

**Rousseau and the Ancients**  
**Rousseau et les Anciens**

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## **Between Ancients and Moderns: Women as Citizens in the Œuvre of Rousseau**

It is perhaps paradoxical that Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose writings contributed to the atmosphere that made possible the revolution marking the advent of modernity (at least in Western Europe), was himself enamored of the ancient world. From the pages of the *Confessions*, where he recounts his readings of Plutarch with his father (*OC* 9) to the chapters in the *Social Contract* where he sketches out his austere and seemingly anti-modern conception of citizenship in the ideal polis, Rousseau seems determined to hark back to an ancient world where, if things were not simpler, ideals were rigorously adhered to — at least as far as Rousseau is concerned — and the difference between good and evil strictly maintained. To be sure, Rousseau always remains aware that we cannot return to the days of primordial simplicity.<sup>1</sup> However, Rousseau does unsparingly condemn the inconsistencies and corruption of modern life, exemplified for him most obviously in the *salons* of 18th-century Paris. Moreover, Rousseau insists that we can renew what he considers to be the ancient union of ethical practice and political dedication as the highest expression of our common humanity.

With his childhood immersion in the writers of ancient Greece and Rome, it is not surprising that Rousseau's writings have been understood to valorize ancient values as opposed to the corrupt ones of the modern world. The rise of commentaries that chart this dualism throughout Rousseau's *oeuvre*, which include those critics who argue that Rousseau's thought is coherent in only one aspect of these expressions, is thus in itself not amazing. To be sure, the best of these works do not take Rousseau to task for his ostensible lack of unified thought. In *Men and Citizens: a study of Rousseau's social theory*, Judith Shklar argues that the message in Rousseau's thought is consistently unified, and it is precisely that this dualism is unavoidable: [W]hat is strikingly novel is his insistence that one must choose between two models, between man and the citizen [...but] because they are incompatible [...] the two cannot be reconciled [...] when he called upon his readers to choose between man and the citizen [...] [t]hey were asked, in fact, not to choose, but to recognize that the choice was impossible, and that they were not and would never become either men or citizens" (5–6, 214).

For Judith Shklar, this dualism in Rousseau's thought pits man and citizen against each other, and marks an unbridgeable divide between the

corruption of the modern world and the heroic virtue of the ancient world. My contention in this paper is that while the conventional wisdom in the eighteenth century may well have insisted on the unresolvable dissonance between ancient and modern values, the actual analysis of these issues within the pages of Rousseau's *oeuvre* reveals a different sensibility at work. For Rousseau, by contrast, it is the maintenance of the artificial divide between the ancient values and the modern ones that guarantees the erosion of liberty and personal identity. For Rousseau, the aim remains to create in one person the ability to be both man *and* citizen.

A major problem with attempting to find a more humanistic and inclusive notion of citizenship in the writings of Rousseau is that Rousseau himself appears to exclude a major portion of humanity from even his more liberal vision of citizenship. The maintenance of gender-specificity in the last sentence of the above paragraph is not a function of traditional English grammar: in Rousseau's polis, as Penny Weiss has pointed out to us, citizenship is not extended to women.<sup>2</sup> And so, we must continue to ask ourselves just what notion of citizenship Rousseau espouses for only one-half of the human race. The success of Rousseau's venture — realizing a more open and dynamic concept of citizenship — becomes questionable when one realizes that despite their avowedly non-public status in Rousseau's ideal polis, it is the women who are charged with educating the young children who would become the citizens of tomorrow.<sup>3</sup> Thus, as we will find, it is precisely in Rousseau's writings about women that the flaw in the traditional divide between ancient and modern cultures makes itself most evident, and the tensions in Rousseau's notion of citizenship become most blatantly obvious.

In tracing the problematics of these themes in the *oeuvre* of Rousseau, we will start with analyzing Rousseau's famous examples of citizens at the beginning of *Émile*. Then we will briefly analyze the role of women and their influence in the education of the citizen. Finally, we will consider the implications of Rousseau's understanding of citizenship and the role of women in constructing a humanistic and dynamic notion of citizenship for the modern world.

