Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Tragic Vision of Reality: An interpretation of Rousseau's political philosophy in the light of his theory of language.

by

Richard A. Matthew
Department of Political Science
McGill University

Montreal, Canada

MA Thesis
Advisor: Dr. J. Tully

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Tragic Vision of Reality

Abstract

The central argument of this paper is that Jean-Jacques Rousseau held a fundamentally tragic vision of reality, based on the notion of an irreconciliable conflict between the individual as an agent of free will whose most essential human characteristic is his ability to determine the conditions of his existence and the real need to have law and custom govern individual behaviour in society. The topic is approached through examining Rousseau's theory of language which embodies his political, anthropological and artistic concerns. The paper concludes that Rousseau believed that the individual is destined to live in an imperfect society with which he can never be wholly satisfied and which will therefore deteriorate and perish. Although works such as the Contrat Social attempt to resolve this dilemma, Rousseau was ultimately unable to develop a mechanism of reform that was both practical and true to his perceptions of individual freedom and social authority.

Résumé

La thèse principale de ce mémoire est de démontrer que Rousseau possédait une conception fondamentalement tragique du monde, ceci à cause de l'idée d'un conflit insoluble entre l'individu doté d'une volonté libre dont la caractéristique essentielle est de pouvoir fixer ses conditions d'existence, et la nécéssité concrête de voir la loi régir le comportement individuel en société. L'approche du sujet se fait à travers une analyse de sa théorie du langage, laquelle synthétise ses préoccupations politiques, anthropologiques et artistiques. Le mémoire conclut à la conviction de Rousseau de ce que la destinée de l'individu est de vivre dans une société imparfaite dont il ne peut jamais être entièrement satisfait et qui donc dégénérera et disparaitra. Bien que le contrat social tente de résoudre ce dilemne, Rousseau ne put trouver un mécanisme correcteur pratique et conforme à sa perception de la liberté individuelle et de l'autorité sociale.

Preface

The arguments presented in this paper have slowly evolved and developed over six years of exposure to the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, although the bulk of the research, as identified in the bibliography, was carried out between 1979 and 1981 in Paris and Montreal.

Although the vast number of secondary writings on Rousseau preclude the possibility of claiming the thesis as original, the author has not specifically encountered this approach to Rousseau in his research.

It is difficult to isolate and define the many influences that have affected, directly or indirectly, the arguments contained in this essay. Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that the inspiration for the tragic vision interpretation derives in part from Judith Shklar's short essay, "Reading The Social Contract."

Special thanks must be given for the able guidance and astute criticisms provided by Dr. J. Tully, Department of Political Science, McGill University, during the preparation of this paper.

List of Abbreviations

CS - Contrat Social

DOI - Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes

EOL - Essai sur l'Origine des Langues où il est parlé de la Melodie et de l'Imitation Musicale

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Nous possédons dans ces beaux lieux
Un esprit émané des vieux;
Il est aimable, il est charmant,
Il possède tous les talents.
A tous ces traits de mon pinceau,
Ne reconnait - on pas Rousseau?

- lettre de Mlle Marianne de Mariàl
23 juillet, 1764

Rousseau Jean Jacques 1712 - 1778
Fr. (Swiss-born) philos. & writer

Introduction

For 240 years, the life and works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau have been much praised and much maligned. His writings have endured the meticulous inspection of generation after generation of increasingly critical readers. He has been called the last of the rationalists and the first of the idealists. He has been loved as a champion of the people and despised as a self-indulgent hypocrite. Above all, he has been applauded as a liberal who believed in personal freedom and the inviolability of the individual and castigated as an authoritarian who endorsed a frightening civil religion and unconditionally subsumed the citizen to the state.

Realist or utopian, collectivist or individualist, liberal or totalitarian - it is difficult for the modern student of Rousseau, after wading through the miasma of conflicting interpretations, to emerge with a confident understanding of the man who, without question, exercised tremendous influence on the past two centuries of Western thought and political activity. Confining oneself to primary sources only, one is still faced with the seemingly impossible task of reconciling contradictory sentiments and statements that appear, not only from book to book, but, at times, from page to page.

Many writers have attempted to fit the content of Rousseau's writings into one consistent and irrefutable form. Often, this approach has entailed injecting a unifying concept into Rousseau's work (such as Leigh's use of natural law). Other critics have quickly demonstrated the problems one produces by interpreting an author in light of a concept that is not supported by the primary sources.

Equally problematic is a second popular approach - dismissing large chunks of Rousseau's opus, notably sections of the CS, as out of place. Whatever remains, now consistent, is offered as Rousseau's philosophical system. But as Cassirer and Leigh have demonstrated, too often this paring process results in a distortion of thought that defeats the purpose of the exercise.

One must ask if the best approach to Rousseau is to attempt

to force his thought into a pleasing system. The vast diversity of subjects with which he dealt, his tendency to leave important questions unanswered, his penchant for digression, and his character, as far as we can determine it, suggest that Rousseau neither strove for nor attained unity in his musings.

In a letter to la marquise de Verdelin, Rousseau wrote, "il faut expliquer les discours d'un homme par son caractère."[1] From his adolescent days spent freely roaming through Switzerland to his parasitic dependence on Mme de Warens as a young man; from his appearance as a 30-year old debutant, friend of Condillac and Diderot, wanting to take Paris by storm to his retreat as a middle-aged hermit flitting between eccentric solitude and the public eye; from his professed love of mankind to his wild-eyed paranoia and distrust of people, Rousseau was erratic and antithetical. He changed his religion at least twice, he changed his views on marriage and the responsibility of fatherhood, he constantly changed his feelings toward society.

Rousseau's character is reflected in his writing which consists of loose ends, inconsistencies and doubts, mixed with wonderfully astute observations and ideas. This does not mean we should consign him to the realm of clever epigram writers, publish an ana of his more memorable statements, and leave the rest of his work to historians. In spite of its shortcomings, his work remains a rare and beautiful painting of a man, an era, and a vision of humanity. His theories of language, music, politics and religion certainly contain logical and empirical flaws. At the same time, they are vital theories containing profound and inspiring ideas that give insight into the 20th century as well as the 18th.

That his ideas, even with their flaws, are important can be judged, perhaps, by considering Rousseau's pervasive influence. Not only were his contemporaries - Condillac, Voltaire, Duclos, Herder - touched by Rousseau, but every subsequent generation has read and pondered over the Contrat Social, the Discours, and Émile. The Jacobins staged the Reign of Terror under his mysterious cloak and, according to J.-D. Selche, "c'est la pensée de Rousseau qui servira de guide à la tendance révolu-

tionnaire incarnée par Robespierre et Saint-Just."[2] Burke, stalwart of British political thought, labelled Rousseau the embodiment of the Age of Reason. The traditionalists De Maistre and Bonald attacked his irresponsible individualism; Sir Henry Maine called him a collective despot. "The whole 'Storm and Stress' movement, Lessing, Kant, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller were dependent on him and acknowledged their indebtedness to him."[3] Kant called him the "Newton of the moral world"[4], Herder hailed him as a "saint and prophet", and Schiller, in his poem "Rousseau", wrote:

> Sokrates ging unter durch Sophisten,
> Rousseau leidet, Rousseau fallt durch Christen,
> Rousseau - der aus Christen menschen wirbt. (5)

When Rousseau fell out of favour with the 19th century philosophers, the literary world, George Sand, Dostoyevsky, sprung to his defense. As time passed, his critics and admirers grew in number and scope so that today thousands of articles and monographs in numerous fields are listed in the bibliography of secondary sources on Jean-Jacques.

The desire to read and understand Rousseau is still very much alive. In nations with as diverse political systems and intellectual backgrounds as France, the USSR, Chile, Brazil, the USA, Switzerland and Canada, research is being done on all aspects of his thought. Rousseau and the small community, Rousseau the ecologist, Rousseau the literary figure, Rousseau on education - What has been neglected? What ceases to be relevant?

More important, perhaps, what more can be added to this vast sea of scholarship? And will the sea ever be calm, will a consensus ever be reached that Rousseau was a liberal or a totalitarian, a rationalist or an idealist, a philosopher or a moralist? Perhaps, as Rousseau often suggested to his contemporaries, the aim of his writing has been misunderstood.

At present, two things are apparent. First, critical studies of Rousseau tend to divide neatly into two camps representing contemporary political perceptions reduced to their

most fundamental expression. The two camps compete, profiting from the fact that the scope of Rousseau's writing and thought permits the selective critic to place him into virtually any category. But, while it is convenient for the scholar to reduce and categorize the ideas of past thinkers, Rousseau has historically resisted such rigorous classification and tended to cut across the popular political debates.

Second, within each of the two camps, one finds three basic approaches. The first two have already been mentioned; proponents of the third, epitomized by Voltaire, Hearnshaw and Babbitt, tend to conclude that Rousseau's writings were the tempermental outbursts of a frustrated madman. The well-documented failures experienced by each of these approaches leads one to suggest that if we are to profit from reading Rousseau, we must shed our conventional prejudices that tend to see everything in terms of a well-defined set of dichotomies.

To avoid these difficulties, this essay will attempt (a) not to surreptitiously draw Rousseau into modern categories and (b) not to supply false unity to appease our own sense of order. The first point certainly does not intimate that Rousseau's thought is not part of a recognizable philosophical tradition. It suggests, however, that he may well have stood at an intellectual crossroads, drifting into more than one direction. Likewise the second point does not imply that Rousseau's theories lacked cohesion and structure. But as his thought expanded and he explored more aspects of man and society, he realized the difficulty of unifying everything, of building an impregnable fortress of thought. And, as we will demonstrate later, he realized the futility of trying to do so.

Two of Rousseau's favorite literary forms were the dialogue and the revery. Thought for him was an ongoing process, a voyage that leads in many directions, without necessarily culminating in definitive statements of fact. His work reveals a vision rather than a system, and the critical question is not so much whether the vision is a vision of absolute truth, as whether the vision satisfies the reader's reason and feeling in its depiction of reality. Unlike a philosophical system that

strives to be consistent and whole, Rousseau's vision of society is sufficiently flexible to contain contradictions and dilemmas, reflecting what can be observed in reality, and it is intentionally left open for the reader to supplement and change.

To be effective, the vision employs artistic devices - exaggeration, paradox, metaphor. Critics enjoy pouncing upon these, gleefully exposing Rousseau's inconsistencies, or analysing them into manageable units which, stripped of their dramatic force, can be translated into a more mundane terminology.

Our position is that the value of Rousseau's writings lies in our reactions to the vision of reality it presents. Our approach is to examine this vision to determine whether or not it remains a relevant depiction of the problems man in society encounters. Our conclusion is that it is ultimately a tragic vision, a vision of despair that suggests that the very nature of man precludes the possibility of a perfect society while at the same time compelling him to participate in an imperfect society with which he can never be wholly satisfied. Because this conflictual situation is dissatisfying, man dreams of alternatives. These options, however, be they different descriptions of human nature or utopian models of society, are never rigorously supported by empirical evidence.

At the same time, ideals are a part of man, a part of his environment and his essence. Man, Rousseau argued, is a perfectible agent of free will. These traits allow him, among other things, to conceive and investigate various social systems on an intellectual plane. Indeed, many of the so-called contradictions found in Rousseau's work stem from his own attempts to develop solutions to human problems on paper. But Rousseau was aware of the contradictions scattered through his writing for he appreciated that the constraints on human activity tend to be more severe than the constraints on human thought. An important element of Rousseau's contribution to understanding lies in his compelling presentation of why man, as an agent of free will, and society, as the circumstance of his existence, yield a conflict that cannot be fully resolved through philosophy. It is for this reason that Rousseau's writings do not present a

tight system that is right or wrong as much as a sprawling vision that is more or less accurate.

Rousseau's vision fuses idealism to realism and suggests that both are equally valid dimensions of man and society. Because of this, no absolute structure can be determined and society is appreciated as the site of a constant conflict between ideals and circumstances on both an individual and social level.

Hopefully, our position will be clarified in the body of this essay where we will attempt to substantiate it by examining one aspect of it - Rousseau's views on language.

Rousseau attached tremendous importance to language, which he described as the first social institution, and he used language as a vehicle for examining human nature and society. Choosing to discuss Rousseau's writings on this topic can thus be justified on several grounds.

First, language provides a unifying concept in Rousseau's opus, bringing together his views on human nature and society and joining his artistic activity to his philosophical work. For example, in the Essai sur l'Origine des Langues (EOL), which is largely concerned with the relationship of language to music and, in part, constitutes an attack on the state of language and the arts in general and the theories of Rameau (music) and Condillac (language) in particular, Rousseau used his understanding of the development of society to clarify the theory of language presented. Similarly, the Discours sur l'Origine d'Inégalité (DOI), which examines both art and politics in its discussion of social inequality, contains several lengthy passages on language intended to firm up and clarify the central argument. Again, in Émile, language appears as a relevant concern in a treatise dealing with the education of the moral individual.

Rousseau called language the first social institution, and his theory, which ties its origins to the arts and its development to society, clearly represents the fusion of his artistic and philosophical concerns.

Second, the nature of Rousseau's theory of language inevitably leads into a consideration of his overarching concept of reality. For Rousseau, language was a social phenomenon that made society possible. What, then, was its rôle in society? Rousseau argued that it should be an instrument used by man to express his real physical, moral and emotional needs. But, he continued, just as other social institutions can be disproportionately influenced by factions, as a result of the unequal distribution of authority, so can language. It then becomes a tool in the hands of a group of men rather than a tool in the hands of man.

Rousseau argued, in effect, that language had developed into an instrument of control and education that perpetuated an unjust society. To return language to its (hypothetically) original rôle required that the structure of society be altered to allow each individual to participate equally in its development. The problem with language was essentially the same as the problem with society - the distribution of authority.

From this general picture, Rousseau attempted to define specific problems evident in society. Since the form and content of language were, in his mind, largely determined by the faction wielding authority, he believed a study of language would reveal the major characteristics of this faction. In his analysis, Rousseau determined that language had become increasingly rational and precise, losing its emotional content. This exaggerated rationalism, according to Rousseau, also dominated social thought and behaviour.

Since, for Rousseau, human nature consisted of both reason and feeling, the preponderance of reason meant that, as a citizen, man was alienated from his true nature. Language was a key element in this process. The ideal remedy would be to revamp society <u>in toto</u>, an impossible task for reasons to be discussed later. The situation could, however, be ameliorated by consciously injecting feeling into language. This was precisely what Rousseau attempted to do in his writing and his efforts in this regard initiated a new direction for French prose and had a tremendous influence on the German romantic movement.

As can be seen, language touches directly upon all of Rousseau's major concerns while at the same time standing as a concern in its own right. For this reason, it is a profitable approach to Rousseau's broader tragic vision. Language acts as an element of this vision and, at the same time, serves to clarify other elements of it.

Third, Rousseau's concept of language is evident in the form of his writing as well as in its content and hence we have both the theoretical and practical dimensions of his theory at hand.

Fourth, Rousseau's theory of language is closely related to contemporary research being done on this subject. We can loosely categorize modern linguistic theories as instrumentalist, determinist, or constitutive. Rousseau's theory of language bears striking resemblances to our modern understanding. He begins by adopting a fundamental instrumentalist approach which he then modifies with a determinist twist to accord with his perception of reality. While Rousseau's place in contemporary linguistics is not the concern of this paper, Rousseau's contemporary significance will be implied in our interpretation of his theory of language.

Finally, very little attention has been paid to Rousseau's work on language and thus the thesis will be largely original in theme and scope. The EOL will be examined in detail. This short essay, originally written as part of the DOI, has been largely neglected by the critics and its rôle in clarifying Rousseau's political and social ideas overlooked. Written alongside his better known works, the EOL is useful because it deals with the same basic set of concerns from a fresh perspective.

In view of these points, it seems appropriate to explore Rousseau's contribution to this problem. In the light of Rousseau's work on language, we hope to demonstrate in the following pages that (a) Rousseau held a particularly tragic view of society and the individual, arrived at, in part, through his studies of language, and (b) this tragic vision contains a great

deal that is helpful in understanding the dilemma of man in society today.

Before stating the thesis of this paper, we must present two fundamental premises upon which the rationale for Rousseau's tragic vision is predicated.

(1) Man is perfectible and has a greater opportunity to develop in a social context than he does in a state of nature.

This assertion is partly tautological and merely gives us (and Rousseau) a hypothetical condition (state of nature) for the purpose of comparison. The fact is, we exist in a social context and have only a remote possibility of disassociating ourselves from it. The more debatable part of this first premise is that man is perfectible. By perfectible, we mean that man has an innate capacity to improve himself in moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic spheres. This does not mean that there could be a perfect man and Rousseau never implied this in any way. Accepting this premise is an individual matter and, for obvious reasons, we will not attempt to prove or disprove it. The point is, it is a position underlying much of Rousseau's writing[6] and central to his theory of language and his tragic vision.

(2) Freedom is a primary human value.

The acceptance of this premise rests on our definition of freedom and we will refine it throughout the essay. Basically, Rousseau defined freedom as the power to conduct one's life in accordance with one's free will. What constitutes free will is the real ability to consult one's individual feeling and reason in order to determine what one should believe and how one should behave. This is not a perfect definition and it will be dealt with more extensively in Chapter 3.

Even someone who has chosen to interpret Rousseau as an authoritarian should not have any difficulty agreeing that freedom is fundamental to Rousseau's thought. The problems hinge on the notion of a freely determined moral code that is universal and hence able to be enforced by the state.[7] If one cannot accept

the notion of an objective morality which the state has a right to judge and enforce, one might be inclined to label Rousseau a totalitarian. As we will show in Chapter 3, this view confuses theory and praxis in Rousseau's work and attributes to Rousseau the very dilemma that underlies his tragic vision of reality. For now, we simply present this premise.

Thesis

We have described two premises fundamental to Rousseau's thought:

(1) Man is perfectible, and

(2) Freedom is a primary human value.

The first is posited as intuitively correct; the second will be considered in depth in Chapter 3. We can now state the thesis of this paper.

It is our contention that the importance of Rousseau's work lies not in any so-called philosophical system one can abstract from it, but in the tragic vision of reality that it presents. This tragic vision, which we will explore in the light of Rousseau's work on language, comprises two essential elements:

(1) It suggests that society results in an inevitable conflict between free will and authority. Although Rousseau suggested several solutions to this conflict, it is our belief that he finally concluded that it cannot be resolved without changes to human nature that would prove even worse than the problem itself. At the same time, the presence of this conflict pushes society toward corruption and inequality that ultimately prove intolerable. Hence all societies inevitably perish.

(2) It suggests that the effect of this conflict on the individual is to alienate man from his true nature, by subsuming feeling to reason and by denying him real freedom and authority. While necessity compels man to more or less accept changes in his true nature, the indomitable human spirit tends to revolt against constraints, especially when they appear arbitrary and negative. Language, however, as a system of education and control that is increasingly administered by factional interests, constantly reduces the individual's awareness of his condition and forces him into submission.

Put simply, the thesis of this paper is that, according to Rousseau, language and society have not served to perfect the individual and protect freedom, but rather to concentrate and perpetuate a philosophically unjustified political authority.

This situation has led to a corruption of human nature and morality and therefore society not only fails to serve man's best interests, but constantly deteriorates and eventually perishes.

Our aim is two-fold. First, we examine Rousseau's theory of language to determine his tragic vision of reality. Second, we complete this tragic vision by tracing the natural progression from linguistics to politics evident in Rousseau's work. Language and politics are united to yield a final vision of the dilemma of man in society that remains relevant and enlightening.

Chapter 1

Introduction

We cannot simply pluck Rousseau from the Age of Enlightenment, place him in the 1980's, and expect to learn or prove anything. The fact that we rely on concepts such as authority, freedom and morality in our discussion compels us to examine the circumstances of his writing in some depth. Only in this way can we hope to give flesh and life to the above concepts. And only in this way will we be in a position to judge their contemporary significance.

The fact that Rousseau used terms we still use today has lulled some critics into believing he used them in the same way we do. There are two important points which strongly refute this position and make it imperative for us to begin our study with a chapter on the background to Rousseau's writings. The first reason is aptly expressed by Rousseau himself in a letter written to Mme d'Epinay in 1756:

> Apprenez mieux mon dictionnaire, ma bonne amie, si vous voulez que nous nous entendions. Croyez que mes termes ont rarement le sens ordinaire, c'est toujours mon coeur qui s'entretient avec vous, et peut-être connaîtrez-vous quelque jour qu'il ne parle pas comme un autre. (1)

In a similar vein, Rousseau wrote to M. de Malesherbes in 1762, "Personne au monde ne me connaît que moi seul." [2]

Rousseau's problems with the authorities in Geneva and Paris, the harsh critiques penned by Voltaire and others, and his own personality which blended doubts and paranoia with a conviction that he was endowed with a singular and accurate understanding of man, certainly contributed to his feeling of being misunderstood. But this does not veil the facts that Rousseau gave words distinctive and often original meanings and that he appealed to feeling and intuition as much as to reason in expressing himself. As he perceptively wrote in Emile:

> J'ai fait cent fois réflexion, en écrivant, qu'il est impossible, dans un long ouvrage, de donner toujours les mêmes sens aux mêmes mots...Les définitions pourraient être bonnes si l'on n'employait pas des mots pour les faire! Malgré cela, je suis persuadé qu'on peut être clair,

> même dans la pauvreté de notre langue, non pas en donnant toujours les mêmes acceptions aux mêmes mots, mais en faisant en sorte, autant de fois qu'on emploie chaque mot, que l'acception qu'on lui donne soit suffisamment déterminée par les idées qui s'y rapportent, et que chaque période où ce mot se trouve lui serve, pour ainsi dire, de définition. (3)

Evidently to understand Rousseau's vocabulary we must have some understanding of Rousseau himself which in turn requires some knowledge of the historical situation that shaped his ideas and that spoke a language he found inadequate. Our conclusions here may well lend support to the thesis that Rousseau stood at an intellectual crossroads. His language blends a tradition moving backward through Locke, Grotius and Pufendorf, all the way to Plato, with a new orientation for enquiry and expression that has had a substantial influence on modern forms of communication.

The second reason for examining the background to Rousseau's work is the more self-evident one that the meanings of many words, especially in a dynamic field such as political philosophy, have changed over the past two centuries. We thus have the double problem of our meaning versus both 18-th century meaning and Rousseau's meaning. It is probably not a problem that can be solved definitively. Rousseau's suggestion is essentially a vicious circle - understanding words by the ideas related to them. Nonetheless, it is a problem that can be alleviated and hopefully this chapter will serve this purpose.

