

1998

Rousseau and the Lyric Natural: The Self as Representation.

Pamela Diane Gay

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation

Gay, Pamela Diane, "Rousseau and the Lyric Natural: The Self as Representation." (1998). *LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses*. 6829.

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/6829

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

**A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600**

**ROUSSEAU AND THE LYRIC NATURAL:
THE SELF AS REPRESENTATION**

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 French and Italian

by

Pamela Diane Gay

B.A., University of California at Berkeley, 1977

M.A., Hunter College, the City University of New York, 1989

December 1998

UMI Number: 9922078

**Copyright 1998 by
Gay, Pamela Diane**

All rights reserved.

**UMI Microform 9922078
Copyright 1999, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.**

**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

**© Copyright 1998
Pamela Diane Gay
All rights reserved**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to those without whose encouragement this dissertation would not have been completed. In addition to thanking my Director and Chair of the Department of French and Italian, Dr. Jefferson Humphries, for his support, I wish to give special thanks to Dr. Adelaide Russo, my second reader, for her continued encouragement and patience and to Dr. John Lowe for his knowledge and input on the history of opera. I also wish to thank other members of my committee, colleagues, and friends at LSU and elsewhere who have been of great support; these include, among others Dr. Gregory Stone, Dr. Patrick Fitzgerald, Dr. Garrett McCutchan, Mr. Gerry Anders, Christine, Heather, and David.

I am equally indebted to musicologists Dr. Jennifer Brown and Dr. James Guthrie for their support and consultation concerning the musical background of this work. Finally, I wish to thank my sister for the many stop-overs in Washington and emotional support which has sustained me throughout its writing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	iii
Abbreviations	vi
Abstract	vii
Introduction	1
Rousseau and the Lyric Natural	1
Rousseau as Philosopher of Music and Language	15
Rousseau and the Reformulation of Opera	19
 Chapter One	
Rousseau, the Natural, and the Lyric:	
Eighteenth-Century Beginnings	27
Defining the Natural	33
Music and Origins of Culture	44
The Lyric Natural as Text	51
Aesthetic Doctrines	53
Nature: The Terrible and the Sublime	60
The Public Presence of the Lyric Stage	65
Rousseau and the Supplemmentarity of the Lyric	70
The Lyric Idealized	73
 Chapter Two	
The Autobiographical Emblem in Early Lyric Works	78
<i>La Découverte du nouveau monde</i>	94
<i>Les Muses galantes</i>	101
Of Music and the <i>Essai</i>	108
Song as Sign	114
 Chapter Three	
<i>Le Devin du village</i>: Of the Country as Utopia	117
Formal Oppositions in the Libretto	134
The Pastoral Staged: Representation of the Natural	146
The Pastoral as Tableau: <i>Le Devin du village</i> and <i>La Nouvelle Héloïse</i>	150
The Music of <i>Le Devin</i>	155
Rewritings of <i>Le Devin</i>	160
 Chapter Four	
<i>Pygmalion</i>: The Natural and the Representation of Self	168
A Reading of the Libretto	194

Lyric Indeterminacy	207
Rousseau the Absent Orator	216
Theatricality as Sign	229
History of the Libretto	232
 Conclusion	 247
 Selected Bibliography	 254
 Vita	 259

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Conf.</i>	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Les Confessions</i> . In <i>OC</i> .
<i>DM</i>	Rousseau, <i>Dictionnaire de musique</i> . In <i>OC</i> .
<i>DNM</i>	Rousseau, <i>La Découverte du nouveau monde</i> . In <i>OC</i> .
<i>DOI</i>	Rousseau, <i>Discours sur l'origine d'inégalité</i> . In <i>OC</i> .
<i>E</i>	Rousseau, <i>Emile</i> . In <i>OC</i> .
<i>EOL</i>	Rousseau, <i>Essai sur l'origine des langues</i> . In <i>OC</i> .
<i>HDM</i>	Willi Apel, ed., <i>Harvard Dictionary of Music</i> , Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press
<i>LD</i>	Rousseau, <i>Les Dialogues</i> . In <i>OC</i> .
<i>LDS</i>	Rousseau, <i>Lettre à D'Alembert sur les spectacles</i> . In <i>OC</i> .
<i>LMF</i>	Rousseau, <i>La Lettre sur la musique française</i> . In <i>OC</i> .
<i>LNH</i>	Rousseau, <i>La Nouvelle Héloïse</i> . In <i>OC</i> .
<i>OC</i>	Rousseau, <i>Oeuvres Complètes</i> . Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Vols. 1–5. Edited by Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond. Paris: Gallimard, 1959.
<i>PE</i>	<i>The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics</i> . Edited by Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993
<i>RD</i>	N. J. H. Dent, ed., <i>A Rousseau Dictionary</i> . Blackwell Philosopher Series. Oxford, U.K.: Black

ABSTRACT

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's work for the lyric stage comprises several opera libretti (*Les Muses galantes* and *La Découverte du nouveau monde*), an *intermède* (*Le Devin du village*), a *scène lyrique* (*Pygmalion*) and an unfinished opera (*Daphnis et Chloë*). These works use as a motif the figure of nature while continually defining and redefining, in a sort of spiral development, the self. Nature represents for Rousseau and others of his century a paradigm allowing for small segments of history to be presented as an evenly construed narrative. For Rousseau, the construction of a narrative in *Le Second Discours* marks the passage from the primitive natural state to a cultural one through a series of beginnings. These beginnings appear logical if not always chronological. The same trajectory from savage state to social state is used as a paradigm to define the evolution of self using an ever-evolving tapestry of emblems. Through emblems of the natural appearing in lyric works, the self is defined and redefined as each emblem appears and then transcends its appearance in the framework of the lyric.

For Rousseau, the lyric work suggests a readability through which the transparency of nature can be perceived as being one with the self. Defining *emblem* as a complex of symbols representing this transparency, we can then construe its appearance in lyric works in musical score, *mise-en-scène*, and libretti as an unseen language analogous to self-definition. In this dissertation, the lyric works *Le Devin du village* (1752) and *Pygmalion* (1770) will be the focus of our study because they reveal multiple means by which Rousseau uses the lyric to manifest the ideal of self. Whereas in *Le*

Devin du village this is done emblematically via the treatment of *récitatif*, in *Pygmalion* it occurs via the attempt to embody, through the merger of music and language, the emblem of the self as one idealized unity.

INTRODUCTION

ROUSSEAU AND THE LYRIC NATURAL¹

Pour bien connaître un caractère, il y faudrait distinguer de l'acquis d'avec la nature, voir comment il s'est formé.²

To know a temperament well, to know how it originates, one must distinguish acquired traits from natural ones.

This dissertation examines how Rousseau represents the natural in lyric works, be they libretti or other texts wherein all elements express a given requisite idea. The lyric works I have chosen to study were written and staged by Rousseau in Paris and Lyons between 1740 and 1770. For this study, I define *lyric* as a category of representation in which music is an intrinsic intellectual and aesthetic element. For Rousseau, the musical element of the lyric mode becomes the focal point for the expression of essential emotional and rational values.³

Before beginning this project I found that little substantial criticism of Rousseau's works for the lyric stage had been written. Furthermore, an articulation of the natural as

¹ In this dissertation the term *lyric natural* refers to the setting forth of the lyric phrase in a manner evocative of values of nature in order to recapture nature's healing presence, which Rousseau states in *Le Second Discours* was lost and had to be found. The linking of morality to the affections, and thus to the locus of affection in music, can be found in an unfinished text briefly mentioned at the beginning of *Les Confessions*, Book 9. The title of the text, *La Morale sensitive*, responds to Rousseau's constant concern to understand the most intimate workings of the human heart in order to use the exterior workings of nature to render in the human soul a state most favorable to virtue. *Dictionnaire de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Raymond Trousson and Frédéric S. Eigeldinger (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1996), s.v. "La Morale sensitive" (Pierre Hartmann).

² *Ebauches of Conf.*, 1:1149. To facilitate reading and because of the great variety of sources cited, I have rendered all quotations in this dissertation in standard French.

³ James William Johnson defines *lyric* as one of three general categories of poetic literature, separate from narrative and dramatic forms. Whereas in the lyric mode the musical element is primary, in narrative and dramatic forms it assumes a role secondary to other elements of representation. *PE*, s.v. "Lyric."

a representational strategy focusing on intertextual issues contained in other libretti of the period had not been attempted. Nor had citational systems of reference in the music and libretti of lyric works of Rousseau been identified as bearing the autobiographical emblem. Placed within the broader spectrum of Rousseau's sociopolitical and autobiographical writings, such a study offers invaluable insight into the pervasiveness of the themes of nature and of the natural in Rousseau's text. As a secondary objective this study articulates the role of the libretto as primary text within the Enlightenment project.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the relationship of man and nature was explored not only by Rousseau but also by theorists such as Anthony Ashley Cooper⁴ (1671–1713), third earl of Shaftesbury, and John Locke⁵ (1632–1704). I discuss these theories of the natural in my opening chapters in order to foreground a relationship between the natural and the lyric that is used by Rousseau as a representational strategy. In 1770 he adds to this representational schema the figure of the self, thus forming in his stage works a tripartite model encompassing the lyric, the natural, and the self.

The varied uses of the natural in Rousseau's text, and the distinctions between the natural and the artificial, raise the question of his purpose in his use of the term *natural*.

⁴ In her article "Shaftesbury" in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Elizabeth Radcliffe states that "Shaftesbury introduced into British moral philosophy the notion of a moral sense, a mental faculty unique to human beings, through which they determined right from wrong. The moral sense was analogous to the aesthetic sense, by which, in a Platonic view, beauty is composed."

⁵ In his entry "John Locke," *ibid.*, Nicholas P. Wolterstorff states that Locke's theory of natural law coincided with that of civil disobedience. Locke was not the first to conceive of a *state of nature* devoid of "governmental authority and private property. They [humanity] would still be under divine obligation, much of which would be accessible to them by virtue of their natural capacities. There would be for them a natural law would exist in a state of nature by which each person would have title to their own persons and labor."

Did he intend the same connotation throughout his various works? I posit that for Rousseau, "the natural" was continually changing in definition. Whereas Nature, as a central foundation of Enlightenment thought, changed from the Renaissance conception of "nature" as the law that springs from the essence of things to one that is received from without,⁶ in Rousseau's thought Nature constituted a foundation that could not be easily defined or clearly theorized. For example, in the *Préface* to *Le Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* Rousseau compares man of nature to the statue of Glaucus, identified in Greek mythology as disfigured and made unrecognizable by time, the sea, and storms. In this comparison, the terms *natural*, *primitive*, and *original* are equally privileged:

. . . et comment l'homme viendra-t-il à bout de se voir tel que l'a formé la Nature, à travers tous les changements que la succession des temps et des choses a dû produire dans sa constitution originelle, et de démêler ce qu'il tient de son propre fond d'avec ce que les circonstances et ses progrès ont ajouté ou changé à son Etat primitif? semblable à la statue de Glaucus que le temps, la mer et les orages avaient tellement défigurée, qu'elle ressemblait moins à un Dieu qu'à une bête féroce.⁷

. . . and how will man come to see himself as Nature formed him, through all changes in his original self wrought by the succession of time and things, compared with those changes which circumstance and progress have altered or added to his primitive state? Like the statue of Glaucus that time, the sea, and storms so disfigured that it resembled less a God than a ferocious beast.

In his use of *natural*, as well as of *primitive* and *original*, Rousseau's theological orientation is also to be considered. Rousseau, being from a fundamentally Christian ethos, distinguished between Christianity as practiced by priests of the church and as

⁶ Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), 44.

⁷ *DOI*, 3:122.

revealed in such works as *La Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard*⁸ and *Lettres écrites de la montagne*.⁹ It was in these latter works that Rousseau described himself as Christian—not as a follower of priests, but as a disciple of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ As a Calvinist convert to Catholicism, Rousseau espoused the Christian dualistic conception of the natural, inherited from Descartes, which concerned a fundamental division of man from nature. Rousseau's debt to Descartes (and to the tradition of empiricism in general) is revealed in the following statement from *La Profession de foi*: "J'existe et j'ai des sens par lesquels je suis affecté. Voilà la première vérité qui me frappe, et à laquelle je suis forcé d'acquiescer"¹¹ (I exist and I have senses by which I am affected. This is the first truth I behold and to which I must acquiesce). The ability of the *senses* to perceive a higher truth in nature implied that "the natural" was present in all that man did in nature and, in turn, what nature directly bestowed on man.

The two sentiments Rousseau defined as innate to man, *amour de soi* and pity, were those he considered "natural." Conversely, actions man did to others once he entered a society of peers were "artificial" because they were cultivated in society and

⁸ The savoyard vicar's expression of faith did not consist of imposing a belief, but of defining the origins of judgment and feeling, followed by those of matter and movement, to the end of examining within oneself the universe and its laws. Written to introduce the child Emile to religion, the work gives Rousseau's account of God's nature and an explanation of the connection between religious belief and morality. *RD*, s.v. "The Creed of a Savoyard Vicar."

⁹ Written at Môtiers in 1763 while Rousseau was in exile, the work is inscribed in the polemic following the condemnation by the Genevan Council of *Emile* and *Du Contrat social*. Addressed to an anonymous reader, the letters contain an apology for *Du Contrat social* and an attack on state religion, arguing that under the reforms originally accorded the Protestant church, all interpretations are possible.

¹⁰ *Conf.*, 1:464.

¹¹ *E*, 4:570.

dominated by a desire to establish oneself as superior. One example of this division was the sentiment of "compassion," which stemmed from pity, termed by Rousseau a "natural" inclination.¹² Conversely, "praise," being used by society as a function of peer approval, was "artificial." Likewise, "virtue" was considered artificial because it reflected moral principles based on reason and which could only be learned once one was judged by others. For Rousseau, virtue required will and commitment to principle over and above the promptings of one's feelings and inclinations and was necessary to maintain a just society. As an example of this dichotomy, the character of the noble savage, created by Rousseau as the paradigm of man of nature, is compassionate but has no "virtue"; he performs good actions but is in no way praiseworthy.

Adding to the above range of categories, Rousseau's association of "naturalness" with melody is explicitly revealed in the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*.¹³ Therein he paradigmatically opposes melody to harmony, incorporating this opposition within that of the natural versus the artificial. Within the parameters of the *Essai*, song is revealed as a first language: "Autour des fontaines dont j'ai parlé les premiers discours furent les premières chansons."¹⁴ (Around the fountains of which I spoke the first discourses were the first songs). In Chapter XII of the *Essai*, according to Jacques Derrida, Rousseau

¹² *Amour de soi* is the natural sentiment which motivates every animal toward self-preservation. In man it is guided by reason and modified by passion, thereby creating humanity and virtue. *RD*, 30, s.v. "Amour de soi." *Pity or compassion* is the principle prior to reason that excites in us repugnance at seeing any sensible being, particularly of our species, suffer pain or death. *Ibid.*, s.v. "Compassion."

¹³ *EOL*, in *OC* Vol. 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5:411.

assigns a common origin to language and to song, connoting origin and common birth of melodious inflections and accents, and words:

Il n'y a pas de musique avant le langage. La musique naît de la voix et non du son. Aucune sonorité pré-linguistique ne peut, selon Rousseau, ouvrir le temps de la musique. A l'origine il y a le chant.¹⁵

There is no music before language. Music is born of voice and not of sound. No prelinguistic sonority can, according to Rousseau, open the time of music. In the beginning is song.¹⁶

Song, like all speech, is born of passion. Accordingly, all speech, like music, requires a listener and comes into being at the same time as human society.¹⁷ So, Rousseau argues in the *Essai*, the activation of the senses by melody can also produce positive moral effects: "Les sons dans la mélodie n'agissent pas seulement sur nous comme sons, mais comme signes de nos affections, de nos sentiments"¹⁸ (Melodious sounds affect us not only as sounds but as signs of our affections and sentiments); and "Si le plus grand empire qu'ont sur nous nos sensations n'est pas dû aux causes morales, pourquoi donc sommes-nous si sensibles à des impressions qui sont nulles pour des barbares?"¹⁹ (If the vast empire which our senses holds over us is not due to moral causes, why then are we so sensitive to impressions which hold no meaning for savages?).

¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1967), 280.

¹⁶ *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 195.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *EOL*, 5:417.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 418.

In Chapter XIII of the *Essai*, Rousseau both praises melody and demeans harmonic structures prevalent in the music of his period. The latter he conceives of as an "alteration" of natural proportions, having little to do with pleasure:

L'harmonie proprement dite est dans un cas bien moins favorable encore. N'ayant que des beautés de convention, elle ne flatte à nul égard les oreilles qui n'y sont pas exercées, il faut en avoir une longue habitude pour la sentir et pour la goûter.²⁰

Harmony, properly conceived, is a case even less favorable. Having only conventional appeal, it does not appeal to uneducated ears; furthermore it takes a long time to feel and to sense it.

Melody, on the other hand, achieves a rare status for Rousseau, in serving as an agent of perfectibility,²¹ yet one received through the senses:

Comme les sentiments qu'excite en nous la peinture ne viennent point des couleurs, l'empire que la musique a sur nos âmes n'est point l'ouvrage des sons. De belles couleurs bien nuancées plaisent à la vue, mais ce plaisir est purement de sensation. C'est le dessin, c'est l'imitation qui donne à ces couleurs de la vie et de l'âme.²²

Just as the feelings that art excites in us do not derive from colors, the empire [of images] that music confers on our souls is not the work of sound. [As an example], beautifully nuanced colors are pleasing, but this pleasure is purely sensual. It is the design and imitation which give to these colors both life and soul.

As an aesthetic ideal, the natural signified the abandonment of civilized complexities, resulting from the growth of society and the conquest of the historical

²⁰ Ibid. 415.

²¹ Rousseau describes *perfectibility* as the agent of self-improvement which is innate to human beings but is also a mixed blessing. To his capacity to perfect himself, man owes the capacity to learn trades and to be skilled in learning; conversely, it is the desire for perfectibility which draws man from the "pure state of nature," conceived by Rousseau as innocence, into society. See *RD*, s.v. "Perfectibility."

²² *EOL*, 5:412.

world, in favor of a "purer" life more in harmony with nature. For Rousseau, the musical natural connoted a "return to the ear." "Naturalness," which was associated with melody, required introspection on the part of the listener. Accordingly, melody, in contrast to harmonic embellishment, suggested transparency in revealing to man his innermost conscience. In his chapter on Rousseau's *Essai*, Derrida states that the growth of music, like that of language, represents a severance from a natural or maternal origin:

La substitution éloigne de la naissance, de l'origine naturelle ou maternelle. L'oubli du commencement est un calcul qui met l'harmonie à la place de la mélodie, la science de l'intervalle au lieu de la chaleur de l'accent. Dans ce sevrage de la voix de parole, un "nouvel objet" vient usurper et suppléer à la fois les "traits maternels." Ce qui souffre alors, c'est l'"accent oral." La musique se trouve ainsi "privée de ses effets" propres, c'est-à-dire naturels et moraux..²³

Substitution distances from birth, from the natural or maternal origin. The forgetfulness of the beginning is a calculation that puts harmony in the place of melody, the science of intervals in place of the warmth of accent. In this weaning of voice from speech, a "new object" comes at once to usurp and compensate for the "maternal traits." What suffers, then, from this is the "oral accent." Music thus finds itself "deprived of its proper effects," that is to say, its natural and moral ones.²⁴

Derrida cites Rousseau's allegiance to the history of Western metaphysics, wherein presence is ascribed to the voice as index of being, while writing, as a graphic entity, is accorded a secondary role.²⁵

Rousseau's *Essai sur l'origine des langues* states that when music is transcribed, it becomes graphic, loses its vitality and fails to achieve the caliber of presence. In

²³ Derrida, *De la Grammatologie*, 285.

²⁴ Spivak, *Of Grammatology*, 199.

²⁵ *EOL*, 5:384–86.

contradiction, Derrida's reading unveils a possibility of transposition in music as in all signs from natural to artificial or lifeless states, creating instead a process of supplementarity which Derrida describes in *De la Grammatologie* as writing in its purest sense. Within this process, exactitude displaces expression just as concept displaces "affect." Thus, the ideal of presence is achieved through a continuous process of dispossession.

Derrida's reading of the *Essai* is of interest to this study because it underscores Rousseau's use of a binary system of representation to privilege moral effects through the melodic as opposed to harmonic unity. Within this framework the alliance of the melodic with the moral, both as providing a link between the sign and that which it signified, and as providing a link within the chain of signification, can be considered as Rousseau's specific contributions to the linguistic and anthropological discourses of his century:

A mesure que la langue se perfectionnait, la mélodie, en s'imposant de nouvelles règles, perdait insensiblement de son ancienne énergie.²⁶

As language was perfected, melody, through the imposition of new rules, was robbed of its former energy.

Within this discourse music becomes a missing link in the chain of origin of culture.²⁷

Rousseau's theory of origin wherein the lyric sign plays a pivotal role expresses melody as presence. Presence conveyed as the melodic line is most perfectly suited to the task of mimesis, or the imitation of nature. In examining the question of origin in

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5:490.

²⁷ In his study *Music and the Origin of Language* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press: 1995), 47, Downing Thomas insists on the musical sign as a missing link which the Age of Reason applied to its knowledge of the history of signs.

Rousseau's century, his contemporaries, including John Locke, tended to situate "natural man" in part of a larger *anthropologia anatomica*, as "man of nature." This "norm," conceived as "man of nature," divided peoples into two strata, "civilized" and "barbaric." The former were civilized because they had the faculty of reason. The latter, which included, among others, Eskimos and Africans—in effect, all indigenous peoples subject to different standards than Europeans. These people were judged as "barbarous" because their faculty of reason was less apparent as observed by continental Europeans, including Rousseau, who in the *Notes to Le Second Discours* refers to "la force et la vigueur des hommes chez les Nations barbares et sauvages" (the strength and vigor of men in savage and barbarous nations), alluding to accounts by Jesuit travelers.²⁸ This argument indicates an implicit marginalization by Rousseau of non-European cultures, contrary to his espousal of equal rights for all individuals.

Yet Rousseau's insistence on the question of origin of lyric language subsumes that of all societies. First presented in the *Essai*, the presence of the musical lyric *as* language foreshadows a representational strategy through which he will later theatricalize or promote "the self" as allied to the natural present within the lyric framework. Within this strategy, the interior self belonging to the passions or sentiment, as represented by melody, is most privileged. Musical composition based on melodic unity, as opposed to that based on then-current theories of harmony, becomes most natural for the representation of one's innermost sentimental and moral self. Thus, music

²⁸ DOI, 3:198.

allowed Rousseau a ploy—specifically, to reveal the true, innermost self as one directed by feelings and morally concerned.

Definitions of the self are as varied and fluctuating in Rousseau's texts as those of the natural. Throughout his varied works, the self's relation to the natural fluctuates by degrees and is diametrically opposed during three distinct chronological periods: 1) the period of adolescence, described by biographer Maurice Cranston, when Rousseau rebelled against Calvinist Geneva to embrace the Parisian cultural elite; 2) the period between 1752 and 1757 in which Rousseau's theoretical writings contested the moral validity of the stage; and 3) the period in which he argued in the First Book of *Les Dialogues* that the purer self of "Jean-Jacques" should be accepted by society over the fugitive²⁹ (seen by the public as the political activist "Rousseau") as legitimate author of the lyric work *Le Devin du village* (1752). Framed in tripolar form like that of Rousseau's final staged lyric work, *Pygmalion* (1770), *Les Dialogues*, completed in 1775, presents the self as a joining together and reconciliation of the "natural" self (i.e., the true self, Jean-Jacques) and the "artificial" self (conceived by society as "Rousseau") through a mediating third presence, that of the spectator ("*le français*").

In terms of his role as author and composer of *Le Devin du village*, scholars admit that Rousseau merits a place in musical history. Certainly the configuration of his lyric ideal exists in staged works not only as opera but as *intermède*³⁰ and as *scène*

²⁹ LD, in OC vol. 5. Rousseau wrote *Les Dialogues* during a period of exile and flight in which he felt "pursued" by adversaries and sought, in its writing, to absolve the self of their accusations.

³⁰ Described by Rousseau as a short lyric piece inserted within an opera or stage play to amuse the audience as a distraction. DM, 5:864, s.v. "Intermède."

*lyrique*³¹ (of which *Pygmalion* represents a culminating achievement). The emblem of the natural exists, moreover, in multiple dimensions of lyric representation in Rousseau's staged works. It is present in his libretti, relationships of verbal and musical texts, and mises-en-scène, as well as in stage action. Musically, Rousseau empowers the natural as the presence of melodious rhythms, simple themes, and homophonic (as opposed to polyphonic)³² chordal structures. In Derridean terms, using both verbal and musical paradigms, the natural imposes a fundamental law of supplementarity wherein a compensatory act usurps³³ or supplants original presence as textual or lyric phrase. Its essence is constantly supplemented and undermined by the stage as agent of theatricality, of dissimulation, and of appearance.

In pursuit of the natural as ideal, the positing of a melodic first language is essential to an understanding of the *Essai*. According to Rousseau, the first language was melody, contained in song and holding within its parameters a moral principle. Although the date of the *Essai* has been debated by scholars, two (Beaudouin and Lanson)³⁴ date it prior to 1754, the date of completion of Rousseau's *Second Discours*. This chronology would make it contemporary with the writing and production of the

³¹ Described in *DM*, 5:1033, s.v. "Scène," as the *scène* of a lyric monologue containing at least two actors. In the monologue a single character of lyric predominated, whereas in a *scène* as many voices as characters were allowed.

³² In the homophonic musical style, one voice leads melodically, with a slightly more elaborate accompaniment in a chordal style. Polyphonic structure combines several individual voice parts.

³³ Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," trans. Barbara Johnson. Peggy Kamuf, ed., *A Derrida Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 134.

³⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, "Introduction" (Paris: Flammarion, 1993), 7.

intermède Le Devin du village. For my study, theoretical consequences of this dating are structurally embodied in the text: in the *Essai* Rousseau designates song a lyric first language, and in *Le Devin du village* he uses basic rhythms of the *romance*, a strophic song of lyrical character,³⁵ to entice the spectator visually, thereby subliminally persuading him or her through simple melodic rhythms of the superiority of the natural or countrified environment to the city.

To achieve a fuller understanding of the importance of the natural in Rousseau's *oeuvre*, it is necessary to comprehend that his conception, in the *Essai*, of speech as distinct from a maternal (or natural) sung origin is analogous to his presentation of French opera *récitatif*, introduced in *La Lettre sur la musique française*,³⁶ as distinct from song.³⁷ According to Rousseau, whereas speech first emanates melodically from the expression of passion and progresses from sentiment to reason, language passes from accentuation to a monotony of words. Rousseau imagines a language lacking in essential phonetic conditions, as bearing characteristics of the French language incapable of being rendered as music:

³⁵ The French *romance* is described as "a short strophic song of lyrical character usually dealing with love but also with historical events." *HDM*, s.v. "Romance."

³⁶ Rousseau argues for the primacy of melody in all expressive and moving music, which he states must be rooted in the sounds and accents of the spoken language of its nation of origin. *RD*, s.v. "Writings on music."

³⁷ In the entry "Recitative," *ibid.*, Donald J. Grout describes "a vocal style designed to imitate the natural inflection of speech. It was employed with narrative prose texts in operas where it carried the action from one aria (ensemble, chorus) to another." With the development of the aria, the recitative gradually became faster and less melodic, adopting in the mid-eighteenth century a style known as *parlando* or speaking.

Telle en pourrait être une qui ne serait composée que de sons mixtes, de syllabes muettes, sourdes ou nasales, peu de voyelles sonores, beaucoup de consonnes et d'articulations, et qui manquerait encore d'autres conditions essentielles.³⁸

Such [a language] would be composed only of mixed sounds, [comprising] silent, deaf, or nasal syllables, with few sonorous vowels and many articulations and consonants, lacking other essential conditions.

Rousseau also believed that the French language should not be sung, since in the process of acquiring its particular accentuation and rhythms, which he perceived as properties of "reason" and "grammar," it had become alienated from its originary qualities as song.³⁹

L'étude de la philosophie et le progrès du raisonnement ayant perfectionné la grammaire, ôtèrent à la langue ce ton vif et passionné qui l'avait d'abord rendue si chantante⁴⁰

The study of philosophy and progress of reason, having perfected grammar, supported in language its lively and passionate tone which once rendered it so like song.

Faced with the rapid growth of instrumental music during his century, Rousseau wrote:

La musique, avec toute cette maussade parure, resterait languissante et sans expression; et ses images, dénuées de force et d'énergie, peindraient peu d'objets et beaucoup de notes, comme ces écritures gothiques dont les lignes, remplies de traits et de lettres figurées, ne contiennent que deux ou trois mots. . . .

L'impossibilité d'inventer des chants agréables obligerait les compositeurs à tourner tous leurs soins du côté de l'harmonie.⁴¹

³⁸ *LMF*, 5:292.

³⁹ Rousseau saw the Italian language with songful inflections as far more suitable for operatic *récitatif*.

⁴⁰ *EOL*, 5:4.

⁴¹ *LMF*, 5:293.

Music, with its tasteless ornamentation, would remain languishing and without expression; its figures void of energy and force, would paint few images and many notes, as gothic writings whose lines, filled with ornate letters and features, only contain two or three words. . . .

The impossibility of inventing agreeable songs causes composers to turn all their cares to the side of harmony.

Rousseau is referring to Jean-Philippe Rameau's harmonic treatise in which a chord or vertical structure using polyphony predominates as a compositional framework.⁴² He is also alluding to the development, during the late eighteenth century, of modern symphonic music as it evolved from the baroque to the neoclassical style.

ROUSSEAU AS PHILOSOPHER OF MUSIC AND LANGUAGE

Rousseau's project as librettist, composer, and arranger for the lyric stage involved key dialectical relationships of the natural versus the artificial, such as those that opposed melody to harmony and symphonic text to vocal utterance and utter silences. Within this project, he sought to establish a reciprocal relationship between word and musical tone.

In autobiographical works, this confrontation of opposites revealed in Rousseau a frightening dualism.⁴³ Whereas, musically, his rebellion was shaped by a reversion to ancient forms, incorporating simplified rhythms and rejecting prevalent harmonic theory,

⁴² Rousseau's feud with Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764), the foremost French composer of the eighteenth century, has been copiously documented by scholars. Rameau, in 1722, with his *Traité sur l'harmonie*, came to use chordal structure as a compositional element. Recognition of harmonics as a building block also depended on tonality, a concept that did not evolve until after 1650. Rameau's stage works were foremost in opera and ballet from 1733 to 1764 and held popularity until the Revolution. He earned his living as an organist before staging his most popular opera, *Hippolyte et Aricie*, at age fifty. In the next three decades till his death he wrote twenty-five musical works for the stage.

⁴³ In *LD*, *passim*, Rousseau opposes the natural self as "Jean-Jacques" to the self seen by society, i.e., "Rousseau."

socially it led to a state of alienation, causing him to embrace solitude and suffer real and imagined losses. Jean Starobinski states Rousseau's psychological dilemma as follows:

[que] la société est contraire à la nature, a pour conséquence immédiate: *je m'oppose à la société. C'est le je qui prend à sa charge la tâche de refuser une société qui est la négation de la nature.*⁴⁴

[that] society is contrary to nature, has the immediate consequence: "I" am opposed to society. It is "I" who take on the charge of refusing a society which is the negation of nature.

Presented with the necessity of using a disguise (*paraître*) before his peers, Rousseau embraced an identity embodying a division between what he considered his truer self and the self as he wished to appear:

Un système intellectuel devient une passion; l'idéologie prend forme d'expérience vécue, non pas seulement parce que la morale exige que chacun vive selon ses principes mais parce que le sentiment désire s'identifier avec les idées qui promettent une justification supérieure.⁴⁵

An intellectual system becomes a passion; ideology takes the form of a lived experience not only because morals require that each live according to principles but because feeling desires to be identified with ideas which promise a higher justification.

I agree that Rousseau constructs this identity as one means of challenging his perceived musical rival Jean-Philippe Rameau. In my discussion of the relation between Rousseau's lyric and autobiographical writings,⁴⁶ I elucidate this point, drawing on the recent study by Downing Thomas.

⁴⁴ Jean Starobinski, *La Transparence et l'obstacle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 53.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁴⁶ See Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Another objective of this dissertation is to establish that the basis of Rousseau's theoretical endeavor commences in his work as self-taught composer and as writer of libretti, and that this work therefore warrants examination. As a youth, Rousseau first saw the fledgling genre of opera performed in Venice. From the beginning of his life, when he worked as a music copyist, until its end with his final lyric work, *Daphnis et Chloë*, Rousseau's involvement with music reveals an interior dimension. I explain this autobiographical link to lyric-theoretical texts in this dissertation and, in the process, define the lyric symbols subsumed as autobiography. As potent signifiers of identity, these symbols intertwine to reveal an interchangeability of the lyric and the autobiographical in Rousseau's life and thought.

Personal accounts and impressions of operatic performance pervade Rousseau's work; for example, the seventh volume of his *Confessions* (1769) reveals that his earliest impressions were mixed. Upon first visiting Venice in the 1740s, Rousseau described opera as a confused ensemble of words and music:

... j'étais allé à un opéra de Royer, qu'on donnait alors, et don't j'ai oublié le titre. Malgré ma prévention pour les talents des autres, qui m'a toujours fait défier des miens, ... je ne pouvais m'empêcher de trouver cette musique faible, sans chaleur, sans invention. ...

Il me semble que je ferais mieux que cela. Mais la terrible idée que j'avais de la composition d'un opéra, et l'importance que j'entendais donner par les gens de l'art à cette entreprise ... me faisaient rougir et oser d'y penser.⁴⁷

... I went to an opera of Royer given there whose title I've forgotten. In spite of my respect for talents of others causing me to underestimate my own, ... I couldn't keep myself from finding this music weak, without warmth, or invention. ...

⁴⁷ *Conf.*, 1:324.

It seemed I could do better. But the terrible idea I had of opera composition and the importance artists gave to this enterprise . . . caused me to blush and to dare to consider the thought.

In an age when amateurs played their own music as well as that of great composers, both on stage and for private audiences, Rousseau wrote five libretti, two of which were staged. Of these works, the libretti of *La Découverte du nouveau monde*, completed between 1739 and 1741 (while he was a tutor at Mably), and of *Les Muses galantes* (1741), created prior to his arrival in Paris, survive. In the former, the noble savage hails the conqueror and embraces enslavement. In this early libretto, the clash between natural freedom and civilized bondage is left unresolved as dancing Indians salute their Spanish conquerors as heroes. Rousseau fails to resolve what is initially present as a confusion of moral values: should the conquered natives of the island submit to the rule of benevolent conquerors seeking to "convert" them to the thought of Enlightened Europe, or should the conqueror acquiesce? Instead, Rousseau chose to have opulent spectacle, such as native songs and dances, gloss over ethical dilemmas.⁴⁸ In relying on the immediacy of opera as a newly accessible genre, this libretto foreshadows later theoretical debates on the importance of the arts and the origin and existence of inequality.

In contrast, *Les Muses galantes* represented the pastoral setting and the *galant* as signifiers of gentility, which Rousseau frequently feigned in an effort to disguise his social origins. The work bears a striking resemblance in its structure to *Les Indes galantes* of his rival and judge Rameau. The three characters of music were personified

⁴⁸ Walter Rex, "Background to the First Discourse," in Rex, *Attraction to the Contrary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 93.

by Rousseau as Hésiode (for bold and striking tones), Ovid (for the tender genre), and Anacreon (for lively tunes)⁴⁹ in a manner reminiscent of Rameau's four "oriental" personifications.⁵⁰

Both words and music of Rousseau's third staged lyric work, the *intermède Le Devin du village*, were written during the fall of 1752. The staging at Fontainebleau of *Le Devin* immediately followed a turning point in Rousseau's creative endeavor. Faced with a need to associate the musical sign with emergence of culture, Rousseau concurrently was advancing a theory of linguistic origin in which music provided a missing link. Rousseau's theoretical stance in this early libretto is echoed in both the *Essai* and *La Lettre sur la musique française* through the manner in which *récitatif* as opera's primary trait melodically imitates natural vocal inflections. Consequently early attempts at lyric representation by Rousseau undertaken prior to 1752 foreshadow processes of theoretical experimentation with binary (lyric and verbal) text. In the mid-eighteenth century, Rousseau thus aspired to an ideal lyric and verbal embodiment, which he perceived as a represented utopia of language without the deflection of artifice.

ROUSSEAU AND THE REFORMULATION OF OPERA

In the mid-eighteenth century, opera as lyric genre was reformulated through the musical critique of the *philosophes*. For Denis Diderot, musical sound impressions formed the

⁴⁹ OC, *Les Muses galantes*, 2:362.

⁵⁰ In *Orientalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 120, Edward Saïd explains that during the Enlightenment "the Orient" came to connote not only vast geographical terrains and an expanded view of history, but also the orient or "other" within the self. The four personifications of the Orient represented in Rameau's early-eighteenth-century opera *Les Indes galantes* (1735), translated geographically, were Turkey, Persia, Peru, and the New World.

basis for a theory of the *beau*, founded on chordal resonances of the harpsichord. Jean De la Ronde D'Alembert's competence in harmonic theory was acknowledged by his peers. In the frontispiece of Diderot's *Encyclopaedie* all the arts are represented, but the figure of music stares out suspiciously from behind the others (architecture, painting, sculpture, and pastoral poetry). Her position, according to Walter Rex, is revealing.⁵¹ Although her carriage is proud, her posture reveals the suspicion with which developing musical forms (such as the symphony and concerto) were regarded, since, initially, the *philosophes* held that composers of instrumental music only "made vain noise."⁵²

A primary purpose of this study is to assess Rousseau's vision of the song lyric, as distinct from emerging instrumental forms, as a form that, recalling an earlier period, privileged *word*. In Chapter XII of the *Essai*, Rousseau states that song existed prior to speech. As a source of collective knowledge of the people, the song lyric enhanced the ideal of the singing voice as harbinger of word's supremacy. Rousseau's position as both writer of libretti and inflexible critic of the arts is expanded in this dissertation and is shown via his continued attempts to work with new forms accessible to the lower classes, such as *opera buffa*.⁵³ As a means of self-glorification, Rousseau's attempts in this form made known to his public his own social origins.

⁵¹ Walter Rex, "On the Figure of Music in the Frontispiece to Diderot's *Encyclopaedie*," in Rex, *Attraction to the Contrary*, 110–11.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 117.

⁵³ *Opera buffa* generally denotes operas with light, sentimental subjects and happy endings. In the mid-eighteenth century, *opera buffa* included a two-act structure, some spoken dialogue, and the presence of characters who are members of the common class.

Le Devin du village thus became a virtual display of selfhood actualized and made more significant by the dimension of performance. By the time of its writing, Rousseau had begun to recant his attack on French music and to favor a national opera "inseparable from the language of the people."⁵⁴ By 1767, when his *Dictionnaire de musique* was published, he advocated the newly heralded symphonic form:

Quand la violence de la passion fait entre couper la parole par des propos commencés et interrompus, tant à cause de la force des sentiments qui ne trouvent point de termes suffisants pour s'exprimer, qu'à cause de leur impétuosité qui les fait succéder en tumulte les uns aux autres, avec une rapidité sans suite et sans ordre, je crois que le mélange alternatif de la parole et de la symphonie peut seul exprimer une pareille situation.⁵⁵

When the violence of passion causes speech to be halting, whether because of the force of feeling which fails to find terms sufficient for expression or because of their impetuosity which causes them to occur loudly in succession without end and without order, I believe that the alternative mixing together of verbal and symphonic text, alone, can express this.

In *Pygmalion*, his fourth staged lyric work, Rousseau as composer exploited the new lyric genre to reveal the transcendence of being into appearance. In *Pygmalion*, based on a Greek myth about embodiment, Rousseau sought to achieve from the binary form of verbal and musical text an ideal embodiment. Artifice emblemized the natural in the self as being of the earth. Through the confrontation of natural and artifice, the figure of marble stone was used to transcend the earthbound state and allow appearance to

⁵⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Lettre sur la musique française*, in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), 636–37, quoted in Julius Portnoy, *The Philosopher and Music: An Historical Outline* (New York: Humanities Press, 1954), 153.

⁵⁵ *DM*, 5:1067, s.v. "Symphonie."

triumph. The theory of the natural versus the artificial thus became a central facet of its representation.

In essence, Rousseau's understanding of music conformed to its presence in his century, one that applied reason to such diverse domains as nature, history, society, religion, and art.⁵⁶ Of these, nature was the most exalted sphere. The intense focus of the Enlightenment on the natural world was said to inform the mind of its true nature. Along with the intellect, nature was judged by Rousseau's peers as sufficient unto itself.

In music, the natural flourished. Lévi-Strauss describes the aesthetic response of the typical bourgeois listener Rousseau sought to attract:

Le plaisir musical de l'auditeur . . . était probablement plus intellectuel et de meilleur aloi, car une moindre distance le séparait du compositeur⁵⁷

The musical pleasure of the listener . . . was probably more intellectual and of better quality, because a smaller distance separated him from the composer.

In concluding that the average citizen accorded to music a more important role in Rousseau's time than today, Levi-Strauss's comment recalls Rousseau's own musical awareness. Displaying just this sort of framework, Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique française* alluded to his knowledge of Corelli, Galuppi, Jommelli, Perez, Pergolese, and other foreign musicians. Even as music teacher, he had copied the works of Jean-Baptiste Lully and Rameau; in his frequent visits to the Paris Opera, he had heard the works of these and other composers. Béatrice Didier writes that Rousseau both knew

⁵⁶ Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, vii.

⁵⁷ Claude Levi-Strauss, *Regarder, Ecouter, Lire* (Paris: Editions Plon, 1993), 45.

and appreciated French music of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and that this knowledge played a primary role in his formation.⁵⁸

Rousseau's musical critique called for a simpler style, arguing against the boldness of "reason" in trying to outdistance nature, which Rousseau perceived as reflective of *melodic*, as opposed to harmonic, unity. In the text of *Le Second Discours*, he states:

. . . je crois apercevoir deux principes antérieurs à la raison, don't l'un nous intéresse ardemment . . . à la conservation de nous-mêmes, et l'autre nous inspire une répugnance naturelle à voir périr . . . tout être sensible. C'est du concours . . . que notre esprit est en état de faire de ces deux principes, . . . que me paraissent découler toutes les règles du droit naturel; règles que la raison est ensuite forcée de rétablir sur d'autres fondements, quand par ses développements successifs elle est venue à bout d'étouffer la nature.⁵⁹

. . . I perceive there two principles anterior to reason, of which one ardently interests our concern for self-preservation and the other inspires in us a natural repugnance in seeing the disappearance of all sensate beings. It is a contest . . . one which our spirit undertakes between these two principles . . . in which all the rules of natural right appear; rules that reason is thereby forced to reestablish on other grounds, than by those successive developments through which she has intended to destroy nature.

In *Deux Principes avancés de M. Rameau* he posits a similar point:

. . . si la longue routine de nos successions harmoniques guide l'homme exercé et le compositeur de profession, quel fut le guide de ces ignorants qui n'avaient jamais entendu d'harmonie dans ces chants que la nature a dictés longtemps avant l'invention de l'art? Avaient-ils donc un sentiment d'harmonie antérieur à l'expérience?⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Béatrice Didier, *La Musique de Lumières* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 56.

⁵⁹ *DOI*, 3:160.

⁶⁰ *OC*, *Examen de deux principes avancés de M. Rameau*, 5:360.

... if the long routine of harmonic successions guides the learned man and professional composer, what was the guide of the ignorant who never heard harmony in the songs dictated by nature long before the invention of the art? Did they not have an awareness of harmony which existed anterior to experience?

In my close readings which follow, I come to terms with how Rousseau used the lyric stage to portray emblems of self-definition and, at the same time, advance a world view.

In working toward these ends, I am aware of earlier studies by Beatrice Didier, Jenny Batlay, and others who have understood the uniqueness of Rousseau's position as musician. Didier's *La Musique des Lumières* underscores the importance of music in the lives of Rousseau and the *philosophes*; more importantly, her study of the transposition of the lyric sign in autobiographical works serves as a precedent for this study. In *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les chansons*, Jenny Batlay analyzes Rousseau's use of the French folk-song as seminal to his moral imagination. Both of these studies analyze aspects of his musical output and point to immense, little-known contributions to which, it is hoped, my study will add.

In Chapter One, I examine Rousseau's role as musician-librettist and explore the changing presence of the natural as it evolves during the eighteenth century. I then examine various ways in which the natural functions in Rousseau's lyric works as a symbol which is demonstrated throughout the various dimensions of the lyric stage comprising text, music, and mise-en-scène.

In Chapter Two, I examine the alliance between the lyric and the revelation in man's conscience of the "other," exotic element in nature which is transposed or reformulated by the lyric. This chapter examines early libretti and the presence of song as

a musical motif relying on simpler rhythms and melodic structures in contrast to chordal harmonies. This chapter also proves how, through the presence of song, the lyric acts as a bridge to later autobiographical writings.

In Chapters Three and Four, I discuss how representation via the lyric stage foregrounds an autobiographical "retelling." Within this gesture of retelling, textual elements contained in libretti are reexamined as emblems of self-definition. In *Le Devin du village*, references to the natural are subtle and contain multiple groupings of symbols comprising the autobiographical emblem; in *Pygmalion*, the subject of Chapter Four, the self assumes a more complex structure, necessitating the emergence of the natural as an embodiment, both musically and verbally, approaching that of the icon. In both chapters, I discuss the reductive texts of Rousseau's libretti and how each valorizes the natural through subtle plays of reference. As an example, *Le Devin du village* symbolizes, in its representative stance, the meeting or affinity of nature to country and village. Through its use of setting similar to that of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, it reveals in Rousseau a need for the nurturing presence of the countryside, belying a quest for origin. The libretto of *Le Devin* thus becomes for Rousseau a form of *rhétorique restreinte*, alluding to the presence of an internal voice. Within its lyric text, the rustic setting functions as both symbol and repository of identity. Finally, in Rousseau's fourth lyric work, *Pygmalion*, self and other are fused via a causality initiated by the appearance of the Rousseauist symbol of the veil enshrouding nature. Therein, the natural embodiment of self as marble statue assumes a status as icon. Functioning as symbol, the veil affords the instant of recognition of the idealized self while, at the same time, affording an alienation between

the artistic creation and the artist. In *Pygmalion* the opacity represented by the veil thus initiates a process of self-discovery, leading in turn to one of embodiment undertaken by Rousseau as artisan. Louis Marin explains how a crossing over or confrontation of subject-self to object-self occurs in Rousseau's conception, revealing, through the lyric, selfhood's fullest dimension: "La syncope se produit lorsque le regard de la statue voilée chute et s'aveugle dans le toucher du voile"⁶¹ (The syncope is produced when the regard of the veiled statue falls and is blinded in the moment of touching the veil).

Throughout this dissertation, I draw upon a selective list of works. In Chapter One, I refer to the two *Discours*, to *Emile*, to *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and to the *Lettre à D'Alembert sur les spectacles*.⁶² In Chapter Two, I refer to the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, the *Dictionnaire de musique*, and other musical writings.⁶³ In Chapters Three and Four, I refer to two libretti: *Le Devin du village* and *Pygmalion*, published in folio editions contained in the Schautz Libretto Collection of the Library of Congress. Autobiographical writings supplementing Chapters Three and Four include *Les Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, *Les Confessions*, and *Les Dialogues*, or *Rousseau: Juge de Jean-Jacques*.⁶⁴ Throughout this dissertation, I have used my own translation wherever a standard translation is not available.

⁶¹ Louis Marin, "Le Moi ou les pouvoirs de l'image," *Modern Language Notes*, 107:4, 664.

⁶² *OC*, Vols. 3 and 4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1.

CHAPTER ONE

ROUSSEAU, THE NATURAL, AND THE LYRIC: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BEGINNINGS

In Jean-Jacques Rousseau's century, music rose to prominence by being freed from its position as the privileged court-spectacle art of Louis XIV to assume public recognition. In the early 1700s it entered a new realm of representation for the bourgeoisie and the common class with such public events as the Paris *concerts spirituels*¹ and the London public concerts by such composers as Handel. With the invention of the *pianoforte*² and the advent of keyboard musical forms, playing of music in private drawing rooms for family gatherings greatly increased. The growth of musical genres based on the newly popular sonata form³ made music a frequent topic of discussion in salons.⁴

¹ In France, public concerts were founded by the composer François André Danican Philidor in 1725 and continued till the eve of the French Revolution, in 1789. These concerts took place around Easter and were devoted to sacred music but later in the century included secular music as well. They served as the model for similar institutions in Berlin, Leipzig, and Vienna. *HDM*, s.v. "Concert."

² The *pianoforte*, or piano, was invented in Florence in 1709 by Bartolomeo Cristofori. Conceived as a new variety of harpsichord, Cristofori's *piano action* of 1720 included both an escapement and hammer check, allowing for modulations of volume. Although not appreciated in Italy, Cristofori's homeland, the instrument was not improved upon for nearly a century; nothing comparable in quality appeared until the 1770s. *Ibid.*, s.v. "Piano" (Edwin M. Ripin).

³ Although this term is frequently used for single movements of all sonatas (including concertos, symphonies, quartets, and overtures), it is most commonly applied to the first movement of a sonata, the *sonata allegro*, which is composed of three sections: exposition, development, and recapitulation, the latter usually followed by a coda. The structure can be indicated by the scheme AABA. The *exposition* contains a first and second theme connected by a bridge or modulating passage, the second theme being in a different key from the first. In the *development*, the central section of the movement, musical devices such as tension, repetition, trills, etc. occur, making it radically different from the exposition. The *recapitulation* normally contains the material of the exposition, but with the second theme cast in the tonic or first key. *Ibid.*, s.v. "Sonata."

⁴ Since the late seventeenth century, literary salons had formed poles of attraction for men of letters, foreigners, and aristocrats. After 1750 their role as centers for debate and influence grew. The typical salon was presided over by a hostess, a woman of social ambition who led discussion of whatever literary work was in vogue. *Dictionnaire des Lumières*, s.v. "Salon" (Jean-Noël Pascal).

The *philosophes'* debates on musical aesthetics embraced two contradictory trends: one was to locate the general principle of the *beau musical*⁵ relative to that judged as *beau* in other living things; the second was to ascertain the musical reflection in time and space, delving into both the historical past and the quest for the exotic.⁶ These two central issues involved in musical aesthetics caused the *philosophes* to summon forth the musical *esprit* of their century and, at the same time, to formulate public taste. One indirect result of their inquiry was an expansion of the scope of staged genres for the elite—such as opera—to address the common classes. The *philosophes* also undertook the aesthetic critique of what they envisioned opera to be by delving into the problem posed by *récitatif* (discussed later in this chapter) and reformulating it as a musical branch of aesthetics. Simply stated, they questioned whether recitative, as binary text, should privilege word or music. They also questioned whether the overly ornate structure of French opera⁷ should be replaced by the Greek model of tragedy, which drew from polyphony and the musical properties of language. Late in the century,

⁵ The *beau*, a favored Enlightenment term, was not limited to aesthetics, but was the marker of the common or base standard of a possession or good. Enlightenment thinkers sought to isolate its aesthetic value. The *beau musical*, defined as the perfection of nature in music, passed in the eighteenth century from a mode of imitation to one of expression. During the classical period, all arts held as their common denominator the *imitation* of nature. In the Enlightenment, this principle was contested as D'Alembert proclaimed music the last of the imitative arts. Inspired by an exterior nature, music responded to man's nature, reproducing his primeval cries. Music had to be simple insofar as it remained attached to what was primitive and natural in man. As the concept of nature expanded during the eighteenth century to include not only the exterior, but also the interior, psychological world of man, music entered the realm of expression. Didier, *La Musique des Lumières*, 29.

⁶ Ibid., 41.