### **Citizen/ess in the ancient world**

Rousseau's most famous example of a citizen is in fact not a citizen at all, but a citizeness. The irony derives from the fact, as we have mentioned, that in ancient Greece — as well as in the polis of Rousseau's *Social Contract* — women did not enjoy the full status of citizenship. Nevertheless, Rousseau chooses to use the figure of a woman to exemplify an important aspect of Rousseau's concept of citizenship, which is that of self-

sacrifice. This example bears examination: “Une femme de Sparte avait cinq fils à l’armée, et attendait des nouvelles de la bataille. Un Ilote arrive; elle lui en demande en tremblant. Vos cinq fils ont été tués. Vil esclave, t’ai-je demandé cela? Nous avons gagné la victoire. La mère court au temple et rend grâce aux Dieux. Voilà la Citoyenne” (*Émile* 4: 249). This example in fact obscures a central paradox in Rousseau’s definition of citizenship, which becomes evident as we compare Rousseau’s example of male citizenship to his portrayal of the female citizeness. Rousseau’s depiction of male citizenship concerns Pederatus’ reaction when his bid to join the council of three hundred is defeated. Although the two examples appear similar — in each case, self-sacrifice for the greater good of the state is valorized — the differences between the two images point to a much deeper dissonance than is evident at first glance.

It is important to note that the stakes are not the same for the protagonist of each example. Pederatus has lost the opportunity of serving in public office at the time of the recounting of this incident. Presumably, he would not be prevented from attempting to run again for public office at some future date. His loss, therefore, is not absolute and it is also not irretrievable. Consequently, the type of self-sacrifice that he experiences is not as fundamental as might exist, for example, in the case where one lost the opportunity ever again to compete. Pederatus’s rationale reflects this measured understanding of a temporary set-back: his positive reaction to his (temporary) personal defeat seems based on the assumption that if he was rejected for public office, the reason must be that the other candidates were better qualified than him. His notion of self is not destroyed by this rejection for public service, because presumably, although he was judged unworthy at this time, he might just as well be favorably judged for this position in the future. In Pederatus’ world, the duties of citizenship do not entail absolute judgements of self, and also do not pose mutually exclusive mandatory options.

By contrast, the second example concerns a mother who has lost (possibly all of) her sons in battle. For this mother, the loss of these individual children is absolute. It is not merely a case of the temporarily-lost opportunity socially or politically to distinguish oneself. In addition, the loss of these children is irretrievable: these children will not come back to her again. The Spartan mother — and notice that she, unlike Pederatus, is defined solely by her function and bears no mark of individual identity — is lauded for ignoring her own personal loss in the face of a Spartan military victory. What assumption can we make about the rationale for her reaction? Is it like that of Pederatus, arguing in this case that the lives of the other soldiers were worthier of being saved, and thus that it was a (morally)

good thing that her sons were the ones that got killed? That understanding of the Spartan mother's reaction does not take into account the emotional connection between parent and child which, as we know from other statements of Rousseau, is crucial in laying the groundwork for the more extended form of caring that Rousseau envisions as the basis for the emotionally cohesive and dynamic polity. For Rousseau, it is the people with strong emotional connections in their personal lives who make the best citizens precisely because they can extend that feeling of connectedness over society as a whole. Such citizens consider the interests of the state as their own and not just as one of various competing concerns that they must balance.<sup>4</sup> As a result, they will care intensely about the state and rank the common political enterprise as their highest undertaking. A similar point of view is expressed even in the more "Spartan-like" pages of *Discourse on Political Economy*, where Rousseau notes the indispensability of personal feeling to the formation of the good citizen.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, in the first version of the *Social Contract*, Rousseau speaks of "le moi particulier, répandu sur le tout" as being "le plus fort lien de la société générale" (330). From all of these statements, we see that understanding the words of the Spartan mother to devalorize the existence of her own children would render her, in Rousseau's view, the very opposite of a good citizen(ess).

There is, however, another way that we can understand the reaction of the Spartan mother. We could interpret her rationale to be that the lives of individuals simply don't matter in the face of the overriding objectives of the state (*raison d'État*). In that case, however, we would have to question whether this understanding can at all fit in with Rousseau's oft-cited goal for the political state as he expresses it in the *Social Contract*: to increase the dynamic humanity of its individual constituent members, which is demonstrated by its overriding concern for their freedom.<sup>6</sup>

An additional question asserts itself in the face of these oft-cited examples of citizenship. Why is it that the example of a citizeness involves values that are incompatible with Rousseau's own stated goals for his political state and the individuals that would inhabit it? The answers to these questions are rooted in the way that Rousseau himself constructs the role of woman in his conception of both her individual and political functions. It is to this issue that we now turn our attention. We focus on the education of Sophie, the perfect helpmate to Émile who personifies in his turn Rousseau's ideal combination of the man for all seasons who would also redeem the larger society from corruption. In so doing, Émile also embodies the ideal citizen.<sup>7</sup>

