

INFORMATION TO USERS

This dissertation was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

University Microfilms

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

A Xerox Education Company

73-16,435

HANCOCK, Helen, 1935-
JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU AND FRIENDSHIP. A
SINGLE CASTLE (1712-1750).

The City University of New York, Ph.D., 1973
Language and Literature, modern

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

© COPYRIGHT BY

HELEN HANCOCK

1973

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU AND FRIENDSHIP.

A SINGLE CASTLE (1712-1750).

by

HELEN HANCOCK

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in French in
partial fulfillment of the re-
quirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York.

1973

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.

2/16/73

date

Madeline Morris

Chairman of Examining Committee

Febr 16/1973

date

Henri Peyre

Executive Officer

Renée Waldinger

Bettina Knapp

Henri Peyre

Supervisory Committee

PLEASE NOTE:

Some pages may have
indistinct print.

Filmed as received.

University Microfilms, A Xerox Education Company

Pour Jean-Claude.

Parce que c'est lui.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not be complete without an expression of gratitude and affection to two distinguished scholars who have inspired and guided me, not only in this enterprise but throughout my entire graduate experience. These are Distinguished Professor Henri Peyre, beloved and revered "father" to countless students and professors of French literature, and my own incomparable thesis director, Professor Madeleine F. Morris, of whom I can say with sincerity: "Rien ne vaut la douceur de son autorité." I wish also to thank Professors Bettina Knapp and Renée Waldinger, who touched and honored me with their personal interest and encouragement. I am heavily indebted, as well, to my dear and respected friend, Professor Henri Lurié, for his devotion, criticism and enlightenment. And, finally, I thank the American Association of University Women for its invaluable assistance.

HELEN HANCOCK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	v
Introduction	1
<u>Foundations of Friendship</u>	20
<u>The Tests of Society</u>	71
<u>A Sentimental Education</u>	142
<u>Civilization</u>	259
Conclusion	325
Bibliography	331

INTRODUCTION

"Quand tout était dans l'ordre autour de moi, quand j'étais content de tout ce qui m'entourait et de la sphère dans laquelle j'avais à vivre je la remplissais de mes affections. Mon âme expansive s'étendait sur d'autres objets, ... "¹

"Rien ne montre mieux les vrais penchants d'un homme que l'espèce de ses attachements," Rousseau proclaimed, later qualifying his statement, "à moins qu'il ne se soit d'abord trompé dans son choix, ou que celle à laquelle il s'était attaché n'ait ensuite changé de caractère par un concours de causes extraordinaires; ce qui n'est pas impossible absolument."² Modern psychology has shown that, in fact, both points of view must be taken into consideration. The study of a man's attachments, both male and female, both real and imaginary, is the study of his deepest meaning, his relationship to himself and to his environment and his capacity to resolve the conflicts and frustrations which inevitably arise in these introverted and extroverted domains. "L'homme n'est pas un être isolé," observes Marcel Raymond. "Il est toujours 'en relation';

¹Rousseau, Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Pléiade, 1959 et seq.), Vol. I, p. 107⁴. The four volumes thus far published of Rousseau's complete works, compiled under the direction of Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, are hereinafter referred to as "O.C. I," "O.C. II," "O.C. III" and "O.C. IV," respectively. French spelling and punctuation have been modernized throughout this study.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 281.

en relation avec un milieu cosmique. Au coeur de notre solitude, il y a autrui. Au plus profond de nous-mêmes, il y a la société, ou son image."¹

The interplay of human relations is a particularly enlightening study in the life and works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. This subject first intrigued, then obsessed the philosopher; for, whatever else he may have been, Rousseau was first and foremost a moralist, and he saw morality as a social concept.² Rousseau's attitude toward and experience with friendship, then -- of itself and in opposition to the corresponding drives toward solitude and hostility -- are keys to the understanding of his personality and thought.

The present study is an attempt to demonstrate this thesis insofar as it applies to the period of Rousseau's character formation. Further studies are planned concerning Rousseau's three major friendship crises and the role of his experience and meditation on this subject in his great theoretical works. None of these, however, would be feasible

¹Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La quête de soi et la rêverie (Paris: Corti, 1962), p. 191.

²That is, "evil" being defined as the ill-intention of one man toward another, "goodness" takes on a negative connotation. E.g. "... l'Etat de Nature étant celui où le soin de notre conservation est le moins préjudiciable à celle d'autrui, cet état était par conséquent le plus propre à la paix, et le plus convenable au genre humain. ... On pourrait dire que les sauvages ne sont pas méchants précisément, parce qu'ils ne savent pas ce que c'est qu'être bons; ... " Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité, O.C. III, pp. 153-4. Cf. "... L'injustice ne consiste que dans le tort fait à autrui ... " Rêveries, O.C. I, p. 1027. "Dire faux n'est mentir que par l'intention de tromper, ... " Ibid, p. 1029. (Speaking of himself in the third person:) "Justice et vérité sont dans son esprit deux mots synonymes qu'il prend l'un pour l'autre indifféremment. La sainte vérité que son coeur adore ne consiste point en faits indifférents et en noms inutiles, mais à rendre fidèlement à chacun ce qui lui [est] dû en choses qui sont véritablement siennes, en imputations bonnes ou mauvaises, en rétributions d'honneur ou de blâme, de louange ou d'improbation." Ibid, p. 1032.

without having first accomplished the fundamental task of establishing standards of comparison and a basis for comprehension and judgment of this singular man and provocative thinker. For Rousseau is not as easily defined as one might assume by the mere volume of his autobiographical writings and countless studies devoted to his life and works.¹ He himself was the first to realize this, as his mission of self-revelation carried him further and further into the depths of the human heart.

"... Les vrais et premiers motifs de la plupart de mes actions ne me sont pas aussi clairs à moi-même que je me l'étais longtemps figuré,"² he admitted toward the end of his life. Even Jean Starobinski, Rousseau critic par excellence, was forced to conclude that, in the end, the Rousseau whom he knows as well as any man has ever known the philosopher, escapes definition:

On n'en a jamais fini avec lui: il faut toujours s'y reprendre à neuf, se réorienter ou se désorienter, oublier les formules et les images qui nous le rendaient familier et nous donnaient la rassurante conviction de l'avoir défini une fois pour toutes. Chaque génération découvre un nouveau Rousseau, en qui elle trouve l'exemple de ce qu'elle veut être, ou de ce qu'elle refuse passionnément.³

Thus we have brought special interest and care to this enterprise, in the hope of lighting still another candle in the tenebrous yet vibrantly alive and highly gratifying realm of Rousseau studies.

¹A particularly unfortunate lack of solid, objective writing pertaining to the philosopher exists in the English language.

²Rêveries, O.C. I, p. 1051.

³"Rousseau et la recherche des origines," in J.-J. Rousseau. La transparence et l'obstacle (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), p. 319.

The period covered by this work (1712-1750)¹ is the subject of the major portion of Rousseau's Confessions and therefore appears at first glance to be the best-known portion of his life. Much of what the public "knows" about this period, however, is pure legend or foregone conclusion. Numerous distinguished scholars have, of course, uncovered facts shedding light on the credibility of various portions of the Confessions and bringing new and valuable perspectives to the overall picture. These have generally appeared only in partial studies attracting a relatively small group of readers with specialized interests. Many have never appeared in English. The rigid requirements of the biographical form have prevented many details from reaching a wider public, and, due to the very complexity of their subject, Rousseau's biographers -- even those whose works appear in two or three volumes -- are forced to sweep across the philosopher's human relations experience without going into depth or detail. When one particular incident or relationship is the subject of investigation, it is often presented separately and out of context with the vast panoply of Rousseau's life and work.

Yet Rousseau is a man who, unlike most writers, cannot be considered out of context, nor can generalities form a portrait of his complex nature. Our method of investigation, then, will be to proceed chronologically throughout the period of his life covered by this study, examining, in analogy with his theory of evolution, the hereditary and early environmental forces that, as he puts it, "fixed" his character, without which,

¹Rousseau's relations with Diderot and the "Philosophes" have been excluded from this study, their complexity requiring their being treated separately in a forthcoming undertaking.

comprehension of his later human relations experiences and his abstract thought as moralist cannot be achieved; synthesizing all pertinent facts on both the objective and subjective levels; in addition to seeking rational enlightenment, attempting to bring out the artistic mastery with which Rousseau portrays moments experienced on the indefinable "subjective" plane of existence; and, most importantly, assigning to the objects of our investigation our considered personal interpretation, in the hope of bringing forth their life, relation and relevance -- at least from one critic's point of view, which we hope will be considered solid and mature, yet sensitive and imaginative, and in partial reply to Peter Gay's inspiring call for "that most desirable and most elusive of goals: a complete biography of Rousseau."¹

This stage of Rousseau's experience poses certain methodological problems. In recounting his youth in the Confessions and other autobiographical writings, Rousseau selects a few representative incidents to describe his "soul's growth" from a primarily subjective point of view: " ... J'écris moins l'histoire [des événements de ma vie] en eux-mêmes que celle de l'état de mon âme."² Incidents are thus somewhat deformed to enhance their symbolic value; colored by Rousseau's later romanesque vision of his "destiny;" and, for all the basic sincerity of his intentions, which can hardly be questioned, there remain many areas in which he subconsciously resists shouldering the moral responsibility for certain acts

¹Preface to Ernst Cassirer, The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, translated and edited by Peter Gay (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), pp. v-vi.

²Confessions draft, O.C. I, p. 1150.

whose guilt he is not in a psychological position to handle. In truth, we know very little about Rousseau's youth and depend almost entirely on the philosopher himself for our knowledge of it. Nonetheless, when approached from the context of Rousseau's entire body of writing, including his correspondence, and when compared with the many admirable scholarly revelations concerning this period of his life, the many questions become, if not clear, at least intelligently debatable. The definitive study of Rousseau has yet to be written -- and may it never appear, for, until then, we must continually turn back to the writings of the man himself for a taste of his genius and unicity.

Perhaps the autobiographical approach taken herein requires preliminary justification. We chose this method based on our conviction that Rousseau's concept of honor or the circumstances of his youthful nervous collapse provide greater and deeper insight into his image of friendship than an acquaintance with the pleasant but bland clichés on the subject dictated to him, as her secretary, by the charming Mme. Dupin. For friendship is, quite frankly, better experienced than described. Although this study could easily be limited to a compilation of Rousseau's many remarks on friendship -- a collection of "beautiful thoughts," as it were, I believe that this would inevitably prove as dry and meaningless as the Spirit of Julie that some well-meaning contemporary forged out of an expurgated New Héloïse. Worse yet, this approach would constitute a veritable distortion of Rousseau's thought in its lack of completeness.

Friendship is not a merely decorative element in Rousseau's "system."

More than pleasure and consolation, it also appears as a forceful and positive means to attaining the Truth and Virtue to which Rousseau was attempting to attract his public.

What, then, to Rousseau, constitutes "friendship"? The philosopher wisely avoids limiting the concept by an attempt at definition, aware that, as will become evident herein, each new relationship has its own unique and indescribable characteristics.¹ It is possible, however, by examining Rousseau's theory of evolution, to arrive at a working definition for the purposes of this study and to grasp friendship's role in Rousseau's moral universe. In this respect, we begin with an examination of the universe itself.

Rousseau's method takes, as point of departure, a hypothetical effort to distinguish between the hereditary and environmental forces working in man, in order to establish just what changes he can reasonably hope to effect in his moral being. It is highly noteworthy that neither friendship nor rivalry are "natural" in Rousseau's general view of the human species. His purely hypothetical Natural or Primitive Man was an isolated being, an animal-like solitary nomad, having no needs, fears or contentment except on a purely physical plane, and no passions but the few arising from these. Individual inequality -- purely physical and nearly negligible -- was totally unimportant to Primitive Man who knew "neither vanity, nor precedence [considération], nor esteem, nor scorn."² Self-preservation and self-perpetuation demanded all his waking moments,

¹He often assigns a series of epithets to a given friend, indicating the various aspects of their relationship.

²Rousseau, Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité, O.C. III, p. 157. (Translation mine.)

strength and energy, and his life-style resembled that of other wild creatures, consisting of attending to physical needs, self-defense and rest. Able through his own effort to nourish and house himself from spontaneous natural resources, Primitive Man knew near-total freedom and was thus morally and physically self-sufficient and free from the necessity to establish a fixed residence or to sustain permanent relations with any other member of his species. Having no need for them, he had neither acquaintance nor recognition of other men, and virtually no communication existed, whether hostile or affectionate. Women led the same active, independent lives as men, and sexual relations were purely indiscriminate. Children remained with mothers only until able to fend for themselves, at which time they would wander away, to be lost and forgotten.

Since morality is a social concept in Rousseau's theory, the State of Nature was amoral (or pre-moral, if regarded in a temporal context). Nonetheless, Rousseau concludes that Primitive Man was "good," that is, not ill-intentioned toward his fellow creatures. His reasoning is based on the fact that, thanks to ignorance, preoccupation with the business of day-to-day living and the absence of passions other than those few physical needs easily satisfied within the framework of his everyday life-style, Primitive Man had no interest in the abasement of another and was thus "wild" but not intentionally harmful -- "a free man, whose heart is at peace and whose body is healthy."¹ Furthermore, Primitive Man possessed a "natural virtue," pity -- the instinctive self-identification

¹Ibid., p. 152. (Translation mine.) Rousseau was of the rationalistic conviction (common to the eighteenth century) that no man is gratuitously ill-intentioned. He did, however, at times, make exception for "méchants," whom he was admittedly at a loss to classify.

with a suffering creature -- deriving from his basic principle of self-preservation (hereinafter referred to as Primary Self-Interest¹). Pity is naturally subordinated to Primary Self-Interest but serves to moderate it. Whereas the latter works toward the preservation of the individual, pity is a Collective Self-Interest working toward the conservation of the species as a whole and stands as the basic principle of the sentiments of brotherly-love and humanity: Christian "charity." Rousseau sees this as the source of all other virtues.

Self-preservation in the primitive state rarely necessitated directing one's hostile forces against another human being or encroaching on another's interests. This state was thus the most peaceful and, from this point of view, the most fitting for man. Furthermore, with no contradictory passions, Primitive Man was more sensitive to pity than is Civilized Man. On the other hand, having no temptation to disobey his benevolent impulses, Primitive Man derived from his "goodness" neither virtue (which, in Rousseau's terms, implies self-mastery) nor honor (that is, recognition of superiority, either hereditary or, as in this case, a moral superiority acquired through the exercise of free-will).

Neither the desire nor the means of change blighted this animal-like manner of existence. Countless centuries lay between the state of pure sensation and that of simple knowledge. As man evolved, his first look at himself was hierarchically oriented: " ... Sachant à peine distinguer les rangs, et se contemplant au premier par son espèce, il se préparait de loin à y prétendre par son individu."² Man then directed his reflec-

¹Rousseau calls it "amour de soi."

²Ibid., p. 166.

tion to comparisons between himself and other individuals of his species, thus forming his first rudimentary notions of society, cooperation and competition. The habit of togetherness developed feelings of affection, and little independent family-societies were formed. This was the Golden Age of man. "Si l'homme vivait isolé," Rousseau affirms, "il aurait peu d'avantages sur les autres animaux. C'est dans la fréquentation mutuelle que se développent les plus sublimes facultés et que se montre l'excellence de sa nature. En ne songeant qu'à pourvoir à ses besoins, il acquiert par le commerce de ses semblables, avec les lumières qui doivent l'éclairer, les sentiments qui doivent le rendre heureux. En un mot, ce n'est qu'en devenant sociable qu'il devient un être moral, un animal raisonnable, le roi des autres animaux, et l'image de Dieu sur la terre."¹

It is only at this moment of socialization, Rousseau suggests, that the human being metamorphoses from a potential man to a man full-blown. "... Quel être sensible peut vivre sans passions, sans attachements?" he asks rhetorically; "Ce n'est pas un homme; c'est une brute, ou c'est un Dieu."² On the other hand, this same socialization represents the greatest obstacle to men's happiness.

This half-way point between nature and civilization, says Rousseau, was the happiest and most durable state, the least subject to revolutions, the best for men, "the veritable youth of the world."³ As long as men

¹Rousseau, De l'Etat de nature, O.C. III, p. 477.

²Solitaires, O.C. IV, p. 883.

³Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité, O.C. III, p. 171. (Translation mine.)

retained their original self-sufficiency, they needed no guide other than the voice of nature. Whatever pain they suffered came almost exclusively from nature and not from their fellow-men. The thought of willfully harming another human being was still largely absent from their experience. " ... Les démêlés étaient si rares, et les secours mutuels si fréquents qu'il dut résulter de ce commerce libre beaucoup plus de bienveillance que de haine, disposition qui jointe au sentiment de commisération et de pitié que la nature a gravé dans tous les coeurs dut faire vivre les hommes assez paisiblement en troupeau."¹

With the habit of frequentation, the faculty of relation-perception continued to develop, creating a desire for precedence and promoting the spirit of competition. This called for an exterior source of judgment, creating the concepts of "reputation" and "the public." It is in this manner that Rousseau conceives the birth of the sentiment of love. "On s'accoutume à considérer différents objets," he hypothesizes, "et à faire des comparaisons; on acquiert insensiblement des idées de mérite et de beauté qui produisent des sentiments de préférence. A force de se voir, on ne peut plus se passer de se voir encore."² The new value of precedence distilled heady delights therefofore unknown to man, but secreted a deadly poison, exemplified by the birth of jealousy, simultaneous with that of love. Its gravest and most far-reaching effect was the concurrent development of a relative motivation principle: the internecine

¹De l'Etat de nature, O.C. III, p. 476.

²Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité, O.C. III, p. 169.

Competitive Self-Interest,¹ opposing man's Primary and Collective Self-Interests and causing internal and external conflict. Man is naturally "good," that is, moved to moral order and harmony, only so long as he is uncorrupted by Competitive Self-Interest. "Le coeur de l'homme," said Rousseau, "est toujours droit sur tout ce qui ne se rapporte pas personnellement à lui. ... Mais quand notre intérêt s'y mêle, bientôt nos sentiments se corrompent; et c'est alors seulement que nous préférons le mal qui nous est utile, au bien que nous fait aimer la nature."² Man was now subject to immorality through such deviation in value-appraisal.

Thus conflict became a part of the human condition: individuals were torn between two opposing principles, good and evil, and their relations varied between harmony and hostility. From this point on, discord triumphed, and all further evolution was moral degeneration in the guise of progress: "in appearance so many steps toward the perfection of the individual, and, in reality toward the decrepitude of the species."³

As society developed, a value revolution took place, with the institution of moral or political inequality by which precedence was accorded certain individuals following standards of judgment "depend[ing] on a sort of convention" and "established or at least authorized by men's con-

¹Rousseau calls it "amour-propre."

²Lettre à d'Alembert (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1967), p. 77. (Italics mine.)

³Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité, O.C. III, p. 171. (Translation mine.)

sent."¹ As long as individuals had remained self-sufficient, their interrelationships had been independent and generally sources of pleasure, but as soon as one man economically "needed" another equality disappeared and servitude and misery came into being. The cause of this "great revolution" was the concept of property, engendering, in turn, that of justice, with which civil society began. (Rousseau points out that "justice" is an artificial, conventional concept, since property rights differ from natural rights.) "Wealth" now became a standard by which precedence was determined.

The value revolution upset and restructured men's social relations. By stabilizing society, it permitted each member to be assigned a rank on the social ladder. With the concept of social hierarchy, men -- masters in appearance -- became enslaved, that is, dependent on others for gratification, protection, even mere subsistence. This gravely affected their relations, causing them to dishonor themselves in reality in order to honor themselves in appearance. Since the civilized individual's fortune depends on the figure he cuts in others' eyes, men found it advantageous to don becoming masks. Truth could no longer be identified with appearance,² and from this distinction came two tendencies from which countless vices developed: the desire to show off and the desire to hide.³

¹Ibid., p. 131. (Translation mine.)

²"Etre" and "paraître."

³Rousseau understands by "vice" anything contrary to the basic principle of moral order and harmony, including that which goes against the conventional moral code of a given society at a given moment in time.

Eventually, the drive for precedence turned man against man in active combat. As the earth became more and more crowded and unclaimed lands were no longer within reach, a situation was created whereby one man's gain was another man's loss. At this point, the social state completed its transformation into "the most horrible state of war."

"... L'ambition dévorante, l'ardeur d'élever sa fortune relative, moins par un véritable besoin que pour se mettre au-dessus des autres, inspire à tous les hommes un noir penchant à se nuire mutuellement, une jalousie secrète d'autant plus dangereuse que, pour faire son coup plus en sûreté, elle prend souvent le masque de la bienveillance; en un mot, concurrence et rivalité d'une part, de l'autre opposition d'intérêt, et toujours le désir caché de faire son profit aux dépens d'autrui ..."¹

The desire to distinguish oneself had thus developed into an unbridled passion, ambition, smothering man's natural predisposition to humaneness and compassion. No longer functioning on the principle of Primary Self-Interest nor satisfied with the collective precedence conferred through identification with the human species, men had become the pawns of Competitive Self-Interest, each man seeking his individual precedence at the expense of general harmony and order. Through ambition, happiness itself, the greatest of values, had come to be based on precedence. Men had come to identify with their public images to such an extent that "a time arrived when the sentiment of happiness became relative and it was necessary to look at others to know if you yourself were happy."² Luxury, as the symbol of precedence, came to acquire God-like

¹Ibid., p. 175.

²De l'Etat de nature, O.C. III, p. 477. (Translation mine.)

status.

The civilizing process had a snowballing effect, with desires creating needs (passions) creating inventions or discoveries (developed mental faculties) creating desires creating needs creating inventions, ad infinitum. Developing alongside inequality, passions thrust men "outside themselves": rather than settling for a morally-propitious mediocrity,¹ they craved more and more. Blinded by greed, then, society came to honor the greatest absurdities. (Here, Rousseau refers specifically to the institution of the nobility and the "impertinent prejudice of conditions.") Society, in this manner, subjected itself to the value-tyranny of a wealthy and powerful elite whose standards were artificial and tailored to its own aristocratic interest.

At this point, it becomes obvious that Rousseau's conception of human relations is not as naïvely optimistic as it may have appeared at first glance. Indeed, if Western morality has in some ways evolved, Rousseau's ideas are generally as provocative today as they were in the eighteenth century, and, although the subject remains open to lively debate and speculation, modern anthropology and psychology have yet to prove him wrong.

To illustrate this, we turn back to Rousseau's Man, whom we find motivated by pure self-interest. " ... L'amour du bien-être," he states, "est le seul mobile des actions humaines ... "² This, to Rousseau, is "natural" only so far as his own pleasure and sustenance are concerned.³

¹"Les bonnes moeurs tiennent plus qu'on ne pense à ce que chacun se plaise dans son état." Lettre à d'Alembert, p. 234, note.

²Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité, O.C. III, p. 166.

³Cf. "Le plus méchant des hommes est celui qui s'isole le plus, qui concentre le plus son coeur en lui-même; le meilleur est celui qui partage

He relegates the drive for power and precedence and all of man's cruel and violent tendencies to the environmental plane, blaming them largely on man's developed mental faculties, particularly that of imagination which he sees as mother of the passions. Not only do all modern men have both these tendencies (to which we have applied the English terms of Primary and Competitive Self-Interest, respectively), but the latter is the stronger force in civilization. Thus Rousseau finds (purely hereditary) man good but men (in the civilized environment) more ill- than well-intentioned -- a pessimistic optimism certainly.¹ Even assuming, then, that Rousseau's Natural Man is no more than a product of the wishful thinking of a guilt-ridden mind -- hypothesis which has yet to be proven or disproven -- Rousseau's system may be conceived as "tough" and "realistic," since it was created for modern man.

Rousseau's approach is equally bittersweet concerning human attachments. According to his theory of civilization, friendship's tender intercourse, far from being the result of a natural drive toward companionship, self-expansion and self-expression, appears as a dormant potentiality on the Primary Self-Interest level, requiring further development to achieve flowering.² Both Collective and Competitive Self-Interest levels

également ses affections à tous ses semblables." Lettre à d'Alembert, p. 222.

¹But optimistic nonetheless in Rousseau's relegation of hostility to the environmental plane.

²The reproductive drive, which could hardly be considered "unnatural," is, of course, excluded from this consideration; however, Rousseau did firmly believe that, without the stimulation of environmentally-developed imagination, man's sexual drive would be vastly reduced and a purely physical function.

participate in the perfection of friendship, the former in the realm of the individuals' identification with the attachment, endowing the relationship with its own moral identity; the latter in the selective and exclusive nature of the sentiment in Rousseau's eyes. Rousseau's conception of friendship has, then, its morally harmonious aspect, with relation to the individual's loss of competitive motivations in his identification with the relationship itself, but also a facet of covert hostility, lying in its elitist (thus competitive) characteristics and the relationship's implicit disdain of the unchosen persons foreign to it: harmony for insiders, but a potential hostility toward outsiders.

Friendship's aspects are further refined in Rousseau's thought. Obviously aware that men are born with widely-differing natural attributes, the philosopher often discusses variations of intellect, of health and of character. He was also fully conscious of the wide variations in individual emotional capacity. Chaillot, for example, Claire's and Julie's childhood governess, pointed out Julie's extraordinarily passionate nature and the "dangers" it bore, alongside its indication of superiority. Claire, too, was passionate in her own specialty, friendship. Indeed all the major characters of Rousseau's novel were naturally superior beings in their extreme sensitivity -- "êtres selon mon coeur" Rousseau called them, persons vibrating, like himself, on an electrified "subjective" plane of existence, altogether different from the common man's "objective" one; persons who, although indistinguishable from ordinary human beings to the uninitiated, recognized each other intuitively through "signs," an "air" or an "expression." Friendship, to members of this sensitive elite, these Happy Few, was a heightened metaphysical experience, and spontaneous, if not provi-

dential.

Needless to say, Rousseau considered himself one of these privileged creatures. Encyclopédiste Alexandre Deleyre remarked facetiously yet clairvoyantly during a quarrel between Rousseau and Diderot, " ... J'y aperçois, si je l'ose dire, le sublime de l'amitié, et tout ce par quoi elle peut ressembler à l'amour: des reproches sanglants, des duretés amères, des remords, des retours, en un mot, ce qui cimente et redouble l'union."¹

Friendship, not love, was Rousseau's great passion. His cult of friendship was no mere sublimation for more strongly-desired but unattainable domestic or erotic relationships; it was, rather, the manifestation of a profound need for a foundation on which to construct his faith in the universe and in himself. "To love is to need," said Helvétius. The very excess of Rousseau's psychological need reflected itself in his excessive friendship demands. "Vous dites que je ne suis indifférent à personne," he wrote to Marianne Alissan de La Tour; "Tant mieux. Je ne puis souffrir les tièdes, et j'aime mieux être haï de mille à outrance, et aimé de même d'un seul. Quiconque ne se passionne pas pour moi n'est pas digne de moi."²

¹Rousseau, Correspondance complète, edited by R. A. Leigh (Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1965 et seq.), Vol. IV, No. 496 (March 31, 1757), pp. 205-6. The volumes thus far published of Rousseau's Correspondance complète are hereinafter referred to as "C.C. I," "C.C. II," "C.C. III," etc.

²C.C. XIII, No. 2193 (September 26, 1762), p. 122.

Unless he was the object of universal attention, however large or intimate the "universe," Rousseau lost his feeling of stability, his orientation, even the very sentiment of his existence. But his "audience" had also to judge and take a stand on Rousseau's intrinsic value; the constantly-renewed expression of approval as well as that of recognition was thus called for in Rousseau's human relationships -- and, as he consistently, even compulsively, rejected moral mediocrity as far as he was concerned as an individual, the "other's" forced appraisal was necessarily that he was either the best or the worst of men.

The question of Rousseau's very honor or dishonor was thus bound up in the question of friendship, giving it a life-or-death urgency. It is important to bear this in mind in the study of friendship's relation to Rousseau's life and theory.

FOUNDATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP

It was spring of 1728. A small boy looking younger than his fifteen-going-on-sixteen years, with dark hair, a tanned complexion and strangely brilliant black eyes was strolling in the sunshine along a dirt road leading away from the formidable gray stone walls of the City of Calvin. A shiny sword was at his side, a song on his lips. As he walked, he daydreamed. "J'entraais avec sécurité dans le vaste espace du monde; mon mérite allait le remplir: à chaque pas j'allais trouver des festins, des trésors, des aventures, des amis prêts à me servir, des maîtresses empressées à me plaire: en me montrant j'allais occuper de moi l'univers: non pas pourtant l'univers tout entier; je l'en dispensais en quelque sorte, il ne m'en fallait pas tant. Une société charmante me suffisait mais délicieusement choisie, où j'étais assuré de régner. Un seul château bornait mon ambition. Favori du seigneur et de la dame, amant de la demoiselle, ami du frère, et protecteur des voisins, j'étais content; il ne m'en fallait pas davantage."¹ A single castle -- harmonious universe of well-born, virtuous and devoted friends, and he "assured of reigning" at the center; a world of approval and affection, honor and friendship -- so little yet so much to ask was the object of his happiness-quest. Later, soaring to uncharted heights of glory or writhing in the tenuous grasp of despair, Jean-Jacques Rousseau would, with gentle irony, mock the astonishingly naïve boy he had been upon leaving Geneva to seek his fortune. Still, transposed to a simple, bucolic setting, his earthly paradise would always remain basically the same domestic castle-dream. At fifty-nine

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 45.

years of age, he would admit, "Quand l'ardent désir de cette vie heureuse et douce qui me fuit et pour laquelle j'étais né vient enflammer mon imagination, c'est toujours au pays de Vaud, près du lac, dans des campagnes charmantes qu'elle se fixe. Il me faut absolument un verger au bord de ce lac et non pas d'un autre; il me faut un ami sûr, une femme aimable, une vache, et un petit bateau. Je ne jouirai d'un bonheur parfait sur la terre que quand j'aurai tout cela."¹

Quite an unpromising prospect for adjustment to the harsh realities of human relations, this youthful dreamer of fifteen and fifty-nine. Before studying his moral formation, then, it is fitting to examine these unusual aspects of his character.

One point must be stressed at the outset: in this study, Rousseau will be treated as a great man.² "No man is a hero to his manservant," the saying goes, and we are all in this respect Rousseau's domestics: nowhere in literature is there an example of a more intimate relationship between author and reader. Thus he willed it, with his systematic exposition of Jean-Jacques-the-man alongside Rousseau, artist and philosopher, each necessary to complete and explain the other. Unfortunately, as his life unfolded, the portrait of "Jean-Jacques" became the subject of great controversy, with the result that we know this man too well without understanding him enough. In him, we sense the heights of man's greatness and the abyss of his baseness and absurdity, and, almost automatically, we place ourselves in imagination alongside him to share in his experience. Nonetheless, in our rightful identification with Rousseau, we tend, perhaps through vanity, to pull him down on our own

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 152.

²Note that the adjective is "great" and not "good."

stratum to judge him, rather than rising to assess him on his own level. We mock him for stressing his singularity; we mock him for the very singularity we mocked him for stressing; and then we maintain that he was not at all singular but indeed quite commonplace! The popular designation of him by his first name alone, in servant fashion, which began as a Voltairian swipe to point up Rousseau's lowly origins (as though they would suffice to make him an object of scorn), caught on among the poet's contemporaries and still subsists today. "Poor great man!" we exclaim patronizingly with Guéhenno, "perhaps you [tu] were only ridiculous,"¹ overlooking the other side of the coin: a greatness which nearly all humans covet and only a handful achieve. Without this greatness and the message it bears, the study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau would not be worth the undertaking.

How, then, was Rousseau a great man? The philosopher would undoubtedly have concurred with Mme. de Chenonceaux's description of the phenomenon of greatness: "Those who profess natural religion and deny revelation do not, for all that, disavow a general Providence which distributes its gifts to privileged men; which expands nature's blessings for them by a purer enlightenment and a greater character of virtue. Nor do they deny that the Supreme Being wishes, perhaps, to give these men to the human species as an aid and as a model to enlighten and ameliorate it."² While he was not and never claimed to be a model of virtue, Rousseau did definitely feel himself to be a kind of example elected by fate with a mission to enlighten mankind and lead it toward morality.

¹Jean-Jacques (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), Vol. I, p. 363. This citation (translation mine) is herein employed out of context, merely for its aptness.

²Rousseau, Correspondance générale, eds. Th. Dufour and P.-P. Plan (Paris: Colin, 1924-34), Vol. XII, No. 2449, Mme. de Chenonceaux to Rousseau (c. February 11, 1765), p. 355. The twenty volumes of Rousseau's Correspondance générale are hereinafter referred to as "C.G.," followed by a Roman numeral designating the volume number.

Although Rousseau would perhaps himself disagree, according to his own definition we may describe his greatness as falling into the category of "heroism," with the limitation that this qualification be applied only insofar as his philosophic activities are concerned. The source of such "heroism" is genius, which Rousseau describes as consisting of an extraordinary potential, combining qualities of sentiment with those of the intellect. "... Les âmes ne sont plus ou moins illustres," he affirms, "que selon qu'elles ont des sentiments plus ou moins grands et nobles, des idées plus ou moins vives et nombreuses. Les faits ne sont ici que des causes occasionnelles."¹

Describing the phenomenon of genius in greater detail, Rousseau stipulates: "Qu'on cultive ou non les sciences, dans quelque siècle que naisse un grand homme, il est toujours un grand homme; car la source de son mérite n'est pas dans ses livres, mais dans sa tête, et souvent les obstacles qu'il trouve et qu'il surmonte ne font que l'élever et l'agrandir encore. On peut acheter la science et même les savants, mais le génie qui rend le savoir utile ne s'achète point; il ne connaît ni l'argent, ni l'ordre des princes, il ne leur appartient point de le faire naître, mais seulement de l'honorer, il vit et s'immobilise avec la liberté qui lui est naturelle, et [l']illustre Métastase lui-même était déjà la gloire de l'Italie avant d'être accueilli par Charles VI. Tâchons donc de ne pas confondre le vrai progrès des talents avec la protection que les princes peuvent leur accorder."²

But genius alone is not sufficient. The hero must also have a raging fire within him, driving him onward. This indeed was the source of Rousseau's astonishing eloquence, as he himself admitted. "Je savais," he said, "que

¹Confessions draft, O.C. I, p. 1150.

²C.C. IV, No. 418. Rousseau to Franz Christof Scheyb (July 15, 1756), p. 27.

mon talent ne venait que d'une certaine chaleur d'âme sur les matières que j'avais à traiter, et qu'il n'y avait que l'amour du grand, du vrai, du beau qui pût animer mon génie ... On s'imaginait que je pouvais écrire par métier comme tous les autres gens de lettres, au lieu que je ne sus jamais écrire que par passion."¹ This extraordinary drive compensates for the hero's defects of character and provides him with an unshakable courage and strength of purpose, expressed, not destructively, but in everyday conduct. He is "un composé de bonnes et de mauvaises qualités salutaires ou nuisibles selon les circonstances, et combinées dans une telle proportion qu'il en résulte souvent plus de fortune et de gloire pour celui qui les possède, et quelquefois même plus de bonheur pour les peuples, que d'une vertu plus parfaite."²

Rousseau's hero is motivated by a desire to achieve happiness for men, but, behind this apparent altruism lies a burning personal ambition. "Ne nous dissimulons rien," warns the philosopher; "la félicité publique est bien moins la fin des actions du héros qu'un moyen pour arriver à celle qu'il se propose, et cette fin est presque toujours sa gloire personnelle. ... Il y a bien de la différence entre l'homme vertueux et celui qui a des vertus; celles du héros ont rarement leur source dans la pureté de l'âme, et, semblable à ces drogues salutaires, mais peu agissantes, qu'il faut animer par des sels âcres et corrosifs, on dirait qu'elles aient besoin du concours de quelques vices pour leur donner de l'activité."³ It follows that too many heroes would be as destructive to moral order as one rare example from time to time is constructive. On the other hand, the hero is, in a sense, self-destructive, as he risks his entire reputation with every great action he undertakes, and the

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 513.

²Discours sur la vertu du héros, O.C. II, p. 1265.

³Ibid., p. 1265. (Italics mine.)

odds are against him, with failure bringing about greater scorn than success would have conferred honor.¹ Thus, Rousseau gives, as the "true foundation of heroism," strength of character. The hero does not always perform great actions, but he is always capable of them, distinguishing himself in this respect from the ordinary man whose capacities are relatively limited. Furthermore, the hero is able to focus on his object without distortion or distraction, in a superhuman effort of concentration.² Finally, the hero's greatness is invulnerable, at one with himself and independent of his reputation. In adversity as well as in glory, the hero is a great man; " ... Il ne règne pas moins dans les fers que sur le trône."³

Although Rousseau's many weaknesses of character make it painfully clear that he lacked heroic strength of character on a personal level, it can be readily admitted that he found this abnormal strength in the enunciation and defense of his message. If Rousseau's greatness, then, is accepted according

¹That Rousseau did actually, to a certain extent, identify with his "hero" is suggested by the following remark concerning his Confessions, seen as a sort of heroic action: " ... De la manière dont je suis connu dans le monde j'ai moins à gagner qu'à perdre à me montrer tel que je suis." Rousseau, Mon Portrait, O.C. I, p. 1123.

²Ironically, this is precisely the Abbé Trublet's criticism of Rousseau: "Il a de la profondeur, creuse une idée, suit un principe, jusqu'où il peut aller, voit devant lui et à perte de vue, non à côté, et cela parce qu'il n'y regarde pas. Ce qu'il voit l'attache, le fixe, le saisit trop, pour qu'il puisse en détourner ailleurs les yeux. Il est en extase, fixe à un seul objet dont rien ne le distrait pas, même ce qui y tient le plus par les rameaux; il suit le tronc ou la branche principale. Mauvais philosophe, car la philosophie est la science des causes, non d'une cause, et tout effet, toute chose a ordinairement plusieurs causes. Or, Rousseau ne voit ordinairement qu'une cause; ou du moins ne les voit pas toutes; et sait encore moins le degré de l'influence de chacun, encore moins peser que compter. De là vient qu'il outre tout; car toutes les causes réunies se modifient, se tempèrent et se combattent, et de là un effet modéré, etc. [sic]"

"On lui a reproché de l'obscurité, et il en a, non dans les idées principales; il les voit trop bien, mais dans les accessoires." Cited in C.C. III, Appendix 142, pp. 350-1.

³Discours sur la vertu du héros, O.C. II, p. 1274.

to his own definition of heroïsm -- "une intempérance de gloire" -- clearly his personal ambition (Competitive Self-Interest) as strongly affects his moral formation as do the principles of love and friendship (Collective Self-Interest) and of self-love (Primary Self-Interest).

Rousseau, then, was not exempt from the great vice of civilized man, and his ambition was great indeed, in conformity with his singular and excessive character. Perhaps his major characteristic was this very self-consciousness. "Vain as Satan," Diderot called him in his own searing Tablettes. Now, we are all egotistical and infinitely more so than we care to admit, but Rousseau was chained to himself in an unusually passionate love-hate relationship. Everything he ever wrote was, from a certain viewpoint, of and for himself, and, in the long run, he was the only thing that truly mattered.¹ The famous statement in the preface to his comedy, aptly entitled Narcissus, that the author worked only for his own esteem was unquestionably sincere. Nonetheless, this esteem or sense of security was utterly dependant on the approval of Rousseau's entire "universe" -- whether construed as the general public or a mere handful of intimates. Others' indifference, we have remarked, was unbearable to him because it meant that, in effect, he had ceased to exist. Others' disapproval -- even the sign or suspicion of it -- was sufficient to shatter his worldview and self-image. At these moments, he was unable to affirm certitude regarding himself and his environment, only surprise and perplexity -- rarely "I am innocent!" but rather, "I, guilty? How can that be?" -- then retreating to review the whole situation, in search of an explanation, until reassurance was forthcoming from some exterior source. When this failed to materialize, Rousseau would be thrown into a state of doubt, and his evaluation would take place on a subconscious level, in a mechanism he

¹Rousseau often observes that the only exterior objects to enter his awareness were those that touched him subjectively, relating to him (and not he to them) by attaining the inner depths of his existence. In this respect, he was not really concerned with what mattered to his friends, but prized them only in relation to himself.

once described regarding his religious belief: "... Je crois en Dieu tout aussi fortement que je crois aucune autre vérité, parce que croire et ne croire pas sont les choses du monde qui dépendent le moins de moi; que l'état de doute est un état trop violent pour mon âme; que quand ma raison flotte, ma foi ne peut rester longtemps en suspens, et se détermine sans elle; qu'enfin mille sujets de préférence m'attirent du côté le plus consolant et joignent le poids de l'espérance à l'équilibre de la raison." He qualified his description in a variation of the same text: "Je n'empêche pas que, ce que j'appelle sur cela preuve de sentiment, on ne l'appelle préjugé; et je ne donne point cette opiniâtreté de croyance comme un modèle; mais, avec une bonne foi peut-être sans exemple, je la donne comme une invincible disposition de mon âme, que jamais rien ne pourra surmonter, dont jusqu'ici je n'ai point à me plaindre, et qu'on ne peut attaquer sans cruauté."¹

Obviously, the most "consoling" and "hopeful" point of view in the case of a human relations dilemma was to exteriorize the blame, opting for his own goodness and rightness at the expense of the other's badness and wrongness. It follows that this left Rousseau extremely prone to conflict between himself and his environment. Only by escape to a safe, select, sealed-off milieu (an "island," a "prison," an imaginary "ideal world"...) could he be assured of mastery of his world- and self-images and of the universal harmony necessary to his well-being. Utter solitude, he declared, made him feel like God. He daydreamed systematically, Raymond believes as much as five to six hours per day.² Yet such solitary elation is impossible to maintain on a permanent basis for a number of down-to-earth reasons such as emotional vicissitudes

¹C.C. IV, No. 424 ("Letter on Providence"), Rousseau to Voltaire (August 18, 1756), pp. 47 and 62.

²Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La quête de soi et la rêverie (Paris: Corti, 1962).

independent of exterior stimuli, and the need for others for self-preservation and enjoyment. More ominously, solitude is a powerful medicine, potentially more deadly than the disease it is called in to cure.

Just as Rousseau knew the temptations of both solitude and society, he was intellectually attracted to the ideal of mediocrity (which he called "wisdom") as well as to that of excess ("heroism" previously discussed), although fully realizing, in spite of his later nostalgia for the obscurity which he "should never have left," that the second was the only category to which he was personally susceptible. In order to experience life to the fullest, he was moved to continually "create" himself on a higher level of existence, by talking and writing incessantly and, as we have mentioned, always about himself.¹ His writings were at one with himself and he with them. This is the heart of his uniqueness. In this respect, too, he was continually dependent on the judgment of others as catalyst and validation, whether readers or friends -- and indeed his writings call forth the same extreme reaction he elicited from friendship.²

¹He justified his pursuit of a literary career that contradicted his austere principles by conceiving himself as "obliged" to speak the truth as he saw it and again "forced" to defend his honor -- this mechanism, of course, taking place on a subconscious level.

²Cf. "Il écrit d'une manière ou à entraîner tous les esprits avec sa force, ou à les révolter contre lui." C.C. XIII, No. 2196, Isaac Iselin to Vincenz Bernhard Tscherner (September 27, 1762), p. 131. Also: "Cet homme me paraît être dans le cas de beaucoup d'illustres: ou il est adoré sans restriction par de fanatiques admirateurs, ou déprisé d'une manière peu équitable, sans qu'on lui pardonne quelques défauts en faveur de tant de mérite." C.C. XIII, No. 2250, Georg Ludwig Schmid to Vincenz Bernhard Tscherner (October 24, 1762), p. 247.

Rousseau's moral formation cannot be the same as that of a Voltaire, a Diderot or a Montesquieu, since each emerged from a uniquely individual source. Rousseau's hereditary legacy, aside from the accident of greatness previously discussed, was marked by a painful, frightening and embarrassing illness, with only the years of his youth as respite. We shall never know with certainty the exact cause of his condition. "J'étais né presque mourant," he recounts; "on espérait peu de me conserver. J'apportai le germe d'une incommodité que les ans ont renforcée ..."¹ Rousseau describes his complaint as a blockage of the urinal canal caused by a physical malformation. "Je n'urine jamais à plein canal," he declared in a medical statement, "et jamais aussi l'urine n'est totalement supprimée, mais le cours en est seulement plus ou moins embarrassé, sans être jamais entièrement libre, de sorte que j'éprouve une inquiétude, un besoin presque continuel, que je ne puis jamais bien satisfaire."² The affliction has been variously diagnosed as a mere psychosomatic symptom, some form of venereal disease,³ chronic uremia producing a toxic condition, even hypospadias -- a complete deformation of the organ whereby elimination is effected through an outlet in the lower abdomen (although the length of the probes Rousseau ordered⁴ seems to preclude this recent and gratuitous diagnosis).

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 7. Cf. "... J'étais né mourant. Un vice de conformation dans la vessie me fit éprouver durant mes premières années une rétention d'urine presque continuelle, et ma tante Suzon qui prit soin de moi eut des peines incroyables à me conserver." Confessions, O.C. I, p. 361.

²C.G. IV, Appendix 1, last will and testament drawn up by Rousseau in February, 1763, p. 374.

³This, thanks largely to Voltaire's highly unreliable smear campaign against Rousseau.

⁴"... Surtout des plus longues qu'il ait, puisque je suis obligé de mettre à toutes des allonges qui m'incommodent beaucoup, mais qui sont nécessaires pour que la bougie pénètre jusqu'à l'obstacle." C.G. XI, No. 2169, Rousseau to F. H. d'Ivernois (August 20, 1764), p. 233.

Starobinski gives "the rather farcical list of the diagnoses which have claimed to pronounce the definitive verdict on the Rousseau case, as much concerning his urinary troubles as his 'mental state' ... " The physician-literary critic-Rousseau scholar adds, "So many various opinions and diagnoses could very well instruct us on the evolution of medical ideas from 1800 to 1970; on the contrary, our knowledge of Rousseau is scarcely further advanced."¹ The rather primitive autopsy carried out after Rousseau's death revealed no abnormalities of conformation.

Whatever the cause or combination of causes of Rousseau's condition, it is its unmistakable psychological rather than scientific aspects that interest us. "Nearly always with Rousseau," affirms Starobinski, "the body speaks first."² (This will later be the case concerning his nervous breakdown.) Whether the cause was physical or not, Rousseau's subconscious used it to its advantage, as alibi and consolation. He also suffered greatly from it, and it made him nervous and short tempered. Rousseau used his illness not only to defend himself from accusations, real and imaginary, of debauchery, but to conserve his freedom from the guilt he associated with the sexual act and to preserve his personal freedom. "Rather than to be suspected of having committed evil," says Starobinski, "he prefers to mutilate himself symbolically or to pass himself off as an incompetent lover."³ The critic points out that Rousseau's illness was the worst in situations of social dependence. "Each time, Rousseau, who accepts no compromises, no servitude, says 'no' with his whole body."⁴ Starobinski concludes: "... The illness is much more than a

¹"Sur la maladie de Rousseau" in Jean-Jacques Rousseau. La transparence et l'obstacle (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), pp. 436 and 437. (Translation mine.) This article contains the best and most complete discussion of Rousseau's physical condition which has been consistently used by Rousseau's cultists and enemies to "prove" their man's innocence or wickedness.

²Ibid., p. 443.

³Ibid., p. 442-3.

⁴Ibid., p. 443.

pretext: it is a [form of] conduct. The imperious micturition and the refusal of an intolerable dependence are one and the same."¹

We conclude, then, that, although Rousseau's illness was later to give witness to serious psychological maladjustment of which all too plentiful evidence is found throughout his entire lifetime, and is in this respect of vital importance (as is his later paranoia) to the retrospective understanding of this period, it may reasonably be seen as non-existent on the physical plane during nearly the entire portion of this study, since, until its appearance in 1748, he was apparently without the slightest suspicion of any abnormality and was otherwise, in spite of hypochondriacal symptoms, surprisingly robust.

Closely related to Rousseau's illness, as well as his genius, was his legendary sensitivity -- "une sensibilité d'écorché," in the words of Gagnebin and Raymond.² "De tous les dons que le Ciel ... avait départis [à ma mère et à mon père]," sighed the author of the Confessions, "un coeur sensible est le seul qu'ils me laissèrent; mais il avait fait leur bonheur, et fit tous les malheurs de ma vie."³ (In truth, Rousseau's sensitivity brought him as much pleasure as it did sorrow, and the long periods of misery he voluptuously bemoans, recalling his few and fleeting moments of pure joy, were seemingly endless in his estimation only because they were measured by "heart-" rather than "clock-time.")

Seeing it as the source of his grandeur and misery, Rousseau habitually spoke of his "sensitive soul" from a pre-Romantic point of view, with poignant melancholy betraying pleasure-in-pain, all the while expressing an eternal

¹Ibid., p. 443.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 14, note 1.

³Ibid., p. 7.

psychological aspect of the human condition, exquisitely perceived and rendered in a famous passage: "O Julie," exclaims Saint-Preux, "que c'est un fatal présent du ciel qu'une âme sensible! Celui qui l'a reçu doit s'attendre à n'avoir que peine et douleur sur la terre. Vil jouet de l'air et des saisons, le soleil ou les brouillards, l'air couvert ou serein régleront sa destinée, et il sera content ou triste au gré des vents. Victime des préjugés, il trouvera dans d'absurdes maximes un obstacle invincible aux justes vœux de son cœur. Les hommes le puniront d'avoir des sentiments droits de chaque chose, et d'en juger par ce qui est véritable plutôt que par ce qui est de convention. Seul il suffirait pour faire sa propre misère, en se livrant indiscretement aux attrait divins de l'honnête et du beau, tandis que les pesantes chaînes de la nécessité l'attachent à l'ignominie. Il cherchera la félicité suprême sans se souvenir qu'il est homme: son cœur et sa raison seront incessamment en guerre, et des désirs sans bornes lui prépareront d'éternelles privations."¹

While failing to understand it, Rousseau was aware of his "invincible penchant for melancholy," which he called the torment of his soul.² In this sense, he habitually identified with the Fatal Hero, misunderstood and rejected by a society blind to his superiority, notably that of Prevost, in particular Cleveland. It was in this light that he saw Socrates and, particularly, Christ.

¹La Nouvelle Héloïse, O.C. II, p. 89.

²"Soit tempérament, soit habitude d'être malheureux, je porte en moi une source de tristesse dont je ne saurais bien démêler l'origine. J'ai presque toujours vécu dans la solitude, longtemps infirme et languissant, considérant la fin de ma courte vie comme l'objet le plus voisin, un vif désir de sensibilité, dans une âme qui n'a jamais été ouverte qu'à la douleur, portant continuellement dans mon sein, et mes propres peines et celles de tout ce qui m'était cher. Ce n'était là que trop de quoi fortifier ma tristesse naturelle." Rousseau, "Fragment of 'Mémoire présenté à M. de Ste. Marie pour l'éducation de son fils,'" C.G. I, p. 377.

The Rêveries develop the description of Rousseau's sensitivity: "Dominé par mes sens quoique je puisse faire," he reveals, "je n'ai jamais su résister à leurs impressions, et tant que l'objet agit sur eux mon coeur ne cesse d'en être affecté; mais ces affections passagères ne durent qu'autant que la sensation qui les cause. La présence de l'homme haineux m'affecte violemment mais sitôt qu'il disparaît l'impression cesse; à l'instant que je ne le vois plus je n'y pense plus....."

"Cette action de mes sens sur mon coeur fait le seul tourment de ma vie. Les jours où je ne vois personne, je ne pense plus à ma destinée, je ne la sens plus, je ne souffre plus, je suis heureux et content sans diversion, sans obstacle. Mais j'échappe rarement à quelque atteint sensible, et lorsque j'y pense le moins un regard sinistre que j'aperçois, un mot envenimé que j'entends, un malveillant que je rencontre, suffit pour me bouleverser. Tout ce que je puis en pareil cas est d'oublier bien vite et de fuir. Le trouble de mon coeur disparaît avec l'objet qui l'a causé et je rentre dans le calme aussitôt que je suis seul. Ou si quelque chose m'inquiète c'est la crainte de rencontrer sur mon passage quelque nouveau sujet de douleur. C'est là ma seule peine; mais elle suffit pour altérer tout mon bonheur."¹

To Rousseau's hypersensitivity is thus tied an extraordinary imagination and faculty of identification, particularly where guilt or sorrow are concerned. Sitting in a café on the opening day of his hit operetta, The Village Fortune-teller, Rousseau overheard an honest- and friendly-looking officer confidently boast to a gullible audience of having seen "the author" at dress rehearsal. He then proceeded to describe "the author's" appearance and what he had said and done. Rousseau's reaction, far from the malicious, detached amusement one might expect, was an extreme embarrassment and shame. " ... Tandis qu[e

¹Rêveries, O.C. I, p. 1082.

l'officier] débitait ses mensonges," he confessed, "je rougissais, je baissais les yeux, j'étais sur les épines; je cherchais quelquefois en moi-même s'il n'y aurait pas moyen de le croire dans l'erreur et de bonne foi. Enfin tremblant que quelqu'un ne me reconnût et ne lui en fit l'affront, je me hâtai d'achever mon chocolat sans rien dire, et baissant la tête en passant devant lui, je sortis le plus tôt qu'il me fut possible, tandis que les assistants péroraient sur sa relation. Je m'aperçus dans la rue que j'étais en sueur, et je suis sûr que si quelqu'un m'eût reconnu et nommé avant ma sortie, on m'aurait vu la honte et l'embarras d'un coupable, par le seul sentiment de la peine que ce pauvre homme aurait à souffrir si son mensonge était reconnu."¹

Not only was Rousseau extraordinarily sensitive and imaginative, he was in some respects incapable -- unwilling to expose himself to the effort and risk -- of dealing masterfully with people in everyday encounters, tending rather to withdraw in defense against the hazards of psychological self-affirmation.² We see him, for example, as a young man in a tug-o-war with a tiny child left temporarily in his charge. Late the first night, Rousseau was awakened by the sound of the child's cries. He jumped out of bed and lit the candle. The little boy had sought nothing but this attention and promptly fell asleep. Two nights later, the incident repeated itself. This time the child received a warning: "My little friend, this is all very well, but don't do it again!" The youngster failed to become discouraged and tried once more. "What do you want?" asked his angry companion. "I can't sleep." "Too bad." The child asked the young man to light the candle. "What for?" So the youngster attempted to light it himself, but, unable to perform the

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 377.

²Thus the famous Rousseau psychological "laziness," which permitted the philosopher to avoid distasteful acts and to maintain his belief that he could perform adequately (if such were his desire) acts in areas in which his confidence was shaky. Thus, too, Rousseau's legendary timidity: "une timidité insurmontable qui me fait perdre contenance et m'ôte la liberté de l'esprit, même devant des gens aussi sots que moi. Je devrais être guéri de ce défaut pour les torts qu'il m'a faits: je ne puis cependant m'empêcher d'imaginer qu'on en peut abuser aisément pour me mépriser un peu plus que je mérite." Rousseau, "Fragment of 'Mémoire présenté à M. de Ste. Marie pour l'éducation de son fils,'" C.G. I, p. 377.

operation, brought candle and lighter to his mentor's bedside. Rousseau declared he didn't want them and rolled over to face the wall. Thereupon, the child exploded into a first-class temper tantrum, running about the room, screaming, shrieking, singing, kicking and pounding the chairs and table. Rousseau, in bed, did not budge but became furious. With a last-ditch effort at self-control, he got up, seized the child and locked him in a dark, closed room for the rest of the night.¹

Now, leaving aside all but its short-term practical results, this far-from-desirable method of problem-solving doubtlessly assured young Rousseau of systematic insubordination as long as he remained in the child's vicinity. This is only one of a myriad of examples in which, by trying to solve his human relations problems, Rousseau opted for the apparently "easy out" -- locking his difficulties in a closed room as he had his young charge -- and finding himself, in the long run, in a situation infinitely more unpleasant and demanding than that which would have resulted from a straightforward, determined plunge-in-and-get-it-over-with approach. Instead, his emotional dependence on those around him led him to seek out parent-figures as gratification and protection from insecurity and to employ submissiveness as a technique of attachment. A first version of the Confessions reveals that, in early childhood, "already fearful through the danger of displeasing," Rousseau became "very prone to acts of submissiveness," describing himself as "sorrier to displease than to be punished."²

¹Recounted in Emile, O.C. IV, pp. 364-5.

²"Le Première Rédaction des Confessions (Livres I-IV)," ed. T. Dufour, Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau IV (1908), p. 25.
(Translation mine.)

Deformed, then, in his singular vulnerability as in his greatness, Rousseau was not surprisingly possessed of an excessive, uncontrollably impetuous "all-or-nothing" character. "Il ne me faut que des plaisirs purs," he confesses, the presence of an intermediary or the tiniest doubt or imperfection being sufficient to destroy the absolute quality he craved. He often remarked the infinitely vast number of chances for misery as opposed to the single chance for happiness, the infinitely great possibilities of immorality as opposed to the one possibility of righteousness, and so on -- an idealistic frame of mind hardly propitious to friendship in the ordinary sense of the term -- that of a Mme. Dupin, for example -- without, however, affecting receptivity to ties of extraordinary compatibility such as that which briefly united Montaigne and La Boétie.

Aware of the abnormality -- he would have called it "uniqueness" -- of his démesuré temperament, given to sudden outbursts of unbridled emotion followed by periods of extreme lassitude, Rousseau describes his cyclic inner life: "J'ai des passions très ardentes, et tandis qu'elles m'agitent rien n'égale mon impétuosité; je ne connais plus ni ménagement, ni respect, ni crainte, ni bienséance; je suis cynique, effronté, violent, intrépide. Il n'y a ni honte qui m'arrête ni danger qui m'effraie. Hors le seul objet qui m'occupe l'univers n'est plus rien pour moi: mais tout cela ne dure qu'un moment et le moment qui suit me jette dans l'anéantissement. Prenez-moi dans le calme, je suis l'indolence et la timidité même: tout m'effarouche, tout me rebute, une mouche en volant me fait peur; un mot à dire, un geste à faire épouvante ma paresse, la crainte et la honte me subjuguent à tel point que je voudrais m'éclipser aux yeux de tous les mortels. S'il faut agir je ne sais que faire; s'il faut parler je ne sais que dire; si l'on me regarde je suis décontenancé. Quand je me passionne, je sais trouver quelquefois ce que j'ai à dire; mais

dans les entretiens ordinaires je ne trouve rien, rien du tout; ils me sont insupportables par cela seul que je suis obligé de parler."¹

During moments of passion, Rousseau was unable to calm or even contain himself.² It was only toward the end of his life that he learned to wait out the storm. "Convaincu de l'impossibilité [de] contenir ces premiers mouvements involontaires, j'ai cessé tous mes efforts pour cela. Je laisse à chaque atteinte [de fureur] mon sang s'allumer, la colère et l'indignation s'emparer de mes sens, je cède à la nature cette première explosion que toutes mes forces ne pourraient arrêter ni suspendre. Je tâche seulement d'en arrêter les suites avant qu'elle ait produit aucun effet. Les yeux étincelants, le feu du visage, le tremblement des membres, les suffocantes palpitations, tout cela tient au seul physique et le raisonnement n'y peut rien; mais après avoir laissé faire au naturel sa première explosion, l'on peut redevenir son propre maître en reprenant peu à peu ses sens; c'est ce que j'ai tâché de faire longtemps sans succès, ..." ³

The rapidity of Rousseau's metamorphoses equalled the extremity of their proportions. Said he of himself, "... Il passe d'une extrémité à l'autre avec une incroyable rapidité sans même remarquer ce passage ni se souvenir de ce qu'il était l'instant auparavant ..." ⁴

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 36. Two other aspects of Rousseau's character may be tied in here: "Impulsiveness and stubbornness at the same time," says Ducros, "impulsiveness to take a stand, stubbornness in sticking to it, even if the stand appeared risky, these are, I believe, two essential traits, not only of Rousseau's character but of his entire work ..." Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Paris: Boccard, 1918), Vol. 1, p. 76.

²Indeed, Rousseau's excessiveness eventually progressed, at one end of the cyclic scale, to periods of "madness" during which he lost all control of his thought processes. Later, too, Rousseau's feeling of inner division would drive him on to more adequate self-understanding. An enigma to himself, with no fixed character ("deformed" by the mere presence of others), he would seek the restoration of his primordial unity.

³Réveries, O.C. I, p. 1083.

⁴Dialogues, O.C. I, p. 818.

This phenomenon was not merely a question of normal change in mood or spirits but affected Rousseau's entire personality. As case in point, we offer Rousseau's description of the perils of normal conversation as presented to him by his over-active imagination:

"Si peu maître de mon esprit seul avec moi-même, qu'on juge de ce que je dois être dans la conversation, où, pour parler à propos, il faut penser à la fois et sur le champ à mille choses. La seule idée de tant de convenances dont je suis sûr d'oublier au moins quelque'une suffit pour m'intimider. Je ne comprends pas même comment on ose parler dans un cercle: car à chaque mot il faudrait passer en revue tous les gens qui sont là: il faudrait connaître tous leurs caractères, savoir leurs histoires pour être sûr de ne rien dire qui puisse offenser quelqu'un. Là-dessus ceux qui vivent dans le monde ont un grand avantage: sachant mieux ce qu'il faut taire, ils sont plus sûrs de ce qu'ils disent: encore leur échappe-t-il souvent des balourdises. Qu'on juge de celui qui tombe là des nues! Il lui est presque impossible de parler une minute impunément. Dans le tête-à-tête il y a un autre inconvénient que je trouve pire; la nécessité de parler toujours. Quand on vous parle il faut répondre, et si l'on ne dit mot, il faut relever la conversation. Cette insupportable contrainte m'eût seule dégoûté de la société. Je ne trouve point de gêne plus terrible que l'obligation de parler sur le champ et toujours. Je ne sais si ceci tient à ma mortelle aversion pour tout assujétissement; mais c'est assez qu'il faille absolument que je parle pour que je dise une sottise infailliblement.

"Ce qu'il y a de plus fatal est qu'au lieu de savoir me taire quand je n'ai rien à dire, c'est alors que pour payer plutôt ma dette j'ai la fureur de vouloir parler. Je me hâte de balbutier promptement des paroles sans idées, trop heureux quand elles ne signifient rien du tout. En voulant

vaincre ou cacher mon ineptie, je manque rarement de la montrer."¹

Now, in this same conversational setting, Antoine Bret offers an anecdote describing Rousseau's incredible faculty of change. In the Parisian salon world, Bret saw Rousseau as "toujours modeste, toujours intérieur et ne se livrant à la conversation et aux divers amusements de la société qu'avec une réserve infinie." On one occasion, however, Bret witnessed a miraculous transformation. " ... Je l'y ai quelquefois vu très aimable," Bret reports, "et même une fois de la plus ingénieuse coquetterie. En tout il n'était question que de l'intéresser un peu. Une demoiselle étrangère, fille de beaucoup d'esprit, marchant déjà vers son été mais d'une physionomie ouverte et riante et dont la conversation animée semblait encore plus piquante par un joli accent italien, attaque un jour particulièrement notre philosophe dont elle entrevoyait sans doute la secrète sensibilité au fond de cet oeil d'aigle qu'il portait souvent sur elle, et dont le feu devenait toujours plus brûlant lorsqu'il s'abandonnait à la nature et à ses sens.

" [La demoiselle] ne s'était point trompée. M. Rousseau sortit pour ainsi dire de lui-même, se développa et s'embellit à nos yeux, mille traits agréables lui échappèrent, il fut bien secondé, et je me rappelle encore avec étonnement tout le changement que fit en lui ce désir momentané de plaire, car cet incident n'eut point de suite, mais pendant deux ou trois heures il nous offrit notre philosophe avec un déploiement de grâces qu'on ne lui soupçonnait pas et que lui aurait envié le courtisan le plus avantageux et le plus accoutumé à triompher dans ces espèces de joutes galantes. C'est dans cette disposition d'esprit qu'il a probablement tracé ces pages brûlantes où son âme s'est répandue avec toute la sensibilité dont elle était remplie."²

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 115.

²C.C. II, Appendix A-81, p. 311. Bret's incident is not an isolated

Rousseau's extraordinary and constant changeability cannot be overstressed. Dusaulx, an acquaintance of his later years, saw two rival souls in him, alternately taking command of his body. He passed from happiness to sorrow, joviality to melancholy, in an instant, with oftentimes only the slightest environmental change as catalyst. No one of his contemporaries ever understood his personality (except perhaps several disciples toward the end of his life); on the contrary, it startled or shocked everyone, intriguing some, repulsing others.¹

example. Pastor Vernes told a similar story to J.-P. Brissot de Warville: "[Vernes] me citait avec attendrissement une promenade qu'il fit une fois avec [Rousseau] au clair de la lune sur les bords du lac. La conversation tomba sur la Providence. Jean-Jacques qui bégayait, balbutiait dans les sociétés, où il était presque toujours mal à son aise, parce qu'il était hors de son niveau, Jean-Jacques, vivement ému par le silence de la nature, par le spectacle qui frappait ses yeux, parla de la Divinité en inspiré. 'Jamais', me disait Vernes, 'il ne fut aussi éloquent dans ses livres. Rien dans tout ce qu'il a publié n'approche de cet élan de son imagination.'" C.C. III, Appendix A-132, p. 329.

¹D'Holbach eventually confessed that he and his friends had used Rousseau's emotional instability as a source of amusement: "Rien n'était plus commun que la conversation ordinaire de Jean-Jacques; mais elle devenait réellement sublime ou folle dès qu'il était contrarié. J'ai à me reprocher d'avoir multiplié ces contrariétés pour multiplier les moments d'éclat et de verve. Cependant lorsque je voyais qu'il s'emportait, je m'étudiais à le calmer et il retombait tout de suite dans son engourdissement." Reported by Cerutti, cited in C.C. III, Appendix A-140, p. 347.

Many of Rousseau's seemingly inconsequential actions and predicaments become clear and logical in the light of his chameleon personality. He was himself aware of it to a certain extent and described it playfully in the Persifleur: "Rien n'est si dissemblable à moi que moi-même. C'est pourquoi il serait inutile de tenter de me définir autrement que par cette variété singulière; elle est telle dans mon esprit qu'elle influe de temps à autre jusque sur mes sentiments. Quelquefois je suis un dur et féroce misanthrope, en d'autres moments, j'entre en extase au milieu des charmes de la société et des délices de l'amour. Tantôt je suis austère et dévôt, et pour le bien de mon âme je fais tous mes efforts pour rendre durables ces saintes dispositions: mais je deviens bientôt un franc libertin ... En un mot, un protée, un caméléon, une femme sont des êtres moins changeants que moi. Ce qui doit dès l'abord ôter aux curieux toute espérance de me reconnaître quelque jour à mon caractère; car ils me trouveront toujours sous quelque forme particulière qui ne sera la mienne que pendant ce moment-là; et ils ne peuvent pas même espérer de me reconnaître à ces changements, car comme ils n'ont point de période fixe ils se feront quelquefois d'un instant à l'autre, et d'autres fois je demeurerai des mois entiers dans le même état. C'est cette irrégularité même qui fait le fond de ma constitution. Bien plus; le retour des mêmes objets renouvelle ordinairement en moi des dispositions semblables à celles où je me suis trouvé la première fois que je les ai vus. C'est pourquoi je suis assez constamment de la même humeur avec les mêmes personnes. De sorte qu'à entendre séparément tous ceux qui me connaissent, rien ne paraîtrait moins varié que mon caractère: mais, allez aux derniers éclaircissements, l'un vous dira que je suis badin, l'autre, grave, celui-ci me prendra pour un ignorant, l'autre pour un homme fort docte; en un mot, autant de têtes autant d'avis. Je me trouve si

bizarrement disposé à cet égard qu'étant un jour abordé par deux personnes à la fois, avec l'une desquelles j'avais accoutumé d'être gai jusqu'à la folie, et plus ténébreux qu'Héraclite avec l'autre, je me sentis si puissamment agité que je fus contraint de les quitter brusquement de peur que le contraste des passions opposées ne me fit tomber en syncope."¹

In Rousseau's life experience, this changeability gives widely-varying, yet equally "true," subjective pictures of a given period, and we must constantly remain on guard against interpreting as a permanent quality of Rousseau's temperament and history what may only be the momentary lighting of a given scene. An instant, an hour, a day may bring about an altogether different-appearing picture. It is thus impossible to pinpoint or define Rousseau -- much less "understand" him -- ; one can only take into consideration the simultaneous existence of optimistic and pessimistic views of a given situation -- and all the shades between!

This strange hereditary legacy could not help but affect Rousseau's concept and experience of human relations. To it must be added numerous environmental influences. Generally speaking, his entire childhood was pervaded by an idealism acquired largely through literature. A predictably subjective -- acutely subjective -- reader, Rousseau acquired very early the habit of meditating, interpreting and applying literary experience to life, which gave this experience a peculiar immediacy. His reading began at such an early age as to coincide with the beginning of sustained self-consciousness, which usually occurs at four or five years of age. The world to which infant-Rousseau awakened, then, was, like that of Don Quixote and all the nobleman's more or less illustrious posterity, adream-utopia.² This influence was

¹O.C. I, pp. 1108-9.