⁷ French opera of the mid-eighteenth century was distinguished from Italian by the greater importance the French form afforded to drama; the exceptionally large role of ballets, choruses, and spectacular scenes; the greater use of instrumental music; the use of simple songs rather than elaborate arias; and a characteristic "French overture." *HDM*, s.v. "Opera" (Donald J. Grout).

reforms in various nonmusical arts that opera comprises—movement, costume, and scenic design—were attempted by David Garrick,⁸ Denis Diderot,⁹ Jean-Georges Noverre, and others.¹⁰ As a result, subgenres such as pantomime, *opéra-comique*,¹¹ and ballet grew in popularity, developing their own aesthetic doctrines.

As a member of the common class, Rousseau seized the opportunity presented by the developing lyric form of *opera buffa*, introduced into France by the Italians, to display his self-taught musical talents. Although he was not the only librettist to deal with pastoral conventions and characterizations, he was the only one to develop the representation of the natural into a moral strategy with which to propagate his views.

In this chapter, I introduce Rousseau's concern with the lyric natural as a condition of the *beau musical* and examine how the pursuit of this ideal became for him a quest relying on the possibility of embodying nature and the natural on stage toward

⁸ In *Paradoxe sur le comédien* Diderot described the British actor David Garrick as able to portray emotion and to sway the crowd while detaching himself emotionally from exigencies of characterization. Diderot: *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Hermann, 1983), 152.

⁹ Diderot speaks of opera in the dialogue between "Moi" and "Lui" in *Le Neveu de Rameau*. The character of Le Neveu alludes to the need for operatic reform, deploring the poverty of text in libretti and praising the attempts of Noverre and others to unify stage spectacle into one cohesive whole.

¹⁰ Jean-Georges Noverre's *Lettres sur la danse*, written in 1758, had the intent of resolving the problems inherent in opera performance. The reforms Noverre advocated included the presence of a stage director to oversee the whole of the staged production; the unification of libretti, music, and stage design into one cohesive narration; less ornate costume designs; and the relinquishing of ornate dance segments within operatic performance.

¹¹ An opera or other dramatic work on a sentimental subject, with a happy ending, and embodying comic elements. Until the mid-nineteenth century, comic operas usually contained spoken dialogue. In France the term applied to such works whether they were comic or tragic. The French *opéra-comique* developed before 1715 with popular farces that mingled spoken dialogue with songs to familiar airs (*vaudevilles*). Chief composers, other than Rousseau, were Gluck, Monsigny, and Philidor. *HDM*, s.v. "Opera" (Grout).

the end of moral betterment. As such, I argue, representations of the lyric natural functioned for him as alternate endeavors to those afforded by traditional theater (in a narrow sense, theater constituted solely by a text). As performance, the lyric embodiment as ideal took precedence over the merely textual. Thus, through the presence of the lyric natural, Rousseau's schema of representation sought to reify nature and harbored within its structure a moral dimension. Repeatedly Rousseau associates sentiment, voice, and conscience as indicators of a sound moral existence: "tout l'art d'être heureux"¹² (all the art of happiness) may be reduced to following an interior voice which is understood as being from the heart.

Rousseau states in the *Essai* and in *Le Second Discours* that the structure of music when allied to sentiment indicates an expressive presence. Through the figure designated by Rousseau as *melodic unity*, music represents a locus of true affections or sentiment in an anterior, original state. Within the performative construct, music gave to theater a moral significance, achieving a purpose which was extra theatrical.¹³ Through the presence of this unity, the stage tacitly objectified the merging of speech and song as a moral presence while mollifying negative effects of *apparaître*, or artifice, normally ascribed to it. Using the stage as vehicle, Rousseau sought to transform the natural as lyric emblem¹⁴ into an embodiment of clear, distinct truths:

¹² *E*, 4:1104-1105.

¹³ Here I refer to the traditional definition of *theater*, which differs from that of *theatricality* set forth by Marion Hobson (see Chapter Four n. 129 herein).

¹⁴ Thomas Sebeok cites a proposal put forward by David Efron, Paul Ekman, and Wallace V. Friesen concerning the emblem: "Emblems differ from most other nonverbal behaviors primarily in

Le projet d'une morale sensitive répond à un souci constant chez Rousseau: celui d'une compréhension intime de la mécanique humaine, dont on puisse déduire "un régime extérieur" de nature à mettre l'âme dans l'état le plus favorable à la vertu.¹⁵

The project of a morality of the senses responds to a constant concern of Rousseau's: to understand the intimate workings of humankind, from which the exterior presence of nature places the soul in the state most conducive to the achievement of virtue.

Throughout this dissertation I argue that Rousseau used the staging of operas¹⁶ to present his views concerning mankind as a whole and, in later works, to establish the idea of his own uniqueness. As Rousseau grew older, he was tortured by a discrepancy between the external image given him by contemporary writers and what he strongly believed he was. Thus he devoted himself to self-awareness—and thereby exposed contradictory traits of his character. In all works discussed, "text" is associated with a binary configuration of vocal performance and musical score reinforcing each other. In these staged performances Rousseau clarifies the meaning of his inner feelings theatrically through an idealized embodiment of the self.

Rousseau's—and his century's—confrontation with music's history took place through the revival of the cultural heritage of Greek tragedy. Thus it is important to this

usage, and in particular in their relationship to verbal behavior, awareness, and intentionality. Emblems are those nonverbal acts which have a direct verbal translation. . . . This verbal definition or translation of the emblem is well known by all members of a group, class, or culture." *Contributions to the Doctrine of Signs* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 136.

¹⁵ *Dictionnaire de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Trousson and Eigeldinger, s.v. "La Morale sensitive" (Hartmann).

¹⁶ The reformulation of opera undertaken by Rousseau and other *philosophes* passed through various stages before the art form assumed the performative structure by which it is known today. In Rousseau's period *Le Devin du village* was described as an *intermède* and *Pygmalion* as a *scène lyrique*. Contemporary correspondence indicates that the status of "opera" was denied to *Pygmalion*.

study that Rousseau exempted the ancient Greek tragedy from his indictment of theater (again, in a narrow sense) in *La Lettre à D'Alembert sur les spectacles*. Greek tragedy was a spectacle comprising chorus, musicians, dancers, and actors; the genre fused all the arts collectively designated by the Greeks as *musica*. The consequences of Rousseau's reverence for the Greek stage are many and will be discussed in following chapters. Primarily they concern the principal place in his schema of representation that Rousseau accords to music as an all-encompassing strategy.

Through the mid-eighteenth-century appearance of the *tragédie-lyrique*,¹⁷ which represented an attempt to reify through music the ancient Greek tragedy, opera was part of a total societal movement. The bourgeois allegiance to the form was expressed by Theodor Adorno, who wrote that opera is governed by the element of appearance [*Schein*].¹⁸ For Rousseau, who sought to undo appearance (*l'obstacle*) throughout his text in order to expose being or truth (*la transparence*), the lyric genre as performative act afforded a forum through which he laid bare the force of true sentiment and clarity in a staged environment generally characterized as ornate. Adorno states that opera cannot dispense with "appearance" and, because of this, reaches a state of crisis. To dispense with appearance, the form must surrender itself; Rousseau refused to provoke that surrender. Opera's evolution during the late eighteenth century fostered a "musical

¹⁷ The *tragédie-lyrique* was one of two forms (the other being the *opéra-ballet*) issuing from seventeenth century classicism which aimed at synthesis. In such works as the revival of Lully's *Alceste* by Gluck, the noble genre of tragedy was wedded to the lyric in an attempt to emulate the collaborations of the previous century. *HDM*, s.v. "Opera" (Grout).

¹⁸ Theodor Adorno, "Bourgeois Opera," *Der Monat*, 7:55, 43–47.

metaphysics" that, as espoused by the *philosophes*, asserted music's ability to impart meaning independently of the verbal text, thereby implying a collective mythology.¹⁹ This mythology, of which opera was a primary focus, extended beyond known developments in the musical field and harbored an expanded awareness of the powers of signification. As a result, the lyric stage emerged as a newly expanding forum for debate concerning the natural.

DEFINING THE NATURAL

As one of Rousseau's most pervasive themes, the natural appears in many of his writings and harbors several meanings. Some of its denotations include the "natural goodness of man"²⁰ and the condition of immersion in nature's healing spirit. For example, in the *Confessions*, Rousseau saw the experience of merging with nature in a forest as aiding the recollection of an imagined earlier time where men were purer: "Enfoncé dans la forêt, j'y cherchais, j'y trouvais l'image des premiers temps dont je traçais fièrement l'histoire; je faisais main basse sur les petits mensonges des hommes, j'osais dévoiler à nu leur nature"²¹ (Secluded in the forest, I looked for and found the image of earlier times whose history I proudly traced; I uncovered the lies of men and dared to unveil the truth). In Rousseau's meditative writings, nature was evoked as a mysterious and beautiful complex of symbols summed up in the expression *agréables chimères*. In the

¹⁹ Didier, *La Musique des Lumières*, 15.

²⁰ As referred to in Rousseau's *Discours sur l'inégalité parmi des hommes* and *Emile*, the theme of natural goodness implies that man is by nature good until corrupted by society. Natural goodness enables him to distinguish "natural" from "alien" passions. *Rousseau Dictionary*, s.v. "Natural goodness."

²¹ *Conf.*, 1:386.

following passage, *verdure, fleurs, oiseaux* all function as an emblem-complex designating the natural on multiple levels of senses:

L'occasion sans doute était belle pour un rêveur, qui, sachant se nourrir d'agréables chimères au milieu des objets les plus déliants, pouvait s'en rassasier à son aise. En sortant d'une longue et douce rêverie, me voyant entouré de verdure, de fleurs, d'oiseaux, et laissant errer mes yeux au loin sur les romanesques rivages.²²

Without a doubt, the occasion was beautiful for a dreamer who, knowing how to nourish himself with agreeable chimeras amid objects in bloom, could revitalize himself at will. In leaving a long, sweet reverie, I saw myself surrounded by trees, flowers, and birds, and let my eyes wander afar on romanesque riverbanks.

Similarly, in *Le Second Discours*, Part I, Rousseau presents "the state of nature"²³ not as a world apart but as a totality of all qualities that constitute man's nature from which he acts out of *amour de soi*.²⁴ Starobinski's revealing psychological study demonstrates that Rousseau's perception of the natural is one of difference between himself and others, causing the appearance of *amour propre*: "On peut aimer hors de soi plus que son existence propre. . . . L'amour propre, au contraire, subordonne tout à ses commodités et à son bien-être, et il est à lui-même son seul objet et sa seule fin"²⁵ (One can love outside

²² OC, *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, 1:1040.

²³ In *Le Second Discours* Rousseau says that the state of nature is one "which no longer exists, which perhaps never existed, which probably never will exist, and about which it is nevertheless necessary to have precise notions in order to judge our present state correctly." Roger S. Masters and Judith R. Masters, trans., *The First and Second Discourses* (New York: St. Martin's, 1964), 23.

²⁴ Rousseau describes *amour de soi* as primitive and innate, thus anterior to all other passions. *Rousseau Dictionary*, s.v. "Amour de soi."

²⁵ Cahier de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, conservé à Neuchâtel, Suisse. A distinction between *amour de soi* and *amour propre* existed in religious literature before Rousseau used it. Abbadie, *Introduction à la connaissance de l'esprit humain* (Paris: Vauvenargues, 1749). The terms distinguish entities found only in a state of nature (*amour de soi*) and only in society (*amour propre*). *Dictionnaire de Jean-Jacques*

oneself more than one's own existence. . . . Self-love, however, subordinates all to its convenience and well-being; its only object and end is within itself). Starobinski's study posits that Rousseau perceived this difference as one of innocence, causing him to seek asylum within nature while suffering imagined hostilities.²⁶

By the time Rousseau began to write, and to compose musical scores, the doctrine of the natural in music entailed a "return to the ear" and foreshadowed a renewed awareness of melody. Intrinsic to an understanding of Rousseau's relation to the natural is, therefore, a reconstruction of the lyric in the larger autobiographical context of his work. I concur with the conclusions of Starobinski in which all of Rousseau's writings, including his lyric works, are interpreted as the result of a particular psychological dilemma. For Starobinski, Rousseau the man emerges as the epitome of the dichotomy between authenticity conceived as naturalness and falseness conceived as artificiality.

I conceive of Rousseau's display of "self" as theatricalized to gain approval. As Starobinski explains, Rousseau claimed authorship of the lyric because it afforded him praise from peers. The act of *representation* thus constituted for Rousseau acceptance through theatrical means.²⁷

Ainsi se constitue une magie de la représentation, dont l'effet sera autrement puissant que la magie de la présence, sur laquelle Jean-Jacques

Rousseau, ed. Trousson and Eigeldinger, s.v. "Amour de soi" and "Amour propre."

²⁶ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 294.

²⁷ In *Le Premier Dialogue* (LD, 1:682–85), one means Rousseau uses to seek authenticity and approval of his peers is to prove he is author of *Le Devin du village*.

avait d'abord compté. Il a écrit *Le Devin* et *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, il s'est enchanté de ses propres visions.²⁸

Thus, the magic of representation appeared, of which the effect was as powerful as the magic of presence on which Rousseau at first had counted. He wrote *Le Devin* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, he became enchanted with his own visions.

In sum, the underlying ambiguity in Rousseau's objective is revealed as a seeking for praise, using a supplementary structure—that of *paraître* (in this case the external trappings of traditional theater)—as a means to achieving acceptance of the self (i.e., essence).

Throughout the larger context of his writings, Rousseau's vision of the lyric natural is one of communion with external nature in private settings such as Les Charmettes or L'Hermitage and directed toward the replenishment of self.²⁹ In lyric works such as *Le Devin du village*, the natural is a private utopia glorified as the countryside, an idyllic setting where the judgment of others, founded on appearance is replaced by that of the self. In the country, the interior, *savage* self triumphed. For Rousseau, external nature was valorized as part of the private domain through melodic unity: "La mélodie naïve parle du règne de la nature"³⁰ (*Naïve melody speaks of the reign of nature*). He also considered that the birth of musical creation came from the heart,

²⁸ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 210.

²⁹ Les Charmettes, the retreat Rousseau shared with Mme de Warrens, is described in the *Confessions* as a place of happiness and innocence. *Conf.*, 1:225. The Hermitage was a seventeenth-century residence bordered by cultivated gardens on the edge of the forest of Montmorency. It was discovered by Rousseau in 1754; he described it in the tenth book of the *Confessions* as *une habitation délicieuse*. In its rustic setting, due to the hospitality of Mme d'Epinay, Rousseau was able to practice his profession as music copyist. *Conf.*, 1:518.

³⁰ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 210.

requiring, on the part of man, a reintegration with his internal nature, inducing a state of primitive fervor.³¹ In the *Confessions*, he describes the act of lyric creation:

. . . j'ai intitulé cet opéra *Les Muses galantes*. Mon premier acte, en genre de musique forte, était le Tasse; le second, en genre de musique tendre, était Ovide; et le troisième, intitulé *Anacréon*, devait respirer la gaieté du dithyrambe. Je m'essayai d'abord sur le premier acte, et je m'y livrai avec une ardeur qui . . . me fit goûter les délices de la verve dans la composition.³²

. . . I entitled this opera *Les Muses galantes*. My first act, with loud strains, evoked Tasso; my second, with tender phrases, was Ovid. The third, entitled *Anacreon*, breathed a gayness of the dithyramb. I tried the first act and lost myself with such ardor that . . . I sensed a verve of delirium in its composition.

Yet Rousseau, the dreamer engrossed in subjective chimeras, was also the inflexible critic. In *Le Premier Discours* he emphasized how the sciences and the arts simultaneously helped to establish civility and orderliness in society, while at the same time they helped to mask a contrived uniformity and pervasive falseness that were alien to the natural self:

On n'ose plus paraître ce qu'on est; et dans cette contrainte perpétuelle, les hommes qui forment ce troupeau qu'on appelle société, placés dans les mêmes circonstances, feront tous les mêmes choses si des motifs plus puissants ne les en détournent. On ne saura donc jamais bien à qui l'on a affaire.³³

One dares not appear as one is; and in this perpetual constraint, men form a herd called society, placed under the same circumstances, making all the

³¹ Didier recounts how Rousseau, tormented by fever, composed an act of *Les Muses galantes* in six or seven hours while sequestered in bed, a place of maternal refuge. Didier, *La Musique des Lumières*, 386.

³² *Conf.*, 1:294.

³³ *OC, Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, 3:8.

same movements if not dissuaded by more powerful motives. One really never knows with whom one is dealing.

In *Le Premier Discours* Rousseau took up the aforementioned theme of false appearance in society as contrary to the higher, spiritual purpose of humankind. He extended this indictment to others, even philosophers, who were motivated by ambition and personal greed. Therein he drew parallels between the "rules" of theatricality, which he defined as not appearing to others in a truthful manner, and the art of deceitful appearance in society. Rousseau thus believed that theatricality, driven by idleness and the vanity of the social public, masked innumerable vices under a veil of politeness:

Quel cortège de vices n'accompagnera point cette incertitude? Plus d'amitiés sincères; plus d'estime réelle, plus de confiance fondée. Les soupçons, les ombrages, les craintes, la froideur, la réserve, la haine, la trahison se cacheront sous ce voile uniforme et perfide de politesse³⁴

What train of vices accompanies this incertitude? No sincere friendships, no true esteem; a lack of confidence. Suspicions, fears, coldness, reserve, hatred, and betrayal are hidden under the uniform and false veil of politeness.

Throughout his early work, Rousseau contended that a European society in which arts, sciences, and letters flourished nevertheless fostered mutually dependent relations among its citizens that were contrived, artificial, and thus contrary to the purposes of nature. Culture, which Rousseau designated in the text of his discourse as the sciences and the arts, presented a conundrum: Although culture was the means through which civilized man transcended the shadows of nature's hidden creative processes, as a product of civilization it also alienated him from his own true nature, or *genie*. Rousseau thus

³⁴ Ibid.

accorded to the realization by man of his own interior self, sustained by nature, a prime importance: it is only through the realization of this natural self that the individual contributes to humanity:

Avant que l'art eût façonné nos manières et appris à nos passions à parler un langage apprêté, nos mœurs étaient rustiques, mais naturelles; et la différence des procédés annonçait au premier coup d'oeil celle des caractères. La nature humaine, au fond, n'était pas meilleure; mais les hommes trouvaient leur sécurité dans la facilité de se pénétrer réciproquement, et cet avantage, dont nous ne sentons plus le prix, leur épargnait bien des vices.³⁵

Before art fashioned our manners and taught our passions to speak a formal language, our morals were rustic, but natural. Our difference of conduct conveyed at first glance those of our character. Human nature, basically, was not better, but men found security in the ease of perceiving one another. This advantage, a value to which we are no longer sensitive, spared them many vices.

In *La Lettre à D'Alembert sur les spectacles*, Rousseau harshly criticized the construction of a theater in a moral city such as Geneva. He formed an analogy between the theater and social man: the elegant French drama of Molière and Racine appeared artificial because the actor's art is deception. But so is the action of a public image in which one parades as other than he is: "Qu'est-ce que le talent du comédien? L'art de se contrefaire"³⁶ (What is the talent of the actor? The art of false appearance). The implications for Rousseau's lyric works are antithetical, causing him to denounce the trickery of social appearance within the core of spectacle through the presence of the lyric embodied as melodic unity.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ LDS, 5:43.

Yet it is in lyric works that Rousseau seeks to deconstruct the purpose of traditional theater so that artifice might triumph beneficially. In all staged lyric works, nature exists as *emblem*, and one that is good. As a highly formalized complex of symbols in the visual modality, the natural emblem reveals in the work of Rousseau an interior dimension concerning the self.³⁷ Enhanced by the presence of the lyric, Rousseau's psychological dilemma, his need for an autobiographical "retelling," a coming to terms with humanity, is revealed. A careful study of these works thus reveals how Rousseau proceeds from a state of seclusion, drawn from a mystical and timeless sensing of unity and oneness³⁸ and reverence, toward one of justification and social interaction with peers. Represented theatrically, oneness is transformed as the embodiment and interdependency of lyric and verbal texts; represented as self, it is transformed as the ideal merging of the private, unassuming Jean-Jacques and the public, theatricalized Rousseau.

For Rousseau, the staged lyric work thus achieves a major status as representation and as emblem of selfhood, wherein all elements express the ontological supremacy of the natural. Within these works, the sensual *experience* of musical phrasing, the simplified decors of stage design, and the verbal text are used to connote the omnipresence of nature. It is the presence of the lyric which allows the speaker/singer

³⁷ In his study of Yeats, "Image and Emblem in Yeats," Paul De Man describes the emblem of nature as an image composed of a myriad of distinct formal elements. De Man differentiates between the experience of the natural object, which is one of coherence, and the linguistic representation of it, which is characterized by logical discontinuity. De Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 58.

³⁸ Asher Horowitz, *Rousseau, Nature, and History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 25.

to establish meaning through the libretto as text and signifier. Through this performative construct wherein music and word are wedded, an ideal form is created.

In his earliest philosophical writings and his later autobiographical works, Rousseau presents the figure of nature through a perpetually initiated project of lyric self-definition. As above passages reveal, nature functions in Rousseau's text as a pervasive concept, one which implies *la transparence*,³⁹ or truth. Defined by Rousseau as authenticity, *la transparence* exists in society and in man himself behind the masquerade of deceitful appearance. As a term, *la transparence* implies that essence or truth cannot be concealed. Thus, as a truth cloaked behind the veil of false appearances, the natural is one of Rousseau's most equivocal terms. In *Le Second Discours* he reveals the surreptitious appearance of inequality in society which proceeds from physical appearance among one's peers to encompass the growth of society itself and, finally, to encompass the means of making a living and the ownership of property. Nature's equivocality in the text of Rousseau can be stated as follows: Describing the natural state implies a risk of retrospective illusion. For Rousseau, this occurs when one looks back wistfully on an imagined, primitive past. In contrast, dealing fully with the present requires that the "natural" within the self be rediscovered through processes of reason and meditation, thereby salvaging whatever truth that might have survived from the original natural state. The presence of the natural within the self is thus revealed as locus of sentiment.

³⁹ Starobinski defines *la transparence* as Rousseau's fidelity to his interior vision, through which the self retains an originary innocence and through which reflection, faced with society's conflicts, acquires a privileged function. *La Transparence*, 15.

Yet as stated in the novel *Emile*, in the *Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard*, external primitive nature may serve as sanctuary for the interior self. In the revelation of faith of the Savoyard vicar, man's inner conscience possesses a voice superior to those of reason and passion. External nature, as Rousseau envisions it, introduces the natural child, Emile, to the falsity of organized religion. To become the ideal citizen Rousseau intends, Emile must look inward to reason and his conscience and look outward to nature.⁴⁰ The voice of conscience revealed by nature is substituted for religion; thus nature functions as refuge. In the following passage, the inner voice of God is sensed through the presence of the narrator:

Après avoir ainsi de l'impression des objets sensibles et du sentiment intérieur qui me porte à juger des causes selon mes lumières naturelles, déduit des principales vérités qu'il m'importait de connaître, il me reste à chercher quelles maximes j'en dois tirer pour ma conduite, et quelles règles je dois me prescrire pour remplir ma destination sur la terre, selon l'intention de celui qui m'y a placé.⁴¹

After having deduced from the impression of my emotions and from the interior feelings that compel me to judge causes according to my natural enlightenment, the true principles I must know appear. It remains for me to find those maxims of conduct and also the code of conduct that I must follow to complete my earthly destination according to the intention of he who placed me here.

In this passage the omnipresence of nature is a dominant motif, one that moves the narrator into a mood of contemplation. Similarly, Rousseau reveals the presence of nature as sanctuary, lyricized as the passing of time, in the voice of the dying Héloïse. In

⁴⁰ Maurice Cranston, *The Noble Savage: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1754–1762* (London: Allen Lane, 1985), 204.

⁴¹ *E*, 4:195.

the following passage, night is revealed as part of a mysterious complex of symbols which comprise the natural emblem, lyrically symbolized as *syncope*,⁴² suggesting melodic, songful presence: "La nuit fut cruelle et décisive. Etouffement, oppression, syncope, la peau sèche et brûlante; présence de la sublime contemplation de Dieu"⁴³ (The night was cruel and decisive; stifling, oppressive, syncopal, the flesh dry and burning; [there was] a presence of sublime contemplation of God).

To Rousseau, a primary musical signifier of the natural lay in the use of monophonic harmonies simpler than those of polyphonic chordal structures. Starobinski describes how Rousseau's musical ideal was the *chant à l'unison* present in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, consisting of "la mélodie naturelle dans son harmonie naturelle. C'est le triomphe de la nature, qui chante à travers le chanteur"⁴⁴ (the natural melody within natural harmony. This is the triumph of nature which sings through the voice of the singer). The idealized unity of voice and song becomes the limit of imitation and what is imitated; if such a unity were accomplished, imitation would become useless since immediacy would prevail.⁴⁵ "Culture" can thus be designated as the beginning which is also an ending, of an always already begun separation of song from speech.

⁴² In *DM*, 5:1068, *syncope* is defined as "prolongement sur le temps fort d'un son commencé sur le temps faible" (prolonging the forceful duration of a tone begun on a weak tempo). Rousseau describes its uses in melody as for "l'expression et le goût du Chant" (the expression and flavor of Song) but says that its principle use is in harmony, wherein, for the practice of dissonance, the first part of the *syncope* serves as a preparation and dissonance sounds on the second.

⁴³ *LNH*, 2:454.

⁴⁴ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 111.

⁴⁵ Spivak, *Of Grammatology*, 197.

MUSIC AND ORIGINS OF CULTURE

Historically, the opera as genre has been ascribed to the bourgeoisie, rather than to feudal or courtly culture.⁴⁶ One trace of this origin is the arrangement of the *convemu*, or group, relative to the principal performer. This is manifested on stage by sonorous fullness and choral masses which point toward a greater circle than that of the aristocracy. French opera of Rousseau's period contained multiple levels of representation, all of which lacked a central unifying structure. Lavish stage designs, elaborate ballets, and insipid libretti characterized the lyric stage during the epoch in which Rousseau began to write. According to Rousseau and others, most notably Diderot, the text was to receive absolute priority, even if that meant denigrating the importance of newly developing instrumental forms:

... les mots au spectacle lyrique ont la même importance expressive qu'au théâtre parlé; il faut qu'ils racontent une histoire . . . les sentiments et les passions humaines . . . le chant, dans ces conditions, ne convient pas pour toutes les occasions, il marque les moments privilégiés; le récitatif sera très simple, avec très peu d'accompagnement; il sera parlé même, quelquefois pour remplir plus exactement son rôle explicatif⁴⁷

... words in the lyric spectacle have the same expressive importance as in spoken theater. They tell a story [with] human passions and feelings: song, under these conditions, doesn't suit all occasions, but marks privileged moments. Recitative should be simple with little accompaniment. It should be spoken, sometimes to fulfill its explicative role.

⁴⁶ Didier, *La Musique des Lumières*, 30.

⁴⁷ Etienne Haeringer, "Le Livret et les philosophes," in Haeringer, *L'Esthétique de l'opéra en France au temps de Jean-Philippe Rameau* (Oxford, U.K.: Voltaire Foundation, 1990), 89.

The above aesthetic reforms took place concurrently with the idea of history embracing the philosophical study of man. The origin and development of ideas are a history of human experience that is, in turn, intertwined with the development of language.⁴⁸ Culture thus became implicated in the search for the origin of ideas in language. In the *Essai* and *Le Second Discours*, Rousseau has difficulty in determining which came first: does culture, as an already unified society, become necessary for the institution of language or does language precede the invention of society?⁴⁹ Rousseau treats the musical sign as a key element in the establishment of language. In this quest he joins Locke and Condillac, both of whom professed articulated sound as an apt device for the representation of beginnings.⁵⁰

Rousseau discusses "beginnings" of the lyric voice in his pivotal theoretical works, the *Essai* and *La Lettre sur la musique française*, the latter elucidating for his public his ideas on music as signifier of origin. I theorize that the debate over origin was crystallized as Rousseau's critique and treatment of the defining detail common to opera, the *récitatif*. This element constitutes a signature in Derridean terms;⁵¹ furthermore, it belied for Rousseau a negation of the natural, yet one which through multiple theatrical

⁴⁸ Downing Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 41.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 42.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 46.

⁵¹ The sign as defined by Derrida is constructed as *différance* through the binary opposition of signifier and signified. The relationship between the word and the concept the word implies can only be arbitrary. The positing of *récitatif* as "signature" of opera lies in its embodiment as *sevrage*, of consequent suspension of music and text existing through this suspension as idealized textual form. *PE*, s.v. "Deconstruction" (Vernon W. Gras).

processes conveyed its presence, thus exposing a process of supplementarity. In later works, experimentation with the formal elements of *récitatif* enabled Rousseau to challenge existing Enlightenment beliefs on opera as a performance for the elite classes. In fact, Rousseau replaces the traditional performance structures of *récitatif* with his own consciousness of musical formulas. Making money mattered less than pleasing the self. Within this process, Rousseau tested the very adages that conferred popularity on the lyric performances of his period: the favoring of the common classes, the debate over the supremacy of musical versus verbal text, and the desire to be seen in public acting a role.

For example, in *Le Devin du village*⁵² Rousseau makes a point of favoring the common classes by having the fickle suitor Colin reject a *chatelaine* for a maid of common birth. Contesting the supremacy of musical over verbal text, Rousseau's reworking of *récitatif* called attention to uneven phonetic utterances; whereas in *Le Devin* he suppressed the form entirely, in *Pygmalion* he sought an idealized union, one in which spoken text both enhanced and completed the musical text yet was prevented from accompanying instrumental segments. In both works, contrary to the norms of his period, Rousseau favored a sparseness and simplicity of costume and set design. In both works too, as well as in a final opera, *Daphnis et Chloë*, the song motif precognized for Rousseau a *musique extra-européenne*.⁵³

⁵² See Chapter Three, 166.

⁵³ In her chapter "Musique primitive, musique extra-européenne," *La Musique des Lumières*, 62–64. Béatrice Didier reveals the curiosity of the Enlightenment about foreign music. Hindu and Arab music held less interest than that of China; commonalities between Chinese music and Pythagorean

Rousseau, along with others, questioned through numerous debates whether song was a universal language bordering on the exotic: "L'usage des chansons semble être une suite naturelle de celui de la parole; et n'est en effet moins générale; partout où l'on parle, on chante"⁵⁴ (The use of songs would seem a natural continuation from speech; and is less general; everywhere one speaks, one [also] sings). Hence, Rousseau conceives that songs preceded literature, in the narrow sense. In his lyric works, Rousseau's use of sung monophonic rhythms, freed from the excesses of harmony commonly favored by the *philosophes*, suggested a transformative presence, through which man was transported to distant historical settings. In the entry "musique" in volume 5 of the *Encyclopaédie*, published in 1769, Rousseau alluded to the music of such seemingly exotic peoples as the Arabs and Chinese, who supposedly did not transcribe their music as Europeans did: "Quant aux Chinois, on trouve dans le Père du Halde, qu'ils furent étrangement surpris de voir les Jésuites noter et lire sur cette même note tous les airs chinois qu'on leur faisait entendre"⁵⁵ (As for the Chinese, one finds in the Father of Halde that they were surprised to see that Jesuit fathers notated and read all Chinese melodies that they heard). Rousseau used all of what he termed *musiques extra-européennes* to confront the renowned theory of harmony of his rival Jean-Philippe Rameau: "De tous les pays de la terre, qui tous ont une Musique et un chant, les

mathematics were frequently stated; also, comparisons between the savage, the Negro, and the sailor were frequently made.

⁵⁴ *DM*, 5:695, s.v. "Chanson."

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5:685–86, s.v. "Caractères en musique."

européens sont les seuls qui aient une Harmonie"⁵⁶ (Of all countries on earth, who all have music and song, Europeans alone have Harmony). Conversely, he denigrated European musicologists for their transcription of "exotic" forms of music, seen through European eyes. In *La Musique des Lumières*, Béatrice Didier cites Rousseau's discussion in *Le Dictionnaire* of recent conquests of the historical world. In the accounts of explorers, the music of such regions as Asia and China, and even that of the American "savages," fell short of expectations precisely because it was transcribed by European musicologists who failed to capture its inherent exoticism.⁵⁷ The arguments of Rousseau and other *philosophes* over the validity of these musics were glossed over by more pressing aesthetic issues of harmony versus melody. The sole criterion of judgment concerned whether exotic musics, such as those from China and the New World, incorporated harmonic or melodic principles as a base.

The growth of operatic art became an object of musical and cultural critique that provided Rousseau a forum in which to foreshadow future discourse on society, the natural, and music. As the primary lyric form of his century, opera was a laboratory in which he worked out the exigencies of his theory. Although he later modified theory to suit his extreme sensitivity, the result was a double perspective through which he viewed and was viewed by his peers:

⁵⁶ Ibid., 5:847, s.v. "Harmonie."

⁵⁷ Didier, "Musique primitive et musique extra-européenne chez Rousseau et quelques écrivains du XVIIIe siècle," in *L'Homme des Lumières et la découverte de l'autre*, ed. D. Droixhe and Pol-P. Gossiaux (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université libre de Bruxelles, 1985), 125.

Dans l'allure singulière qu'il adopte, il y a un mouvement d'orgueil et un comportement destiné à appeler les regards; c'est sur quoi la critique n'a pas manqué de l'accabler. Mais Rousseau est le premier à en convenir; la plus sévère critique et la plus ironique vient de Rousseau lui-même.⁵⁸

In the singular persona that he adopted, a pride and comportment destined to attract attention did not fail to overwhelm him. But Rousseau was the first to surrender; the severest, most ironic critique came from Rousseau himself.

Opera, the lyric form favored by Rousseau, had its beginnings in the last phase of Louis XIV's absolute monarchy, in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries. It was heralded by the advancement of bourgeois⁵⁹ who, by the time Rousseau wrote his first libretti, had emerged as necessary figures in the plot of the intermezzo.⁶⁰ Opera as genre, along with *récitatif* as its emblem, is thus a logical starting point for a discussion of the scope of idealism inherent in Rousseau's musical philosophy. As lyric form, it represented an ideal origin of music and language, one that cannot be determined in time.

In a pivotal manner, this lack of point of union or original *sevrage* is explained by Derrida as "la nécessité de l'intervalle" (the necessity of the interval) or as "la fissure qui, dans l'origine même, en destine l'apparition"⁶¹ (the splitting-apart which, even at the origin, destines its appearance). In his reading of the *Essai*, Derrida posits that, for Rousseau, the eighteenth century's search for origins began with the originary severance

⁵⁸ Starobinski. *La Transparence*, 55.

⁵⁹ Adorno, "Bourgeois Opera." 29–31.

⁶⁰ The Parisian success of *La Serva Padrona* (1733), an intermezzo in two parts, served as a model for Rousseau in his polemic in *La Querelle des bouffons*. As a prototype, *opera buffa* typically used spoken dialogue and common people as characters and may have indirectly influenced Rousseau's use of them in *Le Devin du village*.

⁶¹ Derrida. *De la Grammatologie*, 286.

of song from speech present in a first state of nature. This severance coincided with the arrival of harmony. In all of Rousseau's works, *melodic unity* is synonymous with origin, whereas *harmony* is equated with severance or difference. Derrida writes in *De la Grammatologie*:

Car l'histoire qui suit l'origine et s'y ajoute n'est que l'histoire de la séparation entre le chant et la parole. Si nous considérons la différence qui écartelait l'origine, il faut bien dire que cette histoire, qui est décadence et dégénérescence . . . n'a pas eu de veille. La dégénérescence comme séparation, sevrage de la parole et du chant, a toujours déjà commencé.⁶²

For the history that follows the origin and adds to it is nothing but the story of separation between song and speech. If we consider the difference which fractured origin, it must be said that this history, which is decadence and degeneracy through and through . . . has no prehistory. Degeneration as separation, severing of word from the song, has always already begun.⁶³

The *sevrage*, or distancing, of the musical origin of language from speech presented a never-ending search by Rousseau for a lyric voice expressive of a purer sentiment and vocal resonance. For him this originary severance contained inherent questioning of the passage from nature to culture. In *Le Dictionnaire* he describes *récitatif* as "Une manière de chant qui approche beaucoup de la parole, Une declamation en musique, dans laquelle le musicien doit imiter, autant qu'il est possible, les inflexions de voix du déclamateur"⁶⁴ (a manner of singing which resembles speech, a musical declamation in which the musician imitates, to the extent possible, the inflection of the declamation). If *récitatif*

⁶² Ibid., 284.

⁶³ Spivak, *Of Grammatology*, 199.

⁶⁴ *DM*, 5:1009.

implied that the musician imitated the inflection of the human voice, then, in Rousseau's theory, the voice was deemed one with melody and manifested as a lyric construct.

Récitatif thus posed the following problem: that although song and speech derived from a common origin, they were separated at the birth of history, an imprecise date always implying a further retrogression. The initial act of their separation simultaneously signified a beginning and an ending. Because progress severed man from his original natural state, in which the first language was musical, this separation has already occurred. Furthermore, the chance for a harmonious reconciliation never appeared. Thus, the accompanying theoretical principle on which *récitatif* was based is impossible as language, since language, French in particular, has lost its former musical quality.⁶⁵ Rousseau's treatment of the *récitatif* principle therefore became yet another dimension of his indictment of Enlightenment culture. For Rousseau, the suppression and denial of *récitatif* form in lyric works functioned as part of this indictment. It recalled the initial separation of nature, represented by melody, and artifice, which Rousseau perceived in polyphonic chords. Suppression of traditional *récitatif* in Rousseau's lyric text connoted a cultural coming-to-terms by which he denounced what was for him an "artificial," and thus unnatural, joining together.

THE LYRIC NATURAL AS TEXT

My project is not simply to prove the presence of the lyric natural in Rousseau's text, but also to explain how and why it exists. My task is thus an exploration of the lyric natural

⁶⁵ *EOL*, 5:410.

both as representation of Rousseau's self and, in a larger sense, as an essential construct of his thought.

In *De la Grammatologie* Derrida initiates a discussion of the common beginning of speech and writing. In the chapter entitled "Ce Dangereux supplément," he explains the difficulty of separating the origins of the two: "Origine de l'écriture, origine du langage, les deux questions se séparent difficilement"⁶⁶ (Origin of writing, origin of language, a difficulty exists in separating these two questions). Derrida's origin of writing necessarily contrasts with Rousseau's postulation that writing developed after speech and occurred only as man's need for nourishment and shelter increased with the passage of time. Yet Derrida's definition of "good" writing as a divine inscription on the conscience is revealed in the following passage and resembles the stance taken by Rousseau:

Il y a donc une bonne et une mauvaise écriture: la bonne et naturelle, l'inscription divine dans le coeur et l'âme; la perverse et artificieuse, la technique, exilée dans l'extériorité du corps.⁶⁷

There is therefore both good and bad writing: the good and natural kind [is] the divine inscription on the heart and soul; the perverse and artificial, technique exiled in the exteriority of the body.

Derrida accords to writing an omnipresence not unlike Rousseau's own privileging of melody as originary language: "Il me semble donc que la Mélodie ou le chant, pur ouvrage de la nature . . ."⁶⁸ (It seems to me then that melody or song, as pure work of nature . . .).

⁶⁶ Derrida, *De la Grammatologie*, 44.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁶⁸ OC, *Origine de la melodie*, 5:331.

Rousseau's evocation of the joining together at the origin of melodic unity and original speech is important, revealing a traceable ascendancy of the lyric signature within his theoretical work. Rousseau states in the *Essai* that the song lyric, as melodic unity, existed and was intertwined with language and with passion: "Avec les premières voix se formèrent les premiers sons, selon le genre de la passion qui dictait les uns ou les autres" (With the first voices were formed the first sounds, according to the type of emotion each conveyed). Alluding to the omnipresence of song, Rousseau wrote in the *Essai*: "C'est un des plus grands avantages du musicien de pouvoir peindre les choses qu'on ne saurait entendre"⁶⁹ (One of the greatest advantages of the musician is to paint things that cannot be understood). A musical language thus represented through tones and melodic structures universal phrases or ideas not normally rendered as speech.

In his indictment of the French language contained in *La Lettre sur la musique française*, Rousseau advocates a more "natural" operatic lyric modeled on the more passionate vocal tones of Italian. This stance caused him, in operatic works, to espouse the role of "otherness." Using opera as a laboratory, Rousseau sought to join, in an ideal sense, the melodic text to the verbal, envisioning an idealized form. The resultant need for supplementarity caused Italian to emerge as an idealized, more cosmopolitan vehicle for operatic language.

AESTHETIC DOCTRINES

In the discussion which follows, an exploration of the lyric natural appears both as an essential construct of Rousseau's thought concerning culture and, in a larger sense, as

⁶⁹ *EOL*, 5:413.

key to the representational schema of Rousseau's self. An understanding of the natural as aesthetic doctrine was expressed in many early-eighteenth-century treatises by such theorists as Alexander Baumgarten and John Locke, who preceded Rousseau in defining aesthetics as a human faculty separate from logic. Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* (1750) is considered the starting point of modern aesthetics because it describes a human faculty distinct from rational thinking; Baumgarten introduced the discipline of aesthetics into German philosophy, defining the response to beauty as pleasure in the perfection of sensory, as opposed to conceptual, representation.⁷⁰ Baumgarten's treatise is worth noting for its initiation of the reader/spectator into an internal subjective realm, paving the way for Rousseau's own aim of touching the spectator's senses.

Placing Baumgarten's theory in a cultural context, the empiricist John Locke stated in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that signs emerged through the medium of sensation and were seized by the soul to form knowledge.⁷¹ According to Locke, no spoken or written discourse existed prior to experience. Locke's system was based on imagery and postulated that for each simple idea perceived through the senses, a reflection in the mind caused the idea to be named. Locke argued that knowledge was enhanced by the living of life and that we can regulate our belief-forming capacities through perception, awareness, and insight.⁷² The ideas and actions of Rousseau himself

⁷⁰ *Dictionary of Philosophy*, s.v. "Baumgarten."

⁷¹ John Locke, *Essai philosophique concernant l'entendement humain* (Paris: J. Schreuder et P. Mortier le Jeune, 1755), 60.

⁷² *Dictionary of Philosophy*, s.v. "John Locke."

can therefore be treated according to his particular century's epistemology, through the joining of the philosophical ideal to the aesthetic. By the mid-eighteenth century, two distinctively different modes of thought had emerged due to the writings of Baumgarten, Locke, and others whose thinking posed the aesthetic doctrine of the sublime against that of mimesis, inherited from the preceding century's interest in the writings of Aristotle.

Described in Aristotle's *Poetics*,⁷³ the doctrine of mimesis holds that poetry (and in following, all of the arts) should imitate "men in action"—that is, art should imitate human beings and their associations with one another. Poetry should do so not only through tragedy and comedy, but also by other means, such as the playing of the flute or lyre. The classical mimetic aesthetic was thus founded on a theory of art which held that the world was an object or locus of a truth revealed in nature. Because nature was ordered and intelligible, it could be rendered by the artist, whose task was to reveal truth. The artist undertook the task of harmonizing chaos through a deliberate ordering of nature through artwork. In mimesis, the locus of meaning of the sign is posited between a signifier and a signified, or referent, that remains fixed. Whereas in poetry mimesis consisted of verbally conveying an experience so that the mental image received was analogous to that which we know from the world according to sensory data,⁷⁴ in musical representation only the mental image received was conveyed through musical tones.

⁷³ Aristotle, *The Poetics* (New York: Modern Library, 1984), 226.

⁷⁴ *PE*, s.v. "Representation and mimesis" (T. V. F. Brogan).

Discussions of musical mimesis had arisen in Florence as early as the late sixteenth century. In the early seventeenth century, with Descartes, music was described essentially as a mathematical system. In his earliest work, the *Compendium Musicae*⁷⁵ (1618), Descartes assigns bass textures to represent movements of the soul as accompaniment for the solo singer. Thus he replaces the concept, inherited from the Renaissance, of equal-voiced counterpoint. In the development of the operatic aesthetic, poetry, music, and dramatic action interacted to create a unified model of mimetic representation. Because of the more elusive nature of the musical signified, however, Aristotelian theory was difficult to apply to opera. As a result, in France, opera became associated primarily with its text, or libretto, and was discussed as a literary genre.⁷⁶ In the late seventeenth century, music separated from poetry, thereby acquiring a separate system of signs.⁷⁷ For this study, the late-seventeenth-century theories of Nicolas Boileau-Depréaux and St. Evremond on operatic form are most important, providing as they do a background for the *philosophes'* debate over the primacy of music versus text.

Boileau's *Art Poétique*, for example, condemns the frivolous style of Italian performance, advocating instead a rigid adherence to classical (i.e., Aristotelian) doctrine:

⁷⁵ Descartes' *Compendium of Music* applied mathematical principles to the study of harmony and dissonance. Descartes sought to distinguish the true from the untrue in a scientifically accurate manner. He held that arithmetic and geometry were the only true sciences and that all truth should therefore be subject to precise arithmetical and geometrical demonstrations. René Descartes, *Compendium of Music*, trans. Walter Robert (Rome: American Society of Musicology, 1961).

⁷⁶ Georgia Cowart, ed. *French Musical Thought, 1600–1800* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press, 1989), 3.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Evitons ces excès, laissons à l'Italie
De tous ces faux brillants l'éclatante folie.⁷⁸

Avoid these excesses, leave to Italy
The wonderful folly of all these false brilliancies.

Although Boileau was "anti-opera" partly because it was perceived in late-seventeenth-century France as an Italian invention characterized by frivolity, he believed in strict rules that all classical art should follow. His contemporary St. Evremond favored the Italian musical style, criticizing the French *récitatif* characterized by Lully's⁷⁹ works as having "ni le charme du chant, ni la force agréable de la parole"⁸⁰ (neither the charm of song, nor the agreeable force of language). During the 1740s opera admitted a more reciprocal relation of music to text. Social factors such as the growth of the listening audience and the rise of instrumental music caused opera to become a representational strategy, marked by a tension between its libretto, introduced as a minor literary genre, and its music, containing aspects of the colorful *style galant*.⁸¹ This strategy led to opera's being closely associated with a sociological subtext, that of the literary salon.

⁷⁸ Nicolas Boileau-Depréaux, "Chant Premier," in Boileau-Depréaux, *L'Art poétique* (New York: G. E. Steichert, 1926), 160.

⁷⁹ Jean-Baptiste Lully, Italian by birth, was appointed superintendent and master of chamber music to the court of King Louis XIV in 1661, making him the most powerful court musician. His success at the court derived from his collaborations with the dramatist Molière and his establishing, in 1672, the Royal Academy of Music. Lully won acceptance for French-language opera, although he was not its inventor. He did develop the classic French overture in five parts, later adopted by Handel and Bach, among others.

⁸⁰ Charles de St. Evremond, "Sur les Opéra," in *Textes sur Lully et l'opéra français*, ed. Minkoff (Genève: Editions Minkoff, 1987), 11:81.

⁸¹ *Style galant* refers to the light, elegant style of the rococo prevalent during the mid-eighteenth century, as opposed to the heavier style of the seventeenth-century baroque. *HDM*, s.v. "Style galant."

The second major aesthetic doctrine emerged in full force in the writings of Edmund Burke (1729–1797) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) with the appearance of the theory of the sublime, based on a power or reason that legislated over sense, and over which man had no control.⁸² In 1756, in his *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Burke defined the sublime as "whatever fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, which to say, whatever in any sort terrible, or conversant about terrible objects. . . . a source of the *sublime*."⁸³ Burke's ideas were important in establishing a distance between the object perceived as representation and the self. It is this distance that gives to the sublime its capacity to inspire awe. Burke traced the presence of the sublime to man's instinct for self-preservation. Often thought of in terms of times or places that ease communion with God, the sublime evokes a response of terror that hurries man on with irresistible force.⁸⁴ Burke's ideas on the sublime were also important in their delineation of a sensitivity which was not dependent upon words but allowed the construction of an internal realm of interpretation by the spectator.

According to Kant, the sublime exists beyond reason in its production of the effects of surprise or admiration. In *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime*, Kant presents the sublime as encompassing essential aspects of melancholy in a type of

⁸² Kant's view of the sublime results from the awareness of the powers of reason as they legislate over the senses, displaying both the limitations of sensory experience and the powers of the mind. *Dictionary of Philosophy*, s.v. "Sublime" (Susan L. Feagin).

⁸³ *Dictionary of Philosophy*, s.v. "Edmund Burke" (Isaac Kramnick).

⁸⁴ *PE*, s.v. "Sublime" (Feagin).

individual not made for society. For Kant, beauty and sublimity were polar opposites but stood on a level of equality.⁸⁵ Their analysis depended on the reflective faculty of the subject.⁸⁶ In trying to recapture the irrational, the sublime was first considered as an adornment. Yet in terms of eighteenth-century standards of taste, artistic subjectivism—represented by the sublime—became valued over the doctrine of mimesis, which posited a more objective beauty. In his translation of Longinus' *Treaty on the Sublime*, Boileau described an aesthetic style infused with an elusive *je ne sais quoi*. The feeling of awe imposed by the sublime pertained not only to rhetoric and poetics of genres and styles, their rules and figures, but to all aesthetic response. According to Boileau, the sublime both completes and supplements the aesthetic sign, allowing the occurrence of subjective image-making. The sublime thus defies representation, its importance residing in an "effect on the senses" which lies beyond that of the object represented. For example, Rousseau's first libretto, *La Découverte du nouveau monde* (fully discussed in the following chapter), employs a combination of aesthetic styles. The *galant* portrays the character of Christopher Columbus as figure of heroic virtue. Yet when Columbus appears to American natives on the island of Guana-Antilles,⁸⁷ the effect is of the sublime, conveying within its context the sublime evocation of awe. In this early libretto, Rousseau's overt theatrical intent was to represent the manners of *galant* society

⁸⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Essai IV: The Sublime*, trans. James Meredith, in *Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* (Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press, 1911), lxxi.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ "Guana-Antilles" is the name given by Rousseau to the islands first seen by Columbus in the libretto of *La Découverte du nouveau monde*.

while simultaneously stirring in the spectator's senses a power of "otherliness" evoked by the sublime via a metaphorical substitution afforded by the stage.

NATURE: THE TERRIBLE AND THE SUBLIME

The opposition nature/culture, together with that of being/appearance, dominates Rousseau's philosophical writings. Ernst Cassirer's premise that the eighteenth century's newfound realm of the natural became "not only a world of objects, but also a medium through which the mind develops its own self-knowledge"⁸⁸ is worth examining because, as he states, "Before Rousseau came on the scene, questions of nature and society had not yet been sharply distinguished in French culture of the late eighteenth century." One of the foundations of eighteenth-century thought is the importance given to nature, not only by Rousseau but by other theorists preceding him. The works of prior theorists emphasized human knowledge and man as the center of the universe (so ordained by God), and produced two important philosophical approaches to nature and the natural.

The two views with which Rousseau contended were those of the pastoral idyll and of wild, untamed natural terrain. The pastoral drama had been introduced in Italy in the early seventeenth century as vehicle for presenting the first entire plays in music. The pastoral lyric came from antiquity and during the Renaissance took the form of a drama containing choruses, songs, and dances based on tales of nymphs, deities, and shepherds. In France pastoral themes coalesced in Honoré d'Urfé's *L'Astrée*, the story of the unrequited love of a shepherd and shepherdess.⁸⁹ Pastoral fiction, with its repetition of

⁸⁸ Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, 27.

⁸⁹ Cowart, *French Musical Thought*, 56.

lyric themes, invited musicality. The uniqueness of *L'Astrée* as pastoral fiction lay in its narrative structure of overlapping tales producing an illusion of musical, polyphonous texture. Although the public passion for pastoral scenes had waned in Italy by the end of the 1600s, it remained the dominant mode of French opera well into the next century.

