

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE 'JEU DES CLEFS': À LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU
IN THE LIGHT OF PAUL NADAR'S PORTRAITS

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In 1886 Paul Nadar, son of the journalist, caricaturist and celebrated photographer Félix Nadar, took over his father's third and last Parisian studio on the rue d'Anjou. For over a decade, Paul had learned the then still complex and skilful art of portrait photography, working under the auspices of his father in the highly frequented Boulevard des Capucines studio during its most commercially successful period in the 1870s. However, the following decade was more precarious for professional photographers in France and elsewhere: technological developments led to reduced exposure times, easier development processes and lighter and smaller camera equipment, epitomized by George Eastman's invention of the Kodak box camera in 1888 – all factors that contributed to the rise of easy amateur photography. Attuned to these new commercial challenges, and as evidence of his entrepreneurial acumen, Paul Nadar opened a shop for photography equipment alongside his studio, much to the chagrin of Nadar *père* who believed the core business to be the portrait sessions with the affluent clientele of the *belle époque*.¹ In fact, trading on the famous name, the Nadar studio of the last two decades of the nineteenth century up until its closure in 1924 was still highly sought after by the Parisian aristocracy and bourgeois society.

Among the high society celebrities and haute bourgeoisie who regularly passed through this studio was the Proust family: Professor Adrien Proust, his wife Jeanne and their sons Marcel (Figure 1) and the two-years-younger Robert. As one of the main society photographers, a number of the people who would later become friends, acquaintances and

salon hosts of the future writer, sat for Paul Nadar. These included actors, aristocrats and artists who would inspire, in one way or another, the characters assembled in the fictional world of *À la recherche du temps perdu* (published between 1913 and 1927). Even if the portrait photographs by Nadar are historico-cultural and aesthetic artefacts in their own right, numerous photographic plates leaving the studio of the rue d'Anjou later acquired a particular importance precisely by virtue of the sitter's relation to Proust's seven-volume masterpiece. Thanks to Félix Nadar's donation of parts of his voluminous *œuvre* to the Bibliothèque nationale de France, a collection greatly enriched by around 400,000 glass negatives by both Félix and Paul obtained by the French state in 1950, the majority of these originally private photographs were preserved for posterity. Indeed, this photographic *patrimoine* formed the basis for an exhibition in 1978 – *Le Monde de Proust, photographies de Paul Nadar* – of around one hundred portraits by Paul Nadar relating to Proust's life and work.²

Testimony to their evocative power, going far beyond the mere surface recording of a lost era with its fashions, grand iconography and photographic conventions, this first Proust-themed exhibition of the Nadar portraits inspired two different readings of *À la recherche*: William Howard Adams's *A Proust Souvenir* published in 1984³ and Roland Barthes's 'Proust et la photographie', a seminar prepared for the Collège de France in 1980 (published posthumously in 2003).⁴ Both authors make extensive use of the Nadar portraits in their texts, reproducing many of the photographs alongside biographical, anecdotal and critical commentary. In each case, the juxtaposition of photograph and text sharply reveals Adams's and Barthes's particular conception of Proust's novel, its relation to its author's life, and the extent to which *À la recherche* is a *roman à clef*. This text-image dynamic also highlights how Nadar's photographs may impact, alter or inflect the reading of the novel. In what follows, I shall pursue the question of how one sort of interpretation of this important body of photographic portraits corresponds to and underscores a specific 'pact' between

text and reader and, by extension, how the specific photographs draw attention to the ‘contrat de lecture’, which, as Philippe Lejeune has shown, is co-constitutive of a literary genre.⁵ Of course, the generic status of *À la recherche* has been a contentious point of debate in Proust scholarship, with Lejeune himself being famously indecisive,⁶ and Adams and Barthes will be shown to contribute to this debate through the lens of photography. To this end, rather than addressing the narrative and thematic or metaphorical presence of photography *within* Proust’s novel (a question that has attracted increasing scholarly attention since the 1980s),⁷ I am concerned with a text-image relation that is *external* to the narrative and with the question of how existing photographs play a part in its reception.⁸ From a larger perspective, this is the question of how and to what extent visual artefacts and the art of portrait photography may affect the reading and analysis of any literary text, which in turn speaks to complex relations between text and image, and literature and biography more generally. In Proust’s case at least, the reception of the novel in the light of photography reflects back on its actual production and hence leads to a circular interpretative movement from production to reception and vice versa; a movement entirely appropriate to the self-reflexive narrative of the would-be writer in *À la recherche*.

