A Dispute about Duration before and after *À la recherche du temps perdu*: from Alfred Maury to Gérard Genette

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Abstract. In *À la recherche du temps perdu*, passages on dreams, sleep and narrative time refer, among other sources, to a discussion about "the duration of thought in dreams", which developed from Alfred Maury's *Le Sommeil et les rêves*, published in 1861. The debate was triggered by one of Maury's dreams, called "the guillotine dream", which compressed an extraordinary number of events in the smallest possible span of time. Without surprise, problems raised by the dream reappear hardly transformed in Gérard Genette's influential study of narrative temporality in Proust – through the categories of order, duration and frequency –, which he developed in *Figures III* (1972). The article aims to show that the late nineteenth-century search for objective and subjective criteria for the measurement of time in experimental psychology is continuous with questions raised in contemporary narratology. In this configuration, Proust acts as a *passeur* of reflections on these problems and their possible solutions, which were stirred in the debate surrounding temporality in dreams, notably on the duration of reading.

> "*Arranger tout ce que je dis du rêve […] plutôt dans la trame du roman*"
> "*Peut-être aussi […] avons-nous pris l'habitude même en dormant convenablement d'avoir dans notre sommeil des points de repère, sorte de reflet des 'barres de mesure' (comme on dit en musique) du temps de la veille*"
> Proust, *Cahier 59*, folio 17v ; f.12v-13

1. Introduction: A reversal

Literary theory and criticism should aim to extend our knowledge of a given text or *œuvre*. With this assumption in mind, Ionna Vultur was asking, in a special issue on the occasion of Gérard Genette's death in 2018, whether his rigorous analyses had furthered our understanding of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (Vultur 2020, p. 80). It was a call to re-evaluate Genette's narratological theories, which have become closely associated with Proust's novel, as have other classical works of Proustian criticism, notably, by Gilles Deleuze or Hans Robert Jauss (Deleuze 1961 and Jauss 1986).

Many of Genette's essays were indeed concerned with *À la recherche du temps perdu*, but perhaps none as influentially as "Discours du récit" (Vultur 2020, pp. 79-80). The method proposed in that essay was largely, if not exclusively, built on the Proustian novel.[1] It was based on the distinction between narrative, story, and narration, or the narrating instance (Prince 2008, p. 121), and focused on three types of relations between them in a narrative text, considered as the sole object of study: the relation between narrative discourse and story (or between the narrative text and the fictive or real events it recounts) (Genette 2007, p. 21), that between narrative discourse and narration, and finally, that between narration and the story (*ibid*., p. 15).[2] Among the distinctions that Genette drew from previous literary

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[1] "On ne peut certes soutenir que les concepts ici utilisés soient exclusivement 'nés de l'œuvre'" (Genette 2007, p. 276).

[2] That is, between the *énoncé* and the *énonciation*. See among others, Fludernik (2005, p. 609); Prince (2008, p. 121).

theorists, was Günther Müller's, between narrative discourse and story (Müller 1968 quoted in Ricœur 1984, p. 144). By separating *Erzählzeit* (narrative time) from *erzählte Zeit* (time of the story), we can compare the time taken to recount the events of a given narrative, measured in the number of pages and the hours it takes to read them, with the temporality of what was recounted, measured in terms of clock and calendar times in which events took place (Fludernik 2005, p. 608). The two levels could be related to the temporal qualities of the lived experience of time (*Zeiterlebnis*), a third term which Genette did not retain (Ricœur 1984, p. 150; p. 152).

Concepts from Tzvetan Todorov were also relevant to Genette: that of narrative time, which addressed the dissimilarity between the two temporalities of narrative and story; the aspects of the narrative, that is, with how the narrator perceives the story, and, finally, its modes, which pertained to types of narrative discourse chosen for different kinds of story (Todorov 1966, p. 139). Genette retained the first category more or less as Todorov had defined it, but reorganized the elements of the other two. Narratives could be studied by adopting verbal grammatical categories, which fell into three kinds of determination: those that pertain first to *time*, second to mode, that is, to types of narrative representation, and third to the narrating instance per se (the narrator and the real or virtual addressee of the narrative), which Genette subsumed under the category of the *voice*.[3]

Assessing anew Genette's treatment of Proust also raises general questions about the posterity of the 1960s and 1970s' structural analysis of narratives, which did not find successors.[4] For a particular challenge arises for any literary theory in relation to Proust, in so far as *À la recherche du temps perdu* includes, says Antoine Compagnon, "the whole of culture", in particular "the whole of literature", music, politics, the beginning and development of the Third Republic, the Dreyfus Affair, among other major themes of the novel.[5] This means also an abundance of references to late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century discourses and sciences, gleaned in contemporary works, journals, in conversation reported in his correspondence, and in the press. They occur at the level of the story (characters have scientific careers, discuss ideas and current affairs, as well as art and music), or at that of the narrating instance, given that the narrator produces maxims and theories.[6] These "retrospective rationalizations" incite us to look for their (philosophical or scientific) sources. When they pertain to literature, they misleadingly appear ready-made for the literary theorist to use.

One way of returning, albeit indirectly, to this still fascinating theme is to ask, by reversing our initial question, what the novel has brought to Genette's narratological theory. It has provided a unique matter for elaborating an innovative method. But what does that include? These questions take a concrete form when we turn to *Narrative Discourse*, where Genette highlighted the narrator's reflections on narrative time and dreams. Dreams, according to the narrator, distort our perception of time; they make us experience radical changes of rhythm and speed, just as sleep does. Their mode of appearance in the novel, both as the narrator-protagonist's and characters' dreams and as the object of the narrator's rationalizations, also sends us back to late nineteenth-century research on dreams, and to a long-lasting dispute stemming from Alfred Maury's "guillotine dream", but which ended up pertaining to narrative time. To what extent did Genette's theory take on from Proust's "novel", but also beyond the novel, indirectly from its sources, even if the dispute may be only a diffuse point of reference? Genette was attracted to what he

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[3] *À la recherche du temps perdu* is the expansion of "Marcel becomes a writer" (Genette 2007, p. 19).

[4] Genette, for example, has turned to ethics and aesthetics, and others have returned to literary history (Compagnon 1998, p. 10). It is impossible within the space allowed here to offer a comprehensive overview of narratology in relation to Proust. Other works in narratology on narrative time could also be relevant, as well as other "experiments" with time, narrative and dreams, such as Wladimir Nabokov (2018), who, in *Insomniac dreams: Experiments with Time*, presented a dream diary to reflect on narrative time. See Herman, Jahn and Ryan (2007).

[5] See A. Compagnon, "La Recherche, œuvre totale": https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/entretiens/La-Recherche-oeuvre-totale-3-.htm.

