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## 4.4 Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*

Carmela Marranchino

The analysis of Proust's manuscripts, which has steadily increased since 1962 (when the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) purchased a few autographs that had been in the possession of his heirs for years), is an exemplary case of French *critique génétique* (see section 1.4) in action. At the same time, the reconstruction of the history of the text of *À la recherche du temps perdu* has resulted in a fruitful, constant, theoretical and methodological reflection within the discipline, including recent digital developments. It is exemplary due to the complexity of Proust's *modus operandi*; the centrifugal structure of the novel that takes place through a proliferation of textual units without following a firmly established plan; the rich, varied handwritten documents; and even the problems surrounding its publishing, partially imposed by Proust (up to his death on 17 November 1922) and partially compromised posthumously by the arbitrary 'restoration' done by his heirs and publishers.

In 1912, Proust submitted the typewritten documents of the first part of a novel titled *Les intermittences du coeur* (according to the original plan) to various publishers, dividing it into two parts: *Le temps perdu* and *Le temps retrouvé*. After being rejected by Fasquelle, by André Gide on behalf of Gallimard's *Nouvelle Revue Française* (NRF), and by Ollendorf, the first volume appeared with the title *Du côté de chez Swann*, published by Bernard Grasset at the expense of the author in 1913. Although it was to include another two volumes, *Le côté de Guermantes* and *Le temps retrouvé*, their publication was interrupted by the outbreak of WWI. Publication was resumed only in 1919 by NRF, which released a new edition of *Du côté de chez Swann* while the author was still alive (which varied from Grasset's version), and the books *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* (1919), *Le côté de Guermantes I* and *II* (1920–1921), and *Sodome et Gomorrhe I* and *II* (1921–1922). *La prisonnière*, the correct typewritten version of which Proust managed to send to Gallimard in time, was issued posthumously, with the subtitle *Sodome et Gomorrhe III* (1923). Other posthumous publications included *Albertine disparue* (1925) and *Le temps retrouvé* (1927), edited by Proust's brother Robert and by scholars Jacques Rivière and Jean Paulhan who, worried about ensuring the text was comprehensible,

presented a contradiction-free follow-up novel as if it had been completed by Proust himself, all while quietly implementing their heavy-handed interventions behind the scenes.

This textual arrangement was canonized by the subsequent editions published by Gallimard in the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. The first was issued in three volumes edited by Pierre Clarac and André Ferré (1954), with the second-to-last part of the novel maintaining the original title of *La fugitive*, which had been previously changed by Proust to *Albertine disparue* to avoid confusion with the equally-titled translation of a work by Rabindranath Tagore performed by Madame Brimont. The second was issued in four volumes edited by Jean-Yves Tadié (1987–1989) that were enriched by a series of *esquisses*, that is, a selection of old drafts extracted from the *Cahiers* manuscripts offered as a simplified transcription. However, the massive editorial reworking of the posthumous volumes of *La recherche* became clear in 1986, upon access to the typescript of *Albertine disparue*, corrected by Proust just before his death and intentionally ignored by the early editors. It was then published in 1987 by Nathalie Mauriac Dyer and Étienne Wolff. The numerous substantial variants that Proust added to the text of *Albertine disparue*, in particular the removal of 250 pages, surpass the last version attested to by the *Cahiers* manuscripts (*Cahiers de mis au net XII–XV*), which the Gallimard editions were based on. They also create undeniable narrative disjunction with the subsequent *Temps retrouvé*, highlighting the unfinished nature of the novel (Mauriac Dyer 2005). By demonstrating the arbitrary nature of the text in the posthumous volumes, this discovery has caused an identity crisis for the entire published *corpus* of *La recherche*, previously untouchable on its lofty pedestal, and has fed into the debate between genetic and textual criticism on the handling of an incomplete, partially posthumous work. The different editions are representative of different positions in the debate: in editing the 1992 Champion edition, Jean Milly published the long version of *Albertine disparue*, typographically differentiating Proust's subsequent changes; on the other hand, in order to adhere as much as possible to the state in which Proust left the novel when he died, Mauriac Dyer suggested publishing — after the last volume that appeared in the author's life, *Sodome et Gomorrhe II* — the typewritten documents of *La prisonnière* and *Albertine disparue* corrected in 1922,

which were to be parts of a *Sodome et Gomorrhe III*, followed by their complete preliminary texts, i.e., the *Cahiers de mis au net VIII–XV*, and by the last notebooks in the series, XVI–XX (Mauriac Dyer 2007). In 2017, for the Classiques Garnier edition, Luc Fraisse published the long version taken from the *Cahiers* manuscripts, providing the variants in a critical apparatus. In addition, by making note of the changes imposed by the first publishers, Fraisse provided a more complete analysis of Jean Paulhan's correcting approach, often aimed at flattening the lexicon and Proustian syntax in favour of greater clarity.

