

# FAMILY EDUCATION AND TRADITION: IN SEARCH OF LOST TIME

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**Abstract.** As an enduring social novel, *In Search of Lost Time* (1871-1922) not only traces the personal growth of its protagonist, Marcel, and also reflects the richness of French culture and tradition. This paper focuses on issues of family education and educational traditions within the novel. It provides an in-depth analysis of the educational behaviors and philosophies of Marcel's grandmother, mother, and father, while tracing the social educational traditions that underlie these modes of parenting. The study reveals a complex coexistence of two distinct educational models in Marcel's family, characterized by contrasting values, goals, and methods. This complexity stems from parental adherence to two differing traditions of family education: the traditional, status-oriented model focused on social legacy, and a modern, person-centered approach rooted in natural development. This study enriches interdisciplinary literary research while offering new insights into family education and sociological studies of tradition. By filling a gap in scholarship on family education in *In Search of Lost Time*, it lays groundwork for future exploration of conflicts and harmonies in educational traditions within the novel and other works with similar themes. The study employs Edward Shils' sociological theory of tradition as a theoretical framework.

**Keywords:** *family education, educational tradition, personal growth, In Search of Lost Time*

## Introduction

French writer Marcel Proust's (1871–1922) *In Search of Lost Time* is a novel of enduring social value. On the surface, it traces the growth and development of the protagonist, the literary artist Marcel (Author A, 2004); on a deeper level, it reveals the richness of French culture and tradition (Poulet and Coleman, 1955). This paper attempts to link the family education Marcel receives to the broader educational traditions of French society. The novel's narrative spans the period from 1880 to 1919, a period crucial for the transformation of French family structures from traditional to modern (Shi, 2001). As Pierre Bourdieu noted, educational capital came to dominate modern family values, with family worth increasingly measured by members' educational achievements rather than by economic inheritance. As the main bearer of educational capital, children came to be highly valued as the medium for passing down family status, and thus family education took on unprecedented importance. Unlike school-based education, family education does not rest primarily on rational or scientific theories. First, families are not specialized educational institutions; rather, their educational behaviors are naturally embedded in daily life. Second, parents generally lack professional training in modern educational theories. When asked why they choose certain educational methods, parents often reply that "it has always been so" or "it ought to be so." Such beliefs and behaviors, seen as natural and worthy of continuation, are precisely what constitute tradition. Tradition provides the foundation for actions by

defining their goals, standards, and methods (Shils, 1983). It is evident that family education and tradition are inherently inseparable.

Proust, who might be considered a sociologist in his own right, insightfully captures the way Marcel's modern family approaches family education as a method of legacy. The novel serves as both Marcel's personal story and as a microcosm of his family's educational practices. The family education he receives not only frames the beginning of the story but also permeates Marcel's reflections throughout his life. At the same time, Proust, with his profound cultural awareness, reveals the deep dependence of family education on tradition. Beyond Marcel's own family education, the novel also illuminates the grandmother's education of his mother and the influence of Monsieur de Norpois on his father (with the latter being almost a spiritual father to him). These two generational transfers of education across three generations form a clear chain of tradition, reflecting the structure of family education traditions in France at the turn of the 19th century. Family educational tradition and family education itself are related as source and current. An analysis of the family education Marcel received is critical not only for understanding his growth and values but also for appreciating the composition and dynamics of family educational traditions in France at the time. Conversely, French educational traditions offer insights into Marcel's family practices and personal development. Since family traditions within a society have a fundamental consistency, an in-depth study of Marcel's family provides valuable insight into the complexity and dynamics of family educational traditions in broader French society. Furthermore, given the relative stability of tradition, such a case study offers useful references for understanding contemporary family education in France and even in other societies.

