The progressive impact of the creative artists of Á la recherche du temps perdu upon Marcel's perception of the essential reality

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THE PROGRESSIVE IMPACT OF THE CREATIVE ARTISTS OF A LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU UPON MARCEL'S PERCEPTION OF THE ESSENTIAL REALITY

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEARCH FOR A VOCATION

Ainsi toute ma vie jusqu'à ce jour aurait pu et n'aurait pas pu être resumée sous ce titre: Une vocation.

III. p. 899
**A la recherche du temps perdu** is a complex multifaceted novel. It spans sixteen volumes and attempts to deal with a panoply of themes and emotions, which are examined separately and finally combined to show the underlying relationship and basic unity between seemingly isolated elements. Childhood, memory, time, love, music, art, sleep, society, the historic France are major preoccupations of the narrator and occupy a major position in the book.

But the chief preoccupation of the narrator Marcel, is the search for a vocation. **A la recherche du temps perdu** has been defined by the critics and by Proust himself as the story of an invisible vocation. It is the story of an artistic vocation—the narrator is outwardly searching for a career for himself; he feels that his talents probably lie in the field of literature. He wishes to be a writer—he has chosen a creative vocation for himself. This search for a vocation manifests itself at a particular moment of history in a particular society—it is the vocation of the twentieth century artist situated within the framework of a society in the midst of evolution.

The novel points out the conflict between a
genuine vocation and a series of false vocations represented by social life, love and friendship. Marcel seeks a means of achieving his goals in literature; coincidentally, the knowledge that he will attain concerning the relationship between himself and the rest of the universe and the discovery of the composition of his own essence, will be exactly the information that he needs to become a true creative artist. (Swann, a character in the novel, epitome of Marcel, appears to represent Marcel at a primary superficial level of perception. Swann intends to write an essay on Vermeer; in actuality he pursues his love affairs and social life. Marcel is sincerely searching for the means to achieve his task. Swann will remain within the framework of temps perdu—lost time; while, even though at a snail's pace, Marcel constantly will move forward by virtue of his vocation towards le temps retrouvé—time regained, which is identified with la vraie vie.)

Actually, Marcel's search for a vocation corresponds to his search for la vraie vie, the search for essential reality. Marcel has an intuition that, beneath the appearance of everyday reality, something must exist that exposes reality as it really is, stripped of analysis and disguise. Marcel is trying
to arrive at an explanation or rationalization for existence. He is dissatisfied with everyday life. Life as it is experienced—the mundane plane of daily existence—appears to be unsatisfactory. Certainly, the actions required to live one's life among society are shallow and meaningless. Even deep relationships of love and friendship appear to render no visible explanation of the meaning of life on earth for man. He searches his entire life for an answer to the meaning of existence, undergoing several crucial revelations at rare intervals, which enlighten him, give him great pleasure, and eventually broaden his comprehension of the totality of reality. He wishes to endow his life on earth with a purpose and find a means to ensure immortality. Perhaps through literature Marcel can penetrate beyond the appearances of everyday reality and provide a rational explanation for the existence of the individual.

Marcel wonders whether something exists that is more real than that which normally confronts human perception. Certain isolated kinesthetic sensations inadvertently produce pleasurable impressions in the narrator, conscious impressions of reality. Marcel will come
to realize that these impressions, and the impression yielded by the perception of a sensation experienced simultaneously in the present and at some moment in the past will expose the hidden, absolute reality of the universe. The essential moment reveals the essence of things, and enables its recipient to reach his own essential nature as well.

Marcel will come to perceive the existence of a deeper reality through a series of experiences and progressive revelations. Signs and sensations particularly appear to conceal some mysterious truth and to raise questions in Marcel concerning their origin. The mysterious, inexplicable profound joy that accompanies these rare experiences finally determines Marcel to seek their origin.

Marcel undergoes a multitude of varying experiences during his life which cause him to question the existence of a deeper reality. Each experience, different from any other, uncovers a new facet of reality and progressively brings him a little closer to the object of his quest. Marcel will undergo his first revelation when he tastes a petite madeleine—the little scallop-shaped cake soaked in tea, which reincarnates reminiscences of
Combray and brings about the realization that the answer to some of the questions of life he is seeking lies within himself. Marcel unexpectedly has a second revelation; the sensation of beholding the three steeples of Martinville as he approaches them by carriage travelling along a winding country road produces such an impression upon him that he feels compelled to reproduce what he has seen and felt in the form of a literary fragment. Subsequently, Marcel will come upon three trees as he approaches Hudimesnil, which seem to conceal a profound meaning. The three trees appear familiar to Marcel; they seem to waver between a distant moment in the past and the present moment; the direction of the trees appears to spring from within the narrator. What he is seeking to discover seems to emanate from within himself. These sensations, impressions and involuntary memories will enable Marcel to uncover the existence of a deeper layer of reality, of which he has had an intuition all his life.

The work of art, an expression of the essence of another human being, is also a means for recovering lost time. The work of art will recapture past life,
projected through the vision of its creator, who will endow it with real life. Marcel will discover the essence of authentic reality by uncovering the essence of another. The creative artists of *A la recherche du temps perdu* exert a profound influence upon the life and thought of the narrator. The artists will shed light upon what lies behind the world of appearances; by revealing their own essence they will make apparent the hidden reality of the entire universe, according to their own original perceptions.

It is also possible to perceive the essential quality—*l'essence qualitative*—of people—the profound similarities that exist in a succession of individuals. The Guermantes family exhibits throughout the clan the same essential characteristics that make them immediately recognizable as belonging to the group. *Le génie de famille*—the spark of similarity which unites a group of people together who exhibit certain recurring traits, brings into prominence the laws that govern the behavior of people. *Le génie de famille* is the permanent cell, that perpetuated unifying force characterizing all the members of that dynasty.
A series of successive revelations at the conclusion of the novel in *Le temps retrouvé*, demonstrates to Marcel that it is possible, through the contemplation of the essence of things, to experience fragments of existence withdrawn from time. Time in the pure state, a minute freed from the order of time, exists untouched, rarified—the experience of the essential moment by the creative artist enables him to create from it what he will. The essential moment is the springboard which propels the artist to demonstrate his unique vision of reality.

The vision of which Marcel has had intimations all his life is finally revealed to him. One may search endlessly; however, there is only one truth and it is instantly recognizable.

Mais c'est quelquefois au moment où tout nous semble perdu que l'avertissement arrive qui peut nous sauver; on a frappé à toutes les portes qui ne donnent sur rien, et la seule par où on peut entrer et qu'on aurait cherchée en vain pendant cent ans, on y heurte sans le savoir, et elle s'ouvre.  

The creation of a true work of art must begin at the core of reality. Commencing with the essence of things, from the root of an impression, enables Marcel to pursue his craft sincerely; he will be able to reflect through his work of art the truth, the essential reality that he has perceived. His vocation and his search for the essential reality are one and the same.

The happiness that he has experienced at various epochs of his life is given again to him, but this time he is determined to search for the profounder causes of the emotion evoked by these various sensations. The joy will contain a certainty. Formerly, he was content merely to savor the pleasure of an impression; towards the end of a life of uncertainty, he is determined to seek the origin of a series of exquisite sensations.

The signs and sensations that appear to particularly reveal the truth and to raise questions in Marcel concerning their origin are always accompanied by a mysterious, profound joy. Marcel will come to realize that the revelation of a new truth, resulting from the perception of a unique real impression is forecasted by an inexplicable sense of happiness that comes from deep within. Marcel wishes to discover
for himself the profounder causes of his emotions; he is determined not to resign himself to a failure to understand them. The revelation that is finally given to him carries with its accompanying joy a certainty that reinforces in his own mind the reality of his literary gifts and even of literature. Marcel realizes that his task now is to interpret the various sensations as symbols of laws and ideas, by converting them into their spiritual equivalent—a work of art. His past life, people, episodes, sensations and impressions will be the material for his creation of a work of art; Marcel will not be free to choose what he will fashion into a work of art. Impressions from his past life will come to him inevitably but fortuitously; the true artist will listen to his instinct, seize the impression that he has received, and bring it to perfection in a work of art. The experience of the essential moment will endow Marcel with the existence of an absolute reality, a reality that transcends time and space.

There are four creative artists in _À la recherche du temps perdu_ who profoundly influence and guide Marcel towards his ultimate goal: a total comprehension of the essential reality, and the function that it will serve for him; comprehension of the essence of self
and its universal correspondence serve as a springboard for true artistic creation. Bergotte, the writer, Elstir, the painter, La Berma, the actress—an artist in the sense of being a creative performer, and Vinteuil, the composer, reveal to Marcel their hitherto unknown worlds, their unique perceptions of essential reality and their own essential nature as well. Marcel will perceive that transcendent reality can be comprehended through the direct experience of the essential moment. The creative artist also reveals to another his personal essence and the essence of reality through a clarified, refracted vision of his work of art.

The task of any artist is to penetrate beyond the sensations, signs and symbols which constitute everyday reality in order to decipher whatever truth there is to read behind them. The truth actually must emanate from within the artist—it is synonomous with the essence of things. The sensations are outward indicators of the presence of underlying laws—the creative force of the universe which will be given form and expression through their spiritual equivalent—a work of art.

The work of art is pre-existent and exists in each of us. It is a matter of interpreting the signs and symbols: In literature specifically:
...je m'apercevais que ce livre essentiel, le seul livre vrai, un grand écrivain n'a pas, dans le sens courant, à l'inventer, puisqu'il existe déjà en chacun de nous, mais à le traduire. Le devoir et la tâche d'un écrivain sont ceux d'un traducteur. (III. p. 890)

The sensations come to the individual at random, he is not free to choose them; the coincidence of the past and present occurring simultaneously, resulting from one given sensation happens inevitably, but only the artist has the genius or instinct to interpret and convert them into a work of art.

...il fallait tâcher d'interpréter les sensations comme les signes d'autant de lois et d'idées, en essayant de penser, c'est-à-dire de faire sortir de la pénombre ce que j'avais senti, de le convertir en un équivalent spirituel. Or, ce moyen qui me paraissait le seul, qu'était-ce autre chose que faire une oeuvre d'art? (III p. 878)

Man undergoes the experiences of daily living, but only the artist is able to state the connection between these experiences. He studies the objective phenomena, extracts their common essence, and by demonstrating their relationship, endows two separate objects, sensations or experiences of concrete reality with real life—as reflected through artistic creation—the only life in consequence which can be said to be really
lived. Life thus defined, which is imminent in all men, no less than the artist, but most men do not seek to shed light upon it. The writer, as well as any other true creative artist, can make the connection.

...la vérité ne commencera qu'au moment où l'écrivain prendra deux objets différents, posera leur rapport, analogique dans le monde de l'art à celui qu'est le rapport unique de la loi causale dans le monde de la science, et les enfermera dans les anneaux nécessaires d'un beau style; même, ainsi que la vie, quand, en rapprochant une qualité commune à deux sensations, il dégagera leur essence commune en les réunissant l'une et l'autre pour les soustraire aux contingences du temps, dans une métaphore. (III p. 889)

The signs of art are non-material in the sense that they unlock or lead to the imagination of something else. These signs refract an essence rather than to merely imitate the objective resentation. The critic Deleuze explains the function of external signs as forerunners of their spiritual equivalent.

Au contraire, l'Art nous donne la véritable unité: unité d'un signe immatériel et d'un sens tout spirituel. L'Essence est précisément cette unité du signe et du sens, telle qu'elle est révélée dans l'oeuvre d'art.²

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The work of art has its own existence, independent of the signs and symbols that comprise it. The work of art reveals the essential nature of its creator. Art manifests the essence, the essential quality emanating from the être-la personnalité profonde--of the artist, made transparent and reflected in an authentic, unique work of art. Every unique work of art developed from the essential reality of its creator is a new original world. Deleuze justifies the idea that a work of art springs from the essential reality of its creator.

Une essence est toujours une naissance du monde: mais le style est cette naissance continuée et refractée, cette naissance retrouvée dans les matières adéquates aux essences, cette naissance devenue métamorphose d'objets. Le style n'est pas l'homme; le style, c'est l'essence elle-même.\(^3\)

The essence of the artist is manifested through the work of art which individualizes it and renders it lasting and original. Its originality emanates from the unique manner that the artist makes use of the substance of his medium; for example, color for the artist, sound for the composer, words for the writer. According to Deleuze, the manner in which the artist uses his particular medium--the substance or matter that

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 43.
communicates his essential quality—constitutes the style of the artist.

L'art est une véritable transmutation de la matière. Le matière y est spiritualisée, les milieux physiques y sont dématerialisés, pour réfracter l'essence, c'est-à-dire la qualité d'un monde originel. Et ce traitement de la matière ne fait qu'un avec le style.⁴

Every part of the narrator's remembered life will be in some way touched by the arts and the young man's understanding of his literary vocation will be achieved in the broad light of art in general, rather than with reference to literature alone. An understanding of the essential reality of each artist, the particular qualities of their unique world, the elements that constitute their individual essence, helps Marcel to define the relationship between the artist and his creation. Within the novel, each guest artist has specific realizations in an attempt to give substance and presence to something that eludes the narrator, which had been alluded to separately in the three trees and the three steeples, and which will make itself known to Marcel at the Hôtel de Guermantes. The creative works by the artists of À la recherche du temps perdu will reveal to Marcel how to make use of his

⁴ Ibid, p. 42.
revelations, the creation of a work of art, how the work of art reflects the unique world of its creator as well as the entire universe, and the relation between the great artist and his art.

Each creative artist of *A la recherche du temps perdu* represents a progression in the life of Marcel towards the discovery of the essential reality—the basis upon which to build a true creative life. The principles of each creative artist are applicable to Marcel who aspires to literature. The four major creative artists of the novel represent major branches of artistic creation: literature, painting, drama and music. Marcel will discover that the principles of aesthetics are basically the same, and the verities of one field can be applied to another. But each creative artist that Marcel encounters, whose work he comes to know intimately, will reveal something essential to him, vital to his ultimate comprehension of transcendent reality. The progressive revelations of each artist seem to correspond to the progress that the narrator has made towards his ultimate goal. Marcel will first discover that there is an underlying truth and harmony to the allegedly superficial, pompous phrases of Bergotte.
The essence of Bergotte, who like any other artist strives for perfection, is buried within typical idealized phrases, recognizable to Marcel. La Berma embodies the idea of perfection that Marcel senses to reside within the various forms of art. Her genius diffuses the essence of her soul through the rôle and adds a second layer of truth to the part. Elstir will confuse the viewer of his paintings; he recaptures on canvas the first perceptions of the eye, before the process in man that names things can begin to work. The new impressions of Elstir sometimes consist of a metaphorical exchange of elements; the use of equivalents shows the underlying relationship of all things and reveals the basic unity of the universe. Vinteuil will finally demonstrate to Marcel that music most closely recaptures the sensations experienced by a human being. The music of Vinteuil expresses the individual existence of his soul, the inner reality of the artist, which reflects the vast transcendent reality of the universe.

This thesis will attempt to describe the characteristics of each creative artist and to expose his particular concept of reality. This thesis will also endeavor to demonstrate the progressive corresponding
impact of each creative artist upon Marcel. An understanding of what constitutes essential reality and how Marcel came to finally discover it at the Hôtel de Guermantes is vital to perceive not only the narrator's realizations, but to understand the function that each artist serves for Marcel. Each artist perceives the essence of things and has the genius to translate his vision into a perceptible form. Marcel will reach his moment of realization when the essential reality is revealed to him; the strivings of each individual artist will become perfectly clear to him; their individual concepts of reality parallel Marcel's revelations as he comes upon them.

The series of sensations and impressions that serve to enlighten Marcel shall now be examined in an attempt to better understand not only the final realizations of Marcel, but also the inner workings, the individual essence of each artist.
CHAPTER II

SENSATIONS, SIGNS AND IMPRESSIONS

Seule l'impression, si chétive qu'en semble la matière, si insaisissable la trace, est un critérium de vérité, et à cause de cela mérite seule d'être appréhendée par l'esprit, car elle est seule capable, s'il sait en dégager cette vérité, de l'amener à une plus grande perfection et de lui donner une pure joie.

III p. 880
Throughout his life Marcel has had an intuition that a reality exists beyond that which ordinarily confronts human perception. This invisible reality is not attainable through the realm of the intellect; it cannot be achieved by a conscious effort of the will; it is not subject to customary concepts of time and space. Marcel senses that the universe is governed by secret laws; he wishes to penetrate to the essence of things to discover the unknown force that binds the myriad elements which form the matter of the universe together. By what process can the essences sealed up in material phenomena be made to reveal themselves?

An impression is produced when the present moment is united with a moment of the past that possesses elements in common with it; the past and the present are fused and it is impossible to tell whether one is in one moment or the other. This impression is a segment of time in the pure state; it reveals the essence of reality.

Marcel experiences an intimation of the existence of a deeper reality, which commences the series of revelations that lead him towards a total comprehension of la vraie vie. Marcel lifts a spoonful of tea to
his lips in which he had soaked a morsel of the petite madeleine. An exquisite sense of pleasure invades his being; he cannot divine its origin, but he realizes that it is in no way attached to the rational analyses of his mind. The sensation of tasting the scallop-shaped cake soaking in a spoonful of tea fills the narrator with a precious essence. Marcel realizes that the sensation diffusing itself throughout him is his own being, his own essence; he has become the object of his quest. "Il est clair que la vérité que je cherche n'est pas en lui mais en moi." (I. p. 45)

As he penetrates into the deepest regions of his own consciousness, clearing away time and space, he comes face to face with a state of pure being; he seems to sense that this state will play a key role in unleashing the creative process.

Chercher? pas seulement: créeer. Il est en face de quelque chose qui n'est pas encore et que seul il peut réaliser, puis faire entrer dans sa lumière. (I p. 45)

Marcel has an intuition that the creative life will be his destiny, and that a pure state of being beyond consciousness will serve as the raw material for his creative efforts.
Memory plays an important rôle at this instant. The physical sensation of tasting the tea-soaked madeleine triggers the traversing of great spaces, and eventually evokes a time in the past, exactly as it occurred. Memory evoked by a physical sensation will be another element to the discovery of the essential reality.

Marcel cannot yet ascertain that the physical sensation evoked by a tangible object will aid him in his quest for self-realization. The sensation of the madeleine clarified the consciousness of the narrator to attain its innermost depths and crystallized actual memories of Combray. Marcel's mind wanders as he approaches the brink of another meaningful encounter with reality. Marcel derives intense pleasure and a sort of fecundity of mind from the contemplation of certain material objects. He begins now to wonder whether, not the pleasurable objects themselves, but the impression evoked by intense concentration upon them might contain some hidden meaning.

