GENTLENESS, SEVERITY, AND THE SYSTEM OF ROUSSEAU:
RESPONSES TO MODERN COMMERCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School
of the University of Notre Dame
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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July 2009
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Abstract
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Rousseau seems "republican" in critiquing modern people as luxurious and soft, in contrast with primitive sternness and virtue. Yet he also seems "romantic" in exposing modern life as cruel and oppressive, in contrast with primitive gentleness and idleness. This dissertation comprehensively analyzes themes related to gentleness and severity in Rousseau, while also comparing him with other major political philosophers and social theories. It shows that, despite the pervasiveness of these themes in Rousseau, scholars have either neglected them or treated them in isolation from one another. Chapter 1 characterizes the pivotal social types appearing in Rousseau, including the citizen, the civilized modern, the moral human (Emile), the solitary dreamer (Rousseau), and several kinds of "savages." An innovative typology reveals substantial coherence behind many of his central paradoxes.

Chapter 2 argues that despite his searing critiques of modern oppression, Rousseau typically does not characterize his contemporaries as cruel. Instead, the fundamental structures of civilization institutionalize basic conflicts of interest and self-
reinforcing inequalities. With these structures secured, modern elites can reap civilization's false benefits without needing to be violent—they need only be “harsh” or “hard.” In Chapter 3 we turn to “doux commerce,” the prevailing Enlightenment theory that increasing commercialization and cultural refinement would make people more “gentle,” “mild,” and tolerant. Whereas Rousseau has been understood to repudiate commerce simply because of its cruelty, we find that he largely concedes the descriptive premise of doux commerce. However, he frames the “softness” it generates as politically base in comparison with the stern virtues of the ancients, as resulting from moral indifference rather than genuine conviction, and as perfectly compatible with the ramification of cruel institutions. Chapter 4 discusses basic tensions in Rousseau’s highest prescriptive ideals, the citizen and the moral human. We find, for instance, that he was more critical of the violence generated by republican patriotism than is usually believed, that his domestic education counterbalances emancipation from direct human authority with exposure to the harshness of nature, and that the pinnacle of his social thought may be a stoicizing overcoming of the violent jealousy which arose with human society itself.
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Rousseau’s many paradoxes and at least apparent contradictions have been noted since the first responses to his first significant work.¹ Here we will focus upon two clusters of antitheses with significant implications for the overall tenor of his social thought. On the one hand, we find praises for “sensitivity, gentleness, sentimentality, and compassion,” seemingly in keeping with his reputation as a proto-romanticist or vanguard intellectual of the modern Left. On the other hand, we find comparable enthusiasm for “manliness, courage, hardness, and patriotism,” apparently in keeping with his reputation as a stern moralist or classical republican.² Discerning whatever possible coherence may lie behind such dualisms and paradoxes seems essential to grasping his fundamental intentions. These particular antitheses become especially relevant in view of recent scholarly inquiries into the Enlightenment theory of “doux commerce.” According to this theory, the Bibliography contains full documentation, as well as abbreviations and conventions used in citing Rousseau.

¹ The quoted remarks are among the antitheses listed by Arthur Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man: On the System of Rousseau’s Thought*, 91. Among eleven antitheses and “maîtres mots” mentioned by Yves Toucheuf, “la douceur” and “la dureté” are listed first (*L’Antiquité et le christianisme dans la pensée de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 6). “La dureté” suggests hardness, firmness, toughness, harshness, and/or severity. *La douceur* is the nominal form of the adjective *doux, douce*, whose range of meaning is listed in the main text immediately below.
the increase of *commerce*—meaning both economic exchange and broader social interaction—would make societies more *doux* (gentle, mild, calm, peaceable, soft, and/or sweet).³ It was advocated by Jean-François Melon, Montesquieu, Voltaire, David Hume, and indeed a strong majority of the leading intellectuals of the time. Although Rousseau has been rightly singled out as a uniquely vigorous opponent of *doux commerce*,⁴ the ways in which he opposed it are more problematic and complex than has been supposed. For instance, his many appeals to primitive ways of life seem chiefly intended to discredit the urbane lifestyles celebrated by *doux commerce*, yet we find a peculiar duality in these lines of criticism. On the one hand, moderns are said to be luxurious, lazy, weak, and soft, in opposition to images of primitive hardiness, vigor, ferocity, and rustic virtue. On the other hand, modern life is said to be cruel, frenzied, competitive, and harsh, in opposition to primitive gentleness, spontaneity, abundance, and idleness. Is Rousseau, then, simply an imaginative ideologue, forwarding wildly opposed and oscillating characterizations of these eras, merely in revolt against the spirit of his age?⁵

In this Chapter I will attempt to unravel Rousseau’s central paradoxes related to gentleness and severity. We will begin with some of the most influential general interpretations of his work, and come to focus on the surprising amount of moral variety

³ The theory has become well-known to scholars of the Enlightenment or the history of economic thought following the work of Albert Hirschman (see esp. *The Passions and the Interests*, 56-63, and *Rival Views of Market Society*, 43). We will return to *doux commerce* at length in Chapter 3 below.


⁵ Note the judgment of d’Alembert, who is probably the most level-headed of Rousseau’s interlocutors: “So often you have been seen, for very slight motives, out of vanity or ill-humor, to clash head-on against the ideas of your age…” (*Letter of M. d’Alembert to M. J.J. Rousseau* [1759], CW 10:371).
among — savages6 he describes. In the process, I will synthesize and expand upon previous interpretations, offering an innovative typology of the character types he most prominently depicts, and differentiating certain clusters of moral tendencies and norms which he considers proper to (or characteristic of) differing social situations. As scholars who have previously offered more limited typologies have acknowledged,7 some of the categories can only be offered as helpful tools which we may bring to the texts, rather than all-encompassing, fixed categories Rousseau self-consciously posited. Yet I do contend that this typology, which systematically depicts several fundamental contrasts and tensions,8 can serve as an illuminating prolegomenon, or first approach, to Rousseau's social thought. Accordingly, it does not attempt to displace prior interpretations, or pronounce definitively whether Rousseau should ultimately be understood as coherent or contradictory. Rather, it provides a clear schematization of aspects of his work which are commonly or plausibly perceived as revealing some degree of tension, thereby facilitating a greater degree of awareness, precision, and rigor in future discussions of his coherence. By laying the groundwork for more systematic comparisons of pre-civilized, civilized, and ideal forms of life, we will also be better positioned to explain his full response to doux commerce—and with it, his basic stance

6 I will use terms such as — savages” or — barbarian” without scare-quotes, in keeping with the language of Rousseau’s time and without suggesting thereby any value judgments, whether positive or negative. I have also attempted to use gender-inclusive language where this would not bring undue risk of distorting Rousseau’s meaning, which often regards problems of violence which he considers more endemic to human males than females.

7 Cf., e.g. Tzvetan Todorov, Frail Happiness: An Essay on Rousseau, 3.

8 At this formal level, my reading is perhaps closest to that of Timothy O’Hagan, who understands Rousseau as offering — a powerful recurring tension at the heart of a unitary systematic project” (see Rousseau, ch.1, and — Taking Rousseau Seriously,” 73-76). O’Hagan’s tension, however, is between a morality of the senses and one of duty, which is only one of several dimensions incorporated in my typology.
toward modernity as he perceived it. Finally, this endeavor may be of intrinsic value in offering sustained explorations of some of his most acute psychological and socio-political observations.

1.1 Men or Citizens?

During the last several decades, most scholars who have ventured to interpret Rousseau's general teaching have defended its fundamental unity. Some have done so without clear acknowledgement of any deep tensions within his thought—a task which can seem plausible enough so long as one, in practice, focuses chiefly or exclusively on a single aspect of it, such as the romanticism of his autobiographical writings or the republican virtue of his political writings. Others scholars have, more plausibly, attempted to show how his many apparent contradictions might somehow be consistent expressions of some deeper principle, or how one principle or stance can be judged to

9 We will not here extensively and directly challenge the views that Rousseau is simply contradictory, or that his developments over time amount to fundamental contradictions. The frequent presence of certain themes or norms in works which are otherwise dedicated to a contrasting theme—which we will see throughout this Chapter—is strong evidence against a reading of Rousseau as primarily contradictory or developing. We must add “primarily” here, though, not simply out of standard academic cowardice, but because it seems more accurate to qualify this systematic reading according to a secondary shift in point of emphasis at various points in his intellectual career. Note, for instance, his blaming of Diderot for the harsh tone and somber air of the Second Discourse (Conf. VIII, 326n/389n). Whereas various Kantian or Straussian interpreters have emphasized Rousseau’s proclamations in favor of his own systematic coherence, we might qualify this just as fairly in taking him at his word regarding the genuine intellectual tensions and profound shifts of mood underlying his thought and career (such qualifications are made, albeit peripherally, by the best Straussian interpreters: e.g., Melzer, Natural Goodness, 282n36; Christopher Kelly, Rousseau as Author: Consecrating One’s Life to the Truth, 99; cf. Leo Struass, “On the Intention of Rousseau,” 487).

10 For Strauss, his students, and their students in turn, Rousseau’s many obvious contradictions clearly indicate, for the careful and philosophical reader, a deep underlying unity: see esp. Strauss (Natural Right and History, 252-94; “On the Intention of Rousseau”), Roger Masters (The Political Philosophy of Rousseau), Melzer (Natural Goodness), and Jonathan Marks (Perfection and Disharmony in the Thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau). Victor Goldschmidt expresses his admiration for Strauss’s interpretations of the unity of Rousseau and the centrality of the Second Discourse, although he does take issue with Masters’
be his truest or most fundamental, despite substantial and largely unintended incompatibility among the ideals he praises. For our purposes, we will focus upon those who have shown how Rousseau presents multiple ways of life or kinds of society which are largely incompatible, some of which are nonetheless comparably defended by him. A seminal version of this approach is Judith Shklar’s *Men and Citizens*, which argues that Rousseau presents two radically opposed utopias as “equally valid.” She explains how one of Rousseau’s main influences, Archbishop Fénelon, had used a similar tactic, which need not be self-contradictory since these utopias are offered more in the service of diagnosing the emotional diseases of modern civilization” than as empirical or attainable alternatives. Rousseau’s models of “a tranquil household” and “a Spartan city” are not meant to be reconciled, but to show how each meets “the inner psychic needs of men for inner unity and social simplicity,” unlike the modern attempts to be half natural and half social, thus rending the self and generating neither true “men” nor true “citizens.”

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12 Esp. Ernst Cassirer (*Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe; The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*). We might place Todorov in this camp since he seems close to Cassirer in finding the autobiographical ethic to be an intrusion of Rousseau’s personal imperfections and misfortunes, rather than a genuine ideal (*Frail Happiness* and *Imperfect Garden: The Legacy of Humanism*; discussed in Note 44 below). Jean Starobinski attempts to find an underlying psychological unity (*Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction*). Robert Wokler maintains a thesis of fundamental unity, while allowing for chronological shifts and development (*Rousseau*, e.g. 32-33, 68, 72, 79, 124-26). Frederick Neuhouser maintains that the three “principal texts of Rousseau’s philosophical project” (i.e., the *Second Discourse*, *Social Contract*, and *Emile*) constitute “a single, coherent system of thought,” even though contradictions may be somewhat common in his other works (*Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love: Evil, Rationality, and the Drive for Recognition*, 18-19).


There can be little doubt that Shklar’s distinction is illuminating, at least as a preliminary contrast. \(^{14}\) We might highlight, for instance, Rousseau’s stark contrast of (on the one hand) the true citizen’s radical subordination of domestic life and repudiation of contemplative and universalist religiosity, with (on the other hand) village life’s embrace of sweet, —unspoiled family love,” which may even allow gentle Christianity to flourish. \(^{15}\) Along these lines, Shklar’s distinction may help us understand the recurring contradiction between apparently sincere praises and forceful disparagement of cosmopolitanism in Rousseau. \(^{16}\) For it is clear that he saw patriotic fervor to be deeply necessary in the cultivation of citizen virtue, which is largely understood as love of the common good over private goods. \(^{17}\) And yet, since patriotism and cosmopolitanism are virtually impossible to combine in the same soul—and fully impossible to combine in an entire people—he seems to have found it necessary to preach patriotism one-sidedly in civic

\(^{14}\) Shklar’s dichotomy has been criticized by Neuhausser, who argues that man and citizen are phases in Emile’s development and are not meant as —mutually exclusive ideals” (Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love, 19-24, 155-61, 172-73, 251-60). But since our purposes here require not so much mutually exclusive alternatives as a prima facie plausible contrast, Neuhausser’s own analysis would support this, due to the significant theoretical efforts he requires to reconcile the accounts of rationality and moral motivation in Emile and the Social Contract (236-60). We will answer Neuhausser at greater length in Section 4.7.

\(^{15}\) See Shklar, Men and Citizens, 18, 21, 31, 160-61.

\(^{16}\) For praises, see DOI II, 174/178. For denigrations of those supposed Cosmopolites…who boast of loving everyone in order to have the right to love no one,” see GM I.2, 81/287; E I, 39/249. Rousseau may have been the first eighteenth century writer to use the term cosmopolite in the sense of a friend of the human race and citizen of the universe (Robert Derathé, OC 3:1414n2). Todorov discusses many of the relevant passages regarding the clash of patriotism and cosmopolitanism in Rousseau, but perhaps resolves it too conclusively in favor of cosmopolitanism as his genuine position (Frail Happiness, 26-30).

\(^{17}\) Patriotic inspiration is thus a central component of his attempt to see a common good as distinct from the liberal Enlightenment project of aggregating individual goods: “public felicity, far from being based on the happiness of private individuals, would itself be the source of this happiness” (GM I.2, 79/284). More generally on love of the fatherland as the best means of making the particular will conform to the general will, see DPE 15-16, 20-21/254-55, 259-60f. We will return to these passages in Section 4.1, esp. Note 25.
contexts. This civic virtue is pursued through radical dedication to the polity's general will, and generates a deep harmony among one's fellows, while naturally tending toward utter indifference and harshness to foreigners. However, an alternative vision of a more private moral virtue is also prominent in his writings, and this defines virtue as the strength of will necessary to conquer one's passions, which naturally values and serves humanity as such. In another relevant contrast, within the political sphere he insists upon the necessity of severely prosecuting the wicked (in the manner of the Spartans and early Romans), lest one indirectly become cruel to the innocent. Regarding personal virtue, though, he tends to insist upon a (proto-Kantian) maxim of severity toward oneself and gentleness [douceur] toward others" (DOI Dedication 121/199).

We may thus diagram a basic dichotomy of Rousseau's thought along Shklar's lines:

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18 –Patriotism and humanity, for example, are two virtues incompatible in their energy, and especially among an entire people. The Legislator who wants them both will get neither one nor the other. This compatibility has never been seen and never will be, because it is contrary to nature, and because one cannot give the same passion two aims” (Mountain I, 149n/706n, emphasis added). This and related passages are discussed below, Section 4.2, esp. Note 35. See Kelly for a balanced discussion of the harshness that accompanies fanatical devotion to the community,” which Rousseau frequently defended in the face of the moral laxness of his contemporaries, but which he ultimately argued must be very carefully directed (Rousseau as Author, 95-96).

19 For indifference to foreigners—a theme to which we will return around Note 120 below—see esp. SC IV.8; and E I, 39/248f: “Every patriot is harsh [dur] to foreigners. They are only men. They are nothing in his eyes…. The essential thing is to be good to the people with whom one lives.”

20 On the service to humanity, see Emile's subordination of Sophie's rights over him to the rights of humanity,” in needing to serve a needy stranger rather than keeping his appointment with her. Sophie recognizes the legitimacy of this ordering, responding with enthusiasm, tenderness and even submission (E V, 441/812f). We will return to this episode in Section 4.6.

21 LR 64n/72n; E IV, 253/548; SC II.5; discussed in Chapter 3 below, around Note 116. A parallel ideal is listed among the charms of Jesus’ character: “the gentleness of morals [douceur des moeurs],” including how “He was simultaneously indulgent and just, gentle with the weak [doux aux foibles] and terrible with the wicked” (Mountain III, 186/753f). We will return to the gentleness of Jesus and the Gospel in Section 4.2, esp. Note 53.

22 The quoted passage, although in a civically oriented section of the Discourse on Inequality, is offered in the more immediately private moral context of commending the ministers of Geneva on the extent to which the spirit of Christianity and holiness prevails in them. In an early fragment of a prayer (perhaps dating around 1735), Rousseau similarly resolves: “shall be indulgent toward others and severe
Nonetheless, in depicting these two psychological poles, we might question whether Shklar has adequately depicted that of man.” For equally formidable cases have been made that Rousseau’s genuine alternative to his political ideal is the radically individualistic, proto-romantic, solitary dreamer.” This aspect of his thought is emphasized by many writers, including those influenced by Leo Strauss. In Arthur Melzer’s The Natural Goodness of Man, which is plausibly understood as the leading comprehensive Straussian interpretation, we find a largely dichotomous reading of the alternatives which Rousseau presents to civilized, divided humanity: the political solution and the individualistic solution.” On such readings, Rousseau is read as rigorously consistent in his ultimate meaning, since he subtly indicates that his political

toward myself” (—Fragments on God and Revelation,” CW 12:160/OC 4:1038). A late condemnation of the proud intolerance of modern philosophy states: —Generation of Despots can be neither very gentle [fort douce] nor very peaceful, and such a haughty doctrine…is not suited to restrain the pride of its sectaries by a morality indulgent toward others and repressive [reprimante] toward oneself” (RJJ II, 179/891; the wealthy are faulted for perfectly reversing this maxim, as quoted in Chapter 2, around Note 24 below). Rather questionably, Rousseau believes that in his life and in the manner in which he related his Confessions, he has fulfilled such objectives, treating himself —with a justice that is often even too rigorous” (RJJ II, 188/903; cf. Rev. IV, 36f-39/1035-38). The basic combination of gentleness to others and severity to self would seem to be a close structural parallel to Kant’s formulation of those ends which are also duties, namely the happiness of others and one’s own perfection (see Metaphysics of Morals, in Practical Philosophy, AK 6:385, 393). In the cases of both Rousseau’s strand of moral virtue and that of Kant, a strong ethical rigorism with regard to oneself seems to be combined with a deep respect for autonomy, which prevents one from straightforwardly applying those rigors to others, even though they are known to be required for genuine human perfection. See Vittorio Hösle for a corrective of potential excesses stemming from this dichotomy (Morals and Politics, 288-89); see also the balance struck by Adam Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments, I.i.5.5, 25.


24 Melzer, Natural Goodness, 91-108. We will return below to other commentators variously influenced by Strauss who attempt to avoid this dichotomous reading, such as Jonathan Marks and Laurence Cooper. Thus the interpretation described here as Straussian” is not understood as the only Straussian approach, although it is the most common and the one closest to Strauss himself.
solution—and with it, his many pronouncements in favor of virtue—ought to be read as merely intended for popular consumption.\textsuperscript{25} The one life which is currently available to moderns, and which receives true justification according to his most fundamental theoretical or philosophical principles, is that which he most boldly revealed in the \textit{Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality} (or \textit{Second Discourse}).\textsuperscript{26} This is also very nearly the life in which he himself indulged in his later years—one of spontaneous, sentimental delight, shorn of human attachments, transcendent moral principles, and their corresponding obligations and burdens.\textsuperscript{27} While not entirely neglecting Shklar’s idea of “man”—that is, the domestic and virtuous life of \textit{Emile} and \textit{Julie}—such readings would generally agree with Melzer in seeing this romanticization of domestic virtue and attachments as mere popularizations of Rousseau’s genuine individualistic solution. The latter solution is only attainable by someone with extraordinary intellectual gifts.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{25} For the common Straussian distinction between writings or claims intended for popular audiences and those intended for philosophers, as applied to Rousseau, see Strauss, \textit{On the Intention of Rousseau}, 466n36, and \textit{Natural Right and History}, e.g. 258n15, 261n20, 265-66, 280, 288-89. For the most sophisticated recent interpretation along these lines, see Kelly, \textit{Rousseau as Author}, e.g. 37, 44-49, 64-65, 127-33, 140-71. In my view, the Straussians have undoubtedly pointed to a number of passages in which this distinction is pivotal for Rousseau, but more often than not, this distinction—and the paradoxes associated with it—are themselves ultimately explained by the interpretation according to different social structures offered here. We will return to these question in Chapter 4, Note 53.
\item\textsuperscript{26} See esp. Strauss, \textit{Natural Right and History}, 264, citing Conf. IX, 314/407: “of all my writings the one in which these principles are demonstrated with the greatest boldness [\textit{le plus hardiesse}], not to say audacity.” However, a possible qualification to the interpretive priority of the \textit{Second Discourse} is mentioned in Note 9 above.
\item\textsuperscript{27} For Rousseau’s intentional subversion of virtue through his theoretical teachings on goodness, see esp. Melzer, \textit{Natural Goodness}, 90, 101-6, 258; cf. “Rousseau and the Problem of Bourgeois Society,” 1030-32. This is close to Strauss, “On the Intention of Rousseau,” 482; \textit{Natural Right and History}, 282, 290-91; \textit{What Is Political Philosophy?}, 51-53. Gourevitch offers a moderated version of this thesis: that Rousseau’s ultimate view is a form of Epicureanism, a private, temperate pursuit of this-worldly pleasure and happiness among a small circle of friends (“The Religious Thought,” 213-15, 218-19).
If Shklar’s contrast between citizen and man corresponds to Rousseau’s contrast between civic virtue and private moral virtue, the Straussian contrast between the political solution and the individualistic solution largely corresponds to Rousseau’s contrast between “virtue” and “goodness.”

Unlike the intuitively admirable yet demanding and harsh standard of virtue, this “goodness” is humanity’s natural endowment. It is the healthy and natural expression of love of oneself (amour de soi), which—apart from the corruption of society and the development of pernicious self-love or vanity (amour-propre)—tends toward one’s simple self-interest with a minimum of harm to others, due to the influence of pity. For our purposes, perhaps the most

individualistic solution is that lived (or aspired to) by Rousseau himself, the solitary artist and romantic dreamer.” It is the “most unified and most natural of civilized ways of life,” whereas in Emile, Rousseau tries to formulate a less extreme if also less perfect form of the individualistic solution by showing how an ordinary child without philosophic genius, if raised from birth with the proper method, might attain a high degree of unity even within society.” Against reading Emile as Rousseau’s primary ideal (as discussed in Note 44 below), Melzer argues that Emile does not apply to philosophers, and is addressed to an inhabitant of France, where citizenship is no longer possible (Natural Goodness, 92, 277-81. On the apparent inapplicability of Emile’s education to a genius of Rousseau’s caliber, see E I, 52/266, which Pierre Burgelin [OC 4:1315n2] plausibly links with Conf. II, 51-52/61-62. See also Marks, Perfection and Disharmony, 70). In supporting this individualism, Melzer (281) quotes an important fragment in which Rousseau claims that he revealed the secret of governments not so peoples “might throw off the yoke, which is not possible for them, but that they might become men again in their slavery,” in the manner of Epictetus (Beaumont fragment, CW 9:92/OC 4:1019). We will return to similar issues of Straussian interpretation in Chapter 4, Note 63, and to the question of Emile’s relation to politics in Section 4.7.

29 Discussed below in Sections 2.6 and 3.3.

30 For its harshness, see e.g. Strauss, Natural Right and History, 290. In this narrative, Rousseau is read as inheriting this painfully harsh (and clearly unclassical) understanding of virtue from Montesquieu: see Strauss, What Is Political Philosophy, 49-50; and more extensively, Pierre Manent, The City of Man, 24, 30-31, 40.

31 See e.g. E II, 92/322; IV, 237/525; “Letters to Malesherbes” II, CW 5:575/OC 1:1135f.

32 This pivotal concept is introduced at DOI I, 152/154; Note XV, 218/219. Its effects are discussed more extensively around Note 98 below.

33 DOI Preface, 127/126; I, 152-54/154-57. Very rarely, Rousseau mentions, in addition to pity, a more positive component of natural goodness, as in this late, polemical claim that his writings demonstrated “that man is a naturally good [naturellement bon] being, loving justice and order; that there is no original perversity in the human heart, and that the first movements of nature are always right” (Beaumont 28/935f; contrast, e.g., GM I.2, 79/284). For possible means of reconciling this divergence, see
revealing contrast of the ethics of goodness with that of virtue is found in Rousseau’s conflicting pronouncements regarding harm. For, in his teachings related to virtue—and especially political virtue—relevant others make binding claims upon us, and not to overcome one’s passions and dedicate oneself to them constitutes a severe harm. In his teachings related to goodness, however, the avoidance of direct and palpable harms to others, insofar as this can be reconciled with one’s self-preservation, appears to be humanity’s sole moral requirement. It seems to be the latter standard to which the autobiographical Rousseau appeals. In surrendering himself to the sweet reveries of solitude, he asks for nothing from society and thus is permitted to offer it nothing in return. In this way Rousseau seems to suggest that duties differ objectively and to a

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Cooper’s discussion of Rousseau’s goodness as a physical, not a moral, attribute, meaning “harmonious order” (Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life, 59-60).

34 See DSA II, 17/18, Obs. 46/51, LR 81/91, PN 97/965, LA 16/262/15 (discussed below, in Sections 3.2–3.4). “The most vicious of men is he who isolates himself the most, who most concentrates his heart in himself; the best is he who shares his affections equally with all his kind” (LA 117/337f/107; see also Chapter 4, Note 145). Even in his more constructive moral writings, Rousseau continues to emphasize refraining from doing harm as the first step toward the good, the most essential lesson, and the most indispensable duty: E II, 104f/340; V, 442/815; Julie V.2, 435f/531, VI.7, 559/680 (St. Preux writing in both cases); fragment “On Wealth,” CW 11:9/OC 5:472. The apparent psychological basis for this priority is discussed below, in Sections 2.5–2.6.

35 E.g. DOI I, 154/156, and many autobiographical passages.

36 For especially enthusiastic depictions of how he began “systematically surrendering to his gentle idleness” (douce oisiveté),” see RJJ II, 126/822; Rev. VII, 57/1060. At times, though, he displays regret regarding his lack of positive moral dedication: e.g. Conf. X, 426/509; Rev. VI, 56/1059.

37 Consider Diderot’s charge that “Only the wicked are alone,” and the assumption of Rousseau’s reply: “it is even impossible for a man who is and wants to be alone to be able to and to want to harm anyone, and consequently for him to be a wicked man” (Conf. IX, 382/455; cf. E II, 105n/340-41n). The solitary state is also “the only one in which one never finds oneself in the necessity of harming someone else for one’s own advantage” (“Letters to Malesherbes” II, CW 5:576/OC 1:1137). The latter argument is central to his critique of civilization, as we will see below in Section 2.1.
very large extent, depending on one’s social circumstances. Along these lines, then, we may depict a second Rousseauian contrast:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualistic solution:</th>
<th>Political solution:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The solitary Dreamer</td>
<td>The virtuous Citizen</td>
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</table>

One reason for choosing either the Shklarian or the Straussian dichotomy as the most accurate overall interpretation is that Rousseau himself characteristically frames his contrasts in a radically dualistic fashion. In this he follows a distinguished line of powerful rhetoricians, who are often guilty of overstating their dichotomies precisely because of these rhetorical skills. Thus if it remains the case that both dualisms

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38 The apparent contradiction regarding the ethics of harm is partially explained by considering labor what we could call a “conditional duty” or what Hösle terms an “implicative imperative,” which is not a matter of subjective preference but objectively requires that “under conditions A you must do B” (see Objective Idealism, Ethics and Politics, 48). Outside of society, isolated man, owing nothing to anyone, has a right to live as he pleases. But in society, where he necessarily lives at the expense of others, he owes them the price of his keep in work. This is without exception” (E III, 195/470). Rousseau also refers to “the human and social Religion, which every man living in society is obliged to accept” (Beaumont 59/976). Wolmar similarly contrasts those who “live in country simplicity,” who “have no need to develop their faculties in order to be happy,” with those in the civil state where one needs his hands less than his head, and where each individual is accountable to himself and to others for his whole cost [tout son prix] for whom “it is important to learn to extract…everything that nature has given them…” (Julie V.3, 464/566f, translation modified). The same logic seems to apply to the necessity of sibling marriage in the earliest times, even though “the law that abolished it is no less sacred for being by human institution” (EOL IX, 278n/406n. Starobinski cites many prior discussions of the early permissibility of incest: OC 5:1566-67n3; cf. Leon Kass, The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis, 293-96). Rousseau’s unqualified condemnations of idleness, offered in a political context, are discussed around Chapter 3, Note 43. Additional evidence for his situational ethic is presented in Chapter 4, Notes 101 and 145.

39 Note the judgment of John Rist, who is in general highly sympathetic to Augustine: “as a polemicist Augustine’s training was in rhetoric, and that training left him with the rhetorician’s habit of forming dichotomies (often too unnuanced) of his subject matter” (Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized, 310). Of course, Rousseau—whose rhetoric proved unprecedentedly influential for generations—was not very fond of these rhetorical tendencies when they appeared in his adversaries: “it is not at all certain…that this doctrine of original sin, subject as it is to such terrible difficulties, is contained in the Scriptures either as clearly or as harshly [si durement] as it has pleased the Rhetorician Augustine and our Theologians to construct it” (Beaumont 29/937f. Mme Warens similarly rejected what Rousseau calls “popular Christianity” in maintaining that the Scriptures were commonly interpreted “too literally and too harshly [trop durement]”: Conf. VI, 192/229). We will return to related methodological issues in Notes 81 and 110 below.
illuminate basic elements of his thought, we might prefer a model which incorporates them both. And since they both include a similar “Citizen” category, we need only consider whether the solitary Dreamer and the privately virtuous member of the village or the family might sensibly be distinguished, deciphered as significant for Rousseau, and placed alongside each other. Here we may find the work of Jonathan Marks helpful, since he has recently established that Rousseau repeatedly praises a “middle way” between the solitary individual and the collectivized citizen. Marks finds that although some of Rousseau’s most prominent and well-known formulations are framed dichotomously, his considered judgments frequently prescribe a social life based around the tribe or the family to be the ideal situation. In such a middle state of “independent commerce,” one may attain many of the sweet pleasures and cultivations of social life, while avoiding the radical interdependence and concomitant servility of advanced societies. The virtuous and domestically sentimental life possible under such circumstances would seem to constitute “the happiness of the moral human [l’homme moral]” (E III, 177/444). Whereas for Marks (as for many other recent commentators)

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40 See Marks, Perfection and Disharmony, 7-11, 54-88.
41 For “independent commerce,” see Marks, Perfection and Disharmony, 12, 61-65; commerce is meant here in the sense of “sociality” (cf. 65) or “association.” The phrase and the passage in which it is found (DOI II, 167/171) will be discussed in Note 79 below, where I will favor the rendering, “independent association.”
42 Note, also, that Marks is not attempting to develop a tripartite schema, but is showing that even in Rousseau’s most collective modes of thought, regarding politics, there is an “abiding presence of individualism” (Perfection and Disharmony, 82). This is clear when Rousseau advocates a rustic self-sufficiency for citizens, as when the mountainous, agricultural Swiss serve as a model for Corsica (Perfection and Disharmony, 77-82). See esp. Corsica 134-35/914-15.
43 The passage quoted actually discusses the happiness of “the natural human” in contradistinction with that of “the moral human.” The discussion of the happiness of the moral human seems to proceed at EV, 442-46, 474/814-820, 859. I have altered the translation to the more inclusive “man” since the female characters, Julie and Sophie, are such prominent exemplars of this moral category—albeit not without gender-specific differences.
this model based on Emile is clearly Rousseau's genuine ideal, we will suspend such final judgments. Instead, we merely suggest that insofar as Rousseau variously recommends a middle state of limited societies in addition to the two better-known extremes, we may schematize his thought as tripartite.

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<tr>
<th>Solitary existence</th>
<th>Independent association</th>
<th>Interdependent multitude</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual solution: Solitary Dreamer</td>
<td>Domestic solution: Moral Human</td>
<td>Political solution: Citizen</td>
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TABLE 1.1

A SYNTHESIS OF THE SHKLARIAN AND STRAUSSIAN MODELS

In addition to combining the insights of the Shklarian and Straussian approaches, this model links Rousseau's various moral prescriptions explicitly to three socio-political

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44 Whereas most of the leading works of a generation ago took either the Second Discourse or the Social Contract as Rousseau's most fundamental work, a rising trend is to take Emile as the most fundamental. Rousseau's claim that Emile is his greatest and best book” (RJJ I, 23/687) is quoted to this end by Marks (Perfection and Disharmony, 4), Cooper (Rousseau, Nature, 4, 18), and Nicholas Dent (Rousseau, 1, see also 79-82; — Rousseau on Amour-Propre,” 63n6); cf. Todorov (Frail Happiness, 65, and Imperfect Garden, 181). Conversely, some have downgraded the life of the citizen because it is no longer available to modern men (Todorov, Frail Happiness, 12-13, 25, 30, 55; cf. Imperfect Garden, 180). The life of absolute solitude has been downgraded because Rousseau expresses deep regrets about his final condition (Frail Happiness, 31-32, 57-58; Imperfect Garden, 97, 103-5; Marks, Perfection and Disharmony, 70-74; Neuhouser, Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love, 85-86), or because the peculiarities of his life and personality ought not to be confused with his fundamental thought” in its maturity and perfection” (Cassirer, The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 40; see also 95-96, 128; cf. Todorov, Imperfect Garden, 99-101, 104; Reisert, A Friend of Virtue, 22, 22n). Such arguments for the priority of Emile are notably challenged by Melzer (discussed in Note 28 above).

45 Rousseau himself suggests a three-tiered distinction soon after his man or citizen” dichotomy, in saying that the father, in educating his son, owes to his species men; he owes to society sociable men; he owes to the state citizens” (E I, 49/262). Cf. O’Hagan, Rousseau, who briefly discusses a moment of resignation” and isolated withdrawal (Rousseau, 19-20, 26-27, 272), alongside the morality of the senses and that of duty which he sees as Rousseau's fundamental tension (Note 8).
contexts, thus enabling a better explanation of his apparently contradictory pronouncements. For Rousseau is, in one sense, a radically political and even deterministic thinker, maintaining that characteristic mentalities and habits naturally flow from certain social conditions, and that certain moral norms and obligations are proper to those conditions. In terms of our themes of gentleness and severity, we find a clear continuum of the rigor of moral demands across these social conditions. The citizen, in addition to being the harshest of these three to outsiders, is also called to be the harshest to himself. He is not to find his happiness in contemplative delights, and may take pleasure only secondarily (at best) in domestic ones. He must instead find his pleasures chiefly through immersion in all things public, and in deriving his delight from identification with the harmony and well-being of the community. Accordingly, it is with regard to this social state—and not his moral teaching in general—that we find Rousseau making his most radically “constructivist” pronouncements. For, given the naturally asocial (or at least apolitical) character of humans and the aggressively competitive nature of *amour-propre* among any large group of interdependent people, 

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46 On Rousseau’s situational ethic, see Note 38 above. See also Starobinski: “Rejecting providentialist interpretations [of history], Rousseau founded with brilliance what would later be called historical sociology, whose two main tenets are that we cannot understand modern man without understanding the society that educated him and we cannot understand society without knowing how it was constituted” (Introduction” to the Discourse on Inequality, in Transparency and Obstruction, 292/OC 3:lv, translation modified). The precise sense of Rousseau’s determinism will be discussed below in Section 2.5.

47 For the necessity of citizens to derive their happiness primarily from the public felicity, see Note 17 above. Marks argues that Shklar exaggerates the extent of the citizen’s subordination of private freedoms and pleasures; but they nonetheless remain “more narrowly circumscribed than Emile’s or the savage’s” (Perfection and Disharmony, 82, 170n35). This seems correct in view of Rousseau’s strong emphasis, against Plato, on the need for domestic sentiments as a natural base on which to form conventional ties, and how “love of one’s nearest” is “the principle of the love one owes the state” (E V, 363/700). For Shklar, this passage is the only one in which Rousseau truly questioned whether the family would or should be destroyed in the Spartan model (see Men and Citizens, 21, 21n2).

48 This claim will be defended at length in Chapter 4. The basic contrast seems to be suggested in the claim that “Plato only purified the heart of man; Lycurgus denatured it” (E I, 40/250).
one must offer a correspondingly radical solution to minimize social interdependence and channel *amour-propre* towards communally salutary ends.\(^{49}\) Instituting such a people thus requires, —so to speak, changing human nature” (SC II.7, 69/381).\(^{50}\) In the formation of the “moral human” Emile, by contrast, Rousseau's depiction differs, speaking of “the natural man living in the state of society” (E III, 205/483),\(^{51}\) and of allowing natural potentials of “becoming social” to develop in due course.\(^{52}\) Emile attempts to combine a fundamentally cosmopolitan disposition and will, with rich domestic and neighborly associations,\(^{53}\) and a physical vigor allowing him to serve his free country when necessary.\(^{54}\) In addition, the methods applied to Emile's education seem much gentler.

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\(^{49}\) The radical, political minimization of interdependence is discussed in Section 2.6.

\(^{50}\) For extensive references regarding “denaturing,” see Gourevitch, *Introduction*” to LPW, xvii-xviii.

\(^{51}\) See, for instance, Reisert on the distinction in *Emile* between the “conditionally natural” and the “unconditionally (or absolutely) natural” (*A Friend of Virtue*, 21-22).

\(^{52}\) The Savoyard Vicar claims, “as cannot be doubted, man is by his nature sociable, or at least made to become so...” (E IV, 290/600). Rousseau makes very similar remarks in his own voice—albeit perhaps intended for a popular audience, namely Sophie d’Houdetot—in his slightly earlier “Moral Letters” (V, 196/1109). Although his belief in natural sociability is commonly denied, with some plausibility, by many interpreters (notably most Straussians), other strong interpretations have been offered that Rousseau ultimately endorses natural sociability, denying only that humans are naturally political (cf. DOI II, 177/182; DPE 4-5/242-43). Christopher Brooke maintains the latter view, placing Rousseau largely in line with the Augustinian tradition (“Rousseau’s Political Philosophy: Stoic and Augustinian Origins,” 113-14). Victor Gourevitch—who is himself a Straussian—also does so, while placing Rousseau in line with the Epicureans (“Introduction” to EPW, xxii-xxiv; “Introduction” to LPW, xii-xvii; “The Religious Thought,” 205-7). We will find that in Rousseau’s version of quasi-natural, minimal sociability, even the best forms of socialization are inevitably accompanied by formidable complications and hardships (Sections 4.3–4.5, esp. Chapter 4, Note 102).

\(^{53}\) Emile presents the example to others of “the patriarchal and rustic life, man’s first life, which is the most peaceful, the most natural, and the sweetest [la plus douce] life for anyone who does not have a corrupt heart” (E V, 474/859; cf. *Julie* V.2, 438-39/534-36). See also the praise of life around Neufchatel, as combining “both the tranquility of a retreat and the sweetness [douceurs] of society” (LA 60-61/295-96/54-55); and the discussions of Marks, cited in Note 42 above. Julie maintains that the happiest estate is that of a villager in a free State (*Julie* V.2, 439/536). We will return to the sweetness of domestic life in Sections 4.6–4.7, esp. beginning around Note 268.

\(^{54}\) Emile will certainly not be a professional soldier (E V, 456/834), but it appears he must be prepared for the unlikely possibility of serving his people politically, even in war (for his final relation to political life, see E V, 456-57, 472-75/834-35, 857-60). We will return to the theme of vigor in education.
than those applied to the citizen, since he is spared from any commands of a guardian, from the terrors of a wrathful religion, and from regular immersion in the martial glories of his fatherland. Throughout his extreme social isolation during his boyhood and adolescence, he is spared from the unnatural and premature expansion of his passions. Thus when he comes to adulthood, the duties of virtue he learns are far less burdensome to him. At this point, nonetheless, the high degree of severity he requires in relation to himself is especially evident—in his need for natural religiosity, deep moral inspiration, and voluntary submission to his tutor—if he is to overcome his burgeoning passions when socially necessary (E V, 444-45/817-18). By final contrast, the autobiographical Rousseau chafes at all constraint and eventually surrenders himself to every impulse. He nonetheless maintains a dogged confidence that, despite his many prior interactions with society, he alone has maintained the soul of original, natural humanity, and that his natural goodness has been expressed in his deeper, abstract preferences even when social pressures led him to betrayal or abandonment. The differences among Rousseau’s

in Section 4.3, and of Emile’s relation to politics in Section 4.7. He must, for instance, alternate exercises of the body and the mind in order to overcome the idleness which might otherwise be natural to humans: —He must work like a peasant and think like a philosopher so as not to be as lazy [fainéant] as a savage‖ (E III, 202/480). Such duties would thus appear to be conditional, in the sense explained in Note 37 above.

55 On the vigorous nature of citizen education, see Section 4.1, and for its contrast with Emile’s, see Section 4.7. For the more blunt wrathfulness of citizen religion, see Chapter 3, Note 74, along with the discussion in Section 4.2. Cooper points to a similar dichotomy in citizen formation (Rousseau, Nature, 203-204, 204n19).

56 For the submission to the tutor, see E IV, 324-26, 442-49/650-53, 814-24, discussed in Section 4.5 below.

57 On Emile’s need for virtue rather than mere goodness, see Cohen’s objections to Melzer (―The Natural Goodness of Humanity,” 137n41).

political and domestic solutions regarding gentleness and severity will be explored at length in Chapter 4.⁵⁹

1.2 Diagnostic or Prescriptive?

Having distinguished three alternative ideals offered by Rousseau, may we be said to have outlined every fundamental social state or moral life he sketches? A further glance at existing interpretations may call this into question. Although what I have called the Shklarian and Straussian paradigms may be among the best known overall interpretations, other commentators have focused upon the “human types” or “cast of characters” presented by Rousseau,⁶⁰ and have come across a broader array of possibilities. Tzvetan Todorov, for instance, follows a different methodology than that employed here, and finds that there are three main ways of life praised by Rousseau: (1) the citizen, (2) the physical and solitary individual, and (3) the moral and universal individual.⁶¹ These ways converge nicely with what we have depicted, but in addition Todorov posits a distinction between the “state of society,” out of which each of these lives flow, and the “state of nature.” Whereas the difference between the state of nature and the state of society constitutes a crossing from one stage to another, the contrast of lives following upon the state of society constitutes an alternative.⁶² However, Todorov

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⁵⁹ The individual model is, in the final analysis, considered an alternative rather than a full-blown ideal, and will be discussed in a later article (see Chapter 4, Note 2).

⁶⁰ Cooper, Rousseau, Nature, 51. Todorov pursues “the question of what ways are open to man” (Frail Happiness, 3).

⁶¹ I present here a verbal form of the model in Frail Happiness, 18. I arrived at my schema independently of Todorov, and of Cooper, whom we will discuss immediately below.

⁶² Todorov, Frail Happiness, 13.
does not consider the state of nature fully among the human ways of life, since on his reading of Rousseau, “The notion of a state of nature is only a mental construct, a fiction intended to help us comprehend reality, not a simple fact.” 63

A still more comprehensive picture is offered by Laurence Cooper, who deciphers five human types representing “the fundamental alternatives that are or have been available to humanity.” 64 Again converging with our analysis above, among these types are (1) “the virtuous citizen of the ancient, austere polis,” (2) “the Jean-Jacques of the Reveries and selected other autobiographical depictions,” and (3) “Emile,” a natural man living in the state of society. 65 In addition, Cooper posits—like Todorov, but as an alternative which once was possible for humans—(4) “the inhabitant of the pure state of nature”: a “savage” who is “social and pre-moral.” 66 And finally but least admirably, we find (5) “the divided, corrupt social man, exemplified most commonly by the bourgeois but most perfectly (according to Rousseau) by the vain, malicious philosophers who conspired against Jean-Jacques.” 67 Among these, it is only the divided social man

63 Todorov, Frail Happiness, 10; see also 13, 47-48; Imperfect Garden, 82-84. This view of the state of nature will be criticized below, in Note 102.

64 Cooper, Rousseau, Nature, 51f; see also 17-26, 51-59.

65 Cooper, Rousseau, Nature, 51. I have altered Cooper’s numbering for my own purposes, but this should not distort his argument since he presents them in no particular order (Rousseau, Nature, 51n26). For his pictorial schematization of the types, indicating the relation of each to nature—Cooper’s main intention—see 49-50n22. Although Cooper’s five types come closest to the six posited here, his logical schema has minimal correspondence to mine.


67 Cooper, Rousseau, Nature, 51. A very recent article draws from Todorov, Cooper, and Marks, discussing the same five human types as Cooper while helpfully focusing on self-knowledge (see Benjamin Storey, —Rousseau and the Problem of Self-Knowledge”).
who has in no sense a good or natural life, since he lacks both moral and psychological integrity, [living] in contradiction with nature in the deepest sense.”

If we combine Cooper’s savage and his divided social man with Todorov’s distinction between stages and alternatives, we may conclude that both the savage and the divided social man represent stages, with the latter being the usual historical outcome of the former. This suggests, in turn, that if we are to understand properly the world-historical moral alternatives presented by Rousseau, we must carefully investigate not only the lives he endorses as contemporary alternatives, but his broader (and often critical) philosophy of history. Here we approach better-trodden interpretive territory, since his basic philosophy of history is apparently presented systematically in the Second Discourse, a relatively brief and frequently read work. According to the best-known version of its historical narrative, humans had lived for ages untold in isolated self-sufficiency, living entirely in the moment from the spontaneous fruits of the earth, with a childlike peacefulness in relation to others, whom they had no vested interest in

68 Cooper, Rousseau, Nature, 52. By contrast, Cooper argues that Rousseau endorses three different kinds of lives, and that although other philosophers had suggested that different ways of life are indicated for different individuals…only with Rousseau does the notion arise that there is more than one substantive ideal” (1).

69 As Cooper notes, although the divided social man is just one of the five alternatives, “alas, he’ is the majority of humanity” (Rousseau, Nature, 52, cf. 118). I write the “usual historical outcome” in keeping with the view that Rousseau’s sweeping criticisms of society or civilization or our social institutions” are not critiques of all human societies throughout all of history, but do critique the majority of them, and the overwhelming majority of them which existed in Europe in his time. See, in this connection, Cassirer (Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe, 25-26), Melzer (Natural Goodness, 79), and Cohen (“The Natural Goodness of Humanity,” 118). We will return to this issue below, in Section 2.6, esp. Note 86.

70 It was widely read in Rousseau’s time as well, although he may suggest it is not as easily grasped: “it found only a few readers who understood it in all of Europe, and none of these wanted to talk about it” (Conf. VIII, 326/389).

71 His soul, which nothing stirs, yields itself to the sole sentiment of its present existence, with no idea of the future, however near it may be, and his projects, as limited as his views, hardly extend to the close of day” (DOI I, 143/144).
harming. Their needs were minimal, purely physical, and thus easily satisfied; their days were spent freely enjoying humanity’s natural laziness in a ‘delicious indolence.’

This idyllic state was brought rapidly to a close, however, due to various accidental and external causes, such as the seizure of private property and the founding of states, thus forcing others to leave the natural state for the sake of survival.

The ‘civilization’ that was then quickly established is characterized by vanity, fierce ambition, and cruel exploitation. Its feigned order and violent essence may best be exemplified by war, in which more murders were committed in a single day’s fighting, and more horrors at the capture of a single town, than had been committed in the state of Nature for centuries together over the entire face of the earth’ (DOI II, 174/179).

Rousseau’s philosophy of history thus seems to suggest a fundamental historical dualism.

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72 — see him sating his hunger beneath an oak, slaking his thirst at the first stream, finding his bed at the foot of the same tree that supplied his meal, and with that his needs are satisfied” (DOI I, 134/135). It is difficult to conceive of the ‘misery’ experienced by a free being, whose heart is at peace, and body in health” (150/152. Cf. Note XVI, 219/220, explaining why many civilized travelers have joined the savages, but we have yet to convert one savage to civilization. See also PF VI [On Public Happiness], 40/509). The only goods the savage knows are的食物; the only evils he fears are pain and hunger; even death is not known before he moves ‘away from the animal condition’ (DOI I, 142/143). To this list we should probably add the ‘repose and freedom’ discussed in Note 73 below. Other ‘needs’ derive from habit and desires of which Savage man does not know (Note XI, 211f/214). The minimal curiosity and corresponding lack of boredom of the savages are proposed as a model in Emile (IV, 229f/515).

73 See EOL IX, 272n/401n: ‘The extent to which man is naturally lazy [paresseux] is simply inconceivable. It would seem that he lives solely in order to sleep, to vegetate, to remain motionless; he can scarcely decide to go through the motions required to keep from dying of hunger. Nothing keeps the savages loving their state as much as this delicious indolence. The passions that cause man to be restless, provident, active, are born only in society.’ See similarly the support drawn from ‘the majority of animals’ (DOI Note X, 208/211); from savage man as breathing ‘nothing but repose and freedom’ (II, 187f/192); and from the fact that ‘only hunger rouses him from his laziness’ (‘The State of War,” LPW 169/OC 3:605).

74 DOI II, 173f/178; E III, 193/467; ‘The State of War,” LPW 167/OC 3:603. The notion of the founding of states providing an eminent threat and pressure toward statehood for others is given plausible support by current social theory: see Hösl, Morals and Politics, 556-57.

75 In this sweeping condemnation not only of lust for conquest but of all war, Rousseau seems to inaugurate a certain strand of radical modernity (one shared, for instance by Voltaire, e.g. ‘guerre” in
Regardless of the ultimate historical status of the state of nature, Rousseau is quite clear that there can be no return en masse to the forests and the savage state (DOI Note IX, 203-4/207-8f). This provides further justification for not modeling it alongside the three alternatives he prescribes, in various ways, for his contemporary readers. In addition, it has been questioned whether Rousseau’s primitive history can be adequately characterized as a single stage. Arthur Lovejoy and Jonathan Marks are among the more careful scholars who have insisted upon the significance of a middle historical stage, between what we may call the “primitive” stage of the “pure state of nature” and the mature (or, as Rousseau would have it, decrepit) stage of civilization. Rousseau refers to this middle stage as “ascending society,” in which comparative judgments, amour-propre, and the development of reason and foresight have been set in motion, with deeply ambivalent consequences for humanity, which we will explore below (DOI II, 162-)

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**TABLE 1.2**

A DUALISTIC MODEL OF ROUSSEAU’S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Primitive</th>
<th>“Civilized”</th>
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<td>Peaceful Savage</td>
<td>Frenzied, oppressive social Man</td>
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*Philosophical Dictionary,* and Diderot, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville,* section V, in *Political Writings,* p. 73). At the same time, however, he is probably echoing a commonplace of ancient primitivism: see Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe,* V, lines 988-1001, 1281-1308; and Seneca, *Phaedra* (in *Primitivism and Related Ideas,* 285). Rousseau develops the idea at length in a fragment, “The State of War,” which adds that since we are subject to the laws of the civil state, but nations are in a state of natural freedom in regard to each other, “we are subject to the inconveniences of both [states] without finding security in either” (LPW 163/OC 3:610; see esp. 162-63, 167/608-10, 603). This is also mentioned as a possibility at E V, 466/848. Contrast his republican model, which claims to combine the advantages of both states: E II, 85/311.

*76 Discussed in Note 90 below.*
Even with the beginnings of amour-propre, however, an intensive social interdependence could not exist before the invention of agriculture and metallurgy (168/171f). And it is interdependence which seems to be the decisively negative turning point, since as long as humans applied themselves only to tasks and arts—that did not require the collaboration of several hands, they lived free, healthy, good, and happy as far as they could by their Nature be, and continued to enjoy the gentle sweetness of independent association [des douceurs d’un commerce independant]…” (167/171).

Although Rousseau's discussion of this middling stage is terse and—like the "middle way" represented by Emile—easily overlooked, he explicitly states that it occupied—

77 See Lovejoy, "The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau's Discourse on Inequality," esp. 165-67, 179-82; Marks, Perfection and Disharmony, esp. ch. 2; Gourevitch, "Rousseau's Pure State of Nature," 36-37. This "ascend society" is sometimes referred to as the "tribal stage" (e.g. Melzer, Natural Goodness, 63, 70). Cooper is fully aware of this "tribal society" (Rousseau, Nature, 17, 31-32, 44, 50, 188n5), but does not integrate it into his five-type model discussed above, perhaps because he does not find it to reveal anything pivotal about the relation of nature to the good life.

78 Rousseau elsewhere interprets Moses' depiction of Cain as indicating that a wicked man, whose offerings were rejected by God, invented agriculture; thus "The author of Genesis had seen farther than had Herodotus" (EOL IX, 272/400). Some support for this basic contrast may be found in Kass's "philosophic commentary" on the book of Genesis, which persuasively depicts the biblical endorsement of shepherding and nomadic life over farming and urban life. For Kass, the biblical authors seem to have posited a need for a period shielded from the temptations of these more advanced economic forms, during which time instruction and habituation in the ways of holiness and righteousness might take root. He contrasts Aristotle's more optimistic view of the origins of the city with "the more pessimistic view, shared by the Bible, [that] the city is rooted in fear, greed, pride, violence, and the desire for domination" (The Beginning of Wisdom, 147; see esp. 129-32, 144-48, 227-43, 247-50, and 624-25).

79 Any translation into English loses a great deal. Gourevitch has "the gentleness of independent dealings"; Marks alters Gourevitch to "the sweetness of independent commerce" (Perfection and Disharmony, 61 and 168n11); Rosenblatt offers "the sweetness of independence commerce" (Rosenblatt, Rousseau and Geneva, 78); the editors of the Collected Writings use "the sweetness of independent intercourse" (CW 3:49); Adam Smith’s review renders it "the sweets of an independent society" (—Letter to the Edinburgh Review" [1756], in Essays on Philosophical Subjects, 252. Hume similarly mentions how we "begin to taste at ease the sweets of society and mutual assistance": Treatise of Human Nature, III.2.7, 345—although he is speaking of the origins of government). I have included both key meanings of douceur since they seem pivotal for Rousseau here, as we shall see in the discussion of barbarism in Section 1.4 below. For commerce, I have used "association," thereby avoiding the connotations of a social structure per se ("society"), or of specifically economic interactions ("commerce" or "dealings"). "Association" is used at least once by Allan Bloom—where Rousseau encourages the adult Emile to live in the midst of his compatriots, cultivating their friendship "dans un doux commerce" (E V, 474/859).
just mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our
amour-propre, [and thus] must have been the happiest and the most durable epoch”
(167/171).\footnote{Translation modified. However, since more extensive argumentation is employed in support of the primitive state, and this praise of the middling state abruptly follows its depiction as “bloodthirsty and cruel,” his sincerity in praising the middling state has been called into question by Straussian scholars such as Heinrich Meier (see Marks, Perfection and Disharmony, 64-65). Such arguments would support the broader Straussian contention that Rousseau’s pro-society arguments are mere popularizations. Note, however, that Melzer does grant the superiority of the tribal stage for Rousseau, since although such peoples have slightly compromised “their perfect, animal-like unity of inclination,” they have “clearly increased their capacity to ‘feel life’. This reinforces the importance of not excessively emphasizing amour-propre to the obscuring of “the true villain of Rousseau’s analysis, _personal dependence” (Natural Goodness, 70 and 70n2; see also 74-81, 108, 290; Cooper, Rousseau, Nature, 136n35, 180n97). We shall return to this theme in Chapter 2, esp. around Note 9.}

It seems significant enough to include in our basic model, then, and suggests a close parallel between Rousseau’s three ideal or prescriptive models, and his three historical or descriptive models.

### TABLE 1.3

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<th>Solitary existence</th>
<th>Independent association</th>
<th>Interdependent multitude</th>
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<td><strong>Descriptive, Diagnostic</strong></td>
<td>Primitive (solitary-Savage)</td>
<td>Savage (social-Savage)</td>
<td>Frenzied, oppressive -Civilized&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prescriptive, Constructive</strong></td>
<td>Individual solution: Solitary dreamer</td>
<td>Domestic solution: Moral Human</td>
<td>Political solution: Citizen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We must pause to explain the terminology, since Rousseau’s usage of “savage” seems looser than his underlying concepts.\footnote{This would seem to be his intended method, to some degree. In Emile, he insists that it is impossible in a long work “always to give the same meanings to the same words,” and that he attains...} On the one hand, he is remarkably clear in
distinguishing the two *states* in question. The earliest state of humanity, which occurs in
—the pure state of nature” or “the primitive state,”<sup>82</sup> is one in which a human might meet
another “perhaps no more than twice in their life” (DOI I, 144/146).<sup>83</sup> In some passages
these terms are explicitly contrasted with a nascent state of society,<sup>84</sup> which is
categorized by independent association,” and exemplified by “most” of the “Savage
Peoples who are known to us.” On the other hand, perhaps due to the polemical
requirements of the *Second Discourse* in contrasting pre-civilized life favorably with
civilized life, his terminology regarding these *peoples* is far less clear, referring to them
indiscriminately as “Savage,” in dualistic opposition to “civilized.”<sup>85</sup> By contrast, as we
clearly “by arranging it so that as often as each word is used, the meaning given it be sufficiently
determined by the ideas related to it and that each place where the word is found serves, so to speak, as a
definition” (E II, 108n/345n, translation modified). In the case of the distinction I am attempting to
formalize here, Rousseau explicitly chides the failure “to draw adequate distinctions between ideas” (DOI
II, 166/170), in a passage we will quote at length around Note 101 below.

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<sup>82</sup> For these terms, see e.g. DOI I, 141-42, 159/142-43, 162.

<sup>83</sup> After summarizing the quick, purely animal sexual encounters of DOI Part I, he writes: “Such
was the condition of nascent man [l'homme naissant]… but difficulties soon presented themselves” (DOI II,
161/164f). Thus “nascent man” clearly differs from the later “nascent society,” which is described in the
following Note.

<sup>84</sup> See esp. DOI II, 166/170: “But it should be noted that beginning Society [la Société
commencée] and the already established relations among men required in them qualities different from
those they derived from their primitive constitution [constitution primitive]… the goodness suited to
the pure state of Nature [au pur état de Nature] was no longer the goodness suited to nascent Society [la
Société naissante]….” This usage of pur état de Nature seems very consistent with similar usages: its
apparent differentiation from l'état de Nature in general, as employed by previous philosophers (DOI
Exordium, 132/132); and the lengthy depiction in Part I of the assumption of this primitive condition
Note similarly the speculation that certain creatures, taken by vulgar observers to be beasts, might actually
be “genuine Savage men [véritables hommes Sauvages],” with no opportunity to develop their faculties,
who thus remained “in the primitive state of Nature [l'état primitif de Nature]” (DOI Note X, 205/208).
Finally, since l'amour-propre is born in society, “say that in our primitive state, in the genuine state of
nature [véritable état de nature], Amour-propre does not exist” (Note XV, 218/219). See also DOI II,
186/191; Note XII, 214-15/216-17.

<sup>85</sup> For instance, in summarizing the state of pre-social man as depicted in Part I, Rousseau employs
“l'homme Sauvage” (DOI I, 157/159f). Marks similarly finds that Rousseau uses the term “savage”
—to apply indifferently to original man, the men of the savage nation, and all men between those two states.
will see in detail below, the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* uses “Savage” in a narrower, technical sense, referring to a minimally socialized people who subsist chiefly by hunting. Partially on this basis, then, I introduce “Primitive” as a noun to refer to people of the solitary, primitive state. When applying Rousseau’s broader use of “Savage” in an instance which clearly refers to one or another social state, I will add a prefix: —soliary-Savage” or —social-Savage.” For his over-arching category of “Savage,” I will often substitute —non-civilized.”

The plausibility of this model hinges largely upon a distinction between diagnostic (or descriptive, or critical) and prescriptive (or constructive) teachings in Rousseau. This distinction is central to Kant and later Kantian interpreters of Rousseau, while also appealed to in non-Kantian interpretations, such as the Straussian. Some disputes properly remain regarding how unqualifiedly it may be applied, such as the extent to which the patterns exemplified in the more spontaneously natural, diagnostic thought are retained and re-applied in the prescriptive thought. Nevertheless, the model seems accurate insofar as it suggests a clear distinction between a philosophy of history—depicting the usual course of human social development and moral decline—and a series of proposals for radically breaking from this process and thus avoiding its

86 The distinction begins with Kant himself, in “Conjectural Beginning of Human History” and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, AK 8:116-17 and 7:326-27, respectively).

87 See Marks, *Perfection and Disharmony*, 113-15, for Rousseau’s extensive application of the descriptive —sage pattern” in each element of his constructive thought, even regarding his own quasi-solitary existence, which seems most individualist (70-74), and his political thought, which seems most collectivist (74-79). Todorov similarly attempts to show how Émile’s third way “integrates and articulates” some of the elements of the other two ways of life (*Frail Happiness*, 18).

88 The justification of the qualification, “the usual course,” is discussed in Note 69 above.
“civilized” end. We have seen how, in his most prominent narrative, Rousseau attributes the rise of civilization to accidental factors which are external to human nature; nonetheless, he simultaneously maintains that this process has unfolded with overwhelming uniformity, and in accordance with human capacities which he acknowledges to be latent. This has drawn intelligent criticism from the beginning.

However his persuasiveness on this point may be challenged, we have seen that returning to an earlier, spontaneous social state is not an option. Thus for any prescriptive solution, breaking from the course of civilization requires a mind and will powerful enough to transcend the usual course of thought and life in instituting a new way. If this were not daunting enough, certain highly favorable social conditions also seem to be required. In the case of the political solution, “the Legislator” along the lines of Lycurgus is required—someone who is able to persuade without convincing.” This,

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89 The developments of the human mind required “the fortuitous concatenation of several foreign causes which might never have arisen and without which he would eternally have remained in his primitive condition” (DOI I, 159/162; cf. Preface, 124/122ff, I, 137ff/138). Although it is “in man’s nature to have passions,” and their “source is natural,” in the original state our “natural passions are very limited” and under social conditions “countless alien streams have swollen” them (E IV, 212/491). We will return to Rousseau’s proposed solutions, in Chapter 4, Note 100.

90 As Charles Bonnet, a well-known Genevan naturalist, objected: “All that results immediately from the faculties of man, should it not be said to result from his nature?... It would be as unreasonable to complain that these faculties, in developing, have given birth to that state, as it would be to complain that God has given man such faculties” (“Letter from M. Philopolis,” CW 3:123/Mémoire, 138). Rousseau replies, “Since you mean to attack me in terms of my own system, please do not forget that in my view society is as natural to mankind as decrepitude is to the individual, and that Peoples need arts, Laws and Governments, as old men need crutches” (“Letter to Philopolis” [ca. 1755], EPW 224/OC 3:232; see similarly, DOI II, 167/171). Marks appeals to this exchange as evidence that Rousseau did not sincerely believe his exoteric position, that the natural must be equated with the original (Perfection and Disharmony, 28-33, 98. For related interpretive maneuvers of Marks, see Note 112 below). Aubrey Rosenberg, by contrast, argues that Rousseau is caught here in his own web of specious reasoning (“Eighteenth-Century Theories of Generation and the Birth and Development of Rousseau’s Natural Man,” 280). Cooper and Neuhoouser subtly discuss the problem in regard to amour-propre, and ultimately find Rousseau’s approach flawed (see Rousseau, Nature, ix-x, 45-46, 60, 159, 189-90; Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love, 65, 117, 125, 128-40, 265-70). We will return to this issue below, in Section 2.6, esp. Note 86.
in turn, requires a people who are minimally socialized, and thus remain malleable.\footnote{91} Any robust form of the domestic solution seems to require a brilliant and benevolent manipulator of circumstances, such as Wolmar or Emile’s tutor;\footnote{92} alongside a divinely inspiring paragon of female virtue, such as Julie or Sophie; as well as a moderate degree of decency in one’s government and a robust degree of isolation from advanced and urban societies.\footnote{93} Finally, the individual solution seems to require a still higher degree of rustic isolation, and can apparently be undertaken only by one who is himself of formidable brilliance.\footnote{94}

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\footnote{91} Esp. SC II.7-10; also Poland II, 180/956; Conf. XII, 543-44/648-49. The need to intervene radically in nascent society—“to begin by purging the threshing floor and setting aside all the old materials, as Lycurgus did in Sparta”—is suggested even in the Second Discourse, an early and almost exclusively critical work (II, 175/180; cf. 182/187f). David Leopold rightly points to this requirement of a rupture from the course of history as one of several fundamental differences between Rousseau and Marx (The Young Karl Marx, 266). Also, Rousseau had learned from Montesquieu that certain social conditions are required which are only feasible, in turn, under certain climates (SC III.8, 100/414). For such reasons it is fair to conclude that Rousseau did not think an embrace of the political solution was possible for advanced societies, and accordingly should not be read as intending to be a revolutionary—at least within modernized societies. Nonetheless, it would be wrong to go so far as Todorov in dismissing the political solution as currently impossible \textit{per se} and thus of merely conceptual relevance (Imperfect Garden, 180; cf. Frail Happiness, 12-13, 25). This is a tempting solution for those who would like to see Rousseau as readily appropriable, yet it may be that he had mainly labored—for his homeland and for little States constituted like it. If his doctrine could be of some utility to others, it was in changing the objects of their esteem and perhaps thus slowing down their decadence, which they accelerate with their false appreciations” (RJJ III, 213/935). This problem is also illustrated by the exceptional circumstances required for the lives of Emile and Julie—his otherwise most appropriable and appealing models.

\footnote{92} On the psychological and social elements of such manipulation, see Shklar’s well-known “Images of Authority” (ch. 4 of Men and Citizens, also reprinted in The Cambridge Companion to Rousseau). For a more critical (even hostile) discussion, see Lester Crocker, —Rousseau’s \textit{Emile}: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” Dennis Rasmussen offers several additional references in this connection (see The Problems and Promise of Commercial Society: Adam Smith’s Response to Rousseau, 46n46). On the need for exceptional circumstances, see Gourevitch, “Introduction” to LPW, xiv. Julie goes so far as to say that the combination of circumstances making her program of education possible has “perhaps never been seen anywhere else but here” (Julie V.3, 479/584).

\footnote{93} For Emile’s distance from political life, see the passages cited in Note 54 above.

\footnote{94} See the perplexing remarks at DOI Note IX, 203-4/207-8f; and the discussion of Melzer’s downgrading of the ideal of the \textit{Emile}, in Note 28 above.
1.3 Hard or Soft Primitivism?

The six-type model above seems useful as a first approach to Rousseau’s teachings on the social forms and moral possibilities of human life. For those concerned with the issues of gentleness and severity, however, certain complications soon emerge regarding Rousseau's diagnostic thought—complications with deep implications for his critique of civilization and its most intensified form, modernity. We have seen how, in the images of the *Second Discourse* which would prove so influential in later cults of sentimentality and Romanticism, Rousseau appeals to a peaceful and idle primitive existence as a device for exposing the frenzied, unnatural oppressions of self and others which are typical of civilization. It has accordingly been commented upon that Rousseau nowhere uses the term “noble savage” with which he is often associated, and that his image of humans in the pure state of nature is not remotely “noble” in the usual sense.\(^95\) Nevertheless, it is equally striking that in the *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts* and in several other writings, he offers far different images of early humanity—as thoroughly vigorous, stern in their morals, and at times pitiless in their fury and vengeance. Such images are invoked to expose, not the excess harshness or cruelty of civilized and modern life, but rather its softness, weakness, and decadence. In short, at first and second glance, Rousseau seems to engage in a blatant form of philosophical self-indulgence, seeking to have it both ways in describing the softness and severity of both civilization and savagery, and in evaluating the moral status of both softness and severity. Otherwise put, he seems to insist, somehow, that savage life is to be seen as simultaneously soft, hard,

\(^{95}\) Melzer’s sources indicate that “noble savage” was first used by John Dryden in *The Conquest of Granada* (1670-71); “le bon sauvage” was in use even in the sixteenth century, but Rousseau never uses either term (*Natural Goodness*, 55n13).
and thus praiseworthy, while civilized life is also soft, hard, and yet despicable. We can put a finer point on the problem by invoking Arthur Lovejoy and George Boas’s distinction between two traditions, which they term —hard primitivism” and “soft primitivism.” The soft variety was exemplified in many paeans to “the Golden Age under the Saturnian dispensation,” during which humans enjoyed abundant security, leisure, and simple pleasures, bestowed by Nature as a gentle and indulgent mother. 96 By contrast, hard primitivism paid tribute to the constant overcoming of physical hardship, poverty, and threats from harsh climates and predatory animals; among the “rude, hardy fellows” of this tradition were the Scythians, the Getae, and later the Germans. 97

The most immediately apparent solution would be to find in Rousseau’s solitary-Savage the bases for soft primitivism, and to find in his social-Savage those of hard primitivism. In the later state, amour-propre has been awakened, and thus pride, the

96 Lovejoy and Boas mention, apparently as moving quite far in this direction, Diderot’s Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville, although I would add that Diderot there displays much of what Lovejoy and Boas describe as a “Romantic” ideal of expansion of desires, as opposed to the more rigoristic tenor of the usual primitivists (Primitivism, 10-11). See, for instance, Diderot’s exhortation for all post-pubescent to copulate, indiscriminately and with great frequency: Supplément, in Political Writings, e.g. 50-54, 66-71. For his commonality with Helvétius in finding the easy gratification of carnal desire as a primary cause of social robustness, health, and happiness, see Mark Hulliung, The Autocritique of the Enlightenment: Rousseau and the Philosophes, 195. Kant’s rigoristic perfectionism leaves little quarter for admiring this sort of peaceable, passive hedonism: Yet what if the genuine end of providence were not this shadowy image of happiness, which each makes for himself, but rather the always proceeding and growing activity and culture that is put in play by it… Does the author really mean that if the happy inhabitants of Tahiti, never visited by more cultured [gesittetern] nations, had been destined to live for thousands of centuries in their tranquil indolence, one could give a satisfying answer to the question why they exist at all, and whether it would not have just as good to have this island populated with happy sheep and cattle as with human beings who are happy merely enjoying themselves?” (Review of Herder’s Ideas,” Part 2, in Anthropology, History, and Education, AK 8:64f. Cf. Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, in the same volume, AK 7:324f; and Metaphysics of Morals, in Practical Philosophy, AK 6:318).

97 Lovejoy and Boas, Primitivism, 9-11. See the many primary sources and commentary upon, for instance, ethnographical accounts of real savages as models for hard primitivism (315-67; cf. Juvenal in 70-73); and for varying, mostly poetic examples of soft primitivism, see esp. 27-28, 46-47, 64-65, as well as 304-14 for the quasi-historical accounts of the Hyperboreans.
drive for honor, and the need to be loved and praised superlatively by all. One then judges any intentional wrong not only as physical harm, but as ~contempt for his person,‖ and ~vengeances became terrible, and men bloodthirsty and cruel‖ (DOI II, 166/170). Jealousy springing from new ideas of comparative merit, beauty, and romantic attraction also provided powerful new kindling for explosions of social violence. Indeed, Rousseau was led to reason philosophically toward a gentler, pre-historical, primitive state precisely because of the historical and ethnographical evidence which depicted the cruel vengeances of humans in this middling stage:

This is precisely the state reached by most of the Savage Peoples [Peuples Sauvages] known to us; and it is for want of drawing adequate distinctions between ideas, and noticing how far these Peoples already were from the first state of Nature [du premier état de Nature], that many hastened to conclude that man is naturally cruel and that he needs political order to be made gentle [un désir de police pour l'adoucir], whereas nothing is as gentle [si doux] as he in his primitive state when, placed by Nature at equal distance from the stupidity of the brutes and the fatal enlightenment of civil man, and restricted by instinct and reason alike to protecting himself against the harm that threatens him, he is restrained by Natural pity from doing anyone harm, without being moved to it by anything, even after it has been done to him. (166/170)

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98 DOI I, 152/154; Note XV, 218/219. ~Self-love [L'amour de soi], which regards only ourselves, is contented when our true needs are satisfied. But amour-propre, which makes comparisons, is never content and never could be, because this sentiment, preferring ourselves to others, also demands others to prefer us to themselves, which is impossible. This is how the gentle [douces] and affectionate passions are born of self-love, and how the hateful [haineuses] and irascible passions are born of amour-propre. Thus what makes man essentially good is to have few needs and to compare himself little to others; what makes him essentially wicked is to have many needs and to depend very much on opinion‖ (E IV, 213f/493). See also the lengthy, programmatic comments on amour-propre and its connection with ~all the hateful and cruel passions‖ in RJJ I, 9-10/669-70; II, 112-13/805-6. This rejection of all comparison seems to be moderated in a later political writing (see Corsica, 153-54/937-38, quoted below in Chapter 3, Note 166), as well as in the Emile itself, apparently regarding a later stage of Emile's development (E IV, 235/522f, block-quoted in Chapter 4, around Note 164).

99 We will argue below (Note 110) that this passage probably overstates the cruelty of the social-Savage.


101 The significance of this term is discussed in Notes 81 and 83 above.
Coincidentally, we may note here Rousseau's frequent appeals to historical and ethnographical evidence regarding the social-Savage state, which deeply undermine the view that he is indifferent to empirical evidence. Among this vast range of evidence, he takes a special interest in the Caribs (les Caraïbes), who seem to provide decisive evidence for certain softer elements of the non-civilized—and perhaps even the primitive—state:

… it is all the more ridiculous to portray Savages as constantly murdering one another in order to satisfy their brutality, as this opinion goes directly counter to experience, and as the Caribs, which of all existing Peoples has so far deviated least from the state of Nature, are in fact also the most peaceful in their loves and the least given to jealousy, even though they live in a scorching climate which always seems to rouse these passions to greater activity. (I, 156/158)

Rousseau's claim that the Savage soul yields itself to the sole sentiment of its present existence, with no idea of the future, is also based partially on observations of the Carib, who sells his Cotton bed in the morning and comes back weeping to buy it back in the

\[102\] One finds a common failure to distinguish between the pure, primitive state of nature—about which Rousseau reasons (at least chiefly) philosophically rather than empirically—from the middling, savage state. This may largely account for the error of Shklar in claiming that Rousseau was utterly uninterested in history, past or future (Men and Citizens, 1; see also 6, 17n3), and that of Todorov in maintaining that the state of nature is only a mental construct, a fiction and purely imaginary (Frail Happiness, 10, 13; cf. 48, 57; Imperfect Garden, 82-84). See, similarly, Emile Durkheim, Montesquieu and Rousseau: Forerunners of Sociology, 66-69; Neuhouser, Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love, 36, 38, 193n12. Contrast the excellent argumentation of Kelly, who concludes that it seems essential to Rousseau’s project, not that his account of the pure state of nature is historically correct or that it is not so, but that it perhaps could have been so (Rousseau’s Peut-Etre: Reflections on the Status of the State of Nature, esp. 79-80. Other more balanced estimations of the combination of logical and empirical elements in the Second Discourse are offered by Ronald Meek, Social Science and the Ignoble Savage, 78-79, and Lovejoy, The Supposed Primitivism, 169n1. Cooper frames a parallel argument in terms of Rousseau’s certainty about the basic historical themes, alongside more conjectural details: Rousseau, Nature, 17-18, 41-42). Nevertheless, it is right to note that Rousseau is skeptical of unreliable histories and travel accounts, apparently meaning ones which have not been based upon truly philosophical observation and interpretation: DOI I, 142f/144; Note X, 209-10/212-13. In describing the need for philosophical observers of foreign lands in many possible destinations, he concludes: finally the Caribbean [les Caraïbes], Florida, and all the Wild regions, this being the most important voyage of all and the one that should be undertaken with the greatest care…” (DOI Note X, 211/214).
evening, for not having foreseen that he would need it for the coming night” (143/144). This may reflect the profound indifference of all non-civilized people to all but repose and freedom, in contrast to the citizen’s frenzied pursuits of power and reputation—concepts which must have no meaning for a Carib (II, 187/192f).

