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ROUSSEAU'S THEATRE FOR THE PARISIANS:
A STUDY OF THE THEATRICAL WORKS OF JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

by

JERRY M. SCHWARTZ

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1999

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Preface

Like most theatre-lovers who first encounter it, I found Rousseau's Lettre à d'Alembert infuriating. Much of my anger sprang from his arguments, borrowed from Plato, seeking to prove that theatre was not a moral force in society but rather a form of vice. Yet what also struck me was the fact that the author who presented these negative views was clearly an ardent theatregoer. When I learned the extent of Rousseau's activities in the theatre I was intrigued. Having been convinced, by Cassirer, that Rousseau's philosophy was integrated by a single idea, I wondered how Rousseau was able to reconcile this Lettre with his theatrical works.

After reading Starobinski's studies of Rousseau, a solution presented itself in his concept of the "antidote in the poison" as the key to Rousseau's social program. In searching for articles that applied this idea to Rousseau's theatrical works I found that little study had been done in the area of Rousseau's theatre and next to none applying Starobinski's idea, or indeed any idea, attempting to reconcile Rousseau's views on theatre with his obvious love for it, and so my thesis was born.

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As it happens, there has recently been a great surge of interest in the Eighteenth Century, and I found myself blessed with the publication of two books that were invaluable in my research: Maurice Cranston's final volume of his biography of Rousseau, The Solitary Self (1997), and Professor Marvin Carlson's Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century (1998). English translations of most of Rousseau's works have recently been published or reprinted. It is my hope to see his theatrical works translated in one volume. This thesis is meant as a preliminary stage toward that goal.

In approaching the task of presenting Rousseau's theatre I decided to divide his works into general categories that reflected the areas of his theatrical development: the operas, the comedies, the political works, and their ultimate resolution in lyric melodrama. In doing so I found it necessary to discuss each area of Rousseau's theatre in terms of the events that surrounded it and brought it into being. Consequently the reader will find that each chapter has its own time-frame that often overlaps the previous one. The study nevertheless progresses forward to culminate in Rousseau's Pygmalion.

This work owes much of its existence to the inspiration of my professors at the City University of New York. I wish to thank my dissertation committee, in particular my Thesis

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Chairman Professor Daniel Gerould, for his invaluable knowledge of Eighteenth Century theatre as well as his advice and infinite patience. My thanks also, of course, extend to Professor Marvin Carlson whose work on the Eighteenth Century French and German theatre has been an inspiration and whose book on Voltaire has been a godsend. I thank Professor Jonathan Kalb for teaching me what it takes to be a good writer, for his kind support in this ultimate endeavor, and for telling me what I needed to learn in order to finish this work: that it is to be my rite of passage into the realm of academia.

Finally, I want to thank my research assistant Kathleen Huber, whose excellent knowledge of theatre and the French language, and whose superb editing skills, have made the burden of my work so much easier to bear.

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Introduction

Few figures in the Western World have generated as much scholarly interest as Jean-Jacques Rousseau. But although his essays and novels have inspired thousands of books and articles examining his revolutionary ideas, surprisingly little attention has been paid to his theatrical works. Why should this be?

Rousseau's own writings may be to blame. With the publication in 1750 of his Discours sur les sciences et les arts (also known as le Premier discours), Western culture received a staggering broadside that, to this day, has sent thinkers scurrying to their canons. One of the worst casualties of his attack was the theatre, which received an even more furious assault in his Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles (1758). Thinkers from Voltaire to Jonas Barish have pointed to this book as proof positive that Rousseau was anti-theatrical.

But was he? Current scholarship has begun to re-examine Rousseau's Lettre à d'Alembert and his Préface to Narcisse in order to correct this perception. The 1993 paperback reprint of Allan Bloom's 1960 translation of and introduction to the Lettre à d'Alembert signifies the extent to which this

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controversial work has gained wide interest. Bloom wants the work to be re-evaluated along with our modern fears of censorship, arguing that Rousseau was not so much against theatre as for its reform.[1] On the other hand, Samuel Ajzenstat argues that Rousseau's intent was not censorship, but something more radical: "to defend art against the theatre."[2] David Marshall sees Rousseau's goal as replacing one form of theatre with a far more coercive one: public festivals.[3]

If Rousseau's _Lettre à d'Alembert_ expresses his doubts about the moral worth of theatre, his own career testifies to his profound love of it. By the time he arrived in Paris in 1742, he had already written two operas (_La Découverte du Nouveau Monde_ and _Iphis_) and a comedy (_Narcisse_). Throughout his ten-year residence in Paris (1742-1752) Rousseau was an avid theatregoer. His exposure to the works of the finest playwrights and composers of France helped him to hone his craft and broaden his knowledge. In Paris, his theatrical endeavors received encouragement and assistance from Marivaux and high praise from Voltaire.

If Paris taught him the skills of a playwright, it was his sojourns to Italy that taught him the power of opera. In Turin he first encountered the splendor of Italian music and in Venice the enchantment of _opera seria_ and _opera buffa_.

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These experiences formed the foundations of his power as a composer and librettist.

In the course of his career, Rousseau attempted to master nearly every theatrical form then presented on the Paris stage. He wrote two comedies of manners (*Narcisse* and *L'Engagement téméraire*), a harlequinade (*Arlequin amoureux malgré lui*), a political romance (*Les Prisonniers de guerre*), a prose tragedy (*La Mort de Lucrèce*), a comic opera (*Le Devin du village*), a full-length tragic opera (*La Découverte du Nouveau Monde*), a full-length opera-ballet (*Les Muses galantes*), and a court masque (*Les Fêtes de Ramire*). In the last years of his life he invented an entirely new form of theatre: the lyric melodrama (*Pygmalion*).

Given the tone of his *Premier discours* and his *Lettre à d'Alembert*, one might assume that Rousseau's theatrical works were written before his self-imposed moral reform. But in fact he continued to write plays and operas both during and after his period of anti-theatrical diatribes. Moreover, those that were performed in Paris drew enthusiastic responses from audiences and theatre artists alike. A year after writing his *Premier discours* attacking the Arts and Sciences he created his most famous theatrical work, *Le Devin du Village*, which was performed before the King and Queen at Fountainebleau in October 1751 and the following

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March at the Opêra in Paris. Improving on Italian opera buffa, this French interlude breathed new life into French opêra-comique and even inspired Gluck in Vienna. In that same year Rousseau saw his Narcisse premiere at the Comêdie-Française and spawn numerous imitators, inspiring a craze for metamorphosis comedies dealing with men and women disguised as the opposite sex.

Even with Rousseau's so-called "reform" after the publication of his Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inêgalitê parmi les hommes (1754), also called his Second Discours, in which he is filled with fervor for his native Geneva and in which he aimed his barbs at Parisian high culture, he did not renounce the theatre. Instead, while working on the ideas that would later produce his Contrat social, he began La Mort de Lucrêce, a republican tragedy written in prose. And in 1762, when the publication of Emile found him banished from both Paris and Geneva, he still did not renounce the stage. In that same year he began work on his Pygmalion.

It is primarily on the basis of his Lettre â d'Alembert that Rousseau is judged anti-theatrical. What has been ignored or forgotten are the numerous essays and books in which Rousseau passionately promotes the theatre. His Lettre sur l'Opêra (1741), Lettre â M. Grimm . . . sur Omphale (1752), Lettre sur la musique françoise (1753), and

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his Dictionnaire de musique (begun in 1745 and completed in 1762) all extol the power of opera. In fact Rousseau wrote and published letters and essays praising the virtues of opera even in the last years of his life. Inspired by the operas of Gluck, his Extrait sur l'Orphée de Gluck (1776?), Lettre à M. Burney (1777), and Fragmens d'observations sur l'Alceste de Gluck (1777) all offer fresh insights on his music theories.

Given this history, one is forced to ask why, in the face of his famous polemics against the theatre, did Rousseau actively engage in it throughout his life? My thesis is an attempt to answer this question. In doing so I adopted Jean Starobinski's approach, which is to look beyond the texts themselves to the world in which Rousseau lived and worked.

An important part of that world centered on the Paris salons in which elegance, wit, and impeccable manners ruled along with lively discussions concerning the pressing issues of the day. The tone and the guest lists of the salons were dictated by the salonières: elegant, well-read, sophisticated women who were, more often than not, the wives of extremely wealthy bourgeois capitalists. Guests included the greatest statesmen, scientists, men of letters, and artists that Parisian society of the day had produced. It was in the salons that Rousseau met, among others,

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Marivaux, Voltaire, Rameau, and Diderot.

Another meeting-place for poets and theatre artists was the Café de Procope, which was situated directly across the street from the Comédie-Française. It was an establishment frequented by Rousseau and his friend Diderot, a place where they might discuss music and theatre while sipping coffee and playing chess. It was at the Café Procope in 1752 that Rousseau announced to the world that he was the author of Narcisse, which was then playing across the street.

At this time the world of the Parisian theatre was made up of three officially-sanctioned companies: the Comédie-Française, the Théâtre Italien, and the Opéra. Although the exclusive right to perform tragedy had been awarded by the Crown to the Comédie-Française, comedy and opera had gradually become less restricted to any particular theatre, and each company competed to present these forms. Consequently, in addition to a company of actors, each theatre had its own resident musicians and dancers. All three resented the competition of the Théâtre de la Foire which was made up of the Foire Saint-Germain and the Foire Saint-Laurent, and which offered lowbrow comedies and musical parodies of the latest works presented at the official houses.

The Court also had its private theatres in which the

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official companies were required to perform by royal command, with the Crown often defraying a great deal of the cost of the elaborate spectacles staged at Versailles and Fountainebleau. Two of Rousseau's works premiered at these Court stages.

There were, as well, the society stages maintained by the wealthy at their chateaux. These were amateur theatres in which the hosts and their guests would perform for their own amusement. Many new works by Voltaire, Marivaux, and even Rousseau were especially written for these stages which, being isolated from Paris censors and critics, tended to be more liberal and experimental.

Voltaire and Diderot led the Enlightenment's program in France of reforming Church and State via unofficial books and pamphlets. In the center of the arena of ideas were the great projects organized by Diderot and endorsed by Voltaire which produced the Encyclopédie, to which Rousseau, at Diderot's request, contributed articles on music.

But it was the theatre that was considered the most important organ for dispensing Enlightenment propaganda. Rousseau's theatrical works were no exception. But while Rousseau's essays and letters have been examined to extract his political views, his theatrical works have been all but ignored. Only three have been studied in any depth: Narcisse, Le Devin du village, and Pygmalion.

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Although the studies of these three works have proven a most useful beginning to this examination and while, in his essay "The Antidote in the Poison,"[4] Starobinski has found in the Préface to Narcisse what he holds to be the clue to Rousseau's entire social program, neither Starobinski nor any other scholar has tried to find within the plays and operas themselves Rousseau's answer to his critics.

If one believes, as I do, that Rousseau wrote his plays not merely as personal diversions but, as Starobinski argues for Rousseau's other works, as an antidote, an Achilles' Spear intended to cure the ills of a corrupt society, then Rousseau's seemingly conventional pieces may disguise an attempted cure for what Rousseau perceived as a corrupted art. The aim of this study is to discover just such a purpose and, hopefully, to reveal the nature of what I have termed Rousseau's Theatre for the Parisians.

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Notes

1. Allan Bloom, Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960) xi-xii.

2. Samuel Ajzenstat, "Citizen Rousseau Banished the Poets," in The Stage in the 18th Century, edited by J.D. Browning, (New York, Garland Publishing, 1981) 76.

3. David Marshall, "Rousseau and the State of Theatre," Representations 13 (September, 1992): 671-72.

4. Jean Starobinski, "The Antidote in the Poison," in Blessings in Disguise; or The Morality of Evil, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 123-26.

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Chapter One

The Idolater of Rameau: *Les Muses galantes* and *Les Fêtes de Ramire*

Rousseau was thirty years old when, in the summer of 1742, he came to Paris in search of fame. Looking to Rameau as his model, Jean-Jacques dreamed of being a composer. It was not wealth that mattered to him; he scorned money--even feared it. Nor was he after royal patronage, which would have obligated him to support a political system he despised. What he feared most was being corrupted and succumbing to vanity and greed. These fears eventually led Rousseau to employ desperate measures.

By 1747 Rousseau's theatrical career reached a crisis that began by his alienating the most celebrated composer of the age, Jean-Philippe Rameau, and ended with the aborted premiere of Rousseau's opera-ballet *Les Muses galantes*. Rousseau's opera, inspired by the music and theoretical works of Rameau and admired by the powerful Duc de Richelieu, was being rehearsed that year at the Paris Opêra. Two years earlier, after the command performance of *Les Muses galantes* for Richelieu, the Duke offered Rousseau a rare opportunity to have his work heard at Versailles by adapting *Les Fêtes de Ramire*, written by the two men Rousseau most idolized,Voltaire and Rameau.

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Rousseau met stiff resistance from Rameau but strong support from the Duc de Richelieu. He also acquired another powerful ally in Voltaire who, in a letter to Rousseau, praised his talents in glowing terms and gave him total authority over the libretto and permission to adapt it as he liked. The work was going well when Rousseau suddenly sensed that Rameau was behind a sinister plot to destroy his reputation before it began. At a critical moment in the project Rousseau withdrew and shut himself up in his room. Rameau was forced to complete the work. Rousseau's behavior cost him the support of Richelieu. Some months later at the Paris Opéra, the dress rehearsal for his _Muses galantes_ was greeted with warm applause by a large audience. Rousseau seemed poised on the brink of success when he suddenly withdrew his opera from rehearsal and canceled its premiere. Behind these two self-inflicted reversals of fortune lay a moral crisis accelerated by events that began six years before.

Rousseau in Paris

Rousseau entered Paris in July 1742 under far better circumstances than those of his brief stay some ten years before. In 1732 he had hoped to find a city as grand and imposing as he had imagined "où l'on ne voyoit que de superbes rues, des palais de marbre et d'or."[1] Instead he entered through Faubourg Saint-Marceau, then a slum

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district, and saw nothing but "petites rues sales et puantes, de vilaines maisons noires," and "l'air de la malpropreté, de la pauvreté."[2] And when Rousseau finally had the chance to view the splendid sights of Paris, he raced to the Opéra and Versailles, only to feel betrayed that they did not live up to his expectations: "car il est impossible aux hommes et difficile à la nature elle même de passer en richesse mon imagination."[3]

This time, however, rather than a naive boy of nineteen with unpolished skills and no useful contacts, Rousseau was an experienced man of thirty, one who brought with him an additional decade of knowledge, together with letters of introduction from the well-connected. He also carried two manuscripts, either of which he hoped would make his fortune: his new music notation system, based on numbers rather than notes, and his comedy Narcisse, ou l'Amant de lui-même.

His route through Paris was also far more pleasant. He writes in Book Seven of his Confessions, "Autant à mon précédent voyage j'avois vû Paris par son côté défavorable, autant à celui-ci je le vis par son côté brillant."[4] Although he describes his lodgings at the Hôtel Saint-Quentin on the Rue des Cordeliers near the Sorbonne as "vilaine rue, vilaine hôtel, vilaine chambre," he had chosen the boarding-house because of the important men who had lodged there before they became famous.[5]

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The Hôtel had been recommended to him by the Abbé de Mably and the Abbé de Condillac, who were destined to become famous philosophes. They were the sons of M. de Mably, chief provost of Lyons, who the year before had hired Rousseau as tutor to the Mablys' grandchildren. It was the Abbé de Mably who gave Rousseau letters of introduction: one to the renowned savant and octogenarian Fontenelle, and another to the archaeologist Count de Caylus, a member of the Academy of Painting.[6]

The Hôtel soon lived up to its fame, for within days Rousseau was introduced to another ambitious young thinker, Denis Diderot; and it would not be long before he met Marivaux. Rousseau quickly made the valuable contacts he needed, among them Rameau's mentor, Father Castel, a Cartesian Jesuit keenly interested in music theory, and the physician René-Antoine Réaumur, a member of the Academy of Sciences, who was most instrumental in helping Rousseau to present his system to the Academy.

In the Academy

Even before presenting his paper, Rousseau enjoyed preliminary meetings with Academy members, most importantly the mathematician d'Alembert, who was later to play a significant role in the querelle des Bouffons. Looking back on this moment in time, Rousseau realized its importance to his career:

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> Mes fréquentes visites à mes Commissaires et à d'autres academiciens me mirent à portée de faire connoissance avec tout ce qu'il y avoit à Paris de plus distingué dans la litterature, et par là cette connoissance se trouva toute faite lorsque je me vis dans la suite inscrit tout d'un coup parmi eux. 7

On 22 August 1742 Rousseau officially presented the paper on his system to a select committee. Their reception was not what he had hoped. Although his system was praised as an improvement over other such systems, the Academy also pointed out that the idea was not new and that his numerical notations, which allow a single instrument or vocalist to read music quickly, were inadequate for the needs of a full orchestra. Furthermore, his number system did not allow a musician to perceive at a glance the dynamic flow of the score. Rousseau felt that he was treated unjustly by the Academy and wrote with bitter contempt of the certificate they awarded him:

> Sur leur rapport l'Academie m'accorda un certificat plein de très beaux complimens, à travers lesquels on démêloit pour le fond, qu'elle ne jugeoit mon Systême ni neuf ni utile. 8

Rousseau's hopes of causing a revolution in music notation were dashed by the Academy's critique. It was not faint praise he wanted but recognition of his genius and the fame that would result. Unable to get satisfaction from the Academy, he took his case to the people. In February 1743, the _Mercure de France_ published an article in which Rousseau defended his system. This was followed by his book entitled _Dissertation sur la musique moderne_.

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If the article and the book did not move the Academy nor stir a musicians' rebellion, it did become popular reading in the fine homes of the salonnières, who welcomed him.

In the Salons of Paris

Here Rousseau discovered the truth of Father Castel's dictum that it was not at the Academies but in the salons that one's fortunes rose or fell. "On ne fait rien dans Paris," he advised Rousseau, "que par les femmes."[9] To expand on his meaning, the Cartesian Father offered Rousseau a Euclidean metaphor:

> Ce sont comme des courbes dont les sages sont les asymptotes; ils s'en approchent sans cesse, mais ils n'y touchent jamais. 10

Castel suggested two salons that would be open to him: Mme de Beuzenval's and Mme Dupin's. Rousseau visited each in turn. It was the latter that was by far the more important in furthering his musical career. In his Confessions, Rousseau recalls his first encounter with Mme Dupin:

> Elle étoit encore, quand je la vis pour la prémiére fois, une des plus belles femmes de Paris. Elle me reçût à sa toilette. Elle avoit les bras nuds, les cheveux épars, son peignoir mal arrangé. Cet abord m'étoit très nouveau; ma pauvre tête n'y tint pas: je me trouble, je m'égare; et bref, me voila épris de Mad[e] Dupin. 11

Although married to a much older man, Mme Dupin did not respond to the young Rousseau's amorous overtures. Despite her receiving Rousseau en déshabillé, Mme Dupin was

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"unfashionably faithful"[12] to her husband, Claude Dupin, one of the richest men in France and the owner of the splendid château Chenonceaux in the Loire valley. She was the daughter of the financier Samuel Bernard and his mistress Mme Fontaine, the former actress Manon Dancourt.[13] Young, beautiful, wealthy, talented, and charming, Mme Dupin hosted one of the most prestigious salons in Paris. Rousseau informs us:

> Sa maison, aussi brillante alors qu'aucune autre dans Paris rassembloit des societés auxquelles il ne manquoit que d'être un peu moins nombreuses pour être d'élite dans tous les genres. Elle aimoit â voir tous les gens qui jettoient de l'éclat: les Grands, les gens de lettres, les belles femmes. On ne voyoit chez elle que Ducs, Ambassadeurs, cordons bleus. [14]

Rousseau goes on to list, as her frequent guests, some of the most prominent nobility of the day, as well as distinguished men of letters and science such as Montesquieu, Fontenelle, Buffon, and Voltaire. Rousseau admired all four throughout his life, but as a would-be dramatist it was Voltaire he idolized most, although they would not meet until 1750.[15]

Mme Dupin engaged Rousseau as tutor to her teenage son, Chenonceaux. The future author of Emile found himself out of his depth tutoring the spoiled and difficult youth, but a friendship quickly developed between Rousseau and Mme Dupin's stepson Francueil, who was close to his own age. His plans for Narcisse were put on hold when Rousseau learned that Francueil had friends at the Opéra; for it

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was at this time that Rousseau began to seriously consider becoming an opera composer.

Les Muses galantes

Although Rousseau had written the libretti and music for two earlier operas, they had proved disappointing. While in Chambéry, probably between 1740 and 1741, he composed a tragic opera called Iphis et Anaxarête and another called La Découverte du nouveau monde,[16] both of which he claims: "j'avois eu le bon sens de jetter au feu."[17] This is only partly true; the music may have been burned, but the libretti have been spared (only partially in the case of Iphis). This rash act was precipitated by the reception La Découverte received "après l'avoir lû â M. Bordes, â l'Abbé de Mably, â l'Abbé Trublet et â d'autres."[18] One senses his regret at having destroyed La Découverte when he boasts of its reception by Jacques David, a professional composer in Lyons who helped Rousseau with this work.[19]

> J'avois fini par faire le même usage, quoique j'eusse déja fait la musique du prologue et du prêmier Acte, et que David m'eut dit en voyant cette musique, qu'il y avoit des morceaux dignes du Buononcini. 20

Rousseau was also indebted to David for teaching him how to play the recorder and, more significantly, for showing him a musical notation system David had invented to facilitate teaching music to beginners.[21] The

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cumulative judgments of Bordes, Mably, Trublet and David made Rousseau almost abandon his dream of becoming a famous composer.

These fears were soon routed by an experience which convinced Jean-Jacques of his hidden talent. That April, Rousseau saw Joseph-Nicolas Royer's opera-ballet le Pouvoir de l'Amour. He was both disappointed and excited by the work:

> Je ne pouvois m'empêcher de trouver cette musique foible, sans chaleur, sans invention. J'osois quelquefois me dire; il me semble que je ferois mieux que cela. 22

At first he remembered the reception of his early efforts, and his courage failed him. Although an idea for a story was forming in his head, he wondered where he could find a great composer to set his libretto to music.

The next day he came down with a high fever which soon turned into pneumonia. In his delirium:

> Je composois des chants, des duo, des choeurs. Je suis certain d'avoir fait deux ou trois morceaux "di prima intenzione" dignes peut-être de l'admiration des maitres, s'ils avoient pu les entendre executer.[23]

When Rousseau had recovered from this fever-dream, his qualms also seem to have evaporated, for he writes that "Je voulus en avoir le coeur net et tenter de faire à moi seul un Opera, paroles et musique."[24] Musical ideas came flooding into his head. "Je m'y livrai," he writes, "avec une ardeur qui pour la prêmiêre fois me fit goûter les dêlices de la verve dans la composition."[25]

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Thus was born his Les Muses galantes. Rousseau's theme for this new opera was love and inspiration. Each act would present a famous poet inspired by the love of a muse and evoke a musical mood reflecting each poet's view of love:

> Mon prêmier Acte en genre de musique forte êtoit le Tasse: le second, en genre de musique tendre êtoit Ovide; et le troisième intitulé Anacreon devoit respirer la gaité du Dithyrambe. 26

Rousseau had been drawn to Tasso's poetry since his late teens, when he was sent to Turin by Mme de Warens to be converted to Catholicism. Rousseau would often walk past Tasso's house, which was near the hospice of San Spirito where he lodged.[27] Years later, in Venice, he would joyfully listen to the gondoliers singing verses from Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered.[28] The correlation between Tasso's poetry and Italian music would later be highlighted in Rousseau's Lettre sur la Musique françoise (1753).[29] The new opera took such hold of his imagination that Rousseau became enslaved by it, even passing up a chance to attend the Opêra in order to work on his own:

> Un soir, prêt d'entrer â l'Opêra, me sentant tourmenté, maitrisé par mes idêes, je remets mon argent dans ma poche, je cours m'enfermer chez moi, je me mets au lit aprês avoir bien fermé tous mes rideaux pour empêcher le jour d'y pênêtrer, et lâ, me livrant â tout l'oestre poetique et musical, je composai rapidement en sept ou huit heures la meilleure partie de mon acte. 30

In the artificial darkness of his room Rousseau could dream that he was Tasso in love with the Princess of

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Ferrara. All the injustices he had endured as a youth were transferred into Tasso's struggle against the princess's "injuste frère."[31] His guilty love for Mme de Warens, his missed opportunities for true love, his impossible passion for Mme Dupin, all found outlet in his fantasies. His imagination let him become Tasso, and, he tells us, "me donnerent une nuit cent fois plus delicieuse que je ne l'aurois trouvée dans les bras de la Princesse elle-même."[32]

The original Tasso act has been lost, partly due to the fact that it was cut from the opera on the "advice" of the Duc de Richelieu and replaced by the Hesiod entrée. The unusual circumstances of the new act's creation as well as its unique content will be examined later.

From Lully to Rameau

The gallant lovers that populated Rousseau's imagination found their way into his operas through the opera-ballets of Rameau. Rousseau's Muses galantes was written in accordance with the conventions of the opera-ballet form, which had developed in France from its Seventeenth-Century Italian roots into a spectacle combining song, spoken dialogue, and dance.

French opera reached its maturity in the hands of Louis XIV's celebrated court composer Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-87), who wrote comic operas with Molière as his

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librettist and the bulk of his tragic operas with Philippe Quinault (1635-1688). In 1694, urged on by the pious Mme de Maintenon, Louis withdrew his support of the opera. Enthusiasts and financiers, however, saw to it that opera continued to be presented at the Palais-Royal, where it spawned would-be Lullys, but gradually decayed into second and third-rate copies. No longer employed to support the grandeur of the Royal Court, opera librettists turned to more topical and fanciful scenarios.

Now dependent on the tastes of the literary pundits who contributed to the *Mercure de France*, opera underwent harsh attacks from the champions of the spoken drama. Unable to conform to the models of Corneille and Racine, librettists instead emphasized spectacle and entertained by adding magic and fantasy to their fare. As a consequence the opera-ballet form emerged, emphasizing dance *divertissements* and consisting of a prologue introducing the theme, followed by three or four short *entrées*, each telling a complete story.

Such was the state of musical drama in 1732 when Jean-Philippe Rameau came on the scene and challenged the supremacy of Lully with his tragic opera *Hippolyte et Aricie* and again in 1735 with the triumph of his *Les Indes galantes*. Rameau emphasized singing over dance and spectacle, and his librettist Louis Fuzelier banished magic and *deux ex machina* from his plots. Rameau and

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Fuzelier's Les Indes galantes broke new ground with their use of exotic locales and their refusal to employ the traditional Gods of Olympus. Fuzelier was, in fact, quite aware of the novelty of his libretto, and took steps to prepare the Opēra audience for this startlingly new opera by writing an introduction justifying his approach. In it he argues that an author who wants to compensate a jaded, sophisticated audience must offer novelties. Rather than Olympus, Fuzelier offered exotic earthly customs and locals. Rather than the magical and fantastical acts of Gods and magicians, Les Indes galantes depicted raw nature: erupting volcanos and shuddering earthquakes.

Rameau and Fuzelier, who were both in their sixties when they collaborated on Les Indes galantes, satisfied the opera-ballet's requirements, with an ensemble that included an orchestra of about fifty pieces, a corps de ballet of as many as eighteen dancers, a chorus, and principal dancers and singers. Pierre Jēlyotte, who later, as an idol of the Paris Opēra, would befriend Rousseau, was just beginning his career when he starred with Mademoiselle Pelissier in Les Indes galantes. Although these singers were to make their careers as interpreters of Rameau's music, it was the dancers who were the main attraction and the best paid. Mademoiselle Sallē, its star dancer, already commanded a fee of 2,000 pounds a week in London with her innovative "action dancing."[33]

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Rousseau's Musical Awakening in Venice

Always in need of money, Rousseau often took work unsuited to his temperament. In the summer of 1743, he had no sooner completed the Tasso act of *Les Muses galantes* than he accepted the position of Secretary to the Comte de Montaigu, French Ambassador to Venice, and he would not finish the work until almost two years later. His quarrels with Montaigu would lead to his humiliating dismissal in 1744, but the year he spent in Venice would be crucial to his understanding of Italian music. And, ironically, it would be the Venetians who would first hear the Tasso act of his *Muses galantes*.

Tensions with his superior began almost from the moment he arrived. Much of it had to do with his unquenchable thirst for music. Before setting out, Rousseau had arranged to have his harpsichord delivered to him in Venice. As befitted his new position, Rousseau also made sure that he arrived in a splendid gondola. Montaigu must have complained about these demands to his brother Louis-Gabriel-Christophe, for in a letter written on 19 November 1743, Montaigu's brother comments: "Je suis touchê de l'humeur du Sr Rousseau, et je souhaitte que son clavessin et sa gondolle charment suffisament ses ennuys."34 Rousseau's first desire was to attend the opera. As Secretary to the Ambassador, he insisted on all the privileges that accrued to that position.

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It soon became a source of tension between him and his employer. A letter sent by Montaigu to Abbé Pierre-Joseph Alary, an under-secretary at the Court of King Louis XV, reports that:

> Le surlendemain qu'il fut arrivé, il se plaignit amerement de ce que l'ayant mené dans ma gondole pour aller entendre de la musique, mes gentilshommes ne l'avoient pas mis au dessus d'eux dans ma gondole, me disant qu'il étoit le premier homme de ma mission.[35]

Despite the Count's complaints, Rousseau's position is supported by the fact that in his first official task, arranging for the Embassy's boxes at Venice's five opera houses, Rousseau was given second choice after the ambassador, while the rest of the Embassy staff "disposoient des autres Loges."[36] Rousseau was not overwhelmed by his first Venetian opera. He claims that his appreciation of Italian music was not immediate since: "J'avois apporté de Paris le préjugé qu'on a dans ce pays-là contre la musique italienne."[37] But his prejudice was soon conquered because: "j'avois aussi receu de la nature cette sensibilité de tact contre laquelle les préjugés ne tiennent pas."[38] When he first visited the opera he emulated the rest of the audience, prattling, eating, and playing cards. But soon the music so charmed him that he would steal away where he could be alone and listen to the operas, which sometimes went on at length. At one such performance at the Teatro di San Crisostomo, Rousseau fell asleep until roused by a beautiful aria:

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> Mais qui pourroit exprimer la sensation délicieuse que me firent la douce harmonie et les chants angéliques de celui qui me réveilla. Quel réveil! Quel ravissement! quelle extase, quand j'ouvris au même instant les oreilles et les yeux! Ma prémiere idée fut de me croire en Paradis. 39

Rousseau was so moved that he ordered a copy of the aria. He kept the sheet music for some time, but no matter how often it was played, it never lived up to his memory of the first time he heard it.

> C'étoit bien la même note, mais ce n'étoit pas la même chose. Jamais cet air divin ne peut être executé que dans ma tête, comme il le fut en effet le jour qu'il me réveilla. 40

Musicians were plentiful in Venice; and orchestras could be engaged for very little money. Each week Rousseau would hire musicians to come to his room and play his favorite arias from the operas he had just seen. It was at one of these private concerts, when the ballet-master of San Crisostomo was in attendance, that he asked the ensemble to play some pieces from his Muses galantes:

> Soit qu'elles plussent ou qu'on me voulut cajoler, le Maitre des Ballets de St. Jean Chrysostome m'en fit demander deux que j'eus le plaisir d'entendre exécuter par cet admirable Orchestre et qui furent dansés par une petite Bettina. 41

Whether this was flattery or admiration, the fact was that Rousseau had the honor of hearing music from his new opera played at the magnificent opera house managed by Michel Grimani.[42]

As Rousseau's demands for proper treatment increased, Montaigu's annoyance grew into a fury. Montaigu insisted

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on monarchist privileges of class, Rousseau on republican privileges of office. In the political structure of the day, the nobility, smarting from the loss of their power at Court, had also lost all sense of *noblesse oblige*. Montaigu soon denied Rousseau the privileges and pleasures belonging to the office of Secretary. To add insult to injury, Montaigu withheld his wages. Rousseau protested and was dismissed. He returned to Paris determined to obtain justice, but found that when he told his story the nobility merely closed ranks and turned a deaf ear to his pleas.

Back in Paris: The Completion of *Les Muses*

Returning to Paris without money, burdened by debts, and with his reputation in ruins, Rousseau was once again engaged by the Dupins for a small salary, this time as an amanuensis transforming copious notes into texts on politics that Mme Dupin, an early feminist, planned to publish. The books never materialized, but her crusade for women's rights would be a legacy to her great-granddaughter, George Sand.

Rousseau might have subsisted at this level of income for some time, but an urgent need for more money suddenly arose when he met the woman with whom he was to spend the remainder of his life. She was neither beautiful, wealthy, or aristocratic. Nor was she well educated or

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witty. She had none of the qualities that seemed to attract Rousseau. She was, in fact, a laundress named Thérèse Levasseur who was quite plain, quite poor, and totally illiterate. What Thérèse inspired in Rousseau was not thoughts of love or marriage, but of domestic tranquillity. Having lost the mothering of Mme de Warens, Rousseau hoped Thérèse would supply this need. "Je lui déclarai davance," he tells us, "que je ne l'abandonnerois ni ne l'épouserois jamais."[43]

If Rousseau's affection for Thérèse was not the kind that inspires poets, their affair did force Rousseau to think about her upkeep. In desperation, he returned to his abandoned opera-ballet and in less than three months completed Les Muses galantes.

The finished opera began with the traditional prologue involving Greek gods and goddesses. The setting is Mount Parnassus, showing Apollo surrounded by the Muses. Already we recognize in Apollo's opening aria one of Rousseau's constant themes: nature as sanctuary from corruption. After praising the glory of the Muses as more brilliant than the "plus beaux dons de la nature," Apollo sings:

> APOLLON
> Sur ce paisible mont, loin du bruit et des armes
> Des innocens plaisirs vous goutez les douceurs.
> La fière ambition, l'amour ni ses faux charmes
> Ne troublent point vos Coeurs. 44

This serenity is suddenly threatened when Cupid and Glory descend in a chariot and Apollo insults Cupid by

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finding his presence in Glory's chariot ridiculous. Cupid punishes Apollo by first inspiring him with love for the nymph Daphne and then condemning him to suffer her scorn.

> L'AMOUR
> Je te rendrois heureux; je prêtens te punir.
>
> APOLLON
> Quoi! toujours soupirer sans pouvoir la flechir?
> Cruel! que ma peine est terrible! 45

In Cupid's curse we find another of Rousseau's themes: frustrated love. It is, of course, the passion of Saint-Preux in La Nouvelle Hêloïse, but we find it in practically all of Rousseau's theatrical works as well, played out in various ways, and imbued with Rousseau's personal brand of Romantic self-torture that Goethe--much to his own chagrin--was to make fashionable in the suicidal hero of Die Leiden des jungen Werthers. The prologue of Les Muses galantes ends with Cupid scattering the Muses to the far corners of the earth to "enchanter l'Univers,"[46]

The poets Rousseau chose for his heroes were not selected merely as ornaments of contrast. Each reflected various aspects of Rousseau's emerging philosophy. Hesiod was closest in political philosophy to Rousseau's mixture of the Protestant work ethic and the Renaissance idyll of pastoral simplicity, both aspects reflected in Hesiod the shepherd. Hesiod's Works and Days is a didactic poem illustrating that honest work creates wealth, and idleness, poverty. Works and Days also serves as the

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inspiration for Rousseau's opera-ballet, for in it we learn that Hesiod's poetry was a gift from the Muses whom he met one day while tending his sheep on some foothills.

Ovid reflected the tension of the open-hearted poet living in a sophisticated and dangerously corrupt society. Rousseau must also have admired Ovid's rejection of high office in order to pursue his love of poetry; and no doubt he identified with Ovid's forced exile caused by the displeasure his poetry aroused in the Emperor Augustus.

Anacreon was also exiled--not by political intrigue, but by war. His patron was the Tyrant Polycrates who, unlike Ovid's ungrateful Augustus, delighted in Anacreon's poetry and embraced him as a friend. Rousseau pursued the nobility most of his life in the vain hope of finding such a relationship--a hope finally betrayed by the cowardice of the Duc de Luxembourg. In examining the Ovid and Anacreon acts, it becomes evident how deeply Rameau's operas had influenced the younger composer's work. Rameau's impact on the Hesiod act, although equally significant, would be quite different.

For the tender musical mood of the second _entrée_, Rousseau chose Ovid. Apart from the fact that Rousseau drew upon Ovid's _Metamorphosis_ for his _Iphis et Anaxarete_ and _Pygmalion_, Ovid had deep personal meaning for him that went far beyond the poet's eroticism as enjoyed in the Rococo movement. Ovid, like all of the heroes in

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Les Muses, wrote in the first person, a voice Rousseau employs in his own poetry and, most importantly, in his Confessions. The confessional voice would later be sacred to the Romantics.

In the opening of the second entrée, Ovid is discovered in his garden in Tomis at the foot of Mount Scythia. The setting will be a favorite for future Romantics: "des Montagnes affreuses parsemées de précipices, et couvertes de Neiges."[47] In the fifth stanza of The Art of Love, Ovid sings:

> Nullus amor tanti est--abeas, pharetrate Cupido!--
> ut mihi sint totiens maxima vota mori.
> vota mori mea sunt cum te peccasse recordor,
> in mihi perpetuum nata puella malum. 48

Rousseau's Ovid captures a similar tone:

> Cruel amour, funeste flamme!
> Faut-il encore t'abandonner mon ame?
> Cruel amour, funeste flamme,
> Le sort d'Ovid est-il d'aimer toûjours? 49

If Rousseau's setting evokes a Romantic sense of dread, and his verse the passionate tone of Ovid, the opening situation is reminiscent of Rameau's Hippolyte et Aricie, even down to the names of the two heroines: Aricie in Rameau's work, Erithie in Rousseau's. Both girls are about to join the cult of Diana and dedicate their lives to celibacy. It is for this blatant copying both of the situation and of Rameau's dramatic premise that Rousseau will later be accused of plagiarism.

But the similarities of the two situations part ways

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in terms of the women's motivations. While Rameau's Aricie is coerced into celibacy, Rousseau's Erithie, as a follower of Diana, is resigned to enter her temple. What stops her, in the nick of time, is the apparition of Cupid in the form of a statue. From this point on, Rousseau's conflict is not between love and honor, but passion and chastity, i.e., the strife between the followers of Cupid and those of Diana.

In this regard it is interesting to note that Rameau will, in his turn, make use of a similar conflict in 1758 in his one-act ballet Anacreon, where the conflict is between the followers of Bacchus and Cupid. As in Rousseau's ballet, there are two choruses, representing the two cults, who musically battle over the soul of the central character. But Rameau's ballet resolves the conflict in a way satisfying to the erotic tastes of the Rococo: the two gods join forces, and Bacchus allows love into his cult while Cupid admits wine. Rousseau's resolution looks forward to the Romantics, and is both more sentimental, in that Cupid triumphs, and more disturbing, in that the conflict between virtue and passion is not really resolved at all. Rousseau will later deal with this same conflict in a far more profound and mature manner in his novel La Nouvelle Hêloïse.

Scholars have noted similarities between Rousseau's opera and Rameau's Les Indes galantes that go beyond mere

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hommage. Olivier Pot, for one, observes:

> On pourrait facilement montrer d'ailleurs comment, sans même parler d'_Iphis et Anaxarète_, _Les Muses galantes_ demarquent avec application _Les Indes galantes_ (1735): outre l'analogie du titre, l'opéra de Rousseau reproduit la même disposition en tableaux, il utilise l'ambiance de fêtes pour produire la même impression forte sur les sens. 50

Turning to the text of the Anacreon _entrée_ in _Les Muses galantes_, we find proof of these assertions. Rousseau went so far as to adapt the same dramatic idea found in Rameau's fourth _entrée_ of _Les Indes galantes_, "Les Sauvages." In this act, which is set in the Americas, two officers, a Frenchman and a Spaniard, are in love with an Indian girl named Zima who, unbeknownst to the officers, is already betrothed to the Indian Adario. Damon, the French lover, champions inconstancy; Alvar, the Spaniard, fidelity. In scene 2, Adario hides and listens to the officers quarrel:

> ALVAR
> Damon, quelle vaine espérance
> Sur les pas de Zima vous attache aujourd'hui?
> Vous outragez l'amour, et vous comptez sur lui!
> Croyez-vous ses faveurs le prix de l'inconstance?
>
> DAMON
> L'inconstance ne doit blesser
> Que les attraits qu'on abandonne.
> Non, le fils de Vênus ne peut pas s'offenser
> Lorsque nous recevons tous les traits qu'il vous donne.
> Un coeur qui change chaque jour,
> Chaque jour fait pour lui des conquêtes nouvelles,
> Les fidèles amants font la gloire des belles
> Mais les amants légers font celle de l'amour. 51

Compare this moment with the first scene of Rousseau's

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"Anacreon," which is set in ancient Samos. Here the lighthearted poet Anacreon competes with his friend Polycrates for the love of Thémire. According to the writings of Aelian,[52] Polycrates, a patron of the arts, admired Anacreon's poetry but did not approve of the poet's sexual promiscuity.

> ANACREON
> Je conçois le dêtour;
> Parmi tant de Beautés vous espérez connoitre
> Celle dont les attraits ont fixé vôtre amour
> Mais cet amour enfin . . .
>
> POLYCRATE
> Un instant le fit naitre:
> Ce fut dans ces superbes jeux
> Où mes heureux succés celebrés par ta Lyre . . .
>
> ANACREON
> Ce jour, il m'en souvient, je devins amoureux
> De la jeune Thémire.
>
> POLYCRATE
> Eh! quoi? toujours de nouveaux feux?
>
> ANACREON
> A de beaux yeux aisément mon coeur céde:
> Il change de même aisement;
> L'amour à l'amour y succéde,
> Le gout seul du plaisir y régne constamment.
>
> POLYCRATE
> Bientôt une douce victoire
> T'a sans doute asservi son coeur.
>
> ANACREON
> Ce triomphe manque à ma gloire
> Et ce plaisir à mon bonheur. 53

Still, there is originality in Rousseau's handling of the conflict. In his text the relationship between the two men is more complex than the rather casual one in Fuzelier's libretto of Les Indes galantes. Rousseau

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has the bond of friendship between his two Greeks tested by their love of the same woman. The conflict, in Rousseau's hands, anticipates Romantic anxiety. Both men are consumed by passions beyond the control of their reason:

> POLYCRATE
> Ami trop cher: Rival trop dangereux,
> Ah! que je crains tes redoutables feux!
> De mon coeur agitê fait cesser le martyre.
> Porte â d'autres appas tes volages dêsirs.
> Laisse moi gouter les plaisirs
> De te cherir toujours et d'Adorer Thêmire.
>
> ANACREON
> Si ma flamme êtoit volontaire
> Je l'immolerois â l'instant:
> Mais l'Amour dans mon coeur n'en est pas moins sincêre
> Pour n'être pas toûjours constant.
> La Gloire et la grandeur au grê de votre envie
> Vous assurent les plus beaux jours
> Mais que ferois-je de la vie
> Sans les plaisirs, sans les amours. 54

Left alone, Polycrates, in scene three, laments:

> Transports jaloux, tourmens que je deteste,
> Ah! faut-il me livrer â vos tristes fureurs?
> Faut-il toûjours qu'une rage funeste
> Inspire avec l'Amour la haine et ses horreurs.
> Cruel Amour ta fatale puissance
> Desunit plus de cours
> Qu'elle n'en met d'intelligence. 55

Rousseau will later put just such anxious ardor into the mouth of his most troubled lover, Sextus, in his unfinished prose tragedy Le Mort de Lucrêce. But here it is not Polycrate's tortured passion that wins the love of Thèmire, but Anacreon's lighthearted joie de vivre.

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<u>Lettre sur l'opéra italien et français</u>

Apart from honoring Rameau by using his musical ideas, Rousseau was not above other forms of adulation. Pot asserts that Rousseau's <u>Lettre sur l'opéra italien et français</u>, written in 1744, was deliberately composed to flatter Rameau by championing French over Italian opera.[56] Rousseau begins his opening argument with a touch of irony:

> C'est un malheur pour l'opera que Aristotle ni Horace ne nous en aient pas donné les régles: Je m'imagine que nos Grecs et nos Latins modernes n'en auroient pas parlé avec tant de mépris. 57

The modern Greeks and Romans Rousseau refers to are Bossuet, La Fontaine, La Bruyère and Saint-Évremond, as well as Corneille, Racine and Molière, all of whom wrote disparagingly of opera. Rousseau defies them all by defending it. It is fortunate, he states, that the source of operatic inspiration has dried up and that we must endure "les misérables Rapsodies"[58] of today because they allow us to appreciate the artistry of Lully and Quinault. He argues that there are laws in opera, as in tragedy and comedy, which must be obeyed if the work is to succeed on the stage. By combining music and poetry, opera demands additional rules. Rousseau warns that "c'est certainement un défault" to confuse opera with the other two forms of drama and not "suivre dans chacun de ces Poemes son genie particulier.[59]

Rousseau next asserts that the French language, as

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opposed to Italian, enables its operas to be "meilleures et plus raisonnables,"[60] because French is designed to express ideas with great precision, while Italian is designed to express emotions. By 1753, in his Lettre sur la musique françoise, his priorities will suddenly be reversed and Italian will be the supreme musical language.

To those who assert that opera is mere artfice and illusion, Rousseau points out that all theatre, including tragedy, employs these devices. This observation anticipates his future attack on the theatre in his Lettre ā d'Alembert; but here it is used to justify it. How, he asks, can one consider tragedy to be "la rēpresentation d'une action humaine" when heroes in the real world:

> ne justifient point par de grands mots les sottises que l'amour leur fait faire, leur discours n'est point un tissu de pensēes gigantesques, d'expressions empoulēes; ils ne font point ces cris ridicules ni ces gestes forcenēs qui remplissent notre theatre.61

In spoken drama, says Rousseau, a great poet may be able to make these things believable, but never in opera. He insists that the ministers of the Royal Court conversing in song would be "le comble du ridicule."[62] The Italian operas have contributed to this absurdity by employing actual historical figures as subject matter, rather than fable and fantasy, which are better suited to opera:

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> Ce n'nest au lieu d'*Isis*, de *Phaeton*, de *Persée*, d'*Iphigenie*, qu'Antiochus, Cesar, Caton, Themistocle, et même Tamerlan qui viennent en longs et clairs roulemens choquer grossiérement le gout et la bienseance, en nous representant ces anciens et respectables Heros sous la figure de vils châtrés qui donnent la torture à leurs gosiers pour nous faire admirer leurs chevrotements. 63

Metastasio, Rousseau claims, has created, not operas, but musical tragedies "comme mille personnes en avoient fait avant lui."[64] It is Quinault who has invented true opera; by not looking to tragedy or comedy as his model; rather "il a inventé un 3e genre de spectacle, il a fait précisément des Opera."[65] Neither has Quinault attempted to present history on the opera stage, but fantasies, which suit the genre better and "comportent le chant naturellement."[66]

Rousseau laments that in striving for *vraisemblance*, the Italians have eliminated one of opera's greatest beauties, the chorus "qui font un si bel effet à l'opéra."[67] Rousseau praises Rameau's use of the chorus in *Les Indes galantes* with its "choeur brillant soleil et celui des matelots qui périssent." And in *Hyppolyte et Aricie* where "le choeur lancez la foudre."[68] He exclaims that one cannot hear such pieces "de sang froid." Italy, he laments, "n'a rien à mon gré qui la dédommage de cette beauté de moins."[69]

As far as *vraisemblance* is concerned, Rousseau argues that choruses are ideal for representing *fêtes* and other

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forms of civic festival, such as "sacrifices, des évocations, des réjouissances publiques...des cris de Guerre, des chants de victoire."[70]

> Un spectacle brillant accompagné d'une Musique harmonieuse seduit les sens et empêche l'esprit de réfléchir sur le peu de vraisemblance des choses qu'il voit. 71

Later, in the Lettre à d'Alembert, he will champion these forms of public entertainment over theatre itself.

Rousseau admits that all of Europe is in love with the charms of Italian music. (We should bear in mind that Rameau was among its admirers.) But Rousseau claims to prefer French music: "La musique Italienne me plait souverainement mais elle ne me touche point, la françoise ne me plaît que parce qu'elle me touche."[72] Although the tunefulness of the former enhances the voice and charms our ears, "les sons séduisans de la second vont droit au coeur." If music is meant merely to please, Rousseau declares, then "donons la palme à l'Italie," but if it must also move us (émouvoir) then, Rousseau demands, "tenons en à la nôtre."[73] Considering how moved Rousseau will be by Italian music when he joins the querelle des Bouffons, one must conclude that what "moves" him at this point is his desire to flatter Rameau.

Rousseau's Campaign for Success

His opera completed, Rousseau now needed to have it

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heard by Rameau. This was a formidable task indeed, for Rousseau would have to re-enter the salons, where he felt least at ease, and solicit patronage:

> Mon Opéra fait, il s'agit d'en tirer parti: c'étoit un autre Opera bien plus difficile. On ne vient à bout de rien à Paris quand on y vit isolé. 74

It was a fellow Genevan, M. de Gauffecourt, who introduced Rousseau to Rameau's patron, M. Le Riche de La Poplinière, a wealthy tax farmer and patron of the arts. In the Confessions, he writes that Mme de La Poplinière was Rameau's "très humble écolière," adding that "Rameau faisoit, comme on dit, la pluye et le beau tems dans cette maison."[75] It was at the Poplinières' that Rousseau finally succeeded in meeting his idol.

From the beginning things did not go well. Learning of Rousseau's opera, Rameau was skeptical that a man with no formal musical training could create anything worthy of his time and patience. Rousseau offered him the score of his opera as proof, but Rameau protested that he found reading scores too tedious. La Poplinière suggested that perhaps he would rather hear it played. Rameau relented.

For the little concert La Poplinière assembled some of the finest musicians and singers from the Paris Opéra. The performers consisted of "une dixaine de symphonistes, et pour Chanteurs Albert, Bernard, et Mlle Bourbonnois."[76] Rousseau was impressed by their musicianship but humiliated by Rameau's reaction:

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> Rameau commença dès l'ouverture à faire entendre par ses éloges outrés qu'elle ne pouvoit être de moi. Il ne laissa passer aucun morceau sans donner des signes d'impatience: mais à un air de Haute-contre dont le chant étoit male et sonore et l'accompagnement très brillant, il ne put plus se contenir. 77

Rameau began to berate Rousseau in such an insulting manner that even his patrons were shocked. He announced that:

> une partie de ce qu'il venoit d'entendre étoit d'un homme consommé dans l'art et le reste d'un ignorant qui ne savoit pas même la musique. 78

Lest anyone miss the implications of his last remark, Rameau went on to openly accuse Rousseau of being little more than "un petit pillard." Imagine Rousseau's embarrassment and humiliation at being called a plagiarist by his idol in front of the Poplinières and--even worse--before the artists of the Opêra. Rather than being met with meek silence, Rameau's remarks were objected to by both the master of the house and the musicians. Had this been an isolated incident, Rameau's outburst might have had the devastating effect on Rousseau's career that was obviously intended. But Rameau was notorious for being rude and ill-mannered. Bernard Gagnebin notes:

> L'attitude de Rameau correspond à son comportement habituel dans les salons, fait de vanité, de supériorité et de susceptibilité. 79

Rousseau was so appalled by the incident that on 14 September 1745 he wrote to Jean-Baptiste Bouchaud: "Ma musique l'a mis de mauvais(e) humeur, qu'il soutient qu'elle est trop bonne pour pouvoir être de moi."[80]

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Despite Rameau's contemptuous remarks, word of Rousseau's new opera reached the ears of no less a figure than the Duc de Richelieu, Marshal of France, First Gentleman of the King's Chamber, Superintendent of Court Spectacles and, coincidentally, Mme de La Poplinière's lover. Richelieu wanted to hear the work performed and he arranged a concert with full orchestra, as Rousseau boasts, "aux frais du Roi," at the home of Michel de Bonneval, Master of Court Entertainments. Richelieu's reaction was in stark contrast to Rameau's: he cheered and applauded throughout the performance. Rousseau writes:

> . . . â la fin d'un Choeur dans l'acte du Tasse il se leva vint â moi et me serrant la main, M. Rousseau, me dit-il, voila de l'harmonie qui transporte. Je n'ai jamais rien entendu de plus beau: je veux faire donner cet ouvrage â Versailles. 81

Ominously, Rameau did not attend the performance. He was busily working behind the scenes to undermine Rousseau's alarming success. Rousseau registered the first signs of trouble when Mme de La Poplinière greeted him at her toilet the next day with cold looks and began to disabuse him regarding his success:

> . . . et me dit que, quoiqu'un peu de clinquant eut d'abord êbloui M. de Richelieu, il en êtoit bien revenu, et qu'elle ne me conseilloit pas de compter sur mon opera. 82

This veiled threat was followed by the arrival of Richelieu who addressed Rousseau in "un tout autre language." Although he was still complimentary and still seemed

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interested in presenting the opera at Versailles, he suddenly warned Rousseau that the Tasso act "ne peut passer à la Cour" and that "il en faut faire un autre." Clearly Rameau, through Mme de La Poplinière, had somehow convinced Richelieu that Rousseau was a plagiarist who had neither the skill nor the talent to have produced the music Richelieu had just enjoyed. Perhaps his demand that Rousseau replace the first act was meant as a test, to see if the young man could quickly compose something completely original.

Rousseau, far from being put off by this challenge, leapt at the chance to rewrite the first act. Apparently he realized that the Tasso <u>entrée</u> was inappropriate to the opera's classical setting, and may have already selected the poet to replace Tasso. Rousseau writes:

> Sur ce seul mot j'allai m'enfermez chez moi et dans trois semaines j'eus fait à la place du Tasse un autre Acte, dont le sujet étoit Hésiode inspiré par une muse. 83

Rousseau was pleased with his new work: "Il y avoit dans ce nouvel acte une élévation moins gigantesque et mieux soutenue que celle du Tasse."[84] He must have rewritten and improved on the music as well for he adds: "La musique en étoit aussi noble et beaucoup mieux faite." With the elimination of Tasso and the addition of Hesiod, all three acts now dealt with poets of the classical period, giving the work greater unity. In addition,

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Rousseau also included something quite astonishing. He had added a personal element intended to mock Rameau and justify himself to the world as a musician:

> Je trouvai le secret de faire passer dans cet acte une partie de l'histoire de mes talens, et de la jalousie dont Rameau vouloit bien les honorer. 85

Why would Rousseau go to such lengths to assert his genius? Perhaps he realized that even a rewritten score was no proof that the musical ideas were not lifted from some other work. Rousseau would encounter accusations of "_plagiat_" again with _Le Devin du village_.

Rousseau as Hesiod

Rousseau's need to be "transparent," with all of his virtues and flaws fully revealed, as Starobinski consistently argues, is an important aspect of all his fictional work and makes Rousseau unusual in his century. Rousseau's way of revealing himself in his fictional works, at a time when this was frowned upon, is achieved by his indirectly stepping into his own characters. The Hesiod act is a clear instance. Rousseau obliquely assumes the guise of Hesiod to re-enact his own musical history and to explain his apparent lack of musical skills. The situation revolves around a music competition. Two maidens, Doris and Eglé, enter:

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DORIS
L'Amour va vous offrir la plus charmante fête,
Déja pour disputer chaque Berger s'apprête:
Le Don de vôtre main au vainqueur est promis. 86

Eglé is actually Euterpe, the muse of lyric poetry, disguised in order to test Hesiod's love. When Hesiod approaches, the two women hide and listen to his lament.

HESIODE
Eglé méprise ma tendresse
Seduitte par les chants de mes Heureux Rivaux
Son coeur en est le prix, et seul dans ces hameaux
J'ignore les secrets de l'art qu'elle couronne;
Eglé le sait et m'abandonne! 87

We see reflected in Hesiod's despair the emotions Rousseau no doubt experienced when, like Hesiod, he felt his adoration of Rameau scorned and rejected. Hesiod fears that Eglé has been seduced by the songs of his fortunate rivals, just as Rousseau fears that France has been seduced by Rameau. But then a miracle occurs, Hesiod falls into a dreamy sleep, and in it he hears the music of his heart. Like his poet, Rousseau also fell into a kind of delirium when he was sick with pneumonia and dreamed of melodies that he could only partly recall upon awakening. Again, in the Venetian opera house, he awoke from sleep to strains of heavenly music which could never again be fully recaptured.

Out of these dreamlike memories his opera was born. Hesiod's triumph is already assured. Doris has promised in the previous scene:

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DORIS
Eglé dans nos hammeaux inconnuë, étrangère
Jouit sur tous les coeurs d'un pouvoir mérité,
Rien ne lui doit être impossible
Avec le secours invincible
De l'Esprit et de la Beauté. 88

Is Rousseau telling us (and Rameau) that only the virtuous can be divinely inspired and that he, by implication, is just such a blessed soul? Certainly not literally. But indirectly, Rousseau is presenting his concept of genius, and includes himself in that category. For he, like Hesiod, was inspired by the muse.