However, amidst the extensive commentary and critique on *In Search of Lost Time*, this topic has not received sufficient attention. To address this gap, this paper explores Marcel's family education in the context of a sociological framework of tradition. It focuses on differences in the ideal models and educational approaches among the family members and on the distinct traditions they uphold. This study not only enriches interdisciplinary literary scholarship but also provides new perspectives for family education and sociological studies on tradition. Future research might expand to examine family education traditions in other classic novels or explore the conflicts and harmonies within family educational traditions more deeply.

### ***Literature review***

*In Search of Lost Time*, a masterpiece of French literature, has continued to inspire extensive research and discussion worldwide for over a century. Since its publication, this novel has been celebrated not only for its exquisite literary artistry but also as a significant work for exploring social structures, individual growth, and cultural transmission (Watt, 2011). However, despite the substantial body of academic studies, relatively few have focused on the analysis of family education and its underlying educational traditions in the novel. Research on family education has explored the diverse roles and influences of parental figures. Grenet (2010) argued that the narrator's parents play inseparable and complementary roles in his development. She emphasized the father's influence on artistic growth through natural experiences, contrasting with the mother's cultural nurturing. Rousset (2019) further examined the maternal and grandmotherly love that serves as the foundation of the narrator's emotional and narrative origins, demonstrating the central role of family affection in shaping individual character. The educational traditions in Proust's family were shaped by the

societal context of his time. Shils (1983) highlighted the critical role of families in cultural transmission, noting that multiple traditions can coexist within a single society or even within one family. In light of this framework, Proust's family reflects two dominant educational traditions: on the one hand, the father embodies a utilitarian perspective on education, emphasizing career planning and the preservation of social status; on the other hand, the mother and grandmother adopt an approach blending reason and emotion, aiming to nurture an independent and morally conscious individual. The tension and integration between these contrasting approaches not only mirror the transitional dynamics of French family education at the turn of the century but also underscore the internal conflicts of differing values within a single household.

Scholars have also delved into Proust's personal experiences to uncover the real-life foundations of his novel. The influences of his mother on his artistic ambitions and the educational methods of his father are often seen as directly reflected in the growth narrative of Marcel, the protagonist. For example, Carter and Lange (1994) noted that Proust's sensitivity and creativity were shaped predominantly by his mother's cultural influence, whereas his father served as a pragmatic guide. In summary, existing literature on *In Search of Lost Time* provides valuable insights into the novel's depiction of family education, though significant gaps remain. For instance, the mechanisms of conflict and reconciliation between different educational traditions warrant further investigation. Future research should seek to integrate Proust's literary text with sociological theories to offer deeper insights into the complex relationships between educational traditions and cultural transmission.

### ***Theoretical framework***

This paper draws on sociologist Edward Shils' theory of tradition as a theoretical foundation. Shils emphasizes the important role of the family in maintaining tradition. He views the family as a central institution within the primary systems of tradition maintenance-including family, school, and church-that connect the past, present, and future (Shils, 1983). Shils analyzes the ways in which tradition is transmitted within families. A child becomes a family member not only by virtue of biological survival but also as a carrier of beliefs and patterns. Parents pass on past experiences and the achievements of human culture to their children through daily behaviors or intentional guidance. This guidance is future-oriented, preparing children for the later stages of life. At each stage of growth, children learn and internalize both general and specific patterns from their parents, many of which become enduring and self-generalizing throughout their future lives. When they have children of their own, they transmit the knowledge and patterns they learned from their parents. Here, Shils' discussion touches upon family education within the transmission of tradition, though he does not explicitly use the term "family education."

Shils notes that tradition comprises a series of variations around themes that are accepted and passed down. Although tradition is closely associated with specific behaviors, it does not refer to the behaviors themselves but rather to the patterns, goals, and methods that guide them (Shils, 1983). Based on this, we can develop a clearer definition of family education tradition: it consists of the patterns, objectives, and effective methods recognized within a family that guide educational behaviors and are passed down across generations around a shared theme. This definition also clarifies the main content of research on family educational traditions-namely, the shared theme and the genealogical relationships surrounding it. Shils further cautions that in any large

society, multiple major traditions coexist simultaneously. The notion that an “age spirit” permeates all aspects of society, embodied in every work and action, is misleading. As Gombrich (according to Shils, 1983) explains, such a view oversimplifies the diversity of traditions in any complex society and obscures their competition over similar themes, while also exaggerating the unity of an age spirit. Shils also points out that when various traditions coexist face-to-face, conflicts are inevitable. In addition to Shils’ theory of tradition, this paper also incorporates sociologist Singly’s research on the contemporary French family and studies on family education from Modern Pedagogy to construct the theoretical framework.