Nevertheless, a complete dichotomy between a soft primitivism grounded in the earliest state and a hard primitivism grounded in the social-Savage is far from adequate. For, just as the above examples of Carib immediacy are used to show that some softer aspects of primitive life are retained in the later Savage state, the Caribs are also appealed to in establishing a certain hardness which seems to apply even to the earliest states. The

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103 The account of the sold bed is paraphrased from a Jesuit, Jean Baptiste du Tertre, whose *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les Français* (1667) depicted a natural goodness in the Caribs, as had Bartolomé de las Casas before him. Georges Pire argues that, despite the fact that Rousseau only cited du Tertre once (i.e., DOI Note VI, 195/200), he owed to him a great deal of his anthropological understanding (“Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les relations de voyages,” 359). Du Tertre’s full writings do not seem to be readily available now, but see Starobinski’s selected quotes in OC 3:1321-22n and 1346n4, as well as the more extensive selections in Peter Hulme and Neil Whitehead, eds., *Wild Majesty: Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day*, 128-37. Du Tertre finds in the Caribs great simplicity, natural naïvety, virtually no marks of inequality or servitude, limitation to only needful desires, no government, and liberal gift-giving instead of commerce (in *Wild Majesty*, 129, 131). “They are naturally kind, gentle, and affable, and often sympathize to the point of tears with the ills of the French, only showing cruelty to their sworn enemies” (131). In contrast with the soft primitivist model, however, Du Tertre notes how in religious matters they undertake “such frightful austerities, such painful fasts, such strange mortifications, [and] such cruel bloodlettings…” (133). More generally in this connection, it should seem strange—at least on the basis of current evidence—that Rousseau singles out the Caribs as being closest to the primitive state, given their reputation from the earliest times for being unusually cruel to outsiders, ambitiously warlike, and frequent eaters of beast and human flesh (David Abulafia, *The Discovery of Mankind: Atlantic Encounters in the Age of Columbus*, 125-26; Anthony Pagden, “Introduction” to *Facing Each Other: The World’s Perception of Europe and Europe’s Perception of the World*, xx; David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, 110-12). This reputation is based originally on the fearful testimony of the Taínos, a much larger and vastly more peaceable group. Perhaps the Tainos were, nonetheless, excluded from consideration as closest to the state of nature due to their intensive practices of agriculture, their extensive trade, their advanced craftsmanship of canoes, and their hierarchical power structures (cf. Abulafia, *Discovery*, 117-23). It is difficult to know the extent to which Du Tertre’s observations were shaped by the ideological imperatives of all European observers of the new world: “They had been concerned, to a greater or lesser extent, either to defend or to attack the colonial conquests in America, orthodox Christianity, and/or contemporary European society…” (Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage*, 37). Thus contemporary Europe’s discontents could emphasize American “simplicity, honesty, and equality,” while Europe’s admirers could emphasise the dullness and uniformity of American life, the stupidity and cruelty of the savages, and their extremely low standard of living” (Meek, 39; similarly, David Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment*, 41).
reason why Caribs (like Africans) live in —the most profound security” with regard to ferocious beasts, is that they have realized they surpass such beasts in skill more than the beasts surpass them in strength (DOI I, 136/136-37, 137n). The problem of such beasts may suggest that nature is not as gentle a mother as is sometimes suggested, and human use of stones, sticks, and arrows is often required to compensate.

More generally, Rousseau frequently depicts life in or near the original state of nature as requiring and generating an extraordinary hardiness in comparison with civilized humanity. In keeping with the traditions of hard primitivism, he appeals to the toughening effects of inclement weather, changes of seasons, and fatigue from escaping ferocious beasts (DOI I, 135/135; II, 161f/165). In such a setting those without robust constitutions perish, and those with strong constitutions give birth to similarly endowed children who undergo the same travails, thus acquiring “all the vigor of which the human species is capable” (I, 135/135). Their physical capacities regarding self-preservation—in sharp distinction from the organs concerning softness (la molesse), sensuality, and delicacy—become exceedingly fine-tuned. This reasoning is confirmed by travelers’ reports of “most Savage Peoples,” which express astonishment at their strength and acute senses of sight, hearing, and smell (I, 140/140; Note VI, 194-95/199-...

104 The illustrations of this principle with the Caribs and others were added in the 1782 edition, drawing from the authority of François Correal.

105 Cf. EOL X, 279/407. Of children in the savage state, he writes: “Nature deals with them exactly as the Law of Sparta did with the Children of Citizens; it makes those who have a good constitution strong and robust; and causes all the others to perish; differing in this from our societies…” (DOI I, 135/135). Among the reasons that the strength and organs of our children may develop later than they did in the primitive state are: “The original weakness they owe to their Parents’ constitution, the care taken to swaddle them and cramp all their limbs, the softness in which they are reared, perhaps the use of another milk than their Mother’s…” (Note XII, 215/217; cf. E I, 59/277, on the softness of our fathers and mothers leading to children with already spoiled constitutions). We will return to the link between swaddling and stifling in Emile (Chapter 4, Note 68).
200). Rousseau similarly observes that although civilized man, with advanced machinery in hand, can easily overcome the savage, if they were both unarmed it would be a still more unequal contest in the savage’s favor (I, 135/135f).

At the same time, since primitive man’s passions are minimal, and his reason and amour-propre are uncultivated, there are no temptations to disobey the —gentle voice [douce voix]” of pity, and he will naturally seek his own good with the least possible harm to others, being fierce only occasionally and as preservation requires. Thus vengeance is only mechanical and immediate, seldom leading to bloodshed; for such reasons Rousseau

106 Similarly, in depicting the radical diversity of human types, in contrast to —the ruck of Philohysters, that men are everywhere the same” (DOI Note X, 210/212), he extols —the powerful effects of differences in Climates, air, foods, ways of life, habits in general and, above all, of the astonishing force of uniform causes acting continuously on long successions of generations” (204f/208). In the following passage, he attempts to show the great extent to which even —natural inequality” (defined at Exordium, 131/131) is the effect of social habits. —Thus a sturdy or a delicate temperament, together with the strength or the weakness [la foibless] that derive from it, are often due more to a tough [dure] or an effeminate upbringing, than to the bodies’ primitive constitution. The same is true of strengths of Mind…” (DOI I, 157/160). The considerable but ultimately not unlimited extent of malleability for Rousseau will be discussed in Chapter 4, esp. Note 118.

107 Norbert Elias offers a parallel contrast of ancient and modern warriors, although his ancients are more advanced than the solitaries Rousseau is discussing here. —Compared to the battle fury of the Abyssinian warriors—admittedly powerless against the technical apparatus of the civilized army—or to the frenzy of the different tribes at the time of the Great Migrations, the aggressiveness of even the most warlike nations of the civilized world appears subdued. Like all other instincts, it is bound, even in directly warlike actions, by the advanced state of the division of functions, and by the resulting greater dependence of individuals on each other and on the technical apparatus. It is confined and tamed by innumerable rules and prohibitions that have become self-constraints” (The Civilizing Process, 161).

108 DOI Preface, 127/125f; I, 152-54/154-57; Note IX, 198f/203. An unusually strong statement of the position occurs in the fragment —The State of War” (LPW 166/OC 3:601), which presents humans as naturally peaceable, timorous, and prone to flee threats to a notably greater extent than is maintained in DOI I, 135-36/136-37. An additional reason for the minimal conflicts of the primitive state is that human nature was not originally carnivorous, and frugivores —live in constant peace with one another” (DOI Note V, 194/199; further implications are discussed in Note 134 below). However, Rousseau may thus undermine his contention that humanity’s natural state was exceedingly idle, since he also maintains that —the animals living only off grasses and plants…spend almost all day grazing and are forced to spend much time feeding themselves…” (DOI Note VIII, 196/201). We might add that both idleness and natural harmoniousness would be undermined to some degree by current scientific understandings of the tendency of many plants to develop poisons in order to deter the frugivores, which in turn forces the frugivores to expend considerable resources in search of clays and minerals which counteract these poisons. A certain kind of laziness could still be practiced, however, as discussed in Note 116 below.
declares them “fierce [farouches]” rather than wicked” (154/157). By comparison, we have seen above how in social-Savages, amour-propre makes outbursts of vengeance more intense and less limited by mere self-preservation, and thus these outbursts may be described as “cruel” rather than (the more beast-like) “fierce.”

Unfortunately, while one might outline the soft and hard elements of Rousseau’s primitivism with some confidence, it seems far less clear how these elements cohere. His primary account in the Second Discourse seems to be one of an overwhelmingly abundant and secure original state (DOI I, 134/134f), which was interrupted by accidental

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109 Cf. EOL IX, 267-68/395-96, which explains how conditions of uncertainty, fear, and weakness made it necessary for each man of “the first times” to be “a ferocious animal [un animal féroce]” (267/395). Here, too, ferociousness is contrasted with wickedness: “Someone who has never reflected cannot be element, or just, or pitying; nor can he be wicked and vindictive” (268/395f; cf. the defenses of the violence of savages in Montaigne, “On the Cannibals,” Essays I.31, 236/ Les Essais, 210; and Diderot, “Suite de l’apologie de M. L’Abbé de Prades,” Oeuvres, 1:528). We will return to the links between weakness and vice in Section 2.6, as well as Chapter 4, Note 94. In view of the comment on lack of reflection, this seems to converge with the category of the first state of nature in the Second Discourse. However, in the Essay, families existed in these first times (267/395), and the rise of sweeter sentiments and mutual taming occurs with a mixture between families (277/405f), rather than with the rise of families due to fixed settlements, as in the Second Discourse (II, 164/167f). These contrasts seem to flow in large part from the differing assumptions of the two works, with the Discourse hypothetically excluding the divine bestowal of “lights and Precepts,” and accordingly positing a lengthy primitive state void of lasting sociality (DOI Exordium, 132/132). The later and unpublished Essay claims to “reconcile the authority of Scripture with ancient records,” “posing a relapse after Noah’s Flood into the dull barbarism they would have been in if they had been born of the earth” (EOL IX, 271/399, cf. 269/397. For similar appropriations of the Flood, see Meek, Social Science and the Ignoble Savage, 70, 73, 79n46, and Gourevitch, “Rousseau’s Pure State of Nature,” 49n42. Cf. also EOL IX, 273-74/401-2, and PF IX [On Population], 55-56/531-33, for the providential tilting of the axis and the use of natural disasters to force humans to come together,” as in many pagan myths, which are cited in Gourevitch, EPW 402n9 [27]. For debates surrounding the role of the tilt of the axis among Rousseau’s French contemporaries, see Stroebinski, OC 5:1564n2).

110 Although the DOI II, 166/170 passage (quoted above) actually says that “vengeances became terrible, and men bloodthirsty and cruel,” I have restated Rousseau’s ultimate position here as suggesting that vengeances (not men as such) became cruel. In addition, “cruel” here should be taken as a momentary indifference to another’s suffering in a moment of rage, rather than a fixed and positive delight in another’s suffering. The passage should probably be taken as rhetorically overstating the cruelty of the social-Savages of whom we have records, accepting the extreme evaluations of his interlocutors for the sake of argument before charging them with fallaciously inferring original humanity from these records. This method is described in an early fragment: “...would present what I wish to prove in such a light as to appear to grant the opposing sentiment much more than I would really grant it, leaving it to the force of my reasons subsequently to reclaim what I will initially have conceded above and beyond what I needed to concede” (“Idea of the Method in the Composition of a Book” [ca. 1745], EPW 301/OC 2:1243). As we will see in Section 1.4 below, bloodthirstiness and cruelty are by no means characteristic of most social-Savages for Rousseau, although they are characteristic of a minority sub-group of hunters.
and foreign causes. At the same time, among the difficulties with which nascent man” is “soon” presented are ferocious beasts and the height of trees (II, 161f/165), and these would seem to harden the human condition from nearly the beginning. According to Jonathan Marks, we ought to infer that, for Rousseau, these harsher aspects of life—requiring foresight and hardening to circumstances—are actually present from the very beginning. And thus we must also infer that in his genuine teaching, nature and human nature are essentially disharmonious. Marks further argues that Rousseau’s depiction of a lush and idyllic state of nature must therefore be a form of satire, intended to undermine his previously stated definition of "nature” as equivalent to origins and therefore independent of history and circumstance.

Be that as it may, the possible existence of two different kinds of primitive states, one being considerably softer than the other, derives additional support from the Essay on the Origin of Languages. There Rousseau derides European philosophers for projecting their own "barren and harsh” conditions onto the first men, since humans (like all animals) surely had their origins in the far more abundant and accommodating South (EOL VIII, 266/394). These lush and fertile climates allow men to live more easily, 

111 Marks, Perfection and Disharmony, 5-7, 26-28. Cooper also calls attention to some of these harsh original elements without reaching Marks's conclusion (Rousseau, Nature, 189).

112 Marks, Perfection and Disharmony, 15-38, 93-102. For Marks, an additional reason for believing Rousseau’s equation of nature with origins is not serious, is that he grants that civilization develops naturally latent potentials, thus making it impossible to blame solely external causes (see Note 90 above on Bonnet). Thus Rousseau’s rhetorical purposes in (falsely) equating the original and the natural are to attack Hobbes’s description of original man as an asocial brute (95-96, cf. 103f), and to make nature appear kinder than it is, so that his audience will love it more, thereby undermining the allure of Parisian life (96-102).

113 Similar issues arose later in the study of Victor of Aveyron, a feral child captured in 1800 around the village of Saint-Sernin. Even after extensive care and training, they found him to be linguistically limited to grunts, apparently unconcerned with anything but food, and indifferent to affection and kindness. In addition, many observers were struck by the extent of the bruises, scrapes, and scars
and thus without one another (IX, 272, 277/400, 405). This may converge with the claim in the Second Discourse that as humanity spread, “difficulties multiplied together with men,” leading them to different sorts of terrain and climates, and thus different ways of life (DOI II, 162/165). It may be, then, that to whatever extent one inhabited a Southern climate with a low population, one’s conditions were quite “prodigal,” whereas population pressures may have forced many to the more “miserly” North (cf. EOL X, 279/407). Alternatively, higher population would at least lead to greater scarcity within the South, making “the height of trees” (DOI II, 161/165) newly problematic. For such reasons, we may suggest that, for Rousseau, although an unqualifiedly soft primitive existence was probably quite rare, and although certain soft elements are incorporated in perhaps any life prior to nascent society and especially civilization, there are some solitary, primitive states which seem predominantly soft, while others seem covering his body, and lost their original confidence in the idyllic, ostensibly Rousseauistic character of the primitive state. See the account in Nancy Yousef, “Savage or Solitary? The Wild Child and Rousseau’s Man of Nature,” esp. 251-55. Yousef rightly notes that the doctors exaggerate Rousseau’s portrayal of the desirability of the natural state (249-51, 262-63). However, Yousef may exaggerate how negatively Rousseau himself evaluates the harshness and limitations of the natural state which he clearly depicts. His evaluation still seems positive in comparison with the usual civilized state.

114 On the North and the South, see, similarly, PF X [The Influences of Climates on Civilization], 56-57/532-33. The theme of needs naturally separating humanity, while passions—which are not yet born in the primitive state—draw men together, occurs throughout EOL IX, as well as in EOL II, 253/380.

115 Consider also the “excessively large population that results from the state of Nature” (DOI Note XVII, 221/222), discussed in Note 128 below. In connection with sexual history, Susan Meld Shell also discusses the importance of population density in depleting natural bounty, while adding the observation that pregnancy would become more frequent, thus reinforcing the motivation for the first “domestic” revolution (“Émile: Nature and the Education of Sophie,” 280).

116 In view of how only hunger rouses savage man from laziness, and how even this can hardly do so (discussed in Note 73 above), one element of softness which would seem to be nearly universal outside of civilization would be the spontaneous enjoyment of laziness, insofar as this is permitted by circumstances and the drive for self-preservation. Rousseau seems to suggest that even the scantiest natural circumstances would allow—at least occasionally (cf. Note 108 above)—for a repose that is quite different from the optimizing, ambitious amour-propre of civilization.
**predominantly** hard. In order to avoid confusion with Rousseau’s normatively loaded uses of the terms “soft” (*mou, molle*) and “hard” (*dur*), we will henceforth dub those primitive existences which predominantly align with Lovejoy and Boas’s category of “soft primitivism” as “Idyllic Primitives,” and those predominantly aligning with their “hard” category as “Vigorous Primitives.”

1.4 Sweet or Cruel Savagery?

In addition to these harsher aspects of solitary life, any strict dichotomy between a soft primitive state and a hard social-Savage state is further undermined by the observation that the romantic love made possible by nascent society is not solely a tale of jealousy and violence. After a chain of events led from increased interaction, to increased rationality, the use of tools, and finally the development of huts, families could be established and differentiated (DOI II, 164/167). The habit of living together then gave rise to “the first developments of the heart…the sweetest [les plus doux] sentiments known to man, conjugal love and Paternal love” (164/168). The rise of such ideas and sentiments is said to make humans grow tame (*s’apprivoiser*) (166/169). In the Essay,

117 Marks thus seems to underestimate the role of climate in arguing that the peaceful, easily satisfied state depicted in the First Part of the Second Discourse—probably never existed, since nature is harsh and does not leave human beings in peace” (*Perfection and Disharmony*, 37, emphasis added; see 34-37). It may be relevant here that in his later years, Rousseau seems to have thought he could establish just such a predominantly soft environment for a new colony of rabbits on an isolated island. He believed the rabbits “could multiply in peace there without fearing anything and without doing any harm”—provided they could withstand “the rigor of the winters” (Rev. V, 44/1044).

118 This is part of the reason the leading studies of *amour-propre* clearly establish that it is not simply evil (as many accounts would have it), but simultaneously the source of the greatest human evils and the highest human possibilities and goods. See Dent, *Rousseau*, 4, 20-25, 52-58, 76, 85; Dent, —Rousseau on *Amour-Propre,*’ 63-64; Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life*, esp. 114-72; Neuhouser, *Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love*, esp. 9-11, 53, 59-70, 119, 156, 187-88, 218-19, 250, 267.
Rousseau similarly depicts youths’ initial interactions with new, sweeter sights outside their family, which render the heart “less savage”: Beneath old oaks…spirited young people gradually forgot their ferociousness, little by little they tamed one another; in striving to make themselves understood they learned to make themselves intelligible” (EOL IX, 277/406). The cultivation of romantic love thus seems to increase severity as well as sweetness, and this paradox is not lost on Rousseau. Indeed, at the least obstacle this tender and sweet sentiment becomes an impetuous frenzy, and the gentlest of all passions receives sacrifices of human blood” (DOI II, 165/169). In addition to these outbursts regarding the beloved, we also find at this stage the first historical analogue to the insider-outsider distinction exemplified on a broader scale by Rousseau’s model of the patriotic Citizen: Hence the apparent contradictions one sees in the fathers of nations. Such naturalness and such inhumanity, such ferocious ways and such tender hearts, so much love for their family and aversion toward their species. All their sentiments concentrated among their near ones were therefore the more energetic” (EOL IX, 268/396). Thus the state of independent association is marked by the cultivation of human capacities for the sweeter and gentler sentiments, and at the same time a vast

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119 In apparent contrast with the Second Discourse, the Essay finds sexual interactions within one’s family (i.e., the incest that was inevitable and acceptable at this time) insufficiently lively to inspire the passions needed to develop language (EOL IX, 278, 278n/406, 406n). See Note 109 above for the context of this difference.

120 Explaining merely apparent contradictions in the moeurs of ancient times is a common theme among social thinkers associated with historicism. Ferocity or cruelty is commonly the more negative pole, but several thinkers would place greatness or magnificence of soul—rather than Rousseau’s affection—as the more positive pole. See esp. Vico, New Science, §38, 272, 991; J. S. Mill, “Civilization,” 130-31; Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morality, I.11, 26. For a helpful discussion of Vico on the lack of feelings of familial affection among the ancient heroic fathers, see Riccardo Caporali, “Vico, ‘Tenderness,’ and ‘Barbarism,’” 199-205, 216. For many early modern observations on the violence or cruelty of the ancients, see Paul Rahe, —Antiquity Surpassed: The Repudiation of Classical Republicanism,” 235-51.
increase in the stakes of threats to the enjoyment of one’s beloveds—whether by romantic competition or tribal outsiders’ encroachments—which leads to intense expressions of cruelty unknown in more primitive life. Rousseau nonetheless considers this stage “the golden age,” since meetings with outsiders so rarely occurred:

“Everywhere the state of war prevailed, yet the whole earth was at peace” (EOL IX, 269/396). And although this aspect of his thought is by no means clearly developed, it may be that it is these harder attributes of both primitive and later savage life to which Rousseau appeals in the First Discourse and the polemics which followed it. In critiquing the luxurious softness of modern humanity, he there appeals to the rude, rustic virtues of such (often despised) peoples as the Scythians and the Goths—virtues including a vigorous endurance of pain, martial strength, true courage, —good faith, hospitality, justice, and…a great horror of debauchery…” (LR 66/74f).

121 The contemporary savages of America, the early Persians, Spartans, early Romans, Germans, Vandals, and Huns are also among the rustic peoples praised by Rousseau (DSA I, 11/11-12; Letter to Grimm, EPW 58/OC 3:65). The link between originally independent families and broader tribal government may be indicated here: —The first societies governed themselves aristocratically. The chiefs of families deliberated among themselves about the public business; young people readily yielded to the authority of experience…. The savages of northern America still govern themselves this way in our day, and they are very well governed” (SC III.5, 92/406; cf. —Letter to Philopolis,” EPW 226/OC 3:234, on how it is good that various American tribes exist, and —do without our political order [police]). Thomas Jefferson, after discussing the forms of non-governmental social control that prevail among Virginia’s natives, comes to similar conclusions: —we it made a question, whether no law, as among the savage Americans, or too much law, as among the civilized Europeans, submits man to the greatest evil, one who has seen both conditions of existence would pronounce it to be the last: and that the sheep are happier of themselves, than under care of the wolves. It will be said, that great societies cannot exist without government. The Savages therefore break them into small ones” (Notes on the State of Virginia, Query XI, in Writings, 220; see similarly Letter to Madison, 30 Jan. 1787, Writings 882; cf. Letter to William Ludlow, 6 September 1824, Writings 1496). Contrast Hobbes, Leviathan, XIII, ¶9-12, pp. 76-78.

122 This is a recurring theme. Rousseau claims that in Europe alone hospitality is sold; in Asia pure humanity receives humans. He has heard it said that in Holland one must pay them to tell one the time or offer directions: —Those who would thus traffic in the simplest duties of humanity must be a despicable people indeed” (Rev. IX, 87f/1097. In 1853 the Swiss-born Philip Schaff similarly noted the —busy unrest” of American life, including how —The New York merchant is vexed, if stopped with a question on the street; because he loses a couple of minutes”: quoted in Mark Noll, —Introduction” to God and Mammon: Protestants, Money, and the Market, 1790–1860, 6). The modern lack of hospitality is also attacked in Note 133 below. Montesquieu takes a more even-handed approach, lamenting the possibility of reduction
In contrast to these conflicting psychological developments, certain material attributes of nascent society lead straightforwardly to softening. With a more settled life, the sexes begin to establish different ways of living, with the women becoming more sedentary, while “both Sexes...began to lose something of their ferociousness and vigor” as a result of “their slightly softer [un peu plus molle] life” (DOI II, 164/168). Through such factors as the mastering of useful animals (162/166) and the rise of mechanical conveniences, the body is continually weakened in comparison with primitive life (164f/168; cf. DSA II, 20-21/22-23). And just as our domesticated animals are smaller and less vigorous than wild ones, so also humans are enervated from our “soft [molle] and effeminate way of life” (DOI I, 138f/139).124

In contrast with these ominous anticipations of modern luxury in the Second Discourse, the Essay focuses upon an economic practice which enables much of the leisure we have found in the primitive state, in combination with the broader social sentiments of nascent society. There Rousseau precisely defines “three stages of man considered in relation to society,” where “everything is seen to be related in its principle to the means by which men provide for their subsistence, and as...a function of the

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123 Cf. DSA I, 7/8; II, 20-22/22-24. Such peoples may be categorized among the potentially larger, more tribal, and more advanced “barbarians,” as defined in the Second Discourse, rather than as depicted in the Essay (see DOI II, 168/171f, quoted in Note 126 below). For discussion of Rousseau’s appeals to harsher, rustic virtues, see below, Sections 3.3–3.4. For the sense in which traits are natural if they are “universally present among primitive peoples” but lacking in the pure state of nature and often among moderns, see Cooper, Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life, 108-12.

124 Indeed, we degenerate all the more appreciably due to all the conveniences we give ourselves beyond those we give to domesticated animals, including clothing (DOI I, 139/139). We will return to this below, in Section 3.1, esp. Note 38.
climate and of the nature of the soil.”125 Namely, “The savage is a hunter, the barbarian a herdsman, civil man a tiller of the soil” (EOL IX, 272/400).126 Although the Essay claims to investigate “the first men” (269/396) and “the first times,”127 it either bypasses or revises the Discourse’s primitive state, since the Essay’s “first men” are united in families, and apparently must engage in hunting, herding, or farming, in contrast to the Discourse’s mere gathering of the spontaneous fruits of the earth.128 Apparently having

125 Throughout Social Science and the Ig noble Savage, Meek notes the centrality of mode of subsistence in the new social science of the Enlighten ment—which seems to have come to fruition through a number of partially independent sources through the 1750s. Rousseau’s degree of originality regarding the stadial progress of society must remain disputed, since it is not clear whether the relevant portions of the Essay were written around 1755, or closer to 1761-1763 (Social Science, 76, 90-91). During the latter period, the four-stages theory would have been clearly articulated by several sources, such as Helvétius’s 1758 De l’Esprit (Social Science, 92-93f). For seventeent h-century predecessors, see Robert Wokler, “Rousseau’s Pufendorf: Natural Law and the Foundations of Commercial Society,” 387-93. Enlightenment stadial theories are now commonly faulted with running “counter to the modern notion that societies mature in diverse ways and that nomads as well as pastoralists and farmers occupy a fully developed world of their own” (Weber, Bárbaros, 40), or with problematically assuming that “first-hand testimony regarding any savage or barbarian society constitutes an accurate depiction of the early history of any advanced society” (Richard Sher, “From Troglodytes to Americans: Montesquieu and the Scottish Enlightenment on Liberty, Virtue, and Commerce,” 391-92).

126 This three-stage model is also related to languages: “The depiction of objects suits savage peoples; signs of words and propositions, barbarian peoples, and the alphabet, civilized peoples” (EOL V, 257/385). There is also a less formal but still evident distinction among the savage, barbarian, and civilized states in the Second Discourse. In claiming that metallurgy and agriculture gave rise to civilization, Rousseau writes that certain peoples “seem to have remained Barbarians as long as they engaged in one of the Arts without the other” (DOI II, 168/171f; cf. Note VI, 194/199. Savage, barbarous, free, and monarchical peoples are also described as suited to differing climates in SC III.8, 101f/415f. See also the table of contents for a project, Histoire des moeurs: PF XVI [On Morals], 75/560). By contrast, he sometimes uses “barbarous” more loosely to describe non-civilized humans, e.g. DOI II, 177/181. And perhaps out of keeping with his avowed principles, he occasionally uses it as a term of derision. For instance, he feared visiting Corsica, and thereby “fiding myself at my age, alone, without resources, far from all my acquaintances, at the mercy of a barbarous and ferocious people…” (Conf. XII, 637f/651. Cf. the attribution to the Corsicans of the primitive virtues of an “indomitable and ferocious mood,” but on the other hand of an “inclination toward theft and murder.” The latter is said to have been contracted due to oppression and impunity under their former governors: Corsica 136-37/917). We will discuss another negative use of “barbarous” in Chapter 4, Note 206. See Montesquieu’s earlier distinction between savages and barbarians in Spirit of the Laws XVIII.11. For analysis and broader context, see Catherine Larrère, “Montesquieu on Economics and Commerce,” 344-45, 366; and Note 125 above.

127 Defined as “the times of men’s dispersion, regardless of the age one chooses to assign to mankind at that period” (EOL IX, 267n/395n)

128 For additional comments on the differences between the two texts, see Note 109 above. It is noteworthy here that Rousseau’s primitive, spontaneous “fruits” of the earth do not include animals, since
already commenced the cycle of human industry responding to new needs, the greater number of people, who were —less active and more peaceable,” stopped this frenzied cycle —as soon as they could” by gathering and taming cattle (271/399).129 Thus pastoral life was born, which Rousseau praises as —the most self-sufficient art,” since it —almost effortlessly” provides humans with food, clothing, and tents. —father of repose and of the indolent passions” (271f/400),130 pastoral life enabled countless hours of the romantic taming we have depicted, since —time had no other measure than enjoyment and boredom” (277/406).131 For such reasons, it seems plausible that at least the majority of people in nascent society enjoyed —the gentle sweetness of independent association” as herdsmen,132 and the tenor of their lives was predominantly soft in both labor and social (i.e., familial) relations. We might finally note that it is of such pastoral images that Rousseau drew many of his most grandiloquent images, of which he himself was the

humans are not originally carnivorous (Note 108 above, contra Meek, Social Science and the Ignoble Savage, 84, 86f). The incompatibility of hunting with the primitive state may be further reinforced by the claim that hunting is not at all favorable to population growth, quickly depleting its land of prey. Thus all of —the fathers of large nations” were farmers or shepherds rather than hunters, and hunting should be regarded —less as a primary means of subsistence than as a supplement to the pastoral state” (EOL IX, 271, 271n /399, 399n). Thus (extensive) hunting seems deeply opposed to the —excessively large population that results from the state of Nature” (DOI Note XVII, 221/222), from the —prodigieuse population” natural to barbarian life (DOI Note IX, 202f/206f), and from the extreme fertility of the earth (—The State of War,” LPW 168/OC 3:604), before overuse from agricultural cultivation (DOI I, 134/135; Note IV, 192-93/198. But cf. —Replies to LeRoy’s Comments on the Discourse on Inequality,” EPW 229-30/OC 3:237; Letter to Grimm, EPW 56/OC 3:63f; and EOL IX, 275-76/403-4, which give conflicting testimonies on the value of leaving the land fallow).

129 The phrase —stopped as soon as they could” seems unclear, and it is my conjecture to connect it with the cycle of human industries and needs, which is mentioned in Rousseau’s following paragraph.

130 Cf. EOL X, 279/408, on life in the harsher, cold climates: —Idleness, which feeds the passions, yielded to labor, which represses them.”

131 John Millar similarly points to the pastoral stage as allowing the leisure and refinement conducive to deepening concern for romantic pleasures (Origin of the Distinction of Ranks, ch. 1, section 2, 123-29).

132 This could be inferred by process of elimination from the economic rationale discussed in Note 128 above.
Accordingly, a more accurate moniker for him and his theoretical progeny may be “the gentle barbarian,” rather than “the noble savage.”

However, in the same pages we are introduced to Rousseau’s most severe human type—at least among the non-civilized. In contrast with the “less active and more peaceable majority”:

The most active, the most robust, those who were always on the move could only live off fruit and the hunt; so they became hunters, violent, bloodthirsty [sanguinaires] and, in time, warriors, conquerors, and usurpers. History has stained its records with the crimes of these first Kings; war and conquests are nothing but manhunts. Once they had conquered, it only remained for them to devour men. This is what their successors learned to do…. Of the three ways of life available to man—hunting, herding, and agriculture—the first develops strength [la force], skill, speed of body, courage and cunning of soul, it hardens [endurcit] man and makes him ferocious [féroce]. (EOL IX, 271/399)
Such a life of hardened and habitual bloodthirstiness does not seem to be paralleled among the non-civilized humans depicted in the Second Discourse. This is perhaps because of the Discourse’s polemical need to depict non-civilized life as characteristically soft and gentle, especially during its most properly natural phase, which is more primitive (and thus gentle) than the lives of most contemporary savages. Accordingly, its closest approximation to the bloodthirsty hunters is found after the invention of landed property and agriculture, when those who were stronger, more skillful, and more ingenious employed various stratagems which radically heightened inequality (DOI II, 169f/174). This eventually led to a class war in which the rich—had scarcely become acquainted with the pleasure of dominating than they disdained all other pleasures…like those ravenous wolves which, having once tasted human flesh, scorn all other food, and from then on want to devour only men” (171/175f, translation modified).

By contrast, Adam Smith’s depiction of savages seems far closer to Rousseau’s hunter-Savages (with whom Smith could not have been familiar). For Smith, savages are characteristically marked by very harsh conditions which give rise to hard and austere virtues, cultivating an extreme endurance of pain in themselves, along with strong drives for vengeance and cruelty against their enemies. The latter capacities are often concealed, but are all mounted to the highest pitch of fury” (see esp. Theory of Moral Sentiments V.2.8-13, 204-9; cf. I.5, 23-26; III.3.34-38, 152-52; VII.ii.4.2, 306; Wealth of Nations V.i.g.10, 794; also discussed below in Chapter 2, Note 67). Consider in this connection the argument of Dennis Rasmussen, that the ultimate ground of Smith’s defense of commercial societies—despite his concessions to Rousseau regarding their moral and political drawbacks—lies in Smith’s harsher depiction of the poverty, dependence, and insecurity that characterized most previous ages” (“Rousseau’s ‘Philosophical Chemistry’ and the Foundations of Adam Smith’s Thought,” 620-21, 626).

Also PF VII [Commerce, Luxury, and the Arts], 49/522. In this way, both the Hunter-Savages and the early aristocrats seem to be distinctive in that their ways of life flow at least as much from their distinctive, internal natures as from their environments. Their environment has played some role, however, inasmuch as they were led to this life by ignorance of other ways; scarcity of spontaneous fruits (cf. EOL IX, 272/400, which introduces the three stages as functions of the soil); and the rise of familial or tribal bonds, which enable them to cultivate and cooperate in their brutality. Because they are exceptional within my schema, they are imperfectly characterized as arising under violent conditions.” This is misleading insofar as they are themselves inflicting violence rather than having it inflicted upon them, but it remains the case that it is the experience of violence which allows them to realize and habitualize their taste for blood and domination. In addition, after the first generation or so, their descendants will naturally inherit violence as a way of life with little variation stemming from their individual natures or choices. We will return to Rousseau’s peculiar type of environmental determinism below, in Section 2.5.
In the polemics which followed the First Discourse, however, Rousseau did concede the thoroughgoing viciousness of certain non-civilized peoples. In contrast with the "reasonable" and "modest" ignorance which he finds essential to ancient virtue, "There is a ferocious and brutal ignorance, born of a wicked heart and a deceitful mind; a criminal ignorance even of the duties of humanity, which multiplies the vices, degrades reason, depraves the soul, and renders men similar to beasts…" (Obs. 49/54). Peoples exemplifying such vices despicably feed their self-indulgence, ambition, and idleness "with the sweat, the blood and the toil of a million wretches" (LR 72/82). Such images of vile, non-civilized hardness are rare in Rousseau, but as we can see from the immediately above, they were readily applied to expose the genealogy and character of civilized and modern privilege.

The following Table may schematize Rousseau's images of the softness and severity of non-civilized life. The dotted line indicates a distinction which is not as explicit or readily implicit in Rousseau as the distinctions indicated by straight lines. His apparent vagueness here could be partially explained insofar as the groups on both sides of the dotted line inhabit the same historical and socio-political stage, differing only in the favorability of their natural and social environments.

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137 Among the ignorant peoples conceded to be vicious are the Kalmuks, the Bedouins, and the Kaffirs (Letter to Grimm, EPW 54/OC 3:62). These passages are discussed below, in Sections 3.3–3.4. It is difficult to see how Rousseau could sincerely praise such peoples as the Goths and Vandals (Note 121 above), given his deep convictions against military aggression. If he was sincere and his claims are consistent, it may be that these barbarian invasions are seen as legitimate pursuits of self-preservation—considering the pressures of expanding human populations (cf. DOI Note IX, 202f/206f)—rather than in the service of *amour-propre* and inflamed appetites.
TABLE 1.4
THE DETAILED SOCIO-POLITICAL TYPOLOGY OF NON-CIVILIZED HUMANS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images of softness: under abundant, harmonious conditions</th>
<th>Solitary existence</th>
<th>Independent association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idyllic Primitive (spontaneous contentment, peacefulness, docility)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social-Savage, or Barbarian (sweet and gentle; occasional bursts of cruelty)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Images of severity: under scarce, violent conditions | Vigorous Primitive (exertions for sustenance; occasional bursts of ferocity) | Hunter-Savage (bloodthirsty, habitual violence to beasts and humanity) |

1.5 Soft or Harsh Civilization?

In the following two Chapters we will offer a more sustained discussion of civilized life, attempting to discern whatever coherence may lie behind Rousseau’s varying condemnations of civilized modernity for being either soft, hard, or both. Chapter 2 explores the harder sides of civilization, finding the need to differentiate among Rousseau’s treatments of the elites, the common people, the relations among them, and the legal system. Perhaps surprisingly, given the fierceness of his polemics against contemporary elites, Rousseau does not characterize them by active inflictions of cruel violence. Rather, a comparative peacefulness is made possible through a coercive state apparatus which shields their persons and property. At the same time, however, this apparatus allows for a kind of systemic cruelty which deprives and degrades the common people. While falling short of the vigorous violence of their ancestors, contemporary elites are still characterized by their harshness or hardness (dureté) in relation to the masses, whether in economic exploitation, dismissive and abusive treatment, or luxurious
self-indulgence which inevitably increases the deprivation of the poor. We thus find, at the same time, that to the extent of their "civilization," the great mass of commoners are led to innumerable vices through exploitation and ambition—most of which are petty and deceitful rather than overtly violent, however, due to state coercion. All things considered, Rousseau seems to suggest that to whatever extent civilization, commerce, and economic interdependence progress, society becomes divided into a class of excess and one of want. Since this interdependence also increases each individual's conflict of interest against the others, the need to deceive and betray becomes habitual, in explicit contrast to the temporary conflicts of interest which occasionally occur among the savages (PN 101-2n/970n).

When turning from the perspective of institutions and cross-class relations to the behavior of the socially refined in relation to their peers, however, we find a sort of interdependence more conducive to the celebrated gentleness of Rousseau's age. In Chapter 3, we find that Rousseau grants much of the descriptive content of doux commerce theory, conceding that commercial wealth, cross-cultural interaction, and higher learning have made their partakers more polite and less violent. Yet he interprets such gentleness as resulting not from higher moral conviction or more elevated sentiments, but rather from physical softness, psychological weakness, and moral indifference. In this way softening decreases some evils in the process of undermining most genuine goods, such as the severe purity and martial fortitude we have seen depicted of certain barbarous peoples.
1.6 Conclusion

A final Table summarizes the major distinctions and social types described above.

TABLE 1.5
THE COMPREHENSIVE SOCIO-POLITICAL TYPOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Solitary existence</th>
<th>II. Independent association</th>
<th>III. Interdependent multitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Descriptive:</strong> Under abundant, harmonious, or privileged conditions</td>
<td><strong>IA. Idyllic Primitive</strong> (spontaneous contentment, peacefulness, docility)</td>
<td><strong>IIA. Social-Savage, or Barbarian</strong> (sweet and gentle socially; occasional bursts of cruelty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>IIIA. “Civilized” Elites</strong> (physically soft; habitually “polite” to peers or superiors; habitually harsh to inferiors)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Descriptive:</strong> Under threatening, violent, or scarce conditions</td>
<td><strong>IB. Vigorous Primitive</strong> (exertions for sustenance; occasional bursts of ferocity)</td>
<td><strong>IIB. Hunter-Savage</strong> (bloodthirsty, habitual violence to beasts and humanity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>IIIB. “Civilized” Commoners</strong> (physically deprived, socially degraded, habitually knavish)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Prescriptive:</strong> Decisive breaks from the usual course of civilization</td>
<td><strong>IC. Solitary Dreamer</strong> (heeds only naturally gentle, properly voluptuous, immediate impulses; association may be sweet if void of all obligation)</td>
<td><strong>IIC. Moral Human</strong> (virtuous self-command enables domestic sweetness, as well as communal and cosmopolitan dedication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>IICC. Citizen</strong> (virtue as conformity to the general will; patriotic delight in public goods; harsh indifference to foreigners)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This analysis suggests the great extent to which Rousseau finds our morals to be shaped by our surroundings, in terms of social complexity (the horizontal dimension), the favorability of our environmental resources (the descriptive element of the vertical dimension), and whether a far-seeing intellect had decisively broken with the usual course of civilization (the prescriptive element of the vertical dimension). Although this schema may not definitively identify each social type depicted by Rousseau, it seems to capture those that are most pivotal for his social analysis. For our purposes here, it shows
that by attending closely to the subtle distinctions among various socio-political contexts he depicts, and by occasionally positing additional structures logically demanded by his depictions, there is a substantial coherence to his depictions of pre-civilized, civilized, and ideal forms of life. The systematic interrelations suggested here will also facilitate many comparisons, while preventing common interpretive pitfalls.

This being said, to establish a degree of systematic coherence, phenomenological consistency, and observational acuteness in a philosopher is not to establish the overall soundness or persuasiveness of his system. At times Rousseau shows a surprising degree of impartiality in openly depicting various primitive weaknesses, while at least observationally and implicitly acknowledging certain modern strengths. Yet though his various social types may have considerable integrity, there remains a degree of arbitrariness in his appeals to them. It is, for instance, rhetorically compelling to expose elite modern softness through the image of the Vigorous Primitive or the stern Barbarian. But it would require a more careful and sustained analysis to show that those moderns who enjoy a substantial degree of economic security, leisure, and refinement due to economic and technological progress are characteristically softer in less appealing ways than the Idyllic Primitive, or harsher in more deplorable ways than the Hunter-Savage.

Generally, Rousseau’s approach is to criticize a modern weakness by appeal to an inverse primitive strength, whereas a more impartially philosophical approach would surely compare strengths against strengths and weaknesses against weaknesses.

On the other hand, this analysis may also suggest an ultimate moderation to Rousseau’s moral stances, in both their critical and prescriptive elements. For, despite all his bravado in praising the hard sternness of the Citizen or the Vigorous Primitive, he
consistently repudiates any bloodthirstiness, lust for domination, and universal hard-heartedness. Similarly, despite all his romanticism in praising the idleness and abundance of the Idyllic Primitive or the pastoral Barbarian, he consistently repudiates any softness attained through human exploitation, or of frivolous luxury, or of failure to execute any duties appropriate to one’s socio-political condition. Insofar as our analysis of gentleness and severity in Rousseau has been accurate, it has uncovered the structural elements of his social criticisms and prescriptions, thus increasing the possibilities for clarity and rigor of understanding, regardless of how each reader might ultimately judge the coherence and persuasiveness of his thought as a whole.
CHAPTER 2:
ELITE HARSNESS AND SYSTEMIC CRUELTY:
THE CRITIQUE OF INSTITUTIONAL MODERNIZATION

Among Rousseau's many polemics against modernity, the civilized appear sometimes as soft, indulgent, weak, effeminate, and overly polite, while at other times they appear harsh, exploitative, merciless, and knavish. This apparent oscillation seems especially problematic insofar as non-civilized peoples are also characterized both as "hard" and "soft"—and yet the non-civilized receive praise for this, while the moderns are condemned. Having seen in Chapter 1 how Rousseau's characterizations of non-civilized life as either soft or hard seem to be differentiable into several different non-civilized types, which correspond to different forms of social organization and environmental hospitality, we will apply a similar approach regarding the moderns here. To begin with the members of advanced civilization whom he most despises—the aristocrats and the wealthy—we might be surprised to find that he very rarely charges them with violent cruelty, and suggests instead that their lived experience is marked overwhelmingly by forms of softness rather than hardness. It is images of idleness, luxury, and indulgence with which he most closely associates them, and which seem to constitute his most
prominent attack on the *moeurs* of modernity.\(^1\) This may prompt us to ask, on what consistent basis may Rousseau condemn the privileged so sweepingly, given his exuberant praises for the idle abundance of primitive life, and the comparative indolence of non-civilized life in general? Does this not contradict his complaints about —the excess of idleness [*oisiveté*] among some” in civilization (DOI I, 137/138)?

2.1 Social Conflict and Competition

An initial point of contrast between the primitives and the privileged moderns is that the idleness and abundance of the latter do not result from nature, but from the vast increase of the mechanical, economic, and domestic comforts which we have seen to begin in nascent society. Although we will return to the ultimate hedonic futility of these comforts and pleasures,\(^2\) we may observe here that the exemption from labor leads the wealthy to be tormented by boredom (ML VI, 202/1117). Under these conditions, they are able to abandon themselves to a softness more dangerous than the deprivations of the poor, in arousing their appetites and sensuality so easily and ravenously that they are wracked by indigestions, and often die of their excesses (DOI I, 137/138; Note IX, 199/204).\(^3\)

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1 We will return to these topics at length in Chapter 3.

2 Section 3.1.

3 Here Diderot, who was still a friend of Rousseau at the time of the *Second Discourse*, may serve as an exemplar of the wealthy lifestyle, since “The irrepressible Diderot consumed food and alcohol on an epic scale and suffered constantly from indigestion” (Leo Damrosch, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius*, 210). Rousseau may also have remembered that La Mettrie, a materialist, had died in 1751 from overeating (Gourevitch, note to EPW 405). On the civic impact of gluttony, see Plutarch, *Lycurgus* [10]; Plato, *Republic* III, 405c-d.
Even though modern abundance brings self-inflicted pains to the wealthy, Rousseau contends that they pursue it all the more intensely due to the comparative and competitive nature of social wealth. Civilized humans rush toward any available gratifications and displays, however futile, due largely to the need to express and reinforce their sense of social superiority. The handful of powerful and rich perceive a direct interest in keeping the many miserable, since the former value the things they enjoy only to the extent that the others are deprived of them, and they would cease to be happy if, without any change in their own state, the People ceased to be miserable” (DOI II, 184/189). Thus the harsher underside of luxury is often evident even in ostensibly charitable acts, as in Rousseau’s late recollection of the unfortunate time when, thrust in among the wealthy and the men of letters, I was sometimes reduced to sharing their sad pleasures” (Rev. IX, 83/1092). Among the festivities at a certain dancing party was throwing bread down into a crowd of peasants, which led them to struggle for it. This led him to wonder, what sort of pleasure could one take in seeing herds of men degraded by abject poverty pile up on each other, choke each other, brutally mangle each other to grab

4 Cf. DOI II, 171/175; judgment of the Plan for Perpetual Peace,” CW 11:56/OC 3:594. Clifford Orwin implicitly contrasts the man of the classical tradition with Rousseau’s socialized man: We strive not for the good or to be good, but to be first…” (—Rousseau and the Discovery of Political Compassion,” 304). Around eighty years later, Tocqueville found reason to fear a similar psychology operating in an opposite direction: There is in fact a manly mâle and legitimate passion for equality that incites men to want all to be strong and esteemed. This passion tends to elevate the small to the rank of the great; but one also encounters a depraved taste for equality in the human heart that brings the weak to want to draw the strong to their level and that reduces men to preferring equality in servitude to inequality in freedom” (Democracy in America, I 1.3, 52/104. Cf. First Memoir on Pauperism” [1835], in The Tocqueville Reader, 147: I think that beneficence must be a manly and reasoned virtue, not a weak and unreflecting inclination. It is necessary to do what is most useful to the receiver, not what pleases the giver, to do what best serves the welfare of the majority, not what rescues the few”). The warning about the depraved taste for equality may serve as a kind of reply to Rousseau, considering the parallel reasoning and Tocqueville’s careful reading of him (he wrote in an 1836 letter: There are three men with whom I live a little every day; they are Pascal, Montesquieu, and Rousseau”: quoted in Mansfield and Winthrop’s Introduction” to Democracy in America, xxx).
avidly at some pieces of gingerbread trampled underfoot and covered with mud?” (Rev. IX, 84/1093). In contrast with Rousseau's own simple pleasures of paying a little girl for apples and having her distribute them to poor little boys, this suggests the difference that separates healthy tastes and natural pleasures from those which opulence engenders and which are hardly anything but pleasures of mockery and exclusive tastes engendered by scorn” (84/1093).

Still more significantly, those enjoying soft conditions in civilized life are by no means living off the spontaneous abundance of the earth (like the Primitives), or off the fruitfulness of animals (like the gentle Barbarians). Rather, they are supported by a broader social structure, and in this monstrous and forced inequality, it necessarily happens that the sensuality of the rich consumes in pleasures the people’s substance, and barely sells it dry, black bread at the cost of its sweat and the price of servitude” (PF VII [Luxury, Commerce, and the Arts], 50/523). Thus in the civilized state, the excess idleness and indulgence of some directly causes the excess labor and want of others (DOI I, 137/138; Note IX, 199/203f).

5 After similarly appealing to dry and black bread, another fragment mentions the reply of the wealthy person, that such labors and hardships are the station of the poor, and habit accustoms them to it. Rousseau then mocks the sort of arguments which attempt to show that such civilized wretches are better off than those in the —sage climes [who] live in a continuous indolence without labor and without needs” (On Wealth,” CW 11:14/OC 5:478f).

6 Rousseau indicates the irony of this consequence of modern softness: —And of what value are these cruel voluptuous pleasures that the small number purchase at the expense of the multitude? The luxury of the cities brings misery, hunger, despair to the countryside, if some men are happier the human race is more to be pitied for it” (ML II, 181/1089; see also LR 70/79). St. Preux claims to have been taught by Julie that —the primary needs, or at least the most touching ones [les plus sensibles], are those of a beneficent heart, and as long as there is someone who lacks necessities, what honorable man has any superfluities [a du superflu]?” (Julie II.13, 189/231, translation modified). Both the OC and CW editors note that this passage seems to be a rejoinder to Voltaire’s pun in behalf of —le superflu, chose très nécessaire” (see —le Mondain” [1736], in Mélanges, 203).
Such arguments indicating the necessarily oppressive character of comparatively heavy consumption—which largely presuppose a fixed global supply of goods—were a stock in trade of austere classical, republican, and Christian thought before Rousseau, and would take on more explosive, revolutionary significance in Marxist and anarchist thought after him. What appears to be Rousseau’s most distinctive variation on this tradition is his attempt to ground it in what appears to be his most fundamental criticism of typical civilization—its increase of the links of self-interested interdependence. He saw himself as opposing a contemporary consensus here:

All our Writers regard the crowning achievement [le chef-d’ouevre] of our century’s politics to be the sciences, the arts, luxury, commerce, laws, and all the other bonds which, by tightening the social ties among men through self-interest, place them all in a position of mutual dependence, impose on them mutual needs and common interests, and oblige everyone to contribute to everyone else’s happiness in order to secure his own. (PN 100/968, emphasis added)\(^7\)

We have seen how this is clearly suggested in the Second Discourse, since “the gentle sweetness of independent association”—the proper mean of social-Savage life, despite the presence of amour-propre—is lost once peoples transition from “tasks a single individual could perform.”\(^8\) From “the moment one man needed the help of another; as soon as it was found to be useful for one to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property appeared, [and] work became necessary…” (DOI II, 167/171).\(^9\)

\(^7\) Nannerl Keohane makes Rousseau’s critique of “the masterpiece of policy in our century” central to her reading of him (Philosophy and the State in France, 425-32).

\(^8\) Chapter 1 above, esp. Section 1.2.

\(^9\) Note here how interdependence, made systematically possible by the newly invented arts of agriculture and metallurgy, is itself the underlying condition for inequality and property, which are alternative candidates as the chief source of social evil in Rousseau. In a summary of his basic teaching on natural goodness, a “second state” of human history includes interaction and comparisons, “But as long as there is less opposition of interests than convergence of understanding, men are essentially good” (see
For Rousseau, interdependence generates an extreme conflict of interests, in contrast to the fundamental and typical harmony of enlightened self-interests posited by his interlocutors, whom we might call (classical) liberals or pluralists. Where his interlocutors claim that society is constituted such that each gains by serving the rest, Rousseau replies that this —would all be very well if he did not gain even more by harming them,” and that any legitimate profit is —exceeded by the profit to be made illegitimately” (DOI Note IX, 198/203). This is illustrated by the wealthy individuals whom greedy heirs secretly wish dead, ships whose wreckage would be good news to rival merchants, commercial houses whose burning would delight their debtors, and peoples whose destruction would cause their neighbors to rejoice (198/202). Far from being atypical cases, from the onset of mutual dependence, —we must take care never to let ourselves be seen as we are: because for every two men whose interests coincide, perhaps a hundred thousand oppose them, and the only way to succeed is either to deceive or to ruin all those people” (PN 100/968). The conflict of interests is thus especially evident in commercial economies: —Financial systems make venal souls, and as

Beaumont 28f/936f). Interdependence (in his terms, —universal dependence” or —mutual dependence”) is also emphasized at PN 100/968; DOI I, 151/153, 158-59/161f. Rousseau sometimes makes claims which would support the more usual understanding of him, that inequality and property are the root of perceived evils (DOI II, 161/164; Note IX, 200/204; Obs. 45/49f), but it would seem that the clearest understanding of his most considered judgment would have interdependence as the logically and chronologically prior cause. See also the argument of Melzer for the primacy of interdependence, quoted in Chapter 1, Note 80.

On the natural, extensive harmony of selfish interests maintained by most philosophers, see Graeme Garrard, Rousseau’s Counter-Enlightenment, 19-26; Mark Hulling, The Autocritique of Enlightenment, 9-37; and Helena Rosenblatt, Rousseau and Geneva, 52-61. Of course, this assumption was not universally prevalent much longer; for instance, in his study of the origins of Marxism, Leszek Kolakowski entitles the section on Rousseau and Hume, —Destruction of the belief in natural harmony” (Main Currents of Marxism, 1:41-44).

This principle is also appealed to in establishing the destructiveness of irreligion, since —what private interests have in common is so slight that it will never outweigh what sets them in opposition” (E IV, 312n/633n, discussed below in Section 3.4. See also E IV, 314f/636).
soon as all one wants is to profit, one invariably profits more by being a knave [frip] than by being an honest man” (Poland XI, 226/1005).

Thus as a general rule, "la Société humaine...necessarily moves men to hate one another in proportion as their interests clash...” (DOI Note IX, 197f/202). Accordingly, the public, moralizing maxims of the civilized are directly contrary to their private, self-interested reason. They are born "enemies by duty and knaves by interest,” and only lacking the assurance of impunity prevents them from fulfilling the insatiable, brutal self-aggrandizements which are "the secret aspirations of every Civilized man's heart." It is interdependence and the resulting conflict of interests, then, which are responsible for the incessant deception, jealousy, treachery, and crimes which we observe (LR 71/80, PN 100/968f). On such grounds Rousseau suggests a fundamental contrast between independent and interdependent life:

It is perfectly possible that a Savage might commit a bad action, but it is not possible that he will acquire the habit of doing evil, because it would profit him nothing. I believe that men's morals can be very accurately gauged by how much business [la multitude des affaires] they have with one another: the more dealings

12 In his most constructive ethical work he draws a positive conclusion from the same pessimistic principle: "The precept of never hurting another carries with it that of being attached to human society [la societé humaine] as little as possible, for in the social state the good of one necessarily constitutes the harm of another” (E II, 105n/340n).

13 See all of the remarkable DOI Note IX, 197f-199/202-203, which includes the contrast of "our frivolous displays of beneficence” with "what goes on in the recesses of men's hearts” (198/203). A close parallel is found in the slightly earlier Preface to Narcissus: "Uncommitted crimes dwell deep in men’s hearts, and all that keeps them from being carried out is the assurance of impunity” (101/969). Although both Savages and Europeans are both merely men, in Europe "the government, the laws, the customs, self-interest, everything places individuals under the necessity of deceiving one another, and of doing so incessantly; everything conspires to make vice a duty for them; they must be wicked if they are to be wise, since there is no greater folly than to provide for the happiness of scoundrels at the expense of one's own” (PN 101n/969n).

14 Another important passage contrasts dependence on men with that on things: "Dependence on men, since it is without order, engenders all the vices, and by it, master and slave are mutually corrupted” (E II, 85/311).
they have [plus ils commercent ensemble], the more they admire their talents and their industry, the more decorously and cunningly are they villains, and the more contemptible they are. I say it reluctantly: the good man is he who has no need to deceive anyone, and the Savage is that man. (PN 101-2n/970n, emphasis added)\textsuperscript{15}

In contrast to the vigorous independence and self-sufficiency of the savages (DSA I, 7n/7n), "ties of servitude are formed solely by men's mutual dependence and the reciprocal needs that unite them" (DOI I, 158-59/161f; see also II, 182/187). Many come to hold Domination dearer than independence, and consent to bear chains so that they might impose chains [on others] in turn" (II, 183/188; see also LR 76-77n/86-87n). Much later in life, Rousseau again found the principle applicable to his ambitious contemporaries: "they torment themselves their whole life long by doing what is loathsome to them; they omit nothing servile in order to command" (Rev. VI, 56/1059; cf. RJJ II, 179/891).\textsuperscript{16} By contrast, Rousseau's fundamental maxim praises the person who has no need to put another's arms at the ends of one's own; from which it follows that the first of all goods is not authority but freedom" (E II, 84/309).\textsuperscript{17}

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\textsuperscript{15} This contrast of occasional outbursts versus habitual will may also lie behind the following definition: "war consists not in one or several unpremeditated fights, not even in homicide or murder committed in an outburst of anger, but in the steady, considered and manifest will to destroy one's enemy…" ("The State of War," LPW 173/OC 3:173). Cf. Hobbes, Leviathan, XIII, ¶8, p. 76.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{16} As sources Robert Osmont provides the case of Otho in Tacitus, Histories I.36, and La Bruyere, Caractères VIII.12 (OC 1:1707n1). Against Tronchin's claim that in general, men fear to obey more than they love to command," Rousseau again appeals to Otho as exemplary: "Tacitus judged differently about it and knew the human heart. If the maxim were true, the Valets of the great would be less insolent with the Bourgeois, and one would see fewer good-for-nothings groveling in the Courts of Princes. Few men have healthy enough hearts to be able to love liberty: All wish to command, and at that price none fear to obey. A little upstart gives himself a hundred masters in order to acquire ten valets. One has only to see the pride of the nobles in Monarchies…” (Mountain VIII, 261n/842n).
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\textsuperscript{17} Similarly, his ideal of liberty in a free state is understood less as doing what one pleases, and more as not being subjected to another's will or subjecting someone else to yours (Mountain VIII, 260f/841). According to Patrick Riley, it is only with this 1764 Mountain passage that Rousseau formulates both negative and positive freedom correctly from a Kantian perspective (—Rousseau's General Will,” 138).
\end{flushleft}
discusses several of these passages, concluding that Rousseau radicalizes the classical critique of the tyrant, since for him — every form of social power, and not just tyranny, is [dangerously] unstable owing to man's natural asociality and intractability.18 In all of this we begin to uncover another fundamental tension or paradox of his project, since his critique of social oppression is rooted not so much in an institutional accident or an oppressive (and eliminable) minority, as in the universal aspirations of an initially good human nature inasmuch as it becomes social and interdependent.

2.2 Legalized Exploitation and Elite Harshness

Our —Vigorous Primitive” and gentle —social-Savage” had brief, occasional explosions of ferocity or cruelty interrupting a fundamentally harmonious and peaceable life; in the civilized human, we might find a formal parallel in reverse. The civilized human's fundamental, habitual state is self-serving manipulation, deceit, and use of others, secretly pining after opportunities for more complete and overt forms of domination or exploitation, which periodically occur and are seized. We must note, though, that in the usual state of civilization, a legally enforced social contract prevents most open displays of violence. This seems to be a significant factor explaining why Rousseau almost never charges his elite contemporaries with being ferocious or even cruel. For although he portrays modern civilization as brutally oppressive to the majority of its subjects, he also portrays the civilized (and especially its leading figures) as luxurious and weak rather than forceful or ferocious, enabling him to fault them for

18 Natural Goodness, 74n8; see 73-74. For examples of this apparently inevitable instability, see the relations of the wealthy person with his servants in —On Wealth” (CW 11:12-12/OC 5:476-77).
lacking the vigor found in Savages or Citizens. We have seen that civilization’s oppressiveness is partially explained by an economic system in which the soft indulgences of a few naturally generate cruel deprivations for the many. We will find that Rousseau depicts a similar, systemic cruelty in regard to civilized legal systems. Nonetheless, it remains puzzling how such a severe legal and economic system might be established and maintained by an elite which lacks both strength and violent cruelty. Although Rousseau does not directly address this problem, a coherent explanation may be found in his depiction of contemporary elites as “harsh” or “hard” (dur), alongside the sociopolitical psychology which drives this harshness.

Since each civilized person must strive to make others “really or apparently find their own profit” in working for one’s own profit, one becomes deceitful [fourbe] and artful with some, imperious and harsh [dur] with the rest…” (DOI II, 170/175, translation modified). While these masquerades seem to characterize every person in rough proportion to their civilization, Rousseau seems to posit a need for gentler and more artful forms of manipulation whenever one is dealing with a social superior or equal. The search for the means of ensuring impunity is thus “the end to which the powerful bend all their forces, and the weak all their cunning” (DOI IX, 198/203). And since these

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19 The idea of the superior within a greatly unequal power structure tending overwhelmingly toward contempt for his inferiors is paralleled in Norbert Elias’s account of The Civilizing Process. For Elias, however, this was much more common in the straightforward domination of feudal times, and with the rise of effective state monopolies of coercion as well as increasing links of economic interdependence, all classes felt cumulatively effective external pressures toward affective restraint and politeness. See esp. the following: “The further interdependence and the division of labor advance, the more dependent the upper class became on the other classes, and the greater, therefore, becomes the social strength of these classes, at least potentially. Even when the upper class was still primarily a warrior class, when it kept the other classes dependent chiefly through the sword and the monopoly of weapons, some degree of dependence on these other classes was certainly not entirely absent. But it was incomparably less; and less, too…was the pressure from below. Accordingly, the sense of mastery of the upper class, its contempt for other classes, was far more open, and the pressure on upper-class people to exercise restraint and to control their drives, was far less strong” (The Civilizing Process, II.11, 177; for the theory of interdependence, see
forces” include the usual workings of legal and economic power, elites brandish considerable social control over the mass of humanity, without characteristically needing recourse to direct personal violence.

Given the influence of contemporary elites, Rousseau need not attribute extreme violence or ferocity to them; neither must he revise his depictions of them as softly self-indulgent. They seem to be able to maintain and profit from their place in the system through “harshness” alone, which seems to be Rousseau’s most frequent characterization of them. In one extreme outburst, he writes: “I hate the great [les grands], I hate their status [leur etat], their harshness [leur dureté], their prejudices, their pettiness, and all their vices, and I would hate them even more if I despised them less” (“Letters to Malesherbes” IV, CW 5:582/OC 1:1145). He would later find an exception to elite harshness through the patronage of the Duc de Luxembourg. Without making the

esp. IV.1, 367-91. See also the depiction of how this masking of impulse was less all-embracing and automatic in the court society than in the “pacified middle classes,” since for the court society, the dependence and submissiveness of the poorer strata always opened a broad social field…in which affective impulses of all kinds could be openly expressed” [The Court Society, 258; quoted in Stephen Mennell, The American Civilizing Process, 109]). Tocqueville offers a similar account of the softening of aristocratic manners with the equalizing of social states (see Democracy in America, II 3.1; II 3.21, which is also appealed to in support of Sharon Krause’s social theory in her Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation, 110; see also 125, 200). Tocqueville also objected to Gobineau’s theory of invincible, natural racial inequalities on similar grounds: “What interest can there be in persuading the base people who live in barbarism, in indolence, or in servitude, that since they exist in such a state by virtue of the nature of their race, there is nothing to do to ameliorate their condition, change their mores, or modify their government? Do you not see that your doctrine brings out naturally all the evils that permanent inequality creates—pride, violence, the contempt of fellow men, tyranny, and abjectness under all forms?” (Letter to Arthur de Gobineau, 17 November 1853, in The Tocqueville Reader, 268).

20 Rousseau “does not have a very sublime opinion in general of the high virtue of men of quality [gens de qualité]” (RJJ II, 187n/901n, translation modified). On the other hand, he does not appreciate the many letters he receives, attempting to bait him, filled with “nothing but stupid declamations against Nobles [les Grands] and the rich” (RJJ II, 191/906f).

21 To Rousseau, this exception only further demonstrated their culpability, as he explained to his patron in a transport of emotion: —AhM. le Maréchal, I hated Grandees [les Grands] before I knew you, and now I hate them even more, since you make me feel so much how easy it would be for them to make themselves adored” (Conf. X, 441f/527).
connection directly, he may have wanted to establish himself as an additional (albeit short-term) exception, since he claimed that during his association with the powerful he did not lose his simplicity of manners or become less affable with the ordinary people [*moins liant avec le peuple*]” (Conf. X, 442/527). More characteristic cases are commonly found in Rousseau’s writings, especially the autobiographies. For instance, François Grossi, once the chief physician of Savoy, was certainly the most caustic and brutal *Monsieur* I have ever known…. He was as miserly as he was rich and harsh [*dur*]” (Conf. V, 171/203-4). Similarly, the self-important *parvenu* Saint-Lambert completely forgot that his footman was a person, and treated him with such a shocking contempt [*mépris*], with such a harsh [*dur*] disdain in everything…” (Conf. IX, 302/467). One outstanding fragment suggests that a wealthy person’s habitual harshness is continually reinforced by his need to harden himself in turning away the needy from a share of his surplus, and the constant use of locks, chains, and the gallows to shield it from them.22 The wealthy person thus perfectly reverses Rousseau’s proto-Kantian maxim we discussed above, in showing softness [*molesse*] toward yourself and…harshness [*dureté*] for others” (CW 11:14/OC 5:478).24 Rousseau’s well-known social theory of pity is also

22 Stated in the second person: —*durcissez votre ame à l’aspect de toute les souffrances des indigens*” (OC 5:476).

23 –*On Wealth,*” CW 11:8, 12, 15-16/OC 5:471, 476, 480-81. This fragment seems to find an official, briefer expression in *Emile*: →*If I were rich, I would have done everything necessary to become so. I would therefore be insolent and low, sensitive and delicate toward myself alone, pitiless and hard toward everyone else* [*dur pour tout le monde*], a disdainful spectator of the miseries of the rabble—for I would no longer give any other name to the indigent, in order to make people forget that I once belonged to their class…. Up to this point I would be like all other rich men” (E IV, 345/678). After a similar litany against the harsh neglect of the poor by the wealthy, he writes ironically that —*God has endowed them with a most meritorious gentleness* [*douceur*] *with which they are able to support the misfortunes of others*” (LA 39/279/36). We shall return to the moral impact of becoming rich in Note 72.

24 Regrets and debasement inevitably follow from this (*On Wealth,*” CW 11:14/OC 5:478). For the ideal of being severe to oneself and gentle to others, see Chapter 1, Note 22 above.
offered in this connection: "One pities in others only those ills from which one does not feel oneself exempt" (E IV, 224/507). Accordingly, kings lack pity for their subjects because "they count on never being mere men"; the rich are "so hard [si durs] toward the poor" and the nobles show "so great a contempt [mépris] for the people" because they count on never being poor or common (E IV, 224/507). Therefore, much as the abundance of the luxurious classes has far different social consequences than that of the Idyllic Primitive, so their painlessness and security lead to increased social harshness rather than contented peacefulness.

The great are able to attain what they desire typically through mere harshness rather than explosive, violent cruelty, largely because of a compliant legal system. In any political order in which the wealthy and powerful have established a social contract over the people yet by and for themselves, they are enabled by the laws continuously to exploit the poor and the weak in peaceful impunity. Rousseau may be seen as attempting to expose such an order as merely an "order," as when he condemns "our foolish civil institutions in which the true public good and genuine justice are always sacrificed to"

More generally, "The man who did not know pain would know neither the tenderness of humanity nor the sweetness [douceur] of commiseration" (E II, 87/313f). An additional maxim hinges on the sentiment one attributes to the person undergoing hardship. In this way one can be hardened [endurcit] against the fate of humans just as one does not pity a sheep going to the slaughter, who is presumed not to foresee his fate; "and the rich are consoled about the ill they do to the poor, because they assume the latter to be stupid enough to feel nothing of it" (E IV, 225/509). The general theory is anticipated by Aristotle, albeit with a moralistic rather than a class-conscious application: "Pity may be defined as a feeling of pain at an apparent evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it, and which we might expect to befall ourselves or some friend of ours, and moreover to befall us soon" (Rhetoric II.8, 1385b13-15, in The Complete Works; cf. Hobbes, Leviathan, VI, ¶46, p. 32).

Tocqueville, although clearly less of a social radical than Rousseau, noticed a similar pattern, at least in the France of Rousseau’s time: "This government of the old regime, which was...so gentle [doux] and sometimes so timid when it came to men placed above the lower classes—so enamored of forms, of slowness and consideration—was often harsh [rude] and always quick when it acted against the lower classes, and above all against the peasantry" (The Old Regime and the Revolution, II.12, 189/Oeuvres complètes, 2:187; see also III.6).
some apparent order or other, in fact destructive of all order, and which does nothing but add the sanction of public authority to the oppression of the weak and the iniquity of the strong” (Conf. VII, 274/327). The most universal application of this principle is again found, surprisingly enough, in the constructive Emile: “the universal spirit of the laws of every country is always to favor the strong against the weak and those who have against those who have nothing. This difficulty is inevitable, and it is without exception” (E IV, 236n/524n). Rousseau offers many instances of this spirit, in terms of both the framing of the laws and their enforcement. In some fragments he seems to posit a moral equivalence between theft and various sanctioned activities of the wealthy. For instance,

27 The quotation here was prompted by reflecting upon the futility of his official complaints about the unjust and incompetent French ambassador to Venice (Conf. VII, 274/327). For similarly extreme declarations against civilization, see Mountain I, 148/705; DOI II, 174/179; Beaumont 52/967, the latter being quoted in Note 86 below.

28 Translation modified. The principle is perhaps less universal in the following fragment, given the ambiguous “among us”: “[16] Law and the practice of justice among us are only the art of sheltering the Nobles and the rich from the just reprisals of the poor. [17] They make the most of the full rigor of the laws to avenge all the wrongs done to them and elude the laws with ease in all those they do to others” (PF IV [On Laws], 32/496). Another fragment contrasts the depiction in learned books of the miseries of nature and the peace and justice of civil order, on the one hand, with actual observations, on the other hand. “see unfortunate peoples groaning under an iron yoke, mankind crushed by a handful of oppressors, starving masses overwhelmed by pain and hunger, whose blood and tears the rich drink in peace, and everywhere the strong armed against the weak with the frightful power of the laws” (“The State of War,” LPW 162/OC 3:608f). Harry Payne observes that Rousseau stated clearly in the 1750s the sort of pessimistic position regarding the usual function of law which other philosophers only gradually learned over the course of the following two decades” (The Philosophes and the People, 178-80).

29 After explaining how he, a mere apprentice, was being made to pilfer by a journeyman, he notes how if he had been caught, the journeyman’s denial of involvement would have been believed, leading to Rousseau’s double punishment. “This is how in every condition the guilty strong person saves himself at the expense of the innocent weak one” (Conf. I, 28/33). A similar principle is mentioned as a “great maxim” of the Jesuits (VII, 273/326, cf. XII, 507/606); regarding the French Opéra’s continued use of his The Village Soothsayer while denying him the agreed upon price (VIII, 324/386); the hunting rights of princes (XI, 481/574f); the application of consumption taxes for necessities rather than luxuries (LA 114n2/335n2/104n2); the especially secretive legal procedures of France (RJJ I, 60/736f, including a rare, positive remark on England); and in many other instances (e.g. Mountain V, 222/796, VIII, 278/862f). One passage mentions the biblical case of Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kings 21:1-16) as a warning about living close to the noble and the rich (E V, 473/857). Another passage suggests the probability of some form of rape or seduction with impunity, since the poor man is “lost…if he has the misfortunate to have an honest soul, an attractive daughter, and a powerful neighbor” (DPE 32/272).
the real reason one finds few thieves and murderers among the wealthy is that—"they have a thousand more convenient ways of stealing and murdering" ("Notes on Helvétius's On the Mind," CW 12:212/OC 4:1130). Since there exists, in addition, a powerful duty within the civil state not to oppose the violence or injustice one sees, the wicked must frequently be left unchecked (ML V, 194/1106f). The extreme pessimism of Rousseau's positive legal theory would find innumerable successors, but among predecessors one may perhaps number only Plato's Thrasymachus and Bernard Mandeville.31

In all of this, we find that although the overt violence of the elite may be rare, their exploitative injustices are frequent, and they can be assured that the legal authorities will look aside if their abuses of their fellows take on extra-legal proportions. Nonetheless, Rousseau's depictions of the elite are clearly distinguishable from the vigor

30 This is offered as a comment on Helvétius's claim that, "if, among rich people, often less virtuous than indigent people, one sees few thieves and murderers it is because, for a rich man, the profit from theft is never proportionate to the risk of torture" ("Notes on Helvétius's On the Mind," CW 12:212/OC 4:1130; cf. Henry Fielding, An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers, 345-46). Rousseau also maintains that the wealthy hire writers to make the poor man's theft even more infamous and the rich man's even more respected; every day imagining new distinctions in order to authorize in the one and punish in the other the same intrigues under other names" (On Wealth," CW 11:12/OC 5:476). For more on the reduction of murder in Rousseau's times, see below, Chapter 3, around Note 133.

