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types while the sharp Republican lines between citizens and non-nationals tend to flatten differences between different groups and trajectories. All of this is coherent and convincing although there is perhaps a danger of allowing debates around the Republic and its hidden exclusions to obscure other critical positions coming, for example, from a more radical leftist standpoint. Overall, however, this is a well-argued and informed book that does important work by bringing some relatively neglected but significant areas of film production into view.

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Proust's *In Search of Lost Time: The History of a Vocation*

MEINDERT EVERS

Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2013

206 pp., £29.80, hbk, ISBN 978 3-63-162931-4

This book is based on Meindert Evers's doctoral thesis, originally written in Dutch in 1974, revised and published in 1997, and translated into German in 2004. The author firmly grounds his discussion of Proustian aesthetics in the (mainly) European intellectual and artistic history immediately before and during Proust's time. It is impressive how the author, in barely 10 pages in Chapter I, surveys an extensive cast of thinkers, writers and artists who may have contributed to the *fin de siècle* spirit. Some are better known than others: Kant, Heinrich von Kleist, Schopenhauer, Freud, Nietzsche, Louis Couperus, Thomas Mann, Baudelaire, Oscar

Wilde and Wagner, to name but a few. This section is followed by more detailed 'influence studies' between Proust and a few key writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, as well as those involved in the Symbolist movement. However, Evers's account, which is made from an intellectual historian's perspective, is necessarily schematic, and Proust specialists today may find some of his observations unsatisfactorily limited, especially given how many monographs on Proust's relation to the above thinkers and artists have appeared since the 1970s.

The flourishing field of Proust studies since the 1970s means that many of the author's arguments may appear less original today than they were then. Throughout the book, particularly in Chapter II, Evers consistently stresses how Proust is *not* a decadent or aestheticist writer, which he demonstrates primarily through discussions of Proust's characters (Swann and Charlus) and three paradigmatic relationships between art and life (around notions of *mondanité*, contradiction and commitment), as well as two informative comparative studies with Mann and Nietzsche. While these various points are very well substantiated with abundant textual analyses, very few scholars today would insist that Proust should be defined primarily as a decadent writer. Taking into account recent scholarship on the relation between decadent aesthetics and Proust's own aesthetic evolution, one may wish that this clear-cut opposition between Proust and decadence set up by Evers could be further nuanced, as the author—perhaps rather too absolutely—asserts: 'Proust, still seen by some as a representative of the *fin de*

siècle, because his novel portrays this time, has none of the characteristics of a decadent author. Proust is radically different. His philosophy differs completely from that of a D'Annunzio, a Wilde, a Couperus, three examples of typical *fin de siècle* authors' (134). Chapter III, which explores aesthetic experience (through 'involuntary memory', 'dreaming and awakening' and 'modern means of communication'), could best serve as a critical introduction to this particular aspect of Proust's novel, as it has been much more elaborated by later Proust scholarship. The last chapter, which discusses Proust's 'modern' representations of 'cultural criticism', 'the Dreyfus Affair', 'the First World War', 'homosexuality' and 'the aristocracy and high society', could be read in a similar fashion.

However, Evers makes a crucial argument in Chapter IV, entitled 'The Recreation of Reality: Perspectivism and Metaphor'. The part on Proust's perspectivism is probably the book's most original contribution to our current Proust scholarship. The notion of perspectivism is often associated with Nietzsche in philosophy and Cubism in art. But Evers first traces Proust's perspectivist aesthetic to Ruskin and then—rather intriguingly—to Leibniz and his pluralistic and fragmentary visions of the one and only universe consisting of 'monads'. We have concrete evidence of Proust's passionate reading of Leibniz's work (e.g. *Monadology*). Given the sheer volume and complexity of Leibniz's philosophy, one may wish this fascinating investigation to be developed further.

The book covers quite a wide range of topics; the chapters are relatively independent of one another and can be read

accordingly. Overall, undergraduate students and lovers of Proust rather than Proust scholars are likely to benefit most from this book, with its almost jargon-free writing style, lucid explanations and resourceful analyses. In fact, one does not even have to have read Proust to follow most of the discussions, as the author rather extensively recapitulates many plots before analysing them. Quotations are all in English accompanied by Proust's French original in the footnotes (referring to the 1954 Pléiade edition rather than the new Pléiade) with occasional typos and wrong paginations (174–175).

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The Livres-Souvenirs of Colette: Genre and the Telling of Time

ANNE FREADMAN

London, Legenda, 2012

178 pp., £40.00, hbk, ISBN 978 1-90-654093-7

The title of the book gives us a major clue on the innovative approach developed by Anne Freadman in her analysis of a particular Colette corpus, the one devoted to autobiographical writing: *Les Vrilles de la vigne*, *Mes apprentissages*, *La Maison de Claudine*, *Sido*, *L'Étoile Vesper* and *Le Fanal bleu*. Freadman follows the powerful lure of Rimbaudian *vieilles vieilleries* and its echoes with Colette's fondness for collecting objects, people and memories. To this must be added a technical aspect, that of the study of the genre of Colette's writing. Freadman argues that, by largely avoiding