THE POLEMICS OF SENSIBILITY:

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU'S RADICAL ROMANCE IN

JULIE, OU LA NOUVELLE HÉLOÏSE

By

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(Under the direction of Thomas Cerbu)

ABSTRACT

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's epistolary novel, *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*, created a literary sensation as the best-selling book of the eighteenth century, and the author himself had a consequential, if controversial influence on the French Revolution, as well as the Romantic Movement. Although recent scholarship on Rousseau and revolution has turned toward the role of ideology in the writings of the author, his sentimental novel receives little modern attention. This essay addresses the salience of Rousseau's novel as the most comprehensive statement of his thought, creating the "myth of Rousseau" and a generation of believers who identified with the author and his philosophy. I propose to first discuss the phenomenal popularity and literary cult following of Rousseau as the first celebrity author, and why *La Nouvelle Héloïse* achieved a mythical status. The encyclopedic and persuasive power of the new genre of the novel, along with the author's unique appeal to his readers, combined with the rise of print consciousness toward an awareness of individualism and the interior self, together making for a life-changing impact upon the revolutionary generation. The theory of M.M. Bakhtin, embracing the novel as the genre *par excellence*, provides useful perspectives for examining how this novel intersects

and intertwines with the reader's context and consciousness, *dialogizing* the "ideological becoming" of a human being. I will follow in a close reading how *Julie* subverts the societal conventions of the era, connecting the personal and political, while providing a charismatic lyrical voice of "sensibility" toward internal self-awareness and subjective feeling as a means of truth, morality, and spirituality--the essence of romanticism. Considering this, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* calls for more attention as a crucial contribution to Rousseau's legacy, and the success of the novel holds a startling relevance for our own age of cultural instability, technological advances, revolution, and lyrical thinking.

INDEX WORDS: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Romanticism, Lyricism, Heteroglossia, Dialogic, French Revolution, M.M. Bakhtin, Eighteenth Century, Print Consciousness, Virtue, Sensibility, History of the Novel

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE LYRICAL REVOLUTIONARY

'Terror without Virtue is bloody; Virtue without Terror is powerless.' That ugly sentence would have been different if Robespierre had not read Rousseau. Stanley Loomis, *Paris in the Terror*.

What links violence to writing? What must violence be in order for something in it to be the equivalent of the operation of the trace? Jacques Derrida, from "The Violence of the Letter: From Levi-Strauss to Rousseau" in *Of Grammatology*.

But we who remember must bear witness: that was not only a time of horror but also a time of lyricism! The poet reigned along with the hangman…Here innocence danced! Innocence with its bloody smile. Milan Kundera, speaking of the 1948 communist revolution in Czechoslovakia, *Life is Elsewhere.*

Can art have any real effect in the political drama of human history? Since we will be considering this question concerning the way the powerful genre of the novel intermingles with politics and romance, we will begin with a modern novelist who mingles sexuality and political revolution as a theme throughout his works. Milan Kundera knows something of revolution, coming of age in the 1948 communist takeover in Czechoslovakia and charged as a political criminal after the Soviet repression of the "Prague Spring" movement of 1968, which forced him into exile in France. In *Life is Elsewhere* (though Kundera's intended title was "The Lyrical Age"), the plot follows the adolescent yearnings of a young poet, Jaromil, paralleled with the revolutionary utopian passions and reductionist political discourse of that critical period during the 1948 communist *putsch*. Interwoven in the story are vignettes of the leftist student riots in the Sorbonne during 1968, the same year Russian tanks crushed the democratic reforms in Prague. Kundera argues that the idealistic thinking of adolescents in love, lyrical art, and revolutionary idealism are based on similar premises: "youth, poetry, and revolution are one and the same"

(1973, 226). Kundera shows all three belonging to a world of romantic abstractions and denial of reality, eventually deteriorating into violence and a betrayal of human empathy. While we may grant youth their fantasies for a few years before the world lays its ugly burden upon them, and allow poets their aesthetics, *Life is Elsewhere* is a savage indictment of the political romanticism that pervades revolutionary movements: "Lyricism is intoxication, and man drinks in order to merge more easily with the world. Revolution has no desire to be examined or analyzed, it only desires that the people merge with it; in this sense it is lyrical and in need of lyricism" (Kundera 1975, 261-2). In all of Milan Kundera's works, revolutionary and specifically communist doctrine is associated with a type of dangerously poetic lyricism, which is anti-rationalist in its unquestioning beliefs based in slogan and image, and denying essential human realities by using cloudy abstractions. Communism comes off as somewhat of a narrative fiction in a penny dreadful novel.

The merging of the lyrical and the political is a disturbing fact of the modern public sphere as well, but this connection has been present since the beginnings of the modern age. For that matter, we could say that the surge, if not the origins, of both romanticism and revolution in the late eighteenth century is not coincidental, and both are associated closely, but not clearly, with the name of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Ernst Cassirer argues that in his novel, *Julie,* Rousseau "discovered and resurrected the world of lyricism…that so deeply moved and so strongly shook his contemporaries" (Cassirer 1963, 85). The precise influence of this author and philosopher has always been subject to much debate and speculation, but it is well known that the name of Rousseau was very much on the lips of French revolutionaries of all contending parties, and that much of the blame for the revolution itself was placed by the survivors of that turbulent period on overheated interpretations of the works of Rousseau. Little contention, however, surrounds

his crucial influence on the movement we call Romanticism, which was not a transient artistic period, but rather, very much remains with us today in a twentieth-century incarnation, and could be called the beginnings of the modern mind.

Central to both Romanticism and revolution is the concurrent technological development that engendered the age of print. The invention of the printing press, of course, had preceded the eighteenth century by several hundred years, and its growing technological accomplishments were vital to previous revolutionary movements such as the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the Puritan Revolution in England. But the eighteenth century saw the proliferation of print on a mass scale, and a multiplication and affordability of books and periodicals for the common man, somewhat of an "age of information" akin to our own. As scholars of the history of the book like Eric Havelock, Robert Darnton, Marshal McCluan, and Walter Ong have shown, the primary significance of the technological developments of writing and print was not merely the spread of information, but the changes in *consciousness f*rom orality to a consciousness altered by writing and the printed page: cultivating interiority and individuality, visual primacy of truth, analytical thinking about reality, and the cumulative development of science and knowledge. In *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology*, Ong summarizes the issue like this:

> With knowledge fastened down in visually processed space, man acquired an intellectual security never known before…It was precisely at this point [the peak of the encyclopedic age] that romanticism could and did take hold…The romantic age felt it knew enough to savor its unknowing…The more knowledge grows, the more appealing become ventures into the unfathomable or bizarre. (Ong 1982, 278-9)

Ong goes on to argue that technology and romanticism are interconnected and spring from the common ground of accumulated knowledge--the former for practical purposes and the latter as a launch to another world (ibid. 279ff.). The confluence of technology, romanticism and revolution made for dramatic change into a truly new world order.

For our purposes, this consciousness comes together in the romantic reaction to the Enlightenment, that "age of reason," and the enablement by print technology of a charismatic and loquacious genre, the novel. In this tumultuous historical period of social and political discontent, these tensions united in the most popular book of the time, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*[1]. We will examine the improbable influence of this novel, little read today, and the extraordinarily creative and original thinking of Rousseau, which resulted in one of the first genuine "pop" celebrity cults. This may help to explain some of the mystery that surrounds the extraordinary but highly contended place of Rousseau in the evolution of modern thought and art.

Entering into the scholarship around Jean-Jacques Rousseau is fraught with peril: his own oeuvre is prolific, extremely diverse in range, and complicated and contradictory in its premises. This scholarship is voluminous, multidisciplinary, and bipolar in conclusions, and as in his own day, full of adoring admirers and disparaging enemies. Although the history of the French Revolution is not really the subject of this inquiry, a discussion of Rousseau's contemporary influence cannot avoid important connections to that fateful event, and to some of his most enthusiastic revolutionary fans, who claimed he had changed their lives. Like Rousseau scholarship, the French Revolution is one of the most contested events of history, more unresolved today than ever, and to cite certain scholars is seemingly to choose sides. While

[1] This essay will refer to the title, *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse,* as *Julie*, or as *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* for stylistic reasons, as Rousseau often did himself.

attempting to avoid any reductionist generalizations that Rousseau or any one work was the "cause" of any part of the revolution, we will find it profitable to examine some of the astonishing and colorful characters who made great claims for his influence, and try to imagine exactly what about *Julie* was so meaningful to that generation. Especially as we consider the seeds of romanticism in the book--known as "sensibility" in its early form--it will be important to note how significant Rousseau's novel appears in connection with revolutionary discourse and images, and with romanticism's ambiguous impact upon events.

Additionally, since we will be looking at the role of Rousseau in the rise of the genre of the novel during this period, we will be applying novelistic theory from M.M. Bakhtin as a way of interpreting how the novel both communicates and interacts with ideology, even to the *becoming* of personal ideological consciousness. Needless to say, Bakhtin himself in *his* complexity is a figure of ambiguity, controversy, and contradiction. Thus if we are working in a galaxy of Rousseau, the French Revolution, romanticism, and Bakhtin, we could be approaching a methodology of "chaos theory" in an attempt for an ordered system. We will need to carefully stake our ground in well worked-over territory, albeit still very rocky and full of weeds. A champion of chaos and complexity himself, Jacques Derrida suggests we use imagination in reading Rousseau:

> Not only does Rousseau take for granted the distinction between imagination and reason, but he makes the difference the strength of his entire thought…Certainly imagination has here a value whose ambiguity is often recognized. If it is able to corrupt us, it is first because it opens the possibility of progress. It *broaches* history…Although the concept of reason is very complex in Rousseau…reason, in as much as it is the understanding of the

> faculty of forming ideas, is less proper to humanity than imagination and perfectibility. (182)

Of perfectibility, we will not concern ourselves, but our imaginations will help Rousseau speak to us today, and he would have it that way. Peter Gay insists that the "critic's equipment" for a study of Rousseau must include the ability to sympathetically enter his world and "imaginatively re-create" his environment of dreams (intro. in Cassirer 1963, 22). Reason will often fall short in trying to establish a systematic Jean-Jacques, but imagination will let him speak across the centuries.

Although he publicly reviled the new pop genre of the novel, Rousseau's audience came to him primarily through his reluctant success in romantic fiction, as his other works temporarily faded into contemporary obscurity; his evolution into timeless political and social philosopher and legendary man of creative ideas began mostly with a tale of sentimental young lovers, driven to excess by a hostile social order. In this reading, we need to first examine the wild popularity of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, especially in contrast to the author's other works that are better known today but obscure or unpublished in his time; ironically, his novel is marginalized in modern times. The reader reception of Rousseau's novel was so unprecedented and perhaps unequaled that it must be acknowledged and analyzed in order to understand its impact. *Julie* was received with a near mass hysteria and almost religious devotion across all classes of European culture. A look at Rousseau's impact upon the lives of fascinating personalities of the day, such as Maximilien Robespierre, will both prove interesting as well as enlightening in examining the book as far more than a sentimental romance, but rather as a revolutionary manifesto in its content. The notoriety of some of these characters and their homage to Rousseau are part of the myth that has led to oversimplifications about the author's blame for the excesses of the French

Revolution. For our purposes, we will want to keep such factors in mind as we consider the impact of literature on some of his actual readers and look for exactly what about the novel resounded with them as life changing truths. This becomes particularly important as we address the language of the novel, and how concepts such as "virtue," "nature," "freedom" and the "Supreme Being" became bloody abstractions of revolutionary excess, as well as a code for the cult of the author. In this we will also want to consider Jean-Jacques' own expressed theory of the novel and theory of himself, ever at the center of all his writing. With this essential groundwork in mind, a re-reading of *Julie* reveals a radical revolutionary document and less of an effusively passionate romantic fantasy.

We will also examine in this introduction the power of the novel genre in the eighteenth century, and how the rise of print consciousness itself contributed to a new awareness of the individual self, democratic ideals and subversion of the class system, a public sphere generated by the business of marketing ideas, and an empowered new female readership audience. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* occupies a consequential place in the emergence of the genre and contains an array of creative, radical ideas that could only have been conveyed in novelistic prose. Against this background, we will consider at the end of this chapter how we should best read the novel.

Because of the maudlin tone of the novel, the vast number of critics and scholars who investigate Rousseau's thought pay scant attention to *Julie*. Some critics do sober definition studies of love, nature or virtue in the book, but miss the iconoclastic fervor that shook a generation, what we will call a *double-voiced* intention. The characters have potential for psychological analysis, but their gushing sentimentality probably makes them uninteresting. However, attention does come from the feminist line of criticism, which has in recent years gone beyond Rousseau's surface level patriarchal structures--albeit conflicting with his worshipful

stance toward women—and look at Julie's articulate and intelligent role as heroine. Despite the incredible complexity of Rousseau's romance, modern trends seem fixed on Rousseau's sexual eccentricities and instability toward gender constructions. Notwithstanding, critics like Judith Shklar and Carol Blum provide a helpful grounding for this study that is unrelated to particular feminist interpretations of Rousseau. The well-known study of Jean Starobinski provides an insightful diagnosis of the author's pathologies, and the ways his psyche is reflected in his writings. Starobinski enlightens every work of Rousseau, including *Julie*, by showing the author's preoccupation with "transparency," a concept that informs the assumptions of my work.

Once we consider the profound impact of Rousseau upon his readership in the eighteenth century, we will look more closely at *why* the book electrified a cult following. The fact is that *La Nouvelle Héloïse* carries a latent message of political outrage couched in the injustice and inequality of a society that condemns the young protagonist's love as forbidden. Herein lies the political philosophy. The Enlightenment views of an orderly nature and reason are subverted by higher callings of natural wildness, intensity of feeling, and interior nobility of the soul. In what was the most eloquent voice of his age, Rousseau is the first Accuser on a mass scale of the artifice and hypocrisy of civilized society. He also becomes a pioneer of psychology, invigorating the insights that began with Locke into what constitutes a living, breathing experience. Furthermore, he explores psychological disturbances, not only channeling the unhappiness and insecurity common to human existence, but providing solutions. Rousseau uses the interior and individualizing voice of print consciousness in the novel to accomplish rapport, identification, and compassion in a manner that was so unprecedented his audiences went wild with emotional connections to the author. Speaking to the private mind, he reached with a spiritual voice to a public grown disillusioned with ritual and corruption in the Church.

Appealing through an eloquent inner voice rather than the contested enigmas of scripture, he presented an attractive "natural" religion with a saintly role model in an evangelistic and sensible voice. This language of spirituality is closely linked also with erotic love and "the language of the heart" in a simultaneously seductive and inspirational manner, in stark contrast to the religion and romance of the day.

All of this took place through *sensibility*, which was "the intuitive capacity for intense feeling" or in other words, a feeling heart, which became "the precondition for morality" (Schama 149). In *Julie,* we will see how this sensibility becomes a way of seeing, being, and finding truth and salvation; the very ambiguity of the word and its relation to "virtue" amd other abstractions will be a theme we will follow, and find sensibility to be a powerful rhetorical tool in the hands of Rousseau.

After acknowledging the reasons why *Julie* is little read today compared to other eighteenth-century novels and other works of Rousseau, we will consider the ideological potential of this novel and the questions it provokes about the interweaving of art and the individual, lyrical thinking, and technology, and all of these influencing social and political change. Cassirer, writing in the context of 1930's Germany in *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau,* insisted that Rousseau's writings are "a movement of thought that ever renews itself, a movement of such strength and passion that it seems hardly possible in its presence to take refuge in the quiet corner of 'objective' historical contemplation" (1963, 35). A similar context to pre-Revolutionary France exists today: a growing gap between rich and poor, an overwhelming national debt, a new technological consciousness, mass communication provoking unpredictable outcomes, a sudden influx of global interaction, paralyzed institutions controlled by an entrenched elite, conflicting special interests, and lyrical political rhetoric based on image

and myth. In our own age of almost insurmountable problems, we know that whatever political power seizes the stage, it will not be based on articulated reason, but rather on lyrical thinking, whether it is based on family values, the Founding Fathers, a Christian Nation or Islamic Republic, diversity, choice, change, or social justice.

Kundera, in the most popular of his books, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, describes this lyrical attachment to simplistic truths and denial of unpleasant realities, as a vague "aesthetic ideal of categorical agreement with being" which he calls "political kitsch." Kundera likens an American senator's tears at seeing children playing in the grass to the smile of a Communist statesman from the podium at the brotherhood of man in the masses below him: "The senator had only one argument in his favor: his feeling. When the heart speaks, the mind finds it indecent to object. In the realm of kitsch, the dictatorship of the heart reigns supreme" (250). Kundera traces this kind of thinking to the eighteenth century:

> Since the days of the French Revolution, one half of Europe has been referred to as the left, the other half as the right. Yet to define one or the other by means of the theoretical principles it professes is all but impossible. And no wonder: political movements rest not so much on rational attitudes as on the fantasies, images, words, and archetypes that come together to make this or that *political kitsch.* (ULB 257)

Although this kind of thinking can be seen to be reflective of Rousseau, the purpose of my work is not, as has often been done, to blame Rousseau for the kitsch of the Revolution. Rousseau's central theme was the freedom of the individual from the conditions and opinions of social, religious and political institutions of the day. Romanticism liberates the mind and soul from submitting to the predetermined values of a world that always goes awry. As we shall see, Rousseau turns the individual inward toward the discovery of truth and strength within the self,

and the world becomes better only as individuals change themselves. Just as the teachings of Jesus Christ for personal change were distorted into political juggernauts and force, so Rousseau's liberation of the self was misread into oppression, as it continues today. The leap from the personal will to the force of power over others' wills often form the basis of the rhetoric of kitsch.

Nevertheless, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is a political novel, and in all senses a beginning of the personal as political. Part of the problem ensues from the novel as a mass phenomenon, unprecedented at the time, and the unexpected--and unwanted--celebrity of its author.

ROUSSEAU: CELEBRITY SUPERSTAR

Jean-Jacques Rousseau must certainly be the first author in literary history to have had a theme park dedicated to his honor, and his celebrity cult status in the latter eighteenth century remained unprecedented until the era of mass media. Other authors, of course, received more respect and literary recognition, but Rousseau had a peculiarly obsessive fan base that resembles the status granted to present-day pop icons and bears comparison to Elvis devotees on a holy quest to Graceland. The shrine for Jean-Jacques pilgrimages was twenty-five miles outside of Paris, at Ermenonville, on the estate of Marquis de Girardin, where Rousseau had spent the last months of his life and was buried in 1778. A contemporary wrote, no doubt with some hyperbole, that "half of France has transported itself" to this revered site, described by Simon Schama in *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* as far more than a grave monument, and more a vehicle for activity-based meditations on the novels of Rousseau (Schama 158-160). Local peasants were hired as bit players, dressed as shepherdesses and cow-herds, frolicking and singing folk music in set-piece pastures to evoke the pastoral scenes of Switzerland in *Julie*; a

specialized marble bench was placed for the breastfeeding advocated by *Emile*, a radical practice for the aristocracy of the stilted rococo age. Dark, uncultivated forests suggested wilderness with imitation mountains, waterfalls, and Gothic ruins. A guidebook, somewhat of a "program" written by Girardin, directed the pilgrim's thoughts toward a full appreciation of what he was witnessing. One could view the cabin where Saint-Preux, protagonist of *Julie*, agonized over his frustrated love, and quotations from the novel were engraved in stone throughout the "scenery of virtue." The culmination of the tour was the tomb of Rousseau on the "Isle of Poplars" on the lake of the estate, where Girardin counseled sublime feelings: "Let your tears flow freely…Never will you have spilled such delicious or such well-merited teardrops" (158-9). In the decade following the author's death and prior to the Revolution, this shrine echoed the feelings of those who would become the revolutionary generation of all classes. Additionally, in the years following his death, an authentic pop cult developed around the author, with many poems and songs written in homage to him, plays based on themes from his life and his novels, *fêtes* and street names celebrating him, and alleged fragments and fabrications of his thought in an all-out "press campaign" to his honor exceeding that accorded any other eighteenth-century writer (Blum 135-6).

This well-known enthusiasm is often noted. Rousseau has his established nooks in the textbooks of political thought and educational theory, but none of this would suggest to the modern reader the revolution that is Rousseau. If Stanley Loomis, drawing a connection from Rousseau's thought to the Terror and the guillotine in his riveting *Paris in the Terror: June 1793-July 1794* can state that the author had "an influence and celebrity that probably transcend anything achieved by any writer since his time" (27), we are uncertain whether to take him seriously. Rousseau is everywhere and nowhere in the post-Enlightenment history of philosophy.

Few outside of France would know what to say about him beyond his contributions to principles of democracy or his concept of the noble savage in the "state of nature." A look into the literature about Rousseau will find remarkable attributions to his influence but much disagreement and little clarity about the exact nature of how he comes down to us today. A good example might be Will Durant, an astute observer about the entirety of human history and its great figures, who grants incredible significance to this one Swiss writer in the tenth volume of his *Story of Civilization* series, appropriately entitled *Rousseau and Revolution.* Durant appealed to a broad audience in the mid-twentieth century, but his exhaustive series on world history is obsessively documented and provides extensive fascinating detail and comprehensive synthesis of scholarly work. The opening paragraph of this volume on the eighteenth century is quoted at length here to begin a fuller examination of the enigma of Rousseau and a summary of his influence:

> How did it come about that a man born poor, losing his mother at birth and soon deserted by his father, afflicted with a painful and humiliating disease, left to wander for twelve years among alien cities and conflicting faiths, repudiated by society and civilization, repudiating Voltaire, Diderot, the *Encyclopédie,* and the Age of Reason, driven from place to place as a dangerous rebel, suspected of crime and insanity, and seeing, in his last months, the apotheosis of his greatest enemy--how did it come about that this man, after his death, triumphed over Voltaire, revived religion, transformed education, elevated the morals of France, inspired the Romantic movement and the French Revolution, influenced the philosophy of Kant and Schopenhauer, the plays of Schiller, the novels of Goethe, the poems of Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley, the socialism of Marx, the ethics of Tolstoi, and, altogether, had more effect upon posterity

> than any other writer or thinker of the eighteenth century in which writers were more influential than they had ever been before? Here, if anywhere, the problem faces us: what is the role of genius in history, of man versus the mass and the state? (Durant X, 3)

Durant may be excessive here, or we should wonder why Rousseau is not the center of the canon of modern literature and history. However, such assessments are not rare, nor outdated. Contributions from a recent conference in Copenhagen published in 2011, also entitled *Rousseau and Revolution,* argue for the enduring centrality of the works of Rousseau in the modern era of radical social upheavals, mass political movements, and radical democratic revolutions, stating that "no single theoretician is of bigger relevance" than Rousseau (Lauritsen and Thorup 1-2). The conference addressed the historical controversy of Rousseau's influence upon revolutionary thinking, and the role of philosophy and literature in general to exert change:

> Philosophers, historians and social scientists debate the interrelationship between ideas, structures and societal change--and everyone eagerly assigns praise and blame to various thinkers for this or that development. Rousseau has been the epicenter for this kind of debate for more than 200 years, centered round, albeit not exclusively, the French Revolution as the most monumental social and political change in modern history. Was Rousseau its 'author' or did he just become the convenient target of attack for anti-radicals then and since? (7)

We will have occasion to note work from this conference later, remarking now only that Rousseau is still the "epicenter" of an important unresolved question: What explains the accounting of Rousseau as the father of all kinds of things, from anthropology to Maoism? On the other hand, for all of his seminal influence, the problem of the "paternity" approach is

pointed out by R.A. Leigh in his introduction to the bicentennial of Rousseau's death, a 1978 conference entitled, *Rousseau After Two Hundred Years*:

> Rousseau has too often suffered from critical fixation on the 'paternity' approach. He has too often been regarded primarily as the father of certain ideas, attitudes or events. The father of romanticism; the father of intuitionism and subjectivism (and therefore of laxity) in ethics and religion; the father of the French Revolution (of its achievements or of its excesses and its horrors): the father of socialism, of anarchism, and latterly of totalitarianism….The 'paternity' approach has usually meant that writers tend to take sides, consciously or unconsciously, for or against him in direct proportion to their approval or disapproval of the movements and attitudes he is alleged to have fathered. (viii)

The engendering of this fatherhood seems to find traces of Rousseau's literary DNA everywhere, and the shelves are filled with tomes exhorting this political strand and that, primarily based on the author's political works like *The Social Contract* and the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality.* Something about Rousseau is important, yet a perusal of his best known works today will not yield a clear indication of the supposed seminal thinking that would justify his wild popularity and influence. Moreover, most of what he is known for today was not widely available until quite some time after his death. One place to examine this question is to analyze what Rousseau's contemporary audience was reading at the time, and what particularly resounded with their experience. The bicentennial conference cited above on Rousseau and revolution takes scant notice of his biggest success, *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* which *was* on the minds of his eighteenth-century readers.

THE LITERARY CULT OF JEAN-JACQUES

Despite Rousseau's political genius, his theories of government were of less importance in the creation of myth around the author. Perhaps the most comprehensive statement of this issue comes from Schama, quoted at length for its scope and relevance to this examination:

> Historians have long been concerned to judge Rousseau's influence on the revolutionary generation by gauging that generation's familiarity or unfamiliarity with the formal works of political theory, in particular *The Social Contract*. While there is growing evidence that this work was in fact read and understood before the Revolution, it is undoubtedly true that it never reached the huge and adoring readership of his educational "biography" *Emile* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse.* But to assume that those works had little influence on political allegiance is to adopt a much too narrow definition of the word *political*. As much as his writings dealing with the sovereignty and the rights of man, Rousseau's works dealing with personal virtue and the morality of social relations sharpened distaste for the status quo and defined a new allegiance. He created, in fact, a community of young believers. Their faith was the possibility of a collective moral and political rebirth in which the innocence of childhood might be preserved into adulthood and through which virtue and freedom would be mutually sustained.
>
> Just how this was to be accomplished was, in all of Rousseau's writings, notoriously obscure. In his lifetime he had shown himself circumspect about, if not downright hostile to, any suggestion of revolt. What he invented was not a road map to revolution, but the idiom in which society's discontents would be voiced and its goals

> articulated. And most of all he provided a way in which the torments of the ego--an increasingly popular pastime in the late eighteenth century--could be assuaged by membership in a society of friends. (161)

Rousseau's novels, then, are political in another, more modern sense, and the identities they established in his readership became somewhat of a religion; as a consciousness of the self awakened, it became defined by the language of the self of Jean-Jacques. Schama's mention of a new definition for the word "political" will be an important concept to keep in mind.

Despite the popular assumption that the skepticism of the Enlightenment writers led to the French Revolution, concrete evidence shows that the *philosophes* "were neither widely read nor distributed" in the years prior to the Revolution, but the "philosophy" of Rousseau was the object of near mania (McDonald 18). We shall later consider the notion of Rousseau's language becoming a revolutionary idiom, but the decline to obscurity of his overtly political works in his day necessitates further attention as we consider exactly what about his writing spoke so eloquently to "young believers."

The problem of the influence of the political works is detailed in an exhaustive study of this question by Joan McDonald, in *Rousseau and the French Revolution,* showing that the nature of the revolutionary generation's fascination with the author was more along the lines of a literary cult. *The Social Contract* would seem to modern readers to be the essence of Rousseau's thought, and certainly it is the work most analyzed by modern critics, and is the most eloquent and radical of his works. However, MacDonald shows that *The Social Contract* was of minor importance in the pre-Revolutionary period. She cites the fact that a 1910 catalogue by Mornet of 500 private libraries in and near Paris from the period between 1750 and 1789 found only one copy of *The Social Contract* and 145 of *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* with any other work reaching

scarcely one-fourth of that number (43). No edition of *The Social Contract* was published after Rousseau's death until the Revolution (144) and Rousseau even stated that it was difficult to obtain a copy in France during his lifetime (*The Confessions* 376-7). While few publications of the period attended to his political works, a huge amount of literature was inspired by his novels, or imitations of them (44). McDonald notes that when Mercier in his contemporary commentary on the Revolution wanted to show that Jean-Jacques was the precursor of the event and that his "hatred of inequality" was the essence of his thought, he did not turn to *The Discourse on Inequality*, but to *Julie* and *Emile* (7). Great fans of his entire work thought his political essays were a *tour de force*, but also thought them abstract and impractical (McDonald 43-47; 107). While his name appears everywhere in the discussions about the political future of France, the Declaration of Rights and the Constitution of 1791 have no relation to his theories, and could be said to disagree with them (21). It must be noted that McDonald's studies are contended by such scholars as R.A. Leigh, who is particularly fond of *The Social Contract*. Leigh insists that such studies do not take into account the pirated editions sold on the streets, nor the "Complete Works" editions sold (Swenson 161ff.). We will not enter into the statistical evidence here, but only argue that the political essay, dense with theoretical abstractions, and the novel, depicting passionate romance and sensual absorption, surely had very different audiences. The seeming obscurity of the former compared with the wild popularity of the novel points to *La Nouvelle Héloïse* as much more influential. Certainly, fanatically devoted fans of Rousseau--like Robespierre--were students of *The Social Contract* as well, but the laws and political oratory of the Revolution do not reflect the basic premises of *The Social Contract*, which opposed a representative "republic" in favor of direct democracy as a basic foundation of its theory, a concept that was not feasible in France in 1789.

For that matter, the glorification of Rousseau was not limited to the revolutionaries, but extended to the counter-revolutionaries, royalists and patriots alike, and his authority was appealed to by all factions, including both sides of the debate over the trial of Louis XVI. Rather than his ideas shaping the Revolution, McDonald argues that his ideas were shaped into forms that resembled the politics of the day. Rousseau's name by 1791 was such an essential part of revolutionary religion and was so charged with patriotic emotions that it was necessary that his theories conform to those sentiments which the revolutionaries adopted from their prophet and idol (81). Lauritsen points out that invoking Rousseau became somewhat of a "shorthand" for revolutionaries to stake out political positions (7). The author's name alone became code for radical revisionism, virtue, alignment with "nature," and feeling souls.

More than being the father of the Republic--represented by the bust of him sculpted from Bastille stone for the Assembly--Rousseau could be said to have "captured the imagination" of the generation more than any other figure, and this, MacDonald insists, is "the true explanation of the Rousseau cult" (161). This imaginative perception had little relevance to specific political theory: "It was a personality and literary cult which owed its existence to the appeal of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and *Emile*, but even more to the personal legend" (ibid.). This legend was of the virtuous and feeling Jean-Jacques, the man of "Nature," who was hounded by a corrupt society into obscurity and destitution. More important for political theory was his model for moral regeneration, and this "moral" theme seems to be at the center of revolutionary interest wherever Rousseau appears in their discourse (164). Jean-Jacques was seen as "having laid the foundations of Revolution by rescuing the *individual* from the toils and corruption (of society) and recalling him to the path of virtue…and teaching the need for individual moral regeneration" (my emphasis) (165). Rousseau particularly appealed to a discontented bourgeoisie who suffered

under the oppression of unjust institutions and identified with the persecution of both the young lovers in *Julie* as well as of the author himself, who contented himself with living in "simple natural virtue" and the realm of the individual heart, where false notions of privilege and merit did not exist (166). These abstractions and ethereal emotions were the point of the author, and gave the readers "a real feeling of being spiritually at one with Jean-Jacques Rousseau" (McDonald 169).

Thus his political essays were less of a factor to his celebrity myth. However, one might validly question whether *The Confessions* or *Emile* were a more natural source of his cult following. Rousseau's most devoted fans, like Robespierre, were familiar with all of his works and there is no denying that these books entered into the myth of Jean-Jacques as well. We must therefore consider more closely these and some of his other works, since they have received more attention today from those who are interested in Rousseau.

During his early career and through his late thirties, Rousseau found mediocre success as a music composer and copyist, although one of his operas was performed at Versailles. He developed a friendship with Denis Diderot, one of the authors of the *Encyclopédie*, and wrote several entries on music for that comprehensive work. At Diderot's suggestion, he submitted an argument to the Academy of Dijon for an essay contest, answering the question, "Has the restoration of the sciences and arts tended to purify morals?" Rousseau states that upon reading that question he "saw another universe and became another man" (*Confessions* 294). At a time when essay contests were nearly the "American Idol" of the time, his *Discours sur les Arts et les Sciences* (1749) brought him instant fame with its eccentric assertion that progress in knowledge and culture distanced man from his natural state and brought oppression by feeding the political structures that used knowledge as power. From this first inspiration came the theme that would

dominate his work for the rest of his life and make him famous: the dichotomy between the state of man in "nature" and the artifices and corruption of civilization. He wrote another essay for a later competition at Dijon, *The Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality*, which has commanded great attention in succeeding centuries but did not win the essay contest for that year, 1755, though it did bring further recognition to the author. While his early discourses are important for understanding his thought and did achieve recognition in literary circles, the real turning point in his career came with the publication of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in 1762, the biggest selling novel of the eighteenth century. The period following this publishing sensation was a fertile one for Rousseau, and he quickly followed the success of *Julie* with his other "novel," *Emile,* and the now renowned *Social Contract.* However, these works were immediately condemned and Rousseau fled into exile as they were publicly confiscated and burned.

The obscurity of *The Social Contract* and the political discourses to the revolutionary generation was discussed above, but the importance of *Emile,* his other novel and an influential educational treatise, needs closer examination. While regarded as a fictional construction, *Emile* is primarily a densely ideological discourse about educating a young man, Emile, in accordance with "nature," rather than the artifices of civilization. The scandal that erupted around the book mostly stemmed from its assertion that Emile would not be exposed to religion until he arrived at adulthood, when he could decide for himself a personal belief system. Rousseau stated that "everything that was bold in *Emile* was previously in *Julie*" (*The Confessions* 342), but *Emile* was popular more by notoriety in the decades preceding the Revolution, compared to the "delicious tears" and passionate identification that characterized the reception of *Julie.* Still, the significance of *Emile* cannot be dismissed: even Louis XV is said to have raised the Dauphin by its principles and nineteenth-century educators cited the book as seminal for modern educational

theory. Nevertheless, it does not appear to have had the contemporary impact that *La Nouvelle Héloïse* enjoyed across class and culture. While *Julie* contains the drama of class conflict and forbidden romance from the very first page, *Emile* is theoretical didactics for several hundred pages before the female character is even introduced, and her marriage to the protagonist, if dangled in postponement while he receives further instruction, is a foregone conclusion from the inception of the romance. In short, the bourgeois provincials and "gothic" loving female readership would have had to endure extensive lecturing in *Emile* to arrive at the plot. *Julie* sets up the dramatic tension from the very first letter. The banning of *Emile* made it far less available, though obviously many of Rousseau's already devoted fans would not have been deterred by that, or the slow moving didactic of the first half of the book. If the reputation of *Emile* is more enduring in history, its contemporary influence was far inferior to that of the page-turner *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

The Confessions is the most modern and readable of Rousseau's books today, and is extensively analyzed and anthologized. Certainly much of what we will argue about *La Nouvelle Héloïse* can be seen in this autobiography, which even has an arguably novelistic element. Yet availability of *The Confessions* was limited before the Revolution. Although the author did a few public readings of the book during his lifetime, Volume I was not published until 1782, when the "cult" of Rousseau and pilgrimages to his tomb were already well established. For that matter, Volume I, while confessing some titillating revelations of the author's childhood, covers only the period through his first thirty years, before he enjoyed any public success or notoriety. The seemingly most important event for the author in this volume is his long-term relationship and status as a kept man with the aristocratic and much older Louise de Warens, whom he met when he was a teenager. We could presume that such a biography would only be of interest to those

who were already devoted to Rousseau through his other works, specifically *Julie,* which we might consider as the main entrance to *The Confessions.* Volume II of the autobiography was not available until the eve of the Revolution in1789; that this second installment was then much in demand is not in question, and *The Confessions* became a particular favorite of Robespierre (Jordan 263). Yet the myth of Jean-Jacques had already obsessed a generation, and the latter part of *The Confessions,* with its themes of goodness under persecution, were more of a reinforcement of the myth that had already swept France.

Rousseau is sometimes said to have written his best fiction in his political essays and expressed his best political statements in his novels; we shall see that all of his themes can be found in *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* where he reached his widest audience. The contention here is that this novel conveys in a subtle, yet powerful form a radical and ambiguous polemic of democracy, class iconoclasm, self-conscious individualism, and a new spirituality that would contribute to altering the perceptions of an entire generation. However, this publishing sensation of the century is little known in English today. Rousseau's reputation in France is, of course, of an entirely different sort, but no new complete translation of this book has been available in English since 1761 until the recent Dartmouth edition, published in 1997 and used in this work.

The cult following of the novel has been studied by Robert Darnton in his book of "histori-cultural" curiosities, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History.* Darnton argues that a way of comprehending the real everyday life of distant historical cultures can perhaps be best studied as a "history of mentalities," similar to the way anthropologists analyze alien cultures by totems and taboos (3). The title chapter suggests an alien world of the eighteenth century with disturbing vignettes from the records of history showing appalling disregard and torment of man's other best friend. We know there is something

different in the very worldview of human beings who could laugh uproariously at the dying howls of animals thrown in a sack into the fire, or subjected to mock trials and hangings; our beloved kitties were exterminated as vermin or worse, killed because they were embodiments of demons.

We are equally astonished by another important chapter in Darnton that appraises the fanatical response to the publication of *La Nouvelle Héloïse.* We might recognize by analogy something akin to modern hysteria over the Beatles, or Justin Bieber, though we can scarcely believe such a fuss would be present over a book, especially one with the soap opera emotions of Rousseau's novel. It will be of value for us to read *Julie* with the contemporary reader in mind. Darnton shows that some seventy editions of the book before 1800 made it by far the biggest selling work of the century in all of Europe. Demand was so excessive that booksellers rented copies by the day or the hour (242). Darnton states that average readers were so intoxicated by the book that "They wept, they suffocated, they raved, they looked into their lives and resolved to live better, they poured out their hearts in tears and letters to Rousseau" (242). Rousseau kept for posterity the thousands of ecstatic letters he received, an unprecedented event in the growing cult of authorship, which Darnton identifies as a natural extension of Rousseau's epistolary novel (ibid.).

In Darnton's analysis of the correspondence with the author of *Julie,* we find examples of the fervor with which the book was received, and a new phenomenon in the growing idea of the cult of the writer; it was a novel idea in literary history for an author to receive letters from unknown fans (248). Darnton argues that it was not the love story that stimulated them, but a "love of virtue that readers confessed when they tried to explain their emotions" (246). Darnton states that Rousseau's readers felt the compulsion to confess their own weaknesses to him, to

bare their souls with their own sins and suffering; *Julie* had led them to a new resolve to dedicate themselves to virtue despite the wickedness of the world around them (ibid.). One writes, "Your works are an all-consuming fire…you have penetrated my soul, fortified my heart, enlightened my mind…You are the god that brought me from the precipice!....How I have burned (since) with the love of virtue!" (247). Another admirer explains that his sentimental style is a result of his reading: "It seems one cannot write without being filled with your spirit….The spirit of Saint-Preux passed completely into mine. "The letter continues with the void left in his life after Julie's death in the book (ibid. 244).

Darnton emphasizes that these typical responses were from "ordinary" people, but that very "ordinariness" is what makes them so significant in understanding the phenomenon of *Julie* (241). Darnton concentrates on one particular admirer, Jean Ranson, whose extensive correspondence with a Swiss publisher was preserved for posterity as he attempted to obtain all of the author's published works. He apologizes for his extensive praise of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "but I like to tell myself that the enthusiasm he inspires in me is produced by his own enthusiasm for virtue" (240). Darnton states that Ranson and other readers adapted the tone of the letters of the lovers in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*: "earnest, intimate, sentimental and moralistic" (241). What is particularly remarkable is that Ranson indicates a developing attitude toward printed text, "not just to enjoy literature but to enhance family life" (ibid.). He speaks of a "profound effect" of Jean-Jacques on his domestic life. Rousseau wanted to be taken as a "prophet of truth" and clearly Ranson responded in that manner (232). Rousseau insisted that his message was one of "the heart" rather than "the word," and the innocent hearts of his protagonists, like that of the author, filled the readers with something other than rhetoric.

While the direct influence of Rousseau on the Romantic movement is too vast to consider here, some specific examples would be useful to consider. In English-speaking countries, Romanticism is generally regarded in terms of the nineteenth-century poets, William Wordsworth, Percy Blythe Shelley, George Gordon, Lord Byron, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, all of whom were significantly influenced by the French author. Byron and Shelley went on the Rousseau tour, and Eisler describes them as "recent converts to the cult of Rousseau;" *Julie* "validated crucial areas of each poet's behavior and beliefs" (524-5). They stayed in a chateau on Lake Geneva as part of the pilgrimage, and Byron had a copy of the book with him when he and Shelley were nearly drowned in a squall on the lake near the place where Julie and Saint-Preux had their brush with death. Meditations on Rousseau lended fertility to the imaginations of these poets during this period, where Byron composed "The Prisoner of Chillon" and the third canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" and Shelley wrote his "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," "Mont Blanc," and his famous letter to Peacock (Reiman 26). Additionally, the well-known horror story contest took place during this period, with Mary Shelley writing *Frankenstein* and John Polidori inspired to model *The Vampyre*[2] after the womanizing character of Byron. Lord Byron was often bewildered by the frequent likening of his character to that of Rousseau, including comparisons made by his own mother (Quennell 607-8). Shelley was in the midst of writing the "Triumph of Life" at the time of his death in another less fortunate boating incident. In this poem, which T.S. Eliot considered his best, Rousseau is the guide in a "Dantesque landscape;" the narrator's unanswered question to Rousseau, "Then what is life?" is the last complete line of the poem and of Shelley's life (Reiman 129-30). Another Romantic and Rousseau-pilgrim, William

[2] Some critics believe this little-known prototype of vampire stories may be one of the most influential works ever written. Certainly, its romantic vision of blood-sucking corpses remains with us today as another pop intoxication.

Wordsworth, seems to strongly echo (and sometimes nearly plagiarizes) *The Confessions* in his autobiographical "Prelude" (Nichols 1; 24; 63).

Of course, an immediate comparison is suggested with Richardson's earlier *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded,* another epistolary novel that Rousseau was familiar with in French translation. The story is well known how parish bells rang across England when the serial installment was published of Pamela Andrews' marriage. That event shows the overwhelming power of a new genre, the full-length novel, at a time when the development of the printing press allowed for lengthy, consuming prose at affordable prices to recently appearing literate masses eager for reading stimulation, and equally eager booksellers seeking to cater to that taste. Rousseau happened to catch that wave with the timely release of *Julie,* a novel that appealed both to eroticism and morality with an engaging plot--at least, to the reading public of the time--and contained a subtle polemic that overturned the institutions of the day in favor of democracy and the rise of the individual consciousness of self.

REVOLUTIONARY GENRE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

While the rhetorical power of a story may have significant effects on an individual, some other factor must be involved to make a mere book into a life-changing event, or a stimulus for a mass movement. Another matrix, like one in our own era, was technological innovation in communication and its incarnation in a new genre, the novel. Mikhail Bakhtin, in his analysis of the history of the novel, places great importance on the contribution of the novels of Rousseau to the development of discourse and stylistics in the genre, though he does not follow with specific examples from the author; we will later look closely at elements of Bakhtin's theory as it applies specifically to *Julie.* However, it is first necessary to place Rousseau within the context of

traditional work about this rapidly expanding genre during the eighteenth century, a crucial period of the rise of printing and print consciousness and the sudden availability of expansive texts that could now contain the novel. Rousseau's work was poised at exactly the right time and place to catch this wave. The classic study in this development comes from Ian Watt in his seminal work, *The Rise of the Novel*, which shows the intersection of ascending literacy, industrialization and the middle-class, and the corresponding growth of the print market. While print-based text seems like a primitive form in the age of cyber-reading, the novel swept the world as a radical technological development, a consciousness-altering innovation in an age when the old world was rapidly dissolving into the new, and the nature of thought expressed through it was up for grabs.

In the eighteenth century, the most dynamic aspect of the mass-produced texts was the ability to encompass a relative "realism" by vast incorporation of the details of ordinary life and personal nuance of character. Our modern media age allows for a sharper sense of the "real" that makes this significance obscure to us. The novel verbally captured the imagination far beyond the limitations of the storyteller, and the printed text allowed for a new subtlety of presentation. We can barely grasp the profound naiveté of this new reading public from a modern perspective, where even a rustic farm boy with a television is a comparative sophisticate of narrative. Watt argues that this accumulation of detail appealed imaginatively to the individual senses, as verisimilitude and the depiction of ordinary people in particular situations carried a rhetorical power akin to actual experience (60-61). Strange as it seems, the novel was an eighteenth-century "virtual reality." The expansiveness of print carried a "capacity for the penetration of the Reader and his subjective life" that sustained an enormous power of suggestion (198).

Of course, Rousseau is not considered to be an influence in the developing "realism" of the novel, even if many of his readers thought that *Julie* was a real collection of letters written by actual people (Darnton 244). Auerbach, in his canonical text on realism, *Mimesis*, notes the importance of Rousseau for creating an alternative "natural" reality, that is, the uncivilized "state of nature," as opposed to the historical reality of mankind, a process which Auerbach calls "a wish-image for the design of life" on the part of Rousseau (466). The trappings of civilization become unreality, a clichéd idea by our time, but a radical in idea 1760. As we will see, though *Julie*'s characters live in a plausible world of ordinary lives, the author suggests that civilization subsists through surface appearance, far from Nature, and that a greater reality of the soul transcends artificial human affairs. *Julie* realizes this philosophy in its narrative, and we could say it is a major theme of the novel. Auerbach states that "politicizing this idyllic conception of Nature" creates the conditions for the romantic departure from reality, and the rise of modern subjectivity of reality (466-7). Auerbach credits Rousseau with "awakening a new sense of the individual through the revelation of his own unique individuality" (466). More properly speaking, the characters of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* are all emanations or alter-egos of the author; his unique contribution, through a voyeuristic view into private correspondence, is the manner in which he gives voice to the individual, a language of the self, as it were. Rousseau was most eloquent when his subject was Jean-Jacques, and the subject was *always* Jean-Jacques. This language reached out with an evangelistic fervor to kindred spirits who recognized a higher realism than their shabby lives: a *feeling* heart. The individualism of *Julie* was a charismatic rise of self-awareness that was sweeping Europe through many intermingling forces.

Individualism was in the air. Watt argues that industrialization brought a greater freedom of choice, while urban growth and the departure from the extended family structure brought

increased economic, social and religious individual responsibility. Watt places this in the context of the English novel and the influence of Protestantism with regard to personal responsibility for salvation and the spiritual importance of every element of life (74; 177). If we apply Watt's model to Catholic France, we can see how the individualistic spirituality of *Julie* might spread like a refreshing gospel in a land disillusioned with the excesses and faltering control of the Church, yet not soothed in soul by the withering skepticism of the *philosophes.* Catholicism had also increasingly begun to emphasize individual responsibility for spiritual growth as an accommodation to the Protestant challenge. But the character of Julie departs from Protestantism into an entirely personal relationship with a divine being beyond specific doctrine. We shall have cause later to examine this spirituality, but it is consistent with the appeal to individualism throughout the book and the powerful rhetoric it contains.

Ian Watt, of course, focuses on the English novels of Richardson, Fielding, and Defoe, and takes no note of Rousseau in his mention of French novels, excepting the author's great admiration for the epistolary *Clarissa* (219). However, we will consider some of Watt's attention to the importance of print technology as a factor in the literary cult that developed around *La Nouvelle Héloïse.* Watt argues that Richardson's use of the epistolary form, impossible before the arrival of affordable printing for the masses, gave fiction a new "subjective and inward turning direction" allowing far more expression of private feelings (176). The readership of *Julie* would respond to this development with an inner awakening of the soul. An additional reason for this power is the "impersonal authority of print" that may distance readers from the author but allows them to read more automatically and "surrender to the world of illusion," making the book temporarily an extension of their own personal lives (Watt 198). The comprehensive power of this new genre allows for a personal identification and experiential relationship to literature

that was not possible before, and indeed explains our modern complaint about films, that "the book was better," because it allows us to have a view into the minds of the characters and more completely to empathize with them.

The power of this revolutionary novel genre was part of an epoch that was undergoing a major shift in human consciousness through the medium of print on many levels. Eric Havelock detailed the shift in human thinking from orally-based cultures to written ones, which allowed knowledge to move from memory-based formulaic thinking to an analytical and cumulative process that affected consciousness itself. Walter Ong found a corresponding transformation in the avalanche of printed knowledge, and forecast a similar revolution for electronic consciousness today. Individualism itself was facilitated by the rise of both print and the novel. Bakhtin noted that the novel is the only new literary genre to arise after the invention of writing and "alone is organically receptive to new forms of mute perception, that is, to reading" (3). Astonishingly, evidence is accumulating that until around the eighteenth century, literature was mostly *read out loud*, though this phenomenon was rarely mentioned because it was so commonplace (Lock 72). The advent of "novelistic discourse" ushered in a new "realm of the unspeakable" that represented a significant move toward an individual and private experience of reading[3] (Lock 74-75; Ong 154).

Ong shows that just as writing and the rise of private sacred texts enabled the great introspective religions--Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam; the prolixity of print allowed for the internal reflective thinking on a mass scale which is characteristic of the novel (104). Perhaps one of Rousseau's greatest contributions to modern thought and an attractive part of his initial success was the complex human psychology explored in his writing long before

[3] Rousseau did give public readings of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and his *Confessions*, but the novel became increasingly a private experience.

"psychology" was a discipline. Judith Shklar notes that above all, Rousseau was a psychologist (Shklar vii) and that while he owed a significant debt to John Locke's "sensational" theory, he transformed that thinking into a psychology of "feeling and suffering and an indictment of civilization so severe that it touched every aspect of individual and collective human experience" (33). The way he accomplished this was by answering Locke's question of what and how we know with the assertion that we can only know ourselves in "a new kind of introspection" such that only the "deepest analysis of our own feelings can bring insight" into the human condition (39).

Rousseau's strategy for this was to explore the subject upon which he was most eloquent, himself. Starobinski is, of course, the most authoritative and eloquent student of Jean-Jacques' multiple personality disorders in his comprehensive work *Transparency and Obstruction*, but Rousseau's power lies in the reader's identification with the dysfunction that is in all of us. The most comforting voice for any disorder tells us that "we are not alone." Part of the appeal of *Julie* was its articulate and original depiction of the foibles of the human psyche: Starobinski finds Oedipal struggles, sublimated sexuality, masochism, paranoia, narcissism, projection, and denial, to name a few, and these torments of Rousseau resonate in the consciousness of his audience. Many later novelists, like Jane Austen, would go on to a much more intricate and subtle psychological analysis, but the epistolary form of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* brought, as Shklar indicates, what seemed like amazing "psychological realism" to eighteenth-century readers. Perhaps some of the most neurotic and paranoid revolutionaries found themselves attracted to Rousseau, rather than his works "causing" their disorders.

The dominance of print also paved the way for the rise of romanticism, which, according to Ong, was not coincidental:

> A typical manifestation of romanticism…is interest in the remote, the mysterious, the inaccessible, the ineffable, the unknown. The romantic likes to remind us of how little we know…When print locked information into exactly the same place upon the page in thousands of copies of the same book in type…knowledge came suddenly to the fingertips… It was precisely at this point that romanticism could and did take hold. (Ong 1971, 276-8)

As Ong argues, romanticism is not a "period" from the past, but really the beginning of modern thinking and certainly still omnipresent today (8). Ong sees technology and romanticism growing "out of the same ground" despite their seeming opposition: technology grows out of stored knowledge, and is suspicious of the "soft" science of rhetoric; likewise, romanticism, comfortable in accumulated science, looks to that which is beyond, and has its own suspicions of contrived rhetoric (see *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology* Ch. 1 & 11). Ong is remarkably prescient about the last decade of technology although he did not live to see it. We can see that with exponential growth in access to information and scientific authority, "romantic" thinking is all the more prevalent in every non-scientific area of life; rhetoric lies purely in the domain of the image, the triumph of Kundera's *lyrical* way of thinking in politics and religion, as well as the arts. Rousseau's romantic novel offered a definitive challenge to the Encyclopedists, who were attempting to capture the known world, even as he opened the door to the unknown.

Ironically, during the same period that the tide of private individualism became widespread, a new "public" forum came into existence as well, and the interchange of the two began to form the discourse of human events. McCluan shows that printing *created* the public sphere (ii). Much of the discussion of this emergent "public sphere" centers around the Marxist work of Jürgen Habermas *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* which is based on

economic determinism. Habermas sees individualism as a bourgeois development. A reading audience interested in knowledge and self-improvement directed its attention toward literature, especially the novel, and this became fertile ground for subjectivity (46-50). This new reading public found its voice in the cafes, salons, periodicals, and clubs, like the Jacobins and the freemasons, and made an expected turn from the literary to the political. Sarah Maza, from a feminist perspective, shows how Rousseau was instrumental in this extension, stating that "Rousseau's works spoke to all aspects of his readers' lives, clarifying the connection between private experience and public ideals" (Swenson 50). His "discourse of virtue" became an opposition between sincerity and sensibility, on the one hand, and persecution and artifice, on the other, an antagonism between the individual and society (51). As in our day, when a good share of the public discourse on the web concerns celebrity and entertainment, the cafes and salons were buzzing with the "virtuous self" of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, so that his politically charged works took a natural turn from the individual to the implications for society. As Ong suggests, introspection of the individual invites empathy and group consciousness, and the desire to be more "socially sensitive." Unlike members of a primarily oral culture, "who are turned outward because they have had little occasion to turn inward, we are turned outward because we have turned inward" (Ong 1982, 134).

Along with this new public expression came a corresponding influence from market forces. In the increasingly lucrative book market, Rousseau's name became "commoditized" as a sure-fire bestseller, and his works were imitated and pirated (Simon, *Mass Enlightenment* 98). Indeed, part of Rousseau's paranoia about his public notoriety came from the fact that as one of the first novelists to publish his name along with his work, he had become the target of what we are now familiar with as tabloid attacks and celebrity notoriety. Habermas is correct in asserting

that once capitalism began to experience rich rewards from the publishing industry, an entirely new marketing force came into play in literature, and Rousseau, as one of the earliest beneficiaries of this trend, suffered as well from its ill effects. Although the author himself would not become wealthy from the sales of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, he did significantly contribute to the rise of books as a business.

Most importantly, public sensibility became manipulated on a mass scale in an unprecedented manner that it was not ready to accommodate. Later, we will argue that Rousseau's introspective analysis was not meant to reform society, but to allow the individual to exist within it with integrity. Ong has also argued eloquently that the rise of romanticism came at the time of a similar decline in rhetoric as a discipline. In the great debates of the revolutionary legislators, in clubs like the Jacobins and in the stew of inflammatory pamphlets that were boiling with revolutionary fervor, the rhetoric had shifted to romantic truisms. Robespierre reflects such fuzziness in his very last speech before his execution, quoted by Slavoj Žižek sympathetically in his recent publication of Robespierre's speeches (see note below):

> But there do exist, I can assure you, souls that are feeling and pure; it exists, that tender, imperious and irresistible passion, the torment and delight of magnanimous hearts; that deep horror of tyranny, that compassionate zeal for the oppressed, that sacred love of the homeland, that even more sublime and holy love for humanity, without which a great revolution is just a noisy crime that destroys another crime. (xxxix)

We could argue that modern political rhetoric, which is more image and feeling than content, is a direct descendent of this shift. *Julie* was the high art and entertainment of the period, just as today, when entertainment carries the bulk of political and social belief systems.

