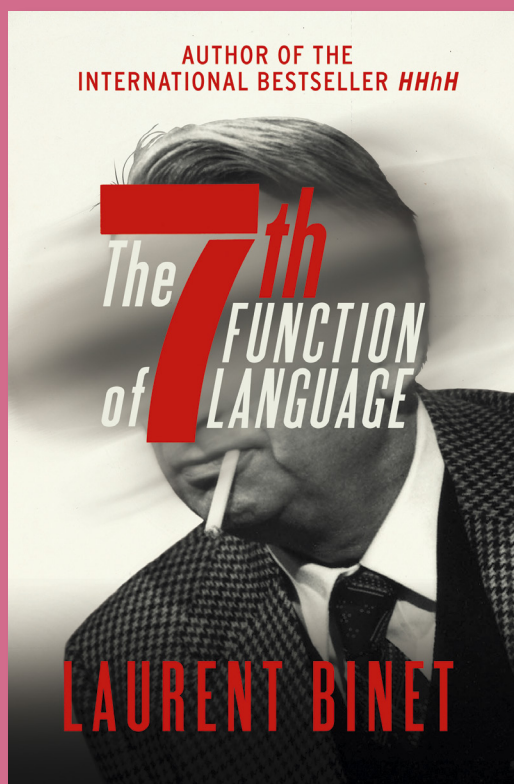




# Reader's Guide



Other novels by Laurent Binet  
*HHhH* (2012)

## The 7th Function of Language Laurent Binet

Translated by Sam Taylor

Published by Harvill Secker

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<b>About the author</b>	Laurent Binet was born in Paris, France, in July 1972. His first novel, <i>HHhH</i> , was an international bestseller. It won the prestigious Prix Goncourt for a first novel and was shortlisted for Waterstones Book of the Year. Binet won the Prix de la FNAC and Prix Interallié for <i>The 7th Function of Language</i> .
<b>About the translator</b>	Sam Taylor was born in Nottinghamshire, UK, in 1970. He began his career as a journalist with <i>The Observer</i> . In 2001, he quit his job and moved to southwest France, where he wrote four novels, learned French, and raised a family. In 2010, he translated his first novel: Laurent Binet's <i>HHhH</i> . He now lives in the United States and works as a literary translator and author.
<b>About the book</b>	Roland Barthes is knocked down in a Paris street by a laundry van. It's February 1980 and he has just come from lunch with François Mitterrand, a slippery politician locked in a battle for the Presidency. Barthes dies soon afterwards. History tells us it was an accident. But what if it were an assassination? What if Barthes was carrying a document of unbelievable, global importance? A document explaining the seventh function of language – an idea so powerful it gives whoever masters it the ability to convince anyone, in any situation, to do anything.
<b>Discussion points</b>	<p>The somewhat absurd death of Roland Barthes at the start of the novel actually happened. Did you know anything about this event before you read the novel?</p> <p>The idea that Barthes' death was an assassination is a construct of the author. Discuss the decision to take a true event in this fictionalised direction.</p> <p>Did you learn anything new about the French intelligentsia from the book?</p> <p>Mixing true events and characters with a fictional story is a delicate balance – do you feel this was done well in the novel?</p> <p>The book makes comic characters out of some of France's greatest thinkers – how do you feel about the way that they were represented?</p>
<b>Themed reading</b>	<p>Antoine Laurain <i>The President's Hat</i></p> <p>Frédéric Dard <i>Bird in a Cage</i></p> <p>Mohammed Hanif <i>A Case of Exploding Mangoes</i></p> <p>Patricia Duncker <i>Hallucinating Foucault</i></p> <p>Fred Vargas <i>Have Mercy on Us All</i></p>
<b>Useful links</b>	<p><a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/16/books/review/the-seventh-function-of-language-laurent-binet.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/16/books/review/the-seventh-function-of-language-laurent-binet.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.npr.org/2017/08/01/539597890/seventh-function-is-a-postmodern-mashup-of-fact-fiction-and-philosophy">https://www.npr.org/2017/08/01/539597890/seventh-function-is-a-postmodern-mashup-of-fact-fiction-and-philosophy</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/who-killed-roland-barthes-maybe-umberto-eco-has-a-clue/2017/08/22/6f644c8e-8696-11e7-a94f-3139abce39f5_story.html?utm_term=.57a067d2539b">https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/who-killed-roland-barthes-maybe-umberto-eco-has-a-clue/2017/08/22/6f644c8e-8696-11e7-a94f-3139abce39f5_story.html?utm_term=.57a067d2539b</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/may/05/laurent-binet-interview-macron-le-pen-7th-function-language-hhhh">https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/may/05/laurent-binet-interview-macron-le-pen-7th-function-language-hhhh</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.partisanmagazine.com/blog/2015/12/4/an-interview-with-laurent-binet">http://www.partisanmagazine.com/blog/2015/12/4/an-interview-with-laurent-binet</a></p>