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# The Moving Frontiers of Intellectual Work

## The Importation and Early Reception of Roland Barthes' Works in the United States (1960s–1980s).

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*Abstract:* This paper focuses on Barthes' career and early American reception (1960s–1980s). It aims at showing the construction of Barthes as an intellectual figure in France and in the United States in a perspective of historical sociology of intellectuals and of social sciences and humanities. In studying how the American reception of Barthes' works takes place in the wider circulation of symbolic goods between the French and American academic, intellectual and literary spaces, it specifically demonstrates the way the crossing of national frontiers, in Barthes' case, is related to the crossing of disciplinary, professional and intellectual boundaries. The paper mobilizes different types of data on Barthes' career in France and on his reception in the United States – biographical data, publishing and translation data – and proposes an analysis of various intermediaries who imported Barthes as a reference in the American academic, intellectual and literary spaces. The combination of these perspectives allows to observe the social conditions of possibility of Barthes' first reception in the United States, the intellectual and academic appropriations of his work, as well as the way the French and American receptions of his works contributed to one another's growth and longevity. Eventually, this case study contributes to the understanding of the logics of the division of intellectual labor in transnational contexts.

*Keywords:* *Transnational; Theory; Semiotics; Academic Field; Literature; Circulations.*

### 1. Introduction

More than thirty years after his death, Barthes still enjoys a remarkable reception overseas: as a recent study reports, he was the third most translated French author in the United States in the Social Sciences and Humanities between 2010 and 2013 [Sapiro 2014], and the translations of his books are distributed over many countries. The ongoing *Open Syllabus Project* currently lists Barthes' *Mythologies* among the most taught texts in the United States: all fields of study included, the book appears as the fifth text written by a French contemporary

author<sup>1</sup>. This long-term success relies on a series of dynamics that cannot be explained by the contents of Barthes' texts alone. Indeed, foreign texts are received and appropriated by specific audiences, situated in particular social, cultural, intellectual and ideological spaces which structure the stakes, the struggles and the hierarchies of the "reception field" [Bourdieu 2002].

The political and cultural context of the 1960s and 1970s in France and in the United States, as well as the intellectual and academic exchanges between the two countries at that time, are fundamental to understanding the rise of several intellectual labels developed in the wake of structuralism in the Social Sciences and Humanities, like "French Theory" or "Literary Theory". Prominent figures like Roland Barthes or Jacques Derrida fit into this reconfiguration of the French and American intellectual and academic fields. The exceptional resonance of their works in the American cultural landscape raises numerous questions on the social conditions of the transnational circulation of symbolic goods. However, sticking to the fame and the visibility abroad of certain intellectual figures on one side, and restricting their reception to contextual influences on the other side can lead one to miss the part played by the various social uses of transnational circulations and mobilities [Jeanpierre 2008; Wagner 2010]. As a matter of fact, the American reception of Barthes' works relies at the same time on transnational circulations as a process – as opposed to a binary view of the transatlantic dialogue – and, on a smaller scale, on social uses, practices and localized strategies of international circulations. This double focus allows one to observe the combination of national, international and transnational logics, and the way they do not always overlap with linguistic, symbolic or institutional ones.

This paper focuses on Barthes' career and early American reception. It aims at showing the similarities and the discrepancies between the construction of Barthes as an intellectual figure in France and in the United States, and provides an explanation as to how the French and American receptions contributed to one another's growth and longevity. The dissemination of Barthes' publications in France and abroad, replaced in his own trajectory, allows one first to understand how, in the transnational circulation of his works, the crossing of national frontiers appears as inseparable from the crossing of other frontiers – for instance between different

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<sup>1</sup> The *Open Syllabus Project* collects and ranks texts and authors according to their presence in over a million syllabi predominantly used in the past decade of teaching at universities. For the example above, 100,000 texts in the US, all institutions and fields of study included, were taken in consideration. In order of appearance, French authors are listed as follows: Alexis de Tocqueville (ranks 31 and 53), René Descartes (ranks 44, 72, 260 and 393), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (ranks 45, 249, 439), Michel Foucault (ranks 48, 61, 326), Jean-Paul Sartre (ranks 58 and 390), Voltaire (rank 63), Simone de Beauvoir (rank 117), Emile Durkheim (ranks 232, 273, 404), Gustave Flaubert (rank 306), Roland Barthes (rank 312). Using the filter for the field of study "Languages and Literatures (Modern)" in the US, out of nearly 6,000 texts Barthes' *Mythologies* appear as the seventh most taught text written by a French contemporary author, and the seventeenth French text all French authors included. The *Open Syllabus Project* being still in progress it undoubtedly prevents us from relying on definitive data here, but helps in distinguishing tendencies. The website [www.opensyllabusproject.org](http://www.opensyllabusproject.org) offers resources about the method and the collected syllabi.

spaces, disciplines, or activities. This circulation was accompanied by a constant reflection on the crossing and the blurring of frontiers, to be found in Barthes' works as well as in the intermediaries of his American reception's. Thus, the joint study of the social conditions of possibility of Barthes' American reception and of its intellectual or even theoretical dimension leads to an examination of the various canals that allowed the presence of Barthes in the United States (intermediaries, book reviews, translations) and of the ways his work was appropriated in the American academic field. This study uses data gathered for an ongoing research project on the historical sociology of the Social Sciences and Humanities (interviews of current and former academics, institutional and pedagogical archives from French and American universities and research centers, bibliographies and publication reports).<sup>2</sup>

## **2. A Social and Transnational Prism on Intellectual Productions**

Two generations of the heterogeneous group of literary theorists that emerged in the wake of structuralism can be identified, the first being gathered mainly around Roland Barthes, and the second around his former student Gérard Genette [e.g. Genette 1966; 1969]. The evolution of their theoretical production has been studied in several ways. Intellectual and literary history have now long underlined the various theoretical inspirations and affiliations of literary theories with structural linguistics, Russian formalism, psychoanalysis, and dialectical materialism, and the rupture these affiliations established with the intellectual traditions of journalistic criticism on one side, and of dominant literary studies on the other side. Re-placing the main theoretical texts in their enunciative context helps in singling out their oppositional value, especially during the episodes of debates and disputes. At the same time, it allows one to understand the way their proposals were to be understood as "interventions" in the academic, intellectual and/or literary spaces [Skinner 2002]. This interpretive stance, though, appears punctually insufficient because of the variety of the stakes at play in the evolution of the literary theories in general, and in Barthes' career and reception in particular. The understanding of the production and the reception of intellectual works requires indeed to go beyond the dialogues with the explicit or implicit interlocutors to take into account the structures which allow and/or constrain intellectual production and its diffusion: institutions, disciplines,

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<sup>2</sup> The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/20072013) under grant agreement n° 319974 (Interco-SSH).

individual and collective trajectories [e.g. Bourdieu 1988; Brisson 2008; Heilbron 2015; Fabiani 1988; Samoyault 2015; Soulié 1995]. For instance, even though the heterogeneous group of literary theorists (Roland Barthes, Tzvetan Todorov, Gérard Genette, Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Jean-Pierre Richard, etc.) was for the most part composed of students and/or scholars in literature, most of them studied and/or worked, until the end of the 1960s, not in universities or Humanities faculties but in places closer to the social sciences and new disciplines than to literary studies (the CNRS, the EPHE, the University of Vincennes), or outside the academic field (in the literary field). Additionally, a great number of them were inserted into international networks whereas literary studies traditionally developed within national configurations [Thiesse 1999]. The late institutionalization of French modern literature as an academic discipline rendered the theorists' careers heterogeneous in France. Indeed, the modern literature *agrégation* was only created in 1959 and remained symbolically dominated by classical literature in higher education institutions [Cardon-Quint 2015]. The internationalization of numerous researchers and critics close to this literary theory nebula has to be understood in this institutional and disciplinary frame, in which there were few academic positions in central French institutions, and in which institutions like the EPHE or the CNRS provided them with a possibility to research and teach, in France as well as abroad. Moreover, in the context of aesthetic, intellectual, ideological and institutional ruptures with the temporally dominant institutions, the resort for international references and careers can be considered as an autonomous posture to refute the national dominant tradition [Wilfert-Portal 2002].

Recently and less, scholars in the sociology of intellectuals and the sociology of the Social Sciences and Humanities have advocated for the idea that the circulation and the reception of ideas had to be understood in transnational frames despite the national structures of the diffusion of knowledge [e.g. Heilbron, Guilhot and Jeanpierre 2009]. Various works have shown the analytical and practical difference between “international” and “transnational” contexts, the first being traditionally conceived on the basis of State divisions whereas the second, emphasizing non-State related configurations, could challenge the official approach to international exchanges [Siméant 2012; Vauchez 2008]. The transnational circulation of ideas is also significantly embedded into other international flows and regulated by international relations between agents, institutions, countries [Heilbron 2001; Guilhot 2011; Mazon 1988]. In this perspective, numerous

contributions have enlightened the role of intermediaries in the transnational circulation of symbolic goods, either underlining their operational role, the changes in their status, their influence on the reception of ideas or the biographical incidences of their being intermediaries [e.g. Boltanski 1975a; Charle 1992; Hauchecorne 2011; Jeanpierre 2004; Roueff 2013].

The French theoretical production in literature has been the object of several works in social history, sociology and literary history [e.g. Angermüller 2013; Compagnon 1998; Kaufmann 2011; Kauppi 1990] and raised the question of the politicization of theoretical contents [Gobille 2005; Matonti 2005a]. An endless bibliography dealing with the French-American making of “French Theory” has been, and still is, established since the very beginning of the importation of structuralism [see Miller 1981]. Regarding this specific case of the transatlantic circulation of ideas, other than the consistent literature produced by the actors themselves [e.g. Lotringer and Cohen 2001; Macksey and Donato 1970], several works have studied the social conditions of emergence of intellectual figures [e.g. Lamont 1987], while others have shown how the international circulation of works could create intellectual labels and movements [Cusset 2003; Lamont and Witten 1988]. Eventually, scholars have noticeably underlined the obstacles to a fluid international circulation of texts and to the reception of specific works [e.g. Apter 2013; Pudal 2004; Sapiro 2012; Santoro 2009].

Not all national spaces, especially not France and the United States – because of their size, of the structure of their institutions, etc. – can be analytically superimposed on each other, even though some of the mechanisms that rule the academic, intellectual and literary life appear as similar<sup>3</sup>. For the United States, François Cusset showed the non-academic uses and appropriations of the corpora of the French 1960s intellectuals in different areas

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<sup>3</sup> French and American academic and intellectual fields are structured and evolved quite differently. For example, whereas the relative autonomy of the French intellectual field provides specific dynamics in the interaction between academic and intellectual life, the question of a potential superposition, in the United States, of the academic and intellectual fields, has been raised by many authors [e.g. Cusset 2003; Lamont 1987]. The spatial distribution of national intellectual and academic life also reveals very different logics. French intellectual and academic life were centralized around Paris. The wider and multipolar academic and intellectual American spaces theoretically allowed a much more important circulation of knowledge and symbolic goods, but appears slowed, eclipsed and made difficult by a strong hierarchization and the relative isolation of elite institutions – which, on some aspects, can appear as another form of relative centralization. For all these reasons, a systematic comparison between the French and American intellectual and academic fields would require a much deeper investigation. However, the polarization, the internal hierarchies and the power struggles inherent to both national spaces allow us to consider them as potential fields in the frame of this case study. See also Charle and Verger [2012] and Lucas [1994].

such as identity politics, artistic practices or pop culture [Cusset 2003]. In France too, the diffusion of texts produced in the wake of structuralism can be observed well beyond the academic field strictly speaking. This relatively extended readership was due to various factors: the postwar economics, the transformation of the French education system which enlarged the graduated audience from the mid-1960s and increased the number of students formed in Humanities and especially literature<sup>4</sup>, the consequential growth of a broader learned public, the transformations of the publishing sphere. In this context, the transatlantic circulation of Barthes' works indicates his position at the intersection of the academic, intellectual and literary spaces, in France as in the United States.