**Sophie: citizeness in training?**

Sophie is first presented by Rousseau as the solution to a problem: that of *Émile's* (potentially) untrammelled adolescent sexuality. In *Émile's* case, the mere knowledge of Sophie's existence<sup>8</sup> should serve to bank the fires of *Émile's* nascent passion. One of the major difficulties in understanding the education of Sophie is that Rousseau seems to be presenting us with two visions of *Émile's* helpmate. On the one hand, Sophie is portrayed as a brilliant prodigy, with more sympathy for theoretical excellence than for practical imperfections. This Sophie is so taken by the story of *Telemachus* that she refuses to have anything to do with the real-life suitors surrounding her. Eventually, this Sophie dies. On the other hand, Rousseau also describes another Sophie, who possesses very average abilities, but is distinguished by her good heart and modest, virtuous behavior. This second Sophie is said to epitomize "woman." Since *Émile* is basically just an average fellow whose faculties have been developed to the utmost by his tutor, Rousseau decides to plan Sophie along similar lines. Ostensibly, then, the story of *Émile's* and Sophie's love and marriage will be a very ordinary one, in spite of the clearly extraordinary task set for the young couple of redeeming the world — or at least, their surrounding environment — from corruption.

However, the large amount of planning and contrived happenstance belies the supposed ordinariness of the tale. When, after a long introduction, the reader, together with *Émile*, finally meets Sophie, it is clear that Rousseau has found new uses for her. Aside from being a convenient stop-gap during adolescence, Sophie can also be utilized to direct *Émile's* general feeling of benevolence towards one person, thus socializing *Émile* through love. Looking further into the future, Rousseau also decides that Sophie can help *Émile* fulfill his task by being a loving background supporter of his efforts, and by transmitting his beliefs to their children.<sup>9</sup>

This vision of Sophie's role in *Émile's* life has considerable implications for the type of personality that Sophie will have. Clearly, genius is out of the question for Sophie. Her role is to be a passive enabler, not an active participant on her own. If Sophie possesses her own brand of genius, she will create her own agenda. Judging from Rousseau's statements about Sophie and about women in general, it would appear that Rousseau feels that *Émile's* task could be more certainly and easily accomplished if Sophie were to serve primarily as a means for *Émile* to achieve his own goals, rather than as a fully developed person with ideas of her own.<sup>10</sup> By identifying Sophie with the prototypical "woman", Rousseau is further able to support the statements he makes about Sophie by claiming that they are generally true for women as a whole. In this way, Rousseau can bolster the

endeavor he undertakes in *Émile*, of writing not for the extraordinary individual, but of inspiring ordinary men and women to take action against the corruption of their age, and thereby to take control of their own lives.

Depriving Sophie of her imagination has two important results. One is that Sophie has no ideas of her own. She becomes mere potentiality, “prepared ground,” to receive and perpetuate *Émile*’s own ideas. The second result becomes apparent only gradually in the lives of *Émile* and Sophie. The deliberate absence of imagination in Sophie results not just in intellectual inferiority for her. More crucially, it leaves Sophie incomplete on the moral and psychological levels as well. The deprivation of Sophie’s imagination renders Sophie less human and even, possibly, incapable of fully loving.<sup>11</sup> The irony lies in the fact that while Sophie’s capabilities are restricted in the name of better serving *Émile*’s aims, it is precisely those limitations that effectively undermine those very goals. In the process, *Émile*’s and Sophie’s personal happiness is destroyed as well.

How does this subversion of aims come about? Sophie’s education, unlike that of *Émile*, is fashioned to be completely relative to that of the dominant people (males) in her life: her father and her husband.<sup>12</sup> To be sure, Rousseau does not completely sustain a perfect traditionalist notion of a woman’s “place”: the narrative of *Émile* reveals that Sophie is given some discretion, which is manifest in her choice of *Émile* as her husband and her say in the couple’s sexual relationship.<sup>13</sup> However, this “softening” of the portrayal of woman as the subservient partner in the marriage relationship points less to a fundamental modification of the traditionalist view of woman than to a repetitive reflection of the dualistic and essentially contradictory double portrait that Rousseau gives us of Sophie in his introduction to Book v of *Émile*.<sup>14</sup> Rousseau’s attempt to incorporate aspects — the extraordinary and the mundane — in his portrayal of Sophie reveals his struggle to strike a compromise between them that will still remain true to both essentialist elements. Thus, Rousseau ends by arguing that although it is true that in most cases women must obey men, this rule is reversed when the woman is of exceptional moral character, like Sophie.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Rousseau maintains that although women’s minds cannot grasp abstractions,<sup>16</sup> women still must be taught how to think and reason if for no other reason than to fulfill their primary duty, which is to raise good citizens for the state (767).

