Questions and Topics for discussion

Lecture 6

*Within A Budding Grove*

1. Analyze scenes in which Marcel’s expectations do not match his experience. For example his encounter with Bergotte and later when he sees Berma.
2. To what earlier scene can the “profanation” of Aunt Léonie’s furniture be compared?
3. Is the prose poem Marcel gives to Norpois the result of the Zut! (Gosh!) passage in *Swann’s Way*? What is Norpois’s reaction to it?
4. Bergotte on Dr. Cottard. Why does Bergotte recommend a certain doctor?
5. Note Bergotte’s assessment of Marcel: “I can see quite well that you are able to enjoy the pleasures of the mind, and they are probably what means most to you, as to everyone who has known them.” What is Marcel’s immediate but unexpressed reaction to this? We will see later what role Marcel assigns to intelligence.
6. What is the difference between Norpois’s and Bergotte’s views regarding art?
7. The influence of the Guermantes’s language on Odette via Swann. What larger point is Proust making here about language? Note how planetary imagery is used to explain this influence.
8. Why does Mme Swann resist being seen as a Botticelli woman?
9. What is the influence of the growing love of sports and the machines of speed on fashion? What is Mme Swann’s reaction to these changes?
10. What point is Proust making when he says: “Granted that the intellectual distinction of a salon and its elegance are generally in inverse rather than direct ratio”?