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The Pursuit of Moral Order: The Religious Foundation of Rousseau's Thought

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Dedication

To Matt and Michelle Beatrice. Yours is everything that I know.

Abstract

The Pursuit of Moral Order: The Religious Foundation of Rousseau's Thought

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Rousseau's religious system is essential to understanding his educational, moral, and political systems. *Order* is the central hub connecting them. Divine order—the order of nature—creates a standard to judge human life. Consequently, Rousseau's entire philosophy is dedicated to reestablishing the natural order created by God and abandoned by humanity. Of course, it is impossible to entirely return to the natural order. Instead, the natural order is a model for all of Rousseau's projects. Nothing that Rousseau proposes is perfectly natural, even if he calls it such. Instead, he artificially produces new orders that approximate nature while never imitating it perfectly. His politics is dedicated to reestablishing the non-contradictory desires naturally present between people despite the new, artificial addition of society; his education is dedicated to making people who live as much as possible without contradictory desires despite being both natural and social creatures. God made us non-contradictory, but our artificial social creations have put us in contradiction with ourselves: the key to good living is to reconcile artifice with nature

and to resolve the contradictions we have made for ourselves. Once Rousseau is placed in his appropriate Genevan religious context, the idea that religious order integrates his entire philosophy becomes plain.

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Introduction

Rousseau's religious system is essential to understanding his educational, moral, and political systems. *Order* is the central hub connecting them. Divine order—the order of nature—creates a standard to judge human life. Consequently, Rousseau's entire philosophy is dedicated to reestablishing the natural order created by God and abandoned by humanity. Of course, it is impossible to entirely return to the natural order. Instead, the natural order is a model for all of Rousseau's projects. Nothing that Rousseau proposes is perfectly natural, even if he calls it such. Instead, he artificially produces new orders that approximate nature while never imitating it perfectly. His politics is dedicated to reestablishing the non-contradictory desires naturally present between people despite the new, artificial addition of society; his education is dedicated to making people who live as much as possible without contradictory desires despite being both natural and social creatures. God made us non-contradictory, but our artificial social creations have put us in contradiction with ourselves: the key to good living is to reconcile artifice with nature and to resolve the contradictions we have made for ourselves. Once Rousseau is placed in his appropriate Genevan religious context, the idea that religious order integrates his entire philosophy becomes plain.

Methodology

The first two parts of this work center around Rousseau's writings. How should we read historical texts? Simply reading is not enough to fully understand because Rousseau's arguments are not obviously or easily reconcilable with each other.[1] Of

[1]This explains Horowitz (among others), who observes that "something about Rousseau's writings has permitted, if not authorized, an astonishing number of disparate interpretations." (1987, 7) I will not bother

course, we could claim that the man attempting to resolve humanity's contradictions was a set of walking contradictions himself. Such a claim is unoriginal, but contrary to Rousseau's own assessment. Possibly, both Rousseau and the literature are correct; perhaps Rousseau is in contradiction with himself in fundamental ways, but Rousseau did not see himself in this way. Perhaps Rousseau did see his contradictions and made the very fact of his contradictions a part of his philosophy. Perhaps the interpreters are wrong and the contradictions are only apparent or linguistic (as Rousseau often claimed). Or perhaps Rousseau was an overly emotional person following the sentiment of the moment, however contradictory to yesterday's sentiments. Whatever may be the case, our goal is to uncover Rousseau's thought—his system of beliefs, however disjointed. If he had a coherent system, let us discover it; if his system was incoherent, let us understand the inconsistency and how he could hold both sides of it at once.

How do we make sense of Rousseau's apparent contradictions? If we understand Rousseau's motives in writing, we might resolve this problem. How does Rousseau's stated set of arguments relate to his real beliefs versus his desired public influence?[2] We need to hash out the difference between Rousseau's system and the parts of the system that he presents to the public in specific contexts; where each statement represents one part of the elephant felt by the blind, we must try to determine how each blind person's report relates to the others (whether they are telling the precise truth, exaggerating for

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to cite other authors on this subject: open up any recent interpretation of Rousseau to its first few pages, and the reader will find some similar statement. This work continues the same tradition.

2It need not be the case that an author either state his real beliefs or aim to influence the public in a particular way. Since any author necessarily has an infinite number of truths to tell, which truths they tell will depend upon the influence they aim to have, insofar as they aim to write the truth. In my judgment, Rousseau does not lie about his beliefs; he merely changes emphases depending on his audience.

effect, lying outright, or any other possibility). The literature suggests three ways to paint this picture, except that it usually resolves two of them into one. Of these two, only one is accurate while the other is inaccurate. What are these three explanations?

The first and most obvious explanation for the different ideas in Rousseau is simply the imprecision of language. No intelligent reader of Rousseau could doubt that he uses language imprecisely. But is his imprecise expression sufficient to explain the differing views between his writings? The main proponent of this view is Masson. For Masson, the relevant information in Rousseau is the feeling, the accent of his argument, rather than the exact expression.[3] Masterful as Masson's work is, he is mistaken. Rousseau's language is simply too contradictory to be the result of imprecision alone. To take the specific case that Masson is explaining as an example, the Savoyard Vicar describes man as the king of the world; meanwhile, Rousseau explicitly discards any such notion in the *Moral Letters*.[4] This is not imprecise language describing roughly the same feeling: it is outright contradiction in two texts that were closely related to each other. Furthermore, Rousseau is explicitly aware of the differences between many of his writings,[5] which does not bode well for the theory that he was primarily concerned with communicating accents or emotional tendencies. We must be on guard against Rousseau's imprecision, but it explains only some of the variance in his presented ideas.

3Masson, Vol. II. 57.

4See 49-53 of this work.

5Speaking of the Profession of Faith and Julie's profession, Rousseau claims that “these two Pieces are sufficiently in accord that one can explain one of them by the other, and from this agreement it can be presumed with some likelihood that if the Author who published the Books that contain them does not adopt both of them in their entirety, he at least favors them greatly.” (*Mountain*, 139) They are “sufficiently in accord” with one another, but not identical.

But this example provides us with a better solution to the problem of Rousseau's imprecision. Rousseau expresses his religious sentiments through fictional characters; insofar as they express slightly different views from Rousseau, it is because they act in character. Julie and the Savoyard Vicar are different people, and Rousseau is different from both of them. Therefore, they ought to subscribe to slightly different religious beliefs. As we shall see, this adequately explains Rousseau's religious contradictions. Unfortunately, this argument—especially regarding the Savoyard Vicar—has been taken as evidence that Rousseau has an “esoteric” doctrine different from his public doctrine, rather than that Rousseau is (at least) a semi-competent novelist. Heinrich Meier makes the lengthiest treatment of the esotericism argument. “To take the Vicar's speech about Natural Religion to be Rousseau's credo is no less mistaken than to want to take the teaching of Natural Religion that the Athenian Stranger presents to his interlocutors, Kleinias and Megillos, in the tenth book of the *Nomoi* for Plato's faith.”[6] Rousseau, Meier argues, never claims the Vicar for his own ideas, and the kind persecution that the section on revealed religion brought down on Rousseau was his motive for covering his beliefs on the natural religion as well. Melzer also suggests that Rousseau's belief that religion is essential for human happiness casts doubt on his claims to the truth of religion.[7] In short, Rousseau's explicit public arguments (especially when made by fictional characters) are not necessarily indicative of his true religious beliefs: he had various motives, including the possibility of persecution, to avoid stating what he really believed.

6Meier, 2016. 224.
7Melzer, 1990. 30. Ftnt. 1.

I will deal with the substantive differences between Rousseau and the Vicar shortly; for now, I am concerned with the esoteric methodology, particularly as set forth by the Straussian school of interpretation. The only book length text on esoteric writing is Melzer's.[8] Essentially, esotericism is when an author writes a work with several different audiences in mind; in order to communicate different messages to different audiences, the author writes their work in such a fashion as to indicate one message to one group and a different message to another. What differentiates esoteric writing from mere prudent argumentation is that the differing communicative intentions are hidden away. As a consequence, the audiences typically break down between those who can pay attention and follow the author's argument (including its contradictions and apparently obvious omissions) and those that cannot or do not pay attention to the argument. Certainly, intentional deception regarding the author's true views is essential to this form of writing. If people were aware of the author's true view, then the tactic would not work. Instead of different people following different lines of argument, everyone would recognize the real belief. Therefore, there must be a conflict between an author's publicly stated views and their private beliefs. Esoteric writing intentionally communicates to two[9] different audiences without one of the audiences knowing that there is a different message being communicated to the other audience, usually to cover the author's less socially acceptable private beliefs in the veneer of publicly acceptable doctrine.

The possibility that philosophers could write in this fashion should not be controversial. It does not take great intelligence to do so. For example: as of 2021, I am a

8Melzer, 2014.

9I limit this to two merely for simplicity, but the number of audiences is theoretically infinite.

fan of Reddit Political Compass Memes. The mods are fans of lots and lots of free speech. Unfortunately, the banning of various other, less morally appropriate meme pages has led to an exodus from those pages to pages with a free speech loving environment—including Political Compass Memes. But the straight up posting of racist memes or comments is censored, which leaves racist users with "humor." A free speech environment favors humor. Of course, everyone can see that not all the "jokes" are jokes. Therein lies the point: what is communicated to the other racists of the subreddit is a racist statement, while to everyone else, the message is ambiguous or perhaps even the lampooning of racism. Though not all of the jokes are jokes, can anyone say with certainty that any one specific joke is not a joke? Esotericism is alive and well. If a bunch of memers can come up with esotericism to avoid a Reddit ban, do we seriously believe that historic philosophers could not do the same for a whole variety of reasons?

Esotericism is something to look out for in philosophical writing. From a methodological standpoint, Straussian interpretation fails because it lacks virtually any methodology. The Straussian treatment of Locke's religion is a good example of this. As Wootton shows, the Straussians oversimplify Locke's religious beliefs both by assuming the influence of Hobbes where it is doubtful by assuming that any argument that apparently contradicts religion is made to inculcate irreligion.[10] Instead of making assumptions, we must follow Wootton's method—a method of referring to journal entries, friends to the author's reports, and other historical evidence (see throughout his introductory essay). Wootton never makes his method explicit, but it is plain enough: if

[10]Wootton, 2003. 68-69.

we would determine the difference between an authors' private beliefs and their public statements, we can do so by referring to evidence that would actually inform us of their private beliefs. Instead of inferring private beliefs from public writings and speculation, we should compare the apparent implications of public writings to private writings or other sources that would likely reveal private beliefs. In Locke's case, we discover that Locke was probably a Socinian of sorts, or at least a denier of the Trinity, but not an atheist as Straussian literature often asserts. Evidence of esotericism cannot stand on speculation from close reading of public writings: it comes from historical inquiry into private journals and private evidence, and comparison of the results of that inquiry with public statements.

Esotericism typically involves two elements: first, it indicates a distinction between private and public beliefs. Second, it indicates the intention to reveal private beliefs to some and public beliefs to others. As such, our very first test should not be of intentions (unless it is extremely easy and clear to do so). Instead, our very first test should be of the private-public dichotomy in opinion. Granting, an author can have different private and public opinions without writing esoterically. But an author cannot write esoterically without distinguishing their private and public beliefs. In that case, the best way to test for esoteric writing is to discover writings or other evidence regarding how the person felt in their “heart of hearts,” as it were, independently of their public writings. This is one of my distinct methodological contributions in this work. I test Rousseau's private beliefs using the reports of his own private writings and the reports of his friends and those that would have known his private views. In searching through this

evidence, I discover no reason to believe that Rousseau's public doctrines differed from his private doctrines. Whatever might be said for esoteric writing broadly—and it certainly exists in some contexts—it does not exist in the context of Rousseau's religion.[11]

Then what are we to make of the alleged contradictions in Rousseau's thought? Especially, what do we make of Rousseau's use of reason and feeling as standards of knowledge? Melzer suggests that the embrace of feeling is purely rhetorical, that Rousseau's argument depends upon reason alone.[12] We will explore the substantial flaws in this argument in the next section and later in the work. For now, we are discussing methodology. Melzer does not cite the *Moral Letters* even once in his entire book. If he had, he would have found Rousseau's explicit definition of reason where he discusses what it can and cannot discover. This is of some relevance in determining if Rousseau depends upon reason alone to prove the central arguments of his philosophy.[13] As we shall

11On the other hand, it does exist in his treatment of Geneva. In both the Second Discourse and in the Social Contract, Rousseau suggests that Geneva is an ideal state. “Happy I am, for every time I meditate on governments, I always find new reasons in my inquiries for loving that of my country.” (Book I, prelude) However, the *Confessions* demonstrates clearly that he did not actually believe this. Speaking of what would become the *Social Contract:* “I saw that all this was leading me to some great truths which would make for the happiness of the human race, but above all for that of my native land, whose ideas of law and liberty had not seemed to me, on my recent journey, as just or as clear-cut as I could have wished; and I considered this indirect method of teaching them these truths the best calculated to spare the pride of the citizens and to secure me forgiveness for having been able to see a little farther in this respect than they.” (377) Geneva did not perfectly understand justice: Rousseau's goal, according to the *Confessions*, was to quietly teach them. Thus, we easily have a difference between privately and publicly expressed beliefs, along with Rousseau's express statement that his goal was to indirectly teach his ideas about justice. Now, we have to imagine that he intended someone to pick up on the imperfections in Geneva after reading his work, or his goal of improving Geneva would not be achieved. Therefore, Rousseau's express statement tells us that his praise of Geneva was esoteric and that, at least in the *Social Contract*, his aim was to spare the pride of his audience and thereby to better teach them by refusing to write about Geneva's flaws directly. Thus, Rousseau's (lack of) treatment of Geneva's failures falls squarely into one of Melzer's categories of esoteric writing (pedagoical-esotericism, chapter 6). That said, because we are not interested in Rousseau's contributions to Genevan politics, this esotericism means little to us.

12Melzer, 1990. 30. Ftnt 1.

13Another view is Grimsley (1968), who claims that “merely subjective feelings could not provide a satisfactory basis for a permanent religious attitude; the promptings of the heart had to be brought into harmony with the lessons of reason.” Therefore, Rousseau engaged in a “deliberate effort to transform personal intuitions into a coherent system of belief.” (xii) This is probably a reasonable psychological

see, the dichotomy of reason and sentiment is not sustainable in the light of Rousseau's explicit (and privately expressed) arguments. Instead, reason is virtually useless without sentiment, because reason without material to reason from can lead us nowhere. The material of reasoning, the premises from which one can draw logical conclusions, are the minimum necessary offering from sentiment. As we shall see, the deepest difference between the Vicar and Rousseau is that the Vicar makes greater use of reason than Rousseau.

But surely this is ridiculous! How can a person believe that mere feelings are a standard of knowledge? How can a *philosopher* believe such a thing? So 21st century sensibilities proclaim. But Rousseau is not of the 21st century. Anachronism is not (good) interpretation: the proper methodology is to relate Rousseau to the common ideas of his time that he was aware of and considered.[14] As I will show in chapter 1, Rousseau's

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explanation of what occurred as a matter of historical fact, but it is not how Rousseau conceives his project. In his conception, sentiment provides the whole basis for reasoning; to use reason to confirm sentiment is impossible, since reasoning properly depends upon sentiment. Instead of gaining a coherent system of belief through reason, Rousseau instead counts on people to have roughly the same sentiments as himself. It is this that elevates his system beyond "merely subjective feelings," for everyone possesses these feelings if they choose not to ignore them. Thus the Savoyard Vicar appeals to Rousseau's heart, Rousseau appeals to Sophie's heart (in the *Moral Letters*), and Julie and the Savoyard Vicar have highly similar religions despite living in fairly different circumstances.

14Skinner, 1969. The primary objection to Skinner's seminal essay on this subject centers around his rejection of eternal ideas, or truths that speak to all times and places. What we discover in the history of thought is "that there are in fact no such timeless concepts, but only the various different concepts which have gone with various different societies." (89) This seems too much to draw from the rest of Skinner's argument. Certainly, we need to take ideas in the context of their time, and that context often shows that they are not dealing with the timeless concept we believed they were dealing with. But to deny timeless concepts or disputes is unnecessary. If there are constants of in human experience, why would reading a text in context deny those constants? On the contrary, doing so would be to deny the need to read a text in the human context.

Some ideas are "eternal," while others are not. Those who advocate for reading historical texts for the sake of eternal ideas are wrong: if the ideas are truly eternal, then they can be discovered today. They are eternal. Why learn Elizabethan English to read in Shakespeare that a Jew bleeds like any other, when a brief look to the contemporary stage shows that all the people of the various religions share similar passions and interests? If our goal is merely to study eternal ideas, going back to old complicated books is not the best way to go about it.

context makes it plain that insofar as Rousseau defended an epistemology emphasizing sentiment over reason, it was in defense of older Calvinist doctrines against a new rationalism that had risen in Geneva by his time. As such, we have every reason to take his sentimental religious assertions seriously.

Not all ideas are eternal: the interaction between the eternal and the ephemeral determines the peculiar nature of any person's thought. This much is true by definition: what else could thinking be, but thinking either about ideas that are eternal, or ideas that are not eternal, or combining ideas that are both? But some of the ephemeral ideas can be forgotten. If it ain't eternal, it is potentially subject to amnesia. If this is so, then many ideas that we take as universal may actually be the result of the combination of universal and purely contextual ideas. How would we test this? One way is to look to insightful thinkers of the past to see how their peculiar context transforms the use of universal ideas. This gives us deeper insight into our own use of the universal ideas, both in showing us that some are less universal than we think, and in showing us that even the universal ideas only have certain implications that we take as obvious because we make assumptions which are less universal and, possibly, less certain.

Skinner was reacting against those that assumed that the wise philosophers all knew the universal ideas, and that the universal ideas were the ideas we understand to be the universal ideas. Thus Marsilius of Padua has (to these scholars) a doctrine of separation of powers that he could not, in fact, have had. (60) Perhaps it is because these authors proclaimed themselves the discoverers of universal ideas that Skinner felt the need to react by denying the existence of such ideas.

Whatever the reason, there is no obvious necessity to deny the existence of universal truths in order to see the need to read philosophical texts in the context of their time. On the contrary: these texts only give us insight into universal ideas present in our own time by their being combined with other ideas that are less universal, but different from our ideas. Any intellectual mediocrity can proclaim the universal ideas: they are universal, everyone who thinks knows about them. A person who offers universal wisdom offers very little.

For myself, I have not gained universal wisdom from Rousseau. I dissociated universal wisdom from (unfortunately also universal) foolishness. I have taken from Rousseau that morality is, essentially, the well-ordered, non-contradictory pursuit of happiness. To be without contradiction is an essential thing in life, perhaps the essential thing. But the typical student of order is not Rousseau: it is Plato, it is the Stoic, it is the Buddhist. A near universal in human religion is the idea that the spirit is superior to the body, that the body is a paltry thing. As Yoda tells us: “luminous beings are we, not this feeble matter!” (Kershner & Lucas, 1980. Since the idea is universal, we need not go to the old philosophers to see this argument in action.)

Rousseau denies this view of the body. Melzer (1990) claims that Rousseau “debunks all of the purportedly 'higher' things in human nature and affairs and, more, actually blames them for causing all of the evils they are supposedly needed to cure.” By doing this, Rousseau “*exculpates* man's *lower*, bodily nature, which had always been falsely condemned, showing to have an unsuspected goodness upon which one might base the unity and happiness formerly sought in the 'higher.'” (26) Rousseau thus represents what Melzer calls “idealistic realism,” where skepticism regarding typical notions of the high leads to the conclusion that false morality has created the very vices it pretends to correct, which in turn leads to the conclusion that the vices were not present naturally so that nature is more trustworthy than the moral claims. This is too extreme: instead, the body is the foundation of spiritual, higher pursuits. If there were no bodily desires, there would be no grounds for making agreements with others, and so no grounds for acting freely via our spiritual nature. Some bodily desire must be legitimate and good for our spiritual nature to

My methodology is to read Rousseau with an awareness of the historical context, along with the identification of the different (fictional) mouthpieces through whom Rousseau expresses his ideas, and with an awareness of the similarities and differences between Rousseau's private opinions and his publicly stated arguments. My primary innovation in this regard is to create precise standards for determining when an author is writing esoterically while implementing those standards in Rousseau's case to conclude that Rousseau was not writing esoterically in his religious beliefs. When he writes something that he does not agree with, it is because he is writing a fictional character; we can sort out what he does and does not believe based on the character for whom he is writing, especially in the case of the Savoyard Vicar.

Substantive Assessment of Rousseau

The basic story of the literature on Rousseau's religion as related to his politics is its lack. The best work on Rousseau's religion by far is still Pierre-Maurice Masson's *La Religion de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. There can be no doubt that he takes Rousseau's religion quite seriously, dedicating three volumes to the subject. He quite adequately reviews the Genevan historical background and elaborates upon Rousseau's religion as expressed by the Savoyard Vicar, arguing that the Vicar's religion is Rousseau's own by

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have any correct use. The body need not be subjugated for the sake of the soul; instead, the soul chooses to subjugate one bodily desire for the sake of another bodily desire. The conflict between bodily desires, in turn, is the product of our being bound by an agreement: we on the one hand wish to keep our agreements, but on the other hand, we wish to escape our agreements while keeping the benefits of the agreement. The disorder that the spirit faces is produced, not by nature, but by society.

Rousseau gives us the concept of order while freeing us from the idea that order means the subjugation of the body. Now, Rousseau is wrong to think that we are naturally well-ordered. I doubt that any God made us that way, and natural selection gives us reason to assume that reproductive motives will conflict with survival motives in certain cases. But when we seek to establish order, we need not do so under the prejudice that the soul is wonderful and the body is terrible. Rousseau is enlightening because he interacts the "eternal" idea of order with a rejection of the standard idea of spiritual superiority to corporeality. He then applies this in his educational theory, and it is for us to see if his application is sound.

an extensive review of Rousseau's writings. Unfortunately, Masson's work fails to speak substantially to Rousseau's political system. Consequently, it fails to bridge the gap between Rousseau's religion and politics. Cassirer attempts to show the relationship between Rousseau's politics and his religion by showing that Rousseau has a theodicy, but spends only a short time elaborating on this theodicy. In doing so, he points out the vague notion that Rousseau puts responsibility to society for evil rather than God, but fails to point out how precisely society accomplishes this function.[15] While one might look for an extension of this view in Neuhouser, he barely discusses the theological aspects of the development of *amour-propre* in his work.[16] Insofar as work has dealt with Rousseau's religion in relation to the rest of his philosophy, it has done so by treating of his theodicy.

But Rousseau's theodicy is not the only part of his religion: the central concept is order[17], and the theodicy only makes sense with this in mind. While Scott[18] very intelligently sees the importance of order for Rousseau's understanding of justice, he relates it to Rousseau's theodicy in a way that narrows the importance of order in

15Cassirer, 1989. 74-78. This is a useful discussion insofar as it recognizes that Rousseau has introduced into our moral vocabulary a new possible place to put blame for moral wrong: neither God nor individuals, but "society." Important as that is, it does little to elaborate on Rousseau's religion as a whole in relation to his morals and politics.

16Neuhouser, 2008. See also James, 2010.

17Because of this, I disagree with Grimsley (1968), who claims that "Rousseau probably does not attach great importance to purely philosophical arguments based on the analysis of the physical world, for he is much more interested in the examination of human nature." (54) Without a doubt, human nature and morality were Rousseau's primary interests. However, as we shall see, the first order that Rousseau perceives in the universe is the order of the universe. It is only this order that permits him to observe that disorder in humanity and to lament it. To claim that this is unimportant is to ignore the letter to Voltaire on the Lisbon Disaster, where Rousseau analyzes Diderot's *Pensées Philosophiques* and concludes that, "on the assumption that motion is necessary, this is, to my mind, the most forceful thing ever said in this quarrel." (*Letter to Voltaire,* 243) Rousseau considered the arguments regarding orderly motion in the universe extremely important.

181992

Rousseau's overall thought. Order, including theological order, is important to Rousseau for far more than his theodicy and provides moral standards well beyond the justification for evil on Earth. Therefore, the best work on Rousseau's central concept is Viroli's.[19] However, Viroli's work deals with the concept of order primarily from the standpoint of society and political questions.[20] As a consequence, he inverts Rousseau's priorities.

> For him [Rousseau], order is not, in itself, a primary value; it is the just political order which is the ground of value since it is the necessary condition for the primary values of liberty, virtue and happiness. It is Hobbes, not Rousseau, who can correctly be described as the philosopher of an unqualified political order, and the political philosophy of the *Social contract* may legitimately be interpreted as the search for a theoretical alternative to the order propounded in *Leviathan.*[21]

If this argument is limited to the political sphere, it is reasonably accurate. However, the concept of order is much wider than politics alone. It extends to the entire universe and to the whole of the divine creation. Consequently, Rousseau's ultimate value is order, but it is not merely political order. Political order is a means to upholding divine order, and divine order includes liberty, virtue and happiness. True, at the end of his life,

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19 2003. Also helpful on the subject of order is Marks (2005). Unfortunately, the problem with Marks' thesis becomes evident in the very first sentence: Rousseau's thought is "a reflection on the natural perfection of a naturally disharmonious being." (1) As Marks notes, "few commentators take seriously the idea that Rousseau thinks nature itself a source of disharmony." (4-5) This is because Rousseau expressly makes it not a source of disharmony, many times. To take just one instance, the Savoyard Vicar makes freedom the cause of humanity's straying from the divine order. Marks largely neglects the Profession of Faith due to his belief that it is an unreliable guide to Rousseau's thought (126; 162-63, ftnt 1). I will argue that the Profession of Faith is a reliable guide to Rousseau's thought. If so, Marks' argument collapses.

In general, Marks argues against Rousseau's express statements in favor of his speculations about what the text must mean. (The earliest examples are 5-7.) Marks fundamentally claims that "Rousseau finds the fundamental cause of disharmony in human nature itself, not in what society or other external forces have done to it," (7) following a conception of nature that comes from the *Emile* as opposed to the *Second Discourse* (3-4). But the *Emile* shows us that agreements are the cause of all the contradictions in humanity. "Take away the primary law of conventions and the obligation it imposes, and everything is illusory and vain in human society…. This principle is of the utmost importance and merits deeper study. For it is here that man begins to set himself in contradiction to himself." (*Emile*, 100) Yet agreements or conventions are unnatural for Rousseau (see *Social Contract,* Book I, Chapter 5). Man "begins to set himself in contradiction to himself" via something unnatural.

20 Viroli, 2003.

21 Ibid., 1

Rousseau would not go so far as St. Augustine, “who would have been content to be damned if such had been the will of God.” No:”my resignation is of a less disinterested kind perhaps, but its origin is no less pure and I believe it is more worthy of the perfect Being whom I adore.” That resignation is a resignation to the will of God that Rousseau suffer here, but that God is just and knows his innocence. “Everything will find its proper place in the end and sooner or later my turn will come.”[22] Rousseau loves the divine order because it brings happiness, if only in the afterlife. This makes the pursuit of happiness and the pursuit of order virtually the same ends. Virtue and liberty are subordinate to both, as means to both. Thus virtue is impossible for Rousseau without religion, and liberty—metaphysical liberty—is largely the potentiality of virtue. Political order serves these ends and is a part of the divine order; while political order is not an end in itself, happiness achieved via divine order is.

I will not neglect the political aspect of Rousseau's doctrine, but I am much more interested in the concept of order in its implications for the education of the individual person. Insofar as I treat of the social order, it will be to understand how the individual person lives within that order. Because the individual person is embedded within a social order, discussion of that social order is necessary; however, my primary interest is in the education of individuals. In short, the plan of this work is to establish Rousseau's religious theory and to connect it to his political theory, but especially with respect to the individually oriented, moral-educational aspects of his political theory. It is understood that Rousseau wishes to imitate the natural order with respect to his political institutions.

22*Reveries*, Second Walk (45)

However, there is a gap in the literature in showing that he imitates nature with respect to individual education as well.

There is too little literature on Rousseau's religion as it relates to his moral and educational theory; what does exist is too strictly related to his theodicy at the expense of the rest of his religious thought. There are instead many works dealing with Rousseau's politics that are proclaim the irrelevance of Rousseau's religious doctrine to the rest of his theory. The best work on Rousseau's moral-educational theory proclaims that Rousseau's religion, while sincere, is merely a psychological need rather than a philosophical foundation: “Rousseau was infinitely more skeptical than either the atheists or the orthodox believers. Since God is unknowable, religion was simply a matter of psychological need and social utility.”[23] Meanwhile, as discussed before, Melzer goes so far as to suggest that Rousseau could be an atheist, proclaiming the importance of religion only to ensure social order, while Meier asserts that the doctrine of the Savoyard Vicar is not identical with Rousseau's own doctrine.[24] As we shall see, Meier's specific claim—that the Savoyard Vicar represents a non-philosophical doctrine, while Rousseau holds to a more philosophical way of life—is almost exactly the opposite of the truth. Instead, it is Rousseau who depends upon the inner light while the Savoyard Vicar depends (in his own mind) upon philosophical reason.

But why can careful scholars account for Rousseau's politics without his religion if his religion is so essential? This is because Rousseau derives principles from the order of nature that are common sensical, with little need for justification due to their obvious

23Shklar, 1969. 108.
24Melzer, 1990; Meier, 2016.

appeal. From the natural order, Rousseau infers a double relation between personal interest on the one hand and the interests of the whole human race on the other. The validity of these principles is a function of their being natural to humanity, but this is a valid measure because nature is intrinsically good as made by God. One can come up with Rousseau's morality (including political morality) simply with reference to the right of each individual to pursue their own well-being combined with the assumed goodness of preserving humanity when possible, which makes the psychological basis of his political system none too complicated. Since Rousseau also assumes a natural orderliness that ensures that true personal interest cannot conflict with the interest of humanity, it thereby becomes possible to account for Rousseau's politics as if he made self-interest alone the basis of moral reasoning (as is Melzer's claim). Hence, it is perfectly possible to discuss Rousseau's system independently of his religion. One only pays the price of misrepresenting the foundations of his system, and thereby misinterpreting parts of it which are less clear without that foundation.

The two sides of the literature do not need a revolution: the cities need not be rebuilt; they need only be bridged together, with such changes as the building of a bridge requires. It is thus unsurprising that the best treatment of individual moral education in Rousseau comes from Shklar. Shklar argues that Rousseau recognizes two ideals (*Men and Citizens*), which are mutually exclusive and impossible, but which act as critiques of the divided, self-contradictory persons then inhabiting Western Europe. Put this way, the relationship between moral education and the concept of order is obvious. So long as we recognize that the impossibility of achieving order is practical rather than absolute,

Shklar's insight is extremely valuable. Rousseau has more than one ideal for well-ordered life: he has more than one prescription for imitating nature. However, Shklar fails to uncover a third order. She studied Rousseau's moral ideals in the light of historical critiques of civilization. Thus, she discovered the man (Emile) and the ancient citizen. The third order is that of the solitary individual, cut off from society. This ideal could not come under Shklar's purview for the simple reason that it is not an ideal; instead, it is closer to a compensation to the individual for whom social life is impossible. Taken together with the other two orders that Shklar so intelligently studies, these three represent the possible ways of ordering an individual without contradictions. As we will see, Emile combines *amour de soi* and *amour-propre* in a non-contradictory fashion; the citizen decimates *amour de soi* for the sake of *amour-propre*; and the solitary individual decimates *amour-propre* for the sake of *amour de soi.*

Meanwhile, Melzer's treatment of Rousseau's political system is quite good as long as his work is purged of the errors resulting from his incorrect treatment of Rousseau's religion. In particular, Melzer understands Rousseau's happiness almost perfectly: “lives are to be evaluated by their degree of existence, which is to say, by their measure of “extent” and especially of unity of soul.”[25] Melzer is correct in arguing that the unity—the orderliness—of our being leaves us with at least three morally acceptable options of how to live. One is the life of solitude, another that of Emile. These two are unrealistic according to Melzer, and so Rousseau counts on the third, which is the

[25]Melzer, 1990. 90.

communally oriented life of the citizen.[26] Melzer's basic point—that the key to the good life is unity of soul—is good scholarship.

The result of Rousseau's doctrine of the pursuit of psychic order, and believing that orderliness is by nature, is his historically eccentric reconciliation of republicanism and natural law tradition.[27] As Melzer correctly understands, the morally high and low in Rousseau—the spiritual and the physical, the morally righteous and the good for survival—are not naturally in conflict. It is society and human vice that creates disorder. Thus, scholars have discovered both natural law and Genevan republicanism in Rousseau. First, Spink makes it very clear that Rousseau's background in Geneva inspired his republicanism. Mason affirms this. Spink refuses to grant that Rousseau knew the Genevan constitution prior to the *Social Contract* (an error corrected by Rosenblatt), but Geneva inspired Rousseau's republican spirit nonetheless. And yet, Derathé is adamant that this not so. Instead, Derathé points to the natural law tradition as the true inspiration for the *Social Contract.* Spink and Derathé agree that it is the natural law tradition that

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26Ibid. 90-96. Contrary to Mezler, a nation of Emiles is not totally unrealistic for Rousseau. He spends much of the first book of the *Emile* discussing how we have abandoned natural education, which consists of a father and a mother being faithful and living in what we would call a nuclear family. In doing this, the need for a philosopher to raise the child is not a need. An instructive comparison: consider the *Government of Poland* to Rousseau's plan for Corsica. It seems to me fairly evident that he intends Poland to follow the ancients, and Corsica to follow the path of Emile. Both follow the General Will, the first from their passion for it or for public favor, the second from their way of life. In other words, the way of Emile is only as unrealistic as the way of the citizen. Rousseau mostly considered both unrealistic, but there is no greater lack of realism for Emile compared to the citizen.

27To avoid accusations of anachronism: Rousseau did not think in these explicit terms, but he clearly dealt with the tradition which we today would call the natural law tradition, while also writing in favor of what we would consider a republican ideal. For the first, observe his dealings with Pufendorf, Grotius, Hobbes, etc. For the second, his ideals of citizenship make this obvious. In dealing with these, he clearly conceives of them, as concepts, as we would, even if he would not use our exact language. Thus, when Viroli (2003) tells us that Rousseau reconciles liberal, social contract traditions with republicanism, he is not wrong. It is more historically precise to speak of the natural law tradition than liberalism, but given the family resemblance (closer to father-son than cousins), we may let this pass.

inspired Rousseau's formal politics, despite the former emphasizing his republicanism. Thus, a great deal of ink has been spilled on both the natural law tradition and the republican tradition in Rousseau's thought, with some conflict and some mutual understanding.[28]

In fact, there is no need for conflict between these two views once we understand Rousseau's application of the concept of order to the political regime. Rousseau can be both a student of natural law theory and a republican theorist because he perceives an intimate and necessary relationship between individual interest and that of the country. Once people have developed to a certain point, once they have certain passions in the soul and certain tastes that produce desires beyond their own, individual strength, people can only pursue their good by uniting with others. Survival without society is impossible: this is the basic premise of the *Social Contract.* Hence the republican emphasis on love of country.[29] Yet no individual enters society expecting to lose by it. Each individual must

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28Spink, 1934 (see also, Mason, 1993); Rosenblatt, 1997; Derathé, 1950. Derathé also denies any Genevan influence: "cette thèse qui fit longtemps autorité ne résiste pas à un examen sériuex et doit être reléguée parmi les légendes qui encombrent encore l'histoire du rousseauisme." ("This thesis of such long authority cannot resist serious scrutiny and should be relegated to the legends that still encumber the history of Rousseaism.) 10.

29One might wonder why this is republicanism rather than mere self-interest. In effect, it is because of the free rider problem. By all means, the social contract is beneficial to every individual, but it is better still if everyone else pulls their weight while I gain all the benefits and do not pull my weight. Thus, the feeling of individual interest alone will lead us to shirk out duties rather than take them up. The citizen takes up patriotism, which makes his private will identical with the General Will. Emile has virtue, which allows him to overcome his interests for the sake of his duty. Of course, the need for virtue implies some conflict in Emile's will, some disorder between man and (legal) citizen. I will deal with this in the course of the work. Suffice it to say here that the republicanism in Rousseau consists in his recognition that individuals pursuing their natural interest alone is not enough to maintain a properly functioning society, even while natural interests (via the natural law tradition) have a sacred place among individual rights.

This makes for a far better definition of republicanism than currently exists among the neo-republican theorists. They see republicanism as the advocacy of a type of negative liberty, freedom from domination (see Pettit, 1999; Skinner, 1998; Viroli, 2002). In my view, Pettit especially shows the flaw in this definition, as he takes Locke for a republican author. Since Locke is typically taken to be the prototypical liberal, we must conclude either that liberalism goes with republicanism quite easily or that Pettit has mis-characterized some important distinction that has historically shown itself between

expect to gain. Hence the relevance of the natural law tradition and its emphasis on the right of self-preservation and the concern for personal interest. The combination of these two traditions into one theory results in the General Will: an agreement between each individual in a society that the collective force of every individual will be used, *not* for the “common good” or the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but rather for the good of *every* individual entering into the agreement. Each individual pledges themselves, not merely to the whole, but to every individual part of the whole. In this, Rousseau imitates lost nature by ensuring that the preservation of each and the whole

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republican and liberal thinkers. By all means, we should be concerned with non-domination rather than non-interference: substantively, the neo-republican theorists have a valid case. But their historical case is shakier. Historical republicanism, I suggest, is not about non-domination: it is about the need for public education to transform natural passion, desire, and interest so as to ensure that individuals will pursue the General Will (or some other form of societal welfare, such as the common good). Liberals believe that the arrangement of institutions can make people good for society without much transformation of their souls, while republicans believe that the soul needs transformation. Thus Rousseau's peculiarity: the soul needs transformation so as to imitate nature. Instead of educating people away from nature like the typical republican theorist, Rousseau educates them towards nature, or at least towards natural order (albeit artificially imitated). Education is not needed to make people unnatural: that happens naturally in unnatural society. Education is needed to imitate natural order in spite of their artificial state in society.

Viroli argues that liberalism is a subset of republicanism (as is modern democratic theory). In a way, all arguments about definitions are inappropriate arguments: proffer a definition and make sure that you use it consistently throughout a work. That is the essential rule of language. The kicker is that we generally wish to 1. use words in the way that others use them while 2. pointing out something of importance when using the word. What Viroli points out is extremely useful: both liberalism and democratic theory are derivative of republicanism, which he defines as “a theory of political liberty that considers citizens' participation in sovereign deliberation necessary to the defense of liberty only when it remains within well-defined boundaries.” The republicans “derived their principle of self-government from the Roman law that 'what affects all must be decided by all.'” (4) From this definition and the historical consideration that these principles reach back well before either liberalism or modern democratic theory, Viroli concludes that, while “republicanism is all too often seen as a province of democratic theory bordering on the large empire of liberalism,” it is “historically more correct to regard both liberal and democratic political theory as provinces of republicanism, based in its classical form on the two principles of the rule of law and of popular sovereignty.” (7)

While this has great importance historically and conceptually, the fact that Viroli is arguing against the grain of common opinion regarding how republicanism and liberalism relate suggests that this is not common usage. I think that my suggestion, that liberalism and republicanism lie of a spectrum regarding their attitudes towards the need to educate the citizenry into morality for the sake of society, does more to both indicate an important theoretical conflict and maintain common usage. Of course, this need not be a definitive objection. However, I will stand by my proposed definitions because I find them useful and because they capture something common in the discourse. Should someone else propose other words to save republicanism and liberalism for a different dispute, I assent with them to change our terms.

coincide.[30] Scholarly division over Rousseau's republicanism versus his dedication to natural law tradition is not accidental: it is produced by not accounting for the natural orderliness of humanity and for Rousseau's wish to imitate that order artificially once nature is lost.

Artificially re-establishing the lost natural order is the essence of Rousseau's thought. But we cannot, contrary to Melzer, simply re-establish any order, any non-contradictory way of living. Rousseau does not adopt a “correspondence theory of

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30Williams (2007) notes that most scholars (such as Melzer, 1990) who make Rousseau out to be a positivist, for whom justice consists in maintaining our agreements, simply fail to “follow Rousseau’s reasoning to its conclusions.” (85) I do not commit this error (and, incidentally, do not see Rousseau as merely a positivist). As Williams puts it, “the point of conventions and laws is not to replace the transcendent idea of justice. The point of conventions and laws is just the opposite: to provide justice with the practical backbone it needs to be a positive force in civic life.” (ibid.) The proper response to both authors is: yes and no. As we will see, there is certainly a divine standard of justice, and the point of the social order is to imitate it as best as can be done. However, our imitations are always imperfect. Since our imitations are imperfect, they are limited. We partially imitate divine justice.

At the same time, Rousseau also endorses agreements as a moral standard, and they have moral validity even when we are forced to violate the divine standards of justice. Thus, true Christians sent off into battle will do their duty and defend their society, albeit without the passion of the Romans or the Spartans. (*Social Contract,* Book IV, Chapter 8.) As we will see, Rousseau expressly tells us that the need to maintain our agreements is a result of the voice of conscience. (*Emile,* 100) We need not accept a merely positivist assessment of Rousseau to accept that agreements are a valid moral standard in Rousseau. On the contrary: it is precisely *because* morality comes from God that we must accept agreements as morally valid. The moral duty to keep our agreements is vouchsafed by God Himself via conscience.

The best overall position between these two is simply this: there is a divine standard of moral order, but our imitation of that order is through an agreement and is intrinsically imperfect. Sometimes, justice with respect to the General Will of the society is not divine justice (see *Political Economy,*). In that case, it seems pretty clear that people should still obey the laws. While artificial agreements absolutely attempt to imitate the natural moral order, they fail; in that case, the agreements nonetheless take precedence. God Himself wills it so.

Masters (1968) understands Rousseau’s conception of agreement well: “although utility is indeed the first source of all contractual agreements which create mutual duties and rights, for Rousseau any contract has another basis in the *loi de la conscience*.” After quoting the *Emile* to precisely this effect, Masters concludes that “mere calculation is insufficient as the basis of *any* morality, whether that based on a natural law binding men as men, or that based on the contract underlying civil society.” (82-83) This is precisely accurate both in its assessment and in its implication of two moralities, one based on natural law, the other based on agreements. In general, Masters’ treatment of natural law and moral law from the civil agreement (77-86) is extremely insightful. He misses that the purpose of morality from agreement is not merely to be enforceable morality, but also to imitate the natural law morality as best as we can, but otherwise provides a fine account.

happiness:" he has a "substantive or formal" standard of morality.[31] Some orders are closer to nature, to God's intended order, than others. The *solitaire* is unsuited to social life and, therefore, to preserving other humans. Their existence is only justifiable under very peculiar circumstances.[32] But Rousseau sees both men and citizens as viable options, as both are consistent with social life. Both are consistent with Rousseau's argument in the *Social Contract* because Rousseau combines republicanism and the natural law tradition into one strain of argument. Desire having surpassed strength, society is necessary, whether one considers ones own interests or if one considers the interests produced by living in the judgment of others. Emile and Cato both need society, and if Socrates does not, he is an inferior person. The artifice which is necessary to construct an orderly individual and the artifice which is necessary to construct an orderly state complement each other. Individuals are constructed to need society, and society is constructed on the premise that individuals need it. All of this holds together in an ordered whole, imitating nature without being nature.

In summary, this work places Rousseau in his Genevan religious context, and shows both how Rousseau's religion is situated in that context as well as in the context of the rest of his philosophy. By challenging the religious rationalism of his age, Rousseau

31Cf. Melzer, 1990. 90.
32Therefore, Polin (1971) is mistaken to claim that *"si paradoxal que cela puisse paraitre, en affirmant, a travers la perfection solitaire de la divinite, la solitude fondamentale de l'homme, Rousseau a fourni le principe d'interpretation decisif de sa politique."* ("as paradoxical as it appears, in affirming the fundamental solitude of man via the solitary perfection of the divinity, Rousseau furnished the decisive principle of interpretation of his politics.") On the contrary: it is not good for man to be alone. This is the fundamental principle of Rousseau's politics, and the solitary individual is, as we shall see, in a sorry (though not necessarily unjustified) state.

also provided a foundation for his moral, educational, and political philosophy in the concept of religious order.

PART I: THE RELIGIOUS ARGUMENT

Rousseau in Religious Context

Genevan Religious History

Let us begin by putting Rousseau in historical context. The story of religion in Geneva beginning with Calvin until Rousseau's time is a story of religious liberalization combined with increasing rationalism. As doctrine became less concerned with dogma and more concerned with moral practice, it also became less concerned with proofs of religion from conscience and inner spiritual testimony and more concerned with “extrinsic” proofs from reason and determinations of historical fact (primarily the presence of miracles). As James Good summarizes it, the 18th century in Geneva was an era in which “hardly a witness for orthodoxy could be found.”[33] But the shift from Calvin to virtual Socinianism was not a linear event: it was a rocky road. While this historical road has been charted before, many Rousseau scholars act as if Genevan Protestantism in Rousseau's time was identical with Calvin's own Calvinism. We should avoid this error.

