POST-PSYCHOANALYTIC PROUST

Abstract

A la recherche du temps perdu, as the last great pre-Freudian novel of the mind, has attracted much attention from psychoanalytic critics over the century since its publication. This article explores the analysis of Proust's novel by critics with a particular focus on the representation of the conscious and unconscious mind. It follows the history of such criticism through the rise of psychoanalysis within the humanities to the subsequent waning of its influence in the early years of our own century. The article argues that our post-psychoanalytic present is the ideal moment to re-examine the parallels and divergences between Proust's and Freud's understanding of consciousness, and to measure them against the rival philosophical and psychological theories which were developed through the course of the twentieth-century,. The current pluralism in the humanities' approach to analysing representations of the mind allows the literary author's own implicit understanding of mental life to assert itself more clearly.

It is my contention here that Proust studies over the course of the last century have sometimes been subject to an unfortunate bias in their approach. Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* has garnered literary criticism from many different fields of the humanities, focused on almost every conceivable aspect of the text. As well as the studies that draw out a single major theme from the work, such as time, art or sexuality, there are those which dwell on more minor elements as a gateway into the text, such as, to take two recent examples, the representation of reading or the use of the English language.[1] Critical methodologies brought to bear on the novel include the sociological, the philosophical, the intertextual, the genetic

[1] On time in Proust, see for example Georges Poulet, *L'Espace proustien* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982); on art, see Kazuyoshi Yoshikawa, *Proust et l'art pictural* (Paris: Champion, 2010); one among several recent studies of sexuality in Proust is Michael Lucey, *Never Say I: Sexuality and the First Person in Colette, Gide and Proust* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). Adam Watt's *Reading in Proust's* A la Recherche: *'le délire de la lecture'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Daniel Karlin's *Proust's English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) are the more specialized studies alluded to.

and the 'narratological'.[2] However, one particular strand that has been prominent among thematic analyses is the study of the novel's representation of the conscious and unconscious mind, and among such studies, one approach that was particularly of note in the later decades of the twentieth century is psychoanalytic criticism, for which Proust's novel, Elisabeth Ladenson suggests, 'has long provided something of a field day'.[3] The dominance of psychoanalytic theory in literary criticism, at least where the analysis of the mind is concerned, has affected our understanding of Proust's novel (it will be argued here) in ways which sometimes obscure the nuances of the uniquely conceived Proustian mind. The waning of the psychoanalytic paradigm in our own century offers a new opportunity to reconsider the relationship of Proust's conception of the mind with the Freudian model, as well as with other, unrelated theories of consciousness and the unconscious.

Proust himself, it is generally agreed, had no knowledge of Freud's work while he was writing.[4] He was, of course, subject to many of the same cultural influences, and may conceivably have encountered Freud-inspired ideas towards the end of his life as they began to enter the French intellectual *zeitgeist*, but he makes no allusion to Freud in his creative work or his personal correspondence, and there is no record of his having read or discussed

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[2] A sociological approach can be seen in Jacques Dubois, *Pour Albertine: Proust et le sens du social* (Paris: Seuil, 1997); Joshua Landy's *Philosophy as Fiction: Self, Deception, and Knowledge in Proust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) offers a philosophical approach; intertextual investigations include Dominique Jullien's *Proust et ses modèles: les Mille et une nuits et les Mémoires de Saint-Simon* (Paris: J. Corti, 1989); Alison Finch's *Proust's Additions: The Making of* A la recherche du temps perdu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, 2008) explores the genesis of the work, and Gérard Genette's 'Discours du récit', in *Figures III* (Paris: Seuil, 1972) is the classic study of narrative form using Proust's work as its model.

[3] Elisabeth Ladenson, *Proust's Lesbianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 109.

[4] See, for instance, Jean-Yves Tadié's 'Introduction générale' to the Pléiade edition. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. by Jean-Yves Tadié (Paris: Gallimard, Pléiade edition, 1987–89), 4 vols, I, p. xxvii. A lone voice of dissent is Ian McCall, whose 'Swann dans les bras de Morphée: A Freudian Influence on Proust' argues that changes in Proust's representation of dreams from *Jean Santeuil* to 'Un amour de Swann' hint at an intervening acquaintanceship with some aspects of Freudian theory, but the evidence is slight. *Neophilologus*, 78 (1994), 529–36.

psychoanalytic ideas. Most French writers of subsequent generations would be at least indirectly aware of such notions as Œdipus complex, repression and the Freudian Unconscious, thanks in part to the enthusiastic espousal of psychoanalytic theory by André Breton and the other Surrealists from the 1920s onwards. Proust's novel was thus the last time in which any parallels with the psychoanalytic model of the mind were plausibly uncontaminated by the writer's own awareness of Freud's theories. That Proust should retrospectively become the most psychoanalyzed of novelists should not surprise us. Over the second half of the twentieth century, Proust's nation was to become 'the most Freudian country in the world', with 70% of French psychotherapists utilizing psychoanalytic or psychoanalysis-derived methods by the century's end, compared with only 12% in the United States.[5] In the study of French literature, Leo Bersani may still have been able to write in a 1965 study of Proust that critics up to that time had 'consistently resisted Freudian categories, in spite of an equally consistent interest in a psychology of depth or of the unconscious', but, perhaps in part due to his own espousal of the psychoanalytic perspective, this state of affairs was soon to change.[6] While discursive and other forms of criticism continued to flourish, analysis of the Proustian representation of the nature and functioning of the mind was increasingly marked by psychoanalytic theory. Through the second half of the twentieth century, psychoanalysis gradually displaced other models of the mind, such as the existentialist, Bergsonian or behaviorist as the dominant paradigm for psychological interpretation of literary works, to the point where Freudian theories like the repression of traumatic memories or the censorship and displacement of Unconscious material into dream symbolism could be cited as established facts of mental life. Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva, both of whom combined roles as practicing analysts, psychoanalytic theorists and

[5] Catherine Meyer, 'Pourquoi un livre noir de la psychanalyse ?', in *Le Livre noir de la psychanalyse*, ed. by Catherine Meyer (Paris: Les Arènes, 2005), pp. 7-13 (p. 7).

