WHAT SOPHIE SEES: THE INTERSECTION OF PROPERTY AND FAMILY IN ROUSSEAU'S *ÉMILE*

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Abstract

This thesis explores the concepts of freedom embodied by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's characters of Émile and Sophie, using property as a focal point. The thesis is divided into three parts: the first looks at Emile's inability to understand property and the relationships property implies; the second seeks to present Sophie's education as an alternative with merits on its own terms; the third examines how a perspective like Sophie can be used to judge property, family, and other relationships Emile deems to be constraints on his freedom. Ostensibly, Rousseau's Émile is a "natural man," or, a human being who Rousseau suggests is a perfect, independent whole. However, throughout Émile, Rousseau challenges this idea of freedom as personal wholeness. Beginning with Émile's introduction to property, which Rousseau claims is the beginning of his moral education, Émile struggles to understand how owning property ties him to other people. In Rousseau's unfinished sequel, "Émile et Sophie," Émile abandons both his property and his family. These twin abandonments point to a failing in Émile's education, as he cannot reconcile abstractions, like his personal liberty, with the particularities of real life. Sophie can do what Émile cannot—she can reconcile abstractions and particulars. From her perspective, property and family are more than constraints to be abandoned, because she can judge and shape the ties that bind her. By thinking like Sophie, readers can also evaluate the relationships that legitimatise the ownership of property and judge whether these relationships are just. Moreover, in thinking like Sophie, readers do not simply reproduce Sophie's conclusions. Instead, they compare Sophie's opinions to the alternatives Rousseau presents throughout *Émile* and "Émile et Sophie." In doing so, readers learn to judge for themselves, transcending the perspectives of Sophie, Émile, and even Rousseau.

Résumé

Cette thèse explore l'idée de la liberté telle que c'est incarné par les personnages de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Émile et Sophie, utilisant la propriété comme point focal. La thèse est divisée en trois parties : le premier concerne l'inhabilité d'Émile de comprendre la propriété et les relations que la propriété implique ; la deuxième présent l'éducation de Sophie comme une alternative ; la troisième cherche à utiliser la perspective de Sophie pour juger la propriété, la famille et les autres relations qu'Émile trouve sont des contraintes sur sa liberté. Ça semble que l'Émile de Rousseau est une « homme naturel » ou un être humain que Rousseau suggère est un entier absolu, parfait et indépendant. Mais, tout au long d'Émile, Rousseau conteste l'idée de liberté que l'homme naturel représente. Commençant avec l'introduction d'Émile au propriété, que Rousseau prétend est le début de son éducation moral, Émile a du mal à comprendre comment posséder la propriété se lie aux autres personnes. Dans la suite incomplète, « Émile et Sophie », Émile s'abandonne son propriété et sa famille. Ces actes d'abandon jumeaux indiquent un manque sévère dans l'éducation d'Émile, car il ne peut pas réconcilier les abstractions, comme sa liberté personnelle, avec les particularités de sa vie. Sophie, par contre, peut faire ce qu'Émile ne peut pas—elle peut réconcilier les abstractions et les particularités. De sa perspective, la propriété et la famille sont plus que les contraintes d'être abandonnés, parce qu'elle peut juger et former les liens qui la lient. Par pensant comme Sophie, on peut aussi évaluer les relations qui légitimassent la propriété et juger si ces relations sont juste. Par ailleurs, en pensant comme Sophie, on ne reproduit pas simplement les conclusions de Sophie. Plutôt, on compare les opinions de Sophie aux alternatives que Rousseau présent tout au loin d'Émile et « Émile et Sophie ». Ce faisant, on apprend à juger pour nous-mêmes, transcendant les perspectives de Sophie, Émile et même Rousseau.

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Introduction

At two critical junctures in the story of Émile's life, he professes to abandon items that seem to limit his freedom. Ostensibly, the eponymous character of Rousseau's *Émile* is raised to be a "natural man," or, a human being who Rousseau—and many commentators—suggest is a perfect, independent whole.[1] Unlike civil men, who must attempt to satisfy their personal desires and their duties to their society, a natural man exists for himself alone. His actions are unconstrained by the opinions of others; he is a whole unto himself. However, throughout *Émile*, Rousseau challenges this idea of freedom as personal wholeness. Beginning with Émile's introduction to property, which Rousseau claims is the beginning of his moral education, Émile struggles to understand how owning property can irrevocably tie him to other people. Property seems to create boundaries, parcelling out land and dividing objects between individuals; in other words, it creates distinct, individual wholes. However, one's possessions do not exist in a vacuum. Ownership is legitimised by the interdependence property creates between individuals. Consequently, the lesson on property exposes a deep failing in Émile's education, as he cannot reconcile abstractions—like his idea of wholeness—with the particulars of real life. As a young man, Émile claims that should he ever be burdened by the relationships stemming from his ownership of property, he will abandon his property without effort.[2] Property is thus the first item Émile commits to abandoning should it constrain his freedom.

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1. For example, *see* Allan Bloom's "Introduction" in *Emile, or On Education* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1979), 6; David Gauthier, *The Sentiment of Existence* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 32; Johnathan Marks, *Perfections and Disharmony in The Thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12.
2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1979), 472. All subsequent citations for this translation of *Émile* will be in-text.

It is precisely concerning the ability to judge—to reconcile abstractions and particularities—that Émile's education differs from that of his wife, Sophie. Rousseau argues throughout *Émile*, that women should defer to their husbands, and confine themselves to the domestic sphere. From this position, however, women are not meant to be ruled by their husbands; they are to rule their husbands indirectly. Men experience freedom as wholeness—never feeling any tension between themselves, their family, or their political community—because their wives mediate these conflicts by manipulating their husbands' *amour-propre*, sometimes translated as vanity. When Émile claims that should his property subject him, he will abandon it, his tutor suggests this "extravagant disinterestedness" will eventually be tempered by his relationship with his wife and children (473). If Émile learns to see the world from Sophie's perspective, he may come to appreciate how she enables his wholeness and develop a more nuanced understanding of freedom. However, in his unfinished sequel to *Émile*, titled "Émile et Sophie, ou les solitaires," Rousseau suggests that his natural man never learns this lesson. In this text, his family becomes the second item Émile abandons because they constrain his ability to be a self-sufficient and unconstrained whole.

Through these two instances of abandonment, Rousseau points readers to a similarity between property and family—namely, both necessitate the existence of relationships that limit an individual's ability to understand themselves as an independent whole. Many commentators, reading *Émile* from the perspective of the titular character, assume that unrestricted autonomy is the only kind of freedom which concerns Rousseau.[3] However, looking from the perspective of

3. *See* Ernst Cassirer, *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1953), 294; Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 362.

Sophie, another kind of freedom becomes visible. Sophie's ability to judge between abstractions and particulars means that she can contemplate an item as a whole—even if its wholeness might only be chimerical—and evaluate that whole in relation to the imperfect particulars she finds in the world. From Sophie's perspective the relationships born of family and property are not merely constraints; rather, by navigating these inextricable relationships through the use of her autonomous judgement, Sophie embodies freedom understood as self-rule. While Rousseau may not have intended for Sophie's judgement to further explicitly political ends, some aspects of Émile's education in property can only be fully grasped from Sophie's perspective. By thinking like Sophie, readers may evaluate the relationships that legitimatise the ownership of property, and judge whether these relationships are just. Moreover, in thinking like Sophie, readers do not simply reproduce Sophie's conclusions. Instead, readers compare Sophie to the alternatives Rousseau presents throughout *Émile* and "Émile et Sophie." Truly thinking like Sophie teaches readers to judge for themselves. In doing so, they may transcend the perspectives presented by Sophie, Émile, and even Rousseau.

I.

Long before Rousseau introduces readers to Sophie, he introduces Émile—or, the natural man. Unlike the civil man, Rousseau claims that a natural man is an "absolute whole which is relative only to itself or its kind" (39). Civil men understand their worth in relation to something outside of themselves—namely, the social body. In *Émile*, like in his other works, Rousseau suggests that the natural man is happier than civil men, who have a divided sense of self. Yet, he also challenges this assumption; in Book I, he asks, "what will a man raised uniquely for himself become for others?" (41). What good is a natural man who exists only for himself when he inhabits a social world that necessarily binds him to others? Ostensibly, Rousseau creates his fictitious

pupil to answer this question. However, Émile does not prove that the happiness of the natural man is superior to that of others. In many ways, his education fails to prepare him for life in society. For example, Émile never learns how to navigate and evaluate competing claims to ownership, a problem inextricably linked to what Rousseau elsewhere calls the foundation of civil society: property.[4] As he grows up, this inability manifests in a desire to withdraw from political and civil life altogether, an escape which is impossible; no matter where he goes, he finds the world inhabited by people. Ultimately, if Rousseau's natural man continues to judge himself only as an independent whole, he risks becoming a perpetrator of injustice against his co-habitants of the world.

Understanding the specifics of Émile's education as a natural man depends on first understanding the challenges surrounding Rousseau's concept of the natural man. Émile, after all, is not a natural man in the real, physical sense; he is a character in a book, a product of Rousseau's art as a writer. This artifice is needed, Rousseau claims, because, to judge the happiness of a natural man, "he would have to be seen wholly formed" (41). While alive, human beings are not whole, since they continue to grow and change until their deaths. It is only in memory that a human life has a defined shape and arc to evaluate, but memories are chimeras which no longer exist in reality. Rather than looking to the past for a natural man, Rousseau creates the illusion of wholeness in his presentation of Émile. Denise Schaeffer notes that, even to judge Émile's childhood, Rousseau seeks to present it as a whole.[5] She focuses on the transition between Émile's childhood and adolescence at the end of Book II, wherein Rousseau claims Émile has been led "up to the

4. *See* Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," in *The First and Second Discourses*, trans. Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters. (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1964), 141.
5. *See* Denise Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 60–62.

boundaries of childish reason" (158). At this stage, he is "bubbling, lively, animated, without gnawing cares, without long and painful foresight, whole in his present being" (159). Without being conscious of the passage of time or of his own eventual death, Émile views himself only in the present moment, creating an illusion of wholeness. Of course, Émile will grow up, Rousseau tells readers, just as spring buds will bloom in summer and die in autumn (158). Despite Émile's childish sense of wholeness being an illusion, Rousseau invites readers to "cast [their] eyes back over the [stage] we have just completed" (158). Schaeffer argues that Rousseau "both creates an illusory wholeness and reveals its illusory quality."[6] Rousseau needs to create the illusion that Émile's childhood is a completed whole to facilitate the reader's judgement of it. This tactic occurs throughout *Émile*, as Rousseau creates a chimerical natural man to facilitate the reader's judgement of the concept of natural man. By both constructing and drawing attention to this illusory quality, Rousseau calls into question the standard of wholeness by which he asks readers to judge his natural man.

Émile's introduction to property also complicates wholeness as a standard of judgment. This introduction, early in Book II, is the first real lesson the tutor imparts to his pupil. Rousseau frames the lesson as concerning not simply physical property, but "some idea of the relations of man to man and of the morality of human actions" (97). These "primary sentiments," Rousseau argues, "are centered on ourselves: all our natural movements relate in the first instance to our preservation and our well-being. Thus, the first sentiment of justice does not come to us from the justice we owe but from that which is owed us" (97). However, to teach Émile the tutor can only appeal to concepts Émile can understand, and the boy is neither prepared to nor interested in understanding abstract concepts like political or personal freedom, nor can he understand property

6. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 61.

when it is presented as an abstraction. He can, however, understand that something belongs to him. Thus, the tutor begins by having Émile plant some bean seeds, so the pupil might feel that "there is in this earth something of himself" (98). The tutor leads Émile to believe that, by investing his labour with the land, he is responsible for the growth of the beans. Allan Bloom and Judith Shklar suggest that the vision of property the tutor encourages Émile to adopt is essentially the same as that of John Locke: cultivation and labour legitimise ownership, but only over otherwise uncultivated land.[7]

However, when Émile initially plants his beans, he has only learned the first half of this precept. One day, the boy arrives to tend his garden, and finds his sprouts uprooted. He cries, in natural indignation, "what has become of my labour, my product, the sweet fruit of my care and my sweat? Who has stolen my goods? Who has taken my beans from me?" (98). The tutor shares in Émile's indignation, spurred by the "first sentiment of injustice" (97). From this sentiment, Émile can be taught about morality and the relationships that exist between people. After a brief investigation, Émile and his tutor discover the culprit: the gardener of the estate, Robert. However, Robert explains that it is Émile who has committed an injustice: he uprooted Émile's garden after the boy unintentionally destroyed Robert's Maltese melons to plant his beans. Émile's sense of injustice was roused, only to be proven unjustified because he did not see the whole picture. Through his conflict with Robert, Émile realises that he did not see the property in full; the standard by which he judged his claim was incomplete. To understand the garden as a whole, Émile must recognise that others may have cultivated the land before him. The tutor who manufactures the

7. Bloom, "Introduction," 13; Judith Shklar, *Man and Citizen: a study of Rousseau's social theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 49; *cf*. John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C.B. Macpherson (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1980), §27, §32–34.

lesson—and Rousseau, as the author of the book—see this episode in full from the beginning; however, this standard of wholeness is initially inaccessible to Émile, and to the reader.