Rousseau's idea of the inspired artist was not a position generally embraced by his age; it anticipates the Romantics. In his Confessions we find the beginnings of Rousseau's conviction that inspiration was all that a true artist required. To illustrate how seriously Rousseau took the idea of inspiration, I turn to an episode at the start of Rousseau's career.

In his youth Rousseau had a weakness for attaching himself himself to dashing and audacious characters, his hero-worship based almost entirely on their panache. Rousseau, not yet eighteen, was still living in Annecy with Mme de Warens when, one cold night in February of 1730, a man came to the door and introduced himself as a French musician named Venture de Villeneuve.[89] Rousseau found him fascinating:

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> Tout marquoit en lui un jeune débauché, qui avoit eu de l'éducation et qui n'alloit pas gueusant comme un gueux, mais comme un fou. 90

Rousseau was so intrigued that "tout ce qu'il faisoit me paroissoit charmant, tout ce qu'il disoit me sembloient des oracles."[91] In the throes of adoration, Jean-Jacques modeled himself on Venture. "Je pouvois," Rousseau admitted, "m'engouer de M. Venture qui avoit de l'éducation, de talens, de l'esprit, de l'usage du monde." He was, in short "un aimable débauché."[92]

What the youthful Jean-Jacques learned from him was that all one really needs to succeed in the world is inspiration and daring. Venture's ultimate legacy was to inspire Rousseau to compose his first musical work and, in doing so, to commit one of his most embarrassing blunders.

The incident occurred at Lausanne, when Rousseau was in desperate financial straits. In his Confessions he recalls the moment of inspiration:

> . . . je me comparois dans ce pélérinage pedestre à mon ami Venture arrivant à Annecy. Je m'échauffai si bien de cette idée, que, sans songer que je n'avois ni sa gentillesse ni ses talens, je me mis en tête de faire à Lausanne le petit Venture, d'enseigner la musique que je ne savois pas, et de me dire de Paris où je n'avois jamais été. 93

Looking back on the event years later, Rousseau could enjoy this amusing parade of youthful folly in which he found himself, as it were, cast in the commedia role of the luckless Giles. His decided to change his name:

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> Il s'étoit appellé Venture de Villeneuve; moi je fis l'anagramme du nom de Rousseau dans celui de Vaussore, et je m'appellai Vaussore de Villeneuve. 94

With his new identity, he began bragging all over town that he was a skilled Parisian musician and composer looking for pupils. The bluff got him room and board on credit at a local inn. His audacity thus fortified, he proposed to M. Treyorens, a prominent citizen and professor of law who gave concerts at his home, that he, Vaussore de Villeneuve, compose a piece for the concert.

Jean-Jacques's daring now knew no bounds; he proceeded to do something that he admits "qu'on aura peine à croire, et qui est très vrai." He tacked onto his composition the tune of a pretty little minuet which was being sung all over Paris and, unknown to Rousseau, throughout France, "supprimant les paroles, et je le donnai pour être de moi, tout aussi résolument que j'avois parlé à des habitans de la lune."[95] On the day of the concert he distributed the music to the musicians "avec autant d'assurance que si c'eut été un chef-d'oeuvre d'harmonie."[96] As for the sound they produced: ". . . non, depuis qu'il existe des Opera françois, de la vie on n'ouit un semblable charivari."[97] The audience response was predictable:

> A peine en eut-on joué quelques mesures, que j'entendis partir de toutes parts les éclats de rire. Chacun me félicitoit sur mon joli gout de chant; on m'assuroit que ce menuet feroit parler de moi, et que je méritois d'être chanté par tout. Je n'ai pas besoin de dépeindre mon angoisse, ni d'avouer que je la méritois bien.

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Nothing more brutally drove home Rousseau's need for formal training than the humiliation he had just endured. His musical skills were so poor, he writes:

> . . . que dans le brillant concert dont j'ai parlé il ne me fut pas possible de suivre un moment l'execution pour savoir si l'on jouoit bien ce que j'avois sous les yeux, et que j'avois composé moi-même. 98

Rousseau's inability to read a score at sight was a fault he tried to correct. But at the time he had neither the funds nor the opportunity to pursue private lessons. By necessity, his musical education was haphazard.

Returning to the Hesiod act, we find a happier ending to the story of the unschooled musical genius. Hesiod, awakening from slumber, finds that a lyre has appeared beside him. He touches it, and beautiful music is effortlessly produced:

> HESIODE
> . . . O Lyre! ô cher présent des Dieux!
> Déja par ton secours je parle leur langage.
> Le plus puissant de tous excite mon courage,
> Je reconnois l'Amour â des transports si beaux
> Et je vais triompher de mes jaloux Rivaux. 99

The rival shepherds enter and sing of their inevitable triumph. Hesiod approaches with his lyre and the villagers mock him, singing: "O Berger, dépozez cette Lyre inutile." But Hesiod, now filled with confidence, stands his ground:

> HESIODE
> Rien n'est impossible â l'Amour
> Je n'ai point fait de l'art une étude servile,
> Et ma voix indocile

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> Ne s'est jamais unie aux chalumeaux.
> Mais dans le succés que j'espére
> J'attens tout du feu qui m'éclaire
> Et rien de mes foibles travaux. 100

Like the audacious shepherd, Rousseau has dared to aspire to the dizzy heights of Parnassus, which only the likes of Rameau may climb. Hesoid asks Euterpe, who has finally revealed her identity:

> HESIOD . . .
> Dois-je espérer encor que vôtre ame sensible
> Daigne aimer un Berger et partager mes feux. 101

But Eurterpe assures him that it is not by one's birth but by one's soul that heaven is achieved:

> EUTERPE
> La vertu des mortels fait leur rang chez les Dieux
> Une ame pure, un coeur tendre et sincére
> Sont les biens les plus précieux
> Et quand on sait aimer le mieux
> On est le plus digne de plaire. 102

Here in Rousseau's Utopian dream world he is granted equal rank with the "Dieux qui gouvernez la terre."[103] Rousseau cannot forgive the snubs, the dishonor, and the injustice heaped on him in Venice by Montaigu and in Paris by Rameau, when his only crime was to prove himself their equal. The Hesiod act is a symbolic expression of his cry for justice, meant to shame these men, and others like them, into admitting that Rousseau is not only their equal, but, by his intrinsic virtue, their moral superior.

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Les Fêtes de Ramire

While Rousseau was in the midst of working on his Muses galantes, he was given an unusual opportunity. The Duc de Richelieu asked Rousseau to work on another project, one that could potentially bring him instant recognition at Court. The French forces had recently won a great victory over the English and Dutch forces at the battle of Fontenoy, and the Court celebrated this triumph by presenting a series of fêtes. One of these was Voltaire's shortened version of La Princess de Navarre, retitled Les Fêtes de Ramire, with music by Rameau. Since Voltaire and Rameau were busy at the time working on another opera, Le Temple de la gloire, Richelieu asked Rousseau to modify and improve on the new adaptation. There were, no doubt, any number of artists capable of doing this job; so in choosing Rousseau, Richelieu clearly demonstrated an appreciation of his talents and a desire to sponsor him.

While assuming the difficult and disagreeable task of adapting La Princesse de Navarre, Rousseau became concerned about Rameau's possible sinister intentions. Rousseau was doubtless pleased by Richelieu's patronage, but Rameau's disdain soon weighed too heavily on his mind to counterbalance the Duke's admiration.

In the beginning, however, Rousseau seems to have been enthusiastic and flattered--even proud--to have been selected. In his Confessions he makes a point of

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indicating the difficulty and the level of skill required to carry out the assignment:

> Ce nouveau sujet demandoit plusieurs changemens aux divertissemens de l'ancien, tant dans les vers que dans la musique. Il s'agissoit de trouver quelqu'un qui put remplir ce double objet. . . . M. de Richelieu pensa à moi. 104

The complexity of the comedy ballet can be fathomed in Voltaire's avertissement to La Princesse de Navarre. Voltaire begins by providing us with a description of the theatre at Versailles, where this comedy-ballet and Les Fêtes de Ramire were performed by order of the King's First Chamberlain, the Duc de Richelieu:

> Il a fait élever un théâtre de cinquante-six pieds de profondeur dans le grand manége de Versailles, et a fait construire une salle dont les décorations et les embellissements sont tellement ménagés que tout ce qui sert au spectacle doit s'enlever en une nuit, et laisser la salle ornée pour un bal paré, qui doit former la fête du lendemain. 105

Voltaire then explains that the idea was to create something new, a genre that would combine all the theatrical arts in such a way that the blend of drama, music, and dance:

> fit un de ces ouvrages dramatiques où les divertissements en musique forment une partie du sujet, où la plaisanterie se mêle à l'héroïque, et dans lesquels on voit un mélange de l'opéra, de la comédie, et de la tragédie. 106

Voltaire acknowledges that in this mixture of genres it would be impossible to give any one of them "toute leur étendue." But that was not his purpose. What was intended was a sort of nationalistic exercise in self-

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congratulation, presented in a star-studded extravaganza:

> seulement de réunir les talents de tous les artistes qui se distinguent le plus, et l'unique mérite de l'auteur a été de faire valoir celui des autres. 107

Between the lines of Voltaire's introduction one senses a personal distaste for the entire genre. Although he wrote a number of fêtes, they were mere hack work to him, done to flatter the powers that be. In the play itself, (Act I, Scene 5 of La Princesse de Navarre) Voltaire had a chance to poke light-hearted fun at the whole idea:

> HERNAND
> Mon maître, né galant, dont vous tournez la tête,
> Sans vous en avertir vous prépare une fête.
>
> SANCHETTE
> Quoi! tous ces violons?...
>
> HERNAND
> Sont tous pour vous.
>
> SANCHETTE
> Pour moi!
>
> HERNAND
> N'en faites point semblant, gardez un beau silence:
> Vous verrez vingt Français entrer dans un moment;
> Ils sont parés superbement;
> Ils parlent en chansons, ils marchent en cadence,
> Et la joie est leur élément.
>
> SANCHETTE
> Vingt beaux messieurs français! j'en ai l'âme ravie;
> J'eus de voir des Français toujours très-grande
> envie: Entreront-ils bientôt?
>
> HERNAND
> Ils sont dans le château.
>
> SANCHETTE
> L'aimable nation! que de galanterie!
>
> HERNAND
> On vous donne un spectacle, un plaisir tout nouveau.
> Ce que font les Français est si brillant, si beau!

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SANCHETTE
Eh! qu'est-ce qu'un spectacle?

HERNAND
Une chose charmante.
Quelquefois un spectacle est un mouvant tableau
. . . Un spectacle assez beau
Serait encore une fête galante;
C'est un art tout français d'expliquer ses désirs
Par l'organe des jeux, par la voix des plaisirs;
Un spectacle est surtout un amoureux mystère
Pour courtiser Sanchette et tâcher de lui plaire. 108

Voltaire's libretto and Rameau's score for Les Fêtes de Ramire were sent separately to Rousseau--presumably by Richelieu. Rousseau decided to write and ask Voltaire's permission to adapt the libretto. Clearly, he needed no official permission since, as far as the custom of the time was concerned, the work was already the property of the King. His motives, therefore, were politic and perhaps even a bit self-promoting. Here was a legitimate reason to finally correspond with the great Voltaire and make Jean-Jacques' presence (and talents) known to him. In his Confessions, however, Rousseau interprets his action as mere good manners:

> Avant toute chose, je ne voulus toucher aux paroles que de l'aveu de l'Auteur, et je lui écrivis à ce sujet une lettre très-honnête et même respectueuse, comme il convenoit. 109

His letter to Voltaire, dated 11 December 1745, although interspersed with polite modesty, nevertheless sounds like bragging. It is the sort of letter a young protégé might write to his mentor after having proudly achieved

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a certain level of success:

> Il y a quinse ans que je travaille pour me rendre digne de vos regards, et des soins dont vous favorisez les jeunes Muses en qui vous découvrez quelque talent: Mais, pour avoir fait la Musique d'un Opéra, je me trouve, je ne sais comment, métamorphosé en Musicien.[110]

What is more, the letter was written eleven days after he had completed his adaptation; for Rousseau tells Voltaire that he is enclosing it for his approval, protesting that it was done at the command of the Duc de Richelieu himself. Rousseau no doubt knew that asking for Voltaire's "permission" after having actually done the deed might have generated a response quite different from the letter he actually received. The reply was dated 15 December 1745 and Rousseau lovingly reproduces it in full (with certain errors) in his Confessions.[111] The opening lines must have seemed a perfect Christmas present:

> Vous reunissez, Monsieur, deux talens qui ont toujours été séparez jusqu'à present. Voyla déja deux bonnes raisons pour moy de vous estimer et de chercher a vous aimer. 112

The rest of the letter discusses Voltaire's distaste for having to write, at Richelieu's command, "une petite et mauvaise esquisse de quelques scenes insipides et tronquées,"[113] Significantly, Voltaire then mentions a blunder in the original ballet which he hopes Rousseau will correct, where the Princess is magically transported from a prison to "un jardin ou. . .un Palais," he can't remember which:

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> Comme ce n'est point un magicien qui luy donne des fetes, mais un Seigneur espagnol, il me semble que rien ne doit se faire par enchantement. 114

To Voltaire's neo-classical taste, this was a "balourdise" unbecoming even the lightest of theatrical fare. But what makes this all the more curious is the fact that in Voltaire's libretto for La Princesse de Navarre no such transformation scene occurs. In Act I, Scene 6 the scene reads:

> CONSTANCE
> (voulant passer par une porte. Elle s'ouvre et parait remplie de guerriers)
>
> Que vois-je! ô ciel! suis-je trahie?
> Ce passage est rempli de guerriers menaçants!
> Quoi! don Pêdre en ces lieux étend sa tyrannie?
>
> LEONOR
> La frayeur trouble tous mes sens.
>
> (les guerriers entrent sur la scène, précédés de trompettes, et tous les acteurs de la comédie se rangent d'un côté du théâtre.) 115

Then a warrior begins singing:

> UN GUERRIER (chantant)
> Jeune beauté, cessez de vous plaindre,
> Bannissez vos terreurs;
> C'est vous qu'il faut craindre:
> Régnez sur nos coeurs. 116

The chorus joins in, and then, of course," on danse." Furthermore, Voltaire's Princess scenario is set "dans les jardins de don Morillo, sur les confins de la Navarre."[117]

In fact, it is in his re-written scenario for Les Fêtes de Ramire that the scene "représente une prison."[118] In

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the first scene of Les Fêtes de Ramire, Fatime (Constance's counterpart) does not see a door opening onto a hallway filled with soldiers. Instead the text reads:

> (On entend un bruit de trompettes. Le Théâtre change et représente un lieu agréable.)
>
> FATIME
> Que vois-je! quel prodige a changé ce séjour?
> O ciel! Quel Dieu nous favorise?
>
> ISBE
> Fatime est belle, et Fatime est surprise?
> Ah! ce Dieu sans doute est l'Amour.

Again the chorus of soldiers enters and the lead sings:

> UN GUERRIER, â Fatime.
> Jeune beauté, cessez de vous plaindre,
> Bannissez vos terreurs:
> C'est vous qu'il faut craindre,
> Regnez sur nos coeurs. 119

Perhaps it was his conflating of these two scenes that caused Voltaire to remark: "Je vous prie, Monsieur, de vouloir bien revoir cet endroit, dont je n'ay qu'une idée confuse."[120] Voltaire asks Rousseau to correct the faults.

> . . .j'ay perdu tout cela entierment de vue. Je ne doute pas que vous n'ayez rectifié toutes les fautes echapées necessairement dans une composition si rapide d'une simple esquisse, que vous n'ayez rempli les vuides et suppléé a tout. 121

Despite Voltaire's explicit request to do so, Rousseau did not choose to correct the "balourdise." Perhaps he was not disturbed by the inclusion of magic in opera. After all, had he not said as much in his Lettre sur l'Opéra? He must also have seen that by allowing the magical moment, the politically tasteful theme of the

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power of Love to reconcile enemies is elevated to the more romantic one of Love's power to transform even a prison into a paradise.

Perhaps Rousseau was loath to change a word of Voltaire's text for fear of angering and alienating the great man, as he had Rameau. Rameau's suspicions that Rousseau was a plagiarist hit Rousseau harder than most because, in the past, his talent and skills had often been questioned. In thinking back, he may have recalled two particularly humiliating memories.

The first occured in 1733 when Rousseau was twenty-one and still living with Mme de Warens in Chambery. The Count de Bellegarde, who had spent many years in Paris and was devoted to Rameau, returned to Chambéry that year and, along with his brother, the Count de Nangis, who played the violin, and their sister the Countess de la Tour, who "chantoit un peu,"[122] promoted some public concerts which they asked Rousseau to supervise. They soon found that the task was beyond his abilities and replaced him. Nevertheless, Rousseau did have the daring to offer them "quelques petits morceaux de ma façon, et entre autres une Cantate qui plut beaucoup."[123] It was a piece "pleine de chants nouveaux et de choses d'effet, que l'on n'attendoit pas de moi." Having observed how poorly Rousseau read music, the brothers "ne douterent pas que je ne me fusse fait honneur du travail d'autrui."

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The piece itself being lost, we have no way of judging it for ourselves.[124] But Rousseau goes on to relate a test that he was given to ascertain if he indeed had the skills required:

> Un matin M. de Nangis vint me trouver avec une cantate de Clérambault qu'il avoit transposée, disoit-il, pour la commodité de la voix, et à laquelle il falloit faire une autre basse, la transposition rendant celle de Clérambault impracticable sur l'instrument. 125

When Rousseau protested that the job could not be done in one sitting, the Marquis asked that he write the bass of at least one recitative. Rousseau struggled with it in M. de Nangis' presence. "Je la fis donc, mal sans doute," Rousseau boasts, "mais je la fis du moins dans les régles, et comme il étoit présent, il ne put douter que je ne susse les élémens de la composition."[126]

The second incident occured a short time later. After a dinner at the home of the Countess de Menthon, the mother of one of Rousseau's pupils and a <u>grande horizontale</u>, the Marquis de Sennecterre suggested to Rousseau that the two of them go through the score of <u>Jephté</u>, a lyric tragedy by Monteclaire which was all the rage, having just been presented at the Royal Academy of Music in Paris (1732) and published the same year.[127] The Marquis, who "savoit (la musique) très bien,"[128] asked Jean-Jacques how many parts he would care to read--he himself could read six. Rousseau was suddenly alarmed:

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> Je n'étois pas encore accoutumé à cette pétulance françoise, et quoique j'eusse quelquefois annoné des partitions, je ne comprenois pas comment le même homme pouvoit faire en même tems six parties ni même deux. Rien ne m'a plus coûté dans l'exercice de la musique que de sauter ainsi légérement d'une partie à l'autre, et d'avoir l'oeil à la fois sur toute une partition. 129

Once again suspicions were aroused that Rousseau was a fraud. Once again he was put to the test. M. de Sennecterre, in his turn, asked Rousseau "noter une chanson qu'il vouloit donner à Mad^{lle} de Menthon." Since there was no way out, as Sennecterre sang the song, Rousseau wrote it down "même sans le faire beaucoup répéter."[130] The young Marquis read it, "et trouva, comme il ètoit vrai, qu'elle étoit très correctement notée."[131] Rousseau then goes on to protest:

> Au fond je savois fort bien la musique, je ne manquois que de cette vivacité du prémier coup d'oeil que je n'eus jamais sur rien, et qui ne s'acquiert en musique que par une pratique consommée. 132

Rousseau might have decided not to change Voltaire's libretto for fear of provoking an incident in which he could be accused of diminishing Voltaire's text by combining it with his own. But this case was quite different. Voltaire had specifically asked him to correct the text, particularly the scene change, which clearly would embarrass him were it allowed to remain. He went so far as to tell Rousseau: "Je me raporte du tout a vous," and "je compte avoir bientot l'honneur de vous faire mes remercimens."[133] It is clear that Voltaire hoped to see

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these "faults" removed. So when Rousseau writes to Voltaire that he has been "mêtamorphosê en musicien," the phrase is apt. By retaining the magical elements in Les Fêtes de Ramire Rousseau allows La Princesse de Navarre to metamorphose from a ballet comique into a ballet fantastique as Les Fêtes de Ramire.

Rousseau was less concerned with Rameau's feelings, writing that he was "dispensê de tous êgards pour Rameau, qui ne cherchoit qu'â me nuire."[134] Although he took care not to change Rameau's music, even so much as to tamper with the keys, "car pour que Rameau ne m'accusât pas d'avoir dêfigurê ses airs,"[135] in composing the segues connecting Rameau's music, he gave himself more freedom to create. "Mon travail en musique," he writes, "fut plus long et plus pênible."[136] He needed to compose several pieces of courtly majesty, not to mention a new prologue and a great deal of recitative. He relates that he "se trouva d'une difficultê extrême" to link all the new recitatives to Rameau's arias without changing the keys. His final verdict on his work was not a modest one: "Je reussis â ce Recitatif." And he adds, "Il êtoit bien accentuê, plein d'ênergie, et surtout excellemment modulê."[137] He implies that working at such a level inspired his genius and made him the equal of these masters:

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> L'idée des deux hommes supérieurs auxquels on daignoit m'associer m'avoit élevé le génie, et je puis dire que dans ce travail ingrat et sans gloire, dont le public ne pouvoit pas même être informé je me tins presque toujours à coté de mes modéles. 138

Throughout these endeavors Mme La Poplinière was constantly at Rousseau's heels, no doubt urged on by Rameau. She objected to Rousseau's mournful music in the first monologue where Fatime sings:

> O Mort, viens terminer les douleurs de ma vie. [139]

Although Rousseau argued that the text called for such a mood, she would not relent until Richelieu came to Rousseau's aid. Richelieu asked who wrote this monologue, and Rousseau showed him that the words were Voltaire's. "En ce cas," Richelieu replied, "c'est Voltaire seul qui a tort."[140] Even with the Duke's presence this sort of sniping by Mme La Poplinière did not stop until Rameau, who was, as it were, pulling Mme La Poplinière's strings from the flies, delivered, through her, what he hoped would be a telling blow.

> . . . enfin j'avois à faire à trop forte partie, et il me fut signifié qu'il y avoit à refaire à mon travail plusieurs choses sur lesquelles il falloit consulter M. Rameau. 141

Rousseau was shocked. Compared to the praise which he thought was his due, Rameau's summons sounded like a rebuke. It was too much, he writes:

> . . . je rentrai chez moi la mort dans le coeur. J'y tombai malade, épuisé de fatigue, dévoré de chagrin, et de six semaines je ne fus en état de sortir. 142

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At the time, his behavior must have seemed hysterical. Was it rational to shut himself in his room for six weeks just because Rameau wanted to go over a few things? Whatever Rousseau sensed was theatening him went far deeper than surface evidence. In disgust, Rousseau threw up his hands and, in an act that seemed certain to end his chances at a musical career, quit the rehearsals and fled to his his room to brood.

His motives here are complex. Undoubtedly a key element was Rameau's hostility. But beneath that was Rousseau's deeper distrust of his ability to rely on powerful friends like the Duc de Richelieu to protect him from vicious accusations of plagiarism. Rousseau's entire _raison d'être_ revolved around his visibility, his image of himself as an innocent and moral man. As the abuses gradually exacted a heavy toll on Rousseau's sensitive and complex mind, he began to turn away from society and become a recluse. In a letter written on 4 January 1762 to Malesherbes, a powerful ally of the _philosophes_, Rousseau trusts him to understand this seemingly misanthropic behavior:

> Longtems je me suis abusé moi meme sur la cause de cet invincible degout que j'ai toujours eprouvé dans le commerce des hommes, je l'attribuois au chagrin de n'avoir pas l'esprit assés present pour montrer dans la conversation le peu que j'en ai, et, par contrecoup, â celui de ne pas occuper dans le monde la place que j'y croyois meriter. 143

Rousseau goes on to suggest that the true cause is his love of liberty, a fundamental concept in his political

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philosophy. But his concept of freedom was an odd mixture of egalitarianism and political coercion aimed, on the one hand, at protecting a citizen's feelings from being hurt, and on the other, of enforcing a rigid code of conduct reminiscent of Calvin's Geneva or ancient Sparta. This quest for the moral state began to take control of Rousseau's ideas around the time that he became disillusioned with Rameau and the image of the Enlightened culture which Rameau represented, and of which he once dreamed of becoming a part.

Rameau had dashed his dream. To add to Rousseau's humiliation, Rameau was called in to complete _Les Fêtes de Ramire_. What Rameau objected to, as it turned out, was Rousseau's overture written "â l'Italienne et d'un style três nouveau."[144] His first demand was that Rousseau send him the overture to _Les Muses galantes_, which was written, as we recall, in Rameau's own French style. Rousseau had learned from a reliable source at Court that his new overture in the Italian style had been well received by the music connoisseurs who compared its quality to Rameau's. Suddenly Rousseau had some power to wield in this affair.

> Heureusement je sentis le croc-en-jambe, et je la refusai. Comme il n'y avoit plus que cinq ou six jours jusqu'â la rêprêsentation, il n'eut pas tems d'en faire une, et il fallut laisser la mienne. 145

With no other choice available, Rousseau's new overture

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remained, but Rameau saw to it that neither his nor Rousseau's names appeared on the programs. According to Ellis, Voltaire's name was also absent.[146] Since everyone knew Voltaire's and Rameau's work, no harm was done to their careers by omitting their names. But the omission of Rousseau's name kept him from sharing in the glory. Clearly, Rameau intended to revenge himself on Rousseau for his brazen refusal to change overtures. Rousseau's Pyrrhic victory lay in the fact that his new overture in the Italian style was, after all, performed before the King.[147]

Les Muses galantes at the Opéra

Some time later, when Richelieu had returned from Dunkirk, where he had gone to prepare for an invasion of Scotland, Rousseau considered writing to him concerning his fee for his reworking of Les Fêtes de Ramire and for redress of his grievances for his name not appearing on the program. But he demurred. "A son retour," he admits, "je me dis pour autoriser ma paresse qu'il étoit trop tard."[148] Rousseau tells us that he never saw Richelieu again. In choosing not to act, he lost a great deal:

> . . . l'honneur que méritoit mon ouvrage l'honoraire qu'il devoit me produire; et mon tems, mon travail, mon chagrin, ma maladie et l'argent qu'elle me coûta, tout cela fut à mes frais, sans me rendre un sol de bénéfice ou plustot de dédomagement. 149

Nevertheless, he assures us that the Duc de Richelieu

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still "avoit naturellment de l'inclination pour moi, et pensoit avantageusement de mes talens."[150] The Duke was not to blame, just "mon malheur," in the person of Mme de La Poplinière. Rameau is not even mentioned.

But was it bad luck? With his loss of Richelieu's esteem after the Fêtes de Ramire episode, Rousseau pinned his hopes of fame on this opera. But, at the very moment when Rousseau was on the brink of gaining the admiration of the Opéra and the Court, he was again at work undermining himself.

To get les Muses galantes accepted at the Paris Opéra, he turned to his friend Francueil for help. His friend delivered as promised. Francueil used not only his own influence but that of Pierre Jélyotte, one of the stars of the Opéra, to get Rousseau's opera heard. Rousseau recalled that there was a large audience at the dress rehearsal, "et plusieurs morceaux furent très applaudis."[151] In spite of these promising signs, Rousseau suddenly decided that "la piece ne passeroit pas," and "je la retirai sans mot dire, et sans m'exposer au refus." His next remark is filled with insinuations of unspecified conspiracies against him. He states that "je vis clairement par plusieurs indices que l'ouvrage eut-il été parfait n'auroit pas passé."

One can discern behind Rousseau's withdrawal of Les Muses galantes a mixture of fear that it might succeed

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and hope that it would fail. The known facts and Rousseau's own account seem to support this conclusion. With no evidence save his vague suspicions of an impending failure, Rousseau almost blithely jettisons his career.

In his later years, Rousseau assisted his enemies in their attacks by denigrating his Muses galantes in its avertissement. In it Rousseau apologizes for the opera by asking the reader to understand "toute la force de l'habitude et des préjugés" which made the work a joy.

> Nourri dès mon enfance dans le goût de la Musique françoise et de l'espèce de Poësie qui lui est propre, je prenois le bruit pour l'harmonie, le merveilleux pour de l'intérest, et des chansons pour un Opéra. 152

Having seen it charm both the Italians and the French, having had it performed at Court in 1745 under the patronage of Richelieu and later, in 1761, before the Prince de Conti, Rousseau still insisted that the work was "médiocre en son genre," and disparages the opera-ballet form itself by describing it as "si mauvais" that we are asked to wonder "comment il m'a pu plaire."[153]

This tendency towards self-defeat did not go unnoticed by his contemporaries. Scherer points out that Fréron, in one of his Lettres sur quelques écrits de ce temps (1753), is cogent when he describes Rousseau's mentality thus: "La passion de M. Rousseau n'est pas d'être applaudi, mais d'être sifflé."[154] Provoked hisses helped reinforce his view of himself as an outcast and justified his need

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to bite the hands that fed him. His self-righteousness fed on his enemies' rebukes.

In taking into account Rousseau's acts of sabotage against his own career, the impact that Rameau had on Rousseau's life should not be underestimated. Considering the esteem in which he held the great musician, the years he devoted to the study of his works, the love he felt for his operas, it is easy to understand the sense of betrayal he finally felt when Rameau's ruthless and unjust character was finally unveiled. One might argue that Rameau's treachery had more to do with Rousseau's volte face against the Enlightenment than any other single incident in his life. If Rameau had been a kind and encouraging mentor like Rouseau's first music teacher, M. Le Maitre; if he had embraced Jean-Jacques as a devoted follower and praised his first uncertain attempts to emulate his master, as Rousseau had dreamed that he would; if he were merely critical rather than viciously envious of Rousseau, how differently would things have turned out? Perhaps there would have been less rage in Rousseau's philosophy. Perhaps it would never have had the impact is has had. Given Rousseau's eventual fame in the world of music and letters, perhaps Rameau's injustice was a blessing in disguise. Blessing or curse, Rameau had left his mark.

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Notes

1. Rousseau, *Confessions*, B. Gagnebin, M. Raymond et al., ed. 6 Vols. *OEuvres complêtes de J.J. Rousseau* (Paris:Bibliotêque de la Plêiade, 1964), 1:159.

Henceforth Rousseau's *OEuvres complêtes* will be abbreviated as OC.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid, 159-160.

4. Ibid, 282.

5. Ibid.

6. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, "Notes et Variantes" to *Confessions*, OC 1:1372-73, n. 5.

7. *Confessions*, OC 1:286.

8. Ibid, 285.

9. Ibid, 289.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid, 291.

12. Maurice Cranston, *Jean-Jacques*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982) 164.

13. Ibid.

14. *Confessions*, OC 1:292-292.

15. *Jean-Jacques*, 253-254.

16. Jacques Scherer, "Notes et Variantes, Thêâtre," *La Dêcouverte Nouveau Monde*, OC 2:1833.

17. *Confessions*, OC 1:294.

18. Ibid.

19. *Jean-Jacques*, 145.

20. *Confessions*, OC 1:294.

21. *Jean-Jacques*, 145.

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22. Confessions, OC 1:293.

23. Ibid, 293-294.

24. Ibid, 294.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid, 294.

27. Gagnebin and Raymond, "Notes" to Confessions, OC 1:1386, n. 9.

28. Ibid.

29. Rousseau, Lettre sur la musique françoise, OC 5:297-298.

30. Confessions, OC 1:294.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid, 294-295.

33. François Lesure ed., Nancy Hartman, tr., Introduction to Jean-Philippe Rameau's Les Indes Galantes (S.A.:Erato Disques,1994) 24.

See also, a description of Sallê's Pygmalion in Edward A. Langhans, "The Children of Terpsichore" in Shirley Strum Kenny ed. British Theatre and the Other Arts, (Washington: Folger Books, 1984) 137.

In his article "Opêra" in the Dictionnaire de musique (1765) Rousseau would later question the value of dance in opera, but in his Muses galantes one finds the direction "on danse" on nearly every other page (See: OC 5:960-961).

34. Letter 69 "Le chevalier Louis-Gabriel-Christophe de Montaigu â Pierre-François, comte de Montaigu," dated 19 November 1743, in R. A. Leigh, ed., Correspondance complête de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (Geneva: Institut et Musêe Voltaire, 1965), 1:210.

Henceforth Rousseau's Correspondance complête will be abbreviated CC.

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35. Letter 122 "Pierre-François, comte de Montaigu, â l'abbé Pierre-Joseph Alary," dated 15 August 1744, CC 2:50.

36. Confessions, OC 1:308.

37. Ibid, 313-314.

38. Ibid, 314.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid, 316.

42. Madeline B. Ellis, Rousseau's Venetian Story, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966) 120.

43. Confessions, OC 1:331.

44. Les Muses galantes, OC 2:1053.

45. Ibid, 1055.

46. Ibid, 1056.

47. Ibid, 1063.

48. Rolfe Humphries, tr., Ovid (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), 45.

Cupid be gone with your quiver!
No love is worth so much trouble
That with my every breath I keep on praying for death.
Death's what I'm praying for, though, when I think
that you have betrayed me.

49. Muses galantes, OC 2:1063.

50. Olivier Pot, "Introductions: Lettre sur l'opéra italien et français," OC 5:LXXX.

51. Jean-Philippe Rameau, Les Indes Galantes, Recorded at Salle des Fêtes Valence, Drome, 1974 (Erato Disques, 1994) 109.

52. David A. Campbell, Greek Lyric Vol. 2, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 27.

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53. Muses galantes, OC 2:1069-70.

54. Ibid, 1070-72.

55. Ibid, 1072.

56. Olivier Pot, "Introductions: Lettre sur l'opéra," OC 5:LXXX.

57. Lettre sur l'opéra, OC 5:249.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid, 250.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid, 250-251.

64. Ibid, 251.

65. Ibid, 251-252.

66. Ibid, 252.

67. Ibid, 257.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid, 252.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid, 255.

73. Ibid.

74. Confessions, OC 1:333.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid, 333-334.

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77. Ibid, 334.

78. Ibid.

79. Gagnebin and Raymond, Confessions, OC 1:1408, Notes on p. 334, n. 2.

80. Letter 137 "Rousseau à Jean-Baptiste Bouchard Du Plessis," date 14 September 1745, CC 2:87.

81. Confessions, OC 1:334.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid, 335.

85. Ibid, 335-336.

86. Muses galantes, OC 2:1057.

87. Ibid, 1058.

88. Ibid.

89. Confessions, OC 1:123.

90. Ibid, 124.

91. Ibid, 125.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid, 147.

94. Ibid, 148.

95. Ibid, 149.

96. Ibid, 148.

97. Ibid, 149.

98. Ibid, 150.

99. Muses galantes, OC 2:1060.

100. Ibid, 1061.

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101. Ibid, 1062.

102. Ibid, 1062.

103. Ibid, 1063.

104. Confessions, OC 1:335.

105. Voltaire,"Avertissement" to La Princesse de Navarre, OEuvres complètes de Voltaire, (Paris:Garnier Frères, 1877) 3:273.

106. Ibid, 273-274.

107. Ibid, 274.

108. Voltaire, La Princesse de Navarre, 293-294.

109. Confessions, OC 1:335.

110. Letter 139 "Rousseau à François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire," dated 11 December 1745, CC 2:92.

111. Confessions, OC 1:335-36, see also notes 1:1410 note for p. 336, notes 1-4.

112. Letter 140 "François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire à Rousseau," dated 15 December 1745, CC 2:94.

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid.

115. Voltaire, La Princesse de Navarre, 295.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid, 280.

118. Fêtes de Ramire, OC 2:1083.

119. Ibid, 1083-84.

120. Letter 140 "Voltaire à Rousseau," CC 2:94.

121. Ibid.

122. Confessions, OC 1:210.

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123. Ibid.

124. Gagnebin and Raymond, "Notes" to _Confessions_ for page 210, OC:1331 n. 3.

125. _Confessions_, OC 1:210.

126. Ibid.

127. Gagnebin and Raymond, "Notes" to _Confessions_ for page 211, OC:1332 n. 4.

128. _Confessions_, OC 1:211.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

131. Ibid.

132. Ibid.

133. Letter 140 "Voltaire à Rousseau," CC 2:95.

134. _Confessions_, OC 1:336.

135. Ibid, 337.

136. Ibid, 336-337.

137. Ibid, 337.

138. Ibid.

139. _Les Fêtes de Ramire_, OC 2:1083.

140. _Confessions_, OC 1:337.

141. Ibid.

142. Ibid.

143. Rousseau, _Lettres à Malesherbes_, Letter 1, dated 4 Janaury 1762, OC 1:1132.

144. _Confessions_, OC 1:338.

145. Ibid.

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146. Ellis, Rousseau's Venetian Story, 163.

147. See Lionel Sawkins "Voltaire, Rameau, Rousseau: a fresh look at La Princesse de Navarre and its revival in Bordeaux in 1763," (Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, 1989) 265:1334-1336.

Sawkins disputes this claim which he terms "spurious." His argument rests on the fact that in all sources of the published scores of both La Princesse de Navarre and Les Fêtes de Ramire the overture is exactly the same. He states that "it seems inconceivable that an overture by Rousseau would have been used on such an occasion, promoted by Richelieu, with Voltaire and Rameau." In a footnote (20) he states: "There is one striking similarity between the last movement of this overture and a minuet in the last scene of Le Devin du village --was Rousseau trying to lay claim to the former . . .?"

One explanation, probably the most obvious one, is that Rameau or supporters of Rameau were in charge of his published works and when it came time to publish les Fêtes de Ramire they simply used the same overture rather than Rousseau's. It should be remembered that Rameau wanted Rousseau to replace his Italian style overture with the one he wrote for his Muses galantes that imitated the style of Rameau. Is it possible that Rousseau's overture to Les Muses galantes was the overture that was finally published? Its having strains of Le Devin du village makes this speculation plausible.

148. Confessions, OC 1:338.

149. Ibid.

150. Ibid.

151. Ibid, 341.

152. "Avertissement" to Les Muses galantes, OC 2:1051.

153. Ibid.

154. Scherer, "Introductions:Théâtre," OC 2:LXXXIX. Also see note 2 on same page.

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Chapter Two

From Idolater to Prophet: _Le Devin du village_

In the fall of 1752, Rousseau's fortunes as a composer would suddenly be transformed from humiliating defeat to shining success with the triumphant premiere of his _intermède_ _Le Devin du village_ at Fontainebleau. The five years that separate the disgrace of _Les Fêtes de Ramire_ and _Les Muses galantes_ from the glory of his _Devin du village_ were filled with events that moved him from obscurity to renown. He began writing articles on music for Diderot's _Encyclopédie_. The same year that these appeared, Rousseau also rose to prominence with his _Discours sur les sciences et les arts_, a passionate broadside against the Enlightenment which his friend Diderot had helped to get published. As a result of this new fame, his _Devin du village_ was quickly accepted at the Paris Opéra.

On the heels of this success came a controversy that would engage Paris in a furious war of pamphlets and become known as the _querelle_ _des_ _Bouffons_, pitting the defenders of Italian _opera_ _buffa_ against those of French grand opera. During this dispute, in which Diderot, Grimm, d'Alembert, and Rousseau took the side of Italian music,

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Rousseau published his devastating Lettre sur la musique françoise claiming that the French did not have and never could have true opera. Much of his aim was to turn the philosophes against Rameau. In this he succeeded.

Anti-Rameau

After the Fêtes de Ramire debacle and the aborted premiere of Les Muses galantes, Rousseau believed that his musical career was over. With its "end" his literary career began. But this would prove to be merely a hiatus from the theatre. It allowed Rousseau to develop ideas springing from the clash between his dreams of recapturing the simplicity of lost youth and the dreams of fame beckoning to him from the Paris salons. More and more the former dreams gained control and finally led to his campaign of reform. In his musings, the memory of Rameau's contempt was never far off and became instrumental in the evolution of his campaign. The beginnings of the campaign are marked by his Discours sur les sciences et les arts (1750), his Devin du village (1752), and his Lettre sur la musique françoise (1753). The first stirrings of reform began when he lost hope in his music career and placed his fate in the hands of the Dupins.

At the time, the Dupins themselves were inspired with a spirit of reform by the publication, in October 1748, of Montesquieu's L'Esprit des Lois. Its appearance on

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the literary scene caused a sensation among political liberals which the Dupins began to work furiously to counteract. In doing so they kept Rousseau busy copying their notes into a more readable text. M. Dupin, as a tax-farmer and financier, was bent on defending his profession against Montesquieu's attacks. Mme Dupin wanted to rescue women from the oblivion inherent in Montesquieu's views that social conventions are the foundation of law.[1]

Privately, Rousseau was in great sympathy with Montesquieu's ideas. We find them in Rousseau's cultural relativist position that governments and cultures are influenced more by geography and convention than by universally accepted principles of law and justice.

Although the meager salary the Dupins paid Rousseau barely met his financial needs, he received spiritual compensation from the intellectual whirl that surrounded Mme Dupin, provided by the famous savants who attended her salon. He also found the Dupins' table and wines to his liking, not to mention the summers he spent with them at Chenonceaux, their magnificent chateau in the Loire Valley. In his Confessions he writes: "On s'amusa beaucoup dans ce beau lieu: on y faisoit très bonne chere; j'y devins gras comme un Moine."[2] The chateau revitalized his creative powers. It was there that Rousseau was inspired to write a comedy, some vocal trios to entertain the family, and a poem to console himself.

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The poem, entitled L'Allée de Sylvie, is considered mediocre verse, but is important as a picture of Rousseau's state of mind at the time. It contains the beginnings of ideas that would later be developed more fully in his political, theatrical, and fictional works. The allée in the title was a promenade through the woods that ran along the river Cher at Chenonceaux. In the poem, Rousseau strolls this lane in order to contemplate philosophical matters, but his mind is distracted by the love welling up in his heart. The conflict between passion and reason is the theme of the poem. In the opening lines we hear again his love of solitude.

> Qu'a m'égarer dans ces bocages
> Mon coeur goûte de voluptés!
> Que je me plais sous ces ombrages!
> Que j'aime ces flots argentés!
> Douce et charmante rêverie,
> Solitude aimable et chérie,
> Puissiez-vous toujours me charmer![3]

In the serenity of these woods, his ambitions seem "vains et tumultuous." They promised "bonheur et sagesse," but produced neither. His fears and doubts about his future enslave him. If only he could be contented with "vertu" and "simple innocence," instead of "soins" and "prévoyance."

His thoughts are interrupted by the passion welling up in him, that he fears may overwhelm him:

> Passions, sources de délices,
> Passions, sources de supplices,
> Cruels tyrans, doux séducteurs,

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Sans vos fureurs impêtueuses,
Sans vos amorces dangereuses,
La paix seroit dans tous les coeurs.[4]

Recognizing their power to destroy him, Rousseau begins to prophesy the downfall of those obsessed by passions.

Malheur â l'ame ambitieuse,
De qui l'insolence odieuse
Veut asservir tous les humains!
Qu'â ses rivaux toujours en bute,
L'abîme apprêtê pour sa chûte
Soit creusê de ses propres mains.[5]

Perhaps his thoughts turned to "l'insolence odieuse" of Rameau, so terrified of rivals. To such men, Rousseau bequeaths "l'abîme." They are driven only by concern for their personal comforts. Within these words stir the beginnings of his Discourses and his <u>Contrat Social</u>:

Malheur â tout homme farouche,
A tout mortel que rien ne touche
Que sa propre fêlicitê!
Qu'il êprouve dans sa misere,
De la part de son propre frere,
La même insensibilitê. 6

Are thoughts of revenge against Rameau hidden between these lines? It would seem so. In a letter to Mme de Warens in January of 1749 he relates his delight in the work he is doing for Diderot's <u>Encyclopêdie</u>, even though he must do it on his own time and is exhausted from trying to meet Diderot's deadline. "Je suis sur les dents:" he tells her, "mais j'ai promis, il faut tenir parole."[7] Then he confesses his motives:

> D'ailleurs, je tiens au cu et aux chausses des gens qui m'ont fait du mal et la bile me donne des forces de même de l'esprit et de la science.

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> . . . Chacun a ses Armes; au lieu de faire des chansons à mes Ennemis, je leur fais des articles de Dictionnaires: je compte que l'un vaudra bien l'autre et durera plus longtems.

Between these two remarks Rousseau has inserted a quotation from Boileau: "La colère suffit et vaut un Apollon."[8] The line is part of a poem from Boileau's Satires I and expresses the same sense of betrayal Rousseau was feeling:

> Quittons donc pour jamais une ville importune,
> Où l'honneur a toujours guerre avec la fortune;
> Où le vice orgueilleux s'érige en souverain,
> . . .
> Et quel homme si foid ne serait plein de bile
> A l'aspect odieux des moeurs de cette ville?
> Qui pourrait les souffrir? et qui, pour les blâmer,
> Malgré muse et Phébus n'apprendrait à rimer?
> Non, non, sur ce sujet pour écrire avec grâce,
> Il ne faut point monter au sommet du Parnasse;
> Et, sans aller rêver dans le double vallon
> La colère suffit et vaut un Apollon. 9

In his own poem, Rousseau realizes that he too is sometimes driven by passion, but he sets himself apart as innocent by birth. His is not "un coeur né pour le crime"[10] as others are. This assertion of his native innocence ("une ame bien née") will be repeated and defended in his autobiographical works throughout his life. The guilty passion that he feels for the unnamed women of the poem springs from his innocent soul. Since in an innocent soul such a passion can do no real harm, he wonders why it is wrong to allow himself to feel it:

> Mais du moins leurs leçons charmantes
> N'imposent que d'aimables loix:
> La haine et ses fureurs sanglantes
> S'endorment à leur douce voix. 11

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He wonders if it is this passion that sets fire to the others.

> Je sens qu'une ame plus tranquille,
> Plus exempte de tendres soins,
> Plus libre en ce charmant asyle,
> Philosopheroit beaucoup moins.
> Ainsi du feu qui me dêvore
> Tout sert â fomenter l'ardeur:[12]

In a moment of Epiphany Rousseau begins to wonder if his fear of passion may spring from his envy of the young, resulting in a stern and oppressive philosophy. Perhaps he fears that he may become like Rameau, intolerant and bitter at the sight of a passionate young idolator.

> Tel, dans une route contraire,
> On voit le fanatique austere
> En guerre avec tous ces desirs,
> Peignant Dieu toujours en colere,
> Et ne s'attachant, pour lui plaire,
> Qu'â fuir la joie et les plaisirs. 13

Before the work he was doing for the Dupins consumed more and more of his time, Rousseau was often able to slip away to Paris for weekly dinners with Diderot and the Abbê de Condillac. These little get-togethers spawned a short-lived periodical edited by Diderot and Rousseau titled Le Persifleur. Rousseau formed a friendship with d'Alembert which led to writing articles for L'Encyclpêdie.

This great enterprise was interrupted by an event that much affected Rousseau, Diderot's imprisonment in Vincennes Castle. In Book Eight of his Confessions Rousseau recalls that whenever he could get away from the Dupins, he would race to his friend's side:

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> En entrant je ne vis que lui, je ne fis qu'un saut, un cri, je collai mon visage sur le sien, je le serrai étroitement sans lui parler autrement que par mes pleurs et par mes sanglots; j'étouffois de tendresse et de joye. 14

Rousseau was troubled by the change that imprisonment had wrought on Diderot's disposition: "Le Donjon lui avoit fait une impression terrible." When no longer confined to his cell, Diderot was allowed to take walks in the park which adjoined the castle. But he needed the presence of friends "pour ne pas se livrer à son humeur noire." Rousseau considered himself the closest of his friends, and the most devoted:

> Comme j'étois assurément celui qui compatissoit le plus à sa peine, je crus être aussi celui dont la vue lui seroit la plus consolante, et tous les deux jours au plus tard, malgré des occupations très exigeantes j'allois soit seul soit avec sa femme passer avec lui les après-midi. 15

In the summer of 1749 Rousseau visited Diderot with the news that he planned to compete in an essay contest sponsored by the Academy of Dijon. In this work Rousseau would release all his pent-up fury, in retribution for the injustices he had witnessed and endured.

The Deceitful Veil of Politeness

With the imprisonment of Diderot, Rousseau began to feel a growing dread of society's injustice. It was Diderot's book Lettres sur les aveugles that so deeply offended M. de Réaumur, causing the famous physician

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and Academician to have Diderot imprisoned. Rousseau recalls that his distress grew out of the thought of Diderot's never being free again:

> Rien ne peindra jamais les angoisses que me fit sentir le malheur de mon ami. Ma funeste imagination qui porte toujours le mal au pis s'effaroucha. Je le crus là pour le reste de sa vie. 16

What must have shocked Rousseau most was that the same Réaumur who had seemed so kind and so tolerant, arranging for Rousseau to present his music system to the Academy, now dared to unleash his power against an intellectual like Diderot, who was an earnest seeker after truth.

To add guilt to his sorrow, while Diderot was languishing in prison, Rousseau was spending his days in the luxurious company of friends of Mme Dupin and her cousin Mme de Poplinière. On an outing to the estate of Baron de Thun, the party's coach passed Vincennes, and Rousseau's pain was made transparent: "je sentis à la vue du Donjon un déchirement de coeur dont le Baron remarqua l'effet sur mon visage."[17] At dinner that night, the Baron remarked that Diderot's imprisonment was the result of his imprudence. Rousseau immediately leaped to defend his friend's recklesness:

> j'en mis dans la manière impétueuse dont je le défendis. L'on pardonna cet excés de zèle à celui qu'inspire un ami malheureux, et l'on parla d'autre chose. 18

The stage was set for Rousseau's epiphany. It was inspired by a notice in the Mercure de France announcing

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an essay contest sponsored by the Academy of Dijon which asked: "Si le progrès des sciences et des arts a contribué à corrompre ou à épurer les moeurs?" The instant he read these words, Rousseau writes, "je vis un autre univers et je devins un autre homme."[19] In his second letter to Malesherbes, Rousseau passionately recounts the moment with all the melodramatic pathos of a romantic:

> . . .tout à coup je me sens l'espirit ébloüi de mille lumieres; des foules d'idées vives s'y presenterent à la fois avec une force et une confusion qui me jetta dans un trouble inexprimable; je sens ma tête prise par un etourdissement semblable à l'ivresse. Une violent palpitation m'oppresse, souleve ma poitrine; ne pouvant plus respirer en marchant, je me laisse tomber sous un des arbres de l'avenuë, et j'y passe une demie heure dans une telle agitation qu'en me relevant j'apperçus tout le devant de ma veste mouillé de mes larmes sans avoir senti que j'en repandois. 20

Given Diderot's situation when Rousseau came to him with the idea for his essay, it should be no surprise that Diderot was delighted with the final product. In his Discours sur les arts et sciences Rousseau turns his wrath against the injustices that he and men like him had been forced to endure. Rousseau announces that "l'Art de plaire" has reduced the high principles of rational inquiry and virtue to "une vile et trompeuse uniformité,"[21] in which politeness and propriety reign supreme. He sees this as a threat to frankness and freedom. It is against independent thought that these social rules are aimed:

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> sans cesse la politesse exige, la bienséance ordonne: sans cesse on suit des usages, jamais son propre génie. On n'ose plus paroître ce qu'on est. 22

Consequently one will never be sure with whom one is dealing or who one's true friends are until it is too late.

> Les soupçons, les ombrages, les craints, la froideur, la reserve, la haine, la trahison se cacheront sans cesse sous ce voile uniforme et perfide de politesse, sous cette urbanité si vantée que nous devons aux lumieres de notre siécle. 23

Although he calls the sciences a pastime of the idle: "Nées dans l'oisiveté, elles la nourrisent à leur tour."[24] Rousseau was careful to aim his barbs not at experimental science, in which he and Diderot engaged, but at Cartesian speculation. In a footnote he asks: "Descartes n'a-t-il pas construit l'Univers avec des cubes et des tourbillons?"[25] He attacks contemporary Cartesians such as Fontenelle, Castel, Rameau, Réaumur and, by implication, Voltaire.[26]

> . . . ces vains et futiles déclamateurs vont de tous côtes, armés de leurs funestes paradoxes; sapant les fondemens de la foi, et anéantissant la vertu. 27

Armed with lessons from Montesquieu he attacks wealthy <u>bourgeoisie</u> like the Poplinières and the Dupins, with such aphorisms as: "on a de tout avec de l'argent, hormis des moeurs et des Citoyens," and "Le goût du faste ne s'associe guéres dans les mêmes ames avec celui de l'honnête."[28]

He goes on to attack the hostesses of the salons who

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force men of talent to submit their works to to the tastes of "jeunesse frivole." Such men have "sacrifié leur goût aux Tyrans de leur liberté."[29] Then, in a passage clearly intended to infuriate Voltaire, he evokes Voltaire's discarded name of Aroüet as a reminder of his humble origins and then accuses him of lowering his standards to please the tastes of his age.[30] In words suggesting a eulogy he asks Voltaire:

> Dites-nous, célèbre Aroüet, combien vous avez sacrifié de beautés males et fortes à nôtre fausse délicatesse, et combien l'esprit de la galanterie si fertile en petites choses vous en a coûté de grandes. 31

Much of what he wrote found sympathetic readers, with the obvious exception of Voltaire, among the radical _philosophes_.[32] They needed only to look around them to see that the arts and sciences had little effect on society's morals. And, as Diderot's imprisonment proved, freedom of thought still stood on shaky ground. In this fight, Rousseau seemed their ally. In a letter written November 1752 Grimm indicates his surprised at this fact:

> Il est fort singulier que M. Rousseau ait converti ici presque tout les philosophes, qui avec quelques limitations conviennent tous qu'il a raison; je pourrais nommer entre autre M. D'Alembert et M. Diderot. 33

Rousseau's _Premier Discours_ (as it is also called) made him a celebrity. But having sought fame for ten years, he now found it unendurable. As so often happens in such cases, people around him began to change in their behavior towards him, and jealousy replaced friendship:

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> Tant que je vêcus ignoré du public je fus aimé de tous ceux qui me connurent, et je n'eus pas un seul ennemi. Mais sitot que j'eus un nom je n'eus plus d'amis. 34

In Rousseau's case, his Premier Discours seemed designed to make enemies. Its success only heightened the effect. In addition, Rousseau now deliberately chose to drastically reform his life. Having cast himself as the enemy of luxury, he set about fulfilling the role. He quit his job with the Dupins and took up the menial profession of a music copyist. He gave up his fine clothes for those of a pauper.

But when fame comes, it is impossible to hide. Although determined to live as a pauper, he was besieged with orders for copy work by people anxious to be in his presence and bask in the glow of his fame. Next came the flood of articles in the January 1751 edition of the Mercure de France attacking his Discours.[35] He answered them severely, making certain that no opponent left the field unscathed:

> A peine mon Discours eut-il paru que les deffenseurs des lettres fondirent sur moi comme de concert. Indigné de voir tant de petits Messieurs Josse qui n'entendoient pas même la question vouloir en décider en maitres, je pris la plume et j'en traitai quelques uns de mainiére â ne pas laisser les rieurs de leur côté.[36]

The heart of Rousseau's Discours went far deeper than brittle criticism. Rousseau, as Diderot immediately realized, had formulated the foundation of a radically new philosophy, one that would reconcile faith with reason,

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and politics with ethics. But, as his criticism suggests, its beginnings grew out of personal experience. The treachery of Rameau and Réaumur revealed to Rousseau the unpleasant truth that a man's character (and for Rousseau this meant his benevolence, or lack thereof) had little to do with his worldly success. For a Calvinist, this concept held an even deeper meaning. How could God choose to raise up the corrupt (Rameau) and strike down the innocent (Rousseau)?

His unique solution to this dilemma, which in theology is known as the theodicy problem, was to locate the cause of man's downfall, not in God's work (Nature), but in the artificial institutions of human creation (Society). The original sin, he concluded, lies in man's turning a deaf ear to God's voice (conscience), and its accompanying love of the innocent self which Rousseau terms _amour de soi_, and listening instead to the false praise of others with its accompanying self-love, which Rousseau termed _amour propre_. The first love was the gift of Nature, the second the curse of society. By eliminating its supernatural elements, Rousseau neatly turned the myth of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden into a more plausible history of the lost paradise of the Golden Age.

Rousseau was the first to admit that we can never return to the Golden Age, and that we must make the best of what

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we have inherited. It was not a return to the state of nature that Rousseau desired, but to the naive innocence that it implied:

> Avant que l'Art eut façonné nos maniéres et appris à nos passions à parler un langage apprêté, nos moeurs étoient rustiques, mais naturelles; et la différence des procédés annonçoit au premier coup d'oeil celle des caracteres. La nature humaine, au fond, n'étoit pas meilleure; mais les hommes trouvoient leur sécurité dans la facilité de se pénétrer reciproquement, et cet avantage, dont nous ne sentons plus le prix, leur épargnoit bien des vices. 37

It is this rustic world that Rousseau attempted to portray in his Devin du Village, which is set in a hamlet situated on the outskirts of, and threatened by, a corrupt cosmopolitan society.

Le Devin du village

In Book Eight of his Confessions, Rousseau writes: "Le Devin du Vilage acheva de me mettre à la mode, et bientot il n'y eut pas d'homme plus recherché que moi dans Paris."[38] Rousseau found relief from his fame in the homes of friends outside of Paris. It was at Passy, in the humble home of a fellow Genevan, M. Mussard, that he first began to think of writing opera again. Mussard, who played the violincello and had also been to Venice, shared Rousseau's passion for Italian music.

