

HELLO!

## SCREENING INTRODUCTION

**A friend who had viewed the first three parts asked WHY, I am making this Project.** Firstly, to enable more people to become acquainted with Remembrance of Things Past – BECAUSE I firmly hold that reading Proust is good for you!

A week ago today, a psychiatrist friend provided me with startling evidence of this: He'd had a patient suffering from obsessive and debilitating attachment to a destructive relationship that had ended years before. After a long treatment, the patient moved to another country and the psychiatrist, in a flash of inspiration that he cannot explain, suggested that this person read "Swann in Love". Some time later he received a postcard with the words "IT WORKED!" Over the 50 plus years that I've been reading it I've met a number of people who refer to it as something like a manual to life.

ALSO, I recently heard the 91-year old Buddhist monk, Ajahn Sumedho, relate this story from his youth in the US Navy:

*I was unhappy and I wanted peace.*

*And so I had a weekend off. I went up to Santa Barbara, California,*

*to go to a Anglican monastery that I was acquainted with,*

*the Monastery of the Holy Cross, which is in a very beautiful place on the cliffs overhanging the Pacific Ocean.*

*And there I spent about three or four days. And one morning, the morning that that I was to leave, I was walking out in the sunshine. And suddenly I just felt this intense sense of peace and joy.*

*And I didn't understand what had happened, but I just noticed the warmth of the sun and the sound of rustling leaves and the warm stones I was walking on. Suddenly it was just all perfect.*

*And I noticed at the time, I was only 19 years old, that the ego was gone. I didn't have one, I wasn't anybody. And I thought to myself, I wish I could be like this all the time.*

As you will see, this bears an uncanny resemblance to the profound ecstatic feelings of rapture that cause Proust to set out on his Quest.

I hope very much that these films have some relevance to you.

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## Some PRE-EMTIVE QUESTIONS, answered... :)

**Discarding all margin** annotations made when I first read Proust, aged 18, **at first my plan** was to make a series of poetic vignettes to illustrate a few of Proust's profoundly detailed observations of simple matters, like the appearance of evening light fading over a curtain rail.

Since I had read all of the English **translations**, over 50 years, I felt it possible to select all the pertinent themes, ignoring none.

Then the project quickly became much more ambitious.

I was able to mark-up digital copies of the latest translations with my selections (in their thousands)

and then cross-refer these to other translations, always prioritising the original,

– as indeed had all **translators** that followed C K Scott Moncrieff;

BUT it was also necessary to be attentive to changes in the text that scholarship and later editors had revealed.

Proust died in 1922 having finished writing the final volume, but before completing publication.

Curiously, Scott Moncrieff also died at the same point in the text of his **translation**.

It was well-known that Proust would have made **extensive revisions** and substantial additions,

since that was his method of working

and a great number of notebooks were available to editors as well as his 'paperolles'

– papers that were glued to the margins of manuscripts,

typescripts and print galleys, after he had exhausted the space available on the page.

FYI

Only four volumes were published before Proust's death in 1922; the final three were edited posthumously by his brother, Robert:

Swann's Way (1913)

In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower (1919)

The Guermites Way (1920–1921)

Sodom and Gomorrah (1921–1922)

The Prisoner (1923 – Posthumous)

The Fugitive (1925 – Posthumous)

Time Regained (1927 – Posthumous)

There were some instances where I **changed the sequence** of the chosen selections, but these were very few.

In addition, the **change of medium from being read to being heard**, combined with the unique cumulative, spiralling poetic nature of Proust's writing,

eg. the great length of his sentences, and parentheses within parentheses,

(which often run for several pages),  
made it necessary to make **alterations** that benefitted **cinema-  
goers**,  
who would have no opportunity to go back and re-read a page or two  
at their own pace.

On rare occasions it was beneficial to order the sequence of  
scenes – for the sake of continuity; and sometimes alter a word in  
Scott Moncrieff's translation for the sake of contemporary in  
modern speech, though other antique words were retained for their  
historicism.

The five films therefore **follow Proust's volumes precisely**,  
though I have not always named these as Scott Moncrieff translated  
them,  
but sometimes following closer to Proust or to later English  
editions.

The pentalogy is expected to complete by the end of 2027.

Furthermore, the films mirror Proust's **signs and symbolism**, using  
modes common to filmic and visual art representation.  
It is also intended that the project develop themes in the manner  
that Proust does,  
following the Narrator's quest from unfathomably profound, but not  
understood sensations,  
to finally **realising his goal** by understanding the disparate  
elements and powerful emotions that he has become increasingly  
aware of since childhood,  
deliberately leaving **the viewer somewhat adrift** in this evolving  
patchwork...  
until the whole is revealed, and its **CUMULATIVE** comprehension,  
not merely on the page, but also directly within **the reader's own  
sensations, as one who has participated in the Narrator's Quest**;  
pursuing the same path towards a spiritual revelation, which he  
calls early in the novel "almost a structure of existence".

Finally, how to represent **Proust's characters?**

– the origins of which cause such lively debate among scholars,  
as they did already during Proust's own lifetime,  
I have eked these out of my own understanding of the many people  
who provided models for Proust's composites,  
– remembering that no living individual was ever equivalent to any  
character, which are much more complex formations.

In the film, however, **the concerns about Proust's models** can be  
largely dismissed and greatly simplified,  
since very few who see this film will have any interest in  
Proustian biography, historicism or scholarship,  
and can safely accept these character representations in the  
films, happily ignoring who the photographs etc are actually of.

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## **STATISTICS**

Started June 2024 = 2 years so far.

Completing between 1.7 and 3.5 screen minutes per 50-hour week  
= a production of about 3 seconds per hour...

So, you can imagine how commercial cinema would view a project of this kind...

The first 3 Parts total 300 minutes

The remaining two parts covering the last 3 volumes:

The Prisoner

The Fugitive

Time Regained

On completion in late 2027, the projection duration will be c 9 hours (540 minutes).

4000 individual assets\* (so far):

\* ie. 8mm, 16mm films, new video footage, photos, illustrations;

sound recordings, voice-over recordings etc

eg. 315 music elements at present

This is expected to rise to c. 10,000 assets on completion

– once again illustrating the somewhat uneconomic nature of the enterprise.

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## **AND ANOTHER THING...**

For myself, there is also a question worth asking here:

To what extent are commercial models, and/or their very similar state arts policies, capable of producing works that are truly worthwhile?

How often do we feel that broadcast television, streaming services and commercial cinemas actually provide us with anything more than a sedative?

To what extent have our museums and galleries become mere cultural window shopping, part of the “experience” industry?

To what extent should we permit career art industry box-ticking cultural Kommissars to dictate cultural policy?