In the 1970s, the formation of the Proust team at the Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes (ITEM) led to the steady increase in genetic studies on the Proustian corpus, facilitated by the acquisition of the author's papers by the BnF. After the 1962 purchase of eighty-two notebooks owned by the author's niece, Suzy Mante-Proust (who also gave the library other papers in 1977), in 1983 the BnF acquired thirteen notebooks from the collection of Jacques Guérin (Fau 2013: 135–36). Among those notebooks, a few stand out: first, a series of seventy-five pieces containing the drafts of *Contre Sainte-Beuve* and of *La recherche* written between 1908 and 1922 (*Cahiers de brouillon*), and second, a series of twenty notebooks of clean copies that had often been reworked (*Cahiers de mise au net*), marked with Roman numerals I–XX by Proust himself and enriched by the famous *paperoles*, sheets of paper glued to the original pages (Contini 1947). This second series is datable between 1915 and 1922 and contains the text of the second part of *La recherche*, from *Sodome et Gomorrhe* onward. The collection, digitized on Gallica and freely consultable ([www.item.ens.fr/index.php?id=578147](http://www.item.ens.fr/index.php?id=578147)), also includes jotter-notebooks, typescripts often made with the involvement of assistants and servants (Brydges 1984 and Pugh 2000), printing proofs with the corrections of the author and others, and loose pieces of paper.

The dynamism of Proust's writing is reflected in the magmatic appearance of the autographs. First Proust used the recto of the paper, then proceeded to eliminate and add text, which he initially inserts between the lines, then in the margins and on the verso, resorting to the *paperoles* for particularly long additions exceeding the material limits of the paper. Sometimes additions were connected to the text with reference symbols ranging from simple to complex (crosses,

circles, flowers, a face in profile, etc.). These variations should be distinguished from the author's notes written by Proust on the lines of the paper (interrupting the narrative thread), in the margins, or more frequently on the verso of the paper. They contain critical and aesthetic musings, programmatic instructions, and references, which can be written at the same time as the words on the page (as is the case with the notes on the lines of the paper), or derive from a subsequent re-reading (Herschberg Pierrot 2007). It is thus essential to define the systematic relationships that are established between the text, corrections, and author's notes so that we may identify different layers of variants (of which, however, a diplomatic approach does not offer diachronic representation, contrary to authorial philology). The cross-references between one notebook and another, demonstrating the tightly-woven interdependence of different documents in Proustian working methods, are quite significant, characterized by constant re-writing and re-reading that spans multiple notebooks, where similar or even diametrically opposed narrative nuclei are reworked more than once, without being dated or numbered, until the novel is fine-tuned, which happens more on the level of the typewritten documents and the printing proofs (Brun 2011). Many notebooks, then, are piecemeal, with numerous pages cut entirely or in part and reused by Proust to save time when transcribing passages that had slowly taken shape over time.

A systematic plan to restore Proust's notebooks was launched in 2008 with the critical-genetic edition of *Cahiers 1 à 75 de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France* overseen by Nathalie Mauriac Dyer and co-published by BnF and Brepols. Two volumes are dedicated to each notebook: the first contains a facsimile of the manuscript and useful 'diagrams of textual units' that indicate in numbered boxes the blocks of primary text (1, 2, 3, etc.), additions (1A, 1B, 1C, etc.) and Proust's notes (nr., in French notes de régie), with the scope of helping readers trace the process of writing the manuscript and broadly reconstruct the succession of narrative sequences, without however pinpointing the exact chronology of the variants (Mauriac Dyer 2008a: 159–60). The second volume, on the other hand, contains the transcription of the manuscript. By highlighting the limits of a linear transcription, considered unable to convey the multiple layers of Proust's writing, often difficult to arrange

in a hierarchy or set to a precise timeline, the recent publishers have adopted a diplomatic transcription that respects the layout of the words on the page. The rendering of the autograph manuscript is conservative, respecting Proustian spelling and punctuation. Corrections and annotations have been signalled with special diacritical marks: minimal interlinear additions are placed between angle brackets (< >); first and second degree crossed-out text has been indicated by single or double strikethroughs, or by x's, depending on the author's markings; when a word has been written over another or if a variant takes up part of the previous reading, the two readings are separated by a forward slash (/); an asterisk (\*) indicates a hypothetical interpretation; square brackets ([ ]) mark the input of the publisher. The transcription is correlated by historical/critical, codicological and genetic notes, which mark the sections derived from previous *Cahiers* or continued within the same notebook (Mauriac Dyer 2001–2002).