Typically for Rousseau, the question of how this balance is to be achieved is not fully explored.<sup>17</sup> In a famous phrase, Rousseau suggests that women act “like ministers in a state,” controlling the power behind the throne while not publicly partaking of any of the royal glory. That is to say, women must be devious in achieving their goal, using caresses and tears to

arrange that they are ordered to do what they want to do anyway (766). What Rousseau fails to realize is that this recommendation of utilizing ruse supports a technique that he elsewhere condemns as inauthentic and dishonest.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the task that Rousseau demands that women accomplish is intellectually and morally impossible to do with the tools that he allows for them. Women cannot be both “relative” to men, subordinating themselves to the social requirements of “opinion,” while at the same time functioning as the moral guides of men by setting up the criteria of this same “opinion” (731). On the political level as well, women cannot exercise authority in a hidden manner (or in any manner at all) if they are systematically denied the knowledge that is necessary for the exercise of authority in the first place. As we know, knowledge is precisely what is consistently denied to Sophie: she is “permitted” to know only what is deemed “necessary” for the accomplishment of her tasks. Thus, in issues small and large, she takes her cues from the dominant males in her life (her father in religion; her husband in matters of taste). Not surprisingly, her motivation for following a particular code of ethics is not any deep understanding that evolves on her own part, but that it makes other people happy with her (751). Unlike *Émile*, Sophie is not taught the strength that is the guarantee of virtue’s continued existence (817).

The result is that Sophie’s existence is irretrievably torn between two moralities.<sup>19</sup> Her tragedy is that she lacks the intellectual skills that would permit her to make a reasoned choice between them. Sophie is trained from the start to lead a life of constraint, in perpetual battle with herself. Therefore, she is unsure, when confronted by two moral alternatives, which path to take. Does she follow her own conscience, or abide by conventional wisdom? Does she listen to herself, or fight her instinct, as she has been taught to do? If *Émile* were there to guide her, all might be well. He would take the burden of decision from her shoulders. As real life demonstrates, however, that situation does not always obtain. Sophie is forced to make a choice, but she has no self, or inner voice of conscience, to fall back on as a guide. In fact, one sign of the success of her education is the destruction of the self that Sophie has been trained to combat. Her complaisance before *Émile* easily extends itself to an acceptance of “alternate moralities.” With no innate moral sense to direct her, Sophie falls prey to the vices from which she was originally supposed to protect her own family.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, to learn that Sophie cannot withstand the enticing vices of Paris. What may be more shocking is that Sophie’s fall from grace precipitates *Émile*’s furious rejection of her, and his decision to end their marriage. This is unexpected because true love, as defined by Rousseau, is supposed to be able to withstand the excesses of jealousy.<sup>20</sup>

According to Rousseau, true love would evince concern at such a turn of events rather than the anger that Émile displays towards Sophie. Émile's actual reaction raises the question of how true his love for Sophie ever really was. His rejection of Sophie would seem to indicate that Émile's love for Sophie was more self-referential than other-directed, emphasizing *amour-propre* over *amour de soi*.<sup>21</sup> The denouement of *Les solitaires*, the sequel to *Émile*, leaves Émile forswearing not only love, but freedom and citizenship as well.

Émile's rejection of citizenship is important because it reflects how the internal contradictions of Rousseau's portrayal of women lead not only to their own deaths<sup>22</sup> but also to the failure of Rousseau's personal goal for Émile himself and Rousseau's more encompassing political goal for all of humanity. In many ways, this is hinted at in Rousseau's early portrayal of Sophie. In justifying the introduction of Sophie into Émile's life, the tutor states that in essence Sophie will not distract Émile from pursuing his life-long goals because Sophie will make Émile all the more himself.<sup>23</sup> But an exclusivist sense of self is precisely what prevents Émile from being able to unite with Sophie in a long-term unit as a couple. It is simply an extension of this premise — the centrality of *Émile's* personal identity and desires — that makes Émile write to his tutor in *Les solitaires* that he sees no point in concerning himself with anything that does not impact directly on his own physical well-being. Thus, Émile argues that his lack of personal liberty as a slave is not negative because he has lost nothing of his primitive liberty" (i.e. he has enough to eat, in the manner of Natural Man in the primitive stage of the State of Nature) and even as a slave, he is still subject to the necessity which is a defining part of the human condition. The fact that this necessity is now at the whim of another human being rather than being the "necessity of things" valorized by the tutor seems to occur to Émile not at all (912, 916).<sup>24</sup>

