

LAZY PROUST AND LITERARY 'WORK'

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'De ce que les hommes médiocres sont souvent travailleurs et les intelligents souvent paresseux, on n'en peut pas conclure que le travail n'est pas pour l'esprit une meilleure discipline que la paresse.'
Marcel Proust¹

'There is no expedient to which a man will not resort to avoid the real labour of thinking.'
Sir Joshua Reynolds (attributed)

When Audrey Evrard and Robert St. Clair asked me to contribute an article on Proust to a volume about laziness, I jumped at the chance to work on a topic so 'modern', both eternal and fleeting. I said yes, therefore, without hesitation but also without thinking, putting a 'Lazy' before 'Proust' as my title, and then soon after lulled myself into inaction, comforted by the outrageously extended timeframes of academic journals. Now that the time has come to respect my years-old promise, I am confronted with the fact that I have wasted all that time *not* reading Proust. Instead, I performed all the mind-numbing tasks that make up the quotidian travails of the American professoriate except the research and critical writing that supposedly counts the most for our career advancement but feels like an afterthought, at best a hobby, at worst unpaid overtime. The experience of writing an article for others on Proust, which is to say being forced to think about laziness, has given me a different perspective on literary and critical work. I would like to argue here in favor of what Proust's novel, as well as current conditions in research universities, forces us to do: a sort of lazy reading, or even non-reading practice that is recuperated in time and in the nick of time.

It is simply not possible to clock in the hours and reread all 3,600 *Pléiade* pages of Proust's *À la Recherche du temps perdu* to get the gist of things, as we might while preparing to

write about a shorter novel, say Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*.² Even if I had dropped everything, taken a leave of absence from my university, and reread *La Recherche* over the last year, I would not be able to hold the entire novel in my head at once, the first few volumes would be hazy by the time I arrived at *Le Temps retrouvé*. Even skimming particular volumes in search of relevant passages carries certain risks, since a thematic reading inevitably leads to misinformed interpretations by isolating passages from the movement of the whole novel. The impossibility of digesting Proust, of doing a diligent as opposed to a lazy reading, which is to say of treating reading Proust as a job, undermines the very notion of a literary expert, a master of the *Recherche* who is paid to 'know' Proust. David Sipress, in a cartoon for *The New Yorker* from 24 December 2007, captures the absurdity of reading as wage-labour by depicting a man who tells his wife while pointing to another, rather angry looking man reading a book on the couch, 'That's the guy I hired to read Proust for me!' No matter how much I might want to pay a graduate student to read for me, the way our colleagues in the sciences manage to have assistants run experiments, there is no way to contract out a personal and immediate engagement with Proust's text at the level of every sentence. But this personal engagement implies having completed a first reading of the whole novel (which for me took several years), and then multiple and fragmentary re-readings after a certain amount of time has passed. The size of Proust's novel requires both a huge initial time commitment, but then invites subsequent, lazy readings dictated by personal whim as much as by professional necessity.

Lazy Marcel and Proust

Writing about Proust, studying the *Recherche*, comes across as a useless exercise or even a snobbish indulgence in no small part due to Proust's reputation as a sickly socialite who never

had to work. By extension, only someone interested in socialites and who has enough leisure to read the epic novel, could devote months and years to such an endeavour. When it comes to the ambiguous distinction (or for the lazy, the lack of distinction) between Proust and his narrator, their supposed laziness influences how we might read the novel, either encouraging us to make an apology for Marcel or perhaps on the contrary to prove our own work ethic as people who have the stamina to slog through so many Proustian sentences. We are caught between, on the one hand, a pointless activity and, on the other hand, one of the greatest feats of intellectual endurance imaginable. The novel itself represents this paradoxically futile labour. One way of summarizing the *Recherche* is to say that it tells the story of a lazy man who squanders his youth, only to recognize late, perhaps too late, how he should write a novel, and then races to finish his great work before he dies. The result is (in Proust's case at least though in Marcel's it is uncertain) a monumental novel in scope and ambition unrivalled by more obviously hard working writers. The story of the novel's publication a hundred years ago reinforces this version of the plot and its mirror image in Proust's biography: as André Gide famously wrote to Jacques-Émile Blanche dismissing Proust's novel for the *Nouvelle revue française*: 'Proust? Proust? N'est-ce pas lui qui écrit des articles dans *Le Figaro*? Un amateur? Un boulevardier?'³ For Gide at the time, Proust could not be a serious literary writer precisely because he did not write for money, he was an amateur as opposed to a professional. Proust himself was aware of his reputation early on, writing to Mme Straus in 1892: 'vous avez bien tort de me croire paresseux, ou désireux d'être mondain. Je suis très travailleur.'⁴ Proust's letter makes the connection between laziness and class, but his claim to being a hard worker does not sound terribly convincing. What *could* count as proof of work before his novel began to be published twenty years later?

