

INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.
5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

University Microfilms International

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 USA
St. John's Road, Tyler's Green
High Wycombe, Bucks, England HP10 8HR

7816143

MOSEK, JANET PRESS
PROUST CRITICISM IN FRANCE: 1914-1938: OF
TIME AND TASTE.

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, PH.D., 1978

University
Microfilms
International

© COPYRIGHT BY
JANET PRESS MOSER
1978

PROUST CRITICISM IN FRANCE: 1914-1938;

Of Time and Taste

by

JANET PRESS MOSER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in French in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University
of New York.

1978

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in French in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

5/11/78

Jacques J. Zephir
Chairman Examining Committee

May 11, 1978

Henri Peyre
Executive Officer

Jacques J. Zephir
Bethina Knapp
Henri Peyre
Supervisory Committee

Acknowledgements

I should like to express my gratitude to my thesis director, Professor Jacques J. Zéphir, who introduced me to the study of Proust and sustained my interest over many years. I should also like to thank my readers, Professor Henri Peyre, who has been more than generous with both his time and his knowledge, and Professor Bettina Knapp, whose work and teaching have deepened my understanding of the critic as myth-maker.

All the rivers run into the sea;
yet the sea is not full; unto the
place from whence the rivers come,
thither they return again.

Ecclesiastes

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
1. PROUST ON PROUST	8
A Novelistic Esthetic	8
A Critical Esthetic	29
2. THE FORMAL APPROACH	41
Style	42
History	52
Composition	61
3. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH	80
The 1920's	81
The 1930's	104
4. THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND MORAL APPROACH	126
The Philosophical Approach	127
The Meral Approach	142
5. CRITICISM OUTSIDE FRANCE	163
England	163
Spain	166
Germany	169
America	178
CONCLUSION	191
BIBLIOGRAPHY	199

NOTA BENE

Quotations from the major works of Marcel Proust will be cited as follows:

from A la Recherche du temps perdu, 3 vols., Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, (Paris: Gallimard, 1954):
by volume and page number only.

from Jean Santeuil précédé de Les Plaisirs et les jours, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, (Paris: Gallimard, 1971):
as IV, preceded by JS or PJ.

from Contre Sainte-Beuve précédé de Pastiches et mélanges et suivi de Essais et articles, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, (Paris: Gallimard, 1971):
as V, preceded by CSB, PM, or the title of the essay or article.

INTRODUCTION

The vagaries of time and taste account, in part, for differing critical understanding of any work; A la Recherche du temps perdu, appropriating as it does this question as subject, is uniquely vulnerable as object. While his contemporaries characterized Proust's style as obscure and cluttered, his poetry as precious, the modern reader has come to value the stylist, the poet, and the lucid analyst in Proust. Our present perception of A la Recherche is part of a continuing evolutionary process, and that which is explicit today cannot be casually isolated from what was implicit in the past. Proust meditated insistently on time, not only as a force transfiguring fictional characters and emotions, but also governing the relationship between an original author and his audience. Conforming to Proust's own view that the proper study of the present is the past, our own perspective should be expanded through the study of previous perceptions of the novel. In returning not only to the appraisals of Proust's contemporaries, but also to those of his immediate successors, a more complete understanding of both the work itself and its modern interpretation can be realized. The documentation of the critical history of a work

doubly enhances the meaning of that work, giving insight into the processes which shaped our present perception, and expanding that perception by restoring to the novel a wide and varied reading. While the one constant in Preust criticism, since the publication of A l'Ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs, would seem to be the continuous and prolific appraisal of various aspects of Preust's novel, there has been no systematic and comprehensive study of Preust's early critics.

The dynamism and complexity of A la Recherche is reflected in the differing faces and values it has assumed for succeeding generations of readers. The most obvious problem confronting the student of Preust criticism in the 1920's and 1930's is an explanation of the contrast between the initial enthusiasm for Preust's novel and the subsequent censoriousness which generally characterize these two decades, a situation further complicated by the staggered publication of the volumes of A la Recherche. An analysis of the criticism of this period must necessarily refer to the values of the times, and the extent to which these values effected the interpretation of the novel. Like Preust's description of the human face as "une grappe de visages juxtaposés dans des plans différents,"¹ Preust's contemporaries and successors read various and often contradictory meanings into his novel.

While the major concern of this study is an analysis of Preust criticism in the 1920's and 1930's, a discussion

of Proust's own novelistic and critical esthetic seems a relevant and necessary prologue to an understanding of critical perception of A la Recherche. In his novel and his earlier writings, Proust stated both his intentions and the standards by which he hoped to be judged. The extent to which critical sensibilities coincided or conflicted with Proust's own creed determined, to some degree, the method and appraisals of his readers.

The multifaceted A la Recherche allowed and accomodated the separate analysis of its parts. Few critics in the 1920's and 1930's treated the novel as a whole, and their writings lend themselves to a division based on approach. This study takes its organization from the dominant concerns of the critics: those who evaluated Proustian style and composition come under the heading "The Formal Approach"; a shared interest in the psychological dimension of A la Recherche determined the selection of critics in the chapter entitled "The Psychological Approach"; moral and philosophical readings of Proust's novel complete the study of French analyses. As Proust's novel did receive international attention, it is hoped that a fuller picture of Proust scholarship during the period studied will emerge through the inclusion of a few appraisals by eminent foreign critics.

The contrast between the volume and intensity of critical attention surrounding A la Recherche before and after World War I may be attributed to the post-war support

of influential critics at the Nouvelle Revue Française. It was not until 1919, through the direct efforts of a few prominent Parisian critics (Gh on, Riviere, Du Bos, Daudet), that Du c t  de chez Swann became the center of extensive critical attention. The 1913 publication provoked little critical response. Articles appeared by Elie-J. Bois in Le Temps, November 12, 1913; Maurice Rostand in Commedia, December 26, 1913; and Lucien Daudet, a close friend who campaigned for many years to focus critical attention on Proust, in Le Figaro, November 27, 1913. More influential reviews appeared in the December 10, 1913 issue of Le Temps by Paul Souday, and in the December 10, 1913 issue of Revue Bleue by Lucien Maury. The following year saw reviews by Jacques-Emile Blanche in the April 15 issue of Eche de Paris; Henri Gh on in the Nouvelle Revue Franaise; Paul Adam in the Petite R publique of January 19; and Jean de Pierrefeu on the same date in Opinion. The number and tone of the articles devoted to Du c t  de chez Swann reflect the generally polite and indifferent reception accorded the novel before the awarding of the Prix Goncourt to A'l'Ombre.

The wealth of journalistic, academic and professional criticism devoted to various aspects of A la Recherche during the 1920's and 1930's demands a discriminatory selection. Access to the exhaustive bibliographies compiled by Douglas W. Alden in Marcel Proust and His French Critics (prefaced by a brief review of general

trends), and Henri Bonnet in Marcel Proust de 1907 à 1914 has been invaluable to our research. Two basic principles have governed the choice of critics included in this study. The few writers whose analyses have endured the scrutiny of past decades and are still valid to modern Proust criticism obviously merit our attention. Of equal importance to any understanding of the critical history of a work are the analysts who, while their appraisals may now be obsolete or discredited, derive their importance from the prominence of their position in the critical establishment and their consequential influence on the prevailing perceptions of the novel. Among the less enduring writers, it has been necessary to omit those who, while they may have written prolifically on A la Recherche, did no more than echo significant notes already sounded by others.

While only the most exhaustive study of the overwhelming amount of criticism devoted to Proust during the 1920's and 1930's could offer irrefutable results, the system of selection adopted here should provide significant insight into the critical history of A la Recherche, the major critical trends in these two decades, and the times which shaped the differing assessments. It is hoped that a synthetic view of both the novel and the criticism of the 1920's and 1930's will emerge from an analysis of the partial evaluations of Proust's critics. As the seeds of our modern perception lie in the early interpretations of

the novel, the object of this study is to examine the role of Proust's immediate successors in our present understanding of his work.

Notes

¹ I, 510.

Chapter 1
PROUST ON PROUST

Any discussion of his readers difficulties must, of course, be grounded in Proust's view of his own intentions. As in the contemporary novels of André Gide (Les Faux Monnayeurs), Jacques de Lacretelle (Journal de colère), and Léon Bopp (Jacques Arnaut et la somme romanesque), explicit statements of esthetic principles are integral to Proust's novel.¹ Any analysis of the innovative elements in the novelistic and critical esthetics which can be deduced from Proust's correspondence, Pastiches et mélanges, Contre Sainte-Beuve, various articles and essays, and the volumes of A la Recherche must proceed from an understanding of the historical context in which these ideas were born. Biographical studies, as they were written after critical attention had already begun to focus on Proust, and thus may have been influenced by critical opinion, must be disqualified as not constituting reliable indicators of the author's literary principles.

A Novelistic Esthetic

An understanding of the esthetic base of A la Recherche cannot be separated from the history of the novel in the

late nineteenth century. The genesis of Proust's literary ambitions coincides with a period when not only traditional novelistic technique, but the value of the genre itself was being openly questioned. While the partisans of the various formal movements for a renewal of the novelistic genre could make no direct claim to Proust's loyalty, the metamorphoses of the turn-of-the-century novel, and the accompanying debate on the need for and the direction of these transformations provide the background for the development of Proust's literary views.

The response to Jules Huret's 1891 "Enquête sur l'Evolution littéraire", published in the Echo de Paris, signaled the end of the naturalist novel which had dominated mid-nineteenth century literature.² While no coherent new form had emerged to replace naturalism, the rejection of positivism as a philosophic basis of literature can be seen in the kinds of novels which were written after 1880: the relativism of Barrès; the psychological novel of Bourget; Loti's subjectivism in Fantôme d'Orient; the role of dream and fantasy in Huysmans' A Rebours, and the absence of a traditional plot in his En Route; the secondary importance of plot in the Goncourts' novels; the lyricism which invaded the novels of Poictevin, Renard and James; and the cult of Poe and Baudelaire which surfaces in the short stories of Henri de Régnier, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and Marcel Schwob. These efforts at innovation oppose the insistence on logical, chronological progression and

primacy of plot which characterized the novel of 1850-1880.³

Towards a poetic novel. Although the lyric dimensions of the works of Emile Zola and Georges Sand had long been acknowledged, the call for a more poetic novel dominated the statements of late nineteenth-century critics and authors. While the symbolists failed to produce a great novel, their influence can be seen in the general orientation of the turn-of-the-century novel. The first mention of D'Annunzio's poetic prose in France can be traced to Romy de Gourmont's April, 1893 article in the Mercure de France. Both L'Innocente and the author's preface to Trionfo della Morte were soon after translated into French.⁴ The lyricism, imagery, and concern for rhythm in James's Clara d'Ellébeuse and Almaide d'Etremont represent an important break with the naturalist tradition, for "La poésie n'était plus seulement sertie dans la trame du récit, comme un joyau qui jette un instant ses feux; elle constituait cette trame même. Le récit, distribué en paragraphes-versets, devenait lui-même lyrique."⁵ Both Renard and Poictevin attempted to reveal the reality embodied in impression or sensation. Proust's esthetic ambitions are rooted in a period described by Michel Raimond as marked by "cette conversion de la prose, moins soucieuse en bien des cas de narrer et d'imposer un univers fictif que d'élucider le contenu de la perception et de l'impression."⁶

The lyrical elements of A la Recherche were absent from the traditional French psychological novel. Bourget's novels resemble demonstrations of psychological theory, and the herces of Dominique and Adolphe tell their stories, rather than live them. The naturists' demands for a literature which, while aiming for an eternal quality, would be anchored in the material events of daily life counterbalanced the more ephemeral concerns of symbolism.

Proust's anti-symbolist statements must be taken in their proper context. His admiration for the poetry of Baudelaire, which he considered classical, and his own metaphorical style show that Proust was not hostile to the achievements of the symbolist movement, but rather was reacting to the progressive obscurity which accompanied its decline. Although he himself was often accused of being obscure, Proust's constant concern for the precision of his vocabulary is evident in the continual corrections of the manuscripts of A la Recherche, with special attention to his characters' use of language.

The poetry of 1890-1910 was marked by a discussion of "une poésie pure dans un langage pur."⁷ As Proust states in "Centre l'obscurité", poetic language differs from the purity of scientific language in that the meaning of each word in poetry, while retaining the strength of its origins, is further enhanced by its action on our imagination and sensibility. It the poet's function is, as Proust believed it to be, one of communicating his original

vision to the reader, then the obscurity of later symbolism served only to limit the audience, by shrouding its truths in a codified language accessible to the small proportion of readers initiated into its secret vocabulary:

le sentiment de la même nécessité,
de la même constance des lois de
l'univers et de la pensée, qui
m'interdit d'imaginer, à la façon
des enfants, que le monde va changer
au gré de mes désirs, m'empêche de
croire que, les conditions de l'art
étant subitement modifiées, les chefs-
d'oeuvre seront maintenant ce qu'ils
n'ont jamais été, au cours des siècles,
à peu près inintelligibles.⁸

While twentieth-century symbolism, with its limited universe and hierarchy of subjects, degenerated into a cult of obscurity, Proust pursued his classical ideal of precision and lucidity in literature.

In the works of James, Poictevin and Renard, the concept of the proper subject matter of the novel has changed: a new novel will no longer be centered on the naturalists' preoccupation with documenting reality, but will derive both its poetry and its truth from the immediacy of impressions. For Proust, "Seule l'impression, si chétive qu'en semble la matière, si insaisissable la trace, est un critérium de vérité. . . ." ⁹ The conflict between Proust's concept of art and that of the nineteenth-century realists is readily discernible. For Proust, the immediate perception of reality is always essentially impressionistic and subjective, and the dialectic between

"impressionism" (subjectivity), and "realism" (objectivity), remains basic to Proust's method.

Literary impressionism, according to the definition of J. Theodore Johnson Jr., exists when "surface textures or tactics correspond to deep structures or strategies which united constitute a particular kind of vision shared by a number of writers of various periods and countries. . . ." ¹⁰ There are several qualities which distinguish impressionism from realism, including a tendency towards new syntheses, relativity, and subjectivity.

For Proust, impressions contain the key to reality. Only after the impression has been received can the intellect be permitted to play its role. The naturalist idea of an external and uniform reality violates Proust's concept of the role of the writer as translator of inner truths:

La réalité à exprimer résidait . . . non dans l'apparence du sujet, mais à une profondeur où cette apparence importait peu. . . . Quelques-uns voulaient que le roman fut une sorte de défilé cinématographique des choses. Cette conception était absurde. Rien ne s'éloigne plus de ce que nous avons perçu en réalité qu'une telle vue cinématographique."

Any "realistic" notion of a hierarchy of subjects conflicts with Proust's idealism; any object is capable of inciting the spiritual process by which truth is revealed. What counts for Proust is the spontaneous nature

of the impression, which then releases the forces of involuntary memory. The intellectual effort to decipher the impression must always be a secondary action. The truth contained within the impression is always threatened by the possibility of over-intellectualization (as in the incident of the madeleine). The impressions received must be assimilated by the intellect, thereby allowing a perpetual interplay between the subjective and objective forces. Proust attributes the failure of "realistic" literature to the dominance accorded intellect over impression:

Si les jeunes ont jusqu'à présent échoué dans leurs généreuses tentatives, la faute en est peut-être à ce qu'on perd le don de la vie quand on veut trop en raisonner; l'oeuvre trop réfléchie rarement est vivante, et la couleur perd en intensité ce que l'analyse gagne en profondeur. De là sans doute le mauvais sort jeté sur tant d'oeuvres modernes, qui les frappe dès leur naissance d'une mort immédiate.¹²

As a literary technique, realism, described solely by its superficial qualities and attained solely through the aid of the intellect, deprives art of its personal, original, and poetic qualities. It is this circumscription of the artist's vision to which Proust objects. He does not deny the possibility of finding universal truths, but maintains that these truths can only be discovered in the solitude of the artist's search, for they reside at the deepest

level of being. For Proust, the subjective-objective dialectic operates on two levels: the spontaneity of the impression must precede its intellectual analysis; and subsequently, individual truths are transformed into general laws.

In attempting to capture the atmosphere of the mind, to convey the illusion of the process of thought and impression, Proust, like the symbolists, must rely on metaphor. The symbolist and subjective novelist share not only the metaphorical technique, but also the effort to create the illusion of reality. James Joyce acclaimed Edouard Dujardin's Les Lauriers sont coupés, written at the height of the symbolist movement of the 1880's, as the first attempt at stream-of-consciousness technique. Dujardin's novel, while symbolist in theory, resembles the modern psychological novel in its effort to convey the sense perceptions of its hero by telling the story entirely from within the mind of the character.

The use of metaphors, allowing the artist to illuminate one reality by another, is essential to Proust's concept of style as the revelation of an original vision of reality. For Proust, metaphors free the described object from its superficial, external reality. The juxtaposition of two unrelated objects is analogous to the process of association in intellectual life:

On peut faire succéder indéfiniment dans une description les objets qui figuraient dans le lieu décrit. La vérité ne commencera qu'au moment où l'écrivain prendra deux objets différents, posera leur rapport, analogue dans le monde de l'art à celui qu'est le rapport unique de la loi causale dans le monde de la science, et les enfermera dans les anneaux nécessaires d'un beau style: même, ainsi que la vie, quand, en rapprochant une qualité commune à deux sensations, il dégagera leur essence commune en les réunissant l'une et l'autre pour les soustraire aux contingences du temps, dans une métaphore.¹³

The metaphor, while serving both an explanatory and didactic purpose, provides the work with an internal unity, and enriches the poetic atmosphere of A la Recherche. The accumulation of multiple images within the Proustian sentence, often abruptly interrupted by a scientific observation, increases the mystery surrounding the inner reality being sought. As Proust writes in "A Propos du 'style' de Flaubert", "je crois que la métaphore seule peut donner une sorte d'éternité au style. . . ."¹⁴ Proust's concept of the role of metaphor as a means of perceiving unity behind diversity is close to Platonic idealism. It is through the creation of new metaphors that Proust eliminates the element of time that separates images.

Style, for Proust, is a question of vision, not of technique. It is through the nuances of his style that an author communicates his original vision to the reader. The inner reality of the character's consciousness is

minutely documented, and the Proustian style reflects the discontinuity of psychologically-based perceptions. Proust adapted both the unpredictable quality of Saint-Simon and the long parenthetical style of the Goncourts to his own style. Style, according to Proust, must be the translation of an inner reality, of the original vision perceived by the artist, and therefore must follow the meandering contours of consciousness:

Le style n'est nullement un enjolivement comme croient certaines personnes, ce n'est même pas une question de technique, c'est --- comme la couleur chez les peintres --- une révélation de l'univers particulier que chacun de nous voit, et que ne voient pas les autres. Le plaisir que nous donne un artiste, c'est de nous faire connaître un univers de plus.¹⁵

It the artist's function is to communicate new realities, his style must transform existing realities, not describe them. Proust's long, involuted sentences trace the movement of creative thought. Proust objects to Balzac's explanatory style, where reality is reported rather than rendered. The beauty of an author's style indicates the qualitative difference between his vision and that of others. Balzac's minute documentation of the external reality of his characters' existence never attempts the synthesis of the external with the internal.

In 1922, French critics began to link Proust's technique with stream of consciousness, despite the fact

that Proust had completed his novel before stream of consciousness became a subject for critical discussion in France.¹⁶ The consciousness Proust documents is generally a past state, and does not conform to the gratuitous and spontaneous nature of pure stream of consciousness. Proust's elaboration of chronologically-ordered past impressions, and his effort to extract general laws from these impressions run counter to the immediacy implicit in stream-of-consciousness writing.

Point of view. Between 1908 and 1912, French critical attention turned towards a comparison of the conciseness of the native novel and the length, detail and freedom from ideology of the German, Russian, and, most particularly, the English novel. The writings of Camille Mauclair, André Chevrillon, Firmin Roz, André Gide, André Suarès, and Albert Thibaudet helped spread the notion that the rigid, traditional structure of the French novel, "de La Princesse de Clèves à Adolphe ou à Dominique," betrayed "l'esthétique du roman que des oeuvres anglaises, allemandes ou russes paraissaient avoir mieux incarné."¹⁷

The English use of point-of-view technique began to attract French critical attention at the turn of the century. In an 1888 letter to Robert Louis Stevenson, Marcel Schwob praised the novelist's use of what he characterized as "progressive description." (In Treasure Island and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, a "dual optic" is used).¹⁸ While

Michel Raimond traces the French roots of point of view to the nineteenth-century adventure novel, to the autobiographical technique of such novels as Adolphe and Dominique, and to Stendhal's psychological realism, the English point-of-view technique appears to have had a great impact on the French imagination at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁹ Charles Du Bos was familiar with the works of both Robert Browning and Henry James, and was partially responsible for introducing James to the French reading public. Meredith's novels, reviewed by Firmin Roz in 1908 and André Ruyters in 1909, were to find, in the post-war years, their most enthusiastic support in the writings of Ramon Fernandez. The works of Hardy, Galsworthy, Stevenson, Browning, James and Meredith, in which excessive commentary by an omniscient narrator is eliminated, and reality is the function of a subjective point of view, were seen by French analysts as a proper model for the revitalization of the French novel.

The adoption of the point-of-view technique in France culminated in a novel which, in its method and intention, was the antithesis of the realist and naturalist novel. While the nineteenth-century realists and naturalists were content to report subjective states, the modern psychological novelist of the early twentieth century attempted to capture the atmosphere of the mind of the character. The poetic transfiguration of the novel was accompanied by a necessary dislocation of the narrative, and a shift

of emphasis from the study of society to the cult of the individual. The reader is placed within the consciousness of the character, and must both intellectually grasp the content of the work and intensely experience it. The elements of time and space are altered by the inclusion of huge masses of subjective material, and by the shifting point of view of the character or characters. In La Prisonnière, Proust writes of "la difficulté de présenter une image fixe aussi bien d'un caractère que des sociétés ou des passions. Car il ne change pas moins qu'elles et si on veut cliquer ce qu'il a de relativement immuable, on le voit présenter successivement des aspects différents (impliquant qu'il ne sait pas garder l'immobilité, mais bouge) à l'objectif déconcerté."²⁰ Reality is dependent on the "optic" of a particular character. In A la Recherche, the dominance of the Narrator's point of view effects descriptive technique, character portrayal, and the traditional concept of plot in the novel.

In contrast to the traditional inventory of landscape and characters, the Narrator's changing perspective determines the description of both the objective and subjective phenomena in A la Recherche. The mobility of the Narrator's point of view multiplies reality, "comme un accident de terrain, de colline ou château, qui apparaît tantôt à droite, tantôt à gauche, semble d'abord dominer une forêt, ensuite sortir d'une vallée, et révéler ainsi au voyageur des changements d'orientation et des différences d'altitude

dans la route qu'il suit."²¹ The novel is no longer a documentation of manners, but rather the minute documentation of the consciousness of one character engaged in an individual spiritual odyssey. The novel has turned from the impartial reporting of external phenomena to the subjective recording of internal phenomena. Adolphe and Dominique differ from Proust's concept of the psychological novel: in these works, a psychological state is described or remembered by the author, while Proust evokes and renders the consciousness of his character. The cult of the individual, an outgrowth of Bergsonian philosophy, symbolism, and the call for a "roman-poème", became an accepted part of the novelistic esthetic of early twentieth-century writers.

According to Leon Edel, the introspective novel "represents historically a return to romanticism, but . . . not a return to the romantic hero."²² Proust's romanticism manifests itself in the value he places on wonder, dream and memory, the preoccupation with childhood, the faith he places in art as the means of escaping the destructive influence of time, the elevation of the artist to the role of hero; and technically in his reliance upon metaphor, symbolism, inversion, and involuted sentences. In Pastiches et mélanges, Proust writes that "Seuls, en effet, les romantiques savent lire les ouvrages classiques, parce qu'ils les lisent comme ils ont été écrits, romantiquement. . . ."²³ Proust's belief in the primacy of art had already been expressed in the doctrines of Musset, Vigny, Flaubert and

Baudelaire. The noble, romantic hero moved from the contemplation of his heart to the contemplation of his mind. The hero of the modern introspective novel remains more profoundly subjective than his romantic counterpart.

The imposition of a logically structured plot is no longer reconcilable with the inward turning of the twentieth-century novel. Valéry Larbaud's Barfnabooth and Jules Romains' Le Bourg régénéré were early attempts to transform both the subject and the technique of the novel. In a letter to Jacques-Emile Blanche, Proust described the failure of recent literature:

les romans que nous aimons le mieux, parus depuis cinquante ans, nous ont habitués à l'idée qu'il n'était pas négligeable de mentionner à côté d'un état d'âme curieux ou d'une vérité importante, tel petit fait qui s'est trouvé sur notre chemin à ce moment-là et qui ne lui est ni curieux, ni important. Mais c'est ce qui a rendu le roman artiste si facile à faire et lui a ôté toute valeur logique.²⁴

In the introspective novel, plot is a function of the point of view adopted by the author. Events no longer proceed in a linear fashion, but rather are structured by the subjective perception of the character.

Proust, like his contemporaries, considered the absence of mystery to be a major and necessary fault of the "realistic" doctrine. The large role accorded dream and fantasy in A la Recherche, the constant dialectic between reality and appearance, and the mobility of the Narrator's

optic all enhance the atmosphere of mystery accompanying the Narrator's spiritual quest.²⁵

In the introspective novel, the dramatic element is intensified by the subjective quality of the author's perception. Objectively, events have no inherent dramatic quality. When the story is told entirely from within the consciousness of a character, the thought processes of that character can be dramatically portrayed. The external gestures and attitudes that betray thought can raise the story to the level of drama. As Percy Lubbock writes in The Craft of Fiction, "Method upon method, the vision of a vision, the process of thinking and seeing exposed objectively to the view of the reader --- it is an ingenious art. . . ." ²⁶

In A la Recherche, the Narrator's intellectual adventure provides the dramatic intrigue. The evolution of thought becomes a novelistic event. The misjudgments and digressions are the outward manifestations of the complex process through which the esthetic finally determined in Le Temps retrouvé progresses:

Mais cette évolution d'une pensée, je n'ai pas voulu l'analyser abstraitement, mais la recréer, la faire vivre. Je suis donc forcé de peindre les erreurs, sans croire devoir dire que je les tiens pour des erreurs, tant pis pour moi si le lecteur croit que je les tiens pour la vérité.²⁷

The realm of novelistic events is broadened to include any force effecting the psychological reality of the character. Were the author to step back from the events and explain the character's thought, the dramatic tension would be diminished.

In A la Recherche, the character becomes the center of the novel, and not a function of the plot. Events are totally dependent on the Narrator's point of view. Proust's characters are never described, but are, rather, perceived. This method of character portrayal had already been introduced by Peictevin, in his 1888 novel, Paysages, and was an integral part of James's technique.²⁸ Proust expands the concept of character to include inanimate objects: the quality of the impression provoked has precedence over its source, for "Les choses ont autant de vie que les hommes, car c'est le raisonnement qui après assigne à tout phénomène visuel des causes extérieures, mais dans l'impression première que nous recevons cette cause n'est pas impliquée."²⁹ The instances of involuntary memory are provoked by sensory contacts with inanimate objects, and never derive from inter-personal contacts.

While rejecting certain aspects of Balzac's work (a certain vulgarity of style, the omniscient presence of the author), Proust admired Balzac's method of portraying characters. The element of surprise in the presentation of a character, the continuity achieved through the re-appearance of characters, and the literal transcription

of a character's language are all Balzacian techniques which Proust adapted to his own style. The changes, both physical and psychological, in Proust's characters, give the sensation of the passage of time: "J'espère qu'à la fin de mon livre, tel petit fait social entre les personnes qui, dans le premier volume, appartiennent à des mondes différents, indiquera que du temps a passé. . . ."30

Particular aspects of the character are presented as they impress the Narrator, with the portrait constantly being altered as more facts are learned. The physical and psychological description of the character is conveyed to the reader through his gestures, attitudes, dress, manner of speaking, vocabulary, way of walking, literary and artistic tastes. The emergence of a synthesized portrait of the character must coincide with the climax of the Narrator's spiritual odyssey.

Composition. Proust frequently referred to his art as classical, although he nowhere clearly defines his interpretation of that term. In a 1921 letter to Martin-Chauffier, Proust writes of the need to retain from the seventeenth century "sa réalité, le fond plein de vie, d'impressions senties et que l'apparente solennité ne doit jamais nous cacher," while avoiding "la formule dix-septième siècle."³¹ Certainly, his search for general truths, his essayist and didactic tendencies, and possibly his original plan for the novel place Proust within the

traditions of French literature.