The ease with which Émile rejects Sophie and their personal life together — which was also supposed to serve as the model of communal life for the surrounding countryside — makes us realize what is lacking in Émile's own personal development. That is the ability to develop a sense of self that can expand to include other people. It involves a capacity to love that includes not only the survivalist instinct of self-love (*amour-propre*), but also the humane instinct fostered by love of self, or *amour de soi*.<sup>25</sup> However, it is precisely because Sophie has no real sense of self of her own with which Émile must contend that Émile's *amour de soi* is not developed in their married life. It is true that Émile and Sophie meet with no obvious obstacles to their union, but that is only because virtually all of Sophie's efforts are dedicated just to enhancing Émile's *amour-propre* (much

in the way that the false type of romantic love is seen to flourish in *Discourse on Inequality* due to the emphasis placed on the cultivation of appearances).<sup>26</sup> Paradoxically, this lack of struggle, seemingly symbolic of the permanent and serene quality of *Émile's* and *Sophie's* love, also reveals why their love cannot survive. In loving *Sophie*, *Émile* is actually loving only an extension of himself inasmuch as it continues to reflect him. For all the talk of mutuality, no real reciprocity can exist in a relationship between two people, only one of whom is truly autonomous. *Sophie's* education makes her receptive to the outward mechanisms of love, but no dynamic relationship between her and *Émile* is really possible. As a result, both of *Émile's* enterprises — the political and the personal — fail.

The conclusion of *Émile* reveals that an authentic polis cannot be achieved by human beings who are not fully realized on the personal level as well. Although it seems that *Émile's* rejection of citizenship is due to the personal failings of *Sophie* (*Émile* leaves because of *Sophie's* infidelity), a more careful analysis of Rousseau's text reveals that *Émile's* and *Sophie's* love lacks the essential ingredients for guaranteeing an authentic personal relationship, and hence is likewise incapable of fostering an authentic political community. Rousseau certainly does not hesitate to condemn the immorality of the modern city (which he blames for *Sophie's* infidelity), but it is incorrect to conclude from this that Rousseau unquestioningly valorizes what he views as the ancient version of citizenship. On the contrary, Rousseau's use of images in his works that are drawn from the ancient world reveals how they too are subject to inauthentic misinterpretation. Thus, in *Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, St. Preux writes glowingly of *Julie* as "illustre et vertueuse Aggripine montrant son fils aux troupes de Germanicus" (2: 607) but it is important to remember at the same time that these seemingly spontaneous "fêtes" are marked by their rigid adherence to rank and hierarchy,<sup>27</sup> which belies the supposed "spirit of equality" that ostensibly reigns.<sup>28</sup> Even more important, the seeming perfection of life on the tightly-organized estate of *Clarens* does not render *Julie* happy: as the end of the novel reveals, the ensuing lack of authenticity in *Julie's* life nullifies the justification of the entire social experiment at *Clarens*.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, Rousseau's examples of citizen and citizeness at the beginning of *Émile* may appear to affirm that it takes the self-sacrificing Spartan mother gladly receiving tidings of the victorious battle in which her sons perished to raise the next generation of patriotic citizens (who will presumably function in the manner of *Pederatus*). But our reading shows that aside from the practical contradictions involved — mothers who care so little for the welfare of their children will certainly not raise any children at all, let alone those who epitomize model citizens! — Rousseau's own

analysis demonstrates that only fully developed individuals are capable of meeting the challenges of authentic citizenship. Only a person with a fully realized sense of self can be a citizen who cares about his country. At the same time, a country must itself nurture its citizens if it expects its citizens to care about the state's own welfare.<sup>30</sup> Following the flawed example of *Émile*, we are indeed reduced, in Shklar's words, to choosing to create either a man or a citizen and failing in both attempts. In that dualistic world, the development of women, too, is constrained from being able to express, let alone realize, a positive conception of dynamic citizenship that can enhance the self in its various manifestations as both individual and (borrowing the Marxist term) species-being. Read in that light, the denouement of *Émile* in *Les solitaires* discloses that the fate of Rousseau's heroines expresses not their unfitness for citizenship but rather, utilizes their liminal status<sup>31</sup> as Other to reveal the flaws inherent in the mutually exclusive conceptions of citizenship and personhood that form the foundation of both the ancient and the modern worlds.