## **Materials and Methods**

This study focuses on Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time* as its primary material, a novel renowned for its intricate depiction of personal growth and family dynamics. The analysis draws from key passages that illustrate the educational philosophies and interactions among Marcel’s father, mother, and grandmother. To contextualize these findings, secondary sources on French family education traditions, sociological theories of tradition, and historical studies of 19th-century French society are incorporated. Central to the theoretical foundation is Edward Shils’ work on tradition, which provides a lens for understanding how societal values and historical paradigms shape familial practices. The selected materials encompass a rich interplay of literary narrative, historical context, and sociological analysis, offering a comprehensive basis for exploring the coexistence of contrasting educational traditions within Marcel’s family. The study employs a qualitative, interpretive approach rooted in literary analysis and sociological theory. Through close reading of the text, the educational methods and values of Marcel’s family members are examined to reveal their connections to broader societal traditions. These findings are interpreted within Shils’ framework of tradition transmission, emphasizing the persistence and evolution of cultural patterns. By tracing how each family member embodies distinct educational paradigms, the analysis identifies points of conflict and integration within the family. Secondary sources, including historical and sociological studies, enrich the interpretation, allowing the novel to serve as both a literary work and a sociological case study. This method bridges disciplines to provide an in-depth understanding of the novel’s exploration of familial and cultural education.

## **Results and Discussion**

In *In Search of Lost Time*, Marcel’s family embodies a traditional division of roles, with the father engaged in work outside the home (serving in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the mother devoted to the household. Consequently, Marcel’s education largely falls under his mother’s care, with occasional contributions from his father. However, the father remains a figure of authority, whose decisions carry significant weight within the family. Given the close bond between Marcel’s mother and grandmother, the latter often shares in disciplining and guiding Marcel. Together, these three figures—father, mother, and grandmother—oversee Marcel’s growth, each keen to pass on what they consider important values, yet frequently differing in their educational goals and methods, with disputes arising especially between the grandmother and father and, at times, between the parents themselves.

### ***The grandmother's (and mother's) education***

On Marcel's birthday, his grandmother carefully selected three books as gifts: George Sand's pastoral novel *Indiana*, a work by Rousseau, and a collection of Musset's poetry. These works, marked by deep emotion and refined observation, highlight the connection between nature and inner feelings. She hoped that the grandeur of these masterpieces would invigorate his spirit, like the fresh air over fields and the sea breeze, setting a model for his thoughts and character (Proust, 2003). These books expressed not only her profound love for Marcel but also conveyed her idealistic values. In her view, a model personality should embody three virtues: a love for nature, kindness and noble sentiments, and rational wisdom. Marcel's mother shared this vision, and it's widely acknowledged in literary circles that the roles of the grandmother and mother in Marcel's life merged into a unified influence (Rousset, 2019). Literature played an irreplaceable role in the education Marcel received from both his grandmother and mother, becoming a bond of love and cultural inheritance across three generations. On that unforgettable night early in the novel, Marcel's mother sat beside him as he struggled to sleep, reading from *François le Champi*, one of George Sand's pastoral novels that his grandmother had carefully chosen as a gift after his father had objected to her original selection. Her reading blended effortlessly with the warmth, generosity, and gentle tones that characterize George Sand's prose.