[6] See Bowie (1987) and Fraisse (2013), among a very extensive bibliography of works dealing with the theoretical and philosophical contents of the Proustian novel and its sources.

deemed to be the novel's most innovative aspects in Proust's treatment of narrative time, those which hark back to late nineteenth-century research and thinking.[7]

Before turning to Genette's discussion of narrative time and voice, then to the narrator's rapprochement between dreams and the art of the novelist in *À la recherche*, and, finally to the nineteenth-century dispute, let us recall Maury's famous dream. It is an essential marker for understanding Genette's and Proust's discussion of narrative time, notwithstanding its direct identification as a source of the novel.

Maury (1817-1892), a multidisciplinary scholar *avant la lettre*, professor of History and Morals at the Collège de France between 1862 and 1892, recorded the following dream, first in a journal article published in 1853, and then in his influential *Le Sommeil et les rêves* (1861):

> J'étais un peu indisposé, et me trouvais couché dans ma chambre, ayant ma mère à mon chevet. Je rêve de la Terreur ; j'assiste à des scènes de massacre, je comparais devant le tribunal révolutionnaire, je vois Robespierre, Marat, Fouquier-Tinville, toutes les plus vilaines figures de cette époque terrible ; je discute avec eux ; enfin après bien des événements, que je ne me rappelle qu'imparfaitement, je suis jugé, condamné à mort, conduit en charrette, au milieu d'un concours immense sur la place de la Révolution ; je monte sur l'échafaud; l'exécuteur me lie sur la planche fatale, il la fait basculer, le couperet tombe ; je sens ma tête se séparer de mon tronc, je m'éveille en proie à la plus vive angoisse, et je me sens sur le cou la flèche de mon lit qui s'était subitement détachée, et était tombée sur mes vertèbres cervicales, à la façon du couteau d'une guillotine (Maury 1878, pp. 161-162).

Maury was ill and his mother was at his bedside. She had been able to witness the short duration of his sleep. The dream condensed the whole of the Terror, during which the dreamer was executed just as he was awakening. In a halting style, Maury tells how he "is present" at massacres, is called to the tribunal, sees its main figures, speaks with them, is judged, mounts the scaffold, to be attached to the "planche fatale" of the guillotine. We pass from the Terror to the technical details of the execution. As either a spectator or the object of the onlookers' attention during the dream, Maury had the impression that he had dreamt even more than he was able to remember and to recount.[8]

Maury, who had an interest in religion, superstition, and dreams, is one of the many nineteenth-century scholars who kept a diary of their dreams and experimented with them, in the vein of early nineteenth-century alienists' studies of dreams.[9] Having established an experimental method for provoking and observing dreams, he produced an anthology of his own dreams that spanned thirty years. His work on dreams also had political underpinnings, and relevance for nineteenth-century medical psychology. In the aftermath of the Revolution, judgement about the "madness" of revolutionary and socialist ideals prompted an upsurge of interest in madness and in all related mental phenomena (hallucinations, ecstasy, etc.), which could explain the revolutionary mindset (Dowbiggin 1990, p. 284).

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[7] On "The Novelistic Tradition", see Azérad and Schmid (2013, pp. 67-74, especially p. 72) on the positivistic language the narrator uses to discuss artistic innovations.

[8] See Hippolyte Taine, who refers to Thomas de Quincey's experiments with opium in *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821) : "il est des personnes qui ont pu vivre mentalement pendant un rêve de quelques minutes, une vie de plusieurs années et de plusieurs centaines d'années". (*De l'intelligence*, t. I, Paris, 1895 quoted in Tobolowska, 1900, p. 79). At issue in the passage from de Quincey is also the "vision panoramique des mourants" later discussed by Bergson and Victor Egger, among others. In *L'Espace proustien*, Georges Poulet devotes an appendix to the study of the phenomenon by Bergson (among others) and in relation to the opposition between two kinds of multiplicity, numerical and qualitative (Poulet 1963, pp. 167-205). Bergson discusses Maury's "classical dream" in "Le Rêve" (1901), where he argues that the dream "voit en raccourci" just as memory does (Bergson 1990, pp. 105-107). The philosopher believed that because in dreams, we are indifferent to the logic of waking life, we lose our attention to life, the dream is free to interpret sensations without adopting the rhythm of reality. Images, he wrote, can rush "avec une rapidité vertigineuse, comme le feraient celles du film cinématographique si l'on n'en réglait pas le déroulement" (*ibid*., p. 106).

[9] Hervey de Saint-Denys (who is mentioned in Proust [1987-89, vol. III, p. 116], for having given a Chinese vase to the Duc de Guermantes), professor of Chinese and Tartar-Mandchou languages and literatures (1874-1892) at the Collège de France was one among many scholars contributing to dream-research. See Carroy (2012a, pp. 21-52).

It is not these aspects that form the substance of the dispute that we will examine below, but rather, the enigma about duration attached to the dream: a very long narrative, albeit of an extreme nature, experienced in a fraction of time. It is as though the formal characteristics of the dream had been more striking to Maury's contemporaries and their followers than the horrific perspective of the beheading machine.

2. *Narrative Discourse*: A Timekeeper's task

How is the temporality of narrative discourses measured? For Genette it had to be conceived in relation to reading: "Le texte narratif n'a pas d'autre temporalité que celle qu'il emprunte, métonymiquement, à sa propre lecture" (Genette 2007, p. 23). The *Erzählzeit* is a *pseudo-temporality*, a "quasi-fiction", or a "faux temps", a temporality conceived as such for the sake of narrative analysis. It is meaningful only in relation to the temporality of the story, which Genette also calls "diegetic". Their relation can be studied according to three temporal determinations (*ibid.*). The first one is that of the *order*, whereby we are contrasting the temporal order belonging to told events (which can be fictive or not) to the pseudo-temporal order of the narrative. The types of relations that are engendered at that level are prolepses (or anticipations), that is, "toute manoeuvre narrative consistant à raconter ou à évoquer d'avance un événement ultérieur" (*ibid.*, p. 28) and analepses (or retrospections), which consist in "toute évocation après coup d'un événement antérieur au point de l'histoire où l'on se trouve", and their variations (*ibid.*). These are *anachronies*, which is the general name for all discrepancies between the narrative discourse and story. Genette also calls this type of temporal distortions affecting the order of the narrative "interpolations" (*ibid.*, p. 158).

