INFORMATION TO USERS

This was produced from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

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

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure you of complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark it is an indication that the film inspector noticed either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, or duplicate copy. Unless we meant to delete copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed, you will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed the photographer has followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For any illustrations that cannot be reproduced satisfactorily by xerography, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and tipped into your xerographic copy. Requests can be made to our Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases we have filmed the best available copy.

University Microfilms International

300 N. ZEEB ROAD, ANN ARBOR, MI 48106
18 BEDFORD ROW, LONDON WC1R 4EJ, ENGLAND

7922415

MISENHEIMER, HELEN EVANS
ROUSSEAU ON THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT
GREENSBORO, ED.D., 1979

COPR. 1979 MISENHEIMER, HELEN EVANS

University
Microfilms
International 300 N. ZEEB ROAD, ANN ARBOR, MI 48106

© 1979

HELEN EVANS MISENHEIMER

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ROUSSEAU

ON THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN

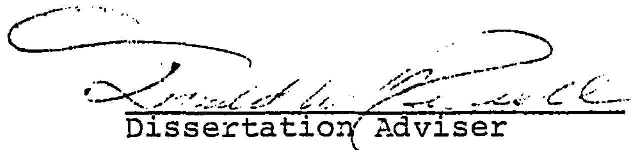
by

Helen Evans Misenheimer

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
1979

Approved by



Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Advisor Donald W. Russell

Oral Examination Committee Members Donald J. Richard

Jeutonne P. Brewer

Dwight F. Clark

Jane T. Mitchell

March 1, 1979
Date of Examination

MISENHEIMER, HELEN EVANS. Rousseau on the Education of Women. (1979)
Directed by Dr. Donald W. Russell. Pp. 97.

This study investigated the theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau on the education of women. The works of Rousseau were consulted in the original French and translated by the writer for the study. Many publications concerning the educational themes of Rousseau have appeared, but minimal attention has been given to the importance and significance of the inclusion of women in his writings.

Rousseau's most famous treatise on education, Emile, contains one chapter given over to a discussion of feminine pedagogy. His novel, La Nouvelle Héloïse, has as its heroine the "new woman," who personifies and gives substance to his theories. His incomplete and little-known sequel to Emile, entitled Emile et Sophie ou les solitaires, was considered as constituting a retrospective evaluation of his educational program.

The study led to an investigation of the century and life of Rousseau, his philosophy of education in general, his pedagogical theorizing as applicable to women, and his novel where his idealized educated woman is given form.

After he had written his educational plan for young men, Rousseau immediately recognized the need for deliberate and careful preparation of a "fit mate" for his ideal student, Emile. Because Emile was destined to do battle with social institutions and would eventually have to move within

society, marriage to Sophie provided the means of his first encounter with the social order he had been created to reform.

Rousseau refused to accord to women the faculty of rational capacity. He retained this attitude of male chauvinism all his life, but because he acknowledged the necessity of educating the ordinary woman, the feminine role in society was enlarged and given emphasis and impetus.

In his works he portrays this ordinary woman in extraordinary dimension. Julie extends the character of Sophie as she matures, while at the same time claiming a more intellectual function for women in the social order. In a letter to the Prince of Wurtemberg (1763), Rousseau speaks of a female tutor for the royal daughter, thus opening positive and pragmatic options for women beyond familial responsibility. In Les Solitaires (published in 1780), he evaluates the education he has proposed for Emile and Sophie. A revocation of his pedagogical recommendations for domestic apprenticeship, based on teaching women through their "passions," can be readily discerned in the failure of both Sophie and Julie. Although Rousseau never admitted women as the equal to men, he gave an extraordinary authority and positive direction to the cause of women when he wrote of the necessity for their education. His writings appear at a rare and uniquely opportune moment of social reordering. There is little doubt that this revolution of ideas helped to provide the essential momentum for carrying the cause of feminine individuality and freedom.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express her gratitude to Donald W. Russell, chairman of her doctoral committee, for his assistance, encouragement and guidance; to Jeutonne Brewer and Jane Mitchell for their constructive criticism and invaluable friendship; to Dwight Clark and Donald Reichard for their encouraging interest; and to the staff of the reference department of the Walter Clinton Jackson Library of the Univeristy of North Carolina at Greensboro for their inestimable and efficient aid in securing materials through the Interlibrary Loan Service.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
APPROVAL PAGE		ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		iii
CHAPTER		
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	ROUSSEAU IN HIS CENTURY	18
III.	GENERAL EDUCATIONAL THEORIES OF ROUSSEAU	33
IV.	ROUSSEAU'S PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN	51
V.	THE NEW WOMAN OF _LA NOUVELLE HELOISE_	66
VI.	EVALUATION	84
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY		95

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Jean-Jacques Rousseau holds an indisputably prominent place in the history of education. His works have been explored from almost every conceivable perspective. His theories have been examined, applied, rejected, ridiculed, praised and misinterpreted. Despite all this attention and the voluminous documentation of his life and educational theorizing, the place of women in these same writings has been surprisingly neglected.

However, Rousseau gave much importance to women in his writings; his most famous treatise on education, Emile, gives one entire chapter, out of a total of five, to theorizing concerning the education of a "fit mate" for the ideal male student, Emile. In La Nouvelle Héloïse he profiles the ideal woman as he envisions her in the heroine Julie. In his Confessions he lingers in sentimental memory reliving his days with Madame de Warens, a quite ordinary woman apotheosized by the precursor of nineteenth-century romanticism. Throughout his life, women touched and shaped his days as a writer, a lover, a philosopher and an advocate for human rights. One cannot ignore the importance of women, from servant girl to royal mistress, in a consideration of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

A limited number of studies written on the subject of Rousseau and women have appeared from time to time. In 1889, Octave Gréard wrote L'Education des femmes par les femmes: Etudes et portraits. One of the portraits was that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The aim of Gréard's essay is to examine Rousseau's literary work from the perspective of certain feminine influences in his life: his association with Madame de Warens, women as the preferred subject of salon conversations, his work on feminine topics with Diderot and with Madame Dupin, and his consultant-educator role with Madame d'Epinay.

This book serves also as a valuable source of information on pre-Rousseauistic proposals made in relation to a more formal program of education for women. These proposals were most often initiated and implemented by women. The "portraits and studies" encompass the period before Rousseau until after his death and up to the Revolution of 1789. They reveal to an extent the influence Rousseau had upon women of quality and their educational concerns: an influence which carried into the late eighteenth century.[1]

In 1903, some of the minor writings of Choderlos de Laclos were published under the title L'Education des femmes. The importance of the collection stems from the

---

[1]Octave Gréard, L'Education des femmes par les femmes: Etudes et portraits (Paris: Hachette, 1889), p. 4.

known influence of Rousseau on Laclos in Les Liaisons dangereuses, an epistolary novel in the style of Rousseau in La Nouvelle Héloïse. Little new insight is present since the ideas are reiterative of Rousseau.[2] Francis Gribble approached the topic from a different direction in a work entitled Rousseau and the Women He Loved (1908). His effort demonstrates vast and intriguing research into the array of women in Rousseau's life, but gives minimal attention to educational theories.[3]

In 1931, a dissertation was submitted by Tieng-Yon Liang. His title, L'Education masculine et l'éducation féminine selon Jean-Jacques Rousseau, indicated one of the first in-depth studies in the area of Rousseau and the education of women. He seeks to clarify and differentiate the ideas of Rousseau on masculine and feminine education for the purpose of comparing them with the educational situation preceding and following Rousseau's own time. This is an extremely valuable work but it is outdated by modern-day comparison and it does not undertake in any manner to explore the paradoxical nature of Rousseau's work where women are concerned.[4]

---

[2]Choderlos de Laclos, L'Education des femmes (Paris: Librairie Léon Vanier, 1903).

[3]Francis Gribble, Rousseau and the Women He Loved (London: Eveleigh Nash Fawside House, 1908).

[4]Tieng-Yon Liang, L'Education masculine et l'éducation féminine selon Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Diss. Yale 1930 (Dijon: Imprémerie Bernigaud et Prévat, 1931), p. 1.

Marguerite Aimery de Pierrebourg, writing under the pseudonym Claude Ferval, published Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les femmes in 1934. She continues the effort to ascertain feminine influence upon the author. Perhaps because of her own femininity, Pierrebourg has a uniquely perceptive insight into such female encounters as those with Madame de Warens, Thérèse Levasseur, Madame d'Houdetot, Madame d'Epinay and many others; nonetheless, her work is objective and thorough.[5] Un Homme, deux ombres: Jean-Jacques-Julie-Sophie (1943) by Henri Guillemin is a fascinating work in which the author seeks to establish the identification of Rousseau in the character of Saint-Preux (a young tutor in La Nouvelle Héloïse), and Madame d'Houdetot (Sophie) as Julie (the ideal wife and mother of the same novel).[6]

Most of the aforementioned literature seeks to reiterate and expand rather than explain and analyze the ideas of Rousseau. When one begins to examine carefully the considerable production of this rather unique being, the paradoxical nature of the man and of his work is inescapable. Benjamin R. Barber in "Rousseau and the Paradoxes of the Dramatic Imagination" asserts:

> Rousseau has been charged with every hypocrisy, every self-contradiction, every paradox that can

---

[5]Claude Ferval, Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les femmes (Paris: Arthème Foyard et Cie, 1934).

[6]Henri Guillemin, Un Homme, deux ombres: Jean-Jacques-Julie-Sophie (Genève: Editions du Milieu du Monde, 1943).

> possibly afflict a man. . . . His arguments for democracy have been labeled totalitarian, his love of solitude has been given the name misanthropy, his educational schemes have been branded manipulative and authoritarian, his condemnation of urban society has been construed as the revenge of a social misfit, and his radical individualism has been understood as rationalized paranoia.[7]

Gribble continues the accusation:

> He refutes himself by his inconsistencies. Contemporary critics contended that Jean-Jacques did not mean a word that he said: the difficulty of the modern critic is to discover that he ever said anything at all which he did not immediately afterwards contradict.[8]

Grand-Carteret states in Jean-Jacques Rousseau jugé par les Français d'aujourd'hui:

> Rousseau is one of those, who, with immense talent, planted as many errors as truths; but these truths are of such a span, they have injected into thinking such vivid clarity, that despite the lapses of the thinker and the private man, there will remain to him always titles bestowed by humanity in recognition.[9]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau more often than not introduced his most intriguing and influential treatises on a note of paradoxical and fallacious reasoning: e.g., "Man is born free and is everywhere in chains" (Le Contrat social), and

---

[7]Benjamin R. Barber, "Rousseau and the Paradoxes of the Dramatic Imagination," in Daedalus, ed. Stephen R. Graubard (Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Summer, 1978), p. 79.

[8]Gribble, p. 181.

[9]John Grand-Carteret, Jean-Jacques Rousseau jugé par les Français d'aujourd'hui (Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1890), p. 334.

again, "Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Creator; everything degenerates in the hands of man" (Emile). His theories on the education of women lack as well the clear rationality of a mind attuned to pensées bien conçues.

Even in his personal life one cannot avoid contrasting the father who deliberately and successively abandoned five of his own illegitimate children with the educator who maintained that one had to give concerned attention and focus to the child in order to form the man. Again, one is shocked to learn that the man who gave foundation to the Bill of Rights in both America and France also bought and shared with his friend Carrio the sexual favors of an eleven year old girl.[10]

Perhaps Madame Necker best sums up the personality that was Rousseau: "[He] is a marvelous bell tower from which it is always delicious to hear the carillon, but from which one must never demand the hour."[11]

Questions inevitably arise as to whether Rousseau has been a blessing or a curse to women's education. Again

---

[10]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Confessions, in Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, 4 vols. (Paris; Gallimard, 1959-1969, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade), vol. I, p. 323. Subsequent citations from the works of Rousseau are references to this edition and hereafter will be identified parenthetically by title, volume and page number, unless the title is clear from context. Citations from other editions will be so indicated.

[11]Gréard, p. 310.

the dichotomy emerges. His curse may be observed in varying ways: he insists upon a reversion to primitivism in the education of women; he offers her the minimal vocational training while loudly and influentially proclaiming her inability to reason and her inferiority to man; he stresses her weakness and asserts that "weak bodies contain weak minds" (Emile, IV, p. 269). He grossly misinterprets her because of his own unorthodox and sentimentalized knowledge of women. He views her as a societal convenience furnished by nature to reproduce and to tend the fruit of her reproduction--man. He denies to her citizenship, making her totally subservient to and possessed by man, at a time when he and history are crying for freedom of the individual. He would make of her the "plaything" of society's culture by expecting her to merely enhance and entertain socially the superior sex.

Conversely, his writings can be viewed as a blessing. Upon conceiving his plan for the education of Sophie, Rousseau seemingly incognizant, inserts woman into her place in educational evolution at a moment when social revolution will uniquely support her cause. Thus the question primordial, still facing modern society, concerning woman's education and place was given further impetus and new emphasis by the ideas of Rousseau. The romanticist Rousseau apotheosizes woman and her societal posture to the point of earthly sainthood, thus recognizing, at least sentimentally,

her value. He gives her importance and credit for her contribution to family and republic. He speaks seriously and expectantly of her rights and responsibilities, the first vestiges of citizenship and equality. His sympathetic writings make her aware of the need for moral reform among her own sex in the eighteenth century and after. In a novel (La Nouvelle Héloïse) of popularity and respect among readers of two centuries he gives her a platform from which to be heard. Further, he seeks to supply her with high moral concepts in instructing her children, her sacred gift to her fellow beings. Thus, woman is ennobled even as she is debased by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to expand the knowledge of Rousseau's philosophy, specifically as it relates to the education of women. Particular emphasis is given to examining the dichotomy existing between the thoughts of the private man Rousseau, a product of his eighteenth-century's male chauvinism, as seen in his pedagogical expressions (Emile, Traité sur l'éducation, etc.), and the romantic writer Rousseau, expediter and ennobler of the causes of womankind, as seen in his more personal revelations (Les Confessions, Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire, La Nouvelle Héloïse, etc.).