²Indeed, fantasy was as much a factor in Rousseau's life as was so-called "reality."

aggravated by Rousseau's intellectual precocity.¹ He later attributed to this form of prise de conscience the admittedly deformed, "bizarre" and "romanesque" vision of human relations from which he was never to free himself. The strong Genevan religious influence also contributed to Rousseau's idealism, giving him the need for a feeling of righteousness, moral order and harmony, as well as for sincerity of intent and action.²

As Rousseau was himself the first to recognize, his personality split very early into two distinct and all-in-all incompatible trends, to which he generally refers as "masculine" (meaning "active") and "feminine" (meaning "passive").³ Both play key roles in his concept of human relations and will be considered consecutively.

Rousseau's passive nature -- his strongly sensuous and "lazy" temperament -- developed through a combination of events beginning with the circumstances of his birth. His mother died of purpuric fever nine days after having brought him into the world "crippled and sick." "Une soeur de mon père," he recounts, "... prit si grand soin de moi qu'elle me sauva."⁴ Thanks largely to his "misfortunes," the infant Jean-Jacques was excessively

¹"Mon enfance ne fut point d'un enfant," he asserted; "Je sentis, je pensai toujours en homme." Confessions, O.C. I, p. 62.

²The Calvinism of Rousseau's youth, dominated by theologian Jean-Alphonse Turretini, had a predominantly moral and practical Christian orientation, quite the opposite of the religious attitude of French contemporaries. According to Grimsley, "The essential point about the religious outlook of his boyhood Geneva was that it had tended to stress the moral rather than the dogmatic aspects of Christianity and the quasi-theocratic government had been anxious above all to control the moral life of its citizens." Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Study in Self-Awareness (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961), p. 67. On more than one occasion, Rousseau spoke of the Genevan's conviction of his own natural goodness. Rousseau was never able to free himself from the influence of his early ethical environment.

³E.g. "... ce coeur à la fois si fier et si tendre, ce caractère efféminé mais pourtant indomptable, qui, flottant toujours entre la faiblesse et le courage, entre la mollesse et la vertu, m'a jusqu'au bout mis en contradiction avec moi-même, et a fait que l'abstinence et la jouissance, le plaisir et la sagesse, m'ont également échappé." Confessions, O.C. I, p. 12. These two facets of Rousseau's personality are clearly evident in Quentin de La Tour's justly famous portrait.

⁴Ibid., p. 8. Cf. "... J'étais né mourant. Un vice de conformation dans la vessie me fit éprouver durant mes premières années une rétention d'urine presque continuelle, et ma tante Suzon qui prit soin de moi eut des peines incroyables à me conserver." Ibid., p. 361.

fussed over during the first months of his earthly existence. Rousseau fails to mention a wet-nurse, but he does speak affectionately of his two mother-figures, Aunt Suzanne, the "Julie" of his infancy, and servant Jacqueline, his childhood "Claire." If it is true that the basic character is formed during the first eighteen months of life, then we must attribute to an overabundance of feminine attention much of Rousseau's sensual passivity.

A second contributing factor was the influence of seventeenth-century idealistic novels, which constituted young Jean-Jacques' first reading matter. Rousseau identified this experience with his father, and particularly the markedly childlike side of Isaac Rousseau's personality. He tells the story thus: "Ma mère avait laissé des romans, Nous nous mimes à les lire après souper mon père et moi. Il n'était question d'abord que de m'exercer à la lecture par des livres amusants; mais bientôt l'intérêt devint si vif que nous lisions tour à tour sans relâche, et passions les nuits à cette occupation. Nous ne pouvions jamais quitter qu'à la fin du volume. Quelquefois mon père, entendant le matin les hirondelles, disait tout honteux: allons nous coucher; je suis plus enfant que toi."¹

Rousseau later saw such novels as pleasurable but treacherous seducers of the sensitive, responsible for much of his own strongly sensual orientation through their overdevelopment of the imagination. "Je n'avais aucune idée des choses," he explains, "que tous les sentiments m'étaient déjà connus. Je n'avais rien conçu; j'avais tout senti. Ces émotions confuses que j'éprouvais coup sur coup n'altéraient point la raison que je n'avais pas

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 8. No critic seems to have remarked that, although Rousseau uses the imperfect tense in describing the all-night reading session(s) with his father, which serves to give them (it) a timeless "privileged moment" quality, it is highly unlikely that Isaac Rousseau made

encore: mais elles m'en formèrent une d'une autre trempe ... ¹ So strong was Rousseau's conviction of the moral uselessness and potential danger of the so-called feminine literary genres that Emile was given no reading matter but Robinson Crusoe until well into his teens, and Saint-Preux excluded from Julie's reading plan the poetry and love stories which he permitted the more tepid Claire, explaining that "ces études énervent l'âme, la jettent dans la mollesse, et lui ôtent tout son ressort."²

A perhaps equally far-reaching consequence of Rousseau's early and prolonged experience of novel-reading was its effect on the philosopher's concept of happiness, which, as the castle-dream reveals, he invariably conceived in terms of sentimental elitism, conditions to identify happiness with ideal love and ideal friendship experienced in an ideal environment with ideal participants, and possessing mystic powers of ennoblement and purification. This, of course, left him eternally disappointed with reality as it presented itself, giving him the vague conviction that life had somehow let him down. This tendency was aggravated by his vulnerability to

a habit of reading all night with his son, especially when his first reaction thereafter was embarrassment and shame, indicating disapproval of the action. It appears more logical to imagine the incident's taking place once or several times at most, with Rousseau's "petrifying" it (by use of the imperfect tense) to make it symbolic of his and his father's sentiments and relationship.

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 8.

²La Nouvelle Héloïse, O.C. II, p. 61. Although, throughout life, Rousseau clung doggedly to his idealistic vision, his awareness that the dreams created by his imagination were unattainable is betrayed in his wish that Emile be different, living only in the present, knowing only reality.

brilliant appearances at the beginning of a relationship, later invariably to "fall from the clouds" at the moment the glittering mask was penetrated. Having learned first from his novels to identify moral goodness with physical beauty, Rousseau later experienced great difficulty in equitably judging people. Without this unfortunate conditioning, he would certainly have experienced fewer disastrous infatuations and enjoyed more solid and fulfilling relationships. Furthermore, at least until his 1749 "illumination," he persistently identified his ideal world (in a sense, his native land) with the institution of the aristocracy. Thus Crocker's comment that "in his fantasies he saw himself as an aristocrat, and dreamed of being one. Life had played him a trick he could never forgive and placed him in the wrong role"¹ -- ambitious, then, through an intuition that his place was amongst an elite of superior beings. Rousseau's so-called "inferiority complex" is merely frustration and indignation at his inability to successfully play this role; his so-called "snobbery" arises from this sense of (moral) hierarchy encountered in his early reading experience.

The passive side of Rousseau's nature was still further developed by his early life-style. During the first ten years of his life, the boy was systematically isolated from the outside world and relatively free from subjection to discipline. " ... Mon père, ma tante [Suzanne], ma mie [Jacqueline], mes parents, nos amis, nos voisins"² -- almost exclusively middle-aged men and women -- constituted his world. "Jamais une seule fois," he said, "jusqu'à ma sortie de la maison paternelle on ne m'a laissé courir seul dans la rue avec les autres enfants ... "³ Modern psychology has shown

¹Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Quest. (1712-1758). (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 74.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 10.

³Ibid., p. 10.

that such early isolation, combined with abundant attention, can cause serious and permanent psychological damage, turning a child in on himself and preventing him from the possibility of ever achieving satisfactory social intercourse. Often on the defensive, he fears being managed by others, fears their smothering him, yet paradoxically he has a great need for favorable attention. Dependent, he misses attention when he fails to receive it and worries about what people think of him. He is inhibited and self-conscious, awkward in showing affection and in asking for it -- disappointed again and again. Too much fussing over a child, then, causes him to develop narcissistic traits, whereas excessive early isolation from his peers virtually renders impossible successful adaptation to society, condemning a man, while still a toddler, to a lifetime as a misfit.

Paradoxically, to the child being thus crippled, this state appears highly pleasurable. Aunt Suzanne was the main figure in this safe, hermetically-sealed and over-extended "pre-schooler" world. Rousseau attributed to her one of his few privileged moments of contentment:¹ "Hors le temps que je passais à lire ou écrire auprès de mon père, et celui où ma mie me menait promener, j'étais toujours avec ma tante, à la voir broder, à l'entendre chanter, assis ou debout à côté d'elle, et j'étais content.

¹These were the rare moments when Rousseau felt satisfied with his lot, not desirous of anything other than the comforts and pleasures he had at his immediate disposition. Through his use of the imperfect tense, Rousseau stresses the habitual characteristics of these situations in the past; yet, by refraining to add any time images, he removes them from the temporal sphere of "reality," "petrifying" them and transferring them to his subjective universe. As the facts behind the Charmettes incident suggest, Rousseau's privileged moments may have been, in reality, considerably less durable than his use of the imperfect leads us to believe -- less durable in terms of "clock time," that is. Rousseau generally adds to the expression of his satisfaction, his feeling that the situation could have gone on forever without change on his part, had it not been terminated by external forces beyond his personal control. (Cf. the early social state in his theory of evolution.) (Cf. also: "J'écrivais mes Confessions déjà vieux, et dégoûté des vains plaisirs de la vie que j'avais tous effleurés et dont mon coeur avait bien senti le vide. Je les écrivais de mémoire; cette mémoire me manquait souvent ou ne me fournissait que des souvenirs imparfaits et j'en remplissais les lacunes par des détails que j'imaginai en supplément de ces souvenirs, mais qui ne leur étaient jamais contraires. J'aimais à m'étendre sur les moments heureux de ma vie, et je les embellissais quelquefois des ornements

Son enjouement, sa douceur, sa figure agréable, m'ont laissé de si fortes impressions, que je vois encore son air, son regard, son attitude; ... La sérénité d'âme de cette excellente fille éloignait d'elle et de tout ce qui l'entourait la rêverie et la tristesse."¹

It has been traditionally customary to eulogize Aunt Suzanne, following Rousseau's own example. Recently, on the contrary, she has been attacked for having spoiled her young charge. This latter attitude is perhaps a bit hard on her: given Rousseau's hereditary legacy, it would have taken a miracle to pull him through his childhood unscathed. For our purposes, since Aunt Suzanne was perhaps the decisive figure in the formation of Rousseau's passive personality, we must try to acquaint ourselves with her and her alter ego Jacqueline.

When Mme. Rousseau died in childbirth, spinster Suzanne was selected -- probably hired -- to move in with the family and take charge of the household management. Thirty years of age, this "fille aimable et sage" appears to have possessed the stabilizing qualities of gentleness, calm and moderation, combined with the delights of beauty, affection and a sweetly-cheerful disposition. Young Jacqueline Faramond, daughter of a local shoemaker and employed as "mother's helper," had similar characteristics, except that, like Julie's Claire, and incidentally only sixteen years old, she was gayer, more accessible and less venerable to the child. (A neighbor later testified of Jacqueline, "Sa mémoire est en vénération dans le quartier. Elle avait un si bon coeur, elle était si généreuse et d'un caractère si gai que je ne suis point étonné que Rousseau ait toujours conservé pour elle un tendre souvenir.")² Although both young women were single (both married

que de tendres regrets venaient me fournir. Je disais les choses que j'avais oubliées comme il me semblait qu'elles avaient dû être, comme elles avaient été peut-être en effet, jamais au contraire de ce que je me rappelais qu'elles avaient été." Rêveries, O.C. I, p. 1035. Also see Grimsley's observations concerning Rousseau's attitude towards time. Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Study in Self-Awareness (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961), p. 334.

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 11.

²Cited by Eugène Ritter, La Famille et la jeunesse de J.-J. Rousseau (Paris: Hachette, 1896), p. 148.

later in life), they were oriented toward their domestic functions, rather than longing for "fulfillment" elsewhere. With no husbands to demand their time nor any duty more pressing than the service of the household (in which they were both literally employed), they gave the baby of the family a great deal of attention. Perhaps they would have done the same for a kitten or a puppy. At any rate, to Rousseau, "les enfants des rois ne sauraient être soignés avec plus de zèle que je le fus durant mes premiers ans, idolâtré de tout ce qui m'environnait, et toujours, ce qui est bien plus rare, traité en enfant chéri, jamais en enfant gâté."¹ "Je n'avais sous les yeux," he continues, "que des exemples de douceur, et autour de moi que les meilleures gens du monde."²

Rousseau always considered -- or longed to consider -- Aunt Suzanne as a mother, witness his stress on her having "restored him to life."³ In Emile, he rhetorically asks, "... où j'ai trouvé les soins d'une mère ne dois-je pas l'attachement d'un fils?"⁴ Suzanne's pedagogical policy of leniency and isolation, however, brings out her actual subordinate position in the household in which she was, after all, only an employee or substitute. Rousseau considered her in this light as well, his natural mother, as we shall see, being spiritually present in the home. Then too, sweet Aunt Suzanne had little education and was not particularly alert or imaginative. At any rate, attempting to look to the child's best interests, she failed to recognize what she was doing to him. In sum, then, we may thank the

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 10.

²Ibid., p. 10.

³Cf. "Chère tante, je vous pardonne de m'avoir fait vivre ..." Ibid., p. 8.

⁴Emile, O.C. IV, p. 257.

all-in-all lovable and in many ways Julie-like Aunt Suzanne for her contribution to Rousseau's goodness, gentleness and, yes, gaiety, but would be justified in deploring her thoughtless contribution to his weakness of character and passivity.

With father Isaac Rousseau, the case was not altogether the same. His influence on Rousseau's passive personality came largely through the development of a complex that was to torture the philosopher throughout his life and eventually to drive him to madness: the fear of guilt. To do justice to this most important aspect of Rousseau's character, we must take a few steps backward in an attempt to reconstruct his early relationship with his father.

The Rousseau-Bernard family tree consisted of pure and unadulterated mediocrity: respectable, predictable, unremarkable bourgeois descendants of French craftsmen and peasants, emigrants to Calvin's sixteenth-century Geneva, literate and aware men and women, narrow-minded, conformist and money-conscious, in true middle-class tradition.¹ By the turn of the eighteenth century, the family, like the Church, had evolved an appreciable, if limited, number of degrees toward liberality. For example, although dancing and adult entertainment were still forbidden in the severe little republic, Jean-Jacques' paternal grandfather, David Rousseau, had given

¹The family was not, however, without certain traces of emotional instability. Besides the somewhat eccentric and irresponsible members of Rousseau's immediate family, a paternal cousin, Jean-François Rousseau, is known to have shown marked symptoms of persecution mania.

several dance parties, one shortly after the death of his wife, Jean-Jacques' own father had spent a year working as dance instructor and played a sinfully toe-tapping fiddle. The Rousseau aunts had played cards on Sunday. Even Jean-Jacques' own mother, Suzanne Bernard, had been scolded by the authorities for having, at a ripe twenty-two years of age, disguised herself as a peasant to attend an outdoor puppet-show. Péchés mignons! But, again, pretty Mlle. Bernard caught the public eye for playing a more dangerous game, in her early twenties, as object of the amorous attentions of a wealthy local married man and père de famille. Although the pursuit was apparently unsuccessful, it nonetheless took place, and the gentleman must have had some grounds for deluding himself into hoping for... well, how could his intentions have been honorable? Submissive, home-oriented girls simply do not find themselves in such predicaments! Again in her thirties, Suzanne Bernard, now Mme. Rousseau, won the admiration -- platonic undoubtedly -- of another local dignitary, the French "Resident" or ambassador. Probably neither a "flirt" nor a "tease," this lively, attractive young woman was, however, most certainly interested in the world outside the confines of her home. If not "thoroughly modern," she was definitely champing at the bit.

With Jean-Jacques' aunt, Theodora Rousseau, the case was different. The good woman had scarcely the time to plight her troth before bringing forth (one week later) a firstborn child. Jean-Jacques was unaware of the shotgun aspects of his aunt's wedding. A late family arrival, he knew his relatives only as middle-aged and respectable -- and, upon reaching their forties, Rousseau and Bernard women dutifully metamorphosed into strict and righteous Calvinists. All three of Jean-Jacques' aunts were "pious," and he even qualified Theodora and Clermonde as "professional dévotes." (Had Jean-Jacques' own mother lived, she may well have developed into something quite different from her romantic legend!) This late-blooming and

excessive female piety can be largely explained by the fact that the family males, selfish, headstrong and tyrannical creatures, were, quite frankly, sub-standard husbands and fathers. Even the gullible Jean-Jacques, who swallowed all the family myths, clearly perceived and flatly stated that the two male figures of his childhood, father and uncle, were "men of pleasure" -- not a very flattering description when applied to a middle-aged paterfamilias.

This sort of shenanigans took only second place in the typical Genevan home, greatly concerned with its public image. Reputation in Geneva was of vital importance. The Consistory or governmental moral agency, the vigilant clergy, even local administrative officials were responsible for the maintenance of moral law and order, and the people were conditioned to value their good name as their most precious possession. The republic itself -- small enough for nearly everyone to be acquainted -- was constructed on the principle of civil hierarchy, divided socially and geographically into "high city" and "low city," its residents pigeonholed into well-defined classes: Citizens, Bourgeois, Natifs and Habitants. Only the Citizens and Bourgeois, or between 1,000 and 1,600, ten per cent of the population, composed the theoretically sovereign body. In fact, however, governmental power had, by Rousseau's time, slipped out of the Bourgeois/Citizens' calloused hands and into the well-manicured grasp of a small elite of wealthy families. Life-styles were simple and similar in all classes. At the time of Rousseau's birth, the Rousseaus and the Bernards were Citizens, living comfortably in their own homes in "high city." Isaac Rousseau was a watchmaker with his own studio and skillful at his craft -- a seemingly logical prospect for upper-middle-classdom. Vallette describes the Genevan watchmaker of this period as "not an ordinary workingman" and "fully conscious of this superiority."¹ Aristocrat, in a sense, of the City of Craftsmen,

¹Rousseau Genevois (Paris: Plon, 1911), p. 21. (Translation mine.)

practitioner of the national art, the typical Genevan watchmaker was an intelligent, surprisingly well-read, well-traveled, open-minded, active, inventive and respected member of the middle-class community, on a par with the local pastor. But Isaac Rousseau was, like Jean-Jacques, a démesuré, and for that reason, in the words of Guéhenno, "his house was slowly sinking from the middle- to the lower-class."¹

We must examine the background of this unusual man, so influential to his son through heredity and environment. Rousseau tells us part of the story: "Un bien fort médiocre à partager entre quinze enfants ayant réduit à presque rien la portion de mon père, il n'avait pour subsister que le métier d'horloger, dans lequel il était, à la vérité, fort habile."²

Upon completion of his watchmaking apprenticeship, Isaac Rousseau had gone into business as dancing instructor with two other Genevans, then had pulled out of the association to return to his watchmaking craft, but first taking time out to see the world outside his tiny native land. Jean-Jacques believed traveling had been his father's attempt to cure himself of a seemingly-hopeless passion for the childhood sweetheart who was later to become his wife... and why not? Then in her resplendent twenties, Suzanne Bernard had wit, culture, beauty and vitality -- plus the added enticement of unavailability. ("Ma mère ... était plus riche; elle avait de la sagesse et de la beauté: ce n'était pas sans peine que mon père l'avait obtenue."³) Indeed, Isaac Rousseau was, if anything, a man of passion. But there are various sorts of passion, and wanderlust is another of them, a typically-Genevan passion as well, in which the Rousseau and Bernard

¹Jean-Jacques (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), Vol. I, p. 23. Translation mine.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 6.

³Ibid., p. 6.

families excelled, and egotistical Isaac would probably never have left Geneva had not Adventure appeared a more desirable mistress than any one woman.

Isaac and Suzanne were both thirty-one when they finally married in 1704. They had been in-laws for nearly five years, since sister Theodora Rousseau had become Mme. Bernard, wife of Suzanne's brother Gabriel. Three years before her marriage, Suzanne, like Gabriel, had come into a sizable inheritance from the pastor-uncle who had seen to her education. The almost-rich, almost-young couple, then, settled down with mother-in-law Bernard in the latter's house in the aristocratic "high city." Several doors away stood another Bernard home, housing Gabriel, Theodora¹ and the aged, widowed Rousseau family patriarch, David, a former watchmaker.² Maiden sisters Suzanne ("Aunt Suzanne") and Clermonde Rousseau completed the family picture.

Nine months after her wedding, Mme. Rousseau gave birth to a son, François. Three scant weeks later, her husband left home for Constantinople, where he was to spend six years exercising his craft as a member of the Swiss community in that city. Isaac Rousseau's prompt and long absence has been variously explained. Rousseau says simply that his father was "called" there, declining further explanation. Had the passionate suitor -- if such he had been -- already tired of wife and family? Was he experiencing mother-in-law problems, perhaps stemming from the original Bernard family opposition to the marriage? Had the responsibilities of fatherhood sufficiently en-

¹The Bernard child who had made such an auspicious entry into the world died on the day of its baptism.

²Money problems had begun in this more pleasure-seeking than socially-ambitious family, with David Rousseau, who had been unable to pay his children their maternal inheritance. Little is known about the old man's character except that he showed little interest in his later-to-become-illustrious grandson. David was to die during the Charmettes summer at nearly 100, a public charge and stripped of his precious citizenship, because his remaining

hanced the siren Adventure to cause him to drop everything and follow her call? (It is noteworthy that Gabriel Bernard had left home six months previously, joining the Imperial Army, and eventually finding his way to voluptuous Venice.) There is verisimilitude in all these speculations, which indicate that Isaac Rousseau's extra-domestic life was more attractive to him than the venerable position of paterfamilias. Financial problems were undoubtedly involved as well. (Gabriel, who by the way had at that time no particular profession, had been forced to borrow before his departure.) Was the economic situation unfavorable, due to the influx of French Protestant craftsmen following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes? Or was Isaac Rousseau negligent of his craft and playing the role of playboy, even during the short period of his marriage?

Mme. Rousseau kept a cheerful face turned toward the world during her six-year "widowhood"¹ (a smile sparkling enough to have attracted the French Resident), witness her charming impromptu to Theodora, cited by Jean-Jacques:

Ces deux messieurs qui sont absents
 Nous sont chers de bien des manières;
 Ce sont nos amis, nos amants;
 Ce sont nos maris et nos frères,
 Et les pères de ces enfants.¹

In the end, however, she was forced to "press" her husband -- with tenderness or exasperation? -- to return. "He left everything and returned," says Jean-Jacques. Mother-in-law Bernard had just died, leaving Mme. Rousseau the house and a considerable amount of money. The couple was again almost rich. Gabriel Bernard, too, materialized at this time, and, in true Rousseau-

family was unwilling or unable to support him. (The family attitude toward its unproductive members must be borne in mind in Rousseau's own later dealings with the members of the little "household" of his maturity.)

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 6, note. One wonders, nonetheless, how Mme. Rousseau could have written "ces enfants" since the Bernard child died six years before the birth of her own first son.

Bernard style, both wives immediately became pregnant. Less than a year after her husband's return, then, Suzanne Bernard Rousseau died, at thirty-nine years of age. In eight years of marriage, she had lived with her husband for a total of less than twenty-one months, during eighteen of which she had been pregnant.

"Dix mois après," says Rousseau, "je naquis infirme et malade, je coûtai la vie à ma mère, et ma naissance fut le premier de mes malheurs."¹

Rousseau clearly saw himself as being responsible for his mother's death, but a Romantic note of masochistic pleasure also reigns in his confession. This excessive and ambivalent reaction to what was an all-too-common occurrence in the eighteenth century appears to have been caused by Isaac Rousseau's strange comportment toward his impressionable young son. Rousseau describes it, in a famous passage:

Je n'ai pas su comment mon père supporta cette perte; mais je sais qu'il ne s'en consola jamais. Il croyait la revoir en moi, sans pouvoir oublier que je le lui avait ôtée. Jamais il ne m'embrassa que je ne sentisse à ses soupirs, à ses convulsives étreintes, qu'un regret amer se mêlait à ses caresses; elles n'en étaient que plus tendres. Quand il me disait: Jean-Jacques, parlons de ta mère, je lui disais: hé bien, mon père, nous allons donc pleurer, et ce mot seul lui tirait déjà des larmes. Ah! disait-il en gémissant, rend-la-moi, console-moi d'elle, rempli le vide qu'elle a laissé dans mon âme. T'aimerais-je ainsi si tu n'étais que mon fils?²

Considering, for the moment, only the guilt aspect of this passage -- which, incidentally, bears a certain resemblance to Rousseau's privileged moments -- on the one hand, Jean-Jacques was forced to shoulder the burden of responsibility for his parents' misfortune, all the while his father was unduly aggravating and concretizing the situation by his own bathetic self-indulgence.

¹Ibid., p. 7.

²Ibid., p. 7. Here again, we may have a case of Rousseau's "petrifying" a single or only several incident(s) by means of the imperfect tense, giving them symbolic value and, at the same time, capturing a moment in the past that was unusually cherished by the author.

The parent-child roles are reversed here: it is Isaac Rousseau who is the hysterical supplicant, with Jean-Jacques the clear-headed comforter. This perception of parental instability at such an early age and under such already personal and painful circumstances can only have proved terrifyingly disorienting to the unusually-sensitive youngster.

At the same time, how wonderful to be "everything" to one's father! Rousseau's insatiable need for affection is sufficient grounds to establish the fact that Jean-Jacques' interest lay in his mother's non-existence, and the foregoing passage shows that he was aware of the fact ("T'aimerais-je ainsi ... ?"). Furthermore, his never having known his mother nor wanted for maternal affection placed her in the fuzzy and relatively indifferent limbo of the abstract, whereas his father was a concrete and present factor, a pressing necessity and source of emotional gratification. The pleasure derived from this aspect of the father-son relationship was thus a doubly-guilty one, involving responsibility for his mother's death and pleasure derived from her disappearance. We must bear in mind that young Jean-Jacques had been taught to perceive the world according to a Calvinist morality, had been taught to identify pleasure with guilt, and was fully conscious of the presence and consequences of "sin."

A similar ambivalence developed in Jean-Jacques' attitude toward his brother François, again due largely to Isaac Rousseau's inexplicable paternal conduct. It is fitting that we stop to examine this, on the grounds that it represents Rousseau's first contact with a peer, that it contributes to clarification of his relationship with his father and, finally, that it reveals certain character traits to become evident in his other attachments.

Poor François Rousseau was not as lucky as his little brother. His father had, as we have seen, left home three weeks after his birth, leaving him to be brought up by his mother and grandmother. François was six years

old when his father returned -- a stranger -- to usurp the prominent position in the household. One can only imagine the child's fury and resentment. Not surprisingly, the little boy failed to win his father's affection. Then, within the period of about a year, the child lost both grandmother and mother -- the only parent-figures he had ever known -- receiving in their place a small and sickly baby brother over whom the entire family was incessantly fussing and cooing. Small wonder François Rousseau "turned bad." When Jean-Jacques was six, the family actually sent François to reform school, where the boy spent three months, released only on the promise that he would thereafter behave. At this time, François, then thirteen, began watchmaking apprenticeship.

This is how Rousseau tells his brother's story:

J'avais un frère plus âgé que moi de sept ans. Il apprenait la profession de mon père. L'extrême affection qu'on avait pour moi le faisait un peu négliger, et ce n'est pas cela que j'approuve. Son éducation se sentit de cette négligence. Il prit le train du libertinage, même avant l'âge d'être un vrai libertin. On le mit chez un autre maître, d'où il faisait des escapades, comme il en avait fait de la maison paternelle. Je ne le voyais presque point: à peine puis-je dire avoir fait connaissance avec lui: mais je ne laissais pas de l'aimer tendrement, et il m'aimait, autant qu'un polisson peut aimer quelque chose.¹

Jean-Jacques' feelings toward his older brother were thus again permeated with feelings of guilt. The woman he had "killed" and by whose absence he had derived such pleasurable benefits was François' mother as well as his own. He clearly blamed himself for François' family disgrace ("L'extrême affection qu'on avait pour moi le faisait un peu négliger ..."), at the same time realizing -- as he, of course, did regarding his mother's death -- that the guilt was unintentional ("... et ce n'est pas cela que j'approuve"). On the other hand, as with his mother's absence, Jean-

¹Confessions, O.C.I., p. 9.

Jacques' interest lay in his brother's domestic misfortune. Herein lies a thought-provoking guilt-factor, which Rousseau perceived very early in life and was later to articulate regarding human relations: that love means preference means precedence means inequality, and the state of being loved risks irritating the moral conscience of the loved-one. Perhaps Calvinist anti-terrestrial theology seemed to confirm this point.

Rousseau stresses the affection existing between himself and his brother.¹ Willing to be good, he could not but will to love his brother and to repress the secret joy he felt in spite of himself at the other's misfortune -- and he probably succeeded since young François in no way represented a threat to his security. He also desired winning his brother's affection and approval, necessary to the maintenance of his self-esteem. ("Etre aimé de tout ce qui m'approchait," he often admitted, "était le plus vif de mes désirs."²) At the same time, one senses a feeling of victory in Rousseau's statement regarding his brother's later disappearance: "Voilà comment je suis demeuré fils unique."³

The ambivalence inherent in this relationship is clearly exemplified in the domestic incident which Rousseau relates concerning his father, his brother and himself:

Je me souviens qu'une fois que mon père le châtiât rudement et avec colère, je me jetai impétueusement entre deux, l'embrassant étroitement. Je le couvris ainsi de mon corps recevant les coups qui lui étaient portés, et je m'obstinaï si bien dans cette attitude, qu'il fallut enfin que mon père lui fit grâce, soit désarmé par mes cris et mes larmes, soit pour ne pas me maltraiter plus que lui.⁴

¹Obviously the vast seven-year difference in age precluded any community of interests between the two children.

²Ibid., p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 10.

⁴Ibid., pp. 9-10.

One may reasonably see this as the hysterical reaction of a sensitive young child to the spectacle of violence. It also appears, perhaps more significantly, as a gesture of self-immolation in atonement for guilt. Feeling responsible for the father's punishment of the brother, the child could atone for his sin by transferring the punishment to himself, and at the same time permit himself to enjoy, with clear conscience, his position of precedence in the household. This would in no way endanger his privileged position and would indeed enhance it, first by turning his father's attention away from his brother and back onto himself, and again by winning his brother's gratitude and the admiration and pity of all those present.

Thus, while feelings of guilt were so profoundly ingrained in Rousseau's character as to retain him on occasion in passivity for fear of becoming guilty of further sins (this will later become evident), the same feelings could also thrust him into violent self-immolatory action. Guilt then -- closely associated with Rousseau's early relationship with his father -- is related to both the passive and the active sides of his personality.¹

Had Rousseau's character been purely passive, he would indeed have been the "femmelette" some of his critics see in him and would certainly not merit the interest of posterity. This was, of course, far from the case, his active instincts being as influential in determining his personality as his passive tendencies. Here we find the so-called "manly" influence, both literary

¹Raymond clairvoyantly observes that Rousseau's feelings of guilt seem to go beyond environmental influences and back to the death-wish. "... The evil," says Raymond, "is to be born separated, to exist pour soi, to reveal oneself to the world disunited from 'mother nature,' ... to feel oneself abruptly cut off from one's source." Jean-Jacques Rousseau: la quête de soi et la rêverie (Paris: Corti, 1962), p. 94.

and in the person of Isaac Rousseau -- and, beyond Isaac, the spirit of Geneva itself. Retracing our steps to the early father-son reading sessions, which Rousseau had, in the case of the imagination-expanding novels, deplored somewhat like a plump lady bewailing her fondness for sweets. Here we find a different, proud and positive, attitude developing, as the following passage reveals:

Les romans finirent avec l'été de 1719. L'hiver suivant [Rousseau would have been seven-and-a-half] ce fut autre chose. La bibliothèque de ma mère épuisée, on eut recours à la portion de celle de son père [in reality, her uncle, the cultured pastor who had educated her] qui nous était échue. Heureusement il s'y trouva de bons livres; et cela ne pouvait guère être autrement; cette bibliothèque ayant été formée par un ministre, à la vérité, et savant même; car c'était la mode alors, mais homme de goût et d'esprit. L'Histoire de l'Eglise et de l'Empire par le Sueur, le discours de Bossuet sur l'histoire universelle, les hommes illustres de Plutarque, l'Histoire de Venise par Nani, les Métamorphoses d'Ovide, la Bruyère, les mondes de Fontenelle, ses Dialogues des morts, et quelques tomes de Molière, furent transportés dans le cabinet de mon père [undoubtedly located in the family home, as was the custom], et je les lui lisais tous les jours durant son travail. J'y pris un goût rare et peut-être unique à cet âge. Plutarque, surtout, devint ma lecture favorite. Le plaisir que je prenais à le relire sans cesse me guérit un peu des romans, et je préférerais bientôt Agésilas, Brutus, Aristide à Orondate, Artamène et Juba. De ces intéressantes lectures, des entretiens qu'elles occasionnaient entre mon père et moi, se forma cet esprit libre et républicain, ce caractère indomptable et fier, impatient de joug et de servitude qui m'a tourmenté tout le temps de ma vie dans les situations les moins propres à lui donner essor.¹

If it is true, as Pascal suggests, that each man is the pawn of either love or ambition, then this represents Rousseau's ambitious side. It was through books that he learned, at the very moment of his intellectual "birth," to become a hero-worshiper: hero of sentiment, with the novelists; hero of will; with the moralists and historians. As Rousseau had read Astrée subjectively, imagining himself in its ideal world, so he saw himself as a Plutarchian hero. Here, ambition excited him out of his lethargy and into action. Although the action was partially imaginary -- as exemplified by his use of the reading-sessions as intermediary to excite his father's admiration

¹Confessions, O.C. I, pp. 8-9.

for the heroes with whom he, Jean-Jacques, simultaneously identified -- under certain circumstances, the action could be transferred into reality:

Sans cesse occupé de Rome et d'Athènes; vivant, pour ainsi dire, avec leurs grands hommes, né moi-même citoyen d'une république, et fils d'un père dont l'amour de la patrie était la plus forte passion, je m'en enflammiais à son exemple; je me croyais Grec ou Romain; je devenais le personnage dont je lisais la vie: le récit des traits de constance et d'intrépidité qui m'avaient frappé me rendait les yeux étincellants et la voix forte. Un jour que je racontais à table l'aventure de Scévola, on fut effrayé de me voir avancer et tenir la main sur un réchaud pour représenter son action.¹

Although the ambition to achieve heroic glory is contrary to the ideal of friendship through its stress of egotistical self-assertion, Rousseau identified it with friendship from the very beginning thanks to the famous friends eulogized in his books. The "good deed" toward his brother, for example, previously discussed, was both an "heroic" and a "friendly" action. The Genevan influence also stressed simultaneous heroism and friendship, this time on a community level, often expressed in military terms and identified, in Rousseau's mind, with an idealized Sparta. Rousseau was after all not a Frenchman. His attitude toward human relations and his active personality were strongly colored by his Swiss background. Mme. de Staël placed him in the Germanic school, and indeed the eighteenth-century Genevan character was similar to what is often, rightly or wrongly, thought of as "Germanic." The eighteenth-century middle-class Genevan is variously described as proud, independent, stubborn, touchy, idealistic, clumsy of manner and heavy of wit; argumentative, especially on the subject of politics (in which he tended to political liberalism but religious and moral conservatism); moody, tight-fisted, with a workingman's frame of mind, taste and style and a bourgeois respect for law, order and economy; tending

¹Ibid., p. 9.

to criticize and contradict, tending to preach and moralize, obsessed with self-examination in the light of a strict and severe morality (but whose traditional separation of the sexes permitted double standards regarding moral behavior); and legendary drinkers and travelers. Rousseau described the contemporary Genevan as having a cold, sluggish exterior and an inner, passionate nature. Vallette attributes three dominant passions to him: independence, patriotism and a protestantism conceived as being inseparable from patriotism. "Les Suisses en général," according to Rousseau, "sont justes, officieux, charitables, amis solides, braves soldats, et bons citoyens, mais intrigants, défiants, jaloux, curieux, avares, et leur avarice contient plus leur luxe que leur simplicité. Ils sont ordinairement graves et flégnatiques, mais ils sont furieux dans la colère, et leur joie est une ivresse."¹ Du Bellay, Voltaire and Stendhal, who knew the city in three different centuries but similarly misunderstood its Protestant concept of civilization, found it depressingly somber and puritanical, the Genevans selfish, conceited and disagreeable. (Ritter points out that if Rousseau had not spent his youth in honeyed Savoy, he would never have learned the secret of seducing the French public.)

The republic's unwieldy system of fortifications symbolized the feelings of defiant and manly patriotic brotherhood shared by all Genevans, but particularly by the middle-class Bourgeois and Citizens. The city gates opened every morning one-half hour before sunrise and closed one-half hour after sunset. Representing not merely tradition, but defense, the Genevan wall stood as a symbol of the proud little republic's cult of law and order, her will to perpetuate herself and her stubborn resistance to change. "Nearly

¹C.G. IX, No. 1661, Rousseau-to the duc de Luxembourg (January 20, 1763), p. 12.

two centuries of autonomous existence, of repressed exterior attacks and threats, of Calvinist discipline, of theological hegemony over the Reformed world, gave her, with pride in her past, faith in her international role and the tenacious will to remain herself."¹ Vallette describes the Genevan tradition as being one of "ardent patriotism, limitless civic devotion, and a passionate attachment to the political institutions of the city," adding: "... Si l'on discute avec une âpreté acharnée sur l'application des lois, et sur l'étendue des droits particuliers, on est d'accord sur le fond même des institutions et sur la base constitutive de l'état républicain. Personne, à Genève, au début du dix-huitième siècle, ne conteste le principe de la souveraineté du peuple."² In fact, Genevan middle-class pride lay more in

¹Vallette, p. 2. Translation mine.

²Ibid., p. 6. Thus Rousseau described his early patriotic education:

On me dit de remplir mes devoirs sans bassesse
 De respecter les Grands, les Magistrats, les Rois,
 De chérir les humains et d'obéir aux lois:
 Mais on m'apprit aussi qu'ayant par ma naissance
 Le droit de partager la suprême puissance
 Tout petit que j'étais, faible obscur Citoyen
 Je faisais cependant membre du souverain,
 Qu'il fallait soutenir un si noble avantage
 Par le coeur d'un héros, par les vertus d'un sage, ...
 Avec le lait chez nous on suce ces maximes ...

Epître à Parisot, O.C. II, p. 1137.

the honor accorded it than in actual power. In the early part of the century, the few wealthy patrician families actually controlling the republic had not yet learned from France to flaunt their status, and a conformity of lifestyles prevailed, saving face for the middle classes.

Genevan republicanism represents a kind of institutionalized brotherhood or community friendship. Combination military and patriotic festivals were a source of high fraternal emotion described by Rousseau: " ... Il faut y avoir assisté chez le Genevois, pour comprendre avec quelle ardeur il s'y livre. On ne le reconnaît plus: ce n'est plus ce peuple si rangé qui ne se départ point de ses règles économiques; ce n'est plus ce long raisonneur qui pèse tout à la balance du jugement, jusqu'à la plaisanterie. Il est vif, gai, caressant; son coeur est alors dans ses yeux, comme il est toujours sur ses lèvres; il cherche à communiquer sa joie et ses plaisirs; il invite, il presse, il force, il se dispute les survenants. Toutes les sociétés n'en font qu'une, tout devient commun à tous. Il est presque indifférent à quelle table on se mette ... "¹

The Genevan Church was another source of the feeling of brotherhood or common friendship. At the turn of the eighteenth century, the Reformed Church, a condition of Genevan citizenship, was very strong, well-organized and formidable. The recent influx of French refugees contributed to religious fervor, as did reaction to the French persecution of Huguenots. Protestant feeling was very strong, particularly in the middle- and lower-classes, and church services were attended faithfully and unquestioningly. No longer severely dogmatic as in Calvin's time, the Church had remained as severely moral. (To the Genevan, the cardinal sins were lying and laziness. He possessed a kind of double standard regarding money and sins of the flesh.)

¹Lettre à d'Alembert (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1967), pp. 235-6.

A feeling of righteousness, of "in-ness," then, pervaded the Genevan spirit of active, community brotherhood. Furthermore, the traditional Genevan separation of the sexes -- very antipode of the Parisian way of life -- gave the Genevan conception of "fraternity" a hairy-chestedness and boisterousness reminiscent of the France of Montaigne and of Henri IV (with which period Rousseau appears to have identified).

Stormy, capricious Isaac Rousseau was every inch the middle-class Genevan. His impressionable son looked like him, resembled him in more than one way, and identified him with his own feelings of patriotic brotherhood. The Isaac Rousseau of Jean-Jacques' early childhood was a man in the vigor of his forties with a strong, highly individualistic personality, enjoying and stressing his unicity¹ -- a man's man, full of energy and enthusiasm, moody, irritable and proud, yet devilishly attractive in a rugged, unpolished way. Highly inflammable, fond of strong emotions, non-conformism and active pleasures (hunting, adventure, ladies, good food, good drink, good fun, travel and male camaraderie), he was, at the same time, a man of narrow principles. With one set of standards for the home and another for the extra-domestic aspects of his life, Isaac Rousseau was pious yet a "man of pleasure," patriotic yet (as we shall see) capable of sacrificing his fatherland to quarrelsome pride, a skillful craftsman and affectionate husband and father yet invariably subordinating duty to the temptation of the moment. In spite of the contradictions of his personality, he was going his own independent way, free of hypocrisy or the pangs of conscience.

¹In his later quarrel with an influential man who gravely insulted his honor by insinuating he was a social inferior, Isaac Rousseau is reported by a witness to have cried out: "Listen, and you will remember: I am Rousseau! I am Rousseau! I am Rousseau!"

As part of the basic education Genevan fathers were required to provide their sons (and also because he enjoyed it), Isaac Rousseau had undertaken Jean-Jacques' education, consisting largely of reading, as we have seen, but also including some writing, basic mathematics, astronomy and history, always with the accent on Protestantism and patriotism.

The master's presence made the sleepy house come alive, but Isaac was often away from home, his greatest pleasures being hunting trips with male friends. Normally, he would spend a portion of the day -- a small portion, judging by his constant financial difficulty -- working at his bench. After the midday meal, he would probably leave the house to join his male counterparts in men's clubs prefiguring the "circles" described in Rousseau's Letter to d'Alembert, drinking and arguing politics, or to court the "ladies" whom he "loved," leaving Jean-Jacques in his tepid women's world, to read and dream of great manly actions and sentiments. (In his pedagogical writings, Rousseau was to recommend father-son inseparability.) Supper time must have seen Isaac back at the household table, playing the role of moral judge and père de famille, perhaps meting out family justice or delivering an eloquent extemporaneous sermon, to the edification of his admiring subjects. After supper would come little Jean-Jacques' lessons and then bedtime for the boy.

Although Rousseau called himself his father's "idol," we see him, rather, as the sometime toy of a self-indulgent man who, for all his virile vitality, had a basically capricious and unstable, upsetting nature. (Ducros called him a "femme sensible.") He was moved by theatrical superficialities and enjoyed voluptuousness, toying with strong sensations and thrilling to their heady liqueur. During the late-night festival described by Rousseau in the Letter to d'Alembert, familial sentiments, gaiety, music, dancing, embraces and kisses mixed with the wine to produce his father's spontaneous

patriotic exclamation, "Jean-Jacques, love your country . . ." ¹ Thus, basically indifferent, egotistical Isaac Rousseau was capable of being moved to sudden demonstrations of tenderness by a grandstand play on the emotions. This tendency is probably at the root of Rousseau's later technique of winning good-will through an emotional appeal, specifically to feelings of pity and compassion. ²

Excessively and unhealthfully demonstrative, both of tenderness and anger, Isaac Rousseau appears also to have made a particularly deep impression on his already high-strung son. ³ We have already seen the manner in which François was punished. ⁴ In Emile, Rousseau describes his impression of the effects of the spectacle of anger on a child. "Les passions impétueuses produisent un grand effet sur l'enfant qui en est témoin, parce qu'elles ont des signes très sensibles qui le frappent et le forcent d'y faire attention. La colère surtout est si bruyante dans ses emportements qu'il est impossible de ne pas s'en apercevoir étant à portée. . . [L'enfant] voit un visage enflammé, des yeux étincellants, un geste menaçant, il entend des cris; tous signes que le corps n'est pas dans son assiette." ⁵ Rousseau suggests that

¹Lettre à d'Alembert, p. 248, note 1.

²Never a Little Angel, Jean-Jacques received his share of "corrections." Sometimes he escaped with a suspended sentence through some tour de force, using ingratiatingly pathetic cuteness to disarm his father, as, for example, when, ordered to say "goodnight" to the family and go to bed without supper, he passed the hearth where a succulent roast was browning on the spit, and stopped to add in a pitiful tone: "Goodnight, roast!" On another, less fortunate occasion, however, Jean-Jacques was locked for "several days" in the attic for having torn a Latin book, during which time it was Jacqueline who took pity on him and consoled him. Rousseau later admitted to having, very young, acquired the habit of submissiveness as a technique of attachment.

³Rousseau, incidentally, shared his father's terrible violence of character, but his personality moved him to reroute it, for example into the fiery eloquence of his writings. This basic violence was to become a major and progressive factor in the philosopher's human relations experience, turned first against himself and then outward, in "retaliation" against his "enemies."

⁴The Mémoire à M. de Mably gives Rousseau's opinion of spanking as punishment: "J'ai toujours eu cette brutale méthode en horreur . . . Un honnête homme ne saurait guère mettre [ses mains] à un usage plus honteux que de les employer à maltraiter un enfant." O.C. IV, pp. 4-5.

⁵Emile, O.C. IV, pp. 327-8.

a child be taught to see anger as illness ("idée qui n'est pas fausse") to avoid his seeing it as something frightening and mysterious. Indeed, the startlingly unpredictable recurring spectacle of his father -- the childhood God-figure -- in a state of uncontrolled emotion, cannot but have affected Jean-Jacques' world-view, diminishing his sense of security and stability, of which Isaac Rousseau stood as symbol. The God-like role of family judge likened Isaac Rousseau to the angry Old-Testament Jehovah whose wrath Jean-Jacques, with his guilt-complex, dreaded and whose existence he so vehemently and unconvincingly denied. And Isaac Rousseau's treatment of Bad Boy François clearly illustrated the consequences of displeasing God -- whom Rousseau saw as "the sovereign judge," "le scrutateur des coeurs" -- by breaking His command. Indeed, Rousseau's later extreme susceptibility to atheistic mockery and ardent defense of God's honor which so shocked and amused the civilized Parisians may well have stemmed from his early identification of God with his father and the strength and complexity of his emotions concerning Isaac Rousseau.

The paternal anger introduced a note of violence into Jean-Jacques' otherwise orderly life -- a phenomenon which was to play an important role in his human relations experience, a phenomenon which he both dreaded and desired, through identification, respectively with the executioner (in his feelings of guilt) and with the victim (in his desire for atonement). Thus Rousseau's orientation to heroism-through-martyrdom rather than through victory. "If I lack the fame of rank and birth," Rousseau was later to declare, "I have another which is more my own and which I better purchased; I have the fame of misfortunes."¹ Thus too such observations as Crocker's:

¹Confessions draft, O.C. I, p. 1151. (Translation mine.)

"Rousseau never could stand success or good fortune. Something in him -- an unconscious seeking of failure, persecution, and martyrdom, punishments to inflict on his guilt and unworthiness -- made him spoil everything. While the tension of repressed wishes can be relieved (as Rousseau relieved them) through imaginary satisfactions, the conscience's demands can be met only by punishment and suffering."¹

To sum up Isaac Rousseau's contribution to Jean-Jacques' early childhood, we might state that, if it is not an easy task to serve as father to a genius, if the best man in the world may still find himself with a neurotic on his hands (witness Pascal père), if we may thank Isaac Rousseau for giving his son a passion for literature, morality, brotherly love and heroic action, we can only deplore his contribution to his son's instability, particularly Jean-Jacques' abnormally great fear of guilt and lack of self-confidence.

¹Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Quest (1712-1758) (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 164.

THE TESTS OF SOCIETY

Perhaps the most astonishing of Isaac Rousseau's many surprises was his abdication of the role of father to his "idol."¹ Jean-Jacques, at age ten, was still living the "safe" secluded life of a pre-schooler, totally dependent on the approval of the parent-figures and not yet exposed to the tests of society. He had passed the age of need for the mother-figure, during which Aunt Suzanne had been unfailingly available, and was entering upon the age of need for the masculine guidance of a father, big brother or teacher. Regrettably, it was precisely at this moment that Isaac Rousseau, now forty-nine, engaged in a particularly vehement quarrel with a retired officer of consideration and was forced to leave Geneva to avoid a term in jail. (His choleric temperament had already earned him a history of run-ins.)²

¹Cf. Ritter: "[Isaac Rousseau was] d'une coupable insouciance à l'égard des siens." Op. cit., p. 137. "Dans toute cette lignée, David, Isaac, Jean-Jacques, on était indifférent aux enfants, on se passait d'eux, on ne s'y attachait pas: calus héréditaire ... " Op. cit., p. 147.

²A résumé of the events of this quarrel shows the unusual extent to which Isaac was susceptible where his sense of honor was concerned, as would be, in turn, his illustrious son: A hunting party of which Rousseau père was a member had intended to tramp across a planted field (common act of discourtesy in the eighteenth century). When the property's thirty-six-year-old owner had tried, perhaps arrogantly, to stop the hunters, Rousseau had become angry and a quarrel had ensued, during which Jean-Jacques' father had slapped the younger man. The landowner, a wealthy, influential retired officer, had run for his men (probably shouting insults back at his aggressor), in the intention of turning Isaac over to the authorities. However, by the time he returned, the hunters had disappeared. Later, Isaac and the landowner crossed paths in the city. The younger man failed to recognize his former adversary, but the vengeful Isaac Rousseau provoked a resumption of the quarrel by stopping and glaring at him. Rousseau wanted an immediate duel. The owner refused, saying such a man was worthy only to be beaten with a stick. Thereupon, Rousseau drew his sword and wounded the man on the cheek, then replaced the weapon in its hilt (perhaps realizing the gravity of his action) and prepared to fight with his fists.

This was as good an excuse as any to regain his precious freedom, and perhaps we are wrong to marvel: Jean-Jacques would later prove to be his father's son by taking the same passive route of escape from situations whose constraints had become unbearable.

So Isaac Rousseau dissolved his household and moved to the village of Nyon, in the Vaud country, territory of Berne, about nine miles north of Geneva, taking Aunt Suzanne with him as housekeeper and placing François with another watchmaker. Too young to enter apprenticeship, Jean-Jacques was made the ward of Uncle Gabriel Bernard (Jean-Jacques' godfather, a rich cloth merchant, having died in 1715), who in turn sent the boy with his own son Abraham, also ten, to Bossey, country village just south of Geneva, to board and study (completing the required education period) with Pastor Jean-Jacques Lambercier, forty-six, and the pastor's maiden sister Gabrielle, thirty-nine.

Bossey stands as Rousseau's first adventure in human relations. At first the transition was quite smooth: Bossey was another closed world, a stop-off point on the road to society. Distracted by its fascinating and delightful novelty, the boy failed to realize the significance of his father's action and Bossey was at first a prolonged summer vacation. Comfortable and well-fed, the boys were subjected to only light studies, with little discipline or supervision. Jean-Jacques was intoxicated by the bucolic setting -- his first exposure to "nature" -- and by the company of Cousin Abraham, his first friend. Attempts at socializing were without success -- to the local children Jean-Jacques and Abraham were clumsy, sissified city boys -- so he and his cousin kept to themselves.

Rousseau stresses the harmony of his relationships at Bossey: "La manière dont je vivais à Bossey me convenait si bien, qu'il ne lui a manqué

Here the quarrel was stopped by passers-by. The landowner eventually pressed charges, but Rousseau refused to pay amends (a fine, three months' imprisonment and a humiliating kneeling request for the city council's forgiveness) unless his adversary was subjected to the same punishment. When this failed to occur, Isaac Rousseau sacrificed citizenship in his beloved republic for a point of honor.

que de durer plus longtemps pour fixer absolument mon caractère. Les sentiments tendres, affectueux, paisibles en faisaient le fond. ... J'étais doux, mon cousin l'était; ceux qui nous gouvernaient l'étaient eux-mêmes. Pendant deux ans entiers je ne fus ni témoin ni victime d'un sentiment violent. Tout nourrissait dans mon coeur les dispositions qu'il reçut de la nature. Je ne connaissais rien d'aussi charmant que de voir tout le monde content de moi et de toute chose."¹ "Everyone" was the Lamberciers: their approval and a lack of violence or hostility in his environment was all-important to Jean-Jacques. (Rousseau was later to reveal, "il n'est pas une vertu qui me soit plus chère que la douceur du caractère ... "²) The Pastor, respectable and pious, appeared somewhat heroic to Jean-Jacques in his conspicuous capacity as village preacher, and the boy was both proud and envious at sermon. When the time came for him to select a profession, Jean-Jacques would choose the ministry "car je trouvais bien beau de prêcher."³ Gentle and orderly but cold and undemonstrative, with a thunderous laugh and a heavy sense of humor, Lambercier was around the house and adjoining church a great deal, making his manly presence felt to the boys (although they had orders not to disturb the Pastor in his study). With little patience for children, Lambercier left the discipline and childcare entirely up to his sister, giving his pupils a minimum of instruction -- largely religious training in preparation for communion -- and a maximum of freedom, much to their delight and approval.

As Jean-Jacques was growing toward puberty, his drive to imitate, challenge and eventually replace the father-figure was directed toward

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 14.

²Mémoire à M. de Mably, O.C. IV, p. 22.

³Confessions, O.C. I, p. 25.

Lambercier. Following the Pastor's amusingly-ceremonial planting of a walnut-tree,¹ Jean-Jacques planted his own little tree nearby, constructing an ingenious miniature aqueduct to drain the water off the Pastor's tree, thus symbolically draining off his own share of the Pastor's glory while simultaneously making a play for the Pastor's recognition and approval. Judging by his obvious joy in retelling the tale, Rousseau felt he had succeeded in this instance. Years later, on his triumphal return to Geneva, Rousseau dreamed of making a pilgrimage to the Pastor's walnut tree. Still later, he called his dog "Sultan" after the Pastor's dog.

Gabrielle Lambercier was about the same age as Aunt Suzanne, that is, nearly forty, when ten-year-old Jean-Jacques began his two-year stay at Bossey. Gentle, pious and straight-laced, she was orderly and well-organized in running the Pastor's house, with the help of a maid and a manservant. She was generous with the boys and treated them like members of the family -- Rousseau believes she had the affection of a mother for them -- but, all in all, Mlle. Lambercier left the children on their own, probably wanting children around the house only as long as they brought in a little extra income and did not represent much extra work.

Rousseau's first social problem developed at Bossey in the form of sibling rivalry between himself and his cousin for the Lamberciers' approval. Although he liked the Lamberciers, finding the Pastor "reasonable" and the sister "affectionate," whatever timid efforts the boy made to win their affection were in vain. For the first time, Rousseau felt himself overshadowed by competition. This led him, at first, to redouble his efforts at heroism, as this anecdote shows:

¹Charmingly recounted in the Confessions, O.C. I, p. 22 et seq.

J'étais à la campagne en pension chez un ministre appelé M. Lambercier. J'avais pour camarade un cousin plus riche que moi, et qu'on traitait en héritier, tandis qu'éloigné de mon père je n'étais qu'un pauvre orphelin. Mon grand Cousin Bernard était singulièrement poltron, surtout la nuit. Je me moquai tant de sa frayeur que M. Lambercier ennuyé de mes vanteries voulut mettre mon courage à l'épreuve. Un soir d'automne qu'il faisait très obscur, il me donna la clé du temple, et me dit d'aller chercher dans la chaire la Bible qu'on y avait laissée. Il ajouta pour me piquer d'honneur quelques mots qui me mirent dans l'impuissance de reculer.

The child left on the adventure, and was soon trembling with fright and disorientation, in a "bouleversement inexprimable" which, after some fumbling and stumbling, caused him to give up and run back toward the house empty-handed.

Je reviens jusqu'à la maison. Prêt à entrer je distingue la voix de M. Lambercier à de grands éclats de rire. Je les prends pour moi d'avance, et confus de m'y voir exposé, j'hésite à ouvrir la porte. Dans cet intervalle, j'entends Mademoiselle Lambercier s'inquiéter de moi, dire à la servante de prendre la lanterne, et M. Lambercier se disposer à me venir chercher escorté de mon intrépide cousin, auquel ensuite on n'aurait pas manqué de faire tout l'honneur de l'expédition. A l'instant toutes mes frayeurs cessent et ne me laissent que celle d'être surpris dans ma fuite: je cours, je vole au temple sans m'égarer, sans tatonner, j'arrive à la chaire, j'y monte, je prends la bible, je m'élançe en bas, dans trois sauts je suis hors du temple dont j'oubliai même de fermer la porte, j'entre dans la chambre hors d'haleine, je jette la bible sur la table, effaré, mais palpitant d'aise d'avoir prévenu le secours qui m'était destiné.¹

The relationship with Cousin Abraham Bernard represents Rousseau's first significant social experience with a peer. "Jusqu'alors je n'avais connu que des sentiments élevés, mais imaginaires," Rousseau states.² This justifies our examining it at some length.

The first thing to attract our attention in the above passage is, of course, the element of rivalry. Jean-Jacques clearly perceived his cousin as a threat, and the commodity at stake was the boy's sense of

¹Emile, O.C. IV, pp. 385-6.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 13.

honor, which served as motivation for both the first and second halves of the adventure (see the occurrence of the term in each of the above segments). To place this in perspective, we return briefly to Rousseau's conception of human relations.

The correspondence between Rousseau's life-experience and his theory of evolution has been remarked. In this instance, it offers some suggestive analogies. Translated into individual terms, the State of Nature corresponds to Jean-Jacques during his Genevan infancy, surrounded by adults (the God- and Nature-figures) who saw to his needs and pleasures. Knowing no temptation and not yet having been posed a real threat by a peer, "solitary" Jean-Jacques enjoyed a passive and non-competitive sense of well-being. According to Rousseau's theory of evolution, the ensuing social situation permitted man to perfect himself by developing his mind and sentiments; on the other hand, with the experience of relativity, the individual developed a drive for precedence through Competitive Self-Interest which, once acquired, became a permanent factor with which to contend, making men subject to moral "crime" and "fault." Now, unlike his primitive counterpart, in Geneva Jean-Jacques had precociously become aware of the moral world (in this case, an ideal world derived through books and religious instruction) and had performed acts of a moral nature (e.g. his intercession in brother François' punishment). He had also developed, perhaps still subconsciously, a sense of competitive honor or precedence, but had not yet entered the uncontrolled moral environment, that is, "society," the "rat race," in which his worth as an individual would be put to the test.

It was at Bossey, then, that Jean-Jacques was first exposed to society and its frustrations. Again turning to our passage regarding Cousin Abra-

ham, we remark that Jean-Jacques' reaction -- whether based on a real or imaginary preference of the Lamberciers for his cousin -- was to blame his "dishonor"¹ on circumstances outside his control ("... un cousin plus riche que moi, et qu'on traitait en héritier, tandis qu'éloigné de mon père je n'étais qu'un pauvre orphelin"). The Confessions contain a similar description of the cousins' relationship to the parent-figures and to each other, with a further demonstration of the "injustice" on which the preferential judgment was based, since Jean-Jacques was in fact "naturally" superior to Abraham:

Si, par la faveur de ceux qui nous gouvernaient, il avait sur moi quelque ascendant sous leurs yeux; quand nous étions seuls, j'en avais un sur lui qui rétablissait l'équilibre. Dans nos études, je lui soufflais sa leçon quand il hésitait; quand mon thème était fait je lui aidais à faire le sien, et dans nos amusements mon goût plus actif lui servait toujours de guide.²

The Confessions add an exemplary incident (recalling Jean-Jacques' earlier defense of his brother) in which our hero attacks and is beaten up by a band of ruffians who had been picking on his cousin. "Me voilà déjà redresseur des torts," comments Rousseau, and his irony is not without a basic seriousness.

The circumstances leading to Rousseau's sense of unjust and humiliating social rejection go back once more to Isaac Rousseau, whose habits of prodigality we have already noted. As a member of the "respectable middle class," Isaac could have climbed socially, had he possessed the ambition to do so. This, however, would have required a policy of order and frugality and an exemplary conduct, discipline for which Rousseau père's character was

¹"Dishonor" because, where honor is concerned, there is no middle ground.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 13.

singularly unsuited. When Jean-Jacques was five years old, his father had been forced to sell the "high city" house and move the family to a third-floor "low city" apartment. The move separated the Rousseaus both physically and socially from the "high city" Bernards and from Aunt Clermonde Rousseau as well, who was to marry, two years later, a well-to-do widower, textile manufacturer Antoine Fazy. A family sense of "exile" or of being above one's station may have partially explained the isolation Isaac had imposed on his son as a child. Nonetheless, the household enjoyed comfort and abundance and had retained the family servant Jacqueline. It is doubtful, then, that in Geneva Jean-Jacques had perceived his "fall." Later, his father's abdication and the "orphan" status that was its consequence added to Jean-Jacques' outcast situation, but, here again, he did not immediately take consciousness of this. (Such perception would have sufficed to ruin his stay at Bossey and his friendship with Abraham Bernard, both of which were primarily positive experiences.) The early Bossey period was, then, a half-way point, corresponding to the early family state of Rousseau's theory of evolution, state which the philosopher considered to be, all in all, the happiest and the best.

Turning to Rousseau's description of this two-year period, we can now examine his first friendship. Friendship, in the theory of evolution, stems from the natural virtue of pity, but requires favorable circumstances in which to develop. Thus it was at Bossey: "La simplicité de cette vie champêtre me fit un bien d'un prix inestimable en ouvrant mon coeur à l'amitié. ... L'habitude de vivre ensemble dans un état paisible m'unit tendrement à mon cousin Bernard. En peu de temps, j'eus pour lui des sentiments plus affectueux que ceux que j'avais eus pour mon frère et qui

ne se sont jamais effacés."¹ In addition, the boys shared similarities of character² (gentleness, sensitivity, docility), of age, of taste and of occupations. They were alone and together and each needed a companion. Thus, while they had known each other all their lives, it was only now that they became "friends."

At the same time, Abraham Bernard was quite different from his tiny, bright-eyed cousin. Weak-kneed Jean-Jacques actually found it a simple matter to boss his friend around. The Confessions describe Abraham as being tall, lean and lanky, with a face like a baked apple; as slow, meek and gentle of mind as weak of body; an overgrown fraidy-cat whose mere presence ("son air mou, et sa démarche nonchalante"³) sufficed to attract the savage mockery of neighborhood children, calling him "Barnâ Bredanna" in Genevan patois, or "bridled jackass." Rousseau's portrait of Cousin Abraham reveals a social misfit, either somewhat retarded or experiencing an unusually severe "awkward age." (It is interesting to note that the intellectual/psychological difference, of which Rousseau was aware, did not prevent his friendship for Abraham.)

The attachment became, to Rousseau, a collective moral entity, sufficient unto itself, as the following passages indicate:

Nous séparer était en quelque sorte nous anéantir.⁴

Toujours inséparables, nous nous suffisions l'un à l'autre, et n'étant point tentés de fréquenter les polissons de notre âge, nous ne primes aucune des habitudes libertines que l'oisiveté

¹Ibid., p. 13.

²We refer to Rousseau's "passive" character.

³Ibid., p. 26.

⁴Ibid., p. 13.

nous pouvait inspirer.¹

Nous avions si peu besoin de nous faire des camarades que nous en négligions même l'occasion. Quand nous allions nous promener nous regardions en passant leurs jeux sans convoitise, sans songer même à y prendre part. L'amitié remplissait si bien nos coeurs, qu'il nous suffisait d'être ensemble, pour que les plus simples goûts fissent nos délices.²

The importance to Rousseau of this aspect of friendship cannot be overstressed, since it signifies that each friend has come to identify with the collective body ("we") rather than to see his friend as an individual ("you" and "I"), and that Competitive Self-Interest, as pertains to the friends, is being held in check so long as the collective body remains intact through identification and isolation. (Note, however, that the Lambergiers' expression of preference for Abraham, and perhaps the mere possibility of this preference, was sufficient to at least temporarily shatter the fragile Collective Self-Interest.³) This conception of friendship explains the expressions of "unison" in Rousseau's description of his relationship with his cousin:

¹Ibid., p. 25.

²Ibid., pp. 25-6.

³Cf. Grimsley's observation: "The role of the other in Rousseau's conception of friendship is ... plainly ambiguous: he is desired and loved as the one who can bring comfort and reassurance, but he is also feared as a potential threat to personal security. It is the very intensity of Jean-Jacques' need for love which causes him to transform love into potential hatred." Op. cit., p. 92. The friend is, then, an object of fear as well as of love. This would become stronger as Rousseau's conscience came to trouble him more and as he became the object of more and more severe criticism. Rousseau's insecurity would thus -- in a manner prefigured in his first friendship -- ruin friendship for Rousseau, turning it into a nightmare caused by his psychological inability to attribute his misfortunes to his own inadequacy and the necessity of finding a scapegoat. Acknowledging his own inadequacy, asserts Grimsley, "might well lead to a catastrophic breakdown of his whole personality."

Quoique nous eussions peu d'occasions de faire preuve de notre attachement l'un pour l'autre, il était extrême, et non seulement nous ne pouvions vivre un instant séparés, mais nous n'imaginions pas que nous pussions jamais l'être. Tous deux d'un esprit facile à céder aux caresses, complaisants quand on ne voulait pas nous contraindre, nous étions toujours d'accord sur tout.¹

This unison is perhaps more clearly evident in Rousseau's descriptions of the friends' activities, as for example this passage taken from the walnut-tree incident:

... Nous allâmes couper une bouture d'un jeune saule, et nous la plantâmes sur la terrasse ... Nous n'oubliâmes pas de faire aussi un creux autour de notre arbre: la difficulté était d'avoir de quoi le remplir; car l'eau venait d'assez loin, et on ne nous laissait pas courir pour en aller prendre. Cependant il en fallait absolument pour notre saule. Nous employâmes toutes sortes de ruses pour lui en fournir durant quelques jours, et cela nous réussit si bien que nous le vîmes bourgeonner et pousser de petites feuilles dont nous mesurions l'accroissement d'heure en heure; persuadés, quoiqu'il ne fut pas à un pied de terre, qu'il ne tarderait pas à nous ombrager.²

It is significant that, as long as the inner aspects of a friendship experience are in harmony, Rousseau finds the superficial aspect unimportant. Like Bernardin's Virginia, friendship may be "always agitated, but constant." Thus, the boys' basic similarities, hereinabove remarked, do not preclude differences, vast differences between the two, which we have pointed out. Nor does friendship require pure sunshine so long as the inner harmony is present. " ... Nous nous battîmes souvent, je l'avoue," said Rousseau, "mais jamais on n'eut besoin de nous séparer, jamais une de nos querelles ne dura plus d'un quart d'heure, et jamais une seule fois nous ne portâmes l'un contre l'autre accusation."³

¹Ibid., p. 13.

²Ibid., pp. 22-3. (Italics mine.)

³Ibid., pp. 13-4.

In Emile, Rousseau expressed the belief that the normal child is capable of only superficial, amoral attachments until the age of puberty, at which time the development of passions creates the need to unburden oneself to a third party, and only then is Friendship generally born. Thus, although at first glance there is nothing illustrious in the basic aspects of Rousseau's friendship for Cousin Abraham (which modern psychologists, incidentally, would see as falling precisely on schedule in the chronological development of personality), the philosopher considered the achievement of this feeling of inner harmony and morality in a social relationship, coming at ages ten-to-twelve, as being remarkably precocious and in line with the plutarchian aspects of the childhood portion of Rousseau's autobiographical writings. We see it, rather, as further evidence of Jean-Jacques' extraordinary 'sensitivity.' Young Abraham, on the other hand, lacked the intelligence, stability and strength of character which might have permitted him to take advantage of his influential position to achieve communication with his friend on a profound or intimate level, which might have resulted in at least the partial reestablishment of Rousseau's sense of equilibrium and self-esteem. In this sense, the apparently successful friendship experience represented, for Rousseau, the loss of a golden opportunity at a time when a fund of self-respect would be desperately needed, with the approach of adolescence.

As Bossey was the scene of Rousseau's first extra-domestic male-male encounter, so it housed his first corresponding male-female encounter -- neither a meeting of the minds nor of the hearts but a first excursion into the nebulous realm of eroticism. Receiving his first spanking, at the hands of Gabrielle Lambercier, Jean-Jacques awakened with astonishment and delight to the world of sensual pleasure. " ... J'avais trouvé dans la dou-

leur," he confesses, "dans la honte même, un mélange de sensualité qui m'avait laissé plus de désir que de crainte de l'éprouver d'érechef par la même main. Il est vrai que, comme il se mêlait sans doute à cela quelque instinct précoce du sexe le même châtement reçu de son frère ne m'eut point paru plaisant."¹ While longing for a return engagement, the child dared not misbehave, for fear of displeasing Mlle. Lambercier. A pathological fear of displeasing, as well as this "unavowable" taste for punishment, thereafter characterized Rousseau's sexual relations.² He preferred the mental pain of shame (to which he was unusually susceptible) or physical pain (even in the form of self-restraint) to the risk of rejection by the object of his desire, by society or by the Sovereign Judge -- evidence of the extent to which his childhood insecurity was to dominate his entire life in all its aspects.