In addition to the subtle influence of literature, his grandmother and mother also served as powerful examples for Marcel. His grandmother's love for nature stood out when she ran joyfully through the garden in a downpour (Proust, 2003). She opposed any artificial restraints that violated nature, such as tying supports to rose bushes, and likewise disagreed with his father's insistence that Marcel stay indoors to read on rainy days. She hoped that by spending time in nature, Marcel would grow strong and resilient, preserving his vitality and natural essence. Kindness and noble sentiments were among the most treasured qualities of Marcel's grandmother. "She was always generous with others, never concerned with personal gain; this generous spirit showed in her eyes as a smile ... a smile that, for all of us, was like a look that replaced a kiss" (Proust, 2003). Whenever someone in the family fell ill, she would don a fine cotton robe to tend to them. For her, virtue was grounded in quiet, real actions rather than grand statements or superficial appearances. Marcel's mother had also come to view these qualities as noble attributes. She was genuine in her emotions and treated others with heartfelt respect. For example, to avoid reminding a bereaved mother of her past sorrows, she softened her language; she avoided mentioning birthdays around the elderly to prevent reflections on age; and to keep young scholars engaged, she refrained from trivial topics (Proust, 2003).

Both his grandmother and mother also instilled in Marcel the importance of reason and wisdom. They placed their hopes in a rationalist view of the routines Marcel followed. Although they were well aware of his nightly sadness before bed, they pretended not to notice, encouraging him to learn to overcome sorrow on his own—helping him to curb his sensitivity and strengthen his will (Proust, 2003). Often, they wove carefully considered ideals into the everyday, almost unnoticeably. Even when choosing a single decorative painting for Marcel's room, his grandmother deliberated carefully, seeking ways to add artistic richness while reducing the influence of materialism and commercialism on the child. "There has never been a boy so completely absorbed into a family that loved him as Marcel". Maurois's words about

the author Proust equally apply to Marcel. Marcel described his profound connection with his grandmother, explaining that a miraculous tenderness seemed to weave his thoughts into hers, creating a special, predetermined harmony between them, where he felt like a part of her, and she, a part of him (Proust et al., 2003). This feeling of unity with his grandmother (and, likewise, with his mother) led him to naturally accept and internalize their values and behaviors, making them part of his character. His dream of writing a grand book comparable to the finest and most refined art, as well as his journey to become his ideal self, are deeply intertwined with this family education. This blend of warmth and wisdom in their family education began with his grandmother, who passed these values to her daughter, and together, they nurtured Marcel with this shared vision. This intergenerational transmission of love, culture, and ideals has become a treasured family tradition.

### ***The father's (and Mother's) education***

The father's approach to Marcel's upbringing focused on two main aspects: planning for his future career and reforming his emotional and impulsive nature. From an early age, Marcel's father demonstrated a strong concern for his career prospects. Although Marcel aspired to become a writer, his father considered the literary profession to be humble and unworthy of being called a career. He hoped Marcel would instead pursue a diplomatic career. However, under the influence of his respected colleague, Mr. de Norpois, the father's attitude shifted. De Norpois believed that writers could also earn respect and wield influence. Consequently, the father agreed to Marcel's career choice, even hoping that he might one day become a member of the French Academy (Proust, 2003). The father's own ambition to become a candidate for the Academy reflects his desire for Marcel to attain at least the same social status as himself. Although the novel does not detail the father's background or early experiences, as a reflection of the author's own father, some insights can be gleaned. Proust's father came from a provincial town, where his family was in the candle-making business, and he was the first in his family to leave. He later became an inspector for the French Ministry of Health and eventually a candidate for the French Academy, reaching the pinnacle of his career. Having achieved social mobility through education, the father naturally wanted Marcel to uphold the family's dignity and status. As Bourdieu noted, like society, all family actions follow the trajectory of "maintaining and enhancing their value," striving to improve their social standing and accumulate various forms of capital.