Jules Lemaître makes the statement that Rousseau's best-known treatises on education include many ideas that are new and many that are true; unfortunately however, Lemaître claims, those which are new are not true and those which are true are not new.[12] Certainly, Locke's influence and Rousseau's often disorderly reasoning can be read into the assertion; but it additionally offers an intriguing point of departure into the long-debated and contradictory theories of the philosopher and his often undefined and ambiguous pronouncements concerning female education. Liang has stated that partially due to the influence of Rousseau, woman "is no longer the companion but the rival of man."[13] While Rousseau would have preferred that woman fulfill only the first of these roles, he may well have enabled her to assume the second.

This study then has as a part of its goal:

1. _To relate the philosophical ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau to the historical context of the eighteenth century_. Paul Hazard has stated that "the seventeenth century went out in an atmosphere of unbelief; the eighteenth came in on a wave of irony."[14] The _philosophes_

---

[12]Jules Lemaître, _Jean-Jacques Rousseau_ (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1905), p. 243.

[13]Liang, p. 1.

[14]Paul Hazard, _European Thought in the Eighteenth Century: From Montesquieu to Lessing_ (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1963), p. 3.

(Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu and others) of the eighteenth century contributed considerably to the questioning of traditions bound in and based upon religious belief.[15]

Happiness became a right supplanting the idea of duty lauded during the seventeenth century. The prestige of nature and the guarantee of reason became central to the Deism springing up all over Europe and replacing the traditional Christian system among philosophers. The new morality was illumined by the light of knowledge and founded on the natural goodness of man, on obedience to the laws of nature and on the instinct which prompts us to pursue happiness.[16] There ensued a rehabilitation of pleasure, passion, and sensual delights as being natural and therefore rational.

Additionally, a spirit of unrest and revolution was becoming apparent. Social changes were rampant. The heavy and wasteful spending (mostly military) of the kings had elevated taxes for the already financially exhausted lower class of people.

All of these events: failure of religious belief, impending revolt, and vast social changes had their impact upon Rousseau the philosopher.

2. To examine the unorthodox educational experiences and limited instruction of young Jean-Jacques.

---

[15]Hazard, pp. 45-47. [16]Hazard, pp. 160-169.

Rousseau's theories on education are sentimental rather than rational. He assures us that he felt before he thought (Confessions, I, p. 8). Descartes' "Je pense, donc je suis" became for Rousseau, "Je sens, donc je suis." His earliest readings were romances left to the family by his deceased mother. He considered this education "ideal" (Confessions, I, p. 61) and seemingly accepted it as being valid and worthy of imitation (Confessions, I, p. 10). However, when accosted by a father who informed Rousseau that he was using the Emile method to educate his son, the author's response was sympathy. He assured the father he felt sorry for him but sorrier for his son.[17]

3. To explore his relationship with the women he encountered and their importance to his ideas on female education. Rousseau encountered varying and sometimes rather bizarre feminine influence. Besides his aunt, to whom he credits a life-long passion for music (Confessions, I, p. 7), he mentions Mademoiselle Lambercier (sister of his tutor) from whom he learned "in pain, even in disgrace, a mixture of sensuality" (Confessions, I, p. 10). This "precocious sexual instinct" and pleasure in pain, will form a continuing theme throughout his life as well as his literature. It will culminate in the enforced observance

---

[17]William Boyd, trans., The Minor Educational Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1962), p. 2.

of virtue in the sexually sensitive _ménage à trois_ of _La Nouvelle Héloïse_.

Madame de Warens, who accepted the theory that "if it feels good, it is good" (_Confessions_, I, pp. 346, 129-130), prevalent in the eighteenth century, was another strong and enduring influence upon the author.

Thérèse Levasseur, in direct contrast to the type of woman Rousseau usually preferred, became indispensable to his existence in spite of the fact that he was one of France's most outstanding writers while she was, according to Hume, "so limited that she knows neither the year, nor the month, nor the day of the week. . . ."[18]

In his later life women of quality will play a distinctive role. Rousseau declares in his _Confessions_ that seamstresses, chambermaids and young women of the class of small shopkeepers had no attraction for him. Real ladies were what he wanted. Herein enter the ladies of the _salon_ and another strong influence on Rousseau.

4. _To define his educational hypotheses in general_. These must be well understood in order to most effectively juxtapose his theories of feminine education. It is particularly interesting to compare the tutorial qualifications of each sex as they are proclaimed by Rousseau. Although Rousseau admits failure in his two attempts to act as

---

[18]Ferval, p. 280.

précepteur to children in his charge (Emile, IV, p. 18; Confessions, I, p. 267), he seems always to see himself as the ideal model of a teacher. It is a well-accepted fact that the student is Rousseau-young, and the tutor is Rousseau-old in Emile. In La Nouvelle Héloïse Rousseau is evident not only in his role as the irresistible lover, but also in that of the wise and sensitive teacher, even when it is Julie who is proclaiming the educational theories. However, in spite of the honorable position assigned to Julie, he defines differing sets of credentials when he speaks of the female and the male as tutors.

5. To define his educational theories as they relate to women. Rousseau advocates a return to primitivism in women's education and reveals a particularly conservative point of view in Emile: "The man should be strong and active; the woman should be weak and passive" (p. 693); the "proper business" of the woman is to bear children (p. 698); "Woman is specially made for man's delight" (p. 693); "There are no colleges for girls, so much the better for them" (p. 701); "A woman's education must be planned in relation to man" (p. 703); ". . . she will always be in subjection to a man . . . and she will never be free to set her own opinion above his (p. 701).

These statements proclaimed him a man of his century; however, he often found himself in conflict within

social and religious mores of his day. Some of his more unorthodox statements (in Book V) follow:

> Whether a virgin became the mother of her creator, whether she gave birth to God, . . . whether the Father and Son are of the same or merely like substance, . . . I cannot see that it is any longer necessary for humanity to come to decision with regard to them, to know what day to keep Easter or whether we should tell our beads, fast, and refuse to eat meats, speak Latin or French in church, adorn the walls with statues, hear or say mass, and have no wife of our own (Emile, IV, p. 728).

Our first duty is to ourself, ". . . the first notion of duty springs not from what we owe others but what is due us" (Emile, IV, p. 329). To speak of duties before rights is to begin at the wrong end. And, finally, on the instruction currently offered females by the chruch: "The convents are regular schools of coquetry" (Emile, IV, p. 739).

6. To explore his novel La Nouvelle Héloïse in order to establish the characteristics of his heroine, Julie. This permits the juxtaposition of his concept of the "ideal" woman of his novel and the "educated" woman as revealed in his pedagogical pronouncements. In Emile (Book V) he states:

> The search for abstract and speculative truths, for principles and axioms in science, for all that tends to widen generalization, is beyond a woman's powers; . . . works of genius are beyond her grasp, and she has neither the accuracy nor the attention for success in the exact sciences . . . (p. 736).

He continues, "The daughter should follow her mother's religion, the wife her husband's" (p. 721). The assumption is that a girl, lacking reasoning ability, must have her religion interpreted by another authority.

Julie not only speaks with an assumed authority, but also with rational _bon sens_. She accepts responsibility for the souls of both Saint-Preux and Wolmar (her atheistic husband), thereby becoming the voice of religious interpretation, important in view of the author's former statement that woman should follow man. Further, it is Julie who recounts the educational plan of the Wolmars, even though some credit is casually assigned to her husband (_La Nouvelle Héloïse_, II, pp. 557-786).

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

In view of the neglect by literary critics of Rousseau's theories on the education of women, the importance and prominence assigned to her in his overall literary production, and the modern-day upsurge of interest in women's rights, it seems appropriate in this the two-hundredth anniversary year of his death (July 2, 1778) to explore this direction of his doctrines, along with their sources, their influence, their ambiguity and their application.

PROCEDURE

Most of the work of Rousseau has been published and, subsequently, translated into English. However, many of the critiques of his writings by his fellow countrymen (both Swiss and French) have not been translated from French and therefore remain unfamiliar to many American educators. This paper has incorporated as secondary sources much of the untranslated critical literature where it relates to feminine education. The nature of the study is historical, primarily focusing on a philosophical/analytical approach as opposed to an empirical method.

The primary sources have been consulted in their original language and transferred to the study by the writer's translation. The works of Rousseau receiving particular attention are his instructionally oriented treatises, his personal revelations and his political polemics wherein women are discussed.

OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter II of the study proposes to give a brief description of the philosophy prevalent in the eighteenth century during the life of Rousseau. It includes a short résumé of Rousseau's life, particularly as it relates to feminine encounters of importance.

Chapter III examines the Rousseauistic principles of education in general (primarily masculine) with particular reference to the goals of education according to the author: his concept of focusing initially upon the child to form the man, his theories of negative education and his successive stages of instruction. Those theories which demonstrate a masculine/feminine conceptual juxtaposition will primarily constitute the explication.

Chapter IV proposes to analyze the thoughts of Rousseau on feminine education--its goals, woman's destiny, along with the female psychology, morality and intelligence. Chapter V probes Rousseau's novel, La Nouvelle Héloïse, wherein is displayed his "new" woman. The dichotomy between his ideas on education in his treatises, letters and articles and his sentimental effusions as precursor of romanticism demand exploration. Chapter VI summarizes and evaluates Rousseau's contribution to the education of women as it is revealed in this study.

CHAPTER II

ROUSSEAU IN HIS CENTURY

The introduction to the 1978 summer issue of Daedalus, dedicated in its entirety to Rousseau, states: "Because Rousseau's writings are inseparable from his person, it is impossible to consider one without the other."[1] For this reason, this chapter proposes to briefly acquaint the reader with the historical time surrounding Rousseau's life, and the people (especially women) who contributed to his experiences, helping to formulate the literary aspects of those topics upon which he chose to elaborate.

The eighteenth century has been historically proclaimed an era of universal criticism. Because of scornful and unrelenting irreverance for traditional values, the Christian system had been definitely abandoned.[2] One of the recurrent arguments was the defining of the "artificial" man as opposed to the "natural" man.[3] Morality was considered simply the evincing of the natural in man.

---

[1]Stephen R. Graubard, ed., Introduction to "Rousseau for Our Time," in Daedalus (Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Summer, 1978), p. v.

[2]Paul Hazard, European Thought in the Eighteenth Century: From Montesquieu to Lessing (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1963), p. 160.

[3]Supplément au voyage de Bougainville (1772) by Denis Diderot exemplifies this sort of exploration.

From this beginning, it was but a short step to the theory that passions are natural and it would be therefore unnatural to try to suppress them. Reason, however, is nature and has set up rational guidelines for man to follow. Self-love (_amour de soi_ as opposed to _amour propre_) is in order, and one must desire his own well-being. The well-being of the community should also be a consideration.

The logical progression from this self-oriented thinking leads one to the next concern of the individual--happiness. A cursory examination of eighteenth-century literature reveals that the quest for immediate earthly happiness was the Holy Grail of the age. Its accomplishment became the favorite theme of writers of verse and prose.

Morality, in the new literature, took on a different meaning: it was founded on the natural goodness of man, his obedience to and respect for the laws of nature, and on his instinct for the pursuit of happiness.[4] The observance of morality based on rational concept takes on an aspect of experimental science.

The whole of the aforementioned characteristics of the eighteenth century played an important role in the thinking and writing of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. One of his very first essays, a response to the question posed by the Academy of Dijon, sets him apart, even while identifying

---

[4]Hazard, p. 161.

him as a product of his own time. The subject ("Has progress in the Arts and Sciences contributed to purifying morals?")[5] brought a negative answer from the author which was to set him at odds with his fellow *philosophes* throughout the rest of his life. It was evident from that moment that Rousseau was an optimist in regard to human nature, but a pessimist where civilization was concerned. The essay, entitled *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750), was hardly plausible, but it was suggestive and provocative. Unlike preceding revolutionary literature, the author brought the masses and their welfare to the forefront of philosophical concern.

Grant-Carteret states: ". . . Voltaire represented more particularly religious emancipation, while Rousseau personified the political and social deliverance of the population."[6] Rousseau, a man of the people, constructed his new doctrine including education as one of the central prerequisites for the new society.

---

[5]The question as expressed by the Academy stated: "Si le rétablissement des sciences et des arts a contribué à épurer les moeurs." Rousseau, in his response, chose to give the negative viewpoint which his essay would pursue: "Si le progrès des sciences et des arts a contribué à corrompre ou épurer les moeurs."

[6]John Grand-Carteret, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau jugé par les Français d'aujourd'hui* (Paris; Perrin et Cie, 1890), p. 191.

Gustave Lanson argues convincingly that Rousseau reiteratively asserted that he would endeavor to philosophically elucidate one primary claim: "Nature has created man happy and good, but society depraves him and makes him miserable" (Rousseau jugé de Jean-Jacques, I, p. 934).[7] This concentration can be clearly outlined from the beginning to the end of his works. Interestingly enough, the previously mentioned philosophical characteristics of the eighteenth century can also be traced through the same works. In his second essay, Discours sur l'inégalité, he follows this trend of thought: men in society have become depraved because of the inequalities of wealth, a phenomenon not ordained by nature. In Le Contrat social Rousseau insists that man's natural goodness has been overcome by social institutions. Man, because of his nature-bestowed abilities, can rectify this miscarriage. Emile, wherein is advocated a "natural" educational program, is the logical means whereby man will solve his problem. La Nouvelle Héloïse furthers this claim for education and establishes the importance of the assumption of moral values, as well as the acceptance of suffering while surmounting adversity, as a purifying element in man's pursuit of happiness.