One night their conversation turned to opera buffa. "La nuit ne dormant pas," Rousseau writes "j'allai rêver comment on pourroit faire pour donner en France l'idée

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d'un Drame de ce genre."[39] In the morning, notebook and pencil in hand, Rousseau walked to the healing waters of Passy:

> et en prenant les eaux je fis quelques maniéres de vers très à la hâte, et j'y adaptai des chants qui me vinrent en les faisant. 40

What inspired these melodies? Certainly the comic operas of Pergolesi, heard at the Venice opera houses. But also the barcarolles sung by the gondoliers; and, even more so, the choirs of the scuole, the charitable institutions where poor and outcast girls were raised and educated. These choruses were composed and directed by the greatest masters in Italy, and sung with full orchestra. Of all the music, this was the most moving:

> Je n'ai l'idée de rien d'aussi voluptueux, d'aussi touchant que cette musique: les richesse de l'art, le gout exquis des chants, la beauté des voix, la justesse de l'exécution, tout dans ces délicieux concerts concourt à produire une impression qui n'est assurément pas du bon costume, mais dont je doute qu'aucun coeur d'homme soit à l'abri. 41

There was another souce as well that Rousseau surely drew from: the memories of his boyhood in Geneva and the simple folk songs his aunt Suson would sing to him. In Book One of his Confessions he recalls those halcyon days:

> Je suis persuadé que je lui dois le gout ou plustot la passion pour la musique qui ne s'est bien développée en moi que longtems après. Elle savoit une quantité prodigieuse d'airs et de chansons qu'elle chantoit avec un filet de voix fort douce . . . L'attrait que son chant avoit pour moi fut tel que non seulement plusieurs de ses chansons me sont toujours restées dans la mémoire. 42

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In his failing memory, snatches of a song especially precious to him came drifting back. The lyrics encapsulate the spirit that later inspired his operas and ballets:

> Tircis, je n'ose
> Ecouter ton Chalumeau.
> sous l'Ormeau;
> Car on en cause
> Déja dans nôtre hameau.
> . . . .
> . . . . un berger
> . . . . s'engager.
> . . . sans danger;
> Et toujours l'épine est sous la rose.[43]

"Je cherche," he laments, "où est le charme attendrissant que mon coeur trouve à cette chanson." He can't explain why he is so moved by this tune, "mais il m'est de toute impossiblité de la chanter jusqu'à la fin, sans être arrêté par mes larmes."[44]

In Passy, the feelings of these melodies were recaptured and jotted down along with some lyrics. Rushing back to the house, he showed the pieces to his host and his housekeeper Mlle. Duvernois, "qui étoit en vérité une très bonne et aimable fille."[45] The three songs he had written were Colette's first aria: "J'ai perdu mon Serviteur," the Soothsayer's aria: "L'Amour croit s'il s'inquiette," and the final duet: "à jamais, Colin, je t'engage, . . ."

His tiny audience applauded with delight. Rousseau recalls that had they not done so he might have thrown the songs into the fire without another thought, "comme

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j'ai fait tant de fois pour des choses du moins aussi bonnes." Perhaps he was recalling the fate of his Iphis and Découverte du nouveau monde.

The songs being well-received by his audience of two, Rousseau quickly completed the text and sketched out all the music in six days. He completed the rest in Paris, "un peu de récitatif et tout le remplissage." Within three weeks "mes scènes furent mises au net et en état d'être répresentées."[46] All that remained uncompleted were the divertissements, which would not be written until Le Devin was mounted at the Opéra.

What Rousseau had created was something France had never heard, an opera written in French, but in the Italian style. And he had improved on Pergolesi, for unlike the Italian, whose refined arias do not reflect the farcical mood of his story, Rousseau managed to suport his verse melodically in such a way that the emotions behind the words were expressed by the music.[47] Furthermore, the work is integrated in such a way that the story is not merely an excuse to introduce pretty songs but a compelling tale of innocent rural lovers threatened by a corrupt urban culture.

In contrast to the tone of his first Discours, the spirit of Le Devin is lighthearted, and surely inspired by happier events. The opera's theme of unsophisticated love reflects the change in Rousseau's relationship with

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Thérèse from one of lover into the deeper intimacy of companion. Some months before the opera was written, Rousseau decided to move in with Thérèse and, with the help of Mme Dupin, who raised his salary and provided the couple with some much-needed furniture, he rented a suite of rooms at the Hôtel de Languedoc, in the Rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honoré. In this environment, Rousseau and Thérèse were finally able to have more time to themselves; and Rousseau's affection for her began to grow. In his Confessions he writes:

> Le coeur de ma Therese étoit celui d'un ange: nôtre attachement croissoit avec notre intimité, et nous sentions davantage de jour en jour combien nous étions faits l'un pour l'autre. 48

They took long walks together and dined alone in their room on simple peasant fare. "Qui décrira," he writes, "qui sentira, les charmes de ces repas." In describing the feelings evoked by the memory of domestic bliss with this simple soul Rousseau concludes: "Amitié, confiance, intimité, douceur d'ame, que vos assaisonnemens sont délicieux."[49] Moments of solitude and serenity were dear to Rousseau; granting him an escape from the ever-increasing demands of Paris society.

Le Devin du village is set in a peaceful hamlet. Its mise en scène requires: "d'un côté la Maison du Devin; de l'autre des Arbes et des Fontaines, et dans le fond un Hameau."[50]

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The interlude begins with a sprightly overture in the Italian style, melodic and charming. Then Colette, a young shepherdess, enters "pleurant, et s'essuyant les yeux de son tablier." She sings:

> COLETTE
> J'ai perdu tout mon bonheur;
> J'ai perdu mon Serviteur;
> Colin me délaisse. 51

Heartbroken and angry that her lover could leave her for another, she warns her unknown rival that she is in for the same treatment. Still, she can't seem to get Colin out of her mind:

> Que me sert d'y rêver sans cesse?
> Rien ne peut guérir mon amour,
> Et tout augmente ma tristesse. 52

In Scene 2 the Soothsayer "s'avance gravement" while Colette counts money into her hand and offers it to him. "Dites-moi s'il faut que je meure," she pleads. The Soothsayer tells her: "Je lis dans votre coeur, et j'ai lu dans le sien." Colette is frightened. The Soothsayer assures her that although Colin has been unfaithful he will soon return and love her forever if she can pretend to be indifferent to him.

> DEVIN
> . . . L'amour croît s'il s'inquiette;
> Il s'endort, s'il est content:
> La Bergere un peu coquette
> Rend le Berger plus constant.[53]

The Soothsayer's observation probably delighted the ladies and self-styled gallants in the audience, already

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captivated by the depictions of jeux d'amour in the comedies of Marivaux and of fêtes galantes in the paintings of Watteau. But such a response would certainly not have pleased Rousseau. In the Pléiade introduction to this work, Guyot comments that Rousseau, "semble presque regretter de le voir livré à l'admiration de mondains incapables d'en comprendre la leçon."[54] In a recitative, the Soothsayer explains that Colin has been temporarily overcome with amour-propre and has left Colette, not for another shepherdess, but the Lady of the Manor:

> DEVIN
> Je prêtens à vous pieds ramener le volage;
> Colin veut être brave; il aime à se parer:
> Sa vanité vous a fait un outrage,
> Que son amour doit réparer. 55

Colin, it seems, has already been receiving advice from the Soothsayer and regrets his infidelity. He is ready to return to Colette. But the Soothsayer needs to test his sincerity with the trial he and Colette have just prepared. He tells Colin that it is too late, Colette has found another lover, a fine lord from the city. Colin is devastated:

> COLIN
> . . . Aurois-je donc perdu Colette sans retour?
>
> LE DEVIN
> On sert mal à la fois la fortune et l'Amour.
> D'être si beau garçon quelquefois il en coute.
>
> COLIN
> De grace, apprenés-mois le moyen d'éviter
> Le coup affreux que je redoubt. 56

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As the villagers watch in terror, the Soothsayer takes out a book of charms and a magic wand and casts a spell. Then he announces that: "Colette en ce lieu va se rendre." One should keep in mind that the title is le Devin du village and not Colin et Colette.

The Soothsayer's techniques will later be employed by the Tutor in Rousseau's Emile and by M. Wolmar in Julie. Rousseau was not adverse to trickery in dealing with stubborn or antagonistic minds. In an autobiographical fragment Rousseau reveals how he sometimes uses this technique to hide his secrets from his enemie:"je jouis . . . du plaisir de les voir sans cesse arroser par les feuilles l'arbre dont j'avois en secret coupê la racine."[57]

The village in Le Devin can also be seen as a microcosm of Rousseau's ideal political state. The Alpine setting and pastoral community will later be fully developed in Julie. And the figure of the Soothsayer conjures up images of the mysterious Legislator in Rousseau's Contrat social, a person who is not a citizen and has no official interest in the state, yet who has the power to prescribe its laws.

Simple melodies have important uses for Rousseau beyond mere pleasure. Realizing that profound ideas can expressed through popular songs, Rousseau imbedded lessons within his arias. For example: Cities corrupt true love.

LE DEVIN
L'Art â l'Amour est favorable,
Et sans art l'Amour sait charmer;

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A la ville on est plus aimable,
Au village on sait mieux aimer.
. . .
COLETTE
Ici de la simple Nature
L'Amour suit la naïveté
En d'autres lieux, de la parure
Il cherche l'éclat emprunté. 58

The humble live a harder life, but they are closer to Nature and to honest feelings:

COLIN
Dans ma cabane obscure,
Toujours soucis nouveaux;
Vent, soleil, ou froidure,
Toujours peine et travaux.
Colette, ma Bergere,
Si tu viens l'habiter,
Colin dans sa chaumiere
N'a rien à regretter. 59

The finale includes another of Rousseau's innovations. The published text indicates "Pantomime."[60] Rousseau has included a theatrical element dear to his friend Diderot. It was the first time that pantomime was integrated into the story of an opera.[61] Although Rousseau removed it from his published draft, in the version performed at the Opéra the stage directions opening the final scene are reproduced in the Plêiade notes:

Entrée de la jeunesse du Village, qui, avec le Devin, chante le choeur: Colin revient à sa Bergère. Suit une Pastorelle pour les Villageois. Le Villageoises donnent un Bouquet à Colin qui le présente aussitôt à Colette. Vient ensuite une Forlane pour les Villageois. Les Villageois donnent un Bouquet à Colette qui le-donne à son tour à Colin. Celui-ci chante la romance: Dans ma cabane obscure.

Puis vient la Pantomime:

Entrée de la Villageoise.

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Entrtée du Courtisan.

Il apercoit la Villageoise. Elle danse tandis qu'il la regarde. Il lui offre une bourse. Elle la refuse avec dédain. Il lui présente un Collier fort orné. Elle essaye le collier, et ainsi parée, se regarde avec complaisance dans l'eau d'une fontaine.

Entrée du Villageois.

La Villageoise voyant sa douleur rend le Collier. Le Courtisan l'aperçoit et le menace. La Villageoise veut l'appasier et fait signe au Villageois de s'en aller. Il n'en veut rien faire. Le Courtisan menace de le tuer. Ils se jettent tous deux aux pieds du Courtisan. Il se laisse toucher et les unit. Ils se réjoissent tous trois, les Villageois de leur union et le Courtesan de la boone action qu'il a faite.

Tout le Choeur de danse acheve la Pantomime.[62]

The pantomime serves to drive home Rousseau's theme of rural innocence versus urban corruption. For most Parisians Rousseau's subversive message was probably lost and the interlude received as a charming new rehash of the pastoral romance in which Rococo sensibilities had recently renewed their interest.

Rousseau's excitement at having completed the work was mixed with anxiety. His new opera was "dans un genre absolument neuf auquel les oreilles n'étoient point accoutumées."[63] Could he endure another failure like that of his Muses galantes? He dreamed of having Le Devin performed for his own pleasure "comme on dit que Lulli fit une fois jouer Armide pour lui seul." In the introduction to the published text of his opera Rousseau would write:

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> n'ayant fait cet ouvrage que pour mon amusement, son vrai succès est de me plaire: Or personne ne sait mieux que moi comment il doit être pour me plaire le plus. 64

Rousseau would take this stance again in the introduction to his Narcisse. By claiming to write only to please himself he cannot be accused of writing for the public. Rousseau decided to submit Le Devin to the Opéra without revealing his authorship. He turned to his friend M. Duclos to assist in this plan by handling the rehearsals. He stayed away, lest anyone guess the truth. To his delight: "Tous ceux qui l'entendirent en étoient enchantés au point que dès le lendemain dans toutes les sociétés on ne parloit d'autre chose."[65]

The rehearsal was, in fact, too successful; for M. de Cury, Master of the King's Entertainment, insisted that it first be presented at Court. Duclos, in trying to keep his word to Rousseau that the work would first be performed at the Opéra, almost drew blood on Rousseau's behalf. Rousseau had by this time revealed that he was the author and Cury turned to him for assistance, but Rousseau, rather than resolve the problem, writes that: "je renvoyai la décision de la chose à M. Duclos."[66] Cooler heads prevailed and the royal will was, by necessity, indulged. The opera was to be presented at Fontainebleau.

Rousseau's worst fears were immediately realized. In the hands of Cury, parts of his work were found to be

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unacceptable as written: "La partie à laquelle je m'étois le plus attaché et où je m'éloignois le plus de la route commune étoit le Récitatif."[67] His recitative was stressed "d'une façon toute nouvelle." Timed to the inflections of spoken words, the innovation was considered too shocking to "les oreilles moutonniérs."

Rousseau gave permission to have his recitatives rewritten by Francueil and Jélyotte, the Opéra's leading tenor, who would play Colin and supervise the production at Fontainebleau. Rousseau stayed away from the rehearsals as long as he could. But in order to observe the final rehearsal on 17 October, he was driven by royal carriage to Fontainebleau with Mlle Fel, the celebrated star of the Paris Opéra who would play Colette, and his friend Grimm, who was, at one time, madly in love with Mlle Fel. At the rehearsal Rousseau had the pleasure of hearing his work performed by a large orchestra made up of the Opéra musicians and the royal band. The singers from the Paris Opéra sang the choruses. The bass role of the Soothsayer was sung by Cuvillier.[68]

All seemed to be going well, when suddenly, on the day of the performance Rousseau decided to make a statement by sporting shabby clothes, a badly-combed wig, and a day's growth of beard. He was being deliberately provocative:

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> Prenant ce défaut de décence pour un acte de courage, j'entrai de cette façon dans la même salle où devoient arriver peu de tems aprés le Roi, la Reine, la famille royale et toute la Cour. 69

Dressed in this manner, he entered the theatre and took his place in a box directly facing the King and Mme de Pompadour. To add to the effect, he was completely surrounded by elegant women, he being the only man in the large box. His courage began to fail him, but he recovered and told himself that he should stay:

> puisque je vois jouer ma pièce, que j'y suis invité, que je ne l'ai faite que pour cela, et qu'après tout personne n'a plus de droit que moi-même à jouir du fruit de mon travail et de mes talens. 70

Finally, he reveals his real purpose: "Si je recommence à m'asservir à l'opinion dans quelque chose, m'y voila bientôt asservi derechef en tout." The entire business was a test he gave himself to see if he could bear up. He told himself that if he was being ridiculous and offensive, what of it? "Je dois savoir endurer le ridicule et le blame, pourvu qu'ils ne soient pas mérités."71

The desired effect did not materialize. Instead of ridicule, Rousseau was treated with elegant courtesy. Eccentric intellectuals were tolerated in polite society, and welcomed in the most fastidious salons as long as they had something of interest to contribute.[72] The opera, which he imagined would be condemned, was instead greeted with "un murmure de surprise et d'applaudissement."[73] The women suddenly seemed to him angels as they whispered

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words like "<u>charmant</u>" and "<u>ravissant</u>." Remembering the fiasco of his concert in Lausanne, Rousseau now felt vindicated: "et je me livrai bientot pleinement et sans distraction au plaisir de savourer ma gloire."[74] The sight of women sighing and weeping at his music aroused him:

> s'il n'y eut eu là que des hommes, je n'aurois pas été dévoré, comme je l'étois sans cesse du desir de recueillir de mes levres les delicieuses larmes que je faisois couler. 75

After the triumphant day came a dreadful night; for Rousseau was asked to present himself the next morning before the King and receive a pension. Wrestling all night with his conscience, he decided to refuse the invitation by claiming infirmity. Rousseau was afflicted for most of his life with a urinary blockage that required him to constantly relieve himself. He writes that he could not have endured an audience with the King in this condition. Be that as it may, Rousseau's true motive is revealed in his next remark:

> Je perdois, il est vrai, la pension qui m'ētoit offerte en quelque sorte; mais je m'exemptois aussi du joug qu'elle m'eut imposé. Adieu la vérité, la liberté, le courage. Comment oser desormais parler d'indépendance et de desinteressement? Il ne falloit plus que flatter ou me taire en recevant cette pension. 76

This act of bravery was interpreted as insolence by the court, as pride by his enemies, and as folly by his friends. Jélyotte was surprised by his actions, and wrote him an affectionate letter:

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> Vous avez eu tort, Monsieur, de partir au milieu de vos triomphes. Vous auriez joui du plus grand succés que l'on connoisse en ce pays. Toute la Cour est enchantée de vôtre Ouvrage: le Roy qui, comme vous savez, n'aime pas la Musique, chante vos Airs toute la journée avec la voix la plus fausse de son Royaume et il a demandé une seconde répésentation... 77

Jéylotte may have thought that Rousseau was displeased with the changes in the opera for he adds: "J'aurai soin de faire le changement que vous desirez, j'accourcirai le Récitatif de la prémiére Scéne." He follows this with a bit of wit concerning Cuvillier: "j'avertirai M. Cuvillier de se contenter de son état de Sorcier sans aspirer orgueilleusement au rang de Magicien."

The news that the Rousseau's interlude so pleased the King that he was heard singing it throughout the palace "avec la voix la plus fausse de son Royaume" and that he had commanded it be repeated within the week made Rousseau a sensation in Paris. This opera in the Italian style, with tunes even a tone-deaf King could sing, had proved what Rousseau would later seek to disprove, that the French could have their own opera.

Le Devin du village remained a favorite in France throughout Rousseau's life and even inspired Mozart's Bastien und Bastienne, which was based on it. In the winter following the Fontainebleau productions, it was played twice at Bellevue before the Queen. During one of these performances the role of Colin was played by Mme de Pompadour, who was considered even by her enemies

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to be one of the finest amateur actors of the age.[78] It was to her interest in the performing arts that we owe the revitalization of the opera at the court of Louis XV.[79]

When Le Devin du village was finally presented at the Opéra 1 March 1753, Rousseau's overture and ballet were heard for the first time. He also replaced Jélyotte's recitative with his own, which the critics at Court feared would "ne révoltât les oreilles."[80] Rousseau writes that his restored recitative: "loin de choquer personne, n'a pas moins reussi que les airs, et a paru, même au public, tout aussi bien fait pour le moins."[81] But, as at Fontainebleau, Rousseau was forced to make certain concessions. The Opéra directors wanted to intersperse his divertisement with miscellaneous songs and dances rather than present it as he conceived it: "en action d'un bout à l'autre, et dans un sujet."[82] He relented because the ideas "déparent point les scenes," although he thought the additions mediocre.

No sooner had his success been achieved than Rousseau again found himself rumored to be a plagiarist. In this case there was clearly some truth to the accusation, which Rousseau himself admits! While at work in Paris, composing the various divertisements for his opera, he visited Baron d'Holbach who showed him some pieces he had commissioned. He asked Rousseau to sort through them on the chance he

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might find something suitable for his opera. He assured Rousseau that "personne ne les connoit, ni ne les verra que moi seul."[83] Rousseau writes that his head was so full of musical ideas at that time that he didn't need any more; but since the Baron insisted: "je choisis une Pastorelle que j'abrēgeai, et que je mis en trio pour l'entrēe des compagnes de Colette."[84] Some months later, when Le Devin was playing at the Opēra, Rousseau visted his friend Grimm. When Rousseau entered the room, Grimm was seated at his clavichord, surrounded by guests. Upon seeing Rousseau, he suddenly jumped up in a guilty manner and Rousseau's eyes instantly moved to the music stand where he saw:

> ce même recueil du Baron d'Holback ouvert prēcisement ā cette même Piēce qu'il m'avoit pressēe de prendre, en m'assurant qu'elle ne sortiroit jamais de ses mains. 85

Some time later, when Mme d'Epinay was giving at concert at her home, Rousseau saw this very same piece sitting on her clavichord. If the secret was out, Rousseau claims that no one said a word to him. He also claims that the gossip was short-lived. If so, it seems odd that he would go to such lengths to confirm its truth. Certainly, considering his history, he was foolish to have even accepted the piece. It could only have been used against him by his enemies. Why did he risk it? Could this be another instance of his wanting to be reviled?

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Despite the viciousness of Grimm's part in this affair he was not of the opinion that Rousseau was without musical talent. Even when Grimm was most critical of Rousseau he was able, at times, to appreciate what Rousseau had achieved with his little interlude. In an article for March 1759 published in his Correspondance littéraire, titled "Lettre de M. Grimm â M. Le Marquis de . . ." Grimm, in discussing recitative in opera, takes the occasion to cite Rousseau's Devin du village:

> Rousseau fit â son Devin du village un recitative qui n'est pas peut-être le bon et le vrai, mai qui ne resemble pas non plus â celui qui est ētabli au magasin; et quoi que les acteurs aient pu faire pour lui donner du plomb par leus ports de voix et par leurs chevrottements ēternels ils ne rēussirent jamais â lui ôter sa grâce et sa vēritē. 86

Rousseau marks the decline of his friendship with his friends' envy of the success of his Devin du village. If he had not yet totally alienated himself from them, that chance would come again when, during the querelle des Buffons, he would turn much of the public against him with his Lettre sur la musique françoise. But in the beginning of the quarrel the philosophes would unite against the defenders of French opera and elect, by default, Rousseau as their most eloquent spokesman. In so doing they would find themselves, against their better judgment, siding with Rousseau against their once admired Rameau. Rousseau, through his Lettre sur la musique françoise, would provoke this schism.

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Le Querelle des Buffons

The querelle actually began four months before the famous arrival in Paris of Eustachio Bambini's opera company in the summer of 1752. In February of 1752 Grimm published his Lettre sur 'Omphale' attacking Detouches' comic opera as inadequate compared to Italian opera buffa. He faulted the French composer for his music being too complicated, and his songs having no connection with the feelings of the characters.[87]

Rousseau responded with his Remarques au sujet de la lettre de M. Grimm sur 'Omphale' published in March. It was signed "D." This anonymity enabled him to strike his first blows against Rameau, which he had been forced to restrain (at d'Alembert's insistence) in his articles for the Encyclopédie. Although the practice of writing under a pseudonym was common among the philosophes, it was unusual for Rousseau, who proudly attached his name to even his most radical works. Why he chose a pseudonym this time had to do with his loyalty to the contributors of the Encyclopédie, many of whom saw Rameau as the hero of their campaign to reform French music.[88] Grimm praised Rameau in his Lettre. Diderot admired him. Although Rameau turned down the offer, he had been Diderot's first choice to write the music articles for his Encyclopédie. And many scholars have suspected that Diderot was the guiding hand behind Rameau's "Mémoire."[89] D'Alembert

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wrote a long panegyric on Rameau for the Encyclopēdie,[90] and he had published Elēmens de musique (1749), summarizing Rameau's complex music theories. Under these circumstances Rousseau chose to write incognito.

The theoretical arguments that Rousseau raised in his conflict with Rameau will be discussed in my final chapter when I present the theories behind Rousseau's Pygmalion. What concerns us here is the progress of Rousseau's attack on Rameau in general. It appears that Rousseau did have a strategy, implied in the nature and the timing of his articles.

His Lettre ā M. Grimm, being anonymous, allowed Rousseau to try out arguments against Rameau which he would later refine. I contend that his attack on French music was merely a smoke-screen to hide his real target. Rousseau's first task in the querelle was to undermine the other philosophes' loyalty to Rameau by convincing them that Rameau and French music were one and the same, which is to say, nothing at all. Rousseau wanted to move the philosophes from the Rameauist camp into the Lullist camp by proving that Rameau's music lacks the purer simplicity of Lully and represents decadence rather than progress.[91]

His strategy in his Lettre ā M. Grimm appears to be to criticize Grimm as often as he can, while attacking Rameau indirectly. He begins with ironical praise for the fame Grimm received from his Lettre sur Omphale:

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"Vous voilà en possession d'un honneur qu'Homere et Platon n'ont eu que longtems après leur mort."[92] He goes on to say that Grimm's remarks "ne disent pas un mot d'Omphale, qui est le sujet de votre lettre."[93] He next establishes his own credentials by showing, through numerous examples, all the errors that Grimm has committed regarding Italian opera and opera theory.

Rousseau, as "D.", tells Grimm that not only has Rameau not created le genre bouffon in France, but that if he were to make such an attempt, it would result in something quite different. As to Grimm's claim that the French have recitative, Rousseau counters that what the French call recitative is only a mixture of singing and screaming. It is impossible to distinguish what the French call recitative from what they term song. Implied in all this is that France has no opera.

"D." asserts that Rameau's theoretical works, which made his great fortune, have done so "sans avoir été lûs."[94] And now that "un Philosophe a pris la peine d'écrire le sommaire de la doctrine de cet Auteur," they will be read even less. Rousseau insults d'Alembert further by claiming that his abridgement "anéantira les originaux."[95]

After praising Rameau for his great talent, his passion, his immense knowledge of harmony "et de toutes les choses d'effet," he accuses him of plagiarism: having a great

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skill for "s'approprier, dênaturer, orner, embellir les idêes d'autrui, et retourner les siennes."[96] Comparing him to Lully, he says that Rameau's recitative "est moins naturel, mais beaucoup plus variê." Although his scenes are fewer that Lully's, "il a rendu son chant baroque et ses transitions dures."[97]

In early October, Rousseau produced another anonymous pamphlet entitled Lettre d'un symphoniste, a seemingly lighthearted piece of mockery supposedly written by a musician to his fellow instrumentalists, celebrating the exodus of the opêra buffa from Paris. Playing the role of outraged musician, Rousseau ridicules the Opêra's orchestra by painting its members as crass incompetents secure in their positions by the grace of Royalty and emboldened by the prestige of their leader, Rameau.

Although Rousseau's scorn seems to be directed at French musicians, it is actually an attack on Rameau.[98] In his Lettre â M. Grimm, Rousseau makes it clear that the development of the French orchestra and its technique are directly attributable to Rameau's orchestrations:

> Avant qu'on me persuade que c'est un belle chose que trois ou quatre desseins entassês l'un sur l'autre par trois ou quatre especes d'instrumens, il faudra qu'on me prouve que trois ou quatre actions sont nêcessaires dans une Comedie. 99

By evoking the rules of tragedy, Rousseau indirectly praises the classicism of Lully and attacks Rameau's dramatic innovations. Rousseau ridicules the musicians'

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attempts to play Rameau's complex orchestrations:

> Les Violons se distribueront en trois bandes dont la prêmiêre jouera un quart de ton trop haut, la deuxiême un quart de ton trop bas, et la troisiême jouera le plus juste qu'il lui sera possible. Cette cacophonie se pratiquera facilement en haussant ou baissant subtilement le ton de l'Instrument durant l'êxecution. 100

Needless to say, this particular work was the probable cause of the Opêra orchestra's burning Rousseau in effigy when Grimm revealed who the author was. It was the opinion of his contemporaries that Rousseau assisted Grimm in his fanciful attack on French music entitled Les Prophêties du Petite Prophête de Boemischrada (January 1753).[101]

But it would be Rousseau's Lettre sur la musique françoise that would finally arouse the sleeping giant and cause Rameau to attack Rousseau. In so doing, the philosophes, who had been sympathetic to Rameau and had found Rousseau's behavior excessive, were forced to close ranks around their colleague and isolate Rameau.

In November of 1753, with the triumphant success of his Devin du village, Rousseau could claim leadership of the querelle that had been raging in Paris, and was, with the exodus of Bambini's troup, dying down. Rousseau writes in his Lettre sur la musique françoise:

> La querelle excitêe l'annêe dernier â l'Opêra n'ayant abouti qu'â des injures, dites d'un côtê avec beaucoup d'esprit et de l'autre avec beaucoup d'animositê, je n'y voulus prendre aucune part. . .et je sentois bien que ce n'êtoit pas le tems de ne dire que des raisons. 102

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At this point, Rousseau's involvement "avec beaucoup d'animosité" in the *querelle* was not certain, and he could deny any participation in "des injures" against Rameau. But, as we know, such was not the case. Having softened up his victim with his anonymous attacks (and we should include Grimm's *Le Petit Prophète* among them) Rousseau was ready to deliver the *coup de grâce*. It was a blow straight to the heart of Rameau's music system, and it was presented with far deeper reasoning and at much greater length than his previous pamphlets.

Rousseau's theme is announced through a parable concerning a Silesian child who, it was rumored, had been born with a golden tooth. All the German savants outdid one another in writing profound dissertations on how such a phenomenon was possible. Rousseau reminds his readers that "la derniere chose dont on s'avisa fut de vérifier le fait, et il se trouve que la dent n'étoit pas d'or."[103] Therefore, Rousseau suggests, "avant que de parler de l'excellence de notre Musique, il seroit peut-être bon de s'assurer de son existence."

Methodically, Rousseau argues that the French have never had a true national music and never will. He challenges the reader's acceptance of Rameau's premise that music is essentially harmonic and arose from the metaphysical phenomenona of *le corps sonore* and *la basse-fondamentale*. Rousseau argues that these are

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Cartesian concepts and have little evidence in fact. He avers that music arose through primitive peoples' need to communicate emotion and is the basis of language. It is melody, he asserts, that is primary. It is the voice of nature (and God), while harmony is merely an artificial construct of reason. The further a nation moves from melody, the further it removes itself from nature. Any music based primarily on harmony is unnatural, and is therfore not music at all.

Grimm's response to Rousseu's Lettre sur la musique françoise expressed his fellow philosophes dismay at the extreme position Rousseau had taken. They were all willing to accept the idea that French music was heavily flawed and in need of reform based on more "progressive" concepts provided by the Italians. But Rousseau's claim that the French could have no music of their own seemed to fly in the face of what Rousseau had just accomplished with his Devin du village. As Grimm would express it:

> Il est assez singulier de voir soutenir cette opinion à un homme qui a fait lui-même beaucoup de musique sur des paroles françaises, et en dernier lieu le Devin du village, intermède très-agréable qui a eu un très-grand succès à Fontainebleau et à Paris. 104

To this observation, all the philosophes (save Rousseau) were in agreement.

But as far as Rousseau was concerned, the Lettre had created its desired effect. In the spring of 1754, Rameau rushed into print with his brochure entitled Observations

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sur notre instinct pour la musique, which attacked Rousseau's ideas and went so far as to maintain that music was "la mêre des arts et des sciences."[105] It was an assertion to which d'Alembert and Diderot took exception. With an even more pointed attack on Rousseau in his pamphlet *Erreurs sur la musique dans l'Encyclopédie*, Rameau alienated himself from Diderot, d'Alembert and the other editors of the *Encyclopédie*. In defending French music over Italian, in attacking their friend Rousseau and their beloved *Encylopédie*, and in asserting that music was the basis of science, Rameau found himself attacked by the very men who had formerly rallied to his defense. Rousseau's strategy had triumphed; Rameau's star was falling and Jean-Jacques's was in the ascendant.

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Chapter Three

Rousseau and Marivaux: L'Engagement téméraire, Arlequin amoureux malgré lui, and Narcisse

Rousseau's early career as a playwright paralleled his music career so closely that the year 1752 marked the premieres of both his Devin du village and his Narcisse. In Paris during the spring of 1743, when his music notation system failed to provide him with the money and fame he had anticipated, Rousseau turned to his little comedy. If he had failed as a musician, he might succeed as a playwright. With his funds running low, and ashamed to ask for help, he limited his visits to a few select friends, among them Marivaux to whom he showed his Narcisse. "Elle lui plut," Rousseau tells us, "et il eut la complaisance de la retoucher."[1]

It was a singular tribute to Marivaux that Rousseau allowed him to retouch his Narcisse, and a singular tribute to Rousseau that Marivaux chose to do so. When the two men met, Marivaux had enjoyed over twenty years of success at the Théâtre Italien and the Comédie- Française. In December 1742, despite his unorthodox comedies and much to Voltaire's chagrin, Marivaux was elected to the Academy. Marivaux's enthusiasm for Narcisse proved to be more than

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mere kindness to a beginner, for in 1743, with Marivaux's endorsement, _Narcisse_ was accepted at the Théâtre Italien and, as was the custom, Rousseau was given a free pass.

But even with Marivaux's assistance, Rousseau would have to wait close to ten years to see his _Narcisse_ presented in Paris. In the autumn of 1747, having withdrawn _Les Muses galantes_ from presentation at the Opéra and having heard nothing from the Duc de Richelieu since the _Fêtes de Ramire_ incident, Rousseau believed that his opera career was over. But by the autumn of the following year, his desire to write for the theatre had revived. While working for the Dupins, Rousseau wrote two comedies in the Italian manner, a three-act comedy of manners titled _l'Engagement téméraire_ and a one-act parade called _Arlequin amoureux malgré lui_. Although the latter was never completed, _l'Engagement téméraire_ was not only completed but was also performed on society stages at the Dupins' Château de Chenonceaux and at the Château de la Chevrette, owned by the brother-in-law of Mme d'Epinay. There Rousseau himself took the stage and played the role of Carlin in his own comedy.

In the meantime, Marivaux was making extraordinary appeals to have Rousseau's _Narcisse_ presented at the Théâtre Italien. The effort met with years of resistance and delays against which Rousseau had no control. In frustration, Rousseau turned from the Italians to the

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Comédie-Française and in 1752, after the success of his Devin du village, was able to interest them in producing Narcisse. But, as happened with his Muses galantes, just as the comedy seemed about to show signs of succeeding he withdrew it from the Comédie-Française. Instead he had it published along with its now-famous Préface in which he confesses his motives for closing Narcisse.

Marivaux and Voltaire

Rousseau's Narcisse, Arlequin amoureux malgré lui, and l'Engagement téméraire were inspired by the comedies of Marivaux and Voltaire. We know from his Confessions that by the age of eighteen Rousseau was already enthusiastic about the works of these two authors. In September 1731, having returned from his first, unfortunate stay in Paris, Rousseau was once again living with Mme de Warens in Annecy and took advantage of her small library to continue his education. Among her books was Voltaire's Henriade and Le Spectateur, which may have been a French translation of Addison's Spectator or, as J. M. Cohen suggests, Marivaux's imitation of the English journal.[2] In any event, his knowledge of the two playwrights must have been more considerable than these incidents in his Confessions indicate, for it was around this time that Rousseau first conceived of his Narcisse, clearly inspired by Marivaux's Le Petit-Maître corrigé and Voltaire's

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l'Indiscret. That both Marivaux and Voltaire fueled Rousseau's theatrical ideas is significant considering that the two men's styles and tastes were so antithetical.

If, as Hauser suggests, the rococo can be understood as a transition between the baroque and pre-romanticism,[3] then Voltaire and Marivaux represent the two extremes within the rococo movement. Even at his most experimental, Voltaire still based his standards of bienséance on the tragedies of Racine and Corneille and the comedies of Molière. Consequently, he did not appreciate Marivaux's characters, with their complex problems and subtle language, and found Marivaux's comedies precious. Voltaire's critique was summed up in his famous quip that Marivaux's style was "peser des oeufs de mouche dans des balances de toile d'araignée." It became an oft-quoted criticism of his dialogue which was contemptuously dubbed "marivaudage" by Voltaire's followers. The dominant opinion of the age supported Voltaire's views and regarded Marivaux as a minor talent.[4] But what Voltaire considered a flaw in Marivaux's writing was seen in the next century as a refinement of the rococo's emphasis on the miniature, manifested in Marivaux's taste for psychological minutia and verbal complexity.[5] In addition, Marivaux's plays and novels--which have often been compared to Watteau's paintings--reflect a malaise that anticipates the romantics. Like Voltaire, Marivaux also catered to

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aristocratic tastes and eschewed sentiment; but through his rejection of Molière as a model, he managed to create a comedy form more to the taste of the salon society.

Not surprisingly, the two poets had opposite personalities: Voltaire enjoyed a good fight, while Marivaux was retiring and disliked strife. Although Marivaux refused to believe it, there is strong evidence that forces loyal to Voltaire and fueled by Voltaire's hostility formed a cabal directed against Marivaux's plays.[6] The essential difference between the two men is reflected in the fact that Voltaire's plays fared best at the Comédie-française, with its grand style, while the bulk of Marivaux's successes were at the Comédie-Italienne, whose actors were expert at the subtle nuances of human behaviour.

Although Rousseau borrowed plot elements from both men, stylistically his comedies were imitations of Marivaux. What Rousseau shared with Marivaux was an interest in exploring the social conventions separating lovers and the emotions they engendered. Rousseau also responded to Marivaux's emphasis on artistic uniqueness, as discussed in his Spectateur:

> écrire naturellement, n'est pas écrire dans le goût de tel ancien ni de tel moderne, n'est pas se mouler sur personne quant à la forme de ses idées; mais, au contraire, se ressembler fidèlement à soi-même, et ne pas se départir du tour, ni du caractère d'idées pour qui la nature nous a donné vocation. . .

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Marivaux, whose own plays were unique in their rejection of Molière as a model, urged the reader to be original by thinking in a natural way, "c'est rester dans la singularité d'esprit qui nous est échue." Which is why "avec ce génie-là, on est nécessairement singulier, et d'un singulier très rare."[7]

The Salons

If Rousseau felt himself to be an alien, he gathered unmistakable evidence of the fact in the salons. Like Rousseau (and most of the other *philosophes*), Marivaux lived on a small income and did not aspire to power or prestige. Unlike Rousseau, however, Marivaux was quite at home in the Paris salons. He frequented the salons of Mme de Lambert and Mme Tencin where, as Oscar Mandel observed, Marivaux was in style, grace, and manner the perfect expression of the salon culture.[8] The language in his society comedies is not the artificial dialogue heard at the Comédie-Française where, Marivaux quipped, "on n'écrit presque jamais comme on parle."[9] If Marivaux's dialogue was more natural, it was still not the language of the street, but a refinement of the language of the Regency and the rococo. Laharpe, then a young playwright and dévoté of Voltaire, noted that even the servants and peasants in Marivaux's comedies spoke in this high style which he criticized as "le mélange le plus bizarre de

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métaphysique subtile et de locutions triviales, de sentiments alambiqués et de dictons populaires."[10] It was in essence--as Marcel Arland suggests--the language of Mme de Lambert's salon.[11] So if Marivaux weighed his words on gossamer scales, they were the very scales--which is to say the language of choice--by which the salonnières measured the level of their culture. Marcel Arland observes:

> c'est le vrai langage, le langage parlé, le langage vivant, que veut reproduire Marivaux; et s'il paraît singulier, c'est qu'il est naturel. 12

Like Marivaux, Rousseau also visited the salons, but he never felt at home in them. His visits were a chore endured for the sake of his career, not a source of pleasure. He was not at his best there, being unable (or unwilling) to reduce his complex ideas into polite repartee. Rousseau tended to blame both himself and the salons for his poor performance, claiming that his personality combined two contradictory aspects:

> un temperament très ardent, des passions vives, impétueuses, et des idées lentes à naitre, embarrassées, et qui ne se présentent jamais qu'après coup. 13

These characteristics, combined with the pressure to perform quickly and well and to play by the rules of the game, made him falter in social situations. "La seul idée," he explains, "de tant de convenances dont je suis sur d'oublier au moins quelqu'une suffit pour m'intimider."[14] Here and in his Discours sur les sciences

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et les arts he evokes the image of a world where spontaneous thought is stifled by the complex rules of the *salonnières*.

But was it an accurate image? Rousseau's attack on the salons in his first *Discours*, as a world in which men and women switch roles and men are forced to submit to the will of the dominating hostesses, has been generally accepted ever since as a true picture of the eighteenth-century salon and an indictment of the age. But as Dena Goodman convincingly argues, there was a more serious purpose, which has been generally ignored, behind the salons' language of politeness.[15] Goodman demonstrates that the *salonnières*, rather than creating a world restrained by rigid rules of behavior, were in the serious business of creating the "civil working spaces of the project of Enlightenment,"[16] and that the rules of politeness were not intended to protect the women from male aggression, nor to feminize the male, but to assure that it was ideas and not personalities that dominated the conversations. It was a way of bringing intellectual rivals face to face in a secure atmosphere. The salons solved an urgent problem: "how were they to continue to debate and disagree in person and still remain collaborators and friends?"[17]

His criticisms notwithstanding, Rousseau owed a great deal to the salons for introducing him to the men and

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women who soon championed his endeavors in and outside the world of theatre. For this reason, despite Rousseau's distaste for the salons, he frequented them whenever he could. Among his most influential friends acquired at the salons were the Duc de Richelieu, Fontenelle, Dupin de Francueil, Duclos, and Marivaux. Although Richelieu was to abandon Rousseau after the _Fêtes de Ramire_ episode, Rousseau had the Duke to thank for presenting _Les Muses galantes_ at Versailles. It was Francueil who saw to it that _Les Muses galantes_ was accepted at the Opēra and Marivaux who tried to get _Narcisse_ presented at the Thēâtre Italien.

Apart from his ambition, the salons held a more serious attraction for Rousseau. For all their restrictions, they were the gathering places for men of ideas. It was not the society but the ideas that held Rousseau there. His opposition to the growing acceptance of Newtonian materialism made him aware of the spiritual gulf between himself and his fellow _philosophes_ and the salons made him sense, more than ever, his invisibility.

If the three Rousseau comedies I am about to discuss borrow their plots and style from Voltaire and Marivaux, I intend to show that their spirit and world-view are pure Rousseau. While all three writers used the stage to criticize society, Rousseau alone used the stage to reveal the intimate world of his own soul. If, like

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Marivaux's, Rousseau's moral attitude is forgiving, it is Jean-Jacques the corrupted innocent led by good intentions whom Rousseau forgives. In Rousseau's comedies one discovers that, ultimately, everything is about Rousseau.

Rousseau and l'Engagement on the Society Stage.

Rousseau's autumnal stays with the Dupins at Chenonceaux were not all hard work. To amuse his hosts, Rousseau performed a number of comedies with the family, including one he himself had written, l'Engagement téméraire. Exactly how long it took him to write the comedy is problematic. In Book Seven of his Confessions he writes: "On y joua la Comédie; j'y en fis en quinze jours une en trois actes intitulée l'Engagement téméraire,"[18] while in the preface to the published play he writes that the comedy still held a certain attachment for him because of "la facilité avec laquelle elle fut faite en trois jours."[19] Both versions may be correct if we consider that it was Rousseau's habit to conceive of his works while on his long walks, and only afterwards to quickly dash them off.

There is much in l'Engagement téméraire that reflects Rousseau's intimate knowledge of the world it portrays. Rousseau's acquaintance with the salons as well as the various positions he held with household staffs of the

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highborn and the wealthy, both in France and in Italy, allowed him to observe firsthand and to re-create the class consciousness and the intrigues that characterize the decaying aristocracy and the emerging wealthy bourgeoisie.

The play's situation involves a bargain between two coy aristocratic lovers, Isabelle and Dorante, in which a rash pledge is exacted by Isabelle that Dorante will never reveal his love for her through word or deed. The cast of characters includes another pair of lovers, Eliante and Valère, and two comic servants, also would-be lovers, Lisette and Carlin. Isabelle, a widow, is plagued with memories of a bad marriage and has vowed never to remarry. Even though she is secretly in love with Dorante, she feels more comfortable with him as a "friend." Dorante must consequently play the "friend" if he hopes to remain in her good graces and not lose the hope of their one day becoming lovers.

The situation is strongly influenced by Marivaux's _la Seconde Surprise de l'amour_ (1726). In Marivaux's play, a Marquise's husband has recently died and she cannot imagine a better one taking his place. Her neighbor, the Chevalier, has been deserted by his mistress. He and the Marquise develop a sympathetic friendship with their suppressed mutual attraction constantly threatening to erupt into love. As in Rousseau's comedy, both

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reluctant lovers have comic servants--in this case, Lisette and Lubin. In both plays we find an opening scene in which lost love has reduced a lady to helpless sighs. The scene in l'Engagement téméraire is between Isabelle and Eliante:

> ISABELLE
> L'hymen va donc, enfin, serrer des noeuds si doux:
> Valêre, â son retour, doit être vôtre Epoux.
> Vous allez être heureuse. Ah! ma chêre Eliante!
>
> ELIANTE
> Vous soupirez? Hê bien! si l'exemple vous tente,
> Dorante vous adore et vous le voyez bien.
> Pourquoi gêner ainsi vôtre coeur et le sien?
> Car, vous l'aimez un peu: du moins, je le soupçonne.
>
> ISABELLE
> Non, l'hymen n'aura plus de droits sur ma personne,
> Cousine; un premier choix m'a trop mal rêussi. 20

Marivaux's comedy opens thus:

> LA MARQUISE, s'arrêtant et soupirant.
> Ah!
>
> LISETTE, derrière elle.
> Ah!
>
> LA MARQUISE
> Qu'est-ce que j'entends lâ? Ha! c'est vous?
>
> LISETTE
> Oui, Madame.
>
> LA MARQUISE
> De quoi soupirez-vous?
>
> LISETTE
> Moi? de rien: vous soupirez, je prends cela pour une parole, et je vous rêponds de même.

The Marquise is angry with Lisette for teasing her but Lisette

is afraid to leave the Marquise alone with her grief.

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LA MARQUISE
Il est vrai que votre zèle est fort bien entendu;
pour m'empêcher d'être triste, il me met en colère.

LISETTE
Eh bien, cela distrait toujours un peu: il vaut
mieux quereller que soupirer.

LA MARQUISE
Eh! laissez-moi, je dois soupirer toute ma vie.[21]

The comic scenes that Rousseau includes have their origins in other works by Marivaux. The letter-stealing scene between Lisette and Carlin is reminiscent of a similar scene between Harlequin and Marton in Act 3, Scene 3 of Marivaux's Les Fausses Confidences (1737). It appears that Rousseau intended to recall Marivaux's Harlequin scene; for we learn from Jacques Scherer that Rousseau may have called his comic servant Carlin in honor of the actor Carlo Bertinazzi who played the Harlequin roles at the Comēdie-Italienne under the stage name of Carlin.[22]

Considering Rousseau's feelings towards Mme Dupin, the play takes on more significance if one casts Rousseau in the role of Dorante. It is a character we will meet again in his Les Prisonniers de guerre. Dorante's monologues can thus be seen as moments in which Rousseau, disguised as Dorante, can reveal himself to us. Some of Dorante's speeches echo fantasies which haunted Rousseau at that time. Visiting Chenonceaux, how could he have helped but imagine himself the husband of the beautiful Mme Dupin and the owner of the splendid chateau? In Act

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1 Scene 2 Dorante is alone on stage and reveals his anxiety,[23] an anxiety Rousseau knew well:

> DORANTE
> Elle m'évite encore! Que veut dire ceci?
> Sur l'état de son coeur quand serai-je éclairci?
> Hasardons de parler.... Son humeur m'épouvante....

When Carlin joins him in Scene 3, he shares his fantasy:

> CARLIN
> Monsieur?
>
> DORANTE
> Vois-tu bien ce château?
>
> CARLIN
> Oui; depuis fort longtems.
>
> DORANTE
> Qu'en dis-tu?
>
> CARLIN
> Qu'il est beau.
>
> DORANTE
> Mais encore?
>
> CARLIN
> Beau, très beau, plus beau qu'on ne peut être.
> Que Diable!
>
> DORANTE
> Et, si bientôt j'en devenois le Maitre
> T'y plairois-tu?
>
> CARLIN
> Selon; s'il nous restait garni,
> Cuisine foisonnante, et Cellier bien fourni,
> Pour vos amusemens, Isabelle, Eliante,
> Pour ceux du Sieur Carlin, Lisette la Suivante:
> Mais, oui, je m'y plairois. 24

In his later writings, Rousseau saw little in l'Engagement téméraire to recommend. In the Confessions he dismisses it as a work "qui n'a d'autre mérite que beaucoup de gaité."[25] His preface to the comedy begins

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with the sentence: "Rien de plus plat que cette piēce."[26] The enthusiasm he must have originally felt for the play may have changed to that negative attitude he took toward all of his theatrical works after his "reform," but most scholars agree that l'Engagement tēmēraire is, as Rousseau describes it, unremarkable as theatre. This may be partly due to the speed with which Rousseau was forced to write in order for it to be performed by the Dupin family during their stay at Chenonceaux.

"Lacking subtlety," Cranston has observed, "the play was doubtless all the easier for amateurs to act."[27] This lack of subtlety may have been intentional on Rousseau's part, but the history of the eighteenth-century society stages suggests that this is unlikely. By the time Rousseau wrote for and performed with the Dupins, the society stage had become all the rage.[28] A great many of the parades and comedies that were later performed at the established theatres of Paris were first performed on society stages,[29] the most famous being Beaumarchais's Le Barbier de Sēville, which was presented at Marie-Antoinette's château at Trianon, with the Queen playing the role of Rosine and the future Charles X as Figaro.[30] We have already seen Rousseau's Devin du village performed at Bellevue with Mme de Pompadour as Colin. A list of authors who wrote for these amateur theatres includes the most prestigious playwrights of the age.

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Voltaire was fond of the society stages, particularly that of the Duchess of Maine at Sceaux, where his own Oedipe was inspired by a performance of Malezieu's Iphigénie in which the Duchess played the title role.[31] Voltaire also had stages installed in his own residences at Cirey, Les Délices, and Ferney, on which he and his guests--some of them stars from the Comédie-française--often performed in his own plays as well as the French classics. Voltaire often tested out his new plays with his house-guests as performers. It was not unusual for his theatre soirées to go on until far into the night. At one such house-party (9 February 1739), where Mme de Graffigny was a participant, she writes that within a twenty-four hour period she and the other guests performed the sum of twenty-three acts of comedies, tragedies and operas.[32]

A great deal of the appeal of writing for society theatre was the freedom these venues allowed the playwrights who, in the established theatre houses, were subject to the censures of the Parliament, the King, the press, and the general public. Those plays meant only for private and select audiences tended to be more experimental, more politically radical, and more irregular. It explains why this eighteenth-century theatrical venue is now considered "le plus vivant et le plus moderne de la vie théâtrale."[33]

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Compared to Beaumarchais's and Marivaux's works in this arena, Rousseau's l'Engagement téméraire seems rather tame. With all the revolutionary ideas stirring in Rousseau's mind at the time, one might think this the perfect opportunity to express his radical thoughts, but there are a number of reasons why Rousseau would never have done so. First of all, the Dupins were supporters of the monarchy and saw the liberalism of Montesquieu (with which Rousseau privately sympathized) as a direct threat to their own ideas of economic and social reform. Secondly, Rousseau tended, at this time, to work within the traditional restraints of the accepted theatrical genres. Thirdly, Rousseau's use of the character Carlin is evidence that he may have had hopes of this comedy's being produced at the Théâtre Italien and was therefore conservative with its content.

Although we know that traditionally the family members were the main participants, we have no knowledge of exactly who played which roles in the Chenonceaux production of Rousseau's comedy. But it was performed again on another society stage. While in the employ of the Dupins, Rousseau had the opportunity of visiting the salon of Mme d'Epinay who, like Mme Dupin, was a patron of the arts, and also happened to be the mistress of Rousseau's friend and employer Francueil.

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Mme d'Epinay was born Louise-Florence-Pétronille de Tardieu d'Esclavelles; but due to the impoverishment of her family she married, at the age of nineteen, the tax-farmer Denis-Joseph Lalive d'Epinay. When Rousseau first met her she was twenty-one and, unlike Mme Dupin, she was fashionably unfaithful to her husband, having begun her affair with Francueil shortly (if not immediately) after her marriage.[34] This may be the reason why Rousseau was more at home in her company than in that of the chaste Mme Dupin. Or it may have been because Mme Dupin was middle-class while Mme d'Epinay's noble blood made her instantly appealing to Rousseau who, as Cranston observed, "never failed to notice and appreciate an aristocratic pedigree."[35] La Chevrette, a splendid chateau on the edge of the forest of Montmorency, just fifteen miles outside of Paris, belonged to Mme d'Epinay's brother-in-law, but it was she who took charge of it as its <u>châtelaine</u>. It was there that Rousseau first met her young niece, Elisabeth de Bellegarde, who would later blossom into the enchanting Comtesse Sophie de Houdetot, with whom Rousseau fell in love and who inspired his Julie.

While Rousseau was at La Chevrette in the summer of 1748, Francueil, remembering Rousseau's comedy, thought of amusing his mistress with some amateur theatricals. Francueil would play Dorante, Mme d'Epinay would play Isabelle, and Rousseau would play the harlequinesque role

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of Carlin. Rousseau had great difficulty learning the role. In his Confessions he admits:

> Il y avois un theatre oû l'on jouoit souvent des piêces. On me chargea d'un rolle que j'ētudiai six mois sans relâche, et qu'il fallut me souffler d'un bout â l'autre â la rēprēsentation. Aprēs cette epreuve on ne me proposa plus de rolle. 36

Considering the time he spent learning it, Rousseau was clearly determined to play the part, but he had always had trouble memorizing. As we know, in the days after his arrival in Paris in 1742, just after his failure with his music system, Rousseau spent his abundant time and his few louis going to the cafēs and attending the theatre "deux fois la semaine."[37] But at this moment in time Rousseau also engaged in another activity, one which cost him nothing: memorizing passages from his favorite poets. "Je me rappellois," he writes, "qu'aprēs le dēfaite de Nicias â Syracuse, les Atheniens captifs gagnoient leur vie â rēciter les Poemes d'Homere."[38] He took up the pastime, he writes, "pour me prēmunir contre la misēre." He set himself the task of memorizing one ode each day "sans me rebuter de ce qu'en repassant celle du jour je ne manquois point d'oublier celle de da veille."[39]

Rousseau must have known that Voltaire also performed his own plays on society stages. It may have been this knowledge that sustained Rousseau's determination. But what he may not have known, and would probably have been comforted to learn, was that Voltaire also had difficulty

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remembering lines, even from his own plays. During another marathon theatre soirée at Voltaire's house at Cirey, the guests, who had just performed quite a number of plays and operas, were asked to perform Zaïre. Carlson describes the remarkable events thus:

> After three hours of sleep, the actors were awake again to warm up with an hour of opera singing, followed by a rehearsal of Zaïre and a break for the women to dress their hair and costume themselves "à la Turque," following which came the actual performance of Zaïre with a comic afterpiece lasting until 1:30 in the morning. Graffigny's lover, Léopole Desmarets, was in the cast and left a rather grim picture of the production, which featured Voltaire and Monsieur and Madame Du Châtelet in leading roles. Voltaire reportedly did not know any two consecutive lines of his part, and became furious with his valet, who served as prompter. 40

Voltaire's fury may have been caused by the embarrassment of playing Zaïre opposite his lover, Mme Du Châtelet, who played Orosmane. Had Rousseau witnessed this scene, he would no doubt have been sympathetic and amused. His performance at La Chevrette would be Rousseau's only attempt at acting.

Arlequin amoureux malgré lui.

In his Lettre à d'Alembert, besides the classical forms of theatre, Rousseau also discusses the commedia forms that were the exclusive domain of the Théâtre-Italien and the fairground theatres at Saint-Laurent and Saint-Germain and which ranged from three-act comedies to parades. These were the theatrical forms of choice

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for Marivaux, the playwright Rousseau most often emulated. Yet of the numerous productions of Marivaux's comedies that Rousseau had seen, none are mentioned in his Lettre. In fact Rousseau discusses only one harlequinade, Delisle de La Drêvetière's Arlequin Sauvage, which was presented at the Thêâtre Italien in 1721 and again at the Nouveau Thêâtre Italien in 1733.[41] It was a harlequinade inspired by the renewed interest in exotic cultures made all the rage by Montesquieu's Lettres persanes. Although there is the usual love interest, Delisle's handling of it lacks Marivaux's sensitivity and finesse. Most of the humor grows out of Harlequin's ignorance of European customs. Even though the comedy deals with the central theme in his own political works--inequality and societal corruption-- Rousseau ignores these elements in his discussion. In explaining Delisle's Arlequin sauvage, Rousseau holds that the simplicity of its central character is not, as may be supposed, the reason for its popularity. Nor is it the comedy's political message. "Qu'on n'attribüe donc pas au thêatre," he argues, "le pouvoir de changer des sentimens ni des moeurs qu'il ne peut que suivre et embellir."[42] Its appeal lies elsewhere:

> C'est, tout au contraire, que cette Piêce favorise leur tour d'esprit, qui est d'aimer et rechercher les idêes neuves et singuliêres. Or il n'y en a point de plus neuves pour eux que celles de la nature. C'est prêcisêment leur aversion pour les choses communes, qui les ramêne quelquefois aux choses simples. 43

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For an audience overwhelmed by complex civilization, Rousseau saw the attraction of depicting the world as natural and simple. Clearly this transparent world was part of the reason Rousseau found *Arlequin Sauvage* so appealing. But he must have also seen the power of juxtaposing the complex and artificial world of eighteenth-century Paris against a Harlequin who openly expresses astonishment and indignation.