The second determination refers to the *duration* of told events in relation to their pseudo-duration in the narrative text (how many pages does it take to tell the events of one Salon evening in Proust, for example, compared to how many pages are devoted to telling many years of the narrator-protagonist's life). Variations between the two durations create differences of speed or changes of rhythm in the narrative, which Genette calls the *anisochronies*. That relation is the hardest to estimate because "nul ne peut mesurer la durée d'un récit" (*ibid.*, p. 81), given that it is linked with the time of reading and that, Genette argued, there is no standard with which to measure the normal speed of reading.[10] Moreover, in the narrative, there is strictly speaking no zero degree of perfect coincidence between narrative discourse and story (of perfect "isochrony") even in dialogues (*ibid.*, p. 82). Genette distinguishes eleven major changes of narrative speed in *À la recherche*, from *Combray* ("180 pages for 10 years"), to the *Matinée Guermantes* (190 pages for 2 or 3 hours), and gives an idea of the breadth of variations it displays: "from 190 pages for three hours to 3 lines for twelve years, lines which signal an ellipsis. The latter is the mark of an "infinite speed" (*ibid.*, p. 88). It marks a pause and can be contrasted with the "absolute slowness" of the description (*ibid.*, p. 90). In between, there are other narrative movements, the "scene", which is "faster" and the "sommaire", borrowed from the English "summary", which is slower than the ellipsis. What emerges from these estimations is that as the rhythm of the narrative in *À la recherche* slows down, it involves more ellipses and becomes gradually more discontinuous: "le récit proustien tend à devenir de plus en plus discontinu, syncopé, fait de scènes énormes séparées par d'immenses lacunes" (*ibid.*, p. 89). It is as though the narrator's memory became gradually more selective and "plus monstrueusement grossissante" (*ibid.*, p. 89). Changes in narrative speed are also called "distorsions" (*ibid.*, p. 158).

The third determination concerns the repetitions of events taking place in the story in relation to their reoccurrence in the narrative. Comparing the two reveals "relations of frequency": "un récit, quel qu'il soit, peut raconter une fois ce qui s'est passé une fois, *n* fois ce qui s'est passé *n* fois, *n* fois ce qui s'est passé une fois, une fois ce qui s'est passé *n* fois" (*ibid.*, p. 112). These variations create an opposition between what Genette calls the "iterative" and the "singulative" narratives. As he had done for the analysis of duration at the macro-level of the novel, Genette estimates the considerable place of iteration in singulative narratives, which are more classical, and notes in Proust an "ivresse de l'itération" (*ibid.*, p. 122). He identifies the first three sections of the novel *Combray*, *Un amour de Swann* and "Gilberte" (*Nom*

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[10] See however Nicholas Dames, who examines machines for measuring the speed of reading (2007, pp. 207-246).

de Pays: le Nom et *Autour de Madame Swann*) as iterative narratives, because in them is told what was regularly happening rather than what happened only once (*ibid.*, p. 116). They produce the temporal phenomena of "condensations" (*ibid.*, p. 58).

Genette invokes the narrator's "retrospective rationalizations" about temporal distortions to support his analyses (*ibid.*, p. 159). The narrator situates temporal discordances either in the art of the novelist, in forgetting or in life itself. There are echoes of the anachronisms studied under the heading of "order" in what the narrator says about the unevenness of time:

> Car souvent dans [l']une (saison) on trouve égaré un jour d'une autre qui nous y fait vivre [, en évoque aussitôt, en fait désirer les plaisirs particuliers et interrompt les rêves que nous étions en train de faire,] en plaçant[,] plus tôt ou plus tard qu'à son tour[,] ce feuillet détaché d'un autre chapitre, dans le calendrier interpolé du Bonheur (Proust 1987-89, vol. I, p. 379 quoted in *ibid.*, p. 158n3). [our additions in brackets]

The lived experience is described in terms of the composition of a work comprising chapters made out of folios, but the work itself is conceived of as a "calendar", in which one finds, as though in anticipation of Genette's theory, the "interpolations". Another passage concerning the condensations created by the novelist backs up Genette's analyses: "Pour rendre (la fuite du Temps) sensible, les romanciers sont obligés en accélérant follement les battements de l'aiguille, de faire franchir au lecteur dix, vingt, trente ans, en deux minutes" (Proust 1987-89, vol. I, p. 474 quoted in *ibid.*, p. 95n4). The reflection continues "Au haut d'une page on a quitté un amant plein d'espoir, au bas de la suivante on le retrouve octogénaire" (Proust 1987-89, vol. I, p. 474). The passage from *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, *I*, follows a discussion of the narrator's future literary career, during which the father ends up accepting the fact that his son is not cut out for a diplomatic career, and will continue to be drawn to literature. Upon hearing his father's statement, ("il est peu probable qu'il change", *ibid.*, p. 473), the narrator thinks of himself as being condemned never to change, while being submitted to the laws of time. This makes him "apparaître [to himself] dans le Temps" (*ibid.*, p. 474). He then compares his temporal fate to that of characters in a novel, and to what the novelist needs to do to "rendre sensible" time's flight. Proust measures the passage of time according to the time of reading ("deux minutes"), pointing out in fact the discrepancy between story and discourse. The concluding pages of "Frequency" present an anthology of many of the narrator's "rationalizations" on time, on the fact that "les jours ne sont pas égaux" (Proust 1987-89, vol. I, p. 383, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 159n1), that, "comme les automobiles", we dispose of "'vitesses' différentes" to navigate through them (*ibid.*), or else, that "le temps dont nous disposons chaque jour est élastique ; les passions que nous ressentons le dilatent, celles que nous inspirons le rétrécissent, et l'habitude le remplit" (Proust 1987-89, vol. I, p. 601, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 159n1.).

Memory, of course, also alters our perception of time, and the narrator's reflections on time also concern the distorting work of forgetting and remembering: "l'oubli n'est pas sans altérer profondément la notion du temps. Il y a des erreurs optiques dans le temps comme dans l'espace". We find again the term "interpolations" in the rest of the passage; they are those of "oubli" which distorted the narrator's sense of space:

> Cet oubli de tant de choses [me séparant par des espaces vides, d'événements tout récents qu'ils me faisaient paraître anciens puisque j'avais eu "le temps" de les oublier,] c'était son interpolation, fragmentée, irrégulière, au milieu de ma mémoire… qui détraquait, disloquait mon sentiment des distances dans le temps, là rétrécies, ici distendues, et me faisait me croire tantôt beaucoup plus loin, tantôt beaucoup plus près des choses que je ne l'étais en réalité (Proust 1987-89, vol. IV, p. 173) [our additions in brackets].