Though Rousseau's overall definition of property mirrors that found in Locke's *Second Treatise*, the way he introduces property to Émile is notably different from Locke's opinions on child-rearing. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Locke suggests that children should be taught to respect property "before they have Language and Understanding enough" to grasp the rights given by labour.[8] As such, the first piece of property children possess must be a gift. Rousseau explicitly rejects founding a pupil's understanding of property on such a basis, as "a gift is a convention and […] the child cannot know yet what convention is" (98). Instead, Rousseau stresses that the tutor must "go back to the origin of property"—that being the act of mixing one's labour with an item (98). A child raised in a rural area, he claims, will naturally develop some understanding of this concept of labour; thus, it is easy to present them with an idea of property that is self-contained. Their claim to ownership over a plant stems from the fact they have watched over it from inception to completion. Émile believes he is judging the question of ownership as a whole, even though this whole is an illusion. Consequently, when his illusion of wholeness is shattered by Robert, Émile is prepared to understand this new whole. He understands the value of his labour, and must only adjust his perception to accommodate the realisation that the labour of others has equal value. As a result, when Robert gifts Émile a piece of his garden without condition, Émile can understand why this gift meaningful.

On one hand, this disagreement between Rousseau and Locke is simply a disagreement over what concepts children will understand first: the ownership given by gifts or the ownership

8. Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, ed. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 2003), §110.

given by labour. However, this belies a deeper dispute concerning how knowledge and instruction should be imparted on children generally. Locke understands that children are not born with fully developed rational faculties. As such, while they are under the tutelage of their parents or their governor, children should respect the reason of their instructor. If instructors use their reason to create a select number of rules that a pupil can remember—for example, that one must "[bow] to a Gentleman when he salutes him"—the pupil will learn these rules as habits.[9] By accompanying these customs with explanations "in very few and plain Words" children will eventually learn the reasons behind their habits.[10] Thus, Locke suggests that children need not have the illusion of seeing the whole picture to develop their reason and judgement correctly. Locke's recommendation that children read *Aesop's Fables* demonstrates this philosophy in practice, as the *Fables* are "apt to delight and entertain a Child" without the child necessarily understanding the morals.[11] However, if children commit these stories to memory, they may reflect on their meaning later. As adults, the morals are now understood and instruct their "manly Thought, and serious Business."[12] In short, Locke suggests that children can be instructed to become rational creatures without fully understanding the whole of their initial teachings.

Rousseau takes the opposite tack. He says that "[a]t twelve Émile will hardly know what a book is," though he will know how to read (116). When Émile does begin to read books, his first book, and his only book for some time, is *Robinson Crusoe*. Unlike fables, *Robinson Crusoe* presents a whole that is intelligible to a young boy—provided one ignores the "rigmarole" at the beginning and end, wherein Crusoe is in contact with civil society (185). By only considering the

9. Locke, *Some Thoughts*, §64.
10. Locke, *Some Thoughts*, §81.
11. Locke, *Some Thoughts*, §156.
12. Locke, *Some Thoughts*, §156.

middle of the novel, Émile sees Crusoe "on his island, alone, deprived the assistance of his kind and the instruments of all the arts." (184). If he projects himself onto Crusoe, Émile can learn to make better judgements because, by pretending to be a man in isolation, he can raise himself "above prejudices," and "judge everything as this man himself ought to judge of it with respect to his own utility" (185). This whole is, of course, illusory; it is derived from a novel rather than from life, and it is not even taken from the whole of the novel. Moreover, this image "is not that of social man" and "very likely is not going to be that of Émile" (184–85). Nevertheless, it is a whole Émile can judge, as the image of his bean seeds had been. Both are illusions of wholeness, but, by considering them as wholes, Émile learns to judge them for himself, in contrast to Locke's recommendation of learning to reason through habit.

Rousseau uses the fables of La Fontaine to demonstrate the danger of basing a child's knowledge on habitual and partial understanding. First, he points to the difficulty in explaining the foreign concepts that occur in fables—from poetic turns of phrase to the meaning of conventional titles like "master," "monsieur," and "landlord." However, Rousseau's concern is not simply that the child will misunderstand; rather, he warns that children will judge these stories without understanding them in full. For example, in a fable wherein a fox tricks a crow, through flattery, into dropping a piece of cheese, tutors may think they are teaching their pupils to beware flatterers, but Rousseau suggests that pupils will instead admire the fox. The children are being asked to judge a story about the dangers of trickery, without understanding the social conventions and moral relations that make trickery disadvantageous. Without understanding the story as a whole, Rousseau argues that children will make "the choice of *amour-propre*" (115). In other words, children will choose that which gives them an advantage relative to others, rather than what is virtuous. Through La Fontaine and *Robinson Crusoe*, Rousseau criticises Locke on Locke's terms,

suggesting that teaching children to judge based on partial information will not inculcate autonomous judgement nor a love of freedom, but a habit of following arbitrary decrees and of manipulating others to satisfy their vanity.[13]

Locke might respond to this accusation by arguing that his method cultivates awe of reason from an early age. He writes that children should "stand in awe of" their parents, so that "when they come to ripe Years, they should look on them as their best, as their only sure Friends."[14] Nathan Tarcov argues that this "recommendation of government by means of a reverence based on forgotten force […] may have a Machiavellian ring.''[15] However, Johnathan Marks observes that Locke's pupil is "educated not to be in awe of just any authority but to be in awe of authorities akin to his father."[16] Ultimately, Locke's pupil does not simply stand in awe of authority, but of reason. However, the transition from standing in awe of reason to loving reason is vague at best, as Locke never treats the subject of love. He ends his education when his "young Gentleman is within view of matrimony,"[17] a point Rousseau criticises in Book V before detailing Émile's courtship of and eventual marriage to Sophie (357). Tarcov and Ruth Grant suggest that Locke neglects the topic of love because he is focused on "individual independence and self-mastery,"[18] yet this is a focus Rousseau appears to share. Through his education of Émile, he seeks to fulfill Locke's aim of creating an independent and rational gentleman, demonstrating how Locke fails to meet his own objective. However, *Émile* also contains a broader critique of Locke. By explicitly

13. Johnathan Marks elaborates this argument in "Rousseau's Critique of Locke's Education for Liberty," *The Journal of Politics* 74, no. 3 (2012): 694–706.
14. Locke, *Some Thoughts*, §41.
15. Nathan Tarcov, *Locke's Education for Liberty* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 96.
16. Marks, "Rousseau's Critique of Locke's Education for Liberty," 702.
17. Locke, *Some Thoughts*, §216.
18. Nathan Tarcov and Ruth Grant, "Introduction," in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education and Of the Conduct of Understanding*, by John Locke (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1996), xii.

considering love and the interdependence love implies, Rousseau challenges the assumption that Émile can be master of himself without reference to others—or, in other words, that an individual can be an independent whole.

Reflecting on Rousseau's criticism of Locke allows for a new understanding of the episode in Book II concerning the garden. First, Émile believes that, in cultivating his beans, he owns the plants because he has laboured over them in their entirety. However, the beans are planted in the ground, and that ground has already been cultivated by Robert. To understand who owns the bean garden, Émile must change his perspective to evaluate it as a whole—understanding that what he previously thought to be the whole was limited. Because no fallow land remains, leaving Émile without any to claim, Robert agrees to gift a small parcel of land to him. This lesson, according to Rousseau, enables children to see "how the idea of property goes back to the right of the first occupant by labour" (99). Yet, in agreeing to share the land, Émile and Robert have not truly settled the question of who is the first and rightful occupant; they assume that there are no occupants before themselves. Perhaps Robert knows that his claim to the land goes back to its first cultivation, but this information is not shared with Émile. As such, Émile's new understanding of the garden's ownership is based on limits similar to his initial understanding, since his perception of the garden as a whole does not extend beyond Robert.

Rousseau acknowledges this fault in Émile's logic, interrupting the narrative to contrast Émile's possession of his beans to Núñez de Balboa's possession of South America in the name of the Spanish crown. Émile nurtures and cultivates plants that are physically rooted in the soil, while Balboa's claim is purely nominal, resting on the Spanish flag he planted in the ground. Yet, whether willfully or not, Balboa and Émile ignore the potential that their land was used by prior occupants. Both believe that the claim to legitimate ownership begins with themselves. As Frances

Ferguson notes, while Robert and Émile's agreement may seem more legitimate than Balboa's because they have both consented to the arrangement, nonetheless "it resembles Balboa's in that both actions implicitly imagine that legitimate possession of the land can be defined as beginning with them."[19] As a human being with limited knowledge, one can never see the whole picture; thus, one can never know who exactly was the first true owner of a property. Practically, claims to legitimate ownership require waiving this question to some degree. Through this episode of the beans, Rousseau demonstrates that all property—and all contracts made possible by property—are supported by a tacit agreement to ignore the possibility of other claims. Ferguson describes this move as "the skillful deployment of ignorance,"[20] an assessment that coincides with Schaeffer's observation that judgement—whether it be of the legitimacy of a claim to property or the happiness of the natural man—requires the illusion of knowing the whole.

How to judge based on a whole, particularly as it concerns property and contract, is a problem that haunts Émile. As an adult, he strives to avoid societal vices. He need not worry about being totally dispossessed, as he was in Robert's garden, since he has inherited property. His education, however, has taught him to disdain professions in commerce, public office, finance, or the military, for example, as these careers would enhance his social status and the value of his property at the expense of entangling himself further in the vice and dependence of civil society. Émile tells his tutor that the only property he desires is "a little farm in some corner of the world" (457). The tutor praises Émile for his modesty, but highlights that "these treasures […] are not as common as you think" (457):

19. Frances Ferguson, "Reading Morals: Locke and Rousseau on Education and Inequality," *Representations* 6 (1984), 82.
20. Ferguson, 83.

> A field which is yours, dear Émile! And in what place will you choose it? In what corner of the earth will you be able to say 'Here I am master of myself and of the land which belongs to me?' […] Who knows where one can live independent and free, without need to harm anyone and without fear of being harmed? (457)

Émile, it seems, does not fully recall that he has previously tried to claim a field—or rather, a bean garden—only to realise he had unjustly taken the land from another. His tutor explicitly draws his pupil's attention to this problem once again; however, the severity of the dilemma has increased as Émile aged. Living under "a violent government, a persecuting religion, or perverse morals" could cause Émile's property to be devoured by "boundless taxes" or "endless litigation" (457). Moreover, living under unjust laws could lead Émile to harm others. "Do you believe," the tutor asks him, "that it is so easy to find a country where one is always permitted to be a decent man?" (457). In choosing his future home, Émile must be sure that he will not suffer injustice from the laws, nor be coerced into committing injustices. The tutor suggests that no such nation exists. Nevertheless, as it is central to Émile's happiness, tutor and pupil set out on a two-year tour of Europe in search of such a country. The tutor notes that "[i]f we succeed, you will have found the true happiness vainly sought by so many others, and you will not regret the time you have spent. If we do not succeed, you will have been cured of a chimera" (457). This chimera could be the mythical civil state so virtuous that Émile's happiness is guaranteed by living in it, or the illusion that Émile himself can be a whole, without dependence on society.

Émile appears to be cured of both these chimeras upon completing his journey. The tutor asks, "What is the final result of your observations? What course have you chosen?" (471). Émile replies that he wants to remain as his tutor as made him: subject to no chains but those of "nature and the laws" (471). He understands that there is no nation where he, as a citizen, would be free

from the claim of the law, and that nature has made him, as a man, dependent on some things external to himself. As for his initial desire to live on a piece of land absolutely his own, he tells his tutor: "I have found that my very wish was contradictory; for, were I dependent on nothing else, I would at least depend on the land where I had settled. […] I could withdraw from dependence on man only by returning to dependence on nature" (472). Émile sees that he is not a single and complete whole; by necessity, he must depend on the land that provides for his body, and on the passions that drive his soul.