Another important development of the period that both fueled the success of *Julie*, as well as the popularity of the genre, was the rise in the readership of women, who would constitute the majority of the audience for the novel to this very day. *Julie* brings the important addition of feminine consciousness into the public sphere. Watt indicates that industrialization also brought an increasing amount of leisure time to the home, with time-consuming tasks like making bread, soap, linen, and the like consigned to the factory. While religious books were big sellers for women's reading, there was growing interest in more secular texts, and although the theatre and public houses were still questionable places for women, private reading was a more acceptable diversion (Watt 43-5). Rousseau was conscious of his female readership, and even indicated in his first preface that *Julie* was "better suited to women than books of philosophy," with the seductive equivocation that no chaste maidens read novels (*Julie* 1). In fact, Julie is an intelligent, articulate, and capable female character who is really developed in a precocious manner for eighteenth-century fiction. If his portrayal is distasteful and stereotypical for the modern critic, especially considering Rousseau's other writings about women, it was revolutionary thinking for the period. Given that women were hopelessly oppressed and defined by the patriarchal structure, had few options outside of the home, and were lectured and cornered into *being* a stereotype, Julie was a breath of fresh air, a hope that the *individual* woman could have a freedom and independent reality in the soul-life that transcended the conventions of society. Something about her character spoke deeply to women. Rousseau claimed to adore women, even as the pedestal he placed them upon was absurd and, ultimately, condescending. Still, his passionate Saint-Preux, denying the stereotype of aggressive male sexuality and placing Julie's "virtue" above all of his desires, appealed to the feminine wish-image with the eloquent effusions of his heart. While Pamela Andrew's "virtue" depended on Christian morals, virginity

and spousal loyalty, Julie exemplified a virtue that allowed for youthful indiscretion, since she could cherish a soul-mate lover other than her cold-blooded husband. This question will be examined at length in a later chapter, but the point here is that *La Nouvelle Héloïse* appealed to the vast new female audience in a unique manner.

The intention here is not simply to provide the anatomy of an eighteenth-century bestseller and its celebrity author. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* was poised at a time in history when the new medium of the novel was on the rise as a powerful communicator while the old order of the ancient regime, along with the entirety of rococo culture, was in precipitous decline. By all historical accounts, Rousseau was the single most important influence during a vast shift in literary habits, political thinking, and cultural identity, when change pivoted into a mass phenomenon, rather than being restricted to the relatively closed circles of the aristocracy. He was cited as a significant inspiration for most of the literary and philosophical work that followed him in the immediately succeeding era, and was present in the discourse of the revolutionary generation and consequently praised or vilified by its critics. His vast, often contradictory oeuvre of political writing is dissected anew by every generation, according to its prevailing perceptions. The exact nature of his influence is further complicated by the vagueness and abstractions by which his contemporaries refer to his work. Yet often overlooked in present-day analysis of the contributions of Rousseau is the fact that the foremost work that the revolutionary generation was reading was *Julie.*

The primary reason for this inattention is that the book is virtually *unreadable* today (we will never see a mini-series based on this story). The modern reader can bear a little sentimentalism for social criticism, as in Dickens, or perhaps regard it with some amusement, like the excesses in the eighteenth-century gothic. The prolonged rhetorical over-heatedness of

ecstatic hyperbole and anguished exclamation of the two lovers is relentless in Rousseau's novel, broken only by extended, tiresome digressions of moral lecturing and odd preoccupations. All of this makes it simply unbelievable that there is anything of significance to find in this novel, and it seems absurd that it could have possibly electrified a generation. Additionally, *Julie* does not display the technical literary ability that we ascribe to influential literary classics of the past. Rousseau's other works often speak with a more agreeable modern tone, and for this reason, those works are read more often today.

THE REPUBLIC OF VIRTUE

To argue that *Julie* had a significant political influence in its day is to pick a quarrel; indeed merely entering the controversy of the French Revolution uncovers a hornet's nest. Citing historians such as Simon Schama, Robert Darnton, or Joan McDonald is to choose sides and align with certain trends in historical perspective that have ebbed and flowed for more than two centuries. In the decades immediately following the Revolution, it was fashionable to attribute its causes to the hotbed of Enlightenment ideas, including Rousseau, and its rabid anarchy, traced to the political consequences of the skepticism, atheism, and anti-monarchism of the late eighteenth century, served as a cautionary tale about extremist ideology. However, through two-thirds of the twentieth century in French criticism--and *French* historians were the only authoritative scholars to the French--Marxist orthodoxy predominated with a "scientific" dialectic analysis of bourgeois capitalism overthrowing the feudal order. Historians such as Albert Mathiez, George Lefebvre, and Albert Soboul, with "layer upon layer of class analysis," emphasized economic determinism over ideology. Yet if Rousseau showed some predilection for a kind of socialism, his works also contain many contradictory assumptions about maintaining a benevolent

aristocracy, which was distasteful to Marxists (Davies 130). This orthodoxy perhaps stifled modern French historical study. With the decline of communism in the late twentieth century, a new school of "revisionist" history began to reassess the role of discourse in the revolution. François Furet, both French *and* a former communist, led this charge, proclaiming that the revolution was "a history of words as much as deeds, of ideology as much as action" (Gough 7). Furet argued that the ideas of Rousseau "rushed into the political vacuum created by the collapse of royal power in 1789, and created the radicalism which made up the real 'mystery' of the revolution" (Gough 8). Schama's narrative and anecdotal *Citizens* continued along this line about Revolutionary ideology. Written in a highly readable style with outstanding anecdotes, it epitomizes this school (Gough 4).Yet his argument has been highly controversial, causing him to state, "If I had wanted a quiet life, obviously, I shouldn't have written *Citizens"* (Davies 169). I am indebted to Schama's imaginative approach in this study, especially his addressing the role of the idiom of revolutionary discourse provided by Rousseau.

Friedrich Nietzsche abhorred Rousseau and often excoriated his role in Western thought as continuing the weakness of Christianity in a secularized form. Rousseau's "good man," Christian ideals, and romanticism are three of the five main enemies he lists under "My Struggles" (*Will to Power* 528-9). Nietzsche typified the blame cast upon Rousseau and his eloquent virtue steeped in emotion and exaltation as instrumental in the French Revolution:

> All the semi-insanity, histrionicism, bestial cruelty, voluptuousness, and especially sentimentality and self intoxication which, taken together constitutes the active substance of the Revolution and had, before the Revolution, become flesh and spirit in Rousseau--this creature then went on with perfidious enthusiasm to set the Enlightenment too on its

> fanatical head which thereby itself began to glow as though in a transfigured light. (*Human, All Too Human* 367)

Nietzsche insists modern social consciousness grew out of Rousseau's *ressentiment* against the aristocracy. The "herd instinct" of society's weaklings thus became a legitimate political struggle the empowered elite, who dominated them by superior force. Romanticism, then, became a "cult of passion" rather than strength, raising those who feel over those who act. (*Will to Power* 567). In fact, *Julie* will carry an important message for how the powerless will triumph through passive-aggressive sensibility.

While we are on a fragile foundation in returning to early post-revolution claims that Rousseau "caused" the French Revolution, we are following a modern question of how language shapes human experience. Addressing exactly the problem, "Do books make revolutions?" Roger Chartier states that the change of public opinion prior to the revolution was,

> …a process of internalization on the part of more and more readers as the century progressed, of ways of thinking proposed by the philosophical texts. Borne by the printed word, the new ideas conquered people's minds, moulded their ways of being, and elicited questions. If the French of the late eighteenth century fashioned the Revolution, it is because they had in turn been fashioned by books. (qtd. in Davies 193)

Darnton argues that the ferment of culture affecting public opinion gave a certain meaning to developing events and determined how people "took sides" when revolutionary events transpired (1995, 244). He focuses on the storm of illegal publications on the eve of the Revolution: Rousseau had many imitators, the so-called *Rousseau du ruisseau,* or Rousseaus of the gutter. Aspiring hacks of "Grub Street" saw him as a kindred spirit, a man of working class background and wife, a critic of the aristocracy, having little formal education, and a target of those who

banned books (Darnton 1982, 36). Darnton suggests that in the "cultural revolution" planned by the radical Jacobins, the "aristocracy of the mind" was the enemy of the republic of virtue: "Perhaps these propagandists functioned as the ideological carriers who injected the crude Jacobinical version of Rousseau into the *sans culottes*," the workers "without breeches" who formed the bloody mobs of the revolution (39). Rousseau was carried forward in the print revolution far beyond his own ideas by men caught up in their own delirium of lyricism.

In order to grasp the significance of the words of *Julie* to the revolutionary generation, we need to first examine the extraordinary effect of Rousseau upon their lives. While the events and personalities of the French Revolution are familiar to Europeans and scholars of French literature and politics, the period is obscure to Americans, and few may recognize important figures like Maximilien de Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, Louis-Antoine Léon de Saint-Just, Georges Danton, or any others except perhaps the Marquis de Lafayette. A digression into some of these characters not only will provide some important factors to keep in mind in a reading of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, but also proves a fascinating portrait of the real people who read Rousseau. Edmund Burke's famous accusation of their devotion perhaps states it excessively, but indicates some of the public spectacle: "Everyone knows that there is a great dispute among the National Assembly which of them is the best resemblance to Rousseau. The truth was, they all resembled him" (Edmunds 272). Much of the attention is drawn by the dictator-like Robespierre, who himself makes the clearest link between the Terror and Rousseau. If a figure like Robespierre appears to be a man of excess and exception, we have much more recorded about him, and will note that his rhetorical appeals to Rousseau were intended for a sympathetic audience. We will not regard him as the typical disciple of the author, but rather propose that his impassioned speeches struck some chord of rapport with his audience. While we are not moving onto the

dangerous, if well-ploughed territory of blaming the Revolution's bloody excesses on Rousseau, we will be examining why the novel resounded with truth to those who were inclined to radicalism.

We discussed above the problem of the absence of specific references and connections to Rousseau's more philosophical works by his contemporaries, even as they invoked his name at every turn--from love and nature to virtue to Terror, and Terror *with* virtue. This is precisely the dilemma in determining the influence of Rousseau. Some critics will point toward the unrecognized significance of Rousseau's novel as an agent of social change. The abstractions associated with the author, and the identity of some with the myth of Rousseau will be an important part of this examination of his novel. Moreover, we will explore the Rousseau effect upon particular individuals, and more specific concepts that are central to *Julie* and were important to them. The extraordinary power of this novel to shape the cult-like adoration of the author--however anachronistic that seems today--can be analyzed in an intriguing way in the discourse of his ecstatic admirers. Additionally, the dialogic interaction between fiction and life may have more clarity when far fewer novels were in circulation and the influences upon the social order can more easily be traced. Furthermore, we must note that some of his followers who achieved significant places in history not only seem to have thoroughly integrated their consciousness with that of Rousseau, but also proclaimed his influence in their lives as if they read *only* Rousseau. The theory of M.M. Bakhtin can be useful in examining how the novel contributes to the ideological becoming of a human being through the "making as one's own" of internally persuasive discourse and internal dialogism. We will have more to say of this in the following chapter. A portrait of some of these characters provides a fascinating glimpse into one of the first modern celebrity cults in literary history. Of course, the importance of Rousseau's

influence extends far beyond the eighteenth century, but the emphasis here on the revolutionary generation is because of the specific, traceable manifestations of his thought in their discourse, a phenomenon that well exemplifies Bakhtin's theory of the novel.

One crucial concept to first examine is Rousseau's employment of "virtue," present in some way in all of his works, but dialogized exhaustively in *Julie.* This character trait was the preoccupation of many of Rousseau's correspondents, who claimed that the book brought them a new "love of virtue" (Darnton 247). The author himself indicates that he had become "intoxicated with virtue" and this produced a "sudden eloquence" that had inspired him during the fertile period when he wrote his novel (*The Confessions* 350). Virtue as an abstraction is important to the study of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and virtue symbolizes a discourse and way of being far beyond the semantics of the word. Carol Blum brilliantly discusses how this obsessed a generation with a thorough analysis of these cultic elements in her 1986 book, *Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue: The Language of Politics in the French Revolution.* Drawing on Starobinski, Blum argues that the "fictional construction" of the "self radiant with virtue" of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, present in all of his works, also informs the individual discourse and public oratory of many of the leading figures of the Revolution (Blum 13). The abstraction of *virtue,* Blum indicates, is problematic in scholarly discussions of Rousseau's influence upon the events following the fall of the Bastille, as well as part of what distances us from *Julie* today. "Virtue" is an uncomfortable concept to modern scholars, and insufficient attention is devoted to this archaic term, despite its centrality to Rousseau and his followers (Blum 14). Even religious fundamentalists would feel awkward proclaiming their "virtue," and use of the term would make modern politicians fodder for comedy. The word is nearly extinct in English (except for idiom, such as "by virtue of…") but was a term as present as "liberty" on the lips of revolutionary

patriots. Blum contends that in the period before the Revolution, disillusion with the authority and myths of the Church, along with resentment for the prestige of royalty and aristocracy resulted in a culture ripe for a new myth, Rousseau's "myth of virtue" (162).

As we discussed above, Rousseau's myth grew enormously in the years following his death and was based less on his political theory than a way of identifying with the author and "conceptualizing the self" which developed into "an authentic popular cult" (133-5). Blum establishes the fascination with the author among the aristocracy and even the royal household, but particularly among the main political parties who were soon to be locked in a death grip that destroyed both factions, although both used virtue as a motto:

> For the two major bourgeois political organizations in the early years of the Revolution, however, the Gironde and the Jacobins, Rousseau's conception of virtue offered a galvanizing and integrating force, providing its adepts with the audacity to denounce and ultimately destroy the prestige of the hierarchy of blood. For both groups, too, it provided the bases for intense personal political binding to a small nucleus of 'elevated souls.' For both groups, finally, it furnished a model for attributing absolute evil to opposing parties, for refusing to envisage compromise with any persons with whom the group was not identified, and for viewing death as the rational alternative to failure of virtue. (139)

Rousseau's political works do not explicitly encourage any such sanguinary excesses, and we will consider whether anything in the popular *La Nouvelle Héloïse* would suggest such associations.

Virtue was a vague byword of the day before Rousseau. The term descended from Roman *virtus*, which had a cult-following of its own at that time, and was of great interest to the revolutionaries in their conceptualized imitation of the classical Republic. This now arcane term

was an abstraction that was often reinterpreted in the context of many diverse historical and literary cultures. Yet the term is of great importance for understanding *Julie* and a useful example of Bakhtin's "alien word" penetrating the belief system of the reader. We will address some of the semantic range of the term and later examine how Rousseau subtly manipulates virtue in his novel. Carrithers, in a discussion of Montesquieu's virtue, calls the term a "protean concept that shifts according to context" from Roman manliness to Machiavelli's princes to Robespierre's justification for exterminating his enemies (Carrithers 122). This will also provide a sharp contrast to the "English Virtue" of the other bestselling novel of the century, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded.*

Myles McDonell shows that until the first century B.C.E., *virtus* was primarily associated with "manliness," based on the root word "*vir"* (man) and was essentially a martial reference relating to courage (131). The term was never associated with chastity, women, or sexuality in any denotation (161-8), nor with moral behavior beyond the ideal courage displayed in a man; Roman records show embezzling soldiers pardoned because of their *virtus* (McDonnell 8). In the latter years of the Republic, when the military was no longer a duty of all citizens but consisted of paid professionals, *virtus* began to take on the semantic range of the Greek *arĕtē*, or an "excellence" that encompassed all other virtues, as the culture absorbed all other things Greek (385). Cicero in particular, a favorite of the later revolutionaries, began to reinterpret *virtus* as *arĕtē*, for lack of a better Roman word (233), in a similar manner to what Rousseau would do with the term centuries later. Interestingly, Schama argues that in the invention of the lawyer-orator as a spokesman for the public during the Revolution there was a conscious link between Rousseau and classical oratory, invoking Cicero's "new man" (166-71). Certainly, both are much represented in revolutionary discourse. Within another hundred years after the Roman Republic,

Christianity commandeered virtue, although the term--translated from *arĕtē*--appears in the New Testament only four times, where it is best translated as "excellence.[4]"

Blum prologues her *Republic of Virtue* with the views of Louis XIV, who understood "virtue" as the awe-inspiring light radiating from his person, humiliating commoners with his glory. Indeed, virtue was primarily the prerogative of the aristocracy by blood, sustained by military glory and service to the king. The term was used by the Church for its own purposes. The blatant abuses and moral corruption of these institutions, according to Blum, called for a new ethic and "the man who forged the vocabulary of [this] new virtue was Jean-Jacques Rousseau" (Blum 23-26). Most critics dismiss Rousseau's "virtue" as a replay of Montesquieu, who wrote of its political value in *The Spirit of the Laws.* Montesquieu associated virtue with a love of one's country involving self-denial and sacrifice (Montesquieu 21). However, he also fudged the term in a way that created controversy, and opened the way for Rousseau's ambiguous usage. Pierre Mamet calls Montesquieu's virtue a "shocking fiction…a truly strange thing that has never been met within this world or the next…an amalgam of ancient politics and Christian virtue in which each element loses its specific traits and takes on colors that denature it" (qtd. in Carrithers 153).

A natural comparison exists with the virtue of Richardson's Pamela, parodied and spotlighted as "vartue" by Fielding in *Shamela*. Rousseau was familiar with the novel in French translation, which preceded the publication of *Julie* in France by over twenty years, and which enjoyed success outside of England. In *Samuel Richardson's New Nation: Paragons of the Domestic Sphere and 'Native' Virtue,* Ewha Chung analyzes the distinctly Protestant "English virtue" as part of the religious educational system and part of the rising nationalism in England.

[4] …in my opinion, based on modern translations

She cites the definition of this term from Gerald Newman in *The Rise of English Nationalism* as "sincerity, honesty, purity (innocence), frankness, and moral independence" (23). Chung demonstrates that part of the English distancing themselves from the French enemy, their former masters, was the emphasis on the vernacular Bible, showing that Pamela's "virtue" is based on her "pious education in the Christian Bible and her faith in God" (23-32). Chung's argument is that Richardson's books reinforce notions of English nationalism and Protestantism over the corrupt "foreign" values of "tainted" virtue. As we will see, Catholic France turned to Rousseau's notions of virtue and a substitute type of Protestantism found in Julie's spirituality. Yet Julie's virtue, unlike Pamela's, allows for a breach of chastity while still maintaining its purity. While print culture in England was dominated by religious text and the Christian novels of Richardson, Fielding, and even the cleric Sterne, France was moving in quite another direction and open to an alternate spirituality found in Rousseau. The full religious nature of revolutionary obsession will be examined in connection with Julie's belief in the "Supreme Being," a belief that brought many denying atheists of the Revolution to the scaffold under Robespierre. For Rousseau, virtue was equally an obsession, and his "intoxication" is described nearly as a "born-again" experience. Starobinski states that Rousseau filled a religious "vacuum" for many of his followers while Christianity was subverted by "a vague anonymous hope, lived in the dense tissue of collective experience, perceived as a group aspiration at the same time as a personal appeal…[Rousseau represented] the ideal model of the stigmatized savior" (qtd. in Blum 147, from the French ed. of Starobinski). Clearly, his enthusiasm was contagious--and evangelistic.

The widespread sympathies with which bourgeois readers regarded Rousseau would have an influence on the political allegiance of the citizenry at the time of the Revolution, but the effect would be more profound on the men and women who participated directly in its

leadership. Jacques-Pierre Brissot, founder of the Girondin party edited the most popular political tabloid in Paris at the time, *Patriote Français*. He was instrumental in bringing down the monarchy, as well as in initiating the war that accelerated the paranoia of the Terror and brought about his own demise. Brissot declared his unwavering faith in the virtue of Jean-Jacques, despite the well-known criticisms of the author:

> Rousseau deserved to become the model for all the centuries…I know that people depicted him as a cheat, as a slanderer. The most moderate said he was a madman. I had the misfortune to adore this madman, and I share this misfortune with a throng of sensitive and virtuous souls. It is not in the least for his style, it is for his virtue. He made me love it, and it would be a great prodigy if a scoundrel made virtue loved. But were they to add the horrors told about Rousseau a thousand other details still more atrocious, more infamous, I would not change my opinion, I would believe my inner feelings. (Blum 142)

Such singular devotion, confirmed by the truth of "inner feelings," was the real sacred truth found in Rousseau, and it was not from the abstractions of *The Social Contract.* The Marxist line of historical interpretation would later dismiss these outpourings as bourgeois sentiments not yet having the vocabulary of scientific thinking, but virtue was clearly a way-of-being for the revolutionaries.

Insight into the ephemeral revolutionary heroine who also rose and fell with the fate of the Girondins, Mme de Roland, shows that despite his anti-feminist attitudes by modern standards, Rousseau stimulated eighteenth-century women into political activism, and women played a substantial role in the Revolution. Manon Phillipon, later married to the finance minister of the revolution, Roland de La Platière, wrote in her memoirs from prison, shortly before her

execution, of the effect of Rousseau on her life: “The fact is I read him very late, and it was well for me that I did so, since I might have been so engrossed as to have read no other author” (Philipon 209). Later she confesses, “Rousseau) was the proper food for my mind, and the *interpreter* of those ideas which I entertained before, but which he alone knew how to explain to me” (273 emphasis added). McDonald notes that she considered *The Social Contract* too theoretical to understand (45). Schama indicates that Mme Roland took her older husband, whom she styled as a sort of Wolmar from *Julie,* on a tour of famous Rousseau sites, beyond the normal Ermenonville pilgrimage to other places of interest from the locations of the novel (159). Their letters to each other reflect the ecstatic discourse of *Julie,* but later, when she took a younger lover in the Rousseau disciple François Buzot, she styled him after Julie’s relationship with Saint-Preux (Loomis 180-1). The Rolands rose to prominence as she entertained a revolutionary “salon” for political discussions of the Gironde party. Her husband became instrumental in auditing the books of his political enemy, Georges Danton, another revolutionary hero who was cynical about the Rousseau devotees; the Rolands and Robespierre brought about the popular Danton’s execution. However, when the rival Jacobins, more radical and ruthless in their interpretation of Rousseau, turned against the Gironde party, the Rolands and their friends found themselves facing the guillotine in one of the many stunning reversals that typified the dangerous politics of the day. Mme Roland admits toward the end of her memoirs that while Rousseau could protect her from falling into the temptation of the “foibles” of the times, he could not “forearm” her against the corruptions of the wicked age that brought his destruction, as well as hers (Roland 275).

Robespierre, who became her enemy and would send her to the guillotine in the name of the same Rousseau, included in every discourse an echo of his idol, and was particularly

influential in his application of that elusive abstraction of "virtue." Robespierre bears a closer examination both for his importance in history, as well as his conscious attempt to present the image of Rousseau as the ideal of revolutionary principles. Jordan characterizes him as:

> one of those rare figures in history who are perceived by their contemporaries as well as posterity as embodying the essence of the passions and contradictions of their historical moment, who seem to personify an age or movement, and whose lives represent general propositions about significant human experience (Jordan 3).

Robespierre rose from a mediocre law practice in Arras to become a delegate to the Estates General in 1789. Carefully negotiating the dangerous political waters of the Revolution, he was the right man in the right moment--ambitious, canny, paranoid, and a cold-blooded idealist. One by one, he eliminated his rivals while the Convention, paralyzed with fear, timidly supported him lest they be next to the scaffold, and as Left devoured Right, then consecutively turned on the moderates and finally upon itself. The controversial figure of Robespierre, who dominated and manipulated the Revolution until he fell under the blade himself, was foremost among the disciples of Rousseau. His speeches and writings are obsessed with Jean-Jacques: "Divine man! You taught me to know myself; while I was still a young man you made me appreciate the dignity of my nature and reflect on the great principles of the social order" (qtd. in Blum 35). This fascinating revolutionary is little known outside of France, and could be imagined as the Thomas Jefferson of the French Revolution, although there are no monuments to him in Paris today (Jordan 2), perhaps because he sent so many other heroes to the guillotine. Ruth Schurr describes him in *Fatal Purity,* a title that echoes his devotion to Rousseau: "Robespierre became the living embodiment of the Revolution at its most feral and justified the Terror as an emanation of republican virtue" (6). David Jordan, while arguing that his infatuation with the author was

not unusual for the day, states that "Robespierre's utterances are punctuated by echoes of Rousseau, paraphrases of Rousseau, quotations from Rousseau, imitations of Rousseau" (31). Most chillingly, his famous statement before the Convention connects the guillotine to virtue: "Virtue without Terror is impotent; Terror without virtue is bloody."[5] Blum sums up how Robespierre, epitomizing revolutionary thinking, used virtue as a political byword:

> Robespierre…declared that 'the soul of the republic is virtue,' and he used this essentially mystical principle to separate himself from those of his compatriots he denigrated as merely political and hence, counterrevolutionary. He announced that all of history illustrated the great struggle: 'Vice and virtue control the destiny of the earth: they are the two opposing spirits warring for it.' The role of the revolutionary state was to legislate virtue… [On May 7, 1794] he had virtue made the 'order of the day.' He reflected proudly upon that act: 'Of all the decrees which have saved the Republic,' he said, 'the most sublime, the only one…which freed people from tyranny, is the one which made probity and virtue the order of the day.' (27)

By "virtue" he meant precisely that virtue that was embodied in the person of the beloved Jean-Jacques. Robespierre represents the extremities of devotion to Rousseau, but his many dramatic speeches resounded with his contemporaries, though they read today like an "alien worldview" (154).

Though his infamous disciple would have horrified Rousseau, Robespierre fancied himself as the emanation of his idol. He claimed to have, as a young man, once seen the author at

[5] The bloody legacy of Robespierre has made the French ambivalent about this hero, although Marxist historians have compared him favorably with Lenin (Gough 74). However, the modern philosopher Slavoj Žižek, who has somewhat of a pop following himself, has recently published a collection of Robespierre's speeches, *Robespierre: Virtue and Terror* (2007), with a sympathetic look at the politician's "virtue" as purity of intention (xxxix). He also sees the "positive" possibilities of terror as "divine violence" (xiii) in the struggle for human rights amid the slide toward "global catastrophe" from "the logic of capitalist development" (xxxvi-vii).

Montmercy in the last year of his life. Jordan describes a near "conversion experience" in Robespierre, akin to the author's intoxication with virtue. Though known for his distance from women during the Revolution, Schurr notes the language of Saint-Preux in early love letters of Robespierre to an unrequited love, echoing the same "undying fidelity," the "perceived cruelty" of his mistress, a "self-righteous" integrity and "above all--self-regard" (Schurr 31). His preoccupation with the peculiar morality of Jean-Jacques, reflected in his nickname, "*L' incorruptible*," did keep him above the sensuality and venality of many of the revolutionaries, but also characterized him as untouched by real human emotions. Robespierre evidences an intimacy with all of Rousseau's works. *The Confessions*, with the second part being published during the height of the Revolution, was a particular favorite of his. He identified with the perceived isolation and persecution expressed by the author. The assertion that he kept an open copy of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* at his writing desk suggests how the sentiments of the two lovers improbably found their way into revolutionary discourse. Schama indicates that while Rousseau would have been opposed to the overthrow of the monarchy and the subsequent anarchy and violence, he provided "the idiom in which its discontents would be voiced and its goals articulated" (161). Beyond the personal identification within the literary cult of Rousseau, the public articulation of his sentiments through political journals and oratory made his words "the speech of revolution" (162). Rousseau became an assumption and an implied subtext within revolutionary thinking. Robespierre's primary forum was the wild oratory of the Jacobin Club, a radical organization that dominated political power during the Terror, with portraits of its idols, Rousseau, Cato and Brutus, painted upon the club walls. Here was the center of vitriol and denunciation that overflowed into the body politic: "Jacobin rhetoric was Rousseau with a hoarse voice and sharpened with bloody-minded impatience" (Schama 527). Rousseau was often

ambiguously cited like a Biblical proof-text, authorizing all winds of political doctrine. Blum states that his words became a "Terrorist language…a sign of purity by which virtuous patriots could recognize each other…reduced to a constellation of simple referents to be expressed within a narrow network of permissible locutions" (218). Indeed, though "terror" had existed as a word long before, only during the Revolution did it begin to be used as a political strategy (Bourg 54). Yet Robespierre made a connection between terror and virtue that resounds today in "martyrs" who use blood to sanctify their purity. Starobinski links this obsession with "purity" to the "evil of the other" that justified the Terror, "homologous with what unfolds on the mental level in *The Confessions*" (from "The Misanthrope in Accusation of Society" cited in Blum 217). The unjustly persecuted innocence of those like *Julie's* characters was avenged--along with the tormented Jean-Jacques--by revolutionary justice.

Rousseau's words cited indiscreetly, however, could be dangerous. Camille Desmoulins, a young revolutionary patriot who had urged the crowd on to the Bastille with an appeal to "friends" of Jean-Jacques, was a friend, near brother-in-law, and fellow Rousseau devotee with Robespierre. Desmoulins had urged a moderation of the Terror in a Paris journal; the offended Robespierre, tender toward his protégé, suggested before the Convention that Desmoulins should burn his writing as an admission of his error. "To burn is not to answer," was the sarcastic retort from Camille, in the very words of their beloved Jean-Jacques when confronted with the burning of his own *Emile.* Robespierre's fury withered the now trembling Desmoulins, who was quickly dispatched to the guillotine (Schurr 31). Georges Danton, a more Rabelaisian revolutionary quite unlike the austere Robespierre, sealed his fate when he drunkenly sneered at the notoriously celibate Robespierre's profession of virtue: "the best virtue is the virtue that I practice with my wife every night" (Loomis 300). Danton was executed with Desmoulins.

Present by Robespierre's side on the bloody tribunal euphemistically named "The Committee of Public Safety" was a young man and probable sociopath, Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just, often designated the "Archangel of Death." Albert Camus considered these two Rousseau fanatics to have "legitimized terrorism" (Blum 162 n.) Certainly, Saint-Just was the revolutionary who had most studied Rousseau. Blum states that his writings are so aligned with Rousseau that he "would be incomprehensible without that referent" (165). But Loomis describes how he is remembered for his icy demeanor: "There is a frigidity about him, an inhumanity, a profound strangeness that makes him seem as alien as some species of reptile…His speeches are choked with blood-drenched imagery" (284). Robespierre often used Saint-Just as cover in making dangerous accusations, but both perished together; Saint-Just was only twenty-six.

Importantly, Robespierre countered the radical, atheistic factions of the Revolution with an elevation of the "Supreme Being" that comprises Julie's articulated belief system, and its extensions by the "Savoyard Vicar" in *Emile*. Indeed, Loomis characterizes Robespierre as the "Torquemada of Rousseau's mystic creed" (369), and many atheist heads were severed for their opposition to this new faith. Weeks before his final undoing, Robespierre led a vast parade and presided over the "Festival of the Supreme Being," a Rousseauvian "spectacle" which the author had insisted should replace the corruptions of the theatre, modeled on the harvest feasts at Clarens. When Robespierre announced that his Committee of Public Safety had decided to acknowledge the existence of God, he paraphrased the creed of Rousseau: "The true priest of the Supreme Being is Nature itself; its temple is the universe; its religion virtue; its festivals the joy of a great people assembled under its eyes to tie the sweet knot of universal fraternity and to present before it [Nature] the homage of pure and feeling hearts" (Schama 831). As we shall see

later, Rousseau's reinvention of religion in *Julie* takes a radical turn with an unorthodox, vaguely Protestant elevation of the individual returning to Nature as the path to immortality. Loomis compares the self-obsession of Rousseau to that echoed in Robespierre's faith: "Religious mania must almost necessarily be the outcome of a devouring vanity, the illusion of power without limit, and a natural disposition towards paranoia" (369). This new faith would never find a dogma, but may be a major strand of modernist spirituality, as it comes down to us today. In the end, a hasty conspiracy railroaded Robespierre to the guillotine while his friends dawdled in confusion. With him died the Terror, precipitating the events that produced Napoleon, who himself blamed Robespierre's excesses on Rousseau. The general indicated that the author had more influence on the Revolution than any other writer, and late in life, Napoleon--considering his own ruinous effects on the nation-- is said to have stated of the philosopher, that it might have been better for France if neither of them had been born (Durant *XI,* 91).

Of course, Robespierre is a fascinating extreme version of his hero's thinking, and would only be a straw man argument for the dangers of Rousseau's thought. Nevertheless, he has certainly added to the notoriety of his beloved Jean-Jacques. Robespierre appealed to an audience that understood him and the myth of Rousseau, and his recorded speeches provide a concrete representation of how the author was read in his day. While we will not be specifically addressing the Revolution in relation to *Julie* beyond this point, the real fanaticism of the novel's following has been considered to better examine the actual content of the book. No other novel has such a history, or such a devoted following.[6]

[6] The radical following of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* does call to mind one modern example: Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged.* While the fiercely anti-communist Rand struggled for years to get her philosophy accepted, her novel enjoyed an extraordinary success and surprisingly has a strong modern following among Republican political leaders in the early twenty-first century, like Paul Ryan. As in Rousseau's novel, highly romanticized characters in a gripping plot make lengthy ideological speeches based on Rand's "Objectivist" philosophy. However, the real impact of that extremist novel, while potentially disturbing, is yet to be determined.

READING ROUSSEAU

We have seen from various accounts the extraordinary recognition that Rousseau is given as a "father" of multiple disciplines, and especially his contribution to what would later be called romanticism. The above represents only a sampling of the wide recognition of the legacy of Rousseau and his contested influence. While trying to avoid the notion that *Julie* was the reason for his success, we have examined why the novel, of minimal importance today, needs a re-examination for its predominance in originating the myth of Rousseau, and how extensively his thought is represented in *Julie,* possibly the form that he was best known for in his day. We have seen that more than popular success, the novel seemed to cultivate a following that was far beyond literary regard and appears to have effected a personal, life-changing experience on the readership and an identification with the author. We have seen generally that the ideas in his novel became highly politicized and contributed to a new awareness of the individual; personal life became politically charged and extended into the public sphere. We have also noted that Rousseau's novel appeared at the right time and place in the evolution of print consciousness and the rise of the powerful novel genre, and how it conveyed a powerful and charismatic experience for eighteenth-century readers in the midst of historical turmoil. Given, then, all of these elements, we will reconsider the novel in this light and keep in mind a number of ways to read *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, which make it an amazingly complex novel, rich in content, and multifaceted in its scope. Many authors have spoken of the "mystery" of Rousseau: his influence is unmistakable, but tracing exactly *what* that power came from seems obscure. We will consider whether *Julie* may have more importance than previously thought by those put off by its sentimental style and sanctimonious didacticism.

We will attend to a political radicalism that is being advanced in the book in a highly seductive manner. Rousseau's more overt political essays are often dry and theoretical, and marred by speculative generalizations about the past. *Julie* argues against the system of injustice, vanity, and inequality, which contrasts with the natural purity of her heart. Rousseau implies that all of life is political, and he portrays an entire world view that encompasses everything from buying local wines, to love of the "fatherland" to spiritual life. Thus, while we are reading about the simple life of country folk, we are reading for revolutionary content. By "political" we are referring more to a personal stance than a public, institutional reform; that misreading, we shall see, was a product of the lyrical imaginations it inspired.

The overlying purpose of the novel is what it claims to be--a love story, exploring the passions of the heart and the duty of virtue in "beautiful souls" that grow into maturity and perfection. Rousseau modeled a discourse of love in a unique manner which gave a voice to passion in a far less jaded age than our own. Yet this work is a manifesto of romanticism, valorizing "feeling" as a new path to truth; *Julie* argues for the pre-eminence of feeling, as the novel creates emotion in the reader. This is love with a political edge that directs the heart toward a new perception of the world. It develops erotic tension while it preaches virtue. Even in fighting bravely against the temptations of "crime," the subject is still sex, and that element provided a good deal of the libidinal overdrive for the novel. Nevertheless, we shall see that this communication of pure souls must transcend a corrupt world that conspires to defeat it. Rousseau did not seek to change the institutions of the world, though he shows that the hegemony of the social order defaces everything it touches, no matter how perfectly it is managed. Ultimately,

Rousseau advises pure hearts to transcend the world and live in a higher consciousness, united with the divine.

Given, then, such a remarkable background for this remarkable novel, we will follow with a close reading of the narrative itself. Before that, however, the second chapter will discuss Rousseau's own view of the novel, both his suspicions about fiction and his own distinctive intentions for *Julie*, as well as his intentional ambiguity about the "truth of the letters." In Chapter Two, we will also discuss certain elements of Bakhtin's theory of the novel which are relevant in our study, and why his critical theory may provide an enlightening tool for understanding this novel and its enigmatic influence.

In the following chapters we will examine *La Nouvelle Héloïse* itself, specifically the ill-fated relationship of the "commoner" Saint-Preux and the blue-blooded Julie, forced apart by her aristocratic father, who marries Julie to a Russian nobleman of his own age. The marriage is happy and the utopian setting of the estate seems to complete Julie's happiness, with her lover even present as a virtuous and platonic friend. Ultimately, however, this perfect world fails, and Julie seems to welcome death as a relief. As we approach the narrative itself in Chapter Three, we will examine themes of love, nature, sensibility and spirituality as they are expressed in the hopeful passion of the young lovers, who are one in heart but facing forbidden class barriers. Chapter Four will follow these themes as they emerge in the forced separation of the lovers, with the young man, Saint-Preux, off to make his fortune in Paris and become a more eligible husband for Julie. Rousseau maintains the dramatic tension of this forbidden love to critique the falseness of the society that alienates the lovers. Yet their hopes are doomed, and Julie is forced into marriage with Wolmar, while Saint-Preux joins the military and travels around the world. As many critics have noted, and as Rousseau indicates in his preface, the two halves of the novel are

often seen as two different books, and Chapter Five will address that "second book." Julie seems happily married, and the bulk the second half seemingly digresses into a variety of topics including domestic management and agricultural economy. While the earlier parts of the book contrast the innocent lovers, united by Heaven and nature against the corrupt world of opinion that stifles them, the second half of the book seems to offer a solution for a perfect society with an enlightened environment for beautiful souls. All the same, the book concludes that such *belles âmes* are consumed by a corrupt society, and can only find fulfillment beyond the earthly realm.

The motifs we will follow in Rousseau are multiple, yet inherently inform each other in Rousseau's comprehensive worldview. The overriding theme of *Julie,* as with all of Rousseau's works, is that man has departed from his natural state, and that every development into civilized institution creates a distance from nature and the Creator as well. What Rousseau means by "nature," "society," or "Heaven" is many things; such notions are *dialogized* terms that reflect contemporary concepts while simultaneously adding new shades of meaning toward new usage. Similarly, virtue, honor, crime, desire, weakness, reason, faith, freedom, sensibility, the heart, and love belong to a common eighteenth-century idiom, but Rousseau reinvents them in a new idiom as they are practiced authentically by "beautiful souls," who reject the false constructions of these concepts by the vanity, emphasis on appearance and "opinion" that dominate the world of men. While the players of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* mature through different stages of growth in their individual realization of authentic character, the entrenched reality of social structures disallows the fulfillment of nature, the *belles âmes* are compelled to find a transcendent existential paradigm within themselves and in eternal union with the divine.

CHAPTER TWO

ROUSSEAU AND BAKHTIN: THEORY OF THE NOVEL

Despite the vastly different contexts of their lives, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin share a great deal in common. Both led persecuted lives and were alienated from society, yet both had enormous posthumous fame that included a cult-like following. In Rousseau's case, part of his isolation came from his paranoid sensitivity to the criticism and slander that came with his position as one of the first novelists to experience celebrity authorship. However, Rousseau had the very dangerous and tenuous standing of authoring a banned book, which forced him into exile and flight to England. Bakhtin was a victim of the Stalinist purges and exiled to Kazakistan, a political status that kept him at the margins of the literary establishment for most of his life. Both writers lived in revolutionary times: Rousseau lived in the period of the deteriorating power of the *ancien régime*, which led to revolution along with several disastrous European wars; Bakhtin lived during the tumultuous events of the Russian Revolution and two devastating world wars. Both suffered from ill health their entire lives, making their prolific output of works all the more amazing. As we discussed in the previous chapter, Rousseau did enjoy some celebrity during his lifetime, but nothing compared to the extraordinary international fame, influence and literary cult status of the years following his death. Bakhtin achieved some recognition at the end of his life in his home country, and his writing was beginning to come to the attention of Western scholars through his "discovery" by Julia Kristeva and Tzvetan Todorov; however, his ill health prevented him from leaving the Soviet Union and his recognition was limited. Posthumously, Bakhtin has become

another trendy critical theory in the West, with the putative "Bakhtin Circle" attracting devotees and publicity that has caused opponents to criticize his uniqueness as overblown and to call him merely a rehash of Russian Formalism. Finally, both men had a counterculture spirituality that informed their entire lives, although their primarily secular followers minimized this element.

The works of both Rousseau and Bakhtin are multidisciplinary, extending beyond literary accomplishment, to encompass philosophy, linguistics, history, science, psychology, sociology and anthropology. In a sense, the works of both men could be said to extend into somewhat of a "theory of the world," which opens the authors to attack for their oversimplifications. Indeed, there is an inclination in the two men toward ambiguity, self-contradiction, excessive verbosity, and gross generalization, all of which defies making a "system" of their works. Morson begins his study of Bakhtin by stating that, "Books about thinkers require a kind of unity that their thought may not possess" (Morson 1), and this could be said equally to apply to Rousseau. Much of Bakhtin's work has been "lost," due to his notorious disorganization and the turbulent events of the Soviet Union (one important manuscript was rolled for cigarettes during World War II). Consequently, both men have contradictory interpreters in a vast range of conflicting "schools" and corresponding historiographies--books about books--covering Rousseau criticism for nearly 250 years and in the speeded-up modern world, several intensive decades of explication of Bakhtin's work.

Both Bakhtin and Rousseau possessed an extraordinary creative genius by which they surpassed their contemporaries and overcame difficult circumstances. The intersection of their thought occurs around the novel. In his introduction to *The Dialogic Imagination*, Holquist echoes Henry James' statement about the genre: "Bakhtin…loves the novel because he *is* a (loose) baggy monster (xvii)." *Julie* could certainly be seen as a baggy monster of a book.

Bakhtin makes some provocative statements about the significance of the author's influence upon the genre in the context of some of his important points. He asserts that Rousseau was seminal in the origin of the sentimental psychological novel and was important in developing the polemic of *internal dialogism* that enters and overwhelms the reader's belief system--a technique that culminates in Tolstoy. Additionally, Bakhtin notes how Rousseau uses an "idyllic" chronotope, revealing the internal development of the individual desiring a return to a "primitive consciousness" in the state of nature. We will address this in depth below, and consider specific examples from *La Nouvelle Héloïse* that work according to Bakhtin's theory.

The literary theory of Mikhail Bakhtin is more than another critical school of thought: Bakhtin theorizes about a process of linguistic consciousness as it evolves into the "becoming" of a language, both in the individual and the culture. This involves not only the influence of literary language, but includes all transforming aspects of the language that contribute to the semantic evolution of meaning. His theory becomes particularly intriguing with Rousseau, who was writing in an era of portentous shifts of ideology, which combined with the advancing technology of the printed page in an age of revolutionary change. The discourse of Rousseau appears in the language of the pre-Revolutionary masses and the ideology of many Revolutionary leaders. It suggests an example of the process of the assimilation of the "internally persuasive" word that is central to Bakhtin's theory of novelistic discourse.

We might begin with the simple concept of a "language," which for Bakhtin carries a meaning beyond language groups and dialects to a full spectrum of the ways of speaking or writing within a culture. Bakhtin states that "Consciousness finds itself inevitably facing the necessity of *having to choose a language.* With each literary-verbal performance, consciousness must actively orient itself amidst heteroglossia, it must move in and occupy a position for itself

within it, it chooses, in other words, a 'language'" (295). These "languages" exist within a field of other languages, hence the mixed and diverse tongues of *heteroglossia*. Bakhtin clarifies this with the example of an illiterate medieval peasant, who may speak one language in his social context, pray in another language in church, sing songs in a third, speak to his family in other private meanings, petition the authorities in still another language through a scribe, and perhaps speak an ethnic dialect (ibid.). However, the diversity of "languages" within a language is critical to understanding Bakhtin, and if present within an illiterate peasant, the concept is more complex across the range of human existence. Bakhtin argues that the prose of the novel makes it the only genre that can incorporate this "heteroglossia" of languages and that this becomes the most distinctive feature of the novel. Bakhtin's most succinct statement of these "multiple tongues" as a definition of the novel will be quoted at some length here because of its importance for studying Rousseau's novel:

> The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases)--this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite of the novel as a genre. The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types and by the different individual voices that

> flourish under such conditions. Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized). These distinctive links and interrelationships between utterances and languages, this movement of the theme through different languages and speech types, its dispersion into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia, its dialogization--this is the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel. (262-3)

Bakhtin insists that the central characteristic of the novel is "the artistic representation of…the image of a language" (336) and the interplay of these voices--whether that of the author, the various characters, or that among a mix of genres--constitutes the art and theme of the novel. Bakhtin evaluates the novelists who most expertly exploited this diversity of characters in the novel, like Tolstoy, Dickens and Dostoevsky, and contemporaries of Rousseau such as Fielding and Sterne. At first glance, this diversity of voices does not seem evident in Rousseau. Certainly one valid criticism of *Julie* is that the voices of the small group of characters are too distinctively those of Rousseau himself, and in some sections where a letter is narrating a conversation, a reader can mistake who is speaking in *Julie*. Rousseau manipulates a number of other languages and genres in his work, exemplifying the heteroglossia that will become distinctive of the novel. The concepts and styles that pervade the entirety of his oeuvre--written in essay, confession, political argument, meditation, letter, or music criticism--are present in *La Nouvelle Héloïse.* Although "languages" may seem like a loose term for such disciplines, we can say that literary, professional and social circles do, in fact, contain specialized vocabulary and diction, differing levels of usage and semantics, along with shared meanings and unique contexts. The novel thus

includes a variety of languages that a reader might otherwise not experience in everyday life. These multiple languages carry the themes that present all of the complexity of Rousseau's thought through the compelling drama of narrative. For this reason, *Julie* became the primary vehicle for his contemporary audience to experience the full range of his philosophy.

Rousseau reveals in Book IX of *The Confessions* that at the time of the writing of his novel, he was also involved in many other projects that later became some of his other principal works. *Emile* and *The Social Contract* were also in progress, and published shortly after *Julie.* Echoes of both works are strongly present in his first novel in an abbreviated form. Rousseau indicates that this remarkably fecund period of his life included his *Dictionary of Music* and his famous *Letter to d'Alembert* concerning Voltaire's introduction of drama to Geneva; we find the language of music theory and theatre criticism woven into the themes of *Julie* as well. He was working on a never-published work he was tentatively called "Sensitive Morality, or The Wise Man's Materialism," anticipating phenomenology in examining how the minor elements of a man's environment "sensationally" (in Locke's sense) affect human thinking. We shall have more to say of this work, but we can propose here that these ideas were intensively assimilated into *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Rousseau was also working on a translation of the Abbé St. Pierre for a friend, a work that argued for the perfectibility of reason, and an idea that Rousseau would argue against in *Julie.* At this time he was preparing his answer to Voltaire's skepticism about God after the Lisbon earthquake. This subject will be addressed in the final chapter of this discussion. Finally, Rousseau states that this was a period of stormy controversy in the writing of the *Encyclopedia* between "Christians and philosophers," and he had "frankly told both sides some harsh truths." He then states ironically that this effort only managed to unite both sides in their opposition to Jean-Jacques, but that he tried to represent and reconcile this dispute in the

characters of Wolmar and Julie (*The Confessions* 366). Rousseau indicates that all of these multiple projects were the subjects of meditation for his daily walks, and clearly many of these thoughts inform the "languages" of *Julie*.

Bakhtin specifically identifies Rousseau as important in the sentimental psychological novel tradition, making use of emotionally laden discourse used with a highly polemical intention (396-7). Denby states that Rousseau "reproduces narrative and linguistic patterns of standard sentimental discourse" and this usage points to "a democracy of feelings" that transcends class (98). This also gives rise to what Auerbach calls a "sentimental ethic" for the bourgeois that was developing in the eighteenth century (401). This language of the passions and of "sensibility" is intertwined with the multiple languages of the book in a highly politicized fashion. Rousseau, in fact, cultivates a language of love and ecstasy that was a revelation for unsophisticated provincial readers. He also provides a vocabulary of "the self," in a way that brought an unprecedented personal awareness. Many of the Romantics will cite the inspiring alpine descriptions of Rousseau's novel as seminal for the language of the "sublime." Music theory will be utilized in a manner that contrasts the "natural man" with the false images of society. The language of philosophy and theology will be used directly in a distinctly iconoclastic manner, undermining established institutions. His political language will intertwine with the treatment of love and virtue, suggesting the way those abstractions are used in Revolutionary politics. Likewise, discussions of economic theory, agronomics and agricultural practices, and domestic organization all serve the larger themes of *Julie*. Educational treatises and homilies of morality will likewise weave into the language of autobiography and memoir.

Stewart, the editor and translator of the English edition of *Julie* notes that "Rousseau was a great stylist in the classical mode; his models were largely ancient and rhetorical, and this

shows whichever character is speaking" (xvii). Classical rhetoric, then, is another language of the book. Moreover, the abundance of Latin quotations, and the heteroglossia of pastoral and poetic genres are a significant part of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, which includes sonnets, odes, epigrams and dramatic quotations from, among others, Petrarch, Mestasio, Tasso, Plutarch, La Fontaine, and Racine. These along with the vast infusion of literary and Biblical allusions not only add an erudite and learned dignity to the work, but also provide somewhat of a bourgeois education in classical learning. As an improbable feminist pioneer, Rousseau offers a highly sophisticated model of learning in the character of Julie, while providing a significant educational experience for women who were otherwise excluded from such learning. We must also note Rousseau's use of the less formal Swiss French, which he apologizes for in the Preface as the usage of the unsophisticated, but which provided its own polemic for a simple, natural language that influenced even the Parisian dialect. Finally, Rousseau's widely recognized command of the French language seems to have spread contagiously as romantic diction.

This brings up the question of why it matters that there may be multiple voices or genres within the novel. First, Bakhtin notes that every genre has its own distinctive discourse: "Each of these genres possesses its own verbal and semantic forks for assimilating various aspects of reality" (321). The novel form does not have any single method for "verbally appropriating reality" and thus it integrates a diversity of other discourses in a "syncretic unification" of the languages of other genres (ibid). He states that genres such as the epistolary tradition, the diary, and the confession introduce their own languages and other "new worlds of verbal perception" to the formerly fixed literary language. The novel assaults the literary conventions of genre, and breaks down the structural formalities of literature, causing a "relativizing of linguistic consciousness in the perception of language borders" (323). The eighteenth-century novel could

be seen as always trying to justify its literary status, as Fielding does with his multiple prefaces to each book of *Tom Jones.* In addition to its informality of style, the novel is deconstructing literary conventions as it spellbinds with its storytelling and incorporation of the details of everyday existence.

The heteroglossia of genre and of different "speaking persons" in the novel artistically combines these "languages," which become *internally dialogized* in a specialized manner of *double-voiced discourse.* These important terms will take some explanation. For Bakhtin, the intentions of the author are *refracted* through a character, or genre; that is, as the light of the author's voice passes through the "prism" of another's language--a character or genre--what emerges for the reader is a rainbow spectrum of interactive meanings. These multiple meanings are a "double-voice," and the interaction between them is "dialogic." Thus when Saint-Preux expresses his distaste for the excesses of the Paris opera, on the surface he is a country boy noting that the opera seems unnatural to the simplicity of his rural perspective, especially in contrast to the more natural melodies of the folk ballads of his experience. The author is employing the language of music criticism both to express Rousseau's own antagonism toward French opera, as well as to argue that this disingenuous urban society contrasts unfavorably with "Nature" and the uncorrupted man. In another manner, the classic Latin pastoral quotations are incorporated into the simplicity of a young lover's speech in the Swiss countryside, suggesting a dialogizing of themes that extends beyond poetic allusion and lends a classical dignity.

We need to look more carefully at Bakhtin's terminology of literary criticism, because many of these terms will be used freely in this work. It must be kept in mind that these terms overlap and integrate with each other, and thus do not refer to separate entities. The all-inclusive concept in Bakhtin is "dialogism;" this is expressed in the title of Holquist's edition, *The*

Dialogic Imagination. This term must be distinguished from conversation or argument among characters; Morson likens it to "oscillating fields" or "a play of forces" in language (51). We can consider a word like "nature" and note all of the scientific, theological, idiomatic and emotional contexts of our day; if we remember that it had very different connotations in the eighteenth century and was laden with new, sometimes contradictory meanings in Rousseau, we have an idea of the implications of the "word" to Bakhtin:

> The word, directed toward its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all of this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a trace in all semantic layers…[brushing] up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness. (276)

Momentarily, we shall examine the enormous power of this dialogization within the belief system of the reader. When I write about reading Rousseau in my cabin in the woods and refer to "nature," there are an infinite number of shadings of the word, beyond my own personal meanings. Similarly, Rousseau will multiply the term "nature" throughout *Julie* in ways familiar and unfamiliar to his eighteenth-century readers.

Perhaps "dialogic" should be distinguished from "dialectic," which might be the expected term from Bakhtin, since he was writing from a strongly Marxist perspective. Jean Starobinski attempts to reconcile the contradictions of Rousseau in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* while acknowledging that the author himself had a great distaste for the dialectic as such. Starobinski argues that Rousseau was nevertheless forced to use the dialectic to reconcile his desire for both physical pleasure and "exalted virtue" because these "conflicting desires cannot be satisfied

simultaneously" but can be synthesized in Julie's death (115). Paul de Man criticizes Starobinski, stating that the dialectic "fails" in Rousseau, because the author was never "a thinker who posits thesis and antithesis" (*Allegories of Reading* 191). For that matter, de Man says that Starobinski's entire book is an unsatisfactory dialectic of "transparency" and "obstruction." But de Man sees in Rousseau a postmodern "allegory of unreadability," which is not a particularly satisfying explanation, since his readers genuinely wanted to emulate Julie, or Saint-Preux/Rousseau, and seemed to be clear in their interpretations. Reconciling discrepancies and contradictions in the thought of Rousseau seems to be a full-time occupation for critics. Repeatedly disdaining philosophical systems, Rousseau might be better seen as Starobinski characterizes him, devising a "system to oppose all systems" whose unity resides only in the person of Jean-Jacques, a consistency that he was satisfied with himself, and "we must not fill in the gaps" (274). Bakhtin celebrates the "dialogized ambiguity" on the "rich soil of novelistic prose" (325-6). The dialectic presupposes an ending in synthesis, but Bakhtin likens the dialogic experience of the novel to be reflective of the ideological "becoming" of a human being, an ever-expanding process of adding and refining new meaning. A more loosely defined hermeneutics helps to account for the enthusiastic ambiguity of *Julie's* reader responses, as well as the presence of Rousseau everywhere and nowhere in Revolutionary discourse, unconnected to any particular philosophical doctrine.

Bakhtin depicts the individual, or group, or language involved in a continuing struggle against "authoritative" discourse, or other internally persuasive discourses that have become a part of the status quo. He aligns this with the *centripetal* forces unifying a language, while *centrifugal* tendencies are part of the ever-changing boundaries of a language or individual. Thus, in the period of the Enlightenment, we can see the following centripetal unifying forces:

efforts to standardize dictionaries and grammar; attempts to submit human vagaries to objective reason; endeavors to incorporate reality into an ordered harmony of a methodical nature of divine creation; ideals that reflect that harmony in all forms of art and communication. However, centrifugal forces were simultaneously unraveling the orderly lines of the century: a consciousness of globally expanding "new worlds" was subverting all premises and assumptions; pre-romantics such as Rousseau were undermining the prevalence of reason with emotion and subjectivity; political, religious and social institutions were becoming top-heavy with corruption and obsolescence; the novel and print culture were disseminating argument and information in a manner as comparatively powerful as the modern explosion of the technological word. Although Rousseau might have seen himself as a centripetal force in a world gone awry, unifying the consciousness within the God-ordained boundaries of nature, he was very much of a centrifugal element in the hurricane of ideas sweeping pre-Revolutionary France.