Rousseau's description of the inconsistencies and inadequacies of the traditional (both ancient *and* modern) approaches to women in the political community must be understood as more than just a grudging admission that something doesn't quite work in the accepted arrangement of political and social power. Rather, Rousseau's implicit critique of the exclusivist wisdom of citizenry and politics<sup>32</sup> itself points to a third option that Rousseau does not as yet enunciate, but whose necessity he virtually acknowledges, as the carefully contrived stages of *Émile*'s development fail to reach their explicitly-anticipated goals. In the best postmodern tradition, Rousseau's text points to a text beyond itself. The very existence of Rousseau's text marks the absence in that text itself, turning our gaze to a book that remains yet to be written. Rousseau's challenge is that he has left that version for us to write.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that the state of primordial simplicity is not the same thing as the model of the ancient world that Rousseau holds in such veneration. This primordial simplicity, as Rousseau describes the State of Nature in *Discourse on Inequality*, in many ways predates conscious human history and can be thought of, in this context, as the "antiquity of world history." See *Discourse on Inequality*, where Rousseau describes the primi-

tive era of the State of Nature (*OC* 160). Rousseau's awareness that we cannot return to any stage of the State of Nature is evident in these words: "Faut-il déruire les sociétés, [...] et retourner vivre dans les forêts avec les ours? [...] Quant aux hommes semblables à moi dont les passions ont détruit pour toujours l'originelle simplicité, [...] ils respecteront les sacrés liens des sociétés dont il sont membres; [...] ils obéiront scrupuleusement aux Lois" (note ix to *D2*, *OC* 207).

<sup>2</sup>Weiss 82–89, 103–4, 110–12.

<sup>3</sup>Rousseau explicitly appeals to the mother in *Émile*: "C'est à toi que je m'adresse, tendre et prévoyante mère" (4: 245). As Rousseau conceives it, the mothers' job is to educate their children to be that "homme rare" — i.e., that individual who would not be torn between personal identity and social incarnation ("Si peut-être le double objet qu'on se propose [i.e., de rendre *un* l'homme social et l'homme individuel] pouvait se réunir en un seul [...] [p]our former cet homme rare" [251]). To that end, *Émile* is to be brought up for all times, classes, and places: "Vivre est le métier que je lui veux apprendre" (252). For Rousseau, this was no more than following the dictates of prudence: he believed that revolution in Europe was imminent (in bk. I of *Émile* he speaks of "la mobilité des choses humaines" [252], and he further elaborates in bk. III: "Je tiens pour impossible, que les grandes monarchies de l'Europe aient encore longtemps à durer" [468 n.]). More centrally for our concerns in this paper, it is the women who are charged with transmitting these values to the children who are the next generation of citizens. It is for this reason that the choice and education of Sophie is crucial to the success both of *Émile*'s personal life and for the fulfillment of his communal responsibilities ("[D]u soin des femmes dépend la première éducation des hommes" (703).

<sup>4</sup>Rousseau argues that "le bons fils, le bon mari, le bon père [...] font le bon citoyen" (*Émile*, 4: 700). Earlier in the same paragraph, Rousseau's rationale is explicit: "l'amour qu'on a pour ses proches [...] est] le principe de celui qu'on doit à l'État [...] c'est] par la petite patrie qui est la famille que le cœur s'attache à la grande."

<sup>5</sup>"[U]n homme qui n'aurait point de passions serait certainement un fort mauvais citoyen" (*Political Economy*, 3: 259). I have referred to *Political Economy* as "Spartan-like" because it advocates creating citizens that view themselves primarily not as autonomous individuals but as part of the greater whole through the process of a rigorous education (260 ff.). The point is that even in these circumstances, Rousseau advocates a state that does not stifle its citizens' existences, but rather that promotes their well-being. In that very same discourse, Rousseau speaks of the state as the "tender mother that nourishes [its citizens]" (261).

<sup>6</sup>In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau identifies the essence of humanity with liberty: “renoncer à sa liberté c’est renoncer à sa qualité d’homme” (3: 356). The legitimate state is one that can justify its strictures by proving that they increase that self-same liberty, proving that its goal is likewise to maximize the humanity of its citizens: “Trouver une forme d’association [...] par laquelle chacun [...] *reste aussi libre qu’auparavant*” (360; emphases mine).

<sup>7</sup>“Il [l’âge d’or] [...] semble déjà renaître autour de l’habitation de Sophie” (859).

<sup>8</sup>When Sophie is first presented to Émile, it is not clear that she really exists: she may well be a figment of the tutor’s imagination deliberately conjured to help socialize Émile (see 656–57).

<sup>9</sup>Much of the discussion in this section of the moral dimension of the romantic dyad is built on the analysis in Berman 188–97.

