Questions and Topics for discussion

Lecture 8

Within a Budding Grove 2: 420-548

1. What is the impression we get of Charlus before he arrives on the scene and afterward? How does Charlus mourn his late wife? What hints does Proust give of his true nature?

2. Why does Marcel say that “adolescence is the only period in which we learn anything”?

3. Why does Marcel say that Saint-Loup, unlike himself, is capable of friendship?

4. What does Saint-Loup learn from his mistress, Rachel?

5. Why does Rachel come to despise Saint-Loup? Whom does Saint-Loup blame for this?

6. What is the basis for Saint-Loup’s denial of the rumor that Charlus was Odette’s lover?

7. Why is Françoise, of peasant origin, a royalist?

8. So far as the attire and accoutrements of the little band of girls are concerned, how are these different from any that he has known?

9. How does the vocabulary employed by the elevator operator indicate a shift towards upward mobility in the service class?

10. Why is Aimé convinced that Dreyfus is guilty?