In his "Réponse à une enquête des Annales", written in 1922, Proust refuses to categorize his novel as "analytic", but prefers the term "introspective". To characterize the work as an effort at self-analysis would deny the common application of the individual truths perceived in A la Recherche. Proust denied any analogy between his novel and the writing of autobiographies and diaries, which tend to be linearly organized soliloquies. Proust's scientific spirit always moves from individual truths towards the development of general laws. This constant progression from the subjective to the objective, from the particular to the general, is what Proust frequently tried to convey in his microscopic-telescopic dialectic. Proust realized that many who admired the truths discovered in A la Recherche attributed them to a microscopic examination, while he insisted on the telescopic vision which enabled him to explore new domains: "Là où je cherchais les grandes lois, on m'appelait fouilleur de détails."³²

The work of art, conceived in solitude, gains its larger, social value from the readers' recognition of the artist's original vision. The validity of an artistic subject is dependent on the author's faithfulness to the quality of his experience. As Proust writes in Pastiches et mélanges, no individual is so unique that his subjective discoveries do not have a broader relevance:

Quand on travaille pour plaire aux autres on peut ne pas réussir, mais les choses qu'on a faites pour se contenter soi-même ont toujours chance d'intéresser quelqu'un. Il est impossible qu'il n'existe pas de gens qui prennent quelque plaisir à ce qui m'en a tant donné. Car personne n'est original et fort heureusement pour la sympathie et la compréhension qui sont de si grands plaisirs dans la vie, c'est dans une trame universelle que nos individualités sont taillées.³³

All the instances of involuntary memory which appear in the published volumes of A la Recherche figured in the original plan of the novel. The skeleton of a logical progression survives in the chronologically-ordered occurrences of involuntary memory. In 1914, Proust wrote to André Gide:

Il semble bien pourtant que "Temps perdu" signifie "passé", et puisque j'annonçais le troisième volume sous le titre: Le Temps retrouvé, c'était bien dire que j'allais vers quelque chose, que tout cela n'était pas une vraie évocation de dilettante. Fallait-il donc dès le début annoncer ce que je ne découvrirais qu'à la fin? Je ne le crois pas . . .³⁴

Although the final version of the novel certainly exceeds the limits of the original plan, the Narrator's spiritual odyssey can be seen as linear.³⁵

Proust's assertion that the resurgent leitmotifs gave an original unity to A la Recherche was very much in keeping with the spirit of his times. La Revue Wagnérienne and

La Revue Indépendante reflected the growing prestige of Wagner in pre-World War I France.³⁶ Proust himself used musical metaphors to describe his art:

Quand ce sera prêt à paraître, ce sera comme les morceaux dont on ne sait pas qu'ils sont des leitmotifs quand on les a entendus isolément en concert dans une ouverture sans compter tout ce qui se situera après coup (ainsi la Dame en rose était Odette, etc.)³⁷

Despite suggestions to censor the sadistic scene between Mlle Vinteuil and her friend after the publication of Du côté de chez Swann, Proust insisted that it was not a gratuitous element in the novel, and that it served as an important bridge to later character development.³⁸ The reappearance of the phrase from the Vinteuil sonata serves as one of the most successful examples of Proust's use of leitmotif. The exhaustive planning of the novel has been documented by detailed studies of the "cahiers".³⁹ To Benjamin Crémieux, who characterized the structure of the novel as circular, Proust explained that the last page of the book had been written before the first, and that all the volumes, when completed, would form a whole.⁴⁰

The unifying force in A la Recherche is memory, told from the optic of the Narrator. In "A Propos du 'style' de Flaubert", Proust explains his method:

J'avais simplement pour passer d'un plan à un autre, usé non d'un fait, mais de ce que j'avais trouvé plus

pur, plus précieux comme jointure,
un phénomène de mémoire.⁴¹

New constructions, although equally as rigid as established and accepted ones, demand flexibility and effort from the reader:

Que les novateurs dignes de devenir un jour classiques, obéissent à une sévère discipline intérieure, et soient des constructeurs avant tout, on ne peut en douter. Mais justement parce que leur architecture est nouvelle, il arrive qu'on reste longtemps sans la discerner.⁴²

Despite Proust's persistent defense of A la Recherche, critics continued either to deny the presence of any structure whatsoever, or struggled to impose a traditionally classical structure on the work. It took many years before Proust's concept of unity of time, place, and action, rooted in the psychological novel's affective, point-of-view approach, was admitted as an equally valid basis of composition.

A Critical Esthetic

Proust frequently wrote of the need for flexibility and effort when confronting original art. For Proust, style and metaphor are the most reliable signs of originality. The original writer:

est généralement assez fatigant à lire, et difficile à comprendre parce qu'il unit les choses par des rapports nouveaux. On suit bien jusqu'à la première moitié de la phrase, mais là

on retombe. Et on sent que c'est seulement que le nouvel écrivain est plus agile que nous. Or il advient des écrivains originaux comme des peintres originaux . . . pour y réussir, le peintre original, l'écrivain original procèdent à la façon des oculistes. Le traitement --- par leur peinture, leur littérature --- n'est pas toujours agréable.⁴³

If, as Proust states elsewhere, the artist is not a creator but rather a translator, then the beauty of his style, the unity of his metaphors, are the substance of his vision.

Although he condemned Sainte-Beuve for his failure to evaluate his contemporaries correctly, Proust himself remained outside the major literary movements of his time. Jacques Rivière, editor of the Nouvelle Revue Française, steadfastly refused to review or publish those authors, still undistinguished, for whom Proust campaigned. Proust's letters to Montesquiou, although influenced by social motives, are embarrassingly extreme in their praise of Montesquiou's rather limited talent. Although he himself misjudged his contemporaries, Proust's antagonism towards Sainte-Beuve's critical method resulted in specific pronouncements on the function of criticism and the approach to be adopted when confronting original art.

The basis of Proust's critical esthetic is his concept of the role of reading. The author does not furnish answers, but incites the reader to search for knowledge which can only be acquired subjectively:

La lecture est au seuil de la vie spirituelle; elle peut nous y introduire; elle ne la constitue pas.⁴⁴

For Proust, reading is not a passive activity, but demands a "servitude volontaire" on the part of the reader. Reading requires an effort analogous to the technique Proust used in the creation of his "pastiches". The reader must immerse himself in and totally assimilate the thought of an artist; then recede from that artist and seek his own truths. This is, in a less mature form, the experience of the young Marcel who, as in child's play, reads himself into the roles of characters in novels. The author is a catalyst, providing the incentive for the perception of individual knowledge:

comprendre étant, en quelque sorte, comme on l'a dit, égaler, comprendre une pensée profonde, c'est avoir soi-même, au moment où on la comprend, une pensée profonde.⁴⁵

The relationship between the artist and the reader is one of interdependence. The discerning reader is provoked into transcending conventional reality by the artist's original vision, for "L'ouvrage de l'écrivain n'est qu'une espèce d'instrument optique qu'il offre au lecteur afin de lui permettre de discerner ce que, sans ce livre, il n'eut peut-être pas vu en soi-même."⁴⁶ The artist's original perceptions are not a substitute for the reader's individual truths, but provide a means for the discovery of these

truths. Proust returns to the telescopic-microscopic dialectic: the artist offers the reader the magnifying glass necessary to "soulever pour nous le voile de laideur et d'insignificace qui nous laisse incurieux devant l'univers. . . ."47

The critic's fundamental attitude towards a new work must, according to Proust, be one of flexibility and humility. He must, as Proust had done with his "pastiche", and as he had advised in the 1904 "Journées de lecture", allow himself to become totally overwhelmed by the author.

Proust's advocacy of thematic criticism can be seen as a response to the popularity of Wagner in early twentieth-century France. As applied to literature, Wagnerism, represented by La Revue Wagnérienne and La Revue Indépendante, became a call for an infusion of myth and mysticism in the novel. Wagner's musical technique was translated into literary terms of circular composition, opposites and parallels, and recurrent themes.

The critic, according to Proust, must study an author's complete works in order to determine the artist's original qualities. As he wrote in Pastiches et mélanges, "Ne lire qu'un livre d'un auteur, c'est n'avoir avec cet auteur qu'une rencontre."⁴⁸ It is only through exposure to a variety of works by the same author that the critic can distinguish "les traits communs dont l'assemblage compose la physionomie morale de l'artiste."⁴⁹

A reader confused by the structure of an original work should, according to Proust, look for the recurrent themes which provide its internal unity and are evidence of the continuity of the author's vision. The essential, original elements characteristic of an author's vision can only be perceived after reading all the author's works. The recognition of traits which, through their repetition, can be described as intrinsic to the modern author's work, help the reader approach the new work. The first task of the critic, in Proust's critical esthetic, is the determination of these "traits essentiels du génie d'un écrivain. . . ."50

Once the critic has determined the essential qualities shared by the various works of a contemporary artist, he must explore the particular realities created by that artist. The critic must be able to decipher the new analogies presented, and seek the inspirational source, the esthetic principles upon which they are based:

Il essayerait de reconstituer ce que pouvait être la singulière vie spirituelle d'un écrivain hanté de réalités si spéciales, son inspiration étant la mesure dans laquelle il avait la vision de ces réalités, son talent la mesure dans laquelle il pouvait les recréer dans son oeuvre, sa moralité enfin, l'instinct qui les lui faisant considérer sous un aspect d'éternité . . . le poussait à sacrifier au besoin de les apercevoir et à la nécessité de les reproduire pour en assurer une vision durable et claire, tous ses plaisirs, tous ses devoirs, et jusqu'à sa propre vie, laquelle n'avait raison d'être

que comme étant la seule manière
possible d'entrer en contact avec
ces réalités. . . . 51

Thus, the critic's search for the source of artistic inspiration should be directed towards the reconstruction of the spiritual, rather than the social realities of the author's life.

Proust accuses Sainte-Beuve of equating literature with conversation by refusing to go beyond superficial, external evidence. By allowing social and political considerations to influence his literary judgments, Sainte-Beuve failed to recognize the merits of Flaubert, Stendhal, Balzac and Baudelaire. Proust's condemnation of biographical criticism is motivated by self-interest to the extent that he accurately anticipated popular reaction to the publication of both his correspondence and the memoirs of his acquaintances. However, the contrast he established between internal and social reality is consistent with his concept of the artist as translator. The truth of the work is internal. The authenticity of the artist's experience is verified by the reader's recognition of the existence of new realities. Throughout the final volumes of A la Recherche, Proust stresses the polarity that exists between the social and spiritual life of the artist. The judgment of art by social criteria violates the primacy that Proust, at the end of his spiritual odyssey, places on art.

The critical method Proust advocates as early as Pastiches et mélanges foreshadows the reception accorded A la Recherche. Proust asks for an impressionistic criticism, uninhibited by intellectual constraints. The reader confronted with a modern work must, according to Proust's critical esthetic, be guided by repetitions as the key to its internal unity. He then must proceed to respond to the signs offered by the book, decipher the new analogies, and seek their esthetic source.

Proust's emphasis on thematic criticism anticipates the formal objections to his work. While Jaloux and Pierre-Quint praised the union of poetry and the novel, most traditional critics, like Lasserre, Souday and Massis, condemned the work as obscure and lacking classical structure. Crémieux' perception of a circular construction coincides with the contemporary vogue of Wagnerism, and was not readily accepted by most readers.

The efforts to place Proust within an historical tradition turned inevitably towards comparisons with Montaigne and Saint-Simon. While A la Recherche does contain elements of an essayist tradition, the unique integration of poetry and essay which Proust's novel represents passed unnoticed.

Those who praised the lyricism of A la Recherche seemed at a loss to account for its originality. While many critics condemned the long, complex, detail-laden

Proustian sentence, no effort was made to situate the technique historically or to discern what were Proust's stylistic innovations. Much critical censorship was directed at Proust's excessive use of inversion, a technique widely employed by Chateaubriand, Balzac, Hugo, Flaubert and the Goncourts. Proustian syntax is original in both the effects it achieves (suspense, emergence, evocation and parody), and in the effort to follow the process of creative thought.⁵²

The deliberate and repeated transposition of sensations in Proustian imagery led to charges of obscurity and preciousness. This technique determines, in large part, the richness, variety and density of the Proustian metaphor. The most positive stylistic critics spoke rather superficially of the "poetic atmosphere" of A la Recherche, but never accounted for Proust's specific use of synaesthesia as an evocative and unifying force. While the subject matter of Proust's novel did not become a major factor in critical censorship until the 1930's, the most immediate critical reaction in the 1920's focused on a condemnation of those qualities which have proven the most lasting: poetry and style.

Notes

- ¹ Michel Raimond, La Crise du roman, (Paris: José Corti, 1966), p. 244.
- ² Raimond, p. 26.
- ³ Raimond, p. 34.
- ⁴ Raimond, p. 199.
- ⁵ Raimond, p. 205.
- ⁶ Raimond, p. 208.
- ⁷ Gaëton Picon, Panorama nouvelle de la littérature française, (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 33.
- ⁸ "Contre l'obscurité," V, 391.
- ⁹ III, 880.
- ¹⁰ J. Theodore Johnson Jr., "Literary Impressionism in France: A Survey of Criticism," L'Esprit Créateur, 13, No. 4 (Winter 1973), 295.
- ¹¹ III, 883.
- ¹² "Un roman à lire: Le Nez de Cléopâtre, par Henri de Saussine," V, 358.
- ¹³ III, 889.
- ¹⁴ "A Propos du 'style' de Flaubert," V, 586.
- ¹⁵ Robert Dreyfus, Souvenirs sur Marcel Proust, (Paris: Grasset, 1926), p. 292.

¹⁶ The expression "monologue intérieur" was used for the first time in France by Bourget in Cosmopolis. Raimond, p. 257, n. 1.

¹⁷ Raimond, p. 100.

¹⁸ Raimond, p. 305.

¹⁹ Raimond, p. 300.

²⁰ III, 327.

²¹ III, 970.

²² Leon Edel, The Modern Psychological Novel, (N.Y.: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), pp. 140-41.

²³ PM, V, 190, n. 1.

²⁴ Correspondance générale, (Paris: Plon, 1932), III, pp. 112-13.

²⁵ The renewal of interest in Poe, Baudelaire and Rimbaud, the call for a poetic novel, Huysmans' use of dream and fantasy, and the 1900 publication of the Arabian Nights indicate the general orientation of the twentieth-century novel.

²⁶ Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction, (N.Y.: The Viking Press, 1957), p. 186.

²⁷ Marcel Proust et Jacques Rivière, Correspondance, 1914-1922, ed. Philip Kolb, (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 28.

²⁸ Raimond, p. 209.

²⁹ Marcel Proust, Chroniques, (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), pp. 196-98.

³⁰ Dreyfus, p. 287.

³¹ Correspondance générale, III, 308.

- 32 III, 1041.
- 33 PM, V, 71-2.
- 34 Lettres à André Gide, (Neuchatel et Paris: Ides et Calendes, 1949), p. 41.
- 35 See Germaine Brée, Du temps perdu au temps retrouvé, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1969).
- 36 Raimond, p. 68.
- 37 Lucien Daudet, Autour de soixante lettres de Marcel Proust, (Paris: Gallimard, 1929), p. 76.
- 38 François Mauriac, Du côté de chez Proust, (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1947), pp. 21-22.
- 39 For further discussion, see Maurice Bardèche, Marcel Proust romancier, 2 vols., (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1971).
- 40 Mauriac, chap. V.
- 41 "A propos du 'style' de Flaubert," V, 598-99.
- 42 "Classicisme et romantisme," V, 617.
- 43 Preface, Tendres Stocks, by Paul Morand, V, 615.
- 44 PM, V, 178.
- 45 PM, V, 86n.
- 46 III, 911.
- 47 PM, V, 177.
- 48 PM, V, 75n.
- 49 PM, V, 75n.
- 50 PM, V, 76n.
- 51 PM, V, 76n.
- 52 For further discussion, see Stephen Ullmann, "Word-

Order as a Device of Style," in Style in the French Novel,
(Cambridge: The University Press, 1957), pp. 146-88.

Chapter 2

THE FORMAL APPROACH

In a 1905 survey conducted by Le Cardonnell and Vellay for the Mercure de France, novelists and critics characterized the present state of the novel as anecdotal, ideological and imitatively realistic. André Gide complained of the lack of original fictional characters, and the general tone of the response was one of disillusion with the genre.¹ The response to André Billy's 1910 survey, published as L'Evolution actuelle du roman, brought further evidence of the confused and contradictory attitude of writers towards the novel.² In 1913, Jacques Rivière's "Le Roman d'aventure" prophesied the evolution of a new novel, distinguishable from traditional literature by its length, imagination and psychology. Barrès, Bourget and Loti were repeating tired themes in their later works. The point-of-view technique of the English novel was familiar to French readers of the early twentieth century. The poetic novel had already made an appearance in the form of Alain-Fournier's 1913 Le Grand Meaulnes.

The dissatisfaction in 1914 France with the existing form of the novel would seem to favor the introduction of the innovative A la Recherche. However, the general

critical reaction to the style and composition of Proust's novel ranged from confusion to outright condemnation. With the exception of Edmond Jaloux, Léon Pierre-Quint and Benjamin Crémieux, most critics characterized Proust's style as cluttered, imprecise and obscure. Proust's insistence on the complex, rigid structure of his book was generally dismissed. The attempts made to explain Proust's original technique cover a broad range of reactions: Jaloux, Pierre-Quint, Crémieux and Souday dealt with the syntax and poetry of the novel; Thibaudet tried to place Proust within French tradition; Abraham, Feuillerat and Vigneron applied various critical methods to an analysis of the novel's composition.

Style

While the most positive evaluations of A la Recherche in the 1920's were based on the novelist as psychologist and observer of society, Edmond Jaloux was one of the first, along with Crémieux and Pierre-Quint, to praise Proustian style. Jaloux' defense of Proust's style assumes its importance more from the context of its time than the content of his analysis. Although his observations may appear superficial to the modern reader, his persistent support of Proust's stylistic technique in the Nouvelles Littéraires provided significant arguments to reject the condemnations which greeted the publication of Du côté de chez Swann. Jaloux confidently and

correctly predicted the eventual ascendancy of the poetic over the psychological and moral dimensions of A la Recherche.

As a critic, Jaloux approaches a literary work with the aim of determining the intentions of the author, and then judging the value of the techniques used by the author to express his personality. Jaloux' admiration for Du Bos' criticism is based on the latter's ability to become totally immersed in literature. Jaloux' effort to allow literature to overwhelm and absorb the critic agrees with one of the fundamental precepts of Proust's critical esthetic.

From his analysis of Les Plaisirs et les jours, Jaloux concludes that Proust is perfectly capable of writing succinct and concise French, and thus refutes the charges of obscurity, resulting from limited ability, leveled against the novelist. If Proust's style has evolved from the short, precise sentences of Les Plaisirs et les jours to the long, circuitous syntax of A la Recherche, then this change, according to Jaloux, must be attributed to a change in purpose, rather than a degeneration of ability. The earlier work shows a "perfection extérieure à laquelle il [Proust] a renoncé volontairement ensuite pour acquérir un autre genre de perfections."³ While Proust succeeded in describing emotion in Les Plaisirs et les jours with classical clarity, the search for truth which permeates all of A la Recherche necessitated a change in style.

The poetic atmosphere of the later work is directly dependent on the depth of exploration into emotion and consciousness, and A la Recherche is bathed in "ce hale de secret et d'étrangeté qui enveloppe les oeuvres volontairement ou involontairement indéscises."⁴ Proust's use of metaphor, of association, his seascape descriptions, his portrayal of Albertine and Andrée bring a poetic dimension to the novel.

Jaloux perceives the vehement formal censorship of Proust's novel as a reaction against the innovations wrought by Proust's search for truth. The willful neglect of traditional laws of composition and the lack of formal concision violate time-honored stylistic platitudes. The length of Proust's novel, according to Jaloux, alienates him from French tradition, and his "communien lyrique avec l'univers" brings him closer to the spirit of English and German novelists.⁵ However, the influence of classical interpreters can be seen in Jaloux' claim for a Proust who is classical in spirit. This spirit manifests itself in the alternately ironic and tragic world view evidenced by the marriage of Gilberte to Robert de Saint-Loup, and that of M. de Cambremer to Jupien's niece. Jaloux touches on Proust's comic talent, which he finds to be reminiscent of seventeenth-century comedy, born of the observation of people and customs.

After the completion of A la Recherche, critical vocabulary was effected by the publication of the trans-

lation of excerpts from E. M. Forster's Aspects of the Novel in La Revue de Genève. From the suggestion that the structural beauty of a novel may depend on its rhythmic, rather than its spatial scheme, came the widespread application of musical terms to literary criticism.⁶

It is in the poetry of A la Recherche that Jaloux finds the basis to counter claims of lack of composition in the novel. While Jaloux will not concur with Crémieux' assertion of a composition "en rosace", or with Proust's own cathedral analogy for the structure of his work, the critic discerns an over-all unity, enhanced by Wagnerian leitmotifs, rather than a traditional sense of composition in the novel. While the conclusion of A la Recherche echoes the initial episode of the madeleine, Jaloux feels that Proust's constant additions to and transformations of the original text have negated the novelist's claim to a well-composed book. For Jaloux, A la Recherche, which combines the novel of manners, autobiography and memoirs, gains unity from its poetic elements and its strictly personal form.

While Henri Massis condemned Proust's "enlaçante magie" as a diabolical technique designed to contaminate the reader with the author's own corruption, and this "culte du pathétique et du mystérieux"⁷ was seen by Paul Souday as a dangerous deviation from the classical tradition of clarity and lucidity, to Edmond Jaloux, Proust's powers

of enchantment give the novel a unity which, "comme un ciment fluide, lie et agglomère des richesses aussi diverses."⁸ Jaloux consistently correlated the role of fantasy, dreams and mystery in a novel with its poetry. In Essences, he writes that "La poésie est l'art par lequel l'individu s'identifie à l'univers. C'est en cela qu'elle est une opération magique."⁹

The generally positive tone of Jaloux' analysis of Proustian style, coupled with his access to the reading public of the Nouvelles Littéraires, countered the severe attacks launched by other critics. In his continued emphasis on the poetic dimension of A la Recherche, Jaloux transcended the limited interests of much of the 1920's and 1930's criticism. While his writings offer little in the way of in-depth analysis to the modern reader, his early, instinctive recognition of the innovative qualities of Proust's style distinguishes Jaloux' criticism from the general and widespread outcries directed against Proust's literary technique.

The positive thrust of Jaloux' stylistic criticism was strengthened by the publication, in 1925, of the first book-length study of A la Recherche, Léon Pierre-Quint's Marcel Proust, sa vie, son oeuvre. In the description of Proust's novel, Pierre-Quint's attempts to encompass all aspects of A la Recherche determine the inevitably general character of his study.

In the chapters devoted to Proust's style, while no intensive analysis of any particular aspect of the novelist's technique is offered, the critic's instinct seems invariably correct, and many of the stylistic qualities he describes and defends are among the most innovative (and frequently misunderstood) elements of Proustian style.

Much in the spirit of his time, Pierre-Quint ties Proust to the seventeenth-century classicists by virtue of the general ideas implicit in A la Recherche. The influence of Bergsonian philosophy can be seen in Pierre-Quint's explanation of the need for a modern novelist to create a new language, one whose dynamism and complexity reflect the "immense travail d'approfondissement"¹⁰ necessary to elucidate the "parcelles subtiles de notre conscience."¹¹ In terms similar to those used by Jaloux, Pierre-Quint praises the poetic atmosphere of A la Recherche, the use of metaphor and the introduction of Wagnerian leitmotifs, and seconds Crémieux' description of the composition "en rosace" of Proust's novel.¹²

Pierre-Quint's is the first lengthy study of the importance of language in Proust's character portrayals. The Bergsonian and Freudian concept that vocabulary, mannerisms and gestures are more revelatory than the content of conversation places Proust among the modernists. Although Pierre-Quint's conclusion that "le comique

aboutit à mettre en évidence une vérité psychologique"¹³ was first suggested by Crémieux in his 1924 XX^e siècle, an interesting analysis of Proust's comic use of language, vanity, puns and transpositions is appended to the 1928 edition of Pierre-Quint's book. The critic's ideas on Proustian composition and style were both provocative, and, in many cases correct.

Throughout his career as literary critic for Le Temps, Paul Souday took every opportunity to remind readers and fellow critics alike of his place among the few critics who, in 1913, remarked upon the publication of Du côté de chez Swann. While Souday may have a chronological claim to primacy, the tone and content of his Proust criticism reflect an inability to recognize or understand originality, to modify past standards, and to adapt to a literature in the process of change.

Souday's articles on Proust's novel give the reader a sense of both the intensity of the early stylistic censorship and the immutability of the critics who penned these attacks. It Proust demanded flexibility on the part of the critic, Souday was certainly not the source of any critical understanding of his work.

Souday takes on the burden of defending the purity of the French language from contamination by authors lacking grammatical form, ignorant of the values of clarity to be derived from seventeenth-century prose, and will-

fully seeking an obscurity contrary to classical tradition. In his 1913 article, and frequently thereafter, Souday highlights grammatical errors, particularly instances of misuse of the subjunctive and failure to make proper agreement, in Proust's novel. In France, "a nation of grammarians",¹⁴ Souday's enumeration of Proust's grammatical faults was significant. The limits of Souday's attitude are perhaps best put in relief by a contrast with the evaluation of a non-Frenchman. In his 1928 "La Complexité dans l'appréhension du monde", Leo Spitzer describes the Proustian sentence as "la phrase latine et française, élargie et assouplie par l'onomatopée impressionniste."¹⁵ In his letters to Souday, Proust underscored the improbability that such glaring errors may have originated with the author.

The minute detailing which forms an integral part of Proust's literary technique is attributed by Souday to the nefarious influence of the English novel, where, contrary to the synthetic French tradition, "la sensation de la vie est produite par une sorte de cohabitation assidue avec les personnages."¹⁶ Proust's affinity with the English novel was a common theme among both supporters and detractors. In more positive terminology, Michel Raimond has compared Proust's desire to "embrasser la durée d'une vie et de manifester comment les êtres changent" with the novels of George Eliot.¹⁷

The "prestige de l'obscur" to which Proust is willing to sacrifice any semblance of clarity, represents a regression in the evolution of literature, and is the antithesis of classical tradition.¹⁸ Souday cites Saint-Loup's homosexual transformation as an example of Proust's "manie du mystère à tout prix."¹⁹ While other contemporaries noted this lack of transition, most were willing to attribute this weakness to the fact that Proust had not corrected the final version of Le Temps retrouvé.

Most of Souday's analyses of A la Recherche begin negatively. Although Souday does praise Proust's imaginative powers, his sensitivity, his art of character portrayal, the technical indictments and warnings of excessive length should have discouraged any reader from opening the novel. Souday finds Proust's long sentences clumsy and frequently incoherent. He considers Proust to be a true impressionist, "incapable de penser par lui-même."²⁰ in the tradition of the Goncourts. Proust's excessive subjectivism, his "scepticisme paresseux,"²¹ and his violation of the rules of grammatical order are all manifestations of what Souday calls an "esprit femmelin,"²² an intimation against which Proust quickly defended himself in a letter to the critic.²³

Souday's indictment of Proust's style is equalled by the critic's contempt for Proustian psychology. There is nothing in the psychology of A la Recherche which is

not either imitative or paradoxical. Proust's excessive reliance on intuition is little more than the reflection of a passing fashion, and his theory of multiple selves is pushed to the limits of the absurd. Charlus' masochistic adventures, according to the critic, could have been written by any author whose aim was to scandalize. The explorations of the worlds of Sodom and Gommorha are seen as useless, sterile ventures. In a letter of January 1, 1920, Proust answered Souday's charges of excessive subjectivity by asserting the novelist's right to oppose the critic's optimism and objectivity with his own pessimism and phenomenology.²⁴ However, Souday seems little inclined to grant rights that do not coincide with his own conceptions.

Souday's unyielding dogmatism, while representative of the attitude of a powerful group of writers towards new literature in France in the 1920's, does not stand the test of time. While censoring Proust in the name of a Latin tradition of clarity, concision and purity, Souday, in his failure to recognize what are today considered to be essentially classical qualities of Proustian prose, inevitably failed to discern the stylistic originality of that prose. While Thibaudet, at the other extreme, refused to apply any esthetic principles to literary criticism, Souday consistently applies standards which forbid innovation. Perhaps Proust himself best

describes Souday's incompatibility with modern literature, when he writes in a letter to the critic "vous ne vous prêtez pas à la transfiguration voulue par l'auteur, [. . .] vous mettez l'oeuvre d'art [. . .] sur le même plan que la vie commune."²⁵ Although Souday's intransigence disqualifies him as an evaluator of contemporary literature, his analyses of literature may serve as an index to the most frequent and widespread reactions to Proustian style by some of the most distinguished and widely-read critics of the 1920's.

History

In an attempt to understand Proust's originality, Albert Thibaudet's criticism is directed towards situating Proust within the tradition of French literature. The mixture of innate pluralistic tendencies, avid Bergsonism and diverse erudition forms the basis for the characteristically dialectic nature of Thibaudet's criticism. Thibaudet began what was to become a life-long collaboration at the Nouvelle Revue Française, where his "Réflexions" appeared, in March of 1912. He shared with the original founders a concern for contemporary literature, a sympathy for original talent, and a conviction that art and beauty transcended moral considerations. Superficially, Thibaudet's Bergsonism might invite comparisons with Du Bos, and his philosophical approach to literature

would seem to allow affinities with Fernandez. However, Thibaudet's ever-increasing historical passion for classifying authors according to spiritual groups, his obsessive consideration of both sides of an issue, the large numbers of authors about whom he wrote, and his refusal to judge literary works separate him from both Du Bos and Fernandez.

Thibaudet's concept of criticism stems from his interests in history, geography and philosophy. The combination of historical and geographical concerns allows the critic to see literature as a whole, to "repérer les groupes qui s'y distribuent et s'y équilibrent."²⁶ The historical critic, in studying the evolution, embellishment, decline and surpassing of an idea, establishes links between simultaneous works, analyzes conflicts, and makes use of Socratic dialog to further his understanding. This method is counterbalanced by geographical criticism, whose province is that of concomitant, successive ideas, and whose instrument is the establishment of parallels and affinities. Bergson, in "Le Philosophe et l'humaniste", sees Thibaudet's categorization of authors as serving a dual purpose: by relating original works to former ones, the critic facilitates the public's access to a new book; secondly, in classifying authors, that which is unique and innovative, by its very exclusion, becomes more easily recognizable. Thibaudet's own critical writings, however,

demonstrate the shortcomings of this approach.

In his article in the Hommage à Albert Thibaudet, Bergson acknowledges an affinity of temperament and disposition between Thibaudet and himself. Thibaudet's concern with general ideas leads him to a philosophical criticism which combines elements of Socratic skepticism, Platonic archetypal ideas and Bergsonian theory.

In "La Critique des philosophes", June, 1927, Thibaudet states that the emergence of Bergsonian philosophy necessitates a new, philosophical orientation in literary criticism. Bergsonism and "Ionism" provide a proper critical atmosphere, in that "leur pluralisme, ce sentiment des individus différents et adverses par lesquels la nature tourne, emporte, annule notre principe pratique de contradiction."²⁷ The lack of esthetic principles in Thibaudet's criticism results from his conviction that standards derived from former works cannot be applied to modern literature. The proposed philosophical criticism, which is directed towards an international exchange of ideas, would stand in contrast to the Neo-Thomist logic of critics like Charles Maurras and Pierre Lasserre. Maurras responded to Thibaudet by characterizing him as "bilatéral", and condemning his pervasive dualism.²⁸

Thibaudet's Bergsonism is evident in both his critical method and his highly imaged, metaphorical style. His first step in approaching a literary work is an effort

to establish an intuitive sympathy between author and critic, for, as Thibaudet writes in Le Bergsonisme, "les créations du génie nous placent à l'intérieur de l'élan vital lui-même."²⁹ Thibaudet was so capable of empathy that Fernandez rather extravagantly credits this assimilationist prowess with making Thibaudet "la conscience des lettres françaises contemporaines."³⁰

The constant dialectic which runs throughout Thibaudet's criticism is equally Bergsonian. This tendency to consider every question from a double viewpoint surfaces as early as 1911, when Thibaudet, in opposing the Doric and the Ionic, concludes that "nous ne comprendrons pas pleinement le dorique, si nous ne l'envisageons à son tour dans son opposition et son harmonie avec l'ionique."³¹ Thibaudet's hesitancy to judge literature stems from both an historical sense of relativity and a Bergsonian concept of succession. In literature, this theory manifests itself in the unpredictable nature of both characters and works. In a similar process to the one involved in Bergsonian philosophy, impressions are organized, in Thibaudet's criticism, and emerge as thought.