### 3. Postures and Trajectory of “a Bastard-Type: the Author-Writer”

#### 3.1. Barthes' “*Blurring of the Frontiers*”: Theory and “Strategy”

The case of Roland Barthes is paradigmatic when it comes to the blurring of the frontiers between different social fields, namely the academic, intellectual and literary fields. At the turn of the Twentieth century, these fields had undergone a strong process of differentiation embodied in the two-sided orientations of literary criticism: the transformations of secondary and higher education and the specialization of intellectual work had led to a relative separation between writers and academics that created a concurrence between “academic literary criticism” and “professional literary criticism” [Charle 1981; Sapiro 2004]. As Christophe Charle and Gisèle Sapiro have underlined, this differentiation also created an internal division of work inside literary criticism that led academic literary criticism to concentrate mainly on classical literature, whereas professional literary criticism would deal with contemporary literature. Literary criticism found itself at the crossing of the intellectual, literary and academic fields. Though it divided literary critics, the separation between academic and professional criticism and, as a consequence, the appropriation of classical or contemporary literature have never been

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<sup>4</sup> According to data produced in the INTERCO-SSH Project and based on statistical reports from the French Ministry of Higher Education (DEPP-MESR), French higher education underwent a major development in the 1960s. It affected particularly the faculties of literature and human sciences (*facultés de lettres et sciences humaines*): the number of first year students in these faculties grew threefold between 1960 and 1965. Inside these faculties, the same increase affected the *lettres modernes* (the number of *licence* diplomas was multiplied by five between 1959 and 1965) and the number of diplomas delivered went on growing until the middle of the 1970s. [Sapiro, Brun, and Dumont 2013]. See also Cardon-Quint [2015] and Prost and Cytermann [2010].

completely hermetic. Significantly, Barthes dedicated works to both classical and contemporary literature, and in doing so he held concurrently these two figures of the literary critic. It can be grasped through the prism of these frontiers that he constantly crossed and whose crossing he theorized. Bourdieu denounced the “vital interests” that some agents – essayists and “academic-journalists” – positioned at the border of the academic field can have in this “blurring of the frontiers” [Bourdieu 1984, 14]. In his analysis of the dispute between Barthes and Raymond Picard, he criticized Barthes’ undecided position, that he considered at the same time as an incomplete reconciliation of the opposites and as an undue extension of an intellectual domain: according to Bourdieu, “having it both ways” would only lead to a desperate effort in trying to “cumulate the profits of science and the prestige of philosophy or literature”<sup>5</sup> [Bourdieu 1984, 155]. As a matter of fact, Barthes navigated among different roles and was identified under various labels, socially situated figures, professional statuses and ethos (like the writer, the scholar, the *intellectuel* or the professor), or various specializations (like the sociologist, the semiologist or the literary theorist). Barthes cultivated this combination of postures.<sup>6</sup>

On the level of Barthes’ intellectual production, the questions of the status of his works, of the categories that regulate intellectual production and of the social distribution of speech are central. In various texts from the beginning of the 1960s, some of which were directly involved in the dispute he had between 1963 and 1966 with Raymond Picard, the leading Racine scholar at the time, Barthes distinguished himself from the “positivistic” or “academic criticism” (“*la critique positiviste/ universitaire*”) and from the social and professional habitus and ethos it carries, to which he opposed the “interpretive” or “ideological criticism” (“*la critique d’interprétation/idéologique*”) he promoted with the group designated by Picard under the label of *Nouvelle Critique*.<sup>7</sup> This distinction can be

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<sup>5</sup> Author’s translation.

<sup>6</sup> The notion of posture as introduced by Bourdieu and Viala helps in understanding the different ways in which a position can be occupied by an agent [Bourdieu 1980a and 1980b; Molinié and Viala 1993, 216]. Jérôme Meizoz applied this notion to literary authors, underlining the fact that the postures are interactional, discursive and physical modalities. As such, they have to be considered at the same time on the basis of “internal” analysis (e.g. intellectual positioning, stylistic and thematic choices) and on the basis of “external” elements, such as the social trajectory of the writer and the way in which the posture actualizes a part of the pre-existing history of the field [Meizoz 2007].

<sup>7</sup> The “*Nouvelle Critique*” is not a label initially promoted by Barthes nor by his colleagues and disciples, has not been a constituted and claimed label by the literary theorists, and does not refer to a precise methodology. Rather, the label comes from the denomination given by Picard to the literary critics he attacked in his pamphlet. It has then been appropriated in polemical texts and discussions, and above all the label has been mostly retroactive in history of French literary criticism [e.g. Compagnon 1998; Doubrovsky 1967; Picard 1965].



found in previous texts [e.g. Barthes 1959]. In “Les deux critiques” [1964b]<sup>8</sup>, Barthes proposed an analysis of the separation between these two types of literary criticism, which partly echoed the historical differentiation of academic and professional criticism. There, he underlined the porosity between “academic” and “interpretive” criticism through their mutual relationship with the academic field. According to him, the difference between these two criticisms was not the result of a division of work, nor of a different use of methods, but “a real competition of two ideologies” [Barthes 1972, 250]. In the same way, in an article published in 1960, he had proposed the distinction between “Authors and Writers” (*Écrivains et Écrivants*) [Barthes 1960].<sup>9</sup> A reflection on literary categories, the distinction also relied on the social uses of language that distinguish a posture from another, the “author” being associated with the figure of the priest and with an intransitive use of language (for example through literature) whereas the “writer” is associated with the clerk and characterized by a transitive use of language (for example through science or essay). In this article, Barthes asserted:

Today, each member of the intelligentsia harbors both roles in himself, one or the other of which he “retracts” more or less well: authors occasionally have the impulses, the impatiences of writers; writers sometimes gain access to the theater of language. [...] In short, our age produces a bastard-type: the author-writer. [Barthes 1972, 149].

In Barthes’ trajectory, the figure of the “author-writer” appeared at a moment in which he was himself in a double posture, trying to integrate research structures in social sciences, and at the same time regularly publishing reviews and essays. The form of the essay itself can be considered a genre distinct from academic and scientific writing on one side, and from literary writing on the other side [Macé 2006]. The posture of the “author-writer” defended by Barthes can also be considered as a product of the intersection of the intellectual, academic and literary fields<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, he continuously postulated a complex

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<sup>8</sup> See Table 3 for the chronology of publication of Barthes’ books and for their English translation and correspondent date of publication.

<sup>9</sup> Though the English translation can sound disturbing, it may be useful to underline that Barthes used the rare and often derogatory noun “*écrivant*” to designate the act of writing, as opposed to the figure of the “*écrivain*”. “*Écrivant*” is translated as “writer” by R. Howard, whereas the “*écrivain*” is translated as “author” [Barthes 1972, 143-151].

<sup>10</sup> The different versions of the figure of the “author-writer” recall what Charle called the “double men” (*les hommes doubles*): an intermediary that can appear at the same time as a figure of the “core activity” and as one of the “support activities” [Becker 1982]. Sometimes considered as an intermediary by the (literary) authors, he can also be received as an author by the general public. Notably, for Charle, the figure of the “double men” is not due to a professionalization process and neither it can be explained only by observing the division of labor. Instead,

continuum between science, criticism and literature through writing which in some ways prolonged, developed and sometimes actualized this figure of the author-writer. *Critique et vérité*, published in 1966 partly as an answer to the dispute with Picard, or “De la science à la littérature” [1967a] (“Science versus Literature” [1967b]), or even later “Écrivains, intellectuels, professeurs” [1971a], all explore these questions and, though in different proportions, emphasize this continuity. The theoretical dimension of Barthes’ proposals in these texts also has to be understood as a position-taking, and as such as a social “strategy” in the sense Bourdieu employed the concept, that is as a coherent but not necessarily intentional decision related to the dispositions and the capital detained by the agent to act in a specific space of possibilities [Bourdieu 1979, 145]. Like the posture, the strategy has a temporal dimension, at the same time building on one’s assets and projecting a coherent figure. From this point of view, Barthes’ theoretical proposals not only have a literary value, but also a social one [Bourdieu 1966]. They constituted at the same time an object of study, a reflection on his own practices, a frame for his work and a presentation of the self, as well as a way to position himself in the French literary, intellectual and academic fields.

### 3.2. *From Journal Writer to Book Author*

One of the striking features of Barthes’ career is that he did not initially benefit from a regular socialization to academic institutions but still acquired a significant cultural and social capital. Born in 1915 in the small declining protestant bourgeoisie, he lost his father young and became a ward of the state. His childhood was spent mostly in the South of France, before coming to Paris and studying at the prestigious high school Louis-le-Grand. Barthes obtained a Bachelor’s degree (*licence*) in literature at the Sorbonne in 1939. Between the beginning of his studies and the end of the Second World War, tuberculosis forced him to distance, cure, and bed rest. While being cured, Barthes formed a growing interest in socialism, became passionate about Michelet, and tried his way to research and literary writing. He also met people who would be decisive for the rest of his career, like Georges Fournié, a Trotskyist veteran of the Spanish War where he had fought against Franco in the POUM. He later introduced Barthes to Maurice Nadeau, a former member of the Communist Party and of the Résistance and a central character in the postwar French

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this figure corresponds to a given state of the transforming intellectual fields and of the diversification of its agents [Charle 1992, 74 ss.].

literary life. A literary critic, Nadeau created the journal *La Quinzaine Littéraire* and introduced Barthes to the Parisian literary life [see Roger 1996; Samoyault 2015]. Even though this experience of cure and distance turned out to be at the same time difficult and extremely rich, it had two major consequences on Barthes' trajectory, career, and intellectual socialization that can be relevant here. First, professionally, Barthes' alternative professional and intellectual formation caused at the same time a relative exclusion from central academic institutions and an additional difficulty in obtaining graduate diplomas and competitive exams (*concours*), which prevented him from having access to a linear academic career. The second consequence has more to do with Barthes' political socialization: he did not share the experience of the war with the intellectuals he met during and after the war, even less did he share the experience of the Résistance, despite building solid intellectual and ideological alliances on the basis of common ideological positions. Finally, if Barthes later placed his work in a Marxist tradition, he never was a member of the French Communist Party. Former networks of the Résistance and solidarities revolving around the different fractions of the Communist Party structured the French intellectual life after World War Two and until the mid-1970s in France [Boschetti 1985; Matonti 2005b; Sapiro 1999], which reinforced Barthes' original and relatively marginal position in the intellectual field.

Starting from these observations, Barthes' publications and initial career show how, through a specific series of collaborations and publications, he emerged and gained his status in French intellectual and academic life. The fact that Barthes experienced important financial and material difficulties until the early 1960s and that numerous texts were commissioned to him partly explain the dissemination of his works, in quantitative terms as well as in qualitative ones (the type of publications differ: reviews, articles, prefaces, interviews, or books). Indeed, before the publication of his first book, Barthes had a job at the CNRS as an intern, then became an assistant in lexicology and sociology in 1952. The publication of *Le Degré zéro* in 1953 appears as a first pivot in Barthes' career: his publications then intensified and started to appear in a continuously diversified number of journals. Remarkably, Barthes' first major essays, *Le Degré zéro* [1953], *Michelet* [1954a], *Mythologies* [1957], *Sur Racine* [1963a], and the *Essais Critiques* [1964a] are mainly collections of essays already published between 1942 and the beginning of the 1960s, either as prefaces or in this quite diverse landscape of intellectual journals and magazines. The

beginning of the 1960s is a second pivot in Barthes' early career: after the publication of *Mythologies* in 1957, he was recruited in 1962 as a research director (*directeur d'études*) at the VIth Section of the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE) on chair entitled "Sociology of signs, symbols and representations". His insertion in the academic field corresponds to the period in which he was not only established as a critic through his collaboration to journals, but also to the moment when his work regularly appeared in new and important journals, and was unified as books.