Rousseau and the World of the *Commedia*

It should not be surprising, then, to learn that among Rousseau's unfinished theatrical works is a one-act comedy entitled *Arlequin amoureux malgré lui*. This fragment is particularly useful in revealing certain aspects of Rousseau's development as a playwright. First, it demonstrates that Rousseau not only attempted to work in this genre but--as the many corrections and redactions of the numerous versions of this work show--struggled to master it. Second, the fact that much of his comedy was borrowed from Marivaux and other masters of the genre demonstrates the vast knowledge Rousseau had acquired of this irregular theatre form.

Finally, and most importantly, Rousseau's *Arlequin* reflects much of Rousseau's own sensibility and, indirectly, the history of his early life. Rousseau has imbued the work with his particular genius. As a boy

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of fifteen, the impressionable Jean-Jacques was captivated by _commedia_ characters, when an Italian puppeteer called Gamba-Corta visited Geneva:

> il avoit des marionêtes, et nous nous mimes à faire des marionêtes; ses marionêtes jouoient des maniêres de comedies, et nous fimes des comêdies pour les nôtres. Faute de pratique nous contrefaisions du gosier la voix de polichinelle, pour jouer ces charmantes comedies que nos pauvres bons parens avoient la patience de voir et d'entendre. 44

Rousseau often used certain characters from the _commedia_ as personalities encapsulating his feelings of alienation, and was at times inclined to see himself as a Harlequin or Punch (Pulcinella). In a passage from his _Confessions_ he describes his helplessness after the success of his first _Discours_, when he was forced to spend much of his time fighting off the "mille ruses" of his fans:

> Je voulois vivre de mon mêtier; le public ne le vouloit pas. On imaginoit mille petits moyens de me dêdomager du tems qu'on me faisoit perdre. Bientot il auroit fallu me montrer comme Polichinelle à tant par personne. 45

While in Venice, Rousseau wrote a poem addressed to M. Bordes in which he describes certain churches that he visited there. At one point in the poem, Rousseau uses the character of Harlequin to represent someone in a state of turmoil.

> Chaque autel y charme les yeux;
> Le luxe et la pompe mondaine
> Y brillent à l'honneur des Cieux.
> Lã, maint agile Energumene
> Sert d'Arlequin dans ces saints lieux;[46]

If the comic role of Carlin in his _Engagement têmêraire_

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was intended as a Harlequin, it too can be included in this list.

Arlequin amoureux malgré lui

Exactly when Rousseau wrote his Arlequin amoureux malgré lui can only be guessed. In his Confessions, Rousseau mentions that while he was staying at Chenonceaux in the autumn of 1747, in addition to l'Engagement têmérarire, several trios, and his poem l'Allée de Sylvie, he composed "d'autres petits ouvrages."[47] If the unfinished parade was one of these, it was probably written about the same time as the full-length comedy.[48]

In his ten years' residence in Paris, Rousseau had many opportunities to see Harlequin comedies performed at the fairgrounds or at the Théâtre Italien, and to glean from them their traditional character types, improvised lazzi, and wide variety of subjects and styles. Since they were not under the onus of classical rules and grew out of the improvisational traditions of the commedia dell'Arte, these plays allowed for a far wider choice of settings, action, characters, language and subject matter. These parades and short comedy forms reveal a different side of eighteenth-century Paris than is shown in the traditional genres bound by classical rules and notions of decorum.[49] Besides Marivaux, many of the best

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playwrights of the age, including Beaumarchais, wrote in these forms. Their comedies were often filled with topical commentary and, although presented in a farcical manner, aimed at pleasing the sophisticates of the society stages where they often premiered.

Until his Devin du village, Rousseau tended to work within the popular theatrical forms of his day. Such is the case with Arlequin amoureux malgré lui. The title is similar to a great number of comedies performed during this period dealing with the amorous Harlequin. An Arlequin amoureux par enchantement was performed in 1722, an Arlequin amoureux par complaisance in 1740, and in 1748 an Arlequin amant malgré lui.[50] The magical elements in Rousseau's harlequinade were also traditional. Fairies, wizards, and magic are found in Fuzelier's Arlequin jouet des fées and Marivaux's Arlequin poli par l'amour. Rousseau's plot idea is also borrowed. In the last-mentioned play, Marivaux's Harlequin, like Rousseau's, is loved by a fairy who has the power to become invisible at will. In 1736, Romagnesi and Procope-Couteaux's les Feés was presented at the Comédie-Italienne.[51] In this comedy a low-ranking fairy named Silvaine is in love with Harlequin. The names of Rousseau's two fairies, Gracieuse (whom he later renamed Fleur d'Orange) and Epine-Vinette, are common ones out of fairy folklore. So, too, is the magician's fanciful name of Parafaragaramus. Magicians

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named Parlaventrebleu, Parlamorbleu, and Patrobogra are found in the parades published in the *Théâtre des Boulevards* (1756).[52] Rousseau incorporated in his comic hero characteristics that were standard fare in this genre: Harlequin's love of food, his vagabond lifestyle, his teaming up with rogues and his being duped by them.

Given all of this, it may seem that Rousseau added nothing new to his Harlequin. But despite the fact that the *commedia* Harlequin had been refined by countless creative minds through the previous two centuries, and by Marivaux and others in the eighteenth century, what strikes the reader familiar with Rousseau is how the author's own sensibilities are incorporated into his portrait of Harlequin. More than just a comic vehicle used to expose the cruelty of the world, Rousseau's Harlequin reflects much of the author's own personality: his naïveté, his spontaneity, his enthusiasm, his amorousness, his frankness, and his moodiness. In this sense Rousseau's dramatic use of his Harlequin is less objective and more subjective, less a general type and more a self-portrait, less about others and more about himself. Jacques Scherer has observed that in this work "la naïveté d'Arlequin devant Nicaise est sans doute autorisée par la tradition théâtrale," but he goes on to ask:

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> Mais ne fait-elle pas penser aussi à l'engouement de Jean-Jacques pour les "douces chimères," que les récits des Confessions permettent d'associer à sa "manie ambulante". . .? 53

Not only does this play remind us of these biographical elements but it also acquires greater emotional resonance through the reader's knowledge of them. Turning to the second scene of Rousseau's Arlequin amoureux malgré lui, we find a situation that is reminiscent of an episode in Rousseau's Confessions. Harlequin and his traveling companion Nicaise are on their way to Paris on foot, without a penny to their names. Harlequin looks to Nicaise's knowledge of the world, his swaggering arrogance, and his wealth of get-rich-quick schemes as their means of salvation. He worships his friend:

> ARLEQUIN
> Tu es bien heureux de savoir tout cela.
>
> NICAISE
> Oh, oh, n'y a bien pu que ça. J'ons du resprit que ça fait peur, je faisons ebaudir tout le monde; drê qu'on me voit, n'an se boute à rire, qu'on diroit d'une noce; et pis je danse, pu farme qu'une peinture, je saute mieux qu'un cabri, quand je chante c'est pis qu'un Marle. Oh, tatiquoi je sommes un dêgourdi. Aussi faut voar comme les filles sont assotées de moi, a me font toujours queuque niche.[54]

Harlequin is ashamed: Nicaise seems blessed with every gift; Harlequin with none. His lack of sophistication will never pass in Paris. Drowning in self-pity, Harlequin cries in his native Italian: "Oh poveretto mi, hi, hi, hi."[55] Nicaise argues that it is not ability but guile that counts:

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NICAISE
Oh, pis nia encore les Mēdecin(s) qui s'engraissont ā faire pâtir la faim aux autres. Et puis les Marchands qui se ruinont bien vîte pour s'enrichir tout d'un coup. Oh, sti lā, c'est le pu bon Mēquier de tous! 56

As in nearly all harlequinades, there is satire here--much of it hurled at bourgeois capitalists. They are judgments shared by Rousseau. But Rousseau is less interested in the propaganda value of his piece than in how in can be used to amusingly reflect on his own follies. Rousseau constantly justified his plays and operas as being works intended primarily for his own pleasure. In the sentimental portrait of Harlequin, Rousseau captures his own personal dreams of fame and fears of inadequacy in Paris. As in the Hesiod act of Les Muses galantes, Rousseau projects himself into this harlequinade via his personalized Harlequin and plot elements that are reminiscent of incidents and feelings from his own history.

The comedic situation brings to mind a number of incidents in Rousseau's youth that suggest a harlequinade. Reading the play with the Confessions in mind reveals how theatrically Rousseau portrayed certain events in his life, casting himself as a Harlequin or a Pulcinella at the mercy of an unjust world. Like Harlequin, Rousseau held numerous positions in the households of the wealthy; and, like Harlequin, Rousseau was peripatetic--due partly to his poverty, but mostly to his own preference.

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In his youth, Rousseau often chose traveling companions not unlike Nicaise who were scoundrels with great panache. Rousseau's account of his voyage to Turin reveals his attraction to this type of man and is filled with incidents worthy of a parade. One evening at Annecy in March 1728, at dinner with Mme de Warens and a certain M. and Mme Sabran, the question of Rousseau's conversion to Catholicism arose. Initially Rousseau was unimpressed with M. Sabran and his advice:

> Le Manan qui dinoit pour nous, forcé de faire une pause pour reposer sa machoire, ouvrit un avis qu'il disoit venir du Ciel, et qui, à juger par les suites venoit bien plustôt du côté contraire. C'étoit que j'allasse à Turin, où, dans un Hospice établi pour l'instruction des cathecumenes, j'aurois, dit-il, la vie temporelle et spirituelle, jusqu'à ce qu'entré dans le sein de l'Eglise je trouvasse par la charité des bonnes ames une place qui me convint. 57

The thought of leaving his precious "Mamma" upset him; but the prospect of travel was exciting. "Enfin," he writes, "l'idée d'un grand voyage flatoit ma manie ambulante qui déja commençoit à se déclarer."[58] The "oaf" in question, M. Sabran, arranged for himself and his wife to accompany Rousseau to Turin. The entire trip was financed by the officials of the local parish. Mme de Warens entrusted Rousseau's companions with her ward's portion of the travel money, but secretly gave Jean-Jacques a small amount from her own purse. Once *en route*, Rousseau began to re-evaluate his traveling companion; who possessed qualities that he found attractive:

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> Je la fis plus agréablement que je n'aurois du m'y attendre, et mon Manan ne fut pas si bourru qu'il en avoit l'air. C'ētoit un homme entre deux âges, portant en queue ses cheveux noirs grisonnans; l'air grenadier, la voix forte, assez gai, marchant bien, mangeant mieux, et qui faisoit toute sorte de mētiers faute d'en savoir aucun. 59

The Sabrans were opportunists. M. Sabran "avoit le talent d'intriguer," and was rarely short of money "quand il en savoit dans la bourse des autres."[60] In the course of the journey, it turned out that Mme Sabran was even more acquisitive. She managed to relieve Jean-Jacques of nearly all his wealth, including a bit of silver ribbon--a gift from Mme de Warens--which Rousseau used to secure his "petite épée."[61] They would have taken the little sword as well, he writes, "si je m'ētois moins obstinē."[62]

In his peripatetic youth Rousseau acquired other rogues as traveling companions. Among them was M. Bâcle, a young Genevan of his own age with whom Rousseau was captivated:

> Ce Bâcle ētoit un garçon três amusant, três gai, plein de saillies bouffonnes que son âge rendoit agrēables. Me voila tout d'un coup engouē de M. Bâcle, mais engouē au point de ne pouvoir le quitter. 63

Rousseau gave up a promising position in the wealthy Solar household in Turin to follow Bâcle on foot to Switzerland with nothing to sustain them but a toy called a Hiero-fountain. Both young men imagined that the fascination aroused by this little water-pipe would inspire the villagers' hospitality:

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> Nous n'imaginions partout que festins et noces, comptant que sans rien débourser que le vent de nos poumons et l'eau de notre fontaine, elle pouvoit nous défrayer en Piémont, en Savoye, en France et par tout le monde.[64]

Rousseau's ambivalence towards romantic love is also present in his harlequinade. The anxiety associated with Rousseau's early encounters with the erotic charms of the opposite sex is presented via his Harlequin, who suddenly discovers that he is pursued by two fairies, one of whom (Gracieuse) is in love with him. Gracieuse dares to break the social rules of fairyland by falling in love with a human. Epine-Vinette warns her that such an act threatens "deshonorer l'ordre des fées."[65] But Gracieuse is not intimidated:

> GRACIEUSE
> Erreur, ma chére Epine-Vinette le rang que nous occupons nous force ã en descendre pour goûter les charmes de la tendresse. Tu sais combien nous avons été dupes toutes tant que nous sommes de nôtre commerce avec les genies. C'ētoit tout esprit ã la vérité, mais helas ce n'étoit que cela; et pour trouver quelque chose de plus solide, il a bien falu revenir aux hommes. 66

Epine-Vinette wonders why Gracieuse has chosen such a lowly specimen of humanity, when she could choose "un petit maitre fraçois," or even "cet enchanteur, ce savant Parafaragaramus."[67] But Gracieuse believes the savant's talents have "plus de charlatanerie que de réalité."[68] She reckons "qu'Arlequin vaut mieux pour l'usage que j'en veux faire."

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The situation is reminiscent of Rousseau's youthful encounter with pretty Mlle de Gaffenried and Mlle Galley, whom Rousseau thought "étoit encore plus jolie." Rousseau admits his preference for women was always above his class:

> . . . des couturières, des filles de chambre, de petites marchandes ne me tentoient guères. Il me falloit des Demoiselles. Chacun a ses fantaisies; ç'a toujours été la mienne, . . . Je trouve moi-même cette préférence très ridicule; mais mon coeur la donne malgré moi.[69]

The three spent a warm June day together eating, flirting, and cherry-picking. All were ripe and heady with sexual intoxication. In his erotic enthusiasm, Rousseau climbed a cherry tree and threw down bunches of cherries, "dont elles me rendoient les noyaux à travers les branches." One of Rousseau's tosses was so well aimed at Mlle Galley "que je lui fis tomber un bouquet dans le sein."[70] All laughed. Rousseau thought to himself: "que mes levres ne sont-elles des cérises! comme je les leur jetterois ainsi de bon coeur?" In spite of the young ladies' obvious signs that his amourous advances would be welcomed, an awkward kiss was all Rousseau could manage.

In Rousseau's comedy, Harlequin must deal with a similar dilemma. Both fairies being equally charming, he cannot tell which attracts him more. Not wishing to offend either, he courts them both.

> ARLEQUIN
> Si je vous trouve jolies? Sangue de mi, il n'y a point de macarons, point le lazagne, point le crosetti, point de fromage de parmesan si joli que vous.

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GRACIEUSE
Fort bien. Mais laquelle de nous deux te plairoit davantage? Parle-nous sincērement.

ARLEQUIN
Laquelle ... oh, vous ētes bien charmante, vous ... et vous aussi. Attendez. ... tic, toc, tic, toc ... toc, toc, ta, ta, ta, ta; ... ma foy, je crois que mon coeur bat des deux cotēs. 71

But Harlequin's lovemaking is fraught with danger. He must guess which fairy loves him or suffer death by drowning. This extreme choice between love and death, although here sublimated into a farce, resonates profoundly in Rousseau's life as in his fictional works. Rousseau turns the clash between his fascination for the wealthy sophistication of a Sophie d'Houdetot and his attraction to the transparent simplicity of a Thērēse into a bittersweet parade. For Rousseau, love is a matter of life and death not only for the individual soul but for society itself which, for its well-being, requires mutual love between its citzens and the state. But it is also problematic and its outcome uncertain. In Emile, the Tutor is exacting in his selection of the proper mate for Emile; but in the unfinished sequel, les Solitaires, Emile and Sophie's "perfect" marriage collapses into tragedy. In Julie, Saint-Preux surrenders his perfect love for Julie to Wolmar, the social engineer. Harlequin's fear of drowning predates Julie's death by drowning where the act is given symbolic meaning.

In most harlequinades, the injustices of society are

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punished swiftly and violently. As an outsider, naïve to the rules of the game, Harlequin is astonished by the crimes perpetrated against the powerless by the members of the upper classes and administers punishment to the smug offenders _ad baculum_ with his trusty club. In _Arlequin sauvage_, the comic hero beats a merchant who demands payment for the goods which the savage Harlequin mistakes for gifts. In the case of Marivaux's _Arlequin poli par l'amour_, the rod of choice is a magic wand which Harlequin steals from a witch and uses to beat her and her agents when he discovers that they have conspired to keep him from his beloved Silvia.

Rousseau's Harlequin is also provided with a magic wand, given to him by the fairies to protect him from the jealous sorcerer Parafaragaramus. Perhaps it will be used to beat his enemies. We will never know, since the play was left unfinished. But in the tirade spoken by the villainous Parafaragaramus, there are signs of wrongs needing to be righted. In this caricature of the evil savant Rousseau presents a corrupt practitioner of the arts and sciences engaged in the business of corrupting human society. A forerunner of the villain in nineteenth-century melodramas, Parafaragaramus is a villain on a large scale. He does not stop at corrupting fools, he has subverted all of society by making its most contemptible members esteemed.

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> PARAFARAGARAMUS
> . . .voi la terre couverte de mes exploits. Toujours grand dans mes projets, j'ai dedaigné tous les travaux aisés. On n'a point vu mes prodiges favoriser l'avarice des vieillards, la coqueterie des femmes, l'infidelité des hommes, la fourberie des bonzes, l'avidité des juges, l'arrogance des ignorans. De plus perileuses enterprises m'ont occupé: tant de jeunes sots rendus aimables par leurs ridicules, tant de Charlatans crus savans â force de montrer leur ignorance, tant de laches recompensés de leur poltronerie, tant d'auteurs applaudis pour leurs sotises. Voilâ ce qu'ont produit mes illusions. Voilâ comment ma puissance a pu fasciner tous les yeux. 72

Here are the beginnings of the theme that will later fuel Rousseau's first Discours: the Arts and Sciences as the tools of social corruption.

Many of Marivaux's short comedies certainly dealt with social corruption. Both La Dispute and La Colonie confront and challenge the notions of the cultural superiority of the West cherished by the Enlightenment. They, like Rousseau's first Discours, project a hypothetical Golden Age corrupted by civilization. Yet they are not mentioned in Rousseau's Lettre â d'Alembert. Perhaps it was their extremely complex and disturbing nature that put Rousseau off. Perhaps their meaning, which was never truly understood until recently, escaped Rousseau's grasp.[73] Both of these pieces are mannerist rather than traditional forms of the genre. This too may have put Rousseau off. In any event, it was Delisle's Arlequin sauvage that Rousseau chose to discuss, being one of the most popular and often repeated of the harlequinades.

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In another section of his Lettre à d'Alembert, one may be surprised to find Rousseau preferring fairground parades to regular comedies and find it odd that, after expending so much eloquence and ink attacking high comedy and tragedy for its corrupting effects on the Parisian audiences, Rousseau suddenly elevates the most vulgar forms of comedy presented at the fairbooths to a preferred position. Is he playing the evil savant raising up the unworthy? Or was it the radical attacks on corrupt society, in which these comedies reveled, that gained Rousseau's sympathy? Perhaps it was the presentation of the common man with his common sense that attracted him. As one reads his Lettre further the evidence mounts that these were not his reasons for finding parades better for the Genevans than Molière's comedies. The problem was that, although Rousseau's goal was to block the establishment of a Parisian theatre company in Geneva, at the time that he wrote the Lettre à d'Alembert the tradition of fairground theatres in Geneva was already a fait accompli and Rousseau was therefore forced to respond to d'Alembert's observation that:

> dans une ville où les spectacles décens et réguliers sont défendus, on permettre des farces grossiéres et sans esprit, aussi contraires au bon goût qu'aux bonnes moeurs. 74

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Not surprisingly, Rousseau's response was to contrast the naturally virtuous culture of Geneva with the morally corrupt culture of Paris as an explanation for the popularity of fairground comedies in Geneva. He argues that the Genevans' virtue is not threatened by the coarse farces of the fairground and that the seemingly more "dêcens et rêguliers" comedies are actually more dangerous. This becomes clear when he turns to the question of elevating Genevan taste. His argument is derived from Montesquieu's contention that civil laws are shaped by the traditional customs and mores of each country. But in contrast to Montesquieu's progressive spirit, Rousseau warns that in a small state like Geneva "toutes innovations sont dangereuses."[75] Although it is true that fairground theatres already thrive in Geneva, Rousseau sees a great difference between these forms and an established resident theatre:

> En ce sens, quel rapport entre quelques farces passagêres et une Comedie â demeure, entre les poliçonneries d'un charlatan et les rêprêsentations reguliêres des ouvrages Dramatiques, entre des trêteaux de Foire êlevês pour rêjoüir la populace et un Thêatre estimê oû les honnêtes gens penseront s'intruire? 76

Granted that the former provide more shocking and less refined fare, the latter would be far more dangerously subversive:

> L'un de ces amusemens est sans consequence et reste oubliê dês le lendemain; mais l'autre est une affaire importante qui mêrite toute l'attention du gouvernement. 77

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If farces lack taste, so much the better. People will grow tired of them all the more quickly. Being coarse and vulgar, they lack the power to seduce. It is not through vulgarity but through refined words and manners that vice insinuates its way into a culture. That is why, Rousseau argues, "les expressions sont toujours plus recherchées et les oreilles plus scrupuleuses dans les pays plus corrompus."[78] The conversations of young people in the village marketplace seldom arouse their passions; but the discreet dialogues in plays do it all too well. Rousseau concludes "il vaudroit mieux qu'une jeune fille vit cent parades qu'une seule réprésentation de l'oracle."[79]

This is a continuation of an argument in the first part of his Lettre where he praises the artistry of Molière and Racine, and then damns them for their greatness. The implication is that were these men lesser artists they would have been less convincing and therefore less corrupting. In other words, it is because "farces passagères" were crude and thus lacked the power to corrupt that they were tolerated in Geneva, while a resident theatre presenting refined Parisian comedies was not.

Narcisse, ou l'amant de lui-même

With the triumphant success of his Devin du village, Rousseau was, after ten years of waiting, finally in a

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position to have his comedy Narcisse produced. Since the Théâtre Italien, to whom he had given the script some eight years earlier, had done nothing for him save to give him a free pass, he turned for assistance to the actor and playwright Lanoue who was then at the height of his powers as a star of the Comédie-Française and leaped at the chance to do Rousseau's comedy.

Besides the prospect of at last seeing Narcisse produced, the success of his Devin du village also offered Rousseau a chance for financial independence. Not only were the royalties he received from the Paris Opéra an indication of his box-office potential, but he also hoped to earn more income from the published text of his opera. It appears that he also had ambitions as a publisher, for on 22 October 1752 he wrote to his friend Lenieps about his success:

> On représente actuellement à la Cour le petit Opéra que j'achevois à votre départ. Le succès en est prodigieux et m'étonne moi-même. 80

The letter goes on to ask Lenieps if he can find buyers for some copies of Pergolesi's La serva padrona which was then being presented by Bambini's opera buffa company, along with other Italian interludes, at the Paris Opéra:

> Je me suis avisé, par le conseil de mes Amis, de faire graver le plus beau de ces intermedes, intitulé la Serva padrona, et j'espère que l'ouvrage sera fini vers le milieu du mois prochain. Si vous connoissez à Lyon des Amateurs de musique, vous m'obligerez de me procurer le débit de quelques exemplaires.

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It was an enterprise that would soon seem superfluous to Rousseau as his income from Le Devin increased. "Je crois vous avoir écrit dans le tems," Rousseau writes Lenieps on 16 January 1753, "qu'on avoit représenté le Devin du Village à Fontainebleau: je ne sais si j'ai ajouté que j'avois reçu une gratification de cent louis."[81] Later on he would receive an additional 50 louis as a gift from Mme de Pompadour, to whom he had sent a copy of his Devin du village. As a consequence of his growing wealth, his book-publishing enterprise seems to have lost its appeal, for he adds:

> Je vous ai envoyé vingt exemplaires de la Serva Padrona; . . . Si vous trouvez occasion de les vendre, vous me ferez plaisir; mais ne vous tourmentez point pour cela, je vous en prie, d'autant plus que, comme vous voyez, je ne suis pas pressé d'argent.

In fact, on 2 January 1753 Rousseau had already entered into a contract with the Paris bookseller Noël-Jacques Pissot to turn over to him the rights to publish Le Devin du village for the sum of 500 livres and to provide Pissot with 114 copies of La serva padrona for which Rousseau was to receive another 492 livres.[82] A few weeks later Rousseau sent a receipt to Pissot which reads: "J'ai receu de Monsieur Pissot la somme de deux cent quarante Livres."[83]

Yet, as with his theatrical success which Rousseau found embarrassing, his opportunities for financial independence seemed to encumber rather than liberate him.

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Rousseau's stated reason for turning down a royal pension was the loss of intellectual freedom it would impose. One might assume that, given the opportunity to gain financial independence with no royal strings attached, Rousseau would embrace it--if for no other reason than to support Thérèse and her family. Despite these obligations, Rousseau seemed eager to dispose of his income as soon as it was acquired and sent the entire sum of Pissot's first installment to Mme de Warens who, although in dire financial straits at that time due to her numerous failed enterprises, was still receiving a royal pension from the King of Sardinia. In a letter to Mme de Warens dated 13 February 1753 he offers her the sum to ease her debts while confessing that the money is sorely needed to support his own household due to the excessive price of bread and fuel in Paris:

> Vous trouverez ci-joint, ma chêre Maman, une Lettre de Change de 240 (livres). Mon Coeur s'afflige également de la petitesse de la somme et du besoin que vous en avez. Tâchez de pouvoir aux besoins les plus pressans, cela est plus aisé oû vous êtes qu'ici, ou toutes choses et surtout le bois et le pain sont d'une cherté horrible. Je ne veux pas, ma bonne Maman, entrer avec vous dans le détail des choses dont vous me parlez, parce que ce n'est pas le tems de vous rappeller quel a toujours été mon sentiment sur vos entreprises. 84

The letter goes on to announce that his Devin du village will be presented at the Opêra on the first of March and, at the same time, will be performed again "le Lundi gras au Château de Bell-vüe en présence du Roy." It was at

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this performance that Madame de Pompadour played Colin.

In spite of all this happy news, Rousseau will not allow the thought of his becoming a composer and playwright interfere with his program of self-denial. The end of the letter reiterates his vow to remain a humble music copyist:

> Avec toutte cette gloire je continue â vivre de mon mêtier de copiste qui me rend independant et qui me rendroit heureux, si mon bonheur pouvoit se faire sans le vôtre et sans la santê.

Rousseau's refusal to benefit financially or socially from his theatrical triumphs is reflected in his self-destructive behavior at the premiere of his Narcisse at the Comêdie-française, an event he had waited nearly a decade to witness.

Rousseau and the Comêdie-Française

In his Confessions Rousseau relates the events that led to his decision to try his luck at the Comêdie-Française. According to Rousseau, not only was he frustrated with the Thêâtre Italien for not producing his comedy after eight years, but during that time he had become "dêgoutê de ce thêatre par le mauvais jeu des acteurs dans le François."[85] In fact, he claims "j'aurois bien voulu avoir fait passer ma piêce aux François plustot que chez eux." He expressed these wishes to Lanoue, whom he held to be an "homme de mêrite."

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Some ten years earlier, Jean Lanoue[86] had been discovered by Voltaire and brought to Paris from Lyons. Voltaire had witnessed Lanoue triumph in the actor's own Mahomet II,[87] a performance Voltaire so admired that he wrote these lines of verse in his honor:

> Mon cher Lanoue, illustre père
> De l'invincible Mahomet,
> Soyez le parrain d'un cadet
> Qui, sans vous, n'est point fait pour plaire.[88]

When Voltaire's Mahomet premiered at the Comédie-Française on 14 May 1742, Voltaire saw to it that Lanoue played the lead. Although a religious cabal led by Piron and the Abbé Desfontaines would close the tragedy after only two performances, the play proved to be an artistic triumph for both men,[89] partly due to Voltaire's having the wit to dedicate the play to the reigning Pope, Benedict XIV, who, much to Voltaire's delight and his enemies' horror, bestowed upon it his apostolic benediction and sent Voltaire gold medals to underscore his papal esteem.[90]

In 1751 Voltaire was finally able, with the approval of the sympathetic censor D'Alembert, to have Mahomet revived.[91] Once again Lanoue garnered praise for his performance; but this time he played Mahomet--his previous role of Seide having been given to Lekain, another protégé of Voltaire's who would soon come to challenge and eventually surpass Granval as the leading tragic actor at the Comédie-Française.

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It may very well have been the appearance of Lekain that so impressed Rousseau with the Comédie-Française and caused him to approach Lanoue about producing _Narcisse_. Lanoue no doubt saw in Rousseau's comedy a play worthy of the Comédie-Française for he later did Rousseau the honor of writing his own comedy in five acts based on _Narcisse_ and titled _la Coquette corrigée_ (1756). Rousseau made one stipulation: that his comedy be presented anonymously. An author's requesting anonymity was not at all unusual in this age of political upheaval and theatrical cabals. It was a common practice of Voltaire's but, as we have seen, quite unusual for Rousseau. It could be assumed that after his triumph with _le Devin du village_ Rousseau feared that this comedy might fail and ruin his career just as it was finally taking off.

After Rousseau had made the necessary changes needed to adapt his comedy to the new company, Lanoue wasted little time in seeing it mounted. Unfortunately the original manuscript of _Narcisse_ has been lost. We are left to deal with the text which, in 1753, Rousseau himself edited for publication.[92] It seems likely that the changes that Rousseau made had to do with fashioning the comedy to the requirements of the Comédie-Française, which had a company and style quite different from the Comédie-Italienne for which _Narcisse_ was originally written. Whether a play was accepted or not by a company

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had a great deal to do with the desires of the company itself. Voltaire, as we know, was required by the Comédie-Française, whose young leading man required a role, to add love interest to his Oedipe, which he grudgingly did by creating the character Philoctète as a former lover of Jocaste.[93] Such was the case with Marivaux as well, who tailored most of his plays for the actors of the Comédie-Italienne.

Narcisse's dialogue is witty and fast-paced, but what must have truly intrigued Lanoue (and Marivaux) was the clever plot twist of having a prank turn against the pranksters who intend to shame Valère out of his vanity by tricking up a portrait of him to resemble a woman. Rather than recognizing himself in the portrait, Valère sees in it the woman of his dreams. The entire plot then turns on Valère's coming to realize his error, in the course of which he almost loses his fiancée, Angélique, along with his inheritance. A subplot built on a far more conventional comic premise involves Valère's sister, Lucinde, who has fallen in love with a mysterious stranger and refuses to marry her father's choice, Angelique's brother Léandre, not knowing that her intended and her beloved are one and the same.

The comedy also has its requisite comic servants and an outraged parent, in this case the father. The happy ending might seem a foregone conclusion were it not for

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the fact that the play's comic hero is a _petit-maître_, a figure of derision in most eighteenth-century comedies.

Tradition of petit-maître comedies.

Although Valère was fashioned on the models of the _petit-maître_ as depicted in the comedies of Voltaire and Marivaux, these authors did not originate the character type. The figure was a product that arose from _l'Ancien Régime_. Around 1683 a group of young French aristocrats, wanting to mock the high moral standards of the Grand-Maîtres of the Knights of Malta, formed a fraternity of debauchery, taking mock "vows" of "chastity" in which they forswore marriage, unless it was to increase their property or prestige. Above all, they vowed never to fall in love. In facetious contrast to the Knights, they called themselves "_petit-maîtres_." In Frédéric Deloffre's study of Marivaux's _Le Petit-Maître corrigé_ he lists fifty-nine plays between 1685 and 1800 that feature this character.[94] On the English stage the _petit-maître_ has been given various names, depending on the social attitudes of the time, from man of mode, to dandy, to fop, to rake. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, as middle-class sentiments took hold, the fashion of the _petit-maître_ came under increasing attack and the fop was seen as the symbol of the moral decay of the nobility. In 1748, Richardson's _Clarissa_, which caused a sensation in Europe

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and inspired Rousseau's Julie, où la nouvelle Héloïse, had turned the rake into a figure of supreme villainy with his portrait of the heartless Lovelace.

In his article "Les Petit-Maîtres and La Critique by Justus van Effen,"[95] James L. Schorr discusses the phenomenon of the petit-maître and its impact on the early eighteenth-century theatre. Schorr's article sheds a great deal of light on the nature of the fashion. According to Schorr, the Dutchman Justus van Effen carried on a long campaign against this fad and was instrumental in reviving a dramatic genre satirizing it. In number LXXXI of van Effen's journal Le Misanthrope he writes:

> Plût au Ciel que mon esprit pût satisfaire aux mouvements de mon coeur et que mon style égalât en vivacité mon aversion pour ces impudents ennemis de la vertu et bon sens! 96

In van Effen's comedy Les Petits-Maîtres (1719) and its sequel La Critique de la comédie des petits-maîtres (1720), the Dutchman chronicles and parodies the tradition of the petit-maître and his female counterpart the petite-maîtresse in the characters of Le Comte and Araminte, who are provided with comic servants, La Fleur and Lisette. In a scene meant to parody the manners of the petit-maître, van Effen has another valet, Jasmine, teach La Fleur the rules of the game.[97] "D'abord," Jasmine warns, "livre-toi absolument à ton imagination; ne pense point; parle sans cesse." He goes on to explain the

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special use made of language: "ne te sers jamais d'un mot dans son sens naturel; larde tes discours de tous le termes à la mode." It is style, not substance, he explains, that matters most: "dis tout ce qui te vient dans la tête d'un air libre, aisé, évaporé." To insure that one never be suspected of sincerity, "ris à gorge déployée, mais d'un rire qui ressemble à un hoquet."[98] The intended effect was to portray frivolous, effeminate behavior as the ideal fashion at Court. This fashion extended to dress as well. In scene 4 of van Effen's Critique, Vicomte Freluquet, a Parisian fop, condemns the "petits-maîtres qui viennent sur le théâtre avec de grandes perruques, des canons et des baudriers," having already admitted that he appears at court "en femme" because "c'est là le vrai moyen."[99]

Van Effen's play is of particular interest to this study not only for its explication of the ethos and the fashion of the petit-maître, but also for its similarities to Marivaux's Le Petit-maître corrigé, which premiered at the Comédie-Française 6 November 1734. Marivaux may have gotten some ideas for his comedy from van Effen's Les Petits-Maîtres, which was published in a new edition two years before Marivaux's play was produced.[100] In both plays, a rich and beautiful woman must choose between a sincere and an insincere suitor. Both plays have comic servants who emulate their masters' ways. Both contain

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the plot device of a misplaced letter written by a female rival. But Marivaux is far kinder to his *petit-maître*, Rosimond, being more concerned with the fashion as an obstacle to one's authentic feelings. Although he finds the mode absurd, he also allows his *petit-maître* a way out of his dilemma. In the denouement of Marivaux's comedy, Rosimond, realizing that he is losing Hortense to a more sincere rival, finally breaks down and confesses his love.

Around this time Voltaire also wrote a one-act *petit-maître* comedy titled *L'Indiscret* which was presented at the Comédie- Française along with his tragedy, *Mariamne*, on 1 August 1725. Voltaire probably based the character of Damis on the chevalier de Villefontaine in Dancourt's comedy *Le Chevalier à la mode* (1688).[101] But, unlike Dancourt's comedy, Voltaire's more sophisticated work was intended to entertain not only the *parterre* but the aristocratic tastes of the *loge* as well. Unfortunately it was only there, Voltaire laments, that it succeeded, the *parterre*'s tastes having become corrupted by the plays of Dancourt and Legrand:

> Cette petite pièce fut représentée avant-hier avec assez de succès, . . . mais il me parut que les loges étaient plus contentes que le parterre. Dancourt et Legrand ont accoutumé le parterre au bas comique et aux grossièretés, et insensiblement le public s'est formé le préjugé que les petites pièces en un acte doivent être des farces pleines d'ordures, et non pas des comédies nobles où les moeurs soient respectées.102

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To its credit, Voltaire claims that it was a comedy which even "l'impitoyable M. de Richelieu" found satisfying.[103] Voltaire treats his petit-maître, Damis, more severely than does Marivaux. Damis's great fault is his need to be candid about his own charms, good looks, conquests, and his opinions of others. In his Siècle de Louis XIV, Voltaire sees the petit-maîtres as "la jeunesse *impertinente et mal élevée*."[104] *Damis's self-absorbtion* leaves him oblivious to the fact that his indiscretions threaten not only others' reputations, but his own as well.

For his Narcisse, Rousseau utilized the petit-maîtres of both Voltaire and Marivaux. He emulated Voltaire's refined style and endowed his Valère with Damis's vanity and excessive concern for his looks. The play's central joke depends upon the audience believing that little is required to transform the petit-maître Valère into a woman. In Marivaux's comedy, Rousseau found many of the plot elements for his Narcisse, particularly the idea of women reforming the petit-maître through subterfuge.

In his study of Rousseau's play Walter E. Rex argues that Narcisse grew out of another theatrical fad that arose in the years just prior to the Comédie-Française's presentation of the comedy in 1752. It was a fad represented by sexual metamorphosis comedies such as L'Année merveilleuse by Pierre Rousseau (later known as

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"Rousseau de Toulouse"), produced by the Théatre Italien 18 July 1748, the anonymous La Grande métamorphose (1751), and a third comedy, attributed to Carmontelle, Les Métamorphoses extravagantes, presented in 1748 at The Hague.[105] Rex's argument is based on the fact that, although Rousseau's Valère shares many of the characteristics of the petits-maîtres in comedies dealing with this fashion, Valère does not share their essential characteristic of despising genuine sentiment. On the contrary, Valère is emotionally effusive and actually over-eager to be in love. In addition, the central problem of the comedy is not how to arouse his love, but rather how to channel it away from his obsession with the "woman" in the portrait and back to his original beloved, Angelique. More significantly, Rousseau's comedy makes a number of references to Valère's transformation into "une espèce de femme cachée sous des habits d'homme"[106] and of the portrait being a metaphor for Valère's metamorphosis.[107]

As compelling as these arguments may appear, there is evidence indicating that it may in fact have been Rousseau's Narcisse that first inspired the fashion of comedies of sexual metamorphosis. Rex is correct in stressing Rousseau's originality in keeping his petit-maître from conforming to type and in pointing out Rousseau's interest in sexual ambiguity. He is also

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correct in seeing that Rousseau's play embodies "one of the most original, surprising, and intelligent comic ideas created by anyone during this period."[108]

The evidence would seem to indicate that Narcisse is the origin of the later fad. One need only recall that Rousseau wrote his comedy sometime between 1732 and 1740 and, around 1746, offered the script to the Théâtre Italien.[109] Try as he and Marivaux might, the Italians never did produce Narcisse. Pierre Rousseau's L'Année merveilleuse, whose central character is also named Valère, had a successful run of fourteen performances at the Comédie-Italienne.[110] Rex claims that the anonymous La Grande métamorphose, although "far better written," was refused by the Italians because Pierre Rousseau's "had reached the Italians first and so prevented any further stage productions" of other similar comedies.[111] Hence the Italians' further reluctance to present Narcisse.

The production of Pierre Rousseau's L'Année merveilleuse is reviewed by Grimm in his Correspondence littéraire. The entry reads:

> On en a même voulu faire le sujet d'une comédie qui a été jouée sur le théâtre des Italiens. Cette pièce n'a rien d'intéressant, puisque ce sont des scènes détachées. Vous pouvez aisément vous en former une idée quand je vous dirai qu'il s'agit de la métamorphose des hommes en femmes et des femmes en hommes. La Folie, qui préside à ce changement, reçoit les hommages des métamorphosés, et elle est répétée tour à tour par un jeune militaire changé en petite-maîtresse, par une jeune fille devenue homme de robe d'une fadeur et d'un ennui insupportable, par Arlequin changé en

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> revendeuse à la toilette, par un grenadier qui conserve sous l'habit de femme l'air brutal d'un soldat, enfin par une femme sensée dont le sort a fait un avocat.[112]

Grimm informs us that the last role was the best written, but was not the work of Pierre Rousseau but rather that of Riccoboni, _fils_ who performed in the play. He adds:

> Toutes les scènes sont d'un froid merveilleux. On a tâché d'égayer cette petite comédie d'un ballet parfaitement dessiné et exécuté: c'est en quoi les comédiens italiens excellent et font honte à l'Opéra, oû la plupart des ballets sont sans imagination, sans feu et souvent sans exécution.

The implication is that the success of Pierre Rousseau's comedy was due mostly to the enhancements by the company of the Théâtre Italien. Further evidence of this is contained in an entry in Grimm's _Correspondence littéraire_ dated 29 April 1754 reviewing Pierre Rousseau's _Les Méprises_. It seems that by that point Pierre's career as a playwright was not going well. The reader is informed that M. Rousseau de Toulouse "a déjà donné quelques petites comédies sans mérite et sans succès."[113] Grimm characterizes him as a man "en qui on ne soupçonnait aucun génie, qui n'est pas aimé du public."[114]

All of this sypports my belief that Pierre's actions were not totally innocent. Since we know that Rousseau's _Narcisse_ preceded _L'Année merveilleuse_ by at least fifteen years, and that it was in the possession of the Comédie Italienne for at least two years prior to the appearance of Pierre Rousseau's comedy, it seems far more likely

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that Narcisse was passed around from time to time, and that Pierre probably read the play and, realizing that Jean-Jacques's Narcisse had not yet been produced, drew from it the comic idea of the sexual metamorphosis for his own play and thus set the fashion for such comedies.

It seems that Pierre Rousseau was determined to be Jean-Jacques's nemesis throughout his life. Jean-Jacques's name was often confused with that of Pierre, who soon took to calling himself Rousseau de Toulouse to distinguish him from Rousseau de Genève. In 1750, Pierre had written some unkind remarks about Voltaire which had been falsely attributed to Jean-Jacques--perhaps by Pierre Rousseau himself.[115] Rousseau was forced to write Voltaire a letter protesting that he was not the author and again thanking Voltaire for his kindness and courtesy concerning Les Fêtes de Ramire.[116]

There is a strong possibility that Pierre Rousseau may have resented Jean-Jacques's acquaintance with Voltaire and his friendship with Marivaux. He surely would have known of Marivaux's connection with Rousseau's Narcisse and the Théâtre Italien. The resentment may have been enhanced by Pierre's own undistinguished reputation as a playwright. A third Rousseau, the famous poet Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, had died in 1741, the very year Jean-Jacques arrived in Paris. At the end of his revue of Les Méprises, Grimm notes that the name Rousseau "est

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favorable pour la littérature," and records a satirical epigram in rhyme about the three Rousseaus that was then making the rounds:

> Trois auteurs que Rousseau l'on nomme,
> Connus de Paris jusqu'à Rome,
> Sont différents: voici par où:--
> Rousseau de Paris fut grand homme;
> Celui de Genève est un fou,
> Celui de Toulouse un atome.[117]

Grimm quotes only the last three lines. In publishing this insulting rhyme, Grimm shows early signs of strain in his relationship with his friend Jean-Jacques. But the insult to Pierre Rousseau is even worse. Pierre later founded the successful Journal encyclopédique and, in 1780, after amassing false evidence, he launched his devastating accusation--one widely believed by his prestigious readers--that Jean-Jacques had plagiarized Le Devin du village.

By exploiting, in his L'Année Merveilleuse, the metamorphosis theme of Narcisse, Pierre Rousseau merely toyed with a concept that had far deeper meaning to Jean-Jacques. In my discussion of Les Muses galantes, I have already mentioned Rousseau's interest in Ovid. He wrote three theatrical works based on, or utilizing, Ovid's Metamorphosis: Narcisse, Iphis, and Pygmalion. I will discuss the latter two in my penultimate chapter. Rousseau's use of metamorphosis and ambiguity as both metaphors and speculative explanations of social evolution

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are found everywhere in his writings. They involve his concern with identity and alienation. In the next chapter I will show how Rousseau's powerful prose poem Le Lévite d'Ephraïm, which dramatizes the use of visual signs to inspire the Hebrews, relates to his prose tragedy La Mort de Lucrèce.

In Narcisse, Rousseau brings on stage a world that reflects a very personal vision. If it appears to have the characteristics typical of its genre, this appearance was intentionally designed to create an acceptable reality, i.e. one familiar to his audience, while being, at the same time, an idealized world of his dreams. This, I believe, is why this comedy has generated discourse concerning its form on the one hand, and discourse concerning its abstract rather than concrete reality on the other.

Rousseau may very well have been experimenting here with a classical genre (the petit-maître comedy) as he did with French opera and will later do with lyric drama. If it was an experiment, its aim was to adapt the play to standards appealing to himself. As we have seen, Rousseau was constantly attempting to present himself on stage--always through the vehicle of other characters, of course, but through characters who shared his feelings and sensibilities--often imbuing several or all of the characters with his presence. I have already observed

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that the characters in Julie, ou la nouvelle Hēloïse all seem to speak and feel in the same way. There is a something of this in Rousseau's theatrical works as well, certainly in Narcisse. There is a sense that it is Rousseau's voice and heart speaking through Valēre and Angēlique; Lēandre and Lucinde; Frontin and Marton. The play itself is about sexual ambiguity and is constantly playing with the perceived and the real. Leandre is forced to assume the identity of Clēonte (a near-homonym for his real name). All are pretending one reality while knowing another. It is a world in which the superficial disguises the real. In this respect, it is Rousseau's critique of fashionable society, of which the petit-maître is the personification.

Or so it seems. Narcisse appears to be a petit-maître comedy, but, as I have indicated, it violates a number of its rules. Valēre, in a quite extraordinary departure from the genre, openly expresses his love for Angelique. Marivaux, of course, prefers to have his lovers fall in love at last. Voltaire's Damis is treated even more traditionally as ridiculous, self-centered, and incapable of sincerity, and therefore justly denied the good woman whom he hoped to seduce. In Rousseau's comedy, although Valēre is ridiculously obsessed with his good looks, Angelique likes him just as he is:

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ANGELIQUE
Que lui trouvez-vous après tout de si ridicule? Puis-qu'il est aimable, a-t-il si grand tort de s'aimer, et ne lui en donnons-nous pas l'exemple? Il cherche à plaire. Ah, si c'est un défaut, quelle vertu plus charmante un homme pourroit-il apporter dans la société! 118

It is his sister Lucinde, not his lover, who finds him ridiculous and wants to reform him. And yet, although she believes him "une espéce de femme cachée sous des habits d'homme,"[119] she also believes him "naturellment bon."[120] The first trait is in keeping with a <u>petit-maître</u>, the second is not. The portrait of the <u>petit-maître</u> as empty-headed is supported by Valère's father, Lisimon, who is shocked when Valère confesses that he has been doing some thinking:[121]

VALERE
Mais mon pére....j'ai fait....des réflexions....

LISIMON
Des réflexions, toi? j'avois tort. Je n'aurois pas deviné celui-là. Sur quoi donc, s'il vous plaît, roulent vos méditations sublimes?

Despite his father's preconceptions, when Valère is alone he proves himself quite a lucid thinker and, being aware of what the world expects of a <u>petit-maître</u>, consciously ridicules himself:

VALERE
Que j'éprouve de bisarrerie dans mes sentimens! Je renonce à la possession d'un objet charmant et auquel, dans le fond, mon penchant me raméne encore. Je m'expose à la disgrace de mon pére pour m'entêter d'une belle, peut-être indigne de mes soupirs, peut-être imaginaire, sur la seule foi d'un portrait tombé des nues et flatté à coup sûr. Quel caprice! quelle folie! Mais quoi! la folie et les caprices

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> ne sontils pas le relief d'un homme aimable? (*Regardant le portrait*.) Que de graces!.... Quels traits!.... Que cela est enchanté!.... Que cela est divin! Ah! qu'Angélique ne se flatte pas de soutentir la comparaison avec tant de charmes. 122

Valère is far too self-aware and honest to be a typical *petit-maître*. Instead, what we are given in this soliloquy is an examination of identity itself. Valère/Rousseau here revels in his self-love and at the same time is tormented by it. How often has Rousseau been seduced by beauty and, in the process, lost his identity? How often has he played the man of fashion to please his own vanity? And is he not, like Valère, naturally innocent? Isn't it only the superficial veneer of fashion and manners that prevents his inner self from being seen?

Another aspect, strikingly lacking in *Narcisse* as a *petit-maître* comedy, is bitter ridicule. This seems odd considering that Rousseau's attitude towards the *petit-maître* fad in his other works is contemptuous. In his *Arlequin amoureux malgré lui*, Epine-Vinette mentions with disdain "ce Butord d'Arlequin" who is not worthy of Gracieuse and who could not even measure up to "un petit maitre françois," much less "cet enchanteur, ce savant Parafaragaramus."[123] In his *Epître à M. de l'Etang* (1749) Rousseau praises rural living where one does not have to endure:

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> . . . ces gens que Dieu confonde
> De ces sots dont Paris abonde
> Et qu'on y nomme beaux esprits
> Vendeurs de fumée à tout prix
> Au riche faquin qui les gâte;
> . . .
> Point de ces fades Petit-Maitres [124]

Yet in his _Narcisse_, Valère is not treated with contempt but with tender amusement. Even in Marivaux at his kindest, there is the sting of ridicule. Certainly the situation in Rousseau's comedy begs for it. Yet Rousseau seems to have forgotten it. Or is its absence deliberate? Jacques Sherer has observed that this sentimental treatment of the _petit-maître_ goes beyond the fop who is cured by love, as in Marivaux's _Petit-Maître corrigé_ or the _Préjugé à la mode_ of Nivelle de la Chaussée (1735), whose _petit-maître_ is sincerely in love.[125]

I believe the reason to be that, while these later plays are still in the realm of realism, Rousseau's sentimental treatment of his _petit-maître_ anticipates Romantic idealism. Rousseau promises in his _Narcisse_ the attitudes of the _petit-maître_ genre while at the same substituting a tender caress for the expected sting. Clearly, Rousseau is enchanted with Valère and protects him from the cruel ridicule to which a society blind to his natural innocence would subject him. If an audience finds Rousseau's play fulfilling, it is because they have embraced his romantic idealism, if only for the brief course of the play. Secretly they share his dream-world

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where all bitterness and hurtful ridicule have been banished, and one's social follies are easily forgiven.

Nowhere in his comedy is this idealism better seen than in the character of Valère. The Rousseau scholar may be tempted to characterize Valère as overcome by *amour-propre*. But if we examine Rousseau's concept we find that Valère's vanity lacks the prerequisites for true *amour-propre*. Far from being concerned about what the world thinks of him, he seems quite content with himself; therefore, he has no desire to undercut or harm his rivals. What Rousseau has imbued Valère with is *amour de soi*, the primordial self-centered love that characterizes Rousseau's Noble Savage. Despite his foppish externals, Valère's soul is that of a natural man.

Love and Duty are depicted as conflicting interests (as they would be in the romantic works of Schiller), but interests that must both be accommodated in a just society. Rousseau allows this accommodation to take place through sleight-of-hand. Everyone who is to be married in the comedy must be tricked into believing that it is not duty (compulsion) that creates their marriage, but free will. As Rousseau will assert in his second *Discours*, civilized man must be fitted with new chains, chains of his own making, that he wears willingly. This is the paradox Rousseau depicts in his comedy. It is this same paradox that underlies the central conflict of his *Julie*,

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ou la nouvelle Hēloïse. And it is with this same reconciliation--the overcoming of passion through the will--that the German Romantics will later become absorbed.

The Premiere of Narcisse

Rousseau's one-act comedy opened at the Comēdie-Française on 18 December 1752 along with Didon, a tragedy by La France de Pompignan written in 1734. Didon was a work that had found so much favor with the public that it was reprised in 1745. Didon was clearly the featured piece, intended to draw a good audience. Narcisse, with its anonymous author, would have to build a reputation on the quality of the work itself and not on the reputation of its creator. This was Rousseau's intention, or so he would have us believe. But he had, in fact, secretly informed a number of friends that he was the author of the piece. The main text of a letter to a fellow Genevan, the celebrated miniaturist painter François Mussard, dated 17 December 1752 reads as follows:

> Je dēgage ma parole, monsieur, en vous avertissant qu'on donne demain lundi la premiere et probablement l'unique reprēsentation de Narcisse: si vous voulez la voir absolument, je vous conseille d'y venir demain. et je vous conseille de n'y pas venir si vous n'êtes sur son sort aussi indiffērent que moi-même. Cependant, je vous recommande toujours le secret, quelque discours qu'on puisse vous tenir. MM. de Gauffecourt, d'Holbach, Grimm, vous et Lanoue êtes seuls dans la confidence; les autres n'ont que des soupçons qu'il ne faut pas confirmer. 126

One obvious omission from his "guest list" is Diderot.

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Perhaps he felt that Diderot was incapable of keeping such a secret. Nevertheless, it is clear that he had no intention of remaining anonymous for long. Rousseau could tell at the first performance that his belief (or was it hope?) that the play would fail was groundless. In his Confessions, Rousseau informs us that the audience so enjoyed the comedy that even before it ended they demanded a second performance. Rousseau, who claims that he himself was bored by what he saw, grew alarmed, and resorted to desperate measures. Before the comedy ended, he writes, he walked out and:

> j'entrai au caffé de Procope où je trouvai Boissi et quelques autres, qui probablement s'étoient ennuyés comme moi. Là je dis hautement mon peccavi, m'avouant humblement ou fierement l'auteur de la Piéce, et en parlant comme tout le monde en pensoit. 127

A testament of Rousseau's actual words to the crowd at the Café de Procope has been preserved in the Anecdotes dramatiques (1775) of Clément and La Porte which were published three years before Rousseau's Confessions. Anecdote 48 testifies:

> Au sortir de la représentation de cette Piece qui n'eut point de succès, M. Rousseau entra dans le Caffé voisin de la Comédie, & dit tout haut au milieu d'une foule de monde; "La piece nouvelle est tombée; elle mérite sa chûte; elle m'a ennuyé; elle est de Rousseau de Genève; & c'est moi qui suis ce Rousseau."128

Rousseau characterized this as an act of courage by an author openly acknowledging his failure to the world. But was it a failure? If it had been, why would the

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audience, who at that point did not even know the author's name, have demanded another performance? In his Confessions Rousseau leaves the reader with the impression that Narcisse was a flop. Clearly the facts do not support this claim. What Rousseau did not tell the readers of his Confessions he did confess to Lanoue in a letter written on 19 December 1752, the day before the second performance. He writes Lanoue that he need no longer conceal the identity of the author of Narcisse since he has himself revealed it. He disparages the play as boring. "Je vois," he tells Lanoue, "qu'il y a eu quelques retranchemens de faits mal à propos, mais ce qui a été fait le plus mal à propos, c'est la pièce." Then he goes on to claim that the play has failed even before it has had its second performance. "Je l'abandonne donc à son mauvais sort." He makes it clear that he wants none of his earnings, which he asks Lanoue to distribute "aux acteurs et aux actrices qui se sont donnés la peine d'apprendre les rôles." In addition, he refuses the free tickets "parce que," he explains, "je désapprouve dans les Auteurs cette méthode d'acheter de voix."[129]

This bitter letter must have struck Lanoue as odd --particularly after the success of the second performance. On 20 December 1752 Narcisse was performed as an afterpiece to an even more popular tragedy, Voltaire's Mérope. By this time, thanks to Rousseau, the author of Narcisse

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was known. If one measures success by box-office receipts, Rousseau's share for the second performance (82 livres) was even higher than the first (74 livres). And the audience had increased from 796 to 913 spectators.[130] It was, by the standards of the time, a respectable showing. Nevertheless, Rousseau judged it a failure. He thought the play "glacée à la répresentation." But, oddly, he adds that it "soutenoit la lecture." No sooner had the comedy closed than Rousseau rushed it into print, adding to it his now famous Préface.[131]

Préface to Narcisse

In his Confessions Rousseau boasts that his Préface "est un de mes bons écrits."[132] He adds that, "je commençai de mettre à découvert mes principes un peu plus que je n'avois fait jusqu'alors." Just what these principles were has been a subject of scholarly interest ever since. But since this statement did not appear until some twenty years after his Préface, Rousseau's contemporaries had to deal with its publication and that of his comedy in the context of their current knowledge.

Grimm saw the connection between Rousseau's Préface and his Discours sur les sciences et les arts as a negative one: a sign of Rousseau's intellectual decline. Grimm read Rousseau's Préface as little more than a weak rehash of the ideas in his discourse. In the entry dated

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15 February 1754 of his Correspondance littéraire, Grimm, who was at the time still officially a friend of Rousseau, noted with admiration Rousseau's remarkable rise to fame through the publication of his Discours sur les sciences et les arts and his brilliant replies to the rebuttals of his discourse offered in the Mercure de France from January 1751 to April 1752 by the academician Abbé Raynal, Charles Bordes of Lyons, and King Stanislas of Poland.