Je m'attachais a me rappeler exactement la ligne du toit, la nuance de la pierre, qui, sans que je pusse comprendre pourquoi, m'avaient semble pleines, pretes a s'entr'ouvrir, a me livrer ce dont elles n'etaient qu'un couvercle. Certes ce n'etait pas des impressions de ce genre qui pouvaient me rendre l'esper-
rance qui j'avais perdue de pouvoir être un jour écrivain et poète, car elles étaient toujours liées à un objet particulier dépourvu de valeur intellectuelle et ne se rapportant à aucune vérité abstraite. Mais du moins elles me donnaient un plaisir irraisonné, l’illusion d'une sorte de fécondité et par là me distraient de l'ennui, du sentiment de mon impuissance que j'avais éprouvé chaque fois que j'avais cherché un sujet philosophique pour une grande œuvre littéraire. 'Mais le devoir de conscience était si ardu, que m'imposaient ces impressions de forme, de parfum ou de couleur--de tâcher d'apercevoir ce qui se cachait derrière elles, que je ne tardais pas à me chercher à moi-même des excuses qui me permissent de me dérober à ces efforts et de m'épargner cette fatigue. (I p. 178)

Material objects appear to be the outer coverings of a secret treasure. Marcel strives to perceive what lies beneath these material objects, what secret they will evoke. Marcel is pessimistic about his vocation at this time; in no way do the impressions that these material objects produce seem linked to enabling the narrator to become the writer that he hopes to be. Marcel will shortly discover that he has mistakenly analyzed the function of these impressions.

The unexpected sight of three steeples rising in the distance along a country road as he approaches Martinville-le-Sec by carriage fills Marcel with an
affective sense of pleasure.

Au tournant d'un chemin, j'éprouvai tout à coup ce plaisir spécial qui ne ressemblait à aucun autre,

En constatant, en notant la forme de leur flèche, le déplacement de leurs lignes, l'ensoleillement de leur surface, je sentais que je n'allais pas au bout de mon impression, que quelque chose était derrière ce mouvement, derrière cette clarté quelque chose qu'ils semblaient contenir et dérober à la fois. (I p. 180)

Marcel has the feeling that the sunny luminous surface of the spires conceal a secret; they have produced an impression upon him that he wishes to decipher.

As he attempts to recover the vision of the steeples, their physical outline seems to peel away like a rind, and Marcel perceives that this impression has a special significance for him.

For Marcel, the three steeples contain the spiritual equivalent of a pretty passage. Words are
the translation for the inexplicable emotion of pleasure that Marcel experiences at this time. The impression of the three steeples of Martinville yields an intense joy in the narrator, which functions intellectually by transforming itself into words. The affective impact of the objective elements—"les trois clochers de Martinville"—produces the urge to create. Thus, Marcel realizes that an impression may have an influence upon him affectively, creating an intense joy which demands a form of expression. For Marcel, the mode of expression will be words. This particular creative artist will find that literature will be the form of expression that reflects the essential reality of his existence.

Sans me dire que ce qui était caché derrière les clochers de Martinville devait être quelque chose d'analogue à une jolie phrase, puisque c'était sous la forme de mots qui me faisaient plaisir que cela m'était apparu...
(I p. 181)

The incident of the three steeples of Martinville provides an excellent example of the mechanics of the creative process. The artist receives an impression; this particular impression, for one reason or another, is unique to the perception of the artist and fills him
with such a strong emotional response that he is compelled to describe transpose, recreate, or reflect upon it, endowing it with form. Art, music, drama and literature are among the various modes of expression. The actual transposition of the creative moment into its artistic metaphor serves the function of catharsis: purging the artist of his obsession with the impression and filling him with a profound sense of joy.

...je me trouvai si heureux, je sentais qu'elle m'avait si parfaitement débarrassé de ces clochers et de ce qu'ils cachaient derrière eux... (I p. 182)

The experience of the three trees of Hudimesnil prophesizes the legacy that will be Marcel's. The narrator will ultimately undergo a series of experiences, which will ascertain his true vocation as a writer, and reveal the particular method that impels his creative life. The three trees of Hudimesnil forecast the most meaningful, the ultimate discovery of the narrator.

Marcel looks at the three trees. He experiences the same profound joy and pleasure that invades him upon tasting the petite madeleine and upon writing the little paragraph that expressed his joy upon the experience of the three spires. As he perceives the three
trees of Hudimesnil, which probably mark the entrance to a shady road, he feels that, as he gazes upon them, that he had seen them once before, they were familiar to him at one time. He perceives the trees simultaneously in the present and in the past.

Nous descendîmes sur Hudimesnil; tout d'un coup je fus rempli de ce bonheur profond que je n'avais pas souvent ressenti depuis Combray, un bonheur analogue à celui que m'avaient donné, entre autres, les clochers de Martinville. Mais, cette fois, il resta incomplet. Je venais de'apercevoir, en retrait de la route en dos d'âne que nous suivions, trois arbres qui devaient servir d'entrée à une allée couverte et formaient un dessin que je ne voyais pas pour la première fois, je ne pouvais arriver à reconnaître le lieu dont ils étaient comme détachés, mais je sentais qu'il m'avait été familier autrefois; de sorte que, mon esprit ayant trébuché entre quelque année lointaine et le moment présent, les environs de Balbec vacillèrent et je me demandai si toute cette promenade n'était pas une fiction, ... (I p. 717)

Like the three spires, the three trees appear to be concealing something beneath their outward appearance.

Marcel must struggle to penetrate their surfaces.

Je regardais les trois arbres, je les voyais bien, mais mon esprit sentait qu'ils recouvraient quelque chose sur quoi il n'avait pas prise, comme sur ces objets placés trop loin dont nos doigts, allongés au bout de notre bras tendu, effleurent seulement par instant l'enveloppe sans arriver à rien saisir. (I p. 717)

The pleasure that Marcel experiences has no defi-
nite object; Marcel is struck with the idea that he must create the object of that pleasure for himself. By attaching himself to the reality of that pleasure, he could create something, he could begin a creative life. The trees appear to emanate from within Marcel. Perhaps what Marcel perceives externally is an indicator of a greater reality originating from within the self. Marcel does not recognize the trees; he cannot identify them as belonging to any part of his past. Rather, perhaps they originated through the vehicle of his memory, because he perceives them double in time. They waver between some remote past moment and the present moment. The double vision of the three trees forecasts the major revelation of *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

The three trees produce an impression upon the narrator. The reality of the pleasure evoked by the impression will form the basis of a true creative life, existence liberated from all contingencies. Marcel does not specifically refer to words at this time as the vehicle of expression. Rather, the principal function of the experience of the three trees is the new sure knowledge that the pleasure evoked by certain meaningful impressions will form the basis which enables him to
create a new true life for himself. The source of energy for the interpretation of impressions emanates from the innermost resources of the narrator.

Ce plaisir, dont l'objet n'était que présenti, que j'avais à créer moi-même, je ne l'éprouvais que de rares fois, mais à chacune d'elles il me semblait que les choses qui s'étaient passées dans l'intervalle n'avaient guère d'importance et qu'en m'attachant à sa seule réalité je pourrais commencer enfin une vraie vie. (I p. 718)

The essential moment which consists of a moment perceived simultaneously in the present and in the past is alluded to, but not fully comprehended by the narrator. The mystery of the three trees and other special moments will become apparent to Marcel when the significance of the essential moment is revealed. For the present, Marcel senses that the experience of the three trees is linked to the identical mystery that will enable him to discover the means to a creative life.

The vision of reality of which Marcel has had intimations throughout his life is inevitably and unexpectedly revealed to him. The past has acquired absolute truth and reality.

Mais justement la façon fortuite, inévitable, dont la sensation avait été rencontrée, contrôlait la vérité du passé qu'elle ressuscitait,
Towards the end of his life, after many years that he considers wasted, his goals of finding the reality in literature completely unrealized, Marcel decides to indulge in the frivolous pleasure of attending an afternoon party at the Hotel de Guermantes. He has a first conscious impression of reality as he is about to enter the Guermantes mansion.

Marcel will experience the identical happiness that invaded him when he tasted the petite madeleine soaked in tea, when he perceived the three steeples of Martinville, the impression of which he felt compelled to translate into words, and when he perceived that the reality of this identical happiness would emanate from something that he would create himself. The emotions, the pro-
found happiness remained the same in every instance; the difference lay in the images evoked. This same happiness is given again to Marcel in a series of revelations--conscious impressions of reality.

Marcel experiences a profound sense of joy when he trips on the uneven cobblestones in front of the Hôtel de Guermantes, when he hears a servant inadvertently knock a spoon against a plate, while waiting to enter the Guermantes party, when he wipes his mouth with a stiffly starched napkin, when he hears water running through a pipe, and again when he chances upon François le Champi in the Guermantes library--the favorite novel of his childhood, which to him symbolizes the essence of the novel. These sensations occur in the present; yet, simultaneously, each sensation evokes a fragment of time in the past--a segment of past time. The past becomes juxtaposed with the present. The sensation--une sensation musculaire kinésthétique--(Bonnet II p. 93) of, for example, tripping upon two uneven cobblestones in the street, constitutes present existence and produces an impression--the impact of true reality. The fact that it triggers the imagination to recapitulate the memory of an incident in the past--in one case, the
memory of the uneven paving stones of St. Marks Cathedral in Venice are recaptured exactly as the narrator once stood there. The two separate elements of time, occurring at different intervals, merged by an element common both to the past and the present, produces a moment situated outside time-extra-temporal—because it belongs simultaneously to both the past and the present. These sensations reveal the essence of things—they constitute the essential moment. An unmodified fragment of existence withdrawn from time frees man from the contingencies of time and allows him to penetrate to the essence of things. He has discovered what is genuine, what he has felt reality to be; he has had an original impression.

The signs through which these impressions are manifested serve to banish doubt and discouragement, to restore Marcel's faith in himself after years thus far unproductive as far as achieving his vocation. Every previous sign and impression was merely a preparation for the great revelation that Marcel has just experienced.
The felicity that Marcel has experienced he now realizes arises from the essential moment, when the past encroaches upon the present, and the being deep within himself can contemplate the essence of things, liberated from the limitations of time. The being that tasted the petite madeleine, perceived the three steeples, and beheld the three trees of Hudimesnil was extra-temporal, like the essential moment, this being was not subject to mortality. Marcel must seize the impression, seek to rediscover what is real in it, and begin to create from it. These impressions will be given to him inevitably; his task is to convert them into a work of art. The revelation of that which constitutes the essence of things endows Marcel with the necessary tools to become a writer.

When Marcel perceives the essential reality of existence, he is able to consider the works of art that he has encountered throughout his life under the light of this new knowledge. Every creative artist whose work of art springs from the essence of reality possesses an extra-temporal self, who has been able to penetrate to and enjoy the essence of things. The creative artist converts this essential state of being to its metaphor--
the work of art—and renders the essence visible to others.

We shall now study the four creative artists of *A la recherche du temps perdu* whose essential reality has been translated into their works, in order to arrive at a comprehension of their individual essences and the progressive impact that their unique perceptions of reality have upon Marcel.
Je m'apercevais que ce livre essentiel, le seul livre vrai, un grand écrivain n'a pas, dans le sens courant, à l'inventer, puisqu'il existe déjà en chacun de nous, mais à le traduire. Le devoir et la tâche d'un écrivain sont ceux d'un traducteur.

III p. 890
Bergotte is the first creative artist to make an impression upon Marcel. Marcel avidly reads the novels of Bergotte, then later will come to know him personally. Bergotte will point out to Marcel the discrepancy between acquired, preconceived notions of personality and physical appearance. Bergotte does not appear to match the physical impression that Marcel imagined of him generated by his writing.

Bergotte, through his capacity as a creative artist, possesses an inner reality that spreads its light over all that he encounters. Bergotte takes life itself, people and mores, sorts out their common characteristics, and makes their relationships apparent. His genius can transform seemingly isolated elements into meaningful reality, perceiving the profound similarities beneath the apparent differences.

Marcel experiences the impact of true reality when he comes upon certain idealized passages of Bergotte. Furthermore, Marcel can identify completely with the writer; the writings of the author seem to echo many of his own thoughts.

Marcel discovers the elements of truth hidden in the heart of certain of Bergotte's writings; these
distilled gems are a transposition of the inner reality of the artist, a transformation of what he had perceived, made visible through his abilities to make use of the material of his craft: life. Words are the mode of expressing his vision.

Bergotte represents the partial vision that Marcel seems to be slowly acquiring of the deep hidden reality that life holds for the sensitive young man. As Marcel grasps the secret of the essential reality behind the style of the writer, he comes a little closer to reaching the means that will enable him to pursue his own similar vocation: literature.

The accent of Bergotte, most ephemeral yet most profound, permeates his writing. On the surface, his style appears elevated, pompous, but lacking in content, repetetive, full of esoteric, archaic phrases. The particular use that Bergotte makes of his words, the flow of his words, their harmony and resonance, their connotations at a particular moment, gives the impression that they belong to Bergotte alone; they reveal the essence of that which really constitutes Bergotte. An apparent diversity of elements comprises his style, yet these elements are common to every one of his books and
seem to represent an idealized cross-section of his work. Marcel will, in the process of reading Bergotte, identify the common elements in certain passages of his work, and realize that these related similar passages form a means of identification of the author. Furthermore, these idealized passages will reveal the inner reality of Bergotte to Marcel and prove that Bergotte is an artist of the first rank.

Yet, the manifest vision, the style of Bergotte appears deceivingly superficial. It was observed of Bergotte by Monsieur de Norpois, the distinguished diplomat friend of Marcel's father, that the writer was "un joueur de flute." (I p. 473) Like a flute player who plays his music agreeably, Bergotte writes beautifully, but with a great deal of mannerism and affectation. Bloch, Marcel's deprecating intellectual Jewish peer, feels that fine lines of poetry are even finer if they mean nothing; and the works of Bergotte, in the opinion of society in the novel appear to fit that classification. Norpois calls Bergotte's style "L'Art pour l'Art." (I p. 473) --"Art for Art's sake." His prose consists of fine words strung together in a harmonious manner--Bergotte has the knack of manipula-
ting words harmoniously, with little regard for their meaning, and with no particular message to convey. His books lack any real construction or solidity. "Ses livres pêchent par la base ou plutôt il n'y a pas de base du tout." (I p. 473). Rather, his style is characterized by sudden bursts of musical phrases, uncommon, rare, archaic phrases that sometimes suggest the idea of ancient classical sculpture, a sort of cheerful idealism, and a pomposity which animates and elevates his style. Simultaneously Bergotte would employ old-fashioned, familiar phrases in a medodious manner which were pleasing to the reader. A musicality permeated his style.

Puis je remarquai les expressions rares, presque archaïques qu'il aimait employer à certains moments où un flot caché d'harmonie, un prélude intérieur, soulevait son style. (I p. 94)

The harmony of his phrases in his early works later gave way to sudden breaks in the narrative; when the author would be confronted with a work of art such as a great cathedral or the revelation of some truth, he would inject an "apostrophe", an invocation, or a prayer into his narrative. Formerly these thoughts had remained veiled, interior, beneath the surface of his
When Marcel first reads one of Bergotte's novels, the elements that he will later come to love in his style are not readily apparent to him. Marcel soon realizes that the outward manifestations that comprise the style of Bergotte are an expression of an inner state whose significance he will eventually grasp. Bloch and M. de Norpois do not have the capacity or instinct to look beneath the seemingly superficial elements of Bergotte's style as Marcel does. They interpret the style of Bergotte at face value. Marcel will perceive, when he finally meets Bergotte personally at the home of Swann, that Bergotte's style expresses his vision of reality and that Bergotte is able to transpose reality, reflecting the inner reality of his own essence and the hidden reality behind objective phenomena as well.

Bergotte is a genius in the eyes of Marcel. The author does not emanate refinement and good breeding; he does not fit into the established patterns of society. However, Bergotte can gaze beyond the habits of a society that he does not conform to, and transpose its behavior into the written word, recreating for the world that which is unique to a particular family—le génie de famille—or to
social group as they really are behind their façade. Bloch and M. de Norpois, reflecting society's opinion generally, judged Bergotte on the basis of the objective elements of his style alone, such as form, use of certain words strung together, mannerism and affectation.

M. de Norpois states authoritatively of Bergotte, "Il n'empêche que chez lui l'oeuvre est infiniment supérieure à l'auteur." (I p. 474) The work is greatly superior to the writer; he does not realize, as Marcel discovers, that the work is but a reflection of the soul of the writer. The work is the man; art makes the man apparent.

Marcel quickly realizes, however, that Bergotte is an original artist. After reading only a little of Bergotte, Marcel comes upon a passage that he isolates from the rest; upon reading this passage, Marcel is filled with a profound sense of joy that seems to come from deep within him. Marcel has stumbled upon the essence of Bergotte; he has perceived that the "morceau ideal" of Bergotte is the most real, most essential part of the writer; Marcel has received a real impression through the work of Bergotte; he has experienced the impact of true reality. The most real experiences
that Marcel undergoes are always accompanied by an intense joy—a profound happiness. Bergotte immediately proves his capacity as a great artist to Marcel on the basis of this impression.

Un de ces passages de Bergotte, le troisième ou le quatrième que j'eusse isolé du reste, me donna une joie incomparable à celle que j'avais trouvée au premier, une joie que je me sentis éprouver en une région plus profonde de moi-même, plus unie, plus vaste, d'où les obstacles et les séparations semblaient avoir été enlevés. (I p. 94)

"Le morceau idéal" is the recurrence of certain phrases or passages throughout the work of Bergotte, rendered not exactly alike when repeated, but bearing enough of a similarity to be recognizable after reading the work of the author. These phrases assume a habitual, idealized configuration, because they express the new findings of Bergotte, the discovery of new relationships. Although perhaps superficial and charming, linear, bi-dimensional on the surface, they acquire a new density and volume when perceived with the sensitivity of Marcel; he realizes that they are the expression of a truth, a reflection of the essential reality of Bergotte.
Je n'eus plus l'impression d'être en présence d'un morceau particulier d'un certain livre de Bergotte, traçant à la surface de ma pensée une figure purement linéaire, mais plutôt du *morceau idéal* de Bergotte, commun à tous ses livres et auquel tous les passages analogues que venaient se confondre avec lui auraient donné une sorte d'épaisseur, de volume, dont mon esprit semblait agrandi. (I p. 94)

"Le morceau idéal" of Bergotte has an effect upon Marcel. Unlike most of the phrases in the novels, an encounter with one of these idealized phrases seems to open up and expand the mind of Marcel, make it more receptive to the perception of these new truths.

