

worse than the English gentleman of leisure. It does not seem to me that the English can do much harm to anybody today. . . . The real danger today is from that fat, adolescent and delinquent millionaire, America, and from all those virulent, misshapen freaks like Amin and Bokassa sired on Africa by Europe. Particularly those ones" (51-52). Whereas the worst African imitation of a European tyrant is overthrown in a coup d'état, the most promising hope for the future emerges in the person of Beatrice Okoh. After Chris's death and the coup, she keeps a long silence, then she decides to hold a naming ceremony for Ikem Osodi's orphan baby girl. This might be the answer to the question she asks her friends: "What must a people do to appease an embittered history?" (220). When it comes to the name itself, Beatrice picks up the tiny bundle from its cot and suggests: "There was an Old Testament prophet who named his son *The-remnant-shall-return*. They must have lived in times like this. We have a different metaphor, though; we have our own version of hope that springs eternal. We shall call this child AMAECHINA: *May-the-path-never-close*. Ama for short" (222). Perhaps this hopeful stance is vital for the surviving central characters of *Anthills of the Savannah*. It implies that a country like Kangan is able to go through a learning process based on experience. The rich variety of life in West Africa presented in the pages of this powerful novel may enable the reader to draw his own conclusions on that account.

Anthony R. Pugh

THE BIRTH OF A LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU

Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1987. Pp. 143.

Reviewed by Germaine Bree

For Proustian scholars 1987 will probably be remembered as a banner year, the year that the unpublished corpus of Proustian manuscripts came into the public domain. This opened the way for a major breakthrough in Proustian studies, more especially for those increasingly numerous scholars engaged in the problems of the text itself.

From the very first, the task of editing and publishing *A la recherche du temps perdu* had proved notoriously difficult. The vicissitudes attendant on the publication of the first edition of the complete text (1913-1927) are notorious. We are all beholden to what is known as the "Pleiade edition," established with meticulous care in 1954 by Pierre Clarac and Andre Ferre, two highly competent scholars, an edition which, until now, has been considered "standard." Now, thirty years later, fueled by the freeing of what are usually referred to as the "pre-texts" to Proust's vast work, new editions are coming out: a "new Pleiade" edition in four volumes, offering some 400 pages of relevant notes, drafts, comments, the work of a team of research scholars, "l'équipe Proust" centered at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris; a more readable, but up-to-date text put out by Flammarion for more general consumption; and what is known as the Robert Laffont-Quid, which includes, it would seem, every item of the apparently inexhaustible fund of Proustiana.

These stages in the presentation of Proust's major work offer no radical changes in the overall organization of the text. Rather they incorporate revisions, duplications, better readings; or identify within the printed text the different layers of insertions, tracing their origin in the manuscripts. (See, notably Alison Winton's two-volume thesis, *The making of A la recherche du temps perdu*, typescript facsimile reproduction [Cambridge: University of Cambridge 1977]). A major impetus to this specific trend in textual research was the acquisition in 1962 by the Bibliotheque Nationale of a mass of manuscripts, typescripts and notes bequeathed by Proust's niece. But there seems to be no end to the underground life of the "pre-texts" or "parallel" texts of *A la recherche*; witness the emergence in 1984 of thirteen new notebooks, to add to those in the files, and, in 1986, the discovery of a complete typescript of *Albertine Disparue*. The wealth of documentation has complicated

the task of researchers engaged in examining and coordinating disparate and often fragmentary evidence concerning chronology and purpose. Different juxtapositions of fragments may suggest different interpretative hypotheses as to the text's progress and Proust's intent. The abundance of material reduces the margin of speculation left open to the critic, but different "contextualizations" will always rest on certain personal assumptions, overt or unconscious. New documents may make the most careful hypothesis obsolete. No Proust scholar today could emulate the self-assurance of Albert Feuillerat who in his pioneering study *Comment Marcel Proust a compose son roman* (1934) was convinced he had the solution to the question.

It is within this frame, which he recalls succinctly but with clarity, that Anthony Pugh situates his monograph. He has long been intrigued by the problems inherent in the structure genesis and development of *A la recherche*. (His Cambridge University doctoral dissertation was entitled "The Composition of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*" (1959); it has remained unpublished). In his "introduction" to his monograph he defines the specific problem it examines, and the solution it presents. His basic proposal concerns the "birth" of Proust's initial conception of the work he felt called upon to undertake. Pugh situates it in an intuition of the form which had been taking shape in his unconscious. It developed, Pugh suggests between the fall of 1908 and the spring of 1909, a process which Pugh sets out fully to document. Pugh's thesis rests on his reading of the famous "dénouement" in *Le Temps retrouve* in which Proust's narrator, through the reiterated experience of involuntary memory with its fusion of past and present discovers the nature of his vocation as a writer. This passage, as Pugh understands it, is a direct transfer into fiction--both literal and symbolic--of Proust's own experience in 1908-1909. His purpose then is to establish a linkage between the two.

After defining his thesis, Pugh, in a first chapter, presents the documents that support it: the manuscripts, Cahiers and Carnets, loose "feuilletés" and pages eventually published in the Contre Sainte-Beuve. His main though not exclusive sources are the first eight of the 62 Notebooks in the archives, together with the *first* of the 'carnets', which was published in 1976 by Philip Kolb as *Le Carnet de 1908*, and letters clustered around the 1908-1909 nucleus. These constitute a kind of "journal" of uncollected aspects of Proust's disparate activities. These sources he identifies fully in two Appendices. Four succinct chapters constitute the bulk of the demonstration followed by an eight-page text (80-88) entitled *Conclusions* (note the plural). The chapters "Summer," "Autumn," "Winter," and "Spring" follow the chronological sequence of discovery at the heart of Proust's "vocation," and as pieced together by Pugh. But they also suggest a psychological progress and succession of "climates" that underlie the structure of the novel.

It would be an idle task and indeed an impossible one to attempt to summarize the careful work of coordination of texts, facts, the "jigsaw puzzle" through which Pugh charts the progress of his demonstration. The method in itself is defined by a careful observation of all the available documents, unconnected though they may seem, that cluster around certain incidents and texts leading the scholar to decipher a latent source and significance. Not the least of the tasks Pugh set for himself was to determine underlying patterns and chronological coincidences. His working out of his thesis is valuable in itself as a methodological model. Well aware of its technical complexity, he advises nonspecialist readers to skip the demonstration, moving from the introduction directly to the concluding pages. One might wonder if this might not prove self-defeating, stressing the circularity in the argument.

What is particularly welcome, to this reader at least, is Pugh's quiet conviction that for the greater artist, the organizing principle of his work cannot be separated from an intense inner need, which he must struggle to grasp and which imposes on disparate material of his experience an aesthetic unity. One may approach Proust's text, or any other, from many standpoints--linguistic, psychoanalytic, autobiographical, social, political, historical--but the text cannot be divorced from the living experience that generated it.