Eventually the second spanking came, this time revealing a second tendency which was to become characteristic: " ... Mlle. Lambercier s'étant sans doute aperçue à quelque signe que le châtement n'allait pas à son but, déclara qu'elle y renonçait et qu'il la fatigait trop."³ Unable to act

¹Ibid., p. 15.

²"Mon ancien goût d'enfant, au lieu de s'évanouir s'associa tellement à l'autre que je ne pus jamais l'écarter des désirs allumés par mes sens; et cette folie, jointe à ma timidité naturelle m'a toujours rendu très peu entreprenant près des femmes, faute d'oser tout dire ou de pouvoir tout faire; l'espèce de jouissance dont l'autre n'était pour moi que le dernier terme ne pouvant être usurpée par celui qui la désire, ni dévinée par celle qui peut l'accorder. J'ai ainsi passé ma vie à convoiter et me taire auprès des personnes que j'aimais le plus. N'osant jamais déclarer mon goût, je l'amusais du moins par des rapports qui m'en conservaient l'idée. Etre aux genoux d'une maîtresse impérieuse, obéir à ses ordres, avoir des pardons à lui demander, étaient pour moi de très douces jouissances, et plus ma vive imagination m'enflammait le sang, plus j'avais l'air d'un amant transi. ... Dans tout le cours de ma vie, emporté quelquefois près de celles que j'aimais par les fureurs d'une passion qui m'ôtait la faculté de voir, d'entendre, hors de sens, et saisi d'un tremblement convulsif dans tout mon corps, jamais j'en'ai pu prendre sur moi de leur déclarer ma folie, et d'implorer d'elles dans la plus intime familiarité la seule faveur qui manquait aux autres." Ibid., pp. 17-18.

³Ibid., p. 15. (Italics mine.)

aggressively, Rousseau chose to act passively by secretly inviting the second party to take the initiative.¹

This is the first incident in Rousseau's history which we can see as abnormal without having recourse to our knowledge of the remainder of his life, although we have seen indications of his going in the direction of masochism in our discussion of his guilt feelings. We have also observed a taste for violent sensations developing, acquired through paternal heredity and environment, with the aid of Plutarchian and Genevan military orientations and the Church's hellfire-and-brimstone theology. Rousseau stresses his strong and precocious sensuality, describing himself as having "un tempérament très ardent, très lascif, très précoce."² We must now further inquire as to what deflected this active drive into masochism.

Looking back on Rousseau's previous experience with women, as we have remarked, the Genevan's mind was geared toward the separation of the sexes -- fact borne out by Isaac Rousseau's double life. Jean-Jacques was prevented from following his father's example and joining the "roughnecks" in the street because of the isolation imposed on him. He thus spent most of his childhood in a feminine world whose members -- idealized adults -- possessed either maternal characteristics (Aunt Suzanne and Jacqueline) or erotic characteristics (Astrée et al.). "Enjoyment" of an idealized woman of this type is, of course, dependent on emotional activity and physical passivity, with, in the latter case, frustration and pain being equated to heroism and personal worth. It was to this concept that Rousseau awoke.

¹See Jean Starobinski, L'Oeil vivant (Paris: Gallimard, 1961) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. La transparence et l'obstacle (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) for a more complete discussion of this aspect of Rousseau's experience.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 17.

Real girls do not seem to have existed in Jean-Jacques' childhood harem. There was one girl in the family, Aunt Clermonde's stepdaughter Fanchon, one year younger than Rousseau. Although he liked this girl and later helped her in a moment of difficulty, she does not seem to have made any impression on him. It was the idealized view of mature women and virginal damsels that Rousseau was to cherish all his life, women as relatively untouchable aristocrats or Astrée-like goddesses.

Rousseau was the first to concede that his erotic passivity was largely due to "prejudices of education" -- the Puritanical terrorism in which he was raised, teaching him to identify pleasure with guilt and sex with sin. "Si jamais éducation fut modeste et chaste," he affirmed, "c'est assurément celle que j'ai reçue. ... Non seulement je n'eus jusqu'à mon adolescence aucune idée distincte de l'union des sexes; mais jamais cette idée confuse ne s'offrit à moi que sous une image odieuse et dégoûtante."¹ Rousseau

¹"Une éducation modeste et sévère avait rempli mon coeur des sentiments honnêtes et d'une horreur invincible pour la débauche; toutes les idées qui s'y rapportaient m'inspiraient l'aversion, le dégoût, l'effroi. La seule pensée de l'union des sexes me paraissait si infâme qu'elle eut amorti mes imaginations lascives, si elle me fut venue en même temps. ... Plus tard l'exemple de la souillure de mes camarades loin de vaincre mon dégoût l'augmentait. Je n'envisageais des filles publiques qu'avec horreur, et grâce aux soins des personnes sages qui m'avaient élevé, l'instinct de la nature se cachait si bien dans mes fantaisies, qu'après avoir fait déjà d'assez grands voyages et vécu parmi toutes sortes de gens, j'avais atteint ma dix-neuvième année [in reality, it was his sixteenth year] avant que mon sexe me fut bien connu.

"Plus instruit, je gardai toujours ma première retenue auprès des femmes. L'amour seul m'égara, jamais la débauche; mes sens furent toujours dirigés par mon coeur: la honte conservatrice des moeurs ne m'abandonna jamais, et autant que je puis aller aux germes les plus profonds de mes passions secrètes, cette honte fut encore en partie l'ouvrage de mes premiers goûts, toujours subsistants. A quoi bon devenir entreprenant pour n'obtenir qu'à demi les plaisirs désirés? Ceux dont je n'osais parler pouvaient seuls donner tout leur prix aux autres. Ceux qu'on devait partager étaient proposables; mais qui n'eut dédaigné de ridicules soins qui, pour trop plaire à celui qui les recevait, nuisaient souvent à celle qui les daignait prendre?

stresses his long ignorance of the mechanics of the sexual act. It and everything associated with it (prostitutes, debauchery, even animals' procreative activities) filled him with horror, scorn, fright and nausea. Countless examples of Rousseau's application of terms such as "purity," "honorableness" and "honesty" to sexual abstinence, as opposed to terms of "dirtying," "unhealthfulness" and "brutality" applied to sexual activity, bear this out. Starobinski observes that it is not the sexual desire but its satisfaction that Rousseau conceives as sinful. Thus Rousseau's affirmation: "Avec un sang brûlant de sensualité presque dès ma naissance, je me conservai pur de toute souillure jusqu'à l'âge où les tempéraments les plus froids et les plus tardifs se développent."¹ And again: "Voilà comment mes sens, d'accord avec mon humeur timide et mon esprit romanesque, m'ont conservé des sentiments purs et des moeurs honnêtes, par les mêmes goûts qui, peut-être avec un peu plus d'effronterie, m'auraient plongé dans les plus brutales voluptés."² Starobinski thus interprets Rousseau's subconscious reasoning concerning passions in general: to desire is to be exposed to sin, of itself a shameful thing. Since the sin is the pleasurable satisfaction

¹N'avais-je donc des moeurs réglées que parce que j'avais des goûts dépravés? Cette conséquence serait injuste et outrée. Un naturel timide, un coeur tendre, une imagination romanesque mêlaient l'amour et la retenue à tous mes désirs: un goût constant pour l'honnêteté, la décence, une aversion pour l'impudence, pour la débauche, pour tous les excès, furent en moi les fruits d'une éducation toujours modeste et saine, quoique d'ailleurs fort mêlée et fort peu suivie; mais dans un caractère doux et sensible à la honte, les désirs qu'elle cachait laissèrent moins de force aux autres. Déjà disposé à m'attacher aux personnes plus qu'à leur sexe, déjà craintif par le danger de déplaire, je m'affectionnais aux actes de soumission; je trouvais ainsi le moyen de me rapprocher par quelque côté de l'objet de ma convoitise en confondant l'attitude d'un amant suppliant avec celle d'un écolier pénitent. Etre aux genoux d'une maîtresse impérieuse était pour moi la plus douce des faveurs. On sent que cette manière de faire l'amour n'amenait pas des progrès bien rapides, et ne mettait pas en grand péril la vertu de celles qui en étaient l'objet." Confessions draft, O.C. I, pp. 1156-1157.

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 16.

²Ibid., p. 17.

of a desire, Rousseau desired, paralyzed (and often imagining himself unaware of the object of his desire). Any normal man would forget his self-image in a moment of passion or, on the contrary, restrain his passion in the name of his image. Rousseau could do neither. Defenseless when assailed by desire, because of insecurity he was unable to face eventual rejection, either by the love-object (if the desire in question happened to be sexual) or by the judging "eye" of the public, real or imaginary. Although Rousseau would sometimes attempt to retain his necessary feeling of innocence by surreptitiously avoiding this witness' gaze, his conscience never left him comfortable when he indulged in active satisfaction. Thus he generally followed the passive route. Since what he sought was a general feeling rather than the specific object of his desire anyway, he could not only escape guilt in this way but procure the narcissistic pleasure of desiring and of seeing himself desired (thus vicariously desiring himself).

To the masochist not daring to partake of active pleasure, the same gratification is enjoyed with impunity in relief from discomfort, as in Rousseau's penchant for confessional catharsis in situations where passionate desire is involved, highly emotional communions accompanied by weeping, serving incidentally to win the approval of and to link him with an admired and respected mediator serving as judge: one of friendship's roles in Rousseau's passionate life.

Beyond this, we must bear in mind the role of Rousseau's demanding genius. Whereas a flesh-and-blood woman requires the commitment of a portion of a man's active personality, Rousseau's active side, as will later become evident, was already totally committed to his "honor" -- at first conceived as the repair of his damaged self-image, finally growing into his great mis-

sion. All his life, Rousseau fled commitment in all its forms, from responsibility to obligation. An unattainable, idealized woman, on the other hand, requires only the passive personality and is a potential source of protection, sustenance and gratification. In this respect, the humble role of "child" or "pauper" or "victim" is a useful pretext, as long as it is accompanied by some face-saving qualification (a precocious child, a pauper by choice and virtue, an unjustly-persecuted victim). Thus the very real disappointment behind Rousseau's tongue-in-cheek conclusion to his version of the spanking incident: " ... J'eus désormais l'honneur dont je me serais bien passé d'être traité par [Mlle. Lambercier] en grand garçon."¹

Finally, we must note Rousseau's often-remarked "natural timidity," or fear of rejection caused by his insatiable need for affection and approval, itself largely stemming from his insecurity.

It is significant that Rousseau's delayed entry into the social environment coincided, or came close to coinciding, with the first indications of oncoming puberty, whereas a child normally has from five to ten years to adapt to the first traumatic experience before taking on the second. (It has been observed that there was no sexual relationship between parent-figures either in Jean-Jacques' home or at the Lamberciers.)

The question of "latent homosexuality" on Rousseau's part, having been brought up in recent criticism, must be briefly considered, especially in that Rousseau's case does indeed contain symptoms often leading to the preference for members of one's own sex. Obviously, this is as easy and vague a conclusion to draw as it is impossible to prove, one way or the other. If, by "latent homosexuality" is meant a conscious or subconscious but, at any rate, frustrated desire to have sexual intercourse with a member

of one's own sex, like everyone and perhaps more easily than many, Rousseau could certainly conceivably have gone in this direction, given the right circumstances. But the whole question is made irrelevant by the fact that these circumstances never occurred. Furthermore, Rousseau was "childlike," not "womanlike,"¹ and it is somehow difficult to conceive of his willingly exchanging the sensuous delights of the "enormous amplitude" of some "dazzlingly white bosom" (using his own descriptive terms) for a bony and hairy chest. However, stranger things have happened.

If, on the other hand, by "latent homosexuality" is meant a sexual element contained in the emotion derived from a relationship with a member of one's own sex -- which incidentally is a sign of great sympathy and emotional capacity rather than of weakness -- we have no evidence suggesting that this was or was not the case, but leave the point open, failing to see that either conclusion would make a great difference.

If, finally, by "latent homosexuality" is meant a preference for social intercourse with members of one's own sex, then we must conclude, à la Normande, "yes" and "no." "Yes" through Rousseau's Genevan influence and through the fact, which will later become evident, that this brilliant man knew no truly intellectually-interesting women who did not also possess a repelling cattiness.² "No" in that Rousseau was always attracted to the gentleness and serenity found more often in women than in men, perhaps not feeling threatened by the Fair Sex. Far from being anti-feminist and fearing

¹Starobinski attributes the theories of "latent homosexuality" to Rousseau's emphasis of the side of his nature which he calls "feminine" (meaning "passive") -- a misinterpretation on the reader's part. The critic sees Rousseau's sexual passivity as another technique (along with exhibitionism, onanism, even illness) to avoid active sexual intercourse, which he had been conditioned to see as repugnant, even sinful, and which risked developing into a relationship that would undermine his independence.

²Two exceptions (Julie von Bondeli and "Henriette") who entered his life through correspondence during his fifties came at too stormy a period for him to fully appreciate their potential.

female domination, as has been suggested, Rousseau welcomed it as long as it was characterized by gentleness, tact and goodwill.

In conclusion, Bossey, Rousseau's early experience in human relations, has revealed that Rousseau clearly required, to achieve friendship in the narrow sense of the term, either a man or woman extraordinarily gifted in intelligence, lucidity, understanding, gentleness, stability, selflessness, constancy... or a good-natured, faithful lapdog like Abraham Bernard, offering neither resistance, threat nor untrustworthiness, and requiring commitment of the passive but not the active segment of his personality which could thus be diverted into other pursuits.

Although Jean-Jacques did not realize it at the time, Bossey was the scene of his initiation into "civilization." This important step bears examination.

Turning back to Rousseau's theory of evolution, we see the onset of civilization as being characterized by the separation of "truth" and "appearance." Taking from Rousseau's theory the elements applicable to his own experience, we find the following: As long as man had been self-sufficient (cf. Jean-Jacques at home), his commerce with others had been independent and a source of pleasure; but as soon as one man needed another (cf. Jean-Jacques "poor orphan"), servitude and misery¹ were born. A man now depended on the arbitrary approval of those in a higher position than his. It was at Bossey, then, that "approval" and "rejection" took on a life-or-death connotation. There too the "natural" -- we would say "naïve" -- child was made

¹Rousseau defines "servitude" as moral constraint, or inability to exercise one's free-will, to make one's own decisions. "Misery," in his terms, is synonymous with the frustration imposed by elements other than one's free-will.

aware of the next step in the theory: the value revolution, wherein men tend to base their judgments on superficialities, on appearance rather than truth. Hypocrisy was a subtle defensive skill Rousseau was never to acquire, and he would thus be tossed about mercilessly until his much later "illumination" would bring across with unmistakable clarity the fact that this discrimination must, in civilization, necessarily occur. For the time being, however, learning of the distinction between his own worldview and reality was upsetting enough for the child, and in his reaction we see a glimmer of the future Rousseau.

He thus tells the story: Along in the study one afternoon, absorbed in his lesson, Jean-Jacques was suddenly confronted by a pair of angry Lamberciers, accusing him of having broken a comb left to dry in the adjoining kitchen. The child's denials met with disbelief. Appearances, he vaguely realized, were against him, and he could conceive of no logical explanation. Yet, knowing himself to be innocent, he stubbornly reiterated his denial. The matter was treated as serious, says Rousseau, adding that this was rightly so, since ill-intention, lying and obstination were involved. Uncle Gabriel was called in to inflict the punishment. Nothing, however, could wrest from the innocent victim the avowal of a crime of which he felt himself to be innocent. "... Tout ce que je sentais," he relates, "c'était la rigueur d'un châtement effroyable pour un crime que je n'avais pas commis. La douleur du corps, quoique vive, m'était peu sensible, je ne sentais que l'indignation, la rage, le désespoir."¹

Friendship played a role in the experience. "Mon cousin dans un cas à peu près semblable, et qu'on avait puni d'une faute involontaire comme

¹Confessions, O.C. I, pp. 19-20.

d'un acte prémédité, se mettait en fureur à mon exemple, et se montait, pour ainsi dire, à mon unisson. Tous deux dans le même lit nous nous embrassions avec des transports convulsifs, nous étouffions; et quand nos jeunes coeurs un peu soulagés, pouvaient exhaler leur colère, nous nous levions sur notre séant, et nous nous mettions tous deux à crier cent fois de toute notre force: Carnifex, Carnifex, Carnifex."¹

If reader impact is considerably diminished by Abraham Bernard's participation in the incident, the violent joy sensed in the above passage stands as evidence that Rousseau's masochism was not by any means limited to the sexual experience in the narrow sense of the term, but that it carries over to friendship and even beyond. Indeed, it is highly noteworthy that this severe punishment calmed Jean-Jacques sensuality for "a long time," indicating the importance of the early-acquired guilt-factor. Having become addicted during his early childhood to self-immolating violence as atonement for guilt and substitution for sinful active pleasure, he would thus need "fixes" of violence at regular intervals, whether through melancholia, frustrated sexuality, pain, confession, persecution... and this experience required the validation of an understanding witness to pronounce the pardon and permit Jean-Jacques to live with himself for a while longer.

The irresistible attraction of self-directed violence, opposing Rousseau's also undeniable and constantly-professed horror of it, probably goes all the way back to the basic life- and death-instincts. Their excesses, in Rousseau's case, may perhaps be traced to his genetic origins wherein lie the seed of his greatness and misery. However, the important thing to retain here is the arbitrariness, or injustice, of the undergone violence, as compared to Jean-Jacques' good intentions. Going far beyond the broken comb,

¹Ibid., p. 20.

this existential illumination concerns one's relation to the universe and its motivating force, whatever it may be.¹

The immediate significance of the broken-comb incident was probably limited to the discovery that most of us make at adolescence and which many of us never learn to forgive: that grown-ups are not infallible. "Nous ne les regardions plus comme des Dieux qui lisaient dans nos coeurs," confessed Rousseau. For Jean-Jacques, however, this discovery was more traumatic than usual. Since he formed his self-image from his interpretation of others' appraisals of him, the incident marked his loss of confidence in his own innocence. This explains why, in his eyes, the world "darkened" around him. Unfortunately, Rousseau's habit of protecting his self-image by remaining "blind" to unpleasant facts of life that might reflect unfavorably on himself, would lead to an eventual series of such "illuminations." Nonetheless, Rousseau thereafter carried with him a vague feeling of para-

¹Rousseau's description of the consequences of the incident shows to what extent his world was overturned: "Je sens en écrivant ceci que mon pouls s'élève encore; ces moments me seront toujours présents quand je vivrais cent mille ans. Ce premier sentiment de la violence et de l'injustice est resté si profondément gravé dans mon âme que toutes les idées qui s'y rapportent me rendent ma première émotion; et ce sentiment, relatif à moi dans son origine, a pris une telle consistance en lui-même, et s'est tellement détaché de tout intérêt personnel, que mon coeur s'enflamme au spectacle ou au récit de toute action injuste, quel qu'en soit l'objet et en quelque lieu qu'elle se commette, comme si l'effet en retombait sur moi. Quand je lis les cruautés d'un tyran féroce, les subtiles noirceurs d'un fourbe de prêtre, je partirais volontiers pour aller poignarder des misérables, dussai-je cent fois y périr. Je me suis souvent mis en nage, à poursuivre à la course ou à coups de pierre un coq, une vache, un chien, un animal que j'en voyais tourmenter un autre uniquement parce qu'il se sentait le plus fort. Ce mouvement peut m'être naturel, et je crois qu'il l'est; mais le souvenir profond de la première injustice que j'ai souffert y fut trop longtemps et trop fortement lié, pour ne l'avoir pas beaucoup renforcé." Confessions, O.C. I, p. 20.

dise lost. Jean-Jacques now saw that perfect harmony (Starobinski calls it "transparency") would never reign at Bossey and that, no matter how hard he tried, he would never become the "idol" of the family there.¹ Conceiving his greatest pleasure as being loved by everyone around him, with everyone, in turn, loving everyone else; finding the absence of this perfection intolerable, he chose to reject the entire environment, which had taken on aspects of the nightmarish Theatre of the Absurd. This action was (perhaps predictably) taken by passive means. Jean-Jacques and alter ego Abraham began to act like Bad Boys, becoming sneaky, lying and rebellious. It took very little to disgust the Lamberciers with the boarding school business. They soon sent the boys back to Uncle Gabriel in Geneva. Here, the cycle began again, with considerably less success. Both Gabriel and Theodora Bernard were too involved with their own particular middle-aged manias -- he with his pleasures and she her piety -- to take an interest in the two twelve-year-olds (not the most captivating age of childhood, one must admit). The Bernards' one concern was to ship their unwanted ward out of the house and into apprenticeship. Abraham was neglected too.

Left on their own, the boys regained their calm and orderly habits. They retained their isolated life-style, avoiding the local street-gangs. (Masses of mediocrity never interested Rousseau on a personal basis.) Their games were make-believe, acting out the adult roles they would soon assume. Jean-Jacques' natural

¹Bossey was thus the setting for great change in Rousseau's life. At first a great playroom, it evolved into the setting for Rousseau's realization that childhood was over for him and he was entering upon a new phase of his existence. On the one hand striving toward the assumption of the adult course of conduct, he also clung to the safety of the childhood role with which he was familiar. This is a normal phenomenon, but the conflict was unusually serious with Rousseau. Extremely dependent and insecure, he needed a great deal of help and understanding to see him through this critical moment. None was forthcoming, and, instead of being resolved, the problem continued to reinforce itself, becoming, for Rousseau, a way of life: the rest of his terrestrial sojourn would be spent alternating between manhood and regression into the security of identification with childhood. Although this expedient would prove sufficient to give him the feeling of safety and innocence and spare him exposure to rejection, he would often deplore his "acting like a child for so long." Confessions draft, O.C. I, p. 1156.

leanings lay in the area of arts and crafts: drawing, handicraft, play-writing and play-acting. The cousins made marionettes and gave performances for the Bernard grown-ups. Jean-Jacques wrote and delivered edifying sermons. Career talk was in the air: Cousin Abraham was to be trained as an engineer like his father who had landed a fairly good job with the Geneva Department of Fortifications. No one knew what to do with Jean-Jacques, who wanted to become a glamorous minister but whose maternal inheritance did not permit the luxury of a higher education. He was finally placed in apprenticeship as a law clerk.

Jean-Jacques was furious. The hero as "scribbler" indeed! He so scorned and despised the ignoble craft imposed on him that he was a sorry sight to his master,¹ who utterly deflated him by sending him ignominiously back to his uncle, as too unintelligent to exercise the "scribbling" profession. Gabriel Bernard then placed his ward under five-year contract with a second master, an engraver. This time the boy went humbly and quietly to his destiny.

Jean-Jacques was to reside with his second master for three years. His was a completely new environment and social experience, and we must look at the relationships he formed during this period.

When Jean-Jacques entered his service, Abel Ducommun was a brand-new master-engraver, only twenty years old, eager to assert his newly-acquired power, yet, at the same time, unable to handle it. Painfully inexperienced and unsure of himself, he was not up to the formative task before him, and

¹Rousseau often confesses never having learned to hide his feelings.

he hid his inadequacies behind a cloak of arrogance, toughness and insensitivity. Ironically, it was at this moment that Jean-Jacques was desperately in need of a man such as Ducommun to set him on his two feet and prepare him to defend himself in the cruel world.

The engraving profession, closely enough related to the boy's creative instincts, pleased him of itself and, still smarting from his rejection as an unfit "scribbler," he hoped to reach mastery of the craft. Rousseau tells us, however, that his master's "constraint" and "brutality" quickly disgusted him with the entire business. It is hard to conceive of Jean-Jacques' ever successfully adjusting to the confinement of professional discipline. Nearly thirteen, he had not yet been "forced" to do any sort of work, except perhaps to learn his catechism which he had not accomplished without difficulty. Years later, he would find himself unable to complete several simple botanical specimen books, in spite of his passion for this hobby, merely because a commitment to do so had stifled his free-will. Constraint of any sort was always to give Rousseau a feeling of suffocation. Even forced to make love, he laughed, he would neither want to do so nor succeed in making himself perform. However hard he tried to restrain himself, he always eventually exploded thunderously to freedom, to the shock and astonishment of spectators who, not understanding this facet of his personality, took him for madman or hypocrite.

Abel Ducommun cannot be held responsible for the discipline involved in learning a trade but rather for giving Rousseau a master-slave, or honor-shame, view of the master-apprentice relationship, through his unmistakably, concretely and publicly treating the boy as inferior. Accustomed to the almost perfect conformity of life-styles reigning in all classes of early eighteenth-century Geneva, Rousseau was shocked to see himself treated differently from his master and the two older journeymen. Meals were a particu-

lar source of humiliation. The young gourmand's food was rationed to him in sufficient but limited quantities. He was not allowed to join in meal-time conversations and was sent away before dessert. The pain was not in the privation but in the insulting spectacle of the others' enjoyment. "Je ne voyais qu'objets de jouissance pour d'autres et de privations pour moi seul,"¹ he explained. Whereas a less imaginative, more submissive boy might have been content to receive nourishment, a room of his own and training in an honorable craft for the price of the discomfort and injustice often necessarily inherent in learning situations, the sight of the others' liberty sufficed to make Rousseau's "servitude" unbearable, and the presence of forbidden fruit made him covetous. Nor could he escape into fantasy: his room was closed to him except at bedtime.

This marks the beginning of one of Rousseau's saddest hours and the moment when the inadequacy of his character and early education in preparing him for social life become evident. Lacking the requirements to meet and overcome the tests of society, he simultaneously rejected this situation in which a complete and immediate dominance was denied him. He tried to escape the problem by fleeing backward in time. He seems first to have tried to engage one of his former "parents" to take him back, spending Sundays with the Bernards and paying occasional visits to the Lamberciers until discouragement finally distracted him. His attempt to ingratiate himself with his father is particularly poignant. Jean-Jacques had visited his father in Nyon from time to time since leaving Bossey. There, he had found Isaac Rousseau, now in his sedentary fifties, the center of a merry circle of

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 32.

friends. A cruel sight! As long as the visits lasted, the boy was allowed to share his popular father's good fortune. Then he would be sent back into oblivion. During one of his visits to Nyon, Jean-Jacques fell in love for the first time, with a pretty, coquettish demoiselle of his father's circle, Mlle. de Vulson. He was twelve and she, twenty-two. His feelings, devoid of sensuality, were nonetheless of a passionate nature: more than mere vanity, as has been suggested, his entire identity was at stake in the relationship, and he took the affair with deadly seriousness. The unwanted child was admittedly playing a role before an audience, and savoring both the escapist make-believe and the ingratiating applause.

Jell'aimais surtout en grande compagnie; les plaisanteries, les agaceries, les jalousies mêmes m'attachaient, m'intéressaient; je triomphais avec orgueil de ses préférences, près des grands rivaux qu'elle paraissait maltraiter. J'étais tourmenté, mais j'aimais ce tourment. Les applaudissements, les encouragements, les ris m'échauffaient, m'animaient. J'avais des emportements, des saillies: j'étais transporté d'amour dans un cercle. Tête-à-tête j'aurais été contraint, froid, peut-être ennuyé.¹

Both as personnage and performer, his sense of honor had been briefly restored until the moment he was forced to turn back to reality:

Nos séparations ne se faisaient jamais sans larmes, et il est singulier dans quel vide accablant je me sentais plongé après l'avoir quittée. Je ne pouvais parler que d'elle ni penser qu'à elle; mes regrets étaient vrais et vifs: mais je crois qu'au fond ces héroïques regrets n'étaient pas tout pour elle, et que, sans que je m'en aperçusse, les amusements dont elle était le centre y avaient leur bonne part.²

All too soon, the damsel betrayed him by suddenly marrying. She had been engaged to a young man all the time of their "affair." Only Jean-Jacques had been unaware of her commitment. Nearly fifty years later, Rousseau had

¹Ibid., p. 28.

²Ibid., p. 29.

still not forgiven this perfidious young lady for the public humiliation she had inflicted on him. He was not without seriousness when he said laughingly -- and note the proud feudal terms -- "Je jurai dans mon noble courroux de ne plus voir la perfide, n'imaginant pas pour elle de plus terrible punition."¹

Yet Jean-Jacques had his own wrongs toward Mlle. de Vulson. During the time of the "affair," a strange, inscrutable, enterprising little vicieuse named Mlle. Goton had been causing him indescribable delights by walloping his tender derrière. He had managed somehow to entice her to make the advances and was now enjoying an emotional release (he was still far from puberty)... but what violent emotion was compressed into that small body! " ... En [la] voyant seulement ... , je ne voyais plus rien; tous mes sens étaient bouleversés. ... J'étais aussi tremblant qu'agité devant [elle], même au fort des plus grandes familiarités. Je crois que si j'avais resté [sic] trop longtemps avec elle j'en'aurais pu vivre; les palpitations m'auraient étouffé."²

These two simultaneous "affairs" illustrate the fact, pointed out by Rousseau himself, that he was never able (except in fantasy and with Mme. d'Houdetot, years later) to equate spiritual love (conceived as noble and beautiful) with physical love (conceived as vulgar and shameful), yet both of which differed from "tender friendship" (from which the sexual element would be missing).

¹Ibid., p. 29.

²Ibid., p. 28.

When Jean-Jacques was nearly fourteen, something happened to change the nature of his destiny and close the door to any hope he may have entertained of recapturing the Good Life as "idol" of his father's family. Isaac Rousseau, now a different man, aging, tiring and ready to settle down to a comfortable old age, remarried.¹ That his father's door, closed to exclude him, had opened to accept a family of outsiders did not escape Jean-Jacques. As he put it as delicately as possible: " [Mon père] m'aimait très tendrement mais il avait aussi ses plaisirs, et d'autres goûts avaient un peu attiédi l'affection paternelle depuis que je vivais loin de lui. ... Quoique sa femme ne fût plus en âge de me donner des frères, elle avait des parents: cela faisait une autre famille, d'autres objets, un nouveau ménage qui ne rappelle plus si souvent mon souvenir."² Jean-Jacques predictably scorned and resented his stepmother, "bonne femme, un peu mielleuse"³ (and he was never one to hide his sentiments). She, in turn, cared nothing for her stepson whom she saw as a lazy, good-for-nothing opportunist.

Less than a year later, the humiliating experience was reenacted, on a lesser scale, when Abel Ducommun also became a bridegroom. To young Mme. Ducommun, instructed by her husband, Jean-Jacques also appeared to be a worthless kid, and she probably avoided him. Rousseau never mentioned Mme. Ducommun, yet he continued residing with the couple. The following year, a daughter was born to the household.

Sometime during this period, Rousseau lost the will to be a Good Boy,

¹On March 3, 1726, he wed Jeanne François of Nyon.

²Ibid., p. 55.

³Ibid., p. 145.

just as he had done at Bossey following his discovery of Injustice. He gave up trying to ingratiate himself and again passively rebelled against his environment, becoming sneaky, secretive, lying, even stealing. (He marvels at the swiftness of his degeneration.) The moral barrier against stealing had been broken by one of the older companions, who had talked the complaisant lad into obliging him by snatching and selling asparagus from the former's own mother's garden, in exchange for a small bribe, while the companion went off to treat himself to a snack with some other buddy. Thereafter, Jean-Jacques stole whatever little thing tempted him: an apple, a bibelot -- petty larceny. (Rousseau explains his horror of stealing anything monetarily valuable or of stealing money itself, attributing his sentiment to his early Genevan education which had taught him to hold money in awe and identify crimes against it with "des idées secrètes d'infamie, de prison, de châtiment, de potence, qui m'auraient fait frémir si j'avais été tenté ... "1) As he would be caught and beaten, he would feel justified in pulling the next job. He would avenge and raise himself symbolically by stealing things he coveted and which his master ceremoniously kept away from him, taking particular delight in making off with his master's personal engraving tools. " ... J'étais transporté de joie d'avoir ces bagatelles en mon pouvoir; je croyais voler le talent avec ses productions."2

Degeneration soon proved a bore. This led Jean-Jacques to begin reading idealistic novels again. Suddenly, reading became an all-consuming passion, the boy's sole interest. Reading on his own time and on his master's, he indiscriminately devoured the local book-renter's entire stock, avoiding

¹Ibid., p. 35.

²Ibid., p. 35.

only pornography, whose very idea filled him with terror. This manner of reading momentarily gave him a false sense of stability by restoring his idealistic worldview and thus his sense of honor and personal worth, but it also signifies his isolation and failure to identify with his environment. Other problems were complicated by the oncoming phenomenon of puberty, for which Rousseau was totally unprepared. Having finished the novels and unable to find fulfillment in reality, he turned to erotic daydreams for escape,¹ creating an ideal world based on the characters and situations in the novels he had read and in which he would appear, significantly, not as himself but as one of the characters. His fantasies both consoled him and further disgusted him with reality. Thus he describes his adolescence: "inquiet, mécontent de tout et de moi, sans goûts de mon état, sans plaisirs de mon âge, dévoré de désirs dont j'ignorais l'objet, pleurant sans sujets de larmes, soupirant sans savoir de quoi; enfin caressant tendrement mes chimères, faute de rien voir autour de moi qui les valut."²

It may be surprising to note that timid, tormented Rousseau could laugh as well as cry and was not a social misfit. Universally rejected by his parent-figures, he was on the contrary accepted, even sought after, by his peers. Little by little he had drifted away from family. Never completely losing touch with Abraham Bernard, the boyhood friendship had nonetheless degenerated. (Rousseau later came to believe his snobbish Aunt Theodore had been behind the boys' separation. This may have been merely a convenient pretext to justify his real or imagined rejection by Abraham, since the

¹Perhaps the presence in the house of a "honeymoon couple" added to the erotic orientation.

²Ibid., p. 41.

Bernards, neither rich nor influential, had on the contrary no reasonable expectations of social advancement.) Jean-Jacques spent his free time with other apprentices, nice average lower-middle-class kids primarily interested in sports. Sundays after church, they would stop by the Ducommun's for Jean-Jacques and then head for the country outside the Genevan walls. These mediocre boys bored Rousseau, less through lack of intelligence than through lack of sensitivity. "Je veux qu'on me distingue," Molière's *Alceste* had demanded. Sometimes Rousseau was unable to approximate, at least in appearance, the "distinguishing" relationship, the "specialness" and "uniqueness" his great and wounded sensitivity craved, if not through an ideal "sympathy of hearts," at least through the substitute of a sensitivity artificially created by the emotions of violence. This is exemplified by an interesting and suggestive incident which took place during Jean-Jacques' apprenticeship period, demonstrating to what point the boy craved the gratifications of his "castle-dream." During a field polo game with a playmate named Pleince, the boys began to squabble -- we have already noted Rousseau's quarrelsome nature -- then to fight, and Pleince hit Rousseau over the head with his mallet. The cut began to bleed profusely. "Je tombe à l'instant," Rousseau recounts. "Je ne vis de ma vie une agitation pareille à celle de ce pauvre garçon voyant mon sang ruisseler dans mes cheveux. Il crut m'avoir tué. Il se précipite sur moi, m'embrasse, me serre étroitement en fondant en larmes et poussant des cris perçants. Je l'embrassais aussi de toute ma force en pleurant comme lui dans une émotion confuse qui n'était pas sans quelque douceur."¹ Unable to stop the flow of blood, Pleince was forced to call his mother, who dressed the wound. "Ses larmes et celles de son fils pénétrèrent mon coeur au point que longtemps je la regardai comme ma

¹Rêveries, O.C. I, p. 1037.

mère et son fils comme mon frère, jusqu'à ce qu'ayant perdu l'un et l'autre de vue, je les oubliai peu à peu."¹ (Obviously this noble and significant ethic was beyond the capacity of young Pleince and his mother, unaware of the blood bond between themselves and Jean-Jacques.)

We have already seen Jean-Jacques derive a finer, closer bond through pain as means, with his father, his brother and his cousin. Still another similar incident took place with one of Aunt Clermonde's stepchildren. Playing amongst some large machinery in Uncle Fazy's textile factory, Jean-Jacques crushed two fingertips in a roller thoughtlessly turned by his playmate. "Je fis un cri perçant ...," he said. "[The playmate] consterné s'écrie, sort de la roue, m'embrasse et me conjure d'appaiser mes cris, ajoutant qu'il était perdu. Au fort de ma douleur la sienne me toucha, je me tus ... "² It is noteworthy that Jean-Jacques sacrificed even his personal "glory" to this nobly-heightened friendship bond, as his wound caused him to miss marching in a uniformed parade; yet he failed to seek his usual passive revenge by "tattling" on the boy.

"Degenerate" or "knight in armor," then, Jean-Jacques was dissatisfied by mediocrity in his personal life. His manner of playing games, for example, was totally unlike that of his apprentice-friends who -- had they thought about it -- would have been quite baffled. "Je leur aurais volontiers échappé si j'avais pu: mais une fois en train dans leurs jeux, j'étais plus ardent et j'allais plus loin qu'aucun autre; difficile à ébranler et à retenir. Ce fut là de tout temps ma disposition constante. Dans nos promenades hors de la ville j'allais toujours en avant sans songer au retour, à moins

¹Ibid., p. 1037.

²Ibid., p. 1036.

que d'autres n'y songeassent pour moi."¹ Rather than amusing himself with his playmates, Jean-Jacques was actually acting out his forthcoming escape. He had long since rejected his environment, but psychological barriers prevented him from taking decisive action to escape it. Unable to force his master to eject him, he now managed to find himself symbolically ejected by the city of Geneva. This was enough to justify his flight. On two Sunday evenings, he had been caught outside the closing city gates and had been obliged to spend the night outdoors. The third time, he took the fateful decision not to return to his master. Adventure was calling the son of Isaac Rousseau, but, wanting to share his experience with a friend, he sent his playmates to notify Cousin Abraham as soon as the gates reopened the next morning. Deep inside, he sensed that this was only a test -- either Abraham would join him on the road or the threat of his departure would force the family to reopen its doors to him. Abraham arrived promptly enough, but neither called him back nor offered to join him, instead praising the idea of his departure and offering him some little gifts. Presents instead of sentiments!!! Rousseau could never believe his childhood friend capable of letting him down in this way and, as we have seen, came to blame his aunt's pernicious influence for the termination of his first friendship and, in part, for his very departure from the Genevan fatherland. " ... Il n'est pas possible que de lui-même [Abraham] n'eut fait quelque effort pour me retenir," he reflected, "ou qu'il n'eut tenté de me suivre: mais point. Il m'encouragea dans mon dessein plutôt qu'il ne m'en détourna. Puis quand il me vit bien résolu, il me quitta sans beaucoup de larmes."²

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 41.

²Ibid., p. 43.

Alas, Jean-Jacques possessed the failure of many sensitive and honor-oriented persons, which is to assume a similar emotional capacity and frame of mind in others, just because they happen to use the same language -- terms and expressions. The language of knightly honor, often incongruously applied to down-to-earth money problems, was used by the adolescents of Rousseau's day. At his master's, the lad had secretly engraved medals of knighthood which he had distributed (and apparently sold) to his playmates. The most cherished of Abraham Bernard's gifts to him was a little sword. An unidentified letter, addressed to "Mon cher Couzin," copied by Rousseau into a notebook several years later, responds to a reproach of insincerity in a knightly vein: its young writer, believed to have been Jean-Jacques himself, speaks of "proof of friendship," calling a third boy (who had incited his addressee to accuse him) "insolent" and "the most self-interested boy I have seen in my life."¹ But beyond the language of honor, friendship was not the same to Jean-Jacques as it was to Abraham Bernard, just as fatherhood was not the same to Isaac Rousseau, nor guardianship to Gabriel Bernard, nor apprenticeship to Abel Ducommun... Cousin Abraham and the others appeared, then, as having betrayed him.

In truth, Rousseau's youthful view of friendship was a combination of nobility and necessity, perhaps even opportunism, as exemplified by his "castle" daydream on the road.² The moment he left the stifling environment which he saw as based on unjust values, he felt calm, free, and released; his idealistic worldview reestablished itself, and he regained the conviction that the superiority he sensed in himself would finally be recognized and

¹C.C. I, No. 2, pp. 142. Translation mine.

²See p. 20 herein.

acknowledged. He stopped at châteaux along the road, to sing wistfully beneath the windows.¹

The flight from Geneva effectively ended Jean-Jacques' relationship with father, guardian and friend. Abraham later ran away and disappeared; it is believed that he died soon afterward. (In the meantime, and even before Jean-Jacques' departure of which he undoubtedly served as model, brother François Rousseau had met the same fate.) Both father and uncle half-heartedly pursued Jean-Jacques, but, quickly discouraged,² turned back to their own private lives, while the youngster looked forward to his -- straight to conversion to Roman Catholicism.

Whereas running away was a common occurrence among Genevan boys of the lower middle class -- a thrifty version of the British grand tour and an almost customary completion of the apprenticeship experience -- Rousseau's departure from Geneva was unusual in several respects. Much has been made of the conclusion to Book I of the Confessions, wherein the "frightening horns"

¹While enjoying the amusing picaresque elements in the Confessions, we must not lose sight of Jean-Jacques' youth and background, his very real superiority, and his utter solitude as he passes from adventure to adventure. If anyone needed "friends ready to serve him," it was he.

²Rousseau stresses that neither his guardian-uncle nor his father wanted to catch up with him. He eventually came to believe that his father's failure to pursue him farther was caused by the fact that Isaac Rousseau would enjoy the interest from his son's inheritance as long as the boy was absent from Geneva. This may be an overly-harsh explanation, perhaps geared to avoid facing the possibility that his father simply did not love him. (Cf. the Abraham Bernard estrangement.) It cannot be overstressed to what extent Rousseau's father's opinion of him colored his opinion of himself.

of the city's rising drawbridge stand as "sinister and fatal omens of the destiny which that moment was opening up for [the lad]." Some critics interpret these as symbols of guilt-feelings derived from the boy's aversion for the master-slave situation of employment. To others, they stand as symbols of his resentment toward the family's indifference toward him. In reality, Rousseau's attitude toward his flight from Geneva is much too complex to be satisfactorily defined by any one such explanation. Amongst the myriad of sentiments undoubtedly affecting his reaction, however, one strong current stands out. Book I of the Confessions concludes with a moving portrait of "what might have been": Rousseau's living peacefully and contentedly, in diligence and obscurity, a long, steady existence as craftsman, patriot, Christian, family man, friend -- not the life he wished for himself, nor altogether that which he thought he wished, but rather that to which his family had destined him. This "might have been" portrait is intimately related to Rousseau's departure and may be compared to his own castle-dream. In leaving Geneva, the boy was clearly following the road to fame and fortune.¹ Castles, palaces and persons of nobility and wealth, a higher, finer life of which his idealistic reading material had provided the model and inspiration were what he was clearly pursuing as he rejected the mediocrity that was not only his birthright but, more importantly, his moral duty. Indeed, the typical lower-middle-class Genevan (as was, in this respect, Isaac Rousseau), in his idealization of the republican principle,

¹This thesis does not contradict the interpretations of his long journey as a quest for identity or for happiness; on the contrary, it complements it by calling attention to the fact that he conceived his identity and happiness on the highest level imaginable. (Thus his so-called "inferiority complex": fear of inability to attain this highest of levels conceived as rightfully his, any lesser achievement filling him with disgust and despair.)

profoundly mistrusting all that which was not mediocre. There was a profoundly sinful connotation, then, to the ambitious motives behind Rousseau's departure¹ -- by leaving his homeland in this frame of mind, young Rousseau was sinning against the ideal of mediocrity, basic part of the faith of his fathers, and taking on an heroic but dangerous gamble on his own moral value. Yet something in him, that he came to see as providential, his Destiny, was calling him to take that chance. "My life was good enough," he would soon confess on a similar occasion; "a reasonable man might have been content with it: but my restless heart wanted something else."² The "Primons!" he was to utter years later in Paris was tacitly implicit in his flight from Geneva. Rousseau would later, in the Dialogues and the Rêveries, refer to the "inquiétude de l'espérance," and Emile would confide to his teacher, "Je n'ai rien tant appris de vous dès mon enfance qu'à être tout entier où je suis, à ne jamais faire une chose et rêver à une autre, ce qui proprement est ne rien faire, et n'être tout entier nulle part,"³ and again: " ... Le première règle de la sagesse est de vouloir ce qui est et de régler son coeur sur sa destinée. Voilà tout ce qui dépend de nous ...; tout le reste est de nécessité. Celui qui lutte le plus contre son sort est le moins sage et toujours le plus malheureux; ce qu'il peut changer à sa situation le soulage moins que le trouble intérieur qu'il se donne pour cela ne le tourmente. Il réussit rarement, et ne gagne rien à réussir."⁴

¹Cf. Rousseau's later moral principle, to which he assigned prime importance: that one should never place oneself in a situation in which his self-interest is in conflict with his duty.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 153. (Translation mine.)

³Solitaires, O.C. IV, p. 899.

⁴Ibid., p. 883.

As will become evident, the guilt involved in this ambition would prove to be a constant source of torment, both on the conscious and subconscious levels, throughout the period covered in this study. Even after the 1750 success and its assurance (in the validation of his genius) that the gamble had not been taken in vain, Rousseau continued to be encumbered, although somewhat differently so, by his precedence, eventually turning it into a cross of martyrdom which he had been "chosen" by providence to bear.¹ Thus the horned drawbridge, justifying his act by symbolically "barring" him from the lesser destiny assigned him by his fatherland (and by his father).

A "sinful" ambition, then -- if only to recover the "universal idol" state of his infancy -- was the end involved in the flight from Geneva. From the republic's (and Isaac Rousseau's) moral point of view, the means were as black as the end. Conversion to Roman Catholicism was, of course, a cardinal sin to the intolerant Calvinists. As soon as a lad left the republic, unless he went north to become a mercenary soldier, he encountered "converters." Great competition for souls existed between Geneva and Savoy. Jean-Jacques and his friends had occasionally taken advantage of offers of snacks from neighboring priests, eager to attract young Protestant souls. Conversion was a common subject of tall-tales among the boys (Jean-Jacques seemed to hold the notion that he would fare quite well with the Church) but the actual act was what everyone threatened to do, with great bravado, but relatively few carried out. In Jean-Jacques' case, not stopping with con-

¹Thereby resolving the conflict described by Lester G. Crocker: "Rousseau was the victim of two different neuroses: inferiority feelings and guilt feelings. Each of these has a different psychological content and a different mode of expression. Although both involve worthlessness (or self-contempt and self-condemnation), inferiority feelings stimulate competition and aggression -- which alone can eradicate them -- while guilt feelings inhibit competitiveness, require subordination, self-debasement, or withdrawal." Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Quest (1712-1758) (New York: Macmillan, 1968), Vol. 1, pp. 56-7. (Italics mine.)

version, the boy was soon to become the long-term protégé of a somewhat shady lady, whose past in the Swiss Vaud country where Isaac Rousseau now resided was not without blemish, and whose present included employment as "converter" and sometime secret agent for the Savoy government and the Catholic Church -- Geneva's arch-enemies. Isaac Rousseau, whose sentiments of patriotism were stronger than those of paternity, never forgave his son for these consequences of his flight from Geneva, and was to die convinced that his son was a failure who had shamefully let him down -- just a bit more guilt for Jean-Jacques to bear. It must be stressed that the guilt Rousseau felt concerning his conversion was attached to his father's opinion of him, not a religious guilt, and Rousseau was later to sigh: "Que n'a-t-il vécu quatre ans de plus pour voir le nom de son fils voler dans l'Europe! Hélas, il en serait mort de joie!"¹ More importantly, the son would have shared the father's elation.

Eighteenth-century Savoy was a small,² well-governed independent state³ with a strong military tradition and a French culture. Since the sixteenth century, royal alliances had tied the little kingdom to the Court of France, and no real national feeling existed except a kind of French patriotism during Rousseau's residency there. The lands were prosperous, pretty and rich, the people neither extremely wealthy nor extremely poor. Life was sweet in Savoy, whose pleasures were of both a corporal and a spiritual order. In certain respects, then, it resembled its French neighbor, whereas,

¹Confessions draft, O.C. I, p. 1160.

²Population c. 3,000,000.

³Under Victor-Amadeus II until 1730, then under Charles-Emmanuel III.

in others, it was closer to Rousseau's fatherland. Public surveillance was great in Savoy, for example. Montesquieu had written of it: "For nothing would I wish to be the subject of these small kings. They know everything you do; they always have you before their eyes; they know your exact revenues; ... they know the smallest family details, to marriages in the smallest villages and they are involved in them. ... Better to be lost in the states of a great master."¹

At first merely "open to offers," and feeling secure in his anti-Catholic prejudices, Jean-Jacques, playing with fire, sent to Savoy's most important "converter," an elderly priest who sent the boy along to a "charitable lady" in Annecy. The sight of this woman, twenty-eight-year-old Mme. de Warens and the sound of her "silvery voice" instantly proselytized the not-quite-sixteen-year-old boy, who could think only of establishing a tie between her and himself. Not only was she the first aristocrat of his experience -- although not the "baronness" she purported herself to be -- but she was the image of an Astrée shepherdess, with ash-blond hair, angelic blue eyes, skin of porcelain and an ample "gorge enchanteresse." More importantly, Jean-Jacques sensed, as do weak and sensitive souls, that this woman was unusually gentle and sentimental, that he would be safe with her and could use and dominate her in his own way, without fear of rejection. This is sufficient to explain what he calls the "sympathy of souls."²

¹Cited in Maurice Vaussard, La Vie quotidienne en Italie au dix-huitième siècle (Paris: Hachette, 1959), p. 26.

²See, for example, Rousseau's description of his sentiments for Mme. de Warens: "Que ceux qui nient la sympathie des âmes expliquent, s'ils peuvent, comment de la première entrevue, du premier mot, du premier regard, Mme. de Warens m'inspira, non seulement le plus vif attachement, mais une confiance parfaite, et qui ne s'est jamais démentie. Supposons que ce que j'ai senti pour elle fut véritablement de l'amour; ce qui paraîtra tout au moins douteux à qui suivra l'histoire de nos liaisons; comment cette passion fut-elle

His intuition did not fail him, but his judgment of her sentiments was again erroneously based on his worldview and personality, not hers. However, for the first time in his life, Jean-Jacques found, in Mme. de Warens, an unselfish parent-figure who would do him more good than harm and, more importantly, a friend who would not let him down. Even if the relationship was to prove less than perfect, his joy on recounting this Palm Sunday meeting is justified: how many go through life without ever finding even that good a friend?

With Mme. de Warens, Jean-Jacques inaugurated an exhibitionistic technique of attachment-through-pity¹ -- telling his "little story." This technique, forced on him as an expedient but in perfect conformity with his character, was to prove an unprecedented success in his human relations and is still working its witchcraft on his readers today. Rousseau tells it thus: "Mme. de Warens voulut savoir les détails de ma petite histoire; je retrouvai pour la lui conter tout le feu que j'avais perdu chez mon maître.

accompagnée dès sa naissance des sentiments qu'elle inspire le moins; la paix du coeur, le calme, la sérénité, la sécurité, l'assurance? Comment en approchant pour la première fois d'une femme aimable, polie, éblouissante; d'une dame d'un état supérieur au mien, dont je n'avais jamais abordé la pareille, de celle dont dépendait mon sort en quelque sorte par l'intérêt plus ou moins grand qu'elle y prendrait; comment, dis-je, avec tout cela me trouvais-je à l'instant aussi libre, aussi à mon aise, que si j'eusse été parfaitement sûr de lui plaire? Comment n'eus-je pas un moment d'embarras, de timidité, de gêne? Naturellement honteux, décontenancé, n'ayant jamais vu le monde, comment pris-je avec elle du premier jour, du premier instant les manières faciles, le langage tendre, le ton familier que j'avais dix ans après, lorsque la plus grande intimité l'eut rendu naturel? A-t-on de l'amour, je ne dis pas sans désirs, j'en avais; mais sans inquiétude, sans jalousie? Ne veut-on pas au moins apprendre de l'objet qu'on aime si l'on est aimé? C'est une question qu'il ne m'est pas plus venu dans l'esprit de lui faire une fois en ma vie, que de me demander à moi-même si je m'aimais, et jamais elle n'a été plus curieuse avec moi. Il y eut certainement quelque chose de singulière dans mes sentiments pour cette charmante femme ... " Confessions, O.C. I, p. 52. (Italics mine.)

¹Probably derived from such childhood successes as the "goodnight, Roast" incident (see p. 68 herein).

Plus j'intéressais cette excellent âme en ma faveur, plus elle plaignait le sort auquel j'allais m'exposer. Sa tendre compassion se marquait dans son air, dans son regard, dans ses gestes."¹

Whatever her sentiments may actually have been -- and what they were at this point is not too important -- Mme. de Warens was doing her job: she gave Jean-Jacques a little expense money and sent him on to the Hospice of the Holy Spirit in Torino, where he was to stay until a suitable job could be found. He was not unaware that his conversion to Catholicism was implied in the package. Jean-Jacques left her house with a combination of regret and joy, sorry to have been sent away but elated to have found a stable point of reference to give purpose and perspective to his life. As Rousseau put it, "Ma douce inquiétude avait un objet qui la rendait moins errante et fixait mon imagination. Je me regardais comme l'ouvrage, l'élève, l'ami, presque l'amant de Mme. de Warens."² And again, "partant pour obéir à Mme. de Warens, je me regardais comme vivant toujours sous sa direction; c'était plus que de vivre à son voisinage."³ His commitment to her, he felt, implied a reciprocal obligation which stood as a bond between them and took the weight of responsibility for his destiny off his own shoulders.

Rousseau later said he could not remember a more carefree interval than his walk to Torino.

Torino was then a prosperous, fast-growing royal city, containing far below 100,000 inhabitants but still densely populated, making street life crowded and lively. As Jean-Jacques approached this glamorous capital, ambition overtook him. "Déjà je me regardais comme infiniment au-dessus de

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 53.

²Ibid., p. 58.

³Ibid., p. 54.

mon ancien état d'apprenti ... "1 The Hospice proved a disappointment, to say the least. Our hero found himself in a gloomy, regimented, prisonlike atmosphere with only a few young North-African Jews, most of whom he found repugnant, as classmates. Jean-Jacques briefly and vainly opposed his militant Protestantism to the subtle dogma of confirmation class, but, seeing no other way out and conscious of his embarrassing position, he broke down and converted in record time -- less than two weeks.² Since no job and little money was forthcoming, contrary to expectations, he apparently asked to be allowed to stay on for several months.

During his residence at the Hospice, a twenty-year-old fellow-converttee sought his company with surprising zeal. This young man's exotic Semitic appearance and manners would have instinctively repulsed the inexperienced and insecure Swiss lad; but it is significant that Rousseau gave in passively to his admirer's advances -- just as he had given in to the apprenticeship companion who had turned him into a petty thief, just as he had been talked out of some of his prized possessions by the couple who had accompanied him to Torino. "Quelque effroi que j'eusse naturellement de ce visage de pain d'épice orné d'une longue balâfre, et de ce regard allumé qui semblait plutôt furieux que tendre, j'endurais ses baisers en me disant en moi-même: le pauvre homme a conçu pour moi une amitié bien vive, j'aurais tort de le rebuter."³ Interpreting Jean-Jacques' passivity as acquiescence, the young man continued his advances which, growing bolder and bolder, finally re-

¹Ibid., p. 59.

²The father of an apprenticeship friend (Bâcle, soon to reenter the picture) had, following a domestic incident, undergone an experience similar to Rousseau's but had backed out at the last minute, paying his expenses at the hospice -- condition which Rousseau would have been unable to fulfill.

³Ibid., p. 67.

vealed their motivation with all-too-clear evidence. Remarkably, Jean-Jacques' passivity continued: "Je me dégageai impétueusement en poussant un cri et faisant un saut en arrière, et sans marquer ni indignation ni colère, car je n'avais pas la moindre idée de ce dont il s'agissait, j'exprimai ma surprise et mon dégoût avec tant d'énergie qu'il me laissa là ..."¹ But Jean-Jacques did remain, paralyzed with fascination, terror and disbelief, and saw the goal of the advances. Only then did he flee. "Je m'élançai sur le balcon plus ému, plus troublé, plus effrayé même que je ne l'avais été de ma vie, et prêt à me trouver mal."² Rousseau describes with disgust his impression of the young Semite's amorous attitude, using words such as "hideux," "obstacle," "sale," "affreux," and "brutal."

Jean-Jacques' reaction is significant -- but we believe that homosexuality has nothing to do with it. What the ardent aggressor had exposed to Rousseau was not homosexuality but masturbation, in which Rousseau was forced to witness the spectacle of his own "vice" -- himself, as it were, in the most unflattering light. In a second similar incident, later, in Lyons, it was again question of masturbation, not homosexuality, in which Rousseau, seated on a park bench at twilight and having entered into casual conversation with a stranger, was suddenly confronted with the same spectacle -- a nightmarish reflection of a self whose existence it was necessary for him to deny in order to preserve his own self-respect. Once again Rousseau fled in terror.³

¹Ibid., p. 67.

²Ibid., p. 67.

³"Je fus si effrayé de cette impudence que sans lui répondre, je me levai précipitamment et me mis à fuir à toutes jambes croyant avoir ce misérable à mes trousses. J'étais si troublé qu'au lieu de gagner mon logis par la rue St. Dominique, je courus du côté du quai, et ne m'arrêtai qu'au-delà du pont de bois, aussi tremblant que si je venais de commettre un crime. J'étais sujet au même vice; ce souvenir m'en guérit pour longtemps." Ibid., p. 166.

On the third and final encounter with a would-be aggressor, again no homosexual act took place but Rousseau was once more forced to see himself as loathesome due to the scornful treatment by the man's landlady and her family. Whether in reality or in his conscience, Rousseau clearly perceived the finger of accusation pointed in his direction. "Je voyais dans leurs regards insultants et moqueurs une fureur cachée, à laquelle j'avais la stupidité de ne rien comprendre. Ebahi, stupefait, prêt à les croire toutes possédées, je commençais tout de bon à m'effrayer ..."¹ Paralyzed by timidity, as was his custom, Rousseau dared not leave their presence until the departure of his companion, a priest, "who pretended to see and hear nothing" (perhaps because the hostility came from inside Rousseau himself). Then Rousseau "hastened to follow the man, very glad to escape those three furies" and his unwanted admirer as well.

The unflattering Confessions portrait of the Jew and the hospice as ugly and nauseating, then, was a faithful replica of Rousseau's very real subjective view of the scene but bore no necessary resemblance to the objective view. Until this moment, young Rousseau had been able to see himself as divorced from the sexual desires he had been experiencing by transposing them onto the "innocent" levels of infantilism or idealistic fiction, in which his participation was only vicarious. Until then, he had been able to plead ignorance of the character of the strange sensations assailing him. Now, the Jew's frank and brutal demonstration brought out with unmistakable clarity the true nature of his desires, which he had, so far satisfactorily repressed (thus his fear of pornography). The overwhelming revulsion felt towards the Jew represented disgust felt toward himself, through

¹Ibid., p. 167.

identification with the young man. Thereafter, Rousseau was no longer sexually "innocent." His onanism began at this time.

Beyond this unfortunate introduction into the realm of carnal knowledge, the Jew was also undoubtedly a strange and formidable creature, with little appeal for Rousseau. No similarity of world-views or life-styles existed between them, no community of interests. The anti-Semitic esthetic prejudices of his fatherland, his idealistic values, even his opportunism would have repelled him from this strange fellow, even assuming his lack of worldly experience had -- as may well have been the case -- blinded him to the goal of the young man's advances. At the most, then, we see this incident as an example of Rousseau's already-active verbal exhibitionism, similar to the telling of his "little story," whose object would be to form an emotional bond between himself and the hearer (or, later, the reader). Starving for parent-like attention and approval, in recounting the adventure to everyone at the hospice, Rousseau was again giving puppet shows for the "grown-ups," the priests or father-figures, and playing the role of make-believe preacher for a would-be "family." His means of handling the incident proved fruitless. He was officially told to hush up. What most jolted Jean-Jacques in this affair was the priests' demonstration of a set of values altogether in opposition to his own idealistic ones, mistaking the boy's righteous indignation for fear of an act which they described to him as quite harmless and, finally, baptizing the offender with greater symbolic honor than that accorded Jean-Jacques. Without taking into consideration the boy's character and his Genevan background, his attitude toward this situation would be incomprehensible.

But how did he let himself tumble into the situation in the first place? This is a question of particular interest to our subject. A combination of

various psychological factors may have been responsible: his own dread of rejection, coupled with his extraordinary power of identification with the underdog -- this fellow who apparently needed a friend -- may have paralyzed him; fear of the guilt inherent in hurting another's feelings may have contributed to his paralysis; a general repugnance toward hostility may have played a part; an aversion toward making himself an enemy; finally, sheer indifference may have had its influence -- not wanting to take the incentive involved in setting this fellow straight. Here again, we must bear in mind Jean-Jacques' character and background: his extraordinary difficulty in taking decisive and positive action. It is especially noteworthy, then, that, while often active -- unpleasant and quarrelsome -- in the presence of friends, Jean-Jacques was often dangerously complaisant when faced with persistent aggressiveness by persons to whom he was indifferent. Such a sucker for the hard sell would do well to avoid the marketplace!

Free again, and with little money, Jean-Jacques' "bizarre" and "romanesque" worldview once again came into focus. He felt the same joy and release he had felt upon disengaging himself from apprenticeship. Like a good Genevan, the first thing he did on release from the hospice was to go sightseeing around the capital. It was the splendid palace and cathedral that fascinated him. He took the habit of attending royal mass every morning, not to enjoy the artistic and architectural beauty, but as much for the magnificent music that intoxicated him as to eye the prince and his courtiers in the amusingly-naïve but very real hope of being "discovered" by "some young princess who merited [his] homage."¹ He lived at a sort of flop-house run by a good-natured woman who was kind to him and eventually found him a job. In the meantime, the nervous boy worried about the future: " ... malgré l'étourderie

¹Ibid., p. 72. (Translation mine.)

de mon âge," said Rousseau, "mon inquiétude sur l'avenir alla bientôt jusqu'à l'effroi."¹ He began going from door to door, ostensibly to find engraving work or any kind of odd-job, but in fact to seek a protector.

In this way, he met pretty Italian shopkeeper, Mme. Basile, in whom he accurately sensed, as he had with Mme. de Warens, a gentleness which would not reject him. The coquettish yet modest elegance of this "piquant Brunette," whose "good character painted on her pretty face made her vivaciousness touching,"² inspired him with sexual desire. He told his "little story," again with success, and his newfound confidence led him to interpret Mme. Basile's sentiments as being similar to his. She gave him some busy-work, permitting him to remain at the shop, during which time she neither encouraged him nor discouraged him. Trembling with desire, yet paralyzed by fear of rejection, the neurotic adolescent was able neither to make a positive advance nor to master his emotion, temporarily resolving the dilemma by devouring her body with his "eagle eye," to the point of intoxication, imagining that her sentiments were the same. The scene is well-known in which he followed her to her bedroom, where she was seated by the window, embroidering. Believing himself unseen, Jean-Jacques placed himself on his knees, extending his arms toward her "with a passionate movement," only to be "betrayed" by a mirror. Without changing her attitude, the young woman beckoned to Jean-Jacques, who placed himself at her feet in a highly-charged, uncomfortable but delightful attitude characterized by joyous gratitude of her passive acceptance of his desire, which he imagined she shared, and paralysis caused by his lack of experience and fear of requesting the kind of gratification he

¹Ibid., p. 73.

²Ibid., p. 73. (Translation mine.)

coveted.¹ A servant was heard nearby, and Mme. Basile quickly told Jean-Jacques to leave. Making a speedy exit, he seized her extended hand, to which he applied "two burning kisses," and which he seemed to feel pressing itself against his lips. "De mes jours," sighed Rousseau, "je n'eus un si doux moment ..."²

What is interesting in the story of Mme. Basile is that, without introducing any new elements to Rousseau's psychology, it shows that, rather than working themselves out, his human relations problems were becoming aggravated and were falling into certain trends. Obviously trying to "find himself" -- and his search would continue for years to come -- he was taking the route forced on him by ambition, that of opportunism rather than "elbow grease" and, in this context, was developing techniques to win-friends-and-influence-people that favored his passive personality. He was now systematically playing the role of victim (which was becoming him less and less), and, in doing so, was not being entirely open and above-board, coming to blame exterior circumstances for his own faults. Nor was he an outstandingly talented interpreter of exterior circumstances. To illustrate Rousseau's defective logic at times when he is not being honest with himself, we turn back to the Mme. Basile story, of which we lay aside the amusing and perhaps purposely-distracting Boccaccian elements, concentrating only on its spirit.

Jean-Jacques was deeply troubled by the presence of a third party at

¹See p. 83 herein. This indeed represents one of Rousseau's petrified privileged moments. "Nous ne faisons [again note the imperfect tense] pas le moindre mouvement; un silence profond régnait entre nous; mais que le coeur disait et sentait de choses! Cette situation paraîtra très plate à bien des lecteurs; cependant j'eus lieu de penser qu'elle ne déplaisait pas à la jeune personne, et pour moi j'y aurais passé ma vie entière, j'y aurais passé l'éternité sans rien désirer de plus." Confessions draft, O.C. I, p. 1161. See p.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 76.

Mme. Basile's, a salesclerk whom he saw as having been entrusted with the lady's guard by a jealous husband and as having secret pretensions to her favors. This man loomed ominously and inexorably in the background as a hostile witness and potential threat. The triangle begins thus: "Il en prit beaucoup contre moi, quoique j'aimasse à l'entendre jouer de la flute, dont il jouait assez bien. Ce nouvel Egiste grognait toujours quand il me voyait entrer chez sa Dame: il me traitait avec un dédain qu'elle lui rendait bien. Il semblait même qu'elle se plut pour le tourmenter à me caresser en sa présence, et cette sorte de vengeance, quoique fort de mon goût, l'eut été bien plus dans le tête-à-tête."¹ Then, after the bedroom incident, as Jean-Jacques sought a second opportunity:

"Les deux jours suivants j'eus beau guetter un nouveau tête-à-tête, il me fut impossible d'en trouver le moment, et je n'aperçus de sa part aucun soin pour le ménage. Elle eut même le maintien non plus froid, mais plus retenu qu'à l'ordinaire, et je crois qu'elle évitait mes regards de peur de ne pouvoir assez gouverner les siens. Son maudit Commis fut plus désolant que jamais. Il devint même railleur, goguenard; il me dit que je ferais mon chemin près des dames. Je tremblais d'avoir commis quelque indiscretion, et me regardant déjà comme d'intelligence avec elle, je voulus couvrir du mystère un goût qui jusqu'alors n'en avait pas grand besoin. Cela me rendit plus circonspect à saisir les occasions de le satisfaire, et à force de les vouloir sûres, je n'en trouvai plus du tout."²

Jean-Jacques came to see himself as being mocked by this omniscient enemy. Mme. Basile had originally considered training Jean-Jacques to do simple bookkeeping, then had let the idea drop. Suddenly the salesclerk

¹Ibid., p. 74.

²Ibid., p. 77.

became enthusiastic about the idea and offered to teach the boy, so that he could offer his services to Monsieur Basile on the latter's return. "Il y avait dans son ton, dans son air je ne sais quoi de faux, de malin, d'ironique qui ne me donnait pas de la confiance."¹ Mme. Basile, he added (perhaps merely wishing it had been so), without awaiting a reply, told the clerk coldly that Jean-Jacques was grateful for his offers but that she looked forward to fortune's eventually favoring the lad's merit and that "it would be a great shame if, with such wit, he should turn out to be a mere salesclerk."

Finally, when the "brutal" husband returned home, in symbolic red coat with gold buttons, to send Jean-Jacques packing and embarrass Mme. Basile in front of guests, it was the salesclerk who "triumphantly" delivered the message. "Il assaisonna sa commission de tout ce qui pouvait la rendre insultante et cruelle."² Jean-Jacques hung around the shop a bit, but the salesclerk, spotting him, made a "more expressive than attractive" gesture with a yardstick, sufficient to discourage the young suitor.

Now, whatever the salesclerk's and Mme. Basile's intentions may have been, Jean-Jacques' were definitely less than honorable, and his usefulness to the shop was nil. The salesclerk did nothing wrong, but his presence reminded Jean-Jacques of what he was doing wrong. Instead of abandoning his dishonorable intentions or, on the other hand, pursuing them and paying no attention to the bystander, the boy tried to keep his feelings but hide them; however, he could not lose the conviction that this man knew everything that was going on in his mind and was mocking him. (Indeed, young Rousseau's heart was probably on his sleeve.) Perhaps the discomfort caused by this

¹Ibid., p. 78.

²Ibid., p. 79.

situation also served to justify Jean-Jacques' "affair" with Mme. Basile, as his master's beatings had "justified" future thefts.