The father's educational approach reflected this goal. For example, he initially strongly opposed Marcel attending plays, considering it a frivolous waste of time. However, inspired by Mr. de Norpois, he later viewed attending theater as a potential key to advancement, leading to a change in his stance (Proust, 2019). The father was particularly dissatisfied with Marcel's sensitive and impulsive nature. Marcel recognized from a young age that being emotional was a significant flaw. To his father, Marcel's insistence on asking for a goodnight kiss before going upstairs to bed was "unnecessary and ridiculous" (Proust, 2003). Given the father's pragmatic attitude and obsession with career success, it can be inferred that he saw emotionality as a hindrance to success. However, while he often mocked and ridiculed Marcel's rich and outwardly expressed emotions, the father himself was equally emotional. He frequently acted on impulse, without careful thought. The grandmother described him as irrational, and the great-uncle had previously remarked that Marcel's sensitivity was "just like his father's" (Proust, 2003). As Marcel grew up, he began to understand his father through

his own experiences: both struggled throughout their lives to suppress and conceal the endless yet hidden emotional turmoil within them. The father's approach to Marcel's upbringing was, in essence, an attempt to impose his ideal self upon his son. This was both a fulfillment of parental responsibility and an effort to resolve his own internal contradictions (Fei, 2018).

The father did not influence Marcel through personal example but instead hoped that his son would become the kind of person he himself could not. As a result, his educational methods were authoritative rather than subtle. He often displayed contempt for Marcel's intelligence by mocked his dreams and friends. Sometimes, he would abruptly deprive Marcel of the right to take a walk or demand that he leave his mother early to go to bed, offering only perfunctory explanations or none at all. His demands often appeared arbitrary and commanding, disregarding reason or the child's emotional response. This authoritarian approach damaged the parent-child relationship (Fei, 2018). The father's authoritarianism became a source of lifelong anxiety and pain for Marcel, who secretly compared him to the biblical Abraham, ready to sacrifice his son:

*"Whenever I listen closely, I seem to still hear the cries of those days. In my father's presence, I forced myself to endure, but when alone with my mother, I couldn't help but cry out loud. In fact, this crying never stopped"* (Proust, 2003).

Despite the pain, Marcel unconsciously internalized his father's authority deep within his soul. As Shils (1983) observed, acknowledging authority also entails accepting the beliefs and behavioral paradigms it conveys. Like his father, Marcel never entirely escaped his emotional nature. In his intimate relationship with Albertine, Marcel displayed a domineering attitude to maintain his authority—a clear imitation and replication of his father's behavior.

### ***Two educational traditions***

From the above analysis, it can be seen that there are significant differences between the educational values and methods of the grandmother and mother compared to those of the father. According to Shils' theory of tradition, most of what parents pass on to their children does not stem from their own experiences or family but from the shared beliefs and ideas of society as a whole (Shils, 1983). This collective consciousness, transmitted across generations, constitutes tradition. In any large-scale society, there are multiple coexisting major traditions. Thus, it can be reasonably inferred that, in 19th-century French society, at least two educational traditions coexisted, serving as the roots of the two forms of family education in Marcel's household. The French sociologist Philippe Ariès, in *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, studies the transformation of family and childhood concepts in France from traditional to modern perspectives. His work helps us understand the traditions of family education in France during the 19th century and earlier. Philippe Ariès distinguishes two types of families based on the status of children within them. In the first type, children are largely ignored, with inheritance and work being the only priorities. In the second type, the family's wealth depends primarily on the children and their future. This complements Durkheim's view of the modern family as centered on people rather than material wealth. As a result, there are two types of family education traditions.