> Ce discours, coronné par l'Académie de Dijon et écrit avec une force et avec un feu qu'on n'avait pas encore vus dans un discours académique, fit une espèce de révolution à Paris et commença la réputation de M. Rousseau, dont les talents étaient jusqu'alors peu connus. 133

In this same article Grimm notes that in Rousseau's replies to the published responses of King Stanislas and Charles Bordes to his discourse Rousseau remained:

> maître du champ de bataille, non pas, à ce que je crois, pour avoir trop bonne cause, mais faute d'avoir trouvé des adversaires assez forts pour lutter contre lui.134

He goes on to point out that D'Alembert, who might have have been a worthy opponent, remarked that Rousseau "n'était pas trop éloingé de ses opinions."[135] Grimm seems more distressed than pleased that no one has challenged Rousseau. He soon makes it clear that he does not embrace Rousseau's repudiation of the Arts and Sciences. He longs for a powerful mind to come forward and challenge Rousseau's ideas. Grimm admits that Rousseau has said admirable things, but:

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> on ne peut pas dire que la logique de ses raisonnements soit assez fort ou assez bien établie pour nous entraîner à adopter son système. 136

Having read Buffon's L'Histoire naturelle, Grimm sees man as more than merely a beast, but rather as a creature superior to all animals in having reason, which enables him to see beyond the given to the possible. If imagination is the cause of humanity's ills, it is also the source of the Arts and the Sciences that have produced innumerable worthwhile achievements, especially in ethics. Rousseau's confusing man's state with that of a beast baffles Grimm:

> si les sciences sont si nuisibles, il ne faut pas les cultiver; s'il ne faut pas que les hommes les cultivent, il ne faut pas qu'ils parlent; s'ils ne doivent pas parler, il ne faut pas qu'ils réfléchissent, il ne faut pas qu'ils aient une idée de la vertu ni du vice, etc. Or la faculté de réfléchir, qui est proprement la source de tous les maux, est essentielle à l'homme; et qui dit un homme, dit un être qui réfléchit et la première réflexion a engendré toutes les autres. 137

In the critical style employed by M. Bordes, Grimm finds a justification for the polite society condemned by Rousseau: if he is not "un adversaire assez vigoureux pour M. Rousseau," one can still praise "la politesse, la douceur et la décence avec lesquelles il a traité notre citoyen."[138] The implication is that M. Bordes is the more civilized of the two because he is the more polite. Therefore it is M. Bordes and not Rousseau who should serve "comme modèle à tous les écrivains qui se mêlent d'écrire de la controverse."[139]

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In Rousseau's preface to Narcisse Grimm sees hope that Rousseau has caused his own downfall and finds the Préface an example of excess appended to an already bad comedy:

> M. Rousseau a gâté son triomphe par une préface outrée qu'il a mise à la tête d'une mauvaise comédie intitulée Narcisse, ou l'Amant de lui-même. 140

Grimm claims that the Préface lacks originality and focus and finds only a few pages worthy of praise:

> Cette préface, qu'il fit imprimer sans aucune sujet, n'est pas trop bonne d'ailleurs, si vous en exceptez quelques pages dignes de M. de Montesquieu.

Rousseau's purpose in writing the Préface has become a problem among contemporary scholars. Benjamin R. Barber and Janis Forman have surmised that "it was the very considerable success of the play that prompted Rousseau to write an extended preface to it."[141] But, as we have seen, Rousseau took pains to make certain that Narcisse would not have a "considerable success." Barber and Forman are correct in claiming that the Préface was written by Rousseau "to defend himself against the charges of hypocrisy,"[142] but it was also meant to serve as an introduction to the comedy itself, though this fact has seldom been grasped because the text appears to be concerned with expanding on the assertion in his first Discourse that the Arts and Sciences have not contributed to the purification of morals.

Barber and Forman observe that the Préface also previews ideas that Rousseau will soon develop in his Discourse

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sur l'origine de l'inégalité as well as serving as an advance guard for the future Romantic rebellion against the denaturization of man by the materialist movement and the rise of capitalism. He also notes that embedded within the text is Rousseau's most basic fear: invisibility; and that this fear is the cause of his paranoia, which is already apparent in this early writing. More importantly, this work is autobiographical in nature and is intended to present its author as a figure unjustly assaulted by friends and foes alike.

It is the autobiographical aspect that concerns me in this discussion of Rousseau's _Préface_ to his _Narcisse_. Scherer, finding that the facts contradict Rousseau's conclusion that _Narcisse_ failed, suggests that we should seach for the reason "moins dans un échec qui est loin d'être évident que dans l'attitude de Jean-Jacques Rousseau."[143] Reading Rousseau's _Préface_ from this point of view, I found it to be less a prelude to his second _Discours_ than an elaborate confession and self-justification. Rousseau must have been aware that his behavior at the café de Procope would soon become common knowledge. It is my position that his _Préface_ is an attempt to excuse it while openly admitting that he deliberately sabotaged the premiere of _Narcisse_. Note his explanation:

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> Il me falloit une épreuve pour achever la connoissance de moi-même, et je l'ai faite sans balancer. 144

Just what sort of test was it that required that he threaten any hopes of _Narcisse_ or any future play of his being performed by the Comédie-Française? I believe that all of the remarks presented in his _Préface_ up to this point are preliminary arguments intended to reveal the motives behind and the justification for these actions. He knew, after the furor over his first _Discours_, that it would be impossible for him to pursue a theatrical career without being accused of hypocrisy. Such attacks had already begun after the success of his _Devin du village_. This is the reason he chose to present his comedy anonymously. But somewhere along the line he must have seen this as an opportunity to put his own integrity to the test.

In the first half of the _Préface_, Rousseau asserts that he is not an enemy of the arts, but that they have been abused, and it is through their abuse that morality has suffered. The arts, like the sciences, should be the province of seekers after truth. Such men are rare, but they are worthy practitioners:

> S'il reste quelque difficulté à ma justification, j'ose le dire hardiment ce n'est vis-à-vis ni du public ni de mes adversaries; c'est vis-à-vis de moi seul: car ce n'est qu'en m'observant moi-même que je puis juger si je dois me compter dans le petit nombre, et si mon ame est en état de soutenir le faix des exercices littéraires. 145

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Rousseau believes himself to be one of the elite, the precious few who care only for truth. But he isn't certain. How can he test his own integrity? How can he prove to himself and to the world that he is not driven by amour-propre, that he does not care what others think of him, that he does not even care whether he succeeds or not? The answer comes to him in a flash: he will deliberately destroy his career by announcing to the world--to the famous men known to frequent the Café de Procope--that the play is worthless and that he is its author.

Does this mean that he must henceforth abandon the arts? On the contrary. The fact that he passed the test is his proof of his worthiness to pursue them. Rousseau goes to great lengths to explain in his Préface that it was never his desire, despite the corruption of society, that the sciences--"soit que les sciences y aient contribué ou non"--should disappear. "C'est une autre question dans laquelle je me suis positivement déclaré pour la négative."[146] Abandoning the arts and sciences will only leave the people vulnerable to worse evils. If one cannot cure the diseased, one can at least protect those still unaffected.

> Car premiérement, puisqu'un peuple vicieux ne revient jamais à la vertu, il ne s'agit pas de rendre bons ceux qui ne le sont plus, mais de conserver tels ceux qui ont le bonheur de l'être. 147

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Rousseau suggests that the solution lies in the knowledge that "les mêmes causes qui ont corrompu les peuples servent quelquefois à prévenir une plus grande corruption." As Starobinski has pointed out, Rousseau's solution--one he will apply to his politics as well--is to cure from within, to turn the disease's virus into its cure in the same way that smallpox, for example, was eradicated: by applying the bacillus in a form that both infects the patient and cures the disease by displacing it with a less noxious bacillus. His solution is an example of what Starobinski has termed "the antidote in the poison."[148] Rousseau argues that if the Arts and Sciences do not preserve virtue, at least they preserve its semblance.

> Ce simulacre est une certaine douceur de moeurs qui supplée quelquefois à leur pureté, une certaine apparence d'ordre qui prévient l'horrible confusion, une certaine admiration des belles choses qui empêche les bonnes de tomber tout- à-fait dans l'oubli. 149

The very fact that Vice needs to disguise itself as Virtue is proof that Virtue still has power. And if Vice wears a mask, it is not to achieve the same ends as Hypocrisy, which wants to betray, "mais pour s'ôter sous cette aimable et sacrée effigie l'horreur qu'il a de lui-même quand il se voit à découvert."[150] In this way, virtue is at least not completely abandoned. Maintaining a semblance of decency and virtue requires the arts--particularly music and theatre:

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> Lorsqu'il n'y a plus de moeurs, il ne faut songer qu'à la police; et l'on sait assez que la Musique et les Spectacles en sont un des plus importans objets. 151

Theatre can not make people virtuous, but it can distract them from committing worse crimes. In this way an author is a public benefactor:

> Je m'estimerois trop heureux d'avoir tous les jours une Pièce à faire siffler, si je pouvois à ce prix contenir pendant deux heures les mauvais desseins d'un seul des Spectateurs. 152

Such was the test he imposed on himself. He wanted his play to be hissed, but it was not. When his _Discours sur les sciences et les arts_ brought him literary fame which enabled his _Devin du village_ to be produced, he put himself to the test by refusing to dress as a successful composer. Instead he presented himself to the King and the Court as a pauper. He did more: he refused a royal pension. Having passed this test, he set himself a more rigorous one:

> Après avoir reconnu la situation de mon ame dans les succès littéraires, il me restoit à l'examiner dans les revers. Je sais maintenant qu'en penser, et je puis mettre le public au pire. Ma Pièce a eu le sort qu'elle méritoit et que j'avois prévu; mais, à l'ennui près qu'elle m'a causé, je suis sorti de la représentation bien plus content de moi et à plus juste titre que si elle eût réussi. 153

Rousseau concludes that since he has passed these tests, he, more than anyone, has earned the right to write books and compose poems and music. He declares that he will continue to do so until the moment when the public "remarquent en un mot que l'amour de la réputation me

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fasse oublier celui de la vertu,"[154] a moment Rousseau doubts will ever come.

The closing of his Narcisse did not dampen Rousseau's desire to compose and write for the theatre, as many have supposed. He continued, as he said he would, to write books, plays and libretti and compose poems and music. Among the theatrical works he would later take on is a form, until then rarely attempted in France: a prose tragedy titled La Mort de Lucrèce. He would also write a scēne lyric entitled Pygmalion, which for the first time introduced lyric melodrama to the theatre and, along with his Julie, oũ la nouvelle Hēloïse, inspired the younger European dramatic poets of his age to launch the Romantic movement.

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Notes

1. _Confessions_, OC 1:287.

2. J. M. Cohen, tr. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, _The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau_, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1953), 110.

3. Arnold Hauser, _The Social History of Art_, 4 Vols. (New York: Vintage Books, 1958) 3:33.

4. Marvin Carlson, _Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century_, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998) 62.

5. Arnold Hauser, _The Social History of Art_, 28.

6. Marcel Arland, "Preface" to Marivaux, _Thêâtre complet_, (Paris: Bibliotēque de la Plēiade, 1949), XVIII-XIX.

7. Ibid, LI.

8. Oscar Mandel, Introduction to _Seven Comedies by Marivaux_, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 3.

9. Marcel Arland, "Preface" to Marivaux, _Thêâtre complet_, LI.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. _Confessions_, OC 1:113.

14. Ibid, 1:115.

15. Dena Goodman, _The Republic of Letters_, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 53.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid, 96.

18. _Confessions_, OC 1:342.

19. Rousseau, "Avertissement" to _L'Engagement tēmēraire_, OC 2:877.

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20. Rousseau, L'Engagement téméraire, OC 2:881.

21. Marivaux, La Second suprise de l'amour, Théâtre complet, 553-554.

22. Jacques Scherer, notes to L'Engagement téméraire, OC 2:1847.

23. L'Engagement téméraire, OC 2:882.

24. Ibid, 2:882-883.

25. Confessions, OC, 1:342.

26. Rousseau, "Avertissment" to L'Engagement téméraire, OC 2:877.

27. Maurice Cranston, Jean-Jacques, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), 207.

28. Carlson, Voltaire, 68-69.

29. Daniel Gerould points out in his introduction to Gallant and Libertine : "Nine of the ten plays in this collecton . . . were originally presented on society stages by amateur actors for select audiences." Daniel Gerould, ed. and tr., Gallant and Libertine: Eighteenth-Century French Divertissements and Parades, (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1983), 8.

30. Jacques Truchet, "Introduction" to Théâtre du XVIIIe siècle, 2 vols. (Paris: Bibliotêque de la Plêiade, 1972), 1:XX.

31. Carlson, Voltaire, 9.

32. Ibid, 53.

33. Jacques Truchet, "Introduction" to Théâtre du XVIIIe siècle, 1:XX. .

34. Cranston, Jean-Jacques, 223.

35. Ibid.

36. Confessions, OC 1:346.

37. Ibid, 1:287.

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38. Ibid, 1:288.

39. Ibid.

40. Carlson, Voltaire, 53.

41. Jean Rousset, editor's note to Rousseau's Lettre à d'Alembert, OC 5:1316, n.3 for p. 18.

42. Lettre à d'Alembert, OC 5:17-18.

43. Ibid, 19.

44. Confessions, OC 1:25.

45. Ibid, 1:367.

46. Rousseau, Fragment d'une Epitre à M. Bordes, OC 2:1144.

47. Confessions, OC 1:342.

48. Jacques Scherer, notes to Arlequin amoureux malgré lui, OC 2:1850.

49. Gerould, Gallant and Libertine, 7.

50. Jacques Scherer, notes to Arlequin amoureux malgré lui, OC 2:1850.

51. Ibid, 1851

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid, 1852.

54. Rousseau, Arlequin amoureux malgré lui, OC 2:939.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid, 941.

57. Confessions, OC 1:53-54.

58. Ibid, 54.

59. Ibid, 57.

60. Ibid.

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61. Ribbons seem to have been a weakness of Rousseau's. While in Turin in 1728, Rousseau would, in turn, steal a pink and silver ribbon from his employer, the Comtesse de Vercellis, and accuse a servant girl named Marion of the theft. Marion was dismissed. Rousseau speculates that: "il n'y a pas d'apparence qu'elle ait aprés cela trouvé facilement à se bien placer." (OC 1:85) The injustice he caused her haunted him the rest of his life. (Confessions, OC 1:84-87).

62. Rousseau, Confessions, OC 1:60.

63. Ibid, 99.

64. Ibid, 101.

65. Arlequin amoureux malgré lui, OC 2:935.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid, 936.

68. Ibid.

69. Confessions, OC 1:134.

70. Ibid, 137.

71. Arlequin amoureux malgré lui, OC 2:948.

72. Ibid, 954.

73. Gerould, Gallant and Libertine, 15.

74. D'Alembert quoted by Rousseau, Lettre à d'Alembert, OC 5:5.

75. Ibid, 113.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. L'Oracle (1740) was an erotic one-act fairy comedy by Saint-Foix, often reprised during the period Rousseau resided in Paris. See 5:113, n. 6

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80. Letter 183 "Rousseau à Toussaint-Pierre Lenieps" dated 22 October 1752, CC 2:199

81. Letter 191 "Rousseau à Toussaint-Pierre Lenieps" dated 16 January 1753, CC 2:210.

82. See appendix no. A85 Traité fait entre J.J. Rousseau de Genève, et Pissot Libre à Paris, CC 2:322.

83. Letter 192 "Rousseau à Noël-Jacques Pissot," dated 13 February 1753, CC 2:211.

84. Letter 193 "Rousseau à Françoise-Louise-Eléonore de La Tour, baronne de Warens" dated 13 February 1753, CC 2:212.

85. Confessions, OC 1:387.

86. Or La Noue. Plêiade editors B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond refer to him as Joseph-Baptiste Sauvé, called La Noue, (OC 1:1938), R. A. Leigh refers to him as Jean-Baptiste-Simon Sauvé, called La Noue. (See Letter 188, CC 2:207) Marvin Carlson refers to him as Jean Lanoue (Voltaire, 55.)

87. Carlson, Voltaire, 55.

88. As quoted in Frederick Hawkins, The French Stage in the Eighteenth Century, 2 Vols., (New York, Haskell House, 1888) 1:344

89. Ibid, 1:348-349.

90. Carlson, Voltaire, 56.

91. Ibid, 88.

92. Jacques Scherer, notes on Rousseau's Narcisse, OC 2:1865.

93. Carlson, Voltaire, 10.

94. James L. Schorr cites Frêdêric Deloffre's study of Le Petit-Maître corrigé (Genève: Lille 1955) and notes that pages 44-88 list chronologically fifty-nine plays on the subject of the petit-maître. Cited in James L. Schorr, "Les Petits-Maîtres and La Critique by Justus van Effen," Studies on Voltaire & the Eighteenth Century, (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1990) 278:1 n.2.

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95. Schorr, "Les Petits-Maîtres and La Critique, 1-10.

96. Justus van Effen, James L. Schorr ed., Le Misanthrope LXXXI in Studies on Voltaire & the Eighteenth Century (1986) 248:362.
Van Effen's Le Misanthrope, first published 19 May 1711, was inspired by the Spectator of Addison and Steel, launched in March 1711. Schorr calls it "the first 'spectator' in French." (Ibid, IX).

97. Justus van Effen, Les Petits-Maîtres, in Schorr, "Les Petits-Maîtres and La Critique," 19.

98. Ibid.

99. Justus van Effen, La Critique de la comédie des petits- maîtres, in Schorr, "Les Petits-Maîtres and La Critique," 75-77.

100. Schorr, "Les Petits-Maîtres and La Critique," 6.

101. Carlson, Voltaire, 18.

102. Voltaire quoted in "Avertissement pour la présente édition," L'Indiscret, OEuvres complètes de Voltaire, (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1877) 1:243.

103. Voltaire quoted in "Avertissement pour la présente édition," L'Indiscret, 1:243.

104. Quoted in Schorr, 2 note 6.

105. Walter Rex, "Sexual metamorphoses on stage in mid-eighteenth-century Paris: the theatrical background of Rousseau's Narcisse," Studies on Voltaire & the Eighteenth Century, (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1990) 278, 269-270. See also on page 270 note 5.

106. Rousseau, Narcisse, OC 2:977.

107. Ibid, 1006.

108. Rex, "Sexual metamorphoses," 267.

109. Jacques Scherer, notes on Narcisse, OC 2:1860.

110. Rex, "Sexual metamorphoses," 272.

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111. Ibid, 273.

112. Grimm et al, Correspondence littēraire, 1:198-99.

113. Ibid, 2:135.

114. Ibid, 138.

115. See Leigh's notes b. and c. concerning Rousseau's letter to Voltaire (letter 149 dated 30 January 1750) in CC 2:125.

116. Ibid, 123-124.

117. Hawkins, The French Stage, 1:400. See also Grimm, Correspondence littēraire, 2:138.

118. Rousseau, Narcisse, OC 2:980.

119. Ibid, 977.

120. Ibid, 978.

121. Ibid, 992.

122. Ibid, 999.

123. Arlequin amoureux malgrē lui, OC 2:935-936.

124. Rousseau, Epitre ā M. de'l'Etang, OC 2:1151.

125. Jacques Scherer, notes to Narcisse, OC 2:1863.

126. Letter 187 "Rousseau ā François Mussard," dated 17 December 1752, CC 2:203.

127. Confessions, OC 1:387-388.

128. Cited by Leigh in Letter 188 "Rousseau ā Jean-BaptisteSimon Sauvē, dit de La Noue," CC 2:208, note b.

129. Ibid, 207.

130. Jacques Scherer, "Introductions: Thēâtre," OC 2:LXXXVII.

131. Confessions, OC 1:388.

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132. Ibid.

133. Grimm, Correspondance littéraire, 2:318-319.

134. Ibid, 319.

135. Ibid, 320.

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid, 321

138. Ibid.

139. Ibid.

140. Ibid, 321-322

141. Benjamin R. Barber and Janis Forman, tr. and ed., "Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Preface to Narcisse," Political Theory (Stage Publications, Inc., November 1978) 538.

142. Ibid.

143. Jacques Scherer, "Introductions: Théâtre," OC 2:LXXXVII.

144. Rousseau, Préface to Narcisse, OC 2:973.

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid, 971.

147. Ibid, 971-972.

148. Jean Starobinski, "The Antidote in the Poison: The Thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau," Blessings in Disguise,passim 118-168.

149. Rousseau, Préface to Narcisse, OC 2:972, footnote.

150. Ibid.

151. Ibid, 973.

152. Ibid.

153. Ibid.

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154. Ibid, 974.

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Chapter Four

The Evolution of a Republican: *La Découverte du Nouveau Monde*, *Les Prisonniers de guerre*, and *La Mort de Lucrèce*

In the face of all of Rousseau's attacks on French culture, it may be difficult to believe that Rousseau loved France--especially French theatre--all his life. In Book Five of *Les Confessions*, which he began at the age of fifty when it seemed to him that all of France was bent on his destruction, he writes of the French: "Je les aime en dêpit de moi quoiqu'ils me maltraitent."[1] In his early theatrical works, Rousseau's francophilia is clearly evident. We have already encountered it in his *Muses galantes* and his *Fêtes de Ramire*, both influenced by his adoration of Rameau and Voltaire who championed French culture. His adoration is even more evident in the first two of the three works I am about to examine. In these three works I will trace the movement away from Rousseau's early French chauvinism and towards his Genevan republicanism. In the process, Rousseau evolved from imitator of Rameau and Fuzelier and Voltaire in his *Dêcouverte du Nouveau Monde* to seasoned author with his *Prisonniers de guerre* to innovator with his unfinished prose tragedy *la Mort de Lucrèce*. In these three

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theatrical works Rousseau's view of France also progressed from starry-eyed idolater living in Chambéry to sober realist working in Venice to revolutionary alien residing in Paris.

Before we continue, I must remind the reader that since e the approach of this dissertation is to examine Rousseau's theatrical works in terms of the major themes that are a part of Rousseau's overall body of work, the structure of this discourse requires that I go back in time in each chapter to show the development of the themes that each group of plays reflects. Such is the case here with what can be called his political plays. What concerns me here is examining those theatrical works which reflect the progress towards Rousseau's political and spiritual turnabout--that period in time when he began to question his faith in his adopted country, France, and his adopted religion, Catholicism, and finally to turn his back on both to return to the Geneva he had abandoned and its Calvinist creed.

Rousseau and France

Although a Genevan citizen by birth and a republican by conviction, Rousseau secretly nurtured a love for all things French. In his Confessions Rousseau blames his francophilia on his early love of French literature and history:

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> mes lectures continuées et toujours tirées de la même nation nourrissoient mon affection pour elle, et m'en firent enfin une passion aveugle que rien n'a pu surmonter. 2

This secret love was concealed from all, even during his "reform" when he hurled contempt upon the French:

> Ce qu'il y avoit de plaisant ētoit qu'ayant honte d'un penchant si contraire ā mes maximes je n'osois l'avouer ā personne, et je raillois les François de leurs dēfaites, tandis que le coeur m'en saignoit plus qu'ā eux. 3

When war broke out in 1732 and Sardinia joined forces with France to invade Austria, Rousseau's interest in France's fate became personal. Since Mme de Warens was still living on the pension of the King of Sardinia, the outcome of the war would affect Rousseau's future as well. Rousseau recalled watching the French troops marching past her house on their way to invade Milan, "de sorte que je me rassasiois du plaisir d'aller les voir passer."[4] Rousseau's imagination had already been excited by the exploits of great French military heroes from reading Brantôme's <u>les Grands Capitains</u>. "A chaque Rēgiment qui passoit," Rousseau recalls, "je croyois revoir ces fameuses bandes noires qui jadis avoient tant fait d'exploits en Piēmont."[5] As the war progressed, he awaited news of his fate, "et plus bête que l'ane de la fable je m'inquietois beaucoup pour savoir de quel maitre j'aurois l'honneur de porter le bât."[6] The saddle that Rousseau was to wear was one of his own devising and when it later

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became unbearable, he shook it off. But in 1739, the year he began his Découverte du Nouveau Monde, Rousseau's love for France and for her theatre was at its height.

La Découverte du Nouveau Monde

Although Rousseau claims in his Confessions that in 1741 this opera, which the musician David had faintly praised, was "jeté au feu" at Lyons, the manuscript of the libretto has survived intact. The libretto had actually been written two years earlier. The actual date is important because it allows us to grasp the relationship between the text and Rousseau's political views at that time. The historical events taking place at the time served to inspire Rousseau. The clue to the opera's date is found in the prologue. Europe enters and laments the loss of her "deux jalouses soeurs," America and Asia, who have both fallen from their former glory. "Leur Lustre est effacé, leur pouvoir est détruit."[7] Suddenly Minerva and Destiny, with France seated between them in a chariot, descend into the hall of the Palais de la Gloire.[8]

> MINERVA and DESTINY
> Tes voeux sont entendus. Ne verses plus de larmes;
> Tu vas voir succéder la Paix au bruit des armes.
> Mars pretend vainement prolonger tes malheurs
> Ta fille prendra soin d'enchainer ses fureurs.
>
> (Ils lui presentent la France.)

The prologue refers to the year 1739, when France was at peace and perceived as the supreme power in Europe.

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By 1740 her power was in jeopardy as France entered the War of the Austrian Succession. It was a ruinous war for France which was urged upon Louis XV by his notorious mistress Marie Anne de Nesle. France had been at peace since November 1738, when the War of the Polish Succession ended with the Treaty of Vienna, but was now supporting a war between Austria and Russia against Turkey which finally came to an end in 1739 with the Treaty of Belgrade. France had achieved considerable prestige in Europe, having come to terms with Spain and having convinced one of Walpole's ministers, the Duke of Newcastle, that France would someday dominate Europe, and perhaps even America.[9] During this time France and Spain, the principal beneficiaries of the Treaty of Vienna, had joined in naval operations along the coast of Spain. This alliance resulted in a renewed interest in the discovery of the New World in which France was now perceived as a part of Columbus's expedition, re-interpreted as no longer just Spanish, but European.

Rousseau was swept up in this tide of fervor for France as the standardbearer of Western culture. It was in 1739, when France was totally at peace and seemed at the height of her power, that Rousseau is believed to have written the libretto of his *Découverte du Nouveau Monde* while still living at la Charmettes.[10] He could easily have written the music between then and 1741 when we know he

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was in Lyons, which was the only period that Rousseau, as he claims,[11] could have shown his opera to M. Bordes, the Abbé de Mably and the musician David at the same time.

The New World and the Noble Savage

Rousseau's Découverte grew out of a long and ever-evolving European interest in America as the home of the Noble Savage. In Stelio Cro's study The Noble Savage (1990) he informs us that two centuries of exploration of the New World prior to the Eighteenth Century furnished Europe with stories of the natural goodness of the native Americans to such a degree that a radical new philosophy was born.[12] In his L'Amérique et le rêve exotique (1934), Gilbert Chinard characterized the newly emerging ethos as a substitution for the rejected myths and religious convictions which had sustained the eras prior to the Enlightenment. He writes:

> Le bon indien va paraître reunir en lui toute les vertus antiques et chrétiennes, c'est de l'Amerique et des Isles que l'on va rever et c'est des récits de voyages que proviennent directement toutes les utopies qui abondent avant Rousseau, et dont Rousseau s'inpire. 13

Rousseau had found the idea of the natural goodness of primitive civilizations in works such as François Fénelon's Aventures de Télémaque (1699) and in Prévost's l'Histoire de M. Cleveland. (1731)[14] In Rousseau's poem Le Verger de Madame La Baronne de Warens,[15] written the same year

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as La Découverte (1739), are found the following lines:

> Quelquefois m'amusant jusqu'à la fiction,
> Télémaque et Sethos me donnent leur leçon,
> Ou bien dans Cléveland j'observe la nature
> Qui se montre à mes yeux touchante et toujours pure.

Rousseau would later partly base the character of Emile on Fénelon's Télémaque. Interest in the American colonies and natives would grow throughout the eighteenth century. In 1767 Voltaire's short novel L'Huron, ou l'Ingénu appeared. It told the tale of a virtuous Huron brought to France and confounded by European customs and Christian theology. The following year Marmontel would rework Voltaire's novel into the play Le Huron and present it at the Théâtre Italien.

As early as 1721 the Parisian stage had been employing the figure of the Noble Savage, a primitive with little or no government or organized religion but with natural virtue and inalienable rights, as a useful weapon in a growing movement against a tyranical Monarchy and Church. The corruption of Western culture was played against the appealing figure of the savage raised in ignorance but naturally wise. Such was the theme of Delisle de la Drevetière's Arlequin sauvage (1721), in which a savage Harlequin becomes the dispenser of ruthless justice against French manners, administered ad baculum. Marivaux gave another twist to the subject in l'Ile des esclaves (1725), a harleqinade dealing with some ancient Athenian citizens

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and their slaves shipwrecked on a Greek island governed by rebel slaves who have killed their masters. In Marivaux's comedy, masters and slaves are forced to change roles and names.

Rousseau's Découverte du Nouveau Monde, however, is not in the spirit of these comedies. Rousseau's models for this opera were not Marivaux, Delisle or other critics of French culture, but Rameau and Voltaire--not the Voltaire of Candide who would emerge later, but the Voltaire of Alzire--Voltaire, the scourge of l'infâme, and the defender of French culture and Christian virtue. Rousseau's hatred for these two men would be born a decade later; now, at age thirty, he still held them as idols. Rousseau's interest in the Discovery of the New World sprang from the fact that this historical event lent itself to a dramatic meeting of European high culture and American primitivism at the peak of what Rousseau (and many others) believed to be Europe's Golden Age. The historical situation allowed Rousseau to dramatize a common link between these two worlds, a link that had been dramatized many times: love. It is not, of course, Christian love, but romantic love that Rousseau portrays, which was in keeping with the growing anti-Christian spirit of the age, which ennobled the Pagan.

Rousseau's three-act opera, set on the island of Guyana on the day that Columbus first sets foot in the New World,

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begins with a traditional prologue peopled with both human characters and abstractions. Continents, nations, gods, and metaphysical concepts celebrate France as both conqueror and peacemaker. After Minerva and Destiny present France to Europe as the one nation able to restore peace to the world and prestige to Europe, Minerva responds to Europe's skepticism by first describing France's ferocity when enraged:

> MINERVE
> La France à ton repos ne fut jamais contraire;
> Et quand ses ennemis vaincus dans cent combats
> Eprouvoient sa juste Colère,
> Son coeur pleuroit le sang que répandoit son bras.

Then, in a gentler tone, Minerva presents France as peacemaker:

> France, étens tes bienfaits sur la terre et sur l'onde,
> Aprens à l'Univers par tes soins généreux
> Qu'il est moins glorieux de conquerir le Monde
> Qu'il n'est doux de le rendre heureux.16

This mild speech is followed by Destiny's none-too-veiled threat to France's enemies that war is waiting in the wings for any nation so foolhardy as to oppose France's will and destiny:

> LE DESTIN
> Goute en paix les faveurs que le Ciel te prepare
> Ton sort est remis en ses mains.
> S'il reste en tes climats quelque peuple barbare.
>
> Elle ira le dompter, et par un soin plus rare
> Porter ses douces moeurs dans leurs coeurs inhumains.

According to Jacques Scherer, the "peuple barbare" were the Corsicans.[17] But the threat clearly has a broader

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meaning in terms of the opera's overall theme: that a virtuous nation (such as Rousseau perceived France to be at this time) has the right, destiny, and duty to conquer the savage world. Rousseau's conviction that right is on the side of virtue has profound political implications which he will later expand upon in his Contrat social. But even before that book, the seeds of this idea had already been planted in his mind, as this and the next two plays will demonstrate. As in most operas of the period, conquest is sublimated into an erotic game. France steps forward and asks the people to celebrate France's glory via a spectacle of dance and play.

> LA FRANCE . . .
> Montrez-vous tels qu'auprès des Belles
> Vous seduisez les plus cruelles,
> Quand le Heros Guerrier s'y change en tendre Amant.

This conquering by love is also the theme of Les Indes galantes, and ties its four entrées together. But for Rousseau love meant more than mere gallantry; a nation's existence was at stake. Not only is Guyana threatened from within by the strife between Digizé and Carime, but their jealous rivalry over the Chief also threatens to destroy their nation from without when Alvar, the Spaniard, falls in love with Carime, who is bent on betraying the royal couple. In the end, it is not love but honor that resolves the conflict. Columbus's generous admiration

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for the Chief's courage and willingness to sacrifice himself to save his people allows the opera's happy ending.

Rameau/Fuzelier and *Les Indes galantes*

I have already shown Rameau's impact on Rousseau's *Les Muses galantes* and the uses Rousseau made of *Les Indes galantes* in its love scenes. But before writing *Les Muses*, Rousseau had already written *La Découverte*, drawing on elements from the "Turc généreux" (1st entrée) "Les Incas du Pérou" (2nd entrée) and the "Les Sauvages" (4th entrée) of *Les Indes galantes*. It was a work that inspired not only Rousseau but, as we shall see, Voltaire as well. A number of *Les Indes*'s plot elements were used by both men. A synopsis of *Les Indes galantes* is as follows:

In "Le Turc généreux," the Pasha Osman is in love with Emilie, whom he has abducted. Emilie believes that her lover, Valère, has died trying to defend her honor. When Valère is suddenly washed ashore from a shipwreck, Emilie is overjoyed to see him until she learns that he is the prisoner of Osman who, having overheard their vows of love, accuses them of treason. Emilie asks Osman how love can be a crime. The climactic scene reads:

> OSMAN (à Emilie)
> Vous l'accusez en voulant le défendre
> Vous prétendez en vain cacher votre embarras,
> Et retenir les pleurs que je vous vois répandre.
> Vous cédez au penchant de votre coeur trop tendre:
> Ah! du mien je suivrai les lois,
> Je saurai me venger ainsi que je le dois.

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EMILIE (ã Osman)
Le barbare!

VALERE (ã Osman)
J'attends l'arrêt de ta colère.

EMILIE (tremblante)
Juste ciel! quel moment!

OSMAN (présentant Emilie ã Valère)
Reçois de moi, Valère, Emilie et la liberté.

Osman, it turns out, had once been Valère's slave, but his young master had set him free, "et s'efforce aujourd'hui," Osman explains, "d'imiter sa magnificence."

In "Les Incas du Pérou," the second entrée of Rameau's Les Indes Galantes, Rousseau found even more material for his opera La Découverte du Nouveau Monde. In this land of volcanoes, earthquakes, and burning sun, metaphors for erotic passions abound. Once again we find the love triangle of two natives and a foreigner. Phani, the Incan princess, has fallen in love with Carlos, a Spanish Conquistador. Her love arouses the jealous passions of the High Priest, Huascar. Since he cannot possess Phani he schemes to have her thrown into the volcano to appease the angry gods he claims she has incensed. Carlos has his soldiers kill all those involved in the ceremony and then gives Huascar a worse punishment, he is forced to consent to their marriage. Fuzelier's libretto provides a powerful climax to the act. In Scene 8, Huascar is left alone on stage:

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(Le volcan se rallume, et le tremblement de terre recommence.)
HUASCAR
La flamme se rallume encore.
Loin de l'éviter je l'implore...
Abîmes embrasés, j'ai trahi les autels.
Exercez l'emploi du tonnerre,
Vengez les droits des immortels,
Déchirez le sein de la terre
Sous mes pas chancelants!
Renversez, dispersez ces arides montagnes,
Lancez vos feux dans ces triste campagnes,
Tombez sur moi, rochers brûlants.
(Le volcan vomit des rochers enflammés qui écrasent le criminel Huascar.)

In a final act of contrition, justice, and courage, the savage Incan priest condemns himself to a more horrifying death than any European court could devise.

"Les Sauvages" was added to Les Indes galantes after its opening. The addition was well received and established the opera's success. The setting of "Les Sauvages" is a forest in the North American west where the territories of Spain border those of France. As the act opens, the ceremony of the Great Pipe of Peace is about to begin. Chief Adario is disturbed that his sweetheart, Zima, is being wooed by two European officers, a Frenchman named Damon and a Spaniard named Alvar. I have already discussed their opening scene in my chapter on Rousseau's Muses galantes. After the Frenchman and the Spaniard quarrel and attempt to seduce Zima, Adario leaps out of hiding to defend her. The stage directions read: "Zima, charmée de son transport, lui présente la main." (I,4) The scene continues:

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ZIMA
C'est l'amant que mon coeur vous préfere.

ALVAR
(les apercevant)
Osez-vous prononcer un arrêt si fatal!

ZIMA
Dans nos forêts on est sincère.

When the passionate Spaniard challenges the Chief, Adario faces him courageously. Damon gallantly defuses the situation and the two officers, realizing they have lost, leave the lovers to themselves. Before their final duet, Zima tells Adario:

ZIMA
De l'amour le plus tendre éprouvez la douceur!
Je vous dois la préférence.
De vous à vos rivaux je vois la différence:
L'un s'abandonne à la fueur
Et l'autre perd mon coeur avec indifférence.
Nous ignorons ce calme et cette violence.
Sur nos bords l'amour vole, et prévient nos désirs.
Dans notre paisible retraite
On n'entend murmurer que l'onde et les zéphirs;
Jamais l'écho n'y répète
De regrets ni de soupirs.

It is in this entrée that the native custom of polygamy is discussed and, as in Rousseau's _Découverte_, rejected by the lovers as unnatural. It was a position in accordance with the neoclassical rules of _bienséance_. The contrasts between the natural and the artificial, honesty and corruption also animate Voltaire's _Alzire_.

Voltaire and _Alzire_

Rousseau had long admired Voltaire's _Alzire_, which

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premiered in 1736, a year after Les Indes galantes. In a letter[18] written to Mme de Warens from Grenoble 13 September 1737 Rousseau recounts his reactions to a performance of Alzire he had attended there:[19]

> La mienne fut fort dérangée hier soir au spectacle. On représenta Alzire, mal à la vérité; mais je ne laissai pas d'y être ému, jusqu'à perdre la respiration; mes palpitations augmenterent étonnamment, et je crains de m'en sentir quelque temps.

The letter is important not only as evidence of Rousseau's admiration for Voltaire's Alzire but as a further testament to the theatre's emotional impact on Rousseau. Rousseau goes on in the letter to explore why theatre seems to affect him so powerfully, while leaving others unmoved:

> Pourquoi, Madame, y a-t-il des coeurs sensibles au grand, au sublime, au pathétique, pendant que d'autres ne semblent faits que pour ramper dans la bassesse de leurs sentimens?

His answer anticipates the theories of the German Romantics:

> la fortune semble faire à tout cela une espéce de compensation; à force d'élever ceux-ci, elle cherche à les mettre de niveau avec la grandeur des autres: y réussit-elle ou non?

Clearly Rousseau saw himself as possessing one of those elite souls which could be deeply moved by great poetry. In fact, the event so upset him that he concludes the letter with a reluctant vow:

> Cet accident m'a forcé de renoncer désormais au tragique, jusqu'au rétablissement de ma santé. Me voila privé d'un plaisir qui m'a bien coûté des larmes en ma vie.

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Alzire was a play that Rousseau never forgot. In a long and admiring letter to Voltaire written 18 August 1756, responding to Voltaire's poems Sur la Loi naturelle and Sur le Désastre de Lisbonne, Rousseau addresses Voltaire as "l'auteur d'Alzire." At this time Rousseau was no doubt reminding Voltaire, whose optimism and faith in God's goodness had been shaken by the tragic Lisbon earthquake the year before, that he once wrote a play praising Christian virtues.

Indeed, Alzire was a testament to the Christian virtues of forgiveness and mercy. The play is set in Lima, Peru during the Spanish occupation. It is not based on any historical incident but makes use of local color for its effect. The drama grows out of the clash between the Christian and Incan cultures and concerns a fanatical Christian Governor of Peru named Guzman and his love for the Incan princess Alzire whom he converts to the Catholic faith and marries. Alzire's former lover, the Incan chief Zamore, whom Alzire believes to have died in prison, is released only to find that his beloved has married the fanatical Guzman. In the final act, Guzman and Zamore fight to the death and Guzman is mortally wounded. Feeling death approach, Guzman is suddenly filled with Christian repentance and not only frees Zamore but bestows upon him the soon-to-be-widowed Alzire. The play, which opened at the Comédie-Française 27 January 1736, was a sensation

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and ran for twenty nights. Its theme of Christian redemption seemed to absolve Voltaire of the stigma of being a foe of the Church.

The Rameau/Fuzelier opera contained a number of dramatic elements that Voltaire appears to have adapted for his *Alzire*. In "Le Turc généreux," the situation is somewhat similar to Voltaire's *Alzire*. Here, of course, it is the barbarian, and not the fanatical Christian who rises above his jealousy. Voltaire may also have borrowed the idea of Osman's debt of gratitude to Valère. In *Alzire* Guzman's father, Don Alvarez, owes his life to Zamore. For honor's sake Guzman owes Zamore his freedom; but he ignobly withholds it until the very end.

In addition, Voltaire probably got the idea of the setting and the love interest for his *Alzire* from "Les Incas du Pérou," with its love affair between a Spaniard and an Incan princess. Here, too, was the theme of religious corruption. Like Huascar, Guzman uses his religious power as a club to beat the conquered into submission. Also like Huascar, he repents and sees the error of his ways before he dies. On the other hand, Voltaire uses the events to present far more profound ideas. He understands the nobility of Zamore's faith and shows his refusal to renounce it as an act of courage and integrity. Finally, Voltaire demonstrates his religious tolerance and portrays the Spaniards as superior

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to the Incas only when, as Christians, they demonstrate mercy and forgiveness.

Rousseau drew dramatic ideas from both works. Although he must have been deeply moved by its Christian sentiments, it was not Voltaire's theme that Rousseau borrowed from Alzire, but its love triangle and its sentiments regarding native American culture. In rendering his dialogue for La Découverte, Rousseau reveals his admiration for Voltaire's ideas in Alzire by expressing the same thought. In Alzire (I,1) Alvarez says:

> ALVAREZ
> Nous seuls en ces climats nous sommes les barbares.
> L'Américain, farouche en sa simplicité,
> Nous égale en courage et nous passe en bonté.

In Act 3, Scene 4 of La Découverte, Rousseau's Columbus says almost the same thing:

> COLUMB
> . . . en ce climat sauvage,
> On éprouve autant de courage,
> On y trouve plus de vertu.

As with Huascar and Guzman, the jealousy that consumes Carime in Rousseau's Découverte is also dangerous. But Rousseau shows her crime as far greater, for she plans to sacrifice her nation for the sake of revenge. True to his code, however, Rousseau is loath to allow a real villain into his dream world. Carime is redeemed and brought back from the precipice by the courage of the Chief who is, for Rousseau, the quintessential hero. In this way Rousseau has substituted for Voltaire's Alvarez

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(whom Rousseau must have admired for his virtue and courage) not the Christian Columbus, but the savage Chief. Imbuing his Noble Savage with all the courage and dignity of Alvarez, Rousseau presents to the viewers an image of their forgotten primal virtues in the figure of the great Chief. Even while the nation is terrified by the priests' vision of a great invasion from across the ocean, and while his wife Digizé begs him to flee for their sake, the Chief stands his ground:[20]

> LE CACIQUE
> Moi fuir! leur Cacique! leur Roy!
> Leur Père enfin! l'espères-tu de moi,
> Sur la vaine terreur dont ton esprit se blesse?
> Ah! Digizé que me proposes-tu?
> Un coeur chargé d'une foiblesse,
> Conserveroit-il sa tendresse
> En abandonnant sa vertu?
> Digizé, je chéris le noeud qui nous assemble,
> J'adore tes appas, ils peuvent tout sur moi,
> Mais mon Peuple m'est cher encore autant que toi
> Et la vertu plus que tous deux ensemble.

Here, as in "Les Incas du Pérou," one sees a society filled with fear and trembling. In such a world religion plays a major role; but Rousseau's presentation of religion in a society gone mad is intended to justify its power, while Fuzelier means to question it. It is the purpose of the High Priests in both works to appease Nature's gods. Fuzelier's attitude in this regard is akin to Voltaire's in his Alzire: tyrants of religious dogma hold sway over a people through fear and intimidation.

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Both Huascar and Guzman use their religious power to serve their lust and hide their crimes. By contrast, Rousseau's Grand Prêtre is honest and sincere. He is depicted as a seer in touch with the forces of nature. In times of great terror, he calms his nation by assuming (or perhaps feigning) the power to communicate directly with the gods. Prayers for deliverance and courage are sent up to the gods:

> LE GRAND PRETRE
> Dieux qui veillez sur cet Empire
> Manifestez vos soins, soyez nos protecteurs.
> Bannissez de vaines terreurs;
> Un signe seul vous peut suffire;
> Le vil effroy peut-il fraper des coeurs
> Que vôtre confiance inspire? 21

The Priest's purpose is to provide an ethical base and metaphysical explanation for phenomena beyond human control. In this sense, he is a spiritual brother to Rousseau's Savoyard Vicar, but with greater political power. Rousseau's attitude toward the Chief and the High Priest goes beyond mere respect. They reflect his awe for the dual aspects of the great legislator Moses, the Old Testament figure that Rousseau most admired--as he also admired the Jewish nation Moses led. In one of Rousseau's political fragments titled Des Juifs the following passage appears:

> Les Juifs nous donnent cet étonant spectacle, les loix de Solon, de Numa, de Lycurgue sont mortes, celles de Moyse bien plus antiques vivent toujours. 23

In his article Moïse, législateur . . ., Bronislaw Baczko

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notes that Rousseau's works reflect "deux images de Moïse nettement distinctes et opposées: celle de Moïse 'faiseur des miracles' et celle de Moïse grand législateur."[24] Rousseau already perceives in this early opera that these two aspects of Moses--the great legislator and the magician--are both important and legitimate activities that a primitive legislator requires to lead a savage nation, as Moses led the Jews.

In embracing Moses and the Jews, Rousseau set himself apart from the anti-clerical position of the enlightenment and dared to brave the wrath of its two most formidable leaders, Voltaire and Diderot. In his Dictionnaire philosophique, Voltaire depicted Moses as a religious fanatic who ordered his Levites to slaughter 23,000 of his own people rather than punish his own brother for the sin of the Golden Calf. Voltaire considered the ancient Jews "un petit peuple d'esclaves barbares."[25] In La Mosaïde, a work attributed to Diderot, its author also judged Moses a fanatic but went even farther than Voltaire, portraying his cruelty through pathetic images:

> Hommes, femmes et enfants, tout tombe sous le fer meurtrier des esclaves de Moïse. Le zèle pour leur Dieu les anime, Dieu lui-même les agite; ils ne sont plus des hommes, mais des monstres furieux, insensibles à la vue des membres palpitants et du sang de leurs plus proche parents. . . .Ici coule le sang d'un fils massacré par son père. là fument encore les entrailles d'un père égorgé par son fils; plus loin un époux sanguinaire et dénaturé poignarde du même coup et innocente femme et le fruit malheureux qu'elle porte. 26

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Baczko argues that Voltaire's primary objection concerning the Jews is not anti-Semitic but anti-Judaic.[27] Voltaire believed in supremacy of universal law and considered it a crime for any group to isolate itself from society.

By contrast, it was the Jews' isolation that so impressed Rousseau, who saw a nation's culture as consisting of unique laws and customs. The more ingrained these laws and customs, the more durable the nation:

> Quelle doit être la force d'une legislation capable d'opérer de pareils prodiges, capable de braver les conquêtes, les dispersions, les revolutions, les siécles, capable de survivre aux coutumes, aux loix, ã l'empire de toutes les nations, qui promet enfin par les épreuves qu'elle a soutenues de les soutenir toutes, de vaincre les vicissitudes des choses humaines et de durer autant que le monde? 28

La Découverte also reflects Rousseau's great interest Moses's other image, the "faiseur des miracles." In his Confessions, there is a curious reference:

> Ceux qui ont lu dans les Lettres de la Montagne ma magie de Venise trouveront je m'assure, que j'avois de longue main une grande vocation pour être sorcier.29

Rousseau is referring to his Letter Three[30] in which he states that if the priests of Baal[31] had had the chemist Guillaume-Francois Rouelle (1703-1770) with them, as Elijah had God, "leur bucher eut pris feu de lui-même et Elie eut été pris pour dupe." What Rousseau was referring to was the discovery that the mixture of certain liquids that look like water can, when combined, create explosive results. The Letter goes on to discuss other

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Biblical miracles that modern science can explain or duplicate. What is remarkable about these observations is that he appears to support the use of magic to dupe religious followers. The Letter goes on to ask what would have happened if a scientist with knowledge of chemistry and electricity had appeared in Europe a hundred years ago: "l'eut-on brûlé comme un sorcier, l'eut-on suivi comme un Prophête?"[32]

Of course, there is no evidence that Rousseau engaged in black magic. These passages were written tongue-in-cheek. But, in a sense, Rousseau did believe in sorcery. As we shall see later, in my discussion of La Mort de Lucrèce, Rousseau's attitude toward religion was pragmatic rather than dogmatic. But as I hope to have made clear, it would not be inconsistent with his political philosophy to hold that the use of sorcery could serve a moral purpose for those members of society who were unenlightened and still driven by superstition.

Rousseau will employ magic just this way in his Devin du Village, where Rousseau's facination with the power of sorcery is manifest in the character of the Soothsayer, who uses the villagers' fear of and belief in his fortune-telling powers to coerce the young lovers into living virtuous lives. The theatre being a form of illusion, it seems that what the Soothsayer does with magic, Rousseau wants to do with his Découverte du nouveau

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monde: charm the audience into patriotic zeal through theatrical illusions.

What separates Rousseau's _Dēcouverte du Nouveau Monde_ from _Alzire_ and even from _Les Indes galantes_ is the lengths to which Rousseau has gone to generate, from his age's common sentiment concerning the native American, not an object lesson in humility or religious tolerance but a new nationalistic fervor. It is a work of political propaganda such as might have been created for the court of Louis XIV, or any of the courts of Europe, to sanction their nation's right to plunder the Indies. At a time when the nobility was struggling to wrest power from the crown, and the Regency was setting a new standard of debauchery and creating the rococo style of dainty elegance, Rousseau's almost baroque opera may well have been intended to resurrect a desire for France's lost grandeur. What gives it power as a work of art is the care that Rousseau has taken in creating the world and the characters of the native Americans. It is in the mythic dramatization of the Noble Savage that Rousseau's personal vision shines through. Fuzelier's savages are, at best, sentimental sketches or paler shades of characters lifted from Voltaire and others. For all his use of local color, Voltaire's natives have a sophistication that better reflects the polite world of eighteenth-century Parisian politics than the savage world of sixteenth-century

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America. But Rousseau, in his protrayal of the native Americans, manages to create a more believable New World by allowing us to experience the fear of the loss of their nation. Most eighteenth-century writers used the Savage as a foil to criticize the flaws in their own system of laws and ethics. Rousseau takes his cue from Montesquieu in understanding the origin of these laws as evolving from custom and tradition, but goes beyond Montesquieu in holding culture and nation above universal law. In this way, he anticipates the social theories of the Romantics, led in Germany by J. G. Herder, whose concern for the presevation of Germanic culture drew him to McPherson's supposed translations of the Gaelic poems of Ossian. Rousseau's appeal to the pathos of the native Americans anticipates Herder's Humanität.

La Découvert's resolution can be read as colonialist rhetoric in defense of the conquest of native cultures by right of a superior ethos. But as Baczko reminds us, Rousseau's politics was concerned with the preservation of one's own culture by any means necessary. In 1770, when Rousseau was asked by Prince Wielhorski to assist in Poland's quest for independence, Rousseau saw two possible scenarios for the Polish nation: in the first Poland succeeds in gaining her independence, and in the second she is annexed by the Russians. As Baczko presents it,[33] in the case of the first scenario, the Poles were

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to look to the Greco-Roman models of Lycurgus and Numa and restructure their government along such lines. But the second scenario required more subversive actions:

> Par contre dans l'autre hypothèse le problème se pose de savoir si un _peuple_ peut survivre à la déstruction de son _Etat_, protéger son existence et son originalité. En d'autres termes: un peuple, sans patrie, sans structures étatiques, vaincue et subjugué peut-il conserver son identité en demeurant une _nation_. (Emphases are Baczko's.)

Baczko goes on to observe that Rousseau's ideas are manifest in the Biblical history of the Jews who, although often subjugated by other nations, managed to preserve their identity. So too was the case with the Polish nation, if it hoped to to maintain its integrity:

> Chaque Polonais doit trouver dans l'identité nationale la source originaire des valeurs vigoureuses, une manière d'être dans la monde, qui imprègne toute son existence. 34

The beginnings of these views are dramatized in Rousseau's tragic opera-ballet. Here are found the images and feelings of an unsophisticated but noble nation on the brink of extinction and fighting for its life. Columbus perceives in the Chief's willingness to sacrifice his own life to save his nation the unmistakable mark of a great leader. In a profound gesture of homage, he restores the Chief's weapons and throne. Understood in this way, Rousseau's _Découverte_ is a fantasy of hope for all conquered nations. If it seems a love letter to France, it is one appended with a message pleading for

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respect for a people's culture which, for Rousseau, is the immortal soul of a nation.

Les Prisonniers de guerre

As with Les Muses galantes, Rousseau began his one-act comedy Les Prisonniers de guerre in 1742, while in Paris, and did not complete it until his return from Venice in 1744. The comedy is set in Hungary during the War of the Austrian Succession and is an unabashed love letter to France. The work not only recaptures Rousseau's personal romance with the adventure novels he read in his youth, it is also inspired by an authentic love of France reflected in the zeal of his personal services to the nation in Venice, a love that he would later blush to admit. In Book Seven of his Confessions he calls it a work which:

> je n'osai jamais avouer ni montrer, et cela par la singulière raison que jamais le Roi ni la France ni les François ne furent peut-être mieux loués ni de meilleur coeur que dans cette Pièce, et que Républicain et frondeur en titre, je n'osois m'avouer panegyriste d'une nation dont toutes les maximes étoient contraires aux miennes. Plus navré des malheurs de la France que les François mêmes, j'avois peur qu'on ne taxât de flaterie et de lâcheté les marques d'un sincere attachement dont j'ai dit l'époque et la cause dans ma prémière partie et que j'étois honteux de montrer.35

Rousseau's comedy concerns the love affair between Dorante, a French prisoner of war, and Sophie, the daughter of a Hungarian official. Sophie is engaged to Maker, a dull but wealthy bourgeois burgher who despises Dorante

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for his French charms and fears that he is interested in seducing Maker's own daughter Claire as well as Sophie. Maker's engagement to Sophie, which was arranged by her well-meaning father, is being delayed in anticipation of the imminent return of her brother, Frederic, who is being released from French captivity in exchange for a French prisoner of war.

Rousseau's open chauvinism towards France and his interest in Hungary began, in part, during his youth when, according to the Confessions, his uncle and tutor Gabriel Bernard "alla servir dans l'empire et en Hongrie sous le Prince Eugene."[36] By 1742, his loyalty to Hungary was soured by news that he had heard concerning the Hungarians' treatment of French prisoners of war. In that year--the year before Rousseau began writing his comedy--many Genevans were speaking with great admiration of the courage of the French commander, the Comte de Belle-Isle, who in December of 1742, with his forces surrounded in Prague by the Austrians and British and threatened with imminent starvation, made a daring escape with most of his troops to Eger. Through accounts of the incidents, Rousseau learned of the cruelty of the Hungarian troops under the command of the Marēchal de Broglie towards the besieged French, and responded with a satiric poem titled Vers sur le commandement en Bohëme donnē ā M. Broglie in 1742. The poem, inspired by his

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sympathy for France and his contempt for Broglie, shows a facetious side which Rousseau seldom displayed in his fiction.

> Broglie pour reparer sa honte
> Va braver le fer et la mort:
> Dolent de sa culotte, Helas, il fait son conte
> De la ravoir enfin par un dernier effort.
> Mais en vain du succès il flatté son ame
> Le bon Seigneur n'a pas la fortune â souhait.
> Dêja culotte â bas son derriêre est tout prêt
> Bientôt par la main d'une femme
> Vous verrez qu'il aura le fouët.[37]

The woman refered to is, of course, the Austrian monarch Marie-Thêrêse.

Rousseau's attitude toward French culture would be affected both positively and negatively by his year's residence as Secretary to M. Montaigue, then French Ambassador to Venice. Rousseau's experiences in Venice served to inspire not only his operas but all of his literary endeavors including the two political plays I am about to take up. I have already discussed Rousseau's admiration for Venetian opera and his quarrel with the Comte de Montaigu. Now, in order to appreciate his _Prisonniers de guerre_, I must summarize Rousseau's political activities in Venice.