<sup>10</sup>If Sophie possesses her own brand of genius, she will create her own agenda. Judging from Rousseau’s statements about Sophie and about women in general, it would appear that he feels that Émile’s task could be more certainly and easily accomplished if Sophie were to serve primarily as a means for Émile to achieve his own goals, rather than as a fully developed person with ideas of her own.

<sup>11</sup>One can derive this from the fact that the imagination is what enables one to love. Hence, reducing Sophie’s imagination would inevitably lead to a diminution of her ability to love.

<sup>12</sup>“Toute fille doit avoir la religion de sa mère.” But the mother herself must accept her husband’s religion: “[...] et toute femme celle de son mari” (721). Also: “Loin de vouloir l’assujettir [son mari] à ses goûts, elle prendra les siens” (770).

<sup>13</sup>See, for example, Sophie’s defense of Émile’s refusal to leave his workstation when Sophie and her mother pay him a social visit (809), Sophie’s concern regarding the deleterious effect Émile’s wealth might have on his character, and her agreement to marriage with him only when she is satisfied that he is worthy of her own moral standards (813). The tutor explicitly gives her the discretionary say in the couple’s sexual relationship (862–63).

<sup>14</sup>See discussion on p. 164 above.

<sup>15</sup>“En devenant votre époux, Émile est devenu votre chef; c’est à vous d’obéir, ainsi l’a voulu la Nature. Quand la femme ressemble à Sophie, il est pourtant bon que l’homme soit conduit par elle” (865).

<sup>16</sup>It is ironic to reflect that while in the context of Rousseau’s writings, these ideas have been condemned as misogynistic (see Okin 159–66), the contemporary expression of the essentialist view that women’s essence is

different precisely *because* it is not “androcentrically rationalist” (note the fact that those two factors — maleness and the capability for orderly thought — are still linked) has been hailed as revelatory and even liberating. See in that connection Gilligan.

<sup>17</sup>Rousseau seems to suggest a reciprocity within the institution of marriage based on mutual independence (720). It is important to note, however, that while this may function in a limited sense, the implications that contemporary critics attempt to draw from this in connection with the larger political arena are not borne out by an analysis of Rousseau’s text itself. Thus, Schwartz argues that a similar interdependence exists regarding human sexual relationships (see esp. 74–113). As we prove here and further in *Rousseau and the Politics of Ambiguity* (especially ch. 4), however, authentic interdependence is exactly what does *not* occur. Rather, a whole new round of inauthenticity is precipitated. Tracy Strong makes the not-unrelated argument that the (justifiable) reason (in Rousseau’s lexicon) that men are more active in politics than women is that “their sexuality takes them less frequently away from the common” (136). Critics like Strong fail to see that this formulation begs the question: after all, who but men utilize their “maleness” to define what the “common” or the “normal” is?

<sup>18</sup>In the *Discourse on Inequality*, for example, “ruse” as used in the hunt is viewed by Rousseau as starting the moral slide to pride, *amour-propre*, and inequality.

<sup>19</sup>In his comments to the Pléiade edition, Burgelin notes: “Les femmes risquent d’être singulièrement déchirées entre deux morales” (1647).

<sup>20</sup>“Dans la plupart des liaisons de galanterie l’amant hait bien plus les rivaux qu’il n’aime sa maîtresse [...] pour l’amour véritable c’est autre chose [...]. Émile amoureux et jaloux me sera point colère, ombrageux, méfiant, mais délicat, sensible, et craintif, il sera plus alarmé qu’irrité [...] il redoublera de soin pour se rendre aimable” (798–99). In *Émile* Rousseau also portrays love as “l’amour-propre joint au désir” (694).

<sup>21</sup>For an extended definition of these terms, see Morgenstern, esp. ch. 2.

<sup>22</sup>Okin makes this point, particularly in ch. 8 (167–94); the relevant points are on pp. 172 and 175. What Okin does *not* do, most notably, is to explain the theoretical function of these deaths. That is to say, she never explains why Rousseau, a literary craftsman and thinker of no small ability, allows the fictional deaths of these women to overshadow the theoretical consistency of these works. An alternative explanation is provided at the end of this paper, and at greater length in Morgenstern, esp. ch. 2 and 4.

<sup>23</sup>“Émile aime Sophie [...] il a de nouvelles raisons d’être lui-même” (801).

<sup>24</sup>Émile insists, “[J]e suis plus libre qu’auparavant.” Of course, this statement becomes less amazing when one recalls that the “necessity of things”

as described by the tutor often turn out to be manipulated by the tutor himself. Thus, one can question whether Émile did in fact ever receive an education as idealized as the one claimed for him by his tutor.

