course, published first by Columbia University Press in 2005) and after *How to Live Together* (the first course, published in 2012). The decision to publish the English translations of the three courses out of chronological order would have to do with the various pressures and constraints of the publishing world, but also due to translator preference. Kate Briggs, in *This Little Art*, writes:

> the three lecture courses thus appeared, in translation, out of sequence, the second one first, then the last, then the first, determining the reading order for those readers receiving them for the first time (effecting a kind of *disrhythmy* or *disrhythmia* that was arguably not without its effects). Among all the other factors – timing, chance, availability, willingness, power, position, status – there was also this: preference, appeal, attachment. Unsystematic, and sometimes regrettable. Really ridiculous, maybe. But there it is.[23]

This sequence in the publishing and thus reading order destabilizes the reader and makes the original chronology ambiguous. What stands out to the reader of the lectures is their finality, being delivered very close to the unexpected end of Barthes' life. Even so, they seem to exist outside of chronological time (like *Mourning Diary*), pointing to his death rather than explicitly carrying with them the association with the late period of Barthes' work and research. Nathalie Léger refers to the idea of 'literary utopia' as one of Barthes' projects, but it is also what the reader experiences: 'to know nothing of the object sought, simply to know something of oneself', especially because of the ambiguity in chronology.[24] Perhaps, the object sought is how to prepare to write a novel. And perhaps, the reader instead gets to know about themselves, and, to an extent, Barthes.

Barthes was institutionalized for tuberculosis for a formative period in his youth, which resulted in him considering Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, a book about a sanatorium, as 'Heart-rending'. In his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France on 7 January 1977, Barthes explains that he himself suffered the same sickness as Hans Castorp, the protagonist in *The Magic Mountain*. Because of this, Barthes calls his own body 'historical', and thus, much older than his age of 61 at the time: 'In a sense, my body is the contemporary of Hans Castorp, the novel's hero; my body, still unborn, was already twenty years old in 1907, the year when Hans entered and took up residence in "the country up there".'[25] Barthes becomes 'a historical witness to a fictional novel'.[26] Barthes conveys his feelings as someone who seems to be dwelling in two temporalities at once: Mann's novel removes him from present time and places him in the time of the written narrative; alternately, it conflates his own personal memory with the narrative world of the book in history. What does he suggest to do? His answer to this conundrum is to forget and start again: 'I must fling myself into the illusion that I am contemporary with the young bodies present before me [that is, the students attending his lectures], and not with my own body, my past body. In short, I must be periodically reborn. I must make myself younger than I am'.[27] Barthes is desiring a reset on life, a backwards-movement to *more* life.

Barthes embarks on a similar line of thought in his lectures some two years later. He recognizes that, at the age of 63 (at the time), he is well past middle-aged. His situation forces him to consider how many days he might have left in his life. That is, his remaining days are limited (he decides to refer

to the biblical text of John 12. 35: 'Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you'). Everything that he has done previously appears to be simply repetitive and he is figuring that nothing will ever be new again until his death. But an Event has occurred that happens to break and transform life into two parts: before and after. Barthes states, 'I have no time left to try out several different lives: I have to choose my last life, my new life'. Ultimately, Barthes is attempting to emerge out of acedia.[28] He questions, 'When this text, this lecture course is over, there'll be nothing else for it but to start over again, to begin another one?'[29] He continues, 'I have no time left to try out several different lives: I have to choose my last life, my new life', which he calls *Vita Nova*.[30] In the very first lecture, Barthes states: 'at a certain point in a life […] The Desire-to-Write (*scripturire*) can present itself as the obvious Recourse, the Practice whose fantasmic force would enable a new beginning'.[31] Rather than *actually* writing a novel of his own (as might be suggested by the topic of the lectures), Barthes states that this is a *fantasy*: 'I'm at the Fantasy-of-the-novel stage, but I've decided to push that fantasy as far as it will go, to the point where: either the desire will fade away, or it will encounter the reality of writing and what gets written won't be the Fantasized Novel'.[32]

For Barthes, this new 'novel', the published *Mourning Diary*, is the manifestation of a new writing practice.[33] In the first lecture, Barthes mentions the importance of not committing to print the previous year's lectures on 'The Neutral', and feels that his lectures should not be published at all (this particular publication of *The Preparation of the Novel* – and the other lectures recently published – skirt around this apparent problem in that they constitute the publication of lecture *notes* in translation rather than a word-for-word transcription of the delivered lectures). Rather, Barthes suggests that his lectures should 'be set aside for the Ephemeral' (not unlike the 'diary' note cards).[34]