The first dramatic work set to music in France was entitled *Pastorale* with music composed by Robert Cambert set to the poetry of Pierre Perrin. Performed in 1659, it was designated as an imitation by the gods of human experience. Perrin intended that the French language be set to music without the loss of any of its syllables; thus his poetry harbored a contradiction in according a metrical beat to the silent *e*. During the same period, the eighteenth-century view of the *citoyen* emerged in the plays of Molière. M. Jourdain's dancing master of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* once exclaimed of opera:

Lorsqu'on a des personnes à faire parler en musique, il faut bien que, pour la vraisemblance, on donne dans la bergerie. Le chant a été de tout temps affecté aux bergères.⁹⁰

When people are made to speak in music, it is necessary, for the sake of verisimilitude, to have the action take place in a sheep shed. Singing has always belonged to that realm.

"Speaking in music" meant, in the opinion of the dancing master, that music embodied simple emotions. The dancing master typified the common class, the bourgeois gentleman the elite.

At the beginning of Rousseau's operatic endeavor, the pastoral mode begun by Perrin and the view of the dancing master were still in effect. Rousseau's early use of the

⁹⁰ Molière. *Oeuvres Complètes, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (Paris: Editions Garnier frères, 1962), 2:434.

natural scenario characteristic of pastoral reverted to a style that incorporated stock characters and the themes of social disguise. Given his own uncitified upbringing on the outskirts of Geneva, these conventions certainly interested Rousseau.

In his use of the pastoral, Rousseau was influenced by the fashionable use of the term *galant* by his rival Rameau and others. It is possible that he borrowed the form from Rameau's opera-ballet *Les Indes galantes* (1733). Rameau's second staged work, with libretto by Fuzelier, evoked eighteenth-century ideals of conquest through the characterization of four exotic realms: China, Persia, South America, and—representing France's passion for the New World—Louisiana.⁹¹ In a style similar to that of Rameau, but written with Rousseau's new notational system, the libretto of *Les Muses galantes* endowed common pastoral personae of the Muses⁹² with characteristics of the Enlightenment's faith in reason.

In this early libretto, Rousseau's concern was with the *galant*, and to the extent that it was, he emulated Rameau. The *style galant*, as cultivated by the *homme de bon goût*, reflected the virtuous state of a then-privileged class which still sought to glorify values of Arcadia. In the early 1700s, Arcadia was the perception closest to what was then also perceived as the savage's paradisiacal realm.

⁹¹ Divided into four acts entitled, respectively, "Les Incas de Pérou," "Le Turc généreux," "Les Fleurs," and "Les Sauvages." *Les Indes galantes* evoked eighteenth-century ideals of conquest. Its libretto was derived from actual accounts published in journals of the period such as *Le Mercure de France*. In its libretto, conquering Spaniards and French were depicted in a less than flattering posture.

⁹² The number of Muses, although not consistent in classical Greek myth, is usually nine: Calliope presides over epic poetry; Clio, history and playing of the lyre; Melpomene, tragedy; Euterpe, lyric poetry (or tragedy and flute playing); Terpsichore, choral dancing (or flute playing); Erato, love poetry (or hymns to the gods); Polyhymnia, sacred music (or dancing); Urania, astronomy; and Thalia, comedy.

In the midcentury, a new ideal of the natural as untamed emerged in writings of the earl of Shaftesbury. In *The Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1707), *The Moralists* (1709), and *Characteristics* (1711), the wild realm of nature was explored. Just as Boileau's poet desired to know society and the town,⁹³ Shaftesbury's man of nature desired the untamed natural landscape. In Shaftesbury's writings the Arcadian vision of the natural shifts to a more personal exploration of nature by man. The distinction between the high, divine power of nature and the "demonic" force of nature disappears with Shaftesbury, giving way to an inward form and "feeling" for the natural.⁹⁴

According to Shaftesbury, art cannot achieve what exists beyond nature; however, the process of creation evidenced by the inner commitment of the artist produces an infallible truth. For Rousseau and his contemporaries, the longing for a return to countrified origins mingled with the ideal of a return to a primitive state of nature, supposing the rediscovery of what was true and beneficial to man. Yet the natural posed the conundrum of whether nature can be accurately known or understood without first knowing the culture that is its opposite. In the previous century, the chiasmas of the natural had been discussed by Pascal, whose *Pensées* alluded to custom, or culture, as an entity interdependent with nature itself:

Mais qu'est-ce que la nature? Pourquoi la coutûme n'est-elle pas naturelle? J'ai grand peur que cette nature ne soit elle-même qu'une première coutûme, comme la coutûme est une seconde nature.⁹⁵

⁹³ Christopher Thacker, *The Wildness Pleases* (Beckenham, U.K.: Croom Helm, 1983), 12.

⁹⁴ Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, 85.

⁹⁵ Blaise Pascal, *Les Pensées* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1972), 50.

But what is nature? Why is custom not natural? I am afraid that this nature is no more than a first custom, just as custom is but a second nature.

Pascal's comment seems in keeping with his innate pessimism. According to Pascal, self-love engenders lying and injustice, hence the misery of the human condition. Insofar as man is incapable of reflecting upon this condition, art provides him a necessary release.

In the later decades of the century, the natural intertwined with the primitive and the exotic; as a result of this intertwining, a subjective thirst to emulate nature arose among artists, foreshadowing romanticism. With its advent, the sublime sentiment in art shifted from an objective contemplation of nature to the subjective process of creation. Neo-platonism, incorporating a revival of platonism fused with oriental wisdom, embodied yet another change. Late in the century, its appearance would influence Rousseau's conception of the *scène lyrique Pygmalion*,⁹⁶ which focused on the *psychology* of creation. As I stated earlier, the question of Nature during the Enlightenment ranked with those concerning the intellect and the power of reason and pertained to every domain. Intertwined with the lyric as signifying force, the natural was embraced by Rousseau, eliciting a myriad of interpretations.

⁹⁶ Neo-platonism, revived in the late-eighteenth century, derived from a system of idealistic, spiritualistic philosophy inspired by Plato. It included elements of mysticism wherein, following the inspiration of Plato's *The Cave*, the "real" world was merely appearance concealing the real. In the late-classical period, Neo-platonist theory influenced the interpretation of poetic texts. *PE*, s.v. "Platonism and poetry." Founders of Neo-platonism felt that philosophical thought in the Hellenic world was inadequate to the task of moral and religious regeneration. As one result of this thought strain, Plato's idealism and Oriental religious influences came to be united in one philosophical movement which held that man, composed of body and soul, was partly like God, spiritual, and partly like matter, the opposite of spiritual. *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, www.csn.net/advent/cathen/10742b.htm, s.v. "Neo-platonism."

THE PUBLIC PRESENCE OF THE LYRIC STAGE

As can be deduced from Rousseau's autobiographical writings about his early days in Parisian society, his concern with the potential of the lyric stage to reveal the truth of nature was counterbalanced by a concern to reveal the decadence of the society in which he lived. Rousseau thus dared to use the mask, or *paraître*, of the emerging operatic art to reveal the favorability of a natural setting over that of the city to a public he wished to instruct. Thus his works for the lyric stage, through interwoven levels of signification involving both the natural and the lyric itself, revealed to the spectator the tension between clarity and opacity, almost as if he, Rousseau, as part of his culture, could accurately unveil its truth. As Jacques Derrida states:

Si l'opération de l'art passe par le signe et son efficacité par l'imitation, il ne peut agir que dans le système d'une culture et la théorie de l'art est une théorie des mœurs. Une impression "morale," par opposition à une impression "sensible" se reconnaît à ce qu'elle confie sa force à un signe.⁹⁷

If the operation of art succeeds through the sign by way of imitation, it may only succeed within a system of culture wherein the theory of art is a theory of custom. A moral impression opposed to a sensory one is recognized by its force as sign.

Consequently, Rousseau's several lyric works *theatrically* portrayed the culture/nature dichotomy. Through these works, Rousseau manipulated the lyric to validate the natural and, simultaneously, to acknowledge its origin to the public as spectator and receiver of his system of representation as harbinger of his beliefs.

The purpose of music in the eighteenth century was twofold; it was a staple of public life and also entered the private realm of reflection. As part of the *philosophes'*

⁹⁷ Derrida. *De la Grammatologie*, 294.

province in lively debate, music provoked references to current operas and operatic reforms as well as to new theories of harmony. As a result, the century witnessed many ongoing musical quarrels, among them Rousseau's with Jean-Philippe Rameau, France's most famous composer. In *La Querelle des bouffons*, elucidated in the following chapter as the pitting of traditional French versus Italian opera, Rousseau praised the Italian language for all qualities lacking in the French. Rameau in turn was Rousseau's principal detractor. As one of many who wrote in response to Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique française*, Rameau defended the science of harmony as being from nature.⁹⁸

As an art form, opera, which first developed in Italy in the late 1500s, inspired the French, nearly a century later, to develop their own unique form in *la tragédie lyrique*, conceived in large part by Jean-Baptiste Lully. To compare Italian and French musical styles as they emerged in the eighteenth century, the Italian was a model of symmetry, including both contrapuntal formulas and use of the figured bass. More decorative than the hybrid French style, which included frequent changes of meter and no fixed instrumental form, ornate Italian operas relied on castrati until well into the century. In contrast, the short phrases and dominant melodic structure of the French style made it appear more songlike. As developed by Lully, French opera was traditionally associated with five acts and a prologue. Following *La Querelle des bouffons*, departures in structure of French opera were made and traditional libretti reformed, rendering their narrative more unified. Collaborations of Lully and his librettist

⁹⁸ Louisette Reichenburg. *Contributions à l'histoire de la Querelle des bouffons* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1937), 81.

Pierre Quinault resulted in the *tragédies lyriques Cadmus and Hermiône* (1673) and *Alcesie* (1674), which concentrated on heroic characters. Lully died in 1687. Some four decades later, Rameau emerged as France's most celebrated opera composer and theorist. His *Traité de l'harmonie*,⁹⁹ published in 1722, was pivotal in its explanation of the basic principles of harmony. Rameau's French opera style dominated in France from 1733 to 1754.¹⁰⁰ His popularity reached its zenith in the 1740s and corresponded to the rising importance of music in public life. Lévi-Strauss relates how

l'auditeur du XVIII^e siècle, enthousiasmé par l'audace d'une modulation en trois notes pour passer d'un ton au ton relatif, se sentait de connivance avec le compositeur.¹⁰¹

the eighteenth-century listener, enthusiastic about the daring of a three-note modulation between a tone and its relative tone, felt like the composer's accomplice.

In contrast to Rameau's early musical background, Rousseau's was limited. At seventeen he began to sing cantatas, considered more elevated than other forms of dramatic music. By age twenty-one he had served in Chambéry as professor of vocal music.

Two other biographical events are noteworthy. In 1742, Rousseau's system of musical notation, presented in *Projet concernant de nouveaux signes pour la musique*, was rejected by the Académie des Sciences. In the face of this rejection, Rousseau

⁹⁹ Developing later than counterpoint, harmony, the chordal structure of music composition was recognized by Rameau, Fux, and others as a major structural and compositional element.

¹⁰⁰ By the late eighteenth century, with the emergence of forms such as the cantata and of suites for harpsichord and organ, the French musical audience was divided among Lullists following the musical principles of Lully, Ramists following those of Rameau, and Gluckists devoted to the dramatic operas of Gluck.

¹⁰¹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Regarder, Ecouter, Lire* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1993), 47.

defended his system as more natural and logical than that of Rameau because it could be more easily interpreted visually. For Rousseau, the visual interpretation of music rendered it more potent, more capable of expressing meaning, perhaps foreshadowing the importance he accorded to "text." He angrily wrote to the British musicologist Dr. Charles Burney about the rejection:

. . . cette manière de noter n'a point été adaptée. Comment aurait-elle pu l'être? Elle était nouvelle, et c'était moi qui la proposa!¹⁰²

. . . this manner of notation was not adapted. How could it have been? It was new, and I proposed it!

In 1743, Rousseau traveled to Venice, where he would have witnessed performances of such *opera buffa* as the *Orazio* of Latilla, *La Finta Cameriera* of Pergolese, and *La Finta Schiava* (by several authors, including Gluck.)¹⁰³ He recounts his first impressions in the *Confessions*:

Malgré ma prévention pour les talents des autres, qui m'a toujours fait défier des miens, je ne pouvais m'empêcher de trouver cette musique faible, sans chaleur, sans invention. . . . Il me semble que je ferais mieux que cela. Mais la terrible idée que j'avais de la composition d'un opéra, et l'importance que j'entendais donner par les gens de l'art à cette entreprise . . . me faisaient rougir et oser d'y penser. D'ailleurs où trouver quelqu'un qui voulût me fournir des paroles et prendre la peine de les tourner à mon gré?¹⁰⁴

In spite of my awe of the talent of others, which has always caused me to belittle my own, I couldn't help finding this music feeble, without warmth or invention. . . . It seemed I could do better. But the terrible idea that I had of the composition of opera, and the importance that cultivated

¹⁰² Julien Tiersot, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1920), 65.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁰⁴ *Conf.*, 1:316.

persons attributed to this enterprise . . . caused me to blush in daring to think of it. Besides, where could I find someone to furnish words who would render them to my liking?

In an age when amateurs played and were as interested in their own music as in that of great composers, Rousseau wrote five lyric works, of which five libretti and three musical scores survive. His first opera, *La Découverte du nouveau monde* (1741), was completed in Lyons and was followed by *Les Muses galantes* (1746). He even collaborated with rivals: Richelieu asked Rousseau to produce a shortened adaption of Rameau and Voltaire's joint work *Les Fêtes de Ramire*, to be performed before King Louis XV. The work, adapted as Rousseau's *La Princesse de Navarre*, was performed at Versailles in 1745. Words and music of *Le Devin du village*, Rousseau's sole opera produced in Paris, were written during a few weeks in April of 1752. His later musical works included *Pygmalion*, a *scène lyrique* that, though written around 1762, was not produced until 1770. After the completion of *Pygmalion*, Rousseau retreated into the writing of songs, a form on which he worked until his death.

A scholarly survey of these works reveals the paradox of Rousseau's "double" position as both theorist and composer. In his *Confessions* he declares his sensitivity about being self-taught; likewise, in the preface to his play *Narcisse*, he defends his role as critic. In the former, Rousseau relates his lack of confidence on first meeting Rameau:

La Poplinière dit là-dessus qu'on pouvait le lui faire entendre et m'offrit de rassembler des musiciens pour en exécuter des morceaux; je ne demandai pas mieux. Rameau consentit en grommelant en répétant sans cesse que ce devait être belle chose que de la composition d'un homme qui n'était pas enfant de la balle, et qui avait appris la musique tout seul.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 333.

La Poplinière said it could be played for him to hear and offered to assemble musicians to play several sections. I asked for no more. Rameau consented, grumbling and repeating again that it was the work of an inexperienced young man who was a self-taught musician.

Constantly, Rousseau was forced to transcend his sense of self-lack. Rousseau feared *paraître*, yet in appearing to his peers as "musician" could sublimate his fear. He obscured feelings of insufficiency with another mask, a combative one through which he intended to instruct society. Starobinski writes that Rousseau's critique "*accuse la civilization, dont la caractéristique fondamentale est sa négativité par rapport à la nature*"¹⁰⁶ (accuses civilization, whose fundamental characteristic is its negativity regarding nature). That Rousseau relied on the ornately baroque genre of opera to reveal the natural is paradoxical and attests to both his cleverness and his virtuosity. In following sections, I define processes through which his inherent idealism transformed the lyric stage.

ROUSSEAU AND THE SUPPLEMENTARITY OF THE LYRIC

Rousseau did not attribute his acclaim as a musician to his *intermède Le Devin du village*. Despite its modest success, he believed it to be an amateur work; however, he continued to write opera, *scène lyrique*, and various hybrid forms. For Rousseau, the lyric had two functions: first, it initiated an autobiographical discourse; second, it appropriated a cultural consciousness which privileged melody as originary presence. The initial and harsh separation of song from speech is described by Derrida as a beginning (of music) which is also an ending, which he designates as the point of origin:

¹⁰⁶ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 37.

La dégénérescence comme séparation, sevrage de la parole et du chant, a toujours déjà commencé. Tout le texte de Rousseau *décrit*, nous allons le voir, l'origine comme commencement de la fin.¹⁰⁷

Degeneration like separation, severance of word and song has always already begun. All of Rousseau's text describes, we shall see, the origin as the beginning of the end.¹⁰⁸

Throughout Rousseau's theoretical writings, the deliberate severance and consequent rejoining of word and music are constantly revealed as emblems of his belief in the lyric natural and its integration through the stage. Rousseau wished his spectator to know his vision of fundamental division and complementarity of nature and of culture present at the origin. In his attempt to explain his views, he redefined the boundaries of musical theory and did so in two processes. First, he asserted a theory of *récitatif* embodying sentiment. Toward this end, he experimented with *récitatif*, opera's primary signature. In *Le Devin du village* he suppressed its presence to convey melodic unison; in *Pygmalion* he deferred its function to purely instrumental passages to symbolize psychological states: the fear and hoped-for approbation of the protagonist.¹⁰⁹ In the former work, Rousseau relied on musical indications and on the sparse stage directions in the text, believing that they would allow every discriminating listener could put his own harmony to it.¹¹⁰ In both works, Rousseau contended with the function of *récitatif*, refusing to

¹⁰⁷ Derrida, *De la Grammatologie*, 284.

¹⁰⁸ Spivak, *Of Grammatology*, 202.

¹⁰⁹ In *Le Devin du village*, Rousseau suppressed *récitatif* from the work's performance at the Opéra; in *Pygmalion*, he employed a deliberate separation of voice, silences, and musical passages.

¹¹⁰ Albert Jansen, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau als Musiker*, (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1884), 295.

accept it as mere verbal complement to musical text. Severance of word and lyric thus functioned as a marker, connoting original loss of form, but also its hoped-for redemption.

Second, in foreshadowing processes of self-definition, Rousseau's theatrical strategy privileged solo voice. This strategy precedes theoretical claims decrying the futility of a search for origin of the lyric elsewhere than in the human voice.¹¹¹ In the lyric work, Rousseau thus constantly challenged the function of binary text, one allowing the verbal dimension to both supplement and undermine the musical. The confrontation of this process implies an instability of means; yet in fearing ridicule for his lack of talent, Rousseau obstinately pursued the goal of composing, causing self-confrontation. In the *Confessions* he writes:

Mon opéra fait, il s'agit d'en tirer parti: c'était un autre opéra bien plus difficile. On ne vient à bout de rien à Paris quand on y vit isolé.¹¹²

My opera completed, I desired to reap the benefit by composing another, even more difficult. One gets nowhere in Paris when one lives isolated from others.

In stressing a linkage of the writing of lyric works to autobiography, this passage reveals the complicity of Rousseau as being both composer and librettist. Opera is described as a means to project a certain appearance. To join society, to appear and be recognized from a better vantage point than before, is paradoxical yet so is Rousseau's own dialectic of being/appearance as shown through the writing of lyric works in the new operatic genre

¹¹¹ *EOL*, 5:380.

¹¹² *Conf.*, 1:333.

which were, even in Rousseau's period, socially indefensible to a majority of the public who saw them.¹¹³

Rousseau's musical achievement has been treated by scholars who attempt to uncover affinities with contemporary research. In the final section of this chapter, Rousseau's contribution to the lyric stage is revealed as the fulfillment of twin ideals of music and autobiography.

THE LYRIC IDEALIZED

Differences occur in the assessment of Rousseau's musical work by scholars: some, such as Arnold Whittall, place Rousseau within his century as looking backward toward the simplicity of the sixteenth-century Florentine Camerata;¹¹⁴ others, such as Marie-Elisabeth Duche, place his achievement with those of modern musical theorists such as Pierre Schaeffer and John Cage.¹¹⁵ One of the most interesting viewpoints placing Rousseau "before his time" comes from Whittall, a musicologist who views Rousseau's position on music as emanating from a longing for an idealized Arcadia, "a refuge from the storms of contemporary life."¹¹⁶ Whittall likens Rousseau to an "eighteenth century

¹¹³ David Littlejohn, *The Ultimate Art: Essays Around and About Opera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), viii.

¹¹⁴ The Florentine Camerata, whose members included Bardi, Galilei, Rinuccini, Caccini, and Peri, was a group of Florentine intellectuals who met around 1580 at the home of Count Bardi and who sought, among other things, to create a multi-arts spectacle based on musical imitation modeled after the style of ancient Greek drama. *HDM*, 122, s.v. "Camerata."

¹¹⁵ Marie-Elisabeth Duche, "Modernité du Discours de Jean-Jacques Rousseau sur la musique," in *Rousseau after Two Hundred Years: Proceedings of the Cambridge Bicentennial Colloquium*, ed. R. A. Leigh (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 266.

¹¹⁶ Arnold Whittall, "Rousseau and the Scope of Opera," *Music and Letters* 45 (October 1964), 370.

Caccini"¹¹⁷ demanding priorities of word, music, and tone. Just as Caccini had formulated spectacles wherein all arts were accorded equality, Rousseau sought to create a totalizing system of representation. According to Whittall, the greatest error on Rousseau's part was in not taking seriously enough his rival Rameau. In confronting Rameau, Rousseau denied that harmony, in itself, had expressive powers. This in itself could have been sufficient to account for Rousseau's perceived inadequacies as a practical musician. Whittall concludes that Rousseau was "too much concerned with the limitations of music to be a great theorist."¹¹⁸

In *Modernité du Discours de Jean-Jacques Rousseau sur la musique*, Marie-Elisabeth Duchez traces an alternate trajectory of Rousseau's awareness of the boundaries of musical systems. These boundaries join the eighteenth century's system of musical reference to that of the historical:

... Rousseau dénonce, dans *L'Essai sur l'origine des langues* ... l'idée que seul est musical ce que peut se noter dans notre système de musique: il écoute l'intervalle spatialement, en dehors du système harmonique; et refusant d'identifier 'son' et 'note,' il remet en question, comme les musiciens d'aujourd'hui, les pratiques de la transmission écrite.

... Rousseau denounces, in his *Essai* ... , the ideal that only that contained within our system is musical. He listens spatially to the interval outside the harmonic system. He refuses to identify sound and note, putting into question, as do contemporary musicians, the practice of musical transcription.

¹¹⁷ A seventeenth-century Italian composer whose recitative style was modeled on that of one of the greatest Italian actresses of the period, Caccini attempted to mirror vocal inflections and shifts of accent in the melodic line.

¹¹⁸ Whittall, "Rousseau and the Scope of Opera," 373.

"Indecidability" confers on the listener's response the role of ultimate judge or interpreter of musical representation as a refusal of containment within a system of boundaries.¹¹⁹ This refusal of a framing of the representative process recalls, in turn, *l'espace*, defined by Derrida, as "déploiement . . . dans une localité originale, de significations que la consécution linéaire irréversible, passant de point de présence en point de présence, ne pouvait que tendre et . . . échouer à réfoiler"¹²⁰ (deploying . . . in a primary locale, meanings that the consecutive irreversible linearity, passing from point to point of presence, cannot but be indefinitely extended).

I contend that Rousseau's writings on music call for a reexamination of his text as a whole. In the *Essai*, Rousseau's association of music with passions of the heart is stressed: "la voix annonce un être sensible; c'est un des plus grands avantages du musicien de pouvoir peindre les choses qu'on ne saurait entendre"¹²¹ (The voice announces a sensitive being; it is one of the musician's greatest advantages to paint things that one cannot understand). Rousseau's emphasis on the senses reaffirms an essential linkage between gesture, language, and human feeling at the heart of his endeavor and of his century's quest for origin:

Les passions ont leurs gestes, mais elles ont aussi leurs accents, et ces accents qui nous font tressaillir, ces accents auxquels on ne peut dérober son organe pénètrent au fond du coeur.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Duchez, "Modernité du Discours," 264.

¹²⁰ Derrida, "La Scène de l'écriture," in *L'Écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 321.

¹²¹ *EOL*, 5:380.

¹²² *Ibid.*

Passions have their movements, but also their accents, and these accents that make us shiver, these accents whose organ penetrates to the depth of our hearts, cannot be erased.

In conclusion, Rousseau subsumed the ideal of a musical system under that of a general semiology of culture. He succeeded, creating a theory of origin, one in which sentiment enhanced by the presence of the lyric supplied a missing link. By questioning the accepted definition of Western musical notation as it had evolved since the Middle Ages, Rousseau explored the idea of boundaries. In the *Essai* as in musical articles published in the *Encyclopaedia*, he questioned a musical system's preestablished boundaries as necessarily confined to a given cultural system. Thus "musicality" is intimately related to what is considered sonorous only if a given acoustical system is the basis of sonority and of tonality. Rousseau questioned the implied alliance of this base, and the inherent relationship of note and sound. According to him, a given cultural system of musical signifier and signified was not fixed but was, in fact, governed by a system defined by what Derrida later would term "indecidability." Rousseau defended his stance by alluding to the Greeks, who "n'avait absolument d'harmonique dans notre sens que ce qu'il fallait pour fixer l'accord des instruments sur les consonances parfaites"¹²³ (had no harmony in our sense other than that necessary to assemble the harmony of instruments on perfect consonances).

Through its idealism, the lyric endeavor of Rousseau's text foregrounds the autobiographical. Uniting many elements into a single enactment of truth harboring a belief that a world view could be expressed through the lyric stage, Rousseau sought to

¹²³ Ibid., 5:415.

contain the present through the inaugural creative act. Within this context, the autobiographical signifier was reciprocally enhanced by the lyric, as in a balanced play of difference.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL EMBLEM IN EARLY LYRIC WORKS

My purpose in this chapter is to examine the autobiographical emblem in the early lyric works of Rousseau: *La Découverte du nouveau monde* (1741) and *Les Muses galantes* (1746). Using the definition of *emblem* advanced in Chapter One, the visual modality of the emblem, existing as a subspecies of symbol, may be translated into verbal behavior, awareness, and intentionality. In turn, these may be transposed into moral and mystical meanings. Among the emblems appearing in Rousseau's early libretti, described below, are the countryside, the flora and fauna common to a natural setting, and the figure of the savage or individual who exists apart from society.

La Découverte du nouveau monde and *Les Muses galantes* were written for the new hybrid dramatic vocal forms which were developing in the mid-eighteenth century. They predate Rousseau's two *Discours*—an important point in laying a chronological framework for his thought. Emblems appearing in the two lyric works are later transformed in theoretical writings into discourses of social criticism and the supremacy of European over non-European cultures. Through the lyric stage, Rousseau thus set a precedent in his thought for the marginalization of non-European cultures.

I argue that Rousseau's critical stance toward the noble savage in his first libretto foreshadows, along with the works of contemporaries such as Voltaire and Diderot,¹ the

¹ Baron de Lahontan's *Dialogues d'un M. le Baron de Lahontan et d'un sauvage dans l'Amérique* (1703), Voltaire's *L'Ingenu* (1767), and Diderot's *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* (1772) all confer on the "savage" a status of "other," a norm established by the European.

exploration of an idealized anthropology. In Rousseau's case, the savage of the New World showed himself to be morally superior to his European conqueror through his failure to be corrupted by the arts, represented in Rousseau's libretto as native songs and dances. We might conclude that the sciences and the arts corrupt only Europeans; thus Rousseau takes pains to privilege what he considers to be the parameters of social behavior of his own society through their careful examination and exclusion. In a similar manner, Rousseau's second lyric work, *Les Muses galantes*, tacitly reveals, through its structure, the wording of its libretto, and its mise-en-scène partaking of images based on the *galant* courtier and prevalent taste for the *pastorale*, Rousseau's desire to assimilate with the very society he criticizes. Finally, both lyric works explore, in different ways, the questions of natural origin which preoccupied his century.

In *La Découverte du nouveau monde* nascent themes of the anthropology of man emerge via tropes of the arts and the noble savage. The songs and dances of the savage function as a textual analogy to his innocence, thereby conferring on his culture a retrospective illusion of integrity. In *Les Muses galantes* the revival of the *pastorale* inflames Rousseau's desire to create in each act a scene depicting the love of a different poet, recalling thereby the harmony of a purer past as counterpart to the present. The libretto, based on the poet Tasso's love for the princess of Ferrare, the *Hesiod* of Ovid, and the Greek dithyramb, is recounted in the *Confessions*. The following passage reveals Rousseau's ardent desire to assimilate—a stance paradoxical when compared with his later writings—and to expose through this assimilation the self's integrity:

... je voulais en avoir le coeur net et tenter de faire à moi seul un Opéra, paroles et musique. ... Je projetais dans un Ballet héroïque trois sujets différents en trois actes détachés, chacun dans un différent caractère de musique et prenant pour chaque sujet les amours d'un Poète, j'intitulais cet Opéra *Les Muses galantes*.²

... I wanted to clear my conscience by undertaking myself the words and music of an opera. ... I conceived as a *ballet héroïque* three different subjects in as many acts, each using a different genre of music and conceived around the idea of the loves of a poet. I entitled this opera *Les Muses galantes*.

Whereas in this chapter I discuss these early libretti, showing how Rousseau initiates, through the lyric stage, a portrayal of European man which becomes a basis for theory and seeks to embrace appearance, in following chapters I discuss how Rousseau attains, through the lyric work, a *rite de passage* culminating in self-enshrinement. It is tempting to read these early works as miniature laboratories existing before the advent of theory (as in the two *Discours*) and, at a later stage, preceding the autobiographical endeavor.

Following the assimilation of self presented in *Les Muses galantes* the totalized self begins to appear in the libretto, music, and staging of *Le Devin du village*,³ written in the wake of the publication of *Le Premier Discours*. In this libretto the "country Rousseau" and the setting of his childhood are revealed as lyric text, with mise-en-scene reminiscent of actual scenes recounted in the *Confessions*.⁴ Rousseau's libretti

² *Conf.*, 1:294.

³ See Chapter Three.

⁴ The first volume of the *Confessions* reveals Rousseau's love of the country through such settings as Bossey, the lausannais countryside, and Chambéry.

depict the country and settings far from the city as havens of the natural that border on the utopian. Similarly, *Pygmalion*,⁵ written in 1762 and not performed as lyric work until 1770, glorifies the self as artisan. In the Greek myth, Pygmalion the sculptor uses stone, a substance of the earth, to fashion an ideal for posterity, thereby transcending his earthly state. Using the myth as base, Rousseau in his *Pygmalion* emblemizes the self as transcendent, able to overcome the strife of the earthbound state through the creative endeavor. Rousseau's own literary achievement is thus represented or emblemized as the artwork.

Other *philosophes*, such as Diderot⁶ and D'Alembert,⁷ joined Rousseau in experimenting with new musical forms, such as the *opera buffa*.⁸ Yet even though D'Alembert played the harpsichord and Diderot portrayed utopian operas in *Le Neveu de*

⁵ See Chapter Four.

⁶ In *La Musique des Lumières* Béatrice Didier describes the imaginary operas of Diderot beginning in *Le Neveu de Rameau* with the improvised pantomime between "Moi" and "Lui." Didier calls this is an instance of a literature which "invents" music, the gestures of the actors mimicking the interplay of different musical instruments, including shifts in volume and rhythm; artists, Didier adds, possess "une ivresse de la création qui les amène à se servir de leur oeuvre comme support à d'autres oeuvres" (a creative frenzy which causes them to use the work of others as a basis for their own). In *Le Neveu de Rameau* the debate over operatic reform is taken up in dialogical form between "Moi" and "Lui." In pantomime the Nephew parodies gestures, expressions, and vocal inflections common to opera of the period. The text relies on contemporary debates regarding libretti and social comportment following patterns seen on the stage.

⁷ D'Alembert was not a musician but was interested in theory via his knowledge of mathematics. The only *philosophe* not to participate in the musical quarrels of his century, he attempted in the *Encyclopédia* to straddle the fence by separating musical ideologies of the mid-eighteenth century.

⁸ The Italian *opera buffa* evolved from *intermezzi* performed between acts of serious opera to an independent two-act form. Its traits include lively comic characterizations and ensemble finales. Among the prominent composers in the genre were Pergolesi, Piccini, and Mozart. Late in the eighteenth century, elements of sentimental drama combined with the farcical style. *HDM*, s.v. "Comic opera" (Donald J. Grout).

Rameau, Rousseau was the only *philosophe* who embraced the challenge of writing both poetry and the music of the new genre.⁹ The *Confessions* also reveal Rousseau's love of music and his desire to use musical composition to distinguish himself among peers:

La musique était pour moi une autre passion moins fougueuse mais non moins consumante par l'ardeur avec laquelle je m'y livrais, par l'étude opiniâtre des obscurs livres de Rameau, par mon invincible obstination à vouloir en charger ma mémoire qui s'y refusait toujours, par mes courses continuelles, par les compilations immenses que j'entassais, passant très souvent à copier la nuit entière.¹⁰

Music was for me a passion no less fleeting than consuming by the ardor I attached to its study, either by the diligent study of obscure texts by Rameau, or by my invincible obstination wanting to fill my mind which always refused the task, by immense compilings that I stacked up, very often spending the entire evening copying.

The lyric stage, with its hybrid dramatic and musical elements, introduced to Rousseau an opportunity to represent the natural, a favored tenet of his philosophy, as a totality. By means of the forum the stage provided, he could elicit the sympathy of the spectator and build on that sympathy to persuade the spectator to exercise conscious virtue to the end of reembracing the simpler values of a purer life. As Rousseau saw it, a moral life favored the natural setting of the country.¹¹ Thus, the arrangement of stage elements of music, verbal text, and mise-en-scène constituted a language wherein systems of

⁹ Although libretti of Rousseau's works early works survive, late-nineteenth-century editions of the journal *S.I.M.* (Studies in Music) in the Schautz libretto collection of the Library of Congress confirm that the musical scores have been lost. From the *Confessions* we learn that advance auditions of the musical score, comprising minuets, musettes, and ballets typical of the early eighteenth century, did not merit performance at the esteemed Paris Opera.

¹⁰ *Conf.*, 1:219.

¹¹ For Rousseau, compassion was one of two emotions (the other being self-love) that exist prior to reason. It is compassion which causes "a natural repugnance upon seeing any other sensible being and particularly any of our own species suffer pain or death." *OC*, 3:126.

reference to the natural served to assuage cosmopolitan ills. The lyric stage was, in essence, a *pharmakon*, a remedy for the ills of society that also camouflaged those ills. In his essay "Of Plato's *Pharmakon*," Derrida states that the medicine designated as *pharmakon* "is beneficial; it repairs and produces, accumulates and remedies, increases knowledge and reduces forgetfulness. Its translation by 'remedy' nonetheless erases, in going outside the Greek language, the other pole reserved in the word *pharmakon*. It cancels out the resources of ambiguity and makes more difficult an understanding of the context."¹² The lyric stage functioned for Rousseau both as remedy and as shield, one which allowed him, at the same time, distance from and communion with the spectator as judge and "other."

Rousseau's timidity, as described in the *Confessions* and recurrently in his work, was such that he could express himself only in written form. The lyric stage, as a form of "writing," thus allowed a substitutive projection, one which purposely distanced the self from its means of expression, thereby creating a double presence. This splitting of the self into an original, projected "other" caused the theatricalized lyric work to assume a form of written supplement to the "true" Rousseau. This process of supplementarity caused the stage, a mirror reflection, to merge with the spectator, persuading him to perceive in its natural setting a locus of empathy or compassion. Rousseau's early lyric works characterized the Antillean savage, the "galant" courtier, or the vain shepherd as belonging to a nature envisioned as a *pastorale* or primitive setting yet interdependent on a fabricated theatrical representation for its perception. The opposition of nature to

¹² Kamuf, ed., *Derrida Reader*, 125.

culture was present in Rousseau's early libretti, in which various unproblematic "natural" settings were represented by opera, the most contrived of stage forms.¹³ The fundamental division constituted by the representation of these words had personal and political implications.¹⁴

From a political perspective, the natural in its staged lyric representation was the first of several platforms upon which Rousseau set forth ideas that implicitly marginalized non-European cultures, a process beginning early in his career. In his first libretto, *La Découverte du nouveau monde*, Rousseau's conception of the noble savage implicitly marginalizes non-European cultures by suggesting the transformation of a "primitive" originary state into a "cultured" European one. This notion of course represents a trend in Western European intellectual discourse, one to which Rousseau contributes further in his first and second *Discours*. For example:

Si la culture des sciences est nuisible aux qualités guerrières, elle l'est encore plus aux qualités morales. C'est dès nos premières années qu'une éducation insensée orne notre esprit et corrompt notre jugement.¹⁵

If the culture of science is harmful to warlike qualities, it is even more so to our moral qualities. From our earliest years, senseless education dulls our mind and corrupts our judgment.

Rousseau's reference to "la culture des sciences" is of interest in its assimilation of man to a microcosm which extends to the entire universe. As a result, "natural history," later

¹³ Samuel Johnson referred to opera as an "unnatural art," continuing the criticism of the form advanced in the late seventeenth century by St. Evremond, Perrault, and others.

¹⁴ See Chapter Four.

¹⁵ *OC, Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, 3:24.

perceived as the study of "anthropology," centered around a "universal man" of all periods and places. During the Enlightenment, the "uniqueness" accorded to the human species consistently equated "natural man" with the "man of nature,"¹⁶ leading to confusion and a falsifying of cultural attributes such as race, occupation, religion, etc., which privileged the European as norm and neglected peoples then considered exotic, such as Negroes, Hottentots, American Indians, and Eskimos, among others.¹⁷

In Rousseau's lyric work, as in his two *Discours*, this marginalizing of non-Europeans occurs in a dialectical process which incorporates imagery, verbal text, and intertextual reference wherein "culture" and "nature"—as defined by European standards—are posited against each other. Columbus and *sauvage* are portrayed as conqueror and conquered, respectively; there is also an opposition of the European and the colonized. On yet another level, the cultured or civilized self, epitomized by the European white race, is opposed to the purer, more natural self identified with the savages defined by Rousseau as those objectified as "the other" through conquest.

¹⁶ Pol-P. Gossiaux, in his article "Anthropologie des Lumières (Culture 'naturelle' et racisme rituel)," defines "anthropologie" in 1778, the year of Rousseau's death, as follows: "[Elle] est proprement cette branche importante de la Science Philosophique qui nous fait connaître l'Homme sous ses différents rapports physiques et moraux. Elle nous apprend à connaître l'origine de l'homme, les différents états par lesquels il passe, ses qualités ou affections, ses facultés ou actions, pour en déduire la connaissance de sa nature" (This important branch of philosophical science causes us to know Man through his different moral and physical rapports. It permits us to know the origin of man, the different stages he passes through, his qualities our feelings, his capabilities and actions in order to deduce a knowledge of his nature). *L'Homme des Lumières et la découverte de l'autre*, ed. Droixhe and Gossiaux (Liège: Université de Liège, 1987), 49.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 53. In his interesting text, Gossiaux postulates that this privileging of a pseudo-culture *naturelle* derived from the European account of the origin of man turned the entire conception of *l'histoire naturelle* against itself.

The libretto enacts Rousseau's self, as well as his world view, in terms of the opposition European (defined by that culture by such signifiers as well-mannered, morally correct, socially acceptable, and adept at "cultural" feats such as the composition of *opera buffa* and political oratory) and savage (defined by Rousseau as of the country, having simple values, being compassionate, etc.) It is interesting to note how Rousseau's concept of the man of nature, appearing in *La Découverte du nouveau monde* (written in 1741) as well as his two *Discours* (1753 and 1755), actually contributes to the marginalization of the very peoples he implies that he wishes to protect.

In *Le Portrait du Roi*, Louis Marin's definition of representation as a process of decoding is one to which Rousseau's lyric works respond:

Aussi pourrait-on considérer que la présente étude tente d'examiner divers domaines du langage, récit d'histoire et discours d'éloge, ou d'image, tableau d'histoire, médaille ou portrait, comme les expansions de cet énoncé.¹⁸

The present study attempts to examine diverse domains of language, historical account, and elegiac discourse, or of image, historic tableau, medallion and portrait, all of which are expansions of the subject.

Through various modalities of verbal text, musical phrase, and mise-en-scène, Rousseau's early lyric work, as a comprehensive embodiment, engaged the spectator on multiple levels in order to elicit a response of persuasion or seduction.

In his scenic conception Rousseau uses two separate settings. These include a forest, representative of the New World, and a gilded Spanish fleet, representative of Europe. The ostensible choice between the vision of the fleet filled with soldiers flanked

¹⁸ Louis Marin, *Le Portrait du Roi* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1981), 9.

by Destiny and Minerva¹⁹ and that of the natural forest of the Indian tribe inhabiting the island of Guanahan in the Antilles reinscribes the fundamental division between the character of Columbus and that of Le Cacique, the "savage" chief, further cast as a *mise-en-abîme*²⁰ of the character of Rousseau himself. The island setting is described as follows:

Le théâtre représente la forêt sacrée où les Peuples de l'Isle de Guanahan venaient adorer leurs Dieux; on y voit quelques Bustes d'Idoles sur des troncs d'arbres grossièrement taillés.²¹

The theater represents a sacred forest where people of the Island of Guanahan come to adore their Gods. Several busts of idols are seen on rudely fashioned tree trunks.

Yet on a deeper level the choice of settings and narrative, in which Columbus bows to the will of the savage chieftain, traces the theme of nature versus culture (conceived according to European standards) which underlies the entirety of the libretto. For example, the narrative recounts the tale of the visit by Columbus to the Antillean island inhabited by peaceful Indians. As the Spanish fleet arrives, the natives celebrate the event with songs and dances although sensing a strange foreboding: "C'est ici le séjour de nos Dieux formidables. Ils rendent en ce lieu leurs arrêts redoutables" (Here is the resting place of our formidable Gods. They make their fearful decrees in this place). The theme of conquest of the savage by the gentrified European is introduced on several levels. For

¹⁹ *DNM*, 2:820.

²⁰ In this dissertation I define *mise-en-abîme* as a setting-apart, within a text, of key elements of self-referentiality.

²¹ *Ibid.*

one, Columbus must conquer Le Cacique. For another, Cacique has himself conquered a lover, Carime, thereby provoking the jealousy of his spouse.

Just as Europe sought to exist in precarious harmony with what it conceived as primitive New World or Pacific cultures worthy of conquest, Rousseau sought to resolve his own interior conflicts between Calvinist values and the cultivated worlds he had experienced in Venice and Paris. In *La Découverte du nouveau monde* Rousseau's opposing world views are theatrically displayed through staging that privileges supplementarity in representing the natural self as embracing compassion through a stage apparatus denoting artifice.

Developed in the narrative of libretti well before they are theorized, such aspects of Rousseau's thought as his Calvinist ethos, his schooling in ways of the aristocracy, and his approach to the writing of opera, are revealed as markers through which a dialectic of being is crystallized. The tension of essence/appearance which is characteristic of theater is equally characteristic of Rousseau's self. Thus, tensions occur between *l'homme naturel* and *l'homme artificiel* wherein neither cares about reality but stakes his essence on illusion. These tensions are testimony of self-awareness. According to Cassirer, Rousseau's great discovery is that everyone carries the archetype of natural man within.²²

In parts of *La Découverte du nouveau monde* Rousseau decries the arts and sciences as cultural bondage and commences an autobiographical journey backward in time. Walter Rex explains that the savage is always Rousseau himself, freed from the

²² Ernst Cassirer, *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Peter Gay (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 51.

constraints of his Calvinist upbringing.²³ In this first libretto, through appearance or *paraître* conceived as theatrical representation, Rousseau addresses major societal issues such as whether the arts and sciences could exist without corrupting social life, as well as the ethical and moral dilemmas surrounding conquest.

The theme of Rousseau's second libretto is less serious. *Les Muses galantes*, written upon his arrival in Paris in 1745, shows how Rousseau sought the acclaim of his peers through appearing to conform to and then challenging current musical practice. Beginning a rivalry with Rameau, Rousseau first devised a nontraditional system of musical notation based on numbers. The representation of chords with numerical symbols rather than notes was an aesthetic issue later subsumed within a personal one: Rousseau's rebellion against Rameau as musical precursor. To Rousseau, the use of numerical symbols seemed a "purer," more natural form of signification than the traditional notation for polyphonic chords.

Throughout Rousseau's staged lyric works, the tension between the natural and the artificial is revealed as that between Rousseau as natural man, as in *La Découverte du nouveau monde*, and Rousseau citified, as in *Les Muses galantes*, seeking to win the approval of his peers. When the prestigious Académie des Sciences rejects the novel

²³ Rex, *Attraction to the Contrary*, 104. Before his conversion to Catholicism, Rousseau espoused the religious doctrine of the French Protestant reformer John Calvin (1509–1564). In *Du Contrat social* Rousseau evoked the figure of Calvin as founder of the ideal city, which was organized around the principle of love of one's country. Later in life Rousseau felt victimized by Calvinism, as is expressed in *Lettres de la montagne* (1763). In his essay "John Calvin," *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 99, William J. Bouwsma describes Calvinism as a "natural theology based on innate and universal religious instinct that can discern evidences of the existence and attributes of God everywhere in nature." Calvinist thought also emphasized the concept of predestination and, according to Bouwsma, the "extreme transcendence of God."

musical notation of Rousseau the cosmopolite, a savage Rousseau rebels. In the Preface to the *Confessions*, Rousseau writes as if to reinforce the link between natural man and the archetype he believes exists in all:

Voici le seul portrait d'un homme, peint exactement d'après nature et dans toute sa vérité, qui existe et qui probablement existera jamais.²⁴

Behold the portrait of a man, painted exactly according to nature and in all of its truth, which exists and will probably always exist.

In Book Five of the *Confessions* Rousseau states that, in the early period of his life, music was of supreme importance. Later, the practice of composition became the marker through which to introduce the "artificial" self to society:

J'apprenais insensiblement la musique en l'enseignant. Ma vie était assez douce; un homme raisonnable eût pu s'en contenter: mais mon coeur inquiet me demandait autre chose.²⁵

I avidly learned music through teaching it. Life was sweet; a reasonable man would be content with such a life. But my impatient heart desired other things.

The public Rousseau displaced his resentment onto staged creations through his work as musician-librettist. His resentment of the prevalent social structure led him to present therein a world view in which wealth and allure of the city played no part. In the series of restraints imposed upon Rousseau, including the rejection of *Les Muses galantes* by the *Académie des Sciences* and a failed attempt at a career in diplomatic service,²⁶ the

²⁴ *Conf.*, 1:3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:53.

²⁶ Benoît Mely explains how Rousseau composed the libretto and music of *Les Muses galantes* to "save face" upon his return to Paris from Venice, where his quarrels with the French ambassador blocked a career as diplomat. Translated from B. Mely, *Un Intellectuel en rupture* (Paris: Minerve.

lyric stage offered him a means of social advancement which provided some solace. He was already contending with issues of interior, moral conviction opposing exterior, objective truth. Such complex issues surface in the libretto of *La Découverte*, the text of which centered on opposing truths of the clarity of nature (conceptualized as *amour de soi* and compassion) and those of civilization and progress. In my reading of the libretto and its stage directions, I posit that origins of inequality are represented within an undetermined geographical area depicted as a natural realm wherein consequences of gentrification are signified by the arrival of the European, the consequences of which include broken trust and the relinquishing of natural innocence, both of which disruptions are deemed by Rousseau in *Le Second Discours* as contrary to laws of nature.

In addition to being a pretext for public image, the lyric stage presented a semantic map of issues concerning the private Rousseau. The natural functioned as an emblem of self on both external, philosophical and interior, personal levels. On the philosophical level, Rousseau proffered a theory of natural origin in which he designated the figure of the savage as that of the morally purified. Rousseau posited Cacique, the savage of his libretto, against Columbus, the cultured European, in a manner analogous to the conflicted image of self he chose to portray. Until forced to contend with custom, Rousseau himself was untamed. His own rusticity amid well-mannered settings thus portrayed the self duplicitously intertwined in a social milieu while simultaneously exiled from its peers. Yet, as stated in following verses, the self portrayed here is always of Rousseau's choosing:

1985), 40.

Hommes savants dans l'art de feindre
Qui me prêtez des traits si doux,

Vous aurez beau vouloir me peindre
Vous ne peindrez jamais que vous.²⁷

Men learned in the art of pretense,
Who bequeath me such fine character traits,

You will never paint my portrait,
All you will ever portray is yourselves.

My reading of these early works illustrates how Rousseau asserts his self as glorified object. By theatricalizing his true, interior self, the staged lyric work privileges appearance or *paraître* as leading toward a *moral* outcome. Rousseau stated in *La Lettre à D'Alembert* that the disparity between being and appearance was directly responsible for the widening gap between the words and actions of men. He used this insight to his advantage in his lyric works, so that appearance triumphed only when directed toward a process of moral betterment:

Sitôt que je fus en état d'observer les hommes, je les regardais faire, et je les écoutais parler; puis voyant que leurs actions ne ressemblait point à leurs discours, je cherchais la raison de cette dissemblance, et je trouvais qu'être et paraître étant pour eux deux choses aussi différentes qu'agir et parler, cette deuxième différence était la cause de l'autre.²⁸

Just as soon as I was in the state to observe men, I watched their actions and heard them speak. Then, seeing that their actions hardly resembled their speech, I looked for the reason behind this disparity. I found that being and appearance were for them two things as different as acting and speaking, and that this second difference caused the former.

²⁷ OC, "Quatrain pour un de ses portraits," 2:1157.

²⁸ OC, "Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont," 2:775.

Thus, on the lyric stage, appearance causes the psyche of the spectator to envisage, tacitly, a process of moral reform. The lyric stage was for Rousseau a means of initiation to a self based on sentiment, orienting the spectator through a regard upon appearance to other more critical issues. The exploration of this agenda, brought forth through the process of performance, emerges as paramount.

Whereas Rousseau's writings prior to 1752 foreshadowed his emergence as political philosopher, the influence of the stage on public life in his century²⁹ directly confers on these early libretti a demarcative function. During the 1740s aesthetic tastes changed, allowing a degree of experimentation within previously fixed genres. In opera, the rococo style espoused by Rameau no longer represented public taste.³⁰ This shift of preference prompted the *philosophes* led by Diderot and Rousseau to reform the lyric stage. Their effort focused on two issues: the rivalry and consequent "absoluteness" of music and word, and a change in the form of the libretto. As a group, the *philosophes* suggested the following: words understood on the lyric stage should have the same value as in spoken theater; composers should abandon elaborate stage designs; and narratives should reflect scenes of bourgeois life.

As Rousseau began to write libretti, individualism entered the lyric stage, although interiority was still regarded with distrust. Whereas in *La Découverte du nouveau monde* individualism dominated in the exterior characterization of Columbus as

²⁹ See Chapter One, 65.

³⁰ *Rococo* is defined as a "gallant style" emphasizing prettiness and lightness. It flowered in France from 1725 to 1775 and is the counterpart to the more stately "baroque" style of the same period. *HDM*, s.v. "Rococo."

benevolent conqueror, the interior nature of the individual was inferred through processes of reflection, as when Carime, the maiden rebuffed by Cacique, exclaims:

Je ne connais point l'art de feindre,
Avec regret je vais couler vos pleurs,
Mon désespoir a causé vos malheurs,
Mais mon coeur commence à vous plaindre
Sans pouvoir guérir vos douleurs.

Renonçons à la violence.
Quand le coeur se croit outragé
A peine a-t-on puni l'offense.³¹

I don't know the art of pretense,
With regret, I cry your tears,
My despair has caused you unhappiness,
But my heart begins to pity you
Without curing your grief.

Renounce violence;
When the heart senses outrage,
The offense has hardly been punished.

Conversely, by the time Rousseau staged the *scène lyrique Pygmalion*, interior states of the individual dominated as processes of psychological reflection. Oppositions within Rousseau—of self realized through the dialectical encounter with other within the self—formed on the lyric stage an endless process of mutation.

LA DECOUVERTE DU NOUVEAU MONDE

In the libretto for *La Découverte du nouveau monde*, Rousseau addressed a new moral standard by questioning the rationale for conquest was morally viable. Within the libretto's European context, he depicted the savage as an individual cast against the tide of false appearances represented by the conquering European society. As an

³¹ DNM, 2:835.

autobiographical retelling, the portrayal of the savage is not unlike Rousseau's image of himself. In the *Confessions* Rousseau recounts his rustic habits in the bourgeois setting of the Baronne de Warrens:

D'ailleurs quoique j'eusse l'esprit assez orné, n'ayant jamais vu le monde je manquais totalement de manières, et mes connaissances, loin d'y suppléer, ne servaient qu'à m'intimider davantage, en me faisant sentir combien j'en manquais.³²

Besides, although I had a rather precocious spirit, having never seen the world I totally lacked manners, and my acquaintances, far from helping out, only served to further intimidate me in making me realize how much I lacked.