One can hardly examine the writings of Rousseau without wondering about the author's own early education

---

[7]Gustave Lanson, Historie de la littérature française (Paris; Librairie Hachett et Cie, 1918), pp. 780-786.

and its effect upon his thinking. Perhaps it is the unorthodox nature of his youth that in some part explains his paradoxical ideas. Certainly the near-poverty and insecurity in his own early life must have contributed to his awareness of the under-privileged and their haphazard existence, determined as it was by the exigencies of the day. Bronislaw Baczko speaks of Rousseau as a victim of "social marginality." He claims:

> . . . Rousseau never forgot his apprenticeship to inequality. The lesson he learned . . . was an essential dimension of his first experiences as a marginal. . . . He experienced marginality among the vagabond poor and . . . among the debutante intellectuals.[8]

Rousseau's father, an emotional and unstable man who lost his wife to Rousseau's birth, early gave his son a precocious sensitivity to life's events. They read and wept together over the romantic novels left by Rousseau's mother. Throughout his writings the fact that he felt before he thought will be evident, sometimes engagingly, sometimes frustratingly: "Thus came to me bizarre and romanesque ideas on life, which experience and reflection have never been able to cure" (Confessions, I, p. 8).

Rousseau describes his own education in the first book of the Confessions. Reading was his beginning of self-consciousness. By reading his late mother's books, he not only acquired practice for extreme facility in reading, but

---

[8]Baczko, pp. 29-39.

a knowledge of passions unique to his young age. He "conceived" nothing, but "felt" everything. After the novels he read Bossuet, Plutarch, Ovid, La Bruyère, Fontenelle, "and some volumes of Molière" (p. 9).

Much of his plan for Emile's education is revealed in his story of his youth:

> . . . the children of kings could not have been nurtured with more zeal than was given me during my first years, adored by all who surrounded me, and always, which is even more rare, treated like a cherished child, never like a spoiled one. Never for a single time, until I left my father's house, did they allow me to run alone in the streets with other children. Never did anyone have to satisfy or suppress in me those fantastic whims attributed to nature, but which are born in reality from education alone. . . . How could I become wicked, when I had before me only examples of gentleness, and the best people in the world? . . . those who surrounded me did not obey me, truth to say, but loved me, and I them in return (p. 10).

Therein we obtain a glimpse of "negative" education, focus upon the child's needs, care without demands, and parental integrity as they will be explored later in the education of Emile.

Rousseau's earliest formal instruction came in music from an aunt whom he adored. When his father left Geneva, Rousseau was sent, with his cousin, to be instructed by the Protestant minister Lambercier, "to learn, together with Latin, all the trash included under the name of education" (Confessions, I, p. 13).

"Tender, gentle and affectionate feelings" were formed in the young Jean-Jacques. Here, too, occurred one

of the first of his strange and passionate responses to women, in relation to Mademoiselle Lambercier upon the occasion of his punishment at her hands. The control developed then preserved his morality for years to come, according to the author (Confessions, I, p. 15). Sex as a topic of education for Emile is inserted late in his development. Sex, about which Rousseau says he had only a confused notion for years, "always appeared to me under an odious and disgusting image" (Confessions, I, p. 16). "Who," he reminisces, "would have believed that the chastisement I received at eight from a thirty year old girl [fille] would have determined my tastes, desires, and passions for the rest of my life?" (Confessions, I, p. 15). He declares the punishment less terrible than anticipated, but, "what was still more strange, this chastisement made me still more devoted to her who had inflicted it" (p. 15).

This strange reaction to pain brought "a mixture of sensuality which had left me less afraid than desirous of experiencing it again . . ." (Confessions, I, p. 10). He experienced this emotional paradox many times in his life with the women he encountered, and he included it in the identifying characteristics of his principals of La Nouvelle Héloïse. When Julie has violated her father's will to see Saint-Preux, her father beats her "mercilessly." Later in the evening she covers her father with kisses and tears. "For myself, as I told him, I should think myself only too

happy to be beaten everyday for this reward . . ." (La Nouvelle Héloïse, II, p. 176).

Again, Saint-Preux finds expiation for past sins even in his proximity to Julie and is exultant despite the fact that he is denied her caresses. His reaction to this pain:

> If extinguished passion hurls the mind into a state of depression, subdued passion adds to the consciousness of its victory a new elevation and a more lively attachment to all that is great and fine (La Nouvelle Héloïse, II, p. 556).

Rousseau himself psychologizes on the import of his precocious sensuality for his life:

> My old childish taste [chastity and modesty], instead of disappearing, became associated with the other so that I could never banish it from the desires kindled by my senses; and this madness, joined to my natural timidity, has always made me very unenterprising toward women, for lack of courage to say everything or power to do everything (Confessions, I, p. 17).

The duality of Rousseau's emotions toward women, its early formation and its imposing potential significance in his treatment of feminine development and instruction is strikingly apparent.

Rousseau left Switzerland and his Protestant upbringing for France and its Catholic influence. It was there that he began to meet many of the women who were to have an influence upon him and his literature.

One of his first encounters (1728) was with the woman who greatly contributed to his thinking throughout his life: Madame de Warens. She was a convert to

Catholicism and an escapee from Geneva, as was her student. Her own education carried the seeds of that which she felt to be a fit curriculum for her young charge. She had studied music and had inherited a library on medicine. This latter led to rather bizarre laboratory experiments and financial enterprises. She shared these interests with Rousseau and she hired tutors who were engaged with the responsibility of encouraging him in a fine and useful occupation. Rousseau earned a living most of his life as a music copier and argued vehemently in _Emile_ for a practical and pragmatic approach to education.

After a period of absence from Madame, he suffered mortification when he learned she had taken another lover. He nonetheless entered a _ménage à trois_ arrangement and later advocated this solution as acceptable to the existing problem among the three characters of _La Nouvelle Héloïse_.

One wonders what Rousseau would have been without Madame de Warens. Her generous hand allowed him to escape the baser conditions for which fate had destined him. Knowledgeable conversations, philosophical discussions, and leisure time for intellectual pursuits, all afforded by her, contributed to the formation of his genius. His suffering at her hands prompted his belated move from adolesence to adulthood. His observation, from her privileged position, of those whose fate he might have shared surely awakened human echoes and fraternal pity in the developing heart of

the ombudsman of the people. Here, too, in a bucolic setting, he was enabled to become acquainted with the nature which will be in his writings a recurrent heroic deliverer from humanity's ills. It has been said that thanks to Madame de Warens, the Confessions were written.[9] Perhaps had this been her only contribution to Rousseau's literary effort, the world would owe maman salutation; Rousseau himself declares, "that epoch of my life decided my character . . . I was in the middle of my sixteenth year" (Confessions, I, p. 41).

Rousseau left Les Charmettes, the country residence of Madame de Warens, while still a young man (1741, when he was thirty years old). Even in the less than elegant company of her house, he had sensed the lack of accomplished social graces in his upbringing: "In a tête-à-tête, there is another inconvenience . . . the necessity of talking perpetually. . . . This unbearable constraint alone would have disgusted me with society" (Confessions, I, p. 103). He was to feel this lack keenly in the years to follow. But as Rousseau's ambitions began to soar, he sought ways of being accepted into the intellectual circles of Paris by way of the celebrated salons of the eighteenth-century literati; one of the first people he met was Diderot. Rousseau very much desired entrée into the Academy of

---

[9]Claude Ferval, Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les femmes (Paris: Arthème Foyard et Cie, 1934), pp. 91-95.

Sciences in order to introduce his "musical scheme" (*Confessions*, I, p. 287). He accomplished this task but failed to be accepted socially in the *salons*. One of his sponsors, Père Castel, advised, "Since musicians and servants will not sing together with you, change your tactics, and try the women" (*Confessions*, I, p. 289). As a result of Castel's endorsement Rousseau made the acquaintance of several intelligent and influential women. On this level of society Rousseau would forever be uneasy. When Madame de Beuzenval invited him to dine he somehow got the impression he would eat with the servants and was incensed (*Confessions*, I, p. 289). The "marginal" man Rousseau, the nascent wit of Paris *salons*, was always close to Rousseau the lackey.

He eventually met Madame Dupin, a beautiful and moral woman, with whom he promptly fell in love. Her gatherings included the names of great personages--Fontenelle, Buffon, Voltaire, the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, among others. Rousseau, as usual at a loss to deal with the feminine situation, wrote a *billet doux* to Madame Dupin, who admonished him for his *gaucherie* in a manner whose "coldness . . . froze my blood" (*Confessions*, I, p. 292).

Fortunately, at this moment, Madame de Broglie obtained a position for him as secretary to the ambassador to Venice (*Confessions*, I, p. 295). He was to be no more successful in feminine relationships in Italy. For the most part the women available to him were prostitutes and

therefore unacceptable to his thinking. Even among this group, however, he was not popular. After a particularly clumsy encounter with the lovely Zulietta, she counsels him to ". . . lascia le donne, et studia la mathematica" (Confessions, I, p. 322).[10]

It is the opinion of Ferval that it is this lack of sociable traits and feminine perceptivity in Rousseau that precipitated his rather unnatural attachment to a twenty-three year old servant girl, Thérèse Levasseur, who was to have a bizarre and gripping hold on him until his death. Ferval theorizes that one reason was that her obvious lack of education and culture dispelled Rousseau's usual sense of intimidation in the presence of females.[11] Rousseau himself declares, "I am more afraid of a pretty young woman in déshabille than of anything else in the world" (Confessions, I, p. 189). Levasseur represented one side of that dichotomy in Rousseau's concept of feminism so readily seen in his works. She was the woman of the streets and remained in keen contrast to the woman to whom Rousseau aspired, romantically and literarily.

Hume renders a brutal description of her after Rousseau and Levasseur had sought exile in England:

> She will always be a great obstacle in the life of Rousseau: she is mean, quarrelsome, talkative,

---

[10]"Forget the ladies and study mathematics."

[11]Ferval, pp. 95-100.

> and [they say] that she is the cause Rousseau could not stay in Switzerland.[12] She is so limited that she knows neither the year, the month, nor the day of the week; she is unaware of the value of money and in spite of all that, she has on Jean-Jacques the empire of a nurse over her charge.[13]

Did Levasseur influence Rousseau? We can certainly conclude that some of his experiences with her were influential in his books. Much has been made of the fact that Rousseau, with Levasseur's reluctant consent, abandoned his five infants to an orphanage. It is not this writer's purpose to belabor the morality involved. It is interesting, however, to note that Jean Château argues that in Emile Rousseau opts to give his student a tutor, instead of his father's care, "because he dares not make himself a father," he dares not meet directly the challenges of parenthood.[14] This, in spite of the fact that the author has adamantly argued the father's tutorial superiority.

Levasseur apparently is one of only a few females Rousseau met with whom he enjoyed anything approaching a natural and satisfying sexual relationship. As has been stated, this is true probably due to her failure to intimidate him, but she also seemingly depicts a refutation

---

[12]This statement was made in reference to the unmarried state of Rousseau and Thérèse.

[13]Ferval, p. 250.

[14]Jean Château, Jean-Jacques Rousseau: sa philosophie de l'éducation (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1969), p. 78.

of the tendency he always evinced to sanctify women on a certain level, in personal and literary instances. A psychologist might maintain that his mother was the first saint to occupy his galerie, perhaps as a result of her premature and sacrificial death (for Rousseau). Madame de Warens, his beloved and significantly named maman would be another. Madame d'Houdetot in the character of Julie would mark the culmination of his saintly congregation.

Thus duality is once more revealed in the nature of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: the tendency to veneration, apotheosis and glorification of women on the one hand, while at the same time obviously viewing his own self as superior and aloof to the class of women occupying the original and "real" level of his social position.

Julie is fabricated from the stuff of fantasy, Levasseur is reality. Pons has stated that the juxtaposition of the ideal woman of the novel and drama of that day (Phèdre, Célémine, Chimène, Clarissa Harlowe, Pamela, et al.) and the average woman met in society turned thinking people to a new image.[15] Rousseau's female Janus fully exemplifies this conclusion as she is viewed from his ambiguous and wafting descriptions. Because of his inability to reconcile his own stance in relation to the feminine half of society, two types of women appear in his thinking,

---

[15]Jacques Pons, L'Education en Angleterre entre 1750 et 1800 (Paris: Editions Ernest Leroux, 1919), p. 227.

helping, perhaps, to explain his theoretical duality as it concerns the instruction of women, as well as her deliberate omission from his formal educational plan as applicable to Emile.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL THEORIES OF ROUSSEAU

It is readily discernible that all ideas of Rousseau as related to education of men or of women are based on his concept of what will reform the society of his century. It is the *état social* which enlivens all the pedagogy of Rousseau. And it is primarily what he considers the "frivolity" of his time that pushes him to a complete philosophical reform and a new educational proposal. *Le Contrat social* sets forth his remedy for the political and social ills of civilization; *Emile* proposes to educate man in preparation for that contractual challenge.

Some of the most apparent goals of education as Rousseau perceives them are: that it be natural, conforming to the dictates of nature as evolution prompts; that it be of practical application; that it promote individuality and that it be the protection and deliverance of the student from the life to be endured.

Rousseau is unequivocal and categorical concerning the role of nature in education:

> Observe nature and follow the route that she traces for you. . . . Nature wants children to be children before being men. If we wish to pervert this order we will produce precocious fruits which will have neither maturity nor flavor (*La Nouvelle Héloïse*, II, p. 562; *Emile*, IV, p. 319).

He points out that education comes from three sources--nature, man and things. The interior development of our organs and faculties is the education of nature, the use we learn to make of this development is the education of men and what we gain from our experiences in our surroundings is education by things. If the teaching of these three masters comes into conflict at any point, man will never be at peace with himself. Of these three only the education deriving from men can be controlled and then only to a limited extent; nature is completely beyond our supervision (Emile, IV, p. 247).

Man is born good and possessing natural tendencies. To develop to his superlative potential, man must be allowed to follow these tendencies. How is this to be accomplished? "We can do much, but the chief goal is to prevent anything being done" (Emile, IV, p. 251). Thus Rousseau proclaims his initial theories of negative education. The master "must not teach precepts, he must allow the student to discover them for himself" (Emile, IV, p. 266). It is essential that we:

> Let nature move for a good while before mingling ourselves in her movements, for fear of acting contrary to her operations. . . . Nature possesses the means of fortifying the body and making it grow that we should never contradict (Emile, IV, p. 343).