[6] Leo Bersani, *Marcel Proust: The Fictions of Life and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 8.

prolific cultural commentators, put neo-Freudian approaches at the forefront of the poststructuralist theories which dominated the humanities in the century's final decades, buoyed by a strong vein of psychoanalytic influence in twentieth-century French literature itself, among writers such as Michel Leiris or Marie Cardinal. The status of the *Recherche* as the undisputed masterpiece of pre-Freudian introspective literature was an attraction for the many critics who came to adopt a psychoanalytic perspective on their subjects. Aside from Bersani, psychoanalytic studies of Proust's work have come in monographs from critics including Malcolm Bowie, Julia Kristeva and Serge Doubrovsky.[7] The Modern Language Association records analyses of Proust drawing on Freud, Lacan, Félix Guattari, C. J. Jung, Otto Rank and Melanie Klein.[8] Psychoanalytic readings are offered of the novel's representation of, among many other matters, memory, humour, mourning, narcissism, jealousy, obedience, parricide and ejaculation.[9] Even studies which do not adopt an explicitly

[7] Malcolm Bowie, *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Julia Kristeva, *Le Temps sensible: Proust et l'expérience littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994); Serge Doubrovsky, *La Place de la Madeleine: écriture et fantasme chez Proust* (Paris: Mercure, 1974) . Also worth noting are Jean-Louis Baudry's *Proust, Freud et l'autre* (Paris: Minuit, 1984) and Randolph Splitter's *Proust's* Recherche: *A Psychoanalytical Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1981).

[8] Among the sixty-four psychoanalytic studies recorded by the MLA, Freudian analyses include Harold Bloom, 'Introduction to Proust', in *Dilemmes du roman: Essays in Honor of Georges May*, ed. by Catherine Lafarge (Saratoga, CA: Anma Libri, 1990), pp. 311–25; Lacanian. readings include Anne-Marie Smith-Di Basio, 'Emerging Phantom-Like from Some Other Reality: Thinking Back and the Apparition of the Feminine', *Paragraph* 32, no. 2 (2009), 214–25. On Guattari, Jung, Rank and Klein, see respectively Charles J. Stivale, 'Guattari's Proust: From Signs to Assemblages', *Esprit Créateur* 46, no. 4 (2006), 113–24; Patrick Brady, 'Problematic Individuation in A la recherche du temps perdu', *L'Esprit créateur* 22.2 (1982), 19–24; Stephen G. Brown, 'The Curse of the 'Little Phrase': Swann and the Sorrows of the Sapphic Sublime', *College Literature* 30.4 (2003), 89–113; Leo Bersani, 'The Culture of Redemption': Marcel Proust and Melanie Klein', *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1986), 399–421.

[9] Maya Slater, 'Proust, Psychoanalysis and Involuntary Memory', *Literature and Psychology* 37, no.1–2 (1991), 1–10; Katharine Streip, 'Psychoanalysis, Humor and ressentiment', *Paragraph* 14, no. 2 (1991), 170–83; Alessia Ricciardi, *The Ends of Mourning: Psychoanalysis, Literature, Film* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); René Girard and Alan Roland, 'Narcissism: The Freudian Myth Demythified by Proust', in Alan Roland (ed.), *Psychoanalysis, Creativity, and Literature: A French-American Inquiry* (New York: Columbia

psychoanalytic approach to their analysis of the mind have sometimes made use of Freudian concepts such as the Œdipus complex or the (specifically psychoanalytic) Unconscious, as in Adam Watt's *Reading in Proust's* À la Recherche, in which the Narrator's first encounter with literature is interpreted in terms of the psychoanalytic 'primal scene' of witnessed parental intercourse: for Watt, the Narrator's bedtime story 'is in many ways analogous with the Freudian scene, in that it marks the beginnings of the narrator's psycho-sexual development (with attendant consequences regarding his relationship with his mother), which are inextricable from his introduction to literature'.[10]

The twenty-first century has seen a rapid decline in the influence of psychoanalysis in French literature and society, and in the arts more generally. Freud's edifice has been weakened from within, as late-twentieth-century researchers uncovered the identities of some of his most famous case studies, and learned that their subsequent medical history or their retrospective judgment on their talking cure fails to bolster Freud's claims.[11] At the same time, new theories of the mind, and the psychotherapies developed from them, have rivaled psychoanalysis for efficacy and surpassed it in the evidence base for their claims. Clinical

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University Press, 1978), 292–311; Sarah Joseph, 'Marcel and Albertine: A Proustian Psychoanalysis of Listening?', in Isabelle McNeill and Bradley Stephens (eds.), *Transmissions: Essays in French Literature, Thought and Cinema* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 161–77; L. Scott Lerner, 'The Subversive Obedience of Proust and Freud', *Modern Fiction Studies* 51, no. 2 (2005), 285–310; Roy B. Lacoursiere, 'Proust and Parricide: Literary, Biographical, and Forensic-Psychiatric Explorations', *American Imago: Studies in Psychoanalysis and Culture* 60, no. 2 (2003), 179–210; Murat Aydemir, *Images of Bliss: Ejaculation, Masculinity, Meaning* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

[10] Other examples of psychoanalytic elements in studies with primarily non-psychoanalytic methodologies include Oedipal references in Lawrence R. Schehr, 'Proust's Musical Inversions', *MLN* 97 (1982), 1086–99 (p. 1087); castration complex in Jean-Pierre Richard, *Proust et le monde sensible* (Paris: Seuil, 1974), p. 161; or Freudian profanation in Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: PUF, 1964), p. 171.

[11] Historical investigations into the identities of many of Freud's best-known patients, including the 'Wolf Man' (Sergueï Pankejeff), 'Anna O.' (Bertha Pappenheim), 'Dora' (Ida Bauer), 'Little Hans' (Herbert Graf) and the 'Rat Man' (Ernst Lanzer), have disputed the successful outcomes claimed by Freud in his case-studies. See, for example, Michel Onfray, pp. 411-38.

psychology and cognitive neuroscience base their own understanding of the mind on vast numbers of controlled experiments on volunteers and on the understandings of brain function derived from the study of healthy brains and neurological disorders. More speculatively, evolutionary psychology uses evidence from ethnology and zoology to consider how our mental faculties may have developed as adaptive traits for our survival and reproduction in the environment of our evolutionary past, and, in doing so, rules Freudian concepts like the 'death drive' or an innate propensity to incestuous desire to be implausibly unDarwinian. Among psychotherapies, Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) has become the most prominent alternative, often counseling against introspective searches for the causes of mental illness in the patient's past, and instead attempting to instill habits of mind which perceive and forestall the onset of anxious or depressive episodes. In France, this rivalry broke out into the so-called 'guerre des psys' with the 2004 publication of a government report, *Psychothérapies: trois approches évaluées*, which declared the greater effectiveness of CBT over psychoanalytic therapies in the treatment of several forms of mental illness, and which was withdrawn the following year under pressure from psychoanalysts.[12] The resulting scandal was further inflamed in 2005 by the publication of *Le Livre noir de la psychanalyse*, a collection of articles by psychologists and others impugning the efficacy of psychoanalysis as a therapy and its pertinence as a model of mind, which became a best-seller and inspired the the *Nouvel Observateur* to splash across its cover the question, 'Is it time to give up on psychoanalysis?'.[13] Despite the efforts of psychoanalysts such as Elisabeth Roudinesco and

[12] INSERM, the French National Institute for Health and Medical Research, published a meta-analysis of a thousand studies, demonstrating the superiority of other treatments, and of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in particular, over psychoanalysis in dealing with a range of mental health problems (Paris: Éditions INSERM, 2004). An echo of the affair comes in the 2012 report by the French Haute Autorité de Santé (HAS) on the treatment of autism, which again counsels behavioural therapy and rules that psychoanalysis is 'not pertinent' to the condition.