	1942-1952	1953-1962	1963-1969	1970-1980
<b>20 and more publications</b>				
Intellectual/ literary journals		<i>Lettres Nouvelles</i>		
Specialized non-academic journals		<i>Théâtre populaire</i>		
Magazines				<i>Le Nouvel Observateur</i>
<b>10 to 19 publications</b>				
Academic publications			<i>Communications</i>	
Magazines		<i>France-Observateur</i>		
Newspapers	<i>Combat</i>			
<b>5 to 9 publications</b>				
Intellectual/ literary journals	<i>Existences</i>	<i>Critique, Esprit</i>		<i>Tel Quel, La Quinzaine littéraire</i>
Academic publications		<i>Annales, Communications</i>		
Specialized non-academic journals		<i>Bulletin de la guilde du livre</i>		
Newspapers				<i>Le Monde</i>
<b>2 to 5 publications</b>				
Intellectual/ literary journals	<i>Esprit</i>	<i>Arguments, Documents</i>	<i>Tel Quel, La Quinzaine Littéraire</i>	<i>Critique, Gramma, L'Arc, Les nouvelles littéraires</i>
Academic publications		<i>Revue internationale de filmologie</i>		<i>Communications, Revue d'esthétique</i>
Specialized non-academic journals		<i>Arts, Club, Bref</i>		
Magazines			<i>France-Observateur, Le Nouvel Observateur</i>	
<b>1 publication</b>				
Intellectual/ literary journals	<i>Cahiers de l'étudiant</i>	<i>Tel Quel, Europe, La Nouvelle Critique, Médiations, L'Arc, Le 14 juillet, US Lines Paris Review</i>	<i>Lettres Nouvelles, Critique, Esprit, Arguments, Gulliver</i>	<i>L'humidité, Les lettres françaises, Cahiers Cistre, NDLR</i>
Academic publications		<i>Revue française de sociologie, Information sur les sciences sociales, Le français dans le monde</i>	<i>Annales, L'année sociologique, Information sur les sciences sociales, Langages, Le français moderne, Les cahiers de la publicité</i>	<i>Poétique, Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, Lecture et pédagogie, Le français aujourd'hui, Discours social, H. Histoire, Cahiers média, Recherches de sciences religieuses</i>
Specialized non-academic journals		<i>Travail théâtral, Cahiers Renault-Barrault, Rendez-vous des théâtres des nations, Spectacles, Théâtre d'aujourd'hui, Publi 54 27, rue Jacob, Actualité littéraire, Positif, Jardins des arts, L'Arche Clarté, Tribune étudiante</i>	<i>Arts</i>	<i>Ça, Magazine littéraire, Art-Press, L'architecture aujourd'hui, Musique en jeu, L'autre scène, Créatis, Photo, Zoom, Le photographe</i>
Magazines	<i>L'Observateur</i>	<i>L'Observateur</i>	<i>Réalités, Marie-Claire</i>	<i>Vogue hommes</i>
Newspapers			<i>Combat</i>	<i>Le Figaro littéraire, L'humanité, Libération, Le Monde de l'éducation</i>

TAB. 1. Roland Barthes: Publications in French Periodicals (1942-1980)

Sources: Barthes [2002]; Leguay [1982]; Miller [1981].

Note: Table 1 presents the number of publications by Barthes in French periodicals during his lifetime. Data includes articles and books reviews (329 publications in 90 journals). Even though their initial logic and uses are different, Barthes could take general positions in both, extend the scope of book reviews to article-wise reflections or even re-write book reviews to turn them into lengthy articles. Data presented here excludes interviews, contributions in collective volumes, prefaces and contributions to arts catalogue. The variety of periodicals prevented from an aggregation of numbers or a purely quantitative measure and presentation

of the data. “Intellectual/ literary journals” gather interdisciplinary journals characterized by lengthy essays and reviews, and participants close to the intellectual and literary fields. “Academic publications” are categorized as such on the basis of their being invested by academics, developed close to research centers and having a disciplinary or sectorial (“social sciences”) referent. “Specialized non-academic journals” include publications non exclusively run by academic, close to the agents and instances of specific practices: theatre, literature, arts, politics. “Magazines” include regular publications of general and cultural interest. They are distinct from the specialized non-academic journals by their format, their use of advertising, their mixing different types of content. “Newspapers” include national newspapers and their weekly supplements<sup>11</sup>.

Other than the difference in the rhythm and investment required for the publication in magazines, intellectual, academic or literary journals, three general observations can be made. First, the important diversity of journals in which Barthes was present at some point shows the potential extent of his readership, which goes way beyond the frontiers of an academic readership from the beginning to the end of his career. Second, the fact that he published numerous articles also partly explains the construction of his books as collections, which leads to a reflection on the two different types of reception they engage: even if the publication of articles as books unified his production and made it available to different audiences, he was situated in the intellectual, academic and literary fields through his position in journals. Third, the four periods indicate different steps in his consecration, and show the shift undergone by his production. He started by publishing in journals, with an intense activity between 1953 and 1962, but at the end of his career these publications decreased, while being much more dispersed on numerous periodicals: his activity was then to be found in books, in the seminars held at the Collège de France, in prefaces and numerous interviews.

From the moment Barthes started to publish until the end of 1952, his articles could mainly be found in *Existences*, the journal of the sanatorium where he was cured, in the left-wing newspaper born in the French Résistance *Combat*, in which Barthes’ introducer, Maurice Nadeau, held a renown literary section, and the leftist catholic review *Esprit* directed at the time by Albert Béguin and close to Barthes’ future publishing house Le Seuil. After the publication of his first book *Le Degré zéro de l’écriture* in 1953, his publications intensified and diversified. He regularly published articles in *Les Lettres Nouvelles*, the literary left-wing journal founded by Maurice Nadeau, and numerous reviews in the journal *Théâtre populaire*, which Barthes would privilege for his public ideological positions, particularly exposed through his defense of Bertolt Brecht and his commitment for “popular theatre”. He wrote in numerous theatre journals, marking his engagement for theatre beyond his activity at *Théâtre populaire* (*Travail théâtral, Spectacles, etc.*). At the same time, he published critical reviews and essays in the widely diffused generalist and cultural weekly *France-Observateur*, also marked as left-wing. He started to write essays for intellectual and book journals such as *Critique*, *Esprit* and *Arguments*, the latter he had contributed to create and was interested in Marxism and Social Sciences, and also *Europe*, a literary journal formerly close to the Communist party, like *La Nouvelle Critique*. He also published two articles in the student journals *Clarté* (journal of the Students of the Communist Party) and *Tribune Étudiante* (journal of the Students of the Parti Socialiste Unifié). They underline his ideological position while showing at the same time his absence of attachment to a specific political position. Barthes also published in academic journals: in the *Revue Française de Sociologie* and in the prestigious social sciences journal *Annales*, as well as in other academic specialized journals (*Informations sur les sciences sociales, Revue international de filmologie, Le français dans le monde*). This first evolution shows that his career does not start only through academic or disciplinary publications: on the contrary, the collaboration to several specialized non-academic journals, followed by the publication of his first book in 1953 and the success of *Mythologies* in 1957, are essential. As a matter of fact, specialized and academic journals were

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<sup>11</sup> For specific information on journals, see for example Boschetti [1985]; Kauppi [2010]; Matonti [2005a]; Samoyault [2015]; Sapiro [1999]; Serry [2015]; and Ajchenbaum [2013]; Consolini [1999]; de Faramond [2010]; Escal [1980]; Leveratto [2009]; Patron [1999]; Pinto [1984].

not numerous at the beginning of Barthes' career: the market of specialized journals started to grow and structure by the end of the 1950s. During this period, Barthes also gave an interview and published five prefaces for book club editions of literary classics. *Club* and *Bulletin de la guilde du livre* were the journals attached to these book clubs.

Between 1963 and 1969 are included the dispute with Picard, which is essential for Barthes' exposure, and the books related (*Sur Racine* [1963a]; *Essais Critiques* [1964a]; *Critique et vérité* [1966]), plus a book Barthes had in preparation for a long time, *Système de la mode* [1967c]. The collaborations to journals are centered around structuralism and semiology (*Communications*, *Tel Quel*), while the initial journals are still present (*Lettres Nouvelles*, *Critique*, *Esprit*, *Arguments*, *Annales*, *Combat*). At this point, the general evolution of Barthes' publications in periodicals shows a growing diversification of journals, due at the same time to the creation of new journals and to Barthes' reinforced insertion intellectual and academic networks.

The last period (1970-1980) is marked by publications on new topics (*L'Empire des signes* in 1970), the relatively fast publication of books non exclusively based on already published material (*S/Z* in 1970, elaborated from Barthes' seminar at the EPHE, *Sade*, *Fourier*, *Loyola* in 1971, and the *Nouveaux Essais Critiques* in 1972) and two very successful books (*Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* in 1975, a short autobiographical essay, and the literary essay *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* in 1977, the year of his election at the Collège de France). Barthes' consecration is also visible in the great number of prefaces he wrote then, more than twenty, no longer for classics only but also for contemporary avant-garde texts (Pierre Guyotat's censored *Éden*, *Éden*, *Éden* [1970c], Guido Crepax's publication of *Histoire d'O* [1975e]), in the number of interviews (more than fifty) and in the dissemination of publications. Indeed, apart from *Le Nouvel Observateur* in which Barthes held a series of chronicles, his publications are widely dispersed: among national newspapers (*Le Monde*, *Libération*, *L'humanité*, *Le Figaro* and their weekly supplements), intellectual and literary journals (*La Quinzaine littéraire*, *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, *Les lettres françaises*, but also avant-garde literary journals like *L'humidité* or *NDLR*). Contributions to academic journals are much more important at the end of his career, and include different disciplines (literature, history, communication, pedagogy) and legitimate journals specialized in literature (e.g. *Poétique*, the literary theory journal created in 1970 by G. Genette, T. Todorov and H. Cixous; the *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, founded by Gustave Lanson at the end of the Nineteenth century and which used to represent the literary studies the promoters of structuralism in literature opposed). Finally, several contributions to journals specialized in photography (*Zoom*, *Photo*, *Créatis*, *Le photographe*) can be linked to Barthes' work on photography in *La chambre claire*, published in 1980.

The evolution of Barthes' publications in France shows how he found himself multipositioned quickly and in the long run. He worked in several disciplines, experimented various genres and intellectual practices. Positioned at the same time as the author of several books, as a critic and a collaborator as well as an editor in journals, he became close to important scholars in the social sciences, took part in the debates and networks around structuralism and its different versions. The dispute with Picard reinforced his position as the supposed leader of an opposition to academic criticism and contributed to his being renown. Barthes worked with central figures of the intellectual life in the 1960s, like Lucien Goldmann and A.J. Greimas, Violette and Edgar Morin, with whom he created a research center, the CECMAS, which was at the core of the developing structuralist networks and

gave birth to the journal *Communications*<sup>12</sup>. Barthes read Vladimir Propp on Claude Lévi-Strauss' advice and Georges Dumézil on his close friend Michel Foucault's. By the mid-1960s, most of Barthes' books were conceived as books, he had a regular research and teaching activity, was implied in several journals and collective enterprises, and his publications and translations abroad intensified. His trajectory relatively transformed and ended up with a consecration in 1977, at the end of his life and career, with a position at the prestigious Collège de France. His theoretical views on literary criticism promoted an intellectual figure that could encompass and overcome traditional divisions of intellectual work. At the same time, his marginal initial position in the academic field led him to integrate the academic field through social sciences – instead of literary studies – and through research institutions instead of university, while writing in cultural and intellectual journals. This relative fragmentation is to be found, as the next section shows, also if we take an international perspective on Barthes' career and circulation of works: in his differentiated practices in the international arena, and in the trajectories of the intermediaries of his American reception.

