

## PROUST III: THE GUERMANTES WAY

**Coordinator:** Sharon Girard

The IRP Proust project continues. As the social kaleidoscope turns, we see vividly the hollowness, irrelevance and decline of the aristocracy; the Dreyfus Affair creates unpredictable realignments. Though the haute bourgeoisie is on the march, the upper crust still enchants Marcel. He seeks and is sought in the most exalted circles. He stalks new loves. He is perplexed by the strange antics of the unforgettable “invert” - Charlus. Nothing escapes Proust's penetrating and caustic humor. Even a death so gripping that we can barely turn the page presents a parade of doctors and visitors that can bring on hysterics. Our initial and sustained review of previous volumes, aided by Alexander's *Guide*, ushers new Proust readers into the narrative, characters and themes.

### **Readings:**

*The Guermantes Way* by Marcel Proust, translated by S. Moncrieff, T. Kilmartin and J. Enright, {Volume 3 of 6, Modern Library, ISBN 0375752331}.

*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 - Machiavelli, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Proust. Her profession was computer programming with a specialty in humanities, notably archaeology.

\* \* \* \* \* **Syllabus - A Work in Progress** \* \* \* \* \*

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

ISOLT 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.

The reading for first four sessions (Part One) of the study group comprise many pages – about 100 per session. By the fifth session (Part Two), the page count reduces to fifty. Please try to skim as much as you can during the winter break so that we can be joyful re-readers in the spring.

**Questions:** numbers on the left are pages in GW. For example, 203.2 means page 203, text block 2.

**Session 1 pp 1-107 - Part One**

Read *Reader's Guide* for summaries and review of SW and WBG. Review major narrative thread, characters and themes.

- 27 What's in a name? Whose name is probed?  
44 Ichthyology again! Who are the fish and the nereids at the Opera  
57-61 How do I see Berma this time? (cf WBG)

**Session 2 pp 107-212**

- 107-110 What is the metaphor for sleep that pervades these pages?  
138 What is the Army's position on Dreyfus?  
184 How has my Grandmother changed?  
208 Who is "Rachel when from the Lord"?  
211-2 What two biblical stories are underneath the text here?

**Session 3 pp 212-317**

- 252 At Mme de Villeparisis', how is the social kaleidoscope functioning?  
281 How does Mme Guermantes' conversation compare to her enchanting name?  
313 How does Norpois stand on the Dreyfus Affair?

**Session 4 pp 317-424**

- Who is in the parade of visitors and doctors calling on my Grandmother?  
376 Who is M Charlus related to?  
386 What is Charlus' offer to me?  
403 What is Dr. Boulbon's diagnosis of my Grandmother?

**Session 5 pp 425-475 Part Two**

- 484 What does Albertine's new vocabulary suggest to me?

**Session 6 pp 475-525**

- 494 Who are some different Albertines that I think about?  
505 Why do I insist that Albertine go home?

**Session 7 pp 525-575**

540 Why is playing with a troop of girls less destructive than friendship?

**Session 8 pp 575-625**

601-4 How did the Guermantes family genie manifest itself?

**Session 9 pp 625-675**

657 Who are the handsome supernumeraries?

**Session 10 pp 675-725**

689 What attracted me about Mme de Guermantes' mind?

**Session 11 pp 725-775**

739 What rumour does the Turkish Ambassadress breathe into my ear?

751 What are the three carriage exaltations?

**Session 12 pp 775-819-The End (44)**

766 Why did I trample in fury on the hat?

819 What is the Duke's final gesture of good breeding?