We find resonances of this passage in Genette's three chapters on time: interpolations, distortions, temporal condensations (*ibid.*, p. 159), which he concludes by summing up the "ontological mystery" surrounding the Proustian hero's relation to time. For the narrator-hero seeks at once "extra-temporality" and "time in a pure state", or else hopes to lie both "outside of time" and "in Time." The

novel as a whole could thus be characterized in terms of its temporal features made to accommodate such contradictions, touched on in the narrator's "retrospective rationalizations":

> Quelle que soit la clé de ce mystère ontologique, nous voyons peut-être mieux maintenant comment cette visée contradictoire fonctionne et s'investit dans l'œuvre de Proust: interpolations, distorsions, condensations, le roman proustien est sans doute, comme il l'affiche, un roman du Temps perdu et retrouvé, mais il est aussi, plus sourdement peut-être un roman du Temps dominé, captivé, ensorcelé, secrètement subverti, ou mieux : perverti. Comment ne pas parler à son propos, comme son auteur à propos du rêve – et non peut-être sans quelque arrière-pensée de rapprochement – du "jeu formidable qu'il fait avec le Temps" (Proust 1987-89, vol. IV, p. 490, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 161).

The title of the last section, "play with Time", is a synonym for Proust's inauguration of the modern narrative. The temporal themes of the novel (memories, the experience of the distortions of time), Genette provocatively suggests, are moreover at the service of the stylistic composition of the novel, of narrative techniques, rather than the reverse. He finds support for this idea, not in the novel itself, but in Proust's essay "À propos du style de Flaubert", where the writer described the reminiscences as a "procédé de brusque transition", concerning Chateaubriand and Gérard de Nerval (*ibid.*, p. 160; Proust 1954, p. 599 and Proust 1987-89, vol. IV, p. 498), that is, a mere technical device. Critics of his novel, Proust wrote, have not perceived its "rigorous composition", and have taken reminiscences as opportunities for free and vague associations. What Genette calls the "realist motivations" (the narrator's justifications of his distortions of narrative time) then act as an "aesthetic medium", as a "principle of composition". Proust would thus have inverted the creative causality and concentrated on narrative techniques, thus warranting Genette's formalist analysis.

2.1. Self-criticism

Some of the objections that *Narrative Discourse* provoked could be anticipated, notably those pertaining to the scientific character of narratology. Looking back over the many notions he had introduced – prolepsis, analepsis, iterative discourse, focalisation, paralipses, etc. –, he wrote:

> Dans un domaine habituellement concédé à l'intuition et à l'empirisme, la prolifération notionnelle et terminologique aura sans doute irrité plus d'un, et je n'attends pas de la "postérité" qu'elle retienne une trop grande part de ces propositions. Cet arsenal, comme tout autre, sera inévitablement périmé avant quelques années, et d'autant plus vite qu'il sera davantage pris au sérieux, c'est-à-dire discuté, éprouvé, et révisé à l'usage. C'est un des traits de ce que l'on peut appeler l'effort scientifique que de se savoir essentiellement caduc et voué au dépérissement (*ibid.*, p. 275).

In spite of its cumbersome "technology", the theory could nonetheless offer "a means of description" for teasing out aspects of Proust's narrative discourse that had remained unexplored up until now, such as the iterative narrative (*ibid.*, pp. 275-276). With respect to Proust's comment about narrative processes, Genette has perhaps done nothing else but describe the techniques, which the writer had already applied and then signposted.

Another problem was that he had perhaps too readily been drawn to the aspects of the Proustian narrative which most departed from conventional narrative techniques: those which invited the literary theorist to invent new categories and methods.[11] Genette later conceded that because of this preference, he might have exaggerated the importance of Proust temporal inventions, which did not sum up his stylistic inventiveness. Narratological invention, with its soulless technicity (Genette 2007b, p. 293), then, took its cue from the most modern aspects of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, which had led to the elaboration of an awkward "arsenal" of "scientific" concepts.

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[11] See Prince (1995, pp. 121-130). Aesthetic inventions, for Genette and other structuralists, could be "unconscious", not to the literary theorist though (Genette 2007, p. 277).

3. Dreams and the art of the novelist in *À la recherche du temps perdu*

It is confusing that when Genette characterized the "play with time" in relation to dreams, in the passage quoted above, he attributed the statement to the "author", in spite of his theory on the fictive role of the narrating instance (*ibid.*, p. 161), and on the narrative voice's temporal dimension (or absence of) in different types of narratives.[12] Concerning the status of the narrator's theoretical digressions on "the play with time", Paul Ricœur took issue with Genette, who argued that they were "une intrusion de l'auteur dans l'œuvre", whereas his solution was to introduce the notion of "un monde de l'œuvre et d'une expérience fictive faite par le héros sous l'horizon de ce monde" (Ricœur 1983, pp. 251-252 n2). This allowed him to integrate the "speculations allogènes", that is, the theories, into the narrative, as the narrator's thoughts (*ibid.*, p. 252). The narrator-hero "*pense* son expérience", through its narration (*ibid.*, pp. 251-252 n1). Genette had thus substituted an overly ascetic interpretation of the novel for the "fictive experience of time", which became a matter of technique (*ibid.*, p. 155). For the comment is one of the narrator's theoretical statements on time, dreams and the art of the novelist, in relation to the general laws of novel writing, at the end of *Le Temps retrouvé*:

> Si je m'étais toujours tant intéressé aux rêves que l'on a pendant le sommeil, n'est-ce pas parce que, compensant la durée par la puissance, ils vous aident à mieux comprendre ce qu'a de subjectif, par exemple, l'amour, par le simple fait que – mais avec une vitesse prodigieuse – ils réalisent ce qu'on appelle vulgairement vous mettre une femme dans la peau, jusqu'à nous faire aimer pendant un sommeil de quelques minutes une laide, ce qui dans la vie réelle eût demandé des années d'habitude, de collage […] Avec la même vitesse la suggestion amoureuse qu'ils nous ont inculquée se dissipe, et quelquefois non seulement l'amoureuse nocturne a cessé d'être pour nous comme telle, étant redevenue la laide bien connue, mais quelque chose de plus précieux se dissipe aussi, tout un tableau ravissant de sentiments de tendresse, de volupté, de regrets vaguement estompés, tout un embarquement pour Cythère de la passion, dont nous voudrions noter, pour l'état de veille, les nuances d'une vérité délicieuse mais qui s'efface comme une toile trop pâlie qu'on ne peut restituer. Et bien plus, c'était peut-être aussi par le jeu formidable qu'il fait avec le Temps que le Rêve m'avait fasciné. N'avais-je pas vu souvent en une nuit, en une minute d'une nuit, des temps bien lointains, relégués à ces distances énormes où nous ne pouvons plus rien distinguer des sentiments que nous y éprouvions, fondre à toute vitesse sur nous, nous aveuglant de leur clarté, comme s'ils avaient été des avions géants au lieu de pâles étoiles que nous croyions, nous faire revoir tout ce qu'ils avaient contenu pour nous, nous donnant l'émotion, le choc, la clarté de leur voisinage immédiat, qui ont repris une fois qu'on est réveillé, la distance qu'ils avaient miraculeusement franchie, jusqu'à nous faire croire, à tort d'ailleurs, qu'ils étaient un des modes pour retrouver le Temps perdu ? (Proust 1987-89, vol. IV, pp. 490-491)

Dreams, according to the narrator, indeed display transgressive temporal properties above all in view of the changes of rhythms and speed, underlined in the passage.[13] If dreams are not, however, "un des

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[12] One of these types is "la narration ultérieure", which unfolds as though it had no temporality. A powerful fiction, it is both situated temporally after the told events but it itself has no duration. It is never measured. It has, like the Proustian "reminiscence", the duration of lightning, it is a syncope, a "minute affranchie de l'ordre du Temps" (Genette 2007, p. 231).