This becomes important in the way that the words of Rousseau became glorious abstractions in revolutionary discourse. Bakhtin also uses the term *relativizing the linguistic consciousness* to describe how the novel works in subversive ways with language, a process which he defines as "the various wanderings of semantic and expressive intentions and the trajectory of this consciousness through languages…(with) the inevitability for such a consciousness to speak indirectly, conditionally, in a refracted way" (326). Furthermore, this "relativizing" proceeds through the established "borders" of a language, again expanding into new semantic intent. Thus we will consider how, for example, "virtue" wanders through many "languages" of the novel, from chastity to inner nobility of character to intensity of feeling, and this may help as a way of imagining virtue's semantic range in the Revolution, including Robespierre's link (and now Žižek's) between virtue and terror.

Another of Bakhtin's concepts we will apply here is the *double-voice* of one authorial intention through another's voice. A passage utilizing several of these terms, shows they are interrelated:

> Heteroglossia, once incorporated into the novel…is *another's speech in another's language,* serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of *double-voiced discourse.* It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. In such discourses, there are two voices, two meanings, and two expressions. And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they--as it were--know about each other…Double-voiced discourse is always internally dialogized (324 emphasis Bakhtin's)…the internal dialogism of double-voiced prose can never be exhausted thematically. (326)

We shall have occasion to refer to this double-voice, and the *internal dialogism* that these embedded meanings create. Internal dialogism also includes "the already spoken about, articulated, disputed, elucidated, evaluated" context of a word within the novel, and within language as well. Early in the novel, a drunken Saint-Preux challenges Lord Edward Bomston to a duel over some indiscreet words about Julie. Knowing the nobleman's reputation of prowess with weapons, Julie writes an urgent letter to Saint-Preux about the fallacy of dueling for honor, which seems to be the subject of letter I, lvii. Yet "honor" is freighted with the associations of Saint-Preux's previous letter I, xxiv, which argues that honor is an internal condition, anathema to "the world." When she is questioning what slitting a man's throat has to do with honor, the intention Rousseau is *refracting* through Julie connects the duel to the violence with which the nobility holds on to worldly honor and property. When she suggests that "bravery" is a false

substitute for virtue, the double-voice is indicting the classical concept of Roman virtue as manliness in battle, which is the reason that justifies the existence of the nobility. The false virtue and honor of dueling are being argued against as such, but the refracted voice questions the claims of the aristocracy to those values. We shall examine this section in detail later, but here it shows how the characters are talking about one subject, while Rousseau is talking about something else. We could say that *Julie* is *The Social Contract* as a love story.

This internal dialogism of double-voice draws its energy from the social heteroglossia of the world itself, and really reflects the multiplicity of voices that make up the individual consciousness (326). Bakhtin's "metalinguistic" theory, as he calls it, is indeed a unique and eccentric view of human language that extends beyond the current range of verifiable linguistic science. Yet his theory makes an imaginative leap into a profound meditation on the human experience of language and thought. This will become useful as we look at the mystical effect of *Julie* as a near "born-again" experience upon the eighteenth-century reading public. As the novel is an artistic representation of the image of various languages in dialogic relation to each other, so a good share of human consciousness involves interacting with and assimilating others' words and transmitting or talking about other people's words. Some words become a major influence in our lives, others become neutral ways of defining the world, some words become that to which we place ourselves in opposition; the sum of all these words becomes the self, and our consciousness at a given moment in time (338-9). Bakhtin states it thus: "The ideological becoming of a human being…is the process of selectively assimilating the words of others" (341). Given that he calls this a "tendency" and qualifies that most humans accomplish this in their own individualized process, we might consider how he describes this process in human interaction and more easily see it in both the affective and effective role of the novel.

By way of example, we might consider the "becoming" of a college student today, who first assimilates certain manners of speaking from his parents and peer groups, as well as from the media to which he is exposed. Many of us have had the experience of seeing children imitate the manners of their parents, or cartoon characters. Sometimes we can recognize certain patterns in our speaking that are remnants of our teenage peer group. A young adult may also be subject to other religious, political, or cultural discourse that is adopted as "one's own," as Bakhtin describes it, and education will introduce a vast number of language systems from science, history, literature, and other academic influences. Concurrently, the enormous influences of pop culture--programs, movies, technology, music, sports, art--each freighted with its own discourse and ideology, become adapted or rejected according to the ever becoming belief systems of the individual. Add to this, for the modern student, all the ramifications of electronic expression—generally an abbreviated, vague and laconic usage. Thus we might identify a hybridization of many "languages" within a given individual: legal language from crime drama, inner city dialect from hip-hop music and country, along with other genres of music; the language of evangelical Christians and modern political code, environmental, or economic rhetoric; world language from globalization; computer and technological speaking; science fiction, fantasy and occult language; generational slang as well as jargon of academic disciplines. Bakhtin identifies the languages, and corresponding semantic ranges that we assimilate as *internally persuasive discourse*, that is, what harmonizes with our previous internal truisms. Moreover, there is always an intensive "struggle" internally with the many voices in our lives:

> The struggle and dialogic interrelationship of these categories of ideological discourse are what usually determines the history of an individual ideological consciousness (342)…

> Our ideological development is just such an intense struggle within us for the hegemony among various available and ideological points of view, approaches, directions, and values. The semantic structure of an internally persuasive discourse is not finite, it is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it this discourse is able to reveal ever newer *ways to mean.* (346)

In particular, this "struggle" is often directed against the "authoritative word," the established word of the fathers, institutions, literary conventions and acknowledged truths of the past that demand acceptance. Rousseau is often using common concepts of the day in new ways, wresting away concepts like virtue, nature, honor, and freedom into meanings that are contrary to the standardized definitions of the culture. With the advances of print, he exemplifies the first stages of technology's impact upon mass meaning.

Bakhtin also indicates that the novel often represents the linguistic forces of an age at a given point in time and space; clearly this is part of the "foreign" feel of the language of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* to modern sensibility. This hints, like Darnton's "history of mentalities," of an age we no longer understand. The more measured effect of Rousseau's novel upon French language and consciousness is beyond the scope of this study, although we can examine the dialogization of languages in the work to uncover new meanings beyond the melodramatic love story. Unquestionably, Rousseau wrote in a language that resounded in the hearts of his contemporaries, or, as we are considering here, *refracted* through multiple languages that dialogued internally within the interiors of a populace in transition; many of those assimilated a good deal of Rousseau, feelings and all, into their ideological consciousness, and their world view changed correspondingly.

We will also examine a cryptic mention of Rousseau in a key section of *Discourse in the Novel* concerning the *alien* word "dialogized within the belief system of the reader" (283). The glossary of Bakhtin identifies that the Russian *čužoj*--"alien"--does not imply the "estrangement or exoticism" of the word in English, but rather the opposite of "one's own and means "otherness--of place, point of view, possession of a person" (423). Nevertheless, the English word, "alien," seems appropriate for Rousseau's alternative universe, and certainly characterizes the estrangement he felt from society. The term captures the inverted meaning the author intends in certain key words. Bakhtin makes an argument for artistic manipulation by Leo Tolstoy, an author whom he studies carefully, but points out that his techniques originated with Rousseau. We will quote this section at length because it will be an important reference point throughout this study:

> Tolstoy's discourse harmonizes and disharmonizes (more often disharmonizes) with various aspects of the heteroglot socio-verbal consciousness ensnaring the object, while at the same time polemically invading the reader's belief and evaluative system, striving to stun and destroy the apperceptive background of the reader's active understanding. In this respect Tolstoy is an heir of the eighteenth century, especially of Rousseau. This propagandizing impulse leads to a narrowing-down of heteroglot social consciousness (against which Tolstoy polemicizes) to the consciousness of his immediate contemporary, a contemporary of the day and not of the epoch; what follows from this is a radical concretization of dialogization (almost always in the service of a polemic). (283)

If homage is given to Rousseau here while making a point about Tolstoy,[7] this process seems to be an apt description of the revolutionary power of *Julie,* and the sentimental readership of the

[7] Tolstoy was known to be a great admirer of Rousseau, and carried a pendant with Rousseau's portrait around his neck in his youth. Interestingly, Tolstoy is also a novelist who developed somewhat of a religious cult-like following

book did not pick it up for the intent of political radicalization. Yet we shall see that couched in the tears of the novel is an "invasion" of the conservative belief systems of the bourgeois, a stunning attack on apperception, i.e., the perceived understanding in terms of the consciousness of prior experience. Rousseau utilizes a "polemic" against social, political, and religious institutions, along with reversing common morality and perception of truth. It is a polemic of individuality, positing a reevaluation of the social order and "nature" itself, while purporting to be a silly little love story of youthful naiveté. Rousseau speaks of his own alien usage with meanings uniquely his own in a letter to Madame d'Epinay: "Learn my vocabulary better, my good friend, if you would have us understand each other. Believe me, my terms rarely have a common meaning; it is always my heart that converses with you, and perhaps you will learn some day that it speaks not as others do" (qtd. in Cassirer 1963, 14).

Bakhtin identifies Rousseau as an important stylistic innovator in the "sentimental psychological novel" and its epistolary tradition, which utilizes the "discourse of pathos" set in the background of interiors, parlors, gardens, and "the privacy of one's own room," away from the broader historical and political landscapes (396). Set in opposition to mythic larger-than-life heroics, the Sentimental style tests its heroes and heroines in the realism of everyday life and it includes

> a pathos occasioned by helplessness and weakness rather than by heroic strength, (and) the deliberate narrowing-down of the conceptual horizon and the arena of man's experience to his most immediate little micro-world (to his very own room)--all this is accounted for by the polemical opposition to a literary style in the process of being rejected. (397-8)

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that attempted agrarian utopias in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and included sexual abstinence.

Literary conventions were targeted for their contrived and artificial expressions of human existence and supplanted by a more conversational manner of writing, closer to true human communication. Again, with Rousseau, this is a return to the purity of nature, and such realism becomes a new literary language that appeals to the norms of the less sophisticated bourgeois readership, as well as offering them the possibility of heroic adventure within the commonness of their own lives. Saint-Preux is not tested by his courage in battle, and his actions are not an ordeal for conventions of chivalry and honor, but his trial is closer to what Bakhtin describes as a test of his discourse and ideology (334). The struggle for his beloved is not a combat of physical strength and nobility, but of facing the falseness of aristocratic society, armed with the abstractions of virtue; the battleground is primarily the interior of his individual soul, working toward self-fulfillment.

Additionally, we shall address Bakhtin's inclusion of Rousseau within his essay "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," although this will be more thoroughly examined in Chapter Five. Bakhtin's most extensive discussion of Rousseau specifically occurs in the section about the polemic function of the chronotope, set in idyllic time:

> There is a considerably more incisive reworking of idyllic time and idyllic matrices in Rousseau, and in subsequent texts influenced by him. This reworking proceeds in two directions: first, the basic elements of the ancient complex--nature, love, the family and childbearing, death--are isolated and undergo sublimation at a higher philosophical level, where they are treated more or less as forms of the great, eternal, wise force of earthly life. Second, these elements provide material for constituting an isolated individual consciousness, and from the point of view of such a consciousness these elements act as forces that can heal, purify and reassure it, forces that solicit its surrender, its submission,

> requiring that it fuse with them…such matrices had become the lost ideal of human life. (230)

Rousseau's *Discourses* argue for the pure, natural state of primitive man, and against the march of civilization and its institutions which had distanced man from nature, and brought a corresponding oppression and a bondage to appearances. His novel constitutes a savage indictment of the pretensions of society and calls for a return of individual consciousness to that idyllic state. For Bakhtin,

> Narrative undergoes corresponding changes….In novels of the Rousseauan type, the major protagonists are the author's contemporaries, people who had already succeeded in isolating individual life-sequences, people with an interior perspective. They heal themselves through contact with nature and the life of simple people, learning from them the wisdom to deal with life and death; or they go outside the boundaries of culture altogether, in an attempt to utterly immerse themselves in the wholeness of the primitive collective…This line of development, which began with Rousseau, proved to be highly progressive…the Rousseauan line of development, by sublimating in philosophical terms the ancient sense of the whole, makes of it an ideal for the future and sees in it above all the basis, a norm, for criticizing the current state of society. (231)

This concept of a return to simplicity has become a modern cliché, and thus it becomes difficult for us to grasp it as revolutionary thinking. In the second half of *Julie,* after the hopes of the lovers have been extinguished and Julie marries her father's friend, the Russian nobleman Monsieur de Wolmar, the narrative takes an excursion into the self-sufficient utopian environment at Clarens, where all of the friends are living together in complete transparency and lack of sensual desire. Clarens becomes the perfect self-supporting homestead, with Julie

educating her children, supervising the farm business, managing both the work and lives of the servants, and orchestrating charity and business in the village. All superficiality, unnecessary materialism, and vanity of possessions are expunged, with philosophical sensibility in every choice. As Bakhtin explains, the simplicity of their existence becomes the *norm* of human life, removed of all that is false in society, and by implication, indicts that which has previously been considered the ideals of society. Surprisingly, the utopian Clarens fails with Julie's death, and in that insufficiency we will later trace the internal dialogism of the author's double-voice. But in the ancient matrices of the harvest festival, we cannot miss the social criticism of the societal world that has traded the authentic existence of simplicity for a culture of counterfeit values.

Bakhtin, like Rousseau, is not without his critics as well as his ardent defenders and devotees. Most of his work during his lifetime lingered in obscurity in the Soviet Union. *His* dissertation on Rabelais was rejected for decades. Bakhtin's life, then, did not allow for an extensive oeuvre, and his rise to attention in the West during the seventies came during his declining years when he was unable to address his critics. Some, like Bernstein, suggest that his "dialogical imagination" sounds suspiciously like Nietzsche's slave consciousness, "impregnated by the words and values of others and formulated entirely in response to and as an anticipation of the responses he will elicit" (Morson 201). Most often, Bakhtin is noted for his ambiguity and lack of specific examples. We must regret that his oppressed life did not allow him to do a more extensive and clear application of his theories. Given some reservations, we may apply some of Bakhtin's thinking as an *interpretive device* to enlighten some of Rousseau's novelistic artistry in a work that otherwise eludes our modern perspective toward this strange but important classic.

Bakhtin's language-based criticism seems useful for reading Rousseau because the author himself was very conscious about the workings of language and thought; furthermore, shifting

discourse and meaning--while invoking Rousseau--was a characteristic part of the Revolution. Lynn Hunt, in her captivating study of language, image, and gesture, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution,* shows how the flood of words unleashed by the collapsing French state of the 1780's in print and oratory became "the unexpected invention of revolutionary politics," and was the real revolution (Hunt 3). In France, words associated with "the people" became invested with feeling and had a "magical quality," while words associated with royalty or aristocracy became dangerous (20). Language itself became performative in instituting political and social change, and shaped "the perception of interests" that resulted in revolutionary ideologies (24). Hunt discusses the Revolution contemporary, critic and author Jean-Francois La Harpe, who felt that examining the unexpected power of language was the key to understanding events:

> As La Harpe's cranky fashion recognized, language was the Revolution's 'foremost instrument' and the most surprising of all. The rhetoric of political innovation made the Revolution 'an unheard of scandal in the universe,' for it prompted revolutionaries to embark on uncharted waters seeking shores of national regeneration and the republic of virtue. Revolutionaries invented new words, but most important, they gave them new meaning by speaking them in the context of, and for the purpose of, radical political change. (51)

Hunt begins her book with Rousseau's statement from *The Confessions* that he had realized that "everything depended fundamentally on politics" (3). Again, we are arguing here that *Julie* is a contribution to the way that all elements of life became politically charged, and even a simple love story contained a radical polemic. Bakhtin offers a means of reflecting upon how this is accomplished, both consciously and unconsciously in Rousseau, who seems to exemplify

Bakhtin's theory in an extraordinary manner. But Rousseau himself was highly attentive to language, and offered his own theories in the prefaces to his novel of how he meant it to be read and how his language worked.

ROUSSEAU'S THEORY OF THE NON-NOVEL

"Great cities must have theatres; and corrupt people, Novels." So the preface of Rousseau's influential novel begins with an anti-novel manifesto, distancing his work from the genre while simultaneously refashioning it after his own image. Purporting to have examined the "morals of my times," he declares the necessity of publishing this collection of "letters," yet he laments that in a better age they would best be consigned to the fire. However, the carnal appeal of the novel does have some value for a corrupt age in moral lessons, a strategy that the author will employ repeatedly--a voyeuristic titillation with a moralistic superiority. Rousseau immediately dismisses the question of whether these letters are a contrived fiction: for "worldly people" they are "surely a fiction" (3). But the pejorative *worldly* for most readers is someone other than themselves; the challenge throughout the book is to hear a hidden messianic truth for him who "has ears." That, in itself, is the *double-voice*. Paul de Man points out, perhaps unfairly, that "rarely has a preface shed less light" (206); in fact, both prefaces are *part of the fiction itself*. The second preface debates the conventions of the genre and the role of the author, defines the appropriate readership, and apologizes for the apparent naiveté of the lovers, who speak immaturely from their undefiled hearts. All of these elements are fictional. Even as the self-deprecating text criticizes the composition in terms that Rousseau most certainly does not believe of his work, it speaks to a fictional self-image of the "very few readers" who will recognize a higher truth. Proscribing most categories of reader--"people of taste…strict people…the devout,

the libertines, the philosophers…gallant women," an elite is summoned who will not define themselves by a simplistic category. In particular, "those who do not believe in virtue" will find the sentiments "unnatural," suggesting the reversal that those who *do* believe in virtue will find nature encoded in the words of the characters.

Of course, Rousseau is always sensitive to criticism, and exhaustively anticipates every judgment in his prefaces, a strategy he will later apply in *The Confessions*: he cannot be "judged" until he has been "read" (*The Confessions* 5). Likewise, *Julie* demands "reading all the way through" with a similar "dare" to judgment (4). The fictional editor will make comments throughout the novel, anticipating censure or assuring proper interpretation. The provocative warning suggests that the small-minded might rush to "judge," but simultaneously appeals to a prurient interest like a modern film with a parental warning. Nevertheless, the fictional "N." of the dialogue of the second Preface, having "read it all the way through," dares not make a judgment unless it be predicated on the never-answered question of whether the letters are "real" or "fiction" (7). This ambiguous suspension of disbelief moves the question of truth to a higher dimension than realism. Rousseau insists on having a fair hearing of being read all the way through before judgment, and then expresses indignation for anyone who could read it in its entirety and come up with a condemnation: "I could never in my life have regard for such a man" (4). The only fault must be with a judgmental reader, implying that something is wrong with his reading if he does not come to a conclusion of the book's inherent virtue.

Rousseau seeks to create an equivocating stance about his fiction, even as he defines a faculty of *reading* and those for whom it will speak truth. As the editors of the Dartmouth edition of *Julie* indicate, there is much disagreement about the placement of these prefaces. The "first" preface appears to be derived from the second, while the second preface makes sense only after

having read the book, as the character N[8] has done. Some editions make it an appendix (655-6 n.6; 8). The R. of the dialogue in the second preface identifies himself as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, but professes not to know the truth of the letters, as opposed to Rousseau, who does. Clearly, the author wants to establish an identity of the discerning reader, neutralize prejudice, cultivate an ambiguity about the "truth" of the letters, and define the role of the novel/non-novel, a seeming anticipation of Derrida's *differance*, deferring the meaning into "free-play."

Rousseau was, in fact, troubled by the very idea that he was writing a *novel*, an artistic convention that he had roundly condemned:

> My perplexity was the shame of giving myself the lie so clearly and loudly in this way. After the severe principles I had just established with so much uproar, after the austere maxims I had so strongly preached, after so many mordant invectives against effeminate books that breathed love and softness, could anything be more unexpected, more shocking be imagined, than to see myself suddenly inscribed by my own hand among the authors of these books I had censured so harshly. (*Confessions* 365)

Rousseau had become "intoxicated" by reveries of his youthful infatuations and began imagining characters with "an exquisite selection of everything lovable" (361). Professing to be "seduced" by the "delirium" of the ecstatic visions of his characters, he resolved to "make a sort of Novel out of them" (ibid). R. of the second preface, entitled "Conversation about Novels," insists that *Julie* should not be read as a novel because "It is not a Novel" (9), denying the very subject at hand. Prefacing the most successful novel of the century, he will not admit to the name, although

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[8] Though most scholars insist that the identity of "N." is unknown, Susan K. Jackson makes a convincing case in *Rousseau's Occasional Autobiographies* that the second preface addresses issues that are part of the author's dispute with Denis Diderot. Rousseau had sent early copies of Parts I and II to Diderot, but had indignantly taken them back when his friend had not read them in due time. For other reasons, his friendship with Diderot deteriorated during the time period in which *Julie* was written, but Jackson argues that Diderot is the one Rousseau would have most had in mind at this time concerning the topics covered in this discussion (118-27).

he has ambitious strategies that will employ novelistic prose for his own purposes. Rousseau's ambivalence about the novel is reflected in the interpretive morality of his fiction and his view of the nature of truth in his contemporary world. De Man believes that the most interesting part of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is R.'s equivocation over whether the letters are fictional or real and goes on to argue that the "undecidibility" of reading is the major theme of the author (196). However, this postmodern approach is less Rousseau's theme than indicative of the ambiguity of the man himself, and his self-acknowledged self-contradictions.

R. affirms the most basic criticism of novels, and really, the main accusation against *mythos* throughout history: "Novels trouble people's minds" (15). Seduced into a make believe world, a reader becomes dissatisfied with his own; the prolixity of text in the novel had advanced this danger by presenting a comprehensive imaginary world for complete immersion. Rousseau would later confess his own novelistic downfall during his adolescent obsession with the world of novels while reading with his father:

> This love of imaginary objects and this facility of occupying myself with them disgusted me completely with everything that surrounded me, and determined that taste for solitude, which has remained with me since then…one will see the bizarre effects of this inclination…which in fact comes from a too affectionate, too loving, too tender heart which--for lack of finding existing ones that resemble it--is forced to feed itself with fictions. (*Confessions* 34-5)

Rousseau claims that the heated imagination created from this fictional world was part of what brought about his undoing in the real world; for that matter, the same may have happened to the revolutionary audience that idolized him. In the preface, R. explains that, "Trying to be what we are not, we come to believe ourselves different from what we are, and that is the way to go mad

(*fou)"* (*Julie* 15). The translator of the Dartmouth edition notes that the author is playing on etymological sense of "alienation" or "estrangement of the self" (657 n. 29). This existential angst is an essential part of Rousseau's identity, and his intention is to reach out to the audience with "the language of Solitary Folk," placing them in a familiar, everyday environment, and portraying a "tableaux of objects that surround them, [and] only duties they can fulfill." Ideally, novels should undermine "the maxims of large societies; they must expose them as false and contemptible, that is, *as they really are"* (15 emphasis added). Rousseau suggests that the mythical world is the environment of societal convention, and the normal subject of most novels, but he is speaking to an inner reality within the reader in order to make them "wise" (ibid.).

As previously mentioned, Rousseau indicates that at the time of the writing of *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* he was working on an ambitious project he called "Sensitive Morality," depicting how an atmosphere that surrounded the senses with conditions "most favorable to virtue" could cultivate the proper maintenance of the soul (*Confessions* 343-4). Distracted from this writing by his work on *Julie,* he clearly sublimated his intent into the novel as a creation of sensibility that would be conducive to virtue. He meant to create an environment of virtuous characters and sublime backgrounds that will reach out with noble sensations and become a part of the reader's moral grounding. Gaston Hall calls this an "associative determinism" (Hall 30). The virtuous atmosphere of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* aims to produce virtue in the lives of those exposed to it. He envisions the ideal married couple reading the novel together (*Julie* 16), as Jean Ranson proudly announces of himself and his wife in the collected reader response letters (Darnton 226). Rousseau intends that his readers "will rediscover their taste for the pleasures of nature; its true sentiments will be reborn in their hearts…They will fulfill the same functions; but they will fulfill them with a changed soul" (*Julie* 17). Rousseau had no less than this born-again

experience in mind for his readership as a higher truth in fiction than mere verisimilitude. R. invokes Julie's rule for judging novels, and invites this standard as an appraisal of his work when she says that "I for one have no other manner of judging my Readings than to sound the dispositions in which they leave my soul, and I scarcely imagine what sort of goodness a book can possess when it does not lead its readers to do good" (214). Rousseau aspires to more than moral didacticism; he expects faith to reveal itself in good works. As Darnton argues from the reader responses to *Julie,* Rousseau's readers fulfilled the prescriptions of the preface, and told him so in their letters (Darnton 248); this is the "wish-image" Auerbach shows lying in opposition to the historical reality of people's lives (466). Such contradictions were also evident in the revolutionaries who tried to live in a wish-image that denied the coarse realities of life.

Darnton explains this "anti-literary" stance as exactly the new kind of contractual bargain between author and reader that transformed the relationship to the text. Rousseau purposely distances himself from the jaded literary establishment, the cynical philosophers, and the aristocratic tastes of high society, wanting to be read with the innocent eyes of nature and the language of the heart; only those who "love virtue" will understand him (Darnton 230-1). As Rousseau pours out the ecstatic yearnings of his heart, he opens a new channel of communication to the hearts of his readers. According to Darnton, Rousseau guided readers into his text, and expected a "leap of faith" on their part that the author could transform the passions of the heart into a "truth that transcends literature," one which would reach them by their very distance from literary conventions and expectations (231-4). Susan Jackson sneers that the preface "makes a purposive spectacle of reinventing and interiorizing the truth of novels" (138). In a near prophetic voice, Rousseau appeals to the chosen who recognize the truth of the heart. This is reflected in *Julie* when Saint-Preux, in an early letter to Julie, that we should "read little, and

reflect much on our readings." He then affirms that the real truth in books is what is recognized in the heart:

> The great mistake of those who study is, as I have just said, to place too much trust in their books and not draw enough on their own resources; without considering that of all Sophists, our own reason is almost always the one that deceives us least. As soon as we are willing to search within ourselves, we all sense what is right, we all discern what is beautiful; we have no need to be taught either one…Let us therefore not go searching in books for principles and rules that we more surely find within ourselves. (*Julie* 47)

This call to inner truth is familiar to modern readers, but couched within Saint-Preux's tumultuous sentiments and condescending moralism, the revolutionary nature of its meaning to the eighteenth century may be obscure for us. While the Church was being questioned as the authoritative interpreter of truth, the growing body of knowledge catalogued by the Encyclopedists offered the path to enlightenment, but only by using the disciplined paths of learning and reason as objective standards. By contrast, Rousseau's valorization of inner truth over the collective knowledge of books is a radical stance. He took aim at these conventions from his first stellar essay that brought him to fame, claiming that the arts and sciences distorted the natural being of man and placed him farther from the truth; the *lack* of art and civilized learning became the litmus test of nature. This simple thesis will be central to *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and the author will appeal only to the heart in defending it. Such thinking appeals to the essential narcissism of every individual; we prefer to believe that we have some instinctual feeling of what is right, despite what "experts" say. Rousseau was one of the first to appeal on a mass scale to "feeling" as the truth. As if to preview the radical thinking of the books with a *précis*, the second page of the preface highlights the improbability of an older man inviting his

wife's former lover into their home, and R. reminds a skeptical N. of the engraving that depicts this scene, entitled "The confidence of beautiful souls" (346). It is exactly these kindred *belles âmes* that the author seeks as kindred spirits who recognize a higher inner truth--the "new men" of the eighteenth century. Indeed, their very simplicity underscores the uncontaminated truth of their hearts.

Love poetry from all eras asserts that romance finds its greatest eloquence in art; literature teachers argue that the subtle nuances and complex images of poetry project the most complete expression of passion, and even the minimally literate grasp for song lyrics to express the longings of the heart. Rousseau insists that artistic composition and rhetorical skill are substitutes that make up for what one does not feel, as opposed to the sputtering, awkward, childlike emanations of the truly passionate heart. While acknowledging the poet's fire in stimulating our inspiration, in the long run nothing exists but "words." On the other hand,

> a letter really dictated by love; a letter from a truly passionate Lover, will be desultory, diffuse, full of verbose, disconnected, repetitious passages. His heart, filled with an overflowing sentiment, ever repeats the same thing, and is never done, like a running spring that flows endlessly and never runs dry. Nothing salient, nothing remarkable; neither the words, nor the turns, nor the sentences are memorable; there is nothing in it to admire or to be struck by. And yet one feels the soul melt; one feels moved without knowing why. The strength of the sentiment may not strike us, but its truth affects us, and that is how one heart can speak to another. (10)

Rousseau's problem with "words" and rhetoric is sustained as a theme in all of his works, but again, it was *Julie* that was most read in the latter half of the "Enlightenment" eighteenth-century; here we have the counter-enlightenment in frontal assault. The subject is the language of

love, but the implications are the full nature of truth itself, which is not be found in words, but within the heart.

Rousseau will argue that the very simplicity of his work establishes its veracity, although that very characteristic makes us deem it unrealistic today. Like the cinema of the 70's that made earlier films "unrealistic" and yet appears artificial today, the "real" is an open-ended question, and Rousseau most certainly does not speak to *our* hearts; *we* will not weep for Julie. But Rousseau grounds his truth in the innocence and passions of his creations, and unreality is his defense. Although the modern reader does not share the impassioned emanations of this novel, the reading public of the day not only wept profusely with the lovers, they were compelled to all-night reading and re-reading, raged with indignation over the injustice done to the characters, and meditated deeply over the moralizing letters. In this light, the subject of this novel is not the love story but a highly politicized broadside aimed at the charlatanry of society and the corruption of nature caused by knowledge and civilization. As "one heart speak(s) to another"--between the tears--the targeted villain is the social order and the very simplicity of the lover's expression, even their awkwardness, is evidence of the truth.

Like a demagogue manipulating the anger of a crowd with sentimental tales of suffering, Rousseau uses emotion on behalf of a polemic; learning is the privilege of the elite, but feeling is a democratic offering to everyone, and everyone "feels" the truth. David Denby in his book, *Sentimental Narrative and the Social Order in France, 1760-1820,* notes that the only thing that makes this quiet love story interesting is the opposition of social barriers which the heart transcends: the inner world placed against a hostile outer world. He states that "Sentimental love appears as a figure of democracy [and the] criterion of judgment is the internal individual" (Denby 97). If the deep and natural sentiments of love do not acknowledge the social order, then

birth, class, and especially virtue are not a product of nature, but of selfish human contrivance. Denby states that "love is a force which transgresses the social hierarchy" (16). However, as Rousseau will concede in all of his works, the intrusions of social institutions are an accomplished fact of human existence, and one cannot speak as if these realities do not exist. The purity of every natural heart was violated long ago by experience in the world, but conversion is possible.

Rousseau's uncontaminated protagonists are importantly placed in Switzerland, an innocence established by the subtitle, *Letters of Two Lovers Who Live in a Small Town at the Foot of the Alps,* and Rousseau proudly announces himself as "Citizen of Geneva." Jean Starobinski indicates that this choice of location---as opposed to the author's original conception of the more classically pastoral setting of a Greek isle--was both a fertile inspiration for Rousseau's writing and an important connection for the premises of the novel, which sets his fantasy "against a background capable of satisfying the public appetite for everyday reality." Switzerland possessed a foreign atmosphere, but was not exotic or unreachable by travel (Starobinski 344-6). Additionally, the Swiss-French language both excuses any indelicacies in diction, and provides a contrasting simplicity which conveys a sense that one can write awkwardly but "feel properly in a world of truthfulness" (346). The distance between Switzerland and Paris amounts to a comparative argument akin to "structuralism" in viewing the separate cultures (347). Rousseau, seemingly self-deprecating of his style, reminds his readers that if they are looking for stylistic elegance or "pretensions of writing" they will find the letters "detestable" because these young people write only "the interests of their hearts" with no dissembling between them:

> They are children, will they think as men? They are foreigners, will they write correctly? They live in solitude, will they know society? Filled with the single sentiment that occupies them, they are in delirium, and think they are philosophers…They know how to love; they relate everything to their passion. Is the importance they give to extravagant ideas less amusing than all the wit they might display? They talk about everything; they get everything wrong. They reveal nothing but themselves; but in revealing themselves, they make themselves endearing. Their errors are more worthy than the knowledge of the Sages. (*Julie* 11)

Again, Rousseau anticipates every criticism, saying even that his characters are "wrong" if they make naïve assumptions, and he diffuses censure about his own style in the eyes of those who insist on the exacting precision of the French language. Still, the lovers are grounded in purity and innocence, and the implication is that what is "wrong" is set by the standards of society, and that "error" in purity is wiser than the Sages. Rousseau is not, in fact, dumbing down his characters to reflect accurately a rustic, adolescent discourse, but rather, portrays a fantasy: "Completely forgetting the human race, I made for myself societies of perfect creatures as celestial by their virtues as by their beauties, reliable, tender, faithful friends such as I never found here below" (*The Confessions* 359). Despite his noble fictions, Rousseau claims to speak for the truth and with a twist, morality. His readers took his creations as real people and as role models for a better world.

Art has always remained suspect and been at the borders of morality. The theatre, even with its origins in Greek ritual and medieval morality plays, would often be on the defense. But the novel would apologize from its inception, always needing to claim it taught moral lessons to atone for the seeming danger of the individual imagination immersed empathetically in the long

story. Rousseau, disdainful of the genre and claiming he was "seduced" into making use of the form, was not only sensitive to such accusations, he believed his work to be the very essence of real morality. N. voices this concern in the fictional preface, arguing that *Julie* seems to be two books, the first making allowance for vice and the second, supplying a sound moral didactic diminished by the earlier half: "the evil scandalizes before the good can edify" (12). R. responds that the ending will be most useful to the type of reader that is enticed by the beginning, and quotes from *Jerusalem Delivered* that what might seem like the bitter medicine of morality will go down more easily and "cure" with the sweetness of a "deception." Rousseau has a far more comprehensive morality in mind than an instructive ending, and certainly his readers took him that way. Despite the unconventional ethics, as Gustave Lanson stated, "People had been smiling at adultery; Rousseau dared to make it a crime" (qtd. in Durant X, 888).

Yet this novel, rather than ending in happy marriage after the fashion of romances of the day, subverts marriage with a transcendence of the soul in a different type of union. Tony Tanner, in his work, *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression,* states that "The novel, in its origin, might almost be said to be a transgressive mode, in as much as it seemed to break, or mix, or adulterate the existing genre expectations of the time" (Tanner 3). Tanner points out that the early English novel, with its attention to orphans (*Tom Jones),* prostitutes *(Moll Flanders)* and misfit wanderers reflects a move to the dangerous "other" at the margins of society. Julie's transgression against her father's wishes represents a subversion of the traditional family order, and adultery is the ultimate iconoclasm (ibid. 4-5). Yet adultery as an outward physical act is not the subject of *Julie,* and defining the boundaries of the heart--for the characters as well as the reader--is far more ambiguous. The lovers will not cross sexual boundaries after Julie's marriage. Yet morality, for Rousseau, was not a return to puritanical

chastity, but rather a redefinition of a virtue with flaws, after his own likeness. He states that his title character in his "society of perfect beings" was conceived as "weak…but with such a touching weakness that virtue seemed to gain from it" (*The Confessions* 361). The author's elevation of tainted virtue will be explained throughout this study; in the preface he insists of his characters that "only after deploring their faults… [can one] appreciate their virtues." But more importantly, sentiment "communicated to the heart…alone ultimately makes up for all the rest" and becomes a "cumulative effect," exerting change in character (*Julie* 12). Morality, then, is not based on outward action, but on sentiments communicated to the heart. Rousseau is preparing his readers for a revisionist morality that will allow for excusable weakness.

Moreover, the lessons of this novel are only for the pure in heart, those "lovers of virtue" living close to the simplicity of nature, because "no reading [of morality], in my view, will do worldly people any good" (13). Jaded "great city" readers are too far gone to benefit from the lessons of the book, so that Rousseau purports to reach another audience: "…when one wants to be useful, it is essential to be read in the Provinces" (16). "Worldly" Parisian readers have been dulled by endless tomes of morality and philosophy, unknown to the "provincials," i.e. the rest of France. The provincials do not even read most novels, which either satirize rustic life or make it "more bitter" in contrast to the glamorous world of urbane fiction. Of course, Rousseau had hopes of successful sales in Paris, as indeed was the case with this bestselling run of the century. Why did *Julie* appeal to the sophisticates of Paris despite its dismissal of urban readership and the wholesale indictment of city morals in Book II? The answer lies in Rousseau's appeal to an elite of kindred hearts--a near Biblical "remnant"--who have not yet bowed the knee to the false idols of society, despite the outward appearance of their lives. The geographical distance of the provinces from Paris represents a trope of one who may be "in the world, but not of it," as

messianic terms would call it. The author claims from the first page that his book is inappropriate for circulation in "society" and "suitable for very few readers" (3). In reality, along with the focus upon the individual in opposition to society, the author exploits the narcissistic seduction within every reader that he/she is somehow possessed of special insight when the "truth" appears. As with the elite readership announced on the first page of *Julie*, the first sentences of *The Confessions* proclaim "a man in all the truth of nature" who feels his heart, knows men, and says of himself, "I dare to believe that I am not made like any that exist" (5). Let me state here that I am inclined to believe this of myself, but I have found that a lifetime of "growing up" has forced me to confront the fact that I am simply another average man, finding my way through the normal human conditions along with everyone else. The possibility of an esoteric truth appeals to all of us, and certainly the generation of readers following Rousseau showed themselves to be participants of a secret society of the heart where personal "feeling" gave them a certain privilege to the truth. This is, of course, a common fallacy of the modern mind, but Rousseau heralded this possibility to the eighteenth-century like a new world order.

Rousseau must be seen by other beautiful souls, untainted by the corruptions of the world. Starobinski states that part of the way that Rousseau changed history was through the "myth" of Jean-Jacques that grew around him, and the fact that his "critique of society thus turns into an epiphany of private consciousness" (44-5). Central to Starobinski's seminal work about Rousseau, *Transparency and Obstruction,* is the author's preoccupation with presenting himself as open and guileless to the world--transparent—while at the same time he withdraws from the world into seclusion because of its hostility and contaminating influence. The characters of *Julie* will grow from their childlike worldview toward just such a lucidity of being. Every individual *feels* his originality, but longs for an unrestrained communication with harmonious spirits that

support his individual being. Something primitive within us longs to be perfectly *understood*. The characters of *Julie* not only provided models for this transparency of soul but supplied a discourse of the self that struck sympathetic notes in its readers.

Nothing else from the period reads like *Julie*, and if it seems stilted and artificial today, readers responded warmly to it at the time. Sterne may have explored the stream of consciousness of the individual more accurately, but he wrote with an irony that did not call for personal imitation. Richardson portrayed the self, but not the communication of soul-mates. Rousseau invokes the communication of souls as a moral principle (Starobinski 86). N. identifies an important principle of human interaction we will examine, which Bakhtin identifies as the ideological becoming of a human being through the assimilation of internally persuasive discourse:

> I observe that in very close knit society, styles as well as characters become more like each other, and that friends, confounding their souls, also confound their manners of thinking, of feeling, and of speaking. This Julie, such as she is, must be an enchantress; everyone who comes near her is bound to resemble her; everyone about her is bound to become Julie. (*Julie* 21)

Starobinski shows that this mingling of souls to achieve complete transparency represents the moral growth of the characters beyond the institutions of society and the flaws of the passions; it transcends the physicality of existence and approaches to the realm of the eternal soul. Rousseau's readers seem to have absorbed this as a conversion experience.

This communion of souls also contains a suggestive eroticism which was most certainly part of the novel's prodigious success, as well as its scandal. Many critics, modern and historical, reproach Rousseau for a manipulative salaciousness veiled in self-righteous affectation, and

certainly this question bears examination in any comprehensive study of *Julie.* In terms of present-day morality, the book is approvable for "all audiences," and an unsophisticated or hasty reader might miss the veiled sexual liaison entirely; Julie's frequent troubled expressions of conscience about deceiving her parents obscure the additional shame she exclaims when something serious really happens. Her pregnancy and miscarriage are not clearly revealed until the end, and are likewise couched in eighteenth-century euphemism. But clearly, Rousseau was aware of his vulnerability to moral criticism, as he expressed in his preface with a warning to "maidens." Voltaire satirized the putative morality of the book in his "*Lettres sur La Nouvelle Héloïse"* and accused Rousseau of feigning sanctimony while writing a novel that would "make a prostitute blush;" Diderot stated that while "preaching against license in morals, Rousseau wrote a licentious novel"(Blum, 64-5). Granting some hyperbole here for the vendetta that developed between Rousseau and the *philosophes,* clearly the allegation had some substance in his day. Later, in *The Confessions,* which some critics identify as a "third preface" (Jackson 195), Rousseau would show a mastery in simultaneously conveying piety and prurient interest. Like a modern sinner turned born-again believer, repentance makes misdeeds all the more celebrated. The author's admission that *Julie* had such an intoxicating effect on women that "there were hardly any, even in the highest ranks, whose conquest I might not have made" points to the strong erotic content of the book, even though "virtue" was its theme (*Confessions* 456). Loomis calls *Julie* a "significant introduction to the literature of pornography" although "(Rousseau) ravished not the body but the soul of his reader" (27). Although the author avoided any literal descriptions of sex, he aroused the libido while sublimating its manifestations, suggesting a transcendent "soul-mating."

Again, although a maiden's virtue was synonymous with her virginity, Julie and Saint-Preux lose their virginity while maintaining their virtue. Starobinski characterizes this dichotomy as a "dialectic," because the author wants it both ways, "physical pleasure and exalted virtue" (87). Blum applies Starobinski bluntly, stating that Rousseau used "a vocabulary of transparency" to combine his fantasies and his ideal of virtue in "a manual of cognitive style to reconcile moral superiority with erotic stimulation." This oneness of bodies is subsumed in a penetration of souls which "made genitalia irrelevant;" furthermore, she suggests this significantly altered eighteenth-century notions of both virtue and eroticism (Blum 62-64). Auerbach suggests that this "sexual titillation with a sentimental ethic" descended from Prévost's *Manon Lescaut,* which initiated the notion of virtue linked with eroticism (400-1). Tonglin Liu calls this a sublimation of sexual desire into language that calls up the "spiritual eroticism" of the Augustinian tradition, where "religious emotion is expressed through erotic language (11). As will be shown later, Rousseau's passion has a certain evangelical tone and spiritual ecstasy that equates the love of Julie and Saint-Preux to divine dispensation. This proved to be a powerful combination and significantly contributed to the success of the book.

In fact, Rousseau rooted the inspiration for *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in memories of his steamy adolescent longings that still warmed him in mid-life:

> I saw myself surrounded by a seraglio of Houris from my old acquaintances…My blood catches fire and sparkles, my head turns in spite of my already graying hair….The intoxication by which I was seized…that my cure required nothing less than the unforeseen and terrible crisis of misfortunes into which it precipitated me…What did I do on that occasion? Already my Reader has guessed it…The impossibility of reaching real beings threw me into the country of chimeras, and seeing nothing existing that was

> worthy of my delirium, I nourished it in an ideal world peopled with beings in accordance with my heart. (*Confessions* 358-9)

Part of Rousseau's genius was his ability to capture the wistful teenage yearnings, along with the idealized political utopias of sophomoric youth. Certainly, young people made up a considerable portion of his readership, particularly among those who would later become the revolutionary generation (Attridge 266). Loomis notes the political implications of this seductive dialectic of virtue and sensuality, along with the appealing power of frustrated desire:

> On the surface a paean to the exquisite satisfactions of chastity, Rousseau's books actually were inducements to sensuality of a most delicious and novel kind. He introduced sex to the soul, not to the soul that is the precinct of saints and theologians, but to the ardent, sentimental soul of the adolescent--that repository of yearnings not yet directed to their natural outlet, the breeding place of idealism and discontent, of theories in only the slightest way related to human nature as it is, of musings, cravings and rebellion…Like Rousseau, but for different reasons, they are thwarted of the satisfactions which might staunch their tears. They perch perpetually, in delectable anguish, on the brim of relief to their longings. (29)

The democracy of the heart, which recognizes no class distinctions, is likewise the yearnings of the natural man who cannot rise above his station. Lionel Gossman describes Rousseau's unparalleled ability to "sing the life of the heart" in a voice that spoke to the secret dreams and desires of his audience. He possessed an "incantatory power" to replicate in their hearts his own unfulfilled desires as fulfillment for those urges: "Literature becomes both the expression and the consolation of the unhappiness of modern bourgeois man" (271-1). Auerbach argues that the

novel aroused the bourgeois masses to a "moral aesthetic" based on the "condition of natural virtue" propounded by Rousseau (458).

Thus we will imagine Rousseau and Bakhtin as informing each other in *Julie*, and see where that line of questioning leads. As we examine how everyone around her "becomes Julie" we are reminded how Bakhtin discusses the role of language in the ideological "becoming" of an individual. We will consider the *heteroglossia* of the novel, primarily how the language of multiple genres, like music theory, pastoral poetry, religious devotion, or passion, are all interacting around the same themes. We will note how a *double-voiced* authorial purpose is *refracted* through a character with other intentions, speaking a spectrum of meaning. We will find Rousseau using *alien* words in a new semantic sense and "invading" the belief system of the reader with alternative meanings. We will note the *struggle* of what becomes *internally persuasive discourse* against the "word of the fathers," the mainstream ideological lines of the Enlightenment. We will see how words and ideas are *dialogized* in Bakhtin's sense across *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, as a play of multiple meanings through fields of forces, rather like quantum theory or the complexity of interaction of the becoming of consciousness in a human being. This is an open-ended process that does not arrive at synthesis or resolution, but folds back upon itself. Rousseau is dialogizing truth and fiction in the novel, eroticism and virtue; this tension begins in the Preface, but is never resolved. Instead, the author reaches for a truth higher than moral maxims, a language of the heart. As Rousseau reworks Locke's ideas of how "sensations" shape the mind, he is attempting to accomplish his unwritten "Sensitive Morality" in the reader by projecting the charismatic virtue of the characters into the reader as a moral experience. Finally, we will consider the "discourse of pathos," between a small town hero and heroine who are tested in their discourse without leaving home, yet face epic struggles.

Our purpose, then, will be to examine the powerful social critique and political polemic--as it appeared to eighteenth-century readers. This sentimental love story with a subtle eroticism appealed to the tears and passions of Enlightenment sensibility while radicalizing notions of the institutions and norms with a revolutionary fervor. We can only proceed with certain qualifications. As Darnton indicates, even though we are approaching a vastly documented society of a little over two centuries past, we are like anthropologists interpreting distant cultures through "totems and taboos" that may indicate more "otherness" than enlightenment from "an alien system of meaning" (4). Likewise, *Julie* does not *seem* like a compelling and credible read to us today, much less a revolutionary document. That Rousseau's readers wrote him that the book profoundly changed their lives strikes us as bizarre, as do the spiritual-like pilgrimages to his tomb. The ever-ambiguous revolutionary mantra of "virtue" bypasses our understanding, even as it mutates into the chilling connection with Terror, now a decidedly modern term that some today adopt with a self-righteous intent, perhaps akin to "virtue." *Julie* seems impotent and sterile today, and we would be cavalier to circumscribe it definitively in *l'histoire des mentalités*, but we may explore its turgid passions and consider its place as a prime example of the consciousness altering power of the novel.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POLEMICS OF ROMANCE

"I must flee you," exclaims Saint-Preux,[9] avatar of Rousseau and protagonist of *Julie* in the opening passage of the novel. Leaving has become the only option for a virtuous young man trapped in a corrupt and artificial social structure that designates his bourgeois love for a young aristocratic woman as illegitimate. This feigned retreat will lead to an opening salvo against what the Bastille would represent, and advance a criticism of Enlightenment values. Tutor Saint-Preux acknowledges that his position is hopeless as "a man whose station and fortune cannot allow him to aspire" to the heart of his student, the blueblood Julie d'Étange (25). The title's allusion to Peter Abélard and his pupil, "Heloise," is the immediate tension of the early letters, following the ominous quotation from Petrarch on the title page of *The New Héloïse*: "The world did not know her while she was here/ I knew her, I who remain alone here to weep." The connection to classical tragedy is present from the beginning. The young man initially seems to adapt a gallant stance: since his involuntary love is inappropriate, he will excuse himself and depart, although it is immediately apparent that Julie has given him some encouragement of returned affection. The lovers will later consider elopement to "flee" the society that forbids their union. Ultimately, the consummation of their love will only take place when their souls have abandoned the earth for unification in heaven.

[9] "Julie's lover" is never given a name in the novel, although most critics identify him as "Saint-Preux," an ironic nickname designated by Claire after his heroic visitation of the smallpox-infected Julie in Part III. No convincing explanation of this name has ever been made, although the ambiguity of his identity no doubt supported the myth that he was Jean-Jacques himself.

Saint-Preux's purpose is to accomplish his own banishment. Helpless against his acute "sensibility," he has fallen victim not merely to the attractiveness and charm of his beautiful young pupil, but also to "the attraction of the sentiments" that emanate from her purity of soul (26). He recognizes that his attentions are impermissible, but he is so paralyzed in his worship of her virtues that he states he can act only in accordance with her "divine" commands. In the character's initial words, we can see two intentions: while appealing to Julie's "sensibility" and compassion to relieve him from this state of torment, his primary design is to declare his love and to suggest a relationship between them that transcends "the prejudices of the world:"

> Sometimes I dare to presume that Heaven has put a hidden conformity in our affections, as it did in our tastes and age. Still so young, we possess all of nature's penchants undistorted, and all our inclinations seem to coincide. Not having yet acquired the uniform prejudices of the world, we have uniform ways of feeling and seeing, and why should I not dare imagine in our hearts the same accord I perceive in our opinions? (26)

Saint-Preux immediately retreats from his presumption and begs forgiveness for "overstepping" his place, although he tells her to judge him by whether his "sentiments are pure" (ibid.). Still, he equivocates when he says he would "dare to presume" that Heaven might have a higher design for their youthful hearts, which remain close to Nature, and are still uncontaminated by the corruption of worldly institutions. What is conventionally seen as "growing up" is implied to be the acquisition of prejudice, a frequent theme with Rousseau. Julie's would-be suitor chastens himself and retracts his boldness, conceding his "crime" is in the eyes of the world while he simultaneously questions the structures that exclude him. Behind him is the "double-voice" of the author, anticipating the charge that will open *The Social Contract:* "Man is born free, and

everywhere he is in chains." Like the conflict within the hearts of the innocent young lovers, nature and society are in opposition. Although Saint-Preux insists his only option is to flee, Rousseau's intention is forward attack.

Saint-Preux agonizes in further letters over Julie's lack of prompt response, protesting his utter wretchedness. He proclaims that death would be more merciful than silence, and a just sentence for making his beloved feel awkward by his trespassing attentions. Still Saint-Preux is manipulating her with his threats of suicide. Self-immolation will be a recurring dramatic tension with both of the lovers, and a figure of Julie's death. In her first letter, she confesses her love--a cherished secret that only the danger to Saint-Preux's life wrests from her heart (letter III, iv). Julie ironically accuses him of being an "artful man" and "vile seducer," who from the first moment made her feel "the poison that corrupts [her] sense and [her] reason" (31). We have already seen that Saint-Preux has surrendered his heart, and offered his "love without hope" as an homage to virtue (30). The real seducer and "poison" that corrupts her is the artificial society that makes their innocent sentiments an offense to "honor." The villains are the aristocracy, who harden their hearts to nature in favor of "opinion." Julie determines to confess "this fatal passion" and her "guilty heart" to her proudly pedigreed parents--"at the feet of those who gave me life"--but higher powers seem to be set against her:

> Heaven is deaf to the prayers of the weak…all of nature seems to be your accomplice; all my efforts are in vain, I worship you in spite of myself. How could my heart, which in full force was incapable of resistance, now surrender only halfway? How could this heart which can dissimulate nothing conceal from you the rest of its weakness…No, from this first step I feel myself drawn into the abyss. (32)

Julie laments her loss of virtue and reason, but her heart, which is incapable of guile, is placed in seeming opposition to heaven and nature; in reality, they are her allies. An acknowledgment of the class structure that makes their love dishonorable is subverted by an opposition of a higher order. As Julie writes from her knees in an appeal for the virtue of her lover to preserve her, Rousseau intends that we observe this as an unnatural act. Saint-Preux's response recalls "the holy character of virtue" and he insists that "when I cease to love virtue, I will no longer love you...I abhor crime more than I love Julie" (34). While the eighteenth-century reader empathizes with the sentimental pathos of the young lovers, a subtle polemic introduces a higher ethical system.

Within the first pages of *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* we find the kind of "internal dialogism" that Bakhtin identifies as the unique feature of novelistic discourse--the introduction of "alien" words with the privately qualified meaning which he characterizes as "Rousseauism." The love letters in the first part of *Julie* are full of ideologically charged words: *virtue, sensibility, sentiment, heart, Nature, Heaven, honor, honesty, crime, purity, confession, reason, passion, love, station, corrupt, vanity, philosopher.* The usage of such terms introduces the struggle of social forces within eighteenth century, and they will mean different things to different groups, whether clergy, aristocracy, middle or lower classes, philosophers, or literary circles. Bakhtin, we recall, would represent the variance in usage as different *languages,* hence, the multiplicity of languages represented by different characters--a differing linguistic consciousness as *heteroglossia* that is unique to novelistic discourse--a dialogue of languages. However, when *two* languages, two intentions of linguistic consciousness, exist within a single utterance, Bakhtin identifies it as a *hybrid construction;* such hybrids represent the author's perception speaking

through the character, whose language can thus have contradictory meanings within a single utterance (Bakhtin 304-5, 358-9).

When Julie asserts that "Heaven" does not hear her prayers because she is weak, and "nature" seems to side against her, she is echoing the contemporary assumption that Heaven has sanctioned hierarchy and the purity of the aristocratic class in nature, as evidenced in the Great Chain of Being. Rousseau is speaking with another consciousness: the truth of the heart, as it exists in the innocence of young lovers is closer to nature and the divine than corrupted civilization. According to Bakhtin, the dialogic struggle between alternatively constructed meanings of other "languages" and *alien* words can generate an individualistic style. Rousseau will utilize an important concept like "virtue" or "sensibility" in a multitude of contexts within *Julie* until the terms take on a life of their own. In the revolutionary milieu, these abstractions would only make sense in the context of Jean-Jacques. Bakhtin highlights the importance of Rousseau's individualistic use of words:

> Highly significant in this respect is the struggle that must be undertaken in such movements as Rousseauism, Naturalism, Impressionism, Acmejism, Dadaism, Surrealism and analogous schools with the 'qualified' nature of the object (a struggle occasioned by the idea of a return to a primordial consciousness, to original consciousness…to pure perception). (277, n.1)

Rousseau had argued in his previous *Discourses* that the rise of civilization distanced mankind from the idyllic natural state of primitive society, and that all of the ills of contemporary existence could be traced to the artificial constraints of social and political institutions. His rhetorical discourse brought attention to his ideas and the public came to expect this view in his work, but his *Discourses* remained abstractions of eighteenth-century political thought. Despite

his contempt for the novel, Rousseau found his voice in the ecstatic exclamations of his characters, and he couched a powerful subterfuge for politics in these polemics of the heart making the case for the egalitarian nature of love.