Throughout, the formation of Rousseau's true self emerges from a conflict between cosmopolitan environments and bourgeois milieus typified by Paris and Venice, and the rustic habits he acquired from austere, simple life in the countryside and Geneva. (Like *La Découverte's* Antillean island, Geneva claimed equality for all citizens, as well as its own sovereignty.)

In *La Découverte* the plight of the savage and his concurrent lack of civilization are depicted as a state of mirthful happiness. This discourse privileges the true or natural self, represented in the libretto by the figure of the savage. Within the text, Rousseau allows the self enthroned in nature to triumph over the self of the "enlightened" European. In a similar manner, this glorification of self is represented as the free expression of the savage in the songs and dances of the Caribbean islands.

The figural image of the savage used by Rousseau had been preceded by the accounts of Jesuit missionaries during the preceding century, the missionaries having

³² *Conf.*, 1:48.

themselves been inspired by the writings of Montaigne, who in his essays argued for a more tolerant view of non-European peoples colonized as result of conquest, an argument that marked the passage from stoicism to skepticism.³³

Rousseau admired Montaigne for his stance on naturalizing the art of writing and of art in general. The opening lines of Montaigne's address to the reader, "C'est moi que je peins" (It is myself whom I portray) may be compared to Rousseau's "moi, seul" (myself, alone) from beginning pages of the *Confessions*, nearly two centuries later. The nourishment of the true individual cherished by Montaigne in his writings fosters the view that "he and his work are one." Like Rousseau his writings are offered "as a faithful and sincere portrait of his natural self."³⁴ Thus, the opening scene of the libretto of *La Découverte* differs from other mises-en-scène of Rousseau's time, with their highly elaborate stage designs. Rousseau's simpler mise-en-scène depicted a "sacred grove," a natural setting in which savages lived and governed themselves. Likewise, the analogy to republican forms of government resembling what Rousseau had known in Geneva is evident in the following texts. The settings are described as peaceful yet foreboding. In the first acknowledgment of difference between self and other, Le Cacique, the leader of the savages, declares:

Lieu terrible, lieu révére,
Séjour des dieux de cet empire,
Déployez dans les coeurs votre pouvoir sacré:

³³ Richard L. Regosin, "Montaigne and His Readers," in *A New History of French Literature*, ed. Denis Hollier (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 251.

³⁴ Ibid.

Rassurez un peuple égaré,
De ces sens effrayés dissipez ce délire;
Ou, si votre puissance enfin n'y peut suffire,
N'usurpez plus un nom vainement adoré.

Terrible place, revered place,
Sojourn of the Gods of this realm,
Deploy in the hearts your sacred power to
Reassure a people astray,
Dissipate deliriousness from their frightened senses;
Or, if your power does not suffice,
Don't usurp a name vainly adored.

Nozime, a *sauvage* of the New World, warns Cacique of the impending danger of the arrival of European conquerors. Nozime's austere demeanor and distaste for luxury mirror Rousseau's Calvinist, ungentrified preferences.

In later scenes of the libretto, the character of Columbus embodies the bourgeois attributes of enlightened Europe. When Columbus encounters the "noble savage" of the Americas, he declares:

Je te veux pour ami, sois sujet d'Isabelle.
Vante-nous désormais ton éclat prétendu,
Europe: en ce climat sauvage,
On éprouve autant de courage,
On y trouve plus de vertu.
O vous que des deux bouts du monde
Le destin rassemble en ces lieux.³⁵

I want you as a friend, be subject to Isabelle,
Boast from this day your merited acclaim.
Europe: in this savage climate,
More courage is shown,
More virtue is found.
You, who from the ends of the earth
Destiny assembles in these lands.

³⁵ DNM, 2:825.

In what constitutes a parable of conquest predating the voyages of discovery of Rousseau's own era, the enlightened savage represents a counterforce to conquest. Yet, as Walter Rex explains, Rousseau expresses this "counterforce" in the musical text, prior to its being subsumed theoretically in the written text of his two *Discours*. Rousseau's display of this parable before a *public* made up of theater audiences shows the regard with which he used the stage to both personal and political ends. In so doing, he relied on the growing popularity of music among the mid-eighteenth-century public. As Claude Levi-Strauss states:

Le plaisir musical de l'auditeur du XVIIIème siècle était probablement plus intellectuel et de meilleur aloi, car une moindre distance le séparait du compositeur.³⁶

The musical pleasure of the eighteenth-century listener was probably more intellectual in scope and more refined [than that of today's listener], because a lesser distance separated him from the composer.

Thus Rousseau was able to capitalize on his public's growing fascination with musical matters, including composing, listening, and playing musical instruments.

Christopher Columbus appears as a first example of perfectibility³⁷ revealed through the means of a staged characterization. In Rousseau's libretto, Columbus and the savage represent an originary severance. Through their encounter, the self is defined as a product of this severance; the self is wild and untamed through an early identification with nature, yet forced to contend with civilization. The actualization of selfhood is

³⁶ Levi-Strauss, *Regarder, Ecouter, Lire*, 45.

³⁷ A term favored by Rousseau, *perfectibility* is described as the capacity of man to perfect himself physically and morally. See *RD*, s.v. "Perfectibility."

theatrically displayed through characterizations, as is the binary encounter between culture and nature. The association of the natural with a tropical forest in the New World, a setting far from the cities and civilized mores of Europe, is a theme echoed in this libretto.

As I have shown in preceding pages, the character of the "noble savage" was not new to Rousseau's public. Since primitive man had been encountered more than two centuries earlier during voyages of discovery, his entry into the literary fabric provided him by Rousseau is late. Through multiple processes revealed as a despairing quest for unity, the libretto reveals dichotomies, in turn set forth as rights of the conquered versus the conqueror. Throughout, the New World savage glorifies the arts and sciences; performed in a natural setting, they do not corrupt morals but can be used as instruments of civilization and of virtue. As such, they are contradictory agents to the civility, brusqueness, and vengeance of the conqueror. The savage, as the product of a more harmonized society, is the antithesis of civilized European man, and better able to survive the stages of culturization.³⁸

In a scene from Act II, Columbus the conqueror approaches the savage Cacique with humility. Columbus allows Cacique to reclaim his throne, thereby presenting conquering Spain as benign, exemplifying virtue.

COLOMB:

Allez, je suis vaincu.

Cacique malheureux, remonte sur ton trône.

³⁸ Rex, *Attraction to the Contrary*, 98. Rex posits the dialectical discourse of civilization and the natural as being the first meeting of Columbus with the savage Cacique.

Reçois mon amitié, c'est un bien qui t'est dû.
 Je songe, quand je te pardonne,
 Moins à leurs pleurs qu'à ta vertu.

.....
 Sensible aux feux d'Alvar, daignez de les couronner.
 Venez montrer l'exemple à l'Espagne étonnée,
 Quand on pourrait punir, de savoir pardonner.³⁹

Go, I am conquered.
 Unhappy Cacique, remount your throne.
 Receive my friendship, it is your due.
 I dream, when I pardon you,
 Less of their tears than your virtue.

.....
 Sensitive to the fires of Alvar, deign to crown them.
 Come set forth an example to astonished Spain,
 To pardon, when one could punish.

The emphasis on arts which thrive in a "natural" setting prefigures questions posed in *Le Premier Discours* concerning the viability of arts and sciences in "cultivated society"; and in *Le Second Discours*, as respect for family and for moral values present in the state of nature. In the libretto, Alvar, an officer of the Spanish fleet, functions as Rousseau's compassionate European. When he encounters the savage Carime, Alvar proclaims:

... et je veux que cette Isle
 Avant la fin du jour reconnaisse vos lois.
 Les Peuples effrayés vont d'asile en asile
 Chercher leur sureté dans le fond de nos bois,
 Le Cacique lui-même en d'obscures retraites
 A déposé ses biens les plus chéris.⁴⁰

... and I want this Island
 Before day's end to know your laws.
 Frightened people go from asylum to asylum

³⁹ DNM, 2:852.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 832–33.

To find security in the depth of our forests,
 Even Cacique in obscure retreats
 Has left his most cherished possessions.

This passage is couched in a rhetoric which allies nature to the meaning of haven or refuge. Rousseau's text affirms the "security of the forest" with the phrase, "Cherchez leur sureté dans le fond de nos bois." To the opposition of nature as refuge from civilization, the couplet "en d'obscures retraites . . . a déposé ses biens" frames Rousseau's criteria of judgment.

Such reverence for the natural allied to simple communities apart from civilization passes from Rousseau's lyric works to pervade his autobiographical writings. Within this early libretto, Rousseau's glorification of nature and of self as savage cannot be overlooked. In his second libretto, *Les Muses galantes*, staged in Paris in 1746, Rousseau uses irony to foreshadow aesthetic reforms undertaken on the lyric stage. These reforms reconcile musical composition with verbal text.

LES MUSES GALANTES

In the composition of *Les Muses galantes*, Rousseau *theatricalizes* rebellion against the existing aesthetic system. Rousseau proposed a notational system with which to display musical text more graphically; he also conceived a libretto which mimics the narrative strategy and structure of his rival Rameau's *Les Indes galantes* (1735).⁴¹

In the *Préface* to *Les Muses galantes* Rousseau manipulates his reader, asking him to excuse the author's rudimentary knowledge, fostered in a childhood nourished by only French music. The fault of this upbringing, Rousseau explains, led to his downfall:

⁴¹ See Chapter 1 n. 90.

Cet ouvrage est si médiocre en son genre, et le genre en est si mauvais, que, pour comprendre comment il m'a pu plaire il faut sentir toute la force de l'habitude et des préjugés. Nourri, dès mon enfance, dans le goût de la musique française et de l'espèce de poésie qui lui est propre, je prenais le bruit pour de l'harmonie, le merveilleux pour de l'intérêt, et des chansons pour un opéra.⁴²

This work is so mediocre in scope, and the genre is so poor that, to understand how it ever pleased me one must weigh all force of habit and prejudice. Nourished since childhood on French music and the sort of poetry associated with it, I understood noise as harmony, the *merveilleux* as interest, and songs as opera.

The rejection of *Les Muses galantes* by the esteemed Académie is significant, for this defeat impelled Rousseau to challenge Rameau, thereby subsuming loss through a process of confrontation. How and why Rousseau transformed his aversion to theoretical principles espoused by Rameau to a stance of assertion of his own beliefs on music is discussed in following pages. Rousseau's earlier reverence for Rameau's theory locates the emergence of Rousseau's musical "self" at a theoretical juncture wherein synthesis is achieved through a process of self-assertion and revolt. Rousseau's personal revolt against Rameau recalls what Harold Bloom has termed a usurpation of the influence of the poet-predecessor.

Following Bloom's thesis, a process of confrontation with the predecessor occurs through which the predecessor's influence is assimilated. The ambiguity of Rousseau's position as composer can thus be illustrated according to the following schema:

First, Rameau's influence on Rousseau's compositional practice cannot be discounted and is explicitly stated in the *Préface* to the *Confessions*:

⁴² OC, *Les Muses galantes*, "Avertissement," 2:1051.

Ce fut même sur l'exécution de quelques morceaux que j'en avais fait répéter chez M. de la Popelinière que M. Rameau qui les entendit conçut contre moi cette violente haine dont il n'a cessé de donner des marques jusqu'à sa mort.⁴³

Even on the occasion when several sections [of the work] were rehearsed at the home of La Popelinière, M. Rameau, who heard them, conceived a violent scorn for me, traces of which were present until his death.

Rousseau defies his rival, regarded at that time as France's greatest composer. Through theoretical revolt, in which he criticizes lyric art, Rousseau achieves an authorial status. The importance of his position vis-à-vis Rameau is thus pivotal. (In following pages I elucidate the process whereby Rousseau attains a status as "public figure" through the unconscious "influence" and subsequent confrontation of his rival.)

Second, the narrative of Rameau's earlier libretto *Les Indes galantes* thematically precedes and influences Rousseau's narrative in *Les Muses galantes*.⁴⁴ Each libretto has a pastoral setting with various "galant" comportments. In *Les Indes*, the *galant* encompasses diverse geographical realms; in Rousseau's libretto, it adheres to various lyric modes.

In further examining this process of "textual" confrontation on a musical level, Rousseau's novel theory of notation, wherein chords were indicated numerically,⁴⁵ owes a debt to Rameau's critique. Rousseau's initial system of notation unlike that of Rameau, Pougin explains, was more suitable for singing than for instrumental partitions. The

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ See Introduction n. 50 and Chapter One n. 90.

⁴⁵ Arthur Pougin, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau—Musicien* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1901), 27.

following text from Rousseau's presentation of his musical system at the *Académie des Sciences* shows that he was far more sensitive to Rameau's criticism of his musical works than to any other:

"Vos signes," me dit-il, "sont très bons en ce qu'ils déterminent simplement et clairement les valeurs, en ce qu'ils représentent . . . les intervalles et montrent toujours le simple dans le redoublé . . . ; mais ils sont mauvais en ce qu'ils exigent une opération de l'esprit qui ne peut toujours suivre la rapidité de l'exécution. La position de nos notes . . . se peint à l'oeil sans le concours de cette opération. Si deux notes, l'une très haute, l'autre très basse sont jointes par une tirade de notes intermédiaires, je vois du premier coup d'oeil le progrès de l'une à l'autre par degrés conjoints; mais pour m'assurer chez vous de cette tirade, il faut nécessairement que j'épelle tous vos chiffres l'un après l'autre."⁴⁶

"Your signs," he told me, "are very good in that they determine clearly and simply the values of that represented . . . intervals, and show the bass note in the redoubled [one]; but they are poorly designed as they demand a mental operation which can't always equal the quickness of execution. The position of our notes . . . is visible to the eye without the test of this operation. If two notes, the one high, the other low, are joined by a tirade of intermediary notes, I can see at a glance the progression of one to the other by conjoined degrees. But to assure me of this tirade [in your system], I must line up your figures one after the other."

In addition, Rousseau was influenced by the staged form presented by Rameau, which consisted of a five-part prologue, extravagant costumes, choirs, and ballets crowned with flamboyant scenic effects. Rousseau espoused a simpler model, relying instead on the Italian three-part overture. Whereas Rameau used a series of librettists, including Voltaire and Cahusac, Rousseau wrote his own libretti. Rameau's opera differed from other operatic works of the period through its libretto's relying on actual accounts by Jesuit travelers. It also elicited a series of parodies in opera libretti using the term *galant*.

⁴⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Projet concernant de nouveaux signes pour la musique*, read by Rousseau at the Academy of Sciences, August 22, 1742; Pougin, *Rousseau—Musicien*, 27.

Both Rousseau's and Rameau's libretti reveal a commonly held belief in European sovereignty, focusing on the character of the conqueror and the gesture of conquest.

When Rousseau conceived the works referred to above, performances of *opera buffa*, which contrasted with the more traditional *opera seria*,⁴⁷ had only begun to be shown to lower classes. A result of Arcadian reforms late in the preceding century,⁴⁸ *opera buffa* conceived major roles for characters from the common classes. The genre of *opera buffa* implicitly afforded Rousseau the means to authenticate his common-class background, thus "representing" on stage the truer self as being of nature through its association with "country" and "common people," rather than from a cosmopolitan milieu.

The rivalry between Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Jean-Philippe Rameau as poet-predecessor inexorably leads toward Bloom's theory of the anxiety of influence, which proposes that poets imitate their precursors. "Influence" for Bloom is defined as having power over another.⁴⁹ Bloom states that, as a consequence, the poet [in this case, Rousseau] is condemned to realize his profoundest yearnings through an awareness of

⁴⁷ *Opera seria*, the prevailing Italian eighteenth-century opera, was cultivated in all European countries except France. Based on a rationalist ideal of drama through reforms of Zeno and Metastasio, *opera seria* is conceived around tragic or serious themes and divided into three acts, closely knit, with characters and subjects drawn from history or legend. Each act is divided into two parts, the principal action and the consequence of this action contained in the movement following the principal character. Examples of *opera seria* are Mozart's *Idomeneo*, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and works of Scarlatti and Handel. *HDM*, s.v. "Opera" (Grout).

⁴⁸ A consequence of Arcadian reforms was the exclusion of characters of common classes from *opera seria* in an attempt to rid the form of irrelevant elements in the form of comic and fantastic episodes. This allowed the creation of a new genre, *opera buffa*. See Introduction n. 53.

⁴⁹ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), 26.

of *other selves*.⁵⁰ In this sense, the precursor, acting as "artistic father," produces a rivalry occurring much in the same way as defense mechanisms function in psychic life.⁵¹ The poet's desire to emulate his predecessor is analogous to the dynamics present in the Freudian family, wherein a process of *daemonization* occurs. According to Freud, this process begins by de-individuating the precursor from the self. As a result, following the theory which Bloom develops, the poet is led to a fresh repression which is both instinctual and moral.⁵²

In examining Bloom's thesis, Rameau's influence cannot be discounted: Rousseau, wishing to be "other" than himself, is nonetheless completed by Rameau as "other" both in the domains of musical theory and composition. Rousseau both emulates and rebels against Rameau in forming what he terms a musical system of signifiers based on melody which he asserts resembles the figure of origin. Rousseau's appropriation of melody to nature, over the theory of harmony announced by Rameau as signature of cosmopolitanism, is discussed in following pages.

Although I am not proposing that the genesis of the writing of Rousseau's two *Discours* appropriates itself solely to lyric works, I am proposing that the musical ego is developed earlier in Rousseau's career thus acting as a springboard for later theoretical writings. Rousseau redeems himself through confrontation, allowing Rameau to emerge as father and as object. In this process, Rousseau's purpose was first to assimilate

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 87.

⁵² Ibid.

knowledge, then to accept rejection, which became an agent of self-transformation by allowing Rousseau to usurp his rival's position.⁵³

By the time Rousseau actually experimented with operatic composition, his self was totalized, displaying itself as different. His choice of *opera buffa* as his medium and song as his musical motif distinguish his musical persona from that of his rival. Rousseau theatrically glorifies his simple Genevan origin through *opera buffa*'s portrayal of characters of lower classes. These characters possess benevolent intentions and harbor aspects of originary wisdom. This is but one means through which Rousseau announces the "natural," allied with "primitive" landscape, as exemplary of moral purity.⁵⁴ In *Le Second Discours*, he allies nature with man's capacity for moral perfectibility:

. . . que la nature seule fait tout dans les opérations de la bête, au lieu que l'homme concourt aux siennes en qualité d'agent libre. . . . l'homme se reconnaît libre d'acquiescer, ou de résister, et c'est surtout dans la conscience de cette liberté que se montre la spiritualité de son âme.⁵⁵

. . . that nature alone accomplishes all in actions of animals, whereas man acts freely. . . . [M]an is free to acquiesce or to resist; and it is especially in the consciousness of this liberty, that the spirituality of his soul is shown.

Yet on a more interior level, Rousseau's public display of self is balanced by an equally intense need on his part to retreat, to hide from the public view into a private,

⁵³ Here I theorize that Rousseau actually wished to assume a role as professional musician but could not, due to lack of formal training. Rameau thus became for Rousseau a figure representative of a "lost object," which according to Freud symbolizes that which can never be attained, revealed as a continuous process of displacement.

⁵⁴ *DOI*, 3:164.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

undifferentiated realm of oneness with his fellow man, of nature as sensed within himself and as he described it to others.⁵⁶

OF MUSIC AND THE *ESSAI*

Passages drawn from Rousseau's *Essai*, wherein he explains a special link between the emergence of music and language, bear striking resemblance to his musical writings. The language of the *Essai* accords to "the lyric voice" a privileged cultural origin in which language subsumes culture.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the *Essai* rhetorically resembles the entries "Opera" and "Imitation" written by Rousseau for *Le Dictionnaire de musique*.

In Chapter XIII of the *Essai* Rousseau accords to the empire of the senses a power as images and signs which, in turn, can convey moral causes and effects:

Comme les sentiments qu'excite en nous la peinture ne viennent point des couleurs, l'empire que la musique a sur nos âmes n'est point l'ouvrage des sons. De belles couleurs bien nuancées plaisent à la vue, mais ce plaisir est purement de sensation. C'est le dessin, c'est l'imitation qui donne à ces couleurs de la vie et de l'âme, ce sont les passions qu'elles expriment qui viennent émouvoir les nôtres, ce sont les objets qu'elles représentent qui viennent nous affecter.⁵⁸

Just as a painting excites in us feelings which do not derive from colors, the empire music visits on our souls isn't the work of sound. Beautiful colors pleasantly shaded please our sight, but it is imitation which gives life and soul to these colors. Design and imitation give life and soul to these colors; the passions that they express exert an influence on ours through the objects which they represent which [in turn] affect us.

⁵⁶ Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, 51.

⁵⁷ Downing Thomas' interesting "The Lyric Voice and the Natural Cry" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1991) posits that for eighteenth-century writers such as Rousseau, music predates conventional language as a natural sign of the passions and thereby offers an anthropological link to the origins of culture.

⁵⁸ *EOL*, 5:412-13.

In a similar manner, the power of sentiment is conveyed in "Imitation" in *Le Dictionnaire de musique*. There Rousseau makes an argument analogous to that of the *Essai*, which stresses the subtlety of the processes of imitation. Rousseau's intertwined use of singing and speaking voices as indicators emphasizes the heart as principal locus of sentiment and therefore "receptor" of music's effects. Rousseau believes that music makes possible a sensory imitation, and just as noise produces silences, silence also produces noise:

L'art du musicien consiste à substituer à l'image insensible de l'objet celle des mouvements que sa présence excite dans le coeur du contemplateur. . . On sait que le bruit peut produire l'effet du silence, et le silence l'effet de bruit.⁵⁹

The musician's art consists of substituting the insensible image of the object with that of movements which its presence excites in the heart of the listener. . . . Noise can thereby produce effects of silence, and silence the effects of noise.

In a Derridean sense, speech and silence are intertwined, silence indicating the presence of a speech which is absent. In turn, this interrelationship causes an awareness of the complicity of origins of noise and silence, indicating in each the possibility of the *trace* of the other.⁶⁰

In the article "Opera" Rousseau writes:

Quelquefois le bruit produit l'effet du silence, et le silence l'effet du bruit. . . L'art du musicien consiste à substituer à l'image sensible de l'objet celle des mouvements que sa présence invite dans l'esprit du spectateur.⁶¹

⁵⁹ *DM*, 5:861, s.v. "Imitation."

⁶⁰ Kamuf, *Derrida Reader*, 26.

⁶¹ *DM*, 5:911, s.v. "Opéra."

Sometimes noise produces the effect of silence and silence that of noise. . . The musician's art is to substitute the emotional image of the object with the image its presence invites in the mind of the spectator.

The problem elucidated by the above definitions concerns imitation in music both as a language and as a process of indication, comprising not only what music imitates but how it achieves these ends. The goal of lyric theatrical imitation, as stated above, is for the spectator to experience an internal awareness/sensation comparable to that which occurs in the presence of the imitated object.

Rousseau considers vocal imitation as having robbed language of its songlike quality. In the *Essai* he states:

L'étude de la philosophie et le progrès du raisonnement ayant perfectionné la grammaire, ôtèrent à la langue ce ton vif et passionné qui l'avait d'abord rendue si chantante.⁶²

The study of philosophy and the progress of reason having perfected grammar, have torn from language the lively and passionate tone which once rendered it songlike.

In Chapter XVI of the *Essai*, entitled "Fausse Analogie entre les couleurs et les sons," Rousseau underscores the alliance between language and song by stating that music will be most touching if enhanced by words which direct sentiment toward a specific object. In Chapter XIII, "De l'Harmonie," he repeats that "le seul bruit ne dit rien à l'esprit, il faut que les objets parlent pour se faire entendre"⁶³ (noise alone cannot calm the spirit, objects must speak to be understood).

⁶² *EOL*, 5:425.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 411.

Musically, Rousseau utilizes melody to facilitate a natural representation of feelings, which indirectly influences the listener. Rousseau declares of music: "Elle ne représentera pas directement les choses, mais elle excitera dans l'âme les mêmes sentiments qu'on éprouve en les voyant" (It [music] will not directly represent, but it will excite in the soul those feelings we feel through seeing). Thus, without words, music is not meaningful:

... la musique doit s'élever au rang des arts d'imitation, mais son imitation n'est pas toujours immédiate comme celle de la poésie et de la peinture; la parole est le moyen par lequel la musique détermine le plus souvent l'objet dont elle nous offre l'image.

... music should be elevated to the rank of one of the arts of imitation, yet its imitation isn't always immediate as that of poetry and painting; speech is the means by which music most often determines the object of which the image is offered.

For Rousseau, the interacting of melody and word existed in song as original language. The human voice, composed of consonants and articulations, when separated from its essential origin, song, blocks communication and flow of emotion.⁶⁴ The imitative rapport between the natural and song as original speech thus concerned the resemblance he perceived between nature as object of imitation and the sense received by the spectator/listener. Thus, in its ability to evoke a collective sensation, common to all mankind instead of to the will of any one individual, music was accorded a "compassionate function."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ibid., 416.

⁶⁵ *RD*, s.v. "Compassion."

Furthermore, similarities between articles in *Le Dictionnaire* and passages cited in this chapter stress the primary importance of music in Rousseau's theory, which not only evokes an exterior transcription of signs, but also portrays an interior voice of conscience (as in *Les Rêveries*⁶⁶ or the *Confessions* wherein Rousseau *remembers* the singing voice of his childhood, that of his Tante Suzette).⁶⁷

According to scholar-musicologist Downing Thomas, music is a central preoccupation of Rousseau's *Essai* in its countering politically, culturally, and linguistically the mathematically inspired theory of harmony espoused by Rameau. This argument is convincing. Rousseau was the only theorist of his century to underscore through music a theory of human relations based on sentiment and, more important, to postulate a "proto-melody" as origin both for speech and song. Furthermore, the ideal of a proto- (or originary, natural) melody permeates not only his *Essai* but also his entire *oeuvre*, including novels, autobiographical texts, and major staged lyric works. In privileging the melodic unity, Rousseau is able to counter the argument of Rameau on the importance and "naturalness" of harmony, thereby (if we apply Bloom's thesis) usurping the role of the precursor and establishing for melody a status as social transaction.

Thomas's original insight lends credence to the theory of the development of self through confrontation. Seen in this perspective, Rousseau's internal image of the self, revealed through the lyric, is different from the coveted self of author known to his

⁶⁶ See Chapter Three, 120.

⁶⁷ *Conf.*, 1:11.

public. As a link to the voice of the heart, melody rendered for music a natural origin, just as the voice of sentiment linked Jean-Jacques to the common origins he perceived as his own. The presence of speech as one with melody contributed to Rousseau's theory of compassion as being innate within man, and as stemming from a *musical* genesis.⁶⁸ Thus, similarities between the theory of the origin of music presented in the *Essai* and definitions presented in *Le Dictionnaire* lend themselves not only to a conception of language emerging from an originary "voice" which is lyric, but to a supplementary relationship between the two.

The emergence of language *from* music thus serves as a *mise-en-abîme* of Rousseau's pivotal theory of opera. In his theory of operatic *récitatif*, Rousseau asserted not only that voice should dominate, but also that it should play a particular role, one homophonically contained by melodic as opposed to harmonic unity. Whereas Rousseau's views on the origin of music depend upon a melodic or songful unity of signification, they lead, in turn, to the emergence of melody as primary signifier for opera as a developing hybrid theatrical form. The consequences of a melodic unity as *mise-en-abîme* for the lyric stage are presented in my study of Rousseau's two staged lyric works, *Le Devin du village* and *Pygmalion*, discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

In both of these works, melody functions as an agent of transformation, eliciting interior change. Whereas Rousseau describes this process of change in literary works such as *Emile*, in the above-mentioned lyric works its presence is underscored in every aspect of performance. In *Emile*, training in the processes of song is revealed as a major

⁶⁸ Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language*, 98.

tenet of aesthetic education, foreshadowing the evolution of child into citizen. In a similar manner, in *Le Devin*, the presence of homophonic song is revelatory of natural sentiment, expressed in the purer moral values of country folk. In both, the presence and performance of melody invokes a moral incentive.

SONG AS SIGN

In Rousseau's theoretical schema, melody introduced as song revealed itself as originary language, whereas harmony, in its reliance on multiple refractions of tone, issued from an attempt by the Enlightenment to render what Rousseau describes as "noise by means of noise." "Le musicien qui veut rendre du bruit par du bruit se trompe . . . car il ne suffit pas qu'il imite, il faut qu'il touche et qu'il plaise, sans quoi sa maussade imitation n'est rien, et ne donnant d'intérêt à personne, elle ne fait nulle impression"⁶⁹ (The musician who chooses to render noise with noise is mistaken . . . because it is not enough to imitate, he must touch and please, without which his garish imitation is nothing, and interesting no one, makes no impression).

Rousseau's subordination of song as emblem introduced the idea of anonymity in his libretti. This anonymity reflected the lyric voice as it existed in the latter half of the thirteenth century, at the beginning of the Renaissance. During this period, wherein secular music was the province of the troubadour, song existed as voice, undifferentiated from the person who sang it. Throughout Rousseau's lyric works, the anonymity of song is exposed as a transformative emblem constituting nature's eternal presence in the voice of the singer. As part of Rousseau's system of representation, song tacitly embodies a

⁶⁹ *EOL*, 5:416.

symbol of societal values, the function of smaller communities making a common, less self-serving cause.

For Rousseau, song thus signified a presence of the "nonworldly," implying either a retreat from civilization or an envisioned exotic landscape; it also connoted an absence of self-glorification in favor of others. An originary symbol, song functioned in Rousseau's text as signifier of "nonidentity," which was positive. Belonging to no one and to everyone, it conferred on both singer and spectator a compassion symbolizing equality.

Rousseau thus praises song whose rhythms, derived from harmonies anterior to the early baroque, also contain remnants of Greek vocal music. Song, as expressed by Plato in the *Laws*, was considered as voice of the people.⁷⁰ In Rousseau's lyric works, song iconizes sentiment and the social class of Rousseau's past in its appeal to simpler emotions. Didier states that song as vocal music was for Rousseau an originary voice:

A propos des musiques extra-européennes (ou des musiques anciennes), l'opposition mélodie/harmonie en rejoint une autre—et bien que la musique vocale puisse être polyphonique: l'opposition voix/instrument. L'article *Musique* de l'*Encyclopaedie* affirme . . . l'antériorité de la musique vocale.⁷¹

In referring to music existing beyond the boundaries of the European content (or ancient music), the opposition melody/harmony enjoins another, that vocal music can be polyphonic producing another opposition: that of voice/instrument. The article "Music" of the *Encyclopedia* affirms . . . the primacy of the vocal form.

⁷⁰ Plato, *The Laws*, trans. with Introduction by Trevor J. Saunders (Penguin Classics: London, 1970), 82.

⁷¹ Didier, *L'Homme des Lumières et la découverte de l'autre*, 126.

Through the presence of song and emphasis on common settings and characters, the staging of *Le Devin du village* reveals its author's childhood landscape of simpler country life as an alternative to cosmopolitanism. The country-versus-city dialectic, expressed as Rousseau's self, informs the text in its entirety.

In the following chapter the city/country dichotomy so implicit in Rousseau's self is expressed as emblem through multiple means of representation. In *Le Devin du village* Rousseau experiments with the structure of the stage itself, the wording of text, and the use of the musical score to get his message across. Although Rousseau adopted established conventions of the pastoral motif used in lyric works earlier in the century, his own works employed the natural as a tool of propaganda for persuading the public toward his personal vision, encompassing his increased self-worth and maturity. Thus he undertook the staging of *Le Devin du village*—and thereby gained confidence to delve further into the ego with a view to defining himself at a higher level, while at the same time tacitly proving his worth as musician.

CHAPTER THREE

LE DEVIN DU VILLAGE: OF THE COUNTRY AS UTOPIA

M. de la Tour, si vrai, si sublime d'ailleurs, n'a fait, du portrait de M. Rousseau, qu'une belle chose au lieu d'un chef-d'oeuvre qu'il en pouvait faire. J'y cherche le censeur des lettres, le Caton et le Brutus de notre âge; je m'attendais à voir Epictète en habit négligé, en perruque ébouriffée effrayant par son air sévère, les littérateurs, les grands et les gens du monde; et je n'y vois que l'auteur du *Devin du Village*, bien habillé, bien peigné, bien poudré, et ridiculement assis sur une chaise de paille.¹

M. de la Tour, so true, so sublime, has created in Rousseau's portrait a beautiful work, not a masterpiece which he could have made. I looked for the censor, the Cato and Brutus of our age; I expected Epictetus in Roman garb and powdered wig, intimidating, by the severity of his manner, writers and men of the world. Instead I saw the composer of *Le Devin du village*, plainly dressed, well dressed and powdered, ridiculously seated on a straw-back chair.

As this comment by Diderot on a painting of Rousseau by Maurice Quentin de la Tour makes clear, Diderot considered the work, done in 1753, a false depiction of the Rousseau he knew, the Rousseau whose *Préface* to *La Lettre à M. d'Alembert sur les Spectacles* (1757) contained a veiled accusation against Diderot. The portrait was a favorite, however, of Rousseau himself. In *Le Deuxième Dialogue* he professes his admiration for it: "M. de la Tour est le seul à me représenter fidelement"² (M. de la Tour alone is able to faithfully represent me [paint my portrait]). Rousseau affirmed that De la

¹ Denis Diderot, *Essais sur la Peinture*, in *Oeuvres esthétiques* (Paris: Garnier, 1968), 695, quoted in Jean Roussel, "La Musique 'A la Coupelle de la raison': De Rousseau à Diderot," Aix-en-Provence: Colloque International, *Diderot, les beaux-arts et la musique*, December 14–16, 1984 (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence Service de Publications, 1986), 221.

² LD, 1:781.

Tour had painted him as "l'homme qu'il était" (the man that he [truly] was). Rousseau's preference for the portrait and for the portraitist is further communicated in a July, 1770, letter to his editor, Marc-Michel Reyes:

Je ne suis nullement de l'avis de ceux qui vous ont marqué que mon portrait fait par M. Liotard était parfaitement ressemblant, et ce ne sera sûrement pas de mon consentement que vous le ferez graver. M. de la Tour est le seul qui m'ait peint ressemblant, et je ne puis comprendre pourquoi vous voulez transmettre à un autre la commission que vous lui aviez donnée. Quoi qu'il en soit, je préférerai toujours la moindre esquisse de sa main aux plus parfaits chefs-d'oeuvres d'un autre.³

I am not of the opinion of those who have commented that my portrait by M. Liotard was a perfect likeness. It was surely not with my consent that you are having it engraved. M. de la Tour alone has painted my likeness. I cannot understand why you want to confer on another the commission you gave to him. However it might appear, I prefer the slightest sketch from his hand to the most perfect masterpieces of someone else.

Rousseau's esteem for the portrait contrasts with less favorable impressions he had of others, such as that by the British painter Allen Ramsay, who, following the example of British realism, had painted a more somber Rousseau in Turkish garb. Certainly delusions of persecution at the time of this correspondence caused Rousseau to denounce representations that were less than flattering—portraits by others such as Ramsay, who Rousseau believed was conspiring against him along with the philosopher David Hume. The foregoing passage reveals Rousseau's concern both with representations of the self and with representation as means of assimilation. During the beginning of his exile from France in 1762 and following the burning of his works *Emile* and *Du Contrat social*, Rousseau had the portrait by De la Tour engraved. Fleeing from

³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Correspondence Complète*, ed. R. A. Leigh (Oxford, U.K.: Voltaire Foundation, 1981), 38:79.

Paris to Môtiers near the Swiss border, he kept the painting, which conveyed to detractors a positive message. Anticipating, at this juncture, the need to justify his life through the writing of his *Confessions*, Rousseau chose the portrait as a model of representation—the beginning of an elaborate "Rousseauist iconography"⁴ which would develop during his period of exile.

His former friend, the *philosophe* Diderot was not impressed. Diderot's comment (taken from the *Salon* of 1765) quoted at the beginning of this chapter reflects on a period, shortly after the success of *Le Devin du village*, when Rousseau pretended to be a Latin sage. The analogy to Cato the orator is also clear. Rousseau openly accused the society in which he lived of working against the cause of the individual: on one hand, he criticized the established order; on the other, he foresaw what he considered an ideal society.

The comparison to Brutus is more subtle. Rousseau was in beginning stages of assuming the role of adversary to the other *philosophes*.⁵ Unlike his peers Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Diderot, Rousseau would eventually confront his fellow *philosophes*; in *La Lettre à D'Alembert* (1757) he turned against the group by criticizing the

⁴ *Dictionnaire de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Trousson and Eigeldinger, s.v. "De la Tour. Maurice Quentin" (F. Matthey). I argue that *Pygmalion*, staged first in Lyons (1770) and then in Paris (1775), serves as a performative iconography of Rousseau in the same manner as the portrait by De la Tour. Both were presented to the public as symbols during a period of exile.

⁵ Rousseau and Diderot, Fabre recounts, were friends who later clashed with frightening intensity. They held theoretically opposite views not only of religion but of aesthetics and the ideal of progress. Autobiography as synonymous with the past, significant to Rousseau's conception of self, is conveyed by De la Tour's portrait. Since the self is constantly changing, Diderot perceived the autobiographical act as ephemeral and of the future.

establishment of a theater in Geneva, thereby attacking accepted Enlightenment principles concerning the secularization of the sciences and arts.⁶

My purpose in this chapter is to identify emblems of the self as they are contained in the first of Rousseau's two more fully developed works for the lyric stage. I trace how *Le Devin du village* functions as a *primus passus* foreshadowing autobiographical concerns. In both *Le Devin du village* and *Pygmalion*⁷ the self as a being apart dominates Rousseau's endeavor. In both, Rousseau's belief in his status as a unique individual is shown through his profound awareness of the multiple dimensions of psychology, his own and others.

As originary experience concerning the autobiographical endeavor, I refer in this chapter both to autobiography chronologically conceived and to symbolic acts. As an example of the former, the airs of "Tante Suzette" evoked in the *Confessions* reveal primary sensory recollections of youth:

L'attrait que son chant avait pour moi fut tel que non seulement plusieurs de ses chansons me sont toujours restées dans la mémoire; mais qu'il m'en revient même, aujourd'hui que je l'ai perdue, qui, totalement oubliées depuis mon enfance, se retracent à mesure que je vieillis avec un charme que je ne puis exprimer.⁸

The attraction her singing held for me was such that not only have several of her songs remained in my memory, but today I recall the [experience]

⁶ *La Lettre à D'Alembert* contains in its *préface* a veiled accusation against Diderot for betraying their friendship. Rousseau criticizes the opening of a theater in Geneva and defends the customs and morality of Geneva's citizens. Among his expressed concerns were that theaters divert citizens from their civic duty and pander to existing tastes. *RD*, s.v. "Letter to D'Alembert on the Theater."

⁷ See Chapter Four.

⁸ *Conf.*, 1:11.

despite the loss. [Those songs], totally forgotten since my childhood, are remembered as I grow older with a charm I cannot express.

These first songs heard by Rousseau in an intimate, familial atmosphere reflect internal recollections, which in turn are used as a motif in relaying reflective experience in *Le Devin du village*. Evoking an interior realm, the associated melodies assigned these reflective images differ from the irreducibly high-brow music advocated by Rousseau's peers.

In *Le Devin du village*, initially staged in 1752, Rousseau for the first time realized and directed imagery of the natural drawn from personal memory. In its music, reminiscent of the singing by school choirs of short compositions for voice,⁹ monophonic structures predominated, conveying a single line of melody. As a principal means to enhance text, song as the purest realization of the melodic element, the originary melodic form, contained specific characteristics which appealed to Rousseau in early remnants of Greek vocal music.¹⁰ His insistence on monophony set *Le Devin du village* apart from works by contemporary composers who used baroque¹¹ textures associated with then-current theories of harmony based on polyphony and who relied on reductive texts disassociated from the musical score.¹² Typical operas produced in the period preceding

⁹ In this dissertation I define *song* as a short musical composition for solo voice, based on a poetic text and written in a simple style involving monophony and evenly metered phrasing.

¹⁰ *HDM*, s.v. "Song."

¹¹ In the *Dictionnaire de Musique*, Rousseau describes *une musique baroque* as being characterized by confused harmonies overcharged with modulations and dissonances, harsh melodies with difficult intonations, and constrained movement. *DM*, s.v. "Baroque."

¹² The baroque period in music began about 1600 and extended 150 years. Baroque texture was characterized before 1650 by capriciousness, exuberance, and irregularity. "Variations," "suites,"

Le Devin include many examples of the *pastorale*, such as *Les Amours de Ragonde* of Destouches-Mouret (1742), and numerous works by Rameau—such as *Pygmalion* (1748)—based on Greek mythology and performances by itinerant Italians.¹³ *La Serva Padrona* (1752), with music by Pergolese, was performed at the Paris Opera by Italian bouffons, igniting the famous *Querelle des bouffons* and a virtual war between Italian and French music.¹⁴ Rousseau's *Lettre sur la musique française*,¹⁵ in which French was attacked as a language whose inflections and tones were unsuitable for singing, added to the bitterness of the quarrel. The libretto of *La Serva Padrona* clearly influenced *Le*

"operas." and "sonatas" developed during the baroque era, all characterized by irregular form, such as lacking any single focal element (as in opera, comprising text, music, and mise-en-scène), and by modulation from tonic to dominant keys. "Stylistically, baroque texture is characterized by thoroughbass technique, leading to two principal contours, melody and bass, whose intervening space is filled by improvised harmony." *HDM*, s.v. "Baroque music."

¹³ These works used as motif either the *pastorale* or examples from Greek mythology. They employed elaborate costumes and elegant stage settings, with libretti whose reductive texts were condemned by Rousseau's peers. *Les Amours de Ragonde*, with musical score by Destouches and libretto by Mouret, contains a farcical narrative about an aged widow with four teeth who proposes to a shepherd. Rameau's *Pygmalion*, with libretto by Ballot de Savot, is famous for its staccato percussive effects portraying the sculptor's chiseling motions. The highly elaborate costumes hindered stage movement. The dancer Marie Sallé, in exile from the Opéra, dared to perform wearing a muslin drape in a *Pygmalion* staged in London by Garrick. Her performance caused a scandal widely discussed in France. Operas of the period concentrated on the *pastorale* or bowed to elaborate musical effects of harmony following the treatise of Rameau. Among other composers of the period, Rousseau's position is all the more unique because he wrote both libretti and music (albeit amid constant attacks of plagiarism for the latter).

¹⁴ In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, *bouffons* were simply any costumed performers. In the late eighteenth century, the "War of the Buffons" pitted Parisian musicians and opera enthusiasts who favored French serious opera against those who preferred the Italian *opera buffa*. *HDM*, s.v. "War of the Buffons." For an interesting and detailed account of musical quarrels of the century, see Louisette Reichenburg's *Contributions à la Querelle des bouffons*, as well as Maurice Cranston's "Philosopher of Music and Language" in *Noble Savage*, 271–91.

¹⁵ In *LMF* (1752), Rousseau argues for the primacy of the melodic unity rooted in the sounds and accents of a given language. Italian, he claims, is resonant with clear accentuation, whereas French is harsh, colorless, and without modulation. Thus French cannot be set to melodious music. *RD*, s.v. "Writings on music." Rousseau's argument in *LMF* contradicts that set forth in *LDS* (1758), wherein he advocates an opera setting forth national standards of patriotism, similar to the Greek model.

Devin du village in its use of characterization, although the former's principal character, a maid, marries a noble above her station, whereas in Rousseau's libretto, discussed below, the idyllic love between country "folk" is part of a representational strategy which exposes nature as emblem, suggesting a transformative power.

In the aesthetic debate on opera, the year 1752 thus figured prominently for Rousseau as a meeting point of lyric and theoretical concerns. Rousseau's essay *Le Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts* had won for him the prize at the Académie de Dijon and acclaim among his peers.¹⁶ Cranston relates that, on the heels of this success, Rousseau composed *Le Devin du village* in a matter of weeks.¹⁷

In the libretto of *Le Devin du village*, Rousseau exposed a subtext of nature versus artifice via a narrative that drew upon allegory. Nature's goodness was revealed as the habitat of the sage, and as a setting conducive to romantic love and morality. The mise-en-scène created the illusion of a society in miniature that drew its sole sustenance from nature. Stage directions enhanced the work's allegorical style: a sparsely decorated stage depicted on one side the house of the Devin and, on the other, trees and a fountain. Both framed, in the distance, a hamlet. This world in miniature symbolized for Rousseau a setting wherein the individual, surrounded by the moral purity of village folk, could develop freely into the role of model citizen.

¹⁶ *Le Premier Discours* (1750) was Rousseau's first substantial essay on political themes. He emphatically declares, in answer to the Academy's question, that the sciences and the arts have not had a positive effect on morals.

¹⁷ Cranston, *Noble Savage*, 272.

Immediately following *Le Devin's* presentation at Fontainebleau and première in Paris,¹⁸ Rousseau embraced theory by beginning a quest, initially undertaken by the *philosophes* as a group, to meld the verbal and musical texts into one pure form. In his correspondence he asked his lead singer, Jelyotte, to suppress the *récitatif* of the first scene as it had been performed at Court so as to underscore throughout the work's melodic unity. Rousseau thereby took a stance he had already revealed in *La Lettre sur la musique française*. In the *avertissement* to the 1753 performance of *Le Devin du village* he wrote:

Quoique j'aie approuvé les changements que mes amis jugèrent à propos de faire à cet intermède quand il fut joué à la Cour et que son succès leur soit dû . . . je n'ai pas jugé à propos de les adopter aujourd'hui.¹⁹

Although I approved changes that my friends felt should be made when this *intermezzo* was played at the Court . . . I did not find it appropriate to adopt them today.

In every element of *Le Devin's* performance, ranging from set design, musical composition and arrangement of text, Rousseau went beyond Enlightenment preoccupations with cosmopolitanism to create a construct that accorded with his personal system of belief. The consequence is significant: Rousseau chose to represent his beliefs on the supremacy of the natural through the cultural apparatus and contrivances of the lyric stage. In *Le Portrait du Roi*, Louis Marin claims that the act

¹⁸ The work was performed for the king at Fontainebleau on October 8, 1752. It premiered at the Paris Opera in March 1753.

¹⁹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Le Devin du village*, *intermède* in eight scenes with concluding pantomime, libretto by Rousseau, 1763.

of representation is capable of duplicating the present and thus of intensifying presence.²⁰

Representation does this, Marin claims, through the institution of the subject,

et c'est aussi redoubler le présent et intensifier la présence dans l'institution d'un sujet de représentation. Comment donc la représentation est-elle accomplissement du désir d'absolu qui anime l'essence de tout pouvoir, sinon en étant le substitut imaginaire de cet accomplissement, sinon et étant son image.²¹

and is duplicating the present moment and intensifying presence in instituting a subject of representation. How then is representation the fulfillment of a desire for the absolute which animates the essence of all power, if not in being the imaginary substitute of this fulfillment, or in being its image.

In *Le Devin du village*, Rousseau's self is all-encompassing *subject*, depicted through music, characterization, and mise-en-scène. Thus, the institution of presence occurs in *Le Devin* through several means: musical textures different from those espoused by Rameau and others, a mise-en-scène suggestive of the country, and a libretto wherein actualization of self-identity takes place through a statement about the ills of social artifice and the natural goodness of man. Just as Rousseau portrays an objective duality on stage, he is also able to interiorize this duality, inventing both a real and a mythical self, an invention equally as powerful as the act of writing:

Je me souviens qu'une fois Mme de Luxembourg me parlait en raillant d'un homme qui quittait sa maîtresse pour lui écrire. Je lui dis que j'aurais

²⁰ Concerning *presence*, Derrida asserts that "the problem of reference admits of no solution" and that "Language is not the house of Being" with the potential for leaping the gap between culture and "nature." Accordingly, language cannot be based on "presence," but is a structuring activity not in control of conscious thought, a process through which meaning is constantly deferred. Derrida's project is to deconstruct language, to take it away from the idea of presence. *PE*, s.v. "Deconstruction" (Vernon W. Gras).

²¹ Louis Marin, *Le Portrait du Roi*, 12.

bien été cet homme-là, et j'aurais pu ajouter que je l'avais été quelquefois.²²

I remember how Mme de Luxembourg once spoke in complaining about a man who left his mistress to write. I told her I could well have been that man and should have added that sometimes I actually was.

The representational methods used in *Le Devin* are infused with Rousseau's desire to portray a morally purer form of life far from the city. By 1752 Rousseau was confident of his talents as composer and had already written several libretti. His second work, the opera *Les Muses galantes*, had been successfully performed at the house of La Popelinière for an audience including Rameau and the duke of Richelieu; at the latter's suggestion, Rousseau had even been called to write a shorter version of the words and music of Rameau and Voltaire's joint work *Les Fêtes de Ramire*²³ for performance before the king.

Le Devin enacted a system wherein each facet accorded to the emblem of the natural as primary locus of power. Each dimension of performance interacted with and was penetrated by the others: for example, simple musical forms were supplemented by the appearance of performers dressed in simple costumes; basic musical oppositions of melody to harmony debated during the period were enhanced by parallel dichotomies present in the staging and characterization. As a result, a model of a natural society was

²² *Conf.*, 1:181.

²³ *La Princesse de Navarre*, with libretto by Voltaire, was rewritten by Rousseau under the title *Les Fêtes de Ramire*, to the displeasure of Rameau. Rousseau was given responsibility by the duke of Richelieu to rewrite both music and text. Ultimately, he reworked the music, leaving the majority of the text as Voltaire had originally written it. According to Julien Tiersot, author of *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, the music bears the mark of Rousseau's style more than that of Rameau. Didier, *La Musique des Lumières*, 207.

achieved which, through the multifariousness of the representative act, portended an apocalyptic moment of a civilization in crisis.

A second purpose of this chapter is to examine the autobiographical gesture in *Le Devin*. Although traditional Rousseauian opposites appear suggesting analogous links to other works by Rousseau, the natural as presence is tacitly implied to the spectator through processes of performance in which familiar opposites (such as wealth/poverty, truth/falsehood) are resolved, allowing the self to emerge triumphant.²⁴

According to Diderot, the authentic Rousseau is theatrical. Allying the theatrical to the artificial, Rousseau is artificial in having chosen to conceal his orator self. Thus Diderot's critique imposes on Rousseau a judgment of a self which is dissimulated. Yet the self first claimed by Rousseau in the *Confessions*—"Je sentis avant de penser; c'est le sort commun de l'humanité"²⁵ (I sensed before I thought; this is the common lot of humanity)—is one which is unified. Thus, in the portrait by De la Tour, the composer self holds the orator self in suspension and vice versa. The lyric work thus becomes Rousseau's primary means, his representational stance, for revealing the complex psychology of the self.

Starobinski writes that Rousseau's use of the stage as a device to elicit the spectator's sympathy glorifies the self's ideals:

²⁴ In Rousseau's staged *scène lyrique Pygmalion*, subtle transformative processes occur portraying shifts of mood and character, both of which, in turn, cause the merging of text with music to portray highly differentiated emotions and thoughts. This lyric work is discussed in Chapter Four.

²⁵ *Conf.*, 1:8.

Tel semble être le projet de Jean-Jacques: devenir attirant par une exaltation où le moi ne quitte pas son rêve et ses fictions. Séduire, mais sans se déprendre de soi-même, sans que le désir ait à sacrifier son ivresse immédiate. Obtenir l'attention, la sympathie, la passion des autres, mais sans rien faire que de s'abandonner à la séduction de ses chères rêveries. Ainsi il sera un séducteur séduit; séducteur parce qu'il est séduit; fascinant l'auditoire parce que son regard est détourné vers la fascination d'un spectacle intérieur.²⁶

Such was Jean-Jacques' intent: to seduce by an exaltation where the self abandons neither its dream nor its fictions. To seduce, but without revealing one's true self so that desire does not sacrifice its immediate delirium. To obtain the attention, the sympathy, and the passion of others, but without abandoning the seduction of one's dreams. Thus, he will be a seducer seduced; seducer because he is first seduced; fascinating the listener because his gaze is turned inward toward an interior spectacle.