Proust’s Worlds

Even if it was and remains a literary work that by far surpasses and challenges a typical *roman à clef*, wherein the reader’s recognition of extra-literary and real-life figures is necessary (and indeed often presupposed by the author) in order to fully understand the fictional world, *À la recherche* engages with this notion in a playful and highly ambiguous way. When the first volume, *Du Côté de chez Swann*, appeared in 1913, some of Proust’s contemporaries recognized themselves and others, in part or in whole, in the characters of the novel. For example, Mme Straus, with whom Proust was acquainted when he was still a schoolboy and whose Salons the writer would later regularly attend, immediately saw their

contemporary Charles Haas in the character of Swann and even dubbed him Swann-Haas.⁹ And Mme Straus herself can be seen to have inspired aspects of both the characters of the Duchesse de Guermantes and Odette de Crécy in the novel. His contemporaries' recognition of themselves in the written portraits stubbornly persisted even if Proust often denied specific 'keys', writing as much to his 'accusers' on this score who felt that they were unflatteringly rendered in his book. Thus in 1922 Proust wrote to Laure Hayman, who disliked being recognized by her contemporaries as Odette, and argued: 'je suis forcé de vous répondre pour protester une fois de plus, sans plus de succès, mais par sentiment de l'honneur. Odette de Crécy non seulement n'est pas vous, mais est exactement le contraire de vous'.¹⁰ The issue is directly addressed in *Le Temps retrouvé* where, in an oft-quoted narratological metalepsis, it is stated that only the cousins of Françoise the housekeeper are real people. Apart from this exception 'il n'y a pas un seul fait qui ne soit fictif, [...] il n'y a pas un seul personnage "à clefs", [...] tout a été inventé par moi selon les besoins de ma démonstration'.¹¹ At the same time, however, in his correspondence, Proust also acknowledged, albeit equivocally, certain keys in *À la recherche*,¹² which were later used especially by those first-generation Proust biographers and critics indebted to the *l'homme et l'œuvre* paradigm to prove and sustain that certain aspects of the novel's fictional world are anchored in a real-life event or person.

In the second half of the twentieth century, at the time of the burgeoning *nouvelle critique*, Proust scholarship tended to address the 'generic ambiguity' of *À la recherche*, yet continued to oscillate between classifying the work as either fiction or autobiography.¹³ Apart from the self-reflexive generic problems and paradoxes raised by the novel itself, the first major biography of Proust by George Painter (published in two volumes in 1959 and 1965), added a new impetus to the *roman à clef* discussion owing to his interpretation of *À la recherche* as a 'creative autobiography'.¹⁴ Painter's biography meticulously traces a multitude of events, meetings and minute details of Proust's life that recur in *À la*

recherche, ranging from the button-hole moss-rose worn by count Robert de Montesquiou and transposed onto Baron de Charlus in the novel to the musical première hosted by the Princesse de Polignac in 1907, which, according to Painter, served Proust as the model for the grand final scene of the Princesse de Guermante's *matinée* when the narrator realizes the effects of time on human existence.¹⁵ Painter's work has been criticized for its excessively biographical and psychological approach to the creative process of literary writing, yet also provided an invaluable source for an exploration of possible links between Proust's worlds, both imaginary and real. As we shall see, for Adams and Barthes, Painter's then standard biography is an important starting point for their respective engagement with the photographs by Paul Nadar. In fact, Painter's study serves to highlight the often problematic aspects of the relation between life and work, autobiography and novel, biography and literature in question, which are only further amplified when Nadar's images are juxtaposed with *À la recherche*.