There are three dimensions deserving attention: (1) historical circumstances, (2) intellectual climate, and (3) Rousseau's personal experiences. From this very general overview we will move into a more detailed consideration of the background to the primary texts - EOL and DOI - to be discussed in Chapter 2.

Part 1

A. Historical Circumstances

What was the nature of the world to which Rousseau was born in 1712? It was above all a world of change, both violent and peaceful, of change in political and economic structures and of

change in religious, scientific and political thought.

In the two previous centuries the face of Europe had been altered by the Reformation. Religious wars and disputes, notably in France, Germany and England, characterized an era which saw the advent of Luthur (1483-1546) and Calvin (1509-1564). Protestantism made Geneva, as Ralph Leigh puts it, an isolated and insulated island in a Roman Catholic sea. Revealing the island mentality of the Genevese, Rousseau felt isolated and out of place in the rest of Europe, a feeling evident in all his writing.

France, where Rousseau spent much of his life, had emerged from the religious wars of 1628 to regain military and commercial strength under first Richelieu (1624-1642) and then Mazarin (1643-1661). By the end of Louis XIV's long reign (1643-1715),

> foreign enemies - particularly Spain and Austria - had been neutralized, a strong army had been mobilized, a network of highways had been constructed, the nobility and religious minorities - especially the Huguenots - had been brought under control, and even more important to the future of the nation, a well-organized and efficient central administrative service had been established. (4)

The Swiss Cantons had received their independence in 1648 and the free institutions and civic practices of the republican Geneva strongly appealled to Jean-Jacques. His infatuated dedications to his homeland and his proud label, citoyen de Genève, suggest that Rousseau chose to ignore the fact that authority in Geneva was essentially limited to 25 members of the Petit Conseil. Jean Terrasse suggests that Rousseau was aware of the political reality in Geneva well before the uprisings of 1762-1764 in which the authority of the Petit Conseil was directly challenged by the bourgeoisie.[5] In any case, Rousseau found it convenient to idealize Geneva at least until 1762 when Emile was banned there as heresy.

During the last 20 years of his life, numerous important political events - the Seven Years War, the crowning of Catherine II in Russia, the marriage of Marie Antoinette to the future Louis XVI, and the American Revolution - occurred, firm examples of a momentous era in history.

The impetus to these wide and important events rested partly in new and explosive currents in scientific and philosophical thought. No longer could feudalism be endured, no longer could the monarchy be accepted as the natural and indisputable embodiment of authority, and no longer could science and reason be restrained by articles of faith that had not yet stood the test of critical inspection.

Contact with more primitive civilizations in the Americas encouraged men to reconsider old beliefs and question the validity of long-accepted traditions and mores. A growing middle-class, a growing discontent and a growing need to redefine relationships, institutions and practices through the newly acquired tools of empirical study and reason resulted in the uniquely motivated and inquisitive enlightenment mentality.

B. Intellectual Climate

It is impossible to give a brief but accurate description of the various intellectual movements that developed in the 18th century. Nonetheless, several important lines of philosophical enquiry can be isolated to demonstrate the currents of thought to which Rousseau was exposed. References in his work, his circle of friends and the careful research of modern biographers such as Launay and May, give us a good idea of the scope of thought with which Rousseau was familiar.

Certainly he was acquainted with three related schools of thought that preceded him and had a great impact on the 18-th century: (1) the Materialists, (2) the Cartesians, and, (3) the British Empiricists.

(1) The Materialist school is aptly represented by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) whose Leviathan and De Cive were two of Rousseau's favorite targets for criticism. Many of Rousseau's early works contain vitriolic attacks on Hobbes' conceptions of human nature, the state of nature and the justification of authority in political society. Hobbesean philosophy is grounded on a utilitarian morality that Rousseau initially rejected in toto but later came to appreciate for its practical dimension.

(2) The Cartesian school, originating with René Descartes (1596-1650) attempted to impose a sort of mathematical structure on thought.

> What can be said must be statable in quasi-mathematical terms, for language less precise may turn out to conceal the fallacies and obscurities, the confused mass of superstitions and prejudices, which characterized the discredited theological or other forms of dogmatic doctrine about the universe, which the new science had come to sweep away and supersede. (6)

Important members of this school include the sceptic Pascal (1623-1662), the Christian rationalist Bossuet (1627-1704), Fénelon (1651-1715), Leibniz (1646-1717) and Spinoza (1632-1677), whose call for complete intellectual and scientific freedom provided inspiration for 18-th century writers. Combining scepticism with the notion of innate ideas, this tradition, revitalized by Newton, continues to influence modern methodology in the social sciences. Rousseau accepted the importance of scientific investigation and the validity of scientific proof but felt that this approach disregarded the equally important rôle of feeling (or instinct or intuition) in understanding man.

(3) The most influential figure of the British Empiricist school was John Locke (1632-1704) whose doctrine of observation and common sense freed philosophy from the chains that had held it suspended in the realm of speculation. While accepting certain Cartesian principles, Locke opposed the notion of innate ideas. His influence on the 18-th century is undeniable and it is certain that Rousseau was familiar with his Essay Concerning Human Understanding.

In Rousseau's France, two important schools vied with each other: the Rationalists led by Montesquieu (1689-1755) and the Sensationalists represented by Condillac (1715-1780), Diderot (1713-1784), La Mettrie (1709-1751), d'Holbach (1722-1789) and Helvétius (1717-1771). The former believed in a rationally determined positive law; the latter, disciples of Locke, believed that "all mental processes could be analyzed into atomic constituents consisting of basic, irreducible units of sensation." (7)

Between the two lay the sceptic Voltaire, more of a social critic than a philosopher, who played a key rôle in popularizing Locke but did not wholly agree with the Sensationalists.

These were Rousseau's friends and enemies, the popular coterie of philosophers who captivated France and Switzerland and whom Rousseau both admired and despised. Like Voltaire, who was his greatest adversary, Rousseau stood between the two schools and his reticence to embrace one over the other led to his ultimate exclusion from the support of either.

The tendency of the Enlightenment thinkers, motivated by developments in science and philosophy during the 17-th century, was to attempt to make philosophy more of a natural science. The importance of empirical evidence was widely recognized although each thinker interpreted the problem in his own way and various methods of solving philosophical problems were conceived and pursued.

The picture, however, would not be complete without a few words on the intellectual movements taking place in the arts at the same time. The connection between philosophy and art has always been a close one and the two spheres of activity often reinforce and borrow from each other.

During the Age of Enlightenment, many philosophers - including Rousseau - were also artists. Hence the intimacy of the two was enhanced and, as will become evident when we describe Rousseau's life, the artistic dimension, which supplied creativity and reacted to the world with perhaps greater spontaneity, deserves special attention. Without the artistic impulse and the artist's sensitivity to reality, Rousseau would not have produced the inspired writings he did.

In our modern world of exaggerated specialization, art, science and philosophy tend to be isolated from each other, although thinkers in each field occasionally reaffirm the natural relationship between the three disciplines. We believe our knowledge has become too vast and complex for a single person to master each domain. Hence, for example, the social scientist may have little understanding of developments in the

physical sciences and little awareness of trends in art.

This was not the case in the 18-th century when arrogance and enthusiasm combined to encourage men to have a general proficiency in each field. Although Rousseau had a pronounced weakness for pure and applied science and little interest in experimentation, his range of interests was broad enough to allow him to make important contributions to religion, politics, language, music, literature, theatre, education and anthropology.

Since the Renaissance, Western art had been dominated by the Baroque and Rococo traditions, aptly described by Arnold Hauser as "courtly art".[8] The 18-th century, unsettled by a growing middle-class and general unhappiness with the absolutist, monarchical doctrine that regulated both art and philosophy, gave birth to a double-edged attack. On the one hand, there was a rebirth of the classical tradition, enfused with rationalism, as demonstrated by artists such as David.

Prior to this, there was the advent of a naturalism/emotionalism, an approach with which Rousseau is often associated. It is perhaps not unfair to suggest that Rousseau led the attack on courtly art as he and others led the attack on courtly philosophy. After Rousseau's Julie, for example, and especially after the Rêveries, western literature, particularly in Germany and France, dramatically changed in both style and content. The injection of an inner or self-inspired feeling altered the character of the social novel and allowed the romanticism of Goethe and Schiller to emerge. Freed from stolid convention and an arid and detached point of view, literature became the inspired, psychological, analytical and highly personal art form it is today. Moreover, Rousseau introduced the common man as protagonist, endowed with virtues and filled with a natural goodness not found in the nobility.

To summarize, we can see in the 18-th century a number of vital forces balking against the traditional attitudes and beliefs that had served the interests of religious faith and absolute monarchy. Science, philosophy and art combined to question old values and beliefs and ultimately redirect

political activity. The attacks came from various directions and developed in different ways but all tended to converge in an examination of religious faith and morality, political authority and the general aims of society from a quasi-scientific perspective.

Born in an isolated and fairly liberal state, where the traditions of courtly life were less severe than in neighbouring nations such as France, Rousseau was in an excellent position to appreciate and comment on the problems with which Age of Enlightenment thinkers grappled. And, as will be seen, Rousseau's personal life was instrumental in preparing him for the place he would assume in the vanguard of Western European thought.

C. Personal Biography

The first 30 years of Rousseau's life were spent roaming through France and Switzerland. The freedom that characterized this phase of his life would enchant him with its memories in later years. It was a time of education and experience, a time to live life rather than analyze it.

By the age of seven he was reading indiscriminately: romantic novels left by his mother, Plutarch and Grotius with his father. His father's political enthusiasm - the Rousseaus belonged to the citizenry of Geneva - filled Jean-Jacques with an early love for the political institutions of his homeland. At the same time, his father was a watchmaker, a commoner, and at the age of 12 Rousseau was installed as an engraver's apprentice. His attachment to the common people would prove a driving force throughout his life.

At the age of 16 he found himself missing the curfew bell and locked outside the city's gates for a third time. Unwilling to face the punishment the engraver was certain to mete out, Rousseau decided to leave Geneva. Out of money, he soon found room, board and the façade of religious belief by agreeing to convert to Catholicism. His decision was a matter of expedience and allowed him to pass much of the next 14 years under the protective wing of a fervent Catholic, Mme de Warens, who played the rôle of mother and first lover.

This period of his life was comprised of a myriad of entertaining experiences charmingly described by Rousseau in the Confessions. His first muddled sexual encounters, his foray into the world of musical composition, his work as a tutor and his rigorous application to academic studies in an effort to educate himself combined to prepare him for his sudden charge out of a parochial existence and into the cultured and refined world of Parisian society, the intellectual mecca of Europe.

In 1742 he left for Paris, armed with a new system of musical notation, to revolutionize the world of music. Turned out by the Academie des Sciences, a bewildered Rousseau found himself working as a lackey for the bourgeois Dupin family. It would be several years before he would become the talk of le tout Paris.

Meeting Diderot brought him closer to the circle of young stars, and Rousseau managed to secure a position as secretary to the French ambassador in Venice. Annoyed with the ambassador's handling of diplomatic affairs, Rousseau quarrelled and left to become a secretary in Chenonceaux, picking up Therèse Levasseur along the way. The plain and illiterate washerwoman would find immortality as Rousseau's common-law wife, and the bearer of the four or five children he sent to the Enfants-Trouvées. Rousseau's lack of responsibility plagued him in later years and Emile may be read as an attempt to expiate his early sins of fatherhood.

From 1745 to 1750, Rousseau wrote operas and edited numerous articles on music, mainly for l'Encyclopedie, which was conceived as a monument to reason. He began to gain recognition for his writing abilities when he took the renowned annual prize of the Academie de Dijon for his Discours sur les arts et les sciences. True popularity, however, came only in 1752 with the opera Devin du Village. It was short-lived, for the next year he was burned in effigy for his Lettre sur la musique française. This trend would continue throughout his life.

Now 40, Rousseau had arrived. He enjoyed the notoriety of a modern rock star and treated Paris to a constant show. The

years spent seeking recognition had paid off - but his response to success surprised nearly everyone and very likely enhanced his fame. Returning to Geneva, he reaffirmed his belief in the Protestant faith and restored himself as a citizen. Having renounced Catholicism, he then renounced the vain and artificial French society epitomized by Paris and firmly stated his intention to live by the principles he had described in his two Discours.

The years 1755 to 1762 were especially productive. Under the patronage of such figures as Mme d'Epinay and the maréchal de Luxembourg, Rousseau wrote his Lettre à d'Alembert, Julie, the Contrat Social and Emile. The response of the authorities, his former circle of friends and the public at large tended to be critical, although Julie was hailed as a vital step in the development of French prose. The fate of the CS and Emile, however, hastened his eccentric paranoia and feeling of being misunderstood. His works were outlawed in Paris and Geneva, and burned as heretical, and Rousseau found himself forced to flee from warrants for his arrest. Ousted from Switzerland and France, he ended up in 1766 staying with David Hume in England. Convinced that Hume was party to a plot conjured up to slander and humiliate him, Rousseau returned to France the next year under the pseudonym Renou. That same year he married Therèse, whom he would later describe as a woman he had never loved but always respected.

The last decade of his life, a relatively tranquil period, was largely devoted to the ardent defense of his life and philosophy. The Confessions (1770), Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques, Dialogues (1775) and the Rêveries (1778) are fascinating for their honesty, their arrogance and the light they shed on his earlier and better known writings. Rousseau felt abandonned and misunderstood, but held a firm conviction that God was testing him and would reward him for standing by his beliefs in the life to come: "Que chacun d'eux découvre à son tour son coeur aux pieds de ton trône avec la même sincérité; et puis qu'un seul te dise, s'il l'ose: Je fus meilleur que cet homme-là".[9]

This brief and incomplete sketch of Rousseau's life - which is well-documented and vividly portrayed in the Confessions - is included here for several reasons.

First, for the first 40 years of his life, Rousseau's main concern was with music. He was recognized as a composer and a theoretician, and this knowledge and interest partly shaped his theory of language, which provides a bridge between the artistic and political dimensions of his thought and character. As will be seen, Rousseau believed language responded to and was produced by both the sensual and the rational sides of man. This places him at the center of an important 18-th century debate and gives his theory a realism lacking in the works of the more structured sensationalists and rationalists.

Second, the originality of Rousseau's work is indicated by the reactions it elicited. The enduring quality of his ideas cannot be denied. The controversy they still cause has its roots in his own day. It is indeed unusual for a writer to remain as controversial as Rousseau.

Finally, the momentous nature of his life is reflected in his writing and one should keep in mind his situation at the time he wrote any particular text so as not to be misled by extreme statements. While the impassioned tenor of some of his assertions motivated the harsh criticisms he endured, the tone was certainly exaggerated as he reacted to public criticism. Rousseau may have written for himself, but he wrote to his contemporaries, a fact too often neglected.

One can readily appreciate why it is essential to read Rousseau completely before commenting on a particular text. This is not the key to discovering a perfectly consistent system, but it does show that for Rousseau thought was an ongoing process and ideas introduced in one work were often picked up in others to be clarified or enhanced, defended or eliminated. For example, it is ridiculous to comment on civil religion as depicted in the CS without having read Emile, written at the same time and dealing specifically with the problems of education and religion.

Part 2

> O Français et Françaises, nation parlière, que vous donnez de force aux mots, et que vous en donnez peu aux choses.
>
> - Rousseau à Mme de Verdelin, 4 fevrièr, 1760.

A. Background to the EOL

Rousseau's EOL was first published in 1781, three years after his death. There has been some controversy over when it was written (Gustave Lanson suggests 1750), but the strongest arguments put it in 1754, which places it squarely beside the DOI (1754-55).

> Quirin: Rousseau dit lui-même dans un projet de Préface qu'il [EOL] ne fut d'abord qu'un fragment du Discours sur l'origine de l'inegalité, ou, du moins, qu'un sorte de note à placer en appendice. D'autre part, il lui arrive de citer une ligne de Duclos, tirée de ses Remarques sur la grammaire, publiées en 1754. (10)

This position is reaffirmed by Pierre Masson, who concludes his argument by stating that:

> L'Essai sur les langues a donc été primitivement en 1754 une longue note du second Discours; en 1761, il est devenu une dissertation indépendante, augmentée et corrigée pour en faire une riposte à Rameau. Enfin, en 1763 cette dissertation, revue une dernière fois, a été divisé en chapitres. (11)

Accepting this position, one thing becomes clear: Although Rousseau was not entirely pleased with the EOL (he did, however, read it to Malesherbes and believed it worthy of publication), it cannot be characterized as part of his earlier and less mature writings. It emerged during the same prolific period as his other major writings and deals with the same complex of problems - nature, morality, politics - although it contains a new twist - the social rôle of music and sound. It seems justified, then, to consider it in conjunction with the DOI, not only in terms of content, but also in terms of the research

Rousseau was engaged in at the time.

Since his trip to Venice in 1743, Rousseau had been mulling over the idea of an extended work on political institutions:

> mes vues s'étaient beaucoup étendue par l'étude historique de la morale. J'avais vu que tout tenait radicalement à la politique, et que, de quelque façon qu'on s'y prit, aucun peuple ne serait jamais que ce que la nature de son gouvernement le ferait être. (12)

The DOI, which initially included what would later become the EOL, was a first step toward the completion of this project. In his introduction to both works, Jean-Claude Quirin succinctly outlines the various sources Rousseau referred to in preparing the two essays.[13]

His classical reading included Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Politics, but Rousseau was more inspired by the natural law school that developed from these influential works. He read De jure belli ac pacis (1625) written by Grotius and Pufendorf's De jure naturae et gentium, which was partly a commentary on the earlier work. These two books were popularized by the translations of the French Protestant Jean Barbeyrac and by the rather loose interpretations of the Genevese Jacques Jean Burlamaqui, member of the Council of Geneva. Rousseau cites both authors.

From this natural law school, Rousseau took the notion of a pre-social state of nature and also the critique of divine right, but he could not accept either the concept of law held by its proponents or their notion of sovereignty. (Both Grotuis and Pufendorf endorsed an absolute monarchy).

In addition to this, Rousseau was familiar with and highly critical of Hobbes' Leviathan and De Cive. These treatises justified a form of absolutism by positing it as the only escape from a volatile and destructive state of nature.

Another important influence was John Locke, popularized by Voltaire and idolized by Condillac, Montesquieu and the Encyclopedists. However, as Quirin notes,

> l'intransigeant Rousseau est aux antipodes de ce modéré Locke, faiseur d'habiles compromis. Locke admet l'existence d'un état de nature, mais les hommes y ont déjà des droits et la raison; la conséquence en est que le droit de propriété, par exemple, se trouve ainsi être un droit naturel. Or, si Rousseau a recours à l'idée d'un état de nature, c'est précisément pour exclure toute possibilité d'une quelconque légitimation naturelle de l'ordre humain. (14)

A more direct influence came from Condillac and Diderot with whom Rousseau met weekly. Rousseau's interest in imagination, feeling, and language can partly be traced to his familiarity with themes found in Condillac's work.

> Mais Rousseau se distingue de son illustre prédécesseur sur un point capital: au lieu de suivre, comme le philosophie sensualiste, la genèse de la raison chez l'individu, c'est a travers la société et son histoire que Rousseau étudie l'élaboration progressive de la rationalité. (15)

It is, incidentally, in this way that Rousseau may be considered as having given reason a sociological foundation.

Rousseau also relied on several travel journals in constructing his conception of primitive people. While the noble savage had been an important image in French literature and philosophy at least since Montaigne's Essais and Fénélon's Télémaque, it had been developed by the imagination of writers such as Montesquieu and Voltaire to act as an unsubstantiated but clever tool with which to criticize society. Turning to Pere Dutertre's Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les Français (1667), La Condamine's Relation d'un voyage en Amérique méridionale (1745) and the abbé Prévost's Histoire générale des voyages (1746-1770), Rousseau attempted to refurbish the image of the noble savage with fact. This goal of truthfulness led Rousseau to a deep consideration of Buffon's Théorie de la Terre and Histoire naturelle de l'homme (1749) and tied his philosophical theories more closely to the reigning scientific paradigm.

Against this myriad of secondary information, Rousseau built the DOI and the initial draft of the EOL. The decision

to make the latter into a separate essay indicates that Rousseau's research led him to consider language as an especially important topic. In itself this is not unusual:

> L'essai de Rousseau, en effet, est bien de son temps, cars il semble répondre à une question «en vogue» parmi les philosophes et les gens cultivés d'alors: il s'agit de réfuter la thèse chrétienne traditionelle, qui fait du langage un pur don de Dieu, et de démontrer, au contraire, que la parole est une ouevre strictement humaine. (16)

Moreover, Rousseau's personal interest in music, sound and communication coupled with his goal of isolating the problems in modern political society and proposing solutions to them would seem inevitably to lead to a discourse on language.

In the EOL we can see two distinct lines of influence. The first travels from Locke through Fontenelle and Condillac, and is based on the notion of sensation as the origin of knowledge. Rousseau was familiar with Condillac's sensationalistic epistemology, having witnessed at first-hand the genesis and development of the latter's Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines (1746).

In his essay (subtitled: "Being a Supplement to Mr. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding"), Condillac was attempting to fill a lacuna in Locke's thought - the origin of judgement, of distinguishing and comparing, given the premise of tabula rasa. According to Condillac, everything could be traced back to sensation, a position, however, which failed to explain how a succession of experiences, sense (recall Condillac's famous statue), became an experience of succession, reason. Rousseau recognized this failure and to rectify it he endowed man with a quality (understanding) that could logically develop into reason and could be supported both empirically and philosophically.

Condillac's essay also aimed to refute the Cartesian view of language:

> Les mots traduisent des idées qui représentent fidèlement le réel saisi par l'intelligence,

> aussi le langage provide-t-il de la pensée logique et ne doit-il rien à l'impulsion des passions. (17)

Descartes had conceived a simple, rational, universal language and Cartesian thinkers viewed language as solely an instrument of reason, omitting the rôle played by feeling in its use and meaning.[18] In refuting this, Condillac proposed two languages - the one a poetic language linked to imagination and historically prior to the other, an analytic language based on reason. The reconcilation of the two would produce a perfect language.