The concept of negative education extends from the concern given to clothing confining a child's movements to allowing the student to be punished by the nature he seeks

to defy. Positive education will begin only at approximately the age of adulthood. Negative education as applicable to woman is totally inconceivable to Rousseau because her options in life are entirely limited to her role of wife and mother. Therefore, Rousseau rarely alludes to women in his theoretical hypothesizing concerning education; it is a masculine domain. Girls are relegated to a particular pedagogy, found in Book V. What need is there to allow her to determine for herself or to conjecture upon the import of future decisions when nature has already physiologically, and irrefutably, dictated her destiny? What need is there for her to confront the challenges of life when an external authority will always formulate and regulate her actions? Rousseau has said that man is unable to control the educational domain of nature. In his plan, woman is unable to control even the educational domain of man. As for the education deriving from environment and experiences, those too will be relative to the male figures who surround her.

Rousseau envisions education as taking place in an evolutionary pattern which he bases upon the chronological age of the student. From the ages of one to five years the instruction will primarily deal with the physical welfare of the pupil; from five to twelve his moral training takes place; from twelve to fifteen the emphasis is placed upon his entry into formal studies and after fifteen the training of emotions and sentiments will be explored.

One of the areas of practical concern to Rousseau in the physical development of the child is that he be strong and unencumbered physically (as well as mentally) to attain his full potential as a man. He warns that weak bodies house effeminate men (Emile, IV, p. 269). Although he neglects most of a girl's early development, in the realm of physical education he assumes a rather non-sexual stance. He advocates much more physical exercising for the female than had been proposed by his predecessors. He does, however, demonstrate a different theory in relation to freedom in play and its resultant excitement and enthusiasm. He cautions that the female is prone to overindulgence emotionally in activities, which could lead to flippancy and insincerity (Emile, IV, p. 710). Boys, on the contrary, are viewed differently: "Do not check his restlessness, it is a necessary apprenticeship to learning (Emile, IV, 343)."

Rousseau speaks most often of woman's place as that of wife and mother, somewhat surprisingly since he would be least acquainted by experience with these two roles. His own mother died at his birth and he married only when he was fifty-six years old (1768). His relationship with Levasseur was not that of husband and wife, but of master and servant; of course, where Rousseau's ideas are concerned it may be legitimately argued that there is no difference.

In the four chapters of Emile dealing with masculine education, Rousseau's only allusions to women are usually

directed to mothers, most often in an admonishing manner. A typical remonstrance is found in the following passage:

> When mothers deign to nurse their own children, then will there be a reform in morals; natural feeling will revive in every heart, the state will not lack for citizens, this first step alone will restore mutual affection (p. 258).

In contrast to his neglect of women in Books I through IV, he cannot write of women's education in Book V without constant reference to men. As has been indicated, Rousseau tends to ignore women as little girls. One of the earliest experiences recorded by him in a female life is that of a young girl at table who cunningly and greedily acquires a serving of the only dish she has not already tasted (p. 712). The incident reveals a typical concept of feminine psychology expressed by Rousseau: women are selfish, superficial and deceptive.

One other reference made to little girls is that of the child dressing her doll in preparation for learning the tricks of adornment to use later as a part of her role in attracting a mate (pp. 706-707). Neither of these incidents reveals so much an innocent child as a seductive and calculating female. The use of such incidents as these probably account in part for Gréard's statement that Rousseau protests in vain that he is searching to form the "wife and mother" in woman: "What he is preparing is the mistress who knows how to please. Voluptuous images haunt his mind.

He refuses himself no license. . . ."[1] This statement would seem to reinforce the observation that Rousseau had a limited notion of how to prepare young women for the role of wife and mother.

The second stage of instruction for the young male is that of a moral nature. The program of negative education continues and Emile is allowed to test nature even to the extent of painful encounter (p. 41). He is thus taught the ephemeral quality of life as well as an appreciation for the feelings of others.

The importance of focusing upon the child is most apparent in this stage of development:

> What must one think then of that barbaric education which sacrifices the present to the uncertain future, which burdens a child with all sorts of prohibitions and begins by making him miserable in order to prepare him for happiness eventually which he may never enjoy? . . . The age of harmless mirth is spent in tears, chastisements, threats, and slavery. The unfortunate child is tormented for his good; . . . Love childhood, indulge its sports, its pleasure, its lovable instincts. . . . Why rob these innocents of the joys so quickly gone . . . ? (pp. 301-302).

The greatest gift given to man is his freedom and he must early be subjected to the understanding that he can achieve freedom (and consequently happiness) only as he can begin to function within the limits of his own desires and abilities. "He must want that which is" (Les Solitaires, IV, p. 883). This state presupposes no dependency beyond

---

[1] Octave Gréard, L'Education des femmes par les femmes: Etudes et portraits (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1889), pp. 237-238.

himself and ensures his enduring triumphantly the demands of life. Additionally, one must never try to reason with the child or show him authority. He should respond only to "self-compulsion." A sense of ownership through property enables the student to understand a basic morality--consideration of others. Intellectual reasoning is a possibility only when the child reaches an age of understanding. He is still incapable of forming judgments at this age. Books should not be forced upon him too early; at twelve Emile will hardly know what a book is.

It is perhaps needless to add that the word freedom has no place in the curricular vocabulary pertinent to feminine education. A girl, instead of learning to function within the confines of her own ability and desires, will be trained to respond only to the wishes of parents and, later, husbands. Woman is never given the power to reason by Rousseau. She will ever depend on the intelligence and reasoning of others. Her need to know of ownership of property is revoked by Rousseau's firm belief that she herself constitutes the property of the male. Perhaps the most strikingly differentiating characteristic of masculine and feminine education in the works of Rousseau is his obvious and deliberate intention to assign to woman all her life the traits given to man only as a child.

The student from age twelve to fifteen will enter the period of formal study and will be directed from a

utilitarian point of view. Morality and propriety in this context will follow later. His studies will be based upon his natural curiosity, his powers of observation, and the general principle, "What is the use of this?" Utilitarianism demands that the student, of necessity, learn a trade but there is no need for specializing. He is not to be trained "as a magistrate, a soldier nor a priest; he will be a man" (Emile, IV, p. 251).

Woman has no necessity of any formal study since man will care for her needs. The utilitarian theory, however, applies soundly to her particular condition in life. Her instruction, gained in her father's house, will prepare her for managing her own household--enough counting for keeping budgets, enough cooking, sewing and serving to keep her family comfortable, and enough singing and dancing to lift the spirits of a discouraged, hard-working husband upon his return to his home in the evening.

Rousseau touches most hesitantly upon the necessity of training for the sexual and emotional nature of man (when Emile is nearing the age of twenty). He speaks only now of theological discussion. The student must at last become a social and religious being. In Rousseau's view man's union with woman (a part of his social induction) is a debasement of his condition:

> Man is made sociable by his weakness; it is our common misery which causes our heart to incline toward humanity. . . . Every attachment is a sign of insufficiency: . . . While he was incapable of

> affection, he was dependent only on himself and his necessities; the moment he loves, he depends on his attachments (Emile, p. 503).

Emile has received a "natural" education projected at giving him a practical means of livelihood; he is an individualist, dependent only upon himself until love enters. His personal education, because it has been taught by nature, has prepared him to confront physical and emotional dangers by accepting his destiny and things as they are. He cannot live alone, however, and paradoxically he has been schooled to be at war with society.

Rousseau's état social revolution demands that all abuse of the poor must be eliminated. He seeks to destroy all inequality in material and intellectual spheres. Each member of the society must learn a trade; he must produce. Each individual has rights and must be cognizant of rights of others.

As Girardin has expressed it:

> The fundamental principle of democratic government is the idea that there is a right in the mass, whether it be instructed or ignorant. Each man coming into this world has the right to give his opinion and his vote on affairs of state, not by the title of wise and informed man, or learned and enlightened man, but by title of individual.[2]

As for Sophie and her kind, they will be reared in a state congruent with the proper qualities for those of the intérieur. Rousseau expresses differing needs for Emile

---

[2]Fernand de Girardin, Iconographie des oeuvres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Paris: Morel, 1910), p. 43.

and Sophie according to aptitudes and functions particular to each sex. He rejects current formal educational theories for Emile because he sees them as utterly useless and vain; he rejects them for Sophie because he believes her inept in the tasks of reasoning and learning, but he retains her domestic training. He denies any need for Emile to become socially talented; whereas, he accepts the premise that Sophie ought to be gracious and agreeable. Yet it is Emile who will dwell in society.

Moral education (which will be discussed more fully in Chapter IV) offers one of the most interesting juxtapositions of Rousseau's understanding of the two sexes. Because man moves in society while woman remains exclusively _dans la famille_, moral education will be sharply contrasted. Emile, the author finally admits, must enter into the social moral order which presupposes a positive approach to education heretofore lacking in Rousseau's negative framework.

> Remember that to guide a grown man you must reverse all that you did to guide the child. Do not hesitate to speak to him of those dangerous mysteries which you have so carefully concealed from him heretofore. Since he must become aware of them, let him not learn them from another, nor from himself, but from you alone; since he must ever fight against them, let him know his enemy, that he may not be taken unaware (p. 641).

Reason alone is not sufficient for dealing with others, for it cannot establish a natural law; _sensibilité_, having its source in the heart, must be consciously developed. For the woman, however, the direction will

evolve otherwise. Her moral development will be attached particularly to her sex and her role limited by that fact. Liang has stated that Rousseau's moral rests upon human liberty:

> . . . the characteristic of the particular moral of Rousseau is his notion of liberty, independence or more precisely individuality, which in its turn marks moral dignity. And while he takes his stand on this moral concept wherein it concerns masculine education, he completely disregards it for women.[3]

Happiness is a result of wise and judicious choosing. It is reasoning which gives to man his freedom since it permits him to withstand the baser passions of his human nature. Rousseau's conclusion is that all morality comes from reason tempered by the heart. It seems evident that if women cannot reason, they cannot maintain a state of morality, nor consequently of happiness. Both Julie and Sophie will be victims of this tragic supposition.

Rousseau has educated his student from birth to age fifteen entirely through the efforts of his tutor; a natural mother and father are never encountered since Emile was orphaned at an early age. Philosophically, Rousseau believes the father to be the perfect teacher (_précepteur_) (_Emile_, p. 261), but idealistically, he removes Emile to the care of a tutor.

The qualifications for the tutor (_gouverneur_) are rather demanding and somewhat ambiguous. Since Rousseau-old

---

[3]Tieng-Yon Liang, _L'Education masculine et l'éducation féminine selon Jean-Jacques Rousseau_, Diss. Yale 1930 (Dijon: Imprémerie Bernigaud et Prévat, 1931), p. 113.

is instructing Rousseau-young, vast liberties are taken. Some of the more practical aspects of his credentials are: he will assume the position at the birth of the child and continue until the child is an adult. He will not be paid; he must be a father or "more than man"; he must have been trained for his task (literally for "his pupil"). His qualifications should be based upon a consideration of his duties. He must be young, but nonetheless wise. Although he should be trained (the author never explains how), he should have only one student during his lifetime because it is a total commitment. He will teach only one science--the duties of man. He will guide rather than instruct; he must never give precepts. He should choose his pupil (preferably an ordinary child--the exceptional will have to fend for himself). He should be able to educate a man for any position. He should cause his student to honor his parents, but obey the tutor. Student and teacher must never be separated and, finally, the master must teach virtues (Emile, pp. 236-269).

Rousseau in passing makes it very clear that the selection of the pupil is of great importance. The impoverished man has no need of education; the nature to which he is closer will shape him. The rich man, on the contrary, will encounter traditional educational plans within his own station; therein lies destruction. Therefore, the wealthy child should be chosen. Secondly, the

tutor should not choose a feeble, sickly child since this choice robs the state of two men--the child and the tutor; the former, because his mind is focused upon staying alive, the latter because "All sensual passions find their place in effeminate bodies. . . . A feeble body makes a feeble mind" (Emile, p. 269). Rousseau excuses himself from the position of tutor because he has previously failed at the task and considers himself unfit. He unreservedly asserts, however: "I pass over those qualities required in a good tutor; I take them for granted, and assume that I am endowed with them" (Emile, p. 265).

As to female tutors, he again relegates women to a position lower than that of men: women are in reality nurses (nourrices). Her requirements are: she should be recently a mother; healthy of body and disposition (since violence of passions and humours can spoil her milk); of good character, zealous, patient, gentle and clean. She should not be intemperate, greedy, careless, or hasty. She should be the only guardian and confidante of the child and her authority must always be subjected to that of the male tutor (with whom she holds her nursing position in common) and the father (Emile, pp. 273-275).

It is only in La Nouvelle Héloïse that Rousseau is willing to accede the instruction and education of children (in the French sense of the words) to a female, his beloved

and feminine ideal, Julie.[4] Julie makes a slight concession to the leadership of her husband in that she claims to have been directed by him. But it is from her mouth that issues the reiteration of the educational doctrines exposed in *Emile* (*La Nouvelle Héloïse*, p. 562). Monsieur Wolmar (her husband), when questioned by Saint-Preux (her lover) upon educational matters, always refers the latter to Julie. Yet Julie modestly claims: "I nurse the children, but I do not presume to aim at making men of them. . . . I am a woman and mother, I shall keep my proper place" (*La Nouvelle Héloïse*, pp. 577-578).

Despite her claim, a casual reading of Letter 10, Part IV, in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* will reveal most of the important educational theories expressed by Rousseau himself in Books I-IV of *Emile*. Again, like her creator Rousseau, she relegates her daughter's education to another plan: ". . . her education is my special concern, but the principles on which it is conducted are so different that they merit a conversation to themselves" (*La Nouvelle Héloïse*, p. 585).

In his "Lettre à Monsieur le Prince de Wurtemberg" (November 10, 1763), found in his voluminous *Correspondance*, Rousseau speaks more specifically of the education of a

---

[4]For the French, *education* is that teaching which takes place at home. *Instruction* is the responsibility of the schools. Julie seems to have the real responsibility of both, contrary to Rousseau's claims in *Emile*.

girl and her female tutor (gouvernante, a term far removed from nourrice, despite the fact that he lapses into bonne [servant] occasionally). It is interesting to contrast her qualifications and duties with those of the male tutor and of the nurse.

