

## Proulx on Naturel (2014)

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Essays in this collection were presented during a three-day conference at the Centre de Recherches Proustiennes de la Sorbonne nouvelle in November 2012, on the occasion of the ninetieth anniversary of Proust's death. As Mireille Naturel explains in her introduction, this center has been an important hub for Proust studies since its founding in 1984: the breadth and quality of contributions gathered here attest to this since all are the work of scholars previously or currently affiliated with the center.

The opening chapter by Jean Milly further details the center's history and its affiliates' achievements including doctoral theses, a longstanding association with the *Bulletin Marcel Proust*, and significant publications. Among these was a new edition of *À la recherche du temps perdu* based on manuscripts, produced for GF-Flammarion from 1983 to 1987 (soon thereafter to be rivaled by the Pléiade edition published between 1987 and 1989). Danièle Gasiglia-Laster provides interesting details about her work on *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* for the GF edition, including her elucidation of Proust's references, often obscured by the passage of time. Yasué Kato reflects on the technological changes (from word processing to digital photography) that have transformed her own research since the 1980s, through the example of a particularly thorny editorial problem related to the dispersion of the manuscript of the *Jeunes filles*.

Highlights of the volume include Julie André's thought-provoking reflection on Proust's manuscript "cahiers" as objects, on three related levels: material (physically delimited, yet situated in a network of references), writerly (providing clues to Proust's compositional practices, such as reading a passage in one "cahier" while re-writing it in another), and readerly (as texts to be reconstructed by various readers). A remarkable chapter by Cécile Leblanc examines Proust's deep familiarity with musical critics of his time, whose idioms are redeployed across the *Recherche*'s characters: while Swann experiences music in the manner of an outdated nineteenth-century critic, Vinteuil is presented as an idealized, forward-looking composer who transcends Wagner. Dagmar Wieser's contribution likewise sheds light on Proust's complex relationship to two therapists, Paul Sollier (at whose clinic he stayed during the winter of 1905–06), and Paul Dubois (whom he read but never met—on this detail, Wieser corrects Jean-Yves Tadié's 1996 biography). Wieser emphasizes the importance of these interactions: for Proust's evolution from the first *Carnet*, to his project of an essay on Sainte-Beuve, to the *Recherche*; for his pastiche of specific therapeutic discourses through the *Recherche*'s doctor characters; and in the development of his theory of reading, which Wieser links to analytic transference.

A donation (to the *Société des Amis de Marcel Proust*) of letters from Marie Nordlinger to the early Proust scholar L. A. Bisson provides the impetus for a cluster of essays on Nordlinger, Proust's friend and advisor on artistic and linguistic matters during his Ruskinian phase. Cynthia Gamble provides valuable biographical details and reflects on the role of objects exchanged by the pair, a practice that leaves numerous traces in the *Recherche*. Yves-Michel Ergal re-examines Nordlinger's role in assisting the translation of *La Bible d'Amiens*: while he concludes that her contribution is less significant than commonly believed, he argues for Nordlinger's importance to the future *Recherche* since she linked the Ruskinian world of Venice to Proust's own world of personal attachments. Edward Bizub, meanwhile, ponders how Proust evolved from translating Ruskin to claiming that writing is a "translation" of interior truths ("Le devoir et la tâche d'un écrivain sont ceux d'un traducteur," we read in *Le Temps retrouvé*). Bizub proposes that this development was made at the price of Ruskin's disappearance from the final volume of the *Recherche*, an erasure revealed by the study of relevant manuscripts.

The remaining essays touch on diverse subjects: the covers of various editions of Proust's novel (Elyane Dezon-Jones and Emily Eells), the reception of the *Recherche* from 1913 to 1954 (Tomoko B. Woo), Proust as described by Colette in various eras (Laurence Teyssandier), Proustian images of death as animal, vegetal, or mineral (Aude Le Roux-Kieken), writers' houses as "lieux de mémoire" (Jacques Mény), and the Jacques Rivière papers recently acquired by the Bourges municipal library (Robert Tranchida). While the resulting book is indeed "plural" in its wide range of topics, tones, and approaches, a common thread emerges in its finest moments, about the scholarly value of meticulous archival study: of Proust's manuscripts, but also of some of his intriguingly lesser-known sources.

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