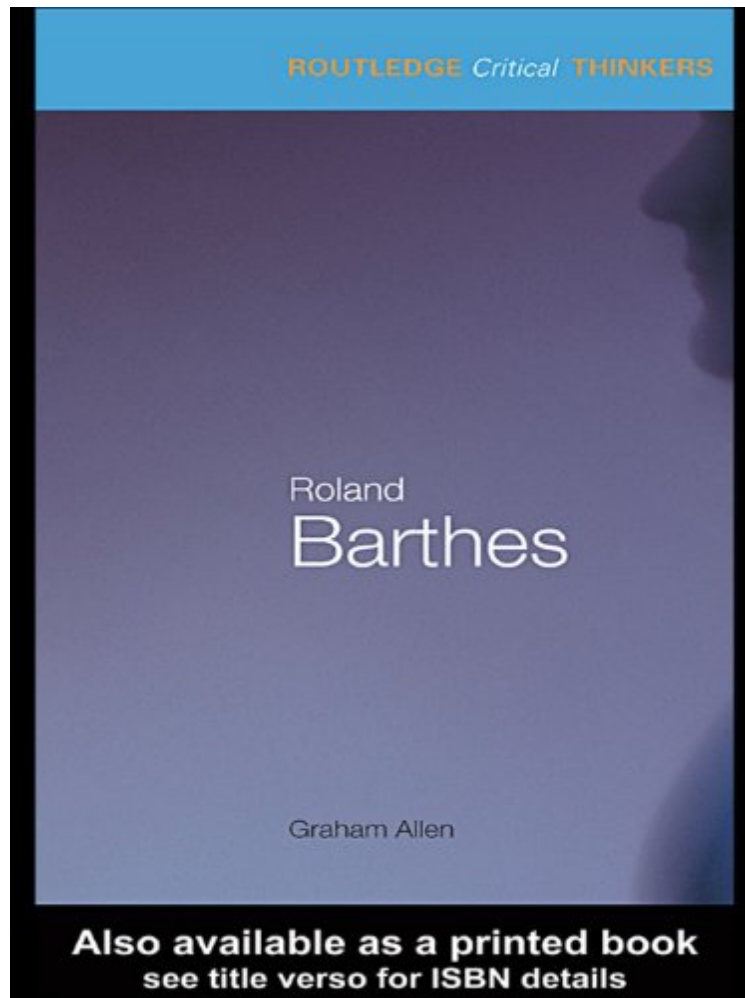


(Download pdf) Roland Barthes (Routledge Critical Thinkers)

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Von Graham Allen

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Von Graham Allen : Roland Barthes (Routledge Critical Thinkers) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Roland Barthes (Routledge Critical Thinkers):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A good introduction to Barthes' ideasVon FrKurt MessickGraham Allen's text on Roland Barthes is part of a recent series put out by the Routledge Press, designed under the general editorial direction of Robert Eaglestone (Royal Holloway, University of London), to explore the most recent and exciting ideas in intellectual development during the past century or so. To this end, figures such as Martin Heidegger, Paul Ricouer, Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and other influential thinkers in critical thought are highlighted in the series, planned to include more than 21 volumes in all.Allen's text, following the pattern of the others, includes background information on Barthes and his significance, the key ideas and sources, and Barthes' continuing impact on other

thinkers. As the series preface indicates, no critical thinker arises in a vacuum, so the context, influences and broader cultural environment are all important as a part of the study, something with which Barthes might agree, although many of the thinkers in this series are also influenced greatly by thinkers at odds with Barthes ideas. Why is Barthes included in this series? This series is primary for critical thinking in a literary sense, and Barthes is one of the founding fathers. Topics such as structuralism, semiology, post-structuralism, cultural studies and psychoanalytic literary criticism are but a few of the areas in which Barthes' impact is crucial; the larger field of intellectual life also owes a debt to Barthes' foundations, whose influence extends into psychology, history, politics, linguistics, philosophy, science, and theology (and even further afield). Barthes' career was one of non-traditional achievement - given that his theoretical stance had him at odds with more established norms, it makes sense that his career embodied an intellectual cycle outside more traditional degree-granting universities, until the very end, and even there, both sides viewed each other with suspicion. Barthes' key ideas, presented in this text, include definitions of literature and the understanding of critical distance, in this case the distance between writing and the 'natural, universal' meanings that society wants to impose upon the writing. In semiology, Barthes looks at the issue of sign and symbol - how are these played out in literary and narrative forms in culture? For Barthes, it is important to understand the prevailing mythologies and demythologise the situation - this has important ramifications for those in fields that require understanding of subtexts, pretexts and contexts, such as theology and psychology. As part of the key ideas, Allen looks at Barthes' Structuralist phase (roughly 1957-67) and his Post-Structuralist phase, influenced (as are most French intellectual thinkers) by the events in 1968 in the academy, as well as the 'death of the author' developments, which included a movement away from ideas of objective and scientific possibilities for understanding and analysis. Here some cross-pollination takes place between the various thinkers, those whom Barthes has influenced, and those who have influenced Barthes. Barthes idea of textuality coincides with related developments in Derrida's thinking. Not content with being merely a text-bound thinker, Barthes began to branch out into the areas of music and art (most particularly, photography) as media of communication. Barthes' last book, 'Camera Lucida', explores photograph and visual media as 'messages without a code', and explores how this changes culture, particularly the modern culture with its advertising media overload of images. One of the useful features of the text is the side-bar boxes inserted at various points. For example, during the discussion on Barthes' development of Writing and Literature, there are brief discussions, set apart from the primary strand of the text, on Existentialism, Bourgeoisie, Avant-Garde, and Dialectic, developing further these ideas should the reader not be familiar with them, or at least not in the way with which Barthes would be working with ideas derived from them. Each section on a key idea spans twenty to thirty pages, with a one- to two-page summary concluding each, which gives a recap of the ideas (and provides a handy reference). The concluding chapter, After Barthes, highlights some key areas of development in relation to other thinkers, as well as points of possible exploration for the reader. Barthes' thought vis--vis Derrida, Blanchot, Kristeva and Todorov is developed a bit, but the chapter on After Barthes is perhaps less developed here than in other volumes of the series because the development of the key ideas of Barthes show more directly where the influences continue to make impact. Indeed, the field of literary critical theory might not exist without Barthes; it would certainly be a much diminished enterprise. As do the other volumes in this series, Allen's concludes with an annotated bibliography of works by Barthes, works on Barthes, and a good index. While this series focuses intentionally upon literary theory, in fact this is only the starting point. For Barthes (as for others in this series) the expanse is far too broad to be drawn into such narrow guidelines, and the important and impact of the ideas extends out into the whole range of intellectual development. As intellectual endeavours of every sort depend upon language, understanding, and interpretation, the thorough comprehension of how and why we know what we know is crucial.

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Kurzbeschreibung Roland Barthes is a central figure in the study of language, literature, culture and the media. This book prepares readers for their first encounter with his crucial writings on some of the most important theoretical debates, including: *existentialism and Marxism* semiology, or the 'language of signs' *structuralism and narrative analysis* post-structuralism, deconstruction and 'the death of the author' *theories of the text and intertextuality. Tracing his engagement with other key thinkers such as Sartre, Saussure, Derrida and Kristeva, this volume offers a clear picture of Barthes work in-context. The in-depth understanding of Barthes offered by this guide is essential to anyone reading contemporary critical theory. Pressestimmen 'Thorough, clear and well-informed' - Jonathan Culler, Cornell University

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