TOWARDS A POLITICS OF NOSTALGIA:

NOSTALGIC MEMORY AND NASCENT COMMUNITY IN LATER ROUSSEAU

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Abstract

This dissertation reconstructs Rousseau's philosophy of individual nostalgic memory in order to understand the nostalgia for lost community and nature that pervades Rousseau's political works. Critics of Rousseau often accuse him of a dangerous and passive nostalgia in the face of the uncertain perils of critical thought, moral action, and political negotiation. They argue that Rousseau invites his readers to be nostalgic for forms of homogeneous community, and transparency with nature, that are possible only in fantasy – a fantasy that may only be realized through fanatical violence and the suppression of difference and dissent. Drawing from *Émile*, *Confessions*, and *Rêveries*, this dissertation argues that Rousseau displaces the common understanding – common both in his time and our own – of nostalgia as passive and unthinking. I argue that he develops his phenomenology of nostalgic memory from the philosophy of his (onetime) close friend, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac. For Rousseau, as for Condillac, we remember and enjoy the products of our own activity: sensations and ideas that we compared and evaluated. And our comparisons and evaluations (or sentiments) responded to the pleasure, examples, and language of other people. Later nostalgic recollection thus may follow pleasure to return us to memories in community and in the physical world. Nostalgia is an invitation to compare and judge our past judgements and sentiments anew. This Condillacian philosophy of individual memory informs Rousseau's political rhetoric and political ideals. The rhetoric of Rousseau's political works, like that of his later autobiographical and literary works, at once attempts to recall us to our lost capacity for moral and political judgement, and to our dependence on other people. And his political texts describe ideals of political communities that, like his ideals of intimate community, are premised on our identification with the different, but consonant, activities of other people – both within the present generation, and across time. In later Rousseau, nostalgia opens us to our capacity for thought, virtue, and community. His imagined citizens, self-presentations, and literary characters think and act through their nostalgia, rather than despite this passion.

Résumé

La présente thèse reconstitue le parcours philosophique de Rousseau qui a trait à la mémoire nostalgique individuelle. Le but est de comprendre la mémoire nostalgique par rapport à la perte du sens de communauté et de nature, concept qui s'étend à toute l'œuvre politique de Rousseau. Ses détracteurs l'accusent souvent d'une nostalgie passive et dangereuse en face des périls incertains de la pensée critique, de l'action morale et de la négociation politique. Ils prétendent que Rousseau incite le lecteur à ressentir de la nostalgie envers les notions de communauté homogène et de transparence avec la nature, choses qui ne sont possibles que dans l'imaginaire – un imaginaire qui ne peut se concrétiser que par la violence fanatique et l'élimination des différences ainsi que de la libre expression. Puisant dans les œuvres *Émile*, *Les Confessions* et *Les Rêveries*, la présente thèse avance l'idée que Rousseau altère la notion commune – autant celle de son époque que de la nôtre – de nostalgie qui se veut passive et réactive. Je soutiens qu'il élabore sa phénoménologie de la mémoire nostalgique à partir de la philosophie de son (jadis) ami intime, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac. Pour Rousseau, comme pour Condillac, nous nous souvenons des résultats de notre propre activité et en tirons plaisir: sensations vécues et idées que nous avons comparées et évaluées. Nos comparaisons et nos évaluations (ou sentiments) sont tributaires du plaisir, des exemples et du langage des autres. Le souvenir peut ainsi se fonder sur le plaisir et nous rappeler à la mémoire des activités en communauté et dans le monde physique. La nostalgie se veut une invitation à évaluer nos jugements de valeurs et nos sentiments du passé et à les voir sous un jour nouveau. Cette philosophie condillacienne du souvenir individuel est à la base des discours et idéaux politiques de Rousseau. Le discours que tient Rousseau dans son œuvre politique, tout comme il le fait dans ses ouvrages autobiographiques et littéraires de la seconde moitié de sa vie, tente de nous ramener vers notre potentiel – perdu – de jugement moral et politique, et notre dépendance envers autrui. Ses textes politiques décrivent des idéaux de communautés politiques qui, à l'instar de ses idéaux de communautés intimes, sont fondés sur le fait que nous nous identifions aux activités différentes d'autres personnes, mais qui sont en accord avec les nôtres, tant à notre époque qu'à travers les âges. Dans ses œuvres de la seconde moitié de sa vie, la nostalgie de Rousseau nous ouvre sur notre potentiel de pensée, de vertu et de société. Les citoyens de son imaginaire, les personnages au travers desquels il se représente lui-même, et ses personnages littéraires pensent et agissent en fonction de leur nostalgie plutôt que malgré elle.

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Introduction: From Political Nostalgia to Individual Memory

Rousseau presents his reader with a puzzle. His works are indisputably nostalgic. He continually evokes longing for past greatness, or a lost connection between people and with nature. His literary characters, theoretical personages, and fictional representations of himself often echo this nostalgia in their arguments and passions. On the other hand, he criticizes political and literary forms of representation and identification that alienate us from our capacity for judgement, moral virtue, and political action. Nostalgia clearly risks this type of escapism and false consciousness. We cannot engage authentically in virtue and politics of the present if we live in dreams of the past. In *Émile*, Rousseau thus ridicules the bourgeoisie's condescending admiration of rural life; in the second *Discours*, he rejects the desire of would-be Rousseauians to return to the state of nature; in *Julie*, the titular character condemns the longing of St. Preux, her former lover, to return to the past in fantasy. Rousseau at once invites and rejects nostalgic longings. And he seems both to invoke and repudiate the forms of alienating identification on which this nostalgia depends.

In this dissertation, I argue that Rousseau rejects the idea – current in his own period as in our own – of nostalgia as a form of passive retreat from critical thought and from moral and political action. Drawing from the sensualist philosophy of his (onetime) close friend and colleague, Étienne Bonnot, Abbé de Condillac, Rousseau recasts nostalgia as a form of active thinking. We follow our pleasure to compare and re-evaluate past sentiments, fantasies, and ideas in order to distill moral and existential truth. This nostalgic recollection may reorient us towards the pleasures of virtue and justice. And our pleasure may motivate moral and political

action and critique. For Rousseau, nostalgic identification is empowering and critical when it is the first moment in a series of comparisons. He challenges his readers to be tenaciously nostalgic and morally and politically active.

Nostalgia for *Patrie*

In his *Dictionnaire de musique,* Rousseau comments on the propensity of Swiss soldiers stationed in France and Belgium to fall into uncontrollable melancholia after hearing the sound of the *ranz-des-vaches*, a Swiss cow-herding song.

> These effects, which do not take place for foreigners, come solely from habit, memories, and a thousand circumstances, which, recounted by this Tune to those who hear it, and recalling for them their country, their old pleasures, their youth, and all their ways of living, excite in them a bitter pain for having lost all that. The *Music*, then, does not precisely act as *Music*, but as a memorative sign.[1]

For Rousseau, the "rustic cantilena" affects the soldiers because it is a sign of past pleasure, rather than because of its physical effect as a sound. The music points the soldier's imagination back to his youth and to passionate experiences of his homeland. As a *re*presentation, however, it cannot transport the soldier to home. Indeed, in this case, its effect is debilitating: hearing familiar music in a strange land dramatizes the gap between the associated images and their faraway referents. Home is present and absent. It retreats, even as it appears. In short, the soldiers are *nostalgic*, a medical diagnostic term that predates Rousseau by about a century, and became increasingly common among practicing doctors and laity of his day.[2]

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[1] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 5 (Paris: Pléiade, 1995), 924; Rousseau's italics. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from French primary and secondary sources are my own.

[2] The *Dictionnaire du Diagnostic* (1771) defines *nostalgie* as "an immoderate desire to see again the places in which we were born, and a lively chagrin for not being able to return there." M. Hélian, *Dictionnaire du diagnostic, ou l'art de connoître les maladies, et de les distinguer exactement les unes des autres*, 4th ed., (Paris: Chez Vicent, 1771),

Scholars interested in the connection between Rousseau's political and musical theories point to this passage as an indicator of the cultural and emotional underpinnings of the nation's general will.[3] The music speaks to the customs, languages, reflections, and myriad of circumstances which bind a people together, and "do not take place for foreigners." In Rousseau's text, however, the soldiers experience this passionate national unity at one step removed: they yearn for a *polis* that has been lost. And they are lost in its memory, representation, and accompanying fever. His example thus invokes another, and this time a negative Rousseauian image: the spectator at a theatre, who feels every passion of the imagined spectacle and yearns to be a part of it, but does not act virtuously in real life.[4] Indeed, the nostalgic soldiers and travelers to which Rousseau refers often surrendered their important moral and political powers of judgement and will. In his history of nostalgia, Jean Starobinski notes that melancholic Swiss mercenaries sometimes would recover their moral agency in one of two choices: suicide or desertion – both of which were greatly feared by their mercenary captains. More soldiers were simply incapacitated by grief.[5] In his implicit reference to nostalgia as a

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s.v. "nostalgie." The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1835) records the subsequent dissemination of the term among a wider French population: "Sickness caused by a violent desire to return to one's homeland. Popularly, we say *La maladie du pays, le mal du pays*." *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, (1835)), s.v. "nostalgie," accessed 7 August, 2016, http://www.artfl-project.uchicago.edu/content/dictionnaires-dautrefois.

[3] See, C.N. Dugan and Tracy B. Strong, "Music, Politics, Theatre, and Representation in Rousseau," in *Cambridge Companion to Rousseau*, ed. Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 353; John T. Scott, "Rousseau and the Melodious Language of Freedom," *Journal of Politics* 59 (August 1997): 803.

[4] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi des hommes*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 3 (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 115; *Lettre à d'Alembert*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 5 (Paris: Pléiade, 1995), 23-24; Dugan and Strong, "Music, Politics, Theatre, and Representation in Rousseau," 337-39.

[5] The history of nostalgia confirms this connection between moral and political retreat and nostalgic longing. Sufferers from this "illness" – nostalgia – often were those who had been forced by economic circumstance or direct order to leave their country, a condition common among Swiss mercenaries. Those travelers and foreign workers who had chosen more actively to leave their homes, tended not to become nostalgic. Jean Starobinski, "The Idea of Nostalgia" *Diogenes* 14 (1966): 86. Nostalgia thus is a reaction to dependence and dislocation. It acts either as a further pacifying or newly activating passion. It either removes people from direct engagement with their immediate world, or drives them to drastic action and escape.

medical diagnosis, Rousseau seems to offer an image of dislocation and passivity, in addition to one of community and activity.

Conceivably, Rousseau distinguishes between real memories and false imaginings, especially those dreamed by an artist and consumed by a passive audience. He thus would support the common treatment for nostalgia at the time – to return home to a *real* and lost community. But Rousseau frames his descriptions even of ideal home and happiness according to a complex temporality and sense of longing. First, he suggests that nostalgia *for* the lost ideal is salutary, and must not be lost. "Although this Tune today remains the same," he continues his description of the *ranz-des-vaches*, "it no longer produces the same effects on the Swiss, because, having lost the taste for their first simplicity, they no longer regret it when it is recalled to them."[6] Rousseau laments the loss of nostalgic memory of homeland, in addition to the loss the homeland itself. In *Émile*, similarly, Rousseau's character, the Savoyard Vicar, laments the modern forgetting of conscience, the nostalgic memory of the lost pleasures of virtue.[7] Rousseau invites nostalgia for nostalgia. While not ideal, nostalgia is a passion to retain.

Second, he places the reality of past happiness or justice in constant doubt. "If they once existed [*si elles furent*]," he writes of the charming heroines of *Julie*, in its second preface, "they no longer do."[8] Rousseau describes lost states of happiness in both the conditional and in the past tense.[9] They are, and were, at once real and ideal, states to which it is impossible simply to

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[6] Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, 5, 923-24.
[7] *Émile, ou de l'éducation*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 4 (Paris: Pléiade, 1969), 601-02.
[8] *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 29.
[9] In the second *Discours*, for instance, he says he must "set aside all the facts" and appeal to "hypothetical and conditional reasoning" in order to depict the state of nature; this state is forever out of our reach. In *Rêveries*, he admits that, in *Confessions*, he made "transpositions of facts" to recall and portray his lost childhood happiness as "it must have been." *Discours sur l'origine*, 3; *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Pléiade, 1959), 1035. While different in important ways, each temporality places the reader in a position of longing for what could have been, but is no longer possible.

return, even if they had remained the same. Finally, structures of dislocation, representation, and longing also pervade the nonetheless ideal lives of those people living in these utopias. At certain moments, for instance, he suggests that ideal citizens under his imagined social contract, and those of idealized Geneva, are themselves nostalgic for the greatness of past generations. Contrary to the scholarly view that he advocates for a politics and an intimacy of the eternal present,[10] his texts place the ideal as a temporal and nostalgic event. Nostalgia is at once a salutary and disappearing emotion, a constituent part of his ideals, and a symptom of their failed realization. While Rousseau is a critic of living vicariously in identifications, fantasy, or memory, he encourages both the fallen reader and the ideal citizen to mourn for lost political, moral, and natural possibilities.

In light of Rousseau's philosophy of memory, however, the tension between Rousseau's demand for political and moral authenticity and his validation of nostalgia is released, because individual nostalgic memory is a means to comparative thought, and, thus, to will-formation. For Rousseau, positive manifestations of the will follow judgements of our good. The danger lies in misjudging the relation between our ideas, and greatly misconstruing our place in natural, moral, and political orders. The sentiment of heightened *amour propre* is one such failure of moral knowledge. It is animated by ideas that place the self falsely at the center of all orders, and cause the self to perceive as attacks the activity of other people. In this dissertation, I claim that Rousseauian nostalgic memory is a means to re-evaluate and compare past ideas and fantasies. Nostalgic memory is both a salutary and ideal passion, therefore, because it may – by drawing people to re-evaluate the ideas on which their sentiments depend – orient them towards

[10] See, for instance, Charles Taylor's treatment of Rousseau and modern social imaginaries in Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2007), 207-11.

non-alienating sentiments of the moral and political order. And the lost state of goodness or happiness is the first moment in a series of comparisons, rather than merely an end goal. It is an invitation to thought. Indeed, Rousseau longs most strongly for communities in which competing perspectives on a founding myth or sentiment may draw the members to form and know a larger moral or political order.

The History of Interpretation

The misunderstanding that Rousseau is nostalgic for collective unanimity and individual retreat, and that this nostalgia is a passive reaction, has a long history. Scholars note that several of Rousseau's contemporaries and critics accuse him personally of "melancholia,"[11] an organic illness that physicians and laypeople often linked to nostalgia (as well as to religious fanaticism).[12] For instance, Guillaume de Malesherbes, the censor, writes that Rousseau must suffer from "an extreme sensibility, a great fount of melancholy and much disposition to see objects from a negative view."[13] For these contemporaries this "melancholic view" often was manifest in his political works and their potential effects. Voltaire, for instance, sardonically remarked – in response to Rousseau's gift of a copy of the second *Discours*, a gift of what Rousseau called his "sad reveries"[14] – that "never has so much intelligence been used to make us

[11] See, Rudy Le Menthéour, "Melancholy Vaporized: Self-narration and Counter-diagnosis in Rousseau's Work," in *Medicine and Narration in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Sophie Vasset, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, vol. 4 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2013); *La Manufacture de maladies: La dissidence hygiénique de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2011); Ernst Cassirer, *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, trans. Peter Gay, 3rd ed. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1975), 90-91.

[12] For instance, the article "Mélancholie (*Medecine*)" in l'*Encyclopédie* calls melancholia "the nostalgia or malady of the country." *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, (University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 Edition), (1765)), accessed June 12, 2015, http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/.

[13] Malesherbes to Rousseau, 25 December 1761, in *Correspondance complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. R. A. Leigh (Geneva: Institut et musée Voltaire, 1965).

[14] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Réponse [à Voltaire]*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 3 (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 226.

stupid….One acquires the desire to walk on all fours when one reads [Rousseau's] work."[15] While Voltaire describes Rousseau's reader in animalistic terms here, later he names Rousseau himself as an animal, the "poor bastard of Diogenes"[16] who "descends in a direct line from a coupling between the dog of Diogenes with one of the snakes of discord."[17] For Voltaire, "only Rousseau is crazy enough to say that all men are equal," and to dream of marriages, based on feeling, between people of disparate classes.[18] Rousseau is a social outcast who dreams of an impossible state of natural equality that cannot be realized in actual, present society.[19]

Subsequent scholarship and philosophy is similarly critical of his melancholic longing, but names it as "nostalgia." We can divide this scholarship, in part, based on what "lost referent" is its focus – the pure state of nature, inner nature, peasant life, the Greek *polis*, or harmony with the natural world – and how it views Rousseau's assessment of this loss. In the early 19th-century, Benjamin Constant accuses Rousseau of a dangerous nostalgia for Spartan life, one that, if applied in modern conditions, would only result in tyranny.[20] In the 20th-century, Irving Babbitt and Starobinski argue that Rousseau is a melancholic "nostalgic." His ideals of inner purity and lost innocence are impossible to achieve. Instead, nostalgia makes him unhappy and dissuades him from messy moral action. At the same time, it creates a demand that other "corrupted" people answer for the failed realization of these ideals – a demand that Babbitt and Starobinski see answered with the widespread violence of the Terror against suspected traitors to

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[15] Voltaire to Rousseau, 30 August 1755, *Correspondance*.
[16] Voltaire to Damilaville, 19 March 1761 (D9684), in *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire, Correspondance et documents*, 2nd ed., vol. 86-135 (Paris: Oxford Foundation, 1966-87).
[17] Voltaire to Mme de Deffand, 21 November, 1766 (D13684), *Oeuvres complètes*.
[18] Voltaire to duc de Richelieu, 22 June 1762 (D10522), *Oeuvres complètes*.
[19] Michel Schmouchkovitch, "Portrait d'un fanatique? Jean-Jacques en Diogène," in *Rousseau and l'Infâme: Religion, Toleration, and Fanaticism in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Ourida Mostefai and John T. Scott (London: Rodopi, 2009).
[20] Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns," in *Constant: Political Writings*, ed. Biancamaria Fontana (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 (1816)).

ideals and sentiments of the French Revolution.[21] By contrast, Judith Shklar defends Rousseau as a pessimist utopian, rather than a nostalgic. His images of ancient Spartan city life, and lost village life, are models by which to judge modern moral and political life, rather than lost realities or present possibilities.[22] Indeed, Rousseau criticizes nostalgia in the character of St. Preux, who clings to a memory of now impossible romantic love. For all these commentators, Rousseauian nostalgia (whether that of Rousseau, his readers, or his characters) marks an untenable longing for a lost unity, transparency, presence, or communion between individuals and with nature. It invites either passive retreat from the complexity of political, moral, and economic life, or realization of an impossible fantasy at the price of violent suppression of real or suspected dissent. It is at once depoliticizing and politically dangerous.

Following Rousseau's encouragement to connect his person closely with his ideas, these scholars inevitably make a strong analogy between Rousseau's nostalgic depictions of his intimate happiness and his political ideals. As John Scott puts it, for instance, citing Starobinski, "immediate and univocal communication serves Rousseau as a model for politics and human relations more generally."[23] In this dissertation, I accept this analogy. Indeed, I claim that we cannot understand Rousseau's political ideals and rhetoric without understanding his moral psychology. But I argue that scholars often apply it too quickly, and distort his accounts of intimate and political happiness, and the nostalgia that pervades his account of both intimate and political objects. For Rousseau is himself a theorist of passions and sentiments. And he develops a connected, (largely) sensualist account of individual memory and reason that casts

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[21] Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), 135-37, "Romantic Melancholy"; Jean Starobinski, "La mise en accusation de la societé," in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: quatre études de Jean Starobinski, Jean-Louis Lecercle, Henri Coulet, Marc Eigeldinger* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1978).
[22] See Judith N. Shklar, *Men and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 6-8, 141.
[23] Scott, "Melodious Language," 822.

memory as nostalgic. Unless we take him to be completely blind to the passion that he conceptually and rhetorically deploys, and the theory of nostalgic memory that he develops and assumes, an understanding of Rousseau's politics and political nostalgia must begin with an account of nostalgia at the individual level.

Methodology

My goal in this dissertation is thus to lay a different foundation for understanding the nostalgia that pervades Rousseau's political works by reconstructing his account of individual nostalgia. I focus on the three later texts – *Émile*, *Confessions*, and *Reverie* – in which Rousseau provides his most detailed treatments of memory and nostalgia. With the exception of the second chapter, which treats the first two books of *Émile*, I work backwards through his *oeuvre*: from the late autobiographical works, *Confessions* and *Rêveries*, through the final books of *Émile*, and finally to the "nostalgic" citizen of *Contrat social* and *Lettre à d'Alembert*, and the nostalgic reader of the second *Discours*. In these last three explicitly political works, I will reframe their treatment of the individual, political actor in the context of the preceding phenomenology of individual nostalgia.

My reconstruction of political nostalgia from individual nostalgia broadly follows Rousseau's own methodology (one shared with Locke and Condillac). In this approach, analogy is a productive source of inductive knowledge only if one derives carefully and precisely one term of the analogy from the other. More specifically, I will use reconstructive and contextualist methods. Like many neo-Kantian and Straussian scholars, I take seriously Rousseau's claim that

his works are closely connected, and form a common treatment of "man's original goodness."[24] Rousseau writes, in *Confessions*, for instance, that "all that is daring in *Contrat social* had previously appeared in *Discours sur l'inégalité*; all that is daring in *Émile* had previously appeared in *Julie*."[25] I follow Melzer, Masters and Kelly in applying Rousseau's claim to his later, autobiographical works. I will thus draw from all three texts to reconstruct what I take to be Rousseau's largely sensualist philosophy of memory. I will also use letters and texts from Rousseau's immediate intellectual and literary context to effect this reconstruction. Indeed, I will argue that Rousseau follows Condillac closely in all three texts, and frames his treatment of nostalgia and memory in Condillacian and Lockean terms.

This reconstructive approach risks obscuring important differences of genre between Rousseau's philosophical, literary, and autobiographical texts.[26] But Rousseau invites us to take this risk, because he constantly mixes his genres: *Émile* is an educational treatise in which the character of "Jean-Jacques" briefly appears; *Confessions* is an autobiography with, partly, a philosophical purpose; and *Julie* is a novel that pretends to be a collection of real letters between lovers who discuss, among other things, pedagogy and philosophy. With qualifications, Rousseau also claims that the views or actions of certain characters are presently, or were once, his own. I thus highlight the philosophical commonalities and connections between Rousseau's texts. I also emphasize their literary distinction between author and fictional character, because

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[24] See, in particular, Cassirer, *Question of Rousseau*; Arthur M. Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man: On the System of Rousseau's Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Christopher Kelly, *Rousseau's Exemplary Life: The "Confessions" as Political Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); Roger Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

[25] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Pléiade, 1959), 407.

[26] Indeed, Rousseau often chose his genre carefully to reflect his intended audience and rhetorical goals. For instance, Rousseau's defends his use of the novel form as a way to engage country readers. See, *Julie*, 2, 18-20; Christopher Kelly, "Taking Readers as They Are: Rousseau's Turn from Discourses to Novels," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33, no. 1 (1999); William Mead, "*La Nouvelle Heloïse* and the Public of 1761," *Yale French Studies*, no. 28 (1961).

this distinction helps express Rousseauian nostalgia. Rousseau characterizes "Jean-Jacques," the "Savoyard Vicar," and "St. Preux" as different versions of his past and present selves. These characterizations dramatize the experience of inner plurality that defines his philosophical account of nostalgic memory. In this thesis, I follow closely the 17th- and 18th-century definitions of nostalgia. I define nostalgia as a feeling of bittersweet longing that both transports us to past pleasure, and highlights the gap between the past and present. I also argue that, in later Rousseau, this bittersweet feeling of nostalgia often manifests as a feeling of overlap or juxtaposition between perspectives of present and past self-iterations.

To capture this element of inner plurality, I organize the majority of the chapters by life-stage. In Chapter One, I trace the reoccurring and unstable opposition between nostalgia and critical thought and action that runs through the dominant strains of modern Rousseau scholarship. In Chapter Two**,** I develop Rousseau's sensualist account of memory-formation, and the nostalgia implicit in the child's exploration and memory of the natural world. In Chapter Three, I reconstruct from Rousseau's treatment of his own memory in *Confessions* the effect of the imagination – manifest for most people in adolescence – that associates and charms memories through time. Chapters Four and Five address the nostalgia of the old man in *Confessions* and *Rêveries*. In Chapter Four, I argue that, for Rousseau, we deploy a form of nostalgic recollection that Rousseau calls "analysis" to retrace the "chains" between our past ideas, and to compare and re-evaluate them. In Chapter Five, I argue that Rousseau implicitly deploys this "nostalgic analysis" in his comparison of his experiences of intimate happiness. In Chapter Six, I take up the perspective of the adult moral subject. I claim that Rousseau presents "modern" heroes in Émile and St. Preux who feel their freedom through their nostalgia, and act from this basis. My purpose in ordering these "life stages" out of a natural order, and ending

with adulthood rather than old age, is twofold: (1) to emphasize the overlap between the perspectives of the child and the old man that appears in *Émile* and in Rousseau's autobiographies; and (2) to treat childhood, adolescent, and aging nostalgia as a resources for understanding the more implicit nostalgia of the adult.

I conclude with Rousseau's political ideals and political rhetoric. I argue that Rousseau challenges us to perceive a critical politics of nostalgia that revisits and re-examines the fruits of past activity to judge and act anew, in the present.

Chapter One

Thinking Nostalgia in Rousseau: Secondary Literature

Modern Rousseau scholarship reads nostalgia in Rousseau in two ways. Nostalgia either structures Rousseau's argument as a whole, or is a minor vice that Rousseau recognizes in his character and in his work, and largely transcends. For both approaches, nostalgia is a form of thinking, rather than simply an emotion. For both scholarly approaches, nostalgia also is a pejorative term. "Nostalgic thinking" compares unfavorably with more critical and productive forms of knowledge, such as reason, (moral) intuition, or deconstruction. It connotes solipsistic, repetitious, and reactive thought, as well as moral and political passivity. It must be said that these accounts treat Rousseauian nostalgia only tangentially, where it touches their central interpretations of his work. But these interpretations – all of them major schools of Rousseau scholarship – each develop what are often subtle and comprehensive positions on the longing that pervades Rousseau's works. I will divide these competing readings of nostalgia in Roussseau into three broad approaches: psychological, reconstructive, and structural.

Much of the present thinking on nostalgia in Rousseau is prefigured in Ernst Cassirer's neo-Kantian readings of Rousseau in the 1930s. In the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries, scholars often viewed Rousseau through the lens of the Romantic movement that he partly inspired, as a champion of feeling against reason. Rousseau's insistence on the close connection between his life and his philosophy also encouraged critics to dismiss his arguments as expressions of his personal and idiosyncratic emotions. As Babbitt writes, in 1919, for instance, "[Rousseau's]

programme amounts in practice to the indulgence of infinite indeterminate desire."[27] In this reduction of Rousseau's thought to an expression of feeling or temperament, scholars repeat the criticisms of Rousseau's work by many of his contemporaries and first interpreters.[28] Cassirer argues that interpretations of Rousseau – favorably, as a proto-Romantic; or negatively, as a man whose work remains trapped in his own sentimentality – are both misplaced. As *Émile*, especially, makes clear, Rousseau argues for the development and use of reason, even as he elucidates its subtle relation to the passions. And even his late, autobiographical texts, *Confessions* and *Dialogues*, can be read as extensions of his earlier and more overtly philosophical arguments.

Cassirer may only elucidate and defend the rational structure of Rousseau's work, however, by externalizing the negative qualities of Rousseau's supposed sentimentality – its passivity, its idiosyncrasy, and its excess – to another category of experience, which Cassirer refers to as "original" feeling, and the yearning for this feeling (nostalgia). He defends the coherence of Rousseau's works through two strategies. First, he interprets Rousseau's lost nature as a prescriptive ideal for present ethico-political life. For Cassirer, following Kant's reading of Rousseau, the "lost" voice of conscience is a nascent expression of our inner autonomy.[29] Similarly, his yearning for the "state of nature" is rhetoric to highlight the contingency of the *present* social and economic world. Taken together, these claims imply that the present conceptual, social, and political world may be remade through rational human agency. In this project, the lost state of nature – which positions a state of autonomy and

[27] Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, 79.
[28] See, Cassirer, *Question of Rousseau*, 90-91; Le Menthéour, "Melancholy Vaporized: Self-narration and Counter-diagnosis in Rousseau's Work."
[29] Cassirer, *Question of Rousseau*, 50.

equality – is a regulative ideal for humanity's natural political ends.[30] If Rousseau yearns for a lost nature, he only does so to throw into relief the *telos* of moral-political life.

Second, Cassirer exorcises from the rational Rousseauian project Rousseau's (merely) personal, quasi-religious intuitions. Cassirer recognizes the importance of feeling to Rousseauian reason. At the same time, he argues that Rousseau distinguishes between two different tendencies of feeling: original and moral. *Original* feeling is a passive understanding of nature's structure, and a gratification for its abundance. Only in "the repose in the infinite variety of impressions which nature unceasingly bestows upon us can we know and enjoy it." By contrast, *moral* feeling is the sentiment of the principles of ethical conduct. It derives from a deeper rational understanding of the order of nature, and orients the self toward just political goals. In Cassirer's view, the "original" feeling of nature "blot[s] out our own existence, so that we may live solely in and with nature." By contrast, in pursuing our moral feeling "we are concerned with elevating and intensifying this existence of ours" through political community.[31] The emotional intuition is active and self-affirming, rather than passive and self-negating.

While he does not articulate it explicitly in these terms, Cassirer uses the distinction between good (moral) and bad (original) forms of feeling to divide Rousseau's texts. The moral and political works of Rousseau, such as *Contrat social* and *Julie*, and up to *Dialogues*, are important philosophical works. They promote and explicate reason and moral feeling. By contrast, Cassirer rejects as merely idiosyncratic Rousseau's writings prior to the *First Discourse,* and his last work, the autobiographical *Rêveries*. For Cassirer, before Rousseau

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[30] Ibid., 82; *Rousseau, Kant, Goethe: Two Essays*, trans. James Gutmann, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 10. For a recent articulation of the neo-Kantian reading of Rousseau's longing, see Simon Swift, *Romanticism, Literature and Philosophy: Expressive Rationality in Rousseau, Kant, Wollstonecraft and Contemporary Theory* (London: Continuum, 2006).
[31] Cassirer, *Question of Rousseau*, 106-08.

moved to Paris at the age of thirty, and discovered political reality, "the power of feeling and imagination had not yet found a fixed and harsh boundary in the reality of things." He lived his most vivid youthful moments in dreams that mimic the passive knowledge of original feeling. In *Rêveries*, Rousseau thinks and lives in solitude, and retreats from ethico-political life, and from rational thinking, to the "original feeling" of passive, self-annihilating devotion.[32] His dreaming and his botany express his singularity, and expose him to the truth and goodness of nature. But they do so at the expense of active, self-affirming, and productive thought.

The "original" exposure to nature is not itself nostalgic. Cassirer implies that Rousseau experiences this form of intuitive knowledge directly during his early and late life. But it is also the object of his longing. Throughout his life, Rousseau returns repeatedly to his early memories of Geneva – in *Confessions* and elsewhere – because of the "feeling that there, and there alone, he had still possessed life as a true entity, as an unbroken whole." Despite Rousseau's anti-nostalgic political and moral arguments, his yearning for this lost wholeness "haunted [him] till his old age and never lost its power." Cassirer does not comment on how this yearning "haunted" his mature work. But Rousseau gives way to passive knowledge precisely insofar as he follows and gives into his nostalgic longing. Nostalgia echoes, in some sense, the passivity of its object. Nostalgia is a marker between different feeling-knowledge systems, rather than a feeling. It is an orientation toward the "other" of rationally grounded thought and sentiment.[33]

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[32] Ibid., 40-41.

[33] In his later essay on Rousseau and Kant, Cassirer distills even further the rational, non-nostalgic element of Rousseau's thought to its purely Kantian form. Following Kant more closely, Cassirer re-evaluates Rousseau's turn to solitude as an important manifestation of ethical resolve. But he rejects as nostalgic Rousseau's demand to reconcile virtue and happiness. Where Rousseau "*demands*, as the price of serving [virtue], the fulfillment of his *yearning* for happiness," Kant sees only justice and right as the rational basis of morality and politics. For Cassirer, Kant thus dissolves completely "the chimera of the golden age and the idyll of a pastoral Arcady" in Rousseau. The more systematic Kant completes Rousseau's ideas by exorcizing completely their nostalgic elements. *Two Essays*, 42, 40, 59; my italics.

Cassirer sets the stage for reading nostalgia as a form of thinking. But his schema is vague about two related points. First, Cassirer is unclear about in what sense Rousseau's early experiences of wholeness and devotion "haunt" his more rational texts and thinking. Second, the relationship between Rousseauian longing and the object of that longing – the "original" feeling – is undeveloped. In particular, the act of nostalgic fantasy seems to connote a minimal form of activity and self-affirmation that runs counter to the passivity of its object.

Modern Rousseau scholarship largely accepts Cassirer's distinction between passive-nostalgic and active-critical thought, but transforms Cassirer's static distinction between "tendencies of feeling," and his static distinction between texts, into a dynamic play between rival currents of thought and feeling that range across Rousseau's works. The three rival approaches to nostalgia (psychological, reconstructive, and structural) that I mentioned above disagree on three substantive points: (1) the precise object of longing; (2) the nature of nostalgic memory; and (3) the relative freedom of Rousseauian nostalgia. I will examine in Chapter Five the primary object of Rousseau's nostalgia. In this section of Chapter One, I want to outline the competing interpretations of nostalgia as a form of thinking, and of the relative freedom involved in such thinking.

Psychological Approach

In the "psychological" approach, the debilitating effect of Rousseau's personal nostalgia pervades elements of his ostensibly rational thinking. Rousseau's desire for wholeness originates in his personal neuroses, his own fear, guilt, and paranoia.[34] Or this desire expresses

[34] Jean Starobinski, "Rousseau's Happy Days," *New Literary History* 11, no. 1 (1979); *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), chapters 8-10.

his singular reaction to archetypical modern yearnings for innocence, separation and oneness.[35] And Rousseau chooses – however unconsciously – to develop and justify theoretically his primordial emotions and obsessions. If Cassirer looks to Kant to delimit Rousseau's reason from his fantasy, "psychological" readers look to psychoanalysis and psychology to trace the circuitous, conceptual routes by which Rousseau pursues his deeper desires.

For Starobinski, for instance, Rousseau's moral arguments in *Dialogues* distill the nostalgia for wholeness that takes more complex forms in his earlier works. For the aging Rousseau of *Dialogues,* reflection becomes "the root of all evil," rather than the ambivalent human power that he explicated in *Émile*.[36] And he attempts to justify his own goodness and innocence overtly by demonstrating the immediacy of his own moral being.[37] In Starobinski's reading, Rousseau's position is paradoxical. He must use reflection in different forms to justify and demonstrate unreflective sensuality. But the implicitly self-defeating character of Rousseau's approach shows the dominance of his nostalgia. Rather than recognizing and addressing this performative contradiction, Rousseau chooses to ignore it. Instead, he retreats further into fantasy. In *Rêveries*, he further reconceives of goodness as the pure sensual experience of nature. Here, Starobinski reads Rousseau's nostalgia as morally passive. In this reading, Rousseau increasingly fantasizes about immediate, passive knowledge. And he uses this fantasy to mask his choice to avoid the existential risks of negotiating with actual people and addressing conceptual obstacles.