We start with Calvin's doctrine regarding the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. Inner testimony is identical with conscience. Calvin argues that conscience needs a precise definition to understand its use in judgment:

> For we say that men know and have comprehended in their mind, is Science: so when they have a sentiment of God's judgment, like a second witness, which does not fail to uncover their faults, but puts them before the seat of the grand Judge, and holds them like hell: such a sentiment is called Conscience. It is like a thing mediating between God and men: men have an impression in their heart, that cannot be effaced by forgetting the knowledge they have of good and evil: they are pursued by whatever makes them guilty when they have offended. This is what Saint Paul means in saying that conscience testifies with men, when their

[33] Good, 1913. 278.

> thoughts accuse or absolve them in God's judgment. A simple knowledge could be snuffed out: because the sentiment that draws men to the seat of God, is like a guard to watch and spy on him, and to make open all that would be easy to hide if he could. [34]

As Calvin continues, "truly good conscience is nothing but the inner integrity of the heart."[35] Calvin identifies the heart with conscience, which is the divine mark of a doctrine's truth.

Calvin uses conscience to solve a number of theological problems, including the existence of God.

> There is no doubt that men have a sentiment of the divinity in them, as a natural movement. Thus none can take refuge in proclaimed ignorance, as God has imprinted an understanding of himself in everyone, which he renews in memory and distills drop by drop, so we know from first to last that there is a God, that he made us, that we will be condemned by our own testimony that we cannot but honor, and that we must dedicate our life to obey him.[36]

We know God via sentiment. The same is true of moral law, which in turn testifies to the truth of the Gospels. Even if no one else is on Earth, God commands us to

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34 Car comme nous disons que les hommes sçavent ce que leur espirit a comprins, dont vient le mot de Science: aussi quand ils ont un sentiment du jugement de Dieu, qui leur est comme un second tesmoin, lequel ne souffre point d'ensevelir leurs fautes, mais les adjourne devant le siége du grand Juge, et les tient comme enferrez: un tel sentiment est appelé Conscience. Car c'est comme une chose moyenne entre Dieu et les hommes: d'autant que les hommes ayans une telle impression en leur coeur, ne peuvent pas effacer par oubly la cognoissance qu'ils ont du bien et du mal: mais sont poursuyvis jusques à ce qu'ils se rendent coulpables quant ils ont offensé. Et c'est ce qu'entend sainct Paul, en disant que la conscience testifie avec les hommes, quand leurs pensées les accusent ou absolvent au judgment de Dieu. Une simple cognoissance pourriot estre en un homme comme estouffee: parquoy ce sentiment qui attire l'homme au siege judicial de Dieu, est comme une garde qui luy est donnee pour le veiller et espier, et pour descouvrir tout ce qu'il seroit bien aise de cacher s'il pouvoit. (See Masson, Prof de Foi, nt 2, 237; Calvin, Livre III, Chapitre XIX. Vol II. 193)

35Ibid. 193-94. "*tellement que bonne conscience n'est sinon une intégrité intérieure du coeur*"

36 Nous mettons hors de doute que les hommes ayent un sentiment de Divinite en eux, voire d'un mouvement naturel. Car afin que nul ne cherchast son refuge sous tiltre d'ignorance, Dieu a imprime en tous une cognoissance de soy-mesme, de laquelle il renouvelle tellement la memoire, comme s'il en distilloit goutte a goutte, afin qu quand nous cognoissons depuis le premier jusques au dernier qu'il y a un Dieu, et qu'il nous a formez,nous soyons condamnez par nostre propre tesmoignage, de ce que nous ne l'aurons point honoré, et que nous n'aurons point dédié nostre vie a luy obeir. (Calvin, livre 1, chapitre III.Vol I. 5)

guard against indecency in the heart, along with all impure language and incontinent behaviors: “even if there were no one else on Earth, I am required by conscience to keep the law.” Sin does not merely scandalize others, “but I am guilty before God for having transgressed what what he has prohibited between Him and me.”[37]

Conscience is central to Calvin's theology, as it forms the basis for belief in God and knowledge of moral law. In this, Rousseau is obviously similar. Is Calvin Rousseau's direct source, did Rousseau take Calvin's ideas indirectly, or is their shared belief set coincidental? Rousseau uses Calvin's phrase “between him and me” in several contexts. For example, just after the end of the Profession of Faith, Emile finds “his true interest in being good,” or “in being just between God and himself.” This discovery is independent of any specific revealed religion, since “it is up to him alone to choose” which revelation he accepts if any.[38] Thus, Rousseau agrees with Calvin: conscience assures us of the moral law between God and ourselves. Though there are obviously disagreements between Calvin and Rousseau, there is a definite relationship between their appeals to conscience as a means of knowledge; as we will see, Rousseau understands conscience as the voice of God in the human spirit just as Calvin did.

Calvin founded Genevan Protestantism; but by Rousseau's time, Calvin would not have recognized what his city's religion had become. There were a series of leaders after Calvin, but those relevant to our story begin with Frederick Spanheim. Spanheim became “the leading theological professor at Geneva” in 1626. It was Spanheim “who sounded

37 *“Quand il n'y auroit homme vivant sur la terre, je suis tenu en ma conscience de garder telle loy...mais je suis coulpable devant Dieu comme ayant transgressé ce qu'il m'avoit défendu entre luy et moy.”* See Masson, 323, nt 2; ibid., vol II. 194

38 Masson ibid; *Emile*, 313-314

the first warning note against the newer views of the theological school of Saumur in1635 by writing against Amyraut."[39] This view was contrary to the view of the Genevan Reformed Church, for "Amyraut's view of election ('Amyraldism' [or Saulmurianism]) was an attempt to avoid some of the harshness of Calvinism by affirming a 'hypothetically universal' predestination: Christ's atonement was sufficient for all, though efficient only for the elect."[40] Obviously, such a loose doctrine could never be allowed in Geneva. Spanheim was followed by Francis Turretin.[41] As explains, Turretin

> allowed reason to play only a small part in establishing the divine origin of Scripture. Reason could not serve as the foundation of the faith because it was marred by the Fall. Reason could, however, be used to deduce doctrines that logically follow from clear Biblical passages. By using this methodology, Turretin was able to avoid the rationalistic tendencies of the Remonstrants as well as the extreme fideism of the Enthusiasts.[42]

From Calvin to Francis Turretin, religious rationalism and liberalization had little place in Geneva. This changed with Jean-Alphonse Turrentin, Francis' son. As Martin Klauber notes, "Jean-Alphone's father died in 1687, just before the young Turretin began his formal theological training at the Academy of Geneva. This meant that young Jean-Alphonse studied under theologians with far more liberal tendencies than his father, foremost of whom was Louis Tronchin." Unlike Spanheim, Tronchin "was the most prominent Genevan advocate of the Saumur Academy." Jean-Alphonse also studied under Jean-Robert Chouet, who was a former professor at the Academy of Saumur and

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39Good, 159.
40McNeil, 250.
41Good, 159
42McNeil, 25

“the leading Cartesian among the faculty at the Academy of Geneva.”[43] Detailing these two is important to understanding Turrentin.

We will start with Chouet. Chouet introduced Cartesian philosophy into the Genevan academy. Before this, he taught at the Academy of Saumur for five years. Despite this, Chouet ascended to the chair of philosophy by keeping his controversial views quiet in the days leading up to his appointment. Chouet's Salmurianism was seen as threatening, but his Cartesianism was never seen as a problem. He was hired despite his Salmurianism because Geneva had graver problems, in the view of the Company of Pastors. For, “although theologians at the academy continued to view Arminianism, Salmurianism, and Roman Catholicism as the major threats to the Reformed faith, deism and atheism were beginning to be seen as far more dangerous.” Cartesianism, despite being “a departure from Reformed scholasticism,” was not perceived as a great threat compared to deism and atheism. Since “Chouet found in Descartes an ally for the Reformed faith,” rationalism was able to enter Geneva to defend orthodoxy against worse enemies than itself.[44]

The next great source of Turrentin's religious thought was Louis Tronchin. Tronchin had many students of note, including Pierre Bayle and Jean LeClerc. This makes Klauber wonder “about the orthodoxy of Tronchin himself,” given his apparent influence on students who would “be so critical of the conservative and scholastic form of theology taught at the academy.” Whatever the state of Tronchin's orthodoxy, Klauber

43Klauber, 9.
44Ibid., 40.

summarizes some of Tronchin's views and their influences of Jean-Alphonse Turrentin thus:

> First, Tronchin applied the rigors of reason to virtually every area of theological discussion and believed fully that reason does not contradict, but rather supports Christian faith. Second, his system of natural theology provided an essential basis for his position on special revelation just as Turrentin's would.... Lastly, his openness to dialogue with members of rival Protestant denominations, such as the Lutherans and the Anglicans, and his desire for closer relations with them was an important example of Turretin's desire to forge a union among the three groups.[45]

Tronchin also believed that everything essential in Scripture would be clear to any reader, even a layperson. Indeed, Tronchin could advise a female layperson that simply reading the Bible would be sufficient to make her aware of the differences between the true and the false where essential for salvation.[46] The Bible alone is clear. The need for authority declines as rationalism rises in Tronchin.

Turrentin himself was not a whirlwind of heterodoxy: he was heterodox only with regard to original sin and predestination. Nonetheless,

> it is in large part thanks to his influence, to the example that he gave in his academic courses, to the counsel he gave to his disciplines to expound the fundamental truths of religion from the pulpit and to remain silent about the rest, that all dogmatism tended to disappear in Genevan religious teaching; without being rejected, dogma imperceptibly slid to the back-burner.[47]

Turrentin caused a major shift in Genevan Calvinism, not by advocating for different viewpoints, but by de-emphasizing religious dogma altogether. Turrentin succeeded Tronhin as professor of theology in 1705. Turrentin "virtually abandoned the

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45Ibid., 46-47

46Ibid., 53.

47 "C'est dû en grande partie à son influence, à l'exemple qu'il donnait dans ses cours académiques, au conseil qu'il donnait à ses disciples d'exposer en chaire les vérités fondamentales de la religion et de garder le silence sur tout le reste, que toute dogmatique tendît à disparaître de l'enseignement religieux à Genève; sans être rejetés, les dogmes glissaient imperceptiblement à l'arrière-plan." (Spink, 125)

traditional Reformed doctrine that the Holy Spirit confirms the divine origin of Scripture in the heart of the believer." Further,

> in his attempt to prove as much as possible about the nature of God through the use of reason, he advocated a system of natural theology that was so extensive that it served as almost an independent source of religious knowledge. Although Turrentin did not completely replace Scripture with natural religion, he gave rational arguments equality with biblical revelation, stating that both are in complete harmony.

This basic methodology was a response to what Turretin "considered to be the most formidable challenges to the faith." These were deism and, above all, atheism.[48] In addition to rejecting Scholastic methodology, Turrentin "attempted to prove as much of orthodoxy as possible through natural revelation and thereby formulate a defense of the faith based upon the same category of reason to which the deists, atheists, and Socinians ascribed."[49] To persuade the rationalist skeptics, Turrentin appealed to rationalist methods. He started with natural religion. "Turrentin made a sharp distinction between natural and special revelation in his theistic proofs. He did not rely at all upon special revelation in his theistic proofs, but defined natural theology as those doctrines which can be established through the use of reason."[50] Natural religion is strictly rational; checkmate, atheists!

While Turrentin grants that revealed religion might involve intrinsic proofs from conscience, he emphasizes them very little in practice for the same reason that he emphasizes reason in natural religion—to persuade via the reason common to believers and disbelievers. The Holy Spirit *could* use "internal" means to give us knowledge of

48Klauber, 62-63.
49Ibid., 69.
50Ibid., 76-77.

Christ; “foremost among such internal means would be the light of conscience, which provides man with a sense of justice.”[51] Turrentin argued that “the internal marks” of the truth of Scripture “consisted of the beauty of the doctrines of Scripture, the Bible's accords with reason and conscience, its utility, and the consolation that it provides for believers.” But Turrentin limited his use of these proofs. Even in discussing the Scriptures, “the external marks, consisting primarily of miracles and prophecy, received the bulk of Turretin's attention.” The internal marks may well be persuasive “for the person who is already a believer and is predisposed toward doing the will of God,” but “the nonbeliever or the deist” needs objective proofs. Turrentin does not reject the Inner Testimony of the Holy Spirit, but relies upon reason to convince skeptics:

> he directed his arguments not toward the believer, but toward the deist and the atheist. His apologetic system was not, therefore, a total repudiation of Calvin's since it is directed to a different audience, but it minimized Calvin's arguments to an almost unrecognizable degree. His insistence on such external proofs followed the arguments of Socinus and Grotius quite closely. The Remonstrants in Amsterdam, LeClerc and Limborch, also employed similar defenses of the Christian faith.[52]

In short, Turrentin revolutionized Genevan Calvinism by directing his arguments towards religious skeptics and adopting rationalism to persuade them, whether the subject was natural religion or revealed religion.

Rousseau almost certainly heard Turrentin preach when he was a child; even if he did not, someone else would have preached the same morals for Rousseau to hear. Notes Pierre-Maurice Masson:

51Ibid., 71.
52Ibid., 109-110.

> all the venerable discourses look like brothers: they are drab and almost indiscernable, without the least originality of spirit and the imprint of the city. This is precisely what gave them their social force: they said the same things with the same accent; whomever opened their mouth, it was always the same voice crying in the desert. Without bothering to expound speculative, already embarrassing dogma, they preached the same strict, rather harsh morals, celebrated the austerity and simplicity of past times, denounced and stigmatized rising luxury, anathematized the libertine morals of the great European cities (above all the Babylons of Rome and France), and recalled their audiences to material and moral happiness of "the happy Reformation," while reviving their pride in being Genevan by detesting Catholicism. [53]

Rousseau had likely heard either Turrentin or any of the others preaching the same doctrine in their sermons—a doctrine stressing virtue over theological hair-splitting while condemning luxury. No doubt, these were some seeds of Rousseau's thought.

As the foregoing suggests, Turrentin had a massive influence on religion in Geneva. Despite his tact in introducing his views, "still his teachings gained such influence that in a few years [by 1703] it became possible to abolish subscription to the Consensus."[54] As of June 15th, 1725, "only subscription to the Old and New Testament and to Calvin's catechism as their summary was required." Good's evaluative slant is typical of him:

> alas, the movement to a lower creed did not stop here.... [T]he trend was not only away from Calvinism, but from all orthodoxy; and this gathered momentum as the

53 "Tous ces vénérables discours ont cette qualité de se ressembler comme des frères: ce sont des ouevres grises et presque indiscernables, ou l'on sent moins l'originalité d'une âme et d'un talent que l'empreinte de la cité. Et c'est la précisément ce qui dut faire leur force sociale: ils disaient les mêmes choses avec le même accent; quel que fut celui qui ouvrit la bouche, c'était toujours la même voix qui criait dans le désert. Sans s'attarder a exposer des dogmes tout spéculatifs, et déjà gênants, ils prêchaient une morale stricte et un peu âpre, célébraient l'austérité et la simplicité des moeurs d'autrefois, dénonçaient et fletrissaient le luxe naissant, anathématisaient le libertinage des grandes cités européennes, et surtout des Babylones romaine et française, rappelaient à leurs auditeurs la félicité matérielle et morale que leur avait value "la bienheureuse Reformation," et ravivaient chez eux, avec la détestation du papisme, l'orgueil d'être genevois." (Masson, vol 1, 27-28)

54 Good, 174.

> years rolled on. Turrentin's mistake was in attacking the old Calvinism so severely as to start an influence that ultimately led to the undermining of all orthodoxy.[55]

The most important leader after Turrentin is Jacob Vernet, who “became the theological leader of Geneva for a half a century” after Turrentin's death.[56] Indeed, Vernet “took great pains to acknowledge his debt to his mentor,” Turrentin. It was particularly through his views of “accommodation”—the extent to which the Bible accommodates for its audience to the level of their knowledge and ethical advancement—that Turrentin influenced the next generation, with Vernet's “denigration of the Old Testament” being an example of such accommodation.[57] Vernet denied the Trinity, Original Sin, and the divinity of Christ, although he granted that Christ was above men and angels.[58] Vernet was exceptionally liberal. Klauber summarizes well:

> in the next generation, [Turrentin's] successors, such as Jacob Vernet, who succeeded Turrentin as a professor of theology at the academy, would adopt Turrentin's use of reason in theology. They would also apply it to traditional areas of theology that had been preserved from the scrutiny of reason because they were deemed “mysterious.” The result was that the theologians of mid-eighteenth century Geneva could reject or call into question doctrines such as the Trinity and the Incarnation because they did not square with reason, while the ethical and pragmatic aspects of religious thought could be maintained.[59]

Masson expands the examples of this beyond Vernet to other Rousseau associates. “Turrenttin, who Jean-Jacques could have heard as a child without understanding all the daring innovations, died in 1737; but his spirit stayed alive in Geneva's ministers.”[60]

55Ibid, 178.
56Ibid., 282.
57Klauber, 140.
58ibid., ftnt 12, 195; Good, 284
59Klauber, 191.
60 “Turrenttin, que Jean-Jacques enfant avait pu entendre prêcher, sans en comprendre alors toutes les hardiesses novatrices, était mort en 1737; mais son espirit restait vivant chez les ministres de Genève.” (Masson, vol 1, 200)

While Rousseau had (in his own words) a “true and profound respect” (*véritable et profond respect*) for Vernet, reading much of and often quoting Vernet's work himself, it was still the case that “Vernet already approached his sixties, and this age differences maybe imposed a certain reserve on the friendship.” Consequently, Rousseau was less reserved with both Paul-Claude Moultou and Jacob Vernes, who were both less than thirty as of Rousseau's return to Geneva.[61] They also held to the liberal theological spirit: “they were a more modern generation, these young pastors that asked only to make an alliance with their age.”[62] Masson elaborates:

> These young philosophers, who were also ministers, were completely un-offended by the anthropology of the *Second Discourse,* the rationalism of the *Letter to D'Alembert*, and Julie's dying words, and were nonetheless quite sincere Christians, though of a sincerity where tradition, race and patriotism supported one another. They felt in any case that “there is more than one way to be a Christian,”and it was time to become “reasonable” Christians. They felt that their Christianity was no longer than of their fathers, or their grandfathers, and it was time to say so.... These ministers of the new school were still, without a doubt, “theologians, but without superstition;” they knew little more quite exactly, or at any rate, never said quite precisely, what they believed and what they did not believe.[63]

> The new generation of pastors was not like the older generations:

> they had not officially renounced the dogmas of their great ancestors; but they were little by little agreed to stay silent on these dogmas; the content of

61 “Vernet approche déjà de la soixantaine, et cette différence d'âge imposera peut-être a l'amitié de Rousseau une certaine réserve.” (ibid., 201-202)

62“d'une génération plus moderne, ces jeunes pasteurs ne demandent qu'a faire alliance avec le 'siècle.'” (ibid., 202)

63 “Ces jeunes philosophes, qui sont aussi des ministres, et qui ne seront scandalisés ni par l'anthropologie du second *Discours*, ni par le rationalisme de la *Lettre à D'Alembert*, ni par les déclarations de Julie mourante, sont pourtant des chrétiens très sincères, mais d'une sincérité où la tradition, la race le patriotisme se soutiennent l'un l'autre. Ils sentent d'ailleurs, “qu'il y a plus q'une manière d'être chrétien,” et qu'il est temps de devenir des chrétiens “raisonnables.” Ils sentent que leur christianisme n'est plus tout a faire celui de leurs pères, ou de leurs grands-pères, et qu'il est temps de l'avouer.... Ces ministres de la nouvelle école sont encore, sans doute, “des théologiens, mais point des supersitieux;” ils ne savent plus tres exactement, ou, du moins, ne disent plus tres précisément, ce qu'ils croient et ce qu'ils ne croient pas. (ibid., 203)

> formulations become more and more empty; and it was the Company [of Pastors] itself that demanded in 1725 that new ministers not "treat in their chairs any curious material without utility that tended to trouble the peace." This meant that most dogmas were "without utility," a decisive blow which hardly attracted attention in the 18th century. In this Christianity, to which the ministers were attached by so many links, and by a tradition so strong, put their essential emphasis on the same things and demanded above all that dogmas prop up morals.[64]

Thus, the new pastors were both religious liberals in that they demanded no dogmas except for those associated with morality, and rationalists in that they emphasized reason and extrinsic proofs for the Scriptures. In both of these respects, Genevan Protestantism had departed from Calvin significantly by Rousseau's time. Calvin emphasized the Inner Testimony of the Holy Spirit: Jean-Alphonse Turrentin effectively relegated it to a footnote. Calvin emphasized dogma: the Company of Pastors sacrificed dogma for peace in 1725, and no one batted an eye. The times they were a changin'.

But all of this runs up against a problem: if the pastors of Geneva had no problem with Rousseau's writings, why did they censor them? Not because they genuinely saw problems with the writings as such. There were two reasons that the pastors felt the need to censor Rousseau. The theological reason was his treatment of miracles. The pastors depended on miracles as their proof of the divine origins of the Scriptures; without the miracles, they may as well have been deists with respect for Jesus rather than Christians.

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64 "non qu'ils eussent officiellement renonce aux dogmes des grands ancêtres; mais ils s'étaient mis peu a peu d'accord pour faire le silence sur ces dogmes; le contenu des formulaires se vidait de plus en plus; et c'était la Compagnie elle-même, qui demandait a ses nouveaux ministres, en 1725, de "ne traiter dans les chaires aucune matière curieuse et inutile et qui tendit a troubler la paix,"—proclaimant ainsi la plupart des dogmes "inutiles," grief décisif, dont on ne se relevait guere au XVIIIe siecle. Dans ce christianisme, auquel les ministres de Genève restaient attachés par tant de liens, et par une tradition si forte, ils ne mettaient plus l'accent essentiel sur les mêmes choses, et demandaient surtout aux dogmes d'étayer la morale. (ibid., 198)

The second reason is that the world knew this: the rest of the world understood Genevan religion for what it was, a liberalized, rationalist system close to deism. To fend off accusations of deism, Genevans had to make some show of their Christianity. Rousseau gave them their chance. Let us first look at Rousseau's treatment of miracles, and then place it in the Genevan context.

Rousseau, Geneva, and Miracles

Rousseau never denied the ontological possibility of miracles, whether as the Vicar or in his other writings; instead, he limited himself to the epistemological impossibility of recognizing miracles if or when they occurred, and saw the need to doubt miracles presented in a dubious fashion. The Vicar wants a miracle worker to change the very face of nature: a miracle of that kind would prove the divine dispensation of the one working them. Short of that, as we will see, the sentimental, inner testimony that exists in the Gospel is what convinces him. Rousseau himself has never seen a miracle: “show me miracles and I shall believe in miracles.” As Rousseau puts it, “I do not even need miracles to be Christian.”[65]

The third *Letter From the Mountain* is essential to understanding Rousseau's view of miracles. There are three methods of proving revelation: the most essential is “from the nature of the doctrine: that is from its utility, its beauty, its sanctity, its truth, its depth, and from all the other qualities that can announce to men the instructions of supreme wisdom and the precepts of supreme goodness.” This proof, being the “the most reliable, and most infallible,” is such that “it bears within itself a proof that makes all others

65Beaumont, 212-213..

unnecessary.” Nonetheless, “in order to be felt it requires study, reflection, knowledge, discussions suited only to wise men who are educated and know how to reason.” The second proof is in the person chosen to announce the revelation:

> their sanctity, their veracity, their justice, their pure and spotless morals, their virtues inaccessible to the human passions, along with the qualities of understanding, reason, mind, knowledge, prudence, are as many respectable indications whose combining, when nothing gives it the lie, forms a complete proof in their favor and says they are more than men.

Yet this can also deceive the good people that take it for evidence of the dictate of God. The final proof of revelation “is an emanation of divine Power, which can interrupt and change the course of nature at the will of those who receive this emanation.” This proof of a divine messenger is “the one that particularly strikes the people, incapable of coherent reasoning, slow and reliable observations, and in all things the slaves of its senses.” But such proofs are equivocal, the least reliable of the three proofs; the miracle may be “apparent or real,” so that only those reasoning from doctrine have an assured sign, “and that consequently only good reasoners can have a solid and sure faith.” Nonetheless, “divine goodness lends itself to the weaknesses of the vulgar, and wishes to give them proofs that work for them.”[66] Miracles, though possible and even apparently real, are the least important proof of divine doctrine.

If God wants to perform miracles, He can do it; however, it is impossible to recognize any miracle as such with certainty.

> Since a miracle is an exception to the Laws of nature, to judge one it is necessary to know those Laws, and to judge one reliably, it is necessary to know them all. For a single law that is not known could, in certain cases unknown to the spectators, change the effect of those that are known. Thus the person who

[66] *Mountain*, 166-167.

> proclaims that such and such an act is a miracle declares that he knows all the Laws of nature and that he knows this act is an exception to them.

A person who does extraordinary things is not the same as a person who works miracles.[67] How might Jesus' miracles be explained, if they were not miracles?

> Enlightened by the spirit of God, Jesus had understanding so superior to that of his disciples that it is not surprising he performed many extraordinary feats in which the spectators' ignorance saw a marvel that was not there. To what extent, by virtue of this understanding, could he act by natural ways unknown to them and to us? That is what we do not know at all, and what we cannot know.

With extraordinary feats like those of Jesus, we must “respect them without making pronouncements about their nature, were a warrant issued against us a hundred times.”[68] Rousseau argues that alleged miracles may well only be apparent “miracles” performed by a Demon rather than God, and then clarifies:

> do not go concluding that I have rejected miracles. No, Sir, I have not and do not reject them. While I have stated the reasons for having doubts about them, I have not dissimulated the reasons for believing in them. There is a big difference between denying something and not affirming it; and I am so undecided on this point that I dare someone to find a single place in all my writings where I am affirmative against miracles.[69]

Rousseau does not affirm the existence of miracles because he does not believe that they can be identified with certainty.

The pastors all saw this in the Profession of Faith, and they agreed with a great deal of his assessment. Wrote Moultou: “your natural religion is nothing other than Christianity well understood, the whole difference is that you prove that which the Gospels send us by authority. You thus differ from the true Christian only in that he takes

67Ibid., 173-175.
68Ibid., 177-178.
69Ibid., 181.

from Heaven what you take from the light of your reason alone." Thus, in spite of the question of miracles, "who thinks like J.C. is His disciple. He would be quite less scandalized still if you rejected the miracles, which certainly are quite far from being demonstrated." But Moultou continues, "this enlightened Christian, my dear fellow citizen, this Christian philosopher, is not the people." They believe in Christianity only because of "the miracles on which it is founded." Consequently, for the people it would cease to be "the most reasonable, the most august of religions, if it ceased to be the most marvelous." Miracles and prophecies, "which are so much wrong in our minds," are "the only means to appeal to the people," without which "they do not know what to believe. Thus why I fear that your work will be dangerous in Geneva, though it will be very good for Paris. Our religion here is only the natural religion, confirmed by miracles, the only reason of the people in matters of religion."[70] Moultou's disagreement with Rousseau consists solely in the fact that Rousseau takes the people to be less convinced than put off by the accounts of miracles in the Gospels.[71] Yet he does argue that miracles are the

70Leigh, X, 156. 15 March 1762. "Votre religion Naturelle, n'est pas autre chose que le Christianisme bien entendu, toute la différence c'est que le c'est que vous prouvez ce que l'Evangile nous enseigne par autorité. Vous ne differés donc du vrai Chretien qu'en qu'il croit tenir du ciel même ce que vous reconoissez ne devoir qu'aux lumiéres de votre raison. Par conséquent un Chretien raisonable qui croiroit pourtant, touts les miracles de J.C. Ne vous refuseroit pas le titre de Chretien; Qui pense come J.C. Est Son Disciple. Il Seroit bien moins Scandalizé encore de ce que vous rejettés des prodiges, qui certainement Sont bien loin d'être demontrés....

"Mais ce Chrétien éclairé, Mon cher Concitoyen, ce Chrétien Philosophe, n'est pas le peuple. Celuy cy ne croit le Chritianisme, que parce qu'il croit aux miracles Sur lesquels il est fondé; et il cesseroit bientot d'être pour luy la plus raisonable, la plus auguste des religions, si elle cessoit d'être la plus merveilleuse. Ces miracles donc, ces propheties qui luy feroient tant de tort dans notre espirit, Si quelque chose pouvoit luy en fére, Sont le Seul point d'appuy du peuple, Si vous les luy otés il ne luy reste plus que des piliers flottants, il ne Scait que croire. Voila pourquoy je crains que votre ouvrage ne Soit dangereux a Genève, (quoy qu'il Soit très bon pour Paris) C'est que notre Religion n'est icy que la Religion naturelle, confirmée par des miracles, Seule raison du peuple en fait de Religion."

71This may represent a confusion on Rousseau's part, since he argues both that peoples are generally unconvinced by miracles and that miracles are the best means to convince the masses. A possible distinction is that healthy publics are unconvinced by miracles while unhealthy publics find them convincing. (See *Mountain,* 166-68) This possibility does not concern us here.

proofs most attractive to the vulgar: it would seem that, for Rousseau, the very proofs most attractive for the vulgar also makes them dubious, where Moultou, also dubious of miracles, nonetheless finds them much more useful in order to promote belief. As Moultou wrote in an earlier letter, while "nothing so strong, so luminous, so true on the natural religion" had ever been written, " I will not dispute with you about revelation; if our opinions are not exactly the same in this regard, they are not strongly opposed..."[72] If this is what Rousseau was censored for, it was a half-hearted censoring indeed.

Other pastors found miracles more essential than Moultou. Turrentin's influence continued so that "with Vernet and the older pastors, rationalism gave birth to extrinsicism."[73] They believed that natural reason could teach all of the essentials of religion, and could be used to interpret the Scriptures as well. The Scriptures were a supplement to natural reason, teaching "the truths which escape our natural penetration."[74] Reason cannot explain the mysteries in Scripture; however, "the truth of the mysteries was established by Jesus Christ's miraculous works."[75] As one of these pastors wrote on the 29th of January, 1765:

> If the proof from miracles has no force, I cannot see Jesus as anything other than a philosopher who better understood and developed the natural religion, and that's all; with no proof of his divine mission, I cannot believe that he was sent by God or persuade myself that he was resurrected and that he will be judge of the world.[76]

72Ibid., 80. 3 February 1762. "Je ne disputerai point avec vous sur ce qui concerne la revelation; si nos opinions ne son pas tout a fair les memes a cet egard, elles ne sont pas non plus fort opposées."
73"avec Vernet et les plus âgés des pasteurs, le rationalisme s'etait borné à 'l'extrinsécisme.'" 135 Spink
74*des vérités qui échapperaient à notre pénétration naturelle.* Vernes, *Traite de la religion chretienne*, quoted in Spink, 135
75"*la vérité de ces mystères est établie par les oeuvres miraculeuses de Jésus-Christ*." Spink, 135-136
76 Si la preuve tirée des miracles n'a point de force, je ne pourrai envisager Jésus que comme le philosophe qui a mieux pénétré et développé la religion naturelle, mais voilà tout; n'apportant aucune preuve de sa mission divine je ne puis le croire envoyé de Dieu, me persuader qu'il est ressuscité et qu il sera le juge du monde. (Quoted in ibid., 137, ftnt 1)

As Spink concludes:

> We easily understand the importance of “extrinsic proofs” like miracles and prophecy in this theology. They could not renounce these proofs, nor admit that reason alone could replace them, with reducing their religion to pure deism: they had no “inner sentiment,” no immediate, intuitive knowledge of the truth of their faith to replace their rationalism.[77]

Thus, Rousseau took less account of miracles and counted more upon conscience as the proof of the existence of God than Genevan religious authorities, particularly in the case of the older pastors. If he had a great critique of the Genevan religious institutions, it was in their dependence upon the miraculous and the prophetic as the mark of religious truth. But this was hardly worthy of censorship or condemnation on its own. On the contrary: Rousseau's dependence on the inner light more than miracles is a return to Calvin. But of course, with the turns that history had taken, a return to Calvin was no longer consistent with Genevan Christianity; without miracles, Geneva would become deist.

So much for the theological reasons to censor Rousseau. But these are clearly not enough. Why could the pastors not simply say what they believed: this man is Christian, but not in the way we are? Why could they not simply agree with Moultou's assessment? Why was it so important, not only to maintain miracles in their own doctrine, but also to condemn the man who disagreed about them?

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77 On comprendra facilement l'importance dans cette théologie des “preuves extérieures,” des miracles et des prophéties. Ils ne pouvaient pas renoncer a ces preuves, ni même admettre que la raison seule puisse les remplacer, sans réduire leur religion au pur déisme: ils n'avaient aucun “sentiment intérieur,” aucune connaissance immédiate et intuitive de la vérité de leur foi pour remplacer leur rationalisme. (ibid., 136-137)

The most evident reason was merely to add to the flame of another work—the *Social Contract.* As Cranston notes, in Geneva, "discussion of *Emile* was secondary to discussion of *The Social Contract*, and although the two books were put together on the agenda [of the meeting of the Petit Conseil], *The Social Contract* was the one that really troubled the rulers of Geneva." This is accurate: looking to the notes on the meeting of the Petit Conseil where *Emile* and the *Social Contract* were condemned, the primary concern was clearly the *Social Contract.*[78] The notes show that the Conseil claimed concern with Rousseau's deism, but there is no elaboration on where he claims to be a deist or what makes him a deist. Rousseau's deism is simply asserted. In contrast, the largest charge against Rousseau is charge 20. It condemns the very specific claims of Book III, chapter 18 of the *Social Contract* as "anarchic and destructive of all constitutions and forms of government." The principles are "destructive of all government, and of ours in particular." While the Petit Conseil claims that Rousseau is a deist, this is clearly just to trump up the charges that they actually cared about—those based on the *Social Contract.*[79] As we have seen, Rousseau's religion was not truly problematic for much of the Genevan clergy; calling him a deist was merely a means to eliminate his political threat.

Not that there was no threat at all in Rousseau's religion. Spink summarizes the pastors' dilemma rather well:

> Rousseau offered them a solid demonstration of the truths of natural religion; he offered them moving passages on the beauty of Biblical morality. His writing is

78Cranston, 1997. 6.

79Annales de la Societé de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, vol 11. 206. This is also Cranston's assessment. Vol III, 6.

> full of protestant principles: dogmatism is rejected; Rousseau searches for dogmas that are clear and related to morals. In the end, they found an eloquent praise of protestant religion. But at the same time, he fought by breaching their apologetics. The pastors were tolerant on principle; they hated dogmatism; they loved Rousseau; they saw in him an ally against disbelief. But could they accept, could they even comprehend, their friend's doctrine, or rather his attitude? Rousseau took the weapons with which they had fought against deism and atheism for fifty years, and offered them in exchange a weapon which, as excessive rationalists, they did not know how to wield.[80]

The Petit Conseil could not simply be neutral towards Rousseau; disputes with Voltaire had already taken their toll on Geneva's pious reputation.[81] The *Social Contract* and the *Emile* were both condemned.

Rousseau's censoring proves, not that Genevans were deeply committed to Calvinism against Rousseau's impious attacks, but that Genevans were clinging to a miraculous thread to convince the world that they were Christian. Rousseau threatened that thread. In historical context, it is very clear that Rousseau's writings were not impious. They were a return to Calvin's emphasis on the inner light of conscience against extrinsic proofs of religion like miracles. If we understand Rousseau's religion in this light, then we go far in understanding Rousseau's place in Geneva. But I have yet to directly address Rousseau's religion beyond the question of miracles. What did he

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80Spink,1934. 176. “Rousseau leur offrait une démonstration solide des vérités de la religion naturelle; il leur offrait des passages émouvants sur la beauté de la morale évangélique. Son écrit est plein de principes protestants: le dogmatisme est rejeté; Rousseau cherche des dogmes clairs et qui ont un rapport avec la morale. A la fin, se trouve un éloge éloquent de la religion protestante. Mais en même temps, il battait en brèche toute leur apologétique. Les pasteurs étaient tolérants par principe; ils haïssaient le dogmatisme; ils aimaient Rousseau; ils voyaient en lui un allié contre l'incredulitê. Mais pouvaient-ils accepter, pouvaient-ils même comprendre, la doctrine, ou plutôt l'attitude de leur ami? Rousseau leur ôtait les armes avec lesquelles ils luttaient depuis cinquante ans contre le déisme et l'athéisme, et leur offrait en échange une arme que, rationalistes a outrance, ils ne savaient manier.”

81Spink, 1934, elaborates on the details in chapter IV. Suffice it to say here that they wished to defend themselves against the accusation of Socinianism, for example that put forward by D'Alembert (though as a complement) in his article on *Genève*.

believe? And how did it fit, not only into the Genevan context, but into the context of his own thought? Let us turn to this subject.

Rousseau's Religion

Rousseau's Religious Epistemology: The Moral Letters

The primary text to refer to to understand Rousseau's religion is the *Profession du foi du vicaire savoyard* in Book IV of the *Emile*. The scene involves a vicar talking to a young Rousseau about religion, not to tell the young Rousseau what to believe, but to give him the kind of guidance that he needed at his troubled age.[82] It is set forward in the *Emile* as an example of how to properly teach your pupil religion. Consequently, the *Profession of Faith* is very comprehensive. However, before we visit the *Profession* in detail, we should start with the *Moral Letters.* The *Letters* were a series of letters written by Rousseau to the woman he loved, Sophie d'Houdetot. While their original intent was (we must suppose) her happiness and improvement, Rousseau uses many of the passages from the *Letters* in the *Profession.* Therefore, I will use the *Letters* to clarify the *Profession* and to identify potential tensions that Rousseau must have been aware of based on the comparison of the two texts. At the same time, they are not the Vicar's statement, but Rousseau's own. It is possible that Rousseau holds different views than his fictional character. If there is a significant difference between the Vicar and Rousseau, the *Letters* are the first place to look. In fact, the primary difference is a difference of religious epistemology: the Vicar confounds reason and sentiment together, while Rousseau depends solely on sentiment. By a remarkable coincidence, this turns out to be a fantastic place to start in understanding Rousseau's religion. After this, we will move on to Rousseau's writings that were aimed at clarifying the *Profession*, including the *Letter*

82Biographically speaking, the vicar is very roughly based on a true portrait; see Cranston, vol I, 62-63

to Beaumont and the *Letters Written from the Mountain,* in order to analyze the primary difference between the *Profession* and the *Letters.*

Reason and the Inner Light

The essential difference between Rousseau and the Savoyard Vicar is epistemic. In order to demonstrate this, I will first discuss the concept of the *inner light* in Rousseau. Rousseau depends entirely on the inner light, while the Vicar confounds reason and the inner light. What is the inner light? All have it who do not completely extinguish it, but some have it more than others. It is a *feeling* or *sentiment* that everyone possesses. For all the terrible mores that peoples have taken up, they have still been able to recognize justice, despite all the authority of religion against it. Therefore,

> there is then in the depths of all souls an innate principle of justice and moral truth anterior to all national prejudices, to all maxims of education. This principle is the involuntary rule based on which we judge our actions and those of others as good or bad in spite of our own maxims, and it is to this principle that I give the name of conscience.[83]

The inner light is a sentiment revealing justice to us. The *Letter to Beaumont* and the *Letters From the Mountain* both give us further elaboration on the inner light. In the former piece, Rousseau claims that "I hold all doctrine to be revealed in which I recognize the spirit of God." This recognition is what defeats the need for human testimony, as "there are other equivalent or superior proofs that dispense with that one."[84] As Rousseau later elaborates, his belief in the extraordinary nature of Jesus is not the product of human testimonies: "I recognize it as a consequence of the Gospel and the sublimity I see in it, without anyone attesting to it. I do not need to have someone affirm

83Ibid., 93.
84*Beaumont,* 214.

for me that there is a Gospel when I am holding it." As Rousseau elaborates, "someone doesn't report to me that the Gospel exists. I see it with my own eyes, and even if the whole Universe maintained to me that it does not exist, I would know very well that the whole universe is lying or is mistaken." Thus Rousseau can answer the question of how many men stand between him and God: "not even one. The Gospel is he document that decides and that document is in my hands. *However it came to be there and whatever Author wrote it, I recognize the divine spirit in it.* That is as unmediated as it can be. There are no men between that proof and me."[85]

Rousseau recognizes the divine spirit in the Gospels: this is his proof of their coming from God. The proselytes of the Savoyard Vicar respond to other Christians similarly:

> we accept Revelation as emanating from the Spirit of God, without knowing how and without tormenting ourselves to discover it. Provided we know that God has spoken, it matters little to us to explain how He went about making himself understood. Thus, believing in the divine authority of the Gospel, we believe that Jesus Christ is cloaked in that authority.[86]

The Gospel emanates from the spirit of God. It is a form of the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. Rousseau's consistent doctrine, in short, is one in which the inner light grounds and affirms reasoning—if it does not entirely replace reasoning—and where the inner light is, in fact, a form of inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. This makes for a reasonable consistency within Rousseau's doctrine as a whole: with Shklar, we can agree that Rousseau is a skeptic insofar as he depends upon reason alone.[87] However, this

85Ibid., 216. Emphasis added.
86*Mountain,* 143.
87Shklar, 108. "Rousseau was infinitely more skeptical than either the atheists or the orthodox believers. Since God is unknowable, religion was simply a matter of psychological need and social utility."

skepticism changes when Rousseau makes reference to his inner light, or his conscience: this gives him a certainty that reason does not provide.

Thus, we can say in advance—not based upon speculation, but upon the documents immediately related to the *Profession of Faith*—that there is a methodological difference between the Vicar and Rousseau. This difference is virtually the opposite of that proclaimed by Meier: instead of Rousseau representing the philosophical with the Vicar representing the un-philosophical, it is Rousseau who depends upon sentiment while the Vicar claims to depend upon reason alone. This is an essential difference, but it is solely one of method: the conclusions to which the Vicar and Rousseau come may well be otherwise virtually identical, in spite of the different methods by which they draw them. To see, we have to compare.

The Profession of Faith

We must begin by identifying Rousseau's plain and explicit religious doctrine. According to Meier, we cannot simply point directly to the Profession of Faith because the Vicar is a character. As Rousseau explicitly tells us the remarks prior to the Profession of Faith, "instead of telling you here on my own what I think, I shall tell you what a man more worthy than I thought."[88] The Vicar might disagree with Rousseau. Yet Rousseau claimed that his beliefs are "more or less [*tel a peu prés*] what I have written down in my 'Profession of Faith of a Savoyard Priest.'"[89] Rousseau and the Vicar are largely in agreement, but we should expect minor disagreements. This possibility is confirmed in the *Letters Written From the Mountain* where Rousseau claims of Julie's

88*Emile*, 260.
89*Reveries*, 55.

profession of faith and the Vicar's that "it can be presumed with some likelihood that if the Author who published the Books that contain them does not adopt both of them in their entirety, he at least favors them greatly."[90] Rousseau's account is that he largely agrees with the Vicar. To understand Rousseau's exact religious belief, we should first understand the Profession of Faith, and then understand the disagreements between it and Rousseau's other writings (particularly those related to the *Profession* in some way). This will allow us to perceive both Rousseau's general theology and his particular areas of disagreement with the Vicar. The Vicar will provide us with the forest of Rousseau's thought while Rousseau's other writings will show which trees he would cut down.

Reason and the Inner Light

The Profession of Faith consists in two halves: the natural religion and the revealed religion. According to the Vicar, natural religion is all that is necessary: "show me what one can add, for the glory of God, for the good of society, and for my own advantage, to the duties of the natural law, and what virtue you produce from a new form of worship that is not a result of mine? The greatest ideas of the divinity come to us from reason alone."[91] For the Vicar, the natural religion is equivalent to the religion of "reason alone." Or so he says—but his definition of his method at the beginning of his argument differs. Instead, the Vicar first answers his own radical doubts by means of the inner light. Unable to remain a skeptic, but recognizing "the insufficiency of the human mind" and the divisions of the philosophers, the Vicar said to himself, "let us consult the inner light: it will lead me astray less than they lead me astray; or at least my error will be my

90*Mountain*, 139.
91 *Emile*, 295.

own, and I will deprave myself less in following my own illusions than in yielding to their lies."[92] We see a contradiction in how the Vicar thinks of his theology and his actual method: he claims to speak for reason, but actually consults the inner light. As the Vicar finally defines his method,

> I am resolved to accept as evident all knowledge to which in the sincerity of my heart I cannot refuse my consent; to accept as true all that which appears to me to have a necessary connection with this first knowledge; and to leave all the rest in uncertainty without rejecting it or accepting it and without tormenting myself to clarify it if it leads to nothing useful for practice.[93]

The sincere heart, and not the convinced reason, is the first standard of judgment. Yet the Vicar continuously confounds his method with that of reason, not once making note of the inner light while discussing reason and its faculties and, "so to speak, [making] certain of myself." On the contrary, at the end of his account of reason that ensures his right to judge religious questions, the Vicar explicitly contrasts reason and sentiment: "I know only that truth is in things and not in the mind which judges them, and that the less of myself I put in the judgments I make, the more sure I am of approaching the truth. *Thus my rule of yielding to sentiment more than to reason is confirmed by reason itself.*"[94] Despite trusting in the inner light, and explicitly contrasting the inner light to reason, the Vicar nonetheless confounds reason and the inner light later on: in short, his methodology seems confused in this point.