The first tradition is associated with the apprenticeship model of education. Children were sent to live in another household at an early age (around 5-7 years old). The

mission of such families was clear: to protect the family estate and collectively engage in a trade. Children worked and lived just like adults, without distinctions, essentially functioning as young adults. Because children spent very little time in their own families before leaving, parental affection for them was often shallow (Aries, 1965). Author Q observed that, between the 16th and 17th centuries, literature documented two prevalent emotional attitudes toward children. Initially, there was indulgence, with parents treating children as playthings, somewhat whimsically (Aries, 1965). This was followed by frustration and anger, as parents worried that overindulgence would spoil their children. In such families, “the transmission of values and knowledge, and the broader socialization of children, were not guaranteed or controlled by the family” (Aries, 1965). As a result, family education lacked seriousness and was often arbitrary. The second tradition emerged under the influence of modern schooling. During the 17th century, moralists and educators developed a new focus on the psychology and moral upbringing of children, which influenced education well into the 20th century. They recognized the fragility of children’s rational minds and emphasized nurturing this aspect. This marked the beginning of a serious and genuine concept of childhood. Such ideas, originating outside the family, gradually permeated family life (Aries, 1965).

This change in children’s status was reflected in parents’ increased attention to everyday details (their health, their amusing remarks, their academic progress) and demands for equality of rights for children. By the late 17th century, middle-class families sought to balance warmth and reason in family education. Parents were encouraged to stay close to their children, let them express their thoughts freely, and treat them as rational beings, using affection to win their hearts. This view is exemplified by Goussault’s *Portrait of an Honest Woman* (Aries, 1965). The ultimate goal of this tradition was to raise honest, upright, and rational individuals (Aries, 1965). French Enlightenment thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau built upon this tradition by proposing an education philosophy centered on nature. His work *Emile or on education* was originally written for a virtuous and thoughtful mother (Rousseau, 2009) and can be read as a guide to family education. Rousseau emphasized that family education is the starting point and foundation of life-long education. Parents are a child’s first teachers, and the success or failure of family education directly affects the child’s physical and mental development, as well as their future social behavior.

This education, according to Rousseau, should not cater to society’s utilitarian demands but instead ensure that the child grows into a free citizen with an independent personality and moral character. He advocated for parents to follow the natural laws of children’s growth, avoiding coercive or punitive measures. Educational methods should prioritize observation, guidance, and companionship, particularly fostering habits aligned with nature (Rousseau, 2009). Rousseau also stressed the importance of role models, asserting that parents’ words and actions are the best teaching tools for children. Thus, parents must also cultivate their own behavior and lead by example. The differences between these two educational traditions are primarily reflected in whether children are seen as potential heirs to family property or as independent individuals; whether they are passive adaptors to society or active reformers of it; whether their physical and psychological traits and personalities are respected; and whether parents lead by example in daily life. These contrasts provide valuable insights into the evolution of family education and its impact on children and society.

### ***The coexistence of two educational traditions within a family***



The coexistence of different traditions within society may be brought into the same family by their respective advocates. This gives rise to situations where two or more distinct traditions coexist within a single family. The Marcel family serves as an example of this phenomenon. From the above analysis, we can trace the connections between the father's and grandmother's family education approaches and the two aforementioned educational traditions. The father regarded Marcel as a potential successor. Since the Middle Ages, the tradition of sons inheriting their fathers' professions has been taken for granted by the father and other relatives in Combray. However, in modern times, generational transmission in some professional fields has become increasingly unfeasible. This is because such professions are tied to honor and social prestige rather than wealth. The father accepted this reality but insisted that Marcel must pursue a respectable and influential career, ensuring the superiority of their social class. His efforts to shape Marcel's character were guided by the standards of an adult who could adapt to societal life and achieve tangible success. His treatment of his son alternated between indulgence and frustration, depending on his mood, rather than regarding him as an equal. His authority and authoritarianism were rooted in this perspective.