Rousseau in Venice

In the course of his year's stay in Venice as Secretary to the French ambassador, Rousseau became directly involved in the French and Venetian intrigues surrounding the War

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of the Austrian Succession. Rousseau arrived in Venice at a point when Spain, France's ally, had just declared war on Austria's ally, Sardinia. Spain had recently occupied Savoy and was making preparations to invade Piedmont. Venice was officially neutral, but secretly supportive of the Austrian cause. The extraordinary events that make up a large section of Book Seven of _Les Confessions_, and which have been contested by scholars throughout the last century, have in this century been proved generally factual, as has been impressively documented in Madeleine B. Ellis' _Rousseau's Venetian Story_.[38] In his year as Montaigu's secretary, Rousseau's services to France were numerous and extended to the French stage itself, where he was instrumental in having the actor Veronese and his daughter Coralline released from their contracts in Venice and returned to France, where they were contracted to appear at Versailles and in Paris.[39] Regarding the war itself, it was on his own initiative that Rousseau secured the safe release of a French vessel placed under embargo by the Venetian government and assaulted by Slavonian sailors.[40] Rousseau's action earned him great respect from both the Venetian government and the French legation (with the exception of Montaigu, who resented being upstaged.) More importantly, Rousseau could claim credit for warning the French ambassador in Naples (via dispatch) of the impending

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invasion by the forces of the Austrian commander Lobowitz and thereby saving the Spanish Bourbons the loss of the kingdom of Naples.[41]

During his service in Venice, Rousseau's concern for the fate of French prisoners of war is expressed in a letter dated 6 June 1744 which he wrote to a certain Lyonaise Captain de Madières, who was placed in charge of caring for French prisoners of war at Goritz and Gradisca.[42] In this brief letter, Rousseau confesses the following sentiment:

> Je souhaitterois fort, Monsieur, d'avoir des occasions plus importantes à vous marquer combien je suis touché de vôtre sort et de celui de tous messieurs vos confrères de Prison. 43

Apropos of the subject of Rousseau's comedy is an incident in Venice in which Rousseau was personally involved concerning an escaped prisoner of war who called himself M. de Montigny. Although he was suspicious of Montigny's claims, Rousseau, nevertheless, thought him a good man and took a personal interest in seeing him returned home safely. Sometime near the end of July 1744 Rousseau wrote the man's mother a letter announcing that her son was on his way:

> J'ai l'honneur de vous adresser cy-joint une Lettre qui vous causera sans doute bien du plaisir, puisqu'elle est de M. vôtre fils qui étoit prisonnier en Hongrie. C'est du moins sous ce titre que la personne qui vous l'écrit s'est présentée à moi. Quoique nous ayons été trompés plus d'une fois sous de faux noms, je n'ai pas jugé que la situation pressante où se trouvoit M. de Montigny supportât la longueur d'un examen. 44

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Rousseau's interest did not stop here, for on 4 August 1744 he wrote a cautious letter to M. de Vertmont, private secretary to the French ambassador at Solothurn in order to secure the prisoner of war's future:

> Quoique nous n'ayons point icy de lumiéres particulieres sur la vérité du raport que M. de Montigny nous a fait de sa naissance et de son état, Je crois pourtant sur l'éxamen qu'en a fait M. l'Ambassadeur, qui connoit sa famille, pouvoir vous le recommander. Il se donne pour lieutenant dans Navarre et frère de M. de Montigny, Exempt des Gardes, et se dit échappé de la Hongrie où il êtoit prisonnier de Guerre. S. E. qui l'a retenu icy plusiers jours pour le remettre un peu en ordre lui a donné quelque argent poursuivre sa route, mais comme cela ne sauroit lui suffire pour joindre son Régiment, si vous jugés a propos de le présenter â Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, peut être S. E. voudrat-elle bien continuer, en supposant la vérité de l'exposé du dit M. de Montigny, a le mettre a portée d'achever son voyage. 45

The most distressing aspect of his position as Montaigu's secretary was the Count's insistence that birth not rank determined privilege. The turning point in their relationship that sealed Rousseau's fate concerned the imminent visit to Venice of the Duke of Modena. Up to that point Rousseau writes that he had endured the Count's petty insults, which included his taking away Rousseau's gondola with the result that "seul de tous les Secretaires d'Ambassadeurs, j'étois forcé d'en loüer une ou d'aller â pied."[46] Montaigu seemed to delight in humiliating Rousseau by treating him like one of the servants and having him take his meals with them on a table covered with filthy linens: "Dans la plus vilaine gargote," he

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protests, "on est servi plus proprement, plus décemment, en ligne moins sale, et l'on a mieux à manger."[47] This might have been remedied had Rousseau been given his salary, but Montaigu saw to it that even this obligation was withheld:

> Forcé de dépenser beaucoup pour me tenir au pair de mes confréres et convenablement à mon poste, je ne pouvois arracher un sol de mes appointemens, et quand je lui demandois de l'argent, il me parloit de son estime et de sa confiance, comme si elle eut dû remplir ma bourse et pourvoir à tout. 48

All of these affronts, Rousseau writes: "J'endurai patiemment."[49] because he thought that they were merely the products of a man filled with ill humor and "je crus n'y pas voir de la haine."[50] But Rousseau's opinion changed when a dinner was being prepared in anticipation of the visit of the Duke of Modena and his family. Montaigu informed Rousseau that he was not invited.

> Je lui répondis, piqué, mais sans me fâcher qu'ayant l'honneur d'y diner journellement si M. le Duc de Modene éxigeoit que je m'en abstinsse quand il viendroit, il étoit de la dignité de S. E. et de mon devoir de n'y pas consentir.

Montaigu was indignant that Rousseau would assert a privilege not even granted to Montaigu's own gentlemen. But Rousseau argued that his position as Secretary demanded such protocol.

> le poste dont m'a honoré V. E. m'annoblit si bien tant que je le remplis que j'ai même la pas sur vos Gentilshommes ou soit-disant tels et suis admis oû ils ne peuvent l'être.

Rousseau goes on to remind the Count that when he is

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formally presented before the Doge and the Senate (which the Count had managed to delay as long as possible) Rousseau, as his Secretary, is required to accompany him and dine with the Venetian Court in the Palazzo di San Marco. "Je ne vois pas," Rousseau argues, "pourquoi un homme qui peut et doit manger en public avec le Doge et le Sênat de Venise, ne pourroit pas manger en particulier avec M. le Duc de Modene."[51] Montaigu had no answer save a stubborn refusal.

Montaigu's objections are made no clearer in a letter he wrote to the Abbê Alary on 15 August 1744 filled with complaints about his secretary. We have already encountered a part of this letter in my discussion of Les Muses galantes in which Montaigu complains about Rousseau's demand, on his way to a concert, that protocol required his being placed in front of the other gentlemen in the embassy's gondola.[52] Concerning the dinner with the Duke of Modena Montaigu writes:

> Pour le propos qu'il me tint au sujet de M. le duc de Modêne qui devoit venir dîner chez moi, je lui fis dire qu'il dîneroit ce jour lâ avec mes gentilshommes, ce qu'il trouva si mauvais et d'une façon si impertinente que je crus qu'il était fou. 53

Rousseau considered this incident to be the turning point in their relationship. "Dês lors," he writes, "il ne cessa de me donner des dêsagremens, de me faire des passedroits."[54]

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Given these experiences in Venice, the little comedy which Rousseau began in Paris must surely have changed when he returned to Paris and completed it a year later. For one thing, we see in this work a departure from his normal models based on the masters of the French stage. Nor does the comedy's situation appear to be derived directly from other plays. Although it is still very much in the classical tradition of prose comedy, there is a sense of first-hand knowledge and experience that makes the incidents and the characters more realistic.

Even the love affair is treated with a mature skepticism. Although Sophie is secretly in love with Dorante, she suspects that his romantic gallantry is merely a seductive prologue to the debauchery in which Frenchmen are reputed to excel. Dorante delivers a speech filled with Rousseau's sentiments concerning true love, which he contrasts with its artificial substitute practiced by petit-maîtres. His true feelings are transparent:

> DORANTE
> Cet abord timide, cette émotion, ce respect, ces tendres Soupirs, ces douces larmes, ces transports que vous me faites éprouver ont-ils quelque chose de commun avec cet air picquant et badin que la politesse et le ton du monde nous font prendre auprés des femmes indifférentes? Non, Sophie, les ris et la gaité ne sont point le langage du Sentiment.55

Despite Dorante's protests that his love is sincere, Sophie suspects he is also seducing Claire, with whom she believes he has been corresponding. When his comic servant,

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Jacquard, brings him a letter given to him by Claire, Sophie's jealousy is made visible. To reassure her, Dorante reads her the letter. The opening sentiments in the letter expressing undying love and devotion are a comic device intended to play with Sophie's jealousy, which soon turns to contrition when she learns that the letter is from Dorante's father. The story is resolved with the return of Frederic, who announces that it was Dorante's father who arranged for his release in return for his own son's. Frederic argues that his father owes his liberator a debt of gratitude that can be repayed by allowing Dorante to marry Sophie. Frederic extends his debt of gratitude to the French people themselves, whom he has come to know and admire.

Up to this point, the comedy is a standard love conflict; Frederic's francophilia turns it into unabashed propaganda. The young Hugarian's sentiments echo those Rousseau expressed in the prologues to La Dēcouverte and Les Muses:

> FREDERIC
> Ah! quittez, mon pēre, ces injustes prējugēs. Que n'avez-vous connu cet aimable peuple que vous haïssez, et qui n'auroit peut-être aucun dēfaut s'il avoit moins de vertus. Je l'ai vüe de prēs cette heureuse et brillante nation, je l'ai vüe paisible au milieu de la guerre, cultivant les sciences et les beaux arts et livrēe ā cette charmante douceur de caractēre qui en tout tems lui fait recevoir ēgalement bien tous les peuples du monde, et rend la France en quelque maniēre la patrie commune du genre humain. Tous les hommes sont les frères des François. La guerre anime leur

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> valeur sans exciter leur colère. Une brutal(e) fureur ne leur fait point haïr leurs ennemies, un sot orgueil ne les leur fait point mépriser. Ils les combattent noblement, sans calomnier leur conduitte, sans outrager leurs gloires, et tandis que nous leur faisons la guerre en furieux, ils se contentent de nous la faire en heros. 56

Rousseau's contempt for the arrogant Broglie and men of his ilk is echoed in his antipathy towards the unsavory Maker, Dorante's rival for Sophie. Maker is portrayed as a boorish and vain middle-aged Hungarian burgher hostile to the French, and a man who will stop at nothing to get his way or his revenge:

> MAKER
> Eh! morbleu: tant de politesse(s) pour la femme ne tendent qu'ã faire affront au mari. Cela me met dans des impatiences.... nous verrons. Nous verrons.... vous êtes méchant, Monsieur le François. Oh parbleu, je le serai plus que vous. 57

Such villainous characters are seldom seen in Rousseau's fiction; Maker being Rousseau's rare exception makes his presence significant. Rousseau may have released all his fury against Montaigu into the character of Maker. As I discussed in my chapter on Les Muses galantes, Rousseau's hopes of finding justice in Paris for the offenses of his superior were dashed when the nobility closed ranks against him. So strong and protracted was the prejudice against Rousseau in his suit against Montaigu, that significant scholarly interest in defending his case only emerged in the twentieth century. It is not difficult to see Montaigu's personality in Maker's

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arrogance and disdain and to see in the creation of Maker's character the signs of Rousseau's re-evaluation of his previously unqualified endorsement of French society.

Apart from its political aspects, the comedy reflects the author's sentiments regarding romantic love as a sort of emotional prison and evokes memories of erotic incidents in Jean-Jacques's past which were usually left unconsummated. One incident in particular regarding the title of the play may serve to reflect its double meaning. In my discussion of _Arlequin amoureux malgré lui_ we met Mlle Galley and Mlle de Graffenried, the two pretty girls with whom the young Jean-Jacques went cherry-picking in 1732. When he first came upon them that day, they were having trouble riding their horses across a stream. The gallant Jean-Jacques, seeing their distress and their charms, waded into the stream and, taking the bridle of the Mlle Galley's horse, led it across, the other horse following its example. In his dazzled and aroused confusion, not knowing what to say or do next, Rousseau started to leave them when Mlle Graffenreid stopped him from going:

> non pas, non pas, me dit-elle, on ne nous échappe pas comme cela. Vous vous êtes mouillé pour notre service; nous devons en conscience avoir soin de vous sécher: il faut s'il vous plait venir avec nous, nous vous arrêtons prisonnier. Le coeur me battoit, je regardois Mlle Galley: oui, oui, ajoûta-t-elle en riant de ma mine effarée, prissonnier de guerre, montez en croupe derrière elle, nous voulons rendre compte de vous.58

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It was in this same year that Rousseau first met the mysterious Suzanne Serre "à laquelle," he writes, "je ne fis pas alors une grande attention, mais dont je me passionai huit ou neuf ans après."[59] At the time, she was only eleven, but in 1742 Rousseau met her in Lyons at the home of M. Mably and fell in love. He saw more of her and "mon coeur se prit," he recalls, "et très vivement. J'eu quelque lieu de penser que le sien ne m'ētoit pas contraire."[60] A love letter from this period, was written by Rousseau to an unnamed woman, believed by many to be Suzanne Serre.[61] There are those who believe that it was Mlle Serre who is the model for his Julie.[62] It was a love affair Rousseau deliberately terminated, giving as an excuse the fact that another man wished to marry her, and claiming that he chose not to stand in their way. To this strangely gallant act he adds the excuses: "Elle n'avoit rien ni moi non plus,"[63] and "nos situations ētoient trop semblables pour que nous pussions nous unir," and furthermore he adds that "dans les vues qui m'occupoient j'ētois bien ēloignē de songer au mariage." Passages redacted from his Confessions indicate that he never got over his love for her.[64] Whether or not the letters were to Suzanne or another unknown woman, the fact remains that Rousseau was at this moment in time deeply in love but, for whatever reason, never married his beloved.

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Scherer believes that it was not Suzanne Serre but Mme de Warens who inspired the romantic passages in _Les Prisonniers de guerre_:

> En tout cas, la situation du prisonnier d'amour, chérissant sa prison sans pouvoir se fermer aux appels du monde extérieur, a été celle de Rousseau devant une figure féminine qui s'est appelée Mme de Warens, qui s'appellera peut-être Thérèse, peut-être un instant Mme d'Houdetot, et qui, dans l'ordre de la fiction, prendra les traits de Julie. 65

Both incidents are enlightening _vis-à-vis_ Rousseau's art. In the first incident, with its reversal of roles, Jean-Jacques is passive and controlled in a mild form of sado-masochism which Rousseau, in his _Confessions_, admits to finding a secret pleasure ever since he was whipped as an adolescent by Mme Lambercier. As with all such sexual games, the end is not coitus, but rather the thrill of prolonging and ultimately frustrating desire.

We see this same form of emotional self-torture in Rousseau's love affair with Suzanne Serre. The history of most of Rousseau's romantic encounters seems to be one of arousing and then deliberately frustrating his own passions. As a pattern of behavior it seems to have extended to his other desires as well, and may explain his apparent urge to fail. His little comedy, with its apparent happy ending, contains metaphors of erotic self-torture in the notion that love is a sort of prison. Dorante is torn between his love for Sophie and his love for France. Sophie reads a different meaning into the

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lines of Dorante's letter from his father in which he is assured: "Vous voilà enfin délivré des fers où vous languissiez."[66] Thinking the author of the letter to be Claire, she responds: "Je ne languirai pas dans les vôtres." But clearly she does; her jealousy is the proof. There is further anxiety in the fact that Sophie must leave her homeland in order to live as Dorante's wife. It is a fear and danger her brother senses and Sophie dismisses too easily:

> FREDERIC
> Ne voiez-vous pas les menaces qu'elle me fait pour lui avoir enlevé le Seigneur Jean Matthiaz Maker.
>
> GOTERNIZ
> Elle n'ignore pas combien les François sont aimables.
>
> FREDERIC
> Non, mais elle sait que les Françoises le sont encore plus, et voila ce qui l'épouvante.
>
> SOPHIE
> Point du tout, car je tacherai de le devinir avec elles, et tant que je plairai à Dorante je m'estimerai la plus glorieuse de touttes les femmes. 67

One can find here the anxiety that permeates Rousseau's later masterpiece, Julie, où la Nouvelle Héloïse, and the anticipation of loss when the two lovers must give up their erotic desires and submit themselves to the will of Wolmar who, like Maker, is a man of means able to provide Julie with social stability. Again, Rousseau's attitude concerning love and duty is not the neo-classical one. Although his characters mouth its platitudes,

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Rousseau conveys in his subtext that the choice of duty over love is a bitter one that satisfies neither virtue.

Of course the neo-classical rules of _bienséance_ which Rousseau plays with help to mask the meanings behind his sexual by-play by sublimating all eroticism into a Platonic game. But this erotic ambiguity is of particular importance to Rousseau, and finds its ultimate expression in the next work we shall examine, his unfinished tragedy _La Mort de Lucrèce_ where the stakes between private love and societal duty are raised exponentially.

La Mort de Lucrèce

In no other play of Rousseau's is the problem of sexuality dealt with more dramatically than in his unfinished prose tragedy _La Mort de Lucrèce_. It not only reveals aspects of his moral philosophy but his philosophy of language and politics as well. In addition, the history of the discovery of this tragedy is not only important in understanding its almost total neglect by scholars until the Twentieth Century but also dramatizes one of French history's missed oportunities. This discovery begins in the midst of the French Revolution.

In 1792 Gabriel Brizard published an unfinished play by Rousseau, which he had acquired after Rousseau's death. This draft consisted of fragments Brizard had assembled from Rousseau's manuscripts and which he titled _Courts_

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fragmens de Lucrece, tragēdie en prose. It was a labor of love made all the more difficult due to the poor condition of the forty-year-old manuscript, which was written in pencil. Brizard wrote:

> Il n'y a que notre admiration pour Rousseau qui ait pu nous donner la patience nēcessaire pour les dēchiffrer et les transcrire. 68

Unfortunately, the manuscript which Brizard used has been lost. But, as luck would have it, a second manuscript was discovered in the Neuchatel library, recorded as document number 7864, which was written in ink, signed by the author, and contained a much longer text than Brizard's. It was titled *La Mort de Lucrēce, tragedie, fragments (2 actes*) and consisted of a complete first act in six scenes, an almost-completed second act in four scenes, and some scattered fragments. This text was published in the *Annales J.-J. R.* of 1906 and titled *Lucrēce tragēdie*. The Plēiade editors have dated this second draft as earlier than the Brizard manuscript. Scherer writes:

> Nous avons donc pris pour texte de base ce manuscrit de Neuchâtel, en l'accompagnant de toutes les indications qui peuvent renseigner sur l'ēvolution du travail de Rousseau. 69

What Brizard had uncovered was the remnants of Rousseau's republican tragedy. That Rousseau had attempted a republican tragedy is not, in itself, surprising. Rather, it was in the timing of this particular discovery that

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the irony lay; for the French Revolution had by 1792 already adopted Voltaire's _Brutus_ as its great republican tragedy. The irony regarding Rousseau's undiscovered tragedy is even more acute if we look to Rousseau's _Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles_. After what appears to be a thorough repudiation of theater, Rousseau suggests in his _Lettre_ something that seems to fly in the face of its entire polemic. After spending a great many words attacking the French stage as unsuitable for the innocent Genevans, Rousseau suddenly invites Voltaire to Geneva.

> Ce qu'il y a de bien sur pour nous, c'est qu'il faudra mal augurer de la Rēpublique, quand on verra les Citoyens, travestis en beaux-esprits, s'occuper â faire des vers françois et des piēces de thēatre; talens qui ne sont point les nôtres, et que nous ne possēderons jamais. Mais que M. de Voltaire daigne nous composer des tragēdies sur le modelle de la morte de Cesar, du prēmier acte de Brutus, et s'il nous faut absolument un thēatre, qu'il s'engage â le remplir toujours de son Gēnie, et â vivre autant que ses piēces. 70

In other words, Voltaire could write for the Genevan stage if he limited his genius to republican tragedies. This was a double insult to Voltaire, whom Rousseau knew to be anti-republican, and whose _Brutus_ and _Mort de César_ were meant as warnings against republican fanaticism. But clearly Rouseau saw them differently, just as he saw Molière's _Misanthrope_ as an attack on virtue.

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The Two Brutuses

Misreadings or deliberate republican interpretations of Voltaire's Brutus were not restricted to Rousseau. In 1790 Paris, just two years before the discovery of Rousseau's Lucrèce, leaders of the French Revolution honored two powerful works of art, one by the painter Jacques-Louis David and the other by Voltaire, which depicted the same political event: Lucius Junius Brutus condemning his two sons to death for their treason against the Roman republic. Both David's painting of Brutus, shown in 1789, and Voltaire's play of the same title, written in 1730, focused on the tragic consequences of political fanaticism. The revival of Voltaire's Brutus in November of 1790 inflamed revolutionary passions. In 1789 David's painting had already been linked with Voltaire's play when a Salon review quoted the last lines of Brutus: "Rome est libre: il suffit."[71] Despite their original meaning, both works were exploited as propaganda to rally the republican cause against the monarchy. The revolutionaries extracted from Voltaire's dialogue the speeches that expressed their republican fervor, and from David's painting the portrait of the quintessential republican hero.

If such powerful reactions could be evoked by two works not even intended to arouse revolutionary zeal, what would the rebels have done with Rousseau's play, had it

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been finished and found? For it was certainly a work designed to awaken republican passion. It is a tragedy that uses the death of Lucrèce as a symbol of the excesses of monarchical tyranny and the sight of her silent and bloody corpse on the stage to inspire a pathos and fury that would serve to inflame the citizens who witnessed it to vengeance and revolution. If its subject matter and its prose would have distressed Voltaire, the tragedy would certainly have appealed to the citizens thronging the guillotine.

Rousseau's Return to Geneva

While his Devin du village had made Rousseau celebrated at Court, his Lettre sur la Musique française made him reviled by the musicians of the Paris Opéra and suspect by his fellow philosophes. In June 1745 Rousseau sought refuge from the pressures and intrigues of high society in the sober life of Geneva and returned there with the hope of never again leaving his beloved city. His reception in Geneva was what he had hoped:

> Arrivé dans cette ville je me livrai à l'enthousiasme républicain qui m'y avoit amené. Cet enthousiasme augmenta par l'accueil que j'y receus. Fêté, caressé dans tous les états, je me livrai tout entier au zèle patriotique, et honteux d'être exclus de mes droits de Citoyen par la profession d'un autre culte que celui de mes pères, je resolus de reprendre ouvertement ce dernier. 72

All that remained was Rousseau's re-conversion to his

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old faith. Rousseau's return to the Protestantism of his father was entirely in keeping with his views on republicanism and Christianity. Believing the heart and soul of Christianity to be Christ's teachings, Rousseau was content to allow the various religious rituals and laws to be decided by the people of each nation. As a reinstated citizen of Geneva he felt it was his duty "d'admettre le dogme et de suivre le culte prescrit par la loi"[73]

His plan was to resolve some final business in Paris and then to return with Thérèse and settle down in Geneva for the rest of his life.[74] While settling into his new life, Rousseau decided to amuse himself with one of his favorite pastimes: taking long walks. During one of these walks his thoughts turned, as usual, to politics and republicanism.

> . . . ma tête accoutumée au travail ne demeuroit pas oisive: je digerois le plan déja formé de mes Institutions politiques . . . je méditois une histoire du Valais, un plan de Tragedie en prose, dont le sujet qui n'étoit pas moins que Lucrèce ne m'ôtoit pas l'espoir d'atterrer les rieurs, quoique j'osasse laisser paroitre encor cette infortunée, quand elle ne le peut plus sur aucun Theatre françois. 75

According to the story of "cette infortunée" told in Livy, Sextus, son of King Tarquinus Superbus, secretly lusted after Lucrèce, the beautiful and virtuous wife of Collatinus. After charming his way into the home of the naive Collatinus, Sextus stole away from his host,

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entered Lucrèce's room, raped her, and fled. Overwhelmed by her disgrace, Lucrèce dressed herself in mourning and sent for her father and her husband. Her father, Lucretius, arrived with Brutus, and Collatinus brought with him Publius Valerius. Standing before them, Lucrèce related how she was savagely dishonored; then, crying out for vengeance, stabbed herself to death. Deeply moved, Brutus drew the blade from her breast and had the men swear upon it an oath to end the tyranny of the Tarquins. Bearing the dead Lucrèce into the city, the men displayed her corpse before the people, inciting them to overthrow and exile the Tarquins, after which the rebels, led by Brutus and Collatinus, formed the republic.

A Taboo Subject

Like Joan of Arc, a hero made unacceptable for French theatre by Voltaire's satiric poem La pucelle, Lucrèce was a figure who inspired ridicule rather than awe in the minds of most French writers. The rape of Lucrèce by Sextus Tarquin and her subsequent suicide were considered too horrible and extreme a story for the neoclassical stage. If Sextus' conduct was thought barbarous, Lucrece's suicidal response was considered grotesquely puritanical. This attitude is reflected in an account given by Mouhy in 1780 of a Lucrèce published by Ryer in 1638:

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> 'Sextus, un poignard à la main, veut exiger que Lucrèce réponde à ses desirs; elle s'enfuit dans la coulisse; on entend des cris, et Lucrèce reparoit en désordre' : voilà une des situations de cette Piece, qui peut donner une idée de la maniere dont les Auteurs de ce temps traitoient de semblables sujets. 76

Farces about Lucrèce were enjoyed in the fairground theatres. Jacques Scherer informs us that in 1695 Regnard and Dufresny presented a popular and often-performed comedy about Lucrèce at the Foire Saint-Germain which Rousseau might very well have read about in Gherardi's Théâtre italien. In scene five of the second act Harlequin, as the Tarquin character, chases Lucrèce around the stage. She kills herself, and Tarquin exclaims:

> Ah! Lucrèce; mamour! vous donnez aujourd'hui
> Un exemple étonnant qui sera peu suivi. 77

He exits singing.

As if the choice of subject matter was not challenging enough, Rousseau also defied the conventions of his day by attempting a tragedy in prose set in ancient Rome. Although the playwright Antoine Houdar de La Motte (1672-1731) had argued in the preface to his Oedipe (1726) that prose allowed greater verisimilitude and range of expression for the poet, he never attempted it himself. Lillo's London Merchant (1731) inspired a re-evaluation of prose in France. Diderot was a great admirer of Lillo's bourgeois drama. But even Diderot, whose ideas on theatre were far more innovative than Voltaire's, limited his defense of prose to genre sérieux, which he placed midway

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between tragedy and comedy, and which he later called drame.

But it was Voltaire who would, for some time, wield the ultimate power in this debate. In 1731, at the height of his love affair with the English stage, he admits in his preface to Brutus that the lack of rhyme in English drama allows for greater freedom:

> Le Français est un esclave de la rime, obligé de faire quelquefois quatre vers pour exprimer une pensée qu'un Anglais peut rendre en une seule ligne. L'Anglais dit tout ce qui'l veut, le Français ne dit que ce qu'il peut. 78

Nevertheless he was opposed to the use of prose in French tragedy on the grounds that rhyme "est essentielle à la poësie française." The French, he said, will never be satisfied with mere prose because "qui a le plus ne saurrait se contenter du moins." His final verdict was resolute:

> Nous ne permettons pas la moindre licence; nous demandons qu'un auteur porte sans discontinuer toutes ces chaînes, et cependant qu'il paraisse toujours libre; et nous ne reconnaissons pour poètes que ceux qui ont rempli toutes ces conditions. 79

Clearly, had Rousseau's play been completed and performed, it would have been considered--with its ancient setting--a significant innovation in eighteenth century French tragedy. If its chances of success were dubious, the attempt was certainly daring. Still, there were certain concessions to French taste which needed to be made. If Rousseau wished to make the play palatable to

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his audience, he would have to retell the story in more decorous terms. This he clearly attempted. To make Sextus more sympathetic, Rousseau has him hopelessly in love with Lucrece. In addition, he adds the circumstance of their once having been engaged. Lucrèce broke the engagement in deference to her father, who wanted her to marry the more virtuous, if far less impressive, Collatinus, a man who, like her father, was sympathetic to the republican cause. In this way the tension of the play is, as French taste required, centered around the conflict of love versus honor. Lucrece's love for Sextus must be suppressed in order for her to obey her duties to her father, her husband, and ultimately her country.

The Republican Hero

I will examine Rousseau's tragedy on two levels. First as an expression of Rousseau's republican dreams, and then as an experiment in the power of theatrical gesture. In the first I will contrast Rousseau's view of a hero as explicated in his _Discours sur la vertu héros_ with the neo-classic conception of the tragic hero as found in Racine and Voltaire. In the second, I will draw on Rousseau's ideas on language, especially the silent gesture, as treated in his _Essai sur l'origine des langues_ and its unsettling use in his _Lévite d'Ephraim_.

In Rousseau's tragedy the moment of attack is

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immediately problematic. Why did Rousseau choose this moment in the story of the birth of the Roman Republic rather than follow Voltaire's lead and bypass this potentially hazardous portrayal by setting the action after Lucrece's death? One reason is that the two men had opposing political themes. Voltaire wished to dramatize the dangers of fanatical republicanism in contrast to the enlightened monarchy he championed. To this end, he chose the moment when Tarquinus Superbus had rallied the support of his allies to threaten the new republic, which was still uncertain of its ability to survive and its moral right to do so.

Rousseau had just the opposite purpose in mind. His play was an expression of his fervent passion for republicanism. He needed to show the turning point--Sextus Tarquin's dishonorable act--that ignited the revolution. Even more to his purpose, Rousseau wanted to portray the essence of his republicanism: the virtuous state. For this reason, it is the attempted corruption of Lucrèce that is the play's central focus.

The struggle against corruption is the theme of the play. Once introduced in the first scene, its variations are developed as relationships unfold and reveal the conflict between virtue/integrity and desire/ambition. It is a struggle that takes place in the play on every social level. Pauline must struggle between the seductive

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power of Sulpitius' ambition and the seductive power of Lucrece's virtue. Sulpitius is counting on corruption to serve his drive for power.

Rousseau probably had Racine's Britannicus in mind when he created Sulpitius. Like Narcissus in Racine's tragedy, Sulpitius is a cynic, driven by personal gain. He views all men as corrupt or corruptible. Rousseau's Sulpitius also evokes Voltaire's Messala in Brutus, but there is a fundamental difference between the two characters. Messala aims to corrupt; but Messala is no cynic. Rather, he is an idealistic counter-revolutionary. Rousseau might have treated the character of Sulpitius in this fashion, but he chose not to. This is all the more surprising, since Rousseau claimed to loathe authors who portray villains. In a footnote to la Nouvelle Hêloise he writes:

> Je ne saurois concevoir quel plaisir on peut prendre à imaginer et composer le personage d'un Scêlerat, à se mettre à sa place tandis qu'on le rêprêsente, à lui prêter l'êclat le plus imposant. 80

Why did he add a villain here? Clearly, Rousseau must have felt that a Sulpitius is needed in this tragedy to reflect the darkest side of corrupt society. When Sulpitius says, "Nous serions perdus s'ils êtoient assês sages pour savoir se passer des secrets services par lesquels nous les enchainons,"[81] Rousseau indicts most of the courts of Europe.

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Rousseau's Brutus is not portrayed as completely virtuous, but unlike Voltaire's hero, it is not because he possess a tragic flaw. Rather he is portrayed as a Machiavellian statesman. Rousseau's Brutus is consciously ruthless. It is clear from Brutus' first scene that he intends for the revolution to profit from Sextus' attempted corruption of Lucrece. When Lucretius learns of his daughter's peril, Brutus tries to reassure him:

> BRUTUS
> Calme-toi, digne et heureux Pére et connois le Tresor que les Dieux t'ont donné. Oui, le fils de Tarquin est adoré de ta fille, mais sais-tu que ce sentiment caché pénétré par moi seul n'est pas moins ignoré de celle même qui l'éprouve que du Tyran qui en est l'objet; sais-tu que la découverte de ce funeste secret coûteroit la vie à cette chaste et respectable femme; . . . C'est par le côté même qui t'allarme que ta fille est le plus digne de toute nôtre confiance; osons lui déclarer nos projets et les Tarquins sont perdus, puisque Sextus est aimé. 82

Later in the play, when Lucretius is alarmed at seeing Sextus and Sulpitius enter Pauline's room, Brutus does not try to defuse the situation. Instead he tells Lucretius: "Laissez les courrir à leur perte, et songez à Collatin qui nous suit."[83] Finally won to Brutus' cause in the final scene of Act 2, Lucretius seems more interested in recruiting Collatinus to their cause than in protecting Lucrece. Lucretius advises Collatinus:

> LUCRETIUS
> Vous verrez à loiser vôtre Epouse, mais il ne sera pas toujours tems de venger vos affronts et les siens. 84

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One senses here that Brutus and Lucretius speak with one voice, as conspirators do. Lucretius speaks for Brutus when he advises his son-in-law on how to deal with the impending dishonor of Lucrece. His advice is startling:

> LUCRETIUS
> He bien, laisse-toi conduire à un tendre Père qui t'aime et à son ami qui veut t'estimer. Tu feras ton devoir car tu es Romain, et tu feras sagement de pourvoir à ta sureté car il n'y en a jamais auprès d'un Tiran pour le mari d'une femme qu'il aime. C'est souvent pour mieux conserver sa vie qu'il faut savoir braver la mort. 85

Obviously, Rousseau's Brutus is not Voltaire's. The high moral dudgeon of Voltaire's hero, shown as a tragic flaw and meant as a warning against political zealots, is not to be found in Rousseau's republican hero. One might have expected Rousseau's Brutus to be even more consumed with virtue than Voltaire's, but, although Rousseau's Brutus uses the word often, he is far less obsessed with virtue than with achieving the business at hand: liberating Rome. Yet Rousseau intends Brutus to be the portrait of a true republican hero. His speeches are just as passionate and just as inflammatory as those of Voltaire's Brutus, if not more so:

> BRUTUS
> Les Dieux ont voulu que Rome portat une fois le joug de la servitude pour apprendre à la conoitre et par consequent à la dêtester. Nôtre épreuve est desormais suffisante; nous abhorrons nos fers autant qu'il est possible; il est donc tems de les briser. Rome entiére te parle ici par ma bouche: ou nous pêrirons tous, ou nous dêtruirons le monstre qui nous dêvore. 86

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Brutus, like Rousseau's legislator in his _Contrat social_, embodies the General Will of Rome which speaks through his mouth. Brutus's love for the society of law and republicanism is only surpassed by his disdain for the corrupt society formed under a monarchy:

> BRUTUS
> Grace au ciel nous ne sommes pas comme ces peuples effeminés où tout n'existant que par la volonté des Rois, tout perit dès qu'ils ne sont plus, faute d'une autorité legitime et independante. 87

The last phrase recalls Rousseau's _Contrat_, but here the indictment of the French monarchy as an illegitimate form of government is clearly implied. We find here a republican hero who is eloquent and daring, but flawed.

Nevertheless, Brutus corresponds to Rousseau's concept of a proper hero. In his _Discours sur cette question: Quelle est la vertu la plus necessaire au héros, et quels sont les héros a qui cette virtu a manqué?_, written in 1751 in response to a competition of the Academy of Corsica, Rousseau attempted to deal with these "questions frivoles." The discourse provides important insights into Rousseau's views on heroism. The philosopher, Rousseau observes, is concerned with personal happiness, the hero with the happiness of his nation. The abstract ideas of philosophy, he feels, have little effect on the powerful and the meek. What nations require are conditions that make happiness possible, which are the tasks of the hero, tasks not accomplished by reasoning but by brute force.

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> C'est souvent la force à la main qu'il se met en état de recevoir les Bénédictions des hommes qu'il contraint d'abord à porter le joug des loix pour les soumettre enfin à l'autorité de la raison. 88

Although he agrees that the perfect hero has only the interest of his nation at heart, he grants that such a hero is rare:

> Ne nous dissimulons rien; la félicité publique est bien moins la fin des actions du Héros qu'un moyen pour arriver à celle qu'il se propose, et cette fin est presque toujours sa gloire personnelle. 89

Moral perfection does not fit the profile of most heroes, who are usually a mixture of good and bad qualities. For the hero's virtues to be activated, what is required is Rousseau's usual prescription: "the antidote in the poison."[90] A hero's virtues:

> ont rarement leur source dans la pureté de l'ame et, semblable à ces drogues salutaires, mais peu agissantes, qu'il faut animer par des sels âcres et corrosifs, on diroit qu'elles aient besoin du concours de quelques vices pour leur donner de l'activité. 91

If not moral perfection, what then is the essence of a hero? After an extensive examination of all the supposed virtues--valor, moderation, courage, justice, temperance, prudence--Rousseau demonstrates that the greatest heroes in history were lacking in at least some of these. For Rousseau, the single virtue that the true hero must possess is _la force de l'ame_. Rousseau's praise of this ideal anticipates the romantics' sublimation of the will. Sextus, who certainly possesses courage in battle, ultimately lacks the strength of will to sustain his dream

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of winning Lucrèce's love. He must look to Sulpitius for support:

> SEXTUS
> Ami, que tu lis mal dans ma coeur que tu veux rassurer. Vois si je connois ton zêle; vois jusqu'à quel point je puis porter ma confiance en toi. J'entreprens sur ta parole de séduire la plus chaste des femmes. 92

On the other hand, Sulpitius, whose will is strong, has no interest in Rome's needs but only in Sextus' power to provide him with the means to satisfy his own desires. What Rome requires is a moral force that will galvanize the republican heroes into forming a new nation.

That force rests with Lucrèce. Rousseau makes this clear in fragment 2. The speech must belong to the unwritten Act 5, because at this moment Brutus and Lucretius have been summoned by Lucrèce. As they are on their way, Sextus crosses the stage and Brutus reins in his rage--perhaps because he suspects what has just taken place. Brutus tells Lucretius:

> BRUTUS
> Il me tarde de voir Lucrèce, je ne sais quelle voix me crie au fond du coeur que c'est elle qui doit briser nos fers. Sans doute c'est sous les auspices de la vertu qu'il convient à la liberté de naitre.93

Brutus, who alone has guessed Lucrèce's secret love for Sextus, admires her strength of will in not acting on it. Indeed, it is her strength of will Brutus is counting on to precipitate Sextus's dishonorable act: the rape (or attempted rape) of Lucrèce. Rousseau does not make

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it clear just what does take place. But what he does make clear is Lucrèce's will to oppose Sextus's amorous advances. Brutus sees in Lucrèce a figure of absolute virtue, one that has already been tempted by her secret desires and has overcome them. In Act 1, Scene 5 he tells Lucretius:

> BRUTUS
> . . . sais-tu quels prodiges de force et de vertu cet amour involuntaire subjugué sans le connoitre peut produire dans sa grande ame? Apprend que des passions à vaincre sont un plus puissant aiguillon pour des Ames hëroïques que de froides leçons de sagesse, qui ne trouvant aucun obstacle n'acquiérent aucune force par la resistance; apprend, toi dont rien n'altera jamais la vertu, que c'est du sein de nos desirs reprimés que nait cette fierté genereuse qui nous apprend à mépriser les foiblesses d'autrui aprés avoir triomphé des nôtres. 94

There is, of course, a great deal of Rousseau's personal struggle embedded in this speech as well as a concept of the moral will that later became the core of Kant's ethics and Schiller's aesthetics. But we find here, as well, Rousseau's emerging concept of woman as the protector of a nation's virtue.

If Rousseau's Brutus is portrayed as the hero of the republic, his Lucrèce is its sublime martyr whose death inflames republican fury. Rousseau begins to establish Lucrèce's character in her reaction to Pauline's challenges. Using Livy's portrait, the first scene opens with Lucrèce as the seemingly devoted wife preparing wool and dyes to repair some garments. But Rousseau adds sexual

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tension to her character; like Phèdre, the lady is consumed with anticipatory remorse:

> . . . J'ignore si c'est ma santé qui se détruit, j'ignore si ce sont des pressentimens qui me menacent, et sans être coupable, je croirois sentir des remords si toute ma consolation n'étoit de rentrer au fond de mon coeur. 95

Pauline pretends surprise that the virtuous Lucrèce should ever feel remorse. But Lucrèce fears that all of her virtues may not be enough to protect her from what she fears:

> Croi-moi, Pauline, les vertus n'ont jamais d'excés, et quiconque les auroit toutes ne seroit jamais accusé d'en avoir trop. 96

Pauline is not the standard confidante. She does not exist merely to reflect and aid the inner struggles of her mistress. She too is conflicted. On the one hand, she has grown to admire Lucrèce; but on the other hand she is a spy. She has been placed in her position of household slave to find out Lucrèce's true feelings for Sextus. Hence Pauline's sardonic tone concerning Lucrèce's "reserve excessive" and her "humeur austère." There is a subversive motive behind her apparently innocent questions. Why is Lucrèce so reluctant to mix with society? Does she fear contamination? What is the point of imprisoning herself and depriving good and honest people of the example of her virtue?

Lucrèce is unconvincing when she says that living in the blissful bosom of her family could hardly be called

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imprisonment. More believable is her assertion that the only duty she owes is to herself. And as for being an example:

> l'unique leçon qu'il me convient de donner est l'exemple d'une vie honnête, et j'ai toujours cru que la femme la plus digne d'estime est celle dont on parle le moins, même pour la loüer. 97

But Pauline begins to probe beneath the veneer of her self-control and touch the nerve of Lucrèce's ambivalence. By evoking the will of the people, she reminds Lucrèce that the kingdom desired her engagement to Prince Sextus. By breaking off her engagement and marrying Collatinus, she may have obeyed her father's will, but her virtue was purchased at the price of defying the people's will and her own desires.

The situation anticipates Rousseau's Julie in _la Nouvelle Héloïse_, a virtuous woman torn between two men, one passionate, impulsive, and dangerous, the other sober, predictable, and kind. Like Julie, Lucrèce must confront her father's will and ultimately surrender to it. Her true love must be sacrificed for the sake of family and society.

Woman as the keystone of civilization is a major theme in Rousseau's work. He believed that it is the woman that holds the family together and teaches the man how to convert the selfishness of a lover (_amour de soi_) into the socially useful love of a husband and father (_amour_-

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propre). In Rousseau's vision of the evolution of Noble Savages into citizens, the development of the family is a watershed in this progress. Love of family is the fundamental emotion that allows a citizen to overcome the selfishness of *amour de soi* and achieve love of country. Both Julie and Lucrèce give up their *amour de soi*, the lovers who serve their selfish desires, and surrender to virtue, the duty to create a family and, ultimately, citizens fit for a republic.

If the play's conflict of love and duty is the *sine qua non* of French neoclassical plotting, Rousseau manages to raise the stakes by making the survival of society itself depend on the outcome. If romantic love and honor are not necessarily mutually exclusive in French classicism, they are for Rousseau. The fundamental struggle in Rousseau's ideology is between the selfish will and the social will. What is demanded in society's social contract is the surrender of private happiness to social duty, the surrender of desire to virtue.

As Rousseau's hero, Lucrèce is fully aware of this dilemma. She is not only conscious of her own desires but also of those of the civilization waiting to be born, the Roman republic. And it is only for its sake that she is willing to submit to the harsh demands of virtue. It is a sacrifice that both Rousseau and Lucrèce accept with deep regret. In a telling fragment (13) from the

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tragedy, Lucrèce, alone on stage, cries:

> Cruelle vertu, quel prix nous offres-tu qui soit digne des sacrifices que tu nous coûtes! La raison peut m'égarer à ta poursuite; mais mon coeur me crie qu'il faut te suivre, et je te suivrai jusqu'au bout. 98

In fragment 17 Lucrèce sees a dead man (perhaps the slave that Sextus murders in Livy's account) and envies him:

> Juste ciel! un homme mort! Hélas! il ne souffre plus; son ame est paisable. Ainsi dans deux heures... O innocence, où est ton prix? O vie humaine, où est ton bonheur?... Tendre et malheureux pere!... Et toi qui m'appelois ton épouse!... Ah! j'étois pourtant vertueuse... 99

If Lucrèce regrets the price of virtue, she also accepts the social/political necessity of the sacrifice. In her character and motivation we find the fundamental difference between Rousseau's hero and those of former models. Unlike the Greek tragic hero who exerts her will in a hopeless struggle against fate, and the Christian tragic hero encumbered by some unconquerable flaw that seals her fate in spite of her will, Rousseau's hero overcomes her passions by the strength of her will and thereby determines her own fate. For Lucrèce, death is not a surrender but a deliberate choice. In her willing her own death, Rousseau's Lucrèce anticipates Schiller's Maria Stuart and Johanna. Before the century was over, Schiller would explore and develop this very concept of the will's overcoming passion in order to die sublimely.

Nevertheless, there is a special problem with Rousseau's tragedy. If he wanted to dramatize the sacrifice of desire

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to virtue, why did he choose the shocking story of Lucrèce? Lucrèce's rape and suicide seem far too extreme, even rather extraordinary (if not utterly bizarre) circumstances for the founding of a republic.

Le Lévite d'Ephraïm

To understand his choice we must recall Rousseau's ideas on the connection between language and feelings. Rousseau was suspicious of reason and rhetoric as proper motivators of human action. Their appeal is to the abstract imagination on the one hand and to human vanity on the other, both improper as appeals to *amour-propre*. What is needed to properly (morally) motivate the masses is a language that goes beyond words and reaches their primal conscience, the dwelling place of *amour de soi*.

In Chapter One of his *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, written in 1761, Rousseau distinguishes between two pre-literary methods of communication: voice and gesture. It is the second he considers the more direct and less prone to complex conventions. By gesture he does not mean gesticulation but pantomime. Pantomimed language engages the eye in such a way that a single sign contains meaning that might require many words to express. "Mais le langage le plus ênergique est celui oû le signe a tout dit avant qu'on parle."[100] Among his examples are Thrasybulus of Miletus who, when asked by Periander of

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Corinth (625-585 B.C.) how a king should rule, began lopping off the tallest ears of wheat in his path; Alexander putting his ring to the lips of his favorite; the terrifying message sent by the King of Scythia--a frog, a bird, a mouse, and five arrows--which caused the army of Darius to flee in terror. Rousseau asks us to imagine Darius' response if he received a letter instead:

> plus elle sera menaçante moins elle effrayera; ce ne sera plus qu'une gasconade dont Darius n'auroit fait que rire. 101

The power of these visual signs appeals to our primal feelings rather than to our reason. This early language was not used to communicate practical matters but spiritual ones:

> Des besoins moraux, des passions. Toutes les passions rapprochent les hommes que la necessité de chercher à vivre force à se fuir. Ce n'est ni la faim ni la soif, mais l'amour la haine la pitié la colère qui leur ont arraché les prémiéres voix. 102

The most powerful (and horrifying) example Rousseau provides is drawn from the last three chapters of the book of Judges, which tell the story of the Levite of Ephraïm. The story, in brief, tells of a young Levite and his concubine who stay the night in a city of the Benjamites as house guests of an old man and his daughter. The Benjamites, inflamed with desire for the Levite, demand that he be given to them. The old man offers his daughter to them instead, but they refuse. Finally, the Levite pushes his lover out into the crowd and slams the door

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behind her. In the morning he finds her dying on the doorstep, having been savagely raped and beaten. The Levite cuts her body into twelve parts and sends one part to each of the tribes of Israel. The message so appalls the Israelites that they rise up against the tribe of Benjamin and slaughter all the women and children of the tribe, and all but six hundred of the men. Rousseau comments:

> De nos jours l'affaire tournée en plaidoyés, en discussions, peut-être en plaisanteries eut traîné en longueur, et le plus horrible des crimes fut enfin demeuré impuni. 103

In 1762 Rousseau retold this story as a prose poem titled _Le Lévite d'Ephraïm_. It was inspired by the fury which greeted the publications of his _Contrat social_ and his _Emile_. For Rousseau, the year was one of his worst. In Paris, a warrant was issued for his arrest. In Geneva, both books were publicly burned. Even his powerful protectors seemed to be conspiring against him; Malesherbes, court censor and secret friend of the _philosophes_, the Duke of Luxemborg, Marshal of France, and Mme de Luxemborg were all alarmed at the dangerous atmosphere at court provoked by his books. In his _Confessions_, Rousseau recounts his growing suspicions of his friends' betrayal:

> Un matin, cependant, que j'étois seul avec M. de Luxembourg, il me dit: avez-vou parlé mal de M. de Choiseul dans _le Contrat social_? Moi! lui dis-je en reculant de surprise; non, je vous jure; . . . Et dans

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> l'Emile? reprit-il. Pas un mot, répondis-je; il n'y a pas un seul mot qui le regarde. Ah! dit-il avec plus de vivacité qu'il n'en avoit d'ordinaire; il falloit faire la même chose dans l'autre livre, ou être plus clair! J'ai cru l'être, ajoutai-je, je l'estimois assez pour cela. Il alloit reprendre la parole; je le vis prêt à s'ouvrir; il se retint et se tut. Malheureuse politique de courtisan, qui dans les meilleurs coeurs domine l'amitié même! 104

His even dearer friendship with Mme de Luxembourg also seemed suddenly to cool. She said nothing to him concerning the rumors, a courtesy which he, at first, interpreted as reassuring him by playing down the danger through her forced gaiety. But it troubled him: "Ce qui me surprenoit étoit qu'elle ne me disoit rien du tout: il me sembloit qu'elle auroit dû me dire quelque chose."[105] Such suspicious behavior from those he thought his protectors further aggravated his fear that a great conspiracy had been mounted against him. To make things worse, even Thérèse's twenty-eight years of devotion seemed to be cooling. "Depuis longtems," Rousseau writes, "je m'appercevois de l'attiedissement du sien." Although he felt he loved her even more than before, he observed sadly that she "n'étoit plus pour moi ce qu'elle fut dans nos belles années."[106]

Troubled with these anxieties, Rousseau picked up the Bible to find some solace and found himself reading the story of the Levite of Ephraïm. Profoundly moved, he was deep in thought when his reveries were suddenly interrupted by the news that men were on their way to

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arrest him. The Duke and Duchess helped him to escape and were relieved to finally see him go. It was during this flight that Rousseau wrote his prose poem. In the preface to the first draft Rousseau wrote:

> Voila de quoi je m'occupois dans les plus cruels momens de ma vie, accablé des malheurs auxquels il n'est pas même permis à un homme d'honneur de se préparer. 107

In the preface to his second draft, both his message and motive become transparent. The decree of Parliament had broken his heart. Feeling that he had written _Emile_ and _le Contrat social_ out of benevolence, wishing and doing no man harm, all he asked in return was society's pardon for having offended it. The decree was its response. Bitterly he concludes:

> Qu'est-ce donc que cette société tant vantée qui ne récompense jamais le bien, qui souvent dissimule le mal et le punit toujours moins severement que son apparence. 108

The _Lévite_ was his response. If it was intended to mollify anyone, it was certainly not the _philosophes_. It is hard to imagine another work of his day filled with such threats of horrible vengeance against the urbane society of the salons and the court. To please those who might be in sympathy with Rousseau, the unsavory subject matter itself, like that in the story of Lucrèce, needed to be carefully handled. After recalling Salomon Gessner's _Idylls_, he decided to combine the biblical story with the style of the pastoral poem.

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> Ce style champêtre et naïf ne paroissoit gueres propre à un sujet si atroce, et il n'étoit guère à presumer que ma situation présente me fournit des idées bien riantes pour l'égayer. 109

He wrote quickly, finishing three cantos in first three days of his flight, and the last one when he reached Motiers.

> . . . je suis sur de n'avoir rien fait en ma vie où règne une douceur de moeurs plus attendrissante, un coloris plus frais, des peintures plus naïves, un costume plus exact, une plus antique simplicité en toute chose, et tout cela, malgré l'horreur du sujet, qui dans le fond est abominable; de sorte qu'outre tout le reste j'eus encore le mérite de la difficulté vaincue. 110

Although the basic story is faithful to that told in Judges, Rousseau embellishes it in significant ways that emphasize his unique interpretation. His telling of the story lays emphasis on those unspoken messages that move the people to action. The most important is the division of the woman's body into twelve parts. Each tribe, having received only one part, needed to join with the other tribes in order to re-assemble the Levite's concubine and comprehend the grisly message: to exact vengeance against the Benjamites:

> A l'instant il s'éleva dans tout Israël un seul cri, mais éclatant, mais unanime: Que le sang de la jeune femme retombe sur ses meurtriers. Vive l'Eternel! nous ne rentrerons point dans nos demeures, et nul de nous ne retournera sous son toit que Gabaa ne soit exterminé. Alors le Lévite s'écria d'une voix forte: Beni soit Israël qui punit l'infamie et venge le sang innocent.111

Having said this, the Levite fell face-down and died. A public funeral followed in which the body of his beloved

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was re-assembled. Both were buried in the same grave, "et tout Israël pleura sur eux."[112] Inspired by these signs, the Israelites attacked the tribe of Benjamin.

During the prolonged battle the Benjamites at first triumphed. The allied tribes gathered at Shiloh, where the Ark of the Covenant lay, and God spoke to them "par the bouche de Phinées fils d'Eleazar," and promised to deliver the Benjamites to them.

> A l'instant ils sentent déja dans leurs coeurs l'effet de cette promesse. Une valeur froide et sure succédant à leur brutale impétuosité les éclaire et les conduit.
> 113

Other signs followed. Israelite troops, having sacked the Benjamite city of Gibeah, sent a signal in the form of a great cloud of smoke. Upon seeing the sign, the main body of the allied army of Israël, who had been retreating before the Benjamites, suddenly turned and faced the enemy: "Les Benjamites . . . virent avec effroi les tourbillons de fumée qui leur annonçoient le desastre de Gabaa."[114] But the smoke that rose from the devastation of their city was a sign both of God's judgment and his covenant with Israel. The tribe of Benjamin will not perish. Since it is through the woman that the Jewish bloodline is carried on, all the women and children of the tribe of Benjamin were slaughtered. In order to carry out God's covenant and provide the tribe with heirs, virgins were needed. But the other tribes had sworn a

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sacred oath never to allow their daughters to marry with Benjamites. A solution was found. The inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead had refused to commit the crime of shedding their brothers' blood, and also had not taken the oath. As punishment they were slaughtered along with their wives. Only the virgins were spared and given over to the Benjamites. Rousseau considered this just:

> Cette branche des enfans de Manassé, regardant moins à la punition du crime qu'à l'effusion du sang fraternel, s'étoit refusée à des vengeances plus atroces que le forfait, sans considérer que le parjure et la désertion de la cause commune sont pires que la cruauté. Helas! la mort, la mort barbare fut le prix de leur injuste pitié. 115

Rousseau's tale does not end with this act of brutal justice, but with one of reconciliation. Once more, it is through unspoken signs that the receivers heard profound eloquence. For the six hundred surviving Benjamites, the tribes had only been able to provide four hundred wives. Threats of more bloodshed would only have terrified the nation. A more peaceful solution was needed. There was to be a great festival at Shiloh. The Benjamites were told that when the young virgins of the city came out to dance, the men should abduct them. They did so, but the act so infuriated the inhabitants of Shiloh that there was threat of war. The girls were returned and given the free choice of remaining with their families or marrying with their Benjamite abductors. All the girls were loath to leave their families. But Axa, whose father

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saw the wisdom of the sacrifice, was asked by him--more in looks than in words--to leave her betrothed, Elmacin, and join with a Benjamite.

> Axa baisse la tête et soupire sans rêpondre; mais enfin levant les yeux, elle rencontre ceux de son vénérable pére. Ils ont plus dit que sa bouche: elle prend son parti. Sa voix foible et tremblante prononce à peine dans un foible et dernier adieu le nom d'Elmacin qu'elle n'ose regarder, et se retournant à l'instant demi-morte, elle tombe dans les bras du Benjamite. 116

A menacing murmur rose up from the people of Shiloh, who were horrified by the event. But they were silenced by Elmacin who surrendered to the virtue of necessity and, offering himself to the service to the high priests, vowed never to marry again. Rousseau's poem concludes:

> Aussi-tôt, comme par une inspiration subite, toutes les filles, entraînées par l'exemple d'Axa imitent son sacrifice, et renonçant à leurs prémiéres amours, se livrent aux Benjamites qui les suivoient. 117

Rousseau's theme of the surrender to paternal will as the ultimate act of virtue is here reinforced two hundredfold. It is the motive behind the ultimate sacrifice of Lucrèce. The love affair between Lucrèce and Sextus is no mere surrender to Parisian taste for romance. Lucrèce must be in love with Sextus if her sacrifice is to have Rousseau's intended meaning.

It is clear from the fragments that Lucrèce commits suicide. But just how it was portrayed is left open to speculation. It is interesting to note that the fourth and fifth acts encompass the actions that were most

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ridiculed by critics of the story, the pursuit and rape of Lucrèce and her suicide. This may have been the reason that Rousseau was unable to complete the play. However, there is enough left to form an idea of what the final product might have been.

From what we know of Rousseau's politics, we can be fairly certain that the play was intended to excite the passions of the community. As Rousseau constantly repeated in his Letter à d'Alembert, theatre cannot instruct through reason, it can only move an audience by appealing to its emotions.

> Ne sait-on pas que toutes les passions sont soeurs, qu'une seule suffit pour en exciter mille, et que les combattre l'une par l'autre n'est qu'un moyen de rendre le coeur plus sensible à toutes? Le seul instrument qui serve à les purger est la raison, et j'ai déjà dit que la raison n'avoit nul effet au theatre. 118

Emotions must already be in sympathy with the fate of the hero if they are to provide pleasure. If Rousseau hoped to move the Parisian audience to republican zeal, it would have to be emotionally primed. Appeals to emotion are indirect and difficult to pin down. If one wishes to subvert a culture, overt rhetoric against the establishment will have little effect. But appeals to secret feelings--suppressed desires--can be addressed through the emotional life of the play.