[13] *Le Livre noir de la psychanalyse: vivre, penser et aller mieux sans Freud*, ed. by Catherine Meyer (Paris: Les Arènes, 2005); publication details from *www.arenes.fr; Le Nouvel Observateur*, 1 January 2005.

Jacques-Alain Miller to mount a counter-offensive through their own publications, the most recent contribution to the debate, Michel Onfray's 2010 book, *Le Crépuscule d'une idole: l'affabulation freudienne*, seems to take the diminished status of Freud for granted in its arguments, as it does in its title.[14] During this same period, non-psychoanalytic theories of the mind begin to make their presence felt in the arts, with the publication of a number of books of literary theory and criticism drawing on evolutionary psychology and cognitive neuroscience, although the use of such methodologies in the humanities remains controversial.

At this critical juncture in the history of psychoanalytic literary criticism, we are well placed to explore how Freudian interpretations took on Proust's work, to evaluate how far Proust's own vision of the mind fits the psychoanalytic model imposed upon it, and to consider how 'psychoanalytic Proust' compares with the interpretative power of other theories of the mind that have come before and since. Proust himself, annoyed by the label 'Bergsonian' that came to be attached to his novel during his lifetime, suggests the *Recherche* might better be thought of as 'a series of "Novels of the Unconscious"', which demonstrates that he saw himself as working in the same territory at least as Freudian theory.[15] He clearly has many areas of common interest with Freud: Malcolm Bowie lists ten major themes to be found in Freud's theories and Proust's fiction, including sadism and masochism, homosexuality, dream analysis, the 'accidental' emergence of the unconscious in slips and mannerisms, infantile sexuality, jealousy, theories of consciousness and the unconscious, and the role of free association.[16] Proust's mind does comprise conscious and unconscious parts,

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[14] *Pourquoi tant de haine?: anatomie du Livre noir de la psychanalyse*, ed. by Elizabeth Roudinesco (Paris: Navarin, 2005), *L'Anti-livre noir de la psychanalyse*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 2006)

[15] Marcel Proust, Interview with Élie-Joseph Bois, 'Variétés littéraires: *A la recherche du temps perdu*', in *Le Temps*, 13 November 1913, p. 4, reprinted in Marcel Proust, *Choix de lettres*, ed. by Philip Kolb (Paris: Plon, 1965), p. 287.

[16] Bowie, pp. 68–69.

with the latter, as in Freud, figured as a vast realm which both stores memories and motivates our actions for reasons unknown to us. Proust's Narrator uses metaphors of things buried underground or in the depths of the sea to describe from where the findings of involuntary memory emerge.[17] He searches for insights into his own mind from the interpretation of symbolic dreams (*OJFF*, I, 618–19; trans., 205), or speculates with hindsight on a motive that may have been 'unconsciously determining' (*SG*, III, 10; trans., 12) in a decision to cross the courtyard to spy on Jupien and Charlus. Reflecting on such phenomena, he suggests that unconscious root causes may often lie behind our conscious ideas and impressions:

> However clearly we identify our own impressions, as I then believed I saw clearly into my melancholia, we are unable to plumb their deeper meaning: as with those attacks of sickness that a doctor hears his patient describing, but which lead him to detect a deeper cause, unknown to the patient, so our impressions and ideas count only as symptoms. (*AD*, IV, 141; trans., 525)

This representation of the mind suggests an affinity between Proust's principle of mental discontinuity and the Freudian division of the psyche.

Freud's schema of consciousness and Unconscious, and even more so his later tripartite division of the psyche into super-ego, ego and id, figure these faculties as semi-

[17] Marcel Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, I, 45; *The Way by Swann's*, trans. by Lydia Davis (London : Penguin, 2001), 48; *Le Côté de Guermantes*, II, 821; *The Guermantes Way*, trans. by Mark Treharne, 531 Quotations from Proust's novel will be taken from the 2001 six-volume Penguin translation, ed. by Christopher Prendergast, and subsequent page references will be given in the text to the Pléiade French edition followed by the 2001 Penguin translation. The titles of Proust's original seven volumes are abbreviated as follows: *DCCS*: *Du côté de chez Swann/The Way by Swann's*; *OJFF*: *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs/In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*, trans. by James Grieve; *CG*: *Le Côté de Guermantes/The Guermantes Way*; *SG*: *Sodome et Gomorrhe/Sodom and Gomorrah*, trans. by John Sturrock; *P*: *La Prisonnière/The Prisoner*, trans. by Carol Clark; *AD*: *Albertine disparue/The Fugitive*, trans. by Peter Collier; *TR*: *Le Temps retrouvé/Finding Time Again*, trans. by Ian Patterson.

independent entities, each with their own aims and motivations which may be hidden from and conflicting with the others: Freud writes, for instance, that the ego 'feels itself hated and persecuted by the super-ego', or the id 'cannot say what it wants'.[18] This too finds an echo in Proust, where a similar dynamic can be seen between the Narrator's 'petits personnages intérieurs', who can be similarly ill-aligned and ignorant of each other, as when the question of whether the Narrator will write to an acquaintance or get to work on his book is posed in such terms: 'This one of my selves had kept its scruples and lost its memory. The other self, the one which had conceived his work, on the other hand still remembered' (*TR*, IV, 617; trans., 349–50). More Freudian still is the account of the quasi-independent workings of the Narrator's unconscious mind which reconstitute Albertine's phrase, 'casser le pot' without his conscious knowledge:

> 'But as she talked, my mind was still pursuing, in the waking, creative sleep of the unconscious (a sleep in which things which first passed us by unnoticed now take full shape, in which our sleeping hands grasp the key to secrets hitherto sought in vain), the search for the meaning of the interrupted sentence whose intended conclusion I wished to discover.' *P*, III, 842; trans., 313.[19]

As in Freud, the unconscious mind is here associated with sexual taboos. The central role of sexuality in mental life is the other major element, along with mental discontinuity and multiplicity, which Proust's mind shares with Freud's. Like Freud, Proust makes sexual desire the centre of our mental life, and the driving force behind consciously and

[18] See especially Sigmund Freud's Freud's 1923 essay, 'The Ego and the Id', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74), XIX.