Divine Order and Freedom

92Ibid., 268-69
93Ibid., 269-70
94Ibid., 272. Emphasis added.

After taking account of what the rational faculty is, the Vicar makes his assessment of the universe. Everything the Vicar observes is matter, and that matter is either in motion or at rest. Since both options exist, neither is essential to matter, but since motion is an action, it must be an "effect of a cause of which rest is only an absence." Therefore, rest is the natural state of matter.[95] Since there is motion, either a moving thing "is an animate body" or else "motion has been communicated to it." Since the universe is not a large animal moving itself, there must be an external cause to its motion. This cannot be seen, "but inner persuasion makes this cause so evident to my senses that I cannot see the sun rotate without imagining a force that pushes it, or if the earth turns, I believe I sense a hand that makes it turn." Since "the first causes of motion are not in matter," we must go back to a first cause. This cause must have a will, and so

95Ibid., 272. One does well to compare this claim to the manuscript of the *Letter to Voltaire.* Rousseau agrees with the Vicar, but he does not believe that this proposition can be proven via reason alone. Speaking of Diderot's *Pensées Philosophiques*: "I remember that what struck me most forcibly in my entire life, about the fortuitous arrangement of the universe, is the twenty-first philosophical thought, in which it is shown by the laws of probability that when the number of throws is infinite, the unlikelihood of an outcome is more than made up for by the frequency of the throws, and that consequently the mind should be more astonished by the hypothetical duration of chaos than by the actual birth of the universe. –On the assumption that motion is necessary, this is, to my mind, the most forceful thing ever said in this quarrel; and, as for myself, I declare that I know of no reply to it, true or false, that is consonant with common sense, lest it be to deny as false what one cannot know, that motion is essential to matter. On the other hand, to my knowledge no one has ever explained the generation of organized bodies and the perpetuity of seeds in terms of materialism; but there is this difference between these two opposed positions, that although both seem to me equally convincing, only the latter persuades me. As for the former, if someone were to tell me that, with one fortuitous throw of characters, the *Henriade* was composed, I would unhesitatingly deny it; it is more possible for chance to bring this about than for my mind to believe it, and I sense that there is a point at which moral impossibilities are for me equivalent to a physical certainty. Never mind what I may be told about the eternity of time, I have not traversed it; about the infinity of throws, I have not counted them; and my disbelief, however unphilosophical, will, in this, triumph over demonstration itself. I do not object to having what in this connection I call *proof of sentiment* called *prejudice*; and I do not offer this obstinace of belief as a model; but, with what is perhaps unprecedented good faith, I offer it as an invincible disposition of my soul, which nothing will ever succeed in overcoming, of which I have so far had no occasion to complain, and which cannot be attacked without cruelty." (*Letter to Voltaire*, 243) Rousseau makes no pretense of believing based on reason alone: it is "proof of sentiment" that makes him believe that motion is not necessary to matter.

“a will moves the universe and animates nature.”[96] Yet, “if moved matter shows me a will, matter moved according to certain laws shows me an intelligence.” Thus, the universe exists with a purpose, albeit an unknown purpose: the harmony of the parts speaks to the unity of the whole. No healthy mind listening to inner sentiment is persuaded by talk of combination and chance: we must assent to the existence of “a supreme intelligence.”[97] The order of the universe perceived and guided by inner persuasion assures us that a supreme intelligence guides the universe in order.

But there is a single violation of this harmony: “I see evil on the earth.” Despite the fact that man, as the only being that can relate everything to himself, is the king of the earth, nonetheless “concert reigns among the elements, and men are in chaos! The animals are happy; their king alone is miserable!” This disharmony proves the existence of the soul. There are“two distinct principles” within human nature, each in conflict with the other. “If to prefer oneself to everything is an inclination natural to man, and if nevertheless the first sentiment of justice is innate in the human heart, let him who regards man as a simple being overcome these contradictions, and I shall no longer acknowledge more than one substance.” Body and soul are in conflict as two substances that cannot be reduced to each other, leaving the materialists “deaf to the inner voice crying out in them in a tone difficult not to recognize.” This inner voice shows that “something in you seeks to break the bonds constraining it.” Further, “the sentiment of my freedom is effaced in me only when I become depraved and finally prevent the voice of the soul from being raised against the law of the body.” In short, “man is therefore free

96Ibid., 273
97Ibid., 275

in his actions and as such is animated by an immaterial substance." Free will solves the problem of evil, for

> all that [man] does freely does not enter into the ordered system of providence and cannot be imputed to it. Providence does not will the evil a man does in abusing the freedom it gives him; but it does not prevent him from doing it, whether because this evil, coming from a being so weak, is nothing in its eyes, or because it could not prevent it without hindering his freedom and doing a greater evil by degrading his nature.

In fact, "the supreme enjoyment is in satisfaction with oneself; it is in order to deserve this satisfaction that we are placed on earth and endowed with freedom, that we are tempted by the passions and restrained by conscience." Providence willing otherwise would have meant willing a contradiction, giving the reward of self-satisfied restraint to the one who does not practice it.[98] Freedom potentially violates order, but the potential for violation alone produces the possibility of the highest satisfaction of all—the restraint that maintains order.

The person who practices such restraint is assured happiness. "Justice is inseparable from goodness." The nature of God, being all-powerful and, "so to speak, coextensive with the existence of beings," is such that God "could not be destructive and wicked without hurting Himself." Because God is powerful, He must be good. Thus, the justice of God is deduced from His power, "for the love of order which produces order is called *goodness;* and the love of order which preserves order is called *justice.*" God owes humanity "all He promises them in giving them being." Since God gave humanity the idea of a good and the need of it, He thereby promised it them. Written into his own soul the Vicar finds the words: "*be just and you will be happy.*" Since the universe is an

98Ibid., 278-281.

orderly place, the person who is just—who preserves that order—is assured happiness. Anything else would simply be disorderly. Yet the just are clearly not happy in this life. So observing, "conscience is aroused and complains about its Author. It cries out to Him in moaning, 'Thou hast deceived me!'" Since we cannot reject the existence of order, there must be an afterlife to rectify this apparent disorder: "let us be good in the first place, and then we shall be happy." Order and the observed unhappiness of the just proves the immateriality of the soul.[99]

However long this afterlife may last, the dead person only remains the same person after death by the preservation of their memory; therefore, "in order to be actually the same [person] I must remember having been." This memory "will one day cause the felicity of the good and the torment of the wicked." While we live, passion leads us astray,

> but when, after being delivered from the illusions given by the body and the senses, we will enjoy the contemplation of the Supreme Being and the eternal truths of which He is the source; when the beauty of the order will strike all the powers of our soul; when we are solely occupied with comparing what we have done with what we ought to have done—then the voice of conscience will regain its strength and its empire. It is then that the pure delight born of satisfaction with oneself and the bitter regret at having debased oneself will distinguish by inexhaustible sentiments the fate that each has prepared for himself.

Will there be other sources of happiness in the next life? Unknown. But man will be happy in the next life if he does not abuse his faculties in this one, for reasons which are founded "less on the merit of man than on the notion of goodness [the love of order which produces order] which seems to me inseparable from the divine essence." Nor can it be known if the wicked shall be tormented eternally: at any rate, we need not look to

99Ibid., 282-83

the next life for hell, for “it begins in this one in the hearts of the wicked.”[100] There is punishment for the wicked and reward for the good. Otherwise, God's goodness—God's love of order which produces order—would be in serious question.

Morality: Conscience in Society

But how do we do good on Earth? The Vicar's method here is the same as before: “in continuing to follow my method, I do not draw these rules from the principles of a high philosophy, but find them written by nature with ineffaceable characters in the depths of my heart. I have only to consult myself about what I want to do. Everything I sense to be good is good, everything I sense to be bad is bad.” The first of all cares is for oneself, but the inner voice tells us “that, in doing our good at another's expense, we do wrong!” This is because “in listening to what it [the inner voice] says to our senses, we despise what it says to our hearts; the active being obeys, the passive being commands. Conscience is the voice of the soul; the passions are the voice of the body. Is it surprising that these two languages often are contradictory?”[101] The soul speaks the language of justice, and it is to it that we ought to listen to be just on Earth.

Between reason and conscience, it is best to follow conscience, for “conscience never deceives: it is man's true guide. It is to the soul what instinct is to the body.” True, “all the morality of our actions is in the judgment we ourselves make of them,” but this is the judgment of the conscience, not of reason. The judgment of conscience ensures that “the primary reward for justice is to sense that one practices it.” Except for a tiny few who may be completely insensitive to justice, “iniquity pleases only to the extent one

100 Ibid., 283-84
101Ibid., 286.

profits from it; in all the rest one wants the innocent to be protected."[102] And now we finally find conscience defined for practical use: there is "an innate principle of justice and virtue according to which, in spite of our own maxims, we judge our actions and those of others as good or bad. It is to this principle that I give the name *conscience.*" This explains unselfish action, for while all must pursue their own good, only the existence of a moral good explains "anything but the action of the wicked."[103] Conscience clearly exists as a principle differentiating good and bad, rewarding the just for their justice and punishing the unjust for their injustice.

But not all sentiment is conscience: we must "distinguish our acquired ideas from our natural sentiments." Indeed, "the acts of the conscience are not judgments but sentiments." These sentiments are of a dual nature. There are first the sentiments related to the individual: "the love of self, the fear of pain, the horror of death, the desire of well-being." But "man is by his nature sociable, or at least made to become so," and "can be so only by means of other innate sentiments relative to his species; for if we consider only physical need, it ought certainly to disperse men instead of bringing them together." The Vicar continues, "it is from the moral system formed by this double relation to oneself and to one's fellows that the impulse of conscience is born." Knowledge of the good is not innate, but as soon as it is known, it is loved thanks to conscience. "It is this sentiment which is innate."[104] The "moral system formed by this double relation to oneself and to one's fellows" is the foundation of conscience and the voice of nature.

102Ibid., 286-87
103Ibid., 289.
104Ibid., 290.

Unfortunately, conscience "speaks to us in nature's language, which everything has made us forget." Activity in the world stifles conscience: "conscience is timid; it likes refuge and peace." Being banished, "to recall it costs as much as banishing it did." But "one has countless reasons to reject the inclinations of one's heart.... To enjoy doing good is the reward for having done good, and this reward is obtained only after having deserved it. Nothing is more lovable than virtue, but one must possess it to find it so." The world causes natural conscience to flee, to be replaced by other considerations. This leads us back to the question of order, for "there is some moral order wherever there is sentiment and intelligence," whether that order is good or bad: "the difference is that the good man orders himself in relation to the whole, and the wicked one orders the whole in relation to himself." It is by our will that we push ourselves to act according to virtuous merit, which (the Vicar speculates) is why body and soul were united. To raise himself to the happiness of being purely spiritual, "I practice sublime contemplations. I meditate on the order of the universe, not in order to explain it by vain systems but to admire it constantly, to worship the wise Author who makes himself felt in it."[105] Admiration for the divine order makes us more spiritual beings, more inclined to order ourselves in relation to the whole.

The Vicar's natural religion so far has centered upon the concept of order. The Vicar perceives an order in the universe which demonstrates the existence of God, and the nature of God ensures that the one observable disorder—human misery—cannot be a part of His established order. From this we infer freedom, and the right use of that

105Ibid., 291-293.

freedom is to make ourselves one with the order established by God. Doing so may not reward us on this Earth, but since the universe is an orderly place, we will certainly be rewarded in the hereafter. Order pervades the Vicar's entire analysis. Then, the Vicar ends the section on the natural religion by asking God to correct his errors if they are dangerous: “the fact that I act in good faith does not mean I believe myself infallible.”[106] On this note, the subject of the conversation changes.

Revelation

The young Rousseau asks the Vicar about revealed religion. The Vicar was “profoundly persuaded” by natural religion; revealed religion contains “only perplexity, mystery, and obscurity.” But, since the youth's sentiments are unstable, the Vicar is willing to expound his own sentiments to him. As we know, “the greatest ideas of the divinity come to us from reason alone.” But here again, the Vicar confounds reason and the inner light. As he carries on, “view the spectacle of nature; hear the inner voice. Has God not told everything to our eyes, to our conscience, to our judgment? What more will men tell us? Their revelations have only the effect of degrading God by giving Him human passions.” In fact, “if one had listened only to what God says to the heart of man, there would never have been more than one religion on earth.”[107] Justice demands that “either all religions are good and agreeable to God; or, if there is one which He prescribes to men and punishes them for refusing to recognize, He has given it certain and manifest signs so that it is distinguished and known as the only true one.” This must be equally true for the entire human race, for if even one person is ignored, “the God of that religion

106Ibid., 294
107Ibid., 295.

would be the most iniquitous and cruel of tyrants."[108] Revelation needs a compelling reason to be reasonable.

To know more than the natural religion requires "recourse to extraordinary means." The word of others is not sufficient: the natural reason of all is equal, so belief in others depends upon proof. God may speak directly to others, but "I should have preferred to have heard God Himself. It would have cost Him nothing more, and I would have been sheltered from seduction." Miracles are not enough, since miracles are witnessed by men and reported in books written by men. "What? Always human testimony? Always men who report to me what other men have reported! So many men between God and me!"[109] Assessing the veracity of their reports is an absurdly difficult task: it demands Herculean historical efforts to understand the various religions of the world and their reports of miracles, and a great knowledge of the mechanical laws of the universe in order to know which miracles or prophecies are worth believing. We obviously cannot accept every report of every miracle that allegedly takes place, for "there would be more miracles than natural events, and the greatest of all miracles would be if there were not miracles wherever fanatics are persecuted." We should not look to small miracles as evidence of revelation. Instead, "it is the unalterable order of nature which best shows the Supreme Being. If many exceptions took place, I would no longer know what to think; and as for me, I believe too much in God to believe in so many miracles that are so little worthy of Him." The one who causes great changes in nature itself, who shows themselves to be "the Master of nature," would be worth believing;

108Ibid., 297
109Ibid

short of this, “if your miracles, which are performed to prove your doctrine, themselves need to be proved, of what use are they?” Finally, since the claim that God performs miracles is usually paralleled with miracles performed by the Devil, miracles do not prove the divine origins of a messenger.[110] The order of nature is the best proof of God, and His messenger should change that entire order to prove themselves, not some petty little part of that order.

What remains as evidence of revelation is the reasonableness of what is revealed. Revealed religion must “clarify for us the confused ideas which reasoning draws in our mind, but it should also propound a form of worship, a morality, and maxims that are suitable to the attributes with which we conceive His essence on our own.” If revelation instead teaches us absurdities, aversion, terror, or a terrible God, then we should choose to believe the natural religion and disbelieve the revealed religion. If the natural religion is insufficient, it “is due to the obscurity in which it leaves the truths it teaches us.” Thus revelations must be “clear, luminous, and striking by their obviousness.” Revelation must also teach these truths “in a manner evident to man's mind.” In short, “the best of all religions is infallibly the clearest.” God made reason for us to use it, so that “the minister of truth does not tyrannize my reason; he enlightens it.”[111] Revelation must be reasonable and differs from natural religion, never by contradicting it, but only by clarifying it.

There also can be no “obligation to acknowledge” revelation. Miracles are inconclusive, meaning that “this alleged obligation is incompatible with God's justice” because it makes the barriers to salvation “insurmountable for the greater part of

110Ibid., 297-299; also 301-305
111Ibid., 299-300

mankind." Thus, the Vicar rejects any obligation to acknowledge a given revelation, while he otherwise remains in "respectful doubt." The Vicar knows that he is not infallible, and leaves each to judge for themselves. Possibly their judgment is better than his, but it is not his fault that their judgment is not his. Indeed, "if I were a better reasoner or better educated, perhaps I would sense the truth of revelation, its utility for those who are fortunate enough to see against it objections I cannot resolve."[112] But the Vicar's reason is his own, and it cannot convince him of any revealed religion. Reason is not enough to prove revelation.

But per his usual, the Vicar changes his standard of proof and favors the heart over reason, intrinsic over extrinsic proofs: "I also admit that the majesty of the Scriptures amazes me, and that the holiness of the Gospel speaks to my heart." The story of Jesus is clearly written into the human heart: "when Plato depicts his imaginary just man, covered with all the opprobrium of crime and worthy of all the rewards of virtue, he depicts Jesus Christ feature for feature. The resemblance is so striking that all the Fathers have sensed it; *it is impossible to be deceived about it."* Nor could Christ have been invented, for "never would Jewish authors have found either this tone or this morality; and the Gospel has characteristics of truth that are so great, so striking, so perfectly inimitable that its contriver would be more amazing than its hero."[113] Christ's example appeals directly to the natural heart, and his historical existence is plain: this is what makes his revelation believable.

112Ibid., 307
113Ibid., 307-08. Emphasis added.

Christ is believable, but the Gospel is also "full of unbelievable things, of things repugnant to reason and impossible for any sensible man to accept!" Facing this, one must simply "respect in silence what one can neither reject nor understand, and [] humble oneself before the great Being who alone knows the truth." In this, the Vicar remains in an "involuntary skepticism," which is painless since this knowledge is not essential to practice. "The essential worship is that of the heart;" all particular religious institutions are useful institutions of place and country, and are acceptable if they do not preach immorality or intolerance. While preaching morality and teaching his parishioners to love one another, the Vicar would keep the peace without urging anyone to leave the religion they were born into. "While waiting for greater enlightenment, let us protect the public order. In every country let us respect the laws, let us not disturb the worship they prescribe; let us not lead citizens to disobedience."[114] Since revelation is a matter of the heart, let it remain a matter of the heart; if established national religions are conducive to morality and tolerance, they are just and respectable.

All of this, the Vicar tells his "young friend," is "my profession of faith *such as God reads it in my heart.*" It is unwise for anyone to "disturb peaceful souls or alarm the faith of simple people" when "there remains some sound belief among men." In his skepticism, the young man must judge the Vicar's argument for himself; therefore, "begin by putting your conscience in a condition where it wishes to be enlightened. Be sincere with yourself. Make your own those of my sentiments which have persuaded you. Reject the rest. You are not yet depraved enough by vice to be in danger of choosing badly." As

114Ibid., 308-310

faith goes, “keep your soul in a condition where it always desires that there be a God, and you shall never doubt it.” Aside from this, what is essential to faith is doing one's duty, “and that without faith no true virtue exists.” Not a fanatic, not a proud philosopher, thus the boy goes right: “private interest deceives us. It is only the hope of the just which never deceives.”[115] Thus the Vicar summarizes what he considers essential and ends his speech.

Rousseau's Epistemology: Knowledge through Sentiment

I will contrast the Vicar and Rousseau's epistemology. Briefly, the Vicar believes that he follows “reason alone.” In contrast, it is very clear that Rousseau depends far more on sentiment than on reason. However, Rousseau believes that his method is better suited to religious questions; consequently, the Vicar confounds reason and sentiment together in his analysis. We will start by looking at Rousseau's reasoning.[116]

Rousseau's epistemology starts at skepticism. Though even geometric reasoning is uncertain, the real problem of certainty is that “it is not so much reasoning that we lack as the foothold for reasoning.” For, “man's mind is in a condition to do a great deal but the senses furnish him with few materials, and our soul, active in its bonds, prefers to exert

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115Ibid., 310-313. Emphasis added.

116 Many treatments of the Profession of Faith simply take it as a rational analysis. Thus Cranston tells us that “the whole tone of the Savoyard priest... is one of sweet reasonableness.”(Vol II., 193) Yet readers at the time did not necessarily see reason in the speech. La Condamine praises it, saying: “Que je me sais bon gré de penser avec vous que la voix de la conscience, Sorte d'instinct irresistible, est un guide plus Sur qu'une raison orgueilleuse dont nous Sentons a chaque moment les bornes!” (Leigh, X, 287-88. 24 Mai 1762) (“I find myself quite grateful to think with you that the voice of conscience, a kind of irresistible instinct, is a more certain guide than a proud reason whose limits you feel at every moment!”) The common assertion that the Vicar is simply the voice of reason was not obvious to Rousseau's readers. Mezler (1990, 30; ftnt 1) correctly perceives that the Vicar accepts sentiment as a standard, and so concludes that the Vicar is not Rousseau, since Rousseau would not depend on proofs of sentiment. Since he would, Melzer is wrong.

itself upon chimeras that are within its reach than to remain idle and without movement."[117] As Rousseau explains,

> reason is the faculty of ordering all the faculties of our soul suitably to the nature of things and their relations with us. Reasoning is the art of comparing known truths in order to compose from them other truths that one did not know and which this art makes us discover. But it does not at all teach us to know these primitive truths which serve as elements of the others, and if we put in their place our opinions, our passions, our prejudices, far from enlightening us it blinds us; it does not exalt the soul at all, it enervates it and corrupts the judgment that it should perfect.[118]

The heart provides the first principles of reasoning. Without them, reason would lead nowhere. But the *Letters* go further: they deny reason *any* place in producing sound philosophy. The third letter assesses what reason alone can bring us: "after having proceeded through the narrow circle of [the philosophers'] vain knowledge it is necessary to end where Descartes had begun. *I think therefore I exist.* That is all we know." But the fourth letter revises our ignorance; our first lesson is "humility," but "if reason crushes and debases [man] interior feeling lifts him up again and honors him."[119] After ending the reign of reason, Rousseau makes the interior feeling, or the heart, the standard of both morality and knowledge.

> I have nothing more to demonstrate to you, oh Sophie, and if it were only a question of philosophizing I would stay at this point and, finding myself stopped in all directions by the limits of my intelligence, I would finish instructing you before I started; but I have already told you, my design is not to reason with you and it is from the depths of your heart that I want to draw the only arguments that should convince you. Let me tell you then what is occurring in mine, and if you

117*Moral Letters,* 84.
118Ibid., 80.
119Ibid., 87-88. If the *cogito* is all we know, it follows that Rousseau denies the knowledge of God through natural reason. This interpretation is made more probable by the fact, assuredly known by Rousseau, that Descartes' next proposition after the *cogito* is to demonstrate the existence of God.

> experience the same thing, the same principles ought to suit us, the same route ought to lead us in the search for true happiness.[120]

Rousseau rejects the rational method of consideration altogether. Rousseau grants that reasoning can lead to correct conclusions, but it lacks materials to start from. In practice, when you look to "the depths of your heart," all of the arguments that should convince you are there. Despite reason's potential to increase knowledge, Rousseau writing to Sophie depends solely upon "what is occurring in" his heart, and hopes that something similar is occurring in hers. Despite the possibility of reasoning from the materials of the inner light, Rousseau bypasses reasoning and directly applies the judgment of conscience to particular propositions instead. Rousseau distinguishes the inner light from reason and then stops using reason. Even without a detailed analysis of the *Profession,* this obviously contradicts the Vicar's claim that the natural religion is the religion of "reason alone." Does this difference produce results, or is it an isolated oddity?

There is a resulting difference, where Rousseau contradicts the Vicar expressly. The Vicar proclaims that man is the king of the world. This is why he is struck by the miserable state of humanity's existence on Earth, which is a necessary observation to prove the existence of the soul and free will.[121] Yet in the *Letters*, Rousseau explicitly contradicts the notion that man is king of the world:

> let us be humble about our species in order to be able to pride ourselves about our person. Let us not say in our imbecile vanity that man is the King of the world, that the sun, the stars, the firmament, the air, the earth, the sea are made for him, that the plants germinate for his subsistence, that the animals live so that he might

120Ibid., 89.
121*Emile,* 277-78

> devour them; with that manner of reasoning, that devouring thirst for happiness, for excellence, and for perfection, why will each not believe that the rest of the human race was created to serve him?[122]

The distinction between these two views is important. The Vicar can only discover the existence of the soul and free will by observing the horrible state of the king of the world, and he knows that man is the king of the world because man is the only creature that can relate all things to himself; however, he also proclaims that the order of vicious action is ordering all things in relation to ourselves. In other words, it is precisely our capacity to order things with relation to ourselves that proves the existence of the soul.

This is not the demonstration of the soul present in the *Moral Letters.* The demonstration in that context is based in raptures, in "noble delirium," or at least "a voice that forbids us to have contempt for ourselves."[123] In other words, Rousseau does not adopt or lightly change this portion of the Vicar's Profession: he contradicts it. While Rousseau directly senses the existence of the soul through the inner light and refuses to believe even for an instant that man is king of the world, the Vicar is forced to depend upon reasoning from the disorder of the king of the world being miserable to the conclusion that there is a soul that reestablishes order.

Thus the *Moral Letters* show some fundamental differences between Rousseau and the Vicar, stemming essentially from their differing methodologies. The Vicar, confounding reason and the inner light, seems to need a certain amount of reasoning in

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122*Moral Letters,* 87-88. This difference tracks the difference between Voltaire and Rousseau. As Gourevitch (1997) notes of those two: "the difference between the two is that for Voltaire the whole should accommodate to man, whereas for Rousseau man must accommodate to the whole." (xxvii)

123Ibid., 88.

order to discover the truth: Rousseau, while not rejecting the possibility of reasoning if we have sufficient materials to reason with—and thus maintaining the validity of the Vicar's own method—nonetheless bypasses reasoning altogether in his own methodology in favor of a direct appeal, in every instance, to the inner light. Rousseau would repeat this epistemic view elsewhere, for example in the *Letter to Voltaire*:

> I do not object to having what in this connection I call *proof of sentiment* called *prejudice;* and I do not offer this obstinacy of belief as a model; but, with what is perhaps unprecedented good faith, I offer it as an invincible disposition of my soul, which nothing will ever succeed in overcoming, of which I have so far had no occasion to complain, and which cannot be attacked without cruelty.[124]

Rousseau was not so sentimental solely because he was writing to Sophie; as it turns out, he was just a sensitive dude. While Meier has no definite method in arguing that Rousseau and the Vicar are not identical, he is not entirely wrong: Rousseau trusts entirely in the inner light, while the Vicar begins his speech by claiming to argue from reason alone, and ends up perceiving the order of the universe through the inner light, through sentiment, confounded with reason. Our essential function is to make ourselves a part of the universal order, specifically by respecting both our inclination to self-preservation and the preservation of the whole species. The place of revelation in all of this is to clarify the principles of natural religion, but not to essentially alter them. It cannot alter them because extrinsic proofs to weigh against our reasoned conclusions are lacking; without them, we must trust our own reason and sentiment more than the claims of anyone who would subvert them. We grasp the order of things naturally through our faculties, and revealed religion cannot persuade us that the perceived order is a false one.

124*Letter to Voltaire*, paragraph 31 (243)

This is what the Vicar argues: Rousseau clarifies the Vicar's arguments in other writings. We turn to those.

A Gospel Christian: The Letters to Beaumont and Written From the Mountain

Rousseau wrote two major clarifications of the *Profession of Faith:* the *Letter to Beaumont* and the *Letters Written From the Mountain.* The *Letter to Beaumont* is the first letter clarifying the Savoyard Vicar for public consumption. As we have seen, the *Profession of Faith* produced a significant uproar. Beaumont wrote a condemnation of the *Profession* in defense of French Catholicism. Rousseau's clarifications of the *Profession* occur as a response to Beaumont. While France condemned the *Emile* and *Social Contract*, Geneva need not have followed suit; the French condemnation created division in Geneva over how to respond. Naturally, the Citizen of Geneva chose to defend himself. This is the purpose of the *Letters Written From the Mountain. Beaumont* is a defense against Beaumont, while *Mountain* is a defense for Genevans. Both defenses double down on Rousseau's sentimental epistemology and show that he is what he calls a Gospel Christian.

Rousseau summarizes why he is critiqued in the *Letter:* “today in the very celebrated century of philosophy, reason, and humanity, for having proposed with circumspection, even with respect and for love of the human race, some doubts founded on the very glory of the supreme Being, the defender of God's cause,” in this very same age he is “dishonored, banished, pursued from State to State...”[125] Consistent with the Vicar, it is only on the foundation of “the very glory of the supreme Being” that

125*Beaumont*, 166.

Rousseau is willing to criticize particular doctrines. This is expected as a defense of the Vicar. The work is also written for Beaumont. The treatment of the problem of original sin makes this evident. First, Rousseau takes his normal line:

> the fundamental principle of all morality about which I have reasoned in all my Writings and developed in this last one with all the clarity of which I was capable, is that man is a naturally good being, loving justice and order; that there is no original perversity in the human heart, and that the first movements of nature are always right.[126]

Despite this, when addressing Beaumont's objection that original sin makes his education un-Christian and "*not even suited to making Citizens or men,*" Rousseau's first response is not to deny original sin. Instead, he argues that "there is no other way to be absolved of original sin and its effects than by baptism. From which it would follow, according to you, that only Christians had ever been Citizens or men." Rousseau proceeds to claim that "it is not at all certain" that original sin is truly contained in the Scriptures. The concept of original sin acts to "greatly obscure the justice and the goodness of the supreme Being."[127] Despite rejecting original sin, Rousseau temporarily argues in terms of it for the sake of the argument. This shows even when rejecting the relevance of the doctrine: "but at bottom," Rousseau asks, "what is this doctrine to the author of *Emile*? Although he believed his book to be useful to the human race, he destined it for Christians, for men cleansed of original sin and its effects, at least with respect to the soul, by the Sacrament established for that." Since the primary audience of *Emile* was already cleansed of original sin by Beaumont's doctrine, it follows that leveling original sin against *Emile* as an objection is, even on Beaumont's system,

126Ibid., 169-70
127Ibid., 171

illogical. “You attribute to original sin the vices of peoples you admit have been delivered from original sin. Then you blame me for having given another origin to those vices. Is it just to make a crime for me not to have reasoned as badly as you do?”[128] Rousseau never disowns his own beliefs, but he happily takes up the hypotheticals that contradict his beliefs to accommodate his audience. *Beaumont* is thus not a *pure* statement of Rousseau's theology—he makes concessions when it helps the argument. Despite concessions to his Catholic opponent, the *Letter* still contributes to our understanding of the *Profession* so long as we can identify what is not mere concession.

Rousseau's basic proclamation of faith is clearly no concession, either based on the *Letter* itself or the evidence from the *Mountain*. Rousseau proclaims:

> your Grace, I am Christian, and sincerely Christian, according to the doctrine of the Gospel. I am Christian not as a disciple of the Priests, but as a disciple of Jesus Christ. My Master quibbled little over dogma and insisted much on duties. He prescribed fewer articles of faith than good works. He ordered belief only in what was necessary to be good. When he summed up the Law and the Prophets, it was more in acts of virtue than in formulas of belief, and he told me himself and through his Apostles that the person who loves his brother has fulfilled the Law.
>
> As for myself, well convinced of the essential truths of Christianity, which serve as the foundation of all good morality; seeking in addition to nourish my heart with the spirit of the Gospel without torturing my reason with what appears obscure to me in it: persuaded, finally, that whoever loves God above all things and his neighbor as himself is a true Christian, I strive to be one, leaving aside all these doctrinal subtleties, all this important gibberish with which the Pharisees muddle our duties and obfuscate our faith; and along with Saint Paul, placing faith itself beneath charity.

128Ibid., 172

In short, “I take Scripture and reason for the unique rules of my belief.”[129] If Rousseau were to make a concession to a Catholic, this would not be it. Rousseau follows the doctrine of Christ from Christ's own mouth.

The proselytes of the Savoyard Vicar say something similar in the *Mountain*. “Our proselytes will have two rules of faith that make up only one, reason and the Gospel. The latter will be all the more immutable because it will base itself only on the former and not at all on definite facts that, because they need to be attested, put Religion back under the authority of men.” These proselytes will be the reverse of other Christians: “the latter are people who dispute a great deal about the Gospel without bothering to practice it, whereas our people will be very attached to its practice, and will not dispute at all.”[130] As they say to the disputers, “we recognize the authority of Jesus Christ because our intelligence acquiesces to his precepts and discovers their sublimity for us. It tells us that it is suitable for men to follow these precepts, but that it was beyond men to find them.”[131] But this does not mean that the Bible and Gospels themselves are necessarily divinely inspired, for the words of Jesus are above any other report of the Apostles: the proselytes of the Vicar claim that

> we do not respect this Sacred Book precisely as a Book, but as the word and life of Jesus Christ. The character of truth, of wisdom, and of sanctity found in it teaches us that this history has not been essentially tampered with, but according to us it has not been proven that it has not been tampered with at all. Who knows whether the things in it we do not understand are not mistakes slipped into the text? *Who knows whether Disciples so greatly inferior to their master understood*

129Ibid., 189
130*Mountain*, 142
131Ibid., 143

> *and represented him well throughout?* We do not decide about that, we do not even presume, and we offer you conjectures only because you demand it.[132]

The text of the Bible can err, and the disciples are clearly capable of error: their words cannot be divinely inspired. In other words, the Bible is just a history—a history of a man so great as to assure us of his divine dispensation. This accords well with Rousseau's claim to be a Christian "according to the doctrine of the Gospel," as a disciple of Jesus Christ, not of the priests.[133] What the proselytes and Rousseau have in common is their dedication to Jesus the man, who revealed important moral truths to the world.

Rousseau, the Vicar and his proselytes all have a respect for Jesus as the foundation of their revealed faith in common. However, the epistemic differences between Rousseau and the Vicar become even more clear in *Beaumont* and the *Mountain.* Rousseau's characters continue to demonstrate confusion between reason and the inner light, while Rousseau himself demonstrates no such confusion. He instead makes it very clear that the inner light alone is the standard of religious truth, just as he did in the *Moral Letters.* The proselytes have "two rules of faith," namely, "reason and the Gospel." The latter is founded upon the former, and the doctrines of Christ appeal to their "intelligence." But for Rousseau, we find the contrary: while he says that "Scripture and reason" are his "unique rules of belief," he explicitly and strongly distinguishes between what comes from his heart and what comes from his reason:

> I do not have the good fortune to see in revelation the evidentness they [who never doubt anything and believe without question everything presented to them while dissimulating the difficulties involved] find in it, and if I decide in favor of it, it is because my heart leads me to do so, because it offers nothing except what

132Ibid., 143-44. Emphasis added.
133*Beaumont*, 189

> is consoling, and because the difficulties in rejecting it are no less great. But it is not because I see it proved, for most assuredly it is not proved in my eyes. I am far from being educated enough for a demonstration that requires such profound learning ever to be within my grasp.[134]

Rousseau's belief is not based on proofs; it is based on the heart. The proselytes believe in reason, and the Gospel founded upon reason. It is true that they also do not depend upon the kinds of "proof" that Rousseau is speaking of here. But where Rousseau explicitly speaks of the heart, the proselytes never do so. The spread of these proselytes produces "no change in the form of worship and great changes in hearts,"[135] but nowhere in proselyte's speech do they appeal to the heart for their beliefs. Their speech addresses reason, intelligence, understanding. Unlike Rousseau, they have no apparent use for the heart, despite being proselytes of the Vicar. In a way, we may even say that the proselytes are less explicitly confused than the Vicar, while farther from the truth: the Vicar is at least aware of the inner light, however much he confounds it with reason, while the proselytes make no references to the inner light at all, as the heart, the inner light, or the conscience. Rousseau understands the difference between reason and the inner light and recognizes the latter as his source of knowledge; the Vicar claims to gain knowledge from reason, but then uses the inner light; and the proselytes claim to use reason alone. This confirms that Rousseau's making the Vicar epistemically confused was intentional, and shows that Rousseau's private belief in the *Moral Letters* is also his public belief in *Beaumont.*

Bolder Professions of Faith than the Profession of Faith

134Ibid., 192.
135*Mountain*, 142

We should now compare the Savoyard Vicar to Rousseau's other works that Rousseau points us towards. Rousseau suggests some comparisons in the *Letter to Beaumont.* While protesting Beaumont's attack on the Profession of Faith, Rousseau argues that

> my *Discourse on Inequality* circulated throughout your Diocese, and you did not issue a Pastoral Letter. My *Letter to d'Alembert* circulated throughout your diocese and you did not write a Pastoral Letter. The *New Heloise* circulated throughout your diocese and you did not write a Pastoral Letter. Yet all these books, which you have read, since you judge them, are imbued with the same maxims. The same modes of thought are not more distinguished in them. If the subject was not suited to developing them to the same extent, they gain in force what they lose in extent, *and the Author's profession of faith is found expressed there with less reserve than that of the Savoyard Vicar.*[136]

Rousseau's assessment is accurate: while he never spoke at the same length about religion in his other works, his statements in other contexts were often more bold than those of the Savoyard Vicar while possessing the same basic thrust.

Let us start with the *Letter to D'Alembert*. *D'Alembert* is primarily concerned with arguing against establishing a theater in Geneva. However, the first few pages defend the Genevan clergy against accusations of Socinianism. Rousseau's defense of the clergy is extremely weak: he practically grants d'Alembert's assertion, and never explicitly argues that the Genevan pastors are not Socinians. Rousseau's objection is merely that, while

> you have praised this worthy body in a way that is very fair, very true, and appropriate to it alone among all the clergies of the world, in a way which yet increases the respect for you of which they have given witness; you have praised them, showing that they love philosophy and do not fear the eye of the philosopher. But, Sir, when one wishes to honor people, it must be done after their fashion and not our own, lest, with reason, they be offended by harmful praises which, for all that they are given with good intention, nonetheless do damage to the estate, the interests, the opinions, or the prejudices of those who are their

136*Beaumont*, 168. Final emphasis added.

> object. Are you unaware that every sectarian name is always odious and that such imputations, rarely without consequence for the laity, are never so for theologians?[137]

You shouldn't call people names, even if they are true! That's mean! More substantially, Rousseau also objects that d'Alembert had no means to learn that the clergy were Socinians. As Rousseau summarizes the matter, “I do not claim, for that, either to judge or to blame the doctrine that you impute to them; I say only that one has no right to impute it to them, at least unless they admit it; and, I add, that it does not resemble the one in which they instruct us at all.”[138] In short, Rousseau never claims that the clergy themselves are not Socinians, or that Socinianism is such a terrible thing.[139] As Rousseau then states,

> in general, I am the friend of every peaceful religion in which the Eternal Being is served according to the reason he gave us. When a man cannot believe what he finds absurd, it is not his fault; it is that of his reason. And how shall I conceive that God would punish him for not having made for himself an understanding contrary to the one he received from Him?

Those who see no absurdities in the mysteries should believe them, but if the Socinians see the mysteries as absurd, all there is to do is “leave them alone.”[140] Any religion that serves God is acceptable.

So far, so consistent with the Vicar. Next comes the question of eternal punishment. If the Socinians find it incompatible with divine justice, and

> interpret as best they can the passages contrary to their opinion rather than abandon it, how could they do otherwise? No one is more filled than I with love

137*D'Alembert*, 9-10
138Ibid, 11
139 A parenthetical addition in a later edition says that he feels, from the confused notions he has received of Socinianism, “more disinclination than taste for it.” ibid
140Ibid., 11-12

> and respect for the most sublime of all books; it consoles me and instructs me every day, when other books inspire in me only disgust. *But I maintain that, if the Scripture itself gave us some idea of God unworthy of Him, we would have to reject it on that point, just as you reject in geometry the demonstrations which lead to absurd conclusions. For, of whatever authenticity the sacred text may be, it is still more believable that the Bible was altered than that God is unjust or malevolent.*[141]

The Vicar never explicitly asserts that the Bible has to be rejected in particular points. He remains in "respectful silence" regarding the difficulties in the Bible, leaving knowledge of the truth to God: he does not dare to hex portions of the Bible allegedly inconsistent with reason. Yet Rousseau is (publicly) comfortable with this doctrine. Rousseau's guidance in the *Letter to Beaumont* is clearly accurate: while *d'Alembert's* religious treatment is much shorter than the Profession of Faith, it is also more bold. Despite his distaste for Socinianism, Rousseau professes one of its fundamental doctrines in rejecting Biblical passages contrary to reason.

Brevity combined with increased extremity is also present in the *Second Discourse*. Most obviously, Rousseau rejects original sin. "Men are wicked; sad and continual experience spares the need for proof. However, man is naturally good; I believe I have demonstrated it."[142] According to the *Confessions*, this destroys the foundations of modern Christianity. Rousseau says of Madame de Warens' religion that "her system clearly destroyed the whole doctrine of original sin and redemption, and shook the complete basis of common Christianity, so that Catholicism, at any rate, could not subsist with it."[143] The Vicar is clearly more reconcilable with original sin. He claims that we are

141Ibid., 12-13
142*Second Discourse*, 193.
143*Confessions*, 218-19

only able to will our own good, but our good is in two distinct types: one depends upon the body, the other upon the soul, the one oriented towards ourselves and ordering the world in accord with our wishes, the other, ordering ourselves with the world in accord with the wishes of God. For the Vicar, we are conflicted beings—an assessment with which Rousseau himself undoubtedly agrees, given the wickedness he now perceives everywhere—but the Vicar does not proclaim that humanity is born good. The most natural interpretation of the Vicar is that the seeds of both good and evil are inherently present in the human. Rousseau is far more radical in this regard.

Heloise is the last work that Rousseau recommends we look to in *Beaumont,* and it is also bolder than the Profession of Faith. Since many passages in *Heloise* were censored, Beaumont can be forgiven for not knowing about them. For instance, Julie refuses to teach her children the catechism, despite her piety. As St. Preux perceives, "you don't want their faith to consist merely in words, nor for them only to have learned their Religion, but also to believe in it, and you rightly think it is impossible for man to believe what he does not understand." Then, as St. Preux responds when Baron Wolmar asks if he is Christian, "I endeavor to be one... I believe of Religion all I can understand, and respect the rest of it without rejecting it."[144] This is no stronger stuff than the Vicar serves up, but it was strong enough for Malesherbes to censor it, explaining to Rousseau that

> Julie and St. Preux being the novel's heroes, their way of thinking can make an impression and will always be taken for that of the author. Thus one can make them heretics, because that is the religion of their country. But it appears in this

144*Heloise,* 477

part that the author goes further and gives to St. Preux doubts on all that which is incomprehensible.[145]

The heroes cannot represent a heretical philosophy not excused by their nationality. Rousseau's response was that "St. Preux's response to Monsieur de Wolmar is, of all the things one can say, the most moderate and reasonable about the Christian religion and its mysteries."[146] Thus, the French decided to censor parts of the religion that could be found in the Savoyard Vicar, which the Genevans ignored.

Other statements censored by the French were more bold. Rousseau's note on those who persecute others for their faith in part five, where he claims that "such persecutors are no believers; they are scoundrels," is one such instance.[147] The Vicar is for tolerance; however, he does not proclaim that all intolerant people are scoundrels. St. Preux's denial of original sin and divine grace is another such instance, and it would appear that the author of the *Letter to d'Alembert* learned something of his religion from St. Preux, for the latter proclaims in this context that "were this harsh and discouraging doctrine deduced from Scripture itself, is not my first duty to honor God? Whatever deference I owe to the sacred text, I owe even more to its Author, and I would sooner believe the Bible falsified or unintelligible than God unjust or evil."[148] But a bold position

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145Leigh, VIII. 118. 16 February 1761."Julie et St Preux estans les héros du Roman, leur facon de penser peut faire impression et sera toujours prise pour celle de l'auteur. Ainsi on peut les faire hérétiques, parce-que c'est la Religion de leur patrie. Mais il a paru dans cet article que l'auteur va plus loin et qu'il donne à St Preux des doutes sur tout ce qui est incompréhensible." 1298

146Ibid., 235. 10 March 1761. "La réponse que fait Saint-Preux à M. de Wolmar est tout ce qu'on peut dire de plus modéré, de plus sensé, sur la religion chrétienne et sur ses mystères." 1350

147*Heloise*, 487. Censored because not all persecutors act in bad faith. "On a retranché la Note, non pour approuver les perséceuteurs, mais parce que c'est une proposition outrée et fausse que de dire qu'ils Sont tous de mauvaise foi. D'ailleurs cette note est inutile à l'ouvrage, elle n'est point neuve à beaucoup pres, et par consequent point instructive, et il y a des gens à qui elle deplait. C'est faire en pure perte des ennemis à l'ouvrage et a l'auteur." Leigh, VIII, 119. 1298.