Thus, De la Tour's portrait alludes to an equivocal truth—the existence of a self both interiorized and represented—and demonstrates the equivocality of "presence" in Rousseau's text. Theatricality, as stated in the *Lettre à D'Alembert*, is necessary for human survival; it is also a strategy used by Rousseau for his own survival and is present as a linguistically related propensity to dissimulate. Thus Rousseau's identity as militant orator of human equality is analogous, as subject of dissimulation, to that of Rousseau as composer of *Le Devin*. Although the representational locus of power in the lyric work is subtler, the persuasive effect on the spectator functions in a similar fashion to that of oratory, wherein inflections in volume and tone, although realized subliminally, function as a unified form.

Le Devin contains multiple tools of dissimulation, such as a sparse set with props suggestive of a milieu far from either Paris or Fontainebleau, and correspondences of

²⁶ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 209.

monophonic, as opposed to polyphonic, musical text with verbal texts—all of this designed to persuade the auditor/spectator of a particular world view. For Rousseau, lyric representation both diffused and unified the presence of the natural through manipulation of senses on several strata of reception. Through affirmative discourse the presence of nature is represented as both positive and good:

Quand on sait bien aimer, que la vie est charmante!
 Tel, au milieu des fleurs qui brillent sur nos cours.
 Un doux ruisseau coule et serpente,

When one knows how to love well, how charming life is!
 This, amidst flowers that shine in our courtyards,
 A silent river meanders and flows.

Nature perceived as multiple systems of representation is thus portrayed in *Le Devin* by such symbols as the *hameau* of the mise-en-scène, the dialectical opposites of the natural and the artificial in the libretto, and monophonically structured musical themes devoid of complex chordal harmonies. All elements, in their symbolism and opposition to contemporary performance practice, belie Rousseau's quest for uniqueness as a striving for unity:

L'expérience de unicité interne—se compose-t-elle l'impossibilité de l'unité réelle qui m'unirait aux autres en même temps que moi-même? Vivre avec l'ivresse de l'imagination du Tout, Est-ce suffisant pour réparer l'échec de la double relation? Que vaut l'unité symbolique que la conscience vit dans la séparation? Le symbole est-il assez fort pour nier et surmonter la séparation?²⁷

The experience of internal oneness—is it composed of the impossibility of a true unity which would unite me to others and at the same time to myself? To live freely with the imagination of totality . . . is this sufficient to repair the mark of duality? What is the worth of symbolic unity that the

²⁷ Ibid., 310.

conscious lives as separation? The symbol, is it powerful enough to endure separation?

De la Tour's portrait equivocally portrays this uniqueness as an identity visually unperceived by Rousseau's peers.

The premiere of *Le Devin* in Rousseau's fortieth year brought him acclaim as musician from both the court and public. Yet its representation also underscored a final gesture in which lyrical scenes were staged as *biographical recollections*. As biographical narration, it marked a crossroads because the stage became a metaphor for the positive display of and working out of sociological tension in critical works which followed. This tension, expressed in his correspondence with D'Alembert, concerned the theater as scene of artifice and amusement and actors as agents of dissimulation. As Rousseau stated, the theater had an adverse effect on morals and should not be constructed in a genuine milieu:

Soit qu'on déduise de la nature des spectacles, en général, les meilleures formes dont ils sont susceptibles; soit qu'on examine tout ce que les lumières d'un siècle et d'un peuple éclairés ont fait pour la perfection des nôtres; je crois qu'on peut conclure de ces considérations diverses que l'effet moral du spectacle et des théâtres ne saurait jamais être bon ni salubre en lui-même: puisqu'à compter que leurs avantages, on n'y trouve aucune sorte d'utilité réelle. . . . Or par une suite de son inutilité même, le théâtre, qui ne fait rien pour corriger les moeurs, peut beaucoup pour les altérer.²⁸

Whether one deduces from the nature of spectacles in general forms to which they are susceptible; whether one examines all which the enlightenment of people and of a century have accomplished in the name of perfection; I believe we can conclude that the moral effect of spectacle and theaters could never be salutary in and of itself. Even in counting their advantages, no real utility is found. . . . And, by their very

²⁸ *LDS*, 5:83.

uselessness, theaters, which can do nothing to better morals, do much to alter them.

According to Rousseau, the spread of cosmopolitan values to a city such as Geneva would cause people to behave with the sentiment of actors—which he perceived as false and not in accordance with nature—thus ceasing to have honest inner lives. Rousseau believed that in watching a play on stage, such as those seen in the city of Paris, public habit turned to this morality and led to a "going out," or parading in public following the appearance of actors. This in turn caused a paradoxical situation of simultaneous superficial visibility and internal isolation. The modern city was an expressive milieu and secular society, but people could only achieve authentic relationships, such as trust and play, in the country.²⁹ Finally, although the manipulation of appearances, such as styles of dress and mannerisms, found favor with one's peers, it did little to foster authentic sentiment. Following the publication of *La Lettre à D'Alembert* in 1758, the theme of theater as source of corruption in society disappeared from Rousseau's writing. Afterwards, he probed more deeply into the nature of theatricality and selfhood from which issued contrived or authentic relationships. Rousseau professed in later writings that the harmony of nature existed as the voice of conscience echoed in each person's soul. In his *Confessions*, he begins with the childhood memory of the originary lyric, recalled as the song of Tante Suzette:

Je cherche où est le charme attendrissant que mon coeur trouve à cette
chanson: c'est un caprice auquel je ne comprends rien; mais il m'est de

²⁹ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Viking, 1971), 114.

toute impossibilité de la chanter jusqu'à la fin sans être arrêté par des larmes³⁰

I look for the tender charm my heart finds in this song: a caprice that I can't understand, yet which is impossible to sing until the end without being stopped by tears.

This lyric echoes the ideal of a text expressive of sentiment wherein the voice is embodied as a gesture bound to the passage of time conceived as memory.

My own reading of Diderot's comment on the portrait of De la Tour is as follows: Rousseau's two selves, musician and orator, exist in harmony and confrontation. Rousseau the musician complements and confronts Rousseau the orator. Rousseau as composer/librettist uses the lyric stage to convey a utopia or amendatory nucleus of signs not limited to music, but involving a text consisting of movements, gestures, and verbal symbols suggesting a representation exceeding the frame or boundary of the stage itself. In a similar manner, Rousseau the orator seeks to convey the ideal through theory. Yet sensitivity lies at the heart of his endeavor. It is sensitivity which the lyric conveys more clearly than oration.³¹ It is Rousseau's own sensitivity which his oration conceals.

As composer, Rousseau sought in melody the model of an originary lyric voice; as orator, Rousseau criticized the discontinuity of urban life. His indictment of the city, his envisioning of schisms in urban experience extended by default a title of authenticity to the rural. *Le Devin du village*, as representation wherein Rousseau exchanged his visions and music for the attraction, sympathy, and admiration of others, conveyed a

³⁰ *Conf.*, 1:11.

³¹ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 180.

dimension of origin, and of identity with the common folk of Rousseau's past. Rousseau created on stage a sympathetic allegory of the worthiness of a return to nature represented by the natural setting of the countryside, through the projection of a system of belief and

dont l'effet sera autrement puissant que la magie de la présence, sur laquelle Jean-Jacques avait d'abord compté. Il a écrit *Le Devin* et *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, il s'est enchanté de ses propres visions, de sa propre musique, et voici que s'attachent à lui, de façon imprévue et si désirée, les regards chargés de "délicieuses larmes" qu'il recueillera avidement. Jean-Jacques se sent présent dans une image qui le représente, et qui fascine les auditrices: le plus précieux de sa gloire, au moment du succès du *Devin* est une satisfaction amoureuse dont la nature n'est pas très différente de celle qu'il attendait, à seize ans, en s'exhibant dans les allées, de Turin.³²

the magic of representation, whose all powerful effect was as magical as the earlier presentation upon which Jean-Jacques had counted. He wrote *Le Devin* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. He was enthralled with his visions, his music, and, beheld with surprise the raptured regards of "delicious tears" so desired and impromptu which the public bestowed on him and he avidly accepted. Jean-Jacques felt present through an image which portrayed himself and fascinated his listeners: his most precious glory, the moment of *Le Devin's* success came from the loving recollection of the awaited moment of exposing himself, at age sixteen, on the streets of Turin.

Following *Le Devin's* presentation and success, Rousseau had brief recourse to pretensions of virtuous heroism and superior wisdom. In part, his sense of superiority was enabled by a music which sang the seduction of a hoped-for return to the past.³³

As an *opera buffa* with Italian harmonies, Rousseau's *Devin* was constructed as a tableau of rural life. Low-born characters such as servants and peasants, simple staging

³² Ibid., 210.

³³ Ibid., 211.

and costumes, and portrayal of open-air scenes instituted a lyric theater accessible to all classes. Enhanced by later composers Monsigny and Grétry,³⁴ Rousseau's *villageois* style would offer to the French the first vestiges of a romantic lyric stage.

FORMAL OPPOSITIONS IN THE LIBRETTO

The opening lyric of *Le Devin*, "J'ai perdu mon serviteur," acts as a figure of severed unity. Class, custom, and the presence of nature in a countryside inhabited by simple "folk," as opposed to the false appearance of city people, figure prominently in the libretto's theme. The libretto consists of seven scenes and a concluding pantomime. As allegory, it reveals that city dwellers of the eighteenth century lived in a world of simulacrum, apart from the purer customs and morals of country life as adhering to laws of nature.³⁵ Values of the lower classes, reflective of Rousseau's own social origins, were represented as harmonious with country life and as testimony of a purer virtue existing away from the city. On multiple levels, *Le Devin* reflected Rousseau's defiance of the aristocratic and courtly milieu, which was also that of opera's origin.³⁶ In writing it,

³⁴ Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny (1729–1817), a contemporary of Rousseau, was one of the creators of *opéra-comique*, a form in which a heavy reliance of *comédies en vaudevilles* on popular melodies changed to a form, *la comédie en ariettes*, which used original music: like Rousseau, Monsigny was influenced by the Paris appearance of the Italian *opera buffa* and the performance of *La Serva Padrona* and other *buffa* works. Richard Grétry's operatic compositions bridged the span in Paris between the rococo age of the 1760s and the Revolution; Grétry's music was Italian-influenced, yet fitted to French accentuation.

³⁵ Sennett, *Fall of Public Man*, 116.

³⁶ In this dissertation I argue that Rousseau's indictment of opera as art form of the upper classes is revealed by his selection of this form to make a political statement. This phenomenon is revealed most strongly in *Le Devin du village*, written by Rousseau in the *opera buffa* subgenre that gained great popularity in the mid-eighteenth century. In the text of *Le Devin du village*, the treatment of its libretto, and the interrelation of music to literary text, Rousseau expresses his view of developing Enlightenment society.

Rousseau was aware of changing attitudes toward the aristocracy and of the preference for *opera buffa*, wherein low-born characters such as servants and peasants played major roles.

In my reading of the libretto, I designate images of nature having the capacity to calm the emotions of the spectator through either susceptible potential or innate reactive potential. Although Rousseau possessed a theoretical aversion to theatrical spectacle, he embraced it in its lyric form solely on the grounds that it offered a means of identifying with one's fellow man through pity or compassion. The libretto of *Le Devin* reveals the individual torn from a moment of origin represented through landscape's functioning as a privileged locus of retreat. Also, it revealed the sympathetic element through which, despite the power of reason, men react on seeing others' sorrow.

Although ostensibly the subject of this *intermède* is the love of Colin for Colette, each representing for the other a model of subjective desire, it also elicits from within its libretto a praise of the *virtue* of compassion, which can be nourished only within a morally correct setting. The compassionate individual learns that he has the power to act effectively in regard to others and, in so doing, becomes the object of their favorable regard.³⁷

The principal argument of *Le Devin* to which the *philosophes* adhered was the combat against superstition; however, the soothsayer of Rousseau's narrative reigns triumphant as the compassionate being, destined to reunite two sweethearts: "Qui me fait deviner tout ce qu'ils m'ont appris; / Leur amour à propos en ce jour me seconde"

³⁷ RD, s.v. "Compassion."

(Which causes me to foretell all they have taught me; / Their love in this day reinforces

[my skill]). In the first scene Colette laments the loss of her love, Colin:

J'ai perdu tout mon *bonheur*
 J'ai perdu mon *serviteur*:
 Colin me délaisse;
 Hélas! Il a pu *changer*?
 Je voudrais n'y plus *songer*;
 Hélas! Hélas! j'y songe sans *cesse*;
 Colin me *délaisse*.

Il m'aimait autrefois, et ce fut mon malheur . . .
 Mais, qu'elle est donc celle qu'il me *préfère*?
 Elle est donc bien charmante; imprudente *bergère*.
 Ne crains-tu pas les maux que j'éprouve en ce jour,
 Colin m'a pu changer; tu peux avoir ton *tour* . . .
 Que me sert d'y rêver sans cesse,
 Rien ne peut guérir mon *amour*
 Et tout augmente ma tristesse.

Peut-être il m'aime encore . . .
 Pourquoi me fuir sans cesse,
 Il me cherchait tant autrefois:
 Le Devin du canton fait ici sa *demeure*;
 Il sait tout, il saura le sort de mon *amour*,
 Je le vois et je veux m'éclaircir en ce jour.

I have lost my happiness,
 I have lost my servant:
 Colin has left me!
 Alas! Could he have changed.
 I can't accept the thought.
 Alas! alas! I dream ceaselessly:
 Colin has left me.
 He loved me before, it was my distress . . .
 But, who is she that he prefers?
 She is charming; imprudent shepherdess.
 Do not fear the ills I feel today,
 Colin has changed me; you can have your turn . . .
 How useless to endlessly daydream
 Nothing can heal my love
 And all augments my sadness.

.....
 Perhaps he loves me again . . .
 Why flee me so ceaselessly,
 Before, he searched for me so much.
 The soothsayer abides nearby.
 He knows all, will know my fate,
 I see him today to know my fate.

In the first stanza, the principle aria, "J'ai perdu mon serviteur," aligns the substantives *serviteur* and *bonheur*, thus privileging two opposing entities. In succeeding verses, the rhyme *changer/sonner* opposes the value of change as a conscious, visible alteration of presence to that of dream, a subconscious and thus invisible transformation.

In succeeding lines of twelve metric beats, the progression of substantives from positive to negative value exists, but only superficially: although the alliance of the rhyme "ce fut mon malheur" with "celle qu'il me préfère" is evident upon first reading, the third strophe rhyming with the substantive "imprudente bergère" expresses as code of presence the joining together in rhyme of the words *préfère/bergère*. The natural is thus valorized through their alignment as that which is lacking in the preceding superficial scheme. In the final verses, *amour*, signifying sentiment, is rhymed with *tour*, containing ambivalent meaning as either "trick" or "turn of fate." The introduction of *demeure* aligns positive value with the rhyme *amour/jour* present in final stanzas. Its presence contrasts with the negative rhyme scheme: *cesse/tristesse/délaisse*, all which serve as signifiers implying separation or lack of unity. The proximity of the substantive *Devin* to the verb *éclaircir* in the final verse, "éclaircir en ce jour," introduces the theme of enlightenment, announcing the eighteenth-century topos of enlightened reason.

The second scene associates the value of sentiment with the character of the *Devin* with the phrase "Je lis dans votre coeur" (I read in your heart), associating the verb *lire* with sentiment. In the libretto, characters analogous to stock figures drawn from the *commedia dell'arte* are reflected in Rousseau's protagonists: Colin is a mischievous village lad reminiscent of a Harlequin; he loves the shepherdess Colette, reminiscent of Columbine. Yet for Rousseau, even simple country folk are not free from the vice of *paraître*: Colin is briefly infatuated with "la dame de ces lieux" (a woman of higher station) just as Colette imagines other suitors "des galants de la ville." The implications undermine the very strategy Rousseau has set up; it is as if he chose to reveal a paradoxical falseness in the natural realm.

In the second verse Rousseau introduces the dispute over the values of nature over those of artifice:

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

I will return the fickle one to your feet,
Colin is brave, he loves to boast,
His vanity does an outrage to you
That his love must repair.

In the final couplet, vanity—for *paraître*—opposes *amour*, signifying essence, allowing the internal rhyme of *amour/secours* to valorize the private domain by allying intimacy to comforting shelter.

In the second aria of *Le Devin*, the topos of nature and artifice reappears, presenting an opportunity for representation which is taken more seriously by Rousseau.

Just as signifiers of the natural are allied with sentiment as truth in the second stanza of this aria, they are opposed by those of falseness in the first. *L'amour* as principal signifier is thus enhanced through its association with *coeur/bonheur*; conversely, the rhyme progression *ville, discours, facile, amours* in the first stanza signifies the potentially threatening artifice:

Si des galants de la ville,
J'eusse écouté les discours
Ah! qu'il m'eût été facile
De former d'autres amours.
Mise en riche demoiselle,
Je brillerais tous les jours;
De rubans et de dentelles
Je changerais mes atours . . .

Pour l'amour de l'infidèle,
J'ai refusé mon bonheur;
J'aimais mieux être moins belle,
Et lui conserver mon coeur.

If I had listened to the galants
of the town; it would have been easy
to find other loves,
Dressed as a rich demoiselle,
I would stand out
In ribbons and laces,
Changing my surroundings . . .

For the love of an unfaithful
I refused my happiness;
I would rather be less pretty
And keep from him my heart.

At the conclusion of the second scene, signifiers allying sentiment and literary knowledge are shown: the Devin who *reads* hearts will render to Colette the heart or essence of Colin as revealed through the literary signifier *ouvrage*, or work.

In the third scene, a system of values opposes sentiment to science. In this scene of six verses, the words *science profonde* metonymically signify the enlightened mind; in turn, they complement *leur amour* as a single love shared by two people. In a lesser hierarchy accorded to the final verse, the association of *dame du lieu* with the substantives *les airs et le mépris* underscores the seriousness of the soothsayer's wager:

J'ai tout su de Colin, et ces pauvres enfants
 Admirent tous les deux la science profonde
 Qui me fait deviner tout ce qu'ils m'ont appris;
 Leur amour à propos en ce jour me seconde:
 En les rendant heureux, il faut que je confonde,
 De la dame du lieu, les airs et le mépris.

I knew all about Colin, and these unfortunate children
 Both admire the depths of the science
 With which I predict what they've taught me to learn;
 Their love supports me:
 In causing their happiness, I must confuse
 The airs and scorn of the lady of this realm.

Here, *science profonde* is not to be taken lightly, but is given as an example of a reasonable nature which must be present if one is to engage in a sincere love, as opposed to superficial gallantry. Colin and Colette, simple village people, have as their adversary the *châtelaine* or *dame de ces lieux* whose facetious seductions momentarily have lured Colin with the possibility of social ascent. By the fifth scene, Colin will have renounced all false grandeur in favor of the happiness of a simple heart. In the fourth scene, love and the acquisition of knowledge are rendered equally necessary for wisdom, which is opposed to *biens superflus*:

L'Amour et vos leçons, m'ont enfin rendu sage;
 Je préfère Colette à des biens superflus:

Je sais lui plaire en habit de village;
 Sous un habit doré, qu'obtiendrai-je de plus?

Love and your lessons, at last have made me wise;
 I prefer Colette to worldly goods:
 I knew how to please her dressed in village garb;
 In a golden habit, what more would I obtain?

In this stanza, Colin dares to resist the desire to attain worldly goods and persuades his beloved Colette recognize that their attainment leads only to unhappiness. This text reveals that Rousseau, well before the writing of his *Second Discours*, had already formulated ideas on inequality of class based upon unequal distribution of wealth. The rivalry of love and fortune is again expressed in Scene Four by the Devin, who warns Colin that Colette also has suitors, more wealthy than he, adding:

On sert mal à la fois, la fortune et l'amour,
 D'être si beau garçon quelquefois il en coûte.

Fortune and love together are poorly served
 To be a handsome lad is often costly.

In Scene Five, Colin shows the firmness of his resolve: he will abandon riches and fame to be with Colette:

Je vais revoir ma charmante maîtresse,
 Adieu château, grandeur, richesse
 Votre éclat ne me tente plus.

I will see again my charming mistress,
 Goodbye château, grandeur, riches
 Your allure no longer tempts me.

And in the following stanza:

Quand on sait aimer et plaire,
 A-t-on besoin d'autre bien?
 Rends-moi ton coeur, ma bergère.

When one knows how to love and please,
Does one have need of wealth?
Give me your heart, my shepherdess.

In the sixth scene, the theme of the worth of love over worldly goods is repeated. In spite of Colin's repentance, Colette plays the coquette, implying she has chosen another: "Vos soins sont superflus; Non, Colin, je ne t'aime plus" (Your cares are superfluous; / No, Colin, I no longer love you). Yet when Colin threatens to leave the village rather than see Colette with another, each claims the other as preferable to all wealth, the universe, or riches of the court. Although the Devin has cast a spell, both lovers realize a kinship among loving, the country, and foreswearing worldly goods. Colin sings:

Quelque bonheur qu'on me promette,
Dans les noeuds qui me sont offerts,
J'eusse encore préféré Colette,
A tous les biens de l'univers.

Whatever happiness I am promised
In the nests offered me
I would have preferred Colette
To all the wealth of the universe.

He is echoed by Colette:

Quoiqu'un seigneur jeune, aimable,
Me parle aujourd'hui d'amour
Colin m'eût semblé préférable,
A tout l'éclat de la Cour.

Whatever young, loving lord
Spoke to me today of love,
I would have preferred Colin
To all the brilliance of the Court.

As in most operatic romances, the narrative expands beyond the framework of the action, becoming an excuse for an intense lyrical outpouring. Such is the purpose of the

sung romance of the seventh scene, "Dans ma cabane obscure," in which Colin bemoans the severities of country life. Nevertheless, in the country there is nothing to regret with Colette at his side; even hardships can be warm and compelling. Through the pureness of heart of Colette, a simple country maid whose one true love is Colin, the lyric suggests that far from the city happiness cannot help but reign. Colin sings,

Dans ma cabane obscure toujours soucis nouveaux
 Vent, soleil, froidure, toujours peine et travaux
 Colette ma bergère, si tu viens l'habiter
 Colin dans sa chaumière n'a rien à regretter.³⁸

In my obscure little hut, always new cares,
 Wind, sun, cold, always labor and toil
 Colette, my shepherdess, if you come to live here,
 Colin in his cottage will never have regrets.

Whereas Nature is the artificial construct conceived by Rousseau to enable man to denounce society, at the same time it allows him meditative and cognitive sustenance: "Une fois la société oubliée, . . . le paysage reconquiert aux yeux de Jean-Jacques le caractère d'un site originel et premier"³⁹ (Once society is forgotten, . . . the countryside reconquers in Rousseau's eyes, the character of an original and primary local). In *Le Devin* Rousseau presents the synthesis of his views on nature, conceived as the countryside, through the voices of different characters. Just as Colin finds solace in his little thatched hut, Colette finds comfort in the healing presence of nature; finally, Le Devin, the agent of transformation, represents higher wisdom, which will extend in later Rousseauian endeavors to persons of superior knowledge such as St. Preux in *La*

³⁸ Rousseau, *Le Devin du village*, 8.

³⁹ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 59.

Nouvelle Héloïse and the legislator of *Du Contrat social*.⁴⁰ The figure of the soothsayer can thus be viewed as representative of Rousseau himself.

In order to present his different theories to the reader, Rousseau's characters play different roles. The libretto calls into question moral or philosophical truths established as fundamental truths of nature. Theatrically, the space of interiority subsumed by the individual is intruded upon through the very process of representation. In fact, the individual's self is examined as though every aspect of his daily life were open to scrutiny and the judgment of his peers. Through the visualization of interiority, the self is affirmed.

In the final scene, the *divertissement* wherein Colin dances with Colette demonstrates musically and dramatically the aesthetic aspirations of the mid-eighteenth century according unity to the stage by molding the work of librettist, choreographer, musician and painter into a coherent whole under the authority of one overseeing figure or stage manager. The culminating scene of *Le Devin* consists of a romance duo sung by Colin and Colette, followed by an air sung by the Devin as master of ceremonies. The final scene consists of a *divertimento* performed in silence, serving as commentary on the value of wisdom.

In *Le Portrait du Roi* Louis Marin cites as a secondary effect of the representative process the *effet du sujet*, the power of legitimization and of authority,

⁴⁰ The character of St. Preux, tutor of Julie, has knowledge of both city and country and, as mediating presence, imparts the wisdom of each domain. *RD*, s.v. "Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse." In *Du Contrat social* the figure of the legislator is designated by the people as their representative, imbued with a higher knowledge to instigate and authorize their laws. *Ibid.*, s.v. "The Social Contract."

which results from the reflection of the subject upon itself.⁴¹ This claiming of what is represented through a mastery of time and reflection by the spectator occurs through successive images that substitute for, transform, and thus represent the subject. Marin presents the act of representation as containing both the means and the foundation of rendering an image or series of images to substitute interchangeably for one or more others. Representation does this, Marin concludes, through signs, through exteriorizing an ideal-typical model of intelligibility, even in the case of an abstraction. Accordingly:

La représentation dans et par ses signes représente la force: délégations de force, les signes ne sont pas les représentants de concepts mais des représentants de forces saisissables seulement dans leurs effets-représentants.⁴²

Representation in and by its signs represents force: delegations of power, these signs are not signifiers of ideas but of knowable powers only in their representative effects.

As *intermède*, *Le Devin du village* constituted for Rousseau a representative system. In this system the self was designated as interpretant of the natural in embracing a function of catharsis. The representation of *Le Devin* as lyric work constituted a benevolent gesture by Rousseau, one directed toward his cosmopolitan public and projecting the image of Rousseau himself through the protagonist. Implicit in Rousseau's statement is that the self must be severed from cosmopolitan society if it is to embrace authenticity. Thus, the authentic individual harbors a truth found in nature through a process of supplementarity, of substitution of presence, through which artifice, representing wealth,

⁴¹ Marin, *Le Portrait du Roi*, 10.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 11.

property, and false appearance, is denied. For the reader/spectator, *Le Devin* achieves an effect of totalization. The affective power by which this totalization is authorized by Rousseau defers the task of persuasion to the staged image of the country *hameau* as figure of origin, one which is preferable to the allure of the *ville* as symbol of an intrusive civilization.

THE PASTORAL STAGED: REPRESENTATION OF THE NATURAL

L'homme social, toujours hors de lui, ne sait que vivre dans l'opinion des autres, et c'est pour ainsi dire de leur seul jugement qu'il tire le sentiment de sa propre existence. L'homme de la ville ne sait plus se manifester que comme objet. Il n'est pas sujet.⁴³

Social man, always outside himself, only knows how to live in the opinion of others and as such, it is only in their judgment that he feels his own existence. The man of the town only shows himself as object. He is not subject.

The historical emergence of the dichotomy between the country and city is presented by Raymond Williams as being astonishingly varied. Williams's analysis of literary texts as objects of socio-critical discourse in view of a constantly changing world of the outdoors, if applied to *Le Devin du village*, might seem to call into question his discourse on the practices of such "folk" as hunters, pastoralists, and farmers.⁴⁴ The true difference is one of perspective, for as Williams explains, the dichotomy extends from country and city to birth and learning, situation and power, constituting wider ranges of possibilities. In Rousseau's day, interpersonal changes evolving from the world of the

⁴³ *DOI*, 3:75.

⁴⁴ Raymond Williams, *Country and City in English Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 1.

Court of the preceding century concerned, in the country, simple habits of allegiance and fidelity and the ways in which one dealt with and appeared to strangers.⁴⁵

The relationship between the country and the city in the eighteenth century mirrors that of birth and learning. The influence of the myth of the Virgilian golden age is not the first instance of conceptualization of country life; the *Works and Days* of Hesiod and accounts of the ninth century B.C. contain references to a way of life in which prudence and effort are seen as virtues.⁴⁶ Portrayals of the country in Rousseau's day exhibited a revival of classical pastoral, along with rural literature of another sort which introduced idealized tones and images.⁴⁷ The country ideal was also associated with tension: pleasure was associated with loss, harvest with labor, summer with winter.

In the mid-eighteenth century the character of pastoral literature subsumed a vision of utopia and confronted contemporary visions of nature and of the country as place of refuge. The era, dominated by neo-classicism, sought unity through nature: either to find in nature a renewing font of origin or to avenge through art the loss of the longed-for natural setting of the past. The presence from the previous century of the pastoral on the lyric stage was thus one of renewal and, as a carefully constructed model of representation, dealt with the tension between nature and society. In representing the

⁴⁵ In *The Fall of Public Man*, 77, dealing with the social psychology of capitalism, sociologist Richard Sennett explains that a bridge was built between what was believable on the stage and on the street, a bridge consisting of two principles: the body and the voice. In the construction of this bridge, men behaved like actors and could be sociable with each other, but only on impersonal grounds. Whereas the body was treated as mannequin, speech was treated as sign.

⁴⁶ Williams, *Country and City*, 14.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

clarity of rural life, the pastoral genre portrayed an imaginary golden age derived from ancient Greece in which the loves of shepherds and shepherdesses played a common role. In France the pastoral romance was embodied in Honoré d'Urfé's *Astrée*, wherein mortal shepherds cavorted with immortal nymphs. Theatrical conventions of the pastoral adopted by Rousseau in his staging of *Le Devin* include a closing act in pantomime and the *hameau* as unifying visual symbol. As in *Astrée*, two opposing views of love predominate, comprising sentimental passion and the desire for riches. Likewise, the use of a natural setting for a romance rife with obstacles, the presence of fellow country folk, friend and foe, and the magician as mystery figure were borrowed by Rousseau from the pastoral of the previous century. With *Le Devin du village*, Rousseau became the first European writer to modernize the pastoral idyll successfully by means of the stage.

As a consequence of the renaissance of interest in Hellenism at the end of the eighteenth century, Rousseau succeeded in implanting on the public stage an aesthetic taste for the pastoral idyll filled with common characters. This literary subgenre entailed the presence of common folk as heroes representative of the ideal of a primitive arcadia:

En France . . . la pastorale ne réussit pas à s'implanter dans le roman et reste fort médiocre dans la poésie; la pastorale dramatique apparaît comme la forme la plus en accord avec des tendances de la littérature française et la plus goûtée du public, mais elle n'a pas abouti à une oeuvre de premier ordre.⁴⁸

In France . . . the pastoral was not incorporated in the novel and remained quite mediocre as poetry; the dramatic pastoral thus appeared most in agreement with tendencies of French literature most enjoyed by the public, yet never achieved a work of first importance.

⁴⁸ Jean Terrasse, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la société du XVIIIe siècle* (Ottawa: Université d'Ottawa Press, 1981), 77.

Rousseau's reworking of the pastoral received much attention. Its unifying visual symbol, *le hameau*, granted authority to nature revealed as a countrified realm away from the city's *paraître*. The rustic mannerisms of Colin and Colette harmonized with those of Rousseau himself. In the *Confessions* Rousseau claimed to desire an insular life, one of exile in a small community whose happiness is constructed on the foundation of intimacy, one which reflects on the natural setting as symbolic of purity.

Deux ans passés au village . . . me ramenèrent à l'état d'enfant. A Genève, où l'on ne m'imposait rien, j'aimais l'application, la lecture; c'était presque mon seul amusement; à Bossey, le travail me fit aimer les jeux qui lui servaient de relâche. La campagne était pour moi si nouvelle, que je ne pouvais me lasser d'en jouir. Je pris pour elle un goût si vif, qu'il n'a jamais pu s'éteindre.⁴⁹

Two years spent in the village . . . transported me to a state of childhood. In Geneva, where nothing was demanded of me, I loved to apply myself to reading; it was almost my only amusement. At Bossey, work caused me to love games of repose. The countryside was so new for me that I could not tire of enjoying it. I developed a taste for it that I could never extinguish.

In *Le Devin* the countryside, as natural habitat in which one has a parity with one's peers, is an emblem of childhood and also symbolizes and enacts a parallel between nature and the interior self. Ingrid Kisiuk sees the symbol of nature as an emblem of spiritual health:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau est le premier à donner au paysage une valeur psychologique en établissant une correspondance entre l'état de son âme et l'aspect du monde extérieur. Il est le premier à donner à l'image une double réalité: une réalité physique et une réalité psychique. Rousseau trouve dans la nature un miroir qui reflète ses joies et ses peines.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *Conf.*, 1:51.

⁵⁰ Ingrid Kisiuk, "Le Symbolisme du jardin et l'imagination créatrice chez Rousseau, Bernardin de St. Pierre et Chateaubriand," in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1980), 185:303.

Rousseau is the first to give to the countryside a psychological value in establishing correspondences between the state of the soul and the exterior world. He is the first to accord to the image a double reality: one physical and the other psychic. Rousseau sees in nature a mirror reflecting his joys and pain.

In following pages I address the interiority of the natural sign in *Le Devin* which reappears in the form of other societies in miniature depicted in later works.

THE PASTORAL AS TABLEAU: *LE DEVIN DU VILLAGE* AND *LA NOUVELLE HELOISE*

Le tableau, la fête, l'utopie sont étroitement liés dans l'oeuvre de Rousseau et appartiennent au même espace sociologique. . . . Le tableau, au XVIII^e siècle se composait d'un inventaire de connaissances permettant de dresser un bilan de la conscience et d'affirmer l'existence d'un ordre du monde.⁵¹

The tableau, the festival, and utopia are linked in the text of Rousseau, and belong to the same sociological space. . . . The tableau in the eighteenth century consisted of an inventory of knowledge which permitted an awakening of conscience and affirmation of the existence of a world order.

Both mise-en-scène and text of *Le Devin du village* refer to utopia as an idealized natural realm. Rousseau's idyllic mise-en-scène prefigures the models⁵² contained in his later works. For example, whereas utopia exists in *Le Devin du village* as nostalgic sentiment for the past, it exists in political works such as *Le Second Discours* as a state where benefits of a just, humane, and prosperous society may be enjoyed, or in *Du*

⁵¹ Terrasse, *Rousseau et la société*, 53.

⁵² *Utopia*, according to Louis Marin, can be defined as two images that confront each other. One is a dominating gaze "in its imaginary mastery totalizing space as far as it erases its particular divisions by a perspective . . . which dissolves its 'loci' into a universal horizon; the other is an overpowerful center endowed with the complete control of undifferentiating processes and of the overhanging mastery of all possible exteriority through absorption." *Critical Inquiry*, 19:2, 402.

Contrat social as the possibility of an ideal social order, and serve as examples of utopias similar to that evoked in *Le Devin du village*. Rural images and solitary natural landscapes are prominent in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.⁵³

Before the creation of the garden of Julie, heroine of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* ⁵⁴ ("L'Elysée enclos conçu et cultivé par Julie . . . un endroit exceptionnel; privé, séparé, et caché" (The Elysian enclosed, conceived, and cultivated by Julie . . . an exceptional space, private, separate and hidden), yet analogous in its symbolism, the *hameau* of *Le Devin* was configured as an emblem of nature presented in the form of a tableau, wherein meaningful events such as marriage and the attainment of wisdom took place. Existing beyond life's contradictions, the tableau revealed a hidden order of the nature of things.⁵⁵

Rousseau frequently drew from his own memories. *Le Devin* contains, as does *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, a symbiosis of real sites and landscapes which are used to construct an ideal natural realm, utopic in its immunity from contamination. Thus, the *hameau* of *Le Devin* is neither Rousseau's Ermitage nor Savoie nor Switzerland, but all three in one. Exiled in the Ermitage after the defeat of his *Second Discours*, Rousseau studied key themes of moral consciousness in relation to the theater (the *savoyard* landscape in *La*

⁵³ "Milord, que c'est un spectacle agréable et touchant que celui d'une maison simple et bien réglée où règnent l'ordre, la paix, l'innocence; où l'on voit la vraie destination de l'homme! La campagne, la saison, la retraite, la vaste plaine d'eau qui s'offre à mes yeux, le sauvage aspect des montagnes . . ." (Milord, such a pleasing spectacle as that of a simple and well managed house where order, peace and innocence reign; where the true path of man is perceived as the countryside, the season, the retreat offered to my eyes, the wildness of the mountains . . .). *LNH*, 2:440.

⁵⁴ Rousseau's epistolary novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse* was published in 1761. Considered one of the most important works in eighteenth-century French literature, it combines plausible sentimental themes with descriptive settings of everyday life in a village at the foot of the Alps.

⁵⁵ Terrasse, *Rousseau et la société*, 55–56.

Nouvelle Héloïse exposed this moral preoccupation). Escape from society thus demands an ideal realm where the self can freely open up its interior. Finally, Switzerland symbolized a utopia of flight where Rousseau could begin preliminary attempts to justify his actions.

The mise-en-scène thus simultaneously portrays past, present, and future. Like the waterfall of the *Essai sur l'origine des langues* and the mountain of *Lettres écrites de la montagne*, the *hameau* of *Le Devin* constitutes an essential element of Rousseauian landscape. And in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* the characters place a value on a simple and primitive lifestyle in their quest for happiness. In that work St. Preux writes to Julie of the paradox of the city: for him, the disorder of Paris opposes the natural order of the country, degrading man by the social conditions it creates:

L'homme du monde voit tout, et n'a le temps de penser à rien; la mobilité des objets ne lui permet que de les apercevoir, et non de les observer; ils s'effacent mutuellement avec rapidité, et il ne lui reste du tout que des impressions confuses qui ressemblent au chaos.⁵⁶

The man of the world sees all and has time to think of nothing; the mobility of objects only permits his perception, not his observation of them. Mutually they are erased rapidly so that nothing remains but confused impressions resembling chaos.

Conversely, the country permits the reconstitution of man's original oneness. In allowing man to identify with a happier origin, the "moi commun,"⁵⁷ which promotes the interests of society, enables him to identify with that which gave cohesion to the social body.

⁵⁶ *LNH*, 2:222.

⁵⁷ The *moi commun* is distinguished from the *moi particulier*. In the former, the self is bearer of dispositions and attributes stemming from the self's role in society; in the latter, the self is discrete and self-absorbed. *RD*, s.v. "Alienation."

Likewise the countryside as the locus of sentiment is identified in Rousseau's text through symbols such as the hamlet of *Le Devin*, reflecting a primitive golden age.⁵⁸

Unlike the aristocratic festival depicted in *La Lettre à D'Alembert*, the festival in *Le Devin* denotes sane tastes and "natural" pleasures. On another level, the presence of utopia in Rousseau's work masks the social reality implicitly present. *Le Devin* as representation permitted Rousseau to mask the enormous distance which separated him, at the time of its writing, from the common class. Through the totality achieved as staging, text, and mise-en-scène, a dialectic evolved, inviting critical human issues of ecology, geography, and morality to reveal themselves as subtext. Perhaps the difficulty of imagining himself as part of Paris, a city of strangers, caused Rousseau to underscore the importance of rural beginnings. Thus, the characters of Colin and the Devin function as masks to reveal Rousseau as the carefree apprentice transformed into the sage. They allude to the morality, health, and geography of a utopic natural haven as recollective of that of Rousseau's origin.

In his staging Rousseau connects his ideas on music to his philosophical system and literary thought. His basic premise is founded on a belief in the original harmony of a nature not yet corrupted by civilization. In the visual modality afforded by the stage, the emblem of nature is contained in multiple sensory dimensions as a highly formalized symbol consisting not only of visual settings such as the *hameau*, but also of tuneful melodies and of stage actions depicting openness. Allegorically, the text, mise-en-scène, and music allude to the tension between nature and artifice as one basic to human

⁵⁸ Terrasse. *Rousseau et la société*, 66.

identity. Rousseau's awareness of individuality within historicity can be conceived as an act of self-narration. The resultant tension, accomplished through staging, includes that which exists between good nature and bad society, that which hinges on the problem of passion, and that which exists as an organic cycle of life and death.

The problem of passion is delegated to the protagonists, Colin and Colette. In the libretto multiple cycles of distancing separate the two. Following the sixth scene, this separation is reinscribed as a slow pantomime wherein gestures and slow danced movement echo representational motifs used in the text. The cycle of life and death, portrayed through gestures seen as external and alien to the central action, is performed entirely in silence as part of an elaborate concluding pantomime which mimics the protagonists. In the libretto of *Le Devin* the transformation of country to city is portrayed as the ebb and flow of a natural cycle wherein nature's regenerative presence is manifested.

In addition to the aesthetic problem posed by the efforts of the *philosophes* to merge lyric and text, a decorative sleight of hand developed with mise-en-scène. Rarely defined, but always present, the baroque *merveilleux* offered a mode of evading familiar constraints and attaining instead a quality of transcendence.⁵⁹ Rousseau's consciousness of the role mise-en-scène played in operatic reform is evidenced by his consenting to see, along with the critic St. Evremond, "danser les prêtres, soldats, diables ou animaux, dans

⁵⁹ *Le merveilleux* was defined by elaborate creatures of fantasy, clothed in exotic costume, resembling shepherds and shepherdesses, common to the often dispersed narrative structure of eighteenth-century French opera. It was a structure the *philosophes* as a group opposed and sought to undo via the reformulation of the libretto.

la mesure toutefois, où leur danse s'accorde avec leur caractère"⁶⁰ (priests, soldiers, devils, or animals perform wherein their dance agrees with their character). Rousseau's summary statement concerning the natural is revealed in both explicit and implicit contexts. Implicit autobiographical references are expressed via the theme of natural virtue and freedoms suffering from the corruption of the high-born and citified.⁶¹ Explicit references are achieved as explained above through the processes of performance.

THE MUSIC OF *LE DEVIN*

Rousseau's preference for Italian harmonies was shared by Diderot and other philosophes. Although Rousseau did not achieve the Italian-style recitative that he desired for *Le Devin*, his imitation of the three-part *sinfonia* of Italian opera overtures lent an Italian-like brilliance to the work.⁶² *Le Devin*'s rustic dances and vaudeville melodies were inspired by Charles Favart, whom even Voltaire admired as a master of versification.⁶³

In contrast to theorists in the seventeenth century, when music—in its subordination to the libretto—reinforced the text, the *philosophes* as a group sought to unify music and text into one form.⁶⁴ The *récitatif* of *Le Devin* thus progresses subtly

⁶⁰ Charles de St. Evremond, *Sur les Opéra*, quoted in Marie-Françoise Christout, *Le Merveilleux et le théâtre du silence* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), 97.

⁶¹ Daniel Heartz, "The Beginnings of Operatic Romance: Rousseau, Sedaine et Monsigny," *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 15:2, 158.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 158.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ This desire to reformulate opera was dealt with by Denis Diderot in pantomime in *Le Neveu de Rameau*. Therein, the nephew of the famous Rameau maintains the advantages of the Italian operatic

from instrumentally accompanied verse to unaccompanied song. (In *Le Dictionnaire* Rousseau had stated that a measured *récitatif* as the result of a measured instrumental accompaniment is a bastard form.)⁶⁵ In *Le Devin* he sought to change the "unnatural" quality of French *récitatif* by altering its internal structure: "Souvent, un récitatif ordinaire se change tout d'un coup en chant et prend de la mesure et de la mélodie"⁶⁶ (Often an ordinary recitative is changed into song and takes both measure and melody).

Rousseau had sacrificed prose to song in his emphasis on the silent *e*.⁶⁷ Yet the imitative structure wherein he made a virtue of changes in musical texture as text-reinforcing devices presents a model for study. Throughout the work, a three-bar prelude for orchestra of strings and flutes is used as recurrent texture. The voice comes in, doubled by violins. Then the bass begins, coming in again to form a two-part texture for the second and third bars of the phrase. This two-part texture prevails until the end of the first strain, which consists of the same melody twice, but adding the dominant musical key the second time it is played. In the conclusion, the use of the Lombard

style over the French, creating through pantomime an entire opera in its scenic and sonorous aspects. This imaginary opera in fact foreshadowed a hybrid genre—the renewal, at the end of the century, of French lyric tragedy, but based on Italian models. Rousseau, on the other hand, preferred to relegate music to linguistic considerations. He conducted an ongoing study, begun in the *Essai*, on music's link in a chain of cultural signification. As parallel endeavor, he experimented with *récitatif* as a theoretical idealized joining together of word and lyric.

⁶⁵ " . . . quand l'accompagnement est mesuré, cela force de mesurer aussi le récitatif, lequel n'est plus le vivant témoin de la musique en vers . . . tout récitatif où l'on sent quelque autre mesure que celui des vers n'est plus du récitatif." *DM*, 5:1008, s.v. "Recitative."

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Grétry, *Essais sur la musique*, 276–77, quoted in Jean-Christophe Rebejkow, "Sur *Le Devin* du village de Jean-Jacques Rousseau et ses relectures par Diderot," in *Le Théâtre dans l'Europe des Lumières: Programmes, pratiques, échanges*, comp. and ed. Mieczysław Klimowicz and Aleksander Wit Labuda (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1985), 62.

sharp⁶⁸ (for example, in the phrase "Dans ma cabane obscure") was an expressive device that Rousseau, in another context, explicitly labeled *sanglots* (sobs). This texture begins after the second strain starts without recess, then opens up again like the first, proceeding in two parts. In the penultimate measure, as the voice ascends to an accented high note to furnish a melodic climax, the melody then returns to the same three-part texture as the prelude. The last sequence contains a magical effect; musically, it opens to a four-part diminished seventh chord to express the wonder of Colette's charms flowering and overcoming all hardship. Rousseau thus underscores by musical means epigrammatic points of his poem.⁶⁹ As an archetype of the imagined return to the natural state, the romance motif in the final scene functions as a musical unifying structure. A structure with infinite grace, the romance as defined by Rousseau in the *Encyclopaédie* comprises the following elements:

Air sur lequel on chante un petit poème du même nom divisé par couplets, duquel le sujet est pour l'ordinaire quelque histoire amoureuse et souvent tragique. Comme la *romance* doit être écrite d'un style simple, touchant, et d'un goût un peu antique, l'air doit répondre au caractère des paroles; point d'ornement, rien de manière, une mélodie douce, naturelle, champêtre; et qui produise son effet par elle-même, indépendamment de la manière de la chanter.

An air to which is sung a little poem of the same name, divided into couplets, of which the subject is often an amorous tale, and often tragic. As the romance should be simple, and somewhat archaic in style, the air should correspond to the character of the words: no ornaments,

⁶⁸ In baroque music prior to 1750 the *dot* was used as a prolongation of a note for undetermined value depending on various factors such as the character or rhythm of the piece. *Lombard* was the unexplained name for inverted dotting of a note. *HDM*, s.v. "Dotted notes," "Lombardic style."

⁶⁹ Hertz, "Beginnings of Operatic Romance," 160.

nothing mannered, the melody natural, rustic and producing its effect by itself, independently of the manner in which it was sung.⁷⁰

The medieval romance of France and Spain, the form used by the troubadours, described amorous adventures; in the eighteenth century the form changed and was devoted exclusively to a short poem celebrating love.⁷¹

In *Le Devin* the structure of the romance most closely resembled sung "language" more expressive than prose. Rousseau's enterprise functioned as idealized "lyric text" in which word, melded with song, represented a paradigm of man's origin, thus subsuming music as part of man's original unity. Musical themes reflecting French songs from the Middle Ages served for Rousseau as a conciliatory musical text, linking past to present. These songs were first performed without overture or *récitatif*⁷² to promote Rousseau's new musical claim of melodic unity, with which he opposed the dominant theory of harmony based on a *corps sonore* (sonorous body) espoused by Rameau.

As I explained in Chapter Two, the most "natural" music for Rousseau was that which had existed since the origin of humanity—the melody of the human voice. This melody, born in the same instant as word, as a sort of singing language, contains both musical and intellectual elements which have existed for centuries. In the *Essai* Rousseau writes that in earliest times, song imitated the accents of the speaking voice, until the

⁷⁰ Denis Diderot. *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et les metiers* (Paris. 1751–80), s.v. "Romance." Rousseau was the author of all articles on music in the *Encyclopédie*.

⁷¹ Hertz, "Beginnings of Operatic Romance." 157.

⁷² The staging of *Le Devin du village* at the Paris Opéra, March 1, 1753, suppressed *récitatif* at the suggestion of Rousseau to his tenor, Jelyotte. Masters and Kelly, eds. and trans., *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Confessions and Correspondence* (Dartmouth: New England University Press, 1995).

singing voice gradually separated from the speaking voice. At the origin of historical time, Rousseau postulated, it was difficult to separate word from song: whereas the voice developed in spoken and sung qualities, "word" separated into a discursive act (i.e., speech). As a model of representation, the song lyric exteriorized man's interior through the triumph of voice as passion. In a second stage of development, the voice created for expression of human passions became the vehicle for song, but one that was clear, not clouded by opacity. Finally, in a third phase of evolution, instrumental music separated from the singing voice it was created to imitate and became autonomous. Thus Rousseau affirmed that song was actually word transcended to a superior level.⁷³

In *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Compositeur de chansons*, Jenny Batlay refers to Rousseau's return to nature through song as an act of reconciliation: "L'entreprise de Rousseau—retour à la nature—sera de réconcilier par le chant l'unité originelle de l'homme: dans sa parole il y aura le moins d'espace possible entre le signifiant et le signifié (parole transparente)"⁷⁴ (Rousseau's enterprise—return to nature—will be to reconcile with song man's original unity: in his speech there will be the narrowest distance between the signifier and signified). Rousseau's use of song thus figured throughout his text as an allusion to a purer, more natural vocal form reminiscent of origin. In *Le Devin*, song rhythms were introduced as repetitions, substitutions, and transformations of the lyric phrase within a musical *system*. Rousseau's portrayal of the

⁷³ *EOL*, 5:423.

⁷⁴ Jenny Batlay, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Compositeur de chansons* (Paris: Editions de l'Athamor, 1976), 17.

musical natural functioned as a process of primitive transformation. Establishing unity between the past and present, song rhythms privileged the use of the solo voice.

Rousseau represented unification via a dual means. First, the staging of the pastoral idyll contained the structure of a tableau causing the stage to appear as "framed." Second, the presence of a noble, sanctified love was represented via the romance as musical form. Consequently, the simplicity of lyric eschewed a sentiment of virtue. Rousseau used the romance and its system of versification to foreshadow future melodic patterns.

REWRITINGS OF *LE DEVIN*

The implied rewritings of *Le Devin du village* by Denis Diderot and the British musicologist Charles Burney might lead us to consider the presence of lyric text as signature of the Enlightenment. In this section I refer specifically to Diderot's reference to Rousseau's *Le Devin* as a critique and a stimulus for reflection as having a distinct place in the way Diderot interprets the musical sign. Diderot believed that art, even in a corrupt society, is a positive force which liberates man's most creative impulses. Unlike Rousseau, who set up a cleavage between art and moral values, Diderot reconciled the aesthetically pleasing with the socially useful. His views on music and on art in general linked aesthetics to empiricism. Diderot's ideal spectator perceived beauty as the harmonious relationship of parts to the whole. Thus Diderot viewed the *beau* as the human capacity for perceiving the relationships at the core of the sense of the beautiful.

Certainly musical criticism as practiced by the *philosophes* provided a renewed stimulus for creation. Diderot's professed rewriting of Rousseau's *Le Devin du village* is mentioned in both *Les Trois Chapîtres ou les visions d'une nuit de Mardi Gras* and *Le Plan d'un opéra-comique*.⁷⁵ Conceived as fantasy under the guise of Carnival, *Les Trois Chapîtres* parodies *Le Devin du village*, subtly undermining its setting, characterization, and text. For example, the *scène* of *Les Trois Chapîtres* is a village wherein the protagonist, Colin, typifies a bumbling country fellow who owes his existence to tending a herd of sheep. Since, for Diderot, "rewriting" exists solely as imagination, comedy becomes a valid criterion of judgment.⁷⁶

In the second *Chapître*, Diderot refers to Rousseau's staging, suggesting *rewriting* through intertextual means. In this scene, Diderot invokes *le Coin*, the section of the opera championing the Italians. He deftly satirizes textual fragments of *Le Devin*, suggesting humor through parody—"qu'elle chantait bien des chants qui n'étaient pas bien" (she sang well songs which were not well-composed)—and using overly dramatized exaggeration: "Non, non, Colette n'est pas trompeuse" (No! Colette is not deceitful).