This idea of two Prousts, two narrators, two readers, either lazy or surprisingly hard workers, manifests itself in Jean-Paul Sartre's writings, where the existentialist held two views of his famous predecessor. According to Young-Rae Ji, while Sartre was greatly influenced by Proust's writings and expressed admiration for Proust largely in private, his public attacks on Proust sought to characterize the writer as nothing but a 'rentier', someone who lives off the work of others and whose own work, such as it is, remains nombrilistic.⁵ Proust already anticipates this line of critique in *Le Temps retrouvé*, when he dismisses as irrelevant a certain streak of literary criticism that calls for artists to leave their ivory towers and 'à traiter des sujets non frivoles ni sentimentaux [...] à tout le moins non plus d'insignifiants oisifs [...]' (IV, p. 460). In a surprising reversal, Proust claims that this political engagement more often than not amounts to an avoidance of the hard work of literature. By dedicating themselves to a cause, writers run away from the more important work of literary creation; the apparently frivolous is our only chance to achieve the eternal. Proust's take on Sartre would then be that the philosopher's political engagement was a way to avoid thinking about time. Shawn Gorman has argued that 'Sartre's musings on Proust read like nothing so much as displaced self-criticism in which the "bourgeois" Marcel Proust is a stand-in for the guiltily "bourgeois" Jean-Paul Sartre.'⁶ (It is worth pondering how much of our own critical practice as scholars of literature involves displaced self-criticism related to the futility of literature.)

However much we might wish to value laziness, it proves a rather difficult task. Jacques Derrida, in his famous critique of Michel Foucault, 'Cogito et histoire de la folie', claims that speaking for the insane is nothing more than betraying them better – if reason has won out so powerfully, then all of us who speak, write, and are heard can do nothing but repeat the same supposed crimes against the mad.⁷ There can only be a 'praise of reason', as Erasmus's *In Praise*

of Madness makes evident. Similarly, hidden within each praise of laziness lies a hidden assertion of productivity or use value and thus a way of better betraying those of us who strive for indolence.⁸ If you take more vacation days, or work thirty-five hours a week, or spend most of your life observing the super-rich, you might be a more productive worker, help the economy, become a better writer. The best an *éloge de la paresse* can hope for is a shift in values of what appears useful (such as quality over quantity) or a shift in who benefits from the vice (individual laziness can work for the collective good). As I will try to argue, in Proust, however, the ‘lazy turn’ occurs not through a change in values but through a shift in temporal perspective from the present to the future. In many ways Proust’s laziness amounts to a praise of pro-crastination, which derives etymologically of course from ‘waiting for tomorrow’. Laziness allows us to distance ourselves from the work of time in order to let time work for us – the vice of the *rentier* (relying on the work of others as capital accrues over time) is now the virtue, the farsightedness, of the writer (who profits in the future from not working in the present).

Literary work

How does laziness as the literary work of time manifest itself in the *Recherche*? In true lazy fashion, I let the search engine do the reading for me. ‘Paresse’, ‘paresseux’, ‘paresseuse’, and ‘paresseusement’ show up sixty-four times in the *Recherche*.⁹ Proust seems to prefer inaction to work, judging by word choice: ‘travailleur’ shows up five times and ‘industrieux/se’ four times, while ‘oisif’ and ‘oisiveté’ show up thirty-seven times. Still, these numbers are deceiving in a work of over a million words. As a comparison, a common word like ‘amour’ and its derivatives show up 1154 times, a rather obscure word like ‘papillon’ twenty-one times. Does this mean that Proust thought ‘butterflies’ are three times less important than ‘laziness’ but four times more

important than 'worker'? Whatever the significance of the total number of occurrences, the distribution of the sixty-four different instances of 'paresse' are telling. There is a concentration in *Un amour de Swann*, mostly to describe Swann's 'paresse d'esprit', 'paresse de penser', or even 'paresse cérébrale' with regard to his lack of imagination regarding his love for Odette. A few thousand pages go by with relatively few occurrences of 'paresse' until *La Prisonnière* and *Albertine disparue*, where both Albertine and the narrator's mother chide the narrator for his laziness or inability to begin writing. *Le Temps retrouvé* has the greatest frequency of 'paresse', with two references to the musician Morel's laziness, and the rest to describe the narrator's struggle to finish his great opus.