In Condillac's estimation, which may be characterized as a theory proposing the intellectual/sensual origin of language in a social context, people originally communicated through actions aided by a few, inarticulate sounds. "Speech succeeding the language of action, retained its character."[19] Furthermore:

> As the prosody of the primitive languages fell very little short of melody; so the style of those languages affecting to imitate the sensible images of the mode of speaking by action, adopted all sorts of figures and metaphors, and was become extremely picturesque. (20)

Hence, "The style of ~~all~~ languages was originally poetical."[21]

According to Condillac, language matures along three lines. (1) Dance, gesture and sound evolve into poetry and ultimately prose. (2) Need and feeling develop into reason. (3) The vague nature of early forms of communication gives way to increasing precision.

But Condillac's arguments in support of this three-fold progression prove inadequate. He writes, for example, that "In examining the progression of languages, we have seen that custom fixes the meaning of words, merely by the circumstances in which we speak."[22] While this explanation may appeal to common sense, it is at odds with the sensationalistic premise from which Condillac begins and with which he ends: "The senses are the source of human knowledge."[23] The problem lies in Condillac's failure to convincingly depict the process through which sensation gives birth to reason and hence the ability to build a systematic and consistent vocabulary for both objects and ideas.

His theory requires two things which unfortunately cannot be fitted into it - an innate capacity to reason and a defined

social context within which language can develop. These shortcomings were recognized by Rousseau and, as will be seen, while his theory bears striking resemblances to Condillac's, it is based on a fundamentally different first premise.

At this juncture it is worth mentioning two other sensationalist thinkers Rousseau knew who also authored tracts on language: Duclos and Diderot. Charles Pinet Duclos wrote the Remarques sur la grammaire générale et raisonnée (1754) to which Rousseau refers in the EOL.

The most important idea Rousseau borrowed from Duclos[24] was that there might be an interesting relationship between the character of a people's mores and conventions and its language. What Duclos had simply suggested, Rousseau would pursue and in several works he comments on the notion of language shaping and reflecting the national ethos from which it springs.

According to Marc Eigeldinger, Diderot's Lettres sur les sourds et muets (1751) had little influence on Rousseau.[25] It was another treatise in the tradition of Condillac, which adopts a somewhat more empirical approach to the problem of language. For Diderot, "Les mots dont les langues sont formées ne sont que les signes de nos idées."[26] Like Condillac, Diderot viewed language as progressing from an expression of things to an expression of relationships as it went through three stages - naissance, formation, perfection - and, also like Condillac, he described a rational and a poetic (emblematique) language.

Rousseau was ultimately dissatisfied with the theories of all three authors, but he was indebted to their spadework.

A second line of influence came from the music theoretician Jean-Phillipe Rameau (1683-1764) whom Rousseau admired in the 1740's but soon vehemently disagreed with on fundamental issues. The title of Rameau's influential work, Démonstration du principe de l'harmonie servant de base à tout l'art musicale, gives a good indication of its thesis.

Rameau built his theory[27] on data collected from experiments done by the French mathematician Joseph Saveur (1699) who was verifying the work of Père Messenne (1636). The latter had

discovered that striking a metal cord hung with a weight attached to one end produces one clear note and two lesser, but still distinct, notes: "l'octave de la quinte du premier et la double octave de la tierce majeur."[28] His conclusion, which was Rameau's starting point, was that harmony was natural and thus the basis of music rather than melody. Rousseau, however, strongly disagreed with Rameau's position as well as his conclusions that harmony could depict the state of men's souls and that harmony was fundamental to the universal order. Much of the EOL is an elaborate critique of harmony.

Most critics overlook the many chapters of the EOL devoted to this question. Quirin, for example, deems it justifiable to omit these chapters in his edition of the Essai. While it is perhaps true that this dimension of Rousseau's theory of language seems superfluous, the music/language relationship he developed should not be forgotten. In his criticisms of the evolution of the arts in society, which Rousseau uses to attack the political development of society, he relies on this theory. Thus, the various parts are pulled together - art, communication, human nature, feeling, reason, political society - into a general but comprehensive overall vision.

In a discussion of Rousseau the artist[29], M. Donakowski characterized the 18-th century mind as highly suspicious of art and music that did not have an evident moral/ethical content. Men such as Mozart, who composed pieces in a variety of carefully chosen and deliberately conflicting styles, were despised in a way similar to Rousseau.

To subordinate the language of reason to the language of passion was decried as irresponsible and irrational. The prevalent view was that art and music should help educate people to a moral and rational life. Much of Rousseau's work demonstrated that what was often despised as irrational was in fact natural and essential to a fully developed individual and a successful society. The failure to appreciate this had, in Rousseau's mind, created an imbalance, with reason and precision bullying feeling into submission. The effect was to strip man of his real nature and at the same time fail to replace it with a libe-

rating social nature. Society was harnessed to reason and its blind and uncritical acceptance of this allowed an inherently irrational state of affairs to emerge and flourish.

Rousseau's view brings to mind the tendency modern countries continue to exhibit in placing tremendous faith in technology, often without considering the probable effects on human nature and social conventions. One is lucky if health and safety factors are discussed. The popularity evinced by the plethora of books and pamphlets written in the past decade on topics such as relaxation, mental health, happiness and stress attests to a society that is growing concerned with the emotional well-being of the individual. Additionally, the advent of the Green Party in Europe, the growth in ecological movements and the increasingly vocal longing for a simple, rustic, back-to-nature existence, indicate a general social malaise that can likely be attributed to the rapid and irresponsible development of a technocratic society. And, in the tradition of Rousseau, many writers are exploring language to expose its rôle in shaping a general and increasingly servile social mentality. The concern that modern language veils human nature, dissembles truth and perpetuates an inexpressible unhappiness and anxiety, is Rousseau's concern. We may be able to better understand the confusing and unsettling life that is submerged in the vast, boundless industrial complex society has become, by reading Rousseau.

Chapter 2

Introduction

It has been suggested by Jean Morel that Rousseau's theory of language is not, in fact, a theory at all: "ce que l'on a considéré comme une théorie du langage chez Rousseau n'est qu'un moment de sa démonstration".[1]

Scattered throughout his writings, Rousseau's comments on language may indeed by pulled together into a theory as writers like Jacques Derrida and Jean Starobinski have done. Yet there is a certain incompleteness to Rousseau's work on language that implies he intended to develop his ideas further. Several aspects of his thought - notably the language-thought-language and society-language-society circles - were certainly unresolved in his own mind.

By changing the last phrase of Morel's comment above to "an aspect of his tragic vision" we can accommodate both positions. Rousseau's work on language contains an implicit theory of language but it is a theory that can only be fully understood when placed into his overarching tragic vision of reality.

Quirin captures the essence of this when he claims in his edition of the EOL that Rousseau's theory of language was neither astute nor original. But, "Rousseau a moins voulu écrire une histoire du langage que saisir la nature et le conditionnement du langage parlé."[2] Furthermore, "Rousseau va plus loin que ses contemporains en disant que la parole est l'oeuvre de l'homme «social» ."[3]

Language, for Rousseau, was another vehicle for examining social man and comparing him with man in a state of nature. Thus Rousseau's theory of language cannot be considered on its own: It must be discussed in the light of his other writings on politics and education. This is confirmed by the fact that the EOL was originally part of the DOI.

Part 1

A. Earlier Writings

Rousseau's writings prior to 1754 were largely on the topic

of music and include the Projet concernant de nouveaux signes pour la musique (1742), Dissertation sur la musique moderne (1743), articles for the Encyclopédie (1749), and the Lettre sur la musique français (1753). On the whole, it is generally accepted that these works represent Rousseau's slow but steady evolution as a writer and thinker and contain mostly unoriginal material. Michel Launay writes, "jusqu'en 1753, la pensée de Rousseau n'a pas encore conquis son originalité".[4] Any ideas of importance were restated in later works and, as Rousseau himself did not attach much importance to his earlier writings with the exception of the Discours sur les arts et les sciences,[5] it seems fair to begin with the EOL, clarifying its ideas with quotes from later sources.

B. The EOL

Rousseau begins his Essai by stating that "la Parole étant la première institution sociale, ne doit sa forme qu'à des causes naturelles".[6] From the outset, his intention appears similar to that of other Enlightenment writers: to refute the religious claim that language is purely a gift of God. This opening line also indicates that Rousseau assumes language is simply a form of social communication and hence not an inner or personal dialogue.

He then divides communication into two parts - gesture and sound - implying that the first best expresses physical needs while the latter best expresses emotional or moral needs. As Quirin points out, the term "moral" (Fr. moral) was used by Rousseau as the opposite of physical or natural and can be defined as that "qui tient à la convention humaine."[7] It should be distinguished here from the term "moeur" which also translates as moral and in Rousseau's writing carries the classical connotation of expressing, teaching or conforming to a standard of right behaviour. Our use of moral for both terms should be clear by the context - where it is not, the French terms will be employed.

According to Moran, "Rousseau seems uncritically to share the common assumption that language can be meaningful only by being referential",[8] a view that presages Russell and the early

Wittgenstein. This seems evident early in the Essai and throughout Rousseau attempts to expand the scope of references from those outlined by Condillac - physical (tree) and conceptual (big) - to include the moral (good) and passional (love).

He concludes his opening chapter by stating that man has always been able to communicate in some way and "si nous n'avions jamais eu que des besoins physiques, nous aurions fort bien pu ne parler jamais."[9] Societies, he argues, would still have arisen. It is only our moral and emotional needs that force us to communicate through speech, a theme which is reinforced throughout Emile.

Having asserted that needs lead to gestures and passions lead to words, Rousseau claims that "On ne commença pas par raisonner, mais par sentir."[10] This suggests to him that the first languages were passionate and musical. It is in this way that sound and accent become a key to depicting pure emotional needs and may be considered as their most vital form of expression. This will tie in with Rousseau's later comments on music. Clearly, he is attempting to explain the importance of sound and rhythmn in language and communication. Words are invented but sounds are pure and natural. In losing this dimension, this lyrical quality, language is responding to changes in needs that are of an entirely social nature which, as Rousseau will argue, are basically corrupt.

It is also emotional needs that unite men as "L'effet naturel des premiers besoins fut d'écarter les hommes et non de les rapprocher."[11] Both language and society have a common origin which, as Rousseau will later point out, can most logically be attributed to a natural catastrophe.

In Chapter IV Rousseau sketches the first language as rich in synonyms, figurative, persuasive and musical. He sets up the first half of a set of dichotomies that he will later complete allowing him to plug language into a more expansive vision of the natural versus the social or conventional. This central comparison is supported in Rousseau's writing by a host of lesser dichotomies such as feeling-reason, strength-precision,

and freedom-servitude. The final picture indicates that the development of society entails a gradual but inevitable shift in human nature from one end of a continuum (what it is naturally) to the other (what it is forced to be). Ideally, human nature would be in the center, conforming to social necessities through the perfection and refinement of its natural qualities. Instead, it has detached itself from its logical evolution.

Language is an aspect of this process of alienation. Rousseau's concern, however, is not simply with the fact that human nature is forced to change. This is necessary and desirable. But rather than developing toward virtue and perfection, society has moved toward corruption and the change in human nature has naturally reflected this degenerative movement.

The dichotomies are clarified in Chapter V:

> A mesure que les besoins socials croissent, que les affaires s'embrouillent, que les lumières s'étendent, le langage change de caractère; il devient plus juste et moins passionné; il substitue aux sentiments les idées; il ne parle plus au coeur, mais à la raison. (12)

These trait shifts are reflected in the development of written forms of communication which reflect various stages of social organization. Written language begins with imitation of object (pictures) corresponding to primitive society. It progresses through signs (barbarian man), which are artistic representations of objects, to its final stage as letters (civilized man) which are completely abstract. This final stage, while increasing the scope of references, drastically reduces the number of sounds recognized, giving expression an artificial uniformity which is convenient, if not justified by the reality. "L'écriture, qui semble devoir fixer la langue, est précisément ce qui l'altère; elle n'en change pas les mots, mais le génie; elle substitue l'exactitude à l'éxpression."[13] For Rousseau, the sad consequence of writing is that "En disant tout comme on l'écrirait, on ne fait plus que lire en parlant."[14]

Certainly the written word is based on phonology, but, for Rousseau, this is "les voix et non pas les sons."[15] It is the

latter that gives language its vitality and its ability to faithfully express feeling. As Rousseau writes in Emile, "L'accent est l'âme du discours, il lui donne le sentiment et la verité."[16]

It is a commonplace that in speech the tone of voice is at least as important as the words used. But, according to Rousseau, we deceive ourselves if we do not accept that our range of sound has severely diminished over the years and, compared to a hypothetical primitive tongue, we speak in a cold and monotonous tone.

Having described the history of language as a process of increasing rationalization, Rousseau approaches the issue from a different perspective in chapters VIII to XI, returning to the question of the origin of language. Rousseau's position is that the same natural conditions that are conducive to society - climate, geography, scarcity - influence language. The simultaneous origin of society and language is suggested and the mutual evolution of the two is traced.

The organization of society (savage, barbarian, civilized man) is related by Rousseau to the economic base - hunting, herding and agriculture. In the first stage, man "abandonné seul sur la face de la terre, à la merci du genre humain, devait être un animal féroce."[17]

The second stage is described as the "siècle d'or" and Rousseau refutes the Hobbesean description of the state of nature by arguing that, guided by "les lumières" and "la pitié", man has no reason to attack his fellow man. "Partout régnait l'état de guerre, et tout la terre était en paix."[18] These two first stages are not historically distinct and may co-exist. Man lives in the state of nature as a hunter or a herder, a savage or a barbarian, for he has either applied his imagination to his innate capacities for compassion and understanding, distinguishing himself from other animals, or he has not and is essentially an animal himself.

It is the emergence of agriculture that unites men into social groups comparable to modern civilization: "Le premier

gâteau qui fut mangé fut la communion de genre humain."[19] Under ideal conditions, however, Rousseau believes nothing could induce man to leave the golden age:

> ils n'auraient jamais renoncé à leur liberté primitive et quitté la vie isolée et pastorale, si convenable à leur indolence naturelle, pour s'imposer sans nécessité l'esclavage, les travaux, les misères inséparable de l'état social. (20)

Rousseau has some difficulty explaining this necessity and resorts to the vague possibility of natural catastrophes or the intervention of Providence. Scarce resources or the instinctual need to form a common front in the face of danger may compel men to unite. In the DOI, Rousseau suggests a group of people living on an island as very possibly the situation that led to the formation of society and language. He had no clear and concise solution to this problem and his numerous attempts suggest he was more interested in justifying the use of a state of nature in his writings by supplying the reader with a host of credible transitional models than he was in actually determining the true origin of society.

In a manner more persuasive than defensible, Rousseau paints a pleasant picture of social instincts being aroused by chance meetings at a common waterhole in the southern countries or by the cold, the darkness, and the lack of food in the north. The concomitant effects on language are that (a) southern tongues tend to be lyrical, born of passions that emerge gradually and (b) northern tongues are harsh and precise, born of sudden and absolute physical demands.

Perhaps the most important point raised by Rousseau in this section of the Essai concerns the natural human capacity for compassion and the rôle of imagination in liberating it. For Rousseau, compassion is the only natural human virtue,[21] but to experience it man must be able to undergo a double process of identification with another and interiorization of the other's situation. This process requires a fairly advanced set of experiences giving the individual ideas to compare. It is imagination that creates the distinction between human and

animal compassion and understanding; thus, it is imagination that promotes reflection or reason, initially the simple process of comparing ideas (in the sense of concrete objects).

In an attempt to improve on Condillac's failure to explain the emergence of reason in a simple, sentient being, Rousseau describes man as possessing essentially animal characteristics that transcend the primitive level at which they are found in animals through the singular rôle of imagination. Imagination at this level is akin to free will for it is the quality that allows man to react and act otherwise than from sheer instinct.

In Chapter XII Rousseau launches into a new direction to argue that music and language have a common origin and their division has led to their deterioration by limiting the scope and depth of their expression. Since feeling is prior to reason and verse precedes prose, Rousseau concludes that language requires rhythmn and melody to be complete. Rousseau appeals to the Greeks to verify his assertion and in so doing reveals his platonic conception of art. According to Kremer-Marietti:

> Le RHUTHMOS, avant d'être le rhythme que nous connaissons, était selon la signification authentique du terme grec, et en particulier dans la littérature ionienne, dans la poésie lyrique et tragique, dans la prose attique, et dans la philosophie, la synonym de schema, forme. (22)

Rousseau argues that art is merely a form of imitation (in painting it is the drawing; in music it is the melody that imitates nature). Specifically, melody imitates the sounds of the passions, the first inarticulate accents and cries expressed by man: Originally, these sounds were both music and language, a vivid and moving expression of pure feeling.

In Emile Rousseau states that evidence of this original and natural language can be found in young children:

> On a longtemps cherché s'il y avait une langue naturelle et commune à tous les hommes; sans doute, il y en a une; et

> c'est celle que les enfants parlent avant de savoir parler. Cette langue n'est pas articulée, mais elle est accentuée, sonore, intelligible. (23)

It is from this premise that Rousseau attacks Rameau's theory of harmony described earlier. Although both melody and harmony are now conventional, the former harks back to the state of nature and from these roots derives its tremendous force and its ability to evoke feelings. The latter is total artifice and represents the dissassociation of music from feeling.

Rousseau distinguishes two types of sensations: (1) pure sense impressions and (2) intellectual and moral impressions received through the senses. By describing this latter category he is correcting Condillac and justifies his position by asking "pourquoi donc sommes-nous si sensibles à des impressions qui sont nulles pour des barbares?"[24] Different nations react to different melodies and this is a phenomenon established by convention, based on different ways of expressing moral (conventional) needs and experiences. Physically we are all the same and a scream of pain is a scream of pain but the senses are also receptive to stimuli which trigger the moral and intellectual (socially-determined) part of man. One can see here the beginning of a powerful argument that those who are able to influence language (either sound or vocabulary) will, ipso facto, be able to control men to some extent.

Rousseau's position appears consistent if we accept his contention regarding the mutual origin of music, language and society. Kremer-Marietti states that:

> langue, musique, politique sont indissolublement liées dans leur destin; en dépit des théories linguistiques, musicales et politiques...force nous est de reconnaître que Rousseau a fondamentalement raison. Cette reconnaissance nous ne pouvons l'assumer que dans le rapport à l'origine. (25)

It follows logically that the fate of music is tied to the fate of language and both reflect the state of society. According to Rousseau, "A mesure que la langue se perfectionnait, la

mélodie, en s'imposant de nouvelles règles, perdait insensiblement de son ancienne énergie."[26] By perfection, of course, Rousseau means that language becomes increasingly precise and rational. But "le progrès du raisonnement, ayant perfectionné la grammaire, otèrent à la langue ce ton vif et passioné que l'avait d'abord rendue si chantant."[27] Originally, melody was an aspect of discourse, but ultimately precision forces the two to part, a movement strengthened by servitude which is endemic to society and tends unrelentingly to repress feeling. Human nature is altered by being stripped of its passional content. The results are that (a) language is limited to being an expression of reason and (b) music, while it can still evoke feeling, is weakened by being treated as a form of entertainment rather than of communication.

Rousseau concludes his essay with a polemical chapter entitled "Rapport des langues aux gouvernements".

> Ces progrès ne sont ni fourtuits ni arbitraires; ils tiennent aux vicissitudes des choses. Les langues se forment naturellement sur les besoins des hommes; elles changent et s'altèrent selons les changements de ces mêmes besoins. (28)

The political reality, according to Rousseau, is one which depends on servitude and force. Authority is concentrated. Language reflects this state of affairs. It neither persuades nor discourses; it merely commands. Thus, for Rousseau, modern civilization is the end of an imperfect circle - it is a parody of the state of nature: "il faut tenir les sujets épars; c'est la première maxime de la politique moderne".[29] As in the state of nature, men are isolated and unable to fully communicate. They are subject to a law imposed on them by an alien authority; in practical terms, similar to being subject to natural law. The fundamental difference is that they have exchanged total freedom for total servitude and rather than being the victims of passion and impulse, they are now the victims of reason and convention.

In this chapter, Rousseau is specifically referring to France and the French language. He concludes his Essai by

quoting Duclos' comment that language reflects and influences the national ethos. In Emile, Rousseau reaffirms this notion in more direct terms:

> Les têtes se forment sur les langages, les pensées prennent la teinte des idiomes. La raison seule est commune, l'esprit en chaque langage a sa forme particulière; différence qui pourrait bien être en partie la cause ou l'effet des caractères nationaux; et, ce qui paraît confirmer cette conjécture est que, chez toutes les nations du monde, la langue suit les vicissitudes des moeurs, et se conserve ou s'altère comme elles.(30)

In view of Rousseau's condemnation of most of the political regimes of his day, it is a safe assumption that the gist of his comments in chapter XX of the EOL is applicable to society in general or at least to all corrupt societies.

This brief summary of Rousseau's work on language is intended to help clarify Rousseau's understanding of the relationship between language and society as this will be critical to our elaboration of his more general tragic vision of reality.

It is convenient to express Rousseau's understanding of this relationship in the light of modern linguistic theories. For the purpose of this essay, three prevalent positions will be used that together can serve as a reference system for our analysis of Rousseau. The instrumentalist approach to language views it as a tool used by man to communicate his perception of reality. In opposition to this, the determinist approach suggests that language determines man's perception of reality. Between the two lies what we might term the constitutive approach which argues that language depends on reality and vice-versa.

Schematically, these three approaches may be portrayed as follows:

Instrumentalist: Language is neutral in regard to reality.

Real World → Language → Real World

Constitutive: Language is a part of reality.

Real World → Language

Determinist: Language effectively determines reality.

Real World → Language → Perception of Real World

Rousseau's theory of language does not fit any one of the above categories perfectly. Instead, he offers a more fluid interpretation which is closely tied to his perception of society and the state of nature.

This is best demonstrated if we divide language into two parts: phonology and semantics. In turn, semantics can be subdivided into vocabulary and grammar. If we accept that these three components constitute language, we can use them to clarify and explain Rousseau's theory. We might point out that these three elements are evident in both oral and written language but that these two forms of communication are not equivalent. We have already quoted Rousseau on writing which he viewed as a rational development of language that weakened its phonology and, in consequence, had detrimental effects on its semantics.

