# The Proustian Paratexte

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By the word "paratext," I mean all of the marginal or supplementary data around the text. It comprises what one could call various thresholds: authorial and editorial (i.e., titles, insertions, dedications, epigraphs, prefaces and notes); media related (i.e., interviews with the author, official summaries) and private (i.e., correspondence, calculated or non-calculated disclosures), as well as those related to the material means of production and reception, such as groupings, segments, etc. Less a well-defined category than a flexible space, without exterior boundaries or precise and consistent interiors, the paratext consists, as this ambiguous prefix suggest, of all those things which we are never certain belong to the text of a work but which contribute to present—or to "presentify"—the text by making it into a book. It not only marks a zone of transition between text and non-text ("hors-texte"), but also a zone of transaction, a space that is essentially pragmatic and strategic—and here I am referring deliberately to Léon-Pierre Quint's work devoted to Proust's literary strategy. This term, however, is not to be taken in the usual, let us say (unfairly) Balzacian sense of quest for success, power, fortune or glory. For, in regard to the work with which I will be dealing exclusively here, *A La Recherche du temps perdu,* the Proustian strategy has as its essential objectives first, the publication of the work—itself not a small matter, as experience clearly demonstrated—and then, given the conditions particular to its publication, a pedagogical objective, namely, the instruction of the public so as to guard against eventual misunderstanding and to orient the reader to the kind of reading which Proust considered the most faithful and the most pertinent. It is above all this second objective which relates to the paratext and which therefore we will consider here. As an amateur "Proustian," without pretentions of revealing anything new to the specialist, I would like to offer, first, a succinct and non-exhaustive inventory of the paratext of the *Recherche* and, then, indicate what (to me) appear to be its principal critical and perhaps even theoretical lessons.

I. *Inventory*

For various reasons, which remain implicit, I have chosen to divide the paratext of the *Recherche* into three groups, according to their degrees of authority or authorial responsibility: official paratext, unofficial paratext and posthumous paratext.

*Official paratext.* The official paratext consists of what one might call the "antehumous peritext" ("péritexte anthume"), that is, things proposed while Proust was living, and to which he agreed, regarding the immediate periphery of his text and including but not extending beyond the covers of the text. As is nearly always the case, this paratext, which sustained many changes between 1913 and 1922, is the result of various compromises, especially between the author and editor(s). Included in this category are such things of differing degrees of importance as:

—*the title, or rather the whole "titular apparatus" ("appareil titulaire").* I will discuss this far-reaching question later, but it should be noted from the outset that the complexity of this apparatus is directly linked to the complexity of the work's structure, which it reflects to varying degrees: main title, volume titles, titles of divisions, chapters, sections, and various other segments of the work.

—*the generic indication.* None. This absence is nothing revolutionary. In fact, it seems that the presence of the word *novel* at the beginning of novels is a recent, typically French practice. Neither Balzac nor Flaubert nor Zola wanted this indication to be used. We also know that Balzac hardly liked being labeled a novelist. Nevertheless, in the case of Proust, the absence of such an indication leaves the question of generic status—or at least of the generic *intent* of the *Recherche*—open to discussion.

—*the editor's name.* We should remember that there were two successive editors, without counting a third, which was posthumous.

—*inserts.* For lack of information which, in any case would be difficult to obtain, I will leave this category blank, at least for the moment.

—*publicity wrappers ("bandeaux").* There was at least one such wrapper in 1919 for the volume *Jeunes filles*, which indicated the work had been awarded the Goncourt Prize, and which caused quite a stir.

—*preface.* None, neither by Proust himself nor, as was the case for *Les Plaisirs et les jours,* by anyone else. This is a notable omission, in light of the practices of the day, and I will come back to it later in another context.

—*dedications.* Given the difficulty of documenting this category taken in its broadest sense, I limit myself to printed dedications of the work, leaving aside all personal dedications of individual copies, save one, which because it is unofficial or even private, I will discuss under another heading. As is widely known, *Swann* was dedicated to Gaston Calmette "as a testimony of deep and affectionate appreciation" for having published Proust in his *Figaro*, but also, although by anticipation, so that Calmette could help Proust publish with Fasquelle. Thus, it seems as though Proust considered this dedication to have had an influence over the entire *Recherche.* The ensuing disappointment with Fasquelle freed him, no doubt, for a new gesture of appreciation and allowed him

to dedicate *Guermantes* to Léon Daudet, or, more precisely to Daudet as the author of *Voyage de Shakespeare* and other great works and as an "incomparable friend." (Those who find in this a sign of alliance with the Action Française would do well to read very carefully.) We know that *Jeunes filles* was awarded the Goncourt Prize due to Daudet's efforts. A simple dedication should be distinguished from a specified or motivated dedication which is in and by itself limited or diminished. In their dedicatory missives, the classics practiced this custom of paying dues by pseudo-flattery, and I cannot help believe that it was not in all innocence that Proust spelled things out so carefully. We should also note that these two dedications are signed either "Marcel Proust" or "M.P." Now while some may find this a uselessly redundant piece of information, I do not, for I believe the reason behind such precision lies in the homodiegetic nature of the story; here, as elsewhere, we have to be leery of an inacurrate reading which would attribute the dedication to . . . the narrator.