However, despite acknowledging these necessary chains, Émile does not conclude that the independence he seeks from society is a chimera. Rather, to be free, he decides he must have "no more than one chain" (472). Émile tells his tutor that, to avoid being constrained by his wealth or his property, he will "loosen the bonds which attach [him] to it," rejecting his tutor's initial suggestion that "when the laws put your property at your disposition […] you [are] the master of your own person" (472; 456). Having property makes one master of the property, not of oneself. He boasts, "[w]hen my property subjects me, I shall abandon it without effort" (472). In this way, Émile claims, "I will not be free in this or that land, in this or that region; I shall be free everywhere on earth" (472). To be truly free and independent everywhere, Émile must be a man who exists nowhere. He must have no roots binding him, be they in the form of debts, friends, or even a particular home. If he cannot leave them behind, he is not free. The only constraints Émile claims he accepts are those he cannot do without—sustenance, shelter, and his wife. Émile believes this to be the true, blessed freedom achievable for natural man.

Though his tutor praises this speech, he indicates that it is not quite a complete understanding of human freedom. He tells Émile: "This extravagant disinterestedness does not displease me at your age. It will decrease when you have children, and you will then be precisely

what a good father of a family and a wise man ought to be" (473). In other words, Émile is not yet a wise man. According to his present attitude, his marriage to Sophie is the only bond tying him to a human community—though he views this relationship not as a connection to civil society, but as an extension of the passions with which he is burdened by nature. In a sense, Émile views his wife less as an individual than as an extension of himself: they are part of the same whole. The tutor highlights that Émile's relationship with Sophie, and the family that will grow from it, will change how Émile understands his freedom and independence. Though he may have been cured of the chimera that there exists a perfectly virtuous state that will protect his independence, Émile still labours under the illusion that he, as a man, is an independent whole. The lived reality of family life, it seems, will challenge this image of wholeness Émile has of himself and of his family.

Not all scholars view Rousseau as criticising Émile's assumption that an individual man can be radically independent. After all, the project Rousseau appears to set out for himself with *Émile* is to demonstrate the happiness possible for the natural man who is an independent whole. Diverse commentators and critics, including Ernst Cassirer, Leo Strauss, and Charles Taylor, have interpreted Rousseau as being preoccupied with the achievement of personal freedom and autonomy.[21] According to Mary Nichols, while Rousseau may have some "reservations about whether Émile's self-contained existence is either possible or productive of happiness," his ultimate goal for Émile is nonetheless a "radical individualism" mediated by a connection to his family.[22] Nichols argues that the objective of the episode in Book II, concerning Émile's beans and Robert's melons, is to instill emotional detachment from one's property. Shklar similarly

21. Cassirer, *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*; Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 294; Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, 362.
22. Mary Nichols, "Rousseau's novel education in the *Emile*," *Political Theory* 13, no. 4: (1985), 536; 553.

claims that, for Rousseau, "[o]ur emotional response to work and property is debilitating because we so easily come to depend on objects. And this dependence only stokes the fires of desire for inequality."[23] Robert's anger over the loss of his melons exemplifies this claim; he is upset because of the destruction of his property, even though the melons are not essential to his survival, as Nichols notes.[24] Moreover, because Robert is the legal owner, he can dictate the terms by which Émile—the property-less—can acquire property. The tutor even suggests that Robert tax Émile half of whatever he grows. Though Robert generously does not impose such a condition, the potential for him to abuse his power as a property-owner mirrors Rousseau's argument in "Discourse on Inequality." The delineation of property, and the eventual division of the whole world among a class of property owners, entrenches a seemingly natural inequality, leading to the debasement and degeneration of all human life.[25] In this light, it is reasonable to assume that Rousseau's objective is to create and praise a natural man, free from the vices inherent to property, society, and civil men.

However, as previously noted, Rousseau challenges this apparent objective by asking: "But what will a man raised uniquely for himself become for others?" (41). At the end of *Émile*, it may seem that there is a happy answer to this query; Émile can be radically independent from society while still being joined with his family. In the final pages, it appears that Émile and Sophie are content. They are about to begin a new chapter of their lives together, discovering the joys of parenthood. Émile visits his old tutor, telling him that he will endeavour to raise his child as his tutor raised him. But Émile does ask his tutor to fulfill one final task: "[R]emain the master of the young masters. Advise us and govern us. […] As long as I live, I shall need you" (480). Julia

23. Shklar, *Man and Citizen*, 49.
24. Nichols, "Rousseau's novel education," 540.
25. *See* Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 156–158.

Simon suggests this demand has an ironic edge, marring the otherwise happy ending. Émile may want to raise a child as he himself was raised, but because his education stressed his independence and abstraction from others, he does not know how to be a teacher. Such an activity necessarily requires "a moral commitment based on concrete relations," in Simon's words, which cannot be reduced to the simple contracts Émile has been taught.[26] Émile's education, Simon claims, "has failed because he remains dependent on the preceptor to reproduce himself."[27] Émile's radical independence is supported by the external governance of his tutor and his wife. Following Simon's logic, Émile's education demonstrates that a man raised uniquely for himself becomes a burden to others.

"Émile et Sophie," Rousseau's incomplete sequel to *Émile*, adds weight to the suggestion that Émile's education is flawed. The text is comprised of two letters from Émile to his absent tutor. While it is impossible to discern Rousseau's intention with this unpublished work, the existence of a sequel, even an unfinished one, "raises questions about what it might mean to understand and evaluate Émile's education as a whole," as Schaeffer notes.[28] What perspective must a reader adopt to judge the happiness of the natural man: that given at the end of *Émile*, which appears mostly happy, with no reference to Émile's future? Or that suggested in the two letters Émile writes to his tutor, filled with death, disappointment, and betrayal? In either case, it would be false to claim that one is judging Émile's life in its entirety. As Rousseau indicates in Book II of *Émile*, in which he asks readers to judge Émile's childhood as a self-contained stage, any attempt to create a whole out of an individual human life will necessarily be chimerical. Schaeffer argues

26. Julia Simon, "Natural freedom and moral autonomy: Émile as parent, teacher and citizen," *History of Political Thought* 16, no. 1: (1995), 33.
27. Simon, "Natural freedom and moral autonomy," 32.
28. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgement*, 158.

that readers confront this problem more forcefully in "Émile et Sophie," since the letters are written by Émile without reply from his tutor. Readers are "deprived of Rousseau's running commentary, or the hand of the author."[29] Just as the tutor will no longer govern and advise Émile, Rousseau will no longer construct artificial wholes for readers to judge.

The events of "Émile et Sophie" pick up long after the end of *Émile*. During this time, Sophie has given birth to both a boy and a girl. However, Émile's tutor has not heeded Émile's plea to govern and advise the couple forever. In his letter, Émile writes "you are dead for me, my eyes will never see you again."[30] Nevertheless, Émile addresses the letters to his former tutor, appealing to him as he might a distant god. Since the tutor's departure, tragedies abound. Sophie's parents die in quick succession, followed by Émile and Sophie's daughter. Grief-stricken and seeking to console his wife, Émile moves the family to Paris. In the city, the couple is distracted from their pain, but they also become emotionally distant with each other. Émile describes how, during their two years in the capital, he becomes detached from his relationships, while Sophie becomes inseparable from a married Parisian couple. Émile continues going through the motions of his life and his marriage until Sophie undergoes a sudden change. She withdraws from her friends and from Émile, rousing her husband's interest in her. Sophie resists his renewed sexual advances, finally telling him, "[a]nother has sullied your bed, I am pregnant; you will never touch me again in my life."[31] This revelation crushes Émile. He leaves their home in Paris and wanders the streets for three days, his opinion of Sophie vacillating wildly. Ultimately, the letter concludes with Émile writing to his tutor, his family, and to Sophie—who is still caring for their surviving

29. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 161.
30. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," in *Collection complète des œuvres, Genève, 1780–1789* vol. 5, (édition en linge rousseauonline.ch, 2012), 454. This and all subsequent translations of "Émile et Sophie" are my own.
31. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 466.

son—to inform them of his decision to leave his family and his country. Then, "without valet, without money, without crew, and without desires and cares," Émile leaves, "alone and on foot."[32]

"Émile et Sophie" confirms that Émile still believes he can be an independent whole. Patrick Deneen and Thomas Kavanagh argue that this means Émile's education is a success. Deneen views Émile's solitude as continuous with the lessons the tutor imparts throughout *Émile*, as it highlights the inevitable misery that accompanies attachments with other human beings.[33] Kavanagh likewise suggests that, in leaving Sophie, Émile has succeeded in freeing himself from the chains of human passion, realising his education's ultimate goal, to create a man dependent on nothing but his own, unencumbered reason.[34] Shklar also views Émile's education is a success, as it endows him with every virtue except for the ability to control fate.[35] However, according to her reading, "Émile et Sophie" is not the joyous culmination of this education; rather, it reflects Rousseau's pessimism concerning human nature. Because human beings cannot know and control fate, they never see the story of their lives in full. Thus, they cannot navigate the divide between individual and citizen without conflict.

There is also the possibility, as argued by Schaeffer and Nichols, that Émile's education fails him. Both highlights that, despite the emphasis on freedom and autonomy, Émile is never actually alone; he never becomes a Robinson Crusoe, marooned on his island. Throughout his youth and the early years of his marriage, Émile is governed meticulously by his tutor and by Sophie. As a result of this coddling, Émile never learns to navigate and judge interpersonal

32. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 497.
33. Patrick Deneen, *The Odyssey of Political Theory* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2003), 158–159.
34. Thomas Kavanagh, *Writing the Truth: Authority and Desire in Rousseau* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 78–101.
35. Shklar, *Man and Citizen*, 150.

relationships for himself. Nurturing this kind of judgment is ostensibly the purpose of the tutor's lesson on property, which he undertakes in the first place to give Émile "some idea of the relations of man to man" (97). Just as the lesson on property is meant to introduce Émile to moral relations, his two-year trip around Europe is intended to make him "consider himself in his civil relations with his fellow citizens" (455). Though he is raised uniquely for himself, the tutor still intends for Émile to have some relationships with other human beings. Yet, in rejecting Sophie, his son, and all other commitments, Émile rejects all relationships of this kind. Instead, he adopts an untethered existence, which the tutor criticises in Book IV as "extravagant disinterestedness" (473).

In the second, unfinished letter of "Émile et Sophie," Émile describes his meandering voyage. He must leave France altogether if he is to truly leave behind his old life, and so he boards a boat for Naples, intending to support himself using the carpentry skills he learned as a boy. However, the captain of the ship does not take Émile to Naples; he sells Émile as a slave in Algiers. Émile takes this change of status in stride, writing "what have I lost of my primitive freedom? Am I not born a slave to necessity?"[36] Despite being in physical chains, Émile feels free. He sees no difference between working under his master in the carpentry shop as a boy and doing similar work for slave masters. The work of his hands may belong to someone else, but "my will, my understanding, my being, everything by which I was me and not another" remain his.[37] Though rougher, he claims the slave masters give him a better education in freedom than his former tutor.[38] The closest Émile comes to forming a relationship with others is by inspiring a strike among his fellow slaves against a cruel overseer. Émile does not understand this strike as making him part of a collective; rather, he makes up his mind to refuse the work and to accept the consequences as an

36. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 504.
37. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 506.
38. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 505.

individual. He knows that the support of others will make his action more impactful, and he speaks to them about his intentions, but their decisions are incidental to his. As such, the strike does not result in solidarity between Émile and his community; the slave owner simply replaces the overseer with Émile. Presumably, Émile improves the working conditions, although he declines to speak about his work as an overseer as "that is not what this [letter] is about."[39] Eventually, Émile is sold as a personal slave to the Dey of Algiers, where it is implied he acts as a kind of royal adviser.[40]

The second letter demonstrates that, because Émile reverts to his "extravagant disinterestedness," he cannot distinguish between suffering injustice and perpetrating injustice. He believes that, if he carries his freedom in his heart, it can remain untouched by others, regardless of his circumstance. Yet, the question his tutor asks him before departing on their two-year journey is still relevant: "Who knows where one can live independent and free, without needing to harm anyone and without fear of being harmed?" (457). There are meaningful differences between working for oneself and working for a slave master, and between working as a slave and working as an overseer; however, these differences are only apparent if one considers more than a single, isolated individual. Émile assumes he is an independent whole, without any bearing on others; in doing so, he fails to consider these tangible situational differences between life as a free citizen, and as a subjugated slave. This fault is the same one with which Émile struggles during his lesson on property in Robert's garden. Émile then measures his claim to the land in relation to himself alone, without considering his potential relationship to the people who may have cultivated the land before. By considering himself as an independent whole, he arrives at a mistaken conclusion. As an adult, when he attempts to define the less tangible concept of freedom, Émile continues to

39. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 513.
40. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie" 524.

use himself as his only point of reference, as though he is an independent whole. A similar problem therefore emerges: Émile becomes complicit in dispossessing others of their freedom, just as he was guilty of dispossessing Robert of his property.