#### 4. Transnational and Transatlantic Circulation

##### 4.1. *Changing Places: Roland Barthes' International Relations*

Barthes' travels abroad were frequent nearly all along his career, but they changed over time [Chevalier 2001; Samoyault 2015, 370]. Before he obtained a position at the EPHE as a research director in 1962, Barthes had worked for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris for the services dedicated to teaching. He had also spent the years 1948-1950 abroad: as a professor in Bucarest (Romania), and then in Alexandria (Egypt). There, he had met A.J. Greimas, who then played a crucial part in integrating Barthes, on a social and intellectual level, in the nebula of French literary theory [Kaufmann 2011; Kauppi 1996; Samoyault 2015, 232]. In the 1960s, Barthes travelled to Italy very frequently, but also to

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<sup>12</sup> *Communications* was in its first years one of the main journals publishing new literary theories built in the wake of structuralism. Its eight issue, dedicated to the structural analysis of narrative, was published in 1966 with contributions from A.J. Greimas, Claude Brémont, Umberto Eco, Christian Metz and Tzvetan Todorov and was one of the fundamental early publications of the emergent literary theories at the time. The issue features articles reprinted in several collections in France and abroad, like Barthes' "Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits", Todorov's piece "Les catégories du récit littéraire" or Genette's "Frontières du récit." [Barthes *et al.* 1966]. A number of articles have been translated and published abroad. The issue itself had been translated in Spanish, without Eco's contribution, in 1977 [Buenos Aires: *Tiempo Contemporáneo*] before being reprinted as a volume in French by Le Seuil.



Germany, Spain, Africa, Asia. Tiphaine Samoyault counts that he would travel abroad at least five times a year during this period. Beyond Barthes' effective presence abroad, his progressive integration into foreign academic networks shows that he invested national spaces in very different ways. Table 2 shows the distribution of Barthes' original publications abroad.

	1942 - 1952	1953 - 1962	1963 - 1969	1970 - 1980	Total
Belgium	0	1	2	1	4
Spain	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Italy</b>	0	0	8	17	25
Japan	0	0	1	1	2
Morocco	0	0	0	2	2
Switzerland	0	1	0	3	4
<b>UK</b>	0	0	2	3	5
<b>USA</b>	0	0	4	4	8
Vietnam	1	0	0	0	1
Yougoslavia	0	1	0	0	1

TAB. 2. Roland Barthes: *Original Publications Abroad (1942-1980)*

Sources: Barthes [2002]; Leguay [1982]; Miller [1981].

*Note:* Table 2 is based on the collection of original publications abroad by Barthes during his lifetime. Data has been collected on the basis of the place of publication and not on the language, so that the UK and the US on one side, and the francophone countries on the other, can be distinguished. All types of publications have been taken in consideration (articles, interviews, prefaces, chapters in collective volumes). The original publications exclude translations and re-publications, meaning that are only included texts which first publication is abroad. The original publications allow to observe the integration of the author into international networks – unlike the observation of the translations, which reveals the circulation of texts, that can be independent from the author's taking part in international networks.

Italy appears clearly as the country in which he published most original texts (25), three times more than the USA which are at the second place (8), followed by the UK (5). The texts published in Italy, to which must be added numerous and fast translations of Barthes and other French semiologists, theorists and structuralists are part of an important but localized reception (national/internal movement). On the contrary, the reception of Barthes' texts published in the UK and in the US, is part of a broader diffusion of structuralism and French theoretical works (external movement).

Between 1942 and 1953, Barthes did not publish abroad except an article in a francophone journal notably based in Vietnam, *France-Asie*. During the following period (1953-1962), he published an article in a Belgian journal and a preface to Stendhal in a Swiss Book Club edition, an article in *Politica*, based in Belgrade, about the new perspectives in French literary criticism. The years between 1963 and 1969 are marked by the intensification of publications abroad, original publications as well as translations. A chapter for a collective volume was published in Belgium. The Japanese journal *Umi* published an interview, before publishing another in 1973. In Italy, during this period, Barthes published mostly journal articles and chapters in collective volumes. The publications in English are prestigious and internationally recognized. Barthes

published in the *Times Literary Supplement (TLS)* “Criticism as a Language” [1963b] and “Science versus Literature” [1967b]. In the American journal *Modern Language Notes*, close to Johns Hopkins University, Barthes published “Les deux critiques” [1964b]. Also in the United States, he published a contribution to a collective volume in honor of Roman Jakobson [1967d] and an article in the journal close to the Prague Circle based in New York, *Word* [1968a], which reinforced his symbolic insertion in the networks of structuralism and literary theory in the US. During the last decade (1970-1980), Barthes’ publications abroad diversified and intensified with his consecration as an intellectual figure. He published prefaces, articles and entries in Italy, and gave interviews to the Spanish national newspaper *El País*, to the Moroccan journal *L’opinion*, to the American journal *French Review*. In the UK, he gave an interview published in the volume *Signs of the Time: Introductory readings in Textual Semiotics* [Heath, McCabe and Prendergast 1971]. He also published another article in the *TLS*, a chapter in a collective volume from a symposium on Literary style and two contributions to collective volumes in the United States, one of which was the book from the famous conference held in Johns Hopkins in 1966.<sup>13</sup> Even though translations are not part of the data collected here, it is worth mentioning that in the United States some of Barthes’ texts especially on Robbe-Grillet had been discussed, translated and reprinted. A famous article entitled “Littérature objective” [1954b] was for example translated by Richard Howard and used as a preface for *Two Novels* of Robbe-Grillet published in the United States in 1965.

Interestingly, Barthes published numerous texts in Italy that were contributions of different kinds: prefaces, newspaper articles, entries in literary anthologies, essays in literary or theatre journals. His essays and translations in Italy have been numerous and played an important part in the renewal of some disciplines in the Italian Humanities [Gallerani 2015]. However, these publications do not seem to play the same part in Barthes’ circulation abroad than the early English-speaking ones: Italy, at the time, relatively followed French intellectual life. As a consequence, Barthes plays in Italy a similar part that he played in France. He progressively published articles, prefaces for classics and then contemporary literature, encyclopedia entries, was received as an intellectual legitimate figure. On the contrary, the English and American publications integrate him in a wider circulation inside the English-speaking areas, and have been translated and published in collections when quite a number of Italian publications had remained untranslated before the posthumous publications of articles collections and of Barthes’ complete works<sup>14</sup>. Indeed, the *Essais Critiques*, published as a collection in France in 1964, contain prefaces, articles published in several French intellectual journals, like *Arguments*, *Critique*, but also

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<sup>13</sup> See below.

<sup>14</sup> Some texts first published in Italy had been published and/or translated in French journals or collective volumes (*La Quinzaine littéraire* had published the preface to a catalogue of works by Bernard Réquichot in 1973, an article published in the journal *Paragone* [1971c] had turned into a chapter in the volume *De Shakespeare à T.S. Eliot. Mélanges offerts à Henri Fluchère* [1976a]). Barthes’ posthumous article collections *L’obvie et l’obtus* [1982], *Le bruissement de la langue* [1984], *L’Aventure sémiologique* [1985] contain articles originally published in Italy. The preface to the Italian edition of Pierre Loti’s *Aziyadé* had been published in the collection *Nouveaux Essais Critiques* in 1972 [1972b].

*Bref*, *Théâtre Populaire* or *Tel Quel*, and two articles originally published in *Modern Language Notes* and *Times Literary Supplement* (“Criticism as a language” and “Les deux critiques”)<sup>15</sup>.<sup>15</sup> These two articles are the only two in the collection that were originally published in foreign journals – English-speaking ones – and two of the most critical towards French literary criticism and teaching of literature. The content of the articles as well as the fact that they had been published as books on one side, and abroad on the other side, fuelled Raymond Picard’s pamphlet in 1965, who quoted them and blamed their international status [Picard 1965, 83]. In doing so, he pointed at the potentially wide resonance of English-speaking publications and at the same time he appeared sensitive to the importance of a dispute – and a reputation – that could possibly cross the national frontiers.<sup>16</sup><sup>16</sup> Interestingly, for Picard, these legitimate English-speaking publications deserved a response and were significantly considered a potential sounding board. The texts themselves, highly critical of French literary criticism, their initial places of publication and their reprinting in the *Essais Critiques* in 1964, i.e. before Picard’s pamphlet, help in asserting a certain growing symbolic power of the English-speaking intellectual and academic world at the time and its being appropriated as such in the national struggles [Bourdieu 2002; Sapiro 2014].

Whereas circulations between France and the US could be approached on a one-to-one basis, Barthes’ reception in the United States took place in the transnational circulation of his works in general, and in particular inside the English-speaking world. Indeed, Barthes had a more ancient link with the UK than he had with the United States; the UK and the US having long coexisted, struggled over, and partly shared publishing, academic, intellectual and literary authorities in the English - speaking world. In 1939, Barthes had planned to teach as a lecturer in England but finally got a job in the South of France. In 1951, he was recruited to teach at the University of Cambridge but stayed in Paris and did research with the lexicologist George Matoré. After the publication of *Le degré zéro* in 1953, Barthes started to be invited in foreign universities, especially in the UK. He travelled to London, Manchester, Edinburgh, giving talks and lectures [Samoyault 2015, 237 and 285]. One year later, he also went to London to record several BBC Broadcasts, that gave him an important

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<sup>15</sup> See Table 2 and comment.

<sup>16</sup> The dispute offers a possibility to observe the role of international stakes in a national debate. In his essay, Picard explains that it is the reprinting of Barthes’ articles “in two books” and “abroad” that forced him to respond. Remarkable also is the fact that when Picard mentions Barthes’ articles published in *Modern Languages Notes* and in *Times Literary Supplement* – that he judges as “more or less defamatory for University” – he explicitly regrets that *Le Monde* did not publish his own answer to Barthes “in its weekly supplement distributed abroad” [Picard 1965, 83 ss.].

visibility. Travels abroad are not to be considered as detached from the French networks: in London, Barthes spent time with Jean-Pierre Richard – another central figure of the renewal of literary studies in France, promoter of thematic criticism, who shared Picard’s critics and resentment with the “Nouvelle Critique” – before returning regularly all along his career. The reception of Barthes’ works in the UK was precocious, and the dispute with Picard had regularly been the object of articles in literary journals like the *Times Literary Supplement*<sup>17</sup>. Barthes went to the United States for the first time in 1958. He was invited to lecture at Middlebury College, and then spent time in New York. During this stay, he met Michel Butor and Richard Howard, his future translator. One of Barthes’ most famous appearances in the United States is a few years later at the conference “The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man”<sup>18</sup> held at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore in 1966. After the conference, he taught there as a visiting professor for a semester, gave talks in several American universities and spent time in New York with Richard Howard. The networks built in New York and more generally in the United States were also, at times, converted in teaching, publishing and career possibilities: in 1972, Barthes taught at New York University (NYU) in Paris on the request of Tom Bishop, whom he had met at NYU in New York, and who invited him again in New York at the very end of his career in 1978; and in 1974 Barthes also taught at State University of New York (SUNY) in Paris. The same year, Barthes was also invited to teach in England again, in London, Oxford and Cambridge, where he was on the request of the British literary critic Frank Kermode, at the time recently appointed King Edward VII Professor of English Literature. Famous in the British literary studies for his importation of French literary criticism developed in and around structuralism, Kermode was later implied in the controversial Colin McCabe case, in which the refusal of the latter’s tenure was partly justified by his affiliation with structuralist and post-structuralist literary criticism [Morgan and Baert 2015].

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<sup>17</sup> See for example “Civil War among the Critics” [*The Times Literary Supplement*, 3 February 1966: 83] and “Crisis in Criticism: the Picard-Barthes debate” [*The Times Literary Supplement*, 23 June 1966: 545-566], significantly reprinted in *TLS, 5 Essays and Reviews from The Times Literary Supplement, 1966* [London, Oxford University Press, 1967].

<sup>18</sup> The conference was held in October 1966 and gathered numerous academics later identified under the label “French Theory”, including Louis Althusser, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Claude Lévi-Strauss. The conference is often remembered for the theoretical distances globally taken from structuralism. Barthes delivered a lecture entitled “To Write: an Intransitive Verb?” reprinted in *The Rustle of Language* [see Macksey and Donato 1970].