When Thibaudet applies his critical method to Proust, the results are unsatisfying. The critic's enthusiasm for Proust's novel is communicated to the reader, but his quest for general ideas and his mania for classifying authors interfere with any analysis of the book as a separate

entity. In Histoire de la littérature française de 1789 à nos jours, Thibaudet includes Proust with the generation of 1914 in order to accommodate the publication date of his novel. One can contrast Thibaudet's scale of thirty years separating generations with the method used by Henri Peyre in Généralisations littéraires. Where Thibaudet sees five generations between the years 1789 and 1914, Peyre distinguishes up to eleven. Thibaudet's broader time scheme tends to omit the more subtle undercurrents effecting the rise and decline of ideas. By including Proust in the generation of 1914, along with Alain-Fournier, Montherlant, Morand and others, Thibaudet ignores the bonds of common adolescence and shared experience which tie Proust to the preceding generation.

Although they form the basis for most of the future developments in A la Recherche, Thibaudet relegates the episodes of Combray and Balbec to the role of digressions, and declares Proust's book to be the first wholly Parisian novel: He proceeds from this rather shaky premise to attribute the evolution of the urban novel to the emergence of an urban, Jewish class of writers, whose education at the lycée Condorcet stressed philosophy over rhetoric. Thus, Proust's novel is tied to an historical phenomenon.

Much in the spirit of Michelet and Taine, Thibaudet's tendency to consider authors and their works as products of environment, race and climate emerges in Maurras

and continues to develop throughout his writings.³²

Thibaudet's obsession with Proust's Jewish origins surfaces in his 1923 "Marcel Proust et la tradition française", in an attempt to link Proust with Montaigne and Bergson, and thus establish the introduction into French literature of a "doublet franco-sémitique."³³

For the critic, these authors' shared maternal Judaism is the key to the dynamics of their thought. This idea, which Thibaudet rather cautiously broaches in 1923, is repeated in the 1936 Histoire:

Proust est demi-juif, comme Montaigne et Bergson, avec lesquels il partage cette intuition du mouvant et de la durée, qui paraît correspondre à une greffe du plant juif sur le tronc d'occident.³⁴

This argument, while providing a good example of Thibaudet's fondness for natural metaphors, fails to identify what might be particularly semitic in this phenomenon.

When Thibaudet abandons racial influence as a means of explaining style, the parallels he suggests between authors have greater interest. The critic draws analogies between Montaigne's and Proust's intellectual lyricism, their psychological cult of the individual, and the absence, in both their works, of any tangible events.³⁵ However, the rapports suggested are not further explored.

In linking Proust to Saint-Simon, Thibaudet once

again proposes a fertile field for investigation. While their shared "style [.] consubstantiel à la chose pensante et vivante,"³⁶ by its uniqueness, sets Proust and Saint-Simon apart from French tradition, the similarities between the two authors allow Thibaudet to place Proust within a category. In the uncorrected Albertine disparue, the critic sees "l'influence active et précise"³⁷ of Saint-Simon. In this same volume, Thibaudet compares Proust's, Jules Romains' (Mort de quelqu'un), and Auguste Comte's treatment of the subjective existence of a loved one after death. While all three share the same subject, Proust's originality lies in his technique, for he "laisse en lui libre cours à une abondance de souvenirs et d'images sur lesquels il se refuse à exercer un contrôle et à consentir des sacrifices."³⁸ Once again, Proust, in his refusal to "écrire simple," is closest to Saint-Simon.³⁹

In his 1930 Physiologie de la critique, Thibaudet distinguishes three kinds of criticism: spontaneous, professional and creative. Thibaudet's literary criticism, with its essential pluralism, combines elements of all three criticisms described. Thibaudet opposed dogmatism in any form, whether it be the determinism of Taine, the evolutionism of Brunetière, the Neo-Thomism of Maurras and his followers, or the militancy of Souday.

Just as Thibaudet's criticism is characterized by his own pluralism, an analysis of his writings leaves the

reader in a state of equivocation. There are advantages and disadvantages to Thibaudet's approach. From a general point of view, the affinities established between modern, original authors and their more familiar ancestors affords a means of access to the new work. In Histoire de la littérature française de 1789 à nos jours, Thibaudet writes:

dès qu'avec Proust un certain sentiment de familiarité s'est établi, on a reconnu qu'on l'attendait, que le roman français faisait là une de ses remontes naturelles et nécessaires, et que, comme Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant ou Renard, Proust ne le laisserait pas tel qu'il l'avait trouvé.⁴⁰

However while Thibaudet does suggest provocative analogies between Proust and Montaigne, Saint-Simon, Valéry and Mallarmé, his interest in generalities and categorization inhibits him from a more profound and complex inquiry into their common traits. The critics concern with establishing parallels between different authors often results in an isolation of one aspect of the work, and a failure to communicate the essential nature of the work to the reader.

Thibaudet's sincere enthusiasm for all literature has a double consequence: the reader rejoices in Thibaudet's exuberance before the text, and in the conversational style of his critical dialog; however,

his natural plasticity often leads him to digress and the work being studied often serves as little more than a pretext for the expression of the critic's thoughts. While a good critic should be able to extract the good from the most mediocre work, Thibaudet often wrote indiscriminatingly and with equal fervor of the most original and the most banal books. Thibaudet's refusal to judge literature is an inherent part of both his historical and philosophical approach. Had he written less, one might be able to deduce a judgment implicit in the authors selected for study. However, the prolificness of his criticism forbids any such procedure, and Thibaudet himself, in Physiologie de la critique, condemns partial or judgmental writing as being "moins intelligent, moins vraiment et purement critique, que celui qui comprend le procès dans sa nécessité et sa pérennité, dans son mouvement de systole et de diastole, comme un rythme profond de notre littérature."⁴¹

While Thibaudet and Du Bos share a fundamental Bergsonism, their critical efforts follow opposite paths. Thibaudet considers his "Réflexions" to be more directed towards the work than the personality of the author, while Du Bos's Approximations seem to be "en perpétuelle approche vers les écrivains qu'il aime et dont il n'achève pas la poursuite," and end by revealing more about the critic than the author.⁴² Thibaudet's concept

of literary duration and relativity discourages the exclusion of any author from consideration. Du Bos only wrote on those authors with whom he felt an initial, instinctive sympathy, and as was the case with Proust, discontinued his criticism of these authors when he ceased to favor them. While Thibaudet's method of parallels and opposites may have encouraged wary readers to approach the Proustian novel, his criticism of Proust lacks the substance and depth to reveal its basic originality.

Composition

In his intriguing 1934 Comment Marcel Proust a composé son roman, Albert Feuillerat advances the thesis that Proust's method, style and intention in writing A la Recherche reflect two distinct time periods: the poetic, lyrical version of Proust's novel, written between 1905 and 1912; and the intellectual, analytic, demonstrative version, which was imposed upon the original text in the form of additions made from 1912-1922. To prove his theory of the dual composition of A la Recherche, Feuillerat first compares the Grasset proofs of A l'Ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs and Le Côté de Guermantes with the text of the published volume. Once the revisions have been distinguished from the primitive text, Feuillerat seeks to determine their common direction and quality. Based on the analysis of the supplementary

material appended to A l'Ombre and Le Côté de Guermantes, Feuillerat, in the second part of his study, applies his conclusions to an attempt to restore the original version of the third volume of A la Recherche.

Feuillerat's study presents an original and provocative method for explaining what had been seen as the inconsistencies of the composition of Proust's novel. Although the structure of A la Recherche had come under persistent attack, the work had always been considered as consistent in spirit and intention. Feuillerat is able to explain apparent confusions and contradictions through his theory of two distinct periods of composition, marked by opposite styles, methods and concerns.

The comparison of the published texts of A l'Ombre and Le Côté de Guermantes with the Grasset proofs yields interesting results. In this volume, Proust's additions, while not substantially altering the original structure of the work, indicate a change of intention. The revisions are similar in effect to the technique in Montaigne's Essais, and are largely provoked by association of ideas.

However, it is in the nature and style of the additions that Feuillerat finds evidence for the affirmation of his theory of separate composition. At the time of his study, the texts of Jean Santeuil and Contre Sainte-Beuve were unknown. A reading of these early works modifies, and in many cases, negates many of the

critic's conclusions. While the conclusions at which Feuillerat arrives may no longer be valid, the original scholarship on which Comment Marcel Proust a composé son roman is built retains its importance.

According to Feuillerat, the additions Proust made reflect the cynicism, disillusion and illness which accompanied his maturity. In the realm of character development, all the revisions are derogatory. The Duc de Guermantes evolves from a comic figure into a tragic one; Gilberte becomes less sympathetic in her augmented role; the Narrator's admiration for Bergotte is tempered with impatience; Mme de Marsantes, whose original portrait contains many of the traits with which Proust endowed his fictional mother and grandmother, is metamorphosized into a hypocritical, superficial character; Odette's vulgarity is accentuated; Françoise becomes a more negative character as she becomes more complex. While their discovery is of interest, Feuillerat's use of the derogatory nature of the additions in support of his theory of two dialectically opposed attitudes on the part of the author is arguable. The disdain and the sarcasm which characterize the revisions can be found in the social portraits of Jean Santeuil.

The symmetry and classicism (seen by Feuillerat in the parallels and dichotomies established between Du côté de chez Swann and Le Côté de Guermantes) of the

original version of A la Recherche has been "violemment et irrémédiablement disloqué" by the additions, and the introduction of Albertine, coupled with the expanded presence of Charlus, change the general significance of the work by allowing homosexuality to become its dominant theme.⁴³ Feuillerat attributes the more explicit and pervasive homosexuality of the later books to the pessimism and cynicism of Proust's 1912-1922 period. This assumption is skillfully refuted by Robert Vigneron, in his 1937 "Genèse de Swann", with material that was available at the time of Feuillerat's writing. Combining a study of history, biography and text, Vigneron traces Proust's interest in homosexuality as a literary theme to his 1893 "Avant la nuit", which appeared in La Revue Blanche. The 1907 Eulenburg affair, which was reported in Le Figaro, represents for Vigneron the starting point for the development of Du côté de chez Swann. The scandal caused by the accusation of homosexual practices among the military, the aristocracy, and the politicians of Berlin was followed closely in Western Europe. Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld's testimony at the trials supported many of the ideas Proust had advanced in "Avant la nuit", namely the absence of a hierarchy in non-procreative love; the freedom from moral stigma in homosexuality; and the possible link between homosexuality and nervous disorder.⁴⁴

The Berlin trials had a tangible effect on French

literature: in December, 1907, R my de Gourmont, influenced by the theories of Havelock Ellis, published "L'Amour   l'envers", and in a January, 1908 article, Gourmont sought to distinguish between pederasty and homosexuality. Two scientific studies, Hirschfeld's The Third Sex and Fischer and de Weindel's Homosexuality in Germany, a documentary and anecdotal study, were translated into French in the early part of 1908. In May, 1908, Proust wrote to Robert Dreyfus of his intention to write a novella on the theme of homosexuality. The years 1909 and 1910 saw the publication of Daudet's Le Chemin mort and Binet-Valmer's Lucien.⁴⁵

In Vigneron's chronology, the Eulenbourg affair gave Proust, who had already gathered a mass of unorganized material for his novel, but had no firm sense of its form, "ce sujet d'une signification infinie, dont il r ve depuis des ann es."⁴⁶ Vigneron's analysis of the elaboration of the homosexual theme in A la Recherche does not fit Feuillerat's time scheme, and essentially invalidates Feuillerat's premise that the expansion of the homosexual theme can be solely attributed to a change in attitude. Vigneron has shown that Proust's intention to use this theme was constant: only the medium was lacking.

Vigneron's analysis accounts for the genesis of the homosexual theme in A la Recherche. Further support for this theory can be found in a reading of "La Race maudite",

which forms part of the text of Contre Sainte-Beuve, and was written in 1909.⁴⁷ Feuillerat finds that, from a structural point of view, the massive additions, starting with Sodome et Gomorrhe, distort Proust's original plan and destroy any possibility of symmetry. The stories of Charlus and Albertine have become "deux énormes excroissances,"⁴⁸ and the critic is unable to discern "la moindre intention constructrice dans la distribution des additions."⁴⁹ In Marcel Proust, romancier, Maurice Bardèche considers La Prisonnière and Albertine disparue as an overture to Le Temps retrouvé. Bardèche feels that La Prisonnière and Albertine disparue were intended by Proust to be the formalization of the theories exposed in the previous volumes, and to function as demonstrative episodes, as does Un Amour de Swann. Although no mention of Albertine can be found prior to 1913, Bardèche has found a 1909 reference to a young girl, "ruinée, entretenue sans jouir d'elle [.] par impuissance d'aimer."⁵⁰ The 1910 manuscripts reveal the existence of a girl named "Maria", who will later become a "prisonnière."⁵¹

The most frequent additions to the original text are, according to Feuillerat, those offering analyses of passions and emotions, and leading to generalizations. The critic considers the analytic thrust of the numerous additions as "la plus indiscutable preuve que Proust, quand il concevait de pareilles additions, avait complète-

ment changé de méthode littéraire ."⁵² The poetic, dreamlike atmosphere of the primitive version is destroyed by the abstract logic of the additions. The change in method necessitates a change in style, and the circuitous, metaphorical style of the first version, "chargé de résonances poétiques,"⁵³ has now lost "tout velouté, tout caractère musical."⁵⁴ The taste for psychological analysis, reflected in the additions which complicate love with suffering, jealousy and anguish, the generalizations concerning man, passions, customs, are all revelatory functions of intelligence rather than instinct. The imposition of intelligence, described in a necessarily dry, logical style, leads to contradictions and confusions in the reading of the text. In the revised version, the Narrator is no longer a spectator, recording surprise and sensation, but a psychological and sociological analyst, a classifier, for whom "l'analyse est devenue critique."⁵⁵

Feuillerat was not mistaken in characterizing the nature of the additions, but rather in divorcing their quality from any earlier conception of the novel. The seconding of instinct by intelligence was already evident in the Jean Santeuil text. The Amour de Swann episode, whose function and place in the novel long confused critics, can properly be considered an indication of Proust's didactic and general intentions. The original third part of Volume I of A la Recherche, which was

eliminated from the first publication because of its length, already contained analytic material concerning the role of jealousy and forgetting in Marcel's affair with Gilberte. The anguish and futility that result from love and friendship also surface in Jean Santeuil. Michel Raimond, in La Crise du roman, notes that the alternation between instinct and intellect is introduced in this first volume, and the presence of Un Amour de Swann is an early indication of "une ambiguité qui devait se développer considérablement dans la suite d'une conscience et l'étude d'un cas."⁵⁶ Bardèche attributes this apparent contrast in style to Proust's method of writing. All the instances of involuntary memory are described in the early notebooks. Proust's constant use of the technique of "surimpression", first noted by Benjamin Crémieux, accounts for the interjection of analysis in the midst of intuitive, impressionistic passages. While Feuillerat sees the inconsistencies in Proust's work as a necessary outgrowth of Proust's innate changeability, the method of montage which Bardèche describes as characteristic of Proust's technique may account for the juxtaposition of the poetic and the abstract. Thus, Feuillerat's conclusion that the poetic passages of the published version are only "des touches vives sur le fond grisâtre d'une pensée abstraite, souvent obtruse," is due more to the consistent application of a particular method rather than to a later intrusion.⁵⁷

For Vigneron, Feuillerat's theory of a drastic change in method and style would indicate "non seulement une évolution mais une révolution de la doctrine esthétique."⁵⁸ Before the publication of Le Temps retrouvé, Ernst Robert Curtius noted the totality of "l'interpénétration du mundus sensibilis et du mundus intelligibilis" in Proust's novel.⁵⁹ The tension that Feuillerat correctly perceives can perhaps best be attributed to the varying, but coexisting concerns of an essayist and a poet, rather than to a radical change of purpose.⁶⁰

The comparison between Proust's A la Recherche and Balzac's Comédie humaine was an early theme of Proust criticism. For Feuillerat, the 1912-1922 period of revision is also distinguishable by the greater affinity with Balzacian techniques and concerns. In his 1929 Proust: Recherches sur la création intellectuelle, Pierre Abraham statistically correlated the growth of Balzac's influence on Proust with the increased frequency of Balzacian expressions and events in A la Recherche. Abraham attempts to establish a link between Balzac and the social aspects of Proust's novel. Thus, according to the critic, the curve of Balzacian influence reaches its peak in Le Côté de Guermantes and Sodome et Gomorhe. In as much as Abraham's statistics have been questioned, his conclusion that there exists a calculable growth and decline of Balzacian influence on A la Recherche

can not be substantiated.⁶¹

Feuillerat cites the additions of the soirée at the Princesse de Guermantes, Charlus' duel, the Baron's affection for Morel, the social commentary and the use of such formulae as "On dira peut-être" and "Disons pour finir," as evidence of a Balzacian trend which surfaces only in the 1912-1922 revisions. The debt to Balzac inherent in any novel of manners written after the Comédie humaine would seem indisputable. The interest of such an analogy lies rather in its depth and purpose. More important, however, would be a contrast of the purpose of the description of social events in A la Recherche and La Comédie humaine. While a Balzacian character's outward climb and descent through the hierarchy of society provides a material description of that character, Proust's social situations are designed to reveal purely psychological discoveries. The events are of secondary importance. Feuillerat, like Abraham, is correct in suggesting an analogy between Proust and Balzac, but neither critic succeeds in proving the existence of anything more than a superficial relationship.

Feuillerat is mistaken in his dating of Proust's interest in Balzac, which is already evident in the unpublished Contre Sainte-Beuve. A note concerning a pièce to be entitled "Le Balzac de M. Guermantes", which was appended to a critical study of that author, had been

found in Cahier I of Proust's drafts for Contre Sainte-Beuve.⁶²

Feuillerat's instinct is correct in noting the more traditional tone of the later volumes, but his hypothesis forces him to attribute this change to the domination of instinct by intelligence and reason, a phenomenon indicative of Proust's second period of work. While the amount of psychological analysis does increase with the progress of the novel, the change seems a natural accompaniment to the gradual maturing of the protagonist.

The publication of Feuillerat's book provoked a great deal of controversy and discussion. Despite the fact that his theory that A la Recherche is marked by two distinct methods and styles, owing to a radical change in the author's intentions, was not sustained, much of Feuillerat's work represents an important contribution to Proust scholarship. The critic's theory of dual composition and his attempt to restore the final volume of Le Temps retrouvé to its original form is yet another phenomenon indicative of the confusion caused by the revolution Proust had brought to the form of the novel. Feuillerat's temporal explanation of the dialectic between perception and intellect fails to account for the ever-present ambiguity between reality and appearance in A la Recherche. In order to substantiate his claim for the overwhelmingly analytic character of the later revision,

Feuillerat omits consideration of more poetic, lyrical additions made during this second period.⁶³ The contradictions in his novel were largely intentional, and in a February, 1914 letter to Jacques Rivière, Proust explains that "Ce n'est qu'à la fin [.] que ma pensée se dévoilera. Celle que j'exprime à la fin du premier volume, dans cette parenthèse sur le Bois de Boulogne [.], est le contraire de ma conclusion. Elle est une étape, d'apparence subjective et dilettante, vers la plus objective et croyante des conclusions."⁶⁴

While the final version of A la Recherche, with its additions and revisions, certainly exceeds Proust's original plan, it would be difficult to agree with Feuillerat that the contradictions in the published text are the product of a Proust "atteint de troubles de mémoire," no longer capable of perceiving the "désordre qu'il créait par ses innombrables additions."⁶⁵ A more reasonable explanation, but one that negates Feuillerat's time scheme, would be the fact that Proust was not able to correct the final proofs of the last volume. The metaphorical style, whose absence from the 1912-1922 additions Feuillerat attributes to a new taste for analysis, was always considered by Proust as a fundamental tool of analysis. The discontinuity of A la Recherche is certainly due more to the author's concept of time than to the encroachment of age, pessimism and cynicism. While

Feuillerat's theory is a provocative and original attempt to explain the structure of Proust's novel, and he does inadvertently focus attention on the poetry of the novel, a knowledge of the Jean Santeuil and Contre Sainte-Beuve manuscripts invalidates the critic's conclusions.

What most clearly emerges from a study of the formally-oriented criticism of A la Recherche in the 1920's and 1930's is a sense of confusion when confronting an original work. Those, like Jaloux, Pierre-Quint, and Crémieux, who were able to recognize the poetry in Proust's novel, remained general in their analyses. Thibaudet's attempt to situate Proust within French tradition may have made the author more accessible to readers, but failed to establish more than superficial, although provocative analogies, as does Abraham's effort to link Proust with Montaigne, Saint-Simon and Balzac. While Feuillerat's theory of dual composition has been largely discredited by the subsequent publication of Jean Santeuil and Contre Sainte-Beuve, his hypothesis is further evidence of the persistent doubts surrounding the structure of A la Recherche. Vigneron, in his reliance on biographical, historical and textual evidence, brings new insight to the study of the genesis of Proust's novel, and to an understanding of the author's intentions. It is ironic to note that the obscurity, length and confusion

of Proust's novel have been transformed with time to represent clarity, richness, harmony and poetry to the modern reader. The passage of time has accorded precedence to the elements of his novel which were most misunderstood by his contemporaries: poetry and style.

Notes

- ¹ Marcel Raimond, La Crise du roman, (Paris: José Corti, 1966), p. 91, n. 29.
- ² Raimond, p. 95.
- ³ Edmond Jaloux, "Les Plaisirs et les jours," Oct. 4, 1924, in Avec Marcel Proust, (Paris: Kra, 1953), p. 65.
- ⁴ Jaloux, "Albertine disparue," Jan. 16, 1926, p. 82.
- ⁵ Jaloux, Preface (from an article dated Nov. 21, 1931), p. 50.
- ⁶ Raimond, p. 144.
- ⁷ Paul Souday, "Rilke et Jaloux," Le Temps, Aug. 11, 1927.
- ⁸ Jaloux, Preface, p. 50.
- ⁹ Edmond Jaloux, Essences, (Paris: Plon, 1952), p. 119.
- ¹⁰ Léon Pierre-Quint, Marcel Proust, sa vie, son oeuvre, (Paris: Kra, 1925), p. 125.
- ¹¹ Pierre-Quint, p. 132.
- ¹² In Du temps perdu au temps retrouvé, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1969), Germaine Brée shows a progressive, rather than a circular structure in A la Recherche.
- ¹³ Pierre-Quint, p. 292.
- ¹⁴ Henri Peyre, Failures of Criticism, (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967), p. 126.

¹⁵ Leo Spitzer, "Le Style de Marcel Proust," in Etudes de style, trans. Eliane Kaufholz, Alain Coulon, Michel Foucault, (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), p. 410.

¹⁶ Paul Souday, "Du côté de chez Swann," Dec. 10, 1913, in Marcel Proust, (Paris: Kra, 1927), p. 11.

¹⁷ Raimond, p. 441.

¹⁸ Souday, "Le Côté de Guermantes II et Sodome et Gomorrhe I," May 12, 1921, in Marcel Proust, p. 45.

¹⁹ Paul Souday, "De Loti à Proust, par Louis de Robert, Mes Modèles, par Jacques-Emile Blanche, Au Bal avec Marcel Proust, par la Princesse Bibesco, Quelques lettres et vers à Mesdames Laure Heyman et Louisa de Mornand, Deux correspondances de Marcel Proust, un catalogue, par Georges Andrieux," in Le Temps, Jan. 10, 1929.

²⁰ Souday, "Albertine disparue," in Marcel Proust, p. 84.

²¹ Paul Souday, "A la Recherche du temps perdu, t. VIII, Le Temps retrouvé. Chroniques. Hommage à Marcel Proust," in Le Temps, Nov. 17, 1927.

²² Ibid.

²³ Marcel Proust, "To Paul Souday," Nov., 1920, Correspondance générale, III, (Paris: Plon, 1932), 86.

²⁴ Proust, "To Paul Souday," p. 75.

²⁵ Proust, "To Paul Souday," Nov. 15, 1920, p. 90.

²⁶ Albert Thibaudet, Paul Valéry, p. 1, as quoted in Henri Rambaud, "Vues sur Albert Thibaudet," L'Esprit Créateur, 14, No. 2 (Summer 1974), 166.

- 27 Albert Thibaudet, Réflexions sur la critique, (Paris: Gallimard, 1939), pp. 190-91.
- 28 Marcel Devaud, Albert Thibaudet, critique de la poésie et des poètes, (Fribourg, Suisse: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1967), p. 126.
- 29 Albert Thibaudet, Le Bergsonisme, (Paris: NRF, 1923), II, 57.
- 30 Ramon Fernandez, "La Critique d'Albert Thibaudet," in Hommage à Albert Thibaudet, Nouvelle Revue Française, July, 1936, p. 48.
- 31 Albert Thibaudet, Les Heures de l'Acropole, (Paris: NRF, 1913), p. 175.
- 32 John C. Davies, L'Oeuvre critique d'Albert Thibaudet, (Genève: Droz, 1955), p. 59.
- 33 Albert Thibaudet, Réflexions sur la littérature, (Paris: Gallimard, 1939), p. 190.
- 34 Albert Thibaudet, Histoire de la littérature française de 1789 à nos jours, (Paris: Librairie Stock, 1936), p. 536.
- 35 Thibaudet comments on Montaigne's: "Je ne peins pas l'être, mais le passage," in "Le Quadricentenaire d'un philosophe," Revue de Paris, Feb. 15, 1933, p. 765, as quoted in Davies, p. 165.
- 36 Thibaudet, Réflexions sur la littérature, p. 188.
- 37 Thibaudet, "Albertine disparue," Europe Nouvelle, a9, Feb. 13, 1926, p. 214.
- 38 Ibid., p. 213.

- 39 Thibaudet, Réflexions sur la littérature, p. 187.
- 40 Thibaudet, Histoire, p. 535.
- 41 Albert Thibaudet, Physiologie de la critique, (Paris: NRF, 1930), p. 153.
- 42 Thibaudet, Histoire, p. 527.
- 43 Albert Feuillerat, Comment Marcel Proust a composé son roman, Yale Romanic Studies, VII, (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1934), p. 225.
- 44 Robert Vigneron, "Genèse de Swann," Revue d'histoire et de la philosophie et d'histoire générale de la civilisation, (Lille: Jan. 15, 1937), p. 70.
- 45 Vigneron, pp. 71-76.
- 46 Vigneron, p. 76.
- 47 Maurice Bardèche, Marcel Proust romancier, (Paris: les Sept Couleurs, 1971), I, 162.
- 48 Feuillerat, p. 256.
- 49 Feuillerat, p. 255.
- 50 Bardèche, I, 170, from Carnet I, fol 3 v°.
- 51 Bardèche, II, 31.
- 52 Feuillerat, p. 122.
- 53 Feuillerat, p. 130.
- 54 Feuillerat, p. 131.
- 55 Feuillerat, p. 128.
- 56 Raimond, p. 281.
- 57 Feuillerat, p. 262.
- 58 Vigneron, p. 94, n. 1.

- ⁵⁹ Ernst Robert Curtius, Marcel Proust, trans. Armand Pierhal, (Paris: NRF, 1928), p. 79.
- ⁶⁰ Raimond, p. 333.
- ⁶¹ Jacques-Yves Tadié, Lectures de Proust, (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1971), p. 75.
- ⁶² Bardèche, I, 214.
- ⁶³ Tadié, in Lectures de Proust, p. 214, offers the following additions as examples of omissions by Feuillerat: the scene in which the dining room at Balbec is compared to an aquarium; the description of the dinners at Rivebelle; the "demoiselles du téléphone."
- ⁶⁴ Marcel Proust et Jacques Rivière, Correspondance, 1914-1922, ed. Philip Kolb, (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 28.
- ⁶⁵ Feuillerat, p. 262.

Chapter 3

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

Proust's novel, largely ignored from 1914-1920, was the subject of intense analysis and controversy amidst the nostalgia, pessimism and skepticism following the War. The changing focus and technique of the novel, reflecting the growth of psychological speculation that had begun in France with Taine, became emphatic in the critical approach to literature in the 1920's and 1930's. The link between Proust and modernism became an essential part of psychologically-oriented literary criticism in France after the 1922 translation of Freud's psychoanalytic theories.

An increasing awareness of and access to psychological theory effected both the subject matter and the form of the novel at the turn of the century. Hippolyte Taine's 1870 De l'intelligence familiarized French readers with the English theory of association. Théodule Ribot followed his 1870 Psychologie anglaise contemporaine with Les Maladies de la mémoire (1881), Les Maladies de la volonté (1883), and Les Maladies de la personnalité (1885). The Revue philosophique de France et de l'étranger, founded by Ribot in 1876, was a forum for discussion of contem-

porary theories of experimental and pathological psychology. In 1877, Eduard von Hartmann's Philosophie de l'inconscient was translated into French. The impact of the scientific concept of multiple personality can be seen in a corresponding complexity, dislocation and dissection of character in the late nineteenth-century novel. Bourget's 1889 Le Disciple is a demonstration of his knowledge of the theories of Ribet, Hartmann, and Taine. Mirbeau's L'Abbé Jules, Hermant's Coeurs à part, Prévost's La Confession d'un amant, Renard's Poil de carotte and L'Ecornifleur, and Rod's La Sacrifiée reflect the increasingly psychological orientation of the novel.¹

The 1920's

Although much was written on the psychological dimension of A la Recherche, the studies of Jacques Rivière, Charles Du Bos and Benjamin Crémieux may well represent the most original and perceptive analyses of this aspect of Preust's novel during the 1920's. These three critics, all contributors to the Neouvelle Revue Française, reflect to some degree the literary climate of post-war France in both their approach to Preust and the conclusions they draw. Their importance to a study of the critical history of A la Recherche lies in the quality of their appraisals, their prestige within the literary community, and their impact upon the reading public.