A second rewriting of *Le Devin*, as *Le Plan d'un opéra-comique*, contains other subtle references to the text of the original. It was described by Roger Lewinter "comme un pendant truculent à l'idylle de Rousseau" (as a truculent counterpart to Rousseau's idyll) wherein the intrigue differed, in passing from settings of chateau and bell tower in

⁷⁵ Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. H. Mayer and P. Citron (Paris: Hermann, 1983), 19:17.

⁷⁶ Didier, *La Musique des Lumières*, 361.

Le Devin to those of imagined boutiques in Diderot. *Le Devin* is also briefly mentioned in the text of the *Troisième Entretien sur le Fils naturel*,⁷⁷ wherein Moi and Dorval discuss the role of the dance. When Dorval states that the dance requires its own man of genius, and should exist as a spectacle apart, Moi concurs but gives as one example of the incongruity of theatrical art the concluding pantomime of *Le Devin du village*:

L'auteur, mécontent du ballet qui termine *Le Devin du village* en proposait un autre, et je me trompe fort, ou ses idées ne sont pas éloignées des vôtres.⁷⁸

The author, dissatisfied with the ballet which concludes *Le Devin du village*, proposed another, and I am very mistaken, or his ideas are not unlike your own.

Written in 1753, *Les Trois Chapîtres* followed the publication of the *philosophe* Grimm's *Petit Prophète de Boehmischbroda*, which parodied the arrival in Paris of the Italian *bouffons*. Parodying the work of Grimm in form and pseudo-biblical style,⁷⁹ *Les Trois Chapîtres* contained as its two main characters the Prophet and his Voice, and openly alluded to *Le Devin*. The same characterization had been used by Grimm. In his *compte rendu*, Diderot used a tableau by the painter Teniers to recast Rousseau's opera. In Diderot's imagined revision, the opera spectator's desire to enter the realm of pastorals causes him to lament the absence of violin and bow:

⁷⁷ Rebejkow, "Sur *Le Devin du village*," 69.

⁷⁸ Diderot, "Troisième Entretien sur *Le Fils naturel*," in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 10:162.

⁷⁹ Grimm took an active role in the "Querelle des bouffons" as a partisan of *opera buffa*. *Le Petit Prophète de Boehmischbroda*, written in 1753, was a fable in pseudo-biblical style parodying contemporary musical taste. One chapter was entitled "Les vingt et un chapîtres de la prophétie de Gabriel-Joannes-Nepomucenus-Franciscus de Paula-Waldstorch, dit Waldstoerchel, qu'il appelle sa vision." Diderot defends Rousseau's text for its conventional and moral overtones, which entered into Diderot's own later conception of *drame bourgeois*. Diderot, *Oeuvres Complètes*, 19:7.

La toile se leva, Colette parût; il la reconnut aussitôt pour la Bergère aux yeux noirs dont il était écrit au V^e chapitre de la Prophétie, *qu'elle chantait bien des chants qui n'étaient pas bien*, et encore que pour cette fois le Poète eût dit dans ses vers: *Non, non, Colette n'est pas trompeuse*, et qu'il eût dit vrai, cependant le Petit Prophète n'en voulait rien croire.⁸⁰

The curtain rose, Colette appeared; the Prophet immediately recognized her as the black-eyed Shepherdess announced in the fifth chapter of the Prophecy, *that she sang well songs which were not well composed*, and that this time the Poet said in his verses: *No, No, Colette is not deceitful*, and he spoke the truth, although the Little Prophet chose not to believe it.

In *La Vision du Mardi Gras*, Diderot not only parodied the world of *bergeries* common to devotees of the pastorale, but also lampooned the public's indulgence in *opera seria's* scenic effects. For example, in the following passage from Diderot, the Devin appears on stage wearing flowing red robes suggesting those of a demon. He is warned by the Prophet not to enter the forest of Boehmisch-broda lest he be reprimanded by the *Procureur-Fiscal* for his elaborate dress:⁸¹

Alors le Devin que Colette était venue consulter parut. Le Petit Prophète le prit pour un contre-épreuve d'un Démon de grand Opéra car il était tout rouge et il lui cria: "Monsieur le Devin, garde-toi de venir dans la forêt de Boehmisch-broda, car le Procureur-Fiscal pourrait bien te faire griller, pour t'apprendre à t'habiller autrement."⁸²

Then appeared the Devin that Colette had come to consult. The little Prophet took him for a facsimile of a grand opera demon because he was totally red. He cried out, "Mr. Devin, beware of the forest of Boehmisch-broda; the Fiscal Procurer would grill you, to teach you a different way of dressing."

⁸⁰ Denis Diderot, *Les Trois Chapîtres ou la vision de Mardi Gras*, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 19:23.

⁸¹ Operatic taste for lavish scenic design dictated that one scene take place in hell or an underworld peopled with hellish creatures.

⁸² Diderot, *Les Trois Chapîtres*, 19:23.

The red robes worn by the Devin thus parodied the public's taste for *mises-en-scènes* in hell, complete with fastidiously dressed demons. *Le Devin du village* in Diderot's recasting represented a point of departure toward subsequent works, including the *Troisième Entretien sur le Fils naturel*, wherein *Le Devin* is also mentioned.

In a similar vein, Charles Burney translated *Le Devin* into a version staged in London in 1766. Burney was a music teacher and musicologist familiar with the writings of Rousseau and D'Alembert; he made D'Alembert's acquaintance in 1764 during a study trip to Paris. Burney's travels over the Continent resulted in a three-volume history of music published in 1771. He later met Rousseau, who was then living apart from Parisian society on the rue de Grenfell. The two conversed on Italian music and Burney's translation of *Le Devin* and its acceptance in England. Rousseau spoke of his principle of *l'unité de la mélodie* as contained in *Le Devin*.

Burney's respect for Rousseau is evident in his translation, but so are the difficulties inherent therein:

Substitute aux mots français, sur les mêmes cadences, les mots généralement plus courts d'une langue qui compte beaucoup de monosyllabes, n'est pas assurément tâche facile . . . Mais si Colette spécifiquement française, convient bien à la simplicité villageoise, ce prénom n'est pas anglais.⁸³

To substitute French words on the same cadences with words generally shorter from a language possessing many monosyllables isn't an easy task . . . But if [the name] Colette, specifically French, accords with village simplicity, it isn't an English first name.

⁸³ Jacques Voisine, "*Le Devin du village* de Jean-Jacques Rousseau et son adaptation anglaise par le musicologue Charles Burney," in *Le Théâtre dans l'Europe des Lumières*, ed. Klimowicz and Labuda, 143.

Burney's *Cunning Man* used simple language, resembling that of Spenser in the pastorate of the preceding century.⁸⁴ His translation was helped toward its ultimate production at Drury Lane by the scandal surrounding Rousseau.⁸⁵ In Burney's two-act version, the Devin dominates the story more than in Rousseau's text and is depicted as a conjurer. In the scene concluding the first act, Burney's Devin displays his true personality, scheming as would a master charlatan with mysterious powers: "And this is the plan / Of a true cunning man." This transformation of the character dominates the opening act of Burney's rewriting. Other modifications, including the substitution of anglicized first names, characterize Burney's revision of Act Two. His vocabulary is stilted, relying on British clichés, and his language is contrived in comparison with Rousseau's, as in the phrases "ye jocund swains" and "ye maidens fair":

Haste, haste ye maidens fair
 Haste, haste ye jocund swains:
 Assemble here, Assemble here,
 And imitate this pair
 Gay shepherds quit the plains.
 Fair nymphs from village haste.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Rousseau came to London after being expelled from Geneva in 1762 for issues concerning the publication of *Emile* and *Du Contrat social*. On June 7 of that year, the Faculty of Theology of the Sorbonne denounced *Emile* for the views on natural religion contained in "The Creed of a Savoyard Vicar." Rousseau's arrest was ordered, and he fled to Yverdon in Switzerland. Under pressure from Genevan authorities, he moved to Môtiers, where he enjoyed the protection of Frederick of Prussia. Aided by the Scottish philosopher David Hume, Rousseau was persuaded to relocate to England. A quarrel arose between Hume and Rousseau, pitting their partisans against each other on both sides of the Channel. (I elsewhere refer to Rousseau's belief that Hume and the British portraitist Allen Ramsay were part of a plot to undo him.) Rousseau was allowed to return to the outskirts of Paris on condition that he cease political writing.

⁸⁶ Charles Burney, libretto to *The Cunning Man*, quoted in Voisine, "Le Devin du village et son adaptation anglaise," 143.

This language, unlike Rousseau's, would have seemed out of place in an English country village of the eighteenth century. The English countryside by then enjoyed many of the same luxuries as cities in France, with the English farmer, as country gentleman, partaking along with his compatriots of the advantages of commerce.⁸⁷ Burney's verse employed the vocabulary and cadence of Early Modern English of the late fifteenth century, which bridged into the Modern with the works of Ben Jonson and others. It was almost impossible for Burney to reproduce in English Rousseau's structure of versification. For music, Burney substituted the English ballad, introduced in *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay, for the French *romance*. Rather than risk confusion with the satirical style initiated by Gay, Burney substituted the word *air* for *romance*. Rousseau's reply to Burney following the work's premiere was both apprehensive and cryptic. As related in the following commentary, he was cautious of Burney's alterations:

Je vous dois des remerciements pour avoir daigné vous occuper du *Devin du village*, quoi qu'il m'ait toujours paru impossible à traduire avec succès dans un autre langage. Je ne vous parlerai pas des changements que vous avez jugés à propos d'y faire. Vous avez consulté sans doute le goût de votre nation et il n'y a rien à dire à cela.⁸⁸

I owe you thanks for having consented to busy yourself with *Le Devin du village*, although it has always appeared to me impossible to translate into another tongue. I won't speak of the changes you have judged necessary to make. No doubt you've consulted the taste of your nation and there is nothing more to say.

Burney undoubtedly knew Rousseau's work would be judged as of Gallic origin; thus, being unable to conserve its language and simplicity, he resorted to popular clichés. Like

⁸⁷ M. Dorothy George, *England in Jonson's Day* (London: Methuen, 1928). 15.

⁸⁸ Voisine, "Le Devin du village de Jean-Jacques Rousseau et son adaptation anglaise ." 143.

Rousseau, he believed in the intimate union of words and music.^zOf Rousseau's final staged work, *Pygmalion*, derived from the monologue *Pigmalion*, which he wrote at the beginning of his period of exile, a far more revolutionary piece was created. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, *Pygmalion* belonged to the genre of prose monodrama before being integrated by Rousseau into a fully staged *scène lyrique*. Following its production in 1770, translations and adaptations appeared in Italy, Holland, and Austria. These were toned down in ways that distorted Rousseau's original intent.

CHAPTER FOUR

PYGMALION: THE NATURAL AND THE REPRESENTATION OF SELF

Pygmalion,¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau's last staged lyric work,² premiered at the Hôtel de Ville in Lyons and later in Paris for private audiences in May 1770; in 1775 it was performed for the general public in Paris by La Comédie Française. My purpose in this chapter is to interpret various signs of the natural in *Pygmalion*, on the levels of the lyrical, the musical, the mise-en-scène, and the spoken monologue. Toward this end, I will establish a groundwork by identifying lyrical and verbal referents to the natural as these exist in the processes of performance. (By "processes" I mean performance strategies undertaken by Rousseau as author, implied judge,³ and actor in the staged lyric work.)

This task necessitates an investigation of the iconic relation between text and author, whereby a cognitive yet arbitrary link between the two emerges by means of theatrical representation. Furthermore, my reading involves a realization of the way in

¹ *Pygmalion* was written in the early 1760s, at the beginning of Rousseau's exile in Môtiers, near the Swiss border. He had Reyes, his publisher, send the text to Môtiers along with that of *L'Engagement téméraire*. The *scène lyrique* *Pygmalion* was based on the former. The orthographic change in the title reflects Rousseau's passage from a period in which he favored Italian language and harmonies to one wherein he embraced the Greek. Neo-Platonist doctrines concerning transcendence of physical form through the spirit are echoed in *Pygmalion*.

² Rousseau's term *scène lyrique*, Arthur Pougin says, would today imply the cantata form or melodrama. In the cantata, purely symphonic music is either accompanied by or alternates with spoken text. Pougin cites Beethoven's *Egmont* and Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* as similar cases. Pougin, *Rousseau—Musicien*, 122.

³ In both *Du Contrat social* and *Les Dialogues* Rousseau constructs a tripolar "scene" implying an omniscient reader who is both judge (*Du Contrat social*, first version) and witness (*Les Dialogues*).

which signs of the natural, revealed to the reader via spectacle, constitute a world view wherein Rousseau indicts the Enlightenment cult of appearances.

In Rousseau's theory, clearly stated in the *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité*, the doctrine of appearance (*paraître*) over being (*être*) opposes the artificial self to the natural self and privileges the former. The natural self is uplifted through its immersion in nature and relation to the primitive; it is closest to the natural state when its own preservation is most in accord with that of its fellow men. The natural self derives its basic needs from this state, which is deemed best suited to the requirements of mankind. In contrast, according to Rousseau, the artificial self desires to dominate others; this domination is possible through the acquisition or possession of those attributes or accomplishments which yield a competitive edge. Such attributes include one's public appearance (for example, in strength, skill, or eloquence), one's wealth, and most important, one's degree of control over others as made possible by possession of property.

Chacun commença à regarder les autres et à vouloir être regardé soi-même, et l'estime publique eut un prix. Celui qui chantait ou dansait le mieux, le plus beau, le plus fort, le plus adroit, ou le plus éloquent devint le plus considéré; et ce fut là le premier pas vers l'inégalité et le vice en même temps: et les premiers préférences naquirent d'un côté la vanité et le mépris.⁴

Everyone began to look at everyone else and to wish to be looked at himself, and public esteem acquired a value. The one who sang or danced best; the handsomest, the strongest, the most skillful, or the most eloquent came to be the most highly regarded, and this was the first step

⁴ *DOI*, 3:169.

at one toward inequality and vice: from these first preferences arose vanity and contempt.⁵

In this view, appearance has a demarcative function contrary to the development of society. (Rousseau states in *Emile* that although associating with others is unavoidable, without compassion it most commonly brings with it perversion. A true society holds possibilities for individual and social existence only through mutual care and respect).⁶

Rousseau believed that a completely unmediated or natural world view is possible for only a very few. He also believed, however, that it is the responsibility of these few—represented in his works by such varied figures as the artist and the legislator⁷—to be divinely inspired by nature and to use this inspiration to create shared bonds of sentiment. In the *scène lyrique* *Pygmalion* Rousseau uses the artist figure to affirm this belief through the symbolic re-creation in stone (itself of nature) of the favored natural self. In the text of *Pygmalion*, artifice is allowed a brief moment of triumph in that it makes possible an allusion to this reaffirmed self as being of nature.

The story of the sculptor Pygmalion has been treated many times throughout the Western literary tradition, inspiring writers and artists since the time of Ovid. In Greek mythology, Pygmalion was a king of Cyprus who fell in love with Aphrodite and, upon her refusal of him, created an ivory statue in her likeness. The goddess, taking pity on the

⁵ Victor Gourevitch, trans., *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The First and Second Discourses* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 175.

⁶ *E*, 1:363.

⁷ The legislator in *Du Contrat social* is chosen by his peers to act on their behalf; he possesses a deep understanding of human nature similar to the far-seeing vision associated with artistic creation.

king, brought the statue to life as Galatea. The Pygmalion legend is recounted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, X, wherein the poet's obsession with love and feminine psychology causes him to portray the artist's love for his statue in pathological, morbid terms:

And even so, the others
The foul Propoetides, would not acknowledge
Venus and her divinity, and her anger
Made whores of them, the first such women ever
To sell their bodies, and in shamelessness
They hardened. . . .

One man, Pygmalion, who had seen these women
Leading their shameful lives, shocked at the vices,
Nature has given the female disposition
Only too often, chose to live alone,
To have no woman in his bed. But meanwhile
He made, with marvelous art, an ivory statue,
As white as snow, and gave it greater beauty
Than any girl could have, and fell in love
With his own workmanship.⁸

Ovid reconstructed the Greek myth, having the statue to come to life as a mortal woman, a state eliciting sexual desire even from the straitlaced artist; more important, Pygmalion was conceived as a sculptor, not a king, and allowed to escape from reality into creative art. Through Ovid's account, the statue comes alive through the sculptor's caressing touch.⁹ A further embellishment by Ovid on the original myth concerns the status of the artwork as monument. In the Greek myth, Pygmalion, like Orpheus, shies away from women and is granted an impossible wish: also like Orpheus, Pygmalion is given the power to awaken the dead, analogized by Ovid as a coming to life of the artwork. These

⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955). 242.

⁹ Serge Galinsky, *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 30.

two thematic similarities are enhanced by Rousseau in the staging of his *scène lyrique* through the representation of the statue's coming to life. "Tourments, vœux, désirs, rage, impuissance, amour terrible, amour funeste!—Ah, tout l'enfer est dans mon cœur agité"¹⁰ (Torments, wishes, desires, rage, impotence, terrible, dire love; all hell is contained in my beating heart). In Ovid's tale Venus rewards Pygmalion by bringing Galatea to life; in Rousseau's *scène* the figurative act of naming the self conferred by posterity is brought to life as creation. The objectification of the autobiographical moment is thus conferred on the work through its being staged. Alain Grosrichard is quoted by De Man as saying that Rousseau's main purpose is to have his representation of the world coincide with that which he conveys to his public and peers.¹¹ The theatrical representation of self, which I address later in this chapter, is Rousseau's affirmation.

Various works of French literature also enact the dialectical relationship of "the natural" versus "the artificial" through the story of Pygmalion's love for Galatea, his creation; the most important of these, *Le Roman de la rose*, by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, dates from the thirteenth century. In the part written by de Meun, Nature emerges as a magnificent forge wherein men are generated to assure the continuation of the species:

Et lorsqu'ils eurent prononcé ce serment de telle façon que tous purent l'entendre, Nature, qui s'occupait des choses qui sont enfermées au-dessous de la voûte céleste, était entrée dans sa forge, où elle mettait tous ses soins à forger des pièces individuelles pour assurer la perpétuation des

¹⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Pygmalion* (Paris: Privately printed, 1772), 15.

¹¹ Alain Grosrichard, "Gravité de Rousseau," in *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, 8:64, quoted by Paul De Man in *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 163.

espèces; car les individus les font vivre si longtemps que Mort ne peut les atteindre; elle ne sera jamais capable de les poursuivre assez rapidement, car Nature la serre de si près.¹²

Soon as the barons shouted loud their oath,
 So that it could be heard both far and wide,
 Dame Nature, who takes cognizance of all,
 Entered her workshop, busying herself
 With forging individual entities
 To save the species' continuity
 Against the assaults of Death, who ne'er attains
 The mastery, no matter how he speeds,
 So many reinforcements she creates;
 For Nature's reproduction follows Death.

Thus, according to de Meun, Nature is even more powerful than Death. In the scholastic world view, dominant in the Middle Ages, every phase of reality was assigned its own unique place. Consequently, in *Le Roman de la rose*, Nature is revealed as having bestowed language on man alone because she considered him her most magnificent achievement: "seul l'homme à qui je fais . . . tourner le visage vers le ciel, seul l'homme que je forme et fais naître avec la propre forme de son Créateur"¹³ (Mankind alone, to whom I've freely given . . . / Mankind alone, whom I have brought to birth / Bearing the very likeness of his God).

Furthermore, the story of Pygmalion is represented in the poem as one of several discourses on the doctrine of love, one wherein de Meun expresses the inaccessibility of the object of desire. Overcome by the physical passion of the artist, the work of art suddenly comes to life, influencing the spectator to believe in the absolute transformative

¹² Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la rose*, trans. Harry W. Robbins (New York: Dutton, 1962), 339.

¹³ Ibid., 339.

power of the artist as creator and as molder of nature. "Pigmalion . . . s'approche et s'assure de la réalité du phénomène . . . il se donne à elle bien volontiers en homme qui lui appartient tout entier. A ces mots ils s'allient, se remerciant mutuellement de leur amour"¹⁴ (He closer comes as if for further proof, / And freely offers to be wholly hers. / In loving words they're mutually allied; / Each gives the other thanks for love received).

Crystallized in scholasticism, the religious system of the Middle Ages gave to man a consciousness of being sheltered by Nature as an inviolable order of all living things. Knowledge of nature was limited to finite objects of sense and was confined to a finite, dependent, created being. In medieval thought, a relatively independent sphere of natural law accessible to human reason existed side by side with divine law. Thus the knowledge of nature in the Middle Ages was no more than a point of departure toward understanding the "system of nature" as it was known in the Enlightenment.¹⁵ Consequently, the poetic imagination of the Middle Ages could not supplant nature's world with one which morally influenced the reader to achieve perfectibility as was the case with Rousseau.

As I have conveyed in earlier chapters, nature was elevated to the sphere of the divine in the Enlightenment. The belief arose that individuals are bound by a code of conduct completely knowable through their own original nature, and that this same code

¹⁴ Ibid., 450.

¹⁵ Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, 39. Cassirer states that knowledge of nature, synonymous with knowledge of Creation, was accessible only to "a finite created human being" and included no other content than finite objects of sense.

requires one to act compassionately toward others.¹⁶ In Rousseau's treatment of the Pygmalion legend, the power of the artist is linked, through the medium of stone as natural presence, to that of all mankind. Thereby the artist assumes a role as divine source of power or "forger" of nature, unlike in *Le Roman de la rose*, where he is subordinate to the higher presence of God. In Rousseau's *scène lyrique*, the representation of the world of nature is attained through the reflective self-experience of the sculptor. Due to its status as spectacle, the achievement of Rousseau's *Pygmalion* as *scène* differs from that of de Meun's representation in that Rousseau accords full presence to *self*-experience and to *self*-witness. If one admits, with Paul De Man, that acute self-understanding is not incompatible with pathological misinterpretations of the self's relationship to others,¹⁷ then Rousseau's final lyric work can be perceived as an enshrinement of self-love in the face of ambivalent, adversarial personal and social structures.¹⁸

The use of the Pygmalion myth in both medieval and late-eighteenth-century versions, whether as staged play or opera, conveyed on mortal man a supernatural presence. Artists looked at the fable as the earliest stage or representation wherein the

¹⁶ Both Rousseau and Kant are concerned with perfectibility and with transference of this capacity through morally right conduct toward others.

¹⁷ De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 163.

¹⁸ In *Les Dialogues* Rousseau complains of being persecuted by adverse political factions. In the essay "Complôt," *Dictionnaire de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. Trousson and Eigeldinger, J. F. Jones states that the project undertaken by Rousseau through the writing of *Les Dialogues* (*Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*) derived from a desire on his part to thwart what he considered to be the formidable power of adversaries defined in various works as *les philosophes*, governments, persons of high rank, and both the Catholic and Protestant Churches.

figure of the sculptor, as mortal man, was made worthy of acclaim on account of his wisdom and bravery. Rousseau's evocation of myth and the heroic was inspired by the Enlightenment's search of known history for philosophical and anthropological approaches to the study of man.¹⁹ In the musical domain, the choice of mythology to invoke the heroic inspired Rousseau and other late-eighteenth-century composers, including Christophe Willibald Gluck²⁰ and Rousseau's most prominent musical rival, Jean-Philippe Rameau.²¹

Musically, Rousseau's conception of the Pygmalion story differs significantly from Rameau's by departing from the form characteristic of French late-eighteenth-century opera: namely, that of an overture followed by five acts and a concluding ballet. For his overture, Rousseau borrowed from the tripartite structure of the Italian *sinfonia*.²² As stated in a correspondence between Rousseau and the amateur composer Coignet, whom he had met in Lyons in 1770, Rousseau's version was not conceived as an opera and alternated between spoken text and orchestral music. Unlike standard

¹⁹ Cassirer. *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, 12.

²⁰ Gluck's *Alceste* was performed in Vienna in 1767 and revamped in 1776 for a premiere in Paris. Rousseau wrote to the English musicologist Charles Burney concerning the dramatic principles inherent in Gluck's music, which Rousseau admired.

²¹ Rameau's *Pygmalion*, produced August 27, 1748, with libretto by Ballot de Savot after Antoine Houdar de La Motte, is cited in the *Viking Opera Guide* as opera's first "revival" to have taken place in France. Unlike Rousseau's *Pygmalion* with its three-part overture modeled on the Italian style, Rameau's followed traditional French opera form, with an embellished five-part overture concluded by a ballet. Rameau's version was noted for its polyphonic, piercing, staccato chords denoting the sculptor's chiseling of marble. Amanda Holden, Nicholas Kenyon, and Stephen Walsh, eds., *Viking Opera Guide* (New York: Viking, 1993), s.v. "Rameau" (Graham Sadler).

²² This structure comprised essentially an *andante* or slow passage preceded and followed by an *allegro* (quick-tempo) passage.

practice of *récitatif*, wherein music and text were performed concurrently, music echoed the mood of the text and engaged in a reciprocal relationship with spoken monologue. Moments of the natural sublime were imparted to the spectator through a continuous dialectical unfolding of symphonic chords and verbal text. This musical marker of the sublime resulted in the spectator's being overwhelmed with an awareness of his own subjectivity or, in Kant's view, an awareness stemming from reason which legislates over sense.²³

I postulate in this chapter that Rousseau's earlier attempts, in the *Essai*, to establish originary links with music and language are reinscribed in *Pygmalion*; it is therefore my purpose to discuss this particular dialectic of music and text in *Pygmalion* which, in being used as a framing device, transcends (in a Derridean sense) borders or boundaries of representation of lyric art in exposing truth.²⁴ To understand *Pygmalion* as "embodiment" of music and language, an embodiment surrounding a myth which is itself about embodiment, is to understand the essence of the dialogue as harbinger of a truth which mediates between nature and art.

Rousseau's conception of lyric text occurred during a revival of neoplatonism. The tradition of philosophy deriving from Plato was based on more than twenty-five works by the Athenian, most of them in the form of dialogue. To Plato, true

²³ *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, s.v. "The Sublime" (Susan Feagin).

²⁴ In *La Vérité en peinture* Derrida states that a principal goal is the displacement of the established borders of art and theory. Art is questioned in terms of its borders and the effects on it of forces coming from "outside" which interfere with its integrity, self-knowledge, and even with its own self-representation. David Carroll, *Paraesthetics* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 132. In "Le Théâtre de la cruauté et la clôture de la représentation," in *L'Écriture et la différence*, Derrida examines the idea of boundary as it deals with theatrical space.

understanding was achieved in dialectical form, the philosopher acting as midwife to reveal what we already know.²⁵ Among Plato's later works, the dialogues *Phaedo* and *Timaeus* raise issues concerning the immortality of souls belonging to the realm of forms (*Phaedo*) and the appearance of forms as God's thoughts (*Timaeus*). Plato's recourse to the dialogue as a form conveying a truth which was *already known* as part of "divine nature" influenced its conception as realized text, embodying truth.

The staging of *Pygmalion* as lyric *scène* encompassed the ideal of textual form through a dialectical process revealed as symphonic responding to verbal dimension. According to Plato, the truth of *ideas* or forms, the substance of the dialogue, could be perceived by reason. Whereas *Timaeus* advances the idea that the thoughts of gods assume the shape of "forms," in Rousseau's *Pygmalion* the enshrinement of self can be conceived as the ideal achieved through the shaping of the marble image and an ideal, albeit dialectical, rendering of musical and verbal texts. More important to Rousseau, given his need for approbation as cited in his correspondence with Malesherbes,²⁶ this enshrinement is witnessed by the spectator as reader and as other.

As *scène lyrique*, *Pygmalion* can be read at concurrent levels which reveal Rousseau's psychological plight. As representation, it subliminally reflects the conscious

²⁵ *Theological Dictionary*, s.v. "Platonism."

²⁶ Rousseau's correspondence in 1762 of four letters to the superintendent of documents, Nicholas de Malesherbes, offers an apology of self amid hoped-for approbation. In the first letter, Rousseau humbly questions the "motives to which you attribute the decisions I have been seen to make since I have borne *a sort of name in the world* [*italics mine*] perhaps do me more honor than I deserve but they are certainly closer to the truth than the ones attributed to me by those men of letters who, giving everything to reputation, judge my feelings by their own. I have a heart too sensitive to other attachments to be so strongly attached to public opinion." OC, *Première Lettre à M. de Malesherbes*, 1:1142; Masters and Kelly, eds. and trans., *Rousseau: The Confessions and Correspondence*, 572.

self's fears understood by Rousseau as the language of sentiment or the heart. On a more formal level, Rousseau's working of music with text allowed him to contend again with the problem of *récitatif*, as in his earlier musical quarrels with Rameau. This issue, originally enunciated in *La Lettre sur la musique française*, was not brought to rest until the creation and staging of *Pygmalion*, wherein Rousseau found what constituted for him "a solution" to the problem. The solution was to alternate musical text with spoken dialogue, forming an ideal lyric text expressed dialectically. Taken from a musical standpoint alone, Rousseau's innovation in *Pygmalion* (wherein the vocal phrase reflected the musical phrase and was stated separately and distinctly from the latter in alternation) constituted a radical experimentation with the process of *récitatif*.²⁷

My reading specifically interprets as dialectical various signs of the natural as conceived by Rousseau in *Pygmalion*. A hybrid work made up of music (consisting of twenty-six ritornellos²⁸ with orchestra), mise-en-scène (consisting of circular stage with solo actor and props), and spoken text or libretto, *Pygmalion* contains multiple levels of discourse which constitute further iconic (i.e., what the *scène* reveals as theatrical representation) and narrative (i.e., how Rousseau uses *Pygmalion* as an autobiographical emblem) systems of reference.²⁹ Whereas the libretto presents iconic reference to

²⁷ As Rousseau began to structure *Pygmalion*, standard operatic recitative consisted either of a *parlando* style generally practiced in Italian opera or a strictly measured sung text with orchestral ensemble accompaniment, reserved for climactic scenes of the drama.

²⁸ A short instrumental conclusion at the end of an aria or song. In the case of Rousseau's *Pygmalion*, instrumental partitions were played following spoken declamation. *HDM*, s.v., "Ritornello."

²⁹ Louis Marin, "Toward a Theory of Reading in the Visual Arts: Poussin's *The Arcadian Shepherds*," in *The Reader in the Text*, ed. Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Grosman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 295. In Charles Saunders Pierce's trichotomy, signs are "classified as icons

Rousseau as fugitive at the time of its writing, prior to his entry into exile (see the statement "Quelle grande révolution s'est faite en moi" [What great turbulence exists in me]), the musical text, written in a minor key, privileges interior moments. The theme of *Pygmalion* is realized as a dialectic of self and nature existing as one through an eternal process of embodiment. As such, *Pygmalion* alludes to images Rousseau will recount in his third autobiographical work, *Les Rêveries*:

Mais la plupart des hommes agités de passions continuelles connaissent peu cet état [de paix], et, ne l'ayant goûté qu'imparfaitement durant peu d'instant, n'en conservent qu'une idée obscure et confuse, qui ne leur en fait pas sentir le charme . . . ils s'y dégoûtassent de la vie active dont leurs besoins toujours renaissants leur prescrivent le devoir.³⁰

But most men agitated by continual passions hardly know this state, having experienced it but imperfectly for only a few moments. Thus they only savor a confused and obscure idea of its charm . . . they despise the life activity which their needs perpetually prescribe them to fulfill.

This passage, acting as metatext, also questions the conventions of artistic behavior.³¹

The performance of *Pygmalion* enshrines as spectacle the sculptor's involvement with his creation as that of Rousseau's enshrinement of self. Iconically, the narrative concerning the artwork as spectacle projects a *mise-en-abîme* of Rousseau as subject, theatricalized before the spectator. In serving as locus of refuge from the world, the artwork, like the invisible frame of the performative structure, acts as metaphor for desire. Rousseau is

when they are similar to their object"; Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 178. Sebeok, *Contributions to a Doctrine of Signs* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 82, explains that images constitute one subclass of icons and that the notion of icon related to Platonic mimesis was broadened by Aristotle to include all cognitive and epistemological experience.

³⁰ OC, *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, 5:1047.

³¹ Cassirer, *Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, 298.

exalted as a deity yet wishes to be of the people, symbolized as the earth by the presence of marble stone. Conversely, in being separated from the self he wishes were earthbound, Rousseau's spirit is in exile. Thus, the artwork achieves a status as locus of both self-exile and self-exaltation. In his regard upon the artwork, the spectator also achieves a status as witness and is thereby allowed a role as judge not only of the artwork but also of the condition of Rousseau's self.

In the *Cinquième Rêverie* Rousseau speaks of the judgment of men versus the act of self-judgment:

Une grande révolution que venait de se faire en moi; un autre monde moral qui se dévoilait à mes regards; les insensés jugements des hommes, dont, sans prévoir encore combien j'en serais la victime, je commençais à sentir l'absurdité; le besoin toujours croissant d'un autre bien que la gloriole littéraire, dont à peine la vapeur m'avait atteint que j'en étais déjà dégoûté; le désir enfin de tracer pour le reste de ma carrière une route moins incertaine. . . .

C'est de cette époque que je puisse dater mon entier renoncement au monde.³²

A great change which has just taken place in me; another moral world which was unveiling itself to my observations; men's insane judgments, whose absurdity I was beginning to feel, without yet foreseeing how much I would be victimized by them; the ever growing need for some good besides literary vainglory whose vapor had hardly touched me before I was already disgusted by it; the desire, in short to follow for the rest of my course a less uncertain route. . . .

It is from this epoch that I can date my complete renunciation of the world and this intense desire for solitude.³³

³² OC, *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, 5:1089.

³³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1979). 131.

As libretto and as musical text, *Pygmalion* foreshadowed a future trend in opera of adhering to a more psychological, interior voice; it also enacted Rousseau's belief that music expresses shades of feeling that make possible a "coming alive" of the artwork.³⁴

J'ai un coeur trop sensible à d'autres attachements pour l'être si fort à
l'opinion publique; j'aime trop mon plaisir et mon indépendance pour être
esclave de la vanité.³⁵

My heart is too sensitive to other attachments to care much about public
opinion; I love pleasure and independence too much to be a slave to
vanity.³⁶

Rousseau echoes this attitude toward worldly success in the text of the libretto where the character Pygmalion recounts that

l'entretien des peintres et des poètes est sans attrait pour moi; la louange
et la gloire n'élèvent plus mon âme; les éloges de ceux qui en recevront de
la postérité ne me touchent plus.³⁷

the commerce of painters and poets no longer interests me; fame and
glory fail to lift; praises of those who receive posterity no longer interest
me.

My reading of this work adds to those by Paul De Man and Louis Marin. In introducing the theme of tripolarity, I dispute De Man's rhetorical posture and his conception of Rousseau's *Pygmalion* as a process of confronting dualisms. I argue instead for a musically supplemented rhetoric, one in which the dialectical structure is used to reveal a

³⁴ Rex, "Sobering Reflections on a Forgotten French Opera Libretto," *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 16:4, 399.

³⁵ *Conf.*, 1:1130.

³⁶ Masters and Kelly, eds. and trans., *Rousseau: The Confessions and Correspondence*, 574.

³⁷ Rousseau, *Pigmalion*, 5.

truth already perceived and known, following the definition of "forms" advanced by Plato.³⁸ A truth was witnessed and understood by the spectator, who through the act of witnessing the performative spectacle accorded Rousseau approbation. Thus, in the performative act, truth was achieved through a structure which is in fact tripolar.

In Rousseau's libretto, De Man states, the discourse of the protagonist, symbolized as the self of Rousseau, reinforces the epiphany of self through the dimension of interiority versus the exterior self represented by the artwork. According to De Man, the dimension of interiority ascribed to the verbal text supplements the pathos of self ascribed to Rousseau, thereby causing the self to achieve status as a totality. In De Man's essay "Self," he asserts that Rousseau's figurative rhetoric fails, undermining itself to result finally in textual ambiguities. He asserts that there is no climax, effectively "flattening" the work's conclusion. He attributes this lack to a discourse in *Pygmalion* acknowledged by "the figurative structure of self which is asserted and fails to escape from those categories it claims to deconstruct."³⁹ According to De Man, *Pygmalion* embodies a particular encounter between author and work which begins as confrontation and culminates when the statue of Galatea comes to life. Rousseau's representation of Galatea rhetorically constructs her beauty as only in the emotional gesticulation of her maker. Therefore, her godlike quality issues from a discrepancy between specular and

³⁸ De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 177.

³⁹ In her *Forms in Plato's Latter Dialogues*, Edith Schipper describes the fundamental theory of forms, introduced by Socrates in *The Republic* as "one for many things which have it as the same characteristic, attribute, class, or (as we see in the *Phaedo*) relation, as many beautiful things all have the same characteristic of beauty, . . . the one form. It is what the things are, the one common nature of many things." (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965). 2.

formal natures.⁴⁰ For De Man, the result is a failure of synthesis between two polarities of self and other mirrored by the sculptor and statue: "The totalizing symmetry of the substitutive pattern is thrown out of balance; instead of merging into a higher, general Self, two selves remain confronted in paralyzing inequality."⁴¹ It is through the vacillation which constitutes the general movement of the text that Rousseau fails to claim authority for the self.

My conclusion differs from De Man's. I believe that Rousseau posits the *scène* on the static figure of Pygmalion and on the artist as craftsman, even as he constructs a cumulative rhetoric directed toward the artwork but witnessed by the spectator as a third polarity. In so doing, Rousseau allows the visual processes of staging to assume a role in the construction of synthesis, one evolving in tripolar form and progression. Rousseau's vanity is subtly at play in *Pygmalion*, inscribed as posture of hope through the spectator's presence. By means of this presence, Rousseau wishes to be acknowledged as a unified being through the work's being staged; also he wishes that the spectator identify with his plight.

Whereas De Man's critique concerns the scene's rhetorical ambivalence, mine allows instead for the existence of a third dimension which becomes possible through lyric staging. Spectacle is completed by the presence of the spectator who witnesses and feels transformative effects as a receptive agent. In the dialectic between self, other and spectator actively at play, Galatea's statue as artwork supplements the representation of

⁴⁰ De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 178.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 185.

Rousseau's presence as being one with that of the monument he creates, yet in opposition to the true self of nature emerging from the earth.

In his article "Le Moi et les pouvoirs de l'image," Louis Marin cites the figure of the veil as posing extremes of interiority and exteriority. The veil, he says, is opaque in that it reflects the locus of absence or desire, yet transparent in that it indicates a dimension of truth not yet revealed. According to Marin, "la solution délirante de reverser dans l'oeuvre d'art extérieure, dans la figure de pierre, les forces que le moi enferme dans son intériorité"⁴² (the delirious solution of reversal in the exterior artwork, in the stone figure, of those forces that the self contains in its interior) presupposes multiple levels of interpretation. Marin's appropriation of the term *reversal* ascribes to the artist's movements of chiseling a concurrent psychological transformation of Rousseau's unseen self. The sculptor's presence can be seen as iconically reflective of Rousseau's attempt to rise above limitations of both musical and human achievement. In this chapter I will add to and redefine the parameters of alienation achieved through the staging of *Pygmalion* as marker of selfhood.

As spectacle and as autobiographical text, *Pygmalion* allowed Rousseau to displace the arduous task of writing his life (as exhibited in the *Confessions* and, later, *Les Dialogues*) onto an iconic theatrical representation. The mise-en-scène configuration denotes a dual presence of sculptor and sculpture, each of whose reflective gaze casts upon the other a mirror image. Thus the lyric drama *Pygmalion* achieves status as an

⁴² Marin. "Le Moi et les pouvoirs de l'image." 662.

objectification of autobiography. In the *Confessions* Rousseau describes an analogous moment of mystification:

Dans l'abîme des maux où je suis submergé, je sens les atteintes des coups qui me sont portés, j'en aperçois l'instrument immédiat; mais je ne puis voir ni la main qui le dirige, ni les moyens qu'elle met en oeuvre.⁴³

In the abyss of evil in which I am sunk, I feel the blows struck at me; I perceive the immediate instrument; but I can neither see the hand which directs it nor the means by which it works.⁴⁴

Mystification may be taken to mean a concealment of truth or opacity. For Rousseau, the hybrid nature of the text of *Pygmalion*, formed from the combination of text and symphonic fragments, reflects monumentality through multiple dimensions. For example, the use of symphonic form to evoke sensory impressions reveals, through suspended moments of discordant sound and uses of the minor key, the self's confrontation with the awe of the natural associated with the sublime.⁴⁵ The concurrent framing device achieved by juxtaposing orchestral music with text, supplemented by periods of silence, results in a deliberate alienation of sound from verbal text which distinguishes Rousseau's *Pygmalion* from lyric works of contemporaries.

The dimension of the spectacular in the representation of *Pygmalion* equally accorded to Rousseau a degree of self-preservation. Within *Pygmalion*'s hybrid text and staging, subjective processes of creation were joined to objective frameworks of self-

⁴³ *Conf.*, 1:362.

⁴⁴ Masters and Kelly, eds. and trans., *Rousseau: The Confessions and Correspondence*, 307.

⁴⁵ During the eighteenth century, the "sublime" invoked a response of awe on the part of the subject confronted with the power of natural presence.

definition. Rousseau re-created himself by means of iconic reference to exile stated in the libretto, reinforced by actions of the protagonist on stage.

Reference to the exiled state and despair Rousseau experienced at the time of this work's writing appears in the following passage:

O ma Galatée! quand j'aurai tout perdu,
tu me resteras, et je serai consolé,⁴⁶

Oh my Galatea! when I will have lost everything
you will remain, and I shall be consoled.

Throughout the libretto and staging of *Pygmalion*, Rousseau inscribes himself textually through his principal character, thereby transcending the limits of representation through mirroring the artist as a figure of self-enshrinement. A monument to selfhood is thus embodied through the medium of performance; symbolically, the self is enshrined as recovering a lost state of wholeness.

Although De Man states that the coldness of the statue reflects the figural coldness of the sculptor, whose act of creation forces him to acknowledge difference through acknowledging mortality, I claim that through a tripolar interpretive schema, music may be said to enliven the story of Pygmalion just as life awakens or enlivens the statue's coldness or deadness. The text, in using music to enliven language, thereby establishes a chain of oppositions between the work of art and Rousseau's presentation of his self: as the work of art is aggrandized and deified, the sculptor's self is diminished and bound. Conversely, as the work of art is abandoned in the despair of re-experiencing the human condition, Rousseau's self is deified through being human and from the earth.

⁴⁶ Rousseau. *Pygmalion*, 7.

Therein lies the tension between the text's binary representation of the natural and its inclusion of various strained metaphors indicating artifice—"peut-être pourrais-je encore ajouter quelque ornement à sa parure; / Aucune grâce ne doit manquer à un objet si charmant"⁴⁷ (perhaps I could add some ornament to her finery; / No grace should be lacking to such a charming object). Thus Rousseau chooses to confer on the artwork the *parure* of appearance he feels he has been denied. This embrace of spectacle has far-reaching implications in what Rousseau conveys to others whom he deems peers. Rousseau's two projects, as communicated accurately in the *Confessions*, are to live in the present and thereby to trace the past and the future. Yet to re-create the self accurately, one must stand outside observing it in full consciousness. In Rousseau's *Pygmalion*, the first lifting of the veil and the sculptor's recognition of truth are two separate moments. Yet Rousseau allows for these moments of recognition and attendant reflection through the objective expansion of the self beyond the boundaries of narcissism. Jean Starobinski describes Rousseau's narcissism as also a reflection of his desire:

. . . qu'il [Rousseau] espère n'est autre que la parfaite réflexion de son désir, mais renvoyé par un vivant miroir. Par conséquent l'oeuvre ne doit pas demeurer une froide chose de marbre qui s'immobilise dans son existence autonome. Pygmalion implore le miracle qui abolira l'extériorité de l'oeuvre et lui substituera l'intériorité expansive de la passion narcissique. . . . On peut voir là . . . l'expression mythique d'une esthétique "sentimentale" qui assigne pour tâche à l'oeuvre d'art d'imiter l'idéal du désir, mais qui vise aussi à métamorphoser l'oeuvre en bonheur vécu.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁸ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 91.

Rousseau hopes for the perfect reflection of his desire, but rendered by a living mirror. Consequently, the artwork cannot remain a cold slab of marble immobilized by its autonomous existence. Pygmalion implores the miracle that will abolish the exteriority of the artwork and substitute instead an interior expansiveness of narcissistic passion. . . . Therein is perceived . . . the mythic expression of the aesthetics of "sentimentality" which assigns to the artwork a double task: that of imitating the ideal of desire and of metamorphosizing into a happiness which is experienced.

Starobinski textualizes Rousseau's dilemma: Rousseau must prove to humankind the sincerity of his feeling by revealing his inner thoughts exactly; yet must do so while constantly experiencing lack. Starobinski postulates that Rousseau foresees *Pygmalion* as the embodiment of one of the "créatures selon son coeur" (his heart's creations) suggested in the *Cinquième Rêverie*. According to Starobinski, Rousseau desires not only that the artwork come to life, but that it receive approbation. I contend that the approbation of the artwork aspired to by the sculptor is reinscribed as that of the spectator with the following consequence for Rousseau: the onus is placed on the spectator to judge and contrast Rousseau the artist's toil with the objectification of Rousseau's transformed self as godlike monument, portrayed in marble, itself of nature and the earth.

The public presentation of *Pygmalion* by La Comédie Française occurred during the period in which Rousseau's paranoid delusions caused him to offer *Les Dialogues*⁴⁹ on the altar of Notre Dame. In this work, completed following the performance, Rousseau alludes to *Pygmalion*'s untimely production:

. . . puisqu'on vient de mettre à Paris *Pygmalion*, malgré lui sur la scène, tout exprès pour exciter ce risible scandale qui n'a fait rire personne . . . ;

⁴⁹ *Les Dialogues* was published posthumously in 1778.

puisqu'enfin ces écrits n'ont pas garanti leur auteur de la diffamation de son vivant, l'en garantiront-ils mieux après sa mort?⁵⁰

. . . since they have just staged *Pygmalion* in Paris in spite of him, deliberately to arouse this laughable scandal at which no one is laughing . . . ; since these writings have not guaranteed their author defamation during his lifetime, will they do so better after his death?

During this period Rousseau falsely claimed full authorship of the entirety of *Pygmalion's* musical composition⁵¹ while angrily denouncing its staging as an attempt by outsiders to persecute him, "malgré lui et tout exprès pour lui nuire" (in spite of himself and expressly to harm him).⁵² He refused to witness its Paris performance.

Rousseau's psychological state during the time of *Pygmalion's* production is revealed in its libretto and staging through what I shall call the setting on stage of "lyric indeterminacy." Rousseau's belief concerning the way he was perceived by others is couched in nuances involved in the consecration of the sentiment of love and the exploration of the nature of art and identity. In like manner, various shades of feeling involved in the coming alive of the artwork are foregrounded in the libretto and revealed through indeterminate, wavering stage movements and musical arrangement. Rousseau's

⁵⁰ LD, 1:435.

⁵¹ Rousseau approached Horace Coignet, a Lyons businessman and amateur composer, to write the work's twenty-six orchestral partitions. Coignet responded in writing, saying that. "Je dois cependant à l'exacte vérité annoncer que dans les vingt-six ritournelles qui composent la musique de ce drame, il y en a deux que M. Rousseau a faites lui-même . . . par la difficulté de représenter ce spectacle, je déclare que l'andante de l'ouverture et que le premier morceau de l'interlocution qui caractérise le travail de Pygmalion appartiennent à M. Rousseau." (I must announce truthfully that, of twenty-six ritornelles composing the music of the drama, two were composed by Rousseau . . . in the difficulty of staging this work, the *andante* of the overture and the first partition of the drama in which the sculptor speaks of his work, belong to Rousseau). Pougin, *Rousseau—Musicien*, 122.

⁵² Ibid.

belief that music could express various shades of feeling, which in *Pygmalion* lead to the artwork's coming alive, was shared by few other librettists of his period.⁵³ In the libretto, music can be said to enliven language just as the sculptor Pygmalion causes the statue to come to life. *Pygmalion* thus stood apart from other genres, the *tragédie-lyrique*⁵⁴ and the *théâtre de la foire*,⁵⁵ by virtue of its use of processes of indeterminacy expressed through music, stage actions, and verbal text. Musically, it expressed shades of feeling through the juxtaposition of silences—"la pièce n'est qu'un monologue où la pantomime tient une assez grande place à côté de la déclamation parlée" (the text is only a monologue where pantomime is intensified in alteration with spoken declamation)—which are in turn enhanced by the musical commentary of the orchestra.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the musical expression of shades of feeling—"Mais c'est l'action intérieure, la psychologie des personnages, que voulait essentiellement exprimer Jean-Jacques" (But Jean-Jacques wanted essentially to express the interior action or psychology of his

⁵³ Walter Rex points out that Poullain de Saint-Foix's *Deucalion et Pirrha*, with music by Giraud and Berton, was staged September 30, 1755, by the Royal Academy of Music. Saint-Foix's work was performed two decades before Rousseau's *Pygmalion*. Like the latter work by Rousseau, Saint-Foix's expressed psychological tension between two characters and a drama that rose to a single moment of climax. Both departed from the standard set by *tragédie-lyrique*, wherein a limited "noble" vocabulary is set against voluptuous spectacle, unity, and suitability of story to setting and characters were often left aside. Rex concludes that both libretti approach the modern conception of opera music. *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 16:4, 393.

⁵⁴ See Chapter One n. 66.

⁵⁵ Fairs in commercial centers of Europe attracted traveling theater troupes. In 1724 the principal Parisian *théâtre de la foire* took the name *opéra-comique*. This term originally designated a new form of theater founded on a mixture of popular songs and dialogues. The new form was barely tolerated by the more established Opéra, France's state theater, to which it had to pay a nominal fee. *Dictionnaire européen des Lumières*, s.v. "Théâtre de foire."

⁵⁶ Pougin. *Rousseau—Musicien*, 160–61.

characters)—is reinforced by stage instructions, throughout the libretto, reflecting foreboding, troubled emotions:

*Il s'approche du pavillon, puis se retire, va, vient, et s'arrête quelquefois.*⁵⁷

He approaches the pedestal, retreats, comes, goes, and stops himself intermittently.

and,

*Il va pour lever le voile, et le laisse retomber comme effrayé.*⁵⁸

He advances to lift the veil, then lets it fall, frightened.

Indeterminacy, characterizing not only in the staging but the work as a whole, serves to theatricalize and thus reinforce feelings of paranoia which, in Rousseau's case, lasted from the period prior to the writing of *Les Dialogues* (1772–1776) until well after *Pygmalion's* production. That is to say, the articulations of the narrative are blurred by the concurrent doubling of musical and linguistic frames of reference. I am suggesting that these are textually linked to the ambivalence of the multiple defining relationships of this *scène lyrique*. The crossing-over or contamination of key relationships between the artist and his creation and the artist and the audience are thus revealed through a triple regard of the artist to artwork, of the mirror-gaze of artwork to artist and of the spectator acting as both viewer and judge. *Pygmalion* becomes for Rousseau a "crossing over" of the private self into a realm which is essentially public, thus making visible or "exposing" the self's attempt toward a state of betterment or perfectibility.