31 On the close link between Rousseau's view of society and that of Thrasymachus, see the fine discussions in Arthus Melzer, The Natural Goodness of Man, 60-63, 82-84, and Rousseau and the Problem of Bourgeois Society," 1019a-20a. However, Thrasymachus seems to account for a democratic version of this brutal legal positivism, while Rousseau sees the laws as uniformly favoring the rich. In this Rousseau seems more in line—descriptively but not evaluatively—with Mandeville (Fable of the Bees, 1:23f; cf. 164, 206, 272-74). Smith noted this and several other commonalities with Mandeville (letter to the Edinburgh Review," in Essays on Philosophical Subjects, 251-52; cf. his own view in Wealth of Nations V.i.b.2, 709-10, V.i.b.12, 715). Hobbes, a strong psychological egoist who is often understood as maximally pessimistic, would deny Rousseau's thesis, since in a monarchy, "the private interest is the same with the public" (Leviathan XIX, ¶4, p. 120; cf. XXV, ¶16, p. 172). Augustine may come closer to Thrasymachus and Rousseau here, with his comparison of kingdoms to great bands of robbers, differing only in that kingdoms have added numbers and impunity (City of God IV.4, 147-48). Although it has been argued that Augustine does believe justice is absent in all earthly states (Herbert Deane, The Social and Political Ideas of St. Augustine, 125-29), this conclusion can be avoided by attributing the lack of justice to most kingdoms most of the time" (Jean Bethke Elshtain, Augustine and the Limits of Politics, 106), to non-Christian civil governments (Oliver O'Donovan, The City of God XIX and Western Political Thought," 143), or to the necessary, minimal structure of civil governments, rather than all practically functioning governments (John Rist, Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized, 219).
and occasional cruelty of social-Savages, let alone the habitual bloodthirstiness of the Hunter-Savages. Historically, however, the civilized elite’s mere harshness and largely peaceable exploitation seem to have been made possible through precisely this sort of bloodthirstiness. As we have seen, the Hunter-Savages are said to become —warriors, conquerors, and usurpers” (EOL IX, 271/399). In a similar way, contemporary aristocrats seem to be the descendants of that —most horrible state of war” of the rich and powerful versus the poor and weak, which followed the advent of agriculture, metallurgy, property, and the seizure of all open land, but preceded the invention of government (DOI II, 169f-173/174-77). The establishment of laws generates a degree of restraint which decreases the degree of severity necessary in private retributions (167/170f).

Accordingly, the exploitative and stratifying nature of civilized interdependence is reinforced by legal power. This allows social elites to be harsh to the majority of humans while being—as we will see at length in the Chapter 3—gentle to their peers and superiors, and indulging in an idle luxury which greatly softens their bodies without generating the natural delight of pre-civilized abundance.

2.3 Middling Estates

Until this point we have discussed civilized elites and commoners in a dichotomized fashion, in keeping with the typology laid out in Chapter 1. This dichotomized schema has the advantage of capturing Rousseau’s fundamental polemic

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32 Cf. the remarks of Milord Edward on how rarely great aristocratic names descended from a man genuinely worthy of respect, and how it is always a twenty to one wager that a gentleman descends from a knave (fripón). As for the consequences of the nobility, —Mortal enemy of laws and liberty, what has it ever produced in most countries where it flourishes, other than the power of tyranny and the oppression of peoples?” (Julie I.62, 138-39/169-70).
against the stratifying nature of interdependent (and especially commercial) civilization. However, Rousseau was aware that modern societies were not reducible to the very rich and the very poor, and here we shall clarify the status the middling categories he mentions, namely the men of letters and the bourgeois.

Rousseau seems to present men of letters as similar to elites in their enjoyment of the soft privileges of civilization. Being parasitic upon the wealth of their benefactors, though, they do not need to engage in direct exploitation. Being able to focus far more on “kissing up” than “kicking down,” they may lack the greats’ fundamental motivation for harshness. Rousseau seems to find their crimes to be matters more of omission than commission; or at least, their commissions are chiefly verbal. To take the most notable cases, he argues that they defend only the interests of those who fund them, revealing their indifference to the truth and to the well-being of the many (SC II.2, 59/370f; E V, 458/837). He also finds a stark contrast between their cosmopolitan professions and their indifference to whatever suffering does not directly disturb their work and prospects (cf. PN 99/967; DOI I, 153/156; E IV, 312n/633n). Finally, an exception to their generally humane and gregarious demeanor is often found when their most treasured

33 The current phrase, “kiss-up, kick-down,” was used by Carl W. Ford Jr. to describe John R. Bolton, then George W. Bush’s appointee for ambassador to the United Nations (Dafna Linzer and Charles Babington, “Former Colleague Says Bolton Abused Power at State Department,” Washington Post, April 13, 2005, page A04; online version). However well this may apply to Bolton, it aptly captures the sort of mentality Rousseau takes to be virtually universal in civilized life, and perhaps especially in social climbers (such as the case of Saint-Lambert, discussed above).

34 Montesquieu makes a similar argument, without applying it uniformly to the learned (Persian Letters, Supplementary Letter 8, or Letter 145 in the 1758 edition).

35 Such intellectuals display the false cosmopolitanism discussed in Chapter 1, Note 16 above. Their combination of indifference and interdependence is importantly explained by a contrast of two kinds of bonds: I complain that Philosophy loosens the bonds of society formed by mutual esteem and benevolence, and I complain that the sciences, the arts and all the other objects of commerce tighten the bonds of society through self-interest. And it is indeed impossible to tighten one of these bonds without the other relaxing by as much. There is therefore no contradiction here” (PN 100n/968n).
orthodoxies are challenged, such as (of course) in their treatment of poor Jean-Jacques himself.36

The bourgeois provides a more complex middling case, in that Rousseau is often understood as presenting the first use of the term bourgeois in its modern sense, and the first analysis of “the problem of the bourgeois.”37 However, if we understand “bourgeois” to indicate a rising commercial middle class, the habits characteristic of it, and in contradistinction to the classical citizen, then this figure seems to be more rare and shadowy in the writings of Rousseau than one would expect.38 His most influential remarks contrast the unity of self and public dedication of the citizen to the self-division of the people of his day—presumably due to their privatized and commercialized status.39 Yet discussions of the bourgeois as a distinctive social class actually seem quite rare. And despite his apparent hostility to every existing form of social inequality in his Second Discourse (II, 187-88/192-94), in several passages he explicitly repudiates the aspiration for complete equality of wealth (PF VII [Luxury, Commerce, and the Arts],

36 For his persecution by proud intellectuals, see RJJ II, 179/891 (quoted in Chapter 1, Note 22 above), and the excellent discussions of philosophic pride in Christopher Kelly, Rousseau as Author, 148-50, 154-65.


38 See, for instance, the retrospective from 1768, entitled “Sentiments of the Public Toward Me in the Various Estates that Compose It” (CW 12:67/OC 1:1183-84). While listing at least ten distinct social groups, including the Great, the Magistrates, the Priests, and Le peuple (“which was my idol”), Rousseau does not list anything corresponding to the bourgeois or middle class. Melzer may implicitly account for this in maintaining that “the divided modern man is characteristically a ‘bourgeois,’ not in the narrow sense of ‘middle-class,’ but in the broader one originated by Rousseau: an urban non-citizen, any selfish man who is very dependent on society (unlike the peasant or the savage) but who does not live (and die) for it (as does the citizen)” (“Rousseau and the Problem of Bourgeois Society,” 1018n3).

39 See esp. E I, 40/249f; SC I.6n; Mountain IX, 292f/881 (the latter is quoted below, in Chapter 3, Note 143). Other brief mentions of “bourgeois” in the relevant sense include Julie II.16, 200/243; Corsica 131/911; Poland XI, 228f/1008; Conf. V, 161/192. See also the more positive use of the term in the Letter to Voltaire, EPW 236/OC 4:1063, quoted in Note 66 below.
49/522), instead striving to combat only extreme economic inequality. In keeping with this, his practical political writings actually reveal a strong endorsement of the middling classes and their general tendencies toward justice; it is, in fact, the political abuses inevitably caused by the very rich and the very poor which make extreme inequalities politically unacceptable.  

It seems, then, that Rousseau’s fundamental critique of the bourgeois and commercial lifestyle largely hinges upon his empirical observation that a deeply commercial society cannot sustain a bourgeois class, if understood in the sense of a stable and substantial middle class. As we will see below, his general picture of commercial society, and especially major urban centers, consists of desperate competition; extreme over-exertion of oneself and of those one exploits in pursuit of wealth and distinction (PF

40 Robert Wokler similarly maintains that for Rousseau equality ought not to be pursued for its own sake,” and that Rousseau never sought the abolition of private property, despite the virulence of his critique (Rousseau, 80). Rousseau seems formally to follow Montesquieu in distinguishing the need for a much higher degree of equality in a monarchy than a republic, since “Never in a monarchy can the opulence of an individual put him above the prince; but, in a republic, it can easily put him above the laws” (LA 115/336/105. Cf. Montesquieu, Spirit of the Laws, III.3-7, V.2-7, XI.3-6, XIX.27. The parallel is only formal, though, in that Montesquieu clearly favors monarchies in some ways, whereas Rousseau finds their highly unequal political and economic system to be ultimately disastrous). Several important passages argue against allowing extreme inequality to arise, or in behalf of a self-sufficient estate—between the very wealthy and the beggars—as the bulwark of the laws (DPE 19/258; SC II.11, 78, 78n/391f, 392n, Mountain IX, 300-301, 301n, 305/889-91, 891n, 896f). His recurring argument that this middling estate does not have the pretense to rule over others and has a common interest only in the laws being observed, echoes Machiavelli’s contentions in behalf of the multitude over the powerful (The Prince, IX, 39; Discourses on Livy I.58, 115-19; II.2, 129-30).

41 Karl Marx also theorized the radically stratifying nature of capitalism, of course. Here he seems largely to converge with Rousseau, and their most relevant difference may be that Marx’s upper class is very much a commercial one, whereas Rousseau’s is largely aristocratic, having taken up only certain habits of commerce. For Marx on stratification, see e.g. The Communist Manifesto [1848], in Selected Writings, 229-30, 239. Max Weber takes up this argument of the Manifesto directly, arguing that it overlooked the need for specialized, clerical middling classes, which had proven necessary in complex economic enterprises even when ownership was being concentrated (“Socialism” [1918], in Political Writings, 289-90, cf. 279-81). Clifford Orwin also discusses the parallel between Rousseau and Marxism regarding inequality, while contrasting their shared approach with the view of Montesquieu and others regarding the rise of compassionate sensibilities (“Montesquieu’s Humanité and Rousseau’s Pitié,” 140-41).
V [On Honor and Virtue], 35/502); and rapid reversals of fortune, oscillating between excess and want.\(^{42}\) Even in the case of Geneva, Rousseau apparently resists acknowledging the development of a commercial middle class and upper-middle class. Instead, we find him celebrating mountainous yeoman farmers and industrious artisans, whose simple sustenance has come under threat by a political oligarchy.\(^{43}\) Whereas Montesquieu, Hume, Smith and others would favor a liberal economy precisely because it allows a middle class to arise and overturn the oppressive dependence and insecurity of feudalism,\(^{44}\) for Rousseau the commercial economy seemed only to increase inequality

\(^{42}\) Montesquieu also critiques rapid reversals, although he applies this not to commercial societies in general but to excesses of John Law’s reckless system of finance: “Everyone who was rich six months ago is now in poverty, and those who had no bread then are gorged with riches. Never have the two extremes been so close” (Persian Letters, 138, p. 245; or in the 1721 edition, 132, p. 185). For related comments see Persian Letters 132, 142, 146 (or in the 1721 edition, 126, 136, 138). John Law’s schemes were partially responsible for the —South Sea Bubble” of 1720; for the ensuing outcry, see E. J. Clery, The Feminization Debate in England: Literature, Commerce, and Luxury, ch. 3.

\(^{43}\) Some of Geneva’s residents are granted to be quite rich, yet Geneva lacks —those enormous disproportions of fortune, which impoverish a whole land to enrich a few inhabitants and sow misery around opulence.” Also, it is certain that —many live in relatively harsh poverty and that the easy circumstances of the majority come from hard work, economy, and moderation rather than positive wealth” (LA 93/319/85; for his remarks on Geneva’s eschewal of luxury and softness, see below, Chapter 3, Note 99). It may be that their mountainous terrain shields them from much of the typical development of commerce and inequality (cf. Corsica 134/914; Marks, Perfection and Disharmony, 77-82). Even so, Rousseau questions whether —inequality has not reached among us the last limit to which it can go without shaking the republic” (LA 115/336/105. See esp. Kelly, Rousseau as Author, 131-32. It is this challenging spirit in which the apparently exuberant praises of Geneva, in the Dedication of the Second Discourse, ought to be taken: see Rosenblatt, Rousseau and Geneva, 84-87; Rosenblatt, —Rousseau’s Gift to Geneva,” 65-66, 72-73; and Julie VI.5, 541/658). Yet in a final statement, in a work said to be intended only for himself, Rousseau seems to approve of the conditions in Geneva and Switzerland, where —abject poverty does not bring its hideous face to [public celebrations,] nor ostentation [le faste] show its insolence” (Rev. IX, 85/1093). Even with these qualifications in mind, Linda Kirk may be correct in maintaining that Rousseau’s accounts of Geneva—especially those before 1762—were idealized in avoiding discussion of the estate-based application of the sumptuary laws; the growth of banking, insurance, and international money-lending; and —the staggering opulence of…three or four hundred families” (—Genevan Republicanism,” 288-90).

\(^{44}\) For Montesquieu, see e.g. Persian Letters 106, 122 (or 103, 118 in the 1721 edition), Spirit of the Laws V.6, XIII.2, XX.4-5, XXI.20; for Hume, see esp. —Of Refinement in the Arts,” Essays, 277-78; —Of Commerce,” Essays, 265; cf. —Of the Middle Station of Life,” Essays, 547-49. On Smith, Dennis Rasmussen argues that he advocates commercial society, despite his sympathy with a number of Rousseau’s criticisms of its excesses, largely because it is a necessary precondition for overcoming the social dependence and political insecurity which prevailed in all pre-commercial societies (The Problems and Promise of Commercial Society: Adam Smith’s Response to Rousseau, esp. ch. 4).
and dissatisfaction. It would thus seem that —the problem of the bourgeois,” for Rousseau, consists in the spreading of a commercial and pandering culture across virtually all social ranks,\(^{45}\) rather than in the rise of one economic class. We will consider this self-styled culture of gentleness and politeness in Chapter 3.

2.4 The Common People as Natural or Degraded

As far as the great mass of civilized humanity is concerned, two contrasting themes are especially prominent in Rousseau—one of deprivation and degradation, the other of natural simplicity and goodness. In both cases the common people's lives can be described as —harder” than those of the privileged classes, at least materially speaking, but it is only in cases of degradation or extreme deprivation that moral decline results. Here I will suggest that Rousseau's depiction of commoners as either natural or degraded seems to hinge chiefly on the extent to which they are civilized through interdependence, urbanization, or feudal domination.

Despite his relentless assaults on the elites of his day and their institutions, Rousseau is far from ascribing all the virtues to the lower ranks. When advising the gentleman Emile regarding the class from which to seek a suitable wife, he even goes so far as to warn him about the difficulties of finding one among —the dregs of the people” (cf. Conf. VII, 278-79/332-33). —It is not that they are more vicious in the lowest rank than in the highest, but that they have few ideas of what is beautiful and decent, and that

\(^{45}\) I have here drawn from Ryan Hanley's observation that for Smith, —the problem of the bourgeois seems to extend across the ranks of commercial society” (—Commerce and Corruption: Rousseau's Diagnosis and Adam Smith's Cure,” 141). Cf. Dannhauser, —The Problem of the Bourgeois,” 7-8.
the injustice of the other estates makes the lowest see justice in its very vices” (EV, 408/767; see also PF IV [On Laws], 32/497). Considering the extent of the injustice Rousseau perceives in the higher estates, this logic makes him differ from many victimologists in his stark depiction of the vices which proliferate among many common people. For example, when exhorting the wealthy Sophie d’Houdetot to give of her time, efforts, and money in aiding the sick, poor, and oppressed, he braced her for the inevitable obstacles: “Unclean houses, brutal people, objects of poverty will begin by disgusting you…. You will find [the people] to be liars, self-interested, full of vices that will rebuff your zeal…” (ML VI, 202/1117). His advice consists not in denying the reality of these vices among the poor, but in considering their common humanity as well as one’s own vices and the education that covers them. He condemns Voltaire on similar grounds: “Above all I complain about the disdain that M. De Voltaire affects on every occasion for the poor in his writings which otherwise inspire only the good of humanity. It is not that this author is wrong in everything of which he accuses this deplorable part of the human race, but can he believe that…society will get on better for it if men are even harsher [encore plus durs]?” (“On Wealth,” CW 11:16/OC 5:481).46

If Voltaire was thereby displaying a characteristic vice of the class to which he had risen, the characteristic vices of the civilized poor appear to be pettiness, servility, violence, 47 prostitution, 48 and above all, theft. The latter can be contrasted with the

46 Payne singles out Rousseau’s opponent in a similar way: “No one portrayed the brutality of the people more insistently than Voltaire” (The Philosophes and the People, 18). For a balanced discussion of the philosophes’ combination of insensitive scorn and sober realism regarding le peuple, see Payne, ch 1, esp. p. 15.

47 The greater rates of murder among the people seems to be conceded in “Notes on Helvétius’s On the Mind,” CW 12:212/OC 4:1130 (discussed above, Note 30). We will return to the question of murder below in Section 3.5.
robberies (Brigandages) by the poor which seem frequent and open in the period of class warfare which immediately preceded the formation of governments (DOI II, 171/175f). Rousseau seems to find the experience of his own apprenticeship more characteristic of later civilization, settled by the force of contract and law. He then learned how:

to covet in silence, to hide myself, to dissimulate, to lie, and finally to steal [dérober]: a whim that had not come to me until then, and of which I have not been able to cure myself very well since. Covetousness and powerlessness always lead to this. This is why all lackeys are pilferers [fripons], and why all apprentices are likely to be [doivent l’être]: but in an equal and tranquil condition, where all they see is within their reach, the latter lose this shameful penchant when they grow up. (Conf. I, 27/32, translation modified)

He claims to overcome his fondness for pilfering—for the time being—during his stay with Madame Warens, where everything belonged to him (Conf. VI, 224f/268). The term fripons is his most common characterization of the poor under conditions of political order, and it would thus seem that the contrast with brigandages indicates that the rise of political order makes crime a much less bold, forceful, and violent enterprise, instead tending to become the covert acts of the weak.49

48 See, e.g., Julie Second Preface, 14/20; VI.6, 549/668. Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché note Rousseau’s distinctiveness here: —Although Diderot and others had drawn attention to the exploitation of poor girls by irresponsible men, it is unusual in this period to find the prostitute also seen as a kind of victim of society. Rousseau himself suggests in the Confessions that he could possibly have been responsible for inflicting such a fate on Marion [Conf. I, 71/85]” (CW 6:716n59).

49 Similarly, in Latin a clear distinction exists between robbery or armed raiding (latrocinium) and (the more small-scale and furtive) theft (furtum). This may make more sensible the perversion of the natural law which Aquinas notes among the German tribes, who did not consider —robbery” to be wrong—whereas it would be far more difficult for them to find honor in petty —theft” (cf. E. A. Goerner, —Response to Hall,” 653, 655n1; commenting on Aquinas, Summa theologiae I-II 94.4 resp., who is in turn drawing from Julius Caesar, De bello Gallico VI.23. See also Summa theologiae II-II 66.3-4; Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics V.2, 1131a6-8). A current parallel may be drawn, in keeping with common sociological perceptions of the United States as (for various reasons) a wilder and less civilized place than Europe with respect to violence (e.g. Mennell, The American Civilizing Process, 122-37). Accordingly, travelers in America would have greater fear of armed robbery or mugging, whereas those in Europe would have greater fear of pick-pocketing.
In addition to pushing the poor toward crime through sheer want, increasing interdependence also generates vices among them through ambition and instrumentalization. Rousseau’s critique of instrumentalization is perhaps most eloquently presented by the Wolmars as they contrast their own economic practices with those common elsewhere. They demand of their domestics —nothing but what is reasonable and useful, and they have enough respect for the dignity of man albeit in servitude to put him only to tasks that do not abase [avilissent] him” (Julie IV.10, 386/469). According to Julie:

Man…is too noble a being to have to serve merely as an instrument of others, and he ought not to be used for purposes that suit them without consulting also what suits him; for men are not made for positions, but positions are made for them, and in order to allocate things appropriately one must not in distributing them look for the job each man is best at, but for the one that is best for each man, so as to render him as good and happy as is possible. It is never permissible to degrade [détériorer] a human soul for the benefit of others, nor to make a villain [scélérat] for the service of honest people. (Julie V.2, 439/536)

Here we find close anticipations of Kant’s ‘Formula of Humanity,’” and it seems plausible that Kant’s well-known realization of the dignity of humanity through Rousseau may have derived from these passages, since Kant read Julie carefully. Tocqueville, by contrast, maintained that under the old order, a moderately high degree of servitude had

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50 She had earlier observed, Servitude is so unnatural to man that it cannot possibly exist without a measure of discontent” (Julie IV.10, 378/460).

51 Cf. Ernst Cassirer, Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe, 1-2, 14. More generally, for Kant’s discovery of the dignity of humanity through Rousseau, see Allen Wood, ‘General Introduction” to Kant, Practical Philosophy, xvii-xviii; or Wood, Kant’s Ethical Thought, 5-9. The difficulty of applying Kant’s principle of ‘never as a means only” to the social and economic realms is suggested by his perception that those craftsmen who did not independently generate their own products were too dependent to be worthy of the vote: Theory and Practice, AK 8:295 and 295n, and Metaphysics of Morals, AK 6:315-16 (both in Practical Philosophy).
often been maintained without abasement of soul, and in this he may have been rebuking Rousseau for ratcheting up social expectations beyond what is feasible on a large scale.

Presumably in large part because their economic and social practices have little in common with those of the Wolmats at Clarens, the populace in “the majority of states” is brutalized and stupid” (Mountain IX, 299/889). Once again, significant personal experiences seem to lie behind Rousseau’s social concepts. The semi-fictional Savoyard Vicar found that — the opprobrium to which fortune had reduced the [young Rousseau] stifled every true sentiment of good and evil in him. There is a degree of degradation [d’abrutissement] which takes away life from the soul, and the inner voice cannot make itself heard to someone who thinks only of feeding himself” (E IV, 264/562). In Emile, his greatest constructive writing, Rousseau thus presents himself as having escaped such

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52 “The people, not having conceived of the idea of a social state other than their own nor imagining they could ever be equal to their chiefs, received their benefits and did not discuss their rights. They loved their chiefs when the chiefs were lenient and just, and they submitted to their rigors without trouble and without baseness [basses], as they would to inevitable evils sent by the arm of God…. It is not the use of power or the habit of obedience that depraves men, but the use of power that they consider illegitimate, and obedience to a power they regard as usurped and oppressive” (Democracy in America, Introduction, 8/44, quoted with approval in Höhle, Morals and Politics, 788-90; see, similarly, Democracy in America I 2.7, 246; II 3.5, 546-47; Note XXII, 702; and The Old Regime and the Revolution, II.1, II.11, 179. Cf. Democracy in America, II 3.12, 575, on American women). On the other hand, we have seen Tocqueville’s perception of strong tendencies toward injustice under the old regime (Notes 19 and 26 above). In addition, he found that a highly abasing form of poverty was arising in Britain, namely the paupers, and his analysis of them would parallel Rousseau’s perception of the degraded masses as exceptions to the processes of modern refinement: “While throughout the rest of the nation education spreads, morals improve, tastes become more refined, manners more polished, the indigent remains motionless, or rather he goes backward. He could be described as reverting to barbarism” (First Memoir on Pauperism,” in The Tocqueville Reader, 146).

53 Similarly, in discussing the possible emancipation of the serfs of Poland: “I laugh at those degraded [avilis] peoples who, letting plotters rouse them to riot, dare to speak of freedom without so much as an idea of it, and, their hearts full of all the vices of slaves, imagine that all it takes to be free is to be unruly” (Poland VII, 196/974).

54 It was a combination of poverty and religious incredulity that was stifling the boy’s nature (E IV, 263/561). He is shortly thereafter identified as the young Rousseau (264/563).
suffering and debasement after this encounter. However, his later persecution suggested to him a kind of misfortune which seems to parallel his youthful degradation: —Some kinds of adversity elevate and strengthen the soul, but some strike it down and kill it; such is the one to which I am prey” (Rev. VI, 53/1055). Presumably, the pains and toils of most pre-civilized humans, as well as independent farmers, would fall squarely into the category of strengthening adversity. In this way Rousseau seems to posit extreme deprivation, instrumentalization, and disdainful treatment—rather than suffering as such—as lying behind the degradation and vices of the poor. These observations weigh heavily against the contention of Judith Shklar, that for Rousseau suffering was an unmitigated evil that ought to be reduced in every possible way.”

The kinds of suffering against which Rousseau protests are best exemplified by urban life. And here, too, his cries against victimization are framed alongside critiques of perverted appetites. Just as we have seen that many civilized people will submit to every form of servility for the opportunity to command, so he reveals how the deceits and

55 Marcel Raymond comments (OC 1:1805n6) that in the Ébauches des Confessions, Rousseau wrote that “My persecution has elevated my soul” (OC 1:1164), but this was written around fifteen years before the Reveries.

56 One passage calls tilling the land and living off its fruits the “condition natural to man.” —All the true pleasures are within his reach; he has only the pains inseparable from humanity, pains that he who thinks he can avoid merely exchanges for other, more cruel ones” (Julie V.2, 438/534f, translation modified). The suffering of pre-civilized humans is discussed above, Sections 1.3–1.4.

57 Men and Citizens, 54. See, similarly, 12, 40, 71, 135. Shklar’s interpretation may converge too conveniently with her own moral views (see Ordinary Vices, 5, 21, 237, 241; —The Liberalism of Fear,” esp. 29). A distinction between fundamentally different kinds of suffering is also supported by Rousseau’s theodicy” or physiodicy.” This distinguishes between moral evil, which is grounded in human folly and choice, and physical evils which are merely the orderly workings of nature. See Letter to Voltaire, 18 August 1756, EPW 233-34/OC 4:1061; cf., on general versus particular evils, Letter to Voltaire, EPW 240/OC 4:1068; E IV, 281-82/587-88 (Savoyard Vicar). In view of these distinctions it would seem that Julie on her deathbed expresses Rousseau’s ideal response to suffering, after she mentions her life’s laments: —Ad yet, if I had to be reborn under the same conditions, the evil I have committed would be the only one I would wish to retrench: the evil I have suffered I would still accept” (Julie VI.11, 595/726).
degradations of cities frequently result from senseless economic ambition. In defending
his flight from the city into solitude amid the peasants of Montmercy, Rousseau shows an
almost Voltairean contempt for the Parisian people. He would rather be able to give
some pleasure to my poor neighbors…than to help those crowds of petty intriguers with
which Paris is full to succeed, who all aspire to the honor of being rogues [fripons] in
place, and who, for the public good as well as their own, should all be sent to plow the
earth in their provinces” (Letters to Malesherbes” IV, CW 5:580/OC 1:1145). Cities
are thus not presented as places of exploitation and passive victimization, but as sites
where humans mutually devour one another by greed, crime, and even disease. The
false allure of luxury, vanity, and ambition draws many to the cities, depleting the
countryside and discouraging agriculture. The ultimate consequences of advanced
urban interdependence seem encapsulated in St. Preux’s description of Paris, which is
perhaps of all the cities on earth the one where fortunes are most unequal, and where the
most sumptuous opulence and the most deplorable misery prevail at one and the same
time” (Julie II.14, 191/232).

58 A later passage also states (perhaps not altogether seriously) that the urban poor should be sent
back to fill the void of the Provinces” (Beaumont 62f/980).

59 See E I, 59/276f; EOL IX, 273/401; and Notes on Helvetius’s On the Mind,” CW 12:210/OC
4:1128. In drawing a parallel between vice and physical disease, Rousseau echoes Plato: ...this vice
we’ve named—acquisitiveness—is what is called ‘disease’ when it appears in flesh and blood, and ‘plague’
when brought by the seasons or at intervals of years; while if it occurs in the state and society, the same
vice turns up under yet another name: ‘injustice” (Laws X, 906c).

60 See Julie II.14, 190-91/232-33; II.21, 223f/273; and for the most sustained criticism of cities
and modern commercial ambition, see Poland XI, 224-26/1003-5, Corsica 131-32/911.

61 Upon first entering Paris, ...I saw only filthy and stinking little streets, nasty-looking black
houses, the air of dirtiness, poverty, beggars, carters, cobblers, hawkers of herbal teas and old hats. From
the first all this struck me to such a point that all the real magnificence that I have seen since in Paris has
not been able to destroy that first impression, and I have always kept a secret disgust for living in that
capital” (Conf. IV, 133/159, translation modified. See, similarly, Rousseau’s 1737 description of stratified
Montpellier, discussed in Starobinski, Introduction” to DOI, in Transparency and Obstruction, 284/OC
Rousseau's broader ethnography and anthropology ground his rejection of the city and his endorsement of the more natural states of humanity. He exhorts his pupil to travel and observe those outside the highest estates and in the remote provinces, for there one can discover a truth relevant to all people. "The closer they are to nature, the more their character is dominated by goodness. It is only by closing themselves up in cities and corrupting themselves by means of culture that they become depraved and exchange a few defects that are more coarse than harmful for appealing and pernicious vices" (E V, 469/852f). It is in this context that we find Rousseau's most sustained pleas for personal, social action, along the lines of the "Moral Human." He implores country folk of all ranks not to forsake their current estate for the infamy, misery, and dishonor of urban life (Julie Second Preface, 14/20). And the Wolmars are offered as a model for the wealthy, in contributing "as much as they can to rendering the peasants' condition easy [douce], without ever helping them to leave it." Julie's great maxim is — not to favor changes of condition, but to contribute to making each one happy in his own, and above all to make sure that the happiest of all, which is that of a villager in a free State, is not depopulated in favor of the others" (Julie V.2, 438-39/535-36; cf. E IV, 348/682f).

Interestingly, Voltaire similarly observes that there is no city with more beggars than Paris, but maintains that this does not detract from its being the most civilized city, since it proves only that there are wretches and vermin throughout France, who run to Paris, seeking riches and preferring begging to "getting their livelihood from honest industry" (On Commerce and Luxury, 278).

Similarly: "One must descend into the other estates [outside of high society] in order to learn the true manners of a country, for those of the rich are almost everywhere the same" (Julie II.14, 193/236). After describing more negative behaviors—domestic violence—Rousseau concludes: "Just because an example is drawn from the dregs of the people, it is no less conclusive, men show themselves everywhere, the lower the level they are in, the less nature is disguised" (A Household on rue Saint-Denis” [ca. 1735], CW 12:247/OC 2:1256). More broadly, for the convergence of modernized peoples in their manners, see Chapter 3, Note 61.

Against the ambition of the times, Jean-Claude Gaime taught the young Rousseau that "if each man could read in the hearts of all the others, there would be more people who would want to descend than..."
This is later illustrated in how the Wolmars dine, work, and share in the festivities of the peasants, and never snicker haughtily at their awkward airs and boorish complements…. Thus the gentle equality [la douce égalité] that prevails here re-establishes nature’s order, constitutes a form of instruction for some, a consolation for others, and a bond of friendship for all (Julie V.7, 496-97/607-8). In such social and moral conditions one can enjoy Horace’s aurea mediocritas, since Whoever enjoys health and does not lack the necessities is rich enough if he roots the goods of opinion out of his heart” (E IV, 354/691). Between this simple and sufficient condition, and the highly interdependent and degraded conditions of urban poverty, Rousseau would seem to place rural peasants of monarchies, where oppressive feudal institutions or excessive taxation prevail. He strongly condemns the physical suffering resulting from such inequitable arrangements, but seems to link urban poverty much more closely with moral
to rise” in social position (Conf. III, 76/91). Gaine is the abbé of Savoy on whom Rousseau’s “Savoyard Vicar” was largely modeled (77/91). In establishing the importance of being satisfied in one’s estate, Rousseau observes that, Deceit and the spirit of intrigue come from un easiness and discontentment; everything goes badly when one aspires to the position of another. One must like his trade to do it well” (LA 126n/344n/115n).


65 Similarly, St. Preux writes: There is no such thing as absolute wealth. That word merely signifies a relation of surplus between the desires and the means of the rich man. One is rich with an acre of land; another is a beggar amidst his mounds of gold. Disorder and fancies know no bounds, and make more people poor than do real needs” (Julie V.2, 434/529f). More generally on the importance of occasionally stepping outside one’s estate (such as during evening festivities) and the consequent importance of the middling estates (les états moyens), see Julie V.7, 497n/608n.

66 For the oppressiveness of excessive taxation, feudalism, or an inhuman master,” see Julie V.7, 493-94/603; SC I.4, 46/357; Conf. IV, 137-38/163-64. In a polemical context concerning theodicy, Rousseau argues against Voltaire that the natural condition of humans is on balance a worthy gift: Consult an honest burgher [bourgeois] who has led an obscure and tranquil life, without projects and without ambition; a good artisan who lives comfortably off his trade; even a peasant, not from France—where they maintain that peasants must be made to die of poverty in order to make us live—but from the country where you are [viz., Geneva], for example, and in general from any free country” (Letter to Voltaire, EPW 236/OC 4:1063, translation modified).
degradation, which would be in keeping with his treatments of interdependence, elite harshness, and the commoners’ ambition.

In his more positive characterizations of the common people, Rousseau frequently parallels them with savages, notably in their greater spontaneity of sentiment and accordingly greater expressions of pity. Whereas the philosopher and the prudent man withdraw from social disturbances, “Savage man has not this admirable talent; and for want of wisdom and of reason he is always seen to yield impetuously to the first sentiment of Humanity. In Riots, in Street-brawls…it is the rabble [la canaille], it is the Marketwomen who separate the combatants, and keep honest folk from murdering one another” (DOI I, 153f/156). Rousseau found this moral contrast confirmed by his later experiences:

Why must it be that having found so many good people in my youth I find so few of them in an advanced age, has their race dried up? No, but the class [l’ordre] in which I need to look for them today is no longer the same one in which I found them then. Among the people, where great passions speak only at intervals, the feelings of nature make themselves heard more often. In the more elevated stations they are absolutely stifled, and beneath the mask of feeling nothing but interest or vanity ever speaks there. (Conf. IV, 124/147)

67 The Swiss would parallel the commoners here, being naturally cold, peaceful, and simple, but violent and extreme in anger…” (Julie IV.10, 373/453). The depiction of stifled passions would parallel Max Weber’s observations on Calvinists, Baptists, and other highly ascetic Protestants: “The qualities of _Gemütlichkeit_ and _naturalness_ that people notice about the Germans are quite unlike the Anglo-American atmosphere, which still today suffers under the lingering impression of that thorough crushing of the uninhibitedness of the _status naturalis_—this is even noticeable in people’s faces” (The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism, Part II, [Calvinism], p. 87). While Weber points out drawbacks of this posture, he also shows how the overcoming of certain ostensibly natural impulses allowed for significant moral progress: “Contemporaries were well aware of the difference between the ethical standard of the Reformed royal courts and that of the Lutheran ones, which were so often places of drunkenness and brutality” (ibid., p. 86). Similarly, “...among the nations influenced by Puritanism, the rational interpretation of sexual relations has given rise to the refinement of marital relationships and their permeation by spiritual and ethical values, and to the finer blossoming of courtesy within marriage. This is in contrast to that patriarchal peasant miasma which has been left behind in often quite tangible amounts right up to the level of the _spiritual aristocracy_” (The Protestant Ethic, Part II, n238, p. 181f). Adam Smith’s difference from Rousseau is more descriptive than evaluative; he finds it is the simpler savages
Among those youthful encounters, we might include how after leaving Geneva as a young man, he was received by peasants with greater kindness than city dwellers (urbains) would have given him, as well as more simplicity and less condescension (Conf. II, 38/46). Similarly, the people of Savoy—where even the nobles have minimal wealth and engage in military service—are "the best and most sociable people I know." If there is any small town in the world where one may taste "la douceur de la vie dans un commerce agréable et sûr;" it is Chambéry in Savoy (Conf. V, 158/188). According to Harry Payne, such images of peasant virtue were "by no means new in the annals of moralism, but Rousseau insisted upon it with a seriousness and intensity which differentiated his vision from the pastoral niceties of eighteenth-century art and literature." Although unfairly in some respects—since Rousseau was equally clear that many peoples (including the French) were degraded rather than virtuous, and often explicitly opposed revolution—Rousseau's image and authority would later be appealed to with even greater intensity by Maximilien Robespierre and other leading French revolutionaries.

whose emotions are highly stifled, in comparison with whom the often indulged sensuality, emotional outbursts, and sincerity of the wealthy classes are described as "liberal" or "loose." The "strict or austere" moral system which prevails, at least as an ideal, amid the far less forgiving circumstances of the poorer civilized classes seems closer to the savages (see the references in Chapter 1 above, Note 135). For his part, Turgot maintained that the people were hardened by misery, and that the sentiments of nature were much less alive among them (Payne, The Philosophes and the People, 25-26).

68 It is also happy, wise peasants, contrasted with miserably refined peoples, whom Rousseau praises in his well-known advocacy of political self-representation (SC IV.1, 121/437).

69 Payne, The Philosophes and the People, 181.

70 Robespierre was to draw from Rousseau in characterizing le peuple as unqualifiedly good and pure (see Carol Blum, Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue, 159, 197). Robespierre also apparently linked this approach with Rousseau's maxim on the need for severity toward oneself: "the characteristic of popular government is confidence in the people and severity against itself" (Oeuvres 10:356, quoted in George Klosko, Jacobins and Utopians, 105). John Adams, on the other hand, observed that the infallible authority of the people was implied by the concept of the General Will, and that this could become a
2.5 Social Determinism and Moral Judgment

In each of these cases, contentment with an estate which is fundamentally decent grounds the possibility of natural goodness or virtuousness in social life. Since "good morals depend more than is thought on each man's being satisfied in his estate" (LA 126n/344n/115n), the citizen ought to make his fellows love the estate which helps them to be good—rather than merely exhorting them to be so, in the ineffectual manner of preachers (Julie Second Preface, 14/20; cf. Fragments to Corsica, CW 11:162f/OC 3:948). Here we might pause to consider the peculiar combination of personal and political moralism we find in Rousseau, which apparently combines the strident ethical condemnations of Calvinism with the exculpating systemic critiques later found in Marxism. Rousseau was not completely unaware of a potential inconsistency here, and in a later writing attempted to show he had reconciled the two approaches:

The scorn which [Jean-Jacques] had displayed for that entire pretended social order, which in fact hides the most cruel disorders, fell much more on the constitution of the different estates than the subjects filling them and who, by this very constitution, are reduced to the necessity of being what they are. He always made a very judicious distinction between persons and conditions, often respecting the former—though given over to the spirit of their estate—whenever nature periodically regained ascendancy over their interest, as frequently occurs in those who are well born [bien nés]. (RJJ II, 176f/887f, translation modified)

Here "well born" seems to indicate a particularly good natural disposition, rather than any distinctive tendency of social elites to act better than their estates—something Rousseau frequently denies. One fragment helpfully depicts the manners in which the wealthy are pretext for tyranny (Adams to Jefferson, 13 July 1813, discussed in Susan Dunn, "Revolutionary Men of Letters and the Pursuit of Radical Change," 744).

71 For the distinction between the "common constitution of the species" and each individual's "particular temperament," see Julie V.3, 461/563, or similarly, E II, 94/324. For the usage of bien nés in
reduced to the ways of their estate. There Rousseau explains that although he has seen many poor people who claim to aspire to be rich in order to help the poor, he has never seen any rich person make use of the same maxims.” He posits that there probably are some causes that make men change systems upon changing situation, and that deprive them of the will to do good while giving them the power to do it,” such as the present allure of pleasures and the continuous raillery of your equals” to live up to the decorum of your station. 72 On the other hand, a similar analysis of social corruption was used by the Savoyard Vicar to teach the young Rousseau compassion, against the latter’s tendency to prideful bitterness against the rich, which may have turned into hardness of soul [dureté d’ame]. 73—In always setting aside vain appearance and showing me the real evils it covers, he taught me to deplore [déplorer] the errors of my fellows, to be

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72 On Wealth,” CW 11:7, 9-10/OC 5:470, 472-74. The moral impact of “doing everything necessary to become rich” is also discussed in Note 23 above. Living up to the decorum of one’s station had provided an important qualification to the moral demand for charitable giving in traditional thought. See, for instance, Aquinas, who argues that in general—“it would be inordinate to deprive on oneself of one’s own, in order to give to others to such an extent that the residue would be insufficient for one to live in keeping with one’s station and the ordinary occurrences of life: for no man ought to live unbecomingly” (Summa theologiae II-II 32.6).

73 One may suggest that Rousseau’s effusions of hatred for the rich, discussed in Section 2.2 above, could be evidence of the sort of bitterness which he criticizes here. This would be only one of many respects in which his moral teaching rises well above his personal practice. Starobinski also calls to mind how Emile and the Wolmars engage in “precisely the kind of charitable assistance” that Rousseau frequently rejected, with outrage, in his personal life (“Introduction” to DOI, in Transparency and Obstruction, 285-86/OC 3:xlvi-xlviii). For further examples, see Leo Damrosch, Restless Genius, 263-64, 309-12. After citing some of these examples, Jonathan Marks defends Rousseau on the grounds that such gifts constituted the “serious benefactions” leading the recipient to be bound without his consent (“Rousseau’s Discriminating Defense of Compassion,” 732n19, citing E IV, 234/521).
touched by their miseries, and to pity them more than to envy them. Moved with compassion for human weaknesses by the profound sentiment of his own, he saw men everywhere the victims of their own and others’ vices” (E IV, 265/564). Here we find the mutual character of victimization, grounded in a universalization of vice in corrupt social situations, depleting the capacity for positive moral agency across social classes. It would seem, then, that as sweeping as Rousseau’s critique of the highly civilized may be, it is precisely the socially and environmentally deterministic character of his thought which leads to his most sympathetic qualification of their wickedness—or at least of their guilt.

These suggestions of social determinism stand in clear tension with Rousseau’s metaphysical and moral philosophy, which insists upon the necessity of a strong, apparently libertarian view of freedom if moral norms are to be valid and binding. In a few passages Rousseau does seem to contradict himself by positing a strict social determinism, but I would suggest that even these passages are qualified enough that the contradiction may be avoided, or at least relegated to the despair of his final writing.

After considering the furious persecutions continually leveled against him, I began to

74 Translation modified, emphasis added. An alternative distinction, used for the same purpose of evoking pity, is listed as an advantage Emile reaps from his travels—of “having known governments by all their vices and peoples by all their virtues” (E V, 471/854).

75 E.g. E IV, 280-81/585-87 (Savoyard Vicar); RJJ II, 140-41/841-42; III, 238/967. For an unqualified defense of Rousseau as an advocate of free will, in opposition to Straussian interpretations, see David Lay Williams, Rousseau’s Platonic Enlightenment, 66-72. In addition, as a rationale for not praying for the power to do good, the Savoyard Vicar and St. Preux offer similar (Pelagian) stances that the Supreme Being has naturally given us “conscience for loving the good, reason for knowing it, and liberty for choosing it” (E IV, 294/605; see also Julie III.21, 315/383; VI.7, 561/683; cf. Julie’s view at VI.6, 552-53/672-73). On a related passage, Patrick Riley comments: “so much for the supposed ‘Calvinism’ of one who was (often) closer to being a Pelagian—as Pascal would have pointed out” (‘Rousseau’s General Will,” 130). One might, nonetheless, find more than a few traces of Rousseau’s Calvinist heritage in his moral and cultural austerity, although certainly not in his theology (or philosophy, as it may be) of the will.
see myself alone on earth and I understood that in relation to me my contemporaries were nothing more than automatons who acted only on impulse and whose actions I could calculate only from the laws of motion” (Rev. VIII, 72/1078, emphasis added).76 Here the qualification “in relation to me” may indicate a distinctly provocative situation which prevents the operation of human freedom. If so, this would be consistent with his usually discriminating approach to the impact of social conditions on free will, which suggests, first, that some social situations are more determining than others, and second, that under the usual conditions of advanced civilization, social situations strongly incline (but do not determine) the will toward vice, ultimately overcoming resistance in most cases.77

As for the contrast among social situations, the poor are predictably singled out as having a smaller range of choice than the wealthy. Whereas “the misery of the poor man comes to him from things, from the rigor of his lot, which weighs down on him,” whatever miseries the rich man faces “come to him not from his station but from himself alone, because he abuses his station” (E IV, 225/509). Since the aversion to dying is the strongest natural aversion, “it permits everything to anyone who has no other possible means of living,” and “if there is some miserable state in the world where a man cannot

76 The following paragraph adds: “The wise man, who sees only the blows of blind necessity in all the misfortunes which befall him, does not have…insane agitation” (ibid). This could be seen as a more pessimistic version of his idea of general evil and providence (see the references in Note 57 above), rather than an assertion of universal human determinism. Another deterministic passage claims that the ministers around Neuchâtel, who were persecuting Rousseau, “never act except by impulsion.” This is apparently because they “lack culture and enlightenment” (Conf. XII, 505/604).

77 Frederick Neuhausser offers parallel arguments that for Rousseau’s human nature or external conditions “dispose” or “make possible” certain outcomes but do not “compel” or “necessitate” them (Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love, 40-41, 137). Cooper also maintains: “It would be incorrect to characterize Rousseau as a determinist, but he clearly believes that character is destiny and that character is formed, for the most part irreversibly, by social, political, and even material circumstances” (Rousseau, Nature, 3; see also xii, 2-3, and 192-93 for a criticism of the potential for bad faith and an all-too easy escape from the demands of right behavior” stemming from this psychological and situational orientation). Timothy O’Hagan also offers a middle position (Rousseau, 12-14, 29).
live without doing harm and where the citizens are rascals [fripons] by necessity, it is not the malefactor who should be hanged, but he who forces him to become one” (E III, 193f/468). However, it is not clear how frequently this hypothetical applies in the real world. For instance, in Julie, Rousseau argues that the sovereign should see to it that there are no beggars in his territory (V.2, 442/539). In the current social order, however, Rousseau opposes the view that to feed beggars is to create seed beds of thieves [voleurs].” On the contrary, they must be fed, lest they become thieves…. all those who have once tasted of this idle trade acquire such an aversion to work that they would rather steal and get themselves hanged than to revert to the use of their two arms” (442n/539-40n). To refuse them a simple ration is, in the words of Julie, an inexcusable harshness” (dureté, 442/540). Whereas begging must therefore be succored, Julie excludes from her charity those poor individuals who have committed an evil (méchante) act, informing them, The world is not so short on good people who suffer, for one to be

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78 The extent to which this necessity” would authorize theft in societies of varying degrees of injustice is unclear, especially considering Rousseau’s countervailing remarks—to be discussed presently—excluding those who have committed evil acts from charity. His point of emphasis certainly serves to mitigate the accountability for at least non-violent thefts. In this he parallels Thomas More’s critique of the enclosure movement in England, and the resulting pervasiveness of theft despite the frequent application of capital punishment against it (Utopia, Part 1, pp. 63-72). We may also observe that Rousseau may not in the end be very far from the traditional teachings on right of necessity” in Aquinas, Grotius, and several other early modern thinkers. Samuel Fleischacker persuasively argues how limited this right was in traditional thought, since it only concerned situations where a poor person had literally no alternatives to theft (see On Adam Smith’s Wealth of Nations: A Philosophical Companion, 215-20). Wherever one might properly draw the lines of justice, the realities of practical negotiation seem to have been grim for poor and rich alike, as in the following description of France in 1789, as typifying the intense anxiety provoked by food shortages in pre-industrial France. The masses were informed by the persistent folklore of dearth with its tales of people dying of hunger or reduced to eating rotten food, grass, and weeds. Beggars were everywhere, voicing the age-old threat to burn down the homes of those refusing them alms; crime multiplied” (Roger Price, A Concise History of France, 107).

79 This strong psychology of addiction parallels those powerful individuals we have seen, who scarcely become acquainted with the pleasure of dominating than they disdained all other pleasures…” (DOI II, 171/175f).
reduced to worrying about you” (437/534). We might infer, then, that even though the misery of the poor person may derive quite strictly from his lot, and some degree of socially undesirable behaviors thus become excusable (if not strictly permissible), under most circumstances the most anti-social behaviors can be avoided, and thus should not be tolerated.

Similarly, although there may be cases in which Rousseau would sincerely argue that the miseries of the rich person comes —from himself alone” (E IV, 225/509), his more considered view would seem to be that advanced civilization has strongly inclined him toward his vices—albeit not as strongly as extreme poverty and degradation would.

This is implied by the —great maxim of morality” which he had developed from his father and his Uncle Bernard, which is —perhaps the only one of use in practice”: —to avoid situations that put our duties in opposition with our interests, and which show us our good in the harm of someone else: certain that whatever sincere love of virtue one brings to such situations, sooner or later one weakens without being aware of it, and one becomes unjust and bad in fact, without having ceased to be just and good in the soul” (Conf. II, 47/56).

This maxim is illustrated by his own withdrawal from society, his refusal to be named on Lord Marshal’s will (47/56; XII, 518f/619), in his breaking off relations with Madame

80 She also fears that she would otherwise be —doing harm to others by putting you in a position to do it” (ibid).

81 Marks also cites this passage (i.e., E IV, 225/509), and in keeping with our analysis above, maintains that since both the rich and the poor of his time are —the products of a historical process that has unfolded over centuries,” —is a gross exaggeration to say…that the rich have only themselves to blame for their unhappiness” (—Rousseau’s Discriminating Defense of Compassion,” 737a).

82 Similarly, Rousseau was struck by the vile and ignoble thought that he might inherit some of the possessions of Claude Anet (Madame de Warens’ other lover) after his death (Conv. V, 172/205f).
de Larnage since he came to be more attracted to her daughter than to her (Conf. VI, 217/259), and by the terrible fate of Emile and Sophie when their circumstances change, as depicted in his posthumous novella entitled *Emile et Sophie, ou les solitaires* (Conf. II, 47/56; OC 4:881-924). Rousseau thus maintains that if we resolved to be prudent in avoiding such situations, we would rarely need to be virtuous, and our weak natures would be of little consequence (Conf. II, 53f/64). At the same time, however—given our participation in a social system which comprehensively sets our interests against others—he suggests the extreme frequency with which our strength of will and freedom shall ultimately succumb to debilitating vices. Thus, whereas “masses of virtuous men existed formerly on earth,” only a very few men have attained virtue in modern times, such as Archbishop Fénelon, Nicholas de Catinat, and George Keith. With these exceptions, the “apparent virtues” of modern men are found to be “only boasting, hypocrisy, and vanity” (RJJ III, 158/863f). The many exceptions and qualifications, if not contradictions, involved in Rousseau’s sociological genealogy of moral evil seem to indicate, then, not a strict determinism, but a strong social conditioning, which is particularly debilitating of free will to whatever extent one is placed amid degrading poverty or corrupt social interdependence. It seems that, for Rousseau, substantive freedom is possible, but much rarer than the popular consciousness may suggest (or at least, rarer than the popular consciousness *did* suggest before his sociological perspective became commonplace).

2.6 Conclusion: Natural Weakness and Enforced Independence

Reflecting upon the extremely limited moral freedom of most contemporary humans may lead us to perhaps the greatest paradox of Rousseau. Although he is best
known for his slogans regarding the natural goodness of man, his defense of this very intuition required him—given his bleak account of civilized humanity—to posit just as fundamentally humanity’s natural weakness. This is implied by the above passages in the late Confessions, but its most explicit formulation is found in a posthumously published essay which was written in 1751:

Men are more blind than wicked; and there is more weakness [foiblesse] than malice in their vices. We deceive ourselves before deceiving others, and our faults are solely due to our errors; we almost only commit any because we allow ourselves to get caught up by petty present interests which make us forget more important and more remote things. Hence all the pettiness that characterize the vulgar, inconstancy, frivolity, capriciousness, knavery [fourberie], fanaticism, cruelty; all of them vices which have weakness of soul as their source. (Discourse on Heroic Virtue, EPW 315/OC 2:1273)

Much as Rousseau advocates compassion for the various social estates, so in general he finds pity — a disposition suited to beings as weak [foibles] and as subject to so many ills as we are…” (DOI I, 152/154).83 Although he does not explicitly reconcile the two, we can safely infer that he understood humanity’s natural weakness and natural goodness to be mutually consistent. This is plausible since the “goodness” he defends is understood as befitting naturally solitary persons, and not spontaneously suited to the rigorous demands of advanced society (DOI II, 167/170).84 Thus we find that many of his fiercest

83 The Emile frequently argues that “all wickedness comes from weakness” (E I, 67/288). We shall return to this in Section 4.3, esp. Note 94.

84 On Rousseau’s combination of natural innocence with the potential for virtue, rather than natural virtue, see Joshua Cohen, “The Natural Goodness of Humanity,” 116-18. Karl Barth similarly maintained, “The natural goodness of man which Rousseau claimed exists is definitely not in any simple or direct sense that which we are in the habit of calling moral goodness, freedom from evil impulses, freedom from all kinds of temptation, and freedom to respect the feelings of our fellow-men” (Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century, 212). The subversive implications of Rousseau’s assumption of natural solitariness could largely explain why Vico endorses the proposition that “law exists in nature, or whether human nature is sociable—which is the same thing” (New Science, §135; cf. §309-13). It may also explain
critiques of civilized human behavior are offered as direct justifications of humanity’s natural goodness. The meaning of his defense of natural goodness, then, is much more a lowering of received standards of moral accountability than an inflation of received understandings of human moral capacities.

This very specific and counterintuitive use of the term “natural goodness” also indicates why Rousseau is far from convincing when he claims that his basic teaching is “highly consoling and useful,” since our vices come not so much from humanity as from “these institutions,” or from humanity “badly governed.” Intuitively, and in terms of his predominant historical influence, this would seem to suggest the ready availability and effectiveness of institutional reforms, whether marginal, moderate, or revolutionary. However, in the proper context of his thought—since he also needed to provide convincing anthropological grounding for such universal and horrific moral failings as those of civilized humanity—we find that our faulty institutions have arisen as a matter of course with overwhelming regularity as humans became interdependent beyond the small, tribal level. It is for this reason that Rousseau’s own political solutions can only be

why, in the wake of Rousseau, Adam Ferguson would strenuously deny the historicity of an asocial state of nature (An Essay on the History of Civil Society, Part I, Section I, esp. 7-11; see also Montesquieu, Persian Letters, 94 [or 91 in the 1721 edition]).

85 This is the case with all of the major statements we have discussed in Section 2.1 above (e.g. LR 71/80, PN 100/968f; DOI Note IX, 197-200/202-204).

86 PN 101/969: “above all I point out something highly consoling and useful by showing that all these vices belong not so much to man, as to man badly governed.” Similarly, among his basic claims are “that man is naturally good [bon naturellement] and that it is from these institutions alone that men become wicked” (“Letters to Malesherbes” II, CW 5:575/OC 1:1136). Finally, he finds the explanation of all human vices “in our social order which—at every point contrary to nature, which nothing destroys—tyrannizes over nature constantly and constantly makes nature demand its rights” (Beaumont 52/966). The ambiguity I am alleging is the phrase “our social order,” which in this declamation would seem to indicate a specific and correctible deviation, whereas in the broader context of Rousseau’s thought, it would have to be taken to mean any of many forms of social order which almost inevitably arise once any people has been pushed by history and nature past the most rudimentary forms of social organization. Support for this conclusion can be found in the related discussions above: Chapter 1, Notes 69 and 90.
established by those at a very early stage of social development,\footnote{87} and only maintained through extremely strong state institutions which vigorously suppress the rise of commerce and the corresponding increase of social interdependence.\footnote{88}

The fear of spontaneous, broadly natural interdependence is evident in the goal of the republican commonwealth: —that every Citizen be perfectly independent of all the others, and excessively dependent on the City; which is always achieved by the same means; for it is only the State’s force that makes for its members’ freedom” (SC II.12, 80/394; cf. I.6).\footnote{89} He similarly describes that his purpose regarding finance is:

\begin{quote}
…not to destroy private property absolutely, because that is impossible, but to restrict it within the narrowest limits, to give a measure, a rule, a brake that restrains it, that directs it, that subjugates it, and keeps it always subordinated to the public good. In a word, I want the property of the state to be as great, as strong and that of the citizens as small, as weak as possible. That is why I avoid putting it in things whose private possessor is too much the master such as currency and money that one easily hides from public inspection. (Corsica 148/931)
\end{quote}

Of course, Rousseau had formulated his economic and political philosophy soon after Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), and with an apparently thorough knowledge of him.\footnote{90} It is striking to find him, then, entirely neglecting Montesquieu’s argument for the crucial importance of the invention of bills of exchange as a powerful check on tyrannical governments, precisely because of their invisibility and

\footnote{87} Discussed in the final paragraph of Section 1.2.

\footnote{88} We shall return to the question of Rousseau’s “totalitarianism” in Section 3.6.

\footnote{89} In this way the republic allows each individual to be dependent on things, rather than men, and thus maintain their freedom and morality (see E II, 85/311; cf. PF X [The Influences of Climate on Civilization], 53/529).

\footnote{90} For Rousseau's knowledge of Montesquieu, see Michael Sonenscher, *Before the Deluge: Public Debt, Inequality, and the Intellectual Origins of the French Revolution*, 223.
transportability. Instead Rousseau put forward an unreconstructed version of the anti-commercial polity allegedly established by Lycurgus, and advocated by Plato and Plutarch. Since the wealthy will not stand for redistribution once they are firmly established, Rousseau seems to suggest that extensive redistribution of land can and should be undertaken only during the founding of states (SC I.6, I.9, II.8; Corsica 153/936f). Once a polity is established, monetary redistribution seems to be rejected for this reason, as well as that one thereby ‘only enriches lazy folk at the expense of useful men’ (DPE 28/268). Instead of such a moderate corrective to a fundamentally open and commercial polity, Rousseau insists on preventing ‘extreme inequality of fortunes, not by taking their treasures away from those who possess them, but by depriving everyone of the means to accumulate treasures, nor by building poorhouses, but

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91 See Spirit of the Laws XXI.20; the argument has been made well-known currently by Albert Hirschman, The Passions and the Interests, 72-78. See also Tocqueville’s comments on the earlier precedents for the idea that the state is the sole real owner of all property, which he considers ‘the mother idea of modern socialism’ (The Old Regime and the Revolution III.6, p. 231). Cf. Machiavelli, Discourses on Livy, I.26.

92 For Lycurgus’s revoking of gold and silver coinage in favor of iron, see Plutarch, Lycurgus [9]. Rousseau frequently appeals to the benefits of this reform, and explicitly frames himself as more moderate than Lycurgus since he does not propose to ban gold and silver but only ‘to make them less necessary’ (Poland XI, 228/1008; this is why he wishes to reestablish taxes by service rather than money: 229/1009, and SC III.15). For what is apparently Plato’s final, practical statement on the communal distribution of landed property, and its understanding as more fundamentally belonging to the state, see Laws V, 739c-e; IX, 877d. On the other hand, in his ambitious Republic, Plato granted the necessity of commercial trade and merchants under most circumstances, given the lack of individual self-sufficiency, and the near impossibility of establishing a city ‘in a place where nothing has to be imported’ (II, 369b-371d). He later purifies only the guardians from all contact with gold, silver, and private possessions (III, 416d-17a; V, 457c-66d). See also Montesquieu on the founding and maintenance of (ancient) democratic republics (Spirit of the Laws V.5).

93 Cf. Plato, Laws III, 684d-e. For Plutarch’s strong endorsement of Lycurgus’s approach to founding, in his radical obviation of the mischiefs of avarice (as opposed to Numa’s mere suppression of military rapacity), see Comparison of Lycurgus and Numa [2]. For his part, Aristotle offers many cautions regarding the social destructiveness and moral futility of radical forms of redistribution (Politics II.5; II.7; III.10, 1281a15-20; V.9, 1309b30-10a2; VI.5, 1320a28-33), but does recommend providing for the friendship and prosperity of the common people through wealth used to acquire a plot of land for farming or a trade (VI.5, 1320a33-b12). See also Constitution of Athens [6, 11-12, 16].
by shielding citizens from becoming poor” (DPE 19/258; see also 23/262). This seems to be accomplished through punitive luxury taxes, through preventing the artificial increase of perceived needs, and through regulations keeping the arts and commercial activity to an absolute minimum, since a middle ground combining commerce and agriculture is ultimately impossible (Poland XI, 224-25/1003-4; Corsica 127, 139/905, 920). Rousseau would thus seem to advocate a particularly extreme version of what Michael Zuckert describes as “old republicanism,” which had a strong commitment to social homogeneity so that all the people had roughly the same interests and the convergence between private and public interest could be easy to effectuate.”

Understanding both Rousseau’s critique of typical civilization and his own very narrow political prescriptions, we must carefully qualify his most optimistic

94 This precisely worded passage is oversimplified by Pierre Force, who describes it as aiming to prevent the unequal distribution of wealth among the citizens” (Self-Interest before Adam Smith, 225). Orwin would be closer to my interpretation, in describing how Rousseau could not have intended “the systematic promotion of the poor to the ranks of the middle class within the framework of commercial society” (“Rousseau and the Discovery of Political Compassion,” 314-15).

95 See DPE 31, 35/271, 275f; E III, 194/468; Corsica 152f/936. The basic approach was also maintained in a late fragment: “Instead of repressing luxury by means of sumptuary laws, it would be better to forestall it by an administration that makes it impossible” (Fragments to Corsica, CW 11:163/OC 3:948; see also Letter to Raynal, EPW 30/OC 3:33). A late fragment also suggests the need for inheritance laws to be strict: “The Laws concerning inheritances ought all to tend to bring things back to equality so that each might have something and no one have anything in excess” (Fragments to Corsica, CW 11:160/OC 3:945). Any man who foregoes his citizenly duty to marry (ibid., 157/941) will not be able to make a will, and “all his possessions will pass to the community” (ibid., 158/942).

96 He claims his most important maxim for the administration of state finances is “to concentrate much more carefully on preventing needs than on increasing revenues,” since the needs of a state often grow much like those of individuals, “less out of genuine need than by a growth of useless desires…” (DPE 26/267).

97 Zuckert’s “old republicanism” was articulated by Montesquieu as a summary of the prevailing older tradition of republicanism. Zuckert dubs its social homogeneity a “gap polity.” It also insisted on a “short-leash” government, requiring constitutions with multiple and redundant means of holding governors in check (“The Political Science of James Madison,” 155. See 155-160 for Madison’s critique of this model as generating governments too weak to protect rights, and as discouraging “the exercise of the unequal faculties of individuals on which the flourishing of human communities ultimately depends”).
proclamations, such as that — the bounds of the possible in moral matters are less narrow than we think…” (SC III.12, 110/425). For him this is true in the sense that certain great lawgivers of the past founded rigorous polities in which everyday citizens rose to a strength of soul and communal solidarity which seem impossible to us. This seems to have provided them with the willpower and moral conviction needed to overcome base temptations, which (as we have seen) routinely defeat all but the most extraordinary of the moderns. This suggests that he is very far from maintaining that human malleability allows us to flourish in any social circumstance, given the proper institutional or educational adjustments. For Rousseau found human weakness to express itself in insurmountable and socially devastating ways throughout advanced civilization. It was thus obvious to him—unlike virtually all of his contemporaries—that civilized humans were constantly chafing in their hearts against social constraints, and perceiving their true interests to be in theft, treachery, or harsh contempt, rather than the cultivation of lasting bonds of mutual trust and benefit. Due to the spontaneous workings of social conflict and competition, solidified in exploitative form by the wealthy and powerful, the search for even the most minimal residues of virtue or social equity would be impossible amid the usual state of advanced civilization. In this way, Rousseau’s own anthropological and historical analysis suggests that his many remarks of political resignation are truer to his social principles than are his prominent remarks on our broad range of political possibilities.

98 On the perceived impossibility, see e.g. Poland II, 179f/956 (to be discussed in Section 3.4). See esp. Chapter 3, Note 112 for the role of Lacedaemonia in revealing moral possibilities to moderns, and Chapter 4, Note 118 for Rousseau’s idea of human malleability.
CHAPTER 3:
ENLIGHTENED GENTLENESS AS SOFT INDIFFERENCE:
THE CRITIQUE OF CULTURAL MODERNIZATION

Following in the wake of Albert Hirschman’s *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (1977), many historical investigations have enhanced our understanding of the eighteenth-century debates surrounding *le doux commerce*.”¹ Represented by such thinkers as Jean-François Melon, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and David Hume, this school of thought maintained that through the increase of *commerce*—meaning both economic exchange and broader social interaction—individuals and societies would become more *doux* (gentle, mild, calm, peaceable, soft, and/or sweet). Although a broad range of mechanisms were posited to explain the nascent capitalistic economy’s “softening of manners,” we may mention the basic commercial imperatives of learning to please and serve others (even if ultimately to advance one’s own interests),² the enlightening and humbling effects of cross-cultural


² Particularly influential predecessors here include French moralists and Jansenists, notably Pierre Nicole (see Jennifer Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices*, 249-61; Nannerl Keohane, *Philosophy and the State in France*, 283-311; E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment’s “Fable”: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society*, ch. 1). For an important interpretation of “the Enlightenment” as a singular entity focused upon improvement of this world through political economy (with its dual
interaction,\textsuperscript{3} the mutually beneficial relation between commercial wealth and the polite arts and sciences,\textsuperscript{4} the attainment of reputation through socially useful economic practices rather than violent exertions in behalf of personal honor or public glory,\textsuperscript{5} and a shift toward prudent this-worldly happiness instead of uncompromising and otherworldly religious fanaticism.\textsuperscript{6} The recent increase in studies on these debates may be largely attributed to their relevance to a range of contemporary issues such as the cultural and

emphasising on sociability and material improvement), and based upon an Epicurean or Augustinian logic of self-interest, see John Robertson, \textit{The Case for the Enlightenment}.

\textsuperscript{3} As is most famously outlined by Montesquieu: \textit{Commerce cures destructive prejudices, and it is an almost general rule that everywhere there are gentle mores [moeurs douces], there is commerce and that everywhere there is commerce, there are gentle mores. [\textsuperscript{[}]} Therefore, one should not be surprised if our mores are less fierce than they were formerly. Commerce has spread knowledge of the mores of all nations everywhere; they have been compared to each other, and good things have resulted from this" (\textit{Spirit of the Laws}, XX.1, 338). John Brown, known as one of the most invertebrate opponents of luxury, actually conceives similar benefits to commerce, but only in its \textit{--first stages," during which \textit{it} supplies mutual Necessities, prevents mutual Wants, extends mutual Knowledge, eradicates [sic] mutual Prejudice, and spreads mutual Humanity" (\textit{An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times}, Part III, section II, p. 426). The contrast between Montesquieu's basic confidence in the effects of cultural interaction with the characteristically ancient positions of both philosophers and commoners is a prevailing theme of Paul Rahe, \textit{Republics Ancient and Modern}, e.g. 1:44-45, 61-63, 2:86-90, 97, 3:46-50, 121-22; see also Note 58 below.

\textsuperscript{4} For instance, Hume's linkage of flourishing arts and industry with increased vigor of the mind and sociability during \textit{ages of refinement}," which are \textit{--both the happiest and most virtuous": \textit{Of Refinement in the Arts}” (previously entitled \textit{Of Luxury” [1752], in Essays, see 269-78}). In describing the time just before his stay in England (1766), Rousseau claims not to have read Hume's treatises on commerce and politics, but had gathered from Hume's great reputation in France (especially among the Encyclopaedists), that he combined \textit{--a very republican soul with the English paradoxes in favor of luxury” (Conf. XII, 527/630).

\textsuperscript{5} For discussions of the changing politics of honor in the early modern period, see Markku Peltonen, \textit{The Duel in Early Modern England}; and Sharon Krause, \textit{Liberalism with Honor}.

\textsuperscript{6} Voltaire and Hume may serve as two examples from the mainstream economic Enlightenment who took particularly hard stances against at least the existing forms of European religiosity. For Hume, see Jennifer Herdt, \textit{Religion and Faction in Hume's Moral Philosophy}, esp. ch. 5; for Voltaire, see Jerry Muller, \textit{The Mind and the Market}, ch. 2. Note, for instance, the famous conclusion to the discussion of the London Royal-Exchange, where various religious groups are \textit{--pacifiques et libres assemblées,” subordinating their differences in favor of the common end of wealth (Letters Concerning the English Nation, sixth letter, p. 30/ Lettres philosophiques, 17-18). Rousseau claims that although \textit{Lettres philosophiques} was assuredly not Voltaire's best work, it was the one that attracted Rousseau most toward serious study (Conf. V, 180/214). On Voltaire's role in inspiring the \textit{Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts}, see Jean Starobinski, \textit{Le Premier Discours à l'occasion du deux cinquantième anniversaire de sa publication,” 28-29, 34-36.
moral impact of globalization, the prospects for a "liberal," "democratic," or even "commercial" peace, and the possible withering of (at least the most orthodox or vigorous forms of) religion in modern society.

Then as now, many found cause to oppose these alleged benefits of commercial expansion. Also spanning a generation are studies of republicanism which uncover varying degrees and kinds of hostility to modern economic life and its cultural and political impact. Although in many ways the father of the distinctively modern,
Rousseau has sometimes been singled out as the most eloquent, profound, and influential champion of the republican and traditionalist criticism of modern commerce and luxury—as well as the high culture of arts and sciences with which he was not alone in linking them. For convenience, I will refer to the expansion and mutual reinforcement of commerce, luxury, the arts, and sciences as —Cultural Modernization.” Informative historical studies have placed Rousseau within this broader context, whether focusing on the history and ideology of luxury, on his relation to the French Enlightenment, or on his specifically Genevan context. In view of these developments, it may be worth revisiting Rousseau’s critique of Cultural Modernization through a careful reading of his texts and with special reference to the cultural ideal of gentleness. This would complement the existing historical and contextual emphasis of the studies which apply doux commerce as a basic framework for understanding Rousseau, but which are

11 E.g., Raymond Trousson, “Art et luxe au XVIIIe siècle”; see also, with less emphasis on Rousseau, Hont, "The Early Enlightenment Debate on Commerce and Luxury"; Christopher Berry, The Idea of Luxury; Shovlin, The Political Economy of Virtue; and Jeremy Jennings, "The Debate about Luxury in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century French Political Thought."

12 Mark Hulling, The Autocritique of Enlightenment: Rousseau and the Philosophes; and claiming a more adversarial relation between Rousseau and the mid-eighteenth century French Enlightenment, Graeme Garrard, Rousseau’s Counter-Enlightenment: A Republican Críte of the Philosophes.

typically less helpful in outlining the deeper structures of his thought, in exploring themes systematically across his body of writings, and in pursuing the implications of apparent tensions or contradictions. It would also supplement the existing analytical or philosophical studies of Rousseau on luxury and the arts, which have not seriously integrated *doux commerce*.\(^{14}\)

In Chapter 2 we have investigated Rousseau’s approach to the harsher aspects of modernization, finding that the increase of legal force and economic interdependence leads to deprivation and degradation among the poor majority, as well as a harsh contempt of social elites toward the poor. Since Rousseau’s fundamental critique of economic and social domination is offered in the well-known (and philosophically crucial) *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, many have concluded that his relation to *doux commerce* is a matter of simple and emphatic rejection—that commerce brutalizes the population. However, criticisms of a contrary thrust are offered in the *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* and the polemical replies which followed it,\(^ {15}\) and these criticisms

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\(^{14}\) Many of these thorough, textual studies of Rousseau on commerce and the arts have been undertaken by Straussian. Although individual issues related to *doux commerce*, such as luxury and politeness, do inevitably come up, a sustained attempt to understand Rousseau’s response to *doux commerce* does not seem to have been undertaken. Cf. Leo Strauss, „On the Intention of Rousseau,” 458-60; Roger Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, ch. 5; Arthur Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man*, 8, 266-70; and Christopher Kelly, *Rousseau as Author*, chs. 2 and 3. A partial exception is Clifford Orwin, whose work we will refer to periodically, esp. in Note 146 below. This neglect is surprising, since the basic claims of *doux commerce* have been thoroughly (and condemningly) treated by Straussian in various other contexts, e.g. Thomas Pangle, *Montesquieu’s Philosophy of Liberalism*, ch. 7; Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern*, passim; Pierre Manent, *The City of Man*, ch. 1; idem, *A World Beyond Politics?*, ch. 8. (Manent, although a student of Raymond Aron, was fundamentally influenced by Strauss as well.) More broadly, on the modern loss of ancient ideals of courage and strength, see Harvey Mansfield, *Manliness*, and on that regarding the “severe virtues” of self-restraint, see Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 188, 197-98, 300.

\(^{15}\) Namely, the *Letter to Monsieur l’Abbé Raynal* (1751), *Observations* (1751, hereafter Obs.), *Letter to Grimm* (1751), *Last Reply* (1752, hereafter LR), *Letter about a New Refutation* (1752), and the Preface to *Narcissus* (1752-53, hereafter PN). Making these replies proved tiresome to him, and he was not to repeat this practice following later works.
are repeated and amplified in later writings with great frequency and consistency. There modernity is repudiated not for its harshness and brutality but precisely for its softness and gentility. I will argue here that Rousseau ultimately grants a qualified version of the empirical premise of *doux commerce* theory, while altering its characterization and reversing its evaluation. The proliferation of material goods, social interactions, and higher learning naturally generates a character with a certain softness—at least among the elite beneficiaries of this process—but this is shown to be feeble and tepid in comparison with the austere virtues found among classical and primitive societies.