Bergotte possesses great talent as a creative artist on the merits of his style alone. The style of Bergotte expresses his unique vision. His many admirers include Marcel's mother and Dr. Boulbon. Like Swann, they said of Bergotte:

*C'est un charmant esprit, si particulier, il a une façon à lui de dire les choses un peu cherchée, mais si agréable. On n'a pas besoin de voir la signature, on reconnaît tout de suite que c'est de lui.* (I p. 99)

The various elements which constitute his manner of expression taken together form a unique talent, instantly recognizable to whomever may come upon it. The style
of Bergotte, so superficial, "précieux" and pretentious on the surface, actually reveals the essence of the writer. The style is the clue to the discovery of what constitutes the real Bergotte, what it is that makes Bergotte an excellent writer, a great talent, perhaps a genius of sorts. What the public designates as talent provides a clue to what Bergotte will reveal to Marcel. The public reads the works of a new writer, may describe his work with certain isolated adjectives. Eventually, they come to realize that these descriptive terms add up to one thing: a man of talent.

Nous sommes très longs à reconnaître dans la physionomie particulière d'un nouvel écrivain le modèle qui porte le nom de grand talent dans notre musée des idées générales. Justement parce que cette physionomie est nouvelle, nous ne la trouvons pas tout à fait ressemblante à ce que nous appelons talent. Nous disons plutôt originalité, charme, délicatesse, force; et puis un jour nous nous rendons compte que c'est justement tout cela le talent. (I p. 99)

Bergotte represents more than a man who is talented at his craft to Marcel. Bergotte's art serves at first as a literary ideal to the young Marcel, lending some confidence to truths discovered in their
embryonic stages by Marcel, as an aspiring writer. Marcel recognizes some of his own musings and philosophy in the writing of Bergotte and immediately begins to look upon the gentleman as a mentor and father.

...il me sembla soudain que mon humble vie et les royaumes du vrai n'étaient pas aussi séparés que j'avais crus, qu'ils coïncidaient même sur certains points, et de confiance et de joie je pleurai sur les pages de l'écri-vain comme dans les bras d'un père retrouvé. (I p. 96)

Marcel expects to become a writer. Thus far, except for the instance of the three steeples of Martinville, the sight of which causes him to transform his impression into written words, Marcel has experienced barrenness as a creative individual. Marcel is beside himself with joy when he discovers that some of the thoughts of Bergotte's were the same that he had expressed to himself, but had dismissed as being worthless.

Il arrivait parfois qu'une page de lui disait les mêmes choses qui j'écrivais souvent la nuit à ma grand'mère et à ma mère quand je ne pouvais pas dormir,... (I p. 96)

He feels that the quality of his own thoughts is inferior and that Bergotte's inspiration, because of his talent as a writer, must come from a higher level.
Nevertheless, the similarity of ideas between Marcel and Bergotte strikes the narrator and impels him to continue in the direction of his literary ideal.

Même plus tard, quand je commençai de composer un livre, certaines phrases dont la qualité ne suffit pas pour me décider à le continuer, j'en retrouvai l'équivalent dans Bergotte. (I p. 96)

Marcel is searching for something that transcends the limitations of pure form and a pleasant harmonious style. He wishes literature to be for him his means of attaining the essential reality. The artistic sense dictates that he submit to the reality within himself. The genius of an artist lies in his power to reflect, rather than to reveal what is reflected. The artist must know how to become a mirror and in this way can reflect his own life. The constant self-repetitions of Bergotte throughout his novels, the variety of phrases expressing the same idea endlessly, become apparent to Marcel upon reading the author. The use of imagery by Bergotte causes the explosion or revelation of his essence: that which constitutes the essential reality of Bergotte becomes apparent through these phrases, common to every one of his books.

The phrase-type is the typical phrase of Bergotte,
the significant self-repetitions of the author, expressing elements common to every one of his books, but expressed in different forms. The phrase-type, actually applicable to all the arts, yields a glimpse of a more essential reality behind the actual language which the artist uses. It is a means of access into his world. Bergotte will recreate the same world continuously. The result is an enrichment of experience which stamps itself indelibly on Marcel's soul. The essence of Bergotte is manifested by the particular use Bergotte makes of his words, the flow of his phrases, their harmony and connotations at certain moments yield the impression that they belong to Bergotte alone, express the essence of what Bergotte's vision of reality is.

The impression that Marcel has built up of Bergotte through reading his work is radically different from the actual physical appearance of Bergotte, "le doux Chantre aux cheveux blancs." (I p. 547) This crude-looking gentleman could not possibly be the originator of the transparent beauty that comprises his books. Marcel is forced to reconstruct entirely his physical impression of Bergotte, discarding all preconceived ideas of him. However, Marcel notes the
correspondence between the speech of Bergotte, which indicates the presence of thought behind what he is saying; verbally, he strings images together harmoniously and uninterruptedly, which match exactly the parts of his books in which his form becomes so poetic and musical; the physical presence of Bergotte manifests to Marcel that human speech reflects the human soul, just as the writing of Bergotte also is but an exteriorization of his inner reality, an expression of his essential reality.

Dans certains passages de la conversation où Bergotte avait l'habitude de se mettre à parler d'une façon qui ne paraissait pas affectée et déplaisante qu'à M. de Norpois, j'ai été long à découvrir une exacte correspondance avec les parties de ses livres où sa forme devenait si poétique et musicale. Alors il voyait dans ce qu'il disait une beauté plastique indépendante de la signification des phrases et, comme la parole humaine est en rapport avec l'âme, mais sans l'exprimer comme fait le style, Bergotte avait l'air de parler presque à contresens, psalmodiant certains mots et, s'il poursuivait au-dessous d'eux une seule image, les filant sans intervalle comme un même son, avec une fatigante monotonie. De sorte qu'un débit prétentieux, emphatique et monotone était le signe de la qualité esthétique de ses propos et l'effet, dans sa conversation, de ce même pouvoir qui produisait dans ses livres la suite des images et l'harmonie. (I p. 550)

Marcel poses a rather contradictory question to
himself, when confronted with the striking discrepancy between the physical appearance of Bergotte and the mild and gentle wisdom expressed in his books. He wonders whether originality, an ability to express in a unique fashion the radical and essential difference that constitutes the individual writer is the factor that separates one writer from another. Concentrated individual labor, hard toil may not be nearly enough to produce an original work of art; the unique essence of the artist must emanate from the creative effort. But this notion of a contrasted essential difference between two personalities appears rather pretentious and unreal to a sceptical Marcel, who has not yet formulated any definite aesthetic theories.

Son oeuvre ne me semblait plus aussi inévitable. Et alors je me demandais si l'originalité prouve vraiment que les grands écrivains soient des dieux régnant chacun dans un royaume qui n'est qu'à lui, ou bien s'il n'y a pas dans tout cela un peu de feinte, si les différences entre les œuvres ne seraient pas le résultat du travail, plutôt que l'expression d'une différence radicale d'essence entre les diverses personnalités. (I p. 549)

Bergotte is truly a creative artist because his unique perceptions, the relationships that he perceived, especially in his own family were communicated to his readers for posterity. Bergotte showed that the speech
of his brothers and sisters was exactly like his, their elocution was similar, the way they dwelled on words, inflected and emphasized certain words was the same as the author's. Bergotte possessed an additional characteristic, rendering him superior to his family: he was able to extract the hidden reality, the truth by virtue of his genius, to form the connection between these seemingly unrelated elements in his mind, and transform them into a work of art. Bergotte epitomizes through his gift of instinct the qualities of the original artist.

Mais le génie, même le grand talent, vient moins d'éléments intellectuels et d'affinement social supérieurs à ceux d'autrui, que de la faculté de les transformer, de les transposer. (I p. 554)

Marcel also discovers that Bergotte is seemingly moralistic, with a high regard for virtue, for what is good and right; this philosophy is expressed in his books. In reality the personal morals of Bergotte did not reflect the rigid views of his books. Society seemed to be growing more and more corrupt; at the same time people had access to more information concerning the lives of literary men. But Bergotte no longer seemed to feel the obligation to perform certain practical duties
that were required to live in society; the most pertinent form of reality for Bergotte consisted of the duty of imagining other people's lives.

Peut-être, plus le grand écrivain se développait en Bergotte aux dépens de l'homme à barbiche, plus sa vie individuelle se noyait dans le flot de toutes les vies qu'il imaginait et ne lui parut plus l'obliger à des devoirs effectifs, lesquels étaient remplacés pour lui par le devoir d'imaginer ces autres vies. (I p. 559)

Every fresh beauty of his work was a drop of the essential quality of Bergotte, the little drop of Bergotte that was buried in the heart of a thing, which he had distilled from it and extracted the truth. To extract the elements of truth hidden in the core of everything by virtue of the genius of the great artist was called "faire le Bergotte". Every new truth was related to and symbolized all the rest, bore a family likeness, yet remained separate and individual, as was the act of discovery that had brought it to the light of day.

Cette différence dans le style venait de ce que le Bergotte était avant tout quelque élément précieux et vrai, caché au coeur de chaque chose, puis extrait d'elle par ce grand écrivain grâce à son génie, extraction qui était le but du doux Chantre, et non pas de faire du Bergotte. (I p. 550)

The little phrases that appeared to transmit this inexplicable dewy freshness, that contained that price-
less element of truth, came to be known as "Bergottisms."
The young writers of the day emulated and imitated him, but could never attain his vision; they attempted to be "Bergottish," to sound and write like Bergotte, but they merely possessed talent and could never recapture the special essence diffused by the genius of Bergotte. The public, slaves to stereotyped impressions, were also unable to fully penetrate the profundity beneath his style.

When Bergotte was able to truly depict to his readers the reality of the dull bourgeois household in which he grew up—the elements common to his speech and that of his brothers and sisters, their boring conversations, which revealed the essential ties that bound him to them—on that day he transcended the limitations of social class, refinement and even intellect, and manifested to the world the luminosity of his personality and his genius as a writer.

De même ceux qui produisent des œuvres géniales ne sont pas ceux qui vivent dans le milieu le plus délicat, qui ont la conversation la plus brillante, la culture la plus étendue, mais ceux qui ont eu le pouvoir, cessant brusquement de vivre pour eux-mêmes, de rendre leur personnalité parcellaire à un miroir, de telle sorte que leur vie, si médiocre d'ailleurs qu'elle pouvait être mondainement et même, dans un certain sens, intellectuellement parlant, s'y reflète, le génie consistant dans le pouvoir réfléchissant et non dans la qualité intrinsèque du spectacle reflète. (1 p. 554)
When Bergotte's great talent seems to have withered, when he finds it increasingly difficult to write in an original fashion, Marcel replaces his emulation of the literary talents of Bergotte with other writers. Yet Bergotte has served his purpose to Marcel; the genius of Bergotte, although insufficient and limited to his gift of expression, still has exposed the essential reality of this particular soul. Through his style we have been able to perceive the power of his genius, to reflect his inner personality.

Seul le style exprime l'âme, révèle, à découverte le visage vrai de l'écrivain et non le masque nos yeux voient. (III p. 884)

A unique, original mind has been uncovered and Marcel has gained access to the quality of that mind.

Cette vraie vie de Bergotte, la vie de l'artiste, qui n'éprouve pas de devoir plus grand que celui d'exprimer, d'imaginer d'autres vies. (I p. 558)

As Bergotte grows older and sick, progressively colder and constantly itching, when he feels death slowly overtake him, he reflects upon his creative life. As he is dying, he goes to view an excellent painting by Vermeer at a local museum. Bergotte is especially taken with a patch of yellow wall "un tout
petit pan de mur jaune" (III p. 187) on a certain canvas described by an art critic in the newspaper. The patch of yellow wall seems to represent perfection—a perfect translation of the essence of the artist who painted it—Vermeer. The patch of yellow wall distills, refracts the essential quality, the pure vision of its creator. As he dies, Bergotte weighs his creative output against the little patch of yellow wall, the perfection of which appears to point out to Bergotte his own limitations as a creative artist. Bergotte never achieved the moment of perfection in his books symbolized by the little patch of yellow wall.

C'est ainsi que j'aurais dû écrire, disait-il. Mes derniers livres sont trop secs, il aurait fallu passer plusieurs couches de couleur, rendre ma phrase en elle-même précieuse, comme ce petit pan de mur jaune. (III p. 187)

It is only as he is dying that he grasps the message of art: one can achieve perfection only through Art. Art can translate and recapture the vision of the artist perfectly, the distillation and purification of a particular essence rendered by an artist and preserved for all time. The artist submits himself to his vision and attempts to project it as perfectly as possi-
ible through his work of art. At the end of his life, Bergotte seems to have grasped the meaning of his vocation and the perfection that he never attained. Bergotte serves as a foil to Marcel who will be able to consummate the ultimate achievements of Art. Marcel will make the same discovery when he realizes that literature will also be his means of expressing the essential reality that has become apparent to him.

La vraie vie, la vie enfin découverte et éclaircie, la seule vie par conséquent réellement vécue, c'est la littérature; cette vie qui, en un sens, habite à chaque instant chez tous les hommes aussi bien qu'en chez l'artiste. Mais ils ne la voient pas, parce qu'ils ne cherchent pas à l'éclaircir. (III p. 895)

The style of Bergotte has been an expression of his essence, a manifestation of his vision. The qualitative difference of Bergotte, the unique composition of the individual elements that compose his personality have been clarified and have cast their luminosity over everything that Bergotte perceives. The characteristics of the work of Bergotte are really a metaphor for the components of his soul. These characteristics constitute his soul and express his vision. The style of the writer is the vision of the writer made apparent. Marcel will understand better than H. de Horpois, and even the pretentious followers and imitators of Bergotte that style reflects that inner reality of the writer.
Notre vie, et aussi la vie des autres; car le style pour l'écrivain, aussi bien que la couleur pour le peintre, est une question non de technique mais de vision. Il est la révélation, qui serait impossible par des moyens directs et conscients, de la différence qualitative qu'il y a dans la façon dont nous apparaît le monde, différence qui, s'il n'y avait pas l'art, resterait le secret éternel de chacun. (III p. 895)

Marcel discovers that the style of Bergotte, apparently précieux and haughty, lacking in any visible depth, does reveal the essential quality of the author.

Behind the physical and verbal façade that constitutes Bergotte, Marcel begins to comprehend the power of the word as a means of expressing reality. He perceives that Bergotte possesses special qualities that classify his work as belonging to him alone, projecting his vision. Bergotte is able to find the similarities between people and things. The typical phrase that seems to represent the essence of Bergotte and reappears in every one of his books is known as le morceau idéal. Bergotte never achieves a perfect style, which is the ultimate goal of every creative artist but he is able to transmit through his style the extent of his genius to the aspiring writer, Marcel. Although Marcel will understand fully the message of Bergotte only at the end of his life, Bergotte is the
first artist to contribute to the development of Marcel as a creative artist. Marcel, who has intuitively perceived that the message of *les trois clochers de Martinville*--the three steeples of Martinville--was that a real impression--a true contact with reality begs--to be given a form of expression and can be translated into a piece of art. Words have become the mode of expression for Marcel; words have already been intuitively Marcel's vehicle for expression of the truth.
CHAPTER IV

ANOTHER LAYER OF TRUTH: LA BERMA

Telle l'interprétation de la Berma était, autour de l'œuvre, une seconde œuvre vivifiée aussi par le génie.

II p. 49
The narrator of *A la recherche du temps perdu* ranks La Berma in importance with Bergotte, Elstir, and Vinteuil; La Berma is a performing artist; the latter are original creative artists. Yet, La Berma serves the same function as the three other creative artists for Marcel: she communicates to Marcel the essential reality of her own unique vision, peculiar unto herself, communicated through her medium-acting. She enables Marcel to reach the reality hidden beneath appearances.

La Berma will show to Marcel that it is impossible to receive a valid impression when preconceived ideas block a clear vision of truth. La Berma will reveal the perfection of art—which Marcel avidly seeks and which seems to evade him. The perfection of La Berma will consist of a complete absorption into herself of all essential matter. This matter will be refracted through the central ray, the genius of La Berma, her extraordinary vision which reveals her essence. La Berma reveals the universality of a particularized emotion, fulfills the playwright's original intentions and adds a second layer of truth to the part, by dint of her genius. La Berma will manifest to Marcel the individual nature of a real impression.
When Marcel attends the matinée performance of *Phèdre* with his grandmother, upon the urging of M. de Norpois, and permission reluctantly granted to him by his father, Marcel will hear La Berma play for the first time. He has heard Bloch speak of the great actress; he is familiar with the pamphlet of La Berma written by Bergotte, who considers the actress a genius. Marcel goes to this first matinee performance of La Berma with great anticipation and many preconceived notions about the impressions that he will receive from her performance; he expects to derive from La Berma's playing the revelation of certain aspects of nobility and tragic grief.

Puis, attendant du jeu de la Berma des révélations sur certains aspects de la noblesse, de la douleur, il me semblait que ce qu'il y avait de grand, de réel dans ce jeu, devait l'être davantage si l'actrice le superposait à une œuvre d'une valeur véritable au lieu de broder en somme du vrai et du beau sur une trame médiocre et vulgaire. (I p. 441)

The projection of Marcel's imagination has created in his mind a myth or mystique about La Berma. He has elevated the actress to a superhuman level. The actress herself is not really human; she becomes a
tragic character from Racine and she will reveal certain superhuman characteristics in her acting.

La Berma, because of the heroic characteristics attributed to her by the imagination of Marcel is aptly suited to interpret the plays of Racine; she should lend her talent only to works of merit matching her extraordinary emotional capacity; she should not deign to appear in mediocre melodramas.

Furthermore, Marcel's concept of La Berma requires that she lend her great talent to the classic plays which he already knows by heart. Marcel had read and re-read the works of the classical playwrights until he had committed them to memory. The content of the great classics alone in Marcel's mind are worthy vehicles to accommodate the talent of the great actress. The classics are empty containers waiting to be filled with the talent of La Berma, who will unfold the genius of her interpretation to the expectant Marcel.

...les œuvres anciennes que je savais par cœur, m'apparaissaient comme de vastes espaces réservés et tout prêts où je pourrais apprécier en pleine liberté les inventions dont la Berma les couvrirait, comme à fresque, des perpetuelles trouvailles de son inspiration. (Ip. 441)
Marcel expects to derive from the acting of La Berma something different and more meaningful than sheer pleasure; he seeks to be made known to him truths pertaining to a world more real than the one in which he lives.

