1995

Notions of Happiness in Rousseau's "Julie".

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NOTIONS OF HAPPINESS
IN
ROUSSEAU'S JULIE

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
The Department of Political Science

by
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May 1995
"The happy man will have the attribute of permanence."
-Aristotle, Ethics, Bk I
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For their undying care for and faith in all their children, I thank my parents with love, respect, and gratitude.

And I recall the memories of Willmore Kendall, who introduced me to Rousseau, and of Sister Eugenia, who taught me most of what I know of reading and writing.
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ABSTRACT

This enquiry first establishes both the importance and the general meaning of the notions of happiness in Rousseau's corpus. Both private and public happiness are seen as the overarching intent of his life as a thinker. The possibility of a tertiary notion of happiness—between private and public—is presented with the introduction of the subject work Julie; or The New Heloïse.

Themes considered at some length are passion/virtue, happiness/duty, love/friendship, as well as the notions of Platonic and courtly love—not to mention the dichotomy motion/rest.

At the end of Part One of the novel, the lovers are forcibly separated, and the tasks of reconciling the above dichotomies must be accomplished in other than physical terms. Parts Two and Three are portrayed as a classic example of the passion myth playing itself out until the symbolic deaths of the lovers—he goes to sea and she marries at her father's demand.

The remainder of the story chronicles the reign of morality and extreme sublimation. Passion and virtue are eventually reconciled in the death of the heroine Julie, but not before she offers a vision of a viable means of reconciliation and fulfillment.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

_Julie; or The New Heloise_ is a political novel in that it deals with mores that govern human passions. One might even presume that the work formulates an ethic of love. Besides, one can assume that anything a philosopher creates also partakes of philosophic discovery. And so it is with the _Julie_: an interplay of the poet and the philosopher. And, yes, there are conflicts. I would say that, in the _Julie_, philosophy formulates the question--that of the possible reconciliation of passion and virtue--and poetry dares a resolution.

Much of this study reads like a commentary, for it was judged that such a form of analysis was best suited to a philosophical novel, where there was both story and argument. Also, a novel of letters, as this one is, does not include an all-seeing or synthesizing first or third person; the commentator fills that role as best he can.

This study divides the novel into three parts: 1) the love affair itself (Part I); 2) the period of forced separation of the lovers (Parts II and III); and 3) the lovers' reunion and attempt to salvage love on other than physical terms (Parts IV, V, and VI).

It is my contention that love and virtue are reconciled only incidentally within the novel itself, but that Rousseau, through his paradigmatic personage of Julie,
offers a vision of how that reconciliation might be effected. In offering his answer to this age-old question of the private and the public, Rousseau borrows, at least in part, from past ages, as the title of his work would indicate.

This study does not pretend to be a comprehensive treatment of the Julie; rather, its essential concern is how happiness is viewed and pursued by Rousseau's characters and, by interpolation, by Rousseau himself. And, of course, within the confines of a love story, as this one is, the question of happiness becomes the question of love. In fact, whereas the Julie is not meant to be a comprehensive statement on happiness, it might rather be a comprehensive statement on love and happiness; for it shows how happiness might be attained within the context of love. And that doorway turns out to be rather narrow. It is so narrow—so tenuous—that its attainment is offered only as a vision.
CHAPTER 2
BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC HAPPINESS

It will prove both useful and necessary to situate the question of happiness within the confines of Rousseauean works other than The New Heloise. Such an investigation serves not only to accentuate the importance of the subject for Rousseau, but also to determine if it is given different meaning and weight in different works. To be examined within this chapter are On the Social Contract, Emile, The Confessions, and The Reveries of the Solitary Walker.

In the study of any political philosopher—in the study of any philosopher or, for that matter, of any person of letters—one should be able to question the overarching intent of the work and receive from the text at least a thoughtful attempt at an answer. When one asks this ultimate question of Rousseau's corpus, the most ubiquitous and logically necessary intention seems to be that of defining and promoting both private and public happiness.

In a more than superficial sense, Rousseau returns us to Aristotle and the ancient eudaemonistic understanding of human behavior. To his question "What is the fascination with Rousseau?" Arthur M. Melzer ultimately has a concise answer: "In a word, he boldly insists on pushing beyond the tame, manageable issue of comfortable self-preservation to
confront the whole, messy, complex question of happiness."

This kinship between Aristotle and Rousseau holds true surely if we define eudaemonism as that ethical theory which upholds the highest ethical good to be happiness. If we add to this bare bones definition of eudaemonism the requirement that reason be the essential element in the pursuit of happiness, then the kinship becomes almost purely heuristic: for Aristotle, 'humankind is essentially rational; for Rousseau, humankind is essentially free.

One might foresee conflicts, or at least tensions, between the private and the public notions of happiness in whoever thinks seriously about the good of man. These tensions exist in a fundamental way in both Aristotle and Rousseau, and, perhaps, that is the source and substance of their kinship. For example, one might ask: Does the same thing render a private individual and a (public) citizen happy? Is it possible for a citizen to be both rational and free, or either one of the two? Aristotle resorts to a sort of dualism—the differentiation of moral and intellectual virtue or perfection. And Rousseau will unearth what he sees as the ultimate conflict between truth and life itself; he may be seen as a sort of naturalist who, at the end of

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day, has only happiness and its phenomenological elements as his guide.

The position that happiness is, in fact, Rousseau’s ultimate occupation needs some textual justification, although a general meditation on just about any of his writings would yield just such a conclusion. I shall, first, demonstrate that Rousseau’s expressed intent in writing was, in fact, individual and collective happiness. I shall then briefly explicate the notion of happiness as it appears in the above mentioned works. Such a procedure will provide for the reader of the Julie a context in which to situate Rousseau’s treatment of happiness in that novel.

Happiness as the Intent

At the heading of his first publication, The First Discourse, Rousseau, simultaneously, humbles reason and enthrones happiness as the goal of his deliberations.

Here is one of the greatest and noblest questions ever debated [Has the restoration of the sciences and arts tended to purify or corrupt morals?]. This discourse is not concerned with those metaphysical subtleties that have prevailed in all parts of learning and from which the announcements of Academic competitions are not always exempt; rather, it is a matter of one of those truths that concern the happiness of mankind.2

The logic of the above statement would make the question of happiness itself an even greater and nobler question than

the one posed for the competition, which in itself, is "one of the greatest and noblest questions ever debated."

The intention of Rousseau—his philosophic and poetic focus—remained constant throughout the course of his writings. Twelve years later, in the Preface of Emile, he identifies himself and his philosophizing with the very notion of happiness. Rousseau is saying that he believes that he has an obligation to propose his ideas to the public,

for the maxims concerning which I am of an opinion different from that of others are not matters of indifference. They are among those whose truth or falsehood is important to know and which make the happiness or the unhappiness of mankind.³

In that same year, 1762, Rousseau published On the Social Contract, wherein, it may be argued, he strongly intimated that the end or objective of his masterpiece of political philosophy was none other than happiness. This contention that the explicit intention of On the Social Contract is the furtherance of public happiness should be viewed within Rousseau's general critique of Hobbesian philosophy: Rousseau believes that individuals and societies have some capacity for happiness (after all, humans are by nature good); whereas Hobbes sees only a

diminution of pain and a delaying of death as the ultimate political successes. Rousseau's primitive innocent is capable of greater heights than Hobbes's cunning and bellicose natural man. But how does Rousseau inform us that the intent of On the Social Contract is the happiness of the citizens living under such a regime?

In the Introduction to Book I, Rousseau tells us that his goal is "legitimate and reliable rule"—taking men and their interests as they are and laws and right as they can be. A harmony of "justice and utility" seems to be his ultimate goal. Immediately, however, after defining what seem to be his ultimate goals, he advances the issue one step further toward a more encompassing perspective. First, he writes: "I start in without proving the importance of my subject." If the balancing of "justice and utility" be not proof of the importance of his book, then what is? The proof must be in demonstrating the importance of the effects of the balancing of "justice and utility." I contend that the intended effect of the harmony of justice and utility is happiness of the citizen. No wonder he does not prove the importance of his subject—his subject is a foundational principle (as Aristotle would say, it is the end and never a means).

Almost immediately after stating that he has not proven the importance of reconciling justice and utility, Rousseau begins to muse about being "born a citizen of a free State" and how the right to vote there imposes public duties. He concludes this meditation by saying: "And I am happy, everytime I meditate about government, always to find in my research new reasons to love that of my country!" In other words, Rousseau has been made happy, as a citizen, by a state that resembles, at least in the essential of giving a political voice and vote to its people, that state which he is recommending in On the Social Contract. Rousseau, it seems, wishes to play the role of none other than the legislator who would bring happiness to humankind by means of a new ethos, as well as new institutions.

In the last months of his life--some fifteen years after On the Social Contract--Rousseau boldly states in the Sixth Walk of The Reveries of the Solitary Walker that, if he had been given the proverbial ring of Gyges, "Only the sight of public felicity could have affected my heart with a permanent feeling, and the ardent desire to contribute to it would have been my most constant passion." Here is a

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5 On the Social Contract, p.46.

prince who can only be a prince if he has the capability of living his passion: contributing to public happiness.

Rousseau's Thoughts on Happiness

For Rousseau, man is naturally good, and his experiences of true happiness are linked to love and goodness. Although Rousseau agrees with Hobbes on the non-teleological understanding of life and the self, he disagrees with Hobbes that "felicity is a continual progress of the desire, from one object to another." For Hobbes, taking as model the anxiety-ridden urban man, life is opposition—a continuous flight from evil; for Rousseau, taking as model peasants, savages, and even lower animals, life is attraction to a "delicious idleness," but also attraction to a "positive affection for oneself and for simply being." Rousseau, critiquing Hobbes's myopic view of human nature, saw that man was an unfortunate product of history and that it might be possible to return—not to some point of idyllic and unchanging human nature, for such a nature, in the Aristotelian sense of nature, never existed, but to an earlier period when man was more in tune with himself and less at odds with his world.  

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7 Melzer, p. 32.
9 Melzer, p. 38.
10 Melzer, p. 51 n. 3.
Despite insistent "Kantian" interpretations of Rousseau, Melzer contends, as mentioned above, that Rousseau held to the "traditional view that the good is prior to the right" and that "justice must ultimately be judged before the bar of happiness." This represents the essential element of eudaemonism—the primacy of happiness as the justification of moral acts. Even Ernst Cassirer, who ultimately views Rousseau as a non-eudaemonist, must conclude: "From the outset, [Rousseau's] whole thought was moved by the problem of happiness: its aim was to find a harmonious union of virtue and happiness." But it is less the unjust or immoral man than it is the disunified man who presents the more tragically fundamental picture of unhappiness:

Always in contradiction with himself, always floating between his inclination and his duties [happiness and virtue], he will never be either man or citizen. He will be good neither for himself nor for others. He will be one of these men of our days: A Frenchman, an Englishman, a bourgeois. He will be nothing.

Strictly speaking, there are two opposing resolutions for the above described vacillation: a resolute public person (a good citizen) or a resolute private person (a dreamer). It is in On the Social Contract that Rousseau offers his

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11 Melzer, p. 62.


13 Emile, I 40.
political solution, which, in great part, is an explicit and implicit description of what a true citizen would be.

It is in *The Reveries*, however, that Rousseau offers the (mutually exclusive?) private solution:

A simple and permanent state . . . where the soul finds a base sufficiently solid on which to rest entirely and to gather there all its being, without the need to recall the past or encroach on the future; where time is nothing for it, where the present lasts forever without even marking its duration and without any trace of succession, without any other sentiment of privation or of enjoyment, of pleasure or of pain, of desire or fear, but alone of our existence, which sentiment is able to fill the soul entirely.\(^{14}\)

Though hardly compatible with civil society, this private solution would seem, according to Melzer, to be of value as a point de repere for less radically private resolutions. But one senses something unique and peculiarly new about what Rousseau sees and how he proposes to correct it. For one, nature is good; it was (is) man who corrupts man, of course, with the complicity of historical accidents. One would then think that the way to repair man would be to return simply to his original nature. The problem there is that man has no changeless nature and no telos. He is infinitely malleable, or theoretically so. What then is Rousseau's advice for the restoration of man's authenticity? Melzer explains:

\(^{14}\) Melzer, p. 66.
Any way of life of reasonable extent is good, regardless of content, provided only that it is internally consistent. Rousseau is the first thinker thus to complete man's liberation from God and nature: to abandon all substantive standards, natural or divine, and to replace them with the formal standard of psychic unity or non-contradiction.

The two paths to wholeness actually proposed by Rousseau were complete selfishness (reveries) or complete selflessness (the community); extreme individualism or extreme collectivism. These were his ways of eliminating personal dependence and returning to unity—the ultimate human problem and its resolution.

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15 Melzer, p. 90.

16 J. L. Talmon is quick to say that Rousseau never decided if it was better or worse to be alone. "The only salvation for this agony [of "waverings between his inclinations and duties"], if a return to the untroubled state of nature was impossible, was either a complete self-abandonment to the elemental impulses or to "denature (denaturer) man" altogether." The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy (London: Secker and Warburg, 1955), pp. 38-39. Talmon speaks of Rousseau's question as if it were his conclusion, or even his prescription. In answer to one horn of the dilemma, Ronald Grimsley writes (Jean-Jacques Rousseau—A Study in Self-Awareness (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969): "It may be said at once that [Rousseau] does not attempt to solve the problem of frustrated passion through development of some kind of anarchic individualism. On the contrary, Saint-Preux/Rousseau tends to suggest the spiritualization of his attitude through the elaboration of a Platonic outlook which sets very definite limits to any excessively individualistic attitude." (p. 130) And, on the other hand, the Social Contract, though "denaturing" to Talmon, is viewed by Grimsley as fulfilled and protected "participation in a social life based on the ultimate truth and integrity of the 'law'." (p. 322)
The work of Rousseau is charged, in fact, with antitheses: solitude/community, idleness/activity, naturalism/self-conquest and so on. These dichotomies are not the result of confusion on Rousseau's part, but rather "the logical consequence of his analysis of society's contradictions and indeed a testament to the rigorous and unflinching consistency of his thought."\(^{17}\)

What is common to both poles of these antitheses is "freedom." Individualism is characterized by "natural freedom"; the political solution is characterized by "civil and moral freedom." For Rousseau, freedom was the essential condition of the good life. Thus, all restorations of wholeness and unity of humankind must account for freedom.\(^{18}\) Rousseau blends liberal (or modern) and classical thought to arrive at a radical humanism: "he will bring true unity and happiness to men not by uplifting them to some divine or transcendent standard, but by preventing them from using and ruining each other."\(^{19}\)

But, finally, Rousseau radicalized the argument beyond the domain of modern and ancient premises by belittling the rational and social principles which formed the bases of Hobbesian thought and by doubting the highest of the high--

\(^{17}\) Melzer, p. 91.

\(^{18}\) Melzer, 91.

\(^{19}\) Melzer, p. 112.
i.e., religion or ultimate happiness—and by placing the revival of unity and happiness in the care of man’s animal goodness (the bodily, the animal, the instinctive, the sentimental, the passionate). The attainment of unity and happiness would appear a simple matter—just maintain an original animality. But the preservation of a natural goodness proves "to require as much wisdom and to be as rare and difficult as the perfection of the soul had formerly been thought to be." This is the irony of Rousseau’s project and, as Melzer bleakly concludes, it is "a study in the pessimistic consequences of humanism." The New Heloise, I contend, offers a resolution, though not a universal one and not a facile one.

**On the Social Contract**

Having touched on the importance of the concept of happiness for Rousseau, this investigation will now focus on a study of happiness in four of his major works: On the Social Contract, Emile, The Confessions, and The Reveries of the Solitary Walker. Two of these works are autobiographical and two are more or less political in nature; the latter two works were intended to be of use to humankind in a public way. Of the two non-autobiographical works, On the Social Contract claims to demonstrate how to

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20 Melzer, p. 286.

21 Melzer, p. 287.
make men, as citizens, happy; and *Emile* attempts to educate not necessarily a citizen or a philosopher but someone capable of maintaining a sort of goodness and happiness even while living within (a corrupt) society.

According to Charles Butterworth, Rousseau's non-autobiographical works were "intended for the common good of his fellow men."

In these writings, Rousseau addressed himself to the problems that beset man in general. . . All of these works had the same basic goal: to destroy the prejudices which gave rise to the vices and misfortunes besetting men or, differently stated, to persuade men to stop admiring the arts and sciences which enslave them and to stop scorning the useful virtues which could bring them happiness.22

*On the Social Contract* is an answer to the situation and its historical genesis described in the two discourses. History had dumbly conspired to bring humankind to a state of general slavery, alienation, and unhappiness; *On the Social Contract* would describe the only way over the impasse.

Rousseau looks to the past for his ideal of "man's happy freedom" and to the future for the establishment of a regime in accord with the nature of man, a nature replete with contradictions: primarily expressed in the dichotomy

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of political society and the state of nature.\textsuperscript{23} Whereas Hobbes considers only the condition of happiness—life, Rousseau goes further in an attempt to discover what would make men happy, or: What is the good life?

In his pursuit of happiness, Rousseau challenges the whole of the Enlightenment—not only do the sciences and arts not improve morality, they corrupt it and contribute to the unhappiness of man. Sparta is presented as the refuge of real men—a city founded on civic virtue. But "Rousseau is a republican; he is a republican because he believes men are naturally free and equal" and, therefore, that only a republic could make men happy.\textsuperscript{24}

Because civic virtue is the core of the republican regime, moral education—not enlightenment from the sciences—is "the prerequisite of sound civil society." Rousseau praises ancient deeds and practice, specifically the perceived necessity of civic virtue. But he joins the moderns in denying man's political nature and, for that matter, he denies that man has any nature in the ancient or teleological sense of the word. The state is artifice—originating in the desire for self-preservation. At


\textsuperscript{24} Bloom, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau," p. 516.
present, societies merely protect existing privileges and inequalities.

So what is man in this state of nature? He is not what Hobbes describes. In fact, unlike Hobbes's natural man, Rousseau's is apolitical and asocial.25

It is in the Second Discourse that Rousseau attempted an explanation of just how humankind came to be as they were. To find natural man what is needed is a history of the species: Rousseau employs (or rather creates the discipline called) anthropology, but he especially relies on "introspection" to uncover the first and most simple movements of the human soul: 1) Emerging from pre-civil life into civil society, man took on simultaneously his sociality, his speech, and his reason; 2) This early man had no foresight or imagination, and thus could have no fear of death; 3) He was not naturally hostile, but would defend his life; 4) He was idle and saw no need to fight (after all, he was living in a world of abundance); 5) He senses "the sweetness of his own existence"--and consequently views life as a good thing; 6) His two greatest passions were self-preservation and pity for his species; 7) He was not moral, for there was no need for virtue, but he possessed a sort of primitive "goodness"; 8)

25 For us to "reach" Rousseau's pre-civil man, we must do something like what Freud did in order to "discover" the unconscious: We must imagine what must have been in order to explain what is.
He saw no one as having a natural right to rule over anyone else; 9) His only virtues were equality and freedom. As the human emerges into his nature, or rather "second nature," he is already equipped to distinguish himself from the other animals: especially, by freedom and equality. Man was, and is, almost infinitely perfectible; he is pure potentiality, and this is his curse and also the source of his mastery. It was a series of historical accidents, Rousseau speculates, that allowed and encouraged pre-civil man to develop. For example, accidents threw pre-civil man into close proximity; and this led to the notion of private property. The management of the crops of that private property encouraged forethought, as well as inequalities, which in turn led to wars between the haves and the have-nots. Man now lives with and for others, and he is constantly comparing himself to others; and this vanity (amour-propre) is at the root of everything that causes man unhappiness--wars included. Vanity (amour-propre) takes the place of "amour de soi" (love of self). Once man begins to live his life on the outside, he cannot help but become a slave to his own vanity. Knowing at least the basics of how Rousseau envisioned pre-civil man and his movements to civilization will aid in the understanding of his ethics. One thing seems clear: The development of these terrible passions requires, in order to counteract them, the most severe moral education, if men are to live together happily.
But there is no natural right in Rousseau's world: morality must be created by an act of will, intelligence, and sentiment. Rousseau's answer was On the Social Contract: an amalgam of self-interest and duty. The goal of this document was to restore wholeness to civil life—a life based on convention.

But man's "capacity to make conventions is the sign of [man's] freedom; his will is not limited by nature." Thus, the trick is to avoid the arbitrary character of conventions, and conventions become the fulfillment of man's nature and worthy of his respect and obedience. As Rousseau writes in the Introduction to Book I of On the Social Contract, he will attempt to reconcile right and interest, justice and utility—and we might add, virtue and happiness, and duty and interest.

How does the social contract lessen the agony of the alienated citizen and, at the same time, make it more difficult to succumb to the vainglory of the amour-propre? The answer is as follows: "The law is produced by the will of each thinking in terms of all. The primary function of the social contract is to constitute a regime which can express the general will." In obeying all an individual obeys only himself. He, thus, remains free and capable of

happiness, for "Willing is, as such, independent of what is willed." The general will, to allow man freedom and happiness, must remain an empty notion—it is "pure will."²⁸

In an ironic sense, freedom is not the enemy of, but the "sole source of morality." Rousseau pulls down the last vestiges of natural law, for "The will of the people is the only law." Each individual is both lawgiver and subject. It must never be forgotten when thinking of Rousseau's politics that the general will functions in an atmosphere of self-imposed and severe moral conditions, even if "virtue is not itself the end" and only a means to freedom. Freedom, we should add, is in turn the means to happiness, if it is not happiness herself.

As Allan Bloom reminds us, "Rousseau began his critique of modern thought from the point of view of human happiness."²⁹ The question of course becomes whether the solution of the social contract works for all men, especially whether the best men can find complete satisfaction (or happiness) within any civil society. Such a question is drawn from Rousseau's own writings. Baldly stated, Is civil society in conformity with man's nature?

²⁸ One might be reminded of the poet Robert Lowell who, in "Jonathan Edwards in Western Massachusetts," comes to realize that "hope lives in doubt. / Faith is trying to do without / faith."

"Virtue is necessary for civil society, but it is unclear whether it is good in itself."³⁰ Where in civil society is there room for a life of the "sentiments"? What happens to the good man, as opposed to the moral man? It is enough to remind ourselves that Rousseau ended his life—not totally voluntarily—as a solitary dreamer beyond the walls of the city, so to speak. As we shall continue to observe, there is a fundamental tension within Rousseau's understanding of humankind. Rousseau gave each of the generic vitae its due: citizen and dreamer.

**Emile**

The *Emile*, according to Melzer, may be interpreted as using natural law based on individual conscience in order to liberate Emile from priests and philosophers; and *On the Social Contract* may be interpreted as rejecting natural law in favor of the general will in order, also, to liberate citizens from priests and philosophers. Melzer concludes that Rousseau contends that "Men cannot be made virtuous or secure by doctrines but only by living under the absolute rule of law."³¹ We might add that the rule of law, which is the expression of the general will, is also the only way to render public men happy. For the citizen, virtue amounts to happiness.

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³¹ Melzer, p. 148.
On the Social Contract is an attempt to create an environment of public happiness; Emile attempts the formation of an individual capable of living happily, even within a regime which falls short of the standards of On the Social Contract. As Allan Bloom summarizes in his conclusion to the Introduction of Emile: "Emile stands somewhere between the citizen of the Social Contract and the solitary of the Reveries, lacking something of each."32

In this analysis of happiness, it might be profitable to consider, as Bloom states, that "only in nature or according to nature is man's happiness to be found," because only there exists "a perfect equilibrium" between man's desires and his capacity to satisfy them.33 If man were by nature political, as Aristotle maintains, then the solution would be a matter of moderating or perfecting desires. But there are even greater contrasts to be made on this issue of the ultimate disagreement between Rousseau and Aristotle.

Bloom defines the contest:

An older moral philosophy, which goes back to Aristotle, taught that desires are by nature infinite and that man possesses the faculty of will, guided by reason, which can control desires for the sake of the good. The language of this philosophy was that of virtue and vice. Virtue was in this older view understood to be natural and the control exercised by it to be productive


of at least one part of happiness. Virtue is happiness according to Socrates' formula. Courage controls man's fear of pain; moderation his love of pleasure. This control of pleasure, a willed harmony in tension, was itself understood by this tradition to be a pleasure. The existence of such virtues and their pleasurable character—except perhaps for the vain pleasure of superiority over others—is flatly denied by Rousseau. In particular, it is the virtue of moderation, which governs the desires connected with food and sex, that concerns him so much. To Rousseau, man is naturally moderate. Society inflames his desires, and the control exercised over them is not that of virtue but that of fear, of external command, of what we now call repression. . . . Healing, rather than appeals to morality, is what is needed in order to attain the bit of happiness possible for social man.34

Emile then is not exactly an attempt at reconciling virtue and happiness; rather

Emile is an experiment in restoring harmony to the [incoherent] world by reordering the emergence of man's acquisitions in such a way as to avoid the imbalances created by them while allowing the full actualization of man's potential.35

The intent of Rousseau is to restore to man his original wholeness or unity—thus allowing for his rediscovery of a degree of happiness. The contemporary manifestation of the diversion from possible happiness is represented by the bourgeois, whose profundity of soul is defined solely by fear of violent death.

34 Bloom, Love, p. 44.
35 Bloom, Intro, Emile, p. 3.
The first part of *Emile* is devoted to rearing an autonomous civilized savage, and the second part attempts to bring that "atomic individual into human society and into a condition of moral responsibility on the basis of his inclinations and his generosity."\(^{36}\)

One reading of Plato's *Republic* is that the best regime is only possible "in word"—that there is no political salvation, so to speak, and no true happiness for the citizen qua citizen. The message that Rousseau offers with *Emile* is that "The right kind of education, once independent of society, can put a child into direct contact with nature without the intermixture of opinion."\(^{37}\) Of course, Rousseau here denies the ultimate duality of desire and reason. But, even independent of society, the process of growth of the child must be controlled. For example, the tutor must impede the appearance of both the fear of death and amour-propre until such time as Emile is capable of dealing with them—that is, until such time as he has developed strong countervailing traits of character.

The net result of Emile's education is that "His will to affirm never exceeds his capacity to prove." He lives only by the laws of necessity, and he "has not unlearned how

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to die, harms no one, and knows how to be ignorant, possesses a large share of the Socratic wisdom."\textsuperscript{38}

Important to remember is that Emile has not been taught to master his passions; rather, he has been reared such that his passions do not come into conflict with each other, or with the necessities of the external world. Sublimated sex, not repressed sex, becomes the link between the individual and the disinterested respect for law. Sublimation, a Rousseauean notion, is making the higher from the lower. And the last two books of 	extit{Emile} "undertake in a detailed way the problematic task of showing how the higher might be derived from the lower without being reduced to it." And, as Bloom points out, everything in those last two books is related to sex.\textsuperscript{39}

One example of the divided nature of man—a result of his historical development—is the disparity between natural puberty (15 years of age) and civil puberty (mid-twenties): a tension between natural desire and civil duty. Rousseau unifies these two puberties by "establishing successively two passions in Emile, which are sublimations of sexual desire"—and they are compassion and love. Without entering the details of the psychological mechanism of this lesson, suffice it to say that "Rousseau studies the passions and

\textsuperscript{38} Bloom, \textit{Intro. Emile}, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{39} Bloom, \textit{Intro. Emile}, p. 16.
finds a way of balancing them one against the other rather than trying to develop the virtues which govern them." 40

Emile, thus, moves from nature to society without his being denatured and without succumbing to a morality of selfishness. In fact, in his education, the conflict between inclination and duty has been supplanted by inclination and ideal. And, if it may be said that Emile's love for Sophie is ideal and thus illusory, it must also be said that "the deeds which those illusions produce are real." 41

If controlling pleasures is not in itself pleasant, as we mentioned at the outset when outlining Rousseau's position, Emile—as a husband and future father—must be moral (as opposed to merely "good"). But what understanding of morality does Rousseau give him? Bloom addresses this question directly:

Virtue, he tells him, is not the perfection of desire, but rather the overcoming of desire. Virtue is strength, the strength, to put it paradoxically, to want to do what one does not want to do. Where do we get the strength to look at persons and things we love most and at the same time to be aware of and unmoved by their vulnerability? The incapacity to face the mortality of those we love is partially explained by the weakness of modern man, attributed by Rousseau to the conflict between nature and society. 42

40 Bloom, Intro. Emile, p. 20.
42 Bloom, Love, p. 137.
It is the absence of conflict in his desires that gives Emile such strength of soul—such power. He would probably regard the Aristotelian man of virtue as divided in soul, and the Roman Stoic as suppressed. Emile is "good," though he does not know he is good and does not know what goodness might be. He has been reared to be—not to think! He has been reared to a common happiness.

The Confessions

Whereas On the Social Contract provided for the happiness of a sort for the citizen, and whereas Emile reared the happy "good" man, The Confessions, an autobiography, concerns itself primarily with the happiness of the radical individual—-but more: the individual, as Rousseau describes himself in the opening paragraph: "I am unlike any one I have ever met." Thus, we can expect Rousseau of The Confessions to be more interested in private than in public happiness. In fact, The Confessions should be read as the history of one man's search for happiness—a man who, through the fortuitous authenticity of his unique character, was able to present posterity with an autobiography of at least heuristic value. Since no one knows to ask the question "What is happiness?" until he has experienced it, this search is in large measure, but not totally, retrospective. Rousseau will engage in reminiscence in order to identify the happy times of his
younger years, but his glance back is as steely cold as it is nostalgic.

In *Emile*, Rousseau rears his pupil to be a natural man, who, because of a quiet imagination, can maintain his wholeness and independence indefinitely. But Rousseau himself—the subject and the object of *The Confessions*—is a civilized human and "must find wholeness by participating in a community."43 The question remains the same: How can we return to a state of even quasi-wholeness and independence?

In Book VI of *The Confessions*, Rousseau attempts to attest to, if not describe, "the short happiness of my life." Four or five years were spent at Les Charmettes with his benefactrice Mme de Warens. And it was there that Rousseau suffered an illness which convinced him that he was about to die. Christopher Kelly begins his analysis of Book VI by questioning the nature of Rousseau's brush with death and his perceived access to happiness. "The major question raised by Book VI is how the prospect of imminent death can serve as the foundation of happiness."44

During his illness, Rousseau harbored a fear of imminent death—all of which caused him to reflect on


44 Kelly, *Exemplary*, p. 149.
religious matters. He does not, however, agree (with Hobbes) that fear of death is natural, for pre-civil man 1) is not possessed of the faculty of foresight, and 2) he sees no way of preventing death. In sum, fear of death and fear of Hell are both unnatural, and they are two great causes contributing to the unhappiness of man.

The happiness of the pure state of nature consists largely in the avoidance of tormenting hopes and fears. The same is true of the happiness of the young Emile. Book VI of the *Confessions* shows that Jean-Jacques's happiness is founded in the resignation toward death caused by his acceptance of illness. This resignation temporarily cures him of the civilized desires that torment him, although fears of death and Hell occasionally trouble his calm. He is happy in so far as he is free of these fears.45

Living with the conviction of imminent death kills the imagination and offers the experience of necessity: thus, allowing for the experience of undisturbed happiness. There is no fear, there is no hope. But, unlike the natural man, Jean-Jacques's happiness is both an absence of pain and "a still sweeter awareness of this absence." Imagination and power, desires and abilities, are in equilibrium; Rousseau imagines no great projects. "He lives entirely in the present."46 And that is another way of defining happiness, a way out of civilized corruption and the debilitating games of amour-propre (self-love).


Is this sort of return to nature a viable way for civilized humans to find happiness? Christopher Kelly concludes in the negative: This sort of return to nature and happiness "must be inflicted from outside; it is an accident." Even Jean-Jacques cannot hold a steady course after his experience of imminent death. Is the imagination, then, stronger than the reason? It seems so, for as the acceptance of the inevitability of death and its nearness fade, the imagination takes control again.

A second period of elusive happiness comes in Book XII, the last Book of The Confessions. Rousseau is now living on Saint Peter's Island, in Lake Bienne. There, the external "accident," precipitating feelings of the possibility of natural wholeness and happiness, is the so-called conspiracy against Rousseau and his works. According to Rousseau, his former friends had totally isolated and degraded him and were conspiring to alter his works. The results of the conspiracy were so effective (or were believed to be by Rousseau) that, in the equation of happiness, this conspiracy plays the same role in Rousseau's life as did severe illness in Book VI. That is to say, the conspiracy robbed Rousseau of the hope of ever fulfilling imaginary projects. In other words, the conspiracy played the role of "necessity." During this period, Rousseau, due to the

47 Kelly, Exemplary, p. 158.
deaths of a chain of friends, is even cured of the desire for friendship.

There are both similarities and dissimilarities between Rousseau's life at Les Charmettes and on Saint Peter's Island. At the former, Rousseau was engaged in industrious study of various disciplines; on the island, he lives an idle life of botany, long walks, and contemplation. He even allows his imagination to enliven his botanical pursuits and to take him back in his memory to happy times (the danger with the imagination is precisely when it takes you into the future). At Les Charmettes, he began his day with a prayer; on the island, his prayer has become purely contemplative—asking nothing of God.

Rousseau seems to be self-sufficient and whole on Saint Peter's, but the only flaw is his anxious fear that the authorities will not allow him to live out his life on the island. His happiness is in jeopardy, for his life is not founded in necessity and certainty. Rousseau still has hopes and fears. Also, after being expelled from the island, Rousseau gave serious consideration to drafting legislation for Corsica. Kelly writes of this undying need for glory; Rousseau makes it clear that while his experience has succeeded in curing him of his sexual passions and petty vanity and has even been able to impose some limits on his imagination, it has not succeeded in ending his attachment to justice and
glory. The return to wholeness is revealed as partial and temporary.\textsuperscript{48}

The salient features of Rousseau's meditations on happiness in the \textit{Confessions} involve a stripping away of artifice to an almost buddhistic nudity. It is a hope out of doubt, which never abandons the doubt.

\textbf{The Reveries of the Solitary Walker}

There are approximately eight years separating the \textit{Confessions} and the \textit{Reveries}, the latter of which was apparently incomplete at the time of Rousseau's death in 1778. Our subject is still happiness, and we shall look to Rousseau's last (written) words in order to discover how he then regarded (the notion of) happiness. The title of the work describes and depicts the nature of Rousseau's search for happiness: One must dream alone—which seems a far cry from the rigors of the regime in \textit{On the Social Contract}. There seems to be a regression from concern with public happiness and a movement inward toward individual happiness.

"I am now alone on earth," begins the First Walk. In such a condition of solitude, "What am I?' asks Rousseau—and thus defines the task of the \textit{Reveries}. Ironically, it is the conspiracy against Rousseau that has forced him into this solitude and has, in turn, given him the unique opportunity of examining himself as if in a philosophical state of nature. He has died to the world:

\textsuperscript{48} Kelly, \textit{Exemplary}, p. 235.
And here I am, tranquil at the bottom of the abyss, a poor unfortunate mortal, but unperturbed, like God himself.49

Rousseau claims to be writing the Reveries only for his own benefit—for "the sweetness of conversing with my soul"—and not as an apologetic, as in the Confessions and the Dialogues.

There seems to be a strong strand of Platonism in this small work. Rousseau writes of the growth of his soul's moral life "with the death of every earthly and temporal interest. My body is no longer anything to me but an encumbrance, an obstacle, and I disengage myself from it beforehand as much as I can."50

Together with all this talk of death, or at least of talk about death to the world, the preceding citation might allow us to feel that we are engaged in another Phaedo. Is Rousseau not offering the picture of his soul as an alternative to Socrates's? But the new Socrates might well be an individual of feelings as opposed to a person of thoughts. Whatever, his happiness, like Socrates's, might turn out to be of a "purely personal value."51

Because of the universal and infallible nature of the conspiracy against him, Rousseau was forced upon his own

49 Reveries, p. 5.
50 Reveries, p. 7.
resources, to the extent that he thanks his persecutors for his new found spiritual and emotional independence or self-sufficiency.

This resource [i.e., feeding his heart with its own substance], which I thought of too late, became so fruitful that it soon sufficed to compensate for everything. The habit of turning within eventually made me stop feeling and almost stop remembering my ills. By my own experience, I thus learned that the source of true happiness is within us and that it is not within the power of men to make anyone who can will to be happy truly miserable.52

To his enemies, Rousseau, as if a Stoic once-removed, professes to owe his experience of rapture and ecstasy. Whether these experiences can be described as "contemplation" or "reverie" is difficult to discern, and might just depend on definitions; Rousseau uses both terms, it seems at times, interchangeably. Whatever the case, reverie (as the path to happiness) does not presuppose philosophic understanding. Rousseau, even when speaking of the highest things, is profoundly egalitarian. By the close of the Third Walk, wherein Rousseau speaks of his God and the tenuous nature of all arguments about the divine, Butterworth maintains that Rousseau is not anxiously awaiting some sort of future compensation, but rather shows

52 Reveries, p. 13.
a confidence "rooted in his enjoyment of reverie, not in hope beyond his control."\textsuperscript{53}

The Fifth Walk deals explicitly with the subject of this investigation: happiness. Rousseau states that he was most happy, in his lifetime, during his two-month refuge on Saint Peter's Island, which is "pleasant and singularly placed for the happiness of a man who likes to cut himself off."\textsuperscript{54} There he committed himself to idleness, as if to a religion:

While [the others] were still at the table, I would slip away and go throw myself alone into a boat that I rowed to the middle of the lake when the water was calm; and there, stretching myself out full-length in the boat, my eyes turned to heaven, I let myself slowly drift back and forth with the water, sometimes for several hours, plunged in a thousand confused, but delightful, reveries which, even without having any well-determined or constant object, were in my opinion a hundred times preferable to the sweetest things I had found in what are called the pleasures of life.\textsuperscript{55}

And, when the weather was too rough, he would retire to the lake shore to watch and listen to the waves—which had similar effects to his boating on the lake. The happiness he feels is, he says, not at all of the momentary nature of delirium or passion; "rather a simple and permanent state which has nothing intense in itself but whose duration


\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Reveries}, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Reveries}, p. 66.
increases its charm to the point that I finally find supreme felicity in it."56

In the next paragraph, Rousseau seems to negate the validity of his comments about "permanent" happiness: He raises the notion of the continual flux and transitory nature of all things—including happiness. And, then, as if playing the devil's advocate, he proposes an acid test to determine if what is felt is in fact happiness: "I would like this instant to last forever."57 Rousseau expounds that if anyone can find happiness, then it is because he is able to live totally in the present—with no need of recalling either past or future. Yet, Rousseau stops short of recommending his life of reverie to those engaged in the active life, and justifies his idleness in a thoroughly ad hoc manner:

But an unfortunate person who has been cut off from human society and who can no longer do anything here-below useful and good for another or for himself can find compensations for all the human felicities in this state, compensations which fortune and men could not take from him.58

Rousseau briefly describes the environmental prerequisites for such experiences; and the person himself must be at peace and must have "a cheerful imagination" which comes naturally "to those whom Heaven has favored." And, again in

56 Reveries, p. 68.
57 Reveries, p. 68
58 Reveries, p. 69.
fine Stoic fashion, he claims that "this kind of reverie," would have sustained him even to the dark dungeon of the Bastille.