These factual observations on Barthes' international travels lead us to several remarks. First, Barthes' precocious integration into international networks contributed to the transnational circulation of his works. Barthes' initial reception, including the reception of the dispute in the UK seems to have contributed to insert his works in a broader international circulation later built around the US, recalling that national and linguistic borders do not completely overlap and that the relative margins of linguistic spaces can be at the origin of specific dynamics of circulation [Hauchecorne 2011]. This last observation is reinforced by the fact that compared to other authors famous in the English-speaking world and who made the fortune of the label "French Theory" – Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard for example – and other protagonists of the literary theory in France in the 1960s and 1970s, like Tzvetan Todorov or Gérard Genette, Barthes did spend much less time in the US and as a consequence was much less formally part of the American academic and intellectual spaces, institutions and specific debates. Instead, Barthes' publications abroad seem to have increased with his consecration.

#### *4.2. Barthes' Books in Translation*

Sapiro underlined the difference between the dissemination of works through articles and books, the latter being the promise of an enlarged audience, while the first generally circulate among peers and students [Sapiro 2014]. The study she proposed on the translation of French Humanities also provides contextual information for the reception of Barthes in the United States. Indeed, she showed that from the 1960s, the United States gained power over the United Kingdom in the transnational publishing field, and that in this dynamic the American publishers tended to invest more in French translations. Various translations and publications of French intellectuals experienced an exceptional longevity in the US and in the UK. The success of "French Theory" do not seem challenged even in the recent years: according to the statistics, between 2010 and 2013, six translations of Roland Barthes have been published, which places him in third position in the French most translated authors in the Social Sciences and the Humanities during this period – right behind François Laruelle (eight translations) and Alain Badiou (seven) and before Bernard Stiegler, Hélène Cixous or Etienne Balibar [Sapiro 2014, 228]. The chronology of Barthes' first translations in the United States informs at the same time on his general reception, on his growing symbolic

capital and on the time-lags inherent to any international processes of circulation and reception.

Original Title	Translated Title	First Publication in France	First Publication in the US	Time-span (years)	French Publisher	US Publisher	Translator
<i>Le degré zéro de l'écriture</i>	<i>Writing Degree Zero</i>	1953	1968	15	Seuil	Hill and Wang	A. Lavers & C. Smith
<i>Michelet</i>	<i>Michelet</i>	1954	1987	33	Seuil	Hill and Wang	Richard Howard
<i>Mythologies</i>	<i>Mythologies</i>	1957	1972	15	Seuil	Hill and Wang	Annette Lavers
<i>Sur Racine</i>	<i>On Racine</i>	1963	1964	1	Seuil	Hill and Wang	Richard Howard
<i>Essais Critiques</i>	<i>Critical Essays</i>	1964	1972	8	Seuil	Northwestern UP	Richard Howard
<i>La Tour Eiffel</i>	[Extend translation: <i>The Eiffel Tower and other Mythologies</i> ]	1964	1979	15	Seuil	Hill and Wang	Richard Howard
<i>Eléments de sémiologie</i>	<i>Elements of Semiology</i>	1965	1968	3	Gonthier	Hill and Wang	A. Lavers & C. Smith
<i>Critique et vérité</i>	<i>Criticism and Truth</i>	1966	1987	21	Seuil	U of Minnesota	Katrine Pilcher Keuneman
<i>Système de la mode</i>	<i>The Fashion System</i>	1967	1983	16	Seuil	Hill and Wang	R. Howard & M. Ward
<i>S/Z</i>	<i>S/Z</i>	1970	1974	4	Seuil	Hill and Wang	Richard Miller
<i>L'Empire des signes</i>	<i>Empire of Signs</i>	1970	1982	12	Skira	Hill and Wang	Richard Howard
<i>Sade, Fourier, Loyola</i>	<i>Sade, Fourier, Loyola</i>	1971	1976	5	Seuil	Hill and Wang	Richard Miller
<i>Le plaisir du texte</i>	<i>The pleasure of the text</i>	1973	1975	2	Seuil	Hill and Wang	Richard Miller
<i>Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes</i>	<i>Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes</i>	1975	1977	2	Seuil	Hill and Wang	Richard Howard
<i>Alors la Chine?</i>		1975	none		Bourgois		
<i>Fragments d'un discours amoureux</i>	<i>A lover's discourse: Fragments</i>	1977	1978	1	Seuil	Hill and Wang	Richard Howard
<i>Sollers écrivain</i>	<i>Writer Sollers</i>	1979	1987	8	Seuil	U of Minnesota	Philip Thody
<i>La chambre claire. Note sur la photographie</i>	<i>Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography.</i>	1980	1981	1	Cahiers du Cinéma	Hill and Wang	Richard Howard
<i>Nouveaux Essais Critiques</i>	<i>New Critical Essays</i>	1972	1980	8	Seuil	Hill and Wang	Richard Howard
<i>Leçon</i>		1977	none		France		
			<b>Average</b>	9,44			
			<b>Std Dev</b>	8,58			
			<b>Median</b>	8,00			

TAB. 3. *Roland Barthes in Translation in the United States*

Sources: Library of Congress, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Note: Table 3 is based on the first American publications of Roland Barthes' books in the United States. It includes the books published during Barthes' lifetime, presented with the translators and the French and American publishing houses. Books are ordered by their French publication year. Posthumous publications (*Journal de Deuil*, the Seminars he held at the Collège de France, new publications of collected writings, etc.) are not included. Note that the short book *Alors la Chine?*, first published in the newspaper *Le Monde* [1975a], has no translation as such except a translation by Lee Hildreth in the journal *Discourse* [Vol. 8, Fall/Winter 1986-1987: 116-122], but the *Carnets du voyage en Chine*, published in French in 2009, were translated in 2012 by Andrew Brown in an edition of Anne Herschberg Pierrot [Cambridge, UK: Polity Press].

The first striking observation on the first publications of translations of Roland Barthes is the quasi monopoly of a publishing house (Hill and Wang) and of a translator, Richard Howard. The emerging role of literary agents in French publishing and the part played by several intermediaries fed the general flow of French translations in the United States. Hill and Wang, now an imprint of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, was founded in 1956 and invested mainly, during the 1960s, in literature, playwrights and critical essays. At the time, among other texts they published poetry and stories by Langston Hughes, plays by Jean Cocteau, Elie Weisel's memoir *Night* in 1960. As we underlined for his French career

and his intermediaries', Barthes was published in an environment of non-strictly academic works.

The table shows Barthes' publications according to the chronology of the first French publications of his works as books, and evidences the time-lag in the translation process. The difference between the standard deviation (8,58) and the median (8) indicates that the chronology of Barthes' translations in the US is quite irregular, and that the rhythm of the translations accelerated towards the end of the period taken into account in the table. Let's first consider the order of the first American editions of the books. Richard Howard appears as the first translator of an American *in extenso* edition of *Sur Racine* [1964c]. He then translated the *Essais Critiques* in 1972, before becoming Barthes' only translator for the first American editions of his books from 1977 to 1987, that is to say at the moment Barthes achieved his consecration in France and abroad. During this last period, Howard translated *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* and *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* before Barthes' death, and after he translated *L'Empire des Signes*, *Le Système de la mode*, *Le Bruissement de la langue* (published posthumously in France) and Barthes' *Michelet*. From this point of view, Howard played the most important part as a translator at the very beginning and at the very end of Barthes' career, and remains his historical translator, since he also translated the posthumous *Journal de deuil* (*Mourning Diary*, published in 2010 by Hill and Wang). The publication of Howard's translation of *Sur Racine* in 1964 is followed by two translations by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, *Writing Degree Zero* and *Elements of Semiology* [1968b], and one by Annette Lavers, *Mythologies* [1972e]. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, academics in the UK, were specialists of French literature, ideas and philosophy. Their translations of *Writing Degree Zero* and *Elements of Semiology* were published first in the UK in 1967 by the British publishing house Cape. *Mythologies* is published simultaneously in 1972 in the UK and in the US, the American editions being still published by Hill and Wang. The translations of *S/Z*, *Le Plaisir du texte* and *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* are Richard Miller's, a translator specialized in literature, theatre and essays. *S/Z* and *The Pleasure of the Text* are introduced by a preface by Richard Howard, confirming also his role as an intermediary in the framing of the reception of Barthes' works in the United States – like Sontag's preface to the American edition of *Writing Degree Zero* does for her own role in Barthes' reception. These observations on the first American translations of Barthes' books thus show that Barthes' reception goes through England for

three of his major books, asserting the importance of considering the reception of Barthes in the United States in the frame of his circulation in the English-speaking area. At the same time, they confirm the diversity of the authorities that support Barthes' circulation in France like in the English-speaking world. Indeed, Cape publishing, like Hill and Wang, were interested in essays and fiction, like Barthes' French publisher, Le Seuil, was also publishing fiction and essays. As a matter of fact, in the first English translations, only one book had been published by a University Press in his lifetime, *Critical Essays* (Northwestern University Press).

The time-span between the first French publication and the year the American translations appeared shows that the most delayed translations concern Barthes' more ancient books, except *Sur Racine*, which was nearly immediately translated by Howard: *Le Degré zéro* and *Mythologies*, which had had an important reception and played a central part in Barthes' career are translated fifteen years after their publication, respectively in 1968 and 1972. These are, among the translations published during Barthes' lifetime, the only two ones that were released more than ten years after their initial publication. The posthumous translations of *Michelet* and *Criticism and Truth* were published in 1987, respectively thirty-three and twenty-one years after their first publication in French. With *The Fashion System*, they are the only three books by Barthes that had been published in French during his life and that have American posthumous first editions. The rhythm of the publications shows that the last published translations are concentrated on a relatively short period: out of eighteen translations, seven are posthumous and published in six years, between 1981 and 1987; while eight had been published in the whole 1970s<sup>19</sup>.<sup>19</sup> More generally, the time-span between the first French publication and the American translations tend to diminish from the mid-1970s. For instance, *Le Plaisir du texte*, published in French in 1973, and *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*, originally published in 1975, are translated two years after their French publication, while *La Chambre claire* and the *Fragments* are translated a year after their publication. These time-lags are significant on two levels. First, they have to be understood in the frame of Barthes' career and trajectory: as his consecration in the academic and intellectual fields is manifest, the rhythm of the translations accelerates, and the relations between the publishing houses are less in need of

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<sup>19</sup> It is worth mentioning that in 1977 is also published a collection of Barthes' articles that gathers canonical texts and widely circulates as an anthology of texts previously dispersed, *Image, Music, Text* [Barthes 1977a].



intermediaries and importers to select and diffuse texts [Sapiro and Bustamante 2009]. Second, these time-lags have to be considered in the context of Barthes' reception and translations as taken in the wider reception and different waves of "French Theory" in the US. But not all "French Theory" circulated the same way. As a comparison and an indicator of the differential receptions inside French literary theory produced in the wake of structuralism, Genette's and Greimas' books were nearly all published in English by university presses [Sapiro and Dumont 2016]. Their trajectories, as well as those of their intermediaries and allies were much closer, if not limited to, the academic field and specialized interlocutors than in Barthes' case. However, if Barthes' works were first introduced in the United States beyond the frontiers of the academic field, his work is then discussed, used and appropriated by important figures of American literary studies, in a close dialogue with literary theorists developed in France around Genette.