148Ibid., 562. Censored because this is obviously anti-Catholic. Leigh, VIII, 120. 1298

against intolerant people is relatively weak sauce, and the superiority of reason to Scripture has already been covered.

There is at least one portion of *Heloise* which is both bold and original: the presentation of Baron Wolmar, the disbeliever, contradicts the Profession of Faith, though not in the immediately obvious way. The Savoyard Vicar finds faith necessary to virtue: Wolmar appears to contradict this assessment. Rousseau claims in the *Confessions* that he intended Wolmar and Julie both to demonstrate the virtues of philosophy and piety. He crafted them, he claims, to avoid a potential civil war in France after "the storm aroused by the *Encyclopedia*." Rousseau decided to attempt to destroy the prejudices of each party—the Christians and the philosophers—against the other so as to unite them once more, by showing "each party merits and virtues in the other," and so "drew the two characters of Wolmar and Julie with an enthusiasm that caused me to hope that I had made them both lovable and, what is more, one because of the other."[149] But this assessment seems incomplete. Rousseau is clear in the *Letter to d'Alembert* that virtue without faith is impossible. Of the contrary opinion, he says that "I held this erroneous opinion for a long time, but now I am only too disabused."[150] How do we reconcile the virtues of Wolmar with his inability, as an atheist, to be virtuous?

The solution is that his virtues are not virtues in Rousseau's sense. As Wolmar states, the only feeling he ever had in his life was for Julie. Despite the slight nature of the sentiment, "in order to act the sentiments require strength only in proportion to those that oppose them," and Wolmar possessed no other sentiments—not even the "passion

149*Confessions*, 405-06
150*D'Alembert*, 97

for virtue." As Wolmar says of cold-hearted people while speaking of himself, "Everything is fine so long as their coldness protects them from temptations; but should one appear and hit them, they are defeated as quickly as they are attacked, and reason, which governs while it is alone, never has the strength to defend against the slightest assault."[151] Wolmar is good only because he happens to have no passion which is not innocent. He never struggles against his passions. It is for this same reason that Wolmar is not persuaded that God exists: he lacks the "sensibility" that persuades people of God's existence. "Who among us can do what [inner sentiment] has not wished to do?" This lack explains why Wolmar and Bomston could spend three months in debate without either moving from their beliefs;[152] lacking sentiment, Wolmar has neither passion for vice nor passion to believe in God. While Wolmar cannot possess virtue because of his disbelief, his relative lack of passion makes him naturally good. This presentation is assuredly more bold than either the Vicar or *d'Alembert*; while it affirms that the disbeliever cannot be virtuous, it also affirms that the disbeliever can be good. This much is not truly contradictory to the Vicar's doctrine. True, we must distinguish virtue and goodness to make this much fit into the Vicar's argument, but Rousseau certainly makes that distinction and the Vicar never rejects it. Wolmar's natural goodness is not contradictory to the Vicar.

The true contradiction to the Vicar is more subtle than the simple fact that the Baron is a good man. The contradiction to the Vicar is in his assessment that "no one can be excused for not reading" the book of nature, and consequently not finding God there,

151*Heloise*, 404-05
152Ibid, 574-75

for “it speaks to all men a language that is intelligible to all minds.”[153] Wolmar's mind is unable to perceive the beautiful order of nature that is, for the Vicar, the proof of the existence of God. Such a perception is dependent upon sentiment that Wolmar does not have. Since it would be unjust of God to punish or blame us for not knowing what He did not give us the means to know, the Vicar would have to forgive Wolmar: he possessed no means to know God. This difference is traceable to the fundamental methodological difference between Rousseau and the Vicar. While Rousseau depends upon inner sentiment to convince people—and thus could not blame a person without inner sentiment for disbelief—the Vicar confounds inner sentiment and reason. As such, the Vicar is able to blame people for disbelief because he believes that reason leads us to belief, so that disbelief is ignoring the reason given in common to all humanity. Rousseau is more bold than the Vicar because his epistemology differs from the Vicar's.

Rousseau is largely much more bold in his other writings than in the *Profession of Faith.* Portions of the Bible contrary to reason are not from God; original sin is false; and some of those who are irreligious can be forgiven for their inability to believe, since God did not give them the means to know Him. All of these propositions are far more bold than anything put forward in the *Profession of Faith*, but Rousseau did so without hesitation. These differences need explanation to understand Rousseau's religion.

Explaining the Differences: Part 1; Inexact Expression of Ideas?

Rousseau and the Vicar both hold to a “liberal” religion, and we can reasonably say, a form of Gospel Christianity. Both clearly believe in some truths independently of

153*Emile*, 307

the Bible, but also hold Jesus and his doctrines in high regard. Further, both believe in revelation due to its intrinsic proofs, rather than its extrinsic proofs. But they also differ from each other in some of the details of their beliefs. The literature generally suggests two explanations: one, suggested by Pierre-Maurice Masson, is that Rousseau's expressions of faith are not quite exact or formulaic in their nature; the other is that the Profession of Faith was written “esoterically,” that Rousseau never intended to communicate his views in the Profession, that he instead aimed at communicating with two separate groups of people, only one of which (perhaps “the wise” or, at least, those not likely to persecute him for his beliefs) would recognize the flaws in the Profession and draw out Rousseau's true beliefs. In fact, neither of these two options suffice to explain the differences between Rousseau and the Vicar. I propose a more obvious explanation for their differences: since the Vicar is a fictional character, he must act in character.

Let us begin with inexact expression. Masson argues that “in these two professions of faith, separated by about a year, there seems to be very different content; but this first impression is false. As always with Rousseau, the essential thing is the general orientation of the thought, the emotion, the accent; and we find these identical in the *Letters to Sophie* and the *Profession of Faith.*”[154] But the differences seem too great to explain merely by inexact expression. The Vicar calls man the king of the world because he is able to relate everything to himself, while Rousseau is uncertain of humanity's place

154“...de ces deux professions de foi, que sépare à peine une année, il semble que le contenu soit très différent; mais cette impression première est fausse. Comme toujours chez Rousseau, l'essentiel est l'orientation générale de la pensée, l'émotion, l'accent; et nous les retrouvons identiques dans les *Lettres à Sophie* et dans la *Profession de foi.*” (Masson, vol II, 57)

in the universe, feeling only the greatness of human feeling “whatever rank ours might be in the system of the universe.”[155] The Vicar attributes kingship to humanity precisely out of its capacity for vice, while Rousseau never falls into that trap. That this difference is merely a difference of expression is unlikely.

The difference is better explained by the epistemic differences between Rousseau and the Vicar. The Vicar raises humanity up out of its capacity to relate everything to itself through reason:

> what being here on earth besides man is able to observe all the others, to measure, calculate, and foresee their movements and their effects, and to join, so to speak, the sentiment of common existence to that of its individual existence? What is there so ridiculous about thinking that everything is made for me, if I am the only one who is able to relate everything to himself?[156]

Humans can relate everything to themselves through reason (observation, measurement, calculation, foresight);[157] they can use reason to detect what is, in effect, the vicious order of the universe (although the Vicar does not acknowledge it as such), the order which relates everything to us rather than finding our own place; therefore, man is king of the world, and (though the Vicar's good feeling would never allow it) the vicious order appears justified. Rousseau speaks of the greatness of humanity thanks to their feeling, which allows them to take any place in the universe, whatever it may be. The Vicar calls man king of the world and proves it by pointing to reason and its capacity to perceive vicious order: Rousseau rejects the position of king of the world because he recognizes that humans have noble feeling, whatever superior faculties other creatures

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155*Moral Letters*, 89
156*Emile*, 277
157Observer; mesurer; calculer; prévoir leur mouvements. Clearly, the language of reason.

may possess. Given Rousseau's argument and that he used the *Moral Letters* to write the *Profession*, it simply strains credulity to suggest that he did not realize that the Vicar's argument for man's kingship founds itself on the vicious order. Yet it is also obvious that he would never agree with that. No: the Vicar makes this argument because it is in his character to make the argument, since he is not the sentimental prodigy that Rousseau is.

Explaining the Differences: Part 2; Esotericism?

But could Rousseau be writing esoterically? Esoteric writing demands that an author have a private opinion which is distinct from their public opinion. There is no evidence for such a thing in Rousseau's case, at least not for his religion.[158] True, Rousseau and the censors were not unacquainted with each other. But Rousseau is extraordinarily bold in his public writings that cannot conceivably be put to anyone other than himself: to say he made himself different from the Vicar to evade censorship is ridiculous. But esotericism may also be for pedagogical purposes or to maintain public order,[159] and Rousseau plausibly sees both as proper in his writings. The Vicar believes in preaching the orthodox religion as far as it is not contradictory to good morals, so as not to “disturb the faith of the simple people” and to keep public order. However, this is not enough. We can put esoteric motives to almost anyone by this standard: if an author argues that some belief is essential for society in any way, then we have reason to suspect that they would lie to make people believe the essential something. We need evidence, not conjecture.

158There is better evidence for this proposition for some of his political views. Specifically, it seems clear that the Social Contract is intended both as an abstract work of politics and as a critique of Genevan institutions. See this work, ftnt. 11.
159Melzer, 2014

Esotericism is the art of concealing the belief that is held, as it were, in our heart of hearts. In the process, we also wish to make our real beliefs known to some, despite hiding that doctrine from others who are not the intended audience. Therefore, the ideal test for esotericism would be to directly perceive what the true beliefs of a given author are, and then compare them to whatever the author has written. Obviously, this is impossible. Therefore, we need to find an accurate method to operationalize the "deepest opinion of the heart." An obvious operationalization of the deepest opinion of the heart is in writings that are more private in nature—ideally an extensive philosophical diary that the author never intended anyone to see, but possibly a set of private conversations between friends or private letters never intended or expected to be published. If all there is to worry about is fear of the censors, then a work published without that fear (say, because written anonymously or under a pseudonym) compared to a work with that fear (published under the author's name) would also be effective. Much of this evidence exists for modern philosophical writing. For example, David Hume is explicit in writing to Adam Smith that his *Natural History of Religion* was "changed in point of prudence" from what he had originally sent to Smith.[160] Further, the Baron D'Holbach seems to have written a number of articles for *l'Encyclopedie* to which he did not sign his name, but where he nonetheless would often "adopt an ostensibly orthodox position in order to achieve the desired result," namely, the oblique critique of Christianity by critiquing other religions. D'Holbach would also make a plain condemnation of atheism in these articles.[161] This is obviously contrary to d'Holbach's *System of Nature*. Comparing

160Quoted in Gay, 1967.
161Newland, 527

relatively private to public documents is both theoretically superior to mere speculation and conjecture and eminently doable for the modern historian.

Finding esotericism means comparing a source of private opinions with publicly expressed opinions. However, this satisfies only the first piece of the operationalization: the second piece involves demonstrating, in addition to the author's differing private and public opinions, that the author intended to leave a window in their public writings to the private opinions, through which some readers would be able to see while others would not. I have no systematic notions on how to determine if the author intended such a thing.[162] If Rousseau's writings and other reports on his religious beliefs do not demonstrate a distinction between his private and public opinions, then we need not search for esoteric writing.

The best available evidence closes off a distinction between private and public religious belief in Rousseau. The evidence that best operationalizes Rousseau's private views are those recorded in private conversations, insofar as we have records of them. The difficulty with such records is their imprecision and uncertainty; however, if they match Rousseau's writings reasonably well, then we should believe that Rousseau's public writings were in accord with his real beliefs. I will start at weaker evidence and move on to stronger evidence.

One such piece of testimony is a letter by Jean-Andre Deluc, unfortunately writing in 1798, on Rousseau's religion in 1754. According to Deluc, Rousseau was “one

162The best I can come up with in this regard is if they say they have such motives. Even then, there is a question: do they say it generally, or with regards to their specific writing/writings? That must be determined case by case.

of the most sincere theists,” who nonetheless serves as an example of one who abandons religion, 'the single salutary guide of man.” But what was this alleged abandonment of religion, according to Deluc? “After the principles of natural religion, Rousseau could only love Christianity, since it is a precise theism, and has the good of humanity as its purpose.” He was a Christian who “searched for religion in the heart and spirit of man, to find there that which he desired.” But then he went to Paris where he found a number of atheists, “against whom he defended theism with great warmth: but they shook his belief in revelation” through Buffon's empirical work. This led to an attack upon Mosaic revelation and then, “almost inevitably,” created “the same prejudice against all revelation.” Nonetheless, Rousseau “did not abandon the profession of Christianity, as his acquaintance with atheists had convinced him that a public religion was indispensable to maintain society.” Thus he returned to Geneva to take on the faith of his home country, “thinking that the banner of Christianity, reconciling him to the greater part of society, would give him for influence to maintain theism against the atheists. This was the time when I started seeing him for the first time.” Thus Rousseau's state in coming to Geneva was one of doubts regarding revelation, particularly Mosaic revelation, due to “the geological arguments against the first revelation.” But “it was not difficult to make him understand that he had chosen a poor guide in Buffon.” However, Buffon was not the only geologist against the Mosaic account, and since Deluc's own work was insufficient to take them all on at that time, “Rousseau, then returning into the Protestant church, maintained his incredulity regarding Mosaic revelation, and consequently on all the

inspiration of our sacred authors." He thus unfortunately tried to pose the principles of morality independently of revelation in *Social Contract* and *Emile.*[163]

The picture of Rousseau as a deist (and esoteric writer) gains some plausibility in this letter—but only some, and only if we read this letter alone. Let us start by analyzing the letter itself. Rousseau seems to have left Paris a deist: his primary doubts were about Old Testament revelations provided by Moses, and the doubts about the rest of revelation were a prejudice created by consequence. Then Rousseau joined the Genevan church despite his doubts, the better to maintain his natural religion against atheism. Rousseau could later be made to doubt Buffon's geological account. Nonetheless, due to other geological accounts, Rousseau continued to doubt Mosaic revelation and the inspiration of the authors of the Bible. DeLuc's account is not quite inconsistent with the faith that Rousseau expressed in his public writings. Rousseau claims only to be a Christian according to the moral doctrines of Christ in the Gospels: this need not involve accepting the Old Testament accounts of Creation. Nor does Rousseau necessarily believe that the authors of the Bible or the documents as a whole are inspired: he believes in the words of Christ himself. It is empirical analysis that shook Rousseau's faith in revelation, but Rousseau's faith does not depend upon the authority of persons or particular facts: it depends upon the sublime doctrine in the Gospels and the superior nature of the one who communicated that doctrine. The only part that is fully contradictory to Rousseau's public writings—where his reasoned doubts about revelation were open to all, where he proclaimed his reason for belief to lie in his heart rather than in particular facts, and

163Quoted in Leigh, vol III, 326-28. (Appendix 130) The entire set of passages is quite interesting.

where he never claimed to believe in anything other than the morality of the Gospel as a Christian—is the portion where DeLuc claims that Rousseau left Paris as a deist. This was before DeLuc had actually met Rousseau, and given that the account occurs 44 years after the recollected events, it seems reasonable to look for other sources to see if they confirm the details of this account.[164]

In fact, this account is contradicted by a scene from the *Memoirs of Madame d'Epinay,* an autobiographical novel by (surprise!) Madame d'Epinay. We must be cautious in using anything out of this set of memoirs; as Masson notes of the scene in question, while it most likely took place in 1754, "the whole scene has been rewritten, or even reconstituted, with more psychological truth than historical exactitude."[165] But an accurate psychological portrait is what we are looking for, and the portrait that arises (from before Rousseau leaving Paris) does not make him out to be a mere deist. Rousseau is certainly anticlerical in the piece: the priests have made God say what some men wanted. But, as "Rene"—Rousseau—answers when the group is asked if they would even reject the natural religion: "the morality of the Gospel is the only thing that I conserve of Christianity, because it is the natural morality that constituted all cults in ancient times. In rejecting, he said, miracles, absurd mysteries, and the novelty which has decorated all that, I believe myself a better Christian."[166] This much is quite consistent

164Given how close this Gospel Christianity is to deism, it is perfectly reasonable to suspect some flaws in memory.

165Masson, *Diner,* 4. "Car toute la scène a été recomposée, ou meme reconstituée, avec plus de vérité psychologique que d'exactitude historique."

166Ibid., 14. "La morale de l'Evangile est la seule chose qu'il conserve du christianisme, parce que c'est la morale naturelle qui constituait anciennement tout le culte. *"En rejetant, dit-il, et les miracles et les mystères absurdes et de nouvelle date dont il ont pomponné tout cela, je ne m'en crois que meilleur chrétien."*

with what Rousseau would write later, and gains high evidentiary value because it is reported by Diderot, Rousseau's best friend in 1754. Taking all of this together, we may reduce these conversations to one statement of theological belief: the natural religion is produced by sentiment, and all that should be preserved of Christianity is the moral doctrine of Christ in the Gospels.

If this is a proper summary of the private conversations of Rousseau, then we cannot say that those private conversations contradict Rousseau's public writings. The private accounts of Rousseau's religious views and the public accounts that Rousseau put forward show a large amount of agreement. In both, natural religion takes the forefront in theological inquiry. In both, revealed religion teaches natural morality with a specificity that humanity could not discover on its own. Revelation has the purpose of specifying what natural religion leaves relatively unspecified in moral duty, just as the Vicar suggests. Ultimately, Rousseau proclaims himself a Christian, albeit a Christian who rejects the trappings of traditional Christianity in favor of the morality expressed in the Gospels. Since this is precisely what he claims publicly, there is little reason to believe that Rousseau wrote esoterically.

The best method to determine if a person wrote esoterically is to compare their public writings to their private writings to see if they differ, and then to determine if the motive for any existing difference was to show one group one set of ideas while leading another group to perceive different ideas. In the context of Rousseau's religion, there is certainly no evidence whatsoever that Rousseau was an atheist. What little evidence exists for esoteric writing suggests a deism little different from the natural religion in the

Profession of Faith, while the more precise and trustworthy account provided by Madame D'Epinay with Diderot overlooking it suggests that Rousseau was the Gospel Christian that he claims to have been. In other words, the best available evidence suggests that there is no real difference between Rousseau's private and publicly proclaimed beliefs. As such, there is no reason to believe that Rousseau wrote esoterically with regards to religion. Instead of inexact expression or esoteric writing, the differences between the Vicar and Rousseau are a result of the Vicar being a fictional character and Rousseau a novelist, an author of fiction. Since the Vicar is a character, Rousseau must make him act in character. It is not that Rousseau intended the audience to pick up on a different message: it is simply that Rousseau is creating a consistent character.

Explaining the Differences: Part 3; The Novelistic Character of the Vicar vs Rousseau

As a character, the Savoyard Vicar differs from Rousseau in three rather important ways. First, the Vicar is a vicar: he must preach Catholicism as a matter of the law. Second, the Vicar is "a man more worthy than I," which Rousseau notes while explicitly informing us that he will not tell us what he himself thinks.[167] Third, the Vicar tells us that "I am not a great philosopher, and I care little to become one."[168] The character of the Vicar is that of a learned man, but not a brilliant one. In contrast, Rousseau claims to be a "prodigy."[169] The Vicar is in an official position, socially oriented (which makes him virtuous), and non-prodigious; Rousseau never held any power,

167*Emile*, 260
168Ibid., 266
169*Confessions*, 67

prefers solitude, and is a prodigy.[170] These three character differences should explain the theological differences between Rousseau and the Vicar, especially the difference in sociality.[171]

Rousseau explicitly tells us that he makes the Vicar act in character. In a footnote on the Vicar's "involuntary skepticism," Rousseau writes:

> it is important to note that the Vicar could find many objections as a Catholic that are null for a Protestant. Thus the skepticism in which he remains does not prove mine in any way, especially after the very express declaration I made at the end of this same Writing. It is clearly seen in my principles that several of the objections it contains are beside the mark.[172]

Rousseau appeals to the Vicar's Catholicism as a cause of disagreement between the Vicar and himself: the Vicar remains in a state of doubt where Rousseau does not. This character difference goes far to explain why it is that Rousseau and St. Preux can reject portions of the Bible while the Vicar cannot: a Catholic cannot hex portions of the Bible. Catholicism also explains the Vicar's ambiguity on original sin vs. natural goodness, if (as Rousseau claims) natural goodness undermines Catholicism. The Catholic-Protestant divide provides a sound explanation for some of the differences

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170The second fact is particularly important, since solitude is extremely useful to hear the inner voice. "Learn how to be alone without boredom. You will never hear the voice of nature; you will never know yourself without that." (*Moral Letters*, 97)

171 Some agreement is inevitable, as Rousseau and the Vicar are both human beings (imagined or real) inquiring in good faith. As Rousseau tells us in the *Letter to d'Alembert*, "human reason has no well-determined common measure and [] it is unjust for any man to give his own as the rule to that of other." Supposing good faith, "up to a certain point there are common principles, a common evidence, and, in addition, each has his own reason which determines him; thus this sentiment does not lead to scepticism; but also, since the general limits of reason are not fixed and no one can inspect another's, here, with one stroke, the proud dogmatist is stopped." (11) This sits well with the proclamation against disputing in *Heloise*, after Wolmar and Bomston fail to reach any agreement given three months to dispute (*Heloise*, 574-575). The sentiment of God's existence and their good faith guarantee that Rousseau and the Vicar will have some solid agreement.

172*Mountain*, 168

between the Vicar and Rousseau. Since this is a difference Rousseau explicitly references, we are on very solid ground appealing to it.

But we need more than the Catholic-Protestant difference, for it fails to explain three phenomena. First and foremost, the clear distinction that Rousseau draws between reason and the inner light as compared to the Vicar's confused treatment of the two; second, the treatment of man as king of the world in the Vicar as compared to Rousseau's opposition to such arrogance; third, the treatment of atheism as unforgivable by the Vicar vs Rousseau's treatment of Wolmar as being essentially good despite his atheism. Since I have already shown the latter two differences to be a result of the first difference,[173] it is the first difference that needs explaining. The epistemic difference is a result of their differing birth and levels of sociality. Rousseau is an asocial prodigy: the Vicar is a virtuous every-man, learned but of regular intellectual capacity, and concerned with his parishoners (thus social). These facts make up for their epistemic differences.

The prodigy difference might make us think that we have taken a wrong turn on this explanatory path. Surely, Rousseau the prodigy should be a better thinker than the Vicar. As such, Rousseau's lesser dependence on reason is perplexing. But this is not so: it is clear that Rousseau's prodigiousness consists in his enhanced capacity for feeling, not for reasoning. Rousseau rejects all pretense:

> mine was no true childhood; I always felt and thought like a man. Only as I grew up did I become my true age, which I had not been at my birth. You may laugh at my modestly setting myself up as a prodigy. Very well, but when you have had your laugh, find a child who is attracted by novels at six, who is interested and moved by them to the point of weeping hot tears. Then I shall admit to being absurdly vain, and agree that I am wrong.

173See this work, 67-68; 79-82.

It is for this reason that you can find a Jean-Jacques and “talk to him of God at seven, and I promise you that you will be taking no risks.”[174] As Rousseau claims earlier on, “I felt before I thought: which is the common lot of man, though more pronounced in my case than in another's.”[175] Feeling, not reason, made Rousseau a prodigy.

But even feeling needs development. That development demands solitude. Rousseau had a great deal of solitude in order to develop his feelings (at least if we simply take his word for it), calling himself solitary constantly throughout his writings.[176] The Vicar seems to never have been solitary. Not only would Rousseau's natural prodigy make him more attuned to feeling, but his solitude would amplify it. The very fact that the Vicar is a more virtuous man than Rousseau, more inclined to work for his parishoners, makes him less capable of developing his inner light. Consequently, the Vicar must depend more upon reason while Rousseau has no need of it.

In a way, then, tripartite character differences described (Catholic vs Protestant, normal vs prodigy, solitary vs social) may be reduced to two: the Catholic-Protestant difference and the differing powers of sentiment. If we wish to understand why Rousseau and the Vicar differ, it is not because Rousseau was writing esoterically, nor because he was writing inexactly: it is because Rousseau is a sensitive Protestant, while the Vicar is a less sensitive Catholic. This possibility is confirmed by St. Preux's greater agreement with Rousseau compared to the Vicar: St. Preux is Protestant, and we learn that he is “a

174*Confessions*, 67
175Ibid., 19
176Two examples: “Your latest Poems, Sir, reached me in my solitude...” (*Letter to Voltaire*, 232); in the preface to the second letter to Bordes, he is “a solitary who enjoys living by himself” (107).

twenty-year-old sage who knows prodigious numbers of things!"[177] The differences between Julie herself and the Vicar may be instructive in this regard, since she is a Protestant—though Rousseau tells us they are "sufficiently in accord that one can explain one of them by the other."[178] In short, the only necessary explanation for the differences between Rousseau and the Vicar is Rousseau's own stated principle: the characters of a novel must act as imitations of something in nature.[179] Since the Vicar differs from Rousseau, he acts—and speaks—slightly differently than Rousseau. Yet they still essentially agree thanks to their common good faith. Their natural constitution, social position, and established religion differ, and so some details of their religions must differ, but common humanity unites them.

Conclusion of Part I

Rousseau's work cannot be considered on its own. It must be considered in the context of Genevan religious history. In that context, Rousseau is a return to Calvin's original doctrine of appealing to the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit over extrinsic proofs of miracles and revelation. This shook Genevan Protestantism because Genevans of Rousseau's time differentiated themselves from deism largely as a result of their belief in miracles—they used extrinsic proofs to show the truth of Christianity. An attack on those extrinsic proofs was an attack on their status as Christians, which they could not allow in the face of the rest of the world. Rousseau was not censored for his irreligious views, but for his return to Calvin's original doctrines against the rationalism that began

177*Heloise,* 61
178*Mountain,* 139
179*Heloise,* 7-8

to rise after Jean-Alphonse Turrentin's influence in Geneva. When we consider the contradictions between his characters (especially the Savoyard Vicar) and himself, we conclude that they are primarily explicable by the relative dependence on the inner light versus reason as their means of knowing God and religious truth. Rousseau depends on the inner light, while the Vicar confounds the inner light and reason together.

From the perspective of understanding the world, the central concept in Rousseau's theology is *conscience*. However, in terms of the substance of his beliefs, the central concept is *order*. Rousseau (and the Vicar) discovers order by means of conscience, or the inner light. Order is first an aspect of the physical and biological universe: it is the set of laws according to which everything evidently acts. Then order becomes moral: it becomes the happiness of the creatures in the universe. But we are miserable. Since God is good and cannot intend any part of His universe be miserable, it follows that we have disordered the universe through our freedom. Then the question is: how would we act to maintain the order of the universe? The Vicar begins to give us an answer; observing our nature, we infer moral principles from the double relation between our desire to preserve ourselves and pursue our well-being while not wishing to do so at the expense of others. But this lacks a certain amount of precision. One solution to this imprecision is to turn to revealed religion. Rousseau does this, calling himself a “Gospel Christian,” a Christian who respects the words of Jesus as revelation of true moral doctrine, affirmed by the conscience as soon as they are read. This Christianity needs no affirmation through extrinsic evidence, since conscience directly confirms the truth of Jesus' words independently of anyone else's testimony.

But Rousseau knew that he was arguing with disbelievers. Therefore, he did not simply say: follow Jesus. He made more systematic, reasoned arguments for his moral beliefs. This is good, because appealing to conscience through the example of Jesus seems rather vague, and (to me at least) is totally unpersuasive. What were his moral arguments? How did Rousseau elaborate on the idea of a moral order in the universe? How did we fall from that order, and how do we reestablish it, however incompletely? We turn now to this inquiry.

PART II: Order, Moral Education, and Polity

The Order of Nature and Moral Doctrine

The concept of order is central to Rousseau. Every part must exist in a non-contradictory harmony to form the whole: that is how Rousseau views the universe, physical and moral. We have seen the religious foundation for this view, and that Rousseau sincerely believed in that religion. Now, we turn to add greater precision to how Rousseau's religion founds the moral order and determines what that order is. The moral order cannot simply be observed because humans have free will. What we observe in the world, with all of its suffering and vice, cannot be the moral order. Instead, we must infer the correct moral order from the design of nature. We must order the faculties, sentiments and passions given to us by God; it is in this way that the ordering of nature determines morality.

As we shall see, human passions include *amour de soi, amour propre,* pity, and the sense of justice. At some time between the *Second Discourse* and the *Emile,* Rousseau changed his mind about pity; instead of being directly natural to humanity, he determined that it was an outgrowth of *amour propre* instead.[180] Natural human faculties

180Thus, as Lovejoy (1961) notes, a "dichotomy of human motives was adopted, though not constantly or consistently, by Rousseau." (146) In fact, this study shows that the dichotomy between *amour de soi* and *amour propre* was quite constant in Rousseau, at least once he established it in the *Emile.* However, the fact that the two are a dichotomy does *not* mean they are a mutually exclusive dichotomy. Grimsley (1968) always treats them as such, for example claiming that "one of the most serious symptoms of contemporary decadence is the transformation of genuine *amour de soi* into false *amour-propre.*" (39)

Dent (1988) makes it absolutely clear that the contrast between these two "is not a matter of mutual exclusion… despite the virtually unanimous opinion of commentators that it is." By all means, Rousseau is "apt to say that *amour-propre* is *the* paramount source of individual and social perversion, whereas he always says that *amour-de-soi* is good, creative, benign and wholly beneficial in its effects for us." But it is "mistaken" to leave it at that, for Rousseau also says "that *amour-propre* may be benign, valuable and good for ourselves and in our dealings with others, for all that he equally insists that it very

include freedom, perfectibility, and language. These must be ordered in a non-contradictory fashion. *Amour de soi* takes two essential forms: the desire for survival and the desire for sex. The divine aim of these passions is evident: the preservation of the species and each (individual) part of the species. This divine aim is confirmed by pity in the *Second Discourse.* The correct governance of *amour propre* does not consist in its destruction, but in its being made consistent with *amour de soi* (or with the divine aims inferred from *amour de soi*). Naturally, this takes the form of love and romantic pursuits. However, our faculties also indicate the divine intent to lead us away from our natural state. Why else would we be perfectible—a better translation is probably malleable—and free to resist our natural instincts if God did not wish for us to use those faculties? Language and justice show us how we ought to leave nature: we should abandon nature by forming a society which is based, not upon natural desire, but upon mutual agreement. Upholding our agreements is justice, and the desire for justice is natural. However, the content of any particular agreement is artificial: humans determine it by convention. As such, justice is the nexus point of nature and artifice.

Forming the just society means forming a new, artificial order based on agreement which respects the moral order inferred from nature without being nature. We cannot count upon a simply natural psychology in attaining this end. However, there are two alternative educations that can make proper citizens. One is in the *Emile*: Emile

often comes not to be so." (20-21) Dent ultimately concludes that *amour propre* is "in its orderly and equable form" when it ensures "that we receive what is proper to us, from others." When it does this, it is nothing but the extension of *amour de soi.* (118) In this, I moderately disagree with Dent; for while this assessment is perfectly reasonable (if unspecific) for Emile, we will see that the ancient citizen crushes *amour de soi* using *amour propre.*

imitates nature because his *amour propre* is expressed in romantic love like the natural man (albeit through an artificial mechanism, imagination, due to the need to resist the desires produced by the corrupt society that he is destined for). But the result of this is that he is easily capable of not desiring the General Will; whatever he may have agreed to, he has no particular desire to contribute to the rest of the society in any type of political obligation, particularly when the society is as corrupt as it is. Therefore, Emile learns virtue—he learns to resist his natural desires and overcome them. This virtue is also useful if his (artificial) love should fall apart for any reason. Through virtue, Emile can reconcile his natural desire and his obligations as fit. The alternative education is the ancient education, the education (confusingly enough) of the "citizen."[181] This education forms people to become patriots who cannot live apart from their country by manipulating their *amour propre* to create a passionate identification with the country, even to the point of overriding *amour de soi* (at least in theory). This overriding is what it means to denature the citizen. These people are also orderly when the denaturing is successful, for they desire only the preservation of their country. Yet they also abide (at least partially) by moral law, for they preserve humanity by preserving their fellow

181The fact that Rousseau refers to citizenship both as being a member of the agreement that forms the General Will and in the light of a particular psychological framework is just another instance of Rousseau using language with less than ideal precision. As I will show (see 200-203), the citizen and the natural man cannot be the same person. There are "two contrary forms of instruction—the one, public and common; the other, individual and domestic." (*Emile,* 40) Yet despite this contrariety, Rousseau wishes "perchance" to achieve "the double object we set for ourselves... by removing the contradictions in man." (41) Rousseau insists on natural man and citizen being contrary types of persons, yet he also proposes—if only theoretically—that nature and citizenship might be reconciled. The only viable solution is that he has two different concepts of citizenship appended to the one word: one is ancient citizenship, the other is formal citizenship. Even without going into the formal analysis of Rousseau that I later will, can we honestly believe that Rousseau took his Emile to be the Spartan citizen? And yet Emile becomes a citizen. One form of citizen is the psychological citizen, the denatured man who gives everything he is to his country. The other is a legal citizen, who respects the General Will despite having his own, private will that contradicts the General Will. Emile becomes the latter, but certainly not the former.

countrymen. These two educations cannot be reconciled, for one cannot have a man who preserves his natural desires who is also denatured, but either education can produce individuals who make for good citizens, who contribute to the General Will as their agreement requires.

But what is this agreement? Its nature follows directly from the dictates of *amour de soi.* No one would agree to destroy themselves, but each must agree to aid each other if (as is now the case) we cannot live well on our own. Therefore, each individual pledges themselves to protect the good of the collective whole, in exchange for which the collective whole guarantees the welfare of each individual. The nature of this agreement shows us why people cannot simply be left to their natural desires. Each would like to receive the benefits of the protection of the collective whole, but naturally, no one wants to contribute to that collective force. Yet if people followed their natural inclinations, the collective force would cease to exist and no one would benefit from it. People must either overcome their natural inclinations through virtue, or they must learn to love the General Will as a matter of their personal well-being despite the love of the General Will being unnatural. The natural man is a solitary man in the sense of having no *amour propre* at all. This man, unlike Emile or the ancient citizen, fails to contribute to the well-being of others in his society. As such, except under very special circumstances, he fails to live according to moral law, specifically by violating his agreement with others that forms the General Will. Whatever asocial picture Rousseau presents in the first part of the *Second Discourse*, the Vicar's assessment in the *Profession of Faith* remains his belief: it "cannot

be doubted" that "man is by his nature sociable, or at least made to become so."[182]. The solitary man is therefore inferior to the social man, unless an iniquitous society casts the solitary man out.

Before moving on to demonstrate all of this, it is important to review Rousseau's sources. What inspired his moral thinking? Of course, the implicit answer of my work is that his religious system inspired it. However, that alone is not sufficiently determinate, and it is highly unlikely that Rousseau birthed every one of his moral thoughts on his own, in a vacuum, without using other authors in the process. What authors and which ideas influenced the development of his moral thought?

<u>Rousseau's Moral Use of His Sources</u>

To discuss all of Rousseau's sources for his every idea and thought would be far, far too much, even if we limited the scope of inquiry to moral thought. But we can look for the sources of his central moral tenet: the natural goodness of humanity, and with that, the natural orderliness of humanity. We already know that the primary source of so much of Rousseau's religious thinking is Geneva, so it should come as no surprise that the view of humanity as naturally good also comes from there. Calvin did not preach natural goodness; however, the Genevan pastors believed that too strict an emphasis on doctrines like Original Sin and predestination was counterproductive. It prevented good works, and works were essential to salvation. The truths of Christianity are for practice: "religion consists in practice," Vernet informed Geneva. As Vernet would argue, man was "originally a noble creature," so that to be good, "you need only to will it." This was a

[182] *Emile*, 290

typical Genevan view: Original Sin was broadly downplayed, even if humanity might now be corrupt after the Fall. [183]

But then what of self-love? Rousseau appeals constantly to self-interest in his moral theory, claiming (for example) in the *Social Contract* to reconcile justice and interest. More broadly, the primary passions that Rousseau addresses are *amour de soi* and *amour-propre*: the one other passion that we will find moving humanity, pity, will turn out to be a form of *amour-propre* in his later analyses (though it stands independently in the *Second Discourse*). Both are forms of self-interest. Why does the apostle of natural goodness appeal to thoroughly to self-interest? Why does he assess it so positively?

We live in an age that detests self-interest. Rousseau did not. The Genevan pastors understood that self-love is natural. Therefore, it could not be evil since humans are naturally good, made in God's image and implanted with the passions of His choosing. Thus, according to Deluc (a friend to Rousseau's), a “well-regulated” self-love would “excite man to virtue.”[184] Deluc was not peculiar in this new understanding of self-love; indeed, there was an entire Calvinist tradition dedicated to redefining the relationship between self-love and human nature, motivated by the optimistic appraisal of humanity and the recognition that self-love came “not in the corruption of nature...but in

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183See Rosenblatt, 1997, 12-17. Deluc also argued that the Creator placed in humanity “an invincible desire for happiness, and an insurmountable aversion to pain. These two opposed penchants form the true *amour de soi-meme*, or *l'amour propre*, so natural to man in his existence.” *(Lettre critique sur la fable des abeilles*, 16) (“*le Créateur lui a imprimé une inclination invincible vers le bonheur, & une aversion insurmontable contre le malheur: Et c'est de ces deux panchans opposés que se forme le véritables amour de soi-meme, ou l'amour propre, aussi naturel a l'homme que son existence.”)*

184Quoted in Rosenblatt, 66.

nature itself."[185] Humans are naturally good, and they also naturally love themselves; therefore, their self-love is not intrinsically evil.

Self-love is also heavily used in the natural law tradition. Derathé argues that Rousseau's use of the natural law tradition was more a matter of what he rejected than what he accepted from them.

> In reality, Rousseau's political thought comes from a reflection on the theory of the jurisconsults, who, as we have seen, had authority in his era. The principle themes of his own doctrine—state of nature, social pact, sovereignty—form the elements of the political theory taught in the various treatises on natural law, and we find them (for example) in Pufendorf. On each of these classic themes, Rousseau brings new solutions directly opposed to Pufendorf's. In writing the *Social Contract,* he knowingly formulates a new theory of the State, which, in his eyes, should replace that of the jurisconsults whom he reproaches for having served their interests at the expense of truth. His debt towards the jurists of the natural law school is considerable, but, as we will see, he owed more to them by what he rejected than by what he retained from their teaching.[186]

Without a doubt, there is a great deal of truth in this assessment. However, Rousseau maintained the base of the natural law school—which was a recognition of the moral validity of self-interest as a part of the divine creation, as indicative of our moral function. In fact, even beyond the natural law school, we find the praise of self-love. As Tuck summarizes the views put forward by Lipsius and (as is relevant to us) Montaigne:

> Starting from a position of scepticism about received moral theories, whether Ciceronian or Aristotelian, or the recent, anti-Aristotelian sciences... they

185Quoted in ibid., 67.

186 Derathé, 1950. "En réalité, la pensée politique de Rousseau est issue d'une reflexion sur la théorie des jurisconsultes, qui, comme nous l'avons vu, fait autorité à son époque. Les thèmes principaux da sa propre doctrine, état de nature, pacte social, souveraineté, forment les éléments de la théorie politique enseignée dans la divers traités de Droit naturel, et on les retrouve tous chez Pufendorf par exemple. Sur chacun de ces thémes classiques, Rousseau apporte des solutions nouvelles et directement opposées aux vues de Pufendorf. En écrivant le *Contrat social,* il a conscience de formuler une théorie nouvelle de l'État, qui, à ses yeux, doit remplacer celle des jurisconsultes auxquels il reproche d'avoir servi leurs intérets aux dépens de la vérité. Sa dette envers les juristes de l'ecole du Droit naturel est considérable, mais, comme nous le montrerons, il leur doit plus par ce quíl rejette que par ce qu'il retient de leur enseignement."

> recognized that the only secure basis for conduct was an acceptance of the force of *self-interest* or *self-preservation.* But the self could only be preserved by a kind of emotional horticulture, in which certain passions were allowed to blossom and others kept firmly under control.[187]

This new humanism spread and ultimately resulted in Hugo Grotius, who took the work of the previous humanists and attempted to turn it from moral skepticism to a "post-sceptical moral science."[188] The essence of Grotius' theory was to take self-preservation and transform it into a moral right. "He proposed in effect to use the sceptics' vision of how a life should be led in order to refute their initial scepticism about the possibility of a moral science." The moral obligations present in Grotius' work are those of self-preservation: any other moral obligations are the product of civil society, which cannot contradict self-preservation.[189]

The use of self-interest to found moral doctrine is also evident in Hobbes. Hobbes founds the law of nature on self-preservation: "a Law of Nature, (*Lex Naturalis*), is a Precept, or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit, that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved."[190] Pufendorf also adds to the chorus in favor of self-love. The very first fact of human nature is self-love; indeed, unlike Grotius, Pufendorf even denied the natural sociability of human beings, asserting instead that self-interest brought people together. Barbeyrac's translation brought the place of self-love to the fore, while praising many of the Genevan theologians that we

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187Tuck, 62
188Ibid., 154
189Ibid., 173
190*Leviathan,* chapter 14.

have already discussed precisely for their treatment of self-love and the need to do one's duty rather than discuss dogma. Drawing upon them, Barbeyrac concluded (in his view correcting Pufendorf) that *religion* was one of the great principles of natural law. Finally, Burlamaqui drew upon precisely the argument of the Geneva theologians that self-love is placed into the human heart by God and thus must be good, fusing together the natural law tradition and the Calvinist moral theology.[191]

In both of these sources—the Genevan Calvinist tradition of natural goodness, including ordered self-love, and the natural law theorist's understanding of self-love as the basis of moral and especially political order—we can see the influence of Stoicism.[192] The Stoic concept of order ensures that there is harmony in the universe. Because of this harmony, conflict between the true interests of individuals is impossible. Further, each individual is naturally directed towards their true interests, since nature is inherently orderly. We are so designed that our interests and the interests of others are best pursued together, so that the true interest of the individual and the state are intertwined.

The plainest example of this is Cato in Cicero's *De Finibus.*[193] As he begins his argument in Book III:

191Rosenblatt, 92-97

192Using the Savoyard Vicar's treatment of order in the universe—among various other pieces of evidence —Williams (2007) concludes that Rousseau's source is Plato. There can be no doubt that Rousseau was deeply influenced by Plato; his express citations throughout *Nouvelle Heloise* alone are sufficient to demonstrate that. Unfortunately, in this particular issue, there is a confounded variable problem: Plato and the Stoics sound an awful lot like each other regarding universal order. My reason for preferring the Stoics is simple: it is Seneca's *De Ira* who stands at the start of the *Emile*. More broadly, Plato seems to be St. Preux's master more than Rousseau's own. If St. Preux is modeled off of Rousseau, this undoubtedly has significance; however, Rousseau was ultimately his own man. In any case, this is an instance where we can easily say: "why not both?" Beyond a shadow of a doubt, this is the correct answer regarding Rousseau's sources and influences. Since there is so much more for Plato to account for in Rousseau's thought—which Williams deals with masterfully enough—I account for some of the Stoic influence here.

193 Whether or not Rousseau read *De Finibus,* it was used extremely often in the 18th century for its contrasting of Epicureanism and Stoicism. Hont, 2015. 14-15.

> It is the view of those whose system I adopt, that immediately upon birth (for that is the proper point to start from) a living creature feels an attachment for itself, and an impulse to preserve itself and to feel affection for its own constitution and for those things which tend to preserve that constitution; while on the other hand it conceives an antipathy to destruction and to those things which appear to threaten destruction.

While this is expressly not the same as pleasure—which has already been rejected as the final object of endeavor in the dialogue—it is a natural impulse towards self-preservation, felt even by infants independently of pleasure and pain.[194] What is natural or accords with the natural is good, and so the first good act is to retain our natural constitution; the second is to "retain those things which are in accordance with nature and to repel those that are contrary."[195] But there is also a mutual attraction between humans as such, which shows the naturalness of society. From this Cato proceeds to argue:

> Again, they hold that the universe is governed by divine will; it is a city or state of which both men and gods are members, and each one of us is a part of this universe; from which it is a natural consequence that we should prefer the common advantage to our own. For just as the laws set the safety of all above the safety of individuals, so a good, wise and law-abiding man, conscious of his duty to the state, studies the advantage of all more than that of himself or of any single individual. The traitor to his country does not deserve greater reprobation than the man who betrays the common advantage or security for the sake of his own advantage or security. This explains why praise is owed to one who dies for the commonwealth, because it becomes us to love our country more than ourselves.[196]

This apparent about-face from the previous reasoning is made possible by the fact that the wise learn to love harmony with nature more than the particular goods to which they were initially attracted.[197] Our natural tendencies, including self-preservation, lead us to an understanding of the harmony of the universe and the divine will.