Jacques Rivière's analysis of the psychological

aspect of Proust's work is perhaps the most acute to have been offered in the early 1920's. The search for truth is the constant in the vacillation between dogma and experience, between objectivity and subjectivity that characterizes Rivière's literary experience. Rivière's taste can be traced through the successive enthusiasms for philosophical idealism and for symbolist poetry, for Barrès' cult of self, Claudel's religious orthodoxy, Gide's theory of "disponibilité", and finally, to Proust's novel, considered in its psychological, "positivistic" and classical dimensions. The seeming contradictions between the traditional and modern attitudes represented by Rivière's various and fluctuating attachments, which the critic himself called his "effroyable plasticité",² are reconciled in an ideology of absolute acquiescence, be it to a religious ideal or to desire, shared by Claudel, Barrès and Gide.

Rivière's pre-war criticism, treating such diverse phenomena as Stravinski's "Sacre du Printemps" and Cézanne's painting, is marked by an intensely subjective reaction to the work of art. While Rivière, in his post-war Proust criticism, approaches art more objectively, his basic flexibility before an original work, his ability to be overwhelmed by art, and his willingness to allow intuition and instinct to function freely were joined with a greater emphasis on intellectual analysis that enriched his later writings.

The exaltation of life, which characterizes Rivière's pre-war criticism, receives its fullest treatment in the 1913 "Le Roman d'aventure". This essay takes its place among the speculations and prescriptions in the early twentieth-century debate on the need to revitalize the novel, and serves as an index of Rivière's personal tastes before his first contact with A la Recherche. In a 1924 interview with Frédéric Lefèvre, Rivière stated that "Le Roman d'aventure" " m'apparaît aujourd'hui comme l'annonce et presque la prophétie d'une oeuvre qui devait voir le jour vers la fin de cette même année: l'oeuvre de Proust, justement."³

The essay itself seems to be a personally transitional piece, in which Rivière renounces his former symbolist and idealist enthusiasms and calls for a future-oriented novel whose "adventurous" quality would be essentially psychological. "Le Roman d'aventure" is important to the study of Rivière's later Proust criticism in that its major themes foreshadow the particular approach adopted by the critic in his appraisal of A la Recherche. Symbolism is attacked for its limited vision, wherein emotion is the only valid subject of a work; its effusive composition, relying once more upon emotion for structural unity; its restrictive vocabulary, based on an emotive hierarchy of words; and its totally subjective approach, which renders the work of art too intricate a part of the author's

persona to achieve a broad communicative power. This last element of symbolism negates the essential role of literature: that of putting others in touch with truth. Symbolism, according to Rivière, had evolved into an act of consuming reality, rather than expanding it. Rivière rejects the twentieth-century later symbolists as artists who "ne connaissent que des plaisirs de gens fatigués. [.] Ce n'est pas sans raison que le symbolisme a été attaché à la philosophie idéaliste. Vraiment, pour cette génération, les choses avaient perdu leur réalité. Tout était devenu mental."⁴ The symbolist effort had changed direction: instead of embracing reality, it sought escape from reality. In his post-war studies of Proust, Rivière never devotes attention to the psychological novel's indebtedness to symbolism, nor to the particular symbolist techniques which are inherent to and enhance A la Recherche.⁵ Rivière's assessment of Proust's novel is exclusively psychological, without concern for the novel's poetry, its sense of wonder, the lyrical transfigurations of Odette and Gilberte.

The romantics' positive stress on individualism was countered in their works by the exclusive identification between the artist and his work, and by the glorying in submission to, rather than understanding and analysis of the passions described. The romantic work "n'a pas été amenée jusqu'au contact avec sa perfection, elle n'a pas

pris la peine de venir en recevoir la forme et l'agencement."⁶ Proust's preoccupation with childhood, his concentration on self, are treated by Rivière in their psychological dimension, without regard for their romantic lineage.

"Le Roman d'aventure" assumes its most positive aspect in the careful delineation of the new literature that Rivière feels must evolve. Rivière's strong rejection of symbolism (as illusion), romanticism (as incomplete), and impressionism (as complacent and superficial), led him to an overly enthusiastic prophecy of a return to classicism, which governs his later criticism of Proust. While the symbolists have tired of life, and the romantics have been content with imperfection, "L'oeuvre classique, c'est l'oeuvre en acte; c'est celle envers laquelle son auteur s'est complètement acquitté, celle dont chaque molécule a été lentement amenée à sa perfection."⁷

Rivière realized that, ultimately in France, all new works have to sustain the implicit comparison with the classical values of lucidity and insight into man's inner life. With Descartes and Dostoyevsky as his models, Rivière calls for a novel representing the convergence of analysis and imagination, truth and beauty. The novel will be indebted to classicism in its exactness and its detail of style, in its "pre-moral" attitude, and in its subject; its complexity and progressive development are modern and original.

The "adventure novel" is comparable to classical literature in that, while being self-sufficient at each stage of its development, it represents a work that is constantly in the act of creation, capable of expansion to accommodate both the growth of its characters and the flexibility of the most profound imagination. It will be a novel turned toward the future:

L'aventure, c'est la forme de l'oeuvre plutôt que sa matière, les sentiments aussi bien que les accidents matériels, y peuvent être soumis. Et puisqu'elle est le reflet de notre état de nouveauté au monde, elle doit comprendre, en même temps que notre attente et notre accueil de l'imprévu dans les choses, l'émerveillement que nous donnent les âmes. A côté du roman d'aventure proprement dit, il y a donc place pour un roman psychologique d'aventure.⁸

The new novel will be long, complex, and often contradictory. It will always reflect the search for general truths. In contrast to the romantic concept of character, the "adventure novel" will present a world of characters formed not from moral judgment, but from "scientific" observation. In the 1924 debate with Ramon Fernandez, Moralisme et littérature, Rivière maintained that the classical authors approached their work with a "pre-moral" attitude, while Rousseau and the romantics, through a pre-conceived morality, negated the truth of their works. In Rivière's "new novel", the characters will reflect various facets of the author, but will never be completely

identifiable with him. The term "adventure" applies equally to the unexpected external development of the characters, who assume different, often contradictory aspects as the novel progresses.

Rivière's later studies of A la Recherche reflect his early enthusiasm for the psychological novel, grounded in a search for general truths in literature. His unique receptivity towards new literary efforts is equally evident in his concept of the role of the critic. The critic must reinterpret tradition that has its basis in classical art, as Rivière wrote in his 1913 study of Poussin, where he states that beauty lies in "l'équilibre des choses, leur accord, leurs correspondances et ce noeud mystérieux de directions que tout regard attentif découvre en n'importe quelle portion de la nature."⁹

Rivière's post-war criticism is marked by a conscious effort to restrain the subjectivity of his earlier studies. In his capacity as editor of the Nouvelle Revue Française, Rivière published extracts from A la Recherche, asked Proust for critical articles, lectured on Proust and devoted most of his post-war criticism to a discussion of Proust's novel. The exultation of life which characterized Rivière's pre-war art, dance, music and literary studies is transformed in the post-war years to an exultation of understanding, and finds its creative equivalent in A la Recherche. The early concern for sincerity (De la sincérité

envers soi-même", 1911), has become a search for universal truths, and Rivière now considers sincerity to be an essentially moral attitude.¹⁰ In a letter to André Gide, Rivière writes "N'être pas chrétien, c'est trouver à cette vie une raison suffisante. Cette raison suffisante pour moi, c'est la connaissance de moi-même. . . ."¹¹ The source of Rivière's essays on Proust is an immediate and profound emotional response to the novel, grounded in a shared search for universal truths.

Rivière's critical method in his studies of Proust is an active reconciliation of the polarity between subjectivity and objectivity. Intellect, at first paralyzed by submission to the work, emerges to structure and analyze the affective reaction. The interplay of impression and intellect, essential to A la Recherche, coincides with Rivière's view of subjectivity and objectivity as legitimate responses to art.

For Rivière, psychology represents the only valid instrument in a modern search for truth. In a letter written to Proust on July 13, 1920, the critic declared: "Je veux travailler à une renaissance de la psychologie. Et fatalement vous en apparaîtrez non pas seulement comme le précurseur, mais comme le protagoniste essentiel. . . ."¹² The genesis of the modern novel, as of classical literature, lies in sensation. Introspection is the only valid starting point for objective creation. The externalization of

affective phenomena allows for objective analysis, and results in the novelist's transcendence of his material. Rivière exclusively views Proust's novel as psychological, linking A la Recherche to classicism and positivism.

The most penetrating of Rivière's studies of Proust are contained in the volume entitled Quelques progrès dans l'étude du coeur humain. This series of lectures, given in 1924, incorporates ideas Rivière had previously expressed in "Marcel Proust et la tradition classique", 1920, and "Marcel Proust et l'esprit positif", 1923, both published in the Nouvelle Revue Française.

Just as the revival of classicism called for by Rivière was not intended to be an imitation of seventeenth-century literature, his definition of positivism deviates from the strict, Comtian sense. For Rivière, a "positivistic" approach to emotions implies a detached, serene attitude toward the analysis of a pre-existing reality, and:

Toute l'originalité de Proust, et la source de toutes ses découvertes en psychologie, doivent être cherchées dans un formidable appétit scientifique que sa force même a fait dévier sur lui-même.¹³

By confronting affective phenomena with a scientific attitude, Proust reveals the existence of the unconscious as fact, and discovers the relative nature of love.

In a theme first broached in the 1920 "Marcel Proust et l'esprit classique" and expanded in the 1923 "Marcel

Proust et l'esprit positif", Rivière links Proust's skepticism to the classical tradition of Racine, and opposes Proust's concept of the deceptive activity of emotions to the psychological globalism practiced by the romantics. The critic sees Proust's constant probing of the emotions as an end to romantic surrender and a beginning of classical resurgence. However, the new classicism that Rivière predicts gains its originality from the scientific spirit adopted by Proust, and applied for the first time to the affective domain. Rivière declares Proust's technique to be "une révolution classique, . . . un retour offensif que fait l'esprit classique dégorgée par le Romantisme."¹⁴ It is in this respect that the critic links Proust with Freud, a theme more fully developed in the Geneva lectures, as pioneers in psychology.

What Rivière considers as perhaps Proust's greatest originality lies in his divergence from Freud. Where Freud conceives of the conscious and unconscious as dialectically opposed forces, Proust proposes a reciprocal, parallel action of these two systems. Very little of Freud's work had as yet been translated into French, and with the benefit of hindsight, Rivière's strict distinction between the verticality of Freud's concept and the horizontal nature of Proust's now seems rather specious.

Proust and Freud share an innovative contribution to the study of love: the illustration of the mutual depend-

ence of love and anguish, joy and suffering. Rivière's reservations about Proust's theory of love surface in "Une nouvelle orientation de la psychologie". The critic perceives the limitations of the Proustian theory: the denial of the role of physical and moral quality in the chosen individual; the elimination of the instinct for self-sacrifice inspired by "l'amour-passion"; and the absence of any possibility of human interaction, grounded in Proust's particular experience, and not universally applicable.¹⁵

The exclusion of morality from psychology allowed Rivière to perceive "moral effects" in A la Recherche from an intellectual "purging of passions" similar to that achieved by the great classical dramatists.¹⁶ However, in the October, 1924 "Lettre ouverte à Henri Massis sur les bons et les mauvais sentiments", Rivière acknowledges the disturbing effect of a lack of moral instinct in the Proustian characters:

On peut souffrir parfois, en lisant Proust, d'un certain manque de repères moraux, qui donne parfois l'impression du naufrage. Je suis encore d'avis qu'un tempérament complet et bien équilibré, en qui la vie circule normalement, tend instinctivement à classer les êtres autour de lui, et lui-même parmi eux, suivant certains critères définis, qui sont ceux de la morale naturelle.¹⁷

In the opening sections of his debate with Ramon Fernandez,

Rivière defends Proust as sharing with Racine "une psychologie positive des sentiments."¹⁸ Whereas the romantics rendered an ordinary character monstrous by imposing preconceived moral values, Proust succeeds in portraying the human qualities of a monster (Charlus). However, in the final "Synthèse" of the debate, the beginnings of a more qualified attitude may be seen in Rivière's concession that "moral instinct" is necessary to the psychological description of character.

While warning against George Meredith's tendency to step in and judge his characters, Rivière finds that the moral dynamics of conscience enrich the psychological life of Meredith's characters. Rivière was not unique among early twentieth-century French critics in his admiration for Meredith. While charges of immorality are no longer leveled against Proust, Meredith's novels now seem weighted down by casuistic moral judgments and are less admired than they were in the 1920's.

In its complexity, its introspection, its progressive structure, detail and exactness of expression, its search for universal truths, Proust's work represents the fulfillment of Rivière's 1913 "Le Roman d'aventure". Rivière died in 1925, before the publication of Albertine disparue and Le Temps retrouvé. His exclusively psychological approach, his concern for a classical revival, coupled with his hostility toward symbolism and romanticism,

explain the absence in his writing of any evaluation of the metaphysics, poetry, or study of manners in A la Recherche. What is still vital and engaging in his assessment of Proust is his enthusiasm, born of a genuine recognition of originality, and his lucid analysis of the psychological dimension of Proust's novel. Amidst critical reaction to A la Recherche dominated by charges of dilettantism and clouded nostalgia for childhood, Rivière was the first to perceive the analytic thrust of Proust's novel. He managed to both situate Proust within a classical tradition (and thus make the novel acceptable and accessible to many confused readers), and to perceive the essential modernism of A la Recherche (linking Proust to Freudian psychology). Rivière's own conflict between subjectivity and objectivity is reconciled in his Proust criticism, where intuition is seconded by analysis. In Marcel Proust, Jacques Rivière found a kindred spirit in the search for general truths empirically derived from the unrelenting study of the self; in Jacques Rivière, Marcel Proust found perhaps his most sympathetic and perceptive interpreter, or as Claudel described the critic, "the ideal reader."¹⁹

The exclusive concern for psychology which governs Rivière's criticism was complemented by Charles Du Bos's search for spiritual revival in literature. Similarly, Rivière's intellectual analysis of A la Recherche finds its subjective counterpart in Du Bos's reading of Proust.

Du Bos was the only other critic of equal stature to openly praise Proust's novel at this early date. He did not write prolifically on Proust: only his 1921 essay, "Marcel Proust", and his 1922 "Points de repère" will be discussed. Although Du Bos's Journal contains many references to Proust, it was not explicitly written for publication, and for the purposes of this study, will not be considered as a legitimate source of Proust criticism.

Du Bos's critical method is always the same: he approaches a new work with a passivity designed to allow the author's thought to invade the mind of the reader. His procedure is best described in his Journal, where he writes that "la personne ici est vraiment le lieu et rien que le lieu où passe, que traverse le courant spirituel."²⁰ The reader's humility before a new work corresponds to the critical attitude formulated by Proust.

The starting point for Du Bos's criticism is the vertical relationship between the active thought being studied and the passive reception of that thought by the critic. The reader's creativity is a subsequent reaction to his total immersion in the mental atmosphere created by the author. While recognizing that Du Bos's method leads to substitution and limits the interaction between author and critic, Georges Poulet credits Du Bos as a precursor of the modern critical technique of identification.²¹

Du Bos seeks to identify the "point de départ" of an author's thought. For the critic, the "point de départ" of the Proustian novel lies in the exultation which puts the Narrator in touch with a reality distinct from convention. The initial exultation is essentially illogical, contradictory, and ephemeral. The distinguishing mark of genius in Proust is that "seul de l'exultation il connaît le prix. . . ."22 It is Proust's "courage de l'esprit" which allows him to sustain contact with this second reality, and forges an intimate relationship between this reality and his "sentiment de la vie." The scrupulous examination of the results of exultation is proof of Proust's "moralité intellectuelle", and distinguishes him from other creators in Du Bos's hierarchy of authors.

Du Bos seems strongest in his defense and description of Proust's analytic technique, which was often attacked as a negative effort towards total dissociation. Proustian analysis, according to Du Bos, moves in two diametrically opposed directions: a Neo-Platonic prolonging of reality, and a dissection of convention. It is always a creative process:

. . . l'analyse ne se solde jamais en déficit; si elle résout en leurs éléments tous les composés qui lui demeurent suspects, elle nous restitue autant de corps intelligibles, à l'abri désormais de toute atteinte.²³

The metaphysical dimensions of Proustian analysis derive

from the constant effort to go beyond conventional reality, from Proust's "originalité [.] en profondeur."²⁴ Du Bos distinguishes two levels of Proustian metaphysics which correspond to the dual direction of analysis. While Rivière ignored the poetry of A la Recherche, Du Bos sees a dependent relationship between the lyricism of analysis and metaphysical progression. Proust's description of the Vinteuil sonata gains its spirituality from the closeness of the starting point for analysis to the original exultation. Of less spiritual impact are the social scenes, where esthetic imagination transforms society into spectacle. In "Points de repère", written for the Hommage à Marcel Proust published by the Nouvelle Revue Française, the critic characterizes Proust's scientific approach as "peut-être aujourd'hui la seule attitude possible pour l'artiste s'il veut rendre l'humanité contemporaine."²⁵

While other readers condemned Proust's accumulation of minute details, Du Bos strongly defends this technique as accurately reflecting the complexity of reality. Although many contemporaries could see nothing in A la Recherche but a conventional novel of childhood reminiscences, Du Bos was one of the first to recognize the originality of A la Recherche, and saw that "la convention n'a touché ni son [Proust's] esprit, ni son oeuvre, auxquels elle se berne à fournir une inépuisable matière."²⁶ It is by virtue of his "moralité intellectuelle", untouched

by standard morality, that Proust's novel escapes the inhibiting influence of convention.

The constant fluctuations between past and present are seen by Du Bos as variations which enrich the unifying theme of time, rather than unstructured digressions. Du Bos touches on the multiple levels of character portrayal and Proust's powers of observation in the final section of his 1922 essay. However, in his discussion of Le Côté de Guermantes, the critic voices doubts as to the validity of Proust's totally objective approach, which, by according equal interest to all subjects, leaves no room for moral distinctions. At the time of the writing of this essay, Du Bos feels that the lack of a hierarchy of values in Le Côté de Guermantes is compensated by the psychological depictions of such incidents as the stay at Doncières, the visit to Mme de Villeparisis, and the lunch with Saint-Loup and Rachel. He notes two instances of exultation in the Guermantes volume: the telephone conversation between the Narrator and the grandmother, and the Narrator's objective observation of the grandmother upon his return from Doncières.

Du Bos's evaluation of Proust is mostly laudatory. He is important to a history of critical reaction of Proust because of both his influence as a collaborator on the Nouvelle Revue Française and his positive assessment of Proust's style, treatment of time, and psychological

insight. He is the first French critic to see a metaphysics in A la Recherche, and to direct attention to the poetry in which it is grounded.

Du Bos tends to establish hierarchies of authors based on a standard of spirituality. His effort to capture the mental atmosphere of the text being studied often leads to metaphorical digressions. Du Bos, who only analyzed works to which he was sympathetic, wrote no further essays on Proust after the eulogy, "Points de repère." After his 1927 conversion to Roman Catholicism, Du Bos confided to his Journal that Proust lacked "l'effort intellectuel génial" necessary to grasp the unity of the consciousness he had so successfully dissected.²⁷ Through his Journal, one can trace the correspondence between his waning enthusiasm for Proust and his waxing orthodoxy.

Benjamin Crémieux is the only one of the critics discussed in this section whose writings extend beyond the publication of Le Temps retrouvé. His critical method, as revealed in the 1924 essay "Marcel Proust" in XX^e siècle, involves the reader in a search for the genesis of a work and an attempt to reconcile biographical factors with the author's choice of genre and theme. The critic then proceeds to a detailed analysis of the work, evaluating it in the context of the artist's former literary efforts, and judging the success with which stated intentions are realized.

Proust's imagination, memory, hypersensitivity, isolation, and freedom from practical concerns, according to Crémieux, determine both the genre and the themes which he pursued. Proust's imagination, heightened by his hypersensitivity, allows a constant communication between the conscious and the unconscious. His isolation from society favors this contact with the unconscious, and also accounts for the predominance of memory in A la Recherche. The earlier "Pastiches" and Les Plaisirs et les jours anticipate this tendency. Proust's art is grounded in his powers of memory and imagination, cultivated in solitude.

Like Rivière, Crémieux considers Proust's positivism to be the key to "le renouvellement psychologique et littéraire" represented by A la Recherche.²⁸ For Crémieux, Proustian analysis does not end in dissociation. The critic sees evidence of the concept of the existence of a unified self in Proust's descriptions of dream, sleep, forgetting, and instances of involuntary memory. Proust's search for knowledge leads to a temporary disintegration of personality; memory allows and fashions the recreation of self. Proustian analysis is seen as a creative process which does not diminish love by stripping it of its metaphysical attributes, but rather enhances it by the description of suffering and anguish, and results in a concept more human and vital.

Crémieux, like Rivière, ties Proust to both modernism and classicism in his study of the psychological dimension of A la Recherche. Like Freud, Proust is able to discern the deceptive role of emotions; like the classical authors, Proustian analysis leads to discovery of universal truths. Proust's skepticism towards affective phenomena also determines his method of character presentation. Departing from the tradition of Balzac and Stendhal, Proust's heroes are not explained by their actions, for Proust "se refuse à voir dans un acte la projection fidèle de la personnalité profonde d'un être."²⁹ As Crémieux notes in tracing the presentation of Odette and Albertine, character portrayal in A la Recherche, while dependent on the Narrator's perspective, is nevertheless a process of constant and continuous development.

While Rivière established a strict distinction between psychology and morality, and Du Bos saw morality in the intellectual effort to explore the initial exultation which forms the basis of art, Crémieux integrates morality with psychology, and finds that Proust, as psychologist, "en mettant au jour tous les ressorts de l'inconscient, en les empêchant de jouer par trahison, fait oeuvre de moraliste."³⁰ The exclusively psychological morality which Crémieux finds in A la Recherche is, according to the critic, determined by the novelist's leisured existence and freedom from utilitarian concerns. In 1926,

Crémieux' position has changed, and he accuses Proust, along with Pirandello, of contributing to the pessimism and instability of the post-war period. In a December, 1927 article, "Le Temps retrouvé," Crémieux once again returns to his earlier, positive assessment, and finds that Proust "nous montre la voie pour nous conquérir, pour reconstruire le monde, en nous affranchissant du temps."³¹ Crémieux' wavering attitude coincides with the delayed publication of the posthumous volumes, the negative effect of the publication of Proust's correspondence with Montesquiou, and the increasing moral censorship of A la Recherche.

Crémieux was the first critic to identify the importance of the role of reading to an understanding of Proustian esthetic. By considering the 1904 "Journées de lecture" as the key to the author's psychology, Crémieux deduces Proust's concept of art as interpreting, rather than imitating nature, and explains the demands made upon the reader by a style allied to the author's psychology.

While most of Crémieux' study is devoted to the psychological dimension of A la Recherche, his interests are broader than Rivière's and Du Bos's, and his essay includes an analysis of style and structure which foreshadows future formal appraisals. He sees Proust's talent as a critic reflected in the submission of impression to intellect, described as an "impressionnisme critique."

In this early essay, Crémieux discerns a structure, characterized as "en rosace", in *A la Recherche*, and notes the introduction, in the opening pages of the first volume, of every important character and theme in the novel.

Crémieux' analysis is, in its major points, very close to Jacques Rivière's. Both critics praise Proust's scientific approach to affective phenomena, see a creative counterpart to the dissection of personality, and consider *A la Recherche* to be an original vision of reality and a departure from romantic subjectivism. Both Crémieux and Rivière are enthusiastic for a revival of classicism, and both emphasize Proust's links with the classical tradition. Crémieux sees Proust's "surimpressionnisme" as culminating in a "véritable classicisme impressionniste,"³² and claims that Proust's style, founded on impression, imagination and memory, and intelligence, breaks with romantic tradition and inaugurates a new classicism of prose.³³ Both Crémieux and Rivière confirm the universality of Proust's psychological discoveries.

Crémieux' belief that the critic's function is to make literature accessible to readers and his synthetic approach to a new work correspond to the critical esthetic advanced by Proust. However, Proust certainly would have been hostile to the critic's attempt to consider the themes of his novel as determined by biographical factors.

Crémieux' essay, while affirming many of Rivière's

earlier conclusions, extends the psychological assessment of the novel to include an analysis of style and composition. While Crémieux' study is less strikingly perceptive than Rivière's, it is solid and comprehensive. His knowledge of Proust's own literary tastes and his deductions from the novelist's early texts helped to shape a future understanding of A la Recherche.

Both Du Bos and Crémieux acknowledged their debt to Rivière in the orientation of their criticism.³⁴ Du Bos's critical technique of recreating the mental atmosphere of the work, while resulting in fewer precise conclusions, helped to familiarize the public with the Proustian esthetic and psychology. The constant interplay between intuition and intellect in Rivière's analysis seconds Proust's own technique. By associating Proust with Freud, Rivière contributed to a modern reading of A la Recherche. His analysis of the psychological aspect of Proust's novel remains the most original and acute of the 1920's.

Jacques Rivière, Charles Du Bos and Benjamin Crémieux approached Proust's novel with flexibility and enthusiasm. Their analyses are free from the more restricted and specialized concerns which characterize the psychologically-oriented criticism of the 1930's, and the intuitive quality of their studies allows for a more personal and broader exploration of A la Recherche.

The 1930's

The psychological approach to A la Recherche taken by the critics of the 1930's is more technical than that assumed by previous readers. While Rivière, Du Bos and Crémieux focused the greater part of their attention on the psychological dimension of Proust's novel, their analyses were broad enough to include other aspects of the work. The legitimacy and accessibility of sociological and psychoanalytical studies bring a new element into the literary criticism of the 1930's. With Arnaud Dandieu and Charles Blondel, a very specialized stage of evaluation is reached.

While Dandieu and Blondel sought to apply theoretical knowledge to literature, Ernest Seillière and Robert Brasillach represent a separate, more conservative trend in 1930's criticism. Seillière's assessment of the psychological aspect of A la Recherche remains dogmatic, while Brasillach rather moralistically denies to Proust any psychological insight.

Arnaud Dandieu's 1930 book, Marcel Proust: sa révélation psychologique, is important as a psychologically-oriented study of A la Recherche, as a document attesting to the emergence and availability of psychoanalytic theory, and as an index to anti-realist trends which were to become more pronounced as the decade progressed.

Dandieu skillfully uses his knowledge of the works of Janet, Freud, Piaget, Minkowski, Lévy-Bruhl, Meyerson and Loisy to support his psychological analysis of the Proustian metaphor.

Dandieu is sympathetic to the dominant role of the affective in Proust, which abolishes the objective concept of cause and effect. The critic discredits the Cartesian theory of identity, and finds that Proust returns art to its original mystical value by substituting "à l'identité idéale l'analogie sentimentale."³⁵ Cause and effect assume an irrational quality in Proust, who, by opposing reality to rationalism, tends towards "la reconstruction d'une évidence extra rationnelle."³⁶

The structure of A la Recherche, according to Dandieu, rests on the nine instances of revelation. The key to these "privileged states" and Proust's psychology lies in the Proustian metaphor and the relationship established between sensation and memory.³⁷ Historically, Dandieu traces Proust's metaphorical technique to the romantic concept of affective time, to Ruskin's use of detail and analysis and his reliance on both the material and the spiritual, and to the role of music as a catalyst. All the revelations share common qualities: they are metaphorically described by the relationship between sensation and memory; they are preceded by a period of discouragement; and they are distinguished by their suddenness,

intensity, discontinuity, and sense of déjà vu.

The metaphor is the Proustian instrument of analogy, and its essence lies in the juxtaposition, in the affective, of a past and present sensation, with mystical participation between the two sensations. At this point in its development, the Proustian metaphor becomes "une véritable action sacrée," in the sense of Alfred Loisy's definition of sacrifice in L'Essai historique sur le sacrifice.³⁸

Here, Proust reverses the intellectual trends of the past two centuries by elevating the "action sacrée" to the level of belief. By consciously substituting emotion for intellect, Proust restores the romantic, mystico-artistic value to literature. Dandieu finds Proust's poetry of an affectively apprehended past to be of an equally romantic quality, derivative of the poetry of Baudelaire and Musset.

The "action sacrée" is the "culture méthodique de la révélation."³⁹ In basing his observations on affective reality, Proust inevitably displays characteristics of primitivism or "infantilism" in his metaphorical method. Dandieu, with the help of Piaget and Freud, sees Proust's "infantilism" as "le secret, à la fois de sa faiblesse et de son génie."⁴⁰ Proust presents two aspects of "infantilism": the failure to distinguish between past and present, subject and object, complemented by the belief in participation as a means of creating an affective

relationship between different phenomena. According to Dandieu, participation, "clef de toute opération magique [.] est aussi le germe de la métaphore proustienne."⁴¹ The principle of participation, effectively used in religious ceremonies, is practiced by Proust in a disinterested, artistic fashion. The resulting "privileged states", similar to the mystical "revival" in religious experience described by William James, display an "intensité affective" which "les assimile donc à de véritables extases métaphysiques."⁴²

Dandieu traces the development of the role of the fetish in Proustian revelations, establishing a dependent relationship between the material and affective spheres, and links the trauma which fixes the Proustian fetish to Stendhal's theory of cristallization. The fetish is then idealized, or, in Freudian terms, sublimated, to form a part of the poetry of the past. The critic perceptively analyzes the role of dreams in A la Recherche, which, because they have no relationship with the present, have limited revelatory powers.

Dandieu uses the anti-rationalist, affectively perceived realities discovered in A la Recherche to defend Proust against charges of destroying personality. Proust, on the contrary, while denying its intellectual base, gives personality a new foundation in the conflict between affective memory and the irrational:

. . . seule la révélation affective du passé, c'est-à-dire la métaphore action sacrée, donne naissance au sentiment de notre propre existence et nous fait espérer notre propre unité.⁴³

Although Dandieu strongly defends the artistic and psychological values of A la Recherche, he finds limited social value in the work. This is seen as a result of Proust's schizophrenic indifference and hostility towards society. This is the weakness to which Dandieu refers when he writes of Proust's "infantilism". The infantile atmosphere which "donne à l'ensemble du monument proustien son rythme et son originalité essentielle,"⁴⁴ and from which the psychology evolves, at the same time restricts the moral level of the work and leads Dandieu to the conclusion that "moralement son oeuvre reste incomplète."⁴⁵ The moral insufficiencies of A la Recherche also result from Proust's attempt, in Le Temps retrouvé, to internalize "l'action sacrée". Proust's final belief that "tout est dans l'esprit," and his consequent rejection of the fetish, according to Dandieu, lead to an estheticism deprived of moral value.⁴⁶

Dandieu was the first of the psychologically-oriented critics to recognize the romantic elements in Proust's work. Although Jacques Rivière had already established Proust's affinities with Freud, Dandieu's analysis benefits from the wider publication and credibility accorded

psychological studies towards the end of the 1920's. While the metaphysical qualities of Proust's revelations had been previously noted by Charles Du Bos, Dandieu more thoroughly documents this aspect of Proust's work. The weakest part of his book may well be the clinical evaluation of Proust's schizophrenia, which suffers from a rather forced attempt to explain literary achievement through biography.