#### 4.3. *Barthes in American Journals: Book Reviews and Translations*

Barthes' travels abroad, as well as his original publications in foreign journals and the translations of his books, show a growing evolution all along his career. His presence in English and American journals follows quite a similar pattern. Following the same chronological divisions, book reviews and articles dedicated to one or several books by Barthes were individuated in several sources. During Barthes' lifetime, 169 were found to have been published in the US.<sup>20</sup> In this group of articles, none appears to have been published between 1942 and 1952. A single article is published in the following period (1953-1962), in 1957 in the magazine *Books Abroad*, which later became *World Literature Today*, and reviews the *Mythologies* that had just been published in French. Between 1963 and 1969, nine reviews have been published in the US, mostly in library journals and bulletins (*Choice*, *Library Journal*) and in *Books Abroad*. They dealt with the *Essais Critiques*, that had been published in French in 1964, and with *Writing Degree Zero* and *Elements of Semiology*, that had both been translated into English in 1968. Two articles published in 1969 stand out in this small batch. One, "Writing as temperature," published in the New Criticism-friendly literary journal *The Sewanee Review* by the writer and Trappist monk Thomas Merton, is not exempt from some criticism ("You

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<sup>20</sup> The research was limited to Barthes' lifetime mainly because of the dispersion and the change in the approach to his works after his death. This limited search offers the possibility to observe the way his works were introduced at first, and before the academic appropriations and spread discussions of his works. Sources: Miller [1981], annual French XX Bibliography.

need some time to decide whether or not this is really a brilliant book or just another bag of critical tricks” [Merton 1969]) but generally situates Barthes in relation to structuralism, in French literary criticism (Sartre) and underlines the mysticism and esotericism of the text before mentioning Barthes’ *Essais Critiques* and works on Racine. The second article is written by Stephen Nichols, at the time a professor at Dartmouth College, and published in *Contemporary Literature*. Though it is a review of *Writing Degree Zero*, all the first part of the article dwells on the Barthes-Picard dispute, which Nichols analyses as the opposition of the “literary scientists” to the “neo-sartrians”, before analyzing Barthes’ proposals and advocating for a wider diffusion of his works in the United States [Nichols 1969].

The last decade, 1970-1980, concentrates the most important part of book reviews dedicated to Barthes’ works, mostly in their English translation. It shows a distribution that asserts at the same time the legitimate publishing sphere in which he is introduced, and the relative variety of audiences this reception addressed, that seem to go past the limits of the strictly academic reception. An important part of the reviews (more than thirty) of Barthes’ works are, again, published by library journals and bulletins (*Choice*, *Kirkus reviews*, *Library journal*, *Publishers weekly*), and often unsigned. They show that Barthes’ books were integrated into the circuits of books received and indexed in both scholarly and commercial perspectives. At the same time, Barthes was regularly reviewed in central literary journals, magazines and supplements that addressed non-strictly academic audiences. For instance, between 1970 and 1980, in *The New York Times Book Reviews* nine articles were dedicated to Barthes, plus two in the main edition of *The New York Times*. Among these, in 1972 the literary critic Richard Locke favorably reviewed the *Mythologies* and the *Critical Essays*, the literature scholar Peter Brooks reviewed – favorably also – *The Pleasure of the Text* and *S/Z* in 1975. The German-born literary scholar Geoffrey Hartman, influenced like the latter by the Yale school of Deconstruction, reviewed *Image, Music, Text*, Stephen Heath’s edition of essays by Barthes, in 1979. Hartman’s review was favorable, underlined Barthes’ succeeding in his “folly”, and recalled Barthes’ success and good reception in the United States<sup>21</sup>. Frank Kermode, Edward Said, John Sturrock also reviewed and praised Barthes’ works in *The New York Times Book Review*. *The New York Review of Books* published three reviews, and John Updike wrote two in *The New Yorker*. Intellectual and literary journals also dedicated reviews to Barthes’ works,

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<sup>21</sup> “He is himself rapidly becoming an institution, having received the accolade of the Modern Language Association and Susan Sontag. Sixty thousand copies of the French version of “A Lover’s Discourse” are said to have been sold in a little over a year. Ten of his books are now available in English and he’s beginning to have guru-like influence.” [Hartman 1979].

whether they be particularly supportive of the theoretical approach (*Modern Language Notes*, *SubStance*, and *Diacritics*, where Michael Riffaterre published a lengthy review of *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* in 1972) or more critical (*Partisan Review*). Finally, it is interesting to notice that specialized academic journals also reviewed Barthes' books: Jonathan Culler reviewed Barthes' *S/Z* and *The Pleasure of the Text* in the *Yale Journal of Criticism* in 1975, *The French Review* proposed two articles on Barthes in 1975 and 1976. Academic journals not specialized in French studies or in literature also positioned themselves on Barthes' works: Edith Kurzweil reviewed Barthes' *New Critical Essays* in *Theory and Society* after their translation in 1980, which she found "of some interest" but underlined they were "dated [...] old, and (were) of more interest to Barthes scholars than to sociologists or general readers" [Kurzweil 1981] and Philip Thody, who later became Barthes' translator for *Sollers écrivain*, reviewed *Image, Music, Text* in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1980.

In addition to the book reviews and to some original publications, some journals also published translations of excerpts from Barthes' books. Twelve could be found between 1967 and 1980. Again, they reveal logics similar to those of the publication of book reviews: specialized journals cohabit with more generalist ones and with newspapers. *The Drama Review*, for instance, published two translations in 1967 and 1971, of two untranslated texts dedicated to theatre ("Seven Photo Models of Mother Courage" [Barthes 1967e] and "On Bunraku" [Barthes 1971d]), *Yale French Studies* published a translation of "Writing and Revolution" in 1967 and *The American Poetry Review*, in 1980, published Barthes' piece on Pierre Loti's *Aziyadé* in Richard Howard's translation. The literary journal *Salmagundi* published translations that seem to have acted as a sort of advertisement for the following book translations: they published "Literature and Discontinuity," from the *Critical Essays*, in Howard's translation, in 1972 – the year of their publication – and excerpts from *S/Z* a year after the publication of its translation. In the same way, *The New York Times* published a translation from *Mythologies*, "The Guest Word," in 1972, confirming that newspapers would also play as a relay between the book publications and the readership. *Diacritics* published "The Dolls of Bunraku" in 1976, and the journal *New Literary History*, published by Johns Hopkins University Press since 1969, published Barthes' famous piece from the sixth issue of *Communications* "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative" in 1975. Finally, the journals show, to some extent, similar dynamics with the book publications: even though book reviews in the UK seem less numerous than in the US, Howard's translation of Barthes' inaugural lecture at the Collège de France in 1977 is published in the UK in 1977, in the *Oxford Literary Review*, and republished in the American intellectual journal *October* in 1979.

## 5. Intermediaries of the Transatlantic Circulation

### 5.1. *Importers of French Literature, Criticism and “Theory”*

The integration of Barthes' works in different national contexts could not have happened without local and transnational intermediaries. A number of them cultivated international and/or transatlantic careers in the American academic, literary and intellectual fields, where French language and studies were distinctive among the intellectual elites and in the foreign languages and literary studies. Three different figures of intermediaries who played a part in the introduction of Barthes' works in the US are examined here. They have in common a strong social capital that placed them in pivot positions in transatlantic academic networks. They appear as concrete facilitators in the American reception of Barthes' works, their part as intermediaries being different from the role played by critics and reviewers in the discussions of Barthes' works. Overall, they shared a common interest and part in the reception of French writers, intellectuals and/or academics. Tom Bishop appears as an official intermediary, whose networks relied on diplomatic, cultural and intellectual social networks and sociabilities. Sylvère Lotringer's position is on the contrary built on networks close to the academic field but developed in a dialogue with avant-garde movements and around the attempted elaboration of a synthesis that would encompass the importation of diverse theoretical orientations. Susan Sontag's role as an intermediary in Barthes' American reception momentarily appears as taken in the creation of her own intellectual and academic position.

Tom Bishop, born in 1927, has chaired the Department of French at NYU for more than 30 years and was, especially by the end of the 1970s and in the 1980s, in a central position in the French-American intellectual, academic and cultural events in New York. Currently Florence Lacaze Gould Professor of French Literature at NYU, he is well-known locally for being at the core of different networks and institutions. Initially a scholar of theatre specialized on Beckett, Ionesco, Genet, he was close to the theatre milieu and later wrote about the *Nouveau Roman*, becoming close to several writers. In building important French-American networks, Bishop provided exposure, official integration into the American academic and intellectual scene, and long-lasting possibilities of exchanges between Paris and New York's academic scene, organizing conferences and cultural events. Bishop was the first director of the Department of French at NYU since he played an important part in the autonomization of the Department of French from the Department of Romance Languages. Inside NYU, he was also implied in the New York Institute for the Humanities (NYIH), officially created in 1977, which welcomed numerous intellectuals, including Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, but also Italo

Calvino, Czesław Miłosz, Jorge Luis Borges. Bishop has also taken part, at various degrees, in the Center for French Civilization and Culture, La Maison Française of NYU and the creation of the Institute of French Studies. Bishop was also implied in the creation of NYU in Paris. Opened in 1969, it was first located in the offices of the Fulbright Foundation which funds numerous French-American cultural exchanges. NYU in Paris helped establish long lasting and institutionalized exchanges and networks of professors, researchers and students. Barthes, but also Gérard Genette, have spent time and/or taught both at NYU in Paris and in New York.

These sociabilities have to be understood in the context of the American academic field, where philanthropy and private funding strongly regulate the conditions of existence of such networks and institutions. As a consequence, his position can also be interpreted as one of a characteristic production of the division of labor in the American academic and intellectual fields. This position of a cultural intermediary and official guardian of the good French-American cultural cooperation drove him to the temporally dominant spheres of recognition, since he has been designed a *Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres* in 2012 after having been awarded a Prize from the Académie Française (*Prix du Rayonnement de la langue et de la culture françaises*, 1993). The second aspect of his trajectory that explains his being a French-American intermediary is a biographical one. Born in Vienna (Austria) as Thomas Bishopswerder, Bishop told in several interviews and his memoir [Bishop 1989] how he left Austria as a young Jew in 1939 and went to the United States while keeping a strong link with France and becoming bilingual. Like numerous scholars of French in the United States and numerous transnational intermediaries, Bishop would divide his time between France and the United States<sup>22</sup>.

Sylvère Lotringer is, in Barthes' case, an indirect intermediary through his taking part in the rise of the label "theory", in the concurrent importation of French thinkers and through his capitalizing on transnational networks. Like Bishop's, Lotringer's exile is at the same the product of historical and social conditions that first led to a forced migration, and a continuous construction of the self, of his personal, cultural and intellectual identity, and of his career as a border-crosser. Born in Paris in 1938 to a Jewish Polish family that had fled Warsaw, he and his family had left for Israel in 1949. Lotringer came back in Paris and later studied at the Sorbonne. There, at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, he was involved in literary and leftwing political networks, journals and student associations. On the basis of acquaintances he had gained through his collaboration with literary journals with the literary

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<sup>22</sup> Sources: interviews conducted in New York (NY), USA, in May-June 2015; private archives and documentation.

British-American remains of the modernist scene, he started a PhD dissertation on Virginia Woolf at the EPHE under the supervision of Roland Barthes and Lucien Goldmann. He spent the most part of the 1960s abroad: in the US, in Turkey where he taught for a couple of years, then in Australia where he was also a teacher, before trying to come back to the US in search for a position at university. He obtained an appointment at Swarthmore College in 1969.

The years abroad, as well as the transnational turn of his career, kept him away from a stable socialization to a unique academic, intellectual and literary life, either in Paris or in New York, where he arrived at the beginning of the 1970s, before being appointed professor at Columbia University in 1972. His insertion in several artistic networks in New York maintained a social capital he actualized in several ways. He organized conferences in New York, inviting French thinkers, philosophers, musicians and artists from the West Village. He would privilege cultural events, relatively underground culture and avant-garde figures to academic networks, in which he showed less interest and integration. Like Bishop, Lotringer also built his networks on the transatlantic inscription of Columbia University, punctually working and organizing events with Columbia in Paris. From this point of view, the double inscription of these universities, especially at a time in which international relations between the national academic spaces was the object of political and economic investments, appears central to understand how texts, ideas and intellectual figures can be institutionalized not only by national structures, but also through their international circulation. Finally, Lotringer took part in the dissemination of French thinkers in the United States through the creation of a journal in 1972, *Semiotext(e)*, which later became the publishing house of a book series notably called *Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents*, turning Lotringer into a publisher, i.e. a formal intermediary. Lotringer's figure of the "foreign agent" echoes Bishop's memoir title, which is also significantly entitled *Le Passeur d'océan: carnets d'un ami américain*. This figure of the intermediary, though, didn't prevent Lotringer to claim an intellectual contribution to the production of what he promoted as "theory", challenging the idea that as an intermediary he would be consequentially excluded from intellectual production. His being one of the agents of the circulation of French texts in the US can thus be understood as an extension of national networks and as a re-investment of his French intellectual and academic socialization in the American academic field. The punctual inclusion of Barthes in the French theorists is also, from this point of view, a result of this extension of national networks<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Sources: Interview conducted in Paris, France, in July 2015; Lotringer Papers and Semiotext(e) Archive; Fales Library and Special Collections, New York, MSS 221 Series I, Subseries A and B.