[13] Dreams, according to Genette, do not so much have a symbolic as a structural value, they mark the shift between sleep and wakefulness. See Compagnon (1989, p. 151) who contests this formalist view. The phenomenon of speed in *À la recherche* and in Proust's œuvre has been studied in several respects: in relation to Futurism and their hymn of the motorcar, to which Proust devoted an article (Azérad 2013, pp. 59-66). Azérad refers to Sarah Danius' study of the "Modernist Rhetoric of Motion" in Proust, among other works on Proust and modernism, technology and speed (Danius 2002, pp. 91-146). Speed is also a motif, for example, in relation to the "Norwegian philosopher" who was a man "au parler si lent (il y avait un silence entre chaque mot)" but who "devenait d'une rapidité vertigineuse pour s'échapper dès qu'il avait dit adieu" (Proust 1987-89, vol. III, p. 321). (Proust here seems to quote what Bergson says about images in dreams, which, he wrote, can rush "avec une rapidité vertigineuse, comme feraient celles du film cinématographique si l'on n'en réglait pas le déroulement" [Bergson 1990, p. 106] quoted

modes pour retrouver le Temps perdu" (*ibid.*, p. 491), they have something in common with the reminiscences, namely their furtiveness. They have the capacity to bring "distant times" back to us, with their totalities ("tout ce qu'ils avaient contenu pour nous"), which had to travel at great speed to reach us, given their temporal and spatial distance (and perhaps too, their volume attached to the idea of content). The speed of dreams is a function of their power to accumulate, to synthetize, just as days between two distant epochs. Jean-Pierre Richard's description of one of the requirements of the Proustian hermeneutics is relevant to the narrator's description of dreams and their functioning in *À la recherche*:

> la disproportion souhaitée entre le signifiant (le plus souvent humble, fugitif, minimal, sinon minuscule), et l'ampleur étalée ou le pluriel de ses signifiés. On pourra, on devra mettre ici, comme dit Proust, "tout un monde dans une proposition, dans une nuance" ; on bâtira sur la "gouttelette impalpable" de l'odeur ou de la saveur "l'édifice immense du souvenir". Plus réduit sera l'espace du signifiant, plus euphoriquement large le domaine matériel signifié à partir de lui (Richard 1974, pp. 200-201).[14] [our emphasis]

Swann's dream in *Du Côté de chez Swann* provides another opportunity to bring dreaming and writing together. The dream concludes *Un Amour de Swann*, where the narrator reports Swann's reflections on the fleeting character of "les premières apparitions" of a being that one is destined to love (such as Odette). The dream spans over more than two pages (of the first volume of the 1987 Pléiade edition). The dream-story (the told events) is given at the same time as the analysis unfolds, and where the dream imitates the art of the novelist: "comme certains romanciers, il avait distribué sa personnalité à deux personnages, celui qui faisait le rêve, et un qu'il voyait devant lui coiffé d'un fez" (Proust 1987-89, vol. I, p. 373). That a sensation should have been its source is confirmed: "avec la chaleur sentie de sa propre paume il modelait le creux d'une main étrangère qu'il croyait serrer et […] faisait naître comme des péripéties […] le personnage nécessaire pour recevoir son amour ou provoquer son réveil" (*ibid*).[15] What most calls to mind Maury's famous dream, in addition to the notation on speed, however, is its ending:

> Une nuit noire se fit tout d'un coup, un tocsin sonna, des habitants passèrent en courant, se sauvant des maisons en flammes; Swann entendait le bruit des vagues qui sautaient et son cœur qui, avec la même violence, battait d'anxiété dans sa poitrine. Tout d'un coup, ses palpitations redoublèrent de vitesse, il éprouva une souffrance, une nausée inexplicable; un paysan couvert de brûlures lui jetait en passant: "Venez demander à Charlus où Odette est allée finir la soirée avec son camarade, il a été avec elle autrefois et elle lui dit tout. C'est eux qui ont mis le feu." C'était son valet de chambre qui venait l'éveiller et lui disait: "Monsieur, il est huit heures et le coiffeur est là, je lui ai dit de repasser dans une heure" *(ibid.,* pp. 373-374).

We are faced with a *dénouement* typical of what Freud will later, referring to Maury's type of dream, call "alarm-clock dreams",[16] in which the dream-story suddenly changes course when the cause of the dreamer's awakening enters into the dreamer's space. Here, the external stimulus was the fall of a wooden piece. Noises accumulate and heartbeats accelerate. Elements are introduced ("un tocsin sonna

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above in n8). The philosopher reappears in the passage where the narrator reports, through a conversation with the philosopher, and while expressing doubts, what Bergson had said to the philosopher Émile Boutroux about the continuity between sleep and wakefulness and the types of forgetting sleep provokes (Proust 1987-89, vol. III, pp. 370-373). The whole passage is permeated with reflections on the perception of time during sleep, which do not easily fit into the "cadres du temps", whose duration is misleading: its course is rapid or slow, and sleep, which cannot provide markers, never knows whether we have slept "deux heures ou deux jours" (*ibid.*). See Clément Girardi's commentary of this passage in "Proust en dialogue avec Bergson" (https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/antoine-compagnon/seminar-2019-03-26-17h45.htm).

[14] There are other ways in which the "inégalité vivace" (Richard 1974, p. 201) is expressed elsewhere in Proust as an *agglutination*, or a *condensation* (*ibid*., p. 195).

[15] The successive awakenings and dreams in the opening pages of *Combray* are replete with illustrations of the engendering of images from sensations (Proust 1987-89, vol. I, pp. 3-9).

[16] See the section on Freud below.