Soon after the Mme. Basile affair, Jean-Jacques' landlady found him a job as lackey to a wealthy widow. Again the boy's hopes of being "discovered" were high. His employer, Thérèse de Chabod Saint-Maurice, Countess de Vercellis, turned out to be a middle-aged woman dying as stoically as possible of cancer. Jean-Jacques' ambition was extreme, and he had long awaited this opportunity. He tried to spend as much time as possible with Mme. de Vercellis, and his purpose was clear: to win her heart and find a place in her will. Jean-Jacques told her his "little story" and showed her his letters to Mme. de Warens. She expressed curiosity and questioned him coldly, but her very dryness shattered his confidence, causing him to make timid, hesitant replies. Rousseau is sure she judged him unfavorably because of this, feeling her natural deathbed desire should have been to do a good deed to a promising but poor adolescent. She died several months after Jean-Jacques' arrival, leaving him the same small sum which went to each of her servants. Said Rousseau, "elle ne fit rien pour moi."¹

Significantly, Rousseau felt he was the victim of hidden interests at Mme. de Vercellis'. The principal servants -- the butler, his wife and their niece, a chambermaid -- he felt were hostile to him, seeing him as a disquieting figure in the household. Seeing him as being above his and their station, he said, and too greedy to be just, they feared his merit would be discovered by the countess and that her ensuing generosity toward him would diminish their portions of the forthcoming inheritance. Therefore, according to Rousseau, this servant-family united to keep him from Mme. de Vercellis'

¹Ibid., p. 81.

bedside until after the signing of the will, after which he was allowed to enter her room freely.

This may well have been so. The three servants had tried to give Jean-Jacques orders upon his arrival in the family, and he had had no part of their authority, not seeing why he should be "servant to the servants." But, primarily, Jean-Jacques' unbridled ambition was obvious to all in the Vercellis household. Proof of this fact is that, shortly afterward, when the Abbé Jean-Claude Gaime, whom Rousseau met during this period, gave the lad some big-brotherly advice, the message was clearly that of moderation. "Il me parla très honorablement de mon naturel et de mes talents," Rousseau recounts; "mais il ajouta qu'il en voyait naître les obstacles qui m'empêcheraient d'en tirer parti, de sorte qu'ils devaient, selon lui, bien moins me servir de degrés pour monter à la fortune que de ressources pour m'en passer. Il me fit un tableau vrai de la vie humaine dont je n'avais que de fausses idées; il me montra comment dans un destin contraire l'homme sage peut toujours tendre au bonheur et courir au plus près du vent pour y parvenir, comment il n'y a point de vrai bonheur sans sagesse, et comment la sagesse est de tous les états. ... Il me donna les premières vraies idées de l'honnête, que mon génie ampoulé n'avait saisi que dans ses excès. Il me fit sentir que l'enthousiasme des vertus sublimes était neu d'usage dans la société; qu'en s'élançant trop haut on était sujet aux chutes, que la continuité des petits devoirs toujours bien remplis ne demandait pas moins de force que les actions héroïques, qu'on tirait meilleur parti pour l'honneur et pour le bonheur, et qu'il valait infiniment mieux avoir toujours l'estime des hommes, que quelquefois leur admiration."¹ Later, when Jean-

¹Ibid., p. 91. (Italics mine.)

Jacques began his next job, Gaime advised him to moderate his fervor, for fear he would not be able to maintain it. Rousseau's later thinking undoubtedly affected his telling of this tale, but the gist of the Abbé's advice is evident: Jean-Jacques should learn to moderate his ambition -- a lesson which seduced Rousseau's reason but which he was unable to follow.

Nonetheless, Rousseau insists he continued serving his ailing mistress, even after the will had been signed and sealed. Her suffering touched him deeply, and her courage in the face of death made an indelible impression on him.

It was at Mme. de Vercellis' that the famous stolen ribbon incident took place, of which Rousseau was so ashamed -- disproportionately, in the eyes of many who fail to grasp the moral significance of the incident. Jean-Jacques had pilfered a ribbon belonging to a chambermaid. The proprietress had complained to her employers, and the ribbon had been discovered among Jean-Jacques' belongings. The boy had been called up before family and servants and ordered to give an explanation. To save face, he accused the first person who came to mind, he said, young and pretty Marion, the kitchen-girl, of having stolen the ribbon and given it to him. Marion wept and denied the accusation. The boy's heart was breaking, for he liked Marion, but he persisted in his story, rather than face public dishonor. The matter was let drop and was never judged except in Rousseau's conscience. Both young people were sent away (but this was apparently only because their mistress had died, since the countess' nephew and heir asked Jean-Jacques to call on him and eventually found him his next job, and it is not unlikely that the same courtesy was offered Marion). The moral importance of this incident (which Rousseau does not, as some believe, exaggerate) is that it was the only time he could recall throughout his entire life in which he consciously

and intentionally harmed someone -- although not, he insists, for pleasure's sake, but only to protect his own reputation.¹ Years later, Marion's ghost returned to haunt him. Rousseau then feared, perhaps in self-punishment, that this blemish on her reputation had prevented her from finding another job and that she might have been forced to have recourse to expedients... But, for the time being, the lad was preoccupied with problems of his own.

Jean-Jacques returned to his flop-house for five or six weeks, during which idleness, community living and nature obsessed the sixteen-year-old with sexual fantasies. He acquired his lifelong "shameful" habit of onanism. The newly-acquired sense of shame prevented him from procuring another young spanker. Instead, he would go into dark alleys or hidden places and expose his buttocks (the "ridiculous," not the "obscene object," he assures us) to members of the opposite sex, thus approximating the spanking he desired. Rousseau calls it "a spectacle more laughable than seductive," consciously stressing the passive, humiliating aspect of the scene which, to his mind, rendered it "innocent." The exhibitionism continued for only a short time, as the lad was soon caught with his pants down -- literally as well as figuratively! -- and frightened into respectability. Rousseau's handling of the situation is significant. "Je ... dis [à mon capteur, un "grand" homme] d'un ton suppliant d'avoir pitié de mon âge et de mon état; que j'étais un jeune étranger de grande naissance dont le cerveau s'était dérangé; que je m'étais échappé de la maison paternelle parce qu'on voulait m'enfermer, que j'étais perdu s'il me faisait connaître; mais que s'il voulait bien me laisser aller je pourrais peut-être un jour reconnaître cette grâce."² The man

¹This assertion is easy to accept: we have already seen that fear of guilt made it impossible for Rousseau to act with hostility except in self-defense.

²The large/small images of the captor and the lad further stress the ridiculous aspects of the situation, correspondingly lightening the "sinful" ones.

was good-hearted and let the boy off with a short lecture, certainly never dreaming how close this fantastic story actually was to Jean-Jacques' true self-image.¹

Penniless and jobless, the boy still needed protection. It was in this hope that he began visiting a potentially "useful" person he had met at Mme. de Vercellis' the Abbé Gaime whom we have already mentioned, tutor to the children of a count. Jean-Jacques soon recognized that the Abbé could be of no material help to him but continued frequenting him as long as he remained in Torino. (That this disinterest was an unusual phenomenon in Rousseau's human relations is brought out by the fact that he saw fit to point

¹This is only one example of Rousseau's tendency to escape conflict by becoming "another." His legendary "follies" -- temporary alterations of his personality, sometimes in imitation of a real or fictitious model -- often developed into resounding fiascos such as this one. Marcel Raymond observes that their public success was irrelevant, Rousseau seeking first of all to fool himself: "...It is himself that he desired to deny, it is his whole life that he desired to metamorphose." Op. cit., p. 21. [Cf. Nietzsche's excessive comment: "Rousseau, ce premier homme moderne, idéaliste et canaille en une seule personne, qui avait besoin de la 'dignité morale' pour supporter son propre aspect, malade d'un dégoût effréné, d'un mépris effréné de lui-même. Cet avorton qui s'est campé au seuil des temps nouveaux ... " Cited in Dictionnaire universel des lettres, ed. Laffont-Bompiani (Paris: Société d'Édition de Dictionnaires et Encyclopédies, 1961), p. 771.] Raymond further remarks the significance of the fact that Rousseau's "confession" regarding an act of "folly" would center around his own identity rather than around the act perpetrated during his metamorphosis -- the metamorphosis being, incidentally, a necessary condition for the act's taking place. Raymond further observes Rousseau's visible amusement in recounting those of his "follies" for which he was later avenged (in this case, for example, vengeance came to him as the author of the Village Fortuneteller and especially of the New Héloïse which brought all the ladies of Paris to his feet in a quaking pool of tears and voluptuous sighs).

it out with considerable pride.) For the first time, he had encountered the philosophical big-brother-figure he needed. "Il était jeune encore," Rousseau says, "et peu répandu, mais plein de bon sens, de probité, de lumières et l'un des plus honnêtes hommes que j'aie connus."¹ In this more teacher-student than friendly relationship, their conversations consisted of moral lessons on the theme of moderation, lessons which captivated Jean-Jacques for their reasonableness, clarity, simplicity and, above all, the "certain interest of heart" the Abbé showed the lonely boy. Rousseau had again identified a person he could trust. "J'ai l'âme aimant," he said, "et je me suis toujours attaché aux gens, moins à proportion du bien qu'ils m'ont fait que celui qu'ils m'ont voulu, et c'est sur quoi mon tact ne me trompe guère."²

One day, Mme. de Verceilis' nephew sent for Jean-Jacques, advising him that he had found him a job with a future, in the service of Ottavio-Francesco Solaro, Count of Govone ("Gouvon" in the Confessions) and Marquis of Broglia ("Breil" in Rousseau's work), distinguished statesman, adviser and confident to the king. At first disgusted to find himself once again a lackey, Jean-Jacques soon recovered his ambition and began attempting to attract the attention of the rich, aristocratic family for whom he was employed. This was not easy. The job consisted merely of waiting on table and taking a small amount of dictation. The boy was also occupied cutting out pictures for the Count's grandson. Otherwise he was idle and ignored.

Jean-Jacques approached his new tasks with the same ardor and zeal he

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 90.

²Ibid., p. 92.

brought to new situations in which he foresaw pleasure, profit and/or recognition; Gaimé's warning had gone unheeded. However, family crises temporarily prevented the Gouvons from concentrating on their servants. So the lad fell "almost-in-love" with the Count's luscious granddaughter, Pauline-Gabrielle de Breil. He tried to serve her at the dinnertable, but she failed to take notice of him. On the other hand, her arrogant brother spoke to the lackey from time to time and once, infuriated by a scornful remark, Jean-Jacques gave what he saw as such a "subtle" and "well-turned" reply that the damsel turned to look at him. The lackey was ecstatic. On the following day, during a formal dinner, someone among the guests expressed a misunderstanding concerning the etymology of a word in the Gouvon family motto. The old count was about to reply when, seeing Jean-Jacques smiling without daring to speak, he ordered the boy to answer. The lackey proudly explained the motto to the guests. Everyone gazed at him in mute astonishment, but Jean-Jacques was glowing in the conviction that, whatever was passing through the minds of the other diners, the haughty Mlle. de Breil was contemplating him with admiration. Gouvon praised the boy generously, and the guests all joined in. A few moments later, Mlle. de Breil asked the lad to pour her a glass of water. Jean-Jacques obeyed but so trembled that he spilled a portion of the water on the young lady, whereupon her impudent brother thoughtlessly (or purposely) asked the lackey why he was trembling. Mlle. de Breil's blush at the question thrilled Jean-Jacques, certain he had favorably impressed her.

Thereafter, Jean-Jacques hung around Mlle. de Breil's antichamber, but she never looked at him again, and he hardly dared raise his eyes to her. Yet the nearly non-existent "affair" with Mlle. de Breil left a surprisingly deep impression on Rousseau. Several years later, he would describe him-

self as a young tutor forced to leave the home of a Piedmont gentleman because of a reciprocal inclination between the man's daughter and himself! From there, it is only a short step to the original premise of the New Héloïse. That this fantasized situation, similar to that in Mme. Basile's room, fired Rousseau's erotic imagination is, of course, evident. Beyond this, however, the "affair" provides an excellent opportunity to examine the effect on Rousseau's self-image of exterior opinion (or the lack of it). In this sense, Mlle. de Breil represents a superior being -- the demoiselle of his castle-dream on whose God-figures' judgment of him Rousseau based his own self-esteem, even sense of being.

The Mlle. de Breil quasi-adventure, as well as that with Mme. Basile, may well be subtitled "what might have been." The Confessions description of the "affair" clearly differentiates between the two coexisting planes of sentimental existence which may be conceived as objective/subjective, mediocre/heroic or common/noble. Only Rousseau among the Gouvon servants intuitively recognized and revered the spiritual merit, the irresistible "air of gentleness" accompanying Mlle. de Breil's enticing physical charms. "Mlle. de Breil était une jeune personne à peu près de mon âge [seize ans], bien faite, assez belle, très blanche avec des cheveux très noirs, et, quoique brune, portant sur son visage cet air de douceur des blondes auquel mon cœur n'a jamais résisté. L'habit de cour, si favorable aux jeunes personnes, marquait sa jolie taille, dégageait sa poitrine et ses épaules, et rendait son teint encore plus éblouissant par le deuil qu'on portait alors."¹ The vulgar remarks of the servants made the lad suffer cruelly. Likewise, the Gouvon family members (particularly the mother and brother) and family guests

¹Ibid., p. 94.

brought unfavorable judgment upon young Rousseau based on pure appearance: his timidity and lowly social state. Servants and aristocrats, then, are equally "commoners" in the sentimental context in which this story unfolds.

If the fatherlike Count de Gouvon exceptionally gives evidence of a disinterested open-mindedness that stands in sharp contrast to the others' snobbery, one senses that it is rather thanks to the old man's good-hearted simplicity, his naïve generosity -- Christian qualities of the mediocre "sage" variety to which any man may aspire. With Mlle. de Breil, however, as with Mme. Basile, the question of sentimental standing is left open. Rousseau's enumeration of the enchanting young lady's several suggestive "looks" leave room to suspect that beneath her porcelain exterior may be hidden a potential "être selon [s]on coeur;" however, the environment is hostile and the necessary period of sentimental incubation is clearly denied the relationship.

The question of importance here, then, is whether the presence of Rousseau's noble coeur sensible will prove a catalyst to set in motion young Mlle. de Breil's own sensitivity: Will the lackey's "nobility" become evident to her, permitting her to form a "fair," that is, favorable judgment of him, thus at once freeing her inner, natural self and validating the boy's own existence and self-esteem, or will she remain blinded by the civilized corruption of her surroundings, as she was during the early part of their "relationship," at once denying her own and annihilating Rousseau's moral existence? ("Que n'aurais-je point fait," Rousseau exclaimed in frustration, "pour qu'elle daignât m'ordonner quelque chose, me regarder, me dire un seul mot; mais point; j'avais la mortification d'être nul pour elle; elle ne s'apercevait pas même que j'étais là."¹)

¹Ibid., p. 95.

Fortune provided two opportunities for the lives of Rousseau and Mlle. de Breil to touch: first the prise de conscience -- a look, the prize of Rousseau's witty reply to her brother -- then the "fair," the favorable judgment -- a second look, this time of admiration, thanks to Rousseau's eagerness to please and the consent of the damsel's generous, unpretentious grandfather -- finally a gesture of acceptance (asking the lackey for water), Rousseau's manifestation of reverence and naïveté (nervously spilling the water) and, at last, the girl's expression of approval and reciprocation (the blush). For an instant, at least in Rousseau's imagination, nature had vanquished civilization. Says the philosopher: "Ce fut un de ces moments trop rares qui replacent les choses dans leur ordre naturel et vengent le mérite avili des outrages de la fortune."¹

As had been the case with Cousin Abraham Bernard, however, society soon engulfed Mlle. de Breil who never again favored the lackey with her glance and whose sensitivity was left undeveloped, at least in this instance. As in the Abraham Bernard friendship experience, as in the "affair" with Mme. Basile, two major factors contributed to the death of the embryonic relationship: the hostile intervention of a third party acting in accordance with the selfish standards of civilization, and the sentimentally-destructive effects of Time. Rousseau felt certain Mlle. de Breil's mother disliked him. "Pour achever de m'intimider," he confesses, "je m'aperçus que je n'avais pas le bonheur d'agrèer à Mme. de Breil. Non seulement elle ne m'ordonnait rien, mais elle n'acceptait jamais mon service, et deux fois me trouvant dans son antichambre elle me demanda d'un ton fort sec si je n'avais rien à faire? Il fallut renoncer à cette chère antichambre: j'en eus d'abord du

¹Ibid., pp. 95-6.

regret; mais les distractions vinrent à la traverse, et bientôt je n'y pensai plus."¹ (We have already remarked that Rousseau's guilty conscience -- and his subsequent erotic use of the situation is evidence of the fact that his intentions were again clearly dishonorable -- encountered third-party hostility with too great regularity to be coincidental. The effect of Time and distraction on sentiments will be discussed hereinafter.)

Thus, Jean-Jacques' timid attempt to charm Mlle. de Breil and to win precedence and affection in the Gouvon family, just as he had in his Castle-dream, proved to be a failure, but the old Count and his son, the Abbé de Gouvon, became quite fond of the boy and tried to help him prepare for an interesting future. The Count was a distinguished and respectable gentleman, eighty years of age, whose kind simplicity captivated and reassured Jean-Jacques. The Abbé, was a man of letters more than of religion. A plan was devised whereby the lad would spend mornings at the Abbé's, learning a little Latin and literature and taking Italian dictation. Afternoons, the boy would return to his lackey duties with the Count. "Il avait le goût qu'il fallait pour former le mièn, et mettre quelque choix dans le fatras dont je m'étais farci la tête,"² said Rousseau of the erudite Abbé. Unfortunately, the employer-teacher began by placing the boy too high in Latin; Jean-Jacques worked hard but made little progress. Italian dictation proved more instructive; the lad became fluent in the language and also acquired a taste for serious literature and some discernment which later proved useful when he was studying without guidance.

¹Ibid., p. 96.

²Ibid., p. 97.

In this way, Jean-Jacques became "a sort of favorite in the house," the only time when he could have reasonably, without storybook daydreams, have hoped to succeed in the conventional way. The Abbé, highly pleased with the boy, spoke of him to everyone. The aged Count so liked Rousseau that he mentioned him to the king. Even Mme. de Breil, Rousseau feels, ceased being disdainful, and the other servants became quite envious. Rousseau believes (perhaps overconfidently) that the family may have had diplomatic plans for him; but, alas!, he was never able to follow long-term projects. As spring arrived, the boy became bored with the constraint of his work and lessons. The surprise visit of two young friends was sufficient to distract him from his ambitions.

Although there were many newly-converted boys like Jean-Jacques in Torino, Rousseau was not attracted to them and kept to himself. However, he had encountered several Genevan boys who had not converted, among whom were "Crooked-Mug" Mussard, a painter of miniatures, and Bâcle, 21-year-old wigmaker and former apprenticeship playmate. "Ce Bâcle était un garçon très amusant, très gai, plein de saillies bouffonnes que son âge rendait agréables,"¹ Rousseau explained. He suddenly became "infatuated" with this young man to such a point that he could no longer bear to leave him. Bâcle was planning to return to Geneva. In the meantime, he was prowling around the Couvon house with such constance that the family, seeing Jean-Jacques' obsession for him, had to forbid his entrance. This was sufficient pretext: young Rousseau became angry and stopped working either for the Count or for the Abbé. The grownups scolded him; the boy refused to listen. The siren Adventure's song was more appealing to his ears. Finally, the em-

¹Ibid., p. 99.

ployers threatened to dismiss the disobedient lackey. This, Rousseau says, gave him the idea (obviously in the back of his mind all along and the purpose of his latest "folly" and "degeneration") of leaving Torino with Bâcle. "Dès lors," he confesses, "je ne vis plus d'autre plaisir, d'autre sort, d'autre bonheur que celui de faire un pareil voyage, et je ne voyais à cela que l'ineffable félicité du voyage, au bout duquel, pour surcroît, j'entrevois Mme. de Warens, mais dans un éloignement immense; car pour retourner à Genève, c'est à quoi je ne pensai jamais. ... Que devait-ce être lorsqu'à tout l'attrait de l'indépendance, se joindrait celui de faire route avec un camarade de mon âge, de mon goût et de bonne humeur, sans gêne, sans devoir, sans contrainte, sans obligation d'aller ou rester que comme il nous plairait? Il fallait être fou pour sacrifier une pareille fortune à des projets d'ambition d'une exécution lente, difficile, incertaine, et qui, les supposant réalisés un jour, ne valait pas dans tout leur éclat un quart d'heure de vrai plaisir et de liberté dans la jeunesse."¹

The Gouvons did more than the circumstances obliged, but Jean-Jacques' mind was occupied by the Splendid Adventure he and Bâcle were going to live. He replied with impertinence to their offer to retain him in spite of everything and left in a huff, without even stopping to thank the Abbé for his kindness.

However seductive is Rousseau's case for Freedom, Youth and Adventure, the Gouvon confession cannot be read without a vague sense of uneasiness and displeasure. Thus far, the boy's youthful follies had been largely justified and the result of evident provocation. At the Gouvons', on the contrary,

¹Ibid., pp. 99-100.

for the first time we find the lad receiving at last the very opportunity for which he had been striving, and on a level much higher than he could reasonably have imagined, then throwing it to the winds in the most impudent, ignoble manner, and for what excuse? -- Rousseau confesses, and his purposely disarming humor does not totally mask a basic seriousness: "Ma folle ambition ne cherchait la fortune qu'à travers les aventures; et ne voyant point de femme à tout cela, cette manière de parvenir me paraissait lente, pénible et triste ..."¹ Clearly Rousseau was not yet psychologically prepared to meet the Gouvon experience, being neither mature nor stable enough to handle it. Still sentimentally and intellectually undeveloped, he was too preoccupied with his search for his own identity to have become aware, as an adult, of the world outside him. No longer a case of rejection by a cold and hostile environment, then, the Gouvon experience represents an out-and-out flight from constraint, and with far-reaching overtones. At sixteen, not yet a man but no longer an irresponsible child, Jean-Jacques might normally, according to contemporary Genevan standards, frequent Adventure but would be expected to shoulder the responsibility of earning an honest day's pay and looking to the future, as did religiously his footloose apprenticeship pals, as had even the otherwise irresponsible Isaac Rousseau. At this point, it becomes clear that Jean-Jacques' hap-

¹Ibid., p. 98. Cf. "Des vues éloignées ont rarement assez de force pour me faire agir. L'incertitude de l'avenir m'a toujours fait regarder les projets de longue exécution comme des leurres de dupe. Je me livre à l'espoir comme un autre, pourvu qu'il ne me coûte rien à nourrir; mais s'il faut prendre longtemps de la peine, je n'en suis plus. Le moindre petit plaisir qui s'offre à ma portée me tente plus que les joies du paradis. J'excepte pourtant le plaisir que la peine doit suivre; celui-là ne me tente pas, parce que je n'aime que des jouissances pures, et que jamais on n'en a de telles quand on sait qu'on s'apprête au repentir." Ibid., p. 146.

hazard upbringing has rendered him incapable of conforming to exteriorly-imposed discipline; he will eventually reject it in whatever form it presents itself, bursting to freedom in an explosion that startles, perhaps even wounds those standing nearby.

Of course Rousseau's early formation is not sufficient to explain this pathological aversion for constraint; only his ours-mal-léché character and lineage provide explanation and rational, if not moral, justification. What is significant to our study and must be stressed here, however, is the negative aspect of Rousseau's relationships with others. Even this early in his social career, the lad had previously drifted away from family and Cousin Abraham, distracted by the passing of time and new occupations. He had quickly and willingly forgotten his apprenticeship playmates and all other mediocre and "useless" acquaintances. He had abandoned pursuit of the monk, Mme. Basile's friend, who had generously offered to help "place" him, for no reason but time, distraction and a bit of his famous laziness. Now, he consecutively abandoned Mlle. de Breil, the Gouvon father and son, and would soon drop Bâcle for the same reasons, this time giving evidence of an indifference toward others' interests and feelings that becomes a kind of passive insult or cruelty: he squeezed the orange and tossed away the rind. "Ah Rousseau! je vous croyais un bon caractère," little Marion had exclaimed in dismay. From this point forward, Jean-Jacques, like his father, has proved himself a mauvais caractère, selfish and egotistical, able to betray even the bonds of friendship and obligation, even civility, if they interfere with what he feels he owes himself. The oft-remarked fact must be reiterated that Rousseau was interested only in gratifying human relationships -- "friends ready to serve [him]" -- and, as soon as an attachment ceased to remain such, it became either a constraint from

which to flee in aversion or a subject of sheer, utter indifference. Like Pagnol's Marius, Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a boy with no heart to give. We are all, of course, such egoists to a greater or lesser degree, no matter how we may rationalize our motivations, but various long-term moral and social interests prevent us from displaying our opportunism. Rousseau, on the contrary, was admittedly incapable of stifling his individuality in the expectation of long-term gain. Perhaps all genius is such. At any rate, Rousseau would go on neglecting friends and acquaintances one after the other throughout his life; but, lest we bring too heavy a judgment on him, let us bear in mind that no man has ever paid a higher price for such a character failing.

Meantime, however, Jean-Jacques and Bâcle left Torino by foot, carrying with them a clever gimmick fountain by which they planned to earn their keep as they traveled indefinitely throughout Europe. The walk was fun indeed, but the fountain failed to exempt them from paying their inn bills, eventually began to bore them, and finally broke. They began hurrying toward the end of their trip. As they approached Annecy, Jean-Jacques worried about breaking off with Bâcle, fearing he would not be able to get rid of his friend without a scene. He prepared the break-off by acting very cold on his last day. Bâcle understood, said "good-bye" and went cheerfully on his way into oblivion. "Notre connaissance et notre amitié durèrent en tout environ six semaines," said Rousseau, "mais les suites en dureront autant que moi."¹

Rousseau had met the tests of society by proving himself more durable and determined than might have been expected. The tiny prodigy of sensi-

¹Ibid., p. 103.

tivity and self-consciousness proved to have the constitution of a warrior and a will of iron. The goal of his crusade was no longer to regain per se the childhood state of harmonious mediocrity from which he had been ejected: since becoming aware of the stratification of civilized society, he was clearly aiming for such acceptance and equality, but always on the highest rank conceivable (although for psychological rather than material reasons) -- with the reservation, of course, that the effort of self-propulsion be free from the constraint or conformism hereinabove discussed. Lacking skills or obvious talents on which to construct his edifice, basing his entire campaign on a vague conviction of sentimental "superiority," young Rousseau sought patronage rather than educational opportunity. Thus, well before his influential friendship with Mme. de Warens, Rousseau had broken away from the Genevan ideal of earning one's daily bread and had embraced parasitism as a means to a fulfillment conceived, at this point, as being derived from pleasure and precedence rather than from self-sufficiency. In this context, human relationships appeared either as useful or pleasurable, as useless or boring. In his utter dependency, Rousseau's possession or lack of friends took on a dead-serious immediacy. From the day Isaac Rousseau disintegrated his Genevan household, human relations were nevermore a lark to Jean-Jacques -- if indeed they had ever actually been so. Thus, before the Mme. de Warens friendship, the boy had reinforced habits of opportunism. He had developed a "little story" technique for gaining sympathy-through-pity which proved remarkably successful with certain gentle, generous personalities. (In his compulsive self-assertion, he had already revealed himself strongly appealing to some and equally repugnant to others.) He had shown himself attracted to persons in a position

to "protect" him and to those providing distraction (amusement, like Bâcle; sexual adventure, like Mme. Basile; intellectual adventure, like the Abbé Gaine) but had continued rejecting mediocrity in friendship. He had also -- significantly -- proven himself emotionally disturbed and less-than-honest with himself, tending to seek scapegoats for his own weaknesses, thus making his "little story" subject to caution and preparing the way for a stormy future.

A SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION

Isaac Rousseau had been the determining influence on young Jean-Jacques' character, which has already revealed itself to be seriously deficient. Mme. de Warens was to become a second determining influence on his life, through the early development of his genius. He was to spend some twenty years under her wing, if not as the family "idol," at least as the "child of the house" -- a position which he not only cherished, for better or for worse, but which his brand of genius necessitated. He had arrived at her doorstep, a nothing and a nobody, the lowest of the low. When he left her house for Paris, he was prepared to hold his own quite respectably in the cream of high society, even if he was still far from the brilliant star he was to become. This was, of course, not directly Mme. de Warens' doing, and it may well have happened without her, but the important thing is that it would not have happened in the same way.

In the Confessions, Rousseau describes his various "homecomings" to Mme. de Warens' with great artistic care, obviously seeing them as particularly characteristic of the relationship. We shall therefore examine his descriptions in detail.

Going back a year to their first meeting, we find a masterful passage recreating the suspense and quasi-religious emotion of the event as it appeared to the not-quite-sixteen-year-old runaway. Rousseau begins simply and suddenly: "J'arrive enfin; je vois Mme. de Warens."¹ Then,

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 48.

however, instead of describing her to the curious reader, he stops the "clock" to affirm the importance of this period to the formation of his character and his resolution not to pass over it lightly. He then paints a portrait of himself at the time of the meeting: his attractive physical appearance, of which he was unaware; his very affectionate nature but timid fear of displeasing; his considerable background of reading but total lack of perspective. This sudden stopping of the "film" adds to the suspense of the narrative; Jean-Jacques' physical beauty and timid naïveté fire the imagination of the reader (in a technique not unlike that of classic pornography¹), approximating in the reader the character's own feelings of impatience and sensual expectancy.

Rousseau begins the film again, but it has been turned back a few frames, and we see, through humorously ironic eyes, young Jean-Jacques on the road, carefully composing a "beautiful letter in oratory style" in which he calls upon "all [his] eloquence" to captivate the goodwill of the "charitable lady" to whom he has been sent and on whom he feared his bedraggled appearance (which we have already seen as cute-as-a-bug) would make a bad impression.

J'enfermai la lettre de M. de Pontverre dans la mienne, et je partis pour cette terrible audience. Je ne trouvai point Mme. de Warens; on me dit qu'elle venait de sortir pour aller à l'église. C'était le jour des Rameaux de l'année 1728. Je cours pour la suivre: je la vois, je l'atteins, je lui parle.... je dois me souvenir du lieu; je l'ai souvent depuis mouillé de mes larmes et couvert de mes baisers. Que ne puis-je entourer d'un balustre d'or cette heureuse place! que

¹Rousseau's identification of this "homecoming" scene with the sexual excitement he then felt is evident. The rhythm of this explicated passage, tempered only by a gentle irony, approximates that of the sexual act performed with great sensual finesse, exemplifying the extent to which Rousseau's conception of lovemaking was, as Starobinski has observed, visual.

n'y puis-je attirer les hommages de toute la terre! Quiconque aime à honorer les monuments du salut des hommes n'en devrait approcher qu'à genoux.¹

In the above passage, one swift and simple stroke of the pen brings the boy forward to the threshold of the wonderfully terrifying meeting (ecclesiastically described as "audience") on which his future is to depend. An abrupt sentence, wherein Jean-Jacques is told that Mme. de Warens has just left for church, heightens the suspense by again delaying the appearance of the heroine. The coldness of the sentence, paralleling the lack of emotion on the part of an outsider to this heart-event -- a servant giving Jean-Jacques the information -- brings out the existence of two distinct and separate dimensions of reality for Rousseau: Jean-Jacques' subjective plane and the outsiders' objective one. (We do not doubt that Mme. de Warens will vibrate on the subjective plane.)

As a last preparation, Rousseau mentions the date: Palm Sunday, 1728. The year 1728 places the event considerably in the past (already forty years at the time of the writing of the Confessions), which give it a dream-like nostalgic quality as well as the sense of an "historical event." "Palm Sunday" brings forth an emotional response in the reader, approximating Jean-Jacques' own -- combining feelings of holiness with those of spring's sense of beginning, its harmony and its sensuality. At the same time, Rousseau's factual way of making the statement provides a standard of comparison for the subjectivity to follow.

Rousseau now adopts the historic present tense. The thought-groups, all beginning with "je" (italicized) during this portion of the narrative,

¹Ibid., pp. 48-9. Pontverre is the "converter" who had sent Jean-Jacques to the "charitable lady." (Italics mine.)

have been quickening, as have the beats of Jean-Jacques' heart, ending with three short "palpitations" and breaking off, with a point de suspension stopping the film for an atemporal rhapsodic (if gently ironic to stress the lad's "innocent" naïveté) benediction of the spot where the meeting was to take place.

The passage continues:

C'était un passage derrière la maison, entre un ruisseau à main droite qui la séparait du jardin, et le mur de la cour à gauche, conduisant par une fausse porte à l'église des Cordeliers. Prête à entrer dans cette porte, Mme. de Warens se retourne à ma voix.¹

Here Rousseau sets the film again in motion, once more having turned it backward in time a few frames. As Jean-Jacques approaches the moment of truth, Rousseau describes with photographic realism the handful of simple objects the boy perceives, then Mme. de Warens herself, with her back turned. Everything outside of Jean-Jacques' own subjective existence still vibrates on the objective plane until Mme. de Warens turns to face him. Then: "Que devins-je à cette vue!" At this moment, and for the one and only time in his life, Rousseau felt he had fully experienced the miracle of which he had always dreamed, "la sympathie des âmes."

But the reader is not yet satisfied, as the pleasurable discomfort continues: again the film stops:

Je m'étais figuré une vieille dévote bien reçoignée: la bonne dame de M. de Pontverre ne pouvait être autre chose à mon avis.

Here, Rousseau's last "objective" and humorous sentence prolongs the suspense and heightens the contrast and, as in the case of the other disorienting changes of pace, time or mood in this passage, serving to reproduce, in a

¹Ibid., p. 49.

masterful style passionné, the emotion of the event.

Finally, as Mme. de Warens turns around and reveals her beauty of face, body and expression, the sun comes out from behind the clouds and violins begin to play, as Jean-Jacques is transformed in a privileged moment of delight which Rousseau has reproduced in his prose:

Je vois un visage pétri de grâces, de beaux yeux bleus pleins de douceur, un teint éblouissant, le contour d'une gorge enchanteresse. Rien n'échappa au rapide coup d'oeil du jeune prosélyte; car je devins à l'instant le sien; sûr qu'une religion prêchée par de tels missionnaires ne pouvait manquer de mener en paradis.¹

With this flux of release, the reader's and Jean-Jacques' suspense is terminated, and, although the excitement and curiosity continue unabated, the poetic portion of the passage ends. Rousseau goes on to describe Mme. de Warens -- her background, her appearance, her conduct with the runaway -- and to analyze his sentiments for her, which we have already seen, concluding with a prophetic sentence which he places on her lips: "Pauvre petit, tu dois aller où Dieu t'appelle; mais quand tu seras grand tu te souviendras de moi."²

Jean-Jacques' second "homecoming," following the Torino adventures, is of a slightly different character, indicating an evolution in the relationship. Now the preparatory suspenseful discomfort is derived from the pardons he must ask of his Lady.

Since the Palm Sunday meeting with Mme. de Warens, Jean-Jacques had envisaged her house as "home." He had written her during his year in Torino,

¹Ibid., p. 49.

²Ibid., p. 53.

and by now she played a leading role in his self-image and "little story." At the Gouvons, she had sent him the motherly opinion that, if he worked hard and behaved well, his future was assured. Now, having run away for no logical grown-up reason, he greatly feared her scorn. Would their friendship stand despite his weaknesses of character, or would she reject him as had Isaac Rousseau for preferring individualism to conformism? His nervous agitation was extreme as he approached Annecy.

Que le coeur me battit en approchant de la maison de Mme. de Warens!
 Mes jambes tremblaient sous moi, mes yeux se couvraient d'un voile,
 je ne voyais rien, je n'entendais rien, je n'aurais reconnu personne;
 je fus contraint de m'arrêter plusieurs fois pour respirer et reprendre
 mes sens.¹

Rousseau stresses the fact that his fear of rejection in this instance and his heart-interests in general were totally divorced from material concerns, thus establishing the spirituality of his interests and, according to the Calvinist anti-terrestrial frame of mind, their nobility.

Mme. de Warens' "air" sufficed to reassure him. Carried away with the wildest joy, he threw himself at her feet and kissed her hand with happiness and gratitude. (Note the continuing violence of emotion but absence of the erotic element contained in the first meeting. Rousseau later confessed that the first meeting was his only "passionate" moment with Mme. de Warens.) His benefactress appeared gentle and serene, hardly surprised and, he adds, not at all disappointed. She heard his "little story," then decreed that Jean-Jacques would reside in her house. Rousseau compares his feelings at this moment with those of Saint-Preux as he moved into Clarens.²

¹Ibid., p. 103.

²E.g. "Je l'ai vue, Milord! mes yeux l'ont vue! J'ai entendu sa voix; ses mains ont touché les miennes; elle m'a reconnu; elle a marqué de la joie à me voir; elle m'a appelé son ami, son cher ami; elle m'a reçu dans sa

Acceptance by Mme. de Warens signified more than a mere gesture of affection and approval, but a veritable commitment to the boy, commitment described by Rousseau in some detail:

"Je sais qu'il y a une espèce de contrat et même le plus saint de tous entre le bienfaiteur et l'obligé. C'est une sorte de société qu'ils forment l'un avec l'autre, plus étroite que celle qui unit les hommes en général, et si l'obligé s'engage tacitement à la reconnaissance, le bienfaiteur s'engage de même à conserver à l'autre, tant qu'il ne s'en rendra pas indigne, la même bonne volonté qu'il vient de lui témoigner, et à lui en renouveler les actes toutes les fois qu'il le pourra et qu'il en sera requis. Ce ne sont pas là des conditions expresses, mais ce sont des effets naturels de la relation qui vient de s'établir entre eux. Celui qui la première fois refuse un service gratuit qu'on lui demande ne donne aucun droit de se plaindre à celui qu'il a refusé; mais celui qui dans un cas semblable refuse au même la même grâce qu'il lui accorda ci-devant frustre une espérance qu'il l'a autorisé à concevoir; il trompe et dément une attente qu'il a fait naître. On sent dans ce refus je ne sais quoi d'injuste et de plus dur que dans l'autre; ..."¹

maison; plus heureux que je ne fus de ma vie je loge avec elle sous un même toit, et maintenant que je vous écris, je suis à trente pas d'elle!" Nouvelle Héloïse, O.C. II, p. 418. Also: "... J'observai du coin de l'oeil qu'on avait détaché ma malle et remisé ma chaise. Julie me prit sous le bras, et je m'avançai avec eux vers la maison, presque oppressé d'aise de voir qu'on y prenait possession de moi." Ibid., p. 421. Note that this form of welcome is in direct opposition to Isaac Rousseau's conduct with his young son and, to an extent, consoles the boy and makes up for it.

¹Rêveries, O.C. I, pp. 1053-4.

This early residence with Mme. de Warens did not represent Rousseau's "happy days" with her but, he said, was a necessary preparatory period. The philosopher explains the reason for this period of incubation: "Quoique cette sensibilité de coeur qui nous fait vraiment jouir de nous soit l'ouvrage de la nature et peut-être un produit de l'organisation, elle a besoin de situations qui la développent. Sans ces causes occasionnelles un homme né très sensible ne sentirait rien, et mourrait sans avoir connu son être."¹ Rousseau attributed his own "sentimental education" to his long intimacy with Mme. de Warens.

He describes his sentiments toward her as being neither love nor friendship per se, but a sensuous friendship which he calls the sweetest feeling in life -- less impetuous but a thousand times more delightful than love alone (to which it can be joined but from which it is more often separated), and more voluptuous and tender than simple friendship. Rousseau assumed that the feeling was limited to members of opposite sexes, adding, "du moins je fus ami si jamais homme le fut, et je ne l'éprouvai jamais près d'aucun de mes amis."²

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 104.

²Ibid., p. 104.

The first moment of erotic desire having passed, Jean-Jacques never secretly observed her abundant charms with his eagle eye, had neither "transports" nor desires in her presence, but rather was in a "ravishing calm," a privileged moment of his existence, feeling an indescribable pleasure without knowing why.¹ For once he felt satisfied with his lot. "J'aurais ainsi passé ma vie et l'éternité même sans m'ennuyer un instant,"² he exclaims.

Yet his attitude was passionate. " ... De moi à l'amant le plus passionné," he confessed, "il n'y avait qu'une différence unique, mais essentielle, et qui rend mon état presque inconcevable à la raison."³ Gratitude? Idealization? Mere cyclical elation? Perhaps all three. Inanimate objects recalling Mme. de Warens took on a symbolic value. Rousseau recounts extravagant acts -- kissing his bed, the curtains, the furniture, even the floor on which she had walked. Once he even swallowed a piece of food he had persuaded her to expel from her mouth.

The familiarity between Jean-Jacques (now "Little One") and his benefactress ("Mama") began immediately. Thus for nearly two decades it was to remain. Rousseau was the first to point out the significance of the

¹Rousseau says his "extraordinary affection" for Mme. de Warens -- ardor without passion -- prevented him at first from desiring either his benefactress or other women. "Enivré du charme de vivre auprès d'elle, du désir ardent d'y passer mes jours, absente ou présente je voyais toujours en elle une tendre mère, une soeur chérie, une délicieuse amie, et rien de plus. Je la voyais toujours ainsi, toujours la même, et ne voyais jamais qu'elle. Son image toujours présente à mon coeur n'y laissait place à nulle autre; elle était pour moi la seule femme qui fut au monde, et l'extrême douceur des sentiments qu'elle m'inspirait ne laissait pas à mes sens le temps de s'éveiller pour d'autres, me garantissait d'elle et de tout son sexe. En un mot, j'étais sage parce que je l'aimais." Ibid., p. 109.

²Ibid., p. 107.

³Ibid., p. 108.

denomination: "Je trouve que ces deux noms rendent à merveille l'idée de notre ton, la simplicité de nos manières et surtout la relation de nos coeurs. Elle fut pour moi la plus tendre des mères qui jamais ne chercha son plaisir mais toujours mon bien; et si les sens entrèrent dans mon attachement pour elle, ce n'était pas pour en changer la nature, mais pour le rendre seulement plus exquis, pour m'enivrer du charme d'avoir une maman jeune et jolie qu'il m'était délicieux de caresser; je dis caresser au pied de la lettre; car jamais elle n'imagina de m'épargner les baisers ni les plus tendres caresses maternelles, et jamais il n'entra dans mon coeur d'en abuser."¹

Clearly -- and whether or not the reader approves is irrelevant -- Rousseau's happiness and the flowering of his genius depended on just such a friend. How Mme. de Warens played the role is what we must determine, and thus we turn to this fascinating and paradoxical woman.

Born to a noble family in the Swiss Vaud country, Françoise-Louise de La Tour had lost her mother while still in the cradle and had been brought up in a Pietist atmosphere by two maiden aunts. Her education had been somewhat neglected. She had some knowledge of music and the arts. Her taste in literature, according to Rousseau, was "a bit Protestant," Bayle and St. Evremond being her great favorites. Her blonde, pink-and-white beauty is described as residing more in her open and happy expression than in her features. Short of stature and pleasingly plump, well-endowed by her Creator,² her appearance was vivacious and animated but "caressing and

¹Ibid., p. 106.

²As she grew older, she became fat and finally obese. A friend described her as having "beaucoup et beaucoup d'embonpoint, ce qui lui avait arrondi un peu les épaules et rendu sa gorge d'albâtre aussi trop volumineuse." C.C. I, Appendix A-17, p. 293.

tender," her glance "very gentle," her smile "angelic," her laugh "charming" and her conversation seductive and captivating. Much like Julie, she was unaffected and without coquetry. "Sans le plus petit air de prétention, tant s'en faut, car tout en elle respirait la sincérité, l'humanité, la bienfaisance, sans donner le plus petit soupçon de vouloir séduire par son esprit non plus que par sa figure, car elle négligeait par trop cette dernière, sans néanmoins l'affecter comme quelques prétendues savantes de son sexe."¹ All evidence corroborates Rousseau's flattering appraisal of her character: " ... Son excellent coeur fut à l'épreuve et demeura toujours le même: son caractère aimant et doux, sa sensibilité pour les malheureux, son inépuisable bonté, son humeur gaie, ouverte et franche ne s'altèrent jamais ... "² "Elle abhorrait la duplicité, le mensonge; elle était juste, équitable, humaine, désintéressée, fidèle à sa parole, à ses amis, à ses devoirs qu'elle reconnaissait pour tels, incapable de vengeance et de haine, et ne concevant pas même qu'il y eût le moindre mérite à pardonner."³

Nonetheless, for all her unpretentious charm, Mme. de Warens remains a largely enigmatic figure, whom neither Rousseau nor posterity has succeeded in penetrating. At once open and hidden, warm and cold, liberal and prudish, generous and selfish, playful and withdrawn, she was basically a woman trying to fill a gaping void in her life, a void she probably would have, herself, been at a loss to define.

¹Ibid.

²Confessions, O.C. I, pp. 50-51.

³Ibid., p. 199.

At age ten, Françoise had gone to live with her newly-remarried father. At twelve, she was sent away to boarding school, and, at fourteen, had made a "good marriage" to wealthy but dull and spineless twenty-five-year-old Sébastien-Isaac de Loys de Villardin, a weak, sensitive and reflective loner. (The name "Warens" came from a tract of land given the couple as a wedding gift.) The childless marriage failed to bring fulfillment, and Mme. de Warens had recourse to the services of more than one lover. Unlike guilt-ridden "Little One," she enjoyed a cheerful and, yes, scatterbrained lack of complexes. Rousseau blamed her tutor, whom he believed to have been her first seducer, for her worldly "no-scandal, no-evil" philosophy of sexual activity (which she seems to have applied to the economic domain as well). No Célimène, she gave of herself freely and unhypocritically to her Happy Few, affecting neither the perversity nor the false scruples she lacked (but without, however, being the "wanton woman" she is sometimes called). No Madame Bovary either, she brought to love and marriage an indifference that protected her equally from thrill and disappointment.¹ Never was she to meet a man who could "tame" her, and she seems to have enjoyed it that way. The aggressive role delighted her, and this explains her attitude toward friendship.² Indeed, friendship was

¹Said Rousseau: "... Toutes ses fautes lui vinrent de ses erreurs, jamais de ses passions. Elle était bien née, son coeur était pur, elle aimait les choses honnêtes, ses penchants étaient droits et vertueux, son goût était délicat, elle était faite pour une élégance de moeurs qu'elle a toujours aimée et qu'elle n'a jamais suivie; parce qu'au lieu d'écouter son coeur qui la menait bien, elle écouta sa raison qui la menait mal. Quand des principes faux l'ont égarée, ses vrais sentiments les ont toujours démentis: mais malheureusement elle se piquait de philosophie, et la morale qu'elle s'était faite gâta celle que son coeur lui dictait." Ibid., p. 197.

²"Elle n'eut ... guère abusé de ce faux principe [no-scandal, no-evil] pour elle-même [because of her "frigidity"]; mais elle en abusa pour autrui, et cela par une autre maxime presque aussi fausse, mais plus d'accord avec

Mama's passion. (Rousseau said he believed she was only sensitive to one pleasure: that of making her friends happy.) Her need for constant bustle and activity seems to have demanded this outlet. The generosity characterizing her relations is legendary. At the same time, she depended financially upon the goodwill of wealthy protectors.

What irked Rousseau was Mme. de Warens' promiscuity in friendship -- one can imagine his exclaiming, with Molière's *Misanthropist*, "Sur quelque préférence une estime se fonde . . ." -- which attracted all varieties of parasites and charlatans who never failed to take advantage of her open heart and pocketbook. Not satisfied with giving away all she had, Mme. de Warens was continually manufacturing grandiose business schemes, centered around friends, and by which she envisaged making their fortunes. "Ce n'étaient pas des intrigues de femmes qu'il lui fallait," Rousseau explained; "c'étaient des entreprises à faire et à diriger. Elle était née pour les grandes affaires." Born for Big Business, perhaps, but certainly not intellectually or temperamentally equipped for it. Rousseau's suggestion that, given a greater amount of capital, she may have become a success, is unjustifiably indulgent; her mania eventually brought her to poverty and cost her the respect of her neighbors and associates.

la bonté de son coeur. Elle a toujours cru que rien n'attachait tant un homme à une femme que la possession, et quoiqu'elle n'aimât ses amis que d'amitié, c'était une amitié si tendre qu'elle employait tous les moyens qui dépendaient d'elle pour se les attacher plus fortement. Ce qu'il y a d'extraordinaire est qu'elle a presque toujours réussi. Elle était si réellement aimable que, plus l'intimité dans laquelle on vivait avec elle était grande, plus on y trouvait de nouveaux sujets de l'aimer. Une chose digne de remarque est qu'après sa première faiblesse elle n'a guère favorisé que des malheureux; les gens brillants ont tous perdu leur peine auprès d'elle; mais il fallait qu'un homme qu'elle commençait par plaindre fut bien peu aimable si elle ne finissait par l'aimer. Quand elle se fit des choix peu dignes d'elle, bien loin que ce fut par des inclinations basses qui n'approchèrent jamais de son noble coeur, ce fut uniquement par son caractère trop généreux, trop humain, trop compatissant, trop sensible, qu'elle ne gouverna pas toujours avec assez de discernement." Ibid., p. 198.

This undeniably charming lady frankly does not seem to have had much of a head. Her compulsive prodigality and foolhardy business ventures literally ruined her husband. Then she deserted him, fleecing him for all she could get and trying to fleece him for more. Reduced to expedients and lacking scruples in this domain, she took one of the few paths open to her and became a turncoat. She left home in the dead of night and crossed the border into Savoy, taking along all the household belongings she could stuff into her carriage and the gardener's dark and handsome nephew. Once safely in Savoy, she converted to Catholicism, in an admirably-staged piece of show-business, the "miracle of illumination" taking place in public: she suddenly dropped to her knees and commended herself to the direction of no less than Annecy's bishop, who conveniently happened to be on hand to receive her soul. Kindly old Mgr. de Bernex thereafter stood as her friend, savior, protector and employer and arranged a second position for her as sometime secret agent for the king.¹ She tried to talk her husband into emigrating and converting at her example, but the poor man had principles and refused. Forced to sign her few remaining possessions over to her husband to prevent their being confiscated by the Berne government following her conversion, and having failed to persuade Warens to accord her a pension in return, she broke off all relations with her husband, who divorced her shortly afterward, taking refuge in England.²

Oddly enough, Mama's religious convictions were strong and sincere, and she considered herself a "good Catholic." Rousseau compares her to

¹It is noteworthy that aristocratic conversions such as Mme. de Warens' were infinitely more profitable to the convertees than were those of commoners like young Jean-Jacques.

²Later, in her husband's absence, she had, not very ethically, tried to obtain reimbursement of her dowry, belongings and money from her ex-husband's late father's estate.

Mme. de Chantal and the elderly Bernex to a less-witty St. François de Sales. In addition, she had a mania for moralizing and philosophizing, on all -- even the least moral and philosophic -- occasions.

When Jean-Jacques first met Mama, she had been in Savoy for about two years. She was still young and pretty and -- not yet having had time to ruin herself physically, morally and financially -- enjoyed an apparent affluence and well-being. Young Rousseau's total ignorance of Mme. de Warens' precarious financial situation permitted the boy to enjoy, with clear conscience, "all the comforts of home." The full-time household staff consisted of Mama's male servant Claude Anet (the gardener's nephew), a young maid and a cook. This was not the Gouvion magnificence but still approximated Clarens' comfortable abundance. Mme. de Warens' pleasant house and its bucolic setting contributed to Jean-Jacques' affectionate state of mind, recalling the effect of a similar situation at Bossey.¹ His room looked out over the site of the fateful meeting and, beyond, over a stream and some gardens, out into the country. Jean-Jacques mentally attributed the setting to his benefactress and joyously confounded their beauties in his imagination.

The life-style at Mama's was precisely what Rousseau would have chosen for himself. Its least pleasant aspect was having to spend hours at the table, waiting for Mme. de Warens to finish her meal. The presence of

¹"Cet aspect n'était pas pour le jeune habitant une chose indifférente. C'était depuis Bossey la première fois que j'avais du vert devant mes fenêtres. Toujours masqué par des murs je n'avais eu sous les yeux que des toits ou le gris des rues. Combien cette nouveauté me fut sensible et douce! Elle augmenta beaucoup mes dispositions à l'attendrissement. ... Mon coeur jusqu'alors comprimé se trouvait plus au large dans cet espace, et mes soupirs s'exhalait plus librement parmi ces vergers." Ibid., p. 105.

friendship, with its accompanying physical and intellectual activities, made Annecy superior to Geneva, while the sexual element -- if unexpressed at least unrejected and very active on an imaginative level -- made it superior to Bossey. For once the boy enjoyed the universal harmony his heart demanded and at last found himself totally accepted, a member of a close-knit, happy, lively and demonstrative family such as he had imagined in his Castle-dream.

Days were filled with busy occupations, not altogether unlike Jean-Jacques' games with Cousin Abraham, except that now another played the role of game-leader. Rousseau says that he was kept busy and amused doing the things that he liked the least. Mama had inherited from the men in her family a passion for pharmacy -- syrups, infusions, elixirs and cure-alls -- dreadful concoctions she manufactured in the kitchen. Jean-Jacques was employed editing her projects and memos, copying recipes, sorting herbs, grinding seeds and tending kettles of boiling goo. He found the whole thing as delightful as it was ridiculous. "Tout cela," he admits, "sans me plaire en soi, m'amusait pourtant, parce qu'il faisait partie d'une manière d'être qui m'était charmante."¹ Rousseau describes merry scenes that kept them in continual laughter. He maintained that he could recognize a book on medicine by its odor (adding that, more often than not, his guess was correct). Mama liked him to taste her ghastly drugs. He would fight, scream, flee and grimace, but always ended up licking the sticky syrup off her pretty white fingers. When the household members were gathered together in the kitchen, he said, the running and shouting and shrieks of laughter were more like a slapstick comedy than a grave

¹Ibid., p. 110.

pharmaceutical establishment.

Mama was the only person with whom Jean-Jacques never felt the dryness of conversation which made society so unpleasant for him. He babbled as freely to her as he had to Aunt Suzanne.¹ She had worldly experience and a reflective mind which put this experience to practical use. This was her favorite subject of conversation and precisely the sort of useful moral instruction that Jean-Jacques, with his head in the clouds, needed, or so he felt. The boy continued reading, this time without passion and merely through idleness. He sometimes discussed his books with Mama, who had a smattering of literature and discussed it intelligently, although sometimes carrying herself away in her passion for moralizing. She knew enough music to give Jean-Jacques a few lessons, and his interest in this art rapidly expanded into enthusiasm. She often lapsed into daydreams of future business enterprises. Jean-Jacques would let her dream and, in her presence, was the happiest of "children." He loved to be alone with her and would become furious whenever interrupted. As soon as some visitor arrived, as was often the case, he would leave the room, unable to share his Mama with an outsider, sulking in the next room until she was free again. Crowds of visitors of all sorts continually intruded on Jean-Jacques' private world: passers-by, beggars, priests, soldiers, apothecaries, ladies of quality... Mama's job for Church and State made her house a stop-off point for a variety of characters, but, beyond this, her personality also called for constant bustle and activity. The boy was insane with jealousy, but Mama knew how to take care of him (he would not

¹"Nos tête-à-têtes étaient moins des entretiens qu'un babil intarissable qui pour finir avait besoin d'être interrompu. Loin de me faire une loi de parler il fallait plutôt m'en faire une de me taire." Ibid., p. 107.

always be this fortunate): While he pouted, silently condemning all those "intruders" to the Devil, Mama met his fury with pure, good-natured gaiety, and they were soon both laughing until they cried. "Little intervals when I had the pleasure of grumbling," Rousseau called them. If an "intruder" entered in the midst of such a quarrel, Mama would greet him warmly and maliciously prolong his visit, all the while directing amused glances over to Jean-Jacques, whose "eyes of a man possessed" sent daggers in her direction while forced by politeness to restrain himself. His absolute confidence in Mama and her universe led him, nonetheless, to admit: "... Au fond de mon coeur, et même en dépit de moi, je trouvais tout cela très comique."¹

The certitude that this glorified pre-schooler existence would eventually have to end both troubled and heightened its pleasure. When Mama was present, Jean-Jacques was not thrilled but satisfied, but when she was absent he suffered severely. "Le besoin de vivre avec elle me donnait des élans d'attendrissement qui souvent allaient jusqu'aux larmes."² He felt the ardent desire to spend his life with her, but knew this was impossible, for the present, and that his happiness would be short-lived. "Cela donnait à ma rêverie une tristesse qui n'avait pourtant rien de sombre et qu'un espoir flatteur tempérerait."³ He invented an imaginary sweet and eternal felicity with Mama:

Le son des cloches qui m'a toujours singulièrement affecté, le chant des oiseaux, la beauté du jour, la douceur du paysage, les maisons éparses et champêtres dans lesquelles je plaçais en idée notre com-

¹Ibid., p. 110.

²Ibid., p. 107.

³Ibid., p. 107.

mune demeure; tout cela me frappait tellement d'une impression vive, tendre, triste et touchante, que je me vis comme en extase transporté dans cet heureux temps et dans cet heureux séjour, où mon coeur possédant toute la félicité qui pouvait lui plaire la goûtait dans des ravissements inexprimables, sans songer même à la volupté des sens. Je ne me souviens pas de m'être élané jamais dans l'avenir avec plus de force et d'illusion que je fis alors; ... Les jours et les ans et la vie entière s'y passaient dans une inaltérable tranquillité ... ¹

While Jean-Jacques was equating friendship with spiritual voluptuousness, inalterable tranquillity and a total, unrivaled domination of the friend, definition which will be discussed in due time, Mama was applying her own conception of the term: building fabulous imaginary projects around her new young protégé. Fortunately the very grandeur of her ideas prevented her putting them into execution and things continued rather routinely until Paul d'Aubonne arrived and spoiled everything.

Whether or not he deserved the honor, Paul-Bernard Regard d'Aubonne proved a surprisingly influential character in Rousseau's life. Jean-Jacques seems to have become somewhat "infatuated" with him, as he had with Bâcle. Bourgeois of Nyon with pretensions to nobility, former officer and relative of Mama's former tutor-lover -- thus a "cousin" of sorts -- he is described as "un homme de beaucoup d'esprit, intrigant, génie à projets comme elle, ... une espèce d'aventurier."² His wheeling and dealing was not always of the highest ethical calibre. Leigh reveals that he tried to talk the king of Savoy into annexing his (d'Aubonne's) own native Vaud country!³ He was currently trying to sell a lottery plan to the Savoy government

¹Ibid., pp. 107-8.

²Ibid., p. 112.

³C.C. I, Appendix A-31, Notes explicatives, p. 308.

(Jean-Jacques would later try a similar money-making scheme), and soon had to leave town to escape an irate husband with whose wife he had been dallying. Before leaving, d'Aubonne avenged himself by writing a satirical comedy. This set Jean-Jacques to work on his own comedy, Narcissus. (He soon afterward wrote a satire as well to avenge himself of an insult.) From d'Aubonne's time on, it can be said that Jean-Jacques had ceased being a merely passive reader and was regularly active in creative writing.

Mama sent Jean-Jacques to see d'Aubonne two or three times. The man's relaxed attitude and informal, unpretentious chatter inspired such confidence in Jean-Jacques that the boy babbled freely to him. In reality, d'Aubonne was observing Jean-Jacques to determine the boy's strong points. His conclusion coincided with that of the lad's first master: Jean-Jacques was again judged unintelligent! On the basis of this humiliating and unforgettable pronouncement, Jean-Jacques was sent to study for the priesthood at a Lazarist seminary in Annecy. (Said Rousseau, "J'allai au séminaire comme j'aurais été au supplice."¹) Two months later, he was dismissed as inept. Jean-Jacques had brought a music book to the seminary with him, and this was the only subject in which he had made any progress. The constraint of discipline, fear of not learning and terror of displeasing the teacher, not to mention his lack of "calling," seem to have given him an insurmountable mental block. His weekly day off was spent at Mama's. It is not difficult to see the image of her happy home in Jean-Jacques' mind as he proved a poor student. Yet the boy did try, if only to please his teacher. At first assigned to a man he disliked, he grew sad, stopped eating and lost weight. The seminary's superior, a close friend of Mama's,

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 117.

transferred the boy to the care of a young Abbé studying there -- "the gentlest of men."¹ This young man, Jean-Baptiste Gâtier, enchanted Jean-Jacques whose heart could not resist gentleness any more than it could bear coldness or cruelty. (Later, Gâtier and Gaimé became models for the Savoy Vicar.)

Mama was not discouraged when Jean-Jacques was sent home from the seminary. At the boy's wishes, she sent him to the Annecy Cathedral to study music under another "family" friend, Jacques LeMaître, who gave weekly concerts at Mama's. Jean-Jacques spent the fall and winter of his seventeenth year at music school and would have continued, had circumstances not decreed otherwise. He had asked to study there, and he was happy. There were five other boy students, ranging in age from nine to seventeen, but who do not seem to have interested Jean-Jacques. Nor did he learn much music, his sentiments for Mama keeping him absent-minded, daydreamy and sighing. In truth, it was the symbolism of honor and heroïsm -- the handsome cathedral, the noble religious garb, the pride of playing flute in the orchestra -- and the sensuous pleasures -- the good good, the music -- that captivated the lad: a free and undisciplined,

¹Rousseau describes him thus: "Je n'ai jamais vu de physionomie plus touchante que celle de M. Gâtier. Il était blond et sa barbe tirait sur le roux. Il avait le maintien ordinaire aux gens de sa province, qui sous une figure épaisse cachent tous beaucoup d'esprit; mais ce qui se marquait vraiment en lui était une âme sensible, affectueuse, aimante: il y avait dans ses grands yeux bleus un mélange de douceur, de tendresse et de tristesse, qui faisait qu'on ne pouvait le voir sans s'intéresser à lui. ... Son caractère ne démentait point sa physionomie. Plein de patience et de complaisance il semblait plutôt étudier avec moi que m'instruire." *Ibid.*, pp. 118-9. The lasting impression on Rousseau of this passing acquaintance is largely based on a later misfortune -- or so Rousseau erroneously believed -- befalling the young abbé, and with which Rousseau clearly identified: he thought the man had been dismissed for having fallen in love and, unable to keep his celibacy vow, had made the girl pregnant.

"singing and gay" life-style, but even and regulated. Much nearer to Mama's house, he was often able to sup with her. Said Rousseau, "Cet intervalle est un de ceux où j'ai vécu dans le plus grand calme, et que je me suis rappelés avec le plus de plaisir."¹

It was at music school that Rousseau met his next "infatuation" -- a wonderfully Panurge-like character bearing the splendiferous name of Venture de Villeneuve. One cold February night, Venture knocked on the door of the boarding school and announced himself as a Parisian musician in low finances. (His accent, however, was that of southern France, and his father seems to have lived in the Swiss Vaud country, so it is thought that he was actually from a family of French-Protestant refugees in Switzerland.)

Rousseau's masterful description of his childhood hero bears repetition:

Il était court de stature, mais large de quarrure; il avait je ne sais quoi de contrefait dans sa taille sans aucune difformité particulière; c'était pour ainsi dire un bossu à épaules plates, mais je crois qu'il boitait un peu. Il avait un habit noir plutôt usé que vieux, et qui tombait par pièces, une chemise très fine et très sale, de belles manchettes d'effilé, des guêtres dans chacune desquelles il aurait mis deux jambes, et pour se garantir de la neige un petit chapeau à porter sous le bras. Dans ce comique équipage, il y avait pourtant quelque chose de noble que son maintien ne démentait pas; sa physiologie avait de la finesse et de l'agrément, il parlait facilement et bien, mais très peu modestement. Tout marquait en lui un jeune débauché qui avait eu de l'éducation et qui n'allait pas gueusant comme un gueux, mais comme un fou.²

Of course poles apart from Jean-Jacques, Venture had culture, worldly experience and above all an invulnerable self-confidence. "Badin, folâtre, inépuisable, séduisant dans la conversation, souriant toujours et ne riant

¹Ibid., p. 122.

²Ibid., pp. 123-4.

jamais, il disait du ton le plus élégant les choses les plus grossières et les faisait passer."¹ Venture's conversation that night at supper revealed him to be an impressive name-dropper and wit, but his flamboyant bravado at first left room for doubt: asked to sing at the cathedral service the following day, Venture hardly glanced at the music. Jean-Jacques thought he unable to read music. His fears were groundless: the next day the adventurer sang like an angel. Venture boasted about much that was beyond him, said Rousseau after he had become acquainted with him, but kept silent about much that he did know. " ... Je ne crois pas qu'il fût fait pour avoir des bonnes fortunes," Rousseau added, "mais il était fait pour mettre un agrément infini dans la société des gens qui en avaient."² Finally -- and to dissipate any possible suspicion of resemblance to Jean-Jacques -- Venture slept only with prostitutes.

It was Venture de Villeneuve who planted the seed of Paris in Jean-Jacques' imagination. His crush on Venture, deservedly stronger and more durable than that for Bâcle, did not replace his affection for "Mama" in any way. Instead, it showed the boy's need for interesting and diverting male companionship to supplement the gratifying female friendship of his dreams. Jean-Jacques' first thought was to join his two friends into one happy unit. He introduced Venture to Mama, but the chemistry was lacking between them: Venture found Mme. de Warens précieuse and she took Venture for a libertine, warning Jean-Jacques of the dangers of such a friend.

¹Ibid., p. 125.

²Ibid., p. 125.

Just before Easter, Jean-Jacques' world collapsed around him -- for neither the first nor the last time -- when LeMaître quarreled with the church chorister and decided to depart, leaving the cathedral without music on the most important holiday of the year. Mama gave her musician friend money and ordered Jean-Jacques to accompany him at least as far as Lyons and to remain with him as long as his services were required.

For once, Jean-Jacques hit the road with great reluctance.¹ If the first several days were diverting, LeMaître began having epileptic-like fits (perhaps the result of his alcoholism) that frightened and repulsed Jean-Jacques. The boy began looking for an escape. In Lyons, LeMaître had an attack in the street. As the townsfolk carried the helpless man to his hotel, Jean-Jacques saw his chance and fled. Arriving in Annecy, he found that Mama had left for Paris with d'Aubonne and Claude Anet -- no one knew for how long. He was not to see her for another eighteen months.

"J'arrive et je ne la trouve plus. Qu'on juge de ma surprise et de ma douleur!"² -- Rousseau's understatement suggests the traumatic effects of his discovery. For the second time the nervous boy had built his world around a person who had seemingly abdicated, leaving him without anything to which to relate. Why had Mama rejected him? Seeking a logical explanation for this enigma, Rousseau eventually came up with two tentative answers: her generosity to a friend in need (LeMaître) and her desire

¹"La tendresse et mon attachement pour [Mme. de Warens] avait déraciné de mon coeur tous les projets imaginaires, toutes les folies de l'ambition. Je ne voyais plus d'autre bonheur que celui de vivre auprès d'elle, et je ne faisais pas un pas sans sentir que je m'éloignais de ce bonheur."
Ibid., p. 130.

²Ibid., p. 132.

to preserve Jean-Jacques from Venture's corrupting influence. Some attribute Mama's secrecy to the shady aspects of her trip: a mysterious intrigue, perhaps having to do with her secret-agent position and d'Aubonne's habitual scheming. Two things are important here: first the shallowness of Mme. de Warens' otherwise admirable capacity for affection, her butterfly heart, and, second, how little Jean-Jacques actually knew of the woman around whom he had reconstructed his life on the sole contractual basis of the "sympathy of souls" he had sensed at their first meeting and his desperate need for a gratifying, sustaining friend. As Rousseau confessed: "Je n'ai jamais bien su le secret de ce voyage. Elle me l'aurait dit, j'en suis sûr, si je l'en avais pressée; mais jamais homme ne fut moins curieux que moi du secret de ses amis. Mon coeur uniquement occupé du présent en remplit toute sa capacité, tout son espace; et, hors les plaisirs passés qui font désormais mes uniques jouissances, il n'y reste pas un coin vide pour ce qui n'est plus."¹ This is tantamount to an admission that Rousseau was only interested in his friends insofar as their friendship was concerned, that is, insofar as they related to himself, again bringing out his basic indifference to the other's interest. We must stress this dangerous tendency: if "know thyself" is the first law of the oracle, then "know thy neighbor" must be the second, especially if one is destined to unprecedented greatness, lest one build his castles on quicksand.

Only upon undergoing this "punishment" did Jean-Jacques feel guilty for having deserted LeMaitre. (This would not be the last time guilt would be impressed upon him in this delayed fashion.) Suddenly he found himself

¹Ibid., pp. 130-1. (Italics mine.)

alone. He could not turn to Bernex, fearing a reprimand for deserting the cathedral. The kindly superior and the Abbé Gâtier had both left the Lazarist seminary. Mama's young maid and several of her girlfriends were available and giving him the eye, but Rousseau's heart was vulnerable only to ladies of quality.¹ The latter, he had only to see, and, if they were attractive, modest and gentle, his heart and imagination were invariably captivated, at least until the next distraction came along. Thus Jean-Jacques had become infatuated with Mme. Basile and Mlle. de Breil without its affecting his feelings for Mama² and thus he now spent a delightful

¹The "Citizen" somewhat sheepishly confesses his heart-preference: " ... Des couturières, des filles de chambre, de petites marchandes ne me tentaient guère. Il me fallait des demoiselles. Chacun a ses fantaisies; ç'a toujours été la mienne, et je ne pense pas comme Horace sur ce point-là. Ce n'est pourtant pas du tout la vanité de l'état et du rang qui m'attire; c'est un teint mieux conservé, de plus belles mains, une parure plus gracieuse, un air de délicatesse et de propreté sur toute la personne, plus de goût dans la manière de se mettre et de s'exprimer, une robe plus fine et mieux faite, une chaussure plus mignonne, des rubans, de la dentelle, des cheveux mieux ajustés. Je préférerais toujours la moins jolie ayant plus de tout cela. Je trouve moi-même cette préférence très ridicule; mais mon coeur la donne malgré moi." Ibid., p. 134.