Three fragments appear to belong to the penultimate and final scenes of the play. Fragment 14 is probably

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Lucrèce's final speech to Pauline, before Brutus and Lucretius arrive, in which she tells Pauline of her intention to commit suicide.

> Ne vaut-il pas mieux qu'un méchant meure, que mon père soit obéi, et que la patrie soit libre, que si, à force de pitié, Lucrèce oublioit sa vertu? 119

In fragment 11, it is clearly Lucrèce speaking to Brutus after having stabbed herself. "Tien, Brutus, j'ai fait mon devoir, fais celui de Rome et le tien."[120] Fragment 12 may be the final line in the play, certainly spoken by Brutus: "Et pour tout dire en un mot soyons dignes s'il est possible, d'être les vengeurs de Lucrèce."[121] To elicit the full pathos of Lucrèce's sacrifice her death must be made public. Like the body of the Levite's concubine, her corpse must move the secret desires of the audience through the eloquence of silent tableau.

The Final Tableau

The 1790 production of Voltaire's Brutus, which whipped republicans into a political frenzy,[122] had deliberately borrowed the tableau of David's painting. The painting depicts the moment when the decapitated bodies of Brutus's two sons, whom he himself condemned to death for treason against the republic, are born off upstage. Stage left, in bright sunlight, the women of the family swoon. Brutus sits in the shadow downstage right, his back to the horrible scene, his eyes brimming with unshed tears.

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The stage directions read:

> (Des licteurs apportaient sur un brancard le corps de Titus, et Brutus, assis au fond du théâtre, restait immobile dans sa douleur.) 123

So joined were these two portrayals that this *tableau vivant* was permanently embedded as a stage direction in all future printings of Voltaire's play.[124]

The presentation of *Brutus* was part of a campaign initiated by Saint-Just, Charles Villet, and other radicals to refurbish Voltaire's tarnished reputation and represent him as a champion of republicanism. As the final act of his apotheosis, a festival took place which featured a parade, at the head of which rode Voltaire's remains, enclosed in a splendid sarcophagus resting on a chariot drawn by six white horses. Thousands of citizens representing every level of society participated in the spectacle. Even Rousseau was there, in spirit, for this was the form of theatre he had praised in his *Lettre à d'Alembert*, the form of theatre he considered worthy of a republic.

Along its route from the ruins of the infamous Bastille to the Pantheon, the cortege turned into the Tuileries and passed under the window of the King, who had been placed under house arrest in his own palace after the royal family's aborted flight to freedom. Their days were numbered, but no one, save *les tyrannicides*, dared say it. Robert L. Herbert relates that the two Brutuses

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inspired the radicals, who began to call the King "Tarquin" and to call Mirabeau "Brutus."[125] And when the time came to consider executing the royal family, the tableau of Brutus's silent grief over his beloved sons, whom he had executed for the sake of the republic, provided the citizens with a justification no words could express.

The French revolutionaries were well aware of the silent power of a corpse. Had Voltaire's friends not arranged for his corpse to represent a sleeping passenger in order to spirit his coach out of Paris?[126] Voltaire's corpse was fought over by the National Assembly and the Jacobin Society of Troyes, who were planning to buy the Abbey of Scellières where Voltaire was then buried and erect a shrine. The Assembly acted quickly and saw to it that Voltaire's remains were exhumed.[127] After a four-day journey, the procession bearing Voltaire's body back to Paris first displayed his coffin at the most sacred spot of the Revolution, the ruins of the Bastille.

The meaning was clear. Voltaire, in death, would be given a new voice, his words carefully selected to make him appear a supporter of what was about to occur. Just as his Brutus sat silently in the shadows while his son was executed, so Voltaire's silent corpse, resting in the darkness of his sarcophagus, would authorize bloody acts--as had the sanctified bodies of the Levite's bride and Lucrèce.

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If Rousseau's play had been discovered in time, might it not have been used to inspire the French revolutionaries? Roger Gautier, for one, believes so. Gautier sees in Rousseau's Brutus a figure that would have inspired even Robespierre:

> Par son dégoût de la servitude, son amour de la république et de la constitution, par la virulence de ses discours, par son dynamisme et sa force de persuasion, Brutus aurait dû plaire à Robespierre, aux Jacobins, aux révolutionnaires. 128

For the revolutionaries, Rousseau's Mort de Lucrèce--had it been finished--would have possessed virtues that Voltaire's Brutus lacked. Voltaire's play was set after the Roman revolution and deliberately sidestepped what Voltaire would have certainly condemned, the act of overthrowing a monarchy. Rousseau's tragedy embraces revolution--with certain misgivings voiced by Collatin--and drives the revolutionaries forward toward their goal.

In the two decades before the Revolution, Rousseau, more than any other philosophe, had helped form the guiding principles of those who led the revolution. Talma himself was as much a student of Rousseau's philosophy as he was of Voltaire's.[129] In his republican zeal, Talma led a group of actors at the Comédie-Française to perform revolutionary plays such as Marie-Joseph Chénier's Charles IX,[130] a tragedy dealing with the horrors of the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Voltaire himself had predicted that this event, though considered unsuitable for the

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stage in his day, would one day be the subject of a tragedy.[131] Politics, not literature, now dictated taste.[132] The success of Charles IX launched Talma's career and established Chénier as the first dramatic poet of the Revolution.[133]

In the summer of 1792, with Robespierre as leader of the Commune of Paris, plays that supported the Revolution were soon *de rigueur*. Given Robespierre's admiration for Rousseau, it is possible, had the manuscript been found in time and finished by another author, that *La Mort de Lucrèce* might have been the first prose tragedy dealing with a classical theme to be performed at the Comédie-Française[134] and, perhaps, have replaced Voltaire's *Brutus* as the Revolution's play.

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Notes

1. Confessions, OC 1:183.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid, 182.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid, 183.

6. Ibid, 184.

7. La Découverte du Nouveau Monde, OC 2:815.

8. Ibid, 816.

9. Jacques Scherer, "Notes," La Découverte du Nouveau Monde, OC 2:1834.

10. Ibid.

11. Confessions, OC 1:294.

12. Stelio Cro, The Noble Savage: Allegory of Freedom, (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier Univerity Press, 1990) 131.

13. Gilbert Chinard, L'Amérique et le rêve exotique, (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1934) vii, cited in Cro, 151.

14. Jacques Scherer, "Notes," La Découverte du Nouveau Monde, OC 2:1835-36.

15. Rousseau, Le Verger de Madame de Warens, OC 2:1128.

16. La Découverte du Nouveau Monde, OC 2:816-17.

17. Ibid, 817.

18. See Marvin Carlson, Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century, (Greenwood Press: Westport CT, 1998) 47-48.

19. Letter 16 "Rousseau à Françoise-Louis-Eléonore de la Tour, baronne de Warens," R. A. Leigh, ed., Correspondance complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1965) 1:49.

(Continued next page.)

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Notes

19. (continued) The company of actors Rousseau saw at Grenoble was probably that of Francisque-Molin, an itinerant actor and theatre entrepreneur who had acquired some fame at the Foire Saint- Germain between 1715 and 1718. On 4 August 1737 his troupe was granted the privilege of establishing a theatre in the tennis court at Grenoble under the name of Comédiens du Roy français et italiens. (See R. A. Leigh, CC 1:51 note m).

20. La Découverte du Nouveau Monde, OC 2:823.

21. Ibid, 826.

22. Rousseau, Fragments politiques, OC 3:498-500,

23. Ibid, 499.

24. Bronislaw Baczko, "Moïse, législateur . . . ," S. Harvey, et al eds., Reappraisals of Rousseau: Studies in Honor of R. A. Leigh (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1980) 119.

25. Voltaire, Dictionnaire philosophique (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1954) 320, footnote.

26. Baczko, "Moïse, législateur . . . ," 116-17.

27. Ibid, 116.

28. Fragments politiques, OC 3:499.

29. Confessions, OC 1:241.

30. Rousseau, Lettres écrites de la Montagne, "Troisieme Lettre," OC 3:739.

31. 1 Kings 18, 21-39.

32. Lettres écrites de la Montagne, "Troisieme Lettre," 3:740.

33. Baczko, "Moïse, législateur . . . ," 127-28.

34. Ibid, 128.

35. Rousseau, Confessions, OC 1:343.

36. Ibid, 6.

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37. Rousseau, Vers sur le commandement en Bohëme donné à Mr de Broglie en 1742, OC 2:1136.

38. Madeline B. Ellis, Rousseau's Venetian Story, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966)

39. Ellis, Rousseau's Venetian Story, 59-68.

40. Ibid, 68-74.

41. Ibid, 77-87.

42. Letter 92 "Rousseau au capitaine de Madières," dated 6 June 1744, CC 1:241, Notes explicatives.

43. Ibid, 240.

44. Letter 114 "Rousseau à Marie de Montigny, née Durmart," dated the end of July 1744, CC 2:34.

45. Letter 117 "Rousseau à m. de Vertmont," dated 4 August 1744, CC 2:39.

46. Confessions, OC 1:309.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid, 310.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Letter 122 "Pierre-François, comte de Montaigu, à l'abbé Pierre-Joseph Alary," dated 15 August 1744, CC 2:50.

53. Ibid, 51.

54. Confessions, OC 1:310.

55. Rousseau, Les Prisonniers de guerre, OC 2:858-59.

56. Ibid, 870.

57. Ibid, 853.

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58. Confessions, OC 1:136.

59. Ibid, 171.

60. Ibid, 282.

61. Letter 32 "Rousseau à Suzanne Serre (?)," dated by Leigh as 1739, CC 1:103-106.

62. Cranston, Jean-Jacques, 151.

63. Confessions, OC 1:282.

64. Fragments autobiographiques, OC 1:1161, fragment 12.

65. Jaques Scherer, "Introductions: Theatre," OC 2:LXXXV.

66. Les Prisonniers de guerre, OC 2:863.

67. Ibid, 874.

68. Jacques Scherer, "Notes," La Mort de Lucrèce, OC 2:1871.

69. Ibid, 1872.

70. Lettre à d'Alembert, OC 5:111.

71. Voltaire, Brutus, OEuvres complètes, (Paris: Journal du Siècle, 1867-1873) Folio, 9 vols., 3:155.

72. Confessions, OC 1:392.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid, 393.

75. Ibid, 394.

76. Jacques Scherer, "Notes," La Mort de Lucrèce, OC 2:1869, n. 2.

77. Ibid, 1871.

78. Voltaire, Discours sur la tragédie, OEuvres complètes, Folio, 3:139.

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79. Ibid.

80. <u>La Nouvelle Héloïse</u>, OC 2:745, footnote.

81. <u>La Mort de Lucrèce</u>, OC 2:1029.

82. Ibid, 1032.

83. Ibid, 1037.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid, 1039.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid, 1041.

88. Rousseau, <u>Discours sur la vertu du hêros</u>, OC 2:1264.

89. Ibid, 1265.

90. For a complete discussion of this concept see Jean Starobinski, "The Antidote in the Poison: The Thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <u>Blessings in Disguise; or, The Morality of Evil</u>, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) 118-168.

91. <u>Discours sur la vertu du hêros</u>, OC 2:1265.

92. <u>La Mort de Lucrèce</u>, OC 2:1034.

93. Ibid, 1043.

94. Ibid, 1032.

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid, 1024.

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid, 1045.

99. Ibid, 1046.

100. Rousseau, <u>Essai sur l'origine des langues</u>, OC 5:376.

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101. Ibid, 377.

102. Ibid, 380.

103. Ibid, 377.

104. Confessions, OC 1:576-57.

105. Ibid, 577.

106. Ibid, 594.

107. Rousseau, Le Lévite d'Ephraïm, OC 2:1205.

108. Ibid, 1206.

109. Confessions, OC 1:586.

110. Ibid.

111. Le Lévite d'Ephraïm, OC 2:1216.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid, 1218.

114. Ibid, 1219.

115. Ibid, 1220.

116. Ibid, 1223.

117. Ibid.

118. Lettre à d'Alembert, OC 5:20.

119. La Mort de Lucrèce, OC 2:1045.

120. Ibid, 1044.

121. Ibid.

122. See Marvin Carlson, Theatre of the Revolution, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966) 54.

Carlson describes Brutus's impact on the revolutionaries:

> The mayor's fears were more than justified, for the performance was one of the most turbulent since the beginning of the Revolution. Even before the play

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began, Mirabeau was sighted in the fourth box, and heartily cheered; he stepped forward to acknowledge the tribute to a new burst of applause. The revolutionary fervor carried over into the performance, moreover, as verse after verse was followed by extended applause.

123. Voltaire, OEuvres complête, Folio 3:155.

124. Ibid.

125. Robert L. Herbert, David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution: An Essay on Art and Politics, (New York: Viking, 1973) 80-81.

126. Carlson, Voltaire, 153.

127. Ibid, 163.

128. Roger Gautier, "Les idêes sociales et politiques dans le thêâtre de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," Revue de la sociêtê d'histoire du thêâtre (Paris, 1991) Oct-Dec 172:309.

129. Carlson, Theatre of the French Revolution, 26.

130. Ibid, 21-33.

131. Carlson, Voltaire, 161.

132. Carlson, Theatre of the French Revolution, 23.

133. Carlson, Voltaire, 161.

134. The stories of the other two prose tragedies of this century--Landois's Sylvie ou le Jaloux (1741) and Mme de Graffigny's Cênie (1752)--were both set in the Eighteenth Century (see Rougemont, 30).

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Chapter Five

Rousseau and Metamorphoses: Iphis and Pygmalion

Rousseau's journey as a young and inexperienced composer of Iphis to his final victory over Rameau as the supreme composer of his day was a journey that resulted in his transformation from idolater of all things French to a devastating critic of French music and high culture, and finally into a visionary who, under the powerful spell of Gluck's operas, was metamorphosed into the creator of a new form of theatre, the lyric melodrama.

The eight years it took Rousseau to create his Pygmalion were the hardest years of his life, years of exile from both Paris and Geneva. But they were also formative years in which Rousseau's rejection of Paris would be gradually transformed into a desire to once more triumph in her theatres. In 1762 Rousseau began writing the libretto of his Pygmalion in Môtiers. At Strasbourg in October 1765 he personally directed his Devin du village. In January 1766 Rousseau caused a sensation in London: King George III offered him a royal pension; Garrick commissioned a translation of his Devin du village adapted by Charles Burney into The Cunning-Man. In April 1770 Rousseau premiered his Pygmalion in Lyons. Its success inspired Paris to open her arms to Rousseau once again.

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Iphis

Rousseau may have written his Iphis in Chambéry as early as 1737 or as late as 1740; the clumsiness of the work causes Scherer to place its creation at the earlier date.[1] As its title page indicates, it was a tragic opera intended "pour l'Academie Royalle de Musique."[2] In his Confessions, Rousseau would have his readers believe that he thought little of it, for he writes: "J'avois fait à Chambéri un Opera tragedie intitulé Iphis et Anaxarete, que j'avois eu le bon sens de jetter au feu."[3] But as Scherer points out, this was not the case: "Loin d'avoir été jetée au feu, cette oeuvre de jeunesse a été soigneusement conservée."[4] The care Rousseau took in preserving the libretto reveals a more affectionate attitude towards one of his "enfans illégitimes."[5] As proof of the naïveté of Rousseau's earliest operatic work, Scherer points out that at three points in the beginning of the opera, characters exit as others enter without any acknowledgment of each others' presence or dramatic justification for their silence. "Une telle absence de liaison entre les scènes," Scherer maintains, "n'est pratiquement plus tolérée dans le théâtre français depuis près d'un siècle."[6] Perhaps Rousseau's awareness of these flaws was one of the reasons why only six scenes were completed before the work was abandoned.

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A comparison of Rousseau's text with the original story in Ovid's _Metamorphoses_ reveals that from the beginning Rousseau was already using theatre as a way of projecting an ideal world in which he yearned to dwell. His Iphis is a version of himself consumed by hopeless desire for an unattainable woman. This theme was to be continually repeated in his future theatrical and fictional works which culminated in his _Pygmalion_. Since both works draw on stories from Ovid's _Metamorphoses_ and since both deal with marble statues of beautiful women, it is fitting that this, perhaps his earliest theatrical work, be paired with his last theatrical work, _Pygmalion_.

In Ovid's tale from Book XIV of _The Metamorphoses_ the youthful Iphis, a commoner, falls in love with Queen Anaxarete, who is coldly indifferent to all of his attempts to woo her. Finally, in despair, he hangs himself from the lintel of her doorway. His body is carried to his mother, who mourns him and has his corpse burned on a pyre strategically placed within sight of Anaxarete's window. Rather than being chastened by the sight, Anaxarette watches the cremation with cool detachment. Venus, offended by the queen's coldness, turns her into marble.

Rousseau sets his tragedy in ancient Greece. In order to make the story suitable for the Opêra, Rousseau elaborates on and changes it by adding more characters

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and by having Anaxarette in love with Iphis. To add more love interest, Anaxarette is given a rival, Princess Elise, "de la cour d'Ortule," who is also in love with Iphis, now elevated to the position of "officier de la maison d'Ortule." Elise is provided with a confidante and servant, Orane.[7] To this mix, Rousseau adds Philoxis, "prince de Miscêne," who, for saving King Ortule's throne by putting down a revolt in a single glorious battle, is offered Anaxarette for his bride. The situation, as Scherer observes, is reminiscent of Corneille's _Le Cid_.[8]

The opening scene of _Iphis_ represents a seashore. In the background one sees "une mer Couverte de vaisseaux."[9] As the scene opens, Orane and Elise are conversing. Orane tries to lift Elise's hopes of winning Iphis by telling her that Philoxis has come to marry Anaxarette who is more interested in the power such a marriage will bring than in her forsaken love for Iphis.

> ORANE
> . . .
> Elle consent sans peine â ce choix glorieux,
> L'aspect d'un souverain puissant, victorieux
> Efface dans son coeur la plus vive tendresse.
> Le trop constant Iphis n'est plus rien â ses yeux.
> Sa seule grandeur l'interesse. 10

Rousseau has made Iphis's love more tragic by his having once been loved by the queen who now scorns him. The element of unrequited love is shared by Elise. Knowing that Iphis still loves Anaxarette, she doubts his feelings will ever change.

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ELISE
En vain tout paroit conspirer
A favoriser ma flame.
Je n'ose point encor, chére Orane, esperer
Qu'il devienne sensible aux tourmens de mon ame.
Je connois trop Iphis, je ne puis m'en flatter.
Son coeur est trop constant son amour est trop
tendre. 11

As a theme, the contest between Iphis and a figure of greater stature (Alcide) for the love of a queen (Omphale) was treated in Destouches's lyric tragedy _Omphale_ (1701), a work which, as the reader may recall, was subjected to Grimm's and Rousseau's criticism during the _querelle des Bouffons_. Scherer points out that the ability of love to transcend class was a subject of passionate interest to the poets of the Seventeenth Century but was passé in the Eighteenth, when social rank had become far more fixed.[12] Rousseau's interest was clearly a personal one that, as Scherer writes, "l'attirait parce qu'il présentait, de toute évidence, l'écho de sa situation personnelle."[13]

It is in the nature of this "situation personnelle" that the question of when _Iphis_ was written arises. As Scherer remarks: "Les critiques hésitent entre 1737 et 1739 ou 1740, c'est-à-dire avant ou après le voyage à Montpellier."[14] Why this period? Because it was at this point in time, while he was living with Mme de Warens in Chambéry, that Rousseau's relationship with his _Maman_ was suddenly in jeopardy. The crisis, as was often the case with Rousseau, affected his health. He fell ill,

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and having little faith in doctors, diagnosed himself as having "un polype au coeur."[15] Shortly before this malady, he had suffered from what he diagnosed as "les vapeurs." It was an affliction he took pride in:

> Les vapeurs sont les maladies des gens heureux; c'êtoit la mienne: les pleurs que je versois souvent sans raison de pleurer, les frayeurs vives au bruit d'une feuille ou d'un oiseau; l'inêgalitê d'humeur dans le calme de la plus douce vie, tout cela marquoit cet ennui du bien être qui fait pour ainsi dire extravaguer la sensibilitê. 16

Rousseau's characterization of his happiness as uneasy indicates that his vapors, like his polyp, were probably psychosomatic, brought on by anxiety. The event that may have triggered this anxiety and may have urged him to flee to Montpellier for a cure was the sudden appearance of a young rival for the affections of Mme de Warens. The man's name was Wintzenried.

Cranston, for one, takes the position that Rousseau was already aware of the threat before he left for Montpellier.[17] He notes that although Rousseau writes in his Confessions that he took little notice of Wintzenried before leaving, his correspondence indicates otherwise. The reader may recall that it was at Grenoble, where Rousseau stopped on his way to Montpellier, that Jean-Jacques wrote to Mme de Warens about having taken sick at a performance of Voltaire's Alzire.[18] Under the circumstances one may wonder if his sickness was brought on by his fear of Wintzenried left alone with his Maman.

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His anxiety must surely have grown when, after five weeks of waiting, he received no response to this letter. When Mme de Warens finally wrote him she urged him to stay at Montpellier until the Feast of Saint John. He replied: "je ne le ferois pas, quand on m'y couvriroit d'or."[19]

His next letter to her is filled with more foreboding and reveals that he knows that circumstances have changed between them. In it he pleads for some place beside her, if not the same as before. "Il est inutile," he writes her, "de penser que je puisse vivre autrement." He goes on to beg: "Pourvû que j'aie cet avantage, dans quelque état que je sois tout m'est indifférent." Finally he alludes to her unspoken secret. "Quand on pense comme cela je crois qu'il n'est pas difficile d'éluder les raisons importantes que vous ne voulés pas me dire." The letter ends in a tone of mixed despair and hope:

> Au nom de Dieu rangés les choses de sorte que je ne meure pas au désespoir. J'approuve tout, je me soumets a tout, excepté ce seul article, auquel je me sens hors d'état de consentir, dussai-je être la proie du plus miserable sort. Ah, ma chére Maman, n'étes vous donc plus ma chére Maman? Ai-je vécu quelques mois de trop? 20

When Rousseau returned to Chambéry he found his anxiety justified. He took pains to arrive on time hoping to see his _Maman_ waiting anxiously for him on the road. But no one greeted him there. Full of fear, he raced to the house and found her with Wintzenried and quite indifferent to his return:

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> Cet accueil m'interdit un peu. Je lui demandai si elle n'avoit pas receu ma lettre? Elle me dit qu'oui. J'aurois cru que non, lui dis-je; et l'éclaircissement finit-là. Un jeune homme étoit avec elle. Je le connoissois pour l'avoir vu déja dans la maison avant mon départ: mais cette fois il y paroissoit établi, il'étoit. Bref je trouvai ma place prise. 21

It is possible that Rousseau wrote Iphis before departing for Montpellier, when he was already aware of Mme de Waren's attraction to Wintzenried. But the argument could be made that his suspicions only grew from Mme de Warens's long silences and her cool tone of her letters.

In any case, the situation in his tragic opera clearly parallels his own at that time. Like Iphis, Rousseau is confronted with a rival and like Jean-Jacques pining for Mme de Warens, Iphis, in turn, is tortured with fear that his love for Anaxarette will have no power to prevent her marriage.

> IPHIS, seul.
> Amour que de tourmens j'endure sous ta loi,
> Que mes maux sont cruels, que ma peine est extrême.
> Je crains de perdre ce que j'aime.
> J'ai beau m'assurer sur son coeur,
> Je sens helas que son ardeur
> M'est une trop foible assurance
> Pour me rendre mon esperance. 22

In his Confessions, Rousseau's opinion of Wintzenried is contemptuous; he characterizes him as the sort of jeune amoureux depicted in Molière's l'Étourdi:

> C'étoit un grand fade blondin assez bienfait, le visge plat, l'esprit de même, parlant comme le beau Liandre, mêlant tous les tons, tous les gouts de son état avec la longue histoire de ses bonnes fortunes; ne nommant que la moitié des Marquises avec lesquelles il avoit couché, et prétendant n'avoir point coeffé de jolies femmes dont il n'eut aussi coeffé les maris. 23

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For Rousseau, such a figure would never do as the rival of Iphis. In the fantasy world of his opera Rousseau gave his hero (and thus himself) a far nobler rival, one more heroic and worthy of the hand of a queen:

> IPHIS
> . . .
> Je voi déja sur ce rivage
> Un rival orgueilleux couronné de lauriers
> Au milieu de mille guerriers
> Lui presenter un doux hommage.
> En cet état ose-t-on refuser
> Un amant tout couvert de gloire?
> Hélas je ne puis accuser
> Que sa grandeur et sa victoire.
> De funestes pressentimens
> Tour à tour dévourent mon ame. 24

Actually, history presents quite an admiring portrait of Rousseau's rival, whose full name was Jean-Samuel-Rodolphe Wintzenried.[25] According to a report of the Intendant General of Chambéry presented to the court in Turin in 1757, his father was the châtelain of the Castle of Chillon. Like Rousseau, he ran away and converted to Catholicism, thus finding himself placed in the care of Mme de Warens. He was put in charge of a number of Mme de Warens's business enterprises and, in 1749, became inspector and controller of her mines at Haute-Maurienne. The Intendant General described young Wintzenried as spirited and clever.

> et marque du goût et de l'intelligence en tout ce qui ressort de l'exploitation des mines et de l'excavation du charbon. Il s'énonce bien, il parle un peu volotiers et même il sait bien faire valoir tout ce qu'il a fait.

Scherer adds that there is no evidence that Wintzenried

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was ever a wig-maker. The historical Wintzenried comes off as a far more formidable rival, one who promised Mme de Warens both financial stability and position-- not unlike the marriage between Anaxarette and Philoxis. If this is true, then Rousseau's opera reflects more closely the truth of his situation in 1737 than his Confessions, which were written over forty years later.

Rousseau, in the fantasy world of his opera, projects a remorseful Maman in the figure of Anaxarette and pours into her mouth all the words he will never hear Mme de Warens utter:

> ANAXARETTE
> Je cherche en vain à dissiper mon trouble.
> Non rien ne sauroit l'appaiser.
> J'ai beau m'y vouloir opposer,
> Malgré moi ma peine redouble.
>
> Enfin il est donc vrai j'épouse Philoxis
> Et j'ai pu consentir à trahir ma tendresse.
> C'est inutilement que mon coeur s'interesse
> Au bonheur de l'aimable Iphis.
> Falloit-il Dieux puissans qu'une si douce flamme
> Dont j'attendois tout mon bonheur
> N'ait pu passer jusqu'en mon ame
> Sans offenser ma gloire et mon honneur? 26

Her struggle anticipates that of Julie in La Nouvelle Héloïse. Both, in the end, yield to necessity and give up their true love for a higher duty to domestic and political stability.

> ANAXARETTE
> Je sens encor tout mon amour
> Quoi que pour l'étouffer l'ambition m'inspire
> Et je m'aperçois trop qu'à leur tour
> Mes yeux versent des pleurs et que mon coeur soupire.
> Mais quoi pourrois-je balancer?
> Pour deux objets puis-je m'interesser?

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L'un est roi triomphant, l'autre amant sans naissance.
Ah! sans rougir je ne puis y penser
Et j'en sens trop la difference
Pour oser encore hesiter.
Non sachons mieux nous acquitter
Des loix que la gloire m'impose.
Regnons: mon rang ne me propose
Qu'une couronne â souhaitter
Et je ne serois plus digne de la porter
Si je desirois autre chose. 27

In accordance with the requirements of opera at that time a number of choruses are added: a chorus of Warriors, a chorus of followers of Anaxarete, a chorus of gods and goddesses, a chorus of sacrificers, and finally a chorus of dancing Furies. These last three choruses are not utilized in the unfinished text, but indicate in a general way the direction in which the opera's plot was meant to progress. Clearly there are some problems in this story that violate even the more relaxed rules of <u>bienséance</u> found in Rameau's operas. Iphis cannot hang himself on stage or off. How did Rousseau intend for him to end his life? Was his death in the form of a sacrifice to the gods? The Incan priest Huascar, in Rameau's <u>Les Indes galantes</u> is annihilated by a volcano. In opera, such violent deaths were allowed to be portrayed. There was to be a sacrifice, gods and goddesses will appear, and Furies will pursue some guilty soul. Anaxarette will be turned into marble. But did Rousseau plan that her spirit would be pursued by Furies? Or are they, rather than Venus, the cause of Anaxarette's

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metamorphosis? Venus is not listed in the cast, although she may be among the chorus of gods and goddesses.

It may be that Rousseau also abandoned this work because he was unable to resolve the problems of _bienséance_, particularly the issue of suicide, which was scorned by the sensibility of his age, just as it scorned the suicide of Lucrèce.

Pygmalion's Progenitors

Had Rousseau completed his _Iphis_, theatre history might have been given two works of Rousseau's dealing with flesh and stone. _Iphis_ would have shown the opposite face of _Pygmalion_ in which love breathes warm life into cold marble. The subject of stone transformed into life was popular at this time. (As I shall discuss later, it had symbolic meaning to the Lockeans--to Rameau in particular.) Alexis Piron wrote a comic opera for the Thêâtre de la Foire in 1722 titled _Arlequin-Deucalion_ parodying the Greek myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha, the sole survivors of the great flood. Themis commands them, elderly though they are, to repopulate the Earth, which she says can be accomplished by throwing their grandmother's bones behind them. Comically, Pulichinelle makes Arlequin understand that stones, not bones, must be thrown over their shoulders. The stones then turn into people as they roll downhill.

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Like Rousseau's Pygmalion, Piron's comic opera was a monologue; but Piron's was one out of necessity. Since 1718 the Comédie Française had succeed in forcing the Théâtre de la Foire to perform without spoken dialogue. Its only concession was to allow a single onstage actor to speak. Piron had the will and the talent to rise to the challenge. He employed offstage voices and onstage mutes for Arlequin to relate to. For example, Polichinelle's torso appears out of the barrel which Deucalion and Pirrah inhabited during the flood and speaks gibberish, but is interpreted by the voice of a stooge in the trap-door of the stage over which a barrel has been placed. The pivotal conversation in the dialogue between the two characters in Act 3, Scene 4 reads:

ARLEQUIN, s'agenouillant.
Grand dieu des Petites-Maisons,
Qu'il vous plaise ici nous instruire!

POLICHINELLE
Je suis tout prêt, tu n'as qu'à dire:
Sur quoi veux-tu de mes leçons?

ARLEQUIN
Mon épouse et moi nous songeons
Au moyen de pouvoir repeuple votre empire.

Nous avons là-dessus consulté Thémis. Prenez, nous a-t-elle dit, les os de votre grand-mère, et les jetez derrière vous. O vous qui avez si savamment inspiré tant de commentateurs, ne pourriez-vous pas nous donner la clef de cet oracle?

POLICHINELLE
Rien n'est plus facile à faire;
Vous le saurez en deux mots:
La Terre est votre grand-mère,
Et les pierres sont ses os.

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> Ramassez ici des pierres; jetez-les par-dessus votre tête. Tournez-la! Toi, tu auras fait des garçons, que tu verras aussi sots que toi; elle, des filles, qui lui ressembleront. 28

There was another version of the myth, Deucalion et Pirrha, with a libretto by Poullain de Saint-Foix and music by Girard and Berton that was presented on 30 September 1755 at the Opêra. Although it seems to have failed--perhaps due to the impact of Piron's farce--[29] it is of interest in this study because, instead of stones, Saint-Foix employed a statue of indistinct gender. To avoid the absurdity of an elderly couple mating, Saint-Foix presents Deucalion and Pirrha as young. A goddess tells them that in order to have children they must place a garland around the neck of the statue which will then come to life. The couple, each in turn, fears that the statue will turn into a rival for their love. Finally they throw the garland over the statue and start to run away. But the statue stops them and they see that it is Cupid. I will return to this opera later when discussing its other significant relationships to Rousseau's Pygmalion.

1735 saw the premiere of an opêra comique by Panard and Laffilard called Pygmalion ou la statue animée.[30] It is a comic opera in the full tradition of the genre, with its bawdy double entendres; for example, Galatea is called Galantis. All of the verses are set to the melodies of popular songs. In Scene 2 the tune of La

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bonne aventure accompanies the words: "Zeste, Zeste, plus de chagrin / L'amour change notre destin." In the same scene the mood is changed as "Voyez dans quel rêverie / l'a plongé le dieu des amours" is sung to the tune of Folies d'Espagne. As Jean-Christophe Rebejkow points out: "La variante d'un air bien connu dans l'opéra-comique de la première moitié du siècle est particulièrement caractéristique du ton du théâtre de la foire."[31] He goes on to say that such lyrics and songs are in the tradition of opéra comique where "le ton de la tragédie alterne également avec celui du langage de la comédie."

Of more importance to my discussion is Rameau's Pygmalion. In the beginning of the century, Houdar de La Motte adapted the Pygmalion story to the stage. In his version the sculptor Pygmalion falls in love with a statue he has created of his ideal woman and is filled with anguish at the impossiblity of making love to it. Venus takes pity on him and brings the statue to life, at which point Pygmalion and Galatea are joined in love. It was this work that Rameau had adapted for his Pygmalion, an acte de ballet which premiered 27 August 1748.

The acte de ballet is a short opera form. Unlike an opéra ballet which is written in four or five entrées (or acts), the acte de ballet is meant to stand on its own, although it can be taken from an entrée of opéra ballet, in which case the description ballet détaché is

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added, or it could be a new *entrée* added to an existing *opéra ballet*, as was the case with "Les Sauvages," which was added to Rameau and Fuzelier's *Les Indes galantes*. Rameau's *Pygmalion* was written as an autonomous *acte de ballet* with a libretto by Ballot de Sauvot based La Motte's play written in 1700.[32] Sauvot (or Savot), Rameau's librettist for his *Pygmalion*, handled the story in a manner in keeping with the rococo tastes of the Regency. Alone in his studio, Pygmalion anguishes over the love his statue inspires in him at the cost of alienating his mistress, Céphise.

> PYGMALION
> Fatal Amour, cruel vainqueur,
> Quels traits as-tu choisis pour me percer le coeur?
> Je tremblais de t'avoir pour maître;
> J'ai craint d'être sensible, il falloit m'en punir;
> Mais devais-je le devenir
> Pour un objet qui ne peut l'estre? (Scene 1)

Pygmalion is given a mistress, Céphise, who is helpless to win back Pygmalion's love now that he has invested it in a new object, the marble statue of his ideal woman. Pygmalion's quest for the perfect object of his desire has turned his heart against Céphise, who leaves him:

> CEPHISE
> Cruel, il est donc vrai que cet objet t'enflamme,
> A de si vains transports abandonne ton âme,
> Puissent les justes Dieux, par cette folle ardeur,
> Punir l'égarement de ton barbare coeur.(Scene 2)

But the gods do not punish Pygmalion. Rather he is rewarded by Cupid and the statue comes to life. In his justification, Cupid expresses the rococo aesthetic:

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L'AMOUR _à Pygmalion_
Du pouvoir de l'Amour ce prodige est l'effet.
L'Amour dès longtemps aspirait
À former par ses dons l'être le plus aimable;
Mais pour les unir tous, il fallait un objet
Dont ton Art seul était capable.
Il vit et c'est pour toi; pour toi ses tendres feux
Etaient de tes talents la juste récompense.
Tu servis trop bien ma puissance,
Pour ne pas mériter d'être à jamais heureux.
(Scene 4)

Rameau's opera almost touches on the central theme of Rousseau's _Pygmalion_: the transmission of oneself into the _objet d'art_. But it is merely erotic pleasure that Rameau's Statue is meant to serve, the living Statue is little more than the selfless minion of his fantasies.

LA STATUE
Ciel! quel objet? mon âme en est ravie;
Je goûte en le voyant le plaisir le plus doux,
Ah! je sens que les dieux qui me donnent la vie
Ne me la donnent que pour vous.

PYGMALION
De mes maux à jamais cet aveu me délivre;
Vous seule, aimable objet, pouviez me secourir;
Si le ciel ne vous eût fait vivre,
Il me condamnait à mourir!

LA STATUE
Quel heureux sort pour moi! vous partagez ma flamme,
Ce n'est pas votre voix
Qui m'en instruit le mieux,
Et je reconnais dans vos yeux
Ce que je ressens dans mon âme.

PYGMALION
Pour un coeur tout à moi puis-je trop m'enflammer?
Que votre ardeur doit m'être chère,
Vos premiers mouvements ont été de m'aimer.

LA STATUE
Mon premier désir de vous plaire.
Je suivrai toujours votre loi. . . .
Prenez soin d'un destin que j'ignore,
Tout ce que je connois de moi,
C'est que je vous adore. (Scene 3)

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The structure of Rameau's _acte de ballet_ is also in the courtly rococo convention. The conclusion of Scene 4 consists of a series of popular court dances which the Graces teach to the living Statue. The opera climaxes when a Chorus, overcome with erotic excitement, bursts onto the stage dancing and singing: "Cēdons, cēdons ā notr'impatience, / Courons tous, courons tous."

On the surface, Rameau's opera eschews all profound meaning, its purpose seems to be to urge the elite audience to lose itself in a self-indulgent fantasy of the unquestionable worth of its own ethos, in this case expressed through the powers of Eros. But as I shall discuss shortly, its underlying purpose is a profoundly metaphysical one that appealed to Lockean devoteēs, two important ones being Diderot and d'Alembert who both took a personal interest in explicating Rameau's theories.

Rousseau's _Pygmalion_ (1770), by contrast, was not designed to gratify the reigning elite, but himself. Although it was also, in its way, a self-indulgent fantasy, it was a far more profound one which was to have significant resonance for the Romantics. In an essay written but not circulated during the _querrelle des Bouffons_, Rousseau commented on Rameau's _Pygmalion_. The essay helps to link Rousseau's _opēra comique_, _Le Devin du village_, and his _scēne lyrique_, _Pygmalion_. As I shall later discuss, _Pygmalion_ is the work that attempts to

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resolve the very problems involved in writing French opera--problems Rousseau had raised in his _Lettre sur la musique françoise_ (1753). In 1755 Rousseau responded to Rameau's subsequent attack on the _Lettre_ with his _Examen de deux principes avancés par M. Rameau dans sa brochure intitulées Erreurs sur la musique dans l'Encyclopédie_, a work he did not have published until after Rameau's death in 1764. In his discussion Rousseau quotes and comments on Rameau's _Erreurs_ in which Rameau defends the power of the chorus (as opposed to the aria) to move listeners and uses as an example the chorus _l'amour triomphe_ in Scene 5 of his _Pygmalion_::

> _Tout Choeur de musique_, dit-il, _qui est lent et dont la succession harmonique est bonne plait toujours sans le secours d'aucun dessein, ni d'une mélodie qui puisse affecter d'elle-même, et ce plaisir est tout autre que celui qu'on éprouve ordinairement d'un chant agréable ou simplement vif et gai_. (Ce parallele d'un Choeur lent et d'un air vif et gai me paroit assez plaisant.) _L'un se rapporte directement â l'ame_, (Notez bien que c'est le grand Choeur â quatre parties.) _l'autre ne passe pas le canal de l'oreille_. (C'est la chant selon M. Rameau.) _J'en appelle encore â l'amour triomphe déja cité plus d'une fois_. (Cela est vrai.) _Que l'on compare le plaisir qu'on éprouve â celui que cause un air soit vocal soit instrumental_.33

Rousseau emphasizes the difference between their two philosophies. Rameau defends the position that the _corps sonore_ is in tune with the human soul. In order for music to stir one's soul, he declares, it must be in harmony with it via the harmony of a chorus or an orchestra. A melody, being musically flat, has no power to penetrate

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the _corps sonore_, it can only brush the surface.

What Rameau hears as profound harmony Rousseau hears as noise that annihilates melody. He comments that such mentalities are more impressed by the noise of a tambourine than by the voice of a nightingale.

> ils seront hommes enfin. Je n'en veux pas davantage pour leur faire sentir que les sons les plus capables d'affecter l'ame ne sont point ceux d'un choeur de musique. 34

Rousseau dismisses the concept of the _corps sonore_ as a word that "annonce un physicien dans celui qui l'employe."[35] He argues that harmony that does not support a melody but stands alone is purely mechanical and can only affect the physical being not the spiritual. Rameau's _corps sonore_ is therefore merely a superficial phenomenon. It can never reach the depths of the soul, merely the vanity of the ear.

But Rousseau was either unimpressed by what Rameau was trying to accomplish in his _Pygmalion_, or missed the point. It was not missed by Diderot, d'Alembert, or Grimm. As Thomas Christensen argues, Rameau's _Pygmalion_ had resonance of a far more intellectual nature. Its purpose was not only to please the rococo tastes of the Regency, but far more importantly, the _philosophes_.[36] Diderot had, through great effort, managed to woo Rameau from the Cartesian camp, with its concepts of innate ideas and its distrust of sensory observations, to that of the Lockeans, who went far beyond Locke by contending that

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all knowledge is based on sensory imput alone.[37] The step was not a difficult one for Rameau. As Christensen points out: "It was quite easy to reconcile Descartes's mechanistic metaphysics with sensationalism simply by stripping away the former of innate ideas and God."[38] As a way of expressing this idea, the Lockeans borrowed, from Condillac's Traité des sensations (1754), his metaphor of the marble statue. By providing the statue with one set of sensory organs at a time, Condillac demonstrated that, although each sensory organ is limited by its physical nature to the data it can process, as new sensory organs are added and their data compared the external world enters the dead marble and, by awkening its senses, brings it to life. The idea was in accord with Rameau's concept of the corps sonore; and it was no great leap for Rameau to see how the story of Pygmalion might demonstrate this concept. To those audience members in tune with its meaning, the awakening of Pygmalion's statue became a sensational demonstration of Rameau's Lockean conversion. In Scene 3 Pygmalion is alone with the Statue when suddenly he hears music: "D'oû naissant ces accords?" he asks, "Quels sons harmonieux?" Christensen writes:

> He need not have looked far: the souce of these harmonies was indicated by Rameau's orchestration. The "delicate and harmonious" E major triad is dispositioned by Rameau following the initial proportions of the corps sonore. Over the three following measures, the violins and flutes slowly unfold the upper partials, as if Rameau were composing out the corps sonore itself. 39

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The Statue begins to stir, steps down from her pedestal, and walks towards Pygmalion. The Statue asks: "Que vois-je? Où suis-je? Et qu'est-ce que je pense? D'où me viennent ces mouvements?" These questions, as Christensen comments, "were suitably philosophical ones that would have pleased Diderot."[40] Grimm was also pleased. In his *Lettre sur Omphale* he calls Rameau "grand três souvent et toujours original," and goes on to praise "ce devin *Pygmalion*," as far more pleasing than *Omphale*.[4]

Rousseau and the *opéra comique*.

In Lyons on 19 April 1770 an audience of the local elite witnessed the premiere of Rousseau's *Pygmalion*. Word of the event quickly reached Paris. An entry in Grimm's *Correspondance littéraire* of 1770 reads:

> J.J. Rousseau se trouve depuis quelque temps â Lyon. . . . il a traité le sujet de *Pygmalion* dans un acte d'opéra-comique, moitié chanté et moitié parlé, suivant les us babares de la nouvelle cuisine française. 42

Despite his inaccurate description (there is no singing in Rousseau's *Pygmalion*), Grimm understood the work as the sort of "nouvelle cuisine" served up at the *opéra comique*. The English musicologist and composer Charles Burney was given the opposite impression. In planning his 1770 tour of France and Italy he wrote in his journal:

> Mr. Walpole informed me that by going through Lyons I should meet with Rousseau. who was there, and had written and composed a little Opera called Pygmalion, which was acting there; but all in pantomime, to music of his own composition. 43

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Burney was misinformed on three counts: first, Rousseau's Pygmalion is not an opera; second, although there is pantomime there is also spoken dialogue; and third, most of the music was not composed by Rousseau.

Burney's and Grimm's confusion as to its nature emphasize the uniqueness of what Rousseau had created. Grimm was not wrong in linking Rousseau's Pygmalion to the opéra-comique; nor was his remark meant to disparage that aspect of the work. By 1770 the opéra-comique had achieved official status. In 1762 it merged with the Comédie Italienne and the new company was re-named the Opéra Comique. Grimm understood the appeal of opéra comique which he explains in his Lettre sur Omphale:

> La musique italienne promet et donne du plaisir à tout homme qui a des oreilles, il ne faut pas plus de préparation que cela. 44

His observation explained in a nutshell the egalitarian goal of Rousseau's campaign against French music, to make opera accessible to all social levels. Before we examine Rousseau's Pygmalion, therefore, it is of some importance to see the relationship between Rousseau's new theatrical forms and the opéra-comique.

In 1752, with the lifting of the 1745 ban on the fair theatres and the return of the Italian opera buffa company, the opéra-comique, under the direction of Jean Monnet, entered its most progressive decade. With the premieres of La Serva padrona and Le Devin du village, the opéra-comique

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responded to the new challenges provoked by these productions. Its higher status was mostly due to Charles Simon Favart who took over the direction of the _opéra comique_ after Jean Monnet and raised the early _opéra comique_ from works composed of low and crude subject matter and language to works of wit and sophistication. Even Voltaire later complimented Favart on his achievement at turning into successful comic operas two of Voltaire's own tales, _L'Education d'une fille_ (which became _Isabelle et Gertrude_) and _La Fée Urgèle_.[45]

Even before the ban on the fair theatres, Favart was already demonstrating his powers there. In 1741 Favart's _La Chercheuse d'esprit_, an _opéra comique_ that parodied the story of Daphnis and Chloe, ran for over 200 performances. Its music was lifted from operatic arias and popular songs of the day.[46] Favart, who was a music compiler rather than composer, probably got his inspiration from his father, a baker who set his pastry recipes to well-known tunes.[47]

At the fair, in 1752, Favart parodied Rousseau's _Devin du village_ in _Les Amours de Bastien et Bastienne_, in which his wife played the role of Bastienne. But Favart's musical compilations were soon eclipsed by new works of accomplished musicians. In the five years following the arrival of the _bouffons_ numerous works were created in Paris imitating the Italian style.

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The impact of the reforms brought about at the opéra comique was far-reaching, even inspiring Gluck in Vienna, who composed works for the Habsburg Court in the style of opéra comique from French libretti often furnished by Favart. His comic operas ranged from L'Isle de Merlin and La fausse Esclave in 1758 to Le Cadi dupé in 1761. The plots of Gluck's comic operas were the usual mixture of what Alfred Einstein described as "stupid, mean or grumbling old men, shy pairs of lovers, roguish girls, merry lads, beatific drunkards." Einstein observes that: "The spirit which Rousseau called 'the return to nature' is to be perceived everywhere."[48] Gluck displayed his versatility and skill by being able to balance the French and Italian styles these works imposed. His ultimate achievement was in carrying these styles over to the opera seria with his first masterpiece, Orfeo ed Euridice (1762).[49] Seeing Gluck's operas in Paris would, in turn, inspire Rousseau to rewrite the music to his Devin du village and compose a new opera, Daphnis et Chloé.

In his article The Beginnings of the Operatic Romance Daniel Heartz claims that Rousseau "owes a considerable debt" to Favart for inspiring his Devin du village:[50]

> Several of the small airs in the work, such as "Je vais revoir ma charmante maîtresse" and "Ta foi ne m'est point ravie," both sung by Colin, are scarcely more elaborate than similar minuet-like airs in Favart's vaudeville comedies. Moreover, the theme of rural virtue and freedom suffering corruption by the high-born and the citified was a specialty of Favart's long before it became the message in Le Devin du village.[51]

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Although all of his published works are silent concerning this debt, according to Heartz, Rousseau did in fact acknowledge it by dedicating a separate printing of the libretto of his Devin du village to Favart.[52] Jean-Christophe Rebejkow agrees with Heartz and sees Rousseau's official rejection of opéra-comique as even more ambiguous than that of Voltaire, who at least openly, if somewhat abashedly, acknowledged his gratitude to Favart.[53]

R Rebejkow's article "Rousseau et l'opéra-comique: les raisons d'un rejet" concerns itself with examining this problem: "Qu'est-ce donc," Rebejekow queries, "qui, par ailleurs--et paradoxalement semble-t-il--éloigne finalement Rousseau de l'opéra-comique?"[54] His answer is far too long and complex to properly examine here. But in essence he argues that although one can see the influence of Rousseau's Devin du village on future comic operas such as Monsigny's Rose et Colas and Grétry's Sylvain, and the reciprocal influence of Favart on Rousseau's Devin, in the end their views are not Rousseau's:

> Il's s'oppose ainsi au mouvement d'adaptation de la musique italienne . . . car selon Rousseau, la langue française, dépourvue d'accent, ne saurait se plier aux inflexions de la musique ultramontaine. 55

Rousseau's concerns are with the problem of the French language being inadequate for opera, and his Pygmalion is an attempt to resolve that problem by employing music and dialogue in a totally new way.

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The First Stage in the Creation of *Pygmalion*

The process of creating his lyric melodrama began in 1762, the year Rousseau completed the libretto. The eight years between its conception and its actualization were filled with remarkable productivity intermingled with distressful events. The year 1762, which marked the debut of the two works Rousseau considered his most important and for which he hoped to be celebrated in Geneva, his *Emile* and his *Contrat social*, also marked his exile from both Paris and Geneva.

Before events would throw his life into a tailspin, Rousseau was still basking in the glow of the tremendous success of his *Julie*, which was published in 1761. In this happy hiatus, Rousseau turned once more to his first love, the opera.

On 18 November 1762, Rousseau read the just-completed libretto of his *Pygmalion* to a young Bernese aristocrat named Nicolas-Antoine de Kirchberger who had visited Rousseau in Môtiers. On 21 January 1763, this news was transmitted by Julie de Bondeli in a letter to a Dr. Zimmermann:

> Rousseau a lu â M. Kirchbergeer une pièce admirable. C'est un drame, un seul acte, une seule scêne, un seul personnage, qui est Pygmalion. 56

Thus by January of 1763 a small group of people were already aware of the text of Rousseau's new theatrical work, but not yet aware that it was intended to be a new

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form of opera. What Rousseau had conceived was a *scène lyrique*: a form in which dialogue and music would be separate, with music taking over where words failed. The first stage of the work was the creation of Pygmalion's monologue. As I have indicated, the idea of a play done as a monologue was not new. Piron had already written his comic opera *Arlequin-Deucalion* as a"monologue" --although there are several characters that technically are not on stage, but certainly speak and sing a great deal. Piron wrote his work as a *tour de force* demonstrating how many ways he could produce multi-voiced dialogue without violating the rule allowing only one actor on the stage.

Rousseau's work was under no such restrictions. It grew out of a far more profound and personal aesthetic. It did not look back to the *opéra-comique* as its model--although most scholars see its links to that theatrical form. It would be more correct to view it as borrowing some theatrical elements from the *opéra-comique*, those elements that suited Rousseau's vision. To these elements Rousseau added a great deal more--much of it inspired by contemporary theories concerning ancient Greek music. Nevertheless, when *Pygmalion* first appeared on stage, it was seen by Grimm and others as a work in the tradition of *opéra-comique* because it did not fit any established tradition.

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Pygmalion depicts an artist, alone, isolated from the world, and filled with fear that his powers have abandoned him. His mind perceives an ideal, but his hands can no longer execute its orders:

> O mon gênie, où es-tu? Mon talent qu'es-tu devenu? Tout mon feu s'est étient, mon imagination s'est glacée, le marbre sort froid de mes mains. 57

He begins to doubt his own integrity. "Pygmalion, ne fais plus des Dieux: tu n'es qu'un vulgaire artiste." Gradually a portrait emerges; it is the portrait of Rousseau at the age of fifty, his youth with its promise of perfect love is gone--Sophie's love is gone, so too Mme de Warens's. His friends have abandoned him, the salons are a bitter memory. All that remains is his art:

> Tyr, ville opulente et superbe, les monumens des arts dont tu brilles ne m'attirent plus, j'ai perdu le goût que je prenois à les admirer: le commerce des Artistes et des Philosophes me devient insipide; l'entretien des Peintres et des Poëtes est sans attrait pour moi; la louange et la gloire n'élevent plus mon ame; les éloges de ceux qui en recevront de la postérité ne me touchent plus; l'amitié même a perdu pour moi ses charmes. 58

Into this work, Rousseau poured all of his regrets and his longings. Is it any wonder that, even without music, the text is compelling? Despite Rousseau's intentions, it is the text, rather than the music, that dominates the work. Embedded in the monologue is a theme of artistic struggle and the dream of ultimate triumph. Here is the work that fully justifies my thesis that Rousseau's theatre was profoundly personal. Here, as in all his poetry,

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stories, plays, and novels, is the continuation of his confession--or, rather, his self-justification, i.e., his justification as an artist. His quest--as will become the quest of the Romantics--is not public admiration or official awards, but artistic expression. Nevertheless, in its own way, his art is totally selfish and self-absorbed. As Starobinski observes, Rousseau's goal can be understood as:

> l'expression mythique d'une esthétique "sentimentale", qui assigne pour tâche à l'oeuvre d'art d'imiter l'idéal du désir, mais qui vise aussitôt à métamorphoser l'oeuvre en _bonheur_ _vécu_. 59

This idea can be applied to all of Rousseau's theatrical works. I will examine this idea more extensively later. The point I wish to make is that Rousseau's use of monologue and pantomime in _Pygmalion_ are motivated by a personal vision that would have a resonance for the Romantics quite opposite to that of Piron's.

But if the text contained profound meaning for the future Romatics, for Rousseau the music was equally important. Through its unique use, he hoped to create a new form of opera for the French. The creation of the music was delayed by the crisis that overtook him in the summer of 1762.

The Exile

The events leading to the crisis were swift. On 7 June 1762 _Emile_ was denounced at the Sorbonne. On 9 June

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the Paris parlement ordered the book burned and Rousseau arrested. That afternoon, Rousseau fled from Paris to Switzerland. On 11 June Emile was burned in Paris and banned in Geneva. On 19 June both Emile and the Contract social were burned in Geneva. On 1 July the government of Berne banished Rousseau from its territories. On 2 July David Hume wrote to Rousseau offering his help. Most distressful of all to Rousseau was the news that on 29 July Mme de Warens died at Chambéry.[60] From that moment until 1770, when he tired of running and hiding his true identity, Rousseau traveled to Germany, to England, and back to France, somehow finding time to write an extraordinary amount.

Among the works he began or finished during this period were his Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont (18 November 1762), the Dictionnaire de musique (completed 6 February 1763), his Lettres écrites de la Montagne (9 June 1764), the Projet de constitution pour la Corse (begun August 1764), and Les Confessions (begun 1765, completed 1767).

During this period as a political fugitive, Rousseau's fame was steadily growing. Despite his growing notoriety--or perhaps because of it--he found himself warmly received by the cultured elite in the cities he passed through during his flight. On 2 November 1765, while en route to Berlin, he stopped at Strasbourg where he was asked by Villeneuve, the director of their Théâtre

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Français, to supervise a performance of his _Devin du village_ which was to be presented in his honor. Coincidentally, the _Devin_ was at that moment also being performed at the Paris Opêra to great acclaim, a fact which only caused Rousseau to bristle with indignation --partly because he had tried to withdraw it from their repertoire when they refused him his copyright and, no doubt, partly due to the fact that in 1752 its orchestra had burned him in effigy and withdrawn his free pass.

He had no such misgivings in Strasbourg. However, he accepted the offer with a certain trepidation, having never directed his _Devin_ before, but he soon found the experience exhilarating. As director he could do what he was not able to do in Paris, rehearse the company and, at the same time, teach them. The Genevan maestro forced the company to repeat sections over and over, until he was satisfied. He must have been pleased with his work, for he paid for four tickets for himself and three guests to see the opera from a private box.

Villeneuve was so gratified with the result that he wanted to stage some more of Rousseau's works, starting with _Narcisse_. Rousseau immediately wrote to his friend Du Peyrou asking him to look through his papers and find the scripts for his _Pygmalion_ and _L'Engagement têméraire_. But while _Narcisse_ was being rehearsed, Rousseau received what he had been hoping for, a French passport. With

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this in hand he raced to Paris where he was put under the protection of his friend, the Prince de Conti. It is a pity that this event was not delayed awhile; then history might have seen quite a different Pygmalion emerge. Since Pygmalion lacked a score, it may be assumed that Rousseau intended to provide one for the Strasbourg performance. Why else send for the script? This may account for the two tunes Rousseau had written and included in the Lyons production. Both may have been conceived while Rousseau was preparing his Pygmalion for Strasbourg.