While Dandieu analyzes the literary technique used by Proust to convey his psychological theories, Charles Blondel, in his 1932 La Psychographie de Marcel Proust, attempts to explain the mechanism by which Proust transforms individual truths into general laws. Blondel transfers his scientific knowledge to the literary domain in his appraisal of Proustian involuntary memory. His other writings are exclusively concerned with the science of psychology, and he draws a clear delineation between that science and "psychographie", which belongs to literature.

In the opening chapters of his book, Blondel adds little to the already existing scholarship of Dandieu and Rivière in describing the role, quality and circumstances of involuntary memory. He does distinguish two additional types of memory present in A la Recherche, which approach the quality of involuntary memory, but do not in themselves provoke "privileged states". "Mémoire du coeur", in which the affective quality of the past is retained and

conveyed in a group of incidents linked to one emotion, occurs in Proust's novel without being named. There also exist instances of an organic, muscular form of memory (e.g., the unlacing of the shoes which induces the full realization of the death of the grandmother; the adaptation to different beds), wherein physical movements gain evocative power from past affective relations.

Proustian involuntary memory is free from the pragmatic constraints of habitual memory, and "ne nous apporte pas seulement une première révélation de la réalité, il nous fournit aussi des indications essentielles sur la manière de l'atteindre autrement que par lui. . . ." ⁴⁷

Blondel finds Proust's belief in the identity of psychological introspection and art justified, for the "travail d'approfondissement" indicated by the occurrences of involuntary memory is "la condition même de la création artistique." ⁴⁸

Blondel distinguishes three categories of generalities in Proust's novel: empirical, affective, and subjective. Empirical and affective generalities are not an original Proustian concept. However, Blondel justifies the apparent solipsism at the base of Proust's system of universal psychological laws by elaborating the third form of generalization, whereby involuntary memory penetrates the intemporal and reveals the essence of things.

The essence uncovered through involuntary memory is

radically subjective and relative to each individual's past. However, the phenomenon of repetition, which manifests itself in heredity, environment, and imitation, indicates the seemingly contradictory possibility of generalizing individually-perceived reality. The sensations which provoke involuntary memory share a common emotion, and:

C'est donc cette émotion qui est générale, et, si elle apporte à Proust une impression de joie, de beauté, de vérité qui efface toutes les autres, c'est qu'elle se double du sentiment de cette essentielle généralité où dans l'émotion présente se ressaisissent l'émotion du passé et, avec elle, le passé même.⁴⁹

As early as 1904, in "Journées de lecture", Proust contended that the artist, by communicating his particular vision of reality, offers the reader the means to discover his own, heterogeneous reality. Involuntary memory reveals the quality of truth and prescribes the course of its discovery. The generalities drawn from the experience of involuntary memory have an intensely subjective quality, but are communicable:

Donc, il y a une généralité éminemment subjective, la plus vraie pour Proust, parce que ce qu'il y a de plus vrai à ses yeux est ce qu'il y a en nous de plus intime et de plus émouvant, mais en dépit de sa subjectivité, il est heureusement des détours qui permettent à l'artiste de rendre

cette généralité communicable.⁵⁰

Blondel finds Proust's concept of an unconscious "vivant et agissant, où se trouve ramassé tout ce que la vie psychique a de plus effectif et de plus efficace,"⁵¹ analogous to the theories advanced by Bergson and Freud. While acknowledging similarities between Bergson and Proust, Blondel strongly maintains the distinction between Bergson's philosophical approach and Proust's artistic spirit. Proust's novel shares Freud's preoccupation with the significance of the dream, the technique of association, the manifestations of the Oedipus complex, and the predetermined character of repetition. However, Proust's constant interweaving of memories would effectively nullify the Freudian practice of association, and Blondel, continuing his attack on the scientific limitations of Freud's methods, concludes that "la pièce la plus essentielle de la méthode psychoanalytique ne se trouve donc plus bonne à rien."⁵² It is not clear whether Blondel is censoring Freud the scientist or Freudianism as a social, intellectual phenomenon.

Blondel's work is interesting as an attempt to justify scientifically Proust's insistence on the universal nature of his discoveries. The book is overburdened by quotations, and suffers from Blondel's failure to integrate the psychological dimension of Proust's novel with its artistic value. Although Blondel asserts that his study is of Proust the novelist, not Proust the psychoanalyst, his

assessment remains limited, for "psychological truth is an artistic value only if it enhances coherence and complexity --- if, in short, it is art."⁵³

The treatment of Ernest Seillière as a psychological critic is determined only by his own characterization of his 1931 Marcel Proust. Although three of the seven chapters of his book are intended as studies of the psychological aspect of A la Recherche, Seillière betrays little feeling for either psychology in general or Proustian psychology in particular.

The critic rejects what he discerns as two Proustian esthetics: a mysticism of passion, wherein homosexuality is justified by Rousseauist and naturalist philosophy; and the vitalistic principle of involuntary memory, derived from the works of Oscar Wilde, German romanticism and Henri Bergson. Seillière condemns the amorality of Proust's novel, finds the revelations of involuntary memory lacking in metaphysical quality, and prefers the psychological portraits to the philosophical theorizing of A la Recherche.

While modern readers may sympathize with Seillière's rejection of Proust's philosophical forays, his analysis of the psychological aspect of A la Recherche remains superficial. Seillière seems to be untouched by the advances in and accessibility of psychological theory in the late 1920's and early 1930's. The chapter entitled "Les Eléments psychologiques généraux de l'oeuvre"

labels Proust a "psychologue expérimental, et conséquemment 'impérialiste'. . . ."54 This chapter contributes little to an understanding of the psychology of the novel, and is complemented by the succeeding chapter, "Psychologies individuelles". Here, Seillière's work is even more disappointing, as it promises studies of the social groups of A la Recherche, the Verdurins, Swann, Mme de Villeparisis, the Duchesse de Guermantes, and Robert Saint-Loup. In fact, the chapter consists of summaries of the activities of these characters, and detailed, tedious speculations as to their original models, many of whom Seillière claims to have known personally. The "esprit des Guermantes", and, more importantly to an understanding of the novel, Swann's intellectual temperament, are characterized by Seillière as, respectively, caricaturistic and insubstantial. Seillière's own moralism surfaces with the mention of Robert de Saint-Loup. The critic feels both deceived and offended by Saint-Loup's homosexuality, and cannot reconcile this final version of the character with his earlier, sympathetic facade.

The chapter devoted to the Baron de Charlus, whom Seillière considers the pivotal character in A la Recherche, and the "chef d'oeuvre psychologique de Proust," is marred by its largely descriptive nature and the constant attempts to draw parallels between Charlus and Robert de Montesquiou. Seillière points out Charlus' imperialist and beneficent

qualities, and recounts his fall from prominence in the aristocratic society of the turn of the century. He constantly judges Proust's depiction of Charlus by the criterion of the fictional character's faithfulness to aspects of Montesquiou's personality.

It is difficult to ascertain what audience might have profited from Seillière's book, which would seem to be addressed to those who had either not read A la Recherche and were in need of plot and character summaries, or those who had somehow remained immune to the proliferation of biographical memoirs and articles attempting to identify the living models of the Proustian characters. Seillière's appraisal of the psychological aspect of A la Recherche, while generally positive, suffers from a dogmatic approach to a proposed subject towards which he displays little inclination and which he basically fails to treat.

While Ernest Seillière fails to adequately explain what it is he likes about Proust's novel, Robert Brasillach fails to grasp the dynamic quality of Proust's psychology. Brasillach's literary reviews appeared in the Action Française, where he was greatly influenced by Charles Maurras, and in the Revue Universelle. His appraisal of Proust, based on four articles he published between 1931 and 1933, is contained in the section devoted to "Arts poétiques" of his book Portraits.

The "Quatre images de Marcel Proust" are based on the

1931 article, "A la recherche du bonheur perdu"; "La Parabole de l'arche", which appeared under the pseudonym Jean Servièrre in the October 22, 1931 issue of Action Française; the June 25, 1932 article "Art poétique de Marcel Proust" in the Revue Française; and "Elstir", August 15, 1933, in the Revue Universelle.⁵⁵

Brasillach's analysis of A la Recherche proceeds directly from his premise that Proust's search is not for time lost, but for happiness. This rather limited view colors Brasillach's reaction to the novel and his subsequent conclusions. The critic's basic assumption is that Proust's title reflects the deception that is inherent to the entire work. As he states in "La Parabole de l'arche":

Ce qui me semble le plus intéressant dans la parabole de l'arche, comme d'ailleurs dans toute l'oeuvre de Proust, c'est le mensonge.⁵⁶

Although the role of lies is important to the psychological analysis of A la Recherche, Brasillach takes the lie as basic to both Proust's conception of the novel and his final deliverance from time.

For Brasillach, Proust's search is built upon three elements: time, happiness, and the unconscious. The third element is largely ignored by the critic. Brasillach sees happiness as the only value essential to the recapture of lost Proustian time. In order to safeguard the happiness experienced in privileged moments, Proust must imprison

it in the past, and deprive it of reason through the invention of involuntary memory. Proust's concept of happiness is consequently stagnant and mummified:

. . . bien embaumé la momie peut évidemment durer l'éternité mais il faudra un miracle pour qu'elle puisse nous parler.⁵⁷

By enshrouding happiness in a past inaccessible to the will, Proust abandons himself to a fatalism "à peine corrigé par la foi au miracle."⁵⁸

Equally deceptive, according to Brasillach, is Proust's metaphor of the ark, which serves as the preface to Les Plaisirs et les jours. Brasillach seems to take this metaphor rather literally, and questions the advantages gained by this retreat from life. Brasillach cannot accept Proust's evaluation of the spiritual and artistic profits found in isolation from society, when this exile was imposed by illness, rather than free choice.

Brasillach also condemns Proust for comparing his search to the spiritual one conducted by Noah. The critic cannot detect any of the metaphysical qualities previously noted by Charles Du Bos and Arnaud Dandieu. Proust's memories are all rooted in sensual experience and his search is directed towards a world "uniquement terrestre et charnel."⁵⁹

The critic sees Proust's final faith in art as a necessary conclusion to the lies on which his search is

predicated. If Proust were sincere in his ark metaphor, the novel "devrait nous enseigner la vie intérieure et la résignation aux destins sur lesquels on ne peut rien. Mais on n'en tire aucune espèce de stoïcisme."⁶⁰ Proust's conclusion that art is, according to Brasillach's terminology, the only lasting happiness, stems from his need to maintain the illusion of a spiritual search:

Sa logique l'a mené à cette conception du bonheur, il n'en veut pas sortir, car il lui faudrait alors refaire toute sa vie sur des principes différents.⁶¹

Thus, in Brasillach's view, ends "ce fiasco lamentable."⁶²

Stylistically, Brasillach finds that Proust uses the technique of "surimpression", "à cacher sa vie, à cacher son cœur, à élever autour de lui-même les fumées et les ombres du nécromant, afin qu'il pût nous tromper tous, et demeurer invisible."⁶³ The philological discussions on the derivation of names, the historical references evoked by Odette's style of dress, the reincarnation of the dead grandmother in the person of the mother, are all rewarding examples of this technique. The superposition of images, while born of the need to deceive, remains "une des plus belles et plus profondes idées qu'aucun écrivain ait jamais eues."⁶⁴ Brasillach correctly identifies the importance of Elstir in the novel, whose concept of art and ability to transfigure reality are analogous to Proust's.

Brasillach's analysis of A la Recherche remains limited by his equation of happiness and time in Proust. Although he perceives the importance of the lie in Proust, the critic treats deception as a biographical factor, rather than an element of Proustian psychology. One might surmise the unpleasant effect of the publication of Proust's correspondence and the knowledge of his homosexuality from Brasillach's frequent references to Proust's need to camouflage his "tares" behind a screen of lies.

The greater documentation brought to the study of Proustian psychology would seem to have a limiting effect. While Dandieu's analysis of the Proustian metaphor remains within the domain of literature, Blondel's description of Proust's "psychographie" results in the isolation of one highly specialized aspect of Proust's novel at the expense of a more integrated view. Blondel's detailed justification of the universal nature of Proust's subjectively perceived truths is a more technical variation of the theories advanced by Rivière and Crémieux.

The writings of Dandieu and Brasillach represent a gradual shifting of emphasis from the purely psychological to the poetic contributions of Proust. The anti-rationalist and metaphysical trends of the 1930's are evident in Dandieu's approach to Proust's novel. His recognition of the romantic elements in A la Recherche is an important

step towards a more comprehensive evaluation of the novel.

With the exception of Blondel, all three critics reflect, in varying degrees, the increased public awareness of Proust's personal life. Dandieu finds the moral element of Proust's novel necessarily limited by his "infantilism" and schizophrenia. Brasillach's thesis rests upon Proust's need to disguise his personal life. Seillière is offended by Proust's naturalist defense of homosexuality. While Rivière, Du Bos and Crémieux sometimes wavered in their defense of Proust's morality, an overt condemnation of the moral insufficiencies of A la Recherche emerges in the psychological criticism of the 1930's.

Notes

- ¹ Michel Raimond, La Crise du roman, (Paris: Corti, 1966), pp. 426-27.
- ² Correspondance Jacques Rivière-Alain-Fournier, I, (Paris: Gallimard, 1926), p. 92, as quoted in Helen Thomas Naughton, Jacques Rivière: The Development of a Man and a Creed, (Paris: Mouton, 1966), p. 49.
- ³ Frédéric Lefèvre, Une Heure avec . . ., Série 2, (Paris: NRF, 1924), p. 101.
- ⁴ Jacques Rivière, "Le Roman d'aventure," in Nouvelles études, (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), p. 246.
- ⁵ See Chap. 1, p. 15.
- ⁶ Rivière, p. 253.
- ⁷ Rivière, p. 253.
- ⁸ Rivière, p. 274.
- ⁹ As quoted in Marcel Raymond, Etudes sur Jacques Rivière, (Paris: Corti, 1972), p. 157.
- ¹⁰ Raymond, Etudes sur Jacques Rivière, p. 99.
- ¹¹ Hommage à Jacques Rivière, 1886-1925, Nouvelle Revue Française, April 1, 1925, p. 778.
- ¹² Marcel Preust et Jacques Rivière, Correspondance, 1914-1922, ed. Philip Kolb, (Paris: Gallimard, 1976) pp. 117-18.

¹³ Jacques Rivière, Quelques progrès dans l'étude du coeur humain, (Paris: Librairie de France, 1926), p. 51.

¹⁴ Rivière, Quelques progrès, p. 87.

¹⁵ In a later analysis, Henri Peyre, Hommes et oeuvres du XX^e siècle, (Paris: Corrêa, 1938), pp. 149-78, finds the limits of Proust's subjective concept of love in the spiritualization of passion which excludes physical love. Love, for Proust, is synonymous with the need for knowledge and suffering. Proust's originality lies in his scientific attitude, and finds its antecedents in Racine and Stendhal. While essentially pessimistic, the Proustian analysis finds its rewards in knowledge and poetry.

¹⁶ Rivière, Quelques progrès, pp. 115-16.

¹⁷ Rivière, Nouvelles études, p. 230.

¹⁸ Jacques Rivière and Ramon Fernandez, Moralisme et littérature, (Paris: Corrêa, 1932), p. 42.

¹⁹ As quoted in Henri Peyre, Pref., The Ideal Reader, ed. Blanche Price, (N.Y.: Meridian Books, 1960), p. 14.

²⁰ Charles Du Bos, Journal, I, (Paris: Corrêa, 1946), 65.

²¹ Georges Poulet, "La Méthode critique de Charles Du Bos," in La Conscience critique, (Paris: Corti, 1971), pp. 71-102.

²² Charles Du Bos, "Marcel Proust," in Approximations, (1932; rpt. Paris: Fayard, 1965), I, 91.

²³ Du Bos, "Marcel Proust," p. 100.

²⁴ Charles Du Bos, "Points de repère," in Approximations, (1932; rpt. Paris: Fayard, 1965), II, 437.

- 25 Du Bos, "Points de repère," p. 437.
- 26 Du Bos, "Marcel Proust," p. 98.
- 27 Charles Du Bos, Journal, II, (Paris: Corrêa, 1949), 335.
- 28 Benjamin Crémieux, "Marcel Proust," in XX^e siècle, (Paris: Gallimard, 1924), p. 15.
- 29 Crémieux, p. 61.
- 30 Crémieux, p. 66.
- 31 Benjamin Crémieux, Du côté de Marcel Proust, (Paris: Editions Lemarget, 1929), p. 61.
- 32 Crémieux, "Marcel Proust," p. 24.
- 33 Crémieux, "Marcel Proust," p. 84.
- 34 What Du Bos most admired in his colleague was "cet instinct de connaissance" which was "toujours une passion," from "Jacques Rivière et la perfection abstraite," in Approximations, II, 219. In Appendice II, Inquiétude et reconstruction, (Paris: Corrêa, 1931), p. 226, Crémieux wrote that "Jacques Rivière avait raison; la 'grande enquête positive' inaugurée par Proust se poursuit patiemment et, pourrait-on dire, par séries."
- 35 Arnaud Dandieu, Marcel Proust: sa révélation psychologique, (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1930), p. 19.
- 36 Dandieu, p. 34.
- 37 For the text used by Dandieu to justify his conclusion, see Chapter 1, p. 16.
- 38 "L'action sacrée, qui ne réalise pas immédiatement ni expérimentalement son objet, est censée l'opérer in-

visiblement par un simulacre; cette action est représentative, elle figure ce qu'elle voudrait accomplir et elle se persuade qu'elle l'accomplit en le figurant," as quoted in Dandieu, pp. 72-3.

39 Dandieu, p. 136.

40 Dandieu, p. 48.

41 Dandieu, p. 49.

42 Dandieu, p. 64.

43 Dandieu, p. 161.

44 Dandieu, p. 16.

45 Dandieu, p. 204.

46 Dandieu, p. 198.

47 Charles Blondel, La Psychographie de Marcel Proust,

(Paris: Vrin, 1932), p. 47.

48 Blondel, p. 54.

49 Blondel, pp. 81-2.

50 Blondel, pp. 88-9.

51 Blondel, p. 166.

52 Blondel, p. 189.

53 René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature,

(N.Y.: Harcourt, 1942), p. 81.

54 Ernest Seillière, Marcel Proust, (Paris: Editions

de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1931), p. 80.

55 Gérard Sthène de Jubécourt, Robert Brasillach,

critique littéraire, (Lausanne: Les Amis de Robert Brasillach, 1972), p. 126n.

- 56 Robert Brasillach, Oeuvres complètes, (Paris: Au Club de l'Honnête Homme, 1964), VII, 212.
- 57 Brasillach, p. 207.
- 58 Brasillach, p. 208.
- 59 Brasillach, p. 214.
- 60 Brasillach, p. 215.
- 61 Brasillach, p. 211.
- 62 Brasillach, p. 210.
- 63 Brasillach, p. 218.
- 64 Brasillach, p. 224.

Chapter 4

PHILOSOPHICAL AND MORAL APPROACH

In the 1920's and 1930's, the philosophical and moral dimensions of A la Recherche were attacked on both secular and Christian grounds. While Ramon Fernandez and Etienne Burnet sought an analysis of the purely philosophical implications of Proust's novel, François Mauriac, Georges Gabory and Henri Massis approached the work with a more traditionally Christian attitude.

While moral philosophy has been a significant feature of French thought since the Renaissance and ethical themes were prominent in the nineteenth century in the writings of both positivists such as Durkheim and spiritualists such as Bergson, there had been, until the upheaval of World War I, a tradition of resistance to an abstract analysis of values: "French moral philosophers had tended to focus their attention on ethical phenomena as an empirical or given point of departure for reflection. . . ." ¹ However, the decades after the war saw a "reaction to both intellectual and socio-political tendencies which appear to treat man simply as an object of scientific study or to reduce him to his function in the economic sphere or the

socio-political totality,"² which resulted in a widespread emphasis on a search for moral values.

The methods adopted by all five critics discussed in this chapter are to a great extent reflections of their times. Fernandez proposes a new method of criticism which would establish a dialectic between literature and spirituality. Burnet attempts to show Proust's work as an extension of Bergsonian ideas. The moral concerns expressed as early as 1922 by François Mauriac were, in the fanatical atmosphere of the 1930's, elaborated upon and distorted by Henri Massis. Despite Georges Gabory's assertion that his analysis of homosexuality in A la Recherche is based on esthetic principles, his judgments remain essentially moral.

While the critical approaches of Fernandez, Burnet, Mauriac, Gabory and Massis may appear outmoded, an understanding of their writings is essential to an understanding of both the decades which they represent and the fluctuating popularity of Proust's novel.

The Philosophical Approach

Ramon Fernandez began his career at the Nouvelle Revue Française in 1923, at the invitation of Jacques Rivière. Fernandez' philosophical and moral preoccupations are evident in all his literary criticism, and distinguish his writings from those of his Nouvelle Revue Française col-

leagues. The psychological preoccupations of Jacques Rivière, Charles Du Bos and Benjamin Crémieux are absent from Fernandez' philosophical approach to literature.

For Fernandez, the artist's criticism of his own completed work leads to confusion between the work as an entity and its extension as it is explained. He condemns the descriptive and conceptually-oriented character of historical, psychological and formal criticism. Historical criticism does not enlighten our judgment. Psychological criticism, by substituting one discipline for another, avoids the essential esthetic problems implicit in a literary work. Formal criticism sacrifices humanistic interests to the isolated study of a particular aspect of literature.

Fernandez defines his critical method in "De la critique philosophique", which serves as an introduction to his 1926 Messages. He proposes a philosophical criticism based on intuition, limited by rationalism, and using the language of common experience. Despite the obscurity of his style, Fernandez sees his role as a bridge between pure philosophy and the reading public. To Fernandez, the "idéalisme sain et prudent" of philosophical criticism represents the means of restoring "toute sa valeur positive au jugement, à l'acte volontaire qui transcende notre affectivité présente."³

The philosophical critic's goals are threefold: he must search for the philosophic substructure of a literary work, and determine the general philosophical problems implied by

the work; he must trace the spiritual movement of the work; and he must exert a modifying and creative influence on the facts revealed by his analysis. The object of Fernandez' criticism is to determine the correspondence between literature and spirituality. He seeks a unifying judgment, and as is evident in his writings, "L'acte de jugement de Fernandez ne peut être qu'orienté."⁴

Fernandez' philosophical approach to literature is comprised of, in varying degrees and combinations, Blondelian action, Bergsonian intuition, pragmatism, Newman's individualism, Brunschvicg's critical idealism, and elements of Meredith's and George Eliot's notion of personality.⁵

Meredith has been described by Michel Raimond as the author who "a le plus contribué dans les années d'avant-guerre à saper l'idéal français de construction rigide autour d'une intrigue."⁶ In the introductory "De la critique philosophique", written after the essays in Messages, Fernandez takes the opportunity to contrast Meredith's morality to Proust's lack of spiritual progress. Fernandez' intense anglophilia colors his Proust criticism and although his attitude toward Proust is modified in his later writings, Fernandez never fully accepts Proust's passivity.

All the insufficiencies in Proust's novel derive, according to Fernandez, from his extreme subjectivity, impressionism and passivity. While the moral development of Meredith's characters is mirrored in their actions, Proust's characters

remain "mosaics", composed of concepts and subjective impressions. Meredith's characters "sont situés dans une hiérarchie par l'estimation de leurs pensées, de leurs sentiments, de leurs actes."⁷ Proust's characters are confined to living "de la vie de l'auteur, parce que lui-même ne vivait que de sensations et qu'on ne tire point d'unité humaine de la sensation. . . ."⁸

Proust's analytic impressionism allows sensation to be identified with reality, and thus limits reality. Impressionism implies a disinterest in the object, and should therefore be only an intermediary stage in the progress toward reality. Proust fails to proceed to "une affirmation nouvelle de l'objet," and cannot achieve the passage from ego to non-ego, the "délivrance de soi" accomplished by Meredith.⁹

Fernandez contrasts the contemporaneous and active cooperation of imagination, will, sensation and intelligence in Meredith's novels with the retrospective function of Proustian intelligence. In Proust's novel, intelligence never surpasses impression, and is limited to an analysis of the reality fixed in memory. If, as Fernandez writes in De la personnalité, "Le sentiment de soi est un sentiment prospectif,"¹⁰ then Proust's search for reality in memory violates Fernandez' criterion of action as a confirmation of spiritual and moral progress. By refusing to confront contemporary reality, Proust condemns himself to a

"spiritual past-ism" which Meredith surpasses through the interaction of creation and judgment.

Fernandez' "La Garantie des sentiments et les intermittences du coeur" may be seen as an effort to convince Jacques Rivière of the need for morality in literature.¹¹ While he supports Rivière's contention that analysis does not destroy personality, Fernandez goes further than Rivière in demanding that the artist surpass and master affectivity. Fernandez' theme throughout his 1924 debate with Rivière, published as Moralisme et littérature, is the artistic importance of moral conscience in literature. In the final "Synthèse" of the debate, Rivière acknowledges that Meredith's morality enhances the psychological and artistic values of his novel.

In his analysis of "Les Intermittences du coeur", a text which Fernandez feels reveals Proust's thought and its limitations, the critic faults Proust most specifically for the absence of a hierarchy of values, and for the lack of spiritual progress in A la Recherche. These two deficiencies result from Proust's definition of soul as a collection of sensory experiences scattered in time, and self as the passive subject of experiments. By identifying each self with a particular experience fixed in time, Proust spatializes time and violates Bergsonian philosophy.

Fernandez defines spirituality as "le sentiment de se dépasser. . . ."¹² This is accomplished through "l'élaboration

sentimentale de l'expérience sensible."¹³ By regarding individual sensibility and imagination as the guarantee of sentiments, Proust, according to the critic, never passes from the level of sensibility to that of sentiment, and negates any possibility of spiritual growth. In XX^e siècle, Crémieux expresses an opposing view to that of Fernandez, and finds a progression from commonplace morality to wisdom. Proust's concept of knowledge, in Crémieux' analysis, resembles the Christian ideal of renunciation. In Fernandez' hierarchy, the intermittences of the heart occupy the level below sentiment which should dominate them. Proust passes directly from impression to intellectual comprehension, and thus avoids the psychic contraction of the formation of sentiment. Here Fernandez, in philosophical jargon, indicates the same weakness in Proust that Rivière described in psychological terms. In Proust, intelligence is the only path to unity, and only intelligence progresses.

The opposition established between Proust and Meredith is extended to include Cardinal Newman and Montaigne. For Fernandez, spiritual progress need not imply metaphysics, and he finds Newman's system of understanding equally valid without the presence of God. While Newman and Meredith think progressively, Proust reconstructs the past, and therefore "empêche l'intelligence de favoriser le moindre progrès vital et spirituel."¹⁴ Contrary to Proust's parallel concept of time, Newman and Meredith integrate

time and being. Most importantly for Fernandez, because Newman and Meredith endow impression with permanency, the intelligence is allowed to surpass present experience and create future experience.

In a theme elaborated upon in De la personnalité, Fernandez opposes Montaigne's active introspection to Proust's passivity. Montaigne distinguishes self from passions, and always perceives himself "sous l'angle de l'unité."¹⁵ While Montaigne, identifying thought with action, shows the higher regions available to man, Proust's passive sensibility childishly reduces everything to its lowest common denominator. Fernandez' hypothesis that the stagnation of Proust's spiritual growth may be due to a certain "infantilism" tempered by intelligence was later adapted by Arnaud Dandieu to his analysis of the Proustian metaphor.

In his 1928 article, "Note sur l'esthétique de Proust", Fernandez modifies his attitude toward Proust's spiritual deficiencies, and praises his originality as a psychologist, novelist and moralist. The revelation of the past allows Proust to "retrouver [.] les conditions d'un progrès spirituel, liées par les nécessités de l'expérience à une progression à rebours dans sa propre mémoire,"¹⁶ and thus escape the parallel concept of time for which Fernandez had previously condemned him. While acknowledging the personal reality of Proust's discoveries, and admiring the dichotomy Proust establishes between affective reality and

intellectual reality, Fernandez does not concur with Rivière's affirmation of the universal, objective character of Proust's truths. Fernandez protests against the abstract quality of the laws Proust deduces, and his failure to apply them to a non-rationalist philosophy.

Fernandez' search for moral and philosophical truths explains both his enormous admiration for Meredith and his reservations about Proust. His esteem for Meredith, whom he credited as the first artist to use "une méthode nouvelle d'investigation psychologique et d'expression littéraire: la méthode de l'analyse dramatique. . .," never wavered.¹⁷ While Fernandez was praising Meredith in Messages, E. M. Forster wrote in Aspects of the Novel that "Meredith is not the great name he was twenty or thirty years ago, when much of the universe and all Cambridge trembled [.] he will never be the spiritual power he was about the year 1900. His philosophy has not worn well."¹⁸ The lack of drama in Meredith's psychological presentation had already been noted by English readers and would continue to be seen as one of the major deficiencies in Meredith's novels.

Although Fernandez accepts Rivière's assessment of Proust's psychological originality, he never approaches Rivière's level of objectivity and rationalism. Fernandez' Bergsonism allows similarities with Du Bos, but Du Bos's refusal to judge literary works and the introspective quality of his criticism violate Fernandez' critical criteria.

His literary criticism is characterized by his insistence on judgment and his search for spiritual progress. In his 1943 Proust, Fernandez seems to have come to terms with the novelist. He praises Proust's experimental spirit and detective story technique, finds analogies with both the Bergsonian philosophy of pure time and the Brunshvicgian concept of critical idealism. However, Fernandez expresses his hope for a new literature, in which personality will be determined by action. Existentialism was to embody several aspects of Fernandez' formula for a new literature.