[…] Swann entendait le bruit des vagues"), which turn out to have been some of the disguises hiding the cause of awakening ("C'était son valet de chambre qui venait l'éveiller"). In the long passage on sleep from *La Prisonnière* (Proust 1987-89, vol. I, pp. 628-633), the narrator compares leaving the milieu of sleep to leaving a running train, that is, abandoning "a milieu animé d'une grande vitesse" and where our perceptions are "surchargées" (*ibid*., p. 628). He characterizes through its "play with Time" the type of profound sleep he experienced when he fell asleep only in the morning: that deep sleep has been "quatre fois plus reposant" but appears to the sleeper "quatre fois plus long, alors qu'il fut quatre fois plus court". The passage continues with a celebration of the "multiplication par seize […] qui introduit dans la vie une véritable novation, pareille à ces grands changements de rythme" which, in music, confound the duration of notes (*ibid*.).

4. A long-lasting discussion

The topic of sleep and dreams is intricately related to late nineteenth-century dream research on which Proust drew, according to Anne Henry, among others. For example, in the passage recounting Swann's dream in *Du côté de chez Swann*, Proust has, "pour faire vraisemblable", simply reproduced "le rêve célèbre dit de 'Maury guillotiné'" (Henry 1983, p. 341), to give the impression of a dream that would follow an implausible logic and temporality. Henry's interpretations of Proust in relation to German Romanticism have attracted assents and objections, notably concerning the idea that the novel could be the transposition of a philosophical system.[17] Nevertheless, the rapprochement between the structure of Swann's and Maury's dream is interesting, but it is too narrow. For it is not a single dream, albeit extraordinary, that is at issue, but a discussion among philosophers and psychologists concerning the duration of dreams, which developed most notably in the *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*,[18] during the 1880s and the 1890s.

The idea that "time went quicker in the life of dreams" (Stevenson 1999, p. 128) than in wakeful life was circulating in scientific and literary discourses, without Maury's name being necessarily mentioned. For some of the discussants, the hypothesis of the stupendous speed of dreams had become a superstition, a popular belief about the nature of dreams (Le Lorrain 1894, p. 276). In 1894, Jacques Le Lorrain had seen Maury's dreams reproduced at least "une douzaine de fois" (*ibid*., p. 275). Only "the law of mental inertia" (*ibid*.) and prejudice could explain the longevity of the dispute, that is, the "universal credit" (*ibid*.) afforded to Maury's account of his dream. They did not foresee that it would be kept alive at least in Proustian criticism. Within the scope of this article, we will focus on some of the arguments that are relevant to narrative analysis, notably those put forward by Le Lorrain and by Victor Egger, two authors among those many others who wrote on the subject, including Bergson (Bergson, 1990), after having situated briefly the scientific context in which it took place.

4.1 The measure of mental acts

The dispute unfolded in the context of the expansion of the objects of study and the methods of experimental psychology. Inspired by Johann Friedrich Herbart's mathematization of psychology, which Théodule Ribot had introduced in France, late nineteenth-century experimental psychologists believed that we could know the relative lengths and forces of mental acts and of states of consciousness by developing means of measuring them.[19] We know of these experiments especially through their critique, notably through that of Henri Bergson.[20] Mostly in the *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*

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[17] See Fraisse (2013, pp. 49-51) and Ricœur (1984, pp. 248-251). See Compagnon (1989, p. 302), for whom the "search for truth" in the novel is the transposition of a lie about the narrator's belief in the laws that he makes. See the collection of essays edited by Annick Bouillaguet (2009), on Proust's relation to science.

[18] The journal was founded in 1876 by Théodule Ribot, the first chair of Experimental psychology at the Collège de France (1888-1901). See Bizub (2006).

[19] See Théodule Ribot (1976) who introduced J. F. Herbart's work on "De la possibilité et la nécessité d'appliquer les mathématiques à la psychologie" (1822) to the French public.

[20] For Bergson's role in the advent of formalist criticism through his refusal of the transparency of language, and in spite of his criticism of the measure of mental acts, see William Marx (2002, pp. 59-61).

(1889), Bergson developed a notion of duration, which he distinguished from existing common and scientific understandings of duration in order to refute the use of quantitative notions by associationist and experimental psychology in the study of states of consciousness.[21] The latter considered that the flux of consciousness could be divided into distinct units, whereas for Bergson it had to be conceived in terms of a "qualitative multiplicity". By this, he countered the idea that conscious states could be added successively to each other to form a "numerical multiplicity". Misconceptions about them arose, according to Bergson, because we generally represent time and states of consciousness spatially, that is, in terms of a succession of moments that one can grasp simultaneously in a homogeneous space. One of Bergson's primary examples was that of a melody. When we hear a melody, we do not count the notes. Rather we experience their interpenetration, their coming together to form the melody. Through the numerical approach we lose its aesthetic qualities. The whole that the melody forms is divided into countable units. The discussion around the duration of dreams which we will examine briefly was emblematic as much of the ideal of measurement Bergson criticized, as of its failures to provide satisfactory answers.

4.2 From physiology to stories

Many arguments about the dream were grounded in physiology; they nevertheless touched on the domains of imagination and literary creation, just as Maury's own explanation appealed to the force of the images surrounding the Reign of Terror. For example, it is simply impossible, claimed Le Lorrain, who opposed the idea of a "prodigieuse accélération" (Le Lorrain 1895, p. 60), that there should be an acceleration of mental activity in dreams because sleep, which is the condition for dreaming, is defined "depuis des millénaires un état de repos", in which activity in general is essentially reduced, "slowed down" or indeed, "inhibited" (Le Lorrain 1894, p. 276). "Nulle introspection et nulle expérience […] n'autorisent l'affirmation que la vie du sommeil acquière une telle suractivité […] qu'en moins d'une seconde s'y succède une liste d'événements, qui vus au stéréoscope, qui même lus ou pensés réclameraient un intervalle soixante fois plus long" (*ibid.*). The acceleration thesis goes against the most fundamental fact about sleep. Nevertheless, Le Lorrain conceded that some sensations are inordinately exaggerated and can therefore generate more intense images than in waking life (as in Aristotle, the correlate of the lowering of mental activity is an increased capacity to perceive bodily processes). Dreams do follow the "tendance à l'accroissement ininterrompu", which brings about a state of anarchy of sorts (Le Lorrain 1895, p. 64). In dream-life, Le Lorrain claimed, "[o]n n'y connaît pas les difficultés rebutantes qui nous arrêtent en temps de veille. On a des ailes et l'on plane, on escalade des montagnes, on découvre des Eldorados, on fait et l'on gagne des bancos rothschildiens, on terrasse des géants, on a le génie, on a la force de l'élasticité suprême" (Le Lorrain 1894, p. 277). Dream-life offers opportunities that are usually left to the heroes of adventure novels; they trigger "fantasmagories". A slight respiratory discomfort, for example, can engender "un appareil d'images monstrueuses" (*ibid.*), or else the life of nervous centres can bulge out and produce limitless images and experiences (physiological phenomenon take form, are transposed into situations and images).