194Cicero. Book III, 5.
195Ibid. 6
196Ibid., 19
197Ibid., 6

However, I know no real evidence that Rousseau read *De Finibus.* While it is the most plain demonstration, we should stick to sources he more likely used, like Seneca. Seneca's 121st letter to Lucilius is revealing. In this letter, it is plain that nature orders humanity towards their self-interest and desire for self-preservation. Self-love is the product of nature: "Nature brings up her own offspring and does not cast them away; and because the most assured security is that which is nearest, every man has been entrusted to his own self."[198] Self-love is a part of the order of nature for Seneca just as much as it is for Cicero's Cato. But virtue involves being equally "compliant with the orders of man and God,"[199] while nature is just another word for God.[200] This same sentiment is obviously captured at the start of the *Emile*, where Rousseau quotes Seneca's *De Ira*: "we are sick with evils that can be cured; and nature, having brought us forth sound, itself helps us if we wish to be improved."[201] As Seneca continues:

> nor is the path to virtue steep and rough, as some think it to be: it may be reached on level ground. This is no untrue tale which I come to tell you: the road to happiness is easy; do you only enter upon it with good luck and the good help of the gods themselves. It is much harder to do what you are doing. What is more restful than a mind at peace, and what more toilsome than anger? What is more at leisure than clemency, what fuller of business than cruelty? Modesty keeps holiday while vice is overwhelmed with work. In fine, the culture of any of the virtues is easy, while vices require a great expense.[202]

Happiness is gained from moral goodness, from the goodness that we are naturally inclined towards.

198Seneca, Letter 121
199Ibid., Letter 120
200Seneca, *On Benefits*, 4.7.1
201*Emile*, 31. "*Sanabilibus aegrotamus malis; ipsaque nos in rectum genitos natura, si emendari velimus, iuvat.*"
202Seneca, *On Anger*. Paragraph 13.

However, it is precisely from the Stoic treatment of happiness that the limits of Stoic influence on Rousseau becomes clear. His use of Epictetus demonstrates this. Without a doubt, Rousseau mimics Epictetus in admiring the divine order of the universe. “The wise and good man then after considering all these things, submits his own mind to him who administers the whole, as good citizens do to the law of the state.” To do this, we must “learn to wish that every thing may happen as it does.” Epictetus continues,

> and how do things happen? As the disposer has disposed them? And he has appointed summer and winter, and abundance and scarcity, and virtue and vice, and all such opposites for the harmony of the whole; and to each of us he has given a body, and parts of the body, and possessions, and companions.
>
> Remembering then this disposition of things, we ought to go to be instructed, not that we may change the constitution of things,—for we have not the power to do it, nor is it better that we should have the power,—but in order that, as the things around us are what they are and by nature exist, we may maintain our minds in harmony with the things which happen.[203]

This resembles Rousseau's theology perfectly. But Rousseau parts company with him at his next stop. Epictetus names a series of apparent evils, and denies that they are real evils at all: the person who is discontented with their state bears the punishment of being in whatever state they are in. We should instead simply accept our state, whatever it is.

> “Must my leg then be lamed?” Wretch, do you then on account of one poor leg find fault with the world? Will you not willingly surrender it for the whole? Will you not withdraw from it? Will you not gladly part with it to him who gave it? And will you be vexed and discontented with the things established by Zeus, which he with the [fates] who were present and spinning the thread of your generation, defined and put in order? Know you not how small a part you are compared with the whole. I mean with respect to the body, for as to intelligence you are not inferior to the gods nor less; for the magnitude of intelligence is not

203Epictetus. Book I, Chapter 12.

> measured by length nor yet by height, but by thoughts. Will you not then choose to place your good in that in which you are equal to the gods?[204]

Unlike Epictetus, Rousseau is quite concerned about his maimed leg: he considers things of the body very relevant. This is evident in his use of Epictetus in his third maxim on the governance of pity. Some allege there is the same proportion of happiness and misery in every station of life: Rousseau says no. In the process, he shows that not all of our good or evil depends on our mentality alone.

> The miseries of the rich man come to him not from his station but from himself alone, because he abuses his station. Were he unhappier than the poor man himself, he would not be pitiable, because his ills are all his own doing, and whether he is happy depends only on himself. But the misery of the poor man comes to him from things, from the rigor of his lot, which weighs down on him. No habit can take from him the physical sentiments of fatigue, exhaustion, and hunger. Neither intelligence nor wisdom serves in any way to exempt him from the ills of his station. What does Epictetus gain in foreseeing that his master is going to break his leg? Does the master break Epictetus' leg any the less for that? He has, in addition to his misfortune, the misfortune of foresight. If the people were as clever as we assume them to be stupid, what could they be other than what they are?[205]

Why does Rousseau depart from Stoic doctrine at this point? Rousseau rejected the idea that the body is paltry and that suffering in this world is irrelevant. God made us beings with self-love, and that self-love includes that terribly pathetic desire to not have our legs broken. Since our nature is a part of the order of nature, it follows that our natural desires are legitimate. God made us to be afraid for our legs: Epictetus is wrong to shrug off bodily harm. In fact, shrugging off what God made us to be concerned with is disowning the divine order.

204Ibid

205*Emile,* 225-26

In short, for the proposition that "man is naturally good," which implies that he naturally lives well in the divine order, Rousseau has more than a few sources. He agrees with the Stoics that the universe is ordered by God, including humanity. As such, the true interests of humanity are not naturally in conflict with each other. But that does not lead him to advocate simple indifference as the Stoics do, nor concern for the whole above concern for the part, for he knew that *amour de soi* is natural and that *amour-propre* naturally develops under certain circumstances. This, too, is ordained by God; this, too, is good.

In fact, spiritual concerns would be impossible without physical concerns.[206] Our spiritual faculty is our freedom.

> Nature commands every animal, and the beast obeys. Man feels the same impetus, but he realizes that he is free to acquiesce or resist; and it is above all in the consciousness of this freedom that the spirituality of his soul is shown. For physics explains in some way the mechanism of the senses and the formation of ideas; but in the power of willing, or rather of choosing, and in the sentiment of this power are found only purely spiritual acts about which the laws of mechanics explain nothing.[207]

But this freedom is only possible in civil society. It is in civil society that we acquire "moral liberty, which alone makes man truly the master of himself. For to be driven by appetite alone is slavery, and obedience to the law one has prescribed for oneself is liberty."[208] But civil society is not founded on spiritual concerns; it is founded on the General Will, which (as we will see) is an agreement of each individual for the protection of themselves, in exchange for which they offer their strength to the collective

206Just as intellectual reason is impossible without sensory reason. *Emile,* Book II.
207*Second Discourse,* 114. Freedom is translated from *liberté.*
208*Social Contract,* Book I, Chapter 8

whole to protect every other individual. This agreement is founded on self-preservation and our need for others due to our weakness. Rousseau provides nothing to suggest that it is founded on spiritual concerns, and of course not: it is the civil contract that makes the great proof of our spirituality, freedom, possible. In effect, the civil contract makes spirituality itself possible. We can exercise our spirit against bodily concerns only because bodily concerns motivated us to make an agreement with others to preserve each other, but that agreement calls upon us to engage in actions which are contrary to our personal desires. Even while the spirit conflicts with (some) bodily desire, it can work in this life only because of bodily desire. The body is the foundation of the soul in this life. Without the body and its concerns, the spirit would be inactive. By extension, at least some of the concerns of the body must be legitimate, and indeed the proper aim of spiritual concerns. Which desires are legitimate? How do we know? To what end should we use our freedom? To the ends dictated by the order of nature, that allow us to take our proper place in that order.

Review and Elaboration of the Vicar's Morals

The moral order is violated by human vice. Man is two rather than one, he is soul and body, each making contrary appeals to particular interest and innate justice. How can this conflict exist in an orderly universe? The Vicar answers that this conflict is necessary in order to give humanity freedom. In order to have freedom, humans must be able to will something contrary to right order: Providence

> could not prevent [human evil] without hindering his freedom and doing a greater evil by degrading his nature. It has made him free in order that by choice he do not evil but good. It has put him in a position to make this choice by using well

> the faculties with which it has endowed him.... To complain about God's not preventing man from doing evil is to complain about His having given him an excellent nature, about His having put in man's actions the morality which ennobles them.

In order to gain the “supreme enjoyment” of being satisfied with ourselves, we must have freedom: we must be “tempted by the passions and restrained by conscience.” This makes us like God: “I shall never reproach You for having made him in Your image, so that I can be free, good, and happy like You!”[209] Freedom is a necessary part of order for humanity, and that freedom necessarily implies the ability to step outside of the moral order. Human moral order requires that moral disorder be possible. Evidently, we have made the possible real.

But what was God's moral order, before we screwed it up? The moral order is the natural order, not the artificial order. The artificial is produced by human action: the natural is produced by God. What is given by God is good. “Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man.”[210] God gave us a soul, but “conscience is the voice of the soul” while “the passions are the voice of the body.... It is only when one haggles with [conscience] that one has recourse to the subtleties of reasoning.”[211] With this background, we need only “distinguish our acquired ideas from our natural sentiments.” We naturally love the good and flee the bad, so that “the acts of conscience are not judgments but sentiments.”[212] In that case, we need only determine which sentiments are natural to determine the right order. What are these?

209*Emile*, 281
210Ibid., 37
211Ibid., 286
212Ibid., 289-90

> These sentiments, as far as the individual is concerned, are the love of self, the fear of pain, the horror of death, the desire of well-being. But if, as cannot be doubted, man is by his nature sociable, or at least made to become so, he can be so only by means of other innate sentiments relative to his species; for if we consider only physical need, it ought certainly to disperse men instead of bringing them together. *It is from the moral system formed by this double relation to oneself and to one's fellows that the impulse of conscience is born.*[213]

Moral conscience consists of the double relation between one's own well-being and the natural concern for one's fellows. If we can insert ourselves correctly into this order, then we are moral: if we fail to do so, then we are not moral. If we love *this* order, in which we order ourselves "in relation to the whole," rather than ordering "the whole in relation to [oneself]," we are good.[214] Conscience teaches us to recognize the correct moral order, as produced by God. If we freely choose this order, then we are good: the failure to choose this order makes us bad. So much is the Savoyard Vicar's account of moral good and evil, and it depends upon the order established by God. But Rousseau is more elaborate about what is by nature elsewhere, in the *Second Discourse.*

<u>Rousseau's Moral Theory: Deducing Morals From Human Faculties</u>

To say that Rousseau's morality follows from his theology of order is well and good, but it is vague. Even saying that we must elaborate on the double relation between our own well-being and not harming others needs, well, elaboration. How does the order of the universe translate into a *specific* ought? How do we know what the order of the universe means for us, as humans? There are two different types of order: the order of nature and the artificial orders set up by humanity. There is nature, and there is that which human beings have set up using their own freedom. Rousseau's essential argument is that

213Ibid., 290
214Ibid., 291-92

knowledge of what is morally right depends on using the natural order prior to human intervention as a standard of judgment. In order for humanity to have some semblance of happiness, we must imitate the natural order in producing a new, artificial order. We must, as Rousseau puts it in the *Political Economy,* "imitate here below the immutable decrees of the divinity."[215] To do thus, we must know nature.

Rousseau's primary purpose in the *Second Discourse* is to tease out the differences between the natural and artificial orders of the world. The value of the *Second Discourse* is in its delineation of the true natural state of humanity. Granted, Rousseau expressly claims that his purpose is to demonstrate the origins of inequality. That is, after all, the subject that was assigned. But this is clearly not what Rousseau primarily had in mind: his delineation of the origins of inequality was only a means to understanding the distinction between humanity as God made it and humanity as formed by humans. Thus he begins the preface saying that "of all the branches of human knowledge, the most useful and the least advanced seems to me to be that of man." It is because of this that inequality is relevant, but understanding it is also exceptionally difficult: "for how can the source of the inequality among men be known unless one begins by knowing men themselves? And how will man be successful in seeing himself as nature formed him, through all the changes that the succession of time and things must have produced in his original constitution, and in separating what he derives from his own essential nature from what circumstances and his progress have added to or changed in his primitive state?" From all of these changes what do we now find left? "Instead of a being who acts

215*Political Economy*, 129

always by fixed and invariable principles, instead of that heavenly and majestic simplicity whose mark its author had left on it, one no longer finds anything but a grotesque conflict of passion that thinks it reasons and an understanding in a state of delirium." From our initial orderliness we now find only disorder, and we do not actually know wherein our original orderliness consisted. In fact, the more we know, the less we know: "Since all the progress of the human species continually moves away from its primitive state, the more we accumulate new knowledge, the more we deprive ourselves of the means of acquiring the most important knowledge of all. Thus, in a sense, it is by dint of studying man that we have rendered ourselves incapable of knowing him."[216] If all of this sounds like the beginning of a *Discourse on Human Nature* rather than a *Discourse on Inequality,* that is because human nature, not inequality per se, is Rousseau's real subject.

When Rousseau finally speaks to what he is trying to do, he tells his readers not to imagine "that I dare flatter myself with having seen what appears to me so difficult to see." He has merely "begun some lines of reasoning" to try to clarify the question and reduce it "to its true state." Others will be able to do more with the question. And then it becomes clear that the question is not one of inequality: "for it is no light undertaking to separate what is original from what is artificial in the present nature of man, and to have a proper understanding of a state that no longer exists, that perhaps never existed, that probably never will exist, and yet about which it is necessary to have accurate notions in order to judge properly our own present state." The Aristotles and Plinys of the world

216*Second Discourse,* 39

should take up the question: "*what experiments would be necessary to achieve knowledge of natural man? And what are the means of carrying out these experiments in the midst of society?*"[217] Rousseau writes the *Second Discourse* to clarify the question of human nature, not inequality: inequality is simply on for the ride because it plays an essential role in transforming human nature as Rousseau conceives it.

This places the *Second Discourse* squarely within the context of Rousseau's concept of order and inference of morality from the natural order of the world. "It is this ignorance of the nature of man that throws so much uncertainty and obscurity on the true definition of natural right. For the idea of right, says Mr. Burlamarqui, and even more that of natural right are manifestly ideas relative to the nature of man. Therefore, he continues, the principles of this science must be deduced from this very nature of man, from man's constitution and condition."[218] For all our disagreements, "all we can see very clearly regarding [natural law] is that, for it to be law, not only must the will of him who is obliged by it be capable of a discerning submission to it, but also, for it to be natural, it must speak directly by the voice of nature." This means that we must leave aside "all the scientific books that teach us only men as they have made themselves," so that we can instead meditate "on the first and most simple operations of the human soul." Rousseau perceives two principles

> prior to reason, of which one makes us ardently interested in our well-being and our self-preservation, and the other inspires in us a natural repugnance to seeing any sentient being, especially our fellowman, perish or suffer. It is the conjunction and combination that our mind is in a position to make of these two principles, without the need for introducing that of sociability, that all the rules of natural

217Ibid., 40
218Ibid., 40-41

> right appear to me to flow; rules that reason is later forced to reestablish on other foundations, when, by its successive developments, it has succeeded in smothering nature.

Thus "one is not obliged to make a man a philosopher before making him a man." By listening to the inner voice, people will not harm other sentient beings unless their own preservation comes into conflict with those others (which is legitimate).[219] Rousseau is primarily concerned with the first movements of the human soul by nature. He then tells us quickly that only this "same study of original man" is "the only good means that can be used to remove those multitudes of difficulties that present themselves regarding the origin of moral inequality, the true foundations of the body politic, the reciprocal rights of its members, and a thousand other similar questions that are as important as they are poorly explained."[220] "Moral inequality" is only one of the "thousand other similar questions" that this study of human nature lets us address. Nor does Rousseau end the preface to address this inequality. He addresses the inequalities of power that make "human establishments" apparently based "on piles of shifting sand." But the study of human nature makes the basis of society more evident: "Now without a serious study of man, of his natural faculties and their successive developments, one will never succeed in making these distinctions [between the shifting sand and immovable base of society] and in separating in the present constitution of things what the divine will has done from what human art has pretended to do." It is because of the importance of this topic that "the hypothetical history of governments is an instructive lesson for man in every respect."[221]

219Ibid., 41-42
220Ibid., 42
221Ibid., 42-43

By the preface, the *Discourse on Inequality* is one part inequality to every hundred parts human nature.

Finally, Rousseau concludes the preface with a quote from Persius: “learn whom God has ordered you to be, and in what part of human affairs you have been placed.”[222] This quotation is significant, not only for what it says—though that obviously places this work in the context of Rousseau's conceptual use of moral order –but also for where it comes from. Having searched for references to Persius in Rousseau's other works, I have come up completely empty handed. For lack of any evidence to suggest the contrary aside from this quotation, I conclude that Rousseau did not actually read Persius. However, he did read Pufendorf, and Pufendorf cites these lines word for word in *De iure naturae et gentium.* In that context, he uses both this line and the “know thyself” phrase before beginning his inquiry into human nature. After establishing that certain beliefs must not be tolerated in a society for their tendency to deter us from our duty to God and undermine laws and mores,[223] Pufendorf argues that our primary occupation is to understand our own nature. “Out of this true fountain it is easy to infer knowledge of human duties.” At this point Pufendorf cites the Persius line that Rousseau steals to end his preface.[224] Since the title page of the *Second Discourse* also references nature through a reference to Aristotle (“not in depraved things, but in those well oriented according to nature, are we to consider what is natural”)[225], we may say that all of Rousseau's prefatory

22243. “*Quem te Deus esse Jussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re, Disce.*” (Persius, *Satire 3,* lines 71-73)
223Pufendorf, Book II, Chapter 4, §4.
224Ibid., §5. “*Post haec cuique cultura sui circa hoc potissimum occupatur, ut seipsum, suamque naturam probe exploret, & nosse discat.... Ex hisce autem velut fontibus facile notitia humani oficii deducitur.*”
225*Second Discourse,* 29. “Non in depravatis, sed in his quae bene secundum naturam se habent, considerandum est quid sit naturale.”

material is book-ended by references to the need to know human nature so as to order ourselves according to the divine moral order. The *Second Discourse* is not about inequality, except insofar as false conclusions about nature have produced inequality (as in Aristotle's treatment of slavery).[226] No: the *Second Discourse,* the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality,* is about human nature and the changes it has undergone in the process of social development. Inequality merely rides on human nature as an important part of the process.

Human Nature in the *Second Discouse*

Rousseau wishes to distinguish the natural state from the artificial state we now live in, to determine the principles that govern the natural state. We have already seen what those principles are: *amour de soi* and pity, which are both prior to reason.[227] *Amour de soi* and pity are present in animals generally, so their naturalness to humanity is not doubtful.[228] These passions preserve the entire human race: *amour de soi* causes each individual to keep themselves alive, while pity ensures that they are disinclined to harm others unless there is a real necessity in doing so. The resulting rule is not the Golden Rule, but one "much less perfect but perhaps more useful than [that]: *Do what is good for you with the least possible harm to others.*" This is the rule produced by natural sentiment, and "although it may behoove a Socrates and minds of his stamp to acquire

226See *Social Contract*, Book I: Chapter 2. Rousseau makes it evident that Aristotle has mistaken nature and, therefore, established the justice of an unjust institution, slavery. Rousseau ignores the context of his quoting Aristotle entirely in the *Second Discourse*. It was evidently not his subject.
227See this work, ftnt. 219. This reference also shows us why Rousseau's reasoned arguments are necessary despite his appeals to sentiment and conscience as sources of moral knowledge. Reason is forced to reestablish the principles of morality because its successive developments have stifled nature; the voice of conscience is no longer loud enough for us to hear without the aid of reasoned argument. Thus, Rousseau provides rational defenses of his moral system, not just appeals to conscience.
228Ibid., 130-33

virtue through reason, the human race would have perished long ago if its preservation had depended only on the reasonings of its members."[229] Preservation of humanity is based on the combined passions of *amour de soi* and pity.[230]

The previous two passions sit well with the Vicar's founding morality on the double relation between love of self and desire not to harm others. However, while the purpose of the *Second Discourse* is to show just how far from natural order we have strayed, Rousseau also believes that modern society is intended by God. Thus his response to those who ridicule him as claiming that we must go back to nature:

> What! must we destroy societies, annihilate thine and mine, and go back to live in forests with bears? A conclusion in the manner of my adversaries, which I prefer to anticipate rather than leave them the shame of drawing it. Oh you, to whom the heavenly voice has not made itself heard and who recognize no other destination for your species than to end this brief life in peace; you who can leave your fatal acquisitions, your worried minds, your corrupt hearts, and your unbridled desires in the midst of cities; reclaim, since it is up to you, your ancient and first innocence; go into the woods to lose sight and memory of the crimes of your contemporaries, and have no fear of debasing your species in renouncing its enlightenment in order to renounce its vices. As for men like me, whose passions have forever destroyed their original simplicity, who can no longer nourish themselves on grass and nuts, nor do without laws and chiefs; those who were honored in their first father with supernatural lessons; those who will see, in the intention of giving human actions a morality from the start which they would not have acquired for a long time, the reason for a precept indifferent in itself and inexplicable in any other system; *those, in a word, who are convinced that the divine voice called the whole human race to the enlightenment and happiness of celestial Intelligences*: all those will endeavor, through the exercise of virtues they obligate themselves to practice while learning to know them, to deserve the eternal reward they ought to expect from them; they will respect the sacred bonds of the societies of which they are members; they will love their fellow-men and will serve them with all their power; they will scrupulously obey the laws, and the men who are their authors and ministers; they will honor above all the good and

229Ibid., 133

230"This reductive analysis leaves [Rousseau] with two principles prior to reason and independent of sociability, self-preservation and pity, which, in his view, suffice to allow men to act in conformity with natural right." (Gourevitch, 1997. xvii)

> wise princes who will know how to prevent, cure, or palliate that multitude of abuses and evils always ready to crush us; they will animate the zeal of these worthy chiefs, by showing them without fear or flattery the greatness of their task and the rigor of their duty. But they will nonetheless scorn a constitution that can be maintained only with the help of so many respectable people—who are desired more often than obtained—and from which, despite all their care, always arise more real calamities than apparent advantages.[231]

The state of nature may well be happier than civil life; however, the development of civil life is by Providential design. For those who recognize the divine purpose of society, going back to the state of nature is wrong and impossible. Instead, they must respect the bonds of society and live their lives as social beings. We are meant to develop into the kind of enlightened beings that exist only in society. But the current state is miserable and outside of the divine, natural order, dominated by unnatural passion. What happened?

The purpose of the *Second Discourse* is not merely to detail the state of nature: it is also to show how humanity went from being the unsociable, natural man to the sociable being he now is, and how this transformed man into a being subject to desires beyond his strength and forced him, precisely through those desires, to live under oppression. Looking to the *Second Discourse,* we can determine at which precise point humanity lived most within the order of nature as social beings. We can see where humanity was right before it went wrong. And Rousseau has a precise point where humans are sociable and happy: directly before the development of metallurgy and agriculture. I will call this point of development "nascent society."[232] Says Rousseau:

231Ibid., 201-03. Emphasis added.
232Ibid., 150

> ...This period of the development of human faculties, maintaining a golden mean [*une juste milieu*] between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our vanity, must have been the happiest and most durable epoch. The more one thinks about it, the more one finds that this state was the least subject to revolutions, the best for man, and that he must have come out of it only by some fatal accident, which for the common good ought never to have happened. The example of savages, who have almost all been found at this point, *seems to confirm that the human race was made to remain in it always*; that this state is the veritable prime of the world; and that all subsequent progress has been in appearance so many steps toward the perfection of the individual, and in fact toward the decrepitude of the species.[233]

The savage state is the happiest state, the state humans were meant to remain in.

Misery proves the disorder of the world; by inversion, happiness proves its orderliness.[234] The happiness found in the nascent society confirms that it is natural. We further affirm this by remembering that the first movements of nature are always right. What are the first movements contributing to nascent society? People find this new situation by a kind of necessity. Human beings spread, this raises difficulties, which (combined with various accidents) teaches people to make use of nature around them, and "this repeated utilization of various beings in relation to himself, and of some beings in relation to others, must naturally have engendered in man's mind perceptions of certain relations." This "finally produced in him some sort of reflection, or rather a mechanical prudence that indicated to him the precautions most necessary for his safety." Thus reason is born, and this produces the very first stirrings of *amour-propre* as people

233Ibid., 151. Emphasis added

234This shows us the error in Charvet's (1974) assessment that the golden age "has no bearing on the substance of Rousseau's argument, for this argument concerns the options for men, who, in becoming dependent on and necessary for each other, confront the conditions of maximum corruption." (23) Besides Emile's taking on something like the "self-sufficient peasant life" that Charvet equates this golden age with, the golden age provides a kind of model for how humans can exist in an orderly fashion while both *amour de soi* and *amour propre* exist. As we will see, by making Emile fall in love, Rousseau follows the model of the golden age.

discover their superiority to other animals. People come to associate with each other for mutual gain (though with no foresight), and these first developments "finally put man in a position to make more rapid ones." People establish families and "a sort of property" in the huts that they develop and live in. These developments are presented as if they are necessary, without the intervention of human will. Hence reflection is "produced in" humanity: people do not spontaneously will it. This much is a part of the divine order. What are the first consequences of this situation for the human spirit?

> The first developments of the heart were the effect of a new situation, which united husbands and wives, fathers and children in a common habitation. The habit of living together gave rise to the sweetest sentiments known to man: conjugal love and paternal love. Each family became a little society all the better united because reciprocal affection and freedom were its only bonds.

A series of natural events produces a new, first movement in the heart, which is the development of love. In turn, this establishes the first lifestyle differences between the sexes.[235] Since these are the "first developments of the heart," they are natural: they are good. The goodness of conjugal and paternal love is obviously consistent with everything else Rousseau says. Rousseau also defends the patriarchal family as natural in *Political Economy*.[236] Thus, we see that the foundation of this nascent society is natural.

But this development of the heart produces consequences that seem bad. The first luxuries develop, "the first yoke [humans] imposed upon themselves without thinking about it." People acquire ideas of merit and beauty which introduces love which "at the least obstacle becomes an impetuous fury," so that "the gentlest of the passions receives sacrifices of human blood." Eventually, "each one began to look at the others and to want

235Ibid., 142-47
236*Political Economy*, 124-25

to be looked at himself, and public esteem had a value. The one who sang or danced the best, the handsomest, the strongest, the most adroit, or the most eloquent became the most highly considered; and that was the first step toward inequality and, at the same time, toward vice." Because people fall in love, they need to be looked at, and looked at as the best. The relative passion of *amour propre* is born of romance. This makes people cruel, since they must defend themselves against assaults on their vanity (and not just on their actual person or goods).[237] Nonetheless, humanity is happiest in this state. How can humans be happiest in a state of luxury and cruelty?

For all their seeming evil, these consequences of conjugal and paternal love are necessary and morally justifiable. True, people are cruel in this state, but morality makes this necessary. Because people are moral beings, they need the limitations of vengeance for lack of laws. "Morality beginning to be introduced into human actions, and each man, prior to laws, being sole judge and avenger of the offenses he had received, the goodness suitable for the pure state of nature was no longer that which suited nascent society;" consequently, we can see "that it was necessary for punishments to become more severe as the occasions for offense became more frequent; and that it was up to the terror of revenge to take the place of the restraint of the laws."[238] Vengeance was a necessary element of the new state of affairs. The other evil of this state is luxury, which makes people weaker. However, luxury is only truly bad when it begets dependence. As long as there is no dependence, luxury is unproblematic. As long as humans were contented with their huts and crude luxuries, applying themselves to make things they could make by

237*Second Discourse*, 147-150
238Ibid., 150

themselves, “they lived free, healthy, good, and happy insofar as they could be according to their nature, and they continued to enjoy among themselves the sweetness of independent intercourse.”[239] In spite of crude luxury and love producing cruelty, the savage state is still superior to the current state of affairs *and* the initial state of nature presented in part 1 of the *Second Discourse*. Cruelty serves the function of the laws, and serves rather well in comparison. Cruelty serves to preserve the species, even if it is destructive against particular individuals.

The nascent society suggests a new order. Of course, *amour de soi* and pity still have their place. Only *amour propre* is new. *Amour propre* is the cause of vice and evil in Rousseau's thought, so its introduction in nascent society is counter-intuitive.[240] However, there is a distinction between *amour propre* in natural man and in civil man. In natural man, there is “une juste milieu” between the passions, where *amour propre* simply takes a place beside *amour de soi* and pity. In civil man, *amour propre* dominates the soul entirely. Thus Rousseau can say in the *Discourse on Political Economy* that “it shows a poor knowledge of men to believe that men who have once been seduced by luxury can ever renounce it. They would a hundred times rather renounce necessities, preferring to die of hunger rather than of shame.”[241] The evil of *amour propre* lies in its domination of the human psyche. So long as it maintains its place alongside the other passions, rather than dominating them, it has a place within natural man. *Amour propre*

239Ibid., 151

240By noting that *amour propre* is a cause of vice and evil in Rousseau, I by no means limit it to that alone. Neuhouser (2008) argues that there is a theodicy associated with *amour propre* and the appropriate governance of *amour propre.* He is broadly right that *amour propre* is a part of the divinely intended order of things (though many of his specific arguments are mistaken).

241*Political Economy*, 151

must be well-ordered, not dominant.[242] Natural man is not devoid of *amour propre*: his *amour propre* serves the function of gaining status for the sake of romantic pursuits, and does not decimate *amour de soi* or pity in the fashion that *amour propre* does in modern, civil man. On the contrary: since *amour propre* is for the sake of romantic pursuits, and those involve various pleasures related to *amour de soi*, *amour propre* clearly reinforces *amour de soi*. The first movements of the heart are orderly.

Besides the passions, two human faculties are also detailed in the *Second Discourse:* perfectibility and freedom. Perfectibility refers to the malleability of human nature: “by contrast [with humanity] an animal is at the end of a few months what it will be all its life; and its species is at the end of a thousand years what it was the first year of that thousand.” Humans live by more than instinct: they change based on circumstances and necessity. “It is this faculty which, bringing to flower over the centuries his enlightenment and his errors, his vices and his virtues, in the long run makes him the tyrant of himself and of nature.”[243] Since perfectibility is natural, it implies that the transformation of instinct—the change from the natural state to an artificial one—was divinely intended, even if it could cause misery. We have already seen the footnote to this passage: it shows that the divinity intended humanity to develop into societies for the sake of enlightenment. Perfectibility defines humanity's divine purpose of becoming enlightened.

242 Since love is the first movement of the heart that produces *amour propre*, its proper ordering involves love. We will see this clearly in Emile's relationship with Sophie.
243*Second Discourse*, 114-15

Freedom effectuates perfectibility by making resistance to instinct possible. “It is not so much understanding which constitutes the distinction of man among the animals as it is his being a free agent. Nature commands every animal, and the beast obeys. Man feels the same impetus, but he realizes that he is free to acquiesce or resist; and it is above all in the consciousness of this freedom that the spirituality of his soul is shown.”[244] Together, freedom and perfectibility allow us—indeed, obligate us—to step outside of the divine order. As the Vicar tells us, freedom makes us like God and is a part of God's plan for us. Even as it allows us to step outside of the divine order, freedom allows us to create artificial orders just as God created natural orders. Together, perfectibility and freedom both play a part in the divine order, precisely by allowing us to step outside of that order and then to imitate it as we imitate God.

Within the *Second Discourse,* we learn that *amour de soi*, pity, *amour propre*, perfectibility and freedom all have a part in the natural, divine order. The first three are a part of the order made by God; the last two allow us to leave it and to make our own orders, as God does. All have a part in orienting us towards the moral truth. The first three show us the natural order that we ought to imitate, while the last two give us the power to imitate it, rather than merely to follow it. But the *Second Discourse* is not the only source of knowledge with regards to what is natural to humanity. The *Second Discourse* is a reasoned history (*une histoire raisonnée*), not an exact history. This is because the place of divine action is ignored in the *Second Discourse.* The question is:

244Ibid., 114

what else has the divinity placed into the human soul? If we know this, then we can know what else is a part of the divine order in Rousseau's philosophy.

Essay on the Origin of Languages

The obvious place to look is in the *Second Discourse's* companion piece, the *Essay on the Origin of Languages.* It was written for the same contest as the *Second Discourse*: it will describe what is missing there. From the title, the most obvious natural inclination of humanity is for language. People realized that language could be useful with sentient beings like themselves, and so developed it; "the inventors of language did not make this argument, but instinct suggested its conclusion to them."[245] It is instructive to compare this to the treatment of language in the *Second Discourse.* There, Rousseau discovers that it is impossible for language to develop naturally, "for if men needed speech in order to learn to think, they had an even greater need of knowing how to think in order to discover the art of speech."[246] In fact, Rousseau piles difficulty upon difficulty in the formation of language, such that it is "difficult to conceive in itself," since people would have to unanimously agree to which symbols they ought to use for which ideas, and "that unanimous agreement must have had a motive," so that "speech seems to have been highly necessary in order to establish the use of speech."[247] The same problem is almost treated as a non-problem in the *Essay.* Rousseau explains the motive for language without any proposed objection:

> As soon as one man was recognized by another as a sentient, thinking Being, similar to himself, the desire or need to communicate to him his sentiments and

245*Languages*, 248
246*Second Discourse*., 121-22; see generally, 120-26
247Ibid., 123

> thoughts made him seek the means to do so. These means can only be drawn from the senses, the only instruments by which one man can act upon another. Hence the institution of sensible signs to express thought. The inventors of language did not make this argument, but instinct suggested its conclusion to them.[248]

That's it: Rousseau does nothing else to address the motivation behind language. Rousseau considers language as a natural faculty of humanity, implanted by God. Rousseau thereby cuts the *Second Discourse's* Gordian Knot.

Language is connected to perfectibility. "Conventional language [as opposed to communication by gesture] belongs to man alone. This is why man makes progress in good as well as in evil, and why animals do not." But "progress in good as well as in evil" is precisely what Rousseau means by perfectibility: the capacity of human beings to adapt into good or evil, to change and move beyond mere instinct. Perfectibility is produced by conventional language. This suggests a connection between perfectibility and reason: to perfect himself, man must consider instinctive impulse and reject it, which involves some degree of consideration.[249] Rousseau continues by rejecting the sorts of physical explanations that the *Second Discourse* would depend on: "This single distinction seems to be far-reaching: they say that it can be explained by the difference in organs. I should be curious to see this explanation."[250] Obviously, "I should be curious to see this explanation" means that the explanation is a load of crap. The difference is not merely a physical one; being distinctly human, language is distinctly spiritual. This

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248*Languages*, 248

249True, Rousseau's definition of freedom in the *Second Discourse* starts by distinguishing freedom from rationality, claiming that humans are not so much rational as free. However, he proceeds to note that human spirituality consists in being aware of our freedom, of our capacity to resist our instincts if we see fit. We must realize our own capacity in order to be free. Thus, while freedom defines humanity rather than rationality, that freedom seems to involve a degree of reflection when it is actually practiced. Thus, virtue is only possible to a reasoning creature (which should not, of course, be confused with a philosopher).

250Ibid., 252

makes it exactly similar to perfectibility, which is also spiritual. Language is essential to perfectibility, perfectibility is natural, and so language is natural.

But Rousseau's suggested motivation for language presupposes the ability to perceive other humans as sentient beings, and this is not obviously natural in the *Second Discourse.* However, the *Essay on the Origins of Language* and the *Emile* both portray this as another innate tendency. Rousseau's treatment of pity makes this clear:

> The social affections develop in us only with our knowledge. Pity, although natural to men's heart, would remain eternally inactive without imagination to set it in motion. How do we let ourselves be moved by pity? By transporting ourselves outside ourselves; by identifying with the suffering being. We suffer only to the extent that we judge it to suffer; we suffer not in ourselves but in it. Think how much acquired knowledge this transport presupposes! How could I imagine evils of which I have no idea? How could I suffer when I see another suffer if I do not even know that he suffers, if I do not know what he and I have in common? Someone who has never reflected cannot be clement, or just, or pitying; nor can he be wicked and vindictive. He who imagines nothing feels only himself; in the midst of mankind he is alone.[251]

While an original instinct, pity only kicks into gear once people start thinking and imagining other people's thoughts. Understanding others as sentient is natural in the *Essay.*

Justice is treated similarly in the *Emile.* Rousseau treats of justice while speaking of particularly difficult infants*:*

251*Languages,* 267-68. This reflects the explanation in the *Emile:* “At sixteen the adolescent knows what it is to suffer, for he has himself suffered. But he hardly knows that other beings suffer too. To see it without feeling it is not to know it; and as I have said a hundred times, the child, not imagining what others feel, knows only his own ills. But when the development of his senses lights the fire of imagination, he begins to feel himself in his fellows, to be moved by their complaints and to suffer from their pains. It is then that the sad picture of suffering humanity ought to bring to his heart the first tenderness it has ever experienced.” As Rousseau concludes a little later: “thus is born pity, the first relative sentiment which touches the human heart according to the order of nature.” (222) Since pity is a *relative* sentiment, it is a form of *amour propre,* which is relative rather than absolute in nature. Pity is the first expression of *amour propre* according to the order of nature, if we follow the explanation given in the *Emile* and the *Essay on the Origins of Languages.* Cf. Masters (1968, 46).

> I shall never forget having seen one of these difficult cryers [] struck by his nurse. He immediately kept quiet. I believed he was intimidated. I said to myself, “This will be a servile soul from which one will get nothing expect by severity.” I was mistaken. The unfortunate was suffocating with anger; he had lost his breath; I saw him become violet. A moment after came sharp screams; all the signs of the resentment, fury, and despair of this age were in his accents. I feared he would expire in this agitation. If I had doubted that the sentiment of the just and the unjust were innate in the heart of man, this example alone would have convinced me. I am sure that a live ember fallen by chance on this child's hand would have made less of an impression than this blow, rather light *but given in the manifest intention of offending him.*[252]

The infant's natural sense of justice is offended because he perceives his nurse's intent. This confirms that perceiving intentions in others is a natural capacity.

***Emile* and the Sense of Justice**

The example from *Emile* is an excellent segue into Rousseau's treatment of justice. Justice was natural to the infant in the example. But what is this natural justice? The Vicar defines justice as “the love of order which preserves order” (while “the love of order that produces order” is goodness).[253] Thus, justice involves preserving existing order. But this is rather vague. What order is there to preserve? An evident answer is: the social order. The first sketch of morality “is not drawn by the hand of man but is graven in our hearts by the Author of all justice. Take away the primary law of conventions and the obligation it imposes, and everything is illusory and vain in human society.”[254] We must maintain our agreements, including the agreement which forms society. Preserving this agreement is preserving the social order. Since the goal of the contract that founds

252*Emile,* 65-66. Emphasis added

253Ibid., 282

254Ibid., 100. This is obviously consistent with society being founded on an agreement. The primary law “graven in our hearts by the Author of all justice” is to maintain our agreements, despite the fact that those agreements are themselves not the simple product of nature. Our agreements are not natural (see *Social Contract,* Book I, chapters 1-6), but the desire to maintain them is. Thus, we see society is both natural and unnatural.

civil society is the preservation of property,[255] it follows that the preservation of property is also a sacred duty of justice.[256]

With this in mind, it is perfectly reasonable that Emile's first appearance in the *Emile* is in his learning about the rights of property. After all, it is in establishing justice “that man begins to set himself in contradiction with himself.” We cannot simply keep our promises because it is in our interest to do so, for that leaves us completely unbound. Justice involves being bound in spite of our interests.[257] Establishing justice begins our contradiction with ourselves because we want both whatever it is that we pledge in making our agreement, while also wanting to keep our end of the agreement. We wish both to keep whatever we promised while also keeping our promise, and we cannot do both. Emile finally arrives in the novel that bears his name when property, the central social institution preserved by justice and so the cause of our inner contradictions, is finally in view.[258] He arrives because we must understand how he was educated to preserve him from the inner contradiction so far and long as possible.

Emile learns about property after he plants beans in land that happens to already be in use by one Robert, who is pissed to lose his melons. He explains how he worked what his father before him improved, just as everybody else does since the lands have been taken for such a long time.

Emile: Monsieur Robert, are melon seeds often lost then?

255*Second Discourse*, 159-60
256Hence Rousseau's treatment of the right to property is *Political Economy* (140).
257*Emile*, 100
258Ibid., 98-100

> Robert: Pardon me, my young fellow, but little gentlemen as giddy as you do not often come our way. No one touches his neighbor's garden. Each respects the labor of others so that his own will be secure.
> Emile: But I don't have a garden.
> Robert: What do I care? If you ruin mine, I won't let you go around in it anymore, for, you see, I don't want to waste my effort.

From this example we see "the way of inculcating primary notions in children one sees how the idea of property naturally goes back to the right of the first occupant by labor. That is clear, distinct, simple, and within the child's reach."[259] The boy understands the right to property. This (after the giddy boy keeps destroying windows and so is locked in his room, not for punishment, but merely to protect the windows)[260] leads to an agreement that the boy stop destroying property in exchange for letting the boy go freely about.

> Here we are in the moral world, here the door on vice opens. With conventions and duties are born deceit and lying. As soon as one can do what one ought not, one wants to hide what one ought not to have done. As soon as interest causes a promise, a greater interest can cause the violation of the promise. The only concern now is to violate it with impunity. The means are natural: one conceals and one lies. Not having been able to forestall vice, we are now already reduced to punishing it. Here are the miseries of human life which begin with its errors.[261]

The way to solve this problem is to continue following nature: when the boy lies, make the punishment be, not a punishment, but "a natural consequence of their bad action." The liar will no longer be believed and will be accused of actions he did not commit, unable to defend himself by his word. But this is not the method used with Emile. Rousseau's solution is more complicated: "he who is aware of the need he has of others' help, and who never fails to experience their benevolence, has no interest in

259Ibid., 99
260Ibid., 100
261Ibid., 101

deceiving them; on the contrary, he has a palpable interest in their seeing things as they are, for fear that they might make a mistake prejudicial to him."[262] By educating the child naturally and freely, he has no reason to lie. Give him no reason to lie and the boy will never contradict justice. Thus "children's lies are all the work of masters." Because masters want to control and govern and instruct, "one prefers that [the child] know their lessons and lie, rather than remain ignorant and be true." Since Rousseau cares only for "lessons in practice," that is not a problem. Instead, "it is quite clear that the more I make his well-being independent of either the will or the judgments of others, the more I reduce any interest in him to lie."[263] An independent Emile is an Emile who does not understand the value of lying. Since Emile is generally independent and the governor (upon whom he presumably does depend) demands little, he has little reason to be unjust. Emile keeps his word because Rousseau never allows natural desire to contradict the artificial agreements that Emile might have to make.

Justice is preserving order by preserving the order created via our agreements. This sense is a natural one, and it is only bad education that eradicates it by having children make agreements that they are tempted to violate. But this seems like an incomplete understanding of justice, for justice in the *Political Economy* takes on a different aspect. Instead of maintaining our agreements, justice in that context is respect for the General Will of the entire human race.

This shows that there are two different senses of justice in Rousseau: there is human justice, and there is divine justice. We know that one sense of justice cannot be

262Ibid., 101
263Ibid., 102

identical with service to humanity, or else it would be a tautology for Rousseau to say (as he does) that justice is the most beneficial virtue to humanity,[264] which only makes sense if justice is separate from benefiting the human race. Human justice is the justice of maintaining our agreements: divine justice is living in accord with the natural order, which demands the preservation of the whole human race and every individual human insofar as possible. To be clear, both are equally forms of justice: justice is the love of order which maintains order. The order maintained may be the natural divine order, or it may be the artificial order produced by human agreement. Both are forms of justice. But they are different, ultimately divergent forms of justice. As we will see, artificial justice can never completely imitate natural justice. But artificial justice remains possible and sacred. The appeal of artificial justice—the desire to keep our agreements once made—is natural to humanity, even when the particular details of agreements are necessarily artificial.[265]

Rousseau perceives five aspects of our nature that need ordering together: *amour de soi* (including pity), *amour propre,* language, freedom (together with perfectibility), and justice. These must be ordered to make for a good way of life. The first is not necessarily social, and the next two, while social, need not be civic. It is the final two—freedom and justice—that show the need to aim ourselves towards civil society.

264*Emile*, 253

265If they were not artificial, no agreement would be necessary: nature would takes it course and we would all do whatever needed doing without any agreement.