At the same time, Rousseau occasionally concedes that the modernized have made certain gains in gentleness and the reduction of violence, which are *prima facie* of social value. But in doing so he turns the characteristic self-understanding of Cultural Modernizers on its head, by interpreting such gentleness not as an outgrowth of enlightened conviction or elevated sentiments, but as a side-effect of psychological weakness and moral indifference, which decrease some evils in the process of eliminating most genuine goods. Perhaps even more surprisingly, he may be said to engage in a certain pessimistic version of *doux commerce* himself, when he insists that already-corrupted societies cannot be brought back to virtue, and thus require the kinds of self-interested pursuits that might divert them from the wanton brutality and crime to which they would otherwise be attracted. In the concluding section, we will see how these findings allow us to forge a middle position between scholars who see Rousseau as overwhelmingly opposed to *doux commerce*, and more recent contentions that he should be seen as a fundamentally moderate thinker who pragmatically accommodates the conditions of modernity.
3.1 External Goods and Aspirations

Although in his young adulthood Rousseau had embraced the life of monarchy, sharp inequality of ranks, luxury, and polite ingratiating toward potential benefactors, by the time of the First Discourse, he had been turned around by his famous illumination on the road to Vincennes, and determined to return to his austere, Genevan republican roots, both ideologically and existentially. He then came to articulate his profound and consistent opposition to the high culture of the eighteenth century, demonstrating its corrosive moral impact, which would prove fatal to polities—and especially republics—if not resisted or removed. Here we will decipher the systematic logic which underlies many of Rousseau’s objections to Cultural Modernization—namely, that it introduces external goods, motivations, customs, and ideas which are unsuited to human nature, undermine robust cultural convictions, or both.

For Rousseau, luxury’s corruptive impact upon virtues necessary for the survival of empires and republics was one of the great commonplaces—maintained universally in the pre-modern world among all social and intellectual ranks (even if only as a conviction among those succumbing to it in practice). It was not until the studied perversity of his own century that a few claiming to be philosophers would come to praise luxury. In

16 See Rousseau’s early renunciation of the “fierce [feroces] maxims,” “sad austerity of the Stoa,” and “brittleness [dureté]” of his republican childhood, coming to love “humanity” and cherish “gentleness (la douceur),” respecting the rank and imitating the virtues of the great (“Letter to Parisot” [1742], CW 12:17/OC 2:1140). Nevertheless, he notes that his soul has not given way to “an exaggerated softness [une molesse outrée],” but still clings to innocence, maintaining that “Nothing should be exaggerated, not even virtue” (18/1141). See the summaries of this phase in Leo Damrosch, Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius, 149-68, esp. 151-52, and Rosenblatt, Rousseau and Geneva, 37-40.

17 Cf. Hulliung, Autocritique of Enlightenment, 125; Garrard, Rousseau’s Counter-Enlightenment, 89.

18 Melon is singled out as the first such philosopher (LR 84/95). On the prior consensus against luxury, see DSA II, 18/19; PF VII [Luxury, Commerce, and the Arts], 45/517. Rousseau’s critiques of
seeing extravagant, unchecked consumption as an outright good rather than as a sign of
decay or even a necessary evil, the basic focus of political life is reversed: “The ancient
politicians forever spoke of morals and virtue; ours speak only of commerce and money”
(DSA II, 18/19). Rousseau saw the fine arts as a natural outgrowth of luxury, and
discerned a similarly novel slackening of morals in the advocacy for a theatre in Geneva
by d’Alembert and Voltaire.

Rousseau offers a rival approach to human nature to demonstrate the futility of
these pursuits, even by the hedonic standards often used to justify them. In contrast to the
kind of sensual fulfillment and worldly paradise portrayed by Voltaire and others,
Rousseau argued that the excessive and vanity-driven aspiration for material
gratifications leads only to the frustrating chains of habit and perceived needs in pursuit
of ever-shifting goals (E II, 80-81/304-5). Far from being embarrassed by the

19 Echoing Montesquieu, Spirit of the Laws, III.3, 22f; cf. DPE 13/252. Robert Wokler argues that
that here, among many other passages drawing from Bossuet, Plutarch, and Montaigne while rarely
alluding to their source, the First Discourse invites suspicions of plagiarism (Rousseau, 29). As for the
contrast of ancient and modern politics itself, the claim is exaggerated regarding the ancients, if it is taken
to imply a lack of concern with commerce. To take a source well-known to Rousseau, see Plutarch on
Solon’s attempt to encourage manufacturing and trade, covering “artisanship in a cloak of respectability”
(Solon [22]), and on Numa’s encouragement of the arts of peace, especially agriculture, but also several
other manufacturing trades, allowing free scope to means of attaining wealth besides military rapacity
(Numa [17-19], Comparison of Lycurgus and Numa [2]). The evidence of ancient diversity on this matter
stands, even though Plutarch sides with Lycurgus on this matter (Comparison of Lycurgus and Numa [2],
as discussed above in Chapter 2, Note 93).

20 D’Alembert is said to be the first to propose a theater under the republican conditions present at
Geneva. Rousseau maintains that of two great historians, Hume and Tacitus, Hume may take
D’Alembert’s side, but it is most unlikely that Tacitus would (LA 15n/261n2/14n2).

21 Tyrants, uniquely positioned to attain these goals (at the cost of the wretchedness of their
people), are destined to end their lives in boredom (Julie VI.8, 570n2/694n1); see also E IV, 228-29,
349/513-14, 683-84.
increasingly common objection that even the first people to wear clogs would have been accused of luxury in primitive times, he maintains absolutely that "Everything beyond the physically necessary is a source of evil" (LR 84/95). Thus far, Rousseau’s analysis of the self-undermining futility of excessive sensual gratification overlaps with the strictest Augustinian and Christian moralists. However, we should note here a certain tension in Augustinian thought between (on the one hand) the attempt to harness or channel worldly self-interest, and (on the other hand) the need to suppress it due to its tendency toward insatiability and social contempt. And although in Rousseau’s positive teaching, there is a place for channeling certain quasi-self-interested passions (above all, patriotism), he is consistent in demanding the suppression of narrow, spontaneous forms

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22 This argument from the inevitably arbitrary definition of luxury in practice played a significant role in what Berry describes as "The de-moralisation of luxury" in the seventeenth century (ch. 4 of The Idea of Luxury). Melon, for instance, had repudiated the very use of the term luxury, as conveying uncertain, confused, and false ideas, the application of which might stop industry altogether (Essai politique sur le commerce [1734], 258).

23 Cf. E IV, 236/524. For the prevention of new needs arriving in political economy, see DPE 26/267, quoted above in Chapter 2, Note 96. A more sophisticated statement of the psychological reasoning is later described as the position of Julie: "She contends that whatever proceeds from the senses and is not necessary to life changes in nature the minute it turns into a habit, that it ceases to be a pleasure when it becomes a need, that it is at the same time a chain we impose on ourselves and an enjoyment we deprive ourselves of, and that forever anticipating desires is the art not of satisfying them but of stifling them" (Julie V.2, 443/541f). We shall see that in other contexts Rousseau seems to move away from the strict physical necessity position laid out in the Last Reply.

24 Despite his well-known denial of original sin and his fundamental attribution of corruption to social influences, it has been rightly argued that Rousseau’s analysis of corrupted social humanity draws heavily from bleak Augustinian thinkers such as Pascal: see Christopher Brooke, "Rousseau’s Political Philosophy: Stoic and Augustinian Origins," 107-13; Mark Hulliung, "Rousseau, Voltaire, and the Revenge of Pascal," 59, 64-69. Herdt concludes that despite his prominent repudiations of original sin, "Rousseau was nevertheless preserving some of the most problematic features of modern hyper-Augustinianism: its anxiety about social formation, its tendency to allow the ideal of honesty to displace moral aspiration, and its recourse to moral resources not intelligibly integrated with, or even running counter to, intentional human agency" (Putting on Virtue, 305). We will return to Rousseau’s similarities with Augustinianism in Chapter 4, around Note 141.
of egoism and vanity.\footnote{25} In thus rejecting luxury he provides a psychological counter to the modern philosophical trends, documented by Hirschman, according to which social order could be maintained by “harnessing” self-interested passions, or certain passions could be overcome through the “countervailing” force of other passions.\footnote{26} For Rousseau, such attempts are not sustainable because “all the passions are sisters and the one alone suffices for arousing a thousand, and…to combat one by the other is only the way to make the heart more sensitive to them all” (LA 21/265/20).\footnote{27} Similarly, it is a great mistake in domestic as in civil economy to attempt to combat one vice with another or create between them a sort of equilibrium, as if what saps the foundations of order could ever serve to establish it!” (\textit{Julie} IV.10, 379/461).\footnote{28}

However, due to his defense of the “natural goodness” of human nature, Rousseau attributes these grasping tendencies overwhelmingly to the distorting influence of society,

\footnote{25}The alternative of embracing a more narrow self-interest as the inevitable bond of society, and the proper means of suppressing more base instincts in behalf of great labors for one’s fellows, is taken straightforwardly by Pierre Nicole (see \textit{Essais de morale}, esp. “De la charité et de l’amour-propre,” “Des moyens de conserver la paix avec les hommes,” and “De la grandeur”). Locke translated the former essay for the countess of Shaftesbury, along with “On the Existence of a God,” and “On the Weakness of Man.” Giambattista Vico also explained the political harnessing of this more blunt form of self-interest as a demonstration of providence: “Out of ferocity, avarice, and ambition, the three vices which plague the entire human race, it creates armies, trade, and courts, which form the might, affluence, and wisdom of commonwealths” (\textit{New Science}, §132, cf. §38). For a discussion of Vico as a providentialist and Augustinian social theorist coming to terms with Epicurean arguments such as Bayle’s, see Robertson, \textit{The Case for the Enlightenment}, ch. 5. For Rousseau’s rejection of these approaches, see Sections 2.6 above, and 3.6 below.

\footnote{26} Hirschman, \textit{The Passions and the Interests}, 16-31.

\footnote{27} This is among Rousseau’s arguments showing how the softening and pity evoked in tragedies are sterile emotions which soon wither away and cultivate no reason or disposition to regulate our passions, and thus have “never produced the slightest act of humanity” (LA 20-24, 57/265-68, 292f/19-23, 52f).

\footnote{28} This is placed in the voice of the character St. Preux, whose positions are usually but not always attributable to Rousseau; in this case it seems fair to assume he is Rousseau’s mouthpiece. Pierre Force has also linked this passage with Rousseau’s critique of \textit{doux commerce} theory (\textit{Self-Interest before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science}, 223). See also the supporting comments of Julie (\textit{Julie} II.27, 247/302).
and especially to the role of opinion.\(^{29}\) One need not, after all, relegate one’s society to harnessing potentially destructive passions which do not naturally or inevitably exist. Accordingly, one of Rousseau’s most recurring themes is the powerful role of opinion in striving for pomp and luxuries which are socially and economically costly beyond any proportion to their genuine physical and experiential benefits.\(^{30}\) The central role of \textit{Robinson Crusoe} in the mental formation of Rousseau’s pupil Emile, often appealed to as an example of radical individualism, is perhaps more fundamentally an appeal to discern the genuine usefulness of physical goods according to whether they would be of any value on a deserted island, rather than merely for misguided human praise (E III, 184-87/455-59).\(^{31}\)

Rousseau would take a similarly "primitivist" approach to the higher learning of the sciences and the arts, which both sides of the debate believed to be considerably rejuvenated since the Renaissance. Although he appeals to certain ancient predecessors along this front, they are often quite different than those appealed to by friends of the ancients in his day (not to mention ours),\(^{32}\) and thus his arguments here seemed far more

\(^{29}\) Discussed in Chapter 1 above, esp. Sections 1.3–1.4.

\(^{30}\) E II, 80f, 126-27/303f, 371-73; III, 190-91/462-64; cf. PF VII [Luxury, Commerce, and the Arts], 47/519.

\(^{31}\) This is not to say that no individualism is apparent in Rousseau’s appeal to \textit{Robinson Crusoe}. He states explicitly that Crusoe is "on his island, alone," in a state which is "at that of social man" (E III, 183/455), which leaves out Friday, Crusoe’s faithful companion in Defoe’s novel (as observed by Joel Schwartz, \textit{The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau}, 82, and Kelly, \textit{Rousseau as Author}, 93).

\(^{32}\) In comparison with our times, Rousseau makes his appeals less in the manner of Alasdair MacIntyre, Eric Voegelin, Leo Strauss, or their followers, based fundamentally on the philosophy of Plato or Aristotle (cf. Tarcov and Pangle, —Leo Strauss and the History of Political Philosophy,” 928), but rather by a more historical appeal to the lived experience of certain rustic or primitive peoples or classes. For explorations of these alternative ancient traditions, see William Desmond, \textit{The Greek Praise of Poverty}; R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, eds., \textit{The Cynics}; and Arthur Lovejoy and George Boas, eds., \textit{Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity}. For extensive links with Rousseau, see Niehues-Pröbsting, —The Modern Reception of Cynicism," 340-46. (It is true that Lovejoy counters the persistent
novel and shocking to his contemporaries than his repudiation of luxury. A number of his interlocutors were actually quite willing to grant the corruptive impact of luxury upon society—this was re-emerging as the majority position in France from the 1740s through the Revolution—while being appalled by Rousseau’s far-reaching repudiation of higher learning. Here it is important to note the qualification—far-reaching,” since Rousseau

view of the Second Discourse as—essentially a glorification of the state of nature and that its influence tended wholly or chiefly to promote primitivism”: —The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau’s Discourse on Inequality,” 165. However, here I am appealing to a broader sense of primitivism, which Lovejoy also attributes to Rousseau as a form of cultural primitivism,” even though chronologically Rousseau favors a middling state of nascent society, rather than the most primitive, pre-social state. See Lovejoy, —The Supposed Primitivism,” 166f; Lovejoy and Boas, Primitivism and Related Ideas, 240-41, 274, and for the general contrast of chronological and cultural primitivism, 14-15.) Interestingly, Pocock’s version of republicanism also draws from such historical and primitive sources, in now explicit contrast to the more philosophical models of virtue championed by Straussians: —the ideology of virtus can be traced back to the hoplite revolution of perhaps the seventh century before Christ; it expresses an ideal of warrior citizenship pre-Socratic, pre-Christian, and pre-juristic, and attempts [by Paul Rahe and Harvey Mansfield] to prove that ancient values were philosophical and that Machiavelli was modern in departing from them appear to me to miss the point” (The Machiavellian Moment, 2003 Afterword, 564).

33 Jennings, —The Debate about Luxury,” 82. John Shovlin would specify that this majority position” generalization applies to middle-ranking provincial elites (nobles and notables), as opposed to the increasingly ascendant plutocratic financiers-cum-merchants” and the philosophic party with whom they were largely linked (Political Economy of Virtue, 37-38). These groups regained the initiative in the argument beginning in the 1740s, after the apologists for luxury had enjoyed the upper hand in French intellectual life during the first half of the century” (Shovlin, Hume’s Political Discourses and the French Luxury Debate,” 206). Trousson maintains that although many in his times opposed luxury, Rousseau’s opposition was distinctive in its passion and intransigence, being radically hostile to every form of luxury” (—À et luxe au XVIIIe siècle,” 22, 31).

34 Shovlin also notes this distinction, as well as how the provincial notables of the Dijon Academy who awarded Rousseau the prize for the First Discourse, —dit deep ambivalence about the Voltairean apology for luxury,” like most French middling elites of the eighteenth century (The Political Economy of Virtue, 25-26). For King Stanislas of Poland, —its not from the sciences, but from the bosom of wealth that softness [mollesse] and luxury have been born” (—Rép to the Discourse,” CW 2:33f/Mémoire 47). Joseph Gautier defends the Athenians at the time of the Persian Wars as showing the compatibility of the arts and military virtue, attributing their decline to the rise of venality under Pericles, whereby —the funds intended for war were used to nourish softness [mollesse] and idleness” (—Refutation of the Discourse,” CW 2:73/Mémoire 54f). For Charles Bordes, —Corruption follows prosperity closely; sciences ordinarily make their progress at the same time; things so diverse can be born together and encounter each other, but this happens without any relationship of cause and effect between them” (—Discourse on the Advantages of Sciences and the Arts,” CW 2:96/Mémoire 68). More generally, note d’Alembert’s sympathy to sumptuary laws in his Encyclopédie article describing Geneva: —Sumptuary laws forbid the use of jewelry and gold, limit funeral expenses, and oblige all the citizens to go on foot in the streets; there are carriages only for the country. These laws, which would be regarded in France as too severe [trop sèves] and almost as barbarous and inhuman, are not at all destructive of the true comforts of life which can always be gotten at small cost; they only curtail ostentation, which does not contribute to happiness and which ruins men
made an exception for that very small number of thinkers and scholars of the first rank, who could at least be of essential use as political advisors at courts (an exception he subtly noted in the *Discourse on the Science and Arts* itself, and repeatedly clarified in later writings). Although he seems to retreat or at least equivocate on his original assertions that the arts and sciences are intrinsically pernicious (PN 96-97/964-65, cf. DSA II, 16/17), he remains firm in his contention that higher learning is simply too ethereal for the overwhelming majority of us, who have highly limited minds, and hearts full of passions (Obs. 33/36). Moreover, he does not seem to allow a role for the fine arts in society, although they had been clearly endorsed in one of Rousseau's primary models, Fénelon's reformed city of Salente. Rousseau grants that many pleasures,


35 The examples he gives of “Preceptors of Mankind” are Verulam (i.e., Francis Bacon), Descartes, and Newton (DSA II, 26/29). For examples of the general exception, see Obs. 35/39; DSA 5, 17, 26/5, 19, 29; Letter to Raynal, EPW 29/OC 3:31; Letter to Grimm, EPW 57/OC 3:64; LR 64/73; Letter about a New Refutation, EPW 90/OC 3:102; PN 102/970. The distinction is typically understood by current students of the Discourse, most recently Sally Campbell and John Scott, —Rousseau's Politic Argument in the Discourse on the Sciences and Arts,” 823-24. The theme of the rarity of such worthy geniuses would carry on into Rousseau's latest works; in the Confessions, he writes that he owes to the sole example of Charles Pinot Duclos the knowledge that —rightness and probity can sometimes go together with the cultivation of letters” (Conf. VIII, 312/371; cf. VII, 244/290; unfortunately, Rousseau would later come to believe that even Duclos betrayed him with —ring duplicity”: RJJ, —History of the Preceding Writing,” 246/977).

36 Against the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's more general theory that human reason is always perfecting itself, since every century adds its lights to previous ones, Rousseau writes: —He did not realize that the scope of human understanding is always one and the same, and very narrow, that it loses at one end as much as it gains at the other, and that ever recurring prejudices deprive us of as much enlightenment as cultivated reason might replace” (Letter to Mirabeau, 26 July 1767, LPW 269/CC 33:239). We will return to the weakness of human reason in Chapter 4, esp. Section 4.4, and Note 276.

37 Fénelon specifies of the reformed Salente: —We have not suppressed in the city any but superfluous arts, which divert the poor from the culture of the lands for the supply of real needs, and corrupt the rich by introducing among them luxury [le faste] and softness [la mollesse]: but nothing has been done that can affect the fine arts, or those who cultivate them with a true genius” (Telemachus XVII, 296/368). Thomas More's Hythloday similarly limits luxury, portraying the cultural possibilities if the vast army of craftsmen producing goods in contemporary society —only to satisfy a demand of luxury and licentiousness” could be redistributed across —only a few occupations, those few…required to satisfy our true needs and authentic pleasures” (*Utopia*, Book II, p. 100).
charms, and comforts can admittedly be derived from the arts and sciences, as is particularly clear with those mechanical arts which prevent “all our discomforts” (PF XVI [On Morals], 72/556). However, perceived needs are then steadily increased, less out of “genuine need” than by “a growth of useless desires” (DPE 27/267). This, in turn, increases the potential for frustration since many objects are “more cruel to be deprived of…than to possess them was sweet [douce]” (DOI II, 165/168).

In addition, beyond any questions of pleasure, the broader moral impact of the arts and sciences upon society at large and upon those who typically cultivate them has been consistently disastrous throughout history (PN 96-97/964-65). If there is so little that is useful to be derived from the intellectual labors of the few who are worthy of them, much less can we endorse that crowd of popularizers and obscure writers who “devour the State’s substance at a pure loss” (DSA II, 17, 26-27/19, 28-29). The primitivist appeals here are overt, with “eternal wisdom” being said to have placed us in a “happy ignorance,” placing a heavy veil of difficulty in the attainment of learning in order to warn us against these prideful and ultimately destructive efforts (DSA I, 14/15). The contemporary educational curricula—focusing on dead languages,

38 See also LR 63f, 69f/72, 79; PF VIII [Economy and Finances], 51/525; cf. E III, 176/441f. Also relevant is DOI I, 139/139, discussed in Chapter 1, Note 124.

39 Leon Kass cites this passage from the Discourse (DOI II, 165/168) as illustrating the basic problem that due to the “indeﬁnitely inﬂatable” nature of human desires, technological advancements “transform the souls and lives of the victors, preventing them from tasting victory as success” (“Introduction: The Problem of Technology,” 18-19).

40 Cf. LR 64/72f: “the vices of vulgar men poison the most sublime knowledge and render it pernicious to the Nations; the wicked derive much that is harmful from it; the good derive little beneﬁt from it.”

41 To Gautier’s objection that by such reasoning the difficulties in cultivating the earth should be taken to indicate that it should be left fallow, Rousseau replies: “Gautier has not given thought to the fact that with a little work one is certain to make bread; but that with much study it is very doubtful that one
specious arguments, and external politeness—may allow pupils to make fine-sounding eulogies in behalf of morals, but are of no positive effect in drawing them to actually perform their duties (DSA II, 22/24; LA 32/274/29-30). More suited to the capacities of human nature would be a Spartan- or Persian-style physical education until at least one's fourteenth year, followed by the practical study of one's duties.42

Rousseau here appeals to one of his political norms to condemn frivolous study and luxurious pomp since they are born in idleness, and feed it in turn. Contrary to various more accommodating monarchical or liberal lines of thought—and apparently to Rousseau's more individualistic ethical assertions as well—he argues that “In politics, as in ethics, not to do good is a great evil, and every useless citizen may be looked upon as a pernicious man” (DSA II, 17/18).43 Thus what appears merely neutral becomes problematic in detracting from “the time and effort which every human being owes to nobler objects” (Obs. 46/51). In a morally healthy society, the habit of work and a good conscience extinguish “the taste for frivolous pleasures” and “foreign amusements,” understanding that amusements are permissible only insofar as necessary (LA

—succeeds in making a reasonable man…. why has nature imposed necessary labors on us, if it is not to turn us away from useless occupations?” (Letter to Grimm, EPW 56/OC 3:64). However, this civic-agrarian strand of thought in Rousseau is in tension or contradiction with a complete primitivist strand, since at many points he offers clear endorsements of leaving the land fallow (see above, Chapter 1, Note 128).

42 See DSA II, 22-23, 22-23n2/24-25, 24-25n2, drawing from Montaigne's essay “Du Pédantisme” (―Of Pedantry‖ or “Of Schoolmasters' Learning‖; see Complete Essays, 160). We will return to these prescriptions in Chapter 4.

43 Cf. LR 81/91: “no honest man can ever boast of leisure as long as good remains to be done, a fatherland to be served, unfortunates to be relieved….” A slightly later remark may foreshadow the political context which Rousseau may eventually have come to see as a precondition of this rigorous ethic: “In a well-constituted state, every citizen has duties to fulfill; and he holds these important cares too dear to find leisure for frivolous speculations” (PN 97/965). For Rousseau's more accommodating lines of thought, apparently based upon the application of different norms to different social circumstances, see Chapter 1, Note 38. Victor Gourevitch offers a Straussian interpretation of similar tensions; on his reading, they result from Rousseau's writing from the perspective of a plain citizen in texts such as the First Discourse and the Letter to d'Alembert (―Rousseau on the Arts and Sciences,‖ 737, 744-45).
16/262/15). Thus, even while a Spartan was abroad in Athens or Susa, in the midst of the fine arts and \textit{in the lap of luxury and softness} \textit{[au sein du luxe et de la molesse]}, \textquotedblright the bored Spartan longed for his coarse feasts and his fatiguing exercises\textquotedblright{} (LA 133/349/122). Far from pursuing the \textit{effeminate,} \textit{mercenary,} passive, and socially stratifying diversions inherent to the modern theatre or the \textit{salon,} the true citizen will seek even in his pleasures and repose the simple yet joyous public festivals which express and reinforce communal solidarity.\textsuperscript{45}

Since Cultural Modernization is also linked to economic and intellectual inequality, it also diverts the focus of social attention away from genuine moral excellence toward frivolous externals. Regarding economics, \textit{the} refinements of softness \textit{[molesse]} and luxury" corrupt both the rich who enjoy them and the wretched who covet them (DOI Dedication, 122/120; Obs. 46/51). Their minds become debased by a host of futile cares, and the taste for ostentation crowds out the taste for the honest in almost every case (DSA II, 19/20).\textsuperscript{46} Since even wisdom is not insensitive to glory, and all see that men are valued by the extent of their consumption, \textit{what will become of...}

\textsuperscript{44} Rousseau notes how being locked up together endlessly with no objective but chatter is \textit{the scourage of society no less than of solitude}; \textit{nothing narrows l'esprit more,}\textsuperscript{45} engendering trifles, malicious tales, teasing, and lies (Conf. V, 169/202).

\textsuperscript{45} See LA 125-26, 126n, 133/343f, 344n, 349/114f, 115n, 122; cf. E II, 107/344. Such public ceremonies are properly illustrated by the Romans, being marked by decorum and gravity, not luxury. They displayed only the luxury of the vanquished, whose sparkle revealed great lessons: \textit{the captive Kings were shackled with chains of gold and precious stones. There you have luxury correctly understood} (Poland III, 187/964). The military luxury of weapons and horses can be tolerated where necessary, \textit{but let all effeminate finery [parure effeminée] be held in contempt, and if women cannot be made to give it up, let them at least be taught to disapprove and disdain it in men} (Poland III, 188/965). Rousseau seems to take a more accommodating approach toward some forms of luxury in the domestic-moral context (Chapter 4, Note 291).

\textsuperscript{46} Cf. Plato, \textit{Republic} VIII, 555c: \textit{So isn't it clear that it is impossible for a city to honor wealth and at the same time for its citizens to acquire moderation, but one or the other is inevitably neglected?} The similarity between Plato and Rousseau here is also observed by Joshua Mitchell, \textit{Plato's Fable}, 83-84, 192-93. See also Plato, \textit{Laws} VIII, 831c-d; IX, 870a, 918a-23b.
virtue, when one has to get rich at all cost?” (DSA II, 23, 18/26, 19). Regarding
intellectual distinctions, praise and reward are allotted to talents rather than probity,
agreeableness rather than goodness, and rhetoric rather than usefulness. 47 Among people
who honor letters, agreeable social commerce (agrément du commerce) and –elegance of
morals” are substituted for –purity of morals” (Obs. 48/53). Men are made more sociable
in desiring to please one another through their literary works and speech (DSA I, 6/6).
As for politics, polite peoples (Peuples policés) indeed owe much to their cultivation of
the Sciences, Letters, and Arts: –Happy slaves, you owe them the delicate and refined
taste on which you pride yourselves; the sweet [douceur] character and urbane morals
which make for such engaging and easy relations [commerce] among you; in a word, the
appearances of all the virtues without having a single one” (DSA I, 7/7). In answering
the charge that his praise of ignorance would deprive Christians of the study of the
Scriptures, Rousseau replies—with whatever degree of sincerity—that he in no way
detracts from the genuine Christian study of his duties, which is the study of his religion
(Obs. 39f/43f). The history of Christianity then becomes an object lesson in moral
decline, since after Jesus chose simple fishermen to propagate his message, apologists
soon strove to combat paganism, each proving cleverer than his predecessors, and
–morals began to relax.” Far from the simple, wise and gentle (doux) terms with which
Jesus preached virtue, we find a frenzy of persecutions and the childish subtleties of

47 DSA II, 23/25; LR 65/73f; PN 98/966; cf. Montaigne, –Of Schoolmasters’ Learning” (Complete
Essays, 153-54). Apparently eliding significant issues of labor motivation, Rousseau objects to rewarding
talents since thereby –m are rewarded only for qualities which do not depend on them: for we are born
with our talents, only our virtues belong to us” (PN 98/966). We will see in Section 3.6 below that
Rousseau’s positive political thought does allow merit to be rewarded by honor. He also grants the
necessity of motivating agricultural labor by the hopes of retaining substantial portions of its fruits (see
Corscia 144, 152-53/925-26, 936-37).
scholasticism, wherein each strives to teach Christianity rather than to practice it—to be Casuists rather than Saints (Obs. 40-44/44-49). In portraying the novelty of contemporary praises of luxury, the self-expanding nature of gratified desire, the contrast between real pleasure and social approval, and the diversionary and parasitic effects of arts and letters, Rousseau combined classical moral arguments with extreme primitivism to portray the most celebrated achievements of modern civilization as effeminizing and useless for any solid human satisfaction.

3.2 Foreign Subversions and Elite Atheism

Against the widespread Enlightenment assumptions that the best in human thought and culture can be edifyingly disseminated to populaces both within and across cultures, Rousseau’s basic logic seems to be that such broad communicative channels tend to transmit chiefly that which is corrosive to primitive and indigenous culture. This pattern emerges in his treatment of the impact of the theatre upon the masses, of the excessive integration of men and women, of foreign cultures on one another, and of the tendencies of the learned toward subversive ideologies. As for the theater, even the most refined and wise of playwrights are fundamentally dependent on the morals and tastes of their audience, since whatever legal regulations are enforced, if an audience finds their works the least bit constraining rather than amusing and titillating, the works will be left without praise or audience (LA 22, 22n, 46f/266, 266n2, 285/21, 21n, 43). In practice, then, the principal object must be to please the audience at hand, and thus rather than

48 In this criticism, Rousseau is self-consciously following Plato. At the time of writing the LA, Rousseau prepared an extract of various passages where Plato treats of theatrical imitation. See, in
changing sentiments or morals, the theatre can only follow or embellish them (LA 17-18/263-64/17-18). Therefore, in an educated age such as Rousseau’s own, even a great talent such as Voltaire must sacrifice many —strong and manly [mâles] beauties”— to our —false delicacy,” flattering mere knowledge and wit rather than virtue (DSA II, 19/21; LA 29/272/27). The works of the comparably talented Molière ridicule goodness and simplicity while arousing interest in and sympathy for treachery and falsehood. In doing so, he is in fact fulfilling the natural tendency of comedy, since nothing is less humorous than virtue’s justified indignation, while —ridicule is the favorite arm of vice” (LA 26-37/270-77/24-34). For such reasons, Rousseau holds that the arts have a general tendency to reinforce the national character, and at least in corrupt ages they can only reinforce decline.

particular, —Of Theatrical Imitation” (CW 7:346-47/OC 5:1207-8), which draws from Republic X, 605b-606b, on the need to please the vulgar, and the theatrical appeal to the —sensitive and weak part” of the soul.

49 In a manner out of keeping with the typical posture of his political thought (both critical and positive), Rousseau also mentions —couraige” along with knowledge and wit—and as opposed to —sweet [douce] and modest virtue”— as being permitted on the modern stage (LA 29/272/27).

50 According to the general pattern, —Aintrepid, grave, and cruel People wants deadly and perilous festivals in which valor and composure shine. A ferocious and intense People wants blood, combat, and terrible passions. A voluptuous People wants music and dances. A gallant People wants love and civility. A frivolous People wants joking and ridicule. Trahit sua quemque voluptas” (LA 18/263/17. For the widespread deployment of this quotation from Vergil— Each led by his pleasures” [Eclogues II.65]—by early modern Epicureans and Augustinians alike, see Force, Self-Interest Before Adam Smith, 48-63, cf. 183-94. More broadly on the —convergence between Augustinian and Epicurean currents of thinking about the nature of man and the possibility of society which occurred after 1680,” see Robertson, The Case for the Enlightenment, e.g. 8, 32, 46, 128, 137, 237, 380.) The exceptional circumstances of ancient Greece and republican Rome allowed for a proper hardening of their characters through spectacles: Greek theater was —open under the sky before a whole nation, [and] presented on all sides only combats, victories, prizes, objects capable of inspiring the Greeks with an ardent emulation and of warming their hearts with sentiments of honor and glory” (LA 78/308/72). —Thus the Gladiator combats which, during the Republic, animated the courage and valor of the Romans, only inspired the population of Rome, under the Emperors, with the love of blood and cruelty. The same object offered to the same People at different times taught men at first to despise their own lives and, later, to make sport of the lives of others” (LA 17f/263/16).

51 Rousseau presents intentionally contradictory remarks concerning whether drama is —good for the good and bad for the vicious,” or good for the corrupted while bad for the good (LA 20, 64f/265,
Rousseau offers a similar, civic republican response to those who would advocate the greater refinement of society by a more thorough integration of women into the social life and public culture of men. According to him, the ancient men spent almost their whole lives in the open air, while the women accepted a homebound and private life. If we find that modern men are restless amidst our attempts to impose a sedentary, domestic, and garrulous life upon them, and that women and men alike lose their morals by too close a commerce together, this indicates that the ancient model of ordinarily separating the sexes was in fact the plan of nature (LA 100-107/325-30/92-98; cf. Julie IV.10, 371/450; VI.5, 544/662). It is, however, men who are more radically affected by this excessive cultural interaction, since men lose not only their morals but their constitution as well: this weaker sex, not in the position to take on our way of life, which is too hard [penible] for it, forces us to take on its way, too soft [molle] for us; and,

298f/19, 60). For comments on his casuistry indicating for whom which sorts of arts are useful, see Kelly, Rousseau as Author, ch. 3, esp. pp. 66-77 on his positive use of certain kinds of arts such as public festivities, countering passivity by making spectators into participants, and focusing energies on public life and honors.

52 For the application of doux commerce theory and the specific civilizing role of women, as appropriated by Genevan patricians and their ally Voltaire, see Helena Rosenblatt, “On the ‘Misogyny’ of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Letter to d’Alembert in Historical Context,” 100-105, 114. For Rousseau’s contrast with the broader eighteenth-century French tendency to embrace the role of commerce and women in civilizing and softening men, which allowed women to gain greater equality and freedom in the process, see Catherine Larrère, “Women, Republicanism and the Growth of Commerce.” Hume offers a strong version of this modernizing thesis (see “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences,” in Essays, 134; cf. “Of National Characters,” in Essays, 215).


54 See Julie II.21, 221/270, in which St. Preux describes how the experience of sexuality in Paris has destroyed the absurd maxim about overcoming temptations by multiplying them.” Contrast the depiction of the model household of Clarens, which largely separates the two sexes—applying to family and servants alike—in order both to “restall a dangerous intimacy” and to allow men to engage in “the active and laborious life nature assigned them” (Julie IV.10, 369-71/449-51).
no longer wishing to tolerate separation, unable to make themselves into men, the women make us into women” (LA 100/325/92). Such remarks may justify the common ascription of misogyny to Rousseau, and surely offend our current sensibilities still more than they did those of Rousseau’s contemporaries. For our purposes, however, we need only observe that Rousseau’s answer to *doux commerce* here confirms rather than denies its fundamental descriptive or sociological premise—the process of softening—while altering softening’s qualitative depiction and rejecting its normative endorsement by Cultural Modernizers.57

Running parallel to, and perhaps partially causing, Rousseau’s pessimism about the progressive impact of the arts upon the masses, and of women upon men, is his strong pessimism about the interaction of ethnic or national cultures in general.58 After

55 The Spartan women are later mentioned as an exception, who made themselves robust, rather than making the men enervated (LA 103/327/94). On this exception see Joel Schwartz, *The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 52-55; for broader reflections on Rousseau’s critique of effeminacy, see Schwartz, 46, 58-59, 63-66, 71-72.

56 For an extensive review of feminist criticisms of Rousseau, see Rosenblatt, “On the ‘Misogyny,’” esp. 91-99. Rosenblatt’s own attempt to defend Rousseau on this front through historical contextualization may mitigate some of his sharp edges, but there are perhaps limits to what can be explained away as “clearly the words of a man who had been offended by patrician women’s mockery of republican values and who was deeply disturbed by the influence they were having on their husbands and other women” (Rosenblatt, 111f). Wokler offers a similarly generous interpretation (*Rousseau*, 129).

57 As for the qualitative depiction, we may follow an interpretive distinction E. J. Clery makes between “feminization” (increasing sociability, civility, compassion, domesticity, love of family, and refinement) and “effeminization” (increasing corruption, weakness, cowardice, luxury, immorality, and the unbridled play of passions: *The Feminization debate in Eighteenth-Century England*, 10). Whereas the mainstream cultural modernizers depict softening as chiefly a matter of Clery’s “feminization” without “effeminization” (with Mandeville and Voltaire being extreme cases, largely embracing both), Rousseau depicts similar changes as primarily concerning “effeminization.” In his negative and political critiques of cultural modernization, he seems to denigrate Clery’s “feminization” as well, but we will see in Section 4.6 below that, in Rousseau’s constructive ethical theory, women have a pivotal role to play in overcoming the harshness of men.

58 See, similarly, Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy* I.55, 111-12; II.19, 174-75. A similar pessimism regarding foreign travel is expressed by Sparta’s mythical founder, Lycurgus (Plutarch, *Lycurgus* [27], cf. [8-10]); and by Plato and Aristotle regarding the impact of commercial harbors (Plato,
explaining that our ancestors' morals were not necessarily good, but that ours are even worse, he delineates the causes of modern corruption besides the sciences:

The destruction of the Roman empire, the invasions by hosts of Barbarians have made a mixture of all peoples that must inevitably have destroyed the morals and customs of each of them. The crusades, commerce, the discovery of the Indies, navigation, far-flung expeditions, and still other causes which I do not wish to mention, have perpetuated and increased this disarray. *Everything that facilitates communication between nations transmits not the virtues, but the crimes of each of the others*, and adulterates the morals appropriate to the climate of each and to the constitution of its government. (PN 96n/964n, emphasis added)

In his later writings, Rousseau forlornly describes a cultural homogenization which had occurred in his own times, and which many would now recognize as occurring under globalization. —There are no more Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, even Englishmen, nowadays, regardless of what people may say; there are only Europeans” *(Poland III, 184/960).* For any people with morals, such external forces would inevitably include

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59 This would perhaps be an acknowledgement that his earlier depiction of “innocent and virtuous men” (DSA II, 20/22) was merely a rhetorical flourish. Alternatively, it could describe a period predating that of “our ancestors” referred to in PN 96n/964n.

60 Contrast the more positive comments on the superior size and strength of the barbarians who vanquished the Romans, indicating that contemporary weakness flows from our “indolent and soft [indolent et lâche] life” rather than a degeneration of the species (LA 102f/326f/94). As for corruption stemming from communication between nations, see the reasons why travelers characteristically become more corrupt (E V, 455/832).

61 This is explained by increasing interaction and cultural domination by the French, as well as the fact that no European nation has “been given a national form by a distinctive institution” *(Poland III, 184/960).* On the globalization theme, see also DOI Note X, 205/208; EOL X, 279/407; Julie II.14, 193/236; E V, 453-54/829-31. Karl Marx similarly observed: “Present-day society” is capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries *[Kulturländern]*, more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country, more or less developed…. all have this in common, that they are based on modern bourgeois society *[bürgerlichen Gesellschaft]*, only one more or less capitalistically developed” *(Critique of the Gotha Programme [1875], in Selected Writings, 564f/ Werke, 19:18.* See also *Communist Manifesto*, Parts I-II; cf. “Address to the Communist League” [1850], in *Selected Writings*, 284).
many differing and opposed norms and ideologies, leading them to despise their ways and customs. In this respect, Rousseau shows himself to be more conservative than even Aristotle, Aquinas, or Hume, asserting that “The slightest change in customs, even if it is in some respects for the better, invariably proves prejudicial to morals” (PN 102/971). This suggests that the typical person, being far from a philosopher, is not generally capable of a rational, progressive criticism of inherited convictions to any appreciable degree, so to whatever extent she accepts the inadequacy of a given convention, ostensible progress along that front is outweighed by the universal loss of cultural confidence.

Beyond the structural issues concerning the impact of the sciences taken in the abstract or in relation to the masses, Rousseau points to a structural basis leading the highly learned to culturally and morally subversive ideas. Unfortunately not being merely idle, the learned—and especially the great majority of those who consider themselves philosophers—actively undermine the foundations of faith and virtue:

62 Contrast Aristotle, Politics, II.8, 1269a12-24; Aquinas, Summa theologiae I-II 97.2; Hume, “Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth” (Essays, 512); Montesquieu, Persian Letters 129; and James Madison, The Federalist No. 49. Here Rousseau may be exemplifying what Vittorio Höfle calls anti-Enlightenment or skeptical conservatism—perhaps drawn from Montaigne, in Rousseau’s case—as opposed to the sociologically based conservatism of Aristotle, which recognizes that without traditional mores natural law norms could not take root, [and] that a stance that fails to recognize the achievements of factual mores destroys more than it creates” (Morals and Politics, 775-76; cf. 550, 811-18). Arthur Melzer develops a version of skeptical conservatism, building upon Rousseau and Leo Strauss (see On the Inherent Tension between Reason and Society”). A slightly later claim of Rousseau is more in keeping with the Aristotelian tradition: “you will at least grant that, in a state as small as the republic of Geneva, all innovations are dangerous and that they ought never to be made without urgent and grave motives” (LA 123/342/113). See also later passages counseling cautious political reform, discussed in Note 140 below.

63 At times Rousseau condemns philosophy as even more clearly worthless than science (LR 64f/73; cf. RJI I, 59/736). This may be meant to apply to the many claiming to be philosophers, who propagate the maxims of our ratiocinating century,” as opposed to the few “true Philosophers” (PN 98/966). For a careful discussion, influenced by Leo Strauss, of Rousseau’s denunciation of philosophers in his public writings out of a sense of citizenly duty, and ascription to himself of alternative titles such as “fend of the truth,” see Kelly, Rousseau as Author, 140-82.
—They smile disdainfully at such old-fashioned words as Fatherland [Patrie] and Religion, and dedicate their talents and their Philosophy to destroying and degrading all that is sacred among men” (DSA II, 17f/19). The chief reason for this can be seen as a special application of the general principle that under conditions of inequality, people strive overwhelmingly for external distinctions in wealth and the display of talents. In the case of philosophers, at least in “enlightened” times, there is no philosophy so paradoxical or pernicious which the desire to distinguish oneself will not drive them to assert. The pride of believing oneself different from and superior to the common people also leads philosophers to exult in impious or libertine theories. By contrast, throughout his social and political writings, Rousseau champions the natural (or quasi-natural) convictions of upright peoples, such as chastity, modesty, conscience, and patriotism, against the attempts of philosophes to debunk them as mere prejudice.

Far more significant than false teachings on any particular moral question, and perhaps the primary source of these false teachings, is the close link of philosophy with atheism. The most fundamental reason philosophy gives rise to atheism seems to be the proliferation of so many warring sects and the extraordinary rarity of a human reason which can powerfully demonstrate those fundamental religious principles which upright, socialized human hearts feel or intuit naturally (DSA II, 25/27; E IV, 268-69/568-70).

64 The first philosophers earned great renown by teaching men to perform their duties and the principles of virtue; soon these became commonplaces, so their opposites were needed to attain distinction (PN 98/965). Also, these first philosophers, who all preached virtue, —would have gotten themselves stoned to death if they had spoken otherwise” (PF XVI [History of Morals], 72f/557).

65 PF XVI [History of Morals], 72f/556; PF VII [Luxury, Commerce, and the Arts], 46/518.

66 On chastity and modesty, see e.g. LA 81-89/311-17/74-82; Conf. V, 165-66/197-98; and on these virtues in relation to conscience, ML V, 195/1107-8. On the other hand, his defense of the immediacy of Primitive life and of natural goodness are potentially subversive of these virtues, as can be inferred from Sections 1.3 and 2.6 above. See Chapter 1, Note 123 for a possible reconciliation.
Beginning in ancient times, countless philosophical sects secretly taught atheism while praising the common religious life in public (Obs. 41-42n/46n). In Rousseau's time—and especially as he perceived it in his later years—such unbelief became far more open, through dogmatic preaching against religion (RJJ III, 241-42/971f; Rev. III, 32/1016), and often against the reality of human freedom and virtue as well (RJJ II, 140-41/841-42; III, 238/967; cf. E IV, 280-81/585-87). Such philosophers are said to take human beings for beasts, attempting to materialize all the operations of the soul and to deprive human sentiments of all morality…” (EOL XV, 290/419; IX, 275n1/403n1). While at times Rousseau seems to maintain that there has been a minority of true philosophers who have rejected these pernicious teachings (PN 98/966), he typically uses the term "philosophy” and its cognates derogatively: “Philosophy will always defy reason, truth, and time itself, because it has its source in human pride, stronger than all these things” (Obs. 42n/46n). It is well-known that, in Rousseau's own professions of faith, he reveals a degree of profound psychological need to believe in a caring God and a compensating afterlife which could be readily interpreted along the deconstructive lines of Feuerbach, Marx, or Freud. Rousseau's most polemical response to this may be that

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67 See also Rev. III, 21/1015f: “I was living then among modern philosophers who hardly resembled the ancient ones. Instead of removing my doubts and ending my irresolution, they had shaken all the certainty I thought I had concerning the things that were most important for me to know.” Gourevitch overlooks these distinctions with his (characteristically Straussian) interpretation that “Rousseau consistently equates philosophy with atheism” (“Rousseau on the Arts and Sciences,” 747-48).

68 See also Note 63 above for Rousseau's critique of (prevailing forms of) philosophy.

69 See especially Letter to Voltaire, 18 August 1756, EPW 242-43/OC 4:1070-71. Although he is willing to single out Christianity, in particular, for its servile submission to despotism (SC IV.8), in general he defends religion on the grounds of providing a just hope for the oppressed. This may provide further evidence of his anti-revolutionary proclivities, since he clearly was not anticipating a time of full liberation that might supplant this sociological need for compensation. For the most thorough discussion, although it may underplay (on Straussian grounds) the extent of Rousseau's religiosity, see Victor Gourevitch, "The Religious Thought.” For well-argued correctives, see David Williams, *Rousseau's Platonic Enlightenment*,
atheism is itself far from disinterested,\footnote{In the context of comparing his own convictions, admittedly confirmed in part through feeling, with the anti-religious views of the philosophers, the character \textit{Rousseau} asks: \textit{Do you believe that in taking the opposite view with so much ardor, your Gentlemen are influenced by a more impartial motive?} (RJJ II, 170/879).} and could properly be described as an ideology (in Marx’s later sense) of the rich and powerful, enabling its adherents to enjoy their lives purely according to their given impulses and passions, and (when useful) dominating the weak without check or remorse (RJJ III, 239-41f/968-72; \textit{Julie} V.5, 485/592).\footnote{The contemporary popularity of atheism is said to be an ephemeral fanaticism, soon to fade away: \textit{This convenient philosophy of the happy and rich who build their paradise in this world cannot long serve as the philosophy of the multitude who are the victims of their passions, and who—for lack of happiness in this life—need to find in it at least the hope and consolations of which that barbarous doctrine deprives them} (RJJ III, 241/971). This prediction may be confirmed—albeit temporarily—by Tocqueville following the French Revolution, who describes the faddish irreligion in the times leading up to the Revolution as foreign to \textit{the natural instincts of humanity} and to his own contemporaries: \textit{What Frenchman of today would think of writing the books of Diderot or Helvétius? Who would want to read them? I will almost say, who knows their titles? The experience of political life which we have acquired over the last sixty years, incomplete though it is, has been enough to disgust us with this dangerous literature} (\textit{The Old Regime and the Revolution} III.2, 207/Oeuvres 2:206, translation modified; see also 203/203). For the domination of the weak and the classes to whom this domination is particularly useful, see above, Sections 2.1–2.3.}

The role of religion in Rousseau’s positive teaching is highly disputed, ranging from the views that Rousseau is himself a kind of Epicurean, through Deisms or fideisms of varying degrees of depth and warmth, to his fundamental compatibility with the moderate Calvinists—or even Catholics—of his day. For our purposes here, it will suffice to observe that, whatever Rousseau’s personal convictions may have been, and whatever contradictions are apparent among various aspects or phases of his thinking, he is consistent in holding that irreligion is fundamentally compatible with socially moral behavior only under exceptionally harmonious and undemanding circumstances, since it

\footnote{In the context of comparing his own convictions, admittedly confirmed in part through feeling, with the anti-religious views of the philosophers, the character \textit{Rousseau} asks: \textit{Do you believe that in taking the opposite view with so much ardor, your Gentlemen are influenced by a more impartial motive?} (RJJ II, 170/879).}
radically undermines the rational and emotional supports for virtue. As is well known, in his understanding of virtue Rousseau anticipates Kant, defining virtue as a kind of force (force) needed to overcome passions, and sharply distinguishing virtue from doing good merely out of taste or inclination (E V, 444/817). For Rousseau, an effectual belief in a moral, Supreme Being provides，“purpose to justice” and “a basis to virtue,” drawing people through sublime, fearful, or rational motives toward the service of a higher order of which God is the linking center, whereas under non-religious beliefs, only that love of “order” centered ultimately around the self can finally be justified (E IV, 291f/602). Without this basis, one may display many fine maxims in

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72 —To wrest all belief [toute croyance] in God from men's heart is to destroy all virtue in it…. This word virtue means force. There is no virtue without struggle, there is none without victory. Virtue consists not only in being just, but in being so by triumphing over one's passions, by ruling over one's own heart” (Letter to Franquières, 15 January 1769, LPW 280f/OC 4:1142-43; note the toute, which is similarly mentioned in E IV, 263/561: “The forgetting of all religion [toute religion] leads to the forgetting of the duties of man”). We will return to Rousseau's concepts of virtue in Chapter 4 below.

73 The quoted phrases come from the following remarks of Julie, who should probably be taken as speaking for Rousseau here: “It is he who gives a purpose to justice, a basis to virtue, a value to this short life spent pleasing him; it is he who never ceases to cry to the guilty that their secret crimes have been seen, and who causes the forgotten just man to hear: thy virtues have a witness; it is he, it is his inalterable substance that is the true model of perfection, an image of which we each bear within us…. and even if the immense Being on which it dwells did not exist, it still would do well to dwell on it endlessly the better to be master of itself, stronger, happier, and wiser” (Julie III.18, 295/358).

74 Rousseau frequently appeals to a fear of punishment in the afterlife: see the Persian idea of Poul-Serrho (E IV, 314n/635n; RJJ III, 239/968), and among the dogmas of his civil religion are “the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment [châtiment] of the wicked” (SC IV.8, 150f/468). This is, however, an area where Rousseau’s own private or purely ethical teaching seems to differ from his public or political teaching (cf. Note 69 above). For instance, he emphatically rejects “eternal punishments [l'éternité des peines]” in the Letter to Voltaire (EPW 242/OC 4:1070). Compare the even more unqualified remarks of the Confessions: “In general, believers make God as they are themselves, the good make him good, the wicked make him wicked; the devout who are spiteful and choleric see only Hell because they would like to damn the whole world: loving and gentle souls [les ames aimantes et douces] hardly believe in it, and one of the astonishing things from which I cannot recover is to see the good Fenelon speak about it in his Telemachus, as if he truly believed in it; but I hope that he was lying then; for in the end however truthful one may be, one certainly must lie sometimes when one is a Bishop” (VI, 192/228f).

75 The passage cited is in the mouth of the Savoyard Vicar, but is similar to claims made in close proximity in Rousseau’s own voice (E IV, 235n, 314/524n, 636).
one’s books, but this is quite different than showing that they are well-connected with the non-religious doctrine (E IV, 312n/633n), and the hard-headed atheist, who reasons both well and honestly, will merely adorn his pursuit of self-interest with the mask of virtue, and otherwise be indifferent to the fate of mankind except insofar as it can be related to that interest. Thus when the non-religious do preach various semblances of morality publicly, it is rootless and fruitless” (Rev. III, 26/1022).  

Rousseau acknowledges that in practice religion often does not prove to inspire virtuous behavior, but insists that in a fair comparison, insofar as other things are equal, religion adds a comparatively powerful motive, and such motives have prevented many harms and produced many virtues and laudable actions in the past (E IV, 312-13n/633-34n). This is not, of course, to suggest that Rousseau unambiguously endorsed religion in every form; he was a scathing and influential critic of intolerance, fanaticism, clerical

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76 _Abandon this [viz., religion], and I no longer see anything but injustice, hypocrisy, and lying among men. Private interest, which in case of conflict necessarily prevails over everything, teaches everyone to adorn vice with the mask of virtue. Let all other men do what is good for me at their expense; let everything be related to me alone; let all mankind, if need be, die in suffering and poverty to spare me a moment of pain or hunger. This is the inner language of every unbeliever who reasons. Yes, I shall maintain it all my life. Whoever speaks otherwise although he has said in his heart, ‘There is no God,’ is nothing but a liar or a fool” (E IV, 314f/636f). On the pursuit of mere self-interest as qualified by the necessities of social life, cf. SC IV.1, 122/438. Rousseau came to think that such a moral system had come to triumph over the populace, through the influence of the philosophes, between the time of his first writings and his last writings, with the result that “The sole doctrine it [viz., the public] can henceforth taste is that which puts its passions at ease and covers the irregularity of its morals with a veneer of wisdom” (RJJ II, 140/841).

77 Thus, in practice, their public, exoteric teachings ultimately result in the same behaviors as “this other secret and cruel morality” (Rev. III, 38/1022), which has been summarized by Grimm: “The sole duty of man is to follow the inclinations [penchans] of his heart in everything” (Conf. IX, 393/468). Rousseau’s most extensive discussions of the contrast between the philosophes’ public teachings and their interior doctrine are in _RJJ_: see 28, 140, 179, 212n/695, 841f, 891, 934n.

78 Regarding some moral evil which is genuinely appealing to someone, Rousseau suggests that the mere abstract image of virtue will not prevent an unbeliever from succumbing. “The believer, you will say, will succumb as well. Yes, the weak man; the one who is writing to you, for example: but give both of them the same amount of force, and watch the difference which their fulcrum makes” (Letter to Franquières, LPW 282/OC 4:1144).
power, and Christianity—or at least most institutional forms of it (E IV, 295-310/606-29; SC IV.8). His lonely attempts to form a third party, sharply distinguished from both the orthodox and the philosophs, reached their ultimate conclusion shortly after the publications of Emile and Social Contract (1762). Although Diderot could understandably complain about the widespread Christian embrace of Rousseau for his anti-philosophe declamations, regardless of how he “dragged Christ through the mud,” Rousseau eventually came to alienate both parties thoroughly enough that he was left without prominent defender when the religious and political establishments turned decisively against him. He found this bitterly ironic, since he viewed himself as alone in seeking to reestablish a sense of religion on the basis of its strengths, rather than its weaknesses in its revealed, dogmatic forms (Mountain V, 227/802).

3.3 Reasonable Ignorance and Natural Goodness

As the striving for external goods and distinctions, the mixing of cultures, the professionalization of entertainment, and the subversion of native beliefs and norms continued, Rousseau perceived a deep shift away from the moeurs of primitive, healthily functioning societies. His praise of a kind of cultural ignorance or simplicity was often

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79 Diderot to Sophie Volland, 18 July 1762, on Rousseau: “Il a pour lui les dévots. Il doit l’intérêt qu’ils prennent à lui au mal qu’il a dit des philosophes. Comme ils nous haïssent mille fois plus qu’ils n’aiment leur dieu, peu leur importe qu’il ait traîné le Christ dans la boue, pourvu qu’il ne soit pas des nôtres. Ils espèrent toujours qu’il se convertira; ils ne doutent point qu’un transfuge de notre camp ne doive tôt ou tard passer dans le leur” (Mémoire 26).

80 These episodes are recounted in Damrosch’s fine recent biography, Restless Genius, 331-402.

81 He also notes the irony surrounding French persecution: “that this people who boasts of its gentleness [douceur] arms itself with the strangest barbarity” (Beaumont 23/930). We will return to Rousseau’s controversial relation to Christianity in Section 4.2.
caricatured as maintaining that since all ignorant peoples are virtuous and all learned peoples are wicked, we need only burn all our libraries and books in order to be restored to our bygone excellence (cf. PN 96/964). The only claim among these which seems faithful to his position is that all learned peoples have been corrupt and vicious (Letter to Grimm, EPW 54f/OC 3:62; LR 67/76). But even here, we recall that "peoples" as a whole must be distinguished from those particular and extraordinarily rare individuals who can combine learning and virtue. Rousseau also clarifies that although learning may be the swiftest and most profuse cause of corruption, it is not the sole cause (PN 96n/964n)\(^{82}\); accordingly, he acknowledges that many ignorant peoples have also been vicious, including the Kalmuks, Bedouins, and Kaffirs (Letter to Grimm, EPW 54/OC 3:62). For such reasons he distinguishes two kinds of ignorance:

There is a ferocious and brutal ignorance, born of a wicked heart and a deceitful mind; a criminal ignorance even of the duties of humanity, which multiplies the vices, degrades reason, depraves the soul, and renders men similar to beasts…. There is another, reasonable sort of ignorance, which consists in restricting one's curiosity to the scope of the faculties one has received; a modest ignorance, born of a lively love of virtue, and which inspires nothing but indifference toward all that is unworthy of occupying man's heart, and that does not contribute to making him better…. (Obs. 49/54)

At the most general level, we might say that Rousseau merely contends that being a barbarian is an entirely different thing than being criminal (Letter to Grimm, EPW 54/OC 3:61). Similarly, ignorance is said to be an obstacle to neither good nor evil, but merely humanity's natural state (LR 67/75).

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\(^{82}\) The concession would be far from satisfactory to Voltaire, who later insisted that the ills of literature and reputation are "only flowers in comparison to the other ills which have inundated the earth at all times," and that "Great crimes have been committed only be famous ignoramuses" (Letter to Rousseau, 30 August 1755, CW 3:103/Mémoire 136f).
On what positive grounds, then, can he offer such robust praise of certain ancient or primitive peoples? Here we must return to his teaching on the "natural goodness" of humanity. We approach here one of his great tensions or contradictions, for in the First Discourse and related criticisms of modern moral character, Rousseau typically maintains that more primitive peoples have a thoroughly developed virtue which supports social cohesion, purity, and martial excellence. By contrast, in the Discourse on Inequality and related criticisms of modern economic and political structures, primitive humanity is revealed to be naturally "good," but this goodness is largely negative and by no means provides humans with the virtue that is necessary to form just and cohesive social units beyond the most minimal and naturally based units, especially the family. We have also found that the developed teaching of natural goodness in the Discourse on Inequality offers little if any support to the idea of Rousseau as an advocate of the "noble savage"; far from being noble in any typical sense, his primitive humans seek only to support their own survival in a passive, even lazy existence, while minimizing necessary conflicts with others through avoidance or flight whenever possible. Even so, we should not go so far as to say that Rousseau simply does not offer an image of the noble savage—even if it is true that he does not use the term—since in the First Discourse and several later writings, many savage or barbarian peoples are presented as possessing vigorous, stern, and noble virtues. How might these varying depictions of early humanity be reconciled, or at least understood?

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83 See above, Section 2.6.
84 See above, Sections 1.3-1.4.
85 Above, Chapter 1, Note 95.
For our purposes, we may note that even according to the schema presented in the *Second Discourse*, the societies praised in and immediately after the *First Discourse* are clearly more advanced and developed than the most primitive state of humanity (cf. DOI II, 161-68/164-72). According to the typology developed above in Chapter 1, those earliest “Primitives” are still largely or entirely pre-social, whereas the many peoples praised as virtuous in the *First Discourse* and subsequent polemics would clearly have entered the “social-Savage” or “Barbarian” states of “independent association,” and are only referred to as primitive in comparison with advanced civilizations. We will find here, in Rousseau’s early characterizations of these simple peoples, some of the arguments concerning natural goodness and its complex link to social virtue which inform the whole of his mature thought. Typically assuming, rather than specifying or explaining, the lack of the “brutal ignorance” discussed above, Rousseau asks rhetorically how it is that the first men could have been corrupted, given that they were exceedingly ignorant and the sources of corruption were not yet open to them (LR 66/74). Similarly, he claims that a few generations before Rome became the most virtuous people that ever existed, it was founded by a mere troop of bandits. At that point their morals were neither corrupt nor well-formed, and they neither despised virtue nor knew it; for the words *virtues* and *vices* are collective notions which arise only in dealings among men” (PN 103n/971n; cf. DOI I, 150f/152f). Apparently, among a certain number of peoples, the contaminations of vice did not arise, while an ignorant, impolite, and rustic virtue did. Appealing—in some cases controversially—to authorities such as Socrates, Xenophon,

86 Sections 1.3–1.6.
Justin, Quintus Curtius, Tacitus, and Montaigne. Como Rousseau praises such virtue in the contemporary savages of America, the early Persians, Scythians, Spartans, early Romans, Germans, Goths, Vandals, and Huns (DSA I, 11/11-12; Letter to Grimm, EPW 58/OC 3:65), while snubbing the Athenians and the later Romans (DSA I, 11/11-12).

Also in contrast to Rousseau’s depiction of the ‘Primitives,’ the virtuous ancient peoples do not seem to depend solely on their fully innate instincts of self-preservation and pity. Although it is not entirely clear how they were able to avoid the severe corruption depicted in the Second Discourse, these peoples are said to live according to a range of moral sentiments which Rousseau often calls — innate feelings [sentimens innés],” “primitive dispositions,” or “natural rectitude [droiture naturelle]” (LA 23-24, 116/267-68, 337/22, 106; RJJ III, 242/972). These sentiments might better be described, however, as quasi-natural, since they are not found among the completely independent Primitives, but develop naturally as humans are socialized apart from distorting influences such as fundamental economic inequality or interdependence (cf. ML V, 196/1109; E IV, 290/600). In this context, it would seem that Rousseau’s primitivism,

87 For Socrates’ alleged praise of ignorance, based on Apology 21c-22b, see DSA I, 12-13/13-14. For Montaigne’s favoring of the savages of America over Plato’s Laws, see DSA I, 11n/11-12n. For the ancient historians mentioned, see Letter to Grimm, EPW 54/OC 3:61, where Rousseau apparently concedes to Gautier the authorities of Herodotus, Strabo, and Pomponius-Mela, as weighing against the virtue of barbarians.

88 Even granting these distinctions, Rousseau’s brief in behalf of primitive peoples is still unusually strong, in that he characteristically praises savages unqualifiedly, and offers a uniformly positive contrast of them with modernized peoples. See the balanced treatment of the question of moral evolution by Hösle, Morals and Politics (176-82, cf. 58-61), and in particular the rejection of — Rousseauian admiration for the noble savage,” in favor of the approach of Tacitus, Leibniz, or Vico, who, as convinced representatives of the Roman Empire and modern science, respectively, were able to recognize the superiority of the barbarians at those points where it truly existed” (179).

89 The following passage clearly presupposes the possibility of living within oneself rather than in the opinion of others, which is the doom of social origins depicted in the Second Discourse. It praises — gentle [douce] and precious ignorance, the treasure of a pure soul and satisfied with itself, that finds all its
as well as his praise of ignorance, are comparative rather than absolute. For he seems to suggest that the practical study of our duties is (at least morally and politically) superior to complete ignorance. When properly conducted, this seems to be an exceedingly simple and natural thing, since ―a good mind needs little learning‖ (LR 82/93), and everyone has received all the light he needs for such study‖ (Obs. 33/37). Similarly, ―all the ideas which are salutary and truly useful to men,‖ which at all times constitute the true bonds of society,‖ were ―the first to be known‖ (E IV, 339/670). In polemical contexts, Rousseau twice includes among the means to study one’s duties the books of Religion,‖ including those of Christianity (Obs. 39f/43f, LR 82/93), but his sincerity on this point may be called into question. As we have seen, it does seem fair to suggest that ancient virtue was formed with the support of religion, but this seems more likely to be in accordance with one’s broadly natural sentiments of religion, rather than with revealed texts.

Rousseau's basic contention, then, seems to be that humans can shift from the mere innocence of primitive goodness to the hearty virtue of various ancient peoples on the basis of certain very simple and broadly natural sentiments. At the same time, he apparently suggests that while such sentiments are basically natural, they are also exceedingly fragile, and humans can very easily be ‖denatured‖ in a socially destructive way. The resulting urgency of protecting natural sentiments is supported by a principle

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90 Quoting Seneca, Moral Letters 106: Paucis est opus litteris ad mentem bonam.

91 This remark continues with the anti-Enlightenment charge we have seen above: and that the only way transcendent minds can now distinguish themselves is by means of ideas that are pernicious and destructive for mankind‖ (E IV, 339/670).
that would be emphasized from the *First Discourse* through his mature works: that many errors are “a thousand times more dangerous than the truth is useful” (DSA II, 16/18).\textsuperscript{92} The errors in question do not seem to be just any intellectual error (including abstract theological errors), but errors which relate to our fundamental moral duties.\textsuperscript{93} If ever philosophy can add anything good to “the simple insights of reason and the pure sentiments of nature,” the evils it adds are still greater (PF VII [Luxury, Commerce, and the Arts], 44f/516).\textsuperscript{94} Parallel arguments hold at a social level, since the knowledge of virtue and the frenzy to achieve distinction provides some real excellence to a few, while unleashing a multitude of disasters upon the many.\textsuperscript{95} All told, we should conclude that although Rousseau at times seems to praise ignorance as such, his considered and (at times) clearly stated judgment is that a complete ignorance is preferable to the false light

\textsuperscript{92} Similarly, Obs. 50/55; Preface of a Second Letter to Bordes,” EPW 109/OC 3:105; E II, 96/327; III, 171/435, 204/483; and concerning the divinity, IV, 259/556. The argument is at times supported by the idea that while truth has only one way of being, falsehood “admits of an infinite number of combinations” (DSA II, 16f/18; E II, 84/310). Interestingly, although Rousseau in general emphasizes the abuses of civilization rather than its uses, in introducing Emile to money, he explicitly reverses this order (E III, 190/462, discussed in Chapter 4, Note 147). Cf. the similar language in the discussion of female cleverness in relation to men (E V, 372/713).

\textsuperscript{93} See *Julie* I.31, 80n/98n; cf. VL7, 562n2/684-85n, which I interpret to mean that false theological maxims are not as grave as moral misconduct, while the latter is itself not as bad as false moral maxims because they undermine the very possibility of returning to good conduct. This reading seems confirmed by Rousseau’s four-part distinction within religion, and in particular, the distinction within dogma between the part which sets forth the principles of our duties in serving as a foundation for morality, and the part which, purely of faith, contains only speculative dogmas” (Mountain I, 139-40/694-95).

\textsuperscript{94} Rousseau then explains that this is why his work needs only to attack the errors of his adversaries (PF VII [Luxury, Commerce, and the Arts], 45/516).

\textsuperscript{95} See DOI I, 151f/154, quoting Justin on the superiority of the Scythians’ ignorance of virtue to the Greeks’ knowledge of it. Also on the ignorant masses in a modernized society: “I know that they know nothing, that they are brutal and coarse, and nevertheless I did say, and I say again, that they have been enervated by the Sciences which they despise, and the fine Arts which they do not know. It is one of the great inconveniences of cultivating Letters that, for a few men they enlighten, they corrupt an entire nation at a pure loss” (Letter to Grimm, EPW 53/OC 3:60). Cf. DOI II, 184/189: “it is to this ardor to be talked about, to this frenzy to achieve distinction which almost always keeps us outside ourselves, that we owe what is best and what is worst among men, our virtues and vices, our Sciences and our errors, our Conquerors and our Philosophers, that is to say a multitude of bad things and a small number of good things” (emphasis added; cf. PF V [On Honor and Virtue], 38/505).
of moral error, and that a comparative ignorance consisting of a confident embrace of broadly natural and primitive moral norms is the mindset by far the most conducive to the virtues necessary for any true social order.

3.4 Fortitude and Vigor against Bravery and Indifference

The genuine political virtue exemplified by various ancient societies is chiefly characterized by a severity of morals or manners (une sévérité de moeurs). A combination of severity to oneself and gentle camaraderie with one’s fellows is embodied in rustic and pure morals: “good faith, hospitality, justice, and, most important, a great horror of debauchery, that teeming lap of all the other vices” (LR 66/74f). By contrast, with the rise of conveniences, arts, sciences, and luxuries, “true courage is enervated” and “the military virtues vanish” (DSA II, 20/22). Thus Rousseau typically denies the modern depiction of itself as gentle, sweet, and mild (doux), instead portraying it as soft (molle), weak (foible), and effeminate (efféminé). Although his comments on the modern lack of martial virtues are in general highly polemical and apparently absolute, at a few

96 Beaumont 81/1004: “The darkness of ignorance is preferable to the false light of error.” This parallels a remark made about religion in the context of Rousseau’s persecution: “it would be still better to have none at all than to have a barbarous and persecuting one that, tyrannizing the Laws themselves, would thwart the duties of the Citizen” (Mountain I, 148/705).

97 See the prescriptions summarized in the section on “Rousseau’s ‘Manly’ Republic” (Garrard, Rousseau’s Counter-Enlightenment, 64-67).

98 Jean Starobinski cites the definition of “Énerver” offered by the 1762 Dictionnaire de l’Académie: “affaiblir, par la débauche, ou par quelque autre cause”; Starobinski writes to understand here, “amollir” (OC 5:1365, on p. 94n4).

99 In a possibly ironic passage, Rousseau praises Geneva for being neither “so rich as to become enervated by softness [énerver par mollesse] and lose the taste for true happiness and solid virtues in vain delights, nor so poor as to need more foreign assistance than your industry provides” (DOI Dedication, 118/116; see Chapter 2, Note 43 on interpreting his remarks on Geneva). He mentions how generous Genevan citizens would look upon the establishment of a theatre as a “monument of luxury and softness.
points he qualifies his criticism, which leads to his most illuminating formulations concerning the vices of softness. For even though he denies "true courage" to the characteristic moderns, he concedes even in the First Discourse that many modern soldiers do not lack valor. It is only that their polished bravery is quite different than the sustainable fortitude with which Hannibal's soldiers crossed the Alps and Caesar's conquered the Gauls (DSA II, 22/23).

How, indeed, can men overwhelmed by the least need and repelled by the least pain be expected to face up to hunger, thirst, fatigues, dangers, and death. With what courage will soldiers bear up to extreme labors to which they are in no way accustomed?... Do not cite as an objection to me the renowned valor of all these modern warriors, so scientifically trained. I hear their bravery praised on a day of battle, but I am not told how they bear up under extreme labors, how they withstand the harshness [la rigueur] of the seasons and the inclemency of the weather. A little sunshine or a little snow, the want of a few superfluities, is enough to melt and destroy the best of our armies in a few days. (DSA II, 21/23, emphasis added, translation modified)

Thus softness seems to be the vice of not being able to overcome pain, including the discomfort of unmet desire for pleasure—such men are cowardly and pusillanimous, equally incapable of withstanding pain and the passions" (PN 99/966). Moreover,

[molesse] being elevated on the ruins of our antique simplicity and threatening from afar the public liberty" (LA 96/322/88). The modern praises of luxury are characteristically referred to as this soft and effeminate [molle et effeminée] philosophy whose convenient maxims have won it so many supporters among us" (PF VII [Luxury, Commerce, and the Arts], 46/518). Of course, Rousseau offered many allusions to, and illustrations from, the ancient world in this connection (see DSA I, 13-14/14-15; LA 101n2/325n2/92n2, cf. Herodotus III.12; Poland II, 179-82/956-59).

A similar charge is made against the woman-like soldiers available in monarchies (LA 101n1/325n1/92n1). In the posthumous Discourse on Heroic Virtue, Rousseau lists many forms of valor—enerous or brutal, stupid or enlightened, raging or tranquil—the sword of vice or the shield of virtue—before dubbing ardent love of fatherland and...invincible steadfastness in the face of adversity" as the virtue a hero needs most (EPW 312/OC 2:1270). The man of strength or fortitude (l'homme fort) is honored in all events, with happiness and adversity contributing equally to his glory (EPW 316/OC 2:1274).

Cf. the response to Gautier, who claimed not to see the connection between courage and virtue: Once a man has grown accustomed to prefer his life to his duty, he will soon also prefer to it the things
Rousseau maintains that such force of will is not to be found resulting from some temporary goal, however urgently desired, but requires an entire way of life dedicated to overcoming pain and weakness (cf. E V, 362/699). In a later, political writing, he maintains that cultivating the earth as a farmer is the genuine education of the soldier, since it forms men to be as patient and robust as they need to be in the field (Corsica 126/905; cf. DSA I, 7/8). By contrast, soldiers taken from the towns are rebellious and soft [mutins et mous], they cannot bear the fatigues of war, they fade away in the marches, illnesses consume them, they fight among themselves and flee before the enemy” (Corsica 126/905, translation modified). While a taste for letters, philosophy, and the fine arts softens [amollit] bodies and souls,” the taste for physical exercises diverts from dangerous idleness, from the effeminate [efféminés] pleasures, and from luxuries of the mind” (PN 98/966; Poland III, 187/964). For such reasons, Rousseau follows Machiavelli in radically downplaying the significance of military technology and that make life easy and agreeable” (Letter to Grimm, EPW 57/OC 3:64). Aristotle may be close to Rousseau’s double-sided consideration of softness. Within the general sphere of self-indulgence and moderation, he distinguishes the conditions relating to pleasure (un-self-controlled and self-controlled) from those relating to pain (softness [malakia] and resistance [karteria]): see Nicomachean Ethics, VII.7. More broadly, for an exposition of Aristotle as a balanced alternative to modern aspirations to soften manners, see Thomas Lindsay, Aristotle’s Appraisal of Manly Spirit.” See also Plato, Republic VIII, 556b-d.

102 Contrast Montesquieu on how the love of true liberty in England enables them to take up the most severe sacrifices and taxes in times of need: Spirit of the Laws XIX.27, 327.