Rousseau applauds the securing of a "governess" by the Prince since the royal couple is too occupied to assume the responsibility. He reiterates, however, "only a father can give a father's care, and only a mother . . . can give a mother's care."[5] He essays to answer the questions of the Prince by proposing rules for the education of the child (Sophie): Rule 1: Make sure your child is dear to someone; Rule 2: The governess must have her line of action marked out for her, and have perfect confidence in its success; Rule 3: The governess ought to have absolute control of the child (pp. 115-116).

Within these rules, one should expect to find a tutor of the child's own sex; young, but not too young, and certainly not beautiful; preferably a widow, not a maid. Her own children must not be near her. She should not be too clever nor of lofty sentiments, with just enough

---

[5]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Lettre à Monsieur le Prince de Wurtemberg," in Correspondance Complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ed. R. A. Leigh, 20 vols. (Oxfordshire, Thorpe Mandeville House, 1973), Vol. XVIII, p. 115. Further citations from this edition will be indicated parenthetically by page number where the text is clear.

intelligence to understand orders; and she must be steady, not giddy or light-headed (p. 116).

At this point Rousseau seems to recapitulate and realize what he is demanding. His conclusion, in sharp contrast to his insertion of himself as the ideal in the male tutor's qualifications, is simple where women are concerned: "As we shall not find a perfect woman, we must not ask too much" (p. 116).

He continues her description by requesting that she be gentle (interestingly by reason not necessarily by temperament), even-tempered and cold as opposed to effusive and capricious.[6] Brilliance is unnecessary and possibly a drawback, since the child, a superior herself, may be led to think that all below her station are as intelligent as her governess.

Since one of the rules states that the tutor must care for the child, this may have to be instigated. In describing Emile's tutor Rousseau assumes that because the tutor must love the child, he will love the child (Emile, IV, p. 268). His efforts and their rewards will be bound up with those of his pupil, and his fortune will be "a store laid up for his old age" (Emile, IV, p. 268). The arrangement for the devotion and common destiny between the

---

[6]It is significant to this study that Rousseau is using the word reason here as an assumed characteristic, thus once again revealing his paradoxical theorizing.

governess and her charge is much more crassly ensured: "It is necessary that her fortune be attached to the effect of the education she will have given" (Correspondance, p. 118). Unlike the male's position, monetary reward is in order, perhaps essential. Rousseau suggests: show her a pretty house in the country, at the height of her enthusiasm say to her, "Bring up my daughter as I have spoken, and all that you see is yours." Or again, say, "if in six years my child is so and so, you will have this or that for reward" (pp. 118-119).

The governess can never be left to her own devices and Rousseau suggests that a directory, containing her duties and explained to her by the Prince, be put in her possession. She must follow it to the letter. He additionally refers the Prince to La Nouvelle Héloïse (Part IV, Letter 10) as a source of maxims pertinent to the education of his daughter (Correspondance, p. 121).

It is readily ascertained that women are omitted from Rousseau's plans of general education in Emile, Books I-IV. He rather reluctantly yields to her in Book V. He denies her freedom, individuality, and the direction of her own destiny. Within the narrow confines of the place he has accorded to her, his letter to the Prince of Wurtemberg seems to offer a slight but marked change of direction in his concept of the possibilities of education for women.

It is essential to look more specifically at his philosophy where it touches more deliberately on feminine pedagogy and woman's potential.

CHAPTER IV

ROUSSEAU'S PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN

A major problem that pedagogues have always confronted in feminine education is the near total dependence of the child upon his mother during his most inquisitive and acquisitive period of life. Education for the women of France was recognized as an essential facet of the pedagogical challenge long before Rousseau wrote his famous Emile.

Fénelon, one of the strongest advocates of women's education, wrote as early as 1687:

> Nothing is more neglected than the education of women. Custom and the caprice of mothers often decide everything: one supposes that one ought to give little instruction to this sex . . . but can men hope for any sweetness in life for themselves if their narrowest society, that of marriage, turns into bitterness?[1]

As a result of his concern he wrote a "prescription" for the proper rearing of girls. Additionally, he was the first to found this code upon a study of the psychology of the child.[2] The principles included: recognition of and respect for the student's nature, the limitations and capabilities of the teacher (assumed to be the mother), the

---

[1]François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Traité de l'éducation des filles (Paris: Chez Billois, 1811), p. 9.

[2]Octave Gréard, L'Education des femmes par les femmes (Paris: Hachette, 1886), p. 4.

adjustment of the direction of education to the conditions of life, the application of the possible within the ideal, and confidence in the efficacy of education. Within these principles he urged the tutor: do not hurry, search for character, discover talents, afford liberty, avoid falseness, distinguish between good and bad, employ reason, replace ennui with pleasure, provide small victories, and use advantageously imagination and curiosity.

When one examines the liberal and advanced concepts of Fénelon, it becomes quite clear why the accusation of a return to primitivism has been leveled at Rousseau, writing many years later. Fénelon produced many followers--primarily women--who implemented his liberal ideas. One of the most famous of these was Madame de Maintenon, governess of the children of Louis XIV, who later married the king. When she died in 1719, her proudest claim, expressed at her request, in her _acte de décès_ was that of "institutrice de la Maison Royale de Saint-Louis."[3] She founded Saint-Cyr, a school for girls, poor but well-born. Her plan of education represented the first efforts at secularization of female instruction (a break with convent pedagogy).

Père La Chaise gives recognition to Saint-Cyr by declaring:

> The object of Saint-Cyr is to give well-bred ladies to the state: there are enough good nuns

---

[3]Gréard, p. 73.

> and not enough good mothers of families; girls will be better brought up by persons belonging to the real world.[4]

The educational plan of Madame de Maintenon went far beyond domestic duties: her school taught language study--analysis succeeded by exercises of grammatical synthesis followed by practice in phraseology, word meaning and discourse. On Level 1 the girls studied reading, writing, calculation, basic grammar, catechism, religion and history. Level 2 added music, geography, and mythology. Level 3 offered French and the dance. At Level 4 other languages, moral education and manual work were included.[5] Unfortunately, much of the avant garde pedagogy of Saint-Cyr later gave way to the church's objections, and religiosity once more gained control over female education. Of course, Rousseau gives little note to the church's educational elitism, his interests center upon _le peuple_.

Another famous and influential disciple of Fénelon was Madame de Lambert. Her house was often referred to as the "antechamber of the Academy."[6] She interested herself and other important _salon_ figures in the problem of women's education by declaring:

> . . . one strives only for men, as if they formed a species apart, while women are sacrificed,

---

[4]Gréard, p. 114. [5]Gréard, pp. 138-146.

[6]William A. Nitze and E. Preston Dargan, _A History of French Literature: From the Earliest Times to the Present_ (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1938), p. 367.

> abandoned, reduced to nothingness: in their youth they busy themselves with nothing serious, in the course of their life they can take charge neither of the care of their fortune nor of the conduct of their affairs, they are delivered without defense to the world, to prejudices, to ignorance, to pleasure; it suffices that they be beautiful, no one asks more of them: they are held not responsible for all the rest.[7]

In contrast to these foregoing expressions of pedagogical liberality, there arose a conservative voice--that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Emile, Rousseau's most educationally oriented treatise, was written between 1757 and 1761, immediately after the appearance of La Nouvelle Héloïse and Le Contrat social. The author at once acknowledges the primacy of women's role in education when in Book I he writes:

> It is to you that I address myself, tender and far-sighted mothers, who can remove from the highway and guarantee to this blossoming plant shelter from the crushing force of human conventions! Cultivate, water it lest it die; its fruits will one day make your joys. Form early a protective wall around the soul of your child: another may sketch the plan of it; but you alone must establish the starting post (pp. 245-246).

His initial acknowledgement of woman's educational needs is strongly reinforced when he asserts that Emile must search for a suitable mate and dedicates Book V to that purpose. She must be a woman who complements and supplements Emile's own person. She will not be found in

---

[7]Gréard, p. 169.

Paris, ". . . where women no longer believe in honor nor men in virtue" (p. 691). Sophie must be a woman as Emile is man; that is, possessing all that which is suitable to her species and her sex for fulfilling her place in the physical and moral order (p. 692).

To effectively speak of Rousseau's theories on the education of women one must be willing to concede that education is an eminently social plan. It must contain the element of evolution not unlike that acceded to all other social development. Within Rousseau's system of educating Emile lay the inevitability of the plan of educating his feminine counterpart, Sophie. For this inescapable reason, and only this reason, Rousseau feels it necessary in his final chapter, almost as an afterthought, to outline a practical plan of education for women. They would, after all, reproduce the species, thereby having primary and determining involvement with the male sex. Rousseau concentrates particularly on three areas of women's education: intellectual, physical and moral.

His chauvinistic views concerning the intelligence of women are made vividly clear in Book V of Emile. Interestingly enough, while proposing a radical shift in the traditional education of men, Rousseau endorses wholeheartedly the informal nature of the domestic apprenticeship of women. For the most part, he disdainfully ignores formal feminine education. He does, however, express his

belief that girls leaving the convent are not only coquettes, but are prepared merely for otherworldly pursuits and concerns. This fact collides with his firm belief that education should be practical and pragmatic.

These last terms succinctly sum up Rousseau's educational aims for the feminine element of society. He resolutely declares:

> Once it is demonstrated that man and woman neither are, nor ought to be, constituted in the same way, in character nor in temperament, it follows that they ought not have the same education. By following the directions of nature they ought not to do the same things; the goal of their work is common, but the work is different and consequently the desires which direct them. After having tried to form natural man, in order not to leave our work imperfect, let us see how the wife who suits this man ought to be formed (p. 700).

The sole destiny that Rousseau accords to woman is that of wife and mother. Beyond the family, his theories include no place for her in society:

> Give, without scruples, a woman's education to women, see to it that they love the cares of their sex, that they possess modesty, that they know how to grow old in their _ménage_ and keep busy in their house. . . .(p. 715).

Contrary to his exhortations where the individuality of man is concerned, he does not at all consider the personality of the girl; she is formed only in relation to her future duties. Her life will exist only as it is related to conjugal society. As Compayré has well stated it:

> Between the education of Emile and that of Sophie, there is no longer only a contrast, there

> is an abyss, Rousseau enfranchises Emile, he enslaves Sophie.[8]

Rousseau repeatedly proclaims that in order to be well guided one must always follow the indications of nature. In nature's decision to have women bear the children in the plan of procreation, Rousseau sees a clear signal to the plan of women's education. By the same signal he endeavors to trace a female psychology. He maintains that the only commonality evident between the sexes derives from their species, and the only difference comes from their sex (p. 700). He sees these differences as being qualitative as well as quantitative: "All the faculties common to the two sexes are not equally shared; but taken altogether they compensate for each other; . . . " (p. 701).

One is intrigued by Rousseau's persistent tendency in his educational exhortations to portray woman as an image of baseness and slavery.[9] He assures us, however, that these traits result not "from nature but from her bad education" (pp.56-57). On the other hand, since nature has been established as being infallible and he proposes no change in the traditional apprenticeship plan of education

---

[8]Gabriel Compayré, Jean-Jacques Rousseau et l'éducation de la nature (Paris; Paul Delaplane, 1901), p. 77.

[9]Tieng-Yon Liang, L'Education masculine et l'éducation féminine selon Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Diss. Yale 1930 (Dijon: Imprêmerie Bernigaud et Prévat, 1931), p. 45.

for women, he does not recommend that characteristics such as ruse, dissimulation, cunning (all of which he considers lead to perversity in men) be eliminated. He urges that they be encouraged--since she possesses them naturally, and all that which is natural is good. This "weakness" in fact will help to balance her strength against that of the male, enabling her to retain some control in her life.

In view of the psychological concept of femininity already evinced by Rousseau, one is not inordinately startled to find him proclaiming that since woman cannot reason, she must be taught through her "passions." He avers that although repelled by having to read and write she will apply herself diligently to the tasks served by her sex. Her cares in the interests of her doll will be properly transferred when, older, she "awaits the moment of being her doll herself," in striving to make herself attractive to the opposite sex (p. 707).

Because of his assumption that, when very young, girls and boys are only children and the same designation suffices for beings so similar, Rousseau never bothers to focus on the female child as he has been so careful to do in Emile's education. He sees woman only as adult, ready to take up seriously her conjugal responsibilities, even in her play as a mere child. Her thinking is practical and empirical, never abstract or theoretical; the word describing her special qualities of education is intuition.

Beyond this gift, Rousseau attributes to her little reasoning ability. Her characteristic virtues should be modesty, docility, and above all, honor.

The goals of "intellectual" feminine education are based then upon her destiny as well as upon her psychology. The author believes that nature has decreed woman's total dependence upon man. Female and male dependency, however, is not mutual:

> . . . men depend upon women through their desires: women depend upon men through their desires and through their needs; we would subsist better without them than they without us. . . . Thus all education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them, to rear them young, to care for them older, to counsel them, to console them, to render their life agreeable and sweet, these are the duties of women in all times, and what ought to be taught them from their childhood (p. 703).

Since woman is considered innately weak and dependent, she must make an effort to attain the strength needed for serving man. Another aspect of her education explored by Rousseau is that of her physical well-being. Influenced greatly by his readings of ancient Greece and Rome and their emphasis upon sports, he feels strongly the need for women to be active and healthy, a not so enigmatic concept when one recalls the author's extraordinary love of nature

and his belief in its curative powers for soul and body.[10]

Rousseau states early in Book V (Emile): "Since the body is born, so to speak, before the soul, the first cultivation ought to be that of the body" (p. 704). He adds that physical education for men and women is equally important, but, once more, for differing reasons: "Through the extreme femininity of women begins that of men. Women ought not to be robust like men, but for men . . ." (p. 704).

In relation to this element of women's instruction, he grants to the convent one of his few endorsements. There, at least, girls have ample opportunity for open-air activities and nourishing food; whereas, at home they are kept immobilized in a stuffy room and fed delicacies by over-anxious mothers (p. 704). Even in the physical aspect of a woman's life, Rousseau advises prudence and restraint. Because girls are ("or ought to be") greatly restrained, they are apt to overindulge when released--as in their evincing too much enthusiasm in games. They must be held in check since this is a signal of danger and many vices derive from this trait:

> . . . prevent their withdrawing from one game in order to run to another, do not allow them a

---

[10]Many examples of the literary theory of pathetic fallacy can be found in Rousseau's works, especially his novel La Nouvelle Héloïse, wherein Saint-Preux is restored and renewed in life by communication with nature after traumatic emotional and psychological bouts in his relationship with Julie.