La Nouvelle Héloïse argues with pathos in a sentimental love story, though as Denby states of sentimental novels, "Romantic love emerges as an experiential truth blocked and frustrated by oppressive forces" (98). Rousseau expressed love in a style that was new, but beautiful in the contemporary context, and far more accessible than the complex traditions of courtly love poetry. No cynical philosophy was propounded, and no subversion of spirituality could be found--only the injustice of cross-cultural love in sensible young people who saw the incompatibility of their union with a commitment to "virtue" as it was commonly defined in the day. The scandal of this book consisted in a redefinition of those values. Rousseau took pride in the fact that the subject of the novel was simple, focused on three characters and "maintained for six volumes without episode, without romantic adventure, without wickedness of any sort, either in the characters or the action" *(Confessions* 457). Nevertheless, the dramatic tension is social injustice, and this power of the novel subversively compelled the readership of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* to make it the literary phenomenon of the century.

Following the first half-dozen letters in this epistolary novel, we have the introduction of Julie's cousin and lifelong friend, Claire, who is later called by her married name, Madame d'Orbe; Claire has also been tutored by the young Saint-Preux. This trinity of friends forms the core of Rousseau's ecstatic visions of an "ideal world peopled by beings in accordance with my heart…Completely forgetting the human race, I made for myself societies of perfect creatures as celestial by their virtues as by their beauties, reliable, tender, faithful friends such as I never found here below" (*Confessions* 359). Along with all of the iconoclastic thinking and philosophy

of Jean-Jacques, we must also be mindful of his frustrated longing for *friendship*, which eluded him to the end of his life. The soul-mate friendship between Julie and Claire seems to have been the starting point for Rousseau's initial project, and while he says that he created Julie with an excusable weakness on her path to virtue, he imagined Claire as infallibly wise (361). Claire will remain the confidant and rock of wisdom for both young lovers, and her letters narrate their actions when they are separated. Claire's voice appears at many key transitions of the book, and she writes the final letter in the conclusion of the book. The voice of reason and common sense that speaks through Claire has drawn attention from feminist critics, who see her as the one credible feminine role model in *Julie*. Her thinking is never clouded by delirious emotion.

Claire's initial letter substantiates the unquestionable virtue of their tutor, whom she often refers to ironically as "the philosopher." Although this appellation implies an ironic tone in her diction, Rousseau may be suggesting her wise approval of the maturing, true philosophy of Saint-Preux, as opposed to the false *philosophes* who have subverted morality with their cynicism and comic irony. Claire assures Julie that all of their education has been balanced with a corresponding love of virtue. Their former governess had too candidly exposed their hearts to the seductive dangers of passion through novels, but Claire insists, "If we have learned too much for our years, at least such study came at no cost to our morals" (37). Although she concedes the danger of Julie's position, she more importantly identifies the theme that Rousseau intends as the moral foundation of the novel: the honor of the struggle of virtue against both temptation and the social institutions that subvert it. Claire's letter verbalizes a pointed statement of the problem: "That the Baron d'Étange should consent to give his only daughter, his only child, to a petty bourgeois without fortune" (ibid.). Money, of course, could make this attachment acceptable, despite bloodlines. Claire's noble father has evolved to more open-minded thinking, and prefers

his daughter's happiness to perpetuation of pure nobility. She also questions the morality that would demand that her "honesty" should reveal the threat to propriety from the interloper, Saint-Preux, in order to preserve the established order. Claire believes in a higher virtue that answers to the bonds of "faith, trust, and friendship," even if it contradicts the "maxims" of tradition; what was "virtuous" in another age has now become "wickedness" if it extorts a breach of confidence between their hearts (ibid.). Rousseau is reinterpreting the honesty of conventional standards; the higher calling of love revises the meaning. Julie underscores this break with the past as she discusses her mistaken former notions of honesty in letter I, ix:

> I was reared in accordance with maxims so severe that the purest love appeared to me the height of dishonor. Everything taught me or led me to believe that a maiden of any sensibility was undone at the first tender word that escaped her lips; my troubled imagination confused crime with the confession of passion; and I had such a horrible notion of that first step that I could scarcely see any interval between it and the last…I thought the struggles of modesty were the struggles of chastity…I have recognized that I was wrong; I had no sooner spoken than I felt relieved. (41)

Julie recognizes that virtue allows for the admission of love for a commoner, and confession—which is no "crime" as she formerly believed--brings relief to the psychic disorder which results from adhering to the artificial taboos of the social order. Recovered from these delusions of false "infamy," she can now "savor the delightful pleasure of loving in all purity," enjoying deeper happiness and health and state that "the harmony of love and innocence is paradise on earth to me." (41). She holds to sexual purity, perhaps all the more so by verbalizing her passion, but she believes that virtue can love with intensity and still profit the soul.

Rousseau is subtly challenging the boundaries of social interaction between the sexes. Although he deplores the salacious *tête-à-tête* of aristocratic salon culture, love can revel in ecstatic confession and remain entrenched in virtue. At the time of the writing of *Julie,* Rousseau was struggling with justifying his actions with Sophie d'Houdentot, a married woman but also mistress of another man. His concern with accounting for his relations with Mme d'Houdentot in Book IX of *The Confessions* occupies far more of his attention than documenting the composition of his famous novel. The misunderstandings about the nature of this relationship brought about his notorious break with his former friends, the encyclopedia editors, Diderot and Grimm. Despite his passionate outpourings to his beloved Sophie, "the gleam of all the virtues adorned the idol of my heart; to soil its divine image would have annihilated it" (*Confessions* 373). In a passage that echoes the early declarations of Saint-Preux about the impossibility of violating the perfect being of Julie, Rousseau insists, "…to debase my Sophie! Ah that could never be!" (ibid.). Starobinski argues that Rousseau was completely preoccupied with only one affair--his own and certainly, at the core of all-things-Rousseau are the trials of Jean-Jacques (Starobinski 22). The author is justifying himself in *Julie*, exploring his own soul, and refracting confession through his characters and the representation of virtue. The novel reinterprets the eighteenth-century world-view in radical revision, capturing the reader's sentiment and redirecting her perspective toward an alien world. The modern reader, comfortable with platonic friendships, has trouble grasping the revolutionary possibilities in a character drama that seems based on the tear-drenched emotions of the characters. In the narrow world of the private rooms of eighteenth-century man--and particularly woman--the novel infiltrated the consciousness with a new way of being and loving, and a new sense of the individual existential domain that does not answer to the hierarchy, but to the heart.

Rousseau, like Saint-Preux, is ever the tutor, and while his love story radicalizes romance with social criticism, he uses the reader's affection for his characters to add credibility to the extensive moral lecturing on a multitude of subjects; much of the last half of the novel will be devoted exclusively to overt didacticism. In the first dozen letters of Book I, Saint-Preux addresses the important subject of reading, and the author advises the audience about the principles of internalizing the book. Central to Saint-Preux's admonition is the maxim, "To read little, and reflect much on our reading…to talk a lot about them between us, is the way to digest them well" (46). Darnton shows that Rousseau's readership took him fully at his word: "He transformed the relation between writer and reader, between reader and text" (228). Rousseau is there to instruct on *how* to read. Additionally, Darnton suggests that Rousseau's disclaimer as to his literary credentials added another "political edge" to his novels; the "literary" became emblematic of the power structure of the aristocracy and its masquerade (230). High art was often an enigmatic and excluding code to the bourgeoisie, and starkly contrasted with these inviting emanations from the innocent heart.

More importantly, Saint-Preux reminds Julie, and his audience, that while wide erudition inflates the ego with an excess of ill-considered fluff, the virtuous heart, which is closer to nature, perceives by intuition the most vital truths:

> …for what you put into your readings is better than what you find in them, and your active mind makes from the book another book, sometimes better than the first…As soon as we are willing to search within ourselves, we all sense what is right, we all discern what is beautiful; we have no need to be taught either one…Let us therefore not go searching in books for principles and rules that we more surely find within ourselves. (*Julie* 47)

The Enlightenment presupposed that the accumulation of human knowledge was moving towards increasing comprehension of the world; Rousseau is proposing a superior inner light, which does not depend upon books for learning. The Encyclopedists, who were now Rousseau's enemies, aspired to accumulate the full spectrum of human erudition, while he presented the counterargument that the essential truth is already within the heart. Rousseau's invocation of the supremacy of inner, personal truth radically departs from everything that came before. Later in the book, this initial theme of intuitive wisdom would include spirituality, the domain of the Self, and social behavior. If Rousseau's own belief in the truth of himself--and his shameless narcissism--sometimes repels us, it is a contagious narcissism, for every reader wants to believe that he is a member of the enlightened few who do not allow worldly knowledge to contaminate an instinctual grasp of the truth. Darnton suggests that Rousseau challenged the reader to read with innocence, and to forget literary conventions and urbane sophistication that interfere with the truth (230).

It also must be noted that this kind of reading is directed, quite unconventionally, at the value of learning *for a woman,* who has a higher truth in her heart than that found in institutions of higher learning. Saint-Preux's plan for Julie's continuing study is to dismiss most of traditional education as inferior to the innate wisdom of the heart. Science, he argues, "is valid only for trade" and most often serves for the parading of knowledge by pedants: "Take away from our Men of science the pleasure of making others listen: knowledge will be nothing for them" (46). The learning of mathematics, languages, and physics will be reduced for Julie because "whatever speaks nothing to the soul is unworthy of your attention" (48). He intends to renounce all history as well, except that of Switzerland because "it is a free and simple country, where ancient men are to be found in modern times" (ibid.). Most literature is excluded as well,

excepting Petrarch, Mestastio, Tasso, and some "masters of French theatre," who are all quoted in the letters. Saint-Preux rejects the books of love that are the conventional reading intended for women because, "What would we learn about love from these books? Ah, Julie, our hearts tell us more than they do" (49). The learning and literature of the Enlightenment are dimmed by sentiments of the heart, which perceives truths that reason alone cannot achieve. The bourgeoisie may have been minimally educated, and the female readership was insecure about their qualifications for higher learning, but Rousseau assures them that those who *feel* with the heart already have the most knowledgeable perception of what is important to know.

Rousseau's digressive excursions into educational morality are a major feature of *Julie*, and it might be argued the melodramatic plot seems like a foil for the author's preachy world view. Several books into the novel most of the dramatic action ends, and little else happens for hundreds of pages. However, Rousseau approaches the action rather quickly in the beginning of the novel, with the first ecstatic kiss happening within the first twenty-five pages and sexual consummation after fifty; the rest of the novel will not reward any erotic expectations on the part of the reader, since the author has other designs. Even these few physical encounters are not portrayed as actions, but rather as inner psychological events. As the subject of the first engraving (53), the after-effect of the kiss is illustrated, emphasizing Julie's shock and near fainting away, and showing Saint-Preux's gallant posture, sweeping her into his arms. The strategy of the engravings, important and carefully ordered by Rousseau from his early experience as an apprentice engraver, will be examined more carefully later, but the sublime landscape and the emotional intensity are more the subject of the picture than the action itself, and the fateful arbor will later become an important trope. The "fatal kiss," engineered by Claire as a coquettish game, subverts male aggressiveness and social impropriety. It places Saint-Preux

in Rousseau's favorite place--surrendering the will to an overpowering mistress. The mystical near-swoon in both of the lovers is a signal that nature is speaking of things that are more important than the social order. Saint-Preux rhapsodizes the moment in his letter, while Julie remains silent. Surely the predominantly female readership, including the "maidens," succumbed to the imagination of such an eloquent embrace:

> O immortal memory of that moment of illusion, of delirium and enchantment, never, never shalt thou fade in my soul, and so long as Julie's charms are engraved therein, so long as this troubled heart furnishes me sentiments and sighs, thou shalt be the torture and happiness of my life!…Alas! I was enjoying an apparent tranquility; submissive to your supreme commands, I no longer murmured at a fate over which you deigned to preside. (51)

If the modern reader grimaces over the sentimental hyperbole, the political nature of the transgression is obscured by the ecstasy. The middle class asserts its democratic power of the heart, while still remaining appropriately servile. If there is social restitution to pay, the punishment itself is part of the sensual pleasure of the throbbings of love.

Of course, Rousseau's masochistic yearnings and his often quoted early pages of *The Confessions* are part of the myth of Rousseau. His "precocious sexual instinct" is aroused by the spankings from his governess, Mlle. Lambercier. Rousseau identifies a theme in his relationships with women and subconsciously, his fictions: "Who would believe that this childhood punishment received at eight years of age from the hand of a woman of thirty determined my tastes, my desires, my passions, myself for the rest of my life" (*The Confessions* 13). After several pages of development in his autobiography concerning the impact of this event, we find him describing the place Saint-Preux will sensuously occupy for the duration of the novel: "To

be on my knees before an imperious mistress, to obey her orders, to ask her for forgiveness, were very sweet enjoyments for me" (15). The sufferings of the frustrated lover are, in fact, the purpose of this sly sexuality that flows in tears. As Stanley Loomis has indicated about this incident, the soul is the location of intercourse in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (29). Though Rousseau is writing of himself, he is tapping into a primal urge that will sweep a generation like mass-mourning: tears will become the authentic response of a feeling heart. Julie will send Saint-Preux away following this kiss, and the brief consummation will result in his exile. The suffering will continue for the rest of the book, and Saint-Preux will dangle in exquisite agony. The political intimations of this frustration will emerge slowly, but the mass media possibilities of the novel are set in motion toward victimhood as a cultural identity, resentment as a revolutionary force, and suffering as a valid self-perspective on the world. Saint-Preux calls for a new mode of heroic virtue: "It is not heroic actions that duty requires of us, but a still more heroic resistance to unrelenting sufferings" (*Julie* 71). Of course, much will be made in modern times of sexual masochism, as it descended from Rousseau's contemporary, the Marquis de Sade. Rousseau appeals more to the political sense of suffering as ecstatic torment. Madame Roland wrote in her memoirs while awaiting the guillotine that she found comfort in the martyrdom of her persecuted master; Robespierre and other revolutionaries often quoted Rousseau to support the notion that an artful and corrupt world persecutes the lovers of virtue. This theme threads its way through the entirety of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and, as we shall see, enlightens the meaning of Julie's death.

The return of Julie's father, the proud Baron d'Étange, necessitates Saint-Preux's temporary removal to the mountains, lest the heat of the lovers' passion be too readily apparent to the protective and jealous father. The young lover writes impassioned descriptions from the countryside that could be seen as an early manifesto for the next century's romanticism. Letter I,

xxii (62-69) is of particular interest to Jean Starobinski in his assertion that transparency of the soul and spiritual fusion of the lovers is at the core of the wish-fulfillment of Jean-Jacques. Saint-Preux declines to discuss the details of his journey, and focuses on the main concern the lovers: "I will limit myself to telling you about the state of my soul; it is only right to give you an account of the use that is made of your property" (61). Rousseau depicts the craggy peaks and yawning chasms of upper Switzerland to convey a new sense of the power of nature, with its sublime vistas that will counter the sculpted gardens of eighteenth-century France:

> Sometimes huge cliffs hung like ruins above my head. Sometimes high and thunderous waterfalls drenched me in their thick fog. Sometimes a perpetual mountain stream opened by my side an abyss the depth of which eyes dared not fathom. On occasion I got lost in the darkness of a dense wood. On others, on emerging from a chasm a pleasant meadow suddenly delighted my sight. (61)

Will Durant attributes the vogue of mountain climbing in Europe to the emotional impact of the descriptions in *La Nouvelle Héloïse.* This brief letter is a seminal strand in the romantic "sublime," and is the novel's most intensive depiction of the wildness of "Nature." Starobinski emphasizes that "Rousseau depicts the scenery of *another* world" where the thin air exhibits a "transparency," diminishing the distance between objects under the "veil" of the cloudy atmosphere in the more civilized spaces below the peaks; even the colors and features are more vivid and alive (65). In a key passage about *Julie* in his eloquent study of Rousseau, Starobinski likens Rousseau's natural scenery to a similar passage in the *Dialogues*, quoted here at length:

> Imagine…an ideal world similar to our own and yet quite different. Nature is the same as on our earth, but its economy is more apparent, its order more evident, its sights more admirable. *The forms are more elegant, the colors more vivid,* the fragrances sweeter, and

> all the objects more interesting. All nature is here so beautiful that contemplation of it inspires the soul with love for so touching a tableau, and with the desire to cooperate in so lovely a system comes fear of disturbing its harmony; this gives rise to an exquisite sensibility, which gives *immediate pleasure* to those so blessed, pleasure unknown to hearts in which similar contemplation has kindled no flame. (qtd. in Starobinski 82)

Starobinski associates the transparency of the mountain air in *Julie* and the removal of the "veil" with the "immediate pleasure" of this passage from the *Discourses*: "The terms are equivalent: in Rousseau's allegorical language, the removal of the veil is synonymous with immediate pleasure" (81). Starobinski's analysis of the novel centers on the use of "veils" as a trope in the novel, symbolizing the various "obstacles" that prevent the longing of the soul from fusing with the beloved and the divine. In Rousseau's ideal world of transcendent perfect beings, "beautiful souls" have perfectly transparent hearts, as he believes he does, and they communicate with a purity of sentiment and wordless virtue. We will consider the evangelistic appeal of this openness and its impact on a world that was accustomed to appearances as the criteria of judgment. Rousseau is opening a new articulation and self-consciousness of the individual, but simultaneously anticipating the existential alienation of the lonely Self and the difficulty of real communication through language. The author is holding out the promise that a return to Nature creates honesty, and that the simple country life removes the vices of civilization, that heartfelt sentiment is truth, and that love will triumph in virtue. Starobinski's masterwork has become definitive in discussing Rousseau, and wherever one finds "transparency" used in a discussion of Jean-Jacques, one can find Starobinski in the bibliography. Rousseau considers clarity of character and motive as a cardinal virtue, even if his own life did not always exhibit such clarity.

For our purposes, we will consider transparency as another idealistic abstraction, granted power by its very ambiguity.

In the mountains far above the opacity of Paris, Saint-Preux tells of a better world in the rustic alpine villages of Switzerland as if he were a foreigner in an exotic locale. Somehow the landscape itself purifies the soul of the inhabitants with "yet sweeter enchantments…their simplicity, their equanimity, and that peaceful tranquility that makes them happy through freedom from pain rather than taste for pleasure," along with their "disinterested humanity" and "pure love of hospitality" (65). This hospitality is so universal in Switzerland that Saint-Preux cannot spend his money, and monetary transactions are rare. Servants work without pay and beggars are absent. In a foreshadowing of the utopia of Clarens, the entire region is self-sufficient and the laborers toil for pleasure rather than profit. This convivial atmosphere where domestics eat at the master's table reflects the freedom of the republic itself: "the family is the image of the State" (66). Saint-Preux protests only that the excessive celebration of his visits obligates him to drunkenness, again suggesting the intoxicating nature of living in simplicity. He notes that somehow the vigor of country living leads to enormous bosoms in the supple maidens, a subtle inroad to the topic of Julie's modestly covered breasts, dignified by a stanza from Tasso that speaks of the "obstacle" to the eyes, transcended by the imagination (69). Rousseau often links innocence with prurience in a way that hints of the redefinition of virtue which is elaborated in the novel. These vignettes of Switzerland will provide an important contrast to the big city scenes of Paris that are soon to follow.

Julie, in her response, respectably upbraids him for his clever mention of the bosom and reminds him that, "If virtue ever forsakes us, it will not be, you can take my word for it, in instances that call for courage and sacrifice" (71). The fictional editor, in a rare footnote,

comments that this will "square poorly" with the subsequent action. "Virtue" will be called into question, but in reality it is common notions of virtue that will, in fact, be questioned.

Saint-Preux's forced absence from Julie is at the other side of the lake, where he can almost view her house through the narrowed perspective of a borrowed telescope (74). Rousseau develops the theme of the opposition of heart and societal convention that will inform the brief but controversial sexual tryst between the lovers. Foundational to this dichotomy is the plight of "sensibility" that will determine a new standard of morality for eighteenth-century France: "O Julie, what a fatal present from heaven is a sensible soul! He who has received it must expect to know nothing but pain and suffering in the world" (73). This punishment of the feeling heart suggests an unjust tormentor, and a victim who holds only to the truth in a cold world of constant suspicion: "Victim of prejudice, he will find in absurd maxims an invincible obstacle to the just wishes of his heart. Men will punish him for having upright sentiments on every subject, and for judging by what is genuine rather than by what is conventional…his heart and his reason will be endlessly at war" (ibid.). As Bakhtin has noted, the theme may surface long before the reorientation of alien words encroaches upon the preconceptions of the reader by a newly dialogized word. Reason had been the governing standard of morality in the Enlightenment, systematically establishing a solid justification for every societal norm; Rousseau is moving toward a reinterpretation that originates in the feeling heart. As Simon Schama argues, the "realm of virtue" will now constitute the new standard:

> In this new world, heart was to be preferred to head; emotion to reason; nature to culture; spontaneity to calculation; simplicity to the ornate; innocence to experience; soul to intellect; the domestic to the fashionable;…It generated a new literary vocabulary, saturated with emotive associations…Lavish use of words like *tendresse* (tenderness) and

> *âme* (soul) conferred immediate membership in the community of Sensibility…To possess *un coeur sensible* (a feeling heart) was the precondition for morality. (Schama 149)

Enlightenment theory had subordinated all elements of human experience to the higher, God-ordained faculty of reason, but humans naturally suspect that everything does not fit together so easily; certain things don't seem to "feel right" even if they fit the propositions of logic. Rousseau appeals to this dissent with an affirmation that intuition is the higher guide, and he will make sensibility a divine attribute as well.

Saint-Preux establishes his own binary opposition between "the sentiments that raise me up" and "your father who disdains me" (73). In an earlier letter (I, xxii), Julie recounted how she had hesitantly ventured on the topic of her virtuous tutor to her father, who had just returned from an extended journey. He approves of Julie's newly acquired erudition, although tellingly, he feels that her study of "heraldry" has been insufficient in this vital subject. The eligibility of the young bachelor must have occurred to him, and the Baron asks after his "fortune" and "birth." Upon finding that the former is minimal and the latter merely "honest," he brusquely asks how much Saint-Preux is being paid, and sniffs disdainfully at the tutor's rejection of gifts, which puts them in "a commoner's debt" (61). Saint-Preux is understandably miffed by this assertion, and insulted by the offer of a stipend. His response distinguishes between worldly honor, based on appearance and prejudice and which "does not penetrate the soul," and genuine honor, which is grounded on "the eternal truths of morality" and is not subject to outward manifestations, but is rather a "permanent sentiment of inner satisfaction" (69). Rousseau establishes that true morality is an inner condition of the heart and an individual judgment which disregards the outward display of prejudicial morals.

This discussion of honor provokes Saint-Preux to condemn the conduct of the famous tutor, Peter Abélard, with his pupil Heloise, in one of the few direct references in the book to the notorious story suggested by the title, "The New Heloise." This title seems to have been a last minute addition during the publishing stage of the novel (*Julie*, ed. Intro. xii) rather than a central conceit of the book, but Rousseau is using the Abélard story here to introduce a suggestion of the scandal to follow. Saint-Preux considers Abélard "a wretch deserving of his fate" of castration and "as little acquainted with love as virtue" (70). Rousseau, before adding the allusive title, anticipated the inevitable comparison and distinguished Saint-Preux from the hypocritical monk, who preached morality but was driven by his "passions" to abandon honesty: "Love is deprived of its greatest charm when honesty abandons it. To appreciate its full value, the heart must delight in it and raises us up by raising up the loved one" (70). Abélard was blinded by lust, which inevitably fades after indulgence. Saint-Preux insists that his commitment to honor, an internal sentiment of the heart, is an even higher calling than that of his beloved: "If I must choose between honor and you, my heart is prepared to lose you: it loves you too much, O Julie, to preserve you at that price" (71). In a sleight of hand, whereby honor is reinterpreted, the lovers will both have sex and maintain their honor. Rousseau will not make Saint-Preux into a hypocrite in the likeness of Abélard, but rather, contrasts the hearts of the two tutors according to the higher values of the inner man. If Saint-Preux will be symbolically castrated by the injustice of the social order, he and Julie will remain true in their hearts, with an eternal bond of virtue that does not originate in the passions. The young lover knows that society will not recognize the purity of their hearts, and the battle against the social structure is hopelessly stalemated. Julie, the "New Heloise," will learn from her mistakes and eventually determine her own destiny.

Saint-Preux contemplates Julie's dwelling through a telescope from the "wild spot" across the lake and "dares to penetrate right into your rooms" (74). In addition to the implied innuendo, he imagines an intimate view of her private life, seeing right through to the virtue of her soul. Stewart and Vache suggest that this "ambience of the 'gothic' themes" reflects the popularity of the poet Ossian, who was supposedly discovered by James Macpherson, but later determined to be a forgery (663 n.61). This presumed Celtic epic, with its stormy passions and wild scenery, nevertheless had its influence upon the sentimental gothic tradition, and depicts what Stewart calls the "cry of rage in the wilderness," echoed here by Saint-Preux:

> O Julie! O Julie! And should we not be united? And should we not while away our days together? And could we be separated forever? No, let that horrid thought never present itself to my mind! In an instant it changes all my tearfulness into a fury; rage drives me from cave to cave; groans and cries burst from me despite myself; I roar like an angry lioness; I am capable of anything; except give you up. (75)

He argues that an "edict from heaven" has already determined that they should be together. This "first law" decrees that humans must unite with the soul mate they find, which will lead them to bliss (75). Believing in heaven's support, Saint-Preux makes the argument that they should elope together. Their young lives will be too short to languish away in this kind of separation. "Let us be happy and poor," he pleads, insisting he will pay for their bread with hard labor: they will have unfathomable riches in their mutual love. The ancient bloodlines of her family, so critical to her father, have no importance compared to the present uniting of souls. Invoking the "lover's leap" of Sappho, he plays upon her fears of his death. Echoing the opening line of the book, that social convention leaves only the option to "flee," he now implies that they must flee together, as Rousseau sought recompense in solitude from the ills of society. Despairing of the possibility for

social change, he sees the solution in the individual following his own virtuous path outside of society.

The next piece of correspondence at this critical moment comes from Claire, who informs Saint-Preux that Julie lies near death of a fever and urges him, without Julie's consent, to rush to her side. The turmoil that her lover has caused within her, together with the news that her father intends to marry her to an older man, places her in a delirium of "transports" that threatens her life. The dilemma makes her virtue vulnerable, and she is caught between love and duty, forced to act from fear and frustration. The disgrace to her parents that would result from her potential elopement both entices and repels her. She likens the arranged marriage to being sold in a business transaction: "So, my father then has sold me? He is making merchandise, a slave of his daughter, he acquits his daughter at my expense! He pays for his life with mine!"(77). Her future husband, Monsieur de Wolmar, a Russian nobleman who saved the life of her father in battle, will become a major figure in the novel, and Julie will eventually give her absolute devotion to him until her death. However, at this point we are only shown her pure and virtuous love for Saint-Preux, who is disdained by her father for ignoble heritage and lack of fortune. The novelist, setting up one of the most scandalous moments in eighteenth-century fiction, prepares us by showing the psychic tensions of the distracted young woman, in the broken phrases of her tormented soul. Julie imagines herself "fugitive, wandering, dishonored… I may trail my shame and despair…Alas! Want and infamy change people's hearts" (ibid.). This pathetic appeal introduces the disgrace of the following letter, I, xxix, which relates the only occurrence of sex between the lovers in *La Nouvelle Héloïse.*

Sexual intercourse does not occur as action in the text, but vague discourse *about* sex is present in this letter and the ones that follow. The reader can only surmise after the fact, by the

wording of her shame--her "demise" and "the abyss of infamy" (79). The deed itself is revealed only by her reported contrition. Bakhtin notes that the "expressive structure of the character's inner speech" permits authorial intention to merge with the character's thoughts (319), which are conveyed through the epistolary form. Rousseau anticipates the reader's judgment by supplying the expected condemnation of Julie's fall from virtue in her own self-blame and full acceptance of responsibility. Saint-Preux is at the same time exonerated as she attests that a "hundred times" he struggled and triumphed: "No, no, never was he capable of violating his vows" (78), even though she excoriates him as a "brute." Carnal relations have occurred, which was inappropriate reading for the "maidens" anticipated in the preface, but the internal dialogism of this section explores many themes that diminish the significance of actual sexual intercourse. Claire created the danger by leaving Julie unchaperoned; her father coldly "sells" her; Saint-Preux has shocked her with his suggestion of elopement, and stands before her distraught with the impossibility of their union, claiming a danger to his life. Julie blames and excuses everyone, especially herself. Her transports have compelled her to weakness, loss of reason, love, and finally vice. Julie struggles internally between the languages of the "authoritative discourse" of tradition and the language of the heart, her thoughts alternatively echoing social forces that strive for moral control and other, centrifugal voices that question the maxims of the day.

Julie submits to the arranged union to spare her parents the "death blow" of marriage to a commoner and succumbs to pity: "it was pity that undid me" (79). Although her "fatal passion" has come masked in virtue--a term that is undergoing a critical revision here--Julie portrays her action as a selfless sacrifice to love, to hurt herself rather than those she loves:

> The impossibility we should ever see our vows fulfilled, the necessity of concealing that impossibility from him, the qualm at deceiving such a submissive and tender lover after

> flattering his hopes, all these sapped my courage, added to my weakness, estranged my reason. I had to deliver the death blow to those who gave me life, to my lover, or to myself. Without knowing what I was doing, I chose my own demise. I forgot everything and remembered only love. So it is that a moment's distraction has undone me forever. I have fallen into the abyss of infamy from which a maiden can never return, and if I live, it is only to be more unhappy. (79)

Julie's transgression takes on the suggestion of martyrdom as she takes the blame in order to save others, and such allusions to Christ will appear many times in the text. Of course, the event here is merely one girl losing her virginity, except that this moment, and its aftermath, is the matrix that "would permanently alter the eighteenth-century concept of both eroticism and virtue" (Blum 60). For Richardson's Pamela, virtue is precisely coexistent with her virginity, and the loss of one is the loss of both; in the end "Virtue Rewarded" is abstinence rewarded. If N. of the second Preface questions whether the rest of the book redeems the "reprehensible" beginning, he is speaking of this moment. In Rousseau's cult following of readers that were obsessed with virtue, Julie's deflowering is a crucial question. Rousseau's political influence obviously has much more significance than the status of a hymen, but then as today, a great deal of importance in politics comes down to prurient interest: Did he/she in fact have sex? Empires fall and rise upon such questions, *especially* in the modern era where, ironically, promiscuity is generally accepted. *Julie* is an important milestone in the sexual becoming political. Indeed, Julie's fall helped drive the publishing success of the novel. Certainly, her premarital sexual experience is a key element of her character for the duration of the narrative.

The theme is the time-worn antithetical opposition of appearances and reality, but Rousseau poses the problem in terms of the conventions of public opinion against the existential

realities of the soul striving with an earnest heart for virtue. Rousseau describes his strategy for Julie's character in *The Confessions* as creating "such a touching weakness that virtue seemed to gain from it" (361). As Starobinski indicates, the fundamental sin is "considered and deliberate [*réfléchie*] baseness," not an inadvertent lapse of the heart (208). Jean-Jacques had a great deal personally invested in the belief that his wrong actions stem from his sensibility to the impulses of nature rather than to reflective wickedness (209). Evil couches itself in dissimulation, and avoids the light. According to Starobinski, if transparency is the essence of the virtuous soul, Julie opens her soul in confession to Claire; in reality, it is confession to the reader. In the same way we try to expiate our own sins through confession and self-loathing, Julie initiates her path of redemption; her anguish is drawn out exquisitely, and at length. Her crime is an "appearance," brought on by being "sold" into slavery by her father. The reality is the inner anguish of beautiful souls, who are prohibited from happiness by convention. Julie will not deliver the "dagger into a mother's breast" of a love-marriage, though her compassion admits the injustice to her lover from her submission to false honor.

"Pity" compels her to self-sacrifice. Pity for Rousseau is one of the two most natural human instincts, along with "self-love," or survival, which Julie claims to deny here out of "pity." Blum argues that this concept of pity is the most central to Rousseau's "vision of the nature of man and the corrupting influences of social relations" (87). As expressed in the *Second Discourse*,

> Pity is a basic element of the nature of man and some higher animals, akin to survival: Meditating upon the first and simplest operations of the human soul, I believe I distinguish two principles which precede reason: one interests us urgently in our own

well-being, and the other inspires a natural repugnance toward seeing any sentient creature suffer or die, and especially our fellow men. (3: 505)

Julie, by her own account, denies her instinct of well-being, but succumbs to the other--pity for her lover's condition. Rousseau departs from Freud in exalting pity above the propagation of the species as the basic instinct of nature. For Rousseau, sexuality was not innate, but rather an "intruder" that imposed itself from the outside (Blum 89). Julie is compelled by an instinct more basic than sex. In fact, Julie will be characterized by her compassion for others, and she will be delivered from a soon-to-come more dangerous tryst with Saint-Preux by rushing to the aid of one of her servants. Her later domestic life at Clarens is dominated by a commitment to the well-being of servants and community in what will constitute a large part of the social theory of the novel in Part IV. Fielding's "good-hearted" Tom Jones will give his last coin away to an unfortunate in need but show excusable weakness to sexual temptation; this was a reflection of Fielding's own "latitudinarian" theology. Rousseau makes this idea considerably more revolutionary by portraying good-hearted sexual weakness in a female.

The wise counsel of Julie's devoted friend Claire reinterprets her virtue in an alien discourse while seeming to affirm conventional language. Again, the action has taken place off stage but discussion of the meaning of the action extends for many pages. We cannot say that any one voice expresses the precise view of Rousseau, who does not lend approval to extramarital sex and deplores passion that leads to "vice." The dialogued views of the character *refract* a spectrum of meanings around the specific action, moving toward a significant reinterpretation of virtue and sexuality. Claire assumes the blame for the consequences, having foreseen the danger for Julie, knowing that for Julie's sensible heart "throbbing with love it would be happiness or death" (80). Moreover, this life-or-death hyperbole for the pangs of love

blurs the immorality of the action. Claire declares her own irresponsibility for forgetting the weakness of Julie's dejected heart, which is "less able to fend against itself." The battle is identified as the heart against its own pleas. Claire argues that a moment's weakness does not undo a lifetime of "painful victories" and sacrifice to virtue, which answers Julie's assertion that her action can never be undone. She insists that Julie's noble battle, even after defeat, speaks more for virtue than lesser women who successfully resist temptation: "You could lose a great deal before any woman purer than you could ever be your equal" (81). A pure heart can slip into a little illicit sex and still remain a paragon of virtue. Claire characterizes herself as little subject to "transports;" we will see that her chaste marriage will never display passion, though clearly we are intended to sympathize with her for what she misses. Though she will never succumb to sexual temptation, she considers herself "less chaste" than Julie. In Bakhtin's terms, Rousseau relativizes the linguistic consciousness of "chastity," defining it by the capacity of the heart for deep feeling. Physical virginity is a technicality in the language of the heart, perhaps recalling the apostle Paul's "circumcision of the heart."[10]

More importantly, Claire subverts the language of chastity with a direct assault upon the traditions about the purity of women: "I hate bad maxims even more than bad deeds." This statement is affirmed by the fictional editor, who states that "bad maxims corrupt reason itself, and leave no resources by which one might return to the good" (80). Rousseau often attacks the *maxime*, meaning both formulas of wisdom and commonplace principles of behavior (see Glossary *Julie*, Stewart and Vache, trans. 632). Here, "maxims" are the accumulation of wisdom about feminine chastity based in religious, social and cultural principles; Rousseau calls them subversions of reason. The corruption of words undermines the abilities of reason to work

[10] "But he who is a Jew is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God." (Romans 2:29 ASV)

according to nature. In place of "bad maxims," love offers an alternative view: "Is genuine love meant to degrade the soul?" (81). Claire reminds Julie of her many other remaining virtues, which obscure the one that has become "tainted." While the entire question is simplistic for the modern reader, for Rousseau's audience the adjustment represents a tidal surge into previous conceptions.

If Claire's stance is to argue that a virtuous heart transcends weakness, Saint-Preux believes they have only followed "nature's purest law." Sensing anger in her tone, and humiliated by her repentance, he contends that a de facto marriage has taken place with heaven's approval:

> Be more just to yourself, my Julie; look with less prejudice on the sacred bonds your heart has contracted. Have you not followed nature's purest laws? Have you not entered freely into the holiest of engagements? What have you done that divine and human laws cannot and should not sanction? What is lacking in our union but a public declaration? Be mine, and you bear no more guilt. O my spouse! O my worthy and chaste companion! O glory and happiness of my life! No, it's not what your love has done that would be a crime, but what you would now revoke: only by taking another spouse can you offend honor. (82)

Nature's attraction results in mating and the eternal bond of souls; only a public recognition needs to follow.[11] Again, "chastity" remains intact. Rousseau has already established that the institutions of civilization are corruptions of the natural man, but what he is doing here is more complicated than justifying a premarital union. Julie will later refute this idea of "another spouse," and argue that Wolmar restores her virtue by his forgiveness of her deflowering. The unnatural worldly order will seemingly triumph in Part III of the text, and the lovers will never

[11] Religiously conservative young couples still make this argument among themselves today.

be united on this earth, although their alienated longing will extend for another five-hundred pages. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* has deeper calculations than liberating sexuality; in fact, it is important that the characters transcend physical passion into the higher realm of the union of "beautiful souls." The exquisite sufferings and "delicious tears" of the frustrated protagonists are an important vehicle for the forward progress of the narrative, since little else happens. The reader is meant to sympathize with the injustice of Julie's marriage, and Rousseau's real intention saturates the meaning of all that follows. The social order will not be uprooted; Rousseau was not advocating revolution, and all of his political writings rest on the assumption that even if institutions are corrupt, they remain an unalterable fact. Individuals, however, can find a higher plane of existence, as Jean-Jacques has found--a place of suffering, loneliness, and persecution, to be sure, but a place where kindred spirits will find fulfillment in the virtue and transparency of souls.

Integral to the morality of the book are Saint-Preux's pleas for honesty about everything within Julie's heart; withholding anything is "larceny….against love." Since the two have become one soul, an attempt to conceal anything is self-deception: "O Julie, conceal nothing from your own self" (83). The assertion that one lover's existence is contained in the soul of another, that "heaven's edict" has ordained their union, or Julie's affirmation that "your heart is made for mine and not for another" are not the delusions of youth, nor are they mitigated by her unwavering commitment to her husband; they have become an eternal juncture of souls that eclipses human invention. Julie, recognizing that passions cool with age, extracts a vow that "I will never cease to be your heart's confidant" (90). Both will maintain this commitment to transparency throughout the difficulties ahead. Rousseau extends the possibility to every kindred spirit; living in existential loneliness, a chaste bond can exist outside of marriage where the

squalid domestic realities of all-to-human fallibilities interfere with soul-mate ecstasies. Although moderns know the experience and pitfalls of such relationships, in the sexually segregated world of the eighteenth century this is a radical notion; to the neglected housewife, the fantasy can suggest true love without "crime," and the hope of having it, as Rousseau believed, both ways.

Julie takes an uncharacteristically salacious turn when she takes advantage of her parent's absence to arrange a romantic tryst in a peasant barn. This "chalet" will become a trope for the unrealized carnal relations of the couple. "Chalet" is an example of Bakhtin's theory about the heteroglossia of the many "languages" of the novel as centrifugal tendencies of a language (272). Originally a Swiss word for a simple building used for milking and cheese-making, the translators of *Julie* insist that this term first makes its appearance in written French here in the novel (631), obviously taking on more meaning than "dairy house," and hence resulting in the modern usage that implies a romantic mountain getaway. Yet the chalet rendezvous will not happen for Saint-Preux and Julie, an alternate path that probably would have sealed their intimate relations. At the last minute Julie's compassion compels her to come to the aid of one of her servants, Fanchon, and to enlist Saint-Preux in securing the discharge of Fanchon's fiancé, Claude Anet, from a money-desperate enlistment in the military. By the time this deed of mercy is accomplished, Julie's mother returns and precludes the plans for the Chalet. From this moment, Julie's conscience about deceiving her parents begins to trouble her, and the lover's hopes come to an end.

In letter I, xlviii, Saint-Preux discusses the nuances of music theory in a way that internally dialogues the simplicity of nature and the artifice of society (107). Music is not a thematic sidelight with Rousseau, but a central motif in his indictment of society, demonstrating

precisely what was wrong with his contemporaries in France. He was not a dilettante about the composition of music and believed that the corrupting complexities of civilization had perverted natural melody. He specifically targets the Enlightenment concept of "harmony" and insists this degradation can be traced back to the origins of social man. The centrality of this problem can be seen in another work written around the same time as his novel, *An Essay on the Origins of Language*, which contains the unexpected subtitle, *In which Something is said about Melody and Musical Limitation.* This work remained unpublished in the author's lifetime, but its message is present in *Julie.* Language originated in the need to spontaneously express the passions but later became rigid and less expressive due to the rules of grammarians. Music was similarly corrupted from its initial imitation of the natural melodies of the voice into later fabrications of modes and harmonies which are not found in "nature." Simple melody speaks in the language of the heart. For Rousseau, this linked perversion of both language and music is crucial.

Saint-Preux's discussion about music speaks of "the language of the heart" (107) and conveys "the powerful and secret connection of the passions with the sounds" (108). Since the young man is a novice about music, Rousseau speaks through one of Milord Edward's musicians to refract his opinions:

> Harmony, he said, is only a distant accessory to imitative music: in harmony proper there is no principle of imitation…it is from the melody alone that this invincible power of impassioned accents arises; from it derives the whole power of music over the soul; devise the most learned successions of chords without admixture of melody, and you will be bored after a quarter of an hour. Lovely melodies without any harmony can hold out a long time against boredom. Let the accents of sentiments animate the simplest of

> melodies, and they will be engaging. On the contrary, a melody that does not speak always sings badly, and harmony alone could never say anything to the heart. (108)

With this complaint about the "unnatural" effects of harmony, Rousseau strikes at the very basis of eighteenth-century thinking. The technical virtuosity of Baroque music and the sophistication of music theory had their counterparts in painting, poetry and the other arts, in the manicured gardens of the rich, highly ordered architecture, and the structure of government and society; all were all conceived according to "harmony," as interpreted by reason. "Nature" was perceived as complex but the cosmos operated by order and design above all. The harmony of chord, polyphony, and counterpoint were the highest accomplishments of music, improving on the primitive elements of simple melody, which was seen as mere folk music. Rousseau, in fact, had directly argued with Jean-Philippe Rameau, who had emphasized the mathematical congruity of music. Rousseau insists that melody imitates passionate speech, which was the origin of language itself; primitives needed to express their emotions beyond simple gestures, and "passions spoke before reason" (Rousseau, *Origins* Ch. 12). "What do chords have to do with the passions?" he asks (Ch.14). The wildness, spontaneity, and expression of nature are most important for Rousseau, evoked in the individually voiced expression of melody. The chord not only has no correspondence in the natural world, it suggests subordination to an artificial structure rather than free expression. Furthermore, as Starobinski demonstrates, Rousseau believed that harmony operates on the senses, but fails to penetrate to the heart with the "immediacy" that generates morality and the pleasure of the soul: "By contrast, melody has 'moral effects that surpass the immediate empire of the senses.' Rousseau is here claiming for melody the privilege of acting directly on a more intimate faculty: now the soul alone savors the

joy of immediacy" (Starobinski 89). The sentiments generated by melody must be allowed full expression, or "transport." The heart must *feel* ecstatically, or it is nothing at all:

> No, Julie, such impressions cannot be sustained halfway; they are excessive or nil, never weak or mediocre; one must remain insensible or allow oneself to be moved beyond measure; either it is the empty noise of a language you do not understand, or it is an impetuosity of sentiment that pulls you along, and that it is impossible for the soul to resist. (*Julie* 109)

These sentiments are the beginning of the Romantic movement in music,[12] in which technical virtuosity gave way to emotion. Rousseau believes in the natural consonance of voices in unison, and therefore Saint-Preux suggests that Julie work on a duet with him, a stimulant for "delicious tears" (ibid). The young man will later return to the topic of music in his criticism of the Paris opera.

\ As the author uses the language of music to dialogue the themes of *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* he uses Julie's developed rhetorical stance against the institution of dueling in a double-voice about false honor. Just as Saint-Preux's excursion into music theory is no digression, so the heroine's departure onto the subject of "the field of honor" is not as much about dueling, as about the delusions of "honor" that prevent their marriage. The duel is between nature and society.

Claire relates to Julie the alarming news that Saint-Preux has challenged to a duel an English nobleman with the rather un-English name of Milord Edward Bomston, "Milord" being, according to the translators, due to a French uncertainty about the English aristocracy (632). The nobleman is infatuated with Julie, and talks indiscreetly about her in front of Saint-Preux when

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[12] Nietzsche asserts that all of Beethoven's works were merely one "everlasting hymn of praise of Rousseau." (*Human, All Too Human,* 365)

both of them are intoxicated. The young man responds disrespectfully; rudeness leads to insult and "giving the lie," the challenge to a duel (323). Bomston has a reputation across Europe for his martial skills, which bodes ominously for Saint-Preux; fortuitously, the older man sprains his ankle in leaping forward at the insult, and so the duel is postponed, giving Julie time to act.

Julie presents an articulate and well-reasoned defense to her lover against the institution of dueling, uncharacteristically eloquent for a woman of the period. Rousseau wins no sympathy from feminist critics when she earlier underscores how nature determines the instinctual differences between men and women: "A perfect woman and a perfect man must be no more alike in soul than in countenance; such vain imitations between the sexes are the height of unreason" (105). These ideas were a given, and Julie merely affirms the obvious for the eighteenth-century reader. However, her intellectual abilities and competence on a multitude of levels still define her as an inspiration for women for what they could accomplish within the limits of the patriarchal structure that was not soon to crumble. Madame Bovary, a century later, would have no more power than Julie. Her argument here and elsewhere, an intrusion in "the business of men," shows exceptional cogency and developed rhetorical skill. The disgrace of dueling represents an easy target, and reasoning against the practice was common in the day; Julie's rhetoric is a highly charged political discourse indicting, in fact, the patriarchal institutions of false "honor" that produce it.

Julie knows the tradition well, coming from a "military family" where her father has been tortured by the memory of killing his best friend in a duel, and "can still feel the cold steel thrust by his own cruel hand into his friend's heart" (130). This unnatural pride will soon be shown when her father stubbornly holds to "honor" in preventing any possibility of union with Saint-

Preux (144). Julie accuses Saint-Preux in his defense of her name of sacrificing her real honor to a "false point" of honor, and reminds the young man of his own teaching on this subject:

> What does the glory of slitting a man's throat have in common with the assurance of moral rectitude, and what purchase can the vain opinion of others have on genuine honor, the root of which all lie deep in the heart? How is this! Do the virtues one really possesses perish beneath the lies of a slanderer? (125)

The language is as vivid as honor killing is vicious, but the topic is "opinion" and the noble heart dismisses opinion. Later she advises him not to "confuse the sacred name of honor with that ferocious prejudice that puts all virtues to the point of a sword" and serves only to make "brave blackguards" (126). Prejudice defines virtue by wielding power, as in Louis XIV "defining the 'great interval' which virtue puts between [other men] and himself [the king]" (Blum 23-6). The nobility have exclusively owned honor and virtue by means of force, to protect privilege. Julie appeals to the true honor and virtue that exist in the heart, regardless of station and appearance:

> Nothing is less honorable than this honor they make such a fuss about; it is just an insane fashion, a false imitation of virtue that decks itself in the greatest crimes. The honor of a man like you lies not within another's power, it lies in itself and not in the opinion of the populace; it is defended by neither sword nor shield, but by an upright and irreproachable life, and that combat is just as good as the other as far as courage is concerned. (129)

The individual, independent of title or fortune, establishes his virtue by the testament of his life. As Denby suggests, the sentiments of the heart are democratic; compassionate Julie, of impeccable bloodlines, sees through appearances to the heart of a man. Julie insists that real courage lies in facing the prejudices of society with a self-knowledge and confidence that honor is democratically within reach of any man brave enough to live it.

Further acknowledgement of this fact is sustained by the aristocratic Edward, who is, as it turns out, a man of true virtue himself. Saint-Preux indicates that he receives Julie's letter with hot-headed indignation, and we are given to believe that the young lover would willingly go to his death. Her appeal to Edward is received by a kindred spirit of noble blood; she confesses her relationship with the young man and insists that because of her love for the virtuous Saint-Preux, she will not survive him by a day (131). This appeal has an effect upon the nobleman, who requests an audience with Julie's lover.

La Nouvelle Héloïse casts many aspersions upon the European aristocracy, but we also have a depiction of men of virtue within the nobility, including Julie's future husband, Monsieur de Wolmar, a Russian nobleman, Milord Edward, from England, and Claire's father, a Swiss baron. It should be noted that none of these figures of benevolent blueblood is *French,* perhaps to obscure the seriousness of the social violation in Rousseau's noble characters embracing full equality with commoners. The French aristocracy was, in general, equally captivated by the novel, despite the leveling tendencies of the book. A particularly disturbing and improbable depiction is that of Milord Edward Bomston on his knees before Saint-Preux, asking for forgiveness and cancellation of the duel, and acknowledging the young commoner's virtue (135-6). To make certain the reader can visualize the implications of the scene, it is the subject of the second engraving of the book, entitled "The heroism of valor" (134). The witnesses, armed with swords as seconds, express shock, and the young man, perplexed, urges the noble back to his feet, touched by the humility of the gesture. More will be said about the power of the engravings, but for now we will note that these visuals were significant to the readership of the day as truth shifted from an oral-based culture to the visual orientation of the printed text, here with illustrations. Dueling would actually rise to its peak in the romantic period, following the

eighteenth century, when "honor" as an abstraction took on far more importance, and weapons were a romantic solution. But Rousseau's attention here is focused more upon the false honor of class distinction.

Milord Edward's apology has come from the request of Julie, and Bomston says he "could not humiliate [himself] enough before the object of her love" (135). More importantly, he recognizes the beautiful souls of the two lovers, the criteria that define value: "Your two souls are so extraordinary that they cannot be judged by common rules; for you happiness neither lies along the same road nor is it of the same kind as that of other men; they seek only power and the admiration of others, you require only tenderness and peace" (136). Genteel Edward affirms that souls are classless.

We should consider here exactly *what* about these two young lovers is so matchlessly extraordinary by this point in the book, as Rousseau's readership seemed to agree. Is there an attraction in the letters we have read thus far that the modern reader cannot grasp, or do they become remarkable because the other characters deem them so? This becomes part of the mystery we are investigating here, because we have not yet seen anything that accounts for such exceptionality in either of the protagonists.

The representation of Bomston as enlightened aristocracy will continue throughout the book, and he will remain a close friend and confidante of Saint-Preux, who will be devoted to his service for life. For that matter, the nobleman will be seen as an embodiment of virtue, despite his dalliances with dubious women in Italy, described in the puzzling appendix.[13] His immediate purpose is to provide a counter position to the shallow pride of Julie's father, through the voice

[13] The purpose of this appendix is uncertain to scholars, and it was not included with the early editions of the book. Near the end of the book, as part of his "test," Saint-Preux rescues Edward from a dangerous triangle with a married woman and a prostitute. I will not attempt to address this appendix, except to note that the nobleman's "virtue" apparently remains intact, despite these relationships.

of a nobleman discounting birth and class. The near-duel has provoked a public scandal which inevitably finds its way to the Baron d'Étange. Edward appeals to Julie's father to accept the lovers' relationship, a proposition the Baron rejects with contempt. The two noblemen then become engaged in a sharp discourse about the values of the European aristocracy; this discussion both overtly questions and internally dialogues the entire history of ancestry and blood. On the surface, the debate concerns the validity of rank and privilege in society; the subtext is the origin of virtue and honor and how "nobility" evolved. Edward argues that Saint-Preux has "received from nature" the gifts that men cannot buy (138). As for nobility, it is "a vain prerogative in a country where it is more harmful than useful. Yet Saint-Preux has that too, doubt it not, not written with ink on old parchments, but engraved deep in his heart in ineradicable characters" (ibid.). The translator indicates that the word "nobility" was already in the common language to describe exceptional qualities (668), but Rousseau is working it here as an alien word being dialogized by both characters in a different sense, relativizing its meaning.

The Baron subverts his own ideology by pompously contrasting the young hero and his own papered descent: "Can a man of honor…even think that the last scion of an illustrious family would go extinguish or degrade his name in that of a homeless Nobody, reduced to living off charity?" (138). Edward warns that such an insult of an absent man of honor could provoke a duel between them, hence implying that Saint-Preux has an "honor" worth defending, and insists that "Such nobodies are more respectable than all the petty Squires of Europe" (ibid.). He further argues that ancestry often contains an abundance of scoundrels, while commoners of noble action receive no recognition; for every aristocrat who showed bravery in war, a primary justification for privilege, a hundred commoners have demonstrated equal courage. Then with

savage invective, he continues with a diatribe that anticipates the discourse of the Revolution, specifically for a "Republic:"

> What then…does this nobility you are so proud of have to distinguish it? What does it do for the glory of the fatherland or the happiness of the human race? Mortal enemy of laws and liberty, what has it ever produced in most countries where it flourishes other than the power of tyranny and the oppression of peoples? Do you dare in a Republic pride yourself on a station destructive of virtues and humanity? On a station in which one boasts of slavery, and feels ashamed of being a man?...What then is this insane glory you make such a commotion about? That of serving a man, and being a burden on the State. (139)

Rousseau is never so openly vicious and harsh in his political writings, but here in fiction he speaks through the voice of an *English* nobleman speaking of the *Swiss* nobility. The censor would not be so lenient about indirect aspersions against the Catholic Church, but here the attack was sufficiently subtle to be acceptable, while still being decidedly pointed. Such discussions couched within a sentimental romantic novel had revolutionary implications. These attacks must have resounded deeply in the bourgeois readership, many of whom would not have taken an interest in the author's essays. The point was political in the parlors of the middle-class, in the hormone-soaked bosoms of young people, and to the multitudes who read novels out of boredom. The political theory is inescapable, shaping with an internally persuasive discourse the minds of the revolutionary generation, while purporting to be only a simple love story. The message reprises Rousseau's second *Discourse,* which argued that the origins of inequality came from the first man who declared ownership of land as personal property and maintained that ownership with violence.

The Baron's prejudice is underscored by his conduct when he physically abuses Julie, displaying with his actions the poverty of his soul. Julie's blood finally brings him to remorse, but he is stubbornly firm in his pride, and suggests that she should never see the young man again, at the risk of Saint-Preux's life. Julie prophetically states the epitaph of the aristocracy's vain beliefs: "Ah, my Cousin, what monsters from hell are these prejudices that deprave the best hearts, and at every instant reduce Nature to silence?" (145).