103 The failure to be accustomed to a vigorous life is also linked with susceptibility to fever and cold” in the DSA (II, 22/24). One might object that exposure to a broad array of infectious diseases through urban and commercial life would be at least as helpful a factor in maintaining a healthy corps as would be physical vigor. This is not to mention the more fundamental health risks from Rousseau’s strong stances against science and medicine (e.g. E I, 54-56/269-72; II, 82/306). A recent study would suggest that his critique of the futility and even destructiveness of medicine may have been surprisingly accurate in his times; nevertheless, it surely seems obsolete following the dramatic progress of medical science and practice beginning in the early twentieth century (see David Wootton, Bad Medicine: Doctors Doing Harm Since Hippocrates).
strategic fortifications in military strength, instead seeing the outcomes of war as being determined almost entirely by moral causes.\textsuperscript{104}

At this point, the current reader may find Rousseau as distasteful as many of his refined contemporaries did. In our own ways, we might question whether other goods gained through the arts and the sciences might compensate for the loss of that — barbarous and fierce virtue which causes humanity to tremble,”\textsuperscript{105} or prefer a powerful and well-governed state where the citizens are secure and thus — at condemned to such cruel virtues.”\textsuperscript{106} Rousseau offers some merely mocking replies to these modern inclinations, such as that it is of course more comfortable to live in a state where — everyone is exempt from being a good man” (LR 78/88). Even assuming the desirability of such a state, he insists upon the need for a citizenry which at least possesses the strength and capacity to practice such — cruel virtues’ when great misfortune makes them necessary to preserve liberty and virtue (78/88). That is, such a citizenry is necessary at least where we may speak of citizens and freedom at all; whereas in a sprawling monarchy, one need not have real men, for one can simply mobilize three times as many — women” (LA 101n1/325n1/92n1).

\textsuperscript{104} — War hardly does anything other than make manifest outcomes already determined by moral causes which historians rarely know how to see” (E IV, 240/529). This is not, however, to say that large, well-disciplined, standing armies do not pose genuine threats to their neighbors (cf. \textit{Poland} III, 183/959; XII, 233f/1013f). For Machiavelli, see \textit{The Prince}, chs. 12, 24; \textit{Discourses on Livy}, II.17-18, II.24. For the related Spartan argument against city walls, its apparent endorsement by Plato since walls are — apt to encourage a certain softness in the souls of the inhabitants,” and its repudiation by Aristotle as based on — overly old-fashioned conceptions,” see Plutarch, \textit{Lycurgus} [19], Plato, \textit{Laws} VI, 778d-79b, and Aristotle, \textit{Politics} VII.11, 1330b31-31a18.

\textsuperscript{105} Quoted in LR 69/78. Stanislas had similarly argued that in the times Rousseau praises, there were more of those audacious men who attack tranquil nations: — Their valor was nothing but ferocity, their courage nothing but cruelty, their conquests nothing but inhumanity” (— Reply to the Discourse,” CW 2:35/Mémoire 48).

\textsuperscript{106} Charles Bordes, \textit{Discourse on the Advantages of the Sciences and Arts}, CW 2:107/Mémoire 80; also quoted in LR 78/88.
Through his civic critique of modern softness, we find Rousseau especially given to such shocking overstatements, perhaps in part because he is writing self-consciously for a popular audience. Nonetheless, even here we find certain traces of the gentleness which he praises in his individualistic or domestic-moral lines of thought, and can easily distinguish his prescriptions from that —f[erocious and brutal ignorance” which we have seen him condemn. For instance, while siding with the republican tradition in opposition to standing, professional armies, he argues: —War is sometimes a duty, and it is not made to be a trade. Every man should be a soldier in defense of his freedom; none to invade that of another: and to die in the service of the fatherland is too noble an enterprise to entrust it to mercenaries” (LR 72/82). While following Machiavelli in much of his depiction of civic and martial virtue, Rousseau departs from his republican muse (SC III.6, 95/409, 95n/409n) in consistently repudiating conquest as a legitimate, necessary, or morally desirable goal of the state. The spirit of his praise of vigorous

107 See Kelly, *Rousseau as Author*, esp. 127-33; more broadly, for readings of Rousseau as an esoteric writer, see above, Chapter 1, Note 25.

108 Especially his writings on primitive humanity, his romances, the *Emile*, and his autobiographies. We will return to these tensions in Sections 4.2, 4.5–4.7.

109 This claim from one of his earliest writings is closely echoed in one of his latest writings: —Each citizen ought to be a soldier by duty, none by profession” (*Poland* XII, 234/1014; see similarly *Fragments to Corsica*, CW 11:161, 163/OC 3:946, 948f). Julie is similarly disparaging against —the professional military who sell their blood for a price” (*Julie* I.57, 129/158; and similarly St. Preux in I.34, 88/108). We will return to this claim in discussing Emile’s choice of profession (E V, 456/834) in Chapter 4, Note 272.

110 See LR 72/82: —only a blind and stupid people admires those who spend their life not in defending their freedom, but in robbing and betraying one another in order to gratify their self-indulgence or their ambition, and who dare feed their idleness with the sweat, the blood and the toil of a million wretches.” See also SC II.9. A fragment apparently goes so far as to suggest that Lycurgus and Numa were —enemies of violence and conquests” who —ought only of making the State independent and tranquil” (PF XII [Parallel between the Two Republics of Sparta and Rome], 63/542). This clearly distinguishes Rousseau from Machiavelli, who believes in the practical necessity of perpetual expansion (*Discourses on Livy*, I.7; II, Preface; II.19; but for the limits of this, see II.4, III.24). On the other hand, Rousseau consistently depicts, at least descriptively, a certain indifference and harshness of true citizens to outsiders (see above, Chapter 1, Note 19). Contrast the reading of Wokler, that Rousseau was —ever again
but circumscribed martial virtue is evident in his advice to the Poles that while bullfights have substantially contributed to “maintaining a certain vigor in the Spanish nation,” the Poles should adopt public games and exercises which are “less cruel but which nevertheless require force and skill” (Poland III, 186/963).

Even granting that Rousseau consistently had this qualified version of ancient martial vigor in mind as his ideal, he still considers the distance between these ancients and the moderns to be vast. For him, ancient history reveals to us another universe, since modern Frenchmen, Englishmen and Russians have almost nothing in common with the strong souls of the ancient Greeks and Romans, besides their physical shape (Poland II, 179f/956; cf. Mountain IX, 292/881). It is above all the image of Sparta which challenges modern presumptions about the possibilities of human nature and society, and it is accordingly the image to which Rousseau returns the most frequently. For

to portray the ideal of military valour in quite the shining colours he had employed in the first Discourse,” and despite his continuing belief in the value of the Roman Republic’s militias in sustaining liberty, he began in the Discourse on Inequality to portray all wars as criminal, murderous, execrable, and—for the combatants themselves—pointless” (Rousseau, 33).

111 Possibly echoing Machiavelli, Discourses on Livy I, Preface; Montesquieu, Spirit of the Laws, III.5, p. 25; IV.4, p. 35; or for a more primitive point of contrast, Montaigne, “On the Cannibals” (in The Complete Essays, 239). This contrast of strength is attributable to changes in ways of life rather than physical make-up, since the northern barbarians from whom we are largely descended were bigger and stronger than the Romans” (LA 102f/326f/94). On the basically fixed status of human nature, supporting the continuing relevance of ancient examples for modern practice, see Machiavelli, Discourses on Livy I, Preface.

112 No example is more suited than Lacedaemonia to make felt “what laws and morals are able to do for man and what man himself can do when he sincerely loves virtue…” (PF XIII [History of Lacedaemonia], 64/544). SC III.12, 110/425 is a better known passage, appealing to Rome in the context of political assembly: “The bounds of the possible in moral matters are less narrow than we think: It is our weaknesses [foiblesses], our vices, our prejudices that confine them. Base souls do not believe in great men: vile slaves smile mockingly at the word freedom.” But cf. Section 2.6, esp. around Note 98, for the limited context in which this applies. Elizabeth Rawson calls Rousseau “the arch-priest of laconism,” and concludes he was, with Montesquieu, the main figure responsible for the rise of “the great age of modern laconomania” in later eighteenth-century France, which gathered together the threads—moral, social, educational, and political—that had usually been separate since the Renaissance” (The Spartan Tradition in European Thought, 242, 227).
moderns, —everything that bears a definite character of strength [force] and vigor does not appear possible…” (PF XII [History of Lacedaemonia], 65/546). Thus the historical record does not suggest that men are alike in all ages, or that all display the same virtues and vices; on the contrary, —men formerly accomplished great things with small means, and today we do just the opposite” (Julie I.12, 49/60). Yet this is not because of our reason but because of our prejudices, our base philosophy, the passions of petty self-interest, and the mechanical conveniences, arts, and luxuries which institutionalize these impulses (cf. Poland II, 180/956; DSA II, 20/22). Striving for uninterrupted comfort as the height of human possibility, we redefine virtue in our own image, offering reductive descriptions or explanations of the vigorous achievements of antiquity.  

Of course, Rousseau was far from repudiating all reductive interpretations of an era’s vaunted moral achievements. This is evident in his most direct response to doux commerce theory, which is not empirically to deny a certain softening effect of commercial modernization, but to reductively reinterpret the sources, nature, and ultimate effects of such softening.  

At times, his descriptions of modern morals avoid the

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113 Contrast Hume’s complaint: —declaim against present times, and magnify the virtue of remote ancestors, is a propensity almost inherent in human nature…” (—ORefinement in the Arts,” Essays 278; similarly —Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations,” Essays 464). See also McCloskey on the —Believers in everything Old,” who arose especially after 1848, among Catholic intellectuals, and in the first generation of professional historians, maintaining that —people in olden times were innocent and good, and that a market-absent purity is to be found in the medieval history of das Volk” (The Bourgeois Virtues, 10-14, 30-31, 49).

114 Although Rousseau would surely consider La Rochefoucauld guilty of the crime of reductively interpreting the virtue of the ancients (cf. Hirschman, The Passions and the Interests, 9-12, 42), the former’s critique of modern gentleness may owe a debt to the latter: —No one deserves to be praised for goodness if he does not have the strength to be nasty [méchant]; any other goodness is most often only a laziness [une paresse] or an impotence of the will” (Maxims, No. 237. Cf. Rousseau’s claim about his early readings with Madame de Warens: —We read La Bruyère together; she liked him better than La Rochefoucauld, whose book is dreary and distressing, especially when one is young and prefers not to see man as he is” [Conf. III, 93/111f, my translation]. This remark should not be taken as inconsistent with —natural goodness”: see DOI, Note IX, 197/202). Friedrich Nietzsche would make several claims to
derogatory term “softness” (molesse or mollesse), conceding that there is a real
gentleness” (douceur) to be accounted for. Citing Montesquieu’s contention that
Knowledge makes men gentle (doux),” Rousseau grants that this is true, and the
most solid thing ever written on behalf of Letters” (LR 64n/72n).

But gentleness [la douceur], the most amiable of virtues, is also sometimes a
weakness [foiblesse] of the soul. Virtue is not always gentle [douce]; when the
occasion requires, it can arm itself with due severity against vice, be fired with
indignation against crime. —And the just cannot pardon the wicked,” a King of
Lacedaemon replied most wisely to those who in his presence praised the extreme
goodness of his Colleague Charilaus. —How can he be good,” he told them, —if he
cannot be terrible to the wicked?” Brutus was not a gentle man; who would be
so bold as to say he was not virtuous? By contrast there are cowardly and
pusillanimous souls that have neither fire nor warmth, and are only gentle
[douces] out of indifference for good and evil. This is the gentleness which the
taste for Letters instills in Peoples. (LR 64n/72n, emphasis added)

To unpack the significance of this reinterpretation of learned gentleness as flowing
chiefly from moral indifference, we will focus upon two vital omissions of this
indifference—a lack of dedication to justice and a lack of psychological vigor. As for
justice, this passage singles out the squeamishness of the learned, modernized mind to
severely prosecute justice against those who are dangerous to the community. Rousseau
is here applying a markedly Machiavellian theme. Most generally, these republicans
converge in maintaining that initial leniency in punishment frequently leads to an

similar effect, such as, —Indeed, I often laughed at the weaklings who believe themselves good because
their paws are lame!” (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Second Part, p. 92).


116 This account is taken from Plutarch, Of Envy and Hatred V, and Life of Lycurgus V.9
(Gourevitch, EPW 339n). We have also appealed to this principle as an illustration of Rousseau’s political
sternness, in Chapter 1, Note 21.
ultimately more violent polity. At a more specific level, they both appeal to Brutus—
the case our century finds most revolting” (LR 78/88)—who had his own sons executed
for conspiracy against the fatherland. In so doing, Brutus would exemplify, for
Rousseau, the need to prevent pity from degenerating into weakness by generalizing it to
the whole of mankind and the common good: “we must have pity for our species still
more than for our neighbor, and pity for the wicked is a very great cruelty to men” (E IV,
253/548). To make a somewhat unusual juxtaposition, Rousseau also anticipates here

117 See Machiavelli, The Prince XVII, 65f; cf. VIII, 37-38; Discourses on Livy, e.g. I.9-10, II.28,
III.1, III.27, III.49. For the sense in which Machiavelli advocates an “economy of violence” rather than an
unqualified consequentialism, see Wootton, “Introduction” to Machiavelli, xxx, xxii. On the other hand,
for both Rousseau and Machiavelli, a special degree of severity is required during founding and crisis
periods. Under ordinary circumstances in a well-governed state, “there are few punishments...because
there are few criminals” (SC II.5, 65/377; for the emphasis on morals preempting the need for punishment,
see PF IV [On Laws], 29-31/492-95; PF XVI [On Morals], 71-72/555-56). The ideal seems to be vigorous
government without cruelty (see Fragments to Corsica, CW 11:156/OC 3:940). A similar balance (with a
different point of emphasis) may be struck by More, who follows a long critique of the English imposition
of capital punishment for theft with the following: “He [i.e., the ruler] should be tough on crime, and by
seeing that his subjects are raised with the right values he should ensure that they do not turn to it, rather
than allowing lawlessness to become widespread and then punishing it harshly” (Utopia, Book I, p. 82).
Montesquieu is similar to More in emphasizing gentleness and the futility of arbitrary harshness in attaining
a balanced system of punishment: see Persian Letters 19, 80, 89, 102 (or in the 1721 edition: 18, 78, 87,

118 See Machiavelli, Discourses on Livy, esp. I.116, III.3, reflecting on Livy, Ab urbe condita II.3-5.
Livy does note Brutus’s pity during the flogging and execution: “They stripped, flogged, and beheaded the
young men. During the whole time all were painfully aware of Brutus’ eyes and expression, for as he
fulfilled his duty as a public official the natural feelings of a father could be read in his face” (II.5, 76). Cf.
Rousseau’s depiction of the Spartan mother, thanking the gods for victory in battle while disregarding the
death of her five sons: “Voila la Citoyenne” (E I, 40/249). However, in a later and more personal-moral
writing, Rousseau does mention the struggle with pity: “...Brutus was a tender father; to do his duty he tore
up his insides, and Brutus was virtuous” (Letter to Franquières, 15 January 1769, in LPW 281/OC 4:1143).

119 For the impact of this and similar passages on Saint-Just and Robespierre, see Carol Blum,
Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue, 177-79. See also GM II.4, 113f/329f. Wolmar’s naturally “tranquil
soul” and “cold heart” seem to enable him to display such governmental virtues excellently: “If I am pained
when I see good people suffer, pity has nothing to do with it, for I feel none when I see the wicked suffer.
My only active principle is a natural taste for order...” (Julie IV.12, 402f/490). By contrast, Rousseau’s
fictionalized account of Judges chapter 19 portrays a people whose thirst for justice was distorted by
outrage, when the Hebrews moved to exterminate all the people besides the virgin women: “Thus, to make
amends for the desolation of so many murders, this fierce [farouche] people committed still greater
ones...” (Levite of Ephraïm IV, CW 7:363/OC 2:1220f). This would be more in keeping with the
following criticism of those who lack pity for the suffering (not to be confused with the wicked): “Expect
from them only inflexible rigor, hardness, and cruelty [endurcissement, cruauté]. They may be men of
integrity and justice, but never Clement, generous, and pitying. I say that they may be just—if, that is, a

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Kant’s sharp contrast between innocence and duty, since both insist that even the purest soul requires the assistance of reason and wisdom to provide direction and solidity to the qualities of the heart. For Rousseau, without such guidance, all the virtues get corrupted—Firmness [La fermeté] readily degenerates into stubbornness, gentleness into weakness [la douceur en foiblesse], zeal into fanaticism, valor into ferocity” (Discourse on Heroic Virtue, EPW 311/OC 2:1269).

As for moral indifference and psychological vigor, we find a parallel passage in the later Emile (1762), this time linked not to governmental enforcement but to religion and everyday citizen morals. This passage is within a remarkable footnote, immediately after Rousseau concedes to the philosophist party” that Pierre Bayle has proven very well that fanaticism is more pernicious than atheism.

man can be just when he is not merciful” (E IV, 227/511f). For helpful comments on the reconciliation of justice and compassion in Rousseau, see Jonathan Marks, —Rousseau’s Discriminating Defense of Compassion,” esp. 736-37; and Clifford Orwin, —Rousseau and the Discovery of Political Compassion,” 307-8.

See Kant, Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, AK 4:390, 404-5; Critique of Practical Reason, AK 5:23-36 (both in Practical Philosophy). In relation to punishment, Kant counters Cesare Beccaria’s rejection of capital punishment as excluded from the original civil contract, arguing that it fails to distinguish —pure reason in me (homo noumenon),” which legislates, from my person as capable of crime (homo phaenomenon), which has no voice in legislation (Metaphysics of Morals, in Practical Philosophy, AK 6:336; cf. Rousseau, SC II.5, 64f/376f).

Cf. Fénelon, Telemachus X, 155/209: Minerva inspired Telemachus —at the same time with the spirit of wisdom and foresight, intrepid valor, and calm moderation [la douce modération]; virtues that are seldom found united.” She then exhorted him to great courage, but on the other hand, not to —court danger unnecessarily. Valor can be no farther a virtue than as it is regulated by prudence: it is otherwise a mad contemp of death, and a blind brutal fury [un ardeur brutale].” Cf. Plato, Statesman 306a-11c, and Republic VI, 503c-d, on the difficulty of combining moderation and courage.

For the range of responses in the French Enlightenment to Bayle’s paradox (that a political society of atheists could survive: see Various Thoughts on the Occasion of a Comet, §§ 133-38, 161-93), and for the distinctive intensity of Rousseau’s defense of civil and personal faith, see Ronald Boss, —Rousseau’s Civil Religion and the Meaning of Belief: An Answer to Bayle’s Paradox.” Wokler also finds Rousseau’s religious convictions to be almost uniquely intense within the republic of letters (Rousseau, 104).
But...fanaticism, although bloodthirsty [sanguinaire] and cruel, is nevertheless a grand and strong passion which elevates the heart of man, makes him despise death, and gives him a prodigious energy [ressort] that need only be better directed to produce the most sublime virtues. On the other hand, irreligion—and the reasoning and philosophic spirit in general—causes attachment to life, makes souls effeminate [effémine] and degraded, concentrates all the passions in the baseness of private interest, in the abjectness of the human me, and thus quietly saps the true foundations of every society. For what private interests have in common is so slight that it will never outweigh what sets them in opposition. If atheism does not cause the spilling of men’s blood, it is less from love of peace than from indifference to the good. (E IV, 312n/632-33n, emphasis added, translation modified).

Far from the natural, extensive harmony of selfish interests maintained by most philosophes, Rousseau finds the clash of private interests to be far more fundamental than their commonalities, and accordingly finds any philosophy which is ultimately grounded exclusively in the happiness of individuals in this life to be unsustainable socially. In practice even if not in theory, such philosophies must inevitably offer worldly prudence as their grounding virtue, and for Rousseau nothing comes as close to pusillanimity as excessive prudence (Discourse on Heroic Virtue, EPW 314/OC 2:1271).

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123 He may consider certain behaviors substantively immoral albeit ‘formally’ admirable: “It will always be a grand and beautiful thing to be in command of oneself, even in order to obey fantastic opinions…” (E V, 391/743). Tocqueville similarly critiques the excessive love of material well-being, to the exclusion of religion, for the enervation, debasing, and weakening it causes to the soul (see Democracy in America II, 2.16).

124 In a later writing, Rousseau warns that “the zeal of fanaticism” is only napping amid this century that is “peaceful out of indifference [pacifique par indifférence]” (Mountain V, 228/802). Montesquieu was also aware of the psychological explanation Rousseau offers, since in claiming that moderation is the soul and spring of aristocratic republics, he needed to specify: “I mean the moderation founded on virtue, not the one that comes from a faint-heartedness [une lâcheté] and a laziness [une paresse] of soul” (Spirit of the Laws, III.4, 25/538a, translation modified).

125 See Garrard, Rousseau’s Counter-Enlightenment, 19-26; Hulling, The Autocritique of Enlightenment, 9-37; Rosenblatt, Rousseau and Geneva, 52-61. Rousseau’s broader opposition to this approach is discussed above, Sections 2.1 and 2.6.
He continues this "grand e note" with a number of empirical observations which further support his case that the philosophical spirit is more destructive than fanaticism in its long-term consequences, even though fanaticism is worse in its immediate effects.

Whatever may be going on is of little importance for the allegedly wise man, provided that he can remain at rest in his study. His principles do not cause men to be killed, but they prevent them from being born by destroying the morals which cause them to multiply, by detaching them from their species, by reducing all their affections to a secret egoism as deadly to population as to virtue. Philosophic indifference resembles the tranquility of the state under despotism. It is the tranquility of death. It is more destructive than war itself. (E IV, 312n/633n)

In these loaded remarks, Rousseau singles out decreased family size as the natural impact of philosophic indifference. He seems to be suggesting that in more simple, rural, chaste, and pious environments, large families are simply a matter of course and do not particularly seem to require sacrifice; whereas for the worldly and urbanized—ambitious for luxury, recognition, and sophisticated entertainment—few things could seem more costly and (egoistically) irrational. The link with despotism is not merely coincidental,

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127 For criticisms of contemporary cosmopolitans and philosophes along these lines, see above, Chapter 1, Note 16, and Chapter 2, Note 35.

128 On the need for the simple and chaste ladies of the country to compensate for city women in order to maintain a stable national population, see E V, 362/698f. Cf., on the moral impact of nursing infants, E I, 46/257f. For many other passages in which Rousseau displays his preoccupation with population, and critical comments on their empirical validity, see Melzer (Natural Goodness, 288-89); Cooper makes a similar critique (Rousseau, Nature, 198). For the explosive (albeit mutually conflicted) impact of Rousseau's philosophical and personal legacy regarding reproduction and the family, see Carol Blum, Strength in Numbers: Population, Reproduction, and Power in Eighteenth-Century France, ch. 6. For current empirical support of Rousseau's empirical link between greater religiosity and greater childbirth rates, see Phillip Longman, The Empty Cradle, 33-36, 165, cf. 61-67. Rousseau would also be gratified by the --Conclusions of John Casterline, who finds low religiosity, as well as high materialism and consumerism, among the main factors depressing fertility (363-65). It is, on the other hand, not clear whether Rousseau would now re-assert such a strong normative ideal of population growth, considering his ambivalent reflections on the social impact of earlier historical stages of population growth, and the evident overcoming of his perceived issues of depopulation in many parts of the world as well as the world taken as a whole.
either. For in a passage written around the same time, Rousseau argues that riots and civil wars may greatly alarm political chiefs, but they do not cause the true miseries of peoples in comparison with a permanent state of even peaceable tyranny and servitude. Judged according to the correct political standard of the preservation and prosperity expressed in population (SC III.9, 105/420), such violent dissensions are to be preferred, since A little agitation energizes souls, and what causes the species truly to prosper is not so much peace as freedom” (SC III.9, 105-6n/420n). Thus, judged by the literally vital standard of population, even a misdirected yet fiery religion compares favorably with the complete dousing of such energies. Similarly, Rousseau maintains—in a rather extreme reaction to Hobbes—that even a complete political disorder is less stifling to the human spirit than a false and oppressive order.

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129 Immediately before the passage quoted, Rousseau writes: Formerly Greece flourished amidst the most cruel wars; blood flowed freely, yet the entire country was full of men. It seemed, says Machiavelli, that our Republic grew all the more powerful for being in the midst of murders, proscriptions, civil wars; the virtue of its citizens, their morals, their independence, did more to reinforce it, than all its dissensions had done to weaken it” (SC III.9, 106n/420n; Machiavelli’s comments are adapted from the Proemio of his Florentine Histories). Similarly, barbarous man is said to prefer the most tempestuous freedom to a tranquil subjection” (DOI II, 177/181). The similarities between Machiavelli’s concept of rinnovazione and Thomas Jefferson’s favoring of tumult” have been duly noted (Susan Dunn, Revolutionary Men of Letters and the Pursuit of Radical Change, 749-51). Such romanticizing about the tumults of popular states had led Hobbes to conclude that there was never anything so dearly bought, as these western parts have bought the learning of the Greek and Latin tongues” (Leviathan XXI [9], p. 141). Tocqueville would also challenge this appeal to Renaissance Italy—and on broadly Rousseauian grounds. After criticizing Machiavelli for his view of the world as a great arena from which God is absent,” his elimination of conscience, and his praising of ability and success above all, he argues that Machiavelli’s portrayal of his times may suggest that we judge ours too severely. In those medieval Italian republics, there was a sort of rude energy, it is true. But how little we see real virtues. Nothing but brutal violence, alongside extraordinary refinements of vice! What egotism! What contempt for law! What skepticism among the upper classes and what superstitions among the lower! What a society deeply corrupted without yet being generally enlightened!” (Letter to Louis de Kergorlay, 5 August 1836, in The Tocqueville Reader, 155).

130 After condemning our social order” as at every point contrary to nature,” Rousseau asks: There are prejudices that must be respected? That may be, but it is when everything else is in order, and it is impossible to remove these prejudices without also removing what compensates for them. Then the evil is left for love of the good. But when the state of things is such that there can be no change that is not for the better, are prejudices so respectable that reason, virtue, justice, and the good that truth could do for men
However weak, effeminate, and selfish Rousseau may find cultural modernity, it is important to recognize that he is not so intellectually self-indulgent as to accuse his century of every vice. He contends, rather, that it has only the vices of cowardly souls [ames lâches],” while having banished a number of vices which require courage and fortitude (la fermeté) (LR 70/79). We may now understand the deeper rationale behind modernity’s incredulity to both the virtues and the crimes of a people such as the Spartans: –Equally weak [foibles] and pusillanimous in good and evil, everything that bears a definite character of strength and vigor does not appear possible to us” (PF XII [History of Lacedaemonia], 65/546). More often than not, Rousseau frames this as a decidedly negative moral condition: –What have you gained then by making yourselves soft [amollir]? For vices that show courage and vigor you have substituted those of small souls. Your gentleness [douceur] is base and pusillanimous, you torment secretly and under cover those you would have attacked with open force. If you are less bloodthirsty, it is not virtue but weakness, in you it is only one more vice” (ML II, 181f/1090).131

Regarding whatever gains the moderns may boast of, Rousseau points to systemic injustices—these cruel voluptuous pleasures that the small number purchase at the expense of the multitude”—which lead to innumerable subtle oppressions and petty vices

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131 Cf. the depiction of contemporary youths: –Base and cowardly [Vils et lâches] even in their vices, they have only small souls because their worn-out bodies were corrupted early…. Abject in all things and basely wicked, they are only vain, rascally [fripons], and false; they do not even have enough courage to be illustrious criminals” (E IV, 335/665, translation modified). Laurence Cooper helpfully discusses the petty and cowardly nature of modern vices (Rousseau, Nature, xii, 32, 128, 162-63, 192; cf. 198-200). We will see how the adolescent Emile is trained to avoid these vices in Section 4.5 (see esp. Chapter 4, Note 193).
(ML II, 181/1089). Even in this very critical passage, however, he never directly contradicts his interlocutor’s claims that “Knowledge makes men gentle” and “the age is less cruel, we shed less blood” (181/1089). He apparently concedes that murders have become less frequent: “And what difference does it make to society if fewer of them perish by murders if the State kills them before their birth by making children onerous to their fathers” (PF IX [On Population], 53/528). Elsewhere he also seems to grant that duels are rarer in his day. But the reduction of duels has not occurred through social or legal pressure—much less through elevated moral ideals or sentiments—but because its main causes have been undermined through changes in moral customs. Whereas men used to quarrel in taverns, they have now “been given a distaste for this crude pleasure by being given others at a low price”; and whereas men used to quarrel over a mistress, they now live more familiarly with women and “have found that it was not worth the effort to

132 See also ML II 181/1089f: “For being gentler [plus doux], are you less unjust, less vindictive, is virtue less oppressed, power less tyrannical, are the people less overburdened, does one see fewer crimes, are malefactors more rare, are the prisons less full?”

133 See also the implicit concession to Helvétius in “Notes on Helvétius’s On the Mind,” CW 12:212/OC 4:1130, discussed above in Chapter 2, Note 30. The concession may seem strange to us, insofar as we are accustomed to narratives of modernization and urbanization leading to greater instability, anomie, and violence. This contrasts sharply with the view of modernizers in Rousseau’s day (e.g., Stanislas, “Reply to the Discourse,” CW 2:35/Mémoire 48; Bordes, “Discourse on the Advantages of the Sciences and Arts,” CW 2:98/Mémoire 71). Note also that among current historians in the field, the majority position follows Norbert Elias in finding that modern civilization over the last few centuries has experienced a jagged sequence of decline in homicide rates, until around 1960 (see Julius Ruff, Violence in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800, 1-10, 119-30, 250. A skeptical reviewer notes that “current scholarship is more likely to uphold, or modify subtly, rather than to reject entrenched views of a gradual abeyance of violence in early modern Europe in response to imperatives of civility and politeness and to emergent state control”: Alexandra Shepard, “Violence and Civility in Early Modern Europe,” 593; cf. 594, 603 for her skepticism). See the striking reductions of crime and disorder in Calvinist (and highly commercialized) polities, as discussed in Philip Gorski, The Disciplinary Revolution, 51-55. In the broadest and most quantitative perspective, Gregory Clark finds by far the highest rates of violent death among modern foraging societies (with rates of around 6.6 per thousand per year), and far less in Neolithic societies (rates of 1.4), followed by settled and institutionally stable agrarian societies (rates of 0.4 in England in 1200), and finally modern high-income societies (rates of 0.01–0.02 in the current United Kingdom; see A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World, 122-30).
fight for the" (LA 71n/303n/65n). Rousseau offers similarly reductive explanations for why fewer acts of rape are cited in his day (E IV, 360/696); and as for the absence of slaves among modern peoples, this too stems more from cowardice [lâcheté] than humanity” (SC III.15, 115/431). A similarly back-handed concession occurs regarding modern politeness. In general, Rousseau repudiates it as a form of hypocrisy and fraud, which allows vice to remain undetected and cuts off the very possibility of cultivating authentic virtue. He thus rejects the prevailing Augustinian assumption of his day, that hypocrisy is a homage which vice renders to virtue,” and seems also to reject the Aristotelian idea that appropriate acts may lead to the cultivation of virtue through external habit. Nevertheless, he did grant that strong pressures for external distinction and approval had generated a culture of politeness (Obs. 47/52; PN 93n/960n; LA 19/264/18). And in a rare, later concession to his shocked interlocutors, he grants that this culture of politeness

134 This passage concludes by observing, "In this Age of enlightenment, everyone knows how to calculate to the penny the worth of his honor and his life" (LA 71n/303n/65n).

135 Kelly rightly observes that in his attacks on the gentleness or softness that came with the spread of the sciences and the arts," Rousseau frequently displays toleration for those vices that give some sign of a residual strength of soul,” and is open to a certain admiration for what could be called heroic criminals” (Rousseau as Author, 87). See also Gourevitch, "Rousseau on the Arts and Sciences,” 748, 750.

136 The more the inside becomes corrupt, the more composed does the outside become: that is how the cultivation of Letters insensibly engenders politeness…these reflections eventually shape style, purify taste, and disseminate graciousness and urbanity everywhere. All these things may, perhaps, be regarded as supplements to virtue: but they can never be said to be virtue, and they will rarely be combined with it” (LR 65/74, emphasis added; see also PF XVI [On Morals], 73E/558). See Kelly, Rousseau as Author, 57.

137 According to the oft-cited maxim of La Rochefoucauld: —hypocrisie est un hommage que le vice rend à la vertu” (Maxims, No. 218). See, e.g., King Stanislas, Reply to the Discourse, CW 2:34/ Mémoire 47; Bordes, Discourse on the Advantages of the Sciences and Arts, CW 2:99-101/Mémoire 71-73.

138 For a helpful discussion of the development of the Aristotelian and Augustinian traditions in regard to habitation, purity of motivation, and grace, and the ways in which a truncated version of the Augustinian insistence on purity of motive led to a more modernistic or Rousseauian emphasis on sincerity over moral improvement, see Herdt, Putting on Virtue, esp. ch. 10.
constitutes a public semblance of virtue. This —consists in a certain mildness of morals [douceur de moeurs] which sometimes compensates for their lack of purity, a certain appearance of order which averts terrible confusion, a certain admiration for what is fine which keeps what is good from being entirely forgotten” (PN 103n/972n). In this way Rousseau grants a kind of social value, not to hypocrisy—which he apparently considers a form of intentional deceit and betrayal— but to a polish or varnish which can cover the ugliness of vice, preventing its poison from being exuded quite so freely,” and preserving a public semblance of virtue (PN 103/972; LA 64/298/59).

What is perhaps Rousseau’s greatest concession to cultural modernization, however, is that once it has transformed the morals of a people, it is not advisable to attempt to return to their earlier vigor and purity. At a political level, Rousseau repeatedly advises against revolution—at least in regard to established, minimally stable, and decent polities—claiming that he merely limits himself to depicting the evil and discovering its causes (LR 84f/95), and that attempts at revolution only increase a people’s chains (DOI Dedication, 115/113). At a cultural level, he emphatically does

139 Vice here dons the mask of virtue not as hypocrisy does, in order to deceive and betray, but rather in order to escape, behind this pleasing and sacred effigy, its horror at itself when it sees itself uncovered” (PN 103n/972n).

140 This qualification must be mentioned since Rousseau may not offer such conservative advice in regard to the full-blown despotism which reduces individuals to a state of nature (DOI II, 185-86/191). In a later writing, he counsels prudence in opposition which seems close to Aquinas’s moderate position: “When the excess of Tyranny puts the one who suffers it above the Laws, it is still necessary that what he attempts in order to destroy it leave him some hope of succeeding” (Mountain VIII, 269/851f; cf. Aquinas, Summa theologiae II-II 42.2 ad 3). Cf. Poland I, 178f/955 on reforming with caution; and the famous prediction of “the age of revolutions” in E III, 194, 194n/468, 468n. Contrast the more absolute conservatism regarding mores which Rousseau insists upon in DSA, discussed in Note 62 above.

141 Observe the qualifications, however, in the following: “no remedy remains, short of some great revolution almost as much to be feared as the evil it might cure, and which it is blameworthy to desire and impossible to foresee” (Obs. 51/56). He later laments the public perception of him as a promoter of upheavals and disturbances,” since he is in reality “the one man in the world who maintains the truest
not maintain that simply burning our books, libraries, Academies, and Colleges would return us to our previous honesty and virtue (LR 84/95, PN 96/964). Indeed, such an attempt would only plunge Europe back into Barbarism, and morals would gain nothing from it,” since “never has a people, once corrupted, been known to return to virtue” (Obs. 50/56). Accordingly, he self-consciously offers highly contrasting advice to corrupt as opposed to virtuous peoples (cf. LA 110, 118/332, 338/101, 107f). In those rare passages where he did offer positive, practical advice for the modernized, he periodically acknowledged the limits of their corruption and implicitly grants the relative efficacy of the political tactics of *doux commerce* and popular Enlightenment. Especially in his early polemics, he emphasized that since the Sciences harm morals more than they benefit society, it would be preferable to have men pursue them less eagerly *[avec moins

respect for laws and national constitutions, and who has the greatest aversion to revolutions and conspirators of every kind…”* (RJJ III, 213/935).

142 For instance, the barbarian invasions of Rome are referred to as “the catastrophe…which destroyed the progress of the human spirit, without eliminating the vices that were its product” (EOL XIX, 296/425).

143 See also, on the futility of sumptuary laws once luxury has taken hold, *Letter to Raynal*, EPW 30/OC 3:33, and Chapter 2, Note 95; and on how a people’s loss of morals parallels the (irrecoverable) loss of a man’s honor, PN 102f/971. In a commercial context, he maintains: “It is too late to change our natural inclinations once they are set in their course, and habit has joined *amour propre…”* (DPE 20f/260). Regarding Geneva, “let us not flatter ourselves that we shall see Sparta reborn in the lap of commerce and the love of gain” (LA 67/300/61). He offers them scornful counsel for knowing their historical place: —*Ancient* Peoples are no longer a model for modern ones; they are too alien to them in every respect. You above all, Genevans, keep your place, and do not go for the lofty objects that are presented to you in order to hide the abyss that is being dug in front of you. You are neither Romans, nor Spartans; you are not even Athenians. Leave aside these great names that do not suit you. You are merchants, Artisans, Bourgeois, always occupied with their private interests, with their work, with their trafficking, with their gain, people for whom liberty is only a means for acquiring without obstacle and for possessing in safety” (*Mountain* IX, 292f/881; for related discussions of *bourgeois*, see above, Chapter 2, around Note 39). An anonymous pamphlet which was written by Voltaire took issue with Rousseau’s claim: “We [viz., Genevans] were nothing different, when we resisted Philip II and the Duke of Savoy; we acquired our freedom by means of our courage and at the price of our blood, and we shall maintain it in the same way” (*Sentiment of the Citizens*, CW 12:49/ Mémoire 327). The futility of the attempt for corrupted peoples to return collectively to virtue may parallel that of corrupted individuals to return to the primitive forest (cf. DOI Note IX, 203-4/207-8; Letter to Philopolis, EPW 227/OC 3:235).
Perhaps more significantly, he offers a rare but consistent distinction between "vice" and "corruption" on the one hand, and "brigandage" or "crime" on the other. And for societies which are modernized and thus beset by vice and corruption, a vast array of palliatives and diversions (such as learned academies and theaters) are needed to keep the inevitably idle and corrupt citizens occupied, lest they descend into theft, violence, and disorder (PN 104/972). Under such conditions, all that can be hoped for is a certain mediocratizing effect, in which "all will contract a soft disposition [un caractère de molesse] and a spirit of inaction which will deprive the good of great virtues but will keep the bad from meditating great crimes" (LA 64f/298/59). In this context Rousseau advocates not the radical transformations of Lycurgus, but explicitly invokes Solon's approach of offering to each people the best polity "they can tolerate" (Obs. 51/56).

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144 The phrase is echoed in a fragment: "If men could know how much more dangerous it is for them to be mistaken than it is useful for them to know, they would receive the lessons of philosophers less eagerly" (PF VII [Luxury, Commerce, and the Arts], 44/516, emphasis added).

145 "Let us therefore let the Sciences and the Arts in some measure temper the ferociousness of the men they have corrupted; let us strive wisely to divert them, and try to deceive their passions. Let us feed those Tigers something, to keep them from devouring our children. A wicked person's enlightenment is, on balance, less to be feared than his brutal stupidity; at least it causes him to be more circumspect about the harm he might do, by acquainting him with the harm he himself would suffer as a result" (Obs. 55/56). Offering an unusually unqualified endorsement of this tactic: "In a big city, full of scheming, idle people without Religion or principle; whose imagination, depraved by sloth, inactivity, the love of pleasure, and great needs, engenders only monsters and inspires only crimes… [T]he policy can never increase the number of pleasures permitted too much or apply itself too much to making them agreeable in order to deprive individuals of the temptation of seeking more dangerous ones…[T]wo hours a day stolen from the activity of vice prevents the twelfth part of the crimes that would be committed" (LA 58-59/293-94/54, translation modified). According to a retrospective passage: "He was stubbornly accused of wanting to destroy the sciences, the arts, the theaters, the academies and to plunge the universe back into its first barbarism; and on the contrary he always insisted on the preservation of existing institutions, holding that their destruction would only remove the palliatives while leaving the vices and substituting brigandage for corruption" (RJJ III, 213/935). See similarly: Letter to Voltaire, 10 September 1755 (CW 3:105f/OC 3:227); Poland II, 182/958.
3.6 Conclusion: Was Rousseau Prudently Reconciled to Modern Life?

This leads us, however, to a significant impasse in current Rousseau scholarship. Most works focusing on Rousseau and *doux commerce* have concluded that he entirely repudiates it, in keeping with the repudiation of modern commerce and culture surveyed throughout most of this Chapter. Other scholars have drawn from the more Solonic passages immediately above, concluding that Rousseau is much more accommodating towards modernity. Jean Starobinski, for instance, has maintained that seeking a remedy internally drawn from the poison or ill at hand is "the fundamental insight of his political philosophy." Ryan Patrick Hanley builds considerably upon Starobinski in a series of valuable articles comparing Rousseau and Adam Smith on commerce and modernity. For Hanley, Rousseau's teaching on palliatives is just one instance of his fundamentally contextualized, moderate, and prudential approach to political reform. In the manner

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146 E.g. Dennis Rasmussen, *The Problems and Promise of Commercial Society: Adam Smith’s Response to Rousseau*, 18, 28-29, 34, 40; Rosenblatt, *Rousseau and Geneva*, chs. 1-2; Force, *Self-Interest before Adam Smith*, 164, 218-25; and more briefly, Wekler, *Rousseau*, 56, 91. According to Clifford Orwin, Rousseau opposed the view that the eighteenth century was an age of the softening of morals (Montesquieu’s *Humanité* and Rousseau’s *Pitié*, 139). Orwin also maintains that “compassion looms within the [Second] Discourse as the moral standard for civil man” (Rousseau and the Discovery of Political Compassion,” 297). However, he does briefly observe that, for Rousseau, “inequality stifles the gentler virtues as surely as it does the manly ones” (Montesquieu’s *Humanité* and Rousseau’s *Pitié*,” 140), which on my reading indicates an association of modernization with a certain kind of softening.

147 "The Antidote in the Poison" (in *Blessings in Disguise; or, The Morality of Evil*, 127).

148 Hanley, —*From Geneva to Glasgow: Rousseau and Adam Smith on the Theater and Commercial Society*”; —*Enlightened Nation Building: The Science of the Legislator* in Adam Smith and Rousseau”; —*Commerce and Corruption: Rousseau’s Diagnosis and Adam Smith’s Cure.* Portions of —*Commerce and Corruption*” have been incorporated in Hanley’s recent *Adam Smith and the Character of Virtue*.

149 Hanley explicitly sides against Rosenblatt’s claim that the *Letter to d’Alembert* is driven by a republican agenda, arguing “against *doux commerce theory*” (*Rousseau and Geneva*, 225, quoted in Hanley, —*From Geneva to Glasgow,*” 201n38).
of Solon, Rousseau strives not for the best regime possible, but whatever second-best regime any particular society can attain, meeting them where they stand. Accordingly, Hanley maintains that if we read even Rousseau’s most apparently radical political proposals more closely, we will find that he is very far from advocating a return to an ancient politics of disinterested virtue. Rather, he attempts to work within the confines of modern experience, seeking modern solutions for modern problems, since the very vice that separates the ancients from the moderns, the love of opinion, is proposed as a remedy for the ills it engenders. Since he also attempts to channel the distinctively and characteristically modern vice of competitive self-interest in a manner that will

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150 For Rousseau’s explicit appeals to Solon, see e.g. Hanley, From Geneva to Glasgow,” 199n11, 200n27; Enlightened Nation Building,” 224b. For Smith’s better-known appeals to Solon, see Enlightened Nation Building,” 222. Regarding this Solonian element as well as the idea of palliatives in Rousseau’s thought, Hanley builds especially on Fonna Forman-Barzilai, The Emergence of Contextualism in Rousseau’s Political Thought: The Case of the Parisian Theatre in the Letter à d’Alembert,” esp. 440, 444-50.

151 See esp. Enlightened Nation Building,” 226a; see also 225a; From Geneva to Glasgow,” 187.

152 See esp. Enlightened Nation Building,” 226a. Rousseau explicitly means to remind us of our distance from the ostensible disinterestedness of ancient republicanism in insisting that ‘we’ today are shaped by ‘prejudices’ as well as by the ‘passions of narrow self-interest’…” (229a). In this Rousseau comes very close to Smith, since both emphasize the the proper task of legislators is principally to attend to these existing prejudices and passions” (229a).

153 See esp. From Geneva to Glasgow”: Both Rousseau and Smith call for moralists to reform modern corruption from within the context and constraints of modernity itself” (178). But Sparta only serves as a standard to judge the distance of modernity’s departure from antiquity. As a guide to solving modern problems it is worthless; Rousseau knows that solutions to today’s problems can only be discovered by those living today” (186; see also 184-85). And from Enlightened Nation Building”: the characteristic vice of modernity, the love of opinion, [can] be employed to recover what modernity has lost” (229b).

154 Hanley, From Geneva to Glasgow,” 187. Both Rousseau and Smith insist that solicitude for the opinions and esteem of others is the distinguishing quality of modern commercial society, and that any attempts to shape contemporary morals must begin with this first principle…” (From Geneva to Glasgow,” 178; similarly 190: the characteristic vice of modern commercial society, the love of appearances…”). Also: So far from a hopeful call of the idealist for transformation, Rousseau’s most forthright advice for the ennobling of his fatherland demands a concession to the worst of all corruptions, the empire of amour-propre. Put differently, the best state he knows is incapable of receiving the best absolutely…” (Enlightened Nation Building,” 227a). Steering amour-propre is described as a second best” solution, a matter of the prudent directing of the chief passion of modernity” (Enlightened Nation Building,” 228a).
advance the common good,\textsuperscript{155} his proposals parallel Adam Smith’s vision of commercial society far more closely than has been understood.\textsuperscript{156} Such arguments would cohere with those of many recent scholars, who aim to reveal a considerably more moderate and prudential Rousseau than the one handed down to us from French Revolutionary and Cold War polemics.\textsuperscript{157}

I endorse these attempts to uncover the more moderate, prudential, and contextualist elements of Rousseau’s thought. Nonetheless, I would suggest that his radically anti-modern elements have been established at least as soundly, and that we may need a more comprehensive and multi-layered theory to do justice to both components. We may find grounds for such a theory insofar as the contention that Rousseau is a fundamentally prudential and contextual thinker—one highly reconciled to modernization and striving to reform it from within—requires the elision of fundamental differences among the social ills and “second best” solutions he proposes.

The most evident problem arises with Hanley’s attempt to demonstrate Rousseau’s modernity in his distance from ancient programs of disinterestedness and overcoming selfishness. It is not clear where such idealistic disinterestedness might be found in ancient political thought or history,\textsuperscript{158} or in alternative interpretations of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{155} Hanley, “Enlightened Nation Building,” 226b, 229.
  \item \textsuperscript{156} See Hanley, “Enlightened Nation Building,” 230a. The main difference between them would be that Smith’s legislator has in mind “the prudent regulation of economic self-interest,” whereas Rousseau’s seems more interested in “the proper regulation of the love of honor and glory” (226b; cf. 231b).
  \item \textsuperscript{157} See e.g. Hanley, “Enlightened Nation Building,” 223b; Fornan-Barzilai, “The Emergence of Contextualism,” 440, 461-63; Jonathan Marks, \textit{Perfection and Disharmony}, e.g. 7-14, 80, 87-88, 118-20, 149-53; Rosenblatt, \textit{Rousseau and Geneva}, 255-59; and Garrard, \textit{Rousseau’s Counter-Enlightenment}, 40.
  \item \textsuperscript{158} Ancient political thought would seem to be dedicated to eudaimonistic justifications of even the most apparently sacrificial behaviors, such as military service. For the complexities involved, see Matthew
\end{itemize}
Rousseau. It does seem fairly clear, however, that this is not how Rousseau himself understood ancient political life. With great frequency and regularity, Rousseau not only appeals to the necessity of extensive emulation, honor, and pride for a virtuous polity, but illustrates this by the examples of virtuous ancient and savage peoples. Indeed, in a few passages, Hanley himself describes Rousseau's linkage of ancient society and the drive for honor. Thus it seems to be left unanswered how appeals to such social forces in Rousseau's political thought could constitute a self-conscious distancing from ancient political morals.

Converse problems arise with Hanley's attempt to equate appeals to *amour-propre* with distinctively modern morals. For, as the *Second Discourse* and other sources

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159 Hanley distinguishes his account from that of Jeffrey Smith, who is said to claim that "far from accommodating the conditions of modernity, Rousseau forthrightly aspires to 'the cultivation of ancient virtue'" ("Enlightened Nation Building," 228n17, citing Smith, "Nationalism, Virtue, and the Spirit of Liberty in Rousseau's *Government of Poland*"). But Smith is quite clear that enlightened self-interest and public approbation play key roles in Rousseau's attempts to revive ancient virtue: see esp. 423-26, 436.

160 Hanley rightly maintains that "a thoroughgoing enthusiasm for praiseworthiness" is inculcated in "the sort of citizen found in Rousseau's political writings" ("Commerce and Corruption," 144). Cooper offers a clear account of this (*Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life*, 25, 32, 52, 125, 204n19).

161 E.g. PF V [On Honor and Virtue], 35/501: "In all countries where Luxury and corruption do not prevail, public testimony of a man's virtue is the sweetest [le plus doux] prize he can receive for it, and all good actions need only to be publicly proclaimed as such for their reward…. What was the motive of the Lacedaemonians' virtue if not to be considered virtuous?" Cf. 38f-39f/506-507f, and Kelly, *Rousseau as Author*, 106, for the rejection of Augustine's critique of ancient honor and vainglory. This social reward may be seen as a necessary step to the habits needed to taste the intrinsic pleasure of good actions (see PF IV [On Laws], 30/494).

162 See esp.: "As we read on [in *Poland*], it at least becomes clear that Rousseau is concerned to appeal to the modern passions, if not precisely the passions of narrow self-interest. Interestingly he uses the example of the ancients to introduce this decidedly modern approach. Thus he explains the principal aim of Greek legislators seeking to fashion peoples was 'to set them on fire with the spirit of emulation,' which 'tied them tightly to the fatherland' (GP, 8). Rousseau's conception of classical republican virtue, that is, is itself founded on the proper channeling of amour-propre via emulation, rather than the recovery of disinterestedness" ("Enlightened Nation Building," 229a). See also ibid., 226a; "From Geneva to Glasgow," 189.

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indicate, the potentially corruptive love of opinion arises with the birth of human society as such, rather than with the later stages of property and commerce. Correspondingly, certain complications arise from the inevitability of *amour-propre* in all extensive social relations. However, in such contexts Rousseau by no means presents *amour-propre* as, in Hanley's words, the worst of all corruptions. Rather, in the domestic moral context of the *Emile*, Starobinski properly shows how, if *amour-propre* is properly delayed in its timing, and extended to others, it can give rise to humane and gentle passions. And in political contexts, Hanley shows clearly enough the fundamental difference between vanity ("la vanité"), a base form of *amour-propre*, and pride ("l'orgueil"), which he calls its less base form. Rousseau defines pride as a love of merited glory and of objects intrinsically great and beautiful; it is characteristically ancient and exceedingly rare in the modern world. What characterizes modernity is vanity, a love of praise at

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163 See DOI II, 164-68/167-171f; and above, Sections 1.3–1.4. This conflation is also apparent in Hanley's claim that for Rousseau separation of être from paraître is a consequence of market society... ("Commerce and Corruption," 140; cf. "From Geneva to Glasgow," 179). By contrast, the passage Hanley quotes in support of this maintains that, with the rise of property and social dependence, To be and to appear became two entirely different things (DOI II, 170/174, my emphasis).

164 Hanley, "Enlightened Nation Building," 227a, quoted more fully in Note 154 above.

165 Starobinski, "The Antidote in the Poison," 128-29. Nicholas Dent and Frederick Neuhouser are among those who have reflected at length upon Rousseau's positive uses of *amour-propre*, especially in ethical contexts (cited in Chapter 1, Note 118).

166 "Enlightened Nation Building," 228a, citing Corsica 153-54/937-38: The opinion that puts a great value on frivolous objects produces vanity [la vanité]; the one that falls upon objects great and beautiful by themselves produces pride [l'orgueil]. See also Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws* XIX.9, which exactly reverses this judgment of the political utility of la vanité and l'orgueil. It further supports my interpretation that Rousseau suggests nothing base about pride here that might support Hanley's description of it as less base. More generally, Hanley appeals to Cooper's treatment of the distinction between pride and vanity ("Commerce and Corruption," 156n24, citing *Rousseau, Nature*, 164. Cooper also develops this distinction in ethical contexts, based especially on E IV, 215/494). Hanley also endorses a range of scholars supporting the idea that *amour-propre* can be put to good effect: see "From Geneva to Glasgow," 200n25, 201n30; "Commerce and Corruption," 156n28. See also Melzer's argument against over-emphasizing the evils of *amour-propre*, discussed above, Chapter 1, Note 80; cf. Hanley, "Commerce and Corruption," 140. We will return to the political expression of pride in the text surrounding Chapter 4, Note 20.
any cost, due to frivolous goods such as wealth or superficial knowledge. Both pride and vanity involve a love of opinion, which is thus by no means distinctively or even characteristically modern for Rousseau. It may be true that a society driven by such honor and pride is not “the best absolutely” in the sense of being the best conceivable way of life, but there is ample reason to believe that Rousseau found it to be the best possible for all polities, at all times. In all of these cases, Rousseau treats amour-propre as a passion which inevitably arises with social interaction, which is inherently neutral morally, and which may lead to genuine virtues when properly directed (even though it is more often poorly directed and leads to grave vices). Both in its nature and in its proper outcomes, amour-propre is not presented as a genuine poison in need of a remedy, but as a potentially dangerous psychological force in need of wise and decisive direction. It is in the context of the pitfalls of becoming sociable as such—rather than with advanced civilization or modernity—that Rousseau makes his remark which is most pivotal to Starobinski and Hanley: —attempt to draw from the ill [mali] itself the

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167 See Corsica 153-54/937-38; cf. DPE 20/259; and Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments, VII.ii.4.8, 309.

168 Hanley, Enlightened Nation Building,” 227a, quoted in Note 154 above.

169 See e.g. Mountain 149n/706n; DPE 16/255; E IV, 312n/632n; Beaumont 52/967; which are discussed above in Chapter 1, Note 18. Accordingly, although the case of Geneva is complex (cf. Chapter 2, Note 43 above), Hanley’s appeal to the importance of public opinion there does not establish that corruption has already made significant headway” (Enlightened Nation Building,” 226b-27a).

170 Here Rosenblatt points us in the right direction: —Contrary to Mandeville’s theory, Rousseau’s was not a theory of countervailing vices. Rousseau did not believe that vices could be turned into virtues. But he did believe that men’s social passions (stemming from self-love), in and of themselves innocent, could be directed into virtuous goals” (Rousseau and Geneva, 87).
remedy that should cure it…. Let us show him in perfected art the reparation of the ills [maux] that the beginnings of art caused to nature.”

Thus in distancing Rousseau from ancient political virtue, Hanley must artificially characterize the ancients as purely disinterested, while neglecting how ancient political virtue is clearly advocated by Rousseau on the basis of pride, as opposed to vanity. These moves support, in turn, Hanley’s claim that for Rousseau all existing polities are fundamentally modernized, with well-established customs and institutions, and far along the paths of corruption.172 However, Rousseau himself was quite explicit that there were a few small European polities which retained substantial portions of their primitive virtues, and other nascent societies which could still institute his positive political program.173 He claimed that the “perfected art” of his positive political teachings were directed to these peoples alone, since only they could still attain the substantial forms of virtue and equality required for fundamental justice and long-term sustainability.

Although Hanley is quite helpful in discussing certain complex middling cases, Rousseau’s most fundamental, paradigm cases remain radically distinct. Such small and nascent peoples were sharply contrasted with the overwhelming majority of the European population, who were subjects of large states, thoroughly Culturally Modernized, or both.


172 See “Enlightened Nation Building,” 225a, 227b, 229a. One key passage in which Rousseau claims certain corruptions “destroy virtue” and yet preserve its “public semblance” (PN 103/972) is said by Hanley to suggest that such corruptions are necessary for Rousseau in “a second-best world” (“From Geneva to Glasgow,” 188; see also 196). Applying this approach to “a second-best world” as such seems undermined by Rousseau’s sharp distinction between the “big city” and “small cities,” discussed by Hanley immediately thereafter (ibid., 188-89).

173 See esp. RJJ III, 213/935: “He had worked for his homeland and for little States constituted like it. If his doctrine could be of some utility to others, it was in changing the objects of their esteem and perhaps thus slowing down their decadence, which they accelerate with their false appreciations.”
For such people, Rousseau is not dealing with—ill" and morally neutral passions which may still be directed to full-fledged political virtues. Rather, their vices are fully developed, manifold, and of the narrowest and most socially destabilizing variety; such passions cannot be cured, and may at best be selectively indulged to divert their agents away from violent outrages against person and property. In this precise sense, it is true that Rousseau prudentially accommodates the conditions of modernity, and by no means advocates revolution for the highly modernized. It is also significant that this approach formally parallels the general "remedy in the ill” structure of his social thought, even though its substance fundamentally differs. Finally, such pandering accommodations to low and distinctively modern vices occur only as occasional, brief, and fiercely dismissive asides, and should be clearly distinguished from the fundamental intentions of his constructive political thought.

If the analysis above is sound, then the scholars of Rousseau and *doux commerce* have been right to claim that he sharply repudiates this modernizing form of thought—we have found this correct insofar as his fundamental, constructive political project is dedicated to a stern politics of virtue, repudiating virtually all intellectual and commercial life. At the same time, Hanley and others have offered insights into the modernizing, moderate, and prudential elements of Rousseau, and such insights are essential if we understand them as applying to irrevocably corrupt states, in order to slightly delay their

174 See Allan Bloom, “Rousseau’s Critique of Liberal Constitutionalism,” 162-63, which suggests that this combination of arguments serves mainly to amplify the discontent of moderns with their inevitable condition.

175 This would be supported by the conclusion of Harry Payne, that in comparison with his contemporaries Rousseau shows a uniquely low degree of interest in practical, incremental reforms: *The Philosophes and the People, 175-80, 186-87*. See also, to similar effect, Ernst Cassirer, *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 66-70; Jean Bloch, *Rousseauism and Education in Eighteenth-Century France*, 16.
impending corruption and doom. Of course, certain elements of prudence would also come into play when Rousseau is applying his constructive politics, as they would for any thinker or politician who is at all concerned with success in the world. But insofar as a people have the prerequisites for his politics of virtue, the ends to which Rousseau strives are thoroughly uncompromising to modern morals and institutions. With these distinctions in mind, some of Hanley’s prime examples of Rousseau’s moderate intentions—for instance, “not to destroy private property absolutely, because that is impossible, but to restrict it within the narrowest limits” (Corsica 148/931)—may fail to convince. We might better move back—moderately and qualifiedly—in the direction of Rousseau’s original reputation as, first and foremost, a highly radical and idealistic political thinker, deeply opposed to the intellectual, cultural, and economic trends of his age. His moderate and prudential elements are real, but secondary, peripheral, and instrumental to his most fundamental social concerns and intentions.

To summarize, we have found that throughout his writings, Rousseau outlined the basic logic of Cultural Modernization as the striving for external goods unsuited to human nature, the misplacement of social praise in vain, stratifying, external distinctions, and the undermining of primitive and indigenous social norms through professionalized pleasures, overbearing ladies, and the corrosive impact of foreign or irreligious mentalities. This logic of “modernization” applies to Socrates’ Athens as much as to

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176 Although focusing on Rousseau’s repudiation of doux commerce, Rosenblatt has also briefly mentioned how he sometimes adopts it in order to show its politically destructive consequences (“On the Misogyny,” 111; cf. Rousseau and Geneva, 69). Melzer describes the extreme corruption and rapid doom predicted by Rousseau of mainstream, modernizing Europe (Natural Goodness, 290).

177 Quoted in Hanley, “Enlightened Nation Building,” 227b; see ibid. for similar restrictions on money. On the necessity of a choice between agriculture and commerce, see ibid. 228b. Many of the relevant Rousseau passages have been discussed above, in Section 2.6.
Diderot's Paris. However appropriately we may associate Rousseau with a distinctively modern sense of autonomy, romanticism, or expressive subjectivity, for Rousseau the modern begins not with himself but with each society’s advancement toward extensive social interdependence and cultural sophistication. And he uniformly views this process as a grave impoverishment of the human spirit and character. As we have seen, these processes are said to result in a character of softness, decadence, and indifference which is profound, irreversible, and politically unsustainable, revealing modernity’s gentleness and sophistication to flow from lower sources and towards feeble ends than would justify its self-congratulations. In our own times, such criticisms may naturally be appropriated in connection with the positional arms-race of contemporary economic luxury,178 with endlessly proliferating works of academic specialization,179 or innumerable other vanities worthy of Savonarolan bonfires. We will not soon conclude our debates on the worth of commercial expansion, increased cultural interaction, academic high culture, the secular subversion of traditional norms, or the permissive nonchalance which may underlie modern gentleness. It remains striking, however, that very few of us would strenuously oppose all of these forces and changes, as Rousseau did—or enthusiastically embrace them all, as many of his contemporaries did. If so, the main intellectual challenge presented by this Chapter’s analysis may be how our current partisan moral ideologies may coherently embrace a few components of Cultural Modernization, while avoiding the interlocking whole depicted by Rousseau.

178 E.g. Robert Frank, Luxury Fever: Money and Happiness in an Era of Excess, and Falling Behind: How Rising Inequality Harms the Middle Class.

Rousseau argued at great length against embracing the forms of economic, political, and cultural development which are virtually universal in civilization, and find their most unbridled expressions in modern life. We have seen that his presentations of the consequences of modernization are paradoxical, but not necessarily incompatible. By attempting to sort through the context and intention of his many criticisms, we have postulated that Rousseau finds modernity cruel due to its institutional enforcement of a system in which interdependence necessitates mutual exploitation, and the elites mock or abuse the many for the intrinsic delight of it. The laws enable elites to add impunity to these injuries. At the same time, precisely because of this powerful and professionalized institutional framework, contemporary elites are not characterized by personal ferocity or violence—as are social-Savages and pre-modern aristocrats—but rather by scorn, indifference, and “hardness” or “harshness” (*dureté*–Chapter 2). Insofar as this institutional explanation of the leading figures of modern life holds, it would help explain how Rousseau can coherently respond to the confidently modernizing theorists of “doux commerce” chiefly by granting their descriptive premise—that increasing commercial luxury, social interaction, and intellectual sophistication really do make those who
partake of them more "mild." However, he reframes and hyper-extends the moderns' praise of their own "douceur" by presenting this not chiefly as an admirable form of "gentleness," but as a morally contemptible and politically unsustainable form of "softness" (molesse). This softness is explained as a result more of indifference and weakness than of conviction or enlightenment, and it is relentlessly exposed by comparing the moderns to stern ancient republicans and to other martially spirited, primitive peoples (Chapter 3). This brings us to the final main characters of Rousseau's critical project—the "Savages" of prehistoric times, including their subset who predate all sustained social interactions, whom we have termed the "Primitives." In some ways, the Savages' lives are rugged, and Rousseau may thus appeal to them in exposing modern luxury and softness. However, in other ways—or probably more accurately, in other times and places—the spontaneous abundance of their natural environments allows them to live with an idleness and natural satisfaction which seems delicious in comparison with most modern lives. These "Idyllic Primitives," then, are invoked chiefly to expose the cruel inequalities, frenzied ambitions, and exploitative labors of modern life. But to some degree the Savages are also appealed to in order to show that profoundly sweet and gentle (doux) human relations were the norm in the early stages of human socialization (Chapter 1). What makes this final appeal not altogether convincing, perhaps not even to Rousseau, is his admission that the burgeoning relations of friendship and love had frequent tendencies to spill over into bloodshed, due to enraged competitions for social preeminence and exclusive sexual possession.

Granting (as Rousseau clearly does) that modern people cannot restore their primitive simplicity by retreating in solitude to the forests, what lessons are we supposed
to take from his various criticisms of modernity? We have seen one immediate
implication of his critical writings, that we should pursue our modernizing habits and
reforms less eagerly, and attempt to retain somewhat longer whatever natural simplicity,
decency, and independence we still possess (Section 3.5). As we have also indicated,
though, in the later part of his career, Rousseau came to offer prescriptions for his earlier
diagnoses (Section 1.2). We are now prepared to explore what are plausibly understood
to be his two main solutions for the problems endemic to modern life—the Domestic,
Moral Human\textsuperscript{1} and the austere, republican Citizen.\textsuperscript{2} We will begin with the Citizen,
to whom we have already been introduced since he is the chief figure exposing modern
weakness, indulgence, and false cosmopolitanism. His formation toward material
austerity, patriotic dedication, and martial virtue occurs continually from birth to death,
within a free republican state so dedicated to the laws and the public good that it largely
overcomes society’s typical inflammation of petty private interests and vanities. We will
then analyze Rousseau on patriotism in connection with cosmopolitanism and
Christianity, finding that his ecstatic praise of patriotism is seen as motivationally

\textsuperscript{1} We will proceed to speak mainly of Man” or Moral Man,” since we will be focusing in this
Chapter on the education of Emile rather than of Sophie, and these are very different educations. It remains
the case that speaking more inclusively of the Moral Human” for Rousseau need not be a distortion, since
Julie and Sophie are clear exemplars of this ideal (as discussed in Chapter 1, Note 43).

\textsuperscript{2} We have also been introduced to a third model—the isolated, Solitary Dreamer” displayed in
Rousseau’s own person throughout his autobiographical writings. This model has been argued to be
Rousseau’s highest human type, especially by Straussian interpreters (discussed in Chapter 1, Note 28).
One might argue, though, that Rousseau does not present this model as prescriptive in the full sense, since
it functions much more as an apologia, and emphasizes his personal uniqueness more than the objective
superiority of this way of life. My own view, then, is closer to those who defend Emile as Rousseau’s
highest human type, and who downgrade the Solitary on the basis of Rousseau’s laments over the
state in which he ended his life (Chapter 1, Note 44). However, in attempting to defend (rather than
advocate) a kind of self which altogether lacks virtue, and which is admittedly soft and idle in several ways
(Chapter 1, Note 36), the Solitary raises significant issues regarding gentleness and severity. Among these
issues are the defense of natural goodness, the parallels between the Solitary and the Idyllic Primitive,”
and the question of Rousseau’s consistency across time. I will take up these issues in a future article
entitled, A Good and Natural Softness? The Autobiographical Alternative.”
necessary for political purposes, whereas in more domestic contexts or private writings he was sometimes willing to condemn certain violent excesses of patriotism. Moreover, in the latter contexts he also expressed considerable admiration for the gentleness of Jesus and the Gospels—something unexpected on the basis of his better known diatribes against Christianity, which occur chiefly in political contexts. We will support this conclusion with a sustained analysis of neglected passages in the rough draft that later became the famous civil religion chapter of the Social Contract, which reveal a sympathy for a liberal version of Christianity alongside powerful criticisms of the excess violence generated by ancient, pagan patriotism.

This domestic prioritization of gentleness over severity finds its most sustained development in what Rousseau plausibly took to be his masterpiece, the Emile, or On Education.\footnote{Rousseau called the Emile his “greatest and best book” (RJJ I, 23/687, discussed in Chapter 1, Note 44).} We will find that although forming a highly humane, loving, and even cosmopolitan young man is its ultimate goal, the balances struck between gentleness and severity form central themes which illuminate the text as a whole. As a boy, Emile will be treated by his guardian with an unprecedented gentleness, since he will not have moral commands, intellectual expectations, or any punishments imposed upon him, and he will be left to enjoy each present moment so far as his natural powers enable him to. At the same time, the guardian will continually expose Emile to exercise amid the rigors of nature, and will vigilantly prevent him from being exposed to the passions and vanities generated by society. In all of these ways the young Emile seems to parallel the isolated individual facing a harsh natural environment which we have described as the "Vigorous
Primitive” model. As he enters adolescence, Emile’s need for society becomes irresistible, and hence the social passions inevitably arise. It is at this point that he must, on the one hand, voluntarily accept a rigorous application of human authority under his tutor in order to avoid those forms of social and sexual excess which may deplete his physical vigor, lead him to become brutally exploitative toward women, or both. After he is trained in virtue and properly domesticated through love for a virtuous woman, we uncover what may be Rousseau’s pinnacle of virtue—a man who is vigorous both in his bodily strength and his control over his appetites and passions, yet who directs this severity toward the “sweet habits” of domestic life, and the higher generosities of cosmopolitan duty. In reflecting here more generally upon the overcoming of male tendencies toward violence through the influence of women, we again find Rousseau altering the points of emphasis of his critical project in favor of gentler ideals. For he now offers counterpoints to his strong emphasis on the pernicious influences of women in his critiques of modern luxury, and in Emile we find a model who can overcome the greatest limitation of the social-Savage—that as soon as humans had come to be able to love, these loves inevitably gave rise to jealousy and violence. In concluding, we will respond to Frederick Neuhouser’s critique of the basic “men or citizens” paradigm, upon which much of this dissertation has been premised, and in the process attempt to discern the relation among Rousseau’s highest prescriptive ideals.

4.1 The Severe and Sweet Denaturing of the Citizen

The consummate sternness and dedication of Rousseau’s true Citizen make him a proper foil to the dissipation and individualism of the civilized modern. As we have seen
previously in his appearances for critical purposes, Rousseau strongly opposed the intellectually intensive educational curricula which prevailed in his times, insisting on the one hand that the few needful ideas are attained with minimal, practical study, and on the other hand that rigorous physical education is far more useful.\(^4\) In part because “a taste for physical exercise diverts from dangerous idleness, from the effeminate pleasures, and from luxuries of the mind,” he concludes that it is “above all for the sake of the soul that one must exercise the body, and this is what our small-minded sages are far from realizing” (Poland III, 187/964; see also 191-92/967-69). The need for such physical vigor in everyday citizen life necessitates the repudiation of luxury and the prioritization of robust agricultural labor. The cultivation of the plow, we have seen, uniquely prepares citizens to endure the fatigues, deprivations, and pains of war.\(^5\) In a healthy and rustic polity, a similar kind of physical education is naturally acquired by the children and youths, as Rousseau claims occurred in the Geneva of his childhood. In contrast with the rising generation of Genevans, trained in gallantry and shielded from the elements:\(^6\)

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\(^4\) Against contemporary education, see DSA II, 22/24, and LA 32/274/29-30, discussed in Section 3.1. On the simplicity of useful learning, see LR 82/93, Obs. 33/37, and E IV, 339/670, discussed in Section 3.3. On the contrast of the softening effect of the taste for letters with that of bodily exercise, see PN 98/966, and Poland III, 186/963 and 187/964, discussed in Section 3.4.

\(^5\) See DSA II, 21/23 and Corsica 126/905, discussed in Section 3.4.

\(^6\) For these youths, “care is taken to raise the children exactly like the women; they are protected from the sun, the wind, the rain, and the dust so that they will never be able to bear any of them” (LA 112/333/102). Fortunately, however, “The greater number still retain that old ruggedness [antique rudesse] which preserves a good constitution as well as good morals. Even those whom an over-delicate education softens [amolir] for a time will be constrained, when they are grown up, to bend themselves to the habits of their compatriots. The latter will lose their roughness [âpreté] in the commerce of the world; the former will gain strength in exercise; all will become, I hope, what their ancestors were, or, at least, what their fathers are today. But let us not flatter ourselves that we shall preserve our liberty in renouncing the morals which acquired it” (LA 112f/334/103). Two years later, Rousseau wrote that he had been mistaken about such depictions of “our great moral progress” in the Letter to d’Alembert (Letter to Moulton, 29 January 1760, CC 7:24, quoted by Jean Rousset, OC 5:1369, on 103n3).
Men were coarser in my time. The children, rustically raised, had no complexion to preserve and did not fear the injuries of the air to which they had been accustomed [agguerris] from an early date. The fathers took the children with them on the hunt, in the country, to all their exercises, in every society. Timid and modest before aged people, they were bold [hardis], proud, and quarrelsome among themselves. They had no hairdo to preserve; they challenged one another at wrestling, running, and boxing. They fought in good earnest, hurt one another sometimes, and then embraced in their tears. (LA 112/334/102f, translation modified)

Here Rousseau’s distinctive combination of severity and sweetness is evident in his juxtaposition of every manner of forceful competition with hugging and crying. For him this is the early taste of citizenship, and it does have traceable roots in his childhood experiences.7

Similarly, when Rousseau turns from physical education to specifically martial training, we find an optimal demand for physical hardiness and republican pride alongside social sentimentality and clear strictures against violent self-aggrandizement.

In discussing which Fatherland he should have wished to choose,” he favors one diverted from the ferocious love of conquest by a fortunate powerlessness,” which is yet protected from being conquered by favorable location. It would thus perform its military training more in order to keep alive…that warlike zeal [ardeur guerrière] and proud courage which so becomes freedom and maintains the taste for it, than from the necessity to provide for their own defense” (DOI Dedication, 116/113).8 This would converge with

7 As a boy Rousseau was playing a game with a friend, but they began to quarrel and fight: during the fight he hit my bare head with such a well-placed mallet blow that with a stronger hand he would have knocked my brains out…. He thought he had killed me. He threw himself on me, embraced me, and squeezed me tightly as he burst into tears and uttered piercing cries. I returned his embrace with all my strength, while crying like him in a confused emotion which was not without some sweetness [douceur]” (Rev. IV, 38f/1037, translation modified from douceur” as tenderness”).

8 Translation modified. D’Alembert similarly observes that even though Geneva is well-fortified, military service is performed there as in a warlike city; the arsenals and magazines are well supplied;
his general position on militias, that serving as a soldier is a universal duty for a citizen, and one that is too noble and too dangerous to entrust to professionals or mercenaries.  

The Genevan exercise of arms was said to bring “us together every spring,” involving festivals exuding “a certain martial spirit befitting free men” (LA 99, 135/324, 350f/90, 123). He recalls how a military parade he had witnessed in his boyhood inspired an exuberant patriotism among the people; among the soldiers, “all heads were spinning with a drunkenness sweeter [plus douce] than wine,” demonstrating how “the only pure joy is public joy” (135-36n/351n/123-24n). During the pinnacle of his writing career, similar Genevan images of liberty, equality, unity, and “la douceur de moeurs” would lead him to abandon himself entirely to its republican enthusiasm (Conf. IV, 141/144; VIII, 329-30/392-93). Regarding the Swiss more generally, another late passage depicts how—before the taste for money, luxury, and mercenary work arose—the families were shut in by winters, and forced for months to suffice for themselves with “fortunate and unpolished industry.” Since interests and needs thus did not intersect beyond the confines of the large families, their only relations were of benevolence and friendship;

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9 LR 72/82, Poland XII, 234/1014, as we have discussed in Chapter 3, surrounding Note 109.