Rousseau concludes this Fifth Walk extolling his past life on the island--assuring himself that imaginative recollection is a good, if not better than the original experiences, then concluding with a reminder of the failing powers of the aged. "Alas!" he concludes in a Platonic manner, "it is when we begin to leave our skin that it hinders us the most."\(^{59}\) "The whole tone of the Walk is that Rousseau's truest happiness is a perfectly solitary happiness."\(^{60}\) But such a happiness is apparently attainable by all, for "such a feeling is the sentiment of one's own existence." This passive and purely sensual moment is by no means, concludes Butterworth, "contemplative."

The episode of Saint Peter's Island is described first by Rousseau in the Confessions, some seven or so years before the Reveries. Butterworth\(^{61}\) summarizes what has changed from one version to the other: 1) In the Confessions, Rousseau was still concerned about convention, and spoke of some acts as those of worship; 2) In the

\(^{59}\) Reveries, p. 71.

\(^{60}\) Butterworth, "Interpretative Essay" to Reveries, p. 193.

Reveries, his explanation of the meaning of happiness took the place of that worship; and 3) In the Reveries, his new view of happiness as a sentiment is likened to "the sense of self-sufficiency God, too, must feel." Those are the major differences between the two works, but there is one more of a purely political nature: The dreamer was not only no help to the little community on the island, but was, in fact, a threat, because his states of reverie represented withdrawal from the political—to the point of an "imitation of death": a dying to the political life per se, as well as a dying to the world itself.

This tension between the city and philosophy is, once again, raised and resolved in a sort of ad hoc way: I have never been suited for civil society; but I have never been a pernicious citizen (rather, I have been a "good" man). But, of course, the more specific question for the present investigation is "whether Rousseau's substitution of sentiment for reason and of solitary happiness as described in the Fifth Walk for ultimate happiness as contemplation is defensible."  

Whatever ultimate happiness might be, Rousseau speaks unequivocally of "truest happiness": "I know and feel that to do good is the truest happiness the human heart can

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savor." He commits himself to the "public felicity" in the event he ever comes into possession of the ring of Gyges. But Rousseau even here implies that he will keep the common good in mind only as long as he is allowed to act from pleasure, as opposed to duty and constraint. Rousseau himself and his model human are nothing if they are not free. This, of course, means that true happiness must have as the essential element the quality of freedom (and, I venture, equality). But with the ring of Gyges there would be no problem, for he would be above constraint.

By now it appears that (private) happiness is tantamount to achieving the state of reverie, which is, at the least, living in the eternal present. But what of the relation between reverie and thinking, meditating, and contemplating? At this point in my investigation, I can only ask if there is a question to ask. That is to say, does Rousseau sufficiently and consciously differentiate these three "mental" processes? I am not sure that he does.

Whatever the case, Rousseau draws a sharp line between thought (reason) and reverie: "I have sometimes thought rather deeply, but rarely with pleasure. . . . Reverie relaxes and amuses me; reflection tires and saddens me. . . . Sometimes my reveries end in meditation, but more often my

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63 Reveries, p. 75.
meditations end in reverie." And regarding contemplation, Rousseau advises that "The more sensitive a soul a contemplator has, the more he gives himself up to the ecstacies this harmony arouses in him." Then Rousseau proceeds to offer a sort of pantheistic description of that reverie that issues from contemplation:

A sweet and deep reverie takes possession of his senses then, and through a delicious intoxication he loses himself in the immensity of this beautiful system with which he feels himself one. Then, all particular objects elude him; he sees and feels nothing except in the whole. Some particular circumstance must focus his ideas and close off his imagination for him to be able to observe the parts of the universe he was straining to embrace.

It seems then that contemplation is used as a sort of psychic exercise to bring the dream to the all-embracing experience of reverie. Rousseau sometimes seems to employ reverie, contemplation, and meditation interchangeably. Again, in the Seventh Walk, he gives a description of reverie (and meditation?), all the while defending his sole pursuit of private happiness.

No, nothing personal, nothing which concerns my body can truly occupy my soul. I never meditate, I never dream more deliciously than when I forget myself. I feel ecstacies and inexpressible

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64 Reveries, p. 91.
65 Reveries, p. 92.
raptures in blending, so to speak, into the system of beings and in making myself one with the whole of nature. As long as men were my brothers, I made plans of earthly felicity for myself. These plans always being relative to the whole, I could be happy only through public felicity; and the idea of private happiness never touched my heart until I saw my brothers seeking theirs only in my misery. Then it became necessary to flee them so as not to hate them. Then, seeking refuge in mother nature, I sought in her arms to escape the attacks of her children. I have become solitary or, as they say, unsociable and misanthropic, because to me the most desolate solitude seems preferable to the society of wicked men which is nourished only by betrayals and hatred.67

Rousseau seems to be saying that the pursuit of private happiness must be justified in each case, for it is, as a theory (or as a religion), possibly detrimental to public well-being. He also seems to be saying, in the above citation, that public felicity was the more natural concern, because it involves man "relative to the whole." One can only say in this confusion that private happiness, not public happiness, has as object "the whole of nature."68

There is irony within the apologia: Rousseau is putting the noose around his own neck.

Not having found happiness in the world of materiality, Rousseau nonetheless succeeded in finding peace and happiness—the key to which was having "learned to bear the

67 Reveries, p. 95.

68 Reveries, p. 95.
yoke of necessity without a murmur." (Where there is a Rousseauian happiness, there seems also to be the force of necessity.) This attainment of tranquility and happiness is often expressed within the context of a Platonic/Stoic view of ethics: Whether he is submitting to necessity (Stoic) or thrusting off the "old wrapping" of the soul (Platonic), the reader might be lulled by a familiarity with Rousseau's language. But Rousseau is not only not a disciple of any school of thought, he is the cornerstone of a new one. He borrows what he feels truthful from other "schools."

The corollary to the solitary happiness of the Fifth Walk is uniquely Rousseauian:

By withdrawing into my soul . . . by renouncing comparisons and preferences . . . I again found peace of soul and almost felicity. In whatever situation we find ourselves, it is only because of self-love that we are constantly unhappy.

This recipe for happiness—eradicate "amour-propre" (self-love)—seems simple enough, but becomes highly complex when the individual so reared must, like Emile, enter society, as opposed to living the life of a recluse. Of course, self-love is the first acquisition of natural man moving into

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69 Reveries, p. 113.


71 Reveries, p. 116.
Thus, Rousseau's recipe for happiness calls for a world-historical revolution, which, it seems, can only be carried on in the households, schools, and churches of a society. Butterworth defines the issue well:

[T]o the extent that the argument here proves the necessity of solitary life for achieving that natural state, it strengthens Rousseau's contention that ultimate happiness is solitary and points to the fundamental problem of civil society, that is, the tension between what is required of the citizen so that the regime and all other citizens may survive and what is necessary so that the individual may enjoy complete happiness without regard for the demands of the regime.72

The life of the solitary is not the way to happiness for most people. "Solitude is a viable solution only for those who, like Rousseau, are able to bring this passion [i.e., self-love] back under control."73 But this self-purification does appear like the "way" of Aristotle--that is, self-mastery over the passions and to virtue. But, as Butterworth distinguishes: "[Rousseau] adheres to no morality of self-control or of the mean. . . . Instead, he


permits his senses to have their full play. He can afford this luxury, he contends, because his natural temperament is good."

The compelling question, then, is this: How does one control self-love in the vast majority who see no cause to control themselves? Their way to happiness must be as distinctive as their way to virtue. A more than casual reading of Rousseau will yield the notion of the few and the many, but, for Rousseau—egalitarian and primitivist—this dichotomy does not necessarily define superior and inferior. One might say, on Rousseau's behalf, that the members of the human species exist on a horizontal continuum with those at the extremes of ignorance and wisdom possessing the greatest chances for happiness. The most "ignorant" and isolated are more likely not to have developed a strong self-love; the most wise and also isolated have had the wherewithal to purify their souls of self-love.

So, how is the middle group, the vast majority, to be reared and civilized? The answer, for what value it might have, seems to be in On the Social Contract. In short, this middle group is to be raised by the laws, by the general will of the body politic.

Having raised those political questions in the Eighth Walk, Rousseau makes a broad sweep in the opening sentence

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of the Ninth Walk: "Happiness is a permanent condition which does not seem to be made for man here-below. Everything on earth is in constant flux, which permits nothing to take on a constant form." If people cannot be happy, they can, Rousseau maintains, be "content." Whereas "Happiness has no exterior sign," contentment can be recognized. This duality is just another of the divisions among men. Now that Rousseau has drawn a division that many will find problematic, he introduces two new notions in this Walk: contentment (briefly mentioned above) and compensation. He seems to be speaking to his world of readers, despite his claim to be writing for himself alone; and he is speaking of the many, for whom the happiness of reveries will probably never materialize.

It is ironic that Rousseau, after stating that "There is compensation for everything," places himself forward as the one who is compensated for his few pleasures by the opportunity of appreciating more deeply the few that he has. There is no more talk of true happiness or of the pretensions of Jean-Jacques's achievement of it: as if he felt a political need to make a silent but substantial statement of salutary import.

The apparently unfinished Tenth Walk seems, in part at least, to be a grand acknowledgement of Mme de Warens, who

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75 *Reveries*, p. 122.
played such a central role in the formation of Rousseau’s soul. There are definitely, however, in these two pages, conflicting ideas about determinism and free will. The very moment he met Mme. de Warens "determined my whole life and by an inevitable chain of events shaped the destiny of the rest of my days." At the same time, he claims that four or five years with Mme de Warens allowed him to be himself, "fully, without admixture and without obstacle, and when I can truly say that I lived." He was free to be who he was and to do what he wanted. Perhaps there is no contradiction—only another instance of a benevolent conspiracy of fate.

It was then that his soul was formed— that his affinity for solitude, contemplation, and feelings developed and sustained him the rest of his life. Perhaps, the only debt he dies owning is to "the best of women." She had given him five years of "pure and full happiness" which, he might have said, compensated for "everything dreadful in my present lot."

A Counter-Conclusion

Rousseau’s ethics (if, in fact, he has one) is based in developmental psychology. Proper upbringing, somewhat like what is found in Aristotle’s ethics, is essential to the attainment of happiness. But Aristotle’s ethics, at least in large part, is more attached to civic and political virtue than to the individual (Of course, Book X of the
Nicomachean Ethics is the glaring exception.) Rousseau’s upbringing is meant to clear away all obstacles from his pupil’s path, so that the pupil can simply be himself in his educational confrontations with nature. Rousseau does not have a blind faith in civil man; rather, he has an informed faith in "natural man."

Whereas Kant seemed to say: If something is difficult to do, then it is probably the right thing to do; Rousseau seems to say: If it is truly difficult to do, then it is probably opposed to you, and you should not do it. In fact, as we have seen, Rousseau claims to be most happy when he is most idle, as on Saint Peter’s Island. Idleness best allows for the experience of one’s own existence and, thus, for happiness.

Nonetheless, self-mastery is important for Rousseau, because it is the only way (short of the experience of approaching death, external constraint, fate, or mass conversions to the Émile) to attain happiness. But not because self-restraint is rational (as with Aristotle), but because self-restraint controls the imagination, which, for Rousseau, plays the role of Aristotle’s irrational element in the soul. The imagination is destabilizing and will take us into an illusory future, if it is not restrained by either the will or necessity or law. It is only when grounded in necessity that one can allow the imagination to
soar at will without fear of losing one's settled state of happiness.

Rousseau's ultimate happiness seems a radically private state of the soul, rather than an Aristotelian activity of the soul. For Rousseau, ultimate happiness is the sweet sentiment of one's own existence, but this state, unlike the independent Stoic soul, is formed in part by accidents of fate. This leads one to realize that Rousseau views the world as divided between the few and the many, and the corresponding notions of happiness. Can one imagine there being enough fortuitous "accidents" occurring to enough humans in order to form a civil society of these lucky unlucky individuals? Thus, fate helps shape the few such that they will experience happiness of the reverie; while the many (lucky in a sense) are formed by the good laws of the city. Thus, for political purposes, Rousseau has the air of a eudaemonist who relies on reason as his guide to civic welfare. For private purposes, he is a contemplative whose contemplations often become reveries—perhaps because his total isolation renders his thoughts useless.

Rousseau's private happiness seems, at times, a composition of an Epicureanism and a sort of earthly mysticism of existence. He purges himself of fear and hope (of the gods, that is), just as Lucretius would have his reader do, and then absorbs himself in reveries that imitate the mystics. More precisely, he sublimates the lower into
the higher. As Allan Bloom puts it, "Rousseau's intention is to create longing in the soul of man. Natural man does not long." And the way of sublimation is to "enrich desires before they are satisfied." One might say that sublimation is distinctly human, for it is ultimately an exercise of freedom (someone's freedom, any way).

Rousseau's understanding of ethics and happiness receive their distinction from his foundational notion of man and nature. He begins with his own kind of modern premises, but--like the alchemist trying to turn stone into gold--he, through a series of sublimations, returns to humankind the legacy of freedom and nobility.

So, finally: Why study Rousseau today? Because his thinking represents an alternative to both the ancient and the typically modern approaches to the good life, or happiness. Better than any other modern, I think, Rousseau spells out not only the horizon of the political, but also its limits. The primary limit of the political would be its inability to answer the claims of both the solitary and the passionate natures--neither of whom can find complete earthly happiness within the collective order. He did for eighteenth-century Europe what Plato did for the Athens of

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76 Bloom, Love, p. 62.
his day; except that, for Rousseau, man is an accident of fate, and, once man, so is his happiness essentially accident. That constitutes the limits. It is as if one’s access to happiness only comes with a sort of grace of nature.

The major distinction between The New Heloise—within the context of the problem of happiness—and the works of Rousseau we have just reviewed is that the above works deal either with the happiness of one or with the happiness of many. The New Heloise grapples with the problem of limited associations--the couple, if you will--and the added element of sexual and romantic love. At the outset of a study of happiness in The New Heloise, one must ask: How does the happiness of a couple in love relate to the happiness of the citizen or of the solitary? And does that work offer ground for synthesis or further fragmentation?

Rousseau portrays extensively, in the Julie, friendship and domestic economy--both elements of any political order. Thus, one might conclude, the possibilities and limitations of these relationships--and their possible contributions to happiness--could tell us something about the political. Irving Singer seems to find a simple mapping of the Julie onto Rousseau’s more expressly political thought.

77"Rousseau undertook to reintroduce eroticism in the context of Enlightenment materialism. Plato’s Socrates performs the role that Rousseau played in response to this condition." Bloom, Love and Friendship, p. 433.
The goal of Rousseau's political philosophy thus becomes the reorganization of society in a way that purifies passionate love between individuals and curtails the search for sensuous pleasure--each of these being products of the unnatural circumstances that man has forced upon himself. They must be subordinated to, and partly replaced by, the nonlibidinal love of one's fellow human beings within a civic-minded community.\textsuperscript{78}

We must determine if Singer is correct and, if so, exactly how so. That is to say, we must determine if Rousseau was a true romantic or if he was only a disillusioned but ultimately unfulfilled man of the Enlightenment--or of Antiquity. And we must not dismiss Rousseau too lightly when he says that he is "like no one in the world."\textsuperscript{79}


CHAPTER 3
CIRCUMSCRIPTION OF THE STORY

Julie; or The New Heloise might be called a philosophical romance consisting of exchanges of letters between its principal characters who are as follows:

Julie d'Etange, a beautiful young girl
Baron d'Etange, her father
Saint-Preux, her tutor
Claire, her cousin
Lord Edward Bomston, Saint-Preux's benefactor
Monsieur de Wolmar, Julie's husband

First published in 1760, the novel has for a setting early eighteenth century Switzerland. Beyond the love affair and its immediate aftermath,

Rousseau finds the occasion to broach all the subjects which interest him: God and religion without a doubt, but also opera, duelling, suicide, Parisians, conversation, domestic and political economy, gastronomy, the art of gardening, relations between servants and masters, education of children, the use of leisure time. . . . In conclusion, novel, poem, The New Heloise figures in Rousseau's history, certainly not as an interlude--not even as a "partage de midi," but the place where all the powers of his thought and all the marvels of his art are assembled and exalted.¹

The novel is divided into six parts, with Part III ending with Saint-Preux's voyage around the world; Part IV begins several years later with Saint-Preux's return. For

Julie, the before-and-after centers on her marriage in Part III to Monsieur de Wolmar. Ironically enough, the actual physical love affair of this cornerstone of European romanticism begins and ends with Part I. All the parts are of comparable length, though the number of letters comprising each part varies greatly.

Writing of the Julie, Allan Bloom puts the novel's importance in perspective: "Although it appears now to be a bore and a pain, it was one of the most popular books ever written and took the whole of Europe by storm."² "No novel was so popular," says Lester G. Crocker; seventy-two editions before 1800 were counted by Daniel Mornet. "The lending libraries were besieged; some doubled their fees and limited borrowers to an hour per volume. Readers snatched it from friends fortunate enough to possess a copy."³ Even sixty years later, Lamartine would cry, "I do not understand how its pages do not catch fire!" In fact, it is the Julie that allows Rousseau to be recognized as the progenitor of the romantic movement, if he was too much rooted in the eighteenth century to be considered a romantic himself.

The Julie is a bourgeois novel in the sense that "Rousseau believed that the religious and political passions

had cooled and that the appeal to love and the intimate interiors of individuals and families was all that remained."4 But it is just because of this privatization of life that Rousseau attempts, in the Julie, the socialization of the individual—or, more specifically, the partial socialization of love—the subject matter of the present project.

That Rousseau was intending to prescribe social mores was not lost on his enemies.

Foreseeing that a successful French Revolution5 would lead to more than just a readjustment of governmental authority, [Edmund] Burke feared that the baneful innovations of the Revolution would have to extend themselves into the furthest reaches of human experience, into values, attitudes, and manners. He did not, therefore, consider a political pamphlet an inappropriate medium for discussion of Julie and St. Preux's fictional passion.6

M. B. Ellis, in her 1949 work entitled Julie or La Nouvelle Heloise, A Synthesis of Rousseau's Thought (1749-1759) argues that the Julie represents a synthesis of Rousseau's previous work. Though not addressing this question in any formal manner, my inquiry demonstrates that the Julie is in fact an extension of Rousseau's previous ideas: it is an attempt to rehabilitate humankind from one

4Bloom, Love and Friendship, p. 141.
5Rousseau had been named philosopher of the Revolution by the French Assembly.
form of alienation: obstructed love. *On the Social Contract* and *Emile*, both of which immediately follow upon the publication of the *Julie*, are even further and differentiated attempts at rehabilitation. Dr. Ellis also finds ominous and ill intent in the character of Saint-Preux, something I prefer to view as innocent desire (which, at times, might admittedly look like evil).

To see Saint-Preux as the embodiment of perverted nature and Julie as purely virtuous nature would gainsay what Rousseau wrote in the *Second Preface* about Saint-Preux: "a young upright and sensitive man, full of weakness and beautiful talk." (OC II, p. 12) And seeing Julie as a pure paragon of virtue also says more than does Rousseau: "a young girl offending the virtue that she loves, and led back to duty by the horror of a greater crime."

J.-R. Carre offers a more accurate description of the gist of the *Julie* and Rousseau's general intentions as a writer: "And we would know the secret of Rousseau, if we knew what, in his most intimate recesses, he thought happiness to consist of." Slowly, Carre unveils the peaceful and silent nature of Rousseau's happiness—or, as Rousseau said, the repose in the silence of the passions. Furthermore, it is "sentiment"—not sensation exactly and

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not rational knowledge exactly—which holds the nature of Rousseau's secret; it is, also, that which makes moral conscience possible.

He points out that Rousseau, at the age of forty-four, left city life never to return. He traces Rousseau's peregrinations and sufferings that led him into a sort of exile, where he discovers a secret more simple than the conscience: simply to exist! to be left alone!8

The problem with Carre's chronological pursuit of Rousseau's secret of happiness is that it is necessarily fatalistic. One's last struggles with life will always appear to be one's metaphysically ultimate answer. In fact, Rousseau never recommended the solitary life; he repeatedly justified his living in solitude by saying that he had no other useful choice, and by saying that he would gladly return to the society of men, if he could. Thus, that fortune brought Rousseau to a solitary end (which to his credit he made the most of) does not annul his earlier work—for example, his formulae for happiness in On the Social Contract and in the Julie. Though Rousseau is perhaps accused of solipsism, he never saw the world to be some sort of identity of his own self. If anything, he saw himself as the "outsider"—not as a model, but as an aberration.

In his most insightful treatment of the *Julie*, Jean Starobinski points out that only death can synthesize separation and union—the condition of our lovers. But Starobinski seems to recognize that, even in death, "sensuous existence" is recaptured; as it had first been savored, then destroyed, and finally transcended. With these essentials I am in agreement.

But Starobinski seems to think that Rousseau must have been embarrassed by the disagreement between the egalitarian *Social Contract* and the paternalistic community of Clarens in the *Julie*. Such would only be the case if Rousseau were portraying Clarens as a political model in competition with the *Social Contract* which he was writing at about the same time as the latter books of the *Julie*. I find it hard to believe that Rousseau could have overlooked that possible source of embarrassment. I would rather view Clarens differently, under not mutually exclusive angles: 1) Clarens is an alternative—perhaps an impossible alternative—to what is created in the *Social Contract*. Specifically, Clarens represents a partial association—a sort of self-sufficient extended family. 2) The paternalism of Clarens is the best political order possible—that is, prior to the introduction of Rousseau's *Social

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Contract.  3) The community of Clarens is a life-like metaphor of the communion of souls—"le menage a trois"—that will be envisioned by Julie as the vehicle of the reconciliation of passion and virtue.

Starobinski approaches the last interpretation when he describes Clarens as a "collective autarchy"—a sort of self-sufficient man writ large. And he pierces to the core of Rousseau's thought when he maintains that, for Rousseau, man is like God not in his knowledge, but in his self-sufficiency. But, in the Julie, there is presented—or envisioned—a self-sufficiency that is more reminiscent of a trinitarian God than of the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle. It is the self-sufficiency not of two souls, not of the isolated romantic couple, but of the triangle of friendship and love that never finds sustained realization within the boundaries of the story of The New Heloise.

Commenting on the story's end—on Julie's death—Starobinski writes that Rousseau "prefers the absolute of personal salvation to the absolute of community." I contend that Julie's death was the only way she could have reconciled passion and virtue; she (and Rousseau) preferred community—or a communion—which was denied her. And that

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10 Starobinski, p. 109.
11 Starobinski, p. 121.
might be the tragedy of Romanticism: the necessity of seeking one's happiness in another world.

Synopsis of the Julie

Part I: This epistolary novel begins with an impassioned letter from Saint-Preux to his student Julie, in which he confesses his ardent love for her. Julie, the lovely and only child of the Baron and Baroness d'Etange, lives in the Swiss town of Vevey on the shores of Lake Geneva and at the foot of the Alpes. Her tutor, hired during the absence of the Baron, is Saint-Preux who, as the story begins, is twenty-three years of age. Julie is eighteen. It is the early eighteenth century. After two more letters from Saint-Preux, one in which he threatens to leave forever, Julie answers and eventually admits her love for him. Claire, Julie's "inseparable" cousin and friend, is informed of the budding romance. There is a long correspondence which satisfies Julie as to Saint-Preux's feelings and intentions; their first embrace is in the groves of Clarens, owned by her parents. Julie asks Saint-Preux to, so to speak, exile himself to his country of Valais, since Julie's father will be returning home. In one of his several letters written during this first separation from Julie, he writes of the difference between their situation as lovers and that of Heloise and Abelard; that is to say, those bygone lovers had given in to baser instincts. The Baron is pleased with the academic progress of the girls, but
displeased with the fact that the tutor is a commoner, and a proud one at that. When her lover proposes that they elope, Julie is extremely shaken by her emotions, so much so that Claire feels the need to call him out of exile. Saint-Preux returns; Claire is absent from Clarens; the Baron wishes to marry Julie off to one of his older friends: the couple consummates their love. Julie immediately expresses her remorse and, because of her mother's suspicions, advises her friend to leave Clarens, but not without prospects for clandestine meetings. When left to stay with her cousin's parents, Julie arranges a rendez-vous with Saint-Preux, but, at the last moment, she calls on him to help extricate Claude Anet from military service so that he can marry Fanchon, a servant in the d'Etange household. Julie's parents return, and Lord Bomston, an English friend of the Baron and also known to Saint-Preux, arrives on the scene. Saint-Preux admires Bomston, but, at first, fears him as a rival for Julie's hand. Julie proposes that the couple, daring even death, meet in her bedchamber. They give themselves to each other for the second and last time. Saint-Preux challenges Bomston to a duel for having said something, while under the influence of wine, that was disrespectful of Julie. After Julie's intervention and his learning of the plight of the couple, Bomston makes a public apology and even tries to persuade the Baron to let the couple marry. Julie's father is enraged at the very
thought, and Julie asks Claire, for the protection of her lover, that she see to his exile—this time to Paris.

Part II: In exile, Saint-Preux is in a state of extreme anxiety. By letter, he protests to Julie. Bomston offers Julie an estate in England for their retirement, but, after consulting with Claire, she refuses the offer, even though she is aware that a marriage arranged by her father might be the only alternative. Bomston, then, resolves to return eventually to Paris and to take Saint-Preux with him to England. Julie writes to her lover in Paris to advise that she will never marry him without the Baron's consent, but, also, that she will never marry another without his consent. In his study of the French people, Saint-Preux is taken with two subjects especially: the difference between speech and action in the French people; and the more general epistemological problems involved in the study of the world. Claire marries M. d'Orbe, so Julie must find another confidante to whom to entrust her correspondence. Consequently, Julie's cache of love letters is discovered by her mother!

Part III: Claire writes Saint-Preux of the seriousness of Mme d'Etange's illness and encourages him to renounce Julie, which he does in a letter to Julie's mother who soon afterwards dies. Feeling responsible for her mother's death, Julie writes her farewell to her lover. And the Baron wrings from Saint-Preux a final renunciation and
release of Julie. In despair, Julie falls seriously ill. Clandestinely, Saint-Preux visits her bedside, after which he is escorted back to Paris by Bomston. In spite of her feelings for her (former) lover, Julie is resolved not to disobey her father. She marries M. de Wolmar; she writes a letter recapitulating their love affair and the events leading to her marriage and her moral-religious conversion. In a subsequent letter, she assures Saint-Preux that she is happy with her new husband. To Bomston, Saint-Preux expresses suicidal despair. Bomston attempts to refute his justifications of suicide. Putting himself in Bomston’s care, Saint-Preux agrees to sign on with a British vessel that is scheduled to make a tour of the world.

Part IV: Several years later, Julie is the mother of two sons, and Claire, with one daughter, is a widow. In the midst of Claire’s plans to move to Clarens with Julie, they receive news from Saint-Preux announcing his return from sea. Wolmar, who is informed of Julie and Saint-Preux’s past together, invites him to join the happy family at Clarens. Saint-Preux writes Bomston detailed letters of the idyllic life at Clarens. In the emotionally charged setting of the groves of Clarens, Wolmar unites the couple with himself in a show of utter confidence and announces that he will take a week’s journey—leaving them alone together. Julie is rightly anxious over their being alone together. The couple takes a boating trip that, due to a storm, lands
them on the opposite shore at Meillerie—the very spot where Saint-Preux had entertained romantic fantasies during his first exile from Julie. They, led by Julie's restraint, resist temptation and return safely to Clarens.

**Part V:** Bomston chides Saint-Preux for his continued lovesickness. But Saint-Preux reassures him of his good health and writes of the private life of the Wolmars, especially of the role of Julie—mistress of the estate and educator of her children. Julie is, however, distressed by the religious incredulity of her otherwise perfect husband. The final arrival of Claire to Clarens causes an ecstasy of happiness. The Baron and Saint-Preux are reconciled at the grape harvest festival where the harmonious life of Clarens is distinctively portrayed. Bomston arrives at Clarens and soon sets off with Saint-Preux for Rome where Saint-Preux will attempt to assist Bomston with problems of his love life. But, during the voyage, Saint-Preux dreams repeatedly of the death of Julie; Bomston takes him back to Clarens where he assures himself of Julie's health and safety. Saint-Preux serves his friend well in assisting him in resolving his amorous difficulties. Claire leaves for Lausanne and Geneva, where she receives letters from Julie that recognize her increased interest in Saint-Preux and that propose a marriage between them.

**Part VI:** Writing from Lausanne, Claire rejects the idea of marrying Saint-Preux. Bomston writes from Rome and informs
Wolmar that his friend is passing the test devised by Bomston: that is, he is conducting himself as a man of thought in his attempts to resolve Bomston's love affair. Bomston is in love with a reformed prostitute Lauretta Pisana, but he knows that he cannot marry her. Bomston pretends to seek Saint-Preux's advice. Creating a dilemma for Saint-Preux, Bomston tells him that, if he marries Laura, they will settle at Clarens; but, if he does not marry her, he will return to England to live. Saint-Preux is bound to 1) educate the Wolmar children and live at Clarens, and 2) serve his benefactor Lord Bomston. Saint-Preux passes muster: he convinces Laura to enter a convent. At which instance, Bomston agrees to retire to Clarens. Julie writes Saint-Preux, proposing marriage to Claire; like Claire, he declines. Then news arrives that Julie, while rescuing her child from drowning, fell ill and, a few days later, died. Wolmar writes a detailed account of the six days preceding Julie's death. Her death can only be compared to that of a saint or even a goddess. Before she died, Julie wrote a final message to Saint-Preux, telling him in essence that she always loved him and that she still loved him and that she took joy in being able to tell him so one last time. In the final letter, Claire urges Saint-Preux to return to Clarens as he had planned before Julie's death. They would live there, so to speak, in the shadow and the light of her memory. Finis
The Red Thread of Happiness

An analysis of the notion of happiness in Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse requires careful attention to how the personages speak of happiness, as well as how they attempt to live it. Word and deed may well conflict. Some of these intricacies are examined in the following commentary on Part I of the Julie, which commentary is meant to demonstrate that the red thread of the Julie is, in fact, a treatment of the notion of happiness, and a treatment of the notion of love as it relates to the understanding of happiness. And happiness always represents for Rousseau the ultimate political, as well as individual, concern.

The Julie begins, in the opening letter of Saint Preux, with a demonstration of the unbearable nature of thwarted desire. Now in the midst of a passion for Julie, Saint Preux pretends to ask advice from her. Should he simply run away? He appeals to a promised friendship—so far from what he truly feels for her—and places the onus on her by asking: "Advise me." In this first paragraph, Saint Preux is doing what he will do continually through the course of the novel: He will defer to Julie; he will place the moral onus on her. Also, this concise beginning portends the very end of the story—with Claire, Julie's cousin, harkening to Saint Preux to join the community of friendship at Clarens
after the death of Julie and united in the spirit of Julie: in a higher purpose, so to speak. Will he fly from her? And, later, will he join the others in friendship? Does Saint Preux, in fact, ever make a decision? And does he ever know friendship? These questions, though somewhat premature, should be kept in mind through the course of the analysis.

In the second paragraph of this brief first letter, Saint Preux, after admitting the foolhardiness of his having taken on the task of tutoring her, all but propositions Julie, while ostensibly deferring to her high morality: "If I suffer, I at least have the consolation of suffering alone, and I would want no happiness that could cost you yours." (I, I, 31)¹ The word "happiness," in its first use, is, one might say, taken in vain. Saint Preux is, in reality, asking Julie if her giving into his desire would cost her her happiness. In other words, does she feel for him as he feels for her? He is desperate; he must be, however, cautious in his boldness.

¹ All parenthetical references in the text are to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Julie, ou La Nouvelle Heloise, Oeuvres completes, vol. II, Bibliotheques de la Pleiade, 1969. The first Roman numeral will indicate the Part of the novel; the second Roman numeral will indicate the number of the letter; and Arabic numerals, whether alone or with Roman numerals, will indicate page number; a lone Roman numeral indicates a Letter in the Part of the novel under discussion at the time. All translations from the Julie are by the author.
After some peregrinations, Saint Preux finally admits that he cannot fly from Julie on his own. She must be the one to take action to deny him her presence. The portrait of a young philosopher without character or self-restraint is slowly taking shape by paragraph five of the novel. One may predict that, barring a great change of character, Saint Preux's pursuit of happiness will be faltering and uneven at best. Nonetheless, he insists that he is attracted to Julie by her qualities of soul—by charms of the heart and not the eye. (I, I, 32) We are led to ask if attraction to the "sentiments" of another should cause such nervousness and lack of self-restraint. Whatever the case, Saint Preux is claiming to base his pursuit of happiness on other than hedonistic grounds, at least on other than carnal satisfaction. No lesser claim could be expected of a young man pursuing a young woman. But his passion seems, for all its spirituality, uncontrollable. Are there other than physical passions that might be uncontrollable?

Are we not already encountering what Allan Bloom calls "a fine irony at the lack of self-knowledge of [Rousseau's] characters"? We are on guard that we cannot rely on the self-interpretations of Rousseau's personages. How his characters understand themselves is not necessarily the way in which Rousseau does, nor the way in which Rousseau's

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reader is meant to understand them. This suggests the apparently thorny question, to be dealt with in an \textit{ad hoc} way within the analysis, of whether any one character speaks for Rousseau.

Saint Preux goes so far as to tell Julie 1) that he "dares flatter himself sometimes that Heaven has staged a secret conformity between our affections" (I,I,32) and 2) that this conformity may be seen in their "natural" and unprejudiced tendencies, unimpaired by the world. Thus, heaven seems to be blessing this union of two like and natural minds. But, as if afraid of tempting fate (or is it showing dexterity in courtship?), Saint Preux concludes: "the ardor of my desires lends to their object possibility which is lacking to it." (I,I,33) In effect, Saint Preux has toyed with the possibility of Heaven's blessing his (their!?) desires. No doubt, such would be the making of a perfect and happy union. The happiness of one would not be sacrificed to the happiness of the other. Saint Preux seems to be making appeal to the notion of Aristotle's blessed man.

But immediately following this hypothetical blessing of Heaven, comes Saint Preux's admission that his passion is an illness, in spite of the professed purity of his sentiments. He asks that Julie not only do him the grace of banishing him from her presence, but, more specifically, of somehow "drying up the source of the poison which is both nourishing
him and killing him." (33) It seems that we have not only a new Heloise, but also a new Abelard. "I wish only to be cured or to die." In this ongoing self-analysis, Saint Preux admits that he has lost his reason and he defines, at least implicitly, the recovery of reason as the return of his heart to himself. Are reason and passion ultimately the same? Whatever, happiness must be somehow something different from the loss of reason or the loss of one's heart. If not, Saint Preux would not now be experiencing anxiety ("trouble") in the depths of his soul.

That love is somehow a matter of life and death is seemingly innocently and melodramatically expressed by Saint Preux when he states that to kiss Julie would cause him to die--but to die the happiest of men. Somehow happiness has something to do with death. Are we, in effect, dead when we have nothing left to pursue? I think that Rousseau poses this question on the political as well as on the individual level. Or must we somehow die before earning the full possibility of happiness? A question akin to Stoic and Christian alike.

Such questions take us, I think, beyond the bounds of hedonism and into a sort of quasi-religious ethos--into a severe and rigorous romanticism, where the wages of happiness are great. Saint Preux asks that they cease those dangerous parlor games, and then, only a moment later, chides Julie for not being civil enough with him when they
are left alone. Does Saint Preux know what he wants at this the outset of the story? Is he a private man, a political man, or merely ill-defined? He seems to be in-the-making, for, though he can intellectualize the issues of his romance, he continues, at the close of this first letter, to indulge in his childlike though not simply ingenuous verbal pursuit of Julie.

Much might be surmised of the character of Saint Preux from this first brief letter, but, briefly stated, he seems a young, sensitive "philosopher" of dubious fortitude, who, in his attempt to win a woman (even if the woman), dares recourse to Heaven! But, beyond what it teaches us about Saint Preux, this letter initiates the discussion of love and happiness: What is the basis of love (and, consequently, happiness)—desire or Heaven, or something in-between, or some combination thereof? And what is the nature of reason that it may be lost in the pursuit of happiness? Saint Preux is a confused philosopher, with a confusing set of shifting priorities. He is "in love." The first personage to appear on the stage of this long novel represents the swirling beehive-like compactness of some of the essential themes of love and happiness:

1. "I must fly from you."
2. "refuse me your presence."
3. "Why then is it a crime to . . . love one whom I must necessarily honor?"
4. "it is that justness of spirit and that exquisite
taste which derive their excellence from the purity of your
soul . . . which . . . I adore."

5. "Sometimes I dare flatter myself that Heaven has
brought about a secret sympathy in our affections."

6. "the ardor of my desires lends to their realization
the possibility which it lacks."

7. "I wish only to be cured or die, and I beg for your
severity as a lover would beg for your kindness."

8. "Be, alas, other than yourself, in order that my
heart may be able to return to itself."

Following a second letter of similar contrivance to the
first, in which Saint Preux expresses his willingness to be
unhappy if renouncing his love is the only alternative and
in which he defines as unbearable his present state of soul—
that between hope and fear—he writes a third in which he
recognizes that his expressions of love are in fact
affecting Julie, even if for the worse. But Saint Preux
goes further: He announces that Julie's sorrow has made him
realize that his love for her is no passing delirium soon to
be overtaken by reason, but that "with despair I feel that
the fire which consumes me will be extinguished only in the
tomb." Moreover, he expresses a tenuous altruism born of
his sensitivity to Julie's suffering: "either I myself am
mistaken or your happiness is dearer to me than my own."
Saint Preux finally writes that the fatal passion which consumes him does not matter, because he "who cannot make himself happy can at least be worthy of being so." (37) He further insists that he will compel her to esteem him by his making himself worthy. He then bids her "adieu" and promises eternal adoration.