Artificial Political Order: The Social Contract

Contrary to common belief, Rousseau does not argue that humans are naturally asocial creatures. Aside from the *Second Discourse,* which Rousseau claims is a purely conjectural history, I see nothing in his corpus to suggest natural asociality. On the contrary, the Vicar tells us that people are either naturally social, or made to become social.[266] We know this because we have faculties for society—the capacity for justice and the capacity for freedom. In fact, it is our capacity for justice that gives us our capacity for freedom. The need to maintain the agreement that forms society gives us a moral standard which can contradict our natural desires, thus giving us a standard for rejecting our instincts. What is this justice? What kind of standard does it give us? Such is the subject of the *Social Contract.*

Independence and Enlightenment: Worse Together

The *Social Contract* is written to found just politics upon self-interest. "I will always try in this inquiry to bring together what right permits with what interest prescribes, so that justice and utility do not find themselves at odds with one another."[267] The Geneva Manuscript elaborates on why this is necessary. Imagine a philosopher shows us a moral principle related to the good of humanity. After all, the human race "ought alone to decide" the correct moral order "because the greatest good of all is the only passion it has." Each individual should consult the human race to determine what they ought to do and whether they ought to live or die. The independent person will

266*Emile*, 290

267*Social Contract*, 156. From this, we can see that Rousseau's goal is to resolve the conflict in the social human soul between their natural desires and their need to maintain their agreements.

respond: “I admit that I see in this the rule that I can consult, but I do not yet see... the reason for subjecting myself to this rule. It is not a matter of teaching me what justice is, but of showing me what interest I have in being just.”[268] Human beings do not care about morality or the common good of humanity or the polity; they care about their own good. This is not just lack of objectivity, but properly follows natural law:

> if concern for his self-preservation is nature's first precept, can he be forced to look in this manner at the species in general in order to impose on himself duties whose connection with his particular constitution is not evident to him? Don't the preceding objections still exist and doesn't it still remain to be seen how his personal interest requires his submission to the general will?[269]

Individuals are partial to themselves, and they *should* be: the first law of nature is self-preservation. Individuals will and should not obey the general will unless they see the reason for doing so within the context of their own, particular will. Justice in the form of the general will must be reconciled with interest in the form of the particular will.

The solution to this problem flows from the first principle laid down for creating a social pact.

> I suppose that men have reached the point where obstacles that are harmful to their maintenance in the state of nature gain the upper hand by their resistance to the forces that each individual can bring to bear to maintain himself in that state. Such being the case, that original state cannot subsist any longer, and the human race would perish if it did not alter its mode of existing.

People lack the strength to achieve their wishes, and since the only source of new strength is other humans, people must create a social organization.[270] People can no longer

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268*Geneva Manuscript,* 161. This problem is identical with the problem of the ethical skeptic in Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy.*
269Ibid.
270*Social Contract,* 163. In the Geneva Manuscript, the cited argument follows immediately after what was the first paragraph of the book (*Geneva Manuscript,* 163), and is thus evidently offered as a solution to the problems set forth by the independent man.

live independently: they *must* now depend upon others. They have no choice in this. In other words, the very first premise of *Du Contrat Social* is that the independent man is *not* independent. This is a necessary condition, for "it is false that in the state of independence, reason leads us to cooperate for the common good out of a perception of our own interest. Far from there being an alliance between private interest and the general good, *they are mutually exclusive in the natural order of things,* and the social laws are a yoke that each wants to impose on the other without having to bear himself."

> "I am aware that I bring horror and confusion to the human species," says the independent man who is stifled by the wise man, "but either I must be unhappy or I must cause others to be so, and no one is dearer to me than myself. I would try in vain," he might add, "to reconcile my interest with that of another man. Everything you tell me about the advantages of the social law would be fine if while I were scrupulously observing it towards others, I were sure that all of them would observe it toward me. But what assurance of this can you give me, and could there be a worse situation for me than to be exposed to all the ills that stronger men would want to cause me without my daring to make up for it against the weak? Either give me guarantees against all unjust undertakings or do not expect me to refrain from them in turn. You try vainly to tell me that in renouncing the duties that natural law imposes on me, I deprive myself at the same time of its rights and that my violence will justify every violence that others would like to use against me. I am all the more willing to agree because I fail to see how my moderation could protect me. Furthermore, it will be my business to get the strong on my side, by sharing with them the spoils from the weak. This would be better than justice for my own advantage and for my security." The proof that this is how the enlightened and independent man would have reasoned is that this is how every sovereign accountable for its behavior only to itself does reason.

Either justice is observed reciprocally or obedience to its dictates is a poor bargain. Without religion, which the multitude will never grasp properly, there is no way to refute what the independent man has asserted.[271] So long as humans are independent

[271] *Geneva Manuscript,* 160. Emphasis added. This is consistent with Emile's discovery of the true reason to be good with his understanding of religion.

and enlightened, they must follow their own interest at others' expense, simply out of self-defense. Even if one individuals' morality is pure, that of others is not guaranteed. Morality is a farce without the guarantee of reciprocity.

General Will as Solution to the Problem of Moral Reciprocity

The solution to the problem of non-reciprocity is the General Will. Rousseau's first argument is that society cannot be a construct of nature. He ends chapter 1 of Book I by claiming that society is a product of agreement rather than nature.[272] He then uses the next three chapters to refute three claims that would make society natural: society based in familial relations, the right of the strongest, and slavery. After refuting these claims to his satisfaction, he then entitles chapter 5: “That It Is Always Necessary to Return to a First Agreement.”[273] Because natural grounds of society do not exist, this artificial ground is necessary.

Individuals must agree to enter into society. This agreement is the essence of society. But what kind of agreement would individuals make? In order for society to be legitimate with respect to each of these individuals, *each* of them has to accept the claims of society—each of them has to enter into the agreement. A society that claims that it will merely defend the common good is not good enough. Instead, a legitimate society must defend the good of each and all of its members; otherwise, the member not protected by the agreement would not enter into the agreement. This is Rousseau's logic when he asks: “But since each man's force and liberty are the primary instruments of his maintenance, how is he going to entrust them to others without hurting himself and without neglecting

272 Ibid., Book 1, chapter 1
273Ibid., Book I, Chapter 2-5

the care that he owes himself?" An individual cannot—or rather, should or will not—give their powers to society without assurance that those powers will be used consistently with their own welfare; thus, the problem is to "find a form of association that defends and protects with all common forces the person and goods of each associate, and, by means of which, each one, while uniting with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before."[274] As Rousseau concludes, "this is the fundamental problem for which the social contract provides the solution." The solution is the General Will.

The General Will solves this problem by ensuring the protection of each individual while protecting all. Speaking of acts of sovereignty, Rousseau tells us that

> It is not an agreement between a superior and an inferior but an agreement of the body with each of its members. This agreement is legitimate, because it has the social contract as its basis; equitable, because it is common to all; useful, because it can have only the general good for its object; and solid, because it has the public force and the supreme power as a guarantee. As long as the subjects are subordinated only to such an agreement, they obey no one, but only obey their own will. And asking how far the respective rights of the sovereign and the citizen extend is asking how far the latter can commit themselves to one another, each to all and all to each.[275]

Everyone pledges themselves to protect the whole, but only because the whole pledges itself to the protection of every individual.

This agreement accords with natural motivations insofar as no individual must sacrifice their interests to the whole.[276] However, the demand that each individual give

274Ibid., Book I, Chapter 6

275Ibid., Book II, Chapter 4

276 A noble soul might choose to sacrifice themselves, and that is an extremely virtuous act, but it cannot be a sovereign command. "In effect, is it not the commitment of the body of the nation to provide for the maintenance of the humblest of its members with as much care as for that of all others? And is the welfare of a citizen any less the common cause than the welfare of the entire state? If someone were to tell us that it is good that one person should perish for all, I would admire this saying were it to come from the lips of a worthy and virtuous patriot who dedicates himself willingly and out of duty to die for the welfare of his country. But if this means that the government is permitted to sacrifice an innocent person for the welfare

themselves to the protection of the whole (with its concurrent demand that they, as part of the collective, use some of their strength to protect others) is unnatural. In the state of nature, people respect each other because they never see each other and their interests never clash in any permanent way. Independence ensures this. In nature, the whole is preserved when each part preserves itself. The new demand that each part protect the whole in society is not natural. Hence the need for punishment:

> each individual can, as a man, have a private will contrary to or different from the general will that he has as a citizen. His private interest can speak to him in an entirely different manner than the common interest. His absolute and naturally independent existence can cause him to envisage what he owes the common cause as a gratuitous contribution, the loss of which will be less harmful to others than its payment is burdensome to him. And in viewing the moral person that constitutes the state as a theoretical entity because it is not a man, he would enjoy the rights of a citizen without wanting to fulfill the duties of a subject, an injustice whose growth would bring about the ruin of the body politic.
> Thus, in order for the social compact to avoid being an empty formula, it tacitly entails the commitment—which alone can give force to the others—that whoever refuses to obey the general will, will be forced to do so by the entire body. This means merely that he will be forced to be free.[277]

Since the agreement that founds society is artificial, we need a Leviathan to enforce it. Without Leviathan, each individual thinks that they do not need to contribute to the collective effort, and the collective effort withers away.

Producing Safe Dependence

of the multitude, I hold this maxim to be one of the most despicable that tyranny has ever invented, the most false that one might propose, the most dangerous that one might accept, and the most directly opposed to the fundamental laws of society. For far from it being the case that one individual should die for all, all have committed their goods and their lives in defense of each of them, so that individual weakness would always be protected by public force, and each member by the entire state." (*Political Economy,* 135) Legitimate self-sacrifice is a function of the state calling upon an individual to fulfill their agreement: since they would have to defend themselves in the state of nature, a reduced risk in war is also acceptable. (See *Social Contract*, Book II, chapter 4, last paragraph.)

277Book I, Chapter 7

But how do we ensure that people are dependent in a safe way? It would clearly be a grave evil if humans were both independent and enlightened. They can be one, but they cannot be the other. Natural humanity was independent but not enlightened; civil humanity may be enlightened, but it must not be totally independent. Thus, *Du Contrat Social* works on the premise that humanity is independent no more. *Du Contrat Social* is written in order to solve the problem of how dependence can exist without it becoming tyrannical. Every individual must be compelled to commit themselves completely to the general will;

> For it is this condition that, by giving each citizen to the homeland, guarantees him against all personal dependence, this condition that produces the skill and the performance of the political machine and that alone bestows legitimacy upon civil commitments. Without it, such commitments would be absurd, tyrannical, and subject to the worst abuses. [278]

The *Second Discourse* shows how mutual dependence creates tyrannical social systems. Therefore, the question is how to ensure independence *without* ensuring independence, since independence and enlightenment combined produce conflict between the particular and the general wills. Rousseau's solution is to change on whom people depend. In the *Second Discourse*, dependence is upon other, individual persons. But Rousseau transforms the collective body into a whole and makes each and every individual dependent only upon that collective. This is the artifice that makes the entire machine work; without it, society would be tyrannical. The general will unites justice and interest.

278*Social Contract*, 167

How does the General Will produce this result? Recall that the order of nature involves a "double relation" between the individual and other humans. In the *Second Discourse,* this is expressed by human beings being naturally motivated by *amour de soi* and pity. The result is that humans try to do their own good with as little harm to others as possible. The ultimate result of this is the preservation of the entire human race. The General Will imitates this natural order. The General Will involves every individual giving themselves to the collective whole, while the collective whole in turn offers every individual protection: the principle of the General Will is to preserve every individual, just as the principle of the natural order is the preservation of the whole human race. Each individual depends upon the collective rather than upon particular individuals, while the collective protects each individual in turn, breaking the problem of dependence. Unfortunately, this imitation is incomplete: it is impossible to entirely imitate nature when living in an unnatural state. Just as Emile was required to take on artificial imagination in order to set him back into the order of nature, so too we must artificially order the state to reorder it towards nature. There are two essential artificial pieces of the social order. First, the General Will does not extend to the whole human race. Second, while no individual depends upon any other individual, each individual depends upon the whole. Together, these artifices show how the General Will imitates nature and set the limits to that imitation.

The General Will does not extend to the whole human race. This is not just an incomplete natural order; oftentimes, it violates the natural order. Nations go to war with one another, which is destructive and awful.

> Man to man, we live in a civil state and are subject to laws; people to people, each enjoys natural freedom; this is what makes our situation fundamentally worse than if these distinctions were unknown. For living in both the social order and the state of nature, we are subject to the inconveniencies of both without finding safety in either.[279]

The existence of particular nations means war. Even if these nations make perfectly just decisions with respect to themselves, the result need not be a just war. A particular nation's general will is not the same as divine justice. After demonstrating that the broader will is the better will and that "the most general will is also always the most just and that the voice of the populace is, in effect, the voice of God," Rousseau then corrects a possible misunderstanding: "it does not thence follow that public deliberations are always equitable; they could fail to be so when it is a question of matters involving foreigners. I have stated the reason for this. Thus, it is not impossible for a well-governed republic to wage an unjust war." While other injustices are caused by the seduction of private interests, unjust war can be the product of a general will which is still particular with respect to the members of the state as against humanity.[280] The general will does not guarantee natural justice because it does not extend to all humanity.

The need for individual dependence on the state is a consequence of the need to concentrate people's affection on the particular country rather than all humanity. Without that, the country would dissolve and the conflicts between people that make it necessary in the first place would overrun the possibility for unification. Each citizen must be "perfectly independent of all the others and excessively dependent upon the city."[281] This

279"The State of War," 256
280*Political Economy*, 127
281*Social Contract*, Book II, Chapter 12

ensures concern for the city. At the same time, individuals cannot be in conflict with each other. This is achieved by ensuring the independence of each individual from the rest. This imitates the natural state, where destructive conflict only occurs after events establish dependence. To establish independence, Rousseau advocates equality:

> Regarding equality, we need not mean by this word that degrees of power and of wealth are to be absolutely the same, but rather that, with regard to power, it should fall short of any violence and never be exercised except by virtue of rank and laws; and, with regard to wealth, no citizen should be so rich as to be capable of buying another citizen, and none so poor that he is forced to sell himself.[282]

Equality ensures independence. By ensuring independence, Rousseau ensures that no one threatens the General Will. Independence ensures the preservation of the whole. The proper social state imperfectly re-establishes the order of nature by combining the preservation of each and the preservation of all, combining independence of individuals with dependence on the state.

The *Social Contract* is written to produce an artificial order that mimics the natural order. Society is intrinsically unnatural and must be founded on agreement: coercive state force is required to uphold the agreement. The nature of the agreement—uniting the will of each individual in the good held in common by them all—mimics the order of nature insofar as it preserves the whole by means of the individual will of each. However, because the agreement is limited to a set group of individuals, this can produce war between groups and make the preservation of the group more important than the preservation of humanity, the original aim of the order of nature. The General Will is preserved by ensuring that each individual in society is independent of every other

282Ibid., 189

particular individual, as they would be in nature. Because the society is limited to a particular group and a society needs to ensure the loyalties of its members, it follows that each individual needs to recognize their dependence upon the laws and the collective whole.[283] Rousseau aims at mimicking the order of nature in the creating an artificial order, but the limits of the imitation come from the very fact of artificiality.

Education for Society and the Civil Religion

An instance of the incomplete imitation of nature in *Du Contrat Social* is the treatment of religion. The discussion of religion recognizes four types of religion, depending on how the religion relates to the state. If a religion competes with the state for authority, then it is "the religion of the priest." This religion creates disorder in people: "in giving men two sets of legislation, two leaders, and two homelands, it subjects them to contradictory duties and prevents them from being simultaneously devout men and citizens." This is obviously bad: "whatever breaks up social unity is worthless. All institutions that place man in contradiction with himself are of no value."[284] The other religions avoid creating this kind of disorder. This is most obvious in the pagan religion. "It unites the divine cult with love of the laws and in that, in making the homeland the object of its citizens' admiration, it teaches them that all service to the state is service to its tutelary god." This unification is good, as it allows people to become passionate about

283Emile's dependence is not obvious: he simply does not have a reason to break the laws. But he claims that he is dependent explicitly. "If I were without passions, I would, in my condition as a man, be independent like God himself; for I would want only what is and therefore would never have to struggle against destiny. At least I have no more than one chain. It is the only one I shall ever bear, and I can glory in it. Come, then, give me Sophie, and I am free." (*Emile*, Book V, 472-73.) As we will see, Emile is dependent because he is in love and wants a family. Since he cannot protect all this without the power of the state, he depends upon the laws.
284Ibid., 246-47

their country as the Spartans the Romans were. However, this religion is flawed insofar as it is based in falsehood, making people "credulous and superstitious" and drowning "the true cult of the divinity in an empty ceremony." Furthermore, when pagan religion becomes "exclusive and tyrannical, it makes a people bloodthirsty and intolerant, so that men breathe only murder and massacre, and believe they are performing a holy action in killing anyone who does not accept their gods. This places such a people in a natural state of war with all others, which is quite harmful to its own security."[285] The pagan religion attaches us, not to humanity, but to the particular state, and does so by teaching us falsehood. Consequently, it potentially makes a country an enemy to the wider order of humanity in favor of the partial order of the particular state.

This is not the case for the true religion, "the religion of man or Christianity (not that of today, but that of the Gospel, which is completely different). Through this holy, sublime, true religion, men, in being the children of the same God, all acknowledge one another as brothers, and the society that unites them is not dissolved even at death." Though this religion is true, it is flawed: "since this religion has no particular relation to the body politic, it leaves laws with only the force the laws derive from themselves, without adding any other force to them. And thus one of the great bonds of a particular society remains ineffectual. Moreover, far from attaching the hearts of the citizens to the state, it detaches them from it as from all the other earthly things. I know of nothing more contrary to the social spirit." Christianity does not attach people to the state: it detaches them from everything. Rousseau does not believe that a society of true Christians is

285Ibid., 247

possible: it would “no longer be a society of men.”[286] This is because a society of true Christians would have no passions at all, caring for nothing Earthly, and so could not be human. A society dedicated to pure truth is impossible, just as the true natural order is impossible.

But Rousseau imagines a society of true Christians anyway. Clearly, he exaggerated in saying that nothing is more contrary to the social spirit, for the Christian society does not look so bad. “Each man would fulfill his duty; the people would be subject to the laws; the leaders would be just and moderate, the magistrates would be upright and incorruptible; soldiers would scorn death; there would be neither vanity nor luxury.” But that is not enough. The Christian has no passion: he cannot love his country or its accomplishments.

> He does his duty, it is true, but he does it with a profound indifference toward the success or failure of his efforts. As long as he as nothing to reproach himself for, it matters little to him whether everything is going well or poorly down here. If the state is flourishing, he hardly dares to enjoy the public felicity, for fear of becoming puffed up with his country's glory. If the state is in decline, he blesses the hand of God that weighs heavily on his people.

It takes only one hypocrite to produce tyranny. The Christian will respect authority however gained, and the hypocrite will gain it. But this is from a disorder within the state, from some individual not being a true Christian. The more interesting disorder, also from lack of passion, comes from outside the state. If a war breaks out, the Christian soldiers do not care about their victory or defeat.

> Set them face to face with those generous peoples who were devoured by an ardent love of glory and homeland. Suppose your Christian republic is face to face with Sparta or Rome. The pious Christians will be beaten, crushed, and destroyed

286Ibid., 247

> before they realize where they are, or else they will owe their safety only to the scorn their enemies will conceive for them.

The only good Christian soldiers either failed to follow true Christianity or were in competition with pagan soldiers.[287] An army of Christian soldiers would be useless. In the circumstances of the world as artificially made, a Christian republic would never be able to defend itself. Complete truth cannot stand in the world artifice.[288]

All three religions are incapable of supporting a state. The priestly religion is false and creates disorder. The pagan religion supports the artificial order, but is false and potentially undermines the natural order dedicated to peace between humans. The true religion dedicates itself to the natural order, but fails to support the artificial order necessary in this fallen world. We must have truth that works in this fallen world, and that is found in the civil religion. The civil religion is designed to ensure that a citizen will "love his duties," while the dogmas of the religion are "of no interest to either the state or its members, except to the extent that the dogmas relate to morality and to the duties that the one who professes them is required to fulfill toward others."[289] Thus, the dogmas of the civil religion are such as to be perfectly consistent with either the soul of the man or the soul of the citizen.

> The dogmas of the civil religion ought to be simple, few in number, precisely worded, without explanations or commentaries. The existence of a powerful,

287Ibid., 248-49

288 This religion is not Emile's religion. Christianity, even Gospel Christianity, involves revelation, and Emile believes no specific revelation. He could, but there is no necessity for it. Emile believes in the natural religion. This religion is true, but it is not Christianity. This is why Emile can be a good citizen, able to attach himself to the laws. Like the Christian, he shows no fervor for them; however, Emile has one worldly attachment that the Christian lacks, and his love attaches him to his country in a way that is impossible for the Christian. We must imagine that Emile could muster up some passion to defend his country with Sophie in mind.

289Ibid., 251

> intelligent, beneficent divinity that foresees and provides; the life to come; the happiness of the just; the punishment of the wicked; the sanctity of the social contract and the laws—these are the positive dogmas. As for the negative dogmas, I am limiting them to just one, namely, intolerance. It is a part of the cults we have excluded.[290]

The set of positive dogmas is obviously designed to attach people to the country. This ensures that the necessary portion of the artificial order is preserved. Furthermore, the true Christian could affirm all of them, even the sanctity of the social contract and the laws: the true Christian performs their duties in the Christian republic, albeit without passion. They surely understand those duties as duties. The negative dogma most obviously prohibits the theological squabbles that were common to the 17th century, but it also prohibits the exclusive form of paganism that created a constant state of war. But it is evident that a non-exclusive paganism, like that of the Romans who adopted so many different gods,[291] could be perfectly consistent with the civil religion. Neither true Christianity nor paganism is prohibited by the civil religion, so long as people recognize their duty to the state.

Both man and citizen are possible under the rules of legitimacy set forth by *Du Contrat Social.* The laws of political legitimacy only demand that people obey and respect the law. Since the civil religion suits both religions, the rules of legitimacy do not forbid either type of person. Therefore, the appropriate education is a function of context. A society cannot be made entirely of true Christians, though an entirely Christian *world* might be successful. But that world would be subject to the same objections as the Christian republic: if only one hypocrite lives in the world, that hypocrite will become a

290Ibid., 250
291Ibid., 243-44

tyrant. However, having true Christians among a populace which is not dedicated to that religion accords with the new order, so long as someone (pagan or friend of natural religion) is willing to fight for their liberty when a tyrant arises. But the inability to fully embrace true Christianity shows the artificiality of the new order. Instead of complete truth, either outright falsehood or (in Emile's case) incomplete religious truth is necessary in some portion of the population. Otherwise, there is a wide religious latitude in the artificial order of society. So long as people are not divided within themselves against society, their religion is acceptable.

Rousseau's Method of Argument: Why He Did Not Stress the Argument From Order More

The need to re-establish an artificial order to replace the lost natural order determines Rousseau's thought. Since this is true, we can ask a question: why did he not stress this argument more than he did? As we have seen, Rousseau did contrast the justice of society and the justice of God; he did claim that perfect justice with respect to the General Will could not always be perfect justice with respect to humanity. He is adamant in praising regimes like Sparta and Rome, with practices of slavery and conquest that are obviously contrary to divine law. But this is hardly an elaborate comparison of the order of nature with the artificial order of his proposed society. Why does he never undertake such a comparison explicitly and in detail?

It is impossible to exhaust all of his motives and every event of his life. A valid answer might well be: he never got around to it.[292] The most appropriate context for

292Though, strictly speaking, he did. We have already reviewed the Profession of Faith. Anyone who reads even somewhat closely will notice the importance of order there. He also infers a set of moral principles

getting around to it would have been *Du Contrat Social.* Other contexts dealt with other issues: they were not well suited to considering the question of divine political order. Why did he not discuss it in his political treatise? Rousseau proposes grounds for the good society that all can agree to, even those that disagree with his theological premises. As Melzer tells us, Rousseau is aiming at the lowest common denominator in *Du Contrat Social.*[293] Rousseau wishes to appeal to self-interest in writing on politics, not higher moral principles. Hence he explicitly tells us that our transformation into moral beings through society is not his concern there. "I have already said too much on this subject, and the philosophical meaning of the word *liberty* is not part of my subject here."[294] Rousseau does not depend on theology because theology was not a relevant consideration for his audience.[295]

based in the "double relation" that we feel between love of self and concern for others. In this, the Vicar is virtually identical to the preface to the *Second Discourse,* where Rousseau claims that the interaction of love of self and pity form all the principles of natural law. But none of this specifically deals with the political order. The question remains valid: why, in discussing political order, does Rousseau never address divine order?

293Melzer, 1990. 116-18. However, to an extent, Melzer mischaracterizes a great deal of the natural law tradition by characterizing its authors as solely concerned with self-preservation in their deductions. As we have already seen in the example of Pufendorf, the concern for self-preservation becomes legitimate precisely because it is willed by God as a part of the divine order. (See this work, 102; 114-15) It is Rousseau, and not the natural law theorists that he depended on, who apparently abandons the divine authority of law based in self-preservation in his writing. Since he believed in that divine authority, why does he do nothing to indicate it?

294*Social Contract*, Book I, Chapter 8

295Not making divine order his subject may be motivated by his seeing how ineffective appeals to it had been in the past. Consider his use (while allegedly ignoring) of Barbeyrac: "I shall neglect, if one wishes, the authority of Barbeyrac, who clearly declares, following Locke, that no one can sell his freedom to the point of subjecting himself to an arbitrary power which treats him according to its fancy: *Because,* he adds, *that would be selling one's own life, of which one is not the master.* I shall only ask by what right those who have not been afraid of so greatly debasing themselves have been able to subject their posterity to the same ignominy, and to renounce for it goods which do not depend on their liberality and without which life itself is burdensome to all who are worthy of it." (*Second Discourse,* 167) The argument that life is the property of God, that liberty is given by God, and therefore that neither can be given up as not belonging originally to us, had already been made. Broadly speaking, the appeal to divine bases of right had already been done, and obviously was not effective against whomever Rousseau was writing for. Natural law writers had already made Rousseau's appeal to divine order. Rousseau may have seen no need for a further appeal where it had been previously ineffective.

But there is a deeper reason for Rousseau to count upon self-interest. Because the order of nature founds itself on self-interest, an argument from self-interest will point towards the natural order. While arguing in terms of the "lower," Rousseau does not thereby abandon the "higher." Instead, he recognizes them as being naturally well-ordered when taken together. When arguing in terms of the "lower" (or broadly, of the non-theological), Rousseau could confidently expect a convergence upon the "higher" (the theological). Hence interest and right are "reconciled," according to *Du Contrat Social:* Rousseau does not sacrifice one to the other. Rousseau did not need to go too far in depth into his theology of order and its implications for the proper social order. The argument from the lowest common denominator would converge on the same result. Of course, natural desire and justice are not perfectly consistent any more. But the point of the social contract is to reconcile justice and interest, to ensure that the natural order is replaced by an artificial order that includes a social agreement that respects the interests of all and enforces support for the whole.[296]

We can see how this new order imitates the natural order and fulfills the divine dictate implicit in our faculties for freedom and justice. People must pursue their self-preservation *(amour de soi*), but they are launched into society because their desires are no longer proportioned to their strength (thanks to *amour propre* produced by our increased enlightenment and capacity to make comparisons). But the relative nature of our new desire means that everyone contends for superiority against everyone else. To resolve this problem, we make an agreement that each shall subordinate themselves to the

296Cf. Melzer, 1990. 116-18

whole, in exchange for which the whole will protect the well-being of each (justice). This, in turn, makes us capable of freedom: while having the whole protect us is better for our interests than being left to our own devices in our enlightened state, we are conflicted between our natural desire to free ride on the agreement and our desire to uphold the agreement. We practice freedom by upholding our agreement despite our natural desire not to.[297] Freedom and justice are intimately related: we can be just only through our freedom, and our freedom is only practiced when justice is possible. Otherwise, we are merely left to natural desire, to instinct. We are un-free and justice is impossible for us. But this leaves us with a problem: Emile is, allegedly, a natural man, but he is also free and just. How is this possible?

297 In this case, the patriot seems less ideal than Emile, less free. Of course, that's true in another sense than the metaphysical one as well; the patriot depends on their country much more intimately than Emile. But the patriot turns out metaphysically free to an extent, since in practice they do not completely eliminate *amour de soi.*

The Education of Nature: *Emile*

Rousseau understands that there are two types of education for society: one for men, the other for citizens. There is a third type of education, for the solitary individual, but their education is not morally valid unless their circumstances are extraordinary.[298] For both social educations, the central question is: how do we reconcile nature and society? How do we respect desire and inculcate justice? As we have seen, the problem of justice is that our desire not to keep our end of an agreement with others is natural, even if we also wish to keep our agreement. In other words, we have intrinsically contradictory desires whenever we enter into an agreement. Leviathan might enforce agreements, but that implies establishing Leviathan and contributing to it (among other things, presumably like limiting its activities to appropriate spheres). Who shall take the effort of appropriately maintaining Leviathan? More broadly, who shall maintain their agreements when they could just as easily not?

There are three sides to this problem. When anyone makes an agreement, they can either uphold the agreement or not. Both decisions have their benefits and drawbacks. Breaking the agreement means (ideally) receiving the benefits of the agreement while contributing none of the efforts or goods called for by the agreement. On the other hand, upholding the agreement means respecting the voice of conscience. Furthermore, the

298Cf. O'Hagan, 1999. O'Hagan also perceives three "strategies of identification," through which "individuals can identify themselves with different totalities larger than they." These include identification with society, the natural order, and the divine order. According to O'Hagan, the last two strategies involve a "retreat from society." However, all three identifications are based in *amour de soi* expanded by means of compassion (18-21). As we will see, the identification with society is based in obliterating *amour de soi* as best as possible and replacing it with *amour propre.* Instead of pity, the citizen feels patriotism. The primary evidence that O'Hagan cites for Rousseau's use of *amour de soi* to create identification with society comes from the *Emile* (see ibid., 127-128). This is an error because Emile is distinct from the ancient citizen, and both receive very different educations.

person who is attached to their country will be motivated by their attachment to uphold their agreements with their countrymen. A good education from the social perspective must make desire consistent with upholding agreements, at least to a sufficient extent that people will choose to uphold their agreements rather than break them. There are three ways to do this. First, we can reduce the intensity of desires contrary to the agreement. Second, we can intensify desires consistent with upholding the agreement. Third, we can inculcate the strength to overcome our instinctive desires in the name of the agreement (which is Rousseau's understanding of virtue).

Rousseau's educations are constructed to do all three of these things. Emile goes through most of his childhood without having his *amour propre* excited. He also lives as independently as a child can. Since *amour propre* and dependence are the reason that our desires are disproportionate to our strength, the result is that Emile remains strong enough to satisfy his desires without dominating others. He sees little reason to lie: he would need desires that can be satisfied by lying to do so. This remains true until he falls in love. His love is arranged both to protect him from the negative effects of society on natural man (particularly on natural man's sensuality) and to make him dependent upon the laws. As a result, Emile will always be loyal to his agreements—both his agreement in marriage, and his agreement in society. But fortune can be capricious, so he must also learn virtue (which is useful in the sequel to *Emile*). Emile's virtue is motivated, like all virtue according to Rousseau, by his belief in God and his need to remain "just between God and himself."[299] By learning true religion, Emile is capable of virtue, and he practices

299*Emile*, 314. This phrase, coming from Calvin, has evident significance given my preceding treatment of justice. Emile remains just between God and himself, as if there is an agreement with God. The nature of

that virtue before finally settling down with his wife and children in a corrupt country that does not ask for his help. The citizen is also educated to have less desire to break their agreement, more desire to uphold it, and virtue to uphold it when it is painful to do so. The citizen learns to have no pleasures outside of their country: their country becomes the center of their existence. At the same time, they learn to love their country so that betraying it becomes unthinkable. Finally, patriotism combines virtue with *amour-propre* so that the patriot can resist any desires inconsistent with their patriotic inclinations. In both educations, the right governing of *amour-propre* is used to ensure that the balance sheet of desire favors upholding the General Will; if this fails, both educations still ensure that people are virtuous enough to choose the General Will in spite of their particular will.

The solitary education is inappropriate for society. Yet it can be made orderly. Instead of governing *amour-propre*, the solitary education eliminates it altogether. As a result, the necessary connection to others is severed. I will start by covering the natural education of the *Emile.*

The Goal of Education: Natural or Civic?

For Rousseau, there are two types of education suitable for people living in society: one is for men the other is for citizens.[300] Humans cannot survive without education, and "this education comes to use from nature or from men or from things." Rousseau defines what he means by this: "The internal development of our faculties and

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the agreement is what we have seen in the *Profession of Faith*: "*be just and you will be happy.*" (282) Keep your agreements with others, and God agrees to bring you happiness.

300See Shklar, 1969

our organs is the education of nature. The use that we are taught to make of this development is the education of men. And what we acquire from our own experience about the objects which affect us is the education of things." Three different influences act in education: how we are born, our experience with how things exist in the world, and what humans teach us. We must ensure that their lessons do not contradict each other. Otherwise, a person "will never be in agreement with himself." Therefore, "he alone in whom they all coincide at the same points and tend to the same ends reaches his goal and lives consistently. He alone is well raised."This is the problem of education, for the education of nature "is in no way in our control; that coming from things is in our control only in certain respects; that coming from men is the only one of which we are truly the masters," and even this is only hypothetical control.[301] We must find a way to make these three sources of education orderly, non-contradictory.

The proper method of education attempts to ensure the conjunction of nature, experience, and human influence. The goal of education must be set by nature; since nature is not subject to our control in any way, we must bend the rest of education towards it. But "nature" needs defining. Is nature really habit, as some argue? In a sense, but some habits come easily while others only continue under very specific circumstances and disappear with those circumstances. "Education is certainly only habit. Now are there not people who forget and lose their education? Others who keep it? Where does this difference come from? If the name *nature* were limited to habits conformable to nature,

301*Emile,* 38

we would spare ourselves this garble."[302] Natural education consists in giving man habits that coincide with nature, which leaves him without contradictions.

The difficulty is that "natural man is entirely for himself." Making man serve others is contrary to nature. "Harmony is impossible" if "instead of raising a man for himself, one wants to raise him for others." Hence the choice between men and citizens: "forced to combat nature or the social institutions [that raise people for each other], one must choose between making a man or a citizen, for one cannot make both at the same time." One must choose between making people for their own sake and making them for the sake of others. In contrast to the natural education, the citizen's education is patriotic. This patriotism makes the citizen love his fellow citizens but hate other peoples: "every particular society, when it is narrow and unified, is estranged from the all-encompassing society. Every patriot is harsh to foreigners. They are only men. They are nothing in his eyes." Rousseau continues that "this is a drawback, inevitable but not compelling. The essential thing is to be good to the people with whom one lives."[303] This ancient education taught men to love their society at the expense of their natural love of self. Natural man

> is a numerical unity, the absolute whole which is relative only to itself or its kind. Civil man is only a fractional unity dependent on the denominator; his value is determined by his relation to the whole, which is the social body. Good social institutions are those that best know how to denature man, to take his absolute existence from him in order to give him a relative existence and transport the *I* into the common unity, with the result that each individual believes himself no longer one but a part of the unity and no longer feels except within the whole.

Social institutions denature man, and denaturing is (gasp!) against nature. "He who in the civil order wants to preserve the primacy of the sentiments of nature does not

302Ibid., 38-9
303Ibid., 39

know what he wants. Always in contradiction with himself, always floating between his inclinations and his duties, he will never be either man or citizen. He will be good neither for himself nor for others. He will be one of these men of our days; a Frenchman, an Englishman, a bourgeois. He will be nothing." The objects of education are opposed, and "from these necessarily opposed objects come two contrary forms of instruction—the one, public and common; the other, individual and domestic."[304] This is the choice we must make: public instruction to make citizens love their country and their fellows at the expense of themselves, or individual, domestic education which maintains the love of self?

The facts of Rousseau's era compel him to decide for the education of nature. Public instruction, the ancient form of education, is no longer possible.[305] Hence, Rousseau's subject in the *Emile* is "domestic education or the education of nature." *Emile's* subject is the education that makes man for himself. "But what will a man raised uniquely for himself become for others? If perchance the double object we set for ourselves could be joined in a single one by removing the contradictions in man, a great obstacle to his happiness would be removed." Rousseau indicates that reading the *Emile* is a good start to judging if this is possible.[306] While Emile will be raised uniquely for himself, Rousseau's goal is to reconcile Emile's good with the good of others. Rousseau chooses the natural education in the hope that removing Emile's contradictions will also remove the contradictions between his interests and those of others. While the *Emile* is

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304Ibid., 39-40.
305As we will see, he attempts to imitate this education in *Government of Poland*. He must have changed his mind on the impossibility of public education in his own age. It happens.
306Ibid., 41

effectively a thought experiment about the result of educating people without contradictions for their own sake, Rousseau is clearly confident that it can succeed in making individual interests consistent with each other just as the individual becomes consistent with himself.

Unnatural Contemporary Education

To educate according to nature in the contemporary context is no simple task. We must stop society from corrupting nature. “To form this rare [natural] man, what do we have to do? Very much, doubtless. What must be done is to prevent anything from being done.” Contemporary “education” corrupts humanity. “All our wisdom consists in servile prejudices. All our practices are only subjection, impediment, and constraint. Civil man is born, lives, and dies in slavery. At his birth he is sewed in swaddling clothes; at his death he is nailed in a coffin. So long as he keeps his human shape, he is enchained by our institutions.”[307] The failures of contemporary education are not a product of public education opposing natural education. Public education no longer exists. Why, then, is contemporary education so bad?

Contemporary education comes from “a denatured practice” of giving the child to a nurse. “Since mothers, despising their first duty, have no longer wanted to feed their children, it has been necessary to confide them to mercenary women who, thus finding themselves mothers of alien children on whose behalf nature tells them nothing, have sought only to save themselves effort.” Instead of leaving the child free, they bind and neglect him. The denaturing is deeper than this, since women give up even wanting to

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307Ibid., 41-43

have children. “As soon as the condition of motherhood becomes burdensome, the means to deliver oneself from it completely is soon found.” But “there is no substitute for maternal solicitude,” so the child comes to care more for the adoptive mother than the real mother. “Where I found a mother's care do not I owe a son's attachment?” The mother's solution is to teach the child to neglect the nurse and treat her with contempt—which, rather than winning back the child's love, instead teaches the child ingratitude to double back on the mother as on the nurse.[308] Rousseau's conclusion is evident:

> Do you wish to bring everyone back to his first duties? Begin with mothers. You will be surprised by the changes you will produce. Everything follows successively from this first depravity. The whole moral order degenerates; naturalness is extinguished in all hearts; home life takes on a less lively aspect; the touching spectacle of a family aborning no longer attaches husbands, no longer imposes respect on outsiders; the mother whose children one does not see is less respected. One does not reside in one's family; habit does not strengthen the blood ties. There are no longer fathers, mothers, children, brothers, or sisters. They all hardly know each other. How could they love each other? Each thinks only of himself. When home is only a sad solitude, one must surely go elsewhere for gaiety.

Only if “mothers deign to nurse their children” will “morals reform themselves.” Then “nature's sentiments will be awakened in every heart.” In short, “this first point, this point alone, will bring everything back together. The attraction of domestic life is the best counterpoise for bad morals.” If “women once again become mothers, men will soon become fathers and husbands again.”[309] Women become mothers, children become well

308Ibid., 44

309 Ibid., 46. In *Julie,* Rousseau pushes the chain of causal reasoning back further. There, “it is in forced and ill-matched unions that young wives, victims of their parents' avarice or vanity, undo, through a disorder in which they take pride, the scandal of their original honesty.” (17-18) Arranged marriage produces the vice of wives, which produces the disorder of society.

raised, fathers love their families, and everything comes into order. All it takes is for women to become mothers once more.

This one change alone would reform the entire society, but it is now impossible. “Women have stopped being mothers; they will no longer be; they no longer want to be.” Parents are ideal educators for their children because of their natural concern: a child “will be better raised by a judicious and limited father than the cleverest master in the world; for zeal will make up for talent better than talent for zeal.” But since the mother is not concerned for the child, the father will not be.“Let us not be surprised that a man whose wife did not deign to nurse the fruit of their union does not deign to raise him.”[310] We must find another route to establish natural education.

The most obvious solution is to hire a governor for the child. But not any governor will do: the governor must not be “a man for sale.” A paid governor will not work. You must “find yourself a friend then.” This is not a natural arrangement, and for this reason Rousseau places a series of limitations upon the type of governor the child can have and the type of child that Rousseau's method can educate. Within these various limits—a relatively young governor who gains absolute authority over the child, a physically vigorous child, a rich child rather than a poor one, a child with a common mind rather than great stupidity or genius—Rousseau sets out his education in order to *restore* nature, rather than to follow it exactly. And what to do if the tutor cannot be found? “I have already told you: what you are doing. One needs no advice for that.”[311] Restoring nature and making man non-contradictory and for himself again requires the

310Ibid., 46-49
311Ibid., 49-59

tutor Rousseau demands. Parents will not take up the task, so someone somewhat extraordinary is required.

Imitating Nature: The Development of Strength

To restore nature, the tutor must imitate it. But how? The fundamental principle of Rousseau's education is to leave the child free. We must give the child "more true freedom and less dominion, or let them do more by themselves and to exact less from others," in order to educate them properly. This is calculated to ensure that nature educates the boy and not people, delaying the (corrupting) influence of society. To achieve this, Rousseau proposes four maxims regarding the use of strength:

> Far from having superfluous strength, children do not even have enough for everything nature asks of them. One must, therefore, let them have the use of all the strength nature gives them—a strength they could not know how to abuse. First maxim.
> One must aid them and supplement what is lacking to them, whether in intelligence or strength, in all that is connected with physical need. Second maxim.
> One must in the help one gives them, limit oneself solely to the really useful, without granting anything to whim or to desire without reason; for whim, inasmuch as it does not come from nature, will not torment them if it has not been induced in them. Third maxim.
> One must study their language and their signs with care in order that, at an age which they do not know how to dissimulate, one can distinguish in their desires what comes immediately from nature and what comes from opinion. Fourth maxim.
> The spirit of these rules is to accord children more true freedom and less dominion, to let them do more by themselves and to exact less from others. Thus, accustomed to limiting their desires to their strength, they will feel little privation of what is not going to be in their power.[312]

Freedom consists in letting the child exercise his own strength as naturally appropriate. Strength is central: we should understand the concept more clearly. In this,

312Ibid., 68

the beginning of Book III is helpful. Strength is not essentially about our absolute power: it is about our power relative to our desires.

> From where does a man's weakness come? From the inequality between his strength and his desires. It is our passions that make us weak, because to satisfy them we would need more strength than nature gives us.... He who is capable of more than he desires has strength left over; he is certainly a very strong being.[313]

By measuring the child's strength relative to his desire, we can determine the child's state of development and respond accordingly. The child's strength determines what is natural to them.

Rousseau divides the *Emile* into five parts. The work is divided into ages of the pupil, from infancy to the mid twenties. Each age has its own concerns and needs, but they center around the concept of strength—the capacity of the child to act as compared to the extent of his desires. The infant has basic needs, but no strength to achieve them; our main aim in infancy is not to excite desires for domination, and to let the infant be free to develop strength against the inevitable blows of nature. To achieve this, parental authority (or Rousseau's authority) must be established clearly and without contradiction. After infancy, reason must develop in tandem with *amour de soi*, the only natural standard. Thus, the child develops sensory reason by free play rather than intellectual notions (that are lost on him when taught, as mere words that he cannot understand). Allowed to develop in this way, Emile judges well of everything that immediately relates to him. Just before puberty, Emile is at his strongest: he desires only his personal well-being, without desires that intrinsically depend upon others (read: sex), and so has greater capacity for action than his desires require for their satisfaction. This triggers curiosity,

313Ibid., 165

and with it comes Emile's education in matters of learning. Once again, this learning is pursued freely. At the same time, Emile learns from his free actions (regulated only secretly and slightly by Rousseau, using motives from nature) to devalue the will to be superior to others and becomes independent instead. Consequently, his desires remain within his means. Finally, puberty hits: with puberty is the age of morals and the age of reason. And so, in an about face, the education becomes more heavily dependent on speech (albeit passionate speech). Rousseau persuades the man that he must search for a wife, and ignites his greatest passion—romantic love—in the process. This desire produces the need for virtue, the strength to overcome desire for the sake of moral order. But Emile can only overcome desire for moral order by knowing the moral order; therefore, before their search for a partner, Emile first learns of natural religion.

In short, Emile's education is one in which his natural freedom is reinforced and only slightly directed, until he accepts the need for authority in puberty (when he recognizes just how out of his depths he is and knows from experience that Rousseau means well). Then, he is directed towards the divine order of preserving humanity while learning enough natural theology to know what the divine order is, so that he can place himself within it even when his desires point him elsewhere. The result of this education may be summarized as strength: the strength first to satisfy his desires due to their limited nature, and then the strength to live without those desires when their frustration is necessary for the sake of moral righteousness. Let us explore the details of Emile's development.