While Ramon Fernandez tried to apply philosophical criteria to the study of literature, Etienne Burnet, a scientist, sought parallels between Henri Bergson's philosophy and Marcel Proust's novel. In his 1929 "poème critique", "Proust et le bergsonisme", Burnet considers Bergson as the key to an understanding of Proust, and attributes Proust's popularity with the succeeding generation to his Bergsonism. Burnet is careful to distinguish philosophical treatise from artistic creation, and thus avoids the simplistic and popular condemnation of Proust as a Bergsonian heretic. The critic consistently maintains the dichotomy between the free, artistic use of Bergsonian doctrine and a strict translation of philosophical doctrine into literature.

It is difficult to deny the existence of certain affinities between Proust's novel and a philosophical

theory whose influence dominated the French intellectual world from 1910 through 1935. His correspondence is further evidence that Proust, a cousin by marriage of Bergson's, and a philosophy student, certainly had knowledge of Bergson's philosophical theories. In a 1910 letter to Georges de Lauris, Proust states that although he has not read L'Evolution créatrice, he is familiar with its contents. It would seem likely that Proust had read the 1900 Le Rire. In both the 1913 interview with Frédéric Lefèvre and a letter of the same year to René Blum, Proust clearly rejects any analogy between his and Bergson's concepts of memory. In a letter to Camille Vettard, he denies the influence of Bergsonian ideas on A la Recherche. Nevertheless, Burnet establishes certain parallels between Proust and Bergson, and attributes discrepancies between the two to the influence of different philosophical trends.

Both Proust and Bergson, according to Burnet, inaugurate a literature and a philosophy using scientific methods. Burnet finds that time, memory, the unconscious, sleep and dream are all Bergsonian themes freely developed by Proust. Before the publication of Le Temps retrouvé, Burnet considers Proust's concept of time as an intermediate state between homogeneous time and pure "durée", a "temps psychologique moyen."¹⁹ In Le Temps retrouvé, Burnet finds a purification of Proust's notion of time which renders it an artistic equivalent of Bergsonian durée.

Burnet notes further evidence of Bergsonian influence in Proust's notion of memory:

Un demiurge qui aurait voulu exprimer dans le langage littéraire la théorie bergsonienne de la mémoire aurait dicté l'ouvrage de Proust.²⁰

For both Bergson and Proust, the act of memory is an esthetic experience, providing the substance of mental life. The critic counters Proust's assertion that Bergson did not consider involuntary memory²¹ by citing the distinction between "mémoire pure" and "mémoire d'habitude" described in Matière et mémoire. However, Burnet does not consider the basic difference which separates Bergsonian "mémoire pure" from Proustian involuntary memory. For Bergson, pure memory retains all of the past, is not strictly affective, and receives information in the form of images. This can be contrasted with Proust's concept of a totally affective and discontinuous involuntary memory. Bergson's pure memory contains contiguous past states available to consciousness. In Bergson's concept, the possibility of re-living a moment of the past is negated by the contemporaneity of all that is past.²²

For Burnet, Proust's treatment of dreams, sleep, and the unconscious are freely translated artistic versions of Bergsonian concepts. However, for Proust, dreams derive their beauty from their deformation of reality, while for Bergson, dreams represent a resurrection of the past, and

are not a creative force.

While Proust is never as wholly optimistic as Bergson, Burnet does see a similarity between Proust's concept of intellectual salvation and Bergson's rationalist, philosophical intuition:

Pour ceux qui ne sont pas les ennemis irréconciliables de l'intelligence, l'essence de Proust sera, en fin d'analyse, une essence salutaire.²³

Bergson's heroic morality is reflected in Proust's "héroïsme de la pensée", which saves him from the intellectual nihilism common to his generation.²⁴

Proust's artistic intuition is compared to Bergson's philosophic intuition. For both Proust and Bergson, intuition, seconded by intelligence, is the means through which art reveals reality. Burnet finds that Proust's appeal to the critic to read all the works of an author in order to discern the originality of that author's vision, echoes Bergson's assertion in the 1912 Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale that "Un philosophe digne de ce nom n'a jamais dit qu'une seule chose. . . ." ²⁵ Burnet does not, however, contrast the basically metaphysical thrust of Bergsonian intuition with the purely esthetic direction of Proustian intuition. While both Bergson and Proust see art as uncovering reality, Proust's esthetic is entirely based on subjective experience, and the reality he seeks to reveal

is, as he writes in Le Temps retrouvé, "notre essence subjective et incommunicable. . . ."26

While the most compelling affinities between Bergson and Proust lie in the philosopher's and the artist's treatment of time, memory, the unconscious, sleep, dreams and intuition, Burnet finds that Proust's concept of personality, his pessimism, and his notion of eternity are not Bergsonian.

Bergson's concept of personality is a logical extension of his theory of time and pure memory. For Bergson, the self is a continual, progressive phenomenon, "une création continue, un jaillissement ininterrompu de nouveauté. . . ."27 Bergson, as Burnet notes, more intensely feels the continuity in succession, the unity in multiplicity of personality. The Proustian theory of personality is founded on the succession of selves, "contigus, mais si extérieurs l'un à l'autre, si dépourvus de moyens de communication entre eux. . . ."28 While similar to Bergsonian personality in its complexity, evolution, dissolution and recombination, and in the opposition between the real self and the social self, Burnet finds that Proust's notion of personality derives from the English theory of association. The critic attributes the discontinuity of Proustian personality to the author's concern with the abnormal. The conflict between Proust's successive and Bergson's simultaneous concept of personality may account for Proust's denial

of Bergsonian influence on his theory of involuntary memory. The multiplicity of self is an intrinsic part of Proust's theories of time and memory, and "C'est donc sur la nature même de notre vie psychologique, faite de la mort fragmentaire et successive de nos moi [.] qu'est fondée la théorie proustienne de la discontinuité de la vie psychique et de la multiplicité des moi dans la même personne."²⁹

Burnet attributes Proust's pessimism, which manifests itself in the absence of energy, action, and will, to the influence of Schopenhauer. If Proust is "rempli de pessimisme héraclitéen," it is because he attaches himself to secular time, and forsakes pure Bergsonian time.³⁰

Bergson is Heraclitean in the essential mobility of his philosophy, which is optimistically oriented toward the future and the need to overcome the past. For Proust, the present holds no hope, for all knowledge is contained in memory.

Proust's notion of eternity, according to Burnet, is not purely Bergsonian, but rather represents a fusion of Platonic, Spinozan and Bergsonian ideas. Proust resists Spinoza's concept of a fixed eternity to the extent that he experiences pure time. Proust conquers death through his idea of eternity, and is indebted to both Leibnitz and Plato for his views on death. Leibnitz' theory of death by infinitesimal degrees coincides with Proust's theory of multiple, successive selves. Proust's intellec-

tualism also corresponds to Plato's asceticism. Burnet concludes that Proust remains closest to Plato's formula of "le temps image mobile de l'éternité."³¹ However, Burnet does not emphasize the absence of Plato's metaphysical anguish from Proust's idealism, and, as Noël Martin-Deslias notes, "S'il [Proust] imagine un monde intelligible comme celui de Platon, il n'en fait point une réalité indépendante de son expérience. . . ."³² For Proust, the value of the reconstructed reality is determined by the extent of his own participation in the creation of that reality.

Burnet is careful throughout his essay not to categorize Proust as a disciple of Bergson. His analysis of Proust's Bergsonism always remains within the limits of the free, artistic expression of philosophical ideas. Burnet's restraint was important at a time when Proust was being censured for deforming Bergsonian theories.

The negation of the utilitarian principle of mental life, accomplished by according intuition primacy over intellect in the search for reality, is the starting point for both Bergson and Proust. Although the philosopher and the artist both confront the problems of time, memory, sleep, dreams, intuition and art, the similarities proposed by Burnet are often superficial and do not always withstand further scrutiny. Burnet always qualifies his appraisals of Proust's Bergsonism through the standard of art, and what the critic considers to be Proust's "substantial"

Bergsonism may be viewed today as more an instance of a sympathetic approach to and interest in the same problem.

The Moral Approach

While the intensity and content of moral censoriousness directed at A la Recherche varied in the 1920's and 1930's, a significant decline of Proust's popularity in France coincides with a resurgence of religious orthodoxy. In the 1920's, the moral censorship of Proust's novel by François Mauriac and Georges Gabory is tempered by their favorable evaluations of other aspects of the novel. Jacques Rivière and Benjamin Crémieux found a valid psychological morality in Proust's writings. In the 1930's, Henri Massis' fervent denunciation of Proust's amorality excludes any possibility of redemption. A generation in ferment found Proust complacent, yet the modern reader values his serenity and finds the attacks of his successors intemperate.

The greatest differences between the present understanding of A la Recherche and that of the period are manifest in this discussion of moral criticism. France, shaken by the experience of World War I, found comfort in the 1920's in the policies of the Third Republic. The government preserved the status quo that had existed before the War, no dramatic social reforms were enacted, and the decade had more in common with the time preceding the First World War than it did with the 1930's. The Bloc National,

which held power from 1919-1924, followed a policy of religious and political appeasement which had its counterpart in the American quest for a "return to normalcy". The mood in most Western countries was characterized by a search for order and the return to bourgeois values.

In France, the policy of religious appeasement manifested itself in the 1920 canonization of Jeanne d'Arc, the 1921 resumption of political relations with the Vatican, and the exemption of Alsace and Lorraine from the laws governing separation of Church and State. The beginnings of a Catholic revival, which reached its peak in the turbulent years of the 1930's, can be traced to the early years of this decade. The comparatively subdued tone of the moral criticism of the 1920's is very much in accordance with the mood of the times.

In politics, the League of Nations had no power to enforce the terms of the Versailles Treaty, and German reparations went unpaid. The late 1920's were a period of inflation and, despite the efforts of Poincaré, the "savior of the franc", devaluation was unavoidable. Depression hit France in 1932. Throughout the 1930's, leftist and rightist coalitions alternated in leadership of the country. In a time of instability, many sought order in perhaps the most dramatic symbol of order, the Catholic Church.

The importance of François Mauriac's articles on Proust

is twofold: his appraisal is that of a fellow novelist; and his writings are characterized by a restraint foreign to the more extreme Catholic critics of the 1930's. With little alteration, the opinions advanced in these articles are repeated in Mauriac's 1947 Du côté de chez Proust.

Mauriac's evaluation of A la Recherche can be divided into two phases, separated by a curiously long silence, which reflects an apparent change of concerns: the four articles which appeared in La Revue Hebdomadaire and the Nouvelle Revue Française between December, 1920 and December, 1922;³³ and the later assessments contained in the 1933 Le Romancier et ses personnages, the December 8, 1934 "Le Proust russe attendu," in Les Nouvelles Littéraires, and the entry in his Journal of 1937, titled "Proust et ses vrais amis". While the early writings deal with the technical and moral aspects of Proust's novel, the 1930's criticism is almost exclusively directed toward the social implications of A la Recherche.

Upon publication of Le Côté de Guermantes, Mauriac, in "Quelques livres", notes the revolutionary character of Proust's novel, which, he states, "peut-être sera l'apport le plus important de notre génération,"³⁴ and attributes the vitality of Proust's characters to his much-maligned subjectivism. A few months later, in "L'Art de Marcel Proust", Mauriac takes a committed stand and declares that Proust has done nothing less than "renouveler un genre

littéraire: le roman."³⁵ Whereas Ramon Fernandez complained of the absence of sentiment in the Proustian progression from sensation to ideas, Mauriac esteems the symbiotic relationship between sensation, sentiment and intellect in Proust's novel as "unique dans la littérature."³⁶ Mauriac adheres, as did many of Proust's earliest and most prominent supporters, to a basically classical interpretation of A la Recherche. The critic links Proust to the classical tradition through the universal quality of his character portrayals. The narrowed vision presented in La Prisonnière compels Mauriac to modify his earlier evaluation of Proust's universality. However, the critic finds that Proust's conclusions retain their general import when applied to cases of unrequited love, and thus "assure à Proust la première place entre tous les maîtres de la jalousie."³⁷

The most interesting aspect of Mauriac's early criticism of A la Recherche would appear to be an evolution in his assessment of the moral dimension of the novel. In his February, 1921 article, "L'Art de Marcel Proust", Mauriac accords A la Recherche a moral structure derived from the unrelenting examination of self which is "à la base de toute vie morale."³⁸ The novel which he praises as a "'Somme' de la sensibilité contemporaine,"³⁹ although exclusively secular, is still morally valid. In his eulogistic "Sur la Tombe de Marcel Proust", written in December, 1922, Mauriac adopts a more orthodox attitude toward the question

of morality in A la Recherche. Declaring that "Dieu est terriblement absent de l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust . . .,"⁴⁰ Mauriac, without accounting for his apparent change in attitude, summarily dismisses his earlier statement. Mauriac condemns not the subject matter of Proust's novel, but rather its exploration "sans armure adamantine," and concludes that, for those who wish to follow Proust, "il reste de réintégrer la Grâce dans ce monde nouveau."⁴¹

Although he uses Christian terminology throughout his evaluation of the moral aspect of A la Recherche, Mauriac claims that even from a purely literary point of view, the absence of moral anguish limits and weakens the work. It is somewhat difficult to follow the mechanics by which Mauriac transfers what remains an inherently Christian analysis to the level of literary analysis. By concluding that "la conscience humaine [] est absente"⁴² from Proust's work, the critic seems to confuse the amorality of Proust's characters with the rigorously individualistic morality of the Proustian search.

The whole of Mauriac's 1930's appraisal of Proust consists of a few references to the novelist in the 1933 Le Romancier et ses personnages, the 1934 "Le Proust russe attendu", and "Proust et ses vrais amis", which appears in his 1937 Journal. While extremists were expanding upon the 1922 observations of "Sur la Tombe de Marcel Proust", Mauriac's attention had turned entirely to the social

aspects of A la Recherche.

In "Le Proust russe attendu", Mauriac rejects as a form of reverse snobism the Marxist characterization of Proust's novel as "bourgeois". This attitude, Mauriac asserts, would limit human interest to those characters below a certain social level. In both "Proust et ses vrais amis" and Le Romancier et ses personnages, Mauriac insists upon the socially revolutionary character of A la Recherche. The enigma inherent in the novelist's pretention to depict society through the isolation and analysis of one passion in one individual has, according to Mauriac, been most successfully overcome by Proust, whose characters are not immobilized by his study. The critic's praise for Proust's method of character portrayal has not wavered from the enthusiasm expressed as early as 1920 in "Quelques livres". In 1947, Mauriac returns to an assessment of the moral dimensions of Proust's novel. The moral deficiencies of A la Recherche have influenced Jacques Rivière, whose faith was altered by "l'oeuvre littéraire sous sa forme la plus redoutable [.] qui n'a d'autre fin qu'elle-même et dont l'analyse pulvérisée, détruit la personne."⁴³ However, it should be remembered that Mauriac's reservations about the morality of A la Recherche did not lead him to a blanket condemnation of the novel.

In a 1926 poll taken by Les Marges, the reading public voiced its approval of the subjective and introspective

approach identified with "modern" literature.⁴⁴ Georges Gabory's Essai sur Marcel Proust, published that same year, while modern in its attempt to link Proust with Freud and psychoanalysis, reflects the growing moral concern for the matter as well as the manner of A la Recherche.

Gabory's essay suffers greatly from its lack of organization. The critic wanders pointlessly from one subject to another, injecting personal anecdotes describing his own exposure to psychoanalysis and luncheons with members of the Nouvelle Revue Française. While the greater part of his essay is devoted to the moral dimension of Proust's novel, the reader is first exposed to the critic's views on Baudelaire, Balzac, dreams, romanticism and style. All these topics, while appropriate to a study of Proust, are diminished by the superficiality of their treatment.

Gabory's evaluation of the moral aspect of A la Recherche is grounded in a discussion of homosexuality. In a rather vagrant fashion, Gabory explores homosexuality as it effects character portrayal, plot, motivation, artistic conventions, and realism in the novel.

Gabory himself acknowledges the contradictory nature of many of his statements. Initially, in response to Mauriac's remorse at the absence of God and Massis' condemnation of the metaphysical vacuum in Proust's novel, Gabory claims that "L'oeuvre de Proust, où Dieu n'est pas, nous ramène à Dieu. . . ."⁴⁵ While Gabory seems to be

answering Mauriac's and Massis' objections, his own analysis is often distinguishable only in its terminology from the more traditional Catholic view. Although, paradoxically, the reader is drawn closer to God as an effect of His absence, Gabory deplores the novelist's indifference. While the critic's despair may be less fervently expressed than Massis', his statement that "Le bénéfice du péché, Proust l'ignore: ni remords, ni scrupules . . ." ⁴⁶ echoes the dogmatism of the articles which were later published as Le Drame de Marcel Proust. At a later point in his essay, however, Gabory seems to accept art as a viable alternative to "cette fin extérieure, que l'homme cherche en Dieu." ⁴⁷

Proust's remorselessness is reflected in the Narrator's detached attitude at the scene of the grandmother's death. Gabory notes the absence of Christian doctrine in the Narrator's reactions, since resurrection for Proust can only exist as a phenomenon of memory. Memory is the only link between Proust and humanity.

While acknowledging the vitality of the homosexual characters, whose vice inspires the development of "leur sensibilité et leur compréhension," ⁴⁸ Gabory deplores the pervasive sexuality, tainted with sadism and homosexuality, of La Prisonnière. Sexuality and vanity account for all character motivation. ⁴⁹ Proust's world has turned towards a "Volupté perdue dans la souffrance, une souffrance qui n'est pas noblement acceptée, désirée comme un don de

Dieu. . . ."50 For a critic professing interest in and admiration for the theories of Freud, Gabory's objection that "la sexualité chez lui [Proust] tient trop de place" is curious.⁵¹ Gabory claims esthetic, and not moral grounds for this judgment. The spread of sexuality in A la Recherche is accompanied by a violation of artistic conventions, and Proust's characters, formerly praised by Gabory for their vitality, are now described as "presque entièrement 'affranchis', surtout pour ce qui touche à la sexualité. Là, Proust perd le sens de la réalité. . . ."52

Gabory's essay suffers greatly from its lack of a coherent approach. No precise point of view emerges from the work, and contradictions abound. Although they are often rendered in esthetic terms, the judgments remain essentially moral. At the beginning of his essay, in what may be considered a self-fulfilling prophecy, Gabory asks: "Est-il possible de fixer quelque chose et y a-t-il une critique, si serrée qu'elle soit qui ne se défasse dès qu'on tire la ficelle?"53

While, in the preceding decade, Fernandez and Burnet searched for a philosophical substructure in A la Recherche, and Gabory masked his moral censorship in esthetic terminology, and Mauriac expressed reservations about the moral dimensions of Proust's novel, much of the criticism of the 1930's was directed toward the obsessive demand for traditional Christian values in literature. While political

and economic events conspired to provoke a spirit of Catholic revival in France, the absence of God in Proust's novel became the focal point unifying writers of such diverse sensibilities as Charles Maurras, François Mauriac and Henri Massis.

In a time of excess, both of the left and the right, the universities and the factories, the world and the spirit, stability was sought with a fanaticism which found literary expression in the demand for an art inspired by traditional moral values. The intellectual appeal of Neo-Thomism, the movement toward collectivism and a sense of declining moral values combined to provoke a surge in both returns and conversions to Roman Catholicism.

Massis' approach to Proust's novel seems related to the dogmatism practiced elsewhere by Robert Brasillach and Charles Maurras. While few would question the sincerity of François Mauriac's religious convictions, his approach to A la Recherche remains more balanced and nuanced than that of the traditionalists who followed him.

Massis condemns Proust to a life in which "Le vice sera son milieu vital. . . ." ⁵⁴ The "drame" in Proust's life is, for the critic, betrayed in the text of Les Plaisirs et les jours. The pervasive amorality of A la Recherche is the result of Proust's failure to surmount the moral crises described in the earlier work. Massis dismisses the contention that these adolescent writings merely

represent drafts of the later work, but rather, combining biography with psychology, considers "La Confession d'une jeune fille", "Confessions d'un parricide", and "Violante ou la mondanité" as evidence of Christian preoccupations which were later abandoned. While expanding the themes of Les Plaisirs et les jours into A la Recherche, Proust will deprive these themes of their most salutary and compelling quality: moral anguish. Here lies, according to Massis, the tragedy of A la Recherche, for:

. . . sa férocité future n'est qu'un revers de sa candeur originelle; car ce peintre des pires dépravations sexuelles crut à l'amour, ce notateur tout positif de mœurs dégradantes fut un mystique de la passion.⁵⁵

Massis fancifully asserts that Proust devoted the twenty years between Les Plaisirs et les jours and A la Recherche exclusively to the pursuit of his vice, which he saw reflected throughout society. After the death of his mother, Proust's feeling that he is "inégal à la vie" leads him to turn inward and retreat from the present.⁵⁶ The moral struggle between will and vice, which Massis finds throughout Les Plaisirs et les jours, is abandoned. With the "abdication de la volonté,"⁵⁷ (a theme at the same time receiving great attention in Germany), Proust is compelled by "la privation de la pureté, tout autant que l'appel de ses sombres désirs"⁵⁸ to write A la Recherche. The genesis of the novel lies in a need not only to confide past sins,

but also to "nous entraîner vers les régions maudites de Sodome et Gomorrhe."⁵⁹ Proust's introspection is not, as Du Bos had contended, an act of courage, but rather a flight from the present. Unable to assume personal responsibility for his vices, Proust contaminates his characters, described by Massis as "automates", with his own illness. Had he directed his vision outward, it would have been tempered with humanism, for even when Proust succeeds in conveying his vision of reality, "c'est proprement le maléfice de son enlaçante magie."⁶⁰

Both Massis and Fernandez condemn the absence of a moral hierarchy, and the resulting lack of spiritual progress in A la Recherche. However, while Fernandez attempted to define spirituality within purely philosophical terms, Massis' objections rest on religious grounds. The Proustian universe, from which God is conspicuously absent, is void of drama, for it is "fermée à l'espérance."⁶¹ In Massis' analysis, Proust turns to art as a means of replacing reality, and of redeeming himself from the suffering he inflicted upon his mother. Massis cannot accept that, as Léon Pierre-Quint writes: "L'art n'est pas pour lui [Proust] une valeur de remplacement, une valeur négative, mais la réalité en soi."⁶² Massis' thesis depends on his refusal to tolerate any system in which God is not the highest moral value. In a tone reminiscent of Brasillach's characterization of A la Recherche as a novel conceived in and

nourished by deceit, Massis condemns Proust's novel as "un vaste alibi, une feinte obstinée, l'évocation d'une existence imaginée, rêvée, qui n'emprunte à la vraie que des impressions fugaces, une sorte d'immense métaphore, inlassablement prolongé. . . ."63

Massis' approach to Proust's novel is not an isolated aberration. In many ways, the fact of his censure is far less to the point than its intensity. It is not the sincerity of Massis' attitude, which is conveyed in the fervor of his prose, that may be questioned, but rather the effort to impose upon a work a moral system alien to the work itself. In Massis' agreement with Maritain's statement that "la lumière intérieure d'un saint Augustin"64 would have been needed to redeem Proust's novel, one may detect the instinctive, tortuous, though unexplored recognition of a kindred Platonism. While Maritain believed that "un chrétien seul, que dis-je, un mystique [] . [] peut faire un romancier complet,"65 he conceded that "les constructeurs des cathédrales ne se proposaient aucune sorte de thèse."66

This resort to the sentiments of an earlier orthodoxy suggests a parochial partisanship rather than a broad concern for spiritual matters as the source of the Catholic critics' quarrel with Proust. In a 1919 letter to Jean de Gaigneron, the translator of Ruskin's The Bible of Amiens compared the structure of his novel to that of a cathedral.67 Gothic cathedrals were commonly thought of as "Bibles in

stone". Proust's spiritual odyssey has a Biblical analogue: Du côté de chez Swann, The Garden, A l'Ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs, The Fall, Le Côté de Guermantes, The Chosen People, Sodome et Gomorrhe, La Prisonnière, Captivity, and Le temps retrouvé, Resurrection. The Catholic critics failed to envision Proust's quest for knowledge, or the recapturing of innocence through involuntary memory, as the analogue of a return to a state of grace. The gratuitous nature of Proustian involuntary memory may find its corollary in Augustine's commentary on John 3:8: "'The wind bloweth where it listeth', never following men's merits, but ever producing them itself . . ."68

The Neo-Kantian reaction to positivism which roughly paralleled the symbolist reaction to naturalism reached Proust directly through Bergson's writings, especially those on intuition. In Catholic apologetics there was a related revival of Jansenist notions of grace; in 1907, Pius X, in the encyclical Pascendi, condemned "religious immanentism". French orthodoxy, faced with immanentism on one hand and godless Marxist materialism on the other, found the transcendental materialism of Neo-Thomism an excellent counter. The Proustian synthesis of corresponding symbolist and naturalist trends in the novel seems an echo of these concerns.

In a similar manner, the apparent absence of will, the "silence de son jugement" which even an admirer like

Jacques Rivière found "amoral"⁶⁹, may be thought to have respectable antecedents in Bergsonian ideas, e.g., "action is perception", as well as in Catholic contemplative and deterministic movements historically at odds with Thomism.

In his 1927 Le Progrès de la conscience dans la philosophie occidentale, Léon Brunschvicg, an exact contemporary and former Condorcet classmate of Proust, and the author of La Raison et la religion, made a reconciliation of idealism and science which both exposes the limitations of the Thomists and suggests the Proustian novel:

Au lieu d'appliquer des principes immuables à une matière nouvelle, le progrès a consisté, d'une part, à revenir sur les principes classiques pour en contester la vérité apodictique, d'autre part à faire surgir des types de relations inédites, imprévisibles.⁷⁰

The most remarkable revelation of the limitations of Proust's Catholic critics is given by the Thomists themselves. Neither master nor disciple finds impropriety in God's absence from art. Aquinas writes:

[Aristotle] teaches that art imitates nature [] . [] the human intellect [] . [] which [] . [] derives from the divine intellect, must necessarily, in those things that it makes, be informed through inspecting those things that are produced naturally, so as to operate in a similar way.⁷¹

Maritain acknowledges the possibility of a "purely practical,

non-conceptual and non-conscious knowledge of God, which can co-exist with a theoretical ignorance of God."⁷²

The Neo-Thomist critics seem to be objecting to the cathedral builder's Platonism and Gallicanism vis-à-vis their own Aristotelianism and ultramontanism. If Proust's Christian dimension is suspect, finally, as more pro forma than otherwise, it is nevertheless not absent. At the very least it can be said of him, as of Henri de Navarre, that he thought Paris worth a mass.

Notes

- 1 Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, IX, (1974; rpt. Garden City, N.Y.: Image-Doubleday, 1977), Part II, p. 87.
- 2 Copleston, p. 105.
- 3 Ramon Fernandez, Messages, (Paris: NRF, 1936), p. 57.
- 4 Alvin Eustis, Marcel Arland, Benjamin Crémieux, Ramon Fernandez: Trois critiques de la Nouvelle Revue Française, (Paris: Debrosse, 1961), p. 156.
- 5 Eustis, p. 153.
- 6 Michel Raimond, La Crise du roman, (Paris: Corti, 1966), p. 99.
- 7 Fernandez, "Le Message de Meredith," in Messages, p. 126.
- 8 Ramon Fernandez, De la personnalité, (Paris: Au Sans Pareil, 1928), p. 101.
- 9 Fernandez, "De la critique philosophique," in Messages, p. 58.
- 10 Fernandez, De la personnalité, p. 49.
- 11 Eustis, p. 152.
- 12 Fernandez, "La Garantie des sentiments et les Intermittences du coeur," in Messages, p. 153.
- 13 Ibid., p. 166.
- 14 Ibid., pp. 160-61.

- 15 Fernandez, De la personnalité, p. 101.
- 16 Ramon Fernandez, "Note sur l'esthétique de Proust," Nouvelle Revue Française, 29 (Aug. 1, 1928), 276.
- 17 Fernandez, "Le Message de Meredith," in Messages, p. 124.
- 18 E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, (N.Y.: Harcourt, 1927), pp. 135-36.
- 19 Etienne Burnet, "Proust et le bergsonisme," in Essences, (Paris: Editions Seheur, 1929), p. 233.
- 20 Burnet, p. 180.
- 21 Interview with Elie J. Bois in Le Temps, Nov. 12, 1913, reprinted in Robert Dreyfus, Souvenirs sur Marcel Proust, (Paris: Grasset, 1926), pp. 285-292.
- 22 For further discussion, see Henri Bonnet, Le Progrès spirituel dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust, vol. 2, (Paris: Vrin, 1949). Also of interest is Elizabeth Jackson's comparison between Proust and Bergson in L'Evolution de la mémoire involontaire dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust, (Paris: Nizet, 1966), pp. 238-51.
- 23 Burnet, p. 205.
- 24 Burnet, p. 217.
- 25 As quoted in Burnet, p. 214.
- 26 III, 885.
- 27 Henri Bergson, La Pensée et le mouvant, (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires, 1950), p. 16.
- 28 I, 183.

- 29 Jacques J. Zéphir, La Personnalité humaine dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust, (Paris: Minard, 1959), p. 188.
- 30 Burnet, p. 201.
- 31 Burnet, p. 218.
- 32 Noël Martin-Deslias, Idéalisme de Marcel Proust, (Paris: Nagel, 1952), p. 196.
- 33 François Mauriac, "Quelques livres," Revue Hebdomadaire, Dec., 1920; "L'Art de Marcel Proust," Revue Hebdomadaire, Feb. 26, 1921; "La Prisonnière," Nouvelle Revue Française, Apr. 1, 1922; and "Sur la Tombe de Marcel Proust," Revue Hebdomadaire, Dec., 1922.
- 34 Mauriac, "Quelques livres," p. 351.
- 35 Mauriac, "L'Art de Marcel Proust," p. 373.
- 36 Ibid., p. 374.
- 37 Mauriac, "La Prisonnière," p. 491.
- 38 Mauriac, "L'Art de Marcel Proust," p. 375.
- 39 Ibid., p. 375.
- 40 Mauriac, "Sur la Tombe de Marcel Proust," p. 8.
- 41 Ibid., p. 8.
- 42 Ibid., p. 8.
- 43 François Mauriac, Du côté de chez Proust, (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1947), p. 124.
- 44 Douglas W. Alden, Marcel Proust and His French Critics, (Los Angeles: Lymanhouse, 1940), p. 111.
- 45 Georges Gabory, Essai sur Marcel Proust, (Paris: Le Livre, 1926), p. 180.
- 46 Gabory, p. 140.

- 47 Gabory, p. 210.
- 48 Gabory, p. 185.
- 49 Gabory condemns Proust's snobism as "fastidieux".
- 50 Gabory, p. 136.
- 51 Gabory, p. 226.
- 52 Gabory, p. 224.
- 53 Gabory, p. 9.
- 54 Henri Massis, Le Drame de Marcel Proust, (Paris: Grasset, 1937), p. 54.
- 55 Massis, p. 82.
- 56 Massis, p. 85.
- 57 Massis, p. 66.
- 58 Massis, p. 114.
- 59 Massis, p. 42.
- 60 Massis, p. 174.
- 61 Massis, p. 167.
- 62 Léon Pierre-Quint, rev. of "Le Drame de Marcel Proust, par Henri Massis," Nouvelle Revue Française, 50 (Jan. 1, 1938), 141.
- 63 Massis, p. 95.
- 64 Massis, pp. 186-87.
- 65 Jacques Maritain, Art et scholastique, (Paris: L. Rouart et fils, 1927), p. 331.
- 66 Maritain, p. 109.
- 67 Marcel Proust, Lettres retrouvées, ed. Philip Kolb, (Paris: Plon, 1966), p. 131.

68 The Grace of Christ and Original Sin, Book 2, in An Augustine Reader, ed. John J. O'Meara, (Garden City, N.Y.: Image-Doubleday, 1973), p. 470.

69 Jacques Rivière and Ramon Fernandez, Moralisme et littérature, (Paris: Corrêa, 1932), p. 80.

70 Léon Brunschvicg, Le Progrès de la conscience, (Paris: Alcan, 1927), p. 705.

71 Commentary on Politics, Prologue, in An Aquinas Reader, ed. Mary T. Clark, (Garden City, N.Y.: Image-Doubleday, 1977), p. 363.

72 Jacques Maritain, The Range of Reason, (N.Y.: Scribners, 1952), p. 70.

Chapter 5
CRITICISM OUTSIDE FRANCE

Proust's novel attracted the attention of prominent critics in England, Spain, Germany and America.¹ Although it is not possible, within the scope of this study, to present a comprehensive picture of critical reaction to A la Recherche outside France, an analysis of the differing foreign perceptions of Proust's novel complements the study of French critical approaches. While no attempt has been made to tie these critics to their own native literary trends, an appraisal of the extent to which contemporary foreign critics shared, added to, or contradicted French opinions of A la Recherche places the French critics in perspective without introducing the complications of hindsight.

England

The very nature of a tribute, hastily compiled to honor a recently-dead author, would seem to insure its superficiality. Although his English readers were among the first to discuss Proust's work seriously, the situation was complicated by the fact that only the volumes of

Du côté de chez Swann had as yet been translated from the French by C. K. Scott Moncrieff.

However, despite the obvious problems presented by both translation and time, the twenty-one authors and critics who contributed to the 1923 Marcel Proust: An English Tribute do perceive many of the basic themes in Proust's novel. Proust is defended against charges of snobbery, praised for his analytic skill and his subjectivity. The most frequent comparisons are with Stendhal, in whose combined objectivity and romanticism George Saintsbury, Arthur Symons, Francis Birrell, Ralph Wright and Compton Mackenzie find a Proustian ancestor. Only Mackenzie contrasts the Stendhalian movement from the general to the particular with the inverse Proustian movement.

Several of the English critics sense, but do not define, a structure in A la Recherche, generally linked to spiritual autobiography (J. Middleton Murry) or music (Ethel C. Mayne, Reginald Turner). The use of musical terminology to describe Proust's novel was a particularly modern phenomenon, which became increasingly popular in France and England after the 1927 publication of E. M. Forster's Aspects of the Novel. Michel Raimond describes the development of a new critical concept of composition, based largely on musical analogies as coincident to "la mesure où les romanciers se détournent de plus en plus de raconter des histoires au profit de développements lyriques ou fantaisistes. . . ." ² While

Forster did not agree that the publication of the final volumes of A la Recherche would make the novel "a perfect whole" and endow it with an "eternal shape,"³ he did see the work as "stitched internally, because it contains rhythms."⁴ In Forster's analysis, music and literature share the ideal goal of expansion as final expression, and rhythm gives the novel an internal unity as valid as that achieved through the imposition of an external plot.

Perhaps the most interesting, because the least general and most suggestive of the positive appraisals in An English Tribute is Joseph Conrad's. His admiration is not for the heralded universal truths in the Proustian novel, but rather for the enlargement of the picture of humanity through Proust's disclosure of "a past like nobody else's. . . ."⁵ Analysis, which is the basis of Proust's creativity, replaces traditional descriptive technique of character portrayal. The beauty of the novel is, according to Conrad, in its appeal to "our sense of wonder."⁶

The generally positive tone inherent to the idea of a tribute attracts interest in the few dissenting essays. For Symons, Proust's novel displays a particularly Latin, and terribly un-British, lack of reserve. Proust's exploration of what the critic terms the "perversity of beauty" is cruel and abnormal.⁷ While Murry praises the analysis of love in Un Amour de Swann, and perceives the composition as reflecting a spiritual search for vocation,

he terms Du côté de chez Swann the work of a dilettante, and Un Amour de Swann "an irrelevant interlude."⁸ These assessments recall the charges of Paul Souday, who found Un Amour de Swann not "positivement ennuyeux, mais un peu banal. . . ."⁹ Arnold Bennett, perhaps the harshest of the detractors, considers Un Amour de Swann and the opening pages of Sodome et Gomorrhe Proust's sole achievements. After Swann, Bennett sees a decline into "orgies of self-indulgence," and the novel becomes monotonous and digressive.¹⁰ The characters are never fully realized, and the lack of structure represents an "outrage of principles of composition which cannot be outraged in a work of the first order."¹¹

The importance of Marcel Proust: An English Tribute lies more in the fact of its existence than in its content. While little can be gleaned of English insight into A la Recherche from the Tribute, a common acknowledgement of what Compton Mackenzie called "the most important literary phenomenon of our time . . ."¹² does emerge.

Spain

Proust's originality, according to Ortega y Gasset's 1923 "Le Temps, la distance et la forme chez Marcel Proust," lies in the limitations of his quest. The Proustian search for a pure memory, one untouched by the present, unexplained by extraneous association, determines the modifications of time, space and form in A la Recherche. While his pre-

decessors expanded and completed memory, Proust's theme is not the object or emotion remembered, but the act of remembering. For Ortega y Gasset, Proust is an investigator, not a restorer, of lost time.

The introspective search for pure memory requires a closer approach to objects and emotions, and results in a radical transformation of literary perspective. Ortega's own theory of perspectivism, defined in El Tema Moderno as "the order and form that reality takes for him who contemplates it"¹³ finds, according to E. R. Curtius, its artistic expression in the Proustian novel.¹⁴

Ortega situates Proust historically within the traditions of late nineteenth-century artistic, philosophical and psychological impressionism. By linking Proust to impressionism, Ortega accounts for the inward turn of the Proustian novel, and its necessarily microscopic vision. Impressionism, according to Ortega, is translated into a philosophic view of reality as composed of fluctuating sensory and emotive states; similarly, in psychology, impressionism rejects the concept of a fixed "character", and regards personality as a series of perpetually changing states. Proust's impressionist tendencies compel him to describe objects by their inner structure, and the accumulation of details, attacked by other critics, is seen by Ortega as consistent with the myopic vision of the Proustian universe. Proust's sentence reflects the contours of the

growth of memory, which, unlike reason, "procède par simple dilatation [.] Se souvenir [.] c'est la croissance de l'espace lui-même."¹⁵

Impressionism, which is the source of the novel's originality, also determines its weaknesses. Ortega condemns the absence of movement in the novel, which modern readers praise as serenity, as an inevitable fault of impressionism. In abandoning the external form of things, Proust must deny any possibility of movement. The static nature of the Proustian universe, where one event does not provoke another event, but rather serves as a pretext for the growth of memory, "martyrise ce caractère dynamique de notre être."¹⁶ Proust's style, in its "exploitation littéraire de cette 'delectatio morosa' que les Conciles ont si sévèrement punie,"¹⁷ opposes and thwarts the reader's natural inclination towards movement. Ortega fails to see that the shift of perspective which makes the Narrator the center of the novel, rather than an appendage to the plot, eliminates the need for external events. The dynamism of the Proustian novel is contained in the dramatic portrayal of the evolution of thought.

Impressionism also accounts, in Ortega's analysis, for the "caractère végétatif"¹⁸ of the Proustian characters. Lacking a definite, physical profile, the characters exist without will; change comes not from within the character, but rather atmospherically, from "les climats physiques

et moraux qui les entourent successivement."¹⁹ In France, the concern for the absence of will in A la Recherche was the province of the moral critics. Ortega's analysis of Proust's characters does not explain the role of will in the social progress of Odette and Mme Verdurin, or in the homosexual conquests of Charlus. The critic also fails to account for the extraordinary relief of the Proustian characters, dependent on the Narrator's perspective for description, and transformed by time.

The basic weakness of Ortega's analysis lies in the impressionistic bias of his approach. Crémieux, who studied Proust's impressionism extensively in XX^e siècle, concluded that "Si l'impressionnisme est à la base de son art, il ne lui paraît valable que digéré, fixé, approfondi par l'intelligence. . . ." ²⁰ Where Curtius found an integration of impression and intellect, Ortega found only impression.

Germany

Ernst Robert Curtius spent the pre-war years in the bi-cultural province of Alsace. His early enthusiasm for the modernist and internationalist principles espoused by the Nouvelle Revue Française and for the poetry of Stefan George was later expanded into a search for a European literature transcending the confines of both nationalism and traditional religion.

Curtius had first met Charles Du Bos in Berlin in 1904,

and again during the 1920's at the literary "décades" at Pontigny. Before Du Bos's 1927 conversion to Catholicism, a shared cosmopolitan and metaphysical approach to literature drew Curtius to Du Bos. In Kritische Essays, Curtius describes Du Bos's writing as marked by "an innate sympathy for [.] 'Metaphysics', which is an element of the German awareness."²¹ Curtius' Platonic reading of Proust can be compared with Du Bos's contemporary finding, in Approximations, I, of a metaphysics in the Proustian movement of thought by virtue of which "nous sommes entraînés, contraints, à rechercher, à poursuivre l'objet dans quelque 'après', dans quelque 'par delà' de lui-même. . . ."²²

The aim of literary criticism, according to Curtius, is not to explain, but rather to point out and suggest. In the first essay on Proust to appear in Germany, written before the publication of Albertine disparue and Le Temps retrouvé, Curtius' combined thematic and technical approach leads to a perceptive and accurate description of both the basic Proustian themes and stylistic technique.

In his essay on Proust, Curtius acknowledges the similarity between his own critical method and the one described by Proust in his study of Ruskin. The primary virtue of a critic lies in his sensitivity to the unique traits of an original artist. The critic's ability to perceive the individual traits of the artist depends on his own passivity and flexibility before the work. Once determined, the

repetition of original constructions leads the critic to the discovery of the "réalité spirituelle"²³ which forms the metaphysical foundation of the work of art.

Perhaps Curtius' most important contribution to Proust scholarship is his refusal to consider A la Recherche as either a psychological or a scientific novel. For Curtius, the fusion of intellect and impression determines both the content and the form of the novel. The dialectic between art and life, art and knowledge, and the relativity of time and space gained through a perspective view are the constants of Proustian thought. Knowledge is the instrument which initiates and allows the perception of reality. Art and life operate in a reciprocal relationship, grounded in an intellectualism which is "le sentiment d'une prise plus intense sur le réel. . . ."²⁴ Just as Proust's art is dependent upon his life experiences, so are the events described heightened by artistic associations (e.g., Odette and Botticelli, Charlus and Balzac).

Proust's relativism, frequently interpreted as skepticism and cynicism by French analysts, is seen by Curtius as a multiplication of reality which, rather than denying value, extends value to all things. The origins of all other relativities (time, art, space, sleep, waking, etc.), lies in perspectivism. A positive relativism forms the creative principle around which the novel is structured, and is the mark of the novel's profound modernism.

Curtius is remarkably perceptive in the sections devoted to stylistic analysis. The critic describes Proustian style as the transcription of a spiritual relationship in which intellectual penetration of the impression results in a perfection of form. The rhythm of the Proustian sentence is wholly personal, and the evocative power results not from an arbitrary accumulation of details, but rather from a "reproduction extraordinairement scrupuleuse et précise des formes les plus caractéristiques de l'object."²⁵ The length of the sentence is a technical device to give greater importance to the closing thought. Curtius was the first to note Proust's use of metaphors as instruments of knowledge necessary to the integration of the material into the spiritual. In his 1928 analysis of Proustian style, Leo Spitzer would concretize many of Curtius' stylistic findings.

The esthetic allusions throughout A la Recherche join Proust to a classical tradition "qui se plaît à tresser autour des situations de la vie quotidienne les guirlandes de la mémoire littéraire."²⁶ Proust's microscopic vision, however, breaks with the one-dimensional movement of classical art, and recalls the details of Oriental art. The grandeur of Proust's art lies in the reflection, through the particular, of "le macrocosme de la totalité spirituelle."²⁷ The concern for nuance, for a precision and refinement in images and ideas, and the recurrent use of vegetal metaphors

are seen by the critic as peculiarly French.

With the pastoral Combray as the center of the novel, both in the sense of geography and character development, the vegetal metaphor manifests itself psychologically in the Narrator's passivity, in the emphasis on the instinctual, on purity and innocence, and in the absence of antagonism between good and evil. The extension of the vegetal metaphor (which Curtius traces to Virgil), to include a vision of society, is consistent with a moral and esthetic neutralization of human life.²⁸ In contrast to the demands of many French Catholic critics, Curtius' broader concern for spirituality in literature exempts Proust's novel from charges of immorality. Proust's contemplative attitude is "au seuil de la mystique comme de toutes les autres formes supérieures de spiritualité."²⁹ In the transmutation of the material by the spiritual, in the esthetic sensation that allows transcendence of reality, in the intemporality of Elstir's paintings, Bergette's novels, and Vinteuil's music, Curtius sees a complete metaphysics, containing "tous les motifs transcendants du platonisme éternel. . . ."³⁰ Although Curtius' Platonic interpretation of A la Recherche may owe more to the critic's own philosophy than to Proust's, this reading persisted. In 1952, Curtius attributes Du Bos's alienation from Proust to the French critic's all-consuming Catholicism, and maintains that, in the metaphysics of

Le Temps retrouvé, "Du Bos's intuitive experiences also could have found their place."³¹

Leo Spitzer's 1928 "Le Style de Marcel Proust" is a more extensive demonstration of many of Curtius' suggestions. Spitzer's approach to Du côté de chez Swann, like Curtius', rests on general principles which correspond to Proust's own critical esthetic. Literary works, viewed as "organismes poétiques en soi . . ." ³² provide both the clue and the matter for Spitzer's textual analysis.

The starting point for Spitzer's critical method, as for Proust's, is the immersion of the critic in the atmosphere of the work. The constant interplay between intuition and intellect, between a view of the part and the whole, between inductive and deductive reasoning, which Spitzer described as forming a "philological circle", corresponds to the Proustian dialectic between subjectivity and objectivity. Spitzer's analysis of a literary work is grounded in a reconciliation between the author's style and world view. The critic is intuitively struck by a stylistic detail in the work, and proceeds, through an exhaustive study of the text, to find the common denominator which unites the detail with the whole. His criterion is coherence, derived from the harmony of style and world view.

Spitzer's stylistic analysis of Du côté de chez Swann confirms the critic's initial premise of a necessary relationship between Proust's style and subject, between

the part and the whole. An analysis of specific Proustian stylistic devices (the varied rhythms, the prolongation of the sentence, the choice of vocabulary), establishes a unity of detail and spirit in Proust's novel.

The Proustian sentence, whose length reflects "sa [Proust's] faculté de voir simultanément les choses les plus diverses,"³³ typically reflects two simultaneous attitudes: the author's serenity and detachment, born of reason, are evident in the clear, disciplined structure of the sentence; his passionate search for reality and desire for precision result in progressive self-corrections, hesitation, and accumulation of details and images. The complexity of the Proustian sentence is the translation of the author's complex view of reality.

Proust's serenity is stylistically transcribed in the symmetry of his sentences, in the use of punctuation to prolong the sentence, and in his choice of vocabulary, tense and grammatical constructions. The progressive divisions of the sentence, slowing its rhythm, are eventually dissolved in the ordering of a complex impression. The parenthetical statements, which most frequently contain facts external to the subjective impression, peripheral impressions, chronological indications, analyses of fact, caricatures, and assertions of general truths, are usually didactic in spirit and represent, for Spitzer, "un nouvel aspect d'une même technique: rattacher allusivement les

faits entre eux, pour restituer la complexité des relations inhérentes à la vie réelle."³⁴

Proust's use of the subjunctive, condemned even by an admirer like Crémieux, is seen by Spitzer as harmonious with both Proust's scientific spirit and the subject matter of his novel. The archaic character of the tense complements a work whose subject is the recapturing of the past. The use of the subjunctive to describe the doubts, fears and desires inherent in psychic experience emphasizes the contrast with the author's objectivity. Spitzer considers Proust's use of "lequel" and "duquel", rather than "qui" and "dont" (attacked as faulty grammar by French critics), and his use of the demonstrative "ce", as characteristic of Proust's scientific tone and search for precision. The frequent borrowing from scientific vocabulary, particularly that of chemistry, is typical of Proust's concern for precision, composition and fusion.

Spitzer finds the subjective component of the Proustian sentence to be basically impressionistic. The accumulation of details provides the rhythmic complement to the complexity of impression. The prolongation of the sentence is not arbitrary; a total impression is described, and the length of the sentence is determined by the duration of the vision. In a sentence constructed by the superposition of several levels, e.g., the description of the stained-glass windows of the church at Combray, the progress of the sentence

follows the movement of the observer's eye, and "La période proustienne, équivalent linguistique du regard, restitue un tableau clair et ordonné du chaos qui s'offre aux yeux."³⁵ Technically, the use of anaphors, indirect discourse, and "c'était" or "c'étaient" enhance subjectivity. The introspective quality of Proust's novel not only justifies his use of the subjunctive, but "entraîne une recrudescence ou une réhabilitation de ce subjonctif affectif."³⁶ The a posteriori self-corrections, the constant additions to and embellishments of images are stylistic devices which reflect the necessarily tentative progress towards an understanding of reality. The recurrence of certain nouns ("irisation", "couleurs naissantes", "apparitions"), and Proust's use of perspective as described by Curtius, are equally impressionistic elements of style.³⁷

Spitzer's conclusions second those of Curtius: both German linguists find in Proust's style a synthesis of intellect and impression. Spitzer's analysis, grounded in a precise and detailed study of stylistic traits, stands in contrast to the contemporary French approach to A la Recherche. While Proust was condemned in his native land as a dissipator of unity, Spitzer finds the novelist's recurrent use of the prefixes "in" and "re" indicative of a search for "l'inaccessible psychique [] .], non la désorganisation de l'organique. . . ." ³⁸ French analysts like Souday and Massis deplored the absence of will in

Preust's novel; both Curtius and Spitzer see will as concentrated in artistic creation, in "la progression résolue des phrases vers leur fin, dans le scellement, le verrouillage de la phrase. . . ."39

Souday's charges that Proust's French was grammatically faulty (conceded by such admirers as Crémieux and Pierre-Quint), and lacking in traditional "Latin qualities", are skillfully refuted by Spitzer's analysis. The German critic finds the Proustian sentence rooted in French classical tradition: "C'est la phrase latine et française élargie et assouplie par l'onomatopée impressionniste. . . ."40

Preust's preference for "qui" and "que", rather than the present participle, restores seventeenth-century tradition, and his use of the subjunctive, which serves the dual purpose of conveying scientific tone and emotional atmosphere, is seen as a preference for "l'archaïsme et, par là même, le 'classicisme' linguistique pénétré d'habitudes latines. . . ."41

The critical method of Curtius and Spitzer seems ideally suited to a study of Proustian style. Spitzer's methodical demonstration of the classical and innovative aspects of Proustian style stands in contrast to the generality of the appraisals of such French supporters of Proust as Jaloux and Pierre-Quint.

America

Edith Wharton's 1924 essay, "Marcel Proust", in

The Writing of Fiction, continues the classical interpretation practiced by French critics of A la Recherche. Proust, by combining literary erudition with a particular, original vision, manages to advance from the past without disowning it, and thus renovates classical tradition. Like Rivière, Thibaudet and Abraham, Wharton finds in Proust the psychology of Racine and the anecdotal, discursive style of Saint-Simon. Proust's originality lies in his syntax, his desultoriness, and in the personal sense of values which determines the inward turn of his novel.

The unity of the early volumes derives from Proust's dual vision, his ability to see simultaneously the whole and the part, to maintain a balance between breadth of vision and "delicacy of touch."⁴² This technique is equally evident in Proust's method of character portrayal, where gestures and words anticipate later developments.

Wharton's condemnation of La Prisonnière as a work born of Proust's own physical and emotional illness leads to an essentially biographical analysis of what are described as "defects in moral sensibility" in A la Recherche.⁴³ The critic perceives "moral blindspots"⁴⁴ in the work which result in a loss of "probableness"⁴⁵ in the characters, and points particularly to the sadism of the scene between Mlle Vinteuil and her friend. In the moral implications of Bergotte's death, which Crémieux considered incidental,⁴⁶ and Curtius interpreted as a model for the passage of

resurrected time from the level of psychology to that of metaphysics, Wharton sees the key to Proust's moral attitude. The omission of any mention of moral or physical courage in this scene reflects, in Wharton's analysis, the fear (of death, responsibility, love, sickness) which dominated Proust's personal life, and forms "the hard delimitation of his artistic temperament."⁴⁷

Wharton adds little to contemporary appraisals in her evaluation of Proust's classicism and morality. The apparent lack of physical and moral courage which, in Wharton's view, accounts for the moral deficiencies of A la Recherche, was condemned early in France, by Paul Souday, under the heading of absence of will, and would later become an integral part of Neo-Thomist censorship of Proust's novel.

The most interesting aspect of Edmund Wilson's 1931 essay, "Marcel Proust", in Axel's Castle, is the critic's perception of not only a logical structure, but also an essential morality in A la Recherche. For Wilson, the novel has a symphonic structure, in whose overture, as Crémieux noted in XX^e siècle, the reader is introduced to not only every important character of the following volumes, but also to all the philosophical themes.

The structure of A la Recherche, in Wilson's analysis, lies in the social episodes, which, although interrupted

by meditations, trace a progression in both time and social ascension. In Du côté de chez Swann, the socially déclassé salons of Mme Verdurin and the slightly more important Mme de St-Euverte are introduced. In the Guermites volume, the Narrator's progress along the aristocratic hierarchy takes him from the salon of the once-scandalous Mme de Villeparisis, to the exclusive company of the Duc and Duchesse de Guermites, and, finally, to the rarefied atmosphere of the reception of the Prince and Princesse de Guermites.

It is in the last three social episodes, all part of the worldly volume Le Côté de Guermites, that Proust's moral attitude emerges. Each successive social conquest is climaxed by an increasingly severe moral judgment. The poignancy of the grandmother's death is heightened by its placement immediately following the reception at Mme de Villeparisis'. The Duc and Duchesse de Guermites' lack of moral sensibility is most graphically conveyed in their reaction to Swann's announcement that he is dying. The guests at the Prince de Guermites' soirée snub Swann, long a welcome and sought-after member of their circle, because of his pro-Dreyfusard stand. In each instance, the vanity of the social situation is underscored by the pathos of the personal situation, and Proust destroys the social hierarchy he has so elaborately set up.

Wilson links the contrast between the "false" values

of the outer world and the principled, intimate family life portrayed in A la Recherche to a particularly Jewish sense of morality. Stendhal, France, Flaubert and Proust all display a cynicism traditional to the French novel; however, Proust's sadness evolves through moral anguish, while disillusion is implicit in the first pages of the novels of Stendhal, France and Flaubert. The alien who emerges from the circle of his grandmother's constancy is filled with the "apocalyptic moral indignation of the classical Jewish prophet" in his gradual discovery of the "false values" and moral mediocrity of society.⁴⁸

The structure derived from the successive social scenes is echoed in the presentation of the Proustian characters, who have roots in either the social world of the Guermantes or the more spiritual world of Combray. The characters in A la Recherche, by illustrating general principles, attain universal significance. The Baron de Charlus, who symbolizes the conflict between masculine and feminine, intellect and passion, owes his role as a tragi-comic hero to Proust's "generous sympathy and understanding for even the monstrosities which humanity produces. . . ." ⁴⁹ Jacques Rivière had previously, using other terms in Moralisme et littérature, opposed the romantic process of rendering a normal man a monster to the Proustian positivism whereby "d'un monstre concret" Proust "va faire un être non plus comme nous, mais commensurable à nous-mêmes, discernable

à notre horizon, connaissable, praticable, déterminable."⁵⁰ Wilson counters the charge of disintegration of personality linked to Proust's method of character portrayal. For Wilson, neither the characters themselves, nor their development are fragmented. What is discontinuous, and original in Proust, is the presentation of characters.

Wilson perceives both the role and the originality of La Prisonnière. What is unconventional in the episode is its neglect of all the standard elements of a love affair, for "it is less the nostalgia for perished beauty and the pathos of wasted passions that move us than the amazement at their obliteration."⁵¹ Wilson has no difficulty in situating La Prisonnière within the framework of the novel: it is the central demonstration of the themes already distinguishable in the Swann-Odette and Saint-Leup-Rachel affairs, and echoed in the Charlus-Morel relationship, the jealous tyranny of Mme Verdurin over the little clan, and the grandmother's constant sacrifices for the Narrator. The lesson of the Albertine experience, where Proust concludes that "les liens entre un être et nous n'existent que dans notre pensée,"⁵² points in the same inward direction as the futility of the excursions into society.

For Wilson, Proust's novel represents both the end and the beginning of an era, integrating as it does the tendencies of both symbolism and modern relativism. The Proustian novel, the first important application of symbolist

principles to the novel, whose subject is the decay of nineteenth-century nobility and romantic idealism is at the same time the literary equivalent of modern physics in the combination of Bergsonian philosophy and Einsteinian relativity through which time becomes a fourth dimension of the novel. The linear progression which Wilson discerns in the novel's social episodes was later found by Germaine Brée in the chronologically-ordered instances of involuntary memory. Wilson's structural and moral analysis of A la Recherche stands in contrast to the contemporary French interpretation of a circular composition, to Spitzer's finding of a mosaic composition, and to the Neo-Thomist moral censorship. For Wilson, not the least of Preust's accomplishments is the construction of a "moral scheme out of phenomena whose moral values are always shifting."⁵³

In his 1939 "The Universe of Death," in The Cosmological Eye, Henry Miller continues many of the themes earlier advanced by Wilson. Miller repeats Wilson's dichotomy between the moral atmosphere of the alien, social world and the particularly Jewish values of the inner, family circle. As did Wilson, Miller perceives the importance of the Albertine episode, which he characterizes as "the core and climax"⁵⁴ of the work, a "Gargantuan" study of doubt and jealousy that surpasses their previous incarnations in Hamlet and Othello.

A la Recherche is the literary representative of both

the end of the nineteenth century and the initiation of a new age. In his surrender to his material, in his questioning of values (as opposed to Joyce's denial of values), in the revelation of the limits of the conscious mind and the concern for a world-view, Proust reflects the culmination of an age.

Proust's modernism lies in his inability to cope with reality, and his impressionism and perspectivism coincide with the emergence of analytic psychology. The novelist's diffraction of incident and character alleviates the suffering tone of the work, and deals the "death-blow to that school of realism which, pretending to be dead, had resuscitated itself under the guise of psychologism."⁵⁵

The esthetic passages anticipate "the birth of a wholly new kind of artist," one whose subject will be the frontier between dream and reality.⁵⁶

While the criticism of Ortega y Gasset, Edith Wharton, and the contributors to Marcel Proust: An English Tribute continues the impressionistic and classical interpretations of the French, and thereby perhaps provokes less interest, the insightful studies of Wilson, Curtius and Spitzer are important additions to Proust scholarship. Most critics outside France were less concerned with moral seriousness than conservative Catholics like Massis, Gabory, Seillière and Brasillach. The Germans and Americans shared

a taste which did not find the classical and the innovative exclusive, and took an actual delight in the novel's defiance of easy category. Sensing the young century their own, they sought in Proust the future of the novel, rather than its denouement.

Notes

¹ While Remy de Gourmont had introduced French readers to D'Annunzio, and Benjamin Crémieux wrote often on Italian literature, Italy was slow to reciprocate. No major Italian study of Proust appeared during this period. Emilio Cecchi's contribution to the Nouvelle Revue Française's 1923 Homage à Marcel Proust and Ugo Ojetti's 1923 entry in Cose viste both represent very general and superficial assessments of A la Recherche.

² Michel Raimond, La Crise du roman, (Paris: Corti, 1966), p. 403.

³ E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, (N.Y.: Harcourt, 1927), p. 236.

⁴ Forster, p. 236.

⁵ Joseph Conrad, "Proust as Creator," in Marcel Proust: An English Tribute, ed. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, (N.Y.: Thomas Seltzer, 1923), p. 126.

⁶ Conrad, p. 127.

⁷ Arthur Symens, "A Casuist in Souls," in Marcel Proust: An English Tribute, p. 140.

⁸ J. Middleton Murry, "Proust and the Modern Consciousness," in Marcel Proust: An English Tribute, p. 105.

- ⁹ Paul Souday, Marcel Proust, (Paris: Kra, 1927), p. 15.
- ¹⁰ Arnold Bennett, "The Last Word," in Marcel Proust: An English Tribute, p. 146.
- ¹¹ Bennett, p. 146.
- ¹² Compton Mackenzie, "A Reader's Gratitude," in Marcel Proust: An English Tribute, p. 60.
- ¹³ José Ortega y Gasset, The Modern Theme, trans. James Cleugh, (N.Y.: Harpers, 1961), p. 142.
- ¹⁴ Ernst Robert Curtius, "Ortega y Gasset," in Essays on European Literature, trans. Michael Kowal, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), p. 298.
- ¹⁵ José Ortega y Gasset, "Le Temps, la distance et la forme chez Marcel Proust," in Hommage à Marcel Proust, (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), p. 298.
- ¹⁶ Ortega y Gasset, "Le Temps, la distance et la forme," p. 297.
- ¹⁷ Ortega y Gasset, "Le Temps, la distance et la forme," p. 297.
- ¹⁸ Ortega y Gasset, "Le Temps, la distance et la forme," p. 295.
- ¹⁹ Ortega y Gasset, "Le Temps, la distance et la forme," p. 295.
- ²⁰ Benjamin Crémieux, XX^e siècle, (Paris: Gallimard, 1924), p. 82.
- ²¹ From Kritische Essays, as quoted in Arthur R. Evans, Jr., "Ernst Robert Curtius," in On Four Modern Humanists, (Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), p. 102.