²"Mon attachement pour elle, quelque vif, quelque tendre qu'il fut, ne m'empêchait pas d'en aimer d'autres, mais ce n'était pas de la même façon. Toutes devaient également ma tendresse à leurs charmes, mais elle tenait uniquement à ceux des autres et ne leur eut pas survécu; au lieu que Maman pouvait devenir vieille et laide sans que je l'aimasse moins tendrement. Mon coeur avait pleinement transmis à sa personne l'hommage qu'il fit d'abord à sa beauté, et quelque changement qu'elle éprouvât, pourvu que ce fut toujours elle, mes sentiments ne pouvaient changer. Je sais bien que je lui devais de la reconnaissance; mais en vérité je n'y songeais pas. Quoi qu'elle eut fait ou n'eut pas fait pour moi, c'eut été toujours la même chose. Je ne l'aimais ni par devoir ni par intérêt ni par convenance; je l'aimais parce que j'étais né pour l'aimer. [Cf. Montaigne's "Parce que c'était lui, parce que c'était moi."] Quand je devenais amoureux de quelque autre, cela faisait distraction, je l'avoue, et je pensais moins souvent à elle, mais j'y pensais avec le même plaisir, et jamais, amoureux ou non, je ne me suis occupé d'elle sans sentir qu'il ne pouvait y avoir pour moi de vrai bonheur dans la vie, tant que j'en serais séparé." Ibid., pp. 150-1. (Italics mine.)

afternoon, innocent in deed if not in thought, in the country as "prisoner" of two pretty young damsels of Mama's acquaintance, Mlles. de Graffenried and Galley.¹ In this erotic situation recalling the triangle St. Preux/Julie/Claire (both girls "loved each other tenderly," yet one received Jean-Jacques' preference, having "je ne sais quoi de plus délicat, de plus fin") Jean-Jacques' virtuous volupté² (giving him the incongruous role of a seventeen-year-old "dirty old man") provided him a privileged moment of escape. For a short time, Mama's reject and Isaac Rousseau's worthless son became ennobled as "l'ami de Mademoiselle Galley." ("J'ai toujours trouvé dans le sexe [féminin]," Rousseau admitted, "une grande vertu consolatrice, et rien n'adoubit plus mes afflictions dans mes disgrâces que de sentir qu'une personne aimable y prend intérêt."³)

¹Although the charming description of the picnic with Mlles. Galley and de Graffenried (*Ibid.*, p. 135 et seq.) richly deserves its honor as one of the most often repeated anecdotes of *Rousselliana*, its content, purely sensual, adds nothing new to Rousseau's psychology.

²"Le doux souvenir de cette journée ne coûtait rien à ces aimables filles; la tendre union qui régnait entre nous trois valait les plaisirs plus vifs et n'eut pu subsister avec eux: nous nous aimions sans mystère et sans honte, et nous voulions nous aimer toujours ainsi. L'innocence des moeurs a sa volupté qui vaut bien l'autre, parce qu'elle n'a point d'intervalle et qu'elle agit continuellement. Pour moi je sais que la mémoire d'un si beau jour me touche plus, me charme plus, me revient plus au coeur que celle d'aucuns plaisirs que j'aie goûtés en ma vie. Je ne savais pas trop bien ce que je voulais à ces deux charmantes personnes, mais elles m'intéressaient beaucoup toutes deux. ... Ceux qui liront ceci ne manqueront pas de rire de mes aventures galantes, en remarquant qu'après beaucoup de préliminaires, les plus avancées finissent par baiser la main. O mes lecteurs, ne vous y trompez pas. J'ai peut-être eu plus de plaisir dans mes amours en finissant par cette main baisée, que vous n'en aurez jamais dans les vôtres, en commençant tout au moins par là." *Ibid.*, pp. 138-9. (Italics mine.)

³*Ibid.*, p. 150.

Jean-Jacques hung around Mlle. Galley's street for a while after the delightful encounter, but, not seeing her or her friend and feeling all eyes riveted on him, he quickly gave up. He did manage to institute a gàlant correspondence, however, talking a local spinster into delivering letters to Mlle. de Graffenried -- rather cruelly, as a matter of fact, since he believed his messenger to have a crush on him.

Meanwhile, Jean-Jacques had obtained permission to live temporarily with Venture (briefly forgotten during the LeMaître affair) while awaiting news of Mme. de Warens. There, the spectacle of Venture's social success turned our hero livid with envy. "Je le retrouvai brillant et fêté dans tout Annecy; les dames se l'arrachaient. Ce succès acheva de me tourner la tête. Je ne vis plus rien que M. Venture, et il me fit presque oublier Mme. de Warens."¹ Jean-Jacques spent mornings with Venture and their landlord, a shoemaker and would-be comedian, whose witticisms in Provençal accent kept them in stitches. After the noon meal, Venture would leave for the local High Society where he would remain until late at night. During this time, Jean-Jacques would take solitary walks, reflecting on Venture's great talents and cursing his own unlucky star, just as he may have done at the spectacle of his father's popularity. To help his friend, Venture obtained an invitation for him to visit the home of a possible protector, a local man of letters, asking Jean-Jacques to bring a couplet. The boy wrote a little poem, on which he envisaged basing his fortune: Venture took it and it was never heard of again. And what of it? Jean-Jacques was too timid to speak up at the time, yet, years later, in spite of all his friend had done for him, he still resented what he believed to be

¹Ibid., p. 133.

Venture's theft of his poem: strange comportment, even for an author, in view of his current status as Venture's dependent.

When no news was forthcoming from Mama, Adventure and Ambition led Jean-Jacques to take to the road again. The ostensible purpose of the trip was to accompany, as a paid guard, Mama's young maid to her father's home in Fribourg. (He stresses the fact -- as if it mattered -- that "nothing happened" between himself and the girl during the trip.) In fact, he was again seeking a home. He stopped to see his father for the first time since his flight from Geneva, both proud and frightened at facing the ordeal of appearing before his severest judge, deeply ashamed to exhibit his monumental failure. Isaac Rousseau, now close to an old man, welcomed his son with characteristic emotivity. Mme. Rousseau was polite, but things did not go well during the interview. Although the Rousseaus saw the boy as an idle parasite -- and idleness was Geneva's cardinal sin -- the main point of contention was Jean-Jacques' religious conversion. In spite of their urging, the boy refused to renounce Catholicism and return to the Protestant faith, for such an act would have cost him all hope of regaining Mama. During the meeting, then, a righteously-indignant Isaac Rousseau came to tell Jean-Jacques that he no longer considered the boy as his son. Rousseau left his father's house that same afternoon, with a little money he had pried out of the man (become tight-fisted in his old age), bitterly aware of his father's continuing rejection and his stepmother's continuing scorn. Isaac Rousseau had become no more than a last resort: the source of a small handout from time to time, in exchange for a little mortification.

If Rousseau hoped to fare better with the maid's father (former organist at the Annecy cathedral), he was disappointed. Neither the girl

nor the man appeared anxious to take him in, though he probably would have accepted any offer.¹ So he turned to the land of fantasy. From Fribourg, instead of stopping again at his father's as he had promised, he headed for Mama's country, Lausanne, certain he would hear from her sooner or later. In the meantime, he took pleasure in living in "her" country, where he carefully avoided inquiring about her and scarcely mentioned her name, secretly fearing to learn something unfavorable about her, since the little he had heard indicated that her scandalous flight and divorce had not been forgotten. He made a two- or three-day excursion to Vevey, her home town, which he found exceptionally moving. The beauty of the lakeside site, which he identified with Mama, his father (residing in the Vaud country), Mlle. de Vulson, his first love, and some inner identification transformed this into the land of his dreams. Contemplating Lake Léman, Rousseau abandoned himself to the "sweetest melancholy."

He was, of course, playing make-believe, perhaps to forget his failure in the eyes of his father, this time attempting to reenact Venture's successes in Annecy. Faced with the necessity of earning a living, he passed himself off as "Vaussore de Villeneuve," Parisian musician,² and attempted to give singing lessons, even though he had not yet learned to sight-read. He went even further, offering to conduct one of his own compositions during a public concert. The results were horrendous -- yet, significantly, he lacked the courage to stop the execution. The shame of admitting his "worthlessness" -- as in the stolen ribbon incident -- made him sweat out his public appearance to the bitter end. The following day, unable to

¹A scant two years after his departure from Geneva, Jean-Jacques' ties were not yet broken with apprenticeship circles. His presence in Geneva seems to have incited some adolescent to pursue him for satisfaction of an old debt of ten sous.

²"Vaussore" is an anagram for "Rousseau." Jean-Jacques was to use this pseudonym for nearly a year.

bear his "guilt," he confessed the whole masquerade to one of the musicians and thereafter felt sure the whole town had his number, although no one openly admitted it. He left soon thereafter.

"Vaussore de Villeneuve" had few acquaintances in Lausanne: his landlord, a friendly, good-hearted man who gave him lodging and two meals a day on credit and was kind to him, even going as far as to try to find him some music students; an embroiderer and a gardener, both from Paris, with whom he would walk to mass at the Catholic Church several miles outside the city, trembling with fear of being discovered as a false Parisian. Letters from the two Annecy damsels cheered him considerably, but the music-teaching business was slow and Jean-Jacques was lonely and melancholy. He moved to Neuchâtel, where business picked up and living conditions improved considerably. There, life was quite comfortable, but loneliness and melancholy continued to undermine his spirits. He lost touch with the two Annecy girls, to whom he failed to send his new address. He had no interest in friends, no will, no goal. Except for some literary attempts, Jean-Jacques was psychologically letting himself go. He would spend his free days wandering alone in the country, dreaming and sighing.

After about five or six months passed in this fashion, nobility and glamour again entered Jean-Jacques' life, along with the chance for adventure -- too tempting to let pass -- in the form of the majestically imposing Archimandrite¹ of Jerusalem: "un homme à grande barbe avec un habit violet à la grecque, un bonnet fourré, l'équipage et l'air assez noble, et qui souvent avait peine à se faire entendre, ne parlant qu'un jargon presque indéchiffrable, mais plus ressemblant à l'italien qu'à

¹I.e. director of monasteries.

nulle autre langue."¹ They met at a restaurant, where Jean-Jacques had come to the rescue as interpreter and the Archimandrite had treated the youth to a good meal. By the end of dinner, they were inseparable. The older man told the boy he was a Greek priest traveling through Europe to seek money for the reestablishment of the Holy Sepulchre. His recommendations were excellent. He asked "Vaussore de Villeneuve" to join him as secretary, and, without reflection, "Vaussore" accepted. They visited Fribourg, Berne and Solothurne, living comfortably and eating well. Jean-Jacques was in great spirits, not only liking the way of life ("... Je n'aurais pas mieux demandé que de voyager ainsi tout ma vie ...") but liking his bon vivant companion ("... Un homme de bonne compagnie, aimant assez à tenir table, gai, parlant bien pour ceux qui l'entendaient, ne manquant pas de certaines connaissances, et plaçant son érudition grecque avec assez d'agrément"). Under the influence of his exalted Greek priest and protected by his own pseudonym, Jean-Jacques even managed to give an excellent public speech on behalf of the "noble" cause. Many years later, Jean-Jacques was to adopt an Armenian costume reminiscent of the Archimandrite's splendid robes.

At Solothurne, the French Ambassador, the Marquis de Bonac, exposed the Archimandrite as the fraud he was and separated him from his young interpreter. Taking Jean-Jacques privately aside, he heard the boy's confession and offered absolution, then took him by the hand and introduced him to his wife and staff of secretaries. In truth, the boy was turning state's evidence, in exchange for a suspended sentence, and his acquaintance with the secretaries was arranged to permit the dictation and signing of a formal

¹Ibid., p. 150.

statement to be used against the lad's former employer and companion. Even given the basic dishonesty of the Archimandrite's pursuit of funds and assuming the young interpreter's innocence, with what remarkable speed and suppleness did Rousseau betray the good man, all in the name of ambition! Rousseau was probably not unaware of his vulnerability to criticism regarding this action: the Confessions stress the monk's having been allowed to depart with impunity, describing the boy as having been forcibly separated from him by the parent-like Bonacs.¹ Furthermore, Rousseau felt the necessity to explain that, even had he not promised to tell the truth, he would have confessed. Knowing Rousseau, it is easy to see that this is so: confessions was compulsive with him since early childhood and, even if the victim were himself, he was obliged to relieve his conscience by means of periodic catharsis such as that following the Treytorens concert fiasco. Rousseau also saw this confession opportunity as a means of capturing the interest and benevolence of the ambassador, a man of outstanding merit and dignity, his "little story," in sum. Thus, while he truthfully states that "a continual need for self-expression places my heart always at my lips,"² in this case, the self-expression seems to have been sheer fantasy, a charming but no less than blatant fabrication: a romanticized combination of his Castle-dream and the Mlle. de Breil affair. Portraying himself, then, as innocent victim of fate, in an attempt to arouse paternal and compassionate feelings in the Bonacs, always in the hope of eventual restoration to his long-lost position as

¹"Mme. de Bonac m'accueillit avec bonté et dit qu'il ne fallait pas me laisser aller avec ce moine grec. ... Je voulais aller faire mes adieux à mon pauvre Archimandrite, pour lequel j'avais conçu de l'attachement: on ne me le permit pas." Ibid., p. 157.

²Ibid., p. 156. (Translation mine.)

family child and idol, Rousseau undoubtedly stressed rather than attenuated the Archimandrite's unattractive side. Here again, as with Marion, Rousseau sacrificed a friend of sorts to further his own interests. Weakness of character, of course, and not willful cruelty, as Rousseau was the first to admit; small consolation, however, to his "victims" and insufficient nourishment for his conscience in which such minute "sins" were slowly accumulating, to burst out into the open with his later fame and friendship crises in which, suddenly, rather than trudging silently away, as had Marion, LeMaitre and the Archimandrite, his victims suddenly turned back to point an accusing finger at him, paving the way to eventual persecution and madness.

Bonac allowed young Jean-Jacques to remain overnight at the embassy before sending him along to whatever destiny awaited him. The boy was profoundly impressed by the fact that the room in which he slept had been formerly occupied by the then "Great Rousseau" -- the poet Jean-Baptiste. Back in Neuchâtel, where he returned, he read the works of Jean-Baptiste Rousseau and wrote a cantata in honor of the ambassador's wife.

The work was not entirely disinterested. Its author was broke, in debt and desperate. Mama, he learned, had returned to Annecy but was angry with him, apparently thinking he had returned to Protestantism under his father's influence. Jean-Jacques tried to win permission to "justify himself" through a mutual friend's intervention, appealing to his benefactress' sense of pity (the affliction her anger caused him and his present indigence), of justice (his ignorance of what he had done to displease her) and commitment (recalling his total dependency on her). An answer does not seem to have been forthcoming, Mama appearing to have been away.¹

¹This whole adventure remains unclear. In Paris, Mme. de Warens had

Jean-Jacques was forced to humiliate himself and ask his already-resentful father for another handout, using a similar appeal to the man's sympathy recalling the commitment implied in the father-son relationship, with promises to perform better in the future and even including a bit of sentimental blackmail.¹ In this state of desperation, then, Jean-Jacques counted on Bonac, not so much to take him into his household (as the marquis already had three excellent secretaries and Jean-Jacques refused to consider resuming his former career as servant) as to procure him connections in Paris, in which he vaguely envisaged some future glory à la Venture de Villeneuve. The boy wrote to Mgr. de Bernex, requesting a letter of recommendation to Bonac. As soon as this arrived, he hurried back to Solothurne, where Bonac, in turn, provided money and letters of introduction to various Parisians. One of the letters was addressed to a gentleman whose son, about to enter the service, needed a secretary. Happily strolling along the road, the boy envisioned a glorious military career unfolding before him.

quarrelled with d'Aubonne, who in turn had warned the Savoy king to have her watched and to prevent her from going to Switzerland. She seems to have traveled to Torino to present her side of the story, which apparently satisfied the king, as her pension was continued, even when Charles-Emmanuel ascended to the throne shortly thereafter. She seems to have taken advantage of her court visit to solicit permission to leave the austere town of Annecy for nearby lively and cosmopolitan Chambéry.

¹Note how this sort of situation was contributing to the formation of Jean-Jacques' self-image: "Triste sort que celui d'avoir le coeur plein d'amertume et de n'oser même exhaler sa douleur par quelques soupirs, triste sort que d'être abandonné d'un père dont on aurait pu faire les délices et la consolation, mais plus triste sort de se voir forcé d'être à jamais ingrat et malheureux en même temps et d'être obligé de traîner par toute la terre sa misère et ses remords ... " C.C. I, No. 5, p. 12. "Si j'ai refusé plusieurs fois une fortune éclatante, c'est que j'estime mieux une obscure liberté, qu'un esclavage brillant." Ibid., p. 13. Cf. Rousseau's letter to a young man of quality renouncing society, cited herein, pp. 226-7.

To such a dreamer, the Big City turned out to be a bitter disappointment. Rousseau was no V&nture, of this he could now be sure. The "secretarial" job proved to be that of an underpaid valet, and Rousseau refused it. Other possibilities demanded time, patience and careful diplomatic solliciting, too constraining for Jean-Jacques, who surrendered before entering battle. Bonac sent more money, but the boy was now determined to return to Mama -- but where was Mama? He decided to call on a friend of hers, Mlle. du Châtelet, whom he had met during the Lyons visit with LeMaître. She could undoubtedly locate his lost benefactress or -- who knows? -- perhaps she might take a protective interest in the desperate boy herself.

On leaving Paris, Rousseau committed a vile and unattractive deed of verbal violence (the only kind of violence he permitted himself but to which he was to have recourse from time to time throughout his life). In imitation of his hero d'Aubonne, he sent a heavy, unfunny, downright nasty satirical poem (which he thought witty) to the father of the young officer who had "insulted" him, mailing it only as he departed.¹

He walked all the way to Lyons. Along the road, he was filled with happy daydreams of the Astrée variety. Mlle. du Châtelet, who lived in a convent, obliged the boy by writing some letters in an attempt to determine her friend's whereabouts. While awaiting news, Jean-Jacques enjoyed visiting with the spinster, an Aunt-like figure -- kind of female Abbé Gaimé -- lacking youth and sex-appeal, but simple, gracious and attractive to the boy who so enjoyed her conversation on human relations ("ce goût de morale observatrice qui porte à étudier les hommes"²) that he attributed to

¹If he had inherited his father's bad character, he lacked Isaac Rousseau's courage.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 171.

her the beginning of his lifelong interest in ethics. Meanwhile, Jean-Jacques was so short of money that, preferring discomfort to debt, he was obliged to sleep outdoors. Word finally arrived: Mama was now living in Chambéry, and she had a job for her protégé. She had sent money for him to join her; she would pass him off as her Godson, and he would become a permanent member of her household. His walk to Chambéry was one of the last of his happy, daydreamy cross-country "solitary promenades."

It must be noted that Jean-Jacques spent a great deal of this last period on the wings of imagination: either appearing in a position of fame and honor or in an Astrée-like Castle-dream, surrounded by imaginary protector-friends. Hours spent alone on the road are responsible for a great deal of these fantasy-friendships. "Jamais je n'ai tant pensé, tant existé, tant vécu, tant été moi, si j'ose ainsi dire, que dans [les promenades] que j'ai faits seul et à pied. La marche a quelque chose qui anime et avive mes idées: je ne puis presque penser quand je reste en place; il faut que mon corps soit en branle pour y mettre mon esprit. La vue de la campagne, la succession des aspects agréables, le grand air, le grand appétit, la bonne santé que je gagne en marchant, la liberté du cabaret, l'éloignement de tout ce qui me fait sentir ma dépendance, de tout ce qui me rappelle ma situation, tout cela dégage mon âme, me donne une plus grande audace de penser, me jette en quelque sorte dans l'immensité des êtres pour les combiner, les choisir, me les approprier à mon gré sans gêne et sans crainte. Je dispose en maître de la nature entière; mon coeur errant d'objet en objet s'unit, s'identifie à ceux qui le flattent, s'entoure d'images charmantes, s'enivre de sentiments délicieux."¹

¹Ibid., p. 162.

The very misery of his true situation made his imagined one a pure delight.¹ But, alas, Jean-Jacques' imaginary world continued to distort his reaction to the real one. His several years of independence had failed to correct his "bizarre" and "romanesque" worldview, and, compared to his imaginary world, real persons were already proving a disappointment, as the Paris visit exemplifies. (On leaving the capital, Rousseau had exclaimed: "Grâce au Ciel j'étais maintenant délivré de tous ces obstacles: je pouvais m'enfoncer à mon gré dans le pays des chimères, car il ne restait que cela devant moi."²) Even his happiness with Mama was, as we have seen, largely an imaginary projection of future bliss. Soon he would be systematically leaving his Lady for hours at a time to daydream about her -- and even she was, he said, the only person he met in his entire life, male or female, with whom he was as perfectly at ease as when he was in total solitude.

Thus, as Jean-Jacques was developing into manhood and should normally have been entering active participation in life, he was living more than ever in dreamland, still playing make-believe roles as he had at Uncle Gabriel's and preparing the day when he would exclaim: "Hélas! mon plus constant bonheur fut en songe."³

A third homecoming to Mama's -- without the doubt and uncertainty of

¹"C'est une chose bien singulière que mon imagination ne se monte jamais plus agréablement que quand mon état est le moins agréable, et qu'au contraire elle est moins riante lorsque tout rit autour de moi. Ma mauvaise tête ne peut s'assujétir aux choses. Elle ne saurait embellir, elle veut créer." Ibid., pp. 171-2.

²Ibid., p. 163.

³Ibid., p. 108.

the others -- took place when Jean-Jacques arrived in Chambéry. He felt content and serene as he approached, no more. "Je me rapprochais avec attendrissement de l'excellente amie que j'allais revoir. Je goûtais d'avance, mais sans ivresse le plaisir de vivre auprès d'elle. Je m'y étais toujours attendu; c'était comme s'il ne m'était rien arrivé de nouveau."¹ Jean-Jacques so enjoyed this trip that, in spite of his joyous impatience to arrive, he took his time, savoring every moment along the way. Rousseau describes his third homecoming:

J'arrive enfin, je la revois. Elle n'était pas seule. M. l'Intendant général était chez elle au moment que j'entrai. Sans me parler elle me prend par la main et me présente à lui avec cette grâce qui lui ouvrait tous les coeurs; le voilà, Monsieur, ce pauvre jeune homme; daignez le protéger aussi longtemps qu'il le méritera, je ne suis plus en peine de lui pour le reste de sa vie. Puis m'adressant la parole: mon enfant me dit-elle, vous appartenez au Roi: remerciez M. l'Intendant qui vous donne du pain. J'ouvrais de grands yeux sans rien dire, sans savoir trop qu'imaginer: il s'en fallut peu que l'ambition naissante ne me tournât la tête, et je ne fisse déjà le petit Intendant.²

Rousseau's description of this homecoming stresses the sense of longing and intimacy which he felt was characteristic of their relationship at this time, validating Jean-Jacques' unwavering belief in Mama's faithfulness in spite of appearances. He is so "at home" with her that neither her appearance nor her surroundings are mentioned in the description, merely her tender and informal "natural" manner of greeting him, and her motherly preoccupation with his future. Although he had not referred to Mme. de Warens for over a page, in this homecoming description Rousseau speaks of her only by the pronoun "she," indicating the familiar and normal nature of his return and her constant presence in his heart. This third

¹Ibid., p. 172.

²Ibid., pp. 173-4.

homecoming is like the return of a child to its mother. Said Rousseau, for example, "Je logeai chez moi, c'est à dire chez Maman ..."¹

Chambéry provided Jean-Jacques with the uniform life-style he needed to effect his education. At age nineteen, he began his first real job, pushing a pen eight hours a day in the Savoy tax office. As the work became routine, he turned to his old passion, reading, also studying math and painting -- new passions -- and, of course, music. He so disliked Mama's small, dark house that, when she rented as herb-garden a suburban lot on which a little cabin stood, he took over the structure, moving in a bed, books and many of his beloved prints to decorate the walls. The sole inhabitant of a self-created universe, he could study and daydream at ease, away from Mama's constant stream of guests whom he still regarded as "intruders."

The knowledge Jean-Jacques was acquiring was beginning to place him in a position to attract some interesting, respectable and cultured friends. The Abbé Giovanni Antonio Palazzi ("Palais" in the Confessions), in Chambéry from fall, 1732, to winter, 1734, a young man who played the organ and harpsichord, "good musician, good man," became Rousseau's "inseparable." Giovan-Battista Canavazzo ("Canavas"), a young bachelor from Piedmont, fellow-employee at the tax office, who played the cello, became a friend as well. Father Philibert Caton, former Parisian socialite and Sorbonne Bachelor, became attached to Rousseau through a common love of music. The Confessions portrait of Father Caton suggests that Rousseau was at last

¹Ibid., p. 176.

making friends who would influence him, through emulation, in the direction of intellectual cultivation in a manner in which disciplined school and work situations had failed:

C'était un grand homme bien fait, le visage plein, les yeux à fleur de tête, des cheveux noirs qui faisaient sans affectation le crochet à côté du front, l'air à la fois noble, ouvert, modeste, se présentant simplement et bien; n'ayant ni le maintien caffard ou effronté des moines, ni l'abord cavalier d'un homme à la mode, quoiqu'il le fût, mais l'assurance d'un honnête homme qui sans rougir de sa robe s'honore lui-même et se sent toujours à sa place parmi les honnêtes gens. Quoique le P. Caton n'eût pas beaucoup d'étude pour un docteur, il en avait beaucoup pour un homme du monde, et n'étant point pressé de montrer son acquis il le plaçait si à propos qu'il en paraissait davantage. Ayant beaucoup vécu dans la société il s'était plus attaché aux talents agréables qu'à un solide savoir. Il avait de l'esprit, faisait des vers, parlait bien, chantait mieux, avait la voix belle, touchait l'orgue et le clavecin. Il n'en fallait pas tant pour être recherché, aussi l'était-il; mais cela lui fit si peu négliger les soins de son état, qu'il parvint, malgré des concurrents très jaloux à être élu définitiveur de sa province, ou comme on dit, un des grands colliers de l'ordre.¹

Rousseau talked Mama into letting him organize and conduct a monthly concert. Mama sang, Palais, Canavas and two violinists played; the result was rather haphazard and not at all professional, but Rousseau loved it and devoted a great deal of time to it. The friends also made music at Caton's. Music sessions were always followed by rollicking suppers whose friendly atmosphere, said Rousseau, almost succeeded in making a wit out of him.

Not surprisingly, the job at the tax office came to appear an unbearable constraint. Rousseau's resignation after eight months of employment, rejecting mediocrity once again to devote himself to ambitions in what appeared to his benefactress to be a "frivolous" occupation, was the occasion of another vehement quarrel with Mama, whose gentleness, like Little One's, did not prevent her from losing her temper on occasion. (We have already

¹Ibid., p. 186.

noted that Rousseau's conception of friendship does not preclude quarrels but that these, between friends, are only superficial, without venom or repercussions, without effect on the profound nature of the relationship, and bringing about the heightened emotion of reconciliation.) Perhaps the Isaac Rousseaus made their opinions heard as well on this occasion.

No professional musician resided in Chambéry. Thus, secure in his rationalization that the tax office was only a temporary institution anyway and that he needed to cultivate a talent by which he could earn an honest living on a permanent basis, Jean-Jacques left on a useless trip to Besançon, with the intention of studying (for how long and for what purpose?) with Venture's former music teacher. There, he found the teacher ready to depart for Paris, leaving the gullible adolescent with pie-in-the-sky promises of future appointment as musician at the French Court. These the boy brought back to Chambéry -- but not before writing Mme. de Warens to ask, in a stilted formality, fruit of the quarrel, whether or not he would be "received with pleasure."

The boy was lucky this time. Mama appeased, he returned to her house and began giving music lessons, finding many clients among Chambéry's demoiselles. The twenty-year-old music teacher's mind, like St. Preux's and his model Abélard's, was more concerned with the physical endowments of his amiable, well-dressed clients than with their less-impressive vocal talents -- but it mattered little: the ritual of music lessons was no more than a formality and status element in a proper young provinciale's "finishing." Jean-Jacques loved his work and for once enjoyed socializing with the gracious Savoyards.

At about this time -- and Rousseau reasoned that it was to save him from the perils of his charming students and their perhaps more aggressive

mothers -- Mama began to treat Jean-Jacques "like a man." In the case of Mlle. Lamercier, being treated like a man had proven a source of great disappointment. While Mama's case seems, at first glance, to be the very antipode of the latter, it was ironically to have the same sad result.

Mama's uninspired seduction of her protégé seems to bear out the existence of both her sexual amorality and lack of savoir faire and justifies the theory that not sensuality but a desire for power over her men was behind her sexual aggressiveness. Rousseau describes the seduction thus: Mama suddenly became mysteriously serious with Jean-Jacques. After vainly seeking the reason for her change, the boy asked for an explanation. Instead of replying, she proposed they discuss the matter the following day. Taking care that they be left alone, she took Little One into the garden, where she began a long moral harangue. Her whole peculiar attitude so worried the young man that he did not hear a word she said. As soon as he realized the point of the discussion, he could only concern himself with adjusting to the idea of becoming Mama's lover. Meanwhile, Mama was rambling on, placing conditions on her favors to which her protégé, without listening, was systematically agreeing. Then she gave him a week in which to think it over. On the day prescribed, Mama, "neither sad nor lively," but "caressing and calm," received Little One. "Comme elle était peu sensuelle," assures Rousseau, "et n'avait point recherché la volupté, elle n'en a jamais eu les remords."¹

"Remorse" is the key word in Rousseau's attitude toward Mama's seduction. As he had become accustomed to living with her, his early sexual desires

¹Ibid., p. 197. Note Rousseau's reasoning.

had weakened -- the honeymoon was over, so to speak -- and the youth had come to see his benefactress as a mother and little more. Far from diminishing the strength of his affection for her, Rousseau asserts, he had never loved her more tenderly than he did at the moment of this change in relationship. Nonetheless, Mama's proposition had awakened desires in the sensual young man, and the week's delay -- sufficient to refrigerate even a healthily-amorous suitor -- served to bring home the ambivalence of his sentiments toward his benefactress: his acknowledged sexual desire (and the recognition of the fact that, indeed, his "virtue" was endangered by every pretty girl who crossed his path) but a guilt-ridden repugnance, "more pain than pleasure," at the thought of becoming his "mother's" lover. "Il n'y a point à douter," Rousseau admitted, "que si j'avais pu me dérober à mon bonheur avec bienséance, je ne l'eusse fait de tout mon coeur."¹

The word "bienséance" is significant here: in the end, Rousseau committed a kind of "incest" largely in order to avoid hurting the feelings of a friend. (We stress the fact that, as long as Rousseau did not feel his own honor or freedom was in any way threatened, he was of a remarkable tact in his human relations.) Thus the oft-quoted passage: "Fus-je heureux? Non, je goûtai le plaisir. Je ne sais quelle invincible tristesse en empoisonnait le charme. J'étais comme si j'avais commis un inceste."² Rousseau later explained: "Mon plaisir était toujours troublé par un sentiment de tristesse, par un secret serrement de coeur que je ne surmontais pas sans peine; au lieu de me féliciter de la posséder, je me reprochais de l'avilir."³ Rousseau confessed he could only make love to Mama by

¹Ibid., p. 195.

²Ibid., p. 197.

³Ibid., pp. 253-4. (Italics mine.)

imagining other women in her place.

The situation was complicated by the presence in the household of a second lover. Jean-Jacques had known "the faithful Claude Anet" nearly as long as he had known Mama. ("Claude Anet avec un habit noir, une perruque bien peignée, un maintien grave et décent, une conduite sage et circonspecte, des connaissances assez étendues en matière médicale et en botanique ... ¹) As we have seen, Anet had probably become Mme. de Warens' lover back in Switzerland. He had, apparently through devotion to her, deserted country and religion at the time of her flight to Savoy. After a carpentry apprenticeship in Annecy, he had turned his back on his newly-acquired trade and had joined Mama's domestic staff as valet-factotum. This dark and passionate young man, impetuous, moody and explosive, seven years Mama's junior and six years older than Rousseau, stands in the Confessions as one of the most Romantic characters of eighteenth century literature, beside Prévost's Cleveland and prefiguring Dumas' tormented Antony. Rousseau stresses Anet's inscrutable discretion and imposing gravity: "Comme il était sérieux, même grave, et que j'étais plus jeune que lui, il devint pour moi une espèce de gouverneur qui me sauva beaucoup de folies; car il m'en imposait, et je n'osais m'oublier devant lui. Il en imposait même à sa maîtresse qui connaissait son grand sens, sa droiture, son inviolable attachement pour elle, et qui le lui rendait bien. Claude Anet était sans contredit un homme rare, et le seul même de son espèce que j'ai jamais vu. Lent, posé, réfléchi, circonspect dans sa conduite, froid dans ses manières, laconique et sententieux dans ses propos, il était dans ses passions d'une impétuosité qu'il ne laissait

¹Ibid., p. 204.

jamais paraître, mais qui le dévorait en dedans ... "1 Anet's unwaivering zeal and fidelity to the service of his mistress equally impressed Rousseau. Nonetheless, the lad had failed to take real notice of the servant until the latter's attempted suicide had brought the valet's relations with his employer into unmistakable clarity. Following a quarrel with his mistress, during which she had in some way insulted his tender pride, Anet had taken poison. Mama had found out just in time to save her lover's life, but not without making a full confession to an astonished Jean-Jacques.

That Rousseau and Claude Anet were rivals, then, in Mme. de Warens' house is without doubt -- and, to Rousseau, the word "rival" is equivalent to the word "enemy." This he recognized and admitted: "Je n'appris pourtant pas sans peine que quelqu'un pouvait vivre avec elle dans une plus grande intimité que moi. Je n'avais pas songé même à désirer pour moi cette place, mais il m'était dur de la voir remplir par un autre; cela était fort naturel."² Having ascended to the position of Mama's lover, Rousseau describes his sentiments at sharing his mistress with another man as causing him "une cruelle peine, tant par une délicatesse fort naturelle, que parce qu'en effet je ... trouvais [le partage] peu digne d'elle et de moi."³ And what of Anet?

Nonetheless, Rousseau stresses the harmony existing in the ménage à trois -- "a union that made us all happy"⁴ -- which he attributes to Mama's "excellent character;" "tous ceux qui l'aimaient s'aimaient entre eux" -- a power with which he later endows his Julie. This talent, as

¹Ibid., p. 177.

²Ibid., p. 178.

³Ibid., p. 196.

⁴Ibid., p. 178.

admirable as it is rare, is the key to Jean-Jacques' and Mama's compatibility, in the light of Rousseau's need for purity or universal affection. With Jean-Jacques, acceptance of Claude Anet as Mama's lover was rather like a sensitive, overdependent child's reluctant acceptance of the sexual relations he assumes to exist between his father and mother, or St. Preux's acceptance of Julie's and Wolmar's marriage, as the following reservations indicate: " ... Au lieu de prendre en aversion celui qui me l'avait soufflée, je sentis réellement s'étendre à lui l'attachement que j'avais pour elle. Je désirais sur toute chose qu'elle fut heureuse, et puisque'elle avait besoin de lui pour l'être, j'étais content qu'il fut heureux aussi."¹

The relationship between Jean-Jacques and Claude Anet bore a significantly father-son character, then, which, remarkably, Rousseau took for granted, stressing rather the respect with which the two men treated each other. "Sans affecter avec moi l'autorité que son poste le mettait en droit de prendre, il prit naturellement celle que son jugement lui donnait sur le mien. Je n'osais rien faire qu'il parut désapprouver, et il ne désapprouvait que ce qui était mal."² On the other hand, Rousseau clearly felt superior to Anet. The character bearing Claude's name in the New Héloïse is a peasant, not one of the Clarens Happy Few. Indeed, the real Claude Anet had basically a peasant's interests and frame of mind, lacking the intellectual orientation and the sentimental finesse of Mama and Little One. Thus Rousseau disliked botany, Anet's passion, and Mama's pharmaceutical pursuits, to which Anet directly contributed; whereas Rousseau's own passion for music was an activity excluding Anet.³ In this sense, the

¹Ibid., p. 178. (Italics mine.)

²Ibid., p. 178.

³We are obviously not suggesting this as the explanation for Rousseau's lifelong passion for music.

following incident may be taken as symbolic of the underlying, and in this case oedipal rivalry between Jean-Jacques and Claude Anet: "Quelquefois la voyant empressée autour d'un fourneau, je lui disais: Maman, voici un duo charmant qui m'a bien l'air de faire sentir l'empyreume à vos drogues. Ah par ma foi, me disait-elle, si tu me les fais brûler je te les ferai manger. Tout en disputant je l'entraînais à son clavecin: on s'y oubliait; l'extrait de genièvre ou d'absinthe était calciné, elle m'en barbouillait le visage, et tout cela était délicieux."¹

That this rivalry remained underground on Rousseau's part is thanks to the fact that equilibrium reigned in the triangle and Rousseau's sense of honor was in no way threatened by Claude Anet.

Rousseau's new status as Mama's lover greatly promoted his sentimental development. The heart-to-heart talks he and Mama would have after sexual intercourse -- the only pleasurable aspect of the lovemaking for Jean-Jacques -- introduced him to the joy of intimate heart-communication. This came in the form of Mama's confidences to him. "Quand on sent vraiment que le coeur parle," says Rousseau, "le nôtre s'ouvre pour recevoir ses épanchements ... "² Rousseau had, until now, told his "little story" for purely material reasons -- to win protection or to avoid punishment -- and for psychological reasons -- to move someone to pity or to relieve himself of unbearable guilt. Now he was privileged to experience the pure,

¹Ibid., p. 181.

²Ibid., p. 199.

disinterested beauty of reciprocal communication with a trusted and beloved friend. The intimacy required for this rare experience was to place it outside of his reach during most of the remainder of his life, but it was always present in his mind and thereafter his conception of friendship did not fail to include this component.

The happiness inherent in this heart-communication made absence unbearable, leading Rousseau to abandon his music teaching to devote himself to the full cultivation of his sentimental life. (Any doubts as to the utility of this occupation are dissipated by a reading of the Julie.)

"... Je ne pensais, ne sentais, ne respirais que par elle," said Rousseau of Mme. de Warens. These were among the happiest moments of his existence. Good-hearted, naïvely well-intentioned Mama did all she could to bring her two men together. "Combien de fois elle attendrit nos coeurs et nous fit embrasser avec larmes, en nous disant que nous étions nécessaires tous deux au bonheur de sa vie ..."¹ Only after she became Rousseau's mistress did she speak of her regard for Anet, but at that time she stressed it with a care suggesting that the two young men's rivalry was not unapparent, particularly on Rousseau's part. "... Elle me montrait combien elle l'aimait afin que je l'aimasse de même, et elle appuyait encore moins sur son amitié pour lui que sur son estime, parce que c'était le sentiment que je pouvais partager le plus pleinement."²

Rousseau could not determine whether or not the impenetrable Claude Anet was aware of his new status in the household (and note the reserve

¹Ibid., p. 201.

²Ibid., p. 201. Note that Rousseau's friendship for Anet was more a question of respect than attraction.

that prevented him from asking Mama) but felt (or hoped) rather optimistically that Anet, in his gravity, regarded his mistress and her new young lover as "two children worthy of indulgence." Here Rousseau once more stresses his "innocence" and the lack of resentment on the part of someone who could be seen as his "victim," as justification for an action that could be interpreted as cruelly immoral.

Thus Rousseau describes his happiness at this time:

Ainsi s'établit entre nous une société sans autre exemple peut-être sur la terre. Tous nos vœux, nos soins, nos cœurs étaient en commun. Rine n'en passait au delà de ce petit cercle. L'habitude de vivre ensemble et d'y vivre exclusivement devint si grande, que si dans nos repas un des trois manquait ou qu'il vint un quatrième tout était dérangé, et malgré nos liaisons particulières les tête-à-têtes nous étaient moins doux que la réunion. Ce qui prévenait entre nous la gêne était que nous étions tous fort occupés. Maman, toujours projet ante et toujours agissante ne nous laissait guère oisifs ni l'un ni l'autre, et nous avions encore chacun pour notre compte de quoi bien remplir notre temps.¹

Rousseau often explained, and we have seen, from the castle-dream to Clarens, that he preferred as life-style a small circle of friends, preferably centered around one special friend, to a conjugal one-to-one living situation. The tiny closed society, controlled microcosm of the larger social environment, provided the intimacy, security and emotional fulfillment of marriage with the variety and personal freedom not normally found within the bonds of the smaller, traditional institution. As was the case with the idealized friendship experiences we have thus far examined, this little triangle represents a self-sufficient unit, a Collective Self-Interest, with which each member identifies, to the exclusion of the outer world. Perfect harmony and equality reigns in the circle, whose communal aspect echoes the unison/union friendship theme. Nonetheless, the fragility of this relationship, which, like all Rousseau's friendship experiences, is

¹Ibid., p. 202.

a state of mind rather than a sum of moments, is revealed in the above passage, in which habit (inseparability) and chance play a strong role and constraint, in the form of boredom or internal disequilibrium, remains a constant threat.

The little society suddenly came to an end with Claude Anet's untimely death in the spring of 1734. "Voilà comment je perdis le plus solide ami que j'eus en toute ma vie, homme estimable et rare, en qui la nature tint lieu d'éducation, qui nourrit dans la servitude toutes les vertus des grands hommes, et à qui peut-être il ne manqua pour se montrer tel à tout le monde, que de vivre et d'être placé,"¹ said Rousseau, at once eulogizing a lost friend whose qualities of stability and judiciousness he sincerely admired, and justifying his and Mama's relationship with a member of the lower social stratum.

Unspeakable guilt feelings are sensed lurking beneath the surface of the Confessions relation of Jean-Jacques' friendship for Claude Anet, the key to which is, as we have said, the two men's rivalry and not "latent homosexuality" as has been suggested. Although awed by Anet's gravity, Rousseau clearly scorned the man as a peasant and only convinced himself he admired him to save his and Mama's face. At the same time as being friends, Jean-Jacques and Claude were enemies. This ambivalence is of no small consequence in Rousseau's psychology. We see it to a degree in most of his male-male relationships, implying a conflict between the loving, harmonious feelings of Collective Self-Interest and the hateful, destructive feelings of Competitive Self-Interest -- the heart of Rousseau's

¹Ibid., p. 205.

moral system. Rousseau's foremost moral principle is on this subject, sometimes expressed negatively (the avoidance of situations which place one's duties in opposition to one's self-interests and present one's own profit in another's harm), sometimes positively (Rousseau's pragmatic and, as he says, the only feasible Golden Rule: do good unto yourself with the least possible harm to others). Time and time again, Rousseau repeated that no social man is exempt from the tyranny of Competitive Self-Interest. Often a hasty or fragmentary reading of Rousseau's works gives the impression that, when he speaks of "evil," he refers to love of worldly pleasures, particularly illicit sexual gratification. These are indeed potentially anti-social passions in Rousseau's ethics but the evil itself is Competitive Self-Interest's child: the will to harm another for one's own gain.

It is not at all surprising to find Competitive Self-Interest beneath the surface of this ostensibly harmonious triangle. We have already shown evidence of it. Rousseau was the first to recognize its existence, when he confessed his "vile and unworthy thought" on the day after Claude Anet's death: a secret joy that he would inherit Anet's clothing, especially the man's "beautiful black suit." Anet's suit, yes, but also Anet's prestige in the household, and sentimental monopoly over Mama. Rousseau's "vile and unworthy thought" was, in effect, that a part of him was glad his rival was dead. Mama's "dear and precious tears," he insisted, washed the last traces of this vile sentiment out of his heart. Her tears activated his Collective Self-Interest, or compassion. This too is entirely believable: Rousseau was not a bad or cruel man: his affection for Anet appears to have been sincere, and his psychology attracted him to the ménage à trois.

Nonetheless, another question hangs open: a question of fact. It

appears that, by the time of writing the Confessions, a tormented Rousseau felt or feared that through his competitive situation and frame of mind he had somehow caused Anet's death. The confusion of dates in the Confessions' recounting seems to bear this out. It seems likely that, in fact, Claude Anet's suicide attempt took place a few months after Jean-Jacques became Mama's lover, not shortly after he had entered the household, as Rousseau reports. Furthermore, Anet's death a year later is often viewed as a second suicide attempt, this time successful, since it was reported to have come as the result of illness contracted when Anet went mountain-climbing to pick "genipi," a medicinal plant not yet growing at the time of the year in which Anet died, when the mountains were still covered with snow. Yet Rousseau actually stresses this point in his Confessions.¹ The author also takes too obvious care to bring out his own selfless devotion to Anet during the last days, as if in anticipation of some raised eyebrows. Even his indelicate stress of Mama's sexual promiscuity (actually comparing her to Aspasia!) may have been geared, in part, to extenuate his own imagined or feared role in Anet's misfortune.

We must therefore ask whether Rousseau was in fact at the root of Anet's suicide, if suicide it was. The answer is perhaps the following: Rousseau may well have been a contributing factor to Anet's death, but, if so, he appears as irritation, not trauma. It seems likely that Anet's suicidal tendency was present even before Jean-Jacques' entrance into the picture. Indeed, the moody, uncommunicative Anet's self-immolating submission to a sexually-cold, sentimentally-promiscuous, domineering woman indicates an

¹" ... Il gagna une pleuresie dont le génipi ne put le sauver." Ibid., p. 205.

attraction to martyrdom that had not awaited Little One's presence to develop. Probably, however, during the time of Rousseau's later persecution, repressed guilt feelings pertaining to Claude Anet, stemming largely from unavowed ill-intentions toward his rival, welled up and necessitated this confession, disguised in a way similar to the Emile paternity-confession. Meanwhile, and for many years, the guilt lay dormant beneath the surface, as the man made his way in the world.

Rousseau soon paid dearly for his moment of relief. "Quand il ne fut plus," he said, referring to his late friend, "je fus bien forcé de prendre sa place, pour laquelle j'avais aussi peu d'aptitude que de goût ... J'avais bien obtenu la même confiance, mais non pas la même autorité."¹ Suddenly, with the death of Claude Anet, Jean-Jacques Rousseau became a man with a grown-up's responsibilities: a père de famille, so to speak. "J'eus désormais l'honneur dont je me serais bien passé d'être traité ... en grand garçon," he had exclaimed regarding Mlle. Lamercier. He could now repeat these words, but in an entirely different context. Claude Anet's death was the beginning of the end of Rousseau's compatibility with Mama, which had, ironically, already stood the test of time. His new discovery of Mama's precarious financial position² was enough to spoil the young man's enjoyment of the Good Life and to throw him into a state of panic and acute distress; yet his character was too weak to enable him to curb her extravagant spending habits. She could all too easily cajole her protégé into

¹Ibid., p. 206.

²Mgr. de Bernex's death a month after Anet's cost Mama half her salary.

silence. "J'étais peu soigneux, j'étais fort timide, tout en grondant à part-moi, je laissais tout aller comme il allait."¹ Rousseau attributes his incurable and obsessive penny-pinching mania to this experience. He began to take small sums of money from the household treasury and hide them away so Mama couldn't spend them. Whenever she found them -- and, he says, she always did -- she would use the money to buy him gifts. Mama's financial state made Rousseau suspicious of the constant stream of "intruders" flowing in and out of the house. Convinced that each visitor was out to fleece her (a not altogether baseless assumption), he could no longer remain comfortably in their presence, and his anger was no longer a source of teasing and laughter. On various pretexts, he began making small trips throughout Savoy and France. He was running away from his problem, certainly, but beyond this his active Swiss personality was also demanding manly nourishment. Even before Anet's death, in Geneva on an inheritance matter,² he had, in this spirit, remained at the Cordelier monastery nearby to enjoy the company of its congenial director, a friend of Mama's.³ Such diversions proved as costly to the family treasury as

¹Ibid., p. 206.

²Entitled to inherit a small field, part of his late mother's dowry, Rousseau, as minor, required his father's consent, a formality not easily accomplished in this case. ("Mon père n'est point venu," he wrote Mama bitterly; "et m'a écrit ... une lettre de vrai Gascon, et qui pis est c'est que c'est bien moi qu'il gasconne ... " C.C. I, No. 7 (August 31, 1733), p. 20.

³To whom he cheerfully wrote: "Tout cela est parfaitement bien jusques ici, mais sa révérence ne vous en déplaît me retient ici un peu plus longtemps qu'il ne faudrait par une espèce de force un peu de sa part, un peu de la mienne; de sa part par les manières obligeantes et les caresses avec lesquelles il a la bonté de m'arrêter, et de la mienne parce que j'ai de la peine à me détacher d'une personne qui me témoigne tant de bonté; enfin, Madame, je suis ici le mieux du monde et le Révérend père m'a dit résolument qu'il ne prétend que je m'en aille que quand il lui plaira et que je serai bien et duement lactifié." Ibid., p. 20.

the "intruders'" schemes. Instead of going back to music teaching, however, he attempted shabby money-making projects à la d'Aubonne, none of which (fortunately) paid off. In truth, one sees Rousseau's point in refusing to sacrifice himself to Mama's charlatans, at the same time as recognizing the guilt in his confession: "Je puis jurer que j'en aurais souffert tous les retranchements avec joie, si Maman eut vraiment profité de cette épargne; mais certain que ce que je me refusais passait à des fripons, j'abusais de sa facilité pour partager avec eux, et comme le chien qui revient de la boucherie, j'emportais mon lopin du morceau que je n'avais pu sauver."¹

Such feelings were augmented by the fact that both Mama and Isaac Rousseau were pressuring the young man to find a job and earn an honest living, more for his own good than for theirs. The youth, in turn, was systematically placating them with sophistry and promises made in grandiose rhetoric and great gusts of hot air. The father mistakenly held the benefactress responsible for his son's apparent worthlessness (everything stemming, of course, from the contemptible change of religion), which infuriated Rousseau, by now clearly perceiving the selfishness in his father's policy toward him and its contrast with Mama's not always wise but certainly selfless generosity.

Meanwhile, the young man was doing as he pleased. His pursuits were intellectual and he was working hard at them: reading, writing, composing, and a new passion: chess. He saw three career lines as being open to him on the level his "honor" demanded: music, writing (as secretary to a noble) and teaching (as tutor to aristocratic children). Even these rather ambitious

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 215.

goals, for a man of his background, were, deep in his heart, conceived as only stepping-stones to his real ambition which had slowly developed -- to become a second "Great Rousseau" and to find a place in the Castle of his dreams. At this point, teaching seemed the most favorable route, and Rousseau felt he was seriously planning for this career. Still, he expressed the desire to spend "the rest of [his] days" with Mama.¹

New friends, now chosen from among an elite of local intellectuals, pushed Rousseau along in this direction. (Palais had left Chambéry by this time, and Caton was involved with personal matters; also, Rousseau's interests had enlarged to include many subjects besides music.) Duvivier, for example, "vieux Lyonnais, fort bon homme," was a friend from the tax-office whom Rousseau sometimes brought to the house. "Il avait vécu dans le monde; il avait des talents, quelque savoir, de la douceur, de la politesse, et savait la musique, et comme j'étais de chambrée avec lui, nous nous étions liés de préférence au milieu des ours mal-léchés qui nous entouraient."²

For nearly two years during this period, France and the Empire were at war. As he met and contemplated French soldiers resplendent in their colorful uniforms, Rousseau became enthusiastically Francophile. He read French pre-Classical literature, especially Brantôme's Grands Capitaines, identifying the literary heroes with the Frenchmen passing in splendor before his eyes. His interests were now humanistic, and his orientation

¹"Je veux lui faire goûter autant qu'il dépendra de moi par mon attachement à elle et par la sagesse et la régularité de ma conduite les fruits des soins et des peines qu'elle s'est donnés pour moi ... " C.C. I, No. 11, Rousseau-Isaac Rousseau (end of autumn, 1735), p. 32.

²Confessions, O.C. I, pp. 108-9.

had clearly redirected itself toward Paris.

"Young and amiable" Savoy gentleman François-Joseph de Conzié, Count of Charmettes and friend and daily visitor of Mama's, had something to do with this evolution. Conzié and Rousseau became rather well acquainted at this time by the Count's offering to become a music student -- perhaps a tactful form of charity. Member of one of the oldest Savoy families of magistratural nobility, bachelor Conzié had been educated in Torino and had returned, in around 1733, to Charmettes, near Chambéry, where he lived with his aging mother. Rousseau's "music lessons" contributed more to his own enlightenment than to that of his pupil. While not a scholar, Conzié was an enthusiastic bibliophile and au courant of all that was new in the arts and sciences. This friendship proved a particularly strong factor in Rousseau's intellectual orientation, both directly and through the intervention of the personality of Voltaire, who seems to have opened the young man up to critical reflection and to humanistic and literary ambitions. Rousseau describes his relationship with Conzié: "Avec de l'esprit, et du goût pour les belles connaissances M. de Conzié avait une douceur de caractère qui le rendait très liant, et je l'étais beaucoup moi-même pour les gens en qui je la trouvais."¹ La liaison fut bientôt faite. La germe de littérature et de philosophie qui commençait à fermenter dans ma tête et qui n'attendait qu'un peu de culture et d'émulation pour se développer tout à fait, les trouvait en lui. M. de Conzié avait peu de disposition pour la musique; ce fut un bien pour moi: les heures des leçons se passaient à toute autre chose qu'à solfier. Nous déjeunions, nous causions, nous

¹Note that, by the qualification "pour les gens en qui je la trouvais," Rousseau admits (as his attitude toward the "intruders" indicates) that he was already a cantankerous "bear" in society.

lisions quelques nouveautés, et pas un mot de musique. La correspondance de Voltaire avec le Prince royal de Prusse faisait du bruit alors; nous nous entretenions souvent de ces deux hommes célèbres, dont l'un devait dans peu se montrer, et dont l'autre, aussi décrié qu'il est admiré maintenant, nous faisait plaindre sincèrement le malheur qui semblait le poursuivre, et qu'on voit si souvent être l'appanage des grands talents. Le Prince de Prusse avait été peu heureux dans sa jeunesse, et Voltaire semblait fait pour ne l'être jamais. L'intérêt que nous prenions à l'un et à l'autre, s'étendait à tout ce qui s'y rapportait. Rien de tout ce qu'écrivait Voltaire ne nous échappait. Le goût que je pris à ces lectures m'inspira le désir d'apprendre à écrire avec élégance, et de tâcher d'imiter le beau coloris de cet auteur dont j'étais enchanté. Quelque temps après parurent ses Lettres philosophiques; quoiqu'elles ne soient assurément pas son meilleur ouvrage, ce fut celui qui m'attira le plus vers l'étude, et ce goût naissant ne s'éteignit plus depuis ce temps-là."¹

The repetition of the word "we" in the above passage indicates a certain "unison" character to Rousseau's conception of their friendship; however, Conzié seems to have called Rousseau by the childish "tu," to Rousseau's respectful "vous,"² perhaps a better indication of their actual relationship. Conzié provided a sympathetic ear for Rousseau's literary attempts and facilitated his self-education immeasurably by opening his well-known and well-stocked library to the ambitious young man, by this material means enabling him to pursue his general education much further than he had been able to go with his study of music.

¹Ibid., pp. 213-4.

²See C.C. I, Appendix A-17, Notes critiques, p. 296.

Now that he had acquired a taste for studies, Rousseau began seeking local "experts," "men of merit" with whom to exchange ideas: art and culture fanciers, physicians, scientists, philosophers. Chambéry was a rich hunting-ground in this respect: society-oriented, cultured, tasteful, alert and knowledgeable residents and visitors abounded. Intellectual activity was high in eighteenth-century Savoy. Art and science academies and gazettes were popular and libraries were commonplace accessories among the well-to-do. In addition to the ubiquitous classics, Rousseau read voraciously in eighteenth, seventeenth and late sixteenth century French literature -- rational, ethical and idealistic. (Pious literature seems to have interested him only philosophically.) He turned to the Italian poets and an elite of sensitive French writers (among whom "the tender Voltaire") for emotional release. History and biography provided the manly heroism in which he delighted. The sciences were in fashion, particularly mathematics, chemistry and astronomy; experiments and expeditions were related in the gazettes. These, too, he cultivated, nearly losing his eyesight in a laboratory accident when a test tube exploded in his face. Study had become a sincere passion -- neither the product or nor entirely independent of personal ambition.

Rousseau cultivated Jean-Baptiste Symond (or "Simon"), the Annecy magistrate to whom Venture had introduced him. Dwarfed and deformed by a cruel nature that was to extinguish his life within several years, Symond had wit and culture, a solid background in music and a passion for literature, particularly the brilliant, superficial salon literature of the time. The tiny man excited Rousseau's emulation by giving him news of the latest events in the glamorous Republic of Letters. "Comme il

connaissait les bons livres et qu'il en parlait volontiers, sa conversation était, non seulement amusante, mais instructive. ... Il louait, animait mon émulation, et me donnait pour mes lectures de bons avis dont j'ai souvent fait mon profit."¹

Still another intellectual friend of this period was a Jacobin monk, physics professor in Chambéry, whose chemistry experiments amused Jean-Jacques "extremely" and founded his lifelong interest in this subject. Clearly, the former Torino lackey was working hard to make his own way, extending his now-ardent ambition even to the choice of his friends.

As Rousseau was feverishly forming his intellectual faculties, his mind and body suddenly failed him -- portents of a bleak future. He underwent a severe nervous collapse. " ... Je déclinais à vue d'oeil. ... J'avais la courte haleine; je me sentais oppressé: je soupirais involontairement, j'avais des palpitations, je crachais du sang; le fièvre lente survint et je n'en ai jamais été bien quitte."² "My passions made me live, and my passions killed me,"³ Rousseau declared, and indeed the development of his genius nearly killed him... and perhaps actually did so in the long run.

This aspect of Rousseau's development is most important in the understanding of his psychology and human relations. The very strength, intimacy and subjectivity of his relationship to the reader, as we have said, make it easy to forget the man's very real singularity. To those

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 142.

²Ibid., pp. 218-9.

³Ibid., p. 219. Translation mine.

with personalities and/or convictions hostile to his, he is a monster, a charlatan, a madman, to be hated or pitied. Either way, we paradoxically tend to judge his human relations as we would our own, that is, on the basis of normal character and experience. Rousseau knew it to be otherwise. "Moi seul," he said in a much-misunderstood passage. "Je sens mon coeur et je connais les hommes. Je ne suis fait comme aucun de ceux que j'ai vus; j'ose croire n'être fait comme aucun de ceux qui existent. Si je ne vauz pas mieux, au moins je suis autre."¹ Rousseau was a great man and Rousseau was a sick man, and it is imperative that we bear both in mind in our approach to his human relationships. If he shared the same feelings and interests of many of his readers, his perception of them was excessive to the highest point, like an ultra-sensitive seismographic apparatus. His passions -- admittedly "nothings," "the most pueril things in the world" -- could derange his entire machine. And everything was "passion" to Rousseau: "toutes les folies qui passaient dans mon inconstante tête, les goût fugitifs d'un seul jour, un voyage, un concert, un souper, une promenade à faire, un roman à lire, une comédie à voir, tout ce qui était le moins du monde prémédité dans mes plaisirs ou dans mes affaires devenait pour moi tout autant de passions violentes, qui dans leur impéruosité ridicule me donnaient le plus vrai tourment."² The vicarious experience of the misfortunes of one of his favorite literary heroes, Prévost's Cleveland, upset him more greatly, he declared, than did his own. A performance of Voltaire's Alzire so moved him that he became breathless and experienced palpitations of the heart and, fearing for his health, had to give up the theatre for

¹Ibid., p. 5.

²Ibid., p. 220.

a short period of time.

Rousseau describes the desires and fears devouring him at the time of his nervous breakdown. First, a neurotic desire for women. With Mme. de Warens, his physical needs were satisfied; yet he so longed for emotional fulfillment that he was as nervous as a wildcat. Secondly, anxiety regarding the future. "Ma cruelle imagination qui va toujours au devant des malheurs," he said, "me montrait [la ruine totale de Maman] sans cesse dans tout son excès et dans toutes ses suites. Je me voyais d'avance forcément séparé par la misère de celle à qui j'avais consacré ma vie et sans qui je n'en pouvais jouir."¹ Finally, anxiety and excitement caused by his studies. We cite, for example, the psychological upset caused by the study of music, Rousseau's great love: "La musique était consummante par l'ardeur avec laquelle je m'y livrais, par l'étude opiniâtre des obscurs livres de Rameau, par mon invincible obstination à vouloir en charger ma mémoire qui s'y refusait toujours, par mes courses continuelles, par les compilations immenses que j'entassais, passant très souvent à copier les nuits entières."² The feeling that his honor and freedom hung on his intellectual accomplishments gave his studies and actions a particular life-or-death immediacy sufficient to cause him infinite difficulty in learning and performing. Where honor and freedom were concerned, Rousseau had always been a bit paranoid and felt or feared that his every movement was a test imposed on him by some disbeliever. At this point, the feelings of persecution show up mostly in music, for the simple reason that his self-assertion was mostly in the musical domain. For example, when a group of cultured persons in Chambéry formed a public concert ensemble

¹Ibid., p. 219.

²Ibid., p. 219. Indeed, Rousseau's inability to perform under pressure -- even pressure self-imposed -- is legendary, his insecurity creating a mental block that derailed his entire intellectual process. "Deux choses presque inaliables s'unissent en moi sans que j'en puisse concevoir la manière: un tempérament très ardent, des passions vives, impétueuses, et des idées lentes à naître, embarrassées, et qui ne se présentent jamais qu'après coup. On dirait que mon coeur et mon esprit n'appartiennent pas au même individu. Le sentiment plus prompt que l'éclair vient remplir mon âme, mais au lieu de m'éclairer il me brûle et m'éblouit. Je sens tout et je ne vois rien. Je suis emporté mais stupide; il faut que je sois de sang-froid pour penser." Ibid., p. 113.

and selected another musician as director, Rousseau was convinced that they doubted the originality of his compositions. A composing assignment they subsequently gave him thus appeared as a test of his musical skill and, beyond this, of his very worth as a human being.

The sources of Rousseau's nervous collapse were largely related to the responsibilities and constraints of the adult status acquired through the death of Claude Anet. Now forced to perform conjugal duties with Mama, he was repulsed by his obligation, yet obsessed with a desire for other women, the forbidden fruit. Responsible for the household, he simultaneously worried about Mama's spending and his own cost to the treasury. Guilt feelings were strong in both cases. With his father, with the Gouvons, with LeMafre and now with Mama, Rousseau had reason to reproach himself for being "ungrateful." In the former case, he owed his beloved benefactress his services, even those as a lover if she so desired, yet longed to avoid their performance and regain his freedom. In the latter case, he owed her his gainful employment, even if its fruits were to be enjoyed by whatever adventurer happened to wander by, yet his own selfish ambition was driving him to work against their friendship in an indefinable pursuit of glory in which even he was not sure of his capacity (thus far having consistently been judged "unintelligent") and on which he was risking everything -- even Mama herself. ("Je me voyais ... séparé par la misère de celle à qui j'avais consacré ma vie ... ")

Thus Rousseau temporarily solved his problem and regained his position as "child of the family" through illness. The period of nervous hypertension was followed by a period of depression. " ... Je fus pris ... de la mélancolie; les vapeurs succédèrent aux passions; ma langueur devint tristesse; je pleurais et soupirais à propos de rien, je sentais la vie

m'échapper sans l'avoir goûtée ... Je tombai tout à fait malade."¹

A "precious attack" Rousseau later called his depression: "Dying," twenty-three-year-old Jean-Jacques recovered his place as idol of the family. " [Maman] me soignait comme jamais mère n'a soigné son enfant ... "² Suddenly his problems appeared over. His monopoly of Mama satisfied his emotional need for love and his insecurity (by distracting her from the get-rich-quick schemes behind most of her spending); it took the pressure off his studies, so that "approved" and "recognized" by his friend, Rousseau no longer had to submit his honor to the dangerous tests of public judgment. Of course this calm was at the price of his life, or so he partially believed, but dying was a pleasure under these circumstances and he drained it for all the melancholy it was worth.

Sans les inquiétudes que j'avais sur [le] sort [de Maman] je serais mort comme j'aurais pu m'endormir, et ces inquiétudes mêmes avaient un objet affectueux et tendre qui en tempérerait l'amertume. Je lui disais: vous voilà dépositaire de tout mon être: faites en sorte qu'il soit heureux. Deux ou trois fois quand j'étais le plus mal, il m'arriva de me lever dans la nuit et de me trainer à sa chambre, pour lui donner sur sa conduite des conseils j'ose dire pleins de justesse et de sens, mais où l'intérêt que je prenais à son sort se marquait mieux que toute autre chose. Comme si les pleurs étaient ma nourriture et mon remède, je me fortifiais de ceux que je versais auprès d'elle, avec elle, assis sur son lit, et tenant ses mains dans les miennes. Les heures coulaient dans ces entretiens nocturnes, et je m'en retournais en meilleur état que je n'étais venu; content et calme dans les promesses qu'elle m'avait faites, dans les espérances qu'elle m'avait données, je m'endormais là-dessus avec la paix du coeur et la résignation à la providence.³

Rousseau's descriptive style, and particularly his use of the imperfect tense to "petrify" the scene, reveal this "deathbed" situation to be among his privileged moments.

¹Ibid., p. 221.

²Ibid., p. 221.

³Ibid., pp. 221-2.

Rousseau's human relations tragedy -- and perhaps that of all sensitive and affectionate persons -- was the need for one special friend among the many and a degree of intimacy and devotion to which practically no human being is capable. "Le premier de mes besoins," he confessed, "le plus grand, le plus fort, le plus inextinguible, était tout entier dans mon coeur: c'était le besoin d'une société intime et aussi intime qu'elle pouvait l'être: c'était surtout pour cela qu'il me fallait une femme plutôt qu'un homme, une amie plutôt qu'un ami. Ce besoin singulier était tel, que la plus étroite union des corps ne pouvait encore y suffire: il m'aurait fallu deux âmes dans le même corps: sans cela je sentais toujours du vide."¹ The poignant hopelessness of his friendship experience lies in the paradox brought out by his nervous breakdown: Rousseau's sentimental needs, dependancy and the demands of his genius made friendship more vital to him than to the average man; yet his concept of friendship implied a certain tyranny. Equality between friends of this nature is achieved only after both sides of the ledger have been totaled: Rousseau was willing to become such a friend's "slave," but only provided he was, in other ways, the friend's "master," and even his personal slavery would stop short of encroachment on his honor and freedom. This was not the result of some selfish machiavellian choice: it was a part of his nature and his genius required it, as did his tormented soul. Mama's "saving of Rousseau's life" during this period of nervous collapse symbolizes the relationship to which he was trying to force her to commit herself. By giving him life, she became his "mother," thus becoming responsible for him: a parent-child form of reciprocal bondage which the

¹Ibid., p. 414.

young man thereafter consistently made it a point to stress in his relations with his benefactress. This, then, is Rousseau's personal friendship tragedy: as dearly and truly as he loved Mama, he was driven by personal needs to try to enslave her. Yet, as we have seen, Mama's happiness lay in precisely the outside interests Rousseau was systematically trying to eliminate: her friends, her visitors, her spending, her money-making schemes... The flame, in this case, was attracted to the moth, and since the moth was to prove the stronger character of the two, she eventually won the encounter by fluttering away. Rousseau's friendship happiness with Mama, then, lasted only during the short time in which he was able to maintain his monopoly over her.

We must examine their new relationship:

S'il y a dans la vie un sentiment délicieux, c'est celui que nous éprouvâmes d'être rendus l'un à l'autre. Notre attachement mutuel n'en augmenta pas, cela n'était pas possible; mais il prit je ne sais quoi de plus intime, de plus touchant dans sa grande simplicité. Je devenais tout à fait son oeuvre, tout à fait son enfant et plus que si elle eut été ma vraie mère. Nous commençâmes, sans y songer, à ne plus nous séparer l'un de l'autre, à mettre en quelque sorte toute notre existence en commun, et sentant que réciproquement nous nous étions non seulement nécessaires mais suffisants, nous nous accoutûmes à ne plus penser à rien d'étranger à nous, à borner absolument notre bonheur et tous nos désirs à cette possession mutuelle et peut-être unique parmi les humains, qui n'était point, comme je l'ai dit, celle de l'amour; mais une possession plus essentielle qui, sans tenir aux sens, au sexe, à l'âge, à la figure tenait à tout ce par quoi l'on est soi, et qu'on ne peut perdre qu'en cessant d'être.¹

The exquisite sensitivity of this passage requires no explication.

We merely point out that it contains the description of the achievement of a state of "union" with Mama.² (With Cousin Abraham Bernard, there had only been "unison," the required intimacy and "sympathy of souls" --

¹Ibid., p. 222.