If the question of the *roman à clef* played a significant role in the early reception of Proust's novel by his contemporaries and perhaps even influenced his evolving creation of the novel's fictional universe (as indicated by the aforementioned 'disclaimer' passage), the photographs here discussed (and others) had a bearing on Proust's creative processes as well. Acquainted from a relatively early age with the event that a nineteenth-century portraiture session represented, Proust developed a well-documented obsession for having his picture taken as well as for collecting images. He frequented the most famous society photographers of his time,¹⁶ including, in addition to Nadar, the studio on the rue Royale of Otto Wegener, a high society photographer famous for his retouching of portraits in order to flatter his clients.¹⁷ In fact, Proust was in the possession of at least some of the portraits taken by Paul Nadar, as it is documented that he asked the Nadar studio for a copy of the portrait of Alfred Agostinelli together with his younger brother and their father.¹⁸ He also owned the Nadar portrait of count Armand-Pierre de Cholet, a model for Saint-Loup who

gave Proust a copy of his photograph (see PS, p. 60). Céleste Albaret, Proust's housekeeper during the last eight years of his life, from 1914 to 1922, recalls in her memoirs that Proust had a drawer full of photographs that he regularly took out in order to indulge in memories or to show them to her and his visitors.¹⁹ Even if we cannot ascertain the extent to which photographs and the Nadar portraits in particular may have inspired Proust to remember and subsequently transform a posture, a facial trait, a silhouette or a fixed expression into literature, the photographs are a compelling visual companion to *À la recherche* which Adams and Barthes creatively exploit for their interpretation of the novel.

Photographs as Windows onto Proust's Life and Work

Although Adams and Barthes are both indebted to Painter's work and recognize it as an important reference point for their readings of *À la recherche* by way of Nadar's photographs, the different ways in which they engage with this biography are telling. To begin with Adams, his study *A Proust Souvenir* supports the search for 'key' personalities, events and places, and implicitly or explicitly sustains the notion of a meaningful and above all traceable connection between Proust's real and fictional worlds. However, even if Adams acknowledges that his study 'could not have been done without the countless biographical details marshalled by Painter' (PS, p. 5), he also concedes that the pursuit of keys in relation to Proust's fictional creation is unlikely to deeply impact on scholarly interpretation and analysis of the novel (see PS, p. 7). Nonetheless, Adams follows in the footsteps of Painter's somewhat Sainte-Beuvian orientation by virtue of his reading of *À la recherche* as 'an extension of [Proust's] life' (PS, p. 11). His approach is based upon the axiomatic assumption that the relation between life and work is largely transparent. As a corollary, he regards the Nadar photographs as purely literal and denotative windows onto the historical world of Proust and, by extension, his reality-based novel. Implicitly subscribing to a documentary paradigm of photography, positing that the photograph is

incontrovertible evidence of a past moment, event or person, and hence shows something objectively true, he writes that the photographic portraits are ‘like mirrors held up to an age, and with their reflected imagery we are much better able [...] to revisualise the life and society that inspired the novel’ (PS, p. 12). Our fascination with the photographs, Adams further states, is due to the fact that they are the point of ‘connection’ between reality and the work of art (PS, p. 14). For the most part the portraits, for Adams, show us the ‘models’ which Proust ‘transformed’ into his characters through his creative genius.

As a whole, the focus of Adams’s argument is on the processes of the novel’s production and its possible inspirations. Eluding the deeper question of how Proust transformed reality into literature, Adams tends to superimpose a historical and cultural narrative onto the fictional text, in a way that strongly suggests a clear teleological relation between the two. His text is accompanied by Nadar’s photographs, with text and image together amounting to around fifty biographical ‘portraits’ of these figures, including a portrait of Charles Haas (Figure 2) representing the *personnage à clef* for Swann. Although Adams concedes that the aloofness of the depicted person in the photograph ‘challenges us to find a single clue to the character’ (PS, p. 29), which is, in this case, aided by the plain back screen of the setting typical of the early Nadar portraits, the photograph nonetheless provides Adams with an opportunity to stress the correspondences between the real-life person Haas and the fictional persona Swann. Adams does so by juxtaposing and comparing concrete biographical details – for instance, Haas’s self-created elevated position in Parisian high society commensurate with Swann – with passages from Proust’s novel. He loosely speculates as to how and to what extent Proust must have been fascinated by Haas’s social position, blending Proust’s literary descriptions of Swann with the actual biography of Haas. Thus the portrait and the citation work in tandem to establish a parallel between ‘real life’ model and character that goes beyond visual appearance. The function of