Saint Preux, like a man fencing desperately in the dark, has, in his attempt to win or even attract Julie, appealed to God, nature, love, and the promise of his future virtue. Moreover, he has made much of his sensitivity to and empathy for her. But, finally, his missives are little more than pleadings for recognition and for requited love. It all seems like a sophisticated courtship. It is at this very moment—when Saint Preux promises to depart and to win Julie's esteem by his becoming virtuous, that Julie has her first brief, enigmatic, and forceful say.

Her entire first communication to Saint Preux is as follows: "Don't seize upon the opinion of having made your leaving necessary. A virtuous heart would be able to subdue itself or be quiet, and perhaps would become formidable thereby. But you . . . you may stay" (37)

The key question: Does Julie want Saint Preux to subdue his heart or does she rather want him to appear to be doing so? Whatever the case, she is obviously interested in Saint Preux; she seems to see through his "arguments," and, though she "scorns" him in her very first note to him, she
has entered into the love game. In the battery fire of missives that follow, Julie challenges Saint Preux to stand his ground. He takes refuge in a veiled threat of suicide. Julie pleads with him to wait for her next letter.

We have learned much of the personage of Saint Preux: He is passionate, though not necessarily profound; he says more than he understands and is not below (unconscious?) romantic demagoguery. Of Julie we know that her wit is concise, decisive, and penetrating. Her first full-fledged letter will tell us much more.

In that letter, which she had pleaded with Saint Preux to wait for, Julie expresses the secret love she has been harboring for him, ostensibly because she fears his suicide. But, in professing her love, Julie says that she has lost honor and has experienced a sort of death-in-life. "[I]s there a death more cruel than surviving honor?" (39) This is not the dying-to-the-world notion that we shall meet at the end of the Julie, but it is a sort of death for a higher purpose, a sort of fatal altruism: Julie gives up her honor (she breaks her word with herself by confessing her love) for the sake of saving Saint Preux’s life.

So the drama really begins with the consideration of whether life is more precious than honor--more specifically, should someone else’s life be more precious to me than my honor? Can happiness be found through sacrifice? However, Julie goes on to belie this understanding that her
confession of love is for the higher purpose of saving her lover's life; she, like him, is simply caught up in a "fatal passion" which she cannot resist. But she, whatever the state of her desire, is aware of Saint Preux's "artful" game: "Led step by step into the snares of a vile seducer, I see, without being able to stop myself, the horrible precipice toward which I am running." (39) Julie then calls him a crafty or artful man whose boldness is motivated more by his knowledge of her love for him than by his love of her. This noble young woman, not Saint Preux, seems to be the one who is truly lost to love. She is, it seems, knowingly in love with her inferior. Nonetheless, she does see some value or virtue in Saint Preux, which is expressed in her statement that, if his heart were such that it could peacefully enjoy this triumph, he would have never obtained it.

So, now, we must consider the artfulness of Julie. Is she saying that she could just as well have maintained her secret of love for Saint Preux? Is she saying that, in spite of her awareness of the cunning games he is playing with her, she has always loved him and that she sees in him at least enough goodness to justify her admission of love to him? If this is so, as I think it appears on close reading, then our love story begins with love games which are prior existentially either to a fatal passion or to a virtuous life, but not to love itself. In other words, the beginning
of our story enacts a sort of chess game—Saint Preux attacking, Julie defending. Both, in their own differing ways, are in love. (The novel may be portrayed as a movement of Julie and Saint Preux toward an equality and a harmony in love—perhaps a remnant of Aristotle's friendship.)

But on what level of consciousness are Rousseau's characters aware of the very games and artifices in which they are engaged? Surely, Julie is not above blatant manipulation: She confesses her passionate love to Saint Preux and demands that he be her only protector against herself, that is, against the loss of her virtue. And, like Lafontaine's stork who extracts the bone from the throat of the wolf, she writes: "Your virtues are the last refuge of my innocence." (40) Julie is, of course, hardly a coy, unquestioning lover. From her pen rebounds the first oath of our long story, and it is in the paragraph headed by that oath that Julie, in effect, challenges Saint Preux to transcend his hedonistic desires:

"Oh God! am I not humiliated enough? On my knees I write you; I bath the paper with my tears; I hand up to you my timid supplications. And think not, however, that I am unaware that they were for me to receive and that in order to make myself obeyed I had only to make myself, with artfulness, scornful. Friend, take that empty victory, but leave me my integrity [honnetete]; I prefer to be your slave and live blamelessly than to buy your dependance at the price of my dishonor. If you deign to hear me, what love, what respect must you expect from her who will owe you her return to life? How charming the
sweet union of two pure souls! Your conquered desires will be the source of your happiness, and the pleasures which you shall enjoy will be worthy of Heaven itself (emphasis added)." (40)

Julie seems to be saying that mastery of the desires allows for, but is not equal to, the most celestial of pleasures.

As Saint Preux artfully—even cunningly—tested Julie for the presence of passion in her, Julie tests Saint Preux for the presence, for even the germ, of virtue in him. But just as Saint Preux attempted to manipulate the mind and emotions of Julie—to the point of threatening suicide!—Julie also engages in such logistical structuring of this incipient love affair. She ends her first letter with what might be called a power play: She says, in effect, that if he takes advantage of her confused state of mind and the trust she has placed in him, it would arouse in her scorn and indignation, which, in turn, would cause her to regain her reason and, by implication, reject him. A strange little bit of psychologizing, the bottom line of which is the following: "You will be virtuous or be scorned; I shall be respected or cured; that is the sole hope which remains to me besides that of dying." (41) Julie, in her own way—but apparently Aristotelian nonetheless—has bound together virtue and happiness; and virtue is represented by mastery over one's desires. But, of course, the nature of what is being overcome is somewhat confused and ambiguous at this point: Are they trying to overcome anti-social behavior
(Saint Preux is not of the proper social class to court Julie), or are they trying to overcome excessive and uncontrollable desire, or both? Our ultimate judgment of their success or failure will involve the object of their quest.

These letters often sound a little like diplomats negotiating treaties. In their very first epistolary exchanges, both lovers have threatened or mentioned suicide as tool of persuasion, or at least of manipulation. The only other interpretation might be that they—at the very beginning of the romance and before consummation of their love—are both somehow truly deranged; for nothing says that a deranged person is necessarily incapable of artfully manipulating another, both through argument and emotion.

In Saint Preux's response to Julie's admission of love for him, he uses "happiness" five times in the space of one and a half pages. He calls on "Heavenly powers" to express his ecstasy. In fact, it may be said with some degree of precision that Saint Preux is given an unearned—an accidental, if you will—taste of bliss, for he sees in Julie's last letter "how the most lively passions retain in a chaste soul the holy character of virtue." (41-42) And this possibility—that is, the reconciliation of passion and virtue—is the greatest hope set out in the Julie, ou La Novelle Heloise. As there cannot be, for Rousseau, virtue without freedom, so there cannot be virtue without passion.
Saint-Preux's apperception of Julie as the reconciliation of passion and virtue is the first clear prefiguring of the manner of Julie's death.

Somehow, the co-existence of passion and virtue represents a "true happiness," whereas pleasure alone, or virtue alone, is lacking. But what accounts for the possibility of this reconciliation of opposing forces of the soul? It is Julie's highmindedness or discipline or chastity which allows her to suffer the fire of passion without submitting to it. But what of our young philosopher who defines himself in this letter as "a simple and sensitive man"--not as a "vile seducer"! Is he here experiencing anything beyond a strong and fumbling passion? I dare say yes, but to no great credit of his own.

Whereas Julie is disciplined (She comes from the lower nobility) in her wearing of her love by a chaste and controlled character, Saint Preux's fires of love are, as he writes, purified by the knowing of Julie. (43) That is, she, through her manipulative admonitions, controls the very sentiments of Saint Preux. Before she announces her love to him, he has been partially "purified." But what does this mean for the notion of happiness and, beyond that, for political philosophy?

The classical dualism of mind and body is operative in Rousseau's distinction between passion and virtue. And, if these latter cannot be reconciled, we are left with the
necessity of the tyranny of the soul over the body. If they could be reconciled, such a feat would have no small political implication. Aristotle offers us one road to happiness: control of the passions by virtuous moderation. Will Rousseau reject this complex of Aristotelian notions, as well as Stoic notions? Rousseau's relationship to classical eudaemonism will remain a concern through the Julie. Although Rousseau does not reject this classical complex--not for routine political reasons anyway--he does attempt to temper it with love, compassion, and feeling--all of which might be said to be his Christian legacy of choice. (His broader project, of course, would be to educate the passions, as in Emile.)

But there is more than the political for both Aristotle and for Rousseau. Aristotle offers a sort of private contemplative bliss--in distinction if not in opposition to moral virtue and its accompanying happiness; Rousseau will offer the possibility of the sweet experience of the sentiment of one's own existence; in another way, that experience might be translated as the sweet sentiment of one's passions in such a way that they are never dissolved and never fulfilled.

But let us return to Letter IV. In a purely exclamatory remark, Saint Preux calls out to "Happiness, pleasures, ecstacies . . . !" We may readily see within this trio that "happiness" might be associated with an
Aristotelian sort of virtue; "pleasures" might be associated with mere hedonism; and "ecstasy" with a sort of religious bliss or "felicity" (a word Rousseau uses for the first time in this letter). These two young lovers, though undoubtedly experiencing love in some sort of amorphous form, are in over their heads (as are all first-time lovers). Saint Preux explicitly admits that they have no experience with passion, and he asks rhetorically if the honor which is guiding them is a deceitful guide. That is, they are not being led by past experience, but by an idea--that of honor, the political virtue par excellence. In other words, the lovers are attempting a political resolution to a radically private experience. But is that not how Western man has always dealt with the passions--at least until the birth of romantic love?

Denis de Rougement, in *Love in the Western World*, claims that the twelfth-century couple Abelard and (the original) Heloise was the first historical, as opposed to literary, instance of the living out of the quasi-religious myth of romantic love. Any serious exegesis of *The New Heloise* must consider the significance of Rousseau's

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3Denis de Rougement, *Love in the Western World* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1966, first pub. 1940). This work is more than helpful to an understanding of Rousseau’s notions of love and happiness. De Rougement claims that Rousseau was writing within the tradition of the passion myth, an allegory of religious longing, the origins of which go back to a Christian gnostic heresy.
medieval allusion. How is Julie like the original Heloise, and how is she different from her? How each of these heroines seeks happiness might be the focal point of this investigation. In fact, our Heloise might be not only "new" but better.

In Letter VI, her first to her cousin Claire, Julie, already having demanded virtue from Saint Preux, reinforces her commitment to virtue by soliciting the aid and protection of Claire against what she sees as a dangerous temptation, for Saint Preux is not only worthy, he is also friendly and virtuous. It is then his good qualities that compose the danger of the temptation. We might ask: What is the nature of virtue if it is to overcome the good? Or should we, as readers, have already surmised that questions of wealth and social status had already made Saint Preux into some kind of evil for someone of Julie’s position? Whatever, she plans to resist him, but she plans to continue to see him. Why?

Is Julie not so wise as we might be led to believe by her intelligent letters? Or is Rousseau not working out, through the decisions and efforts of his characters, the very drama of humankind: the dilemma of the incongruity of nature (Julie’s passion) and society (Julie’s virtue)? At

*OC, II, p. 3, n. 1.*
the beginning of the novel, it seems that the social disparities between the lovers are at the source of Julie’s resistance; otherwise, why not marry and resolve the dilemma? But, as we progress through the story into the rarefied regions of romanticism, we shall catch glimpses of a sort of metaphysical exigency for resistance to passion—something less necessary, but more rewarding than virtue. If a categorical statement may be made about Rousseau’s characters, it is that they are always, more or less consciously, pursuing happiness as they understand it at any given moment in time. They grow and change, both due to external as well as internal forces, but they are always consciously pursuing the elusive goal of happiness. Claire touches on this reality of the often changing perceptions of happiness in her first letter to Julie.

In Claire’s response to Julie (Letter VII), after adumbrating several dichotomies—such as prowess in reason versus weakness of heart, or the claims of honesty versus the claims of friendship and faith—she poses the fundamental question to Julie: "What do you want?" And here we are at the root of the whole dynamic of the love story: Why must there be a conflict between passion and virtue? Yes, the disparity in social class between Saint Preux and Julie disallows their marriage, especially given the type father Julie has. And Julie could, if she wished to end this budding relationship, merely mention it to her
mother. There are several questions here: 1) Does Julie want a relationship with Saint Preux? 2) If so, what kind of relationship? and 3) If not, how does she choose to resist it? These are questions the answers to which involve the working out of Julie's happiness. But the most universal answer might be that romantic love demands a conflict—an irreconcilable conflict—between passion and virtue; and the end, and origin, of romantic love is, and was, an experience of religious union—all of which may be taken as the barest statement of de Rougement's thesis.

Claire pinpoints the sporting nature of Julie's feelings when she says to Julie: "I understand you; you do not wish some expedient which concludes everything; you are willing to take from yourself the power of succumbing, but not the honor of fighting." (I,VII,45) (This line of reasoning concurs with what Claire said immediately before about the advisability of being virtuous because you wish to be, as opposed to because you are simple or ignorant.) And Claire, admitting that some would criticize her for not protecting her friend by simply revealing the secret romance to her mother, concludes that she values friendship over honesty and then allows herself a short meditation on morality and its relative nature: "I imagine that each relationship, each age has its maxims, its duties, its virtues; that what would be prudence to others would be perfidy to me, and that instead of making us good ("sage")
would make us bad ("mechant") by confusing all that.
(I, VII, 46) Then Claire develops the underlying metaphors of warfare by considering strategies of attacking this growing love affair. In brief, she says that, if Julie’s love is weak, they will merely conquer it; if her love, however, is of an extreme sort, a frontal attack could lead only to tragedy. Claire seems practical in the extreme; and she is first and foremost "the friend."

So what is the quintessential cause or dynamic of our story? Is it that Julie, because of her nature, must experience the honor of the fight, or is it because her love is too "extreme" to be, with impunity, dealt with in a summary fashion. (Of course, these two reasons are not mutually exclusive.) We still, however, do not know what Julie wants. Yes, she seems to will her virtue, but does she will her love?

One almost has the impression that this love is like a force of nature attacking the integrity of Julie’s personhood. May we not see the story as not only a battle between passion and society, but, beyond that, a conflict between irrational nature (or passion) and the rational and virtuous integrity of the person. We might further say that these necessarily protracted battles are rare, since both strong passion and high reason must be found in both parties to the affaire. Rousseau’s whole life, it might be argued, was an attempt to reconcile these warring perspectives, to
construct a small world where love and virtue would reign together. Such would constitute happiness. The story of the Julie is a record of successes and defeats in the pursuit of that happiness.

Saint Preux’s promise to Julie that, for the sake of her honor, he would control his passion for her becomes too much for him to bear. In Letter VIII, he, in fact, formally takes back his word (like renouncing a treaty) and puts her formally on guard. Saint Preux gives several reasons for his change of heart: 1) Julie has changed and seems so happy, whereas he is so miserable; 2) His two month triumph of abstinence does not seem to be appreciated by her; and, perhaps, 3) Julie now has Claire to protect her honor (as if it’s now a fair fight).

But at the heart of Saint Preux’s despondency seems to be something more, his realization of the complexity and illusiveness of happiness itself. In spite of Julie’s professed love for him, Saint Preux must say of himself: "This unjust heart dares to desire more, when it has nothing more to desire; it punishes me with its imaginings ("fantaisies") and makes me uneasy in the bosom ("au sein") of happiness." (47) The task of happiness, then, appears to be that of delimiting our desires to the possible, to the non-imaginary and attainable, even if not to the virtuous. We are even led to ask if Saint Preux, after consummating his love, will be happy. If he is motivated by desire, one
might be led to say that he will not be. Or is not happiness a state of soul, as the Stoics would hold, as opposed to an exercise of passion, reason, and will? The infinity of possible imaginings seems to demand that, in order to attain happiness, we restrain our imaginings, because "Whoever does what he wishes is not happy, if his needs exceed his forces."^5

Saint Preux, though he appears to have had a glimpse of the illusory nature of happiness, chooses—and very explicitly!—to develop his means to new-born desire as opposed to restraining his desires. Baldly put, he intends to conquer Julie, and he tells her so! Julie must resist this love, not ultimately because of family and social barriers, but because this love is neither natural nor virtuous; it is rather a creature of the illimitable imagination or fancy of Saint-Preux. It, like present-day society for Rousseau, is an expression of chaos. The political teaching of the Julie, if there be one, will, we must surely expect, be an expression of order.

In her reply (Letter IX), Julie clarifies the irrational or chaotic state of Saint Preux's soul and his less than realistic approach to happiness. "I understand:

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5 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile, II, as quoted in Roger D. Masters, The Political Philosophy of Rousseau (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), 95. This citation and a brief comment are all the space Roger Masters gives to the subject of happiness in his major work on Rousseau.
the pleasures of vice and the honor of virtue would be for you an agreeable fate? Is that your morality?" (49) In effect, Julie accuses Saint Preux of wanting to have his cake and eat it, too. Julie claims to have had a sort of awakening. Curiously, this letter begins with the words "I understand" and concludes with the word "happiness." And, surely, the letter represents a summary of Julie’s theory of happiness— at least at that given point in her life and love.6

Letter IX is truly a wonderful communication. After chiding Saint Preux for wishing to "reconcile" passion and virtue— he gave no rationale for his basically confused desire— she seems to contradict herself by saying that she has "discovered" (somehow!) that "the reconciliation ("accord") of love and innocence seem to me to be paradise on earth." (51) But let us review this letter in some detail, for in it is one view of just what happiness is— in its relation to passion and virtue.

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6 Fundamentally there is only one difference between [the letter-novel form] and that of the memoir-form: the perspective of time. The memorialist knows, at the moment of writing, how all his adventures turned out. Seeing them from a distance, he can now distinguish the incidents and actions which mattered. He can explain things which puzzled him at the time, and can judge how far his own hopes and fears were justified or mistaken. The character in a letter-novel, on the other hand, usually writes under the pressure of immediate events, and cannot see their outcome." Vivienne Mylne, The Eighteenth-Century French Novel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 149.
In sum, Julie says that she has "discovered" that her religious upbringing on the subjects of love and virtue was wrong. "I was raised with such severe maxims that the purest love appeared to me the height of dishonor." Her "troubled imagination" confused the avowal of a passion with a crime.

But no longer . . . "I recognized that I was wrong," she concludes. But how did she come to such conclusions? Did the presence of Claire make the difference? Whatever the case, the event of this letter represents a sort of religious counter-conversion. Julie is, in effect, embracing a new religion--and one might prematurely say at this point, a religion of love. Before examining the content of this new dispensation, we should remind ourselves that Julie--at the moment of her marriage, the moment of her full entry into civil society--will undergo another conversion, one quite unlike the one at hand.

Two months of "experience" have taught Julie that (for her happiness) "my too tender heart needs love, but my senses have no need of a lover." (51) Like a self-willed new Heloise (and different from the original one), Julie jubilantly expresses her new-found power "to love purely." She categorically proclaims: "This state constitutes the happiness of my life." She wishes she could communicate it to Saint Preux and thus make possible a "union of hearts." Julie has overcome the religious repression of the body by
means of a total abstraction from the body. But even the nature of such an abstraction does not shelter the lovers from the vicissitudes of fortune. Julie fears that they are at present as happy as they will ever be. Theirs, she says in so many ways, is a love and a happiness at the equilibrium point: "The moment of possession is a crisis for love, and any change is dangerous to ours; we can no longer do anything but lose it." (51)

This is not a stoic happiness based essentially on the state of an independent and disciplined soul; it is rather a fragile happiness which depends, in part at least, on luck or fortune (an element of happiness clearly recognized, but not enthroned, by Aristotle). Nonetheless, Julie eloquently extols their present for, we sense, as long as it might last: "The mind is adorned, the reason enlightened, the soul fortified, the heart joyful: what is lacking to our happiness?" (52) That question will echo to the end.

The irony of this letter of Julie's, when viewed within the context of the whole story, cannot fail to escape us: It is Julie who will eventually marry and live the life of the body and family, and it is Saint Preux who will become celibate. But, it can be argued at this point, Julie's last word on happiness contains elements of this early, rather juvenile expression. In this very early letter, Julie all but says "I understand happiness." And that happiness that
she claims to understand is Platonic, at least in the popular sense.

Letter IX is most important for two related reasons: 1) In it, Julie confesses to a religious conversion; and 2) She also, thereby, professes to understand the nature of happiness (and love). Her new-found liberation and understanding of love and happiness allow her to enjoy what, in a sense, she accused Saint Preux of fantasizing about: she pretends to attain both love and virtue at the same time. She has her cake and eats it, too. The difference, of course, is that Julie's love is "pure" and, we might add, consistent. Julie is a Christian. We must, then, ask if she is going to the well of Christian thought for the inspiration of her enlightened view of love, or is she (and ultimately Rousseau) essentially independent of Christian resources?

Saint Preux, for all of his stumbling and blind Chaplinesque antics, will accurately dissect Julie's chosen highroad to happiness. The short of it is that Saint Preux is the happiest of men (because he is loved by Julie), but also the most desolate of men (because he is unable to consummate his love for her). Because he feels that the "greatest of goods" is to be loved by Julie, he attempts both to understand and to accommodate what is in effect her asceticism. But he is compelled—perhaps equally for subjective and objective reasons—to point out to her that
what she proposes is against nature. And nature, it seems, is stronger than wisdom.

But that is not his final word; Saint Preux admits to, or pretends to, a startling transformation—no less profound than that of Julie’s recent conversion. "Beyond you alone," writes Saint Preux, "I see nothing in this earthly sojourn which is worthy of occupying my soul and my senses; no, without you nature is no longer anything for me (emphasis added): but its rule is in your eyes, and it is there that it is invincible." (53) Saint Preux’s love for Julie and her reaction to it has denatured him, or so it seems. But still Saint Preux would like to be able either to draw Julie down to his level or to elevate himself to hers. His transformation is only one of necessity; it is hardly a conversion. For him, Julie is a sort of saint ("adorable object"), but it is Saint Preux who is called upon by the situation, and who responds, to the demands of sacrifice: "not being able to reconcile my happiness with yours—judge how I love—it is mine that I renounce." His feelings are fraught with "inexplicable contradictions": "I would like to live for you, and it is you who are taking life from me." (54) He is unhappy in his happiness—surely an inexplicable contradiction, perhaps given life by this new (Christian)

7This notion of "rule" is reminiscent of the sovereign Lady of troubadour days. It will recur.
element of sacrifice whereby Julie is demanding that Saint Preux die to the world of the senses.

It seems that it is this life of sacrifice and denial which, Rousseau hints, is at the root of a lively imagination. Saint Preux indulges his wishes regarding Julie in his imagination and never in her presence. The imagination becomes a sort of weapon by which he avenges himself for the respect which he is constrained to have for her! (54) His happiness, if it may be called that, is, at this point, hardly a peaceful one. He is called to restraint and sacrifice when he is neither Stoic nor Christian, but rather a young man in love.

Nonetheless, Julie begins Letter XI by addressing Saint Preux as "My friend," for, however confused his psyche might be, he is attempting to sacrifice for her. (She actually employs the word "sacrifice." ) But, after attesting to a growing "attachment" to Saint Preux, Julie raises the labyrinthine question of the possibility of using love, or expressions of love, as a weapon of conquest and seduction. (54) Julie always seems aware of such a possibility. But she immediately takes back the thought of it and declares theirs to be a union of souls. Using a conceit from physics, which is reminiscent of John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," she expresses their
mutuality and inseparability: "like those magnets\(^8\) of which you spoke to me [in a physics lesson], that had, let's say, the same movements in different places, we would feel the same things at the two poles of the world." (55)

Not only their sensations or feelings but also their happiness must forever be a mutual experience; they have a "common destiny," declares Julie. And reason should be in the service of love in the conduct—preferably guided by herself—of their pursuit of a common happiness. Though they may never achieve a mutual understanding, as they now have a mutual sensibility, Julie, in fine Solomonic fashion, declares that she is sure of one thing: "I know that the opinion (avis) of the one who least separates his happiness from the happiness of the other is the opinion that must be followed." (56) So, Julie has given the couple a code of conduct based on love and supported by reason. It is right opinion at work for the sake of happiness. And it is a sort of contract.

Julie makes several things clear in Letter XI: 1) The couple will find happiness together, or they will not find it at all; 2) The voice of love and the voice of reason give like counsel in this pursuit of mutual happiness; 3) Saint Preux must learn to follow the dictates of his heart as opposed to the delirium of his heated imagination; and 4)

\(^8\) The word (amant) for magnet and lover is the same in French.
The whole question of friendship is broached. It should be clear by now that their deliberate and explicit concern is happiness, in the sense of eudaemonism, as opposed to mere pleasure.

In Letter XII, Saint Preux turns over to Julie the control and "care of our common happiness" (56), though he can still not think of her without experiencing an ecstasy which he knows he must conquer. And, surprisingly, reclaiming his position of authority and responsibility, he proposes a "method" to their program of studies which, because of their year-long romantic concern with each other, have suffered. One might glimpse a certain irony in that, in one breath, Saint Preux submits to Julie the control over his very will and that, a moment later, he assumes the consummate posture of (her) teacher by proposing to her a new method for the project of their studies together. He is, paradoxically, taking an active part in his submission.

Just what is the gist of Saint Preux's "methode"? Does it relate in any specific way to the first part of Letter XII wherein he submits his will to Julie's rule? In other words, does his method intend to promote in an explicit way their common happiness? The presentation might be distilled as follows: 1) This method will repair the damage done to our pursuit of knowledge—damage caused by our distractions; 2) This "systeme" extracts much from little, as opposed to extracting little from many things; 3) Our knowledge will
be converted to our use and nourishment, as opposed to being a means to commerce or fame; 4) "Read little, and meditate much on your readings"—or talk a lot about what you read; 5) Depend on yourself, rather than on books, for your ideas.

Of course, nothing is ever as simple as it seems with Rousseau. The method, or system, proper takes about a page to describe; following that are several pages of elaboration and de facto adjustments—one might even say, allusive contradictions. For we have to keep in mind that this method might not be merely for academic instruction, but also for the attainment of happiness.

Saint Preux tells Julie that she, unlike many others, is a worthy candidate for the prescribed method, because her "active intelligence works on a book so as to make of it another book, sometimes better than the first one." (58) It might be premature to conclude, within the confines of this investigation, but our analysis of the Julie up to this point lends some evidence to the position that in the Julie Rousseau is, in fact, writing two books: There is the popular and romantic story of the two lovers, and there is a philosophical subplot, treating essentially the notion of human happiness, wherein the irony of the characters (as Bloom might have been suggesting) is that they might express in the subplot the very opposite of what they do or express in the ostensible plot.
From the topic of self-reliance in reading and in the generation of ideas, Saint Preux broaches the subject of what might be called a moral aestheticism or an aesthetic morality: "As soon as we return back into ourselves, each person senses that which is good ("bien"), each discerns that which is beautiful; we have no need of being taught to know either the one or the other. . . . But examples of the very good ("bon") and the very beautiful are more rare and less known, and it is necessary to go far from ourselves in search of them." (58) Contrary to popular opinion, greatness does exist, and we must recognize its existence in order to imitate it. We should find our principles and rules within ourselves and we should leave alone all vain disquisitions on happiness and virtue; "let us give ourselves great examples to imitate rather than vain systems to follow." (59)

So, it is not all books from which we should maintain a radical independence. Rather, stories of heroes should be cherished like a bible.

Then Rousseau takes off into what might itself be called a "vain system." "I have always believed," writes Saint Preux, "that the good was only the beautiful put into action. . . . It follows from this idea that taste is perfected by the same means as is wisdom." An epistemology is hinted at: The dichotomy between "seeing" and "feeling" must be blurred; we must "try to judge the beautiful by
inspection and the good by feeling"; but they are ultimately the same. Is such the only road to wisdom, or only one road among many? At the least, we must learn to see and to feel as well as to reason. Not all humans are capable of following this method or way to wisdom, for "it does not belong to all hearts to be moved at the first sight of Julie." That is, all hearts are not put in the favored position of being able to recognize the beauty and goodness of Julie.

Saint-Preux concludes by explaining that his epistemology (the term is mine) is why he limits all of Julie's studies to books of taste and mores, of virtues and of good writing. Everything in his method centers around examples. But, as we observed above, Rousseau's, or rather Saint Preux's, rejection of the study of systems is based on a sort of system itself: the coincidence of beauty and goodness, with no mention of a distinctive place for truth. So, Saint Preux plans on cutting back on Julie's subjects of study. The rhyme and reason of his enumerated changes hardly seem to follow from his method of examples only: 1) He will eliminate languages (with the exception of Italian which Julie already knows and loves); 2) He will drop algebra and geometry, but will retain physics; 3) He will "renounce forever modern history, except that of Switzerland (and, by implication, he will retain ancient history); 4) With a few exceptions, he will eliminate all poets, and,
without exception, he will proscribe all romance novels. Thus, for the most part, Julie will study physics and, we assume, ancient history. We are led to ask how the study of physics could be grounded on examples? Perhaps, it is because physics offers—if not examples—then at least metaphors of nature, as in the case, mentioned by Saint Preux in this letter, of the conceit of the lovers as magnets; such metaphors are somehow natural and not imaginary.

If our goal in education is to imitate—no, even to become heroes, then Rousseau all but discounts the need of formal education, even of the classics, at least for Julie and him: "true love is a devouring fire which carries its ardor into the other feelings, and animates them with a new vigor. That is why it is said that love makes Heroes. Happy the one whom fate has so placed as to become one, and who would have Julie for a lover!" (61)

This equation of Julie and himself with the heroes finds resonance in a general characterization of the Julie, expressed in the Second Preface: Rousseau's interlocutor is accusing the novel of having nothing out of the ordinary; in effect, he judges the novel to be boring; Rousseau responds, "That is to say, you demand common men and rare events? I believe that I would prefer the contrary." (13) So, now, let us move back to Letter XII. Saint Preux is arguing that men of all ages are not the same. We do not admire the
ancients just because they are ancient; rather, "in days
gone by one did great things with small means, and, today,
one does the opposite." (60)

Does the above not enjoin the question of the
comparability of the personages of The New Heloïse with
those of ancient heroics? This may be another way of saying
that Rousseau’s subjects are human happiness and the human
soul—both illuminated by human love. For Rousseau, the
ground of a new heroic! The frontier of greatness is within
and concerns only happiness, as Saint Preux’s pedagogic
method attempts to make clear. In other words, to follow
the above analogies, great souls, in the microcosm of love,
comprise the true subject matter of the Julie. The rarity
of the "events" are not at issue; only the nature and
development of the souls of the personages. One might even
say that an inner monologue of a person looking both out on
nature and, simultaneously, within himself would be, for
Rousseau, a more appropriate literary form for his subject
matter. (The Reveries seem, in fact, to be just such a
form.) Is love, for Rousseau, merely a convenient physical
metaphor for the exploration of nature and happiness? And
is the tableau of "heroes" portrayed in the Julie merely a
schema of the human soul? Posed otherwise: Is love, other
than love of self (amour de soi), necessary for happiness?
Just what is the status of the Reveries?
In this Letter XIII, Julie, in effect, proposes a test for happiness and she says that she is "reserving a little surprise" for Saint-Preux, ostensibly because of his apparent maturity in arranging their program of studies.

She opens the letter: "I was in fact telling you that we were happy; nothing instructs me of it so well as the pain that I experience at the least change in our situation." (61) Years later, in The Reveries, Rousseau posited a test for true happiness; it has to do with its eternal nature: "As for happiness which lasts, I doubt that it is known here. In our most intense enjoyments, there is hardly an instant when the heart can truly say yes to us: I would like this instant to last forever." (Butterworth, p. 68) Julie openly assumes that Saint-Preux could also pass the test, because she says that "she feels" his impatience at their short separation— that is, at a change in their situation.

Julie is won over, it seems, by Saint-Preux's program of study, because it has nothing in it, we must surmise, that would enhance a seduction. Saint-Preux, Julie says to him, you have made "sacrifices for virtue." (62) As his reward (She still knows that he is a child!), she will take him into the woods, along with her cousin Claire, to offer him "a little surprise." It is very probable that Julie is engaged, consciously or unconsciously, in a process of sublimating Saint-Preux's feelings for her. Surely, he does
not want the situation to remain exactly as it is. So, if that is the happiness test, then he is not happy, as it seems that Julie is.

No sooner does Julie offer Saint-Preux a test for happiness—"I would like this instant to last forever"—than the reader is asked to apply the test to the behavior of Saint-Preux, subsequent to "the fatal kiss" that Julie allowed him. (XIV) As a result of the kiss, he is beside himself—drunk, insane, disturbed—saying that "this memory . . . will be the agony and the happiness of my life." (64) Is it happiness, since he would have liked the kiss in the arbor to have lasted forever; or is it not happiness, since he is not "happy" to live with the memory of the kiss. If true happiness is a permanent state of the soul (as the test itself implies), then Saint-Preux fails. One could say, his soul is not well disposed toward happiness.

Julie's response to Saint-Preux's delirious complaints about the cruelty of the kiss is to ask him calmly, and without explanation, to separate himself from her for an unspecified period of time. She also gives him money for the trip, which he considers an insult to his honor.

In Letter XVIII, Saint-Preux relates that he has submitted to Julie's instructions to leave town in spite of the pain (and near delirium) it caused him. But, more importantly, there are three statements of Platonism in the letter: 1) "each step that took me from you separated my
body from my soul and gave me an anticipated sense
(sentiment) of death." (68) 2) "I have dragged into my
exile only the slightest part of myself: all that is alive
in me remains ceaselessly near you. . . . it penetrates
everywhere like a subtle vapor, and I am happier in spite of
you than I was ever with your permission." (69) 3) And
then he finishes the letter with an analogy of death: "I
must fly from everything and live alone in the world, if I
cannot live in it with you." (69)

The point of these Platonic statements of duality may
be seen as a lover’s desperate attempt to save for himself
what he sees as a failing love affair; it may be seen as a
ture philosophic conversion; or it might be Saint-Preux’s
answer to Julie’s Letter IX, in which she announced that she
wanted only a spiritual relationship. Is Saint-Preux,
perhaps, fighting back, for between Julie’s professed
Platonism and this letter of Saint-Preux’s, there is the
kiss in the arbor, which represents Julie’s compromise with
her earlier avowal of only a spiritual relationship. Is
Saint-Preux not here being "holier than the Church" in an
attempt to win back Julie’s affection?

Saint-Preux fears that Julie has forgotten him (after
five days of separation), but he also does some maturing:
He now realizes why, in novels, so much is made of lovers’
separations. (XIX) "Today I feel how little a peaceful soul
can properly pass judgment on the passions, and how
senseless it is to laugh at feelings you have never experienced." (70) Saint-Preux has at least discovered the formal content of the Arabic aphorism, "The fire only burns where it falls." He concludes the letter by consenting to being tested by Julie.

Saint-Preux claims that from Julie one learns "that divine union of virtue, love, and nature." He also points out to Julie that she is loved by and loves many people, whereas he loves only her. He says that, having no happiness himself, he will share Julie’s. Needless to say, Saint-Preux senses the vacuity of his own existence, in the very act of experiencing his own existence for the first time. (XXI)

Mountain habitation seems to give Saint-Preux’s thought and feelings a certain force and impetuosity. He speaks of "a mixture of savage nature and cultivated nature" in the mountains where, he says, one loses oneself. Yet, the process of sublimation continues: "Would that I could right here bring my whole soul together in yours, and become in turn the universe for you." (83) One could say that this manifestation of sublimation is the mere work of prolonged separation. (XXIII)

Saint-Preux says that he cannot take payment from M. d’Etange for his tutoring lessons, as the Baron now insists, because it would either affect his behavior toward Julie or because he might be forced to betray his employer. (XXIV)
The question of honor regarding the money is addressed by Saint-Preux: "True honor [unlike that based on public opinion] is the essence of true happiness, because it alone inspires that permanent feeling of inner satisfaction which alone is able to make a thinking being happy." (84) It is this true honor which Saint-Preux appeals to in refusing payment for his services, unlike the original Abelard.

When the letters of Heloise and Abelard fall between your hands, you will know what I am telling you of this reading and of the conduct of that Theologian. I have always pitied Heloise; she had a heart made for love: but Abelard ever appeared to me but a miserable creature who deserved his fate and one knowing as little of love as of virtue. After having judged him, will it be necessary for me to imitate him? Misfortune to whoever preaches a morality that he does not wish to practice! He who is blinded by his passion up to that point is soon punished by it and loses his taste for the sensations (sentiments) to which he has sacrificed his honor. Love is deprived of its greatest charm when honesty abandons it; in order to feel its full price, the heart must delight in it, and it must elevate us in elevating the one we love. Take away the idea of perfection, and you take away enthusiasm; take away esteem, and love is no longer anything. How would a woman be able to honor a man who dishonors himself? How will he be able himself to adore her who has no fear of abandoning herself to a vile corruptor? That way, there will soon be mutual distrust; love will no longer be for them but a shameful business: they will have lost honor and will not have found felicity. (85-86)

Julie and Saint-Preux, ironically, retrace the steps of Heloise and Abelard. And they, like Heloise and Abelard, spend their lives in an attempt to redeem their love from
any dishonor. In retrospect, how pitiable is this portrait of the young Saint-Preux, so sure of his right thought and action and so critical of the passions of others: a prejudice which he claimed to have some understanding of just a brief time ago!!