—*epigraph.* There is only one—in *Sodome*, and as is often the case, this epigraph comments at least as much on the title as it does on the text.

*Unofficial paratext.* Here I am referring essentially to elements of authorial commentary that, for various reasons Proust was unable, or did not wish, to integrate either into the text (i.e., the "theoretical" pages of *Le Temps retrouvé)* or even into the official paratext, as would have been the case of a preface signed by the author, for example. It is necessary to distinguish several levels of "unofficialness": public, private, and personal. The unofficial public paratext is published while the author is living and with his consent. In the case of Proust, it comprises interviews he granted and articles signed by others, but more or less dictated ("téléguidés") by him.

At least two press interviews with Proust were published at the time *Swann* appeared in print: one by Elie-Joseph Bois in the November 13, 1913 issue of *Le Temps;* the second by André Arnvvelde in the December 21, 1913 issue of *Le Miroir.* There also several other very "friendly" articles signed by Maurice Rostand, Jean Cocteau, Lucien Daudet, Jean de Pierrefeu and Jacques Emile Blanche. The article by Blanche appeared on April 15, 1914 in the *Echo de Paris,* for which Proust himself wrote the publicity blurbs, and for some time, he attempted to convince Rivière to mention the article in the *Nouvelle Revue Française.* The following quote, from a letter to Gaston Calmette, gives some idea of what I mean by Proust "dictating" ("téléguidage"): "If you were to insert publicity notices, I hope that the epithets *fine* and *delicate* would not be of any more importance than references to *Les Plaisirs et les jours.* This is a forceful work; at least that is its ambition."[2] Proust also suggested to Rivière that he insert a commentary somewhere, such as "it is known at the *Nouvelle Revue Française* that Proust hates the main title of his work (. . .), which was first called *Le Temps perdu.*" This suggestion seems doubtful, however. There is no confirmation of it in any document before 1913, and it is indicative of Proust's opinion only as early as 1920.[3] Nevertheless, it is somewhat ironic that today posterity tends to retain as an abbreviation the very part of the title that Proust would have wanted suppressed: *la Recherche.*

But I would like to return to the interview in *Le Temps.* This interview func-

tions primarily as an admonition, since it appears on the eve of *Swann's* publication.[4] This warning has the same general intent as those found in prefaces written by Balzac: this is only an initial fragment; do not judge the entire work on this and keep in mind from now on the essentials of what you will learn in future fragments, for example, that the narrator who says "I" is not me; that the length of the entire work is necessary to express the passage of time; that this is a *novel of the unconscious* where the role of involuntary memory is a guarantee of authenticity, and that the style is here, as elsewhere, a question of vision.

These same admonitory themes also dominate the private sides of the unofficial paratext, as the correspondence of those years (1911-1914) amply illustrates. Perhaps the best example of this is contained in the famous letter to Jacques Rivière, dated February 6, 1914: "At last I have found a reader who senses that my book is a dogmatic work, and a construction (. . .) It is only at the end of the book, after life's lessons are understood, that my real thoughts will be unveiled. The thoughts at the end of my first volume (. . .) are the *opposite* of those found at the conclusion." A letter to René Blum dated February 24, 1913, contains the same advice to the reader: "[the characters] are 'set up' in the first volume, which is to say that in the second volume they will do exactly the contrary of what one would expect after reading the first."[5] The same idea may be found in many other letters, which I will not mention. Proust wrote almost the same thing to everyone and for the same reasons, with the possible exception of a letter to Fasquelle written in the latter part of October, 1912, in which Proust insists on the *indecent* nature of what was to follow. This is another admonitory tactic specifically aimed at the eventual editor, who must be warned of possible future difficulties and who will nonetheless promise to undertake publication.