Originally, according to Rousseau, nature informs language. But it is not language in a modern sense because all that exists is a primitive phonology which completely embodies a universal semantic system. Sound A (laughter) has meaning A (happiness), sound B (scream of terror) has meaning B (fear), and so on. There is no opportunity to develop a sophisticated semantic system because society does not exist, and no reason to do so, because there is no need to communicate with others. Essentially, this language is not distinguished from the language used by animals. It is instinctual, not rational. While limited in scope, it is an effective means of expression. Rousseau attempts to prove his position by appealing to the universal language of children. His main aim is clearly to establish the importance of sound both historically and for human nature.

We have, then, a purely instrumental and very spontaneous language. If one's immediate reality incites fear, one screams in terror (or quivers in silence) and the language of this reaction is basically instinctual.

From the state of nature, Rousseau argues, man moves into

a social setting. As noted earlier, Rousseau does not successfully describe this transition and, in fact, he has no real need to do so since the state of nature is simply a stipulative reference for the purpose of philosophical enquiry. Similarly, an instinctual, natural language of pure sound is hypothetical. Whether this is true or false is not the real issue. Rousseau is establishing three things:

(1) the importance of sound in language;
(2) the relationship between sound and feeling; and
(3) the fact that sound is natural.

Ultimately, these must be judged as intuitively correct although Rousseau's description of man in the state of nature, his discussion of music and, in particular melody, and his appeal to such things as the universal language of children are all attempts to give these assertions an empirical base.

In society, a well-developed semantic system is mandatory. While this changes the structure of language it does not change its rôle. In the state of nature, it was posited that language is an instrument used to portray one's immediate reality and this rôle continues in society as well. However, one's immediate reality has undergone a significant change. According to Rousseau, the dominant law of society, or the invisible force that governs and directs behaviour, is not the same as its counterpart in the state of nature. Further, reality has expanded from the physical and conceptual to include the moral and passional. Language reflects this situation. But what exactly, is reflected?

In the state of nature, language was an instrument of expression used by the individual who was also the sole embodiment of authority in his personal reality. In society, language remains an instrument of expression but the locus of authority has, insofar as the majority of individuals are concerned, shifted. It no longer resides equally in each individual but is instead concentrated in a specific group. It is only this group that continues to be able to use language as an instrument for expressing its perception of reality. For those without real authority, language is an instrument of control that defines reality for

them. This is not a perfect relationship, of course, but rather a relationship that increasingly perfects itself. This movement towards perfection occurs in spite of the instinctual basis for language because the scope of references language encompasses has grown to include that which is conventional. According to Rousseau, the conventional references displace and overshadow the natural ones.

Rousseau's understanding of language is apparently consistent. He is able to accommodate both an instrumentalist and a determinist approach by demonstrating the natural relationship that exists between language, reality and authority.

This simple but effective theory provides Rousseau with numerous avenues to explore. He notes, for example, that language was once pure sound and this dimension continues to exert itself through music. However, as music is increasingly regarded as entertainment rather than communication and isolated from language proper, the importance of sound is reduced. The key element of language is now its semantic system because this is what society requires. In turn, however, this semantic system is disproportionately supervised or developed by the political authority because it is only the conventional dimension that grows. Since the political authority, according to Rousseau, is committed to technology and reason, the semantic system and hence language itself becomes cold, rational and precise.

Rousseau also noted, and many linguists concur, that as society develops and expands, language grows and changes to accommodate new needs. But society's needs are less and less the needs of man and more and more the needs of the faction that has political authority. Thus we arrive via a different route than that followed in the CS to a justification for Rousseau's concept of freedom (see Chapter 3) and his belief that only an equal distribution of authority can provide the social setting required for such freedom to exist.

The series of problems this position unleashes is obvious. Rousseau has claimed that society can only exist if it has language. But the language and the society that have developed

are unacceptable because they do not recognize in a concrete manner the essential quality of man - free will. As will be demonstrated later, Rousseau concluded that no mechanism was possible to adequately rectify this situation. We can see the elements of his tragic vision begin to appear.

When one recognizes the enormity of the problem Rousseau isolated, one can appreciate why he suggested so many different approaches to resolving it. Formulating a new basis for society as he asserts in the CS, creating moral individuals as he suggests in Emile, or injecting feeling into language as he advises in the EOL, are all reactions to a common problem that aim to reaffirm individual freedom while protecting and strengthening the society that is essential to human perfectibility. However, as we will attempt to prove, while Rousseau believed corrupt societies to be structurally weak and doomed to perish, he ultimately concluded that as a form they were essentially inconquerable and destined to reappear.

Part 2

A. Critical Reaction

Rousseau's EOL has not received as much critical attention as his better known works, but a number of important studies have been made that tend to agree that the relationship Rousseau described between language and society is important and relevant. A brief survey of the more influential studies will serve as a good prelude to our interpretation of the tragic vision of reality depicted in Rousseau's theory of language.

Jean-Claude Quirin claims that Rousseau's work contains a number of empirical flaws. The idea of a simple active language, for example, has since been refuted as complexity is apparent in the most primitive tongues known. Quirin concludes that errors of fact do not detract from Rousseau's overall conception of the nature of language and its ability to change to accommodate new needs and different perceptions of reality.

This criticism, however, misses the point of the distinc-

tion between primitive and civilized language. It is not so much intended as an historical truth as an analysis of the nature of thought itself. This in turn is a piece of a more comprehensive conception of the nature of man.

As Michel Launay writes:

> La pensée, selon Rousseau, a pour sources la passion et la sensibilité; la raison même prend racine dans l'être sensible qui la précede et la nourrit; la pensée rationelle ne saurait donc devenir un dogme ou une théorie close, elle doit rester une simple guide pour l'action. (31)

Rousseau wished to refute the dogmatic rationalist conception of man and dissolve the 18-th century faith in pure reason by demonstrating the interdependent and egalitarian nature of feeling and reason. Neither was sufficient on its own to create a free and moral being. In the DOI, Rousseau states that "avec toute leur morale les hommes n'eussent jamais été que des monstres, si la nature ne leur eût donné la pitié à l'appui de la raison."[32]

One can see in all Rousseau's writings an attempt to define the point of equilibrium between the hypothetical savage, totally free, but totally isolated and unable to progress much beyond other species of life, and the very real civilized man, no longer free but equally isolated, having improved only one half of his nature at the expense of the other.

This point is partly elucidated by John Moran in his discussion of Rousseau's concepts of art and nature as presented in the EOL. Moran agrees that:

> With respect to language, [Rousseau] is mainly concerned with distinguishing and clarifying the conditions that motivate men to speak; the differences that language makes in men's lives, and changes in the basic character of language wrought by changes in our way of living. (33)

The study of language is a tool Rousseau uses to convey what Moran terms the nature-art dichotomy:

> For him, nature is a primitive, interior, dynamic principle, at once proper to each individual and to the physical world as a whole... Art, manifesting itself in the political, military, pedagogical and industrial domains, as well as in "fine" arts, is the peculiarly human agency of actively dominating, and transforming what is "natural" both in man and in things. (34)

In the EOL Rousseau defined art as an imitation of nature and hence it can be considered natural. But, for Rousseau, as clearly expressed in the CS, the interests of the individual and of others or man in general at times converge but are often at odds. This is because each person, while sharing characteristics of his species, is unique and retains his individuality in a social context. Hence, in Moran's formulation, a conflict is possible between one's individual or species nature and another's art. This requires a social situation in which someone's or some group's art (in Moran's sense) is being imposed on others.

Having distinguished between species and individual nature, Moran fails to specify which he intends in the rest of his essay. He suggests that if we accept there is a nature-art conflict, then either (a) nature is in conflict with itself, or (b) the conflict is an illusion, or (c) nature's unity has been disturbed and must be re-unified, although not necessarily as before. He attributes the latter position to Rousseau.

It seems that Moran means that the species nature is in conflict with the art derived from the individual nature of a small group. This is clearly Rousseau's position but Moran concludes that the real conflict is between Rousseau's individual nature and the art of society. While this may have been true, it is surely not the main point Rousseau was making and not a point worth pursuing here.

In spite of this mistake, Moran is correct in stating that "nature...functions for Rousseau as a critical foil against authoritarianism ... and as the key concept in his advocacy of ... liberty."[35] For Rousseau, species nature is conducive to society, or at least permits it, while individual nature recoils from it. The goal of society should be to build on what is common while protecting differences. In the process, both aspects of human nature change and ideally the individual would ultimately always wish for the best interests of society. Rousseau's complaint was that the changes human nature had undergone in society were essentially negative, and men had not perfected themselves as free, moral beings. In Rousseau's estimation, man had neither the freedom of a savage (spontaneous behaviour), nor the freedom of the citizen (obedience to self-imposed law).

Another important commentary was written by Jean Starobinski who argues that Rousseau's interest in language has two dimensions: (1) the history of society and the rôle of education, that is a philosophical interest, and (2) the process of communication, motivated because Rousseau - composer, writer and autobiographer - was a communicator himself. The second point receives support from Pierre Sipriot who, discussing Rousseau's style, writes that his intention was "substituer à l'instrument de communication qu'est le langage quotidien ou le langage «cultivé», un langage d'expression où l'on dévoile son coeur."[36]

Sipriot concludes that Rousseau's language was more truthful than that of his contemporaries because he consciously tried to be totally honest and, to this end, wrote for himself rather than for a public. It is beyond question that the real or imagined honesty evident in Rousseau's writings has had tremendous influence on subsequent writers and has partly inspired the confessional novel, that risqué and probing autobiography that constitutes much of modern literature.

Rousseau's style is the clearest expression of what he believed written language should be - moving, honest, alive

and metaphorical. It is a point worth noting as we fit his theory of language into a broader schema. As a writer and as a philosopher he analyzed language and his conclusions are manifest in the form of his writing as well as in its content. Consider the accolades heaped on Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire. Jacques Voisine, for example, writes that "la mélodie de la phrase ... place ce petit livre parmi les plus beaux qui ornent la prose française."[37] In characterizing Rousseau's style he states that it evokes a "Procédé musical et romantique qui, par la présence d'un liet-motiv mélancolique, suggère le rapprochement avec certaines pièces de Chopin ou mieux encore de Liszt."[38] The Rêveries represents the fusion of feeling and reason; it is a form of communication that gains its public appeal by virtue of its revealing individuality and its tremendous evocative powers.

Starobinski's interpretation of Rousseau reinforces the description of his theory offered in Part 1. He agrees that:

> Au début, la parole n'est pas encore le signe conventionnel du sentiment: elle est le sentiment lui-même, elle transmet la passion sans la transcrire. La parole n'est pas un paraître distinct de l'être qu'elle désigne: le langage originel est celui où le sentiment apparaît immédiatement tel qu'il est, où l'essence du sentiment et le son proféré ne fait qu'un. (39)

This primitive language remains evident in a social context: "Au même titre que l'institution sociale, le langage est un effet tardif d'une faculté primitive: il est le resultat d'un essor différé."[40]

However, "De même que la naissance de la société correspond à l'émergence du langage, le déclin social correspond à une dépravation linguistique."[41] For Starobinski, this has two results. First, while the entire history of man describes a process of unification in one sense, from another perspective people are actually growing apart. They increasingly share a

more precise and binding tongue but only at the expense of losing the sentiment that originally drew them together.

Second:

> De même que l'histoire humaine, telle que la retrace le Discourse sur l'inégalité, débouche sur le désordre d'un nouvel état de nature , fruit d'un exces de corruption , elle s'achève, dans l'Essai sur l'origine des langues, par un nouveau silence. (42)

This concurs with our earlier assertion that for Rousseau, society had developed into a depraved state of nature. The history of language and society is almost cyclical, and the apex is the state of equilibrium, the "siècle d'or", in which man's basic physical needs are satisfied, he exists in a loose communal situation that allows him to improve and distinguishes him from other animals, and he speaks an honest, lyrical, concrete tongue that adequately expresses his physical and emotional needs. Rousseau does not intimate that man could or should have stayed in this situation; rather, he laments the direction social development has taken since that time.

This view is reaffirmed by Marc Eigeldinger who writes that:

> La perte de la langue primitive n'est pas imputable à l'orgueil humain ou aux effets de la faute originelle mais à l'organisation sociale et à la dénaturation qu'elle produit. (43)

Eigeldinger criticizes Rousseau on two points: "il limite à l'excès le rôle du fait social dans la formation des langues et méconnaît le caractère sacré du langage original."[44] His first criticism is based on the belief that sociology has adequately proven that primitive societies had well-developed social mentalities including comprehensive systems of law, rules of conduct, mores and morals. To partly support his point he quotes from Claude Lévi-Strauss:

(1) Le langage est un phénomène de groupe, il est constitutif du groupe, il n'existe que par le groupe.

(2) L'émergence du langage est en pleine coincidence avec l'émergence de la culture.

(45)

Eigeldinger's criticism seems unjustified for three reasons. First, Rousseau describes langage as the first social institution. It is difficult to see how he underestimates the social fact in its formation. Second, Lévi-Strauss' comments are as speculative as Rousseau's: our contact has been limited to our own and other societies and does not encompass a state of nature. Rousseau was well aware of this:

> ce n'est pas une légère entreprise de démêler ce qu'il y a d'originaire et d'artificial dans la nature actuelle de l'homme, et de bien connaître un état qui n'existe plus, qui n'a peut-être point existé, qui probablement n'exister jamais, et dont il est pourtant nécessaire d'avoir des notions justes, pour bien juger de notre état présent. (46)

This does not detract from his intention of constructing a plausible model for the purpose of comparison. In any case, neither Lévi-Strauss nor Eigeldinger can possibly know that the universal, natural language described by Rousseau did not exist in a state of nature. And whether it did or not is largely irrelevant. As Rousseau himself asks, suggesting a dilemma that has no answer: How can we ascertain "lequel a été le plus nécessaire de la société déjà liée à l'institution des langues, ou des langues déjà inventées à l'établissement de la société?"[47]

Finally, Eigeldinger has failed to appreciate that Rousseau's intention was to expose the shortcomings of modern language and hence of modern society. The depraved rationalistic mind sees empirical evidence as the only route to discovery and verification. Rousseau admits to using imagination, specu-

lation and gut feeling. In short, his position can be turned against Eigeldinger. There is little point in attacking Picasso's "Blue Nude" because no-one has blue skin. It remains beautiful.

Eigeldinger attempts to strengthen his second criticism by claiming that "la philosophie du XVIII^{e} siècle et son système personnel lui ont masqué la fonction religieuse du langage."[48] Again three comments: First, Eigeldinger fails to demonstrate how he knows about the religious character of the first language. Second, in view of Emile and the CS, it is ridiculous to argue that Rousseau was unaware of the religious element in society and hence in language. While he may not have dealt with the latter case directly it is implicit in his writing, and one can suggest that, given the mentality and values of the 18-th century, common sense kept him from expressing his views on this issue. But most important, it would have been inconsistent for Rousseau to attribute a religious language to a being that was not yet religious. One must take into consideration Rousseau's views on religion before criticizing him on this aspect of his theory.

Eigeldinger attributes to Rousseau three achievements:

> (1) he established that analogy precedes analysis,
>
> (2) he suggested primitive language was concrete rather than abstract and therefore social development leads to abstraction in language, and
>
> (3) he suggested that originally language was poetic and musical.

Finally, Eigeldinger concludes that:

> Il a vraisemblablement raison d'affirmer que la langage visuel ou gestuel est antérieur au langage auditif ou articulé. Le primitif utilise une langue plus instinctive que volontaire et réfléchée, plus proche des lois de la nature que des lois de l'organisation

> sociale. La parole est pour lui un chant et un cri solitaire, un signal ou un appel, avant d'être un moyen d'échange, un dialogue. (49)

This statement, incidentally, contains in it the reason Rousseau did not describe the sacred nature of the original language and it seems as it Eigeldinger has only succeeded in contradicting himself.

B. Tragic Vision - An initial formulation

At this point in the essay we can begin to assemble the various ideas and images found in Rousseau's work on language in order to show how they reveal a general, but detailed vision of reality, the strengths and weaknesses of which are highlighted by a background of ideals.

First, however, it should be noted that the use of ideals by Rousseau does not relegate him to the realm of utopian writers. When for example, he describes barbarian society as a golden age men would have been reticent to leave, he is not, as critics since Voltaire have implied, arguing that society should step backwards to try to recapture a pastoral, but possibly imaginary past. Rather, he is describing a set of values that, in his mind, have been perverted because social conditions have been created that encourage negative tendencies. The values are not barbarian values - they are modern values which may never have existed in the purity Rousseau envisions. Yet without a pure expression, an ideal connotation, these values become meaningless. Allowing them to be defined by the political authority, that is, by a particular factional interest, was precisely what Rousseau was protesting. To have any substantive meaning as values Rousseau felt they must be defined in terms of what one could possibly isolate in species nature as opposed to the artificial nature created by a minority. A difficult and perhaps impossible task in one sense, but an often effective method of changing society when one does not have the authority to do so.

These values can loosely be reduced to freedom and equality. Rousseau encourages us to consider what these terms should mean and, by sketching them into the past, develops a compelling mechanism for comparison with the present.

In a most fundamental sense, freedom and equality depend on the distribution of authority in society. To understand Rousseau's perception of this, we must analyze his conception of human nature in the various social formations he describes. This will be the subject of the next chapter, but it can be briefly described here so that we can see more clearly how language fits into Rousseau's politics.

Human nature, for Rousseau, is divided into individual and species nature. The first, recognizable by differences in intelligence, capabilities and interests, begins as self-interest (amour de soi) but, if corrupted, becomes self-centeredness (amour propre). The second unites man into mankind and makes it possible to form society on the basis of an objective, set of universal aims.

In Rousseau's conception, both aspects of human nature are malleable and hence perfectible. In any given individual or in the species as a whole, changes come from two directions. On the one hand, human nature is influenced by the reality within which it exists. Education and language are two obvious examples of this process. On the other hand, Rousseau believed man was an agent of free will and hence able to make decisions that would define his nature and also improve it. This quality meant that man had the potential to create, to some extent, his reality or the conditions of his existence. Consequently, man was responsible for shaping the society that, through language and education, partially shaped him. Avoiding conflict obviously depends upon the authority an individual has to make decisions, i.e. the potential one has to exercise free will.

(1) State of nature - In this hypothetical state, man is differentiated from animals by the fact he is perfectible and because he possesses imagination. The two main characteristics

of human nature are compassion and understanding, but what makes it totally unique in this state is free will. Man can decide what he will and will not do and hence what he will or will not be.

> J'aperçois précisément les mêmes choses dans la machine humaine, avec cette différence que la nature seule fait tout dans les opérations de la bête, au lieu que l'homme concourt aux siennes en qualité d'agent libre. L'une choisit ou rejette par instinct, et l'autre par un acte de liberté. (50)

There is no community in the state of nature: man is totally free and only natural inequalities exist. His short and solitary existence makes it impossible for him to develop beyond a very marginal superiority over other animals but as an agent of free will his life-style need not be totally regulated by the law of nature and, while limited in his activities by needs and circumstances, he is the sole embodiment of what may be termed political authority.

(2) Real civil society - The second, and in our depiction of Rousseau's philosophy, middle state, is real civil society. Whatever its origin, and Rousseau suggests several possibilities, it is the only human condition observable. Understanding has developed into reason; compassion has developed into feeling; the two together should inform man of moral behaviour. The progression, however, has not been harmonious and in Rousseau's estimation reason is dominant. In its existing formulation human nature is unsatisfying. The species nature reflects an imbalance of reason and feeling and hence a perverted morality and the individual nature has not been molded into a truly social nature but rather into an egotistical one. Whether this has its roots in a state of nature is not really important. The two points on which Rousseau's concept must be judged are (a) whether or not history reveals that man has developed along these lines and (b) whether or not this is wrong and should be altered.

In this situation authority is concentrated in the hands of a few, a reality which is not, in Rousseau's mind, philosophically justifiable. Man no longer responds to his own desires and needs in conjunction with the limitations imposed by nature, but to the particular edicts of a few. Freedom has become servitude and natural inequalities have been enhanced and supplemented with conventional inequalities such as wealth, rank and education.

The new social nature of man tends to accept this situation and well it should - it is what exists. But Rousseau could not accept the value of a society that appeared to him entirely geared toward guaranteeing the profit and happiness of a minority. He thus suggested a third possibility - society based on fundamentally different principles.

(3) Preferred state - In this imagined society, reason and feeling would develop in unison, as would the species and individual nature. Man would not become an automaton, he would remain a free agent, but his individual decisions would be based on his perception of the best interests of society. He would appreciate that this method of decision - making would be in his particular interest, at least in the long run. Thus these four dimensions of man, activated by free will, would reinforce each other.

Freedom would re-emerge in a new formulation. No longer the freedom to accept or reject animal instinct, it would become the freedom to establish a system of laws that were in one's best interest. Conventional inequalities would tend to disappear and natural ones would be employed for social gain.

In this society, authority is concentrated in the individual and diffused equally in the collectivity. This seemingly paradoxical claim has prompted writers such as Sir Ernest Barker to suggest that if one is the nth part of a master, he is the whole of a slave. As will be seen in the next chapter, this view is based on a misunderstanding of Rousseau's imagined legal system. Moreover, its apparent totalitarian overtone cannot be isolated from Rousseau's equally important opposing claim that

freedom is a fundamental value and with the tremendous value he attaches to the individual. It is in this conflict we clearly see Rousseau's tragic vision take shape.

Rousseau begins by speculating about a state of nature and then traces two lines of evolution - one culminating in what exists; the other leading to a preferred social order. This approach allows him to continuously criticize reality, but ultimately forces him to admit that the other two models are imaginary, no matter how possible, wonderful or inspiring they may be. Also, in many ways, the change Rousseau envisions from human nature in a state of nature to human nature in a preferred society is too drastic, too complete, and its possibility is not borne out by the facts. Rousseau's recourse to the realm of the possible, Pologne, Corsica, suggests education as an avenue for improving existing social institutions and conventions. But ultimately there is the unspoken knowledge, the implicit certainty, that man and society, while dependent on each other, are destined to be in conflict.

Within the models described above, it is easy to see the prominent place of language. While in economic terms it is agriculture that permits society to exist and distinguishes man from other animals, in psychological, social and political terms, it is language. While the economic base refines and perfects itself, the concomitant changes in human nature are realized and reflected in language. Language expresses needs and desires, language is the universal solvent in which individuals are socialized, and language is the vehicle in which reality takes form.