Infancy

Infancy is the subject of Book I. The infant is weak: others must provide the infant with virtually everything he wants. Thus, Rousseau has a brutal interpretation of infancy and childhood generally: “Almost all the first age is sickness and danger. Half the children born perish before the eighth year. The tests passed, the child has gained strength; and as soon as he can make use of life, its principle becomes sounder.” The death toll is caused by the need to be strong and become stronger. “That is nature's rule.” After all, humanity's fate is constant suffering. The child must learn to suffer before taking on the ills of human life. Therefore, we generally must not prevent evils in order to preserve the child. Rather,

> provided the limit of their strength is not exceeded, less is risked in employing that strength than in sparing it.... Harden their bodies against the intemperance of season, climates, elements; against hunger, thirst, fatigue. Steep them in the water of the Styx. Before the body's habit is acquired, one can give it the habit one wants to give it without danger. But when it has once gained its consistency, every alteration becomes perilous for it.[314]

Children must learn to endure. To achieve this, instead of swaddling clothes and constant protection, let the child move freely, “with the sole precaution of keeping them away from the danger of falls and putting all that can wound them out of their reach.”[315] Free movement produces strength. Aside from physical movement, there is psychological strength. Expose the child to frightening phenomena for habituation. It is the choice of objects that make the future man “timid or courageous.” For example, “all children are afraid of masks.” Thus one starts with a pleasant mask that makes the whole room laugh, and “little by little I accustom him to less pleasant masks and finally to hideous faces.”[316]

314Ibid., 47-48
315Ibid., 68
316Ibid., 63

The same can be done with the sound of firearms. Thus much for the first maxim: let the child use all of their strength, by letting them be free and accustoming them to frightening objects.[317]

The second maxim involves meeting the child's physical needs. The importance of breast feeding is unsurprising in this regard. Rousseau has a series of requirements regarding this, but the most interesting is the extent to which the duty of nursing is subject to the will of the governor. If the mother is willing to nurse the child, fantastic—but "she will be given written instructions, for this advantage has its counterpoise and keeps the governor at something more of a distance from his pupil." If a nurse feeds the child, there must be no other governess except the nurse. Otherwise, the child makes comparisons between the various governesses, which diminishes them and their authority. In general, there should be only two sources of authority which ultimately reduce to one, since they are in perfect agreement. This obviously imitates nature by imitating parenthood:

> a child ought to know no other superiors than his father and his mother or, in default of them, his nurse and his governor; even one of the two is already too many. But this division is inevitable, and all that one can do to remedy it is to make sure that the persons of the two sexes who govern him are in such perfect agreement concerning him that the two are only one as far as he is concerned.[318]

While providing for the child's needs, it is necessary to imitate nature by maintaining something resembling a parental form of governance over the child.

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317 That this imitates nature is obvious if we compare it to the *Second Discourse,* in which the simple fact of dealing with the elements without tools increases natural man's strength compared to civil man (*Second Discourse,* 106-07).

318Ibid., 56-59

The third maxim is especially relevant in understanding Rousseau. One assists the child only in getting him what he truly needs. This avoids giving the child a taste for domination. This leads Rousseau to a number of recommendations regarding how to help the child with his needs. For example: “when a child desires something that he sees and one wants to give it to him, it is better to carry the child to the object than to bring the object to the child. He draws from this practice a conclusion appropriate to his age, and there is no other means to suggest it to him.” This is part of accustoming a child “not to give orders either to men, for he is not their master, or to things, for they do not hear him.” This type of advice bleeds into the fourth maxim: distinguish between what the child wants from nature and what they want from “opinion.” Continuing on the last example, a child stretching out his hand for an object may not recognize the distance between himself and the object: he believes he can reach it. This is true if the child silently reaches for the object. It is a different story if the child screams while reaching: “he is ordering the object to approach or you to bring it to him.”[319] Maxims three and four are obviously connected: we must provide what is useful rather than what is produced by opinion, and we can often know the difference by paying close attention to the child's manner of expression. Let the child be free, meet his physical needs, but give him only what he truly needs and not the desires produced by opinion; in this way, he can grow strong without wishing to dominate.

Ordering the Development of Reason by *Amour de Soi*

319Ibid., 66

Unfortunately, people generally mis-educate infants. Rousseau's method is to let the infant be free and do as he pleases, helping as necessary and ignoring the child when he screams unnecessarily. Others force the child to reason early and to experience *amour propre.*

> A child spends six or seven years thus in the hands of women, victim of their caprice and his own. And after having made him learn this and that—that is, after having burdened his memory either with words he cannot understand or with things that are good for nothing to him; after having stifled his nature by passions that one has caused to be born in him—this factitious being is put in the hands of a preceptor who completes the development of the artificial seeds that he finds already all formed and teaches him everything, except to know himself, except to take advantage of himself, except to know how to live and to make himself happy. Finally when this child, slave and tyrant, full of science and bereft of sense, frail in body and soul alike, is case out into the world, showing there his ineptitude, his pride, and all his vices, he becomes the basis for our deploying human misery and perversity. This is a mistake. He is the man of our whims; the man of nature is differently constituted.[320]

Mal-education starts in infancy with whimsical treatment and continues when the teacher keeps the seed of it all growing. Random responses to the child when he cries for his needs are the first means that we use to produce the man of our whims. By treating the infant improperly, the child learns the taste for domination.[321]

Adult whimsy produces a disordered development of reason. When and how should reason develop? The development of reason is a function of the needs of the individual. In the child, the only natural passion is *amour de soi.* "The sole passion natural to man is *amour de soi* or *amour-propre* taken in an extended sense."[322] Reason

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320Ibid., 48

321Ibid., 65-68

322Ibid., 92. This differs from the *Second Discourse,* where the passions natural to man are *amour de soi* and pity. Rousseau describes the development of pity in the *Emile* as a product of *amour propre*. 221-23. See this work, ftnt. 251.

should develop with *amour de soi.* The child is only concerned with their immediate needs and utility. "So long as he is concerned only with his immediate and palpable interest, you will witness developing all the reason of which he is capable much better and in a way much more appropriate to him than it would in purely speculative studies."[323] Children are only concerned with sensory notions, and cannot be concerned with anything immediately beyond that. This set of needs is also well ordered with respect to the development of reason per se: Rousseau does not grant the existence of any ideas not ultimately linked to the senses. "Since everything which enters into the human understanding comes there through the senses, man's first reason is a reason of the senses; this sensual reason serves as the basis of the intellectual reason."[324] In order to develop intellectual reason, one must first develop sensual reason. Let reason develop following natural *amour de soi*, and sensual reason will develop first.

The child's *amour de soi* is well ordered to develop reason. The child is only concerned with immediate gain; their capacity to sense the future is highly limited. He must run, jump, shout, and the result will be the simultaneous development of the mind and the body.

> He judges, he foresees, he reasons in everything immediately related to him. He does not chatter; he acts. He does not know a word of what is going on in society, but he knows very well how to do what suits him. Since he is constantly in motion, he is forced to observe many things, to know many effects. He acquires a large experience early. He gets his lessons from nature and not from men. He instructs himself so much the better because he sees nowhere the intent to instruct him. Thus his body and his mind are exercised together. Acting always according to his own thought and not someone else's, he continually unites two operations: the more he makes himself strong and robust, the more he becomes sensible and

323Ibid., 120
324Ibid., 125

> judicious. This is the way one day to have what are believed incompatible and what are united in almost all great men: strength of body and strength of soul; a wise man's reason and an athlete's vigor.

In short, "you will never get to the point of producing wise men if you do not in the first place produce rascals."[325] The child must follow the senses because the senses are the foundation of intellectual reason, but while he does so, he follows only his own judgment and thereby strengthens his own judgment. The body provides the senses, "and, to get the greatest possible advantage from these instruments, the body which provides them must be robust and healthy. Thus, far from man's true reason being formed independently of the body, it is the body's good constitution which makes the mind's operations easy and sure."[326] The development of sensual reason proper to childhood and the type of *amour de soi* that governs childhood are perfectly suited to each other. On the other hand, the current education is suited to neither of these. "Use force with children, and reason with men. Such is the natural order. The wise man does not need laws."[327] Locke's maxim of reasoning with the child is mistaken. "Bringing reason to bear on unpleasant things only makes reason tedious for him and discredits it early in a mind not yet in a condition to understand it."[328] A boy must be governed solely by his senses. That is how his rational faculties develop.

Do not reason with children, and do not make them jabber in company. Rousseau gives an example: one governor taught his pupil the story of Alexander, taking medicine offered by his physician and friend, Philip, who had been accused of being bribed by the

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325Ibid., 119
326Ibid., 125
327Ibid., 91
328Ibid., 94

enemy.[329] The boy recites the story to a table of guests (who talk non-sense about it). Later, Rousseau goes for a walk with the boy, and discovers that the boy greatly admires Alexander's courage.

> But do you know in what he found this courage to consist? Solely in having swallowed at a single gulp a bad-tasting potion, without hesitation, without the least sign of repugnance. The poor child, who had been made to take medicine not two weeks before, and who had taken it only after a mighty effort, still had its aftertaste in his mouth. Death and poisoning stood in his mind only for disagreeable sensations; and he did not conceive, for his part, of any other poison than senna.

Attempting to teach the boy the courage to face death, the governor has succeeded only in teaching the boy the courage to take his medicine.[330] We believe we communicate reason, we at best communicate sensory truths.

Rousseau continues to show us the proper method of education through examples. One of the first ideas that Rousseau teaches Emile is the idea of property. Its basis is not some abstract argument. Instead, it is Emile's own experience.

> The child, living in the country, will have gotten some notion of labor in the fields. For this only eyes and leisure are necessary; he will have both. It belongs to every age, especially his, to want to create, to imitate, produce, give signs of power and activity. It will not take two experiences of seeing a garden plowed, sowed, sprouting, and growing vegetables for him to want to garden in his turn.

They start gardening: the boy labors on the field. This lets Rousseau explain what it means for something to “belong” to him. The boy understands the labor he has put into the land and how that makes it his.[331]

329Cf. Plutarch, *Life of Alexander,* XIX.
330*Emile*, 111
331Ibid., 98

But the boy is not the only one who labors. Rousseau and Emile return to the land one day and... “All the beans are rooted out, the plot is torn up, the very spot is not to be recognized.” The two hunt down the culprit: Robert the Gardener had planted Maltese melons there. “You have done me an irreparable wrong, and you have deprived yourselves of the pleasure of eating exquisite melons.” After this, Rousseau agrees to send Robert more Maltese seeds and not to work land already owned by another. Eventually, they come to agree to let Emile garden some of the plot: “I grant it without condition. But remember that I will go and plow up your beans if you touch my melons.” Emile learns by experience “how the idea of property naturally goes back to the right of the first occupant by labor.” This idea is “clear, distinct, simple, and within the child's reach. From there to the right of property and to exchange there is only a step, after which one must simply stop short.” The lesson for teachers? “Young masters, think, I beg you, about this example, and remember that in everything your lessons ought to be more in actions than in speeches; for children easily forget what they have said and what has been said to them, but not what they have done and what has been done to them.”[332] Actions and experience, not abstruse argument, must be Emile's education as a child. The child is a sensory being.

Ideas and the Age of Curiosity

The education of Book II of the *Emile* follows nature by continuing to let Emile exert his strength precisely to the extent that he has it. The strength that Emile possesses is bodily strength, and the use of that bodily strength allows him to develop his reason

332Ibid., 98-100

just as much as a child of his age can develop his reason. But people must eventually go beyond merely sensory ideas. Doing so is the subject of Book III. For the first and only time in his life, Emile has greater strength than he has needs or desires. He can expand his consciousness beyond the immediately sensible. While largely following the same methods as before, Rousseau realizes that the boy needs some direction in where to use his excessive strength. Speaking of topology, Rousseau establishes that the main method teaching Emile is letting him be free to act and learn of his own accord.

> In spite of that, he will doubtless have to be guided a little—but very little, and without its becoming apparent. If he makes a mistake, let him do so; do not correct his errors. Wait in silence until he is ready to see and correct them himself; or, at most, on a favorable occasion carry out some operation which will make him aware of them. If he never made mistakes, he would not learn so well.[333]

Freedom plus a little, not so obvious guidance is what Emile needs. Rousseau establishes that guidance through the motives of nature. Specifically, Rousseau considers curiosity natural:

> The same instinct animates man's diverse faculties. To the activity of the body which seeks development succeeds the activity of the mind which seeks instruction. At first children are only restless; then they are curious; and that curiosity, well directed, is the motive of the age we have now reached. Let us always distinguish between the inclinations which come from nature and those which come from opinion. There is an ardor to know which is founded only on the desire to be esteemed as learned; there is another ardor which is born of a curiosity natural to man concerning all that might have a connection, close or distant, with his interests. The innate desire of well-being and the impossibility of fully satisfying this desire make him constantly seek for new means of contributing to it. This is the first principle of curiosity, a principle natural to the human heart, but one which develops only in proportion to our passions and our enlightenment.[334]

333Ibid., 171
334Ibid., 167

Curiosity has its basis in love of personal well-being: it is an extension of *amour de soi*. Curiosity is produced by the relationship between Emile's strength and his needs.

> In the state of weakness and insufficiency concern for our preservation concentrates us within ourselves. In the state of power and strength the desire to extend our being takes us out of ourselves and causes us to leap as far as is possible for us. But since the intellectual world is still unknown to us [at this age], our thought does not go farther than our eyes, and our understanding is extended only along with the space it measures.[335]

The child naturally wishes to understand everything in the physical universe, if only his attention is turned to it. Therefore, "make your pupil attentive to the phenomena of nature. Soon you will make him curious." This does not mean answering every question the pupil comes up with: "to feed his curiosity, never hurry to satisfy it. Put the questions within his reach and leave them to him to resolve." This serves more than whetting the desire to know: to do this is to "let him know something not because you told it to him but because he has understood it himself. Let him not learn science but discover it. If ever you substitute in his mind authority for reason, he will no longer reason. He will be nothing more than the plaything of others' opinion."[336] Presenting problems and letting Emile solve them largely by himself not only whets his desire to know, but also ensures that he uses his faculties to draw whatever conclusion he draws. He understands rather than parrots opinion. This kind of teaching does not aim to teach a great deal, but only to give the taste for study and the methods for learning.[337] Rousseau simultaneously ensures that Emile remains curious and makes him capable of thinking through the objects of his curiosity. He does not depend upon the judgment of others.

335Ibid., 168
336Ibid., 168
337Ibid., 171-72

But how does Rousseau direct Emile's curiosity? Through *utility*.

> As soon as we have succeeded in giving our pupil an idea of the word *useful*, we have another great hold for governing him, for this word is very striking to him, provided only that it has a sense relative to his age and that he sees clearly its relation to his present well-being....
> "What is that good for?" This is now the sacred word, the decisive word between him and me in all the actions of our life. This is the question of mine which infallibly follows all his questions and which serves as a brake to those multitudes of stupid and tedious interrogations with which children ceaselessly and fruitlessly fatigue all those around them, more to exercise some kind of dominion over them than to get some profit. He who is taught as his most important lesson to want to know nothing but what is useful interrogates like Socrates. He does not put a question without giving himself the reason for it, which he knows will be demanded of him before he is answered.[338]

Once Emile understands utility, it becomes the lodestar of and limit to his curiosity. But what if Emile does not perceive the utility of something that Rousseau needs him to learn? The solution is *not* to explain the utility. "It is easy to prove to a child that what one wants to teach him is useful; but to prove it is nothing if one does not know how to persuade him. In vain does tranquil reason make us approve or criticize; it is only passion which makes us act—and how can one get passionate about interests one does not yet have?" [339] Speeches are useless: "young people pay little attention to them and hardly retain them." Instead, "things, things!"[340] Experience is understood and remembered, speeches are not.

For example, Rousseau teaches Emile that the forest is north of Montmorency, and Emile interrupts with the importunate question, "what's the use of that?" Since Rousseau will not give him a purely conjectural explanation, they instead move on to

338Ibid., 178-79
339Ibid., 183
340Ibid., 180

something else, “and geography is not an issue for the rest of the day.” Then they go for a walk—and happen to get lost in the forest. Emile is in tears: “It's noon, and I haven't eaten.” They must contrive of some means to find their way:

> Emile: Oh, my good friend!
> Jean-Jacques: Did we not say that the forest was...
> Emile: North of Montmorency...
> Jean-Jacques: Consequently Montmorency ought to be...
> Emile: South of the forest.
> Jean-Jacques: We have a means of finding the north at noon.
> Emile: Yes, by the direction of the shadow.
> Jean-Jacques: But the south?
> Emile: What's to be done?
> Jean-Jacques: South is the opposite of north.
> Emile: That's true. We have only to look for the opposite of the shadow. Oh, there is the south! There is the south! Surely Montmorency is in that direction. Let's look in that direction.
> Jean-Jacques: You might be right. Let's take this path through the woods.
> Emile (clapping his hands and letting out a cry of joy): Oh, I see Montmorency! There it is straight ahead of us in full view. Let's have lunch! Let's dine! Let's run fast! Astronomy is good for something.
> Note that if he does not say this last phrase, he will think it. What is the difference, provided that it is not I who say it? Now, you can be certain that he will not in his life forget this day's lesson; whereas if I had only made him suppose all this in his room, my speech would have been forgotten the very next day. One must speak as much as one can by deeds and say only what one does not know how to do.[341]

Emile infers the value of a thing for himself, based on his own experience. Emile knows the value of food: as we later learn, Emile “would give the whole Academy of Sciences for the lowest candymaker of the rue des Lombards.”[342] Emile needs to know where he is going, or he will miss his dinner. No argument could be more convincing to him. Emile's curiosity is directed by utility, and the perception of utility is directed by

341Ibid., 181-82

342Ibid., 187. Emile shows excellent judgment in this, though I would rather sacrifice the Ivy League for Ropollo's Pizzeria.

(contrived) experience. *Amour de soi* becomes curiosity because knowledge can serve our comfort and well-being.

Reason and Amour Propre

Yet *amour de soi* is not the only motive in Emile's heart. With the development of reason, the seeds of *amour propre* appear. *Amour propre* is a natural product of the development of reason: it results as soon as we begin to make comparisons between ourselves and others.[343] How to govern this dangerous passion? *Amour propre* develops to compete for a mate (in the *Second Discourse*), but Emile does not yet possess this desire. The natural justification for comparison with others does not yet exist. But *amour propre* is intrinsically comparative. Rousseau has a conundrum: *amour propre* necessarily develops with reason, but reason develops sufficiently to make comparisons before the sex drive. What do we do with *amour propre* deprived of its orderly means of integration with *amour de soi*?

Rousseau has two suggestions: first, to make the first stirrings of comparisons with others unpleasant; second, to make Emile compare himself to himself. For the first, Rousseau contrives for Emile to reveal a magician's trick, who uses magnetism to make a duck obey his commands. After Emile discovers the magician's trick and performs it himself, “the mountebank, confounded, comes nevertheless and embraces him, congratulates him, and begs the child to honor him again by his presence the next day, adding that he will make an effort to gather a still larger crowd to applaud his skill.”

343See ibid., 235

Emile waits until the next day and returns, once again, to the magician's show. Finally, his time to perform his trick comes and...

> new vicissitude of things human! The duck, so responsive the day before, has turned wild today.... After countless useless attempts and constantly being jeered at, the child complains, says that he has been deceived, that another duck has been substituted for the first one; he defies the magician to attract this one.

Emile fails the second day, but the magician succeeds. The magician attracts the duck: the child, with the same piece of bread, sees the duck retreat. The magician uses the child's own piece of bread, also successfully. He pulls the iron in the bread—the key to Emile's trick—straight out of it for the entire audience to see. “Another laugh at our expense.” Then he attracts the duck yet again. “The redoubled applause is that much more of an affront to us. We escape unnoticed and shut ourselves up in our room without going to recount our successes to everyone as we had planned.” The magician comes to see Rousseau and Emile the next day, chastises them both (especially Rousseau, for letting the boy commit such a folly), and then reveals the trick: there was a child under the table, moving with a lodestone as necessary. Now Emile can see “how many mortifying consequences are attracted by the first movement of vanity!” Since it produced such humiliation, “be sure that a second movement will not come for a long time.” This staves off *amour propre* based in comparison to others.[344]

But the boy still has *amour propre*. Rousseau directs it towards Emile himself.

> However, every year I shall note the progress he has made; I shall compare it to that which he will make the following year. I shall tell him, “You have grown so many inches. That is the ditch you jumped over, the load you carried, the distance you threw a pebble, the course you ran before getting winded, etc. Let us now see what you will do.” Thus, I arouse him without making him jealous of anyone. He

344Ibid., 173-75

will want to outdo himself. He ought to. I see no problem in his being his own competitor.[345]

First, humiliate the boy so his *amour propre* never becomes vanity; second, transform *amour propre* into a desire for self-improvement by constantly comparing him with his previous self. *Amour propre* simply affirms what *amour de soi* already accomplishes. *Amour propre* merely amplifies the growth produced by *amour de soi*.

Independence

To ensure that it continues to be well-ordered with respect to the rest of Emile's being, *amour propre* must develop under the correct circumstances. The most essential circumstance is that Emile be independent of others. Otherwise, he will inevitably compare himself to others he needs to be superior to, and the comparisons will consume him. Strictly speaking, independence is no longer possible. To attempt it is unnatural, since humans live in society rather than asocially.

> A man who wanted to regard himself as an isolated being, not depending at all on anything and sufficient unto himself, could only be miserable. It would even be impossible for him to subsist. For finding the whole earth covered with thine and mine and having nothing belonging to him except his body, where would he get his necessities? By leaving the state of nature, we force our fellows to leave it too. No one can remain in it in spite of the others, and it would really be leaving it to want to remain in it when it is impossible to live there, for the first law of nature is the care of preserving oneself.[346]

Humans are now social creatures, whether they will it or not. Nonetheless, some trades offer greater independence than others. Manual labor brings man closest to the state of nature: this means that agriculture and artisanship are open to Emile. A farmer depends on his field: "the enemy, the prince, a powerful neighbor, or a lawsuit can take

345Ibid., 184
346Ibid., 193

this field away from him. By means of this field he can be vexed in countless ways. But wherever they want to vex the artisan, his baggage is soon packed. He takes his hands and goes away."[347] Therefore, Emile must become an artisan.[348]

Training in a trade ensures Emile's independence from others as far as possible, allowing him to keep his integrity. Politics, architecture, music, the arts, teaching—all of these involve pleasing others. One must appeal to members of courts, make acquaintances with influence, and depend entirely upon their judgment. To the artist: "leave your ruler and brush, I tell you. Take a cab and run from door to door. It is thus that celebrity is acquired." This leaves a person entirely vicious. "How will you—more than ever a plaything of public opinion—raise yourself above the prejudices which are the arbiters of your fate? How will you despise the baseness and the vices which you need to subsist?... Now you are poor without being free. It is the worst condition into which man can fall." But if you become an artisan, "probity and honor are no longer an obstacle to life. You no longer need to be a coward and a liar with the nobles, pliable and groveling with the rascals, basely obliging to everyone, a borrower or a thief—which are almost the same thing when one has nothing. The opinion of others does not touch you." Instead,

347Ibid., 195

348 While I am addressing the importance of learning a trade for independence, this training achieves two goals related to *amour propre*. First, it overcomes the prejudice against trades. Conventional "decency," based in *amour propre*, places no limit on Emile's trade. The limitations come from more absolute, substantive standards, like cleanliness. In fact, independence becomes the new standard for *amour propre*: "Do not work out of necessity; work out of glory. Lower yourself to the artisan's station in order to be above your own. In order to subject fortune and things to yourself, begin by making yourself independent of them. To reign by opinion, begin by reigning over it." However, this is appealing to the prejudiced person, not Emile. Ibid., 196-201.In general, Rousseau's examples serve several purposes at once.

> you enter the first shop of the trade you have learned. “Master, I need work.” “Journeyman, set yourself there and work.” Before the dinner hour has come, you have earned your dinner. If you are diligent and sober, before a week has passed you will have the means to live another week. You will have lived free, healthy, true, industrious, and just. It is not wasting time to earn your livelihood in this way.[349]

An artisan can find work anywhere and earn their living well. They depend on no one in particular.

A trade gives Emile independence in the future, whatever his fortune may be, and spares him from the need to live by vice and to feed *amour propre*. But a trade also provides one of the goods that would otherwise be produced only by *amour propre*: a laborious balance of mind and body. This is necessary precisely because Emile does not care about the judgment of others. Rousseau gradually gives his pupil,

> with the habit of exercising his body and of manual labor, the taste for reflection and meditation. This counterbalances in him the idleness which would result from his indifference to men's judgments and from the calm of his passions. He must work like a peasant and think like a philosopher so as not to be as lazy as a savage.[350]

True laboriousness is rooted in *amour propre*, rather than *amour de soi*; without a trade, Emile would be lazy for lack of a reason to be active. Emile needs a trade because he cannot begin to make comparisons with others yet. He needs to know the correct moral standard for making such comparisons first. In the meantime, his economic independence from others is ensured by learning his trade, and it is this independence that stops the growth of *amour propre.*

<u>Authority, Morality, and Passion</u>

349Ibid., 196-76
350Ibid., 202

In book IV, Emile learns the proper standards of morality through reasoned judgment: he finally becomes a moral being. This is also the age of puberty: “we are, so to speak, born twice: once to exist and once to live; once for our species and once for our sex.” New passions develop that Emile must learn to govern and integrate into his character. The passions are a part of the order of nature.

> Our passions are the principal instruments of our preservation. It is, therefore, an enterprise as vain as it is ridiculous to want to destroy them—it is to control nature, it is to reform the work of God. If God were to tell men to annihilate the passions which He gives him, God would will and not will; He would contradict Himself. Never did he give this senseless order.[351]

To annihilate the passions is evil and contrary to order, but the passions must be made orderly. But before we can determine how the passions ought to be ordered, there is a problem: how do we make the pupil abide by our governance? If Rousseau wishes to order Emile's passions, Emile must be willing to listen. Thankfully, only a fool sees the passions as the reason that he will not listen:

> How limited one must be to see only an obstacle to the lessons of reason in the nascent desires of a young man! I see in them the true means of making him amenable to these very lessons. One had a hold on the passions only by means of the passions. It is by their empire that their tyranny must be combated; and it is always from nature itself that the proper instruments to regulate nature must be drawn.[352]

Passions shall be made to limit passions. How? The first answer is to cease treating Emile as a pupil and to start treating him as a friend.

> The true moment of nature comes at last. It must come. Since man must die, he must reproduce in order that the species may endure and the order of the world be preserved. When, by the signs of which I have spoken [roughly, biological signs], you have a presentiment of the critical moment, instantly abandon your old tone

351Ibid., 212. This same reasoning applies with equal force to Diogenes' comments on maimed legs.
352Ibid., 327

> with him forever. He is still your disciple, but he is no longer your pupil. He is your friend, he is a man. From now on treat him as such.

Emile is a man, and one treats men with wisdom rather than force:

> up to now you got nothing from him except by force or ruse. Authority and the law of duty were unknown to him. He had to be constrained or deceived to make him obey you. But see how many new chains you have forged around his heart. Reason, friendship, gratitude, countless affections speak to him in a tone he cannot fail to recognize. Vice has not yet made him deaf to their voice. He is still sensitive only to the passions of nature. The first of all, which is self-love, puts him in your hands. Habit also puts him in your hands.[353]

Emile has every reason to respect Rousseau: he has not spent his childhood constrained and miserable, but happy. Rousseau has planned for Emile to perceive his apparent superiority of judgment since the magician's trick, which has been multiplied in countless ways since then. Rousseau knew then that "the time is approaching when our relations are going to change, when the master's severity must succeed the comrade's compliance. This change ought to take place gradually."[354] The groundwork laid, Rousseau need only inform Emile of "the critical point at which he stands, the new perils which surround him, and all the solid reasons which ought to oblige him to keep an attentive watch over himself before listening to his nascent desires."[355] Emile will listen to his old friend.

This is the age of reason: speech is effective when well spoken. Reasoning with youth must be impassioned: it must appeal to the imagination; it cannot be dry. "Make

353Ibid., 316
354Ibid., 175
355Ibid., 318

the language of the mind pass through the heart, so that it may make itself understood."[356]

With regards to the most obvious of the new perils, if one

> prepares the moment for making oneself understood; expounds the laws of nature in all of their truth; if one shows him the sanction of these same laws in the physical and moral ills that their infraction brings down upon the guilty; if in speaking of this inconceivable mystery of generation, one joins to the idea of the allure given to this act by the Author of nature the idea of the exclusive attachment which makes it delicious, and the idea of the duties of fidelity and of modesty which surround it and redouble its charm in fulfilling its object; if, in depicting marriage to him as not only the sweetest of associations but as the most inviolable and holiest of all contracts, one tells him forcefully all the reasons which makes so sacred a bond respectable to all men, and which bring hatred and maledictions to whoever dares to stain its purity; if one presents him with a striking and true picture of the horror of debauchery, of its foolish degradation, of the gradual decline by which a first disorder leads to them all and finally drags to destruction whoever succumbs to it; if, I say, one shows him clearly how the taste for chastity is connected with health, strength, courage, the virtues, love itself, and all the true goods of man, I maintain that one will then render this chastity desirable and dear to him and that his mind will be amenable to the means he will be given for preserving it; for, so long as chastity is preserved, it is respected; it is despised only after having been lost.[357]

Beautiful speech can present Emile with all the reasons to respect the laws of morality (and especially marriage) without the need for force or ruse. He will voluntarily wish to obey. Not knowing what he needs to, he will ask Rousseau to command him. Rousseau must take his time before accepting to give them both an opportunity to reflect: Emile cannot claim to be taken unawares in the very first instance in which Rousseau uses his authority. "It is important that the young man be aware that he is promising much, and that you are promising yet more." Only after this can Rousseau accept Emile's request. Rousseau thus establishes his authority by Emile's consent.[358]

356Ibid., 323
357Ibid., 324
358Ibid., 325-26

But authority only protects Emile at the moment: Emile must be good without Rousseau's commands. He must learn the reason to be good. This is the Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar. What Rousseau says immediately after the Profession of Faith is telling:

> What new holds we have given ourselves over our pupil. How many new means we have for speaking to his heart! It is only then that he finds his true interest in being good, in doing good far from the sight of men and without being forced by the laws, in being just between God and himself, in fulfilling his duty, even at the expense of his life, and in carrying virtue in his heart. He does this not only for the love of order, to which each of us always prefers love of self, but for the love of the Author of his being—a love which is confounded with that same love of self—and, finally, for the enjoyment of that durable happiness which the repose of a good conscience and the contemplation of this Supreme Being promise him in the other life after he has spent this one well.[359]

The Profession of Faith subjects Emile to moral law, shows him why he should be moral, and shows him his place within the order of nature and nature's God.

Pity

Knowledge is necessary but not sufficient. Passion is necessary to motivate action according to the moral law. The necessary passions are pity and love. Emile learns pity before he hears any speeches about the moral law or the perils of his age. Pity is the first product of *amour propre*.[360] Natural education leaves the the boy ignorant of sexuality; when puberty finally hits, the boy “desires without knowing what.” Consequently, “the eye becomes animated and looks over other beings. One begins to take an interest in those surrounding us; one begins to feel that one is not made to live alone. It is thus that the heart is opened to the human affections and becomes capable of attachment.” Because

359Ibid., 314
360See this work, ftnt. 251.

of this, “the first sentiment of which a carefully raised young man is capable is not love; it is friendship. The first act of his nascent imagination is to teach him that he has fellows; and the species affects him before the female sex.”[361] In contrast, the young men who learn sexuality early “are inhuman and cruel.... Their imaginations, filled by a single object, reject[] all the rest.” It is only the child educated according to nature, who does not learn about sexuality,[362] that can be humane. They focus on the human race because they do not realize what they want, except that it has something to do with others.

The question becomes one of weakness and strength. Because we are weak, we become sociable: “it is our common miseries which turn our hearts to humanity; we would owe humanity nothing if we were not men.” We are attached to our fellows not by their pleasures, but by their pains, “for we see far better in the latter the identity of our natures with theirs and the guarantees of their attachment to us.” Rousseau asks, “how do we let ourselves be moved by pity if not by transporting ourselves outside of ourselves and identifying with the suffering animal, by leaving, as it were, our own being to take on its being?” We strengthen this process by offering the young man “objects on which the expansive force of his heart can act” while keeping away those that cause it to contract.[363]

One way to learn pity is thus to recognize the equality between ourselves and everyone else by observing that the vices of others are often a form of mask. This occurs while studying history. But history is not without danger:

> One of the great vices of history is that it paints men's bad sides much more than their good ones. Because history is interesting only by means of revolutions and

361Ibid., 220
362 Or who learns it as just another, uninteresting fact; ibid., 218
363Ibid., 221-223

> catastrophes, so long as a people grows and prospers calmly with a peaceful government, history says nothing of it.... It is only the wicked who are famous; the good are forgotten or made ridiculous. And this is how history, like philosophy, ceaselessly calumniates humannind.[364] (ibid., 237-38)

History focuses on disaster and chaos. But it is only through intimate facts about individuals that we see the goodness underneath their masks: this is why Rousseau recommends Plutarch above all others. Emile must "see that all men wear pretty much the same mask," but he must "also know that there are faces more beautiful than the mask covering them." Public vanity must be opposed to private humanity. "Set these contrasts side by side, love nature, despise opinion, and know man."[365] But even this leaves a problem, in that Emile may become proud.

> Emile, in considering his rank in the human species and seeing himself so happily placed there, will be tempted to honor his reason for the work of yours and to attribute his happiness to his own merit. He will say to himself "I am wise, and men are mad." In pitying them, he will despise them; in congratulating himself, he will esteem himself more, and in feeling himself to be happier than them, he will believe himself worthier to be so. This is the error most to be feared, because it is the most difficult to destroy.

If Emile compares himself to the miserable fools he sees in history, he might think himself their superior. Therefore, he must effectively repeat his encounter with the magician "in countless ways." Let flatterers take advantage of Emile; let fools take him gambling; "I would let him be flattered, fleeced, and robbed by them. And when, having cleaned him out, they ended by making fun of him, I would further thank them in his presence for lessons they were so good as to give him." Emile must be protected from courtesans to remain ignorant of sex. Otherwise, others must pummel him with their

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364Ibid., 237-38
365Ibid., 237-41

vices. Since Rousseau will share in his follies, pity will inspire Emile to learn more quickly.[366]

Not that Emile will charge into every situation uninformed: Rousseau will inform him exactly of the dangers that he runs into, "without exaggeration, ill humor, pedantic display, and, above all, without giving him your advice as an order until it has become one and this imperious tone is absolutely necessary." Finally, Rousseau will not reproach Emile for his inevitable mistakes. "I told you so!" inflames *amour propre*; better is noting "that countless others make the same mistakes." This combats his pride: "for, to him who believes he is worth more than other men, it is a most mortifying excuse to be consoled by their example. It is to suggest that the most he can pretend to is that they not be worth more than he is."[367] As Emile learns history to distinguish humanity from the mask it wears, experience will teach him that he is no better than they.

Love, Taste and Society

History, theology, and experience—these are the means by which Rousseau teaches Emile to develop a sound character. Pity and a true assessment of his own character relative to others both guide him well. But he must finally learn to love. Love demands more preparation than any of the other lessons that Rousseau wishes to teach. Everything from Emile's sentiments to his literal place in the world must be perfect for this. Ironically, this is why Rousseau now teaches Emile hunting: hunting hardens the heart and "accustoms one to blood, to cruelty." It thus "stifles the tender sentiments."

366Ibid., 245-46
367Ibid., 247

This training helps Emile to listen with care.[368] When Rousseau finally speaks of love, Emile will certainly listen.

> I shall not be afraid to indulge him in the sweet sentiment for which he has such a thirst. I shall depict it to him as the supreme happiness of life, because in fact it is. In depicting it to him, I want him to yield to it. In making him sense how much charm the union of hearts adds to the attraction of the senses, I shall disgust him with libertinism, and I shall make him moderate by making him fall in love.

Rousseau protects Emile against licentiousness by persuading him that sex without love is worthless. He gives Emile a new goal:

> "Your heart," I say to the young man, "needs a companion. Let us go seek her who suits you. We shall not easily find her perhaps. True merit is always rare. But let us neither be in a hurry nor become disheartened. Doubtless there is such a woman and in the end we shall find her, or at least the one who is most like her."

The project of finding this woman becomes a pretext for introducing Emile to society. The task is simple enough: "I would have to be the clumsiest of men not to be able to make him passionate in advance of his knowing about whom." So long as Emile prefers what he imagines to what he sees while he is in the city, it is enough. Give the woman a name, even—Sophie, for instance. After so many details, Emile will believe that the woman is real, that Rousseau is hiding her from him until the right time. With this mindset, "he can be exposed to society almost without risk. Defend him only against his senses; his heart is safe." Even if he does not believe that Sophie is real, Emile could never desire the (vicious) women of the cities.[369] Imagination protects Emile against reality by creating an object of desire that reality will not easily present.

<u>Taste</u>

368Ibid., 320-21
369Ibid., 327-29

While in Paris, Emile will learn good taste. Taste "is only the faculty of judging what pleases or displeases the greatest number." It is distinguished from appetite insofar as it deals only with "things which are neutral or which are at most of interest as entertainment," rather than with needs. Thus, taste is not a function of amour-propre. On the contrary, it "is necessary not only to someone who needs men but also to someone who wishes to be useful to them." True, Parisian taste is not good. Because of inequality, the bulk of people no longer judge according to what pleases, but instead according to what they believe will please those allegedly more enlightened than they. Nonetheless, one must start with Paris before bringing Emile to simpler places of better taste. This is because "taste is corrupted by an excess delicacy which creates a sensitivity to things that the bulk of men do not perceive." Emile will learn to perceive what the Parisians perceive, even if he will not share their assessments. He can go to an area with good taste after he learns perception from the corrupt Parisians.[370] Then it is time to leave. "We are still in search of Sophie, and we do not find her. It was important that she not be found so quickly, and we have looked for her where I was quite sure she would not be found."[371] It is time to find to find the woman that Emile is looking for.

Artificial Love and the Need for Virtue

At last, Emile discovers Sophie. Igniting their passions for each other is easy since they have looked for each other for so long. Since Emile is a worthy man and Sophie has learned to judge according to merit, they are well matched. Now that Emile has finally fallen in love, he can integrate *amour propre* into his psyche in an orderly

370Ibid., 340-42
371Ibid., 354

fashion. This occurs in several ways. First, love teaches Emile the value of public opinion. Emile wants to take up residence near Sophie as soon as possible. He is indifferent to what people will think. Rousseau tells him that this is a rash way of thinking. Woman's virtue lies in opinion: Sophie cannot merely be honorable; she must be *thought* honorable, as well. Emile finds a place two leagues away. “He would sacrifice his happiness a thousand times for the honor of the one he loves.”[372] Emile respects the ways of *amour propre* and opinion for the sake of Sophie.

Emile's capture by *amour propre* is deeper than merely learning how to respect it. Natural love is a product of mere habit. Sophie and Emile have no habits to base their affections on (their affections develop at their very first meeting), so this love cannot be natural. This love is artificial: it is “true love.” “This passion longs only for exclusions and preferences, and it differs from vanity only in that the latter, which demands everything and grants nothing, is always iniquitous, whereas love, which gives as much as it demands, is in itself a sentiment filled with equity.”[373] Love is reciprocal vanity: Emile is finally given over to *amour propre*. But Rousseau's promotion of this unnatural form of love raises a question, since this is the only form of *amour propre* that he promotes in Emile (aside from pity). Since this love is based on imagination, Emile's education is not entirely natural. Why does Rousseau choose this moment to subvert the order of nature?

372Ibid., 412-18

373Ibid., 430. Masters (1968) makes a fundamental mistake in claiming that “true love and *amour-propre* are unnatural sentiments, and the basic difference between them is that the latter is inequitable, whereas love, being reciprocal, is not.” (40-41) His mistake consists in arguing that true love is not a form of *amour-propre.* The passage that he cites in the *Emile* refers to “vanité” as identical with true love except for reciprocity, not *amour propre.*

The structure of society makes the subversion of nature necessary—or, rather, a *fait accompli.* When people live naturally, habit attaches them to each other, sexuality is satisfied, and man lives within the means of his strength. Because civil society is intrinsically unnatural, Rousseau must improvise an artificial solution that stops Emile from acting upon his natural tendencies in this artificial context. Rousseau stops Emile's promiscuity by making him fall in love. To resist unnatural facts—here, the presence of women who would seduce Emile and by whom Emile would naturally be seduced—Rousseau introduces an unnatural passion. In order to artificially reestablish the natural order in an unnatural context, it is necessary to introduce an artificial passion to mimic the order of nature despite the artificiality of society. Emile is not a perfectly natural man; he is as natural a man as he can be in the current state of the world. He is the man whose artificiality reestablishes the natural order and ensures that sexuality is aimed at reproduction (via marriage) rather than pleasure alone.

Introducing artificial orders is not without costs. Artificiality produces its own disorders. Here, the disorders are physical weakening and the loss of independence.

> O Emile, what have you become? Can I recognize my pupil in you? How far you seem to have fallen! Where is the young man brought up with such hardness, the young man who braved the rigors of the seasons, who gave his body to the harshest labors and his soul only to the laws of wisdom, who was inaccessible to prejudices and to the passions, who loved only truth, who yielded only to reason and depended on nothing except himself? Now, softened by an idle life, he lets himself be governed by women. Their amusements are his occupations, their wills are his laws; a young girl is the arbiter of his destiny, and he crawls and bends before her. The grave Emile is a child's plaything![374]

374Ibid., 431

Love makes men soft and dependent upon the beloved. Rousseau counters this by having Emile live far from Sophie. He must run two leagues in order to visit her. He does not see her nearly as much as he would like, and doing so demands significant exertion. The pleasures he experiences are mostly those of imagining his visit, rather than the visit itself.[375] What makes others effeminate makes Emile stronger.

But physical weakness is not the main problem with falling in love. Strength returns as a concept: falling in love means that we no longer possess the strength to satisfy all of our desires. Independence from fortune becomes impossible. Sophie can die at any time, her passions can change, anything can happen.[376] Therefore, at last, Emile must learn virtue.

> My child, there is no happiness without courage nor virtue without struggle. The word *virtue* comes from *strength.* Strength is the foundation of all virtue. Virtue belongs only to a being that is weak by nature and strong by will. It is in this that the merit of the just man consists; and although we call God good, we do not call Him virtuous, because it requires no effort for Him to do good.[377]

Virtue is strength used for justice—for the preservation of order. Virtue will allow Emile to overcome his passions and thus not be subject to fortune. Before Sophie, Emile was good: he could not be bad because he never desired to be. Now that Sophie can die or become corrupt, Emile could desire a disorderly path. Therefore, Emile must learn "to conquer his affections; for then he follows his reason and his conscience; he does his duty: he keeps himself in order, and nothing can make him deviate from it." Emile will find his true freedom by learning "to become [his] own master."[378] Virtue is founded in

375Ibid, 435
376Ibid., 442. *Les Solitaires* is proof of concept.
377Ibid., 444
378Ibid., 444-45

strength: heretofore, Emile has gained physical strength and avoided developing the vices of the soul by never being tempted to develop them. Now, he must become spiritually strong to practice virtue, rather than mere goodness. Emile will obey the order of nature in spite of his (new) passions, if they should ever contradict the divine order.

As Emile practices virtue, he will be occupied with learning civil government. He will leave Sophie for two years and travel the world. To learn virtue, Emile need only follow one precept which "comprehends all the others." That is: "be a man. Restrain your heart within the limits of your condition. Study and know these limits. However narrow they may be, a man is not unhappy as long as he closes himself up within them."[379] Virtue consists in using his strength to maintain his natural place, to keep his desires equal to his strength, not to fall prey to imaginary pleasures: Emile must learn to "extend the law of necessity to moral things."[380] Leaving Sophie, just after they are engaged, is perfectly calculated to improve Emile's strength in this way. At the same time, Emile's must learn the duties of a citizen. He needs to see if it is possible to live anywhere without depending upon fortune, maintaining only "a little farm in some corner of the world."[381] After his travels, seeing the corruption of the world's governments (despite the decency of its peoples), Emile concludes that there is nowhere that will maintain he and Sophie in complete safety, even in such a modest estate. Thus, his need for virtue is redoubled:

> All things considered, I have found that my very wish was contradictory; for, were I dependent on nothing else, I would at least depend on the land where I had settled. My life would be attached to this land like that of the dryads was to their

379Ibid., 445
380Ibid., 446
381Ibid., 454-57

> trees. I have found that dominion and liberty are two incompatible words; therefore, I could be master of a cottage only in ceasing to be master of myself.

Emile cannot be entirely independent, not so long as he is settled with Sophie or his children. Since this is true, Emile should be indifferent to where he will live. All that matters is that Emile can fulfill all of his duties, especially that of gratitude to his country's people. Mostly, this means being a good example for the rest of the populace, but it may possibly mean taking office. Emile will want to get out of that task, and in this world, that will happen if he executes the office effectively until the corrupt people around him can bear it no longer.[382] Emile will live a happy life without being too encumbered by his duties simply by virtue of doing his duty.