As we see, then, these various epistolary admonitions, though private, are still of a professional nature. Proust is speaking to publishers, to critics (sometimes in response to their articles, i.e., to Souday in December, 1913 or to Ghéon in January, 1914) and to other intermediaries, be they journalists or unpaid agents, whose rôles are well-established in the tiny Republic of Letters. Certainly some of those forewarnings could have appeared in a more official, direct way in a preface. Bardèche, for example, categorizes the interview in Le Temps as a "preface-interview," "a veritable '*To the Reader*' which should have been placed at the beginning of the book."[6] But the fact remains that Proust would not have wanted it so. It is perhaps surprising, and therefore all the more noteworthy, that he would have given such advice an indirect, unofficial nature. He wants his point of view known ("Let it be said"), but does not want to assume responsibility openly for it. This coincides with the attitude that Joyce adopted toward certain elements of *Ulysses'* paratext; for example, Homeric titles given, then taken away, as well as other key information released discreetly through the organization of what in politics would be known as a "system of leaks." The ideal reader, like Rivière, would be capable of *sensing* that which he is not told. In the absence of such a reader, the others will be helped, but only indirectly, since they, too, are supposed to understand without being told, or the game will no longer make sense. The paratext and its subtle degrees of responsibility are a means to this end. Conversely, the internal com-

mentary of *Le Temps retrouvé*, which Bardèche has described as a preface incorporated into the story ("récit"), should in fact have been placed precisely where it was, and still is—neither as a postface nor as preface, but as an intratextual conclusion.[7] By this I do not mean to claim that Proust's textual strategy is infallible nor that it is the most effective one possible. I do claim, however, that the strategy is precise in its nature and that its subtleties must be respected as a very close measure of the author's intention. For this reason it is necessary that one have an exact knowledge of them even if one does not consider oneself in anyway bound by them when interpreting or appraising the work.

The last type of unofficial paratext is neither public nor private; it is personal ("intime"). I mean this not in any psychological sense but in a purely technical one, as in the expression "personal diary." I classify as personal any text whose "destinateur" and "destinataire" are one and the same person, no matter how widespread the actual reception might become. In the paratextual order, the relevant writings are what one might call the "ship's log" of literary creation. A good example of this is James' *Notebooks*. Nothing quite like this exists in Proust's case, but the entire mass of foretext ("avant-texte") (i.e., notebooks and notes) can be considered as a paratext *ad usum proprium*—not only as a reservoir of sketches and outlines but also as a collection of instructions and orders for composition—indeed, as self-commentary ("Capitallissime!"). Scholars are well aware of these documents, which I will not attempt to discuss here. Their publication, already underway, means that they will come to function more and more as a true posthumous paratext.

*Posthumous paratext.* This adjective contains two patently different meanings which are even opposed in certain ways. The first, to which I just alluded, is concerned with private and personal paratexts that are later published posthumously and that therefore find in the public readers who are different from those originally intended. This occurs in such a way that the author assumes no responsibility, or if he does, it is according to a specific, but obvious, paradox: *that the most personal is (reputed to be) the most sincere while involving the least responsibility.* I am not supposed to lie to myself, but what I say secretly to myself commits me to no one. The second meaning with which we are concerned is the *properly posthumous* paratext. I refer here to those elements of the paratext that are born (and even conceived) after the author's death and thus for which he can in no way be held responsible. Nevertheless, they constitute editorial facts and, for this very reason, the public receives them as more or less official. The quantity of such facts is considerable and is destined to keep growing until our culture disappears. It consists in everything that present and future editors will add to the Proustian text: information and "authorized" commentaries, generally placed—with all the importance of such positioning—in the peritext of the best and of other editions. I will cite only two examples, taken at random. The first is provided by the three portraits of Proust currently printed on the three volumes of the prestigious Pléiade edition, as is the practice for that collection. The first volume presents us with a photo of the young Proust; the

second, with one of Proust, the dandy; the third with yet another depicting Proust, the artist and thinker. (In point of fact, the obvious connotations are nullified by the actual dates of the portraits, which are much closer chronologically than one would think: 1891, 1895, 1896.) Nonetheless, if one's goal were consciously to establish an autobiographical reading of the *Recherche*, one could do no better than this. Of course, the editors will tell us that they are only illustrating the covers. No doubt the next Pléiade will exhume an intermediate phase to adorn yet another volume. The current Flammarion editions are being presented under Bonnard's invocation just as the Folios bore the colors of Van Dongen. I fear that nothing will return us to the subtle covers of the Livre de Poche editions with their collages of manuscripts and yellowed photographs.

In fact nothing obliges us to illustrate the covers, yet at times, they become self-illustrating. My second example concerns the variable relationship between the main title and the volume titles. The Grasset edition of *Swann* emphasized the volume title, placing the main title above it, but in smaller type. Gallimard kept the same layout for its regular "collection blanche," an edition of 14 (later, 15) volumes; however, there was an important enlargement of the type for the main title, bringing it into primary focus. In 1954, and for the last several years, the new format of the Pléiade presentation accentuated this even more: the section titles have completely disappeared from the first page of the volume and are relegated to the fourth page. In the paperback editions, a greater emphasis is placed on the titles of parts with the main title reduced (the old Livre de Poche), put in the smallest type (Folio), or even eliminated completely (Garnier Flammarion).