The fictional editor of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* footnotes the opening of Part II by saying that he "hardly need(s) to notify the reader that the Lovers do nothing but rave and wander about; they have lost their poor heads" (155). That he does not "need" to do this, but does so anyway, indicates that Rousseau both wants to highlight the psychic effects of social injustice upon the two innocent young people and to appeal to the individual reader for empathy. Saint-Preux begins with his own lamentations of self-pity because Julie has dismissed their "sacred union," an assertion that Julie will bitterly denounce. He is then whisked away without saying good-bye to Edward, who perceives the danger to the young man from the enraged Baron, who will not show the same restraint from a duel as himself. The next communication is Saint-Preux's pitiful "fragments" of a letter (160) with theatrical *points de suspension* that indicate his dangerous condition:

> Why was I not able to see you before my departure? You feared I would expire in leaving you? Piteous heart! Take comfort. I am all right….I am not suffering….I am still alive….I am thinking of you….I think of the time when I was dear to you….I am a bit downhearted….the coach makes my head swim…..I feel dejected…..I will not be able to write you for long today. Tomorrow, perhaps I shall have more strength……or will no longer need it…. (160)

This technique was an imitation in writing borrowed from a contemporary vogue in drama of incomplete phrasing to show emotions too distracted for coherence (*Julie* 669, n. 8). The style is intended to set the context for the more polemical discussions of French social engineering by Milord Edward, which both precede and follow this outpouring of pathos. Alternating with the appeals for empathy in sharing the young lover's despair are the interludes provided by Rousseau's virtuous aristocratic spokesman, Edward, who argues for the enlightened nobility's perspective on class consciousness. Such forms convey the real political radicalism of the novel: an appeal to bourgeois equality and a declaration of the natural rights of the heart to love are combined with an intense ethic of feeling. Saint-Preux and Julie have transgressed the social mores and, as we will discover later, Julie is already pregnant and fated to miscarry, but that is not the moral lesson of the novel. Here, we find the linkage of virtue and eroticism, what Auerbach refers to as manipulation of sexual titillation "while the warmth it evokes is a sentimental ethic" (*Mimesis* 400-1). Likewise, it typifies how Bakhtin says that Rousseau infiltrates the reader's belief system with an alien mode of thinking. We are on a dangerous moral "slippery slope" by eighteenth-century standards, but reason and pathos work together to support this new ethic of the heart.

Milord Edward is portrayed as a man of both virtue and worldly wisdom; his arguments represent the stance of reason as well, with the argument directed favorably toward the union of the lovers. Edward declares to Julie that in all of his experience, he has "seen nothing so extraordinary as you and your lover" (161). His heart detects the "marked character of perfection" in Saint-Preux, and as for the young woman, "there is but one Julie on earth" (160-1). Edward even admits his own aristocratic unworthiness of her love because a higher decree of the heart declares that she requires "the first fruits of a soul." He affirms that their love is a gift

from both nature and Heaven and believes that the only sensible path is to legitimize their union. To facilitate this consummation, he offers refuge at his estate in England, where there will be no "obstacle" to the lovers because "Our wise laws do not abrogate those of nature" (163). Edward cautions against "the error of prejudice and the seduction of scruples that often lead to vice via the path of honor," and he expresses his fear that the lovers will be "sacrificed to the fantasy of station." The fictional editor again notes the astounding humility of the Lord and challenges the reader to consider the truth of this: "The fantasy of station! And it is an English peer who says such things! And this is not supposed to be a fiction! Reader, what say you to this?" (163). Rousseau's political essays concede that aristocratic privilege and property is a reality of the world, and he never refers to noble blood as mere "fantasy." Here an Englishman, in fact the enemy at the time of the publication of the book, during the Seven Years War, subverts all social order as a delusion of the upper classes, an idea that must have resonated well with the bourgeois readership of *Julie.* Again, this indicates that Rousseau's seemingly harmless sentimental novel is, in fact, the most politically radical of his works, and its aristocratic characters are the most revolutionary of all.

Noble Claire affirms this perspective with her own words, as well as her own family's openness to inherent qualities of character above the prejudices of birth. However, Claire sets up a dialogic paradox that demonstrates the conflict of "natural" obedience to parents and to the demands of the heart. Whatever decision Julie makes,

> "…nature sanctions and condemns it, reason condemns and approves it; duty is either silent or in conflict with itself; and consequences are equally dreadful on both sides; you may neither remain undecided nor choose well; you have only the sufferings to compare and your heart alone is the judge." (165-6)

Julie has just stated the pathos of this dilemma in a similar fashion:

> "Obedience and faith dictate opposite duties to me. Shall I follow my heart's penchant? Who is to be preferred of a lover or a father? Alas, by hearkening to love or nature, I cannot avoid casting one or the other into despair; by sacrificing myself to duty I cannot avoid committing a crime, and whatever choice I make, I must die both unhappy and guilty." (164)

A redefinition of "crime" is implied by choosing to abandon her lover, but being faithful to him would be "plunging a dagger into a mother's breast" and making her parents face an old age in shame and regret for having conceived her (165). Nevertheless, Julie's dedicated loyalty to her parents decides the path she will eventually choose and emphasizes her faithfulness, while simultaneously articulating the falseness of the choice and the small-mindedness of her parents' prejudices. Claire's enlightened father offers her the choice of her heart's desire rather than that of station, which affirms that the love of the two young hearts trumps the discrimination of society. Julie's filial piety exculpates her own honor, but accuses the honor of false precepts that condemn her. The double-bind that is placed upon her dialogues the priorities of nature and institution in the mind of the reader, who will inevitably take the side of love and see the artificial constraints imposed by her parents. Julie will follow their wishes anyway, and the agony of the separation of the lovers will provide the drama for the rest of the novel. Pride is the true culprit at work in the Baron d'Étange and his tragic flaw. It can be argued that Julie's eventual death results from this decision. Rousseau intends us to see that matters of the heart are life and death struggles.

Claire remains level-headed about love throughout the book. She will be a devoted wife to her short-lived husband, but will never suffer the "transports" of love that besiege the hearts of

Saint-Preux and Julie. Despite her common-sense wisdom, her sober character causes her to miss out on the pure delights of the lovers. Claire's devotion is to her loving relationship with her cousin, Julie, and her sexual orientation is neutral: "Does the soul have a sex? In truth I cannot perceive one in mine. I may have fancies, but very little love" (169). She indicates that though a husband may be a necessity within the culture, she will never bond to any particular man because "I love only [Julie], and if I have some bonds to sever by following you, I shall take courage from your example" (ibid). More importantly, Claire identifies the nature of the soul-bond between them, that her soul is *becoming* the title character:

> This is bound to happen with all souls of a certain temper; they so to speak transform others into themselves; they have a sphere of activity within which nothing can resist them; one cannot know them without wanting to imitate them, and from their sublime elevation they attract unto themselves everyone about them…You will set the tone for everyone who keeps company with you; they will either flee you or resemble you. (167)

While the identification of Saint-Preux with the author is a natural assumption, and Rousseau admits the young man contains "virtues and flaws" he found in himself (*The Confessions* 262), Julie is the real avatar of Jean-Jacques' voice and the role model for his evangelistic ideal. This key passage reflects what fictional dialoguer N. expresses in the second Preface, when he affirms that Julie displays the language behavior of closely connected social groups, as everyone "becomes Julie" and displays the author's "sensitive morality." Starobinski notes that Rousseau is "justifying the uniformity of style" among the characters, who would be expected to display a range of discourse; but the author is also manifesting a psychological and *moral* principle in this intercourse of the souls (86), and Starobinski cites Claire's passage as key for the later influence of Rousseau (386 n. 19). Rousseau is astute about human behavior in this concept, and dwells on

it in both the preface and other passages; clearly, he has in mind his power to accomplish such changes in a positive manner, just as he often notes the dangerous potential for immorality in the other romances of his day. His characters do not "become" Julie in action, appearance or lifestyle; they begin to resemble her in the way they speak and write. Her actions are minimal. Indeed, she is a fallen woman, and the persuasiveness of her rhetoric is not the point; we are mostly given her words as revealing her virtue. A generation of readers would absorb her words as an emanation of virtuous being. In this sense of "becoming Julie," Rousseau accomplished what Darnton refers to as "transforming the relationship between reader and text." Rousseau departed from the conventions of narrative because he "attempted to teach how to read and to touch the inner lives" of his readers with his own inner voice, transmitted through *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (Darnton 228). The enthusiastic conversions to virtue that Rousseau's readers proclaimed of themselves are a testimony that the author did reach their hearts with an inner experience of "becoming" that was more significant than the plot. If they are inspired to "imitation," we might ask what is being imitated in a novel where the characters *do* very little? Julie's soul is an inner consciousness, a way of *being.* Even Mary Wollstonecraft, once an admirer and later a harsh critic of Rousseau, confessed an infatuation with his ardor and "the most exquisite feeling of which the human soul is susceptible" (Parke 107). *Something* about Julie was contagious. Rousseau speaks through N. to play with the truth of these characters, whose voices increasingly resemble Julie. N. considers that these are matters of feeling that cannot be invented by an author, or that he would not dare put into practice such "traits that strike the multitude." If Julie and Claire really "existed," N. states, "I shall reread this Collection every year for the rest of my life."(21) The power of Rousseau exists precisely in that ability to transform the reader into Julie, just as the other characters are being transformed by her presence.

Julie does, in fact, accomplish a heroic deed by choosing obedience to her parents over true love, and we might conclude that this act of filial piety was a moral action if this were a Chinese novel of Confucian ethics. Julie deliberates whether she has a right to choose a life that is in opposition to those who gave her life, knowing she may "take their lives" by her action (170). The moral is not that she fulfills the path of duty, but rather that the injustice of society puts her in such a dilemma. Her parents are so consumed with false notions of propriety, that the happiness of their daughter threatens their lives. The *hamartia* is the pride of nobility that blinds its citizens into belief systems that destroy the gifts of heaven. Julie will elect the path of noble suffering, and renounce joy in the name of duty: "I shall never desert the paternal household. Go then, sweet fantasy of a sensible soul, felicity so enchanting and so desired, go, fade into the night of dreams, thou shalt have no more reality for me" (171). As Rousseau's sensible soul suffered a martyr's passion under the oppression of a cruel society, so do his characters find their meaning in anguish and alienation. When Julie describes the torment of Saint-Preux--who is perhaps given that saintly appellation for just such a purpose--we see that his nobility is displayed in his capacity to suffer intensely:

> Do not judge him by the condition in which you see him: his distraction results not from cowardice, but from a proud and ardent genius that stiffens against fortune. There is often more stupor than courage in apparent constancy; the ordinary man does not know violent pains, and great passions hardly take root in weak men. Alas! He has put into his constancy that energy of sentiments that characterizes noble souls. (171)

In a subsequent letter to her lover, she bids him to remember the noble sufferings of his heroes, such as Cato, Socrates, and Brutus, who courageously accepted the persecution of virtue. Rousseau has precisely in mind a new kind of heroic virtue, what Bakhtin called the "high

heroizing pathos" of the Baroque sentimental novel. Thus we have anti-heroic protagonists who are tested and tormented in the drawing room and within their internal consciousness. Saint-Preux will shortly travel the world in military service, but we will see little of that experience, which is unimportant to Rousseau. The setting of the mind, the dramatic seat of the soul, will be represented in prolonged discourse for another four-hundred pages, and the author himself will boast that he maintains the reader's interest despite the fact that nothing happens in "six volumes without episode, without romantic adventure, without wickedness of any sort, either in the characters or the actions" *(Confessions* 457). As Bakhtin indicates, these heroic virtues are abstractions; the institutions of society are vague monsters of oppression, and the heroic path follows an ambiguous virtue and inner strength, a generalized intensity of feeling and adherence to "nature" while holding to an obscure truth of the self.

Julie directs Saint-Preux to the classic heroes of self-sacrifice, like Socrates imbibing the hemlock or Cato ripping his entrails, but argues that true nobility is not for public recognition but rather exists in the private struggle of the self: "Private virtues are often all the more sublime for not aspiring to the approval of others but only to the good witness of the self, and the just man has his conscience instead of universal acclaim" (183). Virtue means suffering and alienation from society, not gaining its recognition. This is the heroic pathos of Jean-Jacques, but it is also a challenge to his readership. Excluded by rank and privilege, constrained by loveless marriage and social propriety, or condemned to economic subsistence, the bourgeois hero can find epic dignity in the quiet of his own home and the secret recesses of the heart. Julie determines that happiness lies in purity of soul, and purity is witnessed by transparency, an openness of heart to kindred spirits. The test is the intensity of one's sentiment, expressed in the realm of romance--

and not necessarily limited to love for one's spouse. Virtue and honor are private character attributes, and truth exists within the natural goodness of the heart:

> So let the wicked talk who display their fortunes and hide their hearts, and be sure that if there is a single example of happiness on earth, you will find it in a man of honor. You received from Heaven that happy inclination for all that is good and honest; harken to nothing but your own desires, follow nothing; remember above all the time of our first love. (185)

Julie is forewarning her lover of the traps that await him in the artificial atmosphere of Paris, but she is reminding him that he will find purity within himself and crime without in that great city which is the envy of the world. Beauty will be found not in the external world, but in the soul that possesses authentic feelings.

Within the first third of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, then, we find couched in the voluptuous sentimentalism a radical inversion of society, self and morality. A sentimental ethic redefines concepts of virtue, honor, love and self, and depicts instead the valorization of a new knight of the feeling heart. The reader is drawn into sympathy for the fallen heroine who still retains her virtue. Her lover is not motivated by sexual impulse but rather by a self-sacrificing virtue that elevates his love into spiritual realms. The truth of the feeling heart is placed in opposition to the unfeeling social order that bases its prejudices upon outward appearance. Society engages in blind persecution of the gifts from nature and heaven, and marries for position rather than love. A new literary language invades the conventions of tradition, and a new vocabulary of the self describes the individual, where equality reigns in the heart.

CHAPTER FOUR

ICONOCLASTIC VIRTUE

The rhetorical power of the novel to persuade with empathy, outside the limitations of reasoned argument, has long provided meat for critics of the genre to project dangerous possibilities for its influence. The "danger" has since been usurped by the greater power of other media in our day, and young students are praised for reading *any* novel. It takes more recent critical attention in our age of declining literacy to remind us that the novel can still make a useful contribution to public discourse. Martha Nussbaum addresses the question of whether fiction still has a significant role in the postmodern age: "Does it do any good to tell stories, then, in a world in which many people's daily lives are dominated by various forms of exclusion and oppression? (And where stories themselves can play a role in that oppression?)" (vii). Nussbaum concentrates her analysis on the novel, particularly those written by socially significant authors like Dickens and Forster, conceding that stories projected by electronic genres are beyond her scope. Ultimately, the question becomes whether the verbal and intellectual realms of the novel can combat the barrage of more sensual, superficial storytelling of the media, which overwhelms the attention of the public imagination to the point that verbal argument itself is often marginalized. Both the overwhelming power of pop culture *and* the persuasive dynamics of the novelistic genre are relevant to our study of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, in a period where the novel *was* the projection of pop culture. To some degree, it provided the equivalent of "virtual reality" to the eighteenth century.

Nussbaum argues for the important place of socially significant novels such as *Hard Times* and *Native Son,* which present character traits that are "valuable for citizenship" (10). *Julie* would be a doubtful inclusion in her list, but as we have seen, although Rousseau's novel does not contain sentiments that endure for the modern reader, it spoke to the "Age of Reason" in a spectacular fashion that exemplifies Nussbaum's argument. Nussbaum asserts that "the novel as a genre, in its basic structure and aspiration is… a defender of the Enlightenment ideal of the equality and dignity of all human life" (46). Rousseau offered the counter argument to rationality by subversively making the case for equality while determinedly minimizing systems of reason. The first books of *Julie* create empathy for the young rustic lovers, whose hearts have transcended the reason-based order of the eighteenth century into a higher meritocracy of the heart. Nussbaum acknowledges Rousseau with a quotation from Book IV of *Emile,* as she points out that a failure of empathy, which could be provided by the novel, results in a denial of the suffering of others, "as Rousseau shrewdly observes:"

> Why are kings without pity for their subjects? It is because they count on never being human beings. Why are the rich so harsh to the poor? It is because they do not have fear of becoming poor. Why does a noble have such contempt for a peasant? It is because he never will be a peasant…It is the weakness of the human being that makes it sociable, it is our common sufferings that carry our hearts to humanity; we would owe it nothing if we were not humans. Every attachment is a sign of insufficiency…Thus from our weakness itself, our fragile happiness is born. (qtd. in Nussbaum 66)

As Nussbaum argues, the solution for overcoming this imbalance comes from appealing to the imagination--to see the world from another's perspective. The novel can expertly advance this process by inviting us into the lives and loves of others. The Enlightenment postulated a new

equality of human experience, and Rousseau utilized a rationalist approach in his *Discourses,* There are likewise reasoned arguments in the letters of *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* yet Rousseau profoundly distrusted philosophical systems in favor of the mystic communication of the heart. While Nussbaum might not champion Rousseau as a consummate example of her thinking, nor agree with the sentiments he propounds, he captured the imagination of his readership in a manner that embodies the power of empathetic persuasion that she speaks of and he vividly exemplifies the rhetorical power of the genre. Part II develops significant arguments, but ultimately depends more on empathy.

Following the Baron d'Étange's renunciation of Saint-Preux as a "nobody" who has no rightful privilege to his daughter, Saint-Preux is whisked off to Paris for his own safety. Refusing Edward's generous offer to establish him with a "fortune" that would give him credibility, the young man hopes that he will make his place in the world through business success, and so become a worthy son-in-law. The alluring fortunes of the rising merchant class made wealth a noble exception to the privileges of primogeniture. For Rousseau, wealth also creates a distance from nature that destroys the soul.

Nussbaum shows that the novel appeals to our sense of empathy through its presentation of "possibility" and remind us of "what might be" (5). Part II of *Julie* shows the possibilities of true virtue against the backdrop of Paris. Julie senses the ominous temptations that will beset Saint-Preux during his worldly sojourn away from their sublime mountain home, and recalls the noble sentiments of classical role models he has taught her and to remind him of the inherent nobility of his true self. Julie defines her expectations of the young man's love: "Ardent love by inspiring in you all the sublime sentiments it engenders has given you that elevation of thought and refinement of sense from which it is inseparable" (182). "Sentiment" is an ambiguous term

Parisians apply in a faddish way out of their false hearts. The "editor" subverts that kind of refinement, stating that Julie's own "refinement" is not "conspicuous" in her love, since it is an exterior contrivance for pure hearts (ibid.). While she confesses her own naiveté about the world, the essence of her advice about sentiment presiding over experience is to "never forsake virtue, and never forget your Julie" (183). Again, the author forges into territory alien to the established belief system of the reader. Our lovers, fallen into a temptation that would have negated Pamela Andrew's virtue, reach higher to a *sublime* virtue. This is the "sacred fire" and "holy enthusiasm" which "sad reasoners" and "vain moralists" can never know because of their inability to *feel* the inner truth in their souls (ibid.).

Julie will modify Saint-Preux's criticism of the Parisians to affirm Rousseau's belief that all men are in their hearts good by nature, but seduced into affectation by the expectations of decorum. The people of Paris recognize their own distance from "nature," although they mask the vulnerability of their souls and deny the "delightful tears, the throbs that choke our pounding hearts, the transports that raised us above ourselves" (ibid). Julie then incorporates the hybrid language of classical biography in an ominous list of virtuous suicides--Socrates, Brutus, Regulus, and Cato--anticipating her lover's suicidal thoughts when the longings of his heart are stifled by the demands of false honor. She notes that Saint-Preux's inner man is the divine spark within every individual: "…it is what all men feel, often despite themselves. That divine model which each of us carries within himself enthralls us whether we will it or not; as soon as passion allows us to perceive it, we want to be like it" (184). Most importantly, true virtue is "private" and does not need the recognition of propriety: "let the wicked talk, who display their fortunes and hide their hearts" (184). If man is naturally good, he will be indifferent to exteriors; it follows that the darkness of evil primarily consists in hiding the heart. While this is an individual

call to salvation in a wicked world, sections like this speak with a political consciousness that will take on a political identity in the revolutionaries, and help define their "enemies."

Despite her fallen state and seventeen year-old perspective, Julie will function as the reference point of wisdom and exemplar of purity against Saint-Preux's complaints and temptation in Parisian society; he is, as she states, "but a man" and the dangers are plentiful (183). As the title character of the book, her point-of-view is always the gold standard of the book. However, her belief in the virtue of her lover leads her to advise him to "harken to nothing but [his] own desires; follow nothing but [his] natural inclinations, "and to find his strength in the innocence of their "first love" (185). Young love is the "holy enthusiasm," the holy spirit of the conscience, and one cannot regress to common sentiment after "tasting of every transport that can ravish a human soul" (186). Saint-Preux's response (letter II, xii) calls her, in the language of Metastasio, a "great soul," sealing his "sacred love of virtue" and making him invincible. Later, we will see that his virtue remains intact even after his seduction by a prostitute, the inevitable result of a prolonged exposure to Paris. But here Julie allows him a little indulgence in masturbation, although it is "a precarious resource and dubious consolation" (187). This refers to Rousseau's much discussed "dangerous supplement" that enslaved him, and spawned, via Jacques Derrida, a new terminology of literary criticism. Julie, of course, decries these "equivocal excesses" as "vain homage"(194), but here the *supplement* is the charade of custom that denies the consummation of two natural hearts in favor of loveless, sterile arranged marriage, which is, by implication, the real masturbation.

Having outlined the impeccable virtues of the two lovers, with allowances for a few sins of "weakness," the rest of Part II will define the temptations and opaqueness of urban society before the narrative returns to the simplicity of its alpine setting. The question will be what

Rousseau hoped to add to the many satires and invectives against upper class hypocrisy already proliferating in France.

The translators of *Julie* note the echoes of Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* and describe the epistles in this section as a "pastiche" of Montesquieu (673-4 n.59 & n.71), remarking that even Claire sees them as such (195). Julie will "test the discourse" of Saint-Preux with virtue, and adjust his cynicism about the city by reminding her lover that Parisians are no different than other city dwellers. Men are essentially noble in character when not diverted by the need for dissemblance. Is the young man's diatribe merely an immature echo of the more erudite and subtle Montesquieu, or does Rousseau attempt something else with this approach?

Certainly, the *Persian Letters* were in the mind of many of Rousseau's readership, with a revised edition published a few years before *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Montesquieu claimed to be the first to teach "how to write a novel in letters," and his influence upon the epistolary tradition was enormous (Kahn in Montesquieu, xiv). His imaginary Turkish observers, Uzbek and Rica, express their marvel at European government and state religion in the author's caustic irony, and expose the morals of Parisian culture in a manner that anticipates Rousseau. The alien narrators give an exotic outsider's view of European norms and allow Montesquieu to use empirical observation to examine broad philosophical questions. The protagonists are bewildered foreigners, but the inquiries are profound, and Montesquieu's primary readership was sufficiently educated and sophisticated to appreciate the subtle nuance. Most importantly, Montesquieu's elegant prose embodies the Enlightenment ideal of "Wit"--a pejorative in Rousseau's terminology.

It is not unfair to say that Rousseau is essentially humorless in all of his writings, whatever the genre, despite living in an age that was characterized by literary irony, satire, and

farce. Of course, Jean-Jacques is occasionally sarcastic, and notes certain ironies about his own life by sometimes making a comic remark; but no one comes away from reading this eighteenth-century author laughing. In fact, Saint-Preux castigates Paris, "where things are only grasped for their amusing side," precisely because of its reputation for wit. The outsider unaware of the "code" may be baffled by "a thousand sorry jests" that cover every subject, particularly virtue (203-4). Large cities do not even bother with satire, because that genre would imply a moral stance; the humor is only a relentless mockery and nothing is considered evil. Parisian sentiments are exhausted in wit, leaving no interest in moral action (205). The point cannot be missed that Saint-Preux expresses sarcasm in his descriptions of Parisian turpitude, though Julie reprimands him for his inappropriate "baubles of wit" in his letters (196). We see how the young lover's presence in Paris begins a process of moral degradation that first appears in his language. Julie considers displays of wit to be suspect, fearing that one will "sacrifice the truth of things to the glint of his thoughts and play on his sentence at the expense of justice" (195). Certainly there was not a hint of humor in Rousseau's disciple, Robespierre, and political enemies who laughed at him often found wit to be a path to the guillotine. Loomis notes that the adolescent sexuality of *Julie* reflects the sentiments of teenagers, an age group that has "rarely been conspicuous for their sense of humor." Rousseau, whether in the novels or the political treatise is always solemn, a most "un-French" manner--which reminds us that Rousseau was, after all, not French but Swiss and from the canton of Calvin at that (Loomis 31).

In fact, the provincial Swiss perception of Paris *is* the point, as *Julie's* fictional editor underlines in the footnote to letter II, xiv, where Saint-Preux begins his observations of Paris. The editor attempts to authenticate his fiction by again apologizing for the lovers' youthful and overwrought tone, but prides himself on his courage to publish them as they read, overcoming

his own biased perspective: “Let us leave them as they are. Let the shopworn commonplaces remain; let the trivial observations remain; all that is of little consequence. But it matters to the friend of truth that to the very end of his life his passions not sully his writings” (*Julie* 190). Rousseau is serious and tendentious in his criticism of Paris, but he is aware that he is on well-traveled ground and excuses any potential “commonplaces” as a commitment to “truth” (3). The target audience for *Julie* were bourgeois provincials who were not necessarily familiar with Montesquieu and other satiric epistolary observers, like Françoise de Griffin’s “South American” *Lettres d’une Péruvienne*. However, Rousseau did hope that the appeal of his novel would reach the salons of Paris as well, because his truths were couched in the uncontaminated and unsophisticated observation of rural innocents. In this manner, Rousseau obtained a response beyond that of the worldly-wise and cultured Montesquieu, and without caustic humor. In the revolution, the *sans culottes* cite Rousseau for his exposure of the greed of the aristocratic elite. Real poverty and despotism were not a subject for comedy.

Thus the social criticism of *Julie* is not important for its insight or wit, but for its widespread impact on the reading public. The judgment is not from conventional morality but rather from the innocent protest of the heart, which cannot speak the Parisian dialect: “My heart would like to speak, it senses it is not being heard” (190). The Parisians are assaulted for their famous politeness and charming conversation. Saint-Preux first applauds French communication skills and manners: the depth of knowledge and elegance of reason while avoiding argument; their tactfulness of approach and inclusion of all present; their flawless presentation of social intercourse that is both enlightening and entertaining (191). But beneath the surface is “the cause of the lie,” undermining virtue and giving slavish adherence to fashionable topics. Every subject

has its appropriate nuance and every participant speaks like a "machine" in an era when that trope was not yet a cliché. The result is that "no one ever says what he thinks" (192).

This discussion takes a subversive political turn as he suggests that, as clothing will predict a man's sentiments, so he can change his opinions like attire, if necessary: "Give him by turns a long wig, a uniform, and a pectoral cross; you will hear him preach in succession and with the same zeal law, despotism, and inquisition. There is a form of reason proper to the robe, another to finance, another to the sword (ibid.). Rousseau's fictional editor again footnotes a reminder that "We must allow this reasoning to a Swiss," where citizen-soldiers see their country as well-governed without the professional classes of the military, the priesthood, and the lawyers. Affectation of social manners withers under the scrutiny of the heart born of the idyllic Swiss landscape, and political structures take an oblique thrust as well. Modern theorists search the political writings of Rousseau for his influence, but here in the correspondence of his pure-hearted lovers is the real beginning of revolutionary radicalism. In government discourse as well as the conversations of the table, the problem is the same: "their sentiments do not emanate from the heart" (193). Rousseau is not interested in how the emanations of the heart translate into political structures, and his followers will be correspondingly ambiguous. The popularity of *Julie* in Parisian circles indicates they were not insulted by his allegations; apparently, they responded sympathetically to his appeals to "the heart." Rather than providing an impulse to social action, the *heart* as a lyrical abstraction became an existential way of perceiving the world. Exactly what one does about the inequities of the social order is uncertain, but Rousseau argues that enlightened souls must *feel* above all.

Essential to the book's attack upon Parisian society are Julie's moderating responses, rebuking her lover for his excesses about the city that has showed such hospitality to him.

Reminding him of the common humanity of the city's denizens, even if they are fallen, she notes that the problems of Paris are not unique among urban centers, and points out that he displays some of the same hypocrisy in his criticism. Rousseau's strategy is to dialogue the indictment of the city with the perception from one of untarnished virtue and purity that comes from Julie, who moderates Saint-Preux's attacks and anticipates the responses of urban readers. The sermon of the novel rebukes the sinners while acknowledging that the criticism may be excessive; the real point is the virtue of Julie, who loves the sinners while hating the sin. Unmasking the counterfeit is insufficient to Rousseau; once exposed, society must see the model of the genuine. Starobinski shows that the author's purpose is to heal Paris, that he "offers Paris salvation" (349). The vast bourgeois readership of *Julie* was largely unfamiliar with the commonplaces of literary social criticism, but the novel confirmed their suspicions about the mores of high society. The revolutionary generation would embrace austerity and supposed authenticity as a citizen's "love of virtue." Saint-Preux supplies the attack, but Julie provides the solution, and the decadent salons of Paris are set in contraposition to the pure environs of Vevey.

The young man, far from his idyllic home, begins to reflect the corruption of the city in his letters. Julie notes that the artificiality of the city he criticizes has already influenced him in the affected "prettiness" of the style of his letters, particularly in his use of figurative language, such as "the sentiments of a man's attire" and a "soul one dons like livery," stating that he seems to be adding to his wit "the hue of the country's [colors]" (195). Rousseau had speculated in his *Essay on the Origins of Language* that spoken language must have begun with tropes originating in the "passions," and that speech itself was "the first social institution" (Ch. 1). Because of language, "man makes progress in good as well as evil" as opposed to speechless animals that do not progress in either. Julie protests that she is a "poor Swiss woman," who does not understand

his startling metaphors. As language becomes the first step of man away from his natural state, Saint-Preux's affectation of metaphors indicates his growing distance from nature and willingness to compromise under urban influence. Subtlety works by disguising honesty. In Rousseau's soul-to-soul communication, language is a supplement that is inessential to the heart, as Julie mentions in her discussion of Claire's friendship: "How little the tender language of friendship needs the help of words" (211). Julie's basic criticism of Parisian society concerns the duplicity of words, and the hypocrisy that Saint-Preux identifies in the falseness of their words becomes increasingly evident in his own language.

Julie's response to the letters from Paris also shows "the worthiest and finest of wives," as she describes the marriage of their friend Claire. In contrast, the young man describes the common betrayals of marriage in high society in his subsequent letter (II, xix). Claire's marriage suggests the hope the lovers cherish for their own future. The forbidden love of Julie and Saint-Preux is but a dream of the happiness Claire experiences, because it is condemned by the prejudice of Julie's father. The baron has encouraged suitable "wife-hunters" to court Julie, but she regards them as dunces and libertines who are "lacking in weapons" to compete with Saint-Preux (213-214). The false suitors, Parisian marriage of station, and Claire's marriage all refract the double-voiced intention that the marriage of the two lovers is the way things should be--the mandate of Nature that transcends social boundaries. However, the dishonesty of social convention also means that Claire's new position as a married woman precludes her intermediary role in their clandestine correspondence. This transition will soon result in the discovery of Saint-Preux's correspondence by Julie's mother, an exposure that will banish the hopes of the lovers forever.

The treatment of inauthentic outward images will be woven through the entirety of the author's social criticism in Part II. Rousseau will not specifically attack the political system, or the injustice of social inequity, or the economic repression of the class system, but will find corruption in false exteriors that occlude the genuine impulses of the heart. As with his critique of the dissemblance of language in Parisian conversation, he will utilize the examples of theatre and the opera, contemporary novels, and the subterfuge of femininity as emblematic of the decline of civilization from "nature" to spurious façade. In an appeal to neoclassical dictums of art imitating nature, Rousseau shows that the falsehearted sham of the stage reflects the pretentious masked ball of the culture.

Rousseau is certainly not the first equate the world with the stage, but he does take an original slant in likening a false stage to a false world. He was astute in recognizing that eighteenth-century French drama was forgettable, and perhaps that is the reason that theatre does not speak to us today. Saint-Preux notes of Parisian social decorum that "whatever is no longer in the sentiments, they have put into rules, and with them everything is rules" (205). This leads into his discussion of theatre, and the fact that dramatists have attended so carefully to the classical rules that their work contains little of life. High society prescribed an appropriate behavior even for the most raw of human emotions, grief: "what degree of sadness to adopt at such and such a death;" likewise, dramatic tragedy is more a place for "pretty conversations" than any real representation of life. In the few true sentiments remaining in drama, there is no moral instruction for the playgoers (205-6).

Saint-Preux's primary critique of French drama continues the criticism of the language of polite society. He argues that little emphasis is placed on action and everything depends upon the conventions of talk: "In general there is much talk and little action on the French stage; perhaps

this is because the Frenchman indeed talks even more than he acts" (207). Rousseau tutors his readers about the classical roots of drama, where tragedy was based on heroic action, portrayed real historical events, was grounded in religious purposes, and comedy was directed toward correcting the "vices and flaws" of the culture (206). The kings in present French drama are concerned only with marriages and mistresses, and the follies of society are studied for imitation. The theatre now represents "the conversations of a hundred or so Paris households," while the other half-million souls of the city appear only as buffoons. Socrates used craftsmen and laborers as examples in his dialogues, but French authors would consider themselves "dishonored" to have any idea about the life of a shopkeeper. One might conclude that France is inhabited only by "Counts and Chevaliers" (207). In fact, part of the democratic stance of the novel is to acknowledge the life of the burgeoning middle-class, who will recognize themselves and their own existential struggles in its pages. The theatre had come to represent farce of French society, and it was dominated by a shallow elite who lived only for appearance. Indeed, the aristocracy, comfortable in their *laissez-faire* idleness, did not even attend the theatre to see drama, but to *be seen*, and to know the proper thing to *say* about it (208). As the drama contains grotesque hybrids of the heroes of antiquity attired in French fashion, so the noble actions are cheaply dressed in conversation--and talk may be responsible for the tragedy of contemporary life:

> On the stage as in the world however much you listen to what is said, you learn nothing about what is done, and why would you need to? When a man has spoken, does anyone look into his conduct? Has he not done his bit, has judgment not been passed? Here the honorable man is not the one who does good deeds, but the one who says fine things, and a single ill-considered remark, blurted out without reflection, can work irreparable harm on the speaker which forty years' integrity would not blot out. In a word, although men's

> acts hardly resemble their words I see that they are depicted only by their words without regard to their acts…These are still nothing but appearances, and beneath those open and agreeable exteriors hearts are perhaps more hidden, more sunken in upon themselves than ours. (209)

Discussions like this carry the message that language has become a device for pretense more than a vehicle for truth. Again, the tragic flaw is the concealment of the heart, and Rousseau's solution for the healing of Paris is the dissolution of outward show. Saint-Preux, like the author and other outsiders, was excluded by ignorance of the code. The subtleties and nuances of a language often made him feel as if he was the butt of the joke, as often he was. For Rousseau, the hearts of Parisians remained naturally good, but the smokescreen of words prevented the heart from revealing its true nature. The theatre imitates nothing except appearances, and appearances had become the evil of his generation.

The theme of false fronts, then, is the target of Rousseau's theatre discussion in *Julie,* despite his other misgivings about the dangers of drama as articulated in his *Letter to D'Alembert* composed in 1758, during the writing of the novel. The author, in fact, was far more concerned with the putative "morality" of the theatre than he discusses in the book. D'Alembert had called for the establishment of a dramatic company in Rousseau's beloved Geneva to lend classical dignity to the city, as well as to provide a vehicle for moral instruction. Rousseau argued there that rather than providing moral elevation for Geneva, which was in little need of didactics, the introduction of drama to the city would result in a rapid decline of morals and complete corruption of the population. The point of the essay had little in common with the criticism of the theatre in *Julie.* Perhaps Rousseau was conscious that the argument echoed the novel, and reflected the misgivings in the opening line of the Preface, that "Great cities must have theatres;

and corrupt peoples, Novels." Saint-Preux does not flee the theatre out of fear of moral degradation, but rather because he is "beginning to experience the intoxication into which this restless and tumultuous life plunges those who lead it" (209). He confesses at this point that he has begun to "lock up" his own vulnerable heart and to "judge and reason" the way others around him do. He states portentously that "the truly wise man considers (things) only through their appearances; that he must take prejudices for principles, proprieties for laws, and that the most sublime wisdom consists in living like fools" (ibid). In contrast to this theatre of the absurd, his only hope is "the image of virtue shining in all its splendor….Julie, seated on a throne of glory" (210). Saint-Preux's criticisms of Parisian society will be both subverted and exemplified in *his* actions, but Julie's sensible scolding will also qualify the attack, allowing Rousseau to put forth his condemnation and at the same time apologize for its excess; Julie, even if a fallen woman, provides the voice of virtue.

The novel continues to rely on indirection with an analysis by Saint-Preux of that apex of eighteenth-century French culture, the Paris Opera, about which all visitors "agree that there is nothing so beautiful in the rest of the world" (230). Rousseau had a much more personal interest in this topic as a successful composer of operas, which had been performed in Paris, as well as at Versailles for Louis XV. Indeed, it must be noted that Rousseau originally considered himself a musical prodigy more than an author or philosopher; if his operas had been better received in his day, he might never have ventured into letters. It is a mark of his eclectic genius that some of his songs from *The Village Soothsayer* still receive airplay on contemporary classical radio stations. However, he did not play to the fashions of his day and claims he received death threats and attempts to banish him for his criticism of the opera, especially since he was a foreigner (680,

n.154). Here Rousseau utilizes the language of music criticism in the heteroglossia of his novel. Some of this criticism would appear later in his *Dictionaire de la Musique.*

Saint-Preux states that he embarks on this subject at Julie's request, although the fictional editor notes that the young man knew--as the reader "knowing Julie's character" should know--that Julie was really conveying Claire's curiosity rather than her own; he cryptically states that if the young man had not known this, "he would no longer have loved her" (213). Stewart and Vache suggest this means that if he had actually thought that Julie was interested in the opera, she would not have been worthy of him, or that perhaps this is a test "to sound out the reader's degree of sympathy with the moral premises of the work" (678 n.120). Julie's virtue is set in opposition to what follows of the opera, as if Saint-Preux and perhaps the reader would find it incongruous for her to have what was seen as a prurient interest. Certainly this passage suggests that the marvel of Paris is scandalous. Although Claire's character is also impeccable, she has more worldly wisdom, and indeed he sends his account of the opera to her, not Julie.

Saint-Preux glosses much of his criticism on this sensitive topic by stating it is what the Parisians themselves say about their own opera, while he himself has only attended twice at Claire's behest, and could hardly suffer trying to remain awake for a second visit (230). He states that the opera itself is something of a French academy of music, "a sovereign Court" that determines its own unquestionable standards of quality and taste by what is popular, wherein "the essence of things hangs on words." His own observations are empirically "what any spectator who is not pre-possessed can perceive" (231). The marvel of this stage comes from what we might see as eighteenth-century "special effects" to create an illusion of reality, though this spectacle is so far removed from nature that a sky of "bluish tatters" is suspended from a seeming clothesline and the sun is a gloomy lantern. Clumsy machines manipulate tawdry

canvasses of waves and chariots, demons appear through trap doors, and gods swing from ropes, with actors sometimes inadvertently falling to their deaths. In a reversal of what he has previously said of the ancients (49), these tacky effects are "small things achieved with great efforts" (232). Although the description of this spectacle is uncharacteristically caustic and displaying the only slapstick humor in the book, the author's point is that Paris, epitomized by its most self-acclaimed accomplishment, has so lost touch with real nature that a false imitation induces a false sublime. The quiet soul of Julie, writing from a glorious Swiss landscape, contrasts with everything Parisian. His criticism of the opera is that the French have "a false taste for magnificence," and that their crude and mechanistic attempts to capture grandeur in the illusion of the stage have malformed their taste into a jaded and grotesque emphasis upon sensation (236). Rousseau sees the entire problem with Paris symbolized in what they cherish most in their arts. The only authentic stage is the natural world.

The savage depiction of the music of the opera and the sarcastic tone reflect Rousseau's resentment of his perceived rejection by the operatic establishment of Paris. He characterizes the singing as "whines," "yelpings" and "howlings," which are applauded as if it were for an acrobat performing a stunt without accident. This is hyperbole rather than music criticism, and the depiction of the out-of-tune orchestra is probably inaccurate (233). He inserts a miscellany of opinions he developed in other writings about the superiority of Italian and German opera and pans the amalgamation of ballet into the performance, where priests, gods, and devils dance even in funeral processions (234-5). This conceit invokes the classical insistence that art should imitate life as its reason for being, but these performances "imitate…nothing" (235). The sensibility of the Parisians has become so hardened that these grotesque stimulations are the foundation of their aesthetics and the potential power of music is neutralized "because although

quite spirited and refined, they possess neither sentiments, nor tableaux, nor situations, nor warmth, nor interest, nor anything at all to offer a foothold to music, flatter the heart, and sustain illusion" (235). Yet the French insist that they are the connoisseurs of harmony and that some consider "Music in Paris as an affair of State," or liken opera to a "political institution" (234). Certainly Rousseau is taking shots at the establishment because it did not acknowledge his genius, but the opera is emblematic of societal institutions as a whole. The pure folk melodies of village peasants ring through several sections of the book and are examples that meet Rousseau's approval. The entire milieu of Paris can be viewed in the dissonant tones of its music, the contrivances on stage and the monstrous concoctions.

Since the majority of the readership of *Julie* would have no experience of the renowned Paris spectacle, the author is educating them about proper taste in music. In particular, the mongrel hybridization for sensational purposes creates the most insulting effect--boredom: "French music, dance, and the supernatural mixed together will always make the Paris Opera the most boring spectacle in all existence" (236). As he argues elsewhere in the book, the end product of exciting the senses always results in a crisis of boredom. Rousseau's idea of "spectacle" as a proper substitute for theatre is the village folk festival that he will portray in Part V, in the harvest celebration at Clarens. Clearly, the revolutionary censure of entertainment derived from Rousseau's eccentric notions. Robespierre, who attempted to close down the theatre and opera during the Revolution, would aspire to imitate his master Jean-Jacques in his garish Festival of the Supreme Being. This politically correct form of spectacle performed by "the people" would counter the aristocratic decadence of the Paris opera. While the sophomoric ranting of Saint-Preux about Paris culture does not articulate critical judgment, the political implications are nonetheless powerful. Rousseau has his opinions about Parisian culture, but he

is providing far more than bad reviews of its art. A false world of superficial appearances has consumed the civilized world, and he is a lonely prophet pointing the way back to authentic existence in the heart. His lovers are denied the consummation of what nature has brought together while the world revels in unnatural acts that deny the truth of the soul.

The theme of the unseen goodness of the inner heart is pursued in letter II, xxi, in the discussion of Parisian women. The author sets this up as the young man's reluctant response to Julie's request; she has wondered about his silence on the subject, given his enthusiastic depictions of the buxom Valaisian women on his earlier journey. Although this lengthy discussion subverts another institution of renown in Paris, the real point is not only to contrast ladies' fashion to Julie's modest purity, but additionally to show that beneath the ostentatious apparel that is imitated throughout Europe, the women have a heart of benevolence. He denounces the morals and cold marriages of the same aristocracy that suppresses the natural union of the young lovers, and accuses contemporary novels that reinforce such behavior.

Rousseau knew that his readership consisted substantially of women, as he acknowledges in his first Preface. The attention to Paris fashion in *Julie* acknowledges the burgeoning female readership. Saint-Preux's judgment of style is mixed. He finds them overdone in makeup, but surprisingly simple in dress and displaying minimal gold, cognizant that in expensive luxury they could be outdone by the wives of bourgeois financiers (218). They are less slaves of fashion than other European women because they themselves determine the fashion that others imitate.

"Let us begin with the outside. That is as far as most observers go" (217). Rousseau's frontal assaults on the social order always begin with surface appearance, from whence he believes that all evil derives. Saint-Preux responds to Julie's sensitive inquiry about his uncharacteristic omission about the women as if he consciously conceals the seductive lure of

this dangerous flame. He explains that his earlier preoccupation with Valaisian women was in homage to Julie, but Parisian women contrast poorly; Julie is the standard by which all women are measured. Rousseau applies what will later be a well-worn saw of appeal to a predominately female readership of novels--showing what female characters are *wearing.* While he assures provincial readers that Parisian women are not extraordinarily beautiful, he does complement them on their unique presence and taste, corrupted primarily by the need to appeal to the lasciviousness of men. The contrast of ample-breasted country women, close to nature, appears again, as the women of Paris amplify their paltry proportions with artificial means, but "they are so available for inspection that little remains to be guessed at" (218). Nevertheless, Parisians are the creative masters of fashion sense, imitating no one, and provincial women serve themselves badly to copy styles that cover imagined flaws in an amateurish way (ibid.). However, resentful of their slavish imitators, urban French women strive for fashion that will not be reproduced: "For fear of being indistinguishable from other women, they prefer their rank to their sex, and imitate whores, so as not to be imitated" (219).

More importantly, this world of false images spreads like an infection from outward to inward: "They have incorporated into their manners the same spirit that governs their attire. That charming modesty, which distinguishes, honors, and beautifies your sex to them appeared base and lowborn; they have breathed into their gesture and speech a noble impudence" (ibid.). Rousseau contradicts the Christian assertion that evil proceeds from the inner wickedness of the heart; rather, he believes corruption is absorbed from the outer world of appearance, defiling the inner natural goodness. Although much of this discussion of women in letter II, xx at first seems to be another example of a puritanical man castigating the immodesty of women, the author is insisting that what "beautifies [the] sex" is not an outward appeal to the lusts of men, but inner

character. As the depiction of Parisian women deplores their masculine tone of voice and manly manners, his real criticism is that they imitate men rather than being themselves. While much of this disapproval might seem misogynist to modern readers, and we might question his stereotype of gender as "natural," Rousseau is pointing to the artificial emphasis placed upon women's appearance and he urges them to the freedom of listening to their hearts, rather than measuring self-worth by the attentions of men. Again, this unnatural state derives from the unnatural conditions of city living:

> The main objection to large cities is that there men become other than what they are, and society imparts to them, as it were, a being other than their own. This is true, especially in Paris, and especially with respect to women, who derive from the way others look at them the only existence that matters to them. Accosting a Lady in a gathering, instead of the Parisian you think you see, you are seeing only the simulacrum of fashion. Her height, her size, her gait, her waist, her bust, her colorations, her air, her look, her talk, her manners, nothing of all that is hers…all that is substituted for nature. (223-4)

A woman of pre-Revolutionary France would attend to this attack because he speaks to an inner woman that has "more naturalness" than she thinks (224). Although this letter picks apart every detail of the renowned outer beauty of urban women, the entire novel does not contain *any description* of Julie's physical beauty, which we are led to believe emanates from inner virtue. But Rousseau shows that Parisian women do have an inner loveliness, as well. Saint-Preux recounts that during a country outing with several typical young women, once they have left Paris behind and engaged in some preliminary coquetry, they are willing to "get real," as we would put it, and allow their true natures to emerge. After that happens, he finds "more enlightenment" in them than in many of the men he knows. Indeed, he concedes that once one

lures a Parisian woman out of the "fortress" of her social armor, she can maintain a well-reasoned argument with any man and prove to be sensible, judicious, and lucid (225). Taking up a contemporary platitude that women run the country, and are thus responsible for its ills, Saint-Preux insists that if this is true, "they do evil impelled by men, but good on their own initiative" (226). His letter reveals his astonishment that some of the most frivolous of noble coquettes, seeming to leave the room for "sentimental correspondence," are in fact secretly aiding the poor and victims of injustice (225).

For all of his savage indictment of women and their slavish obedience to appearance, men are the real culprits of civilization. The voice of wisdom and virtue channels through a woman; Julie is the most reliable and consistent character in the novel, and Claire is the most sagacious. The men are more subject to unstable passions and violence, or have a complete lack of emotion, like Wolmar. In fact, the women of the novel may function collectively as a trope for the truth of the heart prevailing over the sterility of reason and the masculine structures of power and hierarchy.

Marriage itself as practiced among the upper classes of France is subversive of virtue: "the whole order of natural sentiments is reversed" and the heart makes no contracts (222). For Rousseau, the heart is the seat of the Divine and the source of judgment, virtue, and alignment with Nature. To contract marriage for any other purpose conflicts with the natural order, and leads to boredom and rampant adultery: "Anyone who marries only fortune or station owes nothing to the person" (222). Yet the purpose of this diatribe is not an exposé of the immorality of the age but the juxtaposition of societal institutions with the holy but forbidden union of Julie and Saint-Preux. The plot of the book will soon move Julie toward exactly this kind of loveless union, with the bond of the impassioned lovers dismissed as indecent. The entire social order is

questioned as the young lover recalls their own connection of the heart: "O Julie! A woman who has not feared to defile the marriage bond a hundred times would dare with her impure mouth to denounce our chaste embraces, and condemn the union of two sincere hearts that never were capable of breaking faith" (ibid.). The law of the heart--the only sure guide to the natural order--becomes irrelevant to the institutions of civilization. Man's establishments have all evolved in opposition to nature. The surface of this love story reads like excessive sentimental invocations, but the real message is revolutionary, and the book was clearly read that way. Romance entices the audience, but the message induces outrage at injustice.

Along with the false nature of the opera, stage, and other arts, Rousseau deplores the contemporary novel as another reflection of the corruption of the age. Parisian men regard women as if their primary knowledge of the sex proceeds from the female characters of novels, rather than real women (226). The "virtue" that comprises the theme of most of these novels is either false or of such an ethereal nature that it is unobtainable by human beings (227). Saint-Preux restates Rousseau's opening line of the Preface that novels are for "corrupt peoples" and have become only remaining voice of moral instruction for the times, but here he indicates the proper goal of the novel:

> I would wish that the composition of these sorts of books be permitted only to honest but sensible persons whose hearts would depict themselves in their writings, to authors who would not be above human frailties, who would not from the very start display virtue in Heaven beyond the reach of men, but induce us to love it by depicting it at first less austere, and then from the lap of vice know the art of leading men imperceptibly toward it. (227)

Stewart and Vache cite this passage as adopted, word for word, from Jaucourt's entry on the novel in the *Encyclopédie*, noting that showing the growth of virtue from vice was highly controversial in his day, especially as practiced in the English confessional novel (680, n. 148). Rousseau attempts a more realistic portrayal of human life, while announcing his intention to lead the reader subtly toward a reachable goal of attainable virtue. Although the characters have proclaimed virtue from the opening pages, their purity is subverted in the mind of the reader by their sexual violation, and it will soon be revealed that Julie has become pregnant and miscarried. Pamela never gives an inch in maintaining her virtue all the way through her wedding day in Richardson's novel. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* makes it acceptable to be weak as one grows toward virtue, and the young lovers pass their later test--left alone for months by Julie's husband. Their final triumph of purity is meant by the author to be an attainable inspiration to instruct his readers.

Nevertheless, Rousseau has a big fall planned for Saint-Preux as the corruption of Paris leads the young man to a night with a prostitute. Trembling and tearful, he relates to Julie in letter II, xxiv that naiveté and bad company have led to his ruin. He had trusted some companions who were in the Swiss Guard, wrongly assuming that his countrymen shared his rural innocence. After he became aware of their worldliness, he decided that he could improve them with moral instruction, which they mocked. The soldiers diabolically plot the corruption of innocence by inviting him to dinner with the supposed wife of an officer who has heard of his virtue. Though suspicious of his surroundings in what the reader knows to be a brothel, he tries to maintain his cool. Upon finally realizing he is surrounded by prostitutes, he decides that politeness demands he remain as an "observer" the one time in his life when he will be in such a place. Improbably, not knowing that his water was white wine, he accidentally gets quite drunk

and awakens, to his shame, in the craven arms of a harlot. This is the subject of the accompanying fourth engraving, for which Rousseau's instructions read that the young man leaves "the place of debauchery in an attitude that evinces remorse, sadness and dejection" while the woman who has seduced him shows "joy, impudence, and the air of a person proud for having triumphed over him" (623).

Yet the purpose of this short but shameful episode of shame is to spotlight how the queen of virtue, Julie, responds to the incident and moralizes its meaning. The real original sin is the corruption of the city itself, and despite his self-righteous rants about Paris living, the clear message is that the young man cannot remain untarnished by the atmosphere surrounding him; slowly, imperceptibly, he is becoming what he despises. Although she does not emphasize his specific crime of debauchery, Julie traces his fall to a "deeper root" that has become apparent in his letters and indicates the real fall from virtue that has been progressing all along: "Bad company has begun by deluding your reason in order to corrupt your virtue" (244). She systematically shows that everything he has judged in the Parisians is present in his own being. His sarcastic treatment of their foibles places him among their number, as if he is a "coxcomb" of wit himself. His criticism of their fads is as ephemeral as fashion itself, making light of practices that will be curiosities of history in ten years, while he makes no mention of "the timeless motives of the human heart, the secret and lasting play of passions" (245). His caustic invective on the primacy of appearances is itself based on surfaces, and seems to have little perception of the psychological character and motivations of the Parisians, or to include a significant study of their educational practices, belief systems, or philosophical maxims. He seems to rely more on what he was told, rather than recording what he had seen for himself; his summary of the character of women is a gross generalization, as well. His very tolerance of the

company of the soldiers and the place they brought him shows that he had already been corrupted because “the indignation of virtue cannot bear the spectacle of vice” (247). She scoffs at his “observer” pretensions, and insists that his fear of derision from his comrades triumphed over his unsteady virtue. Even his writing style has declined into “frilly little letters,” and “in the land of talents,” his own talent has apparently diminished (248).

More to the point is Julie’s own evaluation of the city, where the gap between rich and poor is so much more pronounced than in Switzerland, a place where there are no “millionaires.” Julie notes that he is off-target in assessing a city by its wealthy citizens, whereas a “wise man learns its secrets in a poor man’s cottage” (248-9). With sentiments that anticipate Revolutionary rhetoric, she argues that the poor are oppressed because they lack a voice to represent them, and in a manner that must have resounded with Robespierre states that, “The bold support of disinterested virtue is enough to lift a multitude of obstacles, and the eloquence of a man of honor can frighten Tyranny amidst all its power” (249). In short, Julie insists that the young man could make more active use of his virtue by exercising it with humility.

Is Rousseau subverting Saint-Preux’s social criticism by making it extremist, and then, with Julie’s humiliating reproach proving him a hypocrite by his fall into debauchery? Nothing in the young man’s criticism of Paris--its mores, arts, and artifices--is inconsistent with views Jean-Jacques expressed elsewhere in his writings. Parisians no doubt delighted in his attacks, as all men easily perceive the flaws in everyone else but themselves. Julie’s criticism of the critic allows the author to both press home his judgment of urban decadence and keep his distance from an unreliable narrator. As Saint-Preux feared derision of his moralistic sentiments, so Rousseau was sensitive to the ridicule of his critics. At the same time, the real objective of this section is to show the corrupting influence of urban society. Even his well-intentioned young

protagonist and student of virtue cannot help but be subdued by the powerful seduction of the city's allures. The real contrasting element to the lyrical abstraction of "Nature" is the artificial: the gaudy ornamental, the highly deliberate and stylized, the appearance elevated over the reality, the institution and custom eclipsing the heart. Rousseau ends this section on a note of humility, showing that fidelity to one's own nature trumps the accusation of someone else's flaws--the spirit over the law. The objectivity of reason and truth was beginning to unravel into modern skepticism, where one must find one's own truth among an infinitude of conflicting theories. Julie's quiet wisdom would be a gentle refreshing breeze in a tumultuous era, but it would wear better in the isolation of Clarens than in the streets of Paris.