To better understand the rôle of language, its nature and its process of development, we must now turn to a closer examination of Rousseau's political theory.

Chapter 3

Introduction

In a letter to M. des Malesherbes, Rousseau wrote that his thought could be found in:

> les trois principaux de mes écrits; savoir, ce premier Discours, celui de l'Inégalité et la Traité de l'éducation; lesquels trois ouvrages sont inséparables, et forment ensemble un même tout. (1)

During the next 16 years of his life, he would add to his "principal works", but the notion that together they formed a whole and had to be understood that way would remain. Needless to say, even confining oneself to a particular aspect of Rousseau's thought, one is faced with the difficult prospect of considering literally thousands of pages of text. The near impossibility of such a task has led to the popular critic's game of juxtaposing an apparently contradictory quotation from Rousseau's opus to each claim made by another writer. It is at this juncture that Rousseau must be used as a tool for understanding and not as a bible of knowledge.

Part 1

A. Political Philosophy

The tragic vision sketched perfunctorily in the preceding chapter leads inevitably to the following questions: Does the tragedy emerge because reality did not conform to Rousseau's particular desires, or is the tragedy inherent to reality itself? In other words, does society fail to serve the best interests of men, or did it merely fail to serve the particular interests of a man?

In the introduction, we suggested that, among other things, Rousseau's studies of language led him to conclude that the former case was true. How can this be proven?

We must begin by probing more deeply into the system of values Rousseau envisioned. His concept of political society grew from the complex of political or human values in which he believed. They constitute the core of his understanding and unfold into both a vision of civil society and a more sweeping tragic vision of reality, which will ultimately lead us back to Rousseau's comments on language, the first social institution.

B. Freedom

Rousseau's concept of freedom has been the subject of numerous studies and much controversy. Chapter I of the CS begins, "L'homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers."[2] This line is often quoted by writers who, looking to theory, wish to categorize Rousseau as a liberal/individualist. But, a few pages later, in Chapter VII, he states that "quiconque refusera d'obéir à la volonté générale, y sera contraint par tout le corps: ce qui ne signifie autre chose sinon qu'on le forcera à être libre."[3] This line has often been cited by those who, looking to praxis, wish to argue that Rousseau was an authoritarian/collectivist.

The question is not easily dismissed, if only because so much research and time has been spent building plausible arguments for each side. At the same time, it is quite easily resolved if we accept the thesis outlined earlier of Rousseau's tragic vision of reality. In this case, both dimensions not only fit together but must be included. It is only when one wishes to argue that Rousseau believed his ideal or preferred society could be anything more than a philosophical heuristic designed to act as a foil for his critique of reality, that one encounters a problem. It is our position that the value of the CS lies in its utter despair. There is no lawmaker and there is no society in a position to accept just laws.

Rousseau's concepts of a lawmaker, a society ready to accept laws and laws themselves, only make sense as the logical counterpart to that other hypothetical situation, the state of nature. Neither condition is posited as being actually possible

or truly desirable and it is the union of the two that provides us with the most compelling evidence of Rousseau's tragic vision. Either one considered on its own is an incomplete study and cannot be evaluated for its practicality or significance. But together the two opposite models blend into a philosophy that places reality squarely in the center and attempts to expose its strengths and weaknesses.

But before continuing this line of thought, it is worth considering the various arguments in support of the two positions noted above. We will then hopefully prove that Rousseau was more sensitive to the vicissitudes of mankind than many critics seem to believe. Also, in our discussion of liberty and in our consideration of other political values, Rousseau's understanding of authority will emerge. The question of authority is, both in theoretical and practical terms, the common theme that pervades Rousseau's writings on political society. The justification of authority (and hence of obligation), the distribution of authority and the limitations of authority may be considered as the most important (in terms of originality and relevance) problematic with which Rousseau dealt.

The tradition of criticism that defines Rousseau as a supporter of despotism has drawn many illustrious academics into its ranks. From the harsh accusations penned by his early critics such as Benjamin Constant and Hippolyte Taine to the more temperate studies of Barker and Crocker, this position gains its strength from the sameness of the arguments of its proponents.

In the 18-th century, Benjamin Constant described Rousseau as the friend of "all kinds of despotism."[4] He interpreted the social contract as "one gives oneself to those who act in the name of all"[5] and argued that "When sovereignty is unlimited, there is no way of protecting the individual against the government."[6] His conclusion, which appeals to emotion but ignores the gist of Rousseau's concept of civil society, was that, "Citizens possess rights independently of all social or political institutions."[7]

Perpetuating this misunderstanding of Rousseau, Hippolyte Taine wrote in The Ancient Regime:

> The moment I enter the corporation [social contract] I abandon my own personality; I abandon, by this step, my possessions, my children, my church, and my opinions, I cease to be proprietor, father, Christian, and philosopher. The State is my substitute in all these functions. In place of my will, there is henceforth the public will, that is to say, in theory, the mutable absolutism of a majority counted by heads, while in fact, it is the rigid absolutism of the assembly, the faction, the individual who is custodian of public authority. (8)

A more recent, but equally unsubstantiated attack can be found in Jacob Talmon's The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy. His position is that the general will requires equality and unanimity (nowhere found in Rousseau except in the case of the social contract itself) and he claims that these two elements are the basis of dictatorship. For Talmon, unanimity requires "intimidation, election tricks, or the organization of the spontaneous popular expression through the activists busying themselves with petitions, public demonstrations, and a violent campaign of denunciation."[9] But his appeal to historical examples is futile for he has begun by attributing to Rousseau a position he did not espouse.

In his analysis of Rousseau, Lester Crocker describes him as an "anarchist" in his day, a "Christ-like legislator" in his dreams and an "authoritarian" in his writings.[10] For Crocker it is not laws, but education, censorship, surveillance and control that determine men's behaviour in Rousseau's ideal society. "Liberty, expressed in Rousseau's vocabulary, is the fact of being liberated from the lower moi humain to be uplifted into the moi commun."[11] Moreover, "To say that every law makes us free is a doctrinaire abstraction,"[12] and Crocker concludes that Rousseau was "willing to give the government the power to do to

men all it deemed necessary as the only way of achieving a true society. And it is for this reason, more than any other, that I consider him a totalitarian."[13] It seems that Crocker believed Rousseau to be a precursor of Stalin.

Similarly, Sir Ernest Barker claims that the general will "seems to defend democracy ... but ends by arming Leviathan."[14] He asks, "Was not the Napoleon of the Code an admirable 'Legislator'"[15] and traces Rousseau's major problem to the application of his theory. "If I am the thousandth part of a tyrant, I am also the whole of a slave,"[16] Barker argues, openly distorting Rousseau's intention by inserting the word 'tyrant'. His conclusion is that, "In effect, and in the last resort, Rousseau is a totalitarian"[17] for "He leaves no safeguard against the omnipotence of the souverain."[18]

As one can see, this side supports itself mainly by questionning the application and practicality of three things:

(1) the general will,
(2) the legislator, and
(3) civil religion.

What, it asks, are the most likely manifestations of Rousseau's legislative and educational bodies if translated into society as we know it? But, not only have these critics apparently failed to read anything but the CS, they have not even read it well. What can the whole of Book III possibly indicate except that, for society to survive the government must be strong, but strong governments are invariably corrupt? Rome and Sparta died, Rousseau acknowledges, dashing his cherished models to pieces, and so must all political orders.

Rousseau was acutely sensitive to the tendency toward absolutism of all governments, including his ideal one. His aim was to avoid this by distributing authority equally among the citizens and instituting an elaborate system of safeguards. But his realization of the impossibility of such a system actually appearing is quite evident. As J. McManners notes, "The book CS was written for us, not for Rousseau, who had chosen to be the man according to nature."[19] Furthermore, "The Social

Contract is not a handbook on political theory proposing new ways of going about old business. It is the work of a revolutionary condemning all existing institutions."[20] Rousseau recognized the idealism of the CS. His effort to underline the futility of seeking a perfectly just system should not be misinterpreted as a belief in totalitarianism. Quite the contrary.

In an excellent essay, Judith Shklar writes that "The figure of the law-giver is a study in despair ..."[21] Nature cannot be abolished, however malleable it is, so a private interest always exists in conflict with the collective interest. As Shklar points out:

> Nothing can tell us more about Rousseau's opinion of the political talents of most men than the fact that they must be systematically and continually duped and mystified if they are to be shaped for social justice. (22)

Again: "The great law-giver, like the just law and like equality, is a myth,"[23] and Shklar concludes that "The reason why there is no legitimate political rule is quite simply that it is impossible."[24]

If we consider Rousseau's description of language and society described in Chapter 2 of this essay, his own retreat from political activity and society, and his constant defense (notably in his last three works) of the individual (symbolized by himself) and the individual's natural desire to freely determine the conditions of his existence, it seems impossible to call Rousseau a totalitarian, or an opponent of freedom. What emerges instead is a Rousseau who saw the injustice of reality and the inattainable nature of all ideals.

Against Rousseau the totalitarian, we can juxtapose the arguments of those who claim him as a liberal. This position tends to attach a moderation to Rousseau not evident in his writings of character. Still, it provides a good antithesis to the views outlined above and in exposing its shortcomings we hope to support the thesis of this paper.

We have already mentioned the support given Rousseau by radical writers such as Robespierre and Saint-Just. Throughout the period of German Idealism, he was considered a great liberator, admired by Schilling, Goethe, Kant, Hegel. He has been fitted into the liberal tradition by writers such as J. Salwyn Schapiro who claims that "a distinctly democratic aspect of the liberal state was the contribution of the French Swiss, Jean-Jacques Rousseau."[25]

In an interesting Resumé Complet de l'Histoire de la Philosophie published in Paris, Rousseau is remembered thus:

> apôtre de la démocratie, il croit trouver le fondement de la société humaine dans un contrat librement discuté et librement accepté ... dont le but est la sauvegarde la plus entière possible de la liberté individuelle. (26)

More recently, the Swiss writer Alfred Berchtold wrote that "Rousseau compte, dans l'histoire, parmi les grands libérateurs." (27)

These comments, of course, are assessments of Rousseau's contribution to political thought and activity rather than in-depth studies of his work itself. They serve to highlight the disparity in views one encounters among his critics. It is compelling to suggest that an objective evaluation of Rousseau must accommodate both sides. This, it seems, can best be accomplished by depicting Rousseau as a figure of despair in real life and the author of a vision of society that merged ideals and reality into an inescapable tragedy.

There are, however, popular arguments for Rousseau as a liberal. They tend to either (a) focus on the historical context of his writing, or (b) demonstrate the validity of the famous statement that civil freedom is obedience to self-imposed law. The first approach leaves Rousseau in the past; the second one usually avoids the question of praxis.

The first position is found in Joan McDonald's Rousseau and the French Revolution 1762-1791. McDonald examines three

reasons why Rousseau is called a totalitarian:

(1) direct democracy can lead to dictatorship,

(2) rulers may claim to know the general will,

(3) state education may lead to a loss of individual personality.

According to McDonald, the legislator is seen as a modern dictator and the general will is erroneously compared to the party line.

She refutes this by stating that Rousseau was unaware of modern techniques for molding public opinion. "In his theory of sovereignty he was groping after a new concept of society in which liberty, equality, and the rule of law would be guaranteed by the equal right of every citizen to participate in making the laws."[28] "Education for Rousseau was essentially a process of self-realization"[29] and hence participation in the legislative process would not be a sham but an important activity based on principles of freedom and equality.

McDonald concludes that "In order to understand Rousseau's intentions it is necessary to consider his theory of the general will within the self-contained logic of his political theory, and to place this against the background of his own century."[30]

The problem with McDonald's interpretation is that not only is Rousseau left trapped in the past, but the relevance of his thought is limited to the sort of small community he idealized in Geneva and Corsica. This claim is certainly valid, but it ignores the broader and more enduring dimension of his thought - the entire problem of individual human nature and individual freedom in any social context. From this perspective Rousseau is indeed relevant today. While McDonald has captured the essence of Rousseau's model for an ideal society, she has failed to appreciate the insight he gives us into real man and real society.

The second approach tends to ignore the practicality of Rousseau's theories. John Chapman tries to avoid this by making the confusing argument that Rousseau "sought to achieve liberal ends by authoritarian means."[31] Alfred Cobban attempts to pacify the opposition by agreeing that the chapter on civil religion in the CS was, for the liberal Rousseau, most "unfortunate". More perceptively, Robert Derathé points out that because he was a liberal, Rousseau's main problem was in devising a means to keep the government from usurping sovereign power."[32] Here we have a foundation for the thesis that Rousseau's tragic vision resulted from his belief in freedom and human nature on the one hand, and his realization that political authority was and had to be concentrated in a minority, on the other.

Ralph Leigh's effort to escape this problem is to argue that Rousseau intended natural law to inform positive law.[33] Depending on one's definition of natural law, this position may well be criticized as tautological. If the archetype of natural law is imprinted in each individual, then Leigh is simply saying that each citizen should consult reason and feeling in determining the law he wishes to impose on himself and others. As true as this may be, the problem of ascertaining that law remains. If natural law is something to be used by the lawgiver, then the practical problem is intensified. Rousseau's lawgivers, Moses, Lycurgus, are mythical-type figures and, with the exception of himself, there is little hope given to the possibility that a lawgiver could actually appear.

The liberal-authoritarian characterization of Rousseau splits him in two. The former affirms itself by appealing to the theoretical content of Rousseau's writings, avoiding the question of practicality. The latter attacks Rousseau for endorsing what would probably turn into a despotic or totalitarian regime if established, while ignoring the regime's philosophical underpinnings.

But Rousseau was neither one nor the other and his life as well as his writings attest to the importance he attached to the fusion of thought and praxis. Put simply, Rousseau was saying, if we want these values - freedom, individuality - then we must have a political system based on equality and the dictates of pure human nature. But such a political system is likely to become despotic because authority tends to congeal in a faction. This is our historical legacy, and we cannot shake it off, and, therefore, we cannot realize in a pure form our most cherished social values. We can live in society without them or outside society without them - and therein lies the tragedy of mankind.

For Rousseau freedom was a given attribute of man. As noted in the DOI, man alone has free will and hence the freedom to construct political systems based on systems of laws that are opposed to or in harmony with nature and instinct.

It is because of this natural freedom that the rest of Rousseau's thought makes sense. If man is free, Rousseau asks, then what could prevent him from founding a political system based on the values - justice, morality, equity, freedom - that he, himself, has selected? The CS is an attempt to outline the major characteristics and goals of this ideal society.

But freedom, which allows men to revolt against instinct and to perfect himself as a sentient, rational being, has limitations of which Rousseau was well aware. It is one thing for an individual to enjoy freedom and quite another for a collection of individuals to do so. The fact that man is perfectible does not mean there can be a perfect man or a perfect society. The crux of the problem lies in the concept of particular interest:

> Cette liberté commune est une conséquence de la nature de l'homme. Sa première loi est de veiller à sa propre conservation, ses premiers soins sont ceux qu'il se doit à lui-même; et sitôt qu'il est en âge de raison, lui seul étant juge des moyens propres à le conserver, devient par là son propre maître. (34)

Later in the CS, Rousseau writes:

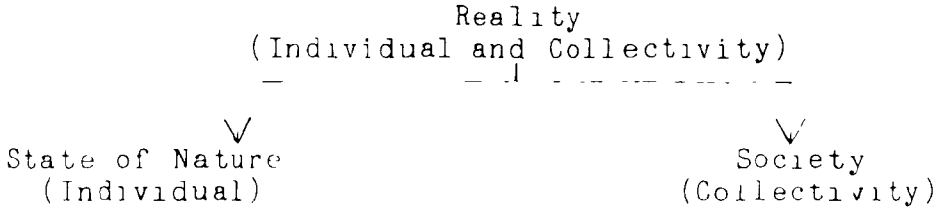
> En effet, s'il n'est pas impossible qu'une volonté particulière s'accorde sur quelque point avec la volonté générale, il est impossible au moins que cet accord soit durable et constant; car la volonté particulière tend, par sa nature, aux préférences, et la volonté générale à l'égalité. (35)

The situation can be summarized in the following way: By nature man is free and his first instinct is to preserve himself. Free will and instinct can be in harmony or in conflict, but the instinct of preservation tends to always express itself. Instinct drives man into society, but freedom tends to revolt against the constraints society must impose on the individual to guarantee its own survival. Can society protect freedom? Only if the expression of freedom, that is, particular interest, can be accommodated or reshaped as a communal or civic interest. Many critics seem to believe Rousseau stops here, content that with civil religion and state education, the necessary changes can be achieved. But another point must be considered. For Rousseau, civic interest can only emerge if the citizen has real political authority. And here reality steps in and Rousseau, through his condemnation of existing political orders, his use of mythical figures and idealism to support his case, and his suggestion that the common man has to be led by the nose, clearly implies that an equality of authority is, in the last analysis, unattainable. Thus the whole exercise serves to ultimately depict the tragic reality of human society - without authority, the individual cannot be free, but with authority distributed equally, society cannot exist.

Why is this so? Why do societies inevitably decay? Why are social values unattainable? As one might expect, Rousseau offers several justifications for his position. We can, however, consolidate them into the following argument.

(1) Society is fundamentally different than the state of nature. This may seem obvious but it is not a simple matter to

determine the differences given that the state of nature is hypothetical. It might even appear pointless to make such a comparison. What is really being said is that the individual is different than the collectivity. Both exist in society and, according to Rousseau, we can envision the state of nature by examining only the individual. We are able to arrive at a clearer understanding of the differences between the individual and the collectivity by placing them in self-sufficient models that can be compared while appreciating that in reality the two, individual and collectivity, co-exist. We have, in effect, the following:



(2) The individual tends to be governed by particular interest and, while particular interests may coincide, they often conflict. Rousseau proves this assertion by pointing to the fact that societies have invariably required a system of laws to endure. The only practical rationale for laws is that things would be worse without them which suggests that they reduce conflicts and facilitate progress. In addition to laws, Rousseau points to such things as customs, a common history, education and religion as factors that can mitigate conflicting interests. But these require time to develop in a society and one is faced with the question, where do laws originate?

(3) Laws originate from factional interests which are simply the particular interest of a group of individuals. While they may be in the best interest of society, they are more likely to be in the best interest of the faction which, in accordance with nature, strives to preserve itself. There is an obvious difficulty in having some particular interests determine the laws that are to resolve conflicts arising from all particular interests.

Rousseau rejects other possible sources of laws - divine revelation, pure reason - as untenable. The first contradicts free will; the second is impossible unless reason pre-exists society. In effect, Rousseau argues that law stems from human nature in that human nature strives to assert particular interests and particular interests are at the root of factional interests. Rousseau appealled to both history and the legal systems of his time to demonstrate that factions wrote laws. The factions that create the laws are those that have somehow - generally by force, deceit or as an expansion of the family structure -- acquired the authority to do so.

(4) These laws tend to be in the interest of the faction and not of the collectivity. Here Rousseau could point to many conventional (social) inequalities to support his case - wealth, rank, power, and so on. The tendency of these inequalities, he argued, is to grow and the result is to antagonize disparities and create social conflicts that weaken and ultimately ruin society.

There is apparently, only one solution to this problem. It is to erase particular interests by replacing them with civic interests, at least in those areas where conflicts are likely to occur. This requires identifying civic interests and for this purpose Rousseau introduced the general will. The problem with the general will is that it has no way of initiating activity. To do this Rousseau introduced the Lawgiver, who was an individual without particular interests. An individual who did not and could not exist.

We see clearly in Rousseau the problems in society (inequality, unequal distribution of authority, conflicting interests, lack of individual freedom, etc.) and the solutions (social contract, equal distribution of authority, civic interest, civic freedom, etc.). But the mechanisms required to apply the solutions to the problems (spontaneous assent, general will, moral education, lawgiver, etc.) are philosophical and impractical. Rousseau could not devise a tenable program for social reconstruction that would not contradict his commitments to individual freedom and equality. The tragedy, for Rousseau, lies in the

fact that the essential characteristic of man - free will - which is only meaningful in a social context, is unable to grow and express itself in society.

This argument will become clearer as we investigate two other elements of Rousseau's political philosophy.

C. Equality

From our discussion of freedom, it is evident that a second political value to which Rousseau attaches importance is equality, and indeed both the DOI and the CS deal comprehensively with this question. Gustave Lanson has argued that the key to Rousseau's thought lies in the opening line of Emile: "Tout est bien sortant des mains de l'Auteur des choses, tout dégénère entre les mains de l'homme."[36], suggesting that, for Rousseau, social inequity is the fundamental cause of human misery.

Judith Shklar proposes a line of interpretation based on the premise that "Equality is the only condition worth more than natural freedom."[37] According to Shklar:

> The egalitarian and democratic aspects of the Social Contract are really the coherent working out of the implications of a single idea. Since convention, and not God or nature, is the origin of all societies, and since conventional rules are made, openly or tacitly, by all those who choose to join a society, the only justifiable political order is the one that serves the interests of all, or at least of most. (38)

In the DOI, Rousseau summarizes the process of social inequality as the inevitable consequence of all modern political institutions:

> Si nous suivons le progrès de l'inégalité dans ses différentes révolutions, nous trouverons que l'établissement de la loi et du droit de propriété fut son premier terme, l'institution de la magistrature

> le second, que le troisième et dernier fut le changement du pouvoir légitime en pouvoir arbitraire; en sorte que l'état de riche et de pauvre fut autorisé par la première époque, celui de puissant et de foible par la seconde, et par la troisième celui de maître et d'esclave, qui est le dernier degré de l'inégalité, et le terme auquel aboutissent enfin tous les autres, jusqu'à ce que de nouvelles révolutions dissolvent tout à fait le gouvernement, ou le rapprochent de l'institution légitime. (39)

In the CS Rousseau describes what should,

> servir de base à tout système social; c'est qu'au lieu de détruire l'égalité naturelle, le pacte fondamental substitue, au contraire, une égalité morale et légitime à ce que la nature avoit pu mettre d'inégalité physique entre les hommes, et que, pouvant être inégaux en force ou en génie, ils deviennent tous égaux par convention et de droit. (40)

The social equality Rousseau describes comprises two elements: it is a general equality of possessions and a precise equality of political rights, which means above all, an equal share in political authority.