To date, then, three generations of Proust's readers have received what one hardly dares still to call the *Recherche*, by way of three or four very different presentations—and here I mean "presentation" in its strongest sense. These cover variations constitute only one element among many. For example, variations occur in the number of volumes (14, 15, 3, 8, soon 4—the new Pléiade edition), in the state of the text, and in the context. (There are those Proustians formed before the publication of *Santeuil* or, before that, of *Contre Sainte-Beuve*.) We are clearly not all reading the same Proust, and that is only the beginning. I am told that this is the common fate of great works and far be it from me to deny it. However, the fact remains that in the reshuffling of (among others) the posthumous paratext, the *identity* of the *Recherche* has changed its status.

## II. *Lessons*

In attempting to identify what can be learned from this brief inventory, I must begin by returning to one of the essential aspects of Proustian paratext, to which I only alluded earlier: the titles, or what I called the "titular apparatus" of the *Recherche*. For this I borrow with a few modifications Jean-Yves Tadié's very informative presentation, juxtaposing the summaries of the 1912 manu-

script, the 1913 *Swann* with its announcements for the sequel, the 1918 *Jeunes filles* with its new announcements, and the actual edition of *Guermantes* and the remainder of the work.[8]

I. 1912 MANUSCRIT. Two volumes

*The Heart's Intermissions.*

Volume I: *The Past Lost* (712 typed sheets.)[a]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| First Part: | I, | Second part, no. 1 | Third Part, I, II, etc. |
| | II, | | Places names: the name |
| Combray | III, | Swann in love | Madame Swann at home |
| | IV. | no. 2 | Places names, the place, etc. |

Volume II: *The Past Recaptured* (in notebooks) "I'm giving each of the two volumes a different title, and will publish them ten months apart."

II. 1913 MANUSCRIT. GRASSET EDITION. Three volumes.

*Remembrance of Things Past*

published:
Volume I. *Swann's Way*
[overture, in the English edition]
1. Combray.
2. Swann in Love.
3. Place names: the name.

"to be published in 1914":
Volume II. *The Guermantes Way*[b]
Madame Swann at home.
Place names: the place.
First impressions of Baron de Charlus and of Robert de Saint-Loup.
Names of people: The Duchesse de Guermantes.
Madame de Villeparisis at home.

Volume III. *The Past Recaptured*
Within a Budding Grove.
The Princesse de Guermantes.
M. de Charlus and the Verdurins.
Death of my grandmother.
The "Vices and Virtues" of Padua and Combray.
Madame de Cambremer.
Robert de Saint-Loup's marriage.
Perpetual adoration.

[a]Volume presented to several editors: Fasquelle, Ollendorff, Gallimard and finally, Grasset
[b]Typeset, but not published, in 1914.

III. 1918 VERSION. GALLIMARD. Five volumes.

*Swann's Way*
(one volume appeared)

*Within a Budding Grove*
(one volume appeared)
*Part One:* Madame Swann at home.
A break in the narrative: old friends in new aspects.
The Marquis de Norpois.
Bergotte.
How I cease for the time being to see Gilberte: a general outline of the sorrow caused by parting and of the irregular process of oblivion.
*Part Two:* Place names: the place.
My first visit to Balbec: seascape with frieze of girls.
First impressions of M. de Charlus and of Robert de Saint-Loup.
Dinner with Bloch and his family.
Dinners at Rivebelle.
Enter Albertine.

IV. 1918 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDING TABLES FROM LATER EDITIONS

*The Guermantes Way* ("in press")
(1918 Announcement)
Names of People: the Duchesse de Guermantes.
Saint-Loup at Doncières.
Madame de Villeparisis at home.
Death of my grandmother.
Albertine reappears.
Dinner at the Duchesse de Guermantes'.
The wit of the Guermantes.
**M. de Charlus continues to make me uneasy.
The red shoes of the Duchesse.

*The Guermantes Way* (1920)
(Index of the edition)

*The Guermantes Way II* (1921)
*Chapter One:*
My grandmother's illness.
Bergotte's illness.
The Duke and the Doctor.
**Decline and death of my grandmother.
*Chapter Two:*
A visit from Albertine.
Prospect of rich brides for certain friends of Saint-Loup.
The wit of Guermantes as displayed before the Princesse de Parme.
A strange visit to M. de Charlus.
His character puzzles me more and more.
The red shoes of the Duchesse.

*Cities of the Plain I*
(1918 Announcement)
Sudden revelation of what M. de Charlus is.
The Princesse de Guermantes entertains.
Second visit to Balbec: The Heart's Intermissions I.
I finally feel that I have lost my grandmother.
M. de Charlus at the Verdurins and in the small train.
The Heart's Intermissions II.
Why I leave Balbac hurriedly, with the desire to marry Albertine.

