Lecture 4

Questions and Topics for discussion

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Swann in Love

1. What is the role of the Comte de Forchefille in the little group? How do the Verdurins react when Forcheville reveals Swann's true place in society?

2. How does Swann behave once he becomes jealous? What is Swann's own diagnosis of his condition?

3. Why is Swann barred from the Verdurin's?

4. How does Swann's predicament compare to Marcel’s as a child at Combray?

5. Proust’s portrayal of snobbery in the Verdurin salon and at the marquise de Saint-Euverte’s.

6. How does M. Verdurin find a way to compete with his wife at appearing to be amused by the wit of the faithful?

7. How does Biche (the nickname of the painter) answer Swann’s questions about a certain painting?

8. Why does Swann proclaim that Mme Verdurin has a “great soul”? What makes him change his mind?

9. Why does Mme Verdurin say of Professor Brichot “only here does he shine”?

10. In Swann’s meditation on Vinteuil’s sonata, he compares the composer to Lavoisier and Ampère. What does this suggest about Proust’s definition of an artist?