The scene in of the bean garden, thus, prefigures the most significant challenges to Émile's education as a natural man. Émile judges his claim of ownership over the beans he planted as if his labour was an independent and isolated whole, but his tutor was preparing him for the realisation that this is false. This pattern occurs throughout Émile's education: he learns to judge based on wholes that only appear to be whole. Despite the tutor's attempts to cure Émile of the chimeras the tutor himself created, Émile fails to thoroughly question the ideal of wholeness as a standard of judgement. If his education is understood as a failure in this regard, Rousseau is not simply criticising Enlightenment thinkers like Locke for failing to educate young men to be free; he criticises the very concept of rationality that supports their education. That Rousseau expects that his readers will criticise judgment grounded in radical individualism when Émile fails to do so is indicated by his presentation of an alternative way of judging: that embodied by Sophie.

II.

While Sophie's education differs from Émile's, Rousseau nevertheless explicitly encourages wives and daughters to subordinate themselves to their husbands and fathers. Gendered differences, he argues, are products of convention—but they are conventions women should uphold. Women are not inferior to men for Rousseau; rather, they ought to use indirect powers to manage their men's passions. To fulfill this purpose, the education Rousseau prescribes for women necessarily differs from that prescribed for men. While Rousseau advocates that women use their education to support the freedom of men rather than their own, Émile's wife, Sophie, is not depicted as being a slave to her husband. Her education, like Émile's, shapes her into a kind of whole capable of autonomous judgement. In fact, Sophie can do what Émile cannot: she can

evaluate wholes while being aware of the illusory quality of their "wholeness." Taking Sophie's education seriously on these terms means that her education is not complementary to Émile's; rather, it challenges that of the natural man. When one compares these two pedagogical styles, one may conclude that Sophie's judgement surpasses Émile's, not only concerning domestic affairs, but concerning political matters as well.

Book V of *Émile*, subtitled "Sophie, or The Woman," details the education of Émile's wife-to-be. As the subtitle indicates, Sophie is not merely a particular individual, she also serves as Rousseau's paradigmatic example of womanhood. At a glance, this would make Sophie a feminine mirror to Émile, insofar as he is a model for the "abstract man" (42). In creating these paradigms, however, Rousseau uses contrasting methods. To depict abstract man as a whole, Rousseau starts with particulars. Most obviously, he gives himself "an imaginary pupil" (50). In looking at Émile, as an individual, readers conjecture about natural man in the abstract. By contrast, Sophie's particular identity emerges from the abstraction of "The Woman." Chapter V begins with Rousseau's lengthy discussion of women's education in general, outlining "the spirit in which Sophie has been raised" (393). At the end of this digression, the character of Sophie appears to readers as a fully grown young woman. In the first case, Rousseau moves from particular to general; in the second, he moves from general to particular.

Sophie's introduction to Émile fits this pattern of describing women first in universal terms and then in specific ones, as Émile is made to love the idea of Sophie "in advance of his knowing [her]" (329). Towards the end of Book IV, the tutor acknowledges that Émile needs a wife. To find a wife, Émile must be introduced to society, but the tutor does not want his pupil to become smitten with some vicious Parisian socialite. To avoid such a fate, he tells Émile they must find him a companion whose merit equals his own. The tutor constructs for Émile a chimerical image

of this virtuous woman, and encourages Émile to love this image. To the readers, Rousseau says that "[i]t is unimportant whether the object I depict for him is imaginary; it suffices that it makes him disgusted with those that could tempt him" (329). By constructing this image, the tutor determines the standard by which Émile will judge the real world, and thereby controls his judgement. To Émile, the tutor says, "Let us call your future beloved Sophie" (329). Though he suggests that this Sophie may not exist at all, the chimera of perfection the tutor creates for Émile later becomes a real, particular girl.

Thus, starting with how Rousseau constructs his male and female characters, there are gendered differences, though not ones that are strictly "natural" for Rousseau. "Natural" is a delicate category in Rousseau's thought. He warns readers not to "confound what is natural in the savage state with what is natural in the civil state" (406). To understand gender in Rousseau's "savage state," scholars tend to turn to works such as his "Discourse on Inequality," wherein Rousseau claims mates "[leave] each other with the same ease," and mothers nurse their children only as long as necessary, like other predatory animals.[41] While sex brings people together, no social bonds are created by it. Beginning with this description of the state of nature, scholars like Joel Schwartz and Nicole Fermon interpret Rousseau as claiming physical and intellectual equality between the genders, though they will come to occupy different stations in civil society.[42] Rousseau supports this assumption in *Émile*, as he begins Book V by affirming that "[i]n everything not connected with sex, woman is man. She has the same organs, the same needs, the same faculties" (357). Of course, saying "woman is man" still implies that the male body is the

41. Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 121. *See also* Note *l* on page 213, where Rousseau addresses Locke's concerning family units in the state of nature.
42. *See* Joel Schwartz, *The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Nicole Fermon, *Domesticating Passion: Rousseau, Women, and Nation* (Hanover, CT: Weselyan University Press, 1997).

natural default for human beings. Pushing Rousseau's argument further, Tracy Strong and Rosanne Terese Kennedy suggest that, in "the crudeness of the first ages," all differences between individuals—including gendered differences—are irrelevant.[43] In the state of nature, Rousseau claims a human being is "without industry, without speech, without domicile, without war and without liaisons, with no need for his fellow men, likewise with no desire to harm them, perhaps never even recognising anyone individually."[44] Noting Rousseau's emphasis on the traits people lack, Strong argues that "[t]here is literally nothing to human beings in the state of nature."[45] Only once individuals compare themselves to other animals, and to other humans, are gendered differences imaginable. By this logic, a woman in the state of nature is not only equal to a man, for Rousseau, but the words "woman" and "man" have no meaning in the true state of nature. The kind of comparison that differentiates between "men" and "women" is part of the "new enlightenment," which Rousseau claims leads to the eventual birth *amour-propre* and the vices of civil society.[46] Consequently, gender—"natural" or otherwise—can only be discussed once one enters the realm of civil society, which Rousseau details in *Émile*.

In civil society, while the roles of men and women diverge significantly for Rousseau, their common beginning and "common aim" provides a shared basis for their educations (358). For example, in Rousseau's view, it is true for men and women alike that "the body, so to speak, is born before the soul," and, as such, "the body ought to be cultivated first" (365). Just as he criticises swaddling and other practices of over-coddling for boys, he claims girls should not be "always

43. Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 137. Tracy Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Politics of the Ordinary* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 44. *See also* Rosanne Terese Kennedy, *Rousseau in Drag* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 19–23.
44. Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 137.
45. Strong, *Politics of the Ordinary*, 44.
46. Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 144.

seated within range of her mother's eyes" (366). Like her male peers, a girl should have the "freedom to play, jump, run, shout, and indulge in the petulance natural to her age" (366). Penny Weiss argues that the end results of men's and women's educations differ not because Rousseau is applying two different philosophies, but because he expects women and men to lead very different lives.[47] Émile, for example, will have to do manual labour throughout his life, while Sophie should only ever work within the home. As such, Rousseau writes that men "ought to be strong and active," and women ought to be "passive and weak" (358). This is not a natural difference in the physiques of men and women, as there are no such differences in the state of nature, but is framed as a direct result of the "difference in the moral relations of the two sexes" (358). In other words, men and women are, quite literally, shaped differently because of their educations.

Intellectually, men and women ought to undergo similar conditioning, in Rousseau's view. He claims that "[t]he quest for abstract and speculative truths, principles and axioms in the sciences […] is not within the competence of women. All their studies ought to be related to practice" (386). Susan Moller Okin does a thorough job of citing the instances wherein Rousseau denies women "the capacity for abstract reason and creativity"—a position that places Rousseau within a long line of thinkers to depreciate women's intellect;[48] however, as Paul Thomas observes, it is Okin who values abstract reason and creativity. Rousseau, by contrast, "considered that it was precisely the 'achievements' paraded at some length in the *First* and *Second Discourses* that had done the human species so much harm."[49] Émile, as a natural man, is no more expected to become a

47. *See* Penny A. Weiss, *Gendered Communities: Rousseau, Sex, and Politics* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1993), 10–35.
48. *See* Susan Moller Okin. *Women in Western Political Thought*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 131
49. Paul Thomas, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sexist?" *Feminist Studies* 17, no. 2 (1991), 198.

philosopher than Sophie. Both men and women are educated to have "good sense" and knowledge that will be useful to them in their future lives (368). That men must be more preoccupied with "abstract and speculative truths" is, again, a result not of a physical or biological difference, but of the "moral relations" between men and women.

The more serious criticism, Thomas correctly notes, is that Rousseau bars women from achieving the independence and wholeness that he seeks to instill in his natural man—achievements which Rousseau seems to value. Instead of being raised uniquely for themselves, Rousseau expects women to center their lives around the opinions of others. For example, he often says that women should defer to the judgment of their fathers or husbands. Mary Wollstonecraft identifies this tension between Rousseau's praise of truth and freedom in men, while, "for the female character, obedience is the grand lesson which ought to be impressed with unrelenting vigour."[50] Moreover, Rousseau claims that the principal object of women's speech ought to be "pleasing things" (376). Rousseau's women are not as empty-minded as Wollstonecraft—or Okin—accuse, but they are expected to be much more concerned with "honour and reputation" than the male characters are (361). Rousseau goes so far as to say that, while "opinion is the grave of virtue among men […] it's the throne among women" (365). Women should not exist outside of reputation and opinion—or, in other words, *amour-propre*. Women must concern themselves with *amour-propre* to this extent is because, in Rousseau's view, the unity of the family depends on a wife being "judged to be faithful by her husband" (361). Maternity is a known fact, while paternity can be disputed, in Rousseau's view. The father's role in the family depends on his belief that his wife is honest and modest. Women do not need to actually be faithful, according to this

50. Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman,* 3rd ed. (London, UK: Johnson, 1796), 87, 89.

formulation; Rousseau's emphasis is on the appearance of faithfulness. To achieve this appearance, women must always think of themselves in relation to others and how they appear to others, rather than in relation to themselves alone. Being preoccupied in this way, women cannot aspire to the independence Rousseau seeks to give Émile.

To argue that Rousseau is simply applying a double standard is a mistake; a more trenchant criticism argues that the subordination of women and their desires is a necessary condition to enable the freedom of Rousseau's men. Mira Morgenstern, for example, suggests that Rousseau views women as creating a continuum between the self, the family, and the polity for the sake of their men, but this continuum is only effective when wives concerns themselves entirely with mitigating tensions between their husbands' desires and the needs of the family as a collective unit.[51] This work requires women to efface their own desires and personalities, becoming more of an illusion than an individual. Weiss and Elizabeth Wingrove similarly conclude that the freedom of the natural man is only made possible because Rousseau's women forfeit the possibility of ever having that kind of freedom.[52] Consider again how Rousseau advocates for a wife to use her appearance of fidelity to tie her husband to his children, "[giving] him confidence to call them his own" (361). "How much tenderness and care," Rousseau writes, "is required to maintain the union of the whole family!" (361). If a woman manipulates her husband's passion correctly, the family will seem whole to him—a move reminiscent of Émile's tutor's machinations in the bean garden. Like Émile, labouring under the illusion of wholeness presented by the tutor, a wife can make her husband view his family as a complete, independent whole. The husband feels no tension between

51. Mira Morgenstern, *Rousseau and the Politics of Ambiguity: Self, Culture, and Society* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 238
52. Weiss, *Gendered Communities*, 90–120; Elizabeth Rose Wingrove *Rousseau's Republican Romance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 58–92.

the interests of this small collective unit and his own interests as an individual; thus, men can experience the radically individual wholeness that Rousseau prescribes for the natural man only if women forfeit their own wholeness.

However, as already noted, there is reason to doubt that the individual wholeness Rousseau presents as the goal of Émile's education is something that he truly believes possible or desirable. After all, Émile is never totally free from the influence of others. Weiss notes how, as a child, Émile is taught to submit to the opinions of his tutor, without being conscious of his submission. Rousseau's explicit advice to prospective tutors is that "[t]here is no subjection so perfect as that which keeps the appearance of freedom. […] Doubtless [a pupil] ought to do only what he wants; but he ought to want only what you want him to do. He ought not make a step without your having foreseen it" (120). Throughout his education, Émile's tutor manipulates his pupil through lessons, such as that with Robert the gardener. Bloom notes, "[t]he tutor and his helpers must disappear, as it were, and everything that happens to the child must seem to be an inevitable effect of nature."[53] This coercion allows Émile to feel free, independent, and whole—but this feeling does not strictly reflect reality.