the photograph is primarily documentary, testifying to the lived life of Haas (seemingly) more objectively than the biographical account in itself ever could.

This strategy is also pursued in relation to other major characters in *À la recherche*: Adams compares Laure Hayman (Figure 3) with Odette, drawing on anecdotal material concerning Proust's falling in love with the mistress of his great-uncle Louis Weil, in order to foreground the connection between the novelist and his contemporary. In this context, Adams makes notable use of Albaret's memoirs, a highly useful source for an eye-witness account of Proust's everyday life and anecdotes surrounding the eccentric writer. From these correspondences between biography and novel, Adams concludes that 'Laure Hayman became, of course, the model for Odette, although the original was far more intelligent, witty, and cultivated than her fictional counterpart' (PS, p. 48). It is significant here that the kind of analysis and juxtaposition proposed by Adams implies, to some degree at least, the problematic Platonic idea that life is the 'original' with the artistic creation necessarily a second-degree 'copy' of it.²⁰ This teleological and linear reading is part and parcel of a biographical approach to literature, one which Proust himself strongly rejected (in his *Contre Sainte-Beuve* from 1909). This aporia is only highlighted by the use of photographs which apparently testify to the historical figures upon which Proust's novel is based.

And yet, although Adams's collection of Proustian characters and their models can be seen in one way as an aphoristic illustration of Painter's biography, substantiating keys with the help of Nadar's portraits, it is also acknowledged that the photographs are a trace of only the 'raw material' for Proust's remarkable transformations (PS, p. 125). Comparing the Proustian portraits with Nadar's might hence instil a certain 'disappointment', since, as Adams argues, the imaginary world is far richer than the portraits are able to suggest (PS, p. 124). It is this kind of *déception* when viewing the photographs by Paul Nadar in the light of Proust's novel that Barthes shares with Adams, yet he uses this emotional reaction in a

different and arguably more productive way, namely as a means to incite the reader's imagination.

Photographs, Imagination and Affect

To turn to 'Proust et la photographie', although Barthes uses Painter's biography of Proust as a point of departure for his engagement with the photographs by Nadar, he decidedly moves away from a directly causal reading of autobiographical keys. Barthes still makes use of them, however, mirroring Proust's own ambiguous attitude. Indeed, whereas Adams presents a more systematic argument as a whole, in which Nadar's photographs serve as supporting evidence of particular keys, in Barthes's seminar the argument must be partly constructed on the basis of his fragmentary and elliptic lecture notes. Nonetheless, Barthes is more systematic in the critical and theoretical use and exploitation of such keys, to the extent that he differentiates different types of keys, including physical resemblance or fragmented keys, such as the aforementioned moss-rose.²¹ Thus, Barthes does not simply reject the notion of the *roman à clef*, but problematizes it with regards to the photographs. In a review of Painter's biography from 1966 (the year of publication of the French translation and a decade of burgeoning structuralism in France), Barthes resolutely rejects the idea of a one-way reading of a literary work via factual biography, accusing Painter of abusing the keys in relation to *À la recherche*. Instead, Barthes calls for a parallel reading of life and work, one through which they reciprocally illuminate each other in largely non-literal fashion. He argues that 'il est vain de chercher les "clefs" de la *Recherche*. Le monde ne fournit pas les clefs du livre, c'est le livre qui ouvre le monde'.²²

In his seminar from 1980, Barthes resumes his critique of the biographical treatment of *À la recherche*, pointing out that the sheer scope of the novel renders an exhaustive or even fairly comprehensive tracing of such keys impossible. And yet, Barthes simultaneously celebrates such a reading as a 'symptom' of what he calls the reader's