4.3. Maury's art of telling

Le Lorrain touched on an important area of objections by commentators of the dream, namely the dreamer's "art of telling". Perhaps Maury had never dreamt such a "story". The author of *Le Sommeil et les rêves* could merely have exaggerated the number of events it contained. If most discussants believed that external stimuli, a noise, a smell, frequently triggered dream, they also thought imagination had a role to play in their formation. It must have been Maury's imagination, which, when he was awoken by the bed piece, had "soudé en une seule chaîne des anneaux de provenance diverse", as the imagination does in artistic and literary work (Le Lorrain 1894, p. 279). Explanations converge as long as they pertain to how objective factors, such as the bedpiece, may have provoked the dream. But not all authors granted

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[21] See Thibaudet (1923, pp. 224-225) on how the refutation of Fechner's psycho-physics, for example, was done through Bergson, after the publication of the *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* in 1889 and thereafter at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

the same importance to these factors. Some wondered about the moment when the dream occurred. Had it occurred immediately after the object fell? Did the dreamer then wake up, or later? Are we faced with a retrospective account? Such were some of the questions the dream raised. The physiological accounts of the dream were insufficient to solve the problem of duration, even though Le Lorrain, for example, refers us to physio-psychological measurements of mental acts (*ibid.*). Before examining further arguments, it is interesting to consider briefly how Sigmund Freud, a reader of the French scientific literature on dreams in general and of the articles about Maury's dream by Le Lorrain, Eggers and others (Freud 2007b, p. 496), displaced questions of measurement towards the topic of phantasy.

4.4 Freud's discussion of Maury's dream

Freud refers to Maury's *Le Sommeil et les Rêves* (1861) at least twenty times in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), and refers to the controversy itself when discussing the "guillotine dream" (for example, Freud 2007a, p. 27; p. 64). He does so notably in relation to sources of dreams. According to most late nineteenth-century authors, external or internal sensations, that is, objective and subjective, organic and psychical stimuli disturb sleep and set off the act of dreaming. For example, "'a peal of thunder will set us in the midst of a battle […] the creaking of a door may produce a dream of burglars'" (*ibid.*, p. 24). Maury's dream could certainly "compress into a very short space of time" a great number of images (*ibid.*, p. 64), yet this did not entail an acceleration of thought that would be "independent of the passage of time" (*ibid.*). Dreaming, according to Freud, was "merely a form of thought" and, unlike what the Proustian narrator believed, it was continuous with waking life (*ibid.*).[22]

The solution to Maury's dream could be found in relation to one of four types of "works" the dream performs, namely secondary revision, which is a form of "retrospective rationalizations" (Freud 2007b, pp. 496-498). The dream merely did what receiving a bed-piece in the neck in wakeful life would prompt one to say: "'That's just like being guillotined'" (*ibid.*, p. 496). It had simply made use of the logical relation of similarity, consonance and approximation "*as though*" (*ibid.*) or "just as", which allows the dream "to achieve quite a remarkable amount of condensation" (Freud 2007a, p. 320-21).

Yet Freud's most important suggestion is that Maury's dream is a ready-made phantasy, indeed, a phantasy of ambition, which emerges when the hero is finally "'led to the place of execution, surrounded by an immense mob'" (Freud 2007b, p. 497), whereas for the discussants in the *Revue philosophique*, the ending showed Maury's tendency to exaggerate. For Freud, the dream had recalled a story which was "composed already", and "stored up ready-made in [Maury's memory] for many years" (*ibid.*, p. 496). The long-prepared phantasy only needed to be "'alluded to'" when the piece of wood fell on the back of Maury's neck (*ibid.*). It had functioned as a "port of entry" [*Einbruchsstation*] into the "network" of ideas composing the phantasy that the dreamer had recalled fully when waking up. As for the phantasy, it was itself created through reading (*ibid.*). Freud moreover underlined the fact that the Reign of Terror was unusually gripping: "how tempting [for Maury] to take the place of one of those formidable figures who, by the power alone of their thoughts and flaming eloquence, ruled the city in which the heart of humanity beat convulsively in those days" (*ibid.*, p. 497).

4.5 The speed of speech

Freud was not the only one who moved away from a physiological approach to the dream by means of the notion of phantasy. Authors hovered between physiological processes (waves, excitations, etc.) and the textual and literary form of dreams, that is, between means of measurement and representation. They compared dreams to the *tableaux* of theatrical productions, of the magic lantern (Tannery 1894, p. 633). Many of Maury's experimental dreams were already prompted by reading, and explained with reference to memories left by readings.

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[22] See *À la recherche* (Proust 1987-89, vol. III, p. 628): "le monde du rêve n'est pas le monde de la veille". The narrator reverses the problem by stating that it does not mean however that waking life is any less real than that of dreaming. In Victor Egger (1894, p. 53), we find the following notation: "la raison juge du temps en rêve au réveil selon les habitudes qu'elle a prises pendant la veille, sans se rendre compte de la différence des deux états".

It is Victor Egger (1848-1909), however, in his contribution to the debate entitled "La durée apparente des rêves" (1895), whose philosophy lectures Proust has attended at the Sorbonne (Fraisse 2013, p. 15), who most strikingly accomplished the shift from physiology to literary creation, and language. Egger began by questioning the delay between the dream and its written transposition because it is precisely through that "experientia litterata" (Egger 1895, p. 43) that the imagination could most intrude on and transform what one called "the dream". Maury had indeed dreamt the guillotine dream in 1840, and had not noted it before 1847-48 in an earlier version of Chapter VI of *Le Sommeil et les Rêves*, published for the first time in 1861. The long gap probably explained the excesses of the dream and made it similar, Egger argued, to the Renaissance statues that have been restored too extensively (*ibid.*, p. 44), suggesting that it had an implausible roundness. When noting the dream down, there could have been distortions creating a "mauvais conte fantastique" (*ibid.*). Maury had proposed an interesting experimental method for the observation of dreams (*ibid.*, p. 42), nevertheless in this case something was left to be desired in the gathering of facts. The quantification of the dream's contents, the duration of the dream and of sleep could not be ascertained, according to Egger, unless one disposed of a reliable system of chronometry: "la chronométrie du rêve sera expérimentale ou ne sera pas".[23]

The author of *La Parole intérieure* moved close to the field of narrative analysis when he attempted to elaborate that system. He rejected the idea that the unit of time in dream narratives was the *tableau*, which he defined as "le décor où pense, parle et s'agite le moi du dormeur" (*ibid.*, p. 47), even though changes of scenery could give the impression that "time is long". Rather than focusing on visual *tableaux*, images that "se prêtent docilement aux agrandissements, aux réductions, aux simplifications de la ligne et de la couleur" (*ibid.*, p. 48), and which one can contemplate for a long time or which can pass in a flash, it would be preferable to use human speech as a standard of measurement, because

> la parole humaine est à la fois inextensible et incompressible au delà de certaines limites. Une phrase dite trop lentement n'offre plus aucun sens, la liaison des syllabes et des mots ayant disparu; inversement chacun sait qu'un acteur qui "détaille" son rôle trop vite amuse ou émeut encore, mais n'est plus compris, et qu'un parleur quelconque ne pourrait presser le mouvement à l'excès sans risquer de supprimer des mots ou des syllabes.