> single instant in their life that they do not know restraint. Accustom them to being interrupted in the middle of their play and lead them without a murmur to other cares (p. 710).

Rousseau even consents to the opinion that a girl "should not be like her grandmother" (at least physically): she should be allowed to be lively, merry and eager; she should be able "to sing, to dance as much as it pleases her" (p. 716). This freedom is not accorded wholly for her sake:

> As for me, I would prefer that a young English girl cultivate the agreeable talents for pleasing the husband she will have with as much care as a young maiden of the East cultivates them for the Harem of Ispahan (p. 716).

Hygiene and diet are not overlooked in Rousseau's plan. Her toilet is simple and natural, she seeks to enhance her natural charms in a manner that is "very coquettish in effect, . . . she covers them . . . but she knows how to arouse the imagination" (p. 747). When Sophie is made aware that "sugar-almonds" destroy her teeth as well as her figure, she overcomes her fault and adopts other tastes which distract her from this low sort of self-indulgence (p. 749).

As has already been apparent in his plan, a third aspect of feminism which Rousseau chooses to emphasize is that of morality. Since woman is seemingly inconceivable apart from her role of wife and mother, her moral nature predictably springs from this relationship. Liang reminds us that Rousseau is "the enemy of Belles-Lettres et des

Sciences," and for this reason is opposed to the formation of "bel esprit" in Emile as much as in Sophie.[11] Emile's education is simple and totally contrary to that evinced by the wits of the social elite. Rousseau, in this respect not unlike many of his fellows of the _salons_, disdained the flippant, irreverent, self-indulged and morally-bankrupt female of the higher echelons of French society. The most distasteful of her traits of personality for him was her "abandonment of the natural, which ordered the mores of former times. . . ."[12]

In contrast, Rousseau poses a stern morality for Sophie:

> Without doubt it is not permitted to anyone to violate his faith, and any unfaithful husband who deprives his wife of the single prize of the austere duties of her sex is an unjust and barbaric man: but the unfaithful wife does more, she dissolves the family, and breaks all the bonds of nature; by giving a man children that are not his, she betrays both, she joins false-heartedness to infidelity (pp. 697-698).

If a father does not love his children, it may well be the result of his lack of respect for his wife (p. 698). Again, it is only fair that woman bear her share of the ills she has brought upon man (p. 709). She can do this by becoming accustomed to restraint and avoiding idleness and insubordination. In fact: ". . . She ought to learn early to suffer -- even injustice, and to support the wrongs of a husband without complaining; . . . (pp. 710-711).

---

[11]Liang, p. 75. [12]Liang, p. 79.

Through her emotions she must also be made to "love virtue." She will never comprehend theological rationale for living uprightly, the male then must assume the dominance and authority from which derives her behavior. One way to assure this socially acceptable conformity is to make her feel subjective to society's "opinion" of her.

> By the law of nature itself, women, as much for themselves as for their children, are at the mercy of the judgments of men: it is not sufficient that they be estimable, it is necessary that they be esteemed; it is not enough for them to be beautiful, it is essential that they please; it is not sufficient for them to be wise, they must be recognized as such; their honor is not only in their conduct but in their reputation, and it is not possible that they who consent to become disreputable can ever be worthy. Man in well-doing depends only on himself and can brave public judgment, but woman in well-doing has accomplished only half of her task, and what one thinks of her matters to her no less than what she is in reality. It follows from there that the system of her education ought to be in that regard contrary to that of ours: opinion is the tomb of virtue among men, and its throne among women (pp. 702-703).

Rousseau obviously feels that in Sophie he has formed emotionally, physically, and morally the perfect feminine counterpart for his beloved Emile. Sophie is intellectually satisfactory, morally adjusted and physically fit. She is sexually eager while modestly restrained. The decision is made; Emile must have his Sophie. Immediately following this conclusion comes a strange hesitancy on the part of the author:

> I wanted to paint an ordinary woman, and by means of elevating her soul I have troubled her

> reason; I have lost my way. Let us retrace our path. Sophie has only a natural goodness in an ordinary soul; all that she possesses more than others is the result of her education (p. 763).

It is clear that Rousseau at this point believes virtuous man knows how to conquer: he simply follows his reason, he performs dutifully and remains in harmony and order with nature. When he recognizes and accepts "things as they are," he is free. Sophie will never know this freedom. Women are incapable of attaining to philosophic notion and duty. They can love _le bien_, they can hardly understand it, they are incapable of knowing its principles. Gréard simply states:

> This daughter of nature is never natural. Her love of virtue, at the moment when she is possessed by it, is hardly a reasoned and wise sense: it is a passion. . . . The more modest Rousseau makes her destiny, the more he elevates her thought, not to restore balance to it and purify her, but to move her and exalt her. . . . Finally, he is obliged to recognize it: he has taken a wrong turn; he has given Sophie a too lively imagination: "by dint of lifting her soul, he has troubled her reason."
>
> It is not only a troubled reason, it is a badly founded reason. The education Rousseau applies for women lacks morality.[13]

Rousseau apparently understands two periods of moral education for girls: the transformation from instinctive to reasoned coquetry marks their passage. This transition is reinforced by his recognition that at some point in her life, woman must depend more upon her reason than public opinion to direct her destiny.

---

[13]Gréard, p. 242.

> From there let her depend at the same time on her own conscience and the opinion of others, she must learn to compare these two rules, to conciliate them and to prefer the first only when they are in opposition. She becomes the judge of her judges, she decides. . . . (pp. 731-732).

> It is important therefore that they [women] develop a faculty to serve as arbiter of the two guides. . . . This faculty is reason (p. 731).

Herein is reflected what may be construed as the beginning of a revocation of his belief that woman needs no reasoning powers. An introduction to the elegant, wise and sophisticated Julie, heroine of <u>La Nouvelle Héloïse</u>, serves to further this premise.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW WOMAN OF *LA NOUVELLE HELOISE*

One aspect upon which most of the critics of Rousseau agree is that he is ragingly ambivalent. Among the psychological facts and fancies perpetuated by this characteristic of his work, none is more worthy of study than the discrepancy between the adamant stance of his personal polemic and his romantically inclined concept of women and their place in a society ruled by the mastery of man.

Emile Faguet gives some insight into the dichotomy of Rousseau's thinking by explaining that Rousseau is "anti-feminist to the supreme degree. How does he prefer Sophie? Ignorant, possessing talents for being 'agreeable and coquettish.'"[1] He continues that one can hardly conclude that "Jean-Jacques did not like women," but that he is what Faguet terms *fémineux*, as opposed to *féministe*. The latter is a man, according to Faguet, who evinces the following characteristics:

> A mind which has as its goal . . . to establish . . . equality or a quasi-equality, among the two sexes, equality of instruction, . . . of

---

[1]Emile Faguet, *Le Féminisme* (Paris: Boivin et Cie, 1925), p. 290.

> rights, . . . of access to trades, arts and functions.[2]

On the contrary, the word _féminеux_ denotes:

> The man who is dominated by his passion for women, and in whose thought or mental reservation a consideration of lover, or at least _galanterie_, persists always, without his ever being able to push it aside.[3]

This definition contains significant insight into Rousseau's paradoxical attitudes of personal conservatism as juxtaposed to his idealized literary portraits of women.

Although Sophie is a fascinating and imaginatively idealized personification of Rousseau's concept of woman in her various roles, it is to Julie, heroine of _La Nouvelle Héloïse_, that one must turn in order to fix upon a more believable and fully defined image. The profile of Sophie is made shadowy and less than credible by the author's intense determination to speak to the reader of his philosophy of feminine education. Rousseau, in effect, seems to leave off the pursuit of the development of Emile's sexual characteristics in order to paint the portrait of Sophie. She becomes an extension of Emile's sexual personality, the source of his ultimate development and formation; the source, one might almost assume, of his perfection or destruction. Much emphasis has been placed upon the role of woman.

---

[2]Faguet, p. 287. [3]Faguet, p. 289.

Rousseau seems to have paused after Book IV of Emile, wherein he expresses the absolute necessity of finding Sophie, to write the first two parts of La Nouvelle Héloïse. After these parts were finished and delivered to the public he returned to Emile and Book V.[4] Perhaps as a result, the personalities of Sophie and Julie are so intertwined that many scholars see them as only one person. As will be seen later there are many parallels in their traits as well as in their lives. Sophie has failed to achieve full human proportion because she is used as a philosophical device; while Julie, on the other hand, skips happily through adolescence and into tragedies which mold and define her as a daughter, lover, wife, mother and friend. Through a series of passionate letters written by an intimate coterie of friends, Rousseau permits us to see finally the development of the perfect wife he has envisioned for Emile.

Château is persuaded that Book V of Emile is a "véritable résumé" of Le Contrat social, and that the relationship between Book V and Julie is indisputable.[5] Emile seems to announce La Nouvelle Héloïse, even though the

---

[4]Octave Gréard, L'Education des femmes par les femmes: Etudes et portraits (Paris: Hachette et Cie, 1889), p. 219. La Nouvelle Héloïse was written from 1757 to 1759, Emile from 1757 to 1761.

[5]Jean Château, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, sa philosophie de l'éducation (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1969), p. 923.

latter is anterior. Rousseau himself declares in his *Confessions*, when forced in later life to defend his works:

> All that which is daring in *Le Contrat social* appeared before in the *Discours sur l'inégalité*; all that which is daring in *Emile* appeared first in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (I, p. 407).

Assuredly, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* seems to reveal the real denouement of *Emile*.

It is interesting to note that the realistic counterpart of Julie is more than likely traced to two women, each of whom was related to Rousseau in a unique way. Rousseau had finally been accepted to some degree into the *salons* of Parisian society. Through Madame d'Epinay he made the acquaintance of a young, attractive woman who would eventually be the Comtesse d'Houdetot. Rousseau meets her again later and unresistingly falls in love with her.

> She came, I saw her, I was drunk with love . . . I saw my Julie in Madame d'Houdetot, . . . clothed with all her perfections with which I had just endowed the idol of my heart. . . . In spite of the extraordinary feelings that I had experienced in her presence, I did not at first perceive what had happened to me: it was only after her departure that, wanting to think of Julie, I was struck by the fact of being able to think only of Madame d'Houdetot (*Confessions*, I, p. 441).

Madame d'Houdetot certainly seems to personify Julie as a young woman, but one can hardly fail to see Madame de Warens in the maturing and more accepting, conforming figure of the older Julie. She adopts many of the philosophies, traits and habits of Madame de Warens

(including the <u>ménage-à-trois</u> arrangement mentioned earlier), as Rousseau paints a more sedate and religious picture of maturing femininity.

Julie's portrait, like that of Sophie, is drawn from an extremely limited and deformed <u>mélange</u> of feminine acquaintanceship. Because he was denied motherhood, separated from potential father-daughter relationships, bereft of true marital companionship and prejudiced by encounters with women of the street, Rousseau is unable to portray woman realistically. In this novel he projects a strange, rather ethereal and saint-like symbol of femininity drawn from his much-imprinted meditative and ardent soul.

Women and their education as a subject of discussion was very popular among the frequenters of the <u>salons</u>. Rousseau was often drawn into the conversations in the role of consultant. After publication of some of his theories, he began to realize some recognition as a spokesman for the rights of people. And there was a decided rise in intensity of the clamor among women for recognition of their debased state.

<u>La Nouvelle Héloïse</u> was immediately accepted and read, especially by the female public. Women were joyfully entranced by its story as well as its philosophy. Its full title was: <u>Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse ou lettres de deux amants, habitants, d'une petite ville au pied des Alpes recueillies et publiées par Jean-Jacques Rousseau</u>.

Grand-Carteret notes:

> _La Nouvelle Héloïse_ was the awaited work, and determined the supreme triumph of Rousseau in feminine hearts. Never before had a writer spoken of love with this communicative ardor, with these searing images, this fever of the entire being transfigured by passion, and burned to death by its fires.[6]

The book was popular certainly because it dealt with life from a feminine point of view, neglected in preceding literature. But there is little doubt that the greater part of Rousseau's popularity among women of the eighteenth century lay in the fact that in his novel he chose to condone a part of their feminine concept of "good." He endorsed "feeling good" and proposed that, "The mere act of loving was virtuous," when happiness was found in it, because it was an act of "obedience to the laws of nature."[7] Of course, "rising after the fall" and the intrigue of intimate, irresistible and titillating amour added to the book's extraordinary acceptance.

Gribble points out that the novel had many themes, but chiefly three:

> . . . the story of the valet who loves the daughter of the house; the glorification of the simple pastoral life; the moralised idealisation of the _ménage-à-trois_.[8]

---

[6]John Grand-Carteret, _Jean-Jacques Rousseau jugé par les Français d'aujourd'hui_ (Paris; Perrin et Cie, 1890), p. 368.

[7]Francis Henry Gribble, _Rousseau and the Women He Loved_ (London; Eveleigh Nash Fawside House, 1908), p. 304.

[8]Gribble, p. 302.

The figure of the valet here is replaced by the tutor, more in keeping with Rousseau's purposes of sketching the new society, as well as less threatening to the "marginal," who had been a valet. Simple pastoral life reflected the escape mentality of many _savants_ of the day (Voltaire, to Geneva; Marie-Antoinette, to the Petit Trianon; Montesquieu, to his country estates, etc.). The _ménage-à-trois_ theme framed a household arrangement the author had experienced first-hand.