‘énergie cryptologique’ (PR, p. 396), that is the fluid and inexhaustible interpretative dynamic between text and reader (and of which Adams’s may be considered to be one example). In fact, Barthes turns Painter upside down, as it were, declaring that ‘*les clefs ne renvoient pas à Proust mais au lecteur; les clefs, le désir, le plaisir des clefs est un symptôme de la lecture*’ (PR, p. 396). Barthes views the pursuit of ‘clefs’ not as a goal but as a consequence of the reading process that Proust’s *À la recherche* stimulates. He continues:

Les Clefs sont de l’ordre du *leurre*, mais ce leurre fonctionne comme une Plus-Value de la Lecture, elles affermissent et développent le lien *imaginaire à l’Œuvre*; elles font partie d’un objet théorique à poser [...]. C’est à ce titre que nous ne refoulerons pas le problème des Clefs, car le leurre est le fondement même de la lecture. (PR, p. 396)

Just glancing through the lecture notes, it would seem that Barthes’s annotated collection of Nadar’s portraits of Proust and his contemporaries marshals material for precisely the sort of biographical interpretation of *À la recherche* that he dissociates from his own critical practices as an end in itself. However, in opposition to Adams’s positivistic reading, Barthes here as elsewhere puts emphasis on the imaginary and the affective in his radically expanded conception of literary interpretation, manifest in his late works from *Le Plaisir du texte* (1973) onwards. Problematizing the relation between life and work as an ultimately opaque rather than transparent one, he shifts the focus from the author of the text and its actual, empirical creation onto the reader and its multivalent reception. And it is exactly this turn away from a factual and literal reading that also informs Barthes’s approach to the photographic portraits by Nadar.

Accordingly, in Barthes’s seminar the photographs are not documentary evidence in a case intending to prove the identity of the real person thinly disguised by the fictional character. Instead they are the starting point for an associative reflection on the fictional world in non-linear dialogue with the beholder’s and reader’s own world and experience. Hence Barthes’s stated aim of ‘intoxicating’ his audience of Proustians, or ‘Marcelliens’ as

he notes, with these images, to immerse them into an imaginative and affective world, as only photographic images can (see PR, p. 391): this, as opposed to stressing their purely instrumental function as sources of information, and readymade interpretative keys. Barthes advocates that Nadar's photographs be first experienced as visual and affective realities in their own right, apart from the novel, which, in turn, gives their subsequent juxtaposition with it – after they have 'lured' readers into the narrative, as a kind of anticipation of its subsequent reading or re-reading – a greater depth and insight.

For Barthes, the Nadar portraits, like many photographs, are prone to trigger a process of imaginary wandering or free contemplation in the viewer. His comments on them testify to this type of engagement insofar as they relate first and foremost to his personal response to the images. This is also in accordance with the phenomenological approach Barthes utilizes with respect to the medium in his seminal book on photography *La Chambre claire*, written one year before the seminar in 1979. One practical consequence of Barthes's approach is that the immersion in the photographs cannot be wholly represented or communicated but only individually experienced for oneself. However, we can note a few of Barthes's comments on specific images, which serve to further differentiate his approach to them from Adams's.

To take an example that Adams also discusses, let us consider the portrait of Laure Hayman (Figure 3). Beyond the narrower real-life relation between the sitter and the character in Proust's novel, Barthes perceives her pose in the image as a specific 'gestus', an indication of Hayman's social superiority, her being a 'demi-mondaine distinguée' (PR, p. 395). He thus establishes a wider historical link between the poses of Nadar's sitters, as a reflection of late-nineteenth-century portrait iconography, and one of the crucial social themes of *À la recherche*, that is the "'monde" mondain' (PR, p. 393). At the same time, Barthes, like Adams, does exploit biographical information in his detailed comments on the photograph, which highlight a number of parallels between her life and that of Odette as