²Cf. (describing his relationship with Mama during the Charmettes idyll shortly thereafter) "... une société aussi libre que douce, si l'on peut donner le nom de société à une aussi parfaite union ..." Ibid., p. 235. (Italics mine.)

which Rousseau regarded with near-Prévostian fatality, as beginning with sympathy and developing through fortune and happenstance -- having been absent.) This new picture is achieved in the above passage with technical virtuosity: The first half of the passage tends to oppose the "je" and the "elle" ("l'un"/"l'autre," "je devenais/son oeuvre," etc.) until the central affirmation of their fusion ("Nous commençâmes, sans y songer, à ne plus nous séparer l'un de l'autre, à mettre en quelque sorte toute notre existence en commun ... "), after which only the pronoun "nous" is used -- actually stressed -- to refer to the relationship. Note also the presence of the inseparability and self-sufficiency necessary to a true Rousseauesque friendship, making possible the relationship's existence as a moral entity of Collective Self-Interest (the identification of both individuals with the relationship's totality, necessary to eliminate any feelings of competition), as well as the aforementioned pygmalion image of Rousseau's being Mama's "work," her "child."

Here falls the "short and precious interval" known as the Charmettes Idyll -- only a few weeks long, as prosaic souls scoff with superiority. (Dates are confused in Rousseau's telling of the tale, but scholars have determined that the idyll took place during the summer of 1736, when Rousseau was twenty-four and Mama thirty-seven. Mama and Rousseau may also have spent a short time at the Charmettes in the summer and fall of 1735, however.) Back from his battle with Death, Rousseau was still listless and feverish. Tired of Mama's dark and dreary house in which even their presence together was "sad" (note the importance of the physical setting), Little One talked his benefactress into spending the summer with him in

the country. She rented a cottage in Conzié's county of "Charmettes."

Rousseau's happiness at Charmettes was not, strictly speaking, friendship's (thus the recurring "je" in his attempts to describe it), but friendship's joys were a large part of it, and friendship was certainly necessary to its existence. Happiness is indescribable, says Rousseau, because it is a permanent state. The Charmettes happiness consisted of a combination of friendship, communion with nature, intellectual exercises, creature comforts and enjoyment of the self by means of dolce far niente, enjoyed in self-imposed routine spiced with variety and with total freedom from constraint.

In the following passage, although Rousseau speaks of his own individual happiness, we sense his feeling of Mama's tacit recognition and approval in the security with which he quenches his thirst from the overflowing cup. (It goes without saying that this is another of Rousseau's privileged moment descriptions.)

Je me levais avec le soleil et j'étais heureux; je me promenais et j'étais heureux, je voyais Maman et j'étais heureux, je la quittais et j'étais heureux, je parcourais les bois, les côteaux, j'errais dans les vallons, je lisais, j'étais oisif, je travaillais au jardin, je cueillais les fruits, j'aidais au ménage, et le bonheur me suivait partout; il n'était dans aucune chose assignable, il était tout en moi-même, il ne pouvait me quitter un seul instant.¹

In the following passage, in which happiness is analyzed, we see the leisurely alternance, ebb and flow, between personal, private existence (Primary Self-Interest) and common, expansive existence (Collective Self-Interest). (To bring out this alternance, we have italicized the "je" and "nous" pronouns and adjectives and separated the segments with double slash-marks.)

¹Ibid., p. 226.

Je me levais tous les matins avant le soleil. Je montais par un verger voisin dans un très joli chemin. ... Là tout en me promenant je faisais ma prière, qui ne consistait pas en un vain balbutiement de lèvres, mais dans une sincère élévation de coeur à l'auteur de cette aimable nature dont les beautés étaient sous mes yeux. ... Je revenais en me promenant, par un assez grand tour, occupé à considérer avec intérêt et volupté les objets champêtres dont j'étais environné, les seuls dont l'oeil et le coeur ne se lassent jamais. Je regardais de loin s'il était jour chez Maman; quand je voyais son contrevent ouvert, je tressaillais de joie et j'accourais. S'il était fermé j'entrais au jardin en attendant qu'elle fut éveillée, m'amusant à repasser ce que j'avais appris la veille ou à jardiner. Le contrevent s'ouvrait; j'allais l'embrasser dans son lit souvent encore à moitié endormie, et cet embrassement aussi pur que tendre tirait de son innocence même un charme qui n'est jamais joint à la volupté des sens. //

Nous déjeunions ordinairement avec du café au lait. C'était le temps de la journée où nous étions le plus tranquilles, où nous causions le plus à notre aise. ... Après une heure ou deux de causerie, // j'allais à mes livres jusqu'au dîner. ...

Avant midi je quittais mes livres, et si le dîner n'était pas prêt, j'allais faire visite à mes amis les pigeons ou travailler au jardin en attendant l'heure. Quand je m'entendais appeler j'accourais fort content, et muni d'un grand appétit. ... // Nous dînions très agréablement, en causant de nos affaires en attendant que Maman pût manger. Deux ou trois fois la semaine quand il faisait beau, nous allions derrière la maison prendre le café dans un cabinet frais et touffu que j'avais garni de houblon, et qui nous faisait grand plaisir durant la chaleur; nous passions là une petite heure à visiter nos légumes, nos fleurs, à des entretiens relatifs à notre manière de vivre et qui nous en faisaient mieux goûter la douceur. // J'avais une autre petite famille au bout du jardin: c'étaient des abeilles. Je ne manquais guère, et souvent Maman avec moi d'aller leur rendre visite ...

Je retournais à mes livres: mais mes occupations de l'après-midi devaient moins porter le nom de travail et d'étude que de créations et d'amusement.¹

The sensual variety inherent in Jean-Jacques' happiness and the delight of mutual enjoyment are part of the description: "Des dîners faits sur l'herbe à Montagnole, des soupers sous le berceau, la récolte des fruits, les vendanges, les veillées à teiller avec nos gens, tout cela faisait

¹Ibid., pp. 236-40.

pour nous autant de fêtes auxquelles Maman prenait le même plaisir que moi."¹
 Heart-communication (the only charm of their lovemaking) appears in the Charmettes happiness during solitary walks with Mama. Rousseau describes a charming day-long hike they made together during which he was struck by the fact that, for once in his life, his dream of happiness had come true.

A final touching passage reveals Jean-Jacques earnestly attempting to persuade Mama to love the flowered cage into which he had enticed her: "Une chose contribuait à ... rendre [mes jours] plus agréables; c'était le soin de nourrir son goût pour la campagne par tous les amusements que j'y pouvais rassembler. En lui faisant aimer son jardin, sa basse-cour, ses pigeons, ses vaches, je m'affectionnais moi-même à tout cela ... "²

Significantly, it was during the Charmettes idyll that Rousseau's hypochondria began. The nervous breakdown had brought him into this new phase of his existence which had begun with Claude Anet's death and Rousseau's consequent entry into adulthood. His introduction to extra-domestic society had, we have remarked, come so late as to coincide with his introduction to sexuality, both of which critical moments had been traumatic in his life. Now he became prematurely acquainted with the concrete inevitability of his eventual death. He had never fully recovered from his nervous disorders, to which had been added various digestive complaints. One day, with no warning, they flared up again with renewed vigor. A "sudden revolution" took place in his body. "Mes artères se mirent à

¹Ibid., p. 244. Cf. the role of the harvest festival in the New Héloïse.

²Ibid., p. 231.

battre d'une si grande force que non seulement je sentais leur battement, mais que je l'entendais même ... Un grand bruit d'oreilles se joignit à cela ... "¹ Not surprisingly, Rousseau panicked, convinced again that he was dying. After waiting for several weeks and seeing nothing new happening, he resumed his normal life-style, but the whiätling and throbbing sounds, he said, remained and he thenceforth suffered from insomnia.

Thereafter, Rousseau considered himself an invalid, showing a morbid concern for his health and, by the same token, a new, vital interest in religion. So far, he had been a practicing but tepid Calvinist, then a practicing but tepid Catholic. Now, with each day seen as perhaps his last, the concept of salvation took on its first real immediacy. (We have seen enough of his guilt-complex to understand this.) Here, Mama came in with her second great influence on Rousseau. Her serene belief (the result of childhood connections with Swiss Pietist François Magny) in a loving, fatherly God who would not forget the least of his children (both the Catholic and the Calvinist churches, on the contrary, preached the doctrine of Original Sin); her view of Christ as an example to teach men to love God and each other; her spontaneous generosity and simplicity of heart, in perfect conformity with Christian morality, not only shaped Rousseau's own religious convictions but steadied him in a moment of great crisis. This, too, affected their relationship:

Trouvant en elle toutes les maximes dont j'avais besoin pour garantir mon âme des terreurs de la mort et de ses suites, je puisais avec sécurité dans cette source de confiance. Je m'attachais à elle plus que je n'avais jamais fait; j'aurais voulu transporter tout en elle ma vie que je sentais prête à m'abandonner. De ce redoublement d'attachement pour elle, de la persuasion qu'il me restait peu de temps

¹Ibid., p. 227.

à vivre, de ma profonde sécurité sur mon sort à venir, résultait un état habituel très calme, et sensuel même, en ce qu'amortissant toutes les passions qui portent au loin nos craintes et nos espérances il me laissait jouir sans inquiétude et sans trouble du peu de jours qui m'étaient laissés.¹

Upon his return to Chambéry in the fall, Rousseau played the role of "shut-in" for a while but little by little opened himself up to society and began seeing people, especially Conzié, his "hero" of the period. At Conzié's example, Rousseau added to the library he was forming (more expenses for Mama). Hypochondria had not interrupted his ambitious study schedule but had actually contributed to it. He "devoured" Jansenist and Oratorian writings, but, he said, their porte étroite pessimism "overwhelmed" him, causing him moments of acute anxiety caused by a "terror of Hell."² Mama's and his Jesuit confessor, "good and wise old man," reassured him, as did a compulsive act -- the tossing of a stone against a tree trunk, "with a trembling hand and horrible beating of the heart" -- after which, he assures us not quite convincingly, he never doubted his salvation. (We again point out Rousseau's utter dependency on belief in a loving, fatherly God to maintain his psychological equilibrium in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.)

In imitation of his personal physician, a man he greatly liked and admired ("honnête homme, homme d'esprit, grand Cartésien, qui parlait assez bien du système du monde, et dont les entretiens agréables et instructifs

¹Ibid., p. 231.

²The following Charmettes prayer reveals to what extent the feeling of guilt pervaded Rousseau's self-image: "O mon Dieu, pardonnez tous les péchés que j'ai commis jusqu'à ce jour, tous les égarements où je suis tombé; daignez avoir pitié de mes faiblesses, daignez détruire en moi tous les vices où elles m'ont entraîné. Ma conscience me dit combien je suis coupable, je sens que tous les plaisirs que mes passions m'avaient représenté dans l'abandon de la sagesse, sont devenus pour moi pires que l'illusion, et qu'ils se sont changés en d'odieuses amertumes; je sens qu'il n'y

me valurent mieux que toutes ses ordonnances"¹), Rousseau studied medicine and science in addition to his other interests. The former proved too upsetting to the young man, who predictably believed himself suffering from every disease he studied. His nervous depression continued: he was pale and thin, heard sounds in his ears, had heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness and melancholia: "les pleurs que je versais souvent sans raison de pleurer, les frayeurs vives au bruit d'une feuille ou d'un oiseau; l'inégalité d'humeur dans le calme de la plus douce vie."² Diagnosing his condition as a "polyp on the heart," he departed for Montpellier to consult a specialist. He would spend the fall and winter of 1737-8 in this medical center of France.

Meanwhile, Mama had fluttered out of the cage. She, like everyone else (including the doctors he consulted) considered Rousseau's illness as imaginary. It had served him as pretext to avoid the role of paterfamilias and had permitted him to evade his duties as breadwinner and domestic administrator and, we strongly suspect, as lover too. It had restored him to a "pre-schooler" childhood, a world of toys and games (or so his travels and studies appeared) and, had Mama's character been weak, might well have imprisoned her in his eternally-devoted service.

This was decidedly not in keeping with Françoise de Warens' character. In her limitless generosity and good nature, she spared Rousseau any un-

a de vrais plaisirs que ceux qu'on goûte dans l'exercice de la vertu et dans la pratique de ses devoirs. Je suis pénétré de regret d'avoir fait un si mauvais usage d'une vie et d'une liberté que vous ne m'aviez accordées que pour me donner les moyens de me rendre digne de l'éternelle félicité." O.C. IV, p. 1037.

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 231.

²Ibid., p. 247.

pleasant scolding or nagging; a woman of action, not of reproach and resentment, she acted positively and simply found herself a new man: twenty-one-year-old Jean-Samuel-Rodolphe Wintzenried, also from the Swiss Vaud country, who, like Rousseau, had run away from a middle-class home during his teens, converted to Catholicism and was now trying to make his way. Quite the opposite of our hero, Wintzenried was a tall, blond Aryan Superman, without any remarkable intelligence, sensitivity, education or tact, but utterly exuding masculinity: a vain and arrogant stud. Mama seems to have spent the summer of 1737 in Wintzenried's company while Rousseau was studying alone at the Charmettes retreat. (Thereafter, Charmettes was Rousseau's solitary "study," just as the little cabin had been during the Claude Anet époque. Now Mama remained in town with her newer and younger protégé.) By September, Wintzenried had become a full-fledged member of the "family." At that time, Mama, whose interest in the Charmettes countryside had been colored by her own enterprising personality, rented a farm for her new protégé.

At first the self-centered Rousseau seems to have been Wintzenried as just another of the "intruders" and "charlatans" over whose presence he habitually grumbled and pouted. However, returning from a trip and finding Wintzenried living at Mama's, he realized, with the traumatic suddenness of the Bossey "illumination," that his position as Mama's "idol" had been usurped. Rousseau places this discovery at the end of his Montpellier trip; it appears more likely, however, that it came even earlier, perhaps following Rousseau's July, 1737, visit to Geneva to claim his small maternal inheritance. (According to Leigh, "il semble à peu près certain que Wintzenried fut installé chez Mme. de Warens dès avant le départ pour

Montpellier ... "1)

Rousseau describes the tragic illumination in another "homecoming" setting -- a favorite friendship experience with him because of its absolute character and an habitual symbol in his works of the characteristics at a given time of a given relationship.

He prepares the scene with some contrast-pieces. A virtuous deed, followed by good intentions for future moral conduct immediately precede the passage (although those he cites may, in fact, have taken place some months later, speculation irrelevant, at any rate, to the technical construction of this passage). Impatience to arrive having put Rousseau a half-day ahead of schedule, he killed time in order to arrive at the hour planned and receive the full effect of his envisaged welcome.

Je voulais goûter dans tout son charme le plaisir de la revoir. J'aimais mieux le différer un peu pour y joindre celui d'être attendu. Cette précaution m'avait toujours réussi. J'avais vu toujours marquer mon arrivée par une espèce de petite fête: je n'en attendais pas moins cette fois, et ces empressements qui m'étaient si sensibles valaient bien la peine d'être ménagés.²

Then comes the actual arrival:

- 1) J'arrivai donc exactement à l'heure. De tout loin je regardais
- 2) si je ne la verrais point sur le chemin; le coeur me battait de plus
- 3) en plus à mesure que j'approchais. J'arrive essoufflé, car j'avais
- 4) quitté ma voiture en ville: // je ne vois personne dans la cour, sur
- 5) la porte, à la fenêtre; je commence à me troubler; je redoute quelque
- 6) accident. J'entre; tout est tranquille; des ouvriers goûtaient dans
- 7) la cuisine; du reste aucun apprêt. La servante parut surprise de me
- 8) voir, elle ignorait que je dusse arriver. // Je monte, je la vois en-
- 9) fin, cette chère Maman si tendrement, si vivement, si purement aimée;
- 10) j'accours je m'élançai à ses pieds. // Ah! te voilà, petit! me dit-elle
- 11) en m'embrassant: as-tu fait bon voyage? comment te portes-tu? Cet
- 12) accueil m'interdit un peu. Je lui demandai si elle n'avait pas reçu
- 13) ma lettre? Elle me dit qu'oui. J'aurais cru que non, lui dis-je; et
- 14) l'éclaircissement finit là. // Un jeune homme était avec elle. Je le
- 15) connaissais pour l'avoir vu déjà dans la maison avant mon départ:

¹C.C. I, No. 15, note "h," p. 47.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 261. (Italics mine.)

16) mais cette fois il y paraissait établi, il l'était. Bref je trouvais
17) ma place prise.¹

The artistic mastery of this passage is impressive. The description is skillfully calculated to bring out the fact that a change has taken place in Mama, while Jean-Jacques has remained the same.² The repetition of the word "toujours" in the preparatory passage provides a standard of the True-Mama by which this Changed-Mama is to be judged. On the other hand, the preparatory passage and first three lines of the homecoming passage establish the fact that Jean-Jacques is still himself: naïve, confident and loving. The repetition of the word "je" stresses the subjective level of this part of the passage: Jean-Jacques' emotion.

Next (ll. 4-8) come some realistic details -- kitchen, workers, servant -- that vibrate on an objective plane, sharply contrasting with Jean-Jacques' subjective level of existence in this passage. This shows that something is wrong; before Jean-Jacques' first fatal meeting with Mme. de Warens, her household images had indeed appeared on this cold, objective plane, but once the "sympathie des âmes" had taken place, affection had transformed Mama's environment into "vivants piliers." Now, these objects were again dead, closed to him. (In Stambinski's terms, the "veil of opacity" has fallen.)

Again similarly to his first meeting with Mama, Rousseau proceeds from a description of Mama's environment to a description of Mama herself. This time, the transition is made by means of a highly nervous, nearly hysterical sentence (ll. 8-10) in style passionné, symbolizing Jean-Jacques' love:

¹ Ibid., p. 261. (Italics and separations mine.)

² Cf. "pourvu que ce fut toujours elle," p. 167, note 2, herein.

tender, pure and strong, for Mama and his great anxiety and impatience at this moment. The repeated words "je" and "si" stand as "heartbeats" (we have italicized them in the passage); the absence of the last comma is a kind of skipped heartbeat symbolizing Jean-Jacques' eagerness to arrive at an explanation.

Next, Jean-Jacques' and Mama's glances meet. In contrast to the first meeting when the sun had come out from behind the clouds at the sight of a Mama vibrating on Jean-Jacques' own subjective plane, this Mama is inscrutable, "opaque," and on the same "opaque" objective plane as her household objects. She is no longer in direct communication with Jean-Jacques, and as long as this is the case, their friendship is dead. Mama's short, meaningless, cliché-type utterances (ll. 10-11 and 13, italicized) symbolize her change. (The lack of explanation is particularly symbolic of Mama's new opacity.) Her good cheer, kiss and civility suggest that she herself is unaware of the change that has taken place, as indeed are all the human beings in the passage with the exception of Jean-Jacques himself. We are conscious of the presence of no evil here: "change" is the keyword. Vulgar appearances accuse Jean-Jacques of being the off-key element in the picture, but the reader, aware of the two levels of existence, knows the truth to reside outside appearances.

Little by little as the passage has unfolded, the reader has gone through the experience with Jean-Jacques: from excitement and impatience to perplexity to worry and impatience to, again, perplexity. Now, in the final three sentences (ll. 14-17), with Jean-Jacques and at Jean-Jacques pace (first slow, then with lightning-swiftness), the reader puts one and one together and comes up with Mama and Wintzenried.

Rousseau could well have stopped here and still made his point; however,

he chooses to stress the traumatic effect on him of this illumination, comparable to his discovery of injustice at Bossey:

Quel prompt et plein bouleversement dans tout mon être! Qu'on se mette à ma place pour en juger. En un moment je vis évanouir pour jamais tout l'avenir de félicité que je m'étais peint. Toutes les douces idées que je caressais si affectueusement disparurent; et moi qui depuis mon enfance ne savais voir mon existence qu'avec la sienne, je me vis seul pour la première fois. Ce moment fut affreux: ceux qui le suivirent furent toujours sombres. J'étais jeune encore: mais ce doux sentiment de jouissance et d'espérance qui vivifie la jeunesse me quitta pour jamais. Dès lors l'être sensible fut mort à demi. Je ne vis plus devant moi que les tristes restes d'une vie insipide, et si quelquefois encore une image de bonheur effleura mes désirs, ce bonheur n'était plus celui qui m'était propre, je sentais qu'en l'obtenant je ne serais pas vraiment heureux.¹

Not only had this experience caused him a terrifying feeling of solitude and chaotic disorientation, necessitating the reconstruction and redefinition of himself and his entire universe, but, from that moment on, if he did not stop hoping for the ideal, he at least suspected that the kind of friendship he craved was not of this world, in which Time conquers all.

With the summer, 1737, arrival of Wintzenried, Rousseau seems to have begun what was to become his characteristic conduct during the remainder of his residence with Mama. When his mood was bad, malignantly sarcastic reproaches of neglect (epistolary, sentimental and financial neglect) and grumbling complaints of all sorts (his health, his financial situation, the way people were treating him, the weather...), suggesting a conviction that Mama was selfishly enjoying frivolous fun while he was suffering. When in a good mood, he exhibited rather forced humor and cajolery, heavily-obvious reminders of the obligations of her maternal relationship to him, some coquettish pouting over her indifference to him and out-and-out humiliating urging that she visit him at Charmettes. Always, the most

¹Ibid., p. 263.

galant best wishes to "Zizi" (Wintzenried's highly appropriate nickname) accompanied Rousseau's letters. Mama's conduct with her ill-tempered protégé was remarkably measured, but intransigent. Without venom or reproach, she would remind him that he had indeed neglected his family duties for his own menus plaisirs: he must simply understand that she had taken someone to fulfill these duties but, beyond this, she was perfectly willing to continue living with him as before. Here, her generosity is truly extraordinary in that this last provision included, much more important than its sexual privileges, the "keeping" of a protégé who, with his travel, clothing and medical expenses, his Charmettes country cottage and the considerable library he was amassing for himself at Chambéry, was a liability far from negligible. Nonetheless, from this period on, Mme. de Warens was rather cold to Rousseau and kept pushing him out of the nest, we may assume for his own good, although Rousseau (probably feeling guilty about having rejected her) believed it was because he had refused to resume the privilege of serving her as her lover.

With Mama's act of female liberation, Rousseau was again along on his subjective level of existence. "Réduit à me chercher un sort indépendant d'elle, et n'en pouvant même imaginer," he said, "je passai bientôt à l'autre extrémité et le cherchai tout en elle."¹ A trial separation seems, however, to have taken place during the trip to Montpellier, city of medicine but also, reputedly, of beauty and charm. He began by seeking evasion. In the stagecoach he passed himself off as an Englishman named "Dudding," and enjoyed a happy en route romance -- the only lovemaking he was ever to enjoy per se -- with a red-blooded middle-aged mother of ten named Mme. de Larnage, who immortalized herself by seducing Rousseau so

¹Ibid., p. 264.

quickly and aggressively that his complexes did not have time to render him impotent. Parting, they made plans to meet again at her Provence home, where "Mr. Dudding" was to spend the winter. Alone once more, Rousseau did some sightseeing (the Pont-du-Gard, the arena at Nîmes, the most famous restaurant in Europe...) Since his symptoms were more frightening than painful, he added, on the road he had forgotten that he was sick.

In Montpellier, he stayed at a boarding house filled with medical students, whose merry boisterousness recalled his apprenticeship days and distracted him from his personal problems. Mornings he would take medicine, drink various exotic waters, and write letters. At noon, he would walk to the town square with one of the students before returning to lunch with the good-natured group. Afternoons, he would accompany the adolescents to watch their land-polo games. Running along on the sidelines to follow the play on which he had wagered a small sum, he enjoyed "a pleasant and healthful exercise that altogether agreed with [him]."¹ Then the players and fans were off to a cabaret. Said Rousseau, "Ils étaient plus bruyants que crapuleux, et plus gais que libertins, et je me monte si aisément à un train de vie quand il est volontaire que je n'aurais pas mieux demandé que de voir durer celui-là toujours"² -- a surprising assertion coming from a man who had just declared happiness as forever beyond his reach, but Rousseau was a man of constant metamorphoses, a fact which cannot be overstressed.

Montpellier was a cosmopolitan city, one of the thirty-four in France

¹Ibid., p. 258.

²Ibid., p. 258.

to boast an Academy. Rousseau was able to frequent the theatre and the opera. He began a course in anatomy (but had to give it up because his stomach could not take the cadavers). He tried (unsuccessfully, as it turned out) to make useful connections among the Montpellier nobility and honnête société. Finally, he became bored. Mama was ignoring him. Until he heard from her, he was extremely anxious about his expenses, since he depended on her for subsistence. When she did finally write, it was to ask him to stay away six months longer than planned and to suggest he apply for a position as secretary to the local social lion, the Count de Lautrec.

Meanwhile, Rousseau was deliberating the question of his future. He experienced great difficulty in taking a decision concerning the visit with Mme. de Larnage in Provence, which would necessarily have profoundly affected his relationship with Mama. He continued writing to Mme. de Larnage and attempted to learn a few words of English from some Irish students at the boarding house so he could carry off the role of "Dudding," but, as the time approached, he trembled at the thought of taking the commitment, his imagination showing him various disasters (becoming bored with his hostess, falling in love with Mme. de Larnage's daughter, becoming exposed as a false Englishman...). He tried turning the decision over to Mme. de Warens in a bit of sentimental blackmail,¹ but she failed to

¹"J'ai oublié de finir, en parlant de Montpellier, et de vous dire que j'ai résolu d'en partir vers la fin de Décembre, et d'aller prendre le lait d'ânesse en Provence, dans un petit endroit fort joli, à deux lieues du St. Esprit. C'est un air excellent, il y aura bonne compagnie, avec laquelle j'ai déjà fait connaissance en chemin, et j'espère de n'y être pas tout à fait si chèrement qu'à Montpellier. Je demande votre avis là-dessus: il faut encore ajouter que c'est faire d'une pierre deux coups; car je me rapproche de deux journées." C.C. I, No. 18, Rousseau to Mme. de Warens (October 23, 1737), p. 57.

take the bait. Forced to make the decision himself, he not surprisingly selected the passive option and returned to Mama's in Chambéry. Interestingly enough, he thereafter viewed this as an act of "virtue" or self-mastery, conclusive enough indication that a part of him did long for a resumption of the pleasures Mme. de Larnage had procured for him and whatever adventure awaited him in her sun-drenched Southern castle.

The decision to remain at Mme. de Warens' was not as simple as it appeared. Guilt and humiliation were an integral part of it. If Mme. de Warens was no longer Rousseau's "Mama," she was then merely a protector and no more, offering him a "charity" he abhorred and knew she could not afford. Yet he could not bear to leave her. Rousseau thus humiliated himself and took on an added burden of guilt in procuring himself the conditions necessary to develop a genius in which no one but himself believed, and in which even he, at this point, could not be sure. We believe this is the significance of the following rather mysterious passage of a letter he wrote to Mme. de Warens near the end of his Montpellier trip:

Vous devez avoir déjà reçu ma réponse par rapport à M. de Lautrec [regarding the secretarial position Mme. de Warens had urged him to seek]. Oh ma chère Maman, j'aime mieux être auprès de D et être employé aux plus rudes travaux de la terre que de posséder la plus grande fortune dans tout autre cas. Il est inutile de penser que je puisse vivre autrement, il y a longtemps que je vous l'ai dit et je le sens encore plus ardemment que jamais. Pourvu que j'aie cet avantage, dans quelque état que je soi[s] tout m'est indifférent. Quand on pense comme [cela] je crois qu'il n'est pas difficile d'éluder les raiso[ns] importantes que vous ne voulez pas me dire. Au nom de Dieu rangez les choses de sorte que je ne meure pas au désespoir. J'approuve tout, je me sou mets à tout, excepté ce seul article, auquel je me sens hors d'état de consentir, dussai-je être la proie du plus misérable sort. Ah, ma chère Maman, n'êtes-vous donc plus ma chère Maman? Ai-je vécu quelques mois de trop?

Vous savez qu'il y a un cas où j'accepterais la chose dans toute la joie de mon coeur. Mais ce cas est unique. Vous m'entendez.¹

¹C.C. I, No. 20 (December 4, 1737), p. 64. "D" may stand for Wintzenried de Courtilles, as the young man called himself, or for Dumoulin, Mme. de Warens' farm foreman.

During the last years at Mme. de Warens', about which we lack much detail, Rousseau completed his basic education and cultivated his literary and composing skills. It was a tremendous enterprise that took a great deal of stamina and discipline, the first great effort he had ever carried through successfully. He maintained relations with a number of cultured friends, especially Conzié, with whom he could discuss intellectual pursuits. Hendel stresses the moral character of a large part of Rousseau's reading, opinion corroborated by many of the reflections found in the correspondence and writings of this period. Preoccupied with his own moral crisis, Rousseau, according to the author of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Moralist, came to see philosophy or morally-oriented study (a disinterested "love of truth") as a means of redemption. The metamorphosis was taking place, and Rousseau was beginning to isolate many of his future themes, although, for the time being, they were scattered and disparate intuitions and tendencies.

On the eve of Rousseau's entry into the highest of mundane society, it is fitting to discuss his character and view of human relations. In so doing, we must once again stress Rousseau's extraordinary changeability of mood. Thus, in the Confessions, Rousseau describes the remainder of his time at Mama's with a Prevostian pessimism indicating a continuation of his melancholia.¹ On the other hand, the following letter, undoubtedly a

¹"Insensiblement je me sentis isolé et seul dans cette même maison dont auparavant j'étais l'âme et où je vivais pour ainsi dire à double. Je m'accoutumai peu à peu à me séparer de tout ce qui s'y faisait, de ceux même qui l'habitaient, et pour m'épargner de continuels déchirements je m'enfermais avec mes livres, ou bien j'allais soupîrer et pleurer à mon aise au milieu des bois." Confessions, O.C. I, p. 266.

literary attempt influenced by his studies, believed to date from the summer of 1738, completes the above passage and shows Rousseau confiding in the sage young man he wished himself to be -- an Horatian profession of faith regarding human relations and his own envisaged role in them:

"Vous voilà donc, Monsieur, déserteur du monde et de ses plaisirs, c'est à votre âge et dans votre situation une métamorphose bien étonnante, quand un homme de 22 ans, galant, aimable, poli, spirituel comme vous l'êtes, et d'ailleurs point rebuté de la fortune se détermine à la retraite par simple goût et sans y être excité par quelque mauvais succès dans ses affaires ou dans ses plaisirs. On peut s'assurer qu'un fruit si précieux du bon sens et de la réflexion n'amè[ne]ra point après lui de dégoût ni de repentir. Fondé sur cette assurance, j'ose vous faire à l'égard [de] votre retraite un compliment qui ne vous sera pas répété par bien des gens; je vous en félicite: sans vouloir trop relever ce qu'il y a de grand et peut-être d'héroïque dans votre résolution, je vous dirai franchement: que j'ai souvent regretté qu'un esprit aussi juste et une âme aussi belle que la vôtre, ne fussent faits que pour la galanterie, les cartes, et le vin de champagne; vous étiez né, mon très cher Monsieur, pour une meilleure occupation. Le goût un peu passionné mais délicat qui vous entraîne vers les plaisirs vous a bientôt fait démêler la fadeur des plus brillants, vous éprouverez avec étonnement que les plus modestes n'en ont ni moins d'attraits ni moins de vivacité. Vous connaissez désormais les hommes, vous n'avez plus besoin de les tant voir pour apprendre à les mépriser. Il sera bon maintenant que vous vous consultiez un peu pour savoir à votre tour quelle opinion vous devez avoir de vous-même. Ainsi, en même temps que vous essaieriez d'un autre genre de vie, vous ferez en même temps sur

votre intérieur un petit examen dont le fruit ne sera pas inutile à votre tranquillité.

"Je ne voudrais pas, Monsieur, que vous donnassiez dans l'excès sans ménagement, vous n'avez pas sans doute absolument renoncé à la société, ni au commerce des hommes; comme vous vous êtes déterminé de pur choix et sans qu'aucun fâcheux revers vous y ait contraint, vous n'aurez garde d'épouser les fureurs atrabilaires des misanthropes ennemis mortels du genre humain, permis à vous de le mépriser à la bonne heure, vous ne serez pas le seul; mais vous devez l'aimer toujours. Les hommes quoi qu'on dise sont nos frères, en dépit de nous et d'eux, frères fort durs à la vérité, mais nous n'en sommes pas moins obligés de remplir à leur égard tous les devoirs qui nous sont imposés. A cela près, il faut avouer qu'on ne peut se dispenser de porter la lanterne dans la quantité pour s'établir un commerce et des liaisons, et quand malheureusement la lanterne ne montre rien, c'est bien une nécessité de traiter avec soi-même, et de se prendre faute d'autre, pour ami et pour confident. Mais ce confident, et cet ami, il faut aussi un peu le connaître et savoir comment et jusqu'à quel point on peut se fier à lui, car souvent l'apparence nous trompe, même jusque sur nous-même. Or le tumulte des villes et le fracas du grand monde ne sont guère propres à cet examen, les distractions des objets extérieurs y sont trop longues et trop fréquentes. On ne peut y jouir d'un peu de solitude et de tranquillité. Sauvons-nous à la campagne, allons-y chercher un repos et un contentement que nous n'avons pu trouver au milieu des assemblées et des divertissements. Essayons de ce nouveau genre de vie, goûtons un peu de ces paisibles douceurs dont Horace, un fin connaisseur s'il en fut, faisait un si grand cas.

"Voilà monsieur comment je soupçonne que vous avez raisonné."¹

¹C.C. I, No. 23, Rousseau to (?)(summer, 1738), pp. 71-73.

Thus Rousseau was happy as well as sad about his solitary retreat at Charmettes: content to enjoy the intellectual pleasures of his "cher cabinet" and dream of a glorious future but sorry to enjoy them alone, particularly as the result of "injustice."

We must examine the "injustice" involved in Rousseau's fall from grace at Mme. de Warens'. Jean Wintzenried was not the cause but merely the symbol of the barrier between Little One and Mama. Rousseau's aversion for the young man came neither from feelings of jealousy, intellectual superiority nor physical inferiority per se. Indeed, with a bit of diplomacy on the newcomer's part, Rousseau would have easily accepted Wintzenried as a friend. The energetic newcomer did fulfill a role in the household which Rousseau had rejected, although, spendthrift like Mama, he did fail to relieve Rousseau of the tormenting sense of financial responsibility. However, according to the notion of hierarchy built into Rousseau's world-view since his Genevan childhood, Wintzenried, as the newer and younger man, should have paid Rousseau the courtesy of acknowledging the latter's seniority and merit, which in Rousseau's case was intellectual. Wintzenried should have looked to Rousseau as a respected older brother and mentor. Rousseau would then have been able to accept Wintzenried's physical superiority and quality as "favorite" without impairment to his honor. Rousseau generously tried to assume the mentor role, but to no avail. Not only was the younger man insensitive to his feelings but, like many well-meaning persons of mediocre intelligence and undeveloped sensitivity, Wintzenried was serenely arrogant -- and the spectacle of arrogance always swept Rousseau into a blind rage, since he identified arrogance with everything he loathed: ill-intentions, violence, injustice, tyranny, persecution, ridicule, barbarism, cruelty, hostility...

Wintzenried unwittingly did all he could to attack Rousseau's sense of personal worth, which was, as we have seen, the only rationalization Rousseau possessed to placate his conscience for remaining on as Mme. de Warens' freeloading dependent. The blond he-man did this by flaunting his own strong point (his "useful" physical superiority) and discrediting Rousseau's "useless" intellectual superiority. Said Rousseau: "... [Il] ne voyait en moi qu'un pédant importun qui n'avait que du babil. Au contraire, il s'admirait lui-même comme un homme important dans la maison ..." ¹ Wintzenried's attitude further attacked Rousseau's sense of honor by distorting Mme. de Warens' image of him, causing Rousseau to cry out in indignation, some thirty years later: "... Tant fit l'illustre personnage qu'il fut tout dans la maison et moi rien" ² -- forgetting that he, Rousseau, had agreed to these or any conditions in exchange for permission to remain.

The "injustice" in Wintzenried's glory and Rousseau's humiliation lay in Rousseau's perception that, for all the younger man's physical action (symbolized by the sexual images of noise-making and tool-working, especially wood-chopping), the newcomer was more of a liability to Mama than was he himself, since Wintzenried was unfaithful as a lover and much more costly than Rousseau to "keep" (Mme. de Warens had invested a considerable amount of money in her unsuccessful farming project with the young man). (Rousseau failed to take into consideration the fact that the energetic Wintzenried was compatible with his compulsively-active benefactress in a way in which he himself had failed her.) Furthermore, Rousseau's own merit was recognized by neither Mme. de Warens nor anyone else. The young intellectual was obliged, literally and figuratively, to sit and admire Wintzenried as

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 265.

²Ibid., p. 265. Thus Rousseau's extreme sensitivity to the noble-sounding name "de Courtilles" eventually affected by Wintzenried in imitation of his father.

the splendid barbarian chopped wood. Thus Rousseau's "Romantic" image continued to develop: the misunderstood outsider persecuted because of his very superiority and unwillingness to compromise in his moral principles. This is indeed precisely the way he saw his position at Mme. de Warens': right or wrong, Rousseau considered the severing of his sexual relationship with Mama an act of virtue; yet, paradoxically, he saw his voluntary abstinence ("one of the things that women do not forgive") as the very cause of her coldness toward him.

Turning to contemporary documents, we find some interesting parallels in Rousseau's image as persecuted "outsider" and misanthropist. During the Montpellier trip, for example, he wrote to Mme. de Warens, "Pourquoi, Madame, y a-t-il des coeurs sensibles au grand, au sublime, au pathétique, pendant que d'autres ne semblent faits que pour ramper dans la bassesse de leurs sentiments? La fortune semble faire à tout cela une espèce de compensation; à force d'élever ceux-ci, elle cherche à les mettre de niveau avec la grandeur des autres: y réussit-elle ou non? Le public et vous, Madame," he asserted, putting words into her mouth, "ne serez pas de même avis."¹

This was not merely a question of emotional laissez-aller or of the influence of the century's taste for the pathetic; Rousseau's tightly-strung nervous system had a great deal to do with it too. During the inheritance trip to Geneva, forced to remain incognito because of his change of religion, Rousseau had suddenly panicked when not receiving word from the friend who was assisting him in this legal matter, convinced the man was out to fleece him. Again in Montpellier, not having received word from Chambéry, he had similarly panicked.

¹C.C. I, No. 16 (September 13, 1737), p. 49.

Other factors brought feelings of persecution: fear of ridicule (i.e. dishonor) for example. Again during the Montpellier trip, until the time Mme. de Larnage had made her amorous intentions clear, her coquetry and the pointed remarks of an elderly gentleman sharing the stagecoach persuaded Rousseau that the two had banded together to make fun of him.

Rousseau's Charmettes prayer is revealing with respect to this aspect of his character, its promises constituting an inventory of the things he felt he was doing wrong. Among attempts to free himself from a too-close attachment to worldly pleasures, to live in purity, do his duty and love and serve his fellow-man, Rousseau promised: "... surtout je réprimerai ma colère et mon impatience, je tâcherai de me rendre doux à l'égard de tout le monde, je ne dirai du mal à personne, je ne me permettrai ni jugements téméraires, ni mauvaises conjectures sur la conduite du prochain; ... Je pardonnerai toujours du fond de mon coeur à tous ceux qui pourraient m'offenser comme je pardonne dès à présent sans réserve à tous ceux qui peuvent m'avoir fait quelque offense, je vous prie, o mon Dieu, de leur pardonner de même et de leur accorder vôtre grâce. J'éviterai avec soin de jamais offenser personne, et si j'avais ce malheur je ne rougirai point de leur faire les réparations les plus satisfaisantes."¹

The persecution arousing Rousseau's anger was not entirely imaginary. During the last Charmettes years, Rousseau had his first taste of systematic hostility. We have already seen how greatly the responsibility for Mme. de Warens' financial affairs affected him and how it had been a major cause of his nervous breakdown. Now, as a "gentlewoman farmer," his benefactress was particularly vulnerable through her scattered possessions. Her farm debts and continual extravagant purchases deeply upset Rousseau. Studying

¹O.C. IV, p. 1038.

in the Charmettes farmhouse, while Mama was living in town with Wintzenried, the young man still felt responsible, threatened and, frankly, scared.

"... Je n'envisageais que ruine et désastres, et le moment m'en semblait si proche que j'en sentais d'avance toutes les horreurs,"¹ he confesses.

In 1739, for example, money problems were serious. Jean-Jacques did what he could to solve them, writing letters here and there to potential protectors. He tried to sell a stagecoach plan to the king of Savoy in exchange for a pension and attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain his missing and presumedly dead brother's share of the maternal inheritance. He did everything short of sacrificing the development of his genius to Mama's (anyway hopeless) financial situation; this he could not do and for good reason, but, at the time, only he, as we have seen, believed in Jean-Jacques Rousseau -- and even he could not be sure. Choosing long-term destiny over short-term duty was a gamble at best. Rousseau had taken the decision his genius forced on him but all-too-obvious financial problems brought it constantly to his attention, underscoring the "guilt" inherent in his position at Mama's. He was extremely nervous and on the defensive. This touchiness and sense of danger may well explain why, twice in 1739, Rousseau and Wintzenried signed formal complaints against servants caught at petty thievery.

Rousseau's 1739 poem, Le Verger de Mme. de Warens,² published in Chambéry or in Lyons (Rousseau's first publication, by the way), reveals even more serious threats to the "family" well-being. (The violent portion of this poem, or most of what is herein cited, was not included in the 1739

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 271.

²O.C. II, p. 1124 et seq.

published text.) This poem, which we will examine in detail, represents a public reply to an apparently-wealthy local personality or personalities attacking Mme. de Warens' primary source of income, her royal pension, on the moral ground that she was using it to "keep" an idle, seemingly-worthless young man.¹ In this poem, after singing the beauty and happiness of his studious retreat, Rousseau thanks his benefactress for having, alone (note the reflection on Isaac Rousseau), procured such conditions for him, adding: "Vainement un coeur bas [variation: 'des coeurs bas'], des âmes mercenaires, / Par des avis cruels plutôt que salutaires, / Cent fois ont essayé de m'ôter vos bontés." He then accuses his accusers of materialism,² asserting his own noble scorn of earthly goods, his stoic ability to affront misery and his determination never, even in the direst necessity, to turn to these cruel persons for help. He continues, addressing himself to Mme. de Warens:

Laissez des envieux la troupe méprisable
 Attaquer des vertus dont l'éclat les accable:
 Bédaignez leurs complôts, leur haine, leur fureur,
 La paix n'en est pas moins au fond de votre coeur,
 Tandis que, vils jouets de leurs propres furies,
 Aliments des serpents dont elles sont nourries,
 Le crime et les remords portent au fond des leurs
 Le triste châtement de leurs noires horreurs.
 Semblables en leur rage à la guêpe maligne
 De travail incapable, et de secours indigne
 Qui ne vit que de vols et dont enfin le sort
 Est de faire du mal en se donnant la mort,
 Qu'ils exhalent en vain leur colère impuissante,
 Leurs menaces, pour vous n'ont rien qui m'épouvante;
 Ils voudraient d'un grand Roi vous ôter les bienfaits:
 Mais de plus nobles soins illustrent ses projets.

Rousseau diplomatically praises the king's grandeur and charitable virtue;

then:

¹It must be recalled that traffic was constant between Chambéry and the Vaud country, where Mme. de Warens' reputation was not enviable, and that Claude Anet's death and both Rousseau's and Wintzenried's presence in the household had surely been subjects of local small-town gossip. Mme. de Warens did not enjoy the reputation of a Julie.

²Cf. Rousseau's (?) letter to "Mon cher Couzin," p. 106 herein.

Et vous, sage WARENS, que ce Héros protège
 En vain la calomnie en secret vous assiège
 Craignez peu ses effets, bravez son vain courroux,
 La vertu vous défend, et c'est assez pour vous:

Rousseau continues, declaring himself no flatterer and that Mme. de Warens, being human, is not perfect (a left-handed compliment, certainly, pointing out Rousseau's continuing bitterness toward her persistence in maintaining relations with her parasitic "intruders"). To her, he remarks pointedly: "La haine quelquefois donne un avis utile: / Blâmez cette bonté trop douce et trop facile / Qui souvent à leurs yeux a causé vos malheurs." Next, he praises her virtue and accuses her attackers of hypocrisy. Now he affirms, as delicately as possible, the superior merit of her seemingly-valueless protégé, himself, pointing out his heavy program of studies, his illness and his love of virtue. The preface to the poem again justifies his failure to devote himself to gainful employment, on the grounds of illness: "On ne manquera pas de s'écrier. Un malade faire des vers! Un homme à deux doigts du tombeau! C'est précisément pour cela que j'ai fait des vers: si je me portais moins mal, je me croirais comptable de mes occupations au bien de la société; l'état où je suis ne me permet de travailler qu'à ma propre satisfaction[!!!]"¹

Rousseau's ambiguous, guilt-ridden, seemingly anti-social and purely egotistical monastic situation during the last years at Mme. de Warens' and the problematic nature of his "wager" on his genius do much to explain his later apparently-inexplicable susceptibility concerning Diderot's rather innocuous aphorism: "Only the wicked man is alone." Never, during Rousseau's entire period of obscurity, that is, nearly two-thirds of his life, could he affirm with assurance, "I am a worthy, honorable human being," but was, rather, forced to defend himself against the accusation of being

¹Cited by Guéhenno, Vol. I, p. 95.

socially superfluous, even pernicious. At first the accusation emanated from the paternal domain, articulated by Isaac Rousseau, with a host of concurring voices. The case for the prosecution had centered around young Rousseau's rejection of and rebellion against the social role chosen for him by those to whom he had obligations, rebellion symbolized by his expatriation and conversion, which latter actions were deemed manifestations of some monstrous ingratitude having its roots in a basic moral worthlessness. Young Rousseau had sensed at once the validity of the accusation on the level of appearances, contradicting his own profound conviction that this was not so and that it was society that had in some obscure way failed him; yet, he was without evidence on his behalf and was not invulnerable to doubt.

Now, the paternal accusation was being repeated with regard to Mme. de Warens. The dangers had become concrete (loss of freedom, financial disaster, separation from "family" and "home"), as had the defense (Rousseau's misfortunes, illness and impending death). So, too, the threats to Rousseau's honor and merit would progressively concretize into overt hostility towards him as he penetrated more and more deeply into the labyrinth of society.

From 1740 to 1742, Rousseau was in Lyons (absence to which the uncomfortable Chambéry situation contributed). Back at Charmettes at the beginning of 1742, Rousseau found himself faced with another threat: his first documented experience with persons who can be considered downright ill-intentioned. A dispute was ignited when a neighboring attorney-landowner's family was caught stealing produce from Mme. de Warens' fields and orchards

and firewood from her woods. Then the neighbor led a hunting party across her planted fields. Thereafter, a peasant was caught cutting firewood on Mama's property, and his axe was taken from him. The peasant went to the neighbor's to complain; the neighbor's wife took the peasant's side; and the Picrocholian War had erupted. Rousseau's nervous state at this point need only be imagined.

The neighbor began to harrass Mme. de Warens seriously, blocking common roads and the passage by which her animals were led to water, polluting her stream with his own wash-water. A deplorable situation, but typical small-town behavior, and which Mme. de Warens' "scandalous" conduct seems to have brought on herself. Rousseau's reaction, however, is significant. In a letter of complaint dated June 17, 1742,¹ which he addressed in his benefactress' name to a local authority, we find some interesting observations. First, the position as innocent victim: he describes the neighbor as the constant aggressor, Mme. de Warens as the weak ("accablée de maux et d'infirmités") victim. Second, the "interest" of the aggressor, who, he feels, wants to get rid of Mme. de Warens in order to rent the farmland himself. Third and most interesting is Rousseau's reaction to the experience of open hostility directed toward a person with whom he identified. When Mme. de Warens complained to the neighbor, he said, the man had replied mysteriously that he would "finish what he had started." Commented a terrified Rousseau, in a laconic way that prefigures his later paranoid reliance on "signs" and suspicions: " ... Je trouvai la sentence singulière ... "

Thus we find, in January 1742, Rousseau remarking to friend Conzié:

¹C.C. I, No. 46, Mme. de Warens to Claude de Menthon, Baron, de Lornay, pp. 151 et seq.

" ... Pourquoi n'êtes-vous pas comme les autres, et de quoi vous avisez-vous ici de vouloir être raisonnable? Chambéry est-il le pays de la raison, et quand il arrive à un homme qui pense d'y en rencontrer un autre, est-il possible de ne pas abuser d'un avantage si rare?"¹ The letter concludes by Rousseau's confiding that he had already several times had the occasion to repeat Ovid's "Barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor illis. / Et rident Stolidi verba latina Getae." Rousseau later wrote Conzié, "Ce n'est pas sans doute vous faire un grand éloge, que de vous avouer, Monsieur, que je n'ai trouvé que vous seul, à Chambéry, capable de rendre un service par pure générosité ... "²

Not only does this situation throw light on Rousseau's contemporary frame of mind and foreshadow future problems in human relations, but it also partially explains his decision to desert the battlefield and leave for Paris in pursuit of a fortune that served as the trip's justification -- since he obviously felt the trip needed justification. This hostility, and neither Mme. de Warens nor Wintzenried, appears to have been the catalyst that sent him on his way. In his Epistle to friend Parisot, of 1742, he wrote (referring to himself in the third person):

Que lui sert de chercher dans cette solitude
A fuir l'éclat du monde et son inquiétude
Si, jusqu'en ce désert à la paix destiné
Le sort lui donne encore, à lui nuire acharné
D'un affreux procureur le voisinage horrible
Nourri d'encre et de fiel, dont la griffe terrible
De ses tristes voisins est plus crainte cent fois
Que le housnard cruel du pauvre Bavaois.³

¹C.C. I, No. 43, pp. 138-9.

²C.C. I, No. 59, December 21, 1743, p. 194. Conzié later stated -- after, however, Rousseau's misanthropic legend had been formed -- "Comme je le voyais tous les jours et qu'il me parlait avec confiance, je ne pouvais douter de son goût décidé pour la solitude et je puis dire un mépris inné pour les hommes, un penchant déterminé à blâmer leurs défauts, leurs faibles; il nourrissait en lui une défiance constante en leur probité." C.C. I, Appendix A-17, p. 294.

³Epître à Parisot, O.C. II, p. 1143.

This situation also contributed to Rousseau's continually-articulated "little story," pathetic by necessity, pathetic by taste and now pathetic by circumstances. Thus we find such contemporary self-portraits as:

Né dans l'obscurité, j'ai fait dès mon enfance
Des caprices du sort la triste expérience
Et s'il est quelque bien qu'il ne m'ait point ôté
Même par ses faveurs il m'a persécuté.¹

and:

Déplacé par le sort, trahi par la tendresse,
Mes maux sont comptés par mes jours.
Imprudent quelquefois, persécuté toujours,
Souvent le châtement surpasse la faiblesse.²

tersely resumed in Rousseau's comment: "... De bien des malheurs ma raison est le fruit."³

Rousseau had always tacitly intended to measure his worth amongst the gods of Mount Olympus, but the step between dream and action, for him, always required some special exterior impetus to shake him out of his tendency to inaction. Whereas the Chambéry "persecution" seems to have served this purpose, it is possible that another force also contributed to Rousseau's decision to leave Mme. de Warens (to whom he was still unfailingly devoted). Although this may well represent nothing more concrete than a youthful literary attempt applied to a fantacized version of his current situation,⁴

¹Ibid., p. 1137. (Italics mine.)

²Pour Madame de Bleurieu, O.C. II, p. 1133. (Italics mine.)

³Epître à Parisot, O.C. II, pp. 1139.

⁴The suspicion that this was a pure fantasy-situation is based on the highly literary quality of Rousseau's letter and the difficulty of according this passion with the fact that, shortly after his arrival in Lyons, Rousseau was sighing for the wife of his employer (to whom this letter was obviously not addressed) and that he ended his short Lyons residency madly in love with a young Lyonnaise named Suzanne Serre. Although this letter is often attributed to Rousseau's passion for Mlle. Serre, it is hard to believe he would have taken a leave of absence from this "love affair" to fall in love

a letter addressed by Rousseau to an unknown young demoiselle-sans-mercy suggests that, perhaps during a 1739 visit to Lyons, Rousseau fell passionately in love, for neither the first nor the last time, and that a pretty Lyonnaise was at least partly responsible for Rousseau's change of orientation... or the desire to meet such a young lady was attracting him.

"L'ambition ni la fumée ne touchent point mon coeur," Rousseau's letter pompously declared in imitation of his moral studies, probably with sincerity if not with veracity; "j'avais résolu de passer le reste de mes jours en philosophe dans une retraite qui s'offrait à moi. Vous avez détruit ces beaux projets, j'ai senti qu'il m'était impossible de vivre éloigné de vous et pour me procurer les moyens de m'en rapprocher je tente un voyage que mon malheur ordinaire empêchera sans doute de réussir."¹ The "means" turned out to be employment as tutor to the children of Jean Bonnot de Mably, position which Rousseau held from May 1740 to May 1741.

Middle-aged Mably was a rich and important man, who enjoyed a reputation as intelligent and enlightened epicurean philosopher and honnête homme. This is one of the few periods of which we have a "naïve" contemporary account of Rousseau's youthful human relations. The young man entered the Mably house full of hope and enthusiasm not unlike that of the castle-dream of his childhood. The following letter to Mably expresses his sentiments quite vividly:

"Permettez-moi de vous témoigner le vif empressement que j'ai de répondre

with his employer's wife, later to return to the first love. On the contrary, as the following texts show, Rousseau was totally identifying with the family by whom he was employed during the early part of his sojourn in Lyons.

¹C.C. I, No. 32, p. 105.

à l'honneur que vous voulez bien me faire de m'appeler chez vous. Vous pouvez être assuré, Monsieur, que je serai attentif à remplir mes devoirs dont je connais toute l'importance, et qu'il ne tiendra pas à moi de les dédommager de la médiocrité de mes lumières et de mon savoir par un zèle et des soins qui dans le fond pourront leur être aussi avantageux que des talents plus recherchés; ... Le premier et le principal but de toute ma conduite sera toujours de vous agréer.

"Il est assez ordinaire à ceux qui entrent dans une maison d'y conserver des vues particulières d'affaires et d'intérêt qui font qu'ils s'y regardent toujours comme étrangers. Par rapport à moi, Monsieur, ce ne sera point cela. Je tâcherai de mériter que vous veuillez bien me tenir lieu de père, comme je me propose aussi de remplir à votre égard tous les devoirs de fils respectueux ...

"Détaché dès l'enfance de ma propre patrie, je ne tiens à rien sur la terre qu'à une bienfaitrice et une mère d'adoption. Ainsi, hors ce que je dois à ses vertus et à ses bienfaits, j'apporterai réunis dans votre maison tous les sentiments de zèle et d'attachement que la nature et l'amitié affaiblissent ordinairement dans les autres hommes en les partageant entre trop d'objets. Que s'il m'arrive de commettre quelque faute, je réponds d'avance qu'elles [sic] seront toujours dignes de pardon, parce qu'elles ne seront jamais volontaires, ce qui n'empêchera pas, Monsieur, que vous n'ayez la bonté de me les faire connaître afin que j'apprenne à les éviter. Ce sont là les dispositions avec lesquelles j'aurai l'honneur d'entrer chez vous et dans lesquelles je persévérerai constamment si vous daignez m'y agréer."¹

¹C.C. I, No. 36 (April, 1740), pp. 119-120.

How far this letter goes beyond mere formality! How completely the subjective Rousseau has, at this moment, broken with the past; how excessive are his hopes and ambitions! This is no mere "job" but a domestic universe, a "castle" he hopes to fill, not as a satisfactory employee but as Child of the Family. And how great is his fear of rejection! Rousseau's letter to Mme. de Warens upon entrance into the Mably household shows the further development of these childlike sentiments:

"Me voici enfin arrivé chez Monsieur de Mably. Je ne vous dirai point encore précisément quelle y sera ma situation, mais ce qu'il m'en paraît déjà n'a rien de rebutant. Monsieur de Mably est un très honnête homme à qui un grand usage du monde, de la cour, et des plaisirs ont appris à philosopher de bonne heure, et qui n'a pas été fâché de me trouver des sentiments assez concordants aux siens. Jusqu'ici je n'ai qu'à me louer des égards qu'il m'a témoignés, il entend que j'en agisse chez lui sans façon et que je ne sois gêné en rien. Vous devez juger qu'étant ainsi livré à ma discrétion, je m'en accorderai en effet d'autant moins de libertés. Les bonnes manières peuvent tout sur moi et si Monsieur de Mably ne se dément point, il peut être assuré que mon coeur lui sera sincèrement attaché. Mais vous m'avez appris à ne pas courir à l'extrême sur de premières apparences, et à ne jamais compter plus qu'il ne faut sur ce qui dépend de la fantaisie des hommes. Savoir, à présent, comment on pense sur mon compte c'est ce qui n'est pas entièrement à mon pouvoir. Ma timidité ordinaire m'avait fait jouer le premier jour un assez sot personnage, et si Monsieur de Mably avait été Savoyard, il aurait porté là-dessus son redoutable jugement sans espérance d'appel. Je ne sais si au travers de cet air embarrassé il a démêlé en moi quelque chose de bon. Ce qu'il y a de sûr c'est que ses

manières polies et engageantes m'ont entièrement rassuré, et qu'il ne tient plus qu'à moi de me montrer à lui tel que je suis."¹

Rousseau had long dreamed of serving as tutor in the home of a wealthy, enlightened, respectable and respected gentleman. More than anything else, this profession approximated his lifelong castle-dream. A tutor was a member of the family -- son to the parents, brother to the children -- yet retained his individual identity as outsider. A tutor was supported and protected by the family, yet enjoyed his own honor, dignity and value through the personal qualities he brought into the household and imparted to the children in his charge. A tutor could be illustrious like Hobbes and Locke or heroic like the Prévostian hero² who entered the profession when a duke begged him to share with his son the vast wisdom gained through his rich life experience.

Alas, Rousseau was alone in seeing the job in this heroic light. In the Swiss Vaud country, Isaac Rousseau, now become Jean-Jacques' "poor father" -- old at sixty-seven, crippled by a badly-healed broken thigh and with a wife almost totally blind -- wrote Mme. de Warens a touching letter thanking her for having procured his son "un employ qui le tire de l'inaction, l'étude est fort belle mais quand on l'a poussée jusques a un certain point & qu'on a pas du bien on doit chercher des occupations qui donne [sic] du pain ... "³ For once, Isaac Rousseau and Mme. de Warens were in agreement.

Nor did Wolmar-like Mably see the job in quite Rousseau's light. Rather, he seems to have had in mind a kind of glorified baby-sitter and assistant

¹C.C. I, No. 38 (May 1, 1740), p. 123.

²Mentioned by John S. Spink, Introduction to Projets d'Education, O.C. IV, p. xxxiii.

³C.C. I, No. 39, (August 22, 1740), pp. 24-5.

social director.¹ Not a likely prospect to play the role of father to his children's tutor, in 1740 he already had four sons, aged one to five-and-a-half, and a daughter was born before Rousseau left the household. Nor was the prolific Mme. de Mably, with whom Rousseau fell in love (admittedly according to his habit), inclined to play mother to a twenty-eight-year-old "child." She tried to teach Rousseau manners so he could assist her with guests, but he handled himself so awkwardly and was so shamefaced and slow that she lost patience and gave up. No more successful in love than in manners, Rousseau (again according to custom) did not declare himself but would gaze at her in admiration and sigh. "J'en fis assez," he said, "Pour qu'elle s'en aperçût ..."² When nothing transpired, he became bored and turned to other interests.

Beyond the failure to recapture the role of "child of the family," two things account for the shortness of Rousseau's stay at the Mably's: his aversion for the profession of tutor and the constraint imposed by the family life-style. The first fact with which Rousseau was faced was his mediocrity as a tutor (this, in spite of a provocative, epicurean-influenced education plan he composed). The two tiny children in his care -- one spoiled and capricious, the other dull and stubborn -- were too demanding for his egotistical and impatient character. "La douceur de mon naturel m'eut rendu propre à ce métier si l'emportement n'y eût mêlé ses orages. Tant que tout allait bien et que je voyais réussir mes soins et mes peines qu'alors je n'épargnais point, j'étais un ange. J'étais un diable quand les choses allaient de travers. Quand mes élèves ne m'entendaient pas

¹The position was originally to include the care of one or both of the Mablys' youngest children.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 268.

j'extravagais, et quand ils marquaient de la méchanceté je les aurais tués: ce n'était pas le moyen de les rendre savants et sages."¹

Furthermore, his timidity made him unbearably uncomfortable. Afraid to ask for it, the gourmand would take a bit of wine from the cellar. Then ashamed to request bread to go with it, he would purchase a small brioche and snack happily in his room, with a novel for company. But later the pleasure would be spoiled by feelings of guilt.

An attack of spring-fever nostalgia for Charmettes and the Good Life under Mama's wing finally led Rousseau to resign from his position at the Mabllys' and return to Mme. de Warens, but, finding nothing changed, he almost immediately returned to Lyons. There he spent another six months, writing and making connections,² this time with Paris clearly in mind.

Lyons, like Chambéry, was for Rousseau still another step along the road to the glamorous capital of Europe. This eighteenth-century provincial metropolis was the second largest city in France: a heavily-populated,³ rich, active, beautiful and celebrated cosmopolitan center in a majestic natural setting. City of commerce and silk manufacturing, Lyons abounded in craftsmen and merchants, but Rousseau no longer belonged to this prosaic world. Nor did the city's attractive appearance and economic prosperity interest him. Rather, he was affected by its subjective facets and by their influence on his human relations experience. Lyons' wealth

¹Ibid., p. 267.

²He was presented to the Duc de Richelieu during this visit.

³C. 120,000 inhabitants.

was largely based on the business of luxury and this element made its way into the city's life-style and general philosophical outlook. Lyons' conception of luxury was altogether to Rousseau's taste, not Paris' dazzling but overdone, wasteful luxury, but a simple and reasonable enjoyment of creature comforts reminiscent of Baudelaire's "ordre et beauté, luxe, calme et volupté." The homes of the wealthy contained many delightful rooms filled with beautiful furniture, tapestries and works of art, games and amusements, well-stocked libraries, musical instruments, even songbirds in cages. The Lyonnais were an alert socially-oriented folk, gathering in salons or in cafés at the Place des Terreaux to read the gazettes, discuss the news, recite their poetic attempts and gamble. Like many provincials and perhaps more so than most, being residents of the second city of France, they were fiercely jealous of Paris whose glory they contemplated with a fascinated, covetous eye.

Rousseau made some interesting acquaintances in Lyons, men outstanding in the areas of culture and philosophy, who treated him with kindness and generosity. These Lyonnais, in close contact with the Parisian world, excited in Rousseau the desire awakened by Venture and his studies to challenge the brilliant French capital. Their encouragement and the excellent connections they were in a position to provide him, gave the young man the impetus necessary to send him along the road to Paris. Their epicurean and sensualist philosophies made a lasting impression on him. For the next ten years, praise of mundane pleasures was to be an important theme of Rousseau's thinking and writing.

At the Mablys', Rousseau met his employers' later-to-become-illustrious brothers, philosophers Abbé Gabriel Bonnot de Mably and Abbé Etienne Bonnot

de Condillac.

Charles Borde was one of Rousseau's first, closest and most useful Lyons friends. From a rich commercial family, Borde was, like Rousseau, a young would-be writer and newcomer to Lyons in 1740, returning to his native city after several years in Paris. His witty, sceptical and satirical mind and love of the arts must have produced exciting anecdotes, portraits and mundane gossip that contributed to Rousseau's rapidly-growing fascination for the capital. Borde, to whom Rousseau addressed two mundane epistles in verse, encouraged Rousseau in his literary attempts. When the time came for Rousseau to leave for Paris, Borde helped him sell his books and obtain letters of recommendation.

Besides Borde, Rousseau made some more fatherly friends in their late forties, fifties and early sixties: Bertrand-René Pallu, Intendant of Justice and Finance of Lyons and cultivated patron of the arts; Jacques David, professional musician of long and impressive experience, leader of the Lyons musical world; Camille Perrichon, former Lyons dignitary, still active in the city's intellectual and cultural life; and Gabriel Parisot, "the best and most benevolent of men," Chief Surgeon of the Lyons hospital and art-connoisseur. Rousseau also remained on friendly terms with the Mablys. David, Perrichon and Parisot were particularly friendly and helpful to young Rousseau. They invited his comments on the mémoires they delivered at the Lyons Academy of Beaux-Arts of which they were members. David gave Rousseau flute lessons and advice on the opera he was composing and set at least one of Rousseau's poems to music. The "noble and generous" Perrichon, old friend of Mama's, paid Rousseau's fare to Paris as a "bon voyage" gift. The Mablys invited him several times to dinner. Rousseau addressed a long epistle in verse to Parisot,¹ calling

¹O.C. II, p. 1136 et seq.

him "toi qui connus jadis mon âme tout entière / Seul en qui je trouvais un ami tendre, un père," (Parisot was thirty-two years his elder), adding, " ... Jamais mon esprit sous de fausses couleurs / Ne sut à tes regards déguiser ses erreurs ... " and "tes yeux ont été les témoins / Si mon coeur sait sentir ce qu'il doit [aux] soins [de Mme. de Warens]." This poem, interesting for many reasons, gives a good picture of Rousseau's relationship with a male friend during this period.

The poem is in essence a long confession -- more accurately, a case presented before a judge -- in which Rousseau explains the various bases of his decision to go to Paris, "ce triste projet" about which he obviously had scruples, asking his friend to judge and pronounce for him: a call for a vote of confidence. It begins pessimistically:¹ in Paris and not having heard from Parisot, yet unwilling to interpret the silence ("by false suspicions unworthy of both of us") as signifying Parisot's scorn, he concludes that it represents a disapproval of his decision, disapproval that Parisot hesitates to pronounce.

Next comes the "little story:" portraying himself as born free and proud, noble and idealistic, but under an evil star; alone, an outsider, unwilling to compromise in his ideals and dishonor himself before the rich and powerful. He describes the lower-middle-class Genevan worldview: scorning wealth and aristocracy, happy in an orderly and austere obscurity. This, he said, taught him to scorn wealth and luxury (and is apparently one thing that was troubling his conscience). However, "faith" exiled him from his country (!) and his ensuing "misery" forced him to have a humiliating recourse to the rich. ("Sans doute à tous les yeux la misère est horrible / Mais pour qui sait penser elle est bien plus sensible.")

¹Portent of Rousseau's future paranoid interpretation of signs.

Only by groveling can one escape this unbearable misery (residing more in social humiliation than in poverty): if the rich were necessarily worthy men, this expedient would be understandable, but Rousseau declared himself above groveling to the unworthy, arrogant provincial rich.

The poem continues: this was how he felt until he met Mme. de Warens. More than financial aid, she gave him his education, both intellectual and sentimental, and his desire to be virtuous. Finally, under the influence of Savoyard and French, especially Lyonnais, friends, Rousseau abandoned his Genevan worldview and adopted an aristocratic orientation¹ (which may be seen as corresponding to the "value revolution" of his theory of evolution).² He learned to enjoy the pleasures of life, realizing that, except in the case of God, virtue is insufficient for happiness and that his attempts to conquer his passions had been vain because the human condition makes this impossible. Men, as is, know no happiness without passions.

C'est toi, cher Parisot, c'est ton commerce aimable
 De grossier que j'étais qui me rendit traitable.
 Je reconnus alors combien il est charmant
 De joindre à la sagesse un peu d'amusement.
 Des amis plus polis, un climat moins sauvage
 Des plaisirs innocents m'enseignèrent l'usage.
 Je vis avec transport ce spectacle enchanteur
 Par la route des sens qui sait aller au coeur:
 Le mien qui jusqu'alors avait été paisible
 Pour la première fois enfin devint sensible,
 L'Amour malgré mes soins heureux à m'égarer
 Après de deux beaux yeux m'apprit à soupirer.
 Bons mots, vers élégants, conversations vives,
 Un repas égayé par d'aimables convives
 Petits jeux de commerce et dont le chagrin fuit
 Où sans risquer la bourse on délasse l'esprit.
 En un mot les attraits d'une vie opulente
 Qu'aux vœux de l'étranger sa richesse présente
 Tous les plaisirs du goût, le charme des beaux arts,
 A mes yeux enchantés brillaient de toutes parts.

¹Mme. de Warens described Savoy as being "un pays où cela [whether one is noble or common] fait une grosse différence." C.C. I, Appendix A-3, Mme. de Warens to François Magny (August 18, 1726), p. 255.

²See p. 12 herein.

Rousseau hastens to add the condition that the pleasures be innocent and enjoyed in moderation, concluding à la Horace: "Rien ne doit être outré, pas même la vertu."¹

The "confession" over, the poem continues with Rousseau's asking Parisot if he may now solicit the backing of wealthy aristocrats and pursue fortune in order to repay Mme. de Warens. He has devoted his first thirty years to study and virtue, he says, but this is insufficient to achieve the "glory" from whence fortune is derived.