At last, Emile returns from studying civil government. He is virtuous and understands civil government, and with it, his duties. Sophie and he are married, and shortly afterwards, Emile rushes to see Rousseau, and proclaims that they shall need his advice now more than ever, since their first child is on the way. Rousseau assured us at the beginning that Emile will not need him, whatever he may claim, so we can assume that Emile is now finally competent to live his life without his master. A happy ending, should fortune not ruin it.

Through the twists and turns of the *Emile*, it can be difficult to see the importance of this education from the social perspective. Rousseau is doing several things at once. He is not merely making a citizen: that is the point of the patriotic education of next chapter. He is making a man, who loves and has taste and enjoys his life. As such, orderliness by reconciling Emile's natural desire and his desire for justice is only one part

382Ibid., 472-74

of Rousseau's goal. He also wants to ensure that Emile's natural desires are orderly, independent of any question of justice. But his goal regarding justice is what we would logically predict: he decreases the extent to which Emile's desires contradict his agreements, increases the desire to uphold his agreements, and teaches Emile the strength to overcome any conflict between his desires and agreements. The most significant event in Emile's life is to fall in love. By falling in love, Emile becomes dependent on the state that makes it possible for him to marry and have children. At the same time, Emile's other desires are moderate: they provide no reason to disobey the laws. He wishes to be left alone in comfort. He has no desire to dominate, no need to show himself off. His imagination does not lead him to believe that he can gain more in this world than he has. He has no motive to seize power, petty or great. Even if the laws should impose unpleasant obligations on him, Emile has the virtue to carry out his obligations in spite of his preference to be left alone by the corrupt state. His religion demands that he do his duty in spite of his other desires. Emile's chiefest desire makes him dependent on the state, while the rest of his desires and abilities make him independent of everyone else. Of course, it is a delicate structure: if Emile's connection to his family breaks, so will his connection to his country. The life of natural desire, justice, and God's order are perfectly ordered in Emile, but that order is fragile. It is inevitably fragile: it depends upon an artificial form of love that can fail. If it fails, that does not necessarily make Emile bad, but it would make him indifferent to society. But we need not leave this to speculation: Rousseau tells us what happens when Emile's link to society is broken.

Alternative Educations: Citizen and Solitary Man

We turn to *Emile's* sequel. Strictly speaking, the sequel does not deal with an education: it deals with the results of an education. This should not dissuade us from studying it since an education is useless without its results, and one of the results of Emile's education is that he is always on the edge of society. With only a little push, he can become solitary. *Les Solitaires* is the story of the little push and the flight into solitude.

The Solitary Education

The push that brings Emile to solitude is Sophie's adultery, after a miserable time spent in the city to escape the country (where her daughter and parents had just died) leads their marriage to dissolution. After their separation, where Emile lives becomes irrelevant. If anything, it is better to leave his country so as to flee her.

> I had to flee; that was my great business, and the consequence of all my prior reasonings. But where to flee? It was upon that deliberation that I had remained, and I had not seen that there was nothing more indifferent than the choice of the place so long as I went away. What good was it to hesitate over my retreat, as everywhere I would find what to live on or die, and that that was all that I had left to do?... If I estimated my existence only at what it was worth for my fellows, I would make myself less uneasy about going to see duties to fulfill—as if they would not follow me where I might be, as if as many of them as can be fulfilled by the one who loves them did not always turn up. I would say to myself that wherever I live, in whatever situation I might be, I shall always find my task as a man to perform, and no one would need any others if each lived suitably for himself.[383]

Emile's connection to his country was the one passion that made his strength inferior to his desires. It was this weakness—his inability to secure his wishes solely by his own will—that made society useful to him. Once Emile finds this desire morally

383 *Les Solitaires*, 710.

illegitimate, he no longer has any use for society. He thus leaves it. "In breaking the bonds that attached me to my country I extended it over the whole earth, and in ceasing to be a Citizen, I became all the more a man."[384] Emile is separate from his country.

But Emile did not simply do this automatically. *Les Solitaires* shows Emile struggling with the decision to leave Sophie for the obvious reason that he still loves her. As he concludes some of his reasonings:

> I had made my decision in relation to Sophie; I still had to make it in relation to myself, and to see what I wanted to become upon finding myself alone again. It had been a long time since I had been only an isolated being on the earth: as you had predicted to me, my heart held onto the attachments it had given itself. It had accustomed itself to being indissolubly united to my family; it was necessary to detach it completely. What a void is made in us, how much does one lose of one's existence when one has depended on so many things and one must no longer depend on anything but oneself—or what is worse, on what makes us ceaselessly feel our detachment from the rest. I had to seek whether I was still that man who knows how to fill his place in his species when no individual takes an interest in it any longer.[385]

The one going into solitude cannot simply go into solitude. His previously existing connections to society must first be sundered, and that is not a simple matter. Hence a large proportion of the first letter is dedicated to Emile reasoning with himself about what must be done and taking various actions to master his passions and keep control of himself.

Once that is done, what remains for Emile to do? Only his duty. This implies that the dictates of justice still apply to Emile. How? One episode makes Emile's justice clear. Emile becomes a sailor, and the captain of the ship intentionally leads the ship astray to sell the crew off into slavery. Upon discovering this, pirates start to overtake the ship.

384Ibid., 711
385Ibid., 705

Emile whispers to the captain: *"Boss, if we are taken, you are dead; count on that."* Emile is highly composed is saying this to him, so the captain ignores his warning. As soon as the pirates board the ship, the boss lets his guard down, thinking himself safe.

> At that moment I believed myself to be judge and executioner, in order to avenge my companions in slavery, by purging the human race of a traitor and the sea of one of its monsters. I ran to him, and I shouting to him: *"I promised you, and I am keeping my word,"* I made his head fly off with a saber I had grabbed. Instantly, seeing the Leader of the Barbary men coming impetuously toward me, I waited for him resolutely, and presenting him the saber by the handle I said to him in the lingua franca: *"Here, Captain, I have just done justice; you can do it in your turn."* He took the saber, he raised it over my head; I waited for the blow silently: he smiled, and taking my hand, he forbade them to put me in irons with the others.[386]

Emile gave his word, and he kept it. Justice was done. Justice continues to be the maintaining of agreements. Aside from this, Emile has only one purpose: to live. "What am I doing? Where am I going? What is my goal?" So Emile asks himself. His answer is that he lives without being a burden on others. Emile labors for his living, and so "I am useful to others in proportion to my subsistence: for men do not give anything for nothing." In other words, "I am still doing a great good from the evil that I am not doing among my fellows."[387] Emile does well by the world, and continues to do his duty by limiting himself to his strength: "the wise man lives from day to day and finds all his daily duties around him. Let us not attempt anything beyond our strength and not carry our existence forward."[388] By desiring nothing but what fortune commands, Emile limits himself to what is in his power. Such is the state of mind of the solitary man.

386Ibid., 714
387Ibid., 712-13
388Ibid., 710

We desire beyond our strength because of *amour propre;* therefore, the need for society is produced by *amour propre.* The solitary person must either lack it or somehow subordinate it to *amour de soi.* For Emile, his *amour propre* was invested in his wife; losing her, he lost it, and all that was necessary to him was to rid himself of his passion for her. "I have regretted only one single thing, and that was the one whom I had to flee. If my heart had left me calm, my body would have lacked nothing."[389] The process of educating oneself out of *amour propre* is more clear in the *Reveries of the Solitary Walker.* Contrasting his happiness and unhappiness, Rousseau tells us that

> love of self [*amour de soi*] alone is active in all of this [Rousseau's happy times], self-love [*amour-propre*] has no part in it. The same is not true during those unhappy moments which I still spend among men, a plaything of their Judas kisses, their extravagant and hollow compliments and their honeyed malice. For all my efforts, self-love still steps in on such occasions.[390]

Rousseau's goal in the *Reveries,* though one he cannot entirely achieve, is to make *amour de soi* the dominant sentiment in his soul. What is his method for doing this?

First, he retreats into solitude, and then he controls his imagination. Society produces *amour-propre* within us; we escape *amour-propre* by escaping society. Rousseau needs solitude to escape others, as he only intended the happiness of all

> until I saw my brothers seek their own happiness in my misery. In order not to hate them I had no other choice but to flee from them, and taking refuge in the bosom of our common mother, I tried in her embrace to avoid the attacks of her children, I became a solitary or, as they say, an unsociable misanthropist, because I prefer the harshest solitude to the society of malicious men which thrives only on treachery and hatred.[391]

389Ibid.
390 *Reveries*, 131-32
391 *Reveries*, 111-12

Only when humanity turned on Rousseau did he turn away from them. When he fled them, it was to avoid the passions they produced. But Rousseau must also re-order his imagination. Without a well-ordered imagination, life in solitude is not truly solitary: the thought of others keeps on invading. Hence Rousseau hated his walks at first:

> Far from enjoying the quiet happiness that I find [in solitary walking] today, I took with me the turmoil of futile ideas which had occupied me in the salon; the memory of the company I had left followed me in my solitude, the fumes of self-love and the bustle of the world dimmed the freshness of the groves in my eyes and troubled my secluded peace. Though I fled into the depths of the woods, an importunate crowd followed me everywhere and came between me and Nature. Only when I had detached myself from the social passions and their dismal train did I find her once again in all her beauty.[392]

Imagination of society produces all the passions of society even in the absence of society. Solitude without reordered imagination is incomplete.

The *solitaire* must first direct imagination away from the painful and towards the pleasant. There are two different types of pain: there is physical pain, and there is the pain of other's judgment. The former is merely necessity, and Rousseau escaped from anguish because he “learned to bear the yoke of necessity without complaining."[393] But if Rousseau knows how to deal with the pain that stems from necessity, he does not know how to deal with the pain stemming from other's intentions. "In all the ills that befall us, we are more concerned with the intention than the result." Pains from necessity are not very bad: intended pains are severe. Therefore, Rousseau governs his imagination by recognizing that no imaginable intention could create the pains that others had put him through. When Rousseau begins to see others as mere "automata, entirely governed by

392Ibid., 133-34
393Ibid., 126

external impulses," then "their inner feelings ceased to matter to [him]." In this, Rousseau follows the wise man:

> the wise man sees in all his misfortunes no more than the blows of blind necessity and feels none of this senseless agitation; his pain makes him cry out, but without anger or exasperation, he feels only the physical impact of the evil that besets him, and though the blows may hurt his body, not one of them can touch his heart.[394]

By imagining that the human race does not possess will or intention, is ruled by nothing more than blind forces and that all the pain they bring is merely necessity and that he was alone in the world, Rousseau brought himself peace and happiness. When Rousseau finally discovered that there was not a single man left on Earth, he was able to retreat into true solitude without imagining what did not exist.

But this is not enough. Rousseau's goal is to be governed by *amour de soi* rather than *amour-propre*. *Amour-propre* is the source of our concern with others. We may be rid of any idea of others intentionally harming us, but *amour-propre* rebels against reason and remains indignant against humanity. *Amour-propre* still needs taming. This is largely a matter of seeing *amour-propre* for what it is: "when the fraud is finally revealed and self-love [*amour-propre*] can no longer conceal itself, there is no further cause to fear it, and though it may be hard to destroy, at least it is easy to subdue."[395] The ordering of the imagination for solitary life depends upon subduing *amour-propre* by seeing it for what it is and rejecting it in favor of *amour de soi*.

***Amour de Soi* By Practicing for the Afterlife**

394Ibid., 128
395Ibid., 129

What kind of *amour de soi* is Rousseau pursuing in his solitary life? He retreats into his memories as a source of happiness, of course, but to what end specifically? Though he names a few, one is of particular interest to us: “I am devoting my last days to studying myself and preparing the account which I shall shortly have to render.”[396] Rousseau is (among other things) preparing himself for the afterlife in writing the *Reveries.* We would do well to compare Rousseau's life of reverie and the afterlife as described by the Savoyard Vicar. The Vicar describes the afterlife as the product of the soul separating from the body, so that the only good it possesses now is reflection upon the past life: memory continues, and the memory of virtuous or vicious actions is the pleasure of that life.

> I sense my soul. I know it by sentiment and by thought.... What I know surely is that the identity of the *I* is prolonged only by memory, and that in order to be actually the same I must remember having been. Now, after my death I could not recall what I was during my life unless I also recalled what I felt, and consequently what I did; and I do not doubt that this memory will one day cause the felicity of the good and the torment of the wicked.[397]

The soul separates from the body, and the memory of the former life produces the pleasure (or pain) of the afterlife. When Rousseau describes his reveries, he describes them quite similarly as the soul leaping up away from the body. True, his imagination has lost its old power, and his "soul no longer flies up without effort from its decaying prison of flesh."[398] This is why he must look to the past rather than imagine other goods:

396Ibid., 32
397 *Emile*, 283
398*Reveries*, 35

> As I tried to recall so many sweet reveries, I relived them instead of describing them. The memory of this state is enough to bring it back to life; if we completely ceased to experience it, we should soon lose all knowledge of it.[399]

Memory is central to letting the soul fly up from the body. As he puts it: "my body is now no more than an obstacle and a hindrance to me, and I do all I can to sever my ties with it in advance."[400] This makes Rousseau's reveries identical with the Vicar's afterlife, excepting the obvious fact that Rousseau was not yet dead. Rousseau's goal is to prepare for the afterlife by ordering himself for it. He does this by replicating the afterlife as best he can while on Earth. The greatest pleasure of *amour de soi* that Rousseau can discover is in his attempt to practice on Earth the same activity as the afterlife will consist in. The moral order that Rousseau attempts to establish in solitude is the same order as exists in the afterlife: it is the order of the soul reflecting upon past actions and enjoying or regretting them accordingly. Nothing in this is comparative.

The Peculiarity of Rousseau's Circumstances and Unjustifiability of the Philosophical Life

Rousseau does not approve of the solitary life outside of his peculiar circumstances. Most people are constantly stirred by passion, and even if they were not, it would not be "desirable in our present state of affairs that the avid desire for these sweet ecstasies should give people a distaste for the active life which their constantly recurring needs impose upon them." Only

> an unfortunate man who has been excluded from human society, and can do nothing in this world to serve or benefit himself or others, may be allowed to seek

399Ibid., 36
400Ibid., 33

> in this state a compensation for human joys, a compensation which neither fortune nor mankind can take away from him.[401]

Solitude is a compensation for one who in unable to embrace the other two of the world's orders, but it is not acceptable in itself. What makes solitary life unacceptable? The question has two answers. First, the *solitaire* is not good for his fellows. The *solitaire* does no harm, but he also does no good. "No longer able to do good which does not turn to evil, no longer able to act without harming others or myself, my only duty now is to abstain, and this I do with all my heart."[402] The *solitaire* acts contrary to God's intended aim for humans, which is the good of all humanity. In contrast, the citizen gives all for his country, while Emile is the head of a family. The *solitaire* preserves only himself, while Emile and the citizen preserve others.

There is another reason that the solitary life is less praiseworthy than the alternatives. Both of the alternatives involve virtue. Virtue ensures that the individual acts according to the general will rather than according to their particular will. In contrast, the general will plays no part in the solitary life: Rousseau need only listen to his particular will in order to live well. In the solitary state, Rousseau changes his opinion of his own virtue because

> there is no virtue in following your inclinations and indulging your taste for doing good just when you feel like it; virtue consists in subordinating your inclinations to the call of duty, and of that I have been less capable than any man living.[403]

Rousseau cannot be virtuous because he merely follows his inclinations. The problem is clearly not that Rousseau fails to do his duty as a *solitaire:* his only duty left is

401Ibid., 89
402Ibid., 33
403Ibid., 96

not to harm people, and he succeeds at that. But because Rousseau's intent is to be rid of *amour-propre,* there is (ideally, at least) no potential conflict in his soul between *amour de soi* and *amour-propre.* Virtue as struggle against his own passions is not even possible for Rousseau, or would not be if he was successful in his project.

The *solitaires'* lack of service to humanity and lack of virtue are interconnected. Virtue is necessary in order to obey the general will, and obedience to the general will means service to a good other than one's particular good. Insofar as the solitary life does not involve virtue, it does not involve service to humanity, and so is neither dignified nor in accord with the divine will. In this respect, Rousseau places the philosophical life below the lives of the citizen and of Emile. Only Rousseau's peculiar circumstances make the subordination of the social passion, *amour-propre,* acceptable. This is evident in Rousseau's assessment of the Wise Man (*l'homme sage*) throughout his writings. Like the solitary walker, the Wise Man eliminates *amour-propre*.

Who is this wise man? There are twelve instances in which this phrase (*l'homme sage*) appears in the *Emile.* However, we can expand the search further when we recognize that Rousseau has an archetype for the Wise Man: Socrates. In the *Discourse on Heroism,* he explicitly puts Socrates in the place of the Wise Man.[404] Rousseau thought what philosophers typically think: Socrates is the archetype of the Wise Man. We can add references to Socrates to references to *l'homme sage* to understand the Wise Man.

Two especially intriguing passages in this search show that the Wise Man is one dedicated to *amour de soi* and not *amour-propre.* First, Rousseau tells us that "he who is

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404*Heroism,* 306.

taught as his most important lesson to want to know nothing but what is useful interrogates like Socrates."[405] The Socratic standard is utility. More telling is a passage regarding *l'homme sage.* To understand causes and effects, goods and evils, needs, we must be able to perceive them, understand them and experience them—otherwise, they are unknown to us. Rousseau concludes from this that "at fifteen one sees the happiness of a wise man as one does the glory of paradise at thirty."[406] Whatever the happiness of the Wise Man consists in, it is known and experienced (potentially) by fifteen. This can only be happiness from *amour de soi.* The self-centeredness of this *amour de soi* is confirmed in the *Discourse on Heroism.* We have already seen that the hero is superior to the Wise Man because the hero ensures the happiness of humanity, while the Wise Man secures only their own. Since peoples cannot be made wise, the hero is preferable.[407] The Wise Man is one who finds his own happiness, but not that of others, and does so through pleasures of *amour de soi.*

Beautiful Solitude in *La Nouvelle Heloise*

Yet wisdom is not identical with solitude, and we might see *La Nouvelle Heoise* as a praise of the solitary life. Rousseau assesses Julie, Claire and St. Preux:

> They live in solitude, will they know the world and society? Filled with the single sentiment that occupies them, they are in delirium, and think they are philosophizing. Would you have them know how to observe, judge, reflect? They know nothing of all that. They know how to love; they relate everything to their passion. Is the importance they give to their extravagant ideas less amusing than all the wit they might display? They talk about everything; they get everything wrong; they reveal nothing but themselves; but in revealing themselves, they

405*Emile*, 179
406Ibid. 183
407*Heroism*, 306-07

> make themselves endearing. Their errors are more worthy than the knowledge of Sages.[408]

Rousseau goes on in this fashion, but two facts about the triangle are clear. First, these three are considered *solitaires,* solitary individuals, in spite of being together. Second, they are plainly not wise. How can it be that these individuals are solitary in Rousseau's sense, that is, without *amour-propre*? Rousseau assures us that they are: “it never occurs to them to shine in each other's eyes. They know and love each other too much for susceptibility [*amour-propre*] to have any further effect between them.”[409] They are not in competition with each other. Consequently, *amour-propre* has no place between them. With respect to themselves, they are solitary.

We should not be deceived by the beautiful picture that Rousseau paints of these three. The events of the novel make it perfectly clear that their solitude is inconsistent with their proper duties. The beginning of the novel exemplifies vice, and it is the later portion of the novel that demonstrates redemption and virtue. As Rousseau writes in the preface:

> Should an austere man leafing through this collection be put off by the early parts, throw the book down in anger, and rail at the Editor, I will not complain of his injustice; in his place, I might have done the same. But should anyone, after reading it all the way through, dare censure me for publishing it; let him proclaim it to the world if he pleases, but let him not come tell me: I feel that I could never in my life have any regard for such a man.[410]

The work cannot benefit the already virtuous. However, it can benefit the vicious with some inclination to virtue. They must be attracted to the work to read it. Therefore,

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408*Heloise,* 11
409Ibid
410Ibid., 4

“this very beginning has to be agreeable to those for whom the end can be useful.” In short, “it is only after deploring their faults that you are able to appreciate their virtues.”[411] Instead of telling us about purity plain and simple, “tell us about purity that can be recovered; perhaps at least someone will be able to get your meaning.”[412] The solitary beginning is vicious, only the end is virtuous.

Let us start at the start. Julie and St. Preux are in love.[413] So far, so good. However, Julie's father disapproves of this love. St. Preux is not of noble blood. However execrable the circumstance, Julie's duty in this case is to obey her father and refuse St. Preux's love while marrying a noble. Instead, they have premarital sex. When Julie is married, she plans on continuing her affair with St. Preux, with only her sudden conversion to sincere piety changing her mind. The rest of the novel is dedicated to their redemption, to the triumph of their virtue over their inclinations. The solitary individuals (Julie, Claire and St. Preux) are not praiseworthy for their solitude: the moment they come into contact with society and its demands, their solitary inclinations lead them to abandon their duties. The simple fact is that the limitation of *amour-propre* is specific to the three lovers between themselves. Once any one of them starts to deal with someone outside of their solitary circle, *amour-propre* returns and leads them to disorder.

For Julie, this means failure to obey her father. But St. Preux also fails in perfect fidelity to Julie. After going to Paris, he makes some less than ideal friends who take him to a whorehouse. He did not know where he was going, but once inside, he decides that

411Ibid., 12
412Ibid., 19
413This is not “true love” as in *Emile*. Julie and St. Preux constantly see each other and share the same tastes (see Part 1, Letter I). Their love is natural, not artificial.

he cannot back out. He is tricked into getting black out drunk and wakes up the next morning next to a prostitute. Julie is largely unconcerned with his actions while blacked out: only his refusal to immediately leave gains her scorn.

> On that score your excuses are pitiful. *It was too late to back out!* As if there were some sort of etiquette in such places, or etiquette should ever win out over virtue, and it were ever too late to avoid doing wrong! Of the security you took in your repugnance, I shall say nothing, the outcome has taught you how well founded it was. Speak more frankly with her who can read what is in your heart: it was shame that held you back. You feared they would mock you on your way out; a moment's jeers frightened you, and you preferred exposing yourself to remorse rather than to derision.

This is the path that leads to vice and the refusal to boldly do right.[414] Shame, an expression of *amour-propre*, stopped St. Preux from acting properly. The *solitaires* cannot withstand *amour-propre* the moment it is introduced, and they cannot live only among themselves forever. Their solitary life is not well-ordered.

The double problem with the solitary life, the life dedicated to *amour de soi* alone, is clear in both the Wise Man and in *La Nouvelle Heloise.* In the first, the Wise Man in inferior to the hero because the Wise Man fails to serve humanity. In the second, we find that the *solitaires* apparently lacking in *amour-propre* rediscover it when they deal with other people. The choice is evidently to think nothing of other humans but not to serve them or to still have *amour-propre*. The first is individually orderly but useless to humanity (and so outside of the divine order of the entire universe), while the second is disorderly for *solitaires*, who must be rid of *amour-propre* to be truly solitary. We must either live among humans with *amour-propre* or we must live away from others and be rid of *amour-propre.* Since it is contrary to the divine will to live alone—since only an

414Ibid., 246

exceptional circumstance, like Rousseau's miserable life, could make solitary life justifiable—we must welcome *amour-propre* into our being. We might order that *amour-propre* with *amour de soi* by uniting it to romantic love, as in Emile, or we might make *amour-propre* dominant by uniting it to the love of country, as in the citizen, but *amour-propre* is essential to serving our divinely ordained purpose in preserving people beyond ourselves.

Education of the Citizen

Emile is good for society, but his social goodness is fragile. Break that goodness, and he becomes solitary. The solitary person is not good for society; realistically, they tend to be bad because they are not truly solitary. An education that makes people directly psychologically dependent on the country is more socially stable. This is the education of the ancients—Spartans, Romans, the civilizations that show so much superiority to the current age. The best work on Rousseau's education asserts that the education of men and the education of citizens are separate phenomena, contrary to each other, but both acting to critique contemporary civilization.[415] I agree. However, this thesis has not gone entirely unchallenged.[416] Before detailing the education of the citizen, I will show that it is distinct from the education of a natural man. We should first visit Rousseau's theoretical argument suggesting the difference between the two, and then visit the particular cases where he claims these different educations have existed to perceive if the results are similar are contradictory.

415Shklar, 1969
416See e.g., Neuhouser, 2008.

We have already seen the theoretical argument for the education of men: educate them according to nature for as long as possible, until they hit puberty. Then, we improvise due to the unnatural state of society and make the boy fall in love. This is an unnatural element in the boy's education, but it is the best artificial means available to counteract the artificial elements of society. Even in this, Rousseau uses imagination to adorn the natural pleasures of *amour de soi*. Thus, Rousseau sticks as closely to *amour de soi* as he can. *Amour de soi* moves the natural man: that is natural, or domestic, education. *Amour-propre* is only used harmoniously with *amour de soi* or to point Emile back to the natural order in unnatural society. In contrast, the successful education of the citizen involves squelching natural inclination. Sparta did not allow people to be natural. On the contrary: “Plato only purified the heart of man; Lycurgus denatured it.” In general,

> good social institutions are those that best know how to denature man, to take his absolute existence from him in order to give him a relative one and transport the *I* into the common unity, with the result that each individual believes himself no longer one but a part of the unity and no longer feels except within the whole.[417]

Denatured men exist only as a part of the common whole. This is obviously not Emile, who is indifferent to his country until Rousseau explains to him that he must settle somewhere where he can show gratitude to his country for having laws that give him courage to stand up to injustice. Emile does not feel only within his country: he can feel anywhere. More broadly, Emile maintains his natural feeling. The entire system of education set out in the *Emile* is meant to ensure precisely that Emile remains as natural as possible. To be denatured is the opposite of being as natural as possible.

417Ibid., 40

Rousseau's examples also make it clear that natural and citizen educations differ. Pedaretus is happy not to be selected to Spartan government: this proves that there are 300 worthier Spartans.[418] This is in contrast to Emile, who is happy not to serve in government because it is not something he wants to do. The typical Spartan woman cares more about victory in battle than the fact that her five children died in the battle; she unhesitatingly sacrifices in praise of the gods after the event. Sophie is far from indifferent when her child dies.[419] Even the praise or condemnation of specific phrases differs: in *The Government of Poland, ubi bene, ibi patria* is reversed in order to properly express the true state of the Polish citizen's mind.[420] Meanwhile, Rousseau tells us that the wealthy individual who intended to enjoy himself would live by this motto.[421] Emile's education is not identical or even consistent with that of ancient citizens from the first portion of the *Emile.*

Patriotism as Pity Replaced

What are a citizens' essential passions? The essential passion for the citizen is patriotism. "Do we want people to be virtuous? Let us begin then by making them love their country."[422] Patriotism is essential, and it precludes feelings of humanity in a general populace.

418Ibid.
419Ibid.; *Les Solitaires.* Admittedly, Sophie also lost her parents in that work.
420Compare *Government of Poland,* 14; *Emile,* 347.
421This example is not from Emile himself. However, the pleasures Rousseau endorses could easily be Emile's if he was wealthy and loveless. Rousseau's basic principle is that pleasures are real when they are not exclusive. The pleasures pursued by the imagined wealthy Rousseau, who happily moves from place to place to enjoy non-exclusive pleasures, is fundamentally different from the pleasures of the Pole who can enjoy what he does only in Poland.
422*Political Economy,* 134

> Patriotism and humanity... are two virtues incompatible in their energy, and especially among an entire people. The Legislator who wants them both will get neither the one nor the other. This compatibility has never been seen and never will be, because it is contrary to nature, and because one cannot give the same passion two aims.[423]

Humanity and patriotism are inconsistent: they cannot exist within the same soul because they both follow from the same passion. If humanity is identical with pity, then the problem is that both patriotism and pity come from *amour-propre.*[424] Pity follows from reflecting on the suffering of others and realizing that others suffer just as we suffer. The reason that patriotism supplants pity is because it limits the recognition of similarity to fellow citizens. “Every particular society, when it is narrow and unified, is estranged from the all-encompassing society. Every patriot is harsh to foreigners. *They are only men. They are nothing in his eyes*.... Abroad, the Spartan was ambitious, avaricious, iniquitous. But disinterestedness, equity, and concord reigned within his walls.”[425] Patriotism limits recognition to fellow citizens, and makes common humanity meaningless. Patriotism takes the place of pity as countrymen take the place of fellow men.

Patriotism flows from the same sources as pity and monopolizes it, but it is fairly obvious that patriotism is not the same as pity. What psychological mechanisms are involved in making patriotism different from pity? To understand this, we can study

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423*Mountain,* 149. This is related to Rousseau's assessment in *Political Economy:* “it seems that the sentiment of humanity evaporates and weakens in being extended over the entire world and that we cannot be affected by the calamities in Tartary or Japan the way we are by those of a European people. Interest and commiseration must somehow be limited and restrained to be active.” (133)

424For pity following from *amour-propre,* see this work, ftnt. 251. Meanwhile, patriotism is produced by “joining together the force of self-love [*amour-propre*] and all the beauty of virtue.” (*Political Economy,* 134). Cf. Masters (1968), who makes “patriotism and civic virtue” a product of pity. (44-46)

425*Emile,* 39. Emphasis added.

Rousseau's concept of heroism. This is because “the greatest miracles of virtue have been produced by the love of country,” and patriotism is “the most heroic of all the passions.”[426] That Rousseau calls patriotism “heroic” is telling: he wrote *A Discourse on Heroism*, he created at least one heroic character in the form of Edward Bomston, and he constantly cites Cato and Alexander as heroic spirits. If we understand Rousseau's concept of heroism, we can better understand his concept of patriotism.

In the *Discourse on Heroism,* Rousseau compares the wise man and the hero.

> The Wise Man possesses all the virtues. The Hero makes up for the virtues he lacks by the splendor of those he possesses. The virtues of the first are tempered, but he is free of vices; if the second has flaws, they are eclipsed by the splendor of his virtues. The one, ever true, has no bad qualities; the other, ever great, has none that are mediocre. Both are firm and unshakable, but in different ways and about different things; the one never yields except by reason; the other never yields except out of generosity; weaknesses are as unknown to the Wise Man as cowardices are to the Hero, and violence holds no more sway in the soul of the one than the passions do in the other's.[427]

The hero is very different from the Wise Man. The hero only possesses some good traits, but his virtues go to greater extremes than the Wise Man's. The heroes' virtues are incomplete but magnificent. Above all, the hero necessarily possesses fortitude:

> Fortitude is the true foundation of Heroism; it is the source or the supplement of the virtues that compose it, and it is what renders it fit for great things. Combine any way you please the qualities that can contribute to forming a great man, if you do not add fortitude to enliven them, they all grow listless and Heroism vanishes. By contrast, force of soul or fortitude alone necessarily bestows a great many Heroic virtues to anyone endowed with it, and it makes up for all the others.

426Ibid

427*Heroism*, 305-06

This fortitude “consists in being able always to act forcefully.” Because vice generally follows from weakness of soul, it follows that “to be great one need only assume mastery of oneself.” And

> this is what strength of soul or fortitude accomplishes; this is how it can enlighten the mind, expand genius and endow all the other virtues with energy and vigor; it can even make up for those we lack; for someone who might be neither courageous, nor just, nor wise, nor moderate by inclination, will yet be so by reason, as soon as having overcome his passions and vanquished his prejudices he senses how much it redounds to his advantage to be so; as soon as he is convinced that he can realize his own happiness only by working for that of others.[428]

Heroism is fortitude that compensates for the existence of other vices, causing the hero to serve their own good by means of serving the public good. This is why, while the Wise Man might be better at attending to his own happiness than the hero, “the true Hero's views reach farther; his object is the happiness of men, and it is to this sublime labor that he devotes the great soul he has received from Heaven.”[429] The hero uses their strength to serve humanity, whatever their other vices, while the Wise Man is largely good for himself.

We can see what is heroic about patriotism: patriotism calls upon a citizen's fortitude and makes them serve the public welfare as their own. Patriotism calls forth strength: it is uniquely suited to calling forth virtue. Strength for what? The country, of course. But how? Citizens are taught from their very birth to see themselves only in relationship to their country, so that they understand their place in the world only with respect to their place in their country.

428Ibid., 314-16
429Ibid., 306

> One must agree that even though men cannot be taught to love nothing, it is not impossible for them to learn to love one object rather than another and what is truly beautiful rather than what is deformed. If, for example, they are trained early enough never to consider their own persons except in terms of being related to the body of the state, and, if I may put it like this, not to perceive their own existence except as part of the state's existence, they will eventually come to identify themselves in some way with the larger whole, to feel themselves to be members of the country, to love it with that exquisite sentiment that every isolated man feels only for himself, to elevate their soul perpetually toward this great object, and thus to transform into a sublime virtue this dangerous disposition from which arises all our vices.
>
> …
>
> It is from the very first moment of life that one must learn to deserve to live, and since at birth one shares the rights of citizens, the moment of our own birth should be the beginning of the exercise of our duties.[430]

A place in relation to their country gives citizens their very *right* to live: the citizens identify themselves with their country so that their place in the order of the world is bound up with their place in their country. The citizen learns to "deserve to live" through fulfilling their duties. Such was ancient education.

Ancient Education in *Poland*

The Government of Poland is representative of ancient political education.[431] The text is explicit that Rousseau is following the example of ancient (thus citizens') education. He writes an entire chapter to speak to the question: "The Spirit of Ancient Institutions." Rousseau describes this spirit in claiming:

430*Political Economy,* 137-38

431Viroli (1996, 90-94) argues that Poland is an exceptional case, wherein Rousseau promotes nationalism due to the fact that the alternative is destruction by Russia. Therefore, Poland is an atypical case of the type of education that Rousseau promotes. This interpretation is mistaken. As the next several paragraphs make clear, Rousseau understood Poland as a resurrection of ancient education. As such, while Viroli's contention that Poland would receive its nationalist education to resist other nations is accurate, this education would not be peculiar to Poland. Rousseau drew his recommendations for Poland from his conception of ancient education. This broadly acts as evidence against Viroli's thesis that Rousseau's typical patriotism was not a nationalistic patriotism.

> All these legislators of ancient times based their legislation on the same ideas. All three sought ties that would bind the citizens to the fatherland and to one another. All three found what they were looking for in distinctive usages, in religious ceremonies that invariably were in essence exclusive and national, in games that brought the citizens together frequently, in exercises that caused them to grow in vigor and strength and developed their pride and self esteem; and in public spectacles that, by keeping them reminded of their forefathers' deeds and hardships and virtues and triumphs, stirred their hearts, set them on fire with the spirit of emulation, and tied them tightly to the fatherland—that fatherland on whose behalf they were constantly kept busy.... these are the things that, by constantly re-kindling the spirit of emulation and the love of glory, raised Greek courage and Greek virtues to a level of strenuousness of which nothing existing today can give us even a remote idea—which, indeed, strikes modern men as beyond belief.[432]

The ancient institutions united individuals to the state by distinguishing it from the rest of the world and bringing the citizens together constantly while giving them a sense of the (great) history of the country. This kindles “the spirit of emulation and the love of glory.” Through these, ancient citizens became stronger in the name of their country than moderns can believe.

Rousseau applies the ancient principles to Poland. “It is a pleasure to speak again of that one of the peoples of our day that makes me feel closest to the men of old.”[433] The next chapter is titled: “The Foregoing Applied to Poland.” Rousseau's fundamental suggestion follows directly from the spirit of ancient institutions: Poland must “infuse into the entire nation, so to speak, the spirit of your confederates, and [] establish the republic in the Poles' own hearts, so that it will live on in them despite anything your oppressors may do.” To prevent its destruction, Poland must follow the ancient examples to educate their own citizens in the same kind of patriotism.[434]

432*Poland*, 8
433Ibid., 9
434 Ibid., 10-11

Rousseau goes into further detail about this education. “I should like you, by means of honors and public prizes, to shed luster on all the patriotic virtues, to keep the Poles' minds constantly on the fatherland, making it the central preoccupation, and to hold it up constantly before their eyes.”[435] Moreover, “I recommend numerous public games, where Poland, like a good mother, can take delight in seeing her children at play. Let Poland's mind be on them often, so that their minds will always be on Poland.”[436] As we have already seen, *ubi bene, ibi patria* is reversed to *ubi patria, ibi bene.* But the greatest difficulty in making “love of country the governing passion” in Poland, Rousseau says, is

> the great differences in wealth between your magnates and your lesser nobles. So long as luxury rules in the homes of the powerful, covetousness will rule in the hearts of all. That which is the object of public admiration is always the object of individual desire, and where a man must be rich in order to shine, the governing passion will be that of getting rich.

If luxury cannot be abolished in Poland, it must at least change its form to something that ennobles the spirit rather than debases it.[437] Everything in people's lives must center around Poland.

Education is the means to center life around Poland, which is why education is “the important topic.” It is education that will make Poles “patriotic by inclination, passionately, of necessity.” This education is precisely like that of the ancients:

> The newly-born infant, upon first opening his eyes, must gaze upon the fatherland, and until his dying day should behold nothing else. Your true republican is a man who imbibed love of the fatherland, which is to say love of the laws and of liberty, with his mother's milk. That love makes up his entire

435Ibid., 13
436Ibid., 14
437Ibid., 16-17

> existence: he has eyes only for the fatherland, lives only for his fatherland; the moment he is alone, he is a mere cipher; the moment he has no fatherland, he is no more; if not dead, he is worse-off than if he were dead.[438]

A Pole is nothing without his country, if the proposed education succeeds. Rousseau later elaborates on the best method to develop patriotism, which is the "soundest, most efficacious, and, if properly executed, absolutely certain to succeed." This method

> consists in seeing to it that every citizen shall feel the eyes of his fellow-countrymen upon him every moment of the day; that no man shall move upward and win success except by public approbation; that every post and employment shall be filled in accordance with the nation's wishes; and that everyone—from the least of the nobles, or even the least of the peasants, up to the king himself, if that were possible—shall be completely dependent upon public esteem as to be unable to do anything, acquire anything, or achieve anything without it. The resulting emulation among all the citizens would produce a ferment that, in its turn, would awaken that patriotic fervor which raises men—as nothing else can raise them—above themselves.[439]

By making every citizen feel that they are under the supervision of all of the other citizens, public esteem becomes the coin of the realm and patriotism becomes well established.

The citizen's education differs fundamentally from the solitary education and the education for domestic natural man. The solitary education eliminates *amour propre* (as best as can be done), while the domestic natural education directs it towards love so that

438Ibid., 19

439 Ibid., 87. The difference here from Emile is obvious. Emile is natural until he is introduced to love, which becomes his only passion: for Poles, their chief passion is patriotism, founded in the desire to emulate those who are admired by the people as a whole. Admiration and the pursuit of glory play a role in exciting the desire to emulate others. In contrast, Emile never wants to emulate anyone while learning history. Other students, whose *amour propre* is in play, want to be "now Cicero, now Trajan, now Alexander." But this is not so for Emile, and if "he just once prefers to be someone other than himself—were this other a Socrates, were it Cato—everything has failed." (*Emile*, 243) Emile learns from history, but he does not want to emulate it or become its subject: this is not true for the Pole.

the natural man can both be natural and connected to his country.[440] In contrast, the citizen—the person[441] produced by ancient education—depends on their country for their very sense of existence; without the country, they become a cipher. Thus the citizen becomes an ardent patriot, and this patriotism motivates a life dedicated to the country.[442] The solitary education is not legitimate in and of itself. It is not good for man to be alone. By being alone, man rejects his divine calling to preserve both himself and the rest of humanity. Only when the preservation of humanity is no longer possible for him, when society has cast him out by its vice, is man justified in escaping social life for solitude. Otherwise, which education we take up depends on the society we are in. Emile is made to make a social individual in a corrupt society. He could live in a healthy society, if everyone were like him, but that simply seems implausible in realistic terms. Emile respects the General Will out of virtue. The citizen lives in a society that taught them (along with everyone else born there) to love the country; everyone there respects the General Will as a function of their own, particular will. Both Emile and the citizen promote the good of other humans, Emile by dedicating his life to his family (at least before fortune causes it to fall apart), the citizen by dedicating themselves to their

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440Thus, the sense in which Emile can be a citizen is not the same as the ancient citizen, as Neuhouser (2008) argues, although he is capable of technical citizenship. Technically, Emile is dependent upon the laws and fulfills his duties towards the state; however, he does not love his country with the passion that ancient citizens did. That love is reserved for Sophie.

441The example of the Spartan mother in *Emile* shows that the ancient education was for both men and women, quite unlike the education for natural domestic man.

442Cf. Horowtiz, 1987, 236. "Rousseau expects that if excess denaturation is avoided, the worst excesses of *amour-propre* will be avoided, since *amour-propre* is only the outgrowth of the profound ambivalence that characterizes the person fixated at the stage of dependence upon the will of others…. The normal individual, dependent upon others, is cut off from his nature and therefore cannot integrate it into the cultural order." This assessment has two problems with respect to the citizen. First, *amour propre* is the means of denaturation, of removal of *amour de soi.* Second, as is evident in the case of the citizen, *amour propre* can be the very means by which individuals can be integrated into the social order.

country. Thus, both fulfill the divine aim of preserving both themselves and the species. Both are morally legitimate educations.

Conclusion

This dissertation was originally about one hundred pages longer. The final portion included an assessment of Rousseau: how can he be useful to us today? What changes do we need to make in his arguments to solve our own problems? Perhaps by reformulating the theology of order, we can solve the problem of disorder, especially in the form of a conflict between the General Will and the private will. Such was the thrust of my attempt; however, readers of the original manuscript found that the final section needed to be either one short, suggestive chapter, or an entire work of its own. Therefore, I have eliminated that portion of this work.

I trust the reader to make of these arguments what they can. Few will read a dissertation; some grad students will merely want to get a grip on the Rousseau literature, some random Freshmen may discover the work while writing their first term paper, but otherwise, few have any reason to touch such a work as this. This is acceptable. I have gained everything I needed to by writing this work. From the disorder in which I entered the University of Texas, I have imposed order upon myself. The first conclusion of this study is that Rousseau's educational writings can be helpful in that endeavor. Do not expect them to work alone! In addition, I had the help of St. John's Wort[443] and the example of a hero who determined upon exactly the wrong way to live, until his very last scene.[444] Rousseau taught me what purification could look like, but he neither provided

443Do not take me for a doctor! That stuff can be exceptionally dangerous when mixed with other, prescription or even some non-prescription drugs. Talk to a doctor first.
444See generally Kiritsugu Emiya, *Fate: Zero.*

adequate ends nor put me in a state appropriate to pursuing purification on his own. Jean-Jacques is part of a balanced diet, but he cannot be your sole subsistence, dear reader.

So much for the more "personal," and more relevant, conclusions to be drawn from this work. More academically, the context of Rousseau's Geneva makes it very clear that Rousseau is a return to Calvin in the appeal to sentiment or the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit against mere rationalist arguments for religious truth. Against this backdrop, it is unsurprising that order is central to every part of Rousseau's philosophy. Of course, order is central to his religious understanding. But it is also the foundation of his moral understanding, since it is by perceiving the order of the universe and the natural person's place in that order that we understand morality as the will of God. This is what motivates Rousseau's attempt to understand human nature. At the same time, order is the central concept of Rousseau's education, since his goal is to educate people to be non-contradictory despite the contradictions produced by society. Finally, order is essential to Rousseau's political theory, as he wishes both to imitate the natural order and to produce non-contradictory relations between individuals by uniting them to a common agreement. Order is the central thread of Rousseau's entire philosophy.

It has proven outside the scope of this work to consider one final area of Rousseau's theory, his aesthetics. I have no competence in music, and so am unqualified to judge Rousseau on music. As to the theater, I think any reader bringing the schema of order to the *Letter to d'Alembert* will quickly find that Rousseau's primary objection to the theater in itself—as opposed to as it exists as an institution in relation to other institutions—is that it has the potential to disorder otherwise orderly citizens, citizens

who are dedicated to the General Will until they are seduced by the examples of the theater to other ideals. Only works written to show an attractive progression from corruption to orderliness, and written for corrupt peoples, can be considered appropriate. Thus, *La Nouvelle Heloise* is justified. But, all this has proven outside of the scope of this work.

In general, Rousseau is best understood as a philosopher of order. In this sense, his claim to have a system and to have written always about the natural goodness of man are both correct. Man is naturally good because he is naturally orderly. At the same time, order is the essence of Rousseau's entire system. Thus, natural goodness—and the attempt to imitate it or to reestablish goodness as order once natural goodness is lost—is the essence of Rousseau's system. Rousseau, always pursuing the truth, did not lie to us in this instance. It is for each of us to determine the value of the truth he told, and whether it was even the truth in the first place.

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