depicted in the novel: ‘Comme Odette, [Laure Hayman] habitait un petit hôtel particulier rue La Pérouse’ (PR, p. 432). Rather than comparing the fictional character to the real-life woman, however, Barthes subtly subverts this model of original (life) and copy (art) by hinting that the Laure Hayman *is like Odette* and not the other way around. This non-linear reading of Proust’s novel and his biography is further emphasized in Barthes’s comments on the aforementioned portrait of Charles Haas (Figure 2) also discussed by Adams, with Barthes also acknowledging the link between Haas and Swann. Yet, he adds ‘celui-ci [Swann]: ne gêne pas l’image’ (PR, p. 430), revealing that his reading of the photograph does not compare the portrait with the life of the depicted person (that is Haas), but with his own *mental* image of the character Swann.

An even stronger and particularly evocative example for this sort of associate and affective response to the portraits is provided by the childhood photograph of Jeanne Pouquet (Figure 4), which is included by both Adams and Barthes. Whereas Adams uses this image to first establish Jeanne as the model for the hero’s adolescent love for Gilberte and then moves on to probe Proust’s homosexuality with reference to Painter’s findings, Barthes laconically points out that Jeanne does not physically resemble the description of Gilberte. Instead, he draws attention to why and how the face of the girl moves him as it presumably moved Proust: ‘Peut-être parce que, à peu de chose près, époque de l’enfance de ma mère’ (PR, p. 444). Barthes here uses the Nadar photograph to superimpose his own emotional biography onto Proust’s narrative and its semi-historical world through a highly personal train of identification. This approach also explains the inclusion of another childhood portrait, one of Gabrielle Schwartz. Barthes admits her relation to Proust’s main cast of characters is rather tenuous, which might hint why Adams does not include this particular portrait. But he also indicates that he will use it in his seminar owing to the fact that he ‘aime énormément ce visage de petite fille’ (PR, p. 447). Perhaps, for Barthes, this strong initial reaction to the image may provide the basis for another associative link or

identification with Proust or the narrator, which, more importantly in this context, exemplifies other viewers'/readers' own personal associations and identifications. Following Barthes, it is thus the *imaginative* relation between photograph and text created by the reader rather than the empirical link exploited by the biographer that constitutes the images' value with respect to *À la recherche*.

The Worlds of *À la recherche du temps perdu*

In conclusion then, the two perspectives on the keys of *À la recherche*, Adams's empirical and positivistic and Barthes's more theoretical yet highly impressionistic one, are, of course, by no means mutually exclusive. In fact, they are like the 'two ways' in Proust's novel, seemingly separate yet conjoined, linked via photography. Adams's positivistic method invites us to decipher the keys in order to *retrospectively* discover and reconstruct the relation between Proust's life and work. By contrast, Barthes's impressionistic approach seduces us into a dynamic 'jeu des clefs' (PR, p. 396) in order to *prospectively* explore the relation between Proust's work and *our* life. It is the meaningful presence of the visual material that enables us to see the different terms and dynamics of the 'pact' between text and reader in a sharper light. Yet, rather than definitively answer the vexed question of whether *À la recherche* is a veiled autobiography, Adams's and Barthes's approaches to it, in tandem with Nadar's portraits, and their comparison with each other, shed a new light on the issues at stake, bringing into play the multiple worlds of Proust's life (including the *mondanité* of the *belle époque*) and work. Moreover, juxtaposing the Nadar photographs with Proust's masterpiece in the context of its reception comes full circle with the creation of the novel and the potential role of these and other photographs in this creation. For, as we know, Proust was equally 'sous l'emprise de la photographie' (to borrow the title of Brassai's 1997 book on Proust and photography), much like his later readers here discussed. From an historical and hermeneutic point of view, the complex relation between

À la recherche and Paul Nadar's photographs is not only external to the work but also related to its literary, cultural and visual afterlife. This afterlife is a tapestry of complexly interwoven threads, including the photographs that *precede* the creation of the novel, the keys which are established *retrospectively*, and the novel's singular characters, all combining to reveal the full significance of the relation between text and image with regards to *À la recherche du temps perdu*.²³

¹ For an account of the tensions between father and son, see Stéphanie de Saint Marc, *Nadar* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), pp. 296-303.