[19] The expression 'se faire casser le pot' (left in French in Clark's translation), refers to anal sex.

unconsciously motivated actions. Sexuality is explored in manifold forms, including such forbidden areas as childhood sexuality, male and female homosexuality, and sado-masochism. In a particularly Freudian move, Proust even draws comparisons between the adult's desire for his lover and the child's for his mother, referring to his need to have Albertine at his bedside 'as a mistress, a sister, a daughter all at once, and as a mother', and comparing his bed-time anxieties as son and lover:

> What I experienced with Albertine on those evenings was not the calming effect of my mother's kiss at Combray, but on the contrary, the anguish of the evenings when my mother said good-night to me only hurriedly, or worse, did not come up to my room at all, whether she was cross with me or kept downstairs by guests. (*P*, III, 618–19; trans., 98–99)

The possible link between the Narrator's childhood relationship with his mother and his adult sexual relationships is of prime importance to every psychoanalytic study of Proust. Just as the passage above appears to invite interpretation of the Narrator's adult sexuality in terms of his formative childhood experiences – Serge Doubrovsky takes it as licence to discuss a hybrid character, 'Albertine-maman'[20] – so psychoanalytic critics have been keen to discover the key to the Narrator's psyche in his childhood reminiscence. Bersani opened the debate in 1965 with an examination of the Narrator's dependence on his mother for his own self-image, which the Narrator himself admits, declaring at the end of the novel, 'I noticed that in matters of self-examination, I looked at things from the same point of view as she did' *TR*, IV, 509–10; trans., 240. While Bersani expanded this idea to explore the narrator's 'persistent and fundamental need to merge with a source of strength outside of himself', later psychoanalytic

[20] Doubrovsky, p. 121.

critics fixated on the maternal relationship.[21] Doubrovsky and Kristeva both make the childhood-restoring *petite madeleine* a symbol of the Narrator's mother, supporting this principally by the fact that it is she who offers it to him, along with the tea to drink with it.[22] The critics proceed to create many-layered interpretative and associative constructs, with Kristeva seeing in the Narrator's consumption of the madeleine hidden references to breast-feeding, and thence to fellatio, and perhaps to an alleged gay practice of eating bread soaked in urine, while Doubrovsky notes linguistic similarities between the madeleine episode and the masturbation scene in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, and concludes that the Narrator's repressed wish to be rid of his mother is expressed symbolically as both defecating and ejaculating her.[23] These extrapolations are admittedly complemented by other, more sober delvings, such as Doubrovsky's convincing redefinition of the madeleine episode as a renewed affective charge towards childhood rather than a simple rediscovery from forgetfulness, or Kristeva's exploration of Proust's double structures of sensation and idea combined. The more creative readings do, however, demonstrate a particular weakness of psychoanalytic criticism, namely that the concept of Freudian repression encourages critical interpretations that bear little relation to what the text, on its 'surface level', declares to be the case. The Narrator's expressed love for his mother can be accepted at face value, or, as the critic desires, be interpreted as a self-deluding cover for repressed feelings with the very opposite signification. Freud's own interpretative methods, which might replace a dream image with a word, then pun on this word to discover the hidden meaning of the image, take him far from the original sense of his material, and similarly read with or against the grain as the

[21] Bersani, p. 34.

[22] Doubrovsky, p. 39; Kristeva, p. 40. Suzanne Dow makes a similar analysis via Lacanian psychoanalytic theory in 'How to Begin a Novel: Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* and the Author-Reader Relation', *French Studies*, 63 (2009), 283–94.

[23] Kristeva, p. 43; Doubrovsky, p. 49.

interpreter wishes.[24] Freud could at least allege corroborating feedback or salutary effects on his patients' state of mind to support his readings; psychoanalysis in literary criticism has no such limiting factors to its interpretations.

Some of the most productive psychoanalytic engagements with Proust have come from fields of criticism which have a more problematic relationship with Freud, such as gender and queer theorists, who see a marginalization of women and a pathologizing of homosexuality in psychoanalytic theory which disinclines them to accept it at face value. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick set the terms for queer reading of Proust with her ground-breaking *Epistemology of the Closet* (1994), in which she convincingly demonstrated that the conceptualization of homosexuality expressed in the novel – a 'true' inner gender which may or may not match the outer sex, but which pairs off heterosexually with its opposite – is not matched in practice by its representation. Charlus and the other gay men may express an 'inner woman' with their sexuality, but Albertine's lesbianism is never viewed in terms of her 'inner man', lending sexuality in Proust 'a sort of asymmetrical list towards the feminine'.[25] On her return to Proust at the very end of her career, in the posthumously published *The Weather in Proust* (2011), Sedgwick took an overt yet unconventional psychoanalytic approach to the text, drawing on the object-relations theory of the Hungarian psychoanalyst, Michael Balint. Balint takes Freud's theory of transference, which he labels 'malignant transference', and accompanies it with a second, 'benign' transference.[26] Where Freud's malignant transference manifests in spiraling demands and needs from the other, much as the Narrator's obsessive jealousy requires ever greater control over Albertine, Balint's benign version of the phenomenon postulates a sustainable and sustaining relationship, in which the

[24] Richard Webster offers a critique of Freud's interpretative methods in *Why Freud Was Wrong: Science, Sin and Psychoanalysis* (Oxford: Orwell Press, 1996), pp. 259–77.

[25] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 233.

[26] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Weather in Proust* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

subject's needs are satiated by a benevolent environment, in the manner that we are sustained by air or supported by earth and water. Sedgwick uses these ideas to move away from the psychosexual readings of Freudian criticism, comparing instead the Narrator's sleeplessness in the unfamiliar Balbec hotel room to the asthmatic's inability to breathe, and recasting his anxiety about his mother's kiss from a libidinal to an existential trauma. More broadly, Sedgwick uses object relations to diagnose a mystical aspect to Proust's representation of the world, with its tutelary spirits and *genii locorum*, which, metaphorical as they may be, nevertheless suggest a universe which is itself alive and a force for good in human lives. The intersection of gender theory and psychoanalysis has its own share of elaborately inventive interpretations, of course; one might think of Kaja Silverman's contention that male homosexuality in Proust is 'routed through lesbianism' by figuring men's mouths in terms of female genitalia.[27] Nevertheless, it is frequently characterized by a skeptical and pluralist approach to the discipline which avoids dogmatic Freudianism, as can be seen, for example, in Ladenson's *Proust's Lesbianism* (1999), which draws on Freud, Klein and other psychoanalytic theorists as one of several approaches to interpreting sexuality in the text, while arguing against those who would conceive it in terms of the conventional Freudian Œdipus complex.

Where the earliest psychoanalytic studies of Proust, like Bersani's original, tempered Freudian analysis with interpretations from existentialism and other theories of the mind, and offered interpretations of the Narrator's not far removed from the results of the Narrator's own introspective analysis, subsequent psychoanalytic critics moved further from the Narrator's own view of his feelings and motivations, reaching the 'expulsion maternelle' of a defecated madeleine in Doubrovsky by the mid-1970s, which is demonstrated to be not only the Narrator's neurosis, but the author's too, through the encoded confession of the initials

[27] Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 11.