Special attention was paid to the reconstruction of the original physiognomy of the notebooks, from which Proust ripped out parts of and even entire pages, reusing them elsewhere. The research done on the paper fragments was based on a careful analysis of their physical qualities, such as the sizes of the fragment and the shape of the tear, the type of paper, the ink, the *ductus*, and even the textual continuity that can be detected between the various fragments (Mauriac Dyer 2008b: 100–02). A project of this scope is incredibly demanding, considering the extensive dispersion that the ripped-out pieces have been subjected to, as shown by the extreme case of the manuscript of *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, spread among fifty copies of a luxury edition (Wise 2003).

The following example of a genetic edition is that of *Cahier 46*, datable to 1914–1915 (André 2009). In the first part of the notebook, Proust introduces the Albertine character to the narrator's worldly Parisian setting, while, starting on folio 57r, he outlines the events of the *Deuxième séjour à Balbec*. The following excerpt offers a brief portrait of Albertine, transcribed from *Cahier 46*, NAF 16686, 52v (<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000131k/f59.item.r=NAF%2016686>):





first and, in the apparatus, the variants formalized by the different compositional phases:

Il n'était pas pâle comme il semblait quelque fois dehors mais comme le jour où j'avais voulu l'embrasser paraissait un beau globe rose, tant un sang vif et clair transparaissait sous sa peau vernie, tant les pentes de ses joues étaient courbes et douces. Le regard glissait sur elles et sur son front jusqu'aux premiers contreforts de ses beaux cheveux noirs naturellement soulevés qui ici saillaient en massifs, là se creusaient en anfractuosités sans qu'en haut cessât de se poursuivre la chaîne ondulée et ininterrompue de leurs crêtes.

Il n'était ... douces] <sup>1</sup>Elle n'était pas pâle comme elle semblait quelque fois dehors; un sang vif col<orait> et clair colora<it> transparaissait dans ses joues lisses; sa figure tout entie<re> → <sup>2</sup>Il n'était pas pâle comme il semblait quelque fois dehors mais rosi de ce rose do<> verni et t<> [d'une matinée (from des matinées) d'hiver partiellement ensoleillée [qui m'avait (from que j'a<vait>) tellement tenté à Balbec (with mais ... Balbec not deleted) → <sup>3</sup>Il n'était pas pâle comme il semblait quelque fois dehors mais <sup>a</sup>semblait un beau globe rose <sup>b</sup>comme il m'avait paru le jour où j'avais voulu l'embrasser comme le jour où j'avais voulu l'embrasser paraissait un beau globe rose, tant un sang vif et clair transparaissait sous ses joues vernies, tant les pentes de son visage étaient courbes et douces → <sup>3</sup>T{sa peau vernie] from ses joues vernies ses joues] from son visage}

Le regard] before Et Et elles venaient expirer et ... front] interlinear insertion naturellement ... crêtes] <sup>1</sup>massés dont les ondulations soulevaient comme des chaî<nes> → <sup>2</sup>que leur ondulation soulevait, creusait, relevait en massifs une chaîne de massifs onduleux → <sup>3</sup>naturelle<ment> naturellement soulevés, creusés, relevés en une chaîne de massifs onduleux → <sup>4</sup>T{ici] inserted en massifs ... crêtes] inserted in the left margin là] inserted sans] before t<> > ondulée] before in< > ininterrompue] before ind< >}

For reference, the definitive text in *Le côté de Guermantes II* is below:

J'aurais bien voulu, avant de l'embrasser, pouvoir la remplir à nouveau du mystère qu'elle avait pour moi sur la plage, avant que je la connusse, retrouver en elle le pays où elle avait vécu auparavant; à sa place du moins, si je ne le connaissais pas, je pouvais insinuer tous les souvenirs de notre vie à Balbec, le bruit du flot déferlant sous ma fenêtre, les cris

des enfants. Mais en laissant mon regard glisser sur le beau globe rose de ses joues, dont les surfaces doucement incurvées venaient mourir aux pieds des premiers plissements de ses beaux cheveux noirs qui couraient en chaînes mouvementées, soulevaient leurs contreforts escarpés et modelaient les ondulations de leurs vallées, je dus me dire [...]