What strikes me as odd, at least in relation to nineteenth-century discourses on work, with their politicized focus on eradicating laziness either in the working classes or the upper class, is that with few exceptions, the narrator only describes artists or failed artists as lazy, which implies that for him at least laziness becomes a synonym for lack of will and of intellectual creativity. The narrator taxes almost none of his human comedy of aristocrats, bourgeois, servants, peasants, and workers with laziness. Tellingly, laziness as a term is concentrated in the most philosophical volume of the novel, *Le Temps retrouvé*, when the narrator comes to grips with his wasted youth and his calling for literary greatness. We might then propose that laziness for Proust is a theoretical and aesthetic phenomenon, not a social or moral one.

This insight, such as it is, led me to think more broadly about the role of laziness in intellectual work. Having to search my own memory, having to rely on my intuition of what was in the *Recherche*, led me inevitably to the famous 'madeleine' scene. While this is the first place anyone looks for anything having to do with Proust, the word 'paresse' never appears there, but a distant reading, an automated or computerized reading passes right over it. As it happens, the

passage itself describes this very dilemma when the narrator tries to explain to himself the strange euphoria he feels upon tasting a cake dipped in tea. The work of searching one's memory for a correspondence between past and present sensations requires overcoming the inertia of habit, which is to say our automated response to sensation:

Dix fois il me faut recommencer, me pencher vers lui. Et chaque fois la lâcheté qui nous détourne de toute tâche difficile, de toute œuvre importante, m'a conseillé de laisser cela, de boire mon thé en pensant simplement à mes ennuis d'aujourd'hui, à mes désirs de demain qui se laissent remâcher sans peine.

Et tout d'un coup le souvenir m'est apparu. (I, p. 46)

What better definition for laziness than a cowardice that turns us away from difficult tasks? Any writer will recognize the temptation to abandon the composition of a difficult sentence and the pursuit of an elusive idea for the soothing comfort of a cup of tea and the numbing mental clutter of daily concerns. Thinking is hard, courageous work, as Proust reminds us not only diegetically with the struggles of the narrator, but also with the difficult structure of nearly every sentence, which challenges the reader.

Gilles Deleuze in *Proust et les signes* sums up the process of remembering in the madeleine scene by naming the obstacle to memory as laziness: 'Et à chaque instant aussi, il se peut qu'une déception particulière relance la paresse et compromette le tout.'¹⁰ The intellectual effort involved in searching for an involuntary memory involves successive attempts; the failure of any one of them, for Deleuze's Proust, can trigger a bout of laziness. The monotony of our daily lives, our relationship with immediate concerns usually prevents us from overcoming our laziness, and we quickly push away the disquieting feeling of the past's intrusion on the present. Here again we see the Proustian paradox of laziness. What most people consider diligence, the day-to-day completion of tasks and the efficient organization of today's desires in accordance

with tomorrow's needs, Proust's narrator defines as laziness, since this diligence fails to grapple with the work of time. By confusing work on the clock with the work of time, the thoughtless hard worker misses all that manifests itself over time and through time, first and foremost our understanding of our own desires and needs.

Charles Swann, the parvenu *rentier* and failed artist, serves as a countermodel and precursor to Marcel, in love and in art, in love as in art. Swann's love affair with Odette manifests all the signs of a Proustian laziness as an inability to prioritize desires in the flow of time. As I mentioned above, the narrator repeatedly chides Swann for a certain mental laziness even as the narrator describes the intense mental labour Swann employs in his strange obsession for a woman 'not his type'. This 'congenital' and 'intermittent' laziness has grave consequences:

Car la tendresse de Swann continuait à garder le même caractère que lui avait imprimé dès le début à la fois l'ignorance où il était de l'emploi des journées d'Odette et la paresse cérébrale qui l'empêchait de suppléer à l'ignorance par l'imagination. [...] Mais Swann ne savait pas inventer ses souffrances. Elles n'étaient que le souvenir, la perpétuation d'une souffrance qui lui était venue du dehors. (I, pp. 278–9)