'M. P.' inverted in the words 'petite madeleine'.[28] Once again, wider ranging psychoanalytic analyses mitigated such psycho-sexual excess with reflections from other voices in the discipline on other elements of Proust's novel. Bersani's later work, *The Culture of Redemption* (1990), turned to Klein to interpret Proust's representation of art. He finds echoes between Klein's theory of sublimation and Proust's conception of art as a redemptive replication of flawed experience.[29] Bersani's return to the analysis of sexuality in Proust five years later in *Homos* was another notable contribution to Proust studies which employed psychoanalysis as one strand of theory alongside other conceptions of gender construction.[30] Cautious agnosticism towards psychoanalysis more generally began to appear from the late 1980s, in Malcolm Bowie's acknowledgement of the important distinction between Freud's model of the mind, 'in which part is radically extrinsic to part and in which barriers and opacities may occasionally be attenuated but never removed' and Proust's 'introspective model, in which the mind is transparent from level to level and permeable part by part'.[31] Henk Hillenaar's 'Proust et la psychanalyse' in 1994 took an openly doubtful view of Freudian interpretation more generally, and perhaps marked the beginning of the decline of psychoanalytic Proust, although would be some years later before psychoanalytic studies themselves began to decline as a proportion of work published on the writer. They are in no danger of dying out, however: even between 2010 and the present time of writing,

[28] Doubrovsky, p. 120. Doubrovsky paves the way for other, less prominent critics to indulge in equally strained psychoanalytic interpretation, including Randolph Splitter, whose Freudian monograph on Proust includes the suggestion that references to 'pipi' (urine) are encoded into the double-'p' of the novel's 'petit pavillon', 'petite phrase' and 'petit pan de mur jaune'. Splitter, pp. 29–31

[29] Leo Bersani, *The Culture of Redemption* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 20–28.

[30] Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[31] Bowie, p. 71

psychoanalytic Proust studies include articles exploring such topics as desire, the uncanny and masturbation in the *Recherche*.[32]

If we reverse the telescope and take Proust's own conception of the mind as our guide to an evaluation of psychoanalytic approaches, we find justification for a certain skepticism. In its broad outlines, the opening of 'Combray' might seem promising territory for a Freudian reading, given that it concerns the recovery of buried memories and a boyhood marked by anxious possessiveness towards the mother. Beyond this caricature, however, it reveals itself as rather ill-fitting to a psychoanalytic narrative. The Narrator's childhood consists of a large number of pleasant or neutral memories, plus one traumatic memory, this being the anxious wait for his mother's good-night kiss. Proust's representation of memory, in which the anodyne memories are banished to the oblivion of the unconscious, while the painful one continues to haunt his consciousness, is the opposite of what would be expected according to Freud's theory of repression. For Freud, repression is the process by which consciousness defends itself by sealing traumatic memories away within the Unconscious; indeed, Freud declares that it is by virtue of this process that the unconscious mind comes into existence, and thus considers repression as the 'cornerstone' of his theory.[33] Proust's representation is, however, in tune with the theories of modern psychology, which is doubtful about the existence of Freudian repression: in an overview of sixty years of psychological research into the topic, David S. Holmes cites findings that 'emotionally intense experiences were more

[32] Per Bjornar Grande, 'Proustian Desire', *Contagion* 18 (2011), 39–69; Anna Magdalena Elsner, 'Uncanny Balbec: Crypts, Nightmares and Phantoms in "Les Intermittences du coeur" ', in Amaleena Damlé and Aurélie L'Hostis (eds), *The Beautiful and the Monstrous: Essays in French Literature, Thought and Culture* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 79-91; Leo Bersani, '"Ardent Masturbation" (Descartes, Freud, and Others)', *Critical Inquiry* 38, no. 1 (2011), 1–16.

[33] Freud, 'On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement' *Standard Edition*, XIV, pp. 7–66 (p. 16).

likely to be recalled than less intense experiences, regardless of whether they were pleasant or unpleasant'.[34]

The contents of the Narrator's traumatic memory also provide a poor foundation for those who would explicate his inner life in terms of a supposed Œdipus complex. The Freudian psychodrama has three protagonists, with the role of the father as sexual rival to the son taking at least equal importance to that of the mother. In the scene of the good-night kiss, the Narrator's father does not stand as an obstacle between the son and his mother's affection, but rather the facilitator: overruling his wife's concerns about indulging the son's emotional fragility, he encourages her to spend the night in the Narrator's room:

> You can see the boy is upset, he seems very sad; look, we're not brutes! You'll end by making him ill, and that won't do us much good! There are two beds in his room; go ahead and tell Françoise to prepare the big one for you and sleep with him tonight.' *DCCS*, I, 36; trans., 39.

Hillenaar notes that psychoanalytic criticism tends to sideline analysis of the father, 'rreduced to an absence or relegated to the domain of art and creativity', rather than highlighting his failure to fit the Œdipal template.[35] One might similarly note the divergence from Freudian expectations posed by the grandmother's displacement of the mother as the emotional focus of the Narrator's family relationships for much of the novel. While the passage quoted earlier

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[34] David S. Holmes, 'The Evidence for Repression: An Examination of Sixty Years of Research', in *Repression and Dissociation: Implications for Personality Theory, Psychopathology and Health*, ed. by Jerome L. Singer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 85–102 (p. 87). V.S. Ramachandran is a more sympathetic voice: 'Although the word has made it into pop psychology, memory researchers have long been suspicious of repression. I lean towards thinking that the phenomenon is real, for I have seen so many clear instances of it in my patients, providing what mathematicians call an "existence proof".' Ramachandran, *The Tell-Tale Brain* (London: Heinemann, 2011), pp. 270–71.

[35] Hillenaar, p. 68.

on Albertine at the narrator's bedside does suggest that the Narrator's adult sexuality is strongly marked by his childhood relationship to his mother, it is not unequivocal. Its continuation emphasizes the *differences* between maternal and sexual relationships:

> But though I suffered the anguish of my childhood, the changed being who now inspired it, my different feelings about her, the very changes in my own character made it impossible to seek peace from Albertine as I had from my mother. (*P*, III, 618–19; trans., 98–99)

The representation of memory also fails to harmonize entirely with the corresponding elements of Freud's theories. For Proust, memories from the unconscious mind come spontaneously, coaxed to the surface in a 'happy moment' that has little in common with the slow and sometimes painful process of reconstruction that is the psychoanalytic method. Certainly these memories are previously lost to consciousness, but there is no endorsement in Proust of Freud's distinction between the 'pre-conscious' store-room into which consciousness can delve at will and the sealed Unconscious, the contents of which can only be extrapolated indirectly. Equally, unconscious reasons for the Narrator's actions can be uncovered by a process of introspection, which, in cool hindsight, reaches the well-springs of his motivation without the need to bypass an internal censor. Just as the discontinuity of the Narrator's experience of time is tempered by the connection finally wrought by memory and art, so the discontinuity of the self stops short of Freud's rigid compartmentalization: Proust's 'steep slope of introspection' (*AD*, IV, 48; trans., 433) leads to the possibility of a comprehensive understanding of our own minds, rather than ending at the locked door beyond which only the psychoanalyst's interpretations can speculate.