As can be seen in the example, this method aims to create a legible body of text of which the entire process of textual correction is recorded in the apparatus, in this case genetic, according to a diachronic and systematic approach that gives priority to the chronology of the markings rather than their layout. This alternate formalization could, perhaps, constitute a useful addition to the model used for the French genetic edition, providing the reader with a truly complete image of the document that doesn't exclude *a priori* an amplified interpretive intervention by the philologist.

Using folios 46v-49r from the same *Cahier 46*, Julie André and Elena Pierazzo have prepared the Proust Prototype, the first prototype of a genetic digital edition of *La recherche* according to the XML-TEI standard ([http://elenapierazzo.org/proust\\_prototype](http://elenapierazzo.org/proust_prototype)). Pages are displayed in pairs, with the verso of each folio next to the recto of the next folio, where the textual units are grouped into numbered zones distinct from Proust's instructions and notes, following a layout that echoes the 'diagrams of textual units' of the genetic editions on paper. By clicking on the image, the superimposed diplomatic transcription appears. The user can read the manuscript by following the order in which the different textual sequences were written (writing order) or according to the order of the manuscript's final version (reading order). The greater or lesser degree of certainty of the position of a zone within the sequence is indicated by varying degrees of chromatic intensity of the background of the transcribed zones: the darker the colour of an area, the more hypothetical its place in the sequence (André and Pierazzo 2013; André 2016).

The first complete digital edition of a Proustian document, on the other hand, was created in 2015 by Nathalie Mauriac Dyer, Françoise Leriche, Pyra Wise and Guillaume Fau. It is the edition of the *Agenda 1906* — a deep red leather Kirby, Beard & Co. day planner for the first quarter of 1906, though Proust used it only later on — that became part of the BnF collection in 2013 (<https://books.openedition.org/>

editionsbnf/1457). Of the 80 pages that make up the *Agenda*, only 29 include notes by Proust, some private (concerning, for example, his spying on Agostinelli around Paris) and some relating to work. The latter were made at different times and for the most part *a posteriori*, and focus on specific, historic, botanical, medical, and other matters that required verification and follow up. According to their chronology and their particular purpose, documentary and scheduling notes can be identified, datable between late spring and/or summer of 1909; verification notes taken on the occasion of the clean copy of *Combray* which are from late summer/early autumn of 1909; and verification notes and reminders jotted down when correcting the drafts of *Du côté de chez Swann* in June/July 1913. The diplomatic transcription is followed by a conservative linear transcription linked to the genetic and critical notes that, where necessary (exploiting the connections that define the digital environment), refer to the reproductions of all the cited Proust collection documents, or of other digitized archives (Wise 2017, Leriche 2016).

In the digital environment, it is worth mentioning the Corr-Proust project, which launched the digital publication of the writer's letters under the direction of ITEM, the Université Grenoble Alpes and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where most of Proust's letters are kept (<http://proust.elan-numerique.fr>). The digital interface contains a two-columns display divided in different tabs that can be viewed side by side, depending on the user's needs. The tabs contain the digital images of the letter, a diplomatic transcription of the text and a standardized transcription; notes; and documentary, archival and bibliographic information. The *corpus* can be filtered on various levels, according to different search criteria, such as date, place, people, etc.

These initial, meaningful digital experiments, along with the development of knowledge about Proust's work promoted by the paper edition of *Cahiers*, are the premise of the ambitious digital 'Hyper-Proust' proposed by Mauriac Dyer: a single digital place, interoperable on multiple levels that holds the publication of the *Cahiers* and of all the materials in the BnF's Proust collection, the text of *La recherche* published by Proust, along with letters and the writer's library (Mauriac Dyer 2008a: 168–69). Such a tool would have infinite potential: it could, for example, make it easier to find and compare the various compositional phases

of the same passage among multiple manuscripts and typewritten and printed documents, a feature that would be particularly advantageous over the printed reproduction of the single documents that make up each of Proust's avant-textes.