Despite abundant evidence of Odette's infidelity and the secret surrounding how she passes most of her time, Swann holds out for the possibility that he may have misinterpreted the cheating he suspects because he doesn't know the whole story. His 'cerebral laziness' prevents him from filling in the gaps with a synthetic image that might provide more suffering but also greater clarity. In the same way, Swann cannot be an artist because he cannot create or invent – instead he seeks, like Mme Bovary, to make life into art by comparing people to famous paintings. Seeing in Odette a Botticelli takes a certain knowledge and perhaps taste, but it does not constitute the distillation of an essence (the process of art for Proust) since it only borrows from another artist's work. Just as Swann cannot invent his own suffering, but receives it from Odette,

he cannot invent aesthetic connections, metaphors, but receives them from the artists he admires.

Given the imaginative leaps and paranoid investigations he undertakes in *La Prisonnière* and *Albertine disparue*, the narrator does not entirely share Swann's 'paresse cérébrale', which bodes well for his artistic ambition, but less well for his love life or even mental health. After many years of artistic inactivity, despite much encouragement from his mother and from Albertine (who while alive might have appreciated Marcel focusing his attention elsewhere), the narrator falls into a state of depression, ending up in a 'maison de santé'. He only escapes through the 'miracle' of the five 'moments bienheureux' he experiences before attending a ball hosted by the Princesse de Guermantes. Referring back to and finally explaining the madeleine scene from a few thousand pages back, the five 'moments bienheureux' lead the narrator to the essence of time and show the way to artistic creation. Each of these moments, like the madeleine, occurs when a sensation in the present evokes a memory of the same sensation from the past, forcing two moments, two places, to coincide. The euphoria felt in that instant derives from a glimpse at an essence, what transcends chronological time, analogous to a metaphor, which finds an essence common to two unrelated objects.

As the narrator works through his theory of the 'moments bienheureux', he sets up an opposition between, on the one hand, 'intelligence' and, on the other, involuntary memory. 'Intelligence' always serves utilitarianism, whereas a 'moment bienheureux' involves an experience outside of chronological time – it announces the future, but also and more importantly the eternal. The narrator discovers 'un peu de temps à l'état pur' (IV, p. 451), time as the agent of change and not a quantity to be measured.¹¹ A too-narrow focus on the minutiae of chronological time normally obscures our extra-temporal being and the essences to be gleaned from involuntary memory:

L'être qui était rené en moi [...] languit dans l'observation du présent où les sens ne peuvent la lui apporter, dans la considération d'un passé que l'intelligence lui dessèche, dans l'attente d'un avenir que la volonté construit avec des fragments du présent et du passé auxquels elle retire encore de leur réalité en ne conservant d'eux que ce qui convient à la fin utilitaire, étroitement humaine, qu'elle leur assigne. (IV, p. 451)

In this passage, the narrator dissects the workings of that industrious laziness, which evacuates reality because of a limited focus on what is useful in a future organized as a wish fulfilment made up of confused fragments of the past and present. Given these constraints, the new self 'reborn' through the experience of the 'moment bienheureux' languishes and dies again, awaiting another fortuitous moment to reemerge for an instant.

The pleasure of the madeleine is not in the material object, in what can be usefully perceived by our intellect, as the reader remembers from 'Combray', but within ourselves, in interiority. As the narrator writes, the sensation of the 'moment bienheureux' is not related to the 'jouissance matérielle, l'action effective' (IV, p. 456). It is as if we need an outward laziness or semblance of inaction in order to turn our attention within, away from our present sensations, rooted in materiality.

The narrator discovers that the only way to hold onto these ephemeral glimpses of pure time is through the creation of a work of art, specifically for the writer in a metaphor. A work of art consists in reading within us the 'livre intérieur de signes inconnus' (IV, p. 458), an act that we must do by ourselves without the help of others, and presumably not with computers. This is a difficult task:

Aussi combien se détournent de l'écrire! Que de tâches n'assume-t-on pas pour éviter celle-là! Chaque événement, que ce fût l'affaire Dreyfus, que ce fût la guerre, avait fourni d'autres excuses aux écrivains pour ne pas déchiffrer ce livre-là, ils voulaient assurer le triomphe du droit, refaire l'unité morale de la nation, n'avaient pas le temps de penser à la littérature. (IV, p. 458)

This passage now explains to us why, for Proust, the ‘intellectuel engagé’ is in fact a writer of bad faith – making a show of saving the world is yet another way of avoiding the task of literature, of literary work. Worse, it assumes that the aesthetic and philosophical insights gained from experiencing moments of history may be interpreted and mobilized into action immediately, instead of retrospectively. While Proust was active in the Dreyfus affair, his portrayal twenty years later of its social impact on that era is unrivalled.