10 In the same passage he recalls how: “My father, embracing me, was seized with a trembling which I think I still feel and share. ‘Jean-Jacques,’ he said to me, ‘love your country. Do you see these good Genevans? They are all friends; they are all brothers; joy and concord reign in their midst. You are a Genevan; one day you will see other peoples; but even if you should travel as much as your father, you will not find their likes’” (LA 135n/351n/124).
harmony and peace reigned effortlessly…” (Corsica 134-35/914-15). Such fervor and harmony generated the virtues and actions of antiquity which “dazzle” our weak and skeptical eyes: —C—ertain it is that the greatest marvels of virtue have been produced by love of fatherland: this sweet and strong [doux et vif] sentiment which combines the force of amour propre with all the beauty of virtue, endows it with an energy which, without disfiguring it, makes it into the most heroic of all the passions” (DPE 16/255, translation modified).

While these anecdotes involve the continual, often spontaneous exercises of citizenship across the lifespan, for Rousseau a formal civic education should begin early. This is why “public education” under democratically established rules and magistrates is “one of the fundamental maxims of popular or legitimate government” (DPE 21/260f). Since one shares the rights of citizens from birth, “the instant of our birth ought to be when we begin to practice our duties,” including the laws for childhood that “teach obedience to others.” Public education has the additional advantages of preventing children from being “abandoned to their fathers’ lights and prejudices,” of raising children “in common in the midst of equality,”12 and of surrounding them with “examples and objects which constantly speak to them of the tender mother that nurtures them” (21/261).13 The teachers should be distinguished citizens who fulfill this role

11 We have discussed this passage in connection with the interpretation of Jonathan Marks (Chapter 1, Note 42).

12 A later passage applies this principle of equality in a more flexible way to the immediate context of Poland, objecting to a difference in the education of the rich nobility versus the poor nobility (as opposed to any differences among citizens). It also maintains that education for them should be, if not entirely free, at least affordable for the poor, and with several scholarships available for the children of fathers who have valuably served the country (Poland IV, 190/967).

13 In addition to these arguments from utility, an argument from right is made since the child’s education will continue to impact the state long after the death of the father, and the fathers will,
temporarily—such as "illustrious warriors, bent under the weight of their laurels, [to] preach courage" (22/261)—rather than professionals, foreigners, or priests (Poland IV, 190/966f). It remains unclear, however, precisely how much preaching or direct teaching is to occur, since at least by the time he wrote Poland, Rousseau insists that "good education has to be negative": "Prevent vices from arising, you will have done enough for virtue" (191/968). This is said to be accomplished by focusing on physical exercises, which makes education enjoyable, while avoiding "boring studies of which they understand nothing and which they come to hate simply because they are forced to stay put" (191/968). Finally, we may observe that in his account, the three ancient peoples who have engaged in public education are—the Cretans, the Lacedaemonians, and the ancient Persians: it was a very great success among all three, and among the last two it achieved wonders" (DPE 22/261). He claims that no modern people has ever attempted public education, due to the excessive size of the nations and other "readily evident"

collectively, have the same rights to be obeyed by their children, albeit collectively under the name "citizen," and in behalf of the law (DPE 21/260). This passage advocating the completely public raising of children would prove inspiring to several leading French Revolutionaries (see Carol Blum, Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue, 116-17, 183, 186-87, 190-91). Rousseau also appeals to the raising of children by the state in Plato’s Republic as a defense of his leaving of his five children at the foundling home (an episode we will discuss in Note 194).

14 A patriotic curriculum—the geography, history, and laws of one’s nation—is briefly described in Poland IV, 189/966. An earlier fragment presents reasons why "The only study suited to a good People is that of its Laws" (PF IV [On Laws], 29/492).

15 He concedes that Rome was able to do without public education, but explains this unique case as arising from a distinctive horror of tyranny, an "infinite love of the fatherland," and "the fathers’ unlimited power over their children [which] made for such severity [tant de severité],” that all their homes were turned into "so many schools of citizens” (DPE 22/262). Eileen Hunt Botting attempts to reconcile the DPE with the domestic education of the Emile by claiming Rousseau in fact rejects public education, and here favors the Roman model as a general rule (Family Feuds: Wollstonecraft, Burke, and Rousseau on the Transformation of the Family, 32; see also 19-25, 30-33, 50-51). This is difficult to reconcile with the DPE itself, which never suggests ambivalence in advocating public education, and stresses that the Roman case is (as it were) the exception that proves the rule of the necessity of public education for republics.
reasons (22/261). In later stating this point, he adds that he does not envisage as a public education those laughable establishments called Colléges” (E I, 40f/250). If his accounts are consistent, then, even the Genevans never met his highest standards of formation in civic virtue, and could only approximate them through the rigors of their spontaneous, rustic, physical education, in addition to their martial training and festivals.

This physical education—which Rousseau strongly praises in connection with the Genevans, the ancients, and his own prescriptions for public education—is deeply linked with a spirit of competition, emulation, and striving for honor. On its face, this contrasts with the critique of amour-propre in the Second Discourse, and we will see below that the young Emile is spared from these dangerous pressures of comparison. Yet the civic education seems to allow no quarter for such concerns, since the children should not be allowed to play by themselves as they please, but all together and in public, so that there is always a common goal to which all aspire and which excites competition and emulation” (Poland IV, 191/968). This accustoms them to many practices including living under the eyes of their fellow-citizens and seeking public approbation through prizes and public spectacles (191/968). As adults, too, citizens ought to be constantly occupied with vigorous public competitions, awards, and ceremonies, which drive out the

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16 Perhaps among these readily evident reasons is the following: National education is suitable only for free men; only they enjoy a common existence and are truly bound together by Law” (Poland IV, 189/966). Allan Bloom’s note to the E I, 40f/250 passage cites SC IV.8, suggesting that the rise of Christianity is the cause of this decline.

17 See Pierre Burgelin on Rousseau’s recurring polemics against the Colléges, which forms part of a tradition stretching back to Montaigne’s On Educating Children” (Essais I.26; OC 4:1300n4).

18 The following sentence specifies that even those parents who prefer domestic education…must nevertheless send [their children] to these exercises” (Poland IV, 191/968). Emulation is also mentioned as a consequence of being taught by illustrious warriors” on courage and upright magistrates” on justice (DPE 22/261). As for honor, see the centrality of public testimony about a man’s virtue in PF V [On Honor and Virtue], 35/501, quoted in Chapter 3, Note 161.
opportunities to pursue private riches or luxuries (Poland III, 185-87/962-64). And even if—at least in the context of Poland, where inequality reigns—luxury cannot be eliminated, its object can at least be changed from “effeminate finery” to the military luxury of weapons and horses (188/965). This is one instance of what seems to be Rousseau’s general strategy for closing the gap between his critique of amour-propre and his understanding of it as inevitable among Citizens. The solution in this case is not to transcend, suppress, or even delay the rise of amour-propre, but to channel it as completely as possible in constructive directions. While it is impossible to “destroy their passions,” or to teach them— not to love anything,” it is not impossible to teach them to love one object rather than another, and to love what is genuinely fine rather than what is malformed” (DPE 20/259). This principle underlies his later distinction between “pride” and “vanity.” It is also in this context of inspiring patriotic pride that Rousseau speaks most radically of transformation:

If, for example, they are taught from sufficiently early on never to look upon their individual [self] except in its relations with the body of the state, and to perceive their own existence as, so to speak, only a part of it, they will at last succeed in somehow identifying with this larger whole, to feel themselves members of the fatherland, to love it with that exquisite sentiment which any isolated man has only for himself, to raise their soul perpetually to this great

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19 The passage continues: “and if women cannot be made to give [effeminate finery] up, let them at least be taught to disapprove and disdain it in men” (Poland III, 188f/965).

20 See Corsica 153-54/937-38, quoted and discussed in Chapter 3, Note 166. These intrinsically worthy objects might, in turn, be supported by the “unchallengeable principle” among men he who makes himself most useful to others should be the foremost” (Discourse on Heroic Virtue, EPW 307). See also the significant remarks on how when self-love becomes comparative, it becomes “pride in great souls, vanity in small ones, and feeds itself constantly in all at the expense of their neighbors” (E IV, 215/494).
object, and thus to transform into a sublime virtue the dangerous disposition that gives rise to all of our vices. (20/259f)21

Similar passages regarding “so to speak, changing human nature” arise prominently in his major discussions of civic formation.22 Laurence Cooper is particularly helpful in showing how, alone among the lives Rousseau praises, the Citizen’s amour-propre predominates over his amour de soi. The Citizen is praiseworthy, nonetheless, because the character of his amour-propre directs him to a broader and higher object which allows him to parallel the psychological order and equilibrium which constitutes the naturalness of our primitive origins.23

We might also observe that the Citizen’s internal order and love of country are essential components of Rousseau’s concept of the “general will,” whose meaning will elude us as long as we attempt to apply it straightforwardly to modern liberal states. This is not only because, as we have seen, such states are far too large, economically interdependent, and divided along ideological and economic factions to constitute genuine republics for Rousseau.24 It is also because, in order for a “general will” to obtain, the Citizens must spontaneously wish for the good of the whole—the common

21 Soon hereafter, this “dangerous disposition” is clearly identified as l’amour propre (DPE 20f/260).

22 See SC I.8, II.7; E I, 40/250; GM II.2, 101/313. Moreover, Rousseau’s political writings consistently maintain that the state is an artificial construct, in comparison with the family (e.g. DPE 3-5/241-43f; SC I.2, III.11; GM I.5). In contrast with the “denaturing” needed in the civic realm, the moral-domestic idea of a cultivated nature is discussed below (Note 102).


24 Discussed especially in Sections 2.6 and 3.6.
4.2 Patriotism, Cosmopolitanism, and Christianity

Rousseau’s patriotic fervor appears unqualified whenever motivational force or the superiority of love for country over love for lucre are in question. However, a careful analysis reveals a delicate balance, and possible ambivalence, in his accounts of patriotism. At times he seems to be at cross-purposes, wishing (on the one hand) to maximally shock the complacent advocates of cosmopolitanism, while revealing (on the other hand) a deep longing for universal peace and harmony. Even in his great praise of love of fatherland that we have seen, he stops short of calling it a virtue—it is, rather, “the most heroic of all the passions” which appears with —“the beauty of virtue” (DPE 16/255). In addition, as we have seen previously, he strongly distinguishes patriotism from any sort of expansionism or love of conquest. Similarly, he distinguishes love of fatherland from that “love of glory” characteristic of a hero, who typically pursues the public felicity far less as an end than —as a means to the end he seeks, and this end is almost always his personal glory. Love of glory [gloire] has made for innumerable goods

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25 This is particularly clear in the draft of the Social Contract: —public felicity, far from being based on the happiness of private individuals, would itself be the source of this happiness” (GM I.2, 79/284; see also PF VI [On Public Happiness], 41-42/510f-512. We have contrasted this with the liberal Enlightenment approach in Chapter 1, Note 17). Similarly, in a better-constituted state, —There even is less private business, because, since the sum of the common happiness contributes a greater share to each individual’s happiness, he needs to seek less of it in his personal pursuits” (SC III.15, 113/429). The general will’s end is clearly stated to be the common good at GM I.4, 87/167. More generally on love of the fatherland as the best means of making the particular will conform to the general will, see DPE 15-16, 20-21/254-55, 259-60f. For the seventeenth century theological concept of God’s —general will” to save all of humanity, and its influence on Rousseau, see Patrick Riley, —Rousseau’s General Will,” 125-27, 134-35.

26 Chapter 3, Note 110.
and evils; love of Fatherland [*Patrie*] is purer in its principle and surer in its effects; and
indeed, the world has often had a surfeit of heroes; but the nations will never have

Beyond such qualifications, a genuine ambivalence can be found in Rousseau’s
depictions of patriotism in relation to humanity and cosmopolitanism. Immediately after
the passage on choosing between “making a man or a citizen,” we find that since every
particular, narrow, and unified society is estranged from the great human society, “Every
patriot is harsh [dur] to foreigners; they are only men, they are nothing in his eyes. This
disadvantage [inconvenient] is inevitable, but it is weak [foible]. The essential thing is to
be good to the people with whom one lives. Abroad, the Spartan was ambitious,
avaricious, iniquitous. But disinterestedness, equity, and concord reigned within his
walls” (*E I*, 39/248f).

This reasoning is then applied against the abstract cosmopolitan
who fails to love concrete individuals. Similarly, in the well-known chapter on “Civil
Religion” in the *Social Contract*, the passionate citizen is favored over the Christian,
whose “fatherland is not of this world,” and who does his duty "with profound
indifference to the success or failure of his efforts…without passion for victory” (*SC

27 See the excellent discussion of heroic virtue in Christopher Kelly, *Rousseau as Author*, 83-88.

28 Translation modified. A similar combination of traits is said to have reigned among the early
Swiss. As we have seen, benevolence, friendship, harmony, and peace reigned effortlessly among
themselves. At the same time, the “dice with which [their] laborious and independent life attached [them]
to their fatherland” led to “the unbreakable firmness, the constancy, even the ferocity [*l'acharnement
même*] that these terrible men brought into combat, resolved to die or to conquer and not even having
the idea of separating their life from their freedom…” (*Corsica* 134-35/915; cf. 136/916f). We have discussed
how in this insider-outsider morality, the Citizen parallels the social-Savage (Chapter 1, surrounding Note
120). Richard Boyd criticizes the exclusionary and pity-stifling implications of Rousseau’s emphasis on
martial virtue (“Pity’s Pathologies Portrayed: Rousseau and the Limits of Democratic Compassion,” 538-
39). But in doing so Boyd overlooks Rousseau’s explicit acknowledgements of these implications, as well
as his grounds for endorsing them on the whole.
IV.8, 148f/466). Thus in a foreign war, if we pit such stoicism against those generous peoples who were consumed by an ardent love of glory and of fatherland, suppose your christian republic confronting Sparta or Rome; the pious christians will be beaten, crushed, destroyed…” (SC IV.8, 149/466f). These claims reveal Rousseau at his most Machiavellian, and would seem to be decisive evidence that he favored patriotism against Christianity and the cosmopolitanism with which he often linked it.

However, in keeping with our interpretation of Rousseau as prescribing various duties in accordance with the necessities of various socio-political structures, we might consider the alternative possibility that Rousseau decisively repudiates Christianity and cosmopolitanism chiefly or exclusively in civic contexts. Insofar as Christianity and cosmopolitanism undermine the patriotic fervor which he sees as necessary to overcome debilitating forms of amour-propre within civic settings, they ought to be marginalized for practical reasons. Rousseau may have suggested as much in several later passages

29 Regarding domestic usurpers, opposing them would require disturbing the public repose, resorting to violence, shedding blood; all this accords ill with a Christian’s mildness [la douceur du Chrétien]; and after all what does it matter in this vale of tears whether one is free or a serf? The essential thing is to go to paradise, and resignation is but one more means to that end” (SC IV.8, 148/466).

30 He revisits this question of passion in war in a later letter to a Protestant minister in Zurich: “How can you fail to see that only great passions do great things, and that whoever has no other passion than that for his Salvation will never do anything great in the temporal realm?” (Letter to Usteri, 18 July 1763, LPW 267/CC 17:64).

31 See Machiavelli, Discourses on Livy, esp. II.2, 131-32. Machiavelli does write that it is false interpretations of Christianity and other historical factors which have made the contemporary world weak and effeminate (II.2, 132; I, Preface, 6), yet given the depth of his expressed contempt alongside his lack of any credible expressions of admiration for Christianity, his sincerity here is highly doubtful. For additional depictions of the weakness of men at present in comparison with the harder and more ferocious ancients, see III.27, 275; III.46. For a remarkable survey of early modern perceptions of the ferocity of the ancients, see Paul Rahe, “Antiquity Surpassed: The Repudiation of Classical Republicanism,” 235-47.

32 Shklar offers a more absolute version of this thesis: “Rousseau's entire case against Christianity is based on its incompatibility with the civic ethos” (Men and Citizens 18, cf. 31). However, as we will see below, there are certain elements of Christianity (as it is traditionally understood) which he consistently repudiates. This seems to work alongside his approval of his own version of Christianity, which is akin to later versions of liberal Protestantism.
explaining his intention. After specifying at length how a suitably chastened Christianity, which was reconciled to civic and theological tolerance, would be tolerated according to the principles of the *Social Contract*, he goes on to explain why Christianity is nonetheless not suitable as a national religion. Since it is very favorable to the general society of humanity, it is "in a sense too sociable," weakening the "force of the political spring," "encompassing all of the human race too much for a Legislation that has to be exclusive; inspiring humanity rather than patriotism, and tending to fashion men rather than Citizens" (*Mountain* I, 148-49/705-6). He then explains why virtues do not combine in the human heart the way they can in books: "Patriotism and humanity, for example, are two virtues incompatible in their energy, and especially among an entire people. The Legislator who wants them both will get neither one nor the other. This compatibility has never been seen and never will be, because it is contrary to nature, and because one cannot give the same passion two aims" (149n/706n, emphasis added). This contrast between what is possible for an entire people and what is possible for (presumably rare) individuals is mentioned repeatedly elsewhere. Taken together, these

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33 For theological intolerance necessarily causing civil intolerance, see SC IV.8, 151/469; E IV, 309n/628n. Among countless other passages fiercely opposing intolerance, see esp. E IV, 295, 299f/607f, 614f; *Julie* V.5, 482n/589n; VI.8, 573/698; *Beaumont* 65-66/983f-85; Obs. 42-43/47. Two significant passages indicate that (special) revelation is religiously unjust and prone to violence not because of its claims to truth, but because of the *obligation* to accept or acknowledge its claims (E IV, 307/625; *Mountain* I, 148/705).

34 Gourevitch explicates this passage: "Entire peoples simply cannot wholeheartedly devote their best energies both to the greatest good of their own country and to the greatest good of mankind as a whole" ("Introduction" to LPW, xxix). The argument is closely paralleled in the later Letter to Usteri (18 July 1763, in LPW 266/CC 17:63). See also the following fragment: "Love of humanity gives many virtues, such as gentleness, equity, moderation, charity, indulgence; but it doesn't inspire courage, or firmness, etc., and does not give them the energy they receive from love of the fatherland, which raises them to heroism" (*PF* XI [On the Fatherland], 59/536).

35 One passage questions whether "people of true philosophers" would be any easier to make than "people of true Christians," contending rather that "as soon as it is a question of peoples, it is necessary to suppose one which will abuse philosophy without religion, just as our peoples abuse religion
claims may suggest that a more universal humanity is intrinsically superior in a moral sense, even though the achievement of a moderately high level of virtue on a mass scale through patriotism would be the superior achievement overall, thereby justifying the dilution of the highest moral standards.  

Rousseau's ambivalence regarding patriotism and humanity, perhaps even on a political level, may also be uncovered by comparing the chapter on civil religion in *The Social Contract* with that in its earlier version, commonly known as the *Geneva Manuscript*. Unlike the rest of the *Geneva Manuscript*, which is in Rousseau's carefully presented handwriting (thus apparently destined for the printer), this chapter is scribbled and seems to be his first draft. Its substantial differences from the final version thus raise interesting questions of authorial intent, although they have been largely neglected. Both texts decisively dismiss "the Religion of the priest," including Roman

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36 See Gourevitch on the parallel need to dilute universal justice in order to make it reciprocal on a more local level ("Introduction" to LPW, xii-xxv, drawing especially from SC II.6 and GM I.2).

37 On the text, see Robert Derathé, OC 3:lxxxi-lxxxiii, and Roger Masters, CW 4:240n41. Derathé also infers that this text probably dates to the early months of 1761 (OC 3:lxxxix). Unless otherwise indicated, in this Section, all references to the SC are to SC IV.8, and all references to the GM are to GM [Civil Religion].

38 Derathé describes how the definitive version would soften the attacks against the Pope and Roman Christianity, remove a eulogy to Protestantism, and change the ordering of paragraphs (OC 3:lxxix, and 1427, on 336n1). Otherwise, the essentials of the first version subsist in the *Social Contract* (OC 3:1427, on 336n1). Masters' typically thorough notes are limited here to the textual
Catholicism, for dividing human loyalties between two earthly authorities. As we will see, the texts are also similar in their strong criticisms of Christianity, although this seems to be defined in an idiosyncratic way. Altogether, the tone of the draft seems considerably less hostile to Christianity than the final version, in part because of significant concessions it makes to the political excesses of the patriotic ancients. After explaining how there were no wars of religion under paganism since no state distinguished between their Gods and their laws, he continues:

Now if pagan superstition, despite this mutual tolerance and in the midst of culture [lettres] and a thousand virtues, engendered so many cruelties, I do not see how it is possible to separate those very cruelties from that very zeal, and to reconcile the rights of a national religion with those of humanity. It is better, then, to bind the citizens to the state by weaker and gentler ties [liens moins forts et plus doux], and to have neither heroes nor fanatics. (GM [Civil Religion], 119/338, emphasis added)

Gourevitch claims to include in his LPW all the passages from the GM which spell out reflections and arguments not incorporated in DPE and SC (LPW 306), yet he omits the passage on civil religion. Despite dedicating three chapters to Rousseau’s religious thought, Timothy O’Hagan does not discuss the radical criticisms of ancient patriotism and violence in the GM. He considers the differences between the two versions to be considerable, not so much in content, but in the arrangement of the content (Rousseau, 222-23). This type of priestly religion is briefly dismissed in the manuscript version for giving men two leaders, laws, and fatherlands, which thereby subjects them to contradictory duties, and prevents them from ever being simultaneously pious men and citizens” (GM 118/336f). After a similar criticism, the final version adds: Everything which destroys social unity is worthless: All institutions which put man in contradiction with himself are worthless” (SC IV.8, 147/464). This criticism is separate from, and apparently (for Rousseau) more decisive than, the problems arising from the purely otherworldly focus of the Gospel (discussed in Note 44 below). This civic critique of priestly authority has renegade, skeptical, and Protestant roots which are often difficult to distinguish, as in the cases of Marsilius of Padua, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke.

An exceedingly small number of scholars have cited these passages. Internet searches for weaker and gentler ties or liens moins forts et plus doux bring up only two published sources: Kelly, Rousseau as Author, 95; and Ronald Beiner, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau on Civil Religion,” 636n56. For Beiner, this proposal indicated a Protestant version of civil religion, but by the time of the definitive version of SC, Rousseau thought through this possibility much more thoroughly, and deliberately renounced it” (ibid.; see also 632-33). More broadly, Rousseau is found to have no valid,
A previous chapter had similarly criticized ancient excesses:

...simply by turning back to very ancient times one easily sees that the healthy ideas of natural right and the brotherhood of all men were disseminated rather late and made such slow progress in the world that it was only Christianity that generalized them sufficiently. And even then one finds in the Laws even of Justinian that the ancient acts of violence [les anciennes violences] are authorized in many respects, not solely against declared enemies, but also against anyone who was not a subject of the Roman empire; so the humanity of the Romans extended no further than their domination. (GM I.2, 81/287)

These passages condemn this ethic far more strongly than any remark in the final Social Contract. After criticizing the errors and potential bloodthirstiness of the Religion of the Citizen, the manuscript concludes: “It is not permissible to strengthen the bond of a particular society at the expense of the rest of the human race” (GM 118/337).

Immediately after these criticisms of “the Religion of the citizen,” Rousseau turns to “the Religion of man or Christianity—not that of today, but that of the Gospel” (GM 119/338; SC 147/465). Both versions contain essentially similar criticisms of this positive proposal, since what he briefly puts forward in the SC does not answer the critique of the first 30 paragraphs of SC IV.8 (617-21).

41 Translation modified. The entire passage should be consulted. This chapter is an attack on Diderot’s contention that there is a universal “general will” of and for the entire human race (see Riley, —Rousseau’s General Will,” 140-44, and Diderot, “Droit Naturel,” from Encyclopédie, Vol. 5 [1755], in Political Writings, 17-21). Behind Diderot here stands Samuel Pufendorf (see Robert Wokler, —Rousseau’s Pufendorf: Natural Law and the Foundations of Commercial Society,” 384-87).

42 A variant of this remark stated: “It is good to tighten the social knot, but not at the expense of the rest of the people” (OC 3:1428, on 337 (b)). What I describe as “potential” bloodthirstiness is said, in both versions, to result whenever this sort of religion “becomes exclusive and tyrannical” (GM [Civil Religion] 118/337; SC IV.8, 147/465). However, in the final version, the objection to this bloodthirstiness is merely prudential, rather than a matter of right: “This places such a people in a natural state of war with all others, which is very detrimental to its own security” (SC IV.8, 147/465, translation modified).

43 The SC version adds: “which is altogether different.” In a later defense, Rousseau insisted: “Your Grace, I am Christian, and sincerely Christian, according to the doctrine of the Gospel [l’Evangile]” (Beaumont 47/960). Cf. St. Preux’s description of his response when Wolmar asked him whether he is a Christian: “I endeavor to be one, I said to him firmly. I believe of la Religion all I can understand, and respect the rest of it without rejecting it. Julie made me a sign of approval...” (Julie V.3, 477/583, translation modified). Rousseau frequently distinguishes the Gospel, or “true” or “pure” Christianity, from...
religion's lack of particular relation to the body politic, detachment from earthly things, excessive submissiveness at home, and comparatively tepid stoicism in warfare (GM 119-21/338-40; SC 147-49/465-67). Due to the blistering radicalism of these criticisms, it is easy to overlook a decisive change of tone which follows a shift of focus, beginning immediately thereafter: But leaving aside political considerations, let us return to right, and let us fix the principles on this important point” (SC 149/467). Rousseau then turns to specify that the duties which the law can properly impose are limited to the dogmas that bear on morality,” which includes having a Religion which makes him love his duties.” We need not rehearse the well-known elements of his purely civil profession of faith” and its sentiments of sociability” (150/468). For our purposes, it is significant

Various distorted versions: Christianisme vulgaire” (Conf. VI, 192/229), or dogmatic or theological Christianity” (Mountain I, 148/705; see also Conf. II, 40/47: every dogmatic religion”). The devout” or professionally devout” are also lampooned, for reasons including their harshness (âprete) and arrogance (Julie VI.8, 573/697f), and their lack of sentiments of douceur and humanity” (Letter to Voltaire, 18 August 1756, EPW 246/OC 4:1074; see also Julie VI.7, 563, 563n/685, 685n; E IV, 264/563). Being a Theologian” or truly theological” has similar connotations (Mountain II, 156/715; Conf. XII, 529/632; but cf. the positive depiction of the adolescent Emile as a veritable theologian”: E IV, 315/637).

44 Although the two arguments are parallel and easily conflated, in the manuscript version it is only the Religion of the priest” which is rejected for dividing human loyalties (discussed in Note 39 above). By contrast, the specific criticism of the Religion of man” is not that it divides human loyalties directly, so much as it saps them by detaching them from earthly things in favor of heavenly salvation. These criticisms are also intensified in the final version, with the notable addition: I know of nothing more contrary to the social spirit” (cf. GM 119/338, with SC 147/465). The final version is also more critical of Christianity in that, before the distinction of the Religion of man” and that of the priest, it claims Jesus came to establish a Spiritual Kingdom on earth; which, by separating the theological from the political system, led to the State’s ceasing to be one, and caused the intestine divisions which have never ceased to convulse Christian peoples” (SC 144/462). This seems to suggest rebellion and strife, quite unlike the submissive adherents of the Religion of man,” and the following paragraphs show how Jesus’ religion quickly transformed into a violent priestly despotism. It must be carefully observed that Rousseau here uses the same term, Christianity,” to describe these very different phenomena.

45 And similarly in the GM: Et us return to right and determine its principles” (121/340). That this is a separate and more limited principle is indicated by a remark made in a still earlier draft, placed at the end of the description of the civil religion proposed in GM: If this is not the best religious policy, it is the only one which the sovereign may prescribe. As for the rest, he may not go any further without usurping a right which he does not have” (OC 3:1429, on 342 (c)).

46 We have discussed Rousseau’s inconsistent depictions of punishment in the afterlife, which seem to have strategic motivational purposes (see Chapter 3, Note 74).
that this consideration of right and duties which can be legislated seems ultimately compatible with (Gospel) Christianity,\textsuperscript{47} so long as this is understood to exclude theological and civic intolerance—as Rousseau frequently maintains true Christianity ought to be understood.\textsuperscript{48}

None of this is intended to suggest that Rousseau actively favors this Christianity as a political religion, since his criticisms in that context are passionate and consistent.\textsuperscript{49}

However, these criticisms of otherworldliness and lack of patriotic ardor concern the political utility of Christianity,\textsuperscript{50} whereas concerning right, each of the theological

\textsuperscript{47} Contrast, for instance, the contention of Diane Fourny, that the Christian’s refusal to enter into the economy of violence necessitates that Christians — see the collective and sacrificial violence” of execution (“Rousseau’s Civil Religion Reconsidered,” 494).

\textsuperscript{48} Many of the passages distinguishing “true” Christianity from various distorted versions (cited in Note 43 above), as well as those extolling the gentleness of Jesus and the Gospel (cited in Note 53 below), are explicitly intended to vindicate the tolerant nature of true Christianity. Although he gives conflicting indications here, he frequently argues, on the one hand, that established Christianity—Protestant to some degree as well as Catholic in full measure—is intolerant. Yet on the other hand, he seems to believe that this can be overcome, in keeping with some (though perhaps not all) fundamental Christian principles. For instance, the manuscript version critiques intolerance as amounting to the claim, “You must think as I do in order to be saved.” —Whoever does not find it execrable can be neither christian, citizen, nor man [ni chrétien ni citoyen ni homme]; he is a monster who must be sacrificed for the tranquility of the human race” (GM 122/341). For Rousseau’s liberal and individualistic reading of the principles of the Reformation, see e.g. Conf. XII, 524/625, and esp. Mountain II, 156-57/715-16: —Their harsh [dure] orthodoxy was itself a heresy. That was very much the spirit of the Reformers, but it was not that of the Reformation.” See also Rousseau’s reply to Malesherbes’ objections to Julie, including the claim that —Every formal profession of faith goes against the spirit of the Reformation [à l’esprit de la réforme]” (Letter to Malesherbes, ca. 10 March 1761, CC 8:235-36, quoted in Stewart and Vaché, CW 6:706-7).

\textsuperscript{49} In this respect, Helena Rosenblatt probably goes too far in reading Rousseau as essentially a Lockeian on toleration, and a Protestant moralist in basic accord with Genevan religious leaders of his time. According to Rosenblatt’s highly contextualized reading, Rousseau makes his intentionally provocative comments against Christianity solely as a reductio ad absurdum of the Genevan patricians’ appropriations of Christianity—as at once a —purely spiritual” religion and a religion demanding their political submission (Rousseau and Geneva, 258-68, 275-76; for examples of these appropriations, see 114-15, 135-41, 150).

\textsuperscript{50} Rousseau distinguishes between the truth of a religion and its social usefulness (Beaumont 54/969; Mountain I, 149/706f). In this methodology he claims he is following the method of the respectable Montesquieu (Sprit of the Laws, XXIV.1), while neglecting to mention that Montesquieu also faced persecution for some of the implications he derived from this method.
Moreover, the only moral requirements relevant here are that one be capable of—sincerely loving the laws, justice, and if need be of sacrificing his life to his duty” (SC 150/468), and these points are apparently conceded to the Christian in the earlier polemic against him. Note that Spartan or Roman ardor is not required, but sacrifice to duty, and this tendency is specifically granted to Christian soldiers. These points in behalf of tolerant Christians would show only that they meet Rousseau’s minimal standards of right, and must remain speculative since they would hinge on many comments he made in various polemical and unpublished contexts. What is fairly clear—insofar as Rousseau may be said to have professed or advocated a religion—is that he advocated a fundamentally natural religion, accessible in its moral essentials to all decently socialized humans. What is less clear is the relation between this natural religion and the Gospel, and in what sense we ought to

51 Moreover, proposing Christianity as a permissible but not optimal political option would be in keeping with the original framing of the SC, against the opposing sentiments of Pierre Bayle and William Warburton: one of whom contends that no religion is useful to the body politic, and the other of whom maintains that Christianity is its strongest support. One would prove to the first that no state has ever been founded without Religion serving as its base, and to the second that the Christian law is at bottom more harmful than useful to a strong constitution of the State” (146/464). The second sentence may seem too strong for my interpretation, but consider Rousseau’s discussion of the compatibility of his civil religion with true or genuine Christianity as a sentiment or belief, not as a political law (Mountain I, 148-49/705-6).

52 Of the true Christians: —. the soldiers would despise death…” (SC 148/466; GM 119/338); —Cizens march to battle without hesitation; not one of them thinks of fleeing; they do their duty, but without passion for victory…” (SC 149/466; similarly, GM 120/339). Importantly, the Christian approach to duty in behalf of worldly goods would also seem to be closely paralleled in the moral prescriptions given to Emile, in a highly Stoicizing and proto-Kantian passage on duty and fortune (see E V, 446/820, discussed in Note 236 below). The requirement of loving the laws may admittedly be more difficult for Christians. The manuscript version is subtly more favorable to them here as well. In both versions, Christianity is criticized for failing to add force to the laws, thereby leaving society without one of its greatest bonds or supports. But in the SC version, it is said to leave the laws—with only the force they derive from themselves” (147/465), whereas in the GM, it leaves the laws with only the force that natural right gives them” (119/338). On this matter, Rousseau may be suggesting that tolerant Christians can be tolerated because they will be intermixed with natural theists, and most of them will be more or less impure in their Christianity (cf. E IV, 312n/632n, quoted in Note 35 above). This would parallel his concession that Christian soldiers were brave under the pagan emperors due to competition for honor against the pagan troops (GM 121/340; SC 149/467). By contrast, in a hypothetical society of true, Gospel Christians, “there would be neither vanity nor luxury,” and each one—fers taking pride in his country’s glory” (SC 148/466).
take his many statements in behalf of the unique power, insight, and gentleness of Jesus’
moral teachings.  

Another layer of ambivalence is evident in that although Rousseau appeals to the standard of ancient patriotic ardor to reveal the limits of Christianity’s political usefulness, he knows this standard is not fully appropriate. This is clear in both versions:

→Now that there no longer is and no longer can be an exclusive national Religion, one must tolerate all those which tolerate the others insofar as their dogmas contain nothing.

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53 See e.g. Obs. 44/49; LA 12-13/259/12; E IV, 307-8, 313n/625f-27, 634n; Beaumont 73/994; Mountain I, 143-44/698-99; III, 166n/728n. One important letter includes sympathetic comments on the excessive gentleness [trop grande douceur]” of Jesus’ character, which prevented him from succeeding in his noble political project (Letter to Franquières, 15 January 1769, LPW 283-285/OC 4:1145-47). In other passages, Rousseau seems clearly to follow and admire Jesus’ combination of being — gentle with the weak [doux aux foibles] and terrible with the wicked” (Mountain III, 186/753f, discussed in Chapter 1, Note 21). In a remarkable fragment, an obvious Jesus figure is presented as — Preaching a divine morality…. aside from the officers of the Temple (enemies of all humanity by their estate) none heard him without being softened [sans attendri] and without loving better his duties and the happiness of others because of them. His speech was simple and gentle [doux] and yet profound and sublime…it was milk for children and bread for men…all found him equally at their level” (Fiction or Allegorical Fragment on Revelation [ca. 1756-57], CW 12:173/OC 4:1053-54. On the fragment as a whole, see Kelly, Rousseau as Author, 155-71). Whereas Rousseau typically accosts Christianity in political contexts for being too soft or too intolerant, in a few important passages he adds a specifically moral criticism, seemingly indicating it is too harsh. Namely, —christianity” has preached excessively stern moral duties, such as forbidding song, dance, and —all the entertainments of the world,” thereby making all moral duties vain (E V, 374/716; cf. LR 66n/75n). However, he elsewhere clearly distinguishes these excesses from the prescriptions of the Gospel (LA 127-29/345-46/116-17), or from those of Julie’s (enlightened Protestant) religion (Julie IV.10, 375-77/465-58; VI.11, 594/724. Christianity is also positively associated with gentleness in the context of Geneva: DOI Dedication, 121/119, LA 13n, 14-15/260n, 261/13n, 14). Although he does use the term —Christianity” in the Emile passage, he later defends this passage in the following manner. —Christian morality is that of the Gospel; I do not recognize any other at all…. Therefore it is wrong to have me say about the Gospel what I said only about the Jansenists, the Methodists, and other sanctimonious [dévots] people today, who make Christianity a Religion as awful and unpleasant, as it is pleasant and gentle [douce] under the true law of Jesus Christ” (Mountain III, 185-86/752-53; cf. Julie VI.7, 563n/685n, which faults them for following the Gospel to the letter). Although the distinction may fairly be dismissed as a concession in fear of persecution, in my view the preponderance of evidence suggests that, in moral (not political) contexts, Rousseau favored his Gospel Christianity, while being occasionally sharp and misleading in his dismissal of other popular forms of —christianity.” His approach to the Gospels, in particular, makes it difficult to justify most interpretations of Rousseau’s religion. For instance, the usual Straussian interpretations, such as Allan Bloom’s, understand Rousseau’s claim in the Emile that he hates books to suggest he is including, —implicitly but especially, the book of books…the Bible” (=Introduction” to E, 7; cf. Leo Strauss, —On the Intention of Rousseau,” 461, and Natural Right and History, 267n32). We will return to Straussian interpretations in Notes 63 and 278.
contrary to the duties of the Citizen” (SC 151/469; similarly, GM 122f/342). Of course, there may be some Machiavellian blaming of Christianity for this impossibility here, but it would not have been impossible for Rousseau to consider the restoration of exclusive national religions a possibility—especially considering the discredited state into which he thought revealed religion had fallen (E IV, 310/630 [Savoyard Vicar]; Mountain V, 227/802; cf. Beaumont 75/996). But in the Social Contract version, this concession seems abrupt and unsupported. By contrast, in the manuscript version, it has clear antecedents in the critique of “les anciennes violences,” and in the superiority of binding the citizens by “liens moins forts et plus doux.”

This more constructive approach to the development of a rational and humane natural religion—which may or may not be seen as ultimately compatible with some version of Christianity—is also evident in the lengthier prescriptions offered in the manuscript’s discussion of civil religion. This again contrasts with the abruptness of the final version, which moves from the justifiability of requiring certain beliefs, to a few positive dogmas, to the one negative dogma of intolerance along with a strong criticism of intolerance (SC 149f-51/467f-69). To these the manuscript adds a paragraph stipulating that once this profession de foi is established, “it should be solemnly renewed each year, and this solemnity should be accompanied by an august and simple cult of which the magistrates alone are the ministers, and which revives love of the fatherland in all hearts” (GM 122/342). After tracing further implications of its tolerant and universal

54 Cf. E IV, 309n/628n: “The duty to follow and love the religion of one’s country does not extend to dogmas contrary to good morals, such as that of intolerance.” The standard of “contrary to good morals” may thus seem minimalist in comparison with the standard of optimal citizen virtue.
nature,\textsuperscript{55} it concludes on a far more positive and synthetic note than anything in the final version: “Thus the advantages of the religion of man and the religion of the citizen will be combined. The state will have its cult and will not be the enemy of anyone else’s. With divine and human laws being always united on the same object, the most pious theists will also be the most zealous citizens, and the defense of the holy laws will be the glory of the God of men” (GM 122/342).\textsuperscript{56} Explicitly including the “religion of man,” which in both versions is introduced only as the Christianity of the Gospel, suggests a universalistic distancing from the extreme national ferocity of the ancients.\textsuperscript{57} At the same time, emphasizing the common core of religions, and apparently redirecting some of this religious energy towards the laws and their defense, at least partially corrects the

\textsuperscript{55} In strongly eschewing religious controversy, it forbids the preaching of “seditive men called missionaries,” or at least those who preach intolerance. The lack of controversy over the dogmas is linked to its minimalist nature: “No apostle or missionary will have the right to come and criticize the errors of a Religion that serves as the basis for all the religions in the world and that condemns none of them” (GM 122/342).

\textsuperscript{56} This may also solve a concern of this chapter’s opening paragraph, namely the scorn of death which fanaticism brings: “Fake away this fanatic’s visions and give him the same hope as the reward for virtue, and you will turn him into a true citizen” (GM 117/336).

\textsuperscript{57} This would align with the account of the treatment of foreigners that Rousseau offers in an earlier chapter of the GM, which has no parallel in the SC. Concerning the maxim of the greatest good or utility of a given society, he writes: “Extend this maxim to the general society of which the State gives us an idea. Protected by the society of which we are members, or by the one in which we live, the natural repugnance to do evil is no longer counter-balanced in us by the fear of being wronged, and we are simultaneously moved by nature, by habit, and by reason to treat other men approximately as we do our Fellow Citizens [à peu près comme avec nos Concitoyens]. From this disposition, transformed into actions, arise the rules of rational natural right [droit naturel raisonné], different from natural right properly so called, for the latter is based only on a true but very vague sentiment that is often stifled by love of ourselves” (GM II.4, 113/329, emphasis added). For an excellent discussion of Rousseau’s concepts of natural right, political right, and droit naturel raisonné, including their relation to patriotism and cosmopolitanism, see Gourevitch, “Introduction” to LPW, xii-xv, xxviii-xxx. Here and elsewhere the GM argues that an understanding of universal right arises from our membership or presence in a political society (see esp. I.2, 81/287). This may seem to contradict the development of Emile and the “moral man,” but Gourevitch (“Introduction” to LPW, xxviii) points out how there, too, political justice is learned through being raised in the laws of their country (pays), even if they have no fatherland (patrie: E V, 473/858; discussed below in Section 4.7, esp. Note 266).
otherworldliness and submissiveness of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{58} It would also demand a high degree of patriotism from those inclined to humanity or cosmopolitanism on more rationalistic grounds. Although the patriotism is clearly less than that of the ancients, it is still formidably demanding and passionate, as we can infer since the punishment for failing to adhere to the profession of faith is only slightly weaker in the manuscript version than in the notorious final version.\textsuperscript{59}

Hence, even if we might possibly take the manuscript version as in some ways a more sincere statement of Rousseau’s beliefs concerning civil religion, the patriotic motivations surveyed in Section 4.1 would mostly remain necessary. The qualifications explored here would, however, be more aligned with the qualifications Rousseau himself provided—whenever he was inclined to speak carefully and qualifiedly—that the patriot’s intense love of country can and should be distinguished from conquest and the love of glory.\textsuperscript{60} It may remain mysterious why a writer, who showed signs of

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  \item[58] In later writing to the Poles, Rousseau praises the spirit of the ancient lawgivers, who all “sought bonds that might attach the Citizens to the fatherland and to one another, and they found them in distinctive practices, in religious ceremonies which by their very nature were always exclusive and national (see the end of the \textit{Social Contract})…” (\textit{Poland II}, 181/958). He then makes an oblique reference to Christianity (or established Christianity) amid a series of criticism of the moderns: “If they assemble it is in Temples and for a cult which is in no way national, which in no way reminds them of the fatherland, and has been turned almost into ridicule…” (182/958).
  \item[59] In the manuscript version: “If someone does not acknowledge [the dogmas], he should be cut off from the city, but he should be allowed to take all his goods away with him in peace. If someone who has acknowledged these dogmas behaves as though he does not believe them, he should be punished with death…” (GM 121/341). The SC version mentions banishment but not the allowance for removing one’s goods. On the other hand, the SC version is cagier about the manner in which these dogmas must be publicly acknowledged (see 150/468), whereas in the GM it is clear that every citizen must “expressly recognize all of the dogmas” before the magistrate (121/340f), and as we have seen the profession is “solemnly renewed every year” (122/342; cf. Fragments to \textit{Corsica}, CW 11:158-59/OC 3:943-44). In the latter regard, the SC version may provide more wiggle-room for non-believers who could act like believers, and thus not be forced to lie directly about religion. This seems to be the model of the \textit{Letter to Voltaire}, which proposes a profession whose positive doctrines are strictly of morality and natural right (including the forbidding of intolerance), having argued for a strong version of freedom of conscience regarding religious views (18 August 1756, EPW 244-45/OC 4:1072-73f).
  \item[60] Discussed in Note 26 above, and the surrounding text.
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strategically adjusting his claims in fear of the censors, would alter a first draft into a publishable version which was far more likely to shock the religious and intellectual establishments. If persecution cannot provide a likely explanation, then, it may be that Rousseau came to think he could better support the prospects of true civic life if he offered a more unambiguous statement in behalf of ardent patriotism, and thus against its main rivals. As we will see in the discussion of the Emile, his official statements in behalf of a more gentle, universal humanitarianism would be set in a more private and domestic context. It would seem, then, that although Rousseau may have privately envisaged certain grounds for rapprochement between man and citizen, he thought the public was in need of a blunter statement of the extreme sacrifices required by either option. In addition, some role may have been played by his contrarian revolt against the spirit of his age, in that clearly revealing any lukewarmness toward patriotism may have proven too palatable to the cultural elite.

61 Consider, for instance, his substitution of a less controversial note for his original note concerning the marriage of Protestants. He did this since the Protestants in whose behalf he was protesting had recently been executed, and he claimed the original note would have perhaps caused the publisher even greater difficulties than...all the rest of the book” (Letter to Rey, 11 March 1762, cited in OC 3:1506; see also OC 3:1430, and CW 4:241n42). Three days later, Rousseau insisted that even the more subtle note be suppressed, “for your advantage as well as mine” (cited in OC 3:1507).

62 We have discussed Rousseau’s demise, upon too greatly offending both the Christians and the philosophes, in Section 3.2, beginning around Note 78.

63 Although Leo Strauss is commonly understood to interpret esoteric writing solely in view of the author’s fear of persecution, Catherine and Michael Zuckert establish that the need for social responsibility and pedagogical restraint are also important factors for Strauss (The Truth about Leo Strauss, 43, and 115-54, esp. 135). According to the interpretation offered here, then, Rousseau seems to be seeking a kind of flamboyant social responsibility, even in the face of persecution. Having a salutary impact on the public (as well as subtly revealing truths to philosophical readers) also seems central to Rousseau according to Kelly in Rousseau as Author, the most careful Straussian study of Rousseau’s approach to writing. I would differ from Kelly, though, in emphasizing the philosophical significance of the virtues and habits Rousseau thought were necessary for social and political life, rather than seeing his autobiographical praise of solitary goodness as his only truly philosophical teaching (as discussed in Chapter 1, Note 28). The current Chapter also discusses Straussian interpretations in Notes 53, 238, and 278.
4.3 Early Domestic Education and Natural Toughening

So, as we have seen, in civic contexts, Rousseau grants the value of gentleness and cosmopolitanism only in highly limited and ambivalent ways, notably in a text which remained private and which became more severe and anti-cosmopolitan in its published form. By contrast, we will find that in more domestic contexts—addressed in two very lengthy and subtle books—gentleness is openly prioritized and even cosmopolitanism finds clear, occasional support. Meanwhile, the harsher elements of life seem to serve merely as instruments to the higher purposes of personal happiness and sentimental relationships. This isolated, domestic setting is the topic of the overwhelming majority of the *Emile.*

Hence, whereas in our discussion of civic education, we were resigned to parse around two dozen isolated (and mostly well-known) pages, in our discussion of domestic education we must navigate through over six hundred pages, which until recently had been neglected in comparison with the *Second Discourse* and the *Social Contract.* Our focus upon themes of gentleness and severity will be enhanced by excellent recent treatments of the relation between nature and virtue, the proper management of *amour-propre,* and the cultivation of pity. Since Rousseau’s model of education is so strongly based upon the cultivation of different faculties in accordance with their natural, physical development (e.g. E II, 158/417f; III, 192/466), we will proceed in rough accordance with the stages of Emile’s life through infancy (Book I), boyhood (II), youth (III), adolescence (IV) and adulthood (V).

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64 My understanding of the *Emile* has been aided by the analytical table of contents in Yves Vargas, *Introduction à l’Emile de Jean-Jacques Rousseau,* 325-36.

65 More precisely, the stage discussed in Book III lacks a proper term; Rousseau calls it the third stage of childhood (*l’enfance,* since it approaches adolescence [*l’adolescence*] without yet being that of puberty [*puberté*])” (E III, 165/426). We will use “boyhood” for the second stage of childhood, described in
Rousseau's pedagogy from infancy through youth reveals his most radical departures from both conventional education and his philosophical predecessors. The best known and most influential of these is his strong emphasis upon autonomy, apparently understood as the rejection of exercising direct and known authority or force upon the child. Perhaps no other proposal could have approached this one in the extent to which it would reduce the experience of severity and harshness in the average childhood. These elements are well-known in the work of Rousseau, as well as in the everyday life of progressive parenting and education in the last quarter-millennium. What is less known is how Rousseau was equally adamant in insisting upon extensive indirect manipulations of the child's experiences, as well as extreme exposure to nature. We will attempt to consider what is least-known—an understanding of the logic behind his extreme rejection of direct authority alongside his equally extreme insistence upon alternative modes of discipline.66

As early as infancy we can discern the fundamental dialectic, which is to nearly optimize the gentleness of direct interpersonal relations, while maintaining a very high level of exposure to the (often harsh) realities of nature. In keeping with his famous

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66 Arthur Melzer touches upon elements of this dialectic. According to him, the fundamental goal of Rousseauian education is autonomy, and his appeal to Spartan and Stoic elements of toughening are merely means to that end. Be that as it may, my reading would converge with Melzer's regarding how Rousseau avoids spoiling the child: "he wants the child to learn directly for himself, to learn as other young animals do through a direct encounter with the world of things, without mediation by the commands, praise, and rewards of parents" (~Modern and Ancient: Sincerity and Toughness in Rousseau's Pedagogy," section II).
political proclamation, “Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains.”  Rousseau’s attempts to restore natural freedom begin immediately after birth. He strongly opposes caps, belts, and the extravagant and barbarous practice of swaddling, favoring instead loose and large diapers” and a large, well-padded cradle” (E I, 60/278; cf. II, 126/371f). Rather than being stifled, the child will thus be free for natural development and strength. Although he seems highly libertarian about swaddling, his atomism is qualified by a strong emphasis on nurture in this stage. Consider, for instance, his (highly influential) praises of motherly nursing, largely on the grounds of the deep sentimental bonds that would emerge spontaneously among the family as a whole (E I, 44-47/255-59).
It is also in infancy—or even in the mother's childhood— that Rousseau begins his prescriptions of natural discipline. If, according to him, mothers who abdicate the nursing of their infants leave the paths of nature in a direction away from nature, a mother can also leave the paths of nature by excessively caring for the infant, as she does when she increases and nurses his weakness in order to prevent him from feeling it; and when, hoping to exempt him from the laws of nature, she keeps hard blows away from him.” Whereas Thetis plunged her son Achilles into the river Styx to make him invulnerable, “The cruel mothers of whom I speak… [plunge] their children in softness,” thereby preparing them for suffering (E I, 47/259). One should rather observe nature and the paths it maps out—the constant exercising and hardening of the child’s body and temperament, through continual trials such as teething, colics, and the many illnesses which cause half of the children to perish before their eighth year (47/259). Replacing personal discipline with natural discipline is in part justified since

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72 More vigorous peoples could safely wash newborns in cold rivers or seas. By contrast, modern children are said to be softened (amolis) before birth by the softness of the fathers and the mothers, and thus only capable of returning to their primitive vigor by degrees (E I, 59/277; the importance of the parents’ constitution for the children is discussed in Note 179 below, and in Chapter 1, Note 105). Girls and women should thus exercise for robustness and the robustness of their children, while stopping short of the Spartan girls’ military exercises (E V, 336-67/704-5).

73 This passage on Thetis and Achilles describes the frontispiece to Emile as a whole. Melzer argues that since Rousseau took such care with his engravings, this frontispiece should be taken to symbolize his new education, indicating that harsh training in Spartan toughness is the central feature of Rousseau’s pedagogical method (“Modern and Ancient,” section II).

74 A current historian similarly writes of eighteenth-century France: “A quarter of all children died before the age of 1, and another quarter before the age of 8. At best, the odds for reaching adulthood were even” (John McManners, Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France, 2:6). Learning how to be sick, without calling upon the doctor or medicine, unless one’s life is in evident danger, is prescribed as the best response to illnesses (E I, 54-55/269-71). Montaigne is later appealed to on the need to exercise the child: “To stiffen [roidir] his soul, he says, his muscles must be hardened [durcir]; by becoming accustomed to work, he becomes accustomed to pain; one must break him to the harshness of exercise in order to train him in the harshness of dislocations, colics, and all illness” (E II, 126/371, drawing from Montaigne, “On Educating Children,” Essays I.26, in The Complete Essays, 172-73).
dealing with nature is only a matter of “dependence on things,” rather than the “dependence on men” which is “without order” and thus “engenders all the vices” (85/311).\(^{75}\)

Most current scholarly accounts either only briefly mention or entirely overlook these harsher aspects of Rousseau’s teaching.\(^{76}\) This is perhaps because most accounts are written with at least one eye focused on Rousseau’s contemporary relevance, and many of his prescriptions here seem quite shocking—at least from our more tender perspective. But they were fundamental to Rousseau’s educational project both philosophically and practically, and they were widely embraced in the generations immediately following him.\(^{77}\) From a strictly moral point of view, he argues that the weaker and more effeminate a body is (whether from inactivity, intemperance, or mortifications), the more its sensual passions are in command (E I, 54/269). During infancy and boyhood, however, he emphasizes that accustoming the child to natural

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\(^{75}\) In this respect, Rousseau’s moral project cannot be said to be motivated by a rejection of or revolt against the constraints of nature—at least when he seems to be reasoning on the basis of a “hard primitivist” understanding of nature. On the other hand, there is undeniably something of the revolt in his central rejection of interdependence (discussed in Chapter 2, Note 9).

\(^{76}\) In a recent lecture, Melzer confirms this assessment: “This very harsh training in Spartan or even savage toughness typically receives very little mention in interpretations of *Emile*” (Modern and Ancient,” section II). Among these brief mentions, Wokler comments on Rousseau’s exchange with Locke on the Scythian and the hardening of the boy’s face and feet (*Rousseau*, 121; see E II, 128/374). Several others offer a few sentences on Emile’s bodily exercise and habituation to the “hard life,” for example Reisert (*A Friend of Virtue*, 150), Mary Nichols (*Rousseau’s Novel Education in the Emile*,” 537, 542), and Geraint Parry (*Émile: Learning to Be Men, Women, and Citizens,” 256). Considering the importance of this training for Emile’s later moral development, Bloom is misleading when he does not mention this element of Emile’s education, and concludes: “The moral education of the young Emile is, then, limited to the effective establishment of the rule that he should harm no one” (“Introduction” to E, 15).

\(^{77}\) According to Julia Douthwaite’s historical analysis, this element was among those most embraced in Rousseau’s times: “Most parents integrated Rousseau’s ideas within a more conventional framework and adopted his recommendations on breast feeding, physical education, clothing, diet, and hygiene, while disregarding or criticizing the author’s views on religious education, discipline, and book learning in general” (*The Wild Girl, Natural Man, and the Monster: Dangerous Experiments in the Age of Enlightenment*, 135; for examples see esp. 142, 144).
extremes and pains leads to many advantages, including physical strength and a capacity to endure pain. These pains are naturally linked with the preservation of our being, and exposure to them in early childhood spares us from feeling their complete force in the age of reason (48/260f). In general, the hard life \([\text{la vie dure}]\), once turned into habit, multiplies agreeable sensations; the soft life \([\text{la vie molle}]\) prepares for an infinity of unpleasant ones” (E II, 129/376). Upon entering adulthood, Jean-Jacques solemnly proclaims to Emile that he has sacrificed none of his early years to those which were to follow, and he has enjoyed all the goods nature gave him. He continues: “Of the ills to which it subjects you and from which I could protect you, you have felt only those which could harden \([\text{endurcir}]\) you against other ills. You have never suffered any of them except to avoid greater ones” (E V, 443/815). The Emile aims to cultivate a savage made to inhabit towns \([\text{villes}]\) and in doing so Rousseau appeals overwhelmingly to the harsh natural environment of the -hard primitivist” tradition to the near exclusion of the -soft primitivism” which is prominent in the Second Discourse (especially Part I). The educational program centrally intends to make the boy feel from an early date the harsh yoke \([\text{le dur joug}]\) which nature imposes on man, the heavy yoke of necessity under

78 The child thereby learns —Constancy and firmness \([\text{La constance et la fermeté}]\)” by taste, without ever hearing the names of these virtues (E II, 131/378). A parallel form of accustoming prepares the child to endure shifts of fortune, by teaching him a craft which can allow him to maintain his independence and manhood even if he loses his opulence or social rank (E I, 42/253f).

79 For a later example, although Emile has a naturally hot nature, in later getting lost on his way to a destination he eagerly anticipates—i.e., Sophie’s house—he remains cool. “See the fruit of the care I have taken since his childhood to harden \([\text{endurcir}]\) him against the blows of necessity” (E V, 419/783).

80 As Rousseau seems to have done, we will use the first name when discussing the actions of the guardian, as opposed to the claims of the author.

81 E III, 205/483f, translation modified from -cities” for \([\text{villes}]\). This key passage is quoted at greater length in Note 101 below.

82 The elements of -hard” and -soft” primitivism in Rousseau are discussed in Section 1.3 above.
which every finite being must bend” (E II, 91/320; see also V, 472/856). Without exception, humanity is subjected to pain, to the ills of his species, to the accidents, to the dangers of life, and finally to death…. The more he gets used to the sufferings which can strike him, the more, as Montaigne would say, the sting of strangeness is taken from them, and also the more his soul is made invulnerable and hard [dur]” (E II, 131/378).

Rousseau presents this regimen in great detail; in general it seems congruent with his approach toward civic education, being in both cases strongly opposed to the extreme material softening of advanced civilization. After beginning with the current practice of warm baths, as a concession to the “spoiled constitution” of modern infants, one should gradually move toward bathing them only in cold and even icy water,” and this practice should be kept for the whole of life. In order to make the texture of their fibers more adaptable and to make them almost insensitive to the various temperatures of the air,” they should be accustomed little by little to bathing sometimes in hot water at all bearable degrees and often in cold water at all possible degrees” (E I, 59-60/277-78, translation modified). More generally in their dress, children should be hardened [endurcir] to cold rather than to heat,” both for scientific reasons and because comparing northern peoples with southern ones indicates that one is made more robust by enduring excessive cold than enduring excessive heat” (E II, 128/374). A similar hardening is

83 In a parallel passage, Julie speaks of the heavy yoke [le pesant joug] of necessity which nature imposes on man” (Julie V.3, 468/571). Gourevitch links these passages to several others on necessity and fate, suggesting that this rationale led Rousseau to depersonalize even God, subordinating him to impersonal necessity” (“The Religious Thought,” 203, 231n30).

84 One exception, on which Rousseau advocates a materially softer approach, is his opposition to the use of ivory or bolts as teething rings. Following the instinctual pattern of the puppy, who is attracted to wood, leather, or rags, Rousseau instead proposes the use of a branch or a licorice stick. This will soften (ramollir) the gums rather hardening (endurcisent) them, as the metal objects do (E I, 69f/292).

85 Discussed in Note 72 above.
prescribed for the sense of hearing, which begins with setting off a cap gun near Emile before moving little by little to accustom him to rifle shots, to grapeshot explosions, to canons, to the most terrible detonations” (E I, 64/283f).

As Emile enters boyhood, his physical exercises become more active and constant, guided by the direction of nature alone.” These exercises strengthen the body and develop the only kind of reason of which the first age is susceptible and which is the most necessary to any age whatsoever” (E II, 124/369). For instance, Jean-Jacques does not attempt to protect the boy from injury, since To suffer is the first thing he ought to learn and the thing he will most need to know,” and it appears that children are born little and weak in order to teach them these lessons without danger (78/300). Rather than being placed in padded bonnets and strollers, the boy should be taken to the middle of a meadow and allowed to fall a hundred times a day,” since the well-being of freedom makes up for many wounds” (78/300f). In his central discussion of physical exercise, Rousseau appeals to Montaigne and others in establishing the role of gymnastic exercises in giving the ancients that vigor of body and soul which distinguishes them most

86 One might add that this active commission of suffering does not seem to be justified by Rousseau’s defenses of his educational approach, which insist that he merely leaves his pupil exposed to certain pains (consider the passive language of E V, 443/815, quoted above, in the text following Note 80). For some unsuccessful experiments with several of Rousseau’s more extreme methods for inuring to fear and pain, see Douthwaite, The Wild Girl, 138-41.

87 These lessons include the use of our strength, the relations of our bodies to surrounding bodies, and the use of natural instruments (E II, 124/369). The centrality of these lessons is based on a sensationalist psychology and epistemology (e.g. 125/370). The role of physical vigor in developing a sharp mind is justified on the basis of the minds of the savages. Although peasants are also physically vigorous, their minds are dull since they operate only according to law and routine (118/360).

88 This freedom is also presented as the reason why Rousseau’s education does not fall to his own objection against conventional education, namely that it sacrifices the children’s present happiness to the consideration of a distant time which may never be.” However, the freedom I give my pupil amply compensates him for the slight discomforts to which I leave him exposed” (E II, 87/313). Since children will often play in the snow to the point of numbness, all the while resisting going inside, Rousseau maintains it is clear they would choose his manner of education (ibid.).
palpably from the modernds” (126/371). –The wise Locke” and several modern commentators are said to agree on the points that children’s bodies require much exercise—which, one might add, is certainly true to a point.89 While explicitly disagreeing with Locke on many points, in this case Rousseau refers the reader to Locke’s treatment, while adding a few observations (and corrections) of his own (126/371).90 In matters of sleep, for instance, the child cannot rest simply according to the laws and rhythms of nature, due to the complications of civil life.91 The child should, then, become –gently [doucement] and gradually” accustomed to –go to bed late, get up in the morning, be abruptly awakened, and spend nights up without getting upset” (129/376). Similarly, he ought to get used to being –ill-bedded” rather than melting and dissolving the body with a soft bed; in this way he will never again find a bed which is

89 In addition to Locke, Rousseau lists –the good Rollin, the learned Fleury, the pedant Crousaz” (E II, 126/371). Pierre Burgelin observes, on the contrary, that these authors –brdly insisted on physical exercises” (OC 4:1387n2). Yet Rousseau has definite predecessors among the ancients in Plato, Aristotle, the Spartans, and Seneca. Among the moderns, Parry cites the relevant passages demonstrating the concurrence among Locke, Rousseau, and Kant on the importance of a physically hardy, rugged upbringing (E-Education,” 612, 620, 625). However, a case could be made on the basis of these ancient and modern thinkers alike that Rousseau’s physical education is unique in that it is not counterbalanced during boyhood by any –stening” influence such as poetry, music, moral discipline, or even socialization. See, e.g., Plato, Republic III, esp. 410b-11e; Aristotle, Politics VIII.4; Montesquieu, Spirit of the Laws IV.8. These objections would be supported by the remarkable case of Richard Edgeworth, whose boyhood was very rare in that it adhered comprehensively to Rousseau’s methods. Authorities including the boy’s father and Rousseau himself noticed the boy’s resolute stubbornness, chauvinism, and poor temper, which eventually developed into –relentless disobedience” after the method was abandoned at age eight (see Douthwaite, The Wild Girl, 136-38).

90 After establishing the priority of hardening the boy to cold rather than heat, Rousseau questions Locke’s attempt to prevent children from drinking when they are hot, prescribing instead that they get accustomed to eating a piece of bread before drinking (E II, 128/374). While censoring Locke for this exception to his typically –mascine [âles] and sensible precepts” (128/374), Rousseau also takes up the opportunity to question whether our first appetites could ever be as unruly as Locke seems to presuppose here (128/374f; see similarly 151/407).

91 Jonathan Marks argues that this cannot be the whole story, since in the Second Discourse it is maintained that, since he is –always near danger, Savage man must…be a light sleeper” (DOI I, 139/140). For Marks, then, it appears that humans ought to avoid habits (such as regular, heavy sleeping) –at because of society’s special demands but because society cannot be counted on always to save us from trying natural circumstances” (Perfection and Disharmony in the Thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 46).
uncomfortable to him (129f/376). In developing the sense of touch, frequent night games will overcome the ignorance which causes cowardice and superstition (133-38/381-88), while shoeless exercise can overcome the potential dangers of delicacy in this part of his body (139/390). In all of these practices of cultivating the senses, Rousseau claims to follow the path of nature, since our senses are our first faculties to be formed and perfected in us (132/380).

Although Rousseau’s goal in these exercises is specifically physical strength and endurance, he closely links physical strength with moral excellence in various ways. In alleged opposition to Hobbes, Rousseau maintains that “wickedness comes from weakness,” and thus if one makes the child strong he will be good (E I, 67/288). At times this theory seems to be an excessive response to the perceived need to empower the weak, leading him to overlook the kinds of abuses which naturally arise from many

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92 He presents the example of the 1602 battle of Escalade: “Awakened at midnight in the heart of winter by the enemy in the city, the Genevans found their muskets before their shoes. If none of them had known how to march barefoot, who knows whether Geneva might not have been taken?” (E II, 139/390). Becoming hardened for bruises and contusions, in preparation for attack, is also argued to be a distinctly male role. Since the fair skin of women is not made for such hardening, every woman naturally flees a moving ball or a shuttlecock (147/401).

93 Hobbes’s claim is that “an evil man is rather like a sturdy boy [vir malus idem ferè sit quod puer robustus]” (De Cive, Preface, [13]). Rousseau finds Hobbes’s claim that the wicked man is “un enfant robuste” to be absolutely contradictory (see E I, 67/288).

94 Cf. E IV, 264/562, discussed in the text surrounding Chapter 2, Note 54. The most astonishing passages actually involve the need to attribute his failures to his own weakness and disempowerment. See his discussion of the benevolences he would pursue if he possessed the ring of Gyges, although he does ultimately defer the ring after considering the one area in which he might be tempted, and the possible future after once straying into aberration (Rev. VI, 55/1057-58; cf. 51/1053). Regarding the need for empowerment, men in the first times are excused for their ferocity, since “Fear and weakness are the source of cruelty” (EOL IX, 267/395, as discussed in Chapter 1, Note 109). Cf. DOI I, 151/153f, which attributes weakness only to dependence. Although in the Essay passage Rousseau seems to refer to the weakness stemming from a lack of defensive association with others, he seems to be in agreement with Montaigne on psychological weakness as the source of cruelty: “I have often heard it said that cowardice is the mother of cruelty. And I have learned from experience that this harsh rage [aigreur et aspreté] of wicked inhuman minds is usually accompanied by womanish weakness [mollesse feminine]. I have known the cruelest of men to cry easily for the most frivolous of causes…. Can it be a weakness [foiblesse] in their soul which makes such men susceptible to every extreme?” (“Of Cowardice, the Mother of Cruelty,” Essays II.27, 786/
kinds of power. Given his keen—and probably even exaggerated—sense of the abuses caused by social inequality, we might infer that the sorts of power Rousseau has in mind here are not comparative or social, but rather individual, physical, and psychological. For instance, regarding physical strength, we have seen how intemperate vices more easily rule in a weak body. A vigorous body is also found to be necessary for a strong soul and intellect (Julie V.3, 461/563). Turning to the effects on the soul itself, Rousseau argues that a weak will or soul is more easily deflected from its course of the natural goods of amour de soi, and toward petty or cruel vices (RJJ I, 9-10/669-70; Discourse on Heroic Virtue, EPW 315/OC 2:1273). Conversely, strength of soul seems pivotal for two reasons—that “force” is required to prevail in the inevitable struggle with one’s passions, and “the strength of an expansive soul” leads one to actually feel one’s being in another, thereby experiencing her sufferings as one’s own. Finally, one of Rousseau’s most central moral ideals—which provides an objective basis for moral norms across different socio-political contexts—is that one ought to be “a strong being”

Les Essais, 693. See the discussion in Judith Shklar, Ordinary Vices, 9, 24, 241). We have discussed Rousseau’s excusing of many human vices as being rooted in natural weakness (Section 2.6, esp. around Note 83).

95 In this connection he argues that it is axiomatic that an all-powerful divinity would be good (E I, 67/288; IV, 282, 284/589, 592).

96 Discussed in Section 2.2 above, and especially Note 31, discussing his similarities with Plato’s Thrasymachus.

97 See E V, 444/817; IV, 325/651. We have discussed Rousseau’s concept of virtue in connection with religion in Chapter 3, around Note 72.

98 The expansion of one’s being, and the feeling of one’s existence, become Rousseau’s central ethical principles in many leading Straussian accounts. See Melzer, The Natural Goodness of Man, 34-48; Kelly, Rousseau as Author, 86-87; Laurence Cooper, Eros in Plato, Rousseau, and Nietzsche, ch. 5.
in the sense that one’s strength and resources surpasses one’s perceived needs. \(^99\) Even if it may seem unnatural to suppress vices and desires, Rousseau justifies this by arguing that nature has not given us these excessive desires, but they are inevitable in the social state. One should delay the arousal of these desires and prevent exposure to unnecessary and harmful ones. But since many desires will inevitably and appropriately arise, the fundamental goal is not prevention, but maintaining equilibrium. This is accomplished by “artificially” accelerating and increasing our rational and moral capacities which are necessary to prevail over these increased desires. \(^100\) Maintaining this equilibrium is thus appropriate according to the broader and more positive concept of “nature” he develops in \textit{Emile}, in contrast with the strict identification of nature with origins that we find in the \textit{Second Discourse}. \(^101\) This broader concept of nature allows for “cultivation” \(^102\)—as

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\(^99\) E II, 81/305; III, 165/426; cf. II, 87/314. We will return to this concept below, in connection with opinion and whims, in Notes 127 and 130. The idea of staying within the bounds of the possible is also connected with self-sufficiency and true freedom (E II, 84/309; cf. \textit{Julie} IV.10, 384/467).

\(^100\) For the increase of passions through “countless alien streams,” see E IV, 212/491 (quoted with related passages in Chapter 1, Note 89). We should repress our many immoderate desires, which are not in nature and therefore against nature (see E V, 405/763). Equilibrium is also appealed to in explaining why, since society inevitably causes the passions to accelerate, one must also accelerate the process of enlightenment in order to regulate these passions (see E IV, 259/557). See also E V, 445/819, \textit{Julie} V.7, 499/610, and for a political parallel, \textit{Mountain} VII, 243/820. For helpful comments, see Gourewitch, “Introduction” to EPW, xix-xx, and Cooper, \textit{Rousseau, Nature}, esp. ch. 1. For further comments on the sense in which this is natural, see Note 102.

\(^101\) The decisive claim is the following: “There is a great difference between the natural man living in the state of nature and the natural man living in the state of society. Emile is not a savage to be relegated to the desert. He is a savage made to inhabit towns [villes]” (E III, 205/483f, translation modified). The remark has become commonplace among Rousseau scholars (it is appealed to, for instance, by Reisert, \textit{A Friend of Virtue}, 21-22, 118, and in Cooper’s theory, discussed around Note 23). Less commonly noticed is that preceding it is a more general principle which would support our reading of Rousseau as a kind of situation ethicist (Chapter 1, Note 38). He there defends his approach as natural since nature “chooses its instruments and regulates them according to need, not to opinion. Now, needs change according to the situation of men” (E III, 205/483; see also 193/467). For further comments on Rousseau’s idea of cultivated nature, see Note 102 immediately below.

\(^102\) According to Wolmar, here endorsed by Rousseau, there are “no mistakes in nature,” and a child’s particular temperament should be “either changed nor constrained, but formed and perfected” (\textit{Julie} V.3, 461/563). Similarly, the question is not to change the character and bend the natural
opposed to the "correction" attempted in conventional and/or Christian\textsuperscript{103} educations, as well as the "denaturing" necessary in civic educations.\textsuperscript{104}

4.4 Autonomous Boyhood and Autarkic Manhood

Although it is easy to see how Rousseau’s pedagogy can easily provide for the physical strength of his pupils, one might seriously question how he can develop moral strength, given his strong commitments against imposing personal discipline, rules, or (at least during childhood) moral ideas as such. For our purposes, what is most interesting is disposition, but on the contrary to push it as far as it can go, to cultivate it and keep it from degenerating; for it is thus that a man becomes all he can be, and that nature’s work is culminated in him by education” (464/566). This approach is analogous to the "surprising mixture of wild and cultivated nature” found in the Swiss Valais mountains (I.23, 63/77), in Julie’s garden (IV.11, 388/472), and perhaps in Switzerland generally (Rev. VII, 66/1071f). Rousseau is said to "cultivate nature,” in opposition to an imagined interlocutor, who "depraves it” (E IV, 254/549); for similar appeals to "cultivation,” see 233/520. He also claims to work "in collaboration with [de concert avec] nature” (314/636), or "to assist nature” (E III, 192/465). The "true affections” of justice and goodness are "an ordered development of our primitive affections” (E IV, 235/522f). In section 4.4 we will discuss the increased difficulties of following nature which arise after the onset of puberty, although even here Rousseau insists that annihilating the passions is "to control nature, ...to reform the work of God” (212/490f). This domestic-moral understanding of nature is also related to Rousseau’s idea of equilibrium (Note 100), of an extended use of the term "nature” (Note 101), of the need for some artificial tactics to maintain these higher ends in the natural state (especially after adolescence: Note 168), and of the broader understanding of "dependence” and "self-sufficiency” applied to the family (Note 268). Cumulatively, the evidence is strong that this domestic-moral approach is not nearly as radical or "denaturing” as the political approach (Note 22). We first suggested this distinction in Chapter 1, Note 52.

\textsuperscript{103} Archbishop Beaumont wrote, against Rousseau’s \textit{Emile}, in behalf of "truly Christian education”: "What an admirable mixture of gentleness \textit{[douceur]} and firmness \textit{[fermeté]}!” (\textit{Pastoral Letter of his Grace the Archbishop of Paris, Declaring the Condemnation of...Emile} [1762], CW 9:14/ Mémoire 271). He wondered what the folly of youth would lead to if left to itself, considering how resistant it is despite our "powerful and continual efforts”: "It is a torrent that overflows despite the powerful dikes built to constrain it. What would happen, then, if no obstacle stopped its flow and broke its force?” (CW 9:5/ Mémoire 261). Rousseau replies that this amounts to wondering why children are wicked "even though constantly tyrannized by childhood,” and instead of erecting many impotent dikes against the river of childhood, we ought to "Broaden its bed and allow it to run without obstacle. It will never do harm” (\textit{Beaumont} 32-33/941-43). Allowing for some exaggeration on Rousseau’s part in this last remark, his children do run without obstacle within their contrived circumstances. More accurate is his claim, "do not say that vice must not be curbed, but rather that it is better to prevent it from being born” (\textit{Beaumont} 33/942).