Julie has apparently received the sort of education advocated for Sophie. She is a spirited but disciplined and respectful daughter of a country home. As a young girl, she falls in love with her tutor, Saint Preux, and becomes impregnated by him. She loses the baby through a miscarriage, but the weight of guilt and the fall from purity are firmly established by the author in her dramatic character. She eventually obeys her father and weds an older man (Wolmar). When their children are born, Wolmar invites Saint-Preux into their home as a tutor for their education. Thus the scene is set within a questionable morality for a testing (whether consciously or not on Rousseau's part) of his educational theories as preparation for life as they are presented in _Emile_. Saint-Preux obviously reflects both the lover and educator personalities of Rousseau, but Rousseau just as evidently becomes at times the female rationalist personified by the character of Julie.

The requirements set forth as pertaining to the tutor in Emile are readily discernible in Saint-Preux, but the principal character in the novel is unquestionably Julie. It is she who will bear and reveal Rousseau's theories, through personificiation as well as by overt doctrine, pertinent to the education of women.

One of his most prevalent theories is that because woman is unable to reason she must be taught through her passions. He has, in fact, by denying her reasoning power, made Sophie a creature subjugated to potential emotional upheaval. He seemingly recognizes and confesses his error in his admission that he may have taken a false path--Sophie will need the capacity of reason. "By endowing her with a great soul [evincing sensibilité, in Rousseau's definition, and directly associated with the ruling passions], I have disturbed her reason" (Emile, IV, p. 763). Additionally, one cannot forget that Rousseau has altered his conclusions concerning women's dependence upon public opinion. In other reversals of theory Rousseau speaks of two distinct classes: "those who think and those who do not," a result of education, not sex (Emile, IV, p. 767). A man should not ally himself with a woman who does not think, "for social and family reasons" (Emile, IV, p. 767). "Moreover, if a woman is unaccustomed to thinking, how can she bring up her children," (Emile, IV, p. 767). The reversal seems to continue when Rousseau, ostensibly reinforcing the education of Sophie, appears to protest too much:

> Sophie loves virtue; this love has become her dominant passion. . . . Sophie swore it in the depths of her soul, and she vowed it at a time when she was cognizant of everything that such an oath costs to retain: she swore it when she should have revoked her commitment to it, if her senses were made to rule over her (Emile, IV, p. 751).

Certainly, one can reasonably conclude that the author is having second thoughts when, after his decision that women must have the power to choose between public opinion and self determination, he writes:

> . . . but at this word [reason] what questions arise! Are women capable of solid reasoning? Is it important that they cultivate it? Will they cultivate it successfully? Is this culture useful in the functions imposed upon them, is it compatible with the simplicity suitable to them? (Emile, IV, p. 730).

Has he already envisioned novelistically the moral weakness in the soul of Julie and her resultant destruction? The principal characteristic of Julie shows her to be for the most part incapable of coping with the complexities of her emotional relationships. She is ruled by her passionate love of Saint-Preux (an example of passion out of control) but strives valiantly to devote herself to duty. It must be understood that virtue in this novel is not concerned with actions or conduct, but is indeed a passion within itself. It is made clear, however, that it is within the struggle between the passions of virtue and desire that reasoning must rise to humanity's deliverance. Julie expresses it best:

> . . . one triumphs over passions only by opposing them one to the other. When the one of virtue gains precedence, it dominates all and

> maintains all in equilibrium; that is how the true sage is formed. . . (La Nouvelle Héloïse, II, p. 493).

Julie, obviously reflecting her creator's doubts, recognizes and questions her moral situation: ". . . how credulous our passions make us; and with what difficulty a deeply-touched heart detaches itself from errors, even those it perceives" (La Nouvelle Héloïse, II, p. 335).

And once more, prayerfully: "Will the penchants that you [nature] gave me be more triumphant than a mind which has misled me so many times?" (p. 335).

Julie becomes quite figuratively and literally drowned in the flood of emotions surrounding her. She repeatedly, but helplessly, avows her intent to respond dutifully. As Gréard points out:

> "With sentiment and enlightenment I wanted to govern myself, and I conducted it badly." She feels that true support is lacking to her, that she is the plaything of emotions, that she has not within her the force which sustains and saves; and she drops out of a life she is powerless to direct, she has no other recourse than to die.[9]

Alexander Gelley sees negativism in yet another aspect of Julie's education. He points out that she never evinces the support of a positive religiosity at the time of her temptation to succumb to her secret suitor.

> What she says now is that she recognizes that the path of refusal, of renunciation is the better way, not because it adheres to religious principles but because resistance maintained, gratification

---

[9]Gréard, pp. 244-245.

> refused puts the soul into a condition of expectation . . . immeasurably more satisfying and lasting than satisfaction of desire would be.[10]

Within the glorification of sentiments of this novel and the clear assertion of the superiority and importance of individualism, Rousseau at last restores to women their own individuality. Woman, contrary to theories expressed by Rousseau in Emile, is imagined as a superior figure in the ménage. She delivers educational lectures that go far beyond domestic boundaries. She, the rational theologian, in that she is a believer, strives to save the souls of both her husband (an atheist) and her lover (a somewhat less than earnestly repentant sinner). Rousseau has maintained, of course, that woman must be led theologically by man. Even more important, she considers her dilemma from her own concepts, not in the forum of public opinion.

Julie's extrication from this dependency, however, is coincidental with her recognition that her life is beyond her ability to control it. She does not possess the qualities to attain the morally pure relationship with Saint-Preux to which she aspires. Her passions will forever enslave her. Her education is insufficient for saving her--she cannot reason and therefore will be victimized by her desires forever. Only death can restore her to purity.

---

[10]Alexander Gelley, "The Two Julies: Conversion and Imagination in La Nouvelle Héloïse" in Modern Language Notes, 92, No. 4 (1977), pp. 749-760.

She in dying writes to her lover of her unconquerable obsession with her love for him:

> I have been under an illusion for a long time . . . it was destroyed when I no longer needed it. You believed me cured, and I believed it . . . the feeling that remained in spite of me was involuntary, I dare honor myself for the past; but who would have been able to answer for the future? . . . By taking me, heaven claims nothing regrettable, and shelters my honor (La Nouvelle Héloïse, II, p. 741).

Interestingly for the pursuit of the subject of Rousseau's theories on the education of women, the author wrote a little-known and rarely-consulted sequel to Emile. In this brief dramatic account, Sophie's passions, like Julie's, will indeed "rule over her." Rousseau entitled the fragment Emile et Sophie ou les Solitaries.[11] The tale contains only two chapters and appears to be unfinished. It continues the author's theories on education, this time in evaluative retrospect.

The plot reveals that when death relentlessly takes her mother and father, as well as her infant daughter, Sophie, having relied always upon her passions instead of her reason for directing her life, becomes inconsolable and unable to control her emotions. Emile in retrospect observes:

> Up to this time, content and peaceful in her solitude, she had been unaware of the bitterness

---

[11]Emile et Sophie ou les solitaries appeared for the first time in August of 1780, in the Collection complète des oeuvres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau. See "Notices Bibliographiques," Vol. 4, p. 1871, Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

> of life, she had hardly armed her sensitive and vulnerable soul against the blows of fate (Les Solitaires, IV, p. 884).

A comment found in the "Notes et Variantes" concerning this explanation concedes: "This insurmountable sorrow of Sophie demonstrates a gap in her education in rapport to that of Emile: she does not know how to yield to necessity" (Emile, IV, p. 1725).

Her emotional condition necessitates a move for the young ménage. They depart for Paris and an ominous future. Sophie, lacking moral education, finds herself defeated in the corrupting atmosphere of Parisian society. She becomes pregnant by her friend's husband and isolates herself from Emile. The first pages of the fragment indicate that Sophie is now dead (Les Solitaires, IV, p. 882). Clearly, she too has fallen victim to her passions and an insufficiency of the power to reason.

In Book I of Emile Rousseau has declared: "Civil man is born, lives and dies in slavery" (p. 253). In a sense, he feels that slavery is the normal condition of man. "Our true yoke is that of passions, from which Emile is liberated" (Emile, IV, "Notes et Variantes," p. 1725). Rousseau leaves no doubt in Les Solitaires that Sophie has not shared this liberation. Like Julie, she has, under the corrupting influence of the society of Paris, become the slave of her passions. Rousseau has stated that Sophie is a "good" girl, but when her pleasure no longer derives from

being good, her goodness is broken and dies under the shock of human passions.

The failure of Julie and Sophie is drawn in stark and seemingly deliberately dramatic contrast to the triumph of Emile:

> . . . I judged on true and simple principles; authority, opinion altered my judgments not at all. . . . I learned thus that primary wisdom is to want what is, and to regulate one's heart by its destiny. . . . What proof could she [Sophie] pull from that view, if not that Emile in this state was hardly subjugated by his passions, and formed only reasonable resolutions (Les Solitaires, IV, pp. 882, 883, 908).

Does the failure of the two women most sensitively and carefully reared under the educational plan of Rousseau himself indicate that the author has lost faith with the plan? It is this writer's belief that it does. Rousseau in his later years seems to recognize that it is necessary to give to woman a solid foundation in her education in order to assure her continued dignity and honor.

Gréard feels that there is little doubt that Les Solitaires constitutes Rousseau's effort to evaluate the education given to Emile and Sophie. He points out that Emile's considerable talents are displayed during his courtship of Sophie (Emile), but it is after the fall of Sophie and her flight that Emile receives the full benefits of his learning (Les Solitaires, IV, p. 233). He handles himself well in the catastrophic encounters of this time.

He teaches others and "shares with them the means for living." Emile himself explains:

> . . . never did I have more authority over myself than when I wore chains. Never did I better comprehend the maxim of the master: to know that the primary wisdom is to want what is and to regulate one's heart by one's destiny (Les Solitaires, IV, p. 917).[12]

Gréard observes that:

> To the arguments of theoretical psychology Rousseau adds the proof of accomplished experience . . .: It is the glorification of his doctrine . . . as for Sophie . . . [would Rousseau have been as at ease] to penetrate the soul of this enchanting girl, to find there the secret of her error?[13]

It is an inviting exercise to try to do this for Rousseau. The author has isolated Emile throughout his period of education. He has no close human contact except with his tutor. Rousseau has methodically bestowed upon Emile the development of his faculties: from two to twelve, he lives by his senses; at twelve he receives the gift of intelligence; at fifteen, reason; at the last, "le sentiment." On the contrary, Rousseau uses "feelings" as the very basis of Sophie's education; and along with it she is provided a rich and powerful imagination.

Both women possess weaknesses in their education, and both will fail through these faiblesses maîtresses. The failure is symbolically represented by the death of

---

[12]The same idea is expressed differently on pages 883 and 889.

[13]Gréard, p. 23.

each. Neither is able to cope with the realities of life, thus illustrating the failure of Rousseau's plan to prevent weakness by means of discipline enforced through his educational proposal.

One might justifiably argue that Rousseau's plan for educationally ensuring the mastery of life's assaults pertains primarily to men, only secondarily to women. The weakness is still present in that men were to protect, control and direct the life of women within their responsibility. Emile explains:

> I said to myself . . . that is is right that one imputes to the husband the disorder of his wife, whether for having badly chosen her or badly governed her; . . . that I was myself an example of this imputation, and that if Emile had always been wise Sophie would never have failed; . . . (Les Solitaires, IV, p. 901).

When this statement is read in true perspective, that it is Rousseau's confession concerning Sophie's innate weakness, the reason for Sophie's failure, her lack of reasoning ability, is even more strongly reinforced. She was never meant to be able to direct her own life.

Julie's failure is apparent when she cannot control her persistent love for Saint-Preux. Because her "passions" have not found a substitute virtue to give her equilibrium, her sinful love exhausts her soul and body. Sophie, similarly defenseless when no longer protected by her love for Emile, succumbs to her passions and finally to death.

For the most part the sovereign role in feminine education that Fénelon and Madame de Maintenon have accorded to reason, Rousseau attributes to sentiment. The characteristics of sentiment bestowed upon woman differ radically from those given to man. The author makes it clear that all passions are good if:

> We are their masters, all are bad, if we abandon ourselves to them . . . reason forbids us to want what we cannot obtain, conscience forbids us, not to be tempted, but to yield to temptation. To feel or not to feel a passion is beyond our control, but we can control ourselves (_Emile_, IV, p. 819).

Is this the same "reason" forbidden to women, the same unexplored and dormant conscience neglected by her education? Then, revealing another fallacy in his reasoning as this theory is applied to male and female, Rousseau adds: "A man is not guilty if he loves his neighbor's wife, provided he keeps this unhappy passion under the control of the law of duty" (_Emile_, IV, p. 819).

When one recalls that Emile's duty is to himself, whereas Sophie's duty is to the authoritative male in her life, a double standard of moral behavior is readily perceived. Rousseau rarely speaks of worthy passions where women are concerned; he is usually admonishing rather than admiring. He, of course, exempts himself from furnishing reasons for his concepts.

Despite his tendency to debase woman intellectually and morally, Rousseau must be viewed as one of those who

gave woman importance in her role as a citizen of the post-revolutionary world. One must conclude that Rousseau has contributed much impetus to the cause of womankind and her place in humanity's evolution.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to expand the knowledge of the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, specifically as it relates to feminine education. Particular emphasis has been given to examining the dichotomy existing on almost every level of Rousseau's thinking.

The rational man of the eighteenth century was ever in combat with the beliefs prevalent in his own time. Voltaire waged constant battle with the religious concepts of his day, while Rousseau's theorizing led him into violent conflict with social assumptions of the century. Because he had been born and reared on the level of the masses and had finally attained a powerful voice in the hierarchy of French society, Rousseau was uniquely empowered to lay claim to the individuality of every man. Further, because he had been endowed with a keen and responsive perceptivity, he was unable to quiet the promptings of his conscience, restless in its social setting.

The personalized approach of Rousseau to philosophy contributed a convincing and enduring wisdom to his writings. Although there is paradox in plentiful amount, there are also prescience and concern on the part of the author, impossible to ignore. Within this concern, women, too, were

assigned a place, and thus received prominence of a literary and philosophical sort for the first time.

Rousseau chose to give a practical turn to philosophical discussion by literarily establishing the steps to man's emancipation. The titles given his early works reveal the steps: Discours sur les Arts et les Sciences, Discours sur l'inégalité, Le Contrat social, La Nouvelle Héloïse, and Emile. It is significant that in the last two works women figure prominently.