Yet again, Proust’s narrator attacks a certain kind of realism, bent on reproducing unimportant details instead of exploring essences. True art for the narrator is one that unravels the work of intelligence, habit, and shortsighted practical considerations ‘à chaque minute’ (IV, p. 475). Art is a consciously lazy work, a process that undoes the work of that industrious laziness of avoidance. But, as Blanchot observed, the novel cannot be made up entirely of ‘moments bienheureux’,¹² and it would be unreadable without a certain filler made up of the work of intelligence and observation – yet as the narrator argues, this time around it would be a transvalued intelligence, one that comes after the revelation of, not only the ‘moments bienheureux’, but also of a life lived lazily:

Alors, moins éclatante sans doute que celle qui m’avait fait apercevoir que l’œuvre d’art était le seul moyen de retrouver le Temps perdu, une nouvelle lumière se fit en moi. Et je compris que tous ces matériaux de l’œuvre littéraire, c’était ma vie passée; je compris qu’ils étaient venus à moi, dans les plaisirs frivoles, dans la paresse, dans la tendresse, dans la douleur, emmagasinés par moi sans que je devinasse plus leur destination, leur survivance même, que la graine mettant en réserve tous les aliments qui nourriront la plante. (IV, p. 478)

As the narrator’s life passes, the material for his book is stocked without him realizing it, indeed only because he doesn’t realize it. All his thoughts and actions that had been born from intelligence and habit destined for short-term goals proved to be too fleeting because too present in his consciousness. Only the seemingly useless pleasures and pains fashioned by laziness

become wedded to a specific moment and place outside of the narrator's consciousness and therefore act as seeds for future involuntary memories and literary metaphors. The narrator must be passive ('une lumière se fit en moi', 'ma vie passée', 'ils étaient venus à moi'), so as not to over-intellectualize his past, at least until the creative process begins. Marcel's life generates memories and therefore signs, but this production implies his own death and partial rebirth in a work of art.

After the narrator dedicates his life's work to distilling pure time, chronology returns with a vengeance. His impending death, the ultimate deadline, makes laziness impossible and cleaves his life into two periods: 'le temps de ma paresse' and 'le temps de mon travail' (IV, p. 619).

And now that laziness is part of the past, the deadline, made manifest by his illness, protects him from any future laziness:

Je me disais non seulement : "Est-il encore temps," mais "suis-je encore en état?" La maladie qui, en me faisant, comme un rude directeur de conscience, mourir au monde, m'avait rendu service [...], la maladie qui, après que la paresse m'avait protégé contre la facilité, allait peut-être me garder contre la paresse [...] (IV, p. 621)

Though prosaic, a deadline channels laziness, distinguishing what is important work from what is social distraction, and makes chronology finally subservient to pure time.¹³ Illness cuts off the writer from 'le monde' (both world and high society) and continually reminds him of his mortality, or rather he inhabits a sort of limbo between the living and the dead, allowing him to access his past life and prepare his great work for the future. Here, the deadline is in fact simply death, but death has to become not just imaginable but palpable, a pleasure principle, for it to stimulate writing. Moreover, laziness functions, in this passage at least, as an autoimmune disorder, a minor illness inflicted on the body by itself that would protect the narrator from the hostile environment of utilitarian labour and that only a greater illness could counter. No longer

living in the world, no longer producing memories and signs, the narrator has no more need for laziness. The ‘tomorrow’ promised by procrastination has arrived. Proust’s novel maintains to the very end that the value of laziness has nothing to do with society, but instead lies in our personal relationship to time and artistic creation.