Susan Sontag (1933-2004), a notable American intellectual and women's rights, anti-war, human rights activist, played a very different but all the more necessary role as an intermediary in the reception of Barthes' works in the United States. She proved central in integrating Barthes at the same time in intellectual networks in New York and as an intellectual reference in the 1970s, together with her own political and critical writings. Sontag appears as a figure of the intellectual intermediary whose position in the academic, literary and intellectual fields is also built on her importation of Barthes and other French works and thinkers. Indeed, the importation of Barthes for Sontag serves her asserting an avant-gardist position in the American intellectual spaces. Her punctual gesture of importation shows how the position of intermediary relies on mutual interests and somehow similar strategies. Born in New York in 1933 to Jewish parents, she first studied at Berkeley, then Chicago and Harvard before going to Europe, studying at Oxford and at the Sorbonne. During her whole life she asserted her attachment to French language and culture, of which she progressively appeared, in the United States, as a privileged intellectual interlocutor [Kaplan 2012]. Met in New York, a friend and fine reader of Barthes, she published fiction, plays, and numerous essays about Arts and Literature, notably dialoguing with Barthes and French literary theories and proposing redefinitions of the aim and the methods of (literary) criticism [e.g. Sontag 1966; 1977; 1982]. The exchange between Barthes and Sontag also shows how the reception can't be understood without taking into account mutual endowments. Indeed, it is Barthes who had proposed Sontag's essay *On Photography* for a translation in French in 1978, years after she had been the intermediary between Barthes and Brian O'Doherty, who had commissioned him the text "The Death of the Author" for the avant-garde journal *Aspen* in 1968. Brian O'Doherty, born in 1928, was at the time a young art critic close to the artistic and intellectual avant-garde. Like Barthes in France, Sontag was not only part of academic networks, and her audience was wider than a strictly academic one. As a woman, a lesbian, a political activist, she evolved in legitimate but disparate intellectual transnational circles. An indicator of her status as an intellectual intermediary is her writing of the preface of *Writing Degree Zero* in 1968. Her preface was indicated on the cover of the book, and can be considered a combination of the model of the "oblativ preface" and of the "emblematic preface" as characterized by Boltanski [Boltanski 1975b]. Both emphasize the distinctive value of the imported text, the second being more insistent on "the social value of an author famous in the native country and nearly unknown in (the United States)"<sup>24</sup>. Sontag also recommended Richard Howard as a translator

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<sup>24</sup> "La valeur (sociale) d'un auteur célèbre dans son pays d'origine et presque inconnu en France" [Boltanski 1975b]. (Author's translation).

for Barthes. Long time a poet and a translator, born in 1929 in a poor Jewish family, he was also homosexual and before turning to poetry, like Barthes, studied lexicology in France. He is the translator of seven books by Roland Barthes, plus a translation in collaboration with Matthew Ward. Howard is also the translator of works by Edgar Morin (*The Stars* [1957] in 1960 at *Grove Press*), Maurice Nadeau (*History of Surrealism* [1945] in 1965 at *MacMillan*), Michel Foucault, Robbe-Grillet and Claude Simon, among others.

Several characteristics of the intermediaries in intellectual transatlantic relations between the 1960s and 1980s can be found in these examples. Bishop, Lotringer and Sontag all possess distinctive linguistic resources as they are all bilingual in English and French. All three have a transatlantic trajectory, sometimes initially based on forced migrations and/or reinforced by an early career and/or formation abroad. Like Barthes', their trajectories stand out by their biographical ruptures and/or significant gaps regarding dominant social norms: all three were born to Jewish parents at a time when Jews were dramatically persecuted; Sontag and Howard's personal life, like Barthes', were marked by their homosexuality. At different degrees and through different initiatives, they showed an engagement for left-wing politics and a proximity with avant-garde groups. They were not only involved in the circulation of Barthes' works, but with the transatlantic back-and-forth of "French Theory" in the 1960s and 1970s and more generally with the importation of French symbolic goods – Sontag and Bishop being for instance important in the American reception of the *Nouveau Roman*, when Lotringer concentrated especially on Deleuze, Guattari and Baudrillard's works. They also evolved in or close to élite institutions which were, to some extent, receptive to new intellectual and academic currents. Their position as intermediaries in Barthes' American reception is partly built through their own exile and transnational trajectories. Laurent Jeanpierre enlightened how exile could raise identity questions, but also how it inevitably turned exiled people, in this case intellectuals, into intermediaries:

Any exile trajectory places the individual in a multiple position of intermediary between groups, social spaces, cultures. [...] Strategies of "presentation of the self" of emigrated intellectuals are by nature part of this (identity) work. Not everyone has the same dispositions for it."<sup>25</sup> [Jeanpierre 2008, 4].

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<sup>25</sup> "Toute trajectoire d'exil place l'individu dans une position multiple d'intermédiaire entre groupes, espaces sociaux, entre cultures. Elle pose à ce titre des problèmes de maintien d'identité qui sont en général moins saillants dans la vie ordinaire. [...] Les stratégies de 'présentation de soi' d'intellectuels émigrés font partie de ce travail (identitaire). Tous n'y sont pas disposés également." [Jeanpierre 2008]. (Author's translation).



The theorization of the position of intermediary is also a way to restore a coherence to individual trajectories characterized by ruptures and fragmentations [Hauchecorne 2011]. However, this biographical argument, often brought up by thinkers and intermediaries themselves, as well as the regularities observable in the trajectories of Barthes and his importers, should not prevent us from considering the disciplinary and institutional dynamics favorable to the emergence of such figures. Their crossing of disciplinary, professional and national frontiers and their being positioned in different fields – like Barthes, for instance Sontag, O’Doherty or Howard wrote literary texts, did not have strictly academic audiences not linear careers – inscribed their activity as intermediaries into wide intellectual projects and multiple possible positions. Their being intermediaries relies on a conversion of resources, (linguistic, social and cultural) and also works as a resource in the intellectual spaces.

### 5.2. *The Academic Reception of Barthes: Disciplinary Appropriations*

If Barthes’ works were initially situated, in France and in the United States, in non-strictly academic spheres, they were progressively appropriated by academic figures and inserted into disciplinary structures. National academic configurations integrate new methods in different ways. Structuralism brought in the French literary studies a prevalence of internal approaches opposed to the dominant literary studies which were largely based on external methods. On the contrary, American literary studies had had a tradition of internal analysis inspired by New Criticism, in which the recourse to historical or biographical elements was not prevailing<sup>26</sup>. But the promoters of structuralism and New Criticism did not advocate for the same practices of internal analysis, and the wide reception of structuralism in the United States still represented an important rupture in the Humanities and, gradually, in the literary studies. The initial circulation of French theories in Departments of French and Comparative Literature rather than in the whole literary studies played an important part in delimiting the process of reception and engaging complex disciplinary struggles. But the importation of new approaches in literary studies also happened in a dialogue with the renewal of certain disciplines and fields of study. It is the case for Rhetoric and American Semiotics, in a phase of renewal in the 1970s via the importation of structural linguistics and semiology. In France, the emergence of semiotics and semiology around A.J. Greimas and Barthes, was also an attempt to provide literary studies with a scientific basis. Though in different ways, in France and in the US, Semiotics have at

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<sup>26</sup> See for example René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, first published in 1948. The two critics claimed their affiliation to philology and New Criticism. The French translation of *Theory of Literature* has been published in 1971 in Genette’s collection at Le Seuil and was entitled *La théorie littéraire*.

some point worked as a possible entrance for new literary theories in the academic field, uniting central figures of theoretical approaches to literature and institutional initiatives.

The careers of several figures of literary theories inspired by structuralism in the United States are marked by their initial inscription in Semiotics. Michel Beaujour's (1933-2013) is characterized by a combination of initial research interests in semiotics and an attempted institutional initiative in favor of this approach.

A French professor of literature, Beaujour held a French bachelor degree (*licence*) in literature and an *agrégation*. He had taught at Yale before being appointed professor at NYU, where he taught in the French Department for more than forty years. At Yale, he had met Jacques Ehrmann, a literary critic and professor who also animated a network of French scholars, conferences and publications around the importation of French structuralism. Together, they had published *A Semiotic Approach to Culture* in 1967, which promoted general semiotic methods to understand cultural facts. Beaujour's works evolved and ranged from cultural history to rhetoric and literary self-portrait – his essay *Miroirs d'encre* had been published in 1980 in Genette's collection at Le Seuil. At NYU, with Tom Bishop, Beaujour had participated in the foundation of the Institute of French Studies (IFS). At the foundation of the IFS in 1977, he had a project of a center dedicated to Semiotics, but the first years of the Institute changed this project in favor of a project based on the methods of social sciences.

The Semiotic Society of America, created in 1976, was invested by literature scholars interested in theoretical approaches to literature together with representatives of numerous other disciplines. It is for instance the case of Thomas Gustav Winner (1917-2004). Born in Prague, he escaped Nazism and went to Harvard as a refugee scholar. A specialist of the Prague circle and of Russian literature, he established the first Semiotics center at Brown University and became president of the society in 1978. Robert Scholes (1929-2016), who was president of the society in 1990, also fits in this landscape. Author of numerous books and essays among which *Structuralism in Literature*, published in 1974, was largely diffused and translated, he held an influential position in American literary studies as a promoter of literary theory, semiotics, study of narrative. A former student of Yale and Cornell universities, he also became president of the Modern Language Association (MLA)<sup>27</sup> in 2004. In fact, the investment of learned societies by promoters of literary theories initially worked as a means of elaboration, diffusion and legitimation of theoretical approaches to literature. In its evolution, it also proved to be a factor of specialization and disciplinarization of theoretical approaches initially not conceived for literature only, like structuralism or semiotics. A continuator of Barthes' works, Michael

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<sup>27</sup> Founded in 1883, the Modern Language Association (MLA) is a large association for literary studies, languages and several sectors of the Humanities. It holds yearly national conventions, regularly publishes bulletins, bibliographies and journals, of which *PMLA* is historically prestigious in literary studies. It confronted serious transformations in its intellectual orientations by the end of the 1960s, which partly dealt with the importation of new approaches and methods in literary studies and Humanities.

Riffaterre (1924-2006), had also been a president of the Semiotic Society of America, in 1986. His works spanned from structuralism and semiotics applied to literature, a deep theorization of the notion of intertextuality (developed around Barthes by one of his students, Julia Kristeva) and an interest for psychoanalysis. His career is characterized by the investment of publishing and pedagogical structures, powerful institutional networks and transatlantic recognition.