- 22 Charles Du Bos, Approximations, I, (1932; rpt. Paris: Fayard, 1965), p. 16.
- 23 Ernst Robert Curtius, Marcel Proust, trans. Armand Pierhal, (Paris: La Revue Nouvelle, 1928), p. 16.
- 24 Curtius, Marcel Proust, p. 46.
- 25 Curtius, Marcel Proust, p. 63.
- 26 Curtius, Marcel Proust, p. 51.
- 27 Curtius, Marcel Proust, p. 126.
- 28 Curtius, Marcel Proust, p. 113.
- 29 Curtius, Marcel Proust, p. 96.
- 30 Curtius, Marcel Proust, p. 150.
- 31 Ernst Robert Curtius, "Charles Du Bos," in Essays on European Literature, p. 278.
- 32 Leo Spitzer, "Les Etudes de style et les différents pays," Actes du VIII Congrès de la Fédération internationale des Langues et Littératures modernes, Université de Liège, 1961, as quoted in Jean Starobinski, Introduction, Etudes de style, by Leo Spitzer, trans. Eliane Kaufholz, Alain Coulin, Michel Foucault, (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), p. 25.
- 33 Leo Spitzer, "Le Style de Marcel Proust," in Etudes de style, p. 399.
- 34 Spitzer, "Le Style de Marcel Proust," p. 416.
- 35 Spitzer, "Le Style de Marcel Proust," p. 402.
- 36 Spitzer, "Le Style de Marcel Proust," p. 433.
- 37 Spitzer, "Le Style de Marcel Proust," pp. 464-65.
- 38 Spitzer, "Le Style de Marcel Proust," p. 448.

- 39 Spitzer, "Le Style de Marcel Proust," p. 407.
- 40 Spitzer, "Le Style de Marcel Proust," p. 410.
- 41 Spitzer, "Le Style de Marcel Proust," p. 434.
- 42 Edith Wharton, "Marcel Proust," in The Writing of Fiction, (1924; rpt. N.Y.: Octagon, 1966), p. 166.
- 43 Wharton, p. 171.
- 44 Wharton, p. 172.
- 45 Wharton, p. 173.
- 46 Crémieux dees, however, see a morality in A la Recherche which, through the constant effort of the intellect, is "preche parente à la fois de l'ataraxie stoïcienne et du renoncement chrétien," XX^e siècle, p. 98.
- 47 Wharton, p. 177.
- 48 Edmund Wilson, "Marcel Proust," in Axel's Castle, (N.Y.: Scribners, 1931), p. 144.
- 49 Wilson, p. 138.
- 50 Jacques Rivière and Ramon Fernandez, Moralisme et littérature, (Paris: Corrêa, 1932), p. 81.
- 51 Wilson, p. 154.
- 52 III, 57.
- 53 Wilson, p. 163.
- 54 Henry Miller, "The Universe of Death," in The Cosmological Eye, (Norfolk, Conn: New Directions, 1939), p. 118.
- 55 Miller, p. 129.
- 56 Miller, p. 127.

CONCLUSION

It is a commonly remarked phenomenon that an original work, almost by definition, requires several generations before its originality is recognized and it takes its place as a standard by which other works in turn are judged. Contemporary critics, like the Buddhist blindmen and the elephant, know that they have something unusual in hand but are hard put to describe it in terms other than the usual. Succeeding generations build upon these descriptions and eventually a clear understanding of the work emerges. A la Recherche, a work of such originality that it is today classed with James Joyce's Ulysses as one of the seminal works of modern prose literature, and which, moreover, takes as one of its themes the relation of esthetic understanding to time, is especially vulnerable to this phenomenon. This study documents the processes by which the understanding of Proust, as it existed on the eve of World War II, came into being.

What emerges most clearly as a general characteristic of Proust criticism during the period studied is the disparity between critical enthusiasm for A la Recherche in the 1920's and the rejection of the novel in the following decade. The differing critical appraisals of the novel

during these two decades coincide, to some degree, with the changing mood of the times. The immediate post-war period's cult of the individual, of adolescence, of emotion and nostalgia read their concerns into A la Recherche. In the 1930's, a countering movement towards populism, "unanisme" and collectivism, joined with a romanticizing of action and the intellectual appeal of Neo-Thomism contributed to Proust's declining popularity.

In the 1920's, interpretations tended towards a reconciliation between past and present, between classicism and modernism. Whether approaching the novel from a psychoanalytical, philosophical or stylistic bias, criticism attempted to both place Proust within an historic tradition and link him to contemporary trends in other disciplines.

While necessarily limited in scope, the critics who adopted a psychological approach to A la Recherche arrived at the most positive appraisals of the novel. In their analyses of the psychoanalytical dimension of Proust's novel, Jacques Rivière, and Benjamin Crémieux after him, saw Proust as both a descendent of Racine and a contemporary of Freud. Rivière's analogy between Proust and Freud, linking the novelist to the psychoanalyst through their common skepticism and scientific approach to affective phenomena, their simultaneous discovery of the symbiotic relationship of love and suffering, is the first modern reading of A la Recherche. Crémieux' deduction of Proustian esthetics

from the 1904 text, "Journées de lecture", led to a psychologically-based legitimization of Proustian character portrayal, morality and style. Charles Du Bos, in relating the lyricism of Proustian psychological analysis to metaphysics, focused attention on the poetry of the novel.

In the 1930's, psychological criticism is dominated by an increasingly technical approach to literary analysis and a rejection of the intense subjectivity of the post-war years. Arnaud Dandieu's and Charles Blondel's application of psychological theory to A la Recherche analyze the part while losing sight of the whole. Although Robert Brasillach seemed somewhat sensitive to Proustian poetry, both he and Ernest Seillière seem untouched by modern psychology, involved in the past to the point of a crippling conservatism. The psychologically-oriented critics of the 1930's lacked the instinct, the curiosity and the courage of their colleagues in the preceding decade. The apparent lack of social conscience in Proust's novel, the literary movement towards a synthesis of the individual and the collective in the works of Saint-Exupéry and Montherlant, the metaphysical reading of Malraux' novels, discredited a psychology now seen as the privilege of a vanishing leisured, egoistic class.

The prevailing Bergsonianism and the common perception of Einsteinian physics in the immediate post-war period

contributed to a philosophic reading of A la Recherche grounded in theories of perspectivism and relativism. Certainly, Ramon Fernandez' search for moral and philosophic certainties in literature and Etienne Burnet's attempt to establish a parallel between Proust and Bergson reflect more closely the preoccupations of their times than a lasting interpretation of A la Recherche. Fernandez' infatuation with Meredith, whose stature had already come under attack in England, governs his philosophic approach and distorts his analysis of Proust's novel. While Proust and Bergson do share a concern for common problems and themes (time, memory, sleep, dream, intuition, art), their relationship has been shown by more recent scholarship to have been considerably more complex than originally perceived and greatly overrated. Burnet's analysis of Proust's Bergsonism did, however, serve at the time to mitigate critical censorship of Proust as a straying Bergsonian.

The absence of God in Proust's novel, first noted by François Mauriac in 1922, became the focal point of moral censorship of A la Recherche in the 1930's. While Bergsonian philosophy was interpreted in the 1920's as the teaching of a morality founded on life, a significant decline of Proust's popularity in France coincides with a resurgence of religious orthodoxy. The demand for an art inspired by traditional values led critics like

Georges Gabory and Henri Massis to a condemnation of the "immorality" of Proust's novel. It seems safe to suggest a correlation between the increased public awareness of Proust's private life, through the publication of correspondence and memoirs, and the growing moral censorship of the novel. Proust's clear statement, in Le Temps retrouvé, of his esthetic and ethical position passed unnoticed.

The study of critical appraisal of Proust's style and composition provides perhaps the most flagrant example of failure to perceive and accommodate originality. The few positive evaluations of Proustian style showed the path of future scholarship: Edmond Jaloux and Léon Pierre-Quint instinctively appreciated Proust's style; Albert Feuillerat's theory of dual composition inadvertently focused attention on the poetry of the early volumes. However, Jaloux, Pierre-Quint and Feuillerat seem to surround the subject without ever penetrating it. Paul Souday's condemnation of Proust's style as incorrect, "un-Latin", clumsy, cluttered and imprecise, grounded in his attempt to apply past standards to present works, represents the dominant trend of the early formal criticism of A la Recherche, and one in which even so astute a critic as André Gide initially shared. The novel which is today considered a standard of lucidity, of poetry, and of prose passed unrecognized in its own time.

Feuillerat's attempt to impose a clear order of composition on Proust's novel, and Albert Thibaudet's effort to situate Proust historically within a tradition of Montaigne and Saint-Simon, while provocative, are evidence of the critical confusion attendant upon a work which does not conform to past models. Only Crémieux' characterization of a circular composition stands out against a background of censorship for lack of structure and organization.

Proust's novel shocked and provoked the best intellects of his time. While some part of the superficiality, lack of insight or misjudgment in appraising A la Recherche may be attributed to journalistic haste or academic conservatism, the study of the history of critical perceptions of the novel by Proust's contemporaries and his immediate successors tends to confirm Proust's own thesis, set forth in Centre Sainte-Beuve and A la Recherche: the criteria by which an original work may be judged are intrinsic to that work, and the new work slowly creates its own audience. Proust's novel eluded explanation grounded in terms of the past, and forced those who sought to understand it to adopt the novelist's own terms. Proust knew that an original work would be subject to charges of difficulty or obscurity until the passage of time had allowed the growth of intimacy between the reader and a new language and structure.

The force of Beuvian biographical criticism, condemned by Proust as misleading and extraneous, emerges clearly in the critical confusion between creator and creation, in the transference of terms describing Proust's social life (mendain, snob, esthete, salonnard) to a characterization of his novel.

While much of the criticism of the 1920's and 1930's now seems partial and ephemeral, deserving of the obscurity into which it has fallen, the instances of sensitive and lucid analysis of Proust's novel helped shape our present understanding, and determined in part the orientation of later criticism. Proust's most perceptive critics can be linked to later developments in both critical method and assessment of A la Recherche: Rivière's criticism, towards the end of his career, seemed to be evolving into a modern psychoanalytic approach to literature; Du Bos has been credited by Poulet as an ancestor of critical identification; Thibaudet, in suggesting analogies between Proust, Saint-Simon and Montaigne, provided topics for further research; the writings of Jaloux, Pierre-Quint, Crémieux and Feuillerat indicated the future direction of Proust scholarship towards an appreciation of what has proven to be the novel's most lasting and valued quality, its poetry.

The novel was a grand synthesis of many esthetic trends of the time. While critics called attention to

the treatment of those to which they were partisan, they often failed to note the more powerful dialectic.

The study of critical perception of A la Recherche during the 1920's and the 1930's is of interest to both historians of criticism and Proust scholars. A case study of the perennial misunderstanding in the wake of an innovative work of art, which later generations come to recognize as a definitive masterpiece, is the basic material essential to all students of this phenomenon. A further history of Proust scholarship after World War II, the groundwork of which may be found in the present study, would contribute to an understanding of the processes through which our present reading of Proust has evolved, and conceivably reveal a continuity of developing perceptions to which future readers of the novel might address themselves.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

A. Texts by Proust

1. Works

A la Recherche du temps perdu. 3 vols. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard, 1954.

I: Du côté de chez Swann. A l'Ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs.

II: Le Côté de Guermantes. Sodome et Gomorrhe.

III: La Prisonnière. La Fugitive. Le Temps retrouvé.

Chroniques. Paris: Gallimard, 1927.

Contre Sainte-Beuve précédé de Pastiches et mélanges et suivi de Essais et articles. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.

Jean Santeuil précédé de Les Plaisir et les jours. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.

2. Correspondence

Auteur de soixante lettres de Marcel Proust. By Lucien Daudet. Paris: Gallimard, 1929.

Correspondance de Marcel Proust et de Jacques Rivière. Ed. Philip Kolb. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.

Correspondance générale. 6 vols. Paris: Plon, 1930-1936.

Lettres à André Gide. Neuchâtel et Paris: Ides et Calendes, 1949.

Lettres à la Nouvelle Revue Française. Paris: Gallimard, 1932.

Lettres retrouvées. Ed. Philip Kolb. Paris: Plon, 1966.

Souvenirs sur Marcel Proust, accompagnés de lettres inédites.
By Robert Dreyfus. Paris: Grasset, 1926.

Le Visiteur du soir, suivi de quarante-cinq lettres inédites de Marcel Proust. By Paul Morand. Paris: La Palatine, 1949.

B. Articles and Works by Proust's Critics Treated
in this Study

Abraham, Pierre. Proust: Recherches sur la création intellectuelle. 1930; rpt. Paris: Les Editeurs Français Réunis, 1971.

Blondel, Charles. La Psychographie de Marcel Proust. Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1932.

Brasillach, Robert. "Portraits." Vol. VII of Oeuvres complètes. Paris: Au Club de l'honnête homme, 1964, pp. 205-243.

----- . Les Quatre jeudis. Paris: Editions Balzac, 1944.

Burnet, Etienne. "Proust et le bergsonisme." In Essences. Paris: Editions Seheur, 1929, pp. 165-252.

Crémieux, Benjamin. Du côté de Marcel Proust. Paris: Editions Lemargot, 1929.

----- . Inquiétude et reconstruction; Inventaires; Essai sur la littérature d'après-guerre. Paris: Corréa, 1931.

----- . XX^e siècle. Paris: Gallimard, 1925.

Curtius, Ernst Robert. Essays on European Literature. Trans. Michael Kewal. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973.

----- . "Marcel Proust," In Hommage à Marcel Proust. 1923; rpt. Paris: Gallimard, 1927.

----- . Marcel Proust. Trans. Armand Pierhal. Paris: La Nouvelle Revue, 1928.

Dandieu, Arnaud. Marcel Proust: sa révélation psychologique. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1930.

Du Bos, Charles. Approximations. 1932; rpt. Paris: Fayard, 1965, Vols. I and II.

----- . Journal. Vol. I. Paris: Corréa, 1946. Vol. II, 1949.

- . Qu'est-ce que la littérature? et dernier Journal intime suivi de Hommage à Charles Du Bos. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1945.
- Fernandez, Ramon. "L'Accent perdu." In Hommage à Marcel Proust. 1923; rpt. Paris: Gallimard, 1927, pp. 94-96.
- . Rev. of André Gide; Marcel Proust; Paul Valéry, by Paul Souday. Nouvelle Revue Française, May 1, 1928, pp. 619-93.
- . De la personnalité. Paris: Au Sens Pareil, 1928.
- . Messages. Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française, 1926.
- . "Note sur l'esthétique de Proust." Nouvelle Revue Française, Aug. 1, 1928, pp. 272-80.
- . "Poétique du roman." Nouvelle Revue Française. 33 (1929), 824-29.
- . Proust. Paris: Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1943.
- . "La Vie sociale dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust." Preface, Répertoire des personnages de A la Recherche du temps perdu. By Charles Daudet. Paris: Gallimard, 1927, pp. VII-XXIII.
- Feuillerat, Albert. Comment Marcel Proust a composé son roman. Yale Romanic Studies VII. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1934.
- Gabery, Georges. Essai sur Marcel Proust. Paris: Le Livre, 1926.
- Jaloux, Edmond. Avec Marcel Proust. Paris: La Palatine, 1953.
- . Rev. of Le Drame de Marcel Proust, by Henri Massis. Nouvelles Littéraires, Feb. 12, 19, 1938, p. 4.
- . Essences. Paris: Plon, 1952.
- . L'Esprit des livres. Vols. I and II. Paris: Plon, 1923, 1927.
- . Rev. of Marcel Proust; Paul Valéry; André Gide, by Paul Souday. Nouvelles Littéraires, Sept. 17, 1927.
- . "Marcel Proust, ses critiques." Nouvelles Littéraires, Aug. 29, 1925.

- , "Sur Jean-Paul et Marcel Proust." Nouvelles Littéraires, Aug. 28, 1926.
- , "La Vie littéraire." Revue Hebdomadaire, May 21, 1921, p. 327.
- Massis, Henri. Le Drame de Marcel Proust. Paris: Grasset, 1937.
- Mauriac, François. Du côté de chez Proust. Paris: La Table Ronde, 1947.
- , Rev. of La Prisonnière, by Marcel Proust. Nouvelle Revue Française, Apr. 1, 1922, pp. 489-93.
- , "Proust et ses vrais amis." Journal. Paris: Grasset, 1937, Vol. II.
- , "Le Proust russe attendu." Nouvelles Littéraires, Dec. 8, 1934.
- , "Quelques livres." Revue Hebdomadaire, Dec., 1920, p. 351.
- , Le Romancier et ses personnages. Paris: Corrêa, 1933.
- , "Sur la Tombe de Marcel Proust." Revue Hebdomadaire, Dec., 1922, pp. 5-9.
- Miller, Henry. "The Universe of Death." In The Cosmological Eye. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1939.
- Ortega y Gasset, José. The Modern Theme. Trans. James Cleugh. New York: Harpers, 1961.
- , "Le Temps, la distance et la forme chez Marcel Proust." In Hommage à Marcel Proust. 1923; rpt. Paris: Gallimard, 1927, pp. 287-99.
- Pierre-Quint, Léon. Rev. of Le Drame de Marcel Proust, by Henri Massis. Nouvelle Revue Française, Jan. 1, 1938, pp. 140-42.
- , Marcel Proust, sa vie, son oeuvre. 2nd ed. Paris: Kra, 1928.
- , Rev. of Proust, by Pierre Abraham. Europe, Aug. 15, 1931, pp. 579-82.
- Rivière, Jacques. The Ideal Reader. Trans., Intro., Ed. Blanche Price. Preface, Henri Peyre. New York: Meridian Books, 1960.

- , and Ramon Fernandez. Moralisme et littérature. Paris: Corrêa, 1932.
- . Nouvelles Études. Paris: Gallimard, 1947.
- , Quelques progrès dans l'étude du coeur humain. Paris: Librairie de France, 1926.
- Scott Moncrieff, C. K., ed. Marcel Proust: An English Tribute. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1923.
- Seillière, Ernest. Marcel Proust. Paris: Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1931.
- Souday, Paul, Rev. of "De Loti à Proust, par Louis de Robert, Mes Modèles, par Jacques-Émile Blanche, Au Bal avec Marcel Proust, par la Princesse Bibesco, Quelques lettres et vers à Mesdames Laure Heyman et Louise de Mornand, Deux correspondances de Marcel Proust, un catalogue, par Georges Andrieux." Le Temps, Jan. 10, 1929.
- . Rev. of A la Recherche du temps perdu, t. VIII, Le Temps retrouvé, Chroniques, Hommage à Marcel Proust. Le Temps, Nov. 17, 1927.
- . Marcel Proust. Paris: Kra, 1927.
- . "Un peu de Proust." Le Temps, Apr. 12, 1929.
- . "Quelques vues sur Marcel Proust." Le Temps, Oct. 25, 1928.
- . "Questions de style." La Revue de Paris, Jan. 15, 1921, pp. 381-96.
- . "Rilke et Jaloux." Le Temps, Aug. 11, 1927.
- Spitzer, Leo. "Le Style de Marcel Proust." In Études de style. Trans. Eliane Kaufholz, Alain Coulon, Michel Foucault. Paris: Gallimard, 1970, pp. 397-479.
- Thibaudet, Albert. Rev. of Albertine disparue, by Marcel Proust. Europe Nouvelle, Feb. 13, 1926, pp. 213-14.
- . "Discussion sur le moderne." Nouvelle Revue Française, May 1, 1920, p. 737.
- . "Le Fantôme de l'obscurisme." Nouvelles Littéraires, Feb. 4, 1928.
- . Les Heures de l'Acropole. Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française, 1913.

- . Histoire de la littérature française de 1789 à nos jours. Paris: Librairie Stock, 1936.
- . Physiologie de la critique. Paris: La Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1930.
- . Rev. of La Prisonnière, by Marcel Proust. Europe Nouvelle, Feb. 9, 1924, pp. 178-79.
- . Réflexions sur la critique. Paris: Gallimard, 1939.
- . Réflexions sur la littérature. Paris: Gallimard, 1938.
- . "Le Rire de Molière." Revue de Paris, 1 (1922), 312.
- . Trente ans de vie française. 3 vols. Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française, 1921-1923.
- Vignerot, Robert. "Genèse de Swann." Revue d'histoire et de la philosophie et d'histoire générale de la civilisation, Lille: Jan. 15, 1937, pp. 67-115.
- Wharton, Edith. The Writing of Fiction. 1924; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1966.
- Wilson, Edmund. Axel's Castle. New York: Scribner's, 1931.

Secondary Sources

A. Articles and Works on Proust

- Alden, Douglas W. Marcel Proust and His French Critics. Los Angeles: Lymanhouse, 1940.
- Bardèche, Maurice. Marcel Proust romancier. 2 vols. Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1971.
- Bersani, Jacques. Les Critiques de notre temps et Proust. Paris: Garnier, 1971.
- Bonnet, Henri. Marcel Proust de 1907 à 1914, avec une bibliographie générale. Paris: Nizet, 1971.
- . Le Progrès spirituel dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust. Vol. II. Paris: J. Vrin, 1949.
- Brée, Germaine. Du temps perdu au temps retrouvé. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1969.

- Chantal, René de. Marcel Proust, critique littéraire.
2 vols. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de
Montréal, 1967.
- Gide, André. "Billet à Angèle." In Incidences. Paris:
Nouvelle Revue Française, 1924.
- Hommage à Marcel Proust. 1923; rpt. Paris: Gallimard, 1927.
- Jackson, Elizabeth. L'Évolution de la mémoire involontaire
dans l'œuvre de Marcel Proust. Paris: Nizet, 1956.
- Kolb, Philip, and Georges Cattau, ed. Entretiens sur
Marcel Proust. Paris: Mouton, 1966.
- Martin-Desliars, Noël. Idéalisme de Marcel Proust. Paris:
Editions Nagel, 1952.
- Mauriac, Claude. Marcel Proust par lui-même. Paris:
Editions du Seuil, 1953.
- Milly, Jean. Proust et le style. Paris: Minard, 1970.
- Mouton, Jean. Le Style de Marcel Proust. Paris: Nizet, 1968.
- Ojetti, Ugo. As They Seemed to Me. Trans. Henry Furst.
London: Methuen and Co., 1928.
- Peyre, Henri. "Marcel Proust, Peintre et analyste de l'amour."
In Hommes et œuvres du XX^e siècle. Paris: Corrêa, 1938,
pp. 149-78.
- . Marcel Proust. New York: Columbia Univ. Press,
1970.
- Strauss, Walter A. Proust and Literature: The Novelist as
Critic. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1957.
- Tadié, Jean-Yves. Lectures de Proust. Paris: Librairie
Armand Colin, 1971.
- . Proust et le roman. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.
- Ullmann, Stephen. Style in the French Novel. Cambridge:
The University Press, 1957.
- Zéphir, Jacques J. La Personnalité humaine dans l'œuvre
de Marcel Proust. Paris: Minard, 1959.

B. Articles and Works on Proust's Critics Treated
in this Study

- Bossière, Jacques. "Autour de Charles Du Bos, critique et critiques." L'Esprit Créateur, 14, No. 2 (Summer, 1974), 149-61.
- . Perception critique et sentiment de vivre chez Charles Du Bos. Paris: Nizet, 1967.
- Canu, Jean. "Arnaud Dandieu et la jeunesse française contemporaine." Revue Bleue, 16 (Aug., 1935), 555-65.
- Cook, Bradford. Jacques Rivière: A Life of the Spirit. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958.
- Davies, John C. L'Oeuvre critique d'Albert Thibaudet. Genève: Librairie E. Droz, 1955.
- Dédoyan, Charles. Le Cosmopolitisme de Charles Du Bos. Paris: Société d'Édition d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1966, Vol. II.
- Devaud, Marcel. Albert Thibaudet, critique de la poésie et des poètes. Fribourg: Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1967.
- Eustis, Alvin. Marcel Arland, Benjamin Crémieux, Ramon Fernandez: trois critiques de la Nouvelle Revue Française. Paris: Nouvelles Editions Debresse, 1961.
- . "Rivière's Crew: Crémieux, Fernandez, Arland." L'Esprit Créateur, 14, No. 2 (Summer 1974), 138-45.
- Evans, Jr., Arthur R. "Ernst Robert Curtius." In On Four Modern Humanists. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970, pp. 85-145.
- Hommage à Albert Thibaudet. Nouvelle Revue Française, July, 1936.
- Hommage à Jacques Rivière, 1886-1925. Nouvelle Revue Française, Apr. 1, 1925.
- Hytier, Jean. "La Méthode de M. Leo Spitzer." Romanic Review, 41 (1950), 42-59.
- Kelbert, Jack. Edmond Jaloux et sa critique littéraire. Paris: Minard, 1962.
- Lefèvre, Frédéric. Une Heure avec . . . Série 2. Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française, 1924.

Naughton, Helen Thomas. Jacques Rivière: The Development of a Man and a Creed. Paris: Mouton, 1966.

Pelegrin, René. Un écrivain nommé Brasillach. Laval: Centre d'études nationales, 1965.

Peyre, Henri. Avant Propos. Studia philologica et litteraria in honorem L. Spitzer. Ed. A. G. Hatcher-K. L. Selig. Bern: Verlag, 1958.

----- "Jacques Rivière and the Pursuit of Truth." L'Esprit Créateur, 14, No. 2 (Summer 1974), 110-20.

Poulet, Georges. La Conscience critique. Paris: José Corti, 1971.

Rimbaud, Henri. "Vues sur Albert Thibaudet." L'Esprit Créateur, 14, No. 2 (Summer 1974), 163-71.

Raymond, Marcel. Etudes sur Jacques Rivière. Paris: José Corti, 1972.

----- "Jacques Rivière devant l'histoire et les nationalités." L'Esprit Créateur, 14, No. 2 (Summer 1974), 121-37.

Richard, Jean-Pierre. "La Méthode critique de Charles Du Bos." Modern Language Review, No. 62 (1967), 420-29.

Sthène de Jubécourt, Gérard. Robert Brasillach, critique littéraire. Lausanne: Les Amis de Robert Brasillach, 1975.

Turnell, Martin. Jacques Rivière. Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, Ltd., 1953.

Vandromme, Pel. Robert Brasillach: l'homme et l'oeuvre. Paris: Plon, 1956.

Wellek, René. "Leo Spitzer." Comparative Literature, 12 (1960), 311-32.

----- "Poulet, Du Bos and Identification." Comparative Literature Studies, 10, No. 2 (June 1973), 173-93.

C. General Studies

Aquinas. Commentary on Politics. Prologue. In An Aquinas Reader. Ed. Mary T. Clark. Garden City, N.Y.: Image-Doubleday, 1972, pp. 363-66.

- Augustine. The Grace of Christ and Original Sin. Book 2.
In An Augustine Reader. Ed. John J. O'Meara. Garden
City, N.Y.: Image-Doubleday, 1973, pp. 443-90.
- Baldensperger, Fernand. L'Avant-guerre dans la littérature
française, 1900-1914. Paris: Payot & Cie., 1919.
- La Littérature française entre les deux guerres.
Los Angeles: Lymanhouse, 1941.
- Bergson, Henri. La Pensée et le mouvant. Paris: Les Presses
Universitaires, 1950.
- Brunschvicg, Léon. Le Progrès de la conscience dans la
philosophie occidentale. Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan,
1927.
- Cazamian, Louis. Criticism in the Making. New York:
Macmillan Co., 1929.
- Copleston, Frederick. A History of Philosophy. Vol. IX,
Part II. 1974; rpt. Garden City, N.Y.: Image-
Doubleday, 1977.
- Edel, Leon. The Modern Psychological Novel. New York:
Grosset & Dunlap, 1964.
- Forman, Maurice Buxton, ed. George Meredith: Some Early
Appreciations. New York and London: Kennikat Press, 1909.
- Forster, E. M. Aspects of the Novel. New York: Harcourt,
Brace & co., 1927.
- Greene, Nathanael. From Versailles to Vichy: The Third
French Republic, 1919-1940. New York: Thomas Y.
Crowell Co., 1970.
- Hazlitt, Henry. The Anatomy of Criticism. New York:
Simon & Schuster, 1933.
- Johnson, Jr., J. Theodore. "Literary Impressionism in
France: A Survey of Criticism." L'Esprit Créateur,
13, No. 4 (Winter, 1973), 271-97.
- Le Bideis, Robert. L'Inversion du sujet dans la prose
contemporaine (1900-1950), étudiée plus spécialement
dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust. Paris: Editions
d'Artrey, 1952.
- Lubbock, Percy. The Craft of Fiction. New York: Viking
Press, 1957.

- MacCarthy, Desmond. Criticism. New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1932.
- Maritain, Jacques. Art et scholastique. Paris: L. Rouart et fils, 1927.
- , The Range of Reason. New York: Scribners, 1952.
- Muir, Edwin. The Structure of the Novel. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1929.
- , Transition: Essays on Contemporary Criticism. New York: Viking Press, 1926.
- Peyre, Henri. The Contemporary French Novel. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955.
- , Failures of Criticism. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967.
- , Les Générations littéraires. Paris: Boivin et Cie., 1948.
- , Qu'est-ce que le classicisme? Paris: Nizet, 1965.
- , Qu'est-ce que le romantisme? Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971.
- Picon, Gaeton. Panorama nouvelle de la littérature française. Paris: Gallimard, 1960.
- Raimond, Michel. La Crise du roman. Paris: José Corti, 1966.
- Seignobos, Charles. Essai d'une histoire comparée des peuples de l'Europe. Paris: Editions Rieder, 1938, pp. 398-486.
- , Histoire sincère de la nation française. Paris: Les Editions Rieder, 1933, pp. 451-504.
- Trilling, Lionel. "Manners, Morals and the Novel." In The Liberal Imagination. New York: Viking Press, 1948.
- Wellek, René. Concepts of Criticism. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963.
- , and Austin Warren. Theory of Literature. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1942.