Strasbourg was not the only town in which the fugitive republican would be honored with performances of his plays. While waiting to depart with Hume for London, Rousseau was feted by the Prince de Conti at his Parisian castle fortress called the Temple. In its private theatre the Prince entertained his guests with plays and operas, including Rousseau's Les Muses galantes.[61]

In London, Rousseau was to have the honor of seeing his Devin du village performed in English at Garrick's Drury Lane. From the moment of his arrival, his presence in London caused a sensation. When he was invited by David Garrick to attend a gala performance before King George III and the Queen, a mob jostled to get into Drury Lane and gawk at the famous man. According to Hume, even the King and Queen "looked more at Rousseau than at the players."[62]

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Part of the sensation was no doubt caused by his attire. Rousseau attended the production in his Armenian costume which he had taken to wearing some years earlier. It was composed of a long coat trimmed in dark fur and a fur hat--the same costume he wears in the portrait painted by Allan Ramsay in 1766 which now hangs in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh. But attention would soon turn from his costume to his behavior. The evening's program consisted of a tragedy, Aaron Hill's Zara, and a comedy, David Garrick's Lethe. Although Rousseau did not understand the English dialogue, he was openly emotional in response to both plays, weeping during the tragedy and laughing during the comedy. At one point, he became so excited by the performance that he would have fallen out of his box had not Mrs. Garrick grabbed hold of the skirt of his caftan to restrain him.[63]

While Rousseau was in England, Charles Burney was persuaded by friends to adapt Le Devin du village for the English stage. Burney was a great admirer of Rousseau's music and the theories defending it, and gladly acceded. His adaptation was entitled The Cunning-Man and was performed with Rousseau's music at the Drury Lane 31 November 1766. According to Cranston--and contrary to what has been commonly believed--it was not Burney's adaptation that was to blame for the failure of the piece. According to reports, throughout the first half the

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audience seemed to be enjoying the opera. Then, during the second half, a witness claimed that "the buzz of hissing followed by the shrill horror of the catcall" ruined the performance.[64]

The disruption was probably the result of the quarrel between Rousseau and Hume concerning a malicious letter published in the St James Chronicle of 1 April 1767 and purportedly written by King Frederick II, but actually the work of Hume's friend, Horace Walpole. The letter invited Rousseau to come to Prussia where the Emperor offered to make Rousseau "as miserable as you can possibly wish."[65] Rousseau accused Hume of being behind the plot and bringing him to England to deliberately humiliate him. Hume responded by publishing a pamphlet entitled "A Concise And Genuine Account of the dispute between Mr. Hume and Mr. Rousseau," which contained the text of personal letters Rousseau had written to Hume. Rousseau, who was staying at Wootton at the time, read about the reception of his opera and immediately suspected Hume.

It was the beginning of the end of their friendship. Rousseau did not remain in England long after that, even though King George had offered him a pension. After returning to France in the Spring of 1767 he spent the next three years completing his Confessions, seeing to the publication of his Oeuvres complètes and, incidentally, marrying Thérèse on 30 August 1768.

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The Second Stage in the Creation of Pygmalion

In 1770 Rousseau was at last able turn his attention to his Pygmalion. To complete the work required a special score, one that had never been used in quite this way before--for the music was not to accompany any arias or recitatives. Instead the music would be played at certain moments when the characters were silent. Although Rousseau had conceived a few melodies for the play (in Strasbourg?) he chose not to complete the score himself. Instead he found a composer whom he believed capable of finishing the score to his exact specifications.

For reasons which will become clear, Rousseau did not choose a professional musician for the work, but an amateur by the name of Horace Coignet (1736-1821). According to Leigh, Horace Coignet, who was by profession a designer and seller of fabrics and embroidery, was also librarian for the Société du Concert in Lyons. In this capacity he attended musical auditions.[66] According to Coignet's testimony,[67] written many years later, Coignet, having learned of Rousseau's arrival in Lyons on 10 April was eager to make his acquaintance. Hearing that Rousseau was attending a concert of Pergolesi's Stabat, Coignet went to the concert hall to find him. Rousseau was seated in the gallery with a M. de Fleurieux who introduced Coignet to Rousseau as "un amateur, bon lecteur," and one who could play music well. What must have piqued

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Rousseau's interest was Coignet's telling him that he would like to show Rousseau some of his compositions. Rousseau may have seen at this moment an image of himself as a young man arriving in Paris, filled with ambition and laden with manuscripts but not yet tried. Rousseau invited Coignet to visit him the next day. Coignet recounts the events of their first meeting:

> A mon arrivée, Rousseau me parut fatigué, et il me dit qu'il était obligé de sortir dans un quart d'heure. La conversation roula sur l'harmonie; je lui dis que j'avais son Dictionnaire, et il parut s'intéresser à moi. Bientôt, me trouvant seul avec lui, je lui chantai l'overture de mon opéra. Ma manière lui plut, il me dit avec feu: 'C'est cela, vous y êtes.' Alors il me fit chanter différents motets de sa composition, tandis qu'il accompagnait avec une épinette. Il m'en demanda ensuite mon sentiment. Je lui répondis qu'ils étaient chantants, mais un peu petits; il en tomba d'accord avec moi, ajoutant qu'il les avait composés pour des religieuses de Dijon. Il oublia qu'il avait à sortir; je restai chez lui jusqu'à cinq heures.[68]

The next day Coignet brought his violin with him and sang a duet he had composed, playing the second part on the violin as he sang the first.

> Il parut goûter cette innovation, disant que de cette manière je ne depéndais pas d'un intermédiare entre le public et moi, et que personne ne pouvait mieux rendre l'expression musicale que l'auteur de la musique.69

To Coignet's delight, Rousseau invited him to dine with him and Thérèse that evening. "Après le dîner," Coignet recalls, "il me communiqua son Pygmalion, et me proposa de le mettre en musique, dans le genre de la mélopée des Grecs."[70]

Rousseau was a passionate student of ancient Greek

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music which was believed to have been unadorned and therefore more natural and more conducive to evoking primal emotions. In his Dictionnaire de musique he defines Mélopée as "l'usage régulier de toutes les Parties harmoniques," in other words, "l'art ou les règles de la composition du Chant, desquelles la pratique et l'effet s'appelloit Mélodie."[71] (Emphasis Rousseau's.) The article goes on to explain the three different parts of the Mélopée which all serve a specific purpose. The Prise (Lepsis) shows the musician the range of voice required; the Mélange (Mixis) establishes how to interlace the appropraite style and mode of the melody; the Usage (Chresès) is, in turn, subdivided into three parts which establish the mood, the dynamics, and the tonality.

"Tous ces Modes," Rousseau writes, "étant propres à exciter ou calmer certaines passions, influoient beaucoup sur les moeurs."[72] At this point Rousseau's interest in the Mélopée becomes clear: It is a political tool designed to develop moral citizens by arousing the proper emotions required for a moral nation and supressing those that are dangerous. To this end the Mélopée is divided into three kinds:

> Le Systaltique, ou celui qui inspiroit le passions tendres et affectueuses, les passions tristes et capables de resserrer le coeur . . . Le Diastaltique, ou celui qui étoit propre à l'épanouir, en excitant la joie, le courage, la magnanimité, les grands sentimens. . . L'Euchastique, qui tenoit le milieu entre les deux autres, qui ramenoit l'ame à un état tranquille. 73

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The Mélopée was designed to inspire the three essential civic virtues vis-à-vis the State: adoration, courage, and loyalty:

> La première espèce de Mélopée convenoit aux Poésies amoureuses, aux plaintes, aux regrets et autres expressions semblables. La seconde étoit propre aux Tragédies, aux Chants de guerre, au sujets héroïques. La troisième aux Hymnes, aux louanges, aux instructions. 74

His head filled with these ideas and "pénétré de son sujet," Coignet composed an overture that night and presented it to Rousseau the next day. Coignet recalls that "il fut étonné de ma facilité." He goes on to relate evidence that Rousseau may already have written two pieces for his work:

> Il me demanda de lui laisser faire l'andante, entre l'ouverture et le presto, de même que la ritournelle des coups de marteau, pour qu'il y eût quelque chose de lui dans cette musique. 75

In his study of Pygmalion, J. Van der Veen confirms that the author of these two pieces is Rousseau. He finds the andantino "plus intéressant." Of this part of the overture he writes: "Cet andantino a sans aucun doute pour fonction de suggérer l'état d'âme de Pygmalion."[76] Van der Veen defers to E. Istel, the author of J.-J. Rousseau als Komposit (1901) According to Van der Veen in his interpretation of the second andante (also believed to be the work of Rousseau) Istel asserts that it can only be understood by following the indicated pantomime. Van der Veen presents his ideas thus:

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> Le commencement de l'_andante_ no. 2 serait également destiné à peindre l'activité de Pygmalion tenant le ciseau; le rhythme accentué et quelques syncopes . . . semblent justifier cette conjecture. 77

It is not at all surprising that Rousseau might have conceived of these two pieces first; the one reflects Pygmalion's initial state of mind, and the other, his art. My dwelling on these two pieces by Rousseau has another purpose that goes beyond my argument that they may have been conceived in Strasbourg. As I will shortly show, it helps explain Rousseau's behavior in Paris some months after the premiere of his _Pygmalion_. The premiere was held at a small theatre in the Hôtel-de-Ville by amateur actors. It was presented on a double bill with _le Devin du village_. Coignet did not accompany with his violin; instead he performed the role of Colin in _le Devin_. Coignet recalls the response:

> Les deux pièces furent bien rendues; et _Pygmalion_, qu'on entendait pour la première fois, fit le plus grand effet. Après la représentation, Rousseau vint m'embrasser dans le grand salon, où la société s'était rendue, en me disant: 'Mon ami, votre musique m'a arraché des larmes.' 78

Coignet followed Rousseau everywhere: "je ne passai pas un jour sans le voir; ses sociétés étaient les miennes."[79] Their evenings were spent attending concerts and operas performed on Lyons's society stages. Among the works performed were, of course, Rousseau's _Devin du village_ and _Pygmalion_, with its score by Coignet.

Coignet must have believed that his career was launched;

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but after Rousseau left for Paris Coignet soon learned that his career was in jeopardy. According to Coignet, as soon as Rousseau arrived in Paris he wrote Mme de La Verpilière asking for the music to Pygmalion. Coignet was surprised that Rousseau had not written him instead. He informed Mme de La Verpilière of his distress and she included it in her reply. "Jean-Jacques lui répondit" Coignet recounts, "que je ne devais pas en être étonné," apparently thinking that Coignet wanted to return Rousseau's lantern which he often lent Coignet so he could find his way home at night.

Coignet then heard a disturbing rumor of a presentation of Pygmalion that was given at the home of a certain Mme Brionnée (or Brionne) "Rousseau était présent" Coignet writes; "il reçut des compliments sur les paroles et sur la musique."[80] His fears were soon confirmed when he read an article in the Mercure de France concering an Englishman who, while passing through Lyons, attended the performance of Pygmalion "dont," Coignet quotes, "les paroles et la musique étaient également sublimes, étant du même auteur." Coignet says that he let two months go by "comptant que Rousseau relèverait cette erreur." He did not. Coignet then wrote a letter to the editor of the Mercure de France informing him:

> que la musique de Pygmalion n'était pas de Rousseau, mais que j'en devais le succès aux conseils de ce grand homme, dont la présence m'inspirait. 81

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In January 1771 the text of _Pygmalion_ was published in the _Mercure du France_ and the _Nouveau Journal helvêtique_. The text in the _Mercure de France_ was followed by "une Letter de M. Coignet, de Lyon, qui nous announce que la Musique est de lui . . ."[82]

Is it possible that Rousseau was passing off Coignet's work as his own or did he rewrite the music while in Paris? All evidence of this is circumstantial, but Istel, for one, believed Rousseau may have written another score.[83] To support this notion, Van der Veer points out that in Rousseau's _Observations sur l'Alceste de Gluck_ "en effet, Rousseau parle de _Pygmalion_ comme s'il eût écrit lui-même la musique pour cette scène lyrique."[84] Istel bases his claim on a score discovered in the Royal Library of Berlin in which Rousseau is designated as the author of the work. Istel claims that this score corresponds almost exactly to the one in Vienna. Van der Veer argues that it is odd that Rousseau never openly made such a claim, and finds Istel's case too weak to accept as fact.

We know that Rousseau was not satisfied with the Coignet score, for in 1772 another score was composed by a Viennese named Aspelmayer.[85] Rousseau had later expressed the wish that Gluck would write a new score for it. The mystery may never be solved, but the Plêiade editors are in agreement with Charles Malherbe, author of the _Annales J.-J. Rousseau_, who, like Van de Veer, finds Istel's

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argument untenable.[86] In a way, Rousseau might claim the music as his own in that he carefully coached Coignet to produce what he was after and because, more importantly, the two best pieces were his own.

Rousseau in Paris

Apparently Rousseau was allowed to return to Paris on the conditions that he did not call attention to himself by wearing his Armenian costume and that he not publish anything.[87] Consequently, after he finished writing the last pages of his _Confessions_ in Paris, instead of publishing them, he read them in the salons at sessions lasting fifteen to seventeen hours.[88] His hopes of using his _Confessions_ to defend himself against his enemies backfired; for his _Confessions_ provided them with facts about his life that formerly were secret and which now could be used as amunition against him. Furthermore, Rousseau was in less control than ever of the use of his _Pygmalion_ due to his fame and the lyric melodrama's numerous publications. As we have seen, society stage productions of it were being done everywhere. It would eventually be produced at the _Comédie-Française_ in 1775.

In Paris Rousseau would encounter two men who would inspire him to rethink his ideas on opera: Charles Burney, and Christoph Gluck. One would rekindle his interest in music theory, the other would serve to transform it.

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Charles Burney

The winter of 1770 marked the beginning of Rousseau's revitalized passion for opera. It was initiated by the visit of Charles Burney on 14 December of that year. Eager to meet Rousseau, Burney traveled from Paris to Lyons on 24 June 1770, the very day Rousseau was travelling back to Paris. Burney finally caught up with him that winter in Paris. Burney had just completed his first tour of France and Italy. The week before his much-anticipated meeting with Rousseau he attended the Concert Spirituel where, remembering the music he had heard it Italy, he writes: "I was far more shocked by Music and singing than ever." He records in his journal that on Saturday, 8 December he:

> heard M. Richer . . . who has a most charming tenor voice--but having only French music to sing, it was thrown away--However, he was far less bad than the rest.--M. Dauvergne is a very dull and heavy composer even in the oldest and worst French style. 89

The only musician he liked was Italian: "Besozzi played a Concerto charmingly--all the rest was the screaming of tortured infernals." His opinion of French music echoes remarks made by Rousseau. Their mutual opinion of French musicians would later be seconded by Gluck.[90] As for one of France's most popular composers--on Monday night:

> heard M. Gretry's new Opera of Les Deux Avares--There were several pretty things in it, but he seems daily to become more and more French in his style. This, it is said, is to suit the Genius of his language--but the fact is not true--for the Music that Lulli grafted on it was Italian, though at a time when Italian Music was bad. 91

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His opinion of Grêtry's opera was not shared by most of the French nor, indeed, by most of the courts of Europe where this opera was translated and performed. Clearly Burney was deeply under the spell of Rousseau.

On 14 December 1770, the afternoon he was to meet Rousseau, Burney records that he first dined at Baron d'Holbach's in the company of Diderot, who insisted he sit next to him. Helvetius was there with his wife and daughters as was Grimm--along with other "men of letters and merit of the first order."[92] He then proceeded to the Rue Grenelle where Rousseau was lodging. Having heard of Rousseau's reputation for bluntness and rebuffs, he entered his apartment "in great _sogezzione_."[93] The person he saw first, Thêrèse "at her needle, almost bent double," took no notice of him:

> in a dark corner was the Man Mountain, in a woolen night cap, great coat and slippers--for which he apologized, and very civilly gave me the best place near the fire--the reception was far better than I expected--I begun immediately to tell him of my journey and errand into Italy--and the account seemed to catch his attention. 94

Soon they were deep into discussion of Italian opera and ancient Greek music. In the midst of their conversation Burney told Rousseau that it was he who had adapted _le Devin du village_ into _The Cunning-Man_. Rousseau said he would be pleased to receive a copy of it.

Burney regarded his conversation with Rousseau as "singularly fortunate." He was overjoyed to speak with Rousseau about music:

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> a subject which has received such embellishments from his pen, that the dryest parts of it are rendered interesting by his manner of treating them. 95

Dr. Burney would soon correspond with Rousseau, in the course of which Rousseau would write his _Lettre à M. Burney et fragmens d'observaions sur l'Alceste de Gluck_ (1774). On 7 July 1776 Burney sent the first volume of his _General History of Music_ to Rousseau, who was presented in its pages as its hero. The musicologist must have been gratified to read in the opening paragraph of Rousseau's reply (_Lettre à Burney_) the following:

> le premier volume de votre histoire générale de la musique, en ranimant en moi un reste de zele pour un Art auquel le vôtre vous a fait employer tant de travaux, de tems, de voyages et de dépenses, m'excite à vous en marquer ma reconnoissance en m'entretenant quelque tems avec vous du sujet favori de vos recherches, qui doit immortaliser votre nom chez les vrais amateurs de ce bel art. 96

Gluck

In mid-November Chevalier Christoph Willibald Gluck entered Paris. He brought with him his _Iphigénie en Aulide_, a _tragédie lyrique_. Gluck was championed in Paris by François du Roullet, the Viennese attaché. Du Roullet cultivated the company of La Pouplinière (the patron of Rameau) and was therefore on intimate terms with the Parisian world of opera. An admirer of Rameau and Lully, Du Roullet was bent on disproving Rousseau's claims about the impossibility of true French opera. He sent Gluck the challenge of disproving it by writing _Iphigénie_.[97]

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As it happened, Gluck was a great admirer of Rousseau. In addition he was known in France since 1745 when he began to set Favart's comic operas to music. He was not, however, a defender of any particular language. He believed that music was universal and that all languages had poetry that could be set to music. He had been, at one time, music instructor to Marie Antoinette. When, with the death of Louis XV in 1774, she ascended the throne Gluck instantly acquired a powerful ally. Finally, Dauvergne, the director of the Paris Opēra, read his score to Iphigēnie en Aulide and recognized a great talent. He commissioned Gluck to write six works for the Opēra. The stage was set for his entrance into Paris.

Almost from the moment Gluck entered Paris, Rousseau became one of his greatest admirers. Rousseau's free pass to attend the Opēra had been restored to him when he returned to Paris. Consequently, not only did he attend the premiere of Gluck's opera which was presented at the Opēra on 19 April 1774, but he attended the second performance as well--and ultimately every performance of Gluck's operas that he could. In Letters of 6 and 11 May 1774, François de Chambrier writes that Rousseau:

> est tout Gluck, vous le verriez dans un enthousiasme etonant lorsqu'il parle de sa musique, aussi ne manque-t'il pas une reprēsentation de l'opera depuis que Gluck est sur le tapis, car on a rendu ā J. J. ses entrées, qu'on lui avoit ôtē par humeur lors de ses ecrits contre la musique françoise. . . Il a même ētē remboursē ā cette occasion pour son opēra du Devin. 98

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In the Correspondance littéraire La Harpe, no friend of Rousseau's or Gluck's, recalled that Rousseau never missed a single performance of Gluck's Orphée et Eurydice which premiered in Paris 2 August 1774.[99] In a letter dated 1 December 1774, La Harpe was quoted as saying:

> Gluck n'a point d'admirateur plus passionné que Rousseau . . . La musique de Gluck l'avait réconcilié avec la vie. 'Puisqu'on peut,' disait-il, 'avoir un si grand plaisir pendant deux heures, je conçois que la vie peut être bonne à quelque chose.' 100

Gluck realized that having Rousseau as an ally was an asset, and took great pains to have it known that Rousseau admired his work.[101] In 1802 Gluck's friend J. C. Mannlich records his memory of a note supposedly sent to Gluck by Rousseau. Mannlich claims the note read:

> Monsieur le Chevalier,
> Je sors de la répétition de votre Opéra d'Iphigénie; j'en suis enchanté! Vous avez réalisé ce que j'ai cru impossible jusqu'à ce jour.
> Recevez-en avec bonté mes sincères complimens et mes très humbles salutations.
> Paris, ce 17 avril 1774. J.-J. Rousseau[102]

Leigh finds this note suspicious. Why, for example, would Rousseau send the note on 17 April when he had been attending the run since 9 April? And since Rousseau had visited Gluck regularly during this period, why would he need to write to him? Was Mannlich's memory incorrect?[103] Or was this a scheme of Gluck's to prove to the world that Rousseau had admitted defeat on the question of French music?

Clearly Gluck valued Rousseau's opinion for, in addition to bringing Rousseau music to copy, some time in the fall

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of 1774, before leaving for Vienna,[104] Gluck gave Rousseau the libretto and score to the Italian version of his Alceste in order for Rousseau to make notes and give his opinion on how to adapt it into French.[105]

Pygmalion at the Comédie-Française

The following year, Rousseau would once again become the center of attention in the world of opera. In an entry dated 28 October 1775, Louis Petit de Bachaumont records in his Mémoires secrets:

> Le bruit court que M. Rousseau de Genève, fatigué de son repos, va reparoître sur la scène, & que pour plus d'éclat il a choisi la comédie françoise. On dit qu'il va donner son Pygmalion à ce théâtre. 106

The next day he added:

> Les comédiens françois annoncent en effet aujourd'hui Pygmalion, scene lyrique de M. J.J. Rousseau: ce qui ne peut manquer de piquer la curiosité générale.

On 31 October 1775 he relates that the Comédie-Française tried to get Rousseau to allow them to perform his Pygmalion. According to Bachaumont one of the actors knocked at his door at his bedtime and Rousseau refused to open the door and told the actor to come back in the morning. Accoring to the same account, the next day Rousseau replied "qu'il n'acquiesçoit point à cela, mais qu'il ne s'y opposoit point" and added enigmatically "qu'il ne feroit aucune démarche pour ou contre."[107] He would only prevent it from being produced had the work actually been stolen. He warned them that it had several flaws

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and described some of them. He did not want his share as author. This version was confirmed by Larive, who had played _Pygmalion_ in Lyons. In the _Tableau historique_ of 1785 (IV,77) he reports that he was the one who woke Rousseau that night. He recounts the same story nearly word for word.[108] This testimony is in sharp contrast to Rousseau's _Dialogues_ in which Le François says that:

> on vient de mettre à Paris _Pygmalion_, malgré lui, sur la scène tout exprès pour exciter ce risible scandale qui n'a fait rire personne, et dont nul n'a senti la comique absurdité. 109

What caused Rousseau to believe this? Robert Osmont suggests that he may have been ashamed of the _Pygmalion_ score, even though most of it was by Coignet.[110] Many commentators have noticed that Rousseau never mentions Coignet's name in speaking of _Pygmalion_. Osmont also points out that Rousseau believed that no one could compose the music _Pygmalion_ required, save Gluck.[111]

On 1 November 1775 Bachaumont renders an account of the premiere of _Pygmalion_ at the Comédie-Française. After describing the work he makes the following comment:

> Par une bizarrerie bien digne de l'auteur, il n'a point fait toute la musique de ce petit Drame: la seule ouverture est de lui; le reste des symphonies est d'un M. Coignet, négociant de Lyon & amateur.[112]

Nevertheless, he reports, the play had made a great sensation "malgré cette infériorité." It can be regarded, he goes on, as "un petit chef-d'oeuvre." He praises Larive, who made his Paris debut as Pygmalion and calls Mlle Raucoux, who played the Galatea, "vraiment belle

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dans cette attitude." Most of the other critics were in agreement as to the success of the work.

In 1770 Grimm was highly critical of the work, even before he had seen it. His objections published in his Correspondance littéraire are Lockean:

> Le rôle de la statue est très-court: elle ne dit que trois mots. Lorsqu'elle se sent animée, elle se touche le coeur et dit: C'est moi. Elle s'approche d'une statue voisine, et, la sentant inanimée, elle dit: Ce n'est plus moi. Portant ensuite la main sur le coeur de Pygmalion, et le sentant palpiter, elle dit: C'est encore moi. Cela est peut-être un peu entortillé, un peu métaphysique; le moi est un terme bien abstrait pour une première pensée ou plutôt un premier sentiment. Ce qui existe rapporte tout à son existence par une loi immuable et nécessaire, mais sans le savoir. Pour découvrir cette vérité, aujourd'hui commune, il a fallu une longue suite d'observations et un long exercice de nos facultés intellectuelles. Comment une statue métamorphosée trouverait-elle, dans le premier instant, un résultat si compliqué, et qui suppose tant de combinaisons et de rapports aperçus? 113

What makes his criticism suspect is that he made no such objections to the behavior of Rameau's statue, who seems to have a far more complex grasp of reality and metaphysics. The "knowledge" of Rousseau's statue is ontological, she is aware only of her existence and that she is a living being. One can argue that Rousseau's giving her the words to express this awareness is purely metaphorical, and answers the question: "If a newborn child could speak, what would its first words be?" Note that Rameau's statue in Scene 3 of his acte de ballet knows a great deal more than that she exists. Even her first questions presuppose a knowledge of the nature of existence: "Que vois-je? Où suis-je? / Et qu'est-ce que

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je pense? / D'où me viennent ces mouvements?" To ask these questions is to already be aware of the faculty of sight and the knowledge of place, time, and causation. Her next set of questions betray a profound knowledge of epistemology and physics: "Que dois-je croire? / Et par quelle puissance / Puis-je exprimer mes sentiments?" Careless of his own contradictions, Grimm then goes on to accept Rousseau's concepts of primal human language:

> Le premier mot d'un être subitement animé serait sans doute quelque expression passionnée, impétueuse, douloureuse. 114

In other words, primal language is awareness of what Rousseau termed _amour de soi-même_--concern for oneself and self-love go hand in hand.

Grimm's final reproach is his considering Rousseau's _Pygmalion_ as little more than an _opéra-comique_. Again forgetting Rameau's _Pygmalion_, Grimm asserts that Rousseau's work violates the rules of _vraisemblance_:

> Ce qui me paraît mal vu, c'est d'avoir traité ce sujet dans la forme ambiguë de nos opéras-comiques, où l'on parle et chante alternativement. Une pièce dans laquelle il s'opère un miracle exige l'imitation la plus éloignée possible de notre manière d'être.

When Grimm finally saw _Pygmalion_ that same year, he corrected his error concerning the characters' singing, but made it appear as if the error had never occurred:

> Vous êtes déjà prévenu que Pygmalion ne chant point, mais qu'il parle et récite, et que la musique n'est employée que pour couper, par differentes ritournelles, les discours de l'acteur, et pour exprimer son action ainsi que les divers mouvements dont il est agité. 115

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These new facts would scarcely have changed his criticism; rather, they would have served only to support even further his contention that the work strains credulity. He writes off Pygmalion's success as due to curiosity seekers drawn to even the least worthy works of a celebrity:

> Je n'ai pas entendu parler de l'effet qu'il produit au théâtre; mais comme les moindres ouvrages d'un homme célèbre excitent la curiosité, vous ne serez pas fâché de trouver celui-ci copié dans le corps de ces feuilles.

Grimm's bitterness with his former friend who has become his enemy is clearly present in these gratuitous remarks.

Meister, who in 1773 had replaced Grimm as rédacteur of the Correspondance littéraire[116] came to Rousseau's defense in his October 1775 review of Pygmalion:[117]

> Je plains les critiques froids et glacés qui, n'ayant su voir dans Pygmalion que l'amant d'une statue, un visionnaire métaphysique et plat, se sont ennuyés de ce long monologue, où ils n'ont trouvé que répétitions, de grands mots et un prodige aussi ridicule à leur gré que la passion qui en est le prétexte. Ce que j'ai cru voir dans cette scène originale et sublime, c'est une de plus ingénieuses fables de l'antiquité, le tableau pathétique des transports, de l'enthousiasme, du délire que peut exciter dans une âme sensible et passionnée l'amour des arts et de la beauté. 118

Meister's appreciation of the work reveals a sophisticated knowledge of theatre, as is plain in his observations on the craftsmanship of Rousseau's scène lyrique:

> J'ai admiré le talent avec lequel l'artiste a su conserver à son sujet ce caractère de simplicité qui lui est propre et qu'il était si difficile de soutenir sur la scène. J'ai admiré la profondeur de génie avec il développe tous les mouvements de la passion, ses progrès et leur gradation successive. Sous ce dernier rapport, la scène de Pygmalion est peut-être un des meilleurs morceaux de philosophe qui sortis de la plume éloquent de Jean-Jacques. 119

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His only regret was with with the music, which he found far less than it might be. Meister noted that the subject is worthy of the talents of a great composer, but unfortunately the music "est d'un amateur, de M. Coignet, négociant de Lyon, à l'exception pourtant de deux ou trois petits airs qui sont de Jean-Jacques."[120]

Years later, Goethe, who admired the work, also saw its flaws. But his critique reveals a far more profound understanding of Pygmalion and its author.

> Diese wunderliche Produktion schwankt . . . zwischen Natur und Kunst, mit dem falschen Bestreben, diese in jene aufzulösen. Wir sehen einen Künstler, der das Vollkommenste geleistet hat, und doch nicht Befriedigung darin findet, seine Idee ausser sich, kunstgemäss dargestellt und ihr ein höheres Leben verliehen zu haben; nein! sie soll auch in das irdische Leben zu ihm herabegezogen werden. Er will das Höchste, was Geist und Tat hervorgebracht, durch den gemeinsten Akt der Sinnlichtkeit zerstören. 121

Goethe had grasped the essence of Rousseau's conflict: that of wanting both the ideal world and the sensual. It is a conflict the Romantics will replay again and again. In Goethe's case, one is reminded of the moral struggle of Faust confronting Helen of Troy. Schiller will dramatize this inner struggle in his Johanna.

Yet, at the time, as even Meister observed, most of the critics seemed to have seen little of this. Either (like Grimm) they read Rousseau through Lockean glasses, or (also like Grimm) they found Pygmalion's material worthy of an opéra-comique, or they were put off by its verbiage, or they turned it into a lesson on Greek theatre.

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The editor of the November 1775 edition of the *Mercure de France* wrote: "cela peut donner l'idée, à ce qu'on prétend, de la Mélopé des Grecs & de leur ancienne déclaration théâtrale."[122] Leigh informs us that Métra was more reserved. His review of 11 November 1775 contains the following remarks: "Toutes ces petites nuances se perdent au théâtre; l'auteur est dans cette bagatelle, plus philosophe que dramatique."[123] Later on he continues in this vein: "on veut sentir au théâtre et non raisonner." On 24 February 1776 the same critic writes:

> Mais la moralité de cette fable, dont on s'occupe le moins, en fait peut-être tout le prix. Nous sommes tous des Pigmalions. Artistes, écrivains, originaux ou copistes, créateurs ou singes d'autrui, tous les hommes sont plus ou moins amoureux de leurs productions. En se restreignant aux seuls auteurs dramatiques, académiques, &c., on feroit une bonne parodie de la scene lyrique, applicable à tous & à chacun en particulier. 124

In Rousseau's almost paranoid remarks in his *Dialogues* concerning the reception of his *Pygmalion* it was, surely, the criticisms in the *Mercure de France* along with Meister's stinging criticism of the music in the *Correspondance littéraire* that he chose to remember while discounting Meister's extraordinary praise along with the overwhelming approval of the audience.

The Quarrel of the Gluckists and the Piccinnists

For Gluck's return to Paris in the spring of 1777, his friends had planned to honor him with a marble copy

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of Houdon's bust which they intended to display at the Opêra alongside those of Rameau and Lully.

The anti-Gluckists, led by Marmontel, had other plans. To undercut the impact of Gluck's French operas, they invited the Italian composer Piccinni to Paris to write an opera called _Roland_ without informing him that Gluck was already in the process of composing one in French on the same subject. Gluck learned of the plot and wrote a letter to Du Rollet, clearly intended for publication,[125] exposing the plot, announcing that he had burned his manuscript of _Roland_, and that he was going to present an new opera titled _Armide_. With the publication of this letter in the _Annêe littêraire_ the Piccinni dispute began. It divided the Parisian music world into two camps, the Piccinnists and the Gluckists. The Piccinnists quoted from Rousseau's past writings against French music to support their claim that Rousseau was on their side; the Gluckists pointed to his presence at every performance of Gluck's operas and quoted overheard remarks of his admiration for Gluck's operas. Rousseau had no desire to be drawn into the quarrel; but he used the occasion to re-examine the connections between music and language in Gluck's operas.[126] In the midst of this debate, Rousseau would write two essays examining Gluck's music: _Fragmens d'observations sur l'Alceste de Gluck_ and the _Extrait d'une Rêponse du Petit Faiseur sur un morceau de l'Orphêe de M. chevalier Gluck_.

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The year before his arrival in Paris, Gluck's _Alceste_ was presented in French at the Paris Opêra on 23 April 1776 and in Italian on 30 July of the same year. The French _Alceste_ was modified from the Italian by Gluck's following Rousseau's notes. Rousseau's _Fragmens_, which deals harshly with Gluck's _Alceste_, were published for the first time in the _Correspondance littéraire_ of March, April, and May 1778. Olivier Pot remarks:

> À parcourir l'ensemble de ces _Fragmens d'observations sur l'Alceste_, on ne peut manquer d'être frappé par les réticences que Rousseau exprime à l'égard du chef-d'oeuvre de Gluck, alors même qu'il semble prendre parti--avec Diderot mais non Grimm et d'Alembert qui suivent Marmontel et La Harpe--pour les gluckistes contre Grêtry soutenu par les musiciens français.[127]

Rousseau's remarks concerning Gluck in his _Prêmier dialogue_, as Pot observes, is a clue to the motivation behind this reluctance. At this point in the _dialogue_ "Le François" asks "Rousseau" if he knows "un grand Musicien étranger venu depuis peu dans ce pays." "Rousseau" replies:

> Admirateur de son talent, d'accord, je le suis aussi; mais quant à son suffrage, il faudroit prêmierement être au fait de bien des choses avant de savoir quelle autoritê l'on doit lui donner. 128

Pot suggests that Rousseau, despite his admiration for Gluck's music, recognized in Gluck's work a threat to his position on French music.

One might then ask why he did not join the opposition against him? The answer to that question is found in Rousseau's metamorphosis. Through the power of Gluck's music, Rousseau began to question and rethink his own ideas concerning the primacy of melody. Despite Rousseau's

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criticisms of Gluck's Alceste he also makes it clear how deeply he is moved by this work:

> Il y a dans tous les bons Opéra, et sur-tout dans ceux de M. Gluck, mille morceaux qui font couler des larmes par la Musique, et qui ne donneroient qu'une émotion médiocre ou nulle dépourvus de son secours, quelque bien déclamés qu'ils pussent être. 129

In his Extrait. . .sur un morceau de l'Orphée de Gluck Rousseau's admiration for Gluck is far more pronounced:

> C'est que du même trait, et qui plus est, du même accord, ce grand Musicien a su tirer dans toute leur force les deux effets les plus contraires; savoir, la ravissante douceur du chant d'Orphée, et le stridor déchirant du cri des furies. Quel moyen a-t-il pris pour cela? Un moyen três simple; comme sont toujours ceux qui produisent les grands effets. 130

One can clearly see in these two essays signs of Gluck's impact on Rousseau's ideas on music. Melody is still primary, but Rousseau appears intrigued with the power of the other musical elements that can combine to produce powerful emotions. The reader may be startled by Rousseau's change of attitude in statements such as these:

> Trois choses concourent à produire les grands effets de la Musique Dramatique; savoir, l'accent, l'harmonie et le rhythme. . . . 131

> J'oserai même dire que le plaisir de l'oreille doit quelquefois l'emporter sur la vérité de l'expression . . . 132

> Quant au rhythme, en quoi consiste la plus grande force de la Musique, il demande un grand art pour être heureusement traité dans la vocale. . . . 133

> De ces principles il suit qu'il faut varier dans un drame, l'application de la Musique, tantôt en laissant dominer l'accent de la langue et le rhythme poêtique, et tantôt en faisant dominer la Musique à son tour . . . 134

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Pot observes that "l'opéra de Gluck constitue pour Rousseau un véritable défi sur le plan de la théorie et surtout de la pratique musicales."[135] Pot goes on to point out Rousseau's renewed interest in the "problèmes posés par la dramaturgie en général et par l'opéra en particulier." As Pot suggests, "seules de nouvelles inflexions dans la pensée de Rousseau sauraient expliquer un tel regain de créativité sur le plan artistique." Its source was Gluck.[136]

Rousseau, like Pygmalion, is being drawn back into the very world on which he had turned his back. Suddenly the lure of adoration once more seduces him. Overcome with temptation, Pygmalion asks himself:

> Quels desirs osé-je former? Quel voeux insensés! qu'est-ce que je sens?... O ciel! le voile de illusion tombe, et je n'ose voir dans mon coeur: j'aurois trop à m'en indigner. 137

In spite of himself, Rousseau falls under the spell of Gluck's powerful personality and musical genius. His artist's soul, like Pygmalion's is given new life.

> Je reprends mes sens. Quel calme inattendu! quel courage inespéré me ranime! Une fievre mortelle embrasait mon sang: un baume de confiance et d'espoir court dans mes veines: je crois me sentir renaître.[138]

In an entry to his journal dated 13 June 1774, François de Chambrier records that Rousseau was working on a new opera called Daphnis et Chloé and that Rousseau showed him the first act "dont il a fait la musique. Il m'en a chanté plusieurs morceaux que j'ai trouvé infiniment agréables."[139] Regarding this opera in a letter of 1

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December 1774, La Harpe sees in the rivalry between Rousseau and Gluck signs of Rousseau's defeat: "Rousseau avait commencé un opéra; mais quand il a entendu la musique de Gluck, il a abandonné son ouvrage."[140] In a letter dated 12 December 1774 Charles Burney writes:

> Etant chez J.J. Rousseau il me dit qu'il refesoit entiérement la musique de son Devin du village, il y joignit la complaisance de m'en chanter quelques morceaux, en s'accompagnant du Clavecin; il est plus content de cette derniére production que de la premiére; j'y trouvai aussi plus de caractére et de diversité dans les différens rolles. 141

These enterprises are all mentioned in the Dialogues. In addition, Rousseau's alter ego notes that "il a dans le même intervalle composé plus de cent morceaux de Musique en divers genres," mostly songs with accompaniment which, he adds, was done as much for the person who had supplied the words "que pour son propre amusement."[142]

La Harpe would have been pleased to learn that Rousseau's work on the new score of his Devin du village was also abandoned. Nevertheless, as Pot points out, La Harpe, with all of his distain for the man, recognized the genius of Rousseau's comic opera.[143] On 30 January 1777 Le Devin du village appeared as an afterpiece to Gluck's Orphée, and Rousseau's Devin held its own against Gluck's masterpiece. In a 1777 lettre La Harpe writes:

> Il faut mettre la plus grande partie de ce succès sur le compte de l'ouvrage même, qu'on peut regarder comme un modele de pastorale champêtre, qui a de plus un charme particulier, l'accord de la musique avec le paroles, accord qui est tel qu'il semble que les idées et les modulations aient été conçues en même temps. 144

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The Finale

On 10 February 1778 Rousseau would witness the entrance into Paris of his arch-enemy Voltaire, who had lived in exile from Paris for the past thirty years. "His return," Carlson writes, "was a triumph, one of the great events of the century."[145] At this moment Rousseau must have remembered his own unheralded return to Paris five years earlier. In an apocryphal story it is said that Rousseau was approached at this time by a man wishing to flatter him. The man ridiculed Voltaire's gala reception at the Comédie-Française. Rousseau rebuked the man by reminding him that no man had a greater right than Voltaire to be honored in the temple of which he is a god.

On 20 May 1778, Rousseau retired to Ermenonville, some thirty miles from Paris. He died there on 2 July 1778 and was buried on 4 July 1778. In 1794 the National Assembly called for the interment of Rousseau's remains in the Panthéon. On 11 October 1794 Rousseau's body was laid to rest alongside that of Voltaire.

In death Rousseau left behind a legacy that would furnish artists and statesmen alike with powerful ideas. Being a man whose vision reached as far into the future as into the past, Rousseau would probably not have been surprised to learn that it was his _Pygmalion_ and not his _Devin_ which spoke most eloquently to the Romantics. Even today, Pygmalion's disenchantment with what we now call Western Culture finds resonance in our postmodern malaise.

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Conclusion

The Problem of Rousseau's *Lettre à d'Alembert*

I have explored Rousseau's life as a theatre artist with the purpose of resolving the seeming paradox between Rousseau's attack on the theatre in his *Lettre à d'Alembert* and his history as a dramatist and composer. In the light of my study, I shall conclude by discussing Rousseau's *Lettre à d'Alembert* in order to offer an interpretation of its meaning as reflected in my presentation of Rousseau's views on and uses of theatre.

To most readers, the *Lettre* paints a dark portrait of the stage--one that might have been rendered by a dour puritan rather than a passionate theatre artist. Rousseau's *Lettre* sounds a jarring note in contrast to the paeans of ecstasy that resound in his writings on opera, a theatre form that shares a great many attributes with drama. Rousseau's criticisms of Parisian theatre as supporting a corrupt culture could certainly extend to the opera. Yet Rousseau scarcely mentions the form. Why should this be?

The answer lies in the *Lettre*'s purpose. Although the title of Rousseau's *Lettre* has come to include the word *spectacles*, its original title mentions only *théâtre de comédie*. This reflects its intent, which was to argue against "le projet d'établir un théâtre de comédie"[1] in

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Geneva modeled on the Comédie-Française. To achieve his goal, Rousseau employed every rhetorical device in his arsenal. As he states in his opening remarks, he is writing to a broad audience, many of whom are not thinkers:

> Prémiérement, il ne s'agit plus ici d'un vain babil de Philosophie; mais d'une vérité de pratique importante à tout un peuple. Il ne s'agit plus de parler au petit nombre mais au public, ni de faire penser les autres mais d'expliquer nettement ma pensée. Il a donc fallu changer de stile: Pour me faire mieux entendre à tout le monde, j'ai dit moins de choses en plus de mots, et voulant être claire et simple, je me suis trouvé lâche et diffus. 2

The primary purpose of the *Lettre*, therefore, is not to examine the problems of the theatre as such, but only those aspects of theatre that can serve Rousseau's ends. His arguments are intended as rhetorical ammunition for the conservative elements in Geneva who oppose the establishment of a theatre urged on them by d'Alembert's article in Volume VII of the *Encyclopédie*.

From the very beginning of his *Lettre* Rousseau makes it quite clear that he does not oppose the institution of theatre in Paris. Although his reasons for tolerating it in Paris may be upsetting to most readers, it is clear that Rousseau is not against theatre as such.

What he does oppose in his *Lettre* is the establishing of French theatre in Geneva for the principal reason that the two cultures (including their governments and mores) are not the same and, therefore, that theatre which is good for the Parisians is not necessarily good for the Genevans.

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This social relativist position, which Rousseau adapted from Montesquieu, was generally anathema to the Enlightenment view of culture and law based on universal principles. The *philosophes* considered Western culture (if not its religion) superior to that of the East because it was based on rational laws that could be applied to all of mankind. Therefore Rousseau's attack on French theatre as unfit for Genevan consumption was meant and received as an assault on the very foundations of the *philosophes*' world-view.

All the permutations of the ideas imbedded in Rousseau's *Lettre à d'Alembert* are too far-reaching to be dealt with here. My purpose is to discuss only those aspects of the work that concern the question of Rousseau's anti-theatrical prejudice.

Rousseau's employment of Plato's arguments against the theatre and the art of acting as being corruptions of the ideal world caused little concern for the *philosophes* who, in embracing Aristotle's views, had long since rejected these arguments. Plato, rather, was evoked to win over those who might already be prejudiced against the *philosophes* and who could be turned against the theatre by Plato's compelling logic. What did upset the *philosophes* was Rousseau's assault on the long-fought-for and well-established consensus that theatre justified its existence in a Christian world through its power to teach moral lessons in a delightful way.

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Rousseau's denial of this belief was tantamount to being a traitor to the Enlightenment program.

Most of the Lettre's rhetoric was aimed at destroying the notion that theatre can improve an audience's morals. The strategy behind the rhetoric is clear. If Rousseau can first reduce theatre to a frivolous pastime, then the supposed need for it in Geneva can be undercut. Rousseau's arguments against the theatre's waste of time, its encouragement of vanity, and its exorbitant costs are arguments designed to appeal to Calvinists.

The idea of the theatre as a moral institution was an Enlightenment belief already being challenged, even in Rousseau's day. Rousseau's views that the theatre's purpose was only to entertain were anticipated just a generation before by Antoine Houdar de La Motte (1672-1731) who held, as did Rousseau, that the purpose of drama was to appeal to emotions rather than reason. But Rousseau's advocacy of feeling over reason is not in itself an anti-theatrical stance. In fact, it marks the essential difference between Neo-Classicism and Romanticism. But those who hold that theatre is an institution for enlightenment will necessarily view Rousseau's attacks on this position as anti-theatrical.

All of Rousseau's attacks on Molière and Racine as well as his critiques of Voltaire and Crébillon are intended to show that theatre is most effective when it dispenses with reason

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and logic and makes its appeals to the heart through pity and love. When reason is employed, Rousseau argues, it is usually in comedy where its aim is to ridicule rather than sympathize, and where a virtuous man like Alceste (or Rousseau) can be made to look a fool. Rousseau was not the first to attack Molière and Racine on these grounds; in 1714 Fénelon, whom Rousseau studied in depth, criticized these two giants in his _Lettre écrite à l'Académie française sur l'éloquence, la poésie, l'histoire, etc._ Rousseau's objections to profane love in Racine's tragedies and the ridicule of virtue in Molière's comedies are anticipated in Fénelon's critique.

These criticisms of Racine and Molière were also concerns of the _philosophes_ themselves. Although they objected to Rousseau's stance on the theatre's inability to affect the morals of a culture, both Diderot and Voltaire were, nevertheless, well aware of the movements afoot to soften tragedy with moral sentimentality and comedy with tears. Both had written plays with prefaces supporting these new ideas. Rousseau knew of these activities, particularly those of Diderot whose _Fils naturel_ had been published in 1757, the year before Rousseau wrote his _Lettre_. That same year, Rousseau had read _Le Père de famille_ while visiting Diderot in Paris. He encouraged Diderot to have it immediately published in order to counteract the accusations, hurled at

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Diderot by his enemies, that he was unoriginal and that his Fils naturel plagiarized Goldoni's Vero amico. Yet when Rousseau came to discussing these new forms, which seem to conform to his own desire for theatre that appeals to the heart, he scorned the efforts of both Voltaire and his, by then, estranged friend Diderot. He wrote off the new genres in a brief and withering paragraph:

> Nos auteurs modernes guidés par de meilleures intentions, font des pièces plus épurées: mais aussi qu'arrive-t-il? Qu'elles n'ont plus de vrai comique, et ne produisent aucun effet. Elles intruisent beaucoup, si l'on veut; mais elles ennuyent encore davantage. Autant vaudroit aller au sermon.3

Rousseau found fault with these new works because they included moral messages and thereby spoiled the pleasure they might have produced.

This criticism does not imply that Rousseau wanted to reduce theatre to mere entertainment. The proof of this is in Rousseau's suggestions on how Molière might have saved Alceste from ridicule:

> Je veux dire qu'il faloit que le Misantrope fut toujours furieux contre les vices publics, et toujours tranquille sur les méchancetés personnelles dont il étoit la victime. Au contraire, le philosophe Philinte devoit voir les désordres de la société avec un flegme stoïque, et se mettre en fureur au moindre mal qui s'addressoit directement â lui.4

In this way Alceste would become a calming influence to Philinte's rages while at the same time maintaining his intolerance of moral breaches.

Rousseau admits, however, that his reworking of Molière's

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masterpiece would fail to please the Parisians. His judgment is delivered as a condemnation of both the Parisian stage and French culture:

> Mais enfin, puisqu'elle est, sans contredit, de toutes les comedies de Molière, celle qui contient la meilleure et la plus saine morale; sur celle-lâ jugeons des autres, et convenons que l'intention de l'auteur étant de plaire â des esprits corrompus, ou sa morale porte au mal, ou le faux bien qu'elle prêche est plus dangereux que le mal même, en ce qu'il séduit par une apparence de raison...5

Molière must appeal to a culture that values the man of the world over the man of moral integrity. In doing so the great poet caters to corrupt values at the expense of his better nature. The implication is clear: If even Molière must yield to society's standards at the cost of his own integrity, what chance does a lesser artist have? This is Rousseau's ultimate indictment of the theatre: a poet with integrity stands no chance in it.

But as Starobinski has argued, creating in his readers' minds a sense of despair is one of Rousseau's rhetorical tricks. For no sooner has Rousseau convinced the reader that Geneva will never tolerate French theatre than he offers a solution:

> Je ne vois qu'un remêde â tant d'inconvêniens. C'est que, pour nous approprier les Drames de nôtre théâtre, nous les composions nous-mêmes, et que nous ayons des auteurs avant des Comédiens.6

Rousseau's own Mort de Lucrèce was just such a project. Hence there is a way by which the lost integrity of a great poet can be regained. It requires a special "remedy."

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And so Rousseau suddenly invites Voltaire to come to Geneva and write republican plays. After directing most of his critique at Voltaire's works, why does he suddenly seek to employ him in Geneva? After convincing the reader that theatre is corrupt, how can he dare appeal to the most popular (and by implication the most corrupt) playwright in Paris to cure the theatre's ills by writing republican tragedies.

As Starobinski observes, this is but another instance of Rousseau's employing the antidote in the poison. "This part of the text," Starobinski observes, "is not intended simply to mollify the great man. As usual it proposes treating the disease with a remedy derived from the disease itself."[7] Suddenly theatre is endorsed as the means of its own "cure." Rousseau dares to invite Voltaire to cure his corrupt Parisian tastes by writing tragedies designed to please the mores of Genevan republicanism.

But my concern is not with the idea of theatre in Geneva but with how Rousseau justified writing theatre for the Parisians. The answer has already been presented by Rousseau's "remedy." If Rousseau is to cure the theatre, he must supply the only antidote: he must employ Achilles' spear.[8] The shavings from its rusty tip, according to legend, were able to heal the very wound it had inflicted. Rousseau will fight theatre with theatre.

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Since Rousseau is aware that theatre must cater to the tastes of its audience if it is to succeed, then theatre that aims to cure society's ills must first appear to be offering the very values it intends to subvert: a theatre that is acceptable and seemingly conventional. Since, according to Rousseau, what the Parisian audience wants to see is not the real world, but the world it desires, the poet who wishes to seduce this audience into seeking a better world must begin by presenting an illusion of the audience's dream world.

The task was formidible. Rousseau needed to deal with the state of spiritual corruption that already existed in Paris. He observed that a culture's idea of "good taste" is not necessarily positive. Taste may reflect the morality of a community or be a symptom of that morality's decay.

> Ce qui ne signifie pas que le bon goût et les bonnes moeurs règnent toujours en même temps, proposition qui demande éclairissement et discussion; mais qu'un certain état du goût répond toujours à un certain ètat des moeurs, ce qui est incontestable.9

A society whose morality is totally corrupt, one that has no interest in morality, is beyond being cured. Did Rousseau consider Paris to be such a society? Not at all. As Rousseau observes in his Prêface to Narcisse, what saves Paris from total corruption is its mask of morality. The mask is the proof that Parisians still value the good, even if they only pay lip service to it. It is for the sake of

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maintaining this mask that Rousseau endorses theatre as an acceptable (if not an ideal) pastime.

A theatre that reaches the forgotten innocent self cannot be overt, it must not preach. It must apeal not to reason but to feelings. Since, for the Parisian, morality is held as a sentiment rather than a conviction, if one wishes to instill in the Parisian audience a sense of morality or a vision of a better world, then morality must be introduced in a sentimental guise.

For example, while seeming to present a man of the world on stage, the use of sentiment can assist in allowing the man of virtue to gradually emerge. _Narcisse_ uses just such a ploy. While appearing to be a comedy ridiculing the fashion of the _petit-maître_, what Rousseau gradually reveals is the soul of a natural man.

Le Devin du village plays with the rococo taste for the _fête galante_. Rousseau offers the traditional rustic setting and the standard situation of the innocent shepherd seduced by the lady of the manor. But Rousseau turns this seemingly standard plot into a moral lesson without overtly preaching. Rather, he engages the courtiers' sentiments for a dream world of innocent simplicity. As Starobinski has observed, Rousseau makes his subversive message tremendously appealing even to the spiritually blasé:

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> Under certain conditions, therefore, a disease that has grown steadily worse throughout human history can find its remedy. Instead of the incomprehensible "ruckus" of the French opera, proof of the decadence of a society given to artifice, it is possible to create another kind of music, a music that flows from the heart, that is the product of a truer taste. In no less a hotbed of civilized perversion than a court theatre, that music, by setting peasant lovers singing and reciting, is capable of awakening the true passion of the beginning of time, and even jaded courtiers are capable of receiving the revelation in their hearts.10

His aim is to have the most sophisticated society in Paris, the Royal Court itself, prefer the simple morality of a city like Geneva to the corrupt culture of Paris.

Pygmalion employs similar devices. Rousseau counted on the rococo interest in this erotic myth where the perfect woman surrenders in selfless love to the male, her creator. Rousseau uses this ideal to both indict and seduce his audience by portraying Pygmalion as the victim of vanity, or *amour-propre*. Only when the jaded artist summons up his authentic self can he create his ideal in his own image. Galatea represents the ideal woman that Rousseau had longed for, one who could share his soul to such a degree that the two would truly become one. In personalizing it, Rousseau transforms the original meaning of the Pygmalion legend. The vain fantasy of self-indulgent eroticism is metamorphosed into a vision of the artist released from the tyranny of an *amour-propre* nurtured by a sophisticated civilization. By Pygmalion's acceptance of his true self--his inner genius, his *amour de soi*--he is, like his statue, vitalized.

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Rousseau's Lettre â d'Alembert is as much a work upholding the values of theatre as it is one criticizing it. The Romantics accepted much of Rousseau's criticism as their own. Both Goethe and Schiller were dismayed at the state of the theatre of their day and saw in Rousseau's criticism clues to its cure. Both wanted to change the tastes of the theatregoing public through education and transform the experience of theatre from passive self-indulgence to an act of spiritual transcendence. There is nothing anti-theatrical in this aspect of Rousseau's Lettre.

Nevertheless, Rousseau's overall message is a negative one that appears to condemn the entire history of theatre for failing in its goal of improving society. In the end, however, it is not the theatre per se that he is condemning, but how it has been corrupted by sophisticated cultures. In the right hands and in the right community it has the power to reinforce the good. Yet, even in such a corrupt culture as the Paris of his day, Rousseau's Lettre argues that theatre can be of benefit.

Rousseau's Neglected Treatise on Theatre

It is unfortunate that Rousseau's Lettre â d'Alembert has become the primary document used to present Rousseau's views on theatre. Much of what Rousseau has written on opera can be applied to theatre, just as Wagner's theories have been.[11]

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In this regard, if there is one work that can stand as Rousseau's treatise on opera (and by implication on theatre as well) it is his Dictionnaire de musique. I have quoted from it in prior chapters, but to illustrate my point, I shall quote a part of his entry on the ACTEUR:

> Il ne suffit pas à l'Acteur d'Opéra d'être un excellent Chanteur, s'il n'est encore un excellent Pantomime; car il ne doit pas seulement faire sentir ce qu'il dit lui-même, mais aussi ce qu'il laisse dire à la Symphonie. L'Orchestre ne rend pas un sentiment qui ne doive sortir de son ame; ses pas, ses regards, son geste, tout doit s'accorder san cesse avec la Musique, sans pourtant qu'il paroisse y songer; il doit intéresser toujours, même en gardant le silence, et quoiqu'occupé d'un rolle difficile, s'il laisse un instant oublier le Personnage pour s'occuper du Chanteur, ce n'est qu'un Musicien sur la Scène; il n'est plus Acteur. (emphasis Rousseau's)12

Clearly there is much in this single entry that applies to the dramatic actor as well.

Rousseau's Theatre for the Parisians

The program for what I term Rousseau's Theatre for the Parisians is manifest on several levels. In each Rousseau makes his presence felt. What his presence implies is a personal world-view intended to seduce the audience into sharing it. It is a view difficult to reduce to a simple definition; but it embraces his feelings about humanity's primal innocence and the desire to recapture it. It is a view that forces the beholder to contrast his or her lost innocence with its present corruption by modern society and

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long to rediscover it. It depicts an idealized lost world, a Golden Age, that is not lost in the past, but that resides neglected in each person's memory.

A key to Rousseau's poetics is his emphasis on all elements of theatre that affect primal feelings and which have their roots in language and music. Rousseau's championing of melody over harmony is an extension of his search for the inner voice of Nature (God) that can be felt but never articulated. To this end, Rousseau's search for alternative uses of theatrical language, such as pantomime, tableaux, and gesture as well as alternative uses of music to express what words cannot, indicates Rousseau's adaptation of many of Diderot's theatrical ideas for his own quite different ends.

Rather than viewing Rousseau as anti-theatrical, we should acknowledge his legacy to the theatre in his plays, his operas, and his essays. To this end, my work is intended as a contribution towards re-evaluating Rousseau's all-but-forgotten theatre works and restoring Rousseau's tarnished image as a man of and for the theatre.

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Notes

1. Lettre â d'Alembert, OC 5:1.

2. Ibid, 6.

3. Ibid, 43.

4. Ibid, 38.

5. Ibid, 41-42.

6. Ibid, 109.

7. Jean Starobinski, The Antidote in the Poison," in Blessings in Disguise, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) 126.

8. Ibid, 137.

9. Lettre â d'Alembert, OC 5:18.

10. Starobinski, "The Antidote in the Poison," 156.

11. In this regard, it is of interest to note that much of what Wagner presented in his theories of opera was anticipated by Rousseau in his writings on opera.

12. Dictionnaire de musique, OC 5:637.

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