This show of strength by Saint-Preux seems almost to have weakened Julie. "I had predicted it, the time of happiness is passed like lightening." This premonition is followed by a statement of grief: "I feel, my friend, the weight of your absence crushing me. I cannot live without you, I know, and this frightens me most." (88)

Saint-Preux answers Julie’s letter of despondency with a call to action—with the spectre of the possibility of

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9In The New Heloise, the relationship between honor and love replaces that, in the original letters of Heloise and Abelard, of sanctity and love. Whereas Heloise and Abelard achieve honor through a hard won sanctity, Julie and Saint-Preux achieve a sort of sanctity through a hard won honor. Sublimation is an arduous chore for the eighteenth-century couple, whereas it is an expected mode of living for the medieval couple, despite Heloise’s difficulties at the outset of their separation. Heloise and Abelard reach sublimation through Christ. For Julie and Saint-Preux, the mystical heights are attained through a secularized, if one likes, form of courtly love. It could almost be said that happiness is more readily desired by Julie and Saint-Preux, but less tenuous for Heloise and Abelard. Just what each couple does in order to redeem its love from dishonor or unholiness is not essentially different: Heloise becomes the bride of Christ; Julie, that of Wolmar; and both Abelard and Saint-Preux begin journeys for some philosophical-theological truth—journeys which, as far as we know, had no final terminations. See OC, II, p. 3, n. 1, for a discussion of Rousseau’s use of the medieval allusion of Heloise and Abelard. The Editors do not give as much importance to this allusion as I do.
losing happiness forever. Carpe diem! He borrows the hedonist’s posture. He begins by describing the sad dilemma of the "sensitive soul." "He seeks supreme felicity without remembering that he is a man: his heart and his reason will be incessantly at war." (89) He says that without her he would never have felt this tension between high and low. Then he proceeds to convince Julie that the time is right to act on this "eternal decree from heaven": "it is the first duty of life to unite with the person whose duty it is to make life sweet for us." (92) Saint-Preux then attacks Julie’s commitment to chastity, saying that it robs her of both reason and true virtue.

He reminds Julie that their youth is passing and tells her that "You are seeking a chimerical happiness for a time when we will no longer be." (93) Saint-Preux pressures Julie to the maximum—with a slightly veiled threat of suicide.

Claire informs Saint-Preux that the separation, coupled with his last letter, has sent Julie to the brink of death; she is so ill that her mother would even like him to return, despite the presence of M. d’Etange. Julie is hysterical and very ill. She complains of everyone close to her—including Claire. Her illness is apparently the result of the separation from Saint-Preux.

Julie confesses to Claire to have lost her innocence. Who, she asks, called that "cruel one" back? But she
eventually blames only herself: "I forgot everything and remembered only love." (96) Julie asks Claire to come live with her. Claire tells Julie that her, Julie's, passion for Saint-Preux was life or death—that is, she had to give in to her passion or die. She agrees to join Julie. (XXX)

Saint-Preux comments on how incompatible impulses can be in one heart. Of himself: "Drunk with love and sensual pleasure, my heart swims in sadness; I suffer and languish in the midst of supreme felicity." (99) He chides Julie for having remorse for having obeyed natural and sacred laws. He proposes that they give themselves to each other as husband and wife, which would right any wrong. He calls himself her other half. But their age of innocence is over. As Julie writes, "our letters were facile and charming...there was no need of artifice or coloring...That happy time is no longer." (102) Most of all, Julie regrets having betrayed the integrity of her love—"my regret is much less having given too much to love than having deprived it of its greatest charm." They have fallen into a form of hedonism: "We have sought out pleasure and happiness has flown from us." When all is said, Julie is hurt by the realization that she and Saint-Preux are no more than "common lovers" who experience nothing but "fits of passion," as opposed to "a pure and holy flame." (In Part VI, when Julie proposes that Saint-Preux and Claire marry,
he protests on grounds that he would become a mere "common husband.")

Again in our reading, we must ask just what Julie wants. She never said she wanted marriage and she never said, as far as the reader knows, that she wanted sex. This letter supports the Julie of the Platonic love, the Julie who needs a lover for her spirit, but no lover for her body. So it is for the second time that Julie asks Saint-Preux to be her holy knight, in fact: "Be then from now on my sole hope. . . . May your worth erase my shame. . . . As long as you will be worthy of respect, I will not be totally contemptible." (103) There seems little question that Julie is resurrecting, to an unawares Saint-Preux, a medieval notion of love: that of courtly love.  

The lovers, under the circumstances, are uneasy in social situations. Addressing Saint-Preux as "friend," as she did in Letter XXXII, Julie observes that "we love too much to be able to so restrain ourselves"; she goes on to delineate a private from a public life, and concludes that a solitary life would, for them, go further in nourishing their passions.(XXXIII) The grand Rousseauean theme of

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10See Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World, for one explication of the origin and nature of the passion myth. See specifically pp. 225-28 for an interesting, though not always correct, interpretation of The New Heloïse.
solitude" is introduced in a grand way, as Julie sums it up: "All grand passions are formed in solitude." It nourishes love and melancholy; but does solitude, we might prematurely ask, nourish happiness? (Julie concludes the letter by writing cryptically of the possibility of her pregnancy.)

The importance of the solitary, or private, life for the achievement of happiness has been dealt with in our earlier discussions, especially those of The Confessions and The Reveries. Here, however, we are dealing with a relative solitude—that is, one essentially of two lovers. We may eventually have to conclude that there is a direct relationship between the attainability of happiness and the degree of privacy or solitude (that is, apoliticality); but we might also have to show a shifting notion of solitude as the particular notions of happiness come forward, specifically, ranging from radically private to radically public. Simply stated: In The New Heloise, Rousseau is portraying the pursuit of happiness of two people. The resolution of the work will have only partial, and perhaps not ultimate, application. Which, we might be led to ask,

\[\text{See OC, II, p. 105, n. 1.}\]
is the higher form of life—solitary, partial association, or political?12

Saint-Preux agrees to return to the solitary life and even generalizes the value of the decision: "the heart is not at all nourished in the tumult of society." (107) Ironically, he asks if it is not preferable to meet for "a single instant and then die" rather than take all the precautions that would be necessary even in a solitary milieu. This calls to mind that mere solitude is no total answer to the happiness of the couple. Happiness will require a disposition of the soul as well as of the environment.

Then, Saint-Preux writes on blindly about his inability to fathom the nature of her secret [about her pregnancy]. It should perhaps also be pointed out—since I shall argue for the importance of the notion of cortezia in the Julie—that Saint-Preux playfully portrays the young men who showered attention on Julie at a party as "cavaliers," a word which in the seventeenth century was substituted for

12If the love of two people is the best path to happiness for most people and if that happiness is best nourished in solitude, that might be a political problem in an urban age. For a discussion of the life of the Golden Age (the family) versus the political life of Sparta, see Judith N. Shklar, Men and Citizens—A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory (New York: Cambridge, first pub. 1968).
the old French word "chevalier." This latter word means simply "knight."\textsuperscript{13}

Continuing repeatedly to address Saint-Preux as "friend," Julie wishes her fears of lover allayed. She wants not only a lover but a friend— not only his heart but his faith. And she proposes, as an "expedient," a sort of initiation for Saint-Preux—in the presence of Julie and Claire—into an order of knighthood.(XXXV) Once he has sworn never to commit an act of treachery against his love for Julie, "you shall have the accolade and be acknowledged as sole vassal and loyal Knight." (111) By referring to Saint-Preux as a "chevalier," Julie communicates doubly: 1) She obviously accentuates the courtly nature of their love; and 2) She distinguishes the order of their love from that of the "cavaliers," whose natures— as degenerate "chevaliers"— now become clear. It is likewise a commentary on the times. It will become progressively clearer just how important a role the notion of courtly love will play in Rousseau's notion of happiness— at least in the happiness of the lovers.

Julie arranges a love tryst, so she must be comfortable with Saint-Preux's profession of fealty. He responds. (XXXVIII) This letter from Saint-Preux is one of dichotomies and ecstasy— if not happiness. He appears

profoundly touched by the spectacle of the friendship between Julie and Clair. He compares their peaceful bliss to voluptuousness, their friendship to love, and falls into an exciting eroticism: "No, nothing, nothing on earth could excite such a voluptuous tenderness than your mutual caresses, and the spectacle of two lovers would have offered up to my eyes a less delicious sensation." (115) The letter ends with a paean to nature and a hedonistic description of eternity: "How happy we would be if Heaven removed from life all the tedious intervals which separate such moments [that is, their rendez-vous]." (117) The thought of several nights with Julie has sparked the "fire of love" which, in turn, animates all of nature. The abiding interest of the dichotomies of this letter lies on the side of "pure bliss" as opposed to "voluptuousness"; it is a harbinger of courtly love and its role in this drama.

After that ecstatic song of nature's complicity in the approaching love-making of our couple, the cold blast of duty cleans the pleasurable prospects away. Julie solicits Saint-Preux's assistance in the rescue of a servant, Claude Anet, from the obligations of an indenture, so that he and a neglected charge of Julie's, Fanchon, might marry. This sacrifice for virtue--they must postpone their rendez-vous--this altruism, represents a "[rare] opportunity to make people happy"; it is a sort of sublimation of the activity of our couple. It is a choice for virtue in the pursuit of
happiness. It is, if not a turning point in the novel, then a healthy respite and a sort of reality-test for the lovers. Saint-Preux agrees to comply with Julie's wish to help the couple. He claims, however, to be doing it for Julie alone and not for "hateful virtue" which is interfering with his preferred plans. He arranges the release of Claude Anet from military service, and to Julie expresses what must be termed a sense of happiness: "How happy one is to do good in serving her whom he loves and thus unite the charms of love and of virtue in the same act of homage." Is this not a solution to the Kantian riddle of how to unite pleasure and duty? Is this not happiness? And is it not based on the tradition of courtly love, though not yet fully purified as a concept within our story? As mentioned earlier, Rousseau's characters do not always possess a high degree of self-awareness; and this is especially true of Saint-Preux. Nonetheless, after professing a profound pleasure in performing this virtuous service and after announcing Julie to be divine, Saint-Preux concludes by raising the possibility of rescheduling their love tryst at the chalet. The effect is clearly comic, and the conflict between appearances and reality shows itself in a profound and, simultaneously, humorous fashion.(XLIII)

"On the use of the word "homage," see Cayrou, Le Francais Classique, p. 803."
Julie continues to extol their act of virtue, saying that it is always sweet to have performed such an act and that "never has anyone been seen repenting of a good deed." Also, Lord Bomston's arrival is announced.

Letter XLVI, from Julie to Saint-Preux, has a disguised structure: 1) Men are always thinking of sex; 2) This is because men are biologically—and, consequently, also in their souls—different from women; and 3) Because of all this, women make better friends to women than do men. And by telling Saint-Preux that Claire is "a hundred times more learned" than he in friendship, Julie continues to employ devices intended to purify and challenge Saint-Preux's feelings for her. Though the superior in matters of love, Julie remains vulnerable to its heartache and she seems desperate to raise Saint-Preux to her level of feeling before it is too late for them both. Julie's intention, I feel, is to reconcile love and friendship—the existential equivalent of the reconciliation of passion and reason, pleasure and duty, the private and the public. The issue could be focused this way: Does love or friendship constitute the happiness of the partial association?

Saint-Preux confesses to Julie his feeling of uneasiness about Bomston's seeming infatuation with Julie. Apparently, because of being under the spell of his love for Julie, Saint-Preux also confesses to having enjoyed Italian music for the first time. Saint-Preux describes in rather
technical terms the superiority of Italian music over French music. This confession is deceptively important to the development of our romance. Simply: Saint-Preux has undergone an emotional conversion of sorts--concretized by the abandonment of French harmony in favor of Italian melody. For him, his conversion represents the embracing of a music of the heart, the soul, and their sentiments--and a departure from a music of technicality. We may say that this conversion is not merely aesthetic, because Saint-Preux radicalizes the importance of this music of the song of the heart and the soul. He gives his preference moral, and even metaphysical, value: "the pleasure [of Italian music] did not stop at the ear; it penetrated to the soul." (133) And we may say that the artistic change of preference represents some sort of change of heart. He had heard the same birds singing before, but to no effect. In fact, Saint-Preux makes no secret of the fact that he associates his awakening to Italian music with his love for Julie ("I had only one regret [while listening to the Italian music]; but it would not leave me; it was that another than you was making the sounds that so touched me.") It seems that Saint-Preux has taken one step more toward worthiness of Julie's love. But an ironic perversion of this episode: It is a castrato who teaches Saint-Preux the superiority of the Italian song and ministers to the opening of the heart to new and deeper
sentiments. Claire's question reverberates: Does the soul have a sex? (See Chapter 5, Part II)

Whatever the case with Saint-Preux's conversion to Italian music, Julie finds it exasperating that he fears losing her to Lord Bomston and, at the same time, speaks of "songs"! And this becomes an occasion for Julie to return to their night of love, when the loss of her innocence precluded any further aspiration toward happiness. She is fed up with Saint-Preux, for he is not good at the game of love. He knows not how to protect love, only how to take its pleasures. She must take the helm. But her situation is dire: "Is it possible ever to have happiness where shame and remorse reign? God! What a cruel state, to be able neither to bear one's crime, nor to repent of it. . . . I am from here on at the sole mercy of fate. It is no longer either a question of force or of virtue, but of fortune (chance) and of prudence, and it is not a question of extinguishing a love which will last my lifelong, but of making that love innocent (harmless) or of dying guilty." (136-37) What would make her love "innocent"?

Julie provisionally defines happiness as depending on innocence—an innocence which could, of course, be bought at the price of repentance. But she can neither bear her crime nor repent. The classical answer to the quest for virtue—force or strength of soul—no longer applies, for she wishes to overcome nothing. The answer must be found elsewhere:
It is in luck and in prudence that this love might play itself out successfully. Simply stated, the only way back to the pursuit of happiness is to make their love both innocent and harmless. For, as the French expression goes, Chase nature away, and she will return at a gallop! Julie is applying the lessons of Emile: Do not attempt to conquer the passions, but rather raise them up to desire what they should desire. Julie, as has been pointed out before, is in the process of raising Saint-Preux into manhood and into love. It seems that, in order to make her love innocent, Saint-Preux must discover true love. He must become Julie's equal!

At a social function, Saint-Preux has evidently drunk too much and has used offensive language in Julie's presence. She takes this opportunity to explain to him just what "true love" is, for obviously he does not know what it is. The middle section of this letter (L) is a sort of manifesto to and eulogy of "true love." Its essence is intimately bound to that of "true happiness" and, seemingly, at least partially exclusive of that of "friendship." Julie speaks in a high tone:

I do not know if I am mistaken, but it seems to me that true love is the most chaste of all bonds. It is true love, it is its divine fire which knows how to purify our natural inclinations by concentrating them in a single object; it is true love which rescues us from temptations and which, except for that one object, makes a member of the opposite sex no longer anything for the other sex. For an
ordinary woman, every man is always a man; but for her whose heart loves, there is no man but her lover... They do not desire, they love. The heart does not follow the senses, it guides them; it covers their bewilderment with a delightful veil. No, [in true love], there is nothing obscene such as debauchery and its gross language. . . . Believe me, my friend, debauchery and love would not know how to live together and are not even able to balance off each other. The heart makes true happiness when there is love, and nothing can take its place as soon as love is no more. (emphasis added) (138-39)

This is a radically sublime understanding of love and happiness. True lovers do not desire; thus, there is no question of moderation of this love to a sort of Aristotelian virtue. (It seems that rest, not motion, is the proper state of man.) We can only wonder just what a love, which is not ultimately a passion, must be. Surely, we are in the vicinity of a neo-Platonic courtly love tradition. And love is not happiness, but it is the cause of it, or is at least its context. Nor should we forget to point out that Julie, though continuing to address her lover as "friend," seems to silently relegate friendship to a level below the most chaste bond of love. The non-desiring, or restful, state of true love might well stem from its very particularity: the longing is allowed to come to rest in a limited goal.

Letter L offers a rather transparent example of how Rousseau employs a small incident, such as drunkenness, to lay down notions of highly unorthodox import. Whether or
not, however, these notions are fully his own—as opposed to those of a character he created—would be premature to say.

Saint-Preux claims, at great length, to have no memory of having, while under the influence, offended Julie. He swears off wine forever and requests that he be punished fairly and severely. He is applying a stern ethic to himself. Julie answers that she thinks his renunciation of wine to be, on practical and theoretical grounds, no less than ridiculous and more unpleasant a thought than the "wicked words" he spoke to her. She releases him from his vow and asks him merely to make an expiatory libation to the Graces, in her presence. She then turns to a discussion of her encounter with Italian music, via Bomston's castrato Regianino. She seems more interested in beauty than in morality. And she seems to agree with Saint-Preux regarding the superior nature of Italian music, but she speaks of it in a more restrained and even rationalistic manner than had he. Julie is giving Saint-Preux a hard time on two counts: the vow not to drink and his enthusiasm for Italian music. Why? Let us offer answers which merely fine-tune our understanding of Julie's project of, let us say, educating Saint-Preux: 1) Just before Saint-Preux's letter of disavowal of wine, Julie had written to him not only of his offensive words, but she had also written a sort of manifesto of "true love," as she understood it. He writes back primarily defending himself and offering to take this
heroic step of renouncing wine. Julie probably thought the occasion called for more substance—at least a passing reference to her idea on "true love." 2) And regarding the muted reaction to Italian music, it might be said that, since the discovery of this music seemed to have made him say and pretend to understand more about love than he truly did, Julie wants to slow him down with her manner of reaction. (Be it noted that Julie repeatedly continues to address Saint-Preux throughout these letters as "my friend," "my dear friend," etc. He does not generally follow suit.)

It is Julie who initiates their second romantic interlude. Because their plans for several rendez-vous were disappointed, Julie proposes a drastic and dangerous plan: that Saint-Preux meet her in her bedchamber. She vows that she is ready to die in his arms, if they are discovered. Saint-Preux has a nervously excited time in Julie's chamber, as he simultaneously writes of his emotions at being in this sanctum. (He has conveniently found paper and pencil, while waiting for Julie.)

Saint-Preux writes about his second and his ultimate night of love with Julie. And here his sentiments seem to catch up with the false conversion to that Italian music of the soul. He begins this recapitulation of the night of love not by addressing Julie as "my love," but by "my sweet Friend." Immediately thereafter he refers to Julie as "the beloved of my heart." There is no way to summarize his
expressive effusions, except to say that he is a convert to "true love." What he had thought was happiness was only pleasure, he says; he was a child, now he is a man.

What Saint-Preux claims to value most from the night of love was "the close union of souls" (Remember Letter LI and his cavalier appeal to "the union of our souls."). He questions his past "love" and announces that "My sentiments—do not doubt it—have since yesterday undergone a change of nature." In the hour after love, they talked and he says that, at that time, "I adored you and desired nothing." The happiness was "eternal" and "peaceful" and "of the soul": "It is the first time in all my days that I experienced it with you; and, however, judge what strange change I experienced; it is, of all the hours of my life, the one which is most dear to me and the only one that I would have wanted to prolong eternally." (148-49) (This is the same definition or test for happiness that Rousseau gives in The Reveries—to wish the moment to last forever.)

Saint-Preux then seems to pose a senselessly rhetorical question. In effect: Was what I felt before love or is what I feel now love? (149) I contend that his questioning makes sense only if we recast the question: Was I your lover before, and am I now your friend? Can love and friendship be reconciled? Admitting the more peaceful nature of his present feelings, Saint-Preux says "The sweetness of friendship tempers the frenzies of love." But
the notions of love and friendship seem to become confused in the ensuing paragraphs, or, at the least, he is speaking (unawares?) of two sorts of "love." Friendship is associated with sweetness and peace, and love with frenzies (emporments). But Saint-Preux tells Julie that he has the suspicion that she knows how to love better than he. Love has more deeply penetrated her soul. And it is that which makes her so enchanting. Then, does Saint-Preux not give another way of defining happiness when writing of the love that infuses Julie's being? "How far away I am from that charming state which suffices unto itself! I wish to enjoy, and you wish to love; I have ecstacies and you passion; all my frenzies are not worth your delightful languor, and the sentiment with which your heart is nourished is the only supreme felicity." (149)

If he is aware of what he is saying, Saint-Preux must be speaking of two sorts of love: a love of frenzy and passion (commonly understood), and the love Julie symbolizes--a reconciliation of voluptuousness and eternity, of passion and friendship. And this latter is that state sufficient unto itself. In fact, Rousseau closes this letter to Julie with words that might have been reserved for a God: "You alone are worthy of inspiring a perfect love; you alone are the one to feel it. Ah give me your heart, my Julie, so that I may love you as you deserve!" (150)
We now seem to be at the heart of Rousseau's romanticism, for which happiness is something different than for Greece or Rome or Christianity.⁵

Drunk, Bomston offends the name of Julie.(LVI) Saint-Preux and he plan to duel. Claire advises Julie to break off this two-year-old romance with Saint-Preux, before it becomes public and ruins her good name and causes someone harm.

Julie writes Saint-Preux a long and reasoned refutation of the grounds for duelling. However valid these numerous arguments, they concern us only tangentially. Does Julie intend to replace the fashion of honor with the fashion of love?—"your friend [Julie herself] wishes to examine with you just how you should conduct yourself on this occasion according to the sentiments that you profess and of which I suppose you do not make a vain and false parade." (152) And honor is the principle from which Julie realizes that she must reason.

After almost seven pages against false honor, Julie broaches the subject of courage. "Like all women, I think that the fire of courage enlivens that of love. But I want valor to show itself on legitimate occasions." (158) It would not be too much of a leap to say that Julie is pairing false honor with immature love and courage with mature love—

⁵See Bloom, Love, p. 65, for a discussion of love as a substitute for morality.
especially if we recall that Julie arranged a test of courage for Saint-Preux and herself, a test which seemed to have caused their "true love" to flower. And, if love is necessary for happiness, then so is courage! But what sort of courage does Julie have in mind?

True courage has more constancy and less eagerness; it is always that which it should be; it is necessary neither to stir it on nor to hold it back: the good man carries it with him everywhere--into combat against the enemy, into a gathering where he stands for those absent or for the truth, into his bed against the attacks of sorrow and death. The strength of soul which inspires it is in evidence in all ages; it always places virtue above events, and does not consist in fighting, but in fearing nothing. (158)

Julie, professing to Bomston her love for Saint-Preux, asks, in her own inimitable way, that he not duel and kill her lover. Saint-Preux writes to Julie of his meeting of reconciliation with Bomston who, in fact, prostrated himself before Saint-Preux. Important to note are Bomston's remarks regarding Saint-Preux and Julie, after he had heard their story from Saint-Preux himself. Bomston admits that they are no ordinary individuals and "cannot be judged by common rules." Their happiness will take another path from that of others; for them, only "tenderness and peace" are necessary, whereas others search for power and recognition. Furthermore, their love is joined to an emulation of virtue which elevates them. And they would be less worthy if they did not love one another. The practicality of the
Englishman speaks: "Love will pass, and virtues will remain." (165)

They see themselves as extraordinary because of their love; Bomston, though he recognizes the uncommon nature of their "tenderness and peace," sees their enduring uncommon quality to be that of virtue. Bomston seems to admit that their happiness comes from their love, but would he also admit virtue as a basis of happiness? When love passes, will happiness also pass? Is virtue unhappy and loveless? Bomston seems to imply as much. Our young couple, on the other hand, believes in the creative force of their love. The question, raised much earlier, of the reconcilability of passion and virtue is raised again, but this time by a third party—and at a time when our lovers are convinced of it.

Julie corrects Saint-Preux's salutation from his last letter: from "let us live in order to love each other" to "let us love each other in order to live." (LXI) Love is primary for Julie—the source of life, but not for that a means as opposed to an end.

Claire describes a heated conversation between Lord Bomston and the fathers of Julie and herself. Bomston is trying to arrange marriage between Julie and Saint-Preux. Baron d'Etange violently objects on grounds that Saint-Preux is not nobility, but a "quidam," or nobody. Thereupon, Bomston attacks the very foundations of nobility and even raises the spectre and the crimes of Machiavelli's founding
prince (without mentioning Machiavelli). Saint-Preux is lauded as a natural aristocrat and therefore worthy of Julie’s hand; thus the gist of the argument is not that they truly love each other. Nonetheless, this attack by Rousseau on aristocracy does show that 1) the notion of aristocracy can be—as it is in the case of our lovers—an obstacle to true love and, thus, to happiness; and 2) the foundations of the institution are philosophically tenuous. Here, then, Rousseau’s political and romantic theories complement each other.

Claire advises that Bomston be sent away, for he, in trying to be of assistance, is damning the cause of Julie and Saint-Preux.

Julie writes Claire of the aftermath, in Julie’s household, of the argument in Letter LXII. Baron d’Etange blames Julie for this idea of her marrying Saint-Preux, and his fury reaches such proportions that he begins to beat Julie mercilessly. They eventually make up, but not without his reminding her of the arranged marriage with Wolmar and not without his forbidding her to ever see or speak to Saint-Preux again. At this point, Rousseau allows himself a well-placed political comment: "Ah, my cousin, what infernal monsters are these prejudices, which deprave the best hearts and silence nature at every moment?" (177) Here, Rousseau explicitly enjoins the question of the relationship between political order and (love and)
happiness. Not only does Julie suffer physical abuse, but she must also live torn between her family and her lover. Her emotions are so contradictory that she lives in "A sort of hebetude which makes my soul almost insensible and leaves me the usage neither of the passions nor the reason." (145) She is dehumanized! Such is the denaturing effect of the enforced prejudices of aristocracy. Julie does not even know whether to hope or to resign herself and her lover to the compensations of love.

She closes with a post scriptum in which she suggests that the fall suffered at the hands of her father might have caused a miscarriage.

In the brief Letter LXIV, from Claire to M. D'Orbe, her husband to be, Claire merely solicits his assistance in the task of separating Julie and Saint-Preux. She does, however, draw a distinction which appears of growing importance in the analysis of the nature of happiness as regards the two lovers.

However successful M. D'Orbe might be in winning Claire's esteem, friendship, and even "more tender sentiments," he should not delude himself—"as a woman I am a kind of monster, and, I know not by what peculiarity of nature, for me friendship outweighs love. When I tell you that Julie is dearer to me than you, you only laugh, and yet nothing is more true." (179)
And Claire must call upon her friendship for Saint-Preux, friend of her friend, for courage in executing the unnatural act of sending Saint-Preux away from his love: "Oh divine friendship! the only idol of my heart! Come inspire my hand with your pious cruelty. Give me the courage to be barbarous." (179) This Machiavellian theme of the necessity of performing barbarous acts is modified here by a contingent necessity--depending on the prejudice and stupidity of the aristocratic institution. Whereas Machiavelli sees the necessity for cruelty, Rousseau sees that necessity itself as man-made. This may be another way of saying that Rousseau is, fundamentally, utopian.

Claire describes to Julie the scene during which Saint-Preux is told that he must leave town and, of course, Julie. Though she does not believe much in "verbose philosophy," Claire instructs Lord Bomston to prepare Saint-Preux with some stoic philosophizing--such as: One's own happiness is within one's own power. Whatever his subliminal preparation, the ordeal is frightful and pitiful for Saint-Preux and, it may be said, meant to affect the reader into a veritable hatred for the institution responsible. Romanticism meets where "true love" and true merit (of that love) meet--where there is no artificiality, political or otherwise.

Nonetheless, removing the political obstacles to happiness would only be a first step to realizing happiness.
If the pitfalls to happiness are writ large in society and if their resolution seems obvious, the road to happiness on an individual level—between two lovers, for example—must always be purified and perfected, as Julie was attempting to do throughout Part I of the novel. Even if the only challenge to the lovers was to love one another, it would still be a challenge, and maybe a greater challenge than otherwise. Whether there are any obstacles to happiness, which are not ultimately socio-political defects, only begs the question, since humankind must ultimately "leave" the socio-political in order to be happy—whether romantically, solitarily, spiritually. To the extent that humankind is happy under the regime of The Social Contract, it is not acting and living as a political species, but as a collective individual.

A provisional summary of Part I: Happiness emerges as the underlying theme of the work. How happiness is attained is more ambiguous. The primary question might be, Is happiness more readily attainable through love or through friendship? Attributes of love would be passion and motion; those of friendship would be virtue and rest. Honor and courage seem necessary to both, unless we are to split them up and say that honor regards friendship and courage regards love. This is another way of asking whether the way to happiness is through the public or through the private modes
of existence. It cannot be ruled out that Rousseau is "creating" a tertiary mode of being, as a new dispensation.

In any case, most of the elements of the romance and its resolution appear, at least, in Part I: love versus virtue; passion versus happiness; imagination versus restraint; Platonism; courtly love; the happiness test; love versus friendship; and motion versus rest. These and other themes, including that of the pleasure found in doing of good works, will be pursued by our author in Parts II through VI. In a sense, we shall end where we have begun--only more simply and more aware.
CHAPTER 5
THE LETTERS OF THE SEPARATION

With Part I ends the actual love affair, though the lovers are not aware of or resigned to that fact. Though they maintain hope, Part II does begin as the lovers' attempt to understand their love and to understand how it might subsist unfulfilled. And such meditations naturally entail consideration of the nature of happiness, for the link between love and happiness will be questioned but never totally dissolved.

Part II

Now separated from Julie, Saint-Preux questions the very value of happiness, but also questions the value of life without it. "It was better to have never tasted felicity than to have tasted it and lost it." (II, I, 190) If he had never known happiness, he might still have reason, virtue, and sense of duty. As it is, he is a deranged fool with nothing—not even courage, or so he writes. Then he recants all those doubts. "I prefer the pleasures which are in my memory and the regrets which rend my soul to ever being happy without my Julie." He expresses the morality of love and its invincibility—both foundations of happiness but independent of happiness.

If I am dead to happiness I am not at all to love which makes me worthy of it. This love is invincible like the charm which gave it birth. It is based on the unshakable foundation of merit and of the virtues; it cannot perish in an immortal soul; it no longer needs hope as a
support, and the past gives it powers for an eternal future. (190)

But, then again, Saint-Preux falls from these lofty heights of assurance back into despair, but not before questioning the eudaemonism of his thought. Is happiness the goal of man; or is it love?¹

If we shall ever become sure that the lovers have resigned themselves to unfulfilled love, we shall have had an indication that they have accepted this (Kantian) view of happiness—something to be worthy of, though not necessarily attained. And will one of the lovers resign herself or himself and not the other? It should be remembered that to maintain the eudaemonistic orientation does not mean being hopeful of fulfilled happiness—it means only the nurturing of the passion for it.

From this letter which prefigures Kant, we move to a letter by Lord Bomston; he more than anyone else represents a sort of political virtue which is embodied in his statement that "Every man is always master of his life." (II,II,193) Praising Saint-Preux’s qualities, Bomston—in fine rationalistic fashion—all but says that Saint-Preux’s salvation is that he is a potential philosopher: "sublime reason is only attained through the same vigor of soul which gives rise to great passions, and philosophy is not worthily

¹Of course, Kant would say that it is duty that makes us worthy of happiness.
served except with the same fire that one feels for a mistress." (193) Is love, as a sort of source of philosophy, superior to philosophy; or is philosophy, as a sort of end of love, not superior to love? Bomston's whole presentation argues for the latter. He is concerned for the couple, not for the sake of their love, but for the sake of justice and order which require that everyone be put to the best personal and social use. And they were made for love! Happy coincidence! They are meant to be an example to the world. But this dictate of nature is thwarted by "an absurd prejudice." The conjugal tie is subject neither to sovereign power nor to parental authority. The political Bomston is again attacking society in the name of society. (There is a curious gestalt at this point: We have, on the one hand, two lovers suffering the pains and even suicidal distress of separation; on the other hand, we find Lord Bomston pleading their case in a most rationalistic and

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2See OC.II, page 193, n. 1 for a brief discussion of the value of love.

3"These two beautiful souls left nature's hand made for each other." Cf. Emile, opening sentence, Allan Bloom translation (New York: Basic Books, 1979), P. 37: "Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man."

4"Man is the cause of his own unhappiness, but is he the cause of his happiness? From Letter XXIV (penultimate paragraph) we see that chance plays an enormous role in the calculus of free and natural happiness between two lovers. Beyond certain macrocosmic reforms, it becomes almost academic to contend that Rousseau even theoretically claimed that social engineering would solve all human problems.
political manner. We may surmise that Rousseau is juxtaposing two—ultimately distinct?—realms of existence: the private and the public.)

Bomston, by arguing for freedom in the marriage process, says that "character and temperament"—natural attributes—make for happiness or unhappiness in the married life. And, some lines below, he calls for merit and choice as the true principles of marriage and "social order." Nonetheless, he does allow society (the paternal order) some macrocosmic role: the father should be able to inform the daughter if her boyfriend is a complete fool. Is Rousseau then allowing to society a role as censor? It seems so. Nature must function within certain frontiers—not unlike the fundamental educative principle of Emile.

A reasonable match must be joined to the absence of obstacles or prejudices to combat. Julie and Saint-Preux, in spite of being driven by love, are a reasonable match. But there is still a problem: What if reason and passion do not coincide, as they fortunately do with our couple? Bomston implies that if love is prevailing over reason in an affair, then "nature has already chosen." We seem to be left, for Bomston's part, with the best of the worst, though he does not explicitly say so.

5See page 372 where Julie, after her conversion to marriage and society, also speaks of "characters and humours" as being more important for marriage than other things, such as love.
Such is the sacred law of nature [love] that it is not permitted to man to transgress, which he will never transgress with impunity, and which consideration for positions and ranks can repeal only at the cost of unhappiness and crime. (195)

Reason must bow to love, according to Bomston, because to do otherwise would be disastrous—not because love is a more sublime principle than reason. "Happy are those whom love unites as reason would have done and who have no obstacles to surmount or prejudices to combat." The ideal, for Lord Bomston, is reason.

There is an irony that exists between what Bomston says about the inviolability of the sacred law of nature—love—and his ongoing action of distancing Saint-Preux from Julie. So a second order of unnatural and unjust actions is being undertaken in reaction to the first order "evil" of Julie's father. This little drama is a demonstration of just how rapidly the good things of nature (in our case, love) can degenerate under human hands. For example, Saint-Preux has all but become mentally deranged. He has (temporarily) lost his humanity to a prejudice.

The nature of love, and consequently the nature of nature, undergoes some scrutiny in this time of trouble and separation for the lovers. Bomston has an ambivalent attitude or idea of love; he seems to stand in awe of it, but, perhaps like an ancient Greek, he views it as a sort of illness (as he says, "corrosive acid") which has progressed too far in the noble hearts of Julie and Saint-Preux. He
offers them an estate in England where they might live out their "true happiness." They are beyond repair, one might say. (II,III)

Even when love is viewed as a true expression of nature, it is seen in conflict with other aspects of nature. In dire straits, Julie describes herself as being between love and nature. And nature must be read to mean family or "blood." (II,IV) Whatever course she takes—choosing love or family—Julie sees herself as condemned to unhappiness and guilt. Claire confirms this view of reality as conflicted and disharmonious: "in this case, whatever course you take, nature both authorizes and condemns it, reason both blames and approves it, duty either is silent or contradicts itself." (II,V,203) Asked for her advice, Claire refuses, saying that reason itself imposes silence on her and that the only rule to follow here is for Julie to listen to her own inclination. There is, then, more than one nature, and irreconcilable conflicts result.

This questioning of nature is radicalized when Claire, speaking of her fiance, asks, "Does the soul have a sex?" Earlier, Saint-Preux had, in effect, answered that it did. Here, Claire doubts it. This Platonic-like question, dropped in passing, so to speak, signals the preoccupation of the remainder of the novel: How is love to survive outside of physical union?
Whereas, in Part I, a strong and direct relationship was established between love and happiness, in Part II that simplistic relationship begins to break down as the disunity of nature begins to show itself. Julie declines Bomston's offer of an idyllic retirement estate; she says: "[Your offer] is a great deal for love; is it enough for happiness?" (II,VI) There was a time for Julie when there was no difference. But shame—even in love—disallows happiness.

In II,IV, Julie spoke of the conflict between love and nature, with family playing the role of nature. Now (II,VI), she speaks as if love were the reflection of nature: "when before has virtue thus had to balance the rights of blood and of nature?" Now, love and family seem to be of equal value in the heart of Julie. The ascendancy of the family bond grew as it was being threatened, not unlike the growth in the status of passionate love in Part I. It is as if nature, when endangered from whichever side, moves to protect itself.6

But what of our other lover? After the separation, Saint-Preux engages in immature, despicable, and ultimately

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6For a discussion, within the context of Rousseau's Confessions, of this diversity or incoherence of human nature, see Samuel S. B. Taylor, "Rousseau's Romanticism" in Reappraisals of Rousseau, S. Harvey et al., ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), pp. 16-17. He refers to this apprehension of nature as the first move "towards Baudelaire's discovery of the beauty of the taboo."
delusional behavior (See Letters II, VII, VIII, IX and X). Julie’s training of him into maturity did not withstand the violence of his separation from her. Eventually recognizing the weakness of his character, Saint-Preux seems to attribute it to his upbringing in philosophy. He professes to Claire in a passing manner a conversion from philosophy to love:

Speak to me no more of philosophy! I scorn that deceiving show which consists only in empty words; that phantom which is only a shadow, which stirs us to defy passions at a distance and which leaves us like a blustering bully at their approach. (220)

In the following paragraph, Saint-Preux gives substance to his conversion: "Chaste love and sublime friendship will restore the courage that a cowardly despair was ready to take from me." (220) So, love and friendship replace philosophy as ruling principles of his life.

From this letter in which philosophy is rejected as a way of life, we come to a restatement of the relationship of philosophy to happiness and find that Plato, not the Stoics, represents the proper way. Letter XI represents Julie’s farewell and final counsel to her beloved; we can only expect a letter of substance. Even her short counsel— "Never forsake virtue, and never forget your Julie"—may be read as an intended reconciliation of nature (Julie/love) and society (virtue). It is a call to the impossible: the reconciliation of duty and inclination. Only if we contrive
to make duty the object of our love is any sort of reconciliation possible; and Julie will eulogize several ancients who did just that. But, first, Julie dismisses rationalist philosophy and calls on Saint-Preux to return to the depths of his soul.

[I]t is there that you will always rediscover the source of that sacred fire that so many times embraced us with the love of sublime virtues; it is there that you will see that eternal simulacrum of true beauty the contemplation of which enlivens us with a holy enthusiasm, and which our passions defy incessantly without ever being able to efface it. (223)

At this moment, Rousseau injects one of his Editor's Footnotes. He writes: "The true philosophy of lovers is that of Plato; while the spell lasts, they never have another. A man who is moved cannot forsake this philosopher; a reader who is cold cannot endure him."

