

Proust
OLLI Loudoun Class L411
Tuesday January 27, 2009

Short chronology of Proust's life:

1871 born in suburb of Paris, July 10, 1871
1880 first asthma attack
1889 joined infantry for one year
1898 Dreyfus affair. Proust with Dreyfusards
1903 father dies
1905 mother dies
1906 Dreyfus affair resolved.
1907 first notes for *Search*
1907 lives in cork-lined room in apartment Boulevard Haussmann
1909 Madeleine incident. Proust experienced a flash of understanding.
1913 *The Way by Swann's* published. Went unnoticed.
1919 Goncourt prize for *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* (In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower; Moncrieff's name: *Within a Budding Grove*)
1920 Awarded the Legion of Honor
1921 Proust's last public appearance; ball January 1, 1921
1922 Proust died, November 18, 1922
1927 last volume published

Longer Chronology

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- **1871:** The siege of Paris by the Prussians had begun in September of 1870 and was followed by the Paris Commune, which was bloodily repressed in May of **1871**. Mme Proust had left the city to escape the turbulence, and at her uncle's home in the Paris suburb of Auteuil; Marcel Proust born on July 10, 1871.
- **1882:** Enters the Lycée Condorcet (known until 1883 as the Lycée Fontanes).
- **1887-88:** Collaborates with schoolmates to publish a series of literary and artistic reviews: *Le Lundi*, the *Revue verte*, and the *Revue lilas*.
- **1889:** In November, enlists for a year of military service, and is stationed in the city of Orléans.
- **1890:** Enrolls in the Faculté de droit and the École libre des sciences politiques in a course of study for future French diplomats. Begins writing and editing for *Le Mensuel*, a resumé of the preceding month's social and political events.
- **1892:** Collaborates with former schoolmates from the Lycée Condorcet to

publish *Le Banquet*.

- **1893:** Publishes stories in the literary and artistic journal the *Revue blanche*. Many of these will later be collected in *Les plaisirs et les jours*. Pressed by his father to decide on a career, he chooses to study to become a librarian.
- **1895:** Begins working on the episodic, unfinished novel that his posthumous editors will name *Jean Santeuil*.
- **1896:** Calmann-Lévy publishes *Les plaisirs et les jours* in June. It has a preface by Anatole France, and while well-reviewed by some, is largely considered a volume of purple-prose by a society dilettante. In July the *Revue blanche* publishes "Contre l'obscurité," an essay in which Proust criticizes the Symbolist movement.
- **1897:** Discovers the writings of John Ruskin.
- **1898:** The Dreyfus affair escalates. Proust writes: "I was the first dreyfusard."
- **1899:** Gradually abandons working on *Jean Santeuil* and begins a concentrated study of the works of Ruskin. Begins translating Ruskin's *The Bible of Amiens*.
- **1900:** Continues to work on Ruskin. Travels to Venice twice.
- **1903:** Marcel's brother Robert Proust marries Marthe Dubois-Amiot. Proust's father dies of a cerebral hemorrhage on November 24.
- **1904:** Begins work on translating Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*.
- **1905:** Publishes his preface to *Sésame et les lys*, "Sur la lecture." This essay, one of Proust's most important, announces his mature voice as a writer. His mother dies on September 26 of nephritis.
- **1906:** *Sésame et les lys* is published.
- **1908:** Begins writing a series of pastiches for the *Figaro*
- **1909:** *Contre Saint-Beuve*, a hybrid work that is essay, autobiography, and fiction, solidifies into the first versions of "Combray" and *Time Regained*.
- **1910-11:** The principle sections of *Swann* are developed and Proust revises material to be found in *Time Regained*. Proust envisions the novel as two volumes: *Time Lost* and *Time Regained*.
- **1912:** Extracts from *Swann* are published in the *Figaro*. Proust now envisions the novel as three volumes. The tentative title for the second volume, *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, is quickly forgotten and replaced by the *Côté de Guermantes*. The *Nouvelle revue française* [N.R.F.] declines to publish the novel.
- **1913:** *À la recherche du temps perdu, Du côté de chez Swann* is published by Grasset on November 14 to a mixed reception.
- **1914:** Works on material that will be found in *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*; *Albertine* appears in the narrative for the first time. André Gide proposes that the N.R.F. publish rest of the novel. The First World War begins, precipitating the closure of most French publishing houses, including the N.R.F..
- **1915:** The publication of the second volume of the *Recherche*, *Le côté de Guermantes* is postponed because of the War.
- **1917:** Finishes *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*; asks his house-maid, Céleste Albaret, to burn in the kitchen oven thirty-two "black notebooks" containing draft material.

- **1918:** The novel is now conceived of in five volumes.
- **1919:** At the end of June *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, the N.R.F. edition of *Swann*, and *Pastiches et mélanges* (a collection of Proust's pastiches and other writings) are published. To some controversy, Proust is awarded the Prix Goncourt in December.
- **1920:** *Le côté de Guermantes I* is published.
- **1921:** *Le côté de Guermantes II* and *Sodome et Gomorrah I* are published.
- **1922:** In early spring, Proust writes the word "fin." In May *Sodome et Gomorrah II* is published. In the same month he attends the premiere of Stravinsky's *Renard* and afterwards dines with the composer, Diaghilev, Picasso, and Joyce. In September *Swann's Way* is published in England, translated by Charles Scott Moncrieff, under the general title, *Remembrance of Things Past*, a phrase taken from the second line of Shakespeare's *Sonnet XXX*.
- Proust dies of pneumonia on November 18, and is buried in Père Lachaise on November 22.
- **1923:** *La Prisonnière* is published.
- **1925:** *Albertine disparue* is published. This was not Proust's title for the volume; *La fugitive* was replaced to avoid confusion with a work of the same name by Rabindranath Tagore.
- **1927:** *Le temps retrouvé* is published on September 22.