These limitations can be observed in a court of law and parliament where, Egger says, "les sténographes savent par expérience qu'il y a pour l'éloquence parlementaire ou judiciaire un certain maximum de vitesse" (*ibid.*, p. 49). Granted that this maximum speed could function as a standard for measuring the speed of thought in dreams, the measuring becomes a matter of finding out whether one can dream more rapidly than pronounce the words composing the narrative of the dream. Egger's suggestion about reading is consistent with the writings of other contemporary authors on time and the novel. The question is not specific to dreams, but also concerns reading.[24] Egger had dreamt a dream "consisting only in utterances": "'Monsieur Egger, voilà ce que vous devriez payer', puis, sans intervalle, la même voix ou la mienne [...]: 'Peuple d'Athènes, prends garde d'éclater'" (*ibid.*, pp. 48-49). On what basis is it possible to say that it takes less time to dream the dream's statements, than it takes to a reader to read the words on a page? Egger specifies that the rhythm of reading would have to be that of a "lecteur pressé" (*ibid.*, p. 49). What is Egger's answer? Even though Maury's dream was steeped in the narrative of the Reign of Terror, Egger thought that Maury had not taken sufficiently into account the role of reading in the formation of the dreams (in addition to that of images). In his review of dreams similar to that of Maury's, Egger argued that the rapidity of thought could not be assessed without acknowledging the temporality of speech, writing, and reading, including the way in which dreams use incomplete words that creates the impression that time passes quickly, or in other words, that dreams use ellipses.

Moving away from the material conditions of reading, Egger also believed that the mis-estimation of duration in dreams could also come from confounding the time it takes to read or to imagine something, and the temporality of the events that are imagined. His chosen example was that of two trips to India

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[23] Egger distinguishes the observations of the professional psychologist from that of the "psychologue d'occasion" (1895, p. 45).

[24] See Dames (2007).

and to Egypt, which had appeared to the dreamer to last at least one year, but which the dreamer had dreamt in a flash (*ibid.*, p. 52). Alluding to Jules Verne's *Le Tour du monde en 80 jours* (1873), Egger affirmed that it was not only possible to accomplish such a trip in eighty days, but that it would also be possible to imagine the eighty days while asleep or awake, in a few minutes, because we would necessarily condense and reduce the stages of the trip to their simplest expression (*ibid.*, p. 49).[25] It is no longer directly a matter of duration but of how to create, transpose and recall a particular reality – a trip, a Reign, etc. – into words, into a narrative which themselves have their own duration. By shifting the mystery from the rapidity of thought in dreams to reading, Freud and Egger seized an essential thread of the discussion about the duration of dreams, and came close to earlier states of the debate. What is one exactly measuring by speaking about the duration of the dream? Is it the narrative composed when awakening that is important, or the discrepancy between what must have been the dream and the narrative about it? Does it make more sense to wonder about the "duration of reading" than it does about that of dreams? In Egger's arguments, the discussion about the duration in dreams led directly to narrative duration. For the author of *La Parole intérieure* did not find a definitive unit of measurement for the passage of time in dreams, and a suitable instrument of chronometry, as much as he had hoped to do (although see Woodworth [1897, p. 524] about the measuring of the train of associations according to Egger). Rather, he emphasised how dreaming is continuous with our narrative abilities or narrative functions (with respect to the "play with time"), whether the latter be continuous to waking life or not.

5. Conclusion

We have recalled only some of the arguments provoked by Maury's dream, as an invitation to reread passages on dreams and sleep from *À la recherche du temps perdu* in parallel with them. Proust, through the narrator, encouraged the rapprochement between the art of the novelist and the observation of sleep and dreams in physio-psychological research. For Proust and the psychologists shared an interest in pairing literary creation, narration and dreams, as well as a fascination for the technical means of representation and their changes over time through which to concretise the intangible reality of dreams and sleep (the magic lantern, the stereoscope, theatrical productions, cinema, etc.).

Because these arguments are relevant to narrative analysis, in so far as they touch on questions of reading, imagination, and production, they invite us above all to re-evaluate Genette's narratological theories in their light. The kinship of narratives and dream, as Proust's narrator established it, had attracted Genette, because they signposted, for the literary theorist, the modernity of Proust's treatment of narrative time. The novel thus becomes a relay between the nineteenth-century sources and Genette's narratology, whereby Proust acts as a "passeur" of the positivistic research which was prevalent during his formative years. From this point of view, the novel is one of the stages in the dispute about duration in dreams triggered by Maury's classical and popular dream, and which continued up until at least Genette's narratology. In the latter, questions about the duration of reading, for example, are still very much at issue (Ricœur contests the idea of a *pseudo-temporality* in narrative, [1984, p. 155]). With this case study of sorts we witness the survival, beyond the novel, of earlier ways of raising concerns about duration. It is not a matter of claiming a strict correspondence between two fields of knowledge: narratology and dream research. Rather, common concerns emerge in them about the measure of narrative time and time in dreams, as well as objections about what can and cannot be measured (consider Genette's critics, among whom stands Paul Ricœur, who dismissed the scientism of narratology). Genette's "formalist" bias thus interrelates with the modernist side of narratology and of the Proustian novel, as well as the late nineteenth-century positivism of dream research (and of the novel). Perhaps we are faced with another example of oscillation between these two poles, which Antoine Compagnon has analysed under the heading of the "entre-deux". He had outlined, among others, a tension in *À la recherche* between late nineteenth-century "historical toponymy" and "poetical onomastic",

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[25] Dreams about travels form a subcategory within the acceleration dream. The ratio between stages in the trip versus the speed of the means of transportation provides various standards of measurement (Egger 1895, p. 53). See also Egger (1895, p. 52), Guyau (1890, p. 79) about a trip to Italy on foot, among others.

that is, between "positivisme et imaginaire" (1989, p. 235). Such kinds of tension would not apply to the Proustian novel alone, but also to the theories that it has inspired during the second half of the twentieth century.

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