How seriously do we take this footnote of Rousseau's? Whatever the ultimate answer, it is definite that in this Letter XI, Julie goes to some effort to offer a Platonic interpretation of happiness and love. For one, Socrates is grouped with Brutus, Regulus, and Cato, as examples of beauty which does not perish—as examples of a "divine model" which everyone carries within himself.

Secondly, Julie asks, "if the true pleasure of the soul is in the contemplation of the beautiful, how can the evil man love it in others without being forced to hate himself?" (224) One might ask at this point: Can we be the object of
our own love? That is, if man can be happy by contemplating the "divine model" of the beautiful within himself, might he not be self-sufficient? Julie seems to have this question in mind when she writes the following.

[T]he source of happiness is not totally in the desired object nor in the heart which possesses it, but in the relationship of one and the other, and . . . as all the objects of our desires are not capable of producing felicity, all the states of the heart are not capable of feeling it. If the purest soul is not alone sufficient to its own happiness, it is surer still that all the delights of the earth would not be able to make [happy] a depraved heart; because there is on both sides a necessary preparation, a certain coming-together from which comes this precious sentiment sought after by all sensitive beings, and always ignored by the false sage who limits himself to the pleasure of the moment in the place of knowing a durable happiness. (225)

When read in conjunction with Julie's letter, Rousseau's footnote seems to be making the following point: For lovers, love is the quest of the beautiful; and happiness must consist in the courage to continue that pursuit in spite of obstacles. "[W]ould it not be better to cease to be than to exist without feeling anything?" (226)

Whereas Saint-Preux had, in Letter X, totally rejected philosophy in the name of love and friendship, Julie demonstrates to Saint-Preux that there is a philosophy which is the very essence of love and friendship. One may tentatively conclude that Julie rejects the rationalism and self-sufficiency of Stoicism, for the essence of life is to feel--to love. And Rousseau understands Julie to be talking
about Plato; for that is the significance of his Editor's Footnote.

But this Plato is interpreted in the most fatalistic and romantic of ways, if we are to take Saint-Preux's formulations of their love as being consistent with the formulations of Julie. That is to say, in the context of discussing the happiness surrounding Claire's marriage to M. d'Orbe, Saint-Preux writes to Julie of their contrastingly tortured love (II, XVI, 245):

[T]he powerful transports of two hearts toward each other always have a secret (sensual) pleasure unknown to tranquil souls. It is one of the miracles of love to make us find pleasure in suffering; and we would regard as the worst of misfortunes a state of indifference and oblivion which robbed us of all the feelings of our misery.

The above is not a gratuitous masochism, but rather an indication of the role of the obstacle (to love) within the passion myth as set forth by Rougement. The totally satisfied love dissipates totally its passion. But Saint-Preux takes the interdependence of lover and beloved further—to a sort of Platonic sublimation of passion and to its relation to happiness: "like the divinity draws all its happiness from itself, hearts warmed by a heavenly fire find within their own feelings a sort of pure and delicious enjoyment, independent of fortune and of the rest of the universe."
So, the union of two souls makes it god-like or self-sufficient. Over-riding all notions in the above citations is the concept of independence and sufficiency of the two loving selves. For, as Saint-Preux had said in the previous Letter XV, "we shall be united in spite of our separation; we shall be happy despite fate." (236) But this is not the god-like Stoic happiness of the lone individual (impossible according to Julie); it is, rather, the happiness of the couple.

It is fair to ask if Rousseau is here speaking of love in his own name, or whether he is creating (or recreating) and propagating an ethos or ethic of love which he thinks salutary. And will the course of the novel retract, in effect, these romantic notions? And, of course, since the question of de Rougement's passion myth has been brought into the discussion, will Rousseau find a resolution to the passion myth? De Rougement notes that, unlike the pure myth, *The New Heloise* ends in a conventional marriage--at least for Julie. Whether or not that marriage dissolved the passion is more problematic, as any reader of the novel may surmise from Julie's deathbed admission of continuing love for Saint-Preux. Nonetheless, it should be clear by now that the social obstacles to union of the lovers, though important for an exposition of Rousseau's socio-political observations, serve ultimately as a context within which the
romantic myth of unfulfilled love is explored and expounded.  

Part III

The discovery by Julie’s mother of her daughter’s cache of love letters radically twists the fate of the young couple. Julie, the essence of the good daughter, grieved over the pain she has caused her bed-ridden mother, becomes the ghost of herself. Claire writes Saint-Preux, insisting that he cease causing such misery and that he renounce Julie forever.

He writes back to Madame d’Etange an impassioned letter of contrition and a promise to neither see nor write to Julie as long as the mother requires. Saint-Preux claims that he is able to "break the sweetest, the purest, the holiest tie that has ever united two hearts," because, in effect, "Julie has taught me too well how one must sacrifice

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The remaining Letters XVII-XXVIII of Part II of the novel seem to be of marginal value to the topic of happiness. I would only comment that Letter XVII, the central letter of the work, contains a sort of epistemology of the difficulties of studying the world. That it is reminiscent of Plato’s Allegory of the Ship of State is interesting; but more interesting would be to apply the lessons of the difficulty of studying the world to the difficulties of studying love (and happiness). And one might also wish to evaluate Saint-Preux since his renunciation of philosophy as his guiding principle. Whether there is a relation seems impossible to determine, but the fact that he falls in with some prostitutes would seem to some highly unphilosophic. He is, however, functioning: he is writing long letters on Parisian life and the Parisians themselves home to Julie, and letters on French politics to Lord Bomston.
happiness to duty." (III,II,311) If happiness represents the reconciliation of duty and passion, it is evident that the present situation called for a sacrifice of passion or inclination. In fact, Saint-Preux says that he has learned "that cruel art of conquering love" from Julie. So, it is love itself that had to be sacrificed to duty, and, though he wishes that happiness be restored to Julie, it is, according to our notion of happiness, impossible. Fate has decreed that love and virtue would not coincide in the life of Julie and Saint-Preux. If, in fact, fate ever so generously obliges, if de Rougement is right about the passion myth, the love and faltering happiness would never be so (bitter) sweet as that of our couple. That is another way of saying that without the obstacles to love there is no love story . . . and no love.

Along with his letter to Julie's mother, Saint-Preux wrote an accompanying letter to Claire, the "cruel one." In that letter, it is as if Rousseau wanted to show his reader the rabid nihilism of unbridled romantic love. Saint-Preux justifies sacrificing all of humanity to his love alone. "Ah, what is a mother's life, what is my own, yours, even hers, what is the existence of the whole world next to the delightful sentiment which united us?" (III,III,312) Threatening a sort of suicide of his human nature, Saint-Preux concludes this most bitter message to Claire with: "it is better to renounce humanity." (313)
What has Rousseau just done with those Janus letters? He has from the same envelope shown us two faces of the passionate lover. The one sacrificing himself for another; the other, willing the sacrifice of all of humanity for his love. If there were ever any questions about the easy acceptance of romantic love by Rousseau, they should be put to rest. One might even argue that the general intent of *The New Heloise* is to bridle romantic love with an ethic, but with an ethic suitable and acceptable to itself.

Claire understands the extremes of Saint-Preux's anger and despair; she writes to compliment him on choosing the prudent course of virtue, as opposed to the course of love. She writes: "you have a hundred times proved to us that there is no road to happiness more sure than that of virtue." She follows by implying that love is a bad gamble: "If one succeeds, the happiness is purer, sounder, and sweeter because of virtue; if one fails, virtue alone can be the compensation." (III,IV,314) The logic of Claire's reasoning seems tenuous, even bogus; virtue is always--win or lose--the winner over the course of love. What would the practical Claire say that love has to offer, even as an outside bet? Probably nothing, for, as we remember, she chooses friendship over love. She is one character whose character is unchanging.

From the death of Madame d'Etange until the marriage of Julie to Wolmar, the exchanges of letters possess the
character of desperation. Blaming Saint-Preux for her mother's death, Julie venomously and dramatically announces that death to Saint-Preux, as well as the end of their love: "It is done: the empire of love is extinguished in a soul given over to despair." (III,V,316) And she bids him "Adieu." As we shall see, through to the end of the story, the empire of love never abandons Julie. The irony of her statement of the death of love is total.

Now in a passionate rage, Saint-Preux writes Claire of his loss of Julie, but he is convinced that she cannot be happy without him.

Love the conquering was the misfortune of her life; love conquered will only give her more suffering. She will pass her days in sorrow, tormented at the same time by empty regrets and empty desires, unable ever to satisfy either love or virtue. (III,VI,318)

Here we have the image of disunified man, mentioned in Chapter I of this study: "Always in contradiction with himself, always floating between his inclination and his duties, he will never be either man or citizen. . . . He will be nothing." (Emile I 40) Rousseau more than intimates here that what he has been talking about all along in this novel is not only love and virtue, but nature and society, man and citizen. From Claire's Letter IV we learned that love and virtue were two different roads to happiness; but might we not ask if happiness is less generic and rather a pole of the dichotomy: happiness-duty. That is what Kant
would like to do with Rousseau: that is, make happiness a means to a way of life. I think, rather, that for Rousseau happiness is the end of man, though the morphology of happiness might vary and require mostly psychic unity only.

To continue with the letter. Saint-Preux gives Julie over to Claire--that is, to "holy friendship." (318) And he hopes that with Claire Julie will be able to recover "her original virtues, her original happiness." (318) It is as if leaving the state of first love is equivalent to leaving a sort of state of nature. He is hoping, in effect, that she regain some form of psychic unity or innocence, taken from her not so much by love as by the failure of love. He wishes for her to be something and not nothing. He wishes her to return to her metaphorical state of nature, in which she was authentically and wholly virtuous.

Claire responds in reconciliation and love. She thanks him for teaching Julie and her to think, as they taught him to feel. She assures him that Julie and he were not responsible for Madame d'Etange's death. Then Claire, as an outsider to love, surmises from what Julie and he have told her that

If love is a desire which is enflamed by obstacles, as you were still saying, it is not good that it be content; it is better that it last and be unhappy than that it extinguish itself in the bosom of pleasure. Your (love) fire, I swear, has stood the test of possession, of time, of absence and of sufferings of all kind; it has conquered all obstacles except for the most powerful of all, which is to no longer
have anything to vanquish, and to nourish itself solely from itself. The universe has never seen a passion stand up to that test; what right did you have to hope that yours would? (III, VII, 320)

Claire's observations are within the strict anatomy of the passion myth. As with Tristan and Iseult, separation and pain represent not the death but the life—even the resurrection—of Julie's and Saint-Preux's love. All this seems quite fatalistic, and one is compelled to ask if there might not be the possibility of a happy issue to such a passion. Strictly speaking, no, but there is the possibility of indefinitely sustaining the love. It is then as if cruel fate were the only salvation of the passion. But could one not ritualize the sustenance of the passion, as in the courtly love tradition? In any case, the above observations by Claire on the "fires of love" do much to substantiate de Rougement's contention that Rousseau was writing within the tradition of the ancient passion myth.

After receiving a note from Julie and her father, Saint-Preux, of course much against his will, sends a brief sentence back to the Baron, by which he restores to Julie her freedom. Another letter from Julie immediately follows: She was forced to ask for her freedom; she still loves him; and she bids him another last adieu. So, the obstacle—the Baron—has done his work for the fires of love. If not happiness, then the chance of happiness is sustained.
The storyline develops with Julie contracting smallpox and Saint-Preux, alerted by one of her letters, travelling from Paris to see her, which he does when Julie, on her sickbed, is only semi-conscious. Claire finally admits to Julie that her dream of seeing her lover at her bedside was, in fact, reality. The illness and the long road of obstacles to their love turn Julie to a course of submissive resolution.

In Letter XV, Julie, surrendering to love, confesses to being "tired of serving a chimerical virtue at the expense of justice." (334) She resigns herself and her love to him forever, for he has the "legitimate" claim to her affections. And that claim is of nature: "Nature, ah sweet nature, resume all your rights! I abjure the barbarous virtues which annihilate them." (335) She goes on to oppose nature to reason which has often misled her. But Julie is in the process of giving all and, therefore, in a sense, nothing. "[L]et not the rights of blood and friendship be extinguished by those of love." (335) The dichotomy of nature-society, passion-virtue, love-blood, has been extended into a triad: love-blood-friendship. It seems that friendship (with Claire) represents what is often called partial association, a surrogate for actual political and civic association. So, nature has been divided into love and blood.
When all is said and done, Julie refuses to choose between the demands of the various orders of life. She will love her lover forever; and she will not abandon her father or her dear cousin. This is perhaps Julie’s attempt to preserve her psychic unity, her very identity. She is fighting the harsh realities of life with the acceptance, resignation, and all-encompassing embrace of a buddhistic quietism.

Duty, honor, virtue, all that no longer speaks to me; but yet I am not a monster; I am weak and not denatured. My decision is made; I do not want to sadden any of those I love. Let a father, slave to his word and jealous of an empty title, dispose of my hand as he has promised; let love alone dispose of my heart; let my tears not cease to flow into the bosom of a tender friend. Let me be vile and unhappy; but let all who are dear to me be happy and content if it is possible. The three of you constitute my only existence, and may your happiness make me forget my misery and my despair. (335)

Julie is pretending to live life on her and not life’s terms, for her course is impracticable, lacking reality, and even benevolently nihilistic. In effect, Julie is saying that, by rights, she should not have to choose between lover, father, and friend. Therefore, she will not choose! She is here a utopian, for the utopian does not seek, in strict terms, what is impossible, but rather what could be, if only .... Her way of dealing with the de facto impossible is to do the impossible.

And what is Saint-Preux’s reply to this strange letter from Julie? He regards her profession of love as a partial
victory, but knows that Julie's utopian resolution could never satisfy him. He admits that remaining to their relationship is only love (and sorrow), but that would be enough for him if only Julie would be realistic.

Alas, a heart less pure would not have led you so astray! Yes, it is the integrity of yours which causes us to be lost; the upright feelings of which it is full have chased out wisdom. You wanted to reconcile filial tenderness with indomitable love; in giving yourself over at the same time to all your propensities, you confuse them instead of harmonizing them and you become guilty because of virtues. . . . you deserve esteem because of your faults. (III,XVI,336)

Later in the same letter, he is more succinct, if still enigmatic, about what would be the nature of their fulfilled love: "Well then, we shall be guilty, but we shall not be evil; we shall be guilty, but we shall always love virtue." (338)

There is much to discuss in this letter, for it not only adumbrates a paradoxical ethic of love, it also--by omission--draws attention to friendship as one of the central propensities of human life. First, the latter point: Julie had written Saint-Preux that she was resigned to sharing her life as best she knew how between lover, father (and his choice of husband for her), and friend. When writing of her "penchants" in his response to Julie, Saint-Preux mentions only blood and love. Apparently, he does not see the friend Claire as a threat. But should he not see friendship as a threat or at least as an alternative
to passionate love? (Remember Claire's announcement to M. d'Orbe that she would always love Julie more than him.)

This neglect of friendship represents a portent of things to come. It is friendship that constitutes the partial association—the closest association, except for that of the farm hands at Clarens, to the purely political that we have any sustained contact with throughout the novel.

One might say that this lover is so caught up in his love that he can entertain only the intense demands of nature: blood or erotic love. Julie, on the other hand, underwent a catharsis, caused by the diverse and irrepressible demands being made on her heart and soul. In a very meaningful sense, the strongest of the two was the first to "fall." And her collapse made her existentially aware of the necessity of respecting all the propensities: love, blood, friendship. Julie is preparing for her entry into society.

If Julie was utopian in her resignation, Saint-Preux was idealistic. Though his love was more than an idea, its fulfillment was not—not as long as the indomitable father was there to object or, if necessary, to kill him. Saint-Preux wants them to live out the myth in the most dramatic way: dying together on some metaphorical island. He is resolutely—and will remain so throughout—apolitical. He remains vertically oriented, whereas Julie, in effect, accepts an equality among the propensities.
A brief note from Claire, or rather from the now Madame d'Orbe, informs Saint-Preux that "Your lover is no longer, but I have recovered my friend. . . . Julie is married. . . . Now is the time when I shall learn if . . . your heart is sensitive to a pure and disinterested friendship." (III, XVII, 339) The importance of friendship then becomes, not as an alternative to love, but as a substitute for it. Friendship, even during the early days of their love and happiness, represents a sublimation of love, whereas marriage, according to the passion myth, is its death, its complete resolution.

One of the most important letters of the novel follows this note from Claire. Letter XVIII (25 pages) of Part III is from Julie and is described by the Pleiade editors (340, n. 1) as being composed of three large parts: 1) A resume and examination of their past together; 2) A moral meditation containing a description of her marriage and conversion, followed by a religious meditation and a prayer; and 3) Reflections on the necessity of conjugal fidelity and the evils of adultery, followed by some personal considerations.

I would go further and say that this letter, among what the Pleiade editors propose, is a document of allusions
which tell us much about the general nature of the *Julie; ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*.

With the general outline of the letter in mind, let us examine segments of interest to the topics of this study:

1) Julie tells Saint-Preux how it came to pass that she consented to marry Wolmar. At one point, "the wailing voice of nature [the loss of her mother due, as Julie thought, to her discovered love affair] muffled the murmurs of love." She was resolved to renounce Saint-Preux; but she regained her strength, so to speak, and, for the first time in her life, stood up to her father in opposing the marriage. Her father fell, crying, to his knees. At her feet, he pleads. We learn that between the time the Baron had promised his daughter to Wolmar and the present time, Wolmar, because of a revolution in his homeland, has lost almost everything. If the Baron refused him Julie now, it would appear that it was because Wolmar was now penniless. It is now not only a question of her duty but of his honor: "honor has spoken, and, coming from the blood that you do,

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8Speaking in the most general terms, Julie, in this letter, embraces marriage to Wolmar and requires that her former lover sublimate his passion for her into a dear friendship; moreover, Julie takes the high ground, a religious pose, and speaks with utter confidence and assurance. It is only natural to compare this self-assurance with Julie's deathbed admission that she was never able to overcome her love for Saint-Preux. The importance of this comparison is not in what it says about Julie (We know that she is an exceptional person!), but in what it says about the religious faith that she embraced simultaneously with her liberation from her passion.
It is always [honor] which decides." (350) Julie has to write asking that Saint-Preux release her from any promises, for, even according to the Baron, such promises are a matter of honor. Julie falls ill; later Saint-Preux visits her, and, when Julie realizes that his visit was not a dream and that Saint-Preux had in fact inoculated himself of smallpox by kissing her hand, her love for him revives. As she writes,

I saw that I had to love in spite of myself; I felt that I had to be guilty; that I was able to resist neither my father nor my lover, and that I would never reconcile the rights of love and those of blood except at the expense of integrity [honnetete]. (351)

So now we see that it was radical acts of solicitude by both her father and her lover that led her to the sort of paralysis that we saw in Letter XV. Strictly speaking, the tension was created by her father's "honor" and by her lover's risking his life because of love for her. She felt responsible for both and therefore decided to accommodate both in the only way she saw possible. She was aware that being all things to all people would not secure happiness for her, but she had hoped that it would assist her loved ones. (It is ironic to note that passionate love has no ceremonial closure; and that might be why Julie chose to marry Wolmar and not merely stay with Saint-Preux.)

2) The central portion of this central letter contains the account of Julie's marriage and religious conversion.

Having arrived at the Church, I felt on entering a sort of emotion that I had never experienced. .
A sudden fright made me shiver. I felt my anxiety increase during the ceremony. I believed I saw the instrument of providence and heard the voice of God in the minister. Everything made upon me such an impression that I believed I felt internally an unexpected upheaval [revolution]. All of a sudden an unknown power seemed to correct the disorder of my affections and reestablish them according to the law of duty and of nature. (353-54)

When asked if she would promise obedience and fidelity, she writes to her former lover that her mouth and her heart promised it; and "I will hold to it until death." (354) So, it took a religious conversion to reconcile duty and nature, irreconcilable on a naturalistic plane.

As far as their relationship is concerned, Julie claims that she feels for Saint-Preux as much, if not more, love than before, but she can feel that love now without blushing. But it is her conversion that she seems more concerned with: "I believed I felt myself being reborn; I believed I was beginning another life. . . . Sweet and consoling virtue, I rebegin life for you. . . . Ah, I have learned too well what it cost to lose you to abandon you a second time!" (355) It took a miracle of sorts but it seems Julie has returned to her former state of virtue—shall we say, innocence or nature. Has Julie in fact "recovered her former virtues, her former happiness," as Saint-Preux wished for her (III,VI), or is this a quasi-recovery—a further removal in fact from her original state?
We are approaching what is for Rousseau a fundamental political and human question: To what extent can a person (or humankind) regain lost innocence, and how? And, if regained, how secure is it? In the Letter XVIII Rousseau offers some indications of what is happening to Julie.

3) The religious nature of this letter cannot be overemphasized, even though this analysis abstracts from it exceedingly and gives undue weight to its small philosophical content. It is unclear what Julie means by her "interior principle"—whether its source is purely religious or whether it is philosophical. She says that, before her conversion, she was devout at Church and a philosopher at home. So she has found a unifying principle of both thought and action. (357) Reminiscent of much earlier Platonic letters, Julie writes: "Only if the character and love of the beautiful be imprinted by nature in the depths of my soul, I shall have my rule as long as it [the beautiful] is not disfigured." Her guide is the beautiful. But how do we preserve the integrity of the beautiful in a world of changing tastes and prejudices, Julie asks? Her answer is facile: "Everything that you cannot separate from the idea of this [infinite] essence is God; all the rest is the work of men." (358)

In fact, Julie exhorts Saint-Preux to abandon philosophy—empty sophisms of a reason that relies only on itself. The nature of the attacks on philosophy make it
clear that she is attacking a way of life, not just the reliance on an academic reason. The lowering of philosophy is the obverse of the elevation of marriage (and religion, though not a strictly orthodox religion). In attacking adultery, Julie writes that the adulterer, among other sins, "violates the public and sacred faith of marriage without which nothing in the legitimate order of human affairs can subsist." (360) Julie, not unlike Rousseau after his experience on the road to Vincennes, seems to be taking responsibility for the welfare of the human species. If this is so—if Julie's conversion is meant to be compared with Rousseau's—some textual support should be forthcoming; and it is. The last three pages of this letter contain the allusions mentioned at the head of this analysis. The first is to Heloise and Abelard; the second, to On the Social Contract; and the last, to Emile.

Before the allusion to Heloise and Abelard, Julie has some blunt words for Saint-Preux:

A sentiment [that is, the love they had for each other] so perfect must not perish of itself; it was worthy only to be immolated to virtue...

.................................................................
I shall tell you more. Everything has changed between us; it is absolutely necessary that your heart change. (363)

Then, Julie quotes his own words to him. They are from Part I, Letter XXIV, before the love affair had progressed to intimacy. Saint-Preux was commenting on the Letters of Heloise and Abelard and describing Abelard as "a miserable
creature" and a hypocrite. The passage quoted emphasizes that love must maintain its integrity and especially honor. If not, love becomes a mere "shameful business." And then Julie seems to quote her own words, also from Part I, when she writes: "Yes, my good and worthy friend, in order for us to love each other forever we must renounce each other. Let's forget all the rest and be the lover of my soul. This idea is so sweet that it offers consolation for everything." (364) This echoes from the time when Julie wanted a lover for her soul, but not for her body.

It seems clear that Julie has become the "new Heloise"—not in the least because she, and not her lover, is the leader into this new and virtuous life. She even speaks of having a rule (une regle) which, in context, one might be justified in translating as "a rule of an order."

I believe I have a surer rule . . . I listen in secret to my conscience . . . and never does it mislead a soul who consults it sincerely. . . . How did this fortunate change come about? I am unaware of it (Je l'ignore.) (364)

So Julie has developed or has been given an infallible conscience. How did this happen? She is ignorant of that. This begins to sound surprisingly like the first paragraph of Chapter One of On the Social Contract:

Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains. One who believes himself the master of others is nonetheless a greater slave than they.

There are only three references to Abelard in the novel, and this one is the most extensive and substantive.
How did this change occur? I do not know (Je l'ignore). What can make it legitimate? I believe I can answer this question.

What Julie does know about her change from a bad to a good conscience is that "I keenly desired it. God alone did the rest." She continues, however, by speaking in what might just as well be psychological categories.

I would think that a soul once corrupted would be so always, and would never return to the well-being of itself; unless some sudden upheaval [revolution], some brusque change of fortune and situation suddenly changed its relations, and by means of a violent shock assisted it in recovering a good disposition. All its habits being broken and all its passion modified, in that general confusion one regains sometimes his primitive character and becomes like a new being recently out of the hands of nature. And the memory of his preceding baseness can serve as a preservative against falling again. (364)

It was her marriage, Julie says, that made her experience something similar. She encourages Saint-Preux to purge by Christian morals the lessons of philosophy, for she is convinced that "there is no happiness without virtue." She confesses that she could never be happy if he were not happy. He has lost a "tender lover" but has gained a "faithful friend."

A third allusion: The first sentence of Emile reads as follows: "Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of

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10This passage is reminiscent of conversations I have had with psychiatrists and psychiatric patients regarding the purgative and rejuvenating effects of mental breakdowns.
But, as Rousseau goes on to say in so many words, a deliberately half-deformed creature is better than if "a man were abandoned to himself in the midst of other men from birth." And the *Emile* is meant to make one "like a new being recently out of the hands of nature." (364)

What we are stalking is the relationship between the *Julie* and *On the Social Contract* and *Emile*, not to mention the *Letter of Heloise and Abelard*. Surely, in Letter XVIII, Julie has become the bride of Christ, but without sacrificing the married life; and that is partially what makes her the "new Heloise." This Letter XVIII also teaches us that society is almost tantamount to marriage and religion. In a sense, Julie left the state of love—a sort of state of nature—in order to consciously accept religious and social principles as a way of life. She did on her own what the original Heloise did only reluctantly, though of a sort of necessity.

Julie attributes to God what Rousseau reserves to his *On the Social Contract*—that is, making a legitimate society out of what was a general state of slavery. And Julie seems to attribute to fortuitous psychic forces and upheavals what Rousseau would attribute to his *Emile*—that is, the return to a sort of quasi-wholeness of the individual human being. Can the *Julie*, in fact, not be seen as a sort of serendipitous *Emile* for late adolescent girls already gone wrong in love? Whatever the case, falling out of passionate
love does seem to be, for Rousseau, a fortuitous event, not totally manipulatable.

The entire discussion of Letter XVIII relates to our central issue of happiness, for the former relation of love to happiness has been broken in favor of the relation of virtue to happiness. And it is a virtue intimately bound to religion and societal norms. At this point suffice it to say that as the story progresses, the extremes of love and society as bases of happiness will be mitigated into the elevation of friendship as the basis of happiness and even of society. In fact, friendship has already become, among other things, the sublimation of love. It will eventually resemble courtly love, as a visionary re-creation of Julie.

These conclusions are reinforced by a letter from Julie, in reply to a letter by Saint-Preux urging her not to divulge to Wolmar the story of their love affair. Julie claims that the only thing lacking to her happiness is his happiness. She then describes her husband as a man of ultimate rationality—never gay and never sad; he is everything Saint-Preux is not—in fact, in his god-like detachment, he is the very opposite of passionate love itself.

Julie has borrowed, as if from him, a new temperament if not a new character. As she writes: "That which has long misled me and which perhaps still misleads you is the idea that love is necessary to form a happy marriage."
In fact, she says that love, being unstable, is little suited to marriage and its many duties. Marriage is a question of fulfilling the duties of civil society; the only thing lovers can do is love one another. But what does Julie now think of love in itself, outside of marriage? It is, she says, the ardor itself of love which consumes it; it wears out with youth; it passes with beauty and age; early or late, lovers cease to adore each other. Julie seems to have truly fallen out of love with love. She even has the heart to tell Saint-Preux that even if she felt for him as she did before and with the knowledge she has now, she would choose Wolmar over him!

She seems to have chosen what she, under the tutelage of her husband, now views as virtue and happiness, as opposed to love and eventual unhappiness. And, since Saint-Preux will not agree that she tell Wolmar of their affair, Julie sees fit to discontinue all "commerce" between them.

In her farewell, Julie distinguishes between a happiness brought by fortune and one brought by God, as well as between true and false virtue.

Adieu, my dear and good friend; if I believed that fortune were able to make us happy (heureux), I would say to you: run toward fortune; but perhaps you are right to disdain it with enough treasures to do without it. I prefer to tell you: run toward felicity, it is the fortune of the wise; we have always felt that there was none without virtue; but be on guard that this word virtue, too abstract, not have more bang than solidity, and that it not be a
word to parade around, which serves more to dazzle others than to content us ourselves. (376)

Soon afterwards, she bids him a last farewell. They will not exchange letters again until Part VI of the novel.

The next letter is a justification of suicide, written by Saint-Preux to Lord Bomston. There are some curious conclusions that he draws from both philosophy and religion, but suffice it to put down the fundamental proposition on which he bases his argument: "Seek your good and avoid your bad in that which does no offense to others." (III,XXI,378) Bomston writes back with his list of arguments, the first being: Do you not believe that the goal of human life has a moral object and that we must make an effort to attain that objective? A disappointment in love is not grounds to end a life--and besides, on your own grounds, you cannot leave, for you would be harming your friends. But Lord Bomston does allow suicide in two instances: explicitly, in cases of extreme physical disability; and, implicitly, in order to save one's country. It is clear from these letters that Bomston is the political being and that Saint-Preux remains radically private.

When Julie reaches hopelessness, she turns to civic virtue, religion, and marriage. When Saint-Preux reaches hopelessness, he turns to a meditation on suicide. Julie's conversion kills romantic love just as surely, it seems, as Saint-Preux's suicide would. Both characters are still
consciously pursuing happiness. It is evident in Julie's case; and a study of some of Saint-Preux's arguments would point toward his continued preoccupation with happiness. Simply put, he argues that he will be happier in the next life than he is in his unbearable misery in this life.

Saint-Preux's immediate fate is decided when he accepts an offer arranged by Bomston: to undertake a three-year (hopefully healing) tour of the world on an English warship. He will hire on as engineer of landing forces, his specialty of study. So, he writes to Claire (also addressing Julie as Claire's friend), informing them of his sea voyage and hoping that on the high seas he will be able to rediscover the calm which forsakes his troubled heart.

This second segment of the novel (Parts II and III) ends with the finalization of the physical or sexual separation of Julie and Saint-Preux. Julie's marriage is irrevocable; and adultery is unthinkable for both of them. They are finally in that new world toward which they have been moving in spite of themselves--the world of spiritual love, surely a world of imagination and emotional ingenuity.
CHAPTER 6
THE LETTERS OF REUNION

Part IV

The prelude to Saint-Preux's return—after a six-year absence—is an exchange of letters between Julie and Claire. Julie's letter is nostalgic: "Life flows by, the fleeting happiness that it offers is between our hands, and we neglect to enjoy it." (IV, I, 398) She writes to Claire of their friendship, and how the passage of time has concentrated their feelings for each other. One dies little by little, "But a sensitive heart defends itself with all its force against this anticipated death." (399) She says that the thought of the past "humiliates me so that I lose courage," but she encourages herself with the honor that she has gained from six years of marriage. She feels herself cured of those old wounds and dares to believe herself virtuous. She cries, but assures Claire that they are tears of pity, regret, and repentance—"love is no longer a part of them; love is nothing to me now." (403) (Her life with Wolmar is not strictly speaking one of love.)

Without calling Saint-Preux by name, she confides to Claire that she thinks he is probably dead. And almost too sympathetically for a married woman, she writes as if in a sigh: "Ah my dear! What a soul he had! . . . how he could love!" (403) Julie pleads with Claire, now a widow with one female child, to come live with her at Clarens. And Julie
expounds the first statement of what might be called the
cult of friendship: "Do you not know that the communion of
hearts imparts to sadness something indefinably sweet and
affecting which contentment does not have?" (404) She goes
on to say that friendship is a solace and consolation for
one's misery and pain. Writing Claire that, without her,
she is nothing, Julie asks that she be allowed to await the
next life in the midst of "innocence and friendship." (405)

It seems clear that Julie, though contented in her
marriage with Wolmar, is not, or does not feel herself
happy. Wolmar is her superior, not her friend per se, and
she needs a friend in order to be happy. Whether or not she
still feels that love could make her happy, she dare not
even mention.

Claire responds that 1) Saint-Preux is probably alive,
for he was seen two months ago off the Canary Islands, and
2) she plans to move to Clarens, Julie's estate, after the
summer. So they can both share the hope of "an eternal
reunion."

It is at this point that a letter arrives to Claire
from Saint-Preux. He returns the well-travelled and tested
sailor. "Am I returning freer and wiser than I left? I
dare believe it and can not affirm it." (IV,III,415) He
returns as a friend, conquered by Julie's virtue. But he is
aware of the dangers of the blurring of the past and the
present. He asks for permission to see Julie so that he will, in effect, know himself.

Wolmar, now advised of the former love affair between Julie and Saint-Preux, invites Saint-Preux to his house, where "innocence and peace" prevail. Saint-Preux is assured that he will find friendship, if his heart is ready for it. But there is more, as an accompanying letter from Claire explains: Not only does Wolmar offer his friendship, he intends to "cure" Saint-Preux (of his passion), for none of them can be perfectly happy before that occurs. Thus, Saint-Preux will enter an environment of peace and order, where the most intense relationships are those of friendship and maternal affection (Julie is the mother of two young sons).

After their first meeting, Saint-Preux writes ecstatically to Lord Bomston: "I have seen her, my Lord! My eyes have seen her! . . . She showed joy at seeing me; she called me her friend, her dear friend." (IV,VI,418) After having time to recover himself and observe Julie, he finds that "In place of that suffering modesty which formerly made her lower her eyes incessantly, one sees the security of virtue ally itself in her chaste look to sweetness and sensitivity . . . a freer air and franker manners have succeeded that constrained behavior mixed with tenderness and shame." (421-22) Then he meets Julie's two children--"more beautiful than the day" and already showing
resemblances to their mother. "A thousand cruel and delightful memories divided my heart." He realizes that it is a mother of a family to whom he is speaking. From that moment of realization, Saint-Preux writes that he knew that they were no longer the same and he began to feel better about himself.

Thus, it is established that both Saint-Preux and Julie still feel something for each other, but both feel that it is something different from their former and passionate love. But Claire's statement that Wolmar intended to "cure" Saint-Preux more than implies that at least Wolmar somehow claims to know that Saint-Preux is still lovesick. Be that as it may, what might this cure consist of? Obviously, it will not be an attempt to have Saint-Preux forget or disfavor Julie. The cure can only be one thing: He must come to know the joys of friendship; he must transform himself from lover to friend. And what will be the nature of this cure? It is, in fact, given voice in Letter VI from Saint-Preux to Lord Bomston.

The situation surrounding the enunciation of Wolmar's first principle of morals is a conversation between Julie and Saint-Preux. At Julie's request, he spoke of Bomston, which led him to speak of his, Saint-Preux's, sufferings and Bomston's assistance; this led Julie to enter into her "justification" for all she had done. At that moment, Wolmar returned to the conversation. Julie continued
speaking as before. Wolmar discerned Saint-Preux's astonishment.

You have just seen, says Wolmar, an example of openness which rules here. If you sincerely want to be virtuous, learn to imitate it: That is the only request and the only lesson that I have to give you. The first step toward vice is to shroud innocent actions in mystery, and whoever likes to hide themselves sooner or later has reason to hide themselves. A single moral precept can take the place of all others; it is this: Never do or say anything that you do not want the whole world to see and hear. (424)

Clasping Julie's and Saint-Preux's hands together, Wolmar announces "Our friendship now begins." To consecrate this bond, Wolmar instructs Saint-Preux to "Embrace your sister and friend." He urges them to be familiar with each other, "But act alone as if I were present, or before me as if I were not." (424)

Wolmar has, in effect, given Saint-Preux a conscience, for as Saint-Preux confides to Lord Bomston: "I began to understand with what sort of man I was dealing, and I resolved to keep my heart always in a state to be seen by him." (425) He comments tellingly that he was finally enjoying the pleasure of Julie's presence, without uneasiness, fear, or anything to disturb it. He is finding a new "innocence"—without suffering, without the obstacles to fulfilled passion. For now, he is outside the myth. He puts himself to bed at the end of this day of reunion,
vowing to leave the Wolmar house if he ever becomes too fond of it.

It is clear that our story has entered a new realm, after that six-year hiatus. The baldest statement of the change is this: Whereas love had reigned, now friendship does. And we have been given some precise indications of how to comprehend friendship as opposed to love. We might ask the question thus: How is friendship most unlike love? The most general answer: Love is private; friendship is public. Or to put the issue in terms of Letter VI: Love is secretive; friendship is open. All that lovers can do is love one another. Their relationship thrives on secrecy. (Of course, we continue to speak of romantic love.) Friendship, as Aristotle put it, is the basis of society. A friendship of two is always likely to network into thousands of relationships, even if not of the same depth and intensity. Question: Does all this make marriage but one friendship among others? And what is the relationship between openness/friendship and happiness? And, more to the point of Wolmar's cure, does openness cause the sting of love/secrecy to go away? One thing is clear: If Julie and Saint-Preux are to find happiness, between themselves or absolutely, they must find it in openness/friendship as opposed to secrecy/love. That, simply, is the challenge of the "cure."
Secrecy, as Wolmar suggests, leads to distrust; it represents a sort of loss of innocence, as does its accompanying passionate love. Openness leads to trust and to a sort of innocence regained. In even broader terms, love is, for Rousseau, a loss of innocence, for, in its absolute privacy, it says "This is mine!" It is the beginning of the comparison of oneself with others; it is the beginning of amour-propre. In a state of openness, one regains one's original innocence—ironically, one's interior as opposed to external life. It is living outside the self—in the loved one—that alienates the self. But, ultimately, passionate love causes alienation only because its fulfillment is deadly to itself.

But to return to the more practical matter of just how the couple (Julie and Saint-Preux) is to act. Wolmar advised that they should act as if he were there when he was not, and as if he were not when he was there. This seems like a conundrum, for if he is there and they act as if he is not there, this is tantamount to being alone and acting as if he were there. Moreover, he says that when he is there he will tell them what he thinks. Therefore, Wolmar will always be there as a conscience or, as we might say today, as an alter-ego.¹ But of essential importance is

that the goal of this moral principle of openness is virtue, and, we can surmise, the ultimate goal is still happiness (but Wolmar has not explicitly expressed that conclusion). Whatever, Wolmar is in the process of laying down the law!