Because these lectures are, in fact, lecture notes that were then delivered in spoken form, they are a predecessor, an *anterior trace* of the lectures. That is, they come before the lectures and signal to the reader that the lectures follow. The lectures as presented are plans of what will take place: they are evocative of what remains after a lecture (thus, 'trace'), but were produced before the lecture and were the notes that Barthes used to present the spoken material of the lecture. It is unnerving to consider that these notes were produced before the lectures but are what remains of the lectures after

they were delivered. They constitute an anterior trace that was received through publication after Barthes' death. The lecture series is available through official recordings on optical media and unofficial audio recordings on various Internet web sites. Therefore, the lectures were captured in some way (thus negating their ephemeral nature). In the recordings, the reader is afforded a genuine look behind the enigmatic curtain of Barthes' writings; here the physical, spatial, vocal Roland Barthes is arrested – captured – for all to experience. Briggs sets the two sorts of artefacts apart: 'A script or score for a performance as distinct from the documentation of said performance; a written prompt for live delivery as distinct from the speech itself; the private preparation for a lecture course as distinct from the transcription of its live, embodied and very public actualization.' [35] These lectures might be characterized as 'photographs', as at least the source of ephemera, now captured onto the printed page.[36]

Elsewhere, Barthes describes this ephemera (spoken lectures and note cards) as beauty. Describing the writing in one of French author Phillipe Sollers' books like swirling leaves, Barthes writes: 'Look at these leaves on the ground, caught up in the approaching storm: they are small spirals, themselves entering into a great spiral, and this spiral moves off, goes away, we don't know where.'[37] Barthes states that Sollers' books contain a '*suffocation* that I call "beauty"'.[38] Barthes continues:

> it is […] like a television screen before the image settles down, or when the image, that holy of holies, is interrupted (by some storm) so that the frosted glass surface vibrates, dazzles, crackles, acts as a barrier to the metaphysic which will come back when the storm has passed.[39]

In an essay delivered as a lecture in October 1978, entitled, '*Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure…*' (referring to the opening line of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*), Barthes seems to acknowledge that all humanity is threatened by death, and plagued by a life of repetition. But there can occur an event that changes all of this: what he calls a 'middle of life's journey'. For Proust, this was his mother's death. The middle of life for Barthes is 'the moment when you discover that death is real and no longer merely dreadful'.[40] Further, in his lecture series on the novel, Barthes describes a sort of novel called *Vita Nova*, an esoteric project that he *hopes* to embark upon. In fact, in his lecture notes, Barthes includes outlines and diagrams for this new novel, a

strange and unclear image of what he is wanting to achieve. And so, for Barthes, the *Vita Nova* is a new practice of writing that contains at least two elements. It contains the pathos of love and death, what Barthes calls a 'moment of truth'; and it must be animated by (something to do with) love: 'kindness? generosity? charity? […] pity (or compassion)'.[41] The result of this 'moment of truth' accompanied by love is something new, a sort of breaking through to a new state of being. Barthes' desire for *this new thing*, the whole working through towards this new thing can be thought of as an image that is seen through a glass darkly, to use a biblical phrase. It is a kind of foreshadow or incomplete reflection of the ideal: that is, the model – the incomplete notes – that Barthes uses in order to create this novel as that very 'anterior trace'.

The death of Barthes' mother in 1977 seems to be the event that spurs him to change his ways: on 15 April 1978, after returning to an empty apartment while on vacation, with the death of his mother hanging over him, he experiences a strong feeling of the desire to retire from the Collège (the incident is described as 'a spell of vertigo analogous "to the illumination experienced by Proust's narrator at the end of *Time Regained*"') and focus on writing.[42] Emma Mason posits that, for Barthes, 'he seeks an epiphanic grace akin to that described by Augustine on reading the Psalms, "I was inwardly pricked" and so commenced "the purpose of a new life"'.[43]

Briggs suggests that the lectures in *The Preparation of the Novel*, while dealing with decisive shifts in Barthes' life which he felt would allow for a new outlook on writing to emerge, are in themselves a 'break with previous intellectual practices […] detached from the *management* of the earlier movement'.[44] Barthes considers this equal to the contemporary experience of the 'daily grind'. In an interview with Scott Esposito in April 2011, Briggs states, 'it's a novel experiment in how to integrate teaching and writing, a test to see whether it's possible to make those two activities into one and the same project'.[45] Briggs suggests also that the allure of this new way of thinking, for Barthes (and, of course, those who enjoy Barthes' work), is the potential of a longer piece by the author, rather than the rather fragmentary works that constitute his later *oeuvre*.

In *Mourning Diary*, it can be argued that Barthes is what Samoyault calls a 'muted light, as it were, more mysterious, more neutral […] because it emanates not from life but from death'.[46] *Mourning Diary* embodies a strange tension in that it does what Barthes wants without his involvement, and that it is the culmination of his theoretical 'novel', and revelatory of both a 'true'

Barthes and a 'muted' construction of a presently-deceased theorist. Léger, in her foreword to *Mourning Diary*, writes, 'The reader is presented not with a book completed by its author, but the hypothesis of a book desired by him'.[47] The book that now makes up Barthes as anterior trace transforms Barthes' life into a 'Life', that is, a theoretical (resuscitated) life.

