BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE,
A PROBLEM IN AUTHENTICITY

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in French in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The City University of New York
1976

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

10 May 1976
date

Chairman of Examining Committee

May 10/76
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Acknowledgements

I wish to express my extreme gratitude to my mentor, Professor J. Robert Loy, for his valuable guidance and encouragement throughout the course of this research. Our many hours of discussions and his numerous suggestions are most appreciated.

I would like to thank the members of my Doctoral guidance and examining comittee, Professors Richard Brooks and Henry Hornik, for the time and effort each has taken to read this dissertation and for their constructive criticism. I also would like to express my thanks to Professor Henri Peyre, Executive Officer of the French Doctoral Program for his interest in this research.

Thanks are also due to the City University of New York and Department of Modern Languages, Brooklyn College for giving me the opportunity to teach.

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INTRODUCTION

In De l'Allemagne which was published in 1813, several months before Bernardin de Saint Pierre's death, Mme de Staël remarks that:

> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint Pierre, Chateaubriand, dans quelques-uns de leurs ouvrages, sont tous, même à leur insu, de l'école germanique, c'est-à-dire qu'ils ne puisent leur talent que dans le fond de leur âme.[1]

She assigns to Bernardin the place between the two greatest precursors of literature of "sentiment" or literature of the "soul." In the words of M. Bellessort, Bernardin is like

> la vigne lascive qui, de ses rameaux suspendus, unit ces deux grands ormes.[2]

As a group, these three writers form what can be considered a first "act" in the Romantic Movement which was to dominate such a great part of the nineteenth century:

> Quand on étudie l'histoire du romantisme, il y faut nettement distinguer une trilogie. Le premier acte, qui renferme les origines immédiates et les commencements se caractérise par trois grands noms, Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint Pierre et Chateaubriand, tous trois inspirés du même liberalisme.[3]

Considered together as the group of Preromantics who were to inspire and form the talents and the philosophies of Lamartine, Hugo, George Sand, et al, or as individual literary "sensibilities" who left their own unique legacies to French literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Bernardin de Saint Pierre always

occupies the place in the middle - he is the bridge between Rousseau and Chateaubriand- not only chronologically speaking but also and especially in reference to all the important doctrines that formed the cornerstone of the Romantic movement.

It is partially, but not exclusively as a transitional figure that we would like to consider Bernardin. To assign him a role in Preromantic French literature as nothing but a "connector" between Rousseau and Chateaubriand is to deny him any original contribution whatsoever. Therefore, this study will clarify Bernardin's role as a transitional writer as well as examine his role as an original thinker.

Bernardin de Saint Pierre has not been the subject of much recent critical attention. When he was written about in the early part of this century it was usually in reference to his personal life. Indeed, Bernardin was a colorful character. A bachelor for most of his life, he married 20 year old Félicité Didot at the age of 56; in 1799, 63 year old widower Bernardin took as his second wife Désirée Pelleporc who was 20 years old. His role as a husband, and the antinomy between his personal character and behavior and his idyllic writings is what mostly interested critics at the turn of the century.

When Bernardin is studied as a "literary figure" it is almost always as the author of Paul et Virginie, a "novelette" which has been considered any number of things: a religious Evangel, an agricultural manual, an idyllic pastoral describing Social Utopia in Exotic Eden, and most frequently, a fairy tale à la Grimm which becomes the "soap opera" for many contemporary ladies and turned its author

into the current heart-throb.

Critics usually single out the weaknesses of Bernardin's pseudo-scientific theories in the Etudes de la nature and especially in his Harmonies de la nature. The totality of his work however has by and large been neglected as has been his original and real contribution as a disciple of Rousseau, to the oncoming Romantic movement.

In addition to examining Bernardin's authenticity as a transitional figure, we cannot neglect the all-important question of Bernardin's authenticity in relation to his own literary works and thoughts. On this score we can present many of the different opinions on Bernardin's personality and character, his actual behavior compared to the image he projects through his writing. His authenticity as a "political" figure and his reaction towards the woman in his life would certainly be main questions in this category.

The first two chapters will assay the basic contribution of Rousseau to the thoughts of Bernardin. There are, of course, differing opinions as to whether Bernardin is actually a disciple of Rousseau, the inheritor and "extender" of his theory, or whether resemblance between their doctrines is only coincidental. M. Souriau Bernardin's defender and esteemed biographer, finds that:

> Bernardin a été l'intime, le confident de Rousseau, mais non pas son disciple. Son originalité n'a rien perdu à son commerce avec un esprit plus puissant que le sien.[4]

Bernardin, for Souriau, is then hardly a follower of Rousseau at all - he staunchly defends Bernardin's ideas as original and any resemblance they might possibly bear to Jean-Jacques' is purely coincidental.

Jean Fabre sees in Bernardin a reflection of Rousseau, but a very, very pale and somewhat twisted reflection indeed:

> Mais Bernardin est à Rousseau ce que Naigeon est à Diderot et HOmais à Voltaire: on n'est jamais mieux trahi que par les siens.[5]

and further:

> Mais il n'avait pas assez de génie, de noblesse et d'audace pour forger son instrument, courir sa chance seul et devenir ce Virgile moderne, auquel il permet parfois de rêver. Il lui fallait des garants et des modèles, il cherchait une forme et un genre . . .[6]

M. Trahard tends to see Bernardin as the one who among all others came closest to Rousseau's thinking. Speaking about the other inheritors of Jean-Jacques' doctrine and methods, i. e. Choderlos de Laclos and Rétif de la Bretonne, Trahard points out:

> Un seul approche directement Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint Pierre . . .[7]

Trahard finds that Bernardin approaches Rousseau most clearly in his disdain for society, his desire for a simple, calm, peaceful life in the bosom of nature, where, through closer contact with the universe, man can reclaim the happiness that once was his in a newly found Social Utopia.

Maury sees Bernardin as a continuer of the Rousseau tradition; furthermore, both of them together are responsible for inspiring the main trends in the Romantic Movement.[8]

From Souriau's denial of any kinship of ideas, Fabre's insistance on Bernardin's involontary betrayal of the master due to his lack of force and genius, Trahard's seeing very close likenesses in their social views and Maury's opinion that Bernardin does not imitate Rousseau, but evolves from a common inspiration, we see that views of the subject are quite diverse and depend on the vantage point of the critic. In an attempt to dissociate itself from the traditional, often fallacious critical views, this study will attempt to provide different understandings of the Rousseau-Bernardin relationship.

All of the major concepts discussed by Rousseau are based on "sentiment"; this is the case for his disciple as well. We see in their work, for example, the notion of nature based on sentiment, religion based on sentiment, social and moral ideas based on sentiment and of course education based on sentiment as well. Everything proceeds from the basic triumph of instinct over reason and everything ultimately returns to "sentiment" which acts as a springboard for so-called rational ideas.

Both Rousseau and Bernardin, it is true, base their doctrines originally on "sentiment" but the evolution of their ideas follow divergent paths. This is due to the fact that the idée fixe or motivating factor in each case is different. With Rousseau, his concern for man's eventual happiness, his views on society, i. e. his hatred for luxury and his love of the simple life, his desire for social justice, and his concept of Social Utopia in a vague, dreamlike Golden Age, are the elements which make up the force

directing the evolution of his doctrine. His disciple's philosophy is centered around an ardent desire, or even mania to demonstrate the harmony of the different elements of nature, i..e. physical appearance and beauty are connected to moral merit and utility, and seemingly conflicting elements can be combined to form a harmonious whole.

NOTES

1. Bellessort, André. "Bernardin de Saint-Pierre ou le plus heureux des trois." in Dix-Huitième siècle et Romantisme, (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1941), p. 249.

2. Ibid., p. 249.

3. Maury, Fernand. Etude sur la vie et les oeuvres de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. (Paris: Hachette, 1892), pp. 607-608.

4. Souriau, Maurice. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre d'après ses manuscrits. (Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1905), p. 142.

5. Fabre, Jean. "Paul et Virginie, Pastoral." in Lumières et Romantisme. (Paris: Librairie Klincksieck, 1963), p. 181.

6. Ibid., p. 185.

7. Trahard, Pierre. Les maîtres de la sensibilité française au XVIIIième siècle. (Paris: Boivin et Cie. Editeurs, 1933), v. IV, pp. 8-9.

8. Maury, F. op. cit., p. 605.

CHAPTER 1

ROUSSEAU, THE FOUNDER OF THE "SENTIMENT DE LA NATURE"

> Exister, pour nous, c'est sentir et notre sensibilité est incontestablement antérieure à notre raison même.[1]

This idea is the general governing principle of Rousseau's thought. Man's capacity to "feel" develops before his ability to "think." Even in his full maturity when his reason is fully developed "sensibilité," i. e., the instinct of the heart, and his physical sensations still influence and shape his thoughts and since "ni la sensation ne le sentiment ne dépendent de nous, notre pensée nous est en quelque sorte, imposée."[2] Jean-Jacques himself is slave to his senses - but he says that it is his heart that rules his body. This seemingly contradictory statement is made plausible simply because the heart, for Rousseau, is the headquarters of the physical sensations. Rousseau is predisposed to sentiment; his is an ardent quest for the raw, natural emotion that primitive man was capable of before the coming of civilization. With Rousseau, experiences of natural sentiment become an act of will. His own words express this deliberate and voluntary recreation of sentiment and summarize all that was important in the new literature of "sensibilité" of which he laid the foundation:

> La raison me tue; je voudrais être fou pour être sain.[3]

Reason, for Rousseau is then insufficient - it fools us as do our physical sensations; instinct alone can be our surest guide. But instinct is made up of two apparently opposing parts; on the one hand are the physical "sentiments," the passions which were tradition-

ally thought of as the force troubling man's soul and inner peace, and leading him to temptation and eventual downfall. Jean-Jacques is fully aware of this "tyrannie des passions":

> Au moment où il croit atteindre la liberté, il sent la dépendance où le tiennent son corps, son esprit, son cœur, qui sont, moins des parties de lui-même que des éléments naturels . . .[4]

He knows the treachery of the passions; they are the source of life but they are the source of death as well. They are capable of creating but no less potent in destroying, they are the beginning and the end of all things.[5]

"Mes passions m'ont fait vivre et mes passions m'ont tué," says Jean-Jacques; this paradox indicates that without his passions, man is lifeless and useless. In a man responsible for leaving as a legacy to the oncoming Romantic generation the cult of passion we can easily see that the passions are a necessary life-sustaining part of sentiment. In no way does he try to deny this side of man's instinct; on the contrary, he tries to orient the passions and use them in ways that will be beneficial to society. Let us not forget, in reference to this point, that Rousseau believes in the innate goodness of man and the value of sentiment. Were this not the case, he could never believe that the passions could ultimately be diverted to constructive use for the betterment of mankind. Jean-Jacques sees in the passions a principle for action. It depends upon the subject whether the actions will be good or bad ones.[6]

But, on the other hand, besides the "physical" force, sentiment is also composed of a "moral" force. It is precisely the

latter that overides the darker destructive passions and makes man turn them to good use. Rousseau is cognizant of passions' counterpart, "morale," and he knows that both of these act upon him, but if he is subjugated to them, "c'est par la seconde plus que par la première."[7] Having established the basic definition of "sentiment" or instinct, i. e. that it is made up of two conflicting parts, and having inisisted upon the predominance of the moral force over the physical, Rousseau then bases his entire doctrine on the prevalence of this moral instinct over reason. "Jamais l'instinct moral ne m'a trompé."

Even so, it is erroneous to think that Rousseau is against "science" because of the fact that it is based purely on reason. What he is chiefly opposed to are the so-called "scientific" academies of his time, "l'inutilité de ces beaux établissements" and "leur bavardage." He detests their excessive erudition which has no other goal but is own glorification.[8]

We begin to see that the causes for his anti-scientific and anti-intellectual leanings are not especially motivated by his distrust of reason. Surely he is against "erudition" for erudition's sake, and the furor for scientific "generalization" prevalent at the time, but what worries him mostly are the social evils brought about by science through the learned academies. Thus, Rousseau, does not oppose pure science itself; he most assuredly respected the direct observation of nature (which he made a premise of his educational theory) and he admired the true scholars like Buffon; but he detested the

philosophes and their "esprit métaphysique" and especially resented the influence of the "bas-bleus" on scientists and "gens de lettres."[9] These facts clearly reveal Rousseau's idée fixe; his quest for society and mankind's happiness. It is an all-important to understand that his apparent distrust for science stems exclusively from fear of the social effects of science and the arts. First and foremost, he wants to prevent people from falling into the trap of "orgueil scientifique," the worst of the wrongdoings of the scientific academies. One must take care to differentiate between "academic" science and pure science. The devastating social effects of the scientific academies, influenced by the blue stockings, peopled by courtisans and subject to the most destructive anti-social prejudices are what Rousseau objects to most of all:

> Peuples, sachez donc une fois que la nature a voulu vous préserver de la science, comme une mère arrache une arme dangereuse des mains de son enfant; que tous les secrets qu'elle vous cache sont autant de maux dont elle vous garantit, et que la peine que vous trouvez à vous instruire n'est pas le moindre de ses bienfaits.[10]

> . . .les Sciences, les Lettres et les Arts . . .étendent des guirlandes de fleurs sur les chaines de fer dont ils sont chargés . . .[11]

In addition to the anti-social prejudices of these academies the most detrimental effect brought about by science is social splintering:

> D'où naissent tous ces abus, si ce n'est pas de l'inégalité funeste introduite entre les hommes par la distinction des talens et par l'avilissement des vertus? [12]

Rousseau is aginst the dogmatically systematized science that tends to break up society. He complains that there are no more citizens, just geometers, chemists, scholars, etc. Here again the "fil conducteur" of Rousseau's doctrine shows its face: his ardent sense of social justice showing the need for an egalitarian society; and the inequality between man is undeniably enhanced by subdivision into separate classes, brought about by the pursuit of erudition; it is the same concern for rendering the social classes more equal that causes Rousseau's objection to the arts. In his Discours sur les sciences et les arts, he imagines a typical prayer of the future generations, who would be victimized by the present one's pursuit of erudition:

> Dieu tout-puissant, toi qui tiens
> dans tes mains les Esprits, délivre-
> nous des Lumières et des funestes arts
> de nos Pères, et rends-nous l'ignorance,
> l'innocence et la pauvreté, les seuls
> biens qui puissent faire notre bonheur
> et qui soient précieux devant toi.[13]

Since Rousseau's constant dream was of a return to Social Utopia and freedom, in an "état de nature" it is clear that the genre of novel he was against was precisely the one that degraded the lot of the peasant who lived close to nature and worked the land. To remedy the great evil of his generation, i. e. the desire to live in the big cities, novels were needed which:

> Proposent de ramener tout à la nature,
> donner aux hommes l'amour d'une vie
> égale et simple; leur faire aimer
> la solitude et la paix, les tenir de
> quelque distance les uns des autres . . .[14]

Besides painting for the peasants a very dismal picture of their own condition, the arts before Rousseau's time were exclusively concerned with the feelings, view and way of life of society's aristocratic element. Classical tragedy of course portrays the sentiments of the upper class; never does one see the "peuple" as the focal point in art. This was to change with the paintings of Chardin and the plays of Beaumarchais, but up until Rousseau's time art had become artifice; nothing more than the rigid systematization of talents, it had been reduced to maxims which stifled the imagination. How easy it is to see why Rousseau, the great believer in instinct would object to the dogmatic codification of classic art which suppressed the creative side of man, but as we mentioned before, his greatest objection was to the social evils which are begotten by the arts:

> Le luxe va rarement sans les sciences et les arts, et jamais ils ne vont sans lui. Je sais que notre philosophie, toujours féconde en maximes singulières, pretend, contre l'expérience de tous les siècles, que le luxe fait la splendeur des Etats . . .[15]

Never do the sciences and arts go without luxury, luxury which Rousseau detests above all because it takes away from the poor people the necessities of life so that the rich can have things which they do not really need. Luxury, is by nature bred in the big cities, centers of civilization. This is the basic evil, because according to Jean-Jacques' doctrine, the concept of property has given birth to society which in turn has created inequality among men. Rousseau hates the cities for being breeding places of luxury, which brings

along the evils of the sciences and arts, all broadening the inequality among men. For Jean-Jacques this is definitely not the existence that nature has intended for man. Rousseau looks back to the life style of primitive man for a lesson on how man was intended to live. Residing in the perfect "état de nature," early man was not subject to the maladies that plague modern civilization; life among the natural elements made him strong, robust and agile. The agitations, depressions and fears of the modern world were unknown to him because "l'homme qui médite est un animal dépravé."

Primitive man did not especially engage in intellectual activity; he was guided by instinct:

> Je le vois rassasiant sous un chêne, se désaltérant au premier ruisseau, trouvant son lit au pied du même arbre qui lui a fourni son repas; et voilà ses biens satisfaits . . .Je voudrais bien qu'on m'expliquât quel peut être le genre de misère d'un être libre dont le coeur est en paix et le corps en santé.[16]

Thus primitive man was happy, his passions being natural ones and easy to satisfy. He lived alone, as nature intended him to, and solitary life was a necessary element to his happiness. It is "property" that first gave birth to the concept of society which in turn has corrupted man and brought about the inequality among the different social classes. The institution of property has created the rich and the poor, the weak and the strong. To legitimize and protect their property, the rich have imposed laws on civil society; to enforce these laws they have elected magistrates, which further solidifies and heightens the inequalities of the social

hierarchy. Once these magistrates are elected they proclaim themselves "hereditary" or heirs to their positions and despotism is born.

The cities clearly epitomize all that is hateful to Rousseau. They represent the origin of inequality through proprietorship, the birth of society and civilization to protect this property, the suppression of the poor by the rich who, because of their desire for luxuries deprive the poor of necessities. All in all, the cities are the complete antithesis of Rousseau's utopian dream of the Golden Age of man where the primitive forerunners lived blissfully and contentedly in the state of nature, according to the natural laws, satisfying their simple passions and as a result, achieving happiness. And happiness is after all what modern man is in vain groping for. Rousseau, ardent moralist that he was, wanted desparately to render modern man happy by purging him of the aforementioned evils imposed by civilization. Happiness did not reside in the frothy false virtues derived from the artificial social conventions of the propertied classes, but in the true virtues of an individual code of morals and conscience.

In order to understand Rousseau's wishes for modern man, we must recall that for him society and democracy are based on origins of sentiment and instinct.

Having thus established and defined the basic nature of man's ills and longing hopelessly to help cure them, Rousseau turns to "solitude" in nature; it is here that he can better contemplate

society at a distance and formulate the long-awaited balm for the wounds left by civilization. We must understand that by "solitude" Rousseau does not mean "isolement." Isolation from his fellow beings is not his objective at all. Rousseau loves mankind and his perpetual dream is the attainment of a greater facility for happiness in modern man; it is precisely this love and concern that cause him to seek "social solitude" in nature where he will be better able to contemplate and help society solve its problems.[17] This meditation in nature has made Rousseau realize that retrogression to savage, primitive life is impossible for modern man. But a return to nature in the form of a rustic existence was a feasible solution. Happiness resides in a return to agrarian life as it would liberate mankind from the burdens of civilization. A return to life close to nature would rid man of the burden of reason, rigid formalities, and artificial laws imposed by civilization. These evils purged from his system, man is again guided by his natural instinct and is in a position to be beneficial to his fellow man because a rustic existence will naturally tend to instill in man the all-important sense of patriotism. For Jean-Jacques, individualism cannot exist without a "culte de l'Etat."[18]

Even in solitude, Rousseau is civically oriented and envisions rebirth of patriotism and civic inspiration in modern man through a closer contact with the universe. Patriotism is only one of the virtues that his new life close to nature will beget; all the others, i. e. goodness, kindness, a sense of justice, etc. will not be long in following as soon as man has shed the debilitating

restrictions and heinous corruptions of civilization and proceeds to live in liberty according to the laws of nature and the dictates of his conscience. And with virtue in tow, can happiness be far behind? Virtue is a necessary condition for happiness because it is through the virtue, the goodness and the justice of his acts that man finds bliss and contentment. All of the aforementioned elements, i. e. liberty, virtue, happiness, etc. are necessary components of Rousseau's concept of Social Utopia. But it is a utopia which is based neither on the Bible nor on the Scriptures.[19] Rousseau models his Utopia after the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations which he admired. The "bons sauvages" which Rousseau describes as "libres, sains, bons et heureux," were his model for virtue and happiness in man in the "état de nature." The other models of ideal societies were the ancient civilizations of Rome, Egypt and especially Greece whose principles of democracy and patriotism Rousseau admired from a civic point of view. But it is probably his Helvetic origins which influenced the description of the ideal society in the Nouvelle Héloïse:

> La salle à manger serait partout, dans le jardin, dans un bateau, sous un arbre, quelquefois au loin, . . .une longue procession de gais convives porterait en chantant l'apprêt du festin, . . .[20]

Rousseau's ideal Social Eden includes outdoor feasts, people singing anddancing, dressed in garlands of flowers and basking in the liberty that reigns supreme. Ther should not however be any misunderstanding

of this point: just as the ancient republics of Greece forbade and did not tolerate in their citizens "tous ces métiers tranquilles et sédentaires qui en affaissant et corrompant le corps, énervent sitôt la vigeur de l'âme,"[21] just so Rousseau sees man in the Age d'Or as a productive and energetic individual engaged in useful work. Everyone will learn a trade, work will be done in open air and a fraternal, benevolent society will be born from mutually derived benefits based on the trades.

Another characteristic of primitive man that Rousseau admired was his physical strength. Not yet having invented any tools, man was forced to do everything with his bare hands and thus developed agility and prowess in many different tasks. Indeed, physical strength is one of the conditions necessary for happiness since according to the Greek doctrine, strength is a virtue. This faculty in man, which modern city life has succeeded in suppressing, is conserved by and developed in rural life. Physical force will be one of the virtues reborn in the ideal existence of the "état de nature."

The ultimate goal of the Age d'Or is of course happiness:

> Il faut être heureux . . .c'est la fin de tout être sensible; c'est le premier désir que nous imprima la nature et le seul qui ne nous quitte jamais.[22]

Happiness is achieved through the virtue inspired in man when he lives in an "état de nature," a mystical atmosphere of liberty in nature where man must only follow the dictates of his conscience. The "état de nature" for Rousseau is a vague, mysterious, dream-world, unhampered by any of the boundaries of the real universe; it is

in this golden climate that he:

> plaçait les beaux mots de vertu,
> de liberté et de bonheur.[23]

Rousseau's Social Utopia is a hypothesis lost in the imaginary atmosphere of the dawn of civilization; it was Bernardin de Saint Pierre who was to furnish a real and concise background for the state of nature described by Jean-Jacques. But Rousseau is aware of the chimeric qualities of his exotic Eden; it is for him "un état qui n'existe plus, qui n'a peut-être pas existé, qui probablement n'existera jamais."[24] It is curious to note how Rousseau refrains from specifying whether the Golden Age he speaks of refers to an ancient paradise forever lost or a possible state of happiness in the future which man must make his permanent goal. But in the Discours sur l'ogigine de l'inégalité he does admit that inspired by the hope

> de rendre les hommes sages, mon coeur
> était échauffé par l'idée du bonheur future
> du genre humain . . .[25]

But Jean-Jacques realized that he could not ask civilized man to retrogress back to the pure "état de nature," and he never indicated the practical means for such a retrogression. Far from asking the impossible, Jean-Jacques applies himself to the research of what ultimately realizable means of amelioration modern man has at his disposal. He does recognize the need for a return to a simple, peaceful country life which would return to man the capacity for happiness that once was his.

As has been said, "nature" is the all important element in

Rousseau's concept of Social Utopia; Rousseau never sees nature as the lifeless decor it had been in the preceding century, in L'Astrée and other literary producations. He is one of the first to feel "le sentiment de la nature," i. e. the direct rapport between the natural universe and the human soul. Nature takes on a social connotation by offering man a refuge from the evil bred by civilization. It offers to the afflicted spectacles for their pleasure and delight to calm their hearts and ease their minds. The bond between man and the universe is so strong that human emotions, joy, sadness, etc. are reflected in nature. Many examples of this notion are found in Rousseau's work: the calming effect of the mountains of the Valais on Saint Preux, the promenade on the lake, the Rêveries, etc. Rousseau sees in nature not only the reflection of his emotions but also the symbol of his destiny. The pleasure that Rousseau derives from the melancholy effect produced in the human soul through certain spectacles in nature, e. g. descriptions of autumn, ruins and graves, place Jean-Jacques in the Preromantic era as the true precursor of Chateaubriand and Lamartine.

One can see through this very brief description of the "sentiment de la nature" in Rousseau why nature is for him the ideal remedy and only hope for a civilization devoured by its own misdeeds and desparately in need of revitilization. Nature's restoring power lies in its foundation on instinct.

Rousseau, through his depiction of nature as a living and breathing organism, is of course responsible for introducing a new type of picturesque language which was to enrich the French literary vocabulary; but the picturesque element is a by product which cannot be separated from the true meaning and scope of the socially oriented "sentiment de la nature." Nature is capable of restoring society's sapped energy because it acts like a "tendre amie" when man is in need of shelter and solace, providing the healing freedom he needs for the release of his individuality and personnality.

Since nature furnishes the liberty necessary for the release of individuality, it is the ideal medium for the creative genius of Rousseau to emerge and attain its highest peak.

Each and every symptom of civilizations' corrupting influence then has its corresponding specific cure in nature. The suppression of individualism in the big cities is remedied by the freedom granted by nature for the personality to emerge. Nature allows man's instinct to flourish, society stifles it, imposing on him instead a rigid code of etiquette. Cities breed luxury, nature provides bounty for all, and for the artist especially, nature is a boundless storehouse of inspiration allowing full exploration and attainment of creative genius. But the highest point in the mystical state of nature is attained when the individual, finally free of the chains of reason, can identify his own existence with that of a Supreme Being governing the Universe:

> Bientôt, de la surface de la terre, j'élevais mes idées à tous les êtres de la nature, au système universel des choses, à l'Etre incompréhensible qui embrasse tout. Alors, l'esprit perdu dans cette immensité, je ne pensais pas, je ne raisonnais pas, je ne philosophais pas; je me sentais avec une sorte de volupté accablé du poids de cet univers, je me livrais avec ravissement à la confusion de ces grandes idées, j'aimais à me perdre en imagination dans l'espace; mon coeur, resserré dans les bornes des êtres, s'y trouvait trop à l'étroit, j'étouffais dans l'univers, j'aurais voulu m'élancer dans l'infini. Je crois que, si j'eusse dévoilé tous les mystères de la nature, je me serais senti dans une situation moins délicieuse que cette étourdissante extase à laquelle l'agitation de mes transports me faisait écrier quelquefois: Ô grand Etre; Ô grand Etre! sans pouvoir dire ni penser rien de plus.[25]

We will not attempt an "explication de texte" of this magnificent passage where Rousseau describes his happiness at the Hermitage with Mme d'Epinay. Suffice it to say that the excerpt conveys a resumé of Rousseau's basic beliefs: the benefits of solitude in nature, the relief from the burden of reason, freedom to "feel." There is also a first suggestion of the "mal du siècle" i. e. the "vague des passions" that was to torture and delight René. Most significant however is the pervading inescapable feeling of the existence of a Supreme Being in nature who infiltrates Rousseau's heart and soul.

The Supreme Being is a power that Jean-Jacques feels in nature through his heart and soul. His religion is not the traditional organized worship of the civilized world; it is anti-dogmatic and anti-clerical. He does, however, retain in his beliefs the Bible and the personage of Jesus Christ but accords to them his own very

personal meanings, based on instinct and nature. There is for Rousseau, as there had not been for Diderot and the other materialists, an organizing intelligence which brings out the harmony of the universe. These things did not just come about by themselves or some lucky chance.

It is his "sentiment intérieur" that confirms for Jean-Jacques the existence of the Deity who shows Himself through the order and harmony of the universe. When Jean-Jacques tries to examine the Supreme Being on a more rational, analytical basis, he fails:

> J'aperçois Dieu partout dans ses oeuvres; je le sens en moi, je le vois tout autour de moi; mais sitôt que je veux le contempler en lui-même, sitôt que je veux chercher où il est, ce qu'il est, quelle est sa substance, il m'échappe et mon esprit troublé n'aperçoit plus rien.[27]

Comparing his "natural" religion with the organized religions of the world, Rousseau finds it impossible to choose which one of the latter would be the "true" religion. Since it is through human effort that these religions have been organized, Rousseau finds them inadequate:

> Que d'hommes entre Dieu et moi![28]

Even if one religion is the true one, what happens to all the people who worshipped the Creator in different ways?

> Celui qui destine au supplice éternel le plus grand nombre de ses créatures n'est pas le Dieu clément et bon que ma raison m'a montré.[29]

Rousseau respects however the religions that are based on the "culte du coeur," the sentiments of the heart. He does not advocate mass abandonment of organized religion; what he would like to see though is a brotherhood of all men who love one another as they love themselves and who love God above all. This concept of brotherly love is, of course, the basis for most religions and it is the crux of Jean-Jacques' natural religion as well.

Rousseau is against the rigid traditions and dogmatic rituals of the civilized churches. Organized religions definitely have a detrimental effect in that they divide men into groups causing animosities which lead to wars and bloodshed. Rousseau rejects all the ceremony, the rituals, the miracles, and the fanaticism of these religions and proclaims the necessity of a universal religion of love and tolerance. Not only are organized religions anti-social in that they pit different sects against each other, they are also against the basic concept of an egalitarian society when they favor the upper classes.

The Vicaire Savoyard, who represents Jean-Jacques on the matter of religion, wants to do away with the intermediaries, the rituals, the miracles, etc. that have distorted the basic meaning of the Bible. He would like to pave the way for a return to the fundamental principles of morality and virtue where the Supreme Being is revealed to man throught his conscience and the love in his heart. Everything then comes back to the "conscience," the "guide infaillible," the "instinct divin"! Rousseau believes that it is up to man to make good use of his basic liberty in accordance with the laws of nature.

which are the same as Divine Will. It is upon man alone that happiness depends; the Deity has given him a conscience "pour aimer le bien," and liberty "pour le choisir." Thus it is not only that happiness depends solely upon man's choice but it is his duty to attain this happiness.

The most efficacious weapon that Jean-Jacques can summon to elevate man to his original capacity for happiness is education. Rousseau's pedagogy in Emile is based on all his previous doctrine that has been discussed in the preceding pages. The child must be protected and shielded from the unnatural and degrading influence of civilization. Instruction must, therefore, take place in the bosom of nature, far away from the stultifying and misleading dictates of society, books and all other artificial things. The essential element in education is, of course, liberty which allows a child to learn through his own experiences in nature. Nature is the best teacher, the best textbook; it helps form Rousseau's ideal concept of "l'homme naturel," the natural man à la Rousseau, who is molded and guided by "morale" to attain the necessary "qualités du coeur," honesty and virtue. But what mainly occupies Rousseau is to develop in his student the capacity to judge and to form critical evaluations for himself. Even though Emile is brought up away from society, he will one day be a citizen and the object of his later years of training is to prepare him for this role through the formation and sharpening of his powers of judgment.