Following the train of the story, we can say that, as lovers, Julie and Saint-Preux attempted to follow love and nature to happiness; as friends, they will be forced to follow virtue and moral principle.

The subsequent letter from Julie to Claire is of interest for several of Julie's comments: 1) She loves Saint-Preux as tenderly as ever, without loving him in the same way; 2) She finds him to be a matured man of the world, more assured and less prone to general philosophical propositions; and 3) She finds that, next to virtue, Saint-Preux loves her best in the world. But there is a "post scriptum" to the letter in which the theme of censorship is developed. (430)

Julie was resolved to take the precaution, what with Saint-Preux returning, of choosing her husband as her confidant and of writing every letter as if he did not have to see it and showing it to him nonetheless. On the face of it, this self-imposed but virtual censorship seems an application of the principle of openness. But Wolmar rejects the plan for a number of reasons: 1) Marriage is too serious a state to admit of openness in every little matter of the heart, as is the case with "tender
friendship") 2) It is good that a wife have a faithful woman friend whom she may confide in, independent of her husband; 3) It is dangerous to make a law of openness, because it could become an undue restriction, making confidences less sweet, because too extended; 4) Some secrets are best shared between two people at a time, even though three should know them; 5) The letters risk being eventually written to Wolmar and not to Julie's friend, such that Julie will be at ease with neither one nor the other; and 6) If Julie does not show her letters to Wolmar, she is more likely to speak kindly of him in them.

A central objection that Wolmar makes to Julie's proposal of censorship is that making openness into a law is unadvisable—primarily, because it would take a certain sweetness out of life. For the proposal would extend the number of people involved in a confidence. As a legislator, Wolmar seems sensitive to privacy, at least insofar as he allows a sort of semi-privacy within the circle of friendships. So Wolmar bends his moral law. And not surprisingly, for it is his own personal moral authority on which Wolmar depends, more than on any inflexible moral principle.

Julie's letter-writing proposal also shows us how thoroughly even Julie places herself in Wolmar's guiding hands. In fact, it tells us that Julie, as well as Saint-Preux, sees herself as in need of a cure. For she admits to
the possibility of needing to be censored in what she writes even to her best friend. In a sense, Wolmar is mentor to Julie and Saint-Preux, not unlike Rousseau the tutor was to his Emile. The difference, of course, is that our couple grew into adulthood without a mentor and now has to be returned to some sort of state of quasi-innocence, if not of nature.

Thankful for the tranquil life of friendship, as opposed to that of impetuous passions, Saint-Preux describes to Lord Bomston the world of peace and order and innocence of Clarens—where everything is in harmony "with the true end of man." (441) It is as if Rousseau were dusting off his Aristotle in an attempt to circumscribe the person and world of Wolmar. Saint-Preux, in Letter X, attempts to give Bomston an idea, in detail, of a domestic economy which is the felicity of both the Wolmars and of their employees. Much of what is discussed would be called today land and personnel management. Over-riding all the insights into conflict resolution, worker motivation and loyalty, is a benevolent and effective paternalism. (447) One also sees this distrust of explicit laws restraining the behavior of workers, just as we saw in the application of the moral principle of openness. For example,

In order to prevent a dangerous familiarity between the sexes, they are not constrained here by positive laws which would tempt them to break them in secret; but, without appearing to do so, customs (usages) more powerful than authority
itself are established. They are not forbidden to see each other, but things are arranged such that they have neither the opportunity nor the will. This is done by giving them occupations, habits, tastes, pleasures entirely different (one from the other).

At this point, the reader might wonder just how Wolmar would react to his daughter having a love affair. The answer, of course, is that his daughter would never do such a thing. But his wife did have an affair, and in a very real way is still under its spell; in effect, Wolmar’s actions toward Julie and Saint-Preux are lessons in how to manage “dangerous familiarity between the sexes.”

Saint-Preux points out a difference between the purely political and purely domestic economy when he writes,

In the Republic, citizens are restrained by manners, principles, virtue: but how to contain domestics, mercenaries, other than by constraint? The whole art of the master is to hide this constraint under the veil of pleasure and of interest, such that they think they want everything they are obliged to do. (453)

One might ask, without going beyond the confines of the text, whether Wolmar’s cure of Saint-Preux (and Julie) is a virtue of the citizen or a quasi-virtue of the servant? It seems that with the principle of openness Wolmar has given the situation a chance to be worked through in an authentic manner. That is, he has given Saint-Preux and Julie the chance of becoming (or remaining) full citizens of Clarens. And such a citizenship entails a certain happiness. On the
other hand, openness is also a principle to be upheld by the servants; as Saint-Preux writes,

[I] think . . . that whenever there is mixing of the sexes every public entertainment becomes innocent simply by being public, whereas the most praiseworthy business is suspect in private (tete-a-tete). (456)

It remains unclear just what difference there is between governance of one's family and of one's city. But there is one error which pertains to both domestic and civil economy:

It is a big mistake in domestic economy as well as in civil [economy] to want to fight a vice with another one or make between them a sort of equilibrium, as if that which sapped the foundations of order were able ever to serve to establish it! All one does by this bad policing is to reunite all the unwanted things. Vices tolerated in a home do not rule there alone; let one take root and a thousand will follow. (461)

But we just saw that the art of the master was to hide constraint of servants under the veil of pleasure and interest. What does this mean for the status of openness as a principle? Not being open with servants must not be a vice, even though covert action looks like one vice trying to correct another.

Summing up his little treatise on the Wolmar estate, Saint-Preux concludes: "Only the order and the rule that multiplies and perpetuates the use of goods can transform pleasure into happiness." (466) And it is evident to him that it is "a happy being" who rules Clarens. In fact, only in such a setting can one, according to Saint-Preux, be
happy or contented: The surest sign of true contentment is a domestic life of retreat. The father of a family is "Alone among all mortals" master of his own felicity, "because he is happy even like God, with nothing more to desire than what he enjoys." (466-67) This master wishes to acquire nothing new, but rather to better possess what he has. And one thing he does is to form or shape those around him. (467-68)

Julie and Saint-Preux are reunited, of course, at Clarens—under the all-seeing eye of Wolmar. Will Wolmar's dealings with them be open (appealing to manners, principles, and virtue), or will they be closed (hiding the motives of pleasure and interest)? This might be another way of asking if we can be tricked into happiness (even by a god-like master). Or if true happiness does not demand a totally open road and a totally open conscience. Whatever, it is somewhat ironic to read Saint-Preux as he writes about the first chore of the master of the house: to allow only honorable people who harbor no secret desire to trouble the order of the house. And how do you find such servants? No, you "make" them, you form and shape those around you! Of course, that—education—is the first political art.

Saint-Preux is a witness to the frank and open nature of the Wolmars' communication with the servants. Since they do not have a different morality from the one they want to give others, they have no need of circumspection in their
speech. They do not "tell all," but they do tell freely all their maxims. (468) But does Wolmar, we might ask, tell his servants that, on principle, he hides what he wants from them under the veil of pleasure and interest? The first principles of governance of Clarens do not, at least on Saint-Preux's telling, seem clear or non-problematic. Saint-Preux tells Bomston that there is much more to describe--how the Wolmars themselves live and raise their children--and that "all that forms a tableau so enchanting that in order to love to contemplate it I need no other motivation than the pleasure I find in it." (470) We are reminded here, incidentally, that pleasure is not necessarily an ignoble motivation.

Saint-Preux writes a second letter to Bomston about life at Clarens; he begins by reaffirming his first most general observation: "One sees nothing in this household which does not join the agreeable to the useful." (IV,XI,470) But useful is not limited to that which brings profit; it consists also of "any simple and innocent amusement which nourishes the liking for seclusion, work, and moderation . . . and . . . a healthy soul, a heart free from the anxiety of the passions." (470) Labor and recreation are equally necessary to man.

But Letter XI is specifically about Julie's Elysium, a wooded area where art has improved on nature, or at least brought the illusion of the beauties of nature to a place
decided upon by man. If the unity of the whole of Clarens is happiness, Elysium is the place to find that principle written large. Only one datum from the Elysium will be considered: the tamed birds that stay in the garden as if there were an actual aviary.

Wolmar explains that, with the help of nature (some birds were there to begin with), it took "patience and time" to perform the "miracle" of taming wild birds. The additional birds were attracted by anticipating all their needs, by never scaring them, by allowing them to make their nests with security, and by not disturbing the little ones. (476) This, of course, could be a description of how Wolmar provides for his domestics and servants. Their peace and security— their happiness—is the immediate concern of the master. No doubt, a paternalism. (477) And neither paternalism nor constructing Elysia are natural in the strict sense; in taming it, a certain violence (480) is done to nature. But that is the only way the less adventurous are able to experience nature, for she hides herself in rugged and secluded places. (480)

Saint-Preux has an objection to Elysium. He says it is a superfluous amusement. That objection is, in effect, given two responses: 1) In so many well-chosen words, Wolmar reminds Saint-Preux that the other woods, outside Elysium, were the site of his and Julie's first kiss. She avoids that wood. Wolmar concludes: "this place was
planted by the hands of virtue." (485) Is that not another way of closely comparing a rather unnatural place like Elysium with the nature of virtue? Is virtue not like tamed wild birds—acted upon by a sort of violence and existing as a sort of illusion? Wolmar's response to Saint-Preux's objection was the right of virtue, or the political response. Julie's response will be quite different. 2) Julie tells Saint-Preux that when she became a mother, her zeal for embellishing Elysium augmented. She thought of one day turning over the care of Elysium to her sons. She thought of her children returning to her those attentions that she bestowed on them, "and the joy of their tender hearts in seeing their mother walk with delight along the shady paths formed by their hands." (485) Then Julie positions herself beyond Wolmar: "In truth, my friend, she said with emotion in her voice, days spent that way have to do with the happiness of the next (literally: other) life, and it is not without reason that in thinking of it I gave in advance the name of Elysium to this place." (485-86) Thus, Julie justifies Elysium for the maternal and religious sentiment it engenders, whereas Wolmar justifies it on moral grounds—that is, it helped keep Julie virtuous and free from thoughts of her former love.

The next day, Saint-Preux entered Elysium alone. He spent two hours there, he says, and he preferred that time to any other time in his life. (The reader might realize
that Elysium has preempted that sublime hour spent with
Julie in Part I.) Saint-Preux reflects on the nature of
revery and finds that

there is in the meditation of honest thoughts a
sort of well-being that wicked people have never
known; it is that of being pleased with oneself.
. . . I do not know another pleasure which could
equal that one. (487)²

A further reflection almost allows him to draw the
collection that those who love solitude are more likely to
be virtuous, because 1) the enjoyment of virtue is wholly
internal and, therefore, most accessible to the solitary;
and 2) non-virtuous activity would be a torment for the
solitary.

Whereas Wolmar spoke of virtue in relation to Elysium
and Julie spoke of happiness, Saint-Preux speaks of "well-
being" and "pleasure." "Being pleased with oneself" becomes
the greatest pleasure that man can experience. Though
pleasure is not happiness, for Aristotle at least, it
accompanies happiness. But Saint-Preux is silent on that
point. Only to the extent that Elysium reminds him of the
once-beloved Julie does that place seem to be more than the
Epicurean garden.

The following Letter XII, though it gives us an
extraordinary profile of the person of Wolmar, is prompted
by Julie's misgivings at being left alone for a week with

²What of the pleasure of knowing you have done good, as
in the Claude Anet/Fanchon episode?
Saint-Preux while her husband makes a trip. She writes to Claire for advice, because she begins to distrust reason and understanding as much as the passions and sentiments.

The letter is mostly a narration of what takes place when Wolmar proposes that he, Julie, and Saint-Preux take a morning walk in the very woods where Julie and Saint-Preux experienced their first kiss. They all sit down, near that fatal spot, and Wolmar, somewhat uneasily, begins to talk. He says that he envisions the possibility of the three of them being able to live together, but he thinks they should know him better. He describes himself as naturally having "a tranquil soul and a cold heart." (490) "My only active principle is a natural liking of order. . . . If I have any ruling passion it is that of observation: I like to read the hearts of men." He says that society is pleasing to him for the sake of contemplation, not for being a part of it. Ideally, he would be a "living eye." (491) Because of his virtual need to observe, humankind may not be dear to him, but it is necessary to him. He went to great pains—even to changing his name and station in life—in order to observe men.

I felt, as you have remarked in one of your Letters, he says to Saint-Preux, that one sees nothing when he is content to look only, that it is necessary to act oneself in order to see men acting, and I made myself an actor in order to be a spectator. (492)
This reference is to the central letter of the collection, Saint-Preux’s Letter XVII of Part II. Wolmar begs a comparison between the attempts of the two young but very different men to study the world. Wolmar gives Saint-Preux’s Letter XVII more focus and importance as a treatise on methodology within The New Héloïse. So let us return to that so important Parisian letter; afterwards, we shall return to the continuation of Wolmar’s story about himself and his understanding of how to "know" the world.

Saint-Preux has been separated from Julie against his will. He is living in Paris. Their love is reciprocal at this point—both implicitly and explicitly. In the turmoil of big-city life, he says that both love and reason give him an aversion to the tumult around him, which he has time to neither feel nor examine. (245) This raises the question of the difficulties of studying the world.

The philosopher is too far from it; the man of the world is too close to it. The one sees too much to be able to reflect, the other too little to judge the total picture. Each object that strikes the philosopher, he considers separately, and being able to discern neither the connections nor the relations with other objects which are beyond his reach, he never sees that [object] in its place and senses neither the reason of it nor its true effects. The man of the world sees everything and has time to think about nothing. The mobility of objects permits him to perceive them only and not to observe them; they wear away together and rapidly, and there remains to him of everything only confusing impressions which resemble chaos. (245-46)
So Rousseau makes the evident but ironic point that the man of the world sees more than the philosopher and that the philosopher—in spite of his superior powers of reflection—cannot fully know the world without a knowledge of its very materiality. But there is another methodological problem—more epistemological in nature: "Nor can one see and meditate alternatively, because the spectacle demands continuous attention, which interrupts reflection." (246) And, if a person wanted to divide his time between the world and solitude, "always disturbed in his retreat and always a stranger in the world," he would be nowhere. Even dividing his entire life into two big parts—the one for seeing, the other for reflecting—is "almost impossible": the reason cannot be turned off and on so easily. (246)

Moreover, it is foolish to try to study the world as a mere spectator who—"useless in business and unwelcome in pleasures"—is never given entre.

One does not see others act, except insofar as one acts oneself; in the school of the world as in that of love, one must begin by practicing what one wants to learn. (emphasis added) (246)

Then Saint-Preux presumably gives his chosen course of action: as an idle foreigner he must assume the manners of the world and he must make himself agreeable, for he is good for nothing else to anyone. And he must fulfill various rules of social etiquette. Having done that, he says that he has gained access, even to the more exclusive "private
suppers." So he studies Parisian society and theater, and what does he find?

In general, there is much discourse and little action on the French stage; perhaps it is that, in effect, the Frenchman speaks more than he acts, or at least that he gives much more value to that which is said than to that which is done. (253)

Because of the Frenchman's valuation of word over deed, Saint-Preux cannot claim to know the hearts of the Parisians. For deeds do not (always) resemble speeches. He sees then only appearances. He is still too much of an outsider to claim to know and pronounce on the Parisians. (The above, of course, assumes that deeds are a more accurate portrayal of a man's soul than are his words.)

His chosen method of studying the world has failed, at least in this instance. But what toll has that method exacted from him as a person? He says he is beginning to feel the intoxicating effects of being of the world. He sometimes forgets who and what he is, for he plays a role each day, to the point of perverting the order of his moral affectations. "I thus see disfigured that divine model that I carry within me, and which served at the same time as object of my desires and as rule for my actions." (255) He is like a small ship on the high seas. (255) Confused and humiliated at how he has fallen from his love of Julie, he tries to return within himself to determine if his former affections are still alive—in short, to see if he still
loves Julie. That is the test of his authenticity and identity. And when he finds Julie still on her "throne of glory," "I believe to have recovered my existence and my life." (256) The privacy of love, as well as its very existence, is threatened by the whirlwind of worldly living, of city life.

But what is Saint-Preux’s life? What is Saint-Preux? Is he a man of the world? Obviously, not. Is he a philosopher? Less obviously, not. He is something apart: he is a lover, for as he himself distinguishes, "in the school of the world as in that of love, one must begin by practicing what one wants to learn." (246) So what is the true object of philosophy, if not the world and not love? Or is philosophy epistemologically possible? If you cannot philosophize about what you are doing and if you cannot know without doing, is philosophy then not an illusion—or at best a wish. Did not Saint-Preux reject philosophy for love and friendship? Perhaps there are sounder (?) reasons for doing so than mere lovesickness. But what, one might ask, is wrong with Saint-Preux’s method of studying the world, as presented in Letter XVII? Does he not at the end of each intoxicating day sober up to find himself and his sacred love intact? He does until Letter XXVI of Part II, when he
becomes the willing victim of Parisian prostitutes! The dangers of studying the world are too great!\(^3\)

But to return to Wolmar's account of himself in Julie's Letter XII of Part IV. Wolmar agrees, then, with Saint-Preux: to know, you must act. Wolmar was also able 1) to intensify his love of order by acting and 2) to acquire a new liking for the good by means of contributing to it through actions. Unlike Saint-Preux, Wolmar was not a mere "idle stranger" in the world. But solitude--even accentuated, it seems, by his good actions--became unbearable to him. It was the vision of an old age without consolation that made him uneasy and sad for the first time in his life. It was then that Julie's father offered Julie's hand in marriage to him. Wolmar describes meeting Julie and experiencing the first and only emotion he had ever had, when Julie embraced her father with such great joy and emotion. He explains to Julie and Saint-Preux that, if that emotion was only slightly felt by him, it was unique, and "feelings (sentiments) only need that force for acting in proportion to those feelings that resist them." (492-93) Wolmar loved, though feebly, he admits, but his soul contained no other passions to counterbalance that sentiment. Thus, his love totally conquered him. He admits

\(^3\)Though Julie forgives Saint-Preux for the prostitute incident, it is immediately after that incident that all turns sour. Mme d'Etange discovers Julie's cache of letters and Julie breaks off the romance.
that, if he had ever had another passion, it would have derailed him.

He takes the opportunity to meditate out loud about the psychology of the philosopher as opposed to that of the man of the world. And he brings the brief discussion to a synthesis or answer—though still ambiguous in its terms.

only fiery souls know how to struggle and conquer. All great efforts, all sublime actions are their doing; cold reason never did anything illustrious, and passions are overcome only in opposing them one against the other. When that [passion] of virtue comes to the fore, it alone dominates and keeps everything in equilibrium; that is how the true wise man is formed, who is no more than another who is sheltered from passions, but who alone knows how to conquer them with themselves, as a pilot sails by adverse winds. (493)

From this account the man of reason might be the philosopher, but surely not the wise man, who is a man of passion—even if the passion of virtue. He is the man who seeks the Good passionately, erotically, to allude to a Platonic metaphor. He is, in short, the lover. Wolmar admits to being neither a man of love, nor a man of the world. In fact, he is living in that in-between world of partial association, whereby he creates his own world with the self-sufficiency of a god.

After a long prelude in which Wolmar confides that 1) he realizes that Julie and Saint-Preux could never forget each other without losing much of their worth, 2) the good can be obtained from sensitive souls with confidence and
sincerity, and 3) they should not fear themselves, he, Wolmar, brings Julie and Saint-Preux to embrace at the spot of their first embrace. This kiss in the bosquet is surely meant to be a dose of the cure, and it appears to work on Julie, for she writes that the kiss was nothing like that first one, that she sadly congratulated herself for having such an altered heart.

But Julie's reaction to news of an upcoming trip of her husband—which would leave her and Saint-Preux alone at Clarens—belie her profession of an altered heart. She asks Claire for advice: Should she stay alone with Saint-Preux? Should she ask her husband to take Saint-Preux with him, and thereby show her weakness? She confesses that she no longer trusts anything that she sees or feels. "I am experiencing with sorrow that the weight of an old failing is a burden that must be carried for life." (499)

More than anything else, Letter XII offers a comparison of the "modi vivendi" of Saint-Preux and Wolmar. Both agree that to know we must act, but Wolmar's action is of a decidedly different order from the passive participation in Parisian society engaged in by the young Saint-Preux. In fact, Saint-Preux seems to think that he can experience the world as he does the passion of love. And, ironically, his pursuit of the world ends in a prostitute's bed. Whereas Wolmar's action on the world for the good (of the world and of himself) ends in marriage to Julie. Saint-Preux is a
lover; he wants to love the world. His mode of seeing and being is loving. Wolmar seems to be a legislator; he wants to order the world. When they speak of action, Saint-Preux and Wolmar are speaking of two distinct activities: the one, a passion or feeling; the other, an action or ordering. The only passion that Wolmar seems to recognize, except for his unique love of Julie, is that of virtue, but exactly what the "passion of virtue" is remains unclear. The wise man possesses it and he seems the ideal synthesis of thought and action, or, rather, of thought, action, and feeling. In the midst of the Enlightenment, Rousseau is bringing to bear the necessity of feelings for the purposes of knowledge, virtue, and happiness. Whereas Wolmar blends thought and action well, it is Saint-Preux who seems closer to a synthesis of thought and feeling.

Wolmar writes a rare letter (XIV) to Claire, in which we experience Wolmar, as the Enlightenment-like personage, in the process of applying not only science, but applying the science of man to the cure of love. What a sacrilege! Yet it is brought to us by him who is ostensibly the most respected and benevolent character of the novel. Let us trace the cold though not ill-intended reasoning of Wolmar as regards the state of the lovers' souls and the course of action required to resolve the love.

Wolmar is not unaware of Claire's rather humorous opinion of his observations of love (508); but he hazards
the following ideas regardless, because he is so sure of himself. First, he contends that he has made a discovery: the couple burns more ardently than ever for each other, and there reigns between them nothing more than an innocent attachment—"they are still lovers and are no more than friends." (508) (If this is true, it is most important, for it heralds the reconciliation of love and friendship; if it proves false, it might be Rousseau's indication that love-and-friendship is a non-synthesizable dichotomy.) Wolmar qualifies his statements by specifying that he is speaking mostly of Saint-Preux, for Julie can only be spoken of through conjecture: "A veil of wisdom and innocence is folded so around her heart that it is no longer possible for the human eye to penetrate to it, not even her own eye." (509) Secondly, as for Saint-Preux, he is not in love with Julie de Wolmar, but with Julie d'Etange. "He loves her in the past tense: that is the true clue to the enigma. Take away his memory and he will no longer have love." (509) He is confusing the times and tenses, and loves only a memory. Thirdly, Wolmar must make a decision in his approach or cure:

I do not know if it is better to succeed in curing him or in disillusioning him. . . . To show him the veritable state of his heart could be to teach him the death of that which he loves; it would give him a dangerous affliction in that the state of sadness is always favorable to love. (510)
Does Wolmar intend to cure or merely disillusion Saint-Preux?

I thought . . . it necessary to make him lose memory of the times that he must forget, by substituting adroitly other ideas for those that are so dear to him. (511)

Wolmar makes it clear that it is Saint-Preux's imagination that must be changed. In place of seeing his mistress, he must see the spouse of an honest man and the mother of his children. "I erase one painting with another, and cover the past with the present." In such a way, he will dissolve the fear in the hearts of the couple, which fears are caused by the fires of the imagination outlasting those of the heart. When he is finished with them, their monsters will disappear at their approach. (511)

Wolmar goes on to say that he thinks he judged right by planning to leave the couple alone together at Clarens. "The more they see each other alone, the more they will easily understand their error by comparing that which they will feel with that which they would have formerly felt in a similar situation." (511)

The question of happiness is boldly addressed by Julie, as told in Letter XV from Saint-Preux to Bomston. Alone with Saint-Preux after Wolmar's departure, Julie confides in Saint-Preux: "My dear friend . . . there is no true happiness on earth." She catalogues her blessings and concludes: "Favored in all things by heaven, by fortune,
and by men, I see everything converging toward my happiness. A secret sorrow, a lone sorrow poisons it, and I am not happy." (513) (We shall discover later that the cause of this unhappiness is the atheism of her husband Wolmar, who is a scientist to the core.)

While Wolmar is away, Julie writes him a brief note 1) suggesting that he visit Claire on the way back in order to hear from her what happened while he was gone, and 2) chiding him for sporting cruelly with his wife's virtue. (Claire obviously told Julie of Wolmar's tactics of the cure—that is, the plans to leave the former couple alone together.) And what happened while Wolmar was away? Did the cure work? Did the love grow dimmer? In brief, Julie was tested in such a way as to test Wolmar's theories about her and Saint-Preux.

Along with three oarsmen and a servant, Julie and Saint-Preux set out on a boat ride on Lake Geneva. There came a storm and by the hardest they reached the far shore and Meillerie, the place where Saint-Preux spent his first separation from Julie (Part I). He and Julie took a walk while at Meillerie, and he confesses to Lord Bomston that his secret motive was to visit the spot with Julie and to show her the memorials of his constant and unfortunate passion. In the most romantic fashion, Rousseau describes this mountainscape which should have been "the refuge of two lovers who alone escaped the confusion of nature." (518) He
showed her her initials engraved in a thousand places and pointed out and memorialized the moments of his love in exile. As Saint-Preux begins to talk of the regret he feels, Julie seems to think he is too close to the edge of the mountain. She pulls him back and asks that they leave.

As the moon rose, they boarded the boat for Clarens. He took her hand and would not have let go of it until death—that only resolution of the passion myth—took hold of him. The process that Saint-Preux seems to undergo on the crossing is realization as opposed to cure or disillusionment—a sharpening of lost love as opposed to a dulling of it by continued contact, as Wolmar, in his rationalistic wisdom, had predicted. The process is one of wide-eyed realization: "It is done, I said to myself; these times, these happy times are no more; they have disappeared forever . . . yet we live, and we are together, and our hearts are still joined." (520-21) To be with her and know her lost to him was more unbearable than being distanced from her. "That was what threw me into fits of furor and rage which agitated me by degrees to the point of despair. . . . I was violently tempted to throw her with myself into the waves." (521) At this point, Saint-Preux lets go of her hand and goes to the bow of the boat.

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Tenderness overcame despair. He began to cry. And, later, when composed, he joined Julie again. He took her hand. He saw that she too had been crying. He said to her: "I see that our hearts have never ceased to hear each other." "It is true, she says in a changed voice; but let this be the last time that they will have spoken in this manner." (521) It seems that Wolmar partially miscalculated. Yes, Julie was able to stave off her and Saint-Preux’s emotions, but the process that the lovers underwent was one of sad realization, even tragedy—surely not that of displacement of memories or a dulling of passions. And the disillusion went beyond the pain of resignation, without resigning itself. Perhaps Wolmar is not the infallible all-seeing eye that he is pretended to be. For one, Julie chides him for his irresponsibility! And one must say that the irresponsible miscalculation is born not only in the pride of philosophy, but in a total lack of understanding and experience of passionate love. Wolmar is a consummate public man; but he has no notion of the private. His principle of total openness is based, it seems, on a lack of appreciation of the private which is circumscribed by romantic love.

Saint-Preux tells Bomston that on that day of the boat ride, he "felt without exception the most lively emotions

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5Philosophy is public in that its knowledge is not essentially esoteric.
[of his life]." And he hopes that they will be the crisis which will restore him totally to himself. He ends with praise of Julie's (and his) virtue and victory over temptation.

Several observations may be made after a reading of Part IV: 1) Friendship is presented as a substitute for love; 2) Though Julie and Saint-Preux have changed somewhat in their affections, they still harbor deep feelings of love for one another; 3) Wolmar, the philosopher par excellence, has ultimate confidence in his ability to "cure" the couple; 4) Questions of epistemology and of the true and, by implication, happy life are raised; and 5) Wolmar's understanding of love, and thus of lovers, is tacitly questioned.

Part V

Saint-Preux concludes Part IV with praise of and thanks to Lord Bomston for his example of virtue and resistance to his mistress--the thought of which sustained Saint-Preux during his long day of temptation with Julie. Part V begins with Bomston's two-pronged reply to his friend: 1) He exhorts Saint-Preux to grow up, that is, to become a man of thought as opposed to one of experience and feeling; and 2) He asks Saint-Preux if he is mature enough to help him, Bomston, with problems centering around his love life. It is curious that Rousseau ends this letter with an Editor's Footnote that questions both Bomston's intelligence and
sensibilities, all of which might urge the reader to ask if Bomston's advice is not untrue, or wrong, or impractical. In brief, Letter I of Part V may be viewed as a continuation of the previous discussions on method—that is, on the proper manner of studying the world and, by implication, dealing with it.

"Leave your infancy, friend, wake up," begins Bomston's strident reply to Saint-Preux. He asks him not to give his entire life over to the long sleep of reason. "My dear, your heart has for a long time imposed on your thoughts. You wanted to philosophize before being capable of it."

Bomston admits that the heart is primary for the truth, for "he who has felt nothing can learn nothing." The sentiments deal with the true relation of things to man, but it is to limit oneself to the first half of this science not to study, beyond that, the relations that things have among themselves, in order to better judge of the relations that they have with us. It is a small thing to know the human passions, if one cannot appraise the objects [of those passions]; and this second study can only be done in the calm of meditation. (523)

Bomston proceeds to elaborate one of the alternative methods presented by Saint-Preux in Part II, Letter XVII (246). Bomston says:

The youth of the wise man is the time of his experiences, his passions being the instruments of them; but after having applied his soul to exterior objects in order to feel them, he turns his soul within himself in order to consider them, to compare them, to know them. (523–24)
To this alternative method of dividing one’s life into halves—one half for seeing/experiencing, the other for reflecting/knowing—Saint Preux offered the following objection (as early as Part II): "But that even is almost impossible; for the reason is not a piece of furniture that one moves around at his whim, and whoever has been able to live ten years without thinking, will never in his life think." (246) And the same may be said for feeling!

Bomston thinks that Saint-Preux, more than anyone else, is at the point in his life when he should begin to study the objects of the passions, for he has exhausted all the feelings and sentiments that could fill up even a long life. In short, he has the raw experience of an old man.

In spite of his many experiences and travels, the first object of his passion—Julie—still rules. Saint-Preux’s wide experiences are a sort of gage of the ultimate worth of Julie. As Bomston argues, "You no longer have anything to feel or to see which merits your attention." (524) The only object left for him to study is himself; the only enjoyment to taste is that of wisdom.

When all is said and done, we seem to be left with three distinct methods for knowing the world: 1) Wolmar chooses to perform good actions; 2) Bomston would have one divide his life into an active and a meditative half; and 3) Saint-Preux chooses to participate (in Paris) as an idle stranger, clearing his mind each night of the affairs of the world. They all seem to be mutually exclusive.
In the past, Julie was the source of Saint-Preux’s virtue, but, Bomston asks, "Will you not go toward the good on your own strength, as Julie has done?" Or will you, he continues, content yourself to make good books instead of performing good actions? Bomston sees weakness in his friend, as regards his feelings for Julie. Hating weakness above all things, Bomston claims that there is no virtue without strength. Bomston seems to suggest that courage is the master virtue. "Do you dare count on yourself having heart without courage?" (525)

Stepping back from this first part of the Bomston letter, we see that he is asking Saint-Preux to attempt to abandon his very identity, which is that of a person who feels the world as opposed to knowing it. (Did Saint-Preux not renounce philosophy for love and friendship?) And, as Saint-Preux wrote in Part II, whereas it is almost impossible to turn one’s reason off and on at will, is it not also just as difficult to turn one’s feelings on and off? Thus, Bomston’s advice might be both wrong and impractical. For Bomston, experience and feeling are no more than means to the objectives which are wisdom and good actions. For Saint-Preux, living a life of "sentiments" or feelings is an end in itself; it is even a life of dependency on the love object, whereas Bomston’s philosopher would be self-sufficient—dependent only on his or her own strength.
Bomston, baldly stated, is a public man or citizen—and thus useful to others; Saint-Preux is a private man and lover and of no use to others, except perhaps the beloved. Bomston is attempting to make a public man of Saint-Preux; he is, if we do not push the implied argument too far, asking Saint-Preux to analyze Julie to death—to analyze erotic love to death. Replacing it will be, of course, friendship. And, though the subject is not explicitly raised in Letter I, it is acted out when Bomston essentially asks Saint-Preux if he is capable of being his friend and of advising him on his, Bomston's, love life. Self-sufficiency and friendship are not mutually exclusive. Bomston must know if Saint-Preux's judgment can be trusted (He knows he has a good heart.). He wants only reason to rule in his affairs. And he gives at least one definition of or role for the friend, while discussing his needs. He says that he is not afraid of the passions which make open war on us, or which allow us consciousness of what we are doing; he fears the illusion of the passions which fool us instead of fighting us. The friendship of a wise man serves the purpose of seeing for us, from another point of view, the objects that we have an interest in knowing well.7

7Bomston is asking Saint-Preux to be his friend, just as Bomston has just furtively been a friend to Saint-Preux: that is, Bomston argued that Julie was a person of strength and self-sufficiency and, thus, we could conclude from Bomston's point of view, not a person of passion or love. In other words, Bomston gave Saint-Preux a different view of
As was mentioned, Rousseau concludes this letter with an Editor's Footnote, which reads as follows:

The galimatias of this Letter pleases me in that it is totally in the character of good Edouard [Bomston], who is never so much the philosopher than when he does silly things and never reasons more than when he does not know what he is saying. (526)8

If there is one conclusion to be drawn from reflection on Bomston's dogmatic remarks to Saint-Preux, it is that we are not always free to choose our manner or method of approach to life and to study of the world. Rather, all men do not share the exact same nature (Cf. Emile), and the contingencies of life and the world do not affect all in the same manner.

This whole question of method of study of the world and of living in the world is, of course, intimately bound to the question of happiness. In other words: In which epistemological (and psychological) mode is happiness to be found? And are there, correspondingly, different species or

8 It could be argued that the Editor's Footnote is a veiled reference to the fact that soliciting Saint-Preux's assistance in Bomston's affairs is a mere ploy to test his maturity, judgment, and self-mastery. Perhaps so, but it may also be a flippant indication of the fallacious, and irrelevant, nature of Bomston's arguments.
modes of happiness? Or can one shape himself to a preconceived method or mode?\footnote{It should not be forgotten that Rousseau is the father of a school of developmental psychology, the primary principle of which might be formulated simply as follows: Development cannot be forced. I refer to the thought of Jean Piaget.}

In his reply to Bomston's letter of exhortation (V, I), Saint-Preux claims to be (partially) cured by Wolmar of his passion for Julie. But the caveat is more important, it seems, than the bulk of his words. He declares that "the scene of Meilleries [i.e., the boat ride and promenade] was the crisis of my folly and of my ills." (527) Wolmar had explained to him the true state of his soul—evidently, that he was in love with a mere memory. "This too weak heart," he tells Bomston, "is cured as much as it is possible to be, and I prefer the sadness of an imaginary regret to the fear of being ceaselessly beset by crime." That is, he is only capable of a partial cure, which consists in knowing and accepting the fact that his love is imaginary\footnote{What nonsense!}. He professes to have found peace, through the aid of Wolmar, whom he now calls friend. Living in the simplicity and equality of the Clarens household, his heart, by degrees, comes into union with those of Julie and Wolmar, "as the voice, without thinking of it, takes on the tone of the people with whom one speaks." (527)
So the cure administered by Wolmar leaves Saint-Preux with an imaginary love of the past that he happily accepts as such, but still with an ability to live in the present with that same woman as a heartfelt friend. He then goes on to speak of life at Clarens and of the wisdom and goodness of Julie and Wolmar. If there is in this world a happy life it is theirs—a life in retreat surrounded by one’s family. But one must know how to employ "the instruments of happiness" and must know how to taste of happiness. So, it is the art of being happy, in a particular situation, that Saint-Preux proceeds to describe to Lord Bomston.

In Part V, happiness will be pursued in two directions—from the public and from the private aspect. The communal life at Clarens represents the public enterprise; and the love of Julie and Saint-Preux, the private. On the one hand, country life, it is argued, makes for a simpler and happier life; on the other, Saint-Preux and Julie attempt to cure themselves of misdirected passion, at one time thought to be the way of happiness itself. But why is country life more amenable to happiness? Briefly stated, because, in the country, people accept their positions and stations in life; whereas, in the city, they are continuously torn by real and imaginary ambitions. Stated otherwise, in the country, life is simple and its desires easily fulfilled. And that state of affairs more generally allows that our strengths be as great as our wishes: one Rousseauian formula for happiness.
It is a life according to nature that Rousseau pretends to portray in his descriptions of the Clarens household.

On another level, the psychological drama of the ascendancy of love over friendship seems to be playing itself out. This process— the attempt to enthrone friendship— is similar to the dynamics of country life: the goal of controlling the imagination (and thus ambition). The couple must replace the memory of what was love with current memories of friendship.

One might ask: Does Rousseau link the success of country life in controlling the imagination with the success of the couple’s love cure? Mutual success seems to be based on the absence of a loss of innocence. If the country peasant has not seen the city and if the lover has not ever been in love, the imaginations of both will probably be dull and their ambitions minimal. Rousseau demonstrates these general principles by various descriptions of life at Clarens. But the cornerstone of all arguments (if they are, in fact, that) is Julie. She is raised to the level of heroine or saint, at least in the mind of Saint-Preux.

There will never be but one Julie in the world. Providence has watched over her, and nothing of that which regards her is the effect of chance. Heaven seems to have given her to the earth in order to show at the same time the excellence of which a human soul is susceptible and the happiness which it can enjoy in the obscurity of the private life, without the help of extraordinary virtues which could raise her above herself, nor with the glory that could honor them. (V,II,532)
Julie becomes symbol—of what humankind can and cannot do. In being what she is, she is both horizon and limit. If humankind can be happy or saved, this Julie—this child of Providence—can surely be also. (This privileged position of Julie in the scheme of things might well be kept in mind as we approach the end of the story of this search for happiness.)

The first ingredient of country happiness is given as Julie’s grand maxim: Do not favor changes in condition, but rather contribute toward making each person happy in his or her present condition; and prevent the villager from leaving the countryside. Saint-Preux objects to Julie that nature gives diverse talents to men without regard to their conditions in life. Julie responds that morality and happiness must be given precedence over talent. And, besides, if we hold that all talents should be developed, we must also believe that talent must coincide with the necessary jobs of life. But this does not seem so. Who would work the fields if we waited for agricultural talent to fill the positions? We could stretch the implications of this line of thought to say that Providence does not distribute the talent and that the development of talent does not necessarily lead to either happiness or morality. In fact, "the most vile [of all talents] is the only one that leads to riches." (536-38) Julie’s ideas on talent are often similar to Rousseau’s of the First Discourse: What
we, in our "fallen state," want is often not in our best interests.