The present climate of doubt about psychoanalysis not only helps to highlight the discipline's imperfect fit to the view of the mind expressed by Proust, but also assists in bringing back into focus other theories of mind which, for literary critics at least, have sometimes been overshadowed. As mentioned earlier, the dominant philosophy of consciousness in French culture in Proust's own time was that of Henri Bergson, who was related to Proust by marriage, and whose ideas Proust discusses in his correspondence and even at one point in the novel itself (*SG*, III, 373–74; trans. 379–80). Bergson's view of the mind is characterized by a distinction between primary consciousness, which receives our sense-impressions from the world, and reflective consciousness, in which we conceptualize our experience. For Bergson, the latter is characterized by a quantifying approach – dividing, measuring and enumerating as one might physical objects in space – towards impressions that are essentially qualitative in nature. In the intuitive part of our minds, mental states merge like blended colors, within a temporal flow that is akin to our appreciation of individual notes as a unified melody. As Bergson expresses it: 'deep states of consciousness have nothing to do with quantity ; they are pure quality ; they merge into one another in such a way that one cannot tell if they are one or several, nor ever examine them in this regard without immediately destroying their essence.'[36]

Evidence for an affinity between Proust's mind and Bergson's has been seen in, for example, the Narrator's claim that retrospectively disentangling his youthful dreams of women and travel is an artificial division of what was a unified mental event: 'my dreams of travel and love were only moments – which I am separating artificially today as if I were cutting sections at different heights of an apparently motionless iridescent jet of water – in a single inflexible upsurge of all the forces of my life' (*DCCS*, I, 86; trans., 89). The Narrator's intuitive feelings are thus to some extent falsified by the intellectual process that

[36] Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), p. 102.

distinguishes them in order to give them individual labels. This and other instances demonstrate that Proust's mind does have certain affinities with Bergson's, as Joyce Megay has discussed in depth.[37] The centrality of memory and temporal flow to both writers' conceptions of consciousness is itself a link between them, and Deleuze is one critic to draw parallels between the 'being-in-itself' of Proust's involuntary memory and the theories of Bergson's *Matière et Mémoire*.[38] Both Proust and Bergson also differentiate clock time from time as subjectively experienced, which can race or creep according to the subject's state of mind (*OJFF*, I, 601; trans., 188). Both privilege the subjective and the intuitive over the objective and rational in their attempt to understand the essentials of the self. On several of the most fundamental elements of the mind, though, they are sharply divided. Bergson's central contention on time and consciousness, for instance, is that states of mind 'follow on from each other indistinguishably' within the flow of *durée*, itself defined as 'an organic development which is not for all that an increasing quantity'.[39] Time as we live it is immeasurable and indivisible, and we misrepresent it when our intellect figures it in terms of length and quantity. When Proust's Narrator conceives time as a series of discontinuous periods aligned as if in space, however, this is not seen as a misrepresentation. Time is a dimension, like the other three (*DCCS*, I, 60; trans., 64), and can be conceptualized in similar ways: serial selves and lined-up vessels of experience are at the core of Proust's view of the mind, and the time his Narrator experiences is, in Poulet's terms, 'spatialized, juxtaposed time'.[40] Elsewhere, Bergson's eccentric idea of memory as a still-existing past which is perceived externally by the mind's eye in a manner analogous to how our real eyes perceive

[37] Joyce Megay, *Bergson et Proust: essai de la mise au point de la question de l'influence de Bergson sur Proust* (Paris: Vrin, 1976).

[38] Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), pp. 72–74.

[39] Henri Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* [1927] (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2003), pp. 170–71.

[40] Poulet, p. 136.

the present is entirely at odds with the modern understanding of memory as traces of experience stored in the brain, which Proust's novel endorses. Superficial kinship in their choice of theme, then, masks deep disagreements between Bergson and Proust, and one can only sympathize with Proust's discomfort at finding his representation of the mind dubbed 'bergsonian'.

The Bergsonian view of the mind was eclipsed from the 1930s onwards by the arrival of phenomenological philosophy in France in the early translations of Kierkegaard, Husserl and Heidegger, and in the home-grown phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and its existentialist variants from Gabriel Marcel and Jean-Paul Sartre. Once again, similarities have been noted between the philosophical model and Proust's representation. Visual perception, for example, is of prime interest to both. E. Casey draws out the similarities between descriptive writing in Proust's fiction and Merleau-Ponty's essays, both of which explore the act of a perceiving subject in feigned 'reality statements' which aim at finding the essence of the act of perception, thus demonstrating more porous boundaries between fiction and philosophy than is generally the case.[41] Merleau-Ponty in fact acknowledges a debt to Proust, writing in *Le Visible et l'invisible*: 'Nobody has gone further than Proust in defining the relationship of the visible to the invisible, in describing an idea that is not the opposite of an impression, but which is its lining and its depth.'[42] Proust's technique of moving from a particular observation to a general maxim, anchors his insights in the interaction of the individual self with the world, as Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenologists were attempting to do. From opposed starting points, the novelist and the philosopher converge as each combines the subjective experience of the conventional novel with the abstract laws of traditional philosophy. The two men share a philosophical education, including influence

[41] E. Casey, 'Literary Description and the Phenomenological Method', *Yale French Studies*, 61 (1981), 176–201.

[42] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible et l'invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 195.

from Lachelier, Ravaisson, Ribot, Egger and Séailles, as well as from Schopenhauer and his disciples.[43] Proust and Merleau-Ponty connect most closely in their understanding of the interplay of the self and world involved in the process of perception. Merleau-Ponty posits a complex dance of inward reception and outward imposition – 'sense impressions give back to me what I have lent them, but it is from the senses that I originally received it' – in which memory associations play an important role in conditioning present perceptions.[44] Proust expresses a similar idea in his description of how our past experience enriches present perception: 'After a certain age our memories are so interwoven with each other that the object of our thoughts or the book which we were reading has practically no importance. We have left traces of ourselves everywhere, everything is fertile, everything is dangerous, and we can make discoveries every bit as precious in an advertisement for soap as in Pascal's *Pensées*' (AD, IV, 124 ; trans. 508). This interplay of inner and outer world, anticipating as it does the 'moments bienheureux' when perceptions trigger involuntary memory, puts Proust in similar territory to the phenomenological focus on what is neither wholly of the mind nor wholly of the external world, but a combination of both.