Reading Lazily

‘Le Temps perdu’, lost time, is of course the past, time forgotten, but also wasted time, the time wasted by laziness. Literary work recuperates laziness, it salvages lost time. But this is not all, for that would just be a simple justification of laziness as working more efficiently, as if the sinner has seen the light. In fact, the laziness of the writer is to let time do the work. To absent oneself so that the work of time becomes apparent; in the *Recherche*, laziness protects the narrator from engaging too much with the world and eventually his illness removes him from society. As the narrator describes it, a rift occurs between the phenomenon of the past and the language or perception that had encapsulated it – the writer finds a metaphor that creates a link between the past event and the present. This metaphor must be jarring in order to reveal the gaps between word, concept, and phenomena in order to show the work of time. What emerges is an essence that would not have been perceptible to someone who was constantly putting in the hours, working within language, diligently banging his head against the wall of practical intellectual labour. When work becomes habit, in a utilitarian or positivist pursuit of eternal progress in the hatred of idleness, the work of time evaporates.

As our profession becomes more business-like, more ‘professional’ as it were, as productivity is measured in pages published, as bodies in the classroom become the goal of all departments in the humanities, and as we are encouraged to practice distance reading and digital

humanities, it behoves us to practice a lazy reading inspired by Proust. By this I do not of course mean that we should seclude ourselves from the world and pray for illness, but rather that we should be attentive to how thought and meaningful writing depend upon a certain passivity and a recuperation through time. Words like academic ‘work’, ‘study’ (etymologically from Latin, ‘studium’ or painstaking application, effort), and ‘research’ imply that what we do as critical thinkers and writers involves an active pursuit or a gathering of facts that can be not only quantified but undertaken in a given amount of time (the six years of the tenure clock or the intermittent pain of the Research Excellence Framework). Yet I would argue that our most worthwhile activity is simply reading aimlessly and, eventually, after time has passed and most preferably with a deadline looming, writing. As Roland Barthes wrote in *S/Z*, rereading is a subversive act against the book market undertaken by such marginal figures as children, the elderly, and professors. For Barthes, he who doesn’t reread is condemned to read the same story over and over, never able to read what Proust called the ‘livre intérieur des signes’.¹⁴ The pleasure of rereading Proust, or any author, comes from returning to the text, always in a different place, never to consume it whole, but being surprised by the newness of what we read, without aim, without goal, and seeing how, without immediately realizing it, time has changed us...

¹ Marcel Proust, ‘Journées de lecture’ in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, ed. by Pierre Clarac and Yves Sandre (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1971), p. 184.

² Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. by Jean-Yves Tadié, 4 vols (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1989). In this article, roman numerals in citations will refer to the Pléiade volume.

³ Laurence Lesage, 'Proust and Gide, Lifelong Antagonists', *The Modern Language Journal*, 36:4 (April 1952), 159–65 (p. 159).

⁴ Letter dated Friday 24 June 1892, available at <<http://kolbproust.library.illinois.edu/proust/search?subject=straus1>> [accessed 12 February 2015].

⁵ Young-Rae Ji, 'Sartre, admirateur secret de Proust', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 46:4 (Winter 2006), 44–55.

⁶ Shawn Gorman, 'Sartre on Proust: Involuntary Memoirs', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 46:4 (Winter 2006), 56–68 (p. 57).

⁷ Jacques Derrida, 'Cogito et histoire de la folie', in *L'Écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), pp. 51–98.

⁸ Paul Lafargue's *Le Droit à la paresse* (first published in *feuilleton* format in *L'Égalité* between June and August of 1880) as well as Bertrand Russell's *In Praise of Idleness* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1935) critique the distribution of work in capitalist economies as much as work itself.

⁹ A marvellous technological shortcut, the website <http://alarecherchedutempsperdu.org> allows the reader to perform instantaneous searches of the entire *Recherche*, without resorting to a CD-Rom or even opening a book. Last accessed 10/15/2015.

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998), p. 36.

¹¹ Christine M. Cano's *Proust's Deadline* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2006) studies the publication history of the *Recherche* in order to understand how mortality determines writing and reading.

¹² Maurice Blanchot, *Le Livre à venir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), p. 33.

¹³ Maurice Blanchot sums up the idea of extra-temporal time for Proust: 'Proust [...] a presentiment que ces instants où, pour lui, brille l'intemporel, exprimaient cependant, par l'affirmation d'un retour, les mouvements les plus intimes de la métamorphose du temps, étaient le "temps pur".'
Le Livre à venir, p. 33.

¹⁴ Barbara Johnson offers the most succinct and profound interpretation of Barthes's paradoxical notion of rereading as well as Barthes's literariness in 'Review: The Critical Difference; Review of *S/Z* by Roland Barthes, Richard Miller', *Diacritics*, 8:2 (Summer 1978), 2–9.