The above might well prepare us for a discussion of a practice of Julie's which might be called ascetic pleasure. But this discussion of self-imposed privation for the sake of heightened pleasure is prefaced with a sort of anti-cartesian hymn to Julie.

Julie's soul and body are equally sensitive. The same delicacy reigns in her feelings and in her organs. She was made to know and to taste all the pleasures, and for a long time she has not loved virtue so dearly as the sweetest voluptuousness. (541)

Nonetheless, "the art of enjoying is for her that of privation," though not a painful privation. Julie believes that when a pleasure becomes a dull habit it ceases to be a pleasure and becomes a need. Therefore, she deprives herself of a pleasure and, when she partakes, partakes in moderation—all with the purpose of enhancing the pleasure.

A more noble objective is proposed by her in all that—to remain mistress of herself, to accustom her passions to obedience, and to shape all her desires to the rule. It is a new means of being happy, for one only enjoys without anxiety that which one can lose without pain, and if true happiness belongs to the wise man, it is because he is, among all men, the one from whom fortune can take the least. (542)

There is no question that Julie's art of enjoying echoes of Aristotelian moderation, but what do we make of

"Compared to Aristotelian moderation?
Rousseau/Saint-Preux's claim that it represents a new means of being happy. By way of answer, it could be said that for Aristotle pleasure was not taken in the fulfillment of individual desires, but in the awareness that one was master of oneself. But Julie—a sort of voluptuary, according to Saint-Preux—was not one to separate mind from body, or morality from pleasure. Moderation, even self-mastery, was in the service of pleasure/happiness. Saint-Preux even makes the argument that Julie had improved on vulgar Epicurians who never lost an opportunity to follow a desire. (542)

The secret of the happy life, in the midst of country retreat, seems to be restrained ambition.

A small number of nice and peaceful people, united by mutual needs and reciprocal goodwill, converges by diverse services to a common end: each finding in his state all that is necessary to be content and to not wish to leave it, one attaches himself to it as being necessary to remain there all his life, and the only ambition that one keeps is that of successfully fulfilling one's duties. (547-548)

The chores of country life are one's duties and pleasures. (549) The useful is joined to the agreeable. Repetition and the love of repetition is the hallmark of this simple life: Content with today, Julie asks nothing different from tomorrow.

She does always the same things because those [things] are good, and because she knows nothing better to do. Undoubtedly she enjoys every happiness allowed to man. To take pleasure for
the whole length of one's state in life, is it not a sure sign that one is happy in it? (553)

As we saw expressed in the Reveries, the wished for duration--to the ideal point of everlastingness--of a particular state attests to the genuine happiness of that state. Rousseau would have us assume that the city-dweller is bored by repetition, probably because what the city dweller does each day is not inherently good, or natural, as well as because of an unbridled imagination. The city dweller is "the man of man, in place of [the man] of nature." (554)

As is evident enough, Letter II recapitulates much of the teaching of Rousseau's first two discourses. But, in Letter II, he takes some steps toward describing his answer to the degeneration of contemporary life, in Paris, for example. Before On the Social Contract, he prepares his ground with a eulogy of agrarian society, but that country life, with the Wolmars as reigning king and queen, is hardly one of liberty and equality, even if it is blessed with benevolence. Perhaps Rousseau offers the paternalism of the Wolmar estate as the best that the European could achieve as it waited for the introduction of "the general will" and democracy. The New Heloise went on sale in January of 1761; On the Social Contract was published in April of 1762. And, as we shall see in Letter III of Part V, Rousseau was also
concerned at this time with the ideas of his *Emile*, which was condemned by the Paris court on June 9, 1762.

In the beginning of Letter III, Saint-Preux, again writing to Bomston, discourses on what we have called the theme of private happiness or, more specifically, the happiness of the couple Julie and Saint-Preux. Musing on the supremely pleasant life that he is living at Clarens, he allows himself a meditation on his former love.

If extinguished love throws the soul into emptiness, subjugated love gives to it, with the consciousness of its victory, a new elevation and a more lively attraction for all that is grand and beautiful. (V,III,557)

And, justifying his very life, he concludes: "I feel that it was necessary to have been what I was in order to become what I want to be." (557) One cannot help asking just what Saint-Preux wants to be. Is it the much admired Wolmar or the adored Julie?

Whatever his wishes for himself, he immediately begins for Bomston a description of the famous "matinee a l'anglaise" during which, after the departure of some guests, Wolmar, Julie, and he are—just the three of them—reunited and in silence. It is a state of being he feels that few people know. It is a friendship that requires no words—that is beyond words! It is "a state of contemplation" in which friends are gathered into each other: "the least distractions are disheartening, the least
constraint is unbearable." (558) The presence of a stranger restrains the feeling of this state.

Two hours passed between us in this immobility of ecstasy, a thousand times sweeter than the cold repose of the Gods of Epicurus. (558)

This is at least the second time that Rousseau has compared the pleasures of his sort of friendship to the pleasures of Epicurean philosophers who were known to value friendship above all else. Even Rousseau's brand of friendship is categorically different from anything that went before. It is a communion of souls, but not within the bosom or brotherhood of any religion or philosophy. It is as if Rousseau embodied that anomaly of the secular mystic—whatever that might mean.  

The happiness of the individual and the happiness of the human species are different and, it seems, mutually exclusive goals. This is demonstrated, or revealed, in microcosm, in the discussion of Julie's theories of education which follow more or less immediately upon Saint-Preux's description of the happiness of the three of them in a garden even more sublime than that of Epicurus.

Beyond the constitution that is common to the species each person brings at birth a particular

12Also, these "two hours" of communion of souls might relate to the two hours Saint-Preux spent in Elysium and to the one hour spent talking with Julie after their love-making. These times involved one, two, and three persons, respectively; and they were each decidedly heightened experiences for Saint-Preux—three different experiences of happiness, we are tempted to conclude.
temperament which determines his genius and his character, and it is not a question of changing or constraining it, but of forming and perfecting it. (563)

Furthermore, there is "a universal system" into which everyone fits; there are no faulty or errant souls necessarily. "Every man has his place assigned in the best order of things; it is a question of finding that place and not perverting that order." (563) This sounds a little like Plato's Myth of the Metals, and, sure enough, two pages over Plato is explicitly cited for the insight that knowledge and philosophy "can do no more than draw out from a human soul what nature had placed there." (565)

Wolmar steps in to elaborate on this Platonic notion of education (Saint-Preux is relating these theories as if Julie and Wolmar agreed on everything.). Referring to two dogs of the same litter, which were raised the same, but which act so differently, Wolmar concludes:

The sole difference in temperaments produced in them [the difference] in character, just as the sole difference in the interior organization produces in us [the difference] in intelligence (esprits). (565)

In order to change a mind or spirit, it is necessary to change the interior organization of the person; and to change a character, it would be necessary to change the temperament. (566) Reason must be a major element of temperament, because it is reason "that makes character come out and gives it its veritable form." (566) And each person
is an individual; education must address itself to the particularities of each individual. "One man is made to carry human knowledge to its furthermost point; to another it is fatal to know how to read." (566)

All this seems simple enough: Nature gives certain latent characters and talents; it is for the educator to bring them out. However, our allusion to Plato’s Myth of the Metals becomes more problematically operative when Wolmar (and Julie?) begin distinguishing between education for country life and education for city life. Men destined for the simplicity of country life have no need, in order to be happy, of developing their faculties, and their talents are like legally non-exploitable gold mines. But city life requires otherwise: All talents must be developed for diverse and more complex chores--for the survival of the individual! But the main point is this: Education of the villager regards the species; whereas education of the urbanite regards the individual. What Rousseau does not have his characters conclude here is that, in the country, the happiness of the individual and of the species coincide; whereas, in the city, the individual flourishes and the species dies. In a sense, the type of person one might become depends less on naturally constituent metals as on the accident of place of birth (for not all talented country boys make it to the city). One begins to wonder about the "universal system" wherein all works for the best, where
everyone has a place and will find it, if only man would follow nature. The argument begins to sound somewhat tautological: Nature is perfect; if something is not perfect, it is not nature, but man-made. Another conclusion might be this: If there is a "universal system," it does not seem to be one, necessarily, of individual happiness. Whatever the case, Rousseau is aware that a right education (something unnatural but done naturally) is dependent on so many contingencies that "wisdom depends much on happiness." (585) This seems to make happiness dependent, at least to a great extent, on contingencies. The element of chance, regardless of Rousseau’s use of the notion of Providence, plays a large role in the pursuit of happiness.

An earlier mention of mysticism sprung from the "matinee a l’anglaise." In Letter V, Saint-Preux formally discusses the subject within the context of religion—specifically, the unbelief of Wolmar and the belief of Julie. We shall deal briefly with the latter, since it addresses Rousseau’s ongoing pursuit of happiness. Saint-Preux claims that one might say that nothing of this earth is sufficient to fulfill Julie’s need to love; and that this excess of sensibility, by which she is devoured, is forced to return to its source. Comparing Saint Theresa unfavorably with Julie, he writes that Julie’s heart is truly inexhaustible, that neither love nor friendship could consume it, that it looks to the only Being worthy of it.
What is singular about Julie is that the more devout she is, the less she believes herself to be, and "she complains of feeling within herself an arid soul which does not know how to love God." (590)

It is no use, she often says, the heart attaches itself only by the mediation of the senses or of the imagination which represents them, and the means of seeing or imagining the immensity of the great Being! When I wish to raise myself to him, I do not know where I am; perceiving no rapport between him and me, I do not know how to reach him; I no longer see nor sense anything, I find myself in a sort of nothingness, and if I dared judge others according to myself, I would fear that ecstacies of the mystics not come less from a full heart than from an empty brain. (590)

Julie continues by saying that, in order to rescue herself from the phantoms of a reason which leads her astray, she substitutes a crude cult which is within her reach for those sublime contemplations which surpass her faculties.

Regretfully, I lower divine majesty; I interpose between it and myself sensual objects; not being able to contemplate it in its essence, I contemplate it at least in its works, I love it in its good works; but whatever approach I take, in the place of pure love that it demands, I have only an interested acknowledgement to offer. (590-91)

Saint-Preux steps in to draw conclusions from Julie's account of her religiosity: "It is thus that everything becomes sentiment in a sensitive heart . . . if the God of the universe escapes her weak eyes, she sees everywhere the common father of men." (591)

Before the novel ends, Julie will confess to a sort of world weariness, which seems to relate to both failed
religious aspirations as well as to (the related) failed romantic passions, for just as romantic love seems to be metaphoric for knowledge of the divine\textsuperscript{13}, so desire for knowledge of the divine seems here a metaphor for the frustrations of the inherent impossibilities of a fully-fulfilled romantic passion.\textsuperscript{14} If happiness depends either on apperception of the infinite or on the satisfaction of a passion for absolute union, then there is no happiness here below for Julie. Perhaps, there is simply no happiness here below.

But what of the happiness of country life? As was stated above, these last few letters deal intermittently with the happiness of the species and the happiness of the individual. They are two almost equally impossible chores, given the present developed state of the species and the mere nature of what would be a conscious and non-alienated human. This is not to deny that, as we saw in Chapter 2, Rousseau, especially in the \textit{Reveries}, expresses that he found for himself, finally, some form of happiness— even if it involved the absence of all other human beings (or, should we say, required the absence of all other humans?). It does seem to mean that the species can only achieve a  

\textsuperscript{13}Cf. the more Platonic-erotic passages of Part I of the novel.

\textsuperscript{14}This impossibility relates to the very nature of the passion myth itself.
very tenuous happiness (or a slowdown in the rate of increased unhappiness) and that Julie’s elaborate and seemingly paradigmatic life proved an inadequate means to earthly happiness.

It was during the first of their discussions of religion that Saint-Preux envisioned the most formidable obstacle to any "guilty desire" which he might still harbor for Julie: "She was surrounded by the supreme majesty; incessantly I saw God between her and me . . . my heart was purged by the fire of her Zeal, and I shared her virtue." (593) The first obvious obstacle to their love had been Julie’s father; this last (?) obstacle—God—may also be said to be her Father. This is the novelist’s way of absolutizing the physical separation of the lovers, while allowing a friendship of spiritual communion. We are returned to the sort of dualistic Platonism that permeated Part I, but now they are, one might say, soul friends as opposed to soul lovers (Julie had, we might remember, asked Saint-Preux to be the "lover" of her soul.). While a "veil of sadness" covered the union between Julie and Wolmar, because of his disbelief, Julie could still converse sympathetically in tete-a-tetes about religion with her former lover. He has, in fact, by necessity, become the lover of her soul. But does this state of the affair make him happy?
In Letter VII, from Saint-Preux to Bomston, the grape harvest becomes the setting—a celebration that returns one to "the time of the patriarchs" (603) and, as the Pleiade editors express it,

the evocation of an Edenic community where beings live in an atmosphere of celebration, joy, love which possesses something of the sacred.¹⁵

It is within the context of the harvest that the reconciliation between Saint-Preux and the Baron (Julie’s father) is announced by the novelist. Wolmar’s second test of Saint-Preux was whether he would embrace Julie’s father; he did, and as a curious Editor’s Footnote, quoting an uncollected letter where Julie quotes Wolmar, says: "From that instant, I counted on him totally." (605)

It is only too ironic that just four pages further on, Saint-Preux, while listening with Claire and Julie to the peasants singing old familiar ballads, falls into a lover’s melancholic revery.

Casting my eyes on [Claire and Julie] and recalling distant times, a shiver takes hold of me, an unbearable weight suddenly falls on my heart, and leaves me with a deadly impression that I cannot undo with impunity. (609)

This might be a foreshadowing of the customarily accepted foreshadowing of Julie’s death (i.e., Saint-Preux’s veil dream; see below), but it is also an indication that he (and Julie, for she blushes at the sound of the singing) is not

¹⁵OC II 602, n. 2.
fully in control of his imagination; he has not, as Wolmar's theory of the cure requires, replaced old memories with new and harmless ones. And, as if to weave perfectly the questions of private and public happiness (or lack of it), Saint-Preux ends the letter with an echo of Rousseau's test of happiness.

Everyone drinks to the health of the victor [judged to have done the most work at harvest] and goes to bed, content with a day passed in work, gaiety, innocence, and [content] not to be sorry to recommence the next day, and the day after, and for one's whole life. (611)

Ostensibly, there is both public and private happiness in Letter VII, unified seemingly by the fact that Saint-Preux "truly felt himself in the country" (602) where happiness seems at least possible. If this is so, what is the import of Saint-Preux's "deadly impression"? Could it not be a premonition that there will be no happiness either for Julie or for him? And the seemingly happy peasants sing their way into another happy tomorrow. They do not have romantic frustrations because 1) their masters work to prevent them from germinating and 2) they do not have developed imaginations (or talents). It seems that only persons autocratically controlled have a chance at anything that might be called public happiness. (Of course, this is before the offered solution of On the Social Contract.)

It should be clear enough by now that on the success of the "cure" of Saint-Preux and Julie hinges the symbolic
possibility of the reconstitution of fallen (or degenerate) humankind for a happy social as well as private life. Our protagonists are something like the guinea pigs of civilization! It is in Letter VIII that Saint-Preux proclaims to his benefactor Wolmar that the cure has been successful!!! As critics, we must not only question whether the cure has finally taken, but also why. Whatever the truth about the cure, Saint-Preux writes to Wolmar in almost unexplainably hyperbolic fashion.

Enjoy, dear Wolmar, the fruit of your labor. Accept homage from a purified heart, that, with so much trouble, you have made worthy of being offered to you. Never has man undertaken what you have undertaken, never has man attempted that which you have achieved; never has a grateful and sensitive soul felt what you have inspired in me. [My soul] had lost its energy, its vigor, its being; you returned it all to me. I was dead to virtue as well as to happiness: I owe you this moral life into which I feel myself reborn. Oh my Benefactor! Oh my Father! By giving myself entirely to you, I can offer you, as if to God himself, only the gifts that I have because of you. (V,VIII,611)

Saint-Preux is telling Wolmar that he, Wolmar, has turned back the march of progressively degenerative history by curing Saint-Preux of his malady of the imagination and memory.16 But how can Saint-Preux say what he does, and is it true?

Saint-Preux confesses that, just eight days before, he had thought all was lost—that the cure had failed. But now

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16We might be reminded by Saint-Preux’s hyperbolic language that for Nietzsche forgetfulness was a blessed art.
he believes himself cured not only because Wolmar tells him so, but because he, Saint-Preux, feels it. He says that he has written Claire the details of what he terms as his "last fault." (The fault is a dream of Julie's death, all to be analyzed shortly.) But what could have finally clinched the cure? It might be that, first, he has learned that the education of the Wolmar children will be turned over to him, and, secondly, he realizes that his friend Bomston, normally considered his superior, is in need of his wise assistance.

Perhaps Saint-Preux's elevation to those two positions of responsibility has given him an assurance of himself and of the cure. But, as we learn in Letter IX, the drastic change in him is more enigmatic—mysterious even. What is it that cures Saint-Preux of his passion/love for Julie? Though the answer will remain ambiguous within the context of the novel, it might have been something as simple as the love of another woman. If that is, in fact, the case, it is a sort of "elective affinity"—not the machinations of a wise man—that finally resolves Saint-Preux's passion. Such is the import of this seemingly trivial question: Reason cures nature, or nature cures nature. Rousseau stands

[17] In mentioning the education of the boys, Saint-Preux points out the fundamental principle of Emile: "everything consists in not spoiling the man of nature while appropriating him to society." (612) He seems to say that he was spoiled, but that Wolmar brought him back to innocence, so to speak.
between the Reason of the Enlightenment and the Romantic
Naturalism of the nineteenth century. What we finally
discover to be Rousseau's answer for the cure of life
itself—Reason or Nature—within the context of The New
Heloise should help to crystalize a definition of Rousseau
himself.

In Letter IX to Claire, Saint-Preux relates the story
of his "last fault" and of his final cure. He is travelling
with Lord Bomston to settle Bomston's affairs; they stay
over at Villeneuve and Saint-Preux finds himself in the same
hotel room as he occupied ten years before on the way to
Sion, when he was first separated from Julie. An almost
uncommunicable impression seized him. He instantly became
what he had been; his present unhappiness left him at first,
but then all of the intervening misery overcame him.

I delivered myself up, in the peace of innocence,
to the ecstacies of a shared love: I savored at
length the delicious feeling which made me live:
The sweet vapor of hope inebriated my heart.
(V, IX, 615)

He describes a sort of delirium, in which he envisions
Julie's death. If she were dead at least he would have the
hope of meeting up with her. "But she lives; she is happy!
... she lives, and her life is my death, and her happiness
is my torture." (615) Thus far is Saint-Preux's waking
dream.

There is no question that his imagination and memory
have not been reconstituted. In fact, he is living not only
in the past, but also in an agonizing present. In any case, he goes to sleep, and those "sad ideas" follow him and transform into a most cruel dream. He believed he saw Julie's mother on her deathbed and Julie, mourning at her side. After some conversation, Julie is in the place of the dying mother, but her face is covered by the ubiquitous "veil." Trying desperately to rip the veil away, Saint-Preux hears Julie say to him, "The formidable veil covers me, no hand can take it away," and, drenched in perspiration, he wakes in tears.

This same dream recurred that night a second and a third time, after which he gets up and eventually enters Bomston's room with the prophetic words--"It is done, I shall see her no more." (617) As soon as Bomston learned the situation and the seriousness with which his friend took it, he treated Saint-Preux to an old-fashioned blessing out: "You merit neither my friendship nor my esteem. . . . if I had given to my lackey a quarter of the attention that I have given you, I would have made a man; but you are nothing." Saint-Preux agrees that he is nothing, but because he will never see Julie again--and Julie is the source of all that is good in him. Bomston smiled, embraced Saint-Preux, and soon had them in a coach headed back to Clarens, so that Saint-Preux could see for himself that Julie still lived. "Do not come back," Bomston tells him
when they have reached the gate of the estate, "until you have torn that fatal veil in your brain." (617)

The next page or so must contain the key to the success of the cure to Saint-Preux's romantic melancholy. Approaching the house and worrying just how he is to present himself, he heard the gate of Elysium open and close. He writes that he heard both her (he is writing to Claire) and Julie talking; "without being able to distinguish a sole word, I found in the sound of your voice I do not know what of the languishing and the tender, that stirred my emotions, and in [Julie's voice] an accent affectionate and sweet as is ordinary with her, but peaceful and serene, which brought me back to the present and which was the true awakening from my dream." (618) Exactly what wakens him from his dream (constituting the "cure"?) is still not totally clear. It would seem that it was the peaceful and serene voice of Julie, but could it not also have been Claire's voice that was described in a more charged and mysterious way?18

Whatever the truth of the matter, Saint-Preux declares in the very next sentence that "Then and there I felt myself so changed that I made fun of myself and my false alarms." And, as a show of his new-found strength and confidence, Saint-Preux decided not even to seek a look at Julie. He

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18 Claire was confessing her love for Saint-Preux at this very moment, but the reader and Claire are led to believe that he heard not a word of it. (See OC II 618, n. 1)
left having only heard her voice. He felt entirely cured, and he felt that he had finally raised "that veil by which my reason was for a long time dazzled (offusquee)." His ecstacies are extinguished, and he sees and loves his duty—a clear sign of his entry into the public realm. "Both of you," he expresses to Claire, "are dearer to me than ever; but my heart no longer distinguishes one from the other and does not separate the inseparables." (619)

Why does he no longer distinguish between Julie and Claire? What in fact lifted the veil? What cured him, if not the realization that he loved Claire as well as Julie, or that they loved each other? If this is the case, if love of Julie is displaced, so to speak, by love of Claire, then Wolmar’s cure, which called for new memories of Julie to replaced old memories of Julie, was not operative here; instead, nature healed itself: It replaced or at least neutralized one love by another. Of course, this is no marvelously new revelation on lovesickness, but, within the context of this philosophical novel, its importance cannot be over-estimated, for it confirms Rousseau’s faith in nature over reason (Wolmar).

Because Saint-Preux might not understand the meaning of events he himself lived through only means that the valid interpretation is not in the mouth of any one character (not even Julie’s), but between the lines of the text. As Allan Bloom remarked and as we quoted early on, Rousseau’s
characters do not always possess a high degree of self-awareness. That Saint-Preux never satisfactorily explains just what it was that freed him leaves it to the reader to discover within the text. That our interpretation reaffirms a long-standing naturalistic interpretation of Rousseau's thought as a whole lends it a sort of validation that the creative interpretation of one brief text could not give. But the interpretation of this brief text also supports the former unfavorable interpretation of Wolmar and his rationalist philosophy and method. The surface reflects the depths, as Leo Strauss has written, and this "romantic novel"—paradoxically enough and as far as it can go—offers a philosophical justification of what later became known as Romanticism. Love cannot be the object of any scientific method, however astute; rather, it has its own laws, one of which seems to be that only varying degrees of love or despair can replace or neutralize love. It is a sort of naturalism, if not a strict romanticism.

In her response to Saint-Preux, Claire is equally puzzled by what moved Saint-Preux to have such a disturbing experience and by what all of a sudden reassured him. "You were alarmed without reason; you are reassured in like manner." (620) In a post scriptum, Claire, covering all possibilities, admonishes:

Moreover, if it is true that you heard nothing of our conversation in the Elysium, it is all the better for you; for you know that I am alert
enough to see people before they perceive me, and clever enough to mock the eavesdroppers. (621)

Perhaps Claire, like this interpreter, surmises that the otherwise unexplainable recovery of Saint-Preux was due to his overhearing Claire’s profession of love for him.

Wolmar’s reaction to Saint-Preux’s dream is perfectly rationalistic: If you were not thinking of your former lover during the day, you would not be dreaming of her at night. Not only does this understanding beg the question, but Wolmar, though he mocks philosophical system builders in this Letter XI, is a Newtonian through and through.

Saint-Preux writes not so much in reply to Wolmar as to inform him of the pitiable state of Edouard’s love life. He speaks of Bomston’s misplaced love for Lauretta Pisana (a reformed prostitute) in much the same way as one might have been speaking of him, Saint-Preux, some eight years before. Saint-Preux vows to save his noble friend from his own passions. We learn that Bomston’s lovesickness is faked in order to test Saint-Preux’s resolve and maturity. He passes with flying colors--even to the point of an independence that, for the first time in his life, allows him to keep a secret from the two Cousins. It is almost as if to say: Saint-Preux is now a man; he is no longer in love.

The story of Saint-Preux and Claire does not formally begin until Letter XII (from Julie to Claire), in which Julie not only urges Claire to marry Saint-Preux, but in
which she indirectly divulges her own feelings for him. She
tells Claire that she can discern that Claire has been
"taken" by Saint-Preux; and she compares Claire's present
situation to hers of old. (V,XIII,625) The danger of living
in close proximity (at Clarens, that is) to "a cherished
object" cannot be over-estimated.

It is my turn, now, my sweet friend, and I have
moreover the sad authority of experience to make
me listened to. Listen then to me while there is
still time, out of fear that after having passed
half of your life deploring my faults, you do not
pass the other half deploring yours. (628)

Returning to Claire's expressed preference for friendship
over love, Julie speaks to the heart of that position: "No,
my child, the soul has no sex; but its affections do
distinguish them." (629) Julie goes so far as to tell
Claire that Claire would have fallen in love with Saint-
Preux, if Julie had not done so first. And this newly
kindled love could well help cure her, says Julie! (631)
But it must be avowed and openly acted upon, Julie presses.
Alluding to one of Saint-Preux's "speeches" from early in
Part I of the novel--the context of which was one of the
rare references to Heloise and Abelard--Julie insists that
"One must honor oneself in order to be honored; how can one
merit the respect of others without having any for oneself;
and where will she stop when the first step on the road to
vice is taken without fear?" (632) Yours is an upright
feeling, Julie tells Claire, that only needs to be declared
to be made innocent. "[I]s it shameful to marry him whom you love or to love him without marrying him?"

It is toward the end of the letter that Julie defines a situation which resembles one expressed by Saint-Preux when he said he could no longer distinguish the inseparable Cousins from each other.

Ah Cousin! how charming for me to reunite forever two hearts so well made one for the other, and which have merged for a long time in mine. May they merge even more so, if it is possible; be no longer but one for each other and for me. Yes, my Claire, you will continue to be of service to your friend by crowning your love, and I will be surer of my own feelings when I will no longer be able to distinguish them between you. (634)

At least two observations need to be made: 1) Whereas we hypothesized that it was Claire's love of Saint-Preux that neutralized his passion for Julie, here Claire's love for Saint-Preux--when seen under the prospect of marriage--neutralizes Julie's love of him. In neither case is the memory tricked into falling out of love, as was Wolmar's proposed cure for love; rather, in both cases, it is a third party to the love that softens or, say, tames the love (It might thus be said that Julie/Saint-Preux/Claire better represent a true "menage a trois" than do the traditional trinity of Julie/Saint-Preux/Wolmar.). 2) It seems that it is only in a menage a trois that the soul--and even its affections--cannot be distinguished. Saint-Preux said that he could not distinguish Julie and Claire, and from that
moment he was cured; Julie says that if Claire and Saint-Preux marry, she will not be able to distinguish them. Asceticism does not seem to be Rousseau’s road to Platonic or spiritual love; it seems rather a sort of sublimation made possible by a merged friendship in which passions are diffused, rarefied, and elevated.

But, if Claire is not agreeable to marriage with Saint-Preux, Julie proposes that "we cast away from ourselves this dangerous man." (634) The education of their children is not as important as the virtue of their mothers. Julie all but professes a continuing passion for Saint-Preux, controllable only by Claire’s marriage to him. And we learn from a letter by Claire’s young daughter Henriette that Julie exits from the room where she has been writing the subject letter, showing every evidence that she has been crying.

So, we end Part V with Saint-Preux claiming to and showing some signs of having been cured of his passion, and with Julie breaking down into admission that Saint-Preux is still for her "a dangerous man." The former has found, and the latter seeks, liberation through a sort of "menage a trois." It seems to be a relationship existing somewhere between the private intensity of romantic love and the public sameness of citizenship. Whatever the nature of the cure, this "new Heloise" is not yet resigned to her convent life.
Claire answers Julie’s proposal of her, Claire’s, marriage to Saint-Preux by saying that, whereas friendship is lavish, love is miserly. In other words, she loves Saint-Preux because he is Julie’s friend.

I think that too close relations are always perilous at the age where he and I were; but, both of us with hearts full of the same object, we would accustom ourselves so to placing it between us that, unless we annihilated you, we would no longer be able to make contact with each other. (VI,II,640)

Claire does not share the ideal of the "menage a trois" which requires a sort of merging of love and friendship.

For Claire, the champion of pure friendship,

Love wants to make all its progress by itself; it does not like friendship to halve the road with it.(641)

For Claire, old friends do not become new lovers. But she does confess, or rather recapitulates, to Julie how she felt an attraction for Saint-Preux and how she admitted in the Elysium the attachments that she felt being born within the both of them. But marriage to him? Never!

For one, Claire is too independent and too far removed from the yoke of marriage. Besides, she does not fear having a bachelor Saint-Preux around Clarens as does Julie. Also, Claire cannot stand the idea of giving her first husband a successor. Add to these reasons the fact that it is abhorrent to Claire to marry the former lover of her
precious Julie and the catalogue of Claire’s oppositions to that marriage is complete.

What of the other half of this proposed marriage? Saint-Preux is in Italy and, according to Bomston, conducting himself with surety and not at all like a lovesick boy. But it is advice that Saint-Preux gives to Bomston, who is embroiled with two women at the same time, that relates as much to Saint-Preux as to his friend. He tells Bomston, "You were able to break one chain only with another." (652) Even though both of Bomston’s women were thought unworthy of him, and both of Saint-Preux’s thought worthy, the natural process—call it that of assisted "elective affinities"—was the same in both cases for cures of lovesickness. Saint-Preux had learned from his haphazard experience with Julie and Claire just how to cure Bomston. Ironically, it was Saint-Preux who employed nature in the service of reason (whereas, I contend, Wolmar’s attempt at the same thing failed).

Saint-Preux announces his definitive cure to Bomston when he says to him that "The reign of love is past, that of friendship begins." (653) And he swears solemn loyalty to Bomston. Bomston says that such a zealous profession of friendship made him forget both the Marquise and Laura. Friendship replaced love, as affinities within love had replaced each other. Bomston announces to Wolmar that Saint-Preux is "truly cured" and ready to be returned to
Clarens. (Bomston seems to imply erroneously, I think, that Wolmar is more than indirectly responsible for this cure. In fact, in Wolmar's reply to Bomston, he has the pride (of philosophy) to say to Bomston that he, Wolmar, did not need Bomston's proof of Saint-Preux's cure, because 1) he, Wolmar, had his own proof and 2) "I believe I know him as well as one man is able to know another." (656) We should never forget that, however astute Wolmar is in knowledge through intellection, he cannot know by means of his sensibilities—which is, of course, the primary mode of knowing for Rousseau and his progeny the romantics.)

In her first letter to Saint-Preux since Part III, Julie begins with her considerations on how one is cured of love: "Great passions are smothered, rarely purified. . . . The cause which makes one cease to love might be a vice, [but?] the cause that changes a tender love into a friendship no less lively could not be equivocal." (VI,VI,664) Julie is, within herself, negotiating her own cure. For Julie, even in the wake of extinguished love, the senses survive and everywhere is the occasion of relapse. She warns Saint-Preux in litany-like fashion of the dangers that must be confronted (e.g., "Do you believe that the monuments to be feared exist only at Meillerie"?), but she sounds more and more like one hopelessly crying out to herself, thinking that her task is to convince others.
Confuting (unawares?) Wolmar’s theory of the cure, Julie expresses a fundament of later Romanticism:

Ah! you know only too well that a tender soul interests the entire universe in its passion and that, even after the cure, all the objects of nature recall to us still that which we felt before in seeing them. (667)

These dangers, even—especially—romantic ones, must be neutralized if Julie and Saint-Preux are ever to be happy. And it is, of course, a question of happiness in this world.19 So she inches toward the issue of marriage to Claire, which seems Julie’s key to happiness, even if not Saint-Preux’s and Claire’s. She claims that, in giving Claire to him, she is giving herself. She sees herself as owing Saint-Preux an old debt, and Claire is offered as payment. In so doing, Julie "figures to reunite us without danger." (671) The sweetest of sentiments will become legitimate, and there will be no danger between them. They will love each other "perfectly" and truly taste of friendship, love, and innocence (the latter of which seems to be regained by this "menage a trois"). Julie’s goal is none other than "a happiness reserved, beginning with this world, only for the friends of virtue." (671) It is always the same question: The reconciliation of love and virtue,

19In Part I, the question was How to find happiness within passionate love? In Parts II and III, it was How to find happiness within a passionate love that cannot be fulfilled? In Parts IV, V, and VI, the question is How to find happiness in the wake of passionate love?
of happiness and virtue. To fulfill the demands of her heart, Julie needs Saint-Preux; to fulfill the demands of virtue, she needs Wolmar. In short, for Julie to be happy, the "menage a trois" must succeed, though, strictly speaking, it is a "menage a quatre." Julie, in her attempts to negotiate this marriage, is in (or sees herself to be in) a fight for her emotional and spiritual life.

Saint-Preux begins his response to this letter from Julie in an exuberant fashion, but stops himself as if to say But do not worry and continues by saying "I feel well; I am no longer the same, or you are no longer the same." (674) He tells her that his reason has returned to him, all of which makes her even dearer to him. He says that, although he has stopped loving, the impressions from the time of their romance are eternal and that he will ever be "the friend of your person and the lover of your virtues," a peculiar merging of love and friendship in a most benign fashion. Opposing Wolmar's theory of displaced memories, Saint-Preux writes that "The flower of my years will not fade in my memory." (675) All of this seems like an expression of a sort of ascetic courtly love. He says that, although he no longer belongs to her, he has remained "under her protection," as if she were his liege lady. Whereas this courtly disposition, with him a bachelor, seems to satisfy him (for he seems cured), whether or not it would give Julie the peace of mind she needs remains dubious.
Admitting that he has grown more sensitive to Claire's charms, Saint-Preux nonetheless compares, unfavorably of course, what he feels for Claire to what he had felt for Julie. All that he can say for Claire is that she, along with Julie, make up the entire female population for Saint-Preux, for his long-suffering has made him forget the rest of women. He quotes Petrarch (alluding to Dante?) to the effect: "My career is finished in the middle of my years." He is, of course, in the midst of his explanation of his cure, of which he says that

misfortune/unhappiness took the place in my case of force for the conquering of nature and the triumph over temptations. One has few desires when suffering, and you have taught me to extinguish them by resisting them. A great unhappy passion is a great means of wisdom. My heart became, so to speak, the expression [organe] of all my needs; I do not have any when it is tranquil. Leave it in peace, the one and the other, and henceforth it is so for always. (677)

There is no clearer expression of world weariness than the above words of Saint-Preux, just as Julie will have a similar pronouncement in Letter XI. But, here, with Saint-Preux's response to the idea of marriage to Claire, Julie's last grasp at earthly happiness seems to be fading. Everyone--Saint-Preux, Claire, Wolmar--seems settled in themselves and in their lives. Saint-Preux, seeming to argue for his capability of sustaining a chaste courtly love, says to Julie: "the fires in which I burned have purified me; there is no longer anything of the ordinary man
in me." (678) It seems that Julie alone is still "unpurified" and subject to temptation.20

Like Claire, Saint-Preux catalogues his reasons for not marrying. From being a tender and grateful friend to Claire, he would become "a vulgar husband"; Julie's presence would dominate their marriage and, besides, he cannot bring himself to break faith with Julie, even though circumstances seem to allow it. Admitting that his feeling of love for Claire has helped him bear his love for Julie with less pain, he ask that he not be shaken from the nothingness into which he has fallen; "from fear that with the sentiment of my existence I not rediscover that of my ills, and that a violent state not reopen all my wounds." (681) Rather, living "peacefully" among Julie and Claire is his idea of contentment.

The irony of Saint-Preux's letter is that he chides Julie for being overly cautious and fearful of what could happen at Clarens, if he and Claire do not marry. Whereas he claims that he has no more battles to fight with himself (682), he totally overlooks the possibility that Julie might be in need of support. And then he goes on to give her a lesson in theology--one, we might add, which is hardly useful to a person in the grip of passionate love: "[God] gives us the reason to know what is good, the conscience to

20The situation of our couple is not unlike that of the original Heloise and Abelard.
love it, and the freedom to choose it." (683) Arguing against the efficacy of prayer, he addresses another lesson at Julie, a lesson that, like the last one, argues for man's self-sufficiency, even if ultimately provided for by God: "It is not [God] who changes us, it is we who change ourselves by raising ourselves up to Him."21 (684) The extension of the argument against the direct efficacy of prayer might be taken as an argument against miracles and against asceticism.

Whether or not Saint-Preux has intended it, his words have told Julie that she can expect no help from him or anyone else in overcoming her burdensome passion for him. He seems to be describing the nature of the phenomenon, there included, his actual inability to marry Claire. Julie's letter of reply will reflect her tacit reception of that somber message.

Before his cure, Saint-Preux had been called a child by Bomston; now, after his cure, he is so called by Julie: "Your letter is like your life, sublime and cringing, full of strength and puerilities. My dear Philosopher, will you never cease to be a child?" (687) She insists that she was not trying to lay down any laws for him, but was merely trying to foresee any inconveniences they might encounter in their life together at Clarens.

21This notion of prayer sounds like that of Peter Abelard.
She goes further and states that it is in this "delicatesse" that survives a true love, rather than in the subtle distinctions of Wolmar, that they must look for the reason of "this elevation of soul and of this interior strength that we experience with each other." (688) Julie does not want to lose Saint-Preux because of what now looks like a desperate and foolish attempt to marry Claire and himself. She even tries to bring him closer to her by expressing openly that her husband does not understand "true love." She tells him that the last six months have been "the sweetest of my life."