⁵⁷ Rousseau, *Pigmalion*, 9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

Thus, Rousseau's paranoia, overtly evident in *Les Dialogues*, is concurrently reflected in both *Pygmalion*'s text and its staged production by multiple processes of indeterminacy and fragmentation. In *Les Dialogues* Rousseau represents a personal identity in crisis, perceived by his reader from the presentation of the relationship in dialogical form between self and other. This identity in crisis is embodied in the work by means of a dialogue between "Rousseau," "The Frenchman," and "Jean-Jacques." In *Pygmalion* this tripolarity is objectified through spectacle; the iconization of Rousseau's life and work is thus projected throughout the performance on every level of representation, as though occasioning through self-display a state of self-alienation striving for unity. Although Rousseau sought control of all aspects of the production, contours of paranoia or self-division intermingled throughout its text were prevalent at the time of its writing. These contours reveal an incongruity between Rousseau the person and the self staged, resulting in moments of suspense. As De Man notes, even though the truth of self is undermined through processes of alienation contained in the rhetoric, acute self-understanding is not incompatible with pathological misinterpretations of the self's relationship to others.⁵⁹ Rousseau's feelings of persecution are iconized in *Pygmalion* as ambivalent representations of the relationships between the artist and his creation, on one level, and between the artist and his audience, on another. The staged dialectic between artwork and self is in turn substantiated by the lyric as portender of absent speech. For example, when Pygmalion first imagines the image behind the veil, a process emblematic of the fear of self-knowledge—"Je ne sais quelle

⁵⁹ De Man. *Allegories of Reading*, 163.

émotion j'éprouve en touchant ce voile! une frayeur me saisit; je crois toucher au sanctuaire de quelque divinité"⁶⁰ (I don't know what emotion I feel in touching this veil! I am seized by fright; I imagine I am touching the sanctuary of a god)—he is revitalized by the transcendent and violent emotion of the moment through the lyric symphonic passage, presented without sung text as indicator of the psychological.

A READING OF THE LIBRETTO

The staging of *Pygmalion* as *scène lyrique* first took place in Lyons, following Rousseau's return to France from exile. Residing near Paris, he could enter the city gates only on condition that he refrain from writing political works. In the *scène's* staging and other aspects, Rousseau offers his world view as a final apology for and act of acceptance of selfhood, signifying his transcendence of isolation and exile.

Rousseau's libretto, closely adhering to the narrative of the Greek myth, richly recounts the story of the sculptor who falls in love with his statue. Pygmalion chooses to live alone yet fashions a dream woman in stone. In a compelling scene, he is at first unable to believe himself worthy of her creation. His emotions range from awe of her, to fear, to feelings of profound love, and finally physical attraction. As the statue comes alive, it descends from the pedestal, accepting its humanity.

In following the original myth, Rousseau's chief creative means of advancing the plot is a dialectic of the Dionysian surge of creativity and the Apollonian embodiment of divine form. The libretto favors this dialectic of warmth and coldness throughout. As Galatea awakens Pygmalion's ardor, so she transcends her the coldness of her marble

⁶⁰ Rousseau. *Pygmalion*, 8.

form. The fusion of opposing energies of cold and warmth occurs when Galatea descends from her pedestal. As she and her sculptor embrace, the transposition of godliness into mortality is consummated.

The opening scene is described in the libretto:

Le théâtre représente un atelier de sculpteur. Sur les côtés on voit des blocs de marbre, des groupes, des statues ébauchés.⁶¹

The theater represents a sculptor's studio. To the side blocks of marble are seen, groups, statues which have been sketched out.

Nature is represented in *Pygmalion* by stone, as being part of the earth and its foundation. The image conveyed in the first scene is that of the tableau; the sculptor is in his workplace surrounded by blocks of marble and partly sculpted statues. In the background stands a single statue shrouded by a veil. The libretto's stage directions focus on the interior state of the artist:

Pygmalion, assis et accoudé, rêve dans l'attitude d'un homme inquiet et triste; puis se levant tout-à-coup, il prend sur une table les outils de son art, va donner par intervalle quelques coups de ciseau sur quelques-unes de ses ébauches, se recule, et regarde d'un air mécontent et découragé.⁶²

Pygmalion, seated and pensive, dreams worried and remorseful. Suddenly, getting up, he takes his sculptor's tools and successively chisels on several rough sketches. He then steps back and looks at his work, discouraged and unhappy.

Pygmalion's posture indicates a deep-rooted melancholy. In gazing at Galatea, he is faced with a conundrum; his self-knowledge, mirrored in her creation, gives rise to a melancholy which, when placed in a literary frame, causes his death as subject through a

⁶¹ Ibid., 6.

⁶² Ibid., 3–4.

constant deferral of signification of the self from interior psychological frames of reference to externalized gestures and appearance. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen has noted that Galatea thus becomes what Freud has termed a "lost object," a model of desire which triggers mimetic assimilation.⁶³

Although the scene indicates that the statue's proper name should be revealed from without, through an externalized act of naming, it is not. Instead, the spectator is presented with opposing systems of signifiers of the natural described by De Man as stone, signifying coldness, opposing human warmth; and darkness, symbolizing the despair of the speaking subject, opposing light.

In the following passage the word *génie* initiates a series of oppositions to the theatricalized signature *je*, for the self. *Génie* represents the interiority the artist and is supplemented by the words *talent* and *feu*, the latter used metaphorically. These terms symbolically ascribe the tension embodied in the naming of the artwork to the unique qualities of the artist; further, they embody the creative process through which familiar and intimate forces are freed to be radically different from the self⁶⁴ so as to offer completion or supplementarity. This dichotomy differs from that of nature and self, where self and other are more easily conceptualized. Opposed to Pygmalion's ardor, objectified as the desire to create a living artwork, is the textual signifier *s'est glacée*.

⁶³ A "lost object" is described as a goal or object of which the quest or attainment is lost. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 16.

⁶⁴ De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 177.

This term, signifying coldness, indicates defeat within the fallibility and weakness of mortal existence:

O mon Génie! où es-tu? mon Talent, qu'es-tu devenu? Tout mon feu s'est éteint; mon imagination s'est glacée; le marbre fort froid de mes mains. Pigmalion ne fait plus des Dieux: Tu n'es qu'un vulgaire artiste. Vils instruments, qui n'êtes plus ceux de ma gloire, allez, ne déshonorez point mes mains!

Il jette avec dédain ses outils, puis se promène quelque temps en rêvant les bras croisés. ⁶⁵

Oh my Genius, where are you? My talent, what have you become? All my fire is extinguished; my imagination, frozen; the very cold marble with my hands. Pigmalion no longer makes Gods: you are only a common artist. Vile tools, no longer those of my glory. Go! Stop dishonoring my hands!

In vain he discards his tools, then strolls a little while dreaming, his arms folded.

Rousseau uses the term *génie*,⁶⁶ prevalent in the late eighteenth century, to direct the text of the libretto toward the view of the self as exceptional person. As a result, *Pygmalion* assumes aspects of portraiture reappearing in later works such as the *Confessions*:

. . . ainsi commençait à se former ou à se montrer en moi ce coeur à la fois si fier et si tendre, ce caractère si efféminé mais pourtant indomptable, qui, flottant toujours entre la faiblesse et le courage, entre la mollesse et la vertu, m'a jusqu'au bout mis en contradiction avec moi-même.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, 4.

⁶⁶ During the course of the eighteenth century, the term *genius* designated a particular relationship between the individual, as a unique product of the human race, and his own specific "genius" or set of qualities contributing to that race. *Dictionnaire des Lumières*, s.v. "Génie" (Saint Girons).

⁶⁷ *Conf.*, 1:12.

... thus began to form or show itself within me this heart both proud and tender; this effeminate but stubborn personality, always oscillating between virtue and laziness, which has placed me until this day in contradiction with myself.⁶⁸

In both existing outside the subject and opposing its image as other, the artist's gaze upon the artwork also carries an unfulfilled desire for the creation of a mirror portrait. Melancholy and longing are cast in terms not unlike those of Rousseau's *Préface* to his earlier play *Narcisse*.⁶⁹

Ce n'est qu'après avoir vu les choses de près que j'ai appris à les estimer ce qu'elles valent; et quoique dans mes recherches j'aie toujours trouvé, *satis eloquentiae, sapientiae parum*, il m'a fallu bien des réflexions, bien des observations et bien du temps pour détruire en moi l'illusion de toute cette vaine pompe scientifique. Il n'est pas étonnant que durant ces temps de préjugés et d'erreurs où j'estimais tant la qualité d'auteur j'aie quelquefois aspiré à l'obtenir moi-même. C'est alors que furent composés les vers et la plupart des autres écrits qui sont sortis de ma plume.⁷⁰

It is only after seeing things at close range that I learned to take them at their true worth; and whether through my research I always found *satis eloquentiae, sapientiae parum*, much reflection, many observations, and much time was needed to destroy that vain scientific pomp. It isn't astonishing that during these periods of error and prejudice when I esteemed so much the quality of author I once aspired to be, that I began to compose the verses and many other writings.

These emotions are characteristic of Rousseau's attempt to wander among chimeras with the act of writing, deliberately letting himself be carried away. In her exhaustive study of melancholy and masculinity in the early Renaissance, *The Tears of Narcissus*, Lynn

⁶⁸ Masters and Kelly, eds. and trans., *Rousseau: The Confessions and Correspondence*, 581.

⁶⁹ *Narcisse* was probably written around 1732; both the play and Rousseau's *Project for a New Musical Notation* (1740) were in his possession when he arrived in Paris, whereas the *Préface* was not completed until shortly before its publication in 1753.

⁷⁰ Rousseau, *Le Préface de Narcisse* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 123.

Enterline likens melancholy and masculinity to the reflecting image of Narcissus' troubling self-knowledge. In Rousseau's *Narcisse* desire is similarly reflected—i.e., through an envisioned union. The wish to blend identities revealed in that work is an idealized notion of androgyny. In *Pygmalion* the reflecting image is not one of androgyny, but of unfulfillment. As Enterline explains, the projected reflection of self troubles the transparent order of the subject's visual perception as much as its verbal order.⁷¹ Accordingly, Rousseau is troubled by self-image and theatrically projects this unfulfillment through the sculptor's troubled gaze on the imperfect artwork. Through a verbal-lyrical dialogue which seeks coherence, the projected image of the artwork embodies a unity reflecting a possibility of being. The consciousness of this possibility causes Rousseau and his character Pygmalion to experience an intermingling of longing and despair.

As a result of his melancholy contemplation in the opening scene, Pygmalion discards his tools. This action—total abandonment of the artwork—is paradigmatic, as though Rousseau projects, yet questions, the very possibility of perfection; and it enables him to construct a binary landscape of symbols as metaphor for the creative process. Rousseau privileges the term *révolution*, meaning "change," as metaphor for the creative act:

Que suis-je devenu? quelle étrange révolution s'est faite en moi? Tyr, ville opulente et superbe, les monuments des arts dont tu brilles ne m'attirent plus; j'ai perdu le goût que je prenais à les admirer: Le commerce des artistes et des philosophes me devient insipide; l'entretien des peintres et

⁷¹ Lynn Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 8.

des poètes est sans attrait pour moi; la louange et la gloire n'élèvent plus mon âme.⁷²

What have I become? What strange change is taking place within me?
Tyre, superb and opulent city, your artistic monuments no longer attract me; I've lost the taste to admire them. Commerce with artists and philosophers is insipid; conversation with painters and poets holds no attraction; fame and glory no longer elevate my soul.

Rousseau's allusion to the city of Tyre is a metaphor of richness and acquisition. The theme of greatness of the Roman Empire, of things which originated in Rome or were once imagined to be Roman, serves as a metaphor for earthly desire. The statue is veiled, indicating lack, chiasmas, and reversal; allusions to Rome, paired with the discourse of philosophers, tempt the sculptor. In this staged gesture of weariness, Rousseau's retreat into exile is iconized by the libretto:

Il s'assied, et contemple tout autour lui.

Retenu dans cet atelier par un charme inconcevable, je n'y puis rien faire, et je ne puis m'en éloigner. . . . Mon ciseau faible, incertain, ne reconnaît plus son guide: Les ouvrages grossiers restés à leur timide ébauche, ne sentent plus la main qui jadis les eut animés.⁷³

Il se lève impétueusement.

He sits down and contemplates all around him.

Detained in this studio by inconceivable charms, I am powerless and cannot withdraw. . . . My feeble, uncertain chisel no longer knows its guide. These bulky works remain uncrafted, no longer knowing the hand which once animated them.

Suddenly, he rises.

⁷² Rousseau, *Pigmalion*, 8–9.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 6.

Here the scene is configured as a tableau wherein, via apostrophic address and stage action, the sculptor projects self onto the artwork, which he in turn conceives as a figure of alienation. His distancing from the statue is reaffirmed by signifiers of vacillation: "*m'en éloigner*" and "*mon ciseau faible*." The passage signifies the emerging instability of the artist's relation to his work, of a separateness from which he cannot escape and from which emerge indicators of ambivalence. Uncertainty is designated by the figure of love, which is structured rhetorically through diverse imagery⁷⁴ indicating, in turn, *amour de soi* and humility. What first appears as love is in fact self-love: Pygmalion beseeches gods, summons unknown forces which invoke the sublime:

Tourments, vœux, désirs, rage, impuissance, amour terrible, amour funeste!—Ah, tout l'enfer est dans mon cœur agité—Dieux puissants, Dieux bienfaisants, Dieux du peuple, qui connûtes les passions des hommes, ah! vous avez tous fait des prodiges pour de moindres causes!⁷⁵

Torments, wishes, desires, rage, impotence, terrible love!—Ah, all hell is in my beating heart—Powerful Gods, beneficial Gods, Gods of the people, who know the passions of men, ah! you have made marvels for the least worthy of causes!

The phrasing of the above passage is musically supplemented by chords of bassoons before changing to another more psychologically driven:

Et toi, sublime Essence, qui te caches aux sens, et te fais sentir aux cœurs; Ame de l'univers, Principe de toute existence; toi, qui par l'amour donnes l'harmonie aux éléments, la vie à la matière, le sentiment aux corps, et la forme à tous êtres; Feu sacré, céleste Venus, . . . où est

⁷⁴ In his essay, "Self," on *Pygmalion*, Paul De Man recalls as a motif the portrait of Narcissus which, he interprets, allows for the bizarre substitution of self for other and of other for self, called love. De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 162.

⁷⁵ Rousseau. *Pygmalion*, 15.

ton équilibre? Où est ta force expansive? où est la loi de la nature dans le sentiment que j'éprouve?⁷⁶

And you, sublime Being, who conceal yourself from the senses and make yourself felt in the depths of hearts; soul of the universe, principle of all existence; you, who through love accord harmony to elements, life to matter, feeling to forms, and form to all being; Heavenly fire, celestial Venus, . . . where is your balance? Where is your expansive force? where is the law of nature in the emotion that I feel?

Only through the presence of the veil is the character afforded distance. The veil conceals the artwork yet is the single frame through which the gaze is focused. In speaking of Rousseau, Louis Marin writes of the gaze as a locus of instability in the artists contemplation of the artwork:

Le regard sur l'oeuvre plastique qui est aussi bien le regard de l'oeuvre dans la vision où se déploient son intérêt de connaissance, son importance esthétique, sa valeur pathétique, cette relation "visuelle" de l'oeil et de l'objet, de contemplation, où circulent les flux et les forces de l'un à l'autre . . . est à la fois posée et dérobée, affirmée et substituée dans le voile léger et brillant "ornée de crépines et guirlandes" qui couvre l'ouvrage.⁷⁷

The regard on the plastic form which is also that on the work wherein the artist deploys his interest in meeting, of the work's aesthetic importance, its sentimental value, the "visual" relation between the eye and the object, where fluxes and forces circulate . . . is simultaneously posed and undressed, affirmed and substituted by the brilliant veil decorated with garlands which covers the artwork.

The narrator in his gaze on the veiled artwork vacillates between fear and love. Its presence evokes complex emotion which awaits the veil's lifting. The experience of paralytic fear signals the presence of the aesthetic sublime, a deep experience of nature.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Marin, "Le moi et les pouvoirs de l'image," 662.

⁷⁸ De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 177.

"j'ai craint que l'admiration de mon propre ouvrage ne causât la distraction que j'apportais à mes travaux"⁷⁹ (I fear admiration of my artwork has caused distraction from my labor); "mon frayeur me saisit" (I am seized by fear). The paralysis instigated by feelings of love evokes admiration, a hopeful silent space of awe: "Qu'il va m'être cher, qu'il va m'être précieux cet immortel ouvrage" (How dear, how precious is this immortal artwork).

Rousseau uses the rhetorical trope of the perfected artwork to indicate the failure of the natural to embody the ideal; in configuring the romantic vision, the ideal must be transcended. The undecidability of the scene wherein Pygmalion symbolically lifts the veil suspends the movement of time in the narrative. Rousseau uses the confrontation between subject and artifice to enact the ideal, unending union between the natural and its reflected image. The awakening of the power of nature within the self, via experience of the sublime, posits the perfect symmetry of the statue against the supreme imperfectibility of human nature. This imperfectibility is always indicated by striving:

Quel tremblement! quel trouble!—Je tiens le ciseau d'une main mal assurée—je ne puis—je n'ose—je gâterai tout.⁸⁰

What trembling, what trouble! I hold the chisel in my trembling hand; I can't—I dare not—I will ruin everything.

Here the artist is evaluating his own power to create the artwork, implying an ascent toward perfectibility. In essence, Rousseau is implying that the self can attain the status

⁷⁹ Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, 7.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

of divinity, that the artwork can thereby be able to exist, dialectically transforming itself as free and independent of its creator.⁸¹

The sculptor's gaze on the statue—a gaze cast as a mirror image of that of Rousseau, as author, upon his work—decenters the self, in turn motivating the lifting of the veil. For Rousseau, the act of self-knowing, as revealed in the writing of the *Confessions*, is paralleled in *Pygmalion*. The cause of the sculptor's fright, echoing Rousseau's own awareness of the scope and magnitude of the creative process, is affirmed by the clarity this act engenders.

Dieux! je sens la chair palpitante repousser le ciseau.

Il redescend tremblant et confus.

Non—je n'y toucherai point; les Dieux m'épouvantent: Sans doute, elle est déjà consacrée à leur rang.⁸²

Gods! I feel her trembling flesh push back the chisel.

He retreats, trembling and confused.

No—I won't touch her; the Gods overpower me. Without a doubt, she already is consecrated to their rank.

On the most profound level, this passage utilizes emblems of self-definition to represent Rousseau's own desire and fear of being "read," of being found out, not unlike Pygmalion's fear of knowing the artwork. The desire for revelation, for knowledge,

⁸¹ Hegel states that art is not art until it is free, achieving as its highest function its establishment within a sphere shared with religion and philosophy as modes through which the *Divine* is brought home to consciousness. *Philosophies of Truth and Beauty*, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (New York: Modern Library, 1964), 388.

⁸² Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, 11.

motivates both Rousseau and his character. There is a rejection of balance between the demands of self and artifice on the part of both. The characteristic figure introduced by Rousseau is that of *antimetabole*, or reversal. The hope for self-perfection, signified by the statue's presence, is itself a negation of the perfected state. Yet negation exists as part of a hoped-for illusion:

Que veux tu changer? Regarde, quels nouveaux charmes veux tu lui donner?—Ah! c'est sa perfection qui fait son défaut— Divine Galatée! moins parfaite, il ne te manquerait rien.⁸³

What will you change? Look, what new charms will you give her? Ah, her perfection is her fault. Divine Galatea, less perfect, you would lack nothing.

This passage is designed to illustrate the impossibility of perfection. Rousseau uses it to reveal the necessary imperfection of artifice in its vain attempt to emulate nature. This recalls Derrida's "logical chain of supplements," i.e., the temptation to emulate the beginning, the originary point, that of the most purely natural state, the attainment of which continually beckons Rousseau. Perfectibility exists as the faculty of self-improvement but does not include perfection, for the repertory for action is limited and fixed.⁸⁴ The silence following the veil's demise is significant, symbolizing Pygmalion's inability to perceive utopia in the artwork's creation:

Longue pause dans un profond accablement,

Voilà donc la noble passion qui m'égare! c'est donc pour cet objet inanimé que je n'ose sortir d'ici—un marbre! une

⁸³ Ibid., 12.

⁸⁴ RD, s.v. "Perfectibility."

pierre! Insensé, rentre en toi-même! gémis sur toi! Vois ton erreur, vois ta folie—Mais non—

Longue pause dans un profond accablement.

Non, je n'ai point perdu le sens . . . non, je ne me reproche rien; ce n'est point de ce marbre mort que je suis épris; c'est d'un être vivant qui lui ressemble; c'est de la figure qu'il offre à mes yeux.⁸⁵

Long pause in profound awe

Behold the noble passion which sways me! Because of this inanimate object, I must leave! A marble! a stone! Crazy man, enter within! get on your knees! See your error, your madness—But no—

Impetuously

No, I haven't lost my senses . . . no, I shall not reproach myself; I am not in love with dead marble; it is a living being which it resembles; it is the face before my eyes.

Rousseau's insistence on the theme of stone, with its properties of immobility, coldness, and lifelessness is repeated throughout the text and opposes that of fire, signifying life and ardor. The opposition is also one of form versus idea and of thought versus sense:

"Quels traits de feu semblent sortir de cet objet pour embrasser mes sens"⁸⁶ (What arrows of fire dart from this object to embrace my senses). These oppositions are never really reconciled; in Rousseau's late-eighteenth-century world of neoplatonism, the supralunar world of divinity and sublunar world of men are held in delicate balance; the straining of the imagination to embrace the ideal is indicated by the text: "Je crois dans mon délire, pouvoir m'élancer hors de moi; je crois pouvoir lui donner ma vie, et l'animer

⁸⁵ Rousseau, *Pigmalion*, 13.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

de mon âme"⁸⁷ (I believe in my madness to transcend myself, I believe I can give her my life, and cause her to come to life with my soul).

LYRIC INDETERMINACY

Rousseau's musical theory advanced in *Pygmalion* and elsewhere must be placed in the context of his experimentation with *récitatif*. Downing Thomas asserts that the discipline of musicology arose in an effort to establish music as an "absolute" art, free from constraints of determinate meaning, in reaction to mimetic principles formulated by Rousseau and others in the late eighteenth century. As Thomas explains, "Musicology may be willing to consider music as a kind of 'language,' but only if this identification is strictly metaphorical—devoid, that is of any epistemic validity. And if music is a language, then it is one that operates on its own terms, independently of any pre-existing meaning."⁸⁸

Confirming Thomas's views, Rousseau's writings and those of his contemporaries are in agreement that eighteenth-century discourse on music was driven by the search for the causal origins of culture. According to Locke, signs initiated thought, memory, and communication; hence, they originated the development of culture. This quest for anthropological origin ultimately centered on the search for a motivational link between signifier and signified: i.e., how a given sign indicates that which it signifies, and how language bridges the gap between sound and idea.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Thomas. *Music and the Origins of Language*, 12–13.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 39.

In *Pygmalion* the first references to the natural are presented as a unification of discursive fields wherein symphonic music portraying the chaotic unconscious is given value through spoken text. This *scène lyrique* contains a cluster of musical signifiers ranging from the use of minor keys to connote mood to the use of unadorned musical phrases by wind instruments to suggest introspection. These effects are enhanced by a tension revealed in the transition from textual to musical phrase.

Rousseau first envisioned the subject matter and form of this text in the context of his critique of Gluck's *Alceste*, a work in which dramatic renderings of symphonic music are juxtaposed with sung text to produce an effect of dramatic continuity.⁹⁰ Whereas Rousseau condemned *récitatif* primarily for the difficulty of locating balance between words and music, in *Pygmalion* musical phrasing which existed separate from text had remedial value in circumventing this perceived problem:

Persuadé que la langue française, destituée de tout accent, n'est nullement propre à la musique et principalement au récitatif, j'ai imaginé un genre de drame dans lequel les paroles et la musique, au lieu de marcher ensemble, se font entendre successivement, et où la phrase parlée est en quelque sorte annoncée et préparée par la phrase musicale. La scène de *Pygmalion* est un exemple, qui n'a pas eu d'imitateurs. En perfectionnant cette méthode on réunirait le double avantage de soulager l'acteur par de

⁹⁰ Rousseau's own assessment of his musical skill is recounted in the following anecdote, reprinted in the *Avis de l'éditeur* of the collection of songs *Les Consolations des misères de ma vie*. During the last ten years of his life Rousseau often alluded to a chimeric "petit faiseur" (little punster) who inspired him with ideas he could pass off as his own. Prior to the creation of *Pygmalion*, in reply to a friend who suggested that he consider composing music for the work, Rousseau responded: "Vraiment, s'il ne l'a pas fait, c'est qu'il n'en était pas capable. Mon petit Faiseur ne peut enfler que les pipeaux; il y faudrait un grand Faiseur. Je ne connais que M. Gluck en état d'entreprendre cet ouvrage, et je voudrais bien qu'il daignât s'en charger" (Truly, if he hasn't done it, it is because he wasn't capable. My little punster can only swell reed-pipes; a great punster is needed. Only M. Gluck is capable of undertaking such a work, and I would be pleased if he would attend to it). Julien Tiersot, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (New York: AMS Reprint Series, 1920), 162.

fréquents repos, et d'offrir au spectateur français l'espèce de mélodrame le plus convenable à sa langue.⁹¹

Persuaded that French, destitute of accent, is wholly unmusical, particularly in the case of recitative, I imagined a dramatic genre wherein words and music, instead of being performed together, could be heard successively, where the spoken phrase was, in essence, announced by the musical phrase. The theatrical scene of *Pygmalion* offered an example and stood unique. In perfecting this technique, the actor would benefit from multiple rests, and the public would benefit from a drama befitting its language.

In his 1764 *Observations sur l'Alceste*, Rousseau commented on Gluck's various innovative uses of harmony. He disparaged claims that he, Rousseau, following his rebuttal of Rameau, disapproved of all forms of harmonic structure and invention.

Rousseau's correspondence also cited his approval of Gluck's conception of the relation between music and poetry:

M. Gluck sait mieux que moi que le rythme sans harmonie agit bien plus puissamment sur l'âme que l'harmonie sans rythme, lui qui, avec une harmonie à mon avis un peu monotone, ne laisse pas de produire de si grandes émotions, parce qu'il sent et qu'il emploie avec un art profond tous les prestiges de la mesure et de la quantité.⁹²

More than I, Mr. Gluck knows that rhythm without harmony is more powerful than harmony without rhythm, he who with a slightly monotonous harmony doesn't fail to produce such great feelings because he feels and uses all prestiges of measure and quantity with profound art.

Rousseau's philosophical reflections on the importance of rhythm and harmony apply to his beliefs on the word's supremacy over the musical text.

⁹¹ OC, *Lettre sur l'Alceste de Gluck*, 5:271. Rousseau's comments on *récitatif obligé* are reprinted from DM, s.v. "Récitatif obligé."

⁹² Ibid., 5:274.

For Rousseau, language at its origin is associated with accent, melody, and poetry. As he states in the *Essai*:

Comme les premiers motifs qui firent parler l'homme furent des passions, ses premières expressions furent des Tropes. Le langage figuré fut le premier à naître; le sens propre fut trouvé le dernier.

Les premières langues furent chantantes et passionnées avant d'être simples et méthodiques.⁹³

As passions were the first motives which caused man to speak, his first expressions were tropes. Figurative language appeared first; literal meaning came last.

The first languages were singing and passionate before being simple and methodical.

Thus Rousseau considered music and language to have the same properties. His statements in the *Observations* imply a practical understanding of the relation between word and musical phrase. Echoing Plato's *Republic*, he articulates the supremacy of word over musical tone, using Plato's definition of music as comprising poetry, rhythm, and meter (wherein melody and meter depend on words).⁹⁴ Generally, Rousseau and his contemporaries tended to believe that the poet determines accent, while rhythm and harmony are the provinces of the musician:

Quelle est la liberté qu'on doit accorder au musicien qui travaille sur un poème dont il n'est pas l'auteur? J'ai distingué les trois parties de la musique imitative; et, en convenant que l'accent est déterminé par le

⁹³ *EOL*, 5:381, 416.

⁹⁴ Plato was interested in a music which consisted of a combination of singing and dancing, performed by choruses to instrumental accompaniment. He analyzed music as having two components, "music" and "sound"; harmony is "order" in vocal sounds; rhythm is called "order in movement" and is shared by both movements of the body and the vocal sounds which accompany them. *The Laws*, 85.

poète, j'ai fait voir que l'harmonie, et surtout le rythme, offraient au musicien des ressources dont il devait profiter.⁹⁵

What is the liberty owed the musician who works on a poem he has not authored? I have determined three segments of imitative music; accordingly, if the accent is determined by the poet, I have shown that harmony and especially rhythm offer the musician [imitative] resources from which he should profit.

Rousseau gives the poet power over the musician, implying that the musician has more to gain in the lyric collaboration than does the poet. As both poet and musician, Rousseau created with *Pygmalion* a unique work, one where the lead character doesn't sing, but recites, allowing music in the form of various *ritornellos* to interrupt his actions as well as the various emotions by which he is affected.

Rousseau's association with the composer Gluck motivated him to utilize music as a framing device for the verbal text *Pigmalion*; thus the motivation for the musical phrase is structured around that of the rhetoric, which in its cadences and inflections affirms the musical phrase. On one hand, Rousseau's methods of representation tacitly imply a series of frames to be transcended by means of an immediate synthesis of sense perceptions. This necessitates a dependence of the music on the literary text and vice versa, as in synaesthesia, suggesting intertwining sense modalities.⁹⁶ On the other hand, musical themes are developed and allowed to exist independent of accompanying vocal

⁹⁵ OC, *Lettre sur l'Alceste de Gluck*, 5:265.

⁹⁶ Pougin, *Rousseau—Musicien*, 164, states: "Ne parlons pas seulement du résultat produit par la combinaison du drame parlé et de son commentaire par l'orchestre, à laquelle l'art postérieur a dû des œuvres telles qu'*Egmont*, *L'Arlésienne*, *Le Songe d'une nuit d'été*, *Manfred*" (We must not speak only of the result produced by the combination of spoken drama with commentary by the orchestra, to which more recent work owes such masterpieces as *Egmont*, *The Arlesian*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Manfred*).

text, allowing separate frameworks of interpretation. Finally, in the heart of the work, the use of orchestral music serves to invoke a separate realm of emotional response. In the framing of vocal declamatory accents, hybrid structures are created which function as indeterminate cognitive moments that portray the subconscious mind as it is engaged in the creative process.

Contrary to the musical practices of many of his contemporaries, Rousseau sought to use the orchestra reflectively to exceed the boundary established by the vocal text of the libretto. In *Pygmalion* this union is clearly present in the appropriation of orchestral response as displacement of spoken text. This displacement recalls Rousseau's theoretical statements in *La Lettre sur la musique française* about the suitability of French as language for the lyric:

J'avoue que tant de faits m'ont rendu douteuse l'existence de notre mélodie, et m'ont fait soupçonner qu'elle pourrait bien n'être qu'une sorte de plain-chant modulé, qui n'a rien d'agréable en lui-même, qui ne plaît qu'à l'aide de quelques ornements arbitraires. . . . Aussi à peine notre musique est-elle supportable à nos propres oreilles lorsqu'elle est exécutée par des voix médiocres.⁹⁷

I acknowledge that so many facts cause me to doubt the existence of our melody, and have made me suspect that it could be no more than a modulated plain song, pleasing only with the aid of several arbitrary ornaments. . . . Is our music even supportable to our own ears when executed by mediocre voices?

Rousseau felt that the sounds of the French language were too harsh, that they lacked melody and expression.⁹⁸ Although his intent was to subvert all spoken language in

⁹⁷ LMF, 5:163.

⁹⁸ Herbert Josephs, "A War at the Opera." in *New History of French Literature*, ed. Hollier, 535.

general and the spoken French language in particular, he formulated a theory of language both original and based on feeling or sentiment: "Je ne sais quelle émotion j'éprouve; je crois toucher au sanctuaire de quelque divinité" (I know not what I feel; I have attained the sanctuary of a God). *Pygmalion* calls into question the symbolic realm of nature (i.e., the artist's workshop as sanctuary) and causes it to be realized as a metaphor for the natural state.

Rousseau claimed in *La Lettre sur la musique française* that the French language was indecipherable and could not be sung because of its guttural sounds; in *Pygmalion* he relegated such discordant sounds to the orchestra in order to emulate turbulent psychological states. The issue of musical supplementarity returns to the issue of vocal primacy, causing a determination of how this primacy functions in the broader spectrum of Rousseau's aesthetic philosophy to be imperative. As an example, in Chapter Three of the *Essai*, the birth of language is ineluctably related to subissues concerning desire and passion more than to any physical need:

Comme les premiers motifs qui firent parler l'homme furent des passions, ses premières expressions furent des Tropes. Le langage figuré fut le premier à naître.⁹⁹

Just as the first phrases spoken by man were from his passions, his first expressions were tropes. Figurative language was thus the first to appear.

Rousseau's privileging of voice in the *Essai* thus accords to it a primary function as locus of desire; his privileging of voice in *Pygmalion* does the same. In *Pygmalion* this process occurs through a deliberate relegation of the musical partition played by the

⁹⁹ *EOL*, 5:380.

orchestra to a role which is secondary, while serving to complement the interior emotions of the protagonist.

In her article "Modernité du discours de Jean-Jacques Rousseau sur la musique," Marie-Elisabeth Duchez summarizes the dilemma of Rousseau's fate as eighteenth century musician:

Ce n'est pas dans ce qu'il a opposé à Rameau et à son époque (la théorie accentuelle de l'imitation des passions, la démarche historico-anthropologique affirmant l'origine commune de la musique et du langage, la primauté de la mélodie) ni dans les "vues nouvelles" dont il est fier (sur l'écriture musicale, les modulations non diatoniques, le mélodrame) que se trouve la profonde originalité qui rapproche Rousseau de la pensée de notre temps . . . ce n'est pas par ses critiques mêmes que Rousseau rejoint certaines préoccupations esthétiques et épistémologiques. Mais c'est par la formulation des fondements musicaux, physiques et épistémiques de son opposition: la limitation du domaine musical et l'incommunicabilité théorique.¹⁰⁰

It is neither in Rousseau's opposition to Rameau and to his epoch (i.e., the accentual theory of imitation of passions, the search for a historical-anthropological link of music and language, the primacy of melody) nor in his views (on musical writing, nondiatonic modulations, or melodrama) that Rousseau is linked with contemporary thought. . . . It is not by these same criticisms that Rousseau unites certain aesthetic and epistemological preoccupations. But it is through the formulation of physical and epistemological musical foundations contained in his opposition: both the limitations of the musical domain and the incommunicability of theory.

I share this view because it emphasizes the revolutionary stance of Rousseau's opposition to Enlightenment musical theory and to the limits of genre. As an example, Rousseau's consciousness as critic supposes an awareness of operatic reform such as that revealed in *Pygmalion* by the absence of *divertissement*. Rousseau's critique of French opera of his

¹⁰⁰ Marie-Elisabeth Duchez, "Modernité du discours de Jean-Jacques Rousseau sur la musique," in *Rousseau after Two Hundred Years: Proceedings of the Cambridge Bicentennial Colloquium*, ed. R. A. Leigh (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 265.

period is textualized in his epistolary novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, in which St. Preux complains:

L'Opéra de Paris passe à Paris pour le spectacle le plus pompeux, le plus voluptueux, le plus admirable qu'inventa jamais l'art humain. . . . C'est que tous les étrangers conviennent qu'il n'y a rien de si beau dans le reste du monde. . . . En effet, la vérité est que les plus discrets s'en taisent, et n'osent en rire qu'entre eux.

Il faut convenir . . . qu'on y représente à grands frais, non seulement toutes les merveilles de la nature, mais beaucoup d'autres merveilles bien plus grandes, que personne n'a jamais vues, et sûrement Pope a voulu désigner ce bizarre théâtre par celui où il dit qu'on voit pêle-mêle des Dieux, des lutins, des monstres, des Rois, des bergers, des fées, de la fureur, de la joie, un feu, une gigue, une bataille, et un bal.¹⁰¹

The Paris Opera is for all of Paris the most pompous, voluptuous, and admirable spectacle invented in all of human art. . . . Foreigners swear that there is nothing as beautiful in the world as this opera. . . . In fact, the truth is that most discrete spectators laugh among themselves.

One must agree that . . . not only is the production expensive in representing all the marvels of nature, but also [in representing] even grander marvels that no one has ever seen. Surely Pope was referring to this theater when he says that one sees [there] pell mell Gods, goblins, monsters, kings, shepherds, sprites, furies, joys, fires, a jig, a battle, and a dance.

Rousseau echoes this complaint in the *Confessions*, as is mentioned in Chapter One.

Duchez' remark seems well-founded when she suggests that Rousseau creates with *Pygmalion* a lyric work which is a major reformulation of the then-prevalent theory of French opera¹⁰² and is therefore transitional to future hybrid forms. Rousseau posits a

¹⁰¹ LNH, 2:251.

¹⁰² French opera of the eighteenth century is "distinguished by: (1) the relatively greater [compared with the Italian] importance of the drama; (2) the exceptionally large place given to ballets, choruses, and spectacular scenes in general; (3) the greater use of instrumental music; (4) the use of short and simple songs, mostly of a dance-like character, rather than elaborate arias; (5) a special type of

lyric form distinctly different from that which is practiced in opera of his period in his choice of a single theme and restructuring of *récitatif*. His theories are placed at the disposal of the reader/listener.

The importance of the musical phrase thus resides in its communicability to this individual as an emotional event which he is free to fathom and to interpret as he chooses. Rousseau's experimentation with musical form, present in *Pygmalion*, represents a repetitive paradigm, a motivation and consequent temptation toward the possibility of music as signifier of selfhood which is symbiotically linked to sentiment. In *Pygmalion* music is posited as emblem of the psyche or of the self's interior. In a Saussurian sense, the text *Pigmalion*, reembodyed as lyric text, acts as summary endeavor to simulate, through absence, a common *langue* to serve as a reference for *parole*. Through the unstable chaos of self-origin represented orchestrally, Rousseau's representation of the text *Pigmalion* as *scène lyrique* can be considered as striving for a purer level of signification.

ROUSSEAU THE ABSENT ORATOR

The ends of classical rhetoric, conceived around the dual presence of orator and audience, include both persuasion and eloquence.¹⁰³ The interior monologue in *Pygmalion* achieves presence as oratory, containing elements of oratorical address¹⁰⁴

recitative; and (6) a special type of overture." *HDM*, s.v. "Opera" (Grout).

¹⁰³ *PE*, s.v. "Rhetoric and poetry" (T. V. F. Brogan).

¹⁰⁴ In traditional oratory, persuasion is audience-directed and eloquence is form- and style-directed. Three basic genres have been delineated in oratory—deliberative, forensic, and epideictic—with three concomitant types of orations: those given before policy-determining bodies, before courts of law, and before occasional assemblies. *PE*, 1046, s.v. "Rhetoric and poetry."

which portray the imprisonment of the self in a moment of despair,¹⁰⁵ before an occasional assembly of peers: "Il n'y a point là d'âme ni de vie; ce n'est que de la pierre; je ne ferai jamais rien de tout cela"¹⁰⁶ (Neither life nor spirit is there; it is only stone; I will never fashion anything from it).

The moral and social issues of the alienated state are present in both the text and the mise-en-scène. For example, the sculptor's solitary confinement in his studio, empty except for slabs of stone, signifies the coldness with which he regards his fellow man. Pygmalion's desire to mold from stone an artwork more perfect than humanity or the self reflects his desire for moral purification through transcendence of his human state. This desire is suggested in lines implying the unification of the self with the gods: "Les Dieux m'épouvantent: Sans doute, elle est déjà consacrée à leur rang"¹⁰⁷ (The Gods overpower me: Undoubtedly, she is already consecrated to their rank). This implicit critique of mortal appearance is evident—along with textual and iconic transpositions to the image of the artist as man compared with his interior or moral state:

La rêverie se développe dans le resserrement spatial, si le moi se soustrait au monde, il s'octroie en compensation un libre pouvoir d'expansion temporelle.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Rousseau's despair during this period is echoed in his second correspondence to Malesherbes, wherein he states, "I admit nevertheless that it depended on very little for me to find myself re-engaged in the world, and that I might have abandoned my solitude not out of distaste for it, but out of a no less keen taste that I almost preferred it." Masters and Kelly, eds. and trans., *Rousseau: The Confessions and Correspondence*, 581.

¹⁰⁶ Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰⁸ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 425.

Reverie is developed in the closing in of space; if the self withdraws itself from the world, in compensation, it grants a power of temporal expansion.

According to Platonic doctrine, revived in the late eighteenth century and echoed in Kant¹⁰⁹ and poets such as Holderlin and Blake, man is composed of body and soul and is partly spiritual, like God, and partly like matter. Neoplatonists stressed inspiration¹¹⁰ as a means through which the poet transcends ordinary reason. Rousseau's libretto, replete with neoplatonist doctrine, symbolizes his attempt to transcend what he perceives is a wretched earthbound existence.

As Rousseau writes in his third letter to his friend Malesherbes, during the earliest period of his exile:

Mon imagination ne laissait pas longtemps déserte la terre ainsi parée. Je la peuplais bientôt d'êtres selon mon coeur, et chassant bien loin l'opinion, les préjugés, toutes les passions factices, je transportais dans les asiles de la nature les hommes dignes de les habiter. Je m'en formais une société charmante dont je ne me sentais pas indigne.¹¹¹

My imagination did not leave the earth, adorned this way, deserted for very long. I soon peopled it with beings in accordance with my heart, and driving opinion, prejudices, all factitious passions very far away, into these refuges of nature, I transported men worthy of inhabiting them. From them I formed a charming society for myself of which I did not feel myself to be unworthy.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Platonist doctrines were echoed in *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, wherein Kant argued that the perceived world is phenomenal and that reality lies beyond the reach of the mind. *PE*, s.v. "Platonism and poetry" (O. B. Hardison, Jr.).

¹¹⁰ The idea of inspiration as a province of art is succinctly stated in the *Ion* where Socrates suggests the presence of a supernatural power in poets. *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Conf.*, 1:1140.

¹¹² Masters and Kelly, eds. and trans., *Rousseau: The Confessions and Correspondence*, 584.

Thus, while Rousseau's *Pygmalion* creates with marble an artwork of monumental stature, Rousseau himself is symbolized by the act of creation as the self's attempt to transcend appearance. He therefore creates a work worthy of what he refers to as "a golden age."

In *Pygmalion* the locus of the stage reflects a foreground presence of the sculptor, a middle ground consisting of unformed masses of clay, and a background wherein the veiled statue rests on a pedestal.¹¹³ From the spectator's point of view, the regard of the statue is cast at an angle reciprocal to that of the sculptor onto stage itself, causing an implosion of the drama. Through the power of their reciprocal gaze, sculpture and sculptor exist in momentary oneness. The aesthetic importance of the sculptor's gaze, its empathy stressed as the visual perspective created between eye and object, is paramount.

Although the veil's purpose is the obscuring of the statue's regard toward the spectator, the gaze is actually tripolar: artist to statue, statue to artist, and artist to spectator. All are subsumed under the specularity of the stage as focus of the gaze of artist, spectator, and creation. As De Man notes, "The ambivalence of this scene of reading (or writing) carries over into the structure of its representation. The scene is both static, with *Pygmalion* locked into the fascinated concentration on a single, perfect object to the exclusion of anything else, and animated by the restlessness of a desire that disrupts all tranquil contemplation."¹¹⁴ This ambivalence implies that *Pygmalion* should

¹¹³ Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, 5.

¹¹⁴ De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 176.

be read on multiple levels and, further, that the scene of reading contained on the stage suggests, through its positioning, realms exceeding the reader/spectator's gaze.

As for the object of contemplation itself, the veil is an involuntary fetish placed at the spectator/reader's disposition to indicate opacity; it exists less as an essential structure than as an emblem of denial.¹¹⁵ In *Pygmalion*, denial of truth is embodied in the emotional state of both sculptor and statue; Pygmalion wishes to imbue Galatea with life, but the marble of the statue reflects his own coldness and indifference to the outside world; likewise, the statue figuratively denies divinity to Pygmalion. In the opening scene, in which involuntary memory plays a key role, both statue and artist are without warmth, the literal coldness of the statue reflecting the figural coldness of Pygmalion.¹¹⁶ Through the setting, the ambivalence of the scene of reading carries over into the structure of the representation. *Pygmalion* can thus be read/visualized as a scene of retreat or of withdrawal into exile.

In the *Confessions* Rousseau reflects upon his own bittersweet experiences of this solitary state:

Fait pour méditer à loisir dans la solitude, je ne l'étais point pour parler, agir, traiter d'affaires parmi les hommes. La nature, qui m'avait donné le premier talent, m'avait refusé l'autre. . . . Tourmenté, battu d'orages de toute espèce, fatigué de voyages et de persécutions depuis plusieurs années, je sentais vivement le besoin du repos, dont mes barbares ennemis se faisaient un jeu de me priver.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Marin. "Le Moi et les pouvoirs de l'image," 662.

¹¹⁶ De Man. *Allegories of Reading*, 178.

¹¹⁷ *Conf.*, 1:373.

Made to meditate at leisure in solitude, I was not to speak, act, or do business with men. Nature gave me the first and refused me the second. . . . Tormented, beaten by every kind of storm, wearied by travels and persecutions for several years, I keenly sensed the need of a rest of which my terrible enemies sought to deprive me.

Rousseau's refusal to witness the Paris performance of *Pygmalion* is significant.

Rousseau posits his self as alienated and thus theatrical. To reenter society, to exhibit or expose the self as worthy of acknowledgment by one's peers, of necessity, cannot be accomplished in concealment. Rousseau can only view the state of being worthy of the *amour de soi* revealed by the creative act of writing and the search for public approval. In the *Confessions* he portrays himself as a man of nature alienated from the artifice of public life, yet there is evidence that he feels that he owes to his reader a sense of clarity and transparency:

Je m'applique à bien développer partout les premières causes pour faire sentir l'enchaînement des effets. Je voudrais en quelque façon rendre mon âme transparente aux yeux du lecteur, et pour cela je cherche à la lui montrer sous tous les points de vue, à l'éclaircir pour tous les jours, à faire en sorte qu'il ne s'y passe un mouvement qu'il n'aperçoive, afin qu'il puisse juger lui-même du principe qui les produit.¹¹⁸

In order to make the chain of effects felt I apply myself above all to developing the first causes. I would like to be able to render my soul transparent to the eyes of the reader in some fashion, and to do so I seek to show it to him under all points of view, to clarify it by all lights, to act in such a way that no motion occurs in it that he does not perceive so that he might be able to judge by himself the principle which produces them.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 175.

¹¹⁹ Masters and Kelly, eds. and trans., *Rousseau: The Confessions and Correspondence*, 146.

Clarity and transparency are thereby achieved for the reader through spectacle embodied by the act of performance. Serving as mises-en-abîme, they are reflected by the sculptor's gaze on the artwork:

Il la voit s'animer, et se détourne saisi d'effroi et le coeur serré de douleur.

Qu'ai-je vu? Dieux! qu'ai-je cru voir? Le coloris des chairs, un feu dans les yeux, des mouvements même—Ce n'était pas assez d'espérer le prodige; pour combler de malheur, enfin je l'ai vu.

Extase

Infortuné, c'en est donc fait—ton délire a son dernier terme—ta raison t'abandonne, ainsi que ton génie—Ne la regrette point, Pygmalion! sa perte couvrira ton opprobre.¹²⁰

He sees her come to life and turns around, seized with fear and his heart overcome with grief.

What have I seen? Gods! what do I perceive? The color of flesh, a vibrancy in her eyes, even movement; it wasn't enough to hope for a work of genius; at the height of unhappiness, at last I have seen her.

Ecstasy

Unfortunate [man], you've done it—your madness in its last stage—reason and your genius abandon you; don't regret it, Pygmalion. Her loss exceeds your disgrace.

Just as Pygmalion must abandon his claim of having created a living artwork and accede to the natural self a final crowning gesture, Rousseau causes his personal self to appear triumphant through its witness by the public as a theatrical event. This occurs in the following ways: As man, he is exonerated through renouncing all claims to immortality through personal achievement, shown in the final passages by the descent from the

¹²⁰ Rousseau, *Pigmalion*, 19.

pedestal of Galatea, the divine object of creation, which may be seen theatrically as Rousseau's acceptance of the earthly or natural state. As author, he achieves with the theatrical staging of *Pygmalion* a foreshadowing of future autobiographical gestures. Finally, as musician, he creates for the lyric stage a work of psychological dimension through the particular treatment of musical and textual phrasing.

In following pages, I examine ways in which *Pygmalion* as spectacle displaces paradigms of the natural through the dimension of performance. These include the rejection of artifice, the striving for natural goodness, and the longing for the natural state in preference over the civilized world. The verse length in *Pygmalion* can be deemed repetitive yet can be seen as a final striving by Rousseau toward a triumphant natural discourse, analogous to the sculptor Pygmalion's molding of definitive contours.¹²¹

As lyric work, *Pygmalion* juxtaposes paradigms of the natural as mise-en-scène, lyric, and libretto. Scenically, it is structured as oration, as if Rousseau were addressing the arbitrary public of spectators as judge of his most intimate acts, envisioned as project of self-creation. As the sculptor approaches the statue, retreats, and contemplates, his gestures are those of the orator.

The preamble to the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, in which Rousseau questions the authority of self, applies here too, for

comment l'homme viendra-t-il à bout de se voir tel que l'a formé la Nature, à travers tous les changements que la succession des temps et des choses a dû produire dans sa constitution originelle, et de démêler ce qu'il tient de son propre

¹²¹ De Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 43.

fond d'avec ce que les circonstances et ses progrès ont ajouté ou changé à son état primitif?¹²²

how can man ever succeed in seeing himself as nature formed him, through all the changes which the succession of times and of things must have wrought in his original constitution, and to disentangle what he owes to his own stock from what circumstances and his progress have added to or changed in his primitive state?¹²³

The musical score of *Pygmalion* (see Figure 4.1) echoes the blurring of boundaries that I earlier described as "lyric indeterminacy."¹²⁴ In the *ritornello* composed by Rousseau, the key of D minor conceived in the Dorian mode is used to describe a subject of noble stature. This minor key is described in the musical history of Dr. Burney as the mode of solemn or tragic affairs. In the segment composed by Rousseau, D minor modulates to C, beginning the section by Horace Coignet. The segment thus modulates to a major key, prefiguring hope.

The *ritornello* composed by Rousseau is found at the opening section of the passage composed by Coignet but arranged by Rousseau. Thus, Rousseau conceives the lyric dimension of *Pygmalion*; his *ritornello* frames the process of interior reflection which is the work's essential theme. Although the segment he conceived introduces little rhythmic change, sudden changes of volume are prevalent. These range from *sotto voce* (soft texture) and *piano* (soft) to *rinforte*, indicating segments which are suddenly loud. Musical processes of rhythm and harmony indicate little change in the 3/8 meter

¹²² DOI, 1:122.

¹²³ Gourevitch, trans., *Discourse on Inequality*, 129.

¹²⁴ See page 224.

Cet Andantino est de J. J. Rousseau *And. en Fa-Majeur*

The musical score is a single melodic line for a piece titled 'Andantino' by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. It is written in F major (one flat) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Andantino'. The score consists of 10 staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The music is characterized by a steady, flowing melody with various note values including eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte) are used throughout the piece. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Figure 4.1

The *andantino* composed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau
from *Pygmalion*

which is achieved throughout. Beyond the dynamics of text of the musical score as a whole, indeterminacy symbolizing the creative process is objectified.

Textually, the issue of the self's legitimacy under the laws of nature is taken up again in the long monologue in which the sculptor addresses Galatea, his creation. Jean Starobinski describes the preamble's Rousseauian declamatory monologue as an encapsulation of a subtle transition from an exterior, terrestrial world to an interior one signified by the veil. Starobinski quotes Goethe's critique of *Pygmalion*:

Il y aurait beaucoup à dire sur ce sujet: car cette merveilleuse production oscille également entre la Nature et l'Art, avec la fausse ambition de faire en sorte que l'Art se resorbe dans la Nature. Nous voyons un artiste qui a accompli ce qu'il y a de plus parfait et qui, ayant projeté hors de lui-même son idée, l'ayant représentée selon les lois de l'Art et lui ayant prêté une vie supérieure, n'y trouve pourtant pas la satisfaction.¹²⁵

There is a lot to say on this subject: because this production oscillates between Nature and Art, with the false ambition to show that art is reabsorbed in Nature. We see an artist who has accomplished perfection and, having projected his idea beyond himself, having formed it according to laws of art, and having given it a higher form, does not find satisfaction.