*Cities of the Plain II*
(1918 Announcement)
Life with Albertine.
The Verdurins quarrel with M. de Charlus.
Flight of Albertine.
Grief and oblivion.
Mademoiselle de Forcheville.
**Exception to a rule.
Venice.
A fresh light upon Robert de Saint-Loup.
M. de Charlus during he war: His opinions and his amusements.
The Princesse de Guermantes receives.
**Perpetual adoration.
The past recaptured.

*Cities of the Plain* (1922)
(Index of the edition)
Introducing the men-women, descendants of the inhabitants who were spared by the fire from heaven.

*Cities of the Plain II*
*Chapter One:* M. de Charlus in society.
A physician.—Typical physiognomy of Madame de Vaugoubert.—Madame d'Arpajon, the Hubert Robert fountain and the merriment of the Grand Duke Vladimir.—Mesdames d'Amoncourt, de Cirtri, de Saint-Euverte, etc.—Curious conversation between Swann and the Prince de Guermantes.—Albertine on the telephone.—My social life in the interval before my second and final visit to Balbec.—Arrival at Balbec.—The Heart's Intermissions.
*Chapter Two:* The mysteries of Albertine.—The girls she sees reflected in the glass.—The other woman.—The lift-boy.—Madame de Cambremer.—The pleasures of M. Nissim Bertrand.—Outline of the strange character of Morel.—M. de Charlus dines with the Verdurins.
*Chapter Three:* The sorrows of M. de Charlus.—His sham duel.—The stations on the "Transatlantic."—Weary of Albertine, I decide to break with her.
*Chapter Four:* Sudden revelation in favor of Albertine.—Agony of sunrise.—I set off at once with Albertine for Paris.

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**Translator's note: These intertitles never appeared in the English translation but in the case of *Cities of the Plain II* and *The Past Recaptured* were incorporated into succeeding intertitles. In the first chapter of the English edition of *The Guermantes Way II,* the two French intertitles ("Déclin de ma grand-mère" et "Sa mort") have been combined into one intertitle. In the 1918 announcement for *Le côté de Guermantes,* there is no existing English copy, so I have translated "M. de Charlus continue à me déconcerter." All other intertitles used here are from the 1934 edition of *Remembrance of the Things Past,* translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Frederick A. Blossom.

*The Captive, The Fugitive* and *The Past Recaptured* contain no table of contents in the definitive edition.

The first lesson to be learned by comparing the 1913 announcements (facing the title page of Grasset's *Swann*) with the summaries of 1918—namely: actual summaries at the beginning of each of the two sections of *Jeunes filles*, and perspective summaries for the sequel "in press"—is, of course, the late invention—between these two dates—of the character, Albertine. This character adds new material and a new dimension to the first stay at Balbec. She is an even greater contribution to those volumes yet to appear, that is, *Sodome*, which will have enlarged to accomodate the future *Prisonnière* and *Fugitive*. This crucial fact—the major consequence of the forced interruption in 1914—is too well-known for me to dwell on it further.

The second lesson concerns the work's structure. By comparing the successive stages of the titular apparatus, we find a progression (in part imposed by editorial contingencies) from an undivided initial structure to one more abrupt and more articulated into divisions and subdivisions. We know that Proust originally wanted to publish his work in one single volume, entitled either *A La Recherche du temps perdu* or *Les Intermittences du coeur*. He quickly resigned himself to an inevitable division and in October of 1912 proposed a work to Fasquelle entitled *Les Intermittences du Coeur* and divided into two volumes: *Le Temps perdu* and *Le Temps retrouvé*.[9] The Grasset edition was supposed to follow this two-volume division. However, as the 1913 publicity indicates, a three-volume division was adopted: *Du Côté de chez Swann*, *Le Côté de Guermantes* (with the change of the article which we know Proust considered to be of great importance), and *Le Temps retrouvé*. Ideally, these volumes would have been published without paragraph identation, not even for dialogue: "This brings the spoken word further into the continuity of the text."[10] According to Maurois, it was Louis de Robert who convinced Proust to accept some indentation in a more traditional format that was published by Grasset and later by Gallimard. Proust clearly views these volume divisions and indentations as concessions and editorial necessities, as he indicates in the following confidences. In a letter cited by René Blum,[11] he explains, "As a concession to common practice, I am giving a different title to each volume (. . .) However, I may place the main title above these as Anatole France did for his *Histoire contemporaine*"; and again in a letter dated November, 1913: "I am pretending that it (the first volume) is in itself a book, like *L'Orme du mail* in *Histoire contemporaine* or *Les Déracinées* from *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*." Thus, against his will, little by little, inch by inch, Proust abandons the undivided initial structure in favor of, first, a two-part, then a three-part division, which in 1918 still under the pressure of circumstance becomes a division into five volumes (*Swann, Jeunes filles, Guermantes, Sodome, Temps retrouvé*), which ultimately becomes seven volumes by the further subdivision of *Sodome et Gomorrhe III* into *La Prisonnière* and *La Fugitive* (which became, only fleetingly, *Albertine disparue* because of competing titles).

This ever-increasing division is apparent even in the progression of the text, since only the first volume, *Du Côté de chez Swann*, is simply divided into three sections, each bearing a subtitle: *Combray* (I and II), *Un amour de Swann*, and *Noms de pays : le nom*. From *Jeunes filles* onward, the work is segmented to a

much greater extent through the use of hierarchical divisions into parts, chapters, and sections, as demonstrated by the above tables of contents, both projected and actual. From *Guermantes* onward, the parts and chapters are no longer subtitled. The last three volumes, because of their posthumous publications, contain neither parts nor chapters. Nonetheless, we have a copious series of intertitles for everything following *Du Côté de chez Swann*. For *Jeunes filles*, they are provided by the summaries in the table of contents in the 1918 edition. Contained therein also are summaries which announce the contents of the entire remainder of the work. For *Guermantes II* and *Sodome*, the intertitles are furnished by those same announcements and by the table of contents in the 1921 and 1922 editions, although there are some inconsistencies here because various changes were made after World War II.* Although some of these items might be somewhat suspect given the many changes in Proust's vision of the work as it developed and given problems of editorial negligence and posthumous publication, we do know that from 1918 onward Proust considered them as intertitles and that he wanted them printed at the beginning of the sections for which they were the titles—or at least by way of concession to the editor—as summaries included in the table of contents with page references. Maurois cites the following letter to a typist concerning the proofs of *Jeunes filles* which confirms this fact:[12] "About a month ago, I asked Gaston Gallimard if he approved of my introducing into the text itself chapter headings as well as indications regarding the different parts described in a table of contents. He said that he did not agree and all things considered, I saw things the same way he did. We thought that the ˣ I had placed at various points—when a new story (or "récit") begins—would be sufficient, and that thanks to the table of contents and the page numbers contained therein (but which could not be printed before the pagination was definitive), the reader could make the correlation with the title I had chosen for each fragment of the whole."

However, even this concessive request was not granted at publication; consequently, there are cases in the present state of the text where it is difficult to determine the proper placement of these intertitles. I am unaware of the policies of those responsible for the editions to come,[13] and I have no idea whether they will succeed in having them implemented by their respective publishers. The fact remains that after the war and contrary to his initial intentions Proust, at least in principle, certainly envisaged a more highly-subdivided work with a wealth of titles. It almost appears as if late in the game he became progessively intrigued with the notion of division and paratextual proliferation, even though he had conceded to it initially against his will and out of necessity.[14]

This fact in itself interests me. It may well be that Proust became increasingly aware that the architectural unity of his work would be highlighted more clearly by the use of titles to clarify its underlying framework than by his initial device of long textual streams without breaks or markings. And this awareness

*Translator's note: These announcements were printed for the forthcoming volumes at the end of the 1918 edition, and thus are considered part of the text by Genette.

would have continued to grow as the architectural unity with which he was so deeply concerned began to show signs of collapse under the weight of constant amplification—whence his shift in strategy to one some might consider equally excessive in another way. In any case, it is significant that each time the editors brought him back, *volens nolens,* to a middle ground.

The confrontation of the titular paratext with the corresponding sections of the text provides us with valuable information concerning the significance Proust accorded a given episode, even though some of this information remains enigmatic. For example, to what does the following indication, at the beginning of *Jeunes filles*, correspond?: "Coup de barre et changement de direction dans les caractères." ("A break in the narrative: old friends in new aspects.") Why is the end of the Gilberte episode entitled "première et légère esquisse du chagrin que cause une séparation et des progrès irréguliers de l'oubli" ("a general outline of the sorrow caused by a parting and of the irregular course of forgetfulness") as if such a "general outline" were not already to be found in *Un amour de Swann*? Enigmatic does not mean insignificant: on the contrary, it is less important than the parallelism, emphasized by the titles between *Nom de pays*, and *Noms de personnes* or the two manifestations of "intermittences de coeur" that appear in the prospective summary of *Sodome* (*Cities of the Plain*): "I finally feel that I love Albertine."

However, it seems to me that the principal thematic lesson of the paratext concerns the problem of the genre of the *Recherche*. There are two contrary and equally excessive versions that are generally accepted relative to this difficulty. On the one hand, the popular version, followed implicitly by some biographers, tends to confuse Proust and "Marcel." Without any subtle pretense, this verison turns the *Recherche* into an autobiography. On the other hand, the second, "critical" version tends to treat the *Recherche* as a pure and simple novel, a work of complete fiction, supported by the indeniable fact that it is not an autobiography.