...ce que je demandais à cette matinée, c'était tout autre chose qu'un plaisir: des vérités appartenant à un monde plus réel que celui où je vivais, et des- quelles l'acquisition une fois faite ne pourrait pas m'être enlevée par des incidents insignifiants, fussent-ils douloureux à mon corps, de mon oiseuse existence. (I p. 442)

He is actually searching for more than new truths. Somehow the acting of La Berma, before he has even witnessed it, should carry with it a notion of perfection.

A toutes ces raisons, je confrontais, pour décider ce qui devait l'emporter, l'idée, invisible derrière son voile, de la perfection de la Berma. (I p. 444)

A notion of perfection, invisible and undefinable but linked to something real obsesses Marcel. Marcel is greatly deceived at this first performance. "Élas! cette première matinée fut une grande
déception." (I p. 445) He feels that the perception of new truths will yield a feeling of pleasure. Actually, the pleasurable sensations that accompany a real impression precede the reception of the newly-discovered phenomena. Every valid experience of truth undergone by Marcel assumes that order. Marcel experiences a supposed perception of truth during La Berma's performance--this new perception is swiftly followed by pleasure. Marcel does not experience a real impression at this first matinée, and his disappointment, not yet comprehensible to him, is certainly justifiable.

Tout au plus, le plaisir que j'aurais pendant le spectacle m'apparaissait-il comme la forme peut-être nécessaire de la perception de ces vérités. (I p. 442)

Marcel senses that a feeling of pleasure possibly accompanies new truths; however, many factors intervene which prevent the reception of a real impression for Marcel at this time. Marcel experiences pleasure upon seeing the little square in front of the theatre, upon seeing the theatre attendants; he is happy in the theatre itself, and when he feels the onset of the performance of Phèdre. Although that representation of Phèdre may have emitted the radiance of a transcendent
Marcel has not been a proper receptacle for the absorption of new impressions or truths. His mind is filled with intellectual notions, abstract ideas of classic interpretation, and an idealized concept of the actress herself. He desires so intensely to acquire new revelations, that he finishes by experiencing only an obligatory sense of admiration of the actress, resembling what he senses is coming from the rest of the audience.

Enfin éclata mon premier sentiment d'admiration: il fut provoqué par les applaudissements frénétiques des spectateurs. (I p. 450)
When Marcel hears La Berma perform *Phèdre* for the second time, he swiftly and concisely comprehends why the first representation fell short.

Je pensais tout à l'heure que, si je n'avais pas eu de plaisir la première fois que j'avais entendu la Berma, c'est que, comme jadis quand je retrouvais Gilberte aux Champs-Élysées, je venais à elle avec un trop grand désir. (II p. 49)

Marcel had still not abandoned the vague thoughts of the perfection of La Berma that had influenced his concept of her first performance. Marcel dwells on the reoccurring idea of perfection at various intervals during his life. Its meaning evades him, but Marcel seems to sense that the idea of perfection somehow emanates from the core of things, is linked to a central point, which will explain many of the mysteries that thus far had not been linked together.

Et même dans mes désirs les plus charnels toujours orientés d'un certain côté, concentrés autour d'un même rêve, j'aurais pu reconnaître comme premier moteur une idée, une idée à laquelle j'aurais sacrifié ma vie, et au point le plus central de laquelle, comme dans mes rêveries pendant les après-midi de lecture au jardin à Combray, était l'idée de perfection. (II p. 46)

Unexpectedly, the second time that Marcel hears La Berma play *Phèdre*, the essence of the perfection
that he had so greedily sought and its significance is suddenly revealed to him. The perfection of La Berma lies in her ability to become one with the rôle. Formerly, when Marcel heard an actress play a part, he would attempt to subtract the talent from the role, seeking to isolate the essential reality of the talent of the artist. In the case of La Berma's second performance, this abstraction of talent was impossible. Le Berma is no longer an actress playing a role; she has become the part that she is playing; she is Phèdre.

Mais ce talent que je cherchais à apercevoir en dehors du rôle, il ne faisait qu'un avec lui. (II p. 47)

Marcel can no longer separate diction, gestures, attitudes; he cannot perceive intentions and effort on the part of the actress. La Berma had internalized the objective elements necessary to create a rôle, absorbing all relevant external factors into herself, completely eliminating all extraneous matter, so that not one factor superfluous to a total identification of the actress with the part remained. This absorption of externals, the attitudes that she had built up of Phèdre, the reasonings that go into the creation of a character had become part of the actress and were mani-
fested externally by a sort of radiance in which the original deliberations were lost. All external elements, voice, attitudes, gestures, veils, pagan gods, lost their individual characteristics and were diffused into the embodiment of an idea perfectly created: the reincarnation of Phèdre.

La Berma is an actress—a great tragedienne—judged by her contemporaries to be the second greatest living actress of the day. An actress, technically, is considered to be an interpreter of an original artistic creation—merely a window or mirror that exposes the essential reality of the playwright. The great interpreter of the works of another is an original artist in his own right; the music of the composer, the role in the play are but the material that the creative interpreter employs to make apparent his own essential quality as well as that of the original maker.

There are two progressive dimensions to the creative interpreter. The great pianist, actor, or dancer is a mere instrument, exposing the blaze of genius of the creator of the original work; one loses consciousness of the presence of the great pianist, for example;
he is so full with what he is playing that he becomes a window opening upon a great work of art. He has become one with his art in his involvement with it.

Tel pour un grand musicien ... son jeu est d'un su grand pianiste qu'on ne sait même plus du tout si cet artiste est pianiste, parce que ... ce jeu est devenu si transparent, si rempli de ce qu'il interprète que lui-même on ne le voit plus, et qu'il n'est plus qu'une fenêtre qui donne sur un chef-d'oeuvre. (II p. 47)

Yet, at the same time the great interpreter adds another layer of truth to the performance. Diverse elements, rich and complex, unique unto the performer, combine to produce an original interpretation: the voice, attitudes, gestures of La Berma as she creates Phedre; the raising of her arm to the shoulder in a certain fashion, the white veils of her costume, clinging and tenuous, endowed with a life of their own, may combine to embody an idea—the purification, rarification of a soul made apparent by the transparency of these elements. These different substances have been refracted by the fire that pierces the central core of the performing artist. Deleuze describes the performance of La Berma in his book Marcel Proust et les signes as follows:
Mais ses gestes, au lieu de témoigner de connexités musculaires, forment un corps transparent qui réfracte une essence, une idée.¹

La Berma is Phèdre; her acting is so transparent, she is so able to fully interpret the role, fulfilling all the possibilities that Racine intended for its tragic heroine. The capacity of the creative performer matches the vastness and depth of emotional content of the rôle. Nevertheless, La Berma plays Phèdre; in addition to the total realization of Phèdre, as Racine created her, La Berma adds the unique fire of her own genius to the rôle, her own essential quality, diffusing the special essence that constitutes her interpretation of the noblest and most tragic emotions.

Tel l'interprétation de la Berma était, autour de l'œuvre, une seconde œuvre vivifiée aussi par le génie. (II p. 49)

La Berma has become one with the part; she has attained the perfection of a total identification with what the playwright intended. Simultaneously the various elements that went into the composition of her interpretation have stratified, creating not opaque

¹. Deleuze, p. 35.
layers covering the soul of the artist, but additional envelopes of transparency displaying the soul that had assimilated them in even greater splendor, the soul had been diffused through them. The soul of La Berma, burned more brightly and quickly through these translucent layers. The soul of La Berma, exteriorized through her interpretation, formed an additional layer of truth to the work of Racine.

The creative artist struggles to penetrate, through the vehicle of his talent, beyond the everyday world of names and things, to reach his basic feelings and release them through his art. La Berma, through the interpretation of a rôle in her unique manner, produces an original impression, unlike any impressions existing in the storehouse of ideas of a particular individual.

L'impression que nous cause une personne, une oeuvre (ou une interprétation) fortement caractérisées, est particulière. (II p. 49)

La Berma, in revealing her particularized view, in communicating her impression, reveals not only her individual universe; she reveals the essence of true reality itself. Her task as a creative performer, to penetrate
beyond matter, beyond ordinary experience, is equivalent to the burden of any other original creative artist.

Ce travail de l'artiste, de chercher à apercevoir sous de la matière, sous de l'expérience, sous des mots quelque chose de différent ... (III p. 896)

La Berma has presented Marcel with a real impression; that which she has created is unique, peculiar to her alone, distinctly individual; it possesses no intellectual equivalent. Abstract ideas, analysis and reasoning, names that we may give the impression cannot really serve it. In our storehouse of ideas there is nothing that corresponds to an individual impression. It is a completely new rendering and cannot be classified according to existing systems. When Marcel heard La Berma's first performance, his applause actually sprang from his preconceived ideas, from what he expected La Berma to reveal. Marcel experiences the pleasure of receiving a real impression during the second performance of La Berma when he least expected it. This real impression brought happiness to Marcel and resulted in the discovery of a truth: Marcel realized that an impression carries with it an individuality peculiar to it which reflects also the individuality of
the work itself or its creator.

Nous avons apporté avec nous les idées de
beauté, largeur de style, pathétique, que
nous pourrions à la rigueur avoir l’illusion
de reconnaître dans la banalité d’un talent,
d’un visage corrects, mais notre esprit
attentif a devant lui l’insistance d’une
forme dont il ne possède pas d’équivalent
intellectuel, dont il lui faut dégager
l’inconnu. (Il p. 49)

La Berma also shows to Marcel that the work of

the playwright is the raw material of the creative
performer for his masterpiece of creative interpreta-
tion. The play itself need not be an important one for
the talented performer to diffuse his unique essence
through the rôle and create a masterful interpreta-
tion. La Berma is as marvelous in the inconsequential play
that follows Phèdre as she was in Racine’s masterpiece.

Marcel perceives the unique qualities that constitute
the essence of La Berma. The essence of La Berma en-
dows the material of her medium—the words assigned to
her by the playwright with reality. She gives them
equal value; her essential quality invests them with
reality. She creates a concise meaningful universe
consisting of relevant emotions communicated to an
audience in her particular style.
Je compris alors que l’œuvre de l’écrivain n’était pour la tragédienne qu’une matière, à peu près indifférente en soi-même, pour la création de son chef-d’œuvre d’interprétation, comme le grand peintre que j’avais connu à Balbec, Batir, avait trouvé le motif de deux tableaux qui se valent, dans un bâtiment scolaire sans caractère et dans une cathédrale qui est, par elle-même, un chef-d’œuvre. Et comme le peintre dissout maison, charrette, personnages, dans quelque grand effet de lumière qui les fait homogènes, la Berma étendait de vastes nappes de terreur, de tendresse, sur les mots fondus également, tous aplatis ou relevés, et qu’une artiste médiocre eut détachés l’un après l’autre.

(I I p. 51)

La Berma diffusés her special essence over all that she touches creating vast effects of one emotion or another. Just as a painter creates impressions with colors, La Berma creates effects with emotions, revealing their universal applicability.

La Berma savait introduire ces vastes images de douleur, de noblesse, de passion, qui étaient ses chefs-d’œuvre à elle, et où on la reconnaissait comme, dans des portraits qu’il a peints d’après des modèles différents, on reconnaît un peintre.

(II p. 52)

La Berma, in bringing to light the basic emotions of life, magnified, particularized, rendered larger than life, makes visible individual feelings and passions, which symbolize the feelings and passions for all mankind. La Berma manifests what Marcel will dis-
cover for himself in *Le temps retrouvé*.

La valeur objective des arts est peu de chose en cela; ce qu'il s'agit de faire sortir, d'amener à la lumière, ce sont nos sentiments, nos passions, c'est-à-dire les passions, les sentiments de tous. (III p. 907)

La Berma convincingly communicates the essence of a basic human emotion such as grief. In becoming one with grief, completely absorbing the components of grief, she diffuses the universality of grief, renders it comprehensible to the spectator. The strongest emotions can be transcribed into a language that is universal. That which survives must have the power to become universal; La Berma illustrates to Marcel that great artistic achievement has a universal significance. The message of a great work of art, particularized, original, carries a message for all of mankind. "puisque rien ne peut durer qu'en devenant général ..." (III p. 905) La Berma has been able to observe actions of human conduct and their accompanying emotions that the individual cannot ordinarily perceive, transmitting their essence into the universal essence, transcribing ordinary behavior into universal behavior. La Berma, in her ability to conceptualize the general emanating from the specific, brings about
a new perception of the truth.

The extraordinary talent of La Berma, completely synonomous with the part that she plays, serves to communicate an essence, the essence or diffusion of soul that is La Berma. The various elements which combine to constitute the unique talent, the style that is La Berma, serve to make more apparent, more translucent, purer and more transparent, the essential quality of La Berma, a marked individuality peculiar only to her style--revealed by her genius. The matter, the elements of the style of La Berma, are refracted by her genius and projected through her style. La Berma attains her moment of perfection in the faithful translation of the character Phèdre as conceived by Racine. Her talent adds the vision that she has conceived to the rôle, at the same time communicating her essence, her view of the world through a masterful recreation of the basic emotions. In this way, La Berma reveals her conception of the world. Deleuze expresses the same thought:

Le monde enveloppé de l'essence est toujours un commencement du monde en général, un commencement de l'univers, un commencement radical absolu.? 

2. Deleuze, p. 39.
La Berma creates a new meaningful universe. In diffusing the radiance of her soul through the various elements that comprise her interpretation of a role she offers an individual rendering consisting of new original elements. Every interpretation of a rôle by La Berma in which her essential quality is made visible is a new version of the universe, a universe unto itself.

The unique world of La Berma, which is a faithful rendering of her original concepts, communicates her essence, the special qualities indigenous to emotion that constitute La Berma. The special essence that is La Berma is part and parcel of a larger reality; when she creates her own unique world, she reveals the essence of the universe as well, a vast transcendent reality. The interpretation of La Berma is unequivocal and absolute. It is a rebirth, regeneration a recreation of the Universe by an original maker.

The result is that Marcel's perception or method of scrutiny of this particular creative artist is essentially the same as for all other forms of art; it always yields a glimpse of a more essential reality behind the actual language which the artist uses; the result is always an enrichment of experience which stamps itself.
indelibly on Marcel's soul. It is this revelation that
is crucial to the artist as well as to Marcel. The
essence of La Berma made visible by her artistic crea-
tion reveals her unique world.

Marcel has sensed that La Berma is a creative
artist in her own right, although technically speaking,
she is a performing artist. Marcel projects in ad-
vance the various qualities that will compose the talent
of La Berma and he is filled with admiration of her
before he has seen her perform.

Marcel is keenly disappointed when he hears La
Berma perform Phèdre for the first time. The tran-
cendent realities that he had been expecting to derive
from her interpretation had eluded him. Rather, pre-
conceived ideas, intellectual and abstract notions of
what La Berma's interpretation should be had inter-
fered with the reception of a true impression by Marcel.

Marcel attends a second performance of Phèdre
rather indifferently. Inadvertently, that which he had
sought so greedily to attain from the performance of
the actress is revealed to him. La Berma is completely
able to internalize all the elements that go into her-
self, emitting in their place a sort of transcendent radiance, which reflects the essential quality of the actress, the superiority of her soul. Every external element, when embodied into an idea of perfection, a complete identification of the actress with the part, serves to clarify, purify, render more transparent the soul of La Berma. Every substance comprising the interpretation of La Berma, when pierced by her genius, makes the soul of La Berma more visible and adds a second dimension of truth to the work of Racine. The interpretation of Phèdre by La Berma, in addition to the reincarnation of Phèdre, comprises a second layer of truth.

Marcel learns that the genius of La Berma blazes through all the material of her medium—not merely the great classic plays. Mundane works as well reveal the talent of La Berma; the essential reality that constitutes her soul is transmitted whenever she performs.

Marcel realizes through La Berma, the individual nature of a real impression. A real impression is accompanied by feelings of great pleasure and happiness and often the swift perception of a new truth ensues.
Marcel discovers that the individual impression reflects an individual character, a completely new unknown element of the particular person or work of art from which it is derived.
CHAPTER V

THE DUALITY OF STYLE AND VISION: ELSTIR

Notre vie, et aussi la vie des autres; car le style pour l'écrivain, aussi bien que la couleur pour le peintre, est une question non de technique mais de vision.
The paintings of Elstir apparently consist of a shocking new method of exposing the essential reality. The impact of Elstir's work upon Marcel is profound; seemingly, Elstir's technique of presenting to the viewer on canvas the optical illusions which compose one's first sight is rather simple and superficial. Closer scrutiny of the paintings of Elstir reveal a creator of universal stature, who will manifest to Marcel certain laws concerning the nature of art.

Elstir possesses a direct vision; he is able to convert the impact of true reality upon himself into a work of art. Rather, Elstir uncovers, exposes transcendent reality as he initially perceives it, during the split second of his first perceptions. Elstir deals with raw sensation transcribing it as the Impressionists do, yielding a true impression when sifted through the magic lantern of his mind, diffusing his unique vision, uncovering his extraordinary sensitivity.

The vision of Elstir not only represents reality exactly as he sees it; his unique perceptions constitute transcendent reality—an unequivocal, absolute rendering,
of the universe, an objective vision, as well as a subjective interpretation.

Therefore, an exposition of the universality of reality manifests the laws that bind together overtly diverse or conflicting elements. Elstir's sensitivity enables him to view the underlying harmony and unity behind all things—a pantheistic approach to the nature of reality. Elstir focuses, clarifies, brings into view for Marcel an alternative to the queries of the narrator concerning the basic relationship between art and life.

Marcel senses the instant that he enters the studio of the painter Elstir for the very first time that he is in the presence of a great original artist who will make apparent to him a unique reality that had not yet been uncovered. Certain characteristics constituting the technique of Elstir will illuminate the mysterious entity of that which constitutes transcendent reality.

...je sentais la possibilité de m'éléver à une connaissance poétique, féconde en joies, de maintes formes que je n'avais pas isolées jusque-là du spectacle total de la réalité. Et l'atelier d'Elstir m'apparut comme le laboratoire d'une sorte de nouvelle création
du monde, où, du chaos que sont toutes choses que nous voyons. (I p. 834)

Elstir creates the world anew by investing objective elements with a new dignity. He deprives these elements of the qualities of which they normally would consist, substituting new qualities for the former ones, thus endowing them with fresh new life, his version of the essence of the universe.