Just as Émile is more constrained than he realises, Sophie possesses greater independence than her appearance suggests. Weiss and Schaeffer both note that, despite calling for women to defer to men, Rousseau still expects women to be capable judges. He writes that "[m]an says what he knows; woman says what pleases. […] Useful things ought to be his principal object and pleasing things ought to be hers. The truth ought to be the only element common to their discourse" (376). If truth is present in the discourse of both men and women, women must therefore be capable of knowing truth. Women are not expected to speak only pleasant nothings; they must endeavour

53. Bloom, "Introduction," 11.

to make the truth pleasant—a task which, as Schaeffer notes, requires judgement.[54] Rousseau criticises contemporary educational practices for this reason, as they do not equip women to properly identify the truth (382). Of course, Rousseau still maintains that women should submit to male governance. He acknowledges that women will likely experience tension between their own judgement and the commands of their fathers or husbands. As such, he recommends:

> As soon as she depends on both her own conscience and the opinions of others, she has to learn to compare these two rules, to reconcile them, and to prefer the former only when the two are in contradiction. She becomes the judge of her judges […] Before rejecting or accepting their prejudices, she weighs them. She learns to go back to their source, to anticipate them, to use them to her advantage. (383)

As Weiss observes, "[s]aying [Sophie] is to prefer the dictates of conscience to those of opinion *only* when the two disagree amounts to saying she is to prefer conscience *whenever* the two conflict."[55] Sophie must be capable of judging the truth for herself, and of trusting her judgment even when it conflicts with those around her.

While Sophie should trust her judgement, she must also be adept at reconciling the "two rules" that govern her conscience: one rule being her own judgment, and the second being the opinions of others. This art of comparison is a skill Émile's education lacks. In the bean garden, Émile allegedly learns that the rights of property are based on rights of the first occupant. From there, Émile can understand the principles of exchange and contact, but after this, "one must simply stop short" (99). Émile is a child, and not yet prepared to think abstractly about the social contract, nor to evaluate between competing claims to ownership. Instead, he accepts the pleasant

54. *See* Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgement*, 137.
55. Weiss, *Gendered Communities*, 26, emphasis in original.

assumption, presented to him by the tutor that his agreement with Robert reflects the history of the bean garden as a whole. Even in Book V, when Émile learns about the social contract, he still does not learn to compare competing claims to legitimate ownership or political rule. To compare arguments requires that one assumes the perspective of another, and Émile is raised to think only for himself. By contrast, the act of comparison is the central tenet of Sophie's education. As a woman, she must always be thinking from the perspective of others—what they want, and how they perceive her—as well as thinking for herself. Her ability to judge must encompass and transcend the judgement of those around her.

Rousseau further emphasises Sophie's ability to think and judge by inviting readers to compare her with "a girl so similar to Sophie that her story could be Sophie's without occasioning any surprise" (402). Like Sophie, this girl is raised by loving parents who, though not rich, are comfortable and virtuous by Rousseau's standards. These parents, like Sophie's, allow their daughter to chose her husband, so long as she consults them (401). The story of the girl like Sophie diverges from that of the original Sophie when the girl fails to marry. Concerned for their daughter, who is growing increasingly despondent, her parents ask her why she has not chosen a husband for herself. The girl like Sophie tells them she is attracted to many men, but she can respect none as a husband. After further questioning, the girl reveals that she has developed an image of a virtuous man based on the character of Telemachus in François Fénelon's *Adventures of Telemachus*. This girl assures her parents that she has not lost her grip on reality: "I do not seek Telemachus. I know he is only a fiction. I seek someone who resembles him" (405). Unable to find any resemblance between Telemachus and her real suitors, however, this girl finds herself taking "slow steps towards death," rather than towards marriage (405). The real Sophie also loves the image of Telemachus, but she can successfully compare him to real individuals, such as Émile.

Schaeffer argues that Sophie's willingness to love Émile does not mean she loves Telemachus less than the other girl like; rather, the girl like Sophie is "so acutely aware of the distinction between image and reality that she cannot fall in love."[56] Telemachus is the image of a perfectly virtuous man in his entirety. He is whole. The girl like Sophie will love nothing less than this perfect whole, even if it is only a chimera. The original Sophie, by contrast, loves both the image of the perfect whole, as well as the imperfect parts that exist in reality. She can compare dissimilar things and arrive at a compromise, while the girl like her cannot.

Through her ability to compare and compromise, Sophie has considerably more agency than Émile. The act of comparison, for example, is something Sophie does of her own accord. Rousseau notes that *The Adventures of Telemachus* "fell into her hands by chance" (410). This phrase may be intended literally or ironically—since, as the author, Rousseau is dictating everything that happens to the character of Sophie. Regardless, the episode serves as a distinct contrast to Émile's encounter with *Robinson Crusoe*, in which the tutor restricts the boy's reading to this book alone, and encourages him to model himself on its titular character. Sophie, from her "chance" encounter with one of the many books she has read, discerns a resemblance between Émile and Telemachus on her own, "[believing] she sees Telemachus affected by Philoctetes' misfortunes" when Émile listens attentively to the story of her father's past troubles (414). Émile takes no notice of Sophie until he hears her name, which is, incidentally, the name the tutor has given his imaginary beloved. Émile is confused when he tries to compare the real Sophie to the tutor's chimerical one: "He does not see exactly the face that he had depicted to himself. He does not know whether the one he sees is better or worse" (414). Instead, of comparing his ideals to the real people he encounters, and judging them for himself, Émile looks to his tutor for guidance.

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56. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgement*, 147.

While Bloom claims that the girl like Sophie is meant to demonstrate that women are more likely to by swept away by their imaginations and illusions, it is Émile that most resembles the girl like Sophie.[57] He struggles to compare perfect wholes and imperfect particulars. While the girl like Sophie refuses to accept any compromises between the two, Émile simply accepts that the real Sophie is identical to the one his tutor constructed. The original Sophie, on the other hand, not only judges on her own, she is responsible for creating the standard to which she compares the real world. Émile's tutor makes the image of Sophie as a means to control him, and prevent him from running off with the first woman he sees, whereas Sophie chooses Telemachus as her paragon of virtue. She is endowed not only with the ability to compare parts and whole, or illusions and reality; she constructs the illusory whole by which she may judge the parts she finds in reality.

Such generous interpretations of Sophie imbue Rousseau's women with a significant amount of power. Contrary to readings like that of Strong—where women are simply "sources of natural illusion"[58]—Sophie consciously creates and wields these illusions. If illusions are understood to be tools used by women, then, according to Schaeffer, they "cannot be reduced to the tool."[59] Some scholars interpret this power as meaning Rousseau's women are equal to—albeit still distinct from—his men. Schwartz suggests that the power of indirect rule Rousseau grants to women is similar to the manipulation used by Émile's tutor, or by the legislator in "On the Social Contract." In this light, "[s]exual relationships are in part exercises in mutual domination."[60] Arthur Melzer similarly argues that Rousseau's women are actively involved in governing by way

57. Allan Bloom, *Love and Friendship* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 121–122.
58. Strong, *Politics of the Ordinary*, 127.
59. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgement*, 142.
60. Schwartz, *Sexual Politics*, 143.

of their "various feminine wiles."[61] Though the means of domination differ, men and women engage in a seemingly reciprocal relationship, in which they rule and are ruled in turn. Indeed, the tutor explicitly tells Émile, "Today I abdicate the authority you confided to me, and Sophie is your governor from now on," seemingly supporting such an interpretation (479). Sophie, like the tutor, will govern Émile internally—through manipulating his passions and his domestic world—while Émile governs Sophie in external, political affairs.

Sympathetic interpretations such as these ignore the negative consequences that accompany all gendered political systems—whether women are afforded power or not. For example, while still offering a generous reading of Rousseau's arguments concerning women, Weiss argues that granting women only indirect power means that women "are always working from a position of vulnerability."[62] To achieve their own aims, women must act covertly. They spend considerable energy bolstering male egos, since speaking directly is a privilege they are not afforded. By accepting the need for this manipulation, male attributes are valorised, while women are objectified and silenced. Ultimately, Weiss claims that Rousseau creates "an adversarial relationship, not one of friendship or affection—or of true community."[63] Wollstonecraft offers a similar criticism: "'Educate women like men,' says Rousseau, 'and the more they resemble our sex the less power will they have over us.' This is the very point I aim at. I do not wish them to have power over men; but over themselves."[64] Though Sophie may be entrusted as Émile's governor, she is not permitted to govern herself. Even when she becomes one of the "tender and

61. Arthur Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man: On the System of Rousseau's Thought* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 248.
62. Weiss, *Gendered Communities*, 98.
63. Weiss, *Gendered Communities*, 100.
64. Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 180.

foresighted" mothers to whom *Émile* is addressed, she still must devote her all energy to the good of others—an extreme as radical as Émile being raised uniquely for himself (37).

There is another possibility, however. Regardless of Rousseau's intention, when one questions the desirability of being like Émile, Sophie emerges as an option that does not merely support Émile's lifestyle, but has merits on its own terms. There are grounds to question the natural man's independence, given Émile's continued reliance on his tutor, his inability to judge for himself, and other questions raised surrounding Rousseau's ideal of freedom as "wholeness." Sophie's autonomy of thought appears to be a far more genuine kind of independence. Unlike Émile, she does not need external guidance or rules; rather, through her ability to judge and compare for herself, she has an authentic ability for self-rule. She is certainly not a perfect, independent whole, like Émile strives to be. In fact, Sophie experiences the friction between the various facets of her identity more acutely than Émile does. She is not only an individual and a citizen, but an individual, a citizen, a wife, a mother, and a woman. Navigating between the illusion of a perfect, independent whole—be it the nation, the family, or the self—and comparing these perfect wholes to the imperfect particulars she experiences, Sophie occupies a middle ground, achieving a kind of independence that recognises her dependence on others.

This interpretation invites readers of *Émile* to evaluate Sophie for themselves—a suggestion that aligns with Rousseau's direct appeals to readers throughout the text. Initially, he addresses his writing to the "good mother who knows how to think," and, at the end, to the "judicious mother" (33; 364). In both cases, he is calling on his readers to act as judges. Schaeffer suggests that the change in how Rousseau addresses his hypothetical readers indicates some attention, on Rousseau's part, for how his readers develop through their reading of *Émile*,

progressing from a predisposition to thinking well to an ability to judge wisely.[65] Joseph R. Reisert and John T. Scott similarly argue that, in *Émile*, Rousseau seeks to change how his readers see the world; however, both assume Rousseau endeavours to achieve this goal by encouraging his readers to imitate Émile.[66] Yet, by appealing to mothers, Rousseau indicates that the judgement he hopes readers develop is, perhaps, more akin to that of Sophie, who excels in comparing chimerical ideals—like the virtue of Telemachus—to the real world, and in finding a middle ground between image and reality. Moreover, she constructs her own standards by which to evaluate the world. Interestingly, if readers seek to emulate Sophie on these terms, they do not simply become like her. Rather, readers learn to compare the chimerical figures Rousseau presents to each other and to reality. They compare Sophie to Émile, to the girl like Sophie, to the tutor, and—most critically—they compare all these figures to themselves. In doing so, the radical independence of Émile is not necessarily dismissed, but it is tempered by an understanding that the perfect "wholes" one constructs are only illusions. Likewise, the indirect power Sophie wields over her husband and family is transfigured, as readers use her style of judgement and self-rule to create something new.

If Rousseau is understood to be making his argument indirectly, he is not necessarily doing so because he wants his message to be accessible to only an enlightened few. Rather, teaching good judgment may require some indirectness in one's approach.[67] As Eileen Hunt Botting observes, "Rousseau uses paradox to build competing cases, tear them down, and then lead readers, through the rubble as it were, to an entirely unexpected conclusion."[68] If Rousseau seeks to

65. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgement*, 9–10.
66. Joseph R. Reisert, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Friend of Virtue* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003),169. John T. Scott, "Do You See What I See? The Education of the Reader in Rousseau's Emile," Review of Politics 74, no. 3 (2012): 444.
67. *See* Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgement,* 14.
68. Eileen Hunt Botting, *Family Feuds: Wollstonecraft, Burke, and Rousseau and the Transformation of the Family* (New York, NY: University of New York Press, 2006), 16.

manipulate his readers exactly as the tutor manipulates Émile, then readers would not learn the art of judgment from *Émile*, as Émile is incapable of judging without his tutor. However, if readers do learn to judge independently, like Sophie, they may arrive at conclusions unexpected even by Rousseau. After all, Rousseau himself warns that, when stories—like La Fontaine's fables—are used to teach, pupils will inevitably apply them in ways "opposite to the author's intention" (115). Yet, *Émile* is a kind of morality tale, not unlike a fable. The character of Émile is a chimera, as is Sophie, as are the natural man and The Woman. If we, as readers of Rousseau, have learned to judge between chimeras and reality, then we can use his story to draw our own conclusions.