What does the paratext tell us about this problem? First, we should recall that no edition verified by Proust (and, to my knowledge, no other edition) gives any official mention of generic status. Second, the author's unofficial (or private) declarations regarding this matter are of truly exemplary ambiguity. For example, in a letter to Antoine Bibesco approximately on October 25, 1912, Proust writes: "The work is a novel; even though the liberty of tone makes it resemble memoirs, in reality its highly structured ("très stricte") composition (too complex for the reader to perceive immediately) distinguishes it from memoirs: the only contingency to be found in it is that which is necessary to explain the role of contingency in life." In another letter to Louis de Robert, approximately on October 28th, Proust states, "I have labored (. . .) on a long work that I am calling a novel because it does not have the contingency of memoirs (the only contingency is that which represents contingency found in life), and because it is very rigorously composed, although that may be difficult to realize, because it is so complex." Proust then writes the following to René Blum on February 20, 1913: "I would like M. Grasset to publish (. . .) an important work (let us say novel, for it is a sort of novel) that I have finished. This novel will be in two volumes, etc. . ." In another letter to

Blum on February 23rd Proust adds: "I don't know if I told you that this book is a novel. At least, it is less different from a novel than from anything else." For Proust, the *Recherche* is not entirely a novel, it is not because the content is fictitious but because it is more constructed than an autobiography would be.

We are given a third indication by the published intertitles, the very grammar of the plot outlines in announcements, various remarks in his correspondence (particularly in the November, 1915 dedication to Mme Sheikévitch, which includes a summary of the Albertine episode),[15] and in all the scenarios that we find in the personal paratext. This grammar is consistent in its use of the first person. The hero is always designated in this way: *my* grandmother's death, how *I* could stop seeing Gilberte, M. de Charlus makes *me* uneasy, etc. This usage is by no way imposed by the first-person narration. (For example, consider the intertitles of *Lazarillo, Guzman d'Alfarache* or *Gil Blas*.[16]) And although I am well aware that we can explain this phrasing by the difficulty caused by the hero's anonymity, it seems to me that the so-called cause is in itself an effect, for the hero is anonymous because he is not entirely autonomous. We are all aware of the author's difficulty on that exceptional occasion when he wants the hero's name to be pronounced by his mistress. In any case, the ambiguous name of Marcel is used in at least one other instance, in a sketch cited by Bardèche, and which he dates 1901: "A man of letters near Cabourg . . . Marcel is going to see him without having read any of his work."[17] As far as I am aware, when Proust does not call his hero "I," he calls him Marcel. For the author of a "novel," what a regression this represents in relation to Jean Santeuil!

In fact, it almost seems as though Proust moved imperceptibly from the officially autobiographical (although undoubtedly fictitious) situation of *Contre Sainte-Beuve* ("I'm talking with mother about Sainte-Beuve") to that of the *Recherche*, into which the first situation has been incorporated without being fully transformed. In light of this, official or unofficial protests of heterobiography carry little weight since they are themselves ambiguous as the following statements suggest: Proust writes in a letter to René Blum: "There is a certain fellow who is telling the story, who says 'I';" and to Elie-Joseph Bois: ". . . the character telling the story, who says 'I' (and who is not me)." But he also writes, in a 1921 article about Flaubert: ". . . the pages where a few crumbs of the madeleine, soaked in tea, remind me (or at least remind the narrator who says 'I' and who is not always me) of a large section of my life. . ."[18] "Not always me," but sometimes, then. Of course, we must not conclude from this rather complex bundle that the *Recherche* is to be classified as autobiography or as having autobiography as its generic intention. And even if it made such a claim, we know enough to reply that such a pretention would be false because the life and personality of "Marcel" (who, for example, is neither half-Jewish nor homosexual) are obviously not those of Proust. In fact, the work makes no generic claim, and Proust himself (in the letter to Louis de Robert, just cited) very honestly adds: "I am incapable of identifying its genre." Elsewhere, I proposed to christen this very composite, ambiguous genre that is somewhere between autobiography and fiction *autofiction*, borrowing this term from the paratext of a work by Serge Doubrowski.[19] The approximate definition of the

term would be: "a story in which the author places himself, more or less clearly and more or less by name, in situations which he simultaneously depicts, more or less forcefully, as imaginary or fictitious."

