



Marcel and Swann “Use” the Woman but They “Practice” the World*

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ERIC Landowski has distinguished the two possible forms of the quest for happiness corresponding to two different forms of taste, namely, "the taste of pleasure," and "the desire to please." With regard to "the taste of pleasure," It is what we now call "aesthetic experiences", which refer to a class of interactions in which "subject sensitivity" – as subject-body – is put to the test in a confrontation with "the materiality of things" or with "the carnal presence" of others. Within this framework are "deep" and "exhilarating" pleasures, for example, in the intimacy of shared pleasure – but also all sorts of pleasures, such as those that can be brought about by the love of music or the other arts, taste for walks or good food, or the practice of a wide variety of activities, sports among others, in which "the adjustment" to the dynamics of a moving partner (whether human or not) leads to forms of euphoria related to the motricity of the own body and its mastery. Then this enumeration gathers heterogeneous pleasures. In fact, any quest for pleasure, whether it is specified in the "aesthetic" mode or the "phoric" mode, is placed on the side of one and not the other of the poles of the alternative that we have above: on the side of the desire to enjoy – to enjoy things, or people, as "incarnate" beings – as opposed to the pleasure of pleasing – to please others, that is, people this time as beings endowed with "judgment". As for the "taste of pleasure," we must distinguish two conceptions of pleasure: The first reduces the world to matters and bodies in respect of which the subject

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condemns himself to maintain only a unilateral “possession”. In other words, this first conception bases the “enjoyment” of the subject on the unilateral relation of the “possession” of the elements of the world and of the people. The second conception emphasizes the relationship of interactional reciprocity. We can give it as an emblem the verb “to love” or “to savor”: to love a landscape or a piece of music, leaving the object free to deploy its potentialities. The first condition for accessing this form of pleasure that we place on the side of love as opposed to possession (or, more technically, on the side of the union as opposed to the “junction”) lies in the availability that allows the subject to grasp the world as a space populated by presences that ask to make sense, that is, subject actants. With regard to the question of meaning, which for Landowski is only the resultant or the product of the subject's interaction with the elements of the world and by making “use” of it, he distinguishes two forms of interaction that one revises the idea of “use” and the other that of “practice”. The first objective of this article is to show that the idea of “use” corresponds to the first conception of pleasure and that of “practice” to the second. The second objective of the article is to show that the two conceptions of the word of “use”, and “practice”, one based on the unilateral, functional and utilitarian relation of the subject with the world, and the other based on the dynamic and dynamic interaction with the world, serve to differentiate the lifestyles and the way of acting of Marcel and Swann, the two protagonists of Proust, vis-a-vis the women and the elements of the world which surround them.

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