Le veston du jeune homme et la vague éclaboussante avaient pris une dignité nouvelle du fait qu'ils continuaient à être, encore que dépourvus de ce en quoi ils passaient pour consister, la vague ne pouvant plus mouiller, ni le veston habiller personne. (I p. 834)

The technique of visual metaphor, metamorphosis or substitution in painting is what is first perceived by the eye, the impression that strikes, the error of perception that the eye often makes, rather than the intervening intellectual process of the mind questioning the cause of the impression and deciding on a rational basis what the eye has perceived. These errors of perception are a spontaneous and concentrated expression of an individual history; they reveal the existence of an individual particular view of the world. They are also metaphors; we identify one thing with an image of something else.
Elstir takes the eye's first perception, transfers it to his rectangles of canvas, and thus creates a unique, original world, his own interpretation of what his eye has perceived. The visual metaphors of Elstir represent the transcription of his innermost being, most basic and profound, his vision of essential reality, a piece of the universe, the universe itself, true life as he has perceived it.

The particularized vision of the artist reflects his own transubstantiation of reality into a work of art. Elstir is presented with his first perceptions, communicated to him as raw sensation. He is able to transfer these sensations onto canvas, using the materials of his medium through his gifted artistic capacity. The artist has the ability to seize and arrest a moment and preserve it for all time by converting it from what it has been to an artistic form. The work of art, because it stems from reality, is an epitome, a miniature conversion of real life to a meaningful form. An epitome of the universe is a piece of the universe itself. The paintings of Elstir are miniature independent slices of the reality of the universe. Elstir has en-
dowed the reality that he perceives with perceptible form.

Elstir evokes the feeling in his painting that each painting has a life, a vitality of its own, contrary to the viewer's customary concepts of what certain elements would normally consist. The paintings of Elstir continue to exist, stand on their own merits, stating their own coherent truth.

The technique that Elstir employs to demonstrate to the world his unique vision, the essential reality of his impressions, is visual metaphor. Elstir recreates the universe, arranging the various elements of composition according to his first perception; each canvas is valid and recaptures exactly the impression of the artist as it occurred when the sensation was first received by him.

Elstir will see things, not as they appear when the process of perception followed by the intellectual process of identification ensues; the intellectual method of reasoning persistent in human beings that immediately endows things with names does not interfere with the perceptions of Elstir. He deals directly with
sensation, before the intellectual processes begin to work.

Parmi ces tableaux, quelques'uns de ceux qui semblaient le plus ridicules aux gens du monde m'intéressaient plus que les autres en ce qu'ils créaient ces illusions d'optique qui nous prouvent que nous n'identifierions pas les objets si nous ne faisions pas intervenir le raisonnement. (II p. 419)

Elstir will see things, not as they appear when first perceived and objectively identified by the intellectual process in humans that endows things with names, but as they appear during that split second of his first glance at them. Objects will thus produce the effect of optical illusions, rather than of things as such.

For Elstir, objects continue to exist but are deprived of their customary qualities. They are endowed with a fresh vision of new real life. Through the technique of metaphor, permanence is given to objects. They are freed from temporal and spatial contingencies. The new vision is real because it is the transcription resulting from the recreation of a real impression emanating from vivid sensations received by the artist.
Naturellement, ce qu'il avait dans son atelier, ce n'était guère que des marines prises ici, à Balbec. Mais j'y pouvais discerner que le charme de chacune consistait en une sorte de métamorphose des choses représentées, analogue à celle qu'en poésie on nomme métaphore, et que, si Dieu le Père avait crée les choses en les nommant, c'est en leur étant leur nom, ou en leur en donnant un autre, qu'Elstir les recréait. Les noms qui désignent les choses répondent toujours à une notion de l'intelligence, étrangère à nos impressions véritables, et qui nous force à éliminer d'elles tout ce qui ne se rapporte pas à cette notion.

(I p. 835)

The work of art reveals the essential quality of the mind of the artist. Objective reality is endowed with value, according to the mental magic lantern of the artist, who breaks up the habitual clusters of ordinary perception and realigns them according to his concept of their worth. The recomposed elements constitute a recreation of reality, an expression of the essential reality of the omniscient artist, reality as he feels it to be. Reality exists; the artist creates it anew when he uncovers the hidden reality that is generally concealed from all of us and makes it apparent according to his particularized vision of it.

The value is all in the painter's eye—it emanates from his vision. "Tout le prix est dans les regards du peintre." (II p. 421) It is not the objective
elements themselves that can be classified according to a value system; it is the artist's perception of things, manifested through the style of his work of art that exposes the essential quality of his mind and assigns a value to the objective world. The artist's perception, which yields his impression, displays not only his way of seeing things, the newly-created truths, but also these impressions display the genius or instinct of the artist. The important element is the new truth, created by the artist of genius, the new value system, the fresh version of the universe. The resurrection of the objective elements generated by the vision of Elstir consists of the creation of the newly-discovered truths and values, not the recreation of his earlier experiences. The original artist is not representational or photographic in the ordinary sense. Elstir is an original artist of genius, because he is able to take the optical illusions which compose his first perceptions, isolate the elements that comprise them, and recompose those elements, rather than reproducing these things as he knew them to be.

The charm of Elstir's work lay essentially in his
metamorphosis of the world, in terms suggesting poetic metaphors, not by some artificial symbolism, but through those natural optical illusions that would make it difficult to identify objects. His work was made up of those rare moments when, instead of looking at things with the eye that merely discerns already preconceived identities, one views nature poetically, before it has been transposed into what it is normally assumed to be. Elstir will make reality apparent, as it really is, according to his direct vision of it.

The optical illusions of Elstir recaptured on canvas signify his concept of true reality, the layer of truth beneath objective elements—the reality of the universe that he has merely uncovered and made apparent for the world to behold by dint of his instinctive genius.

The seascape—le port de Carquethuit—by Elstir serves to illustrate a specific technique of metaphor—substitution. Deleuze analyzes the process used by Elstir:

C'est dire que le style est essentiellement métaphore. Mais la métaphore est essentiel-
lement métamorphose, et indique comment les deux objets échangent leurs déterminations, échangent même le nom qui les désigne, dans le milieu nouveau qui leur confère la qualité commune. Ainsi, dans les tableaux d'Elstir, ou la mer devient terre, la terre, mer, où la ville n'est désignée que par des termes marins, et l'eau, par des termes urbains. 

Elstir suppresses every boundary line between the sea and the land of this harbor town; he employs urban terms for the sea and marine terms for the land, exchanging, fusing, and intermingling the various composite parts of one major element for the other. He needed only a brush stroke to systematize an entire canvas, to give it order.

The roofs of the houses appear to have ships' masts upon them, which give the appearance of ships resting in dry dock or built upon the land; there is no dividing line between the sand of the beach and the ocean; men pushing their boats down into the sea seem to be moving through the waves as much as through the sand. The entire picture gives the aspect of harbors in which the sea has converged upon the land; there are marine grottos where people are at work over

1. Deleuze, p. 42.
which suspend ships and waves—these factors combine to produce a mystical pantheistic impression of subaqueous land and amphibious people.

Behind the metaphorical exchange of the harbor of Carquethuit rests an intimation of tremendous power held in reserve, a muscular tension, produced by the play of certain elements of perspective and linear contrast, such as the angle of the leaning ships, compared with the erectness of the warehouse on the harbor and the upright little houses of the town. All in all, these people riding horseback in the water, the church rising from the water, the ship's sail upon the houses of the town create a certain balance and absence of motion, a logical world, sufficient unto itself.

Each disparate element exists independently, yet simultaneously, relates and intermingles, giving meaning to the other elements, producing a total meaningful experience, expressing the unity behind land and sea.

The various elements of the paintings of Elstir, without apparent design, combine to form a powerful, multiform unity. Balzac wrote a series of novels, not
insisting upon a basic relationship between the various books; actually every novel related to, combined to form a basic whole, the monumental cycle La Comédie Humaine. La Comédie Humaine expresses the intuitive, instinctive vision of its creator. The pieces of a gigantic puzzle when fit together form a whole, where the elements relate to one another, fuse to create a complete unit. In La Comédie Humaine the same characters reappear throughout the various books which compose the cycle. The omniscient vision of Balzac brings together the various elements to form a coherent, unified whole.

The Ring, a complete operatic cycle by Wagner, illustrates musically the same principle, where the same elements or characters continue to reappear throughout the various works, subconsciously joined together by the composer.

Unité ultérieure,...peut-être même plus réelle d'être ultérieure, d'être née d'un moment d'enthousiasme où elle est découverte entre des morceaux qui n'ont plus qu'à se rejoindre; unite qui s'ignorait, donc vitale et non logique... (III p. 161)

The use of metaphor in Elstir's style demonstrates the unité transparente—a multiform, powerful coexistence
between two conflicting basic elements. Elstir perceived these basic elements with clarity and poetic vision; he was able to communicate the basic relationship of these natural elements despite their essential differences.

Une de ses métaphores les plus fréquentes dans les marines qu'il avait près de lui en ce moment, était justement celle qui, comparant la terre à la mer, supprimait entre elles toute démarcation. C'était cette comparaison, tacitement et inlassablement répétée dans une même toile, qui y introduisait cette multiforme et puissante unité... (I p. 835)

The technique, the various characteristics which compose the style of Elstir clearly reveal that the paintings that he produces closely resemble the Impressionists. Impressionism embodies several principles and laws which are rendered visible by the work of Elstir. The Impressionist painter can create an unusual picture of a familiar object, startling and striking the viewer with a concept differing from what he is normally accustomed to, emphasizing certain laws of perspective, which cause him to reproduce things, not as he knows them to be but according to the optical illusions which compose the viewer's first sight. Elstir will see things not as he knows them to be, but
as they appear during that split second of his first glance at them. Objects will thus produce the effect of optical illusions rather than of things as such, and these illusions might be further magnified or exaggerated with the laws of perspective. The Impressionist painter abdicates the powers of intellect and reasoning, in order to empty himself of any preconceived concepts which might obstruct the full, clear reception of an impression. He becomes like a newborn babe, a tabula rasa, an empty slate, upon which an impression can be inscribed. The first perception of an impression is sensation. It is these first fleeting sensations that Elstir strives to reproduce exactly as they occurred to him. The impression produced by the perception of these sensations is synonomous with the essential reality of Elstir, and is an impact of the true reality. The reproduction of these impressions reveals the essence of the artist whose genius is manifested through his work of art. Each artist shows not only his particular universe, but also yields a glimpse into the general reality.

The Impressionist painter, who begins his task
in a state of complete child-like innocence, is confronted with an initial impression of light upon what he perceives. As a being stripped of intellectual discrimination, every object has the same value or importance. A cathedral is not more important than a school building, despite the material or artistic merit, for they both serve to reflect light. It is not the intrinsic quality of the object, but the effect that the object has upon light, a vision of how the object reflects the painter's projection of the way he sees things. Chernowitz points out that the artistic principles of Elstir are the same as the Impressionist school.

No subject is too humble for Elstir, no material can be 'less' beautiful or 'less' precious, since the Impressionist painter does not view things for themselves but only in so far as they serve to reflect light.²

La dame un peu vulgaire qu'un dilettante en promenade éviterait de regarder, excepterait du tableau poétique que la nature compose devant lui, cette femme est belle aussi, sa robe reçoit la même lumière que la voile du bateau, il n'y pas de choses plus ou moins précieuses, la robe commune et la voile en elle-même jolie sont deux miroirs du même

The description of this painting aptly depicts several characteristics of Impressionist painting: the arresting of a given instant in time, the transposition of this illusory, fleeting moment onto canvas, recaptured and preserved for all time; the omniscient power of the creative artist assigns an intrinsic basic relationship to the various elements selected, thus creating a formal order.

Elstir manifests Impressionistic characteristics in his choice of subjects. His first period deals with mythological subjects. Elstir's water colors depicted muses, poets and centaurs wandering about together in a mountainous landscape, rendered at a precise moment of sunset, and with the convincing sincerity that one might imagine that these creatures belonged to
a race apart, now extinct, but nevertheless historical. His second period, reflecting almost all Impressionist art, underwent the influence of Japan, not only in subject matter, but in points of daringly bright color, general decorative quality and angles of perspective. Elstir also painted portraits such as Mlle Sacripant, where a beautiful young woman, actually Odette de Crécy, is deceptively dressed in man's attire. Monet and Whistler painted in the same manner. His seascapes of Balbec best depict the ability of the artist to transform concrete reality into a luminous immensity, capturing the special essence that is Elstir.

Other Impressionist laws discernible in his canvases were contrasts in sizes, such as the lilliputian grace of white sails at the foot of immense cliffs, the disintegration of plane surfaces by light and shade as on the morning sea, the dislocation of a river, breaking up its continuity completely when viewed from a certain vantage point. The contrast of light and shade was also discernible in what appeared to be a mirage, in which a castle crowned with a tower appeared as a perfect circle of castle, prolonged by a
tower at its summit and at its base by an inverted
tower, whether, because the exceptional purity of the
atmosphere on a fine day gave the shadow reflected in
the water the hardness and brightness of the stone, or
because the morning mists rendered the stone as vapour
our as the shadow. The effects of mirage are due to
the fact that the Impressionist artist grasps no details
in his first impression, but more or less a broad view
of the ensemble which renders the scene somewhat vague,
making objects look confused and blurred, not only in
their outlines but also in their mass. The artist
communicates the flux of appearances that strike his
eye; no one part stands out more sharply than another;
details are submerged in the whole, all that is per-
ceived is a soft focus. Mist was a frequent Impression-
ist device; the brush stroke serves here not to desig-
nate form but merely optic value; it naturally makes
forms appear indefinite and easily interchangeable.
Mist, which attenuates the light, is illustrated in an
Elstir painting where the coldness of the water rises
to cloud the blinding sun, dissolving the forms into
undefined aspects akin to equivocal illusions. The
sensation of heat as Elstir experienced it is communicated to the viewer. This water color was painted on a roasting day; a pile of rocks remind one of a cathedral; yet, the volatile heat has caused them to crumble into dust; the heat has drunk up half the sea, producing such a gaseous vaporous state, that reality seems to have been destroyed. Reality seems to have concentrated itself in the shadows which somehow give a true impression of life. Elstir shocks the viewer by displacing reality from the concrete, recognizable elements of the painting, transferring it to the most ephemeral and volatile of all substances—the shadows—which in themselves serve as a metaphor or replacement for that which they reflect. Elstir endows the elusive, transparent shadows with new purpose and essence; the shadows are given the gift of life. An impression of reality emanating from a sensation yields a totally original impression completely understandable to others beside the artist.

Dans ce jour où la lumière avait comme détruit la réalité, celle-ci était concentrée dans des créatures sombres et transparentes qui par contraste donnaient une impression de vie plus saisissante, plus proche: les ombres. (I p. 901)
The various Impressionistic techniques of Elstir enable Marcel to comprehend and recapture the artist's original impressions. Marcel incorporates the sensations of Elstir into his own psyche, which expands his own consciousness and realm of experience.

...je n'eussé guère pu croire que je rêverais maintenant d'une mer qui n'était plus qu'une vapeur blanchâtre ayant perdu la consistance et la couleur. Mais cette mer, Elstir, comme ceux qui rêvaient dans ces barques engourdies par la chaleur, en avait jusqu'à une telle profondeur goûté l'enchantement qu'il avait su rapporter, fixer sur sa toile, l'imperceptible reflux de l'eau, la pulsation d'une minute heureuse.

(I p. 901)

Thoughtful interpretation of a myriad of artistic experiences leads Marcel to the discovery that there is a correlation between the various artistic media. Elstir, Mme de Sévigné, and Dostoevsky each represent a different art form; but their method of revealing the essential quality of their impressions is identical. Marcel perceives that Mme de Sevigne, who manifests her vision by writing letters, is startling. She presents things to her readers in the order of their perceptions of them, as does Elstir, instead of leading up to the impression that they have created, by first
explaining the cause of the impression.

Mme de Sévigné est une grande artiste de la même famille qu'un peintre que j'allais rencontrer à Balbec et qui eut une influence si profonde sur ma vision des choses, Elstir. Je me rendis compte à Balbec que c'est de la même façon que lui qu'elle nous présente les choses, dans l'ordre de nos perceptions, au lieu de les expliquer d'abord par leur cause.
(I p. 653)

She paints landscapes with words in the same manner that Elstir paints his Impressionistic, metaphorical seascapes and her technique resembles Dostoevsky's manner of presenting a character to his reader.

...je fus ravi par ce que j'eusse appelé un peu plus tard (ne peint-elle pas les paysages de la même façon que lui, les caractères?) le côté Dostoievski des Lettres de Madame de Sévigné. (I p. 654)

Marcel explains the similarities between the three artists to Albertine in La Prisonnière.

Il est arrivé que Mme de Sévigné, comme Elstir, comme Dostoïevsky, au lieu de présenter les choses dans l'ordre logique, c'est-à-dire en commençant par la cause, nous montre d'abord l'effet, l'illusion qui nous frappe. C'est ainsi que Dostoïevsky présente ses personnages. Leurs actions nous apparaissent aussi trompeuses que ces effets d'Elstir où la mer a l'air d'être dans le ciel. Nous sommes tout étonnés après d'apprendre que cet homme sournois est au fond excellent, ou le contraire. (III p. 378)
Dostoevsky reverses the real and the apparent; starting from the illusions and beliefs which one has, he then slowly brings them into line with the truth. The author's technique of telling the story of a life is similar to Elstir's breaking up the constellation of real impressions that we call vision.

The universe of Dostoevsky always consists of that same novel and unique beauty which remains the same in all his works—they are fragments of an identical world. In every one of his novels the woman is always the same; she has a mysterious beauty and an apparent good nature, which abruptly changes to a terrible insolence. The reader is presented with the impression that captured the author's first impression—repeatedly, the Dostoevsky heroine is seemingly lovely and kind, but she suddenly changes her nature, revealing her true character. Dostoevsky portrays his characters as Elstir paints his seascapes—suppressing every line of a demarcation between major elements, creating an optical illusion, an equivocate or intermingling of the elements of the medium, the objects of the painting or the various traits which comprise a character. The optical illusion of the first impression—is eventually
linked with the casual factors, uniting them in a visual metaphor.

Every creative artist, regardless of his medium, creates the world anew, communicating to the world his unique vision. However, everyone of Vermeer's pictures are fragments of an identical world; he continuously recreates the same patch of yellow wall, the same open window, the same color of fabrics and places. The portraits painted by Elstir show not only ten different people; each one demonstrates the special essence that is Elstir, communicated to the viewer by an omniscient brain.