Virtue will not, however, get the girl. Julie discloses in the final letter of Part II that their secret passion has been discovered; Julie's mother has suspiciously searched out her hidden cache of letters. While Part I established the pure and tender bond of kindred hearts, Part II contraposes a panorama of a world that has forsaken nature. Part III will show that the social hierarchy will dash the hopes of the lovers by reasserting its hegemony over the heart. The message of the book is that the kingdom of virtue is not of this world, but one must cling to it anyhow for personal salvation. The ideals of nature, the heart, and virtue are shown as suppressed at every turn in favor of social conventions that reverse divine intention and cherish the unnatural as God-ordained. Even Claire, in her scolding letter opening Book III, urges Saint-Preux to renounce his "disorderly" love in the name of virtue (252). She also announces the grim news that the Baron d'Étange, whose word is "irrevocable," has already engaged his daughter to his old army buddy, who is of appropriate aristocratic origins.

The story takes a tragic turn when Julie's mother becomes gravely ill and dies. Julie's grief attributes this to her own sin, which has caused "the horror of parricide." She insists that

she will carry the torment of this crime eternally, having "shortened the life of her to whom I owe mine own" (259). She tells Saint-Preux that they must "sacrifice" their love and any further contact to atone for their murderous deed. The young man protests to Claire that Heaven could not be so unjust and "so pure a flame has not produced such grim effects" (261). The tension set up here indicates that the unnatural demands of the world have a fatal effect. The section that immediately precedes this tragedy attacks the masquerade of hypocrisy and adultery that results from marriage bonds created by fortune and class. If the mother's grief has brought her to an end, it is the false expectations of society that are to blame, not the natural feelings of the two lovers. The controlling forces of civilization have extended so far beyond that which is natural that custom is lethal to the heart. Rousseau is the prophet crying in the wilderness to return to the divine plan, the natural sentiments, the ancient matrices, and the actions determined by love and confirmed in the heart.

Claire's consolation letter (III, vii) shows that Julie's mother had far deeper sorrows than Julie's indiscretion, and this continues the picture of the corrupted aristocracy. First, assuring Saint-Preux that the Baroness had chronic medical problems with "dropsy," i.e., pleurisy, she states that if grief hastened her demise, it was due to a lifetime of heartbreak she had experienced with her husband's persistent infidelities, compounded by his "vain infatuation over noble birth and…rigidity of character" (265). The innocent lovers have been declared illegitimate by the self-deluded honor of this dangerous man, whom Julie believes would be murderous if he knew the truth. Indeed, a few pages later an ominous letter arrives from the Baron to Saint-Preux demanding that the young man, who is a "suborner," should immediately write a "release" for the heart he has manipulated. Her father states that the young man would already be dead if he had seduced more than her heart. Not deigning to duel a commoner, he knows how "the honor of

a Gentleman is avenged when he is offended by a man who is not one" (266), meaning that he will appoint a servant in his place or an assassin (683 n.6). The question here is the nature of honor, and Nussbaum could cite this scene as a precise example of the way that empathy and character work when she speaks of the aspirations of the novel as a defender of the Enlightenment ideals of justice. Our empathetic understanding of the lovers now confronts the wall of inequality that would justify homicide to enforce its scruples. Saint-Preux, defiant but submissive to the paternal claim, writes a release that Julie may contradict the dictates of her heart, but chastens her father that, "when you dare to appeal to nature, you alone are defying her laws" (267).

The immediate consequence of nature's defeat is Julie's dramatic infection with smallpox, the scourge of the age. This suggests that creation itself is in revolt against the social order. The disease nearly takes her life, and does permanently scar her beauty. Julie finds this fitting for "the coarse desires" of the designated fiancé who will take her without her consent. Her silent protest is, "my appearance will speak for me" (269). Nature's voice screams out for a woman whose choice has been silenced by authority. She recalls to Claire that in the midst of the delirium of her fever, a vision appeared that haunted her afterwards: her lover had appeared by her bedside, disheveled and despairing, but "not fearing the communication of such a horrible venom," he had covered her pustule-infested hand with kisses and tears (270). Julie muses that perhaps some out-of-body soul communication has transpired between two hearts so closely knit.

Claire's succeeding letter relates that when the young man was informed of Julie's illness, he made an unremitting three-day journey to her bedside and performed this suggestive act of imbibing her poison. Notably, at this moment Claire gives him the enigmatic title of "Saint-Preux," the only proper name he has in the book, supposedly a pseudonym to confuse the

servants (see 272, 342, and 692, n.25). The purpose of the name is obscure, but this scene is obviously a key moment of the story, especially since he recalls his one blissful previous night in Julie's bedroom, "the very sanctuary where everything bespoke the sensual delight that intoxicated my soul" (274). Claire describes "the burning kisses…planted on that diseased hand" that seemed to relieve her more than medicine. This scene of bathos substitutes what should have been a honeymoon for the lovers, and is now a farce of passion and body fluids emanating from the disease of civilization; Saint-Preux earns his knighthood by gallantly sharing her infirmity and fate, and receiving "the inoculation of love" (ibid.).

Rousseau underscores the effect with an engraving depicting this moment of theatre. The author, who had been apprenticed as an engraver in his youth, appreciated the enrichment that an appeal to visual aids could provide and gave precise instructions to the engraver, which were included in early editions of the book. These are not merely comments on the illustrations, but instructions on their composition and interpretation, as well. In our age of visual superfluity, we can hardly grasp the impact of graphics on the eighteenth-century audience. Though the engravings are beyond the scope of this analysis, as are the tears, some of them are worth noting as part of the rhetoric of this work at a time when the reading public was highly influenced by "sensation." In his chapter about how the "sensibility" cult of 1760's France cultivated the idiom of the revolutionary generation, Simon Schama links Rousseau's novel and the fad for sentimental paintings. At public showings, crowds jostled for closer views of emotionally charged artworks and publicly wept to display their empathy. One critic gushed over such a display of Jean-Baptiste Greuze's 1765 painting, "Girl Weeping over Her Dead Canary:"

> 'Connoisseurs, women, fops, pedants, wits, the ignorant and the foolish…(were) all of one mind about this painting…one sees nature, one shares the grief of the girl and

one wishes above all to console her. Several times I have passed whole hours in attentive contemplation so that I became drunk with a sweet and tender sadness.' (Schama 151)

Schama includes a reproduction of this painting, followed by an engraving from *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and a discussion of how Rousseau's novel contributed to this milieu, along with a depiction of the Rousseau theme-park with legends on the tour soliciting tears. The connection here is how the sentimental tears from Rousseau's novels and Greuze's paintings became revolutionary argument. Schama states that,

> The drastic cultural alteration represented by the first hot eruption of the Romantic sensibility is of more than literary importance. It meant the creation of a spoken and written manner that would become the standard voice of the Revolution, shared by both its victims and its most implacable prosecutors. The speeches of Mirabeau and Robespierre as well as the letters of Desmoulins and Mme. Roland and the orchestrated festivals of the Republic broadcast appeals to the soul, to tender humanity, Truth, Virtue, Nature and the idyll of family life. The virtues proclaimed in Greuze's paintings formed the moral basis of what the Revolution was to understand as Virtue. 'It is virtue that divines with the speed of instinct what will be conducive to the general advantage,' wrote Mercier in 1787. 'Reason with its insidious language can paint the most equivocal enterprise in captivating colors but the virtuous heart will never forget the interests of the humblest citizen.' (Schama 153)

Later, he will argue that during the Revolution public discourse became "saturated with Rousseau's rhetoric of virtue" (279). Mercier (above) makes reason suspicious and cites virtue as an instinct of nature that will ensure the justice of the coming revolution; many of its leaders will take this sentiment to heart. At the zenith of the Age of Reason, a tsunami of tears was washing

away its carefully determined principles like so much debris. Rousseau utilizes reason as it suits him in his *Discourses* and *The Social Contract* but his sensibility, i.e., sentimentalism, makes a far more powerful argument to his audience. Durant, in *Rousseau and Revolution*--the volume that follows *The Age of Voltaire*--wrote that Voltaire thought in ideas and wrote in epigrams; Rousseau saw in pictures and composed with sensations (Durant 170). As the current modern era would demonstrate, sensation trumps reason. Durant correctly identifies that

> It was something new that a man should so completely reveal himself as Rousseau had done through Saint-Preux and Julie; and there is nothing so interesting as a human soul, even partly or unconsciously bared to view…To be emotional, to express emotion and sentiment, became a fashion not only in France but in England and Germany. The classic mode of restraint, order, reason, and form began to fade away; the reign of the *philosophes* neared its end. After 1760, the eighteenth century belonged to Rousseau. (170)

Thus we are addressing a subtle but strong political undertone to a sentimental romance, and in many ways this section, where the lover's relationship is dissolved, could be considered to contain the crux of the argument. For all of the ideological factors and historical trends merging together in this period, it is astonishing to consider that "sensibility" was also an overwhelming political force. The Baron's violent separation of the lovers, the death of Julie's mother and the smallpox episode became the iconoclastic political center of the book. Rousseau was accomplishing far more than storytelling; an appeal to sensibility was defining the boundaries of good and evil in society, and compelling the reader to choose political sides. We see the power involved when modern politicians tell sentimental stories in response to debate questions.

Following the poignant scene of Julie's near death and her lover imbibing her sickness (from which he too recovers) Julie explains why her father has persuaded her to cooperate for his "honor," although force is clearly within his authority. Another engraving follows with the Baron entreating his daughter from his knees (287). It could not have been lost on the pre-revolutionary generation that the aristocracy was portrayed twice in the engravings kneeling before virtue,.[14] Yet the power structures have seemingly triumphed here. Julie's final letter begins with a summary of what their love has meant, and while explaining the reasons for her marriage to Wolmar, declaring her fidelity to her vows and relating her subsequent conversion to restored virtue, the voice of Rousseau refracts through her in one of the more subversive sections of the entire book.

For the first time in the book, Julie's letter (III, xviii) begins with the formal *vous* as the opening word addressing her "friend," as if to announce in polite language that convention has overcome communication in the relationship. She reminds Saint- Preux that he has been the keeper of the secrets of her heart and admonishes him to listen carefully and take "friendship's lengthy discourse into (his) breast" (*Julie* 279). Rousseau speaks to his kindred spirits with a reminder that youthful passion is usually crushed; the reality of the social order has imprisoned the natural wanderings of the heart. While this may seem a preposterous place for a political reading, indeed the justice of the social institution is questioned by their love-at-first-sight as she recalls, "I saw in your face the features of the soul mine required…if man's order had not perturbed nature's affinities" (280). The needs of the soul and the attraction of nature are suppressed by the works of man, and the soul must be denied its complement.

Julie distinguishes this love from mere sensual love that demands "possession," and admits that she had seen more handsome men without effect. Instead, theirs is a mystical union

[14] Engraving #2 portrayed Milord Edward kneeling repentant before Saint-Preux; see p. 137

where “the heart made itself heard” and “silence (was) eloquent” (280). Her “crime” was to give way to written language and open his first letter, and “all the rest was inevitable” (281). The lovers are doomed to fall because the emanations of the heart are strangled by social duty and repressed into passionate letters. Tonglin Lu, in her comparative study of French and Chinese novels of love, *Rose and Lotus: Narratives of Desire in France and China,* sees the passionate letter writing as sublimation:

> In *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse,* the sublimation of sexual desire is accomplished for the lovers by means of a process that seeks to substitute writing for the material object of passion, and thereby to distance them from the present experience either spatially or temporally. Thus, they can only achieve happiness together by reconstituting their experience in such a way that the present must inevitably seem a misfortune in comparison with the narrative image of the past. That image is superior to actual experience, because it is committed to writing and is therefore immutable, whereas the present is empirical and thus open to alteration. (Lu 10)

As Lu’s study suggests, the sexual sublimation in language needs to be considered. On the other hand, Rousseau is suspicious of language in its aid to social dissemblance, and he clearly moves his characters toward a transcendent silence that is more expressive than mere words. He had stated in his *Essay on the Origin of Languages* that even if love was related to the origin of the word, “Dissatisfied with speech, love disdains it, it has livelier ways of expressing itself;” he went on to argue that the ancients more effectively showed love with “mute eloquence” (*Origins* 248-9). Writing becomes somewhat like Plato’s imitation of an imitation, and thus more distant from the heart: “As men’s dealings get more entangled, as enlightenment spreads, language changes in character; it substitutes ideas for sentiments, it no longer speaks to the heart but to the

reason" (256). In fact, writing--with its emphasis on the conventional rules of grammar working like social rules on the human spirit-- ruins spontaneous expression: "Writing, which might be expected to fix language, is precisely what adulterates it; it changes not its words but its genius; it substitutes precision for expressiveness" (260). Rousseau links the developments of language with the rise of civilization, creating part of man's distance from nature. As he argued in his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, every adjective is an abstraction, forcing comparisons for such things as beauty or status, and making some more or less so than others. The characters of *Julie* are moving toward a perfect love that will not need secret letters or conversation, and will possess the pure transparency of heart to heart communication. The lovers are doomed to succumb to temptation because the emanations of the heart are suppressed by social duty and they are stifled into passionate love letters--the secret word that will out itself in sensuality.

Julie summarizes their relationship and shows where it went wrong. She makes it clear that her weakness was transformed into rebellion by the expectations of the patriarchy. The Baron's pledge of his daughter to a friend breaks the natural bond of pure hearts, and replaces it with a man of nobility "who had never loved anyone" (282). This ominous suggestion will not take the predictable disastrous direction, and Wolmar will in fact prove to be a worthy husband, if unemotional. Rousseau has other intentions for this Russian nobleman's notorious coldness and dispassionate eye, which we will address later. However, here the author is subverting the eighteenth-century conception of Nature with a redefinition of nature itself. Noble birth was supposed to be due to the very hand of God placing superior individuals in positions of power, an instance of divine action of nature that was beyond human machination. Rousseau juxtaposes a different nature and a contrasting divine power that speaks through the heart rather than the

blood it pumps. The social order in Rousseau's eyes is a mere supplement stemming from the pride of man.

As Parisian society corrupted the virtuous Saint-Preux, the inner turmoil of Julie anticipating the inevitable loveless marriage weakens her resolve to virtue's call: "The impossibility of finding happiness stirred flames it should have extinguished." In an echo of Caesar, she exclaims "I saw you, I was cured, and I was lost" (282). The resulting "first fruit" of their love is her pregnancy. Julie had maintained a slight hope that her pregnancy revealed the blessing of Heaven on their union. She resolves to announce it in the presence of the pastor, knowing the possibility existed that her father would kill her (283). The political suggestion is always present in Rousseau that the social order maintains its structure only through the violence of the nobility. Her father might violate nature to the extent of murder, as indeed he stated in his threatening letter to Saint-Preux (letter III, x). This danger is averted by her miscarriage, and Julie states that, "Heaven rejected plans conceived in crime," and that "love fulfilled by nature was…betrayed by destiny' (284). The translators of the Dartmouth edition insist that "crime" is the best cognate for *crime* in French, and not "sin," acknowledging the seeming awkwardness of the word in English (685, n.32). "Crime" connotes more of a transgression of the institutional code, rather than the inherent evil implied by "sin." Societal constraints have played on the "weakness" of the lovers, causing them to fall, but they never resort to "wickedness," which involves deliberation. The real criminal act has been the violent action of the Baron, protecting his heraldry and property by assaulting his daughter over her love for a commoner; her fall following the blow aborted her pregnancy (142-46). Of course, even the pregnancy is not clear until this point in the novel, and must be deduced from previous comments. The essential message is that the aristocracy became property holders through the violence of their ancestors,

from whom the eighteenth-century nobility descended by blood, and their continuance is preserved by bloody force.

This makes Julie's "crime" an ironic admission. Julie maintains that the only "honor" she retains is that of Saint-Preux, despite his fall in Paris, which part of the context of his virtue. His courageous confession, from "a heart so sincere…incapable of disguising an infidelity," discloses more value in honesty than fault for indiscretion. Of course, this also indicates the perpetual double-standard of the sexes, that a young man's passion, both for her and the prostitute, is forgivable; guilty remorse makes both of the lovers less culpable. As Starobinski maintains in the central premise of his book, concealment is the indication of wickedness for Rousseau, while transparency covers a multitude of sins.

In fact, Julie found herself in a conflicting position of honor, as her father, from his knees, reveals that he has pledged his "honor" in marrying her to Wolmar, the man who saved his life: "honor has spoken and in the blood you come from, that is always what decides" (288). A contradiction in honor is posed here, where Julie, who has followed the true honor of spiritual hearts must be forced to observe the false honor that vanquishes love with the artificial power of "blood." The implication is that aristocratic ancestry is antithetical to the bonds of nature, and the result is crime. Julie confesses that this internal war has led her to consider the possibility of adultery, marrying Wolmar but maintaining a liaison, as is fashionable in Paris. Although Julie and Saint-Preux had fallen to "weakness" they "still held virtue dear" and "Heaven and nature sanctioned the bonds they had formed." Now, this "flame so pure," and their "holy ardor" must be extinguished for the sake of public propriety (289-90). This reversal suggests that going against nature results in adultery, the real "crime" transpiring here, and perhaps the problem with her lover in Paris. However, Julie submits to the societal order and is unexpectedly transformed,

although this decision will eventually lead to her death. Ironically, then, the crime is not sex, but wrongful marriage. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* argues that in crimes against nature, the wages of sin is death.

Recalling the moment of her vows, Julie describes herself as experiencing a "*revolution"* in the traditional sense of the word, a complete turning around (686, n.47). In a miraculous, mystical experience that suggests the revelation of a saint, she declares, "It was as if an unknown power repaired all at once the disorder of my affections and re-established them in accordance with the law of duty and nature" (292). Stewart and Vache note that this represents a change in language for Julie, now uniting duty and nature, which were formerly in opposition, and producing "a new skeptical discourse" as well as a new vocabulary of nature, family, and order in place of the language of passion and ecstasy (686, n.48,50 and 52). This seeming turn has caused some critics, like Jeanne Fuchs in *Pursuit of Virtue: A Study of Order in 'La Nouvelle Héloïse,'* to equate Julie's transformation with the establishment of order. Fuchs argues that virtue and happiness exist only with order (11). However, not only is this order uncharacteristic of the iconoclastic Jean-Jacques, but we have reason to question whether this change constitutes a positive direction.

We must note that, at the end of *Julie* in her last letter to Saint-Preux written from her deathbed, she repudiates all that follows from this point in the book as delusion, including her change of character; in that letter she will state that she has "lived long enough for virtue and happiness" (609,) which have proved unsatisfactory. There will only be a few more letters in the remainder of the book between the "friends," as the former "lovers" are now called, and following Julie's account of her marriage and subsequent changes, no further contact for eight years. The only significant epistle between them will be Julie's final note to Saint-Preux from her

deathbed, which is enclosed in a narrative of her last days by Wolmar. We will address the meaning of her death in Chapter Six, but we should consider part of her final message as a subversion of the "conversion" experience she describes in Part III. In her last letter, she states that God had given her a necessary delusion to strengthen her when she was alive:

> I have long deluded myself. That delusion for me was salutary; it collapses at the moment when I no longer need it. You have believed I was cured, and I thought I was. Let us give thanks to him who made this error last for as long as it was useful; who knows whether seeing myself so near the abyss, I would not have been drawn into it?…I have done what duty required; virtue remains to me without spot. (608-9)

In her dying hours, when the heart no longer dissembles, she makes her own "confession without shame" that her posture of confidence as a noble wife expressed in Part III was merely a simulacrum of change. Thus upon a second reading, we need to consider that these assertions will be undermined by another double-voice intention of the author which subverts everything she is saying. Though "Heaven and nature sanctioned the bonds they had formed" (290), the forced submission to duty keeps them apart and eventually destroys them. The polemic beneath this letter is that society is in opposition to God and the natural realm, and that this is the fate of all "sensible," sensitive souls in a corrupted world. Rousseau accepts the existing order as inevitable, calling for "beautiful souls" to transcend conformity to the world. This sentiment hardly made him revolutionary; but it was more a way of being in the world than political action. Yet in the political mind of followers like Robespierre, the social order reduces to a struggle between virtue and vice, good and evil, and demands that revolutionary *change* must happen. Indeed, as Julie puts it in the letter following her marriage, "How can the appeal of virtue in those who have once known it fail to disgust them forever with vice?" (290)

Rousseau is clear that the sexual fidelity of a married woman is a boundary that should not be crossed. The "crime" Julie denounces is her thought of adultery before her marriage to the elderly Wolmar, which she now renounces. Nevertheless, she claims that the first thought she had after becoming another man's wife was of Saint-Preux. As evidence of the divine intervention in her psyche, she realizes that she still loves the young man in a virtuous way, with no pangs of conscience: "I knew from that moment that I was really changed. What a torrent of pure joy then flooded my soul!....Sweet and consoling virtue, I begin [my new life] for thee" (292-3). Here is an example of the way Rousseau dialogizes virtue in multiple contexts. In the pure heart, it is no crime to be faithful to one's true love while marrying another, as long as the external crime of adultery is excluded. For that matter, in his own moment of conversion to the "intoxication with virtue" that stimulated the writing of Julie, Rousseau recounts that he began abstaining from sexual relations with his mistress, Thérèse, even as he maintained a frenzied but chaste infatuation for Sophie d'Houdetot, wife of one man and mistress of still another. This classical division of flesh and spirit places sexuality in this world, but the heart as dwelling in a higher consciousness. Starobinski describes this as the author's "bipolar" thinking, as voiced through Julie:

> What I want to emphasize is the fundamental antithesis that underlies this dialectic. Rousseau was not fond of the dialectical mode--quite the contrary. He was forced to use the dialectic because the desires he ascribes to his characters cannot be satisfied simultaneously. Yet simultaneous gratification is precisely what Rousseau wants: he wants to enjoy physical pleasure along with an exalted sense of virtue…As Julie says, 'innocence and love were equally necessary to me,' but she knows that she cannot 'have both together.' On the higher plane of existence she finally attains, however, she can

> combine the two and savor both pleasures at once. To reconcile the irreconcilable Rousseau had to imagine intermediate stages, had to work for transcendence and imagine a process of *becomin*g. (Starobinski 87)

Starobinski sees the synthesis of this problem in the symbols of the harvest feast in Book V, where all of the characters of the book live in perfect unity and transparency. Still, we will see that ultimately the utopian environment of Clarens is not enough, and Julie reveals that she can no longer sustain her illusions. I am arguing that the "higher plane" and "transcendence" that Starobinski identifies do not need reconciliation in this world, and by "dialogizing" these concepts, as opposed to relying on dialectic, Rousseau is initiating the thinking of romanticism that disdains logical resolution.

Julie proceeds in the analysis of her conversion, much of which she will later renounce as self-deception. Although God has brought her a genuine spiritual experience that will prove true, the divine hand has also allowed her an illusion so that she can preserve her virtue intact in view of a heavenly reunion with her lover. She poses a series of rhetorical questions of what "lifts the veil of error" and reveals to her the "horror of the crime that had tempted her." The answer to these questions comes from "the secret voice that had never ceased to murmur in the depths of my heart" (294). The appearance of truth that seems to overlie Julie's born-again perception at first supports, in fact, a discourse of "order," as Fuchs has suggested, but her speech seems to be the generalization of dogmatic maxims that Rousseau abhors:

> I will be faithful, because that is the first duty which binds the family to all of society. I will be chaste, because that is the first virtue which nurtures all of the others. I will everything (sic) that belongs to the order of nature thou hast established, and to the rules

> of reason thou gavest me…From the consideration of order I derive the beauty of virtue, and its goodness from the common utility. (294-5)

The ordered household at Clarens, with its happy, useful servants, practical domestic economy, and natural education could be considered the outcome of this new manner of thinking. The question will be whether this will continue to stand as a resolution in the book, since it seems to reinstate the mainstream thinking of the eighteenth century, that the order of nature was the divine plan for the institutions of man, revealed through the structures of reason; this would be the thesis to romanticism's antithesis. Fuchs argues that happiness necessarily derives from order, but the fact that Julie does not find true happiness in the structure of the family, and welcomes death, recanting the well-ordered harmony of her domestic tranquility as lacking something.

We will examine more of Julie's theology in the last chapter, as she reveals it in later books. However, it is important to note here that Rousseau is dialoging within this religious statement the real priority of his own perspective, the infallible voice of nature in the heart, which is something quite different than "order." Julie asserts the contrast between that which is external and internal in the context of what is *eternal*. This encompasses both the central conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism, as well as the core question of any individual who aspires to spirituality: the tension between "inner" and "outer" realities. She declares that previously she had always maintained some form of spirituality, but states that it would be better to have no religion at all than one which is "external and affected" and does not proceed from the heart (294). She states Rousseau's most essential theological notion and the source of his conflict with Catholic original sin: "I felt I was born good" (ibid.). Yet she finds herself in the classic conflict between inner being and outward behavior that besets all seekers of spirituality--the

dichotomy between “the gospel” and “the world, “faith” and “works,” maxims for “believing” against those for “acting,” “Church” and “home” (ibid.). Nevertheless, a renewed recognition of the “inner principle” of the heart now brings her to have contempt for the external dogmas “which have so ill guided me.” But how is she to preserve this “inner effigy which among perceptible beings has no model to which it compared,” since every century has its desires and delusions that lead the individual astray? “Worship the Eternal Being, my wise and worthy friend,” she admonishes him, and everything of “appearance” will be dispersed (295). It is the external that makes passions disfigure the heart and which provides the temptations that result in vanity. This Eternal Being reveals his image in the true self and restores us from that which has been externally corrupted:

> It is (the Eternal Being), it is his inalterable substance that is the true model of perfections an image of which we each bear within us. However our passions may disfigure it, all its features associated with infinite essence always reappear before reason and help it re-establish whatever portion has been distorted by imposture and error. These distinctions seem easy to me; it takes nothing but common sense to make them. Whatever one cannot separate from the idea of that essence is God; all the rest the work of men…A heart imbued with these sublime truths resists the petty passions of men. (295)

Intuition is the infallible guide to truth. The ambiguity of this approach is not the point, or shall we say, very much the point. The model of virtue we will see in the former “lovers” will be sustained as an example that this philosophy works its truths into a genuinely changed heart, and it is specifically neither Protestant nor Catholic, nor a synthesis of the two.

As Shklar argues, Rousseau never showed that much real interest in religion, and essays like his defense of God concerning the Lisbon earthquake were written more out of opposition to

Voltaire than to develop a real theology (Shklar 114). Jean-Jacques was skeptical about organized religion and his real spiritual pilgrimage was a quest for self. Rather than asserting or reinterpreting doctrine, his own path was an individual, inner work, independent of any outward ritual (ibid. 114-18). We have to note that Rousseau shows here another foreshadowing of modern spirituality, where even conservative Christianity elevates a personal experience with God over denominations and doctrine. This novel is evangelism for the masses, elaborated through the mouths of sympathetic characters; later it would be proclaimed though revolutionary leaders like Robespierre, who saw his own inner truth before applying it publicly. But it does not follow that this inner voice will speak collectively, organizing individuals into a higher order. Rousseau will be one of the first to argue that nature works in a sublime wildness that does not submit to man's notion of regularity. The infallible inner voice of the divine speaking through the individual heart will reign supreme over the external machinations of man's order. Toward the end of this letter, Julies states that" I listen to my conscience in secret; it makes me no reproach, and never does it mislead a soul that consults it sincerely" (300). This subject is addressed far more extensively by the notorious Savoyard Vicar in *Emile,* which was banned for such assertions. The laconic, under-spoken theology of *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* couched in a highly emotional and dramatic plotline of unfulfilled lovers, carried the message far more effectively and widely to the eighteenth century. Yet inevitably we are still asking the question: Are these lovers going to eventually come together?

Rousseau will dialogue the answer to that problem for the remainder of the book, and do a substantial amount of preaching on many subjects while he holds us in suspense. He seems to want to make it clear that though Julie may use the heart as a guide to virtue, it will keep her away from adultery. She includes a rather lengthy diatribe against those "vain sophisms of

reason" which would argue that secret liaisons can be rationalized as long as no one gets hurt, or becomes aware (295). The intended target of this section is curious, because as the translators note, the sheer brazenness of such assertions could never be published, though perhaps it reflects popular sentiments (686-7, n.56). Yet Rousseau is contrasting Julie with those married Parisians who strictly maintain their girls in virginity until marriage and then wink at extramarital affairs. Julie exhorts Saint-Preux to be "the lover of my soul," as indeed they will remain eternally. The author seems to suggest that as long as the physical act of adultery is excluded, virtue remains intact, even as it has survived their earlier indiscretions. He must be aware of the well-known words of Jesus, who called looking upon a woman with desire as adultery of the heart.[15] Rousseau's view of what can transpire in the pure heart is a considerable reinterpretation of this maxim. We will see that Julie does not need to "love" her husband as she "loves" Saint-Preux, and Wolmar will know this. In our own more promiscuous age, sometimes an affair may be excused because a guilty party "never loved" a paramour. Perhaps Rousseau inadvertently marks the beginning of turning illicit *love* into the greater fault.

Saint-Preux's woeful final response will emphasize the injustice of the tragic ending of their love. His mourning projects the expected remorse, but more seriously conveys the political indictment of the patriarchal society that alienates them:

> Before your father's tyranny, Heaven and nature had united us with each other. By engaging yourself otherwise you have committed a crime that love nor perhaps honor cannot forgive, and it is for me alone to claim the property that Monsieur de Wolmar has stolen from me. (302)

[15] "Ye heard that it was said: Thou shall not commit adultery. But I tell you that everyone seeing a woman with a view to desire [her] already committed adultery with her in the heart of him." (Matt. 5:27, 28; transliteration of the Greek, *The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English).*

Again, his ineligibility primarily results from his low birth, and yet we are clear that pedigree could be overlooked with enough "fortune." An action committed against God and nature creates an inverted morality where a father becomes a tyrant, marriage becomes a crime, and a noble husband becomes illegitimate. The empathetic power of the novel makes a savage indictment of the unnatural social order, with true virtue as its victim. Shklar calls Rousseau "a connoisseur of victimhood" and his voice is one crying out to all other "victims" to identify with him as the "universal man;" certainly this is another foreshadowing of modern thinking, where victimhood is a personal identity (Shklar xvi). Saint-Preux represents man destroyed by society as Rousseau himself was "destroyed" by persecution (136). In a similar manner, as has been noted, the self-pity of the victim was a theme in the Revolution, and Rousseau was invoked by condemned and executioner alike. Although Julie labors under the delusion that she has done the right thing, nature will take its course from being thwarted and bring on her death.

Julie's final reply describes how her new husband is perfectly suited to her, and that her "happiness wants nothing." We cannot say the portrayal of Wolmar is ironic, or really even subverted, and as his character emerges we find him likable, talented and a wise and competent husband for Julie in every respect except one. In fact, we can regard Wolmar as somewhat of a trope of reason, dispassionately arranging the world in a logical fashion, but lacking the "sensibility" of heart that loves, and embraces the divine. At this point in the novel, we will ask whether his "coldness of disposition," and his loving "only as much as reason allows" is a desirable fit for the young heroine. The Monsieur is unemotional, and we cannot help but compare his cool devotion to the ecstatic passion of the young lovers who have embraced the wildness of nature and love of the divine; in a similar manner, the decaying age of reason gave way to the youth of romanticism. Rousseau has a place for reason in his world view, and it is

primarily to guide the passions in the proper direction. Ultimately, Wolmar represents the senescence of the age of reason as a solution to the human dilemma. Exactly at the moment that objective rationalism and science had begun to triumph and mass printing allowed the wide dissemination of knowledge, print gave birth to the novel, which raised the specter of subjectivity and feeling, a haunting that would follow reason into the age of existentialism.

We sense a double-voiced intention as Julie argues that love and happiness in marriage do not necessarily exist together. Again, in a clear change of voice that comes at the moment of her vows, she lacks the sentiment and ecstasy that marked her tone so far. She blandly argues that love is really a hindrance to the duty of marriage. Instead, she has found in her union "a tender attachment" which is "not exactly love" but "nonetheless sweet" and more lasting than the ephemera of love (306). She points out the hazards of love: the jealousy and demands, the weariness of long term passion, the fading of emotion from age, and the potential conflicts of two sensitive souls such as herself and Saint-Preux. In short, she presents a common sense reality about marriage that might even be regarded as wisdom, except that it is uncharacteristic of Rousseau's idealism, and conveys so much resignation that one must regard it with suspicion. In fact, as the fictional editor notes, when she states that she has every cause for being happy, apparently "she had not yet discovered the fatal secret" that will torment her, and which remains a dramatic tension in the next couple of parts before it is revealed.

She closes with a brutally frank declaration that knowing what she knows now, if she could do it all over again with free choice, she would choose Wolmar, and further insists that he is her one and only husband, even if his death precedes hers: "If he was not fortunate enough to find a chaste maiden, at least he will leave behind a chaste widow. You know me too well to believe that, having once made you this declaration, I am the kind of woman who could ever

retract it" (308). This proclamation goes beyond societal expectations, and is not done in the sense of never loving another. Rousseau included an editor's note in several subsequent editions of *Julie,* later removed, that underscores his intention here:

> If we wish to become good let us try to do away with relations that keep us from doing so, there is no other way…From this moment Julie despite the love she still retains places her senses on the side of virtue; she forces herself, so to speak, to love Wolmar as her sole spouse…Either I know nothing of the human heart, or the triumph of virtue in all the rest of Julie's life, and the sincere and constant attachment she holds to the end for her husband, depend on this much criticized resolution. (688-9, n.77)

The continuing danger that remains for her also makes her insist that they will henceforward cease all communication (309), and they are to be parted for the following eight years. Then they will in fact be thrown together again with Wolmar's blessing, and even left alone together at Clarens in his final "test" of their virtue. Whatever the strength of Julie's character, she does not retain the willpower to resist love and thus is taken by Heaven to "prevent calamities" (608). Virtue, to Rousseau, can still retain its touching weakness. The certain declaration of Julie's morality still leaves open the possibility of weakness, and though she must die to preserve virtue, something transcendent remains beyond this world. The societal structure is deadly to those who would have both virtue and a sensible heart. If society will not approve of the union of hearts by nature and divine essence, then only alienation and death remain as the door to an eternal bond of the soul.

At the close of Julie's farewell letter, the novel has an interlude of two years, and then takes up an exchange between Saint-Preux and Milord Edward, regarding the nature of virtuous suicide to free the soul from an unbearable world. This discussion foreshadows Julie's death, and

we will examine its meaning below. Edward dissuades Saint-Preux from this course and sends him off to travel the world for an interval of another six years. For now, suicide is an ominous portent that sets up a tension about the fate of the lovers-turned-friends throughout the second half of the novel. Rousseau will utilize the next two parts to cover the full range of his philosophy, some of which he will expand during this period of his life into his other works. We will see that despite the apparent blissful perfection of Clarens, where Julie has it all--virtue, happiness, domestic prosperity and serenity *plus* the complete transparency of beautiful souls with her friends--she still prefers to move on to eternal rest from the burdens of this world.

CHAPTER FIVE

APPLIED VIRTUE

Critics have often noted the same issue that N. addresses in the second Preface, that *Julie* appears to be "two different books" (10-12). For N., the first book "scandalizes" while the second books edifies. For modern critics, the problem is more related to the unity of the book as a whole, especially given the lengthy, preachy digressions among half as many letters in Parts IV-VI over the same number of pages as the first part. We can take R. at face value in the Preface when he says that he means to entice readers before lecturing them, and uses an image like Mary Poppin's "spoonful of sugar" that makes the bitter medicine "go down." He states that he wants to portray the growth of the characters, who are mere children in the beginning. The tantalizing tension of a potential fall remains in the utopian garden of Clarens in the middle parts, and the "friends"--despite their proclaimed virtue--edge closer to each other until the end. However, the essays that dominate the second half of the book have little direct relevance to the plot. Although the novel does not have unity in the sense that we have come to expect of the genre, for Rousseau it was still an experimental form. While Fielding established the prototype for unity in the novel, consciously modeling the epic even in his picaresque road novels, Rousseau's unity is always his own psyche, and the discordance in his novel is that which is present in the author. The author is condensing his complete works in the novel, but a seeming digression is always a part of the whole for him. *Emile,* which is hinted at in the second half of *Julie,* will develop a theoretical heaviness around the thinnest of plots, and will prove far less readable to his audience, excepting the censors. Yet the digressions cover important themes in

Julie and contain the same underlying political radicalism, spiritual iconoclasm, and revisionist morality of the first half. Parts IV-VI have received more attention from political critics because of their overt essay format, and so we will examine them less closely than the subtle politics of the first part of the book. Rousseau's self-supporting agronomics at Clarens, his educational theories, and his discussion of authentic spirituality conform more obviously with his other non-fiction works, and many commentators have applied these arguments at will in support of various approaches to Rousseau. We will examine some of these points briefly as they illuminate the subversive romance of the protagonists in their progression toward a tragic destiny.

Part IV begins eight years after the marriage, with Julie and Claire corresponding like wise old matrons, even though they are both only twenty-eight. Both have children and Claire's husband has died; hearing nothing of Saint-Preux, Julie believes him to be deceased from his broken heart. Julie writes of the declining powers and the progressive losses in the aging process; only the "sensible heart" retains the strength to gather its "natural warmth" toward what remains and one should choose to live for the best (327). Julie pleads with Claire to live with her so that they might shed exquisite tears together, as in the youth of their memories (331, 335).

Julie remains in anguish about the "awful secret" of her premarital loss of virginity and miscarriage, and the kindness of her husband is all the more tormenting, knowing that she must eventually tell him the truth. She imagines that honesty will brutalize her children as "sad victims" of the conflict "between a father fired with righteous indignation, ridden with jealousy, and a miserable and criminal mother, constantly bathed in tears" (329). Even Saint-Preux, in his final letter, had cautioned her about the indiscretion of being too honest, which would be an excessive punishment even for his enemy (303). Nevertheless, Julie's heart is compelled into absolute confession and transparency of the soul. Rousseau is accomplishing several things with

this extended repentance, although we will find out that the all-seeing Wolmar already knew instinctively about her fall and has taken it in stride. First, the author appeals to the forgiveness of the reader by showing Julie's articulate remorse, since human nature will grant an excuse if the perpetrator suffers enough and wallows sufficiently in guilt. The genre will carry its share of fallen women, and Rousseau pushes the edge for eighteenth-century readers, but like for the romantic Hawthorne's tormented Hester Prynne, the audience will sympathize with a female character that agonizes and mortifies herself. Secondly, honesty brings a bond of trust in relationships. Starobinski argues that this complete transparency between friends becomes a basis for the perfect society, as in *The Social Contract*:

> …purity and innocence are restored because people are willing to place absolute trust in one another. The total alienation that makes each person open and visible to all the others ultimately gives them the *right* to exist as autonomous and free human beings, ending their solitude and servitude. Recognition of others justifies and sustains the life of each individual. Everyone watches everyone else; together these separate individuals constitute a social body. Thus Julie sees her friends as part of herself. (Starobinski 85)

Rousseau believes in confession, however imperfectly he accomplished it in his book of that name, or the way it is manifested incompletely with these characters. He presages our modern age, where honesty and acceptance have become tools for the sickness of secrets in addictions, resentments, personality disorders and conflicts. Public confession replaces the comfort of the priest. Shklar claims Rousseau's "enduring originality is due to his psychology," and his ability to diagnose the diseases of modern society (Shklar 1). Though a truism of all modern self-help psychology, living with honesty can bring a transformative healing process. In a bold insight for the eighteenth century, Julie does not suffer for her honesty, and is both released from her guilt

and actually enabled to reunite with Saint-Preux as a friend. Of this transparency, we shall have more to say; Julie is still keeping another "secret" that she does not confess.

Rousseau continues the dialogue of virginity and virtue as a subversion of expectations. We still maintain some notion of the mythical status of female virginity in the modern West, although we see that it remains of primary importance in Islamic, East Asian, and heavily Catholic areas of the world. Needless to say, the double-standard with men continues today, as it was present in eighteenth-century France. Saint-Preux and Lord Bomston could dabble with prostitutes with unsullied "virtue." As Saint-Preux said of the morals of Paris, virginity was indispensable for marriage, but marriage vows were a license for licentiousness; men were as much obsessed with conquering a virgin as they were with possessing one in marriage. Rousseau keeps reminding us of Julie's virtue, and despite her lack of virginity at her nuptials, we can forget her lapses. We can only conclude that Rousseau subtly continues this topic as a trope of the false structures of civilization, contrasting them to the higher consciousness of the heart. "Opinion" has triumphed, and although Julie blames herself for the imagined death of the young man, his fate is really that of nature in a cruel world:

> Thus dies out all that shines for a moment on earth. The only thing lacking for the torments of my conscience was the need to blame myself for the death of an honorable man. Ah my dear! What a soul was his!….what love was his love!…he deserved to live…he must have laid before the sovereign judge a soul that was weak, but sound and loving virtue. (331)

At least Saint-Preux faces Judgment armed with virtue; however, he will soon reappear and the real judgment will be against society itself for destroying the lovers, the final outcome of the book. Meanwhile, Claire reminds her friend of her remaining eternal virtue, which reaches to

"the bottom of (Julie's) soul" (334). Her "weakness" seems like a virtue to Claire: "My Julie, you are born to reign. Your empire is the most absolute I know. It extends even to the will of others…Is it possible to see you for long without feeling one's soul filled with the charms of virtue?"(336). Julie's heart, despite excusable weakness, is an "absolute." Now, we might argue that Rousseau's assertion is a subversion of the morality of the day, that is, of the absolute that is virginity. But he has shown elsewhere that the morals of society are so contaminated, everything has become a shadow of appearance, and he is reaching for a higher absolute. Indeed Wolmar, already knowing the truth of her past, will cherish her all the more for her confession, knowing the shame it costs her (354). Rousseau beckons to a higher law than society's self-deceived moral fictions.

Saint-Preux makes his return from a world tour in the navy, and writes a letter to Claire. Although the young man appears to have been through many adventures and life-threatening experiences, Rousseau avoids description of dramatic action in the book and sums up his six-year round-the-world travels in fewer words than Julie's previous letter, which agonized over her guilt. The action, the themes, plot and image are the interior domain of the psyche for Rousseau, and he is little interested in anything else.

The returning sailor does make some powerful remarks about his travels that fit significantly into the unfolding themes of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*: the entire earth is given over to the corruption of civilization, and there is shame in being a man. With shocking understatement, he mentions that he was the only one of his original squadron to return alive. He comments on the empires of colonialism, and how the "sorry remnants" of once proud inhabitants "burdened with fetters, ignominy, and miseries in the midst of their precious metals, reproach Heaven in tears for the treasures it showered upon them." (339). We have to note that Rousseau was

prescient in seeing this oppression of the natives in the New World at a time when colonialism was more commonly viewed as bringing sweeetness and light to the savages. He has seen peaceful cities leveled, the "image of hell" in war, and vast countries which seemed to have a destiny only to "cover the earth with herds of slaves." He has seen legendary nations like China consisting of an elite minority enslaving the masses:

> Learned, craven, hypocritical, and devious; speaking much without saying anything, full of wit without a bit of genius, abounding in signs and sterile in ideas; polite, fawning, clever, sly and knavish; it places all duties in protocols, all morality in grimaces, and knows no other kindness than salutations and bows. (340)

In other words, the exotic kingdoms of the earth are a lot like Europe. The central premise of Rousseau's essays, which first brought him fame, concern the nobility of man in the primeval state, corrupted by the advance of civilization; Saint-Preux's letters describe a few "desert" islands where virtue remains as a "sanctuary to innocence and persecuted love" like his own, but these natives, like him, have been driven from civilization (339). Yet these isolated enclaves are being swiftly invaded by civilized societies in order to take the inhabitants from a state of needing nothing to "an abyss of new needs." With a view to man's progress across the face of the earth, he finds nothing but shame, and in short, "I rued being a man" (340). Of more significance to Saint-Preux is that in the entire world he has seen no one like Julie d'Étange. The image of her virtue, held closely in his heart, has "tamed" him, and he hesitantly suggests he would like to see Julie and show her his virtue.

The happy reunion of the lovers--now "friends"--soon follows after Wolmar sends an invitation, indicating not only that Julie has confessed the full nature of her past, but she has convinced him that Saint-Preux is "worthy of being loved by her" and should pay them a visit

(342). The young man's letter to Bomston recounts the trepidation and tear-drenched atmosphere of his arrival. He is disquieted to find that Wolmar is a man he both likes and admires, and who even dismisses the polite formalities of Madame and Monsieur, proclaiming, "Decorum …is merely the mask of vice, where virtue reigns" (350). Indeed, Wolmar has established an environment for everything to be in the open at Clarens. Saint-Preux, upon seeing Julie with her husband and children, perceives her "materfamilias" status, and believes he is cured of his passions; he becomes deeply committed to a new platonic friendship. Nevertheless, an erotic tension is maintained which informs the convivial surroundings. Another powerful engraving shows the meeting of the young man with Wolmar, entitled "The confidence of beautiful souls." This is a key concept for the book, mentioned by N. in the Preface, and as the editors note, a "kind of voice-over from some external narrator" (724). Rousseau's "legend," the instructions on the engraving, underscores Wolmar's "confidence in the virtue" of the young friends, and the face of Julie radiates with "the purity of her soul."(624-5). Again, the author utilizes this visual aid to instruct the reader how "sensibility" should perceive it; such pictures were intended to foster meditations.

The question remains how much Saint-Preux really has "changed" from his hard knocks in the world during the time of his absence. Julie recounts to Claire that he has matured beyond his former "servile and base countenance" and slavish submissiveness. Moreover, although he has developed an attractive self-confidence and less "doctrinaire" manner (351-2), we cannot say that we can see a particular change in his disposition, apart from an apparent strength to maintain his virtue. From the drama and trauma of his worldly experiences, we would expect a far different and hardened man. But Rousseau is little experienced in real character development and remained in perpetual adolescence himself. The discourse shifts somewhat, and Saint-Preux

revels in his virtue, but he will still return to the exquisite agony of separation and ecstatic hyperbole at being in the presence of Julie. The voice is still that of the same Rousseau. Although it is clear that the eighteenth-century audience considered *Julie* a novel of emotional "realism," the author is articulating the imagined passions of the heart, and in reality is *creating* a new consciousness of reality in the psyche. Manhood gushes tears and sentimentality as an indication of the feeling heart.

The metaphor of smallpox appears again with an underscoring that clearly suggests a significance to the image, recalling the erotic "inoculation of love" when Saint-Preux secretly entered Julie's bedroom and shared her disease, earning his name.[16] While the young man has worried over what the pox might have done to her face, Julie retains only slight traces of scarring, which adds subtly to her beauty in the way such things sometimes work. Saint-Preux, however, shows more severe scarring, which both pains and fascinates Julie (352). Claire warns her about this attention saying, "never did love conceive such a dangerous cosmetic" (357). This highly original metaphor of love is a constant reminder of his selfless devotion and the damage to his life caused by their unnatural separation; Julie has shown herself weakened by pity in the past. The image artfully suggests a connection of their bodies through their faces, and the scars of their past.

The principle topic of this section concerns virtue, which is repeated throughout this account of their reunion by all the characters; Claire suggests the scars are there to exercise Julie's virtue (357). Julie suggests Saint-Preux loves her most on the earth, "except for virtue" (352). Wolmar allows this meeting because of the virtue of both of them, and Saint-Preux states that "celestial" virtue radiates from Julie's mere glance (347). Although entire books have been

[16] The name "Saint Preux" appears first here (342) and appears only once more, in Wolmar's final letter.

written about Rousseau's idea of virtue,[17] complete definitions are tedious and beside the point; "virtue" is dialogized ambiguously throughout as an alien term being redefined here in new contexts. The idea of an older man inviting a reunion of his young wife with her former lover was appalling for the eighteenth century, and would be injudicious even today; he is soon to leave them alone together for a "test." We are told about all of the "virtue" present here, but it is nothing like the common virtue of the day. Rousseau has in mind a transcendent virtue that speaks to a different world than the conventions of chastity for women and manliness for men.

While the tension between virtue and erotic desire continues through the later books of *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* extensive digressions begin on a range of subjects extending through economics, social theory, and education. In this chapter, we will follow these treatises across Parts IV and V to examine the function of such topics as they discuss the ideals of the way the sensible and virtuous soul interacts with the real world. The Wolmars utilize wealth and resources in a manner that accords with the "state of Nature," as much as is possible in a civilized world. Additionally, this section concentrates on Rousseau's insights into human psychology, as applied to parenting, educating children, and relationships with servants and peasant villagers. Although these discussions contain a certain pragmatic attractiveness about how to live in the world, the primary function is the revelation of Julie's character, beyond the love and honesty of her soul, and to show the kingdom of virtue in practical application to everyday life. These later parts also develop the growing drama between the two former lovers and their relationship to the elderly husband, as well as the crucial view of spirituality and a relationship with the "Supreme Being," culminating in the final scenes of Julie's death. We will follow the developments of those concepts in the next chapter.

[17] See Delaney, Fuchs, Reisert, and Hall.

The tenth letter in Part IV concerns the domestic economy at Clarens and the way that servants are cultivated and manipulated toward an idealistic utopian role as part of an extended family. We can little imagine today the intimate place that domestics occupied in every facet of life for the aristocracy: present everywhere from the chamber pot to private conversations (and sometimes, in the room during sexual intercourse), servants were silent but potentially dangerous witnesses and participants in everyday life. Yet perhaps it was their dehumanization that permitted this intimacy. Rousseau places the servants at Clarens under a somewhat benevolent absolutism, but he clearly conveys a shrewd sense of human psychological motivation that reaches deeper than domestic management theory. Rousseau was criticized for the condescension and elitism of this section and its obvious contradiction of the egalitarian *Social Contract*. He nonetheless attempts to deal with the problem of caring for the peasants, raised in generational poverty and ignorance; the aristocracy could not picture them as independently functioning equals. Again, the perspective is inherently political, and Rousseau states that "In a Republic citizens are restrained by morals, principles, virtue: but how can domestics, mercenaries, be contained other than by constraint and coercion?" (373). The Clarens' answer to this is manipulation under a veil of self-interest or pleasure, but the implication is that the lower classes will never seek virtue on their own without enlightened direction. Rousseau is not outlining a theory of the state here, but rather a way that benevolent wealth could be voluntarily shared for the care of simple folk. Yet revolutionaries like Robespierre clearly read this as an enlightened totalitarianism, with virtuous leaders controlling the people for their own good.

The sensible and modest management of Wolmar's estate contrasts with the world as it is: not only was domestic service commonly an engine of misery and oppression of servants, but it was also an inefficient and malicious burden for the masters. Saint-Preux, and no doubt

Rousseau, sees Clarens as "a society after my heart." He exclaims, "what a lovely and moving spectacle is a simple and well-regulated house where order, peace, and innocence reign; where is assembled without pretension, without ostentation, everything that corresponds to man's veritable destination!" (363). This heaven-on-earth begins with the taste of the masters, who disdain everything that serves as show for only that which is useful. Every convenience of the city can be found at Clarens, but every item has a practical purpose. It is not a house to be "seen," but one to be "lived in" (363). Ornamental trees are replaced by fruit trees, hunting meadows turned into massive vineyards, and drainage converted into irrigation. Here it has to be added that Rousseau displays his ignorance of real farming, claiming that leaving fields fallow causes them to "lose their fertility," and so they are cultivated continuously (364). The pastoral is completed by farm animals ranging around the house, as do the happy laborers, coming and going; this practice, any farmer can attest, does not work with gardens.

The management of Clarens could almost be seen to anticipate a modern motivational business plan: servants are given pay incentives and bonuses for production; a strategy of teamwork is used in all efforts; workers dutifully fulfill their roles and encourage others; all are given a feeling of "owning" part of the corporate endeavor and have a personal interest in success as part of a "family" business. The work environment at Google was prophesized at Clarens, with sports and games on the premises for breaks and a healthy provision of food and drink on site. Regular social activities, childcare, and religious instruction are available, and some of the recreation serves for making soldiers for the fatherland. In general, the Clarens plan must have struck the contemporary audience as enlightened and productive. This creative thinking displays the fruits of virtue, resulting in social justice. We have become accustomed to dismissing dreams of social paradises, and know that these utopian settings don't even work for

hippies. Rousseau is posting a lyrical vision well in advance of those Marxist heavens that will captivate and disillusion future generations. For the eighteenth century, this seemed like a workable program, and virtue was the motivating force.

Nevertheless, a curious feature of Rousseau's thought, also present in his other works, is his strong belief in the segregation of the sexes. At Clarens, circumstances are manipulated such that male and female servants are steered into separate pursuits "to forestall a dangerous intimacy" and rarely have contact, apart from highly mediated public events where young people can meet together. Saint-Preux's general assertion is that men and women have completely different interests anyhow, and even require different foods (372). More than anything else, his persistence in this belief has aroused the ire of feminists suggesting a repression of women as a source of disorder and moral degeneration. Indeed, he has previously mentioned the free mingling of the sexes in Paris as a factor in immorality, as well as a gender blender of roles. In contradiction, the protagonists of the novel are mostly in mixed company, often alone--albeit with tenuous results. Rousseau himself, as he recounts in *The Confessions,* appears to have preferred the company of women, *especially* alone, and seems to have gotten along better with them than with men. It may be that he believes that a virtuous elite can handle this temptation. Saint-Preux is allowed once in the "Gynaeceum" at Clarens, which is forbidden to men, including Wolmar (370). In fact, the young man seems to have an unusually feminine character for a heroic protagonist. Rosanne Kennedy argues in her 2012 book, *Rousseau In Drag,* that Rousseau generally destabilizes gender roles in his works with "examples of 'perverse' identifications and inversion of roles" in his depictions as well as in his own life (2ff), and argues for this androgynous element within *Julie*. In this discussion of servants, Rousseau invokes the idealistic example of Sparta, a culture often glorified in his works, which institutionalized

segregation of the sexes. Either we see this as a contradiction of his own principles, which is not uncharacteristic for Rousseau, or we must consider that he is dialoging this segregation and platonic intimacy of the sexes as an ideal environment for cultivating virtue.

Certainly, the gender model of Julie is unexpected for the era, and she may be one of the most positive and strong fictional female characters until modern times. Of course, it can be argued that a full appraisal of her duties as materfamilias could hardly be called a true to life portrayal of a woman, since the scope of her activities extends beyond a modern "supermom" maintaining a career and managing a family as well. Julie has a personal relationship with every servant, and considers them to be her "children." She counsels with them about their problems and intervenes in their disputes, making her "rounds" at their dinner tables every evening to discuss each servant's day. She personally trains them, including the cooks, grooming them in meticulous fashion for lifetime loyalty. These duties are combined with supervision of the farm and kitchen garden, handling business transactions, wine and cheese making, extensive charity work with the villagers, and educating her children--all along with pleasing her husband. Although we can credit Rousseau with attributing unprecedented talent and capabilities to a woman, feminist critics are quick to point out that the system is Wolmar's creation, and Julie supervises under his benevolent patriarchy. However, we can assume that Rousseau is catering to the prejudice and "realism" of his day, which would have skeptically regarded this philosophical pastoral if it had been the innovation of a woman. Julie is the spokesperson for all of these schemes, and appears as the one capably handling it, while Wolmar is dimly present in the background and generally submits to her judgment about management. Generally, with her competence, wisdom, eloquence, spiritual values, and capacity to love, Julie represents an important contribution a to positive gender modeling, and an inspiration to the female readership

of the period. Arguably, she is not a *realistic* model, but the contemporary readership *thought* she was a real person. Although other authors achieved more credible verisimilitude about women, none had the following of *Julie,* and the title character was the feminist voice of the age.