The grandmother's educational perspective, as reflected in the first three books she selected for Marcel, reveals its intellectual lineage. It can be traced back to the Enlightenment thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who lived about a century before the novel's setting. Both Alfred de Musset and George Sand, the other two authors, were influenced by Rousseau, whose works—such as *On the Origin of Inequality*, *Émile*, and *The Social Contract*—celebrate nature, emphasize individual emotions and inner experiences, advocate freedom, and focus on morality. The grandmother's approach to education aimed to cultivate an ideal, independent individual. Her focus on daily habits and routines sought to enhance Marcel's intellect while bringing him joy and aesthetic refinement, balancing reason and warmth. Shils points out that traditional paradigms of belief and action possess remarkable persistence. They shape people's behaviors either as practices deemed self-evidently acceptable and worthy of preservation or as unavoidable starting points for action. Moreover, once a paradigm is accepted as "natural," this "naturalness" often becomes equivalent to what is normative and obligatory (Shils, 1983).

The family education provided by the father and grandmother (along with the mother) was deeply rooted in past traditions. However, in the practical context of family life, these connections were largely overlooked. What stood out were their respective habitual practices and the things each considered "natural" and "self-evident." In the shared endeavor of educating Marcel, which involved competing traditions targeting the same individual, conflicts often arose as they sought to preserve or pursue their own ideals, power, status, and other interests. The father ridiculed the grandmother's naturalistic education as madness, while the grandmother criticized the father's utilitarian education as foolishness. Yet these conflicts were accompanied by integration (Shils, 1983). The mother played the role of a mediator and bridge between the two approaches, though this is another topic for further research.

## Conclusion

The classic French novel *In Search of Lost Time* (1871-1922) depicts Marcel's personal growth beginning within his family, where familial influence profoundly

shapes his character, values, and life path. This study aimed to trace the underlying family education traditions through the parenting behaviors and philosophies portrayed in the novel. Findings reveal that Marcel's family embodies two contrasting educational models. His father envisions a prestigious, influential career for Marcel, focusing on his professional future and attempting to curb his emotional nature to ensure success. The father's educational style is often arbitrary, fluctuating between indulgence and aversion, and he frequently relies on authority to enforce his expectations. This strict, utility-driven approach becomes a source of lifelong distress for Marcel. In contrast, Marcel's grandmother and mother prioritize fostering natural, kind, refined qualities and a rational mindset, striving to nurture an idealized self. Their approach involves both deep affection and careful role-modeling, subtly integrating educational principles into Marcel's daily habits. This immersive, thoughtful guidance leads Marcel to internalize not only their love but also their values and outlooks.

While there are clear ideological and behavioral differences between the grandmother and mother's nurturing approach and the father's utilitarian model, these variations stem not merely from individual personalities but also from broader societal influences. Historically, French society has seen at least two distinct educational traditions, which are reflected in the contrasting approaches of Marcel's family. One is a traditional, utility-focused education rooted in the medieval and early Enlightenment eras, when the purpose of family education was largely inheritance preservation and children were quickly assimilated into adult society. This perspective often led to a blurred understanding of childhood, characterized by either shallow indulgence or strict control, influencing the father's educational approach. The other tradition, rational and modern, developed alongside the spread of schooling and the recognition of children's unique needs. Figures like Rousseau, with his *Émile*, advocated for an education guided by both warmth and reason—an approach embraced by middle-class families and clearly embodied by Marcel's grandmother and mother. In this early 20th-century French family, we see a blend of utilitarian tradition from medieval times, rationalist influences from the modern era, and an emerging desire to reconcile these approaches. A detailed analysis of Marcel's family provides valuable insight into the complex structure and dynamics of French family education traditions of the time. On a broader level, analyzing family education traditions through literary examples may offer a framework for examining universal family education models across cultures.

However, this study has certain limitations. Although *In Search of Lost Time* delves into social themes, it is ultimately not a work focused on education, and the author's aim was not to systematically document or analyze family education. This results in a somewhat generalized and incomplete portrayal of family education, particularly regarding the father's role. Consequently, links to the corresponding educational traditions may lack depth. Future research could explore conflicts and harmonization of family educational traditions within this novel, examine the portrayal of family education in similar literary works, or conduct case studies on other traditions reflected in the text. In sum, cross-disciplinary research connecting literature and sociological theories of tradition holds promise for further exploration.

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### **Conflict of interest**

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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