Les parties du mur couvertes de peintures de lui, toutes homogènes les unes aux autres, étaient comme les images lumineuses d'une lanterne magique laquelle eût été, dans le cas présent, la tête de l'artiste...(II p. 419)

The study of the works of Elstir reveals to Marcel the artist's unique method of perception. Elstir strips himself of all preconceived intellectual notions, leaving himself susceptible to the reception of pure sensation; his first sight of things, which produces a real impression and exposes the essential reality of the artist. Elstir's first perceptions consist of
"équivoques," optical illusions of boundaries, substitution of one element for another, and optical illusions of perspective. Elstir tries to transfer his impression onto canvas, communicating his original vision, his new creation of the world to his viewers. Marcel is able to arrive at a total understanding of the real Elstir, who breaks up the aggregate of impressions that normally constitute vision, recreating the errors of perception or metaphors that comprised his first fleeting, sensory illusions.

Elstir tâchait d'arracher à ce qu'il venait de sentir ce qu'il savait; son effort avait souvent été de dissoudre cet agrégat de raisonnements que nous appelons vision. (II p. 419)

Marcel realizes that the genius of the painter Elstir, manifested through his style, is similar to the technique of Dostoevsky and Mme de Sévigné who are both writers. These three creative artists reflect, through their method of transcribing their first errors of perception, their genius—their ability to refract through their particular medium the identical beauty that they create.
...l'art d'un Vinteuil comme celui d'un Elstir, le fait apparaître, extériorisant dans les couleurs du spectre la composition intime de ces mondes que nous appelons les individus, et que sans l'art nous ne connaîtrions jamais? Des ailes, un autre appareil respiratoire, et qui nous permettent de traverser l'immensité ne nous serviraient à rien, car si nous allions dans Mars et dans Vénus en gardant les mêmes sens, ils revêtraient du même aspect que les choses de la Terre tout ce que nous pourrions voir. Le seul véritable voyage, le seul bain de Jouvene, ce ne serait pas d'aller vers de nouveaux paysages, mais d'avoir d'autres yeux, de voir l'univers avec les yeux d'un autre, de cent autres, de voir les cent univers que chacun d'eux voit, que chacun d'eux est; et cela nous le pouvons avec un Elstir, avec un Vinteuil, avec leurs pareils, nous volons vraiment d'étoiles en étoiles.
Vinteuil advances the progression of Marcel towards a total comprehension of the existence of true, profound reality by a creative artist to its ultimate point. Each creative artist of *A la recherche du temps perdu* transmits his personal essence, his unique view of the world, which reveals a slice of true reality. Vinteuil, the composer, reveals his own essence to Marcel, particularly in *La Sonate en fa dièse* and the effect of *la petite phrase* in it on Swann; but the compositions of Vinteuil finally reveal to Marcel that music approximates most closely an expression of the reality that is generally concealed from all of us, and only made visible through the communication of the impression of a great artist through his work of art. Not only does the deepest level of art reveal the closed personal universe of its creator, his unknown country, but it also unfolds, at the same time, the vast reality of the universe as a whole, as perceived through the extraordinary vision of the creative artist.

One may discover true reality through direct experience of an essential moment, consisting of a fragment of time existing in a pure state which reveals the essence of things; one may also relive the creative
artist's translation of the essential reality through direct experience of his work of art. The compositions of Vinteuil, especially the Septuor, most closely approximate a direct experience, an absolute recreation of the essential reality. Marcel will comprehend more clearly, through the compositions of Vinteuil, the essential nature of the creative artist whose essential quality is but a segment of the vast reality that is known as the universe. The creative artist, who through a knowledge of his own specific essence, can begin to discover general laws concerning all mankind can be likened to the microcosm within the macrocosm. The inner reality of the creative artist represents the vast reality of the universe. For Marcel, music is the ultimate mode of creative expression. Music seems to transcribe individual human yearnings, human sentiments more accurately than any other medium before intellectual processes, such as the transcription of emotion into words or the process of reasoning intervenes. Music is an example of what might have been, had not the invention of language, the verbal communication of one spirit to another been invented. Music expresses, more perfectly than any other art form, an individual human emotion exactly as it occurs, without an aim or object,
before it can be analysed. Music, a perfect expression of the effect of a sensation upon a human being, occupying a given length of time, is metaphor. Music gives permanence to human emotion, recaptures it more perfectly than any other medium, in its pure state. Music is an equivalent of the temporal process; musical form occupies a given length of time, and is a substitute or metaphor of time.

The music of Vinteuil is first introduced to Swann, a friend of Marcel. Swann will undergo six different phases of experience when he hears the Sonate en fa dièse at subsequent moments of his life. He hears it for the first time at a soirée. He experiences primarily pleasurable sensations, an enrichment, an expansion of soul as he tries to identify the elements within the music that brings him this happiness.

Mais à un moment donné, sans pouvoir nettement distinguer un contour, donner un nom à ce qui lui plaisait, charmé tout d'un coup, il avait cherché à recueillir la phrase ou l'harmonie—il ne savait lui-même—qui passait et qui lui avait ouvert plus largement l'âme, comme certaines odeurs de roses circulant dans l'air humide du soir ont la propriété de dilater nos narines. (I p. 208)

However, Swann finds the music unfamiliar and confusing; he is unable to endow the music and the delicious sensa-
tions that it produces with any real substance or form.

Peut-être est-ce parce qu'il ne savait pas la musique qu'il avait pu éprouver une impression aussi confuse, une de ces impressions qui sont peut-être pourtant les seules purement musicales, inentendues, entièrement originales, irréductibles à tout autre ordre d'impressions. Une impression de ce genre, pendant un instant, est pour ainsi dire *sine materia*. (I p. 209)

When la petit phrase—the little phrase—emerges from the music, it carries him away from his initial impressions, towards a real state of happiness. "D'un rythme lent elle le dirigeait ici d'abord, puis là, puis ailleurs, vers un bonheur noble, inintelligible et précis." (I p. 210) The feelings of happiness and pleasure that Swann experiences at that moment correspond to the same pleasurable sensations that invade Marcel when he tastes the *petite madeleine* and he experiences that first conscious impression of true reality. The joy that one experiences upon receiving a work of art with a heightened degree of sensitivity is identical to the joy that accompanies the revelation of the impact of true reality, the experience of the essential moment—*l'essence qualitative*—when one has fully penetrated the essence of all things. Marcel
will come to understand the similarity of the happiness that both he and Swann experience. Swann has a feeling of pleasure evoked by a work of art; the pleasurable sensations that Marcel experiences upon tasting the petite madeleine are a premonition of something real which will ensue. The sensations of Swann and Marcel are linked to different types of experiences but demonstrate a similar reaction to an experience of creative reality.

Swann hears the Sonate for the second time one year later at the salon of Mme Verdurin. He recognizes the charming little phrase, individual and joyous, that he loved so much, "la phrase aérienne et odorante qu'il aimait (I p. 211), that bore him off to unknown joys in the months ahead; it seemed to inspire in Swann a sort of moral rejuvenation. Superceding the primary subjective effect of creating a happiness in Swann, akin to the happiness accompanying a real impression, Swann now feels a sort of regeneration, the inspiration to dedicate his life to more worthwhile pursuits, to some ideal goal. A passion for the little phrase creates in Swann the desire to lead a better life.
Swann trouvait en lui, dans le souvenir de la phrase qu'il avait entendue, dans certaines sonates qu'il s'était fait jouer, pour voir s'il ne l'y découvrirait pas, la présence d'une de ces réalités invisibles auxquelles il avait cessé de croire et auxquelles, comme si la musique avait eu sur la sécheresse morale dont il souffrait une sorte d'influence élec tie, il se sentait de nouveau le désir et presque la force de consacrer sa vie. (I p. 211)

By the time of his third meaningful experience with the music, the little phrase had come to symbolize the happiness of the love that existed between Swann and his mistress, the somewhat disreputable Odette de Crécy. The little phrase had become, so to speak, "l'air national de leur amour." The phrase had become a token of their love, a mutual pledge which bound them together.

Mais peu lui importait, il la considérait moins en elle-même—en ce qu'elle pouvait exprimer pour un musicien qui ignorait l'exis tence et de lui et d'Odette quand il l'avait composée, et pour tous ceux qui l'entendraient dans des siècles—que comme un gage, un sou venir de son amour qui, même pour les Verdurin, pour le petit pianiste, faisait penser à Odette en même temps qu'à lui, les unissait.

But if Swann has the capacity to receive an impression of reality, he lacks the power to translate his perceptions into a new original form. Swann had half-heartedly begun an essay on the painter Vermeer;
la petite phrase moves him to resolve to continue his
critical studies. However, he will rather equate
the happiness wrought by the little phrase to his love
for Odette. Swann is a célibataire de l'art, an esthete
who can appreciate a work of art with great empathy and
sensitivity, but who does not have the capacity to
reach his own essence, essential for creating a work
of art. The little phrase will serve as a metaphor
for Odette's love, by the time that Swann has heard it
four times, when Odette plays it on the piano for him.
It will serve to recall their moments together. The
Sonate en fa dièse is a metaphor, an expression of the
emotional responses of Swann for Odette de Crécy.

Cette soif d'un charme inconnu, la petite phrase l'éveillait en lui, mais ne lui appor-
trait rien de précis pour l'assouvir. De sorte que ces parties de l'âme de Swann où la
petite phrase avait effacé le souci des intérêts matériels, les considérations humaines
et valables pour tous, elle les avait laissées vacantes et en blanc, et il était libre d'y
inscrire le nom d'Odette. (I p. 237)

The Sonate will serve a variety of purposes for Swann;
but it illustrates through Swann, as it proceeds to ul-
timately unfold laws of the universe, that the soul is
not an impenetrable and forbidding void; the soul is
the container for a great richness of sentimentality
and emotional alternatives. The Sonate reaches the depths of Swann's soul, and successively proceeds, from being a purely particularized expression of Swann's happiness, as he receives its impression, to a communication of its own independent essence and the essence of the Sonate to which it is irrevocably related, to a final revelation of it as a symbol of the force that accompanies the creation of a new world.

As Swann suffers disenchantment and disappointment in his love affair with Odette, the little phrase takes on a new connotation. The little phrase, always existing latent in the mind of Swann, no longer manifests newly-found happiness and hope; it comes to recall bonheur perdu.

...mais Swann y croyait distinguer maintenant du désenchantement. Elle semblait connaître la vanité de ce bonheur dont elle montrait la voie. (I p. 218)

Swann attends a concert at the salon of Mme de Saint-Euverte. Unexpectedly, he has a fifth meaningful encounter with the little phrase from Vinteuils Sonate; it reaches the depths of his being and recreates in Swann the very essence, the reality of his lost happiness with Odette. A reminiscence of the time when he and Odette were in love permeates his being, pervades
the inner self of Swann.

Au lieu des expressions abstraites temps où j'étais heureux, temps où j'étais aimé, qu'il avait souvent prononcées jusque-là et sans trop souffrir, car son intelligence n'y avait enfermé du passé que de prétendus extraits qui n'en conservaient rien, il retrouva tout ce qui de ce bonheur perdu avait fixé à jamais la spécifique et volatile essence. (I p. 345)

The little phrase has acquired a new meaning; now it is a substitute for, it symbolizes Odette in the days when the two were happy; the little phrase has recaptured the essence of the mutual happiness that Swann and Odette shared and fixed it unalterably. The entity of the little phrase with its simple and unique notes is not a chance creation; rather it refers to an inner reality unveiled, made apparent by Vinteuil, which it succeeds in communicating to Swann. This reality affects the whole gamut of human emotions. Swann, whose sensitivity is at this moment sharpened by suffering, can conclude from the objective reality of that phrase that the inner domain of emotion from which it sprang and which it expresses really exists.

When the love between Odette and Swann ceases to exist, through the heightened sensitivity that grief or any other intense subjective emotion brings about, Swann perceives a wider reality. Through Odette, like
Marcel's love for Albertine, Swann can gain nothing more than the experience of what it is to suffer and to love, and at the beginning, to be happy. But from the experience of his grief over the futility of his love, Swann is able to extract the generality that lies within it. "Les idées sont des succédanés des chagrins." (III p. 906) Through his suffering, Swann will emerge perceiving a wider significance of music, arriving at the same conclusion of Marcel in *le temps retrouvé*.

... car il semble que l'élément premier ce soit l'Idée, et le chagrin, seulement le mode selon lequel certaines Idées entrent d'abord en nous. Mais il y a plusieurs familles dans le groupe des Idées, certaines sont tout de suite des joies. (III p. 906)

Swann does not perceive the process that he is undergoing is similar to Marcel's experience in *le temps retrouvé*, when Marcel has at long last gained the significance of the signs and impressions that he had received throughout life. Swann realizes, like Marcel, that from a specific emotion, like grief or sorrow, one can extract the generality or universality of it and apply it to an understanding of transcendent reality.

Swann suddenly feels the little phrase detach itself from his being. He had succeeded in keeping hidden
in the depths of his being the painful emotions that
the phrase reflected. But the Sonate had shown to Swann
the riches of his own soul; through the Sonate a love
of music had been born in him; he came to look upon
musical motifs as being actual ideals--of another
world, of another order--veiled unknown ideas not yet
penetrated by the human mind. When Swann ceased to
consider the Sonate and la petite phrase subjectively,
the composition acquired a life of its own.

Mais depuis plus d'une année que, lui révélant à lui-même bien des richesses de son âme,
l'amour de la musique était, pour quelque temps au moins, né en lui, Swann tenait les
motifs musicaux pour de véritables idées, d'un autre monde, d'un autre ordre, idées
voilées de ténèbres, inconnues, impénétrables à l'intelligence, mais qui n'en sont pas moins parfaitement distinctes les unes des autres, inégales entre elles de valeur et de signification. (I p. 349)

The little phrase of the Sonate communicated an
essence, strength, force or vitality that could not be
denied, based on certain equivalents--actual ideas or
motifs in the mind of Swann, coming from the closeness of the intervals between the five notes that comprised it. Swann now realizes the architecture and form, the breadth and depth of the music; various musical themes awaken corresponding emotions in a sensitive person.
Music may evoke an emotional response, serve as a metaphor or exchange for ideas and emotions; the little phrase stood in for the lost happiness of Swann and Odette, now the Sonate en fa dièse points out to Swann that his soul serves as a receptacle for sensations and impressions and the emotions that they evoke.

Il savait que le souvenir même du piano faussait encore le plan dans lequel il voyait les choses de la musique, que le champ ouvert au musicien n'est pas un clavier mesquin de sept notes, mais un clavier incommensurable, encore presque tout entier inconnu, où seulement ça et là, séparées par d'épaisses ténèbres inexplorées, quelques-unes des millions de touches de tendresse, de passion, de courage, de sérénité, qui le composent, chacune aussi différente des autres qu'un univers d'un autre univers, ont été découvertes par quelques grands artistes qui nous rendent le service, en éveillant en nous le correspondant du thème qu'ils ont trouvé, de nous montrer quelle richesse, quelle variété, caché à notre insu cette grande nuit impénétrée et décourageante de notre âme que nous prenons pour du vide et pour de néant. Vinteuil avait été l'un de ces musiciens.
(I p. 349)

The little phrase possesses more than strength and vitality. It actually possesses real life; the phrase really exists, it stands by itself, part of the wider reality of the Sonate, yet independent, given its own existence. The little was uncovered by the genius and the vision of Vinteuil who made it visible for the entire world. Only a great creative artist with the
ability to reach his own inner nature, extraordinarily sensitive, able to describe his own essence, his unique perceptions, his unique world inadvertently, simultaneously, recreates the universe itself. The scattered themes that comprise the Sonate contribute to the logical birth of the phrase. An unknown, powerful force brings into view a glimpse of the secret laws that govern the universe.

O audace aussi géniale peut-être, se disait-il, que celle d'un Lavoisier, d'un Ampère, l'audace d'un Vinteuil expérimentant, découvrant les lois secrètes d'une force inconnue, menant à travers l'inexploré, vers le seul but possible, l'attelage invisible auquel il se fie et qu'il n'apercevra jamais! (I p. 351)

The creation of the Sonate, a complete closed world, consisting only of the two instruments, violin and piano, seemed to represent creation itself.

C'était comme au commencement du monde, comme s'il n'y avait encore eu qu'eux deux sur la terre, ou plutôt dans ce monde fermé à tout le reste, construit par la logique d'un créateur et où ils ne seraient jamais que tous les deux; cette sonate. (I p. 352)

The sonata itself expresses the creative force, the strength of the artist, akin to God the creator who also creates the universe. The force which propelled Vinteuil to create the Sonate en fa dièse is
the identical force that underlies all creation. The secret laws of the unknown force of creation are the same laws that govern the creation of a work of art.

Music is always associated with the narrator's emotional experience and gives it its meaning. Swann's experience emphasizes this basic relationship between a musical composition and human sensitivity. Vinteuil's short phrase directly affects a sensitive area in Swann which only it can affect; what the phrase touches in him is entirely subjective. At first Swann likens its effect to the emotions of happiness or suffering associated with his love for Odette. Finally, at the Saint-Euverte soiree, he tries to understand the strange power of that short phrase—why it can give his inner life so intense a reality. Then he tries to reach intellectually the man who composed that phrase—Vinteuil. Swann feels a great wave of pity and tenderness towards Vinteuil, kin to him in suffering, who from his sorrow draws superhuman strength, who possesses unlimited power of creation. Finally, after the passage of several years, when Swann has heard the little phrase at six different interludes during his life, he de-
taches himself completely from any involvement with the little phrase. It comes to symbolize the static side of moonlight and the leafy foliage shading an outdoor restaurant in the Paris suburbs that he frequented near the Bois de Boulogne. The real life of the little phrase has completely divorced itself from Swann's being; it's force has been arrested.