As for the existentialist ideas which develop out of phenomenology, the existentialist concept of consciousness as a void, a simple directed spotlight that illuminates whatever is the focus of our attention, seems prefigured in the following passage, which appeared in early versions of *Albertine disparue*, and is now confined to the 'Notes et variantes' of the Pléiade edition:

> Now, as the self exists unceasingly thinking about various things, as it is, in fact, nothing more than the thought of these things, when by chance, rather than having these things before it, it thinks suddenly of itself, it finds only an empty apparatus,

[43] Kristeva, p. 470.

[44] Merleau-Ponty, p. 248.

> something that it does not recognize, to which, in order to afford it some reality, it adds the memory of a face seen in the mirror. (*AD*, IV, 1059–60; not included in the Penguin translation)

The passage suggests that consciousness turned in on itself perceives only nothingness. This recalls Husserl's concept of intentionality – that consciousness is always consciousness *of* something other than itself – which Sartre adopts in an early essay: 'Consciousness has no "inside"; it is nothing but the outside of itself and it is this absolute flight, this refusal to be a substance which constitute it as a consciousness.'[45] The 'empty apparatus' Proust's narrator discovers at the centre of his own mind is strikingly close to the 'utter void' of existentialist consciousness, which has no more substance than a beam of light shining onto the object of attention.[46] Here, more than ever, though, we must be wary of cherry-picking examples which may not be representative of Proust's work as a whole. This 'empty apparatus' may reflect the inner void felt by the narrator in the shocking aftermath of Albertine's departure, but elsewhere the Narrator is confident that riches are to be discovered from looking inwards, and writes of the 'pleasure that could come from finding something lying deep within myself, from bringing it out of its inner darkness and into the light of day' (*OJFF*, II, 95; trans. 316). In general in the novel, consciousness turned in on itself, far from discovering a Sartrean void, finds previously hidden details both about the Narrator's individual self and about the workings of the mind more broadly.[47] The disparity between the two quotations is one example of the Narrator's tendency to mistake for universal maxims what is only the

[45] Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Une Idée fondamentale de la phénoménologie de Husserl: l'intentionnalité', in *Critiques littéraires (Situations I)*, pp. 29–32 (p. 30).

[46] Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Être et le néant: essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), p. 23.

[47] Similar attitudes are expressed in *AD*, IV, pp 48; trans. 433; and *TR*, IV, pp. 489–93; trans. 215–21.

subjective truth of his own mind at that point in his intellectual development, or under the particular emotional pressures he is presently experiencing.

The influence of phenomenological and existentialist thought on French academia in the 1960s and 1970s is perceptible in some of the Proust criticism of the period. Georges Poulet and Jean-Pierre Richard, writers of two of the most widely-read monographs of these decades, both took as their subject-matter the Narrator's subjective 'world', temporal in Poulet's case and sensory in Richard's.[48] Richard, for instance, explored at length how the subjective connotations imposed on the 'notes' of each individual impression made by the things the Narrator perceives combine in the course of the novel to produce the 'mélodie fondamentale' of the self, noting how abundant food recalls the safety and intimacy of home, or bright colors produce a feeling of euphoria.[49] Their readings of the text construed it very much a description of one man's being-in-the-world, to borrow Heidegger's term, in which to analyze the objects of perception is simultaneously to analyze the nature of the perceiver.

Finally, what connections do we find in Proust with the most recent theories of mind? Like psychoanalysis, cognitive and evolutionary theories take a resolutely materialist view of their subject: for both, the mind supervenes on the neural activity of the physical brain. This is one aspect of current thinking with which Proust is clearly aligned. Just as Morel attributes his own lack of self-control to a physiological cause, claiming 'my nerves are all tied in knots now' (*P*, III, 699; trans., 176), so the narrator is apt to see mental events in physical terms. The fading in his memory of Albertine is seen as comparable to the mental consequences of a cerebral stroke:

> That impression of the void which I remember having experienced that day for the first time, that suppression within me of a whole section of the association of my

[48] Poulet, *L'Espace proustien;* Jean-Pierre Richard, *Proust et le monde sensible* (Paris: Seuil, 1974).

[49] Richard, p. 7.

> ideas, as in a man whose worn-out cerebral artery ruptures and who finds a whole part of his memory erased or paralysed. (*AD*, IV, 172; trans., 557)

The embodied status of the mind is touched on in a number of ways in the novel, through the blurring of emotional and physical pain (*AD*, IV, 12; trans., 396), or the 'involuntary memory of the limbs' that fills our body with 'torpid memories' (*TR*, IV, 277; trans., 5). Proust considered the title *Les Intermittances du cœur* for his novel (it survives as a heading to a section of *Sodome et Gomorrhe*), attracted by the way the phrase 'alludes in the mental world to an illness of the body', as he wrote to Eugène Fasquelle.[50]

Proust's interest in the biological substrate of consciousness extends to a nodding acquaintance with Darwinian theory. He discusses his characters' inherited mental and physical characteristics in serious mode, and in comic mode employs evolutionary metaphors to describe the Narrator's grandmother's rise through the animal kingdom in the level of esteem bestowed upon her by the princesse de Luxembourg (*OJFF*, II, 60; trans., 279), or the disappearing tail of the 'S' in Gilberte's signature when, as Mme G. S. de Forcheville, she begins to distance herself from her past as Mlle Swann (*AD*, IV, 167; trans, 551). In discussing Morel's abandonment of Charlus for a heterosexual relationship, the narrator makes explicit reference to Darwin's study of cross-fertilization in flowers, deriving the following analogy to human behaviour:

> Thus the interplay of different psychological laws contrives to compensate, in the flowering of the human species, for everything which, in one way or another, would lead by superabundance or scarcity to its annihilation. As Darwin has shown, a

[50] Letter dated October 1912 to Eugène Fasquelle, in Proust, *Correspondance*, ed. by Philip Kolb, 21 vols, (Paris: Plon, 1970–1993), XI, p. 257.

> comparable wisdom is to be found among the flowers, governing the methods of fertilization by opposing them successively one to another.(*TR*, IV, 360; trans., 89).[51]

While perhaps betraying an overly teleological view of Darwinism, this comment does suggest a broader evolutionary perspective underlying Proust's representation of sexuality, most evident in the famous comparison of gay courting rituals to insect pollination (*SG*, III, 3–6; trans., 5–8). The discourse of biological science allows Proust to discuss gay relationships in a non-judgmental manner, while making an implicit plea for tolerance through his assertions that same-sex attraction is natural, physiological, and fixed from birth (*SG*, III, 344, 514 ;trans., 349, 522).