Born in France as Michel, Riffaterre had studied in Lyon before going to the Sorbonne and working briefly as a lexicologist at the CNRS. He then moved to the United States, where he received a PhD from Columbia in 1957. There, he became a professor in 1964 and published several works in literary theory in a formalist perspective of internal literary analysis before turning to intertextuality and psychoanalysis – among which are the *Essais de stylistique structurale* [1970], *Semiotics of Poetry* [1978] or *La production du texte* [1979], also published in French at Le Seuil in Gérard Genette's series. Riffaterre chaired the French Department at Columbia from 1974 to 1983, where he was Lotringer's professor before becoming his colleague. He was an editor for the prestigious *Romanic Review* from 1971, and directed the School of Criticism and Theory from 1987 to 1997. The School of Criticism and Theory, now related to Cornell University, counts among its Senior Fellows several people linked to the French literary theories of the 1960s, to "French Theory" and to their heritage: Judith Butler, Jonathan Culler, Stanley Fish, Geoffrey Hartman, Julia Kristeva, etc. Riffaterre was at the same time inserted in the networks of literary theory in France – around Genette and the journal *Poétique* – and in the United States. Riffaterre had engaged in theoretical disputes and discussions, notably with the influent literary critic Leo Spitzer, at the time professor at Johns Hopkins, and with Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roman Jakobson, around their reading of *Les Chats* by Baudelaire.

Riffaterre's vice-president in the Semiotic Society in 1986-1987 was Jonathan Culler, who then became President of the Society in 1987-1988. A contemporary prominent figure of literary theory in the United States, his works in literary theory discuss numerous approaches and specialize around the question raised by the specificity of literature, which calls upon the elaboration of a specific theoretical reflection.

Born in 1944, Culler studied at Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge, first taught in Oxford and Cambridge, before being appointed at Yale, and is now a professor of English and Comparative Literature at Cornell University. Positioned in several national and international institutions, associations and journals, Culler was for example a member of the MLA's Executive Council (1982-1985) and Delegate Assembly (1988-1991), but also a member of various different boards and councils, including those of the International Comparative Literature Association and of the American Comparative Literature Association. Among other functions he also is a former editor of the journal *Diacritics* who played an important part in the importation of French thinkers, and an advisory editor for numerous journals in literary studies. He developed an important corpus of literary theory exploring structuralism and deconstruction, in which *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, published in 1975 revised and translated in several languages, was a major book in the theoretical discussions in literary theory in the United States. Culler has published a monography dedicated to Ferdinand de Saussure [1976] and another dedicated to Roland Barthes [1983]. He is the author of several syntheses and theoretical works aimed at the discussion of possible combination of several methods and approaches in literature. The titles

of his works are explicit about the aim of building general analytical syntheses: *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* in 1981, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* in 1982, *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions* in 1988, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* in 1997, translated in more than twenty languages, *The Literary in Theory* in 2006 and *Theory of the Lyric* in 2015.

A clear “family resemblance” gathers these literary scholars. They are of course characterized by their continuation of the theoretical proposals Barthes had contributed to diffuse and elaborate – in the wake of structuralism, formalism, semiotics, poetics. Their punctual investment in Semiotics is an important factor to understand the importation, construction, formalization and legitimation of new theoretical approaches in literary studies. Indeed, the recourse to an emergent field of study relatively independent from the literary discipline as it was structured in the academic field illustrates the necessity to rely on authorities that provide a possibility to bypass the dominant disciplinary approach. But, as the examples above have shown, this logic is oriented towards a following specialization in literature. Indeed, other than their works as literary theorists, they have in common strongly specialized trajectories. They are no longer intermediaries but producers of theoretical works. They share long-term integration and key positions in prestigious institutions. Their integration in learned societies, journals, boards, provide academic power, especially on the reproduction of the student and professional corps, as well as intellectual authority. The international diffusion of their works, and their contribution to the international diffusion of the intellectual genealogy they claim and discuss, reinforces their recognition and, in the same movement, the legitimacy of theoretical approaches in literature in part developed around the importation of French literary theories. The specialization and disciplinarization that characterizes the American continuators of literary theories developed around structuralism presents resemblances with the French evolution of literary theories. Indeed, the French 1960s were characterized by a certain porosity between the academic, intellectual and literary fields. The French academic spaces, structures, curricula transformed by the end of the 1960s and the 1970s, and drove the second generation of literary theorists gathered around Genette towards an institutionalization of literary theories through newly created French and Modern Literature Departments and the formation of a *corps* of French and Literature teachers and researchers. The trajectories of this generation, as well as the institutional and publishing initiatives – in which the journal and the book collection *Poétique* created around Gérard Genette are a powerful tool – are characterized by careers very different from Barthes and his first companions and importers’: more linear, specialized, and invested in the disciplinary structures or governance. Barthes’ career, as well

as the first importations and translations of his books, appeared as distributed over several fields and domains of study. On the contrary, the logics of the academic appropriation and continuation of his works integrate them to wider theoretical corpora into what appears as a legitimate and prestigious disciplinary specialization, i.e. literary theory.

## 6. Conclusion

Analyzing Barthes' trajectory and early reception in the United States through the prism of circulations allows one to reintegrate a single trajectory in different national spaces and various types of activities. Forms of continuity can be distinguished: between Barthes' consecration in France and in the US, between different activities frequently considered as separated, between Barthes' position in the French academic, intellectual and literary spaces and his importer's position in the American ones. Social uses of transnational circulations have been illustrated in Barthes' trajectory as well as in his intermediaries': their differentiated investment of national spaces, the benefits of importation, the dispositions to transnational contexts, as well as the situation of exile appear as central parameters in understanding how the international circulation of ideas is made possible. The social and cultural context provided a first explanation of the wide reception of literary theory and of Barthes' works in France and in the United States. Barthes' social trajectory, started as an intermediary and ended as an internationally famous author, his implications in different intellectual and academic networks in France and abroad have shown a strong and precocious integration in transnational networks. The transnational prism reveals capital to understand how national and international logics are also part of the same movement. At the same time, the case study showed how national and, *stricto sensu*, international logics could not explain all the dynamics of the circulation. Instead, they even appear obsolete for a deeper analysis of the circulation of ideas: the English-speaking area, which englobes here both the UK and the US, illuminates the necessity to separate national and linguistic logics. In the same way, Barthes' trajectory, and the transnational diffusion of structuralism, show that the American reception of his works is part of a much wider process.

The reception of Barthes' works in the American academic field is indeed not limited to literary studies. The reception of Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, the links between semiology and visual studies or cinema studies have for example been at the origin of numerous and important appropriations that would help re-placing the importation of French literary theory in the broader history of the rise of theory in the reconfiguration of several disciplines of the

Humanities and Social Sciences. The concurrent importation of several French thinkers raises questions on the temporality of intellectual circulations. Whereas the time-lag between Barthes' publications in French and in English appears important, the group effect of the importation of French academics and intellectuals in the 1960s accelerated the reception of Barthes' works and helps to explain the way his reception was not exclusively appropriated by academic specialists of literature. Instead, the dissemination of his works in the United States ultimately questions the division of intellectual labor and the way it transforms over time. The effects of the American reception of French intellectuals on their careers, especially for the ones that were part of the "French Theory" nebula, have been proven in several cases. But apart from revealing the rise of intellectual labels or the symbolic powers of certain national configurations, the transformations intellectual work is subjected to in transnational circulations appear salient and essential to understanding the emergence of critical thought and the renewal of academic disciplines.

ANNEX 1. Selected Landscape of French Journals. Around Roland Barthes (1950s-1970s)

Source: Author's Elaboration

Name	Year of creation	End year	Founder(s)	Editorial Committees, regular collaborators.	Contents, areas of interest, ideological orientations.	Frequency	Book series
<i>Annales</i>	1929	Ongoing	Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre	Lucien Febvre (1944-1956), Fernand Braudel (1956-1959), collegial directions: F. Braudel, J. Le Goff, E. Le Roy Ladurie, M. Ferro, G. Friedmann	The journal of the historiographical current of the <i>Annales</i> . It published history and social sciences, turning to cultural history towards the end of the 1960s.	4 issues a year (1946-1969), 6 issues a year (1960-2010), 4 issues a year (2011-)	
<i>Esprit</i>	1932	Ongoing	Emmanuel Mounier	Emmanuel Mounier until 1950, Albert Béguin, Jean-Marie Domenach, Paul Thibaud. Paul Ricoeur is one of the most famous intellectual figures of the journal.	Essays (philosophy, politics, social sciences). Socialism, catholicism.	Monthly	1946, Seuil
<i>Combat</i>	1941	1974	Berty Albrecht and Henri Frenay among Résistants groups during the Occupation.	André Bollier, followed by Pascal Pia, Claude Bourdet, Victor Fay, Philippe Tesson. Albert Camus is one of the main historical figures of the journal.	National and international political affairs, social and cultural topics. Non-communist marxism.	Daily	
<i>Critique</i>	1946	Ongoing	Georges Bataille	George Bataille with Pierre Prévost, Eric Weil and Jean Piel, then Jean Piel, followed by Philippe Roger (current director). Maurice Blanchot was among the first collaborators. Roland Barthes, Michel Deguy and Michel Foucault were part of the editorial committee in the 1960s.	Lengthy book reviews and essays on national and international intellectual contemporary production. Social sciences, philosophy, literature.	Monthly	1962, Les Editions de Minuit
<i>Théâtre populaire</i>	1953	1964	Robert Voisin	Denis Bablet, Bernard Dort, Françoise Kourilski, Morvan Lebesque, Antoine Vitez, along with Barthes, have been among the main animators of the journal. Jean Paris, Jean Duvignaud, Michel Vinaver also collaborated.	<i>Théâtre populaire</i> emerged in an enthusiasm towards Jean Vilar's theatrical initiatives and his "popular theatre". Critical reviews of plays, essays.	Bimonthly	
<i>Lettres Nouvelles</i>	1953	1977	Maurice Nadeau, Maurice Saille	Maurice Nadeau		Monthly (1953-1959) weekly (1959) bimestrial (1960-1976)	1958-1962, Julliard Robert Laffont Maurice Nadeau
<i>Arguments</i>	1956	1962	Colette Audry, Roland Barthes, Jean Duvignaud, Edgar Morin	Colette Audry, Edgar Morin, Roland Barthes, Jean Duvignaud, Dionys Mascolo, Serge Mallet, François Fetjö, Pierre Fougeyrollas, Kostas Axelos.	Essays. Marxism, philosophy, social criticism, social sciences.	Bimonthly	
<i>Communications</i>	1960	Ongoing	Roland Barthes, Georges Friedmann, Edgar Morin	Founded by Barthes, Georges Friedmann and Edgar Morin. Claude Brémont, Umberto Eco, François Flahaut, Christian Metz, Violette Morin, Tzvetan Todorov were regular collaborators until the 1970s.	Created with the CECMAS, Centre d'Etude des Communications de Masse at the EPHE. Aimed at a marxist critique of mass communications. Academic publications, structuralism, social sciences, semiology.	Bi-annual	
<i>Tel Quel</i>	1961	1982 ( <i>L'infini</i> 1983)	Jean-Edern Hallier, Philippe Sollers	Animated by and around Philippe Sollers, the journal counted J-L Baudry, M. Deguy, J-E Hallier, J. Kristeva, M. Pleyne, D. Roche, J. Ricardou, J. Thibaudeau, J. Risset among its regular collaborators. R. Barthes, J. Derrida, M. Foucault took part in the journal.	Essays. Philosophy, literature, literary theory, avant-garde theoretical and literary experiments. Initially "apolitic", the journal turned towards maoism by the end of the 1960s.	Quarterly	1963, Seuil
<i>La Quinzaine Littéraire</i>	1966	Ongoing	Maurice Nadeau	Maurice Nadeau	Book reviews, Literature	Bimonthly	Minuit, 1960
<i>L'observateur (O) France-Observateur (FO) Le Nouvel Observateur (NO)</i>	O: 1950 FO: 1954 NO: 1964	O: 1954 FO: 1964 NO: Ongoing	Claude Bourdet, Gilles Martinet (O) Claude Perdriel, Jean Daniel (NO)	Among the cultural critics and journalists could be found Jean-Luis Bory, Maurice Clavel, Jean Freustié, Hector Bianciotti, Françoise Giroud, Jean-François Josselin, Claude Roy.	Articles of general and cultural interest (politics, culture, economy). Left-wing, anti-colonization (FO). After the Algeria War, NO backed socialism.	Weekly	

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