Despite the fact that Rousseau the philosopher was a firm believer in his century's chauvinistic attitude toward women, Rousseau the private man, sentimental, advocating individualism, sensitive to the faults of his own time, could hardly forever divorce women from their place in the civilization process. Thus the fifth book of Emile and La Nouvelle Héloïse appeared on the scene. Rousseau, unlike his peers, wrote of human problems on a personal level. Perceptive as he was to unfair and unequal treatment, he inevitably, by writing specifically of her, began to question the lot of woman. He does not abandon his chauvinistic position in his lifetime, but he does, in his own unique manner, enhance the feminine condition.

Even though Rousseau returned to primitivism in his plan for educating women, he framed Sophie's instruction within a much more practical methodology than that of Emile. Rousseau himself recognized the plan of Emile as

being idealistic and probably impossible to implement. On the other hand, Sophie's education is pragmatic and realistic, entirely receptive to implementation. In comparing the two plans, one might assume that the author was in some ways more serious, less the dreamer, in his plan for the female.

When we speak of women and their place in the theories of Rousseau, it is essential to understand the terms in their revolutionary sense. Rousseau is speaking of the masses, not the elite; thereby becoming one of the first to accord recognition to the ordinary woman. Because Rousseau's works became the Bible for the revolution of 1789 and because he had seen the importance of writing about Sophie as well as about Emile, woman was given a foothold on the ladder to freedom. In spite of this, one must concede that Rousseau did not intend to liberate woman as a separate entity; his call was literally for the freedom of man. Rousseau, like his century, saw no need for female emancipation. He cannot be declared intentionally malevolent; he merely ignored the question, believing as he did that woman's fate was foreordained to dependency by nature.

As has been noted, the education of Sophie is far more realistic in its application than the plan for Emile. The educational program for the latter represents the author's idealization of man's potential; whereas, the

education of Sophie is a literal and pragmatic concept of woman's role and duty. Thus the author's plan for feminine education can be seen as containing more integrity than that for men. Perhaps this fact accounts for Rousseau's retrospective evaluation of his plan of education in *Les Solitaires*. Could it also explain his revocation of a feminine program he later felt was viable but inapposite and deficient as proposed?

Within Rousseau's pedagogical framework, Sophie seems to become the ultimate stage of Emile's development. His sexual self will be based upon his relationship to Sophie and her complete adaptation to her role. She will determine to a great extent his success or failure. If this fact can only be surmised in *Emile*, it is confirmed in *Les Solitaires*. Part of the success of Emile is related to his survival within the failure of Sophie (*Les Solitaires*, pp. 882, 884, 894, 896).

Rousseau tended to idealize one segment of feminine society while enslaving another. Rational and aware of accepted custom, but having only sporadic and limited religious and academic education, he always had difficulty in deciding what woman should be. He viewed her as unpredictable, threatening, calculating and basically evil. Throughout this study Rousseau's tendency to debase woman is apparent. The lower class of women suffers this humiliation most. Many of his theories are drawn from the negative teachings

of the church (particularly the Pauline doctrines) concerning woman, but he appears unaware of her status as represented in Mariology.

In dramatic contrast to man, who must be permitted to follow his natural tendencies, woman must be constantly constrained and restricted. One would have to conclude that the defender of man-born-good is relegating woman to a basically evil nature. Her gifts from nature (ruse, cunning, dissimulation, and even intuition) are questionable. Perhaps it is because of this assumption that the author denies to woman all control of her destiny.

Because she is bereft of intellect, negative education can in no way be applied to her condition. She must be subjected totally to a positive and directed approach--teach her, restrict her, form her, explain to her and reason for her.

She is never allowed to possess the innocence even of childhood. From her beginning, he implies, she is coquettish, deceptive and self-serving. She is portrayed as a creature of emotions, not rationality; therefore, he speaks to her in an admonishing and condescending tone. Because he is personally ignorant of woman in the true role of wife and mother, his claim to form her is unbelievable and lacking verisimilitude. Moreover, because of the lack of familial stability in his life, his encounters with women tended to be of only one nature--sexual. Both Madame de

Warens and Thérèse Levasseur manipulated him: the former emotionally and philosophically, the latter socially and financially. It is not difficult then to realize why he was tempted to prepare only one type of woman in his educational plan, that of mistress. She must serve man's needs but never assume dominance.

Even the female tutor, although granted the intelligence suited to a male-directed fulfillment of her role, is debased as a person. Her integrity must be bought, while her male counterpart is assumed to possess naturally this quality in abundance. Further, she is not simply offered a salary, she must be teased into accepting her responsibility through her own selfish motivations.

A final debasement of woman is evident when the author declares that Emile, in all his natural strength must, through social necessity, sacrifice his independence to the ritual of marriage. Rousseau obviously believes that sexual desire is a debasing quality in mankind; therefore, woman, the recipient of his sexual attention, is the instrument of that debasement.

Despite his tendency to debase woman in _Emile_, Rousseau unreservedly romanticizes woman in _La Nouvelle Héloïse_, thus revealing the dual role of woman in his concept. It is interesting to note that although provided the same education, Sophie (in _Emile_) conceived as pure and obedient, is totally servile; while Julie, fallen and sinful, is regal.

Sophie is an idealized personification of the ordinary woman; Julie is a romantically portrayed representative of the female of the *salons*. Rousseau was fascinated by and drawn to this type of woman; however, although she appeared to him superior, he continued to preach reform while seeming to recognize in her a new potential. When he projected the idealistic image of womanhood as seen in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, he initiated a possibility for female deliverance and a more positive destiny for the "new woman."

Perhaps this projection would in part explain Rousseau's necessity to evaluate the education of Emile and Sophie in *Les Solitaires*. He affirms the success of the learning of Emile and unstintingly gives to him a good grade on his performance. Sophie has totally failed. She refutes his educational plan for women by her failure.

As surely as Emile is educated to eventually fit in and contribute to society, Sophie is trained to serve a particular male, to anticipate his desires, to rest *en famille*, and to remain moral despite her lack of reasoning ability. In *Les Solitaires*, in almost methodical deliberateness, Sophie wanders into the corrupting society of Paris, enters into an affair with another man and abandons Emile. Thus she breaks all the conditions necessary to her success.

According to Emile's reckoning, Sophie, untried by exterior forces, succumbs to her emotions and is destroyed. Rousseau had written in Emile, "Reason is nature and has set up rational guidelines for man to follow." The author has endowed Emile with reason and has very carefully deliniated the "guidelines," but he has totally neglected Sophie's moral education except as it is revealed in a series of negative commandments. Her only preparation for struggling with unforeseen moral problems is her instruction to love virtue. This love is to direct and limit her options. Sophie's youthful and traumatic death is unquestioningly indicative of some misconception on the part of her creator. If one concedes that the fall of Sophie came partially as a result of her abandonment of husband and home, what is to be said of the death of Julie who remained, dutifully accepting her fate? She is overcome and destroyed also, but within her familial surroundings. She is still (at her death) wed to Wolmar; she has not again physically yielded to her lover; she is a devoted wife and mother; she has remained en famille. Yet both women have failed, a failure symbolized by death as well as by the lack of happiness and harmony in their lives. The one common variable in their destruction is their inability to reason, and reason is the only path Rousseau provides for overcoming immoral tendencies.

Rousseau has stated in Emile that Sophie is ordinary and only her education makes her different. The difference is not sufficient to validate the education. She and Julie bear the identifying characteristics of the errant women of both the masses and of the nobility. Neither has achieved the purity and endurance of the ideal wife and mother Rousseau has sought to form.

In a well-known section of Emile dealing with the religious discourse of the Vicar of Savoyard, Rousseau writes that God gave us the conscience to love good, the reason to recognize it, the liberty to choose it; and it is upon us alone that our happiness depends (pp. 620-627). This list of qualities--conscience, reason, liberty, happiness--sums up precisely those denied to women in the pedagogical plan of Rousseau for feminine society. Based upon the educational foundation he himself established, the fall of woman was inevitable.

Rousseau concludes then that exhaltation of sensibility does not always engender virtue, that aspiration to an admirable morality cannot be substituted for the law of duty, and that impulses prompted by imagination and sentiment are not true forces deriving from the soul. Despite his lack of overt endorsement of woman's rightful place as equal to man, these admissions, in some ways, make him all the more acceptable as an educator and more admirable as a man.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau offers to women an educational program--serious, applicable and provocative. He leaves woman busily engaged with her domestic tasks, but he pointedly and effectively enlightens the differences existing between the sexes. He refuses woman a rightful place in a larger society, but he explores and reveals her inner soul, capturing her secret strength and desires. He breathes a life and substance into her spirit that gives believability to her aspirations. He lifts her from obscurity and slavery to a position of entrance into the real world. His rhetoric and declamatory style contribute a powerful vehicle engaged for her cause. Even when he does not convince, he does move. Even in his paradoxes and contradictions, he forces consideration. In spite of his repeated prejudices against woman, she owes to him, in good part, the lofty position she enjoys today. As solidly as he establishes the authority and primacy of man, it is to woman that he delivers the final hommage. He makes of her counselor and sovereign of the home. He humanizes her in his writings and accords her a more elevated rank in his theories. Even while she is succumbing to error, one senses her superiority to the men surrounding her. He understands and honors her in her weakness and idealizes her in her fall.

For these reasons, feminine intellectuals from Madame d'Epinay to Madame de Staël reflect in their own programs

of education their acceptance and support of many of his ideas as they relate to women.[1] Finally then, it seems splendidly significant that some of his most ardent followers among educators have been women.

---

[1]Octave Gréard, L'Education des femmes par les femmes: Etudes et portraits (Paris; Libraire Hachette et Cie, 1889). The "portraits" include the history of various influential women and their contribution to the educational progress of France. For the role of Mme de Staël, see her Lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de J. J. Rousseau.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Arendt, Hannah. On Revolution. New York: The Viking Press, 1963.

Boyd, William. The Educational Theory of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1963.

________, trans. The Minor Educational Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1962.

Bury, J. B. The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Growth and Origin. New York: Dover Publications, 1932.

Cassirer, Ernst. The Philosophy of the Enlightenment. Boston: Beacon Press, 1950.

Château, Jean. Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Sa Philosophie de l'éducation. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1969.

Compayré, Gabriel. Jean-Jacques Rousseau et l'éducation de la nature. Paris: Paul Delaplane, 1901.

Diderot, Denis. Supplément au voyage de Bougainville. Paris: Editions de la nouvelle revue française, 1772.

Durkheim, Emile. Pédagogie de Rousseau. Paris: A. Colin, 1919.

Faguet, Emile. Le Féminisme. Paris: Boivin et Cie., 1925.

Fénelon. De l' Education des Filles. Paris: Chez Billois, 1811.

Ferval, Claude. Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les femmes. Paris: Arthème Foyard et Cie., 1934.

Gay, Peter. The Party of Humanity: Essays in the French Enlightenment. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1954.

Girardin, Fernand de. Iconographie des oeuvres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Paris: Morel, 1913.

Goncourt, Edmond and Jules de. La Femme au dix-huitième siècle. 2 vols. Paris: Flammarion, 1882.

Grand-Carteret, John. Jean-Jacques Rousseau jugé par les Français d'aujourd'hui. Paris: Perrin et Cie., 1890.

Gréard, Octave. L'Education des femmes par les femmes: Etudes et portraits. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1890.

Gribble, Francis Henry. Rousseau and the Women He Loved. London: Eveleigh Nash Fawside House, 1908.

Guillemin, Henri. Un Homme, deux ombres: Jean-Jacques-Julie-Sophie. Genève: Editions du Milieu du Monde, 1943.

Hazard, Paul. European Thought in the Eighteenth Century: From Montesquieu to Lessing. New York: The World Publishing Co., 1963.

Laclos, Choderlos de. L'Education des femmes. Paris: Librairie Léon Vanier, 1903.

Lagarde, André and Laurent Michard. XVIIIe Siècle. 6 vols. Paris: Bordas, 1966.

Lanson, Gustave. Histoire de la littérature francaise. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1918.

Lemaître, Jules. Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1905.

Liang, Tieng-Yon. L'Education masculine et l'éducation féminine selon Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Diss. Yale 1931.

Locke, John. A Letter Concerning Toleration. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1950.

Martin, Kingsley. French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century: A Study of Political Ideas from Bayle to Condorcet. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

McDowell, Judith, trans. La Nouvelle Héloïse. By Jean-Jacques Rousseau. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968.

Nitze, William and Preston Dargan. A History of French Literature. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1938.

Pons, Jacques. L'Education en Angleterre entre 1750 et 1800. Paris: Editions Ernest Leroux, 1919.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. _Correspondance Complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau_, ed. R. A. Leigh. 20 vols. Oxfordshire: Thorpe Mandeville House, 1973.

________. _Oeuvres Complètes_. 4 vols. Dijon: Biblioteque de la Pléiade, 1969.

Rousselot, P. _Histoire de l'éducation des femmes en France_. 2 vols. Paris: Didier et Cie., 1883.

Saintsbury, George. _A Short History of French Literature_. Oxbord: The Clarendon Press, 1901.

Talmon, J. T. _The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy_. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1970.

B. ARTICLES

Baczko, Branislaw. "Rousseau and Social Marginality." _Daedalus_, 107 (1978), 27-40.

Bricker, David C. "Rousseau's _Emile_: Blueprint for School Reform." _Teachers College Record_, 92 (1973), 537-546.

Coleman, Patrick. "_Characterizing Rousseau's Emile_." _Modern Language Notes_, 92 (1977), 761-778.

Cook, Terrence E. "Rousseau" Education and Politics." _Journal of Politics_, 37 (1975), 108-128.

Gelley, Alexander. "The Two Julies: Conversion and Imagination in _La Nouvelle Héloïse_." _Modern Language Notes_, 92 (1977), 749-760.

Shklar, Judith. "Jean-Jacques and Equality." _Daedalus_, 107 (1978), 13-25.

Tovey, Barbara and George Tovey. "Women's Philosophical Friends and Enemies." _Social Science Quarterly_, 55 (1974), 586-604.