Then Rousseau confides his lack of self-confidence: he fears he lacks what it takes "pour briller dans le monde" -- hubris, arrogance, hypocrisy. He asserts his refusal to disguise his character: it would hurt him too much to do so and would be a show of ingratitude to Mme. de Warens who already suffers from too many problems.

Having finished his épanchement, he adds:

Mais c'est trop t'accabler du récit de nos peines:
Daigne me pardonner, ami, ces plaintes vaines
C'est le dernier des biens permis aux malheureux
De voir plaindre leurs maux par les coeurs généreux.

The poem concludes by Rousseau's again asking for Parisot's judgment. He scorns "glory" (!), lacks ambition (!), men's opinion means nothing to him (!)‡ "pleasures of the heart" are his greatest desire:

Un bon livre, un ami, la liberté, la paix,
Faut-il pour vivre heureux former d'autres souhaits?
Les grandes passions sont des sources de peine:
J'évite les dangers où leur penchant entraîne;
Dans leurs pièges adroits si l'on me voit tomber,
Du moins je ne fais pas gloire d'y succomber.
De mes égarements mon coeur n'est point complice
Sans être vertueux je déteste le vice.
Et le bonheur en vain s'obstine à se cacher,
Puisqu'enfin je connais où je dois le chercher.

¹This frame of mind would eventually carry over to Julie's "epicureanism of reason." Even moral duties, Rousseau was later often to affirm, should be kept on a human, that is feasible, level.

Rousseau's stay in Lyons concluded with an "affair" with twenty-one-year-old Lyonnaise Suzanne Serre, about which little is known beyond the romanticized Confessions account that has immortalized it. It does, however, appear to represent a typical erotic incident in Rousseau's life and may be briefly examined as exemplary of a certain aspect of his human relations experience. Although no formal declaration was ever made, Rousseau recounts, the young lady's gestures and expressions served to convince him that his passion was reciprocated. ("I had some reason to believe that [her heart] was not contrary to me ... "1) Thus it had appeared, to a greater or lesser degree, with most of the blushing young ladies of quality on whom he rested his famous burning gaze. Some scholars rather hastily brand Rousseau's optimistic conviction of success -- not unusual in a timid, inexperienced young man -- as a manifestation of a kind of blatant "conceit." We suggest, on the contrary, that it might more accurately be seen as manifestation of Rousseau's dangerous inability to judge the disposition of the persons with whom he had contact. The imagined reciprocity does not indeed appear to have existed in reality, at least not in the degree to which Rousseau envisioned it, either in this or in any of his famous "love affairs." Rousseau's own account of the Serre affair brings to light this faulty interpretation on his part. "Elle n'avait rien ni moi non plus," go the Confessions; "nos situations étaient trop semblables pour que nous pussions nous unir, et dans les vues qui m'occupaient j'étais bien éloigné de songer au mariage." Quite so.

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 282.

However, a second cavalier was already admittedly a more important part of the picture than was Rousseau himself, nor was the newcomer as mute and passive as his rival: "Elle m'apprit," Rousseau confides, "qu'un jeune négociant appelé M. Genève paraissait vouloir s'attacher à elle. Je le vis chez elle une fois ou deux; il me parut honnête homme, il passait pour l'être. Persuadé qu'elle serait heureuse avec lui, je désirai qu'il l'épousât, comme il a fait dans la suite; et pour ne pas troubler leurs innocents amours je me hâtai de partir ..." The "novel" concludes with

Rousseau's congratulating himself, as he had done ~~after~~ "virtuously" "giving up" Mme. de Larnage: "Occupé de mes tendres regrets durant toute ma route je sentis, et j'ai souvent senti depuis lors en y repensant que si les sacrifices qu'on fait au devoir et à la vertu coûtent à faire, on en est bien payé par les doux souvenirs qu'ils laissent au fond du coeur."¹ While Rousseau was allowing himself to drink in the voluptuousness of what he had come to believe was righteous self-denial, Mlle. Serre's "innocent love" was more materially occupied: she eventually bore a son to Genève, two years later and several months before their marriage.

Whatever was Mlle. Serre's opinion of Rousseau we shall never know, for the philosopher never learned to gauge others' judgments of himself, but Rousseau's passion for Mlle. Serre did unquestionably exist, and, as was his custom, he was unable to keep silent about it, taking into his confidence, among others, Lyonnais friend Parisot and old Aunt Suzanne.² The "affair" itself, however, appears to have been experienced only in Rousseau's ever-alert erotic imagination, in a process of embellishment which he followed in all of his celebrated "affairs." With Mme. Basile,

¹Ibid., p. 282. (Italics mine.)

²Years later, in 1764, Aunt Suzanne accidentally referred to Mlle. Levasseur as "Mlle. Serre."

he had admitted that "l'image de cette aimable femme est restée empreinte au fond de [s]on coeur en traits si charmants," adding: "Elle s'y est même embellie à mesure que j'ai mieux connu le monde et les femmes."¹

Likewise, it was probably Rousseau's creative imagination which was responsible for much of the irresistible charm of his fresh and delicate literary heroines. The Mlle. Serre "affair" was, then, like the others, deformed, or re-formed, through intuition, vanity and a great deal of wishful thinking, into a typical Rousseauesque erotic-fantasy novel-situation: the inexpressible pleasure of loving and inspiring love in return, of feeling pain and of inspiring reciprocal pain; with an insurmountable obstacle to the direct satisfaction of the desire having been erected as a conditioned reflex of self-protection.²

¹Ibid., p. 76. (Italics mine.)

²Starobinski has described the desire/obstacle reflex at length in his masterful studies of Rousseau, in which he points out, among other things, that desiring, with Rousseau, represents exposure to sin, whereas the satisfaction of desire represents the sin itself. In a situation of mute desire accompanied by paralysis, the parties involved achieve "contact" at a distance -- a condition, says Starobinski, necessary to Rousseau's highest exaltation -- its depersonalization allowing Rousseau to fascinate himself with himself. The object of Rousseau's quest, according to Starobinski, being a general feeling rather than the possession of the love-object itself, Rousseau could obtain his goal through such passive pursuit, not only thereby avoiding guilt but enjoying the double pleasure of being desired and seeing himself being desired (thus vicariously desiring himself). Finally, Starobinski senses that Rousseau's aversion for the love-declaration and active pursuit grew from an inability to face possible eventual rejection as well as from the Genevan attitude towards earthly pleasures. Only in this way could Rousseau assure his public and reassure himself that he was indeed loved, without fear of contradiction -- this through insecurity rather than conceit. (Furthermore, according to the "bizarre" and "romanesque" worldview which was Rousseau's in such matters, gleaned from idealistic novels, noble and superior souls recognize each other and communicate directly. In Rousseau's novels, love was reciprocal, if not always requited.)

The Mlle. Serre situation eventually contributed to Rousseau's New Héloïse, as did the "affairs" constructed around Zulieta, Mme. Basile, Mlles Goton, de Vulson, de Breil, de Graffenried, Galley and countless other peaches-and-cream young ladies. The very highly-imaginative quality of Rousseau's habitual approach to erotica appears to explain the peculiar divergency between the various fragments of Rousseau's Confessions of which Mlle. Serre is generally considered the inspiration. This is easily resolved by seeing these writings as fantasy-literature. (Why assume that the technique which gave birth to Rousseau's great novel¹ was begun only in the writer's middle-age?) As the "letter to a young man of quality" has suggested, Rousseau seems, from his very earliest literary attempts,² to have been writing pieces to and about fictitious "friends" concerning imaginary but pleasurable situations, and one may indeed say, in this respect, that Rousseau's inexorable destiny was to become a "novelist," author of idealistic and self-centered masterpieces.

The Mme. Basile anecdote in the Confessions clearly differs in several details from an unused fragment of it later discovered. (In the former, she gazes at him tenderly, while he dares not touch her; in the latter, attentive to her embroidery, she neither speaks nor looks at him, while he, in pleasurable discomfort at her feet, sometimes dares to rest his hand on her knee but "so gently that, in [his] innocence, [he] believe[s] she [does] not feel it."³ In the same way, fragments identified with the

¹To concretize fantasies built around two delightful young women and their respective lover and friend, Rousseau had put himself in the place of one, then another, of his characters and writing "their" letters to each other, describing "their" reactions to various imaginary situations.

²The first (1731?) letter in Rousseau's correspondence, addressed to "Mon cher Couzin" may indeed fall into this category.

³O.C. I, p. 1160. (Translation mine.)

Mlle. Serre period appear more as literary or erotic-fantasy variations-on-a-theme than as documents relating to a single, real-life woman and situation. These fragments, described below, present feelings reappearing in the New Héloïse:

- The loved one is modest, loves virtue more than her own life.
- Rousseau is "satisfied" in her presence, desires nothing else.
- Love is never declared, but Rousseau is strongly convinced that she loves him "passionately." The feeling is too overwhelming for expression.
- This state of mutual frustrated desire is more pleasurable than that of physical love.
- Alone, they dare not look at each other, afraid to trust themselves. In a crowd, they make up for this with effusive demonstrations of affection. (This is reminiscent of the Mlle. de Vulson "affair" as well.)

- The loved one is "severe" and her cruelty is a source of pleasure: "Il me sembla qu'elle me traitait comme une chose qui était à elle; qu'elle me recevait en propriété; qu'elle s'emparait de moi. Elle ne me pria plus de rien; elle ne fit plus que me commander."¹ (This recalls Rousseau's experience with Zulietta.)

- On one occasion, he had read to her and, in his anxiety, had read badly. After correcting him two or three times, she had stopped him. He had begged to be allowed to continue, and she had consented. Then: "... Je continuai, je n'ai jamais si bien lu de ma vie." (Reading, writing, moving another person with his music, eloquence or "little story" was, as we have seen, Rousseau's way of making love, both to another and to himself, by moving another and simultaneously experiencing the pleasure of watching the other's emotional reaction to him.)

This phenomenon of lovemaking-at-a-distance is described more clearly

¹O.C. I, p. 1162.

on several other important occasions to which we refer as standards of comparison. First, concerning his brief adolescent exhibitionism, Rousseau had said: "Le sott-plaisir que j'avait de l'étaler ['l'objet ridicule,' as opposed to 'l'objet obscène'] à leurs yeux ne peut se décrire."¹

Transforming the experience onto the cerebral level, we find Rousseau with Mme. d'Houdetot, on one happy night, in her flowered garden in the moonlight, where he "found, to render the movements of [his] heart, a language truly worthy of them": "Ce fut la première et l'unique fois de ma vie; mais je fus sublime, si l'on peut nommer ainsi tout ce que l'amour le plus tendre et le plus ardent peut porter d'aimable et de séduisant dans un coeur d'homme. Que d'enivrantes larmes je versai sur ses genoux! que je lui en fis verser malgré elle! Enfin dans un transport involontaire elle s'écria: Non, jamais homme ne fut si aimable, et jamais amant n'aima comme vous!"²

At the opening performance of his Village Fortuneteller, Rousseau perceptively analyzed the mechanism of such a reaction: "J'entendais autour de moi un chuchotement de femmes qui me semblaient belles comme des anges, et qui s'entredisaient à demi-voix: cela est charmant, cela est ravissant; il n'y a pas un son là qui ne parle au coeur. Le plaisir de donner de l'émotion à tant d'aimables personnes m'émut moi-même jusqu'aux larmes, et je ne les pus contenir au premier du, en remarquant que je n'étais pas seul à pleurer. J'eus un moment de retour sur moi-même en me rappelant le concert de M. de Treytorens. Cette reminiscence eut l'effet de l'esclave qui tenait la couronne sur la tête des triomphateurs, mais elle fut courte, et je me livrai bientôt pleinement et sans distraction au plaisir de savourer

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 89.

²Ibid., p. 444.

ma gloire. Je suis pourtant sûr qu'en ce moment la volupté du sexe y
entraîtrait beaucoup plus que la vanité d'auteur, et sûrement s'il n'y eut là
 que des hommes, je n'aurais pas été dévoré, comme je l'étais sans cesse
 du désir de recueillir de mes lèvres les délicieuses larmes que je faisais
 couler. J'ai vu des pièces exciter de plus vifs transports d'admiration,
mais jamais une ivresse aussi pleine aussi douce aussi touchante régner
dans tout un spectacle, et surtout à la cour un jour de première représenta-
tion. Ceux qui ont vu celle-là doivent s'en souvenir; car l'effet en fut
unique."¹

Returning to the enumeration of typically Rousseauesque erotic situa-
 tions found in the literary fragments attributed to Mlle. Suzanne Serre,
 we find:

- Rousseau kissed her only once, but he swore he would never forget
 that moment (comparable to Julie's and Saint-Preux's passionate kiss and
 the one later shared by Rousseau and Mme. d'Houdetôt in the Confessions
 account).

- During a trip, Rousseau found her unusually gentle, which disarmed
 him into making a demi-declaration, or rather into inviting hers. To her
 provocative remark, "We are good friends, it seems to me," Rousseau replied,
 "Yes, and we could have been still better friends. Ah! how I would have
 loved you! But, for this to happen, five conditions would have had to be
 filled, the easiest of which is impossible, and without which we may not
 think of it."² Betrayal and rejection follow this fairy-tale beginning:
 the loved one fails to reply, which Rousseau finds natural, "but what was
 not [natural] was a certain expression of the eyes accompanying that silence,

¹Ibid., p. 379. This scene is also the subject of a Confessions
 variant, O.C. I, p. 1164. (Italics mine.)

²O.C. I, p. 1162. (Translation mine.)

and which I will not in my life forget. That nearly imperceptible movement repulsed my heart forever."¹ Finally, her lips turn away from his kiss, as she thinks of another. (This, of course, stands as another indication that Rousseau's later paranoid interpretation of "signs" already existed to a certain degree in his youthful human relations experience and suggests that such rejection was perhaps not without a certain masochistic pleasure.)

- Finally, to conclude this list of fragments, which we see as giving a well-rounded picture of Rousseau's approach to eroticism, a puerile love letter addressed in 1739 (?) to a young Lyonnaise often believed to be Mlle. Serre describes what Rousseau considers the extraordinary depth of his passion and his capacity to have inspired a like sentiment in the bosom of the loved one, had she only permitted him; the fatal misfortune that hangs over his life; and his certitude that the young lady has had "liaisons" (flirtations or affairs?).

The Mlle. Serre "affair," then, reveals to what extent Rousseau's erotic experiences -- and human relations experiences in general -- are difficult to dissect because each was, to him, an experience in which feeling, not fact, was of consequence; and Rousseau's creative imagination participated so greatly in the recounting of a given incident in order to obtain the desired emotional effect, both in himself and in his listener/reader, that, from an objective point of view, one may justifiably describe the Confessions as a work filled with inaccuracies, even falsehoods. Anticipating this criticism, Rousseau explained its irrelevance by pointing out the subjective nature of his writing, coinciding with the level of his experience, by means of a technique which follows "the chain of feelings

¹Ibid., p. 1162.

which marked the succession of [his] being, and by them [the chain] of events that were the cause of the effect [of his being]." "L'objet propre de mes confessions," he continued, "est de faire connaître exactement mon intérieur dans toutes les situations de ma vie. C'est l'histoire de mon âme que j'ai promise ..."¹ Variations of a few basic erotic and general human relations situations, then, recurred at regular intervals during the entire course of Rousseau's life. It was the feeling derived from these human relations experiences rather than the person of the partner that mattered to Rousseau, and this feeling was most successfully obtained through the direct intervention of his creative imagination.

CIVILIZATION

After returning to Charmettes for a last six months of feverish activity in preparation for his début, Rousseau left Chambéry in July, 1742, for Paris, "projetant d'y rapporter un jour aux pieds de Maman rendue à elle-même les trésors que j'aurais acquis ..."¹ The Paris in which he arrived was still the dazzling capital of Europe and, to the European, of the world -- a heavily-populated "world" in which vast wealth and splendor stood alongside the squalor of great masses of poor, a city of delights for those few with the good fortune to be part of the grand monde which was, in fact, a very small world indeed. Wit and debauchery describe mundane Paris until about 1750: a great party, a sceptical, egotistical and frivolous society, quite superficial yet somehow irresistibly seductive. Pleasure was in fashion, garbed in the elegant costume of a masked ball: proud of its shiny veneer, the capital had generally succeeded in abolishing visible traces of Regency drunkenness, blasphemy and loud raucousness. Gossip and nastiness had been driven underground and displays of emotion were severely frowned on, with scandal representing the cardinal sin of which Parisians lived in mortal fear.

The capital was living on illusions, as symbolized by its cult of politeness. "Politeness is to the mind / What grace is to the face," Voltaire had enthused in his Mondain; "It is the sweet image of goodness of heart / And it is goodness that is cherished ... " The "goodness" went no deeper than the level of appearance. Beneath the attractive surface, a hidden anxiety was sensed

¹Confessions, O.C. I, pp. 279-280.

and revealed by a Watteau, a Quentin de La Tour. The Law Affair's great financial upheavals had contributed to the instability and "now" orientation. Honesty had lost social value in the rat-race for status, wealth and pleasure. The capital was morally-disturbed, troubled, shaky. Satires, pamphlets, parodies and epigrams abounded.

Theatre was the national pastime -- theatre and the theatrical -- with the usual French taste for fine foods, fine wines, attractive women, the arts, religion, novels... At this moment, natural science was the great vogue. All was brilliance, then, in the gay, frivolous, cynical and somewhat depraved grand monde, from environmental design to dress to social activity, in which the conformism and formalism characteristic of the previous century remained. Among those who were individualists, only amusing eccentrics were tolerated, and these only in the capacity of conversation-pieces.

Nonetheless, the great townhouses were not impenetrable to ambitious young newcomers armed with recommendations, nor was a relative degree of wealth and fame altogether out of reach, the custom of patronage remaining in common practice. The shortest road to fame and fortune seemed to be via music and literature, particularly prized in the salons. Rich aristocrats, now polished and mundane, were better educated than ever before and had to possess or at least affect an interest in and acquaintance with the arts and sciences. Famous talents of all sorts and promising newcomers were cultivated as necessary accessories to their fashionable salons. At last highly respected by all, practitioners of the arts were not yet self-supporting (the reading public, for example, was not great enough until the 1760's to support a writer). Artists were thus intimately and necessarily tied to the grand monde, and the backing of an influential salon was in-

dispensable for success. This placed great demands on artists, obliged to conform. The duty of an ambitious young man was to be a brilliant and witty light conversationalists, galant and flattering, a talent which, according to Duclos, himself a master at the game, tended to discourage the truly talented and encourage the mediocre.

Everyone played the salon game, then, and the influential, high-spirited, strong-willed, vicious and catty salonnières rivaled each other in defense of their respective protégés. As always, when profits are lying about, opportunists are not far behind, singing for their supper in whatever ways they can devise. Provincials were flocking to the city in droves. Bohemians of all sorts were swarming. These parasites, by taste or necessity, haunted all accessible social circles. Salons and dinners at the homes of the wealthy were crowded with strangers; once admitted, one could return at any time on the condition that he refrain from taking advantage of the privilege more often than about once a week. Great formality was imposed on these gatherings, with the tone generally set by the hostess. Late-night suppers, if smaller and more intimate, were marred by a free-wheeling cattiness and elitism.

Whereas galanterie was the salon pleasure, exchange of ideas was that of the cafés, more "manly," informal and intellectual, where there was less pressure to sustain the conversation and where individual freedom was greater (one might drink, gamble, converse, read a book or a gazette or perform one's literary creations).¹ In serious, reflective circles, great intellectual ferment was taking place, with earthly "happiness" sought

¹Countless cafés had opened in Paris since 1715, but the theatre and Opéra cafés were especially popular. Rousseau was to love café life as greatly as he would come to hate salon life.

through the new ideal of rational enlightenment, while the traditional antipathy between liberalism and conservatism was building up to a point of crisis. Men passionately sought to know all and explain all, in a new humanistic attempt not yet thwarted by dogmatism and personal rivalries.

Rousseau aspired with every fiber of his being to be accepted in Paris, both to prove his worth to himself and to those in his past who had scorned and rejected him. In spite of a series of disappointments, he was to continue believing in Parisian society until his 1749 "illumination" -- moment of truth corresponding to the broken-comb incident, when he was forced to accept the bitter fact that, however hard he tried, he would never find success within the context of Paris' brand of civilization. Now, however, aware of his literary talent which he had assiduously cultivated, Rousseau was hesitant, lacking confidence and inspiration as he bungled the very literary attempts that were intended to lead him to glory. Trying his hand at the stifflingly formal Classical genres, for which he lacked both talent and feeling, he found his own personality and plaintive "little story" incongruously creeping in; yet themes other than those directly pertaining to himself came across as insincere under his pen. In the realm of ideas and philosophy, on the other hand, his writing showed a great deal of promise, but he lacked a sense of "message" to give his work life and unity. His expectations in making the trip to Paris, then, were largely based on an ingenious system of music notation he had invented and planned to submit to the Academy of Sciences, imagining thereby to revolutionize the art of music.

He moved into the Hotel St. Quentin near the Sorbonne, "ugly street, ugly hotel, ugly room." The sale of his books had not brought enough

money to support him for long. Thus the first thing he did was to seek his fortune. The Count d'Amézin found Rousseau several aristocratic music students, one of whom, the Abbé de Léon, "very amiable young gentleman," offered him the position as his secretary which Rousseau had to decline, the pay being insufficient to cover his expenses. Furthermore, he had higher hopes. Elderly Claude Gros de Boze, member of the French Academy (and whose young wife laughed at Rousseau's countrified manners), introduced him to René-Antoine de Réaumur, who in turn took charge of presenting Rousseau's music system to the Academy of Sciences. In August, Rousseau read his proposition to the Academy: it won only lukewarm praise, and the young man was bitterly disappointed. The thing that hurt most was the "injustice" of the procedure, the certitude that the omnipotent Academy members had rejected his proposition based on prejudices and without having understood it. This was an important illumination: Rousseau had heretofore assumed intellectuals to be infallible.¹ Later, when the musician Rameau pointed out the true weakness of the system, its lack of the pictorial qualities of the traditional method, he accepted the verdict stoically, recognizing its validity.

Meanwhile, indignation at the Academy's unjust rejection caused Rousseau to "appeal to the public." He locked himself up in his hotel room and worked "with an inexpressible ardor" to turn his academy paper into a Dissertation on Modern Music, published, largely at his own expense, in January of 1743. The editor of La Clef (Le Journal de Verdun) gave Rousseau and his system excellent notices, also publishing the Epistle to Borde, but the Dissertation failed to make waves on its own merits, and Rousseau lost the incentive to continue calling on potential maecenas. Just at the time he needed to

¹"Durant mes conférences avec ces Messieurs je me convainquis avec

keep himself in the public eye, he said, the necessity to do so proved sufficient to discourage him. The Abbé Desfontaines, famous literary critic, may have contributed to his inertia. According to Conzié, Rousseau later told him he had been "pulvérisé en tout sens et en tout genre et avec toutes raisons par le dit docte abbé, [qui] lui avait prouvé qu'il ne savait encore rien, pas même écrire français, et qu'il fallait lire et apprendre à lire, avant que de vouloir écrire."¹ Father Castel, a colorful Jesuit dilettante and eccentric whom Rousseau sometimes met at cafés, maliciously reminisces, along the same lines: "Votre goût de musique était assez français," he tells Rousseau by means of a cruel and malicious pamphlet published years later, "mais vos vers sentaient un peu trop la province, et la province étrangère. D'autres vous en firent apercevoir les défauts, soit du vers, soit de la langue et de la rime même ..."²

Thus, although he had only a small amount of money left, Rousseau began to enjoy Paris, all the while seeking new roads to fame and fortune.³ (In taking this detour, he was failing to act in accordance with his own professed intentions, since the justification for the trip to Paris was to place himself in a position to repay his benefactress.) His great expectations and mundane frame of mind acquired through the influence of Lyons friends and the Chambéry intellectual elite now gave Paris the air of an earthly paradise. Rousseau had glimpsed high society and now regularly

autant de certitude que de surprise que si quelquefois les savants ont moins de préjugés que les autres hommes, ils tiennent, en revanche, encore plus fortement à ceux qu'ils ont. ... J'étais toujours ébahi de la facilité avec laquelle à l'aide de quelques phrases sonores ils me réfutaient sans m'avoir compris." Confessions, O.C. I, p. 284.

¹C.C. I, Appendix A-17, p. 294.

²L'Homme moral opposé à l'homme physique de Monsieur R***. Lettres philosophiques où l'on réfute le Déisme du jour (Toulouse: 1756), cited in C.C. II, Appendix A-93, p. 335.

³It must be stressed that, in his own way, Rousseau was an assiduous worker during his entire worldly period.

frequented the theatre, the opera and the "in" cafés. (To save money, he eventually had to cut his café frequentation down to every other day and his theatre-going to only twice a week!) Even St. Preux was forced to admit that "ce n'est pas que cette vie bruyante et tumultueuse n'ait aussi quelque sorte d'attraits, et que la prodigieuse diversité d'objets n'offre de certains agréments à de nouveaux débarqués ..."¹ Rousseau took morning walks through the Luxembourg gardens, studying poetry. Afternoons were spent either at the theatre or at the café where the chess-masters congregated. His old passion for chess returned, which he indulged with customary enthusiasm, rationalizing: "Je me disais: quiconque prime en quelque chose est toujours sûr d'être recherché. Primons donc, n'importe en quoi; je serai recherché; les occasions se présenteront, et mon mérite fera le reste," adding, with frankness and perception: "Effrayé des grands et rapides efforts qu'il aurait fallu faire pour m'évertuer, je tâchais de flatter ma paresse, et je m'en voilais la honte par des arguments dignes d'elle."²

During his first year in Paris, thirty-year-old Rousseau, alone and without a "family" to which to relate, desperately needed friends on both parental and fraternal levels. As in his apprenticeship and Chambéry periods, we have very few details regarding the many good-natured friends and acquaintances and the momentary infatuations, both male and female, he certainly had. He occasionally paid his respects to two revered Old Masters, fifty-four-year-old Marivaux and eighty-five-year-old Fontenelle, both of

¹Nouvelle Héloïse, O.C. II, p. 245.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 288.

whom were kind to him (the former even retouching his comedy Narcissus). He called on the Abbé de Mably in Paris. It appears to have been during this period that he met a young, struggling writer but experienced Parisian named Denis Diderot. Finally, Father Castel pulled the young man out of his lethargy by suggesting he try appealing to women. "You can get nowhere in Paris except by means of women," Castel confided. It proved to be useful advice. Castel introduced Rousseau to two important houses, that of Mme. de Besenval and Mme. de Broglie and that of Mme. Dupin.

Mme. de Bezenval was a wealthy middle-aged member of the Polish nobility, widow of a Swiss officer, whose aristocratic prejudices caused Rousseau a new humiliation: the lady expected her young guest to dine with the servants. Her daughter, Mme. de Broglie, diplomatically straightened the matter out and Rousseau dined with hostesses and family friend Lamoignon, but the insult was never forgotten. Unable to shine at table-conversation, after dinner Rousseau had the satisfaction of bringing everyone to tears with an eloquent reading of his Epistle to Parisot -- again his "little story." The pathetic was in vogue in the grand monde, and Parisians were conditioned to respond to it: for a time thereafter, the two ladies were Rousseau's faithful admirers.

Even more useful to Rousseau was witty, rich and still extraordinarily beautiful thirty-six-year-old Louise-Marie-Madeleine Dupin. Granddaughter of playwright Dancourt, one of three illegitimate daughters of fabulously wealthy financier Samuel Bernard -- sisters renowned for their beauty and charm -- and, finally, wife of a Fermier Général,¹ Mme. Dupin and her famous salon were at the height of their legendary brilliance when Rousseau met

¹Claude Dupin owed his fortune to his beautiful wife.

her. No townhouse in Paris was smarter than Mme. Dupin's during the early forties. She attracted the cream of the aristocracy, the arts and the beautiful Européennes. Rousseau says her society was a bit too reserved to appeal to many young persons but was all the more distinguished for its dignity. Mme. Dupin had unusually appealing personal qualities: "femme adorable," says Rousseau, "autant par la douceur, par la bonté de son charmante caractère, que par l'agrément de son esprit, et par l'inaltérable gaieté de son humeur,"¹ adding that she was "serious" and "cold" of temperament. Her conduct, he said, was unreproached, giving her a startling resemblance to Françoise d'Aubigny, Mme. de Maintenon, for charm and cold-blooded determination, while her vague and optimistic religious convictions brought her closer to Mme. de Warens.

Mme. Dupin received Rousseau in her dressing gown. The sight, new for the young man, of bare arms and flowing locks was too much for his foolish heart. She sang for him, accompanying herself on the harpsichord. She spoke flatteringly and knowledgeably about his Dissertation. At dinner, she seated Rousseau at her side (we stress the importance of meal-time ceremony in Rousseau's human relationships and his concept of honor) and invited him to her salon.

Now, Rousseau, in a salon, was a sorry sight indeed. Not just a provincial but a Swiss provincial and a young man whose timidity, caused by an overwhelming desire to please and equivalent fear of rejection, paralyzed him, rendering him mute and foolish, afraid to assert himself, or else pushing him too far, into obsequious and heavy-handed flattery. Rousseau would later bitterly resent such hypocritical "crawling," so foreign to his character, and the compliments disavowed at the very moment

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 291.

he uttered them, the talk for conversation's sake without having anything to say, and such colossal faux pas as taking a piece of fruit from the bottom of a decorative pyramid, thus causing the whole arrangement to tumble to the floor. Rousseau was different from the others, "the Genevan." Most often and most painfully, however, he was lost in the crowd, as in Lemonnier's famous painting of d'Alembert reciting Voltaire's Orphelin de Chine at Mme. Geoffrin's. Some Parisians, sensing his weakness, would attack him, but most were polite. None, however, gave him the recognition he needed, although occasionally he would capture some maternal soul's mild interest through mysterious allusions to his "misfortunes."¹ Only after his fame would society turn its attention to Rousseau. All in all, then, he enjoyed a pleasant, moderate success, although far from the position as "idol" he invariably coveted, thanks largely to the wide range of fields in which he was interested and more or less knowledgeable. Furthermore, he possessed an indefinable personal charm, to which only certain persons were susceptible, but which attracted them in spite of his faults and weaknesses, and brought them to view him with indulgence, even affection.

Unfortunately, in the case of Mme. Dupin, naïve Rousseau -- as yet unfamiliar with the worldly principle "tout nouveau, tout beau" -- made the mistake of taking too literally his hostess' gentleness and demonstration of welcome. Seeing his castle-dream on the verge of coming true, he fell

¹He continued to meet social problems and challenges by retreating into his infantile, pathetic image. This proved highly appealing to a few emotional souls, those who seek to dominate but lack the strength or dedication to control most persons, but he was equally repellent to certain cold personalities who meet weakness and vulnerability with scorn and aggressive hostility.

madly in love. This caused him to make two serious mistakes which very nearly cost him the Dupins' useful benevolence. First, he attended the salon much too often -- nearly every day. Secondly, he wrote Mme. Dupin a note declaring his love. She returned the note so coldly that he understood and gave up immediately (another version of the story has him falling on his knees and Mme. Dupin leaving the room and slamming the door); however, she later asked him to stop attending the salon. The young man sent her a letter begging forgiveness and promising repentance, sending another to M. Dupin, appealing for permission to return. This latter note, remarkable in many respects (to begin with, its very existence!), finds Rousseau touchingly apologizing for his bad first impression and making a surprising declaration: "Je m'étais flatté, Monsieur, du bonheur de vous appartenir pour le reste de mes jours, et je puis jurer que cette idée est le premier et le seul vrai sentiment de plaisir qui m'ait touché. L'espoir de mériter votre estime et votre affection, joint à l'amour de l'étude et du repos m'en faisait un avenir charmant, auquel j'ai sacrifié avec joie toute autre vue."¹ Rousseau goes on to evoke the "sad fatality" that pursues him and systematically destroys all his dreams of happiness. He implores M. Dupin to deliver him from doubt by declaring acceptance or rejection of him. Rousseau admits to being full of weaknesses but pleads the case for the weak: "Il est des retours sur nos fautes qui valent mieux que de n'en avoir point commis." He admits that a mediocrity of talent, merit and wisdom makes him unworthy of the Dupins but suggests the corresponding merit of his unique attachment for them -- reminiscent of St. Preux, mediocre in all but his sentiment. He concludes: "Sans ambition, sans intérêt et sans désir de briller, je ne ferai consister mon bonheur qu'à mériter votre confiance, vos bontés et

¹C.C. I, No. 53 (April 10, 1743), pp. 185-6.

celles de Mme. Dupin. Je ne vous dis rien, qui ne soit une image fidèle de ce qui se passe au fond de mon âme. Jugez-moi là-dessus et daignez m'accorder un mot de réponse."

Rather than revealing some diabolically hypocritical Rousseau as has been suggested, the Dupin incident shows to what extent the young man was blindly driven by desire for some glorified version of his castle-dream, yet the astonishing lack of definition of his self-image and of his goal itself in which the sentiments of love and friendship combine with the position as "child of the family" and the desire to earn admiration through the use of his creative talents. This letter shows with moving clarity how desperate Rousseau was at this period for expressions of affection and approval.

The Dupins apparently took Rousseau at his word. Soon afterward, Mme. Dupin entrusted him with the care of her son Chenonceaux for about a week. The thirteen-year-old spoiled brat put him through the tortures of hell. On the other hand, Mme. Dupin's stepson, Charles-Louis Dupin de Francueil,¹ twenty-six, befriended Rousseau. A common interest in chemistry, the current rage, brought them together. They began a course under chemist Rouelle and, to be closer to Francueil, Rousseau moved to the Right Bank.

Meanwhile, Rousseau underwent a bout with pneumonia. During the illness, he set to reflecting on himself and deplored the timidity, weakness and laziness that kept him in a state of misery in spite of the fire he felt within him, or so the Confessions recount. Still feverish, he began

¹Married since 1737 to Suzanne Bolliaud de St. Julien.

composing an opera, Les Muses galantes, whose story line revolved around the lives of Tasso, Ovid and Anacreon, with whom he identified. Work on the opera was interrupted by a chance occurrence: A secretary was being sought for the newly-appointed French ambassador in Venice, and Mme. de Broglie had suggested Rousseau for the position. Rousseau's salary demand was rejected and the ambassador departed with another young man, but the original secretary was dismissed before his arrival in Venice, and Rousseau was called in to fill the vacancy. After thinking over the proposition for several days, he accepted, bought himself some splendid new clothes and left for Venice in July of 1743, traveling first class.

Indescribably proud of his new position in which he saw his personal worth as validated and his person ennobled, a symbol of the glamorous France he had idolized since his Chambéry days, eager to show the home town that he did indeed have merit, he made side trips en route, to Chambéry (where, finding Mama absent, he visited with Conzié) and to Lyons (where he spent three days, probably calling on all his friends and acquaintances). Continuing his voyage by ship to Marseilles, he found himself caught in a three-week quarantine in Genoa. Preferring not to remain with the passengers, he spent two happy weeks isolated in a lazaretto, playing Robinson Crusoe. When Jonville, French Envoy in Genoa, became aware of the presence of a member of the diplomatic staff in his city, he had Rousseau released and welcomed him cordially into his home. Jonville's secretary, Dupont, befriended the young man (as was befitting under the circumstances), introducing him to various Genoans. Rousseau limits his Confessions description of Dupont, a young but experienced professional diplomat, to a rather patronizing "bon garçon," adding,

"je liai avec lui connaissance, et correspondance partially personal, partially professional, que nous entretenmes fort longtemps."¹ Jonville was away from Genoa during most of Rousseau's sojourn in Venice, which put Rousseau in close epistolary relations with Dupont, who called Rousseau "mon cher ami" (receiving in reply only "mon cher confrère"). When Rousseau later complained to Dupont about his health, Dupont (who had serious health problems of his own, apparently suffering from tuberculosis) sympathized affectionately. Intoxicated by delusions of grandeur, Rousseau seems to have taken this obliging but mediocre young man for granted.

The quarantine over, Rousseau resumed his trip, sight-seeing along the way, and arrived in Venice in early September, to find the ambassador awaiting impatiently.

The most brilliant society in eighteenth-century Italy, Venice was a republic smaller in population (c. 137,000) than Savoy and, unlike the lively little kingdom, in a state of moral and political decadence characterized by a lack of effective leadership and a great deal of corruption and intrigue in all walks of life and, as in Paris, countless parasites, tolerated only through their wit and conversational skills and amusing qualities. Not militarily-oriented, Venice was slumbering in a long peace, concentrating on pleasure and civilization, still outstanding in the fragile graces of art, music and elegance. The republic presented to the newcomer a startling contrast of wealth and poverty, similar to that of Paris. As during his most recent Parisian residence, however, Rousseau saw only Venice's brilliant side.

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 295.

With the exception of its music, Rousseau was blind to the republic's esthetic beauties as such, but rather observed them as symbols of social status. Unlike the epicurean Savoyards and Lyonnais, Venetians had the passion of sensation and ostentation, often at the expense of the creature comforts dear to Rousseau's heart. Venetians had a love of luxury and magnificence and delighted in flaunting it. Beautiful and rich palaces of marble and elegant gardens with fountains, statues and ménageries were part of the sumptuous life enjoyed by Venice's wealthy. However, the splendid gowns of the Venetian ladies and the fine tapestries in the homes were often soiled and threadbare, and sanitary services in the republic were non-existent, majestic buildings stinking of garbage and human and animal excrement.

Nobility (some 2.5% of the population) held all the social and political power. A strong family spirit and severe hierarchy reigned in the noble caste, according honor to seniority and fortune, with ruined nobles (Barnabotti) living off gambling, intrigues and other miserable expedients. Venetian aristocrats did not offer open-house as did the Parisians, seldom inviting even visiting nobles to dinner, and their attractive, coquettish wives and daughters were either carefully chaperoned or altogether hidden away; thus Rousseau would have little opportunity to insinuate himself into their intimacy. However, their presence undoubtedly made itself felt from a hierarchical viewpoint, contributing to the obsession for social status Rousseau was to experience during his Venetian sojourn.

Indeed, demonstrations of status were an integral part of Venetian life. Nobles, upon meeting, were very demonstrative of the honor they were obliged to accord each other, bowing to the floor, even kissing the

hands of those they were courting. Clothing was especially symbolic of honor and may well have influenced Rousseau's later Armenian costume. The old Venetian noble dress was the veste patrizia, a sort of Roman toga donned at the age of twenty as the symbol of nobility: a simple cassock falling to the floor, with wide sleeves. The winter version was lined in fur, the summer model made of silk. Colors were black, violet, red or cream, with the highest nobles wearing purple, richly embroidered in gold and gems. The veste patrizia was worn only in ducal palaces but could be seen in portraits.

A more popular eighteenth-century noble robe was the tabarro, a great wide floor-length coat with rolled collar, in black, gray, beige or scarlat, sometimes worn with a large fur muff. French wigs and clothing styles were becoming popular and were well made (as Rousseau himself remarked) and would be worn under the sumptuous tabarro.

Military uniforms, always a subject of Rousseau's covetous interest, were also very handsome in Venice, whose young officers were elegant and impressive, if not outstandingly effective soldiers.

Great ceremony accompanied Venetian activities. Church services were very showy, with much music incorporated into the ceremony. The Doge's appearance, carried on a golden chair, was accompanied by banners, six long trumpets (so long a child had to hold up the end of each instrument) playing a fanfare, followed by the cortège of his noble following. Periodic holidays, especially the carnival, satisfied the Venetian taste for ostentation. Lasting all winter, it was a perpetual holiday, with pompous processions, costumes, masks, theatrical performances, circus acts, street spectacles and fireworks.

Even Venice's many theatres were a place to see others and be seen, to converse, to eat, to carry on love intrigues or to gamble, to the accompaniment of the performance. Salon life was highly important and outdoor life practically non-existent. Relatively liberated women, society games and gambling (a Venetian passion) attracted the men indoors, as did the popular casini, conversation and gambling houses all over the city but particularly around the Plaza San Marco.

Finally, music -- particularly rich in eighteenth-century Italy -- was everywhere. The wealthy spent freely on music, and singing and instruments were heard regularly on the street.

The French Embassy in Venice was totally without diplomatic importance and stood as a mere symbol of international goodwill. The ambassador's only duty was to see that Venetian neutrality continued. A position on the embassy staff was then either a stepping-stone or a political "plum" and not, in either case, to be taken too seriously by an ambitious and sensual young man. Rousseau made the mistake of seeing it both ways -- trying to please both sides of his personality at the same time -- and of doing what the Abbé Gaime had long ago warned him to avoid: approaching a new position with too much hot-headed zeal and too-obvious ambition. Rousseau's main duty should have been to get along with the ambassador's staff and, particularly, with the ambassador. This he seems to have done successfully at the beginning and to have found time to enjoy friendship and a myriad of social activities.

At first, Rousseau was deeply troubled by personal concerns. His health, since Chambéry a subject of anxiety, gave him a new scare and he

once again saw himself as dying. (The Confessions report, "La fatigue du voyage et les terribles chaleurs que j'avais souffertes me donnèrent une ardeur d'urine et des maux de reins que je gardai jusqu'à l'entrée de l'hiver."¹) He also felt lonely and insecure and called out plaintively for reassurance. Not having heard from Mme. de Warens, he became nervous and wrote to Conzié, imploring his friend to end his doubts: "Rendez-moi, Monsieur, [le service] de me donner des nouvelles de ma pauvre Maman; je ne déguise rien, Monsieur, je vous en supplie, je m'attends à tout, je souffre déjà tous les maux que je peux prévoir; et la pire de toutes les nouvelles pour moi, c'est de n'en recevoir aucune."² Two weeks later, he wrote Mme. de Warens that he needed letters from her "sans quoi je suis tout à fait mort," concluding: "O mille fois, chère Maman, il me semble déjà qu'il y a un siècle que je ne vous ai vue. En vérité, je ne puis vivre loin de vous."³

Then he suddenly adjusted. The work was not difficult, nor was it time-consuming or even much of a challenge. Rousseau worked "every day a good part of the morning and on mail days [Saturdays] sometimes until midnight."⁴ Most of the time, then, was devoted to study and amusement. Frequentation of a merry group of witty and well-educated, well-born young men, bons vivants rather than philosophers, was his sweetest pleasure in Venice. As early as November 23, he wrote, "Je me suis pris d'amitié si

¹Ibid., p. 361.

²C.C. I, No. 59 (September 21, 1743), p. 194.

³C.C. I, No. 62, pp. 198-199.

⁴Confessions, O.C. I, pp. 305-6. (Translation and italics mine.) In all fairness to Rousseau, the Venetian "morning" did last till afternoon, followed by a meal and a siesta.

intimement avec le secrétaire [de l'ambassade d'Espagne] que nous sommes inséparables, de façon qu'on ne voit rien à Venise de si uni que les deux maisons de France et d'Espagne. J'ai un peu dérangé ma philosophie pour me mettre comme les autres, de sorte que je cours la place et les spectacles en masque et en bahutte toute aussi fièrement que si j'avais passé toute ma vie dans cet équipage."¹ The "inseparable" friend was François-Xavier de Carrio, described by Rousseau as a very amiable and bright young man. Other friends were Frenchmen Jean LeBlond (the French Consul in Venice) and St. Cyr, Spaniards Altuna and Fagoaga, a gentleman from the nearby Friuli country whose name escaped Rousseau at the writing of the Confessions but of whom he said, "of all the men I have known in my life [he was] the one whose heart most resembled mine,"² and finally two or three witty and well-educated Englishmen. All men had wives or mistresses, nearly all charming and talented, at whose homes they enjoyed music, dancing and some gambling. Once Rousseau played magician and told his friends' fortunes. They regularly attended concerts, opera and the theatre. Rousseau had the pleasure of hearing two of his compositions played by the St. Chrysostome orchestra. He rode in his own embassy gondola and had boxes in all the city's theatres at his disposal. He became enamored with Italian music, sometimes leaving the box in which his friends were chattering, eating and playing cards, to devote himself to the aural magic alone and undistracted.

Venice's abundant night life was, of course, legendary. Rousseau

¹C.C. I, No. 71, Rousseau to Countess de Montaigu, pp. 212-213.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 313. (Translation mine.)

regularly frequented the all-night cafés in the Piazza San Marco. In imitation of his friends and colleagues, he was spending freely, considering himself as "forced" to live well in order to keep up with his companions and uphold the dignity of his position. As his salary was meager,¹ Rousseau encountered great difficulty maintaining a living standard even vaguely approaching that of his friends. His expenses were primarily in the line of elegant clothing (a lifelong weakness) and music, so inexpensive in Venice that he could rent a harpsichord and, occasionally, four or five musicians to execute his favorite Italian pieces and some of his own compositions. He failed to take advantage of Venice's infamous prostitutes, nor did he seem interested in seeking a wife. Carrio, on the other hand, was a playboy. Tired of playing the field, and as Rousseau's best friend, he proposed that they "keep" a woman together. Rousseau consented. The difficulty in Venice being to find a woman without venereal disease, they selected a very young temptress, "blond and sweet as a lamb," whose mother was trying to prostitute her. While waiting for little Anzoletta to come of age, at which time they would reap the benefits of their investment, they procured a spinet and music teacher for her and spent evenings "chatting and playing very innocently" in her company. Rousseau describes his sentiments, which he attributes to Carrio as well: "Insensiblement mon coeur s'attachait à la petite Anzoletta, mais d'un attachement paternel, auquel les sens avaient si

¹The French ambassador was unusually tight-fisted with his employees. Carrio, holding a similar position at the Spanish embassy, earned a much greater salary than Rousseau's, perhaps thanks to his higher social standing.

peu de part qu'à mesure qu'il augmentait il m'aurait été moins possible de les y faire entrer, et je sentais que j'aurais eu horreur d'approcher de cette fille devenue nubile, comme d'un inceste abominable."¹ (By this time, a pattern has become evident, whereby Rousseau comes to classify all his love-objects as mother-, sister- or daughter-figures, thus subconsciously forming an insurmountable barrier to normal sexual relations, from which he shrank for various reasons already discussed.)

Rousseau did have two sexual encounters of sorts in Venice, recounted in the Confessions (perhaps partially designed to draw the attention away from the moral implications of the episode concerning the charming "Lolita"). Pursued at a dinner party by a luscious flashing-eyed prostitute named Zuletta, Rousseau was burning with desire for the high-spirited young woman who, significantly, treated him like a baby.² In her bedroom she appeared all the more desirable, and Rousseau was preparing to taste the delights of the gods when he suddenly found himself embarrassingly impotent. He sat down and wept like a baby. The cause of the tears, he said, was her beauty combined with her promiscuity.

"Ou mon coeur me trompe, fascine mes sens et me rend la dupe d'une indigne

¹Ibid., p. 323.

²"Elle prit possession de moi comme d'un homme à elle, me donnait à garder ses gants, son éventail, son cinda, sa coëffe; m'ordinnait d'aller ici ou là, de faire ceci ou cela, et j'obéissais. Elle me dit d'aller renvoyer sa gondole parce qu'elle voulait se servir de la mienne, et j'y fus: elle me dit de m'ôter de ma place et de prier Carrio de s'y mettre, parce qu'elle avait à lui parler, et je le fis. Ils causèrent très longtemps ensemble et tout bas; je les laissai faire. Elle m'appela, je revins." Ibid., p. 319.

salope," he reasoned, "ou il faut que quelque défaut secret que j'ignore détruise l'effet de ses charmes et la rende odieuse à ceux qui devraient se la disputer. Ja me mis à chercher ce défaut avec une contention d'esprit singulière ..."¹ It was not venereal disease that he feared nor had he ceased to desire her, he said. She aroused him again, but the incident repeated itself, this time with the result that Rousseau found the imperfection he had sought: "... Je m'aperçus qu'elle avait un téton borgne. Je me frappe, j'examine, je crois voir que ce téton n'est pas conformé comme l'autre. Me voilà cherchant dans ma tête comment on peut avoir un téton borgne, et persuadé que cela tenait à quelque notable vice naturel, à force de tourner et retourner cette idée, je vis clair comme le jour que dans la plus charmante personne dont je pusse me former l'image, je ne tenais dans mes bras qu'une espèce de monstre, le rebut de la nature, des hommes, et de l'amour."² Rousseau had the bad taste to ask her about it. She wisecracked lasciviously, but he sought reassurance, not vulgarity. Seeing his hesitancy, she became angry, and, as he approached her, uttered the immortal words: "Zanetto, lascia le donne, e studia la matematica." Later, reflecting, he could only think of her desirability and his own madness. Before leaving, he had made a new appointment, but, arriving for the rendez-vous two days later, he learned that she had left for Florence. From that moment on, he missed her terribly, but more from shame than from desire: "Si je n'avais pas senti tout mon amour en la possédant je le sentis bien cruelle-

¹Ibid., p. 321.

²Ibid., pp. 321-2.

ment en la perdant. Mon regret insensé ne m'a point quitté. Toute aimable, toute charmante qu'elle était à mes yeux, je pouvais me consoler de la perdre; mais de quoi je n'ai pu me consoler, je l'avoue, c'est qu'elle n'ait emporté de moi qu'un souvenir méprisant."¹

Rousseau fared better with La Padoana, beautiful but not his type; however, in the long run, she caused him infinitely greater anxiety. He called on her, he said, because he had been urged to do so by the men at the embassy and had been to ashamed to admit his terror of contracting venereal disease. After the encounter, he was certain that the worse had happened. He panicked. "Rien ne peut égaler le mal-aise d'esprit que je souffris durant trois semaines sans qu'aucune incommodité réelle, aucun signe apparent le justifiât. Je ne pouvais concevoir qu'on put sortir impunément des bras de la Padoana." He sent for a doctor. "Le chirurgien lui-même eut toute la peine imaginable à me rassurer. Il n'en put venir à bout qu'en me persuadant que j'étais conformé d'une façon particulière, à ne pouvoir pas aisément être infecté ... "²

Obviously, Rousseau was not made for a life of such heady pleasures.

In spite of all the distractions, Rousseau did a satisfactory job at the embassy. He made a good first impression on the ambassador and got along well with the French members of the staff, particularly the second secretary, the Abbé Binis. He worked well and carefully, which was difficult for him since he was admittedly careless and absent-minded. Clearly ambitious, he took the trouble to study the profession in which he counted on rapid advancement.

¹Ibid., p. 322.

²Ibid., p. 317.

At the same time, his current status was a subject of extreme concern. The question of social rank obsessed him. His entire reputation seemed to hinge on his pretention to being Number One in the embassy after the ambassador, with precedence over the Italian noblemen. (This partially accounts for his showy life-style.) In spite of his rational taste for the philosophy of moderation, the lesson had not gotten through to his heart, and this was, in a sense, to be his initiation to the realities of life. So far, he was still playing make-believe. He tried, as usual, to "succeed" through heroism, seeking to distinguish himself as a reformer. For example, he maintained diplomatic immunity at the embassy but refused to extend its protection to shady characters. He reformed the passport tax, abolished the practice of charging French citizens for the issuance of passports, but faithfully enforced the tax to foreigners, even influential Venetians who normally were exempted from such charges. His reforms appear somewhat heavy-handed, potentially dangerous affairs, the kind of policy that makes fierce enemies and requires a strong, well-balanced individual to carry out successfully. When theatrical performers refused to leave Venice to fulfill an engagement in Paris, Rousseau forced them to do so by personally calling on the Venetian theatre-manager in embassy gondola and forcing the performers' dismissal, thus obliging them to go to Paris. On another occasion, a French merchant ship was held incommuniqué by the Venetian government. Rousseau affirms (although this point is disputed) that no one dared help the captain, fearing to displease the Venetian senate. Rousseau took the action that freed the ship.

Rousseau's comportment following this latter affair is revelatory. The grateful captain wanted to give him a gift but he refused, accepting instead an invitation to dinner in his honor. He attended with the "inseparable" Carrio, happy to offer his friend the spectacle of his glorification. On approaching the ship, he was "mortified" to find himself deprived of a canon salute, although "sur les vaisseaux marchands on accordait le salut du canon à des gens qui ne nous valaient certainement pas" and "d'ailleurs je croyais avoir mérité quelque distinction du capitaine." The insult made Rousseau furious. "Je ne pus me déguiser parce que cela m'est toujours impossible, et quoique le dîner fût très bon et qu[e le capitaine] fit très bien les honneurs, je le commençai de mauvaise humeur, mangeant peu, et parlant encore moins."¹ With the pouring of the wine, he again vainly awaited a salute in his honor. "Carrio qui me lisait dans l'âme riait de me voir grogner comme un enfant."

In the embassy, Rousseau saw to it that his various official correspondents were apprised of his efficiency. (The Mme. de Vercellis adventure was repeating itself, minus the Abbé Gaime.) "J'avoue," he confesses, "que je ne fuyais pas l'occasion de me faire connaître, mais je ne la cherchais pas non plus hors de propos, et il me paraissait fort juste en servant bien d'aspirer au prix naturel des bons services, qui est l'estime de ceux qui sont en état d'en juger et de les récompenser."² People began to compliment the ambassador on his excellent secretary. Rousseau

¹Ibid., p. 318.

²Ibid., p. 307.

felt this made the ambassador jealous, and it certainly did not fail to displease the man but appeared to him as a sign of Rousseau's insolence rather than his superiority, since it did not occur to the ambassador that a commoner could be considered a man, much less threaten an aristocrat in matters of personal merit. This reaction is explained by the ambassador's character. Fifty-one-year-old Pierre-François, Count de Montaigu, was a third-rate ambassador filling a second-rate Post. Retired from a successful career as military officer, he had procured the ambassadorial position through family connections with Fleury. Montaigu had no more diplomatic talent than he had experience. (He did not even speak Italian.) Lacking perception and leadership qualities, he combined a dangerous weakness of character with a touchy Pride. Had he not lacked the intelligence and sensitivity, he might have resembled his illustrious secretary in this respect. As is, he recalls Abel Ducommun, Rousseau's childhood master, except that Ducommun was obliged to work for a living, while Montaigu depended largely on his staff to perform his duties, except for the ceremonial obligations, yet at the same time entertained the intransigent bigotry of the nobility, refusing to recognize a commoner's right to honor and dignity. He quarreled with many. His first secretary, as we have seen, did not reach Venice, accused of smuggling. Rousseau's successor was to last only several years, and would be dismissed as unfaithful and a smuggler, after having fleeced his employer for a great deal of money. Soon after Montaigu's arrival in Venice, the undiplomatic diplomat quarreled with

the French Consul, making a permanent enemy out of LeBlond.¹ (On this occasion, Montaigu had taken the function of Embassy secretary from LeBlond and given it to Rousseau, although Rousseau exaggerated in his mind the importance of the title of "secretary to the embassy," scarcely differentiated in the eighteenth century from that of "secretary to the ambassador.") Finally, on Montaigu's departure from Venice, a few years later, the ambassador would be lapidated by his servants for not having paid them sufficiently.

It is doubtful that Rousseau would have won Montaigu's protection however he played his cards. The ambassador was too egotistical to be philanthropic, a man to be taken by force of hypocrisy, both of which required the validation of nobility, and neither of which fell within Rousseau's sphere of capability. The Spanish Ambassador, for example, seems to have taken Montaigu by force. The two men were as inseparable as their respective secretaries, and Rousseau felt that Montaigu was Mari's puppet, adding that, fortunately, Mari gave him good advice.² On the contrary, Montaigu's second Italian gentleman, Domenico Vitali, seems to have gained prestige in the embassy through base hypocrisy.

Montaigu's blind intolerance, pig-headedness and downright disagreeable character was, for Rousseau, cause for indignation, just as Rousseau's

¹Montaigu had demanded that LeBlond take dictation from the secretary of the Venetian Senate. Feeling this symbolic humiliation was beneath his office, LeBlond had refused. Montaigu never forgave the Consul. Later, discovering that one of his gentlemen whom LeBlond had happened to recommend was involved in smuggling (the vice of the diplomatic profession in Venice at that time), Montaigu became openly hostile to his colleague. Both LeBlond and Montaigu consistently attacked each other in their routine messages to Paris.

²Rousseau's judgment is perhaps harsh. It has been pointed out that Montaigu's instructions were to cultivate Mari as a public symbol of the solidarity between France and Spain.

temper, conceit and insolence were unspeakably shocking to Montaignu. (One is reminded of young Voltaire and the Chevalier de Rohan.) For example, when Rousseau proudly told Montaignu about his passport reform, naïvely expecting praise and admiration, the ambassador angrily demanded half of the profits from the remaining passports. Rousseau refused. Meals (as we have observed, an important honor-symbol for Rousseau) were unsatisfactory at the embassy. Rousseau complained: "Dans la plus vilaine gargote on est servi plus proprement, plus décentement, en linge moins sale, et l'on a mieux à manger. On nous donnait une seule petite chandelle bien noire, des assiettes d'étain, des fourchettes de fer."¹ Retorted the ambassador: "Il lui fallait toujours un poulet ou un pigeon pour qu'il pût souper."²

The narrow-minded Montaignu was a source of frustration but member of no rare species, and Rousseau, accustomed to stormy relationships, could carry out his personal public relations campaign without his employer's help. Vitali, however, was another story. The Italian gentleman handily usurped weak-charactered Rousseau's position as Number One. " ... A force de patelinage et de basse lésine, [Vitali] obtint [1]a confiance [de Montaignu] et devint son favori."³ This was Vitali's crime.

In charge of the embassy facilities (Mme. de Montaignu had remained in Paris), the gentleman introduced a quantity of dubious and immodest

¹Ibid., p. 309.

²C.C. II, No. 122, Montaignu to Abbé Pierre-Joseph Alary (August 15, 1744), p. 53.

³Confessions, O.C. I, p. 307.

characters -- or so they appeared -- until Rousseau could not stand to be inside the building. (The secretary even discreetly tried to induce Mme. de Montaigu to join her husband, convinced that the presence of a woman would restore order and dignity to the embassy -- and improve his own situation as well.) To Rousseau, Vitali was a crafty, heartless méchant and a threat to his own well-being. The two were as incompatible as Alceste and Tartuffe. Indeed Montaigu and Vitali both represented a very real obstacle to the accomplishment of Rousseau's ambitions -- but this was real-life, wherein such problems must be expected and dealt with.

Rousseau could endure frustration except where his honor or liberty were threatened. There he remained intransigent. The entire embassy staff had cause for complaint; however, Rousseau saw himself as having been singled out for dishonor, with Vitali as the cause of it. "Dominique, la seule cause de tout, criait le plus haut [contre les injustices perpétrées par Montaigu], sachant bien que l'indécence avec laquelle nous étions traités m'était plus sensible qu'à tous les autres."¹ When Vitali publicly refused to give Rousseau a theatre key he had requested, a valet delivering the humiliating message "in front of everybody," Rousseau forced Vitali to publicly apologize, which the man did with oily obsequiousness.

The Venice honeymoon, then, was soon finished. In September, the gondola (status symbol) quarrel began. Rousseau requested sitting above Montaigu's gentlemen in the embassy gondola. Montaigu refused. Montaigu

¹Ibid., p. 309. (Italics mine.)

confiscated Rousseau's personal gondola. Rousseau complained. (" ... Seul de tous les secrétaires d'ambassadeurs, j'étais forcé d'en louer une ou d'aller à pied, et je n'avais plus la livrée de S.E. quand j'allais au Sénat."¹) Montaignu ordered Rousseau to come to his country house by means of public transportation. Rousseau failed to appear. Said Montaignu, " ... Il me répondit avec un ton de maître, que cette voiture était bonne pour des valets, mais non pas pour un homme comme lui."² Rousseau complained about the gondola question. The vehicle was restored to him... A childish and ridiculous war in an embassy teapot! Having been attacked at his point of vulnerability (social inequality), Rousseau would return the attack at the ambassador's point of weakness (natural inequality). In dictation, Rousseau would sit on the ambassador's overstuffed chair instead of the straight chair beside the desk. As Montaignu would hesitate in dictation, seeking a word that had escaped him, Rousseau would pick up a book and begin to read or sit and look at his employer with an expression of pity.

The final straw was a dinner-table point of honor. Montaignu had instructed his entire staff not to appear at the table on the day of an important formal dinner for a duke. Rousseau objected. This audacity made the ambassador's hair stand on end. He thought his secretary had gone mad. To close the matter, the ambassador cruelly insulted Rousseau, mentioning with scorn the latter's lack of nobility and implying that he was not susceptible to honor. Rousseau held firm: "Il me répondit," said Montaignu, " ... qu'il était bon pour manger avec tout le monde;

¹Ibid., p. 309.

²C.C. II, No. 122, Montaignu to Alary (August 15, 1744), p. 51.

qu'il n'était avec moi que sur ce pied-là."¹

Rousseau's insolence, carelessness and indifference for his work mounted, once he realized that any effort he made to ingratiate himself with the French ambassador was a waste of time. (One is reminded of his experiences at Bossey and during apprenticeship.) Several examples give insight into his character. An anecdote² has Montaignu asking Rousseau to write a letter to a French gentleman, with Rousseau responding by writing, first, an overly-submissive letter which Montaignu refused to sign, then an arrogant and impertinent letter which left his employer gasping and sputtering with indignation. Again, Rousseau is said to have had a letter which the ambassador had dictated to him written by Binis. When Montaignu asked why, Rousseau is said to have laughed sarcastically and said that Binis' handwriting was better than his, upon which Montaignu is said to have made him recopy the whole thing as punishment.

Montaignu's answer to his secretary's mauvais caractère was to give Rousseau's "little prerogatives" to Vitali and to use Binis exclusively for his correspondence.

Rousseau's actions were to some extent justified. The termination of his employment had been mutually agreed upon. (Rousseau had already begun cultivating Paris connections in preparation for his return to the capital, observing that the Venice air was bad for his health.) Months had passed, yet Montaignu had steadfastly refused to allow his secretary to leave. The fact is, Montaignu was having difficulty finding a replacement. At the same time, the ambassador (as was his custom) was publicly

¹Ibid., p. 51.

²Told by J.L.M. DuGas DuBois, Marquis de St. Just, echoing Montaignu. Cited in C.C. II, Appendix A-56, p. 279.

slandering his secretary. Rousseau finally had to write a letter of complaint to Montaignu's brother in Paris.¹

Instead of replying, the brother wrote to the ambassador. This time Montaignu exploded. (In the meantime, he had found a new secretary anyway.) A violent quarrel ensued, during which Montaignu gravely insulted his secretary. "A la vérité," he admitted, "ma tête s'échauffa ... et je lui dis qu'il aurait été un temps qu'un insolent comme lui serait sorti de mon cabinet par la fenêtre; que la mendicité dans laquelle je l'avais pris à Paris aurait dû nous faire penser de lui, l'ami qui me l'avait donné et moi, tout autrement que nous avons fait; qu'il avait toutes les qualités d'un fort mauvais valet..."² Rousseau said he had locked the door of the office to protect himself from the ambassador's men and to place the quarrel on an equal-to-equal level.

Directly after the encounter, Rousseau left the embassy, not even stopping to collect his belongings. (Montaignu had threatened to send his men after him and he was not taking any chances.) He went to

¹In this letter, after respectfully describing Montaignu's public slander, Rousseau gives his irreproachable conduct as evidence of his innocence, adding with determination: "... Rien ne répugne plus à mon caractère que l'indiscrétion et les plaintes téméraires contre les supérieurs; aussi une sottise et mauvaise crainte ne m'empêchera-t-elle jamais de maintenir ma réputation quand je la croirai exposée." C.C. I, No. 88, Rousseau to Louis-Gabriel-Christophe, Chevalier de Montaignu (April 30, 1744), pp. 233-234. A variation of this text (of which we have only a much-corrected draft) continues: "Hors ce seul cas-là, j'espère que cela n'arrivera point et je compte encore assez sur la bonté de S.E. pour me flatter que dans le fond elle rendra toujours la justice que je crois être due aux sentiments d'honneur dont je fais profession ..."

²C.C. II, No. 122, p. 52.

LeBlond's, who welcomed the opportunity to side with the young man against his own enemy. At dinner that night, LeBlond's guests expressed their shock and sympathy. "On avait vu et approuvé ma conduite," said Rousseau; "j'étais universellement estimé."¹ Nevertheless, Rousseau was broke and on the pavement. He had to borrow money to pay his bills and leave Venice and was to work for a long time before he would be back on his feet. Montaignu had not paid his salary regularly and now refused to settle accounts with him, on the grounds that Rousseau had falsified his expense sheet, was an Austrian spy and a smuggler!²

During his last days in Venice, Rousseau had reason to fear for his safety. Montaignu had him pursued from house to house, forbidding the owners to lodge the young man. The ambassador sent some of his men to beat Rousseau with a stick. He held Rousseau's belongings and warned the young man to get out of town, twice formally requesting the Venetian Senate to order the expulsion. In a contemporary dispatch to Paris, Montaignu remarked, "Je juge que je serai obligé d'en user avec violence."³

Panic-stricken, Rousseau left Venice in terror and despair, to avoid "des traitements infâmes auxquels un homme d'honneur ne survit pas."⁴

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 313.

²It is not impossible that Rousseau falsified some passports for smuggling purposes, as was customary, although no evidence of this exists. The Austrian spy accusation is, of course, preposterous. The expense account problem appears to have been the result of a misunderstanding.

³C.C. II, No. 122, p. 53.

⁴C.C. II, No. 121, Rousseau to Jean Gabriel Le Porte Du Theil (August 15, 1744), p. 48.

He would gladly have chucked it all and returned to Geneva and, eventually, to Mama's to live "poor and free," had not his honor been at stake. Immediately following the quarrel, he had lodged at the home of the Chancellor of the French Consulate, "pour bien prouver au public que la nation n'était pas complice des injustices de l'ambassadeur."¹ Montaignu had written to Paris complaining about Rousseau, and Rousseau felt obliged to demand repair. Leaving aside his personal differences with his employer, which he (unlike Montaignu) recognized to be a private matter, Rousseau directed to Du Theil, French Commissioner of Foreign Affairs, a request that his publicly-attacked honor be satisfied. "Le soin de mon honneur et la réparation qui m'est due font ... l'unique objet de mon voyage [à Paris]," he said.² In his own defense, he cited his position as inferior and consequent inability to defend himself alone; the honnête gens' favorable opinion of him (particularly that of official French agents in Venice and Genoa); and, finally, his clear conscience and impeccable reputation (giving Jonville's name and Lyons, Geneva and Venice references). He accuses Montaignu of being "quelqu'un qui, sentant ses injustices, croit les effacer en décrivant celui qui en est victime, et prétend à l'abri de son titre déshonorer impunément son inférieur."³ Rousseau's case concludes by asking the king for punishment

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 312.

²C.C. II, No. 127, Rousseau to Du Theil (letter "reconstituted" by Rousseau in 1763) (September 8, 1744), p. 62.

³C.C. II, No. 127, p. 62.

"if I am guilty," but for protection and justice of innocent, "la satisfaction qui m'est due sur les injustices criantes et les outrages sanglants par lesquels Monsieur l'Ambassadeur a prétendu signaler contre moi son autorité en diffamant un homme d'honneur qui n'a de faute à se reprocher à son sujet que d'être dans sa maison."¹

Rousseau's fear is clear: the loss of his reputation, on which depended the sort of precedence to which he aspired so passionately.² His goal was more obscure. To Mama he spoke of the hope to "m'en venger un jour en ... faisant voir [à Montaigne], non seulement que je vaux mieux, mais que je suis plus estimé que lui."³ Of Du Theil, he requested "votre protection et quelque marque de bonté de votre part qui puisse me réhabiliter aux yeux du public"⁴ -- perhaps another diplomatic assignment?

The complaint was not studied very closely, and Du Theil never replied. Rousseau's request for back-salary was eventually satisfied, but his honor was left unavenged. Du Theil was busy with court, state and military affairs. The king was very sick and thought to be dying; a week

¹C.C. II, No. 121, pp. 48-9.

²"... Que pensera le public qui, content de juger sur les apparences, se donne rarement la peine d'examiner si celui qu'on maltraite l'a mérité? C'est aux personnes qui aiment l'équité, et qui sont en droit d'approfondir les choses, de réparer en cela l'injustice du public et d'y rétablir l'honneur d'un honnête homme qui compte sa vie pour rien quand il a perdu sa réputation." C.C. II, No. 129, Rousseau to Du Theil (October 11, 1744), p. 67.

³C.C. II, No. 132, Rousseau to Mme. de Warens (February 25, 1745), p. 75.

⁴C.C. II, No. 129, p. 68.

before Rousseau's letter was received, he had been administered extreme unction. Rousseau was a foreigner, not a Frenchman, and, anyway, what was there to do? Rousseau was left with the bitter feeling that he had been a victim of social injustice, the master favored at the expense of the servant, but that the public voice had expressed itself justly in his favor. Thus he learned that the Establishment was no more infallible than the Intelligentsia. "La justice et l'inutilité de mes plaintes me laissèrent dans l'âme un germe d'indignation contre nos sottes institutions civiles où le vrai bien public et la véritable justice sont toujours sacrifiés à je ne sais quel ordre apparent, destructif en effet de tout ordre, et qui ne fait qu'ajouter la sanction de l'autorité publique à l'oppression du faible et à l'iniquité du fort."¹ Already in Lyons, according to Hendel,² Rousseau had come to realize that study alone is insufficient formation for a man and that the correct moral disposition must precede the search for knowledge. Now, Hendel continues, the moral importance of political institutions was becoming more and more evident.³ In Venice, Rousseau had contemplated a comprehensive study to be called Political Institutions. Like Plato's Socrates -- a man "fallen among wild beasts" -- Rousseau was beginning to blame the State for his misfortunes.