\textsuperscript{104} Compare the references on political denaturing (Chapter 4, Note 22) with the more balanced approach to making men social (discussed in Chapter 1, Note 52).
the grounds on which he makes these proposals. Unlike his discussions of the dignified treatment of the poor or of political right, Rousseau does not emphasize intrinsic human dignity as the ground for the autonomous treatment of the child. Rather, his emphasis is empirical, insisting that boys are incapable of the kinds of reason or foresight which could make moral discipline comprehensible or acceptable to them, and thus such forms of discipline inevitably appear as an arbitrary will opposing them.

Although we have dwelled upon Rousseau’s harsher educational side, in opposition to the excessive tenderness which he often associates with mothers, he seems even more opposed to the opposite educational extreme: “Fathers’ ambition, avarice, tyranny, and false foresight, their negligence, their harsh insensitivity [dure insensibilité] are a hundred times more disastrous for children than is the blind tenderness of mothers” (E I, 38n/246n). One may see Rousseau’s autonomous education largely as a response to the harsh tyrannies he perceived in overly “fatherly” conventional educations, which

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105 We have discussed his appeal to the dignity of the poor in Chapter 2, surrounding Note 50.

106 In this Section we will follow Rousseau in speaking indifferently of the “boy” or the “child,” although we will see in Section 4.6 that most of this pedagogy applies chiefly to boys alone.

107 Often, but not always associated with mothers—Julie allows her son to follow the continual exercise nature demands of him, running bareheaded in the elements just like the peasants; he thus “toughens himself [s’endurcit]” (Julie V.3, 466/568).

108 Contrast the difference of emphasis in the typically more pessimistic Second Discourse, which is employed to refute the patriarchal view of government, without needing to invoke —hake’s or Sidney’s proofs”: “it suffices to note that nothing in the world is farther from the ferocious spirit of Despotism than the gentleness [douceur] of this authority which looks more to the advantage of the one who obeys than to the utility of the one who commands; that by the Law of Nature the Father is the Child’s master only as long as it needs his assistance, that beyond this point they become equal; and that the son, perfectly independent of the Father, owes him only respect and not obedience; for gratitude is indeed a duty that ought to be performed, but it is not a right that can be exacted” (DOI II, 177/182; cf. E V, 459/837; GM I.5, 89/297; SC I.2; on the abuse of paternal rights, see DOI Note IX, 200/205; for a similar principle of the limits of paternal authority, see E II, 85/310). The principles of the limits of paternal authority, and of adult children owing gratitude but not obedience, are similar to Locke, Some Thoughts concerning Education, §40, and Two Treatises of Government, Book I, §§ 52-53, 56, 87-90; Book II, §§54-59, 63-68; for the role of parental —he and tenderness,” see Book I, §97, and Book II, §§ 67, 170.
deprive children of immediate enjoyment in favor of strenuous attainments of knowledge and politeness—all in behalf of an elusive and vain happiness to be found in the long-term future, and on rational grounds which they are incapable of understanding.

The rejection of command and obedience in the child’s upbringing (E II, 89/316f) seems to be based above all on the observation, “To know good and bad, to sense the reason for man’s duties, is not a child’s affair” (90/318). Below we will discuss the two qualifications to this rejection of moral authority—that indirectly manipulating the child’s circumstances is necessary, and that the child can begin understanding moral reasons upon reaching adolescence. Regarding the direct, personal discipline of the child, though, Rousseau strongly argues that any sort of command or punishment imposed on him cannot be understood on its deeper moral grounds. A dialogue illustrates how, to a child, “bad” can mean only “forbidden,” and this is only bad because of the punishment imposed; this leads to the child’s attempts to conceal or lie about the “bad” act, about which the parent can only restart the circular reasoning by calling such dissimulation “bad” (90/317f). It is in human nature to endure patiently the necessity

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109 The child does have “sensual or childish reason,” which consists in forming simple ideas by the conjunction of several sensations” (E II, 158/417). But Rousseau typically speaks of the child lacking “reason” per se, as when he argues that there can be no morality in the child’s actions because conscience cannot be developed before reason, and thus before the age of reason (E I, 67; see also II, 92/321, and 108n/345n on his use of terms). “Before the age of reason one cannot have any idea of moral beings or of social relations” (89/316f). There can, however, be a sentiment of morality in a child’s judgments of others’ actions, as with their indignation toward those who intend to hurt them (see E I, 65f-67/286-88). Further implications of Rousseau’s view will be discussed below, beginning around Note 120.

110 This sort of concealment would closely parallel that of lackeys and the poor, who are overwhelmingly destined to become pilferers (fripons, discussed in Section 2.4, especially beginning with Note 47).

111 Apparently is it possible to move out of this “inevitable circle,” but only if the childpretends: “Get out of it, and the child does not understand you any longer” (E II, 90/318). This will end up being a matter of force, threats, flattery, and promises. “But since everything you insist on is unpleasant and, further, it is always irksome to do another’s will, they arrange to do their own will covertly” (E II, 90/319). Apparently the problems with personal discipline will reemerge in adolescence, even if the previous efforts
of things but not the ill will of others. Moreover, the child will treat as a caprice every will opposed to his own when he does not appreciate the reason for it,” and he does not appreciate the reason for anything which clashes with his whims” (91n/320n). Accordingly, for Rousseau, the child’s irascibility, rebellion, and deceit should be attributed not to nature but to inflaming the child’s *amour-propre* through subjecting them to our caprices. Further consequences of imposing on the child a duty he does not feel include setting him against your tyranny,” thereby preventing him from loving you, and accustoming him to cover secret motives with apparent motives (91/319).

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112 Rousseau also seems to maintain the logically inverse position, that subjecting the child to *our* caprices—understood as anything constraining their exercise of natural freedom—is barbarous, since it adds additional chains to those intrinsic to their natural weakness (E II, 88f/316; see also Julie V.3, 466/568). Julie’s limiting standard is to leave him the full use of his meager strength, and not to hinder in him any of nature’s impulses” (Julie V.3, 466/568). Instead of barbarously sacrificing the present to an uncertain future, we should follow the first duty of being humane, and loving childhood, its games, and its pleasures (E II, 79/302).

113 See also E I, 66/287: As long as children find resistance only in things and never in wills, they will become neither rebellious nor irascible and will preserve their health better. Here is one of the reasons why the children of the people [du peuple]—freer, more independent—are generally less infirm, less delicate, more robust than those who are allegedly better brought up by being endlessly thwarted.”

114 If, by contrast, the boy’s well-being is optimally independent of the will and judgment of others, his interest in lying is reduced (E II, 103/337f), and he will fearlessly show himself as he is rather than eluding an authority which importunes him (120-21, 160/362-64, 420). Later, in adolescence, You can be sure that if the child fears neither a sermon nor a reprimand on your part, he will always tell you everything. … [N]ever has vile fear taught him to disguise himself…. He is uncalculatingly naïve” (E IV, 319/642). See, similarly, Julie V.3, 478/584.
Although Rousseau's emphasis is empirical, he does attempt to link these behavioral observations to his broader theory of nature. He considers it "quite strange" that people have never imagined other instruments for guiding children besides emulation, jealousy, envy, vanity, avidity, and vile fear—all the most dangerous passions," which thus corrupt the soul before the body has even been formed. Such is not the nature of man, but "the man you have made" (E II, 91f/321). Whereas a little gentleman, constantly constrained, shows excess willfulness in a moment of freedom, a little peasant is "always sure of his freedom" and far less eager to abuse it (92, 161/321f, 422). After this discussion of discipline, Rousseau enters into one of his central denials of original sin, positing that "the first movements of nature are always right," there is "no original perversity in the human heart," and we can thus decipher the historical or biographical origins of each of the vices which enter it (92/322). This model of nature is put on display with the Wolmar children, and in them we can see how "nature is justified" (Julie V.3, 478/584). Julie never prescribes, forbids, or thwarts them, and they are lively, carefree, and frisky; they lack adamant desires and evil inclinations; they never take on an external or artificial form, so observing them reveals the secrets of nature (459-60, 478/560-61, 583-84; see also E II, 160). It is also worth observing that in addition to "the common constitution of the species," Rousseau maintains that each individual is born with a particular temperament, which determines his genius and

115 The commoners are only a partial or comparative model: "And nevertheless the children of the village people, themselves often indulged or opposed, are still quite far from the state in which I want them kept" (E II, 92/322).

116 Rousseau is also committed, like Thomas Aquinas, to the view that "No one does the bad for the sake of the bad" (E IV, 243/535). For his major claims regarding natural goodness, see Chapter 1, Note 33, and Section 2.6, esp. Note 86.
character, and which should be neither changed nor constrained, but formed and perfected." This underscores how, despite his emphasis on the radical difference between properly formed and poorly formed humans, Rousseau does not believe in the infinite malleability of human nature. Indeed, his emphasis upon the innumerable ways one can leave the true paths of nature, and the dire consequences of this, indicate that human nature has a limited number of fixed grooves which must be respected in order to make real moral progress.

According to Rousseau, nature also indicates the extremely limited capacities of a child's reason, and this has implications for the liberation of childhood beyond the proscription of command and punishment. The child's reason is not fit for serious

\[117\] Julie V.3, 461-62/563-64; see also E II, 94/324. For more on cultivating nature, see Note 102 above. On the other hand, weak, delicate, and fearful men, who prefer professions such as tailoring, may reveal a case of "nature's mistake" (E III, 199/476).

\[118\] Commentators have pointed to Rousseau's view of "the extreme malleability of [human] nature over time" (Melzer, Natural Goodness, 49; cf. Strauss, Natural Right and History, 271, who offers "almost infinitely perfectible"). The substantive point is largely conceded by Adam Smith (Wealth of Nations I.i.4, 28). Nonetheless, Rousseau does not seem to support infinite malleability or perfectibility. It is thus important to distinguish the positions of Rousseau and Smith from that of Helvétius, who attributed all intellectual differences to education—a view Rousseau opposed from the beginning (cf. DOI II, 169/174; PF VII [Luxury, Commerce, and the Arts], 49/522). He later explicitly objected to it in Helvétius, whom Rousseau thought based his position on the mistaken idea that the mind and judgments are purely passive. Rousseau thus concludes that "it is not true that the inequality of minds is the effect of education alone, although it can influence it very much" ("Notes on Helvétius's On the Mind," CW 12:211/OC 4:1229; cf. Julie V.3, 461-64/563-66, and Bernard Guyon in OC 2:1673n2). This difference is noted by Wokler ("The Manuscript Authority of Political Thoughts," 121; Rousseau, 122-24) and Cooper (Rousseau, Nature, 41-47, 130-31), but not by the otherwise careful Pierre Force (Self-Interest before Adam Smith, 128). Marx is therefore correct in seeing Helvétius (not Rousseau) as his predecessor in discovering "the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit, and education, and the influence of environment on man..." (The Holy Family, in Selected Writings, 154; cf. 153). For discussions of Rousseau's claims leaning in more constructivist directions, see Notes 130 and 199 below, as well as Chapter 1, Note 106.

\[119\] This was discussed in connection with truth and error in Chapter 3, Note 92. Conversely, Rousseau takes it as evidence that he is on the right path, "When my method deals satisfactorily with all aspects of a single problem and, in avoiding one difficulty, prevents another..." (E IV, 328/655; cf. E I, 57/273).

\[120\] In polemical disputation with the Catholic Church on the "age of reason," Rousseau argues that the only difference between them is that the Catholics claim the age of reason begins at age seven, whereas
development until his youth (around the age of twelve), and the "age of reason" is not reached until the age of fifteen. Rousseau illustrates this through many examples, including the inability of a child to derive any sort of morally edifying principles from the many fables which are supposedly designed for them (E II, 107-17/343-58). The futility, and even oppressiveness, of inducing a child to spend his time in regular study is also supported by a critique of foresight, and of sacrificing one's present happiness for an uncertain future. This is shown to be a particularly unsound bargain considering that a substantial proportion of children will never reach adulthood. Far from correcting man's bad inclinations, these pains prove more pernicious to the child than useful (79f/302f). The child's learning must therefore be limited to the useful lessons related to his real and present happiness, and he will naturally develop a rudimentary foresight as his mind develops. On the other hand, Rousseau insists that even as an adult, Emile's

Rousseau claims it begins at age fifteen (E IV, 258/555f; cf. Beaumont 38-41/949-51). See also Wolmar's discussion of the child's lack of reason, to which Rousseau appends a note taking issue with Locke (Julie V.3, 460-61/561-63; similarly, E II, 89/317). Wolmar's "respect for the early [premier] development of reason" implies that "were his son to know nothing at age twelve, he would be no less educated at fifteen" (Julie V.3, 476/581). We have discussed the implications of the child's lack of reason for his basic incapacity to understand moral norms (Note 109 above).

121 When Emile later becomes a man, certain fables are introduced, with qualifications (E IV, 247-49/540-42).

122 See E II, 79-80, 82f/301-3, 307; IV, 211/489. A version of this criticism appeared in an early writing as well: "In the name of teaching us letters, we are made to suffer torments throughout our unhappy youth: we know all the rules of grammar before we ever hear any mention of man's duties" (PN 98/966). Apparently Rousseau's model of human nature is closely linked in this respect to his own nature; as the character "Rousseau" explains why "Jean-Jacques" is lazy: "The effort that must be made is certain, the reward for it is often dubious, and remote projects can appear to be only lures for dupes to whoever has more indolence than ambition" (RJJ II, 152/857).

123 Discussed in Note 74 above.

124 For the limitation of his learning to ideas which are related to his happiness and are one day going to enlighten [éclairer] him about his duties, see E II, 112/351. Also, "If one ought to demand nothing of children through obedience, it follows that they can learn nothing of which they do not feel the real and present advantage in either pleasure or utility" (116/357). Children actually reason quite well about immediate and palpable interest (108/345). Their focus on present things echoes that of the savages
sort of foresight will consist largely in being able to enjoy presently, and not to miserably defer pleasure entirely into the future. Assuming he has maintained the course of nature, around age twelve or thirteen the child’s strength will come to surpass his needs, and this is nature’s indication to begin labor and studies. At this point the tutor ought to cultivate his natural curiosity (rather than appealing to vanity or constraint), and guide him in learning experientially through the senses (E III, 165-68/426-30). His moral reasoning at this stage is entirely self-regarding, focusing solely on utility, and using *Robinson Crusoe* as its model, in stark contrast to dependence upon the vain opinions of society (184-87/455-59). In all of this we find a clear prescriptive corollary to the polemics against enlightened higher learning we have seen (Sections 3.1–3.2).

Sympathetic commentators are right to point out that these rejections are not absolute,
and it is important to observe that Rousseau does not seem to be rejecting learning, so much as any learning for which one is not bodily or morally prepared. We must move beyond these largely formal remarks, though, and understand the precise content Rousseau gave them. In this sense it should not be denied that he is exceptionally stringent in his sense of the futilities, oppressions, and dangers of typical learning, as well as of the conditions required for proper learning.128

Despite his many liberationist contentions, chief among his prescriptions for a healthy human nature is the limitation of whims, imagination, _amour-propre_, and vanity. The first education must be “purely negative,” consisting not in teaching virtue or truth but in securing the heart from vice and the mind from error” (E II, 93/323).129 But here, too, limiting the child should be seen as a matter of necessity and not will; the child does not rebel against “there is no more” unless he thinks you are lying (91/320f). Refusals should be based on the strong distinction between providing for the child’s natural needs, as opposed to serving his mere whims [fantaisies],” understood as “all desires which are not true needs and which can only be satisfied with another’s help.”130 The infant’s cries

128 If Montaigne may be considered Rousseau’s closest philosophical predecessor, Montaigne certainly applies a similar rhetoric against the “cruelty and horror” with which children were usually introduced to arts and letters. In place of these tactics, Montaigne advocates “une severe douceur” which relinquishes all “violence and force” in motivating students to learn (which may be clearly distinguished from punishment for breaking moral norms). Most strikingly, Montaigne’s notion of the oppressiveness of contemporary book-learning for boys is not laboring over _any_ books—as it is for Rousseau—but rather: “I do not want to corrupt his mind as others do by making his work a torture, slaving away for fourteen or fifteen hours a day like a porter” (Essays I.26, in _The Complete Essays_, 184-85/Essais, 164-65).

129 Parry observes that Rousseau’s terms, “negative education” and “inactive method,” are somewhat misleading, since even if the tutor appears to do nothing, he is actively involved in purging the environment of all vestiges of the social as it is understood by conventional opinion. A better term might have been “defensive” or “protective” education.” He was, however, opposing his method to what he termed the “positive” education of Priestley and Helvétius (“_Émile,_” 252; for a brief history of positive education in the Enlightenment, see Parry, “Education,” 614-19).

130 E II, 84/309f; see also _Julie_ V.3, 466, 468/569, 571f; Conf. I, 9/10. Rousseau later takes issue with an aristocratic mother who instructed him that she did not want her delicate son provoked; “what she
and the child’s requests can quickly change into demands, and if the parent caters to them, this can develop into a habitual taste for —empire and domination” (E I, 66-68/287-89f). Here, once again, Rousseau seems close to the Augustinian tradition descriptively, despite his proclaimed repudiation of it. He frames this approach as a middle ground between submitting to the whims of the child (thus making his first ideas be of domination), or submitting the child to our own whims (thus making his first ideas understood by provoking him was not obeying him in everything” (E II, 122/366). By continually surrendering to the whims of the child one actually makes him weaker and ultimately miserable, since one accustoms him to getting everything, and this cannot be sustained (87/314). As for what constitutes —natural needs,” Rousseau elsewhere observes: —The immediate power of the senses is weak and limited; it is through the intermediary of the imagination that they make their greatest ravages…” (LA 134/350/122). Finally, —What we ought to do depends a lot on what we ought to believe, and in everything which is not connected with the first needs of nature, our opinions are the rule of our actions” (Rev. III, 18f/1013). For more optimistic applications of the significance of opinion, see Note 199.

Therefore one should not humor a crying baby in order to pacify him; one may wish to distract him without him knowing that you are paying attention to him (E I, 68-69/290f-91f). Once the boy can speak, he should cry less (E II, 77/299), and one should answer his request immediately if it is a genuine need, whereas one should irrevocably refuse it if he reinforces his request with tears (86/312). Cf. Julie V.3, 468-70/571-73, which adds the need to —act authoritatively with children” in whatever we require or deny of them, without attempting to reason with them. For her highly limited demands, see 473-74/578-79. Rousseau also indicates that his standard of —genuine need” is not as strict as possible; since —pleasure is sometimes a need,” one should pay attention above all to the motive (E II, 89n/316n; Plato makes a similar concession: Republic VIII, 559b; cf. II, 372a-e).

Like Rousseau, Augustine does not seem to fault the infant (at least not strongly) for crying when he is physically uncomfortable or in order to attain food. He does condemn the infant for greedily pursuing milk; as well as for being indignant, and vengefully weeping, when he is refused an object that would be harmful for him, or when his superiors would not yield to his whims (among other reasons). See Confessions I.6(7)-I.7(11). Rousseau would seem to acknowledge much of this behavior, descriptively, but attribute it to natural communication or ignorance, and to deny that it could become habitual (and thus a vice) apart from the misguided behavior of its caretakers. Rousseau would seem close to Hobbes in many respects (De Cive, Preface, [13]). Locke is concerned to correct, rather than justify, similar tendencies in the infant, while also anticipating some of Rousseau’s approach to whims (Some Thoughts concerning Education, §§104-6; cf. §§35, 109, 111, 148). Manon Roland, a fervent disciple of Rousseau, began questioning his teachings after six weeks of caring for her infant daughter: —I have concluded that the fable of Eve is not so stupid and that gluttony is truly an original sin. You philosophers, who do not believe this, who tell me that all the vices originate in society through the development of the passions and the clash of interests, tell me why this six-week old child, whose imagination is not yet awakened, whose peaceful senses should have no other master than need, is already overstepping its limits?” (quoted in Douthwaite, The Wild Girl, 142f).
be of servitude). The child cannot have the intention of doing harm, and damage to property should be minimized not by commands and punishments but by keeping precious and fragile objects out of his reach (E II, 93/322f). Even when it comes to a child striking an adult, or taking another child’s plaything, we should refrain from rules, restraints, and scolding. Instead, the offending child should be exposed to the blunt justice of nature—the stricken adult should strike back with greater force, and the child who took the plaything should have it taken from him.

Perhaps Rousseau's best-known reasons for indirectly limiting the child’s freedom stem from *amour-propre*. Frederick Neuhouser has recently sharpened our understanding of the role of social isolation and limited competition in preventing Emile from becoming vain or prematurely developing *amour-propre* through social contact. For instance, the youthful Emile is led to compare his physical achievements with *his own* prior achievements, thereby rousing him to a kind of “excellence” without any

\[\text{133} \] See E I, 48, 72n/261, 295n. Similarly, Julie claims she has “spared nothing to protect my son from the dangerous image of domination [empire] and servitude,” which is perhaps the most difficult and most important lesson in his whole education (*Julie* V.3, 467/569f, translation modified).

\[\text{134} \] See E II, 97-98n/329-30n, which also points out that one should never merely laugh at the child, since these blows (however feeble) are “so many murders” in intention. We are given less guidance about fighting among children, but this may be taken on the model of the natural camaraderie of the Genevans of Rousseau's youth (see LA 112/334/102f, block-quoted in Section 4.1 above, following Note 6). If a substantially larger child abused a younger child, it may be that a guardian or a still-larger child would be expected to abuse that child in a similar way, combining the models of this *Emile* passage and the *Julie* passage discussed in the following Note. See also E II, 85/311 for the more basic principle.

\[\text{135} \] The plaything should be taken away, but not given back to the child originally playing with it, since this sort of justice goes beyond nature (and apparently the child's understanding of justice), which could plant a seed of jealousy (see *Julie* V.3, 474/578f).

\[\text{136} \] See Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*, esp. 29-53, 63-70, 128-51, 171-83. For a plausible critique of Rousseau's approach to delaying social contact, see Jennifer Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, 294-96. More generally, we have discussed the potentially positive role of *amour-propre* in Chapter 1, Note 118, and Section 3.6, beginning around Note 164.
possibility of jealousy (E III, 184/453f). In considering this protective method, it cannot be denied that Jean-Jacques pervasively manipulates Emile’s external circumstances in order to keep him from corruptive influences, to have situations optimally illustrate practical lessons, and to lead him to the best paths of life (including his future bride). To many, these manipulations seem not only intrinsically oppressive but contrary to Rousseau’s freedom-loving project. We might reply that Rousseau’s idea of human nature and dignity does not entail respect for human freedom in all its possible expressions (especially in the social state), but it does entail the futility and counter-productivity of thwarting nature in its first movements. Therefore, indirect manipulation, on the one hand, does not directly thwart or subject nature to human will, thus making it a far safer mode of guidance. And on the other hand, manipulation of circumstances allows Rousseau to shield Emile from influences which he considers devastating for his development. And here we may reflect upon how Rousseau’s educational program, like his philosophy as a whole, is sui generis, and those who are strongly attracted to some parts of it will almost always be repulsed by many others. In this case, he argued boldly in behalf of a form of children’s liberation. This would be congruent with his rejection of

137 Cf. E II, 141-43/393-96f, which does turn to social competition in running in order to motivate a particularly lazy boy. See also the very subtle approach to honor taken up by Emile once he is introduced to society in later adolescence (E IV, 339/670f). This is a pivotal passage for Neuhaus; he and Ryan Patrick Hanley both compare it with Adam Smith’s concept of “love of true glory” (Theory of Moral Sentiments, III.2, VII.2; Hanley, —Commerce and Corruption,” 147-48; Neuhaus, Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love, 230-32, 240-45).

138 For Rousseau’s manipulations, see Judith Shklar, Men and Citizens, ch. 4, and Lester Crocker, —Rousseau’s Emile: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness,” as discussed also in Chapter 1, Note 92. Such manipulation is often presented as desired, as when Emile claims to require his tutor’s continued assistance in the closing lines of Emile (E V, 480/868). Among its pleasures seems to be sparing the child (or even the subordinate adults) from the burdens of foresight (Julie IV.12, 407/496).

139 On the other hand, since Rousseau’s model of education hinges so much upon the child’s trust in the tutor’s character, behavior, and motives, it is not clear that his regimens of manipulation could be sustained over a lifetime without decisively undermining such trust.
the Augustinian interpretation of human nature—since there is no "original perversity in the human heart," the origins of each vice can be historically deciphered, and no vice can be attributed to the first movements of human nature (E II, 91f-92/321-22; I, 48/261).

Yet when we explore his approach to whims, *amour-propre*, and the like, we find—as we have in his accounts of social corruption\(^{140}\)—that he retains an unusually strong (though typically unacknowledged) notion of the *capacity* of human nature to develop vice.\(^{141}\) It should be no surprise, then, that he must formulate especially strong mechanisms for keeping Emile upon the true paths of nature, which are needed to replace those conventionally used for similar purposes. While questions may remain about its oppressiveness, moderation, or practicability, this interpretation accords with Rousseau’s own formulation of his method, which is not complete liberation or total control,\(^{142}\) but "well-regulated freedom" (E II, 92/321).

As we have seen, it is around age twelve or thirteen that Emile’s natural curiosity and relative strength increase, indicating the natural time to begin labor and study (E III, 165-68/426-30). His habits of bodily exercise have prepared him for these strenuous exertions, and his tutor begins to make the exercises of the mind and those of the body

\(^{140}\) Section 2.6, and for his Augustinian roots, Chapter 3, Note 24.

\(^{141}\) The parallel is also evident in infant behavior, discussed in Note 132 above. In terms of capacities and tendencies rather than intrinsic or necessary evils, Rousseau seems close to certain formulations of original sin, such as that of Augustinian scholar John M. Rist: "a fatal weakness, however acquired, in man's capacity for moral behavior, whether at the individual or social level" ("Democracy and Religious Values: Augustine on Locke, Lying, and Individualism," 18). See also Rist, *Augustine*, 17-18, 121-28, 208-39, and *Real Ethics: Rethinking the Foundations of Morality*, chs. 3-4.

\(^{142}\) Lester Crocker’s article, dedicated to drawing attention to the "grotesque features" of *Emile*, which have been "largely ignored" ("Rousseau's *Emile*," 113), focuses on the "total control" sought by Rousseau and the circular, empty freedom he provides Emile (e.g. 104-5, 107, 112).
serve as relaxations from one another (202/480). During this superabundant period, Emile begins preparing himself vocationally for a self-sufficient adulthood, before the full onset of puberty requires urgent preparation for society and marriage. His ascent toward moral notions is gradual: Up to now we have known no law other than that of necessity. Now we are dealing with what is useful. We shall soon get to what is suitable and good (167/429). His current concerns with the useful revolve around economic self-sufficiency, like Crusoe on his island. He will channel his overflow of physical and mental strength into the future, but rather than store his provisions in coffers that can be stolen from him or in barns that are alien to him, he will prepare his own arms and his own head (166/427). He should not be prepared exclusively for one station (état), but rather for the inevitable revolutions in the present order of society (194/468). In addition to these prudential reasons, Rousseau maintains that Emile has a circumstantially imposed duty to labor. Unlike the isolated man outside of society, anyone in society necessarily lives at the expense of others, and thus he owes them, without exception, the price of his keep (195/470). Moreover, since the whole earth has now been

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143 His bodily exercises also help him overcome the idleness which would otherwise result from his indifference to men's judgments and from the calm of his passions. He must work like a peasant and think like a philosopher so as not to be as lazy [fainéant] as a savage (E III, 202/480). Once he comes to know himself sufficiently to know in what his well-being consists, he will recognize the difference between work and play, and come to regard play as only a relaxation from work (177/444).

144 The quoted portion alludes to the treasure in heaven of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:19-21), appropriating it for Stoicizing and worldly purposes. Jesus' claim is also alluded to for very different purposes in an autobiographical writing—against worldly prudence, and to defend Jean-Jacques' incapacity for the slightest sustained foresight (RJJ II, 122/818).

145 The argument is intended primarily as a criticism of those who live off of their inheritance: Rich or poor, powerful or weak, every idle citizen is a rogue [un fripon] (E III, 195/470, translation modified). We have also appealed to this passage as indicating how Rousseau views moral duties to differ substantially across socio-political structures (Chapter 1, Note 38). Rousseau similarly moralizes about the duties resulting from the rise of social interdependence in a recently rediscovered letter, which its editors entitle, Lettre sur la vertu, l'individu et la société (ca. Spring 1757). It strongly rejects the argument that we could now owe nothing to society: anyone can see that it is quite impossible for a man to be born, live,
divided up into "thine and mine," no one can remain in the state of nature and still preserve themselves (193/467). Finally, since Emile is young and even philosophers have difficulties understanding the abuses of society, Jean-Jacques now teaches him only about the uses of the arts and exchange, or how humans become useful to one another.

Having established the necessity of independence and labor, Emile must select a particular trade. Arts which are the most necessary and the most independent are the most respectable according to "the relations of necessity," which place agriculture first, followed by ironworking and woodworking (E III, 188/459f). Since Emile owns land, and agriculture is "man's first trade”—not to mention "the most decent, the most useful, and consequently the most noble”—he will cultivate the earth. Yet since the fruits of agriculture are dependent in that an enemy, a prince, or a powerful neighbor may take

and maintain himself in a society without depending on it for anything" (Letter on Virtue, the Individual, and Society,” 31d/"Lettre sur la vertu, l'individu et la société,” 321). After discussing our many bonds, including some vain forms of commerce, it continues: "The indissoluble bonds that unite us all and make our existence, our survival, our reason [lumières], our fortune, our happiness, and, in general, all our goods and evils dependent on our social relations. I therefore believe that when I became a civil man, I contracted an immense debt to the human race, and that my life, and all the comforts it has brought me, should be devoted to the service of mankind” (32b/325f). The duty to labor may also be rooted in the importance of avoiding the "bread of charity" and the temptations that arise with poverty (E IV, 311/631; III, 194-95/468-69; cf. Section 2.4 above). However, these arguments on the duties which follow entry into the social state are in tension with the following: "The precept of never hurting another carries with it that of being attached to human society as little as possible, for in the social state the good of one necessarily constitutes the harm of another” (E II, 105n/340n, discussed in Chapter 2, around Note 12).

146 See also the supporting texts cited in Chapter 1, Note 74.

147 See E III 185, 190, 193/456, 462, 467; cf. the introduction of property, E II, 97-104/329-39. Rousseau even concedes that the division of labor doubles productivity, and becomes necessary once superfluity and idlers arise (E III, 185/456). He claims that the specialization and perfection of each practice is "the apparent principle of all our institutions”; he does not examine "its consequences here,” since he has done so in "another writing” (193/467). Burgelin comments (OC 4:1438, on 467n1) that the description of specialization is "inspired by Plato" (Republic II, 369b-73e). If so, it would signal that Rousseau’s typically strong emphasis against specialization is a known repudiation of Plato.

148 Of course, we are now very far from the denunciations of "agriculture and metallurgy” found in the Second Discourse (DOI II, 168/171f, discussed in Chapter 1, Note 78). This stark contrast would seem best explained by the Kantian distinction between Rousseau’s critical and constructive teachings (Chapter 1, around Note 86), and the idea of seeking "the remedy in the ill” (Chapter 3, around Note 147).
them from him, he must be prepared to support himself as an artisan, dependent only on his own work (195/470). For Rousseau, any art which is useful to the public is decent (honnête), despite the reigning prejudices against manual labor and useful artisans.  

Thus Emile should not pursue the worthless positions of an embroiderer, a gilder, or a varnisher, like Locke’s gentleman,” or of a musician, an actor, or a writer of books” (197/473). This much of Emile’s education is well-known and influential, but what is less known is why Emile should not be a policeman, spy, or hangman, despite their ostensible usefulness. It does not suffice to choose a useful trade. It must, further, not demand from those practicing it qualities of soul that are odious and incompatible with humanity [l’humanité]. Thus, returning to the first word, let us take a decent trade [un métier honnête]” (197/473). While stopping short of stating it directly, Rousseau implies that the usefulness of a trade is a necessary condition for decency, and usually constitutes decency, except regarding certain trades which numb moral sensitivity. This aversion to bloodshed recalls Rousseau’s digression in Emile against eating meat, which

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149 E III, 186, 188, 196-97/457, 459f, 470f-73. On honest work as being between baseness and virtue, see RJJ II, 148/851; cf. 166f/875.

150 The rejection of these arts and luxuries as worthless is discussed in Section 3.1, around Note 37.

151 However, their usefulness may also be denied: They owe their usefulness entirely to the government, which could also make them useless. But let that pass” (E III, 197/473). This may suggest a civic republican rejection of professionalizing certain essential duties of citizens, as in the cases of soldiering (Chapter 3, Note 109) and voting (SC III.15). It may also suggest that well-constituted states would rarely need to turn to policemen, spies, or hangmen, as in the case of punishment being rare (SC II.5, 65/377, discussed in Chapter 3, Note 117). Although these considerations point in a more “softening” direction, one must also bear in mind that by not professionalizing police work (while also not believing crime could be entirely eliminated), Rousseau seems to place the often rough duties of social control and punishment directly in the hands of citizens. Readiness to perform such duties may also be implied by Julie’s idea of true courage” (Julie I.57, 128/157, quoted in Note 202).

152 In making this argument Rousseau may not quite adhere to the standard he formulates shortly thereafter: It is not necessary to practice all the useful professions in order to honor them all. It suffices not to esteem any as beneath oneself” (E III, 200/477).
we have considered in connection with the bloodthirsty -Hunter-Savages.” We will consider, in turn, how strongly such considerations may weigh against Emile's service as a soldier, thus reinforcing the -Shklarian" distinction of domestic man versus martial citizen (Section 4.7).

Having excluded certain trades for being too harsh, Rousseau soon excludes others for being too soft. Being young as well as a man, Emile is not suitable or pleased by any -sedentary and indoor profession which effeminates and softens [ramollit] the body," such as tailoring (E III, 199/475f). Indeed, tailors were not found among the ancients, who had their clothes made at home by women, and the men who pursue this trade now -dishonor their sex.” -The needle and the sword cannot be wielded by the same hands,” and this trade is suitable only to those -weak, delicate, and fearful” men who seem to be a kind of eunuch and -nature’s mistake” (199f/476). For his part, Rousseau's pupil will be forbidden unhealthy trades, but not -hard trades [métiers pénibles] or even dangerous ones,” since they exercise strength and courage and are fit for men alone (200/476). Rousseau soon steps back from -saying too much about this for my refined contemporaries,” shifting to consider which among the useful professions is

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153 On meat-eating, see E II, 154-55/412-14; IV, 320-21/644-45; Julie IV.10, 372f/453; RJJ II, 114/808. Julie similarly remarks, in discussing dueling: -Examine those men accustomed to blood: they brave remorse only by stifling the voice of nature; they gradually become cruel, insensible; they make light of others' lives, and the punishment for having lacked humanity is ultimately to lose it entirely" (Julie I.57, 130/160). Similarly, in arguing for the limits of valor (as distinguished from courage and fortitude), Rousseau asks: -What are we to say about the great men who are all the more surely immortal for not having soiled their hands with blood?" (Discourse on Heroic Virtue, EPW 310/OC 2:1267; he appeals to the example of -le doux et pacifique Citizen who was able to avenge the injuries done him not by the offender's death, but by turning him into an honest man." This refers to Plutarch’s account, Lycurgus [11], which describes Lycurgus as highly ascetic yet -not dour or surly, [and] uniquely gentle and even-tempered with others”). On the history of humanitarian sensibilities regarding animals and the argument that slaughtering them prepares the way for inhumanity to men, see the many references in Rahe, Republics Ancient and Modern, 1:28 and 339nn39-40. The bloodthirstiness of the Hunter-Savages is discussed in Chapter 1, Note 134. We will return related themes with Emile's turn to hunting (Chapter 4, Note 185), as well as his avoidance of professional military service (Chapter 4, Note 272).
most desirable (200/477). Genuine values such as cleanliness, variety, usefulness, physical vigor, and practicability lead to carpentry as the most suited Emile's taste (200f/477f).

We are then reminded that we are not only apprentice workers, we are apprentice men” (E III, 201/478). It may thus be worth observing that Emile’s vocational training eventually comes to have certain romantic benefits. At age twenty he continues to have no concern for riches, and since his means of support is his arms, he is not afraid of lacking bread whatever happens (E V, 418f/782f). When he meets Sophie, her father can see by his labors that he does not despise the condition of the poor (437/807f). Emile himself naturally favors Sophie due to her character and merit, while barely noticing that she is poor and he is rich (400, 422-23/755f, 786-88). The autobiographical Rousseau would have no such fortunes. He lamented the life he could have had if he would have been apprenticed to a good master, since “Nothing would have been more congenial to my temperament nor more conducive to my happiness than the peaceful and obscure condition of a good artisan, especially one belonging to as respected a class as the engravers of Geneva.” This would have allowed him to be “a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father…, a good man in all ways,” instead of leaving a half-finished apprenticeship and falling into the horrors of poverty” and all the temptations of vice and despair” (Conf. I, 36f/43f; II, 38/45).

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154 Sophie’s mother is also thrilled to discover how generously Emile pays his workers (E V, 438/808).

155 Conf. I, 36/43; following the Scholar translation, p. 36. He similarly lamented not accepting the circumstances providence later offered him—to marry the “good girl” Merceret, and pursue her father’s profession in Fribourg, which could have allowed him to spend the rest of his days happily (Conf. IV, 122/145f). Since Merceret’s father was an organist (Christopher Kelly, CW 5:618n31), this profession may not have met the Emile’s exacting standards.
4.5 Adolescence and the Avoidance of Dissipation and Brutality

We have now gotten ahead of ourselves, however, for it is the awakening of Emile’s sexual instincts which brings forth a host of new obstacles and opportunities—the inevitability of significant *amour-propre*,\(^{156}\) as well as coming to know society and virtue. As Emile changes radically through being “born” as a man,\(^{157}\) Jean-Jacques also radically changes educational methods. From an approach which is highly libertarian (albeit not “permissive” in the senses of enabling or coddling), we now switch to an approach which has been faulted as “puritanical,” and which seems to have more in common with Rousseau’s Calvinist heritage.\(^{158}\) As Jean-Jacques must now pursue distinctly human and moral goals in the face of social and sexual threats, he must also rule over Emile more directly and harshly (albeit with his consent). Jean-Jacques thus also shifts from the “education of things” and nature to a human education through sentiment, reason, religion, and love.\(^{159}\) Having made him “an active and thinking being”

\(^{156}\) There have been minor traces of *amour-propre* in him previously, as in the “first movement of vanity” during his confrontation with the magician (E III, 175/440). In the account summarizing Emile’s state at the end of his youth, *amour-propre* is said to be “still hardly aroused in him” (208/488).

\(^{157}\) “We are, so to speak, born twice: once to exist and once to live; once for our species and once for our sex” (E IV, 211/489).

\(^{158}\) The sexual exploits (so to speak) of early Calvinist societies were remarkable. One current historian describes Geneva in the 1560s: “The city’s parish registers from this era reveal astonishingly low rate of illegitimate births and prenuptial conceptions: 0.12 percent and 1 percent, respectively, probably the lowest rates ever reliably observed by European historical demographers” (Philip Benedict, *Christ’s Churches, Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism*, 103). For England and the Netherlands, see Philip Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe*, 54; and for Puritan New England, see David Hackett Fischer, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America*, 89-91. Although these customs had loosened somewhat by Rousseau’s time, one thorough inquiry suggests that he shared with eighteenth-century Calvinist moral theologians both an increasing anthropological optimism and an associated moral activism (Rosenblatt,* Rousseau and Geneva*, 10-17, 66-67, 140-41).

\(^{159}\) See, for instance, E II, 160n/421n: “The only habit useful to children is to subjugate [asservir] themselves without difficulty to the necessity of things, and the only habit useful to men is to subjugate themselves without difficulty to reason. Every other habit is a vice” (translation modified).
through the time of his youth, he must now "complete the man" by making him "a loving and feeling being—that is to say, to perfect reason by sentiment" (E III, 203/481).

Jean-Jacques had long delayed the rise of the comparative passions of *amour-propre* in Emile, through both not directly assisting its rise and slowing its development as much as possible (E IV, 226, 232/510, 518). But with adolescence this passion is inevitable regardless of what we do (215/494), so attempting to prevent its birth or to annihilate it is ridiculous and vain—it is "to control nature, it is to reform the work of God" (212/490f). In addition, since Emile's body and mind have had extensive time to develop apart from *amour-propre* and sexuality, their rise at this point is less of a threat, since "the guide of *amour-propre*, which is reason," is now in place as the natural tool to challenge vices (cf. E II, 92-93/322-23). Accordingly, whereas he had previously been guided and protected by ignorance, ruse, and force, he must now be guided and protected by direct authority, the law of duty, and his "enlightenment *lumières*" (E IV, 316-18/639-41).162

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160 Partially following the authority of Buffon, Rousseau observes that "puberty and sexual potency always arrive earlier in learned and civilized [instruits et policés] peoples than in ignorant and barbarous peoples," which weakens and enervates the former through precocious activities of the imagination (E IV, 215, 215n/495, 495n). Emile has been raised more like the "coarse and simple peoples” who are raised in innocence, offer their "first fruits” in marriage, and have generated "multitudes of healthy and robust children” (216/496). In Emile's case, this "delay of the progress of nature”—or better, this prevention of acceleration—has benefitted him doubly by being dedicated "to the advantage of reason” (316/638).

161 Consequently, "The most dangerous period of human life is that from birth to the age of twelve. This is the time when errors and vices germinate without one’s yet having any instrument for destroying them; and by the time the instrument comes, the roots are so deep that it is too late to rip them out” (E II, 93/323).

162 See also E II, 91/320: "Use force with children, and reason with men. Such is the natural order. The wise man does not need laws.” In context, this would seem to mean that the wise man, not spoiled by education, will not need the constraint and coercion of positive laws, since he will follow rational laws of his own accord (cf. E V, 473/857).
In this new stage of superabundance, Emile begins to feel an interest in those around him, to realize he is not made to live alone, and to become capable of attachment (E IV, 220/502). Due to his innocent upbringing, his first sentiments will be friendship rather than love; he will be "drawn by the first movements of nature toward the tender and affectionate passions," and his tutor may sow in his heart "the first seeds of humanity" (220/502). It is at this point that Emile receives an exceedingly subtle education in compassion, and a very controversial one in religion. For our purposes, the links between religion and virtue—in contrast with the natural egoism which is exacerbated by modern commercialism and intellectualism—have already been sufficiently described above.\(^{163}\) As for compassion, one significant passage indicates the crossroads Emile arrives upon once he begins to compare himself with others and \textit{amour-propre} arises alongside \textit{amour de soi}.

But to decide whether among these passions the dominant ones in his character will be humane and gentle \textit{[humaines et douces]} or cruel and malignant, whether they will be passions of beneficence and commiseration or of envy and covetousness, we must know what position he will feel he has among men, and what kinds of obstacles he may believe he has to overcome to reach the position he wants to occupy. (E IV, 235/522f)\(^{164}\)

This passage has recently become well-known among specialists,\(^{165}\) and Emile's education in rational and sentimental compassion is one element of gentleness and

\(^{163}\) Section 3.2, beginning around Note 66.

\(^{164}\) Cf. E IV, 213f/493 (quoted in Chapter 1, Note 98), which presents \textit{amour-propre} far more negatively, in the manner characteristic of the "critical" writings.

\(^{165}\) It is quoted, for instance, in Neuhauser, \textit{Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love}, 9n13, 16, 40n23; Jean Starobinski, "The Antidote in the Poison," 128; Clifford Orwin, "Rousseau and the Discovery of Political Compassion," 305f; Cooper, \textit{Rousseau, Nature}, e.g. 148, 155, 161. This passage partially gives rise to Cooper's section title, "How Much \textit{Amour-Propre}, and What Kind? Gentleness Versus Cruelty, Pride Versus Vanity" (160-72). In an otherwise excellent book, though, the following claim is typical of
severity which has been treated more than adequately by other commentators. For current purposes, this complex process might be simplified as constituting a prescriptive inversion of the conditions for elite harshness which we have discussed above (Section 2.2). For instance, Emile must understand that he does not need to use others in meeting his true requirements; that the fortunes of this world are the work of chance and injustice more than of merit; that he is fully vulnerable to the sufferings of the common people; and that if he has more virtue and wisdom than most in the world, this is the result not of being “well-born” but a blessing of his tutelage. We shall see Emile’s training in humanity illustrated in his courtship as well. Both these phases of his education might naturally be contrasted with the sterner formation of the Citizen, for whom gentleness among fellow citizens seems to arise only as a side effect of a lack of conflicting interests, alongside a shared pursuit of national greatness and security.

Having undergone basic moral formation, the “true moment of nature comes at last,” and Emile must be prepared to replace himself through marriage and children (E IV, 316/639). The “most natural expedient” to deal with his new inclinations would be to

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the current scholarly neglect of the themes focused upon in the current dissertation. “Far more often than he speaks of gentleness and cruelty, Rousseau speaks of pride and vanity” (Rousseau, Nature, 162). I would reply that in terms of the sheer frequency of discussions, I have not found this to be the case; more importantly, pride and vanity seem to play an instrumental role to gentleness and cruelty in Rousseau’s apparent hierarchy of values. We have discussed the most significant passages on pride and vanity in Chapter 3, Note 166, and Chapter 4, Note 20.

166 See esp. Orwin, —Rousseau and the Discovery of Political Compassion,” 301-8; Neuhouser, Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love, esp. 174-83; Jonathan Marks, —Rousseau’s Discriminating Defense of Compassion,” 731-37. Bloom considers this an “entirely new teaching about compassion,” which makes Emile gentle and beneficent on the basis of his natural selfishness, thereby “introducing a hardheaded softness to moral and political thought” (“Introduction” to E, 17f). Boyd pushes the notion of selfishness further (and probably too far), maintaining that Emile is to be exposed to others’ suffering for the sake of his character, but is not to relieve that suffering (“Pity’s Pathologies Portrayed,” 525-26, cf. 535).

167 We have also discussed another principle which Emile learns at this point, which is the need to generalize pity across the whole human species (E IV, 253/548, quoted in Chapter 3, around Note 119).
marry him off quickly, but this would not be ‘the best or most useful’” (317/640). He must, then, navigate through the considerable risks young men face during this period. At the same time, Rousseau insists that a temperate sexuality is quite possible, since it is opinion—and not the senses or personal temperament—which awakens our sexual impulses, and it is amour-propre which produces more libertines than love does.” If we had never been exposed to ‘bad images’ or the vices and pressures of the colleges, ‘we would have remained chaste without temptation, without effort, and without merit” (330-33/657-62). Reinforcing a theme from the early domestic education, he argues that if an adolescent has been merely habituated to obedience, he will not see the utility of any orders to deprive himself of pleasures, and he will revolt (211-13, 233/489-92, 519). Sexual excesses give rise to problems beyond the loss of personal innocence or virtue, since here again Rousseau finds that an excessive form of softness gives rise to the

168 We should not only listen to the inclinations here, since ‘there are so many contradictions between the rights of nature and our social laws that one must constantly twist and turn in order to reconcile them. One must use a great deal of art to prevent social man from being totally artificial” (E IV, 317/640). See also the contrast of instinctual, animal sexuality with human sexuality (E V, 359/615). These are among the strongest remarks on the artificiality of Emile’s education, which would seem to be in line with the idea that Rousseau must use some artificial means in order to maintain the order of Emile’s broader civilized nature” (discussed in Note 102).

169 Cf. Julie II.27, 247/302. Rousseau himself reached adolescence before he had any clear idea of human sexuality, which later gave him ‘a horror of common prostitutes” and disdain for debauchees. He was naturally timid with women; but he differed from Emile, for one thing, in deriving much sexual pleasure from his imagination (Conf. I, 14-15/16-17). Apparently Rousseau and Augustine would agree in challenging the interpretation of lust as a bodily need. See the following description by Rist: ‘whereas his Pelagian critic Julian of Eclanum (whom some suppose to have been influenced by Aristotle) thinks of sexual behavior as a series of clinical acts, it is Augustine who is aware of the importance of eroticism, that is, of [what D. H. Lawrence would call] ‘sex in the head,’ and who holds that sexual concupiscence derives not from the body but from the disordered soul” (Augustine, 120). See, for instance, City of God XIV.16 on the inward triumph of lust. On the other hand, we have the better-known difference between the two, that Augustine views these mental problems as resulting from a ‘disordered soul,” which Rousseau rejects and reinterprets as chiefly a mental problem resulting from social exposure. In this Rousseau seems closer to ancient physicians such as Rufus of Ephesus and Galen, who were perhaps inspired by Stoicism. Michel Foucault describes their approach as ‘the animalization of epithumia,” seeing the soul rather than the body as the source of human excess, and seeking to reduce sexual practice down to the elementary needs of the body alone (The History of Sexuality, 3:133-40).
opposite extreme. For he finds that those given over to debauchery at an early point are "inhuman and cruel," and their enthusiasm for this one object fills their imagination to the exclusion of everything else, making them "impatient, vindictive, and wild" (220/502).  

These deep fears of sexual excess—and the corresponding need for external restraint—have struck many as incongruous with Rousseau's fundamental vindication of natural goodness and authenticity, and therefore as contradictory or insincere. Although the difference of tone from the early education is striking, we should observe that these fears are congruent with psychological observations he makes in other writings and across a broad range of contexts. For instance, Claire writes of her uncle, Julie's father, that he was "inconstant and philandering" during the early years of his marriage, and when age had brought him back to [his wife], he maintained toward her that unyielding roughness [rudesse inflexible] with which unfaithful husbands regularly compound their offenses" (Julie III.7, 265/323). This logic of sexual cruelty seems to

170 Schwartz briefly discusses this passage (The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 80).

171 Claims very similar to those of this passage in Emile are later stated by "Rousseau" as charges against the character of Jean-Jacques—though he is later proven not to be debauched, as alleged. He is said to be a "hard [dur], fierce, gloomy man," having thrown himself into "the most brutal debauchery" in "taverns and houses of ill-repute" (RJJ I, 15/676). "Don't you know that nothing is less tender than a debauched man..., that debauchery hardens [endurcit] the heart, makes those who yield to it impudent, gross, brutal, cruel; that their impoverished blood...gives them through habit only the bitter goading of need, without adding the sweet [douces] impressions that make sensuality as tender as it is intense... The debauched see in women merely instruments of pleasure that are as contemptible as they are necessary, like those receptacles used daily for the most basic needs" (RJJ I, 23/688; on the last sentence, cf. Julie, Appendix, 616/754).

172 Among his other character flaws are "avain infatuation with noble birth and that rigidity [roideur] of character that nothing can bend..." (Julie III.7, 265/323). We also see his explosive temper in a well-known earlier episode. When her father had been angrily denouncing St. Preux, Julie defended the latter; her father took up the pretext and "beat [her] mercilessly." However, upon seeing her fall, her blood, and her tears as well as her mother's, he quickly became tender, which "ended the triumph of anger and began that of nature" (Julie I.63, 143/174f). After supper they came to embrace, with many tears and in a
find a degree of historical basis in the _Confessions_. There we find, for instance, that a certain charming Madame Corvezy was married to a man with "ultramontane tastes"; since she was "useless to him," he treated her "so brutally" that there was discussion of separation (Conf. III, 100/119f). In two remarkable episodes, Rousseau was himself intensely pursued by men (Conf. II, 55-57/66-69; IV, 139-41/165-68). Perceiving, in the calmness of his mind, another man's face "inflamed by the most brutal lust" made Rousseau wonder if this is how men typically appear "in their transports with women." This led him, in turn, to have "the tenderest regard" for "the offenses of my sex" against women. Although it is not immediately evident how this stern sexual ethic can be reconciled with his more permissive approach to primitive sexuality or various heterosexual encounters of unmarried adults, my own reading of the evidence is that Rousseau considers brutality and/or enervation to be natural consequences of sexual behaviors which are deeply contrary to nature—namely, precocious sexuality, adultery,
and homosexuality. But Emile has been raised to be shielded from even the lesser, excusable vices, and hence to be altogether free from the empire of cruel passions” (E V, 418/782).

Thus we find that Rousseau frequently finds a kind of cruelty or brutal indifference—kinds of “harshness” or “hardness”—to result from sexual excess or unnaturalness. However, in many other passages we find him equally fearing that Emile may suffer a loss of vigor and hardness due to sex, love, or even sexual fantasies. Here, then, is another paradox which parallels his depictions of the moderns as both “soft” and “hard,” and blameworthy for both reasons. In connection with the loss of vigor, we find a physical and scientific problem with early sexual activity, since the growing body has “spirits” (les esprits) designed to provide blood and strength for the developing fibers. If you cause those spirits, which are intended for the perfection of an individual, to take a different course and be used to the formation of another individual, both remain in a state of weakness, and nature's work stays imperfect” (E IV, 232/519).

In general men

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177 See Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché on Rousseau’s distinction between crime and faute (CW 6:685n32). A mere “fault” seems to be an excusable consequence of human weakness, whereas a “crime” is only committed by the wicked, and seems to be constituted by the deliberate or premeditated harm of another person (cf. Julie VI.8, 566/689f; E II, 82/306; IV, 325/651). Occasional use of a prostitute seems to fall under the category of fault or, if not fully intended, “involuntary crime” (Julie II.26-27; cf. Appendix, 613-14/749-51f, and Conf. VII, 266/317). Julie and St. Preux’s initial lapse into unmarried sex similarly passes as “involuntary crime” (Julie III.2, 255/310f; but this may be St. Preux’s wishful thinking: cf. IV.13, 414-15/504-5). Adultery, by contrast, is “a crime” which Milord Edward “held in horror” (Julie Appendix, 613/749; and similarly, Julie’s remark in III.18, 290/352). This distinction between fault and crime may go far in explaining how Rousseau may seem ultra-Puritanical regarding the praise of virtue and the disdain for vice and the disdain for virtue, while remaining ultra-Jesuitical in his praise of goodness and his excusing of purported acts of weakness. Consider his appreciation for the Jesuit confessor he shared with Warens, whose morality was not so much lax as gentle [moins relâchée que douce], [which] was precisely what I needed to counterbalance the somber effects on me of Jansenism” (Conf. VI, 203/242, following the Scholar translation, p. 237). He does note here, though, that he has always considered the Jesuits’ doctrine dangerous, and we might see this is the reason the fault versus crime distinction appears rather obliquely in his writings, excepting the autobiographies (which found much to excuse).

178 A similar division of substance necessary for growth is given as the reason Sophie should not be married at age eighteen, since many have had constitutions weakened, health ruined, and lives shortened.
and women who are not enervated by debauchery—simple peoples such as the ancient Germans—are healthier and stronger, and more fit for generating similarly robust offspring (317, 324/640, 650; Corsica 126/905). Given Emile’s protection from the more brutalizing forms of sensuality, it is various concerns about excessive softening which loom largest in Jean-Jacques’ mind after Emile has fallen for Sophie.

O Emile, what have you become? Can I recognize my pupil in you? How far you seem to have fallen! Where is the young man brought up with such hardness [formé si durement], the young man who braved the rigors of the seasons, who gave his body to the harshest [plus rudes] labors and his soul only to the laws of wisdom, who was inaccessible to prejudices and to the passions, who loved only truth, who yielded only to reason and depended on nothing except himself? Now, softened [amolli] by an idle life, he lets himself be governed by women. Their amusements are his occupations, their wills are his laws; a young girl is the arbiter of his destiny, and he crawls and bends before her. The grave Emile is a child’s plaything! (E V, 431/799)

Thus Jean-Jacques must somehow maintain Emile’s proper hardness while allowing him to become a true lover, which he does in large part by shielding him from enervating by enduring the fatigues of pregnancy before the proper age” (E V, 448/822f). This rationale also applies to the enervation of “body and heart” we have seen in the case of the young man masturbating, at least before age twenty (E IV, 334/663, discussed in Note 176 above).

179 Male temperance and female chastity are important here, since, due to women’s ease at awakening men’s senses and imaginations, if women regularly took the same advances as men, men would see themselves dragged to death without ever being able to defend themselves” (E V, 359/614). For discussions of Rousseau’s view of the woman’s unlimited sexual capacity, and perhaps even desire, see Schwartz, Sexual Politics, 32-36, 158n32; Susan Meld Shell, “Émile: Nature and the Education of Sophie,” 281, 289; Brigitte Weltman-Aron, “Educating Girls: Rousseau’s Sophi(e)stry,” 45-46. Besides the loss of vigor, these forms of sexual excess also lead to boredom (E IV, 228, 330/513, 659), even in the wholesome context of Emile and Sophie’s marriage (E V, 467-77/862-63). The impact of a parent’s vigor on that of the child is also discussed in Note 72.

180 The language and concepts are echoed in Rousseau’s reflections on himself around the time he was falling for Sophie d’Houdetot—then “the grave Citizen of Geneva” was becoming “the extravagant shepherd again” (Conf. IX, 358f/427, discussed in Chapter 1, Note 133).
forms of pleasure while harnessing the psychological —spring‖ of his stage in life to make him, in fact, more of a master of himself and his pleasures than he was before.\textsuperscript{181}

It is in this spirit that Jean-Jacques must propose a contract to Emile which endorses the governor's direct authority. Since a tutor should be —the minister of nature‖ rather than its enemy, he will not clash head on against the new sexual desires by treating them as crimes (E IV, 317/639). He has long refrained from imposing mere obedience on the boy, and will not now turn to long, pedantic speeches, or any —harsh law [dure loi]‖ prescribed without his understanding (232-33/519-20).\textsuperscript{182} Rather, the adolescent’s mind and sentiments have long been developed, he knows how to obey reason, and he has confidence in his governor’s wisdom, intentions, and friendship (246, 332/539, 661).\textsuperscript{183} These conditions explain why when most boys leave childhood, they shake off every yoke and compensate themselves for their long constraint, whereas Emile gives up his complete freedom and —considers it an honor to make himself a man and to subject

\textsuperscript{181} The —springs‖ are discussed in the following paragraph: —Each age has its own springs that make it move [ressorts qui le font mouvoir], but man is always the same. At ten he is led by cakes, at twenty by a mistress, at thirty by pleasures, at forty by ambition, at fifty by avarice‖ (E V, 431/799). This would seem to be an ethical application of Montesquieu’s political idea of the —principle‖ of each kind of government——the human passions that set it in motion [les passions humaines qui le font mouvoir]‖ (Spirit of the Laws III.1, 21/Oeuvres complètes, 536b).

\textsuperscript{182} See also the discussion of how moralizing and gloomy lessons are the death of good education for women as well as men. Young women should not be led to believe they are afflicted. Rather, —Show them in their very duties the source of their pleasures and the foundation of their rights. Is it so hard [si pénible] to love in order to be loved, to make oneself lovable in order to be happy, to make oneself estimable in order to be obeyed, to honor oneself in order to be honored?‖ (E V, 390/741). And similarly: —The first thing that they ought to learn is to love their duties out of regard for their advantages. This is the only way to make their duties easy for them‖ (386/736). Among these immediate advantages is association with the sort of man who is attracted to virtue and purity, in contrast to those seeking easy gratification (392/745). Reasoning in this way with the young woman follows her entry into the age of reason, in a transition similar to Emile’s (381-83/729-31). Before this, however, the girl should have been thoroughly habituated to obedience, unlike the boy (e.g. 369-70/709-11).

\textsuperscript{183} Reisert’s main contribution is an exploration of Rousseau’s view of the necessity of friendship for moral development (A Friend of Virtue, esp. chs. 4 and 6).
himself to the yoke of nascent reason” (315/637). The young man will be responsive if one then speaks to him of the laws of nature, their rewards for chastity and fidelity, and the physical and moral ills that their infraction brings down upon the guilty” (324/650; cf. 231-32, 284/518, 591f). Ultimately, it is the guardian’s own fault if his pupil does not respond as Emile does—voluntarily asking the guardian to take up his authority, to guard him from the enemies within him, and (as Emile puts it) to “force me to be my own master and to obey not my senses but my reason” (325/651f; cf. SC I.7, 53/364). The guardian must be careful not to agree too quickly; he should make clear that combating the youth’s desires and possibly becoming odious to him imposes “a harsher [plus dur] yoke” on the guardian himself than on the youth (E IV, 325-26/652). After the young man has “so to speak, signed the contract,” the guardian should change his language, making his dominion “appear as gentle [de douceur] as [he] had indicated it would be severe [de sévérité]” (326/653). He should, for instance, assure the young man that he will be prepared to explain his reasons once the man is in a position to understand him, and point to the uniquely sweet (douce) life of his boyhood as a guarantee of the guardian’s good intentions (326/653).

Although the two have agreed on a common end and the basic authority of the guardian, we find in practice that the guardian still favors indirect ruse over direct command in most cases. For instance, since “reading, idleness, the soft [molle] and sedentary life,” and the society (commerce) of young men and women are such dangerous trails at this time, Jean-Jacques chooses to put Emile’s senses off the track. Through
exercising his body with hard labor, his imagination rests (E IV, 320/643f).\textsuperscript{184} In addition, Emile is led to a novel and demanding activity, both as a distraction and because it —hardens [endurcit] the heart as well as the body—hunting (320/644). Although Rousseau does not want Emile’s whole youth to be spent —killing animals,” and he does not even claim —to justify in every respect this ferocious passion,” hunting will serve to suspend a more dangerous passion,” allowing for cooler conversation about it (321/645). Given Rousseau’s strong ethical aversions to killing either beasts or men,\textsuperscript{185} the threats of this —more dangerous passion” must be considerable. Moreover, given that he typically only uses —hardening” in a positive sense regarding the body, with a hard heart or mindset being central to the injustices of contemporary elites (Section 2.2), he seems to suggest that even the domestic lover will need his romantic passions at least somewhat tempered and qualified.

Jean-Jacques’ better-known maneuver for taking Emile’s senses off the trail of his true beloved is leading him on lengthy travels; before the latter of these travels, Emile is already deeply in love, and the tutor must explicitly appeal to the authority Emile consensually gave him (E IV, 354f/691; V, 447-50/822-26).\textsuperscript{186} This later journey will also allow Emile and Sophie to put each other to the test, to reach full physical

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\item[\textsuperscript{184}] Although a sworn enemy of the acquisitive and commercial spirit, in this way Rousseau seems to be repeating some of what Weber came to call the —Protestant ethic,” here typified by the Puritan minister, Richard Baxter. As Weber summarizes his teaching: —Together with a moderate, vegetarian diet and cold baths, the prescription for all sexual temptations is the same as that for religious doubt and overscrupulous self-torment: „Work hard in your calling”” (\textit{The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism}, Part II.2 [Asceticism and the Capitalist Spirit], p. 107).
\item[\textsuperscript{185}] Note 153 above.
\item[\textsuperscript{186}] Sophie’s parents similarly appeal to their authority in specifying the sense in which they must judge the appropriateness of her suitors, and to protect her from her suitor once she is in love (E V, 400-1/755-57f). St. Preux is similarly placed under Edward’s care after Julie has been married to Wolmar (\textit{Julie V.1}, 431/526).
\end{itemize}
maturity, and also give Emile the opportunity to learn of his upcoming duties as a member of the state (E V, 448/822-23). When Emile finally returns to Sophie, he has a more enlightened mind [un esprit plus éclairé],” as well as a heart no less tender” (471/854). Similar principles apply to the many shorter journeys Emile must take to see Sophie during the main period of their courtship, since Jean-Jacques arranges to lodge with Emile two leagues away from Sophie’s home (418, 433/781, 802). These tactics allow Rousseau to answer the recurring charge that Emile is becoming effeminate”: “On the contrary, he is hardening himself [s’endurcit]. He has to be as robust as I have made him to withstand the exertion Sophie makes him endure…. If they lived next door to each other, or if he could go to see her seated in softness [mollement] in a good carriage, he would love her at his ease as a Parisian loves” (433/802). Thus Emile’s journeys apply Rousseau’s more general principle that it is especially in relations between the sexes that taste is formed. Since “the ease of enjoyment cools the desire to please,” wherever enjoyment is too easy, taste degenerates, and thus it is in Paris that we find the worst tastes (E IV, 341-42/673-74). Moreover, since Emile only has permission to see Sophie once or twice a week, for around half a day each visit, he employs less time in actually seeing her than in traveling, hoping, or congratulating

187 Or at least to allow Sophie to reach full physical maturity; at this point she is only eighteen (E V, 448/822f, quoted in Note 178 above).

188 Other scholars have briefly commented on this. Schwartz concludes that, in contrast with the characteristically modern lover, Emile is expressly said not to be effeminate” (Sexual Politics, 166n2, citing E V, 433, 435). Botting notices the tricky balance” Emile must strike in maintaining his raw masculinity,” while also becoming civilized and diminished” to some degree (Family Feuds, 49-50).

189 Contrast, for instance, the aspiration to love in order to be loved” which Rousseau prescribes to Emile as well as Sophie (E V, 390/741, quoted in Note 182 above). Bloom describes Rousseau’s point nicely: “Delayed satisfaction is…the condition of idealism and love, and early satisfaction causes the whole structure to collapse and flatten” (Introduction” to E, 17).
himself about seeing her. Therefore, his pleasures, which are true, pure, and delicious but less real than imaginary, exacerbate his love without effeminating his heart” (E V, 435/804). This reliance on imagination, inflamed by the strategic modesty of Sophie, also enables Emile to experience adolescence and courtship not as restraint but as present enjoyment, since it is even sweeter to hope than it is to attain. Altogether, it seems that Emile overcomes the paradox of combining “hardness” and “softness” by maintaining physical and psychological vigor, while being able to direct this vigor either harshly and sternly (toward threatening or demanding obstacles), or gently and lovingly (toward appropriate human recipients). In this he perfectly reverses the pattern of decadent and modernized people, who, as we have seen, develop cowardly and pusillanimous souls.

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190 In depicting the imaginary Sophie before meeting the real one, her simple and apparently very modest attire is said to be “put on only to be taken off piece by piece by the imagination” (E V, 394/747). For the pivotal role of female modesty, see Schwartz, Sexual Politics, 33-39, 123.

191 See E V, 418-19, 447/781-82, 821. Emile’s approach is superior to the imprudent youth not because the latter seeks enjoyment, but because it seeks enjoyment where it is not, and because, while preparing a miserable future for itself, it does not even know how to use the present moment” (E V, 418/781). Thus even during this period when Jean-Jacques most seems to be sacrificing Emile’s present happiness for future goods, he claims to be following his original principles (discussed around Note 125 above). “I have not raised my Emile to desire or to wait but to enjoy; and when he extends his desires beyond the present, his ardor is not so impetuous that he is bothered by the slowness of time. He will enjoy not only the pleasure of desiring but that of going to the object he desires, and his passions are so moderate that he is always more where he is than were he will be” (E V, 411/771). A perception of sacrifice is an additional source of pleasure, as when Emile and Sophie discuss religion together: “...they converse with each other enthusiastically about what gives virtue its reward. The sacrifices they make to virtue render it dear to them…. Their very privations add to their happiness and do them honor in their own eyes for their sacrifices” (426/792). See also Julie on the moral consequences of her loss of hope that St. Preux would eventually be hers (Julie III.18, 282/343), and her more general reflections on the superiority of hoping to attaining, at least regarding worldly things (VI.8, 569-70/693-94f). Rousseau later argues that men have lost the charm and effect of the imagination by yielding to amour-propre, jealousies, petty worldly passions, and the like. “In short, such is the empire and influence of the imagination over us that it gives birth not only to the virtues and vices, but to the goods and ills of human life; and it is mainly the manner in which men yield to it that makes them good or bad, happy or unhappy on this earth” (RJJ II, 120/815f).

192 This reading should stand against that of Nichols, who concludes that Rousseau’s education “intends to replace the toughness of the Homeric hero with the tenderness of humanity”’ (—Rousseau’s Novel Education in the Emile,” 524). It is true that this toughness is revised, but a version of it is clearly required for Rousseau’s prescribed tenderness of humanity and tenderness of romance. On the need for a kind of irascibility in overcoming obstacles, compare the subtle position of Aquinas (Summa Theologiae I-II 23.1; see also I-II 24.2, II-II 123.10).
that have neither fire nor warmth, and are only gentle [douces] out of indifference for good and evil” (LR 64n/72n).193

4.6 The Empires of Women and the Sweetening of Habits

Up to this point, the moral discussions surrounding Emile’s adolescence could be fully expected on the basis of our analysis of modern culture in Chapter 3—that is, young men must avoid domination by women and the physical and psychological enervation which follows (Section 3.2). In contrast with that critical analysis of modern society, when Rousseau turns to prescribe a moral and domestic education, the softening, refining, and moralizing role of a natural, virtuous woman plays a vital role. We have seen, then, how Rousseau protects Emile from his senses in order to lead him to love while continuing to harden and develop his physical vigor. We must now see how Emile—and men in general—are naturally driven by women towards greater kindness, social decency, and moral dedication. It is likely that Emile’s temperance and early innocence would secure him from the cruelty or “unyielding roughness” of the guilty or

193 Discussed in Section 3.4 above, following Note 115. See, and n.b., the extraordinary passage on how the vices of contemporary youth make them “Base and cowardly even in their vices,” which concludes in a proto-Nietzschean fashion by predicting that if a single man could be “temperate and sober” among them, by age thirty he would crush all these insects and become their master…” (E IV, 335/665, partially quoted in discussing related passages in Chapter 3, Note 131). Surprisingly, Emile himself comes to epitomize this modernized character, after he and Sophie move to Paris following the death of their daughter. As Emile describes himself: “Worn out little by little by all these frivolous pursuits, my heart was imperceptibly losing its early drive [ressort] and was becoming incapable of warmth and vigor. I wandered anxiously from one pleasure to another. I searched for everything and everything bored me; I was happy only where I was not, and acted frivolously to enjoy myself…. All my attachments had lessened, all my affections had cooled. I had replaced reality with a cant of sentimentality and moralizing. I was a gallant without tenderness, a stoic without virtue, a sage busy with follies” (Emile and Sophie I, 202/OC 4:886, translation modified, emphasis added). This claim occurs in an unpublished and incomplete sequel to Emile, so it is difficult to judge whether Emile falls into this state chiefly as a result of unfortunate circumstances, or even whether he will remain in it permanently. See Schwartz, who explains how, through the contours the story probably would have taken, “Rousseau vindicates Emile’s education (at the price of conceding the failure of Sophie’s education)” (Sexual Politics, 95-96).
insatiable debauchee. But it would seem that, according to Rousseau, the good majority of men have natural tendencies toward roughness which are best overcome by women’s empire of gentleness.” And perhaps even Emile must overcome certain kinds of hard-heartedness which may result from mere indifference or isolation—faults which we have also seen charged against the moderns (Section 3.4). Here Sophie plays a softening and inspiring role. These aspects of male sexual development are in fact more parallel to the Savages and Barbarians we discussed in Chapter 1. Men should, on the one hand, avoid the explosive and violent jealousy which seem so natural to romantic passion, while still enjoying the sweet affections and taming influence natural to romantic and paternal relations (cf. Section 1.4).

The discussion of sexual jealousy in Emile closely parallels that in the Second Discourse, and directly endorses that earlier treatment. At one level, this is puzzling, and may even suggest the possibility of esoteric writing, since unlike the highly traditionalist marital goals of the Emile, this portion of the Second Discourse includes what is probably the strongest antinomian language Rousseau ever wrote. After discussing the generally sluggish passions of the primitives before amour-propre, property, and the like, the

194 To this we might add, of course, that Rousseau himself seems to have been guilty of such hard-heartedness in his domestic life. On his relations with Thérèse Levasseur, and his consignment of their five children to the foundling home between (approximately) 1746 and 1752, see Leo Damrosch, Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius, 187-95. The mortality rates for such children were around seventy percent during their first year (Damrosch, 193). Whatever its merits regarding the ultimate judgment of his character, the following well-known lamentation should be taken to indicate that Rousseau advocates more virtuous behavior than he himself practiced (at least within the context of the Emile). After asserting the duties of each man to feed and raise his own children regardless of circumstance, he writes: “Readers, you can believe me. I predict that whoever has vitals and neglects such holy duties that he will long shed bitter tears for his offense and will never find consolation for it” (E I, 49/263; see also the passages quoted in Burgelin, OC 4:1311, on 263n1).

195 We have seen, though, that even though it forwards constructive, moralizing purposes, the Emile is strongly antinomian in the sense of insisting upon the typical destructiveness of imposing commands on children.
Discourse comes to discuss the apparently "more dangerous" passion of love. However, after distinguishing the purely physical aspect of love from moral ideas of comparison which could not have existed in the primitive state, Rousseau makes the appeal to the Caribs that we have seen, who are the closest to the state of nature, "the most peaceful in their loves and the least given to jealousy" (DOI I, 156/158). After also ruling out comparisons to other animals which are dissimilar regarding the relative size and number of females (156/159), he returns to answer affirmatively that these violent passions arose with the laws themselves (cf. 155/157). These passions would in fact do less damage in the state of nature than they do in the state of society, "especially in Countries where moeurs still count for something and the jealousy of Lovers and the vengeance of Husbands daily cause Duels, Murders, and worse; where the duty of eternal fidelity only makes for adulteries, and where even the Laws of continence and of honor inevitably increase debauchery, and multiply abortions" (157/159; see also Note IX, 200/204).

Whereas this argument in the Discourse is intended to vindicate the carefree sexual encounters of the primitive state in comparison with the embattled encounters of civilization, it is appealed to in the Emile to distinguish the precise sense in which jealousy is natural, and thereby to answer whether Emile will be jealous (E V, 429/796). It endorses the Discourse specifically regarding the higher level of jealousy and

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196 Block-quoted in Chapter 1, following Note 102. See Section 1.4 for the rise of sexual jealousy in general.

197 Importantly for our purposes, Rousseau is here claiming that in places where moeurs still matter, certain acts of passionate violence are more common than where civilization has loosened and "sophisticated" morals (cf. E V, 360/696, discussed in Chapter 3 above, following Note 134). This would be supported, descriptively, by historical analysis showing the lessening of crime with the breakdown of the feudal code of honor. This has been specifically linked with the persistently higher proportion of murders attributed to jealousy and the "romantic triangle" in regions with a stronger cultural legacy stemming from feudalism, such as the South in the United States (Stephen Mennell, The American Civilizing Process, 125-27, 139-42).