² See the revised catalogue by Anne-Marie Bernard (ed.), *Le Monde de Proust vu par Paul Nadar* (Paris: Éditions du Patrimoine, 2003).

³ William Howard Adams, *A Proust Souvenir* (New York: The Vendome Press, 1984). Hereafter references are inserted parenthetically into the text abbreviated as PS.

⁴ Roland Barthes, 'Proust et la photographie', in *La Préparation du roman I et II: cours et séminaires au Collège de France (1978-1979 et 1979-1980)*, ed. by Nathalie Léger (Paris: Seuil/IMEC, 2003), pp. 385-457. Hereafter references are inserted parenthetically into the text abbreviated as PR. All italics are the author's emphasis.

⁵ Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), p. 8.

⁶ For a concise overview of the scholarly debate, see Dorrit Cohn's chapter on 'Proust's Generic Ambiguity', in *The Distinction of Fiction* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 58-78. For a more recent contribution, see Joshua Landy, 'Proust, His Narrator, and the Importance of the Distinction', *Poetics Today*, 25 (2004), 91-135.

⁷ For an early study on Proust and photography, see Jean-François Chevrier, *Proust et la photographie. Avec des photographies de Pierre de Fenoyl et Holger Trülzsch* (Paris: Éditions de l'Étoile, 1982).

⁸ Despite the wealth of photographic material relating to Proust and his work, including the Nadar corpus, this question has surprisingly eluded Proust scholarship centred on photography. Even in Townsend's recent study on visual sources of *À la recherche*, this question remains unaddressed. See Gabrielle Townsend, *Proust's Imaginary Museum. Reproductions and Reproduction in 'À la recherche du temps perdu'* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008).

⁹ See George Painter, *Marcel Proust. A Biography*, 2 vols (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959-65), I, 94.

¹⁰ Quoted in Barthes, 'Proust et la photographie', p. 432.

¹¹ Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. by Jean-Yves Tadié, 4 vols (Paris: Gallimard/Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1987-89), IV, 424. For an analysis of the narratological complexities of this passage, see Landy, 'Proust, His Narrator and the Importance of the Distinction', pp. 124-27.

¹² For example, in 1918 Proust wrote to Jacques de Lacretelle that 'il n'y a pas de clefs pour les personnages de ce livre [*À la recherche*]; ou bien il y en a huit ou dix pour un seul'. Marcel Proust, *Contre Sainte-Beuve, précédé de Pastiches et mélanges et suivi de Essais et articles*, ed. by Pierre Clarac (Paris: Gallimard/Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1971), p. 564.

¹³ See Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction*, pp. 66-70.

¹⁴ Painter, *Marcel Proust*, I, xiii.

¹⁵ See Painter, *Marcel Proust*, II, 77-78.

¹⁶ See Brassai's list in *Proust sous l'emprise de la photographie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), pp. 30-31.

¹⁷ This is alluded to in *À la recherche*, when, in *La Prisonnière*, the narrator refers to the ‘photographies “retouchées” qu’Odette avait fait faire chez Otto’ (Proust, *À la recherche*, III, 708).

¹⁸ Both Adams and Barthes refer to this episode. See PS, p. 52; PR, p. 399.

¹⁹ See Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1973), pp. 76, 213, 218.

²⁰ This is Barthes’s critique of Painter (see PR, pp. 395-96), which, *mutatis mutandis*, also applies to Adams.

²¹ On this issue, see Kathrin Yacavone, ‘Reading Through Photography: Barthes’s Last Seminar “Proust et la photographie”’, *French Forum*, 32 (2009), 97-112 (pp. 106-07).

²² Roland Barthes, ‘Les Vies parallèles’, in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Éric Marty, 5 vols (Paris: Seuil, 2002), II, 811-13 (p. 813).

²³ I wish to thank Adam Watt for his comments on an earlier version of this article and for drawing my attention to some of the scholarship referenced here.