If the discussion of servants and gender indicates a certain condescending paternalism, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* develops a powerful recognition of the humanity of "inferiors" and by implication, reproaches the society that inhumanly fetters them with a display of superficial appearances. Not only does the author call for a system of fair wages and humane treatment, but also a recognition of the falsity of having numerous servants, grandly attired in livery, merely standing around in idleness with bored minds that inevitably turn to mischief. Rousseau insists that vices, insolence, and conflict in the household staff are merely reflections of the master's character. Recognizing that "servitude is so unnatural to man" that it sets up inevitable problems, he suggests that exercising charity and virtue can induce them to "praise God for having placed the rich on earth for the happiness of those who serve them, and for the relief of the poor" (378). Attesting to the proverbial "No man is a hero to his valet," it is vanity to attempt to enforce a martinet discipline upon unruly subordinates, and only further displays the master's flaws. In fact, the character of the servants is a means of assessment of the master's character:

> The insolence of domestics indicates a vice-ridden master rather than a weak one: for nothing makes them bolder than acquaintance with his vices…The servants imitate their masters, and since they imitate them clumsily they expose in their conduct the flaws which the gloss of education hides better in others. In Paris I used to ascertain the morals of the women I knew by the tone of their chambermaids, and this rule never failed me. (377-8)

These lowly taskmasters of the boudoir see through the mask of pretensions and mirror the aristocracy's flaws to the world in naïve imitation of their masters. They do not serve well when abused or held in contempt and "a thousand secret wrongs" are committed behind the master's back; ladies who think themselves much honored would "melt in tears if they heard what is said about them in their antechamber" (ibid.).

The solution for the domestic bliss practiced at Clarens is the recognition that the proper *use* of resources is what makes a man rich, and it is "from the relation of things to us that genuine ownership arises." This asserts the basic principle of the ownership of property in Rousseau's political essays: "Every well-regulated house is the image of the master's soul" and he who fulfills himself in the proper management of his house and underlings "is master of his own felicity because he is happy like God himself" (383-4). The man who knows true virtue and reproduces it in others is thus served by it. The servants at Clarens are "purified upon entering this abode of wisdom and union" and the virtuous sentiments of Julie and Wolmar are contagious for the self-improvement and loyalty of their "family" (386). For Rousseau, virtue is an infectious inspiration and pays back in virtue. The virtuous life is mirrored in possessions and the environment of the home.

Thus, rather than a digression, this discussion of servants is an elaboration of the themes of *Julie,* and displays a practical, real world application of the lofty principles of virtue and a sensible example of utopian vision. Is this, then, a politically charged vision of the larger world, a microcosm of the ideal state? De Man sees Rousseau as divided between utopian dreams and a totalitarian state (191). Blum compares the manipulation of the will of the servants to that exerted by the tutor of Emile, who works his magic surreptitiously under the "appearance of liberty" but captivates the will itself. Indeed, Clarens suggests a *Brave New World* of operant

conditioning, utilizing principles of human motivation to make servants "obey" out of their own self-interest. Clarens explains how the private will is made to coincide with the "general will" of *The Social Contract* by becoming fused in virtue and "making virtue reign" (Bum 67-71). Starobinski concedes that some critics see this as Machiavellian, but argues that Rousseau "is ready to accept a society in which only pseudo-equality exists, provided that it is possible *occasionally* to make everyone *feel* equal," through the public "spectacle" of the harvest festival, (100), which we will come to shortly.

If *Julie* was not written for purposes of social engineering, it has been read that way. Certainly the implications bear on more than housekeeping, and the earlier quotation we addressed, that citizens of a Republic may be restrained by virtue but "domestics and mercenaries" need "constraint and coercion," bears consideration (373). Rousseau's beautiful souls are sensitive in wisdom and morality and maintain the leadership, but "mercenaries," that is, wage earners, make up the bulk of the population, and are less sensible to virtue. Although Julie does a careful and judicious questioning of "accusers" that inform on other wayward servants, the language chillingly suggests Marxist self-criticism: "…if the matter concerns her service, she thanks the accuser for his zeal. I know, she tells him, that you love your comrade…and I applaud the fact that for you the love of duty and justice outweighs individual affections: such is the way of a faithful servant and honorable man" (382). Informers decidedly played a role in the French Revolution, and all revolutions to follow. The inclination to regard the servants as her "children" can be taken in another manner than maternal love, as if they are in need of condescending lessons for good behavior. The warm feelings of lyrical politics are threatened by individual interpretation. If the revolution is truth, then questions are counter-revolutionary.

Rousseau does in fact have an inclusive perspective that suggests extending the practices of the family as models for the ideal state, though he is far from revolution. He often mentions his home town of Geneva, in *Julie* and elsewhere. The *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* begins with a lengthy preface with praise for the Republic of Geneva, which he claims as an inspiration for his work, already having many of his principles functioning in place. Additionally, he gives much credit to the women of Geneva for its excellence, although this provides no consolation to feminists, since the women have shaped the character of the citizens by their faithful home-making and chastity, a model that Julie reflects. The author notes that Geneva is a state where all private individuals know each other personally, which is fundamental to its success (Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* 25-32). His ideal political utopia is contained within a small state like Geneva, where citizens are intimately involved. Rousseau speaks of the inequities and oppression that rose with civilization and repressed nature, but he does not call for the abolition of property and monarchy, and appeals more for the reform of the individual, putting his talents and wealth into a sensible *use* for the good of humankind. Although he certainly ventured his opinions about government, he had no practical experience in legislation, and really wrote from the example of the ancients, Rome and Sparta, as was common in the day. Moreover, it was perhaps his very lack of government experience, formal education, or even success in relationships that allowed him the creative spark that makes him so original: he was not limited by *real politick* and was able to give his imagination free reign on all subjects. However, his imagination did not extend to the broad application of his name to political coercion and ultimately, terror. If his depiction of Clarens does have a political edge that contrasts to existing society, his solution remains within the reform of individual values, radiating out, as Julie does, to other individuals who are inspired to conform their lives to the call

of virtue. Indeed, as we continue to examine the value system within the domain of Clarens, we see that the transformations involved are within the heart and through individual choice. Even the servants are touched by Julie's radiance of virtue, and imitate her.

This subject of domestic management is taken up again in another letter to Milord Edward in Part V (433ff.), where Saint-Preux describes the source of Julie's happiness as knowing "*the art of living."* He specifically distinguishes this from the French *art de vivre,* which embraces the finest fruits of each day in food, wine, clothing, art, and love. Julie's "art" is a desire for simplicity and closeness to nature, and includes practicality, usefulness, and charity. As Saint-Preux sees it, the usual understanding of the art of living is dominated by indulgence and fashion, but Julie's way is the natural path for which man is born, and which "lasts" beyond death (433). Again, Rousseau elaborates a comprehensive worldview that encompasses every aspect of life, all under the pervading reign of virtue:

> I repeat; nothing relative to Julie is outside the scope of virtue. Her charms, her talents, her tastes, her struggles, her faults, her regrets, her home, her friends, her family, her pains, her pleasures, and her entire destiny made of her life a unique example, which few women will wish to imitate, but which they will love despite themselves. (437)

Perhaps this glowing abstraction of virtue is best defined here as an existential way of *being* that one incorporates into oneself and shines outward to others. If this seems like a near messianic role, it is no doubt intended that way, and the image of Julie as a Christ-figure will extend through her death. Certainly, a divine mission is suggested here, as "Heaven seems to have given her to the world in order to show at once the excellence of which a human soul is capable, and the happiness it can enjoy in the obscurity of private life" (436). This is not, as the author notes, in some worldly acclaim, but in the personal lives of those she loves, her disciples, who, in her

presence, “become Julie.” The attempts to define Rousseau’s vision of virtue, citing the multifaceted uses of the words throughout his works, miss the most essential point that this lyrical abstraction is a complete way of life, encompassed by one principle exemplified in this young woman: “Julie, who never had any rule but her heart, and could not have a surer one” (435). This tenet is what permeates the revolutionary slogans in their intentions to “Make virtue the order of the day” or to “Make virtue reign” as a political stance.

The charismatic Julie radiates this character as the perfect expression of her feeling heart in modest obscurity. Yet Rousseau intends this as an evangelical message for his audience, an embodiment of virtue that enters through “sensations”--like the “Sensitive Morality” book he did not write--and transforms the individual. Julie’s compassion extends to every member of the village, with whom she is acquainted personally in order to tailor the right type of charity or advice, according to individual need. (437). Even the frequent beggars from the adjacent highway can be almost certain to receive a handout. Julie does not trouble herself with the thought that this might be encouraging indolence, saying that “we owe it to ourselves to honor suffering mankind or its image, and not to harden our hearts at the sight of these miseries” (442). In an ingenious argument that applies to our own era of criticism of the “welfare state,” Julie insists that if a multitude of beggars is a burden to the state, we suffer a great number of other professions, such as the theatre, that “corrupt morals” at great expense. Likewise, if we pay dearly to shed a false tear for “comedy,” we could hardly begrudge the true compassion for a beggar’s story with a comparative pittance of charity (439-40).

Her character practices a certain enlightened asceticism that display a higher calling for the art of living according to virtue, “the sweetest of sensual delights” (443). These “privations” are governed by moderation, primarily to avoid “pleasures” turning into habit and need. She

subjects “her passions to obedience” and desires these rules as “a new way for a woman to be happy” (443-4). The practical implications of these ideas really boil down to *simplicity* in matters of food, dress, the household, and the farm. The inhabitants of Clarens modify their tastes to accord with nature, rather than excess, to more fully enjoy what they have and avoid the scourge of boredom and surfeit that typified the aristocracy. Saint-Preux is careful to maintain that everything in the Clarens lifestyle lacks nothing that is essential for sustenance and utility, “but this plenty is not ruinous.” Like the latest twenty-first century fad, the food is locally grown, and the wine pressed from their own vineyards; even the fabric for garments is from regional materials and labor, and all of this contributes to economy as well as income for villagers. This is all part of Julie’s *art de vivre*. Care is given to preparation and quality, but nothing exists for ostentation or novelty. Meals favor intimate table companionship, without a host of servants bustling in their midst. Julie addresses the “taste” that was so valorized in Paris and qualifies it with simplicity: “Does not taste appear a hundred times better in simple things than in those that are smothered in riches?”(447).

Rousseau preaches a gospel that will appeal in a hundred forms in later centuries, but is here an innovative message offered to the masses. It cannot be said to be original, since it was present among the “ancients”--Greeks and Romans, and Christ himself--and with monks and Puritans. The attractive package of *Julie* does not carry religious commands or social guilt; rather it offers a vision of *freedom.* When Rousseau offered the famous challenge from *The Social Contract* that man was born free but remains in fetters, he was not speaking only of political institutions, but of imprisoning personal desire and the need for others’ recognition; he extends the idea to psychological freedom as well. Indeed, we could say that this freedom from desire and tyranny of the mind is characteristic of the success of modern self-help psychology books,

Eastern religions, recovery from addictions, and even environmental awareness. *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* then, is therapeutic in the sense that it offers enchanting role models for an abundant way of life, free from insatiable desire and outward show, a self-sustaining and shared wealth, a closeness to nature, and cherished human relationships of transparency and trust. Julie reinvents "taste" as a binary opposition to the "opinion" that drives the rest of the world (450).

If Rousseau preaches a revolutionary transformation, it is a personal revolution,[18] and not one that conforms to a new "opinion" judged by appearances of austerity; this is where all utopian visions go awry. An unfortunate inevitability of all kingdoms of heaven on earth is that believers see those who do not embrace the principles of self-reformation as evil, and begin to look down on those beings that remain infernally human and cherish the world of desire and comeuppance. Rousseau's lyrical abstractions of good and evil mean "good" as the natural inclinations of man and "evil" as the world of appearance and civilization. These judgments do make an inference about evil in the *other,* who persists in excess and artificiality and rejects natural inner goodness. As we have argued, the revolutionaries extended this austerity into the political: Robespierre, *L'Incorruptible,* practiced personal asceticism as virtue and saw pleasure as counter-revolutionary.

Wolmar manfully introduces the economic theory of Clarens, which is based on minimal exchange of currency and primarily dependent on systems of barter with the locals as a way of maintaining their wealth. This is one of the hippest currents in modern economics as well. Although one might argue that this implies an extension to the state as a self-sustaining nation, Rousseau is only interested in how one works at the local level with an individual making the

[18] Some of Rousseau's work is often cited as politically oppressive, such as the individual forced into conformity with the "general will." But Rousseau is always counting on the enlightened individual making the right choices, and said of his work, "Those who pride themselves on thoroughly understanding *The Social Contract* are cleverer than I am." (qtd. in Durant *X,* 177).

virtuous choices for his own self-interest, while blessing the needs of others as well: "It is the simpler narratives of reasonable folk whom fate's whims and men's injustices have turned away from the vain pursuit of false goods, in order to give them back a taste for the true ones (453). Julie and Wolmar find delight in the companionship of the peasants with whom they share a common humanity, and recognize as a source of wisdom. This will be a great theme of romantic poets, such as William Wordsworth, and a preoccupation of the development of the novel in the succeeding centuries. Democratic sentiment turns from nobility as the only subject worthy of art into recognition of the common man in the majestic, tragic struggles of everyday life. Rousseau was able to travel across all social classes and form a bridge between commoners and aristocracy. This consideration of society, seen from above and below, informs the politics of the novel; yet even as it portrays the enlightened life, it accuses the darkness.

Rousseau's solution lies in education. Speaking of her children's education, Julie insists that "the only laws we impose on them in our company are those of freedom itself" and "the only lessons they receive are practical lessons taken in the simplicity of nature" (473-4). We can see this as the entire foundation of the philosophy at Clarens, applying to every element of their lives; indeed, Wolmar states it as "Everything works together for the common good in the universal system" (462), which he specifically means here in terms of educating the individual for what he was uniquely born to be. Clarens runs by this ideal in every respect. Rousseau sees the hope for the real betterment of society to be in the educational system, cultivating nature from the beginning in children before they are corrupted by the vanity and prejudice of the world. *Julie* includes a short section about education. A thorough discussion of the childhood education philosophy of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* suggests the full articulation of educational theory in *Emile,* but that is beyond our scope here. We do, however, want to examine some of the

educational foundations of *Julie* expressed in the novel's revolutionary views of life, because development according to nature begins in childhood.

Since *Emile* was banned in France, it was far less available to the pre-revolutionary generation.[19] For this reason, we may consider *La Nouvelle Héloïse* to contain the main ideas his contemporaries knew of his educational theory. The broad strokes painted of Clarens are exciting and creative, emphasized by Julie's role model as the practical path to virtue. Additionally, it subverts the educational practices of the day, which converted gentlemen into like-minded thinkers. The contemporary system followed a model that was centuries old, based in antiquity and enforced with brutality. Educational theory functions here as another genre, resounding in yet another voice, with the themes of the novel dialogued with new meanings.

Rousseau's basic premise of human nature is stated here: men are born good, but "the vices we attribute to natural disposition are the effect of the wrong shapes it has received" (461). Vice, then is a learned behavior corrupting the natural goodness that is born in children. An educational system that unfolds according to "nature" cultivates this goodness at each step, instead of developing vanity and habits of bad character. Rather than reforming adult society, Rousseau sees that real social change can only be effected by education of the young. This begins with allowing children to be children and encouraging what a young child wants to do: running free in the outdoors. This develops their bodies with a robust health, rather than confining them indoors with lessons their minds are not yet ready to understand, making them feeble and sickly, because "the soul is affected for life by the atrophy of the body" (461). With incredible prescience that has only been verified by recent science, the author suggests that this

[19] The book was more available in other countries, and in my casual reading during the writing of this work, I discovered that Simon Bolivar, liberator of South America, was raised by a tutor who was obsessed with *Emile,* to great effect in the soldier's life. Bolivar became a Rousseau devotee as well, bringing his influence to another revolution.

free play in the wild develops the immune system better than careful protection indoors. For Rousseau, after the body develops, the mind becomes ready and the "spark of reason" becomes evident and amenable to instruction. Individuality arrives "according to the prodigious diversity of minds," signaling the direction that education should move in, rather than having a standardized curriculum for all, which "obliterates the soul's great qualities, to put in their place small and illusory ones having no reality" (462).

In this section concerning education, Rousseau engages in a rare genuinely Socratic dialogue, with Saint-Preux bringing up objections based on educational theories of the day, debated by Wolmar and explicated by Julie. Clearly, the author is energized by this topic, and has thought deeply into it, despite his lack of teaching experience or raising children of his own. Nevertheless, the author is dramatically insightful and as is widely acknowledged, his theory represents the beginnings of modern child psychology. Intended for small school settings, these instructions are obviously impossible for a mass public education. All of *Julie'*s arguments are for the individual, the family, or the local sphere of influence. If the personal is political, its intention is the reformation of personal politics.

The system at Clarens includes a new equality between children and servants, which the author identifies as one of the most important lessons for children. As noted previously, the servants are regarded more as family members than the usual unctuous lackeys under strict command. The children are not allowed to believe that they must be "obeyed" by another human being; rather, they are persuaded of their own frailty and dependence on other people for assistance and reliant on the "benevolence" of another that must be approached with respect. Moreover, the servants are instructed not to cater to the whims and tantrums of children. Not only does this prepare the child for the real world outside of the classroom, but also encourages

them to increasingly do things for themselves and accept responsibility in preparation for "the heavy yoke of necessity which nature imposes on man" (467-9).

Childish babble is not glorified as precocious, lest it give them a sense of vanity and expectations for empty words. Rousseau here argues for a freedom from the ego, and a hope of real happiness, for "man's vanity is the source of his greatest pains, and there is no one so perfect and acclaimed that it does not still give him more grief than pleasure" (471). This goes as well for the absurd, "prattling" questions of children which are ignored; the author wisely privileges the art of asking meaningful questions as a skill more of the master than the disciple. The book anticipates the central premise of Dale Carnegie's famous *How to Win Friends and Influence People*--that the best way to make a good impression on people is to *listen* to them. Rousseau offers that there is more power in letting others speak than trying to "scintillate" them with one's own words, and rather, make others "scintillate" instead[20] (471-2). Insights like this can actually make meaningful changes in the lives of the novel's readers. As we shall further discuss, what appears to be only a treatise on child training really functions as a manual of self-improvement for all ages, including a frontal assault on what is wrong with society, and what to do about it. Some of these principles could be life-changing *today* if put into practice. While the romantic drama wavers in these discourses, the lectures are energetic, and full of wisdom.

Rousseau also attacks classical education and the forced memorization of endless detail that will never be of use in real life. In this he includes specifically Latin and Greek, geographical facts, and geometry. This represents a certain school of thought about general education that exists in every time and place, always drawing some applause. However, this discussion is brief, essentially directed at the tears and resentment and distaste for learning

[20] I can personally attest to the transforming power of this awareness, as can my children whom I taught this skill, and who today attest that it is the most powerful ability I taught them.

engendered by rote memorization at the expense of the true learning that takes place outside of books.

Julie encourages reading by the kind of trickery and manipulative learning practices Rousseau is much admired and criticized for in *Emile:* parents and servants read stories and stop in *medias res*, pretending to be busy, motivating the child to pick up the book and begin to learn to read on his own. Rousseau's approach is noteworthy because it recognizes child curiosity and motivational psychology, an educational quantum leap for the day. There is a brief discussion of the difference between curriculum for boys and girls, deferred as a teaser for the expanded discussion of his next novel. Moreover, the provocative views of religious education expressed in *Emile* are minimized here, with Julie only saying that she defers study of "catechism" until they are better able to understand it because she means to "make Christians of them one day" (477). Her view of spiritual education shows a break from the doctrinal uniformity generally drilled into youth at the time.

Above all, everything functions for practical action, and Julie strives to emphasis "ideas" and not mere "words," echoing the concern of the author that words add dissemblance to nature. Any element of outward show is kept away from the child, so that original goodness carries into adulthood. Combined with the virtuous models of their parents and servants around them, Julie preserves them from contamination: "Still being nursed in their original simplicity, where would they get vices of which they have never seen an example, passions they have had no opportunity to experience, prejudices nothing inspires in them?" (478). Again, like the "sensitive morality" book Rousseau had planned, the inner heart begins as pure, and if only positive "sensations" come through the senses in environment and education, the purity remains. For the already jaded adult, glutted with false sensations, this meditation on virtue can renew the heart.

As we have seen throughout *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, every action and speech, every digression and form, and even the practices and possessions of Clarens advocate an accord with the primary themes for Rousseau: embracing nature and its inner form of goodness and renouncing phantoms and fabrications of the world. If the audience arrived for bourgeois romance and erotic titillation, they remain for lessons of morality, freedom and individual transformation. Saint-Preux is unsettled by this educational method that is a "program so novel and so contrary to prevailing opinions" (474). He knows that it represents an iconoclastic rattling of the chains for the public imprisoned in the tower of artifice that was eighteenth-century Bourbon France. The dialoging double-voice of childhood education indicts the ideological underpinnings of the Enlightenment gentleman. Part of Rousseau's originality comes from his own self-education primarily outside the system, distancing him from the wit and polish of the traditionally educated gentleman. His more natural voice provided a charismatic attraction for a century that had grown weary of itself. Recognizing that education is the foundation of any society, he proclaims an innovative self-education and cleansing of decayed forms. Indeed, the revolutionaries took up this call literally, again mistaking this self-actualization into what Schama calls a "Rousseauan cultural revolution." In the manner of later communist revolutions, "citizens" burned art, icons, books and accumulated wisdom of the ages--excepting the works of Rousseau. Robespierre himself, self-styled as a "Missionary of Virtue" prioritized his hopes of national education in a "School of Virtue," cut short by his execution (Schama 827-9). He intended the abolition of all traces of the royalist past, aristocratic and ecclesiastical thinking, and relics of cultural decadence, all in the name of re-establishing the idyllic past of Nature and "pure and feeling hearts" (ibid. 831). Once more, the excesses of lyrical thinking prove dangerous as

abstractions for public policy. Nevertheless, such devotees illustrate the hypnotic power of Rousseau's novel upon that generation.

The political subtext permeates the harvest festival at Clarens. Life reaches a climax in the novel as the fruition of country living in fellowship with nature, and Saint-Preux feels that "a drunkenness headier than wine fills [his] soul" (493). Starobinski sees the harvest as the synthesis of all antithetical elements in the novel, the real conclusion and the key image in the book. Bakhtin's assertion of the polemic of Rousseau's "idyllic chronotope"--used as a basis for criticizing society--also provides insight here. Certainly this brief section is laden with allegorical and archetypal significance and celebrates the apex of bliss in the "beautiful souls" at Clarens. The feast is followed immediately by Saint-Preux's ominous dream and an ensuing downturn of mood, culminating in Julie's tragic ending.

The harvest festival is, of course, one of the most ancient of celebrations, with origins lost in the mists of time for every culture, and to Saint-Preux it evokes the "golden age" and a "voice of nature" that touches even decadent hearts (493). The flow of abundance, along with the joyous peasants and bucolic labors, recalls the "times of love and innocence" of the past, suggesting classical images and Biblical patriarchs. Most importantly, the common bonds of humanity transcend class distinctions, and everyone works and mingles together:

> We sing, we laugh all day long, and the work goes only the better for it. Everyone lives in the greatest familiarity; everyone is equal, and no one forgets himself…the gentle equality that prevails here re-establishes nature's order, constitutes a form of instruction for some, consolation for others, and a bond of friendship for all. (497)

The fictional editor asks, if such discriminations can be dropped without thought for a festive period, doesn't that mean that in themselves there is no reality in class distinction (ibid.)?

Notably, even Julie's father is warm toward Saint-Preux, now that there is no danger of kinship. Each day culminates with communal feasting and drinking, and everyone contributes a song. The evening closes with a "joyous bonfire" and a final toast before each "goes to bed content with a day spent in labor, merriment, innocence, which one would not be unhappy to begin anew the next day, the day after, and his whole life long"(499). It should be noted that music, specifically simple folk ballads, is an integral part of the entire day. The primitive melodies stir up unsettling memories for Saint-Preux of his past experience with Julie, enjoying these same songs. Rousseau again brings up music theory and his odd preoccupation with the decadence of chords. Simple melody echoes nature; the harmonics of chords add the intellectual supplements of man and are "distorting the proportions nature has established…Nature has made everything as good as it could be; but we want to do still better, and we spoil everything" (ibid.).

Starobinski identifies simple melody and ballads here as *immediate* for Rousseau, lacking the contrivance of an interpreter, and thus yielding complete *transparency* to the senses (89). Most of his chapter on *La Nouvelle Héloïse* concentrates on the harvest festival and Julie's death as an alternative conclusion to the book, and his work can scarcely be added to here. However, we will consider this transparency to be an important theme for Rousseau that is *dialogued* with other themes. Starobinski sees the tension between "transparency" and "obstruction" as the dialectic at work that achieves a synthesis in the feast. The "simultaneous gratification" Rousseau desires, the contradictions of innocence and love, pleasure and virtue, and nature and duty, are synthesized temporarily in the rituals of the feast, including the temporary "feeling" of equality among the participants (87). Complete "synthesis" is achieved in the transcendence of death at the end, the "second conclusion." Starobinski identifies this process as a "becoming"

that takes place in stages over a period of time, making "time play an important part" in the novel (ibid). My own view of this problem is qualified by Bakhtin's observations.

Although my application of Bakhtin's theory has been drawn primarily from his essay, "Discourse in the Novel," one important concept that he develops in relation to Rousseau is present in another essay, "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel." Drawing the concept from Einstein's theory of relativity, *chronotope,* or "time-space," reflects the inseparability of time and space, and is significant in genre distinctions (Bakhtin 84-5). Time and space are interdependent, and taken together become "an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring" (ibid 424-5). Bakhtin, citing no specific examples, sees Rousseau as instrumental in influencing the early novel tradition with an idyllic "matrix," an ideal of the holistic ancients as the model for how men should be living, thus critiquing what moderns of the eighteenth century had become: "This line of development, which began with Rousseau, proved to be highly progressive…by sublimating in philosophical terms the ancient sense of the whole, [which] makes of it an ideal for the future and sees in it, above all, the basis, a norm, for criticizing the current state of society" (231).

Such a sense pervades *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, but is best represented here in the rituals of the harvest festival. The evocation of the golden age, the "saturnalia," the Biblical patriarchs, the joyous peasants tossing hay and singing joyfully, the primitive melodies, and of course, the wine-making and drinking, all suggest the rhythms of human life in its most authentic form. Clarens depicts the family of humanity, balanced in equality and each contributing to a complete, self-sustaining existence. This is "the lost ideal of human life" and a transcendent eternal wisdom that calls for recognition and regeneration (Bakhtin 230). Additionally, this archetypal existence appeals to an "isolated individual consciousness" in a modern context that seeks healing and

purification in "fusing" with these forces (ibid.). We might note that these ancient rituals derive from oral consciousness when there was less of the kind of interior reflection and self-analysis that were later derived out of writing consciousness and much expanded by print. Without privileging later consciousness, we can say that celebrating peasants in antiquity did not cultivate the internal reflexivity in this novel; they simply filled their roles in the eternal cycles. Saint-Preux takes in these rituals in highly philosophical terms, a line that Bakhtin follows was taken up by later novelists, such as Chateaubriand and Tolstoy. Protagonists find healing through closeness to nature and simple people, and learn wisdom for life and death. They go outside of cultural norms and "immerse themselves in the wholeness of the primitive collective" (Bakhtin 231). Indeed this trope of healing through contact with nature and peasants became a major thread in romanticism. For Rousseau, in the increasingly complex world of the eighteenth century, the healing forces were a return to the simplicity of nature, not in the progress of civilization. Time and space, ancient cycles and rural environments are the "propagandizing impulse" Bakhtin attributes to Rousseau elsewhere, overwhelming the reader's "conceptual horizons" (Bakhtin 283). Hence here is a connection to the pre-revolutionary aristocracy play-acting pastorals in the gardens of the rich.

The political importance of this section in *Julie* in the depiction of the festival suggested the "spectacles" of the Revolution.[21] Rousseau favored open air public spectacles of celebration for the people, as opposed to the enclosed, darkened environment of the theatre, which subverted morals and isolated theatre goers. Thus the harvest feast, and earlier, the dances Julie arranges for the servants, represent the appropriate forms of entertainment; this indicates more than rural pastimes and suggests a *morality* of joy that gives no grounds for dissemblance in the shadows,

[21] Starobinski indicates that the spectacles of the Revolution might be the "most influential" immediate effect of Rousseau's works (93).

and, as Starobinski sees it, is a public transparency of character (ibid. 96). Moreover, whether Rousseau realized it or not, spectacles contribute a certain lyrical propaganda, as we have seen in the garish panoramas of North Korean pageants or the disturbing theatricals of the Nazi spectacles and communist parades. These are descended from the spectacles of the French Revolution, inspired directly by Rousseau in disciples Robespierre and artist Jacques-Louis David. Schama describes the penultimate "Festival of the Supreme Being" in scenes Rousseau would approve of, and there were thousands of participants: young girls carrying baskets of fruit, mothers carrying roses, fathers leading sons with swords or carrying farm implements, large choruses singing folk songs--in *unison*, not harmony--and an enormous, jaggedly sublime plaster mountain which Robespierre ascended in triumph and spoke:

> 'The true priest of the Supreme Being is Nature itself; its temple is the universe; its religion virtue; its festivals the joy of a great people under its eyes to tie the sweet knot of universal fraternity and present before it (Nature) the homage of pure and feeling hearts.' (Schama 831-4)

The allegorical significance of the harvest festival clearly had a political reading beyond the pale of the idyll. Lynn Hunt shows that the revolutionaries sought practical solutions to "theoretical questions raised by Rousseau." Rather than addressing specifics of economic issues, they directed attention to revolutionary language, symbols, and rituals (Hunt13-15). This shows the near religious hermeneutics that ensued in the interpretation of Rousseau and the lyrical symbols he inspired.

Bakhtin also notes that this philosophical sublimation of the idyll, dialogued in internal consciousness, alters the nature of the ancient patterns and ominously, "Love becomes an elemental, mysterious, and --more often than not--a fatal force for those who love, and all this is

interiorized. It comes to us associated with nature and death" (Bakhtin 230). While love and death have permeated art as long as heroes and gods have been protagonists, Rousseau is an innovator in articulating the inner consciousness of the mind, and interior heroes. Beyond the questions of political content and social institutions, even above the restoration of natural living, transparency, and equality, love in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* exists as a transcendental force, akin to the Divine, a manifestation of nature, and a mystical experience. Furthermore, love contains a hint of violence, always existing on the margins of death. For Saint-Preux, love carries a death-wish that nearly destroys him in duels and causes him to welcome suicide. Julie repeatedly suggests that the death of one of them would bring the end of the other. Indeed, this love story proceeds inexorably toward a conclusion in death, the only possible reconciliation with the hostile outside world.

CHAPTER SIX

THE TRIUMPH OF SENSIBILITY

The idyllic consciousness and the mystical love that merges with the divine together become a tragic force in *Julie* which inevitably results in death. The soul that longs for the purity of nature is discontented in the existing world. Erotic love as a metaphor of spiritual love is a tradition from antiquity, but Rousseau unites both types of love into a singular sensibility and way of being. Despite all external appearances, God has united the lovers with deeply feeling hearts and destines them to be together. Yet since such things are impossible in the unnatural conditions of civilization, the solution can only be other-worldly.

We have followed the themes of *Julie* through Rousseau's didactic segments that leave the action suspended while his characters develop his concept of the sensible and virtuous heart. In this chapter, we will return to the plot of tragic love, which emerges slowly in the midst of these lectures, and like the earlier parts, mythologizes the themes. Love, nature, and death begin to come together, as Bakhtin placed them in the idyll, in what Saint-Preux describes as Julie's secret "wild" garden, which she has named her "Elysium," the Greek abode of the virtuous dead. This garden, full of life yet named for death, is another central image of the novel and, as Swenson suggests, an allegory of the inner Julie (Swenson 147). Every element of the landscape suggests the unadulterated state of nature, without and within. The garden is first portrayed as a hidden place, close to the house but invisibly camouflaged and locked with a key. Saint-Preux perceives it as "wilderness" and the "wildest, most solitary place in nature," exclaiming that he sees "no human labor." Julie explains that Wolmar has left the planning entirely to her, and she

has “designed” every element of the garden (387-8). Only native plants grow there, and no symmetry or pruning mars the garden’s natural growth. Shaded strategically by creepers in the trees, herbs and wildflowers abound, and fruit trees are scattered throughout, fruiting for delight and surprise in secret places. Saint-Preux describes it as an “artificial wilderness,” but not in the pejorative sense of contrivance used elsewhere in the book. Every element has a practical and pleasurable purpose, in accord with nature. The same stream that supplies her father’s fountain in the ornamental public garden at Clarens supplies a natural flow that irrigates her “wilderness.” Another stream by the main road that creates a muddy nuisance for travelers is also diverted to the garden. The fountain and the road are human intrusions into nature, but the water achieves a harmonic flow in the Elysium (389-90).

Most amazing is the abundance of birds, “flitting, running, singing, spatting, feuding” and completely unafraid of humans, again contrasted to the caged nature of the aristocratic pets. Feed and nesting materials grow within, human encroachment is minimal, and all needs are present for the birds’ propagation: “In such a way the father’s fatherland is also that of the children, and the colony is maintained and multiplied” (392). Even the birds are political theatre in *Julie;* humans must tread carefully in the garden. When Saint-Preux jests that the freedom provided for the birds makes the Wolmars into slaves of the creatures, Julie argues that is “what a tyrant would say, who thinks he is enjoying his freedom only insofar as it disturbs that of others” (394).

When Julie admits that her design and her gardener’s work have created the Elysium, Saint-Preux is still baffled by the appearance of wildness in the garden, with no trace of hand or “human footprint.” Essentially, they have accomplished what modern environmental science knows of restoring ecosystems: if one cleans up the human destruction and gets out of the way,

nature restores herself. In a sense, this is what Rousseau intends for humanity, since the real "state of nature" was obliterated long ago and can never be completely restored. But removing the artificial is sufficient, and starting the native plants begins a return to the natural order; the rest follows if not disturbed by the violent and distorting hand of man. Julie states that pristine nature "seems to want to veil from men's eyes her true attractions" on remote mountain tops, canyons and islands, completely safe from the disfiguring hands of man. Lovers of nature who cannot visit these faraway places must resort to minimal natural "violence" to the land to establish her wildness close by, and Julie says this cannot be done without a "modicum of illusion" (394). Thus this "artificial wilderness" of Julie's soul admits a bit of necessary contrivance for imagination. For all of Rousseau's nostalgic longing for the state of nature, the best one can hope for is to allow nature to take priority over what we have become, and allow a little illusion. However, the first suggestion appears here that Julie's facade is hiding something, because of the disruption of nature that has subverted the original design.

This merges into an important analysis from Wolmar concerning the relationship of art and nature, proceeding from his commentary on the putative "imitation of nature" in aristocratic gardens. They commission a landscape architect who is "dearly paid to spoil nature," and whose careful design will glorify the vanity of the owners more than the beauty of creation (394). "Taste" and art are inverted as well: "The mistake of so-called people of taste is to want art everywhere, and never to be satisfied unless art is apparent; whereas true taste consists in hiding art; especially where the works of nature are concerned" (396). Specifically, "symmetry…the square and the ruler" are unnatural and contrary. Again, the foundation of the Enlightenment--nature as order, and reason as man's tool to comprehend nature--is actually antithetical to nature. Rousseau is unique and very modern in arguing that "order" is a human-imposed structure which

only narrowly interprets the universe. Clearly this reflects Rousseau's own view of art in the novel and his music. Spontaneous expression reveals more of nature than human arrangement does.

On Saint-Preux's subsequent solitary visit to the Elysium, he seeks to "banish from my memory all this social and factitious order that has made me so unhappy. My entire surroundings will be the handiwork of her whom I cherished" (399). The "order" of society, a hierarchy of noble blood and human institutions, has destroyed nature with its symmetrical aspirations. Yet in the wildness of the garden, he sees Julie's touch of virtue everywhere. She has suggestively given him "the key" to this garden, and he meditates upon the inner Julie and the heart of nature that reproduces itself in the unmanaged wildness of the garden (ibid.). Saint-Preux reflects upon the inner peace the garden brings, one which the "wicked" can never comprehend. Borrowing from the classical dignity of stanzas from Metastasio, he argues that the external benefits of "vice" are an appearance of happiness covering an inner turmoil and misery. Yet contradicting worldly wisdom and surpassing the outward blessings of the Christian ethic, the rewards of virtue are "wholly inner" and "perceptible only to him who *feels* it" (400).

The sojourn in the garden is not without problematic incident, and a comment from Saint-Preux brings up another garden and a less than virtuous memory of something that took place in what now seems to be a "bower of shame." The allusion is to the location of the lovers' first kiss in Part I with Claire present, immortalized in the first engraving of Julie in a near swoon (53). Wolmar, uncharacteristically brusque, insists that as a married woman, Julie has "never set foot in the bowers of which you speak" and this new garden is "planted by the hands of virtue," additionally indicating that his omniscient discernment knows their secret of the bower (398). Wolmar's reaction does seem disproportionate to a mere kiss, and Tony Tanner believes that

Julie and Saint-Preux must have had sex in the bower, a deliberate fornication adjacent to "the house of the Father" (113). This is in accord with Tanner's reading that the primary theme of *Julie* is an Oedipal struggle of love for her father and father-figure, with Saint-Preux as an "adopted child" (Tanner 114). Wolmar does seem to patronize the former lovers as his "children" in the garden (392) and Saint-Preux's previous "delirium" about the bower seems excessive even in a novel of excess. Conceding that the sexuality may be couched, as all the sex in the book is obscure, it seems that kind of paternal pathology is anachronistic in reading Rousseau; it is sufficient that Julie describes the bower as the place "where all the misfortunes of my life began" (402). To the lovers' consternation, Wolmar leads them to the bower of shame shortly following the revelation of Julie's secret garden. This section reveals significant aspects of Wolmar's character and initiates the events that lead to the final tragedy.

Wolmar is an unexpectedly sympathetic character. Not only does Julie love and respect him deeply, but Saint-Preux is unwillingly drawn to love his character and wisdom. Since he knows all of their secrets, he reveals the astonishing "secret" of his birth, which is never mentioned again in the book; not knowing whether this is the author's intention or a flaw, we cannot speculate as to its meaning. The more important revelation is Wolmar's self-analysis of the history of his emotionless character. His cold heart has been apparent since Julie's first description of him, but his own depiction of the extent of his frigidity seems chilling, and by modern diagnosis could almost be called pathological:

> I have naturally a tranquil soul and a cold heart. I am one of those men whom people think they truly insult by saying they feel nothing; that is, they have no passion that turns them aside from following man's true guide. Little sensible to pleasure and pain, I even experience weakly that sentiment of interest and humanity that causes us to assimilate the

> affections of others. If I am pained when I see good people suffer, pity has nothing to do with it, for I feel none when I see the wicked suffer. My only active principle is a natural taste for order…if I have any ruling passion, it is that of observation. I like to read what is in men's hearts…I do not like playing a role, but only seeing others perform…If I could change the nature of my being and become a living eye, I would gladly make that exchange. (402-3)

The *feeling* that has been valorized throughout the novel, really as a superior means of truth, is completely lacking in Wolmar. Even "pity," which Rousseau insists is so much a part of nature--present even in higher animals, like horses--strikes no chord in Wolmar. He confesses that the only time he ever felt any stir of sentiment was when he saw Julie embrace her father after a long absence (404). His dispassionate, "all-seeing eye" seems eternally wise, infallibly judging the characters and actions of men, and accurately predicting outcomes. Judith Shklar is not alone among critics in saying Wolmar represents God himself: "He is, Rousseau makes perfectly clear, God, and is better and kinder than God" (Shklar 128). "He does not believe in God, because he is God" Shklar continues (135). We will return to this view, I will endeavor to show something other than this reading, arguing that Wolmar's lack of feeling precludes him from kinship with the ecstatic hearts of Julie and Saint-Preux and ultimately prevents him from the mystic union with the divine. In addition, Wolmar as God becomes problematic with the later theology of the book. Here we will note that he fails to read Julie's heart, though he concedes to Claire that a "veil of virtue and honesty makes so many folds around her heart, that it is no longer possible for the human eye to enter it, not even her own" (417). He does not foresee that the injudicious "cure" he undertakes for Saint-Preux's love for a past Julie that is "dead" will bring about a

renewal of past feelings and disillusionment that leads to her relinquishment of life, and of him as well, for a heavenly reunion of the lovers.

Wolmar attempts to purify the bower of shame by confronting the former lovers while affirming their virtue. In his "most virtuous of wives," he finds the only flaws to be her tormented memory of her faults and lack of confidence in her worth, warning that "Excessive modesty has its dangers as does pride" (406). He congratulates Julie on her choice of such a worthy man in Saint-Preux. He indicates that they are both like "beautiful souls" with an exceptional capability for a rare emotion: "I saw what delusory fervor had led you both astray; it acts only on beautiful souls; it sometimes damns them, but does so with an attraction that seduces none but them" (406). This near scientific observation from the clinically objective Wolmar contrasts with the exceptional *feeling* that Rousseau wishes to sanctify as the mystical path of the elect and is a partial explanation for the religious-like reception of the book. But Wolmar's coldness can never *feel* the truth, and thus becomes the "Left-Behind," so to speak, in knowledge of the divine, as well as love. Even as he weds Julie--taking a risk for "virtue," since he knows she is a fallen woman--he recognizes that there were unique bonds between the lovers that ought to be maintained, and could not be forgotten, lest each lose something of his/her self-worth (406). He believes that these *belles âmes* can confront their problem with "confidence and straightforwardness," and in transparency, fulfill their virtue and happiness more than if they had married. He addresses them as "my children" and bids them to embrace before him; the bower has been cleansed of its shameful memory and they will "fear this sanctuary no more; it has just been profaned" (407).

At this point Wolmar announces that he will leave the two of them alone for a week while he travels away on business. He explains in a letter to Claire that he intends a final "cure"

for Saint-Preux, bringing him to a realization that the Julie he loves is no more (419). Claire approves of this action, and likens Julie to the original Heloise in the only specific reference in the entire text to that medieval character, Julie being "devout like her" (410). The reference is obscure, since following the debacle, Heloise left without choice, wrote lonely and agonized letters to the castrated and cool Peter Abélard, who resisted seeing her and returned only philosophy to her love. Rousseau seems to make Julie surpass this model as the New Héloïse, who chooses her destiny with transcendent love and with God.

Following Wolmar's departure, Claire suggests the fateful boat ride for the "friends," since Julie loves boats and her husband fears the water. The two friends make their excursion on Lake Geneva, when suddenly an ominous wind blows in, creating waves that make even the sailors fear for their lives. Julie, initially seasick, recovers and during the greatest danger, seems only concerned about the safety of Saint-Preux and the boatmen until they are safely back ashore at Meillerie. The author, characteristically declining action sequences, dispenses with the danger in two paragraphs and proceeds to another danger of the heart. The couple walks to the location of Saint-Preux's exile from Julie in the early part of the book, the place where he wrote letters about the rugged and sublime landscape and his longings for her presence. Starobinski notes that Rousseau considered ending the book with the tragic drowning of both lovers on the lake, but considers that this would have "diminished the scope of the soul's dialectical progress" (Starobinski 114). My position will suppose a more suspended ending.

After the couple arrives at the location of Saint-Preux's former agony of forcefully separated love, the real crisis and turning point of the novel takes place within the interior of Julie's heart. Described originally by Saint-Preux in Part I, letter 23 (62), the jagged mountain landscape is "filled with those sorts of beauties that are pleasing only to sensible souls and

appear horrible to others" (424), pictured here in another engraving as "Monuments of a bygone love" (426). Roaring muddy cascades tumble past broken, insurmountable cliffs, dark forests and fragmented glaciers. Again, the short passages from this and the earlier letter from this location impacted the eighteenth-century view of natural beauty, and merged into the romantic sublime. Today for us, mountain vistas are the pinnacle of scenic vistas, but prior to Rousseau, such places were inaccessible wastelands, depressing and dangerous. The author portrays these landscapes as nature at her wildest, most pristine and intoxicating state. Rousseau made a significant contribution to the modern way of seeing natural beauty. Julie's Elysium is a human attempt at cultivating wildness, though she confesses that nature's "most stirring charms" exist only in such remote places as this (394). Beyond the cultivated boundary of her Elysium and her controlled inner feelings, this tumultuous pastoral backdrop suggests that nature seeks freedom from constraint. Nevertheless, Saint-Preux leads her to a serene nook in this wilderness of grass and flowers which seemed "meant to be the sanctuary of two lovers who alone had escaped nature's cataclysm" (425).

The young man shows her the traces of his former stay, her initials carved in "a thousand places" along with quotations from Tasso and Petrarch. As we see in many places in the novel, the "sensations" from material objects exert their impact upon memory and reproduce the passions long suppressed: "Seeing them again myself after such a long time, I experienced how powerfully the presence of objects can revive the violent sentiments with which one was formerly seized in their presence" (ibid). He recounts the objects around the couple as a narrative and image of his past as "the world's most faithful lover." Here was the rock he sat upon to compose the letter that so moved her, there the one where he kissed her letter a thousand times; beyond were the trees that were ornamented only with snow in the bitter cold, where only the

flames of his heart kept him alive (425). At this point, Julie interrupts him and, with a quivering voice, insists they return the boat. She remains alone and silent during the return journey, but Saint-Preux broods in his melancholy, though he confesses he was "violently tempted" to seize her and leap from the boat to put an end to his torment. He closes his letter to Edward, which ends Part IV, expounding on his realization of "the freedom of man and the merit of virtue" (428). Seemingly, they have been through a close call, but they have passed the temptation in the wild garden.

The near tragedy of the boat excursion and the temptation in the wilderness at Meillerie appear to represent the triumph of virtue over passion, but subtle hints begin to suggest that Julie is more troubled than she indicates on the surface. Later, she will reveal that this event is the beginning of a change that leads to her realization of the "delusion" she has labored under, which is confessed in her final letter. Although Saint-Preux registers her swollen eyes upon her return and exalts in the language of their hearts--communicating without words--Julie, in a tremulous voice, asks that such messages cease. She will later state that only the young man's love of virtue kept them from falling, yet we can hardly believe that Saint-Preux would remain righteously aloof from an advance by Julie. Indeed, Edward comments that the troubling tone of this letter indicates to him that "If Julie were weak, you would succumb tomorrow." Setting up this erotic tension at the end of Part IV, Rousseau proceeds through most of Part V and suspends that drama while Saint-Preux describes the holistic environment at Clarens and its "art of living," which we discussed above.

Following the incident at Meillerie and Wolmar's return, Julie takes up an urgent effort to persuade the now widowed Claire and the frustrated Saint-Preux to consummate their natural attraction and mutual compatibility and marry. The idyllic Clarens environment could best

continue the "confidence of beautiful souls" with the unattached inhabitants safely married to each other. This seems like a beneficial arrangement for all parties and a happily-ever-after conclusion in utopia. Yet Rousseau is not moving in this direction and the idea is rejected as offensive to both Claire and Saint-Preux, basically because they all know that the young man can only have one heart, already totally surrendered to Julie. Although this impossible union is dismissed, some fifty pages of the book are devoted to the letters between them, and so we will briefly attend to this. Marriage does not solve the problem of virtue, which is again dialogized in multiple contexts toward an eternal solution; furthermore, the hopelessness of this situation leads to Julie's demise. Additionally, this section sets up something of an introduction to Julie's radical theology. Although this matchmaking of her friends for their own happiness seems to be natural for a young wife, her endeavors seem excessively imperative; in reality, Julie has recognized since Meillerie that her heart still belongs to Saint-Preux and her virtue is endangered, thus forcing her resignation to another solution.

Julie first implores Claire to search her heart and recognize that she has loved Saint-Preux all along, but demurred because Julie loved him (517). An honest admission of her heart would make it innocent in the light, and Julie asks, "Does the shame lie in marrying the man you love or loving him without marrying him?" (519). In addition, this appeal suggests Rousseau's view of equality as Julie reminds the aristocratic Claire that both she and her noble father disdained questions of birth, recognizing that "the only dishonoring inequality…is that which stems from character or education" (ibid.). Yet a question about Julie's motivation arises from her daughter Henriette's accompanying note to her second "Maman," reporting that Julie has been weeping over the composition of her letter (521).

Claire dismisses Julie's entreaty, saying she only feels "love" for Saint-Preux when he is far away from her, and he only talks of Julie when he is with Claire. She asks Julie if she would "feel no scruple in offering me a heart worn out by another passion?" (532). By the same token, she cites a loyalty to her dead husband and a reluctance to expose his daughter to a stepfather (531). Claire's final letter to Saint-Preux, which concludes the book after Julie's death, declares that she could never even be friends with "a man who was loved by Julie d'Étange and could bring himself to marry another" (611), thus showing her adamant antagonism to another marriage.

In her first letter to him in eight years, Julie importunes Saint-Preux with a different argument, pointing out that while virtue has triumphed under duress, he is still but a *man*, and man is not made for celibacy. It would be presumption of God's grace to test virtue in a lifetime of temptation, and in humility he should accept Claire as a divine reward for virtue. While affirming the bliss of serenity they enjoy in innocent company together and acknowledging that virtue relishes combat, pride could lead him to reckless exposure and a "moment of wrong" that will torment him for life, possibly through an indiscretion with a servant or another stumble with a prostitute (547-9). Anticipating his objections of "unworthiness," she again argues that social "opinion" is false shame, creating more ills than it avoids. Knowing the young man dismisses the necessity of prayer, she urges him to supplicate God for strength and realize, as she does, that marriage to Claire would be the divine provision for man's weakness and prideful overconfidence (552-3). Rather than resist his noble sentiments, he should divert them into honorable duty.

We might note at this point--considering we will soon be more informed about Julie's unconventional spirituality--that her absolute commitment to prayer, extensively discussed here,

is somewhat of a comforting signal to Christian readers, as it definitely sets up a paradigm of piety regardless of her doctrinal ambiguity. Her exchanges with Saint-Preux about religion dialogue anticipated objections in the readership about theological questions of the day concerning freewill and original sin. Julie suggests opposition to Rousseau's antagonism toward original sin: "We are free, it is true, but we are ignorant, weak, and inclined to evil." The solution lies in accepting that though we are "Slaves through our weakness, we are free through prayer," with God providing the power we do not have ourselves. (552-3). Again, the purpose of her argument is to convince Saint-Preux of his dangerous weakness and need of God to provide him a good wife, but the real concern is her realization of *her* weakness, and a central concern of the book is how virtue can coexist with weakness. Definitely within the text, there is a mystical communication between the heart and the divine, here named as "prayer," functioning somewhat as a recognized word with an *alien* semantic range in the belief system of Christian readers, and moving in quite a different direction than prostration or paternoster. But devotion to prayer is also a shibboleth for Christian readers, allowing more flexibility of theology.

The theological notions at stake have been of little interest to predominantly secular critics, and are part of the reason this spiritual conclusion to *Julie* is little attended to, though the subject is crucial. Saint-Preux stubbornly repudiates the suggestion in the kind of ecstatic hyperbole that strikes the modern reader as both distasteful and lacking in credibility. He insists that Wolmar's wisdom and testing have "cured" him, and he is now inexorably devoted to virtue: "No, no, the flames with which I have burned have purified me; there is nothing of the ordinary man left in me. Clarens is a "temple of virtue," and any troubling image of "Julie" would only lead him to contemplate "Madame de Wolmar" for strength (557). Predictably, he insists that Claire would deserve nothing less than that fullness with which Julie was loved, so "Why did

you not leave me a heart to give her?" (558). His memories of Julie would be infidelities to Claire and he further reminds her of their "vows," which he keeps even if she has forgotten them (559). He considers his own love of virtue to be sufficient for strength, and his own obsessive love for Julie gives him power to keep from defiling her. These enraptured proclamations must be disquieting to Julie, and really would be highly inappropriate today from an old boyfriend to a married woman. Moreover, we are inclined to believe Julie, and Milord's Edward's declaration, that Saint-Preux is delusional about his invulnerability, even if many critics tend to read Saint-Preux's strength as his final growth into control of his passions. Julie's response will indicate that she is reading his exaltations as the same kind of immature ravings that have always characterized his letters, and we have reason to suspect his supposed growth over all these years of world travel, excepting his abstention from sex. The title character is Julie, and by this point she has become the oracle of the book.

The primary force of the text in these concluding letters becomes spiritual in focus as the plot moves toward Julie's sudden accident and death. The theology of Saint-Preux's final letter, VI, vii, stirred up a major controversy about the book for the author, although Rousseau had intended for the young man to be viewed espousing an obvious heresy that was supposed to be his own problem. His main concern is Julie's seeming drift toward "devoutness" and withdrawal from the real world into pious prayer and asceticism, and the real message is intuition over argument. Reason has its purpose in discerning "what is good," but reasoning about the "scholastic subtleties" of doctrinal issues can "prove" any side it wants to argue equally, although "inner sentiment, stronger than all arguments, constantly belies" these positions (561). This privilege of intuition extends to reasoning about Scripture as well, and he asserts that he would rather believe the "Bible falsified or unintelligible than God unjust or evil" (562). Prayer

is a means of raising the self up to God for self-understanding of our weakness. He decries extremist mysticism, the "ecstasy of aesthetics" that weakens mind and body into illusions and fanaticism, like that of the "Pietists," whom the fictional editor identifies with Methodists, Calvinists, and Jansenists. According to editors Stewart and Vache, Rousseau attributed all his subsequent persecution to this note, and its elaboration in *Emile.* The obscurity of this issue makes it all but invisible to moderns, yet religion was still very much political in the eighteenth century. The author subverts the common perception of piety in those who visibly seemed the most devoted and close to God. It is again the role of Saint-Preux to attack with excess and Julie to modify with sacred example--somewhat of a bad cop/good cop approach--that leaves the criticism to the former and the solution to the latter. The assumption of the day was that spirituality manifested itself in external behavior, which was suspect as "appearance" to Rousseau and thus inclined to artifice, illusion, and hypocrisy. The author intends to show a simple, internal goodness as a model in Julie, even with her weakness of loving too deeply, but she breaks the paradigms of outward expectations and yet still communes with God.

Julie takes up the subject of devoutness in her response, quoting Wolmar, who believes that "Devoutness is an opium to the soul,"[22] (572) and adds her own critique of external religion:

> But what most estranged me from the professionally devout is that harshness of manner that makes them insensible to humanity, that excessive arrogance that makes them regard the rest of mankind with pity. If in their sublime elevation they deign to stoop to some act of kindness, it is in so humiliating a manner, they feel sorry for others in such a cruel tone, their justice is so rigorous, their charity so austere, their zeal so bitter, their

[22] This suggests, of course, Karl Marx's famous statement that "Religion is the opiate of the people." Some sources indicate that Marx's statement had its origin in the Marquis de Sade's 1797 work, *Juliette*. However, since it is likely de Sade read *Julie,* and more likely that Marx derived the idea from Rousseau than from de Sade, the origin of this idea may be here.

> contempt so perfectly resembles hatred, that their commiseration is more heartless than even the insensibility of the worldly. For them God's love is an excuse to love no one, they do not even love each other; was genuine friendship ever seen among the devout? But the more they separate themselves from their fellow men the more they demand of them, and one would think they reach up to God only so they may exercise his authority on earth. (573)

Julie's example of selfless love, benevolence, and recognition of human dignity has shown that her devoutness proceeds from a different heart. What is at stake here in the alternative spirituality of *Julie* is the expectation that uniting with the divine produces a paradigmatic change of appearance and behavior, and a necessary intolerance that is publicly recognized as religious devotion, an expectation that still remains today. Julie's simple faith contrasts starkly to the *show* of coldness, sanctimoniousness, and hypocrisy of everything that was called religion in the period. However, while the purity of her heart raises her above the dogma of the world we shall see that Julie, like Christ, cannot remain in the world.