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competition among animal species in which males have higher relative power or sexual potency than females (cf. 429/796f; DOI I, 156/159). The Discourse established that no such natural cause of jealousy exists among humans, and the Emile adds to this that —if we consider the human species in its primitive simplicity, it is easy to see from the male's limited potency and the moderation of his desires that he is destined to be content with one female” (E V, 403/797; cf. IV, 214/494). Among humans, the coercion required by polygamists reveals how they are attempting to "elude the laws of nature,” and in all other cases jealousy is more driven by the "social passions” than by the "primitive instinct” (E V, 430/797f). The Discourse is also appealed to in showing that the "unbridled ardor” of "true love” is not as natural as is thought (430/798). Rousseau then makes one of his more ‘constructivist' remarks before inferring what sort of jealousy Emile will have: —since this passion hardly has any seeds in the human heart, its form is determined exclusively by education” (431/798). What then follows is a remarkable portrait of the true lover:

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198 The Emile argues that human males are destined to remain with one female and raise their offspring, as evidenced by the long dependence of the human childhood (E V, 430/797). Emile himself later writes that "children form a truly indissoluble bond between those who gave them being, and a natural and invincible reason against divorce” (Emile and Sophie I, 215/OC 4:903f). The argument is very close to that of Locke, which had been explicitly rejected by Rousseau in the Second Discourse—there Rousseau concedes that such unions may have been advantageous, but maintains that this is quite a separate matter than their being instituted by nature (DOI Note XII, 213/215f, responding to Locke, Two Treatises, II, §§ 79-80, which is in turn close to Aquinas, Summa theologiae II-II 154.2). Although the possibility of esoteric writing with an underlying, subversive intent is not implausible in this case, the contradiction is more likely explained by the Discourse using a more limited understanding of nature (discussed in Note 101).

199 Rousseau similarly touts the value of his system here: —Let them examine carefully the constitution of man and follow the first developments of the heart in various circumstances in order to see how much one individual can differ from another due to the force of education...” (E IV, 254/550). Another passage applies this sort of optimism to the preservation of sound opinions in a political context (SC IV.7). Even in these proto-constructivist passages, though, Rousseau in effect only asserts, with Diderot, that "education can do much,” as opposed to Helvétius’s claim that "education can do all [l’education peut tout]” (see Parry, "Education,” 624, 615). Although I argue that Rousseau is not an absolute constructivist, he did seem to move in this direction in a novel way. As Force writes, "When
When he is in love and jealous, Emile will not be quick to anger, suspicious, and distrustful but delicate, sensitive, and timid. He will be more alarmed than irritated; he will pay far more attention to winning his mistress than to threatening his rival. If he can, he will get rid of him as an obstacle, without hating him as an enemy. If he hates his rival, it will not be for the audacity of contending with him for a heart to which he has laid a claim, but for making him run the real danger of losing her. His unjust pride will not be stupidly offended by someone’s daring to enter into competition with him. Understanding that the right of preference is founded solely on merit and that honor is to be found in success, he will redouble his efforts to make himself lovable, and he will probably succeed. (E V, 431/798f)

Emile has, to a great extent, overcome the paradox which emerged with comparison among the ‘social-Savages”: —the gentlest [la plus douce] of all passions receives sacrifices of human blood” (DOI II, 165/169). The appearance of paradox notwithstanding, this accomplishment is considerable. For, as Rousseau was surely aware, the Platonic, Stoic, and Augustinian traditions—with whom he shares much in psychological and social analysis—have often found that flight is the only viable

Rousseau made the claim that amour-propre was founded on reason and reflection, the claim was received as a paradox. Voltaire responded with the following comment: ‘What a strange idea! Do we need reasoning to want our well-being?’… For Voltaire and most of his contemporaries, we do not need to think in order to know what we want. ‘Our desires are a given’ (Self-Interest before Adam Smith, 133). For Rousseau’s idea of malleability, see Note 118, and for his more pessimistic applications of his doctrine of opinion, see Note 130. Among current philosophers and social thinkers, more optimistic appeals to the role of ideas and culture in shaping what is taken to be natural are invoked to support significant alternatives to the status quo, since the current order cannot be based on natural or universal necessity. See, for instance, Sharon Krause, Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation, 89-90, 163; Martha Nussbaum, Sex and Social Justice, 10-13, 146-53, 253-75; Women and Human Development, 111-66, 252-83; Alexander Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics, 92-138; Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, 79-87, 160-61; Whose Justice? Which Rationality?, 72-78, 88, 108-9, 301-3; Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry, 97-99; and on MacIntyre, the discussion in Matthew Mendham, ‘Eudaimonia and Agape in MacIntyre and Kierkegaard’s Works of Love,” 593-96.

Which is to say, he will respond with good ‘taste,” following the dictates of becoming lovable in order to be loved (discussed around Note 189 above). Regarding the pursuit of the woman, for all of Rousseau’s emphasis on the man’s active pursuit of woman according to the laws of nature (E V, 358/693-94), he also distinguishes this ‘audacity” from the ‘insolence and brutality” which ‘attacks with violence the charms of a young object which feels nothing for him.” This man’s ‘coarseness” is —at the result of ardent passion…it bespeaks a soul without moeurs, without refinement, incapable of either love or decency” (LA 85n/313n/78n).

Discussed in Section 1.4 above.
response to the moral threats arising from deeply loving any exclusive and embodied

202 By adding virtue to his natural goodness, Emile is able to enjoy the deep attachments which began with the social-Savages, while avoiding their periodic explosions of violent jealousy when obstacles or competitors arise.

If men cause certain problems in the manner of their pursuit of women, other problems arise from their everyday brutishness, both among themselves and in their treatment of women. In this respect, nature and human tastes work through the coarse union of the sexes toward the sweetest laws of love, giving women a considerable empire over men (see E V, 360-61/696-97). The woman’s natural tools are gentleness [douceur], skill, and obligingness, using caresses as orders and tears as threats (408/766f). In his political writings, and especially those which are both political and critical, Rousseau is highly critical of the reign of women. For instance, in the portion of the Second Discourse concerning jealousy, in distinguishing the physical from the moral aspect of love, Rousseau calls the latter a factitious sentiment; born of social practice, and extolled with much skill and care by women in order to establish their rule [empire] and to make dominant the sex that should obey (DOI I, 155/157f). However contemptible one may find such a claim, Rousseau indicates that this norm is not absolute in the Dedicatory Letter of the Discourse itself, which concerns the (at least potentially)

202 Of course, for anyone adhering to these traditions who would require absolute non-violence, Rousseau’s approach to romance would probably not suffice. For, if someone were seriously threatening Sophie’s safety, Emile would presumably deter them with a rational ferocity paralleling the self-defense of the primitives, which is based on amour de soi (Chapter I, Note 109). This is also suggested by Julie’s depiction of the upright man, framed in opposition to the vain honors of dueling: Always ready to serve his fatherland, to protect the weak, to fulfill the most dangerous duties, and to defend in every just and honest encounter what he cherishes at the price of his blood, he displays in his action that unshakable fortitude which one does not have without true courage” (Julie I.57, 128/157). By contrast, Rousseau’s open sexual relations with Madame de Warens would suggest an approach towards love—but without restlessness, without jealousy” (Conf. II, 51/52)—more in keeping with various socialist traditions. These traditions, of course, also have important roots in the Platonic, Stoic, and Christian traditions.
more equal and ordered context of Geneva.\footnote{In this passage, the praise of Genevan women immediately follows a discussion of the “rare exception” in Geneva of having venerable pastors who truly practice the maxims of the Gospel: “few people know the extent to which the spirit of Christianity, holiness of morals, severity toward oneself and gentleness [douceur] toward others prevail in the Body of our Ministers” (DOI Dedication, 121/119; this moral principle is discussed in Chapter 1, Note 22). Although the claim may be strategic, it is worth noting that Adam Smith also found the Genevan ministers particularly impressive for morals and learning (Wealth of Nations, V.i.g, 810-11). For related claims on Christianity, see Chapter 4, Note 53. For the complexity of Rousseau’s discussions of Geneva, see Chapter 2, Note 43.} In Geneva, this “precious half of the Republic” preserves the peace and good morals of the men through their gentleness and wisdom [douceur et sagesse]” (121/119).\footnote{“Sagesse” has a broad range of meaning, including “common sense” or “good behavior.”} He then follows this praise with an exhortation to the Genevan women to behave more like those of Sparta—to make their chaste power felt solely for the state’s glory and public happiness,” and to use persuasive douceur and modest attire to teach their men to despise vain luxury, frivolity, and the servility which accompany them (122/119f). Even the Genevan women, then, are partially subjected to the typical pattern of Rousseau’s critical and political writings. In these contexts he chastises women for tyrannizing men and making them luxurious and effeminate, while more subtly mentioning that men will always be what it pleases women that they be,” and thus women alone could use their power to restore virtue and probity (DSA II, 19, 19n/21, 21n, LR 66n/75n).\footnote{For this typical pattern, see Section 3.1, beginning at Note 52. For a useful discussion of many of these passages, focusing on sexual equality rather than gentleness, see Schwartz, Sexual Politics, 41-73, 84-98.} But nowhere in the political writings does Rousseau go as far as he does in Emile, in claiming that so long as a woman’s rule is indirect, the best households are invariably those where the woman has the most authority” (E V, 408/766f). In my view this shift is best attributed to the domestic context, where Spartan austerity is not the ideal, as well as to the chief function of Emile,
which is to justify the ways of nature rather than to critique the ways of (contemporary) society.

This claim regarding the “best households” is left unexplained, but may plausibly relate to the need men typically have to be made less coarse and rough in their everyday behavior. It would seem that, for Rousseau, although most men fall short of the unyielding roughness” or calloused cruelty of the early debauchee or serial adulterer, they do have a degree of excess roughness which is characteristically ameliorated by women in a decent marriage. For instance, even when an adolescent girl’s attractions have hardly developed, she already has considerable influence over men by the sweetness [douceur] of her character.” What insensitive and barbarous man does not soften [adoucit] his pride and adopt more attentive manners near a sixteen-year-old girl who is lovable and pure [sage]…?” (E V, 390/741). Such appeals indicate that the

206 Despite his typical championing of “barbarian” peoples, Rousseau occasionally falls into the typical usage of his time, in using related terms as pejoratives for roughness (as we have seen in Chapter 1, Note 126). Even though he is here attempting to move beyond the more spontaneous goodness or virtue of social-Savages or Barbarians, which combined romantic love with periodic explosions of violence, he does not offer a broader “progressive” theory which denigrates them, probably because this would undermine too much of his critical project. By contrast, his major influence, Seneca—who was also a strong advocate of primitive nature and a strong opponent of anger—centrally exhorted his readers to overcome anger by associating anger shamefully with barbarians such as the Germans and Scythians. Despite the greatness of their physical hardening and endurance, the Germans lack reason and the softening of discipline, and their anger therefore leaves them prey in battle to soft unwarlike men of Asia and Syria.” See On Anger I.11, II.15, and III.2 [5-6] (in Moral and Political Essays). Alexander, Marius, Catiline, and Gaius Caesar (i.e., Caligula) are among the examples presented to show that this kind of savage rage is not limited to primitive peoples (III.16 [2]–18).

207 Rousseau also portrays an occasion when a drunken St. Preux behaved crudely in speech and behavior toward Julie, but her later reproaches are more than enough to make him penitent (Julie I.51-52). The sort of insensitivity Rousseau has in mind may again be rooted in personal experience. Soon after they met, he and Thérèse would have many dinners together in Paris at Madame La Selle’s home, among company Rousseau describes as well-bred and genteel. While maintaining gracefulness and manners in form, the men’s talk was crude in its substance: the young men recounted their amorous adventures, and tales of whores were the more numerous in that their shop was at our very door…. I acquired in this way a store of [social maxims and] highly amusing anecdotes…. Honest women undone, deceived husbands, seduced wives, secret confinements, these were the most common themes, and the man who peopled the foundlings’ hospital with the greatest number of children always received the loudest applause” (Conf. VII, 288-89/343-44, following the Scholar translation, pp. 334-35). Cf. Augustine, Confessions, II.iii (7).
influence of women is not due solely to the attraction of the senses, but the deep sentiment we all have —that women are the natural judges of men’s merit” (390/742; see also 398/752). Similarly, Rousseau argues that a girl needs a certain habitual docility throughout her life, partly because she is inevitably subjected to concerns about reputation in a more fundamental way than men (361/697f; LA 85/313/77f). In addition, because —she is made to obey a being who is so imperfect, often so full of vices, and always so full of defects as man, she ought to learn early to endure even injustice and to bear a husband’s wrongs without complaining” (E V, 370/710f). Responding by bitterness and stubbornness only increases the ills, since women’s natural gifts were not given to make them shrewish, imperious, insulting, angry, or scolding. She ought, rather, to use her —first and most important quality” of —gentleness [douceur]” unless a man is a monster, the gentleness of a woman brings him around and triumphs over him sooner or later” (370/711). While being close to certain traditional views, Rousseau’s

208 A related feminine trait is —wit” or —cleverness” (l’esprit) which is often employed —to repress the petulance of children” and to restrain many —brutal husbands” (E V, 372/713).

209 This —monster” may correspond to the cruelly debauched men we have discussed, as well as the highly depraved men of the following remark (see also the Vicar’s discussion of —monsters” in E IV, 289/598). After arguing that women are naturally the judges of men’s merit, Rousseau adds it is therefore the —last degree of depravity” in a man when a woman’s judgment no longer has an influence on him. All the peoples who have had morals have respected women, such as Sparta, Rome, and the ancient Germans (E V, 390/742). Helena Rosenblatt appeals to this passage in arguing that such respect has —nothing to do with a woman’s ‘softening’ influence,” but is rather based on the —diametrically opposed” reason that women have began every great revolution in behalf of liberty (—On the _Misogyny_ of Jean-Jacques Rousseau,” 114). While true about the specifically political remarks Rousseau makes here, the claim is misleading regarding the broader ethical call to respect women found in the _Emile_. In general Rosenblatt is illuminating in her focus upon Rousseau’s political arguments, but is occasionally led to overgeneralization by failing to distinguish political intentions from domestic-moral ones.

210 For an example of this traditionalism, consider how Augustine’s mother, Monica, perceived the great effectiveness of her gentle methods of dealing with an unfaithful and short-tempered husband. These methods apparently prevented her from ever being beaten, even though —any wives married to gentler [mansuetiores] husbands bore the marks of blows and suffered disfigurement to their faces” (_Confessions_ IX.ix [19]).
argument has understandably drawn much criticism.\(^{211}\) For our purposes, we might simply observe that overcoming such rough vices is far from Rousseau’s ideal,\(^{212}\) but rather, is presented as nature’s way of coping with a corrupt situation.

As for the common allegation that Rousseau is deeply inconsistent in subjecting girls and women to obedience and authority,\(^{213}\) we may note that his arguments establishing the naturalness of the girl’s obedience actually parallel those establishing the naturalness of the boy’s autonomy. They are both driven by observation, and where the boy is found to be fiercely resistant to humanly imposed law,\(^{214}\) the girl is found to be compliant (see E V, 396/750f). In neither case do we find an argument for a universal, rational duty of others to respect the child’s autonomy. As we have seen, this also helps explain why Rousseau can so flagrantly limit (what we would take to be) the boy’s

\(^{211}\) Notably by Mary Wollstonecraft (\textit{A Vindication of the Rights of Woman}, ch. 2) and Susan Moller Okin. See the discussions in Shell, “\textit{Nature and the Education of Sophie},” 288-89, and Schwartz, \textit{Sexual Politics}, 85-86.

\(^{212}\) Although Rousseau’s ideal couples have a substantial degree of functional inequality, this in no way implies any sort of harsh domination on the part of the head of the family. For instance, Claire expresses some concern about her brother after witnessing his wedding: “He is grave and cold; he even seems to me somewhat arrogant; I greatly fear for the little bride, lest instead of being as good a husband as ours, he play something of the lord and master” (\textit{Julie} VI.1, 523/637f). Such remarks deeply influenced later eighteenth-century writers, who ardently believed in the Christian ideal of conjugal fidelity and the newly evolving bourgeois ideal of domesticity that together were to find their most powerful expression in Rousseau’s \textit{Julie}” (Mary Trouille, \textit{Wife-Abuse in Eighteenth-Century France}, 327).

\(^{213}\) See the review of criticisms in Shell, “\textit{Nature and the Education of Sophie}.” One of Shell’s replies in behalf of Rousseau’s consistency is particularly important for our purposes: “As boys are hardened by habituation to endure the vicissitudes of nature, girls are taught to ‘conquer themselves’ so that taming their caprices to the will of others later ‘costs them nothing’” (287, citing E V, 369/709; see also Shell 290). Women are not fit for the boy’s harsh habituation of nature, although little girls should play outside more than current conventions allow (see e.g. E V, 361-62/697-99, and Shell, 298-99n58). Shell concludes that the pedagogies informing the education of Emile and Sophie “\textit{appeal to the same standard and are guided by the same goal}” (284). Her argument is challenging, but never fully confronts the problem of the female’s autonomy (cf. 288f). My interpretation of Rousseau immediately below could explain Shell’s limitation, considering that Rousseau himself was not attempting to offer a plan for autonomy—even for boys—which would satisfy his late-modern critics (who assume a more principled basis for personal autonomy).

\(^{214}\) Discussed in Note 111 above.
autonomy through innumerable indirect manipulations—for these do not goad the boy’s independent nature. It may be that a more fully rational and consistent “Rousseauian” view could be reconstructed on the basis of the more rationalistic arguments for universal autonomy which Rousseau makes in political contexts. However, such a reconstruction should show awareness of the extent to which Rousseau thinks moral and social development is driven by women, and thus how bleak the prospects for such development would be if all humans were truly as resistant to imposed law and moral foresight as Rousseau’s boys are. Such a view might, then, wish to increase a kind of autonomy for females based on intrinsic respect for them, while decreasing a kind of autonomy for males which was based more upon natural intractability than upon respect.215

All things considered, the typical civilized and vice-laden man seems to be greatly benefitted by those civilized women who have not entirely abandoned their natural gentleness, cleverness, and modesty. In this way the moral development of civilized men parallels that of the species at the origins of romantic affection, when “spirited young people gradually forgot their ferociousness [férociété], little by little they tamed one another…” (EOL IX, 277/406).216 Emile has never been ferocious (let alone vicious); he is vigorous and tough physically, while possessing “a tender and sensitive soul” (cf. E IV, 338/669). For her part, Sophie masks her combustible, desirous temperament by a

215 Consider the objections to the boys’ exclusively physical education which we have mentioned in Note 89. In connection with the inherent dangers of social power, we have also discussed Arthur Melzer’s interpretation of Rousseau on “man’s natural asociality and intractability” (The Natural Goodness of Man, 73-74, in Chapter 2, around Note 18).

216 Discussed in Section 1.4 above. See Shell on how the agreeableness of little girls’ language parallels that of the voluptuous southern languages in the Essay, forming a poetic synthesis with Emile’s early language, which parallels “the harshly emphatic clarity of the austerer north” (“Nature and the Education of Sophie,” 288).
pretended pride and a potentially excessive degree of harshness (*dureté*). These traits are more than enough to prevent the loving Emile from being too bold in pursuing her favors during the rare times when they are alone (E V, 426-28/792-95). Through loving Sophie, Emile learns how to please in a manner which is gentle but not "gallant" or foppish.

Sophie also provides one of Emile's fundamental motivations for virtue, and this end was attained even before he met her, when his governor conjured up an idealized young woman named "Sophie," since Emile's future beloved will at least be worthy of this name (E IV, 329/656).

Rousseau initially justifies this depiction of a possibly imaginary object because it will suffice "to make [Emile] disgusted with those that could tempt him." In addition, "what is true love itself if it is not chimera, lie, and illusion? We love the image we make for ourselves far more than we love the object to which we apply it" (329/656). Without attempting to fully treat Rousseau on love, illusion, and what has come to be called "sublimation," we can establish that this claim is probably

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217 Sophie's father sometimes fears that "her extreme pride will degenerate into haughtiness" (E V, 426/792; cf. 439/809f for her "able pride based on merit"). After her tragic experiences in *Émile and Sophie*, she develops an uncharacteristic "*dureté de coeur*" in addition to her "proud soul," and softening her (*toucher, adoucir*) becomes a recurring theme (e.g. *Émile and Sophie* I, 204, 213/889f, 900f).

218 For an exploration of Book V of *Émile* as an exploration of "wisdom," and an intentional response to Book V of Plato's *Republic*, see Cooper, *Eros in Plato, Rousseau, and Nietzsche*, ch. 6. For instance, in Cooper's reading, Rousseau's prescription of hunting (*la chasse*) may have been placed intentionally at the end of Book IV. Although this tactic is presented as an-erotic or even anti-erotic, it may also be preparing Emile for the "hunt" or "pursuit" of both Sophie the woman and *sophia* itself (184).

219 The despairing tone here is similar to his comment upon his return to Madame de Warens, when he found her cold toward him: "How cruel is the illusion of human things!" (Conf. VI, 226/270, translation modified). This expresses a more general principle: "I wrote my *Confessions* when I was already old and disgusted with the vain pleasures of life, all of which I had sampled and whose emptiness I had thoroughly felt" (Rev. IV, 37/1035).

220 See Bloom, "Introduction" to *E*, esp. 15-17, 20-21; Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature*, ch. 3; *Eros in Plato, Rousseau, and Nietzsche*, ch. 6. According to Bloom, sublimation is the attempt to make the sublime out of the non-sublime (in this case, deriving noble deeds, arts, and thoughts from the material world
not as deflating and subversive as it appears at first glance.\(^{221}\) The possibility he is advancing a subversive theoretical doctrine is initially reinforced by a pragmatic argument. After admitting that love (or perhaps “true love”) is only illusion, he argues:

But what is real are the sentiments for the truly beautiful with which love animates us and which it makes us love. This beauty is not in the object it loves; it is the work of our errors. So, what of it? Does the lover any the less sacrifice all of his low sentiments to the imaginary model?... Does he detach himself any the less from the baseness of the human \(m_e\)? Where is the true lover who is not ready to immolate himself for his beloved, and where is the sensual and coarse passion in a man who is willing to die? (E V, 391/743, translation modified)

This parallels the response to Pierre Bayle’s critique of fanaticism, which we have discussed above.\(^{222}\) It seems to be illustrated in the life of Julie, who, though imperfect, was the source of immense inspiration in being perceived to be perfect.\(^{223}\) And although explained by modern science. Rousseau invented the approach, Nietzsche introduced the term, and Freud popularized it (“Introduction” to E, 15-16).

\(^{221}\) The following arguments arose out of my own attempt to understand this claim, which would be surprisingly self-undermining, given Rousseau’s moralistic purposes in \(E\text{m}\text{i}\text{l}\text{e}\). As it turns out, they may also be taken as a response to Allan Bloom, who comments on the same claim: “No more explicit a statement of the necessity of illusion for sublime states of soul could be imagined, nor could we find a better place to ask ourselves, ‘What is the future of an illusion that one knows to be an illusion?’” (\(L\text{o}\text{v}\text{e}\ \text{a}\text{n}\text{d}\ \text{F}\text{r}\text{i}\text{e}\text{n}\text{d}\text{s}\text{h}\text{i}\text{p}\text{s}\), 113; for supporting remarks, see 91-92, 112-13, 136-40). See also, for an interpretation similar to Bloom’s, Gregory Vlastos, “The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato,” 158-59.

\(^{222}\) E IV, 312n/633n, block-quoted in Section 3.4, around Note 127.

\(^{223}\) The theme pervades the first two Parts of \(J\text{u}\text{l}\text{i}\text{e}\), when the love affair between Julie and St. Preux is most intense. For instance, Julie writes: “I know not if I delude myself; but it seems to me that true love is the most chaste of all bonds. It alone with its divine flame knows the art of purifying our natural inclinations, by concentrating them onto a single person; it alone spares us temptations, and makes it so except for that one unique person, one sex ceases to be anything for the other” (\(J\text{u}\text{l}\text{i}\text{e}\ \text{I}\text{.50, 113/138, echoed in E IV, 214/494). “True love” is often compared to idolatry (E V, 425/791) or enthusiasm: “—just as the enthusiasm of devoutness borrows the language of love, so does the enthusiasm of love borrow the language of devoutness” (\(J\text{u}\text{l}\text{i}\text{e}\ \text{Second Preface, 10/15f). Those in love or susceptible to love are uniquely drawn to reading Plato, who offered “the genuine philosophy of Lovers” (\(J\text{u}\text{l}\text{i}\text{e}\ \text{I}\text{I.11, 183n/223n).}
at times Rousseau does seem content to rest with an edifying or comforting chimera, at least regarding love he also offers two more substantial responses or qualifications.

First, the unbridled ardor of true love,” which Rousseau concedes to be illusion, is clearly distinguished from — the sweet habit [la douce habitude] which makes a man affectionate toward his companion” (E V, 430/798). Jean-Jacques advises the newlywed Emile and Sophie that their sexual relations will not always remain as enjoyable as they are initially, even if they remain temperate and do not wear these pleasures out prematurely. — But when love has lasted a long time, a sweet habit [une douce habitude] fills the void it leaves behind, and the attraction of mutual confidence succeeds the transports of passion” (479/866). It is therefore significant that deep moral inspiration does not seem to require perceived perfection, since we are told that the woman who is decent, lovable, and self-controlled, who thus — sustains love by means of esteem” is also able, by merely gesturing, to send a lover to the end of the world, to

224 See, for instance, Letter to Voltaire, 18 August 1756, EPW 242-43/OC 4:1070-71, as discussed above, Chapter 3, around Note 69. This makes a pragmatic argument for belief in the case of irresolvable doubt. Being made happy by a good of the imagination is also compared with the enjoyment of hope (E V, 447/821, and the discussion in Note 191 above). On separate occasions, Rousseau reveals in his companionship with chimeras of his own invention, such as the charming society in Julie, and is able to derive vastly more enjoyment and nourishment from these chimeras than the most voluptuous people can derive from their realities (Letters to Malesherbes III, CW 5:577-78/OC 1:1139-40; Rev. VIII, 74f/1081). In Malesherbes, he then describes how he raises his ideas up to the incomprehensible being who embraces everything” (579/1141), without suggesting that this being is fictional. This close association of purely imaginary beings with the divinity has led some to conclude that Rousseau saw God as purely fictional. In my view, he is probably attempting, for methodological purposes, to establish the primacy and value of imagination, while treating the reality of the object as secondary. — There is no true love without enthusiasm, and no enthusiasm without an object of perfection, real or chimerical, but always existing in the imagination” (E V, 391/743, emphasis added; see also Julie III.18, 280, 280n/341, 341n).

225 This passage also appeals to the Second Discourse as having established that true love” is as natural as is thought” (E V, 430/798), in connection with the problem of jealousy that we have discussed. Schwartz quotes several of the passages discussed in this paragraph in connection with Emile’s dependence on women (Sexual Politics, 95).
combat, to glory, to death, to anything she pleases” (393/745).\textsuperscript{226} It may be these sweet but more moderate habits—rather than the passionate heights of “true love”—which have provided a fairly solid foundation for domestic happiness and virtue since the beginning of human society,\textsuperscript{227} and which have also been necessary supports for that Citizen virtue whose comparative sternness and higher love for the city probably exclude the dizzying heights of personal romance.\textsuperscript{228}

The second substantial qualification to the “illusion” of love also limits romantic passion, yet by conscious acts of the will rather than by gradual sentimental necessity. This involves the need for a proper response to the higher realities of the cosmos, both by tempering personal love in view of the cosmopolitan rights of humanity and by establishing a proper hierarchy of attachments. As for the cosmopolitan rights, one

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\item \textsuperscript{226} Even in the throes of his enthusiasm, St. Preux articulated the same distinction: “Take away the idea of perfection and you take away enthusiasm; take away esteem and love is reduced to nothing” (Julie I.24, 70/86). As for the self-controlled woman, this theme of inspiring sacrifice is also linked with the value of being separated from one’s beloved (E V, 433/802). Bloom’s interpretation of Rousseauian love as illusory (discussed in Note 221) does not give due credit to the role of “sweet habits,” and accordingly presents Rousseauian love as less natural and more exclusively based on strength of will than the interpretation offered here. Consider the list of motivations Jean-Jacques is said to provide: “…he has to admit finally to Emile that over the long run, frenzy cannot endure and principle must fill in for the waning passion. Habit and easy commerce with a woman for whom Emile once had an uncontrollable passion, the love of children, and obedience to the law he has given himself will have to take the place of the raging fire that Jean-Jacques had stoked in Emile and that originally accomplished everything without supplement” (Love and Friendship, 138).
\item \textsuperscript{227} DOI II, 164/168; EOL IX, 277/406. Similarly, “the sweetest sentiments of nature” would never have arisen were it not for female modesty (LA 84/313/77).
\item \textsuperscript{228} See especially the reply to Plato’s communism of women and children in the Republic, which subverts “the sweetest sentiments of nature” while undermining the “love of one’s nearest,” which is also the basis for and “the principle of the love one owes the state” (E V, 362f/700). Although this passage may slightly suggest a full harmony of “Man” and “Citizen,” in view of the evidence discussed below, it should be read as an argument which applies to both Man and Citizen, but in differing ways. This would accord with the argument of Jonathan Marks that Judith Shklar exaggerates the extent of the citizen’s subordination of private freedoms and pleasures, but they nonetheless remain “more narrowly circumscribed than Emile’s or the savage’s” (Perfection and Disharmony, 82, 170n35, discussed above, Chapter 1, Note 47). Consider also the following fragment, which could refer to various kinds of affection: “It will always be great and difficult to subject the most cherished affections of nature to the fatherland and to virtue” (PF V [On Honor and Virtue], 38/502).
\end{itemize}
should say “tempering” rather than “subordinating,” since Emile’s dedication of time, goods, and attention will clearly be directed far more to Sophie and their future children than to any neighbors and strangers (and probably to all neighbors and strangers combined). Nonetheless, a celebrated episode illustrates how the compelling needs of someone outside of the household should overrule an everyday duty toward the beloved.

One evening, Emile and Jean-Jacques were supposed to visit Sophie, but did not arrive until the following morning, to the great consternation of Sophie. Jean-Jacques then explained the extraordinary circumstances of stopping to tend to a peasant who had broken his leg falling off his horse, and whose wife then went into labor upon the sight of him (E V, 439-40/810-12).

With “more firmness [fermeté]” than Jean-Jacques would have expected of him, Emile then explained to Sophie that although she is the arbiter of his fate and could make him die of pain, she should not hope to make him “forget the rights of humanity,” which are “more sacred” to him than hers. To this Sophie responds with great warmth, offering him her hand in marriage when he wishes, and hoping to merit this honor (441/812f).

This accords with Sophie’s character, since she is jealous of her rights to Emile, with the exception of this “inviolable and sacred right”: “She did not want a lover who knew no law other than hers. She wants to reign over a man whom she has not disfigured” (439/810). The higher law which Emile follows is clearly

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229 The account echoes Jesus’ parable of the “good Samaritan” (Luke 10:25-37), although whereas Jesus’ victim is attacked by robbers, Rousseau’s “unfortunate peasant” fell off his horse because he was “a bit drunk” (E V, 440/811). In connection with Rousseau’s “rights of humanity” and the inability of Jean-Jacques to recognize the peasant as an acquaintance (440/812), the universalistic implications of Jesus’ parable are probably also being evoked.

230 Reisert considers this episode the emotional climax of Emile’s narrative (A Friend of Virtue, 8f). He seems well-qualified to discern this, given his (quite Rousseauian) admission, “I still cry when I read Emile” (A Friend of Virtue, ix). Reisert also argues that this account demonstrates how Emile’s “conscience is well formed according to the morality of the Gospel: he loves his neighbor as himself” (164-65; see also 108, 138, and esp. 120).
cosmopolitan rather than political or patriotic, pursuing the rights of humanity rather than a localized public good.\footnote{In addition to following the cosmopolitan over the patriotic alternative discussed in Section 4.2, Emile is also acting in accordance with his earlier lessons in needing to generalize pity across the entire human species, which we have discussed in Chapter 3, around Note 119.} This law provides a certain firmness and noble purpose to a household which may otherwise degenerate into another form of modernistic squabbling and obsession over petty, personal interests.

Immediately after this episode, Emile is introduced to the need to be attached to "imperishable beauty." Jean-Jacques applies one of his characteristic ploys in (briefly) convincing Emile that Sophie is dead.\footnote{Apparently Emile's response here leads Jean-Jacques to suggest that Emile has become one of the "heroes" of the theater, which depicts men crying, lamenting, and lacking constancy and firmness (fermeté: E V, 443/816; cf. Plato, Republic III, 387, X, 603e-604e).} Then, tracing the rationale and benefits of Emile's education up to this point, Jean-Jacques extols the benefits of living without "the empire of the passions," and suggests that Emile is becoming the enemy of himself by being the slave of his desires.\footnote{Slightly earlier in the courtship, Rousseau indicates that, although voluntary, Emile's bonds are natural or necessary in some sense. He describes Emile as sitting at Sophie's knee, yet sometimes looking off to the countryside and desiring to roam it with her; since he cannot, he seems to struggle within himself. \"You are going to say that these are needs to which I have submitted him, subjections that I have given him, and all that is true. I have subjected him to man's estate\" (E V, 432/801). Even so, apparently Emile must return periodically to his active, exercising, and laboring life, since \"To reduce him all of a sudden to a soft \[molle\] and sedentary life would be to imprison him\" (432/801).} Whereas nature had enslaved him to a single death, he was now adding a second one; and if he simply must possess Sophie, from what crimes would his unbridled desires refrain?\footnote{E V, 442-44/814-17. This recalls the critique of the sweet (\textit{si douce}) imagery of the theater, which \textit{amolit} the heart without its being noticed," leading to rationalizations in abandoning oneself to criminal love (LA 55/291/51). The French Theater is similarly criticized for breathing only tenderness"—being given over to gallantry, softness [moresse], and love, to everything which can effeminate man and mitigate his taste for real duties" (117/337/107). These criticisms are made in a more virile civic context, but it is noteworthy that the Stoic element of his romantic theory seems to fully overlap with the civic critique in the \textit{Letter to d'Alembert}.} Jean-Jacques then proceeds to a remarkable discussion, which precludes adequate summary, on the need for virtue understood as
strength of will, and as distinguished from the naïve, innocent goodness which had been adequate for Emile's protected situation until this time (E V, 444/817f).\(^ {235} \) In love, Emile now feels his first passion (except, perhaps, that for virtue), and must learn how to rule it (445/818). He cannot simply distinguish permitted from forbidden passions, for even loving his own wife is illicit if done to the point of sacrificing everything to that love” (445/819). He must restrain his heart within the limits of his condition, in order to avoid being miserable upon losing goods to which he believes he has a right (445f/819). He must put himself above events, learning to detach his heart (very similarly, we might add, to the Christian soldiers we have discussed).\(^ {236} \) He must learn to lose his beloveds and everything else which may be taken from him. He must Attach [his] heart only\(^ {237} \) to the beauty which does not perish.”\(^ {238} \) Then he will find — in the possession even of fragile

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\(^ {235} \) This passage was also discussed, in connection with religion (Chapter 3, around Note 72), and in connection with Emile's contrast to the Citizen and the autobiographical Rousseau in terms of the severity of their duties (Chapter 1, beginning around Note 51).

\(^ {236} \) Above, Note 52.

\(^ {237} \) The “only” must be taken as an exaggeration, indicating a comparatively far stronger attachment to the higher beauty, since Jean-Jacques is clearly not advising Emile that he must abandon Sophie or not have emotional attachment to her. He will be the conqueror of the opinion that places so great a value [si grand prix] on life” (E V, 446/820), but this is not to oppose placing any value on life. In discussing this passage, Schwartz similarly maintains that Emile is to remain dependent on Sophie, while learning to be capable of independence — in case of emergency” (Sexual Politics, 95). We might say, then, that Emile can depend in an absolute sense only on imperishable beauty.

\(^ {238} \) Translation modified: “N'attache ton coeur qu'à la beauté qui ne pérît point.” On the following page, this sort of beauty is linked with God: “Except for the single Being existing by itself, there is nothing beautiful except that which is not” (E V, 447/821). Cooper claims to find a closer consideration of this statement that Rousseau does not accept Platonic eidê, which have more being than the objects of the visible world,” and instead substitutes mere ideals” (Eros in Plato, Rousseau, and Nietzsche, 192, cf. 167-71; this perhaps follows Bloom, “Introduction” to E, 22). However, on its face, Rousseau’s statement almost certainly entails precisely the opposite of what Cooper takes it to mean. For the debate between Rousseau’s Straussian and more Platonizing interpreters, see above, Chapter 3, Note 69. On my reading, although one may plausibly question Rousseau's own personal adherence to these beliefs, no compelling case has been made to deny that Rousseau at least prescribes that Emile (and correspondingly any Moral Human”) should believe deeply in this higher order. Although I would also challenge the view that this teaching is merely exoteric, for our current purposes what matters is genuinely
goods a voluptuousness nothing will be able to disturb‖ (446/820).\textsuperscript{239} If he follows this advice, he will have found a direct solution to the problem of the illusion of true love:

\[ \neg \text{You will not, it is true, have the illusion of imaginary pleasures, but you will also not have the pains which are their fruit. You will gain much in this exchange, for these pains are frequent and real, and these pleasures are rare and vain} \] (446/820).\textsuperscript{240} Emile must, in short, toughen himself emotionally to some degree regarding the changing and passing goods of this world (cf. 446/820), while still maintaining deep emotional reserves on the basis of transcendent beauty and the grateful reception of the genuine, relative goods of this world. It is in this highly Stoic and perhaps even Augustinian stance to the world that Emile finds the only sturdy means of reconciling wisdom, virtue, and domestic affection.\textsuperscript{241}

With his love circumscribed and reinforced by higher realities, Emile is well-prepared to experience the sweet sentiments of trusting, thoughtful affection in his understanding the public ethical teaching, and taking it seriously as such. We have similarly discussed Straussian interpretations in Chapter 4, Note 63.

\textsuperscript{239} In connection with “fragile goods [biens fragiles],” see also the discussion of “our frail happiness [frêle bonheur]” regarding human attachments (E IV, 221/503). The latter passage is the source of Tzvetan Todorov’s title, Frail Happiness (e.g., 66). Todorov is superior in this respect to Nichols, who appeals to an oversimplified account of Rousseau’s ideal of self-sufficiency in order to show that Rousseau could not have meant the things he said in behalf of religion and love (—Rousseau’s Novel Education in the Émile,” e.g. 535-36, 547-48, and esp. 552-53, which conspicuously overlooks the pivotal distinctions we have discussed from E V, 446/820). As for voluptuously enjoying worldly goods, see the combination of Epicurean and Stoic approaches in Julie’s “Epicureanism of reason” (Julie V.2, 443-44/541-42).

\textsuperscript{240} We can infer that the sort of imaginary pleasures sworn off here would include Rousseau’s own in too greatly anticipating his reunion with Madame de Warens (discussed in Note 219). However, this logic would not seem to apply against Rousseau’s enjoyment of his ‘imaginary friends’ (discussed in Note 224), since these cannot be taken away from him. The latter sort of illusion would seem to be a psychologically perverse application of Rousseau’s basic Stoic principle, rather than an exception to it.

\textsuperscript{241} For an excellent recent treatment of a Platonic and Augustinian “ethics of inspiration,” see Rist, Real Ethics, esp. ch. 4. For Augustine’s difficulties in reconciling his Stoic heritage and his Christian imperatives to love others deeply, see Mendham, Kant and the Distinctively Moral Ought,” 564-65, esp. 565n35.
household. However, partly to drive these lessons home, Jean-Jacques takes Emile away from Sophie on a journey which ends up lasting two years. Emile will also need this time to meditate upon the political duties which will arise when he becomes a husband and father (E V, 448/823). And thus Emile’s isolated domestic happiness is interrupted by larger human realities. Rousseau has been understood alternatively as denigrating political life, limiting it, or exalting it as the highest possibility for humans. Having maintained throughout this dissertation that he prescribes different ideals for the small-scale sociability of the “Moral Human” than he does for the broad-scale interdependence of the “Citizen,” this final stage of Emile’s education may be a suitable time to reconsider this commitment.

4.7 Conclusion: Must We Choose between Man and Citizen?

The most significant challenge to the “man versus citizen” dichotomy has been stated by Frederick Neuhouser recently—in fact, after I had formulated and written my first three chapters—in *Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love: Evil, Rationality, and the Drive for Recognition* (2008). The book is philosophically subtle and insightful; it will surely prove influential, which provides all the more reason to respond to its arguments against one of the fundamental premises of this dissertation. In treating Rousseau’s major philosophical works as forming a unitary, complementary, and compatible project, Neuhouser must overcome Shklar’s men versus citizens dichotomy, which he

242 He takes these to be the *Second Discourse*, the *Social Contract*, and *Emile*, as we have seen in our discussion of Neuhouser on Rousseau’s coherence (Chapter 1, Note 11).
finds to be "a prevailing consensus, among political theorists at least."\(^{243}\) For Shklar and others, the *Social Contract* and *Emile* represent competing rather than complementary responses to the problems diagnosed in the *Second Discourse*, each corresponding (perhaps) to a different set of socio-political conditions and possibilities…\(^{244}\) But to set Rousseau's "political philosophy in opposition to his moral pedagogy" in this way "gravely misrepresents those projects."\(^{245}\) Neuhouser's opposition to this view can be understood as two main theses—that Rousseau's own statements of the dichotomy between man and citizen are misleading and explicitly revoked, and that his dramatic contrast of man and citizen intends only to dismiss the very specific, ancient type of citizen, rather than modern republican citizenship.\(^{246}\) To Neuhouser, Rousseau's consistent goal is to generate a "man-citizen," shielding *Emile* from early and pernicious forms of *amour-propre* so he can retain a version of moral and rational self-sufficiency when he enters the political world, and making him capable of rationally embracing the general will of the polity.\(^{247}\)

In developing his first thesis, Neuhouser points out that one must pay attention to Rousseau's full statement of the man versus citizen dichotomy: "Forced to combat nature or the social institutions, one must choose between making a man or a citizen, for


\(^{244}\) Ibid., 19.

\(^{245}\) Ibid., 253.

\(^{246}\) Ibid., 20.

\(^{247}\) Ibid., 255, 260.
one cannot make both *at the same time*‘ (E I, 39/248, emphasis added).”

Building upon this temporal qualification, Neuhouser continues: ‘That it is Rousseau’s intention for Emile to be formed as a citizen, even if only at the end of his education, is unmistakable (E IV, 327-28/654-55; V, 458-67/836-49).”

Neuhouser rightly underscores the importance of stages for Rousseau, and argues that the complete ideal of self-sufficiency is appropriate for boyhood and adolescence (Books I-IV), whereas ‘an passionate nature’ makes complete self-sufficiency impossible and undesirable for adults since it is ‘incompatible not only with the deepest forms of happiness available to humans (E IV, 221/503; DOI II, 164/168) but also with the realization of the ‘noblest‘ potential of the species (SC I.8; DOI II, 203/207).”

Accordingly, Neuhouser contends that Rousseau explicitly revokes the man versus citizen dichotomy later in the book—once Emile’s *amour-propre* and pity have been properly educated, he reenters society to learn ‘the most necessary art for a man and a citizen, which is knowing how to live with his fellows‘ (E IV, 328/655, emphasis added).”

Finally, Neuhouser adds that, near the end of *Emile*, ‘as if to dissolve any lingering doubts as to his intent to make moral pedagogy consistent with political philosophy, Rousseau presents what Emile must know

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248 Quoted by Neuhouser in 157n5, 172, and 260. In the rest of this section, if Neuhouser is quoted to include one of his citations of Rousseau, I will slightly modify the citation’s form in order to match that used here. The editions used are the same.

249 Neuhouser, 21.

250 Neuhouser, 21. On stages in education, see also 257.

251 Neuhouser, 253. Neuhouser (172n28, 253n47, 253n48) also cites passages making related points: E I, 41/251; IV, 327/654; V, 448, 455/823, 833.
in order to take his place in the state by repeating in more or less the same order...the contents of the *Social Contract* (E V, 458-69/836-52).”

According to Neuhouser’s second major thesis, in order to understand Rousseau’s own statement of choosing between making a man or a citizen,” one must see that he has something very specific in mind. —The passages that follow...clearly show, Rousseau is thinking of premodern models of citizenship—those of ancient Rome and Sparta, or citizenship as Plato depicts it in the *Republic*—the common characteristic of which he locates in the circumstance that members of the state think of themselves first as citizens—as Romans or Spartans—and only secondarily (or perhaps not at all) as individuals (E I, 40/249).”

Emile’s education, then, is incompatible not with citizenship *tout court* but only with citizenship in its ancient form.”

We might see a further development of this thesis in Neuhouser’s reply to Laurence Cooper, who grants that Emile is to become a citizen of some sort,” but insists that Emile’s attachment to the state cannot have the passionate character that Rousseau usually ascribes to citizenship, especially in the first book of *Emile.”* For Neuhouser, this only implies that Emile is not to become a citizen in the mode of Sparta or Rome. I see no reason to deny that Emile’s education prevents him from having the kinds of attachments to his fatherland’ (E V, 473-74/857-58) that taking up a position in a modern republic, one

252 Neuhouser, 253. The argument is also stated on 157 and 172.

253 Neuhouser, 20.

254 Ibid.

255 I have quoted Neuhouser’s description (21n34) of Cooper’s view; Neuhouser cites Rousseau, *Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life*, 26, 52-55. Kelly offers a similar interpretation of Emile as not being intended to become a citizen in the strong sense of a citizen of a fatherland” (*Rousseau as Author*, 93), because Emile maintains his natural independence in rejecting emulation and hero-worship (92-98).
consistent with the principles of the *Social Contract*, requires.\textsuperscript{256} Apparently, then, for Neuhouser, the *Emile* would agree with the *Social Contract* in —implicitly reject[ing] certain possible solutions to the problem of political life (how citizens can be brought to care about the good of their polity) because they are incompatible with citizens remaining (ethically and rationally) sovereign individuals.\textsuperscript{257} In further developing Rousseau's idea of republicanism, Neuhouser offers elaborate and insightful reflections on the role of autonomy, rationality, intersubjectivity, and social and economic inequality.\textsuperscript{258} He concludes, however, that although Rousseau's political institutions do offer various remedies to —inflamed *amour-propre,*” these are primarily negative, and he is far less helpful in providing positive sources of esteem.

Rousseau never fully exploits the possibilities his own theory opens up…. For example, it is a constant theme in many of his writings that life in the state—more precisely, distinguishing oneself as a brave and virtuous citizen—offers individuals an opportunity to win esteem, even "glory", for qualities and achievements that promote the collective good [DSA 23-24/26; DPE 14-16, 21-22/253-55, 261]. Even here, though, Rousseau fails to go much beyond the ideas he absorbed from his youthful readings of the ancients to think creatively about the distinctive forms political honor might take in a modern, democratic state.\textsuperscript{259}

Neuhouser's first major thesis is, to a large extent, well-taken. In several ways, he is correct that the *Social Contract* and *Emile* do not articulate mutually exclusive

\textsuperscript{256} Neuhouser, 21n34.

\textsuperscript{257} Neuhouser, 23. In contrast with the “complete and mostly affective identification with their polity” which gave Rome and Sparta cohesion, according to Rousseau —Modern citizens…conceive of and value themselves as individuals and, most important, submit to the general will only on the basis of their own rational insight into the goodness of the laws that obligate them” (22).

\textsuperscript{258} See Neuhouser, chs. 5-7.

\textsuperscript{259} Neuhouser, 169.
ideas, and we should be skeptical of any absolute dichotomy between man and citizen. At the same time, we must be precise in determining the nature and extent of the overlap between them. After all, we concluded in Section 1.6 that even Rousseau’s “Citizen” and “social-Savage” have plenty of similarities, such as deep psychological vigor and indifference to outsiders, without being bloodthirsty or expansionistic. Yet they are clearly very different characters in their historical origins, social settings, and moral outlooks. In a similar way, Neuhouser calls attention to many important parallels regarding autonomy, rationality, and moral motivation in the Emile, the Social Contract, and even sometimes in Rousseau’s portrayals of ancient citizenship. But we will want a full understanding of any genuine contrasts as well as similarities, and I will argue that many contrasts remain, even after we grant some important points to Neuhouser.

Concerning Neuhouser’s claim that the Emile itself revokes its preliminary dichotomies, he is correct in calling attention to Rousseau’s qualification, that one cannot form a man and a citizen “at the same time [à la fois]” (E I, 39/238). He is also correct that Emile does not retain absolute self-sufficiency as a goal throughout his life, and that he comes to be taught how to fulfill his fundamental social duties, which Rousseau sometimes describes as those of “a man and a citizen.” We might begin to take issue with Neuhouser when he attempts to prove that Emile learns “to take his place in the state” through learning the contents of the Social Contract, and that his education has

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260 Neuhouser, 256.

261 It is true that Shklar posits a sharp dichotomy, but this is less significant in her case since she presents the two models not as a choice but solely as a means of criticizing modern society (discussed above, Section 1.1, esp. around Note 13).

262 See esp. Neuhouser, ch. 7.
provided him with the kinds of attachments to his fatherland (E V, 473-74/857-58) that taking up a position in a modern republic...requires. For, as various scholars have observed, one of the chief lessons derived from Emile’s introduction to political right, as well as his travels, is that no fatherland seems to exist, since everywhere individual interests and passions reign rather than the laws. The main lesson, then, is sobering, yet Jean-Jacques assures Emile that he who does not have a fatherland [une patrie] at least has a country [un pays], and he still has certain duties to its simulacra of laws which had protected him throughout his childhood (E V, 473/858). Jean-Jacques teaches Emile that the good man who loves virtue will be genuinely motivated by the public good, and will learn to sacrifice his interest to the common interest (473/858). Yet on closer analysis, the most advisable life seems minimally political. Jean-Jacques

263 Neuhouser, 253, and 21n34.

264 On the introduction to political right we might add the perceptive observation of Wokler, that this dry, abstract section does not seem to have been intended by Rousseau to crown the meticulously elaborated plan of a domestic upbringing with a sublime education for public life (Rousseau, 116).

265 E.g., Bloom, Love and Friendship, 139-40; Jean Bloch, Rousseauism and Education in Eighteenth-Century France, 12. This would cohere with the interpretation of Melzer that Emile is addressed to an inhabitant of France, where citizenship is no longer possible (Natural Goodness, 92, 277-81, discussed in Chapter 4, Note 28). Some have contended, more broadly, that citizenship is impossible throughout the modern world—Schwartz contends this is why romance is particularly important in the modern world as a source of inspiration (Sexual Politics, 93; see also 61-62). The evidence stemming from which politics Emile was able to study is inconclusive, though probably leans in Schwartz’s more pessimistic direction—they have roamed one of the great states of Europe and more of the small ones (E V, 471/855; cf. 473/857 on the extreme weaknesses of our institutions,” which has the same ambiguity we have discussed in Chapter 2, Note 86).

266 Cf. Julie VI.5, 540/657. Stewart and Vaché explain that The country (pays) or home region is merely a relation of association or familiarity, whereas the image of blood connection in the notion of fatherland (patrie) is more essential’ (CW 6:714n30). We have also mentioned this distinction in discussing the link between political life and learning one’s duties (Note 57).

267 The laws had protected Emile, even though the social contract has not been observed’: individual interest [has] protected him as the general will would have done...” (E V, 473/858). Emile’s political duties mainly include living peaceably among one’s compatriots, the morality of his actions, the love of virtue,” and living according to the eternal laws of nature and order.... For the wise man, they take the place of positive law” (473/857-58).
exhorts Emile to live amidst his compatriots, to cultivate their friendship in sweet association \([\textit{un doux commerce}]\),” and to dwell in — the patriarchal and rustic life, man’s first life, which is the most peaceful, the most natural, and the sweetest \([\textit{la plus douce}]\) life for anyone who does not have a corrupt heart” (474/859). 268 Emile should not let so sweet \([\textit{si douce}]\) a life make him regard painful duties \([\textit{pénibles devoirs}]\) with disgust, if such duties are imposed on you” (474/860). If he is called to service, he should fulfill this honorable function; 269 yet if he fulfills it with integrity, he will probably not hold the post long; and among the men of the present age,” Emile is not the sort of man who will be sought (474f/860). So, far from obliterating the ‘man or citizen’ dichotomy, one of Neuhouser’s major proof-texts starkly contrasts a sweet life of domesticity with a life of painful and corrupt public duties, which should be avoided if possible. 270 In a similar vein, Neuhouser is correct that seeking to distinguish oneself in public life through bravery and virtue, and in behalf of esteem and glory, is a constant theme in many of

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268 We have discussed this briefly alongside related passages in Chapter 1, Note 53. Part of its sweetness is that it is more independent and closer to nature than a political life. Jean-Jacques seems to endorse Emile’s wishes to seek — other happiness than living in independence with the one I love” (E V, 456f/834), and — voluntarily to add no other chain to the one with which nature and the laws burden me” (471/855). The final form of independence and self-sufficiency, then, seems to be the family (cf. E III, 191/464 for another case of — independence” referring to a family unit). This would support the interpretation that the family is natural in a broad sense (cf. Chapter 4, Note 102).

269 This is said to follow the model of the Romans, who — went from the plow to the consulate” (E V, 474/860). In this way, then, Emile could be said to follow an ancient model of citizenship, although in his prescriptive-political mode of thought, Rousseau would by no means point to the difficulties of public life as a justification for withdrawing in favor of the sweeter bosoms of private life.

270 This also indicates that it is problematic for Neuhouser to prove his contention that Emile is clearly intended for citizenship because perfect self-sufficiency is — incompatible not only with the deepest forms of happiness available to humans (E IV, 221/503; DOI II, 164/168) but also with the realization of the _noblest_ potential of the species (SC I.8; DOI II, 203/207)” (Neuhouser, 21). For the passages he cites regarding deepest happiness clearly regard domestic society, not political society. This is a case where, as we have shown above, one needs to understand that Rousseau is working not with a dichotomy but a _trichotomy_ of solitary man, domestic man, and citizen (Section 1.1, esp. around Note 39). On the other hand, the passages Neuhouser cites on our _noblest_ potential are more on target regarding civic life, and we will see below the complexity of Rousseau’s treatment of this issue.
Yet it is surely important to the "man or citizen" debate that the Emile explicitly rejects this approach. Not only is Emile taught to avoid political service in general (if possible), but among his first lessons in history is the miseries of political ambition and conquest (E IV, 239-43/528-34), and among his first political lessons is the dishonorableness of joining the military service (E V, 456/834). Although these themes overlap to some degree with Rousseau’s settled political judgments, the tone and emphasis in these passages is far different than any offered in political contexts, and the motivational reasons behind this are quite evident upon a "man versus citizen" interpretation.

We may turn now to Neuhouser’s second thesis, that Rousseau’s "man or citizen" remark is directed against ancient citizenship, and that Emile is accordingly prepared for citizenship in a "modern republic" or a "modern, democratic state." The suggestion is intriguing, and one might wish that Neuhouser had said more in its behalf. He does not seem to offer direct evidence, apart from his (highly speculative) contentions that Emile’s education is the sort expected to serve the republic of the Social Contract, and that the

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271 Neuhouser, 169. It may be observed, in the block quote above, that the examples given of this praise of political life—from the First Discourse and the Discourse on Political Economy—are clearly "political" texts according to the typical man versus citizen readings.

272 Specifically, Rousseau’s political writings do, occasionally and briefly, make clear that conquest is not the point behind all of his praise of martial participation (Chapter 3, Note 110). And he also consistently opposes mercenary service (Chapter 3, Note 109). So the stances and emphasis in Emile seem to derive, first, from the impossibility of virtuous citizen-service in either political life or the military in the modern world (or perhaps only in France); and second, from the comparative sweetness of a domestic life which can avoid these harsh realities. Consider Emile’s broader avoidance of trades involving bloodshed and others which are contrary to sentiments of humanity (Chapter 4, Note 153).

273 Neuhouser, 20, 21n34, 169.

274 This seems implied by Neuhouser’s claim that the Emile and the Social Contract form a two-pronged solution to the problems of amour-propre, the latter dealing with "a society’s basic institutions" and the former with "how the individuals within them are privately raised" (157-58).
Social Contract implicitly repudiates” ancient approaches to education—because they are incompatible with citizens remaining (ethically and rationally) sovereign individuals.275 The first major problem with this is that, except for the case of the domestic education of Emile, Rousseau endorses ancient and public approaches to education—emphatically, without exception, and in stark contrast with modern approaches.276 This is true across Rousseau’s entire career, from the First Discourse, the Discourse on Political Economy, and the Letter to d’Alembert, through the late prescriptive works, the Constitutional Project for Corsica, and Considerations on the Government of Poland.277 So in this sense, Neuhouser’s attempt to make Rousseau more

275 Neuhouser, 23. On the other hand, Neuhouser does attempt to reconcile the pictures of rational motivation in Emile and in ancient Rome (236-56). At one point he describes how—the civic education Rousseau prescribes in order to foster [civic] identification is said to require teaching children to love what is truly fine [beau] rather than what is malformed’ (DPE 20/259). In other words, love for the fatherland in its proper form is a love of—a commitment to—normative ideals that distinguish the fine from the base” (237). I would say that this rationalizing interpretation of Rousseau’s education in patriotism is philosophically admirable but exegetically unsupported. Moreover, this quotation is immediately followed by Rousseau’s insistence on the young citizens’ need to be taught from early on—to look upon their individual self except in its relations with the body of the state” (DPE 20/259). It is this just polity, rather than critical normative ideals, which Rousseau’s citizens are taught to love as—truly fine.” And this is precisely the model of ancient citizenship that Neuhouser argues was repudiated in the Emile. We have discussed this passage in more detail in Section 4.1, following Note 19.

276 More broadly, Rousseau seems to have considered the ancients superior to the moderns on perhaps every political question, including active political participation rather than representation, the strong subordination of private economic pursuits to public goods, the sharing of a common identity, and the universal participation in a vigorous citizen-army. His sympathetic interpreters see him as a defender of individual rights and equality due to his rejection of slavery (SC I.1-4), but he nowhere develops this into a point of superiority of the moderns over the ancients (cf. SC III.15, 114/431; —The State of War,” LPW 176/OC 3:608). The closest he may have come to this view is his critique of the ancient acts of violence among the pagans and his reflections upon the slow development of ideas of natural right, which were helped along by Christianity (GM I.2, 81/287; [Civil Religion], 119/338, block-quoted in Section 4.2, around Note 40). He ultimately seems to have thought the great and useless science” of political right” was yet to be born (E V, 458/836). It is apparently taken as useless for the same reason Saint-Pierre’s project was fundamentally erroneous—that it presupposes humans to be rational, like Saint-Pierre himself, instead of taking them as they are and will continue to be” (Conf. IX, 355/422; see also PF XVI [On Morals], 70/554, and Chapter 3, Note 36 above). In all of this there is no trace of hope in a self-consciously modern republican future.

277 In his historically contextual analysis, Bloch also maintains that in such writings, Rousseau made it clear that, in the case of a truly free society, he was in favour of public education” (Rousseauism and Education, 4; see also 13).
coherent markedly decreases overall coherence. Such incoherence, if real, would be rather bizarre on Rousseau's part, since he certainly presents himself as a friend of liberty and justice in his other political writings. And yet he would have offered no explanation why in the *Social Contract* he implicitly repudiates the educational system which he argued was essential to republican liberty in every other place he discussed such liberty. In addition to the evidence from his other political texts, it is difficult to decipher how exactly the "sovereign individuals" of the *Social Contract* depart from the strong communitarian formation and pressures which pervade the other political writings (see, e.g., SC II.7, III.15, IV.7-8). If there is no discussion of the educational system, then, this does not seem likely to be an endorsement of the domestic approach of the *Emile*, but rather due to the fact that *Of the Social Contract: Or, Principles of Political Right* only deals with a small proportion of what was intended to come to fruition as *Political Institutions* (cf. SC, "Notice," 40/349). This interpretation of Rousseau's politics may also help explain why he disappoints Neuhouser in failing to go much beyond the ideas he absorbed from his youthful readings of the ancients to think creatively about the distinctive forms political honor might take in a modern, democratic state. For Rousseau, by all indications, would consider "modern republic" a

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278 By contrast, various "man versus citizen" dichotomies (such as Melzer's, Cooper's, and my own) offer coherent explanations for Rousseau's differing proposals according to social context and audience. These are also based on fairly straightforward suggestions by Rousseau himself. However, my interpretation has emphasized social context, whereas the Straussian emphasize audience (see Chapter 1, Notes 25 and 38, and Chapter 4, Notes 53 and 145).

279 Of course, Rousseau's "youthful readings" were far more significant to him than Neuhouser suggests. Plutarch was not only the first book Rousseau read in his childhood, but the one he planned to read last in his old age; he is "the author who grips and benefits me the most" (Rev. IV, 28/1024).

280 Neuhouser, 169.
contradiction in terms, and he thought that it was only by pointing to the stern, simple models of ancient peoples that a few small, isolated communities might radically resist the processes of modernization in order to retain a substantial degree of their natural autonomy. For all the worthy contributions of Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love, then, we might remain skeptical of its resolution of the dichotomy between man and citizen.

Although we cannot say that Rousseau favors modern republics to ancient politics, or that Emile’s education culminates in his participation in a modern republic, another important challenge looms against the man versus citizen dichotomy. This has been stated well by Geraint Parry, who, unlike Neuhouser, grants that Emile does not share actively in the life of a fatherland. Yet, Parry contends, the Emile might be reconciled with the Social Contract in a more qualified sense—that the regime of Du contrat social is the one least incompatible with Émile’s upbringing and represents the

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281 See E I, 40/250, and the discussions in Sections 3.6 and 4.1. In view of his consistent polemics against modern politics, economics, and culture (Chapters 2 and 3 above), it is highly implausible that he thought of himself as offering a model of “modern republics” in contrast with ancient ones (see also Chapter 4, Note 275).

282 See Sections 2.6 and 3.6, esp. Chapter 3, Note 173. Neuhouser’s analysis of Rousseau’s critique of civilization and capitalism is in many respects similar to mine (see 119-27, 161-71). Yet in drawing out the implications of these critiques, Rousseau appears quite Rawlsian, in effect a moderate left-liberal in his approaches to taxation, commerce, and inequality (see 151, 165-68, esp. 168n23). It seems to me that in focusing on his commonalities with various pre-modern and anti-modern sources, such as Plutarch’s Lycurgus and Fenelon, we have offered a more authentic interpretation of Rousseau as intending to keep commerce from ever arising beyond an absolute minimum. This differs in several important ways from any possible left-liberalism, which is fundamentally reconciled to commerce, while more-or-less marginally alleviating its undesirable consequences through regulation and redistribution (see Chapter 2 and Section 3.6 above). This is one example of what I take to be a drawback of Neuhouser’s interpretive method, which pays more attention…to the subsequent development of Rousseau’s ideas than to their antecedents because I am less interested in understanding the historical origins of his thought than in exploring its philosophical promise” (13). Although Neuhouser’s endeavor has potentially great value, it risks reading later convictions into Rousseau, such as the meaning of his abstract language of freedom and autonomy in the Social Contract. By contrast, I have attempted to follow the modern and Schleiermachian hermeneutical method, that one should strictly separate the quest for the historical meaning of a text from the quest for the higher truths we may derive from it. See the discussion in Vittorio Hösle, “Platonism and Its Interpretations: The Three Paradigms and Their Place in the History of Hermeneutics.”
only country to whose institutions Émile might be prepared to give his full allegiance while retaining his independence.”

Parry’s solution has the clear strength of accounting for the “action” of the *Emile*, that no truly free state is found, and that this is at least somewhat disappointing to Jean-Jacques. It would also make the action of the *Emile* more compatible with the apparently superlative praise which Rousseau frequently bestows upon the sweet —denaturing” of republican life—even though in the *Emile* as it stands, the crown of superlative praise is clearly bestowed only upon the “sweet associations” of rural and domestic life. For the purposes of this study, we shall grant that Parry may be correct, and that there may be no definitive interpretive answer at this level of precision. Emile is clearly a man of virtue, and such men are willing to undertake public services. In weighing the claims of the *Emile* that these are burdensome in comparison with the sweet and more natural joys of family life, one may find an ambivalence in Rousseau, or one may find a lament that public life has been so widely degraded in the modern world. In addition—considering our previous findings that there are a few elements of independence and individualism even in Rousseau’s most sternly civic politics—by

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283 Parry, “Education,” 623; see 622-23. He cites Peter Jimack, Jean Chateau, and Julia Simon in support of this view (636n45). See also Parry, “Thinking One’s Own Thoughts: Autonomy and the Citizen,” 102-8; and “Émile,” 259-260, 263-68, esp. 265-68.

284 As Parry maintains: “Beneath the apparently idyllic concluding pages of *Émile* there is the clear sense that Rousseau is offering his reader only a second best. It is an education for a profoundly unsatisfactory world, and it largely consists in learning about it only to avoid it so far as is feasible” (“Émile,” 260).

285 See our discussion in Section 1.1, esp. drawing from Jonathan Marks (Chapter 1, Note 42). More generally, see the discussion in Section 2.6 on how Rousseau’s republican state is so vigorously activistic precisely in order to support self-sufficient independence. This would seem to be chiefly a matter of maintaining *economic* independence, whereas the citizens must be interdependent in the sense of collectively holding up the full integrity of the laws, as sharply distinguished from human wills (cf. E II, 85/311).
joining such a free society Emile could perhaps ennoble himself in (occasional?) public service, without too seriously detracting from the richness of his domestic life.

Granting all of this as so many possibilities about which Rousseau may have been intentionally ambiguous or fully ambivalent, I would want to re-sharpen the man versus citizen dichotomy in one key respect. That is, even if Emile is well-suited to serve the truly free polity, we have no Rousseauian reason to believe that such a polity could support itself—either solely or chiefly—through domestically educated Emiles. This is because, first, Emile’s education is presented as extraordinarily difficult to attain in every way—for instance, in having had the complete dedication of one fully virtuous and philosophically sound tutor for twenty years, in virtually complete social isolation for all of his childhood and youth. The impossibility of institutionalizing such a system is, most likely, why Rousseau consistently forwarded public education—run by the state and for the state—as the means to maintain free polities. There the children would be removed from the harmful prejudices which may prevail among their parents, and would be raised in a basic economic equality among themselves. But since their early

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286 See, for instance, Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, 163. Manon Roland was thus disappointed in attempting Rousseau’s impractical method, and wrote to her husband: “One would have to devote oneself entirely to the child, without reserve, and you have to admit that there are few stations in this world that would allow you to concentrate and devote yourself solely to the education of one child” (quoted in Douthwaite, *The Wild Girl*, 143). Of course, Rousseau and others have replied that *Emile* is intended for consideration by philosophical minds and not as a manual for mothers and fathers (cf. *Mountain V*, 211f/783; Bloom, “Introduction” to E, 28), but insofar as this is a fair reply, it would also undermine the prospects for reproducing these principles on a mass scale.

287 Parry is unconvincing in his attempts to explain away the anti-liberal elements of the *Letter to d’Alembert*, *Poland*, and the civil religion chapter in the *Social Contract* (“Autonomy and the Citizen,” 112-18). The concern for autonomy in the *Social Contract* is developed more subtly in a later article (“Emile,” 263-68).

288 See the discussion of DPE 21/261 in Section 4.1, around Note 12. In Geneva and various Swiss regions, a republican or nearly republican system seems to have been maintained despite the lack of public education. If so, they would be exceptions to highly compelling psychological forces, apparently deriving from their uniquely isolated geographies. Consider the discussion of Geneva above (Chapter 2,
socialization precludes them from delaying the onset and acceleration of *amour-propre* in the manner of Emile, Rousseau seeks to maintain psychological equilibrium by quickening the development of their *amour-propre*, while directing it to broader and higher ends—chiefly of competition for honor among themselves, and of delight in the greatness and unity of the polity at large. Similarly, although one later passage does offer its own version of "negative education" in a public setting, overall the publicly educated boys seem to accustom themselves from early on to externally-imposed discipline and even obedience. It remains somewhat mysterious how Rousseau could come to exalt such a highly socializing, competitive, and ideologically-laden education as his ancient public systems, given his lengthy and radical polemics against many elements of them in the *Emile*. We find, it seems to me, the most plausible solution placed amid the very polemic against moral commands in the *Emile*: "The phrase "there is no more" is a response against which no child has ever rebelled unless he believed that it was a lie. Besides, there is no middle point here: nothing must be demanded from him at all, or he must be bent from the outset to the most perfect obedience" (E II, 91/320f; cf. PF VI [On Public Happiness], 41/510). I doubt whether Rousseau would describe his civic education as "the most perfect obedience," but its pupils are taught "laws for childhood that teach obedience to others" (DPE 21/260), and they are deeply habituated from the

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Note 43). We have seen Rousseau argue that although the Romans did provide a domestic education that could meet civic ends, this was a virtually miraculous exception which supports the rule (DPE 22/262, discussed in Chapter 4, Note 15).

289 See the discussion of *Poland IV* in Section 4.1, beginning around Note 13. As Parry observes, there does not seem to be any sort of attempt to delay the development of the boys in public education. "There is no attempt, as with Emile, to eschew interpretation and present the unadulterated facts. Discovery-learning has no place in this scheme" ("Émile," 264). See, to similar effect, Shklar, *Men and Citizens* (160, in contrast with the pastoral Golden Age, 31).
earliest age to serve higher goods, social norms, and the fixed laws of the community (cf. E II, 85/311). They may share with Emile the toughening formed by regular exposure to the harsher elements of nature, but they add to this a civic socialization and inspiration to counter-balance the more privately-driven or exclusionary expressions of their burgeoning amour-propre. If they are likely to emerge less independently-minded, less rational, and less cosmopolitan than Emile, they will have the kind of fervor needed by most to overcome the temptations of society, and to defend their borders with an élan which the Stoic Emile and the true Christians lack. Although in its methods, such a public education seems contrary to the Emile, in terms of its objectives and its underlying psychology, a kind of coherence emerges. For the Emile is withering in its criticisms of the impact of amour-propre, and it would seem that the true Citizen is in need of especially strong patriotism and stern virtues in order to overcome all effeminating luxuries—including, we might add, even the modest luxuries which Julie and Emile seem to be permitted.

290 See above, around Notes 52 and 236. This description of Emile also accords with the dispassionate citizenship described by Cooper and Kelly (Note 255). A further consideration is that Rousseau probably believes that if Emile’s cosmopolitanism were fully popularized, in practice it would only weaken the sentiments of humanity rather than broaden their application (Section 4.2, and Chapter 1, Note 16).

291 The only apparent concession to luxury in a political context is in Poland (III, 188f/965), where it is conceded that military luxury may be tolerated in the unequal environment of Poland, but –effeminate finery” must be held in contempt, at least among all the men (discussed in Section 3.1, Note 45, and Section 4.1, around Note 19). By contrast, in the Moral-Domestic context, St. Preux approvingly describes the –luxury of pleasure and sensuality” one finds in Julie’s exemplary household, although there is no –luxury of magnificence and vanity.” For instance, Julie approves of the new inventions in Paris and London for —spending Carriages more softly [plus doucement],” but not of the great expenses of painting them, since this in no way makes them more comfortable (Julie V.2, 435/531. Cf. the complete rejection of carriages in a political context: Fragments to Corsica, CW 11:160/OC 3:945). See also Rousseau’s remarks about how he would live if he were rich: —…would differ from [all other rich men] very much by being sensual and voluptuous rather than proud and vain and by devoting myself to indolent luxury far more than to ostentatious luxury” (E IV, 345/678; cf. PF V [On Honor and Virtue], 35f/502). Although Emile could never wisely increase his dependence upon wealth through enjoying these kinds of luxury (cf.
In closing, we might reflect on the likelihood that Rousseau exaggerated the oppressiveness, softness, and imminent collapse brought upon by modernization, since highly modernized societies have been shown capable of flourishing in several ways for at least a few centuries. It remains to be seen, though, whether these societies will be attentive enough to their characteristic weaknesses to be able to ameliorate or compensate for them, and Rousseau sharply draws our attention to many of these weaknesses. We have also found that he has unusually pessimistic views regarding the standard effects of human socialization, as well as of the motivational role which reason can typically play in human life. It may also be that his extraordinary sense of the dangers of typical socialization leads him to overemphasize the republic’s need for patriotism, as well as the child’s need to live gently without personal authority and harshly amid the realities of nature. Similarly, we may be grateful that our continued modernization renders much of his depiction of domestic life too starkly unequal for us. Yet here, too, venturing outside the confines of our cultural elite may support his sense that human males are often in grave need of moral and social refinement, and human females can play a pivotal role in

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E V, 472/856), the examples of Julie and Rousseau seem to indicate that, in the Moral-Domestic context, the enjoyment they bring outweighs their moral risks.

292 See, for instance, the appeal Mary Keys makes to Tocqueville in demonstrating modernity’s need for ancient and medieval concerns about virtue and the common good (Aquinas, Aristotle, and the Promise of the Common Good, 6-12). See also Vittorio Hösl’s synthesis of modern universalism with ancient virtue (Morals and Politics, esp. 26-27, 48, 60-61, 107-21, 176-82, 281-304, 551-53, 596-98). We have also mentioned criticisms of current economic and academic systems in the final pages of Chapter 3.

293 Cooper concludes his careful study by pointing out the senses in which Rousseau overestimated the dangers of *amour-propre* (see Rousseau, Nature, 195-207). Neuhouser concludes that Rousseau’s most important claims regarding the drive for human recognition are correct, while then offering valuable criticisms of his attempt to explain all human evils on the single basis of *amour-propre* (Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love, 265-70).
Finally, there can be little doubt that the Rousseau presented here—with his unique combinations of virtue and autonomy, primitivism and refinement, severity and gentleness, and opposition to softness and cruelty—cannot be comprehensively appropriated by either the modern Right or Left. If virtually all of us will end up fundamentally disagreeing with him in key respects, we might do him the honor of acknowledging that his brooding authority weighs against us on these matters, and then challenge him explicitly rather than appropriate (or dismiss) him simplistically. That would be a matter of intellectual integrity upon which we might all agree—assuming, of course, that Rousseau was mistaken to find modern intellectuals constitutionally incapable of integrity or true honor.

These claims are also controversial, of course. For balanced and thoughtful treatments, which often draw from Rousseau, see Leon Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom: A Reading of Genesis*, chs. 5, 10-11; and Amy and Leon Kass, *Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying*. 

294 These claims are also controversial, of course. For balanced and thoughtful treatments, which often draw from Rousseau, see Leon Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom: A Reading of Genesis*, chs. 5, 10-11; and Amy and Leon Kass, *Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying*. 

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