As Alfred Cobban points out, Rousseau's

> belief in the people as the legislative power is based not on an irrational sentiment but on the conviction that the people as a whole form the only power in the state which is not interested in perverting it to selfish and sectional ends. (41)

In Rousseau's thought, equality is required to protect freedom and to provide the basis for a moral or virtuous state to develop. Without an equality in the distribution of political authority, factional interests would ultimately pervert the function of the state by using it to serve particular aims.

Given an initial situation of freedom, there can be no philosophical justification for inequality unless one values servitude.[42] This, of course, applies only to conventional inequality; natural inequality will always exist.

But as Rousseau was quick to demonstrate, social equality necessitates the curtailment of particular interests. Herein lies the major problem with his ideal society and critics have attacked him for describing either (a) a society of depersona-

lized citizens, stripped of all individuality, or (b) a classic instance of tyranny by the majority.

To argue that Rousseau did not intend either apparently forces us to limit the importance of his thought to small, simple, rural communities, governed by a general assembly that enacts few laws, allows people to retain their individuality, and knits them into a harmonious community mainly through habits and traditions which they can appreciate as in their best interest. Indeed, in the CS Rousseau admits that his political system could not exist in a large state. But the fact is, it could not exist in any state. This is evident in Rousseau's descriptions of Rome and Sparta and in his statement that no political organism can expect to endure. As Peter Gay writes,

> It is this normative conception, this Utopian tendency to reason from the perfectibility of man to the perfect state in which only the perfect man can live, that makes Rousseau's thought so great as criticism and so dangerous as a guide for constitution making. (43)

What is lacking in reality is the perfect man, the embodiment of a true civic morality. Without this, an initial equality of authority can only lead to despotism and there is no indication in Rousseau's writing that such a man could be shaped. The whole of Emile attempts to solve this problem but the exercise collapses in futility. To turn out the perfect citizen, each man and woman must be trained on an individual basis for 25 years. For generations, perhaps eternally, all of society is either teacher or student and no-one remains to till fields, run businesses, govern.

Yet tracing Rousseau's thought back to morality or virtue, while demonstrating its tragic dimension, is still instructive. It served Rousseau as an effective critical tool with which to force men to reconsider their lives as citizens. For the impossibility of a perfect society does not preclude the possibility of an individual living a basically happy and good life, even in the confines of corruption.

D. Morality

What, then, is the nature of this civic morality upon which Rousseau's ideal state rests? According to Rousseau, its expression is the general will, but as Korner remarks in a study of Kant:

> Rousseau gives us no independent criterion by which we may distinguish whether a given principle expresses the general will or only the will of all. He gives us no criterion of the morality of principles, and therefore none of the morality of actions. (44)

In the CS, Rousseau defines the characteristics of good laws, that is, of expressions of the general will:

> Si l'on recherche en quoi consiste précisément le plus grand bien de tous, qui doit être la fin de tout système de législation, on trouvera qu'il se réduit à deux objets principaux, la liberté et l'égalité: la liberté, parce que toute dépendence particulière est autant de force ôtée au corps de l'Etat; l'égalité, parce que la liberté ne peut subsister sans elle. (45)

There are obvious problems in both the theoretical and the practical dimensions of Rousseau's morality. Philosophically, Rousseau has described a vicious circle. Morality is the code of conduct (for thought and behaviour) derived from a situation of freedom and equality. But the absence of a civic morality precludes the possibility of a condition of freedom and equality. To break this circle, the lawgiver is required. But the duty of the lawgiver is defined by Rousseau as "une entreprise au-dessus de la force humaine et, pour l'exécuter, une autorité qui n'est rien."[46] The lawgiver's only tool is civil religion, but civil religion can only be introduced to a society that lacks a well-defined system of beliefs, traditions and values. Such a society is purely imaginary.

The circle,however, is not perfect. Taking morality

a step further, we find it defined in Emile as the expression of reason and feeling, and hence accessible to all individuals able to free themselves from conventional prejudices and, in effect, resurrect their true nature. "All", of course, is a theoretical term, for the whole of Emile impresses us with the almost super-human demands such a renaissance entails. In this way, civic morality becomes not a feature of society, but an individual attribute, and, because it must operate within an unjust political system, it is limited by circumstances. Rousseau has lowered his sights: while society cannot be structured on those ideals (freedom, equality) derived from human nature, at least the individual can pattern his own life on these principles.

> C'est en vain qu'on aspire à la liberté sous la sauvegarde des lois. Des lois! où est-ce qu'il y en a, et où est-ce qu'elles sont respectées? Partout tu n'as vu régner sous ce nom que l'intérêt particulier et les passions des hommes. Mais les lois éternelles de la nature et de l'ordre existent. Elles tiennent lieu de loi positive du sage; elles sont écrites au fond de son coeur par la conscience et par la raison; c'est à celles-là qu'il doit s'asservir pour être libre.., (47)

Every man is free to live his life according to self-imposed laws discovered through reason and feeling; and every man has an equal opportunity to do so within the confines of corruption he must accept as the prevailing reality.

We cannot, therefore, dismiss Rousseau's political values as philosophically inconsistent unless we make the mistake of looking only at the CS. The same holds true for the practical dimension when we appreciate that it has been reduced to a purely individual affair, and an essentially internal affair at that, given the inflexibility of the external situation one must more or less accept.

But this line of reasoning must be pursued further. If it is the tragic reality that society holds ideals it cannot hope to realize, it is also the case that the individual, the only indivisible unit of integrity that can exist in society, is

influenced and partly defined (intellectually, spiritually and psychologically) by the external reality. Nowhere is this problem clearer than in language which acts as the universal solvent, dissolving individuals into society by supplying them with values, beliefs and prejudices.

Part 2

A. Commentary

What emerges from this discussion of Rousseau's political understanding is his keen sense of the conflict between the ideal, the possible and the real, on both an individual and a collective plane. The root of the conflict is human nature - its initial characteristics of free will, compassion, understanding and imagination and its primal goals of preservation and improvement. The permutations of human nature are infinite but always align themselves along perceptions, no matter how convoluted, of the primal goals.

These perceptions are in turn shaped by ideals. For Rousseau, the ideal society was that founded by his social contract. The legislator symbolizes the fusion of reason and feeling (nature). Similarly, language in its ideal formulation is the means of expressing the fusion of reason and feeling. Both are expected to respond to physical circumstances and physical and moral needs.

The source of conflict, the downfall of the ideal society, the lawgiver and language, is due to the opposing forces of the individual and the collectivity. Society is the individual's rational and emotional response to physical circumstances and moral needs given the attributes of human nature. But because the authority that is solely vested in the individual in a state of nature must change both form and content in a social context, society becomes the set of circumstances against which the individual must struggle. So society is both man's salvation and his damnation. The individual requires society to survive but society tends to reduce individuality. Unless human

nature can be changed to a civic nature, this conflict remains. The CS attempts to define what this change entails, justifying it by founding the change on human nature itself. But Rousseau's other writings and his life suggest that such a change is impossible. It is a philosophical construct, not a practical process.

Since man cannot be a complete individual and a perfectly social being at the same time unless the two are synonymous, he must choose a middle course which can never be fully satisfying. This practical choice is limited by the fact that man lives in society. In an attempt to clarify it, Rousseau sets up a system of dichotomies that may be subsumed under the heading "Social versus Natural".

The social choices are idealized in Rousseau's writing in, for example, Plutarch, Calvinist Geneva, the social contract, Julie and Wolmar, reason, civil religion and state education. The natural choices are found in his references to such things as the Swiss countryside, Arcadia, the golden age, music, botany, Saint Preux, feeling and conscience or the heart. The choice of one precludes the choice of another and the tragedy lies in the fact that no single choice can be entirely fulfilling. The former turns out citizens; the latter misanthropes - where can one find men?

We see here a problem that characterizes all modern societies. As an agent of free will man can choose technocracy or a rural life, freedom or authority, reason or feeling. But his choice is largely predetermined by the nature of the society into which he is born. Rousseau's characterization of modern societies as corrupt clearly suggests that the individual will tend to conduct his life in a manner that reflects this general and prevalent corruption. Language and law are two key determining factors because both serve to educate and define the individual by informing him of his needs, beliefs and values.

But Rousseau was not an utter pessimist and while his vision of reality was a tragic one, one can still see a profound conviction in the indomitable human spirit diffused through his

writing and manifested in his own life. It is this feature that gives his tragic vision its greatest force while making it palatable at the same time, for it argues, in effect, that even though society is imperfect and often corrupt, misery and unhappiness can still be avoided. But as we will see in Chapter 4, the possibility of escaping one's emotional and moral dependence on society and hence re-affirming one's natural freedom as an individual is remote. Social institutions contrive to eliminate this choice and the most powerful social institution, language, is perhaps inconquerable.

Chapter 4.

Introduction

So far, we have provided a background to Rousseau's writings, a discussion and interpretation of his work on language, and an analysis of key elements of his political philosophy in order to demonstrate that, in a holistic sense, Rousseau's writings and character reveal a fundamentally tragic vision of reality. We have further isolated the main characteristics of this vision and suggested that within it there is a note of optimism rooted in Rousseau's faith in the capabilities of the individual and the strength of primal human nature.

The final chapter of this paper will attempt to pull together the arguments presented in the preceding pages, establish the parameters of the tragic vision, and evaluate it in terms of both its place in Rousseau scholarship and its contemporary significance. In this way, we intend to justify the assertions made in the chapter entitled "Introduction".

Part 1

A. Overview

The DOI traces the development of society from a hypothetical state of nature to a condition of extreme conventional inequality. One of its central arguments is that adaptation to this situation has entailed a perversion of human nature on both the individual and species levels. The key term here is "conventional" for this allows Rousseau to approach the problem from both moderate/reformist and radical perspectives. It also allows him to locate the source of the conflict and its solution in man.

The first part of the Discours portrays in warm, seductive tones natural man - good because he has no reason to be evil, lazily sating himself from nature's abundance. He is a solitary but not a misanthrope. He is a package of potential, a man who has not yet attained the identity of man. To improve, to grow,

to realize his capabilities, he requires society.

Contrary to the belief held by some critics, Rousseau did not idolize natural man for what he was but rather for the potential he represented. The state of nature was, in Rousseau's formulation, a severe limitation on what man could achieve and, for Rousseau, words such as free, moral and good had no substantive meaning if applied directly to the image of the noble savage. Rousseau was concerned with two things: First, that man is compelled to improve and, second, that to do so he requires society. For Rousseau, these were facts and not something of which to be critical. He was not upset that the transition to social man required changes in human nature but rather that those changes had been largely negative.

The second part of the DOI examines civil man. Placed into society by chance or necessity, his natural inclinations became harnessed to the exigencies of his new environment. Rousseau's analysis of the environment concluded that it was structured on inequality, or, more fundamentally, the unequal distribution of authority. The impetus to social evolution is not well-elucidated in Rousseau. He attributed it to a fundamental error in the founding of society, thus paving the way for his more comprehensive study, the Contrat Social. The results, however, are quite clear: "L'égalité dans la peur, la liberté pour le crime, la pitié pour soi."[1] In short, the identity man had assumed was not ennobling and uplifting, but rather enslaving and corrupt.

The EOL pursues an idea that occupies a large part of the DOI - the social and historical foundations and development of language. In his analysis, Rousseau reaffirmed a notion that is clearly asserted in the DOI - as an agent of free will, man is responsible for his environment, including its political structures, legal system, customs and language, and, therefore, he is responsible for the identity he achieves as an individual and as a species.

In building his argument, Rousseau suggested that language and society, which are dependent upon each other, derive from human nature. He offered several possible origins of society

and founded language on man's instinctual method of expressing and communicating his needs and feelings. Language and society lay dormant in natural man and required some sort of catalyst (fate, Providence, etc.) to release them. Once released, however, man became wholly responsible for their administration and development.

Rousseau then explored human nature to determine a value system based on freedom, equality and morality and demonstrated how man had perverted these values through mismanagement of language and society. In an attempt to prove that such values could be attained, Rousseau wrote the Contrat Social. But as Alfred Cobban notes, what surfaces in Rousseau's writing is not a solution but rather a clearer expression of the problem:

> [What must be done] to safeguard the liberty of the individual while at the same time giving the state the moral authority and actual power which it needs if it is to function effectively for the benefit of the individuals composing it. (2)

Rousseau's solution to the problem requires, at first, a clean slate and a Lawgiver, and, later, fundamental changes in human nature. These requirements are out of grasp, a fact that Rousseau came to appreciate in Emile, where he turned his attention from social reconstruction to change possible at the individual level. Here, too, he met with failure because the education of Emile is so impractical. In a sense, it also requires a Lawgiver who does not exist. And, even if successful, it is likely that Emile would end up like Rousseau, loving a conception of man while despising or pitying man as he really is.

The final conclusion of all Rousseau's works suggest Freud's statement in Civilization and its Discontents, "One feels inclined to say that the intention that man should be 'happy' is not included in the plan of 'Creation'".[3] Indeed, in the "Dixième Promenade", Rousseau, looking back on his life, wrote:

> Je puis dire à peu près comme ce préfet du prétoire qui disgracié sous Vespasien s'en aller finir paisiblement ses jours à

> la campagne: «J'ai passé soixante et dix ans sur la terre, et j'en ai vécu sept.» (4)

This sad estimation from the man who wrote hundreds of pages describing and defending his morality and honesty, and who concluded Les Confessions by stating:

> J'ai dit la verité ... quiconque, même sans avoir lu mes écrits, examiner par ses propres yeux mon naturel, mon caractère, mes moeurs, mes penchants, mes plaisirs, mes habitudes, et pourra me croire un malhonnête homme, est lui-même un homme à étouffer. (5)

Everything Rousseau wrote points to his belief that (a) man depends on society, (b) society must limit human behaviour if it is to survive, and (c) because of the conflict inherent in this situation, the best man can only abstract a few fleeting moments of happiness and calm from a world that is miserable and unjust because it limits human behaviour unequally.

According to Rousseau, man needs society - to subsist, to improve, to love - but the loss of freedom and authority it demands can never be fully compensated for and hence man is destined to be endlessly immersed in a conflict that derives from his strong natural inclination for the freedom that will allow him to pursue his particular interests and the harsh social reality that imposes powerful constraints on what he can and cannot do. For this reason, man is ultimately unhappy.

It should be noted, however, that the term "man" is being used, in accordance with Rousseau's tendency, rather loosely. Rousseau's tragic vision is often reminiscent of the classical conception of tragedy. Although Rousseau was concerned with the plight of the common man, it would be a mistake to believe he identified with this mass. He believed that common man does not want the responsibility for his environment, and his particular interests, while they may make him unhappy with the status quo, tend to be short-sighted and misguided. The common man must therefore be directed. The real tragedy is, in a sense, reserved for those who do have the potential to create their

identities and are bullied by reality. There is then, some justification for the claim that Rousseau's main concern was Rousseau. Nonetheless, his vision goes beyond himself and his views are not elitist. If social injustice is especially painful for those who see it, and can envision alternatives, it is nonetheless unfair to everyone, even those who do not question it. Their rights are still compromised, their potential still limited. It is important, however, to appreciate in Rousseau the subtle shift from man to "gifted" man which occasionally blurs the distinction between the author and the people.

In any case, the elements of the tragic vision are very clear in Rousseau's works - particular versus social interest, freedom versus authority, nature versus convention. Apparently, the development of Rousseau's tragic vision and the grounds upon which it is justified are entirely dependent on his conception of human nature, his definition of freedom and his perception of authority.

In turn, these gain their force from the clever way in which Rousseau constructed his arguments, blending hypothetical models of natural man and civil man with a careful analysis of man as he really is.

The question immediately arises as to whether or not Rousseau was justified in condemning man and society on the basis of two idealized models. One might feel inclined to return to the suggestion that Rousseau's tragic vision of reality stemmed largely from his personal dissatisfaction with the world. We therefore must try to determine whether or not this interpretation of reality has a valid, general application.

B. Tragic Vision - General or Particular?

How can we seriously evaluate Rousseau's condemnation of society? Clearly, society does not measure up to his ideals, but so what? If his criticism is based on ideals that he himself confirms are inattainable, then what is its true value? Can we attach much significance to a man who has, in effect, argued that the most a virtuous citizen can expect is a few moments of joy in a life of misery and pain, while the rest of mankind

succumbs to vice and corruption, wallows in the illusion of freedom and happiness, and plays its ugly rôle in the perpetration of a perverted morality, an unjust society and a failed humanity? This appears to be little more than a reformulation of the Christian doctrine of saintly suffering.

But, surely, this is the easiest and least profitable approach to Rousseau. We cannot label him a misanthrope, a madman or an idealistic moralist and explain the tenacity and durability of his ideas. Rousseau was and is a liberator - of thought, of language, of prejudice.

In discussing Rousseau, it is essential to remember that the force of his philosophy comes as much from its music as it does from its logic and both serve to present his ideas. While his perceptive analyses exercise the mind, his vivid descriptions free the imagination, drawing the reader into his network of ideas through guile and persuasion as well as reason. Freedom, for example, is not simply a word, a concept; instead, it is depicted as a real part of man, like his hands and feet, woven into his being, his nature, with such conviction that fiction and fact are forever fused together. We can attempt to be objective in our approach to Rousseau, but eventually we must accept that we are reading one man's study of mankind. It is a study that weds reality to imagination and intimates that both are equally valid, equally important, equally true.

The value of Rousseau's tragic vision depends on our recognition of its particularity, its personal undertone, in the fact that we know it is the work of a single imagination. This is what gives such force to the key concept with which Rousseau struggled - individual human nature. Rousseau reaffirmed man's perfectibility, man's uniqueness, man's intrinsic personal value on an individual level and said, these are what count, these are what society exists for, these are what must be protected, and he did so without ever denying the importance of the collectivity.

What, Rousseau asked, threatens individuality? Language and society, because they are impersonal, universal, standardizing forces the individual cannot fully control or resist. But without them, he is not fully man, for his potential is unreal-

ized and his individuality, mastery and freedom can have no real value in isolation. This problem is a general, universal problem that Rousseau enhanced by making it his individual, personal problem.

For the individual not to be violated by society, Rousseau argued, society must be structured along the lines defined in the CS. But Rousseau's social contract requires a set of circumstances that is impossible to arrange for reasons already discussed. In the realm of the possible, society can only (a) force man to become self-centered by threatening his individuality, his freedom and his authority, or (b) corrupt or destroy his individuality, or (c) force him to retire into himself, found his own morality and live with the best personal conception of freedom and authority he can create, i.e. retain as much of his individuality as adapting to his environment will permit.

We can conclude that Rousseau's tragic vision of reality does indeed have a general application, if we accept his description of man as an agent of free will, naturally free and the first embodiment of authority. While it is certainly true that as an individual, Rousseau appears to have been in conflict with his historical situation, his philosophy is not limited but strengthened by this. Nor can Rousseau be criticized because his "individual" does not exist. He exists internally, as an ideal, and is unquestionably a valid part of mankind. It was perhaps Rousseau's greatest contribution to philosophy to demonstrate the need to approach man as an individual, attaching real significance to his thoughts, feelings and imagination, rather than to treat him as an impersonal, universal concept.

Even the qualities Rousseau attributed to man - freedom, reason, feeling - were not intended as mathematical properties of identity, but as the malleable, informing characteristics of any individual. He appreciated that these characteristics exist in the individual and that while they can grow by virtue of some internal quality unique to man (imagination), they can also be influenced by the social environment. He therefore asserted the individual's need to maintain himself by fully participating

in the creation of his environment.

C. Tragic Vision - Absolute or Corrigible?

Ultimately one arrives at the question which constitutes the crux of Rousseau's thought - can the conflict between the individual and society be reconciled? In an absolute sense, Rousseau's answer is clearly negative: it is impossible for the individual to retain everything he enjoyed in the state of nature and as long as his inclinations are not allowed full and absolute expression, conflict will exist. Rousseau's radical solution to this conflict, as discussed in the CS, proved, even to himself, untenable.

But in a less demanding sense, Rousseau suggests two options. In spite of all of society's irremedial flaws, man can and should concentrate on improving existing social institutions and practices through egalitarian measures. To produce the quality of citizen Rousseau attributed to Rome and Sparta would require a policy of isolation, the development of a strong nationalist sentiment accompanied by widely accepted civic practices, and a general economic and political parity. Contrary to the views of certain modern critics, Rousseau was envisioning Calvinist Geneva rather than Nazi Germany. From this perspective, Rousseau appears to have been a city-state reformist.

The problems with this option center on the mechanisms for establishing it. In Corsica and Pologne, Rousseau attempted to supply a satisfactory response but the gist of his suggestions - to appreciate the element of stability existing in the status quo and gradually introduce egalitarian reforms that will not jeopardize the positive influences of the state's history and traditions - is a far cry from the ideals he described elsewhere. These works of compromise, which have opened Rousseau to much criticism, fail by swinging too abruptly from theory to praxis.

The second option is solely available to the individual. He or she can, like Rousseau, live according to personal laws,

personal values and personal concepts of good and evil.

Rousseau tried to universalize this option by claiming that each individual carries within him an archetype of nature that can inform a satisfactory ethical system. Through shedding conventional prejudices, Rousseau argued, the individual can consult this archetype and structure his life around the values and morals it revealed which would prove to be the dictates of reason tempered by compassion.

The precise nature of this ethical system is difficult to find in Rousseau, although Emile is a lengthy effort to portray it. In Emile, it reduces to a series of platitudes - be true, be virtuous, be good - that are expressed through the normal gamut of human values - honesty, generosity, temperance, courage, justice - and illustrated via a series of parabolic incidents.

What one discovers in the final analysis is that, after ransacking society and decrying its evils, Rousseau could do no more than hold up the panacea of illusion. Dostoyevsky wrote that without some objective criterion for evaluating conduct, everything becomes, philosophically, lawful. In moving from society to the individual, Rousseau loses an essential element of his philosophy - the general will - which, once catalyzed, could serve as a guide to law and ethics. In Emile, the only guide Rousseau discusses is nature as it is depicted in his own life. Replete with inconsistencies, coloured by self-righteousness and tormented by doubt and hypocrisy, Rousseau's life is neither acceptable nor convincing as an objective criterion.

A harsh view of Rousseau might contend that all that remains is the suggestion that man develops his personal identity by espousing the illusion that best suits him. If he remains true, at least in conviction if not in conduct, to the ethical content of his illusion, then he can exist relatively happily as an individual in society - there is no definitive statement defining which illusion represents truth. There is, of course, that inner guide, nature, stamped on the conscience of each individual, but, while this can be consulted, it cannot be codified, and because its expression is subject to the vagaries of free will, it is not an absolute criterion. Rousseau

wished it to be universal, an emanation of nature, but this represents an ideal in his thought. In the end, he could not reconcile free will with a universal morality.