Au lieu du sens profond qu'il lui avait si souvent demandé, ce qu'elle rapportait à Swann, c'était ces feuillages rangés, enroulés, peints autour d'elle (et qu'elle lui donnait le désir de revoir parce qu'elle lui semblait leur être intérieure comme une âme), c'était tout un printemps dont il n'avait pu jouir autrefois, n'ayant pas, fièvreux et chagrin comme il était alors, assez de bien-être pour cela, et que (comme on fait, pour un malade, des bonnes choses qu'il n'a pu manger) elle lui avait gardé. (I p. 533)

When Marcel hears the Sonate for the first time, he feels afterwards that he has not heard anything—-he cannot remember anything of it; his memory fails him. Often, with a complicated piece of music, it takes longer to absorb its diverse elements. Until one finally feels that one knows a piece of music, each successive time that it is listened to is still like hearing it for the first time. Marcel feels that he knows the Sonate perfectly after it had been played two or three times.
What Marcel lacked was not comprehension but memory. Memory is faulty in face of a multiplicity of complex impressions; memory lacks the power of immediately furnishing us with a recollection of multiple impressions. Rather, these impressions assume a gradual position in the memory. Music is analogous to memory; memory is a pre-requisite accompaniment for the comprehension of music. Music is also a metaphor of time; it is the aesthetic equivalent of the temporal process heard as pure form. Memory, the basic ingredient of music, assumes reality when it is heard and becomes time; the aesthetic form assumes the temporal process as it is perceived; as music becomes the aesthetic equivalent of time, music also becomes memory. In his book The Magic Lantern of Marcel Proust, Moss expresses a corollary to the concept of music as a metaphor of both memory and time.

We have in Proust the original concept of memory as a metaphor of time, not content; because of this music is memory's most pertinent analogy. Form is apprehended as sensation, what is being formed is time. Marcel's involuntary memories satisfy a necessary condition, the common quality of being felt simultaneously at the actual moment and at a distance in time. This quality is the exact condition music de-
mands of the listener, time connections
make sound intelligible without any refer-
ence to the objective world.¹

The Sonate brings great pleasure to Marcel when
he hears it, but like life, he absorbs its elements
gradually, in successive moments—he was never able to
succeed in possessing it in its entirety. Everything
requires time to acquire reality. The Sonate for a
time had remained invisible to Marcel, but when the
least obvious parts were finally made known to him,
those that he had distinguished first were already be-
inning to escape him. So although the Sonate brings
happiness to Marcel when he hears it, he never possessed
the composition as a complete entity; he was able only
in subsequent moments to enjoy all the pleasures that
the composition gave to him. As one does in life, its
elements were absorbed gradually, it acquired real life
for him with the passage of time. What he discovered
at once he soon got tired of for it was less different
than what he already knew. That which has been held
in reserve for us, whose composition is new, strange

¹ Howard Moss, The Magic Lantern of Marcel Proust
and confusing to our minds, indistinguishable, but preserved intact, shall be loved longer than the rest because we have taken longer to get to love it. Centuries will elapse before any great work—because of the extraordinary genius of its creator who is a harbinger of his time and unlike ordinary men—can be fully appreciated by the public. The artist is obliged to launch his work, whether it be accepted or not during his time. Vinteuil’s work was appreciated posthumously, although shortly after his death, but posterity increasingly appreciated the full capacity of Vinteuil’s genius. The most obvious, easily acquired beauties are those that are appreciated first. That which takes longer to get to know shall be loved longer than the rest. The Sonate will function differently for Marcel. When Swann had heard the Sonate for the sixth and final time, it was reduced to serve as a symbol for places where he had heard it. The little phrase had lost its wider significance for Swann. For Marcel, the Sonate will assume proportions of universal stature.

The Sonate causes Marcel to muse on the relation—
ship between art and life. The thought nags at him that there may be another reality behind what he ordinarily sees, and that the clue to what is real may be contained in a work of art. Is art more real than life—can life compensate for the inability to discover true reality? Does art contain a profound reality that exposes our real personality stripped of artifice and disguise? Every work of art contains an individuality that also expresses the individual existence of the artist—*l'essence qualitative*—the essential quality of his sensations, which are unlike those of any other human being which will be expressed constantly, similarly throughout all his works of art.

...j'avais moi-même désiré d'être un artiste. En abandonnant, en fait, cette ambition, avais-je renoncé à quelque chose de réel? La vie pouvait-elle me consoler de l'art? y avait-il dans l'art une réalité plus profonde où notre personnalité véritable trouve une expression que ne lui donnent pas les actions de la vie? Chaque grand artiste semble, en effet, si différent des autres, et nous donne tant cette sensation de l'individualité que nous cherchons en vain dans l'existence quotidienne! (III p. 158)

In addition to revealing the character of Vinteuil, the music of Vinteuil poses another question to Marcel who wishes to be a creative artist, but thus far has been unable to decipher the signs and impres-
sions which would reveal the nature of discovering the connections between material objects. Music enables Marcel to not only descend into himself, searching for the inner reality that corresponds to transcendent reality; music will also reveal to Marcel the inner reality of another person, the essential quality of his sensations as he perceived the universe with fresh vision.

La musique, bien différente en cela de la société d'Albertine, m'aidait à descendre en moi-même, à y découvrir du nouveau; la variété que j'avais en vain cherchée dans la vie, dans le voyage, dont pourtant la nostalgie m'était donnée par ce flot sonore qui faisait mourir à côté de moi ses vagues ensoleillées. Diversité double. Comme le spectre extérieurise pour nous la composition de la lumière, l'harmonie d'un Wagner, la couleur d'un Elstir nous permettent de connaître cette essence qualitative des sensations d'un autre où l'amour pour un autre être ne nous fait pas pénétrer. (III p. 159)

Marcel imagines that the only work in existence of Vinteuil was the *Sonate* for piano and violin. When a concert at the salon of Mme Verdurin begins, Marcel does not recognize the music, embellished, harnessed in silver, glittering with brilliant effects. Marcel realizes that he is hearing a composition by Vinteuil and that he has been plunged into an unknown, vast
universe, one that he had been incapable of imagining that Vinteuil could have created.

A peine rappelée ainsi, elle disparut et je me retrouvai dans un monde inconnu; mais je savais maintenant, et tout ne cessa plus de me confirmer, que ce monde était un de ceux que je n'avais même pu concevoir que Vinteuil eût crées, car quand, fatigué de la Sonate, qui était un univers épuisé pour moi, j'essayais d'en imaginer d'autres aussi beaux mais différents, je faisais seulement comme ces poètes qui remplissent leur prétendu Paradis de prairies, de fleurs, de rivières qui font double emploi avec celles de la Terre. (III p. 249)

The strange new world that Marcel plunges into with the advent of the Septuor bears certain similarities to the Sonate; Marcel recognizes the little phrase from the Sonate and other phrases from it as well, but they are disguised, transformed, expanded and enriched, appearing widely different, but actually composed of the same elements. The Septuor is for Marcel a triumphant and complete masterpiece; almost point by point Marcel relives Swann's experience and then goes beyond it. When he first recognizes the little phrase, he feels the same deep joy Swann felt at the Verdurin's. His enjoyment is enhanced, however, because the little phrase appears in it unpredictable, unforeseen, at the heart of this unpublished composition by Vinteuil.
Upon hearing the Vinteuil *Septuor*, Marcel realizes that the impression he receives from it is transmitted to him from the profoundest depths of Vinteuil's being, communicating to Marcel who has the capacity for understanding it, that essential quality of Vinteuil, the individual existence of his personality—the fact that his personality exists alone, and that there is none other like it.

In comparison to the *Septuor*, the *Sonate* appears to be but a timid attempt to seize the essence of life, a bare outline of the *Septuor*, a rough draft. The *Sonate* is pale and shy, light but cold, bathed in rain, emanating electricity, a sterile vegetable world. The *Septuor* is ruddy, alive with country sunlight, glowing with the bells of morning and the joyous cry of the cock. The *Septuor* is the *Sonate* brought to maturity, existing in full bloom. Marcel realizes that all of the other works of Vinteuil were merely essays, dry runs, preparing him for the monumental great work that would encompass all his other compositions and sum up his findings. The other works of Vinteuil, were like the other loves of Marcel's life—merely preparation for the great love—Albertine—that would consume his
being and pave the way, through his grief over the loss of her, for a greater understanding of the essence of life.

Si je considérais maintenant non plus mon amour pour Albertine, mais toute ma vie, mes autres amours n'y avaient été que de minces et timides essais qui préparaient, des appels qui réclamaient ce plus vaste amour: l'amour pour Albertine. (III p. 252)

Like Marcel's love for Albertine, the compositions of Vinteuil were closed complete worlds, allowing room for no other premise. But music, conceived in the particular world of the individual, expressing the most extreme interior point of sensation, cannot continue to exist in the domain of the individual--its significance is universal and general. Music does not merely express one's joy and heartbreak--it expresses the sadness and happiness of mankind.

Marcel remarks upon the correspondence between music and life. The two conflicting themes of the Sonate--le motif volupteux and le motif anxieux--seem to symbolize his love for Albertine.

Même en celle-ci, je ne m'attachai pas à remarquer combien la combinaison du motif voluptueux et du motif anxieux répondait davantage maintenant à mon amour pour Albertine, duquel la jalousie avait été si longtemps absente que j'avais pu confesser à Swann mon ignorance de ce sentiment. (III p. 158)
The Septuor will bring about a reminiscence of Albertine also, but it will promise something much more mysterious and profound than the subjective personalized emotion of love.

Et pourtant, me dis-je, quelque chose de plus mystérieux que l'amour d'Albertine semblait promis au début de cette œuvre, dans ces premiers cris d'aurore. (III p. 253)

The Septuor, in recalling the character of the composer himself, suggests to Marcel that the composition emerged as a result of the composer's profound grief and disappointment, yet unwillingness to accept his daughter's assignation with her lesbian friend, a complete profanation of a healthy father-daughter relationship based on mutual love and trust. Yet this same friend of Mlle Vinteuil who knew how this daughter admired her father and participated with her in a perverted, sacreligious, sadistic profanation of the dead composer, was the very one who took the maze of scribblings--hieroglyphics--that comprised not only the Septuor, but his other posthumous works as well, and deciphered, arranged, organized them, brought them to light, assuring public acceptance of his work shortly after his death and immortality as well.
The Septuor proposed to Marcel the enigma of Vinteuil's human personality. It seemed to Marcel that the composer was living, forever reincarnated through his music. The joy that Vinteuil experienced when he chose a sound; he was able to extract the colour of each tone, creating a completely new and different universe, departing from what music is ordinarily accustomed to be. Vinteuil creates an original world, personal and lasting, communicating the intensity of feeling of the composer when he created it, inextricably uniting the presence of the creator with the creation. The presence of the man is everywhere, apparent in the septet. A timid, forlorn Vinteuil, completely abused in his interpersonal life relationships, experienced such ecstasy in the transposition of sounds into the colorings of the universe, especially the multiple sensations of the creation of full chords, creating a veritable rainbow of sounds, that this original rendering of the universe gave him an increase of strength to continue along to fresh new discoveries. Even fragmentation of his work, widely different, scattered phrases, the little phrase, the seven-note
theme of the septet, all unmistakably reveal the same universe of Vinteuil, revealing his prayer, his optimism, found everywhere through his works, the essence of Vinteuil.

Ces phrases si différentes étaient faites des mêmes éléments; car, de même qu'il y avait un certain univers, perceptible pour nous en ces parcelles dispersées ça et là, dans telles demeures, dans tels musées, et qui était l'univers d'Elstir, celui qu'il voyait, celui où il vivait, de même la musique de Vinteuil étendait, notes par notes, touches par touches, les colorations inconnues, inestimables, d'un univers insoupçonné, fragmenté par les lacunes qui laissaient entre elles les auditions de son œuvre. (III p. 255)

Different phrases composed of the same elements produce in Vinteuil les phrases-types—the typical musical phrases that are recognizable in every one of his compositions and classify the work as being unmistakably composed by Vinteuil. The various fragments scattered throughout his work appear to be widely diverse but they are actually composed of the same elements; behind the apparent differences there is a profound similarity.

There is a permanance to the elements that compose his soul. These components characterize what is unique and individual in Vinteuil or any other creative
artist, and will reoccur in many different forms throughout his compositions. The little phrase of the Sonate appears also in the Septuor as do motifs from other works that seem familiar to Marcel, but they reappear disguised, embellished or transformed.

...je me reconnus, au milieu de cette musique nouvelle pour moi, en pleine sonate de Vinteuil; et, plus merveilleuse qu'une adolescente, la petite phrase, enveloppée, harnachée d'argent, toute ruisselante de sonorités brillantes, légères et douces comme des écharpes, vint à moi, reconnaissable sous ces parures nouvelles. (III p. 249)

Vinteuil will continue to create fragments of an identical world; everyone of his compositions creates the same universe--his interior country--variations on the same theme.

The elements that compose the phrases of Vinteuil emanate from deep within the artist; his unique accent, his patrie interieure, and his mode of self-expression belong to him alone, that no other artist can ever re-capture exactly. The phrases--types of Vinteuil make apparent the typical habitual manner, true unto himself, in which he constantly views the universe. The phrases--types are an expression of his inner country, unknown to the world until he brings it to light, which always remains the same.
Ce chant, différent de celui des autres, semblable à tous les siens, où Vinteuil l'avait-il appris, entendu? Chaque artiste semble ainsi, comme le citoyen d'une patrie inconnue, oubliée de lui-même, différente de celle d'où viendra, appareillant pour la terre, un autre grand artiste. (III p. 257)

So through the works of art of another, through their eyes, man can behold the universe, behold the universe that a creative artist sees, that a creative artist is, man can behold hundreds of universes. Man can escape the reality that confronts him daily; he can transcend reality, perceive a purified, distilled vision, representing the inner reality of another through a work of art.

The Septuor advances towards a conclusion; two opposing motifs have been wrestling with each other–le motif dououreux and le motif joyeux. These themes have no material substance; they seem to summon Marcel to a super-terrestrial joy, contrasting sharply with any previous experience in the visible life of the narrator. Rather, the ecstasy experienced by Marcel upon the resolution of the struggle that announced the finale of the Septuor was most similar to the happiness that invaded him at certain intervals of his life. The happiness that Marcel experienced when he tasted
the petite madeleine at Combray and he turned inward, to his own self to discover something essential; the happiness that Marcel experienced upon composing a little literary fragment when struck by a vivid impression of three steeples dancing before him in the distance as he turned a curve in the road—three trees marking a shady road producing an impression that wavered mysteriously between the past and the present. The happiness linked with these still unconscious impressions of reality correspond to the intense joy that Marcel experiences upon listening to the Septuor. Marcel discovers with the Septuor that a work of art is pregnant with meaning. Art is real; art and life are inextricably intertwined, because a great work of art reflects real life, the inner life, the essential reality of its creator. Marcel was able to recapture the essential reality, the life force, the unique world of Vinteuil in his masterpiece of reflection of inner self: the Septuor.

Marcel had received impressions during his life, such as the vision of the three steeples at Martinville, a vision of true reality, calling to mind the creative reality that an artist experiences, that summons him to
create a work of art. The impression of the three steeples at Martinville demanded a reaction from Marcel that expressed itself in words. The three trees of Hudimesnil produced a forecast of the most meaningful revelation of Marcel's life, the essential moment, which would make possible a beginning of a creative vocation for Marcel. These experiences seem to correlate to Marcel's reaction to the Septuor. The essential moment consists of an impression, emanating from a sensation experienced simultaneously in the present and in the past. These impressions reveal the essence of reality, which art may also reveal. They are fragments of existence withdrawn from Time, extratemporal, free from contingencies, completely real and serve as starting points or foundation stones for the construction of a true life.

...ces impressions qu'à des intervalles éloignés je retrouvais dans ma vie comme les points de repère, les amorces pour la construction d'une vie véritable: l'impression éprouvée devant les clochers de Martinville, devant une rangée d'arbres près de Balbec. (III p. 261)

Marcel and Swann differ in their respective hearings of Vinteuil's music and Marcel finds that the
actual hearing of Vinteuil's music surpasses even the world created by his imagination.

Et un chant parfait déjà l'air, chant de sept notes, mais le plus inconnu, le plus différent de tout ce que j'eusse jamais imaginé, à la fois ineffable et criard, non plus roucoullement de colombe comme dans la Sonate, mais déchirant l'air, aussi vif que la nuance écarlate dans laquelle le début était noyé, quelque chose comme un mystique chant du coq, un appel, ineffable mais suraigu, de l'éternel matin. (III p. 250)

The forms of the Sonate serve to liberate the emotions of Swann; he experiences the Sonate basically as form set free. It serves as a catharsis or a release of his emotions; a series of emotions—happiness, hope, disappointment, lost happiness and finally grief—successively, are purged from Swann through the form of the little phrase of the Sonate. Swann is a sensitive individual who handles the emotions yielded by a work of art subjectively; the Sonate serves him personally and stops. Marcel conceives of form as emotion. Marcel's sentiments are akin to those of the creator; he attempts to recapture the emotional quality, the inner essence of the artist who composed the work. Marcel will impose limits upon the work of art—a hermetically-sealed, structured universe.
The special perception of the creative artist will attempt to penetrate to the essence of a work of art. Marcel attempts to understand the unknown country, the new universe delineated in the work of art. He can find the correspondences, the similarities between the work of art and the universe, within the framework of the work of art. The corresponding emotions that are awakened in him through a work of art are put back into it in order to give it more meaning. Emotion is a tool aiding creation and comprehension in the creative artist; Marcel is an artist—Swann who can only receive impressions is not.

The Septuor of Vinteuil communicates the fully mature impressions, the very deepest realizations of self of which man is capable. Marcel will experience firsthand the same revelations as Vinteuil, when he undergoes a direct perception of the content of the essential moment, which for him will reveal the essence of all things, and will enable him to finally pursue the creative life, consummated with the creation of a work of art—because he had finally comprehended the content of true reality. At this moment in time, Marcel is finally able to understand what Vinteuil
experienced, when he was able to reach the profoundest part of his being, when he reached his own essential nature.

The Septuor transmits the essence of Vinteuil's penetration into the être—the profoundest part of his being. The être is the essential quality, the essence of things, an essence in its pure state. Vinteuil's penetration into his profoundest regions posed itself in the form of a question. In questioning himself, his own essential nature, the answer to the eternal investigations of Vinteuil came from himself. Like Marcel, who understands when he tastes the petite madeleine, that the effect of the sensation is to fill him with a precious essence, the essence that he is full of is himself. His own essence will be the source of creative energy. Vinteuil realizes that true life, the reality of the universe lies deep within oneself, far beyond the familiar externals that one customarily assumes to be true. The answer to life lies within the creative artist; he responds to his own queries on the meaning of life and the function of art with his own particular accent; his own essence dic-
tates the nature of true reality—absolute, liberated from reason and analysis. There is an unlimited number of tightly-sealed universes, each one created from nothing, in the silence, in an infinite void, drawn from silence and from night; each universe reveals the essence of its creator, his particular vision of reality, and his vision of the totality of reality.