Julie's spiritual life highlights the political radicalism of the book, especially since religion--Protestant, Catholic, and heretic--was also still overtly political in the eighteenth century. Rousseau is stepping carefully around doctrinal issues, and answering contemporary questions that we do not have as moderns. Rousseau's view of religion is complex, and like his other beliefs, somewhat contradictory. The letters about spirituality in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* are heavily footnoted with references to Catholicism, Calvinism, Deism, Jansenism, Socinianism and many more as Rousseau anticipates specific objections in his readership. We cannot here consider all of these qualifications, but look for the essentials of the author's gospel of Julie. For

Rousseau, everything converges in Julie, and those who would become her. Yet the confusion of doctrines is, for her, quite beside the point:

> Do we wish to plunge into these bottomless and shoreless abysses of metaphysics, and waste the brief time allotted to us to honor the divinity in disputations over its essence? We do not know what is, but we know that it is: let that suffice us; it makes itself manifest in its works, it makes itself felt within us. We can surely argue against it, but not mistake it in good faith. It has given us enough *sensibility* to perceive and touch it: let us pity those on whom such sensibility has not been bestowed, without flattering ourselves that we can enlighten them without its assistance. Who among us can do what it has not wished us to do? Let us respect its decrees in silence and do our duty; that is the best means of teaching others their own. (574, emphasis added)

Needless to say, this presents an attractive package quite different from the rituals of Catholicism, the dour negativism of Calvin, and the hopeless atheism of the *philosophes.* This is a powerful argument of the book, exemplary of how Rousseau has used narrative empathy to convince a readership unlikely to read dissenter pamphlets. Julie commits to a self-evident duty that lies before her, which is providing happiness to her loved ones, her domestics, village peasants and traveling beggars, and to following her call to a life of virtue. "Sensibility," that gift of a transparent heart and flow of emotion, sensitivity to nature, simplicity, spontaneity, and child-like innocence enables one to grasp the divine and live authentically. A little weakness is only human, as Saint-Preux has taught her: "By teaching me that error is not a crime, you have delivered me from a thousand scruples" (573).

Despite this positive thinking, Julie's letter carries a despondent undertone that returns to the rejection of marriage by her two best friends, and indicates that among all of the perfection

and enlightenment that surrounds her, something is still lacking that she desires. She indicates that the previous six months following the return of Saint-Preux were "the sweetest time of [her] life" and she has experienced the most fulfillment of the blessings of "sensibility" possible in this life (565). The intimacy of the society of beautiful souls has been a utopian communion of hearts: "…the whole charm of the relationship that prevailed among us lies in that openness of the heart that places all sentiments, all thoughts in common, and makes it so that each one, feeling he is what he ought to be, reveals himself to all such as he is" (566). The self-sufficient, harmonious balance of Clarens with nature and the love of her family contain all the components of a perfect life: "I am sated with happiness and life: O death, come when thou wilt! I have no more fear of thee, I have lived" (566). Yet since her lover's return, "a secret languor worms its way into my heart" and she cannot find contentment in all that should bring it. "My friend," she addresses Saint-Preux, "I am too happy; I am weary of happiness." If this seems contradictory to her other professions, the fictional editor states, "What, Julie, you too contradict yourself. You are not…of one mind! Besides, I confess that this letter looks to me like the swan's song" (570). Indeed, her death will follow this letter, which she closes with an intention for an outing at the lake near the Chateau de Chillon where the fateful event takes place (576). But here she only hints at some vague, underlying dissatisfaction, though she knows no woman has a more complete life than hers: "And yet I live in it with a heart ill at ease, which does not know what it lacks; it desires without knowing what" (570). Another allusion to unhappiness has served as a subtext since her marriage, and we must go back to that point to examine it.

Since Julie's marriage, an underlying mystery pervades the narrative about a "secret sorrow" in her marriage, which is finally revealed anti-climatically in Part V, letter 5 as Wolmar's intransigent atheism. Undeniably, her husband's rejection of God--due to his reliance

on the proofs of cold-blooded reason--is a major development in the book and a significant element of its themes, which now point toward Julie's death. However, we are going to question whether the concern is actually Wolmar's eternal home in heaven or really a screen--or veil, if you will--of another "secret," revealed at the unveiling of Julie's "delusion" at the end of the book, where Wolmar's salvation receives only peripheral attention.

The author names the "secret sorrow" as Wolmar's atheism, both in the text and in the summary "Table of the Letters and Their Contents," and yet at key points of discussion on the subject, a suggestion lingers that something else remains hidden, or an additional level of the image remains. In Julie's final letter to Saint-Preux in Part III, where she discusses her new state of marriage, she argues that love is not necessary for a happy marriage, and declares, "You would have to greatly look down on me not to think me happy with so much cause for being so" (306). Although this exclusion of love from happiness is contradictory to the rest of the text, the real question comes in the fictional editor's footnote to this statement: "It would appear she had not yet discovered the *fatal secret* that subsequently tormented her so" (306, emphasis added). Why is Wolmar's atheism a *fatal* secret? It might be argued that Julie's death becomes necessary to inspire Wolmar to faith so that he may reunite with her in heaven, but the ending will not support that reading. Julie seems more preoccupied with the grief her death will bring to Saint-Preux, which is "the greatest pain I take with me" than with Wolmar's salvation (609). Additionally, we should recall that after Julie reveals her "secret sorrow" to Saint-Preux, he notes that "The moment she chose to confide her pain to me made me suspect *another reason* which she was careful not to mention to me" (486).

What Wolmar lacks in being able to comprehend the divine is the same *feeling* that creates her eternal bond with Saint-Preux and excludes her husband. This letter also reveals the

inadequacy of reason and institutionalized religion to grasp the eternal, as elaborated in Julie's final speech before her death. Wolmar's atheism stems from his complete lack of emotion, which results in no belief in "what gives value to virtue;" deep within his heart is only "the horrible peace of the wicked" (481). Incredible to Saint-Preux is the fact that this most virtuous of men who has no vices or vanity of knowledge would "bother to be an unbeliever," suggesting that many believers maintain virtue only for religious reward (482).

Why Rousseau chooses a Russian aristocrat to be Julie's husband, from an obscure and distant nation in the eighteenth century, becomes clear when we see that Wolmar's disillusionment with Christianity stemmed from his childhood experience in the Russian Orthodox Church, which maintained a system of priests and rituals similar to that of Catholicism. Finding nothing to impress him later in life in Catholic countries, he asserts that most priests he has met do not believe in God and primarily serve their own self-interests. The fictional editor shrugs these "harsh and outrageous assertions" as mere reporting of a foreigner's opinion, but the French censors did not miss the implications and this section (707, n.85). Proceeding to examine religion with the objective enlightenment of reason, Wolmar finds it full of contradictions and confusion. By the time he met Julie, "his faith had already closed itself to truth" and competing dogmas seemed to destroy each other rather than establish eternal verities; in the end, his view was purely skeptical (482-3).

Ironically, Heaven has placed him with the devout and pious Julie, who believes that since "nothing earthly is able to satisfy the need to love that consumes her, that excess of sensibility is forced to return to its source" (483). Indeed, this intensity of *feeling*--the "sensibility" that would become romanticism--is the pathway to God that Wolmar will never find, and it is likened to the feeling shared between Julie and Saint-Preux that he cannot share,

and which in turn becomes part of the "secret" of Julie's sorrow. Julie asserts that the objectivity of the senses, the "phantoms" of reason, and even the imagination, are all inadequate in grasping the infinity of the divine (483). Recognizing these inadequacies, she contemplates the divine in its works: "So it is that everything turns to sentiment in a sensible heart. Julie finds in all creation nothing but causes for compassion and gratitude" (484). The sensible heart sees the Supreme Being animating all of nature, but Wolmar sees with the observation of science only a "blind force" and "eternal silence" (ibid.). Saint-Preux exclaims that "we will never bring this man in [to the fold]; he is too cold and is not wicked, it cannot be done by stirring his emotions; he lacks the inner conviction or conviction of sentiment which alone can render all the others invincible" (486). Saint-Preux attempts to argue Rousseau's belief that there is no "absolute and general evil" or even "private evils," since all are surpassed by "blessings." But Wolmar interrupts him, declaring that the young man resorts to "sentiment" over reason, like Julie, and forces Saint-Preux to concede that evil exists nonetheless, another proof, to him, that the existence of evil excludes a divine creator. Rousseau, in double-voice, suggests that the sensible heart, while believing in God, does not believe in the creation of evil (rather, that suffering exists because of a departure from created nature). Nevertheless, it is clear that the *feeling* of sentiment determines the elect--a departure from Calvinist faith--and Wolmar, lacking its vision, can never enter the realm of the divine.

Julie, of course, worries about the afterlife destination of her virtuous but unbelieving husband, and questions the doctrine of eternal hell. Although the bitterness of her suffering could create a wall between them, their disputes only make them "dearer to each other" and she resolves to make this one earthly life as much a paradise as possible for her husband (487). She prays that if she cannot convert the father of her children, that God will allow her "to be the first

to die" (485). This prayer will be apparently answered shortly, and could accord with the argument that his atheism is the "fatal" secret, were it not for her final letter, which inverts everything about their earthly paradise. Indeed, it probably reinforces that he will not be converted by her death, but again, after all of the developments of the book, it does not follow that Julie's early, welcome death is due to her prayer to die before her kindly but godless husband. The eternal destination of Wolmar will remain uncertain in the end, especially if his only path to salvation is the embracing of sentiments. He will shed his first tears at Julie's death, but he will swear to never shed tears for anything else until his own death (591), and tears seem to be the holy water of transcendence in *Julie*.

We must also recall Rousseau's comment that while he was in the middle of writing *Julie*, he became entangled in a dispute among the editors of the *Encyclopédie* concerning "facts" about the Deity:

> Having exploded against each other with the highest degree of rage, the two parties resembled rabid Wolves, desperate to tear each other to pieces rather than Christians and philosophers who reciprocally wish to enlighten, convince, and restore each other to the path of truth…A born enemy of all partisan spirit I had frankly told both sides some harsh truths, which they had not listened to…I took…to soften their reciprocal hatred by destroying their prejudices, and to show to each party merit and virtue in the other one…it did not reconcile the parties at all, and it brought them together only to curse me. (*The Confessions* 366)

Rousseau states that he then threw himself back into the writing of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and drawing the characters of Wolmar and Julie, both in complete disagreement about the existence of God, but committed to virtue (ibid.). He hoped to accomplish through fiction what he could

not change in the world. The discussions about faith, including those with Saint-Preux, exemplify respect and mutual appreciation as fruits of virtue in changing character, and prove Julie to be an enlightened believer. However, Rousseau's attempted fairness to all sides, we have seen, caused *him* further trouble as heresy.

Other concerns take control of the narrative immediately after Julie's letter. Saint-Preux will receive an impassioned letter from Julie's servant, Fanchon, informing him that her mistress is dying, and he will not see her again, nor will any letters of his reaction be included in the book. Julie and her family were dining at the nearby Chateau de Chillon. While walking along the dike of a very deep lake, her young son fell into the lake and Julie, without hesitation, jumped in after him. The boy survives, but Julie is taken with a fever, presumably pneumonia and finally dies after several days. Despite her condition, she shows an incredible energy during her final moments by attending to her loved ones, as described in detail to Saint-Preux in a final letter from Wolmar.

Wolmar tells Saint-Preux that at least the young man will have the consolation of his tears, something that the older man cannot share. He insists that as Julie lived a unique life, her death was without parallel as well. Clearly, she knew--while others held on to hope--that her death was certain. The fever gives her an eloquence during her dying hours, and she declines medical treatment--along with a justified slight to "bleeding"--so that she will remain lucid for her last days. She retains a sense of humor, and tries to distract her loved ones with talkative cheerfulness as if it is simply another day. Indeed, Wolmar relates that he detected in her eyes "a certain exhilaration" that worries him, as if she welcomes death. In fact, in it is clear that Julie dies willingly, embracing the end because this life has become untenable.

The theme of death, and giving up of this life, has been recurrent throughout the text, as the lovers claim they will not survive the loss of the other. Saint-Preux addresses the subject of suicide far back at the end of Part III, when, two years after Julie's marriage, he writes to Milord Edward Bomston an eloquent argument recalling the ancient practice of noble suicide when life has become unendurable. He argues that while the "voice of nature" tells us that we remain in this life until God ordains the end, "We are to await the order, I grant; but when I die naturally God does not order me to give up this life, he takes it from me: it is by making life unbearable that he orders me to give it up" (311). He concedes that nature gives us a horror of dying, often to conceal from us the miseries of living. However, when the weariness of living overcomes the horror of dying, "then life is obviously a great evil, and one cannot too soon be freed from it" (313). Reason and religion bids us to avoid the ills we can, but there are many more sufferings that remain, and God supposedly "imputes to the benefit of the next life our resignation in this one" asking us only to endure what we can. If one must sacrifice to the Supreme Being, why not sacrifice life? Since however many ills we flee, there will never be an end to them, so "Let us deliver ourselves without remorse from life itself, once it has become ill for us; since it is within our power to do so" (316). Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther*, heavily indebted to *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and another book that inspired a cult following[23] ends in the suicide of the young man making a similar argument when his love marries another,.

Bomston utterly refutes his reasoning, and for the most part, tells him he needs to grow up and resolve to do yet one more good deed before he dies, every time he is so tempted (323). The nobleman arranges an appointment for the young man that takes him on his world journey, which ends the first half of the book. This near suicide could simply be adding dramatic tension,

[23] Blum has noted that Robespierre was wearing a powder-blue coat to the guillotine, the faddish uniform of the *Werther* cult (Blum 252).

or displaying the speciousness of reason, since it depends on clever rhetoric of words matched by an equally persuasive counterargument. Fuchs claims that eighteenth-century readers, including Voltaire, were fascinated by this defense of suicide (93). Rather than interpreting this justification of willful death as an isolated sidelight, it informs Julie's release of life. Even though she does not actively bring it upon herself she attributes her death to a merciful God preserving her virtue. Yet her weariness of happiness, her nameless "desire," the "exhilaration" of her looming death, and her plans to await her lover in the afterlife point to a different conclusion. Wolmar states that the note she gives him for Saint-Preux is an "explanation of this mystery" (590). In the history of literature, we must concede that tragic endings tend to be more enduring and endearing than happy ones, but Rousseau seems to be more purposeful in Julie's demise as a natural outcome of the plot.

Since Rousseau is generally regarded as a secular author, insufficient attention has been paid toward the resolutely spiritual tone of the ending of the book. An interpretation of the overtly religious imagery and sentimentality becomes awkward for critics more drawn to his political, romantic and anti-clerical philosophy, which became influential in succeeding centuries. Ardent fans such as Robespierre certainly translated his ambiguous celebration of a "Supreme Being" into revolutionary rhetoric, despite the general myth that the French Revolution was an atheistic movement; these theistic notions of *Julie* have been generally overlooked by the predominately Marxist slant of French historians. Although many critics, such as Starobinski, identify Julie as a "Christian" (116), the term only applies in the generic sense of loosely Christian nations, as compared to the rest of the world, and not in conformance to the actual belief system of the era. The book contains none of the code and core tenets that constitute the basic elements of Christian "salvation," such as the blood sacrifice and cleansing of sin by

Jesus Christ, crucified for the forgiveness of sins, even though Rousseau does cling to a belief in immortality. The author proposes no less than an alternative Christianity in which Julie finds salvation without such atonement, and a great deal of Christ imagery is applied to Julie herself, who attains immortality beyond that purification. Of course, Rousseau rejects the idea of the sinfulness of man as the cause of his separation from God, yet clearly the book dialogues whether "weakness" is acceptable to God, a concern the author struggled with his entire life. This concept of the virtuous but weak proves to be a central theme of the entire book.

Catholicism has been questioned throughout *La Nouvelle Héloïse* by its Swiss characters, although the Protestant approach is consciously distanced in Julie's dying words. Wolmar summons her pastor to her bedside, who, knowing that Julie has been soft on some of the vital doctrines of the faith, hopes that in her final hours, she will "acquiesce in all points in the common profession of faith" (586). Julie concedes that she has lived and will die in the "protestant communion," but she cannot pretend to anything that God has not made clear to her. In her previous letter to Saint-Preux, she has thanked him for reporting a discussion in which Wolmar asked if he was a Christian, and Saint-Preux replied, "I believe of Religion all I can understand, and respect the rest without rejecting it" (477; see also 573). To the pastor, Julie states, "If God has not enlightened my reason beyond that, he is merciful and just; could he ask me to account for a gift he has not given me?"(586). This defense will be taken up by Rousseau in later years in his own confessions and in later writings. Most importantly, Julie insists her "conscience" is clear (a crucial perception for Rousseau, as we shall see). As Julie has performed her "duty" to her loved ones through her dying day, she insists

> My conscience is not troubled; if it has occasionally given me fears, I had more of them in health than today. My confidence cancels them; it tells me God is more merciful than I

> am a sinner, and my assurance grows as I feel myself drawing nearer to him. I do not bring before him an imperfect, tardy, and forced repentance, which dictated by fear could not possibly be sincere…I bring before him my entire life, full of sins and faults, but free from the remorse of the impious and the crimes of the wicked. (587)

Suggesting the myth that the truth is always forthcoming from dying lips, this passage additionally addresses the Christian code word of "assurance[24]" to a faith much obsessed with the deception of other religions or presumptuous sinners. Christians typically base assurance on "what the Bible says," or the Church. The serenity of *assurance* is the genuine conviction from God himself that one has been on the right track, a peace that does not attend the wicked in death. Here, quite contrary to his doctrine, the Protestant pastor supports her, exclaiming that while he came to "edify" her, she has edified him. He has heard a great many dying words, yet hers are the most authentic and inspirational of his life: "Madame, your death is as beautiful as your life…may we all such as we are live and die like you! We shall be very sure of happiness in the next life" (588). This, then, is the clerical recognition of the soundness of Julie's assurance.

Rousseau prolongs these deathbed scenes interminably, wrenching ever bit of sentiment out of his readership, as they recounted in their tear-drenched correspondence to the author. Yet Rousseau is directing these sentiments into the most radical polemics of the entire book. The narrative includes near saint-like occurrences in these last moments, some seeming like miracles to the peasant crowd in attendance. Julie attends to a strange beggar, recognized as her servant Fanchon's wayward husband, who is led to repentance to enable their reunion; thus sinners come to salvation by her death. Her greatest concern is her father, who, having gone against Heaven and nature and separated the lovers--which will become apparent as ultimately the cause for her

[24] cf. "Faith is the *assurance* of things hoped for." Hebrews 11:1; see also Heb.6:11; 10:22, not coincidentally in the Biblical context of the "veil" that will be discussed shortly.

death--now is left alone with his entire family deceased. Julie affirms the divine plan that brought Saint-Preux into her life and exposes the falseness of society that subverted the will of God into something else:

> My heart was made for love, discriminating with regard to personal merit, indifferent to the values of opinion. It was almost excluded that my father's prejudices should accord with my penchant. I had to have a lover of my own choosing. He came forward; I thought it was I who chose him: doubtless it was Heaven that chose him for me in order that, a prey to the errors of my passion, I should not succumb to the horrors of crime, and that the love of virtue itself at least should remain in my soul after virtue itself. (594)

The interpretation of this is obscure, as Stewart and Vache note (721, n.123), and it seems incongruous that the young man was brought into her life only for lessons in virtue, and to deliver her from the "horrors of crime." We must remember that to separate a woman's virtue from her virginity was a radical change for the audience, but by this point virtue has been dialogized into redefinition. Although Saint-Preux seemed originally to use the language of rakes to seduce noble daughters, she says, "At first all I knew of him was his language; I was seduced," yet he "respected" (me) and, "Any man capable of such a feat has a beautiful soul." Eventually, it is *his* virtue that keeps them from adultery, and the "sensibility" that has cleansed her with tears leaves her with no regrets:

> Sensibility always brings to the soul a certain self-contentment independent of fortune and events. How I have wailed! What tears have I shed! And yet, if I had to be reborn under the same conditions, the evil I have committed would be the only one I would wish to retrench: the evil I have suffered I would still accept. (595)

Incredibly, it is her husband Wolmar that relates this account, word for word: "Saint-Preux, I render you her very words; once you have read her letter, perhaps you will understand better (ibid.). This is referring to the letter to Saint-Preux that she handed Wolmar, explaining the "exhilaration" she feels in dying. The messages conveyed through Wolmar, including the letter, seem appallingly insensitive of her husband, and indicate that the young man was her only true love. Wavering from the duty of her marriage, she had considered adultery, and adds that she will reunite with her lover in the afterlife, a destination her husband is probably incapable of reaching.

The common assumption from critics that Wolmar somehow represents God seems weak, considering his final position as an outsider. As cited before, Shklar declares that Wolmar is God, and Starobinski argues that he believes himself "the analogue of God" or that he "refuses to believe in a personal God so as to become his successor on earth," and a "substitute for God" (Starobinski 112-3). The primary evidence for this position is, first, that he is portrayed as omniscient, his all-seeing eye probing men's hearts. Second, his self-sufficient system at Clarens gives him a divine prerogative; this echoes Rousseau's other work that ascribes lacking nothing outside of oneself as comparable to God (ibid.). Certainly, Wolmar is centrally associated with reason, with his dispassionate abilities of observation and wisdom about human motivation. Moreover, we can read scientific thinking into Wolmar's thinking, since science was still an emerging discipline in the eighteenth century and still a subset of reason. But science and reason as enlightenment ultimately fail for Rousseau because of their inability to *feel* the higher truths that cannot be grasped by human rationalism. Indeed, even as science and knowledge developed into the juggernaut of today, apart from its success in military power and the creation of wealth, irrationalism and romanticism still dominate the human spirit in the realms of faith and politics.

Wolmar, old and passionless, with his accumulated wisdom, is unable to transcend his stodgy logic and feel the zeitgeist of the age to come, where feeling comes first.

Julie, in imitation of Christ at the last supper, drinks the wine, even to a little inebriation. Also recalling Christ, her last words whispered to Wolmar are, "I have been made to drink to the dregs the bittersweet cup of sensibility"[25] (601). Only sensibility will triumph in the end. Her funeral shroud becomes a golden "veil," embroidered with pearls that her lover had brought back from his travels in India. Indeed, as Starobinski indicates, this veil imagery exists throughout *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in a multitude of ways. Claire's broken-hearted letter to Saint-Preux, also enclosed with Wolmar's letter, draws attention back to it: "It is all over. Imprudent, unfortunate man, unhappy visionary! You will never see her again…the veil…Julie is no…." The veil recalled alludes to a dream by Saint-Preux on the night he leaves Clarens and stays in the same room he occupied during his earlier exile. As we saw above (p. 240) material objects in the room recalled memories of his lost love, leading him to exclaim he would have more hope if she were dead. This sentiment is transmitted into a dream that recurs several times during the night, and is depicted in a rather gothic style engraving; from this revelation, he knows he will never see his beloved Julie again (503ff.).

The dream is filled with dismal shapes and apparitions, but Saint-Preux sees Julie's mother behind a veil, saying, "My child…we must fulfill our destiny…God is just." As he reaches for the veil, the image becomes Julie, again separated by a veil, which he gropes to remove; but she says to him, "The fateful veil covers me, no hand can push it aside" (505). When Julie's mother died early in the book, and Julie, in her grief, insisted that she must never see the young lover again, he declared, "The veil is rent!" (260). In addition, when Edward dismisses his

[25] "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me…if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done." (Matt. 26:39,42 ASV)

dream, Milord insists that he return to Clarens to calm his fears by seeing Julie. In a foreshadowing of her last letter, Edward urges, "Make haste, I will wait for you; but above all do not return until you have rent that fatal veil woven in your brain" (506). Edward means by this only that he should see Julie's face once more to assure himself but too embarrassed by his fears of seeing her, Saint-Preux is content to hear her voice in the garden.

The expression, "Rend the veil," may have significant meaning here, though it is obscure. Although many critics give a religious significance to this veil as it appears at the ending of *Julie*, no critic that I can find has identified the loaded Judeo-Christian imagery it implies. Thus, more complete interpretation of it may enlighten the paradoxes of the ending of the novel. Allusions to Christ are obvious in Julie's death, but the peculiar Christian meaning of the veil has been disregarded. This may be because Rousseau scholars are not inclined to Christian mythology, and Christians are not inclined to Rousseau, but the possibilities need to be considered. Although the reference may seem pedantic to those not acquainted with the Bible's use of veils, the subject of Christ accessing a way through the veil was not obscure in the doctrines of Calvinism and the Protestant Reformation, and was indeed a key point in countering the Catholic doctrine of priests and sacraments as necessary for access to the presence of God. Julie's entrance, through death, into this presence is no less than a substitution for Christ, an alternative route offered by way of an imitation of Julie.

"The veil is rent" is a well-known expression included in all three synoptic gospels at the moment of Christ's death. Matthew 27 is typical: "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom" (Matt. 27:51-2 KJV). In Christian theology, this veil refers to the "most holy place" in the Jewish temple, described as the literal presence of God which only the high priest could

enter, once a year on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), with blood sacrifices for the cleansing of the sins of Israel (Exodus 26ff.). To Christians, Jesus Christ fulfilled this role, allowing the believer access to the presence of God through the veil: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Hebrews 10:20-1[26]). Although Starobinski argues that Rousseau wants *unmediated* transparency of communication with God, the general Christian conception is that Christ is the "mediator" between a holy God and the believing sinner, whom he presents in the transparency of *purity*, that is, cleansed of sin. Of course, Rousseau does not accept this concept of sin, blood sacrifice, mediation, and forgiveness of sin, and conspicuously does not include these formulas in Julie's dying profession of faith; yet these concepts were well-known to his readership, both Catholic and Protestant. Julie has entered into this "holiest of holy," the presence of God, by a radically different means: sensibility. Though she indicates that "God himself has veiled his face" (574), the normal explanation for this condition is that God's "veil" is due to the sinfulness of man. Julie anticipates the time when she will see God "face to face" in a passage Starobinski uses to his own view of unmediated presence:

> God reads our thoughts even in this life, and by [direct communication] we shall in turn read his in the next, since we shall see him face to face. For after all, she added, looking at the Minister, what use would senses be once there is nothing more for us to do? The eternal Being is neither seen nor heard; it makes itself felt; it speaks neither to the eyes nor the ears, but to the heart. (597)

[26] This doctrine is detailed, rather extensively for the entire chapter of Hebrews 9, thought to be written by the apostle Paul.

The fictional editor argues that this communication of the thoughts of God seems an apt description of "face to face." But the context of this section is the relation of soul to body, and whether there will be resurrected bodies, a question Julie declines to answer. Certainly this unmediated communication is a factor, but the most important point is that God communicates through the sensible heart. The question concerns more whether ears and voice, dependent on a body, are really necessary in heaven; God does not depend on functional organs, even for communicating his will to beings on earth, but works directly on the heart through *feeling* that transcends words as the vehicle of truth. Julie achieves salvation because her feelings are authentic, a path offered to the reading audience as well, and one they took up. Thus "sensibility," the feelings of the virtuous heart, becomes a means to salvation.

While my reading of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* has not attempted to incorporate much of Rousseau's other works into illuminating the novel--which is always a complicated and contradictory task with this author--it is well known that the quickly succeeding *Emile* continued many of the book's themes in a far more extensive manner. This was both a reason why *Emile*, in its philosophical prolixity, was less read, as well as a cause for stirring up more trouble for the author. However, a statement from the notorious "Savoyard Vicar" section on religion is helpful here for its stress on the importance of this privilege of feeling. Ernst Cassirer notes Rousseau's uniqueness in his opposition to the analytic reasoning of the Enlightenment with "the force of feeling," but insists that an understanding of this sentimentality must take into account an "ethical will" within the individual as well. He finds "the real center of Rousseau's doctrine of feeling" the real key to a unified perception of the author's "system," as expressed by the Vicar:

> Conscience! Conscience! Divine instinct, immortal and celestial voice! Sure guide of being ignorant and limited, yet intelligent and free! Infallible judge of good and evil,

> making men resemble God! From you comes the excellence of man's nature and the morality of his actions…without you I feel nothing within myself that raises me above the beasts, except for this sorry privilege of straying from error to error, with the help of an intelligence without order and a reason without principle. (*Emile*, qtd. in Cassirer 109)

Rousseau sees this inner intuitive force, which is in touch with the natural goodness of man, as countering those "external" temptations by which society would lead him astray. Cassirer argues this is not merely a capacity of the mind but centrally "the original power of the self, from which all other powers grow and must grow continually" (Cassirer 112). This inner conscience is the way that virtue extends from the divine and unites with feeling for a complete moral vision.

The departure of Rousseau's thinking from conventional morality cannot be overstated. Julie's model of virtue and feeling has guided her with a divine voice, and that "voice" is the sensible heart. Through this infallible guidance she has assurance of entering the presence of God as guiltless, even while having an erotic passion for a man other than her husband. Rousseau holds an absolute conviction about immortality, and in a letter to Voltaire he insists that no human evidence can refute it: "All the subtleties of metaphysics will not make me doubt for a moment the immortality of the soul or a beneficent Providence. I feel it, I believe it, I want it, I hope for it, and I will defend it to my last breath" (qtd. in Cassirer 70). It is important to see that Rousseau is adamant about his hope in an afterlife, both here and throughout his life--a crucial issue for most of his contemporary audience, as well. Our more modern conception of a feel-good divinity--or secularism and existential absurdity--clouds the salience of life after death to a society where a healthy young woman dies from a chill (and physicians only know to *bleed* her). Rousseau scholarship sees the author primarily as secular author, and rightly points out that he generally expresses little interest in religion as such. Of course, critics are aware that most

authors up until this period have at least vaguely Christian assumptions, but have trouble taking such authors seriously. At such a momentous period of change, it is hard for us to grasp the revolutionary implications that Julie can be saved by what she *feels* rather than the "truth" she believes.

Julie's post mortem letter to Saint-Preux, open for Wolmar to read and enclosed in his own contains a reversal of her earlier pretensions, a shocking revelation, and a way of reading the novel:

> We must abandon our plans…We were planning to reunite: this reunion was not good. It is a blessing that Heaven has prevented it; it is no doubt preventing calamities…I have long deluded myself. That delusion was for me salutary; it collapses at the moment when I no longer need it. You have believed I was cured, and I thought I was. Let us give thanks to him who made this error last as long as it was useful; who knows whether seeing myself so near the abyss, I would not have been drawn into it? Aye, however much I wanted to stifle the first sentiment that brought me alive, it crystallized into my heart. There it awakens at the moment when it is no longer to be feared; it sustains me when my strength fails me; it revives me as I lie dying. My friend, I make this confession without shame…If the heart, which is not in its power, was for you, that was a torment for me and not a crime…virtue remains to me without spot, and love has remained to me without remorse…Have I not lived long enough for happiness and for virtue? (608-9)

The sentiment that was awakened in her young love becomes the same voice of sensibility that sustains her in dying. She ascribes her delusion to God, who has allowed her to mistakenly believe in her change to keep her virtue intact, but the implication is that she would have fallen into the "abyss" eventually, if Saint-Preux had returned to live at Clarens. A certain line of

"crime" exists, which would be the act of adultery of a married woman; God, seeing her weakness, takes her in his mercy, knowing she will fall if she remains alive. This self-knowledge is the "fatal secret" foreshadowed earlier, not Wolmar's atheism. Clearly, she knows now that she would betray her husband eventually if she were allowed to live. She has lived long enough for "virtue" in her eight years of chastity in marriage, as well as for "happiness," proving that the utopian environment of Clarens was insufficient. She is neither in need of the Catholic sacraments nor the Protestant profession of faith in the sacrifice of Christ, forgiveness and atonement; her feelings and intuition lead her to a clear conscience and a penetration of the "veil" to the other side, in the presence of God, "without spot." There, she awaits the lover of her desire, chosen by Heaven to awaken the sentiments that lead to her salvation and their eventual reunion in eternity.

Critics like de Man see this alternative theology more as an allegorical representation, arguing that Rousseau "invents an entity called God," an "eternal simulacrum" and more of "an image within ourselves" (de Man 218-219); unquestionably, the case can be made for the author's ambiguity. I am arguing that Rousseau is dialogizing the notions of conventional Christianity without coming to a clear conclusion about a new path for salvation, while definitely hoping for it. He simply "feels" the truth. We have spent a very long time in the minds of these characters, and we assuredly believe that Julie is "saved," if there is such a thing. As Ong argues, the comprehensive power of print consciousness really came into being during the beginnings of genuine scientific knowledge on a mass scale and provided credible explanations for the existence of the world. To counter that, Christianity used print for both the widespread dissemination of the scriptures and complex analytical systems of interpreting divine as well as human action. Rousseau is in between science and sin in an alternative print consciousness,

articulating the psyche and the sentiments with something that neither reason nor dogma can grasp, but can be intuited through the human heart that possesses the sensibility to read the divine truth of nature.

We might say that the pastor who attends Julie's death recognizes a transcendent truth in Julie, but we cannot be certain about Wolmar and his passionless reason. Julie's final letter instructs Saint-Preux to make a believer of him by Christian example, though we have examined how "Christian" is an alien word with Rousseau, dialoging a personalized semantic intent in a novel manner. Stewart and Vache note that the author indicated to a friend that Wolmar evidences a "conversion," but this "hardly decides the issue," which is highly disputed by critics (Rousseau 610 n.140). We can only pity the older gentleman at the revelations of this letter, detailing Julie's deluded love for him, and her certain fall to adultery in the future. Only the god she loves prevented that inevitability by taking her and fulfilling her hopes of bonding with Saint-Preux in heaven. The young man's grief, not Wolmar's, was her "greatest pain" and she does not leave a promise to her earthbound husband. As we noted, in giving Wolmar the letter to Saint-Preux, she says she has lived as a "worthy" spouse, and he has made her "happy and virtuous;" if she "placed a value on life" it was to spend it with him (590-1). Yet she no longer values life and has lived long enough for "happiness and for virtue" and chooses death to be with Saint Preux:

> But would my soul exist without thee, without thee what felicity should I enjoy? Nay, I leave thee not, I go to await thee. The virtue that separated us on earth shall unite us in the eternal abode. I die in this flattering expectation. Only too happy to pay with my life the right to love thee still without crime, and to tell thee so one more time. (610)

As the narrative begins with Saint-Preux exclaiming "I must flee" because the world cannot accept their love of commoner and aristocrat, so Julie flees the world to await their reunion in another world. In the end, Rousseau does not offer a way of changing the world, but rather a way of individual *being* in the world but not of the world. The Christ-like images of Julie, including her death (at a similar young age) suggest that the world conspires to destroy perfect beings who will not submit to the corruptions of its institutions. Rousseau reaches out through a compelling drama and offers meditations about perceiving the world through a new sensibility, another cosmos of sentiment where one can still partake of original nature and divine will. Julie dies early to prove a point, and does, as Starobinski and others indicate, offer a choice to the reader. A different kind of virtue is being redefined, a virtue for sinners, but also an authentic way of living now and for eternity that transcends all conventionality and expectations of the era. The system of Rousseau is no system, and intentionally belies a point by point road to salvation; rather, there is the consuming experience of the novel, immersed in the virtual reality of the inner consciousness of the author. It proved a powerful combination for the eighteenth century and provided a lyrical vision that in many ways is more present in the lives of moderns today than any psychic state from science or religion. In that, Rousseau is very nearly a holy man.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

> Although Rousseau himself admits that he had a contradictory nature, he is a long way from being aware of all the contradictions in his character and thought. The will to unity is not served by a perfect conceptual clarity: it is a confused thrust of Rousseau's whole being rather than intellectual method. Certainly there is in his work more implicit meaning than he is aware of. This is true of any writer, but especially of Rousseau. 'It took Kant to *think Rousseau's thoughts,'* as Eric Weil has written (and I would add: it took Freud to 'think' Rousseau's feelings). (Starobinski 115)

The written text has an occult power to accomplish far more than the author's intentions, and by its nature says things it doesn't say. Jean-Jacques Rousseau had no premonition of the power of *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse,* and clearly he was both astonished and troubled by the novel's wild reception. He had even less understanding about the future and the direction that civilization was taking. Nevertheless, he anticipated more of modern thinking than any philosopher or author of the pre-modern world. If Kant articulated Rousseau better than Rousseau, we could also add that Jean-Jacques reflects postmodern thought and language philosophy into contemporary thinking far more than any other thinker of the Age of Reason, except, perhaps, the eccentric Lawrence Sterne. Starobinski's connection to Freud speaks from a time when Freud was held in far higher repute, and certainly the unconscious sexual undertones enlighten *Julie,* as critics like Tanner show. I would add that other modern psychologists "think" Rousseau's feelings as well: Abraham Maslow, Jean Piaget, and B.F Skinner echo him, along with a host of self-help psychology works and "New Age" thinkers. Such wisdom has given a positive sense of well-being to the modern self, and clearly, reading *Julie* was *therapeutic* in its day. Rousseau portrayed an alternative lifestyle and worldview at a time when religion and

reason were becoming inadequate in explaining the human psyche. We have become accustomed to reading psychological insight and emotional, meaningful stories, but he had an effect that was no less than revolutionary in his day. This succeeded through his extraordinary creative thinking, the power of the novel, a charismatic relationship with his readership, and an infectious lyrical imagination.

Julie was the first literary cult phenomenon because it was a crystallization of modern thinking combined with the arrival of communication technology. The complexity of the persuasion in the book and the subtlety of thematic movement through a multiplicity of languages, perspectives, and genres could only be accomplished through the innovative technological capacity of the novel. Rousseau's encyclopedic work advanced a new world of feeling and the mystical unknown, beyond the Encyclopedist collection of knowledge. The internalization of voice, a vicarious experience in the virtual realism of the printed page, offered a profound capacity for introspection. The epistolary form allowed an unprecedented access to the inner lives of the characters, a place where Rousseau was a master of eloquence. He brought the awakening of the self by revealing his own individual self; readers embraced the personal identification with the author and his characters. And, as Shklar notes, the epistolary form was the most natural for him, and allowed him his greatest eloquence (228). Rousseau spoke best in a passionate, sentimental voice, enabled by the novel more than other forms. Walter Ong has asserted that print experience has a consciousness altering power, which served Rousseau to grand effect with his style of persuasion. Yet a change of consciousness--a new way of being and perceiving--has an amazing transformative power; however, transformation can be dangerous and unpredictable as well, especially when it happens on a mass scale.

This was a new kind of psychological rhetoric. *La Nouvelle Héloïse* functions as a subtle polemic, capturing the reader in its dream, arousing sensuality in its promise, defining sensibility as an interpretive device, speaking of things known in another semantic dimension, and weaving themes through a multitude of contexts and genres. *Julie* persuades of a new world order, overturns the icons of the culture, and steeps the reader in the experience of the mind and perception of Rousseau. As the author indicates in his preface, he intentionally manipulates a dramatic tension as a "deception" toward a goal of moral edification, and uses the growing power of feeling to communicate "to the heart by degrees," all for a "cumulative effect." Rousseau invites his readership to fall in love with his characters and empathize with their hopes and sufferings; moreover, the interlacing themes and didactic concepts are *dialogized* across every setting, subject, genre, action and incident. After carefully educating his audience as to how to read *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and flattering his sympathetic readers, he moves them in a very different direction than Enlightenment orthodoxy, while skewing familiar eighteenth-century meaning in an innovative and *alien* manner. As they witness the maturing of the young lovers, the author intends that the audience experience "sensation" along with them, and inculcates what Bakhtin calls *internally persuasive discourse* into their own "ideological becoming." In fact, that was the life-changing experience of *Julie* recounted by his readers. The end of the book is better called a "becoming" than a synthesis, as indeed his audience seemed to carry their own intoxication with virtue into a public reformation far beyond the imagination of Rousseau.

The inspiration for Rousseau's thought began with the essay contest that first brought him recognition, and he astonished his contemporaries with his original thinking. Man was originally "born good" in his natural state, but the arts and sciences--and in his later essay, the institutions of society and private property--all had distanced humankind from nature and

produced inequality, oppression, and a substitution of the artificial for the realities of man's original condition. Yet the voice of nature still reaches out to humans, as does the will of Heaven, recognized by the natural feelings of the pure heart when it is clear of the prejudices that modern life imposes. *Julie* becomes an angry tour through the natural and the unnatural aspects of eighteenth-century society, a tale of virtuous hearts finding the path in a world gone awry. Nature united the lover's hearts for eternity, confirmed by the sensibility they share and the virtue they love. The values of "opinion" hold no attraction for them, and society's most treasured symbols are proved false in nature's mirror. Their love itself, the purest flame, is rejected by society and though it endures throughout their lives, the force of unnatural expectations weakens them into mistakes; only their love of virtue sustains them and strengthens their characters. However, they are forced to submit to worldly institutions and seek the most authentic life that remains to them. Tragically, this oppression brings about Julie's death, as if purity cannot continue in a world given over to counterfeit morality. Hope is sustained by the transcendence of feeling hearts that will be reunited in a better world. The implication is that the imposture of society and defilement of nature are not only inauthentic, these are lethal to pure hearts and feeling souls. The book does not end with a call for reformation of the world, but a condemnation, and a call for individual transformation, because the world will not change.

Rousseau and his blockbuster novel made him the first media celebrity and much of his suffering was due to his unanticipated success and attention, a complaint that is a commonplace among the famous today. He did not write for revolution, but for healing, and his *belles âmes* were not radical ideologues; the personal was political in the sense of a call to individual freedom and reformation within their own hearts, and the way they lived in the world. In the closing footnote to *Julie*, the fictional editor--now ambiguously revealing he is the author as

well--boasts that he has succeeded in compiling a readable narrative without rascals and "not driven by villainy, by crimes, not mixed with the torment of hate" and his novel appeals to those readers of "good natural disposition" (612). Still, the lack of evildoers in this tragic storyline does not leave the novel without culprits. Rousseau sees that as human populations become civilizations and set up competition for resources, power struggles vie for property rights, comparison brings inequality, and hence, vanity and pride; the scoundrel is civilization. In his own personal life, Rousseau saw collective conspiracies against him, and such suspicions inform the events of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* as implied causes of the tragedy. While the Baron d'Étange could be called the closest to villainy of the characters for his separation of the lovers, ultimately he is a sympathetic character; nevertheless, he suffers the loss of everyone he loves for his actions. The Baron has acted out of his subjection to a higher power, the "Opinion" of society and its institutions that malevolently turn the hearts of good people into the nature-consuming machine of vanity. The characters of the novel find a resolution in a higher plane of existence, but Rousseau is clear that society is to blame.

Rousseau is often criticized for his idealized conceptions of humanity when contrasted to his own life, which was full of flaws and contradictions. He had no background in government and yet had grand visions of how the world should be functioning. He did not raise his own children or participate in education. His romantic relationships were mostly unreturned infatuations; he did not find happiness of his own. At the end of his life, he stated that the only time he was ever able to completely be himself or experience anything like real happiness and love was when he was, at seventeen, basically a gigolo of Madame de Warens', twelve years his senior. Yet because he was not limited by traditional education or practical realities, he was able to offer a creative vision of the world that was not forced to reconcile with the rules. His other

works like *The Social Contract* spoke of the ideal State, but he was imagining small republics like Geneva or the village at Clarens. He was not accounting for the political means to overthrow the vast institutional systems of entrenched monarchy and centuries of aristocratic control of property. Indeed, the French Revolution, and others that followed descended into violence, power struggles, and spiraling bloodlust that had nothing to do with the author's utopian ideals.

If "Rousseau" and "Revolution" have become linked in history and ideology, the revolution was really one of seeing with the lyrical mind and lyrical values. Rousseau succeeded because there was a remarkable truth to his works. He was simply on to something before everyone else, and he grasped the *feeling* of the human condition far more than the brilliant and talented thinkers and artists of his day. His "outsider" condition enabled him to breech the paradigms of culture; he made the outsider a hero and the establishment a villain. The eighteenth century had reached the full zenith of rococo excess, and the flowering aristocracy had ripened into rottenness, its fruits vulnerable for the plucking. Religious institutions had weakened as well, its corruption and archaic ritual unattractive on one side, with austere and self-righteous Calvinism on the other; the sterile and hopeless alternative of atheism seemed to be an excuse for sensuality. Rousseau seeped into the cracks with a truth that had a feeling of authenticity and presented an entire way of being that encompassed domestic life, the natural world, erotic fantasy, psychological insight *and* salvation. The author proclaimed "revolutionary" vision in the figurative and lyrical sense even if it was mistakenly read by the literal revolutionaries as a manifesto for radical social and political upheaval.

The world was becoming too complex for reason to encompass it all. Lyrical images compact the argument into ambiguous feelings that cannot be questioned. The eighteenth-century concept of "sensibility" is lost to us in English today, now meaning something more like

common sense. “Romanticism” took over the semantic territory of sensibility, but that word has since acquired a connotation of erotic love. Kundera’s use of “lyrical” seems apt for modern political and cultural image constructions, branding, narratives, and myths; but “lyrical” is obscure in English and used here for lack of a better term to characterize the cloud of thinking that carries the day in modern rhetoric, and persuades primarily with emotion. In such an age of information, technological progress, and mass communication, the “truth” has never had less value against the power of feelings. Bakhtin argues that we become the language we absorb from the sum total of the language experience in our lives, we can say that most of us are becoming the “mediated” reality of our technology. Internally persuasive discourse comes as a tune, a commercial, or a show.

The imaginative thinking that Rousseau exercises was not unknown before him; he was an eclectic reader, assimilating and blending many common currents into his own unique creation. He anticipates modern thinking and truths that will be assumptions of the present zeitgeist, and sometimes even faddish obsessions. Rousseau propounds a nascent environmentalism and emphasis on allowing nature to follow its own best interests, uncontrolled and unexploited by man. He established a beauty in natural wildness, and an awareness of the holistic harmony of ecosystems. He preached a certain spiritual essence ruling in nature with undertones of pantheism, anticipating the infusion of Asian religious thought into the West, first from Transcendentalism in the nineteenth century and then later expanded in movements of the late twentieth century. For Rousseau, the message from nature was the revelation of the divine. Indeed, he often sounds somewhat like the *Dao De Jing*, an assumption of Chinese thinking from its ancient origins. The divine force in nature--*Dao* or “the way”--is united with *De*, that is, “virtue,” pervades the cosmos and can be incorporated into human action. As such concepts

have had substance for billions in the East and been inspirational in recent decades in the West, these ideas reflected a truth and wisdom that resonated with the eighteenth-century audience. Rousseau made a new type of spirituality attractive, a "natural religion" that like today, transcended denominational lines.

Julie became somewhat of what we would call an "interactive" text, suggesting readers "become Julie" themselves and provided practical means of daily living to begin the path of virtue. Rousseau promulgates a simplicity and natural method of gardening, and a dignity of common labor and rural living. He applies simple and natural solutions to landscapes, food, dress, furniture, music, occupation, and all of life. Rousseau was correct in seeing that simple music and folk melody would prove more enduring to the masses than the intricacies of Baroque and Classical music. He propounded a lyrical simplicity, akin to the modern illusion that life can return to simplicity or "traditional values" amidst all of our technology and global complexity. Yet as the world grows ever more difficult for "reason," lyrical abstractions become all the more available to explain it.

La Nouvelle Héloïse also speaks eloquently to the discontent of youth, and as Kundera indicated, youth, revolution, and lyrical poetry hold to a common way of thinking. The impact of *Julie* seems like youth movements in the late twentieth century that were disillusioned by stagnant societal conventions and urged into political action by the Beat poets, iconoclastic rock and roll music and revolutionary imagery, all under a banner of "love." Rousseau incorporated a youthful rebellion against the fathers, and as Shklar indicates, offered a kind of attractive "vagrancy" as the "model of natural freedom" (46). Society has always had its vagrants, but never before did they have such a noble and articulated ideology. Nietzsche saw Rousseau's influence as a triumph of the losers. As Ong has argued, the romantic movement became "the

beginning of the end of rhetoric as a major academic and cultural force" (Ong 1977, 296). The restructuring of consciousness engendered by print technology created "new interior distances within the psyche" and helped bring about the "alienation" that became the condition of modern man (ibid.17). The lyrical imagination became a dominating force, even in political and economic action. If Marxism, for example, leaned on its "scientific" premises, it persuaded more on lyrical grounds, such as the "brotherhood of man." All contemporary political movements claim science, but argue with kitsch.

The genius of *Julie* lay in capturing the lyrical thinking of a generation that had grown weary of the limits of political realities, confining institutions and cautiously reasoned strategies. Indeed, the language of the heart, the heightened sensibility, the romantic quest and lyrical vision works only in individual awakening; it turns oppressive only as it becomes applied to others. The novel invites its readers into a world of individual freedom more than mere political liberty--a shared perception of beautiful souls that transcends the ways of the world. If man is born free, the "chains" are his own creations: fashion, extravagance, artifice of style, unnatural music and art, conversation, pretensions of knowledge, possessions, personal pride, the opinions of others, and desire itself are all slaveries of the soul and repressions of natural freedoms. The lyrical imagination grasps a meaning in simplicity, the undervalued, the expression of nature, and spontaneous emanations of the heart. The lyrical vision turns away from reason, knowledge, and institutional dominion of the known, and looks to the ineffable mysteries of the unknown, the realms of the spirit and the intuitively perceived feelings of sensibility. The imagination dismisses the rules of virtue, and focuses on the spirit of virtue. Ultimately, the real power of vision and wisdom in the world is to change oneself; trying to change others--or the world--only leads to frustration, or exercising power with abuse. Lyricism creates another type of

imprisonment. Personal intoxication can induce joy and liberation in difficult circumstances; when intoxication looks outward, it can turn violent.

Likewise, religious inebriation may benefit the believing individual, but becomes dangerous when extended to others. Starobinski shows how the hybridization of religious language and the language of love projects "a prefiguration of heaven and a souvenir of Eden" onto the Swiss landscape of *Julie,* and renders it with an eschatological significance: "Using religious symbolism he created a private myth. What else? The private myth thus constructed is a good bet to become a collective myth for the next generation" (351). The language of individual freedom becomes the shibboleths of true believers as the myth becomes the method. Again, while lyricism and myth inspire the individual, they can be oppressive for the group; those who see otherwise become the "other." The lyrical others become enemies, and bogeyman abstractions of evil. As the dreams of erotic romance have difficulties coping with the unpleasant actuality of loving a flawed human being, socialist paradises and religious utopias must erase complicating facts as counter-revolutionary or demonic agencies.[27] Nazism was the logical flowering of German Romanticism, and the mythical Nordic super-race was complemented by lyrical abstractions of Jewish cardboard villains; ultimately, even Nietzsche's vision was only an alternative lyricism.

However much we argue that Rousseau bears no responsibility for the brutality of the Revolution, there remains the fascinating link of the lyrical mind to violence. How does lyrical virtue become lyrical Terror? Somehow, there is a latent malevolence in *feeling* about words, images, code words, dreams, and abstractions. Lyricism invites a moral stance based upon feeling simple truths in warm pictures, and it despises complicated realities, questions, and intruding facts. Reason can continue the dispute against seeming contradictions, but feelings

[27] As a Christian "insider," I think that most modern believers prefer a lyrical Jesus, and a kitsch-based Devil.

cannot be argued. Reason is enhanced with wit, but feeling hates mockery more than anything. Reason seeks to instruct its adversaries in objective viewpoints. Feelings take all attacks personally, and opposition as malevolent. Virtue and Terror make logical companions not only for Islamic fundamentalists combating the Great Satan, but work as the tools of "shock and awe" to preserve freedom, or drone assassinations to secure the American Dream.

The modern world dwells in the realm where lyrical perception is granted more credibility than realism, and politics can be best explained as the battle of abstract images: traditional values, human rights, equality, Big Government, Wall Street, a Christian nation, the forefathers, special interests, American exceptionality, the War on Religion, terrorists, diversity, alien immigrants, conservative and liberal, or, complements of the French Revolution, Left and Right. Every important issue of the day can be read as lyrical image, laden with emotion and subjectivity. As the world shifted to print consciousness in Rousseau's day, "mediated" experience has become more the norm than real world existence, and the conveyer of our new "consciousness." The modern world of arts and entertainment is immersed in its lyrical fictions: the celebrity, the Facebook profile, the plethora of daily mythic entertainments, the ipod background music to experience, branding, the drugged buzz, the body image, the digital word, and the 3-D movie are the lyrical mediators of everyday "reality." Yet humanity is more discontent than ever, and seeks the answers in stronger lyrical prescriptions to feel better. The conditions today for revolution are sufficient in themselves. Mass communication has become the norm, and we need only "tune in" at any present moment to witness the hegemony of lyricism over global thinking.

The eighteenth century was a simpler time--perhaps the last simple time in Western culture. We should not overstate the impact of a particular book in a context that was rapidly

becoming complicated. However, Rousseau's book became widely available in a time when the arts were still scarcities. Indeed, *Julie* was present in the beginnings of the mass marketing of arts and entertainment; studying his effects suggests a microcosm of the modern world. Today, we are glutted with lyrical imaginations, and we could never look at a single work or even a trend affecting world perception without, really, infinite qualifications about other causes. As in the eighteenth-century revolution of print, we are currently in the midst of a technological hurricane of changing consciousness unfolding too quickly to grasp its meaning. What resembles "sensibility" now requires more of a technological savvy to absorb and interpret the flood of images of the culture. Live feeds or expert film making in visuals and sound make for a vivid "realism" and "reality shows," and yet it seems people live more in dreams than reality. More communication transpires in a single day than probably the entire history of the world up until the modern era, yet meaning seems more controlled and condensed to images, sound bites and arts that *sell*. In modern academics, we have to concede that lyrical thinking sells more than facts and reason, and it controls the discourse. Unfortunately, mass appeal has rarely determined the highest art. We would rather *Pride and Prejudice* to have been the book that changed the world, or *War and Peace.* We would prefer *Moby Dick* to be the life-changing American fiction of the nineteenth century, but that award probably goes to *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* We have only to look at the successes of any present year to believe that kitsch reigns supreme.

La Nouvelle Héloïse became a pioneer of market-based literary fame and mass movement. Rousseau deserves his place of influence in political thought, but his literary contribution needs more recognition to comprehend his significance. Nevertheless, a book that communicates to a great number of people is a work of genius, and Rousseau made a valuable contribution to a new perspective. He did not write *Julie* with a view toward manipulating

readers into earning him money and fame; he only sought to communicate his soul. We cannot say that romanticism would not have happened if he had not come along, yet lyrical thinking has always looked a little like Rousseau. More accurately, we can say that *La Nouvelle Héloïse* was an early example of what would prove a powerful discourse from the time when rhetoric combined with communication technology. Scientific rules in developments of technology; lyrical thinking reigns in rhetoric, human thought, cultural and spiritual change, and social progress--or regress. The two would evolve together, and as science captured the universe, the imagination of lyricism seized the minds of humanity. Although print technology offered the possibility of unlimited word--and this is true now more than ever--the discourse became all the more condensed and based on images and short-term attention. More information seems to lead to less thinking. Nevertheless, to rid the world of its lyrical thinking would be only to cease speaking to it. For that matter, to rid ourselves of lyrical notions would be to lose our dreams. We cannot be sure of the domains of a new consciousness in our own wired world, as the changes in print consciousness are only apparent in retrospect. We can only benefit from seeing the world in how it works and consider ourselves, lest we be too intoxicated to *understand.* Rousseau would have us change ourselves in such a world, and loose our own chains.

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