Rousseau has constructed his pedagogical method to fit every stage of the child's development. He does not see the use in reasoning with a child before the faculty of reason has developped in him. One cannot address oneself to the student's passions before he is aware of their existence nor can one speak to him excessively of religion before he is in a position to comprehend. The five books of Emile correspond respectively to five separate stages of development. Until the age of twelve, the child learns through sensory perception, from direct observation. Through contact with real things and objects, Rousseau teaches Emile about social realities and actual manual trades. He does not burden him with the unnecessary study of dead languages or books. Experience is the best teacher at this point because it permits the student to teach himself. Mostly we must make sure not to instill in the child any of the demoralizing social passions, i. e. vanity, dominance, avarice, falseness. Let us remember that we want to form an "âme naturelle" free of artifice.

From the beginning, Rousseau seeks to free the child of as many constraints as possible: no more diaper, no more wet nurse, children are to be nursed by their natural mothers (this is a point that Bernardin was later to admire.) A child should be allowed freedom to move around, to come into contact with the world around him. Through his sense of touch and smell, he will discover the warmth, cold, weight, etc. A child learns also to overcome fear in this way. From five until twelve is the time for the all-important physical development; the student will engage in all

sports and will be exposed to all climates and non-temperate conditions so that his body will strengthen and his senses become keener. His first moral lessons will be through punishments for his mistakes. Emile will learn to read, but will not indulge in languages, geography or history. At this point, he is in possession of practical sense and not weighed down by abstract notions.

From twelve to fifteen he will undergo observations of nature; he will learn physics, cosmography and geography and his only book will be Robinson Crusoe. He will learn a manual trade, and his handling of the tools will also aid him to form critical judgment.

From twelve to twenty Emile is exposed to a moral and religious training; this is a crucial period because it is then that the passions develop. They are part of nature and to suppress them is ridiculous and unnatural; the preceptor must therefore accentuate the positive passions of friendship, pity, and sympathy, and try to deemphasize the destructive ones such as hatred, jealousy and ambition which are the social passions.

Emile now learns about society, justice and equality. His initiation will be through the study of Plutarque and the Fables. It is here also that Rousseau introduces the Vicaire Savoyard to speak about religion. Emile is now ready to enter the world - he will be happy because he knows how to limit his aspirations to achievable goals.

In Book Five Rousseau speaks of education for women; he sees the function of women as being useful and pleasing to their husbands. It is their duty to take care of, to advise and console their men, to make life agreeable and easy for them. A woman should be taught to be all graciousness and modesty, talented in music and dance, handy in cooking and cleaning and sewing; she should be devout, serve God and do good deeds for her fellow man, love virtue and see in it the only route to happiness.

Everything with Rousseau then proceeds from his social and moral ideas; these are his motivating force. His desire to better man's future existence is his constant dream. His concepts of education, religion and nature are all socially oriented and are based on his orignal concept or sentiment, i. e. the superiority of instinct over reason.

NOTES

1. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Emile ou de l'éducation. ed. F. and P. Richard, (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1963), p. 353.

2. Trahard, Pierre. Les Maîtres de la sensibilité française au XVIIIième siècle. (Paris: Boivin et Cie, Editeurs, 1933), v. III, p. 18. This is Trahard paraphrasing the ideas of Rousseau.

3. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Correspondance Générale de Jean-Jacques Rousseau. ed. Th. Dufour and P. P. Plan. (Paris: Colin, 1924), v. XI, p. 191. quoted by Trahard, op. cit., v. III, p. 18.

4. Trahard, P. op. cit., v. III, p. 30.

5. Ibid., p. 31.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 24.

8. Ibid., p. 47.

9. Ibid., p. 428.

10. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Oeuvres Complètes. (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1959-1969), v. III, p. 15 (Discours sur les sciences et les arts.)

11. Ibid., p. 7.

12. Ibid., p. 25.

13. Ibid., p. 28.

14. Leblond, M. A. L'idéal du XIXième siècle. (Paris: Alcan, 1909), p. 437.

15. Rousseau, J. J. Oeuvres Complètes, v. III, p. 19.

16. Ibid.

17. Leblond, M. A. op. cit., p. 66.

18. Ibid., p. 52.

19. Ibid., p. 93.

20. Quoted by Leblond, op. cit., p. 79.

21. Ibid., p. 81.

22. Rousseau, J. J. Emile ou de l'éducation. Quoted by Leblond, op. cit., p. 82.

23. Brunet, Gabriel. "Bernardin de Saint-Pierre ou les complications de la naïveté." in Ombres Vivantes (Paris: Ed. à l'Etoile, 1936), p. 107.

24. Rousseau, J. J. Oeuvres Complètes. v. III, p. 123. (Preface to Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité.)

25. Rousseau, J. J. Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité. quoted by Leblond, p. 82.

26. Rousseau, J. J. "Troisième Lettre à Malesherbes." in Oeuvres Complètes. v. I, p. 1141.

27. Rousseau, J. J. Emile, extraits. (Paris: Librairie Larousse, Classiques Larousse, 1937), v. II, pp. 48-49.

28. Rousseau, J. J. Emile ou de l'éducation. quoted by Leblond, p.82.

29. Rousseau, J. J. quoted by Leblond, op. cit., p. 79.

CHAPTER 2

BERNARDIN DE SAINT PIERRE, THE FAVORITE DISCIPLE

Rousseau was consumed by an innate sense of justice and a yearning for the future happiness of mankind in a Golden Age; Bernardin desires these things as well but he does not appreach his doctrine from a social point of view. In his Etudes de la nature the essential objective of the author is to show the perfection of nature "qui n'a rien fait en vain." Bernardin does not accept the science of the Encyclopedists based on reason - the true laws governing the universe are not those of the "physiciens" but those which are discovered by our heart: "lois de convenance, d'ordre, d'harmonie, de consonances, de progression, de contrastes." Providence has organized nature for the happiness of man and it is in following nature's laws that man can achieve virtue and happiness. These laws of nature are, as with Jean-Jacques, applied to the evils of society as well and Bernardin, in the style of his precursor, expresses the desire for a Golden Age in the form of an Ideal City where one would study love and benevolence.

The laws of nature, with Bernardin as with his forerunner Jean-Jacques, are revealed to us, not through reason but through "le sentiment qui nous révèle l'existence de Dieu et l'immortalité de l'âme." With Bernardin, just as with Rousseau, the basic conflict between reason and sentiment is the platform for all future doctrines - he sees man as subject to these dual influences and of course he casts his vote for the supremacy of instinct over reason. It is through his reason,

the "instrument" so highly lauded by the philosophes that the human creature is the most miserable of beings; through his reason man falls victim to many evils. It is his reason, contends Bernardin which causes man to submit to his animal passions. Sentiment on the contrary, is the distinctive mark of humanity because it is sentiment that shows man the Supreme Being, a concept which animals cannot perceive. Sentiment is "l'étincelle de vie qui s'enflamme en sublimes aspirations et s'agite en pressentiments de l'éternité," in the words of M. Maury.[1] Through his sentiment man perceives the beauty, the harmony, the agreement of the elements of the universe, a beauty which results from the "mélange des contraires." Reason is incapable of reavealing anytruth; it is instinct alone which can guide man to a true understanding of the laws governing the universe. The "vérité" which Bernardin seeks at the basis of all the natural elements and all the harmonies of nature, refers of course to a comprehension of how nature has created everything with a special purpose, how everything falls into place, and how conflicting elements may complement each other to form a harmonious whole. It is interesting to note that Bernardin's "manie de conciliation" extends itself even to the clash between instinct and reason. Man is composed of two opposing parts and the balance of his nature stems from the blending and harmony of the two extremes, as is the case with all the elements in the universe.

Bernardin shares Rousseau's mistrust of science but whereas the latter was chiefly concerned with the degrading effect on society, the former is more concerned lest the rigid systematization of science

break up the basic harmonies of the natural elements: Bernardin casts doubt upon the scientific discoveries that had been made through rigorous scientific procedure, using scientific instruments. This he does to bring his contemporaries closer to what he considers the basic metaphysical "truths." For Bernardin, science based on reason, is often fallacious, it breaks up the natural harmony of the elements and it "dérobe le plaisir de l'inconnu - l'ignorance pique notre curiosité et excite nos plaisirs."[2]

Leading man to a comprehension of the mysterious and wonderfully harmonious laws of nature is Bernardin's goal and this can be achieved only through a suppression of reason. Instinct alone will not mislead as reason does; religion is based on instinct as it is the only "moyen infaillible de s'élever à la Divinité." Instinct is the basis for Bernardin's social ideas as it alone seeks the well-being of all mankind, contrary to reason which revolves around personal, egotistic goals. In sum, all of man's true happiness and pleasure find their root in instinct.

Bernardin is against the tendancy of science to generalize and to systematize rigidly; he is opposed to science which is "vaine, orgueilleuse, babillarde,"[3] but he does not feel this way about the true science, the science of nature. The more one studies the natural wonders of the universe, the more one must admire them.

The science of nature is exactly what Bernardin sets out to study in his voluminous Etudes de la nature and Harmonies de la nature. His ultimate goal, of course is to show that all the natural elements have a function which is harmonious with the functions of the other

elements; the vegetable, animal and human kingdoms are closely interdependent through their natural roles, there is a close harmony between the universe and man's emotions and there are harmonies between all the sounds, colors, shapes and forms in the universe. Not only do the different elements form harmonies with each other but every element is a harmony within itself; i. e. the function of a vegetable, animal or even person is closely related to its size, color, shape, sound, etc. Everything is a "harmony" within itself and with everything around it. Very pleasing harmonies are formed with often opposing or contradictory elements.

Since he relates function to form, Bernardin has seen something in nature that Rousseau did not see; he perceives the melange of physical beauty and moral merit. Virtue and morality are then lessons one learns from the close study of the natural elements. This virtue, newly acquired from the study of the universe will of course result in ultimate happiness. One can easily see how such an ardent and persistent drive to conciliate everything can lead to erroneous and often ridiculous conclusions. Unfortunately this was the case for Bernardin who chose to put physical phenomena on a moral basis and confused the concepts of "science" and "conscience"; it is this confusion that renders the Etudes and Harmonies unreadable for modern students. These works do however furnish some magnificent descriptions of nature, such as the following passage:

> J'ai aperçu dans les nuages des tropiques, principalement sur la mer et dans les tempêtes, toutes les couleurs qu'on peut voir sur la terre. Il y en a alors de cuivrées, de couleur de fumée de pipe,

> de brunes, de rouges, de noires, de grises, de livides, de couleur marron, et de celle de gueule de four enflammé. . . .Quelquefois les vents alisés du nord-est ou du sud-est, qui y soufflent constamment, cardent les nuages comme si c'étaient des flocons de soie; puis il les chassent à l'occident en les croisant les uns sur les autres comme les mailles d'un panier à jour. Ils jettent sur les côtes de ce reseau les nuages qu'ils n'ont pas employés et qui ne sont pas en petit nombre; ils les roulent en énormes masses blanches comme la neige, les contournent sur leurs bords, en forme de croupes, et les entassent les uns sur les autres comme les Cordillères du Pérou . . .Quand le soleil vient à descendre derrière de magnifique réseau, on voit passer par toutes ses losanges une multitude de rayons luminuex qui y font un tel effet que les deux côtés de chaque losange qui en sont eclairés paraissent rélevés d'un filet d'or, et les deux autres, qui devraient être dans l'ombre dont teints d'un superbe nacarat. . . . Ici, ce sont de sombres rochers percés à jour, qui laissent apercevoir, par leurs ouvertures, le bleu pur du firmament; là ce sont de longues grèves sablées d'or, qui s'étendent sur de riches fonds du ciel, ponceaux, écarlates et verts comme l'émeraude. La réverbération de ces couleurs occidentales se répand sur la mer dont elle glace les flots azurés de safran et de pourpre.[4]

The rich vocabulary describing the subtle mélange of colors, forms, and sizes is truly without equal and has earned for Bernardin the title of innovator of exoticism in French literature. This exoticism should be regarded not only as an artistic contribution but also as an expression and an integral element of his theory of the harmonies of the universe: His theory of nature is based on the difference between instinct and reason and how the former will lead to an understanding of the laws governing the universe: through sentiment alone man is able to

see the harmony of the three kingdoms in nature and the beauty of their contrasting qualities as well.

Not only is sentiment the factor which leads to a comprehension of nature, but it is also reflected in it. Bernardin sees in nature the reflection of human emotions, i. e. the "état d'ame" of the human occupants of the universe. This concept is not new with him; Rousseau,we have shown, also felt the harmony between human feelings and the natural environment. But Bernardin has pushed this interrelationship much further than his predecessor, sometimes causing his writing to be a little heavyhanded due to the visible intention of the poet "de mêler la nature aux sentiments humains."[5]

Nowhere is Bernardin's intention to reflect human feelings and moral messages through nature clearer than in his masterpiece Paul et Virginie. Indeed, one can follow a "natural symphony" of four movements where the physical environment of the Ile de France mirrors the "état d'âme" of the protagonists. In the first movement, nature is calm and serene, she is "bienfaisante" providing the little group with shelter and protection from the outside world. The two families live together in peace with each other and with the land. They cultivate the earth and she blesses them in turn with her bounty. They are dwelling in the perfect "état de nature," they are virtuous, happy, at peace with themselves and with each other. Suddenly, the young girl Virginie, begins to be troubled by an unknown mysterious feeling which we later find out is the harbinger of her oncoming puberty. She reaches a point of extreme agitation which is reflected in nature by a terrible rainstorm. Afterwards calm returns to Earth and the girl has made the transitionto womanhood. Paul and Virginie

continue to live blissfully until circumstances cause the young girl to leave the exotic Eden for the unnatural corrupt world of civilization - Paul's regret as he watches her ship sail is reflected in the gray skies and olive waters, which seem to presage the pending doom of a creature who has left her natural element. The disaster does come in the form of a shipwreck and Virginie loses her life in the raging tempest. After the fall, Paul's sorrow is mirrored in a décor of emptiness, desolation and hopelessness.

As an introduction to the idyllic pastoral Bernardin wrote:

> J'ai tâché dy peindre un sol et des végétaux différents de ceux de l'Europe . . . J'ai désiré réunir à la beauté de la nature . . .la beauté morale d'une petite société morale.[6]

The moral beauty of thepeople is indeed reflected in the physical environment. But the opposite effect can also hold true, i. e. Bernardin observes as did Jean-Jacques before him that nature may instill in us sentiments which are in harmony with her spectacles. This is especially true of the melancholy effect of certain scenes such as graves and ruins:

> Le goût de la ruine est universel à tous les hommes . . .Les ruines occasionées par le temps nous plaisent en nous jetant dans l'infini, elles nous portent à plusieurs siècles en arrière, et nous intéressent à proportion de leur antiquité . . . Les ruines, où la nature combat contre l'art des hommes, inspirent une douce mélancolie. Elle nous y montre la vanité de nos travaux et la perpétuité des siens . . .[7]

Bernardin derives a unique type of pleasure from the melancholy feeling imparted by the sight of graves and ruins; indeed, he believes that one of the greatest pleasures of solitudes is melancholia:

> C'est encore la mélancholie qui
> rend la solitude si attrayante. La
> solitude flatte notre instinct animal . . .
> et elle étend notre instinct divin.[8]

With this conception of the joys of melancholia Bernardin joins with Rousseau as a precursor to the "tristesse" and eventual "vague des passions" of Chateaubriand.

Besides the connection between human emotions and the natural environment, Bernardin, the naturalist observer, defines a relationship between physical beauty and moral merit, which Rousseau, moralist and social theorist had not perceived. The latter recognized to a certain degree that virtue lay in strength; the former showed that virtue resided in beauty and physiological perfection.[9] This concept will be important in our comparison of the role of women for both the writers in question.

Thus Bernardin prepared the way for the eventual synthesis of beauty, utility and force. Beauty is harmonious with function in nature and is a sign of inner happiness and virtue in humans:

> Pour former dans une nation de beaux
> enfants, il ne faut pas, comme le veulent
> les médecins, assujettir l'espèce humain à
> des purgations régulières . . . Il faut
> les rendre heureux au physique et surtout
> au morale.[10]

It is at this point however that Bernardin's theory begins to take on some incredible aspects. His chief fault, in the didactic and detailed study of nature that he offers us, is the fact that he attributes certain physical phenomena to moral and sentimental causes. It must be remembered that Bernardin is trying to present his impressions of the universe, as a naturalist would, on a scientific basis. This is because he is trying to make the theory more acceptable to his contemporaries who were so impressed with "science" that

they did not see the universe being governed by a Supreme Being but by scientific principles. To combat the atheist philosophes Bernardin tried to use their very own weapon, i. e. the scientific induction method, to show that a universe so perfectly harmonious must reveal the existence of a Supreme Being. The end result of these attempts was of course that he confused the notions of science and conscience, because even though his basic belief is that the laws of nature can be seen only through instinct, he tries to present them on a rational basis:

> Bernardin ne s'arrête pas, non plus qu'aux objections des savants et il explique avec sérénité l'origine des volcans ou la forme du pôle par le sentiment, spiritualise les choses, anime le métal, personnifie la mousse, bref, confond le physique et le moral.[11]

"Bernardin mêle la science de Dieu et celle de l'homme." He has replaced reason with instinct, but he has given instinct the same infallibility which the philosophes saw in reason.

What Bernardin has succeeded in doing in fact is to dissolve his own basic definitions of the distinction between physical and moral forces. He speaks of a disdain for science because it leads to atheism but he boasts of breaking away from the constraining traditional, dogma-based religion, to a doctrine that for him is a combination of the best of both worlds, but as M. Maury so accurately notes: "Apologiste de la Providence, il en a paru quelquefois le caricaturiste."

His errors notwithstanding, the fact is never denied that Bernardin was the first to bring the exotic element into French literature. His artist's palette of vocabulary, his forceful or subtle

descriptions of distant and exotic lands, his lyric poetic prose, the almost musical harmony of his lines, have long been the object of admiration and praise. It was in fact through his exoticism that Bernardin succeeded in rendering a precise and real character to the "état de nature" that Jean-Jacques left vague and imaginary:

> L'état de nature n'était plus une vague hypothèse perdue au crépuscule des origines; il se situait parmi l'enchantement des tropiques, dans une île fortunée, au sein d'une atmosphère qui avait toutes les splendeurs de l'Orient.[12]

What the Utopic dreamer left undefined, Bernardin succeeded in putting into distant and exotic boundaries.

But Bernardin's exoticism is more than the mere expression of his poetic gifts; it becomes the art of enriching the sensibilities of his contemporaries to a fuller comprehension of the integral universe in its infinite, magnificent diversity. Rousseau was attracted to nature for many of the same reasons that Bernardin was; the liberty and the solitude furnished by isolation in nature were the qualities that attracted these thinkers to a rural existence.

Mostly it was in the heart of nature that Bernardin's instinct was free to follow its natural bent and achieve a closer unity with the Supreme Being. Bernardin saw the Deity in nature, but we must be careful on this point; it is not through nature that he first discovers the Supreme Being; He is revealed through his sensibilité and "simplicité du coeur." The Supreme Being then tells Bernardin to go forth and study the laws of the universe, where He is

revealed through His works.

Religion, it must be remembered, cannot be revealed through reason; reason, cold scientific research, causes man to lose his religious inspiration. The Deity is not something which may be weighed or measured, it cannot therefore ma ke itself understood to the logical part of man's mind. It is only the instinctive part of man's comprehension that is capable of grasping the concept of a Divine Creator.

It is precisely his religious sentiment or intuition that separates man from animal, as M. Klem puts it:

> La distinction essentielle de l'homme et de la bête consiste, non dans cette raison faible, mais dans un sentiment qui pénètre jusqu'au fond dans son âme. Le sentiment de l'existence de la Divinité qui fait de l'homme un être séparé des animaux. L'homme n'est homme que parcequ'il est animal religieux.[13]

Bernardin's religion is one based on sentiment; it is similar to the natural religion of Rousseau in that it rejects the value of the intermediary dogma and tradition, and relies heavily on the immediate contact between the individual and the Supreme Being. In his Twelfth Harmonie Bernardin raises many of the same objections to organized religions that Rousseau did: an organized religion sins against the laws of nature, when instead of submitting man to God, it submits him to an intermediary in the form of a priest. Religions, according to Bernardin, exploit people's fear of death, and Hell. He also feels that education of children should not be left in the hands of the clergy. He would like to see a religion taught in the elementary

schools, but a neutral religion, devoid of any differences which separate various cults and cause only discord among people.[14] Bernardin would like to see the abolition of many of the harmful institutions of the Catholic church. He would have the clergy take a more humane interest in the welfare of the people and not be so concerned about lining their own pockets. He is against many of the inhumanities and misdeeds brought about by organized religions, but he is much more appalled by the lack of religion, the atheism of his contemporaries. In fact, he believes that atheism was the cause of many of the atrocities of the French Revolution and the destruction of morality which follows.

He had nevertheless completely broken off with the Catholic church at an early age and it is erroneous to see the doctrine of a Catholic thinker in his Etudes, for example. Any passages that might be cited as examples of his adherence to traditional Catholicism are nothing but "un éloge courtois du christianisme, de son élévation morale, de sa vertu consolante," but certainly not a formal adherence to dogma. Until his old age Bernardin remains in his life and in his works "catholique d'imagination et de sentiment et . . .de tempérament; mais il ne croit plus en esprit, et ne pratique plus."[15]

Bernardin's Deism does however come closer to Christianity that was shortly to be rekindled in the works of Chateaubriand, than did his predecessor Rousseau. Bernardin paves the way, so to speak, for Chateaubriand by attempting to reinstill if not apostolic fervor, at least a certain type of enthusiasm, which had been all but wiped out entirely by the atheistic mentalities of his contemporaries.

Bernardin is most unlike Rousseau when he expresses a distinct liking for the cities: he makes a distinction between civilization, which he praises and society, which he criticizes. Bernardin is contemptful only of the misdeeds which man has wrought upon civilization, not of civilization itself.[16] Among all other cities Bernardin prefers Paris where he finds reminders of all parts of the globe and where he sees the role of the capital as reuniting "dans ses murs des hommes de toutes les nations qui concourent à ses plaisirs."[17]

He shares with Rousseau the need and love for patriotism which he sees as an essential element for life in society; as for Rousseau, patriotism is the basis for Bernardin's pedagogical doctrines.

Bernardin's pedagogy is formed on the same principles essentially as Jean-Jacques: the child should develop in liberty, learn by direct observation and contact with nature, without the interference of artificial objects like books, learn that his conscience and heart are the best guides of right and wrong, and that living by the laws of nature will bring him virtue and happiness. He cannot help then but become a patriotic, useful citizen who loves God and his fellow man and is at peace with himself. Bernardin's concept of education is highly idealized and just like Rousseau he is aware that his wishes for an "éducation nationale" don't really have much of a chance of being realized. The actual stages of child development, educational practices and tools, are quite different from what they had been for Rousseau, however.[18]

Like his predecessor, Bernardin would like to found societies based on the instinct which has shown him the existence of the Supreme Power. He would like to furnish man with a better way of life, through the study of the laws of nature. He loves nature as does a naturalist who studies her laws, but he also seeks to find a code of behavior, a formula for human happiness through inspection of the natural universe.

But there are some great differences between Rousseau's concept of Social Utopia and Bernardin's envisioning of the Golden Age: Bernardin is more realistic than his forebear in his notion of the "état de nature" and he was also more realistic in his conception of Social Utopia. He did not demand equal sharing of the land; he very practically said that overly large areas of land should be divided into smaller properties so thay they could be cultivated more profitably, with less waste. He did however believe with Rousseau that the land belonged to the cultivator and not to the proprietor. He had a definite, concrete program for actual social reform, to be realized in his own lifetime, and not at some golden point in the distant future. He would for example, like the government to organize free meals and distribute food to the needy.

Aside from being more realistic than his predecessor, Bernardin differs from Rousseau in approaching the question of Social Utopia from a naturalist's point of view; he desires a society that will be based upon and will reflect all the harmonies of nature.

Just as Jean-Jacques saw that many of the faults of contemporary education were due to social evils just so Bernardin believed that man is born good but society corrupts him. He shared Jean-Jacques' faith in the fact that the child's early years are the best time to initiate his training before he is exposed to the corrupting influence of society. A child is born perfect, and if there are certain faults in the fullgrown adult it follows that the social milieu of the individual is to blame.[19]

Rousseau however did admire several of the ancient civilizations in particular the Spartan one, and be based his system partially on an imitation and emulation of these virtuous societies. Bernardin on the other hand, wants to free contemporary education from the shackles of the past; instead of the study and emulation of the ancient civilizations, he recommended the study of nature and the natural universe. Bernardin's student, as opposed to Emile, is given a more specific sense of patriotism; he is taught early on, that he is a Frenchman, with his own particular brand of culture, history, responsibilities, and love of country. But again the underlying fundamentals of his educational philosophy are similar to Jean-Jacques', i. e. he wanted the child to be prepared for a concrete existence in the real world, where he can learn from the direct observation of nature. Like Rousseau, Bernardin sees the need for immediate contact with the natural elements, not only for moral instruction, but to build up the physical prowess of the student as well. He places his students in full communication with nature; there

that the student may relive some of the sentiments and inspirations of his primitive ancestors.

But his well-meaning desire to eliminate from education the burdens of science, geometry, stifling reason, social prejudices, i. e. all artificial and unnatural objects, has only succeeded in leading to yet another type of artificiality. Bernardin's constructive design of educating the child in natwe where it can learn from direct observation and contact with the natural elements, his suppression of science learned from books, his insistence that the child be taught useful and practical trades, all this basically good plan degrades into something quite romanticized which fails to give the student a true picture of real life and does not prepare him to adjust to it:

> Il veut faire glisser tout doucement
> d'une enfance sans larmes à un âge mûr
> sans épreuves.[20]

This is because Bernardin, as a result of his own bad experiences in school would like teaching and learning to be joyous, almost like a "divertissement." He includes in his program all forms of amusement: dancing, singing, "fêtes," etc. Never does he want the students to be exposed to the harsher side of life, in the form of punishments, tears, etc. Rousseau, of course, does show Emile the other side - he punishes him justly for his wrongdoings and he never tries to stop the child's tears; this would be entirely contrary to the laws of nature. He paints a more realistic picture than does Bernardin and as a result he is able to form an individual capable of critical judgment, which Bernardin cannot form. What Bernardin's student winds up with, says Maury and we agree, is an

> imagination sans gouvernail, livrée à des sens enflammés par un exercice prématuré; impossibilité de juger, impuissance de vouloir, ballottement de tout l'être au hasard des sensations et incertitude continuelle entre les exigences des organes, les prétentions d'une ignorance boursouflée de la folie.[21]

These are the end results of Bernardin's effeminate education.

In the Harmonies Bernardin accords to the woman, the mother, the role of the instructress. Since she herself is not in possession of vague ideologies or abstract sciences, she can only impart the most valuable lesson of all: the virtue and love written in her heart. The woman, being the one closest to nature, is the one best prepared to educate the young. It is she whom Bernardin charges with the formation of her children and to a certain extent her husband, into productive citizens.

Bernardin sees, as Jean-Jacques did, the necessity of educating the woman in her "natural" role of wife and mother; he seeks to adapt the education of women to their character. Most importantly, the wife will be molded by her husband. She will be skilled in the domestic arts as well as in the fine arts of dance, music, and painting. Both Rousseau and Bernardin see the woman as a wife and mother but for Bernardin the woman has a much broader social role. She is the softer side of man; it is she, through her qualities of calmness and serenity, who can appease the more destructive passions of man. She is virtue incarnate. As M. Sambuc points out, Bernardin continuously establishes a parallel between the degree of civilization of certain societies and the position which women hold in these societies.[22]

For Rousseau, on the contrary, "virtue" is certainly an entirely masculine concept. But Bernardin agrees with this predecessor that a woman should not be educated like a man; a woman's mind is a tabula rasa to be filled in by the man destined for her, who will form and shape her to fit his own particular personality and tastes.

But there is a very interesting inconsistency in Jean-Jacques' theory of feminine education which is not present in Bernardin's work; the main contradiction is that Julie, who has been very carefully educated according to Rousseau's doctrine of virtue and conscience, forgets everything once she is in Saint Preux's arms. Virginie, on the contrary, is consistent to the end; after all, she does die because of her "pudeur."

Indeed, the role of woman as a symbol of virtue is basic to Bernardin's thought and works. He very often confuses the adoration of woman, the sentiment of nature and the idea of beauty; this melange reveals in him elements that are already Romantic, and forms what some critics believe to be the connecting link between his work and his life.

Contrary to Rousseau's devouring concern for social welfare then, Bernardin, guided by his concept of the harmonious universe, proceeds from the same basic superiority of instinct over reason to form his social doctrines, religious notions and educational theories.

NOTES

1. Maury, Fernand. Etude sur la vie et les oeuvres de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. (Paris: Hachette, 1892), p. 329.

2. Klem, Léo J. "Bernardin de Saint-Pierre et la vérité," in Review of Laval University, (V, 1950-51), p. 442.

3. Leblond, M. A. L'Idéal du XIXième siècle. (Paris: Alcan, 1909), p. 49.

4. Saint-Pierre, J. H. Bernardin de. Oeuvres Complètes. Ed. Louis Aimé-Martin. (Paris: Méquignon-Marvis, 1818-1820), v. IV, p. 243

5. Trahard, Pierre. Les Maîtres de la sensibilité française au XVIIIième siècle. (Paris: Boivin et Cie, Editeurs, 1933), v. IV, pp. 128-129.

6. Saint-Pierre, J. H. Paul et Virginie in Oeuvres complètes, v. VI, p. 3.

7. Saint-Pierre, J. H. Bernardin de. Etude XII in Oeuvres complètes, v. V, p. 96.

8. Ibid, p. 85.

9. Leblond, M. A . op. cit., p. 100.

10. Ibid.

11. Trahard, P. op. cit., v. IV, p. 103.

12. Brunet, Gabriel. "Bernardin de Saint-Pierre ou les complications de la naïveté." in Ombres Vivantes, (Paris: Ed. a L'Etoile, 1936), p. 107.

13. Klem, Léo J. op. cit., p. 444.

14. Souriau, Maurice. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre d'après ses manuscrits. (Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie, 1905), p.409.

15. Ibid., p. 15.

16. His plan will be presented in detail in the next chapter.

17. Leblond, M. A. op. cit., pp. 105-106.

18. In the next chapter we will present in their entirety Bernardin's educational methods and explain their weaknesses and errors as well as their merits.

19. Maury, F. op. cit., p. 452.

20. Ibid., p. 468.

21. Ibid., p. 491.

22. Sambuc, Edmond, "Bernardin de Saint-Pierre et le Féminisme," Revue Sociologique, (1899), p. 606.

CHAPTER 3

THE REVERIES OF BERNARDIN DE SAINT PIERRE

In the preceding chapters we have compared Bernardin de Saint Pierre's major doctrines with those of his predecessor and idol Jean-Jacques Rousseau. By its very nature a comparative study selects and focuses on only those ideas shared by the writers, or those which set them apart. Such a comparison cannot help but distort somewhat the totality of beliefs and opinions espoused by the individuals in question. This chapter will therefore make a more complete analytical statement on Bernardin's major doctrines.

The structure and sequence we have imposed on Bernardin's "philosophy" in this chapter is not at all evident in his own manner of presenting these thoughts. One cannot hope to grasp fully the "fil conducteur" in such a loosely constructed edifices as the Etudes or Harmonies de la nature. Indeed even to suggest that an organizational framework or logical sequence, i. e. a system, exists in Bernardin's dissembled and incomplete monument to nature would constitue a misrepresentation (if not gross betrayal) of the true nature of his work. Moreover it would give a misleading view of his place in French letters and philosophy since it is a fact, as we hope to show categorically, that in attempting to prove the existence of a Divine Power through tableaux of an organized and logical universe, Bernardin succeeded only in lapsing into arguments based on sentiment and moral.

As underlying elements of Bernardin's doctrine, the concepts of sentiment and morality occupy a major portion of his work; never content with simple statements, he devotes as many pages to developing definitions and giving examples of these concepts as he does to pointing out the evils of misleading "reason." Always the soi-disant systématiseur Bernardin points out different types of reason and how they are necessarily flawed in different ways:

> Mais je veux que la raison sociale obligeât les familles à travailler chacune pour soi, et à mettre plus de variété dans leur vie en y appelant nos arts et nos sciences; elle achèverait bientôt de les détruire . . . Les raisons politiques viendraient mettre le sceau à leur union, en stipulant, dans la langue triste et mercénaire de nos contrats, des douaires, des nourritures, des retraits lignagers . . .Mais la raison personnelle de chaque contractant ne tarderait pas à les séparer.[1]

But luckily for him, man has at his disposal a weapon, so to speak, to counteract the effect of reason: this weapon is his sentiment which directs him to the knowledge of the existence of a divinity.[2] It is precisely this counterbalancing power, this "sentiment religieux," that creates the duality of man's nature; it is from the struggle between the animal and the divine, "la bête et l'ange," as it were, that all the contradictions and ambiguities of human life arise.

If there appears a certain ambivalence of vagueness in the definitions of "sentiment," "morale," "passion," "raison" and "instinct," it is because Bernardin uses these terms if not interchangeably, at least with varying meaning depending upon the particular context. For example, in his De la nature de la morale,[3] he speaks of

two different kinds of "morale," one human and the other divine. One is the result of our passions and the other is the power that inhibits them. The "morale des passions" tends to divide men amongst themselves, because it includes the perfidious forces of love and ambition, both of which tend to have a degenerating effect upon society. The "Morale de la raison," on the contrary is the understanding of the natural laws of the universe, established for men of all differnt creeds and nations, and all walks of life. It is this latter "morale" which enables man to distinguish in the universe the existence of a benevolent creator who has blessed man with his bounty.[4] It is evident of course that the "morale de raison" is superior to the "morale des passions" in that it invariably inspires man to seek fulfillment through his benificent and unselfish acts towards his fellow man. Indeed, if mass society were to follow Bernardin's teachings, all of its misery and suffering might be attributed to a confusing of the two "morales" in question. Because, as Bernardin pointed out, when man attaches the wrong values to each of these opposing "morales," i. e. when he attributes divine characteristics to perishable and mortal things, and finite characteristics to divine things, this is where the torment and fear begin to plague him.[5]

"Reason" or scientifically accrued knowledge based on intellect alone is inferior to "morale de raison" as well. Bernardin's major objections to science as the preceding chapter has shown are its

splintering effects on society:

> Par-tout on a disséqué l'homme et l'on
> ne nous montre plus que son cadavre.
> Ainsi le plus digne objet de la création
> a été dégradé par notre savoir, comme
> le reste de la nature.[6]

Science furthermore hides from us real truths about nature[7], but most importantly science prevents man from seeing moral truths and distinguishing the presence of a Divine Creator in the universe. Bernardin feels that science in its progress, has succeeded in destroying moral laws.[8] For this, he feels as did Jean-Jacques before him, that the scientific academies are mostly to blame; it is not science itself that he resents, but the "corps savants" who through their ambition, jealousy and prejudices have served only as obstacles to real progress.[9] Much in the same way that he sees the necessity for balance and harmony in other phases of life, Bernardin sees certain values and virtues in ignorance, which balances an over-avid quest for knowledge, knowledge which he feels is not always destined for human consumption. In the Preface to his Chaumière indienne Bernardin expresses the notion that the Supreme Power has placed man at a certain distance from his infinite majesty and has hidden certain secrets of the universe from him. This is entirely to man's benefit ; ignorance, says Bernardin can be compared to an eyelid which prevents the entrance of too much light which would blind the eye.[10] Also there is a certain type of delight in ignorance; knowledge of everything ruins the feeling of surprise and mystery that is so pleasant to man.[11]

Bernardin has shown that man differs from beast in his capacity to feel a "sentiment religieux," the presence of a Supreme Being in the heart of nature; but he has failed to deal with the obvious question that arises from this supposition: if man is the only being in all the universe capable of seeing a certain order in nature, why then is he the only one who has brought havoc and chaos to the world through his abuse and mishandling of the natural laws, his interminable wars and ravaging plagues? Bernardin's avoidance of or refusal to explore this paradox is equalled only by his utter faith in the superiority of the "morale de raison" over the "morale des passions," i. e. that the false passions will necessarily give way to the true ones- the ones that a real understanding of the laws of nature will oblige us to follow.

> Elle [la morale céleste] n'a pas besoin de diplômes pour constater les droits du genre humain; elle les a renfermés dans le coeur de chacun de nous. Elle y a imprimé ce sentiment ineffaçable: Ne faites pas à autrui ce que vous ne voudriez pas qu'on vous fît.[12]

But were the supremacy of the divine instinct over the animal passions so evident, it would hardly be necessary for Bernardin to dwell upon it endlessly and to dogmatize it with such excessive rigor. If man could always depend upon the natural laws to guide him there would be but one alternative; Bernardin would not even have to acknowledge the existence of the lower types of passions. But such are the weaknesses and inconsistencies of Bernardin's doctrines.

His naive optimism is most clearly exemplified in his definitions and portrayals of the quest for "vérité." Ignorance,

we have seen is necessary because of mortals' limited capacity for understanding all the laws governing the creation and functioning of the universe; but ignorance is also necessary for a more effective and wider-ranging dispersion of truth; ignorance is as necessary to truth as shadow is necessary to light.[13] Vérité, cannot be learned from books; it is mortals who make books, but nature is the producer of the phenomena of the universe, nature is the art of God, whereas books are the art of man.[14] Like all good things, vérité is a "harmony" which emanates from nature. It is a harmony of human and divine intelligence.[15]

In La Chaumière indienne Bernardin personifies through the Paria, the afore-mentioned unrealistic and highly utopic principles governing man's conduct:

> ...chaque homme trouve la règle de sa conduite dans son propre coeur, si son coeur est simple. La nature y a mis cette lois: Ne faites pas aux autres ce que vous ne voudriez pas que les autres vous fissent.[16]

and offers us the formula for "vérité,"what it is, where to find it, and to whom to convey it:

> Il faut chercher la vérité avec un coeur simple, on ne la trouve que dans la nature; on ne doit la dire qu'aux gens de bien.[17]

"On ne la trouve que dans la nature," are of course the key words in this passage and in all of Bernardin's work; as we have repeatedly remarked in thepreceding chapters, a close study of the laws governing the harmonies of nature, according to Bernardin, cannot help but reveal, even for the skeptic, the existence of a Supreme Being in the universe. In this chapter we should like to take a closer look at

Bernardin's quite rigidly systematized series of the harmonies, i. e. what they are, how they function and how they are the driving force behind his painstaking studies of the animal, vegetable and human kingdoms. Bernardin's basic intentions, i. e. his desires to elevate man's condition and enhance his happiness by furnishing him with the laws of the natural harmonies which in turn reveal the existence of a Divinity, are best described in this passage of capital importance:

> Voilà donc la gloire que j'ai ambitionnée, celle d'assembler quelques harmonies de la nature, pour en former un concert qui elevât l'homme vers son auteur; ou plutôt je n'ai cherché que le bonheur de les connaître et de les répandre; car je suis prêt à adopter tout autre système, qui présentera à l'esprit de l'homme plus de vraisemblance et à son coeur plus de consolation.[18]

Even the most benevolent of critics could not deny the subjectivity on which Bernardin has based his theory of the "causes finales." If all else fails, if he cannot prove the theory by his naturalist's methods, he will not hesitate to resort to arguments based on sentiment and "morale."

One or two other of Bernardin's "idées maîtresses" about nature should be examined before we present the acutal system of the harmonies. First and most important, nature has made nothing in vain. Everything in nature is necessary. Even death and suffering are "témoignages" of nature's goodness; without pain man would be in constant peril of injuring himself without knowing it, and without death, new beings could not be born into the world.[19] Nature has provided for every facet of man's life but if it sometimes seems that she has been

unkind it is only because man has misunderstood or not heeded her laws.[20]

Having understood these guidelines, and their significance to Bernardin's theory of the universe, one can perhaps take a better-informed analytical view of his largely unknown "harmonies" of nature. Basically what is involved is a series of definitions of terms that reappear throughout his studies of the various kingdoms and their relationships to one another. These definitions are best given in the author's own terms (and using his own examples) since they furnish the reader with a true picture of his personality, characterized by an ardent desire to see everything in perfect balance, what some have called his "manie de conciliation."

The first definition that he gives us is that of an "ordre":

> Une suite de convenances qui ont
> un centre commun forme l'ordre.[21]

As an illustration of his definition Bernardin says that a "convenance" exists in all the individual organs of an animal and the "ordre" exists only in the complete body. "Convenances" are only in the details of an organism or a thing, "ordre" is in the "ensemble." As previously mentioned, Bernardin feels that only human beings can feel the "ordre" in the universe which is the Divinity itself.[22] Next comes the all-important definitions of "harmonie":

> De l'opposition des contraires naît
> la discorde, et de leur reunion l'harmonie.[23]

We will speak later on in a general fashion of some of the ridiculous errors that Bernardin was led into because of his inability to put limits on his own doctrines; but for the moment here is

illustration of how he has pushed the definition of "harmonie" to include things of the following nature. He says that certain African peoples prefer white women, supposedly to form a "harmonie" with their own dark complexions.[24] He further says that in the human face all spherical shapes are set off by radial forms to create a "harmonie." Thus, the eyes are accented by the eyebrows, the mouth is set off by moustaches and the ears by sideburns. The face itself is set off from the rest of the body by a beard and hair![25] In all living creatures, animal and human, parts of the body that have opposing functions are made to ressemble each other to form a "harmonie," thus, the excretory organs ressemble those where nutrition is received![26]

Bernardin now speaks of the five basic "formes" which he in turn relates to the basic colors of the spectrum, i. e. red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. He relates these colors to the forms of the line, the triangle, the circle, the ellipse and the parabola.[27] In this particular notion, some have seen new dimensions, and hence a major contribution of Bernardin to the field of esthetics.[28]

The structure of "harmonies" is further extended by the addition of "consonances," which are "des répétitions des mêmes harmonies."[29] and "progressions" which are "Suite (s) de consonances ascendantes ou descendates."[30] He illustrates these definitions with the example of a tree. If the leaves of each twig are arranged on the branches, the same way that the branches are arranged around the tree, then there is a "consonance." If they are arranged in a descending order of size then there is a "progression." The "harmonies are set off and further intensified by "contrastes."

which should not be confused with "contraires." An object has but one "contraire," e. g. white is the "contraire" of black, but it is the "contraste" of blue, green, red and any number of other colors.[31] Here Bernardin first brings out the connecting link between his theory of the "harmonies" and his entire guiding philosophy of the Etudes; the "harmonies" have been created in nature for man's benefit. For example, a blue bird against a blue sky or a blue sea could scarcely be distinguished by humans who need these fowl for food. A benevolent force in nature has then designed it so that the birds who inhabit these areas would be of contrasting colors so that they could easily be seen and used by man either for his life's sustenance or merely for the pleasure of seeing beautiful natural creations.[32]

Bernardin, his exagerations notwithstanding, was capable of seeing these relationships of "harmonies," "progressions," and "contrastes" on a more subtle level. The theory of "harmonies" and "contrastes" was extended to include "moral" and emotional and artistic phenomena as well. Bernardin believed that the "grand art d'émouvoir," consisted in opposing "sensible" objects to intellectual ones.[33] Another illustration, which can already be interpreted as one of the facets of the vague malaise that was to constitute the oncoming "mal du siècle" was Bernardin's notion of "bonheur négatif." This is best expressed by his own example:

> Ainsi, par exemple, dans le mauvais temps, le sentiment de la misère humaine se tranquillise, en ce que je vois qu'il pleut, et que je suis à l'abri; qu'il vente, et que je suis dans mon lit bien chaudement.[34]

The edifice of "harmonies" is completed with the definition of "concerts," which are "ordre(s) forme(s) de plusieurs harmonies de divers genres."[35]

His eagerness to conciliate, contrast, and harmonize had led Bernardin to make "scientific" errors that have long been the butt of mockery; the most famous of these notorious errors are the theory that certain types of melons were destined for consumption by families because they were divided into sections, other fruits were designed for single people because they were not so sectioned; noses were created so that people could wear glasses and dogs were usually of two contrasting colors so that they could be spotted no matter where they were in the house. There are other errors in his work which, although not as extravagantly disproportionate as the prededing ones, are no less misleading; one finds in several places in the Etudes for example the notion that men and women are born in approximately equal numbers because they were destined to mate with each other. It follows then that any man who does not marry, for whatever reason, is automatically condemning a poor damsel either to a life of debauchery or the prison-like existence behind convent walls. Never worry if there are more or less members of one gender in any given area, says Bernardin, because nature has planned it so that if there are a few more women in the south, then there will be a few more men in the north. Of course this is so that people separated by geographical distances would be brought closer together through marriage.[36]

Bernardin is driven by an obsession or a compulsion to find reasons, the why and wherefore for every single natural

phenomenon; this is especially apparent when he tries to clarify the differences between various human groups: he says that the climate of the torrid zones has darkened the skins of the people who dwell there whereas the glacial zones have whitened the complexions of their inhabitants. Nature has provided the Negroes who live in Africa,the hottest part of the globe with protection against the direct rays of the sun, in the form of kinky hair.[37]

This particular type of pseudoscience, if not as apparently outrageous as some of Bernardin's more blatant comparisons, is all the same pseudoscience.

The author himself was entirely aware of the pure subjectivity of this system and the errors he may have made on account of his unique approach to the study of natural phenomena:

> Au reste, je ne donne mon opinion que comme mon opinion. L'histoire de la nature est un édifice à peine commencé; ne craignons pas d'y poser quelques pierres d'attente: nos neveux s'en serviront pour l'agrandir, ou les supprimeront comme superflues . . . Mais s'il est un jour de quelque considération, mon erreur en physique sera plus utile à la morale, qu'une vérité d'ailleurs indifférente au bonheur des hommes . . .[38]

This realization nevertheless did nothing to prevent the author from extending his theory to very improbable limits.[39] One of the repercussions of his theory is the notion of physical beauty being related to moral merit[40] which some have seen as a contribution to the study of aesthetics as a discipline[41] and others as just another one of Bernardin's impossible misrepresentations. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the doctrines embraced by Bernardin de Saint Pierre have as their directing principle the notion that the Divine Being

has provided the harmonies in nature for man's benefit, to aid, guide and console him in his terrestrial existence and to allow the frail creature to elevate himself to his fullest capacity through identification of his soul with the Creator of the universe. Indeed, the study of a simple plant reveals a marvel of construction combining beauty of form and intricacy of function: however hard man may try,he could never succeed in reproducing such a fragile and thin body, which nonetheless is able to weather storms, snows and the strongest rays of the sun. It must then be apparent that a higher force in nature has designed and construced all plants.[42] And in the theory of the harmonies where every element in nature has not only its "contrastes," but is absolute "contraire" as well, there remains but one entity that has no "contraire" at all; this is the mysterious driving force behind nature.[43]

The relationship between his study of the natural phenomena as a sure means of proving Divine existence is best resumed in Bernardin's own terms:

> Elle seule [sa religion] m'a paru le lien naturel du genre humain, l'espoir de nos passions sublimes, et le complément de nos destins misérables . . .Quelques hardies que soient mes spéculations, il n'y a rien pour les méchants. . . .Au moins je serai recompensé de mes travaux si un seul infortuné, troublé par le spectacle du monde, se rassure en voyant dans la nature un père, un ami et un remunérateur.[44]

The preceding chapter has sufficiently shown that Bernardin holds organized religions responsible for many evils of the civilized world.[45] and his desire to bring Christianity back to a basic understanding and adherence to the Evangel is best exemplified by the Christ-like figure of the Paria in La Chaumière indienne. In his

Preface Bernardin says that far from having wanted to attack the Christian religion, he has presented in his story a man, filled with the spirit of Christianity. The Paria is a man according to the Evangel; he loves all men, and does good deeds, even for his foes. He confides in no one but God. It was not from any Bible or text that the Paria learned his way of life however; it was from the natural goodness, charity and morality that nature has imprinted in his heart that he learned his code of behavior.[46]

But here we must momentarily turn our attention to the basic design of the Etudes and Harmonies, which is Bernardin's proof of Divine existence through the causes finales. The best way to present his system is to first examine some of the objections of the atheists to the existence of a deity, and then to see how Bernardin meets them on their own ground with counter-arguments.

Atheists says that a universe exhibiting such a chaotic destructive phenomenon such as man, unprotected and abandoned to shift for himself, the only creature forced to work the earth if he wishes to be nourished, constantly threatened by ferocious beasts volcanoes, earthquakes, bad weather, and other inclemencies of the natural elements, as well as those evils imposed by social forces such as wars, prejudices, taxes, perfidious friends and treacherous women, and mental and physical illnesses - such a universe can surely not be the work of a Benevolent Creator. Indeed, if there were a deity, he must sure be unjust. to have created a universe with so much evil and difficulty.[47] Never one to leave any

stone unturned, Bernardin will directly or indirectly refute all of the objections in the individual Etudes. He starts off with the admonition that "c'est de l'insuffisance humaine que sortent les objections dirigées contre la Providence divine."[48] With such a premise, how can any system of counter-arguments fail? One of the sure signs that there is a God in the Universe is the fact that the idea of immortality of the soul is universal. Atheists may object that the idea of immortality is the invention of certain "hommes de génie," or that the notion was introduced by certain legislators to console their constituants about injustices in their society and to give them hopes of future rewards in an afterlife.[49] But if it were so, how is it that one can find this idea

> dans la tête d'un Nègre, d'un Caraïbe,
> d'un Patagon, d'un Tartare?[50]

In answer to the objection about man's miserable conditions and unhappiness, Bernardin has only this to say:

> Si l'homme se rend lui-même malheureux,
> c'est qu'il a voulu être lui-même l'arbitre
> de son bonheur. L'homme est un dieu exilé.[51]

Even the Atheists' objection that man is the only creature unprotected and unsheltered and abandoned in nature furnishes proof of a benevolent ruler of the world. Divine Wisdom has abandoned the human creature on this earth and has provided bounty all around him so that by the sweat of his brow he may feed and shelter himself. Man alone, among all other living organisms has shown, in whatever miserable conditions he may have been subjected to or whatever state he may have been reduced to, the ability to elevate himself above this conditions and states. This is because there is in him an innate religious sentiment that causes him, in moments of joy and sadness, to seek comfort and solace in the bosom of the Divinity.[52] This is a

sentiment that causes him, in moments of joy and sadness, to seek comfort and solace in the bosom of the Divinity.[52] This is a perfect example of Bernardin's circular reasoning. There is a DEity in the universe because He has created an unsheltered, abandoned creature, but has endowed him with a divine instinct that will lead him, teach him to protect himself, better his lot, and which will, at any moment of distress or joy, make him turn to the Divine Power whom he has recognized because of his innate "morale céleste."

But he most clearly states his case for the theory of the causes finales through the example of the child who was brought up in a dark cavern since his birth. He will remain there in a state of imbecility. If this cavern were filled with the fruit of human effort and if it came to be lit by the light of a lamp, the child would then acquire certain knowledge of the arts, without having any idea yet of the Divinity. But if the lamp were suddenly to be turned off and all of a sudden the doors of the cavern were to open and he would see for the first time and earth covered with flowers, grass, orchards, fruits, forests, etc. he would surely realize that there is a Divine Creator in nature.[53]

Throughout these passages Bernardin has tried to maintain a somewhat rigorous logical approach in his response to the objections of the atheists; but as everywhere else in his work he cannot sustain a reasonable argument for any length of time; because of what can only be termed his fanatacism, he lapses into emotional and illogical arguments. And even his much heralded response in Etude VIII is broken down by this last passage:

> Il [l'Etre Suprême] n'a fait l'homme faible et ignorant, qu'afin qu'il s'appuyât de sa force et qu'il s'éclairât de sa lumière; et bien loin que le hasard des génies malfaisants règnent sur une terre où tout concourait à détruire un être si misérable, sa conservation, ses jouissances et son empire prouvent que dans tous les temps, un Dieu bienfaisant a été l'ami et le protecteur de la vie humaine.[54]

We have stated before and we must say again that Bernardin's goal, his idée fixe, is attainment of happiness for mankind because "sans le bonheur, à quoi servirait d'être vertueux?"[55] It is for this reason that his system suffers from a lack of rigorous approach.

A truly "divinely inspired" religion would cater perfectly to man's happiness and it is chiefly because of its capacity to render him happy that Christianity appeals to Bernardin.[56] It is the divine intelligence in man that makes him search not only for his own happiness but for the well being of his fellow man.[57] The celestial instinct is in fact the foundation of all human societies[58] and teaches all men that the happiness of every individual depends upon the happiness of all mankind. Man must work for the "bien général" because his own well being depends entirely upon it. "Nous sommes tous solidaires les uns pour les autres."[59]

Bernardin devotes a great part of his voluminous work to examining the reasons for social disorders and division among the different classes; he offers proposals for reuniting the different groups to form a harmonious nation ruled by a perfectly balanced enlightened government.

Among sources of division among the classes, Bernardin cites

education which stimulates ambition and emulation, also theatrical performances of comedy and tragedy which mock all traditional values, politics which sets greater value on money than on human life.[60]

It is Bernardin's "esprit conciliateur" that is revolted by the discord and division that govern contemporary society and it is this esprit that is responsible for many of the pages in the Etudes and the Voeux d'un solitaire where Bernardin discusses possible remedies for an ailing society. Bernardin sees the ideal government as a perfectly balanced harmony made up of two essential powers, i. e. the aristocracy and the people. These branches must maintain perfect balance with one another in order to assure justice, prosperity, peace, and above all, happiness to all classes of society. Indeed the harmony formed by this terrestrial government may be compared to the harmonies governing the celestial bodies:

> Je considère donc le roi comme le soleil dont l'embleme est celui de ses glorieux ancêtres; le clergé et la noblesse, comme deux corps planétaires qui tournent autour du soleil, en réfléchissant sa lumière; et le peuple, comme le globe obscur de la terre que nous foulons aux pieds, mais qui cependant nous porte et nous nourrit . . . le soleil lui-même, avec toute sa splendur, n'existe dans les cieux que pour les harmonies de la terre et de ses plus petites plantes.[61]

"Vertu" is formed as a happy medium between extremes; it is therefore desirable says Bernardin that no bourgeois ever try to leave his order and attempt to enter a higher one.[62]

Bernardin assigns specific duties and responsibilities to each branch of society in order to assure a smoother and more effective functioning of the system as a whole; the king's influence

should resemble the influence of the sun which balances all the other spheres in the skies which revolve around it. He would like the King to tour his country every year, from one end to another, just like the sun visits both poles of the globe.[63]

As the center of power it is the king's responsibility to keep the weights of the aristocracy and of the mass of people perfectly balanced - he must not allow one of these to overpower the other.

Bernardin's wishes for reform within the clergy are even more ambitious; he would like the members of the clerical class to come to the aid of indigent and unfortunate people, by having some of the wealthier abbeys share their affluence with the people in the form of gratuitous distributions.[64] The most powerful weapon for social reform is within the hands of the clergy, i. e. educational reform. He wishes them to eliminate the elements of ambition and emulation from primary education.[65] As a reward for having brought about these long-needed reforms, the clergy will endear itself to the men of all nations. It will witness the rebirth of religion in the heart of the people and will have the power to crush tyrants.[66]

Instead of the traditional hereditary nobility that reigned in the courts of Europe, Bernardin envisioned the creation of an "ordre de chevalerie" which would link the common people to the nobility. This "ordre" would be given by the king to any citizen who will have merited it. With the abolition of hereditary nobility the nobles of "origin" will keep their former privileges but they will be able to adopt into their ranks those "plebians" who have been decorated by the

new order. In this way alone will the nobility endear itself to the people and find their sole means of perpetuation of their rank. The people will equally become dear to the nobility and through marriages contracted between these two branches of society, people will find each other bound, not by ties of money but by those of love and virtue.[67]

These ideas are so imbued with democratic spirit that they cannot help but convey a message of true concern for the social welfare for the lower classes; but Bernardin is careful to let the reader know that he is not displaying these generous feelings because he seeks the approval of the "peuple," on the contrary, he insists

> Je ne cherche point à mériter les applaudissements du peuple; il ne me lira pas; d'ailleurs, il est vendu aux riches et aux puissants . . . J'entends par peuple non seulement la dernière classe de la société, mais un grand nombre d'autres, qui se croient bien au-dessus.[68]

The last sentence of this passage is of particular interest as it expands the most commonly accepted definition of "peuple." In fact the lines that immediately follow this passage come as a surprise from a man whose motto was Miseris succurrere disco. Bernardin says:

> Le peuple n'est point mon idole. Si les puissances qui le gouvernent sont corrompues il en est lui même la cause.[69]

On this issue then Bernardin is taking a direct and very realistic approach to the state of affairs; he desires no immediate or abrupt social upheaval. Bernardin cautions that any real, lasting social reform must be the product of years of slow evolution, steadily, not abruptly accrued. He does not wish to instil in the aristocracy

any particular love or overriding sympathy for the "peuple"; he simply wants them to adapt a more practical attitude towards the lower classes:

> Mais, si ce ne sont ni les louanges
> ni les vertus du peuple qui m'intéressent
> particulièrement, ce sont ses travaux,
> C'est du peuple que sortent la plupart
> de mes plaisirs et de mes maux; c'est lui
> qui me nourrit, qui m'habille, qui me loge,
> et qui s'occupe souvent de mon superflu,
> tandis qu'il manque quelquefois du
> necessaire . . .[70]

The "people" perform all the tasks so essential for the very life of a nation. They are the ones that make agriculture and commerce flourish. They are the main part of the nation, and the other two branches are only accessories to them. The "people" can exist without the aristocracy or the clergy but the converse does not hold true.[71] For their own protection and well-being then, the nobles and clergy must take a hand in alleviating the misery of the lower classes. The more men are oppressed, contends Bernardin, the more their oppressors are unhappy and the more that nation is weak.[72] All of society's degrading evils have come from the "sein" of misery; prostitution, theft, arson, robbery, revolt, murder, etc. are the results of oppression. One of the greatest misfortunes for the people is the fact that they really have no readily accessible means for bettering their lot. One must be a conspirator, or be of "mauvaise foi", or a cheater and liar to reach a higher station in life.[73]

This being the case, Bernardin opts for a feasible, practicable program of social reform; it tells us more than a little about his personality when he says that many of these projects are but hopes for

the future. In no way does he want the nobles or landed gentry to think that he is suggesting that they immediately relinquish their large properties to farmers who will divide them into smaller properties to be worked for greater returns from the land. Among Bernardin's projects are the abolition of the venality of jobs which does nothing but bring money to money,[74] and the return of "feminine" work such as sewing to females[75]. This will help many women of "mauvaise vie" lead an honest and virtuous life. Also he would like to see the privileges accorded to big manufactuers and merchants done away with.[76] Bernardin sees in nature itself the perfect means of subsistence for the "peuple." Fishing and farming offer perfect opportunities for the people to be engaged in worthwhile and productive labor.[77]

Bernardin concludes his exposé of social doctrines with the following grim tableau of contemporary society, underlining his own brand of remedy for each particular evil:

> Je le répète, la cause du pouvoir prodigieux de l'or, qui a ôté à-la-fois la morale et la subsistance au peuple, est dans la vénalité des charges. Celle de la mendicité, qui s'étend aujourd'hui à sept millions de sujets, est dans les grands propriétaires des terres et des emplois. Celle de la prostitution des filles du monde vient, d'une part, de leur indigence; et de l'autre, du célibat de deux millions hommes. La surabondance inutile de bourgeois oisifs et médisants dans nos petites villes, naît de la taille qui avilit les habitants de la campagnes; les préjugés des nobles viennent des ressentiments des roturiers; et tous ces maux et une infinité d'autres physiques et intellectuels du malheur du peuple.[78]

Again we must insist upon the terms "Elle n'agit que lentement et par réactions." Indeed, in the Voeux d'un solitaire, published in 1789, Bernardin issues the following words of warning to the

"peuple":

> Ô peuple de Paris . . .Vous venez de briser les liens du despotisme; ne vous en donnez point de plus insupportables par ceux de l'anarchie.[79]

It is no secret then that Bernardin loved civilization and wanted to safeguard it from overzealous patriots. As early as 1773, in his twenty-eighth letter from the Ile de France, Bernardin shows a marked predilection for civilization:

> . . .l'homme est né pour la société, hors de laquelle il ne pourrait vivre . . .[80]

and among all civilizations he prefered his beloved city of Paris:

> Je préférerais Paris à toutes les villes non pas à cause de ses fêtes, mais parce que le peuple y est bon, et qu'on y vit en liberté.[81]

He loves Paris above all other cities but there is nothing like the simple life in the country as he tells us further on in the same passage:

> Ce n'est qu'à la campagne qu'on jouit des biens du coeur, de soi-même, de sa femme, de ses enfants, de ses amis. En tout la campagne me semble préférable aux villes . . .[82]

The inhabitants of the country receive no less attention in Bernardin's works than did the poor people of the cities. The most significant way that the farm dwellers can be helped says Bernardin is through agricultural reform. The most pressing affliction in the present state of agriculture was of course the large properties which tended to waste great areas of productive land and took away from the indigent the chance to better their lives through cultivation of the soil.[83]

It is in agriculture that France must seek the principle means of subsistence for its people. Agriculture, says Bernardin conserves the "moeurs" of the people and makes for happy and fruitful marriages and furnishes gainful employment to the offspring of these blissful unions. Indeed a multitude of lazy and useless bourgeois vegetating in small towns could be convinced to live in rural areas and cultivate the land.[84]

But agriculture can only accomplish these good things if the land is divided up into "petites proprietés."[85] But the division of the land in itself is not an efficacious means of agricultural reform; it must be coupled with tax reforms in the suppression of the unpopular "gabelle." Bernardin favors what he calls an "impôt de censure," a progressive tax which would be paid by those who possessed two properties of twenty arpents, and doubled for those who possessed three properties and so on.[86]

All of his social reforms being accomplished,[87] Bernardin turns to his Voeux for the nation as a whole. These represent a definite departure from the moderate, rational and realistic stand he took on other social issues; he feels that it would behoove an enlightened nation to naturalize citizens from other countries and welcome into its bosom Asiatics, Africans and Americans who would multiply in bliss and harmony in the shelter afforded them by a country blessed with internal harmony.[88] Offering an "asyle" to the afflicted of other nations would only win friends and admirers for the French nation. We have previously spoken of Bernardin's elaborate plan for an international community on the banks of the Seine; here is how he envisions his terrestrial Eden:

> A l'ombre de l'olivier de Bohême, . . .
> dont l'odeur est aimée des Orientaux,
> un Turc silencieux, échappé au cordon du
> serail, fumerait gravement sa pipe; . . .
> Le sauvage du Canada n'y désirerait point
> de dépouiller l'ingénieux castor de sa peau, . . .
> tandis qu'un Juif, . . .se rappellerait les
> chants de Jérusalem, sur les bords de la
> Seine, au pied d'un saule de Babylone.[89]

This side by side coexistence of expatriated Greeks, Turks, Africans, etc. would not only offer a shining example of human "harmonies" it would also do away with the need to seek territorial acquisitions overseas since these people would bring with them the various plants and products that were the chief causes of colonizatinn and slavery.[90]

Before the Revolution Bernardin took a firm stand against colonization because of a patriotic sense of duty and a love for his own country. In his Voyage à L'Ile de France (1768) Bernardin confessed,"Pour aimer sa patrie, il faut la quitter."[91] As early as this time he is moved by his patriotic feeling to desire the development of agriculture on the many yet uncultivated terrains of his native country.[92] Bernardin will later on in his Etudes make a "cause célèbre" of the notion that instead of seeking acquisitions in the New World or Africa, it would be better to develop many French lands that lay fallow.

Bernardin did not believe that a country like France was in need of the extended type of overseas commerce that was involved in importing goods from the colonies,[93] and he would like as much as possible to substitute homegrown products for those hitherto imported from the colonies because it was a great political error to put an entire country in a state of dependence on its colonies.[94] The

social upheavals brought about by the French Revolution, however, had put a new slant on things; in his Voeux d'un solitaire Bernardin has come to the conclusion that perhaps now colonization was the answer to many of the problems faced by a nation barely able to sustain itself. He opted for the transportation of white colonisers to the New World. There these once useless people would find meaningful existences on the soil of the tropics and would establish permanent colonies there. Also it must be considered that many religious refugees were attracted to France after the Revolution because of the country's new liberal constitution. Since the country was barely able to sustain its own citizens, a useful outlet could be made of the overseas colonies where the foreigners could be sent to cultivate exotic products.[95] Contrary to some of his contemporaries Bernardin had every confidence that these white men would be able to do constructive work and lead productive lives in the tropical climates of the New World. These European immigrants will be able to work and cultivate their own lands in colonies without the help of slave labor; in fact Bernardin sees the new colonial society as a peaceful, harmonious coexistence of black and white cultivators.[96]

From his earliest travels to the colonies Bernardin had always been touched by the miserable condition of the black slaves and in Voyage à l'Ile de France he gives a very realistic and grim account of how these people were bought and sold and how horribly they were treated by some of their masters:

> On les débarque tout nus avec un chiffon autour des reins. On les met les hommes dun côté, et les femmes à part, avec leurs

petits enfants, qui se pressent, de frayeur, contre leurs mères. L'habitant les visite par-tout, et achète ceux qui lui conviennent. Les frères, les soeurs, les amis, les amants sont séparés; ils se font leurs adieux en pleurant, et partent pour l'habitation. Quelquefois ils se désespèrent; ils s'imaginent que les blancs vont les manger; qu'ils font du vin rouge avec leur sang, et de la poudre à canon avec leurs os.

Voici comme on les traite. Au point du jour trois coups de fouet sont le signal qui les appelle à l'ouvrage. Chacun se rend avec sa pioche dans les plantations, où ils travaillent presque nus à l'ardeur du soleil. On leur donne pour nourriture du maïs broyé, cuit à l'eau, ou des pains de manioc; pour habit, un morceau de toile. A la moindre négligence, on les attache, par les pieds et par les mains, sur une échelle; le commandeur armé d'un fouet de poste, leur donne sur le derrière nu cinquante, cent, et jusqu'à deux cents coups. Chaque coup enlève une portion de la peau. Ensuite on détache le misérable tout sanglant; on lui met au cou un collier de fer à trois pointes, et on le ramène au travail. . . .Les femmes sont punies de la même manière.

Le soir, de retour dans leurs cases, on les fait prier Dieu pour la prospérité de leurs maîtres. Avant de se coucher, ils leur souhaitent une bonne nuit.[97]

Quand les Européens paraissent émus, les habitants leur disent qu'ils ne connaissent pas les noirs. Ils les accusent d'être si gourmands, qu'ils vont la nuit enlever des vivres dans les habitations voisines; si paresseux, qu'ils ne prennent aucun intérêt aux affaires de leur maîtres, et que leurs femmes aiment mieux se faire avorter que de mettre des enfants au monde; tant elles deviennent misérables des qu'elles sont mères de famille.[98]

Enfin, lorsque les noirs ne peuvent plus supporter leur sort, ils se livrent au désespoir; les uns se pendent ou s'empoisonnent;. . . .Pour l'ordinaire ils se réfugient dans les bois, où on leur donne la chasse avec des détachements de soldats, de nègres et de chiens; il y a des habitants qui s'en font une partie de plaisir. On les relance comme des bêtes sauvages . . .on leur coupe la tête, on la porte en triomphe à la ville au bout d'un baton.[99]

But not everywhere were the slaves as mistreated as on the Ile de France; In 1771 when Bernardin was traveling through the Cape of Good Hope he had this to say of how the Dutch plantation owners treated the black laborers:

> L'abondance du pays se répand sur les esclaves. Ils ont du pain et des légumes à discrétion. On distribue à deux noirs un mouton par semaine. Ils ne travaillent point le dimanche. Ils couchent sur des lits avec des matelas et des couvertures. Les hommes et les femmes sont chaudement vêtus.. . .
>
> Le bon traitement qu'ils éprouvent influe sur leur caractère. On s'étonne de leur trouver le zèle et l'activité de nos domestiques. Ce sont cependant les mêmes insulaires de Madagascar, qui sont si indifférents pour leurs maîtres dans nos colonies.[100]

Yet we cannot say with any degree of positive certainty that documentary evidence would furnish, that Bernardin advocated immediate and complete abolition of slavery. It would be more accurate to say that he opted for better treatment of the people engaged in cultivating products for European consumption. The Code Noir which had been established to protect the slaves from excessive punishment and cruelty should at least be more closely followed:

> Des politiques ont excusé l'esclavage, en disant que la guerre le justifiait. Mais les noirs ne nous la font point. Je conviens que les lois humaines le permettent: au moins devrait-on se renfermer dans les bornes qu'elles prescrivent.[101]

Bernardin did have his own slave (or tour guide) on the Ile de France.[102] so he didn't at this point object to owning a human being. Indeed, in his Conseils à un jeune colon he gives the following advice on the purchase, handling, and treatment of slaves which would ensure the master of the most service for his money:

> Sans doute que parmi ces malheureux vous en trouverez de laborieux, et que vous les gagnerez par de petits bienfaits. Vous leur ferez voir que vos noirs sont chaudement vêtus, bien nourris, jamais frappés; qu'ils ont des femmes, qu'ils vivent tranquilles, et vous leur proposerez d'en augmenter le nombre . . .Les habitants disent que les nègres sont des ingrats . .mais il ne faut pas oublier les coups de fouet, les travaux forcés. Ces souvenirs sont restés dans leurs coeurs. Le parfum de la rose passe vite, mais la piqure de son épine reste longtemps.[103]

His humane attitude towards the slaves is largely based upon what the Bible has taught, i. e. that all men are brothers [104] but it remains a patronizing attitude all the same:

> D'ailleurs, les nègres échappent à la plupart de leurs maux par leur insouciance et la mobilite de leur imagination. Ils dansent au milieu de la famine comme au sein de l'abondance, dans les fers comme en liberté. Si une patte de poulet leur fait peur, un petit morceau de papier blanc les rassure. Chaque jour ils font et défont leurs dieux à leur fantasie.[105]

In his Voeux d'un solitaire Bernardin tries to come to grips with the problem of slavery on a sound, business-like level: for him the ideal situation would be the abolition of slave trade without general production having suffered for it. One way that this could be accomplished was by teaching the native inhabitants of African and the Carribean to cultivate the much sought-after sugar, coffee, and cotton by themselves. Another solution to the slavery problem involved the shipping to the colonies of poor , or lazy or useless French peasants that are not doing themselves or anyone else any good at home; these people would then find gainful employ and lead productive lives on the sugar and coffee plantations.[106]

This particular solution "kills two birds with one stone" because it not only does away with a need for forced labor in the colonies, it also offers an opportunity for a fulfilling existence to these French peasants whose life in the mother country had been anything but productive.[107]

Bernardin also proposes the substitution of homegrown products for exotic imports; e. g. honey would be substituted for sugar, certain vegetable products would replace coffee and linen would take the place of cotton.[108]

But when all is said and done he knows that the centuries-old institution of slavery, born out of colonization, cannot be nullified with a wave of the hand; nor does he suggest any radical uprising or immediate liberation of the slave-laborers in the colonies. Abolition must be accomplished slowly, as any other political reform.[109] This exercise in caution shows the conservative side of Bernardin: but his cautious attitude on the issue of abolition and his warnings to the "people" not to be overzealous with their new government are paralleled by his admonitions to the leaders, those who make the laws and enforce them:

> Chefs du peuple dans tous les ordres,
> je vous le répète au nom de celui qui a lié
> les destins de tous les hommes: votre propre
> bonheur depend de celui du peuple: si vous
> le haïssez, il vous haïra, il vous rendra
> au centuple le mal, que vous lui ferez:
> mais si vous l'aimez, il vous aimera . . .
> Voulez-vous donc vous-mêmes vivre libres?
> n'attentez pas à sa liberté . . .[110]

This is because in politics, as in every other phase of life Bernardin is in quest for the "sage milieu" there is nothing in the universe that doesn't have its contraire and happiness and virtue can only be achieved by striking the perfect balance between two extremes.

Slavery, like all other evils, is an extreme which is the product of an educational system that stresses only the false values of a corrupt society: countless times in Bernardin's work do we find the underlying principle that it is not climate which forms the moral character of men, but their education.[111] Bernardin believes, as did Jean-Jacques before him that man is born good and it is society that makes him evil .[112] Man's soul was given to him in an innocent and pure state[113] and all the errors and evils that come out of civilization find their source in the current system of education.[114]

Clearly then the author does not accept Montesquieu's theory that climate and topography are some of the elements responsible for creating different temperaments and moral attitudes in different nationalities. He believes that it is education and education alone which molds the minds, bodies, and above all the moral attitudes of people of all nations. If there are faults in contemporary society they must be traced back to faults in the educational system. Contemporary education caters to and builds up the overpowering ambition in young people because fathers prefer witty sons to good ones.[115] Virtue and ambition are by definition incompatible.[116] Not only do the present educational systems amplify the devastating passion of ambition and desire for glory, but they also reduce

the students' mind to a repository for useless rules of Greek and Latin grammar. Modern education is impractical because it fills unreceptive skulls with empty babil which they will never use.[117] In place of this he would like to see the establishment of what he calls "Ecoles de la Patrie." The building itself would be in the center of Paris and would enclose a circular amphitheatre divided by steps. The teacher would stand in the middle and there would be several galeries for the use of auditors. Since Bernardin divides the education cycle into three "époques" consisting of three years each, there would have to be nine amphitheatres to accomodate each year of instruction. Around each one of these amphitheatres there would be a big park covered with plants and trees of different nations, one can easily surmise the instructional value and function of each of these plants and trees. The school would be decorated with portraits of infant kings so that the children may identify with virtuous men of yesteryear. So anxious is Bernardin for the children to learn virtue that he would have their families attach to their baptismal names the surname of a family famous for its good deeds.[118] The sound of noisy bells would not disrupt the students in the "écoles de la patrie," only the gentle tones of flutes and oboes would be used to announce the beginning of different classes.[119] Everything learned there would be put into verse and music, for Bernardin believes that music and poetry have the power to "ramener à la vertu des hommes corrompus."[120] As for the actual curriculum, the first discipline to be exposed to the student is religion. The

first commandment of religion is to love God and this they would learn to do without fear. Children do not have the capacity for a theological or philosophical understanding of religion but they are very able to have the "sentiment religieux." It is easy to imbue them with ideas of virtue and religion through the study of natural phenomena.[121] All children of citizens, with no exceptions, will be admitted to the school. In this way they will learn to know one another; the child of a wealthy family will learn to share his affluence with the child from less fortunate circumstances. These children, regardless of socio-economic background will participate in public procession, decorated with garlands of flowers, symbols of purity and innocence.[122]

In the first education "époque" they will learn to read, write and do arithmetic calculations. But even if they do not retain these basic skills they will have profited from their instruction if they know that:

> être sincère, bon, officieux, aimant Dieu et les hommes, est la seule science digne du coeur humain.[123]

In the second stage (from 10 to 12) Bernardin would have them learn the basic trades which are necessary for subsistance, i. e. agriculture, different ways of preparing bread, housebuilding and fabric weaving. In this cycle they would also be taught the Latin language, not by the mechanical memorization method of the colleges but through usage.[124] In the third "époque" the students will learn, also through usage, the language of Homer. In this stage of their education they would be introduced to nature studies as well; the atmosphere, the plants and

animals that inhabit this planet would all be explained to them. Bernardin would now speak to them of laws governing various nations, the principal religions of the world and how Christianity is preferable to all political laws.[125] But whatever they may individually derive from their educations, Bernardin insists that he would never propose to his students any other goal but the good of all mankind.[126] There would be no recompense or punishment,or emulation and envy among the young people in Bernardin's schools. The atmosphere of these schools can best be described in Bernardin's own terms of "lieu charmant."[127] The period of adolescence would be agreably spent in useful acts, which would develop both the mind and the body.[128] Even though many of these notions seem to be impractical and unreal, Bernardin still insists that the "écoles de la patrie" would prepare the students for life in the real world and would teach them how to behave with men of all walks of life.[129] To call this education and "apprentissage de la vie" is a great presumption indeed! Bernardin thinks that a student can just glide smoothly and painlessly froma childhood free of tears and punishment to a peaceful and harmonious adulthood unmarred by the "épreuves" of the real world. Bernardin seeks to stifle the spirit of competition and emulation which is very natural in children and which forms an important impetus for learning. We have already pointed out the fact that in no way has Bernardin shaped or formed the ability in students to form critical judgments of their own and that he leaves every child to create his own particular brand of science based on his own direct observations of nature.

In the Harmonies de la nature Bernardin no longer speaks of three cycles of instruction, nor of amphitheatres nor of "instituteurs" chosen among the fathers of the nation. Education has become much more individualized and is based on direct contact with the natural elements. The mother now has the pivotal role of "institutrice." The importance of the mother can never be overstated as far as our author is concerned.[130] The passive character of the woman is seen as the complement to the active, more agressive nature of the man; together they are "pièces d'une charpente destinées à s'unir."[131] It is because the different characters of man and woman have always been ignored that the fairer sex was given the same education as the stronger one. Nothing could be more misdirected because a woman, whose main role is that of wife and mother and should be given what Bernardin calls an "éducation maternelle," consisting of the domestic arts.[132] Bernardin who has never-ending praise for the woman, blames modern society for the "dénaturement des sexes," "Les hommes s'efféminent et les femmes s'hommassent."[133] Woman has been created to temper the excessively violent facet of man's characer; "C'est la moitié naturelle de l'homme."[134] Thus, most bachelors are "portés à la cruauté"! Women have power over man because their chief weapon is love, "quand on aime, on cherche à plaire, et qui sait plaire est sûr de persuader."[135] Since the weaknesses of each gender are compensated for by the strengths of the other, it stands to reason that the more contrast there is in their characters, the more harmony there will be in their union.[136]

And "vertu" furnishes the perfect vehicle for these opposing natures in the form of the blissful harmony of marriage.[137]

Such is the loose edifice that Bernardin has left us to piece together. The novelty of Bernardin's work does not consist in the use of "causes finales" as proof of the existence of a Divine order in the universe; ; up until his time, if the clergy or certain moralists had any gripes or objections to the sciences, it was certain conclusions reached through scientific methods, but never the methods themselves that were found to be objectionable. These theologians tried to maintain their own notions of the Deity and of a definite code of right and wrong without attacking specific procedures. The separation of religion and secular knowledge had been scrupulously preserved.[138] Bernardin de Saint Pierre had now for the first time used the so-called scientific methods to deduce the existence of a Supreme Being who created the marvelous and exquisitely balanced universe. His chief "merit" lies in the fact that he attempted to synthesize all of his arguments into an enormous system and to reduce all of this disconnected material to a very simple truth. He remains perhaps the last "penseur" in eighteenth century France who attempted such a feat.[139]

One of Bernardin's basic errors, we have seen, is that he replaces "raison" with animal instinct and yet he bestows upon this instinct the same rigorous infallibility which caused him to reject "raison" in the first place. Conscience then becomes the guide, not only for moral behavior, but for natural phenomena as well. The

rule for the study of astronomy is then the same as for the study of moral doctrines, i. e.

> Écoutez parler votre coeur: il meublera votre tête, car il en sait plus que toute la Sorbonne.[140]

NOTES

1. Saint-Pierre, Jacques Henri Bernardin de. Oeuvres Complètes. Ed. Louis Aimé-Martin. (Paris: Méquignon-Marivis, 1818-1820), v. V, pp. 18-19. (Etudes de la nature)
2. Ibid., p. 22.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., v. VII, pp. 423-441.
5. Ibid., pp. 425-427.
6. Ibid., v. V, p. 26. (Etudes)
7. Ibd., v. III, p. 34 (Etudes)
8. Ibid., p. 33.
9. Ibid., pp. 36-37.
10. Ibid., v. VI, p. 222.
11. Ibid., v. V, p. 76 (Etudes)
12. Ibid., v. VII, p. 429.
13. Ibid., v. VI, p. 223-224.
14. Ibd., v. VI, p. 289.
15. Ibid., v. X, p. 183 (Harmonies)
16. Ibid., v. VI, p. 290.
17. Ibid., v. VI, pp. 315-316.
18. Ibid., v. III, pp. xvi-xvii. (Preface to Etudes)
19. Ibid., p. 93.
20. Ibid., p. 345.
21. Ibid., v. IV, p. 60. (Etudes)
22. Ibid., p. 64.
23. Ibid., p. 66.
24. Ibid., p. 85.

25. Ibid., p. 179.

26. Ibid., p. 171.

27. Ibid., p. 87.

28. Leblond, M. A. L'idéal du XIXième Siècle. (Paris: Alcan, 1909), p. 100.

29. Saint-Pierre, J. H. Bernardin de. Oeuvres Complètes. v. IV, pp. 109-110.

30. Ibid., pp. 132-133.

31. Ibid., p. 139.

32. Ibid., p. 154.

33. Ibid., v. V, p. 45. (Etudes)

34. Ibid., p. 78.

35. Ibid., v. IV, p. 200. (Etudes)

36. Ibid., v. III, p. 330. (Etudes)

37. Ibid., v. III, pp. 316-317.

38. Ibid., v. VIII, p. 122. (Harmonies)

39. cf. v. VIII, pp. 105-106, v. IX, pp. 396-399, v. IV, p. 171, etc.

40. cf. v. VI, pp. 193-4, v. V, p. 103 and pp. 106-107.

41. Leblond, for example, in his L'idéal du XIXième siècle.

42. Saint-Pierre, J. H. Bernardin de. Oeuvres Complètes. v. III, p. 263.

43. Ibid., v. IV, p. 108-9. (Etudes)

44. Ibid., v. III, p. 108.

45. Ibid., v. VI, p. 240. (La Chaumière indienne.)

46. Ibid., pp. 237-238.

47. Ibid., v. III, p. 136.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., p. 465.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., p. 467.

52. Ibid., pp. 471-472.

53. Ibid., v. VII, p. 432-433.

54. Ibid., v. III, pp. 472-473.

55. Ibid., v. VI, p. 360.

56. Ibid., v. III, p. 378.

57. Ibid., v. X, p. 60. (Harmonies)

58. Ibid., pp. 82-83.

59. Ibid., v. III, pp. 70-71.

60. Ibid., v. V, pp. 198-199.

61 Ibid, v. XI, p. 63. (Voeux d'un solitaire.)

62. Ibid., pp. 100-101.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., pp. 76-77.

65. Ibid., pp. 177-178.

66. Ibid., p. 79.

67. Ibid., p. 84.

68. Ibid., v. V, p. 139.

69. Ibid.,

70. Ibid., p. 180.

71. Ibid., v. II, pp. 48-49. (Voyage à l'Ile de France.)

72. Ibid., v. III, p. 353.

73. Ibid., p. 397.

74. Ibid., v. V, p. 148.

75. Ibid., p. 150.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid., p. 158.

78. Ibid., p. 296.

79. Ibid., v. XI, p. 19. (Voeux d'un solitaire.)

80. Ibid., v. II, pp. 97-98. (Voyage à l'île de France.)

81. Ibid., p. 101.

82. Ibid., p. 102.

83. Ibid., v. V, p. 153.

84. Ibid., p. 174.

85. Ibid., p. 164.

86. Ibid., v. XI, pp. 155-156. (Voeux d'un solitaire.)

87. Ibid., p. 163.

88. Ibid., p. 194.

89. Ibid., pp. 202-203.

90. Ibid., p. 206.

91. Ibid., v. I, pp. 3-4.

92. Ibid., p. 3.

93. Ibid., v. V, p. 149.

94. Ibid., v. XI, p. 262. (Voeux d'un solitaire.)

95. Ibid., pp. 257-258.

96. Ibid., p. 257.

97. Ibid., v. I, pp. 154-155.

98. Ibid., p. 156 (Voyage à l'île de France.)

99. Ibid., pp. 157-158.

100. Ibid., v. II, pp. 47-48.

101. Ibid., v. I, p. 162.

102. Ibid., p. 208.

103. Ibid., v. II, pp. 111-112.

104. Ibid., v. III, p. 367.

105. Ibid., p. 366.

106. Ibid., v. XI, p. 114.

107. Ibid., v. III, pp. 400-401.

108. Ibid., v. XI, pp. 262-270.

109. Ibid., pp. 141-142.

110. Ibid., p. 145.

111. Ibid., v. III, p. 334.

112. Ibid., p. 421.

113. Ibid., v. VI, p. 254.

114. Ibid., p. 251.

115. Ibid., v. III, p. 428.

116. Ibid., v. V, p. 38.

117. Ibid., v. III, p. 414.

118. Ibid., v. V, p. 327.

119. Ibid.

120. Ibid., p. 329.

121. Ibid., p. 331.

122. Ibid., p. 332.

123. Ibid., p. 333.

124. Ibid., pp. 334-335.

125. Ibid., p. 338.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid., p. 323.

128. Ibid., p. 340.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid., v. X, p. 405. (Harmonies)

131. Ibid., v. XII, p. 160.

132. Ibid., v. V, p. 349.

133. Ibid., v. III, p. 403.

134. Ibid., v. VII, p. 327.

135. Ibid., v. XII, p. 172.

136. Ibid., v. IV, p. 191.

137. Ibid., v. III, p. 77.

138. Ibid., v. V, pp. 358-366, passim.

139. Ibid., p. 349.

140. Maury, F. op. cit., p. 355.

CHAPTER 4

THE VERITABLE BERNARDIN DE SAINT PIERRE

As soon as Bernardin de Saint Pierre had published his Etudes de la nature (1784), he became truly the "vicaire" of Jean-Jacques: his house on the Rue de la Reine Blanche turned into a place of pilgrimage as Ermenonville had been previously. Visitors abounded and Bernardin was literally swamped by letters, many of them from women who had read his works and were now offering him their fortune as well as their hearts. Men of varied walks of life-aristocrats, men of letters, clergymen, doctors, etc. inundated him with marks of their enthusiasm. Medical men offered him prescriptions for his ailments; he received countless dinner invitations; people offered him the use of their country homes and put their varied services and purses at his disposal -- and, almost needless to add, many proposals of marriage came his way.[1]

A 23 year-old military doctor, for example, offered himself as a secretary, "garde-malade," or even son to Bernardin. A man from Bretage sought him out as a spiritual director and one Lafeuillade d'Aubusson wanted to reserve 20,000 livres of his 23,000 livres yearly pension to do charitable acts, on the condition that Bernardin act as his guide and advisor. Another dedicated follower told him:

> Vous portez des paroles de paix et de vie dans l'âme. On voit bien . . .que vous venez de converser avec Dieu.[2]

Bernardin himself in the Avis to the second edition (1786) of his Etudes tells us:

> Un père de famille malheureux m'a mandé que mes Etudes faisaient sa plus douce consolation. Un athée est venu me voir plusieurs fois d'une ville éloignée de Paris.[3]

After Paul et Virginie and les Voeux d'un solitaire, the visits and letters increased. In 1793 Julie de Krudener wrote to him about her nervous depression and all the unhappiness in her life[4] and in the same year Louis Bonaparte,[5] then a youth of 18, told Bernardin that he had shed as many tears upon rereading Paul et Virginie as Paul had shed upon the departure of his beloved. From the United States Dupont de Nemours[6] wrote that he had burst into tears upon rereading Bernardin's masterpiece. We must therefore agree with Monglond that what his contemporaries saw in Bernardin was a confidant and adviser.[7] In July 1796 a young man refered to Bernardin as his "tendre père," because as he put it: "Vous m'avez rempli le coeur de joie et d'espérances."[8] Another young man, according to Aimé-Martin came to Paris in 1795 with frantic intentions of ending his life when by chance he read Bernardin's la Chaumière indienne a work which had a consoling effect upon him. The destitute creature wandered for several days in the Parisian vicinity, living off roots until the moment he finally collapsed he did not want to die until he was reassured that M. de Saint Pierre would be informed that he was dying repentant and consoled by the author's highly idealistic writings.

Such testimony from contemporaries leaves no doubt that Bernardin was considered by his public to be the man of virtue and conscience portrayed through his idyllic literary productions. One can perhaps agree with Arvède Barine that the public does not readily admit that

there is a disaccord between an author and his works. The public had an image of Bernardin as a mild mannered, tender and loving "âme sensible."[9]

Most "modern" criticism has however adapted the diametrically opposite view of Bernardin; instead of the "douceâtre" and "bienveillant" creature envisioned by his contemporaries who made no distinction between the man and the author, modern critics see the creator of Paul et Virginie as a grouchy, egotistical, self-centered individual who sought only to use his friends for any disadvantages which he might obtain from them. Indeed, the excess of sentimentality displayed by his readers and fans lead many of his critics, including Monglond, to consider him "le type accompli de l'égoiste sentimental."[10]

This chapter, it must be made clear, does not seek to exonerate Bernardin in any way. We only desire to present as many different critical views of the author as our research has allowed us to. We do this not to arrive at a definitive portrait of his personality, which is something that critical evidence does not allow us to do with any degree of certainty. Neither do we offer the story of Bernardin's life as a key to understanding his work.

At issue in this chapter is the very theme of the entire study, i. e. Bernardin's authenticity to his own work. The first three chapters of this dissertation have concentrated upon the development of Bernardin from a devoted follower of the Rousseauist tradition to an original thinker and writer in his own right. The last two chapters will complete the portrait of Bernardin's authenticity as a transition-

al writer by discussing his influence on the Romantics and on Chateaubriand in particular.

The second part of the authenticity problem, i. e. Bernardin's authenticity to his own works, we feel, should be presented after the discussion of his original doctrines and ideas, which we have given in the preceding chapter.

It is the explicit purpose of this chapter to present a variety of critical opinions on the author's personality and life in order to show the elusiveness and ambiguity of his personality. This ambivalence in his character we feel has been the cause for much of the criticism and accusations of insincerity hurled at him. The appreciation of the duality of his personality may offer a better understanding of Bernardin's authenticity to his literary productions; this we hope to demonstrate throughout the remainder of this chapter.

One fact that his contemporary as well as his modern critics agree upon is the excess of "sensibilité" in his literary productions. A brief summary of his life will reveal to a large extent how this sensitivity or "sensiblerie" became a crucial part of Bernardin's personality which was to be transmitted to his work. The "petite bourgeoise" family he came from seems to have been cursed with a certain type of hereditary neurosis. His brother Dutailly and his own son Paul were to be subject to mental disorders as well as his sister Catherine who spent most of her adult years ageing in convents. A quick voyage to Martinique with his uncle left Bernardin, at the age of 12, with the memory of a foreign and exotic universe.[11] As an

engineer attached to the Bas-Rhin reserve he quarelled with his chief and was expedited to Malta. He pursued a life of adventure in Holland, Russia, and Poland and moved on to Vienna, Breslau, and Berlin. Back in Paris, he besieged the minister with sollicitations, made much ado of services that he had supposedly rendered his fatherland and, even though he stretched out his hand more than once, he insisted that he would not accept charity - - he wanted only the opportunity to serve his country. Sent to the Ile de France as an engineer he attempted to seduce Mme Poivre the wife of the intendant. To impress her, he offered her money for the poor people of the colony, begged her to be his "directrice de conscience," and to leave her husband and marry him. After all else failed to win for him the virtuous wife and mother, he returned to Paris, " . . . de plus en plus misanthrope et misogyne . . ."[12]

At this time begins for him a period of misery (1773-1783) marked by the humiliating sollicitations he was forced to make and by a worsening state of agitated depression. Around 1775 the fortyish Bernardin goes through a "crise de neurasthénie" which he describes ten years later in the preface to l'Arcadie. Prey to intolerable anguish, Bernardin could not even cross the Seine in a boat on the most beautiful of days; nor could he cross the walk of a public garden or park where groups of people were assembled; it always seemed to him that they were talking about him. At times he feared having been bitten by a mad dog and only the sight of small children playing in a deserted corner of the Tuileries could exert any calming effect on him. These nervous anxieties were followed by "chagrins de famille imprévus."[13] His younger brother Dutailly, used to living off

the handouts of rich widows, had been emprisoned in 1789 in the Bastille for treason. This was actually the first time in his life that Bernardin had to exert himself on someone else's behalf. Later on he exclaimed:

> Ah! . . .combien l'adversité m'a été nécessaire! Combien, sans elle, j'aurais été dur.[14]

And, as Monglond so accurately points out, Bernardin expresses this thought (which was later recaptured by Musset and the other Romantics) in La Chaumière indienne:

> Plus les hommes sont misérables, plus ils sont vils . . .[15]

Living in his small house in the faubourg Saint-Marceau, Bernardin now turned his thoughts to taking a wife. After various romantic adventures he noticed Félicité, the daughter of his publisher Didot; she was 20 years old, he 56.[16] They were married the 27th of October 1793. Léger Didot, Félicité's brother, would later accuse his brother-in-law of having seduced his sister and having killed her with his neglect. It is true that while Bernardin was professing the "morale républicaine" at the Ecole Normale, Félicité was marooned at Essonnes in their country home. She was very lonely as her letters reveal, and she died slowly of consumption, her last days marred by a trial initiated by her husband for his father-in-law's inheritance. After Félicité's death in 1799 Bernardin, left alone with his daughter, Virginie, and hs son Paul, married again at the age of 63, this time to 20 year-old Désirée Pelleporc. He expired in his own home in January of 1814 and his widow married Louis Aimé-Martin, Bernardin's devoted secretary and biographer.

Even this cursory and very general biography reveals to what extent Bernardin is motivated and influenced by his "sensibilité" and as we have previously indicated, all the critics agree that this factor greatly influenced his personal life and was reflected in his literary works. The disagreements between the critics concern chiefly the differences that exist between Bernardin the author and Bernardin the man. The criticism ranges from the devoted praise of his trusted secretary Aimé-Martin to the harsh, cynical views held by Jean Ruinat de Gournier. Most critics are prepared to admit that there exists a definite clash between the Bernardin as we may imagine him through his literary creations and the man he truly was in his everyday life and his dealings with others.

M. Monglond has assembled some very interesting remarks which express the views of some of Bernardin's more skeptical contemporaries who were dismayed to find the author of Paul et Virginie completely different from the man they had imagined him to be. A certain Mme de Cavaignac expressed her disappointment in discovering in the author of Paul et Virginie

> . . 'une nature avide, avare, insociable, un caractere dur et tyrranique', un homme 'toujours au guet de quelque demande à faire, de quelque pension à obtenir . . . mal vu et peu recherché.'[17]

Even his friend Mme Jehanin in an unpublished letter addresses to him the following comment:

> Vous recherchez les petites peines, comme on a coûtume de les fuir. Eh bon dieu! Contentez-vous de véritables malheurs![18]

After careful comparison of this type of documentary evidence on

Bernardin's life with his literary productions Monglond comes to the conclusion it was the author of Paul et Virginie who

> était le premier responsable de cette fadeur écoeurante jusqu'à la nausee . . . qui s'est répandue . . .comme une des plus facheuses traditions du préromantisme.[19]

The artificiality of Bernardin's work, says Monglond, stems precisely from the divorce between the artist and the man.

M. René Doumic who in a very fine article entitled "le Véritable Bernardin de Saint Pierre" covers the portrait of Bernardin through all the main points of his personal life and the doctrines expressed in his writings, saw in our author a "chevalier d'aventures tout à fait selon la définition du XVIIIe siècle." He classes Bernardin among those "sensible" authors who pour all of their sentiment into their work and thus have very little left for their real lives.[20]

As for Aimé-Martin, when describing his beloved master's work at the Institut, says:

> Tels furent les travaux de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre à l'Institut. Ils ont ce caractère particulier, que l'auteur s'y montre toujours ferme dans ses principes, sans aucune considération pour l'époque à laquelle il écrit. Le temps peut changer les systèmes et les hommes, mais il ne peut changer la vérité, et faire que l'athéisme devienne une vertu. La vérité est immuable et chaque siècle commence, la retrouve jugeant les erreurs du siècle qui vient de s'écouler. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre fut immuable comme elle, et pour elle . . .[21]

Thus two images of the man are superimposed on one another:

> Faux patriarche douceâtre, et bénisseur, bonhomme equivoque, égoiste et servile, romancier larmoyant qui fait appel à

> la sensiblerie la plus fade, savant
> et prétentieux, entêté dans ses erreurs,
> philosophe naïf et ridicule . . .
> Bernardin est à la fois égoiste,
> et généreux, bon et retors; il quémande
> et il donne; sa tendresse connaît des
> réticences, mais elle existe, elle fait
> ses preuves.[22]

Trahard, who finds Monglond's criticism of Bernardin too severe[23] is scarcely more tolerant of the author himself:

> Quant à moi, je n'aime pas beaucoup
> Bernardin, dont le caractère me paraît
> sans grandeur, et dont l'oeuvre aux
> trois-quarts manquée, n'offre plus que
> l'aspect séduisant d'une ruine; . . .[24]

In answer to those critics who find Bernardin's tenaciousness and mercenary tendancies intolerable, Trahard quite justifiably retorts:

> pourquoi les grands hommes ne défendraient-
> ils pas comme les autres leur vie matérielle?[25]

The problem with Bernardin is that he attempts to camouflage his calculating nature with a guise of sentimental and mellifluous effusions - - he curiously mixes the pathetic with his pecuniary sollicitations; e. g. if the members of the Convention accord him a pension they will be "des dieux qui, d'une main lancent la foudre, et, de l'autre les fertiles rosées" and if the members of the Comité d'Instruction Publique procure for him gratuitious "denrées alimentaires" they will be rendering an immense service to their country because, as he puts it,

> Citoyens, j'ai besoin de la solitude pour
> me fortifier contre la corruption des villes,
> et d'être tranquille sur mes propres besoins
> pour m'occuper de ceux de la génération future.[26]

If Bernardin can transpose his "sensibilité" to the "domaine des

Gobseck" it must then be a very flexible and pliable sensitivity indeed; it is precisely this combination of "affétərie sentimentale" and cool, shrewd pragmatism that is so distasteful to most of Bernardin's critics and which makes so much of his doctrine ring false. "Le ver est dans le fruit," in M. Trahard's terms. His defenders, while admitting Bernardin's mercenary side, still find in him redeeming values as far as his business dealings are concerned.[27]

The most controversial topic in discussing the man vs. author theme is of course Bernardin's "sensibilité" which is at many points in his work pushed to the nauseating limits of "sensiblerie." As opposed to Monglond, Trahard finds that Bernardin's "sensibilité" truly exists.[28] As we have previously mentioned, his life story is marked at every point by a high-strung melancholic nature which caused him to seek isolation for the world at the tender age of 9. His various disillusioning experiences throughout his travels make the irritable young man even more hermetic in nature and instill in him a deep-rooted resentment for his fellow man.[29] This crisis which Bernardin went through in his early forties might be termed a "nervous breakdown," which causes him to seek separation from the rest of society which he views with bitter rancor. The following excerpts from the Preambule to the Arcadie show how plagued Bernardin really was during this period of his life:

> Ainsi ils (les hommes) me calomnièrent en faisant semblant de me louer, et me perdirent de réputation en feignant de ma plaindre . . . Je m'éloignai donc de ces hommes artificieux . . .[30]

Throughout all his emotionally supercharged dealings Bernardin was

acutely aware of his hyper-sensitive nature:

> Une seule épine me fait plus de mal que l'odeur de cent roses ne me fait plaisir.[31]

Here is how Bernardin describes his own illness :

> Je fus frappé d'un mal étrange: des feux semblables à ceux des éclairs sillonaient ma vue. Tous les objets se présentaient à moi doubles et mouvants: comme Oedipe, je voyais deux soleils . . .[32]

Bernardin refused to take any medication for his "mal de nerfs" claiming that he knew three men who had perished soon after taking remedies for nervous ailments.[33]

When Bernardin broke off with the Encyclopedists he again experienced attacks of melancholia and nervous depression. He was on the verge of leaving society and looking for consolation among the Trappist monks. This neurosis naturally tended to embitter his personality and make him inconsistent in his behavior. In his latter years, Bernardin was irritable, jealous, grouchy, discontent and unsociable; his critics view this period of his life with sharp cynicism. His defenders, on the other hand, (Sainte-Beuve for example), see crises as the mark of the true "âme sensible"who is endowed with a nature susceptible to excesses and abrupt changes in humor:

> Aux peaux plus fines, l'air mauvais est plus irritant; et si l'on n'y prend garde, il s'ensuit des maladies singulières . . .[34]

His most respected biographer, Maurice Souriau readily admits that Bernardin had his faults such as pride, greed in certain matters, irritability and harshness towards the women who adored him.[35] But all these bad traits can be explained by the hereditary nervous problems of which Bernardin was the victim.[36] But Dr. Cabanès who

has examined Bernardin as one of the Grands Névropathes concludes that if Bernardin's nerves were overly excited because he lived in solitude this may be an explanation but not a justification of his behavior. Bernardin was constantly making errors in judgment, because of his selfish, egotistical nature, says Cabanès.[37]

Bernardin's susceptibility manifested itslf at every stage of his life. His inability to get along with his fellow engineers at Malta and on the Ile de France and the friction that this led to are well known. Even the minutest everyday experiences were sometimes blown up to traumatic proportions because of his irritability; e. g. he was miffed when he received letters from Versaille addressed to him as "ingénieur de la marine," because this was a position that he never held - - he also resented the addition of "Bernardin" to his name of "de Saint-Pierre."[38] Through his absurd suspicions Bernardin succeeded in pushing away and repulsing those most disposed in his favor - - he quarreled with d'Alembert, Condorcet and the other "philosophes" because he believed that they had not helped him to obtain a certain gratuity from Turgot.[39] Cabanès adds in an unkindly fashion that Bernardin was not even grateful to those who served him and he conserved his "beggar's" nature even in good times.[40] Trahard correctly points out that whereas with Jean-Jacques the sickness worsened with age, with Bernardin it disappears as he got older.[41] Bernardin, incidentally, was immensely proud when he and Rousseau were spoken of together as a pair of misanthropic hermits.[42]

One cannot conceivably speak of Bernardin's "sensibilité" nor of the author vs. man question without considering his love life and his relationshps with women in general. Indeed this subject should

occupy a major portion of any discussion of Bernardin or his works. The role of the woman as educatress, mother, and embodiment of all goodness and virtue occupies a position of capital importance in Bernardin's work, as the previous chapter pointed out; but the probing question, "Bernardin, a-t-il connu l'amour?" has been the subject of much critical investigation and is still open to conjecture. As M. Trahard so diplomatically ponts out, the answer to that delicate question remains obscure because of the inaccessibility of certain correspondence and incomplete documents.[43] The fact remains however that Bernardin had always been a lady's man. Indeed, his affairs with the coquettish Polish princess Marie Miesnik has been the subject of numerous studies and as we have previously indicated, Bernardin's sojourn at the Ile de France was marred by his attempt to seduce Mme Poivre the intendant's wife. In this latter affair Bernardin showed himself to be a shrewd, relentless and persistent admirer who stopped at nothing short of trickery and emotional ploys to win over the pious Christian wife and mother. It was only Mme Poivre's blunt insistence that he pester her no more with his adolescent foolishness that finally put an end to his persistent nagging. These two disappointing romances succeeded in turning Bernardin into a misogynist, but for a very short period of time indeed. Back in Rennes, he was unsuccessful in his matrimonial efforts and was rejected by several young and wealthy Rennaises. But for most of his "romantic career" documentary evidence seems to suggest that it was he who rejected many proposals of marriage and remained quite aloof and untouched by the attentions paid to him by his female admirers.[44]

In 1787 he rejects the sentimental liason offered him by Julie Legrand. He has the same attitude when after the success of Paul et Virginie he is offered numerous proposals of marriage.[45] But he doesn't wish to remain a bachelor all of his life either: if only Providence would see fit to send him the proper companion, one such as he describes in the Etudes, Bernardin would rejoice in spending his remaining days in the arms of a devoted spouse in a state of blissful matrimony, surrounded by loving offspring. He confesses this in a letter to Julie de Krüdener, dated February 6, 1790, approximately three years before his first marriage:

> Cependant ces succès, et le nombre prodigieux d'amis et d'amies qu'ils m'ont procurés ne suffisent point pour remplir mon coeur. Je cherche une âme sur laquelle mon âme puisse se reposer, c'est-à-dire une compagne douce, sensible, aimable et vertueuse.[46]

He finally found the woman "dont le coeur soit libre" in 20 year-old Félicité Didot the daughter of his publisher. When he married her he was 56 but as many of his biographers have hinted and as M. Trahard plainly puts it:

> une constitution robuste, une sorte d'hypersthésie sexuelle prolongent chez lui l'âge normal de l'amour physique et il a, sur ce point, des aveux sans délicatesse où l'audace se mêle à la chasteté.[47]

Félicité's happiness in her marriage has been the subject of much critical attention; many critics, it seems, judge Bernardin's true "sensibilité" based on what type of husband he was. The opinions on her marital bliss range from one extreme to the other. Bernardin's

staunchest defender is Lt. Col. Largemain, who in 1902 published some hitherto unpublished correspondence between Bernardin and his first wife. He however did not publish the letters in their entirety, as he himself indicated in the preface:

> Nous allons en citer les passages les plus importants afin de montrer l'inanité des accusations portées contre Bernardin . . .[48]

Largemain would have us believe that "il ne cessa de témoigner à Félicité l'affection la plus dévouée."

On the other extreme, we have Jean Ruinat de Gournier who claims that Largemain, who was a relative of Bernardin's, manipulated the letters to make them suit his purpose which was to show that Bernardin's writings, i. e. Paul et Virginie, Les Harmonies de la nature couldn't lie about the character of the man.

Ruinat de Gournier who uses terms such as "étrange et maladif," "hypocondriaque et fantasque," "insociable," "sauvage," "inquiet," and "vagabond" to describe the author finds that Bernardin's

> oeuvre littéraire est en désaccord complet avec son caractère.[49]

He labels Bernardin a "coureur de dot"[50] and claims that Bernardin found it profitable to marry Didot's daughter. Gournier feels that Maury's portrait of Félicité as "craintive, timide, songeuse" is in error; perhaps after her marriage to the "barbon" she took on these characteristics but before it she was "très gaie, très materielle, légère et inconséquente, profondement romanesque."[51] Gournier suggests that Bernardin was not truly enamored of his first wife but that he had the art, as every dreamer does, of murmuring in the ear of a love-struck girl all the sweet things that he perhaps did not feel; as a

man of letters he certainly had the gift of writing pretty lines and loving thoughts which in Gournier's opinion ring very false because of their lack of sincerity:

> Mais que Bernardin sait mal cacher
> sa vraie nature: Il veut paraître
> tendre, délicat, amoureux, sincère,
> il se révèle encore ici ce que toujours
> il a été: insociable, onctueux, faiseur
> de déplorables jeux de mots, patelin et
> surtout égoiste.[52]

We must in all fairness explain that in his preface to the complete correspondence of Bernardin and Félicité which was published for the first time in 1904, Ruinat de Gournier really picks on many minute details of the letters to prove his point. For example, in leter 38, Bernardin had originally written to his fiancée "ton bonheur," he crosses this out and replaces it with "notre bonheur"; Gournier says that if he could have done so without being completely impolite egotist Bernardin would simply have written "mon bonheur." It is true that in many of the letters Bernardin wishes to form and to mold the young woman; he wants her to study botany, he corrects her spelling errors, tells her to get plenty of sleep and even suggests that she eat less in order not to gain weight. Gournier sees these things as a mark of the most unbearable egotism.[53] These passages may of course be judged in a different light; perhaps Bernardin is only trying to mold Félicité in the image of the ideal woman he had described in the Etudes and he may very well have had her best interests at heart. The following excerpt shows clearly Bernardin's concept of the perfect wife:

> Voilà l'étude digne de vous. Etre bonne à vos voisins, attentive et indulgente pour vos domestiques, prévoyante pour les besoins de votre maison, mère tendre pour vos enfants, et ma compagne aimante et aimée en tout temps, telle est la carrière que vous devez parcourir.[54]

After Felicite's death in 1799 Bernardin remained on excellent terms with Henri Didot one of her four brothers, but Leger (or Saint-Leger) Didot hated his brother and in order to take revenge on him and on Bernardin he told people how his sister had been seduced before her marriage by the author of Paul et Virginie and that she had died of unhappiness caused by his neglect. It is hard to tell from their correspondence how far their premarital relations had actually gone but in all probability Bernardin had not "taken advantage" of his bride. Aime-Martin, Bernardin's devoted secretary and biographer violently criticized Leger's attitude and in his 1820 publication of the Essai sur la vie et les ouvrages de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre he staunchly defends the memory of his wife's first husband. Leger then started a defamation suit against Aime-Martin and during the trial he published a small anonymous brochure entitled "La Verite, en reponse aux calomnies repandues dans un ecrit intitule Essai sur la vie et les ouvrages de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre par L. A. Martin (Paris, Imprimerie de Didot jeune, in-8, 1821).[55] In this brochure Leger discusses and criticizes those passages in the book which to him appear inexact; e. g. Aime-Martin says that Felicite was not unhappy -- Leger claimed that the family had letters where divorce was plainly spoken of. Aime-Martin was asked to show the judges the correspondence between the two and Gournier firmly believes that he didn't show all

the letters because a certain number of them are marked "bon" or "non" or "inutile." Aimé-Martin finally lost the case and was forced to pay Didot a fine and to suppress the "passage incriminé."[56] The latter not content with having won the case continued his malicious slander, saying that Bernardin had not shown any appreciation to the Didot clan who had gone to such great pains in the publication of his Etudes. This matter continued back and forth with accusations and defenses on both sides until 1860.

Gournier insists that Largemain in his attempt to whitewash the author had doctored the correspondence. This is what spurred him to publish the complete correspondence between Bernardin de Saint Pierre and his first wife. He would like to show what kind of a man the author of Paul et Virginie really was; "Ne sommes-nous pas au temps des déstructeurs de légendes?" asks Gournier.[57] His ad hominem approach however, does anything but qualify Gournier as an objective "destructeur de legendes." Even the briefest perusal of the letters reveals that this most cynical of critics has interpreted Bernardin's phrases to make them fit his preconceived image of the author as a grouchy, selfish old man with only his own interests in mind. However, one can see a certain selfishness in Bernardin's nature especially in a letter where he is trying to console his fiancée on the loss of her brother who died of wounds received at Jamappes:

> Je suis très touché des malheurs de ce bon et infortuné Neuilly. Si quelque considération pouvait tempérer votre douleur, c'est le succès de mes affaires.[58]

and Bernardin shows on certain occasions the jealousy so common to old husbands with young wives; in a letter where he criticizes Félicité's choice of a loud-colored hat Bernardin writes:

> Je vous dirai plus, c'est qu'ils ne conviennent en aucun temps à une jeune fille qui semble vouloir attirer sur elle les yeux du public. A qui chercheriez-vous à plaire maintenant? A vous seul, me direz vous; eh bien! Je vous dirai avec sincérité que les couleurs dures et tranchées ne vous vont point. Pour moi je n'aime que les couleurs douces et les formes simples. En toutes choses je fuis l'éclat.[59]

Before their marriage Bernardin had made careful plans for a home built with her dowry at Essonnes-- the house was really isolated from civilization as Bernardin believed that they would be happier living "dans la solitude" and "aux champs" "loin du trouble et la corruption des villes"[60] because he knew that public opinion frowned upon an older man with a young wife. He believed that while he was at the Ecole Normale in Paris, Félicité could be happy in the home at Essonnes surrounded by her "livres" and "fleurs."[61] After all, his principal objective was her happiness.[62]

But all was not bliss between Félicité and Bernardin as the following rare letter from the author to his mother-in-law reveals (1796):

> Je ne peux parler en aucune manière, des affaires de la succession à ma femme dont les vapeurs ne font qu'augmenter. Elle s'est mise dans la tête d'avoir la disposition de mon argent ou une pension particulière ou de divorcer. . .[63]

The fact remains that Félicité was alone, marooned much of the time in their country home while Bernardin was in Paris, writing to her to complain of his colds and sicknesses and sending her his dirty laundry. The fact that this wife was forced to live in near-isolation

has caused the majority of critics to consider Bernardin if not quite the ogre that Gournier does, at least not as the most considerate of husbands, such as his literary productions would present him. M. René Doumic agrees that Félicité was at least partially the victim of her husband's neglect.[64] Brunetière is also confident that Félicité was unhappy.[65] Souriau, the most respected of Bernardin's biographers feels that Félicité was not happy but that it was not Bernardin's fault - - he was a good husband, father, son-in-law, etc.[66] M. Trahard believes that Bernardin truly loved his two wives[67] but that he prudently remained at a distance from his first wife in order not to be consumed by a too ardent relationship.[68]

The second Mme de Saint Pierre had better luck with her husband as most of the critics agree. Désirée de Pelleporc, 20 years old when she married 63 year-old widower Bernardin, did what she wanted with her husband and even made him attend Mass with her.[69]

As far as Bernardin's friendships are concerned, again there are varying critical opinions. SAinte-Beuve believes that with "les gens simples et sans vanité" such as Mustel, Duval, Taubenheim, and Ducis, he was as kind and bnevolent as his works portray him. But even Sainte-Beuve admits that

> il ne fallait qu'un certain vent venu
> du monde pour réveiller ses âcretés et
> ses humeurs.[70]

Trahard also points out that in his friendships Bernardin always takes more than he gives, and was always given to abrupt changes in temper.[71] Bernardin was however not devoid of charismatic attraction.[72] His friend Hennin who serves as a go-between for

Bernardin and various commissioners from whom he seeks to obtain pensions, is often the subject of unjust reproach. Their letters, which occupy the major part of the 3 volume correspondence compiled by Aimé-Martin, show to what degree Bernardin bases his esteem for people on what they are able or unable to do for him. His attitude towards Hennin, for example, oscillates from irritation and vexation to delight and extreme benevolence and gratitude, depending upon whether Hennin has been able to exercise his influence favorably on Bernardin's behalf. His friend Duval, the Genevan merchant whom he had met at Saint Petersburg writes letters which show the creator of Paul et Virginie to be:

> bon homme, honnête, ressemblant au fond à ses écrits, mais atteint de quelque manie et marque de mésquinerie et de petitesse.[73]

If critical opinion is divided on the subjects of Bernardin's sincerity in love matters, friendships and "sensibilité" it is in solid accord on the authenticity of the author's political views. Bernardin, we have demonstrated in the previous chapter, showed himself to be a practical thinker on social and political issues: even if he envisioned a state of Social Utopia in his idyllic novel, he was nonetheless capable of designing a definite program for political reform and social reconstruction for his own compatriots. But the question here is, how true was Bernardin to the views he himself preached?

All of the critics agree that whatever the political regime happened to be at a particular time, Bernardin was always sure to make the most of it and try to derive whatever benefits he could from it --

politically then, he swayed with the wind:

> Royaliste ardent sous Louis XVI, patriote anticlerical sous la Révolution, il finissait le bon apôtre, partisan enthousiaste de Napoléon, converti au catholicisme, pensionné par l'Empéreur.[74]

> Très indifférent à la forme du gouvernement, il n'avait jamais professé de répulsion théorique contre la royauté ni la république, pas plus qu'il n'allait en montrer contre l'Empire. Son principal souci avait été, il faut bien le confesser, d'avoir la faveur, sinon l'oreille, des hauts personnages, qui avaient tour à tour détenu le pouvoir ou l'influence. Il avait pu ainsi trouver pour patrons, Louis XVI et ses ministres, puis les conventionnels, et bientôt il aura les princes de la famille impériale.[75]

Bernardin was able to feel at ease under all political regimes because of his flexibility. He adapted to all political situations with great facility and through his charisma was able to make things easy for himself.[76] But for all of this, Bernardin never pardoned the Revolution for having interfered with his business affairs and government pension. But the rule of the Bonapartes restored to Bernardin a pension in addition to a "croix d'honneur."[77] In a letter to his second wife, on this subject he writes :

> je dois ces bienfaits, non sollicités, au simple mouvement de bienséance naturel à ces deux grands princes.[78]

This line is an excellent illustration of the duality of Bernardin's nature: the sentimental proponent of "vertu" and justice side by side with the predatory and avaricious calculating businessman. Many of his biographers, especially Maury, claim however that Bernardin, far from being the victim of the Revolution, turned it to his benefit and profit: political personalities, having judged him only by his literary productions spared him the anguish of incarceration.[79]

At the most, the Revolution did not enrich him to the point he may have hoped.[80] We cannot then sympathize with him too much as it was just at this time that Bernardin was offered and accepted a number of posts: at the Jardin des Plantes, the Bibliothèque Nationale, at the Ecole Normale, and soon at the Académie. At every point he tries to make the best of the situation he is in and to extract every possible benefit from it. One may also see in Bernardin's political view his famous or infamous, as the case may be, "manie de conciliation"; true to his system of balances he wants to retain his influences in all opposing political camps. Never one to really commit himself to any radical movement, Bernardin writes in the Suite des voeux d'un solitaire:

> J'étais lié au peuple par devoir,
> et par reconnaissance au roi dont
> les bienfaits me soutenaient depuis
> douze ans. J'avais combattu le
> despotisme aristocratique, je ne voulais
> pas flatter l'anarchie populaire.[81]

Thus we find contradictions between what Bernardin said in La Chaumière indienne and what he thought at the time of the Empire. Always trying to be in the "juste milieu" his "juste milieu" winds up being as M. Souriau puts it "la moyenne de ses oscillations."[82] Even more shocking than his oscillating political views is his failure to conform to some of his own democratic principles, especially on the issue of slavery. Even though Bernardin indicates that his main motive for leaving the Ile de France was his compassion for the deplorable lot of the unfortunate blacks, Maury is convinced that there is a definite contradiction between his acts and his philanthropic doctrines; he was reproached for having taxed the strength of his Negro slaves too much, for example.[83]

As so many other studies of this nature, in trying to paint a more detailed picture of Bernardin the man, this chapter has tried in all fairness to present both sides of the critical opinions. But unfortunately we cannot leave the reader with a definitive, clearly etched image of the subject; Bernardin cannot be judged by isolated episodes in his life's experience nor from ideas expressed in his novels. For a more complete answer to the author vs. man question we must also consider him as he presents himself in non-fictional writings and in prefaces and preambules to his works.

Many of his biographers and critics pay at least cursory attention to the duality of his character but they do not try to relate it in an analytic way to his works; we believe that in doing so, many of the unusual episodes in his life can be related to the notions expressed in his idyllic literature and can make him better understood as a man and as an author.

Very early in his life Bernardin showed all the signs of being a dreamer, a hypersensitive individual always adrift in a world of reverie.[84] This tendancy to reverie and daydreaming is of course transmitted to his masterpiece Paul et Virginie. The spirit and love of adventure which also manifested itslef early on as another facet of Bernardin's temperament is more clearly reflected in the writings describing his various travels, such as the Voyage à l'Ile de France. This latter work incidentally displays yet another part of Bernardin's literary personality, i. e. the didactic and succinct observatons of the marine biologist side by side with emotional pleas of the moraliser-abolitionist. That all this is tempered by shrewd practicality and

realism on business matters is precisely why Bernardin has presented such a misunderstood and often wrongly criticized figure.

The duality of his nature may have been due to influences of his home: on the one hand there were his parents,

> chez qui le sens bourgeois s'affinait
> de toute la malice normande . . .[85]

and on the other, his godmother, Mme de Bayard,

> vieille comtesse qui avait retenu . . .
> les usages . . .de la vie brilliante,
> la délicatesse des sensations et du
> langage, le goût du grand . . .[86]

He grew up then with the "esprit plébien" coupled with certain aristocratic tendencies, a love and a keen interest for the real world around him as well as a propensity for the poetic and ephemeral "le positif et le poétique."[87] Bernardin never quite had the genius nor the force to blend these two sides of his character into a harmonious mélange - - the excitable, impetuous, moody and hyper-sensitive side of him never allowed him to put a restraint on his emotional daydreamer tendencies; hence we find a constant juxta-position in his works as well as in his personality of the sentimental effusions of a moraliser and the harsh practicalities of the pragmatist.

We may say that Bernardin's best known work is in a sense born of this fertilization of opposites and in this way reflects the authentic personality of is author. Indeed Paul et Virginie may be seen as a montage of contradictions; e. g. the supposedly virtuous and sincere Mme de la Tour, being the initiator of her daughter's leaving the exotic paradise to enter the forbidden world of civilization and society, and her never renouncing the inheritance of her relatives,

which shows that she considers the bucolic life an exile, not a promised land, the tragic dénouement of the book and the most outrageous contradiction of all - - Virginie's death. Far from being "natural" the "pudeur" which kills her is most reflective of an education received in the stifling convents and salons of the civilized world and truly finds no place in a novel which could have as its subtitle "A Hymn to Nature."

The contradiction in Paul et Virginie are repeated in Bernardin's other works as well and we can only concude that these works are authentic in that they mirror the oscillations and dualities of the author's unfathomable personality.

Bernardin's "manie de conciliation" his facility to adapt to changing situations have perhaps been the cause of accusations of inauthenticity of the man to his work.

But if we keep in mind that he was troubled if not indeed tortured, by his inability to conciliate opposites in his work as well as in himself we may come closer to a better understanding of the author as well as of the man.

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CHAPTER 5

BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE AS A TRANSITIONAL WRITER: ROUSSEAU AND CHATEAUBRIAND

The previous chapters have concerned themselves with Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's development from a devoted disciple of Rousseau to an accomplished artist and original thinker in his own right. We should like now to reexamine the role that Bernardin and Rousseau played as precursors of the Romantic movement in general, and to one of its leading proponents in particular.

One cannot deny that the opinions which Chateaubriand has left about Rousseau are quite uneven, to say the least. He is one of Rousseau's greatest admirers as well as one of his harshest critics. On the one hand, after having compared two texts of Byron and of Rousseau, Chateaubriand finds that:

> Dans ces deux récits de Rousseau et de Byron on sent la différence de la position sociale de l'éducation et du caractere des deux hommes. A travers le charme du style de l'auteur des Confessions, perce quelque chose de vulgaire, de cynique, de mauvais ton, de mauvais goût; l'obscénité d'expression particulière à cette époque gâte encore le tableau.[1]

but on the other hand he calls himself a "disciple de Rousseau."[2] and compares him very favorably with the Greek sage Heraclitee.[3] He sees at the same time in Jean Jacques' character a sort of impalatable vulgarity as well as nobility and grandeur of spirit. In Chateaubriand's eyes Rousseau is a madman, haunted by a perpetual persecution complex as well as a sage, endowed with the qualities of measure and moderation

That Chateaubriand changed his mind several times on the subject of Rousseau's works is also a matter of fact. He was a great admirer of the Genevan philosophe in his youth and he was at least partially influenced by the Rêveries du promeneur solitaire which he found akin to his own ideas.[4] Later on, while composing several remarks on a work of his younger days entitled Essai sur les révolutions, anciennes et modernes Chateaubriand reread Rousseau's works "afin de voir s'ils justifieroient au tribunel de sa raison mûrie et son goût formé l'enthousiasme qu'ils lui inspiroient dans sa jeunesse."[5] He arrives at the following conclusion:

> Je nai point retrouvé le sublime dans l'Emile . . .ouvrage de pure théorie et de tout point inapplicable.
>
> On sent plus dans l'Emile l'humeur du misanthrope que la sévérité du sage: la société y est jugée par l'amour propre blessé . . .l'auteur déclame contre les moeurs de son siècle tout en participant à ces moeurs . . .
>
> La Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard . . .n'est aujourd'hui qu'un sermon socinien assez ennuyeux . . .la politique de Rousseau a vielli . . .Rousseau n'est définitivement au-dessus des autres écrivains que dans une soixantaine de lettres de la Nouvelle Héloïse . . . dans ses Rêveries et dans ses Confessions.[6]

Chateaubriand is fully aware that his judgement of Rousseau the writer is always influenced by his impressions of Rousseau, the man. Evidently one cannot base a comparative study of two literary men solely upon their memoirs or other personal writings; one must look to their creative works which form an all-important basis of comparism for ideas and doctrines. For Rousseau and Chateaubriand such a comparison would best be based on a conscientious analysis of the famous

chapter of the Genie du Christianisme entitled "Du Vague des passions." This chapter crystallizes all the "sentiments" common to the two authors in question; i.e. melancholy, solitude, the sentiment of nature as well as the religious sentiment. A discussion of "Du Vague des passions" will demonstrate how these latter notions of solitude, etc. are intimately connected and it will also facilitate an exposition of the social and moral ideas of Chateaubriand and Rousseau.

In his Génie Chateaubriand devotes an entire book to the human passions and their rapport with pagan and Christian poetry to show how the Christian religion influenced, modified and unmasked these passions. The passions of which he speaks are charity, which is the root of good, and vanity, the root of evil and the passions of love and pride.[7] These sentiments are specific and distinct; they are of positive or negative consequences, according to Chateaubriand's traditional Christian views. In the chapter in question, "Du Vague des passions" on the contrary, the discussion concerns less precise sentiments. If one does find in this chapter certain defined passions, it is not because they occupy a predominant place there, but rather because they contribute to create the état d'âme described by the author, a state which takes on, through its imprecise and intense nature, the proportions of a passion. This chapter which is quite short is cited here in its entirety to facilitate discussion later on:

Il reste à parler d'un état de l'âme, qui, ce nous semble, n'a pas encore été bien observé; c'est celui qui précède le développement des passions, lorsque nos facultés, jeunes, actives, entières, mais renfermées, ne se sont exercées que sur elles-mêmes, sans but et sans objet. Plus les peuples avancent en civilisation, plus cet état du vague des passions augmente; car il arrive alors une chose forte triste: le grand nombre d'exemples qu'on a sous les yeux, la multitude des livres qui traitent de l'homme et de ses sentiments, rendent habile sans expérience. On est détrompé sans avoir joui; il reste encore des désirs, et l'on n'a plus d'illusions. L'imagination est riche, abondante et merveilleuse; l'existence pauvre, sèche et désenchantée. On habite, avec un coeur plein, un monde vide; et, sans avoir usé de rien, on est désabusé de tout.

L'amertume que cet état de l'âme répand sur la vie est incroyable; le coeur se retourne et se replie en cent manières, pour employer des forces qu'il sent lui être inutiles. Les anciens ont peu connu cette inquiétude secrète, cette aigreur des passions étouffées qui fermentent toutes ensemble: une grande existence politique, les jeux du gymnase et du champ de Mars, les affaires du Forum et de la place publique, remplissaient leurs moments, et ne laissaient aucune place aux ennuis du coeur.

D'une autre part, ils n'étaient pas enclins aux exagérations, aux espérances, aux craintes sans objet, à la mobilité des idées et des sentiments, à la perpétuelle inconstance, qui n'est qu'un dégoût constant; dispositions que nous acquérons dans la société des femmes.

Enfin, les Grecs et les Romains, n'étendant guere leurs regards au-delà de la vie, et ne soupçonnant point des plaisirs plus parfaits que ceux de ce monde, n'étaient point portés, comme nous, aux méditations et aux désirs par le caractère de leur culte. Formée pour nos misères et pour nos besoins, la religion chrétienne nous offre sans cesse le double tableau des chagrins de la terre et des joies célestes; et par ce moyen, elle fait dans le coeur une source de maux présents et d'espérances lointaines, d'où découlent d'inépuisables rêveries. Le chrétien se regarde toujours comme un voyageur qui passe ici-bas dans une vallée de larmes, et qui ne se repose qu'au tombeau. Le monde n'est point l'objet de ses voeux, car il sait que l'homme vit peu de jours, et que cet objet lui échapperait vite.

Les persecutions qu'éprouvèrent les premiers fidèles augmentèrent en eux ce dégoût des choses de la vie. L'invasions des Barbares y mit le comble, et l'esprit humain en reçut une impression de tristesse, et peut-être de misanthropie qui ne s'est jamais bien effacée.

> De toutes parts s'élevèrent des couvents, où se rétirerent des malheureux trompés par le monde, et des âmes qui aimaient mieux ignorer certains sentiments de la vie, que de s'exposer à les voir cruellement trahis. M s, de nos jours, quand les monastères, ou la vertu qui y conduit, ont manqué à ces ames ardents, elles se sont trouvées étrangères au milieu des hommes. Dégoûtées par leur siècle, effrayées par leur religion, elles sont restées dans le monde sans se livrer au monde: alors elles sont devenues la proie de mille chimères; alors on a vu naître cette coupable mélancolie qui s'engendre au milieu des passions, lorsque ces passions, sans objet, se consument d'elles-mêmes dans un coeur solitaire.[8]

This "vague" identifies as victims those who have not yet had the opportunity to "act"in the world; those afflicted have not been able to define the sentiment which victimizes them, nor have they been able to connect it to any concrete event in their lives. In face of this feeling which is an unsuppressible as it is imprecise, one remains passive and riskas becoming more so as the sentiment is cultivated. It is perhaps the civilized world which is at the root of this state of passions - - one can no longer hope to discover the world by oneself in such a way that there is a real correspondence between inner sentiments and actual daily experiences. The "vague des passions" produces a veritable rupture among the imagination, the world of dreams and existence in the real world; in other words, the gap between the interior and exterior worlds may be defined as the "vague des passions."

The state of which Chateaubriand speaks is one where one cannot at all envisage the possibility of being actively engaged in the

world. The example of the Ancients stresses the fact that, once engaged in the world, one will not experience the malaise in question. For those who are victim to it, this malaise, the exagerations, the hopes, the fears, the inconsistency which evolves into disgust, can well represent an attempt to find something solid, a search for which the Ancients had no need. And if modern society no longer offers the significant activities of ancient times, the Christian religion reinforces the idea that the world and life are worth but little. In its very genesis that religion justifies and even maintains the afore-mentioned rupture and renders it even more painful. Certainly Chateaubriand sees very clearly that "C'est dans le génie du christianisme qu'il faut surtout chercher la raison de ce vague des passions répandu chez les peuples modernes; . . ."[9] He uses the term "mélancholie" at several different places where he means religion. Yet at the same time he claims to see in religion a possible remedy for the mal. Convents and monasteries furnish agitated souls the peace and assurance they so sorely need. In "Du Vague des passions" the accent is upon the attributes of refuge and isolation furnished by the monasteries. It is not certain then that religion offers a remedy; it represents rather an escape for wounded and suffering souls.

The "vague des passions" manifests itself in several forms and its dimensions are multiple. As an état d'âme it consists of desiring a person, a thing or even an experience. Sainte-Beuve reminds us that it is a question of an "ennui" which searches for the infinite, finds it, but is incapable of fulfilling it and leaves men in a state of prolonged desire.[10] Convinced of the impossibility of fulfilling

this desire and finding nothing but emptiness, capital importance is then accorded to the desire itself, because the yearning, the longing is real, it exists and it is necessary to hold on to it at any price. The desire then becomes its own goal, it pursues the "ivresse" of pursuit, a happiness which exists when a quest is not fulfilled because of the sadness engendered by the absence of a climax can transform itself into a certain type of pleasure and become a means of consolation.[11]

Before Chateaubriand published it separately, the story of René directly followed the chapter of the "Vague des passions" in the Génie to furnish an example of the devastating passion. In the Défense du "Génie du Christianisme" Chateaubriand describes in this way the purpose of René:

> L'auteur y combat en outre le travers particulier des jeunes gens du siècle, le travers qui mene directement au suicide. C'est Jean-Jacques Rousseau qui introduisit le premier parmi nous ces reveries si désastreuses et si coupables. En s'isolant des hommes, en s'abandonnant à ses songes, il a fait croire à une foule de jeunes gens qu'il est beau de se jeter ainsi dans le vague de la vie. Le roman de Werther a développé depuis ce germe de poison. L'auteur du Génie du christianisme, obligé de faire entrer dans le cadre de son apologie quelques tableaux pour l'imagination, a voulu dénoncer cette espèce de vie nouveau, et peindre les funestes conséquences de l'amour outré de la solitude.[12]

In attacking Jean-Jacques and the author of Werther, the above quoted passage raises the essential question of the sources of René. Certainly Chateaubriand had borrowed from French and English literature for the episode of René but what is of interest to us and what we are going to examine more closely are the sources mentioned in the passage, namely Saint-Preux. Many critics have the tendency to inscribe René

in the same line of literary personalities as Werther and Saint-Preux; the following discussion is presented in the hope of elucidating this matter and correcting these fallacious judgements and putting the character of René back in its proper perspective.

Werther is if not identical to René, in any case much more akin to him than to Saint-Preux. Just like Goethe's hero, René

> veut avidement saisir tout ce que lui présente de prestigieux et de fascinant sa fantaisie ou la nature contemplée, et s'en rendre maître.[13]

A proud creature, René, like Werther believes that he suffers more than any one else because of his sharpened sensitivity, his nobility and grandeur of spirit. Disgusted with everything, afflicted with this feeling of asphyxiation and with the "surabondance" of life, Werther and René set themselves to pursuing chimeric goals, i.e. isolation and withdrawal from the world, to surrounding themselves with only their unhappiness and anguish. René and his German counterpart are victims of real suffering; the Leiden of Werther are equally those of René. In René Chateaubriand engendered the figure of the melancholiac-the figure which was to loom so large on the threshold of the new century. René is by birth and by temperament a melancholiac; he is made so by the force of circumstances but more importantly his melancholy is a matter of preference and is enhanced by the morbid pleasure afforded him by the contemplation of his own malady. René is super-sensitive, profoundly affected by religion and nature. His "tristesse" is coupled with vanity which at times reaches outrageous proportions and he is acutely influenced by a wanderlust. His is a feverish desire to act

"coupled with an atrophy of the will which inhibits all action; a weariness which, ever seeking something new, is yet unconvinced that there is nothing new under the sun."[14] As M. Mèrlant so aptly puts it:

> Ce double mouvement d'expansion et de receuillement qui fait la vie normale de tous les êtres, manque à René, et lui manque parce que le souci du moi l'encombre et fausse en lui toute perception.[15]

It is only with the realization that his melancholia itself comes anywhere near satisfying his needs, that Rene can rejoice; in his own words:

> Ô mes amis, je sus donc ce que c'était que de verser des larmes, pour un mal qui n'était point imaginaire! Mes passions, si longtemps indéterminées, se précipitèrent sur cette première proie avec fureur. Je trouvai même une sorte de satisfaction inattendue dans le plenitude de mon chagrin, et je m'aperçus avec un secret moment de joie, que la douleur n'est pas une affection qu'on épuise comme le plaisir . . . D'ailleurs (chose etrange) je n'avais plus envie de mourir depuis que j'étais réellement malheureux. Mon chagrin était devenue une occupation qui remplissait tous mes moments: tout mon coeur est naturellement pétri d'ennui et de misère.[16]

René has long been considered the symbol of a whole generation of young men; his "mal du siècle" was the "intellectual anguish" which resulted from the philosophy of the eighteenth century.[17]

For Jean-Jacques the malady was something completely personal which infiltrated the individual and separated him from the rest of society. René, who has suffered only in his own imagination, seeks to suffer in real life - he is actively engaged in the pursuit of unhappiness. Sainte-Beuve very justly remarks with regard to this that the story of René can truly be divided into two separate parts; in the first part:

> René, dégoûté de tout, est décidé à en finir avec la vie, à mourir. C'est alors qu'Amélie reparaît. Je n'insisterai pas sur cette dernière moitié du récit. Je remarquerai seulement qu'ici René obtient un peu ce qu'il désire; il voulait un beau malheur, en voilà un. Sa vie jusque-là, se composait d'une suite de désenchantements sans cause précise: désormais il a son accident singulier entre tous, son fatal mystère.[18]

Amélie's entrance into the intrigue furnishes René with the "beau malheur" that he was seeking and performs the all-important function of defining his sadness, which up until now had been vague and imprecise. He now has a reason for living and as Merlant notes:

> René . . .continue à vivre pour s'adorer; voilà pourquoi il poursuivra ses aventures sentimentales en répandant partout l'idée qu'il porte en lui d'une incurable douleur, sa suprême séduction et le charme dont lui même il s'enchante.[19]

Speaking of the posterity of René, Merlant points out this difference between the New Hero and the Rousseauiste concept of the hero:

> Le souci equivoque de la "vertu", le sentiment d'innocence intime que Rousseau voulait sauver, ne s'exprimeront plus de la même manière; mais ils demeureront au fond de tous ces "méchants": selon le sens vulgaire, jusqu'au jour lointain où le surhomme renoncera au vocabulaire qui rappelle d'anciennes servilités, et restera serein dans ses négations.[20]

It is not insignificant that Chateaubriand, having wanted to combat (in René) "le travers particulier des jeunes gens du siècle, le travers qui mène directement au suicide," has depicted a type who goes much further in the pursuit of chimeric ideals in his isolation in the heart of nature, in the anguish and the contemplation of his own destiny than the heroes of Goethe and Rousseau had ever done before him.

Sainte-Beuve caustically remarks, and not without reason, that

> Plus il [Chateaubriand] s'attaque durement à Jean-Jacques et à l'auteur de Werther, . . . plus is se montre le peu de solidité et même de sincerité de sa plaidoirie.[21]

Perhaps Chateaubriand distinguished in the literary creations of Jean-Jacques and of Goethe, personalities which bore more than a few resemblances to his own psychological makeup. There is no doubt at all that there is much of Chateaubriand in René and the possibility does exist that having recognized Saint-Preux and Werther as kindred souls, Chateaubriand wanted to suppress or deny this part of his own character- the part which, incapable of happiness seeks consolation in solitude but never finds it. The "peu de sincerité" of his argument quite succinctly points out that if he attacks other authors, it is really a part of himself that Chateaubriand is attacking. The latter notion is particularly reinforced by the fact that one trait of Jean-Jacques which Chateaubriand always found intolerable was his persecution complex. In his Essai sur les revolutions, for example, Chateaubriand says:

> J'aime mieux supposer, afin de l'excuser, que Rousseau n'était pas toujours maître de sa tête: Mais alors ce maniaque ne me touche point; je ne sais m'attendrir sur les maux imaginaires d'un homme qui se regarde comme persécuté, lorque toute la terre est à ses pieds . . .[22]

Still it is a known fact that misanthropy and persecution complexes constitue a major theme in Chateaubriand's work and thought. In Atala for example, he finds:

> Si un homme revenait à la lumière quelques années après sa mort, je doute qu'il fût revu avec joie, par ceux-là meme qui ont donné le plus de larmes à sa memoire: tant on forme vite d'autres liasons . . .tant l'inconstance est naturelle à l'homme, tant notre vie est peu de chose même dans le coeur de nos amis.[23]

In René these themes abound: the monasteries and convents, all symbols of refuge and isolation from society, are basic pillars supporting the central ideas of the work.

One may speak, not without justification of Chateaubriand as an author who criticizes in others the unfavorable traits which he recognizes as his own.

Besides the proud misanthropy which Jean-Jacques and René have in common, there are other analogous elements in their respective personalities: for example the following psychological description of René:

> J'ai coûté la vie à ma mère en venant au monde; . . .Pour moi, livré de bonne heure à des mains étrangères, je fus élevé loin du toit paternel.
>
> Mon humeur était impétueuse, mon caractère inégal. Tour à tour bruyant et joyeux, silencieux et riste, je ressemblais autour de moi mes jeunes compagnons; puis, les abandonnant tout à coup, j'allais m'asseoir à l'écart, pour contempler la nue fugitive, ou entendre la pluie tomber sur le feuillage.[24]

How many resemblances in this passage between René's life and Jean-Jacques' ! Firstly, Chateaubriand's birth did not cause his mother's death - this is a characteristic which he has in all probability borrowed from the Confessions of Jean-Jacques. Indeed the lines wherein he describes his adolescence are almost identifal to those of Rousseau in the Confessions:

> J'atteignis ainsi ma seizième année, inquiet, mécontent de tout et de moi, sans goût de mon état, sans plaisir de mon âge, dévoré de désirs dont j'ignorais l'objet, pleurant sans sujet de larmes, soupirant sans savoir quoi; enfin caressant tendrement mes chimères; . . . Les dimanches, mes camarades venaient me chercher, après la prêche, pour aller m'ebattre avec eux. Je leur aurais volontiers échappé si j'avais pu; mais une fois en train de leurs jeux, j'étais plus ardent et j'allais plus loin qu'un autre; difficile à ébranler et à retenir.[25]

From their childhood on then, René and Jean-Jacques felt themselves to be different from others and these upsetting feelings haunted them until the end of their days. Here is how René describes his situation:

> Tout m'échappait à la fois, l'amitié, le monde, la retraite. J'avais essayé de tout, et tout m'avait été fatal. Repoussé par la société, abandonné par Amélie, quand la solitude vint à me manquer, que me restait-il?[26]

Same suffering and impossibility of a cure with Rousseau:

> Jamais je n'étais parfaitement content ni d'autrui ni de moi-même. Le tumulte du monde m'étourdissait, la solitude m'ennuyait; j'avais sans cesse beoin de changer de place, et je n'étais bien nulle part . . .[27]

The similarities between the maladies of René and his precursor are not to be denied. But more revealing still are the divergences between René's "mal du siècle" and the vague malady which continuously afflicted Rousseau.

We have already indicated that René considers himself the representative of a whole generation of young people afflicted by the same intellectual anguish whereas Rousseau is alone in his torment amidst an orderly and seemingly peaceful society. Another point to consider is the solitude of Jean-Jacques vs. the isolation of René. MM. Marius and Ary Leblond establish a capital difference between the

terms "isolement" and "solitude" according to Rousseau's usage:

> Ce que Rousseau appelle "solitude" est simplement l'art de participer à la société de telle façon qu'on en retire plus de bien que de désagrément. Prenons garde qu'il ne parle jamais de l'isolement, et toujours de solitude- il établit une difference essentielle entre les deux termes; il a écrit les rêveries du promeneur solitaire et non d'un isolé. . . . Solitude, chez Rousseau signifie seulement meditation et méditation dans la nature, apaisement, receuillement . . .C'est la solitude qui fera de lui une vraie force sociale.[28]

M. Leblond makes a point of emphasizing the social aspect of Rousseau's solitude - the more that man will be enriched on the inside, the more will he be ready to give generously of himself to others, says he. Leblond sees in Rousseau a precursor of the social theory of solitude which would be a cornerstone of the romantic doctrines of Lamartine and Hugo. He sees in the Rêveries a man who retires at a certain time from the society of his fellow men in order to think about their happiness. If in fact Jean-Jacques had broken off with the rest of humanity says Leblond, it was only to better serve its cause. Such a hypothesis is not easily accepted, Jean-Jacques' fierce egotism and his very pronounced misanthropy and anti-social sentiments making the theory seem rather ridiculous if not altogether false. But a bit of reflection does reveal that in certain of Rousseau's works, in La Nouvelle Héloïse for example, it is solitude and not isolation that the author is describing; in his great novel we find a charming solitude "à deux" far from civilization's corrupting and deteriorating influence. But in Rousseau's later works, the Rêveries and the last part of the Confessions, M. Leblond's theory finds little support; these works bear the imprint

of the bitter misanthropy of a sick man who feels himself the object of innumerable persecutions. The charming milieu of Clarens is replaced by drab, dreary and disheartening isolation. Certainly Chateaubriand's art does not in any way lend itself to such an interpretation of "solitude" - it is only the gray depressing type of "isolement" that one encounters everyhwere in his work.

As we have already indicated, René shares the Leiden of Werther - his isolation in the bosom of nature succeeds in sharpening his sensitivity and in transporting the already unstable being into a stae of deep melancholia. Consistently unfulfilled, René experiences true suffering in his condition:

> On m'accuse d'avoir des goûts inconstants, de ne pouvoir jouir longtemps de la même chimère, d'être la proie d'une imagination qui se hâte d'arriver au fond de mes plaisirs, comme si elle était accablé de leur durée; on m'accuse de passer toujours le but que je puis atteindre: hélas! Je cherche seulement un bien inconnu, dont l'instinct me poursuit. Est-ce ma faute, si je trouve partout des bornes, si ce qui est fini n'a pour moi aucune valeur?[29]

The same expression of unfulfilled desire can be found in Rousseau:

> Je trouvais en moi un vide inexplicable que rien n'aurait pu remplir, un certain élancement de coeur vers une autre sorte de jouissance, dont je n'avais pas d'idée et dont, pourtant je sentis le besoin . . .mon coeur, reserré dans les bornes des êtres, s'y trouvait trop à l'étroit, j'étouffais dans l'univers. J'aurais voulu m'élancer dans l'infini.[30]

But there is however an essential difference between what Jean-Jacques felt in his grasping for the infinite, in his "étouffement" in the universe, and the yearning of which René was possessed. For Jean-Jacques

the feeling was something in which he exalted, something which raised him to a state of spiritual communion with the forces of the universe. René, on the other hand, found nothing in his condition but a source of perpetual torment.

The exagerated importance of melancholia in Chateaubriand's work is expressed in a very precise fashion at the end of Atala which already basks in the dreary atmosphere which was to prevail in René:

> Puis, m'éloignant à grands pas, je m'écriai: 'Ainsi passe sur la terre toute ce qui fut bon, vertueux, sensible! Homme tu n'es qu'un songe rapide, un rêve douleureux; tu n'existes que par le malheur; tu n'es quelque chose que par la tristesse de ton âme et l'éternelle mélancholie de ta pensée.[31]

The importance of the concept of nature in French Preromanticism and Romanticism cannot be stressed enough - particularly in the case of Rousseau, generally acclaimed the innovator of the modern "sentiment de la nature." Not content to depict nature as a picturesque décor from a spectator's point of view, Rousseau describes himself, his whole being in communion with nature, and the harmonies between the autumn scenery and his melancholy soul; for Rousseau nature is steeped in emotion. Chateaubriand was definitely aware of the enrichment of the concept of natue which had been taking place since the second half of the eighteenth century, starting with Rousseau, and in his Génie, he devotes several pages to the defense of the modern concept of nature as opposed to mythological views which had formerly been widely espoused:

> . ... il était dur de ne voir que les aventures des Tritons et des Hérēides dans cette immensité des mers, qui semble nous donner une mesure confuse de la grandeur de notre âme, dans cette immensité

> qui fait naître en nous un vague désir de quitter la vie, pour embrasser la nature et nous confondre avec son auteur.[32]

In this passage, Chateaubriand's desire to embrace nature and to communicate with its creator decidedly show him to be the inheritor of Rousseau's doctrine. Nature plays an all-important role in the "Vague des passions" and he often describes it in fluid, nebulous terms in order to express the profundity, the immensity and immortality of the forces of the universe.

Chateaubriand is constantly searching for something unknown and mysterious hidden in the heart of nature - this is quite evident in his favorite natural images, i.e. forests and oceans. Chateaubriand's characters are haunted by the sounding cataracts, the rain dripping slowly on the leaves, the crackling autumn leaves.

The immensity of the universe is no less impressive for Rousseau. His Rêveries are the work of a man who feels that he is but a very minute part of the universe - but he does feel that he is a part of the physical universe and it is just this fact which separates his thoughts from Chateaubriand's. The latter could not find neither the harmony between his own existence and the physical universe around him nor the close ties between the human soul and the forces of nature. On the contrary, for Chateaubriand nature served only to deepen his feelings of sadness and to render him even more disconsolate and his suffering more acute. René furnishes an excellent example of the latter assertion:

> La solitude absolue, le spectacle de la nature, me plongèrent bientôt dans un état impossible à décrire . . .Sans parents, sans amis, pour ainsi

> dire seul sur la terre, n'ayant point encore aimé, j'étais accablé d'une surabondance de vie . . .Il me manquait quelque chose pour remplir l'abîme de mon existence: je descendais dans la vallée, je m'élevais sur la montagne, appelant de toute la force de mes désirs l'idéal objet d'une flamme future . . .[33]

For Jean-Jacques the case is completely different as the following passage indicates:

> Je sens des extases, des ravissements inexprimables à me fondre pour ainsi dire, dans le système des êtres, à m'identifier avec la nature entière.[34]

The Rêveries as well as Rousseau's fictional writings are full of this type of passage which shows that for Jean-Jacques nature never ceased to be a benefactress, a source of apeasement and especially a tranquilizing and calming force. She also represents:

> un asile, un refuge contre la méchanceté et la haine les ligues et les complots, bref un remède anti-social.[35]

René felt only more tormented in the heart of nature whereas Jean-Jacques sought to lose himself amidst natural wonders where he tried to unravel through close study some of the complexities of the universe.

Despite these very opposing views on the relations of the human spirit and the cosmic forces, there is still one aspect of nature where the views of Chateaubriand and his predecessor are analogous.

Rousseau, we have said felt extasies in identifying his own existence withthe whole of nature, i.e., in bringing himself closer to the creator of the universe. For Chateaubriand nature is steeped in religious sentiment as well. With Rousseau in particular one may

speak of a certain type of pantheism where the existence of the Supreme Being is confirmed by the orderliness and beauty of nature. It is a question of distinguishing the Divine Creator everywhere in nature which is done by Jean-Jacques, who:

> cherche Dieu parmi les arbres, les fleurs et les étoiles. Le sentiment religieux qui procède chez Rousseau d'un besoin de vérité et de justice est dédoplé par l'amour qu'il porte à la nature.[36]

When Jean-Jacques contemplates nature he is able to identify his own will with the Divine will. For Chateaubriand the religious sentiment serves as the link between the "vague des passions" and the "génie" of Christianity.

One can in fact conceive of the chapter "Du Vague des passions" as a circle, comprising the following elements: the melancholia of modern man which pushes him towards solitude in nature where he feels invaded by a religious sentiment, which in turn contributes to the original melancholia . This is evidently a closed circle whose elements are interchangeable.

In the domain of religious beliefs it is the differences of view held by the authors in question that are most striking. Firstly, Chateaubriand had little taste for Protestantism:

> Décidement le puritanisme n'est pas son fait. Les descendants de Guillaume Penn ne montrent 'ni sensibilité ni chaleur.' L'aspect même de leur ville est triste: point de tours, point de dômes . . .[37]

And Jean-Jacques of course is molded by the moralizing influence of his home town, the Calvinist stronghold of Genève.

Mr. Servais has very succinctly pointed out the main divergences which separates the Génie du christianisme from Rousseau's work:

> D'abord la religion de Chateaubriand est alimentée par des remords: il veut expier: nous sommes donc à l'opposé de Jean-Jacques, qui n'a jamais pu concevoir la notion chrétienne du péché. Ensuite, l'oeuvre de Chateaubriand, est avant tout une oeuvre d'art . . . Cette obsession du besoin de beauté, cette place donné à l'art, nous éloigne tout à fait de Rousseau. [38]

The religious sentiment with Rousseau and Chateaubriand can essentially be discussed on two levels; one speaks of a sentimental and esthetic faith as well as the social and moral implications of religion.

The basic idea that is shared by Jean-Jacques and Chateaubriand is the supremacy of sentiment in relgion. The part of Rousseau which Chateaubriand incorporates into his work is the sentimental, non-rationalist half; the influence of the sentimental, emotive Rousseau can be discerned in two chapters of the Génie in particular (V and VI of the first part) entitled "L'existence de Dieu prouvée par les merveilles de la nature," and "L'immortalité de l'âme prouvée par la morale et le sentiment." Rousseau's greatness according to Chateaubriand comes from his attempt to "stem the tide of raucous irreligion which the encyclopedists sought to promote."[39] What drew Chateaubriand primarily to this apostle of morality was the latter's "innate religiosity." One can readily see that Chateaubriand who is credited with restoring the Christian religion to a respected place in literature would easily recognize a kindred soul in Rousseau's quasi-Christian sentiments. Chateaubriand naturally went further than

merely linking nature with a vague natural religion - his originality lies in connecting it with Catholicism itself. For him religion is the true source of sensibility and enthusiasm in modern man. Rousseau, as the first chapter indicated, accepted formal religions only in so far as they were based upon sentiment and the cult of the heart. An apostle of natural religion, Jean-Jacques is chiefly characterized by the fervor with which he clings to the basic doctrines of Christ without formal adherence to the Christian faith. Rousseau attracts Chateaubriand by the force of his soul's aspiration to the Divine and his ardent inner sentiments.

Rousseau's natural religion is of course personified throught the Vicaire Savoyard who is not without resemblance to Père Aubry in Atala. According to the Vicaire Savoyard, man, who is gifted with freedom should make complete use of it and conduct himself according to the laws of nature and obey only his conscience, the infallible judge of good and evil. Mr. William Blanchard has very well understood the role of conscience in Rousseau's natural religion:

> Conscience is the voice of the soul, the passions are the voice of the body . . . Too often reason deceives us. We have only too good a basis for challenging her; but conscience never deceives us; she is the true guide of man. She is to the soul what instinct is to the body.[40]

Several critics have suggested that the idyllic tableau of the savages in Atala brings to mind Jean-Jacques' basic tenets.[41] The religion of the missionary is a primitive, rudimentary religion, without a church or dogmatic tradition. One simple sentence pronounced by the elderly Chactas focuses on the fundamental plan of Père Aubry,

Catholic priest as well as minister of nature:

> Après le sacrifice où il manqua pour moi que la fille de Lopez, nous nous rendîmes au village. Là règnait le mélange le plus touchant de la vie sociale et de la vie de la nature.[42]

In the Preface to this novel Chateaubriand himself states his purpose:

> J'en vis dans ce récit le tableau du peuple chasseur et du peuple laboureur, la religion, première législatrice des hommes, les dangers de l'ignorance et de l'enthousiasme religieux, opposé aux lumières, à la charité et au véritable esprit de l'Evangile, les combats des passions et des vertus dans un coeur simple, enfin le triomphe du christianisme sur le sentiment le plus fougueux et la crainte la plus terrible, l'amour et la mort.[43]

and more precisely in the story itself:

> Je ne leur ai donné aucune loi, je leur ai seulement enseigné à s'aimer à prier Dieu, et à espérer une meilleure vie. Toutes les loix du monde sont là-dedans.[44]

What is mostly sought after then is a harmonious balance between human institutions and the laws of nature. The following description of the Vicaire Savoyard, for example is applicable in more than one place to Père Aubry as well:

> . . .l'être humble et nu devant son Dieu; voici la contemplation intérieure, l'identification avec la nature entière, le sentiment d'une étroite solidarité avec le grand tout.[45]

Rousseau's natural religion comprises a warmth, fervor and enthusiasm which are lacking in most organized religions. On this count Chateaubriand most heartily agrees with his predecessor and in his Génie

(second part, third book, Chapter VIII) where he speaks of "la religion chrétienne considerée elle-même comme passion" he has nothing but laudatory remarks for Jean-Jacques:

> Non contente d'augmenter le jeu des passions dans le drame et dans l'épopée, la religion chrétienne est elle-même une sorte de passion qui a ses transports, ses ardeurs, ses soupirs, etc. Nous savons que le siècle appelle cela le fanatisme; nous pourrions lui répondre par ces paroles de Rousseau: Le fanatisme, quoique sanguinaire et cruel, est pourtant une passion grande et forte, qui élève le coeur de l'homme . . . au lieu que l'irreligion et en général l'esprit raisonneur et philosophique attache à la vie, efféminé, avilit les âmes, concentre toutes les passions dans la bassesse de l'intérêt particulier, l'abjection du moi humain et sape ainsi à petit bruit les vrais fondements de toute société.[46]

As religion is considered a passion by both writers in question it is not astonishing that in their respective writings the religious sentiment is often confused with and may replace sexual desire. Atala and Amélie are of course the most striking examples of this assertion. Even Atala's description evokes the bizarre combinatin of religious fervor and sexuality in the same creature:

> Les perpétuelles contradictions de l'amour et de la religion d'Atala, l'abandon de sa tristesse et la chasteté de ses moeurs . . . tout en faisait pour moi un être incompréhensible.[47]

Sexual desire is constantly struggling with religious belief in this quasi-savage creature. The conflict that takes place in Amélie's soul is even more intricate: afflicted by an unhealthy passion for her own brother she retires to a convent seeking peace and consolation. Monasteries in Chateaubriand's work we have said are symbolic of escape -

but the example of Amélie also shows how certain lingering passions in an individual may attach themselves to a new, but quite different object.

In Julie D'Etange Rousseau has skillfully created a voluptuous and sensual creature who is constantly occupied with the quest for virtue; even while seeking the luminous way of goodness and charity, she yields to her carnal instincts. Julie's case raises the problem of happiness vs. virtue which occupied so much of eighteenth century thinking; in his preface to the Nouvelle Héloïse M. Morel exposes the questions in a very precise manner:

> Le bonheur, c'est la volupté, le plaisir, des plus charnels aux plus sublimes . . . La vertu n'a plus la simplicité qu'elle avait à l'âge classique: elle est l'innocence et la bonté naturelle qui fleurissait en sentiments éclairés dans la vie sociale: c'est la conduite que dicte la raison réfléchie . . . Il ne s'agit donc de heurter deux forces simples . . . ni de faire triompher l'une ou l'autre, mais de les accorder.
>
> Ce que cherche Rousseau, c'est un équilibre stable, un ordre, un arrangement complexe capable de procurer bonheur et vertu.[48]

The result of Rousseau's desire to conciliate happiness and virtue is the idealized community of Clarens where the husband, the wife and the former lover realize a virtuous and happy existence "à trois."

Whatever the case may be for Rousseau, it is always virtue in the specific form of Christianity which triumphs in Chateaubriand's work when there is a conflict between man's natural aspiration and religious law. It is perhaps to his lack of faith in man's natural innate goodness that one may attribute the following convinction of Chateaubriand. In the preface of Atala he admits that:

> Je ne suis point comme Rousseau un enthousiaste des sauvages: . . . je ne crois point que la pure nature soit la plus belle chose au monde. Je l'ai toujours trouvée forte laide, partout ou j'ai eu l'occasion de la voir. Bien loin d'être d'opinion que l'homme qui pense soit un animal dépravé je crois que c'est la pensée qui fait l'homme. Avec de mot nature, on a tout perdu.[49]

The second aspect of religion, i.e. social and moral implications, also furnish some solid bases for comparison between Chateaubriand and his precursor. Chateaubriand's work may be considered as a sequel to the anti-intellectualist crusade of Jean-Jacques against the philosophes. M. Etienne speaks of the utility of religion in Chateaubriand's work:

> Jean-Jacques avait opposé les bienfaits de la religion aux effets destructifs et démoralisants de la philosophie; ses successeurs avaient repris son idée de l'utilité de la religion . . . On croit entendre Jean-Jacques quand on lit dans le Génie du christianisme des phrases comme celles-ci: . . .'Le christianisme est la source divine des grands principes modernes: liberté, égalité, fraternité' . . .[50]

In the last chapter of the Génie Chateaubriand has completely abandoned his previous conception of a sentimental and esthetic Christianity and has replaced it with a social and moral religion:

> Quel serait aujourd'hui l'état de la société, si le christianisme n'eût point paru sur la terre?' demande-t-il. La réponse doit être évidente: les Barbares n'auraient jamais été sauvés de leur propre corruption, l'enfanticide existerait toujours, l'esclavage n'aurait pas été aboli, les crimes affreux se commetraient et 'il en serait fait du genre humain.'[51]

The validity of Chateaubriand's thesis that all social and moral advantages of modern society may be attributed to the benefactions of Christianity is not at issue here; what is evident is that the social and moral connotations of religion emanate directly from the thoughts of Jean-Jacques for whom religion is engendered from a pressing need for justice and truth.

The "ideas" which Jean-Jacques exposed in his first Discours Chateaubriand has adopted as his own. Both dreamed of a rebirth of agriculture, a simple life in a simple rustic environment in a Golden Age that would mark the end of civilizations's corrupting influences. Rousseau, who was so fond of "herborizing" on the Ile de Saint Pierre insists heavily upon the importance of working the soil which was of course man's first profession.

In the Nouvelle Héloïse, having described the domestic economy at Clarens, Rousseau conveys through Saint-Preux his own notions on cultivation of the soil. His feeling is that man must work the soil with his own two hands in order to reap nature's treasures.[52] In Atala Chateaubriand expresses himself on this subject in a similar manner: he sees man and the earth upon which he dwells in marital relationship where man tills the soil and the earth blessing him with her bounty.[53] Both Chateaubriand and Rousseau desired the simple, peaceful, harmonious life close to nature far from the corruption of the cities. They decry the wrongdoings of enlightenment and "philosophy" and laud the contentment of primitive man.

Rousseau, we will see, believed in the "pure" theory of the good savage whereas Chateaubriand tempered this doctrine with a religious element. It is entirely comprehensible that for Rousseau, a believer in the innate goodness of man and the supremacy of instinct over reason, obedience to the laws of nature would be sufficent to render man happy. Chateaubriand, who also accepts the predominance of instinct over reason believes equally well in following the natural laws- except in the case where there is conflict between the natural human inclinations and religious ordonnace, then it is clearly the latter which must triumph.

One has only to examine certain passages of Atala such as the following to ascertain that what Chateaubriand desired most was the correction of savage life by religion:

> . . .J'admirais le triomphe du christianisme sur la vie sauvage; je voyais l'Indien se civilisant à la voix de la religion . . .[54]

and

> Ô charme de la religion. Ô magnificence du culte chrétien! Pour sacrificateur un vieil hermite, pour autel un rocher, pour église le désert, pour assistance d'innocents sauvages![55]

Chateaubriand's Utopia can be best described as a primitive type of Christianity where many of Rousseau's basic guidelines would nonethe less be followed; e.g. individual inclinations would be respected as much as possible, i.e. young people who prefer agriculture would be assigned to groups of laborers and those who have a more restless nature would be entrusted with sheepherding and the care of cattle. Everything including mode of dress would be regulated and the Golden Mean would

be observed throughout. The Christian republic is not strictly agricultural nor is it absolutely military nor is it deprived of the arts of commerce; it is, rather, a well balanced mélange of all these elements.[56]

The new Christians would be the happiest of people under this type of paternal rule; quarrels, arguments, concepts of property would be done away with. Abundantly supplied with the necessities of subsistance, enjoying the gratifying affections of family and fatherland and especially knowing the advantages of civilized living without having left the bosom of nature, and the charms of society without having lost those of solitude, their bliss and contentment would be of a kind yet unwitnessed on this earth.[57]

A capital distinction is here established between Rousseau and Chateaubriand's concepts: if Jean Jacques dreamed of a Golden Age, it was neither according to the Bible nor the Holy Scriptures that he envisioned the idealized existence of primitive man. It was always as a republican more than as a Christian that Rousseau decries the corruption of the cities and the liberal mores of his contemporaries. Chateaubriand, needless to say, remains first and above all a Christian.

It is because the comparison of the stylistic side of these writers must in places refer to their ideas and sentiments that we have reserved that discussion until this point. Rousseau knew well how to observe and describe nature, but, as has long been thought, his successors Chateaubriand and Bernardin de Saint Pierre have carried

his art to much further limits than he ever did: Sainte Beuve reminds us that Jean-Jacques manner of description was direct and simple whereas his disciples Bernardin de Saint Pierre and Chateaubriand useamore rare and exotic type of vocabulary to depict nature and add color and emotion where Jean-Jacques had only worked in light and shadow.[58] Aside from this difference in the art of description Rousseau and Chateaubriand have in common an appreciation for the profound and vast perspectives of nature, their favorite natural images being mountains, forest and oceans.

For Jean-Jacques man is a part of the "grand tout," but a minute part to be sure. The same is true for the element of time. Rousseau conceives of human life as occupying a very small instant in time. Alone in nature, feeling one with the universe, his soul in communion with the Divine Being, Jean-Jacques can conceive of neither time nor space, these elements are abolished in his mind.

Time however plays an important role in Chateaubriand's thought as he was able to distinguish between a "durée absolue" and a "durée progressive."[59] The "durée absolue" is time which doesn't change and exists forever - infinity, in other terms; this concept of time as pure existence belongs only to the realm of the Divine Being. Chateaubriand always had an ardent desire for this pure time; the "durée progressive" or human time, on the contrary, always inspired in him a profound melancholia, in reminding him of the brevity of human life and the rapidity of terrestrial existence.[60]

It would nonetheless be misleading to attribute only

negative characteristics to Chateaubriand's "durée progressive"; Chateaubriand held in high esteem the history of the human race and its artistic powers. He believes that by his accomplishments, artistic and otherwise, man can ultimately restore value to his brief and difficult existence. One must be careful not to misunderstand this point. If Chateaubriand believed in the perfectibility of the human, it was in charitable and pious acts that he saw the salvation of mankind - not in in scientific progress or in "enlightenment."[61]

Chateaubriand's appreciation for ruins and tombs is a natural consequence of his philosophy of time ; in his Génie he indicates that':

> Tous les hommes ont un secret attrait pour les ruines; ce sentiment tient à la fragilité de notre nature, à une conformité secrète entre ces monuments détruits et la rapidité de notre existence. Il s'y joint, en outre, une idee qui console notre petitesse, en voyant que les peuples entiers, des hommes quelque fois si fameux n'ont pu vivre cependant au delà du peu de jours assignés à notre obscurité.[62]

The melancholy inspired by ruins is softened by the somewhat morbid consolation they offer.

Rousseau did not escape the haunting influences of ruins any more than Chateaubriand did; for Jean-Jacques they represented nostalgic monuments for time gone by as well as sources of exaltation and spiritual elevation.

There remains one last subject in the domain of stylistics which should be touched upon, i.e. the art of autobiography.

Even at the moment when he steps out of himself so to speak,

and contemplates himself with lucidity we feel that Rousseau is not really breaking out of his shell and that he is only in quest of the happiness that once was his. He presents himself such as he believes himself to be but offers no judgment on his own psychology or his malady. Chateaubriand on the other hand, who depicts himself through Rene, a proud creature who takes joy in the analysis of his own ennui, does not hesitate to judge and condemn his hero at the end of the episode:

> Je vois un jeune homme entêté de chimères, ... qui sort pourtant aux charges de la société pour se livrer à d'inutiles rêveries . . . Que faites-vous seul au fond des forêts ou vous consumez vos jours, négligeant tous vos devoirs? . . . jeune présomptueux qui avez cru que l'homme ne peut suffire à lui-même, la solitude est mauvais à celui qui y vit pas avec Dieu . . .[63]

Here Chateaubriand is completely breaking through his own defenses; he contemplates himself with frightening clarity· hiss severe judgement and ultimate condemnation of René's chimeras and his "amour-propre" and egotistical presumptuousness are proof of the fact that the author had finally comprehended his own mania.

Not ever having sufficiently broken away from his inhibiting "moi" to attain such a degree of lucidity, Rousseau looks at himself and contemplates his existence but succeeds only in reveling in nostalgic reveries of happiness won and lost, the object of his daydream.

Chateaubriand has then surpassed Rousseau in this respect; he has freed himself of the burden of his mania on an intellectual level and shown himself more courageous than his predecessor whom he never ceased to hate nor to love.

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CHAPTER 6

BERNARDIN DE SAINT PIERRE AND CHATEAUBRIAND

Having seen the Rousseau-Chateaubriand relationship, we must now consider the influence of Bernardin de Saint Pierre on the Romantic movement and most particularly his influence on the work of Chateaubriand.

Lamartine was always the most grateful and devoted of Bernardin's followers among the Romantics, as his remarks prove:

> Voilà le triomphe de l'art sur l'esprit. Voltaire avait fait rire et sourire, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre avait fait prier et pleurer. Le siècle était à lui.[1]

and for Lamartine, Bernardin does not suffer in comparison with Chateaubriand andRousseau:

> Rousseau n'est pas bon, il n'est qu'éloquent. Ses déclamations charment l'esprit, mais ne touchent pas longtemps le coeur . . . Chateaubriand atteint quelquefois ce double terme de la beauté suprême de l'expression et de la sensibilité de l'âme. Mais il n'y reste pas. . . . il devient un rhéteur . . . Quant à ce Bernardin de Saint Pierre dans Paul et Virginie il n'a pas prétendu à dépasser la nature, mais à l'écouter et à l'égaler.[2]

The Bernardin - Chateaubriand relationship was not quite as successful as the Lamartine - Bernardin relationship. Bernardin, the older writer was jealous of the success of his younger contemporary, something which befalls even the greatest of men and which is not at all uncommon in the world of letters. To someone who had asked Bernardin,

circa 1810, whether he knew Chateaubriand, Bernardin replied:

> Non, je ne le connais pas. J'ai lu dans le temps quelques extraits du Génie du Christianisme; son imagination est trop forte.[3]

In fact, the two writers had certainly made each others' acquaintance after Chateaubriand's nomination to the Academy in 1811. Chateaubriand had at first had laudatory remarks for Bernardin's work, such as the following:

> Je reconnais tout d'abord que, dans ma première jeunesse, Ossian, Werther, les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, les Etudes de la nature ont pu s'apparenter à mes idées; mais je n'ai rien caché, rien dissimulé du plaisir que me causaient des ouvrages ou je me délectais.[4]

Chateaubriand, becoming annoyed at Bernardin's harsh criticism, changed his tone and did not hestate to retaliate. He described Bernardin as:

> un homme dont j'admire toujours le pinceau, Bernardin de Saint Pierre, manquait d'esprit et malheureusement son caractère était au niveau de son esprit. [5]

As cold as their personal relationship was, the similarities of their basic doctrines cannot escape even the most casual perusal of their works; to reinforce this notion, we would like first to examine some of Chateaubriand's major works and show in detail how each of them may be traced back to a similar one of Bernardin's, and secondly to point out the general and overall ressemblances of their doctrines.

The Essai sur les révolutions, Chateaubriand's first great work, is a mixture of historical studies and the author's personal sentiments: it is of crucial importance in the understanding of the development of the author as a thinker and writer. Sometimes defending the ideas of the Encyclopedists such as their denial of the immortality of the soul, sometimes reverting to the sentimental notions of Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, in those years Chateaubriand is attempting to define his own literary personality and his attitudes on life. He is much interested in social and moral issues in the vein of Rousseau and Bernardin. Chateaubriand was in poor circumstances at the time of the composition of the Essai; he was in London, forced to earn a living by tutoring and copying while he worked on his writings at night. He had contracted a disease during the campaign of 1794, and he was in poor health and believed that the end of his days was near. In this state of melancholia he explains to the reader that his goal is to assist the human race in their search for happiness.[6] The basic dilemma is whether happiness for the individual may be found in solitude or in society. He brings Bernardin's parable comparing life to climbing a high mountain: every step is full of danger and difficulty but at the end waits the reward of a magnificent view of the sky above and the land below. Similarly, one cannot pass through life without encountering frustration, worry, and pain; but from these torments can result a serene outlook on existence, free of error and prejudice, and the expectation of true happiness.

Chateaubriand is ready to treat his subject with perfect sang froid, free of passion, listening only to his conscience. Comparing his views to Bernardin's doctrines we find that the Pariah in the Chaumière Indienne had pronounced many of the same ideas on human happiness and adversity. Bernardin likewise has benevolent intentions in his work: he seeks to contribute to better understanding and the ultimate solution of social problems. In the dialogue between the Pariah and the English erudite, we hear how the Pariah has learned through adversity to find truth, to sustain the hostilities of men with serenity and patience and to help those less fortunate than himself.

> Instruit par le malheur, jamais je ne refuse mon secours à un plus malheureux que moi. Je tâche de rendre heureux ma femme, mon enfant. J'attends la mort à la fin de ma vie comme un doux sommeil à la fin du jour. Dans quel livre avez-vous puisé ces principes? demande le docteur "Dans la nature' répondit l'Indien . . . mais qui vous a appris à y lire? Le malheur reprit le Pariah.[7]

We can find the truth only if we search for it. The ideas which Chateaubriand introduces at the beginning of his Essai are likewise expressed in Bernardin's Chaumière Indienne. Included in the Essai is a chapter on "Aux Infortunés." Here Chateaubriand depicts in vibrant and heart-rending terms the wretched life of those rejected by the world. Although he is unable to entirely deliver them from their bitter situation he tries to offer them counsel on how to mitigate their sufferings and bear them more easily. Let the unfortunates of the world retire from an ungrateful society to the solitude of nature and enjoy many things overlooked by others. Although such

ideas find their example in Rousseau's thought, the form in which these views are expressed and especially the details are reminiscent of notions promulgated by Bernardin, who had been engaged in social questions before Chateaubriand and had as his motto the words off Virgil: miseris succurrere disco; "I teach to help the unfortunate." According to Chateaubriand the poor of the world are seen as beggars in wretched clothes in the midst of an affluent society:

> Chacun le regarde et le fuit. Il doit donc éviter les jardins publics, le fracas, le grand jour. Un jour il va s'asseoir au sommet d'une colline qui domine la ville et commande une vaste contrée. . . .Il voit éclater le réverbère à la porte de cet hôtel dont les habitants plongés dans les plaisirs ignorent qu'il est un misérable, occupé seul à regarder de loin la lumière de ses fêtes . . .il ramène ensuite ses regards sur quelque petit rayon tremblant dans une pauvre maison écartée du faubourg et il se dit: 'Là, j'ai des frères.'[8]

Even though Chateaubriand is describing the life of an outcast due to poverty and Bernardin is speaking of a religious outcast, the scene described above is strikingly similar to a scene in the Chaumière indienne where Bernardin has the Pariah describe his misfortunes.[9] Rejected by his fellow men because of his caste, he lives in solitude far from the rest of humanity. He dares to search for food only in the dark of night and after seeing the bustling humanity of the cities he returns to his secluded life:

> Je parcourais en liberté de grands quartiers solitaires et silencieux et il me semblait que toute la ville était à moi. Cependant l'humanité m'y aurait refusé une poignée de riz . . .[10]

Chateaubriand definitely shares Bernardin's views but he exposes them with greater force. The philosophical bent of his essay coupled with his personal embittering experiences as a poor student, shyly walking the streets of London, avoiding the crowds, serve to reinforce his images and render them more intense. If society rejects, and we turn to nature and the Divine Creator we will find ourselves and the hitherto undiscovered power of our own minds. Such notions can unquestionably be retraced to Bernardin. Besides the secluded life, Chateaubriand recommends to the unhappy oppressed beings, the study of nature, the plants and their relationship with humans :

> Je recommanderais particulièrement l'étude de la botanique comme propre à calmer l'âme en détournant les yeux des passions des hommes, pour le porter sur le peuple innocent des fleurs.[11]

Quite similar is Bernardin's idea:

> Je jetais les yeux sur les ouvrages de la nature qui parlait à tous mes sens un langage que ni les temps ni les nations ne peuvent altérer. Mon histoire et mes journaux étaient les herbes des champs et des prairies. J'y étudiais sans effort les lois de cette sagesse universelle, qui m'environnait dés le berceau.[12]

Chateaubriand is convinced that a man who follows his counsel must eventually find true happiness on earth. A simple, idyllic existence far from society is his ultimate goal; the "mal" which was later to afflict René is not yet present in Chateaubriand's work. The author is at this point convinced of the existence of true happiness. As we have previously indicated the Essai sur les révolutions is a work of Chateaubriand's youth; the ideas of modern man's discontent

with himself and the world will only appear in the work of the mature writer. As his thought evolves human happiness becomes for Chateaubriand a mere illusion. Nor are Chateaubriand's religious ideas at this point what they were to be later on; although he admits the existence of a Supreme Being he still doubts the immortality of the soul. Bernardin had likewise previously objected to the assertion of the philosophes that immortality of the soul is an invention of the lawgivers to assure the poor, in an afterlife, rewards which had remained unattainable for them in this life. For Bernardin the immortality of the human soul is engraved in man's heart by nature - this view is upheld and elaborated upon by Chataaubriand. He says that primitive man was not content to wander the wilderness and provide for the necessities of life; nature had implanted in his heart an undefined longing for the infinte and the extraterrestrial.

As we have seen before, Bernardin, in his youth, had often planned to found a "république idéale" whose citizens would live solely according to the laws of nature, where everyone would have total liberty. After he had seen two attempts, one in Russia and the other in the Ile de France, completely fail, he dropped the plan for the realization of this idea. In l'ARcadie which remains unfinished, he wished to convey his impressions of an ideal republic but he did not find any nation of his day to be a fitting example of such a republic. Advised by Jean-Jacques,[13] Bernardin contrasted the description of the ARcadian population to the inhabitants of a highly developed city and nation in order to better bring out the advantages of a more primitive life style.[14] He found three epochs in the cultural

history of every nation. The first epoch is characterized by barbarism the second by nature, and the third by corruption.

In comparing the Greek and French revolutions Chateaubriand describes their respective influences on Scythia and theFrench part of Switzerland. He gives a history of both nations from their beginnings to the present time according to their phases of development. He views the time of the revolution in both nations as the start of their downfall. The only difference between Chateaubriand's and Bernardin's descriptions of the various civilizations is that Chateaubriand demonstrates the tree epochs in the same nation whereas Bernardin chooses three separate nations for his contrast.[15]

Chateaubriand's thesis in the Essai, i.e. that history repeats itself, that the French Revolution did not produce anything new, that everything that happens has happened already before, had been discussed by Bernardin in the Preambule to the Arcadie.

> Lorsque un état est à son dernier degré
> d'élévation il est à son premier degré
> de décadence parceque les choses humaines
> commencent à déchoir dés qu'elles ont atteint
> le faite de leur grandeur.[16]

A distinct echo of this is found in Chateaubriand's Essai where he describes the course of world history:

> Les nations déchirées intérieurement par
> des révolutions partielles, après de longues
> guerres civiles et une anarchie affreuse,
> elles retourneront tour à tour à la barbarie.
> Durant ces troubles, quelques-unes d'entre
> elles, moins avancées dans la corruption
> s'élèveront sur le debris des premières pour
> devenir à leur tour la proie de leurs dissensions
> et de leurs mauvais moeurs: alors les premières
> nations, tombées dans la barbarie en émergeront
> de nouveau et reprendront leurs places sur le
> globe ainsi de suite dans une revolution sans terme.[17]

Chateaubriand had been occupied with the Génie du christianisme since 1795 and a first version appeared in 1799. In Paris he continued his studies and worked on his material, assisted by his friends Fontane and Joubert whose valuable advice he often followed. The final version appeared in 1802. Here he defended the Catholic religion against the prejudices and accusations of the eighteenth century. He tried to prove the superiority of the Christian religion over all other faiths, its great and ennobling influence on the human character: that it was not damaging to the arts and sciences and that on the contrary it was full of poetry and beauty.

One of the sources of the Génie has often and justifiably been thought to be Bernardin's Etudes de la nature. Descartes had derived the proof of the existence of God in a rational way starting from the observation "Je pense, donc je suis." Since Descartes' so-called proof had often been turned about to prove just the opposite of the original contention, Bernardin substitutes for the old argument a new and certain proof:

> Je substitue donc à l'argument de Descartes celui-ci, qui me paraît et plus simple et plus général: je sens donc j'existe. [18]

In the first chapter of the Génie Chateaubriand follows Bernardin's program; as there already are proofs by reason of the existence of a Supreme Being he brings a proof by sentiment of the same fact. For Chateaubriand as well as for his predecessor, the miracles of nature furnish irrefutable proof of the existence of God. All his works bespeak the existence of a divine creator, the wonders of nature were not brought about by blind accident.

Bernardin before Chateaubriand had, out of his own observations and those of other travelers, been able to learn about the life and habits of animals, and throught their instincts, "merveilleux et innés" tried to demonstrate a higher and almost moral power in them. As an example he brought the American beaver, whose amazing construction and engineering skills seemed to prove that it was fashioned by a higher power. Chateaubriand elaborates on the habits of the beaver in his first chapter, "Instinct des Animaux" and brings them as a proof of a higher force in nature. Another example of the intricacies of nature, the blessing of the Divine Creator, is furnished by the hen, who becomes as bold as an eagle if her offspring are in danger. This example is found in the Etudes as well. Both authors deal with the wanderings of enormous schools of fish which show further proof of the wise purpose of nature since each year the wanderings happen at the same time and in the same place providing an important means of sustenance to the poor inhabitants of coastal areas. Chateaubriand comes to the same conclusion that Bernardin had come to before him, i.e. that everything in the world is created to serve man and his needs. We find similar images of beauty and artistry in animal sounds and songs in both their writings. It is of course Chateaubriand's overwhelming imagination, the deftness of language and the superiority of the art of description that separates Bernardin de Saint Pierre from his successor. Chateaubriand does adapt Bernardin's theory of the harmonies of the animal, vegetable and human kingdoms as a basis for the causes finales argument. Just as his

predecessor did before him, Chateaubriand goes into quite detailed examples of different types of animals and birds to show that their physical environment is specifically made to agree with their bodily traits and habits. The wonderful balance of nature is as remarkable to Chateaubriand as it had previously been for Bernardin. Nature has created nothing in vain. A supreme wisdom was instrumental in creating a universe where even those things which seem to contradict the order of nature are made for a useful purpose which may be hidden from human reason. Both poets depict the awakening of nature and animals of springtime, the budding blossoming and producing of fruit for the need of man - all these are secrets from man and can be discerned as the bountiful gift of a good and merciful master. Chateaubriand, like Bernardin, speaks of the sentiment of patriotism, the love of man for the and on which he was born, a harmony between the soil and mankind. It must be admitted that Chateaubriand goes further on the subject of patriotism than Bernardin had before him: he attributes to Christianity the perfection of the sentiment of love for one's native land. With the pagans this sentiment was often the cause for violence when it was pushed to extremes. The Christian religion replaces all extremes with an enduring love for justice and therefore curtails and prevents all excesses.[19] In the Génie Chateaubriand does express a profound belief in the immortality of the soul, one of Bernardin's basic tenets. Bernardin uses the veneration of tombs as proof for the immortality of the soul; only the belief that the deceased still live in another world can induce mankind to show such respect for their earthly remains. The importance of tombs is, of course, well known

in the work of Chateaubriand. Both authors bring further proof in examples of even the most savage of tribes worshipping the dead, thus expressing belief in an afterlife and a supreme being. The all important trait of religion for both writers is that it is based on morality - it has an ennobling effect on man's charac. ter and tends to better and correct his nature. Chateaubriand finds great significance in ruins, especially ruins of Christian monuments and as is known, Bernardin had done preliminary work on this subject. Both speak of ruins as witness to the nothingness and transience of everything on earth and of the feelings which ruins inspire in spectators. Both speak of the sentiments of admiration and ignorance.

Reviewing the two works, in conclusion, we find that Chateaubriand received a great deal of inspiration from Bernardin's Etudes de la nature. In the first part, i.e. the demonstration of the existence of a Divine Power in the construction of the world, in the exploration of nature and its laws, Chateaubriand followed Bernardin quite closely. Bernardin had designed the system into which he brought these concepts, the direction and even the guiding principles. Chateaubriand has given impact and effect to these ideas through his inventive vocabulary and intense imagery. Bernardin had defended a Christian philosophy of a more general character whereas Chateaubriand opted specifically for Catholicism which he proclaimed the most sublme and noble of religions. Gustave Lanson speaks of this part of the Génie compared to Bernardin's theology when he writes;

> Le Dieu dont parle Chateaubriand n'est pas le Dieu abstrait d'une idéologie, c'est le Dieu vivant du Catholicisme, et cette différence est immense. Les Etudes et les Harmonies de la nature n'étaient que puériles, au lieu que le Génie du christianisme est

> puissant, car, du moment qu'il s'agit du catholicisme et non du déisme, la démonstration baroque devient une association d'idées singulièrement efficace . . .[20]

It would be misleading if not erroneous to omit the fact that Bernardin defended Christianity in a bold and daring way against materialism and other beliefs. In this respect Chateaubriand was greatly influenced by him and he deserves great credit for pushing this notion through to its ultimate consequences.

The works of Chateaubriand and Bernardin de Saint Pierre which have most often been compared to each other are Atala and Paul et Virginie. It must be explained that Atala was composed at a time when Chateaubriand's ideas were contrary to religion. His intention had been, when he was under the influence of Rousseau, to depict the life of the savages. When he saw that the missing "vraies couleurs" for his work did not allow him to continue it, he decided to travel to America to get a first hand impression. It is therefore that we find in Atala the battle of the human soul between virtue and passion and for Chateaubriand only the Christian religion had the efficacy of strenghtening the soul and restoring peace and serenity to it. After Chateaubriand's conversion, the work of course takes on the aspect of a biblical narrative in its utmost simplicity and clarity. The characteristic that Chateaubriand found most admirable in Bernardin's Virginie was that she

> meurt pour conserver une des premières vertus récommendées par l'Evangile.[21]

Indeed, in his preface as well as in the body of the work itself

Chateaubriand clearly outlines his intentions - to show the virtue and attributes of his religion, its effect upon mankind as the "première législatrice de l'homme." It is the same religious conflict that induces the tragedy in Paul et Virginie and Atala. Besides the general guiding principles similarities in detail abound; both episodes are characterized by simple plots and few characters, the background of Paul et Virginie expressed by Chateaubriand as :

> une certaine morale mélancolique, qui brille dans l'ouvrage et qu'on pourrait comparer à cet éclat uniforme que la lune répand sur une solitude parée de fleurs.[22]

The quiet, harmonic landscape is well described by Bernardin at the beginning of the episode; Chateaubriand starts out with a description of the American forest that serves as a background to his story. The mode of narration in the two works can well be compared - in Atala the story is told by the aged Chactas and in Paul et Virginie it is the Vieillard who recounts all that has happened. Chactas and the Vieillard further resemble each otherin that both men were prototypes of understanding of human nature through many years of experience; they both thad the opportunity to compare the life style of different nations and both had come to the same conclusion that the only way to happiness is the simple life in natue following the laws of religion. Unlike Chactas however, the Vieillard is not the central character in the intrigue - he is mostly a spectator telling a story as he has seen it, not as he had lived. it. Similar descriptions of the effect of love on the respective heroes, Paul and Chactas, are also to be compared. Atala seeks refuge from her passions in the Christian religion, the

Mme de la Tour advises her daughter to do. After Virginie's death the Vieillard tries to help Paul in his misfortune - he shows him that any man, whatever his station in life may be, must die at the end. Similar consolation is offered to Atala on her deathbed by Père Aubry. In Conclusion, besides the general contrast of corrupt life in civilization and the harmonic existence in nature, Chateaubriand follows Bernardin's novel on many minute details: the incest theme is found in Atala as well as in Paul et Virginie , the idea of using natural forces such as storms to reflect human passions, the physical similarities between the respective heroines as well as their fanaticism, life in small communities, division of labor, etc. are only several examples of Chateaubriand's parallels with Bernardin's work. On a more subtle note, it may be said that only in his masterpiece does Bernardin turn to what may be called "pessimism" and in so doing, opens the door for the incoming nineteenth century.[23]

Our discussion of Bernardin de Saint Pierre and Chateaubriand so far has been comprised of a comparison of their respective individual works and the similarities of themes and characters presented in these works: a comparison of the general doctrines of these two authors does present certain hardships because of the vastness of Chateaubriand's work and the countless conflicts within his philosophy. But certain similarities in the main trends of their thoughts may nonetheless be delineated. We may be aided by breaking down our discussion into two parts; firstly, we may study the all-important role of sentiment which served as a guide for both Chateaubriand and Bernardin and then we may analyze some of the social and political ideas which the authors shared.

In the "Première Partie, livre sixième," of his Génie Chateaubriand speaks of "l'immortalité de l'âme, prouvée par la morale et le sentiment" which immediately suggests the supremacy of sentiment and instinct over reason and intelligence and the importance of these notions to Chateaubriand's thesis, i.e., proof of the immortality of the soul. The various subtitles of this part of the Génie, e.g., "Désir du bonheur dans l'homme," "Du Remords et de la conscience," "De Quelques objections," "Danger et inutilité de l'Athéisme," "Bonheur des justes," are strikingly similar to certain chapters in Bernardin's Etudes and Harmonies de la nature. Chateaubriand as Bernardin before him recognizes man's constant quest for happiness and fulfillment. The quest is never quite completed since there is something unique in man, something which is lacking in other living creatures, a certain longing for the infinite in time and space which can be represented in its perfection only by the notion of the Divinity. But this notion remains vague and obscure- if man could obtain a distinct view of this perfection he would scorn it because his nature is to seek new contentment once his previous quests and desires have been satisfied. So it is that definite understanding of the Supreme Power remains constantly veiled. Animals, unlike humans are able to realize their supreme happiness immediately. Man is the only creature who looks to the supernatural for perfection and does not feel complete unto himself. These notions may be retraced to similar ones expressed by Bernardin in La Chaumière indienne. It is there that Bernardin offers the analogy of the eyelid which blocks out the excess light that would be harmful to man; so has the Divine

Being left certain secrets of the universe inaccessible to human understanding. Bernardin believed, as did Chateaubriand that it is his longing for the infinite, that separates man from animal.

Chateaubriand evokes many of Bernardin's doctrines when he speaks of certain of the sentiments, namely coscience and remorse as further proof of the immortality of the soul. The remorse which follows the commission of a wrong as well as the satisfaction which accompanies virtuous behavior, both "voix intérieure (s)" must necessarily be indicative of a Divinity which has instilled in man an innate sense or right and wrong.[24]

Chateaubriand goes on to answer the objections of the Atheists as Bernardin before him had done and just like his predecessor he believes that man is born with an intuitive feeling and appreciation for the existence of a Divine Power:

> Mais d'ailleurs, on peut soutenir, que l'enfant a du moins l'instinct de son Créateur.[25]

Man's religious sentiment and his desire for happiness through a closer communication with the Divine is then the basic sentiment to both Bernardin's and Chataaubriand's doctrines.

One of Chateaubriand's strongest arguments of the virtues of religion as opposed to Atheism in fact is based on religion's ability to touch the sentiments of man's heart:

> La religion tire ses raisons de la sensibilité de l'âme des plus doux attachements de la vie, de la piété filiale, de l'amour conjugal, de la tendresse maternelle.[26]

One of the main functions of Chateaubriand's Génie is the connection of the "passions du coeur" to the great tableaux of nature which he so skillfully accomplishes. He does this to describe the aesthetic side of the Christian religion and the importance of architectural constructions, i.e., monasteries, religious monuments, etc. This part of his work basks in an atmosphere of mysticism; the fascination of tombs, graves, etc. all respond to man's original quest for happiness and his longing for the infinite. Chateaubriand, like his precursor, dwells on the strong connection between the marvels of nature and human sentiment; this rapport he entitles "Harmonies" (which should not be confused with Bernardin's definition of the same word). Chateaubriand says that man's innate sense of religion has always guided him in the choice of sites for religious monuments, such as monasteries.[27] The convent to which Amélie retreats in fact is surrounded by sharp cliffs jutting out into the sea and at night alone in her room she finds relief and solace listening to the sound of the waves breaking on the rocks. The sentiment de la nature in Bernardin's work is of course best described in Paul et Virginie where the natural environment plays such a pivotal role in the sentiments of the protagonists. In this part of the Génie Chateaubriand discusses the importance of tombs and ruins. The following passage in fact, which speaks of the importance of ruins is very similar to one which is found in Bernardin's Etudes:

> Tous les hommes ont un secret attrait pour les ruines. Ce sentiment tient à la fragilité de notre nature, a une conformité secrète entre ces monuments détruits et la rapidité de notre existence.[28]

and a similar passage from Bernardin's Etudes:

> Mais nous avons encore en nous un sentiment plus sublime qui nous fait aimer les ruines indépendamment de tout effet pittoresque, et de toute idée de sécurité; c'est celui de la Divinité, qui se mêle toujours à nos affections mélancoliques, et qui en fait le plus grand charme.[29]
>
> Les ruines ou la nature combat contre l'art des hommes, inspirent une douce mélancolie. Elle nous y montre la vanité de nos travaux, et la perpétuité des siens.[30]

The attractions of the ruins are based for both Chateaubriand and Bernardin on man's feeling of the rapidity of his existence. and his passage on Earth and the eternity of nature. They are based very much on the sentiment of melancholia which is so crucial to Chateaubriand's doctrine and which had been discussed by Bernardin as well. Bernardin's concept of bonheur négatif is very important for Chateaubriand as well. Although he does not designate it under any specific name, it consists of finding happiness by comparison of one's own situation with that of someone else in worse circumstances. The delight which René was to find in reveling in his melancholia was originally introduced by Bernardin in his Etudes and the fascination which ruins and tombs hold for modern man are based on his nostalgia for time gone by, extinct civilizations, and his appreciation for the eternity of nature and its creator. The adoration of tombs even in the most primitive of societies furnished for both Bernardin and his successor further proof of the immortality of the soul.

The object of Chateaubriand's Génie is of course the proof of the existence of the Deity through the wonders of nature:

> Toujours fidèle à notre plan, nous écarterons des preuves de l'existence de Dieu et de l'immortalité de l'âme, les idées abstraites, pour n'employer que les raisons poétiques et les raisons de sentiments c'est-à-dire les merveilles de la nature et les évidences morales.[31]

Throughout this section he follows pretty much the same pattern that Bernardin had followed in the Harmonies and especially in the Etudes de la nature which also have as their guiding principle the proof of the Divine existence through causes finales.[31]

> Mais quel hasard a pu contraindre une matière désordonnée et rebelle à s'arranger dans un ordre si parfait?[32]

asks Chateaubriand of those who would contend that the orderliness of the universe is the result of mere chance. It must however be admitted that Chateaubriand's arguments are more sophisticated than Bernardin's had been, not only because they do not lapse as often into sentiment and effusive rhetoric, but also because Chateaubriand approaches the subject as a philosopher and not so much as a moralist. He speaks for instance of the different seasons of the year which do not disappear but perpetually move on to different parts of the globe; this is where he brings in the notions of "durée absolue" and "duree progressive:" which have previously been discussed. It is because everything is controlled and coordinated by the Divine Creator that the elements of the universe stay so perfectly in balance and function so harmoniously.[33]

The following subsections of this part of the Génie are so strikingly similar to Bernardin's notions that even their titles sound like the various subdivisions of the Etudes and the Harmonies.

In "Organisation des animaux et des Plantes," Chateaubriand points out how animals and plants are specifically designed to adapt to their respective environments; he also explains the inner constructions of animals, the mechanisms that so perfectly control the perching and flying of birds, the way that fish adapt to light and heavy water, the intricate process of plant germination, etc. These descriptions are very close to some of Bernardin's naturalist's observations and the conclusion which Chateaubriand would have us reach could just as well have been described by **his** predecessor:

> Or, si tout était le produit du hasard, les causes finales ne seraient-elles pas quelquefois altérées? . . . Jamais une méprise, jamais un accident de cette espèce dans l'aveugle nature? De quelque manière que vous jetiez les dès il ameneront toujours les mêmes points? Voilà un étrange fortune! Nous soupçonnons qu'avant de tirer les mondes de l'urne de l'éternité, elle a secrètement arrange les SORTS.[34]

And if there are some so called "monsters" or imperfect creatures in nature, they too too have been placed there with a Divine purpose, i.e.

> Pour nous apprendre ce que c'est que la création sans [Dieu].[35]

The first of the causes finales then is the organization of all living creatures into well-ordered systems and networks which cannot be the product of coincidence. Next, Chateaubriand examines the instincts of animals and, in some of his arguments, comes quite close to the emotional rhetoric upon which Bernardin's system relied so heavily. He believes for example that there is a certain "harmony" between the various sounds made by different animals and their

physical surroundings:

> Le rugissement du lion, fort, sec,
> âpre, est en harmonie avec les sables
> embrasés où il se fait entendre, tandis
> que le mugissement de nos boeufs charme
> les échos champêtres de nos vallées . . .[36]

It seems that in the latter assertion Chateaubriand has gone a bit too far, much in the same manner as his predecessor. Next Chateaubriand examines the intricate process of nest-building and bird migration which are both proof of a divine design in nature. The migration of both land and aquatic birds, says Chateaubriand is there for the service of man - it was by the migrations of these birds that laborers in ancient times were able to determine the exact passage of time. Everything in nature is formed to facilitate its function and to fit into a specific physical environment - the color of birds is adapted to the part of the world they inhabit, etc. Then he paints the famous tableau of the night he spent in the deserts of the New World and the intimate contact between the human being and his Divine Creator in the heart of nature.

As the last of the proofs of the existence of a Supreme Being through the wonders of nature Chateaubriand speaks of the marvelous and intricate body with which man has been endowed. Here he cites Cicero and Galin the physician who wonder at the beauty and intricacy of the human body.

The causes finales part of the Génie ends with an impassioned tribute to the instinct of patriotism in man which is a cornerstone of Bernardin's doctrine as well. Because of their love for their

native soil men hesitate to populate areas of the earth unknown to them, thus nature has provided for even demographic distibution over the entire globe. Chateaubriand considers very fundamental the ties that exist between man and the earth he cultivates; he insists that the Christian religion is solely responsible for restoring the quality of measure to this love of country which was many times the cause for hostility among peoples:

> Ce sentiment a produit des crimes chez les anciens, parce qu'il était poussé à l'excès. Le Christianisme en a fait un amour principal, et non pas un amour exclusif; avant tout, il nous ordonne d'être justes . . .[37]

It is significant that in the section on causes finales the work of the Christian apologist seems to describe a religion based on the wonders of natue and the laws of the universe; it is precisely because of this that this part of Chateaubriand's work most closely ressembles the doctrines of Bernardin and Jean-Jacques Rousseau who espoused the ideal of a natural religion. In other parts of the Génie Chateaubriand certainly remains closer to the formal traditional views of Catholicism in depicting the rites, rituals and dogmas which Rousseau and Bernardin did not find indispensable to a true communication with the Supreme Being. Chateaubriand, like Bernardin before him, believed that religion was a social necessity:

> Cependant il faut une religion, ou la société périt.[38]
>
> La société ne peut se soutenir qu'en s'appuyant sur l'autel.[39]

Religion is the main prop of society for Chateaubriand but here he did not have in mind the loose, natural religion which Bernardin had depicted in his works. Let us remember that Bernardin called for withdrawal from the corruption of the cities into the heart of nature, where governed by the natural laws, man would achieve peace with himself, and his fellow man and acquire a more intimate rapport with his creator. Chateaubriand's ideal society as we have previously described is an idealistic tableau of primitive Christianity. For him, nature and the natural life are laws checked by the dictates of Christian belief. He says for example:

> Il y a dans les choses humaines deux espèces de nature placées, l'une au commencement, l'autre à la fin de la société. S'il en était ainsi, l'homme en s'éloignant toujours de son origine, serait devenu une sorte de monstre; mais, par une loi de la Providence, plus il se civilise, plus il se reproche de son premier état: il advient que la science au plus haut degré est l'ignorance, et que les arts sont la nature.[40]

For Chateaubriand it is the latter "nature" or "nature de la societe" which is the superior,

> le génie en [de la société] est l'instinct, et la vertu l'innocence, car le génie et la vertu de l'homme civilisé ne sont que l'instinct et l'innocence perfectionnés du sauvage.[41]

Chateaubriand is aware of the corruption brought about by civilization but he is nonetheless strongly convinced that mankind's progress has been largely due to the advance of civiliaation.[42]

The ideal society for him is of course the one reflected in Atala where man may enjoy all the benefits of civilization in an agrarian existence because of his adherence to Christian dictates.

It is quite interesting that the contradiction between the misdeeds and the benefits of civilization furnishes proof for Chateaubriand of man's original sin. Even a cursory glance at all the different elements of the universe assures us that by a general law all the integral parts, interior and exterior of the universe are in perfect rapport with one another. The celestial bodies accomplish their revolutions in perfect unity, one single globe provides both heat and cold. In the animal world the same general law prevails-their ideas are always in accord with their sentiments, their sentiments are always the same as their "reason." [43]

But there is one creature on earth who is an exception to this law, namely, man. [44] When man has reached the highest degree of civilization he is at the bottom rung of morality. If he excels in the sciences, his imagination decreases, if he is engrossed in the arts, his reason must suffer:

> son coeur profite aux dépens de sa tête,
> et sa tête au dépens de son coeur. [45]

It is reasonable to believe that man in his original design ressembled the rest of creation, i. e. that he constituted the perfect harmony between sentiment and reason. [46] Modern man however, is a contradiction to nature; he may be compared to a demolished palace which has been rebuilt from its ruins. Certain parts are sublime, others hideous. Modern man is the epitome of confusion, instability, and disorder. This point of view bears not even the slightest resemblance to Bernardin's basic philosophy, i. e. that man is good and that it is society which corrupts him. Because of Chateaubriands accepatance of the doctrine

of original sin and all of its ramifications, we find much pessimism in his ideas on the ideal form of government. He feels that a single ruling personality represent the least of the evils of any type of govennment because he would be less liable to cause the harm that any aggregation of mortals would be certain to bring on.[47] Nor can the mass society be educated into voluntary charity; there is no remedy for this shortcoming in man but there is solace offered by adherence to the Gospel. Through love, understanding, tolerance and generosity, man may ultimately find his burden easier to bear.

Bernardin, it will be remembered, opted for a harmonious government where all the branches would balance each other out in perfect equilibrium. His is of course a much more optimistic outlook on society than was Chateaubriand's. This is evident by the great emphasis that he put on education and training the young with the right values from the start. This he felt would turn them into useful and productive citizens and would help createa a society beneficial to all. Chateaubriand does not really approach this subject of reevaluation of the educational system. He is much more involved in his own personal situation and in general, his views are confined to egotistical considerations.

One last point may perhaps be made in comparing the "formation" of Chateaubriand and his predecessor; currently one speaks of "paysages interieurs" as having literary significance. If this is the case, we may contend, not unjustifiably, that both Bernardin and Chateaubriand are greatly the products of their Norman and Breton soils respectively. Both their writings bear the traces of this early influence as well as the marks of the seasoned travellers which they were later to become. The distant and exotic landscapes they

both describe and which has usually been the main connector tying them together as the originators of exoticism in French literature are certainly not the only things their works have in common. Both their writings demonstrate that the authors were practical and pragmatic statesmen as well as romantic daydreamers. The underlying differences in their personalities which is reflected in their work stems from the intensity of Chateaubriand's religious passion along with his greater artistic ability and above all, his remaining from the first to the last, a true aristocrat.

The comparison between Chateaubriand and Bernardin de Saint Pierre cannot be abandoned without a word on the art of description which they, together with Rousseau, the founder, had bequeathed to the nineteenth century. In his art of envisaging nature as a mirror of human emotion, Bernardin has carried on the Rousseauistic tradition and taken it a step further; he has added the infinite details of form and color that the original model lacked. In so doing, Bernardin became the predecessor of not only Chateaubriand but of Theophile Gautier and Pierre Loti as well. But there is a difference between Bernardin's and Chateaubriand's art which must not in any way be underestimated. Chateaubriand's language is distinguished by a new spirit, an almost magical enthusiasm and power. which Bernardin had only sporadically touched upon. The lyricism which is so rich in Chateaubriand's case and which makes him a true Romantic is almost entirely absent from Bernardin's work.

Even if Chateaubriand's mastery and singularity of vision eluded Bernardin, it is to the latter's credit that his works appeared at a time when the great majority adhered to ideas quite different from

those presented in his writings. The change could not come suddenly - it was prepared for by the French Revolution and its after effects. The way was then paved for Chateaubriand's work. Time was right for it, it had been expected, and circumstances assured its great success.

In a more general way, Bernardin's bequest of themes exploited by nineteenth century writers can be summed up as his renewed interest in the "sentiment du moi," the quest of the soul for the infinite, the notion of pure love and what he is best known for, the interest in distant and exotic landscapes.

NOTES

1. Lamartine, Alphonse de. "Bernardin de Saint-Pierre ," in Cours Familier de Littérature, 1856-69, v. 24, p. 591

2. Ibid., p. 692.

3. Vincens, Cécile. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre par Arvède Barine. (Paris: Hachette, 1891), p. 184.

4. Chateaubriand, François Auguste-René de. Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe. (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1951), v. I, p. 417.

5. Ibid., p. 201.

6. Chateaubriand, F. Oeuvres Complètes. (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1861), v. II, p. 271.

7. Saint-Pierre, Jacques Henri Bernardin de. Oeuvres Complètes. Ed. Louis Aimé-Martin. (Paris: Méquignon-Marvis, 1818-1820), v. VI, p. 263.

8. Chateaubriand, F. Oeuvres Complètes, v. I, p. 507.

9. Lusch, Wilhelm. Chateaubriand in seinem Verhältnis zu Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. (Heidelberg: Huber, 1912), p. 16.

10. Saint-Pierre, J. H. Bernardin de. Oeuvres Complètes, v. VI, p. 277.

11. Lusch, W. op. cit., p. 20.

12. Saint-Pierre, J. H. B. de. Oeuvres Completes, v. VII, p. 10. (L'Arcadie)

13. In the Préambule to L'Arcadie (O.C., v. VII) Bernardin describes the circumstances that brought about the conception of this work. One afternoon, while he and Jean-Jacques were relaxing in the Bois de Boulogne Bernardin mentioned to him the idea of writing about a perfect republic. Bernardin said, "Pourquoi vous-même, avec tant d'amour pour le bonheur des hommes, n'avez-vous pas tenté de former une république heureuse? J'ai connu bien des hommes de tous pays et de toutes conditions, qui vous auraient suivi." To which Jean-Jaques answered, "Oh! j'ai trop connu les hommes!" and after a moment's reflection said, "Je vous ai prié plusieurs fois de ne me jamais parler de cela." (V. VII, pp. 67-8). After this Bernardin goes into a rather lengthy description of the ideal republic of Arcadia which he had in mind to describe. Jean-Jacques was very pleased with the outline that Bernardin presented him with and it was often the subject of their discussions (p. 73). Jean-Jacques told Bernardin that to further emphasize the happiness of the Arcadians, Bernardin should include in his epic the stories of other civilizations as well. "De plus il faut opposer à l'état de

nature des peuples d'Arcadie, l'état de corruption d'un autre peuple, afin de faire sortir vos tableaux par des contrastes." (p.73) The two other republics that Bernardin would choose are ancient Egypt which represented a civilization already in decline, after an excess of corruption brought about in turn, by excesses of enlightenment. The other civilization, i. e. the primitive one which has not benefited from human progress, would be represented by ancient Gaul.

14. Saint-Pierre, J. H. Bernardin de. Oeuvres Complètes, v. VII, p. 52.

15. Ibid., p. 35.

16. Lusch, W. op. cit., p. 30.

17. Chateaubriand, F. Oeuvres Complètes, v. I, p. 611 (Essai).

18. Quoted by Lusch, op. cit., p. 84.

19. Chateaubriand, F. Oeuvres Complètes, v. VI, pp. 269-270.

20. Lanson, Gustave. Histoire de la littérature française. (Paris: Hachette, 1923), p. 897.

21. Chateaubriand, F. Le Génie du Christianisme, v. II, p. 237.

22. Ibid.

23. Maury, Fernand. Etude sur la vie et les oeuvres de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. (Paris: Hachette, 1892), p. 637.

24. Chateaubriand, F. Le Génie du Christianisme, v. I, p. 202.

25. Ibid., p. 208.

26. Ibid., p. 214.

27. Ibid., v. II, p. 34.

28. Ibid., p. 40.

29. Saint-Pierre, J. H. Bernardin de. Oeuvres Complètes, v. V, pp. 82-83. (Etudes).

30. Ibid., p. 87.

31. Chateaubriand, F. Le Génie du Christianisme, v. I, p. 151.

32. Ibid., p. 152.

33. Ibid., pp. 153-154.

34. Ibid., p. 157.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., p. 161-162.

37. Ibid., p. 190.

38. Chateaubriand, F. Oeuvres Complètes, v. II, p. 267. (Essai.)

39. Ibid., v. I, p. xxxviij. (Preface to Essai.)

40. Chateaubriand, F. Le Génie du Christianisme, v. II, p. 33.

41. Ibid., p. 34.

42. Chateaubriand, F. Oeuvres Complètes, v. I, p. 307. (Essai)

43. Chateaubriand, F. Le Génie du Christianisme, v. I, p. 124.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., p. 125.

46. Ibid.

47. Spring, Henry Powell. Chateaubriand at the Crossways; a Character Study Analyzing the Non-literary Sources of Chateaubriand's opinions expressed in the Essai sur les Révolutions. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924), p. 35.

CONCLUSION

This study has as its motivation the reexamination and elucidation of a literary personality who has suffered by both the misjudgments of the critics of our time as well as by the erroneous impressions he gave his own contemporaries.

It must be made clear that we have not sought to "exonerate" Bernardin de Saint Pierre in any way; our guiding principle in this research was solely to examine, as the title suggests, the authenticity of the subject. We approached the problem of Bernardin's authenticity on two distinct levels; first, we considered his authenticity as a transitional writer between Rousseau and the Romantic movement of the new century, and secondly, his authenticity in his own work, i. e. how well he lived the principles which he advocated.

In reference to Bernardin as a transitional writer, this study investigated most specifically his literary kinship with Rousseau and Chateaubriand.

In the eighteenth century, ideas such as man's humanity, his innate benevolence, his capacity to feel for others and above all, his ability to form his own moral judgments were monnaie courante of the day. These notions were widely investigated in the works of the scientists and philosophes, including Rousseau. But what Bernardin has taken specifically from the latter's ideas is the concept of religious sentiment.

Jean-Jacques' Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard, his Lettres écrites de la montagne and other works express the basic tenets of the new natural religion. There is in the universe a moving force which, being wise and good, is not responsible for any of the evils, physical or moral, which have befallen modern man. It is man's vices, a destructive social order which are responsible for these evils. Furthermore, man is a being composed of two "substances" so to speak; his spiritual or moral substance, by far the superior, is the one which is endowed with liberty and enables man to follow his conscience, the only true guide to a happy life, governed by the natural laws of the universe. Always inspired by a deeprooted sense of justice, Jean-Jacques further believed in the existence of a life beyond this one, where any inequities would ultimately be rectified.

Jean-Jacques never attempted to prove the existence of a Divine Creator through the order and beauty of creation, deeming most of his contemporaries incapable of such intuitive reasoning. This is a task which he was to leave to his most devoted disciple Bernardin. Since Diderot, Helvétius, and d'Holbach resorted to scientific attacks on religion, Rousseau's disciple felt the necessity of arming himself with scientific facts in order to uphold the opposing doctrine. As the philosophes had done before him, Bernardin divided his erudite study into the triple question of man, God and the Universe, but of course, he did just the opposite of what his adversaries had done; he left the most important part to the Divinity. Bernardin upheld the innate benevolence of nature and its

boundless provisions for the creatures it engenders. His sentiment, his secret instinct above all, was what proclaimed for him the existence of the Supreme Power and the immortality of man's soul.

Bernardin takes then from Rousseau's doctrine the superiority of man's sentiment over reason, the notions of liberty and conscience, the concept of agrarian life and the sentiment of nature, and assembles these into a loosely constructed edifice which he turns into a causes finales argument for the existence of a Divinity. His mark of originality remains in his trying to prove the existence of a Supreme Power in a "scientific" way.

Some of the elements he passed on to Chateaubriand and the Romantic generation are his own legacies from the ideas of Rousseau; namely, the enlargement of the concept of nature and the "modern" religious sentiment.

It was in their observations of nature in rapport with human sentiment that Bernardin and Jean-Jacques left to Romanticism one of its principle heritages. As our study explained, Bernardin went even further in his study of the relationship of the natural environment and man's "état d'âme" than his predecessor had done.

Lyric poetry, the crux of budding romanticism, was, after all, to have its sources in the relationship of Man, God and the Universe. Both Bernardin and Jean-Jacques had shown love for the little man who represented the greatest number of humanity. They had equally done their share to show the relationship between God and the Universe and Bernardin had been principally responsible for revealing,

through his Exotic Eden that he described, the ties between man and his natural environment. He was almost singlehandedly responsible for introducing into French literature the notion of exoticism and the enrichment of French literary vocabulary describing natural scenes. This was to be very significant to the work of Chateaubriand and Loti, among others.

In his quest to rid religion of all dogman and rigid tradition, Bernardin shows himself to be the inheritor of the natural religion of Rousseau; in his enthusiasm and fervor for religious sentiment, he paves the way for the revival of Christianity that Chateaubriand was shortly to bring about.

Besides the religious sentiment, several of the other human sentiments described by Chateaubriand find their root in the work of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. The desparation, melancholia, the "tiredness with life," the alienation, that were so characteristic of the budding Romantic hero were all described by and poeticized by Bernardin before Chateaubriand made them famous. We have described in Chapter 6 how Bernardin attached great importance to the pleasure of tombs and ruins, and the feelings of melancholia and solitude. The belief that a soul may be enriched by its own suffering was expressed by Bernardin before Chateaubriand used it to create the personality of René. Chateaubriand is so often credited with founding these psychological states of mind based on egoism, but many of them had been described, in a more systematic manner, by Bernardin in his Etudes,

As an artist Bernardin may be said to have, in a sense, continued the spirit of individualism statted by Rousseau; like his predecessor, Bernardin always saw himself apart from the rest of society - - he always considered himself different from other men. His and Rousseau's egotistical self-contemplation is one of their greatest contributions to the character of the Romantic Hero.

There can be no doubt then about Bernardin's authenticity as the inheritor and continuer of the Rousseauistic tradition; nor is there any doubt that most of the ideas found in the early Romantic works of Chateaubriand and others find their roots, if not their inspiration, in the thoughts of Bernardin.

There is a weakness which has been at the crux of much of the unkind criticism aimed at Bernardin and his work, i. e. the decline of sentimentalism into sentimentality. His work is, it cannot be denied, smugly moralistic, uncritical of itself and highly presumptuous. This is a weakness common to the novel of sentiment and the sentimental attitude, and left the author open to charges of self-complacency. If being aware of one's own goodness is an inherent fault of the sentimental novel, we agree that Bernardin is guilty and there is no further need to defind him on this point.

The other part of the problem of Bernardin's authenticity finds no easy solution. In Chapter 4 we have presented as many facets of his personality as the available means of research enabled us to. We then explained the basic problem of Bernardin's seeming inauthenticity because his literary production would have us picture

him quite a different man than he in fact was. The helpless man of sentiment, so often the victim of society's cruelties and negligence, is the self-image he would like to project through his writings. He portrays himself as being at the mercy of both his own delicate sensibilities and the cruel society, and as a creature alienated from the rest of the world which wallows in its own corruption.

The image of the alienated man, the poet estranged from the rest of society because of his noble spirit, would of course be recaptured by several of the outstanding Romantics, notably Vigny. Vigny however succeeded in injecting an element of true nobility into his work. He was able to depict solitude and alienation without cheap exploitation of the pathetic. Bernardin was never able to elevate his writing to this level. His heavy reliance on pathos and sentimentalism was his worst transgression as a writer and he deliberately sought to convey an image of helplessness.

The "helpless man of sentiment" is a literary symbol very popular at the time and it has traditonally been linked with characteristics of weakness and impotence. To see such a man then acting with cold deliberation and self-interest is a natural violation of the basic image of the "ame sensible," and it leaves an impression of vulgarity and impropriety. This is the case with Bernardin; he has been severely criticized because his behavior at certain points clashed with the images he portrayed in his writings. Can this however be termed inauthenticity?

There does not have to be a biographical link between an author and his work. We have made it clear in Chapter 4 that much of the criticism aimed at our subject was because of the difference between his writings and his life. This is true for many other writers as well who have not suffered the same fate at the hands of their critics. We feel that the reason that Bernardin's life has been so carefully scrutinized and discussed by his various critics and compared unfavorably to his idyllic work is precisely because of his lapses into sentimental effusion and "sensiblerie." The tone of smug self-righteousness in his work, the artless sermonizing, as well as the gaps in logic, are all responsible for the cynicism of Bernardin's critics.

We can only insist on the fact that Bernardin was a complex character who seems to have had a dual personality which leaves its mark in his writings and in his attitudes. Paul et Virginie as well as his less famous works show Bernardin to be a carefully trained observer of nature as well as a sentimental daydreamer given to emotional effusion.

Pragmatic statesman, shrewd businessman, sought-after ladies' man, rigidly trained scientist as well as sentimental daydreamer--all of these were Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. If the coexistence of many personalities in one man calls for accusations of inauthenticity then many are they who have escaped the unwarranted slings and arrows of criticism which were aimed at Bernardin.

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