Understanding Sophie's education as being concerned with the cultivation of independent judgement changes how one understands its emphasis on *amour-propre*. Rather than impeding her achievement of the natural man's self-sufficient independence, Sophie's unending tango with *amour-propre* presents the possibility of a kind of freedom emerging from one's interdependence. This is not a vision of freedom explicit in Rousseau's texts; he does not present Sophie as a political actor. Rather, having read *Émile* once, and understood Sophie as a potential model of judgement and self-rule, readers must begin the book again with this alternative in mind, and seek to apply it for themselves.

III.

What does it mean, then, to be a reader who thinks like Sophie? Her education is defined by its stress on comparison and good judgment. In perfecting these skills, Sophie comes to understand that a whole and its parts are never seamlessly aligned. Rousseau appears to suggest that Sophie perceives this friction between part and whole in order to make the tension disappear for Émile. Yet, because Émile sees the whole as a single entity, ignorant of the conflict between its parts, he is unprepared to deal with the messy reality of navigating politics. Believing himself a perfect, independent whole, he refuses to accept any limits on his freedom, a position that

eventually forces him to abandon both his property and his family, due to the attachments and restrictions they create. Sophie, through her ability to compare and judge, can do what Émile cannot: she can compromise. She loves the chimera of perfect freedom, while also loving and respecting the particular attachments which bind her to reality. Rather than fleeing, Sophie embraces a kind of freedom that is not realised through wholeness and independence, but which emerges from her dependence on the world she inhabits. The self-rule embodied by Sophie's perspective can be seen most clearly by comparing Sophie not only to Émile, but to the tutor. She presents a way of governing that is collaborative and egalitarian. Being able to compare and govern like Sophie is not enough, though; one must possess good judgement as well, as demonstrated by characters who can compare and rule as Sophie does, but who fail to judge wisely. Readers must evaluate Sophie against these characters, and determine for themselves the best course of action. In doing so, they learn not simply to think like Sophie, but also to make good judgements for themselves. This autonomy of thought, while not a licence to do whatever one desires, is the most genuine freedom found in Rousseau's descriptions of Sophie and Émile.

After their wedding, the tutor attempts to draw Émile and Sophie's attention to the difficulty of making two parts into a whole—such as trying to turn two people into a family through marriage. He warns the then-happy couple: "Knots that one wants to tighten too much will burst" (476). Émile is uninterested in the old man's advice. He assumes that he and Sophie will always be as enamoured with each other as they are in that moment, and cannot conceive of any division between them; in being married, they have formed a whole. Recall what Rousseau writes at the beginning of Book V: a wife "serves as the link between [children] and their father; she alone makes him love them and gives him the confidence to call them his own" (361). According to this formulation, a wife is not an individual: she exists only to join her husband to his children, the link

that makes the family a complete whole. Through the wife, children are made to belong—like property—to the husband, and he is given exclusive rights over them. Thus, Sophie, as Émile's wife, becomes an extension of him. Rather than being two pieces of rope knotted together, Émile sees their marriage as a seamless length of rope.

Despite Émile's obliviousness, Rousseau notes that, "beneath her mocking manner," Sophie appears curious (476). By manipulating Émile's perception of her, Sophie seems as confident as he, but she is nonetheless interested in comparing the tutor's words to her own judgements. Perceiving this, the tutor presses on. He claims "the fidelity [marriage] imposes on the two spouses is the holiest of all rights, but the power it gives to each of the two over the other is too great" (476). Marriage is an indissoluble bond, and precisely because of the power this bond gives spouses over each other, their relationship can become suffocating. He counsels Émile and Sophie that "[e]ach of you ought to belong only to the other. But neither of you ought to be the other's more than he pleases" (477). So that their nuptial knot is not tightened to the point of bursting, there must be some distance between husband and wife; they must remain distinct individuals, to an extent. "Let each of you remain master of his own person and his caresses," the tutor implores, "and have the right to dispense them to the other only at his own will. [… E]ven in marriage pleasure is legitimate only when desire is shared" (477). Through this advice, in which the tutor is warning against marital rape, he points to a deeper reciprocity and equality that must exist between partners in a healthy relationship. In essence, he calls for the couple to find a middle ground between being two individuals and one familial whole.

Sophie struggles to find this middle ground; on her honeymoon, she refuses to even sleep in the same bed as Emile, exercising her power to remain the master of her person and her caresses. Arguably, Sophie errs in demanding too much individuality. In seeking to not belong to Émile

more than she pleases, she does not let herself be with Émile at all. Realising what is happening, the tutor pulls her aside, ostensibly to better explain what he meant, but gives instead entirely new advice: he tells her to act like Émile's tutor. As he explains, Sophie must "reign" over Émile (478):

> It is by this means that you can bring him back to wisdom when he goes astray; lead him by a gentle persuasion; make yourself lovable in order to make yourself useful; and use coquetry in the interests of virtue and love to the benefit of reason. (479)

Gone are the tutor's appeals to mutual desire and equality; Sophie must take over his role as the provider of judgements and creator of illusions for Émile. She must manipulate her husband through flattery and seduction into being virtuous and wise, just as the tutor manipulated Émile through games and lessons. The result is that Sophie, though she may have some power over Émile, is not allowed to act as an individual. As Weiss and Wingrove argue, making Sophie the governor of Émile requires that she, like the tutor, exist for Émile's benefit, rather than for her own.[69] She is the mistress of Émile and of their family, but not of herself. Such an abnegation is necessary as, per Bloom, "[t]he tutor and his helpers must disappear."[70] Simon more explicitly explains that "the preceptor sacrifices his identity for the student" by "[w]orking from behind the scenes and in such a way as to minimize his own contribution."[71] If Sophie is to govern Émile like the tutor, she must also minimize her own identity. Thus, rather than rearticulating his suggestion to find a middle ground, the tutor now tells Sophie to efface her individuality and think only of the family as a whole.

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69. Weiss, *Gendered Communities*, 90–120; Wingrove *Rousseau's Republican Romance*, 58–92.
70. Bloom, "Introduction," 11.
71. Simon, "Natural freedom and moral autonomy," 33.

Despite possessing the necessary skills to replace Émile's tutor, Sophie is ill-suited for the role. When the tutor performs his duties, he does so at a remove from the individual for whom he creates illusions and judgements. In a sense, the tutor is like the legislator Rousseau describes in "On the Social Contract." The legislator is "a superior intelligence" who creates the laws for a polity from the outside.[72] As outsiders, Rousseau suggests that the tutor and the legislator are capable of observing either their pupil or their polity as a whole, making them best suited to govern them. Sophie can never achieve that level of detachment. As Schaeffer notes, "Sophie is not only governing her husband; she is governing herself as well, and she is governing the relationship, of which she is a part."[73] Unlike the tutor or the legislator, who give judgements to their pupil or polity from the outside, Sophie creates judgements for her family from within her family. Her model of judgement provides a vision of self-rule wherein citizens could create laws without needing an external legislator. This vision of democratic self-rule would require collaboration between citizens who are equally capable of judgement; but, rather than teaching Émile to be her collaborator, the tutor charges Sophie with judging for him. He concludes his advice to her with what could be a warning: "Remember that if your husband lives happily at home, you will be a happy woman" (479). That Sophie's happiness depends on her success in managing her husband's emotions is much more viscerally true than saying that the tutor's happiness depends on successfully teaching his student, or that the legislator's happiness depends on successfully creating laws for a polity. As outsiders, both the tutor and the legislator can walk away—indeed, the tutor does so, according to "Émile et Sophie." By contrast, Sophie is tied to the object she governs.

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72. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "On the Social Contract." In *Basic Political Writings* (2nd ed. Translated by Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2011), 180.
73. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 143.

Presumably because her happiness is at stake, Sophie seems to act as Émile's tutor successfully for some time according to "Émile et Sophie." Despite the tutor's long absence, the problems in Émile's marriage are more recent, beginning only after the death of his and Sophie's daughter, and of Sophie's parents. Overcome by her particular grief, Sophie can no longer be the governor of Émile's emotions. She can no longer erase her individuality. With Sophie emotionally incapacitated, Émile is not equipped to provide for his wife what she has provided for him, nor is he even capable of managing his own emotions. It is at Émile's suggestion that the family moves to Paris, to seek distraction from their pain. This is not to suggest that Émile alone bears the responsibility for the later events of "Émile et Sophie"; rather, it seems that the family's move to Paris, and Sophie's pregnancy, are the catalysts of two inevitable reckonings. First, Émile is forced to face the fact that his family is not an extension of himself. He can no longer ignore the friction that exists between the parts and the whole. Second, he must realise that his wife is not identical to the image of womanly virtue ingrained in this mind. "What chimera have you pursued?" he asks himself.[74] That Sophie is an individual who can make mistakes is not something that had occurred to Émile. He was in love with the ideal that Sophie represented, rather than with the actual person. In both cases, Émile is realising that a gap exists between the chimerical image of a whole—his idea of his family, or of his wife—and the truly existing parts.

In confronting this gap, Émile is, once again, more akin to the girl like Sophie than to his wife. The girl like Sophie veers towards one extreme, insofar as she sees an unbridgeable gap between her ideal, Telemachus, and her real suitors. Émile, leaning towards the opposite extreme, sees no distinction at all between the chimerical Sophie created by his tutor in Book IV and the young woman he meets in Book V. The same fault is responsible for Émile perceiving no

74. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 467–468.

difference between himself and his family, or between himself and the chimerical whole that is the natural man. Yet, over the course of his life, Émile is repeatedly confronted with instances challenging his assumption that he, his wife, and his family are perfect wholes. When the girl like Sophie cannot reconcile whole and part, she favours the abstract whole, despite knowing it may not exist in the real world; she loves only Telemachus, despite understanding that he is a fiction, and rejects her real-life suitors. Émile, by contrast, continues to believe that the perfect whole is real. As such, he rejects any situation that questions his presumptive wholeness.

Émile's chimera of wholeness is most forcefully challenged when he learns that Sophie has become pregnant by someone else during their stay in Paris. He can no longer reasonably continue to believe that his family is a seamless whole extending from himself, as Sophie's pregnancy is physical proof that his wife is attached to people other than Émile and their family. Émile is most upset by the idea that "My wife, in sharing her tenderness with two sons, will be forced to share her attachment with two fathers!" More starkly, he claims, "I would have preferred to see my son dead than to see Sophie with one from another father."[75] Émile clings to his vision of familial wholeness—and the exclusive rights this over Sophie and their children entailed by this image—to such a point that he would rather see his family destroyed than acknowledge it to be less than a perfect whole. In Book V, when Émile is confronted with the fact that attachment to his property could restrict his freedom, he tells the tutor: "When my property subjects me, I shall abandon it without effort" (472). This bold claim is eventually realised in "Émile et Sophie," when Émile abandons his family upon realising that his attachment to real and imperfect individuals, like his attachment to his property, restricts his freedom.

75. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 486.

While Émile ultimately concludes that he must leave Sophie and the family he had with her forever, his process of deliberation is far from orderly. On the first day after Sophie reveals her pregnancy to him, he is simply incapable of judging. He unthinkingly wanders the streets of Paris. "I was in no state to see anything, to compare anything, to deliberate, to solve, or to judge anything," he writes.[76] The next day, he seeks to distance himself from his now-detestable home with Sophie, and from the city altogether. He walks all day without realising it, oscillating wildly between defending Sophie to himself and decrying her as "the most odious of monsters."[77] Wingrove characterises Émile as being caught between passion and the rule of law. He loves Sophie in her role as his mistress—as the "arbiter of his pleasure"—but, in her legal role as his wife, her infidelity is intolerable.[78] Schaeffer suggests Émile is caught between passion and reason. His initial deliberations are characterised by reference to what his heart inclines him to believe, while his ultimate conclusion is characterised by the purportedly rational decision to reject deceitful illusions.[79] In either case, Émile spurns his particular desires as a man in favour of an abstract and absolute rule—be that the rule of law or of reason. Once again, Émile's resemblance to the girl like Sophie is made apparent. When forced to confront the gap between his chimeras and his reality, he can find no middle ground.

Thinking through the situation from a perspective like Sophie's—a perspective by which one can compare chimeras and reality and find a compromise between them—the extremity of Émile's conclusion becomes apparent. For a brief moment, Émile seems to question his uncompromisingness, and entertains the possibility that he could return to his wife, musing that

76. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 469.
77. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 474.
78. Elizabeth Wingrove, *Rousseau's Republican Romance* (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 2000), 91.
79. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgement*, 163.