Like all genres, perhaps, this intermediary genre—exemplified by many works other than the *Recherche*, and among them those of Gombrowicz—has roots in very common existential behaviours or attitudes such as mythomania, fantasy, and children's make-believe. The typical constructions of this genre in the conditional tense are evident in this anticipatory description from *Contre Sainte-Beuve*: "Mother would come ("viendrait") beside my bed and I would recite ("raconterais") an article that I want to write about Sainte-Beuve."[20] This is a perfect mixture of autobiography and fiction. It is really "Mother and I" who are on stage, but the stage is imaginary. And perhaps I should also include dream in my list, for Proust places an exemplary value on it in a few pages of *Le Temps retrouvé* and elsewhere in his writing about Nerval, and the importance he accords it has not been discussed sufficiently. The "hero" of my dreams, who dreams them and then speaks about them in the first person, is certainly me. Then again, it isn't me. I haven't lived that dream. But, in any case, I cannot say that it is another. And in many ways, under many headings, the *Recherche* is a dreamed autobiography

Translated by Amy G. McIntosh

NOTES

1. I am borrowing this very essential adjective which has obvious significance from our late colleague Alphonse Allais who, in his works, distinguished the "ante-humous" from the posthumous. The peritext, which designates only a part of the paratext, is related to what Antoine Compagnon (*La Seconde main,* Seuil, 1979) called "perigraphy" ("périgraphie").

2. November 12, 1913.

3. July 1920 to Jacques Rivière. A letter dated December 1919, addressed to Paul Souday, confirms this late discontent: "This work (whose badly chosen title is a bit deceptive)..." Nonetheless, Proust liked the title enough to protest against the English translation of it, in 1922: *Remembrance of Things Past:* "It destroys the title." (*Lettres à la NRF*, 247.)

4. The first mention of a main title in Proust's correspondance seems to be *Les Intermittences du coeur* (in a letter to Fasquelle dated October 28, 1912). Thus, *Le Temps perdu* (as was surely intended in a letter to Reynaldo Hahn on November 15) is the title only of the projected first volume.

5. See Philippe Kolb, *Choix de Lettres* (Paris: Plon, 1965) 283.

6. M. Bardèche, *Marcel Proust romancier* (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1971) in 1: 323.

7. Ibid., 2:330, Cf. table, 426: "a preface in the conclusion." These remarks continue those of 1:225-226, where Bardèche states that in 1909 Proust was planning to use his essay on Sainte-Beuve as a preface or postface to his "novel." (For example, see the letter of August 1909 to Vallette: "When the reader has finished he or she will see...that the entire novel is nothing but the application ("mise en oeuvre") of the artistic principles expressed in the last section, and which constitutes a sort of preface, if you will, placed at the end.") Because the meditation on time recaptured progressively takes the place of the conversation about Sainte-Beuve, the term "preface (or postface) included" could be thus justified as a genetic hypothesis, but it is not at all justifiable as a

description of the final state of the work. In any case, the function of a preface or a postface is to refuse, or rather to *avoid* "inclusion."

8. Jean-Ives Tadié, *Proust* (Paris: P. Belfond, 1983) 23-26.

9. The capital "T" of "Time" seems consistent in Proust's writing. I am not sure whether we always respect his intentions in this matter.

10. Letter to Louis de Robert, June, 1913.

11. February and November, 1913.

12. André Maurois, *A La Recherche de Marcel Proust* (Paris: Hachette, 1949) 290.

13. Jean Milly places no intertitles in his edition of *La Prisonnière* and *La Fugitive* published by Garnier Flammarion.

14. We should add to the titular apparatus considered here those accessory titles chosen for the excerpts published in reviews ("Sunbeam on a Balcony," "Watching her Sleep," etc.) and perhaps also under the rubric of regrets or relief, titles envisioned and later abandoned: *The Age of Names, Stabbed Doves,* etc.

15. *Choix,* 207. I have already commented on this same document from this point of view in *Palimpsestes* (Paris: Seuil, 1982) 291-293, and I am restating essentially the same thing here.

16. It is true that one could find contrary examples, such as Quevedo's *Buscon,* or *David Copperfield* or *Treasure Island.* The situation is complex and sends one back to the ever-possible choice in homodiegetic fiction between authorial enunciation of chapter titles (as in the case of *Gil Blas*, where it is clearly the author who writes "Chapter One: Regarding the Birth and Education of Gil Blas") and their enunciation by the author-narrator (as in the case of *David Copperfield,* where it is the hero who is supposed to be writing: "Chapter One: I Am Born"). But it does not seem to me that Proust's situation—with his wandering "I," changing title-summaries into epistolary confidences—is identical to that of Dickens; it is difficult to imagine his using the first person in his correspondance to designate David. However, I will not say that the testimony of Proust's correspondance is more significant than of the intertitles of the *Recherche*: what is most significant is rather the continuity and the homogeneity of the two speeches.

17. See *Marcel Proust Romancier I,* 172. I would add that when Proust designates his protagonist by the use of the first person, his correspondant (Rivière, for example) enters into the game, responding and designating him (the protagonist) as "you."

18. *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, (Paris: Pléiade,), 599.

19. *Palimpsestes* Cf. Philippe Lejeune, "Le pacte autobiographique (bis)," in *Moi aussi,* (Paris: Seuil, 1986) 13-35.

20. Letter to G. de Lauris, December, 1908.