Questions and Topics for discussion

Lecture 1

Swann’s Way

Combray I

1. The role of Swann in Marcel’s life, in childhood (and later as we proceed through the novel).
2. The importance of the scene of the goodnight kiss
3. The trouble with Swann now and as will be seen in Swann in Love.
4. What are Swann’s weaknesses? How do these relate to similar traits in Marcel now and later?
5. Early statements of the grand themes of time and memory
6. Structural elements of Proustian narrative, especially in Combray, but also in Swann in Love, and the concluding section of Swann’s Way
7. How does Proust create scenes of humor and satire?
8. How does Proust depict Françoise? In what ways is she admirable, in what ways despicable?
9. The grandmother’s and her idea of appropriate gifts for Marcel? What does she mean by “layers” of art?