"Sophie, having stayed estimable in her crime, will be respectable in her repentance; she will be all the more faithful since her heart made for virtue has felt what it costs to offend virtue."[80] Émile suggests that, though Sophie made a mistake, she could learn from it. He recognises that there is a gap between the chimerical Sophie and the real one, but this gap is presented in a positive light, as it provides a space for growth. If Émile had continued to think in this manner, he may have been able to compare Sophie to his idea of virtue in the same way that Sophie compares him to Telemachus. The virtuous ideals they represent may not exist in reality, but in aspiring to be like these perfect ideals, the chimeras guide them, even when they fail to live up to them. However, Émile subsequently claims this brief interlude was merely passion masquerading as wisdom, imitating the language of reason. He refuses to listen to his passions, just as he refuses to compromise between his perfect chimeras and imperfect reality.

The closest Émile comes to thinking from his wife's perspective is when he considers what is to be done with their surviving son. He considers taking the boy from Sophie, as he writes that "this one will soon be replaced with another,"[81] but is lead to reconsider when he discovers that Sophie has visited him while he was at work, in a carpentry shop. Sophie did not make herself known, and Émile learns of her visit some days later, from the wife of his employer. He discovers that, from a hidden perch, Sophie watched him at work, "heaving long, half-stifled sobs and crying torrents of tears."[82] She brought their child with her and hugged him tightly. When she left, she was heard saying to the child, "No, he would never take you from your mother."[83] Hearing Sophie make this claim, even second-hand, forces Émile to evaluate her judgement against his own. He

80. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 481.
81. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 486.
82. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 491.
83. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 491.

asks himself, "What did she see? Émile at peace, Émile at work. What proof did she draw from this sight but that Émile is not subjugated by his passions and forms only reasonable resolutions?"[84] Émile literally seeks to see himself through Sophie's eyes; he seeks to compare his conclusion to what he thinks Sophie's opinion of it would be. In Schaeffer's words "[e]ntering into Sophie's perspective pushes Émile to judge not only whether his decision is reasonable but also whether *he* is being reasonable."[85] This process reflects the different types of rules modelled by Sophie and the tutor. Whereas the tutor presents judgements for Émile—like the contract he creates as a solution to the conflict between Émile and Robert—Sophie invites Émile to judge with her and to compare his judgement to hers. When he stops seeing Sophie as an extension of himself, Émile begins to take into account the differences between his opinion and hers, allowing him to weigh the two perspectives against each other. Thinking in this manner allows Émile to reach a compromise; he decides to leave his son with Sophie, realising his resolution was motivated by anger. In concluding that it is in his son's best interest to be raised by Sophie, Émile suggests that Sophie can still teach virtue to their son—and, perhaps, is still capable of virtue herself, though she is not identical to his chimerical ideal of womanly virtue. Despite this implicit recognition, Émile still cannot bring himself to forgive Sophie, and so he boards a ship, leaving his family behind for good.[86] Contrary to what he believed when his tutor took him by the hand at the end of Book V, his marriage to Sophie did become a knot tightened to the point of bursting.

Unlike Émile as he boards the boat destined for Algiers, readers of *Émile* and "Émile et Sophie," are encouraged to seek a middle ground. Throughout the texts, they are presented with chimeras they must identify and compare for themselves. As noted, this is especially true of "Émile

84. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 493.
85. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgement*, 166, emphasis in original.
86. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 494.

et Sophie," where Rousseau's omniscient tutor is no longer present to guide readers' judgements.[87] In fact, in "Émile et Sophie," Rousseau presents an alternative model of married life. After Émile and Sophie arrive in Paris, disconsolate after the death of their daughter, Sophie becomes attached to a Parisian couple. Émile writes that, this couple's "maxims should have frightened [him]."[88] The couple, Émile says, have a relationship that appears regular and decent to onlookers, but:

> Their good understanding came less from a true attachment than a shared indifference concerning the duties of their [married] state. Little jealous of the rights they had over each other, they claim to love each other much more by giving into their pleasures without constraint, and not being bothered if they were not the object. May my husband live happily above all else, said the wife; that I have my wife as a friend, I am happy, said the husband. […] Each does all they can for the happiness of the other. Can we better love those who are dear to us than to want all that they desire? We avoid the cruel necessity of fleeing each other.[89]

What is notable about these "maxims," as Kennedy observes, is that they "are not those of exclusive possession of the other or rights over the other."[90] While the couple lives together, they are more than two halves of a single whole: the wife wishes the individual happiness of her husband, just as the husband wishes the individual happiness of his wife. Émile should fear the Parisian couple, as they call into question his rigid conceptions of wholeness in family life. He expects his that wife will link him to his children, thereby making the family a seamless extension of himself, the patriarch. By contrast, the Parisian couple presents a vision of family life in which

87. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 161.
88. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 462.
89. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 462–463. My translation here is informed by that of Kennedy in *Rousseau in Drag: Deconstructing Gender*, 90.
90. Kennedy, *Rousseau in Drag*, 90.

both parties accept that the whole binding them to each other is chimerical. They love the chimerical whole, but they also acknowledge the reality that they are two individuals.

It is up to readers to evaluate the Parisian couple's attitudes. On one hand, Émile may be right to fear them, as within the narrative of "Émile et Sophie," the Parisian couple appear responsible for Sophie's corruption. Émile claims the wife made flirtatious advances towards him, "which I did not always resist without pain," before rebuffing him and attaching herself to Sophie.[91] Sophie, it seems, is successfully seduced by the wife; her subsequent pregnancy is apparently the result of an affair with the husband—or a rape.[92] In pursuing what pleases them, the Parisian couple do not consider how they affect others. On the other hand, there are similarities between the Parisian couple's way of life and the initial advice the tutor gives to Émile and Sophie as newlyweds—namely, that they should belong to one another only insofar as they please. There is reciprocity and equality in their marriage, and each maintains their individuality while choosing to build a whole together. They willingly knot their lives together, but do not pull the knot too tight, so to speak. There is something in the initial presentation of their principles that seems agreeable to Sophie, leading to her entanglement with them. Likewise, by refusing to accept Sophie as an imperfect individual, with desires that are not merely extensions of his own, Émile is forced into the fate the Parisian couple sought to avoid: "the cruel necessity of fleeing."[93] However, possessing such an understanding of marriage does not make the Parisian couple virtuous. Readers,

91. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 462.
92. The text and the secondary literature suggests that it was Rousseau's intention for Sophie's pregnancy to be the result of rape. *See* Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 494; Schwartz, *Sexual Politics*, 96–97; Wingrove, *Rousseau's Republican Romance*, 88–90; Nancy Senior, "*Les Solitaires* as a Test for Emile and Sophie," *The French Review* 49, no. 4 (1976): 528–535; Charles Wirz, "Note sur *Émile et Sophie, ou Les Solitaires*," *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau* 36 (1963–65): 291–301
93. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 463.

for their part, may compare the marriage of the Parisian couple to that of Émile and Sophie, and make their own judgements and compromises about what is best.

For readers to undertake such an evaluation, they must think like Sophie. Recall that Sophie's education places an emphasis on learning to navigate between whole and part—or between chimera and reality—which Émile is not taught. Émile believes he is the perfectly free, perfectly whole natural man, and that there is no division between this image of himself and his reality. Such an understanding means that Émile struggles to see how he can be both man and citizen, as being a citizen means his perfect freedom would be restricted by his ties to his state or his property. This refusal to compromise reflects a tragic interpretation of Rousseau's political thought, like that suggested by Shklar, wherein an individual cannot be both a man and a citizen.[94] Following Schaeffer, however, it may be possible the bridge the gap Shklar identifies, by re-characterising Rousseau as a "theorist of middle states (e.g. as a defender of the middle ground between individualism and collectivism, rather than either extreme)."[95] This possibility comes into focus when one considers Sophie's perspective. She, unlike Émile, sees that visions of perfect wholeness are chimerical. In upholding Telemachus, for example, as an image of virtue, Sophie knows he is not real. Instead, she seeks a middle ground between her ideals and reality. Moreover, through her education in *amour-propre*, Sophie comes to understand that her own identity is divided; there is one version of herself presented by the opinion of others, and one that exists in her mind. Sophie is taught that the opinions of others on this subject matter, and that she must attempt to reconcile them with her understanding of herself. Thus, she must mediate the conflicts between her identities as a wife, mother, and citizen with her identity as an individual. Each title

94. *See* Shklar, *Man and Citizen*, 5–9.
95. Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom and Judgement*, 192.

is a chimerical whole unto itself, yet none describes Sophie as a whole. These competing claims on her identity exist alongside each other, and Sophie lives in the space she creates between them.

The political importance of Sophie's perspective is clear when one considers property from her view. In Book II, Rousseau claims that Émile's incident in the bean garden brings "the first sentiments of justice" into focus through the rudimentary introduction of property and contract. Émile is led to believe that he owns the beans because he has planted them and tended to their growth from seed to maturity. His claim to ownership rests on the idea that, through his labour, he knows the plants in their entirety. However, as soon as this logic is established, it is challenged. The beans do not exist in a vacuum; they must be planted in a piece of land—and in this case, the land is owned by a prior occupant. Instead of fundamentally disrupting the logic of Émile's claim to ownership, the tutor encourages him to expand it, suggesting a contract that gives Émile a prefabricated solution to resolve the dispute. This contract with Robert appears legitimate because Émile now sees the garden, and not just the beans, from the perspective of his tutor—a perspective which is assumed to see the garden as a whole. As noted by Ferguson, rather than concluding that the claim to legitimate possession begins with Émile, the boy now presumes that the claim to legitimate possession begins with the gardener, Robert, but Émile does not question the legitimacy of Robert's ownership of the garden.[96]

If one assesses this incident as Sophie might, Robert's arrival does fundamentally disrupt the logic Rousseau presents to justify the ownership of the garden, and of property in general. Just as the beans are part of the garden, the garden is itself part of a larger territory. If readers compare Émile's initial logic to that used to justify the tutor's contract between Émile and Robert, the similarity is apparent. Moreover, Rousseau invites readers to question the limits of the tutor's

96. Ferguson, "Reading Morals," 82.

vision of the garden, as he breaks from his narration to make an aside about the conquest of Núñez de Balboa. The two may differ, insofar as Émile works the land while the conquistador did not; nevertheless, there is a nagging similarity, as both ignore the possibility that the land they claim may already be claimed by someone else. By introducing the figure of Robert in the paragraph following this interpolation of Balboa, readers are invited to compare the latter not only to Émile, but to Robert, and to Émile and Robert as a unit. One is led to ask: who worked the land before Robert? And who before them? This line of questioning could be continued indefinitely. Rousseau must stop Émile from questioning the standard of wholeness in this way, as it would call into question the legitimacy of all property, which is the basis for Émile's moral world.

There are two routes to answering these questions: the first follows the lead of the girl like Sophie; the second follows Rousseau in the "Discourse on Inequality." For her part, the girl like Sophie would likely fixate on the impossibility of knowing the identity of the first occupant. Unable to reconcile the idea of perfect wholeness with the imperfect partial knowledge found in reality, she could reasonably claim that all property ownership is illegitimate. Just as she reduces her parents to silence "by using their own reasoning against them," the girl like Sophie uses the logic justifying property ownership against itself by pressing it to an extreme (405). Rousseau, reaches an arguably similar conclusion in "Discourse on Inequality," but by a different path; he attacks the very notion that being the first occupant legitimises the exclusive ownership of a piece of land, rather than seeking to define—as the girl like Sophie might—who that occupant was. In this text, Rousseau infamously claims that the origin of inequality is the same as the origin of civil society, both being rooted in the invention of property ownership. Specifically, he argues that "the first person who, having fenced off a plot of ground, took it into his head to say *this is mine* and

found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society."[97] From this initial founding, "inequality, being almost null in the state of nature […] finally becomes stable and legitimate by the establishment of property and laws."[98] Inequality is entrenched by the legal division of the world:

> When inheritances had increased in number and extent to the point of covering the entire earth and of all bordering on each other, some of them could no longer be enlarged except at the expense of others; and the supernumeraries, whom weakness or indolence had prevented from acquiring an inheritance in their turn, having become poor without having lost anything […] were obliged to receive or steal their subsistence from the hand of the rich.[99]

This atmosphere fosters hostility between landowners fighting to expand their territory, as well as between the rich and the poor—in both cases, between "the right of the stronger and the right of the first occupant."[100] To end this "perpetual conflict" with something other than bloodshed, individuals agree to a set of laws, ostensibly "to protect the weak from oppression, restrain the ambitious, and secure everyone the possession of what belongs to him."[101] However, legalising the ownership of land does not eliminate the problem, as the entire world is still divided into inheritances owned by the rich, while the dispossessed fight for survival, according to Rousseau. Property law formalises these relations, and defines channels for navigating them. The right of the first occupant does not exist in the state of nature; it only exists in civil society, wherein laws

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97. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," in *The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters (New York, NY: St. Martins Press, 1964), 141, emphasis in original.
98. Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 181.
99. Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 156–57.
100. Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 157.
101. Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 157, 159.

justify their claim of exclusive ownership.[102] As Rousseau writes, "the law of property […] changed a clever usurpation into an irrevocable right."[103] Property ownership, he suggests, is merely conventional—in other words, a chimera.