Par l'art seulement nous pouvons sortir de nous, savoir ce que voit un autre de cet univers qui n'est pas le même que le nôtre, et dont les paysages nous seraient restés aussi inconnus que ceux qu'il peut y avoir dans la lune. Grâce à l'art, au lieu de voir un seul monde, le nôtre, nous le voyons se multiplier, et, autant qu'il y d'artistes originaux, autant nous avons de mondes à notre disposition, plus différents les uns des autres que ceux qui roulfent dans l'infini et, bien des siècles après qu'est éteint le foyer dont il émanait, qu'il s'appelait Rembrandt ou Ver Meér, nous envoient encore leur rayon spécial. (III p. 895)

The three steeples and the three trees do not yet have a material existence; rather they hold in abeyance elements that will eventually solidify. Marcel experiences the three trees and the three steeples as form rather than content; these impressions suggest entities that will eventually acquire their own reality. The reality of the three steeples will be the little literary fragment that Marcel composes,
which expresses the impression that the steeples produce in him. This little literary composition is a miniscule attempt, suggesting Marcel's struggle to reach an eventual mode of expression of the reality within himself that he will come to know. The reality of the three trees will be the most meaningful revelation in Marcel's life; it forecasts Marcel's penetration to the very essence of real life—the essential moment; time in the pure state, reaching the inner reality of self, an infinitesimal speck in the broad spectrum of the universe, which somehow also reveals the essence of all things.

The *Sonate* and the *Septuor* differ respectively to Swann and Marcel. Both compositions reflect form rather than content. Marcel has the capacity to become a creative artist; he comprehends not only the form that Vinteuil has bestowed upon the *Septuor*, but the inner reality and its accompanying joy of the composer as well; Vinteuil communicates his essence to the happy few who possess an extraordinary vision.

The mysterious survival of Vinteuil in his compositions—the accent that marks his work as be-
longing to him exclusively, affirming the individual existence of his soul, the permanent elements that compose his soul and find expression in his music—suggests the possibility that the soul survives the body that harbors it. Surely the music of Vinteuil, which recomposes and translates the inner life of Vinteuil into the form which most nearly approximates it—music—will remain for posterity and assure the immortality of Vinteuil's soul. The septet, the final result of endless self-questioning, is a transubstantiation—the changing of one substance into another; as the conversion of the whole substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; the Septuor recaptures the inner life where sounds seem to assume the inflexion of the human being himself, to reproduce that interior extreme point of our sensations, that part of ourselves which gives us the peculiar exhilaration which we recapture from time to time. It corresponds, in the musical order of things, to the waves of joy which intermittently surge up in the narrator and which expresses itself in words.
Par exemple, cette musique me semblait quelque chose de plus vrai que tous les livres connus. Par instants je pensais que cela tenait à ce que ce qui est senti par nous de la vie, ne l'étant pas sous forme d'idées, sa traduction littéraire, c'est-à-dire intellectuelle, en rend compte, l'explique, l'analyse, mais ne le recompose pas comme la musique où les sons semblent prendre l'inflexion de l'être, reproduire cette pointe intérieure et extrême des sensations qui est la partie qui nous donne cette ivresse spécifique que nous retrouvons de temps en temps... (III p. 374)

The *Septuor* has its own independent identity, but that identity is explicable only in relation to a particular spiritual atmosphere, the one in which the composer lived. Vinteuil's work seems to correspond to a certain spiritual reality—the profundity of emotion and the capacity for joy, as well as the capability to experience the gamut of other emotions that characterize the real Vinteuil, which transcended his outward appearance of a resigned, innocuous music master.

The inner strength, the pioneer spirit, the courage to blaze musical trails by opening up hitherto unknown regions of the soul, originate within the composer himself. Vinteuil had the originality to endow a combination of five or seven notes, merely a combination of sounds, with a human value. They are
endowed with an individual presence, the vision of a great artist has given them form and expression and life. The composer has succeeded in reproducing the interior, extreme point of sensation in a phrase, in a composition, the end-points of emotion that exposes the broad spectrum of possibilities that constitutes the emotions of man.

The Septuor places Marcel at the threshold of a discovery that will eventually make him a creator. He realizes that music inspires in those that have the capacity to receive it, states of deep sensitivity which are incapable of analysis and rationalization; he connects those states with the moments of ecstasy during which he feels he is living more intensely, but he cannot comprehend the origin of the sensations in invoking this heightened sensitivity. Marcel will soon reach the conclusion that these fleeting impressions are the presence of his individual soul; they are his particular equivalent of the enigmatic musical phrases that communicate the mystery and beauty of Vinteuil's music.
The *Septuor* of Vinteuil communicates to Marcel the originality of the soul of the composer, his unique accent, evident in his work, the restless self-ques-
tioning of Vinteuil, the form that these questions take, and the replies to those profound questions which emanated from the depths of his being. This profundity manifested itself to the world in the form of the *Septuor*, the culmination of a life of queries and answers. The *Sonate* was a timid attempt to re-
capture basic reality; the *Septuor*--the final revela-
tion of a life of searching. The reply for the artist: to behold the entire universe, the answer lies within oneself. Marcel receives the result of Vinteuil's endless searching and suffering as the impressions of the *Septuor* recreate their basic reality within him. Marcel will discover his personal means of reaching basic reality for himself in *Le temps retrouvé*. A series of sensations perceived at some distant time in the past and simultaneously in the present exposes reality exactly as it is, reveals the essence of things. *La vraie vie* is basic reality beyond appearances, the profound similarities behind the apparent differences. *Le génie de famille*, the *phrases-types* are among those
elements that combine to create logical meaning and order out of silence, darkness and chaos, extracting their essence by finding their common elements.

These revelations will be committed to Marcel directly when he stumbles on an uneven paving stone, succeeded by a series of other blinding sensations. The creative artists of *A la recherche du temps perdu* and the various revelations, arising from sensations transformed into impressions bequeath to Marcel the same message that occupied a lifetime search and manifested itself in a work of art for the fifth creative artist of *A la recherche du temps perdu*: Marcel the narrator.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION
Towards the conclusion of a lifetime of searching to uncover what is real and what will consequently enable Marcel to pursue a creative life, recognizable through the creation of a work of literature, Marcel has gained the means to achieve his objectives.

The various signs, sensations and impressions that he has experienced have been of use to Marcel. They have paved the way to the perception of a greater reality, \textit{la vraie vie}, the only life in consequence that can really be lived. The progressive spiritual revelations of Marcel have finally exposed the essential reality; the essence of things is attainable through the discovery that a moment exists outside time--extra--temporal, time existing in the pure state. The essential moment is the result of the juxtaposition of a past segment of time with the present moment. The being who experiences this fragment transcends time, has penetrated transcendent reality; he has grasped the essential reality.

The aesthetic transubstantiation of the essential reality for Marcel is the creation of a work of art. When Marcel comprehends essential reality, he realizes
that his vocational goal may presently become possible. He wishes to live long enough to create the work of literature whose existence he had been pondering for so many years.

Marcel had an intuition when he tasted the petite madeleine that the essence that seemed to fill his being was not extraneous; that essence was himself, his own being filled him with pleasure. Marcel also feels at this time that he will create for himself the truth that he is seeking.

The three steeples of Martinville represented a conscious impression of the happiness that had invaded Marcel's being again. A spontaneous little literary passage composed by Marcel translated the pleasure of that impression. The three trees of Hudimesnil predicted the essential reality that would someday be made known to Marcel. Truth lay dormant, concealed in a moment wavering simultaneously between the past and the present.

The essential reality is finally unexpectedly revealed to Marcel at the Hôtel de Guermantes. It clarifies the sensations, signs and impressions that
had been presented to him throughout his life on various occasions whose function he had not comprehended. Now the purpose of art and the rôle of the artist also becomes clear. The felicity, whose cause he could not fathom, springs from the existence of the extra-temporal being that arises within himself, who enjoys time in the pure state, who can contemplate the essence of things. Marcel is now able to perceive the underlying reality behind all appearances.

Each creative artist of _A la recherche du temps perdu_ demonstrates something essential to Marcel. The work of art is composed exclusively of non-material signs, which are a means of gaining access to the essences which reveal transcendent reality. Marcel senses that the works of art that he encounters have something to communicate to him. The revelations of each artist seem to parallel Marcel's progress towards his ultimate revelations. Each artist enables Marcel to come a little closer to a perception of the essential reality when they reveal their own essence through their particular work of art.

Bergotte is the first artist whose work Marcel will come to know and with whom he can identify. Marcel re-
cognizes many of his own thoughts in the works of Bergotte; the occurrence of his own thoughts in the work of a renowned author gives him confidence to continue in a literary direction. The rare archaic phrases, the marvellous imagery, the musicality, the hidden flow of harmony running through Bergotte's phrases fill Marcel with a sense of joy, seeming to emanate from the deepest regions of his soul. Marcel first discovers through Bergotte that every artist has an essential quality, something permanent within the artist that cannot be concealed under a seemingly superficial, précieux style. The central cell of Bergotte is revealed in reoccurring idealized phrases and passages that demonstrate the basic truth of his perceptions. Le morceau idéal is the means by which Marcel perceives the essence of Bergotte.

Bergotte is able to perceive relationships between apparently isolated elements. People, especially relatives, exhibit common characteristics. He is able to extract the common elements that exist in people and situations. Furthermore, the writer points out to Marcel the discrepancy between preconceived ideas of
people and their actual personalities. The physical appearance of Bergotte is unlike the concept that Marcel had formulated of him on the basis of his books. However, there is an exact correspondence between the speech of the author and the parts of his books where his form had become so poetic and so musical. Bergotte had recreated not only certain characteristics of his speech, but also the common elements of the speech of his brothers and sisters into his written language.

Bergotte is a genius because he has the ability to make use of his personality like a mirror; that is, to reflect what he perceives, not on the basis of its intellectual or social value, but based upon his ability to translate his vision of essential relationships between people and situations. Bergotte did not necessarily prove himself superior in intellect or refinement to his peers; he merely had the power to cease existing for himself for a time making use of his genius to reflect his life, to transpose his impressions into a literary form. Bergotte is an ideal figure to Marcel; he yields to him a first glimpse of the essential reality.

Bergotte realized as he was dying that he never
achieved the perfection in his works that every artist seeks to express; he was not successful in transposing perfectly into his medium his vision of reality. The vision of perfection that Bergotte ultimately perceived came when it was too late for him to do anything about it.

La Berma also points out to Marcel the danger of preconceived notions. Marcel attended his first performance of *Phèdre* by La Berma with expectations and with abstract ideas of what her performance should consist. The second time that Marcel hears La Berma perform, he realizes that he came to her first performance with too much anticipation; intellect, a concept of perfection, and premeditation of what impressions he would receive interfered with the reception of La Berma's vision of perfection.

Marcel expects to derive the unfolding of truths belonging to a more real world from La Berma's first performance; if the idea of perfection was transmitted by La Berma, if her talent had embellished the role, Marcel did not perceive it. The admiration that he expresses for La Berma after the first performance
springs from an obligatory imitation of the audience's favorable reaction to her interpretation.

Marcel attends the second performance of La Berma with indifference. Unexpectedly the talent of La Berma imposes itself upon him. La Berma has become one with the part. Her own presence no longer exists; she merely serves as a transparent window exposing the work of the playwright. Simultaneously La Berma has added a second layer of truth to the rôle. By absorbing all external elements, efforts and intentions into herself necessary to create the role, La Berma dissolves all extraneous matter and emits the radiance of transcendent reality made possible by a superior soul who embodies the essence of perfection. The objective elements that comprise her interpretation serve as layers of transparency, to make more apparent her soul and the genius of her interpretation. The essence of La Berma communicates the universality of a particular emotion through the diffusion of her essence.

La Berma demonstrates to Marcel the individual distinct nature of an impression. This impression is original; nothing exists to which it can be compared—it is a form that possesses no intellectual equivalent.
It must be judged for itself on its own merits. The performances of La Berma constitute an individual rendering of an impression.

La Berma performs in plays by Racine, as well as by other lesser playwrights. She endows every part with her essential quality; she exhibits to Marcel that the essential quality of the artist endows the material of his medium with value. It is the genius of the artist, not the intrinsic value of the matter itself that assigns value to the work.

Marcel realizes through La Berma that the actress—a creative performer—is a true creative artist.

Elstir demonstrates the mighty powers of creation to Marcel. The artist not only reveals his own individual essence in his work of art; he reveals the essence of the universe as well.

The paintings of Elstir deprive the viewer of that which he is normally accustomed. Elstir takes away the qualities of which things usually consist, substituting new names for the old. Elstir uses the technique of visual metaphor—the substitution of one element for another—to instruct the viewer in his view of reality. The paintings of Elstir eliminated lines
of demarcation and substituted one conflicting element for another. The metaphors of Elstir are composed of the optical illusions which constitute one's first perceptions, rather than the habitual clusters of impression that result when the process that names things and the process of reasoning have intervened. Elstir has a direct vision of reality; he is able to transpose the sensations that compose his first sight onto canvas prior to the intervention of reasoning or any other intellectual process ensues. Elstir recaptures transcendent reality; the optical illusions of Elstir signify his concept of true reality; he has transposed onto canvas the layer of real truth beneath objective elements, beyond ordinary perception. Elstir reveals the unique perceptions of his own world and reveals the reality of the universe as well. Elstir's metaphors are symbols of the unité transparente—the underlying harmony and unity that binds all things together—even conflicting elements—and reconciles differences. Elstir endows elements with real life that normally would not contain life, such as the shadows in one of his paintings. The luminous paintings of Elstir are
homogeneous and reflect to Marcel that every creative artist only has one basic idea to bring to the world, reflecting his essence and his vision of the universe. The paintings of Elstir are merely fragments of an identical world, reflections of the artist's personal vision.

Marcel perceives that the technique of Elstir is not peculiar to painting. Mme de Sévigné and Dostoevsky present the optical illusions which comprise their first sight of things to their readers. They introduce their readers to their first perceptions of a character or a landscape; things are viewed in their order of perception, rather than explaining the cause of one's impression. Elstir shows Marcel that the principles and techniques of art are interchangeable from one medium to the other.

The perceptions of Swann are analogous to the primary perceptions of Marcel. Swann hears the *Sonate en fa dièse* by Vinteuil at six different time periods during his life. The little phrase of the *Sonate* evokes various impressions from him: a state of happiness; the desire to dedicate his life to some ideal goal; the little phrase becomes a symbol of his love
for Odette de Crécy; later on, it comes to symbolize the happiness that he has lost when his affair with Odette ceased to exist. Swann tries to find a more universal significance for la petite phrase; but eventually, the little phrase becomes merely a symbol for places where he had heard it played.

Swann will never grasp completely the significance of Vinteuil; he is capable of experiencing the same pleasurable sensations that Marcel undergoes when he hears the Sonate, experiencing the impact of a real impression. However, Marcel, who has the capacity to recapture the inner reality of the music will be able to translate the impressions of reality that he receives and endow them with artistic and universal significance. Swann cannot penetrate to the second layer of experience; namely the recreation of an essential impression; he will remain a célibataire de l'art.

The Sonate first appears to Marcel as metaphor. It strikes him that music is the esthetic form of the temporal process; music is also a metaphor for memory as it becomes time.

All the other works of Vinteuil were like the other loves of Marcel. They were merely attempts to
prepare Marcel for the most important love of his life: Albertine. The other works of Vinteuil were essays preparing him for the culmination of a lifetime of creativity: the Septuor.

Vinteuil recaptured perfectly in the Septuor the idea of essential reality. The previous works of Vinteuil posed many questions to Marcel; the Septuor answered supplied answers to these questions. The Sonate enabled Marcel to perceive that music is a means for descending into oneself; music also reveals l'essence qualitative—the essential quality—the exact composition of the sensations of another, namely the composer. The music of Vinteuil causes Marcel to wonder whether art contains a more profound reality than life, the reality that he had been searching for.

The Septuor reveals to Marcel that the work of art springs from nothing, from an infinite void; it is drawn from silence and from night; the work of art is a universe, complete and closed, it is unto itself. The Septuor captured the inner reality of Vinteuil; it expressed the joy of the composer in the process of creation, having the audacity to create anew and the strength to discover himself and to translate his
vision of reality into perceptible form. Vinteuil's self-questioning revealed the uniqueness, the individuality of each artist, the fact that his soul is individual and unalterable; therefore, the various works of Vinteuil, appearing different on the surface are actually composed of the same elements; the similarities are evident beneath the apparent differences. Like Elstir, Vinteuil showed the underlying unity beneath conflicting elements; two opposing motifs in the Septuor wrestle with each other until they are reconciled, leaving Marcel a feeling of true joy, evoking an appeal to a celestial feeling of joy that Marcel wondered if he would ever realize. Music is the perfect language, because it does recapture perfectly the essential quality of the sensations of another. It seems to express a form of communication that might have existed among individuals had not the invention of language come about. The sounds of music recapture emotion more accurately than words can express; the emotions have undergone analytical processes as they have been transcribed into words. Music approximates most closely those individual feelings and recomposes them prior to the intervention of other processes.
Music can assume the inflection of the thing itself; it can reproduce better than any other art form the most extreme interior point of sensation.

The *Septuor* of Vinteuil through direct experience proved to Marcel that art does correspond to a certain spiritual reality. A work of art but music most perfectly transmutes a vision of reality into finite perceptible form. The work of art refracts essence, the quality of an original world. The *Septuor* showed Marcel not only the unique way in which Vinteuil perceived the universe and projected it outside of himself; it revealed a unique world to Marcel that no other artist had ever made him see or would he be able to make him see.

Thus each creative artist of *A la recherche du temps perdu* whose work Marcel studies extensively reveals another aspect of essential reality. The revelations of one artist are more meaningful as they succeed the revelations of previous artists. As Marcel progresses through life, struggling to acquire the knowledge that will enable him to become a writer, grasping, discovering piece-meal important information that alternately encourages and dissuades him, it is not
until the splendor of the Septuor is made apparent to him that Marcel grasps the function of art and the special qualities that the artist must possess in order to create. The Septuor nevertheless remains an indirect revelation. The essential reality—the discovery of his own essential being coupled with the eventual revelation of the essence of things at the Hôtel de Guermantes—gives Marcel the precise direct knowledge that he requires to become a creative artist himself.
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VITA
Heloise Bertman Levit was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on April 2, 1937. Mrs. Levit was raised and attended schools in Haddonfield, New Jersey, graduating from Haddonfield Memorial High School in June, 1955. She was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in June, 1959 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and a minor in Spanish. Mrs. Levit did graduate work at Temple University and at the University of Michigan.

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