Barthes' *Mourning Diary* seems to be like leaves on the ground that are caught up in an approaching storm, a storm of death, after which nothing is ever the same. In the spiral of the wind, these fragments and leaves are caught up in a 'great spiral', where the 'anterior trace' points to the ultimate new life of the next life. Of course, Barthes' quote ends as follows: 'this spiral moves off, goes away, we don't know where'.

Notes

[1] Tiphaine Samoyault, *Barthes: A Biography*, trans. by Andrew Brown (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), p. 491.
[2] Samoyault, *Barthes: A Biography*, p. 498.
[3] Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel: Lecture Courses and Seminars at the Collège de France (1978-1979 and 1979-1980)*, ed. by Nathalie Léger, trans. by Kate Briggs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 25.
[4] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 27.
[5] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 27, p. 28.
[6] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 27.
[7] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 27.
[8] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 71.
[9] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 72.
[10] Samoyault, *Barthes: A Biography*, p. 54.
[11] Roland Barthes, *Mourning Diary: October 26, 1977 – September 15, 1979*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), p. 186.
[12] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, 107.
[13] A different reading of this passage from *Mourning Diary* appears in Nicholas P. Greco, *The Rosary and the Microphone: Religious Impulse in U2's Mediated Brand* (Sheffield and Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2019), pp. 174–75.
[14] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 19.
[15] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 23.
[16] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 25.
[17] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 48–49.
[18] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 7.
[19] Andrew Gallix, 'The Writer Postponed: Barthes at the BnF', *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, 23 August 2015. Available online: https://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/barthes-panorama [accessed 9 March 2024].
[20] Barthes, *Mourning Diary*, p. 50.
[21] Barthes, *Mourning Diary*, p. 113.
[22] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 9.
[23] Kate Briggs, *This Little Art* (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2018), p. 155.
[24] Nathalie Léger, 'Editor's Preface', in Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. xvii.
[25] Roland Barthes, 'Inaugural Lecture, Collège de France', trans. by Richard Howard, in *A Barthes Reader*, ed. by Susan Sontag (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2009), p. 405.
[26] Samoyault, *Barthes: A Biography*, p. 125.
[27] Barthes, 'Inaugural Lecture', p. 405.

[28] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 5. It is worthwhile to consider that the next part of the biblical reference reads, 'If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going.'
[29] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 4.
[30] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 5.
[31] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 10.
[32] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, pp. 11–12.
[33] *The Preparation of the Novel* should be understood as the latter part of a larger project, in lieu of major written works towards the end of his life: *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* was published in 1975; *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* was published in 1977; and *Camera Lucida* was published only in early 1980.
[34] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 7.
[35] Kate Briggs, '*Augmentation infinie de la mayonnaise*: On the New Edition of Roland Barthes's *La Préparation du roman*', *Barthes Studies*, 7 (2021), 49–64 (p. 50).
[36] Nathalie Léger writes that 'those who attended the course recall the remarkable fluidity of his delivery, the deep and enveloping timbre of his voice, the warm phrasing that endowed his authority with infinite goodwill.' Some of these sentiments come through when reading the text but lecture notes are not a replacement for being present at the event. Not all nuance of the moment can be arrested on the page. Léger, 'Editor's Preface', p. xx.
[37] Roland Barthes, 'Over Your Shoulder', in *Sollers Writer*, trans. by Philip Thody (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), pp. 75–92 (p. 75).
[38] Barthes, 'Over Your Shoulder', p. 75.
[39] Barthes, 'Over Your Shoulder', p. 76.
[40] Roland Barthes, '*Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure* …', in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), pp. 285–288 (p. 285).
[41] Barthes, '*Longtemps*', p. 288.
[42] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, pp. 7–8. On 31 October 1977, Barthes writes, 'I don't want to talk about it [his mother's death] for fear of making literature out of it'. Barthes, *Mourning Diary*, p. 23. In the lectures, however, his desire to write is a desire 'to enter into literature, into writing'. Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 8.
[43] Emma Mason, 'Punctive Grace: Reading Religion in Barthes' *Mourning Diary*', *Textual Practice*, 30.2 (2016), 327–43 (p. 332).
[44] Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, p. 6.
[45] Scott Esposito, 'Four Questions for Kate Briggs on Roland Barthes' Preparation of the Novel', *Conversational Reading*, 7 April 2011. Available online: https://web.archive.org/web/20140701124307/conversationalreading.com/four-

questions-for-kate-briggs-on-roland-barthes-preparation-of-the-novel/ [accessed 8 March 2024].
[46] Samoyault, *Barthes: A Biography*, p. 486.
[47] Barthes, *Mourning Diary*, p. 10.

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