Like Rousseau, the original Sophie—or a reader thinking like her—can see claims to ownerships for the chimeras that they are. Consequently, the first sentiment of justice aroused by Émile's episode in the bean garden is not a result of the violation of his property rights; rather, the first sentiment of justice arises from rejecting the validity of someone fencing off a piece of land and claiming "*this is mine*." To claim exclusive ownership of a piece of land is absurd; any territory is part of an ecosystem and history far larger than a single human can know or control. However, while Sophie perceives property ownership for the chimera that it is, she also sees its necessity. Where the girl like Sophie accepts only the abstract whole, the original Sophie accepts both the ideal of wholeness and the world as it is. As with Telemachus, she loves the idea of perfect wholeness that exists in the abstract, but she also loves Émile—the particular and flawed human being. Loving Émile does not mean she loves Telemachus any less; rather, Sophie can compare between whole and part, or between chimera and reality, though they often bear little resemblance to each other. In the conflict between Émile and Robert, they need an agreement lest it become the "perpetual conflict" of which Rousseau warns in the "Discourse on Inequality." Unlike the tutor, however, Sophie would not observe and resolve the conflict from the outside. As in her marriage, Sophie works to resolve a conflict while being herself party to it. She creates chimeras of wholeness and works to reconcile them with the real world, as she did by creating Telemachus as her ideal of marital virtue. She recognises that her real husband is not Telemachus, but she also

102. *cf.* Rousseau, "Social Contract," 168.
103. Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 160.

sees Émile's potential to be like Telemachus. In encouraging him to be a better version of himself, their marriage contract could create a space for collaboration between spouses, if Émile was able to encourage similar growth in Sophie. Concerning property, the development of a contract between parties could assume a similarly collaborative aspect. Sophie, Émile, and Robert could work together to create a contract and an image of justice, rather than having an image of justice handed down to them as a rule from the tutor. All parties must understand that, while the image they create is chimerical, it is a chimera to which they can aspire. Thus, in contrast to the external dictates of the tutor, Sophie embodies the thought processes necessary for genuine self-rule.

Through comparison and compromise, readers thinking like Sophie can envision a kind of freedom emerging from human interdependence, which is more compatible with the requirements of citizenship than Émile's conviction that freedom is an individual's license to do whatever they desire, unhindered by external duties or attachments. As a young man, after travelling Europe, Émile insists that his idea of freedom is possible, so long as he truly has exclusive ownership of his property. If his property is limited in this way, he believes it can truly be an independent whole unto itself; thus, he can live without the fear of being chained to external factors. He fails to consider that his family is an external attachment—leading, in part, to the tragedy of "Émile et Sophie." However, even if Émile's logic is confined to property alone, his tutor tries to remind him that "a field which is yours" is hard to find (457). Though the events in the bean garden are not recalled explicitly, the tutor points to the problems it revealed in asking, "But where is the state where a man can say to himself, 'The land I tread is mine?'" (457). One can never truly know the whole history of one's property; moreover, the tutor draws Émile's attention to another attachment implied by property ownership: attachment to a state. As Rousseau argues in "Discourse on Inequality," civil society is necessary to enforce property law. Therefore, as a property-owning

citizen, Émile may become constrained by the machinations of "the noble and the rich" or "boundless taxes," both products of living in civil society (457). Thus, Émile freedom is possible only if he lives entirely outside of the purview of a state.

Before Émile goes on his two-year journey around Europe, the tutor attempts to warn Émile of the unavoidable dangers of civil life. "Keep in mind," he says, "that everywhere their lands can border on Naboth's vineyard" (457). This reference to the Old Testament story of Naboth's confrontation with King Ahab. Naboth refuses Ahab's offer to purchase the vineyard, as the land is "the inheritance of [Naboth's] ancestors."[104] The king subsequently has Naboth executed on false charges, and seizes his land. The tutor, it seems, is attempting to disabuse Émile of the notion that he can be free if he lives quietly, on land which he alone owns. Even if Émile is as moral and innocent as Naboth, "a man of position may buy or build a house near your cottage" and "under some pretext [may] invade your inheritance" (457). Wherever Émile builds his little farm, he must beware the encroachment of civil society. Even after Émile returns from his voyage and begins his life with Sophie, the tutor's warning seems to reinforce his conclusion that being an unconstrained and independent natural man is incompatible with citizenship.

However, there is a second sense to the tutor's warning, to which a reader thinking like Sophie may be attuned—namely, one can compare Émile to Ahab. In such a comparison, the bean garden of Émile's youth is again subtly conjured, as Ahab desired Naboth's vineyard for the purpose of planting "a vegetable garden."[105] Ahab, like Núñez de Balboa, ultimately does not care who used the land before him. He seeks to impose a myopic vision of wholeness on the world, one which begins with himself. The danger of such a narrow vision is not simply that others may

104. 1 Kings 21:3 (New International Version).
105. 1 Kings 21:2.

forcibly encroach on one's freedom, but that, in exercising one's freedom, one may encroach on that of others. Émile may think he is acting as a free individual, but, without due consideration, he may become the agent of a society based on conquest. This seems to be what occurs to Émile at the end of the unfinished second letter in "Émile et Sophie," as he becomes a slave and advisor to the Dey of Algiers, insensitive to how his freedom has been curtailed, and to how he has become complicit in a regime that curtails the freedom of others. Long before those events, the tutor asks Émile, "Who knows where one can live independent and free, without needing to harm anyone and without fear of being harmed?" (457). His question demonstrates that not being harmed and not harming others are of equal importance. Comparing Émile to Ahab highlights how human interdependence impacts our ability to act freely. Thinking like Sophie allows readers to give both of the allusion's warnings equal weight.

Just as this story offers warnings to Émile, it also contains a warning for Sophie, embodied in the character of Jezebel. After Naboth refuses Ahab's offer to buy his family's vineyard, Ahab returns home, where he "lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat."[106] It is Ahab's wife, Jezebel, who formulates a plan upon noticing her husband's sullenness. She "wrote letters in Ahab's name," orchestrating for Naboth to be accused of blasphemy and stoned to death, allowing her husband to "take possession of the vineyard."[107] Superficially, Jezebel does what Rousseau expects a wife to do. She monitors and manipulates her husband's feelings within the home. Publicly, she acts

106. 1 Kings 21:4.
107. 1 Kings 21:10, 15. There is disagreement in the scholarship concerning how Ahab was able to appropriate the vineyard after Naboth's death, rather than the land passing to Naboth's descendants. Ahab may have been awarded the land as a result of Naboth's trial, requisitioned it arbitrarily, or he may have killed Naboth's heirs. In any case, Jezebel is attributed an important role in the plot. For a lengthier discussion, *see* Francis I. Andersen, "The Socio-Juridical Background of the Naboth Incident," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85, no. 1 (1966): 45–57; Stephen C. Russell, "The Hierarchy of Estate in Land and Naboth's Vineyard," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 38, no. 4 (2014): 453–469.

through her husband, saving him from experiencing friction between himself and his community. Though the community chafes under his rule, Jezebel enables Ahab to feel as though he were a free and independent whole. Of course, contrary to Rousseau's intention, Jezebel encourages Ahab's *amour-propre* to overflow its bounds, enabling his envy of Naboth's property. Yet, if one argues that "the right of the first occupant" is an illusion, as the girl like Sophie—or even Rousseau, in "Discourse on Inequality"—might, one may struggle to defend Naboth's claim over his vineyard. Naboth's refusal to sell the land is predicated on the implicit claim that his ancestors were given the land by God; thus, his possession of the land is legitimised by knowing that his ancestors were the first occupants. If one dismisses the rights of first occupancy as mere convention, there is little preventing Jezebel from removing Naboth to facilitate the creation of a new illusory whole for Ahab. If the rights of the first occupant are not respected, the rights of the stronger would reign. Sophie can appreciate that, in situations like that of Émile's bean garden, a claim to exclusive ownership may be based on a chimera, while also acknowledging that the rights of the first occupant are nevertheless an important convention in human life. She can hold these two contradictory images within her mind simultaneously, understanding that the illusions of wholeness we create to justify property ownership may have bloody consequences. These consequences are of no importance to Jezebel; she seeks to obtain what her husband wants without judging his desires. Similarly, each member of the Parisian couple wishes the happiness of their spouse without judgement. If Sophie is not to become another Jezebel, or another corrupted Parisian, she must think and judge for herself, as Rousseau calls for her to do. She "depends on both her own conscience and the opinions of others," and she "[prefers] the former only when the two are in contradiction" (383). Sophie compares her husband's desires, her society's desires, and even her own desires, to the standards of morality and justice her conscience holds. The standards

may be only chimeras, but Sophie understands that these abstract standards are important nonetheless, and she loves them. Yet, she also loves the world despite its flaws. In comparing the world to the chimeras she constructs, she asks that the world's institutions—her political community, her family, and herself—seek to grow and improve.

Thinking like Sophie leads readers to see that, though all individuals are chained by certain attachments, freedom is possible. While we are not free to do whatever we desire, we are free to grow. Émile fails to see this freedom in growth and improvement; he repeatedly chooses his identity as a man over his identity as a citizen, and even as a father, in pursuit of being an unconstrained, independent whole unto himself. Unless his property or his family is simply an extension of his own person, he cannot tolerate the chains they create. Thus, by the time the narrative of "Émile et Sophie" trails off, Émile is forced into "the cruel necessity of fleeing" his country and his family.[108] Sophie, by contrast, can negotiate the multiple connections that bind her to the world—such as her responsibilities to her country, to her family, and to herself. She may at times fail to fulfill these responsibilities. They may conflict or contradict. Despite these attachments, Sophie is free in a way Émile never achieves; she possesses the freedom of self-rule. Sophie can compare her reality to the chimera she creates, and can seek the best way to reconcile them. Further, she can compare her course of action to those of the people and characters she knows—including Émile, the tutor, the Parisian couple, Telemachus, and Jezebel. With each comparison, she learns to judge better, and through her judgement, she exercises a capacity to improve herself and to shape the connections that bind her to the world. If readers learn to apply Sophie's perspective by comparing her to themselves, they can shape not only their private lives, but how they govern together, in their communities.

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108. Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 462–463.

Claiming a political potential for Sophie's style of education, judgment, and self-rule remains a contentious suggestion. Schaeffer notes it is "difficult to see Sophie as a *political* model," since women are "explicitly absent from political participation" in Rousseau's writings.[109] Scholars as diverse as Weiss and Schwartz argue that Sophie possesses power—even a significant amount of power—over Émile and her family; however, none have used her perspective as a lens to consider political problems, such as property or contract. Admittedly, scholars have likely avoided such projects, like the one attempted here, as they necessarily go beyond Rousseau's texts. Based on his writings, it is unlikely that Rousseau conceived of Sophie as a political model on her own terms. It is, nevertheless, reasonable to suggest that one of Rousseau's intentions in writing *Émile* and "Émile et Sophie" is to teach readers good judgement. His appeals to the "good mother who knows how to think," and the attention he pays to detailing the process of judgement formation, support this suggestion (33). As Morgenstern observes, Rousseau's texts "[engage] the audience not merely as passive spectators but also as active participants in the ongoing enterprise of formulating a dynamic and authentic political theory."[110] Likewise, Schaeffer and Botting suggest that Rousseau seeks to teach judgement through his use of paradox, which demands readers' attention and thought.[111] If Rousseau sought to use the puzzles in his writing as a means to teach readers how to form their own autonomous judgements and theories, the fact readers may use their judgement to arrive at particular conclusions unintended and undesired by Rousseau does not necessarily contradict his intention as a whole.

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109. Denise Schaeffer, "Reconsidering the Role of Sophie in Rousseau's 'Émile,'" *Polity* 30, no. 4 (1998), 626, emphasis in original.
110. Morgenstern, *Rousseau and the Politics of Ambiguity*, 241.
111. Schaeffer, "Reconsidering the Role of Sophie," 626; Botting, *Family Feuds*, 16.

Determining how a perspective like Sophie's could be used to evaluate contemporary political problems is outside the scope of this thesis. What her style of judgment offers is an ability to compare dissimilar, and even contradicting, items. She can evaluate the paradoxes Rousseau presents and, without resolving their central tension, can find a way to live with them. If Sophie is taken as Rousseau's model for judgement, self-rule, and freedom, Rousseau can be read as a thinker concerned with human freedom as it is found in the interdependent reality of life, rather than as a theorist of individual freedom in the abstract, like that embodied by Émile as the natural man raised uniquely for himself. Moreover, if readers take Sophie as a model, they hopefully learn not merely to compare and to compromise, but to judge, and judge wisely.

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