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

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Proust’s In Search of Lost Time: The History
of a Vocation
MEINDERT EVERS
Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2013
206 pp., £29.80, hbk, ISBN 978 3-63-162931-4

This book is based on Meindert Evers’s
doctoral thesis, originally written in Dutch
in 1974, revised and published in 1997, and
translated into German in 2004. The
author firmly grounds his discussion of
Proustian aesthetics in the (mainly)
European intellectual and artistic history
immediately before and during Proust’s
time. It is impressive how the author, in
barely 10 pages in Chapter I, surveys an
extensive cast of thinkers, writers and
artists who may have contributed to the fin
de siècle spirit. Some are better known than
others: Kant, Heinrich von Kleist, Scho-
penhauer, Freud, Nietzsche, Louis Cou-
perus, Thomas Mann, Baudelaire, Oscar
Wilde and Wagner, to name but a few. This
section is followed by more detailed
‘influence studies’ between Proust and a
few key writers such as Ralph Waldo
Emerson, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, as
well as those involved in the Symbolist
movement. However, Evers’s account,
which is made from an intellectual
historian’s perspective, is necessarily sche-
matic, and Proust specialists today may
find some of his observations unsatisfac-
torily limited, especially given how many
monographs on Proust’s relation to the
above thinkers and artists have appeared
since the 1970s.

The flourishing field of Proust studies
since the 1970s means that many of the
author’s arguments may appear less
original today than they were then.
Throughout the book, particularly in
Chapter II, Evers consistently stresses
how Proust is not a decadent or aestheticist
writer, which he demonstrates primarily
through discussions of Proust’s characters
(Swann and Charlus) and three paradigm-
atic relationships between art and life
(around notions of mondanité, contradic-
tion and commitment), as well as two
informative comparative studies with
Mann and Nietzsche. While these various
points are very well substantiated with
abundant textual analyses, very few
scholars today would insist that Proust
should be defined primarily as a decadent
writer. Taking into account recent scholar-
ship on the relation between decadent
aesthetics and Proust’s own aesthetic
evolution, one may wish that this clear-
cut opposition between Proust and dece-
dence set up by Evers could be further
nanced, as the author—perhaps rather
too absolutely—asserts: ‘Proust, still seen
by some as a representative of the fin de
because his novel portrays this time, has none of the characteristics of a decadent author. Proust is radically different. His philosophy differs completely from that of a D’Annunzio, a Wilde, a Couperus, three examples of typical fin de siècle authors’ (134). Chapter III, which explores aesthetic experience (through ‘involuntary memory’, ‘dreaming and awakening’ and ‘modern means of communication’), could best serve as a critical introduction to this particular aspect of Proust’s novel, as it has been much more elaborated by later Proust scholarship. The last chapter, which discusses Proust’s ‘modern’ representations of ‘cultural criticism’, ‘the Dreyfus Affair’, ‘the First World War’, ‘homosexuality’ and ‘the aristocracy and high society’, could be read in a similar fashion.

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

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

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The Livres-Souvenirs of Colette: Genre and the Telling of Time
ANNE FREADMAN
London, Legenda, 2012
178 pp., £40.00, hbk, ISBN 978 1-90-654093-7

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