Then Julie enters into a paradoxical, but ultimately despairing, picture of life: She has everything around her—family and friends; her being is extended by all she has, without being divided. Everything seems perfect, but

my imagination no longer has anything to do, I have nothing to desire; to feel and to enjoy are the same thing for me; I live simultaneously in all that I love, I am full of happiness and life: O death, come when you wish! I no longer fear you, I have lived, I wait for you, I have no more new feelings to know, you have nothing more to take from me. (689)

Julie also fears that the pleasure of living in the presence of Saint-Preux will be spoiled and demeaned by a necessary lack of openness. She seems to underestimate the degree to which the cure has worked on him and speaks to him of his coming time of surety and even indifference (to her). (690)
But she again invites him to Clarens, but this time as a brother, in spite of what she perceives as the dangers.

Having discussed Saint-Preux and his state of mind, Julie opens a discussion of herself. This Letter VIII represents a sort of "confessions" of Julie. Having already summoned death, she here describes her life, since her marriage, as one—paradoxically—of erotic "happiness" only.

During the reign of the passions, they aid in bearing the torments that they give; they keep hope next to desire. As long as one desires, one can do without being happy; one expects to become so; if happiness does not come, hope is prolonged, and the spell of illusion lasts as long as the passion which causes it. Thus, this state is self-sufficient, and the anxiety that it causes is a sort of enjoyment which supplements reality. (693)

Alluding to her last world-weary speech, she concludes this one: "Misfortune to whoever has nothing more to desire!" In a sense, happiness is always outsmarting itself, for "one is happy only before being happy." Completing this text, which is the source for many nineteenth-century romantics\(^2\), Julie seems to offer one of the keys for an understanding of this novel which, we contend, is at least partially within the tradition of the passion myth.

The country of chimeras is the only one in the world worthy to be inhabited, and such is the nothingness of human things that, except for the Being existing by Himself, there is nothing beautiful except that which is not. (693)

\(^2\)OC II 693, n. 1.
Julie defines the human being as the desiring creature. (694) To be unable to desire— to live without illusion—is the only unbearable privation of humankind. "My friend, I am too happy; happiness bores me."

This may well be the ultimate irony of the story: Julie has all that life could possibly give her—among what she would take—and still she is not happy after her ultimate fashion. Could the marriage of Claire and Saint-Preux have restored to her life a renewal of illusive passion that could have made life worthwhile? Whatever, she says that she desires, but for nothing of this world. For lack of a love both noble and passionate enough, Julie looks to Heaven. Saint-Preux has, for all passionate purposes, abandoned her.²³

Perhaps the most meaningful conclusion for our purposes to be drawn from the relative estrangement of Julie and Saint-Preux is that passionate love and friendship cannot exist between the same persons at the same time. The "menage a trois" proposed by Julie would have attempted to preserve a sort of courtly love along with friendship. It

²³The disagreement between Saint-Preux and Julie over the nature and power of prayer might be his way of expressing to her that she must cure herself of lingering lovesickness. It seems, as we noted earlier, that the nature of the passion is such that no one can directly assist in its cure. It is Julie who quotes Wolmar to the effect that prayer is the opium of the soul. Saint-Preux, on the other hand, seems to view prayer as a sort of self-fulfilling wish.
is as if the elements changed their natures and effected the election of affinities accordingly: A friend does not compound with a lover.24

Nonetheless, Julie closes her last letter with a renewal of the invitation to come to Clarens, but, this time, with the intention of entering into a sort of conspiracy of Christian example in order to convert Wolmar from his disbelief.

If the project displeases you or frightens you, listen to your conscience; it dictates your duty.
I have nothing more to say to you. (701)

One might say that, just as Julie has discovered that just as conversion or teaching by example is superior to philosophic discourse, Rousseau uses the heroes and heroines of his novel to convert to a manner of expressing and circumscribing relations of love. Julie’s project is a Christian one; Rousseau’s is one of moralistic sentimentalism.

Julie’s death is announced to Saint-Preux by Claire: "It is done." That note is followed by a long letter from Wolmar, describing the last days and the death of Julie.

24 The situation is somewhat like the Elective Affinities, a later novel by Goethe, in which, as writes Irving Singer, The Nature of Love, Vol. II (Chicago: University Press of Chicago), pp. 440-41: "Nature appears as a deterministic mechanism that unites men and women as if they were chemical elements bonded to one another regardless of marital commitments that seek to keep them apart...[N]atural destinies are not concerned about the welfare of individuals."
Though Wolmar, the would-be "living eye," gives a sober account of the events, Julie's dying and death reflect an assuaged Christian mythology or liturgy: There is a Holy Week; there is a Last Supper; and there is even the illusion of a Resurrection. Julie's dying days are surely meant by Rousseau to teach or show the reader how to live, more so than how to die. She, we dare say, is the founding goddess of a religion of love--on both the humanistic and divine levels. As Wolmar, the atheist, writes: "She did not live like any other: no one that I know has died like her."

(VI,XI,704)

In brief, both her life and her death were exemplary. Rousseau, although in the world of the imagination, is competing with his beloved Plutarch, in the creation of a heroine who will answer the needs of the times. (Whether Julie, with her form of benign and loving Christianity, answers the needs of all times is questionable--that is, in light of Rousseau's rejection in On the Social Contract of Christianity as an appropriate civil religion. Perhaps Rousseau felt that he had sufficiently redirected the attention of Julie's religion to this world and therefore made Christianity acceptable as a civil religion.)

Julie asked that they all have dinner in her room, and, afterwards, the Minister arrives uninvited and unannounced. Julie ends by giving religious instructions to the Minister, but in a totally ingenuous manner. One of the things she
tells him is that she believes "The preparation for death is a good life." (715) The Socratic ring of this statement is undeniable in a traditional Christian environment represented by the Minister who believes in deathbed salvation.

Julie speaks words of love and encouragement to each of her friends and family, putting them at peace in their thoughts of her. As she says to them:

My happiness climbed by degrees to the highest point; it could only fall. . . . Is a permanent state made for man? No, when one has acquired everything, it is necessary to lose. (726)

But she will not allow them to think that they are losing her:

I am not leaving you, so to speak; I remain with you; by leaving you all united, my spirit, my heart dwells with you. You will see me incessantly among yourselves. . . . I was happy, I am happy, I am going to be so: my happiness is fixed, I snatch it from fortune; its only borders are eternity. (727)

The posture of Julie is that of a spiritual leader who is dying. She speaks to them on the state of the soul separated from the body and concludes that a pure spirit could never communicate with a soul trapped in a body.25 The message is: Do not expect me to communicate with you after my death. But a soul can return to earth in order to know what others think and feel; this is done by immediate

25But God can make Himself felt by speaking to the heart. (728)
communication, somewhat like God's. (However, it seems that
God's communications go both ways; those of separated souls
only one way.)

Then there is the discovery that one day's worth of
wine provisions had lasted five days. The incident is not
made into a miracle, but no certain explanation is sought or
found. It is hard to tell if such instances during the week
of Julie's death are meant to be mystifications or
demystifications. It would seem that their effects would
operate according to the frame of reference of the
individual. Nonetheless, the incident of Julie's supposed
resuscitation is doubtlessly a form of demystification,
brought on by an active imagination coupled with the
people's love of the marvelous. (736)

For hours the servants, all of whom were truly devoted
to Julie, believed that she had come back to life, so to
speak. Finally, Claire places a veil of pearls over Julie's
face and dares anyone to lift it and look on the now
decomposing body. In her own world, Julie was a true
heroine of almost goddess-like proportions—to the extent
that her "people" would want to believe or think her capable
of resurrecting.

Julie's last words to her (former) lover Saint-Preux
are delivered to him, in the form of a letter of course, by
Wolmar. She writes that Heaven prevented their reunion and
that the reunion was not good. She says that she has lived
under an illusion for a longtime, and that it dissolves only when she no longer has need of it. "You believed me cured, and I believed to be." (VI,XII,740) This illusion of being cured was salutary, for it might well have kept Julie from falling into the abyss, as she says. But the greatest sentiment (or love) of her life wakes at the moment when there is nothing to fear; it bears her up at the moment of death.

Julie does not apologize for her feelings: they are involuntary and cost nothing to her innocence. In fact, she can say: "Virtue is mine without a stain, and love is mine without remorse." (741) At death—and only at death—is Julie able to say that she has reconciled love and virtue. But it was not without the help of illusion.²⁶ It is death that makes and saves this reconciliation from possible dissolution.

Have I not lived enough for happiness and for virtue? What of use remained for me to get from life? By taking life from me Heaven takes from me nothing that is regrettable, and seals my honor. (741)

She feels that it is a good time for her to die and she leaves joyfully. She exhorts Saint-Preux to live, even in his pain and loss, within the community that Julie defined. "You lose of Julie only that which you lost long ago." (741) She will only die when the last of them dies. And she

²⁶The value given here to illusion seems to disparage Wolmar's rationalistic principle of complete openness.
describes to him his duties and dispositions vis-a-vis Claire, Wolmar, and her children.

The very last words of Julie are much like a swan song—the free expression of love in the face of death, and allowed only by death. For one last moment, she allows herself the luxury of talking to Saint-Preux as her lover. She ends her life as she "began" it: calling him "sweet friend." She fears that she is talking too much, when her heart no longer has a disguise, but she concludes that she has nothing to fear, because it is no longer herself who speaks, for she is "already in the arms of death."27

Her last sentences begin with a sort of neo-Platonic Christian expression of love and death, and end with a most noble all-to-human gift of love.

> When you see this letter, worms will be eating the face of your lover, and her heart where you will be no more. But would my soul exist without you; without you what happiness would I taste? No, I do not leave you, I am going to wait for you. Virtue, which separated us on earth, will unite us in our eternal stay. I die in that sweet expectation. Only too happy to buy at the price of my life the right to love you forever without remorse, and to say it to you one more time. (743)

Julie's posthumous letter focuses much that has filled the novel: its neo-Platonism, its courtly love, its experimentation with triangular and quartenary love relationships, its opposition of love and friendship. It is

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27In effect, then, her words become a sort of illusion.
in death that Julie has found the key to the reconciliation of love and virtue; only the dead and dying soul is totally free to express love to whomever and to do it without loss of honor. Or should it be rephrased?—only he or she who is dead to the world is free of the world and, thus, able to love and remain virtuous at the same time, in any circumstances.

Julie’s impending death allows her to express her love (which, in fact, had been hidden from her by illusion, if she was truthful in saying so). I contend that it is only a slight imaginative leap from Julie’s last letter to the realization that the chaste courtly love tradition, outlined by Denis de Rougement, offers Rousseau’s answer to the dilemma of love and virtue in an imperfect world of contrary "elective affinities."

The novel actually ends with Claire inviting Saint-Preux and his friend Bomston to settle at Clarens as Julie had wished. She speaks of Julie as of a saint (or goddess).

Come then, dear and respectable friends, come reunite with all that remains of her. Let’s reassemble all who were dear to her. May her spirit animate us; may her heart join all of ours; let’s live always in her sight. (744)

Julie was surely not a goddess for Rousseau, but, I think, he put into her possession, so to speak, the key of how eighteenth-century European men and women might learn to manage their out-of-control love affairs. One can say that it involves primarily asceticism, but, perhaps, a better
description would be sublimation; for courtly love does not suppress the expression of love but rather gives it a defined, directed, and circumscribed manner of celebration.

What Julie never attained, others may because of the Julie. The "menage a trois" Julie/Saint-Preux/Wolmar did not last (despite one glorious day in Elysium), because the love couple (Julie and Saint-Preux) had no third party into which to merge and sublimate their passion for the love object. That possibility was offered, at least Julie hoped, by Claire who was loved by both Julie and Saint-Preux. Unfortunately for Julie, Claire and Saint-Preux were not sufficiently attracted to each other to overcome their overwhelming attraction for Julie. The chemistry was just not right; and that is the ironic tragedy of Julie's unhappiness. Such an arrangement would have been the basis of a courtly love, which haunts the work from beginning to end.

Our most general thesis is that Rousseau is concerned primarily with individual and collective happiness—that he is primarily a eudaemonistic moralist. The subtle proposal, as I see it, of something like a courtly love rubric of addressing and living with the randomness of amorous affinities, represents the action of an individual and public moralist. It is a political act—by a political

28 Theoretically, there seems no reason why a "menage a trois" could not work.
philosopher who sees his true concerns as those of the individual soul.
Rousseau's overarching objective was a contribution to the happiness of humankind; the overarching obstacle to happiness was seen as alienation or division of the soul between nature and society, passion and virtue, happiness and duty. The Julie deals directly with this complex and envisions a synthesis—at least for a limited subset of human relationships. There is more than one morpheme of happiness, according to Rousseau, and there is no real hierarchy among them.

As we saw in Chapter I, there is solitary happiness and civic happiness, not to mention the good Emile (neither solitary nor civic). The Julie presents the quest of happiness of the romantic couple, which ends—in Julie's vision, at least—in a partial association or love triangle. This is a form of existence between solitude and society. Such an association is similar to the political in that friendship is its existential foundation and, in that, it is spiritually self-sufficient; but it is unlike the political in that it is not materially self-sufficient. It is not a return to nature; it is a transcendence of it.

The intent of the Julie, then, is to explore whether or not there can exist something like communal happiness—that is, other than solitary happiness—within the confines and horizon of love: that is, beyond love of self. Clarens and
its idyllic community is, I think, a metaphor of the spiritual self-sufficiency envisioned by Julie in the love triangle, as opposed to Clarens being some sort of blueprint for political well-being.

Love and happiness are inseparable notions and experiences throughout the Julie. From Part I, love is in fact viewed as the means to happiness, and, though the type of love as a means to happiness will change as the story develops, the inseparable nature of the two never falls from Julie's firmament. And, from the beginning of the novel, friendship and courtly love also play a role: the friendship of Claire and Julie; and the very nick name given Saint-Preux (Holy Knight)--not to mention the mock courtly love games engaged in by Claire, Julie, and Saint-Preux.

A fascination with an elevated Platonic love is never more evident than in Part I--when the lovers are actually in physical contact. Is it that even in the early stages of a young romance Julie senses that "ordinary" love will never satisfy her? It will turn out that she needs a religious love or at least a love nuanced with religious symbol (or courtly love). She will go to her death in the embrace of both these types of love--expressing, I shall conclude, a sacramentalizing of courtly love (not unlike what
de Rougement describes\(^1\)). Nonetheless, de Rougement's contention that the *Julie* is a mere expression of the passion myth is, it seems to me, inaccurate on two counts: 1) Rousseau is dealing with much more than passionate love; not only is he interested in friendship but also solitude and philosophy and civic virtue and happiness in various forms; 2) de Rougement concludes his brief analysis of the *Julie* by saying that "Rousseau ends with marriage—that is to say, with the triumph of the world as sanctified by Christianity;" de Rougement must know this to be an oversimplification: Does Julie not, so to speak, dissolve her marriage at the moment of her death, all the while living a sort of Christian death-in-life? It seems clear that Rousseau did not believe the social institution of marriage to be an effective resolution of the passion myth, at least not for everyone (see Bomston and Saint-Preux's discussion of marriage as it relates to the few and the many).

It seems that Rousseau—even if only through the Italian poets like Petrarch—was definitely writing within the tradition of Cortezia (courtly love) and the passion myth. In Parts II and III of the novel, themes of romantic love per se begin to appear in sharp silhouette. It is, according to Saint-Preux, as if a "charm" (read: potion)

gave birth to their love, just as in the Tristan and Iseult myth. And it is in Part II that Saint-Preux abandons philosophy for "chaste love and sublime friendship"—or, otherwise expressed, for a sort of courtly love of Julie. Forsaking philosophy is tantamount to abandoning the ideal of solitude and god-like self-sufficiency. The latter is now comprised by the one soul of the two lovers, which makes their current separation all the more—infinitely more—trying. The lovers are, following de Rougement, now experiencing a longing of the infinite, or a longing unto death.

But, in this ordeal, Claire reminds the lovers—and she an outsider to love—that it appears to her that love requires such obstacles for its very survival; that left alone with itself love would die. Here Claire expresses the essential dynamic of the passion myth. And even Julie shows an understanding of the needs of passionate love: "in order for us to love each other forever we must renounce each other. Let's forget all the rest and be the lover of my soul." (364) The only problem with this resolution is that the passion myth is only resolved in death or, as we shall see, in a death-in-life existence. And it is our ultimate contention that Rousseau was attempting to found, within the context of the passion myth, a new or at least a newly rediscovered resolution to the infinite longing of the myth. That resolution would return to the courtly love of
the Middle Ages, but to a courtly love that was, like de Rougement's (as opposed to Singer's), a chaste love. Medieval courtly love begins to twine itself about the allusive symbol of the Abbess Heloise in spiritual communion with her former lover Abelard.

Let us remember that it is Claire, the non-lover, who gives the most pertinent expression to the dynamic of love—that is, the necessity of obstacles to its survival. Could this not be Rousseau's way of saying that you cannot love and know love at the same time? This represents an extension of Saint-Preux's proposition that one cannot both act and know at the same time. But Saint-Preux also seemed to say that one had to act in the world in order to know the world. The only way out of this conundrum is, perhaps, to posit two kinds of knowledge: by intellect and by sentiment. It is as if, by knowing in one fashion, we surrender our ability to know in the other. In other words, loving, like acting, is a form of knowledge: necessarily non-self-reflective. Thus, both forms of knowledge—reason and sentiment—are partially blind. As with Rousseau in general, we can never embrace the entire pie; it might be phrased this way: We cannot know and know we know at the same time. The heart of the paradox of Rousseau is akin to the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle: Man is not God, but, of necessity, he acts as if he were; he pretends to both act and know, when he cannot in deed do both. Rousseau is the
first romantic in that he finds, in the experience of writing, a synthesis of acting and knowing. That Rousseau championed sentimental knowledge should not blind us to the fact he is often viewed as a rationalist—and that he appreciated the limits and horizons of each form of knowledge.

Julie is "in love" and does not understand the nature of that love nor its sacrifices; so, in Part III, she totally alienates herself from herself by attempting to be everything to everyone and by becoming nothing! She gives herself totally to each force within her life: to Saint-Preux (love); to her father (virtue); to Claire (friendship). Then she enters into the ultimate compromise for her: marriage. She alienates herself. And it is after her marriage that she asks Saint-Preux (again) to be the lover of her soul. What is this but a classic situation of courtly love! (but a chaste one). If there is to be happiness within the confines of this novel, it must be found in a form of courtly love, for otherwise the resolution would mean adultery—something that would be too damaging to the moral sensibilities of a Julie.

The novel in fact moves toward just such a resolution: the challenge of the "cure" of love first tests by friendship and then attempts to open up into cortezia. Claire and Julie represent the ideal of friendship. And it is in the "matinee a l'englaise" that the gestalt of courtly
love is first configured. But, as we know, the configurations change; Wolmar, we summarily say (when compared with Claire as a member of the menage), is an unworthy member of the triangle—for in him the other two cannot lose and rarefy their love. Though Saint-Preux offers himself as the ideal courtly lover—friend of your person and lover of your virtues—Julie knows that the traditional configuration of the "menage a trois" holds the answer, even if Wolmar is not a part of it. It is in Part V that the reader first intimates that the key, or at least a key to happiness will be some sort of communion of souls—more specifically, some sort of love triangle. Some sort of courtly love.

Julie has her own "cure" for herself: it would have been a sort of mystical love triangle, an even higher form of love than she suffers. Like Saint-Preux, Julie has found her own cure, and it is so different from Wolmar's theories of replacement of past memories with new memories.

Let us return explicitly to our primary subject: happiness. Rousseau's test for happiness is being able to say: "I will this moment to last forever." This guideline is enunciated both in the Julie and in the Reveries. Using

^The "stress on morality...should not be allowed to conceal the essential truth that in each phase of their relationship the fundamental psychological purpose is the same: the attainment of happiness." (Grimsley, Jean-Jacques, p. 136)
it as a barometer of the various approaches to happiness in the *Julie* yields consistent and insightful results. The happiness of the couple must be a form of courtly love; the happiness of the individual must be solitude. And whether there is a happiness that extends beyond the "menage a trois," whether there is a more extensive or political happiness is not a question that Rousseau seems to answer in the *Julie*. The most that can be said is that, if there is a political happiness portrayed in the *Julie*, it is that of the peasants at the grape harvest. It is the happiness of children at a festival. The "general will", as opposed to a small community of belles ames, has not yet been introduced as a means of overcoming alienation.

But what of erotic love? What of the love of the couple? One might guess that, theoretically, the couple would will the moment of coitus to last forever, but it is not a moment of stasis, rather a constant longing unto death. At all other moments, the couple, one might say, is willing or moving toward orgasm. Their life is one of motion, not rest. There is no moment that they might will to last forever, for there exists no moment of even relative rest in their lives (in so far as they exist as a couple). We saw in Part I where Julie intermittently made appeals to a sort of Platonic love or union of souls, as if she, with keener sensibilities than Saint-Preux, knew that happiness
was more or something different from what they were acting out.

But what of the happiness of the family—Julie’s second mode of life? For a while it seems that family life in rustic retreat holds the key to happiness, but Julie’s world weary speech in Part VI shatters the readers hold on that illusion. Again it is a question of motion and rest. As Julie explains, happiness of necessity climbs to a peak, then declines. She is, of course, speaking of her present state of happiness: the family which is naturally an evolving or moving organism. Children grow up and go away, and that is what you will for them, but it is a hard reality that robs you of your happiness. In other words, there is no moment in the life of the family that you will to last forever. After growing children, there are grandchildren, and so on. Thus, erotic love and family life are both states of motion—so inherently so that in them there is no moment that will be willed into eternity.

Rousseau’s criteria for happiness is another way of demanding the eternal present, another way of asking man to imitate God, another way of transcending motion. It is the romantic attempt to live the illusion of Zeno’s paradox of the arrow that never reaches its mark, that is in motion and yet is not.

What forms of life—other than religious forms—pass Rousseau’s happiness test? Within the confines of our
novel, we might say that both solitude and courtly love do.
It is in Part IV that Saint-Preux spends two hours alone in
Julie's garden Elysium. He says that he preferred that two
hours to any time of his life. In Part I he spoke of his
one hour after love-making with Julie as the preferred time
of his life; and in Part V he and Julie and Wolmar spent two
hours together in Elysium in a sort of communion of souls.
Though sublime, the two hours with Julie and Wolmar are not
said to rival his two hours of solitude in the same garden.
When he first entered Elysium, Saint-Preux expressed the
feeling that the garden affected him like primeval
wilderness or nature. Is art perfecting nature into an
ideal prime nature not the closest man can come to
wholeness? Does the solitary not recreate his own soul?
This is some evidence that Saint-Preux is at heart a
solitary and that, after the end of the novel, he will not
join the others at Clarens. This is, of course, conjecture,
but that the preferred moment of a man's life is two hours
of solitude, when he has loved such as Julie, does say
something of his nature, and it seems to express a
validation, for Rousseau, of existence in solitude. That
Saint-Preux prefers solitude to the communion of the "menage
a trois" seems to prefigure his refusal to wed Claire and
enter into a chaste triangle at the end of the story. One
might say that, whereas Saint-Preux's deepest nature is of
the solitary and Claire's is of the friend, Julie's is love.

And how does courtly love pass the test of happiness? De Rougement claims that the lovers who are within the passion myth actually wish for death, the only resolution to their infinite longing. Of course, the passion myth, and the courtly love which contains it, are allegorical of a religious longing, of a passion to unite with the Godhead, of a wish to return to the Universe. I agree with de Rougement that Rousseau was well aware of the tradition of the passion myth. Of course, he was aware of Heloise and Abelard, who, according to de Rougement, were the first historical instance of its being lived out. But I do not believe, as de Rougement seems to, that Rousseau was simply another chronicler of the myth. De Rougement finds resolution to the passion of the myth, at least on a totally personal level, in Christian marriage. I contend that Rousseau offered his own manner of resolution.

Again, it is a question of motion and rest. Briefly, Rousseau's answer to the passion was courtly love—chaste courtly love: a mode of life in which you love/desire/move to the fullest, without fear of falling from duty/virtue/rest. It is that synthesis of love and virtue that Julie discovered that imminent death gave her. Just as the life of the solitary is changeless, the life of courtly love is changeless, but also imaginative and free. Because
the imagination is restrained within a person by a death-in-life and by the chemistry of the "menage", it does not risk setting the love in motion. Yes, death-in-life takes the place of "nearness to death"—thus eliminating the accidental nature of the occurrence of happiness, as we find in the *Confessions* and the *Reveries*, not to mention the *Julie*.

It must be clear by now that Rousseau's medieval title reflects more than a passing fad of the times, as some experts think. Rather, it is an indication that Rousseau's paradigm of happiness is somehow Christian, somehow medieval. He borrows from Christianity the metaphor of the Christ who walks and loves in this world, but who is dead to this world. He who would save his life must first lose it. Rousseau's lover is the Heloise of the convent, writing to her lover Abelard, knowing full well he is no longer an ordinary man, but loving him as before. Abelard does not seem to understand her abiding love; he silences her. And, after their second exchange of letters, there is no longer a hint in her words of her love for him. (There are not a few parallels between Saint-Preux and Abelard: both lose sexual power; both somehow reject Heloise; both have a similar view of prayer; not to mention the more pedestrian comparisons.)

Courtly love passes Rousseau's test of happiness because, despite its being love (and thus motion), it wishes
for or wills nothing that it is not already. But what adds the element of stasis, of rest? It is the triangular relation that allows for the diffusion and rarefaction of the loves. In the case of Saint-Preux and Julie, the relationship of each to Claire would have been the element of the transmutation of their love into something of both motion and rest. Such a communion of love might be compared to monastic brotherhood or sisterhood, or to alchemy.

Of course, courtly love had existed centuries before and, if we are to believe de Rougement, even within a framework of chastity, but Rousseau secularized a Christian modus vivendi for love by creating the "menage a trois" in place of the convent. So the New Heloise is very much an Heloise: She attempts to create her imaginary convent walls with the mutual love of Claire and Saint-Preux, but finds that her friends are ultimately of different natures. Claire is the friend; Saint-Preux is the solitary.

Courtly love, and serving one's Lady, puts back together something that Kant has since broken: Rousseau joins desire to duty in the pursuit of happiness. With Rousseau, duty and its fulfillment are still linked to the sweetness of pleasure. As Saint-Preux says, knowing that one has done good is the sweetest of pleasures. And, when the duty is performed in the service of one's Lady, the happiness is infinitely sweeter. The incident of Saint-Preux’s assisting the peasant couple Claude Anet and Fanchon
seems a foreshadowing of the vassal serving his liege Lady. Of course, at the time of the event (Part I), Saint-Preux is still absorbed in erotic compulsions, but, even so, he takes great pleasure—even happiness—in his knowledge of having performed a good act, in spite of its interrupting plans for a love tryst.

It is to some extent true that Rousseau was a moralist, for he was surely always working on moral problems. For him, the best morality was the one that helped to make people whole "again"—that turned them inward and away from the fragmentation of the passions and the whims of the imagination. But the attempt to find the coincidence of virtue and happiness, in the Julie or elsewhere, will eventually raise the question of and the role of truth in the ordering of society. Virtue, even on Rousseau's account, is necessary to happiness, but the relation of truth to virtue seems problematic in Rousseau. It is the unnaturalness in virtue that might prompt us to ask if virtue can thus make us happy, for Rousseau strives for a natural wholeness of the individual. Or perhaps: "The life of virtue, for all its moral worth, neglects [the] living element of absolute desire and imagination, and so fails to satisfy all man's needs." Perhaps it is as simple as saying that art must improve on nature—especially since

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3Grimsley, Jean-Jacques, p. 149.
nature is not changeless, but rather perfectible and malleable. It might be that, because of the malleability of man, the project of constructing happiness for humankind can legitimately take different forms.

In the *Julie*, Saint-Preux the tutor allows Beauty and Goodness to preempt Truth; or, rather, Truth becomes a composition of Beauty and Goodness. And, when speaking individually and not as tutor, Saint-Preux states that, if he penetrated the mysteries of the Universe, he believes his situation would be less "delicious" than the existing "blinding ecstasy." For all of his rationalism in his more scientific works, Rousseau, at least in the *Julie*, humbles philosophy and her devotees. Saint-Preux blames philosophy for his cowardice and other ills and renounces it for love and friendship; Wolmar, on my unorthodox reading, is made to appear almost retarded in his understanding of humankind. Just as Saint-Preux the philosopher broke, Wolmar the philosopher is near conversion to Christianity as the novel ends. Can we say that such critiques of philosophy represent a philosophic teaching, or do we entertain the possibility, as Roger D. Masters seems to believe, that such portrayals are mere fodder for the "vulgar" reading audience? Such questions always appear in considerations of Rousseau, for he was, above almost all things, concerned with his usefulness.
Once we accept the fact that Rousseau saw nothing wrong with using art to arrive at naturalness, we can accept the *Julie* as consistent with his other writings on happiness. In the *Confessions* and the *Reveries*, we have seen the role played by the nearness-to-death experience in the attainment of happiness; and we have seen in the *Reveries* that Rousseau embraces the happiness of the solitary. Both notions are validated by the *Julie*, but the novel deals with the love of the couple (and the triangle) and, accordingly, adds to the scaffolding of happiness, so to speak. Once love is presented with an infinite obstacle, the love itself becomes infinite for all practical purposes (or dies). Whereas the solitary of the *Reveries* sees the infinite in a star-studded sky over Lake Geneva, the lovers of the *Julie* could have seen the infinite in the communion of the "menage a trois." In a sense, Rousseau attempts to show how to create an infinite world—not otherworldly, but infinite in its own way and for its own purpose. And the purpose of the action of the novel, whether or not attained, is the happiness of the lovers or, to expand the metaphor, the salvation of the lovers.

*Julie*, it seems, is saved—but at the moment of death and because of death. Saint-Preux remains a question, for he showed no little callousness to Julie's plight in her struggle with her abiding love for him. But both Julie and Saint-Preux represent a sort of cursed elect among
human kind—those who fall into a grand and controlling love. And such represents what I would call the loss of public innocence, for some people never attain a private state of existence, because they are born into and remain in the public world of political or conventional virtue and sensibilities. Falling into the private world of passionate love is tantamount to a loss of innocence of public virtue and habits. As ironic as this might sound, it is surely more common than a conscious loss of natural innocence. The entire role of Wolmar and Bomston is to bring Saint-Preux back to his political self, where in fact it is nature or natural processes that "cure" him. And it is death, the most natural process of all, that cures Julie. Rousseau has us consider just what portion of lovers ever come back to the political, if any. Of course, this is the reverse side of the attempt to return to a quasi-natural wholeness. Loss of whatever kind of innocence requires some form of convalescence or cure, for wholeness—an essential condition for happiness—is not gained by accident, though access to it might be.

There is a movement in the sentimental action of the Julie, as our whole discussion and division of the novel indicates; and Irving Singer has noted a Kierkegaardian-like evolution to our story.

As if anticipating Kierkegaard, Rousseau presents the lovers' progress throughout the novel as
Saint-Preux begins as the representative of an aesthetic attitude toward love—not promiscuous, as Kierkegaard was later to define the aesthetic, but responsive to its immediate goodness. Being a person in love, he manifests sexual passion as a source of vitality and human well-being. He and Julie move to a condition higher than the aesthetic when they fall under the influence of Wolmar, who represents the ethical stage. Julie finally attains the highest level of human development in her pantheistic love of nature. This supplants the aesthetic and the ethical as ultimate values without denying the ideality in each.4

The above must be compared with another of Singer's broad statements about the Julie: "For Rousseau the principal issue was to find the kind of relationship between men and women that will satisfy both love and virtue. The novel is thus an attempt to synthesize the two ideals, as opposed to leaving them in dialectical conflict."\(^5\) For me, an important point of the last statement is that it involves a relationship or a mutual love, not an individual state of synthetic resolution.

Also, there are two problems with the Kierkegaardian analogy: 1) It is more Saint-Preux than Julie who worships Nature; in fact, I am not sure where to find supporting texts for such a statement about Julie; and 2) Whatever happened to the relationship between men and women that will


\(^5\)Singer, p. 307.
satisfy both love and virtue? Does Julie leave Saint-Preux behind in her synthetic rise to the religious? If so, what happens to love, as opposed to the two individuals?

I think that Singer asks the pertinent questions, but I find slightly differing resolutions. Yes, the lovers go through three stages; call them Kierkegaardian for purposes of orientation: 1) The stage of engaged erotic love; the aesthetic level; 2) The stage of what we have called the passion myth—when erotic love, because of external obstacles, cannot be fulfilled; the moral stage which also involves external control, whether physical or persuasive; and 3) The ideal or paradigmatic stage approached by Julie and Saint-Preux—call it Courtly Love— but never achieved by the couple; this stage is "religious" in that it involves internal (self-imposed and fully-embraced) obstacles to erotic love; in fact, the eros is given another object.

As stated above, my stages break down this way: Part I; Parts II and III; and Parts IV, V, VI. Singer's stages seem to divide the novel in two, but it remains unclear at just what point Julie begins her elevation to the religious. If you had three stages, it would seem that you needed three divisions in which to act them out. Also, Singer conducts his analysis as if the personage of Julie foreshadows the Rousseau of the Reveries. I do not agree with such a reading, if that is in fact the subtext of Singer's line of analysis. This is a novel of political import, even if it
is not a political novel; the *Reveries* only incidently speak to the political. Perhaps, the *Julie* is about the highest that we can attain in society, and the *Reveries* is about the highest we can attain in solitude. Looking at Rousseau's personal life, the understatement would be that the *Julie* was a failure; and that the *Reveries*, in process at Rousseau's death, were at least a partial success.

Where is the major political import of this work? One is tempted to say that the world weariness of Julie and Saint-Preux seems to express the frustration and sadness of the political philosopher Rousseau--unable to find a solution or resolution of happiness that would be both political and human. But Rousseau is not only political philosopher--he is poet and creator--and he attempts to be good, beautiful, and true in his efforts to be salutary. But make no mistake about it: This is not a question of an exoteric and an esoteric teaching. Rather, because the world is perfectible or at least malleable, it can be created--and that includes humankind. Rousseau offered in his version of courtly love a new mode or order of living--a new way of being happy.

Aristotle defined happiness as an activity of the soul in conformity with virtue; as a form of self-restraint or moderation. The dominant modern view is that happiness is the satisfaction of desires. The salutary political nature of the ancient view and the naturalism of the modern view
are blended in Rousseau. And what allows him to ride the fence, so to speak, is his romantic belief in the power to shape the world. In courtly love, both approaches to happiness are being lived simultaneously: a motion that is rest; and a rest that is motion.

Rousseau, I think, was both rationalist and romantic—and that duality constituted his self-proclaimed uniqueness. He lived as a romantic and recapitulated that romanticism in a form of rationalism. His ability and willingness to allow both these opposing natures to grow and prosper with himself constitutes his greatness as well as his unique limitations.

Recognizing the claims of Antiquity, he could not abandon the promise of Modernity. That promise was and is comprised of a true freedom and equality of soul. And what does that mean? Within the context of my enquiry, it means that there is more than one way (via) to even true happiness. There are at least three general ways: 1) the private or solitary way, which involves love of self; 2) the public or civic way, which involves love of country; and 3) the tertiary way of romantic love. The *Julie* explores the last of these vitae.

Also, there is a tension in Plato/Aristotle of viewing the good life (happiness) as attainable through the political and of viewing the good life as contemplative or as a partial or complete retreat from the political. All one has to do is read *On the Social Contract* and the
Reveries in order to discover the same tension or polarity in Rousseau. Perhaps the major difference between these ancients and Rousseau is that for Plato/Aristotle virtue was natural and eternal verities were contemplated; for Rousseau, virtue was artifice and varied, and the grand spectacle of Nature was the object of both mind and eye. As we have pointed out already, Rousseau’s greatest affinity with the ancients was, as with Machiavelli, through ancient heroes, especially those of Plutarch. And, as Rousseau suggests in his Second Preface, the characters of the Julie are heroes of the human heart. I would suggest that Rousseau elevates Plato so in the Julie, because he regards him as a poet.

Just how we think happiness is attained will somewhat determine what we expect of the political. If we believe that happiness is a state of mind (Stoicism), we are less likely to demand much in the way of social programs; if we believe happiness to be the maximization of pleasure over pain (Utilitarianism), we are more likely to institute social programs aimed at the physical well-being of the citizens. But what do we do or demand when we believe happiness to be found in solitude? If we the citizens also believe that man is radically solitary by nature, we would probably try to create an over-powering and over-whelming political community, for the purpose of protecting the integrity and preservation of the collective, the only way
of life that could ever preserve the species. If we believed only a small fraction of people to be solitary, we might even help support them in order to control them.

Cast in the most fundamental terms, the conflict that Rousseau sees is between the truth of life and the life of society. Happiness might be found on each extreme and even in the middle. This middle way is that of the Julie--the way of the partial association: a private political union. Let's say, the truth of life brings us to the raw impulses of the solitary dreamer, and the life of society takes us to a denaturing of life itself. Only in the love of Julie's vision--joined with virtue and friendship--is man allowed to exist as fully natural and as fully virtuous. Only here is there synthesis, as opposed to constant opposition or retreat. Of course, whether this love is suitable to more than a slight proportion of humankind is another question.

But what do we do as citizens, if we believe that happiness might be found in a sort of courtly love? Socially and politically, it seems only salutary; it would offer, even in its superficial practice, a channel and framework within which possibly illicit and disrupting affairs might be calmed. But Rousseau knew that such institutions were the work of the poet, not the political philosopher, in spite of the fact that such institutions and mores were of profound political import.
In the Julie, Rousseau seems more Plutarch than Plato. He is a creator of heroes, hopefully, to be imitated, but heroes of love, not war or politics. Rousseau writes in the Second Preface that, within that little world of the novel, he is teaching people to love humanity. His heroine resembles a religious leader and founder, especially in her death and its aftermath, but, as has been said often, hers is a religion of love and humanity, though bolstered by a naturalistic Christianity.

The popularity of this book must have been almost embarrassing to Rousseau the political philosopher. Whereas the young Werther later provoked a rash of suicides, Julie only and purely edified. Such a creation is political in spite of itself—in spite of its effect on what it intends to transcend.

An understanding of Julie; or The New Heloise gives the political philosopher a window of insight into Rousseau’s political aspirations for humankind. Order was no longer enough; it had to be order with some semblance of love, happiness, and unity of soul.
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VITA

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