An objective law of nature may exist, but its content must be interpreted by the individual who is not bound to follow it. It was Rousseau's recognition of this problem that made it impossible for him to develop a blueprint for society that would fully satisfy his concept of human nature.

Rousseau's tragic vision of reality is absolute, but as it firms up in his writing, it becomes apparent that it is not as harsh as we suggested earlier. The vision successfully reflects an important feature of reality in that it is flexible, it has peaks and valleys, and is, for this reason, tolerable if not wholly acceptable.

In other words, much of the tragedy revolves around the notion that man has become less than his potential would allow him to become. Society is not absolutely evil, but it does play the frustrating dual rôle of providing man with a milieu conducive to improvement and at the same time limiting the sort of decisions for improvement that he can make. This in turn reverts to the conflict between particular interest and social interest and Rousseau could not devise a means for reconciling or equalizing the two that would not entail effectively eliminating one or the other.

This does not mean, however, that Rousseau's tragic vision of reality is a sterile, philosophical condemnation. Rousseau uncovered important problems, that functioned as elements of the overarching tragedy, for which he did suggest valid solutions. The success of Rousseau's writing lies in its undeniable foundation in reality and the pervasive futility that tainted his life and his work is a philosophical futility that cannot emasculate Rousseau's insight into real problems and the affirmative, humane dimension of his philosophy.

Part 2

A. Tragic Vision - A Final Formulation

We do not wish that the critical tenor of Part 1 of this chapter should suggest that Rousseau's work was self-indulgent and unsuccessful as a philosophy of man. The hopelessness that surfaces in our analysis is a reflection of the hopelessness that pervades Rousseau's opus. This hopelessness is not a commentary on his philosophy, but rather an element of it. While, on the one hand, the dichotomies developed by Rousseau split man and society and put them in eternal conflict, on the other hand, they are tenable across a wide spectrum of philosophical and social concerns. It is because they work, both logically and intuitively, that the tragedy is successful in its depiction of the human condition.

Man is subject to the competing forces of nature and convention. There are only tenuous and fragile points of reconciliation and a fundamental set of points where the two forces meet in agreement. But it is not these points that allow society to exist. It is rather the fact that man requires society to improve, which is a dictate of nature, that allows it to exist.

This may seem somewhat confusing so we will sketch out a final formulation of the tragic vision of reality to clarify our comments.

1. Man is a perfectible agent of free will.
2. As an individual, and as a species, man requires society to improve.
3. The individual's particular interests, which tend to be self-centered, will, at times, conflict with other interests.
4. To endure, society requires fairly elaborate conventions, designed to limit and restrain the conflicts of particular interests.
5. There is no mechanism through which all members of society can participate equally in developing these conventions.
6. The conventions established are often extensions of particular interests generated by an individual or a faction.

These will tend to be self-centered and will conflict with other particular interests. This situation is only acceptable on practical grounds insofar as it permits society to endure. It has no philosophical basis and cannot eliminate all conflicting interests.

7. As society develops and the conventions increasingly bear fruit for the particular interests they represent, conflicts will grow, weakening social stability and ultimately destroying it.

8. Man's particular interests tend to be short-sighted and laws and conventions tend to reflect this. If man could be motivated to look further, to appreciate that a just society is in his best interest, then society could be greatly improved. But this cannot be achieved without altering human nature on the individual level. Individual interests conflict, to deny this is to threaten the individuality that is crucial to man's free will which is, in turn, the feature that allows him to perfect himself. The tragedy lies in the fact that the final choice is between a society of citizens and a society of individuals. In the former case, free will has been eliminated, in the latter case, its expression is severely curtailed for the majority of men.

This tragic vision is a very comprehensive interpretation of Rousseau. In Chapter 3, we demonstrated that interpretations of Rousseau, that focus on either praxis or theory, tend to develop along opposing lines. The tragic vision interpretation reconciles this division in Rousseau scholarship. On a philosophical plane, the tragedy lies in the fact that Rousseau isolated a need but could not determine a mechanism to satisfy it. He began his argument with man in the state of nature, i.e. man as an individual. From this beginning, he wished to conclude with man as an individual qua citizen. While he could effectively locate the point of transition from individual creature to social being from a historical perspective, he could not do this philosophically. He was, therefore, left with the individual in a social context and, within the logical parameters of his argument, this could only be interpreted as a conflictual situation.

Rousseau faced a ~~similar~~ difficulty on the practical plane. To justify his philosophical work, he examined reality. Here too, he was forced to conclude that it was the individual caught in a social context and at odds with it, that was the best evaluation of reality. This view was reinforced by his conclusion that laws and conventions, as they exist in society, are merely the expression of the particular interests of those who have managed to secure authority. Such a distribution of authority is inevitable, as Rousseau clearly explains in Book III of the CS and Emile, because society requires a government that is of a functional size and that has the power to implement its decisions.

Rousseau's views are consistent on both theoretical and practical planes. Rousseau began with the individual as an agent of free will and concluded with the individual as an agent of free will. When Rousseau wrote in the CS,

> s'il n'y avoit pas quelque point dans lequel tous les intérêts s'accordent, nulle société ne sauroit exister. Or, c'est uniquement sur cet intérêt commun que la société doit être gouvernée. (6)

he was suggesting that a legal system could be established that was in the interest of all men. Such a legal system would be derived from the general will. But the existence of the general will ultimately proves in Rousseau's writing to be hypothetical and there is no definitive statement explaining what these common interests are. Yet Rousseau does give another justification for society - without it, man cannot improve, cannot realize his identity as man. This, then, is where "tous les intérêts s'accordent." It alone is a satisfactory basis for society. But, as Rousseau discovered, establishing a satisfactory basis for society does not, ipso facto, result in a clear definition of what society should be, which laws it should have, how it should be governed. In writings such as Corsica, Pologne and Emile, he recognized that, while all societies may have a common foundation philosophically, they do not have common formulations in practice. The only common element from one society to the next, is that none of them fully appreciate

their philosophical foundation. None are fully conducive to human improvement. This, in turn, is because, unless one begins with a model of the perfect man, one cannot devise a means to achieve perfection. The best one can do is suggest a formulation based on precepts of egalitarianism that logic defends as conducive to human progress. This is precisely what Rousseau began to do. But, not wanting to endanger the individual, jeopardize his concept of free will, or proffer a set of objective criteria for evaluating human improvement, his suggestions collapsed as impractical or unsubstantiated.

Critics suggest that in Rousseau there can only be the individual or the collectivity. This is not the case. In fact, both exist, both compete, and the one is dependent upon the other. Man is in limbo in Rousseau's writings as Rousseau was in limbo in the 18-th century Europe.

Why is this tragic? Tragedy implies that because of some inescapable flaw, a human being fails to achieve the heights he is capable of achieving and falls to a depth that is lamentable. This is Rousseau's view. Because man is not wholly individual or wholly citizen, he is forced to attempt to reconcile these two facets of his life and, in a broad social context, the conflict is resolved by a general degradation of both the individual and the citizen. A small handful of men impose their particular interests on society and, because they have not created a milieu conducive to improvement, they succumb to short-term, transitory interests that mock the ideals their imaginations reveal.

Within this vision, the rôle of language is an especially important and revealing feature. Language makes society possible. It allows the ideals to be expressed and the laws and goals of society to be discussed. In this way, language is every man's defense against encroachment upon his ability to contribute to the creation of his environment and identity.

There is, however, another dimension to language which was especially important to Rousseau and that provides a key to understanding his tragic vision. Language, Rousseau argued,

derives from man's actual mode of expressing and communicating his concerns. In an original context, its semantic system is universal (insofar as it is instinctual) but its application is strictly individual.

In a social context, the universal semantic system is inadequate to cope with the new requirements that develop from social interaction. A host of concepts, that make no sense and would serve no purpose in the state of nature, must be communicated. In the CS, Rousseau wrote:

> Ce passage de l'état de nature à l'état civil produit dans l'homme un changement très remarquable ... Quoiqu'il se prive dans cet état de plusieurs avantages qu'il tient de la nature, il en regagne de si grands, ses facultés s'exercent et se développent, ses idées s'étendent, ses sentiments s'ennoblissent, son âme tout entière s'élève à tel point que, si les abus de cette nouvelle condition ne le dégradoient souvent au-dessous de celle dont il est sorti, il devroit bénir sans cesse l'instant heureux qui l'en arracha pour jaimais et qui, d'un animal stupide et borné, fit un être intelligent et un homme. (7)

The changes Rousseau has described are reflected in language which grows, adapts and is modified to accommodate new needs. On the one hand, there is a tremendous expansion in the reference system of language, which is in line with the movement from a clearly defined and very limited human condition to one which has no evident boundaries and is highly susceptible to modifications of both form and content. On the other hand, there is the obvious need to define society and, concomitantly, to solidify language.

It is not surprising that those who begin to structure society along certain lines also exert a tremendous influence on the development of language. According to Rousseau, it is a faction espousing particular interests that assumes this dual rôle.

We have already discussed the results of this process for

society and for language. Society becomes an instrument used to secure the particular interests of the faction wielding authority; language becomes an instrument of education and control that consolidates and protects the position of this faction.

Both these occurences have a detrimental effect on free will and on the ability of the individual to establish the conditions of his existence. To contribute to the creation of society, he has to use language as this is his only means of relating with other individuals for the purpose of expressing his ideas. But, if the language at his disposal is already prejudiced toward a faction of society, in that its reference systems, phonology and grammar reflect the interests of a faction, then the individual is obliged to work with language in spite of language. This, in a sense, is the situation Rousseau faced that motivated him to introduce a new style of writing, i.e. one that incorporates feeling and intuition in its semantic system.

One question remains to be resolved if we are to accept the tragic vision interpretation of Rousseau. We have seen how Rousseau "en prenant les hommes tel qu'ils sont, et les lois telles qu'elles peuvent être"[8] splits man as he is into the individual and the citizen. We have further seen how Rousseau showed that these two dimensions of man are in conflict and, how because of this, each tends to limit and confine the improvement of the other. Man requires society to improve and, Rousseau argued, almost any society is better than no society. Society requires some system of laws and some degree of stability to exist. To achieve this, a faction is virtually compelled to assume authority and install and administer a suitable conventional system of control and "justice".

The next step in this argument is perhaps not clear. Why is it inevitable that this faction and the laws it legislates will corrupt society (in the long run) and degrade its members? What is the justification for this final conclusion, which is essential to the tragic vision, and which Rousseau repeated time after time in the Discours sur les sciences et les arts, the DOI, the CS, Emile, the EOL and all his autobiographical

works?

Rousseau's reply to this question developed, as did all his ideas, along both practical and philosophical lines and it is worth considering each briefly to complete our argument. An essential element of the tragic vision is that it asserts that man in society falls to a level that is lower than the level of marginal superiority over animals he enjoyed in the state of nature. This is the condemning feature of Rousseau's philosophy, the basis for the claim that societies perish and, according to Rousseau, the source of the motivation that compelled him to write, to expose corruption and degradation, and to argue against it as a philosopher and as a citizen.

1. Philosophical Argument

We must accept the premise, already discussed, that it is an essential characteristic of man to have the capacity to create his identity and determine, more or less, his environment and that if he is denied the authority required to mobilize this capacity, he will be unhappy and not fully a man.

Accepting this, the rest of Rousseau's argument flows easily and logically. Since society constitutes a major portion of man's environment, and it is in this context that he must achieve his identity, logic demands that the individual participate in shaping society. The skeleton that gives society its initial shape and influences the way it will grow and endure is the legal system. Laws, then, are of fundamental importance and the mechanism suggested by Rousseau for their determination and enactment was the general will. There are, therefore, two possible cases:

(a) society structured on decisions of the general will, and
(b) society not structured on decisions of the general will.

Rousseau argued in the CS that societies have not been structured on the general will; therefore, we need only concern ourselves with case (b) which is abstracted from reality.

If the general will was not used to determine laws, then a particular will (or wills) was used. According to Rousseau's definition of human nature, "la volonté particulière agit sans cesse contre la volonté générale."[9] The tendency of the particular will is towards self-interest rather than social interest. But why, if the general will is truly in man's best interest, is it not equivalent to particular will? This is a question that has often been debated by critics of Rousseau. To reply to it we must remember that there is a difference between the individual and the citizen. Rousseau's philosophy depends on this distinction.

Many interpretations of the general will have been suggested by Rousseau scholars ranging from the assertion that it is the expression of the majority and can be determined on any subject through a referendum to the suggestion that it is a unanimous expression achieved after informed and objective consideration and discussion and is only possible in certain cases. After surveying representative literature, one might be inclined to conclude that there is no definitive answer to the problem in Rousseau.

The general will, however, is a logical element in Rousseau's split man, which is the analytical model that is carried like a thread from one work to the next in his opus. In a rough way, the rational man recognizes his limitations; the emotional man does not. The citizen appreciates the right of laws to limit his behaviour and accepts his social obligations; the individual appreciates only his freedom, his desires, his ambition. The particular will is geared toward free will, preservation and improvement in an indefined and unlimited sense; the general will seeks to achieve these things in a clearly defined universe. Of the two, the individual, particular, sensual man is the more fundamental model. Consequently, if man can be satisfied in this capacity in a social context, it is inevitable that this is the route he will choose. He will choose to be the center of his world in society as he was in the state of nature.

The result of this is that if he can, man will use his

particular interest as a guide to the laws he enacts in order to create a situation in his favour, i.e. a situation of inequality. Subsequent actions will strive to consolidate his position and he will do this by enhancing his power, his wealth, his education and by influencing social institutions such as language. This will lead to deprivation for others who will respond by attempting to displace him and to assume his position. Such a situation cannot lead to equality, morality and freedom because these are antithetical to a favoured position. Laws that are unjust are corrupt and a society based on corrupt laws effectively sanctions corruption in other areas of human activity.

Rousseau clearly states that man must be educated to the general will and that only someone without particular interests can be such an educator. This is a strong commentary on the ability of man to rise above his particular interests long enough to accomplish a task such as creating a just legal system. Without assistance, according to Rousseau, he cannot.

Obviously, Rousseau's argument rests on certain assumptions about human nature. But, if we accept these, it is not difficult to understand that general and particular interests co-exist in man and the latter are dominant in guiding his activity. What then, is the use of the general will? This is part of the tragedy; assuming it exists, one concludes that society has no access to it.

Rousseau's philosophical argument has obvious weaknesses. The general will is an assumption that is never verified unless intuitively. In a sense, it is used in the same way a scientist might assume a perfect vacuum to show how perpetual motion could be achieved. The idea of a perfect vacuum exists, things close to perfect vacuums exist and we cannot deny, unless we absolutely succumb to our scientific paradigm, the possibility of a perfect vacuum existing. Given the purpose of laws and Rousseau's concept of human nature, we cannot deny the notion of a general will.

But what really eliminates the problem of the general will from Rousseau's philosophy is that he concluded that it was

unattainable. It was used as a source of inspiration and its existence is not important. Having perpetual motion would certainly alter society; but not having it does not mean we cannot use and benefit from principles determined from studying this concept. This is how Rousseau should be read.

2. Practical Argument

The philosophical strain in Rousseau suggests the social mechanism that leads to corruption and human degradation. Rousseau's practical argument attempts to confirm the sagacity of his philosophy by appealing to historical examples that illustrate the dominance of particular interest and the ensuing corruption and social deterioration generated by a lack of respect for or discontentment with the laws. Rousseau's critiques of society, as presented in the CS, the DOI, Emile and other works, are well-known and will not be summarized here. Several comments on this subject, however, deserve to be made in the context of this paper.

Rousseau's perception of reality fed his philosophical vision. Throughout his writing, Rousseau appeals to historical examples and uses them to inform his philosophical system. This procedure has already been discussed in regard to Rousseau's construction of the image of natural man; it is repeated in his construction of the concept of general will. Pointing out situations of inequality in the early stages of a society's history (and Rousseau uses a wide range of societies, including Rome, Sparta, China, and France), Rousseau then follows social evolution to show how inequality ultimately resulted (or will result) in corruption, degradation and destruction. Having established his historical context, he then demonstrated how inequality was a function of particular interest and how particular interest was built into each political system. The logical counterpart to inequality, in reality as in philosophy, is equality; similarly, general interest is the logical counterpart to particular interest.

Rousseau then "proved" the veracity of these relationships

by using, albeit rather generously, examples of a proto-general will in action in environments such as rural/agrarian communities and Geneva. In effect, he used the example of the apparently contented and stable small community to illustrate the value of the general will. In so doing, he admitted that this was intended as indicative and not definitive because they were not conscious acts of the general will but rather instinctual ones and thus susceptible to the influence of particular will. This does not, however, adversely affect the fact that history supports Rousseau's general will as defined earlier.

Rousseau's practical works, Corsica and Pologne, continue along this line as they use the general will as an informing agent for egalitarian reforms. In other words, he argues for practical democratic and egalitarian measures and is able to justify these with the principles that explain the general will.

In this treatise on the education of the moral individual, Rousseau argues for rising above particular interests as they are learned or defined in society to reach a level of particular interest that, in a sense, reflects all the positive qualities attributed to the general will.

Thus Rousseau used the notion of the general will as an invisible hand to justify and guide reforms on the social and individual levels that were possible. By turning the argument around, he could then argue from possible reforms back to the notion of the general will.

But in all these cases, we have shown how and where Rousseau failed. It is this failure, and the recognition of it by Rousseau, that makes his philosophy and his vision of reality tragic. Both the philosophical and the practical arguments for the general will depend on the existence of particular wills. The predominance of the latter in both arguments leads to the conclusions of factionalism, inequality and corruption that Rousseau could not avoid without eliminating human nature as he conceived it.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to present and defend an interpretation of Rousseau's political philosophy that accommodates some of the arguments and reconciles some of the differences found in the traditional liberal and authoritarian interpretations. It was suggested in Chapter 3 that the popular interpretations of Rousseau tend to accentuate either praxis or theory and in so doing fail to consider Rousseau's thought as a whole.

In our discussion, we argued that Rousseau divided man and reality into two parts, loosely characterized as the liberal/individual/sensual and the authoritarian/collective/rational. Unlike the majority of critics, however, we did not conclude that Rousseau, either directly or indirectly, ultimately argued for one set of characteristics over the other. Instead, we suggested that he recognized that perfection on either level, that is, a society of citizens or a world of individuals, constituted a philosophical perfection, an ideal, and was not a tenable basis for the reconstruction of reality. Either could be an inspiration for change, but clearly Rousseau did not believe in the possibility of founding a society based on the social contract and informed by a legislator any more than he believed in a return to the "siècle d'or". Rousseau's philosophical ideals were analytical tools that should not be confused with his perception of human nature or his understanding of reality.

Rousseau began the CS by stating that he was looking for "quelque règle d'administration légitime et sûre, en prenant les hommes tels qu'ils sont, et les lois telles qu'elles peuvent être."[1] This search is not completed at the end of Book II, as some critics believe, and even the CS as a whole is only a part of a larger, more comprehensive study. The search continued, through Emile, through Julie, through his autobiographical works and it is only after a consideration of all Rousseau's major writings that we are in a position to interpret his political thought.

Ostensibly, Rousseau's aim in the CS and other works was to

reconcile his divided man, to unite the individual and the citizen without subjecting one to the domination of the other. Such a reconciliation proved impossible philosophically and impractical in reality. The more fundamental man, the individual governed by particular interest, haunts Rousseau's opus as the cause of factionalism, corruption, deterioration, the obstacle to civic morality and the instigator of social inequity. The individual, however, requires the society he corrupts to improve. But while man's improvement depends on society, and is enhanced in a stable and prosperous society, it is motivated by individual free will and therefore, in Rousseau's view, the purpose of society is defeated if it fails to recognize the importance of free will.

Rousseau's arguments in the CS, for civic morality and the equal distribution of authority, were predicated on his understanding of human nature, and in particular his concepts of free will and imagination. The essence of the tragic vision lies in the fact that the individual is not equivalent to the citizen and can never be so. Indeed, this distinction is central to Rousseau's thought. Taking men as they are, he identified and defined the individual and the citizen and then realized that his definitions placed the two into conflict. Not wanting to relinquish one, he was forced, in the final analysis, to accept this conflict as the situation that best describes reality.

The conflict is tragic from a philosophical and a practical perspective. Philosophically, Rousseau concluded that it could only be resolved by eliminating either society or the individual. Practically, it resolved itself through the mechanism of allowing some individuals to define society. In other words, a faction assumes the responsibility of maintaining order in society but uses its position to satisfy its particular interests. Rousseau was aware of the positive and negative effects of such a reconciliation. On the positive side, society received a degree of stability and Rousseau appreciated that, in general, some form of society is better for man than no form of society. Against this, however, is the fact that factions have particular interests that inevitably run contrary to the general

interest. In consequence, inequalities flourish that have no justification and a general deterioration of society ensues because the laws and social practices do not command universal respect.

The situation persists from society to society for several reasons. According to Rousseau, the tendency of the common social man is to obey, be it the legislator in the ideal society or a faction in reality. In this blind sort of acceptance, even the self-interested actions of the faction are accepted to some extent, thus guaranteeing it will have at least a short life. The faction naturally attempts to lengthen its life by implementing controls through such critical social tools as language and law. It is always threatened, however, because, according to Rousseau, no legitimate mechanism could be established that would eliminate the possibility of one faction being replaced by another.

The tragedy underlying this perception of reality rests on the fact that the nature of such a society effectively limits the type of improvements available to man. Rousseau saw tremendous potential when he stripped away convention, artifice and prejudice to examine the essence of man. How could he have seen anything but tragedy when he reviewed history and saw human energy and effort expended on constant conflicts, human identity represented as the embodiment of corruption, and human nature denying the compassionate, sublime and sensual qualities that had characterized it in its original formulation.

Rousseau's tragic vision sweeps across all areas of human endeavour and in this way acquires the expansive and all-encompassing quality that makes it such a powerful critique of reality.

In this essay, we have confined ourselves to language, although many other elements of reality have been at least implicitly discussed. Language occupies a special place in Rousseau's thought for it highlights the conflict between factionalism, control and authority on the one hand and expression, freedom and humanity on the other. Language unites the individual and the collectivity, feeling and reason, freedom and

servitude, and thus provided Rousseau with a vehicle for examining, comparing and evaluating the two dimensions that define man.

