

## PROUST II: WITHIN A BUDDING GROVE

**Coordinator:** Sharon Girard

Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, is a many-splendored cathedral hovering between novel and essay. Its exterior chapels form an epic of late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century France; interior chapels - a quest for fulfillment through art. In this second volume we encounter haute bourgeoisie, Jews and military men and girls, girls, girls. Sexual awakening, longing and innuendo permeate the air everywhere - in Paris and at the beach resort of Balbec. Straight-faced humor sends us into hysterics; the inevitable disappointments, misconceptions and lost illusions of growing up are bittersweet. You don't have to have read the previous volume to join our IRP Proust project; initial review ushers new readers into the narrative, characters and themes. Alexander's *Guide* continues to bolster that review.

### **Readings (2 books):**

*In Search of Lost Time: Within A Budding Grove* by Marcel Proust, translated by Moncrieff, Kilmartin and Enright, {Volume 2 of 6, Modern Library, ISBN 0375752196}.

*Marcel Proust's Search for Lost Time: A Reader's Guide to The Remembrance of Things Past* by Patrick Alexander, {Vintage, ISBN 0307472329}.

**Sharon Girard** has coordinated study groups in philosophy and in the philosophical novel ; e.g. Machiavelli, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Proust. Her profession was computer programming with a specialty in humanities, notably archaeology.

\* \* \* \* \* **Syllabus – A Work in Progress** \* \* \* \* \*

**Abbreviations:** The Search = *In Search of Lost Time*; SW = *Swann's Way*; WBG = *Within a Budding Grove*

The Search is a layered, many-splendoured thing where much joy lies in the re-reading. When you re-read, you become aware of the unfolding of the layers, like Japanese paper flowers placed in water. By the fourth session of our study group, our reading is 50 pages per session. But, fair warning, the first three are heavier – 100 pages.

So, try to read (or at least skim) the book in the summer so that we can be joyful re-readers in the fall.

**Session 1            Review of major narrative thread, characters and themes**

**Read *Reader's Guide* for a review:** Summary of *Swann's Way*.

Skim sketches of some characters: Marcel's family (mother, father, Grandmother, Grandfather), M Swann, Mme Swann (Odette), Bergotte, Berma, Vinteuil, Mme Verdurin.

**Read WBG: pp 1-102 (Mme Swann at Home)**

**Questions:** numbers on the left are pages in WBG. e.g, 17.2 = page 17, text block 2.

17.2 What do I expect of Berma at the performance of Phèdre?

37 What does Norpois say about Berma?

70 What is the mission on my account that Norpois would never discharge?

**Session 2            WBG pp 103-200**

122 How does the kaleidoscope work with Jews, with Dreyfus?

165 Why does my estimation of Bergotte begin to fall?

183 What does Bergotte say about Berma?

**Session 3            WBG pp 200-298**

207 Where do I first meet "Rachel when from the Lord"?

227 What is "intermittance"? How does it work with my love for and indifference to Gilberte?

255 To whose suicide does Marcel refer?

273 What plan did I have for my ten thousand francs garnered from the sale of Aunt Léonie's vase? What event quashed that plan?

**Session 4            WBG Place-Names: the Place pp 299-350**

322 What is "wrong" with the church at Balbec-en-Terre?

349 Why are the president and his friends "poisoned with virulent rancour" at the wealthy old lady?

**Session 5            WBG pp 350-400**

353 Who presses against the walls of the aquarium?

384-385 How do the two classes - aristocracy and "middle classes" - perceive each other?

**Session 6            WBG pp 400-450**

400 Why do I assume that the letter was from the milk-girl?

403 Why do I give the fisher-girl a five-franc piece?

404-5 What is my reaction to the three trees at Hudimesnil?

433.2 Who is the anti-Semite?

**Session 7            WBG pp 450-502**

452.2-455 Who is the stranger who stares at me?

466 What is Charlus' attitude toward effeminate young men?

470 What is Charlus' attitude toward Jews?

497 Why did Saint-Loup give his mistress money "only from day to day?"

**Session 8            WBG pp 502-550**

508.1 Which member of the little band jumped over the terrified old man?

515 What was impregnated with so much of the unknown?

532-523 After imbibing beer, champagne and port, how does M. view the restaurant at Rivebelle? Why does M pity all the diners?

**Session 9            WBG pp 550-600**

550-2 how is the little band like a polypoly (550.1) or a madreporé (552)?

557.1 The pronoun "it" occurs 6 times in this paragraph. To what does "it" refer? What "theme" comes through in this paragraph?

561.1 What is the "passionate astronomy"?

568 Is Elstir's painting of the harbor realistic or impressionistic?

**Session 10            WBG pp 600-650**

600 Who is the "Miss Sacripant" of Elstir's painting?

618 How does my impression of Albertine now differ from when I first saw her on a bicycle against the sea?

**Session 11            WBG pp 650-701**

657.2-659 How does my view of nature change after my visit to Elstir?

**Session 12            WBG pp 701-730**

715 How does Andrée differ from Albertine?