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 327.

²Jean-Jacques Rousseau Moraliste (Oxford: Oxford, 1934), 2 vols.

³Thus the moral evolution during Rousseau's formative years, again according to Hendel, proceeded from an interest in knowledge per se to an interest in character formation (education) to an interest in the moral rôle of society (politics).

Rousseau returned to France in shame and humiliation. He left Venice in August, 1744, and proceeded slowly to Paris, making much of the trip on foot, sightseeing and experiencing "little adventures" along the way (diverting enough to cause him to plan to write their description, a project which unfortunately never took place). He failed to stop in Chambéry, as he had on his proud trip to Venice, nor did he plan to call on his father, fearing the adverse judgment of his blind, elderly stepmother, "certain that she would judge me without being willing to listen to me."¹ A mutual friend, bookseller Duvillard, persuaded him not to leave Geneva without seeing his seventy-one-year-old father (as it turned out, for the last time), but Rousseau only consented to do so on the condition that the meeting take place in a cabaret and not in Isaac Rousseau's home. Jean-Jacques spent one or two weeks in Geneva and about the same time in Lyons on business matters and arrived in Paris in early October. There, he found himself, at thirty-two, alone, out of work and in debt. He moved into a hotel near the Palais-Royal and a month later moved in with Venice friend Altuna.

Once again he sought protection among the nobility, using his latest misfortune as he had his music system, to attract attention. ("... Qu'on daigne prendre quelques informations et vérifier les choses," he had written to Du Theil, "et j'ose croire que Monsieur le Comte de Montaigu

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 324. (Translation mine.)

m'aura sans y penser rendu service en me faisant connaître."¹ He had kept the matter to himself (for Rousseau, an extraordinary effort!) as long as his honor had not been involved, but now, in the face of slander, he saw himself as obliged to air the dirty linen in public. His imagination had, of course, blown the affair completely out of proportion. "Aujourd'hui que les procédés de Son Excellence ont rendu l'éclat nécessaire, je suis obligé d'agir différemment; insulté publiquement, la défense de mon honneur veut que je me justifie devant le public, et c'est ce que je ferai avec l'ardeur et la fermeté qui convient en pareil cas à un honnête homme," adding: "Je n'ai jamais craint l'éclat par rapport à moi-même; ma conduite ne perdra rien assurément à être exposée au grand jour, que je n'ai craint que par la peine qu'il pouvait faire à mes protecteurs."² Indeed, his "little story" proved momentarily diverting to high society, always avid for distraction from its chronic boredom; however, in the long run, a scandal of this sort is profoundly distasteful to the French mentality. Nonetheless, Rousseau cried out against Montaigne, as if it were of vital interest to himself and to the public, rendering slander for slander, just as he had done against the Jew in Torino (and half expecting to be again told to shut up, according to his own account). The salon world politely encouraged Rousseau and ostensibly agreed with him, but no one offered any material contribution to his honor's repair.

Rousseau was unusually touchy at this time. He lost two "friends" on this occasion. Rank-conscious Mme. de Bezenval received him icily,

¹C.C. II, No. 129, p. 67. (Italics mine.)

²C.C. II, No. 119, Rousseau to Alary (c. August 8, 1744), pp. 41-2.

which so angered him that he wrote her a nasty letter. Father Castel's reception gave Rousseau the conviction that, behind his polite Jesuit façade, he was faithful to "one of the great principles of society, which is always to immolate the weaker to the stronger;" so Rousseau broke off relations with him, explaining: "Le vif sentiment de la justice de ma cause et ma fierté naturelle ne me laissèrent pas endurer patiemment cette partialité."¹

He was still seeking his dream-castle: wealthy "parents," an honored, honor-conferring "family," status and creature comforts, rather than wealth and power. In a letter to a would-be protector, he called himself "un Suisse qui ne connaît de vrais hommages que ceux du coeur" and "un malade un peu misanthrope qui renonce à toute vue d'ambition pour ne se livrer qu'au sentiment."² Alone in Paris, with no family with which to relate (ties with the Dupins had loosened for a while and Mama, to whom he still envisaged an eventual return, was far away) and problems to get off his chest, he had an overwhelming need for friendship. The presence in Paris, then, of a friend, twenty-year-old Don Manuel Ignacio Altuna y Portu, was highly gratifying. Rousseau had met Altuna in Venice through a friend of the "inseparable" Carrio. The young, wealthy Spanish nobleman, having completed his studies in Madrid, was rounding out his education with a cultural tour of Italy,³ before returning to take residence

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 326.

²C.C. II, No. 111, Rousseau to (?) (perhaps Richelieu) (July 25, 1744), p. 31.

³Rousseau later hoped to make a similar trip around Italy with several friends.

in his native Azcoitia. Rousseau had talked him into a six-month side-trip to Paris to cultivate the sciences. Altuna had left Venice shortly before Rousseau and was in Paris on Rousseau's arrival. An offer of lodging was for Rousseau (already a past-master of opportunism) a comparatively easy matter. "Son logement était trop grand pour lui; il m'en offrit la moitié, je l'acceptai."¹

Following Abraham Bernard and Mme. de Warens, Altuna's is the third great friendship experience painted in the Confessions. The major part of Rousseau's description revolves around the admirably noble qualities of "this amiable young man, born for all talents and all virtues," "un de ces hommes que l'Espagne seule produit, et dont elle produit trop peu pour sa gloire."² Altuna's heroic qualities -- his good looks, "strong" and

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 327.

²Ibid., p. 328. The following is Rousseau's obviously idealized portrait of Altuna:

"Rien n'était au-dessus de sa portée; il dévorait et digérait tout avec une prodigieuse rapidité. ... Quels trésors de lumières et de vertus je trouvai dans cette âme forte! ... Il n'avait pas ces violentes passions nationales communes dans son pays. L'idée de la vengeance ne pouvait pas plus entrer dans son esprit que le désir dans son coeur. Il était trop fier pour être vindicatif, et je lui ai souvent ouï dire avec beaucoup de sang-froid qu'un mortel ne pouvait pas offenser son âme. Il était galant sans être tendre. Il jouait avec les femmes comme avec de jolis enfants. Il se plaisait avec les maîtresses de ses amis, mais je ne lui en ai jamais vu aucune, ni aucun désir d'en avoir. Les flammes de la vertu dont son coeur était dévoré ne permirent jamais à celles de ses sens de naître. Après ses voyages il s'est marié, il est mort jeune, il a laissé des enfants; et je suis persuadé comme de mon existence que sa femme est la première et la seule qui lui ait fait connaître les plaisirs de l'amour. A l'extérieur il était dévôt comme un Espagnol, mais en dedans était la piété d'un ange. Hors moi, je n'ai vu que lui seul de tolérant depuis que j'existe. Il ne s'est jamais informé d'aucun homme comment il pensait en matière de religion. Que son ami fut juif, protestant, turc, bigot, athée, peu lui importait, pourvu qu'il fut honnête homme. Obstiné, têtù pour des opinions indifférentes, dès qu'il s'agissait de religion,

"elevated" character, intellectual brilliance, cheerful nature, noble pride, angelic tolerance and super-human "virtue," outshining his few péchés mignons -- make of him a "new Cid," without violence or vengeance.

"... Le charme de l'amitié," said Rousseau, "... tempérerait et calmait ma colère [contre Montaigu] par l'ascendant d'un sentiment plus doux."¹

It was Altuna's very "nobility" which allowed this miracle to occur.

Said Rousseau, with pride: "Ce sage de coeur ainsi que de tête se connaissait en hommes et fut mon ami. C'est toute ma réponse à quiconque ne l'est pas."² The honorable Altuna's friendship, then, was more like

"même de morale, il se recueillait, se taisait, ou disait simplement: je ne suis chargé que de moi. Il est incroyable qu'on puisse associer autant d'élévation d'âme avec un esprit de détail porté jusqu'à la minutie. Il partageait et fixait d'avance l'emploi de sa journée par heures, quarts d'heure et minutes, et suivait cette distribution avec un tel scrupule que si l'heure eut sonné tandis qu'il lisait sa phrase, il eut fermé le livre sans achever. De toutes ces mesures de temps ainsi rompues, il y en avait pour telle étude, il y en avait pour telle autre; il y en avait pour la reflexion, pour la conversation, pour l'office, pour Locke, pour le rosaire, pour les visites, pour la musique, pour la peinture; et il n'y avait ni plaisir ni tentation ni complaisance qui put intervenir cet ordre. Un devoir à remplir seul l'aurait pu. Quand il me faisait la liste de ses distributions afin que je m'y conformasse, je commençais par rire, et je finissais par pleurer d'admiration. Jamais il ne gênait personne ni ne supportait la gêne; il brusquait les gens qui par politesse voulaient le gêner. Il était emporté sans être boudeur. Je l'ai vu souvent en colère, mais je ne l'ai jamais vu fâché. Rien n'était si gai que son humeur: il entendait raillerie, et il aimait à railler. Il y brillait même et il avait le talent de l'épigramme. Quand on l'animait il était bruyant et tapageur en paroles; sa voix s'entendait de loin. Mais tandis qu'il criait on le voyait sourire, et tout à travers des emportements il lui venait quelque mot plaisant qui faisait éclater tout le monde. Il avait la peau blanche, les joues colorées, les cheveux d'un chatain presque blond. Il était grand et bien fait. Son corps fut formé pour loger son âme." Ibid., pp. 327-9.

¹Ibid., p. 327.

²Ibid., p. 329.

a miraculous justification and validation than a permanent give-and-take relationship. It restored Rousseau's sense of honor and personal worth and soothed his wounded pride for the few months during which the two young men were together, which Rousseau describes as follows:

"... Nous devinmes intimes. Nos goûts n'étaient pas les mêmes: nous disputions toujours. Tous deux opiniâtres, nous n'étions jamais d'accord sur rien. Avec cela nous ne pouvions nous quitter, et tout en nous contrariant sans cesse, aucun des deux n'eut voulu que l'autre fût autrement."¹

The Confessions account fails to mention that Altuna fell seriously ill with a respiratory ailment from which the neurotic Rousseau feared he would not pull through, nor does it mention the presence in Paris of several other Spaniards, Altuna's friends, through whose influence Rousseau hoped to obtain payment of Mama's salary.²

Rousseau concludes his brief Confessions coverage of his relationship with Altuna by mentioning a plan of the type he was later to call his "castles in Spain." Several years later, the two friends were to live together in Spain, forming a "family" and spending the rest of their lives together. "Nous nous liâmes si bien que nous fîmes le projet de passer nos jours ensemble. Je devais dans quelques années aller à Ascoitia pour vivre avec lui dans sa terre."³ In a contemporary letter

¹Ibid., pp. 327-8.

²Since Savoy had been occupied by the Spanish, she had not received her pension, and her financial situation was difficult, leading her to bigger (and more disastrous) business enterprises.

³Ibid., p. 329.

to Mama, he said: "Ce bon et généreux ami est un gentilhomme espagnol assez à son aise, qui me presse d'accepter un asile dans sa maison pour y philosopher ensemble le reste de nos jours."¹ The Confessions gives the plan as failing through cruel fate, but in truth nothing really happened to stop Rousseau from carrying it out, and, although they remained in relations and corresponded from time to time, we can safely conclude that the two friends simply drifted apart.² Already, Rousseau had used Altuna's offer as "sentimental blackmail" to Mama, telling her, "Quelque conformité de goûts et de sentiments qui me lie à lui, je ne le prends point au mot, et je vous laisse à deviner pourquoi?"³ This is an early example of a technique Rousseau would use more and more often, that of making two or more simultaneous plans for future living arrangements with various friends and acquaintances and then playing them back and forth to obtain as many expressions of affection as possible.)

When Altuna left Paris, in the spring of 1745, Rousseau moved back into the Left-Bank Hotel St. Quentin where he had lived upon his arrival in Paris in 1742. There he found the woman who was to serve him as "family" for the rest of his life. With Marie-Thérèse Levasseur, Rousseau had, not the sensual friendship he had experienced with Mme.

¹C.C. II, No. 132, p. 74.

²Altuna returned to Azcoitia, where he became Alcáide in 1746, Regidor in 1747 and 8. In 1749 he married. He died in 1762 at age forty, leaving a son and a daughter.

³C.C. II, No. 132, p. 74.

de Warens, but a friendship substitute ("supplément") -- less fulfilling, certainly, but with the unquestionable advantage of being available, practicable, present. Rousseau explains:

Il me fallait à la place de l'ambition éteinte un sentiment vif qui remplit mon coeur. Il fallait, pour tout dire, un successeur à Maman; puisque je ne devais plus vivre avec elle il me fallait quelqu'un qui vécut avec son élève, et en qui je trouvasse la simplicité, la docilité de coeur qu'elle avait trouvée en moi. Il fallait que la douceur de la vie privée et domestique me dédommageât du sort brillant auquel je renonçais. Quand j'étais absolument seul mon coeur était vide, mais il n'en fallait qu'un pour le remplir. Le sort m'avait ôté, m'avait aliéné du moins en partie, celui pour lequel la nature m'avait fait. Dès lors j'étais seul, car il n'y eut jamais pour moi d'intermédiaire entre toute et rien. Je trouvais dans Thérèse le supplément dont j'avais besoin ... ¹

Youngest child of a large lower-class family from Orléans, where her mother had been a shopkeeper and her father an employee at the mint, twenty-four-year-old Thérèse was working as a maid at the hotel, supporting her aged parents. She was still enjoying her small share of the short-lived beauty common to every young girl when Rousseau first met her (quite possibly during his first stay at the hotel, three years earlier). What struck Rousseau about her, however, was her extreme gentleness and timidity. "La première fois que je vis paraître cette fille à table, je fus frappé de son maintien modeste, et plus encore de son regard vif et doux, qui pour moi n'eut jamais son semblable."² "Le doux caractère de cette bonne fille me parut si bien convenir au mien que je m'unis à elle d'un attachement à l'épreuve du temps et des torts ... "³

¹Confessions, O.C. I, pp. 331-2. Unfortunately, some critics interpret this most spiritual of needs on a purely material level.

²Ibid., p. 330.

³Ibid., p. 413.

Thérèse was indeed different. Like Rousseau, she was somewhat of a social misfit, a victim, a weakling. However, Rousseau was a genius and poor Thérèse could never learn to read, to tell time, to count money, to distinguish the months of the year... (She once took a pastor-friend of Rousseau's for the pope of Rome.)¹

Everyone at the table of the Hotel St. Quentin was making off-color remarks and teasing the young maid when Rousseau met her. Rousseau took her defense, as he always did when he saw a weakling being tormented by the strong. ("Je devins hautement son champion," he declared.) Thérèse failed to thank Rousseau for her defense against the dragons (he implied she was too modest and timid); nonetheless, she "very rapidly" became his mistress.

Rousseau stresses the fact that he never loved Thérèse. "... Du premier moment que je la vis jusqu'à ce jour je n'ai jamais senti la moindre étincelle d'amour pour elle, ... je n'ai pas plus désiré de la posséder que Mme. de Warens, et ... les besoins des sens que j'ai satisfaits auprès d'elle ont uniquement été pour moi ceux du sexe, sans avoir rien de propre à l'individu."² Rousseau ties in their mutual timidity

¹Recent studies in special education have shown that retarded women make excellent wives. Enthused one case-worker: "They enjoy staying home and doing housework. They love and adore children. They ask for nothing except whatever comes without question. They have no conception of money or monetary values. They are very affectionate and sexually uninhibited." Cited by Jill Craighead, "Letters to Ms.," Ms. (January, 1973), p. 4.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 414.

with his "conquest;" (The irony of the term did not escape him.) He seems to have instigated the action ("Je n'avais cherché d'abord qu'à me donner un amusement"¹), but with a concern for non-involvement and impunity ("Je lui déclarai d'avance que je ne l'abandonnerais ni ne l'épouserai jamais"²). Having confessed elsewhere that he had never been able to take the initiative in a love affair, he delicately sidesteps the question of her contribution to the seduction: "Le rapport de nos coeurs, le concours de nos dispositions eut bientôt son effet ordinaire. Elle crut voir en moi un honnête homme; elle ne se trompa pas. Je crus voir en elle une fille sensive, simple et sans coquetterie; je ne me trompai pas non plus. ... L'amour, l'estime, la sincérité naïve furent les ministres de mon triomphe, et c'était parce que son coeur était tendre et honnête que je fus heureux sans être entreprenant."³

Afterwards he reflected on Thérèse's appearance and gestures ("Je la vis interdite et confuse avant de se rendre, vouloir se faire entendre, et n'oser s'expliquer"⁴) and concluded that she must be infected with venereal disease and that he, in turn, must now be infected. He put the question to her without naming the subject. She, he says, thought he was inquiring about her non-existent virginity. When he pressed her to know the details of her infection, she described a seduction scene, to Rousseau's immense relief. Were the tears Rousseau said she shed on this

¹Ibid., p. 331.

²Ibid., p. 331.

³Ibid., p. 331.

⁴Ibid., p. 331.

occasion tears of remorse, as he implies, or merely tears of fright at this strange Monsieur's incomprehensible anxiety? At any rate, we may choose to take with a grain of salt Rousseau's statement: "... Elle me fit en pleurant l'aveu d'une faute unique au sortir de l'enfance, fruit de son ignorance et de l'adresse d'un séducteur."¹

The surprising affair with Thérèse, like that with Mme. de Larnage, was largely the result of chance. Rousseau was used to forming sexual designs on every girl he met, but his half-hearted pursuits were easily discouraged and the matter forgotten. With Thérèse, exceptionally, no resistance was forthcoming and in the hotel every opportunity was available. Her weakness of character encouraged her assailant and kept him from "blocking" into impotency: here was a woman with whom he could play the aggressive role without fear of rejection or ridicule.

The hotel hostess, Thérèse's employer, became "furious" and "brutal" when she learned of the affair, probably interpreting the unlikely union between the dull-witted maid and the well-dressed young man-about-town as prostitution on Thérèse's part. Indeed, Rousseau was at first ashamed of his poor Thérèse, not daring to show himself in public with her. Thinking it was a question of education, he envisaged playing the role of Pygmalion, but soon discovered his Galatea's deplorable lack of capacity. "Son esprit est ce que l'a fait la nature," he declared resignedly; "la culture et les soins n'y prennent pas."² It took habit (Rousseau's

¹Ibid., p. 331.

²Ibid., p. 332. Elsewhere, Rousseau remarked: "Elle est ... plus bornée et plus facile à tromper que je n'avais cru; ..." Ibid., p. 281, note.

legendary paresse) and reflection to turn this tawdry affair into a "friendship substitute." We have already seen Rousseau's reasoning: "Il me fallait quelqu'un [1] qui vécut avec [moi], et [2] en qui je trouvasse la simplicité, la docilité de coeur qu[e Mme. de Warens] avait trouvée en moi." Thérèse, then, was (1) available, reliable and (2) susceptible to the tyranny inherent in the basic domestic friendship relationship Rousseau's genius craved. Rousseau later said, "J'ai toujours regardé le jour qui m'unit à ma Thérèse comme celui qui fixa mon être moral."¹ The important thing was that Rousseau was happy and productive (for the moment only in the intellectual sense!) with Thérèse. She became the stable "family" with which he needed to identify and brought him creature comforts: a good cook and laundress; always an available and uncritical sexual partner (whether Rousseau "loved" Thérèse or not, it took him years of broken resolutions and the Mme. d'Houdetôt trauma to succeed in breaking off sexual relations with her); later, a live-in housekeeper and nurse. Little by little, Thérèse Levasseur became a more and more necessary servant to Rousseau and would have sufficed him emotionally, he insists, had she been able to limit her existence to his, as he felt he had limited his to hers. Here, Rousseau stresses the fact (which none of his friends but Mama was willing to recognize) that friendship, to him, was primarily a matter of sentimental, not intellectual, intercourse:²

¹Ibid., p. 413.

²Cf. for example, Rousseau's description of his happiness with Thérèse once they had begun living together: "Le coeur de ma Thérèse était celui d'un ange: notre attachement croissait avec notre intimité, et nous sentions davantage de jour en jour combien nous étions faits l'un pour l'autre. Si nos plaisirs pouvaient se-décrire, ils feraient rire par leur simplicité. Nos promenades tête-à-tête hors de la ville où je dépensais magnifiquement

Après des personnes qu'on aime le sentiment nourrit l'esprit ainsi que le coeur, et l'on a peu besoin de chercher ailleurs des idées. Je vivais avec ma Thérèse aussi agréablement qu'avec le plus beau génie de l'univers. ... Nous faisons tête-à-tête de petites promenades champêtres et de petits goûts qui m'étaient délicieux. Je voyais qu'elle m'aimait sincèrement, et cela redoublait ma tendresse. Cette douce intimité me tenait lieu de tout; l'avenir ne me touchait plus ou ne me touchait que comme le présent prolongé: je ne désirais rien que d'en assurer la durée.

Cet attachement me rendit toute autre dissipation superflue et insipide. Je ne sortais plus que pour aller chez Thérèse; sa demeure devint presque la mienne. Cette vie retirée devint si avantageuse à mon travail, qu'en moins de trois mois mon opéra tout entier fut fait, paroles et musique.¹

Unfortunately for Rousseau, the very meekness and simplicity that made Thérèse available to him on such favorable terms made her vulnerable to any outside influence as well. Rousseau had in mind "kâeping" her "honnêtement mais sans luxe à l'abri des pressants besoins" ("comme je n'avais pas affaire à une personne avide et que je n'étais pas subjugué par une passion folle je ne faisais pas des folies."²), which means bargain-basement style, while (for he had no intention of turning her into a lady

huit-ou dix sols à quelque guinguette. Nos petits soupers à la croisée de ma fenêtre, assis en vis-à-vis sur deux petites chaises posées sur une malle qui tenait la largeur de l'embrasure. Dans cette situation la fenêtre nous servait de table, nous respirions l'air, nous pouvions voir les environs, les passants, et quoi qu'au quatrième étage, plonger dans la rue tout en mangeant. Qui décrira, qui sentira les charmes de ces repas, composés pour tous mets d'un quartier de gros pain, de quelques cerises, d'un petit morceau de fromage, et d'un demi-septier de vin que nous buvions à nous deux. Amitié, confiance, intimité, douceur d'âme, que vos assaisonnements sont délicieux. Quelquefois nous restions là jusqu'à minuit sans y songer et sans nous douter de l'heure, si la vieille Maman ne nous en eut avertis. Mais laissons ces détails qui paraîtront insipides ou risibles. Je l'ai toujours dit et senti, le véritable jouissance ne se décrit point." Ibid., p. 353—4.

¹Ibid., p — 333.

²Ibid., p — 340.

of leisure) she continued contributing her entire hotel salary to the support of her aged parents. M. Levasseur père was weak and harmless -- "un vieux bonhomme très doux qui craignait extrêmement sa femme" -- but old Mme. Levasseur, Rousseau's immortal "mother-in-law," proved to be a first-class harpy, whose husband called her the "criminal lieutenant" after a magistrate who followed all crimes and was present during torture. Mme. Levasseur had all the personal qualities Rousseau most abhorred: bossiness, heartlessness and arrogance, to which she added the revoltingly inhuman and imbecilic snobbery of a servant who, identifying with a powerful master, seeks to abase his fellow unfortunates. Her greed and opportunism knew no bounds, and she was perpetually dissatisfied. All in all, she was a highly unpleasant, unintelligent old woman -- but certainly no monster nor even a rare species, and she should not have caused Rousseau any serious problems, if only he had enjoyed some strength of character.

As might be predicted, Mme. Levasseur tried to take her daughter's "monsieur" for all he was worth (which was very little, as a matter of fact). Thérèse, as always, offered no resistance, and tight-fisted Rousseau once again saw his money flying out the window. The extra cash brought in by Thérèse's "keep" permitted the old woman to send for her entire family of children and grandchildren, Rousseau affirmed with disgust, for he found them vulgar, greedy and unscrupulous: an entire family of "intruders."

Thus, with Thérèse, Rousseau found himself in a situation similar to the one he had experienced with Mme. de Warens and that had contributed to his nervous collapse, but this time without the protective veneer of middle-class politeness. "Tout ce que je faisais pour Thérèse était

détourné par sa mère en faveur de ces affamés. ... Par une fatalité qui me poursuivait tandis que Maman était en proie à ses croquants, Thérèse était en proie à sa famille, et je ne pouvais rien faire d'aucun côté qui profitât à celle pour qui je l'avais destiné."¹ This infuriated Rousseau, first because he had the Genevan view of economy and again because of the conflict it caused in his "marriage." "Que n'aurais-je point donné pour me faire l'enfant de sa mère!" he sighed; "Je fis tout pour y parvenir et n'en pus venir à bout."² He vainly tried to form a Collective Self-Interest between the younger and older couple, but Mme. Levasseur systematically placed her interests in opposition to his and thus, he felt, to those of her inseparable Thérèse. Rousseau saw the Levasseurs as stealing Thérèse's money and tyrannizing her; he saw Thérèse as letting them take advantage of her without uttering a word of complaint. His warnings to his mistress went uncomprehended and unheeded. He tried to separate her from her mother, but she stubbornly offered him a resistance which he both respected and deplored. In sum, Mme. Levasseur and family kept Thérèse from being a successful friendship-substitute. "Leur avidité lui fut moins ruineuse que leurs conseils ne lui furent pernicioeux; enfin si, grâce à son amour pour moi, si grâce à son bon naturel, elle ne fut pas tout-à-fait subjuguée; c'en fut assez, du moins, pour empêcher en grande partie l'effet des bonnes maximes que je m'efforçais de lui inspirer; c'entfut assez pour que, de quelque façon que je m'y sois pu prendre, nous ayons toujours continué d'être deux."³

The fact is that Thérèse was as attached to her blood-sucking family

¹Ibid., p. 340.

²Ibid., p. 415.

³Ibid., p. 415.

as closely as Mama was devoted to her blood-sucking charlatans. They were, for her, a source of amusement and satisfaction, even if she had to pay for the pleasure they provided. And Rousseau, in trying to detach her from them, was thinking more of his brand of happiness than hers. Mama had proven too strong to be thus tyrannized by Rousseau. Thérèse was quite the opposite. For the time being, however, Rousseau silently bore an in-law situation that was not meant to last.

The Levasseur relationship did not destroy Rousseau's constant need for male companionship nor the concern for his honor. "Faute d'un ami qui fut à moi tout entier," he explained, "il me fallait des amis dont l'impulsion surmontait mon inertie ..."¹ While living with Altuna, he had taken meals at Mme. La Selle's near the Opera and continued to do so. The food was rather bad, he said, but the company was excellent and "reliable" (introduction being by recommendation only). A retired Commander, lewd old débauché, polite and witty old bull-like figure, who lodged there, attracted a joyous group of "mad and brilliant" young officers full of Rabelaisian humor, exuberance and bravado concerning amorous adventures, real and imaginary. Polite and respectable civilians also dined at Mme. La Selle's from all walks of life except the bench and the church. There, Rousseau befriended two of the more sober regulars, Du Plessis, retired Colonel, "bon et sage vieillard," and Ancelet, young of-

¹Ibid., p. 416.

ficer in the musketeers.

Since his playboy father and uncle, since apprenticeship friends, since Bâcle, Mussard and Venture, there is no doubt that Rousseau was strongly attracted to this kind of rowdy, harmless, "manly," Renaissance-like off-color fun, from which only his Calvinist moral influences turned him aside. The crowded table at Mme. La Selle's offered just such Rabelaisian gaiety without vulgarity or excess. The diners told their off-color stories without having recourse to off-color language or overly-colorful detail. To the spice of the tales was added the bravado of galanterie at a neighborhood dress shop whose pretty young salesgirls attracted Mme. La Selle's clients before and after dinner. Rousseau would gladly have joined in the flirtation had it not been for his obstinate timidity, he confessed. As it was, he limited his pleasures to enjoyment of the Boccaccian adventures recounted at the table, stories whose immoral principles, he admitted, momentarily seduced him: "D'honnêtes personnes mises à mal, des maris trompés, des femmes séduites, des accouchements clandestins étaient là les textes les plus ordinaires, et celui qui peuplait le mieux les enfants trouvés était toujours le plus applaudi."¹

For the time being, Rousseau sought applause elsewhere. He toyed with the idea of a "flying machine," and wrote a dissertation on the subject, entitled the New Dædelus. His money-making project, opera Les Muses galantes, completed, he tried to obtain the protection of wealthy mæcena Alexandre-Jean-Joseph Le Riche de La Pouplinière, through an appeal to the

¹Ibid., pp. 343-4. The fact that Rousseau stressed this seductive influence to explain his later actions with his own illegitimate children does not mean this influence did not actually exist. On the contrary, it is quite normal to see him enjoying this healthily-uninhibited atmosphere, an atmosphere that was, after all, rather Genevan in character.

star of Mme. de La Pouplinière's salon, sixty-two-year-old composer Jean-Philippe Rameau. Rousseau calculated that his status as Rameau's admirer and disciple would interest the aging musician in his own budding career. The artists he had so far met -- Lyons friends, Fontenelle, Marivaux, Diderot, for example -- all had been unusually helpful. Perhaps he had been warned about Rameau's reputation as a vain and temperamental bastard -- Collé calls him the "most impolite, vulgar and unsociable man of his time"¹ -- and was too impatient, optimistic, hero-worshipful and, yes, desperate to take notice. At any rate, he soon saw for himself, and his honor took another unforgettable humiliation. After a performance of excerpts from the Muses, which Rameau had reluctantly attended, the composer publicly and with great affectation proclaimed Rousseau to be without talent or taste and implied that the music was not of his own composition because of the irregularity of its quality, adding for good measure a scornful remark about home-made musicians. Other listeners, said Rousseau, enjoyed the opera (once again the public was on his side as against an unjust Establishment), and a performance was arranged for the Duc de Richelieu, who was by the way Mme. de La Pouplinière's lover. This time Rameau refused to attend. Richelieu, however, thrilled the young composer by raving about the opera and mentioning a possible performance at Court, asking Rousseau to change the act on Tasso which could not be presented before the king.

So Rousseau wrote a new act, in which he slipped "une partie de l'histoire de mes talents, et de la jalousie dont Rameau voulait bien les

¹Cited in Ibid., p. 334, Note 2.

honorer."¹ Then Richelieu obtained a commission for Rousseau to rewrite a musical drama called Fêtes de Ramire, with music by Rameau and lyrics by Voltaire. The unsinkable young musician was intoxicated at the idea of "collaborating" with his two heroes, and took advantage of the opportunity to try to ingratiate himself with another reputed bastard whom he had long idolized and studied. Voltaire answered graciously; the unknown composer who had addressed him such a flattering letter posed, after all, no threat to the King's glory, and, as Rousseau later observed, Voltaire thought him a protégé of the omnipotent Richelieu.

The fact of having been given an opportunity to prove himself and the inspiration of working, in a sense, with the two brightest stars of the young century, inspired Rousseau in his task (in reality no more than an ordinary ghost-writing assignment), hoping to force recognition of his talent and take the capital by storm. At rehearsal, however, which Rameau had again disdained attending, Mme. de La Pouplinière astonished the ambitious young man by taking her elderly protégé's side and systematically criticizing Rousseau's work, sending him back to revise several passages. (She had previously criticized the Muses and advised Rousseau to forget about his opera.) Confessed Rousseau (exceptionally, incidentally, since he generally does not even attempt to describe the terrible pain and disorientation following bitter disappointments): "Navré d'une conclusion pareille au lieu des éloges que j'attendais, et qui certainement m'étaient dus, je rentrai chez moi la mort dans le coeur. J'y tombai malade,

¹Ibid., p. 335.

épuisé de fatigue, dévoré de chagrin, et de six semaines je ne fus en état de sortir."¹ Rameau tried to persuade Rousseau to substitute the overture to his own Muses for the one he had written for the Fêtes. Smelling a rat, Rousseau stubbornly refused, and the drama was performed unchanged, but not without Rameau's removing his and Rousseau's names from the program.

On December 22, 1745, the Fêtes de Ramire received a mediocre reception at court. Soon afterward, Richelieu was called away to the army, and Rousseau found himself heartsick, tired, unpaid for months of work on the Muses and the Fêtes, without protection, without repair to his honor and having acquired two powerful obstacles to his music career in the persons of Rameau and Mme. de La Pouplinière.

This was Rousseau's startling initiation into the pettiness, jealousy and hostility reigning in the cultural world. "Je n'ai jamais vu tant de caballes et d'animosités," he observed. "La tête m'en tourne. Vous m'aviez bien dit que c'était quelque chose d'affreux que le métier d'auteur. Je prends courage malgré cela, la fureur même de mes ennemis m'a fait connaître mes forces, sans leur jalousie j'ignorerais encore que je suis capable de lutter contre eux."²

Thus Rousseau had met "civilization" by experiencing three successive disillusionments, those of the intelligentsia, the political and the artistic establishments, respectively, and he had reacted to these crises like the phoenix, rising from his ashed with a renewed, reinvigorated, now violent

¹Ibid., p. 337.

²C.C. II, No. 137, Rousseau to Jean-Baptiste Bouchaud Du Plessis (September 14, 1745), p. 87.

determination to avenge his honor by the acquisition of the precedence, the glory he was now convinced was his due.

In 1745, and particularly after the La Pouplinière fiasco, Rousseau reestablished relations with the rival Dupin salon and with Francueil, to whom he now became quite closely attached. The two men renewed their study of chemistry, with Rousseau giving chemistry lessons on the side in a desperate attempt to earn a living. Francueil was setting up a laboratory in the Dupin's château de Chenonceaux and was planning to write a book on the subject of his studies. Mme. Dupin had writing ambitions as well. They asked Rousseau to serve them both as secretary (although, with Francueil, the position was an editing, researching, even ghost-writing assignment). As a condition of his employment, Rousseau talked Francueil into arranging a run-through of his Muses galantes during a rehearsal of the Paris Opera. Francueil did so, but the success was only mediocre.

It is interesting to note that Rousseau blamed Francueil, in part, for his opera's lack of success. " ... Je vis clairement par plusieurs indices que l'ouvrage eut-il été parfait n'aurait pas passé. Francueil m'avait bien promis de le faire répéter mais non pas de le faire recevoir. Il me tint exactement parole."¹ Rousseau continues with the observation, "J'ai toujours cru voir dans cette occasion et dans beaucoup d'autres, que ni lui ni Mme. Dupin ne se souciaient de me laisser acquérir une certaine réputation dans le monde, de peur peut-être qu'on ne supposât en voyant

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 341.

leurs livres qu'ils avaient greffé leurs talents sur les miens."¹ Rousseau also complains about the salary they paid him.

This is a good example of a situation which we have already remarked in passing and which will occur more and more often in Rousseau's human relations, finally earning him the epithets of "egotistical" and "ungrateful." Viewed on an objective level, it is indeed shocking to see Rousseau grumble about the two friends who came to his rescue when he was down and out. On a subjective level, however, human relationships are not governed by the same laws of rigid equality as are, for example, commercial contracts, and it must be recognized that the Dupins were rich and influential and could easily have made an effort to help Rousseau solve his financial problems and make his mark as a writer or musician, without disturbing their contented, comfortable little existence in any way. Both viewpoints are valid, then, depending on the level from which they are approached. This does not imply bad faith on either side, however, and, in this, Rousseau was wrong to grumble (although grumbling was so much a part of his personality that it must always be taken with a grain of salt). The Dupins simply failed to recognize the talent hidden in their strange, eccentric friend and "domestic," and the discomfort of his life had failed to make an impression on them. They were, after all, aristocrats under the ancien régime. (Indeed, when Rousseau's plight was later brought to their attention, they took action to improve his financial situation and to make his life more pleasant.) Thus, the presence of a sensitive, tormented genius is sufficient, even in the apparently most harmonious of

¹Ibid., p. 341. Note that the "plusieurs indices" and the "j'ai ... cru voir" again prefigure Rousseau's later paranoid interpretation of "signs."

environments, to cause unresolvable conflicts in human relations -- unless the friend possesses an extraordinary sympathy or talent of diplomacy.

Rousseau spent the autumms of 1745, '46 and '47¹ with the Dupins at Chenonceaux. "On s'amusa beaucoup dans ce beau lieu," he said, "on y faisait très bonne chère; j'y devins gras comme un moine. On y fit beaucoup de musique."² In Paris, he moved to the Dupins' neighborhood, for the sake of convenience, traveling across town to Thérèse's Left-Bank apartment for supper "nearly every evening." (He and his mistress did not share the same living quarters until 1750.) Work as secretary to the Dupins was not strenuous because it consisted of Rousseau's favorite activities: study, writing and enjoyment of the Good Life -- music, the theatre, good food, handsome clothes and excellent company -- a satisfying approximation on a materialistic level of the "castle" of his dreams. Rousseau did an enormous amount of reading and work. His studies of the period were largely directed toward political, historical, sociological and scientific areas, although he undoubtedly read every new book published, saw every spectacle and discussed every idea in the air. Mme. Dupin's writings, which he assiduously copied, consisted of a collection of rather stereotyped ideas on women, sentiments and friendship. "On n'aimerait personne si on ne voulait aimer que des gens parfaits," she informed the

¹There is some indication that Rousseau may have made a visit to Holland in 1747. The mémoires of a Swedish count report his presence there, and in good spirits; however, the count may have confused Jean-Jacques with another Rousseau, the name being a most common one. At any rate, no conclusive proof exists one way or the other. See Leigh, C.C. II, Appendix A-64, pp. 289-90.

²Confessions, O.C. I, p. 342.

waiting world; "Toutes les fleurs ne sont pas des roses." Rousseau researched around a hundred books for passages regarding women. While she never asked her secretary's opinion, he certainly meditated and mentally improved upon the eternal and universal subjects of her consideration. Besides the dictation of Mme. Dupin, Rousseau was giving editorial assistance, perhaps even writing large portions of Francueil's work and was writing and composing prolifically on his own. In literature, he was still trying to become a Classical Frenchman, but more and more his own experience was coloring his work.

In the spring of 1748, galant Francueil took a mistress, Louise-Florence-Pétronille de Tardieu d'Esclavelles d'Epinay, twenty-two, wife of a philandering Fermier Général. Rousseau met her and she charmed him. Thin and plain but with large, limpid, expressive eyes, more than a touch précieuse and simpering, young Louise d'Epinay lacked the endearing qualities of a Rousseauesque love-goddess but had outstanding personal qualities of her own -- gentleness, tender-heartedness, wit and talent -- that more than made up for her lack of beauty. She shared Rousseau's and Francueil's passion for music. Rousseau often supped with her and her dashing young lover, and on one occasion she invited him to join her guests at a party in her château, La Chevrette, where he was actually given a role in a play (of course he was unable to deliver his lines). Rousseau apparently failed to sense beneath Mme. d'Epinay's sometimes-forced gaiety a nervous, weak and melancholy coeur sensible and a great void she was trying to fill with all the superficial bustle and thrill her position in society could procure for her. Francueil's wife was another unfulfilled, unattractive poor-little-rich-girl neglected by

her husband. Rousseau is proud of the way he conducted himself as simultaneous confident of each member of the triangle, faithful to his friendship for each, not taking sides with any.¹

This very heavy social and work program distracted Rousseau from other concerns. He was so short of money (his expenses were high) that, when his father died in 1747, all he could think of was the procurement of his brother's portion of the maternal inheritance. He neglected his old provincial friends and even Mme. de Warens, who was already well on the way to becoming "poor Mama." Reduced to expedients, she had indulged in more of her big-business ventures which were now in the process of ruining her financially and morally as she turned to crooked deals. Her letters were no longer welcome to Rousseau, since they gave witness to her "degeneration." "Toutes ses lettres se sentaient de sa détresse. Elle m'envoyait des tas de recettes et de secrets dont elle prétendait que je fisse ma fortune et la sienne. Déjà le sentiment de sa misère lui resserrait le coeur et lui rétrécissait l'esprit."² First the example of his "poor father," and now Mme. de Warens' "metamorphosis" demonstrated to Rousseau -- and he was alert enough to receive the message -- that Time devours everything and that nothing on earth is permanent, something he had undoubtedly heard at church as a boy in Geneva.

¹" ... Dans des relations orageuses entre trois personnes que j'avais à ménager, dont je dépendais en quelque sorte, et pour qui j'avais de l'attachement, je conservai jusqu'à la fin, leur amitié, leur estime, leur confiance, en me conduisant avec douceur et complaisance mais toujours avec droiture et fermeté." Ibid., p. 346. Rousseau's pride at an unfortunate but nonetheless common human relations situation shows how very seldom he was able to survive in any but the most harmonious of environments. A normal person would probably not even have taken notice of this "success."

²Ibid., p. 339.

He sent his former benefactress a little, very little money. His known letters to her are filled with his own complaints -- health, poverty, misery -- which we see as excuses or pretexts for his lack of generosity. Nor did he confide in her any longer. It was often Conzié who advised her of Rousseau's activities.

Mama was not wrong to expect financial assistance from Rousseau, not only in view of his limitless obligations to her but based on the fact that her economic welfare was the ostensible "purpose" of his being in Paris. Rousseau, on the other hand, was not wrong to refuse it. "Le peu que je lui envoyai fut la proie des fripons qui l'obsédaient. Elle ne profita de rien. Cela me dégoûta de partager mon nécessaire avec ces misérables ..."¹ Nonetheless, and in spite of this justification or rationalization, depending on the light in which it is viewed, a "civilized" Rousseau was slowly and insensibly amassing an impressive stock of human relations sins of omission, as he pursued his personal ambition with the ardor kindled by his frustrations and humiliations.

Other "family" obligations were neglected by Rousseau at this time. Thérèse had begun mass-producing little Levasseurs. A first child was born in the winter of 1746, another in December, 1748, still another in 1751. Two more, according to Rousseau, found their way into the world. Whether they were conceived by Rousseau or some nameless conquistador is a secret shared only by God and the complaisant demoiselle Levasseur² -- but the children's actual paternity matters little, since Rousseau, as

¹Ibid., pp. 339-40.

²Cf. " ... Je suis sûr d'être le seul [homme] qu'elle ait véritablement aimé, et ses tranquilles sens ne lui en ont guère demandé d'autres ... " Ibid., p. 415. (Italics mine.)

the person who disposed of them, holds the moral responsibility for their disposition. As each baby was born, he had it deposited in the Foundling Home. He never saw any of them. Old Mme. Levasseur regarded the procedure with indifference, Rousseau reports, and Thérèse, as was her custom, wept but gave in without a struggle.

It is astonishing to see how easily Rousseau took the decision to give away the children, even the last, who arrived during his "reform." "Je m'y déterminai gaillardement, sans le moindre scrupule ..."¹ he confessed. In the light of his pathological inability to take decisions pertaining to positive action, we can only interpret this, from his point of view, as a negative action, the avoidance of responsibility. Did he realize that he may have thus sent his children to their death, or to a fate worse than death? Did he think he could simply walk away from his obligation in the same final manner and with the same relative impunity as he had walked away from the gates of Geneva? He offers various justifications, most of which sound a sour note -- the influence of the conversation at Mme. La Selle's, concern for Thérèse's reputation, the influence of Plato's Republic, of Parisian immorality, of civilization's social inequality... Only one excuse rings true: both Rousseau's and Thérèse's incapacity to bring up children. The babies would have fallen under the pernicious influence of the Levasseur family and developed into monsters. Even adopted by an aristocrat, the children would not have been "Rousseau's," yet their care and upbringing would have made Rousseau unconditionally committed to them and to their adoptive parents. Indeed, one sees his

¹Ibid., p. 344.

point! However, the parties involved were tiny creatures unable to fend for themselves, and no man has the moral right -- according to Rousseau's own "system" -- to abdicate the life and freedom of another human being. Thus the case is closed.

Whatever judgment we bring to this action is irrelevant to this study and will not change history. The important thing to remember is that Rousseau acted, here, as on many previous occasions, by a reflex action destined to preserve his personal freedom -- an egotistical instinct, yes, but an instinct having its roots in his impressive genius and singular character -- and then tried to justify his action with "reasons," reasons which satisfied his mind, for the time being, but never his conscience. This time it is Rousseau who is justifiable "objectively" but blameworthy "subjectively."

In 1749, Rousseau served as secretary to Claude Dupin, then composing a refutation of Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws. The same year, less than six months before the "illumination" that was to change the direction of his life, Rousseau reluctantly but willingly accepted the Dupins' offer that he serve as a kind of mentor to their soon-to-be-married nineteen-year-old son, Jacques-Armand Dupin de Chenonceaux -- the same spoiled child Rousseau had cared for six years before -- on the condition that young Chenonceaux agree to the arrangement, promising to continue in his "frank" and "upright" attitude toward the boy, telling him "the truth without bitterness and without flattery." (Chenonceaux needed this sort of treatment, incidentally, his defects having aggravated with age.)

The change in position does not, however, seem to have taken place. After Chenonceaux's marriage to nineteen-year-old Louise-Alexandrine-Julie de Rochouart, Rousseau referred to himself as "one of M. Dupin's scribes."

The high-born new Mme. de Chenonceaux failed to befriend her glamorous new mother-in-law and avoided the Dupin salon, tending to remain alone in her suite of rooms. Rousseau gave her mathematics lessons and fell in love with her young beauty, her conversation (surprisingly interesting, he said, for a girl just out of the convent) and her pensive, other-worldly charm. "Son teint était d'une blancheur éblouissante; sa taille eut été grande et belle si elle se fut mieux tenue. Ses cheveux d'un blond cendré et d'une beauté peu commune, me rappelaient ceux de ma pauvre Maman dans son bel âge, et m'agitaient vivement le coeur."¹ Even her "exile" contributed to his attraction "by that natural leaning that attracts me to the unfortunate." However, coming after Rousseau's "illumination," these sentiments could not accord with his new image and he found, for once, the moral courage to resist making a declaration -- and a fool of himself.

On July 9, 1750, Rousseau's Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts won first prize in the competition sponsored by the Dijon Academy, and he was suddenly skyrocketed to a fame of which old Mme. Levasseur took advantage to take her pregnant daughter begging behind Rousseau's back at Mme. Dupin's and elsewhere. Perhaps in consequence of his fame,

¹Ibid., p. 359.

perhaps due to the Levasseur mendicity, Francueil suddenly offered Rousseau the lucrative position as his cashier (he was Receveur Général des Finances).¹ Clearly this was the wrong man for the job. ("Ne me félicitez ... point de ma fortune," he wrote Mme. de Créqui; "car jamais je ne fus si misérable que depuis que je suis riche."²) He disliked it, felt unable to perform its duties and, during a week's absence of Francueil, was nearly frantic with anxiety caused by the responsibility of guarding the money. He resigned to become a poor but independent music copyist, joyously exclaiming: "... J'étais malade et paresseux. Aujourd'hui que je suis malade, paresseux et libre; aujourd'hui que je me fous de tous vous autres gens de cour, aujourd'hui que tous les rois de la terre avec toute leur morgue, tous leurs titres et tout leur or ne me feraient pas faire un pas ..."³ But, then, by this time Rousseau had achieved the object of his feverish quest, the glory necessary to nourish his sense of personal honor. His days of "misery" were over at last. Indeed, for the first time in his life, Rousseau could now turn his back on ambition and devote himself to the search for fulfillment in the realization of his old but ever-present castle-dream... somehow, somewhere...

¹Mme. Dupin and Francueil also donated some furniture when Rousseau and Thérèse set up housekeeping, and, when Rousseau fell ill in 1750, she sent a famous doctor to examine him.

²C.C. II, No. 180 (Summer, 1752 ?), p. 195.

³C.C. II, No. 184, Rousseau to Pierre Jélyotte (?)(November, 1752 ?), p. 200.

CONCLUSION

" ... Je fus ami si jamais
homme le fut ... "1

In the beginning, there was Primary Self-Interest: the "Moi," first utterance of Rousseau's Galathea.² Then: "Ce n'est plus moi"³-- the Other, the lovely one's second discovery, until, with Pygmalion's demonstration of love, she sighs, "Ah! encore moi,"⁴ and Collective Self-Interest, the principle of love and friendship, was born. But Pygmalion is only a fairy tale. Life itself presents a third, darker principle of human relations, the Competitive Self-Interest which, opposing the principle of self-expansion, leads the individual to seek his own honor or precedence at the expense of others.

Rousseau acutely felt within himself these three principles of human behavior. In his personal evolution, corresponding to the evolution of man as he envisaged it for use in his moral system, the principle of Primary Self-Interest was the only one operative during his infancy, in which pure survival was his first concern. However, Rousseau felt he had precociously become aware of the two ensuing principles. (Modern psychology would, on the contrary, see them as developing in their proper

¹Confessions, O.C. I, p. 104.

²Pygmalion, O.C. II, p. 1230.

³Ibid., p. 1230.

⁴Ibid., p. 1231.

time, but with unusual intensity.)

Rousseau's sense of Competitive Self-Interest seems to have been overwhelmingly influenced, both directly and indirectly, by his relationship with his father. The boy's natural desire to imitate, challenge and eventually replace the father-figure, was modified by an again natural sense of rivalry with his brother. These normal feelings, however, were intensified by Rousseau's singular character, and by his early reading which the father encouraged. In this reading, the concept of individual heroism was accorded overwhelming value. Genevan influences also placed heavy stress on heroism, both religious and patriotic, but theirs was of a collective rather than individual nature. Indeed, the republic's ideal, and the life-style which Rousseau's family intended for him, was one of pure mediocrity. The story-book heroics were no more to be transposed into everyday life than was the Calvinist identification of sex with sin!

Yet Rousseau took his early moral education with deadly seriousness and spent his life trying to apply it. He would spend the first half in pursuit of personal glory, the second in defense of it, with a hunger that can again be traced back to his father's influence. For Isaac Rousseau's capriciousness and eccentricity, the constant metamorphoses in direction and intensity of his emotional attitudes, gave his son very early in life both an unusual dependency on the parent-figures' affection and approval, and a feeling of insecurity or anxiety with which he was powerless to cope. The boy's eventual rejection by his father developed into a series of real or feared rejections by various parent-figures, developing into rejections by various general aspects of society and came

even to be identified with Rousseau's personal relationship to God. Yet, with each renewed rejection, the feeling of "misery" or frustrated desire, the need for revenge in the form of heightened affection and approval, greater precedence, brighter glory, grew until -- as he moved toward civilization and the symbols of status became more and more apparent -- Rousseau's sense of Competitive Self-Interest became an obsession for personal honor.

At the same time, affectionate-Rousseau, weak-and-passive-Rousseau, the Rousseau of Aunt Suzanne, was as strongly moved toward the principle of Collective Self-Interest. This principle, in his experience, tended to take two separate directions. He succeeded, with childhood friend Abraham Bernard, in achieving a state of "unison" that he was to attain, at one time or another, with numerous male friends throughout his life. With Mme. de Warens, and with her alone, Rousseau had the impression of having achieved, for a period, a more intimate Collective Self-Interest bond, which he termed "union." This tie, based on what Rousseau saw as a natural "sympathy of the hearts" or "souls," was of both a spiritual and a sensual nature, but its sensuality was restricted to the infantile level. After Mme. de Warens' "change," Rousseau was to try to recapture this relationship with various aristocratic women having what might be termed a "maternal" attraction, but, unsuccessful, he was led to settle for a "friendship substitute" in the person of lower-class, vulgar, retarded Thérèse Levasseur, who became his mistress.

Spiritual love was a concept Rousseau had learned in his early idealistic reading, and he had sensed that it could accord both with

the concept of honor and that of self-expansion, for the lovers in the idealistic novels on which he patterned his affective existence not only derived an exquisite pleasure from their emotions but were raised, by their various merits of character (including an acute sensitivity of the heart that permitted them to partake of such divine sentiments) to the level of a privileged elite. Rousseau's psychological needs, the feeling of personal guilt and unworthiness that haunted him from the time of his early relationship with his father, led him to transpose this somewhat ethereal concept to the level of reality in an attempt to raise and repair his battered self-image. His early friendship experience shows him seeking to identify only with persons in some way above his own station.¹ Sometimes these were aristocrats (such as Mme. de Warens, his series of blushing demoiselles, the Gouvon-Breils, Conzié, the Mablys and the Dupins), sometimes charismatic personalities (such as Bâcle, d'Aubonne, Venture and the Archimandrite of Jerusalem), sometimes persons having talents or knowledge he coveted (such as the musician-friends of Chambéry, the intellectual friends of Savoy, the artistic friends of Lyons and the bons vivants of Venice), sometimes persons he admitted for superior quali-

¹Rousseau also exhibited a certain "mentor" or "teacher" tendency to play the role of big-brother to those weaker than himself, but these attempted relationships (so far unsuccessful, by the way) were not friendships in the true sense. Although he would probably have seen them as manifestations of a charitable Christian brotherly-love, they appear to the modern reader more as the result of Rousseau's tendency to identify with the weak or underdog and the expression of his normal need to dominate or feel superior to some other human being.

On the other hand, the personalities "above" him with whom Rousseau identified greatly influenced his intellectual and personality development, just as Julie was to serve as a model to which those at Clarens could orient and raise themselves.

ties of character (the abbés Gaime and Gâtier and Claude Anet), real-life heroes (such as Voltaire and Rameau) and heroes of legend or history (such as Jesus, Socrates, Mentor, an Horatian sage, Cleveland, Robinson Crusoe).

Thus we find all three human relations principles active in the Single Castle, dream of Rousseau's lifetime and his image of personal fulfillment, where a diversity of creature comforts and the possibility of an individual, independent existence¹ joins with a variety of possibilities of self-expansion,² whose necessary internal harmony and equality does not preclude the principle of honor inherent in the very aristocratic nature of the institution.

Rousseau's life in pursuit of his castle-dream carried him further and further away from its realization, largely through the excesses of his character. Compromise was not a word in his vocabulary in this respect, and, with Genevan intransigence, he refused to alter his dream to conform to necessity, preferring to do without, rather than settling for mediocrity. Or, he would so idealize the object of his affection, unable, for various psychological reasons, to judge or understand the persons with whom he had relations or to accurately interpret their attitudes towards him, that he tended to greet new friendships with a disproportionate optimism that turned into shock and dismay -- "je tombai des nues" --

¹Cf. Rousseau's: "Commençons par redevenir nous, par nous concentrer en nous, par circonscrire notre âme des mêmes bornes que la nature a données à notre être ... " Lettres morales, O.C. IV, p. 1112.

²Cf. " ... Mon âme expansive cherche malgré que j'en aie à étendre ses sentiments et son existence sur d'autres êtres... " Rêveries, O.C. I, p. 1066.

when the true characteristics of the relationship eventually forced themselves onto the plane of his consciousness. He had already begun reacting to such traumatic "illuminations" by tuning out into the Land of Fantasy -- "the only [land] worthy of being inhabited" -- as evidenced by the confusion of the real and the imaginary in his "little story" and early literary attempts.¹

Furthermore, as his life unfolded, he was, one by one, committing little "friendship sins" that were gathering in his conscience, making it less and less possible for him to enjoy good fortune with impunity, that is, without the need to punish himself, often necessitating the loss of the desired object itself.

For the time being, however, and although he had already learned that everything on earth is temporary, Rousseau still clung to his belief in friendship and dared hope that he would achieve his dream at one moment or another of a future to which he looked forward in eager anticipation.

¹"Jeté dès mon enfance dans le tourbillon du monde j'appris de bonne heure par l'expérience que je n'étais pas fait pour y vivre, et que je n'y parviendrais jamais à l'état dont mon coeur sentait le besoin. Cessant donc de chercher parmi les hommes le bonheur que je sentais n'y pouvoir trouver, mon ardente imagination sautait déjà par-dessus l'espace de ma vie, à peine commencée, comme sur un terrain qui m'était étranger, pour se reposer sur une assiette tranquille où je pusse me fixer."

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acher, William. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, écrivain de l'amitié. (Paris: Nizet, 1971).
- Allen, Isabel Wait. Thérèse Le Vasseur. Ph.D. dissertation (unpublished), Western Reserve University, 1933.
- Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Geneva: Jullien, 1905 et seq.)
- Aurenche, Louis. Jean-Jacques Rousseau chez Monsieur de Mably. (Paris: Société française d'édition littéraire et technique, 1934).
- Benedetto, L.-F. Madame de Warens d'après de nouveaux documents. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1914).
- _____. "Madame de Warens, espionne de la maison de Savoie," Revue du XVIII^e siècle (1913), pp. 366 et seq.
- Bléton, A. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau et Mademoiselle Serre," Revue du Lyonnais, No. XIII (1892), p. 58.
- Bouvier, C. "La Bibliothèque des Charmettes," Mémoires de la Société savoisienne, No. LV (1914), pp. 177-188.
- Buffenoir, Hippolyte. Les Charmettes et J.-J. Rousseau. (Paris: Cornuau, 1902).
- _____. "Les Charmettes et l'idylle amoureuse de J.-J. Rousseau," Revue, No. XXXVII (1901), pp. 414-429.
- Burgelin, Pierre. Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la religion de Genève. (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1962).
- _____. La Philosophie de l'existence de J.-J. Rousseau. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952).
- _____. "Le rôle du serment chez Rousseau," Dix-huitième siècle, No. I (1949), pp. 213-227.
- Candaux, Jean-Daniel. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau à Gênes et à Venise," Studi francesi, No. VIII (May-Aug., 1964), pp. 250-254.
- Cassirer, Ernst. The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Translated and edited by Peter Gay. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967).

- Ceresole, Victor. "J.-J. Rousseau à Venise," Art, No. VIII (1877), pp. 132-137.
- _____. J.-J. Rousseau à Venise (1734-1744). Notes et Documents. (Geneva: Cherbuliez, 1884).
- Clarétie, Jules. "Des Charmettes," Revue de Paris, No. VI (1865), pp. 66-84.
- Cook, T. I. "The Influence of the Protestant Atmosphere of Geneva on the Character and Writings of Rousseau," Economica (June, 1928), pp. 191-215.
- Courtois, Louis J. "Chronologie critique de la vie et des oeuvres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XV (1923), p. 1 et seq.
- Crocker, Lester G. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Quest (1712-1758). (New York: Macmillan, 1968), Vol. 1.
- _____. "Docilité et duplicité chez Jean-Jacques Rousseau," Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, Vol. 68, No. 3-4 (May-August, 1968), pp. 448-469.
- Daumas, Georges. "En marge des Confessions," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXXIII (1953-1955), pp. 209-228.
- _____. "L'Idylle des Charmettes est-elle un mythe?" Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXXIV (1956-1958), pp. 80-105.
- _____. "Notes sur le séjour de J.-J. Rousseau à Chambéry (1731-1737)," Revue des Sciences humaines (1952), pp. 109-115, 215-227.
- Denarié, M. "Les Charmettes aux temps de J.-J. Rousseau et Mme. de Warens," Mémoires de la Société savoisienne, No. EXIII (1926), pp. 159-185.
- Derche, Roland. "Autour du séjour de J.-J. Rousseau à Venise. La politique et le caractère du comte de Montaigu," Annales de l'Université de Grenoble (1924), pp. 131-176.
- Ducros, Louis. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (Paris: Boccard, 1918). 3 vols.
- Dufour, Th. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau et Madame de Warens. Notes sur leur séjour à Annecy," Revue savoisienne, No. XIX (1878), pp. 65-73.
- _____. "Questions sur le séjour de J.-J. Rousseau à Annecy," Revue savoisienne, No. XIX (1878), p. 57.
- Durel, Pétrus. "Les Charmettes et leurs visiteurs," Revue hebdomadaire, No. 5 (1905), pp. 180-191.

- Eigeldinger, Marc. Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la réalité de l'imaginaire. (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1962).
- Einaudi, Mario. The Early Rousseau. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).
- Ellis, Havelock. "Mme. de Warens," Virginia Quarterly, No. IX (1933), pp. 410-432.
- Ellis, Madeleine. "J.-J. Rousseau, biographical problems (1732-1742)," Romantic Review, No. XXXVIII (1947), pp. 117-132.
- Faugère, Prosper. "J.-J. Rousseau à Venise," Correspondant, No. CLI (1888), pp. 813-823, 1051-1076.
- François, Alexis. "Encore la famille de Rousseau," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXXI (1946-1949), pp. 247-249.
- _____. "J.-J. Rousseau et Nyon," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XVII (1926), pp. 179-191.
- _____. "Rousseau, les Dupin, Montesquieu," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXX (1943-1945), pp. 87-89.
- Fusil, C.-A. "L'idylle des Charmettes," Correspondant, No. CCCXII (1928), pp. 376-398.
- Garden, Maurice. Lyon et les Lyonnais au dix-huitième siècle. (Paris: Belles-Lettres, 1970).
- Gerson, Frederick. Le Thème de l'amitié dans la littérature française du XVIII^e siècle. Ph.D. dissertation (unpublished), Western Reserve University, 1967.
- Grebanier, Frances (Winwar). Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Conscience of an Era. (New York: Random House, 1961).
- Green, Frederick C. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1955).
- Grimsley, Ronald. Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Study in Self-Awareness. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961).
- Groethuysen, Bernhard. J.-J. Rousseau. (Paris: Gallimard, 1949).
- Grosclaude, Pierre. Jean-Jacques Rousseau à Lyon. (Paris: Alcan, 1933).
- Guéhenno, Jean. Jean-Jacques: Histoire d'une conscience. (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 2 vols.
- Guyot, Charly. Plaidoyer pour Thérèse Levasseur. (Neuchâtel: Ides et Calandes, 1962).

- Hendel, Charles W. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Moraliste. (Oxford: Oxford, 1934), 2 vols.
- Höfding, Harald. Jean-Jacques Rousseau et sa philosophie. (Paris: Alcan, 1912).
- Jimack, Peter D. "Rousseau and the Primacy of Self," Studies on Voltaire and the XVIIIth Century, No. XXXII (1965), pp. 73-90.
- Josephson, Matthew. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1931).
- Jost, François. Jean-Jacques Rousseau suisse. (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1961), 2 vols.
- Kunstler, Charles. La vie quotidienne sous Louis XV. (Paris: Hachette, 1953).
- Laforge, René. "Etude sur Jean-Jacques Rousseau," Revue française de psychanalyse, No. I (1927), pp. 370-402.
- Lanson, Gustave. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau," in Histoire de la littérature française. (Paris: Hachette, 1894).
- _____. "L'Unité de la pensée de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. VIII (1912), pp. 1-31.
- Launay, Michel. Rousseau. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968).
- _____. et coll. Jean-Jacques Rousseau et son temps. Politique et littérature au dix-huitième siècle. (Paris: Nizet, 1969).
- Lemaître, Jules. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1907).
- Lumbroso, Alberto. "G. G. Rousseau a Venezia," Pagine veneziane (1905), pp. 13-16.
- Masson, Pierre-Maurice. La religion de J.-J. Rousseau. (Paris: Hachette, 1916), 3 vols.
- Mauzi, Robert. L'idée du bonheur dans la littérature et la pensée françaises au dix-huitième siècle. (Paris: Colin, 1960).
- May, Georges. Rousseau par lui-même. (Paris: Seuil, 1961).
- Monglond, André. "Rousseau secrétaire de M. de Montaignu," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXIV (1935), pp. 39-78.

- Monnier, Philippe. Venise au XVIII^e siècle. (Paris: Perret, 1907).
- Morley, John Viscount. Rousseau and his Era. (London: Macmillan, 1923), 2 vols.
- Mornet, Daniel. Rousseau, l'homme et l'oeuvre. (Paris: Boivin, 1950).
- Mugnier, F. Mme. de Warens et J.-J. Rousseau. (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1891).
- Musset-Pathay. Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Rousseau. (Paris: Dupont, 1827).
- Osmont, Robert. "Contribution à l'étude psychologique des Rêveries," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXIII (1934), pp. 41-67.
- _____. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la jalousie," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXXV (1935), pp. 73-91.
- Pittard, Hélène Dufour. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau et Madame de Warens," Revue des Deux Mondes, No. XXIII (October, 1921), pp. 639-659.
- Plan, Pierre-Paul. "J.-J. Rousseau à Venise: documents inédits," Mercure de France, No. CLXVII (1923), pp. 577-606.
- _____. Table de la correspondance générale de J.-J. Rousseau. (Geneva: Droz, 1953).
- Pomeau, René. "Foi et raison de Jean-Jacques," Europe, No. 391-2 (Nov.-Dec., 1961), pp. 57-65.
- Poulet, Georges. Etudes sur le temps humain. (Paris: Plon, 1950).
- _____. "Expansion et concentration chez Rousseau," Temps modernes, No. XVI (1960-1), pp. 949-973.
- Proal, Louis. La psychologie de Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (Paris: Alcan, 1923).
- Raymond, Marcel. "J.-J. Rousseau: deux aspects de sa vie intérieure (intermittance et permanence du moi)," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXIX (1941-2), pp. 5-57.
- _____. Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La quête de soi et la rêverie. (Paris: Corti, 1962).
- Ritter, Eugène. La famille et la jeunesse de Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (Paris: Hachette, 1896).
- _____. "J.-J. Rousseau et Alphonse Turretini," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. III (1907), pp. 197-201.

- Roger, Noëlle. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau et Mme. de Warens," Revue des Deux Mondes, No. 94-23 (Oct., 1924), pp. 639-659.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Oeuvres complètes. Ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond. (Paris: Pléiade, 1959 et seq.), 4 vols. published as of this date. (Abbreviated O.C. herein.)
- _____. Oeuvres complètes. (Paris: Furne, 1835), 4 vols.
- _____. Oeuvres autobiographiques. Preface by Jean Fabre, annotated by Michel Launay. (Paris: Seuil, n.d.).
- _____. Confessions. Ed. Jacques Voisine. (Paris: Garnier, 1964).
- _____. "Première rédaction des 'Confessions,'" ed. Th. Dufour, Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. IV (1908).
- _____. Correspondance complète de J.-J. Rousseau. Critical edition by R. A. Leigh. (Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1965 et seq.), 14 vols. so far published. (Abbreviated C.C. herein.)
- _____. Correspondance générale de J.-J. Rousseau. Ed. Th. Dufour and P.-P. Plan. (Paris: Colin, 1924-1934), 20 vols. (Abbreviated C.G. herein.)
- Roustan, M. Les Philosophes et la société française au XVIII^e siècle. (Paris: Hachette, 1911).
- Saussure, Hermine de. Rousseau et les manuscrits des Confessions. (Paris: Boccard, 1958).
- Schinz, Albert. "Encore Rousseau et les Charmettes," Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France, No. 42 (Nov., 1935), pp. 416-421.
- _____. "L'Idylle des Charmettes," Revue de France, No. XIV (Nov., 1934), pp. 239-262.
- _____. "Un oncle de Jean-Jacques en Amérique: l'Ingénieur Gabriel Bernard," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXII (1964), pp. 26-36.
- _____. La Pensée de Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (Northampton, Mass.: Smith, 1929), 2 vols.
- _____. "Rousseau romantique et Rousseau calviniste," Revue du Mois, No. XIII (1912), pp. 685-705.
- Sells, A. L. The Early Life and Adventures of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1929).

- Sénéchal, Anicet. "J.-J. Rousseau secrétaire de Mme. Dupin," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXXVI (1959), pp. 173-288.
- Soyer, Jacques. "Quelques renseignements inédits ou peu connus sur la famille de Thérèse Levasseur, femme de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," Mémoires de la Société Archéologique et Historique de l'Orléanais, No. XXXVII (1950), pp. 111-126.
- Spink, John S. Jean-Jacques Rousseau et Genève. (Paris: Boivin, 1934).
- _____. "Les Premières Expériences pédagogiques de Rousseau," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXXV (1959), pp. 93-103.
- Starobinski, Jean. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. La transparence et l'obstacle. (Paris: Gallimard, 1971). Includes seven articles on Rousseau.
- _____. "J.-J. Rousseau et les pouvoirs de l'imaginaire," Revue internationale de Philosophie, No. XIV (1960), pp. 43-67.
- _____. L'Oeil vivant. (Paris: Gallimard, 1961).
- _____. L'Oeil vivant II. (Paris: Gallimard, 1970).
- Stelling-Michaud, S. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (Neuchâtel: Université Ouvrière et Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Genève, 1962).
- Streckeisen-Moultou. J.-J. Rousseau, ses amis et ses ennemis. (Paris: Lévy, 1865), 2 vols.
- Vallette, Gaston. Rousseau Genevois. (Paris: Plon, 1911).
- Vaussard, Maurice. La Vie quotidienne en Italie au dix-huitième siècle. (Paris: Hachette, 1959).
- Voisine, Jacques. "Quelques personnages secondaires des Confessions," Revue des Sciences humaines (Apr.-June, 1963), pp. 221 et seq.
- Wahl, Jean. "La Bipolarité de Rousseau," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXXIII (1959), pp. 49-55.
- Wright, Ernest H. The Meaning of Rousseau. (Oxford: Oxford, 1929).
- Zurich, Pierre, Comte de. "La première rencontre de Rousseau et de Mme. d'Epinaï," Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, No. XXIX (1941), pp. 261-275.