As psychoanalytic approaches have declined within academic criticism in the last decade, methodologies based on evolutionary psychology or cognitive science have come to take their place. French studies have lagged some way behind the study of English literature in this respect – the numbers of cognitive or neo-Darwinian studies published on Shakespeare alone are already approaching three figures, for instance – but Proust has begun to attract attention from these new disciplines. Jonah Lehrer claims that Proust, in his analysis of memory, 'intuited some of modern neuroscience's most basic tenets', and goes on to compare the volatility, malleability and persistence of memory in Proust with new findings in neurophysiology about the role of prions in the formation and retrieval of memories.[52] Scholarly articles are beginning to adopt such perspectives, with Cognitive Proust and neo-Darwinian Proust both making their first appearance in peer-reviewed journals within the last

[51] The reference is to Darwin's 1876 study, *The Effects of Cross and Self Fertilization in the Vegetable Kingdom.*

[52] Jonah Lehrer, *Proust was a Neuroscientist* (Boston: Mariner, 2008), p. 76. Maryann Wolf's *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (2008) similarly draws connections between Proust's representation of the mind and recent findings in neuroscience.

few years, and, given the rapidly growing interest in the new sciences of the mind within modern languages, it seems very possible that more will follow. [53]

Proust's materialist stance on the mind and his scattered references to Darwinian theory do not, of course, co-opt him into any cognitive or evolutionary school of thought, any more than the other parallels we have seen make him a Freudian, a Bergsonian, a phenomenologist or an existentialist. Within academic literary criticism, we find ourselves at a point of transition in debates over the nature and functioning of consciousness. Connections between Proust's conception of memory and the findings of experimental neuroscience are intriguing, and the more speculative theories of evolutionary psychology offer useful alternatives to psychoanalytic interpretations, including a theory of parent-offspring conflict which might explicate the Narrator's relationship to his mother without recourse to incestuous or parricidal urges.[54] Nevertheless, there remain serious concerns about the validity and applicability of these new approaches in the humanities. Cognitive science can be reductive in its model of the mind as information processing, and its insights into the neural underpinning of mental experience have little at present to offer the study of literature: we may be starting to gain understanding of the universal mechanisms of thought and emotion, but it will be some time before the discipline has a useful contribution to the analysis of how *this* individual consciousness underwent *this* unique mental experience, how the Narrator's passion for Albertine is distinct from anyone's love for anyone. Evolutionary psychology may inhabit territory closer to the concerns of the humanities, dealing as it does

[53] See, for instance, Jamila Ben Mustapha, 'Les Echos de la loi biogénétique fondamentale dans *La Recherche*', *Bulletin d'Informations Proustiennes* 39 (2009), 125–34 and Larry R. Marks, 'Sensibility and Individuation: Points of View on a Cognitive Trajectory in Semiotics', *Recherches Semiotiques/Semiotic Inquiry* 13, no. 1-2 (1993), 117–38.

[54] On evolutionary psychology's theory of parent-offspring conflict, and its relevance to literary criticism, see Michelle Scalise Sugiyama, 'New Science, by Old Myth: An Evolutionary Critique of the Oedipal Paradigm', in Brian Boyd, Joseph Carroll, and Jonathan Gottschall (eds), *Evolution, Literature and Film: A Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

with the deepest motivations for human behavior, but what it gains in usefulness it loses in legitimacy. Critical voices from both the sciences and the humanities decry evolutionary psychology as a set of poorly-evidenced just-so stories which invent explanations for contemporary human behavior based on a hazy understanding of the goals and pressures of life in our ancestral environment, while ignoring more recent cultural influences.[55]

Discontinuous mind but not split as in Freud. Ill-aligned inner characters know little of each other. Casser le pot reconstituted outside consciousness.

Sexuality central, as is childhood. Family relationships, if not parents.

Temporality central, but spatialized and compartmentalized, not duree.

Sexuality women in gay men not men in gay women.

Benign sustaining relationship between self and environment

No repression of trauma, no Oedipal triangle

Mind opens to introspection, no locked door.

Buried memories return freely and joyously.

Phenomenological interest in self and world, and in perception as active, two-way process of input and imposition. Past experience enriches present perception. Working out from personal experience to general maxims.

Heidegger-style account of one man's being in the world: analyzinf impressions of outside world gives portrait of inner self.

Embrained consciousness of neurons and strokes.

Darwinian view of sexuality.

[55] Raymond Tallis, *Aping Mankind: Neuromania, Darwinitis and the Misrepresentation of Humanity* (Durham: Acumen, 2011), pp. 47–49

What is to be welcomed, then, at our current point in the development of psychological analysis within literary criticism, is not so much the advent of a 'cognitive turn' in this area of the arts. Rather, we should welcome the plurality, in which theories are in open competition, and subject to the comparative critical judgment of anyone who might wish to make use of them for literary analysis. The relevance of Bergson, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty or Sartre to psychological analysis becomes more pronounced as Freud's shadow recedes, and is accompanied by renewed interest in other theories of the mind from elsewhere in philosophy, from science, and even from religion. Such plurality is particularly opportune in cases such as we have been discussing, where the *fictional* minds of literary characters are at issue, rather than the actual minds of the creative writer or interpreting reader. Limited only by the constraints of realism, and by the knowledge of his day, Proust is free to settle for himself the open questions of consciousness, and to create a world in which, say, spontaneous recollections are radically different in kind from deliberate ones, or gay desires are as innate and fixed as heterosexual urges, just as other writers are free to create worlds in which children repress desires to murder or mate with their parents, or unspoken thoughts can be overheard by God. The primacy of a single paradigm for understanding the mind, be it cognitive or psychoanalytic, can only distort and homogenize these possible mental worlds. A cultural environment in which proliferating theories permit no single orthodox approach to evaluating representations of the mind allows the implicit models of the mind held by the writers themselves to be understood on their own terms and fruitfully reflect onto theories ranging from the Platonic to the Lacanian, without being determined by any one of them.

with the proviso that the concluding section explaining why pluralism is better for an understanding of Proust's project should be made more pointed, forceful, and exciting, that seems a good call to me. That is, instead of the current last paragraph, it would be helpful to conclude with some kind of slightly extended reading of Proust, of mind in Proust, that is enabled by the preceding pages.

I felt that it needed a different kind of introduction. The general rise and fall of psychoanalysis in France is foregrounded too much for my taste early on, and the statement of purpose that finally arrives at the top of p. 14 is too little and too late. The essay needs to be better motivated up front. And the conclusion now seems pale. Interpretive pluralism is motherhood and apple pie. In my view, the essay should say more about the limits of pluralism in the Proustian case. After all, it began as a critique of misguided readings, and your history of Proust scholarship should function to some degree as some sort of guide.