Most important in terms of Rousseau scholarship, however, is that our discussion of language has allowed us to present Rousseau as an artist and philosopher. We quoted Kremer-Marietti as saying that in the EOL music, language and politics are inextricably bound together. In this essay, emphasis has been placed on the importance of recognizing the interaction between the artistic and philosophical features of Rousseau's thought. The use of the term vision rather than theory was intended to accentuate this relationship.

It is a difficult task to define the essential difference between art and philosophy. Plato, contemptuous of the popularity of Homer, devoted much of The Republic to explaining this distinction and concluded that philosophy was superior because it sought truth. Plato believed the artist to be merely a clever imitator and refused to admit that truth is also a criterion for evaluating art. It is beyond question, however, that the artist, like the philosopher, has historically been obligated to defend or renounce his creations on this very basis.

Any definition of the distinction between art and philosophy would certainly have its critics. The tragic vision interpretation, however, does not require that we define either discipline but simply that we recognize that for Rousseau the two worked together to create a general vision of man and society.

In simple terms, philosophy attempts to discover and define human nature and the good society. In so doing, it seeks to be logical, consistent and all-encompassing. Philosophy is predicated on a conception of truth and truth is generally conceived as something that is tenable across time and space.

Art also attempts to express some sort of truth. The artist perceives reality, internally or externally, and expresses his perception truthfully. He does not, however, necessarily portray an ideal society or provide any guide to social action. As James Joyce explained, the artist seeks to achieve an epiphany,

a sensitive, honest and beautiful depiction of some aspect of reality.

Rousseau's work combines these two activities in that it weds the artist's perception of reality to the philosopher's notion of the good and uses the one to clarify and reinforce the other. We speak of Rousseau's vision in the sense that his work contains a sweeping, artistic statement of man and the world. The vision becomes tragic when it is placed against a philosophy of man, against conceptions of good, freedom, equality. Finally, it becomes a tragic vision of reality because the two, art and philosophy, are fused together and presented as a comprehensive interpretation or expression of the human condition.

In other words, we do not say, here, this is the CS, Rousseau's philosophical statement and here, this is Julie, his artistic creation. We have combined the two and argued that together they represent Rousseau's thought. They unite man as he is now, man as his ideals define him and man as he could be or could have been, to convey a total perception of man as the perfectible agent of free will whose imagination and nature place him in conflict with his environment.

Needless to say, in a one hundred page paper much is left unsaid and in many ways this interpretation is of a preliminary nature. In spite of its shortcomings, however, we venture to conclude that three things have been accomplished.

1. We have argued that an interpretation of Rousseau need not seal him into a political category and conclude that he was either a collectivist/authoritarian or an individualist/libertarian thinker. We have further argued that refusing to fit him into one of these camps does not force us to conclude his thought was inconsistent. We have suggested instead that Rousseau's thought straddles what have become the most popular political positions.

By dividing man into two clearly defined parts, Rousseau set the stage for the popular interpretations of his work. Indeed, it is very likely that his writing directed the development of the liberal and authoritarian camps in a general sense. Rousseau,

however, was a realist who appreciated the importance and interdependence of society and the individual. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, Rousseau's thought cut across the popular political debates of his day and it continues to do so. His tragic vision, drawing upon philosophical ideals while accepting the inevitability of injustices abstracted from reality, succeeds because it is an honest assessment of the world, regardless of whether or not one subscribes to it.

2. The tragic vision interpretation of Rousseau does not knock his thought out of philosophy and into some quasi-artistic limbo. While we have discussed the lofty or classical dimension of Rousseau's tragic vision, we have not denied the philosophical content of his work or its value as a practical guide to political action.

What we have argued is that Rousseau's vision contains a philosophy of man and an artistic representation of reality. Together, these two elements discuss the world so that the overall vision is akin to thought itself - open-ended, flexible, stimulating. Rousseau's tragic vision, like many of his writings, can be described as a dialogue between philosophy and art that considers man and society in a profound way but invites reaction. And certainly Rousseau consciously invited reaction.

In this way, we can understand why, after elucidating a philosophy of man, Rousseau was able to support social and individual reforms that were imperfect applications of his philosophy. This was not a contradictory activity; it was a recognition of the relationship between theory and praxis.

3. In developing the tragic vision interpretation, we have had occasion to demonstrate the contemporary significance of Rousseau's thought in general, and his theory of language in particular.

Whether or not one believes that Rousseau's vision of society sheds light on the conflicts that slowly tear apart our modern, technocratic world shall be left as an individual matter insofar as this paper is concerned. Definitely, many of the problems Rousseau discussed continue to plague modern society.

Throughout the world, political authority is concentrated in factions, factions control legislative systems, and the common man's direct political involvement is limited. Tremendous conventional inequalities still exist and meet resistance that has resulted in the demise of several modern political systems. Interest has grown in the small, self-sufficient community, in North America the rural population is growing more quickly than its urban counterpart, people are concerned with emotions and preoccupied with the individual's rôle in increasingly complex societies. These are areas in which Rousseau's comments are useful, especially when he is read as a stimulus to the process of critical thought rather than as the author of a system of ideas to accept or reject.

The elements of Rousseau's tragic vision have also retained their importance in the fields to which they belong. His theory of language, for example, brings to mind research recently undertaken by philosophers, linguists, sociologists, psychologists and writers. Orwell's language of control, Herbert Marcuse's notion of non-critical thought, the philosophies of language that grew from the early Wittgenstein all bear similarities to Rousseau's work.

There is certainly tremendous potential in reading Rousseau in the light of modern theories of politics and language, and a tentative conclusion is that Rousseau's ideas, in spite of their weaknesses, have yet to be disproved and continue to circulate in state-of-the-art thought in numerous fields. There are many avenues for the academic to explore; only one has been pursued in this essay. We might suggest that this is due to the fact that Rousseau explored reality and did so in a way to promote dialogue.

Our final conclusion is that, within the logical parameters of this paper, we have presented an interpretation of Rousseau's thought that confirms its contemporary relevance while remaining true to his ideas and background and that, in the spirit of his writing, can claim to provide a basis for understanding a most influential thinker without claiming to be a definitive interpretation that eliminates the need to read the original.

Notes.

Introduction.

1. Les Plus Belles Lettres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, presentées par Pierre Sipriot, (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1962), p.14.
2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Ecrits Politiques, ed. J.-D. Selche, (Paris: Union Générales d'Editions, 1972), p.7.
3. Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art, Volume Three, (New York: Vintage Books, Undated), p. 117.
4. Ibid., p. 117.
5. Ernest Cassirer, The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, trans. Peter Gay, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), p. 5.
6. For a complete discussion of this premise, see Rousseau's Discours sur l'origine d'inégalité parmi les hommes and the Contrat Social.

Chapter 1.

1. Michel Launay, Le Vocabulaire Politique de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (Genève: Librairie Slatkine, 1977), p. 10.
2. Op. Cit., Sipriot, 1962, p. 120.
3. Op. Cit., Launay, 1977, p. 10.
4. Roy C. Macridis, "France" in Modern Political Systems: Europe, ed. Roy C. Macridis & Robert E. Ward, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 160.
5. Rousseau's understanding of the political reality in Geneva was discussed by Jean Terrasse in his presentation entitled "Rousseau, Tronchin et les Représentants: aspects du débat politique à Genève en 1763-1764" given on May 15, 1982 at the University of Toronto as part of the "Collogue sur les Ecrits Politiques Mineurs de Rousseau".
6. The Age of the Enlightenment, ed. Sir Isaiah Berlin, (New York: The New American Library Inc., 1956), p. 15.

Notes (cont'd).

Chapter 1 (cont'd)

7. Ibid., p. 266.
8. Op. Cit., Hauser, Undated, p.3.
9. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Confessions, Tome 1, ed. M. Launay, (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1968), p. 43.
10. La Pensée Anthropologique de J.-J. Rousseau, presentée par Jean-Claude Quirin, (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1972), p. 101.
11. Pierre-Maurice Masson, "Questions de chronologie rousseauiste", in Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Tome IX, (Genève: A. Jullien, 1914), p. 49.
12. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1968, Tome 2, p. 164.
13. The discussion of Rousseau's reading for the EOL and DOI is based primarily on the "Notice" written by Jean-Claude Quirin for La Pensée Anthropologique de J.-J. Rousseau.
14. Op. Cit., Quirin, 1972, p. 18.
15. Ibid., p. 19.
16. Ibid., p. 105.
17. Marc Eigeldinger, Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la Réalité de l'Imaginaire, (Neuchâtel: Les Editions de la Baconnière, 1962), p. 110.
18. Ibid., p. 110.
19. Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, An Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge, (Florida: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971), p. 175.
20. Ibid., p. 227.
21. Ibid., p. 228.
22. Ibid., p. 306.
23. Ibid., p. 338.

Notes (Cont'd).

Chapter 1 (Cont'd).

24. According to the discussion of Rousseau and Duclos by Angèle Kremer - Marietti in "Jean-Jacques Rousseau ou La Double Origine et son rapport au système langue-musique-politique", in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Essai sur l'Origine des Langues, (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1974), p. 30.

25. Op. Cit., Eigeldinger, 1962, p. 113.

26. Ibid., p. 114.

27. Discussion of Rameau's theory based on information from Op. Cit., Kremer-Marietti, 1974, pp. 32-34.

28. Ibid., p. 33.

29. Rousseau, the artist, was discussed by C. Donakowski in his presentation entitled "The Utility of Myth: Fêtes and Arts as Mass Media in the Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne", given on May 16, 1982 at the University of Toronto as part of the "Colloque sur les Ecrits Politiques Mineurs de Rousseau".

Chapter 2.

1. Jean Morel, "Rechercher sur les sources du Discours de l'Inégalité", in Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Tome V, (Genève: A. Jullien, 1909), p. 151.

2. Op. Cit., Quirin, 1972, p. 105.

3. Ibid., p. 106.

4. Michel Launay, Rousseau, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), p. 16.

5. See Introduction to Chapter 3.

6. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Essai sur l'origine des langues, ed. A. Kremer-Marietti, (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1974), p. 87.

Notes (Cont'd)

Chapter 2 (Cont'd)

7. Op. Cit., Quirin, 1972, p. 13.
8. On the Origin of Language: Jean-Jacques Rousseau - Essay on the Origin of Languages and Johann Gottfried Herder - Essay on The Origin of Language, trans. John H. Moran and Alexander Gode, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966), p. 81.
9. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1974, p. 90.
10. Ibid., p. 95.
11. Ibid., p. 95.
12. Ibid., p. 102.
13. Ibid., p. 108.
14. Ibid., p. 109.
15. Ibid., p. 109.
16. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile, ed. M. Launay, (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1966), p. 84.
17. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1974, p. 121.
18. Ibid., p. 123.
19. Ibid., p. 124.
20. Ibid., p. 129.
21. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discours sur l'origine d'inégalité parmi les hommes, (Paris: Editions Garniers Frères, 1962), p. 58.
22. Op. Cit., Kremer - Marietti, 1974, p. 39.
23. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1966, p. 133.
24. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1974, p. 156.
25. Op. Cit., Kremer - Marietti, 1974, pp. 37-38.
26. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1974, p. 168.

Notes (Cont'd).

Chapter 2 (Cont'd).

27. Ibid., p. 168.

28. Ibid., p. 173.

29. Ibid., p. 174.

30. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1966, p. 134.

31. Op. Cit., Launay, 1968, p. 18.

32. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1962, p. 53.

33. Op. Cit., Moran, 1966, p. 75.

34. Ibid., p. 76.

35. Ibid., p. 77.

36. Op. Cit., Sipriot, 1962, p. 14.

37. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire, ed. J. Voisine, (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1964), p. 28.

38. Ibid., p. 28.

39. Jean Starobinski, Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La Transperence et l'Obstacle, (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1971), p. 182.

40. Ibid., p. 357.

41. Ibid., p. 364.

42. Ibid., p. 369.

43. Op. Cit., Eigeldinger, 1962, p. 120.

44. Ibid., p. 132.

45. Ibid., pp. 132-133.

46. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1962, p. 35.

47. Ibid., p. 56.

48. Op. Cit., Eigeldinger, 1962, p. 133.

49. Ibid., p. 134.

50. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1962, p. 47.

Notes (Cont'd).

Chapter 3.

1. Op. Cit., Sipriot, 1962, pp. 123-124.
2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Du Contrat Social, (Paris: Ed. Garnier Frères, 1962 (a)), p. 236.
3. Ibid., p. 246.
4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Authoritarian Libertarian?, ed. Guy H. Dodge, (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1971), p. 39.
5. Ibid., p. 39.
6. Ibid., p. 39.
7. Ibid., p. 40.
8. Ibid., p. 53.
9. Ibid., p. 73.
10. Ibid., p. 78.
11. Ibid., p. 80.
12. Ibid., p. 81.
13. Ibid., p. 91.
14. Sir Ernest Barker, Social Contract: Locke, Hume, Rousseau, (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. xxxiii.
15. Ibid., p. xxxiii.
16. Ibid., p. xxxv.
17. Ibid., p. xxxviii.
18. Ibid., p. xxxviii.
19. J. McManners, The Social Contract and Rousseau's Revolt Against Society, (Great Britain: Leicester University Press, 1968), p. 13.
20. Ibid., p. 12.
21. Judith Shklar, "Reading the Social Contract" in Powers,

Notes (Cont'd).

Chapter 3 (Cont'd).

Possessions and Freedom, ed: Alkis Kontos, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 86.

22. Ibid., p. 86.

23. Ibid., p. 86.

24. Ibid., p. 88.

25. J. Salwyn Schapiro, Liberalism: Its Meaning and History, (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company Inc., 1958), p. 25.

26. Resumé Complet de l'Histoire de la Philosophie, ed. Gasc-Desfossés, (Paris: Librairie Roville-Morant, Undated), pp. 129-130.

27. Alfred Berchtold, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (Genève: Blanc-Wittwer, 1978), p. 31.

28. Op. Cit., Dodge, 1971, p. 61.

29. Ibid., p. 64.

30. Ibid., p. 66.

31. Ibid., p. 54.

32. Ibid., p. 60.

33. Discussed by Ralph Leigh in his presentation entitled "The Contrat social reinterpreted in the light of the Lettres de la Montagne and the political situation in Geneva", given on May 15, 1982 at the University of Toronto for the "Collogues sur les Ecrits Politiques Mineurs de Rousseau".

34. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1962 (a), p. 236.

35. Ibid., p. 250.

36. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1966, p. 35.

37. Op. Cit., Shklar, 1979, p. 80.

38. Ibid., p. 84.

Notes (Cont'd).

Chapter 3 (Cont'd).

39. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1962, p. 87.

40. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1962 (a), p. 249.

41. Alfred Cobban, Rousseau and the Modern State, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1964), p. 93.

42. For a discussion of this, see Book I of the Contrat Social.

43. Op. Cit., Cassirer, 1954, p. 29.

44. S. Korner, Kant, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1955), p. 140.

45. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1962 (a), p. 269.

46. Ibid., p. 262.

47. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1966, p. 619.

Chapter 4.

1. Op. Cit., Quirin, 1972, p. 23.

2. Op. Cit., Cobban, 1964, p. 9.

3. Sigmund Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, trans. Joan Rivière, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975), p. 13.

4. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1964, p. 172.

5. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1968, Tome 2, p. 431.

6. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1962 (a), p. 250.

7. Ibid., p. 246.

8. Ibid., p. 235.

9. Ibid., p. 251.

Notes (Cont'd).

Conclusion.

1. Op. Cit., Rousseau, 1962 (a), p. 235.

Bibliography.

Primary sources.

La Pensée Anthropologique de J.-J. Rousseau, presentée par Jean-Claude Quirin, (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1972).

Les Plus Belles Lettres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, presentées par Pierre Sipriot, (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1962).

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, The Confessions, trans. J.M. Cohen, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1953).

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Du Contrat Social; Discours sur les sciences et les arts; Discours sur l'origine d'inégalité parmi les hommes; Lettre à M. d'Alembert; Considérations sur la Gouvernement de Pologne; Lettre à Mgr. de Beaumont, Archevêque de Paris, (Paris: Editions Garnier Frères, 1962).

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire, ed. J. Voisine, (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1964).

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Emile, ed. M. Launay, (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1966).

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Julie ou La Nouvelle Heloise, ed. M. Launay, (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1967).

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Les Confessions, ed. M. Launay, (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1968).

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Ecrits Politiques, ed. J.-D. Selche, (Paris: Union Générales d'Editions, 1972).

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Emile, trans. B. Foxley, (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1974).

Bibliography (Cont'd).

Primary sources (cont'd).

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Essai sur l'origine des langues, ed. A. Kremer-Marietti, (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1974).

The Essential Rousseau. trans. Lowell Bair, (New York: New American Library, 1974).

Bibliography (cont'd)

Secondary sources.

Babbitt, Irving, Rousseau and Romanticism, (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1947).

Barker, Sir Ernest, Social Contract: Locke, Hume, Rousseau, (London: Oxford University Press, 1947).

Barry, Brian, "The Public Interest" in Political Philosophy, ed. A. Quinton, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

Berchtold, Alfred, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (Genève: Blanc-Wittwer, 1978).

Blanchard, William H., Rousseau and the Spirit of Revolt: A Psychological Study, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969).

Cassirer, Ernest, The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, trans. Peter Gay, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954).

Chapman, John W., Rousseau: Totalitarian or Liberal, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956).

Chuquet, Arthur, Rousseau, (Paris: Librairie Hachette, Undated).

Claparède, Edouard, "Rousseau et l'origine du langage", in Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Tome XXIV, (Genève: A. Jullien, 1929).

Cobban, Alfred, Rousseau and the Modern State, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1964).

Bibliography (cont'd).

Secondary sources (cont'd).

Condillac, Etienne Bonnot de, An Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge, (Florida: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971).

Crocker, Lester G., Rousseau's Social Contract: An Interpretive Essay, (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1968).

Dobinson, G.H., Jean-Jacques Rousseau: His Thought and its Relevance Today, (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1969).

Droixhe, D., "Un plan inédit de Turgot pour un discours sur l'origine, la formation et le mélange des langues (vers 1750)", received from the Société d'études Rousseauistes.

Droixhe, D., "Langage et société dans la grammaire philosophique de du Marsais à Michaelis: Proudhon et le Rubicon", received from the Société d'études Rousseauistes.

Duffy, Edward, Rousseau in England: The Context for Shelley's Critique of the Enlightenment, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979).

Eigeldinger, Marc, Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la Réalité de l'Imaginaire, (Neuchâtel: Les Editions de la Baconnière, 1962).

Einaudi, Mario, The Early Rousseau, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1967).

Bibliography (cont'd).

Secondary sources (cont'd).

Ellenburg, Stephen, Rousseau's Political Philosophy, (London: Cornell University Press, 1976).

Hauser, Arnold, The Social History of Art, Volume Three, (New York: Vintage Books, Undated).

Havens, George R., Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1978).

Huizinga, J.H., Rousseau: The Self-Made Saint, (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1976).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Authoritarian Libertarian?, ed. Guy H. Dodge, (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1971).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau et Son Temps, ed. M. Launay, (Paris: Librairie A.-G. Nizet, 1969).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, quatre études de Jean Starobinski, Jean-Louis Lecercle, Henri Coulet, Marc Eigeldinger, (Neuchâtel: Les Editions de la Baconnière, 1978).

Jouvenal, Bertrand de, "Rousseau, évolutioniste pessimiste" in Rousseau et la Philosophie Politique, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965).

Korner, S., Kant, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1955).

Kremer-Marietti, Angèle, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau ou La Double Origine et son rapport au système langue-musique-politique" in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Essai sur l'Origine des Langues, (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1974).

Bibliography (cont'd).

Secondary sources (cont'd).

Launay, Michel, Le Vocabulaire Politique de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (Genève: Librairie Slatkine, 1977).

Launay, Michel, Rousseau, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968).

Lecercle, Jean-Louis, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1973).

Leon, Paul, "Etudes Critiques: Rousseau et les fondaments de l'Etat Moderne", in Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Tome XXIII, (Genève: A. Jullien, 1928).

Masson, Pierre-Maurice, "Questions de chronologie rousseauiste", in Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Tome IX, (Genève: A. Jullien, 1914).

Masters, Roger D., The Political Philosophy of Rousseau, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

May, Georges, Rousseau, (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1961).

McDonald, Joan, Rousseau and the French Revolution, 1762-1791, (London: Athlone Press, 1965).

McManners, J., The Social Contract and Rousseau's Revolt Against Society, (Great Britain: Leicester University Press, 1968).

Morel, Jean, "Rechercher sur les sources du Discours de l'Inégalité" in Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Tome V, (Genève: A. Jullien, 1909).

Bibliography (cont'd)

Secondary sources (cont'd).

On the Origin of Language: Jean-Jacques Rousseau - Essay on the Origin of Languages and Johann Gottfried Herder - Essay on the Origin of Language, trans. John H. Moran and Alexander Gode, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966).

Osborne, Annie Marion, Rousseau and Burke, (London: Oxford University Press, 1940).

Partridge, P.H., "Politics, Philosophy, Ideology" in Political Philosophy, ed. A. Quinton, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

Resumé Complet de l'Histoire de la Philosophie, ed. Gasc-Desfossés, (Paris: Librairie Roville-Morant, Undated).

Schapiro, J. Salwyn, Liberalism: Its Meaning and History, (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company Inc., 1958).

Shklar, Judith, "Reading the Social Contract" in Powers, Possession and Freedom, ed. Alkis Kontos, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

Starobinski, Jean, Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La Transperence et l'Obstacle, (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1971).

Talmon, Jacob L., The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy, (New York: Frederick A. Praegar, 1952).

Taylor, Charles, "Language and Human Nature", Unpublished.

The Age of the Enlightenment, ed. Sir Isaiah Berlin, (New York: The New American Library Inc., 1956).

Bibliography (cont'd)

Secondary sources (cont'd).

Wright, E.H., The Meaning of Rousseau, (London: Oxford University Press, 1929).

Bibliography (Cont'd)

Tertiary sources.

Colloque sur "Les Ecrits Politiques Mineurs de Rousseau" aux Collèges Victoria et Erindale, Université de Toronto, 15 - 17 mai, 1981. Société d'études Rousseauistes.