<sup>25</sup>The “self” in *amour de soi* that allows this love to serve as the basis for love of other people can be understood as the “self” as member of the human community. Thus, *amour de soi* can serve as the basis of couples, families, and the state. Rousseau defines this love in *Émile* as “la force d’une âme expansive” (523 n.).

<sup>26</sup>We recall that, in *Discourse on Inequality*, being successful in love is the result of a marketing ploy that is based on fooling other people into believing that one has the sought-after attributes: “Ces qualités étant les seules qui pouvaient attirer de la considération, il fallut bientôt les avoir ou les affecter; il fallut pour son avantage se montrer autre que ce qu’on était en effet. Être et paraître devinrent deux choses tout à fait différentes” (174). Since this love is based on falsehood, it gives rise not to social cooperation but to jealousy and bloodshed: “la jalousie s’éveille avec l’amour [...] la plus douce des passions reçoit des sacrifices de sang humain” (169).

<sup>27</sup>Thus, St. Preux writes of Julie: “vous êtes pour tout le pays un dépôt cher et sacré [...] [l]a présence des maîtres si respectés contient tout le monde [...] [q]ue s’il arrive à quelqu’un de s’oublier [...] il est congédié sans remission dès le lendemain” (607, 609). A similar lack of equality is revealed in the recommended fêtes in *Letter to D’Alembert* (5: 115 n.) and *Considerations on the Government of Poland* (3: 963–64).

<sup>28</sup>The dissonance is summed up perfectly in this sentence: “tout le monde est égal, et personne ne s’oublie” (607). The point, of course, is that if true equality existed, nobody would have to guard against “forgetting” himself, because there would be no superiors to take offense. Thus, St. Preux undercuts his own claim of the perfect equality and social structure existing at Clarens. This point is made more subtly in Rousseau’s *Letter to D’Alembert*, where the authentic fête is contrasted to its inauthentic incarnation. Yet even in the authentic fête, where “nothing is shown,” (“Qu’y montrera-t-on? Rien, si l’on veut” [5:115]) and ostensibly everybody actively participates without any degree of self-consciousness, notions of “place” and social rank are not forgotten. Thus, the marriage balls, explicitly endorsed by Rousseau as an authentic type of celebration, are revealed by Rousseau’s own description to be one in which hierarchical notions of power are sustained (“[le bal] forme un des grands liens qui unissent le peuple à son chef” [5:118 n.). Similarly, in *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, we read: “Il est bon de plus que le peuple se trouve souvent avec ses chefs [...] [p]ourvu que la subordination soit toujours gardée” (963–64, emphases mine).

<sup>29</sup>Cf. the analysis in Morgenstern 213–14.

<sup>30</sup>In Rousseau's terms: "Voulons-nous que le peuple soit vertueux? Commençons donc par leur faire aimer la patrie: mais comment l'aimeront-ils, si la patrie n'est rien de plus pour eux que pour des étrangers [...]" (*Political Economy* 255). Also: "Ce n'est pas assez d'avoir des citoyens et de les protéger; il faut encore songer à leur subsistance [...] le troisième devoir essentiel du gouvernement" (262). We also find this sentiment expressed in Rousseau's *Lettre à D'Alembert*: "Il ne suffit pas que le peuple ait du pain et vive dans sa condition, il faut y vivre agréablement" (115 n.) To be sure, Rousseau's point there is not primarily the idealistic concern for the people's enjoyment of life, but focuses rather on the maintenance of stability: a happy people, maintains Rousseau, is a stable people. Thus, keeping the people happy is really in the best interests of the ruling class, because a happy people is less likely to revolt against them. (Rousseau's concern with revolution would continue to preoccupy him until the end of his life, and is most famously expressed in *Émile* — with arguably less emphasis there on its conservative implications). Rousseau expresses this political consideration in personal terms in *Émile* 468n), but even so conservative a thinker as Burke expresses a similar idea when writing about the responsibility of a country to engage the love of its citizenry most succinctly in *Considerations on the Revolution in France*: "For us to love our country, our country must be lovely."

<sup>31</sup>For a discussion of the marginal aspects of liminality which also endow it with the perspective to serve as a starting point from which to critique the very structures from which it is set apart (and yet of which it is, if only partially, a part), see Cohn.

<sup>32</sup>That is to say, the deaths of Rousseau's heroines in the midst of carefully contrived social systems reveal that some major flaw within the systems caused their deaths. This subsequently casts a "hermeneutic of suspicion" on all major aspects of these systems. For more on this point, see Morgenstern, esp. introduction and ch. 4.

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