Referring to the theory of unveiling, Starobinski describes two moments analogous in tension in *Pygmalion*, for the veil is lifted from the face of the statue twice. The first lifting of the veil occurs when Pygmalion is confronted with falsehood, after the appearance of disillusion and of vanity in having created the perfect object of art. The first confrontation, in which Pygmalion acknowledges his humanness, recalls Rousseau's final pages of Book IV of the *Confessions*, wherein he refers to his imagined reader:

¹²⁵ Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 91.

Si je me chargeais du résultat et que je lui dise; tel est mon caractère, il pourrait croire, sinon que je le trompe, au moins que je me trompe. Mais en lui détaillant avec simplicité tout ce qui m'est arrivé, tout ce que j'ai fait, tout ce que j'ai pensé, tout ce que j'ai senti, je ne puis l'induire en erreur. . . . C'est à lui d'assembler ces éléments et de déterminer l'être qu'ils composent.¹²⁶

If I entrusted him with the result and told him: this is my character, he could believe it unless I deceive him, at least in deceiving myself. But in detailing with simplicity all which has happened to me, all I have done, all I have thought, and all I have felt, I cannot lead him wrongfully. . . . It is for him to assemble these elements with the end of determining the being that they compose.

In this first dévoilement, Pygmalion confronts artifice in realizing his humanity.

Pygmalion asks,

Qu'importe? On sert des Dieux dans nos temples, qui ne font pas d'une autre matière, et n'ont pas été faits d'une autre main. . . .

Vanité! faiblesse humaine! je ne puis me lasser d'admirer mon ouvrage; je m'enivre d'amour propre, je m'adore dans ce que j'ai fait—Non, jamais rien de si beau ne parut dans la nature; j'ai passé l'ouvrage des Dieux.¹²⁷

What does it matter? We serve Gods in our temples who are not made of another material, nor molded by another hand. . . .

Vanity! human weakness! I can't cease admiring my work; I am overwhelmed with self love, adoring myself in what I have made—No, never anything so graceful has appeared in nature, I have surpassed the work of the Gods.

Yet what is offered in spectacle is also the image of Rousseau torn between self-love and the need for public acceptance, as revealed in the *Confessions*.

¹²⁶ *Conf.*, 1:175.

¹²⁷ Rousseau, *Pigmalion*, 9.

In the second dévoilement, that which denounces the veil in its entirety, truth is exposed. According to Rousseau, this revelation is the most critical. "Les hommes constatent qu'ils étaient trompés" (Men stated they were deceived) indicates the necessity of returning, drawn backward into the past through the nostalgia evoked by nature. This is seen in *Pygmalion's* final scene when the sculptor and his artwork merge into earthbound oneness. The spectacularization, or dramatization, of text via a tripolar axis echoes the memory-driven narrative of the *Confessions* and the hope enshrined in *Les Rêveries*. Through this means, transformation from artifice to nature is achieved through the concluding stage action and text as the theater sheds appearance to reveal truth of self. Artifice is thus redeemed by nature, symbolized as a redemption wherein nature triumphs over artifice through the sculptor's labor and by the conclusion of the artwork by Rousseau.

Yet De Man asserts that the rhetorical strategy of this final scene is unfulfilled. I disagree; in my opinion, spectacularization as a tripolar performative construct supplements the rhetorical strategy of the libretto. Rousseau's portrayal of self is thwarted by a rhetorical imbalance whose apogee is the triumphal appearance of artifice rendered in Galatea's form, as suggested by the final scene. Conversely, it is enhanced by the embrace of statue and sculptor in the witnessing of performance,

GALATEE fait quelques pas, et touche un marbre.

Ce n'est plus moi.

Pigmalion dans une agitation, dans des transports qu'il a peine à contenir, suit tous ses mouvements, l'écoute, l'observe avec une avide attention, qui lui permet à peine de respirer. Galatée s'avance vers lui, et

le regarde; il se lève précipitement, lui tend les bras, et la regarde avec ecstase; elle porte une main sur lui, il tréssaillit, prend cette main, la porte à son coeur, et la couvre d'ardents baisers.

GALATEE avec un soupir:

Ah! encore moi.¹²⁸

GALATEA takes several steps and touches the marble.

No longer me.

Pigmalion is agitated and can hardly control his passion. He follows all of her movements, listens, and observes her with avid attention, hardly allowing him to breathe. Galatea advances toward him and looks at him. He rises suddenly, extending his arms toward her and looks with ecstasy upon her; she extends her hand, he trembles in taking her hand and placing it on his heart, covering it with passionate kisses.

GALATEA with a sigh:

Yes, it is still me.

The transformation from opacity to transparency, indicated by both stage action and text, is analogous to the shift from external world to the interiority of self-knowledge.

The following pages will examine theatricality as a signifying device, both in terms of a desire for totalization and of the supplementarity contained in the literary text or libretto.

THEATRICALITY AS SIGN

Marion Hobson's theory of "theatricality" is relevant to this discussion of Rousseau's

Pygmalion in that it points to a nontheatrical space:

Le théâtre n'est pas théâtral. "Théâtralité" porte en soi deux termes: le théâtre et autre chose, que ce soit une autre forme d'art ou le contenu

¹²⁸ Ibid., 12.

d'une situation réelle. Ainsi la formule "théatralité hors du théâtre," dans la mesure où elle suggère la transgression d'une barrière—séparation des genres ou des catégories art/vie—établit en fait deux lieux bien distincts, qu'elle fait communiquer et qu'elle tient séparés dans le moment de la transgression. "Théatralité" appelle en effet "hors du théâtre pour rétablir l'opposition réel/irréel, théâtre/roman, que le passage effectif entre genres, entre art et vie, menaçait d'effacer. C'est donc une communication que désigne en général "théatralité." Mais une théatralité généralisée est-elle possible . . . où les deux pôles ne s'écarteraient plus, où tout, de part en part, ne serait que jeu? Une théatralité comme contamination universelle?¹²⁹

Theatre is not theatrical. "Theatricality" connotes two terms: the theater and something else, whether it be another art form or the content of a real-life situation. Whence the formula "theatricality beyond the theater," in the measure of suggesting the transgression of a boundary, or separation of opposite categories such as art/life. In effect two distinct domains that either communicate or are held separate are created in the moment of this transgression. Theatricality suggests "apart from the theater" solely to reestablish the oppositions reality/unreality, theater/novel, that the passage between genres, between art and life, risks effacing. Theatricality, then designates a communication. But is such a generalized theatricality possible . . . where the poles never separate, where all could be designated simply as a game? A theatricality resembling a universal contamination?

In *Pygmalion* Rousseau posits the figure of the artist as the signifier of self. This enables him to theatrically represent one of the redemptive tenets of his philosophy: namely, the triumph of the natural self, even in society. When conditioned by "the state of nature," the self is all-knowing and yet in awe of the sublime existence of knowing. Whereas, displaced in his studio, Rousseau's sculptor sees marble stone as symbol of nature, the natural man remembers figurally an anterior state which has ceased to exist. Therefore, this judgment on man's present state contains an awareness of the originary condition.

¹²⁹ Marion Hobson, "Du Théâtrum mundi au théâtre mentis," *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, 44:167, 379. This quotation was first brought to my attention through its presence in Patrick Mensah, "The Politics of Masquerade" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1991).

The stage thus becomes a *mise-en-abîme* of Rousseau's life, a phenomenon constructed, like the self, of being and appearance.

In his use of the stage, Rousseau differentiates between l'homme naturel and l'homme artificiel¹³⁰ by means of textual rhetoric which, as De Man states, does not fulfill its promise of completion. The propulsion toward self-examination present in *Pygmalion* is concomitantly embellished by the presence of lyric performance. The attempt to re-create l'homme artificiel, a being able to retain an innate goodness within a system of culture, is first perceived by Rousseau with clarity but is later rejected. The awakening of the truth of self-knowledge is contained in the work's conclusion. According to Rousseau, although alienation necessarily involves the distinction of the individual self from the public, it is always at the expense of others and of one's own true nature. Narcissistic bonding, an assimilation with the coveted object, entails a deeply subjective identification with the wounding event of creation. In this story of the artist and the perfected artwork, the statue is the reflection of Pygmalion's desire and functions as a living mirror of the artist himself. She is visualized as the woman the sculptor desires her to become yet is subject to those conditions of perfectibility inherent in this desire. The image of self as created art can be likened to that of a portrait in a mirror.

Although Pygmalion rejects the temptation to possess the artwork just as the totalizing, narcissistic identification is about to occur,¹³¹ I suggest that this rejection actually constitutes a victory of the natural over the artificial self. In its embrace of

¹³⁰ DOI, 3:168.

¹³¹ De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 184.

interiority as a favored category of signification, *Pygmalion* foreshadows the splintering of selfhood Rousseau later realized in *Les Dialogues*.

Starobinski describes Rousseau as playing his life as a work of theater.¹³² In following pages I will examine the notion of theatricality outside the theater as a method of "deconstructing Rousseau." This process implies that theatrical performance may "naturally" suggest its opposite—i.e., the creation of a nontheatrical space, another aesthetic genre or "reality." In other words, just as Rousseau's "real" experiences are involuntarily theatrical (such as his attempt to deposit a copy of *Les Dialogues* on the altar of Notre Dame and to excel in operatic composition by debating Rameau), Rousseau's theatrical performances suggest the presence of real moral issues at stake. This type of theatricality suggests a reign of generalized theatricality in public life, and in so being, exists as nonreality¹³³ in the sense of the distinction normally accorded "the theater." For the spectator, Rousseau's works of lyric representation thus insist upon a transmutation of boundaries which symbolize multiple dimensions of reading.

HISTORY OF THE LIBRETTO

Pygmalion's uniqueness both as play and as staged libretto lies partly in the fact that its principal dramatic conflict issues from the psychology of the principal protagonist. My reading has attempted to define textual processes of iconization which further define this central issue. The emphasis on the psychological is rare in the performances of lyric tragedy on the French opera stage of the late eighteenth century, as Walter Rex points

¹³² Starobinski, *La Transparence*, 59.

¹³³ Mensah, "The Politics of Masquerade," 87.

out in his discussion of the librettist Poullain de Saint-Foix's *Deucalion et Pirrha*.¹³⁴

According to Rex, Saint-Foix's libretto and Rousseau's text for *Pygmalion* were unique in the late eighteenth century for their revealed emphasis on psychological aspects of character as fulfilling primary plot structure.

Pygmalion displays constant tension between two systems of signification in order to expose the primary nature of identity and art. The means of representing these antithetical polarities constitutes but one aspect of this reading. Conversely, the understanding of "reading" as the containment of a highly organized system of extratextual codes which exist beyond the framework of a lyric representation indicates thematic links to Rousseau's other literary and political works. De Man states quite clearly that signs must be interpreted if we are to understand the idea they are to convey, and that signs are only meanings derived from multiple processes of representation not only generative, or univocal, in origin, but also through the process of reading.¹³⁵ Thus, signs which can be read in one domain may be deferred to other domains, even those for which they were not initially intended.¹³⁶ In the case of representation on the lyric stage, I suggest that reading be directed toward the performance as text, encompassing its various components of libretto, mise-en-scène, and music.

Through such a reading, I have conceived representation as a process which is tridimensional. This process consists of the spectator's gaze which deciphers a code of

¹³⁴ Rex, "Forgotten French Opera Libretto." 389–400.

¹³⁵ De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 8.

¹³⁶ Marin, "Poussin's *Arcadian Shepherds*," 295.

elements considered overtly "theatrical," and the subsequent revelation of a second, underlying reference to the process of narration.¹³⁷ I claim that processes of self-definition can be read in the lyric work's multiple dimensions. Rousseau's claim, in the *Confessions*, of self-knowledge—"Que chacun puisse connaître soi et un autre, et cet autre ce sera moi"¹³⁸ (That each person can know himself and another, and that this other is myself)—is revealed theatrically through the rhetoric, stage action, and music of *Pygmalion* to a public Rousseau assumes is desirous of knowing. On the level of performance as well as of rhetoric, Rousseau can be said to initiate a self-portrait, one both fragmentary and daring, when at the first falling of the veil the sculptor Pygmalion perceives the illusion of artifice: "Quels désirs ose-je former! quels vœux insensés! qu'est-ce que je sens? O Ciel! le voile tombe, et je n'ose voir dans mon cœur; j'aurais trop m'en indigner"¹³⁹ (What desires dare I form. What passionate wishes! What do I feel. Oh Heaven! The veil falls, and I dare not look within; I would see too much cause for self-reproach). Furthermore Rousseau, in showing himself to be on familiar turf with emerging musical forms such as the symphonic,¹⁴⁰ uses the lyric to posit a moral dimension lacking in the nonmusical theater. As Rousseau relates in his correspondence

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 294.

¹³⁸ *Conf.*, 1:49.

¹³⁹ Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, 12.

¹⁴⁰ As developed in the mid-eighteenth century, the *symphony* is described as midway between the waning baroque and advancing classical periods. It consisted of a four-movement design originating in the *concerto grosso*, trio sonata, and Italian classic overture. The modern four-part symphony, as exemplified in the works of Haydn and Mozart of the classical period, consists of an opening allegro, a lyrical slow movement, minuet and trio, and virtuoso finale. *HDM*, s.v. "Symphony."

to Coignet, whose score he arranged and commissioned, the music supplements the affective circumstances of the actor whose words were spoken. Rousseau's strategy was to create in *Pygmalion* the idea of Greek *melopoeia*,¹⁴¹ thereby creating a genre in which narrative was expressed with a musical speech distinct from opera and in which musical and verbal texts, in essence, echoed each other.

In his treatment of words and music, Rousseau, echoing his earlier critique on theater, sought to emulate the Greeks:

... il serait bien flatteur pour moi, qui suis l'auteur de la musique, de pouvoir imaginer qu'elle approche de la sublimité des paroles; je n'en ai jamais attribué le succès qu'au genre neuf et distingué de ce spectacle, à la supériorité avec laquelle ce grand homme a traité ce sujet, et à celle des talents des deux acteurs de société qui ont bien voulu se charger de le représenter; mais ce n'est point un opéra; il l'a intitulé scène lyrique. Les paroles ne se chantent point; et la musique ne sert qu'à remplir les intervalles des repos nécessaires à la déclamation. M. Rousseau voulait donner, par ce spectacle, une idée de la mélodie des Grecs. .. ; il désirait que la musique fût expressive, qu'elle peignît la situation et ... le genre d'affection que ressentait l'acteur.¹⁴²

... it would be flattering for me, as author of the music, to imagine that it approaches the sublimity of the text; I have only attributed success to the superiority of the work's novel and distinguished genre, to the superiority with which this great man has treated the subject, and to the talent of the two actors charged with its representation. It is not an opera, but a lyric monologue. Words are not sung, and music is used to fill the necessary intervals of its declamation. Rousseau wished to give an idea of Greek *melopoeia*, of its theatrical declamation ... ; he wanted the music to be expressive, to depict the situation ... and the mood felt by the actor.

¹⁴¹ Pougin, *Rousseau—Musicien*, 122. As defined by the *Princeton Encyclopedia*, *melopoeia* is one of three poetic modes by which, in Pound's formulation, language is "charged or energized." *Melopoeia* charges words "over and above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the bearing or trend of that meaning." *PE*, s.v. "Melopoeia" (Timothy J. Materer).

¹⁴² Pougin, *Rousseau—Musicien*, 122.

Rousseau admired the actor's skills yet, as he had elucidated in *La Lettre à*

D'Alembert,¹⁴³ was threatened by the moral corruption of the traditional stage:

On peut, il est vrai, donner un appareil plus simple à la scène, et rapprocher dans la comédie le ton du théâtre de celui du monde: mais de cette manière on ne corrige pas les mœurs, on les peint, et un laid visage ne paraît point laid à celui qui le porte.¹⁴⁴

The stage may be given a more simple apparel and the tone of comedy allied to that of the world, but morals cannot be corrected in this manner; instead, they are painted, and an ugly face doesn't appear ugly to the person who wears it.

In the *Lettre à D'Alembert* Rousseau also expounded upon his familiarity with the inner workings of theater and the suspicion with which he viewed those workings. Rousseau rejected traditional theater, which he claimed was morally impure; yet he also discussed theatrical reform, bringing theater to a level unparalleled in France.¹⁴⁵ For Rousseau, the theater inhibited true community. Rousseau spared from his indictment the tragedy of ancient Greece, wherein music accompanied not only singing but all the arts. His staging of the libretto *Pygmalion* as his *scène lyrique* thus restated his belief in the power of music to add moral dimension to performance.

In my reading of *Pygmalion* as theater, paradigms of the natural, such as the desire to flee from social recognition and fame, suggested both by staging and binary

¹⁴³ According to Rousseau, only the Greeks tolerated the portrayal of such adverse moral conditions because their theater upheld national traditions, linking it to the people. Although Rousseau felt that French theater contained a balance of pleasure and utility, he did not see it as being able to portray morals.

¹⁴⁴ *LAS*, 5:81.

¹⁴⁵ Jay L. Caplan, "1759, 23 April—Clearing the Stage," in *New History of French Literature*, ed. Hollier, 475.

text, can be visualized. These repetitive figures, part of a voracious desire on Rousseau's part to retreat from a world of men into that of the senses—"Il est trop heureux pour l'amant d'une pierre de devenir un homme à visions" (He is too contented for the lover of a stone to become a man with vision)—constitute examples of ambivalence revealed through the sculptor's confrontation with excess, embodied in the statue. As the rhetoric of the scene implies, excess revealed through artifice is counterbalanced by the sentiment of self-failing or lack.

In the staged *Pygmalion*, the artist himself is external to the artwork, a framing device which is revealed via the opposition of text to stage action.¹⁴⁶ "Oui, deux êtres manquent à la plénitude des choses. Partage-leur, O Venus, cette ardeur dévorante qui consume l'un sans animer l'autre"¹⁴⁷ (Yes, two beings are denied fulfillment. Share them, O Venus, this devouring fire which consumes one without animating the other). Pygmalion, the artist, must first confront his creation as being more redeemable than himself. De Man points out that, for Rousseau, this first negation of self constitutes the self's recuperation: "Writing seems to be held up and justified as a way to recuperate a self dispersed in the world."¹⁴⁸ For Rousseau, the act of writing the lyric work forces a process of supplementation, in revealing the self's more profound interior dimension. The oppositional structure of this encounter engenders the "heat" of the drama.¹⁴⁹ The stage

¹⁴⁶ Marin. "Le Moi et les pouvoirs de l'image." 669.

¹⁴⁷ Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, 16.

¹⁴⁸ De Man. *Allegories of Reading*, 171.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

setting thus allows the spectator/reader to envision the artist in his studio "displayed" before a public. Pygmalion thereby becomes an object for the spectator in the way that his statue is for the artist:

Il s'approche du pavillon, puis se retire, va, vient et s'arrête quelquefois, et la regarde en soupirant.¹⁵⁰

He approaches from the pavillon, then retires, comes, goes, and stops intermittently, as he looks upon her sighing.

Pygmalion's quest for self knowledge occurs by means of "self-mirroring" through a process of fixed, maniacal creation. The artwork is the primary means by which the spectator is presented with a primary moment of reading Rousseau's innermost thoughts. Here, Rousseau invites the spectator/citizen to assume the role of the "independent man" as witness with the intent of initiating a process of reading Rousseau, full of unexpected twists. The signifying frame of the stage coordinates this witnessing of perfection, of deification of self, through the creation and consequent mirroring of the artwork. Conversely, Rousseau posits the self as emblem of the earth through its symbiotic balance of the statue as stone—mortal and thus earthbound, yet divinified as the artwork.

The text of *Du Contrat social* is recalled by *Pygmalion*'s signifying structure:

Par de nouvelles associations, corrigeons, s'il se peut, le défaut de l'association générale. . . . Montrons lui dans l'art perfectionné la réparation des maux que l'art commencé fit à la nature.¹⁵¹

Through new associations, let us correct, if possible, the defect of that of the general [nature]. . . . Let us show him in art perfected the redressing of evils that art set in motion contributed to nature.

¹⁵⁰ Rousseau, *Pygmalion*, 7.

¹⁵¹ LCS, 3:284.

The ambivalence suggested by this passage is evoked by the figure of the artwork as living mirror. In seeking after perfectibility through art, Rousseau implies, the risk is great. As De Man states in his essay "The Image of Rousseau in Hölderlin,"

The danger can be seen in Rousseau when he allows himself to be carried away by the intoxication of his own lucidity and declares himself capable of being "sufficient unto himself, like God." . . . In the joy of this triumph, both the individual Rousseau and the revolutionary community that takes its origin from his solitary thinking experience the moment of greatest danger: they risk destruction by a direct confrontation with the sacred.¹⁵²

Only in nature or through processes learned away from society can moral values of use to society be learned, Rousseau states. Terence Marshall concludes that Rousseau may have assumed, rightly, that "the power of art perfected" was insufficient to right the full dimensions of the political problem that art began.¹⁵³ De Man explains that the creation of the artwork elicits truth, justifying its presence, on the part of Pygmalion, as an unattainable desire. De Man reveals that the function of the portrait in Rousseau's play *Narcisse* is similar to that of the role of the statue in *Pygmalion*: it reveals a consciousness which is false yet also serves a corrective function in revealing this falseness to the subject in the hope he may mend his ways.¹⁵⁴

Rhetorically, the statue rejects the sculptor as an imperfect being who is unable to redeem himself totally and thereby achieve divinity through perfection. As discussed in *Le Second Discours* and elsewhere, perfectibility enables man to adapt, to increase his

¹⁵² De Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 42.

¹⁵³ Terence Marshall, "Rousseau and the Enlightenment," *Trent Rousseau Papers* (Ottawa: Université d'Ottawa Press, 1980), 41.

¹⁵⁴ De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, 166.

stock of knowledge, and to perfect the environment for his needs.¹⁵⁵ Looking forward to the lyric rendering of the play *Pygmalion* into the *scène lyrique*, Rousseau reveals an acute awareness of the emotional complexity of this transformative process. My interpretation differs from that of De Man in that I conceive of *Pygmalion* as the objectification of autobiography through the tripolar presence of artist, artwork, and spectator, whereas De Man chronicles Rousseau's loss of confidence¹⁵⁶ as an acknowledgment of his earthboundness, thus effecting binary oppositions:

This retreat, this concentration of being in his own consciousness, this return to the originary I at the moment when this I, although saved from the temptation of the object, risks losing itself in the infinity of the divine parousia—this is Rousseau's profound fidelity to his nature as human being.¹⁵⁷

I posit that *Pygmalion*, through processes of objectification of autobiography made possible as spectacle, transforms what De Man perceives as Rousseau's despair into an exuberant gesture of hope. As spectacle, *Pygmalion* allows the mortality of self represented through the artwork to triumph aided by the critical and compassionate gaze of the spectator. As witness to a scene of the twin processes of oration and artistic creation, the spectator witnesses and absolves the self of Rousseau. Whereas De Man cites the truth of *Pygmalion's* text as being one wherein Rousseau chooses to forgo his status as a demigod, equivalent to a quest which spans his entire life,¹⁵⁸ thereby

¹⁵⁵ *RD*, s.v. "Perfectibility."

¹⁵⁶ De Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 27.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

acknowledging earthboundness, and whereas he states that the rhetoric fails to achieve closure, I state that this closure *is* achieved tripolarly through the dimension of spectacle.

Pygmalion visualized as spectacle achieves status as the embodiment of orchestral music, verbal text, and gesture, arranged by Rousseau and conceived as embodiment. Musical examples of this embodiment are revealed in the lyric structure of the *ritornello* composed by Rousseau. Although, as De Man states, Rousseau is faithful to his human nature, a state prohibiting access to immortality, I argue that immortality is attained through the gesture of performance conceived as embodiment. As such, *Pygmalion* constitutes for Rousseau a gesture not only of humility but also of hope.

Through its tripolar form, it foreshadows the structure of later works, such as *Les Dialogues* (in which works, however, humanness ceases to be associated with hope, instead mingling with paranoia and despair).¹⁵⁹ This gesture of humility is symbolized in the production and staging of *Pygmalion*. By his own admission, Rousseau possessed no moral virtues esteemed as preconditions for natural goodness; Rousseau, like the bourgeois spectator he chose to instruct, was weakened by society.¹⁶⁰ In the embrace of mortality, Rousseau's sculptor may be said to form part of a select avant garde made up of Rousseau himself,¹⁶¹ along with the characters of the *Devin*, Emile, and the legislator.

Although written in 1762 while Rousseau sojourned in Môtiers near the Swiss border, *Pygmalion* was performed at the zenith of Rousseau's literary and political

¹⁵⁹ LD, 1167.

¹⁶⁰ De Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 44.

¹⁶¹ Lynne Layton, "Rousseau's Political and Cultural Revolution" in *Trent Rousseau Papers*, 208.

career. Recognition of the artist's self-discipline, centered on the desire to create both a final monument to nature and a testament of self, is key to the work's interpretation. The romantic vision of the genius, of the exceptional being true to himself, lies at the heart of *Pygmalion*. The representation of the highly individualized self who is able to survive alienation from society and who, in perfecting stone (hence, nature), merges with it as commonly mortal, yet divine, is the work's most powerful symbol. Consequently, the work is testament to Rousseau's concern with internal truth concerning the self as being one of transcendence.

As lyric discourse, the libretto and musical *ritornelli* constitute supplementarity and exist for the purpose of revealing inner feeling. The musical key of D minor designated for noble, solemn occasions is, in turn, intended to portray the inner psychological experience of the artist. As lyric work, *Pygmalion* thus reexamines theoretically a claim made in *Du Contrat social*, that art perfected can correct the wrongs which art originally inflicted on nature. In the scene where Pygmalion aspires to craft a work of "art perfected," the resulting consecration of the artwork informs the entirety of the libretto. By reading emblems of self-definition as a code exterior to the performance, I believe that *Pygmalion* constitutes for Rousseau a final apology and plea.

The performance of *Pygmalion* symbolizes totalization achieved through recognition, via the process of reading, of a series of visual and textual formulations common to theater. These include distinctions between musical text, libretto, the libretto's relation to musical text, and mise-en-scène. I suggest that operations of

narration, the lyric, and autobiography are intertwined as the self is reconstructed in its highest form. This is the reason for retreat: in exile, processes of narration are blurred so as to fuse the entities of author, artwork, and text. In the case of its narrative form, the modality of enunciation conceals the signs of the narrator/author,¹⁶² thus Rousseau's presence is concealed behind that of his artwork, the stage. First described by Rousseau in 1762 as a monologue, *Pygmalion* in its semantic content suggests this displacement. In taking as its model the natural self versus artifice, its production included various historical mutations and references to such Rousseauian indicators as compassion, pity, and most important, *amour de soi*.

Although De Man cautions against taking too seriously the work's chronological status in the corpus of Rousseau's works, he concludes that *Pygmalion* was written as Rousseau was looking back primarily on literary achievement. De Man does not conclude, in "The Image of Rousseau in Holderlin," discussed earlier, that Rousseau took refuge in despair,¹⁶³ and therefore sought to elicit pity. I agree with De Man that Rousseau, by the time of *Pygmalion*'s writing, was well aware of mortality; yet my reading finds another dimension, wherein the spectator assumes a role not only as onlooker but as judge. In *Pygmalion*, Rousseau wished the spectator not to pity but rather to commiserate with him by the didactic example of fully experiencing life, of which self-creation mirrored through the artwork served as but one means. Symbolized by the fashioning in marble of the aspired-to self, *Pygmalion*, as work of hope,

¹⁶² E. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 1:3–31.

¹⁶³ De Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 43.

symmetrically complements Rousseau's last autobiographical work, *Les Dialogues*, as work of despair. In this final autobiographical gesture, the rejected self is conceived as misunderstood and an object of scorn and reprobation.

As Rousseau concludes in *Emile* and elsewhere, nature is an originary locus of self-knowing. Rousseau claims that although man's interference in the course of nature causes his corruption, the morality of his actions is contained in his conscience alone. In 1762, during Rousseau's period of exile when he was chased out of France to finally find peace in the Jura mountains on the border of Switzerland, French and Swiss authorities condemned Rousseau's works *Emile* and *Du Contrat social* for their dissimulation of the power of the church in favor of a more "natural" religion.¹⁶⁴ Because of the loneliness of exile and the furor over the publication of these works, the project of *Pygmalion* enabled Rousseau, in Starobinski's words, "to converse with chimeras" while, at the same time, using nature as locus of self regeneration. In its rhetorical intent, *Pygmalion* thus constitutes a praise of nature's healing power while also portraying an indeterminate longing for the perfected self. Even as Rousseau acknowledges belonging to the earth¹⁶⁵ and concedes mortality, in so doing he withdraws into an intensely private oneness. In *Pygmalion*, the characterization of the artist symbolizes a return to the originary "I" of rebirth,¹⁶⁶ via a romantic longing for a new individual worth.

¹⁶⁴ Benoît Mely demonstrates in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Un Intellectuel en rupture*, 119, that the condemnation of Rousseau's two works obscures their implied intent to dethrone individuals in power at that time.

¹⁶⁵ De Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 43.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

In his presentation of the artist as civilized bearer of moral title and responsibility, Rousseau places the lyric persona as standard bearer for the "primitive" element of culture. Resplendent as man of nature, the artist-as-workman engaging in self-determination in an atmosphere of isolation is an individual functioning beyond the dictates of his social milieu. Through Rousseau's pantheistic evocation of the scene of writing, the choice of the artist as persona offers didactic keys to understanding the power of nature present in the artwork. In forsaking the city, amidst lasting visual evocations of the idyllic paradises of earlier writings, Rousseau uses the natural to forge a self in its highest moment of recuperation. As in Rousseau's earlier *intermède*, *Le Devin du village*, the lyric structure of *Pygmalion*, that of the *scène lyrique*, supplants traditional forms. Through such borrowings as his use of orchestral *ritornelli* composed by Coignet, Rousseau indicated his awareness of the practices of contemporary music.

As *scène lyrique*, *Pygmalion* represented a new, hybrid genre. Like *la tragédie lyrique*, it contained elements common to tragedy in that a single serious mood was conveyed; yet unlike French opera of its period, it refused to allow adornments such as *le merveilleux* which would distract from the oratory and inner voice so central to its meaning.

In *Pygmalion* desire is projected toward the image of the self as created work. The composition of marble, fragile yet used for the construction of monuments, is underlying symbol of the work's performance. The moment of spectacle, conceived tripolarly, places the self as *mise-en-abîme*. Selfhood's crowning moment is reflected in the tripolar gaze of artwork, artisan, and spectator. The central point of the drama rests

in the coincidence between Rousseau's real and projected selves. Whereas Rousseau projects through the character Pygmalion the figure of the idealized self, he undermines this projection rhetorically. In summary, *Pygmalion* achieves on stage a *mise-en-abîme* of Rousseau's life and work, a phenomenon constructed, like the self, of multiple layers of being. Conferring on his *scène lyrique* a moral status, Rousseau posited links between the lyric natural and the idealized self, able to transcend mortality.

CONCLUSION

Rousseau scholars have represented Rousseau's indictment of theater as paradoxical, given that he himself was the author of numerous works for the stage. This study has shown how Rousseau's conception of the lyric stage is based on a representational strategy which privileges nature as validating the self. As focus of representation, the presence of nature as healing is imbued in theatrical spectacle through the lyric. The tragic spectacle may generate pleasure, but it also stirs the passions; in contrast, the lyric spectacle is soothing, and through music's soothing effect on the listener, is conducive to virtue. On Rousseau's stage nature is represented as enhancing the individual, both as part of a larger corpus of humankind and in society. Whereas in the early libretti *La Découverte du nouveau monde* and *Les Muses galantes* Rousseau is concerned with the well-being of the self as part of society as a whole, in the later *Le Devin du village* and *Pygmalion* the libretto, staging, and music are used to instruct the spectator on nature and the natural as a medium of self-betterment.

In *La Découverte du nouveau monde*, his first libretto, Rousseau associates the natural with the primitive as locus of alterity. In this earliest lyric representation, situated on an Antillean island, Rousseau places the self, as Enlightened European, at odds with nature, seen as "exterior" to culture. The next topic Rousseau addresses is the development of individual worth; his portrayal of the tribe's ceremonial dances as being conducive to the development of individual worth is discussed at length in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Rousseau's second libretto, *Les Muses galantes*, employs as setting the pastoral, which he designates in his *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* as being between a "pure state of nature" and that of agriculture and war. In turn, man is depicted at his worst and his best. The music for the three acts of *Les Muses galantes* was composed during a period of fourteen months when Rousseau visited Venice. Its harmonies provoked the wrath of Rameau. The libretto of this work is discussed in Chapter Two, but of its music only that of the third act, based on the *Hésiode*, remains.

In the article "Opéra" in *Le Dictionnaire de musique*, Rousseau states that music is most apt to please when it reaches the heart of the individual. Through its influence on the heart or sentiment, music serves as a locus of rebirth, one which springs forth from an originary energy as agent of perfectibility. For Rousseau, this surging forth of power attributed to music is accomplished through the act of representation. As an emblem of self in his four staged works, music is used by Rousseau to elicit an experience of higher truth, displacing the lyric natural with the moral, thereby eliciting closure on the part of the listener. Within these works, Rousseau uses, in the composition and arrangement of his music, theories of accentuation and tonality he himself devises.

Le Devin du village shows Rousseau casting himself in multiple roles. He is, at first, the figure of Colin, ardent lover of Colette, yet attracted to the riches and fortune of the *dame de ces lieux* (lady of the manor). Later, spurning wealth and riches, Colin accepts the more genuine affection of Colette, who is also from the country and of the simple folk. Secondly, Rousseau uses the character of the musician-conjurer Le Devin as one who, like himself, has fathomed the truth of nature. Foreshadowing the later works

Emile and *Du Contrat social*, the figure of Le Devin reconciles nature and the individual as a unity. Whereas, in man's past, nature constituted a first "alienation," nature in *Le Devin* is harmonious and able to reconcile appearance and reality.

In the *scène lyrique Pygmalion*, interior monologue mimics presence as oratory reflecting Rousseau's thoughts on the nature of the self as seen by posterity. In this work, moral and social issues of the alienated state present in the musical-theatrical representation of text and *mise-en-scène* are visualized as the desire to mold in marble stone an artwork representative of the unified self from nature. Confined to his studio, the sculptor Pygmalion achieves on the stage a *mise-en-abîme* of Rousseau's life and work, a phenomenon constructed, like the self, of multiple layers of being.

In both of his later staged lyric works, Rousseau used the lyric stage to cast the self as both represented and representor. As the self which is represented, Rousseau achieves subliminally truths he will later convey verbally. As self which is representor, Rousseau uses music to convey a superior power through the human voice, conceived as organ both of interiority and of conjoinment with humanity as a whole. Even instrumental music was destined to touch the listener's heart through an expressiveness which contained vocality as a source.

I have attempted to demonstrate how Rousseau depicts, through the natural represented on the lyric stage, a continuous metamorphosis of self. In lyric writings as in later autobiographical works, Rousseau represents his innermost self as that which is closest to nature. In the *Confessions*, the association of the earliest state of nature with the primitive before contamination by progress is of importance for it is Rousseau's own

first, "primitive" nature which he conserves through the apparatus provided the staged event. Thus, in *La Découverte du nouveau monde*, Rousseau conceives of himself as a savage seeking gentrification; in *Pygmalion* and *Les Dialogues*, before real and imagined adversaries, Rousseau returns from gentrification to the truth of self conceived as Jean-Jacques.

Just as the success of his first theoretical writing, *Le Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, was achieved in the wake of the rejection of his first musical treatise, *Projet concernant de nouveaux signes pour la musique*, Rousseau's achievement as lyric representor of his theoretical ideas allowed solace following adverse reactions to his social and political theories. Thus, through the presence of the lyric stage, Rousseau remained faithful to his origins.

If by representing the self Rousseau confronted the thoughts of others, he used as a weapon the elusive function of the lyric stage, where appearance, foregrounded through music, could triumph by music. Whereas Rousseau's first works rail against the sciences and the arts as fostering false values, paradoxically, this same theoretical stance privileges the lyric as representational strategy. Throughout his four staged works described in this dissertation, Rousseau insists on music and text as ideal embodiment and on nature as nurturing the individual.

I have shown how the lyric natural in the project of Rousseau espouses a silent dimension, one equally as powerful as his political treatise in that it engages several processes of interpretation. It is a strategy which focuses on the psychological characterization of Rousseau himself and on the judgment of a society of those he

considers his equals. Both are revealed as representation wherein sentiments toward the self and others appear of which Rousseau is not always conscious.

Whereas previous studies, excluding the probing psychological work of Starobinski, refer to many different aspects of Rousseau's character, this dissertation offers an interpretation of lyric works as a means of revealing Rousseau's thought structure, encompassing a career on which much of contemporary Western thought is based. Subsequent to the reaching out of Rousseau studies beginning in the early 1970s to encompass such diverse fields as sociology, ecological criticism, and musicology, this study establishes a reading of Rousseau which is musically enhanced.

Multiple processes of lyric portraiture portray the self of Rousseau as constantly at odds, so that the natural self which frames his identity remains in a state of flux. Whether claiming to instruct or persuade his peers of the self's validity, Rousseau, as this study proves, wages war against the rhetoric of authority on lyric as well as on oratorical terrains. Lyric portraiture thus becomes a dimension of Rousseau's *oeuvre* which, while representing the self as of nature, also presents a dimension different from that allowed in other texts. Aided by colleagues in Europe and elsewhere, I foreground Rousseau's lyric work as a locus of primary investigation. Thereby, it becomes the forum for transforming the individual presence of Rousseau as persona against the backdrop of his lifework seen as a whole. Thus, a purpose of this study has been to show how the verbal text often reveals but one part of a discourse, and that the lyric, by its gesture, both complements and extends the dimension of the whole.

I have tried in this study to show that the entity of the self is not stable. As the producer of multiple texts concerning the self, Rousseau assigns to each a series of messages or encodings not always identifiable to himself yet, nevertheless, communicable to his reader. Whatever Rousseau's consciousness toward them may have been during the period of history in which they were written, the four lyric works and libretti analyzed herein reveal correspondent dimensions of the self as author, reader, and citizen appearing in other texts. Thereby, these works invite a sympathetic, compassionate response on the part of the spectator. Through the lyric dimension, Rousseau is represented as he chooses to be, as a universal and morally sensitive human being.

In adding to present Rousseau studies, this study achieves a portrait of Rousseau from the vantage point of his century and its embrace of musical aesthetics. Through an understanding of Enlightenment debates on opera, requiring a careful reading of libretti, this study frames a revelation--that of a self always in flux and realized as lyric portraiture. Conversely, the emotional charge we as readers receive through reading the lyric Rousseau differs from the critical inquiry such a reading produces. Other investigations, such as Jenny Batlay's study of Rousseau's songs, concentrate on the lyric dimension. I use the lyric to initiate a broad investigation of Rousseau's critical and autobiographical endeavor seen as a whole.

From a new-historicist perspective, Rousseau's place in music history is unique for his composition of both music and text for *Le Devin du village*, wherein he attains a status unequalled in his century, that of librettist composer. An interesting avenue for future research would be comparison of Rousseau's Enlightenment endeavor as librettist-

composer with that of Richard Wagner a century later. In the case of each, the lyric voice is embraced as a language, one exalted as primary within a fully staged representational system. In Rousseau's case, the lyric natural as language represents the self, mirroring its psychological state while dissimulating appearance as a permanent process of decoding.

Finally, this study initiates the investigation into the purposefulness of the lyric stage as a platform for theory. If such a study unveils a hitherto unknown aspect of Rousseau of interest to future scholars, it also concerns the purposefulness and necessity of performance as constituting a world view.

Pamela Diane Gay

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allard, G rald, ed. *Rousseau sur le coeur humain*. Quebec: Le Griffon d'Agile, 1993.
- Apel, Willi, ed. *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972.
- [Anonymous]. *Lyons, vu de Fourvi res*. Lyons: Boitel, 1828.
- Aristotle. *The Poetics*. New York: Modern Library, 1984.
- Audi, Robert, ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Babbitt, Irving. *Rousseau and Romanticism*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977.
- Batlay, Jenny. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les chansons*. Paris: Editions de l'Athantor, 1976.
- Buci-Glucksmann, Christine, and Michel Levinas, eds. *L'Id e musicale*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1993.
- Cassirer, Ernst. *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- . *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. 2nd ed. with Introduction by Peter Gay. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Collissani, Amalia. "Dall'Essai alla 'lettre': Ancora una volta Jean-Jacques Juge de Jean-Jacques." In *Revista Italiana di musicologia*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1989.
- Cranston, Maurice. *The Noble Savage: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1754–1762*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- De Grandval, Nicolas Ragot. *Essai sur le bon go t en musique*. Gen ve: Editions Minkoff, 1992.
- De Hondt, T. Beckett. *A Concise and General Account of the Disposition between Mr. Hume and Mr. Rousseau*. London: 1766.
- De Lorris, Guillaume, and Jean de Meun. *Le Roman de la rose*. Translated by Harry W. Robbins. Introduction by Charles Dunne. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1962.

- De Man, Paul. *Allegories of Reading*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- . *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.
- Delon, Michel, ed. *Dictionnaire européen des Lumières*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1997.
- Dent, N. J. H. *A Rousseau Dictionary*. The Blackwell Philosopher Series. Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 1992.
- Derrida, Jacques. *De la Grammatologie*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1967.
- . *L'Écriture at la différence*. Paris: Seuil, 1967.
- Diderot, Denis. *Essai sur la poésie dramatique*. Paris: Classiques Larousse, 1975.
- Diderot, Denis. *Paradoxe sur le comédien*. Paris: Classiques Larousse, 1972.
- Didier, Béatrice. *La Musique des Lumières*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1983.
- Duchez, Marie-Elisabeth. "Modernité du discours de Jean-Jacques Rousseau sur la musique." In *Rousseau after Two Hundred Years: Proceedings of the Cambridge Bicentennial Colloquium*. Edited by R. A. Leigh. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979.
- Foucault, Michel. *Les Mots et les choses*. Paris: Gallimard, 1966.
- Fuzelier, Louis. *Les Indes galantes*. Livret to music by Jean-Philippe Rameau. Paris, 1735.
- Genette, Gerard. *Figures, III*. Paris: Seuil, 1989.
- Goodman, Dena. *Criticism in Action: Enlightenment Experiments in Political Writing*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Guiet, R. *L'Évolution d'un genre: Le Livret d'opéra en France de Gluck à la Révolution*. Smith College Studies in Modern Languages: XVIII, 1936–37.

- Hazard, Paul. *La Pensée européenne au XVIIIème siècle de Montesquieu à Lessing*. Paris: Boivin & Cie, 1946.
- Hollier, Denis, ed. *A New History of French Literature*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Horowitz, Asher. *Rousseau, Nature, and History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Jansen, Albert. *Jean-Jacques-Rousseau als Musiker*. Berlin: Druck und Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1884.
- Kamuf, Peggy, ed. *A Derrida Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- Kelly, Christopher, Roger D. Masters, and Peter G. Stillman, eds. *The Confessions and Correspondence, Including the Letters to Malesherbes*. Translated by Christopher Kelly. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1995.
- Kerby, Anthony Paul. *Narrative and the Self*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Kisliuk, Ingrid. "Le Symbolisme du jardin et l'imagination créatrice chez Rousseau, Bernardin de St. Pierre et Chateaubriand." In *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford, U.K.: Voltaire Foundation, 1980.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. *Regarder, Ecouter, Lire*. Paris: Editions Plon, 1993.
- Marin, Louis. "Le Moi et les pouvoirs de l'image." *Modern Language Notes* 107:4 (September 1992).
- . "Le Portrait du Roi." Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1981.
- Marshall, Terence. "Rousseau and the Enlightenment." In *Trent Rousseau Papers*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1980.
- Mely, Benoît. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Un Intellectuel en rupture*. Paris: Minerve, 1985.
- Mensah, Patrick. *The Politics of Masquerade: On the Ethical and Epistemological Dilemmas and Debts of Theatrical Language in Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Rousseau, and Contemporary Thought*. Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1991.
- Pergolesi. *La Serva Padrona*. Livret. Paris, 1752.

- Perrault, Charles, Charles de Saint-Evremond, and Antoine-Louis Le Brun. *Textes sur Lully et l'opéra français*. Genève: Editions Minkoff, 1987.
- Portnoy, Julius. *The Philosopher and Music*. New York: Humanities Press, 1954.
- Pougin, Arthur. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau musicien*. Paris: Fischbacher, 1901.
- Preminger, Alex, and T. V. F. Brogan, eds. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Reichenburg, Louisette. *Contributions à l'histoire de La Querelle des bouffons*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1937.
- Rex, Walter. *Attraction to the Contrary*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Le Devin du village*. Livret. Paris: 1754.
- . *Oeuvres complètes, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade*, Vols. I–V. Edited by Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond. Paris: Gallimard, 1959.
- . *Pigmalion*. Livret. Paris, 1778.
- Saïd, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Sebeok, Thomas. *Contributions to the Doctrine of Signs*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976.
- Sennett, Richard. *The Fall of Public Man*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, trans. *Of Grammatology*, by Jacques Derrida. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.
- Starobinski, Jean. *La Transparence et l'obstacle*. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.
- Stone, Gregory. *The Death of the Troubadour*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994.
- Thomas, Downing. *Music and the Origins of Language*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Tiersot, Julien. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. Paris: Felix Alcan, 1920.
- Till, Nicholas. *Mozart and the Enlightenment*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1992.

Tobiassen, Rolf. *Nature et nature humaine dans Emile*. Paris: Boyveau et Chevillet, Presses universitaires d'Oslo, 1961.

Trousseau, Raymond, and Frédéric S. Eigeldinger, eds. *Dictionnaire de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1996.

Whittall, Arnold. "Rousseau and the Scope of Opera." *Music and Letters*, 45 (October 1964).

Woodward, Servan. *Diderot and Rousseau's Contributions to Aesthetics*. New York: Peter Lang, 1991.

VITA

Pamela Gay's critical essays, interviews, and book reviews have been published nationally and translated into French and Italian. While at Berkeley, she was given permission to complete an individual major, choosing as subject of her senior thesis the French writer and choreographer Maurice Béjart. Her reviews and criticism have appeared in such journals as the *New York Times* and are contained in archives including the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and the Civil War Archives of Louisiana State University. In her cross-disciplinary field of French literature and the arts, she has been invited to lecture by UNESCO in Mexico City (1984) and has lectured extensively throughout the United States, at academic institutions on both coasts and at George Washington University, as well as at the University of Calgary and the American College in Paris. Recently, she has authored four essays for *The International Dictionary of Ballet* (London: St. James Press, 1994). Present research interests focus on Rousseau's contribution to eighteenth-century French literature and musicology as well as intersections between the *philosophes* and artistic reform. Conference papers have included the North American Rousseau Association bi-annual conference in Quebec City ("Pygmalion: Prélude to the Dialogues"), the Powers of Poetry conference at the University of Oregon ("Brazil and the Baroque: The Poet as Dreamer and Visionary"), and the GEMCS conference in Newport, Rhode Island ("Rousseau and the Pastorale: Eighteenth Century Ecologies").

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Pamela Diane Gay

Major Field: French

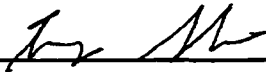
Title of Dissertation: Rousseau and the Lyrical Natural: The Self
as Representation

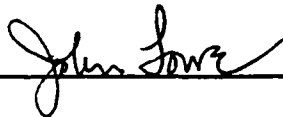
Approved:


Major Professor and Chairman

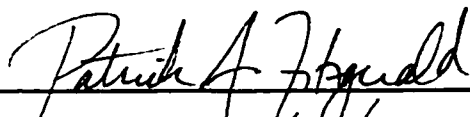

Dean of the Graduate School

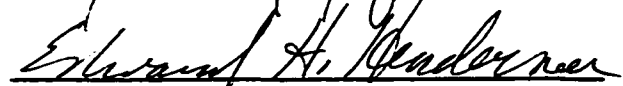
EXAMINING COMMITTEE:





Adelaide M. Russo

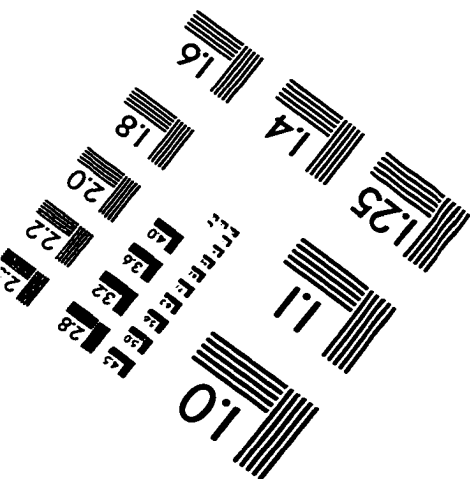
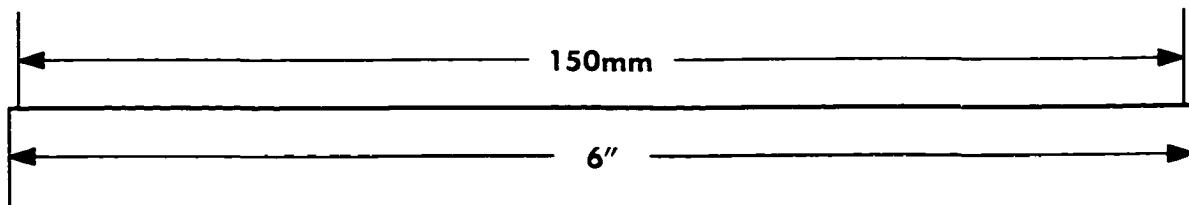
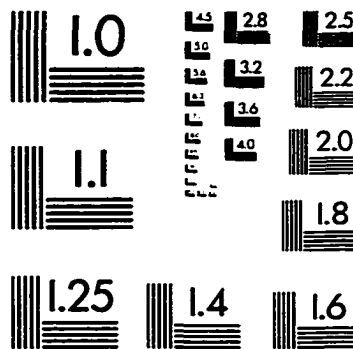
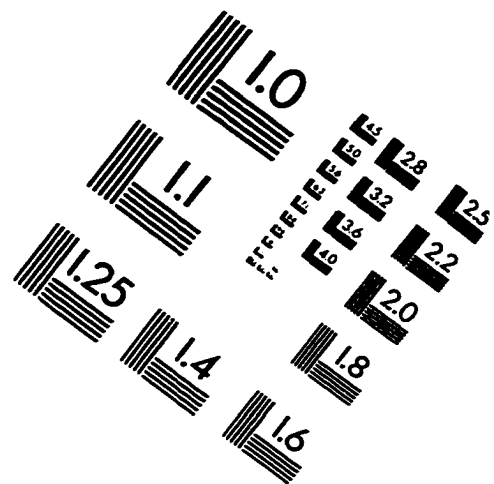
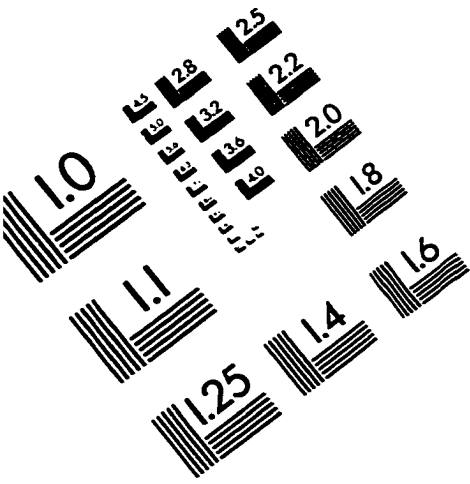




Date of Examination:

14 April 1998

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved