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[35] Margaret Ogrodnick, *Instinct and Intimacy: Political Philosophy and Autobiography in Rousseau* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).
[36] Starobinski, *Transparency and Obstruction*, 207.
[37] Ibid., 209.

If nostalgia increasingly drives Rousseau's thinking, this thinking also exacerbates and re-channels his longing and desire. Rousseau cannot achieve the passive sensuality and wholeness that he desires, because the activity of his own nostalgic thought undermines the pure passivity of the longed-for experience. Rousseau cannot even surrender to pure sensuality – what Cassirer calls devotion – because he must use his imagination to make sure that he experiences the bountiful and generous nature that he demands.[38] Consciously or unconsciously, Rousseau chooses strategies that at once aggravate and frustrate his desire for direct intuition and wholeness. As he retreats to increasingly simple conceptual systems, his thought displaces the longing that it was intended to assuage. Ultimately, Rousseau's nostalgic feeling leads his thinking. But that feeling is fully mediated by his conceptual strategies.

Reconstructive Approach

But if Rousseau's desire for "original-" or "nature-" feeling misdirects his reason, his calm, theoretical justifications of solitary retreat and apolitical, domestic life, which appear throughout his work, are difficult to explain. What I will here call "reconstructive" readings of Rousseau *reconstruct* the logic of Rousseau's diverse works and opposing existential choices to show a coherent whole. Where Cassirer looks to Kantian ethics to elucidate the rational core of Rousseau's thinking, reconstructionist interpreters find more comprehensive approaches to reason that allow them to unify Rousseau's *oeuvre*. In different ways, interpreters connect Rousseau's solitary retreat into writing and reverie in *Confessions* and *Rêveries*, to his defenses of individual or of domestic life, in *Émile*, to his celebration of the individual, natural freedom of the "savage," in the second *Discours*. They argue that, for Rousseau, solitary or domestic retreat

[38] Ibid.

addresses rationally the same problems of self-alienation, dependence, and happiness for which the social contract is one possible solution. And they point out that Rousseau proposed and developed two ideals – individual and political – throughout his career.

"Reconstructive" readings of Rousseau's nostalgia take two forms. In the pessimistic version, the solitary life of a dreamer, or of a writer, is a rational, if inadequate, response to modern alienation. It is a plausible alternative to the domestic ideal that Rousseau's imagines in *Julie* and *Émile*, and the political ideal of the social contract and the Spartan polis.[39] Rousseau's analysis makes clear that both domestic and political utopias are possible. But this same analysis also suggests to him that they are extremely unlikely for most people. Many of the same passions that invite people to community are those that drive them to feel and act from *amour propre* and alienation. In Shklar's reading, for instance, "[t]he Golden Age was not so ridden with difficulties, but men are too volatile to bear its peace."[40] The only rational response is resignation.[41]

In pessimistic reconstructions, Rousseau is a rational pessimist, and not a nostalgic (Skhlar, Cladis, Warner). Or, he is a measured nostalgic, who works at the almost impossible task of guiding himself, and a few other people, back to an original simplicity (Burgelin).[42] For Shklar, as for Cassirer, Rousseau's "lost" states are regulative ideals. In this reading, however, these ideals exist for the purpose of providing criteria for political criticism and moral judgement

[39] Shklar, *Men and Citizens*; Pierre Burgelin, *La philosophie de l'existence de J.-J. Rousseau* (Geneva: Slatkine, (1952) 2011); Mark Sydney Cladis, *Public Vision, Private Lives: Rousseau, Religion, and 21st-Century Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); John M. Warner, *Rousseau and the Problem of Human Relations* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015).
[40] Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, 11-12.
[41] As Shklar puts it, "He made *passivity* his central principle, and a necessary one. For nothing less was compatible with the total condemnation of his age" ibid., 7; my italics.
[42] Burgelin, *Philosophie de l'existence*, 114-20.

rather than for political progress. At most, these ideals provide existential guidance to a few exceptional people. Solitary retreat and inner strength are important, if inadequate, solutions to intractable social ills.

In positive reconstructions, by contrast, Rousseau's retreat into solitary meditation realizes a robust version of the good life. Along with the domestic self-sufficiency of an Émile, this ideal of solitary independence rivals the justice and fellow-feeling promised by his political ideals.[43] In these readings, the historical reference point is the individual in the state of nature, rather than the Spartan soldier. Directly rejecting Cassirer's interpretation, for example, Leo Strauss argues that "[t]he ultimate justification of civil society [in Rousseau] is…the fact that it allows a certain type of individual to enjoy the supreme felicity by withdrawing from civil society, i.e. by living at its fringes."[44] While Rousseau cannot return to this natural existence, he redirects the refined sensibilities of modern life to newly individual and meditative ends. Dreaming in the woods, he enjoys an aesthetic happiness and self-sufficiency that is impossible for most people. While he cannot achieve virtue, he finds new worth articulating the "bad conscience" of his society. He prefigures the sensitive and critical solitary artist.

Both pessimistic and positive versions of the reconstructive reading reconfigure Rousseau's diverse works as a rational and coherent whole. Even *Rêveries* shows us a rational response to Rousseau's analysis of alienating modernity. The solitary dreamer approaches and affirms a feeling, rather than knowledge, of existence. Strauss writes, for instance, that

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[43] Laurence Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); Melzer, *Natural Goodness*; Jason Neidleman, "Rousseau and the Desire for Communion," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 47, no. 1 (2013); Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Allan Bloom, introduction and notes to *Emile, or On Education*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979); Kelly, *Exemplary Life*.
[44] Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 292-93.

"[s]olitary contemplation, as [Rousseau] understands it, is altogether different from…thinking or observation. It consists of, or it leads up to, 'the feeling of existence,' the pleasant feeling of one's own existence." But reverie now expresses elements of what Cassirer called morally- or rationally-inspired intuition: Rousseau "finds consolation only in himself by being fully himself and by belonging fully to himself." Solitary contemplation mimics the self-affirmation of more robust reasoning. It is not "hostile" to thinking and observation, but marks a complementary form of *amour de soi*.[45] Moreover, this solitary contemplation is a rational activity, because it solves the same problems of alienation and dependence also solved by the social contract. As in the process of moral intuition, thinking leads feeling.

Reconstructive interpreters show more comprehensively a unified rational argument and activity in Rousseau's corpus than does Cassirer. Consequently, they minimize the idiosyncrasy and passivity of Rousseau's nostalgia. In pessimistic versions of the reconstructive approach, Rousseau is occasionally "the victim of nostalgia" (Cladis, Shklar). Or, he is nostalgic as a product of his reason (Burgelin). Positive reconstructions either deny or ignore Rousseau's longing. To the extent that the positive readings address the palpable nostalgia that runs through Rousseau's works, they externalize the feeling from Rousseau to the reactions of the reader. As Rousseau's text makes clear, *he* can find a form of happiness because of an unlikely combination of circumstances: (a) his enforced exile, which shields him from the trials of *amour propre*; and (b) his uniquely powerful faculty of imagination, which connects him to intimate companions and to the structure of nature. But most people lack these "advantages." In reading Rousseau, they can only yearn for another, mythical life.[46] In so doing, they fall prey to excesses of anxiety

[45] Ibid., 291-92.
[46] For example, Kelly concludes that the "longing for wholeness which Rousseau stimulates so well in his audience is likely to remain unfulfilled for all but the most extreme cases," Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 248.

and *amour propre* that Rousseau himself rejected. In the "psychological" reading, Rousseau's nostalgic thinking reflects his *contingent* choices (whether conscious or unconscious choices). In "positive" reconstructions of Rousseau's works, Rousseauian nostalgia is, more strongly, a *likely* reaction to his work, under the circumstances. It reflects the reader's different faculties and fate from those of Rousseau. Few will be fortunate (or unfortunate) enough to be able to follow his path. If they find Rousseau a convincing model for aesthetic life, they fall easily into insatiable longing.

To my mind, reconstructive readings face two serious challenges. First, some pessimistic reconstructions of Rousseauian longing as solely dependent on rational critique seem inadequate to motivating this emotion. Second, Rousseau's nostalgia permeates even his descriptions of ideal happiness and intuition. Shklar's work provides the most developed instance of the first challenge. For her, Rousseau yearns for political justice and domestic happiness, because he understands that these utopias are possible. But Shklar's Rousseau often maintains the possibility of a better world on purely negative grounds: his "outraged [personal] awareness of the distance between self and the hostile external social world,"[47] and his ability to conceive of "the present political order reversed."[48] And these reversals seem inadequate to generating the conviction of possibility necessary to produce longing. As Rousseau's multiple utopias suggest, we may conceive of multiple "opposites" to the present social and political order (once we see it as contingent), and many of these may be impossible or undesirable. At the same time, Shklar's Rousseau is indifferent to the testimony of current affairs, history, and human development.[49] Unlike classical utopians, he also rejects human nature and society as noumenal realities that

[47] Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, 3.
[48] Ibid., 8.
[49] Ibid., 2, 6.

reason would recognize, and long for, in a utopic vision.[50] Shklar seems unable to explain the grounds for the motivating force of Rousseau's utopias, because she considers his epistemological and metaphysical commitments to be so slight.

Arguably, for Shklar, the imagination mediates between Rousseau's longing and his critique. She writes, for instance, that "[Rousseau] found it so easy to picture [examples of domestic bliss and friendship] in his imagination, and felt such a profound longing for them that he could never doubt psychologically that they were feasible."[51] His imagination shows him the bare possibility of ideal social life. And his ease in picturing this ideal and his longing for it convinces him of its potential reality. Elsewhere, she writes that the Rousseauian utopia "was an imaginative interruption of [the] process [of degeneration] and a painful awareness of it. *That was all*."[52] Taking these statements together, we might say that imagination provides an object to reason. And the understanding of this possible ideal, against the backdrop of actual history, stimulates the passions of longing and pain.

Even if we follow this logic, however, the idiosyncrasy and particularity of nostalgic thinking cannot be externalized. As Shklar admits, Rousseau also distrusts the imagination, "for men can imagine anything at all."[53] She thus sometimes names as (merely) nostalgic the images and dreams on which Rousseau draws to understand and express abstract utopia: "as for the Golden Age, it had never been anything but the expression of nostalgia." And she must explain the affective power of these imagined utopias by their resonance with Rousseau's singular experience. For instance, Rousseau confirmed the possibility of the "golden age" when he saw

[50] Ibid., 9.
[51] Ibid., 6.
[52] Ibid., 9; my italics.
[53] Ibid., 10.

"intimations of it in rural Switzerland." In this case, his own experience and his reading of classic literature, "were at one in moving his imagination." Similarly, he cannot deny the "psychological possibility" of the moral virtue of ancient heroes, because "he found it so easy in his imagination to identify himself…with these types."[54] In both cases, his pleasurable experience of his imagination, rather than the image, confirms the possibility of utopia.

Moreover, Rousseau knows that these dreams are possible partly *because* he longs for them. Indeed, in Shklar's words, the source of Rousseau's longing is the "irretrievable joys" of lost ages, rather than their possible future.[55] This suggests that Rousseau must, at some level, recognize that his utopias speak to something that he or others experience as real and lost. Otherwise the pleasure of loss would never take hold. Shklar thus designates two origins of the utopic imagination in Rousseau: critical reason and affective experience. The question remains as to their precise relation. In particular, what is the affective transposition between merely nostalgic, idiosyncratic longing for dreams and memories, and Rousseau's reconstruction of these dreams as possible but unlikely realities?[56] By severing the personal and phenomenological connection between Rousseau and the objects of his nostalgia, Shklar robs them of their affective weight. In her dominant formulations, nostalgia seems to dissipate even as it is constituted.[57]

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[54] Ibid., 7.
[55] Ibid., 8-9.
[56] In Cladis's interpretation of longing in Rousseau, the relation between Rousseau's "Enlightenment optimism" and his "Augustinian pessimism" is similarly undeveloped. Cladis rightly highlights the longing and inadequacy that permeate Rousseau's descriptions of the solitary life. But he locates the expansive, longed-for pleasure solely in Rousseau's memories of social and political life, which are themselves marked by the "painful inadequacies of his society and friends." To my mind, this reading downplays the joys of Rousseau's encounters with nature and the divine, and the larger play between the ideal and the real, and between the past and present. Cladis, *Public Vision, Private Lifes*, 164-66.
[57] In this respect, Burgelin's reconstruction of Rousseau's nostalgia is more satisfying. Skhlar must rely on the imagination to mediate between Rousseau's optimistic dreams and his rational pessimism, a faculty that Rousseau distrusted. By contrast, Burgelin's phenomenological approach emphasizes Rousseau's encounter with the ideal life in everyday existence and memory. Rousseau's nostalgia thus is believably powerful, because he feels an ongoing

Structural Approach

The second challenge – that loss and longing permeate even Rousseau's ostensibly rational descriptions of ideal life – is developed to its fullest extent by the third dominant approach to Rousseauian nostalgia: the "structural" approach. In these readings, the palpable nostalgia of Rousseau's texts makes explicit the longing for presence (Derrida; de Man), fusion (Nancy; Vance McDonald; Broome), or transparency (Starobinski[58]; Zerrilli) that animates his broader arguments and discourse. In different forms and texts, Rousseau endlessly pursues expressions of full presence or complete unity – full activity or passivity; complete transparency or opacity – that are impossible within the terms of the broader discourses that he also invokes. His constant attempts to reconstitute presence through writing, memory, or gender-division only repeat the same deconstruction or negative dialectic.

In these readings, Rousseau's feeling of nostalgia is a symptom of the (un)thinking of his discourse. Rousseau's nostalgia is a *necessary* correlative to his arguments and language, rather than a likely effect (as in the reconstructive reading) or a contingent choice (as the psychological reading argues). For these interpreters, Rousseau's *oeuvre* is indeed rational, even more so than Cassirer allows. But nostalgia is the essential quality of Rousseau's form of reason.

Once again, two versions exist. In the literary version of the structural reading, Rousseau's longing expresses a structural tension within a particular text or within a limited set

existential connection to the promises of the lost golden age, the state of nature, or his fantasies of an ideal family. These different iterations of lost "natural life" speak to his existential reality, even if their promise is also frustrated.

[58] Starobinski's seminal work lies between the strong psychological and literary structural readings, and he exerts a direct influence on most structural interpretation of Rousseau. While Starobinski critiques both Rousseau's existential failure to engage true community and thought, and the aporias of Rousseau's thought, he ultimately explains Rousseau's autobiographical writing, in particular, with reference to Rousseau's existential choices.

of connected arguments and images to which he commits himself.[59] Nostalgia is necessary only within a localized (and often historicized) discourse. For instance, in her study of Rousseau's transformation of the pastoral tradition in his novel, *Julie*, Christie Vance McDonald argues that "[f]or *internal* reasons...the all-consuming passionate love between [the titular] Julie and St. Preux is doomed."[60] Both characters demand absolute union with the other. But this experience of fusion undermines the individual integrity required to enjoy and sustain this love. They lose themselves even as they try to find their joy in each other. Their love is intrinsically nostalgic, because of the terms by which they pursue it.

The amorous discourse of St. Preux and Julie does not necessarily reflect Rousseau's thinking on love. Although he draws from his own character and experience in creating St. Preux, in particular,[61] they are his characters rather than his mouthpieces.[62] As McDonald brings out, however, the paradoxical structure of their demand for passionate unity appears throughout the novel, and cannot be dissociated from its animating textual and conceptual discourses. Most crucially, nature also occupies an ambivalent conceptual position throughout the letters. Much like Starobinski's reading of Rousseau's own paradoxical encounter with nature in *Rêveries*, St. Preux both demands passive immersion in the natural world, and undermines the realization of

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[59] See, for example, Judith Broome, *Fictive Domains: Body, Landscape, and Nostalgia, 1717-1770* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007); Marian Hobson, *The Object of Art: The Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Christie Vance McDonald, *The Extravagant Shepherd: A Study of the Pastoral Vision in Rousseau's "Nouvelle Héloïse"*, vol. 105, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century (Banbury: The Voltaire Foundation, 2007); Elizabeth Rose Wingrove, *Rousseau's Republican Romance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). See also Starobinski, *Transparency and Obstruction*, Chapters 1-7.

[60] Vance McDonald, *Extravagant Shepherd*, 105, 93; my italics.

[61] In *Confessions*, Rousseau claims that he identified with the flaws and virtues of St. Preux, but made him lovable and young. Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 430.

[62] Indeed, in the second half of the novel, Julie marries the older and more rational Monsieur de Wolmar, who arguably leads both Julie and St. Preux to recover themselves from their amourous past through a more social and outward form of love. Shklar, in particular, reads Wolmar's guidance of St. Preux as emblematic of Rousseau's rejection of nostalgia. Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, 134-44.

that desire by his own idealizing activity.[63] He must cultivate inner feelings and imagination in order to encounter directly the natural world.

Moreover, Rousseau's attempts to paint the "utopian ideal of infinite happiness in an enduring present" in the second half of the novel endlessly draw on logical structures and literary traditions that deconstruct the timeless quality of this ideal. For instance, Julie's famous garden, the Elysée, is a testament to quiet repose and rural happiness. Symbolically, Julie submits her passion for St. Preux to her reason. Literally, she submits the wild plants and animals to an implicit order. To paint this illusion of remoteness and harmony, however, Rousseau draws from a literary tradition of remote and idealized nature. This ideal nature implies an unattainable past or future goal, rather than a present experience.[64]

On the other hand, the botanical imagery of the garden recalls the very eroticism that Rousseau would integrate into the garden's rational order. Earlier in the text, St. Preux's fantasy connects trees, plants, and waterfalls with parts of Julie's body. Even the ordered plants and wildlife of Julie's garden recalls these erotic associations. Thus, while "at one level the Elysée tells the story of renunciation and happiness in the present, at another it is constantly referring to what it is not: desire and passion."[65] Reason cannot sublimate nature without referring to it. In McDonald's reading, therefore, Julie's and St. Preux's bouts of longing in the garden for their love affair are symptomatic of the structural tensions that drive the novel. Rousseau betrays himself in plot and imagery, because of his literary and logical touch-points. At the end of the novel, Julie's deathbed admission of her continued passion for St. Preux, and her "accidental"

[63] Vance McDonald, *Extravagant Shepherd*, 105, 88.
[64] Ibid., 154.
[65] Ibid., 155.

death, are unsurprising. These events express perfectly the untenable nature of even Rousseau's ideal presentation of timeless, utopic community.

Ultimately, McDonlad's interpretation and other "literary" structural readings are close to Starobinski's version of the psychological approach. Rousseau chooses a set of ideas and images – activity and passivity, eroticism and order – the textual interrelation of which frustrates his attempts to conceptualize social or personal harmony. While Starobinski emphasizes Rousseau's conscious or unconscious choice to take up these sorts of arguments, literary structuralists focus on the aporias of Rousseau's arguments and narratives. They highlight more strongly the conceptual patterns and literary traditions that commit Rousseau to argumentative and narrative choices. Rousseau's freedom is limited by the confines of the discourse that he invokes and develops.

At the same time, Rousseau's paradoxical arguments express a robust system of reason in their own right. For Starobinski, the nostalgic Rousseau avoids conceptually and existentially difficult reasoning, especially as his career progresses.[66] In literary structuralist interpretations, by contrast, Rousseau's discourses are systematically nostalgic throughout his career. This is so even where he attempts to transcend his, or his characters's, longing. Rousseau could have chosen more coherent or, in some cases, less harmful[67] discourses. On their own terms, however, they enact and express a series of necessary and paradoxical truths. Indeed, as some literary structuralists bring out, Rousseau sometimes develops philosophical argument by self-consciously translating structural tensions into sharper and more productive paradoxes. That is,

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[66] *Dialogues*, for instance, "is an ill-fated and shamefaced reflection that revolves around nostalgia for the unreflective life." Starobinski, *Transparency and Obstruction*, 211.

[67] On the harmful effects of Rousseau's presentation of women in his texts – both because of, and despite, the deconstruction of these texts – see Linda M. G. Zerilli, *Signifying Woman: Culture and Chaos in Rousseau, Burke, and Mill* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Broome, *Fictive Domains*.

he recasts genuine logical contradictions and tensions as existential, aesthetic, social or political truth.[68]

In the comprehensive version of the structural reading, Rousseau's nostalgia is an emotional correlate of structural tensions endemic to Western metaphysics and Western forms of language.[69] Most famously, Jacques Derrida argues that Rousseau's work expresses with unique clarity the demand for presence that pervades Western metaphysics. In particular, Rousseau's texts manifest clearly the ambivalence of Western metaphysics towards representation and writing. Connecting the anthropology of Claude Levi-Strauss to Rousseau's political and autobiographical work, Derrida writes, "the ideal profoundly underlying the [Western] philosophy of writing is…the image of a community immediately present to itself, without difference, a community of speech where all members are in earshot."[70] Presence is the exclusion of what Derrida calls "differ*a*nce,"[71] or the active and ongoing self-differentiation of language. In political terms, the community is present that requires no economic, social, or linguistic

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[68] See, Hobson, *Object of Art*, 119-20; Wingrove, *Rousseau's Republican Romance*, 7-23. Hobson writes, concerning the imagination in *Julie*, that it "both confers value and empties of value…Only what has been deeply lived by the imagination is worth having: but the imagination can only operate on what is not present, what cannot be possessed." But *Julie* also makes this tension explicit, and thus transfers its force to a new, and more recognizably Rousseauian, conceptual knot: "The reader lives the *longing* for such an ideal, yet the wearying length of the novel mimics the trivial, the humdrum, which disciplines the idealisation for the characters. In this…the illusions of the imagination are lifted, and it becomes…creative of good and evil." Hobson, *Object of Art*, 120; my italics.

[69] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore ; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Zerilli, *Signifying Woman*.

[70] Derrida, *Grammatology*, 136.

[71] Derrida's spelling of difference with an "a" (differ*a*nce) attempts to capture simultaneously – in Rousseau's texts and in other works – two ways in which presence "differs" from itself: "On the one hand, it indicates difference as distinction, inequality, or discernibility; on the other, it expresses an interposition of a delay, the interval of a *spacing* or *temporalizing* that puts off until 'later' what is presenting denied, the possible that is presently impossible…In one case 'differ' signifies nonidentity; in the other case it signifies the order of the *same*." "Differance," in *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 129. This essay was originally published in French in 1968, a year after the first publication of *De la grammatologie* (1967). "Differance," *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* LXII, no. 3 (1968).

mediation – no mediation by *external* and potentially contaminating means – to experience, enjoy, and understand itself.

In this broader form of structuralism, Rousseau experiences his pessimism about authentic moral and political progress against the backdrop of a "*nostalgia* for what preceded this degradation...a corruption linked…to writing and to the dislocation of a unanimous people assembled in the self-presence of its speech."[72] Rousseau's ambivalence towards modern life and language, and his corresponding longing for self-present community and self-transparent consciousness, is exemplary in the history of metaphysics. It articulates in political and personal terms the longing for being as presence that has marked post-Socratic philosophy.

For these thinkers, claims to unmediated presence are inevitably illusory and unstable, because all thought is expressed in writing, or mimics the differential structure of writing (Derrida; de Man; Zerilli); or being itself is plural and self-differentiating (Nancy). Meaning occurs in the differences between ideas, rather than in representing a discrete concept or empirical reality. For instance, Rousseau cannot define nature except against his different articulations of habit, culture, and society. And this process of differentiation always defers – in the sense of *delaying* – the realization of meaning to a present that cannot arrive. As Derrida explains, in a later essay, "each element that is said to be 'present'… retains the mark of a past element and already lets itself be hollowed out by the mark of its relation to a future element."[73] Presence is, and must be, defined against its opposite: a past and future that are absolutely

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[72] *Grammatology*, 134; Derrida's italics. On Rousseau's nostalgia for community as self-presence, see also, Nancy, *Inoperative Community*. Nancy writes, "Rousseau…was perhaps the first thinker of community, or more exactly, the first to experience the question of society as an uneasiness directed toward the community, and as the consciousness of a (perhaps irreparable) rupture in this community." Ibid., 9.

[73] Derrida, "Differance," 265.

different (and are not mere modifications of presence). But this "interval" between the present and its others also "divides presence from itself," because supposedly "full speech" delays its complete signification. It must defer meaning to a time and temporality against which it is also defined.

Thus, the "presence" of any idea (and, in Nancy's case, of being)[74] is intrinsically contaminated by absence. It posits itself as self-sufficient, but derives its meaning from external "chains" of ideas and signifiers, including those which depend on a non-present temporality.[75] If Rousseau is nostalgic, therefore, he makes manifest the longing for presence and community at the heart of all Western philosophy. This philosophy both demands presence (or non-absence), and depends on forms of mediation – writing (Derrida; Zerilli), communication (Nancy), or metaphor (de Man) – that frustrate and perpetuate this longing.

Like Cassirer and the reconstructionist interpreters who follow him, comprehensive structuralists highlight Rousseau's comments that (a) we cannot return simply to lost communal and individual self-transparency; and (b) neither the Golden Age nor authentic youth were literal events in time. Despite his longing for community and "full" speech, Rousseau often casts this

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[74] Derrida and de Man generally resist making ontological claims, because the language of ontology often implies that the movement of language may be stabilized by reference to a transcendent reality. For them, differ*a*nce precedes any determination of being as presence. Derrida writes, "Since the sense of being is never produced as history outside of its determination as presence, has it not always already been caught within the history of metaphysics as the epoch of presence? This is perhaps what Nietzsche wanted to write and what resists the Heideggerian reading of Nietzsche; *differance* in its *active* movement…is what not only precedes metaphysics but also extends beyond the thought of being." *Grammatology*, 143; Derrida's italics.

By contrast, Nancy is much more comfortable with the language of ontology, because he views the process of differance as a positive condition or "opening" of being in its plurality. Rather than linking differance to the negative dynamics of deferral and absence – dyanamics that derive from structural views of language – he argues that the activity and self-differentiation of deconstruction condition beings to be what they are: internally plural, context-dependent, and mutually exposed. See, esp., Jean-Luc Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, trans. Gabril Malenfant Bettina Bergo, and Michael B. Smith (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 176n12.

[75] For different theoretical articulations of this claim see, for example, Derrida, "Differance," 137-47; de Man, *Allegories of Reading*, Chapter One; Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

lost presence as a normative rather than a strictly historical problem. As Derrida puts it, "the speech that Rousseau raised above writing is speech as it should be or rather as it *should have been*."[76] For comprehensive structuralists (as for some of their "literary" structuralist counterparts (Hobson, Wingrove)), Rousseau is partially conscious of the paradoxical effects of his own discourse. More radically still, they argue that Rousseau "recognized and analyzed [the deconstructive effects of language] with most incomparable acumen."[77]

In this view, however, Rousseau evades the full implications of his own analysis of representation, community, and selfhood. "Having in a certain way recognized this [deconstructive] power," Derrida writes, "Rousseau is nevertheless more pressed to exorcise it than assume its necessity." In his texts, he "strains" to reconstitute presence by the very means that undermined it: through his writing.[78] In *Confessions*, Rousseau speaks of writing as a supplement to overcome the anxiety of speech. Yet he holds out hope that writing can recover presence "as it should have been." In Rousseau's more philosophical works, Derrida argues that supplements to "lost nature" take concrete forms, such as habit, culture, and education. In each case, Rousseau adds something to nature to overcome its insufficiency and corruption. But the process of the supplement – adding an external element to reconstitute internal self-sufficiency – is itself paradoxical. The supplement adds itself to the plenitude of nature, increasing its

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[76] Derrida, *Grammatology*, 141. With respect to the literalness of Rousseau's histories, Derrida presents Levi-Strauss as a naïve reader of Rousseau, who is "faithful to only one particular motif in Rousseau" and, I would say, one particular form of nostalgia.

[77] Ibid. Indeed, in deconstructive terms, Derrida and de Man "displace" strains of Rousseau's thinking, appropriating, in new terms, several of the conceptual moves in Rousseau's work. Nancy's deconstruction of Rousseau's nostalgia in "Inoperative Community" is less detailed and more dismissive. Even in this earlier essay, however, Nancy reads Rousseau as also articulating the ontological exposure and co-appearance that Nancy sees at the heart of true community. In his later work, he develops, for his own purposes, Rousseau's treatments of the social contract and of spectacle. Ibid.; Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Blindness: Jacques Derrida's Reading of Rousseau," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 141; Nancy, *Inoperative Community*, 36-37; *Being Singular Plural*, 14, 34, 46, 65-6, 106.

[78] Derrida, *Grammatology*, 141.

presence. But, in so doing, the supplement places nature in a position of lack, because it substitutes itself for nature. Nature is at once self-sufficient and requires a foreign addition.[79]

In Rousseau, therefore, the supplement is always a threat, because it reintroduces lack when it promised recovery. Derrida points out that Rousseau sometimes speaks of supplements in these terms, as dangerous. More importantly, Rousseau's texts follow implicitly the serial logic of lack and supplement: each Rousseauian supplement – such as culture, the social contract, botany – itself requires supplementation, because the addition undermines presence even as it reinstates it. Where McDonald highlights particular moments of paradox and longing, Derrida tracks a "chain" of related supplements.

In the economy of the supplement, nostalgia names Rousseau's repeated "straining" for meaning that is uncontaminated by temporal or conceptual absence. Derrida's vocabulary of mental "straining" suggests a psychological reaction, and a critique of Rousseau's character. But the deconstructive critique of nostalgia is more structural than psychological: the differential structure of language itself produces the ongoing conditions for the nostalgic rejection of this structure. For example, Rousseau can only demand a self-sufficient nature, *because* of the (albeit deconstructing) distinction between nature and culture. As Derrida writes, "without the possibility of differance, the desire for presence as such would not find its breathing-space."[80] Rousseau desires presence in the emotional and conceptual space created by play between absence and presence. His nostalgic longing follows, as much as leads, the chain of supplements as they deconstruct.[81]

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[79] Ibid., 145.
[80] Ibid., 143.
[81] As Derrida makes clear in "Differance," the term "difference" itself partly "indicates the closure of presence…that is effected in the functioning of traces." "Differance," 131.

If comprehensive structuralist interpreters are correct about the deconstructive nature of language or of being, Cassirer's distinction between nostalgic and rational thinking cannot be maintained. Reason itself is another nostalgic claim of presence that cannot protect itself from contamination from its various others: passion, unreason, and the logic of the supplement.[82] Rather than transcending nostalgia, therefore, comprehensive structuralists displace and recontextualize nostalgic thinking in Rousseau's texts. To this end, they use perversely and self-reflexively the language of presence, the authority of which they undermine. On the one hand, deconstruction – as a form of critique, rather than a name for the self-differentiation of language – works to articulate the active movements of differance implicit in any text's claims to presence.

On the other hand, deconstructive critique intervenes in the system that it describes. To interpret structurally is to include all elements within the "economy" of signifiers and subjects. This includes Derrida's (and Rousseau's[83]) own acts of critical interpretation. Unlike Rousseau's "supplements," however, they see their critical discourses as partial causes within the systems of signifiers to which they refer. [84] Rather than attempting to capture and explain fully a given text or discourse, therefore, they add to its movement of differance in order to displace it. Despite Derrida's strategic rhetoric about the autonomous action of the self-differentiation of language, action is distributed between new and old elements of a structure, between any act of

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[82] For Derrida, for instance, Rousseau represents the objects of his reason as self-identical and present. Reason is natural, and shows what is natural. In these terms, the logic of the supplement is at once irrational and unnatural, because it adds and subtracts in the same gesture. It is a logical paradox. In Rousseau's own speculative history of human civilization, however, "the supplement comes *naturally* to put itself in Nature's place." And Rousseau thinks of the substitution of nature as a natural process. Thus, reason "cannot even determine the supplement as its other, as the irrational and the non-natural." Its paradoxical logic is intrinsic to his own thinking, even though he sometimes articulates this logic in historical terms. *Grammatology,* 149.

[83] Ibid., 150.

[84] For example, Derrida writes of the Levinasian "trace" as both a name that articulates the absence of any single cause (even structure and differ*a*nce), and as a concept that itself must be deployed to be effective. He writes, "No more effect than cause, the 'trace' cannot of itself, taken outside its context, suffice to bring out the required transgression" of the 'closure' or repression of the classical conception of an uncaused cause. "Differance," 141.

writing and its history. "Differance is not simply active (any more than it is a subjective accomplishment)," Derrida writes, "it rather indicates the middle voice, it precedes and sets up the opposition between passivity and activity."[85] The works of comprehensive structuralists articulate, and intervene within, these structures. They self-consciously take up the position of a middle voice, an action that falls between the fantasies of active reason and of passive description.[86]

As forms of critical engagement, nostalgia and deconstruction are opposed. Rousseau's writing is nostalgic because his texts posit a lost maternal language, and pursue aggressively different forms of presence (despite Rousseau's own proto-structural reading of language). Rousseau's discourse of will and sensation, contingency and fate, also obscures the play between agency and structure. While psychological and reconstructive readings of nostalgia in Rousseau critique its direct or indirect passivity, the comprehensive structuralist reading holds that Rousseau's texts repress the "middle voice" that cannot be reduced to either activity or passivity. To put it in overly individualistic terms, the nostalgic Rousseauian longs to either act, fully, or be acted upon. He flees from a movement of differance that names the deconstruction of his own action or retreat. By contrast, deconstruction aims to confront Rousseau's texts with their necessary and ongoing repressions. And this includes the repression of the deconstruction of agency that both Rousseau and his commentators obscure.

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[85] Ibid., 130.

[86] As a result, comprehensive structuralists often qualify descriptions that suggest fully transcendent and active critique. In "Differance," for instance, Derrida writes that the "assemblage" of concepts that he connects in this essay – such as 'trace', 'ontological difference', and 'structure' – bring together "the different ways I have been able to utilize – or, rather, *have allowed to be imposed on me* – what I will provisionally call the word or concept of differance in its new spelling."[86] Ibid., 131.

As forms of thinking, however, I would argue that nostalgia and deconstruction are more difficult to contrast. If presence falls within the economy of differance, it cannot simply be rejected. To use language that none of these thinkers use, deconstruction pushes the reader to think presence within its larger deconstructive economy. Put in this way, nostalgia acts similarly, insofar as it makes manifest the endless loss of presence that structuralist interpreters of Rousseau would also highlight. It is more comprehensive than reason, because – as a type of longing – it follows closely and articulates powerfully the play of presence and absence that reason denies. (In deconstructive terms, it is thus unsurprising that Cassirer and others work so hard to separate nostalgia from reason).

Rousseau stops short of affirming deconstruction as an active process in its own right: he articulates it only negatively, in relation to a lost meaning or a lost maternal tongue. As a writer, Rousseau also pursues this ideal *despite* his insight into language, attempting to escape the very dynamics that he sometimes recognizes. In the comprehensive structural reading, we thus can understand Rousseauian nostalgia as a form of partial knowledge. Rousseau perceives absence within presence, and highlights localized paradoxes, but cannot recognize fully the active structural process of self-differentiation of which these absences and paradoxes are single elements.

The emotional correlate to this theoretical partiality is sadness. Rousseau laments rather than affirms the active play of language. Here, Derrida's discussion, in his essay "Differance," of Martin Heidegger's attempts to articulate differance is helpful.

> It must be conceived without *nostalgia;* that is, it must be conceived outside the myth of the purely maternal or paternal language belonging to the lost fatherland of thought. On the contrary, we must *affirm* it—in the sense that Nietzsche brings affirmation into

play—with a certain laughter and with a certain dance.[87]

For Derrida, differance is not a concept, because it structures language itself. Even Derrida's term is metaphysical; it denotes a certain presence. To think differance "without nostalgia" is to affirm and treat more lightly its activity. Rousseau's works are nostalgic because, like those of Heidegger, they (often) posit a lost, full speech. And, again like much of Heidegger's work, they implicitly reject the play and movement of language that they approach. In the face of structural or ontological truth, they are sad rather than joyous.

All three dominant interpretations of nostalgia in Rousseau – psychological, reconstructive, and structural – follow Cassirer, and treat nostalgia as a form of thinking. As does Cassirer's neo-Kantian reading of Rousseau, these interpretations also contrast nostalgic thinking with more critical forms of knowledge. Nostalgia is passive, idiosyncratic, and repetitious. By contrast, reason, moral intuition, and deconstruction are all – in different ways – active, mediating, and productive. Where nostalgia in Rousseau represses existential, political or structural realities, critical forms of thinking engage these realities through the difficult mediations of language and thought.

Each approach to nostalgia in Rousseau perceives the content and relative freedom of Rousseau's nostalgia differently. But they all read nostalgia as a danger of passivity and

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[87] Ibid., 159, italics Derrida's. See, also, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Humanities," in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 292-93. Despite his clear methodological preference, Derrida also suggests (but does not develop) the idea that the distinction between nostalgic and playful philosophy does not (yet) demand an absolute choice between them, and is itself subject to deconstruction: "although these two interpretations must acknowledge and accentuate their difference and define their irreducibility, I do not believe that today there is any question of *choosing* – in the first place, because here we are in a region … of historicity…where the category of choice seems particularly trivial; and the second, because we must first try to conceive of the common ground, and the *différance* of this irreducible difference." Ibid., 293; italics Derrida's. Cf. "Differance," 159-60.

blindness from which critical thinking must be protected. Nostalgia is a derivative category of critical thought or reason, rather than a passion in its own right. This approach is arguably warranted, because Rousseau does not use the word, and, only refers to the concept in passing. Rousseau may be unreflective about the passion that dominates his rhetoric and work. As I will show, however, Rousseau has a coherent phenomenology of memory that complements his theory of the passions. And this account of memory – both implicit and explicit in Rousseau's texts – is systematically nostalgic. In *Émile*, *Confessions* and *Rêveries*, Rousseau develops an account of longing that at once structures and reveals our activity, which he defines as our capacity to act spontaneously within the causal order, and to compare sensations on the basis of this metaphysical freedom. Rousseauian nostalgia is also morally "active" insofar as it structures and reveals our ability to pursue the implications of our thought and action. And, ultimately, I will argue that nostalgic memory is a means by which Rousseauian citizens actively engage the political world.

Chapter Two

"Eyes Turning Towards the Light": Childhood Memory and Nascent Community in *Émile*

Who has not sometimes regretted that age when laughter was ever on the lips?

Rousseau, *Émile*

This chapter challenges the assumption that nostalgic thought in Rousseau is passive and solipsistic by reconstructing Rousseau's own theory of childhood memory in his pedagogical treatise, *Émile*. I argue that Rousseau invites the reader to long for social and active connection. The young (male[88]) child's movement and passion connect and expose him to foreign internal and external worlds. I also maintain that the child's connection to himself and to community is constitutively nostalgic. Prior to any nostalgic, adult recollection of childhood – such as the nostalgic recollection of the Swiss mercenaries for their youth and *patrie*, in *Dictionnaire* – the Rousseauian child is exposed to the world through his constitutive and ongoing memory of loss. Indeed, for the reader, nostalgia reveals the child's messy and dangerous entanglements with the world, rather than obscuring them. It is an active and systematic, rather than a passive and idiosyncratic, form of thinking.

To develop this position, I claim that Rousseau's understanding of childish memory draws most strongly from the philosophy of Condillac – in particular, from Condillac's *Traité des sensations* (1754) and *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* (1746). Rousseau

[88] Rousseau often speaks of "children," but he speaks primarily of boys. While he argues that girls and boys naturally share many activities, he maintains that girls are much more interested in the pleasures of sight and ornament than in the movement and noise that strengthens a boy's body and forms the basis for his judgement. He also maintains that women lack the ability to reason abstractly. Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 706, 36. On gender in *Émile*, see Penny A. Weiss, *Gendered Community: Rousseau, Sex, and Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), Chapter 2; Wingrove, *Rousseau's Republican Romance*, Chapter 2; Zerilli, *Signifying Woman*, 39-50.

scholars often contrast Rousseau's defense of reason and memory as independent faculties, as well as of innate moral ideas, with the (supposed) radical sensualism of Condillac. In these interpretations of Condillac's argument, both ideas and faculties derive *a posteriori* from passive sensations and passive reactions to these sensations.[89] Condillac thus is thought to be Rousseau's source for understanding the passivity of early childhood, while Rousseau draws from Descartes and Locke to describe the activity of the older, rational child and the adult. As Condillac scholars argue, however, both *Essai* and *Traité* assume that the structures of language, and the individual's activity, mediate his passive sensation.[90] I argue that Rousseau follows Condillac, and understands memory as a social, rather than as an individual and Lockean, phenomenon.[91] This chapter and Chapter Three help us to understand the later Rousseau's understanding of people as social and temporal creatures, and creatures for whom social connection and temporality is an issue.

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[89] See, for instance, David Marshall, "Epistomology and Political Perception in the Case of Rousseau," in *The Challenge of Rousseau*, ed. Eve Grace and Christopher Kelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Jean-François Perrin, "Une *passivité* sous haute surveillance: la mémoire de l'enfant selon l'*Émile*," in *Éduquer selon la nature: seize études sur "Émile" de Rousseau*, ed. Claude Habib (Paris: Éditions Desjonquères, 2012); Jørn Schøsler, "La position sensualiste de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Revue Romane* 13 (1978).

[90] See Hans Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 146-224; introduction and notes to *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*, by Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1746) 2001), xxiii-xxix; Catherine L. Hobbs, "Condillac and Modern Rhetoric: Across the Threshold," in *Rhetoric on the Margins of Modernity: Vico, Condillac, Monboddo* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002); Nicolas Rousseau, *Connaissance et langage chez Condillac* (Geneva: Droz, 1986).

[91] Condillac breaks with Locke significantly on two points. First, in *Essai*, he argues that language is the condition for the exercise of robust reflection. By contrast, Locke treats language primarily as a source of false associations and vague ideas. Second, in *Traité*, Condillac argues that reflection "is the channel by which [ideas] issue from the senses," rather than a distinct faculty from sensation, as Locke maintains. Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Traité des sensations: augmenté de l'extrait raisonné*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 3 (Geneva: Slatkine, (1754, 1822) 1970), "Précis de la première partie". See also ibid., "Dessein de cet ouvrage" and "Extrait raisonné". On the differences between Condillac and Locke, see Aarsleff, Introduction, xv-xviii; Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 43-48, 238-39; Rousseau, *Connaissance*, 100-10.

Image and Idea: Descartes and Nostalgia for Childhood Passivity

In several key passages, Rousseau's account of the faculty of memory in *Émile* places it neatly on the active-critical side of Cassirer's division between rational and nostalgic thinking. Most clearly, Rousseau distinguishes between memory based on *images* and memory based on *ideas*.

> Although memory and reason are essentially different faculties, one does not develop truly without the other. Before the age of reason, the infant receives *images* rather than *ideas*, and there is this difference between them: images are but complete paintings of sensible objects, while ideas are notions of objects that are determined by relationships. An image represents an object by itself alone; but a whole idea presupposes other ideas. When we imagine we only see; when we conceive we compare. Our sensations are purely passive, while all of our perceptions or ideas are born from an active principle that judges.[92]

Rousseau's distinction between images and ideas is Cartesian.[93] He almost certainly derives it from his close reading of the French naturalist, Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon.[94] An *image* is a sensorial representation of a particular, and now absent, perception. The mind's "sixth sense" produces *images* by unconsciously synthesizing numerous sensations into the perception of a discrete object.[95] By contrast, an *idea* is an intuition of the mind. It reflects the mind's comparison of multiple sensations in order to understand the relationships between them. Thus, Rousseau's imagined student, Émile, is limited to passive connections prior to "the age of

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[92] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 344; my italics.
[93] See, esp., René Descartes, *Meditations, Objections, and Replies*, trans. Roger Ariew and Donald Cress (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2006), Meditation Two, "Second Set of Objections," and "Reply to Second Set of Objections."
[94] Buffon writes, for instance, that "memory emanates from the power of reflection, because our memory of past things supposes…the comparison that our soul had made between sensations, that is, the ideas that they had formed. If memory consisted in only the recall of past sensations, these sensations would be represented…without any order or link between them." Georges-Louis Leclerc Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, vol. 4 (Paris: De l'Imprimerie royale, 1753), 56.
[95] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, p. 370, 417. Confusingly, Rousseau also uses a Lockean vocabulary, and calls 'images' *idées simples*, and 'ideas' *idées compléxes*.

reason," which begins between the ages of twelve and fifteen years. He possesses *raison puerile* or *sensitive* rather than *raison intellectuelle* or *humaine*.

Memory and reason develop together, because past images and ideas are the resources Émile uses to make sense of his world. The correlate of *raison puerile* is *mémoire puerile*. On the one hand, memory indicates the limited extent of his understanding. The pre-rational child only retains images, because these are what he understands. Rousseau's writes, "[the child's] smooth and polished brain reflects objects like a mirror; but nothing stays, and nothing penetrates. The child retains the words; the ideas are reflected. Those who listen to them understand; he alone does not."[96] On the other hand, Émile cannot easily make rational comparisons, because his memory retains only contingent and transient connections between ideas. When questioned about an idea, Émile may express an answer perfectly that he memorized from a book or heard from his tutor. But "nothing is fixed, nothing is sure in all that he thinks."[97] He cannot apply the idea or recall its connections, and becomes confused. In this model, the pre-rational child is like Rousseau's "natural man" from the second *Discours*.[98] He remembers only in the immediate short term, because he merely experiences discrete sensations and momentary worlds. He is passive in his experience of sensation and thus almost without memory.

The more detailed scholarly treatments of memory and nostalgia in later Rousseau are often divided by their judgement of the correct interpretation of Rousseau's distinction between ideas and images, in particular, and between active memory and passive sensation, more

[96] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 344.
[97] Ibid., 342.
[98] See, *Discours sur l'origine*, 3, 385, 217n4.

generally. For Judith Shklar, Rousseau's *Émile* offers a critique of nostalgic fantasies of wholeness by relegating them to the pre-rational sphere. In Rousseau's novel *Julie*, the nostalgic St. Preux has judgement but no reason in his assessment of his amorous past with the now-married Julie. He misuses his active faculties: he actively projects an imagistic fantasy of past fusion and wholeness. Ultimately, Skhlar reads the novel as anti-nostalgic. St. Preux needs the more rational Wolmar to help him to develop further his flawed, but active, judgement, and learn to see the higher, moral good.[99]

For Jean Starobinski and Paul Hoffman, by contrast, direct, imagistic relation to nature is the chief object of Rousseau's own longing.[100] For Starobinski, most famously, Rousseau implies, in *Émile*, that we risk alienation from natural, *passive* wholeness in order to find a new, more *active* wholeness on the moral plane. In *Rêveries*, by contrast, the exiled Rousseau regresses. He vainly tries to retreat to a new "state of nature" of passive sensations and fleeting images.[101] For Jean-François Perrin, finally, Rousseau deploys the image/idea distinction from *Émile* in his autobiographic *Confessions* in order to cast his childhood memories as a "reserve" of unconnected and direct images of nature. Throughout his life, he continually and actively reconfigures these passive, free-floating images in order to understand his life and frame his actions.[102]

Nostalgia is either a form of repeated and creative therapy (Perrin), a dangerous inclination to regression towards childhood passivity (Shklar), or a fantasy of lost, passive

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[99] Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, 140-44.
[100] Starobinski, *Transparency and Obstruction*; Paul Hoffman, "La mémoire et les valeurs dans les Six Premiers Livres des *Confessions*," *Annales J.-J. Rousseau* 39 (1972-77).
[101] Starobinski, *Transparency and Obstruction*, 206-07.
[102] Jean-François Perrin, *Le Chant de l'origine: la mémoire et le temps dans les Confessions de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, vol. 339 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1996), 56-65.

wholeness (Starobinski, Hoffman). In each case, the divide before and after the age of reason frames Rousseauian nostalgia. We long reflectively for pre-reflective life.

Helvétius, Condillac, and the Threat of Materialism

Contemporary scholars draw on Rousseau's Cartesian concepts to define the nostalgia that pervades his work. In *Émile*, however, Rousseau deploys this language to pursue a more immediate object: his larger critique of the materialism and proto-utilitarian politics of Paul-Henri d'Holbach, and Claude-Adrien Helvétius. This goal problematizes an absolute distinction between image and idea, and between passivity and activity, because these distinctions are partly rhetorical.

The first draft of *Émile* includes another sentence missing from the final version of the passage about the distinction between ideas and images, and between judgements and sensations. He writes, "if the author of *De l'esprit* had made these distinctions, I doubt that he would have reduced the operations of human understanding only to sentiment."[103] Rousseau refers here to Helvétius. Published in 1758, *De l'esprit* reduces all the faculties to extended forms of passive sensation. Judgement is nothing more than higher-order sensation, a passive registration of similarities and differences.[104]

For Rousseau, Helvétius's text highlights how materialist doctrines obscure human freedom and dignity. For Rousseau's "Savoyard Vicar" (a character whose voice Rousseau

[103] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile (manuscrit Favre)*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 4 (Paris: Pléiade, 1969), 113.
[104] Claude-Adrien Helvétius, *De l'esprit* (Paris: Fayard, 1988 (1758)), 22.

sometimes claims as his own[105]), materialists are correct in maintaining that experience is the product of great chains of cause and effect. But "to suppose some act, some effect that does not derive from an active principle, is really to suppose an effect without cause, and to fall into a vicious circle." Man is "free in his actions" because these effects must ultimately derive from a prior and uncaused cause.[106] For the Vicar, man as a willing being is thus like God: he is an unmoved mover.[107] Moreover, he argues that materialists cannot address natural differences in dispositions between people. Some people may apply themselves to the world more actively and rigorously than others.[108]

For Rousseau, these metaphysical errors both create unrealizable political prescriptions and undermine the perception of moral and social connections between people. For Helvétius, proper education would render people mentally equal, because – given that people have similar capabilities if they have similar experiences – good education and government would condition people, via their passions, to direct their attention, and thus form judgements, equally well.[109] Similarly, he argues that governments discern the public good by calculating the aggregate of (rational) individual pleasures, even at the expense of individual life.[110] In both cases, he promises comprehensive mastery of moral and political life.[111] For Rousseau, such materialism – especially as manifest in the work of Helvétius – is false and teaches people to focus on their

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[105] See, Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1018. Many of the Vicar's arguments, moreover, appear in nascent form in Rousseau's marginal comments on Helvétius' *De l'esprit*. *Notes sur "De l'esprit" d'Helvétius*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 4 (Paris: Pléiade, 1969).
[106] *Émile*, 4, 586-87.
[107] Rousseau's Vicar also conceives of the will in Cartesian terms; it is self-caused and infinite, the faculty by which we are most like God. On the influence of Descartes on Rousseau, see Henri Gouhier, "Ce que le vicaire doit à Descartes," *Annales J.-J. Rousseau* 35 (1959-62); Marshall, "Epistomology and Political Perception in Rousseau."; Pierre-Maurice Masson, introduction and notes to *"Profession de foi du Vicaire Savoyard,"* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1914).
[108] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 586.
[109] Helvétius, *De l'esprit*, 2.17, 3.4, 3.30.
[110] Ibid., 3.6.
[111] See, esp., ibid., 2.24, "Des moyens de perfectionner la morale".

individual, rather than collective, interests. It also undermines the religious and cultural beliefs that bind people together and give them hope for virtue and justice. "Overturning, destroying…everything that men respect," the Vicar puts it, "[materialists] remove from the afflicted the only consolation of their misery, from the powerful and the rich the only brake on their passions."[112] As we shall see in the Conclusion to this dissertation, Rousseau maintains that materialist doctrines ultimately undermine people's capacity for moral regret and judgement.

Strikingly, the most definitive textual evidence of Rousseau's hostility towards Condillac's sensualism is a comment opposing this link between the passivity of judgement and the promise of education. As Rousseau writes in the margins of his copy of Helvétius's *De l'esprit*,

> This principle [of passive judgement] has been established and discussed with much philosophy and depth in the *Encyclopédie*'s article, *Evidence*. I do not know who is the author of this article, but he is certainly a very great metaphysician. I would guess the Abbé de Condillac or [the naturalist] M. de Buffon. Whatever the case, I have attempted to combat it and to establish the activity of our judgements, and in the notes that I have written at the beginning of this book, and especially in the first part of the profession of faith of the savoyard Vicar. [113]

Scholars note that Rousseau draws from this, and his other, marginal notes to his copy of *De l'esprit* in his "Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar." "Profession" marshals an implicit attack against Helvétius's text and the *Evidence* article.[114] For most scholars, Rousseau is broadly Lockean: he rejects innate non-moral ideas (unlike Descartes), while affirming independent faculties of reason and sensation (unlike Condillac or the materialists).[115] In some

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[112] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 632.
[113] *Notes sur "l'esprit"*, 4, 1129.
[114] Masson, Notes, 71n2; "Rousseau contre Helvétius," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 18 (1911): 103-24.
[115] The outlier in recent scholarship is Marshall, who interprets Rousseau as a Cartesian, and as hostile even to Locke's empiricism. To make this claim, however, Marshall must obscure Locke's distinction between passive

iterations of this view, Rousseau draws greatly from Condillac's *Traité* in the early drafts of *Émile*, but alters his account when Helvétius's interpretation of Condillac's sensualism highlights the dangers of materialist metaphysics. In this reading, Rousseau writes the "Profession de foi" to clarify his own view.[116]

Rousseau's marginal note, however, is less definite in characterizing his understanding of Condillac's more moderate sensualism than it appears. He *suspects* someone like Condillac or Buffon because of the "depth and philosophy" of the *Evidence* article. He considers their authorship as only possible, and his judgement is at least partly based on the style of the entry, rather than its philosophy. (The actual author is the French economist, François Quesnay (1694-1774)[117]). Without critique, Rousseau often praises or alludes to Condillac as a "great metaphysician" because of his clarity and depth of thought.[118]

Moreover, Rousseau understands the sensualist work of both suspects – Buffon and Condillac – to allow forms of active judgement that truly materialist positions must deny. As we have seen, Rousseau *derives* his distinction between memory based on passive childhood images and active adult ideas from Buffon's almost identical distinction between animal and (adult) human memory. He undoubtedly perceives the potential for robust mental activity in Buffon's framework.

In the case of Condillac, Rousseau clearly understands the subtle play between activity and passivity that distinguishes the former's sensualism from the Helvétian materialism that it

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sensation and active reflection. See Marshall, "Epistomology and Political Perception in Rousseau," 83. On Locke's distance from both Descartes and Helvétius, see Schøsler, "Position sensualiste."

[116] See, "Position sensualiste," 67.

[117] See, Richard N. Schwab, Walter E. Rex, and John Lough, "Inventory of Diderot's Encyclopédie," in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1971-84).

[118] See, for instance, Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 343.

inspired.[119] For Condillac, sensations are indeed the *means* by which the faculties develop. But the *origin* of reflection is need (i.e. the comparison of pleasure and pain), rather than sensation. This need varies between people, depending on their physical and psychological character, and on their environment.[120] As a being develops, the activity of the soul mediates the comparison of sensations at each developmental step. Most crucially for understanding the Condillacian influence on Rousseau's understanding of nostalgia, memory "is active insofar as it remembers a sensation, because it is the [uncaused[121]] cause that recalls it,"[122] rather than the external "force" of a sensation. For Condillac, reflection is the culmination of different "operations" of memory, imagination, reflection, passion, and hope, rather than merely transformed sensation. Together, these operations are "the channel by which [ideas] issue from the senses." [123] Hans Aarsleff highlights, moreover, that both Condillac's *Traité* and his earlier *Essai* assume that language enables more abstract and active forms of reflection.[124]

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[119] After publishing *Traité*, Condillac himself repeatedly proclaims publically that he is not a materialist (although, at the time, the term is admittedly a pejorative one in many circles). Instead, he argues that he defends the activity of the spirit in a modern form. This interpretation is shared by many of his contemporaries. For instance, Voltaire writes, in letter inviting Condillac to join him at Voltaire's new home, Les Délices, "if there is someone capable of inventing glasses to discover that imperceptible being [the soul], it is assuredly you." January or April 1756 (D6998), *Oeuvres complètes*. On Condillac's defense against charges of materialism, see Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Traité des animaux*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 4 (Geneva: Slatkine, (1755, 1822) 1970), Lettre de M. l'abbé de Condillac à l'auteur des "Lettres à un Américan"; Christine Quarfood, *Condillac, la statue et l'enfant: philosophie et pédagogie au siècle des Lumières*, trans. from Swedish by Yvette Johansson (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002), 29-34.

[120] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 4.9.3.

[121] We may infer from the conditions of Condillac's simplified model that the action of memory is uncaused and reflects the spontaneous activity of the soul: memory is the statue's first act in response to receiving passively more than one sensation, and no other causes exist to illicit this response. Elsewhere, Condillac distinguishes explicitly between the uncaused will and extended matter, the activity of which is the effect of external causes. *Essai*, 1.1.1.8; *Traité des animaux*, 2.6.

[122] Ibid., 4.9.

[123] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, "Précis de la première partie". See, also, ibid., "Dessein de cet ouvrage" and "Extrait raisonné".

[124] See, Aarsleff, *Locke to Saussure*; Introduction. Admittedly, Rousseau remains Cartesian insofar as he maintains that people may refuse a relation, and withhold all judgement and comparison. By contrast, Condillac only speaks of positive choices between sets of ideas. Far from a newly marshaled argument against Condillac's increasingly radical sensualism, however, Rousseau articulates this same position much earlier, in his second *Discours*. Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine*, 3, 142-43. I will address Rousseau's treatment of the will in Chapter Six.

The text of *Émile* and Rousseau's related correspondence suggest that Rousseau understands, and, in many cases, affirms, the subtleties of Condillac's sensualism. Rousseau first mentions Condillac's *Traité* positively, in a 1757 letter to Sophie, the Countess d'Houdetot. In *Traité*, Condillac's guiding conceptual device is a statue that is brought to life by the successive and discrete activations of each of the five senses: smell, hearing, taste, sight, and, most importantly, touch. Referencing Condillac's statue, Rousseau writes, "you may see in the statue of the Abbé de Condillac what degree of *understanding* belongs to each sense if we were given each of them separately, and the bizarre *reasonings* about the nature of things by beings endowed with less organs than we possess."[125] While Rousseau critiques the "bizarre reasonings" of this imagined and abstract creature, he agrees that each sensation is a form of proto-reasoning. Indeed, later in the letter he suggests that some animals may have senses, and understandings, beyond the five senses of human beings.[126]

In this same letter, moreover, Rousseau presents human (spiritual) and animal (bodily) reasoning as analogous, rather than absolutely different.[127] This is precisely the "pseudo-dualist" position that Condillac outlines in *Traité des animaux*.[128] Rousseau also draws from this text in the first draft of *Émile*.[129] Undeniably, he knows that Condillac distributes the activity of reflection more intensively and broadly than Descartes and Locke, rather than reducing active reflection to passive sensation.

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[125] *Lettres morales*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 4 (Paris: Pléiade, 1969), 1096.
[126] Although, in Book IV, Rousseau advocates for a doctrine of instinct; cf. *Émile*, 4, 595n.
[127] *Lettres morales*, 4, 1096-98.
[128] See, Condillac, *Animaux*, 4, 2.5.
[129] Rousseau, *Émile (Favre)*, 4, 62-63. As Jimack highlights, Rousseau also draws his critique of the man-child from Condillac's similar critique, in *Traité des animaux*, of Buffon's own "statue." See, Condillac, *Animaux*, 4, 1.6; Peter D. Jimack, "Les influences de Condillac, Buffon, et Helvétius dans L'*Émile*," *Annales J.-J. Rousseau* 34 (1956-58): 119-21.

Unless we assume Rousseau to be an inattentive reader of his contemporaries, he merely rejects *possible* interpretations and implications of Buffon's and Condillac's respective, moderate iterations of sensualism. Rousseau draws on the language of Cartesian dualism to highlight human mental activity, and to argue against materialist politics, rather than to posit the absolute passivity of childish thought and memory. As Rousseau writes, in a 1763 letter about the Vicar's argument in "Profession," in particular, "the fundamental principle of [Helvétius's] *de l'Esprit* is that judgement is sensation; from which it follows clearly that everything is a body. This principle, being established by metaphysical reasons, could only have been attacked by similar reasoning."[130] To Helvetius' passive, material world, Rousseau adds a complementary metaphysics of an active God and an active soul. Despite his distinction between passive sensation and active reflection, Rousseau also affirms Condillac's wider and more mediated distribution of activity between bodily and spiritual "operations."

Active Childhood, Memory, and Judgement

In *Émile*, Rousseau applies Condillac's genetic epistemology to his account of childhood development and memory. Most directly, Rousseau presents childish reason as fully functional within the child's sphere of understanding and interest. Following his passage on images and ideas, Rousseau immediately qualifies his distinction between adult and childish reason:

> I see that they reason very well in all that they understand and that relates to their present and sensible interest…One errs…in wishing to make them attentive to considerations that do not touch them in any manner, like those of their future interest, or their [future] happiness as men.[131]

[130] Rousseau to Paul-Claude Moltou, 1 August 1763, *Correspondance*.
[131] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 345.

Children do not possess adult reason before the age of the twelve. But they understand fully, as *idea*, the reasoning that affects their interest and present reality. Rousseau thus advises "if you…apply yourself to always ground [the child] in himself, and are attentive to all that immediately touches him, you will find him capable of perception, memory, and even reason."[132]

Rousseau's phenomenology of memory bears out the Condillacian analogy between different stages of reason. At the most basic level, the child remembers – and, thus, on some level, understands – experiences as a "text" that he may interpret more fully after the age of reason. He writes that "all that surrounds [a child] is a book in which he enriches his memory continually without even thinking about it, all waiting for the moment when his judgement may profit from it."[133] Jean-François Perrin interprets Rousseau's book image as a reference to the "book of nature," in which the *tableaux* of objects appear separately, as direct, passive images of the natural and divine order.[134] Indeed, Rousseau sometimes speaks of these patterns as merely raw data, to be compared or re-shaped later,[135] or merely as the passive association of objects that appear together.[136] The child remembers "all that he sees, all that he hears."

Each of these memories, however, is an internally structured proto-idea, rather than an isolated *image*. The child "registers" complex figures, such as "actions, the discourse of men, and all that surrounds him."[137] In *Confessions*, Rousseau similarly reads and retains the works of

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[132] Ibid., 359.
[133] Ibid., 351.
[134] Perrin, "Passivité," 50.
[135] See, for instance, Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 344, 481, 572.
[136] For instance, in his discussion of smell, Rousseau echoes Locke, and worries about the simultaneous "imprint," on the memory, of random associations between sensations; cf. Ibid., 417; John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: Everyman's Library, 1972), 2.33.5-7. In this passage, however, Rousseau is clear that children remember odors passively, through their association with more memorable sensations of taste.
[137] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 351. In *Émile*, Rousseau implicitly contrasts these storehouses of proto-ideas of the world with the "multitudes of images" that a child is often forced to learn from books: "dates, proper names, places, all isolated objects or empty ideas that are retained solely as the memory of signs." Ibid., 350.

Locke, Malebranche, Leibnitz, and Descartes in a childlike manner – "*almost* without reasoning." [138] In his preface to *Julie*, Rousseau offers a useful passage to reconcile the language of discrete objects in "nature" and the more complex objects of his examples. Rousseau's stand-in for himself, "R," demands that novels intended for country readers speak in their country language. "If novels simply offer *tableaux* of objects that surround [country-folk], duties that they can fulfill, novels will not drive them mad. They will make them wise. Novels made for country-folk must speak the language of country-folk; to instruct them, novels must please and interest them."[139] Counter-intuitively, objects *become* discrete images when these objects connect to the larger linguistic horizon in which the child (or, in this case, the reader) lives. They become open to the child's action and his later, more robust judgement, because they are embedded within an intimate background pattern of connections. Action lives in the memories themselves, as it were, even if the child cannot fully read them. Indeed, the child's key sensations and feelings must be structured from the beginning. Otherwise, he would not remember them.

As he develops, the child retains those experiences that are directly related to his interest and activity. Rousseau writes, "All *ideas* that [the child] may understand and are useful to him, all those that relate to his happiness...trace themselves…[on his memory] in characters that cannot be erased."[140] Both a child and an adult will remember what he understands actively, as an idea.

The young child's first sentiment of his existence – and his love of that existence, *amour de soi* – is similarly defined by the activity of his memory. Rousseau argues, more generally,

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[138] *Confessions*, 1, 237.
[139] *Julie*, 2, 21-22.
[140] *Émile*, 4, 351; my italics.

that the child's happiness is the result of an equilibrium between his desire and his abilities. The child is peaceful when he desires only experiences that he can obtain by his own activity. He is happy insofar as he draws his sentiment of existence from within himself. As scholars have recently highlighted, the child's highest good is the active (and measured) expansion of this sphere of desire and competence into the external world. Rousseau writes, "We must not imagine only conserving [the] infant. It is not enough…To live is not to breathe, it is to act. It is to make use of our organs, our senses, our faculties, of all the parts of us that give the sentiment of our existence."[141] The child experiences his existence when he exercises his faculties, and encounters continually a partially foreign world. The difficult task of the tutor is to judge precisely the limit that will fully engage his capacities and the most intense sentiment of his existence.

Less attention has been paid in Rousseau scholarship to the fact that the expansive sentiment of existence is also a temporal experience. For Rousseau, children first experience a sense of themselves by connecting memories of their active and varied explorations of the world.

> Able to do more for themselves, they have less need of guidance [*recourir*] from others. Along with their strength, the knowledge develops that allows them to direct it. It is at this second stage that, properly speaking, the life of the individual begins: he then forms [*prend*] consciousness of himself. Memory extends the sentiment of identity across all the moments of his existence. He becomes truly one, the same, and consequently capable of happiness and misery. It is important, therefore, to begin to consider him already as a moral being.[142]

The infant becomes a child as he gains the power to direct himself within the physical environment. Moving and running in fields – "where he runs, frisks, and falls a hundred times"– he gradually connects *his* movement with past moments of play and exploration. He actively

[141] Ibid., 253.
[142] Ibid., 301.

"takes himself" (*prend*) to be the same person, identical through time, because he directs himself as a constant force through space. The child is united in the world because he throws himself into it, selecting some directions over others.

In some scholarly treatments, Rousseau's doctrine of the sentiment of existence follows closely the Cartesian tradition of an innate sentiment of internal consciousness, and of an ongoing and passive memory of that consciousness.[143] In this interpretation, the sentiment of existence accompanies phenomenologically, but precedes ontologically, the self's perceptions and memories. In his first major work, *Essai*, for instance, Condillac argues that the self experiences a constant sentiment of existence that accompanies and "links" to the varied objects of its attention.[144] Other scholars divide Rousseau's treatment of the sentiment of existence into two moments: (a) the passive sentiment of present existence, which the young child shares with the "natural man" in the state of nature; and (b) the subsequent comparison between memories of past, passive sentiments, a comparison which produces the sentiment of the *moi*.[145]

Rousseau thus seems to follow a traditional view in some form. Where one interpretation argues that Rousseau follows Locke's conception of an intuitive inner sensation, the other interpretation points to Rousseau's proximity to Buffon's particular interpretation of two types of

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[143] See, in particular, Melzer, *Natural Goodness*, 38-40.

[144] Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connoissances humaines*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 1 (Geneva: Slatkine, (1746, 1822) 1970), 1.2.15. For other examples of this tradition, see Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding*, 1, 2.27.11; ibid., 2: 4.9.3; *Encyclopédie*, s.v. "sentiment intime," accessed August 6, 2016, http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/.

[145] See, John S. Spink, "Les avateurs du 'sentiment de l'existence' de Locke à Rousseau," *Dix-huitième siècle* 10 (1978): 297; Jean Starobinski, introduction and notes to *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi des hommes*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 1321n3; Udo Thiel, "Self and Sensibility: From Locke to Condillac and Rousseau," *Intellectual History Review* (2014): 12. See, also, Catherine Glyn Davies, *"Concience" as Consciousness: the Idea of Self-Awareness in French Philosophical Writing from Descartes to Diderot*, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, vol. 272 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1990), 74.

self-perception in Locke: the passive intuition of existence, and the active reflection on past sensation that forms a sense of distinct selfhood and identity.[146]

In *Émile*, however, Rousseau recasts the sentiment of existence and identity-formation as the product of the child's activity within a foreign world. The child starts to experience the sentiment of his existence when he develops capabilities of self-directed movement. And he "forms consciousness of himself" when he develops an active faculty of memory to connect and compare memories of his active explorations. Before this moment – which also inaugurates new abilities to speak, walk and eat – "he has no sentiment, no idea; barely does he have sensations; he does not even sense his own existence."[147] After it, the self-direction of the child's memory echoes and augments the child's experience of its self-direction through space.

Rousseau's model in this reversal is Condillac's *Traité*, which Rousseau read in the early stages of drafting *Émile*.[148] Rousseau scholars often read *Traité* as a move towards a more radical sensualism – one that Rousseau rejects. They thus follow a tradition, dating from the 19th-century, of opposing Condillac's sensualism and Kant's transcendentalism.[149] But Condillac's thought experiment, of a statue that sequentially and separately experiences its senses, addresses a different problem than the relative independence of the faculties. Condillac seeks to overcome the danger of solipsism, most likely in response to Denis Diderot's criticisms of *Essai*, and the affinity that he saw between Condillac's position and that of the Anglo-Irish idealist, the Bishop George Berkeley.[150] Given his premise, in *Essai*, that sensations are "simply manners of being,"

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[146] On the influence of Locke's different understandings of inner-experience – particularly the intuitive state of sensibility and the reflective and moral self – see Thiel, "Self and Sensibility."
[147] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 298.
[148] *Lettres morales*, 4, 1096-97.
[149] On the reception of Condillac's work in the 19th- and 20th-centuries, see Aarsleff, *Locke to Saussure*, 147-76.
[150] See, Quarfood, *Statue et l'enfant*, 24-25.

he seeks to discover how it is possible to "see objects outside of ourselves."[151] In this text, the sense of touch, in particular, mediates between the self and the world, because it at once articulates the statue's limits, and exposes it to objects that resist its own internal movement. A 1776 letter written by Rousseau indicates that he understood the success of Condillac's project in these terms, as an answer to the challenge of Berkeley's idealism.[152]

In *Émile*, Rousseau draws implicitly from the logic of *Traité* in his exposition of the child's identity-formation, even if he does not reference the text directly. The child feels a sense of his existence when he develops the ability to direct himself through space, because he is like Condillac's statue. He takes joy in expanding his faculties and in his exposure to a foreign world. Rousseau does not articulate the connection of movement and memory. In his account, the child simply develops memory and "new force" to direct his actions at the same time. Condillac again makes the connection explicit: "the hand…successively fixes sight on all the different parts of a figure, and engraves these parts in the memory."[153] The statue's emerging ability to touch articulates the contours and impenetrability of objects – including its own body – so that they leave a much stronger impression on the mind. And the overlap between sight and touch allows it actively to compare sensations of the same objects in different terms, a prerequisite for articulating a foreign object in extended space. As Rousseau writes, "especially in comparing sight to touch," children learn "to judge [objects'] size, their shape and all their

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[151] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, "Précis de la seconde partie," 22. Condillac attributes the conceptual device of the statue that experiences discrete and successive senses to Elisabeth Ferrand. Ibid., "Dessein de cet ouvrage," 37-43; "Précis de la seconde partie," 22. On Condillac's evolving position between *Essai* and *Traité*, see Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment*, 24-25.

[152] Implicitly referencing Diderot's challenge to Condillac, Rousseau writes, "How is it that we came to respond to this terrible logician [Berkeley] in the end? Take away the interior sentiment, and I defy all of the modern philosophers together to prove that there are bodies." Rousseau to Laurent Aymon de Franquières, 15 January 1769, *Correspondance*.

[153] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 3.3.15.

qualities."[154] The surrounding passages make clear that Rousseau's treatment of touch draws directly from *Traité*.

The child, on the other hand, actively connects the sentiment of his existence in each past action to these increasingly articulated, past experiences. Udo Thiel argues that Rousseau most likely follows Buffon in his description of identity-formation, because memory "extends [*étend*]" a previously constituted and passive sentiment of present existence *to* "all moments" of his past experience.[155] But Rousseau's logic and language of identity-formation is much more Condillacian. First, memory extends a sentiment of *already* developing "sentiment of identity" rather than a mere "sentiment or consciousness of existence." I am arguing that this "sentiment of identity" is the effect of the increasing force and articulation of the child's bodily existence.

Second, the child extends this sentiment of identity over his past experiences as a continuation of his active exploration and play. Rousseau's language of extension "over" or "across" [*étend…sur*] memories recalls Condillac's description of the statue's sense of touch articulating discrete sensations of colour over objects within a three-dimensional space. For Condillac, the hand "teaches the eyes to extend colours over [*les étendre chacune sur*] all the parts of their environment."[156] In a passage that prefigures Rousseau's description of the active sentiment of existence, using a related verb, Condillac similarly writes, "movement spreads [*répand*] the most vivid consciousness of its existence to all the parts of its body, and makes the body enjoy itself in its full extension."[157] Just as the statue increasingly feels its *own* force as it maps its surrounding space, the child thus increasingly articulates his sentiment of selfhood

[154] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 284. See, also, ibid., 381-83, 88-92, 96-97.
[155] Thiel, "Self and Sensibility," 12.
[156] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 3.3.17.
[157] Ibid., 2.6.2.

across his memories. As Thiel writes of Condillac, "we individuate our own selves only as bodily beings, through the sense of touch; and we regard ourselves as diachronically identical beings on the basis of the experience of change and memory of ourselves as bodily beings."[158] I argue that this description also applies to Rousseau. Through memory, the child increasingly *articulates* his force within his past memories of action, rather than extending a passive sentiment "to" [*étend à*] already fully articulated memories (as English translators often render this passage[159]). Both the child's engagement with the world and with himself is active and passionate.

In *Émile*, the name of the passion for this existence is *amour de soi*, the child's selfish love for his expansive existence within space and for past iterations of himself through time. The child loves partially foreign, but consonant, experiences, rather than a simple self-unity, as some scholars suggest.[160] Rousseau presents *amour de soi* and the more ostensibly comparative process of *amour propre* as originally indistinguishable. He writes, "the only passion natural to man is the love of self [*l'amour de soi-même*] or *l'amour-propre* taken in an extended sense. This *amour-propre* in self, or relative to us, is good and useful. In this regard, it is naturally neutral, because it has no necessary relation to others."[161] The child loves his self across the self's different moments of activity. *Amour de soi* is "*amour propre*…relative to [himself]," the

[158] Thiel, "Self and Sensibility," 9.
[159] See, ibid., 12; Bloom, Introduction and Notes, 78.
[160] See, for instance, Melzer's influential account of *amour de soi* as an instantaneous feeling of unity and desire for self-preservation. To make this claim with respect to *Émile*, Melzer cites from the "Profession" in Book IV, and Rousseau's comment in Book One that the *moi* is the awareness of "the 'I' to which he…relate[s] all his sensation [*du* moi *à laquelle il rapporteroit toutes ses sensations*]." In the latter quotation, however, *il* refers not to "he," a child, but to "it", an imagined, monstrous "man-child." For Rousseau, once again, the child originally lacks any sentiment of his existence (on which *amour de soi* is based). This *moi* must be formed through activity, rather than being felt, passively. Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 280, 98; Melzer, *Natural Goodness*, 36-40.
[161] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 322.

comparison and ranking of past, and different, self-iterations.[162] The child is a moral being "capable of happiness or misery," because he identifies with sentiments of past actions that he may now affirm or regret. Even relative to himself, his *amour de soi* confronts him with internal plurality.[163]

As Florent Guénard highlights, the moment of identity-formation also inaugurates the child's ability to evaluate objects with respect to his nature. In Book Three, Rousseau claims that sensations of objects are purely passive. One simply "feels what one feels."[164] One needs active judgement to make abstract comparisons of objects. By contrast, sentiments are active and implicit *evaluations* of objects with reference to the good of the self as a whole. "While all of our ideas come to us from the outside, the sentiments appreciating them are within ourselves, and it is by them alone that we know the accord or discord [*convenance ou disconvenance*] that exists between ourselves and the things that we ought to investigate or flee."[165] As Guénard puts it, *convenance*, for Rousseau, refers to a "regulated order of relationships" between discrete parts of a system that persist, to a degree, through time. The child feels what "suits (*convient*)," or stems from, the inner harmony between its diverse passions and needs, at a given time.[166] As Rousseau writes in a note to Helvétius's *De l'esprit*, "we must distinguish purely organic and

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[162] As N. J. H. Dent points out, even the natural man of the second *Discours* feels his *amour de soi* passionately and over time. Rousseau speaks of him "envisaging…the pain or the joy of a good or bad [past] success" in hunting. *Discours sur l'origine*, 3, 219n15; N. J. H. Dent, "Rousseau on *Amour-Propre* 1," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 72 (1998): 31. Like all passions, *amour de soi* is relational.

[163] In *Dialogues*, Rousseau similarly characterizes "all the loving and gentle passions" – including, presumably, *amour de soi* – as relational: "there is another sensibility that I call active and moral that is the faculty of attaching our affections to those beings that are strangers to us...Its force is due to the rapport that we sense between ourselves and other beings…The positive or attractive action is simply the work of nature that looks to extend and reinforce the sentiment of our being." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau juge Jean Jacques: Dialogues*, in *Œuvre Complètes*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Pléiade, 1959), 805. My argument is that past iterations of the self are both internally foreign and extend the present child's sentiment of existence.

[164] *Émile*, 4, 481. In other places, Rousseau reserves completely the words *juger* and *jugement* to describe idea-formation; ibid.; *Notes sur "l'esprit"*, 4, 1122-24.

[165] *Émile*, 4, 599. See also, ibid., 429.

[166] Florent Guénard, *Rousseau et le travail de la convenance* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2004), 145.

local impressions, from total impressions that affect the whole individual."[167] The first are simple sensations (*sensations*) that the young child cannot yet compare in a robust way. The second are sentiments (*sentimens*) of the relation of these sensations to the child as a whole. The sentiment of existence is the sentiment of an evaluating self. The child actively evaluates whether to investigate or flee the objects that he encounters passively.

Rousseau also suggests that even the young, self-uniting child may compare objects in order to discern their relation to his nature. As Rousseau writes of the still pre-pubescent, yet rational child,[168] he "must know himself enough to conceive of what consists in his well-being, and…seize on sufficiently extended relations in order to judge that which suits him and that which does not." [169] Admittedly, Rousseau here speaks particularly of the ability of the older child to assess what is useful. He also suggests elsewhere that the earliest sentiment of *convenance* is a passive feeling of pain or pleasure:

> As soon as we have…consciousness of our sensations, we are disposed to investigate or flee the objects that produce them, at first according to whether they are agreeable or unpleasant, then by the accord or discord [*convenance ou disconvenance*] that we find between ourselves and these objects, and finally by judgements that we make of them by the idea of happiness or of perfection that reason gives us.[170]

In this schema, the young, post-identity-formation child feels the agreeableness of sensations (based on *necessity*); the older, rational child feels the accord with objects that they "find" with

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[167] *Notes sur 'l'Esprit'*, 4, 1121.
[168] In Book Three of *Émile*, Rousseau considers pre-pubescents to fall between the *raison pueril* of true childhood (which ends at twelve years of age) and the abstract reason of adulthood (which starts to become possible at fifteen years). They possess *raison intellectuelle* and may compare simple ideas in the natural world, but have not yet developed the capacity to withhold their will or address abstract ideas. On Rousseau's development of his divisions between ages through his drafts, and his overlapping terminology, see Peter D. Jimack, *La genèse et le rédaction de l'"Émile" de J.-J. Rousseau: étude sur l'histoire de l'ouvrage jusqu'à sa parution*, vol. 13, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century (Les Délices, Genève: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1960), Chapter 7.
[169] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 444.
[170] Ibid., 248.

their own comparison (based on *use*); and the adult judges the proper ordering of the faculties (based on a complex idea of *happiness*).

Again, however, Rousseau complicates his divisions between discrete developmental stages, in other passages on memory-formation. He writes of the young child, prior to the age of reason, "If nature gives the child a subtle brain that makes it proper to receive all sorts of impressions, it is not to engrave…all these words [of Kings and dates] without any sense for *his* age…but it is so that all the ideas that he can conceive and are useful to him, all these that relate to his happiness, and must one day enlighten him about his duties, tracing themselves there in ineffaceable characters."[171] For Perrin, Rousseau here designates a "bank" of unconnected ideas that only becomes useful in retrospect.[172] He argues that the influences of Diderot and Nicolas Malebranche outweighs that of Condillac on Rousseau's memory-theory.[173] Rousseau seems to describe, using a Diderotian (and, ultimately, Leibnizian) model, a child's passive exposure to patterns of ideas and sensations that ultimately create the material for later comparison, and condition his later sense of taste. [174] In Rousseau's language, the child is exposed directly to "the book of nature." And that remnant of that nature will later speak, as the Divine speaks in

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[171] Ibid., 351.
[172] Perrin, "Passivité," 46-47; *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 58-59.
[173] *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 53-62. For a different view on Malebranche's influence on Rousseau's philosophy of memory in *Confessions*, see Hoffman, "Mémoire," 81-82.
[174] Diderot writes, in a passage that parallels Rousseau's description of childhood memory, "everything that we have seen, known, perceived, heard…the multitude of human voices, of animal cries and of physical noises, to the melody and the harmony of all tunes, of all the pieces of music, of all the concerts that we have heard; all that exists in us without our knowing it." For Diderot, these memories are often disorganized and unconnected, and resemble what Rousseau calls *images*. A particularly full memory is like "a shop filled with analyses and judgements of works that the analyst did not understand, and that are only connected by their common form." Denis Diderot, *Élements de physiologie*, ed. Paolo Quintili (Paris: Champion, 2004), "Mémoire"; "Lettre sur les sourd et muets," in *Oeuvres philosophique*, ed. Michel Delon and Barbara de Negroni (Paris: Pléiade, 2010), 223. Cf. Gottfried Wilhelm Freiherr von Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 114-16. On the influence of Leibniz on Diderot's conception of memory, see Yvon Belaval, *L'esthétique sans paradoxe de Diderot* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), 50.

Malebranche.[175] The direct experience of nature is the source of the "interior sentiment" of the beauty of the moral order – what Rousseau calls *conscience*.[176] In this interpretation, nostalgic memory may awaken our childhood imprint of natural truth.

In the passage just cited, however, the child imprints only ideas that he can *presently* conceive and use, rather than an unconscious impression of everything. Rousseau's grammar also leaves open the possibility that the child presently senses what "relates" to his happiness. Within a limited sphere, the child thus feels a *convenance,* based on minimal comparison. As we shall see in Chapter Six, moreover, Rousseau implies that nostalgic memories of adolescent virtue and *bons sens*, rather than those of childhood simplicity, recall adults to their sentiment of conscience. Like Condillac's *Essai, Émile* draws an analogy (but not an identity), between the basic comparisons of the young child, and his later, more complex and potentially more systematic comparisons of past sensations as an adolescent, and, then, as an adult.

The dominant readings of nostalgia in Rousseau thus do not apply easily to *Émile* as a whole. Unlike Shklar's and Starobinski's interpretations of Rousseauian nostalgia, the child is an evaluating, comparing, and remembering being already in his first sentiment of united existence. If Rousseau longs for childhood, it cannot be simply for passive transparency. Nor can we follow Derrida, and argue that Rousseau longs for pure activity *or* pure passivity.[177]

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[175] See, esp., Nicolas de Malebranche, *Méditations chrestiennes* (Cologne: Balthasar d'Egmond, 1683), 14.4-5. For the partial (Cartesian) background for Condillac's and Rousseau's associational theories of memory and imagination (which I treat in the next chapter), see, "De la recherche de la vérité," in *Oeuvres de Malebranche*, ed. Jules Simon (Paris: Charpentier, 1842), 2.1.5-8, 2.2.1-3.

[176] On the strong influence of Malebranche on Rousseau's conception of "interior sentiment" and its relation to reason, see Émile Bréhier, "Les lectures malebranchistes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 1, no. 1 (1938); Robert Derathé, *Le rationalisme de J.-J. Rousseau* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), 63-73, 135-38.

[177] While Derrida does not treat the activity/passivity binary in detail, he deconstructs its opposition in his larger analysis of Rousseau's conceptions of the will, the self, and nature. Ultimately, for Derrida, "mediacy is the name of all that Rousseau wanted opinionatedly to erase," which includes the "middle voice" between passivity and

Instead, we may develop further Burgelin's claim that Rousseau invites us to long for the play between activity and passivity, what Derrida would call the "middle voice" between activity and passivity. [178] On the one hand, as we have seen, passive sensation is the condition of the newly self-conscious child's responses to the world. He cannot act or orient himself without often painful and sometimes overwhelming stimulation.

On the other hand, the child's active exploration reveals his limits and dependence. Once again, Condillac's *Traité* articulates Roussseau's logic. Condillac's imagined "statue" is astonished at not finding its body in all that it touches. From "this astonishment is born the anxiety to know…just to where it exists. Thus, the statue takes up, abandons, and re-engages all that is around it. It seizes itself, compares itself with the objects that it touches, and – by measure that it forms more exact ideas – its body and these objects articulate themselves under its hands."[179] Prior to mapping its body, the statue was absolutely passive in the face of undifferentiated sensation. The statue's gradual reactions – its active mapping of its own body – throw it into astonishment and anxiety about the *now* foreign and articulated sensations of objects. Its activity reveals its vulnerability to foreign sensation. Its resulting acts of "taking up" the world further master it, but also measure more exactly its own limits and exposure.

Rousseau applies Condillac's model of the development of the statue to that of the child, although he does not develop all of Condillac's steps. As he writes about touch in a Condillacian vein, after referencing him indirectly: "[i]t is only by movement that we learn that there are things that are not us, and it is only by our own movement that we acquire the idea of

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activity. For instance, the supplement is a "dangerous solution" for Rousseau, because it "occupies the middle point between total absence and total presence." Derrida, *Grammatology*, 157.

[178] Burgelin, *Philosophie de l'existence*, 128; Derrida, "Differance," 130; *Grammatology*, 150.

[179] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 2.5.8.

extension."[180] Where Rousseau emphasizes movement, Condillac highlights the motivations for movement: anxiety about the vulnerability of the self, and curiosity and hope for new pleasure. Ultimately, Émile must actively "measure the radius of his sphere" in order to "stay in the center like an insect in the middle of his web."[181] While Rousseau defines happiness as self-sufficiency, the child develops his capacities in order to feel the full range of his powers and to articulate their limits. While Émile is not aware of all that the Tutor does to allow him to develop fully his capabilities, he constantly feels his dependence on him and on the passive sensations of the physical world. This dependence is the condition, rather than simply the limit, of his activity.

Child, Man-child, Statue

In Book One, Rousseau presents the perverse opposite to the weak but active child: a "man-child [*homme-enfant*]" who "has from his birth the stature and strength of a grown man." Here, finally, is the image of primal unity and passive sensation that critics often present as the chief object of Rousseauian nostalgia. For Rousseau, this being is a monster. He is "a perfect imbecile, an automaton, an immobile and almost insensible statue." In this state of premature development, "not only would he not perceive any object as outside of him, he would not transmit any of them by the sense-organ that made him perceive it." The man-child lacks the experiences of discomfort, weakness, and pleasure that propel the child gradually to map his body, and then his world. He thus skips the important period of experience and development that the child is forced to endure. Rousseau writes, "as his body would have had its growth, and his limbs would be fully developed, he consequently would have neither the anxieties nor the

[180] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 284.
[181] Ibid., 305.

continual movement of children, and could die of hunger before being moved to look for his subsistence."[182] By contrast, the infant – whose organs are "half-formed" and develop more sequentially, starting with touch – can respond to, and isolate, discrete sensations of pleasure and pain.

Indeed, the child benefits from the necessary development of his organs, because they grow in gradual and precise responses to (the type of) objects in his world. As Rousseau writes, discussing the importance of developing childish reason, "while his delicate and flexible organs can adjust themselves to bodies on which they must act, while his still pure senses are exempt from illusions, it is the time to exercise each one to its proper function, it is the time to learn how to know the sensible relations that things have with us."[183] The child knows the world through his active mapping of his body and objects, and through his development in direct relation to the objects that he pursues. We can now understand better Rousseau's argument that the "passive" senses reveal the world directly, unlike "active" reason. He is open to the world, because his capacity is partial. The man-child, by contrast, is much more vulnerable than the infant, because his capabilities exist in isolation from discrete sensations that gradually attune his capabilities to his needs, his body, and surrounding objects. For instance, he could not even satisfy hunger with food directly in front of him, because "there is no immediate communication between the muscles of the stomach and those of the legs and arms."[184]

The man-child is categorically more advanced than the infant in one revealing respect: he has a united sense of self, a *moi*, prior to memory or speech. Without mapping the location of

[182] Ibid., 280.
[183] Ibid., 370.
[184] Ibid., 280.

different sensations to discrete bodily organs, "he would have only one idea, to know the *moi*."[185] Each sensation of the world would be simultaneously and equally *him*. Rousseau writes, "the sensations would reunite in one single point," his brain. He would neither experience separate faculties of sight, sound, touch, smell and taste, nor co-ordinate their sensations to map the outside world. This premature unity hides from the man-child his true vulnerability and dependence, with disastrous results. He is absolutely weak and passive, because he has not been forced gradually to attune his senses and faculties to the world.

Rousseau and Condillac scholarship is divided on whether Rousseau criticizes Condillac's imagined statue in these passages. For some scholars, Rousseau refers to Buffon's similar trope of a fully formed man who slowly develops his faculties.[186] Other scholars argue that the man-child is a stand-in for Condillac's famous statue. In these interpretations, the man-child is an image either of the statue's false abstraction from the temporal and social world,[187] or of the theoretical impossibility of deriving activity and unity from a fully-formed passive body.[188]

Textual evidence suggests that all three positions are partially correct. As Jimack highlights, Rousseau follows closely Condillac's own critique of Buffon's "statue," which Condillac develops in *Traité des animaux*. Condillac writes, for instance, that Buffon's statue "does not guess that it owes its manners of being to exterior causes; it ignores all that comes to it from the four senses… this *moi* seems to it to be the subject of all of its possible

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[185] Ibid.
[186] Jimack, "Influences de Condillac, Buffon, et Helvétius," 119-22.
[187] Pierre Burgelin, introduction and notes to *Émile, ou de l'éducation*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Paris: Pléiade, 1969), cxi-ii, 1324n2; Larry Wolff, "Then I Imagine a Child: The Idea of Childhood and the Philosophy of Memory in the Enlightenment," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31, no. 4 (1998): 391.
[188] Cassirer, *Question of Rousseau*, 113-14; Guénard, *Convenance*, 159.

modifications."[189] As Burgelin remarks, Rousseau transcends Condillac's own account by making his own "statue," Émile, a creature of social attachment and complex desire.[190] Indeed, Condillac writes that prior to the moment when his statue develops a sense of touch, "it is as if it merely exists as a *point*."[191] At this stage, Condillac's statue is also Rousseau's monstrous (nostalgic) fantasy of the man-child.

Pace Burgelin, however, Rousseau's critique of Condillac's statue itself follows Condillac's argument. Aarsleff notes that Condillac self-consciously presents his statue as an artificial being, the stages of whose development are ways to understand the strong role of habit in thinking. Unlike children, for instance, the statue experiences its sensations one at a time and lacks all language (and the more abstract reasoning that depends on language).[192] Moreover, Condillac explicitly stages his presentation of the statue as a "point," a presentation that primarily applies to Part One of *Traité*, in order to highlight the importance of the next moment: the statue articulates a differentiated body within three-dimensional space only once we grant it a sense of touch. As Part Two and Three of *Traité* argue, touch is what allows the statue to approach a real child who synthesizes his sensations, and experiences foreign objects. In his own treatment of the child, Rousseau cites almost exclusively Parts Two and Three of the text, which articulate this more realistic vision of developing reason. Rousseau's concept of the child takes this transformation one step further. He places the child in social and linguistic context. His critique of both Buffon's and Condillac's statues extends further Condillac's *own* critique.

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[189] See, Condillac, *Animaux*, 4, 1.6; Jimack, "Influences de Condillac, Buffon, et Helvétius," 119-21.
[190] Burgelin, Introduction and Notes, cxii.
[191] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 2.2.2; my italics.
[192] Aarsleff, Introduction, xxviii-ix. Aarsleff highlights that Condillac returns to thinking about the strong influence of language in his later texts, a theme that he emphasizes in his earlier *Essai*.

Rousseau's critique of the man-child's immobile, prematurely-formed body similarly follows Condillac's argument. Arguably, the statue and man-child both lack an impulse to venture forward and experience sensations, because they develop the desire to move only on the basis of this experience. In Part One of *Traité*, for instance, the statue desires to experience one of two smells only insofar as it experiences these smells sequentially, and compares them. In this interpretation, the immobile man-child offers an image of Condillac's collapse of the distinction between activity and passivity: the statue's comparison of sensations (a comparison which produces desire) is originally indistinguishable from their contingent sequence in its mind. But Part Two again treats the statue's seeming solipsism as a problem to be solved. While the statue does not grow automatically, "its muscles, which pain contracts, agitate its members, and it moves itself without *even knowing that it moves*." This movement inevitably causes the statue to experience alternative pleasure and pain, and gives it "an interest in studying its movements." Like the child, the statue responds to, rather than transmits, its automatic movement. With this passive movement, Condillac writes, "the statue would be condemned to perfect repose, and possess no means to search for what could be useful or damaging to it."[193] Rousseau's image of the starving man-child clarifies, rather than transcends, a Condillacian position.

The Nostalgia of Identity-Formation

The nostalgic tone of *Émile* more accurately articulates a longing for the exposure to, and evaluation of, foreign sensation. As Burgelin highlights, Rousseau yearns for, and understands, the play between activity and passivity. I have argued that the particular manifestation of this "embedded knowledge" is the child's pleasurable, tactile mapping of the physical world. In his

[193] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 2.5.2; my italics.

notes to the Pléiade edition of *Émile*, Burgelin points to this emphasis on movement as part of Rousseau's break with Condillac's general approach, an approach which looks to the faculty of sight to develop a sense of space.[194] But Condillac himself reverses this particular argument in *Traité*: sight can map space only when assisted by the investigations of touch and movement. The hand must feel out the contours of three-dimensional space to teach the eye how to "look" at figures in the world.[195] Here, *Traité* once again helps us understand Rousseau's implicit argument in Books One and Two of *Émile*.

Without this Condillacian background, Rousseau's presentation of childhood happiness seems paradoxical. He invites the reader to enjoy, and long for, the movement of childhood in which the child – like all people – experiences more pain than pleasure.[196] As Condillac articulates in *Traité*, however, children are like his imagined statue: they enjoy at once the pleasurable object and their own activity in searching for new pleasure and in fleeing pain. Indeed, it is to movement "that they owe the most vivid consciousness of their existence."[197]

In Rousseau's account, however, the joyful experience of the newly united self in space and in memory also involves a sense of loss. For Condillac, the child and the statue both take joy in finding themselves in their bodies, and in their activity in the world. But if the child achieves identity and memory in the same moment, even this primal unity of action is unstable. As Burgelin brings out in his later editorial notes to *Émile*, the child's emotive judgements and reactions take him in disparate directions.[198] "We do not rest in this life for two moments in the same state," Rousseau writes, "the affections of our souls, as well as the modification of our

[194] Burgelin, Introduction and Notes, 1329n1 (to 285).
[195] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 3.3.6.
[196] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 303.
[197] Ibid., 253.
[198] Burgelin, Introduction and Notes, 1336n1.

bodies, are in a continual flux."[199] The child's actions, reactions, evaluations and affections are tied to particular modifications of the body and to particular objects, both of which are subject to change. Even his own sentiments must change, because they will become habitual and passive.[200] The newly united self must endlessly externalize memories of his being that he must also remember as his own. His experience of self-unity is also an experience of the loss of that unity.

This tension in the moment of self-unity is what truly distinguishes Rousseau's vision of the child from Condillac's analysis of the statue. Rousseau does not articulate this difference explicitly. Significantly, however, he begins his account of the child and his early action *prior* to the child's sentiment of his own existence. For Condillac, the abstract statue feels itself as a *moi* as soon as it is conscious of any change, such as that of air quality or temperature. Before the statue moves and maps its body, "it is like it simply exists in a point."[201] For Rousseau, by contrast, the child senses his existence by developing and remembering his action and movement through space. As we have seen, the child reacts to and evaluates the world in disparate moments prior to this development of memory and identity. Unity and (robust) memory are late developments that follow the child's primordial reactions to the world. He is nostalgic as soon as he develops memory, because unity is not his first state.

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[199] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 303.
[200] As the tutor says to Émile about his happiness with Sophie, in Book Five, "if the state which makes us happy lasted endlessly, the habit of enjoying it would take away our taste for it. If nothing changes from without, the heart changes. Happiness leaves us, or we leave it." Ibid., 821.
[201] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 2.1-2.

Turning Towards the Light

The object of Rousseauian nostalgia is also social. Rousseau's examples of the early care of children suggest another dimension foreign to the early life of Condillac's imagined statue: the child's primal openness to the world includes other people. In his discussion of the man-child, Rousseau comments that this impotent and fully developed creature must have been "pretty nearly the primitive state of ignorance and stupidity natural to man before he learned anything from experience or his *fellows*."[202] The comment is odd, because the example, like the whole of Book One, works to show precisely the impossibility of this state for human children. Not only does the child "learn as soon as he is born," but he is exposed and open to the care of his "fellows" from the beginning. The infant "feels his needs, cannot satisfy them, and implores for the help of others with his cries." In the language of accent and grimace, he has "very well followed dialogues" with his nurse. He cries in anger when threatened or struck with malice, objecting to "strange lessons for his entrance in life."[203] Rousseau claims that early education is pre-moral and pre-social. While the tutor may act to delay his robustly social passions – which respond to the imagined intentions of other people, rather than merely to their movement and language – he always has the potential to do so, because he attends to the examples and speech of others from the beginning.

The child's exposure to others in his weakness helps explain further the paradoxical vulnerability of Rousseau's man-child, as well as the most basic object of Rousseauian nostalgia. For Rousseau, "nature made children to be loved and helped."[204] As Burgelin notes, by contrast,

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[202] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 280-81; my italics.
[203] Ibid., 285-86.
[204] Ibid., 315.

the man-child does not even have the empathy of a mother to guide it.[205] Rousseau suggests that the child learns from the movement of other people how to "look" at and handle objects within space, rather than simply to receive them as visual sensations. "Along with their strength, the knowledge develops that allows them to direct it," Rousseau writes; they "have less need of guidance [*recourir*] from others."[206] The self-direction of the child follows from the direction – literally, the re- or co-running, or *recourir* – of other people. This motion exploits and expands the tracks that it has already implicitly mapped out through the touch of others, and through the anxious movement of his body. For instance, Rousseau advises the parent or tutor literally to trace the child's path through space to his toys. This social tracing of the movement of the child's body opens this body to the world. Where the man-child "would not know how to turn his eyes towards what he would need to see," children's "eyes turn themselves continually towards the light" to what announces the help of others.[207] The freedom and activity of the child is premised on his dependence and passive sensation, as well as on the blind activity of his body.

For Rousseau, the child ultimately develops his thought through the structures of grammar and word-formation of a given, shared language. Discussing the education of a pre-rational child in foreign languages, he writes,

> Minds are formed by languages; the thoughts take on the colour of linguistic idioms. Only reason is common; the spirit in each language has its particular form. This difference may well be the partial cause or effect of national characters...in all the nations of the world, language follows the vicissitudes of mores and is conserved or altered with them. [208]

[205] Ibid., 1324n2.
[206] Ibid., 301.
[207] Ibid., 280, 82.
[208] Ibid., 346.

Derrida cites this passage to highlight Rousseau's worry about representation and the mediation of writing. As Rousseau writes in the sentence prior to this passage, "in changing their signs, languages also modify the ideas that [these signs] represent." The signifier dominates the signified, and the language of instruction contaminates the lesson.[209]

But Rousseau's point is precisely the reverse: children are relatively immune to taking on foreign languages – and thus ways of life – because their understanding is so tied to their own communal practices. A child may certainly memorize the words of another language, and transliterate the signs of his experiences into a foreign alphabet. Rousseau remarks that a gifted German child may memorize the dictionaries of six languages before the age of reason. But, "he is still only speaking German," expressing German experience, practices, and interests – with their singular "colour" and connections – in exotic terms. Without the individual ability to compare and superimpose images – which defines adult reason – substitution is limited. Thus "each *idea*…can have but one form," whatever its expression.[210]

Rousseau's vocabulary of *idea* implies that in his own language such thinking happens by other means: through the guiding connections of language and social experiences to which the child is drawn. Thoughts "take on the colour of linguistic idioms." In 18th-century French and German linguistics and philosophy, *analogy* is the more general name for the grammar and dominant expressions of a language that associate particular ideas (including ideas of sentiments) and dictate its nomenclature. Rousseau's description of the close relation between language and thought draws from this tradition – most likely, *via* Condillac's *Essai*. Indeed, Rousseau's comment echoes a similar passage in *Essai*. The passage follows Condillac's most extensive

[209] Derrida, *Grammatology*, 170.
[210] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 346-47. My italics.

discussion of analogy as a characteristic of language.[211] For instance, Condillac points to the multiple connections in Latin expressions and constructions between terms for agriculture and terms for nobility.[212] Taken together, related groups of expressions define the character of a particular language. These local patterns of connection between ideas are immediately clear in people's speech. Condillac writes, "[people] must always insensibly link their words to accessory ideas which indicate how they are affected and what their thoughts are…we need only a short acquaintance with someone to learn his language."[213]

For several 17th- and 18th-century philosophers – most influentially, Condillac – analogy is also a normative epistemological term: analogies between words *should* reflect precise links between ideas. A language may be termed "more advanced" the closer it realizes this ideal. For Condillac, a highly developed language contains analogies that establish particularly systematic relationships between ideas that express true similarity and dissimilarity. These analogies also increase the precision of comparisons and the operation of the memory on which precise comparison depends. Today, we often treat "analogy" as primarily a literary device, and speak of ideas as *merely* analogous. For Condillac – and, I am arguing, for Rousseau – imaginative and rational connections may overlap and aid one another.[214] Crucially, any given set of ideas has

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[211] "From this account of the progress of language [by the perfection of analogy through the genius of poets], it can be understood that, for anyone who knows languages well, they are like a painting of the character and genius of each people. He will see how the imagination has combined the ideas in accordance with the preconceptions and passions; he will see how each nation formed a different spirit in proportion to its degree of isolation from other nations. But if mores have influenced the language, the language in turn…has influenced mores and for a long time preserved the character of each people." Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 2.1.15.162. Importantly, unlike Condillac, Rousseau reserves a universal reason – presumably this is the reason to which the Savoyard Vicar aspires. For both Rousseau and Condillac, however, thinking (also) occurs through language.

[212] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 2.1.15.144.

[213] Ibid., 2.1.15.143.

[214] Ibid., 2.2.15.147-57. Nevertheless, in this tradition, philosophers limit analogic inductions to probable, rather than certain, conclusions. Bad analogies are also a great source of vague and untrustworthy ideas. See, for instance, *Encyclopédie*, s.v. "analogie," accessed 2 February 2016, http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/.

multiple types of resemblance.[215] Languages, therefore, may exhibit comparable precision and animation by means of different analogies.[216] These analogies define what Condillac and others call a language's "genius." They respond to and shape a people's distinctive needs and way of life.

For Rousseau, children thus carry their guiding emotions and analogies into their transliteration of other languages, because these emotions and analogies reflect their social navigation of the world. Rousseau's argument about the unilingualism of children echoes Condillac's point that poetic translation is impossible, because "the same thoughts cannot be expressed in both with the same beauties." Indeed, Condillac argues that to speak a language without its guiding connections and feelings is to "speak in a foreign language and cease to be understood."[217] Like the infant, the speaking child experiences, responds to, and evaluates the "lead" of other people. He draws on the analogies of his languages to evaluate and compare sensations.

For Rousseau, children also know the freedom of analogous reasoning, though they may forget it as adults. For Condillac and for many 18th-century European linguists, analogies – in addition to defining the character of a synchronic language – provide paradigms by which to extend words to new domains, and make new comparison between ideas. Native-speakers master the analogies of their languages insofar as they deploy them in new contexts, linking new ideas through the application and extension of older patterns.[218] For Rousseau, children thus have

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[215] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 2.1.3.39; Aarsleff, Introduction, 32ne.
[216] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.1.15.160.
[217] Ibid., 2.1.15.160-61.
[218] Ibid., 2.1.15.160; Gerda Hassler, "'Analogy': The History of a Concept and a Term from the 17th to the 19th Century," in *History of Linguistics 2005: Selected Papers From the 10th International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences (ICHOLS X)*, ed. Douglas Kibbee (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2007), 160.

"a grammar of their age the syntax and rules of which are more general than ours. If one pays close attention to them, we will be astounded by the exactitude with which they follow certain *analogies*, very viciously, if you will, but with great regularity."[219] Rousseau advises his reader to let children apply freely and rigorously these native analogies. One can always later attend to the exceptions.

Words that refer to ideas that fall outside the child's understanding and memory, therefore, undermine the conditions of the child's activity, rather than his "self-presence" or passive unity. Rousseau's ostensive target in Book Two of *Émile* is educational practices that focus on the memorization of topics completely removed from a child's world. History or Latin lessons can have no meaning for a child who can neither understand the inner motivations of long dead actors, nor deploy Latin to navigate his world. These subjects are harmful, because signs with no clear referents impoverish the young child's experience and memory.[220] Such an education "overwhelms his sad and sterile childhood." He will learn and forget vague phrases and dates, rather than developing fully his faculties and articulating precisely the contours of his surrounding environment. Moreover, he will have few memories in later life on which to draw in order to interpret and understand the world and the conditions of his happiness.[221]

On this point, Rousseau follows Condillac closely. In a passage that predates Rousseau's text by eighteen years, Condillac laments, "If a teacher who perfectly knew the origin and progress of our ideas talked to his pupil only about things that are closely related to the pupil's needs and to his age; if he had the skill to place him in the circumstances that will best teach him to make his ideas precise and to give them the stability of lasting signs… just think of the clarity

[219] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 293-94; my italics.
[220] Ibid., 346-48.
[221] Ibid., 351.

and scope he would give to the mind of his pupil!"[222] Condillac also laments the abstract teaching of Latin, history, and geography: "I say once more that the first thing we must aim for is to give their minds the exercise of all its operations; and to that end we need not run after things that are unfamiliar to them: playful talk will do the trick."[223]

The memorization of abstract words and facts also teaches the child to rely on the judgement of other people. Rousseau writes, "it is in the first word that the child uses to show off, it is in the first time that he takes on another's word without seeing its utility himself, that his judgement is lost. He will have to shine in the eyes of fools for a long time before he atones for such a loss."[224] The child will not remember words that are divorced from his experience. But he will develop the dangerous habit of treating words and facts as commodities with which to buy the approval of others. More generally, traditional education, comprised of study and reading, alienates the child from the movement and education of his body. Cooped up in a classroom, he has "a surplus of strength beyond what he needs to preserve himself." In a limited environment his body has limited needs. He redirects this excess of strength and vitality to a purely "speculative faculty." This energy becomes available for "other uses," such as impressing his teachers or peers.[225] The abstract and meaningless words of others at once remove him from his proper sphere of action, and provide him with the opportunity to treat knowledge as a social game.

In the end, Rousseau's distinction between active thought and passive sensation – and the understanding of nostalgia that depends on this distinction – plays out in social and moral, rather

[222] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.4.12.
[223] Ibid., 2.2.42.
[224] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 350.
[225] Ibid., 359.

than individual and epistemological, terms. The child is truly passive when his *amour propre* removes him from a sphere of possible action: from his evaluating response to the bodies and words of others. As we shall see in the Conclusion to this dissertation, for Rousseau, an entire people may become similarly weak and vain, because they adopt foreign laws that they cannot apply and evaluate.

Conclusion

Ultimately, we must revise the view that Rousseau distinguishes sharply between the ideal and solitary education of Émile – for which he longs – and his more general and disparaging comments about "children" who live according to the habits of a fallen social order.[226] Rather, Rousseau's text presents the child's unity as a moral and social phenomenon. The child is open to the dangers of habit precisely because he necessarily navigates his world with others. His education must help him avoid opposing forms of passive, social life: the comfort of unthinking habit, on the one hand, and the promise of the external abstractions of other people, on the other. Instead, Rousseau demands that the child use his judgement in social context. He internalizes and evaluates his sensations of objects and the examples of others.

While the Tutor of *Émile* removes his pupil from outside *social* influences, we thus cannot read this isolation as an expression of the self's individuality on an *ontological* level. In *Émile,* the Vicar says, "man is social by nature, or is at least made to become so."[227] Rousseau interpreters sometimes read this to mean simply that Rousseau's psychology implies that people

[226] See, for instance, Burgelin, Introduction and Notes, 1313n2; Laurence Mall, *'Émile,' ou les figures de la fiction*, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, vol. 4 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 2002), 101-03. For Mall, the text assumes "a radical opposition between the *universal* figure of *Émile* and the *general* figures of the 'others.'"
[227] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 600.

only achieve their full human potential in community.[228] As Rousseau's psychology of memory highlights, however, the child is always already nostalgic for community. The child's memory recalls him to common life and practice, what Condillac speaks of more broadly as the guiding analogies of local languages. Even his first projections into the world are mediated by time and memory, exposing and linking him to shared knowledge and pleasure. These connections are nostalgic because they are immediately subject to change and loss. They tie him to a world necessarily in flux. Even his own sentiments are subject to the atrophy of habit, and must change with time. On the other hand, memory confronts the earliest self with the impossibility of fully uniting his disparate iterations. At the deepest level, *amour de soi* – the love of self – is also its loss. Contrary to the image of timeless and passive solitary life in Rousseau, the child of *Émile* is a deeply social, active, and temporal being. Nostalgia reveals this ontological truth to both the child and the reader.

In the implicit psychology of memory in *Émile*, Rousseau confirms his reputation as a philosopher of nostalgia for community or nature. He presents a theory of memory that is systematically nostalgic. But Rousseau's psychology transforms the common understanding of nostalgia as a form of passive retreat. In his thinking, we recall ourselves to active engagement in the flux of natural sensation, and *co-action* within community. As in Condillac's *Essai,* language is a form of communication that opens the up self to shared activity. Language and community create the conditions for action and knowledge.[229] In sum, Rousseau's psychology of memory is systemically and thoughtfully, rather than idiosyncratically and neurotically, nostalgic. He places Condillac's abstract statue in a more temporal, social, and biological

[228] See, for instance, Bloom, Introduction and Notes, 21-27.
[229] Cf. Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.2.4, 1.4.1, 2.1.1-15.

context. As a being within community, the child pursues both his freedom and his possible loss. As an image, he prefigures the citizen's fragile glory in *Contrat social*. The child also implicitly feels, in nascent form, the joyful sadness that will define Rousseau's own most powerful memories, in *Confessions*.

Chapter Three

"All my Ideas are in Images": The Nostalgic Imagination of the Young Jean-Jacques

In Chapter Two, I argued that Rousseau subverts the pervasive idea that nostalgics long for passive fusion with nature or community. In *Émile*, the young child retains memories, formed in community, of his practical exploration and judgement of the natural world. In this chapter, I highlight a complementary dimension to the process of active memory-formation: the connecting faculty of the imagination. In particular, I will reconstruct Rousseau's treatment of the memory-formation of his younger self, "Jean-Jacques," from his scattered comments about memory in *Confessions.* This reconstruction will highlight that, for Rousseau, modern languages and politics are partly threats to the citizen's capacity for memory-formation and thought.

Scholars disagree about what comparison, if any, Rousseau implies between Émile and Jean-Jacques and the education that they each receive.[230] Rousseau describes Émile as a child of average ability and robust physical health.[231] The tutor educates him, from childhood to adolescence, through exploration of the physical world. For Émile, books are dangerous, because they inhibit the growth of his careful judgement by inflaming his imagination and

[230] For some scholars, Rousseau abandons the philosophy and pedagogy of *Émile* when he comes to treat his own life. For others, Rousseau presents in Jean-Jacques the anti-Émile. His premature development of *amour propre* and creative imagination exaggerates the limitless activity of the imagination by which modern people are alienated from themselves. By contrast, Émile is a model of the natural, happy child whose imagination is allowed to develop late. A third group of scholars, finally, argues that Jean-Jacques and Émile pursue and attain happiness by means that reflect their differing abilities and challenges. As both a child and an adult, Jean-Jacques alone may find his greatest happiness in dreams and memories, because Rousseau casts himself as an exceptional child. See, for instance, Philippe Lejeune, *Signes de vie, le pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 2005); Marcel Raymond, "J.-J. Rousseau: deux aspects de sa vie intérieure, intermittences et permanence du moi," *Annales J.-J. Rousseau* XXIX (1941-1942); Kelly, *Exemplary Life*.

[231] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 268.

passions. By contrast, at six years of age, Jean-Jacques is sickly, bookish, and has precocious powers of imaginative association.

In this chapter, I will treat Jean-Jacques's and Émile's rival processes of memory-formation as examples of different aspects of a single theory of nostalgic memory. Taken as a whole, this theory applies to citizens, to adolescents and adults, and to a singular child with the imaginative capacities of an adult – Jean-Jacques. I argue that the childhood of Jean-Jacques highlights the way in which semi-conscious imaginative associations between past sensations contribute to present pleasure: the imagination links sensations in order to form associations in memory. It "charms" present experiences by transferring to them the emotion, but not necessarily the content, of earlier experiences and ideas. These passionate experiences form vivid, new memories. For Rousseau, memory-formation thus creates excellent conditions for nostalgia, because our early connections between sensations form the backdrop against which the mind recognizes and feels later sensations to be important and pleasurable, and because we form memories of our past judgements in precarious community. Imaginative associations link past and present pleasure. These links both enchant the world, and, when they are challenged by experience, cause strong feelings of loss and longing.

On the other hand, the associative and charming character of our imaginations allow us to internalize and deploy analogies that enrich our memory-formation and thought. Jean-Jacques navigates and judges his world by drawing on the memory of the same cultural and linguistic analogies that inform the judgement of young children in *Émile*. While indiscriminate imaginative associations are always a threat to happiness and judgement, they also create the conditions for further extending and recalling analogies that facilitate the evaluation and judgement of sensations.

Ultimately, I argue that Rousseau measures the memory and (potential) judgement of his younger self against Condillac's ideal of the "genius poet," rather than against the memory and judgement of Émile, as scholars often claim. Jean-Jacques's precocious imagination at once obscures his childish judgement, and forges strong analogies in his memory between passions, images, and ideas. These early analogies contain powerful intuitions of human nature and happiness that Jean-Jacques's recollection may later discern and articulate as truth.

The Associations of the Nostalgic Imagination

In Jean-Jacques's memory, imaginative association at once contributes to, and competes with, his more cognitive comparisons between ideas. It connects his evaluations of objects and situations with other sensations that he experienced at the same time, or with related objects in his memory. In Marcel Raymond's language, memory recalls "complexes of images and sentiments," that connect impressions that occurred in the same moment.[232] In treating the imagination as a fundamentally associating, rather than merely representative, faculty, Rousseau draws from the empiricist tradition of Hobbes, Locke, and Condillac. As Condillac writes, in *Traité des Systèmes*, the "imagination has its principle in the link [*liason*] between ideas, which makes some revive themselves at the occurrence of others."[233] This conception of associative memory highlights the potential symbiosis between imaginative and rational connections of memories. It lays the groundwork for understanding Rousseau's conception of salutary forms of nostalgic memory-formation, examined in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

In his autobiographical works and later letters, Rousseau often describes powerful, contingent associations between memories. In *Confessions*, for instance, Jean-Jacques retains "the most

[232] Raymond, "Deux aspects," 30-32.
[233] Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Traité des systèmes*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 2 (Geneva: Slatkine, (1754, 1822) 1970).

insignificant facts" about his feelings, sensations, and actions during his pastoral childhood happiness with his caretakers, the Lamberciers, at Bossey: "I remember all the circumstances of places, people, and hours. I see the servant or the valet working in the chamber, the swallow entering the window, a fly landing on my hand, while I recite my lesson."[234] Similarly, Rousseau recounts reading Montaigne's *Essais* while ill. His suffering "joined the ideas of the book with those of the displeasure that [he] suffered while reading it."[235]

In *Émile,* Rousseau provides an explanation for this process. Most simply, the imagination forms and reinforces the contingent connections that we make between sentiments, sensations, and associated objects. Rousseau writes that, after drinking sweetened medicine, a child's "*imagination* recalls to him the bitterness of medicine in the presence of the weaker sensation [of sweetness].[236] As Rousseau says in *Rêveries*, "my imagination retraces ideas in my memory."[237] We may read the likely origin of Rousseau's "sweet medicine" and "Montaigne" stories in Locke's treatment of the early imagination, or "fancy," in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.[238] For Locke and Rousseau alike, the imagination connects "bundles" of ideas in two ways: either involuntarily, through an emotional sentiment that also connects contingent events, or voluntarily, through a person's conscious or semi-conscious desire. Education, interest, and inclination lead people to habituate or undermine these connections through their imagination. The imagination associates and reinforces some connections

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[234] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 21.
[235] *Mon portrait*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Pléiade, 1959), 1128.
[236] *Émile*, 4, 417.
[237] *Rêveries*, 1, 1073.
[238] Locke writes, "A grown person surfeiting with honey no sooner hears the name of it, but his fancy immediately carries sickness and qualms to his stomach, and he cannot bear the *idea* of it; other *ideas* of dislike and sickness and vomiting presently accompany it…had this happened to him by an overdose of honey when a child, all the same effects would have followed, but the cause would have been mistaken, and the antipathy counted natural." This is a pattern that we will see throughout Rousseau's work on memory. He takes examples and distinctions directly from Locke and Condillac to develop his own theories. And he uses these examples to interpret his own experience. Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding*, 1, 2.33.7; his italics.

between ideas over others. At the same time, as in *Émile*, the imagination renders the memory vivid and hallucinatory, rather than habitual or conceptual.

Over time, the imagination selectively combines and aggregates the emotional sensations of different simple and complex ideas. In this sense, Rousseau's treatment of the imagination is particularly Condillacian. The selective combination and aggregation of memories is most clear in Condillac's and Rousseau's respective discussions of "charm." For Condillac, charm is an effect of imaginative association and transference. In a "bewitched" state, he writes, "my spirits move with a force that dissipates all that could deprive me of the sensations I am having," because "the imagination returns several perceptions for every one that it receives."[239] I am "charmed" insofar as the imagination transfers the feeling of multiple past memories and associations onto present experiences and objects. Indeed, I anticipate receiving pleasure comparable to past memories. For Condillac, charm also transfers the emotional content of natural beauty to abstract ideas.[240] Where Locke emphasizes the continued motion of past sensations in habit, Condillac suggests that the imagination aggregates the pleasure of (seemingly) similar past ideas to define the dominating mood of present and future experiences.

In Rousseau, similarly, *charme* is the dominate affect projected on any given object or scene. It takes on different meanings, depending on the context: Sophie helps Rousseau to see the "charming morality" of his memories of virtue; the young Rousseau projects a "charming idleness" on the countryside around him; the older Rousseau recalls "a thousand charming impressions" of Bossey.[241] In other texts and paragraphs, "charm" is defined as the whimsy or idleness that exceeds duty or work,[242]

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[239] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.2.88.
[240] Ibid., 1.2.89.
[241] For an exhaustive list of Rousseau's use of the term, see Michel Gilot and Jean Sgard, *Le vocabulaire du sentiment dans l'œuvre de J.-J. Rousseau* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1980), 154-60.
[242] See, for instance, Rousseau's descriptions of the idle beauty of the natural world in Book Five of *Rêveries*.

or the "worthless ornaments" to truth.[243] As Michel Gilot and Jean Sgard write in their study of Rousseau's sentimental vocabulary, "charm is what remains, when we have analyzed everything…or that which explains by the unexplainable."[244] It is the *je ne sais quoi* that defines the mood and attraction of an entire "scene," rather than simply the combined signification of a set of connected objects.

While the imagination charms experience by semi-consciously connecting past and present emotions, its connections are immediately broken if reason or experience shows the resemblance between past and present pleasure to be unsustainable. Condillac writes, "without the action of the imagination, [the charm] is all gone as if I had been bewitched."[245] Jean-Jacques thus dispels the whole "charmed" character of an experience when he can no longer maintain its key imaginative associations and expectations. Rousseau writes, for instance, that, after the Lamberciers punished him unjustly, even the natural world "seemed to [him] deserted and somber; it seemed to [him] as if a *veil* had hidden her beauty from" him.[246] Behind the veil, Jean-Jacques and his cousin are abandoned (*abandoner*) to lifeless objects on which their imaginations can no longer project love or adventure. Their unjust punishment has severed the association between their pleasures to their memories of intimacy. Here, the veil is a metaphor for a "drying up" of affect, rather than for the opacity of the world, as Starobinski suggests. Rousseau writes, "in appearance it was the same situation, and in effect a completely different manner of being."[247] Jean-Jacques can still perceive the reality of natural objects, but he can no longer connect his past and present life to nature's beauty and joy. His judgement severs the pleasant associations with past memories.

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[243] See, Walk Four of *Rêveries*, in particular.
[244] Gilot and Sgard, *Vocabulaire du sentiment* 157; my translation.
[245] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.2.88.
[246] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 20; my italics.
[247] Ibid., 20.

For Rousseau, our sentiments respond especially strongly to the implied or imagined intention of the other, an intention which we imitate. Rousseau writes, in *Émile*, that "those from whom one expects good or ill by their inner disposition, by their will, those whom we see acting freely for us or against us, inspire in us sentiments similar to those that they manifest toward us."[248] These social sentiments depend on a "superabundance," or excess, of *amour de soi*, in which one feels oneself to be in the place of the other. These sentiments must feel reciprocal to be felt at all.

This "affective mirroring" is the dominant form of association between past, present, and future emotion in Jean-Jacques's experience of the dispelling of the charm of Bossey. I agree with Kelly's argument that Jean-Jacques's punishment challenges his simple image of the inner goodwill of his guardians.[249] But I would highlight that Jean-Jacques's emotion towards others is a response to the imagined intentions of others, rather than merely a successful or failed projection of his inner life onto them. Jean-Jacques "loves and respects" his guardians, because, in their care, he was "a child always governed by the voice of reason, always treated with gentleness, equity, kindness."[250] His love and respect for them reflects their own love and respect for him. Similarly, he loves the life and growth of the natural world that respond to his movement and development. In the face of the dispelling of his imaginative associations and charms, Jean-Jacques then forms a new series of interlinked images and passions. He and his cousin become hateful and tiresome when they feel persecuted by their guardians and abandoned by the indifferent world:

> We were less ashamed of doing wrong, and more frightened of being accused: we started to hide ourselves, to mutiny, to lie. All the vices of our age corrupted our innocence and disfigured our games. In our eyes even the countryside lost that attraction of sweetness and simplicity…We no

[248] *Émile*, 4, 492.
[249] Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 93-95.
[250] *Confessions*, 1, 19.

> longer went to scrape the earth lightly and to shout with joy when we discovered the shoot of the grain we had sown. We grew tired of this life. One grew tired of us.[251]

The torment inflicted by his guardians renders Jean-Jacques tormenting. His lies and "mutiny" corrupt the pleasure of his childhood games. This tired activity renders even the responding cyclical activity of nature bleak and unremarkable. In this model, the imagination transfers affect from memory to experience and expectation. And Jean-Jacques responds to these emotional images, and associates them with new objects.[252] His "mutiny" from his guardians corrupts his own sentiment of his innocence and of nature's beauty, rather than challenging an unsustainable fantasy of transparency. Jean-Jacques's judgements respond to, and guide, entire series of imaginative and emotional associations.

Most importantly for understanding nostalgia in Rousseau's account, the associative properties of even the highly active imagination are potentially non-alienating. Indeed, imaginative associations – even imprecise ones – are necessary conditions for experience, passion, and memory. As we have seen, Jean-Jacques's inaccurate projection of the inner lives of his guardians nevertheless follows the reciprocal logic that characterizes *all* passions. This includes those passions that are appropriate and natural for the adolescent Émile. Rather than being lost in imagination, Jean-Jacques merely lacks the experience and reason to inform his passionate responses to the necessarily imagined inner lives of others. Kelly highlights the necessity of the imagination for social and political life, but obscures its role in producing non-alienating individual emotions, sentiments, and memories.[253]

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[251] Ibid., 21.

[252] Crucially, Jean-Jacques's "mutiny" corrupts the natural world

[253] Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 115. While Kelly argues that Jean-Jacques cannot escape his strong imagination, he treats it as a necessary evil that Jean-Jacques must accommodate or channel, rather than as a source of greater happiness and knowledge. For instance, Kelly interprets Jean-Jacques's practice of botany as Jean-Jacques's attempt to engage his imagination with the charms of nature, and thus moderate the imagination's power. In the beauty of plants, the aging Rousseau finds a useful point of focus for his otherwise dangerous creative projections. Ibid., 231-32.

Rousseau suggests that the semi-conscious projections of charm are similarly necessary for memory-formation, at least once the child grows out of his instinctive, bodily anxiety and curiosity. Summarizing the charming image of the mature child in *Émile*, he writes:

> The existence of finite beings is so poor and so limited that – when we see only what exists – we are never touched. It is chimeras that decorate real objects, and if the imagination did not add *charm* to that which strikes us, the sterile pleasure that we would experience would restrict itself to the sensory organ, and always leave our blood cold.[254]

For the adult and older child, the imagination is a necessary (but not sufficient) cause of the imprint of sensations. He or she must project an image of pleasure or pain beyond the brute reality of the object in order to experience and remember it.[255] In Lacanian terminology, the imaginative projection acts as an "object-cause" of the sentiment that causes memory-formation.

Rousseau's vocabulary reflects his emphasis on the primarily associative, rather than representative, property of the imagination. In *Émile*, Rousseau refers to images as disconnected, or superficially-connected, "pictures" of sensations. In *Confessions*, he more often uses the term to connote strong and often-complex associations between vivid sensations, and between vivid sensations (especially visual sensations), and simple or complex ideas (including passions). For instance, as an older man in exile, Jean-Jacques "made the *image* of the tumult of the world and the peace of [his] habitation" from the contrast between the peaceful beach and the waves of the stormy lake.[256] Similarly, he finds the "image" of the state of nature in the woods of St. Germain.[257] As Anne Hartle writes, "'image' in this sense seems to refer to a kind of *connection* between what he perceives and what he

[254] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 418; my italics.
[255] Here, Rousseau is closer to the Condillac of *Traité*, whose statue follows the projections of charm in his anticipations of sensation. Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 2.10.3, 2.11.7-8.
[256] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 645; my italics.
[257] Ibid., 388.

does not perceive."[258] It draws the mind to other images or to more abstract ideas. Or its internal connections form the model of the relation of abstract ideas. In short, it plays the role of an analogy. It connects the visible to the invisible based on a given pattern. If *Émile* highlights the superficial quality of images, *Confessions* draws on their associative qualities. Whatever the dangers of the imagination, the imagination is a necessary part of much of experience and memory-formation.[259]

Judgement and Memory-Formation

In Chapter Two of this dissertation, I argued that Rousseau follows Condillac in his treatment of childhood memory in *Émile*. The child remembers ideas and sensations that he evaluated and compared through his practical engagement with the physical world. In this chapter, I argue that he deploys a similar memory-theory in treating sentiments in *Confessions*. Jean-Jacques remembers events to which he responded strongly from his inner nature, rather than from his inflamed *amour propre*.

Rousseau's treatment of experience makes the evaluative nature of Jean-Jacques's central memories most clear. Rousseau's language of sensations "imprinting" and "tracing" misleadingly suggests the idea of a passive soul. For instance, in *Confessions*, he wants to "show how each impression that had made a trace on his soul entered there for the first time."[260] He also speaks of the "succession of events" as the "cause" of his "succession of feelings."[261] Sensations, however, are the "occasional causes" of a conceptually distinct inner life of sentiments that actively responds to them:

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[258] Anne Hartle, *The Modern Self in Rousseau's Confessions: A Reply to St. Augustine* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame Press, 1983), 104-05; Hartle's italics.
[259] Indeed, in Chapter Five of this dissertation, I will argue that imaginative associations between ideas, and between the inner lives of people, help constitute Jean-Jacques's greatest and most memorable experiences of happiness.
[260] Rousseau, *Ébauches des 'Confessions'*, 1, 1153.
[261] Ibid., 278. This argument about the passivity of the soul runs throughout Rousseau's work. As late as 1756 – six years prior to the publication of *Émile* – Rousseau planned a treatise that would examine the precise combination of external objects and circumstances that would "place or maintain the soul in the state most favourable to virtue," entitled *La morale sensitive* or *Le materialism du Sage*. While, no doubt, more subtle, such a text would find

> I write less a history of these events [of my life] in themselves than that of the state of my soul as these events occurred. Souls are more or less illustrious only insofar as they have more or less grand and noble sentiments, and possess more or less vivid and numerous ideas. The facts here are only occasional causes.[262]

Objects capture Jean-Jacques's attention to the extent that he evaluates them emotionally. As Rousseau writes in *Dialogues*, for "Jean-Jacques," "simple sensation must join a distinct sentiment... for the object to make an impression."[263] The strength of "grand and noble" sentiment varies between people. Over time, more "noble" and passionate minds thus accumulate more sensations, because sentiments focus the mind on more details.

In *Confessions*, Jean-Jacques's memory of his early life tracks the activity of his attention and sentiment. Just as the child in *Émile* remembers that which he evaluated (in addition to that which he understood), Jean-Jacques, Rousseau tells us, recalls detailed memories of periods of his early life that inspired strong emotions. For example, Rousseau writes in great detail of his joyous time at Bossey.[264] By contrast, Jean-Jacques's memory is confused during periods of passive indifference. For instance, "almost nothing…occurred that was interesting enough to [his] heart to leave a vivid trace" when Madame de Warens, his chief guardian and eventual lover, temporarily left Savoie, in 1732.[265] Jean-Jacques remembers most vividly periods in which he felt strong emotions.

As Roger Mercier highlights, for Rousseau, Jean-Jacques's memory also fails during periods in which his passions alienated him from his authentic self. For instance, Rousseau prefaces his account of

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company with Helvétius's materialism. It suggests that sensation is the direct cause of inner sentiments and their memory.

[262] Ibid., 1150.

[263] *Rousseau, juge de Jean-Jacques: Dialogues*, in *Œuvre Complètes*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Pléiade, 1959). See, also, *Essai sur l'origine des langues, où il est parlé de la mélodie et de l'imitation musicale*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 5 (Paris: Pléiade, 1995), 417.

[264] *Confessions*, 1, 21.

[265] Ibid., 130.

his "extravagant" adolescence in Book Four with the warning that this period of "folly" is the least clear in his memory and mind. He writes, "they are the greatest extravagances of my life, and they happily did not turn out worse…my head became like a strange, out-of-tune instrument." Only later did he return to his natural "tuning" and self. Consequently, "this epoch… is that of which I have the most confused ideas. Almost nothing occurred of sufficient interest to my heart for me to retrace a vivid memory, and it is difficult for me not to make several transpositions of time or place in all the comings and goings and successive displacements."[266] Rousseau remembers his childhood happiness with his father, his pleasures at Bossey, unjust treatment by his aunt and uncle, and his exile from Geneva, and his first periods with Madame de Warens "as though they had just occurred." But he experiences "lacunas" and "gaps" at precisely those moments when he reacts to events with *amour propre*. Just as the child in *Émile* wastes his energy in memorizing abstract signs for the approval of his teachers, Jean-Jacques wastes periods of his "extravagant" youth[267] attempting to distinguish himself in the often-conflicting gazes of others. Both forms of *amour propre* are equally forgettable.[268]

To use the language developed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, Jean-Jacques thus remembers events to which he reacted emotionally "as a whole," as a person who, in that moment, evaluated sensation based on a sense of his "total" interest. Jean-Jacques evaluates and remembers objects that are

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[266] Ibid., 129-30.

[267] Similarly, the adult Jean-Jacques does not retain memories of his periods of social and professional success. During these periods, his sentiment of existence, "evaporate[ed] outside itself on all the objects of the esteem of men." In periods of sorrow, by contrast, his "sentiments constricted, as it were, around [his] heart," and left him with strong memories of "tender, touching, and delicious sentiments." *Rêveries*, 1, 1074.

[268] For Mercier, Rousseau's presentation of the activity of his sentiment necessary for memory-formation is part of his affirmation of the radically free will, against materialist and Condillacian accounts. He cites the Savoyard Vicar's "Profession" as textual support. The account I have made in Chapter Two of the play of active evaluation and passive sensation of the imagined child of *Émile*, however, allows us to be more conceptually precise (as well as to recognize Rousseau's harmony with Condillac's account). In his memory-formation, Jean-Jacques is experientially passive insofar as his sentiment depends on the occasion of sensations and on the memory of sensations. He lacks the adult ability of the Vicar to withhold judgement and to disaggregate and compare sensations independently of experiential and linguistic associations. And he is morally passive insofar as he acts to impress or dominate other people. Roger Mercier, "Sur le sensualisme de Rousseau: sensation et sentiment dans la première partie des 'Confessions'," *Revue des Sciences Humaines* 161, no. 1 (1976): 31.

distinctly "suitable" or "unsuitable" (*convenable* or *disconvenable*) to his entire nature. Following Guénard, I have argued that, for Rousseau, a person's "nature" is the harmonious inter-relation between his faculties, passions and needs. Jean-Jacques is "out of tune" when he reacts to disparate demands of others, and disrupts this self-relation. He is "in tune" when he feels his interest with respect to his whole history, or the portion of this history that is relevant to his present experience. Rousseau's account often reflects this distinction between vain and holistic sentiments in his vocabulary. Vivid and precise memory follows his holistic *sentiments* rather than his alienating *passions* or his indifferent *sensations*.[269]

In *Émile*, Rousseau argues that robust sentiments of *convenance* depend on the child's comparison of sensations and of ideas that constitute his interest, as well as on his comparison of the sensations that make up his natural and social environments. In Chapter Two, I argued that these evaluations begin at the moment of self-formation. Both before and after the age of reason, the child's "real masters are *experience* and *sentiment*…[of] the relations in which [he] finds himself."[270]

In *Confessions*, Jean-Jacques's childhood sentiments rely on similar comparisons between ideas that relate to, and constitute, his interest. His first memory of injustice is paradigmatic. As a child, at Bossey, Jean-Jacques is "always governed by the voice of reason, always treated with gentleness, fairness, and indulgence."[271] Here, he also experiences the full charm of the natural world. When his caretakers accuse and punish him for breaking Mme. Lambercier's combs – a crime of which he is innocent – and for maintaining his innocence, he feels injustice against this backdrop of love and

[269] As is often the case in Rousseau's work, his nomenclature is only precise and consistent within a given group of paragraphs. He will speak of some "passions" that do not depend on unreconstructed *amour-propre*. But he consistently distinguishes between feelings that are motivated by his (sometimes not-fully-conscious) inner sense of self, and those that respond to the fully imagined opinions of others.
[270] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 445; my italics.
[271] *Confessions*, 1, 19.

plenitude. "What reversal of *ideas*! What disorder of feeling! What upheaval in the heart, in the brain, in all of the child's intellectual and moral being!" Even today, he cannot quite understand this moment. "Imagine this, if it is possible. For me, however, I do not feel capable of disentangling it or following the slightest trace of what happened to me."[272] While Jean-Jacques has not yet reached the age of reason, he *feels* a distinct contrast between how he is, and was, treated. And he assesses this difference as both inexplicable and unjust.

Kelly rightly emphasizes Rousseau's implied distance from Jean-Jacques's childhood anger. In his influential interpretation, Starobinski offers what I will call a "presentist" reading of Rousseauian nostalgic memory insofar as he claims that Rousseau retroactively projects his present needs and ideas onto his younger self. For him, the "combs" incident is the first deconstruction of Rousseau's nostalgic fantasy of pure transparency to others. As both writer and character, Rousseau cannot bear the difference between appearance and reality, because appearance hides his inner thoughts and feelings from others.[273] As Kelly notes, however, Rousseau subtly criticizes the limited nature of Jean-Jacques's empathy with his guardians:

> I did not possess *enough reason* to sense how much the circumstances condemned me, and to place myself in the place of others. I held myself to my own position and all that I sensed: the harshness of a dreadful punishment for a crime that I had not committed. However vivid, the pain of the body was barely sensible to me. I felt only indignation, rage, and despair.[274]

Jean-Jacques lacks the skill to see himself from multiple points of view. Instead he engages in something that Émile's careful education prevents Émile from doing, prior to the age of reason: Jean-

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[272] Ibid.
[273] Starobinski, *Transparency and Obstruction*, 7-11.
[274] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 19-20; my italics.

Jacques projects an image of his own feelings onto the other person. He concludes that if his guardians do not act as if they share his goodwill, they must wish him ill.[275]

Despite their differences in interpretation, Starobinski and Kelly both treat Jean-Jacques's early imagination as a fragile identification with others. I will address this common ground in their reading in the next section. Here, I want to highlight something that neither account addresses: that Jean-Jacques continues to think, and to compare – however, confusedly – his emotional states. His sense of betrayal occurs against the backdrop of his expectation of continuity and charm. He responds to the perceived intentions of another. And he suggests that he had *some* reason: enough to inform his anger, but not enough to distinguish appearance from reality.

While his experience focused on himself, moreover, Jean-Jacques's sentiment already connects his plight to a feeling about the treatment of a comparable case involving another person: his cousin. Rousseau continues the above passage,

> In a case rather similar, my cousin had been punished for an involuntary fault as if it were a premeditated act. He threw himself into a fury at my example, and, as it were, rose to the pitch of my unison…We made ourselves shout a hundred times with all our force: *Carnifex*, *Carnifex*, C*arnifex*.[276]

Jean-Jacques and his cousin project inaccurate intentions onto their guardians. At the same time, they see their cases as "examples" of a larger pattern of injustice to which they are both subjected. In Rousseau's musical image, they establish "unison" (rather than fusion) in their passion.[277] In their Latin

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[275] Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 92-96.
[276] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 20.
[277] Importantly, Rousseau's musical metaphor suggests commonality among particular passions and interests, rather than mutual identification. In his musical writings, Rousseau defines *unison* as the union of sounds of the same pitch, rather than the identity of sounds. He writes, "it is false to say that two sounds in unison overlap so perfectly, and have such identity, that the ear cannot distinguish them: for they can differ greatly in timbre and strength. A clock can be in unison with a guitar, the hurdy-gurdy in unison with a flute, and we would not confuse their sounds."

chant, they take on the role of the Roman public orator who condemns the unjust tormentor. This is an act of deliberate solidarity. It sets the pattern for Rousseau's later simultaneous abstraction from, and identification with, the injustice of others. His childhood sentiment is based on a proto-*idea*.

While Jean-Jacques flees to memories of childhood happiness, as presentist accounts of nostalgic memory in Rousseau's work emphasize, *Confessions* is also a story of childhood evaluation based on comparisons, however partial these sentiments and comparisons appear in retrospect. Jean-Jacques remembers events that he evaluated and felt, based on his judgement. He feels and remembers betrayals and indignations that the well-educated children of *Émile* may not, because their social passions are limited.

"A Chain of Sentiments": Memory-Formation and Nostalgia

We are now in a position to understand nostalgia in Rousseau's theory of memory-formation. Most simply, for Rousseau, the process of memory-formation creates strong conditions for feeling nostalgia, because the "complexes" of earlier judgements, sentiments, and fantasies dominate the formation of later ones. For French materialists (like Helvétius) or English empiricists (like Thomas Hobbes and David Hume), fresh experience increasingly obscures the vividness of past sensations. Rousseau's thesis on memory argues the reverse:

> Since, in general, [1] objects make less of an impression on me than does their remembrance, and [2] all my ideas are in images, the first features that engraved themselves in my head still reside there, and those which have imprinted themselves afterwards more or less have combined with them rather than effacing them. There is a certain succession of affections and ideas [*succession d'affections et d'idées*] that modify those which follow them and which must be known to judge [later ideas and affects] well.[278]

I will develop Rousseau's pluralistic vision of ideal community in Chapter Five, and in the Conclusion to this dissertation. *Dictionnaire de musique*, 5, 1141.

[278] *Confessions*, 1, 174.

Rousseau has two premises: (1) objects "make less of an impression…than their remembrance," because, as we have seen, the imagination reinforces past associations of sensations and of ideas; and (2) all of his "ideas are in images" insofar as his imagination links his ideas to vivid pictorial sensations of objects.

Jean-Jacques retains the first complexes of images, feelings, and ideas, for two reasons. First, he retains early events that triggered his "holistic" evaluation, just as he preserves any sensations that were the object of his active judgement. Second, his imaginative memory recalls and reinforces these early evaluations (and connected ideas) via the charm and disgust of directly and indirectly associated images. If all "ideas are in images," these links between memories are especially numerous, because each idea retains and attracts associations with other images (in addition to more discriminate connections to related ideas). Rousseauian memory-formation creates excellent conditions for nostalgia, because the complexes of earlier experiences and sentiments form the backdrop against which the mind recognizes and feels later sensations to be important and pleasurable. [279] The early "features" are powerful, because they at once dominate the formation of later memories, and are recalled by them.

Rousseau's recollection of childhood injustice at Bossey ultimately captures his whole theory of memory-formation:

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[279] For Perrin, Rousseau presents his memory here as nostalgic insofar as he continually returns to a reserve of pure, unconnected images that he may recombine in new ways. "All his ideas are in images" in the sense that Rousseau speaks of images in *Émile*: they reflect directly his childhood experiences of the "book of nature" without his contaminating adult associations or judgements. To my mind, Rousseau's vocabulary resists such a "Cartesian" interpretation. As Hartle highlights, Rousseau says that *all* of Jean-Jacques's ideas are in images. He refers both to his child and adult selves. As we have seen, moreover, he usually uses *image*, in *Confessions*, to refer to more complex connections between sensations and ideas, rather than to unconnected memories. His use of *idea* is similarly diverse. While he sometimes refers to simple ideas, he also includes complex ideas in his use of the term. For instance, he "is moved sometimes to the point of tears by this *idea*" of the tumult of the world. Most importantly, I argue that Jean-Jacques's childhood memories reflect the latter definition of *ideas*, and capture his at least minimal acts of comparison and evaluation of sensations. Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 57-58; Hartle, *Modern Self*, 105; Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 645; my italics.

> While writing this I feel my pulse beat faster again; these moments will always be present to me if I live a hundred thousand years. This first sentiment of violence and injustice is so profoundly engraved in my soul, that all the ideas to which it relates return me to my first emotion. Although relative to me alone in its origin, this sentiment has taken on such a life of its own – and has become so detached from personal interest – that my heart becomes inflamed at the spectacle or the account of any unjust action…as if the consequences were again falling onto me.[280]

The strong sentiment of violence and injustice imprints deeply on his being. It connects itself to complex ideas of solidarity, betrayal, and torment of the weak by stronger parties. It also associates feelings of violence and injustice with the vivid images of "these moments" – moments such as the incident with the combs, the care of the Lamberciers, the subsequent desolation of nature, and the lost sense of innocence. The resulting combination of images, sentiments and proto-concepts becomes the template for reacting to later, often more impersonal and abstract, accounts and spectacles of injustice. And these accounts and spectacles reinforce, and are reinforced by, the memory of his personal being and experience.

Rousseau expresses the constant reference of experience to early memories in the image of himself as a "bizarre and singular assemblage" of sentiments and ideas. This image combines Condillac's treatments of the connections of ideas in memory as a complex "chain of ideas" in *Essai* and a more linear "succession of sentiments (*suite de sentiments*)" in *Traité*. Scholars trace Rousseau's idea of a "succession of affections and ideas" to Locke and Condillac.[281] In its most common expression in Rousseau's later work, memory is a "chain of sentiments (*chaîne des sentiments*)." In *Essai*, similarly, Condillac writes,

> Perceptions can be seen as a series of basic ideas to which we may refer everything that forms part of our knowledge. Above each of these, other series of ideas would rise, thus forming something like *chains* whose strength will lie entirely in the *analogy* of signs, the *order of the*

[280] *Confessions*, 1, 20.
[281] Wolff, "Idea of Childhood," 388; Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 42-58.

> *perceptions*, and in the connection that would have been formed by the *circumstances* that sometimes join the most disparate ideas.[282]

For Condillac, perceptions reflect our needs, the objects toward which we often direct our attention based on our "dispositions, passions, and general state." We may recall each of these basic chain links between objects, people, and circumstance, because our disposition is relatively constant. We form other, smaller chains by the "analogy of signs," or the connection between several signs that reflects judgements of similarity and causation between ideas. Still other links in these smaller chains are caused by the "order of perceptions," and the "circumstantial" connections that the imagination makes between sensations. The auxiliary chains are precisely those that Rousseau describes: numerous, and sometimes overlapping series of conceptual and imaginative "links" between sensations.

At the same time, Rousseau draws from Condillac's *Traité* the idea that the central chain of needs – the passions and dispositions – is dynamic. It reflects a cumulative history of sentiments. At the conclusion of the statue's development, for instance, it puzzles over the question that Rousseau helps to make a classic problem of autobiography: "What is then this succession of sentiments [*suite de sentiments*], which has made me who I am?"[283] Or, as Rousseau would later express it, what is "the chain of sentiments that has marked the succession [*succession*] of my being"[284]?

The statue's answer is a summary of the relatively linear genetic development-story that makes up the body of *Traité*. By contrast, Rousseau is a "bizarre and singular assemblage" of memories, characteristics, and experiences, because even his fundamental "dispositions" are the product of his history of ideas, images, and language.[285] His "tangled chain of sentiments" is made up of "elements

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[282] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.2.3.29.
[283] *Traité*, 3, 4.8.1.
[284] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 278.
[285] *Ébauches des 'Confessions'*, 1, 1153.

that, seeming perfectly incompatible…united to produce forcibly a uniform and simple effect…[and] other elements…the same in appearance…formed by the combination of such different circumstances that one would not imagine that they possessed any relation."[286] No "fundamental" chain exists outside Jean-Jacques's history of events, images, judgements, and the language by which he expresses his judgements. The chain of sentiments both guides his memory and serves as a record of the causal and circumstantial connections that formed his (often complex) being. As in *Émile*, Rousseau, in *Confessions*, places Condillac's pre-linguistic but proto-rational statue back into complex temporal and social context.

Ultimately, Rousseau follows Condillac's conception of memory and knowledge, in addition to drawing from his vocabulary. Memory-formation creates excellent conditions for nostalgia, because Jean-Jacques's evaluation and fantasy respond to, and reinforce, past evaluations and fantasies, even in the act of revising them. As Perrin writes, "everything occurs as if Condillac provides Rousseau with language that clarifies the particular logic of the chain of 'secret affections' that he finds in the history of his soul, as an ongoing restructuration of apparent ruptures and incoherencies."[287] He is dominated by the past precisely because his discriminating reason and his associating imagination are such powerful faculties for connecting ideas. His current memory, experience, and expectation echo past activity.

Despite the fatalism implied in Rousseau's images of "chains" of sentiments and ideas, Jean-Jacques's present fantasies, judgements, and actions are relatively open-ended. As Kelly notes, early ideas and affections merely modify later ones, rather than determining them. He writes, "early events condition what comes after, while at the same time suggesting that future events can channel earlier

[286] *Confessions*, 1, 18.
[287] Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 56-57.

tendencies in a variety of directions."[288] Rousseau's vocabulary of a "succession of affections and ideas" also links him to an empiricist tradition in which arbitrary, linguistic signs allow us voluntarily to recall, and sometimes alter, particular sections of the "memory-chain." Particularly relevant for Rousseau's treatment of memory-formation and – as we shall see in the next chapter – of recollection, signs allow what Condillac and Rousseau call *analysis*. Analysis "consists in composing and decomposing our ideas to create new combinations and to discover, by this means, their mutual relations and the new ideas they can produce."[289] Signs permit us both to resolve complex ideas into their constitutive sensations, and to compose new ideas through renewed comparison. At the same time, we derive signs, and analogies between signs, from the larger, cultural analogies that we treated in Chapter Two. These analogies may be more or less precise, and draw from different images and emotions. Language at once gives mobility to our memory-formation and recollection, and risks contaminating both processes with imprecise or unhelpful analogy.

I will treat Rousseau's "nostalgic" recollection and analysis, as well as the influence of cultural analysis, in the next chapter of this dissertation. In the final two sections of this chapter, I will treat the influence of cultural analogies and images on Jean-Jacques's particular memory-formation and nostalgia. So far, this chapter has treated Rousseau's account of Jean-Jacques's memories as an example of his theory of nostalgic memory-formation. This theory of individual memory-formation helps us to understand Rousseau's conception of the adult citizen as a social and temporal being. In these final sections, I reverse and alter this approach. I examine the dangers of Jean-Jacques's singularly imaginative faculty of memory in the context of Rousseau's implicit theory of *good* nostalgic memory-

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[288] Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 112. I part ways with Kelly, and with presentist interpreters such as Mercier and Hoffman, insofar as they read the "chain of ideas" as largely linear. For Mercier, for instance, Rousseau is "the forever changing sum of all interior states." His present needs and sentiments dominate his interpretation of his past memories. As Perrin makes clear, however, Jean-Jacques repeatedly returns to early "links" in the chain. Mercier, "Sensualism de Rousseau," 32-33. See, also, Hoffman, "Mémoire," 84-85.

[289] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.2.7.66.

formation. If Jean-Jacques may draw on the freedoms afforded by language and analysis, he risks losing himself unthinkingly to the early analogies between passions, images, and ideas to which he was exposed.

Madness and Memory: Jean-Jacques

We have interpreted Jean-Jacques's claim that all of his ideas "are in images" as a premise that applies to Rousseau's conception of memory in general. This claim also expresses Jean-Jacques's particular and dangerous relation to images. The *pre*-adolescent Émile remembers sentiments of his activity and proto-ideas. He retains images only superficially. The *post*-adolescent Émile possesses the strong imagination necessary for both imaginative associations and supplements. But he still presumably creates some ideas without making strong imaginative associations and images. For Jean-Jacques, by contrast, *all* his ideas are associated with concrete images. I argue that Rousseau critiques Jean-Jacques as a poetic thinker whose strong memory, passions, and imagination constantly expose him to the risk of "hyper-nostalgic" madness. His propensity to make associations between images and ideas, and to recall these images, cuts him off from his childhood exploration of the natural world, and, later, from his adult reasoning. The threat of the imagination to *convenable* life is even worse than critics suggest, because – over time – the web of images and ideas creates the conditions to imagine, and escape to, an alternative world. While Rousseau deploys nostalgic rhetoric and structures in his political texts, he is also wary of nostalgia as an alienating passion. We must follow his critique of nostalgic madness if we are to understand, in Chapters Four, Five, and Six of this dissertation, his ideal of nostalgic memory.

We find the likely model for Jean-Jacques's statement that "all his ideas are in images" in Condillac's treatment of "poetic" philosophy and language. In *Traité des systèmes* (1754), a text to which Rousseau refers indirectly in Book Three of *Émile*,[290] Condillac writes,

> Because of the close connection between abstract notions and their original sensory ideas, the imagination is naturally led to represent these notions by concrete images. That is why we call it "imagination," for to imagine is to make clear by images; it is the same thing. So this operation took its name not from its original function, which is to recall ideas, but from its more salient function, which is to *re-clothe these ideas with images* with which these ideas are connected.[291]

For Condillac, *some* philosophers with strong imaginations, and *all* poets, inevitably fuse their abstract ideas to early images of these concepts. "Poetic thinkers" draw on the familiar connections of simple ideas to images in order to link complex ideas to images. These modern thinkers exhibit, in a derivative form, what Condillac characterizes as the key property of early, "poetic" language. Its style was poetic, "because it began by painting ideas [*idées*] with the most sensible images [*images*]."[292] As all his "ideas are in images," Rousseau presents Jean-Jacques as akin to the poetic philosopher and to an ancient speaker of poetic language. For these figures, as for Jean-Jacques, each idea retains associations with sensorial objects, or with the charming images by which the imagination "re-clothes" that idea.

As a connecting faculty, a strong imagination often leads the mind to false, rather than true, connections. This is most clear in Rousseau's and Condillac's common image of "the madman (*le fou*)." As Condillac puts it, a madman "would have too much memory and imagination, and this excess would produce much the same effect as a total deprivation of either…Since the most disparate ideas would be strongly connected in his mind for the mere reason that they had presented themselves together, he would judge them to be naturally connected and would place one after the other in sequence, as if that

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[290] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 434; Burgelin, Introduction and Notes, 1417n2.
[291] Condillac, *Systèmes*, 2, Chapter 13; my italics.
[292] *Essai*, 1, 2.8.67.

would produce a well-founded causal chain [*des justes consequences*]."[293] Taken on its own, or to an extreme, the imagination disrupts the judgement of the true relation between ideas, because its associations are indiscriminate. As Rousseau writes, "he who makes imaginary relations that have neither reality nor appearance is a madman [*un fou*]."[294] Madness is an effect of the purely imaginative association of ideas.

In moderate forms of madness, this excess of the imagination leads to imprecise, "poetic" thinking, manifest for Condillac and Rousseau in the imagistic systems of modern philosophers.[295] As Rousseau puts it, in a letter to Sophie, "each of us, perceiving no object, makes for ourselves a fantastic *image* that we then take for the rule of truth. From this idea, not resembling that of any other, we derive the babble of competing and confusing philosophies."[296] Modern philosophers leave us lost in false and hidden connections, and prey to the charm of their fantastical systems. These systems are so numerous, because they are superficial. Each philosopher obscures the conceptual relations of his or her own ideas, and ignores the relations between the ideas of opponents. He merely paints the world anew, in new terms, images, and associations. For Rousseau, as for Condillac, madness is a form of extreme imaginative association between images, one which forgoes judgement and leaves ideas obscure.[297]

Rousseau describes his youthful naiveté as a strong propensity for such excessive, "mad" associations between images, and between images and ideas. While the young child of *Émile* explores his world carefully through the sense of touch and proto-judgement, the young Jean-

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[293] Ibid., 1.2.33-34.
[294] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 481.
[295] See, esp., Condillac, *Systèmes*, 2.
[296] Rousseau, *Lettres morales*, 4, 1092; my italics.
[297] While Rousseau and Condillac both derive the image of the madman from Locke, Rousseau's formulation is more Condillacian than Lockean insofar as the imagination is a *style* of connection that can fully contaminate the madman's thinking, rather than merely a form of error that provides him with faulty premises, and from which he can construct a rational world. The French text also leaves open the possibility of imaginary relations that *are* based on appearance or reality, because the "qui" can be translated as "which" or "that." Rousseau sometimes treats madness in more Lockean terms; cf. Ibid., 1095.

Jacques loses himself in the images and ideas of literature. At the age of six, Jean-Jacques already feels the passions of an adult, because he links his feelings to the inner lives and adventures of the heroes of the romantic novels and ancient rhetoric that he read voraciously with his father. Of particular note is Honoré d'Urfé's highly influential pastoral novel, *L'Astrée* (1607-27), a novel to which Rousseau returned throughout his life. [298] These novels and treatises offer analogies that guide Jean-Jacques's attention, and extend his feelings.[299] Rousseau writes, "I possessed no idea of things, but I knew already all the sentiments. I conceived of nothing, but only felt."[300] In the first instance, the young Jean-Jacques is like modern philosophers reading each other: he attends to the images of ideas, and to connections between these images, rather than to conceptual comparisons. And he applies these images and associations indiscriminately to his world. Rousseau writes, "I believed myself Greek or Roman; I became the character whose life I read."[301] As he puts it in a letter to Malesherbes, "[as a child], I was active because I was mad [*fou*]."[302]

Jean-Jacques's highly imaginative associations between ideas are even more powerful and dangerous over time, because they are increasingly charmed by early pleasure and analogies. Like the

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[298] In Chapter Five, I will examine the strong influence of *L'Astrée* and its pastoral analogies on Rousseau's understanding and presentation of happiness in *Confessions* and *Rêveries*.

[299] Rousseau read other romantic works from his mother's library. These include the most popular (and lengthy) novels of the 17th century: the heroic romances of La Caprenédes, *Cassandre* (5 vols., 1642–50) and *Cléopâtre* (1648), and Madeleine de Scudéry's populist *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus* (10 vols., 1648–53). From the collection of books that Rousseau inherits from his maternal grandfather, Rousseau mentions the influence of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, and, especially, Plutarch's moral biographies, *Parallel Lives*, which he read in Jacques Amyot's French translation (1569-67). Arguably, Rousseau presents his mother's romantic literature as the primary cause for his insatiable desire and his weakness to harmful flights of the imagination, and prefers books that developed his political (Greek and Roman) identifications. Within a just political state, these latter identifications would have been appropriate, while the former are arguably always alienating. Indeed, he "greatly preferred" the style and heroes of Plutarch to those of La Caprenédes. He also introduces his grandfather's library as greatly different from that of his mother's romances; it possessed some "good books." (For this view, see Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 82-83.) As we shall see in the next three chapters, however, he over-identifies with both romantic and ancient heroes. At Les Charmettes, he also finds happiness and wholeness through his romantic analogies.

[300] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 8.

[301] Ibid., 9.

[302] *Lettres à Malesherbes*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Pléiade, 1959), 1134.

"madman," he has an overwhelming number of imaginary associations in his memory. He is thus singularly prone to nostalgia, because images lend his ideas a great numbers of connections to other ideas and images. At the same time, he forms stronger memories, because his sentiments respond to more pervasive and powerful charms of the natural world, and of the intentions of other people. Over time, his early experiences are especially dominant. His strong imagination extends his early images, ideas, and analogies widely. While each of his new actions may develop some past tendencies over others, Jean-Jacques also, as Perrin argues, repeatedly returns to the obsessions and charms of romantic novels and Roman oratory of his youth.[303] As he ages, he grows in nostalgia, as well as in creative imaginative power. The imaginative connections of his memory increasingly offer him an entire world of attractive images, emotions, and ideas.

In Book IX of *Confessions*, Jean-Jacques approaches full madness. His charming imaginative associations overcome his attachment to reality. He flees to an imagined world of charming friends to find the intimacy that he lacks in the real world.

> Seeing nothing existing that was worthy of my delirium, I nourished it in an ideal world which my creative imagination soon peopled with beings in accordance with my heart…I acquired such a taste for soaring…in the midst of the charming objects with which I had surrounded myself, that I passed hours, days there, without counting, and losing the remembrance of all other things; hardly had I eaten a bite [of a meal] in haste than I burned to escape to run to find my groves again.[304]

The young Jean-Jacques connects his life to the analogies of the novels he read. As a man, he loses himself in a romance that he creates. Its inspiring intoxication, "so sudden and so *mad* [folle], [is] so

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[303] See, Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339, esp. 3-4, 65. I part ways with Perrin insofar as I argue that – in Rousseau's telling – Jean-Jacques deploys the images of his childhood by retracing and reworking the tangled "chains" of association and analogy that he made as a child, and since developed and further complicated, growing up, rather than by returning to an "original tableau" of loosely connected images (Perrin, 3).
[304] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 427-28.

durable and strong."[305] He makes multiple, strong, uncritical connections between the "charming objects" around him and an ideal world that reflects his desires and aspirations. He also draws on the history of pastoral and romantic associations that marked his being and memory from a young age. While writing his first novel – *Julie* – based on his fantasies, he comes to treat Sophie, the Countess d'Houdetot as a new "Julie." "I saw my Julie in Madame d'Houdetot, and soon I only saw Madame d'Houdetot, but dressed with all the perfections that I had just adorned the idol of my heart."[306] His imagination transfers all the pleasures and virtues of Julie onto Sophie. Julie is Sophie's charm, just as the pastoral poetry of Jean-Jacques's childhood and youth charms the entire novel of *Julie*.[307] In the end, Jean-Jacques's imaginary associations offer him the charms and images of a robust, alternative existence.

Rousseau's model for his madness is the Enlightenment trope of the wildly impressionistic (often female) reader of novels. In the introduction to *Julie*, the pretended editor, "R," admits,

> In showing readers the pretended charms of states that are not their own, novels seduce them. They make them disdain their current state by offering an imaginary exchange with another state that they make them love. Wanting to be that which we are not, we come to believe unreal things, and this is how we become mad.[308]

The novel offers the reader an attractive character with whom to identify, and a world in which to act imaginatively. Madness is at once a passive seduction by images, and an active, if semi-conscious, choice of "poetic" readers of a charming world over its alternative.

In this model, the seduction occurs slowly, over time, building associations between passions,

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[305] Ibid., 427. My italics
[306] *Confessions*, 1, 440.
[307] On Rousseau's use of pastoral tropes in *Julie*, see Christie McDonald Vance, *The Extravagant Shepherd: A Study of the Pastoral Vision in Rousseau's "Nouvelle Héloïse"*, vol. 105, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 2007).
[308] Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 21.

images, and ideas. As Condillac explains, in a passage that Rousseau's imagined editor echoes,

> There is no one, I think, who in moments of idleness, does not imagine himself the hero of some novel…But when some sad event arises that makes us avoid our best friends, and become disgusted with all that once pleased us; then, surrendering to our sorrow, our favorite novel will be the only thing that can distract us. Little by little, the animal spirits will dig a foundation for our castle so deep that nothing will change their course. Falling asleep building our castle, we shall live in it as if in a dream. Finally, when the spirits have succeeded imperceptibly in becoming the same as if they we were indeed what we feigned, on waking, we will take our chimeras for realities.[309]

As Kelly argues, Rousseau consciously, rather than naïvely, casts Jean-Jacques as the impressionistic and creative poet who eventually flirts with full madness. I argue that Rousseau understands his vulnerability to madness to be even more acute than scholars, such as Kelly, suggest. Jean-Jacques builds the stories of Julie, Sophie, and the older, Rousseau-like tutor, over a half-lifetime of romantic and Roman associations, analogies, and charms. All that is left for him is to surrender to his sorrow, and allow the "animal spirits" to turn memory into habit, and fantasy into waking life. While Jean-Jacques develops a powerfully creative imagination by middle age, he risks madness because imagination forms, and always formed, the strongest and most numerous "links" in the chains of his memory. He is singularly and dangerously prone to nostalgia.

The Ideal of Poetic Genius

If Rousseau fears the overly imaginative nostalgic connections between sensations, he implicitly measures the "naturalness" of Jean-Jacques against Condillac's ideal of the "poetic genius," rather than the more limited "naturalness" of the young, embodied Émile. The "poetic genius" extends his ideas with his imagination, while maintaining and refining the precision of

[309] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.1.9.83.

his imagination-based connections through his judgement and reflection. As in *Émile*, Rousseau's ideal is the measured expansion of all the faculties, rather than a static balance between desires and capabilities.

For Rousseau and Condillac, the opposing archetype to the madman is the imbecile. If "he who makes imaginary relations that have neither reality nor appearance is a madman," then, Rousseau continues, "he who does not compare is an imbecile [*un imbécile*]."[310] As Condillac puts it in *Essai*, the imbecile "would lack imagination and memory and consequently could not perform any of the operations that they are capable of producing. He would be absolutely incapable of reflection."[311] The imbecile cannot connect sensations and cannot "find relations" between them. He thus cannot recall these sensations in order to reflect on their proper, conceptual connections. In moderate cases, unimaginative people "make decisions only with extreme slowness. They see and they still doubt." They can find precise errors in the arguments of others, but cannot discover and believe truth.[312] The imagination is needed to connect and extend ideas, and to believe them.

As Jimack highlights, Rousseau draws the "man-child" in *Émile* as one such Condillacian imbecile. The man-child is "a perfect *imbecile*, an automaton, an almost insensible and immobile statue." As we have seen, the statue cannot make links between ideas, because its sensations are united prematurely in its brain, in the uniform sensation of the *moi*. Without the developing body of the child, and the child's community, it lacks the ability to map its body and bodily space. We may now add another dimension to this explanation: the statue's overly-developed body also prevents the imagination from tracing the movements of its body and of objects in space. It cannot "*imagine* any means" to meet

[310] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 481.
[311] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.2.33-34.
[312] *Systèmes*, 2, Chapter 13.

its needs.[313] If Rousseau claims that the creative imagination is ideally "inactive" until adolescence, he also implies that it must minimally associate ideas to sustain the early, natural life of average children.

In its "believing," "extending," and "charming" functions, the imagination supports "natural" or suitable (*convenable*) life when it connects images to ideas that fall within people's capacity to understand and use them. In both Rousseau and Condillac, this is most clear on the level of languages, particularly in their treatment of "non-ideal" languages. As "R" (Rousseau) describes the effect of isolation on "the Solitary Folk [*Les Solitaires*]," or isolated country-folk, that populate *Julie*,

> Passions differently modified…have different expressions. The imagination always encounters the same objects, and is more greatly affected by them. That small number of images keeps recurring, mixes with ideas, and lends these ideas the odd and unvaried tone that one notices in the language of Solitary Folk.[314]

The Solitary Folk of *Julie* form vivid memories, because, like Condillac's statue, they encounter the same objects and images repeatedly, and in isolation from competing sensations. The strong web of overlapping associations mimic those of the nostalgia-prone individual: a small group of images adorn their memories, and act as "relay" points between these ideas. Also, like the ideas of Jean-Jacques, their ideas lack precision and order. This is particularly true for Rousseau's passionate, young, country lovers, for whom "love renders all their sentiments into images…But these figures are without precision and without sequence [*sans justesse et sans suite*]; their eloquence is in their disorder."[315]

Country people nevertheless remain natural. Their images – however limited and confused – remain expressions of their sentiments, ideas, and practical engagement with the world, and with each

[313] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 280; my italics.
[314] *Julie*, 2, 14.
[315] Ibid., 15.

other. For Rousseau, it is the urban readers who risk madness by falling in love with "the pretended charms of states that are not their own," with the charms of this country life. By contrast, the language of the "solitaires" gives them a disordered, provincial eloquence that charms and links the ideas and sentiments that animate their worlds. We must add the virtue of the *ownership* of ideas to the competing virtues of their *extension* and *precision*. Even a highly associative imagination may render our desires and actions sane, because it connects them, "holistically," to our past actions, ideas, and images. In this case, it draws our attention to our memories, rather than forcing us to disown or disbelieve our past experiences.

Rousseau and Condillac similarly treat as natural the highly imaginative quality of ancient languages. In *Essai*, for instance, Condillac contrasts the vividness of ancient Greek with the precision of modern French:

> By the simplicity and neatness of its constructions, [modern French] early on gives the spirit an accuracy which it imperceptibly makes into a habit, smoothing the way for analysis, but it is less favorable to the imagination. By contrast, the inversions of the ancient languages were an obstacle to analysis insofar as they, facilitating the exercise of the imagination, made its exercise more natural than that of the other operations of the soul.[316]

The analogies and constructions of modern French are simple, logical, and plodding. Each idea must connect directly to the next related idea – we see this in a classic French (or English) subject-verb-object construction. This strict order assists habitual memory and reflection.

By contrast, Greek and Latin depend more greatly on the listener's (or reader's) imagination to make quick leaps between ideas, and promote more vivid, passionate memories.

[316] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 2.1.15.156. See, also, ibid., 2.1.5.51.

Ancient languages rely on "inversions," or linguistic constructions that delay revealing the full meaning of a sentence until the inclusion of the final word. The listener (or reader) must "create a picture [*tableau*]…[and] unite in a single word the circumstances of an action, much as a painter unites them on the canvas."[317] For Condillac, in particular, these ideas were more deeply traced into the memory, both because they called for greater activity of the imagination, and because they were more vivid and charming.[318]

While Rousseau does not explicitly connect the virtues of ancient language to memory, he draws from Condillac and from sources common to both philosophers – such as Jean-Baptiste Du Bos and Warburton – in order to celebrate a similar virtue of ancient languages to promote passionate accents and images.[319] Rousseau emphasizes the passionate accents of ancient languages, as opposed to modern languages, in particular. As he describes the shift between the first language to later languages, in *Essai sur l'origine*,

> Language changes its character; it becomes more precise [*juste*] and less passionate; it substitutes ideas for sentiments, it speaks to reason rather than to the heart. By the same process, accent fades, articulation extends, and the language becomes more exact and clear, but more sluggish, muted and cold.[320]

One of the greatest powers of this passionate, musical language is to create vivid images of sentiments and ideas of other people, to which we respond. Ancient language also paints vivid images of emotions

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[317] Ibid., 2.1.11.122.
[318] Ibid., 2.1.8.67.
[319] Jean Starobinski, introduction and notes to *Essai sur l'origine des langues, où il est parlé de la mélodie et de l'imitation musicale*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Paris: Pléiade, 1995), 1538n3 (to 375). See, esp., William Warburton, *Essai sur les hiéroglyphes des égyptiens, ou l'on voit l'origine et le progrès du langage et de l'écriture, l'antiquité des sciences en Egypte, et l'origine du culte des animaux*, trans. Marc-Antoine Léonard des Malpeines, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Paris: Hippolyte-Louis Guerin, 1744); Jean-Baptiste De Bos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, 2 vols. (Paris: J. Mariette, 1719).
[320] Rousseau, *Origine des langues*, 5, 384. Indeed, like Condillac, Rousseau frames it as an opposition between analogy and anomaly. See, ibid., 383.

out of accent and words. As Rousseau writes of a vestige of ancient language in contemporary music, "the greatest prestige of an art that acts only through movement is the power to form the *image* of repose."[321] While the ancients lacked habits of precision and order, they expressed their life in a common, non-alienating language that demanded greatly their imaginative activity to synthesize and complete. Once again, a highly active imagination extended and consolidated their practical, common world, rather than alienating them from this existence.

For both Condillac and, implicitly, Rousseau, what Condillac calls "analysis" must complement imaginative associations in order to achieve the *highest* form of natural thought, passion, and memory, rather than achieving *merely* natural forms. While *Essai sur l'origine* is a history of loss, Rousseau characteristically implies that middle periods achieve the ideal by combining ancient and modern virtues. As he writes, "a [modern] language that has only articulations and voices…has only *half* of its riches."[322] On the level of the individual, ideal poetic philosophers emulate the virtues of both modern and ancient languages. On the one hand, they use images to reduce long, complex thought processes to instantaneous revelations of multiple connections. They also draw from vivid and passionate memories. On the other hand, as Condillac puts it, they deploy another "operation capable of directing, suspending, and stopping the imagination, and of preventing the gaps and errors that it does not fail to produce."[323] This second operation is analysis.

For both Rousseau and Condillac, ideal poetic philosophers make extensive and compelling connections between ideas, while possessing the memory to trace past connections, and the analytic ability to examine them. As Rousseau puts it, "the more or less great ability to compare ideas and to

[321] Ibid., 421; my italics.
[322] Ibid., 411.
[323] Condillac, *Systèmes*, 2, Chapter 13.

find relations is what makes men of greater or lesser spirit."[324] Like the well-educated children of *Émile*, the "greatest" spirits experience the highest sentiment of existence, because they constantly develop their faculties to engage the world further, without losing connection to their past activity. They are at once natural, rational, and highly imaginative. The "genius poet," in particular, is a rare figure who not only learns, but extends, the analogies of a given language to reveal and answer new challenges to a linguistic and political community. A people may have individuals of "greater spirit," because others have led the way.

"A Reason of a Different Temper"

In his treatment of Jean-Jacques's childhood, Rousseau has Jean-Jacques possess the potential memory and imagination to achieve the ideal of the genius poet. I claim that Rousseau frames *Confessions*, as a whole, as an attempt to work through the reason implicit in his extensive imaginary and nostalgic connections.

Admittedly, some of Jean-Jacques's imaginative associations resist dissolution through reflection. After describing Jean-Jacques's "dangerous method" of reading analogies from romantic and Roman literature, Rousseau writes,

> These confused emotions that I experienced in quick succession did not alter the reason that I did not yet possess: but they formed for me a *reason* of another temper, and gave me bizarre and romantic notions of human life, whereof *experience* and *reflection* have never completely been able to cure me.[325]

[324] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 481.
[325] *Confessions*, 1, 9; my italics.

Once again, Rousseau follows closely the language and examples of empiricism. For Condillac and for Locke, *experience* (the accumulation of ideas) and *reflection* (the power to direct the attention to past operations of the soul) are the two prongs of the analysis of sensation.[326] For Locke, childhood associations between sensations, in particular, are often the most lasting and resist later reflection.[327] As Locke writes of the danger of children's stories, "the ideas of *goblins* and *sprites* have really no more to do with darkness than light: yet let but a foolish maid inculcate those often in the mind of a child and raise them there together, possibly he shall never be able to separate them so long as he lives." Rousseau casts his father in the position of Locke's "foolish maid." His father reads romances with his son far into the night, and helps create for his son "bizarre and romantic" ideas of human life that will not be cured by time or reason. [328]

Jean-Jacques's stubborn, early images and analogies, however, partially capture accurate, complex ideas. Rousseau's claim that his reading formed in him "a reason of a different temper" than that of his later, adult judgement echoes the religious language of "faith through sentiment" found in Pascal's *Pensées*, one of three texts that Rousseau requested from his editor in order to prepare for writing *Confessions*.[329] In Pascal's famous phrase, "the heart has its reasons, whereof

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[326] In *Essai*, for instance, Condillac defines complex ideas as "the work of reflective experience." Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.2.3.13. On the relation of sensation, experience, and reflection, see John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1, 2.1.2-5, 2.23.29; Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.2.5; *Traité*, 3, 4.9.2.

[327] Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2.33.8. Cf. Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 4, "Des besoins, de l'industrie et des idées d'un homme isolé qui jouit de tous ses sens".

[328] Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2.33.10; Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 8.

[329] Rousseau also requested Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, and Jean de La Bruyére's *Caractères*, which he first read as a child. See Marcel Raymond and Bernard Gagnebin, introduction and notes ibid., by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, xxii; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Ébauches des "Confessions"*, ibid., 9. Prior to Condercet's 1776 edition, based on the "Perier manuscript," 18th-century readers only had access to iterations of the heavily edited and partial 1678 Port-Royal Edition of *Pensées*. In this edition, Rousseau would have encountered a Pascal less skeptical of the power of reason than the Pascal of the complete *Pensées*. I will cite by page numbers Blaise Pascal, *Pensées de M. Pascal sur la religion, et sur quelques autres sujets: l'édition de Port-Royal (1670) et ses compléments (1678-1776)*, vol. 2, Image et témoins de l'âge classique (Sainte-Étienne: Centre interuniversitaire d'éditions et de rééditions, 1971 (1709)). I will also include references, by section, to the 1914 "Brunschvicg" edition of the *Œuvres-complètes-de-Blaise-Pascal*. On the editing, rhetoric, and influence of the 1678 edition of *Pensées*, see Mara Vamos, *Pascal's "Pensées" and the Enlightenment: The Roots of a Misunderstanding*, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, vol. 97 (Banbury: Voltaire Foundation, 1972). On the influence of Pascal on Rousseau's

reason knows nothing."[330] The rare, "true child" of the church knows God through the feeling of inspiration, the "opening [of] the mind to the proofs of reasons" and the "confirmation of these proofs by custom."[331] Feeling is distinct from reason, but it motivates and confirms reason. Or, as Rousseau has Julie say, of her intuition not to confide in her cousin, Claire, "I find myself often mistaken about my reasons, never about the secret movements that inspire me to them. This means that I have more confidence in my instinct than in my reason."[332] The direct "instinct" of truth (or God) is at once the material for reason to develop, and the check on denatured arguments.[333] In *Rêveries*, similarly, Rousseau writes, "born in a family in which mores and piety reigned…I received, from my most tender infancy, principles, maxims, which *others* call prejudices, that never fully abandoned me."[334] *Pace* Kelly, *other* people regard these maxims and principles as prejudices. These ideas remained with Rousseau as a source of intuitive truth.

Pascal rejects the charms of the imagination because they obscure the intuitions of people's hearts.[335] By contrast, Jean-Jacques's precocious, imaginative understanding of sentiments allows him to intuit God in the pious sentiments of his family and caretakers. After describing his religious education with M. Lambercier, Rousseau writes of his childhood:

> I always *felt* and *thought* as a man. It was only in growing up that I returned into the ordinary class. Upon being born, I had left it. One will laugh to see me modestly present myself as a prodigy. So be it; but when one has laughed well, find a child of only six who is attached, interested, and carried away by novels to the point of weeping hot tears over them. Then I

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thought, see Harvey Mitchell, "Reclaiming the Self: The Pascal-Rousseau Connection," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54, no. 4 (1993); Arnoux Straudo, *La fortune de Pascal en France au dix-huitième siècle*, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, vol. 351 (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1997).

[330] Pascal, *Port-Royal*, 2, 377; B 277.

[331] ibid., 380-81; B 245.

[332] Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 257.

[333] As we shall see in Chapter Six of this dissertation, the Savoyard Vicar makes a parallel argument in *Émile*.

[334] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1013; my italics.

[335] Pascal, *Port-Royal*, 2, 348.

> will…acknowledge that I am wrong...Find a J.-J. Rousseau at six years old, and talk to him about God at seven, I respond that you are running no risk.[336]

Jean-Jacques is born a man insofar as, from the time of his early reading, he understands feelings. His precocious images of all the passions allow him to understand the Divine in the religion of the people around him. Like the ancient Greek, his analogies unite complexes of passions, images and ideas, even if, as a child, he lacks the judgement to untangle their implicit connections.

Rousseau, the writer, ultimately claims a singular knowledge of human nature. He opens *Confessions* boldly:

> I form an enterprise that has no precedent, and the execution of which will have no imitator. I want to show to my fellows a man in all the truth of nature. And this man will be myself. Myself alone. I feel my heart and I know men. I am made like none that I see…If I am worth no more, at least I am different.[337]

Rousseau is singular. He feels the underlying nature that he shares with all people, while all other people are alienated from this internal standard. They are lost to themselves and to their commonality with others. Scholars disagree both about *when* Rousseau presents himself as natural in *Confessions*, and in what terms. For Perrin, the young Jean-Jacques is uniquely natural, because he is open to pure, unconnected images of nature. For "presentist" scholars, the older Jean-Jacques retroactively casts his childhood self as naturally transparent or present to other people and to the world. At the other extreme, Kelly argues, "[the child] Jean-Jacques is almost the perfect picture of a denatured, corrupt human who lives outside himself, has contradictory opinions and desires, and longs for things that cannot exist."[338]

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[336] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 62; my italics.
[337] Ibid., 5.
[338] Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 82-83.

I argue that Jean-Jacques is *both* extremely unnatural and exceptionally open to his true, inner nature – and open to Rousseau's later analysis of that nature – because his memory captures an extensive interlocking "chain" of vivid images, complex ideas, and intuitions about the intentions of other people. As the *Encyclopédie* entry on "genius" reads (most likely written by a onetime close friend of Rousseau's, Jean-François de Saint-Lambert[339]),

> The man of genius is he whose expansive soul…receives no idea that does not evoke a sentiment; everything animates it and is conserved within it….[And] his imagination recalls ideas with a more vivid sentiment than when he received them, because, to these ideas, a thousand others are linked, more appropriate to creating the sentiment.[340]

Rousseau's casts himself as the genius whose powers of imagination allow him to feel, remember, and connect his youthful experiences of the people and world around him. He is the particularly *Condillacian* genius insofar his nostalgic imagination and memory-formation makes his later analysis possible. His "bizarre" analogies are sometimes wrong, and he often misapplies them. But he experiences them so vividly and extensively that he may continually rework their implicit ideas. While the bodily Émile is lost if he is poorly educated and makes poor connections between ideas, the nostalgic Jean-Jacques may endlessly return to his associations and comparisons between memories in order to refine their connections.

In his (often inaccurate) sentiments, projections, and comparisons that constitute his memory of ideas and people, Jean-Jacques also articulates his own character. Here, Rousseau again approaches Condillac, in particular, for whom the analysis of self and the analysis of ideas are inseparable.[341] "To truly know a character," Rousseau writes, "one must distinguish the acquired from the natural, see how

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[339] Richard N. Schwab, Rex, and Lough, "Inventory."
[340] *Encyclopédie*, s.v. "genie (*philosophie & littér.*)," accessed April 12, 2016, http://www.encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/.
[341] On this theme in Condillac, see Rousseau, *Connaissance*, 218-19.

it has formed [*s'est formé*], what occasions have developed it, what enchainment of secret affections rendered it so, and how it changes himself [*se modifie*], often to produce the most contradictory and unexpected effects."[342] The older Jean-Jacques's character is the product of a diverse history of a soul's sentiments, projections, and actions. As a nostalgic, he has uniquely preserved this history of madness and intuition in his powerful and wide-ranging memory.

Conclusion: Jean-Jacques as *Puer Senex*

In the end, Rousseau's primary image of Jean-Jacques is as a *puer senex*, the classic and medieval trope of the uncanny "child-man" or "child-elder,"[343] rather than as a madman or a genius. For example, Gregory the Great writes of St. Benedict that "from the time he was a boy, he had the heart of an elder."[344] Similarly, Jean-Jacques is both the playful child *and* the developed man. Unlike the stillborn "man-child" of *Émile*, the abilities of man and child in Jean-Jacques overlap rather than fuse.[345] He intuits adult truth as a child. And he grows into a nostalgic adult whose childhood intuitions and images influence greatly the formation of his later memories. As Rousseau prefaces his explanation of

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[342] Rousseau, *Ébauches des 'Confessions'*, 1, 1149.

[343] On the history of the *puer senex* topos, see Teresa C. Carp, "*Puer senex* in Roman and Medieval Thought," *Latomus* 39, no. 3 (1980); Marc Fumaroli, "Conclusion," in *Le printemps des Génies: les enfants prodiges*, ed. Michèle Sacquin (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale; Robert Laffont, 1993); Quarfood, *Statue et l'enfant*, 239-41; Françoise Waquet, "*Puer doctus*, les enfants savants de la république des lettres," in *Le printemps des Génies: les enfants prodiges*, ed. Michèle Sacquin (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale; Robert Laffont, 1993).

[344] Gregory the Great, *The Life of St. Benedict*, trans. Terrence G. Kardong (Collegeville, Min.: Liturgical Press, 2009), 1.

[345] In *Dialogues*, Rousseau deploys the *puer senex* as a more simple, positive image of the constant and resilient character of "Jean-Jacques": "Of all the men that I have known, the one whose character is derived more simply from his temperament is J.J. He is what nature made him: education has barely modified him. *If* his faculties and strengths were developed all at once from his birth, he would have been found then just about the same as in his old age. Now, after sixty years of pains, misery, time, adversity, men have still changed him very little. While his body ages and breaks down his heart remains ever youthful. He still maintains the same tastes, the same passions of his youth, and until the end of his life he will not cease to be an *old child*." Rousseau, *Dialogues*, 1, 799-800; my italics. Even in this explicitly polemical text, however, Rousseau qualifies his presentation of his natural temperament. "Jean-Jacques" would only have remained completely the same if he had been born "as Adam," with fully formed faculties. Moreover, in this passage, Rousseau speaks of "Jean-Jacques's" singular natural temperament, rather than his universal "naturalness" and openness to truth. A few passages later, "Rousseau" repeats the story of Jean-Jacques's early exposure to false fantasies in literature, from which "he made for himself romantic and false ideals about men and society, of which he had never been completely cured." Ibid., 819; 46.

his nostalgic memory-formation (cited above), "although I was born a man in certain regards, I was for a long time a child, and I still am one in many other regards."[346] The adult Jean-Jacques is dominated by his childhood memories, because he first formed them with the imaginative abilities and synthesizing intuitions of an adult. He is at once man and child, a creature of insight and vulnerability.

As *puer senex*, the precocious Jean-Jacques may recall in vivid detail the implicit sentiment of loss that haunts the self- and memory-formation of even the well-educated child of *Émile*. Prior to any reflection, the child Jean-Jacques feels a precarious love against the backdrop of future and past loss. This is the most fundamental feeling of nostalgia. As Rousseau writes about the charm of his Aunt Suzan and her songs, a charm that defines one of his earliest memories,

> She knew a great number of tunes and songs that she sang with a very sweet and reedy voice. This excellent girl's serenity of soul drove reverie and sadness from her and from all that surrounded her. Her voice attracted me to the point that, not only have many of her songs remained in my memory, but they come back to me even after I had forgotten them.[347]

Rousseau feels his aunt's "serenity of soul" as a precarious victory over the sadness of the entire household. He retains a similar memory of his mourning father, whose "bitter regret…mixed with his caresses, which were all the more tender on this account."[348] To redeploy Rousseau's phrase from *Émile* about the consolation of human love, Jean-Jacques forms early memories of "frail happiness," a vulnerable joy stolen from sadness.[349] The corollary to Jean-Jacques's exceptionally tangled chains of memory is his sentiment of the flux of his present sensations and

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[346] *Confessions*, 1, 174.
[347] Ibid., 11.
[348] Ibid., 7.
[349] On the theme of "frail happiness" in Rousseau, see Tzvetan Todorov's *Frail Happiness: An Essay on Rousseau.* I part ways with Todorov's account insofar as he argues that Rousseau loses sight of the theoretical possibility of precarious, earthly happiness in his own life, especially during his later, autobiographical phase. On the contrary, experiences of precarious joy appear numerous times in Rousseau's autobiography. For him, contingency and vulnerability are the conditions for a singular, sweet joy, rather than for misery. Cf. Tzvetan Todorov, *Frail Happiness: An Essay on Rousseau* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 11-19, 47-53.

sentiments, a flux which constantly alters his relation to his past ideas and images. As the precocious "child-man," Jean-Jacques intuits and remembers profound existential truth.

For Rousseau, the *puer senex* image is also self-mocking. Jean-Jacques exhibits the classic negative characteristics of the *puer senex*: he is born "almost dead," and he remains prone to bodily illness and excess throughout his life. Unlike Émile, he thus struggles to experience his bodily sensations without adding to them imaginative charms. In *Confessions*, Rousseau also redeploys another classic trope of the *puer senex* that, knowingly, both strengthens and weakens his depiction of his younger self. He presents his narrative of his childhood as "likely to be true," precisely because it is so exceptional. Surely, Rousseau implies, he could not have fabricated such a singular and peculiar account.[350] As Perrin notes, Rousseau's educated audience would recognize his self-presentation in terms of this trope.[351] Undoubtedly, they would recognize the ambivalence of this form of rhetoric. The precocious Jean-Jacques is at once a dangerous model, and a seductive, but untrustworthy, characterization.

If *Confessions* is a seductive story, it is also an answer to alienating modern life and philosophy. For Rousseau and Condillac, modern language encourages habitual precision without active sentiment and memory. For both philosophers, modern philosophy offers continually changing images of ideas without precision. Both extremes of habitual reason and inflaming imagination distance people from their common sense,[352] which relies on the ongoing comparison between present and past ideas and images. Moderns, in general, and modern citizens, in particular, cannot judge their interests well

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[350] Rousseau's rhetoric is also self-consciously seductive, because he both rejects the rule that he establishes in *Émile* that the knowledge of seemingly brilliant children is shallow, and proves this rule by the exception.

[351] Indeed, his description of his precocious reading echoes that of earlier descriptions of childhood reading in 17th-century autobiographical literature. Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 22-30. I part ways with Perrin's account of the *puer senex* insofar as he only recognizes the child Jean-Jacques's precocious adult knowledge, and misses the child nature of his adulthood.

[352] I will address Rousseau's use of the Cartesian tradition of *bons sens* in Chapter Six of this dissertation.

without emotional memory which allows their evaluating sentiments to speak and resonate. If their fantasy is divorced from all analysis, moreover, they cannot extend their ideas effectively. The corollary to Rousseau's claim, in *Essai sur l'origine*, that moderns are no longer open to persuasion,[353] is that they are no longer open to the sentiments, passions, and ideas implicit in their memory. As Rousseau puts it, a ruler "needs neither art nor figures to say, *this is my pleasure*," but only precise habits of an abstracted reason.[354] Modern people have become less free, because they remember less imaginatively, and imagine without memory. If Rousseau tempts his average readers with nostalgic madness, he offers them, in exaggerated and disjointed form, a subversive model for discerning their true sentiments. In the Chapter Six and in the Conclusion to this dissertation, I will argue that Rousseau ultimately considers nostalgic memory to be crucial to the evaluating sentiment of the citizen living in either a just or an unjust *polis*.

In the rest of *Confessions*, and in *Rêveries*, Rousseau applies this model to himself. He articulates the sentiment of his nature – and through his own nature, the nature of all people – through his comparison between his changing fantasies, judgements, and errors. To discern and reveal the truth of his nature, Rousseau must follow his pleasure and analyze his numerous self-iterations as Jean-Jacques. I argue that Rousseau at once provides a model for nostalgic analysis, and invites readers to learn "nostalgic analysis" by tracing and completing this model within his autobiographical texts. He challenges his readers to follow his, and their own, nostalgic pleasure in order to re-evaluate and compare now-habitual past judgements.

[353] Rousseau, *Origine des langues*, 5, 428.
[354] Ibid., 428; Rousseau's italics.

Chapter Four

The Nostalgic Recollection of the Aging Jean-Jacques

This chapter reconstructs Rousseau's theory of nostalgic recollection by examining his treatment of the memory of the aging "Jean-Jacques"[355] in *Confessions* and *Rêveries*. In these two tonally nostalgic autobiographies, Jean-Jacques partially realizes the promise of nostalgic madness to which the young Jean-Jacques was disposed. In the face of personal and political persecution, he consoles himself with increasingly selective memories of happiness from his childhood and youth. For Rousseau, however, these autobiographies are both consolation and self-examination.[356] While Jean-Jacques sometimes loses himself in thoughtless reverie, he more often evaluates and compares – and invites the reader to evaluate and compare – his extensive and vivid memories of past images, ideas, and actions. Ultimately, this nostalgic re-evaluation and comparison distills existential and moral truth.

Again, Rousseau draws extensively from Condillac's memory theory. He accompanies the largely Condillacian theory of memory-formation, which we saw in Chapters Two and Three, with a sensualist theory of recollection. For Rousseau and Condillac alike, in recollection our attention follows and reinforces select "memory-chains" between sensations in order to enjoy pleasurable sentiments. For both philosophers, our nostalgic pleasure also invites *analysis*, which, for Condillac, is a type of reflection. We decompose or "resolve" our habitual ideas into

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[355] In order to emphasize Rousseau's distance from the perspectives of "Rousseau." the character, I once again distinguish between Rousseau, the writer, and "Jean-Jacques," his self-presentation.

[356] For Rousseau, both texts are forms of "severe and sincere examination" of himself, and form a common project. Indeed, he writes, "[the reflections of *Rêveries*] should be regarded as an appendix to my *Confessions*." By contrast, he presents *Dialogues* solely as a self-justifying project. It attempts to convince the French public of their erroneous view of him. *They*, not *he,* will correct his self-understanding, if they are not convinced. Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 999-1000; *Dialogues*, 1, Du sujet et de la forme de cet écrit.

their component ideas and sentiments by retracing – via our "chains of sentiments" – the original judgements and sentiments that first composed them. We then recompose these ideas more accurately, and invite more precise decompositions.

For Rousseau, nostalgic recollection articulates the necessary temporal and social conditions of its operation: the disparate, competing sentiments that define us over time, and our dependence on the imaginative projections of the sentiments of others to form and know these sentiments. Nostalgic recollection reveals our singular nature and our universal condition. It articulates the social and temporal constitution of the Rousseauian self that, as we saw in Chapter Two, the child already intuits. It is an active, rather than passive, form of thinking. In Chapter Six and in the Conclusion, I will argue that, in his ostensibly moral and political texts, Rousseau invites the same "nostalgic analysis" from his reader. In later Rousseau, nostalgic pleasure is a beginning of active thought and action, rather than its limit. His works are nostalgic because they open us to our capacity for virtue and for community, rather than because of the difficulty of presently realizing these ideals.

I will examine nostalgic recollection in three sections. First, I will develop, through Rousseau's comments, what I take to be the strongest version of the dominant "consolation" model, by which scholars understand Rousseauian nostalgia as moral and psychological retreat. Second, I will critique this interpretation by placing Jean-Jacques's consolation in the wider context of Rousseau's sensualist, Condillacian-derived account of recollection. I argue that Rousseau presents nostalgic recollection as pleasure-based reflection and analysis. Finally, I develop the limits of nostalgic self-analysis in his necessarily imaginative projections of the intentions of other people.

Consolation Model: Nostalgia as Proto-Madness

At first glance, Rousseau's autobiographic writings confirm the common perception that nostalgic thinking in his work is passive and solipsistic. In the absence of pleasurable associations and sympathetic interlocutors, the aging Jean-Jacques cannot compare his ideas, or overcome his *amour propre* in order to act virtuously. He is mentally and ethically passive. He retreats from painful situations and painful memories into consoling associations of pleasurable memory. While I critique this widespread interpretation in the next section, it is worth reconsidering, because it is partially true.

For Rousseau, recollection is sensualist. It follows and reinforces pleasurable memories and associations at the expense of painful memories and associations. In *Confessions*, the "sweet remembrance of [Jean-Jacques's] fine years...left [him] a thousand charming impressions that [he] love[s] ceaselessly to recall." As Condillac puts it – in a passage from *Traité* concerning Condillac's statue that Rousseau's descriptions of recollection echo[357] – "[the statue] will be brought preferably to retrace those memories that can contribute most to its happiness."[358] And this repeated retracing of pleasurable memories gradually overwhelms the influence of negative ones. Rousseau continues, "far from sharpening the bitterness of my situation with sad recollections, I push them aside as much as possible, to the point that I cannot find them again when I need to."[359] By *Rêveries*, he writes that "the habit of entering inside [him]self finally made [him] lose the sentiment and almost the memory of the ills."[360] Memory follows and

[357] Wolff, "Idea of Childhood," 388, 98; Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 54-55.
[358] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 1.2.15.
[359] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 277-78. As Condillac puts it, in a similar passage, in *Traité*, the pleasurable "link becomes stronger as the exercise of the faculties strengthen the habits of memory and the imagination." Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 1.2.39.
[360] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1002-03.

reinforces pleasure to the point of almost burying the painful memories and associations, both of which weaken through disuse.

Recollection is consoling insofar as it offers an alternative world in which to hide from, and to make up for, past and present pain. Jean-Jacques often speaks of pleasurable memories as hallucinatory escapes from his persecution. In *Rêveries*, for instance, he writes of his nostalgic memories of several weeks spent dreaming and botanizing on the island of St. Pierre that, even if "men will be careful not to give [him] back such a sweet refuge…at least they cannot prevent [him] from transporting [him]self there each day."[361] As Perrin notes, Jean-Jacques's hallucinations fit Condillac's conception, in *Traité*, of imagination as a type of memory so vivid that the statue "feels it is again in that state" (rather than as a separate associative faculty, as it is in *Essai*).[362] Of his memory of St. Pierre, Rousseau writes, "it is impossible to dream of that beloved place without each time feeling myself transported there again on the wings of desire."[363] Once again, the Condillacian background helps to articulate the logic behind Rousseau's description of nostalgic memory. The memory becomes hallucinatory in direct proportion to the statue's repulsion from present pain. This hallucinatory memory "has at least enough vividness to give no attention to the sometimes bitter state in which [a man] finds himself."[364] It eclipses present sorrows with the consoling hallucination of past pleasure. Thus, for Rousseau, the overwriting of painful memories by pleasurable associations "is a *consolation* of Heaven."[365] It consoles for the experience of past and present betrayals and persecutions.

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[361] Ibid., 1049; my italics.
[362] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 1.2.27-29; Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 55.
[363] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1045.
[364] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 1.2.27-29.
[365] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 278; my italics. See, also "Rousseau's" description of the imagination as a "consoling" faculty that allows "Jean-Jacques" to flee his feelings of persecution into charming fantasies and memories of these fantasies. *Dialogues*, 1, 814-15.

For Rousseau, nostalgic memory is a consoling escape from the insurmountable challenges of moral and mental activity in the face of the (feeling of) persecution, in particular. For him, the younger Jean-Jacques (up to the age of thirty) acts well only insofar as he is formed by, and responds to, a world that suits his sensitive and passionate nature. In Rousseau's terminology, he is merely *good*. His second thirty years offer him the opportunity to be *virtuous*, because he is subjected to injustice, persecution, and the temptations of *amour propre*.[366] For Rousseau, virtue is an internal combat in which one is "triumphant over [one's] passions, in ruling [one's] own heart."[367] But the older Jean-Jacques cannot meet this challenge. As Rousseau anticipates the account of his adult life, in Part Two of *Confessions*, "we will see born enormous faults, incredible misfortunes, and all the virtues that may honour adversity, with the exception of *strength*."[368] The adult Jean-Jacques cannot maintain his goodness in the face of the perception of people acting against him.[369] He cannot act dutifully in the absence of pleasurable sentiment, which the animosity of other people destroys.[370] In order to avoid vice, therefore, the aging Jean-Jacques physically and mentally retreats from any people that recall memories of his persecution. Reverie in the woods offers an escape from the challenge of moral action, as well as from any memories of this challenge.[371] There, he retreats to childhood memories of precisely the period in which "fate favoured [his] penchants," and he did not face truly moral demands.

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[366] Among other events, Part Two of *Confessions* recounts: (a) Rousseau's break with Louise d'Epinay and Friedrich-Melchior Grimm; (b) his apparent betrayal by Denis Diderot; (c) the censoring of *Émile* by the governments of Paris and Geneva; (d) the Paris parliament's issue of a warrant for his arrest; and (e) his social and political exile to the island of St. Pierre

[367] Rousseau to Laurent Aymon de Franquières, 15 January 1769, *Correspondance*.

[368] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 278.

[369] *Rêveries*, 1, 1081-84.

[370] Ibid., 1052-53.

[371] *Dialogues*, 1, 823.

Nostalgic recollection is also a flight from evaluating and comparing painful ideas. In retrospect, Jean-Jacques cannot compare or, at times, even associate, his memories of periods of sorrow and persecution. Rousseau writes, "I pay attention to this only by force…anxious and distraught, I hastily throw on the paper several interrupted words which I barely have time to reread, much less correct."[372] This "uneasiness ceases as soon as the object that causes it has disappeared."[373] While Jean-Jacques thought and wrote difficult, controversial ideas in his mid-career, he attributes this strength to a possession by an "effervescent" enthusiasm for virtue – a possession that left him after "four or five years."[374]

Rousseau interpreters plausibly argue that the nostalgic Jean-Jacques loses meaningful, active purchase on the external world. In the absence of pleasure, he is morally and mentally passive. He cannot act virtuously in the face of his alienating passions. And he cannot compare and re-evaluate his most painful present and past ideas. Instead, he escapes into isolation and happy memory. Most scholars of memory in late Rousseau thus claim that Jean-Jacques's "[s]elf-expression is…essential action, but it is an action in which the self never moves beyond its own boundaries."[375] As Rousseau describes the combined effect of botany and memory on his

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[372] *Confessions*, 1, 279.
[373] *Rêveries*, 1, 1056-57.
[374] *Confessions*, 1, 351, 417.
[375] Starobinski, 195. See also the similarly "presentist" interpretations of Hartle, *Modern Self*, 110; Raymond Trousson, introduction and notes to *Les Confessions*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Geneva: Slatkine, 2012), 42-43. For Hartle, for instance, Jean-Jacques's "imaginary world is precisely private," because his memories express his present images and sentiments. For what I will call "affective memory" scholars, such as Raymond, by contrast, Jean-Jacques's recall is a largely passive response to memory-signs of past ideas. Jean-Jacques is active in the present mainly insofar as he seeks objects and environments that will likely recall past happiness and connections. As in "presentist" readings, nostalgia offers Jean-Jacques an escape from the world. For Raymond, Rousseau "lingers in the contemplation of a past happiness that appears to escape from earthly conditions and temporal servitude." He contrasts Rousseau with Marcel Proust, who ultimately confronts the "consciousness of total reality…in all of its density" within the endless chains of his affective memory. Raymond, "Deux aspects," 40. The major exceptions among scholars of Rousseau's autobiography are Perrin and Kelly, both of whom argue that Jean-Jacques follows his memory to question and change his "boundaries," and to challenge those of Rousseau's readers. For Perrin, Rousseau escapes to memories and images of timeless happiness, but only in order to challenge his tragic self-understanding, and to provide readers with images of nature that may serve them as points of comparison to

happiness, in *Rêveries*, "I gradually become accustomed to feeding my heart on its own substance."[376] Nostalgic recollection seems to be either a highly creative or a highly associative escape from engaging internal or external difference. Like the tropes of the seductive 18th-century novel, memory of childhood – and the practices of reverie and botanizing that recall it – offers a distraction from the sadness of the world. Jean-Jacques ultimately seems to realize his potential for madness, when he finds the traces of his childhood happiness in the natural world around him.[377]

Nostalgic Analysis

But nostalgic pleasure and consolation are the beginnings of active thought, rather than its limit. For Rousseau, the pleasurable feeling of nostalgia entices the aging Jean-Jacques to pay closer attention to his extensive network of implicit comparisons and associations between pleasurable memories, and to refine his past judgement and evaluation. It also recalls him to his freedom in the sweet memories of his (missed) potential for virtue. In Condillacian terms, it is a means to analysis.

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understanding their own natures. Kelly similarly interprets *Confessions* as political philosophy in the form of retrospective self-critique.
See, Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 228-29; Kelly, *Exemplary Life*.

[376] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1002-03.

[377] The practice of botany, in particular, he writes, "gathers together and recalls to my imagination all the ideas that flatter it…[and] recalls me to my youth and my innocent pleasures." Even "in the midst of the saddest fate to which a mortal was ever submitted," Jean-Jacques may recall and enjoy again "the meadows, the waters, the woods, the solitude, and especially…[the] peace and repose" of his happiest memories of youth. He looks into the woods around him and sees the charms of his childhood. In *Dialogues*, "Rousseau" presents a similar image of near-madness that recalls his youthful fantasies of acting in romantic novels: "Jean-Jacques" "regularly passes five or six hours a day in delicious company, composed of just, truthful, gay, amiable, and enlightened men, gentle with great virtues, of charming and wise women, full of feelings and graces, modest without grimace" in which he "finds, at his pleasure, sure friends, faithful mistresses, and tender and sound companions." "Rousseau" maintains that these fantasies and memories of fantasies are reasonable consolations, rather than mad visions. Indeed, "Jean-Jacques's" retreat into reverie, "would show him the madness [*folie*] of counting on things here below," on either virtue or *amour propre*. Ibid., 1073; *Dialogues*, 1, 814, 22.

A closer examination of Condillac's treatment of the imagination in *Traité* reveals the active nature of nostalgic recollection. While hallucinatory memory is consoling, its pleasurable past connections and new "links" between memories are based on comparison (and not also on association, as he maintains in the earlier *Essai*).[378] In both *Traité* and *Essai*, moreover, Condillac argues that numerous comparisons between sensations (and between memories) are possible, because they differ from, and resemble, each other in multiple senses.[379] Pleasure-based recollection, therefore, makes *real*, if selective, comparisons, rather than avoiding all reality.

Again, Rousseau reads Condillac closely. For him, similarly, nostalgic memory retraces and reforms "chains" between ideas by making new comparisons and evaluations. Most simply, pleasure invites Jean-Jacques to retrace his past memories and "links" between them. When he "returned to [his] descriptions" of his childhood "endlessly with new pleasure," for instance, he also explored all of their detail. He "could shape [*tourner*] [his] descriptions…just to the point that [he] was content with them." [380] Moreover, pleasure carries him back to "those events that were their cause or effect" and "what these sentiments had made [him] do."[381] Nostalgic childhood memories recall their immediate causes and effects. Indeed, pleasure draws his mind to re-evaluate and refine past sentiments and comparisons. Rousseau writes, "in returning…to the first traces of my sensible being, I find elements that…united to produce forcibly a uniform and simple *effect.* I find other elements there that, the same in appearance, had formed by the combination of such different circumstances that one would not imagine that they possessed any relation."[382] In Rousseau's oeuvre, causal claims are based on comparisons between

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[378] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 1.2.35.
[379] See note 215 above.
[380] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 279.
[381] Ibid., 278.
[382] Ibid., 18; my italics.

sensations.[383] Jean-Jacques compares his long chains of memories of "different circumstances" and "sentiments" in order to re-evaluate his character.

For both Rousseau and Condillac, the name for decomposing and re-evaluating past sentiments and comparisons in order to establish or "compose" new ones is *analysis*. As Rousseau explains, in an early (1745), unpublished treatise on methodology, "one uses the *Analytic* road when one travels back [*remont*] from the present time degree by degree, ancestor by ancestor, to the progenitor of the [ancestral] house."[384] Analysis resolves a complex idea into a chain of component ideas that originate from a past, simple cause. For Rousseau, as for Condillac, the "first ancestor" of the "road" of ideas is a sentiment or idea deriving from, or applied to, sensations, rather than an innate idea (Descartes) or a general proposition (Spinoza).[385] When Rousseau writes, in *Rêveries*, "we barely have any automatic impulses whose cause we could not find in the heart, if we know how to look for it there,"[386] he traces a habit of avoiding duty through his memories to its origin in his enjoyment of a spontaneous act of generosity.[387] Once nostalgic analysis recovers the causal chain of which habits are the effect, we both understand our false projections, and can "compose" a new chain on the basis of more precise ideas and more accurate evaluations.[388] We know both ourselves and our potential. As

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[383] *Émile*, 4, 348.
[384] *Idée de la méthode dans la composition d'un livre*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 1244. On Rousseau's understanding of analysis – and its distinction from synthesis, the movement from general principle to particular consequence – see, also, *Émile*, 4, 434-35; *Confessions*, 1, 234-35.
[385] As Tonelli writes, for Condillac, "[a]nalysis shall proceed from the 'simplest ideas'; but these are not, as for Cartesians, or for Wolff, abstract principles or notions; they are the first particular ideas deriving from sensations and reflection." Giorgio Tonelli, "Analysis and Synthesis in XXVIIIth [*sic*] Century Philosophy Prior to Kant," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 20, no. 1 (1976): 187.
[386] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1050.
[387]Similarly, he follows the happy sentiment of his retreat from society to find the cause of his resistance to treating his enemies with indifference. Ibid., 1079.
[388] For Condillac, we "return to the origin of ideas" in order to "identify the simplest ideas of these notions, and in what order they again [properly] unite themselves to those that come after them." Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.2.7.66, 1.2.6.60.

Rousseau writes of his propensity to ignore his reason, and become indignant against his persecutors, "once the genuine source [of illusion] is known, it can easily be dried up or at least diverted."[389] Similarly, Condillac argues that "if we look for the cause of our [habitual] distractions, we will find how to avoid them."[390] Nostalgic pleasure invites active memory, even if it also replaces present active thought.

Admittedly, in his note and in *Émile*, Rousseau uses the word "composition" to refer to synthesis – the deduction of particular consequences from general principles – rather than for one of the operations of analysis.[391] Indeed, scholars argue that Rousseau's treatment of analysis and synthesis as complementary methods distinguishes his method from that of Condillac, who rejects synthesis outright.[392] In practice, however, Rousseau treats analysis as a means to both decompose and recompose the causal relations between ideas.[393] And, like Condillac, he

[389] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1079. Later in the walk, Rousseau qualifies this position: some illusions of *amour propre* may be known, and traced to their historical origins, but not overcome. Ibid., 1080-81.
[390] Condillac, *Animaux*, 4, Chapter 9.
[391] Rousseau, *Idée de la méthode*, 2, 1244; *Émile*, 4, 434.
[392] Burgelin, for instance, argues that Rousseau is closer to Diderot's methodology than to that of Condillac or Isaac Newton, because both Rousseau and Diderot call for the inductions of sensations to be complemented by the deduction from general principles. Burgelin, Introduction and Notes, 1419n3; Diderot, "Nature," 285.
[393] In *Émile*, for instance, Rousseau describes Émile's exploration of both the causes and effects of his sensations. He follows a "chain [of sensations] by which each particular object attracts another and always shows that which follows it" and ultimately "assign everything in its place." This analytic induction requires "composition" insofar as Émile tests the world through a chain of "deductions," or predictive hypothesies. As Burgelin points out, Rousseau follows the language of Condillac's *Traité des systèmes* closely here. Given that, in *Traité des systèmes*, Condillac permits reasoning about observations that generates general hypotheses that are immediately tested, Rousseau's middle position between "analytic" and "synthetic" methods is closer to Condillac's methodology than Rousseau's vocabulary suggests. While Rousseau defines "analysis" against "synthesis" in "Idée de la méthode," his image of the genealogy of a family (cited above) almost certainly paraphrases the similar genealogical image of this distinction that appears in the *Logique de Port-Royal*, a text he read closely as a young man. This highly influential Cartesian (Janist) text in 18th-century France defines analysis as a method by which we can "compose" effects by paying close attention to a given set of causes that we have "resolved." Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 436, 65; Burgelin, Introduction and Notes, 1419n3; Condillac, *Systèmes*, 2, Chapters 1, 3, and 12; Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 237, 42; Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, *La logique ou l'art de penser; contenant, outre les règles communes, plusieurs observations nouvelles, propres à former le jugement* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1981), 4.2.

ultimately suggests that we follow pleasure to decompose the general propositions, from which synthetic deductions begin, into ideas of sensations.[394]

While nostalgic recollection begins in pleasure, moreover, it follows its associations to revisit and re-examine different types of memories. For Condillac, the mind "will pass rapidly over the other [unpleasant] memories," but will "stop on them *despite itself*," if these memories are closely implicated in its memories of pleasant sentiments.[395] For him, moreover, we connect numerous sensations strongly to objects, and retains this unity in memory.[396] Jean-Jacques thus retains painful "simple" sensations that make up his complex sensations.[397] For Condillac, people also reflect on memories in order to unite – accurately or inaccurately – numerous ideas under general names.[398] While Jean-Jacques follows his pleasure when he unravels the cause of his avoidance of a given street, for instance – he "could not keep from laughing" – "this observation recalled to [him] a multitude of others that had entirely convinced [him] that the true and primary motives of most of [his] actions are not as clear to [him] as he had imagined," and are

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[394] In *Émile*, for instance, Rousseau's primary example of proper synthetic reasoning is Émile's use of the cosmological principles of the sun's path – principles that Émile had earlier discovered "slowly, from sensible idea to sensible idea," using the same limited hypotheses and analogies that Condillac allows. Rousseau also maintains that analysis and synthesis are only "sometimes" complementary. While he does not articulate his criteria, his astronomical example is suggestive of a further proximity to another chapter of Condillac's *Traité des Systemes*, Chapter Twelve. Condillac argues that astronomy is uniquely suited to giving plausible hypotheses from which to make deductions, because it is based only on mechanical principles of direction and movement. Rousseau demands a less immediate confirmation of these principles by observation than Condillac, but he similarly maintains that they must be confirmed by other "chains" of observations, inductions, and hypotheses. Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 432-34; Condillac, *Systèmes*, 2, Chapter Seven.

Admittedly, Rousseau posits undefended principles in both his *Discours*. As J.C.S. Black notes, however, Rousseau's "Frenchman" suggests, in *Dialogues*, that we should read the early texts in light of *Émile*, which "reduces" these hypotheses and principles to a single, causal principle: that "nature has made men happy and good but society has depraved him." I would add that, in the model of Condillac's *Traité*, *Émile* demonstrates this principle through the genetic analysis of the child's sensations and ideas of sensations, even if he also returns to it repeatedly as he makes this analysis. I am arguing that, in *Confessions* and *Rêveries*, he similarly decomposes and recomposes his intuitive sentiment of himself. Rousseau, *Dialogues*, 1, 927; Jeff J.S. Black, *Rousseau's Critique of Science: A Commentary on the Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts* (New York: Lexington Books, 2009), 6.

[395] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 1.2.15; my italics.

[396] Ibid., 3.11.3.

[397] As we saw in Chapter Three, for instance, he recalls the pain of his mother's death as a backdrop to the intimate solace of his Aunt's singing.

[398] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 4.6.4.

discomforting.[399] By following a charming idea, he recomposes an idea of his true nature that explains his habits of avoidance of duty as reactions to betrayal.[400] Nostalgic recollection follows pleasurable memories to sometimes painful sensations and ideas.

Indeed, recollection finds pleasure in vice. In *Confessions*, Jean-Jacques lists another object of memory that is "too dear to ever erase itself from [his] heart" (along with his "good sentiments"): his "faults."[401] The claim is surprising, because, for Rousseau, remorse for a past moral fault becomes increasingly unbearable over time: "instead of finding in the self the *consolation* that we seek there, we only find new torment."[402] While remorse disrupts consolation, however, it articulates a higher pleasure in the feeling of moral potential. On the one hand, we experience what Rousseau elsewhere calls "voluptuous remorse" insofar as we feel "criminal but not depraved." We enjoy our continued connection, through pain, to our remorseful *conscience*.[403] On the other hand, we articulate and enjoy our (missed) potential for virtue. For example, Rousseau writes of his central memory of youthful sin (in which, out of shame, he blamed his own theft of a ribbon on a maid) that he "would joyfully have shed all [his] blood to turn the consequences on [him]self alone."[404] In retrospect, Jean-Jacques sees the passions that he did not fight, but could have fought or corrected. He at once admits his natural weakness, and enjoys, in fantasy, his moral freedom. The more his weakness approaches "invincibility" the more his resistance to these passions would have been virtuous. As we shall see in my treatment of *Émile* and *Julie*, in Chapter Six, for Rousseau, "voluptuous remorse" is ultimately the highest

[399] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1051.
[400] Ibid., 1052-56.
[401] *Confessions*, 1, 278.
[402] Ibid., 1295(a) (to 133); my italics.
[403] *Lettres morales*, 4, 1100; *Julie*, 2, 344. On the "voluptuous remorse" and conscience, see Chapter Six.
[404] *Rêveries*, 1, 1025.

sentiment of moral freedom. We enjoy re-examining our "faults," because they articulate our greatest potential for activity in the face of temptation.

Rather than obscure all painful or difficult memories, nostalgic recollection avoids a particular category of painful memories: memory-chains on which pleasure can find no purchase. Undoubtedly, Jean-Jacques's reaction to the perceived plot against him is singularly sensitive,[405] even paranoid. It also follows the logic of his theory of social passions. A corollary of the fact that others "inspire in us sentiments similar to those that they manifest toward us" is that "we want to be esteemed by the people that we esteem."[406] If those whom we esteem reject us, and we continue to esteem them, then our *amour de soi* is diminished. Given that Jean-Jacques continues to esteem both the opinions of a select few individuals, and, at least for a long time, the collective opinion of the public,[407] his perception that he is vilified by men during different periods diminishes greatly his *amour de soi*. He recalls the events of his betrayal and rejection with "a heart tightened with distress"; the memories dissipate his existence and pleasure.[408] It is with respect to these moments of self-diminishing that Jean-Jacques's nostalgic recollection mimics the highly selective recombination of memories that Condillac describes,[409] rather than with respect to painful memories, generally. As Rousseau writes of the sweet memories of his otherwise painful late adulthood, "the pleasurable [part of the] memory returns alone, released from the sorrows that I experienced at the same time."[410] Nostalgic recollection is

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[405] In *Rêveries*, Rousseau writes, "the action of my senses on my heart produces the only torment of my life…I rarely escape from some infringement that I sense, and, when I think at all of this memory, a sinister look, a venomous word that I hear, a malicious person that I meet, is enough to overwhelm me." Ibid., 1082.
[406] *Émile*, 4, 492; *Rêveries*, 1, 1077.
[407] *Rêveries*, 1, 1077. By the time he writes *Rêveries*, he sees the (sometimes accurate) judgements by the public as a mere effect of the random flux of the public's passions and prejudices.
[408] *Confessions*, 1, 279.
[409] For Condillac, moreover, the statue's memory is only so highly selective when it is restricted to a sense of smell.
[410] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1074.

selective to the point of blindness only insofar as a greatly diminishing *amour de soi* undoes the energy and pleasure of thought.

Conversely, nostalgic memories that resist explanation close off avenues to pleasure. Jean-Jacques consistently dates his "chain of sorrows [*malheurs*]" to his adult life as a famous author,[411] rather than to the general trials of politics, society, or adulthood – as critics claim – because this life exposed him to the lure of responding to the opinions of so many people. This profession also rendered him socially and professionally vulnerable, because he depended on the influence of powerful officials, nobles, and patrons. Rousseau writes, "living alone among…men all more powerful than me…[I cannot] shield myself from harm."[412] His sorrows are thus pure "misfortunes," or acts of "fate" beyond his immediate control or full understanding.[413] He cannot affect or fully understand the outcome of the actions of powerful others. He also cannot easily understand the opinions of an amorphous public.[414] He avoids memories of suffering at powerful or nameless hands, therefore, because he cannot isolate and enjoy his own real or potential virtue. In *Confessions*, he thus appeals to the reader to attempt what he cannot: to analyze his memories of persecution, and "follow back [*remont*] from intrigue to intrigue and from agent to agent to the first causes [*moteurs*] of all."[415] In *Rêveries*, he ultimately concludes, after "long and vain research that "whatever intention, whatever passion, I might have supposed in their souls would never have explained their conduct in a way I could

[411] *Confessions*, 1, 349, 51, 1425n1; *Rêveries*, 1, 1079.
[412] *Confessions*, 1, 424.
[413] Ibid., 260, 351. During his brief intoxication with virtue, moreover, he reacts blindly to these inevitable acts of injustice against him, and invites new oppression and betrayal. As Rousseau writes, of his delirious vision of injustice that lead him to write his first *Discours*, "all the rest of…my sorrows [*malheurs*] were the inevitable effect of this moment of distraction." Ibid., 351.
[414] *Rêveries*, 1, 1076-77.
[415] *Confessions*, 1, 589-90.

have understood."[416] These are "anxious" memories, in addition to heartbreaking ones, because the "chain" of sentiments and actions is too tangled to be known or enjoyed.

If Jean-Jacques's nostalgic analysis is limited, however, Rousseau is clear that his adult fate is exceptional.[417] This fate also depends on his unfortunate decision to live a public life as an author. Many other people are less vulnerable to injustice. Jean-Jacques's fateful sorrows are also limited to his adult life, and do not implicate his memory of his important, early sentiments.

For Rousseau, nostalgic pleasure thus is an important opening to a diverse history of sentiments, events, and actions, rather than simply a consolation for past and present pain. In *Confessions*, Rousseau writes, "I have no need of other reports [*mémoires*]. It is enough…to return inside of myself" in order to "make my interior exactly known in all the situations of my life."[418] He requires only himself, because he retains internal "reports" within himself, rather than because he projects his current inner feeling on the past, as "presentist" interpreters of the *Confessions* passage suggest.[419] His memory recalls a history of "good" sentiments. Conversely, these sentiments reveal a history of events, even if this history of facts is subject to "errors" and "transpositions." As he writes most confidently in the earlier, "Geneva" manuscript version of this passage, "enough monuments [*monumens*] remain of each fact to recover easily its place in the order that I would have marked."[420] Pleasure is the beginning, rather than the limit, of reflection and analysis.

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[416] *Rêveries*, 1, 1078.
[417] See, for instance, *Confessions*, 1, 418; *Rêveries*, 1, 1075.
[418] *Confessions*, 1, 278. See, also, ibid., 130.
[419] See, for instance, Hartle, *Modern Self*, 115-17; Trousson, Introduction.
[420] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 1370n(a) (to 278).

Arguably, for Rousseau, nostalgic reflection cannot lead to knowledge, because we do not retain the sentiments that once animated our sensations. In general, Rousseau longs for different pasts at different times in his adult life.[421] Mercier points to Rousseau's marginal note to Helvétius's claim in *de l'Esprit* that "to remember is to sense," for explanation: "there is this difference that memory produces a similar sensation, and *not the sentiment*."[422] Rousseau seems to imply that present, rather than past, sentiment gives memory-traces of sensations their meaning and their affective charge. Thus, the sentiments that recollection revives are suspect. As he admits in *Rêveries*, "I wrote my *Confessions* already old and disgusted with the vain pleasures of life…[and] my memory often failed me." In order to "experience the happiest moments of [his] life," therefore, he "embellished truth with ornaments."[423] Mercier concludes that Rousseau's "autobiography is…the work of a creator who adorns the facts according to a law that he invents."[424]

But the Condillacian memory theory from which Rousseau draws presents a more plausible, mediate cause for his memories of sentiments than the memories of single past sensations: chains of signs, analogies, associations and sentiments that connect given present and past feelings. For Condillac, "the power [of memory] will not act except when…the objects we wish to retrace pertain to some of our present needs." And we find this connection between past and present sentiment "owing to the analogy of the signs we have chosen and the order we have established among our ideas."[425] When Rousseau admits that he cannot recall given

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[421] In a 1762 letter to the public censor, Guillaume-Chrétien Malesherbes, for instance, he says that he does not return to memories of childhood pleasures, because the latter are "too rare, too mixed with bitterness, and are already too far from [him]." *Lettres à Malesherbes*, 1, 1139.
[422] *Notes sur "l'esprit"*, 4, 1122.
[423] *Rêveries*, 1, 1035.
[424] Mercier, "Sensualism de Rousseau," 33; my translation.
[425] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.1.4.39. As in the case of his explanation of thinking with the aid of analogies, Condillac's own example is also one of nostalgia: "Two friends, for example, who have not seen each other for a long time,

sentiments and sensations in certain moods and times, he thus follows a Condillacian line. Present mood is the first link in a particular "chain of sentiments." Undoubtedly, this present mood, and the subsequent memories that it recalls, may be a response to *present* sensations. For instance, while traveling with his friend, in pastoral terrain,[426] in Cressier, Switzerland, Jean-Jacques encounters a periwinkle flower that returns him, in memory, to a periwinkle flower he glimpsed during a similar walk in the countryside with Madam de Warens, and to his sentiment of great happiness during this time.[427] While the memory of past sensations cannot recall past sentiments directly, however, present objects and moods may recall other links in the chain of sentiments and sensations, and signs for these sentiments and sensations.

Indeed, the mind may guide reflection by using objects that are historically associated with ideas as signs. In *Rêveries*, Jean-Jacques preserves botanical samples to act as what Rousseau and Condillac call "instituted signs."[428] They are objects that his mind associates with particular ideas and sentiments, because of circumstantial connections. He then uses these objects deliberately to evoke the connected ideas and sentiments. He forms a "journal of herbalizations" each sample of which recalls him "with new charm" to the first links of a given chain of memories and ideas. Each dried plant summons "the diverse impressions of objects of the locale that had struck [him], the ideas that they had inspired, the incidents with which these

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meet. The attention that they pay to the surprise and the joy they feel will immediately produce the words that they will suitably exchange. They will complain of the long separation, talk about the pleasure that they once enjoyed together, and everything that happened to them in the meantime." Rousseau refines and extends the nostalgia intrinsic to Condillac's memory-theory, rather than adding a nostalgic element to this memory-theory. Ibid., 1.1.3.32.

[426] Together they "climbed a small mountain at the summit of which [his friend, M de. Peyrou] owned a pretty garden apartment [*salon*] that he called, with reason, *Belle-vue*."

[427] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 226. "Affective memory" scholars often emphasize Jean-Jacques involuntarily recall, just as "presentist" accounts highlight his imaginative distortions of memories. For Rousseau, however, particular "chains" of now-passive comparisons and associations guide his active recollection.

[428] *Discours sur l'origine*, 3, 148; Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 1.2.4.35.

impressions were mixed."[429] The memory-work is nostalgic insofar as Jean-Jacques follows pleasure and charm to recall past connections. I argue that Rousseau adds "foreign charms" to his memories while writing *Confessions* for similar reasons. In the absence of any circumstantial "link," charming images and imagined details act as memory-signs to allow him to explore, re-evaluate, and compare particular happy memories, rather than as general images of youth. In later Rousseau, we retreat and dream in order to navigate our past sentiments and ideas.

These imaginative projections also create the avenues to pleasure necessary to follow one's duty in the face of weakness. Jean-Jacques finds the "strength" to "throw several interrupted words" on the paper in the face of a (perceived) hostile audience because he responds to the "charm" of an imagined reader – one who will find the strength to penetrate Jean-Jacques's "dull," charmless prose by "the desire to manage to know a man, and the sincere love of justice and truth."[430] Admittedly, Jean-Jacques's imaginative projections mitigate the virtue required to remember painful ideas and to write about them. They allow him to respond with pleasure, rather than strength. But they are a way to pursue knowledge of his singular nature by other, social means: he invites the reader to complete his moral act. We may compare and evaluate Jean-Jacques's sentiments and ideas in the second half of *Confessions* by sublimating into moral enthusiasm the pleasure of the memories of the first half of the text.

Ultimately, the oppositions between pleasure and virtue, and between pleasure and knowledge, that Rousseau and his critics sometimes suggest, cannot be maintained. Nostalgic recollection is a form of moral and mental activity, albeit one that depends on pleasure. Jean-Jacques follows the promise of enjoyment to revisit the details of his pleasant memories, to recall

[429] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1073.
[430] *Confessions*, 1, 279.

their sometimes painful associations, and to make new comparisons between them. And he summons the strength to record traumatic memories by anticipating sympathetic responses to his actions by future readers. Even for him, whose powerful memory renders him especially vulnerable to madness, nostalgic recollection spurs reflection and analysis. It is the same "nostalgic analysis" that he invites in readers and citizens.

"A Younger Friend"

The process of nostalgic recollection also reveals existential truth. By comparing his past sentiments,[431] Jean-Jacques feels both the joy of his moral and intellectual growth, and the pain of his corruption and lost potential. He not only knows, but feels, his inner diversity and finitude. As we shall see in the conclusion to this dissertation, it is the same sentiment of inner diversity and finitude that creates the conditions for identification across generational and class lines in Rousseau's idealized Geneva.

The memory of constantly changing sentiments and connections to people and to places is uncanny. But it is also another means by which the aging nostalgic attains social pleasure, because it recalls his past self-iterations. Rousseau first conceives of *Confessions* as "writ[ing] of a life of a man who no longer exists, but whom [he] knew well…this man is [him]self."[432] His first, unpublished introduction to this autobiography presents his authorial stance as a form of self-doubling. He writes, "in surrendering myself both to the memory…and to the present feeling I will paint *doubly* the state of my soul."[433] By *Rêveries*, he expresses this self-diversity

[431] His dismissal of his youthful understanding of regret is typical of his treatment of his younger ideas: "See how I saw the thing at the time; I see it differently today." Ibid., 132.
[432] *Ébauches des 'Confessions'*, 1, 1159.
[433] Ibid., 1154; my italics.

as a source of society and social pleasure. As he imagines reading his written mediations at an older age, "their reading will recall the same sweetness that I taste in their composition, and causing the past to be reborn for me, will, so to speak, *double* my existence. In spite of men, I will again taste the charm of society and…I will live with myself in another age as if I were living with a younger friend."[434] Humanity's duplicity denies "the most social and loving of humans" the charms of society. But he anticipates the enjoyment of the charm and perspective of younger iterations of himself.

Arguably, nostalgic recollection articulates a limited experience of inner difference, because the past self appears as a projected, static image. The younger self-iteration cannot return the sentiments of the older person. He also cannot argue with him. Nevertheless, the memories of younger self-iterations offer distinct perspectives from the present. And the older person recognizes the loss, in addition to the gain, of mental and moral capacity.

Rousseau's image of the ten- to twelve-year-old child, in *Émile*, articulates the social pleasure and difference of "overlapping" perspectives most clearly. In the first moment, we identify nostalgically with the persistent activity of the younger person (or self-iteration) in a way that again mimics the strong associations and hallucinations of madness. Rousseau writes of the image of the child: "[the child's] ardent blood seems to reheat my own; I believe I live on his life and his vivacity rejuvenates me."[435] This image of the younger self seems indistinguishable from the potentially maddening identification with the fictive hero. In the second moment, we feel the gap between perspectives, and enjoy creating the image of future potential of a younger person or self-iteration. As Rousseau anticipates the child's growth, "I

[434] *Rêveries*, 1, 1001; my italics.
[435] *Émile*, 4, 418-19.

foresee him in another age exercising his senses, his mind, and the forces that develop daily within him, and of which in each instant he thus gives hints."[436] We enjoy the charm of a potential future that he projects, and our own activity in projecting it. Our imagination "sees objects less as they are, but more as it desires them to be, because it is free to choose" the particular path that these objects – in this case, people – will follow.[437] We respond to the imagined future of the other being.

In a final moment, the nostalgic image is sad, because it reveals the limit of both our knowledge and our fantasy. The child's actual development will foreclose the particular possibilities that we imagine. He will also not necessarily realize his general moral potential. As Burgelin writes, "if all maturity is an achievement, we [see]…a perfect and present childhood…that the flux of time unfortunately renders precarious." [438] Indeed, in *Émile*, Rousseau ends his image of childhood activity with the image of its subsequent waste by poor educational methods. Similarly, Jean-Jacques repeatedly fails to realize potential happiness and virtue, even as he also grows morally. Indeed, he often temporarily reinvents himself in false "doubles" who alienate him from his true nature and sentiment, such as the alias of the adventuring English Jacobite, Mr. Dudding.[439] Nostalgic recollection invites us to confront the existential truth of the self's simultaneous growth and corruption, rather than to lose ourselves in pleasurable associations and identifications.

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[436] Ibid., 419.
[437] Ibid., 418.
[438] Burgelin, Introduction and Notes, 1407n1.
[439] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 250. On Rousseau's aliases and "doubles" in *Confessions*, see Catriona Seth, "Rousseau et ses doubles," in *Les Confessions: se dire, tout dire*, ed. Jacques Berchtold and Claude Habib (Paris: Garnier, 2015).

Ultimately, however, we still enjoy the perspective of greater knowledge and experience, and feel joy in the face of loss – a form of what we have called "frail happiness." The bittersweet pleasure is at once the motive and the product of nostalgic recollection. It entices us to disrupt, rather than protect, the self's unity by comparing the perspectives of our self-iterations.[440]

Conclusion: Truth that Remains

For Rousseau, self-examination and consolation are ultimately necessary conditions for each other. On the one hand, "reason consoles us for all the sorrows that we have not been able to avoid," because it frees us – as much as is possible – from illusions of *amour propre* to which the history of our sentiments bind us. This "quiet" allows for nostalgic reverie and memory (largely) unhindered by fear and vanity.[441] On the other hand, the pleasure of our past sentiments allows us to compare and re-evaluate them. In *Rêveries*, Jean-Jacques follows this pleasure to analyze – to decompose and recompose – his habits of honesty, duty, memory, and pleasure. In *Confessions*, he elicits the reader to verify his decomposition, and complete the analysis by "composing" its consequences. He "develops well the first causes [of his character] in order to make felt the chain of effects" that ends in Jean-Jacques's feeling of seemingly incomprehensible rejection by the French society and larger public.[442]

While nostalgic reflection can recover pleasure and knowledge even from memories of pain and error, however, it cannot easily substantiate the truth in any given moment. In his

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[440] Seth suggests that Rousseau ultimately recovers his self-unity in the definitive comparison of his self-iterations in old age. As a form of indicative analysis, however, the self-comparisons of past ideas and perspectives is always subject to further analysis in light of later observations and questions. Rousseau thus demands help from his readers to verify and extend the causal chains that he draws, and he continually revises and extends the analysis of *Confessions* in *Rêveries*. His nostalgic recollection recovers pleasure rather than self-unity. "Doubles," 167.
[441] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1081-82.
[442] *Confessions*, 1, 175.

autobiographical works, Rousseau presents the perverse effect of the social nature of passions: while we feel towards others that which their actions suggest that they feel towards us, our feelings also act as internal confirmation of potentially inaccurate perceptions of this intention. In *Dialogues*, "Rousseau" laments the naïvety of "Jean-Jacques," who "in all his attachment [to people]…would always believe that he had found the feeling that he himself had brought to it."[443] In *Confessions*, Madame de Warens's "charming" glances towards him "seemed full of love because they inspired [him] with it."[444] Similarly, Jean-Jacques projected "the noble image of freedom that elevated [his] soul" onto the people of Geneva, merely because he "carried this image in [his] heart."[445] In *Rêveries*, he goes so far as to claim that, unlike contentment, "happiness has no external sign; to know it one must read into the heart of a happy man."[446] While people who are merely "content" share pleasure, shared happiness requires an active, and potentially erroneous, projection. Nostalgic reflection must constantly reassess and compare memories of social pleasure, because we cannot know that it responded to true images of people's intentions.

Anxiety about the past intentions of other people, moreover, infects self-knowledge, because the sentiments that make up our "chain" also were responses to potentially erroneous projections of the intentions of others. Jean-Jacques remembers his most "natural," developed self as the person who emerged, and was shaped, during his periods of greatest happiness. For him, this happiness is always social.[447] The understanding of his nature, therefore, depends on having read correctly the signs of other people's participation. And these signs are easily

[443] *Dialogues*, 1, 821-22.
[444] *Confessions*, 1, 57-58; my italics.
[445] Ibid., 144.
[446] *Rêveries*, 1, 1085.
[447] I will address Rousseau's ideal of happiness in social relations in the next chapter.

misread. Even after we have retreated into memory, and retraced the chains of our being, our nature thus remains subject to doubt. As Condillac's statue says, of the analogous problem of knowing a history of sentiments without knowing the nature of the objects to which these sentiments respond, "I have made a habit of certain judgements, which transport my [inner] sensations to where they are not…[But] if I know external objects imperfectly, I do not know myself any better than these objects."[448] The history of sentiments cannot be told in isolation from the history of the sentiments of other people.

For the statue, a few simple compositions of his sentiments offer a solution. The statue says, "I only have to make several abstractions[449] [of my memories] to have distinct ideas, and to perceive relations more exactly."[450] While the statue cannot isolate metaphysical truth, it can discern the contingency of some sensations and the necessity of others.[451] Composition reveals truth as a form of consistency of sentiments across similar circumstances, rather than as an essence.

Rousseau suggests that we may similarly decompose and recompose social sentiments through multiple comparisons in order to isolate the imaginative projections that are plausible. For him, more generally, social pleasure and charm may only persist in light of their ongoing consistency with other social relationships. In *Julie*, for instance, Julie argues that adulterers cannot maintain marital happiness, even if they are never caught by their spouses, because they

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[448] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, 4.8.6.
[449] Condillac denies his statue the ability to analyze its judgements and sentiments, because it lacks the ability to use signs. But he here suggests that it may engage in a limited form of composition. In *Essai*, "[abstraction] is indispensable for limited minds that can consider only a few ideas at the same time and which, for that reason, are obliged to refer several ideas to the same class." And he implies that careful abstraction, which attends to the true distinction between ideas, is composition.
For instance, he defines reflection both as "the faculty of abstracting and decomposing" and a faculty that "composes, decomposes and analyzes." Ibid., Introduction to Part Four; *Essai*, 1, 1.2.6.57, 1.2.7.74.
[450] *Traité*, 3, 4.8.5.
[451] Ibid.

cannot *not* sometimes wish their spouse non-existent or dead.[452] Similarly, the "secret" love affair of St. Preux and Julie cannot be maintained, because it undermines the pleasure, virtue, and innocence on which love depends, rather than because the affair will be discovered.[453] The charm of adultery is almost impossible to retain over time and in changing circumstances.

Rousseau suggests a similar "plausibility" standard of truth for nostalgic reflection. In *Rêveries*, he claims that his account in *Confessions* "recounted forgotten things as they *must have been*, as they seem to be *in effect*, and never *contrary* to the ways that [he] recalled that they had been."[454] While Jean-Jacques's present sentiments may guide him to the details of past events, he ultimately judges their truth as likely (and *not* impossible) after he has compared and recomposed the relevant memories. As Locke notes in *Essai*, people must allow "degrees of assent" in matters that extend beyond the scope of the senses.[455] While nostalgia is a form of active thought, Rousseau must pursue plausible, rather than certain, truth.[456]

For Rousseau, even consistent possibility is enough to maintain the feeling of charm. As he writes, in his *Lettres morales*, of his belief that an "infinity of spirits of a thousand different orders" witness he and Sophie's secret acts of virtue, "I agree that these are only improbable

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[452] Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 359.
[453] Ibid., 363-64.
[454] *Rêveries*, 1, 1035; my italics.
[455] Locke, *Essay*, 4.16.12; Davies, *"Concience" as Consciousness*, 272, 111. For Locke, analogous reasoning from the known to the unknown is ultimately the means by which we "draw all our grounds of probability." As we shall see in the next chapter of this dissertation, analogous reasoning is at the heart of Rousseau's own "nostalgic analysis" of happiness.
[456] More generally, the knowledge generated by nostalgic analysis is *probable*, rather than certain, because it is a form of induction. As David Hume first pointed out in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, inductive arguments are based on experience, and can always be falsified by new experience. But nothing suggests that Rousseau was aware of Hume's critique. In France Hume enjoyed a reputation as a historian, rather than as a philosopher. Rousseau's correspondence with Hume suggests the he had only read, in Prévost's translation, the first volume of Hume's *History of England*. David Hume, *David Hume: A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.2.3; Michel Malherbe, "Hume's Reception in France," in *The Reception of David Hume in Europe*, ed. Peter Jones (London: Continuum, 2005); Robert Zaretsky and John T. Scott, *The Philosopher's Quarrel: Rousseau, Hume, and the Limits of Human Understanding* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), 100.

conjectures, but it is enough for me that we cannot prove the opposite in order to deduce the doubts that I wish to establish [about the completeness of present human knowledge]."[457] For Rousseau, in this letter, the truth of his memory, and the reality of happiness, virtue, and God, are all at stake in this doubt. In *Dialogues*, he gives up these conjectures. He treats these hopes as "intoxicating" illusions that – in the model of madness – he projected on the people and natural objects around him. Eventually, "[m]aturity and experience at last would…destroy his cherished illusion," and he would flee to reverie to escape "the madness [*la folie*]" of both the vain fantasies caused by *amour propre*, and his projections of the charms of virtue, good will, and order on the world.[458] In *Confessions* and *Rêveries*, by contrast, he subjects these illusions to comparison and analysis to find, as he expresses the object of his desire in *Rêveries*, "sentiment that could withstand the test of reflection and truly please [him]."[459]

Ultimately, Rousseau invites the reader to follow his implicit nostalgic analysis of an object that is distinct from (but related to) his nature, and human nature, more generally: that object is the nature of his happiness, and the happiness of others. For this project he must engage in a final aspect of analysis: the *re*composition of chains of ideas and sentiments.

For Condillac, the precise composition of ideas allows us to reverse the process, and compare ideas in relation to a different causal "origin" that leads to particular ideas that we are seeking. Condillac writes, "If I observe that both known and sought-after ideas can enter into a variety of combinations…I can imagine a combination in which the connection [*liaison*] is the

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[457] Rousseau, *Lettres morales*, 4, 1098.
[458] *Dialogues*, 1, 821-22. Ultimately, Kelly's image of Jean-Jacques as the dangerously sensitive, imaginative child who ultimately transcends his illusions through experience and reason applies much better to Rousseau's defensive treatment of Jean-Jacques in *Dialogues*, than to his more generous treatment of Jean-Jacques and his illusions in his other autobiographical texts. In *Dialogues*, the tone of this image of disillusionment is bleak. Jean-Jacques's recollection dispels all meaningful trust and pleasure in other people.
[459] *Rêveries*, 1, 1075.

strongest possible…If…I view an object in [this] aspect … I will discover everything."[460] Or, as Rousseau puts, in his explanation of analysis in his 1747 methodological note, almost certainly paraphrasing Condillac's explanation, "most propositions that may be made about the same subject have between them a subtle analogy, a connection [*liaison*] hidden to the vulgar mind but that the true genius always seizes. Once we hold on to the end of this chain we conduct ourselves with marvelous ease… to the goal that we had proposed."[461] Nostalgic recollection decomposes and recomposes precisely the causal relations between our ideas and between our sentiments in order to calculate new consequences.[462] Note that such analysis defines the nostalgic "origin" by the questions it attempts to answer, and the comparisons that are required to reach this answer, rather than by psychological or structural need. In the Conclusion, I will argue that we should treat Rousseau's "state of nature" as a similar analytic origin.

For Rousseau and Condillac, nostalgic analysis also must deploy cultural analogies, in addition to mere signs, to re-evaluate and compare past sentiments of several people in multiple circumstances. As Condillac puts it, in the paragraph preceding the passage that Rousseau paraphrases, "since comparing ideas is not always easy to do…there are no objects to which we cannot connect our ideas and which, it follows, are not well suited to facilitate the exercise of

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[460] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 2.2.3.39.

[461] Rousseau, *Idée de la méthode*, 2, 1243-44. In 1745, Rousseau was likely intimately familiar with Condillac's *Essai*. He met Condillac regularly for dinner while Condillac finished *Essai*, and Rousseau introduced him to Diderot and worked to find *Essai* a publisher. Here, we already see Rousseau's and Condillac's different emphases in their treatments of individual activity – a difference that appears in *Émile* (see Chapter Two of this dissertation). While Rousseau highlights that a great genius "seizes" a subtle analogy that is invisible to most people, Condillac brings out the ease by which the analysis progresses, once this analogy is discovered. Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 2.2.3.39; Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 347.

[462] Full analysis – the decomposition, composition, and recomposition of ideas and sentiments – appears most explicitly in *Rêveries*. By examining the "proportion between the diverse combinations of [his] destiny and his habitual sentiments," for instance, Jean-Jacques concludes that worldly misfortune concentrates his sentiment of existence by restricting his attention to domestic life. The "strongest connection" between his good sentiments and worldly well-being – which he examined in different terms, in *Confessions* – begins with his memories of the dispersal of his sentiment of existence, in success; runs through his sentiments of his intimate pleasures, shared with others, under adverse conditions; and explains and justifies his consoling retreat from social life. *Rêveries*, 1, 1074.

memory and imagination," on which analysis depends.[463] Condillac uses pastoral images of shepherd lovers and charming hills as his central example to illustrate the power of analogies to act as such guides to our everyday analysis.[464] As we shall see in the next chapter, in *Confessions* and *Rêveries*, Rousseau implicitly reflects on, and by means of, pastoral tropes of a "romance" that he read and reread since the age of six: Honoré d'Urfé's highly influential romantic, pastoral novel, *L'Astrée* (1607-27).

[463] Condillac, *Essai*, 1, 2.2.3.37.
[464] Ibid., 2.2.3.38.

Chapter Five

Dreams of *L'Astrée*: Nostalgic Analysis of the Good Life in Late Rousseau

This is what I prayed for: a piece of land not so large,
a garden, a stream of running water near the dwelling,
and a very little grove of trees besides.

- Horace, *Satires* I

So far, this dissertation has articulated nostalgia in late Rousseau as a form of active thinking. In this chapter, I examine the chief object of this nostalgic thinking: the content of memories in which Jean-Jacques and other animate beings – animals, people, and, analogously, God – pursue freely their individual, but overlapping, inclinations. Jean-Jacques is happy – that is, he feels the most intense and sustained sentiment of his existence – when he enjoys a sentiment of perfectly reciprocal love with intimates, and shared contentment with the small community around him. In these moments, Jean-Jacques retreats from public life in order to pursue happiness in social relations. While scholars often claim that Rousseau longs for social transparency, cultural fusion, or political unanimity,[465] his ideal of intimate community, in *Confessions* and *Rêveries*, is premised on mutual freedom to express distinct inner lives, and to pursue different, but potentially consonant, ideas of one's good.

[465] See Chapter One of this dissertation. A minority of scholars highlight the place of mediation and intimacy in Rousseau's ideals of knowledge or of social relations. See, Olivia Bloechi, "On Not Being Alone: Rousseauian Thoughts on a Relational Ethics of Music," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 66, no. 1 (2013); Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life*; Michael O'Dea, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Music, Illusion, and Desire* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995); David Gauthier, *Rousseau: The Sentiment of Existence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Wingrove, *Rousseau's Republican Romance*; Warner, *Rousseau and the Problem of Human Relations*.

My epigraph, from the second volume of Horace's *Satires* (30 BCE), is Rousseau's epigraph to Book Six of *Confessions*.[466] It suggests that we should read his description, in that book, of "the short happiness of [his] life," in which he expressed his nature most directly, in a particular literary context: the pastoral tradition to which Jean-Jacques was first exposed as a boy in its 17th-century, romantic form, in Honoré d'Urfé's *L'Astrée*,[467] a tradition for which Horacian poetry and aesthetical theory are ancient sources.[468] In this book of *Confessions*, Jean-Jacques describes his several years in the company of his great teacher, friend, and sometime lover Madame de Warens at a countryside cottage, "Les Charmettes," through key tropes from romantic pastoral literature: a charmed harmony with the natural world, country virtue (as opposed to urban alienation), and, most importantly, perfectly reciprocal love and dependence. While Jean-Jacques read many novels as a child with his father, and applied their analogies to the world, "*L'Astrée*…came to [his] heart most frequently."[469] I argue that it particularly frames his experience and memory of happiness.

I claim, moreover, that d'Urfé's pastoral analogies guide Rousseau's "nostalgic analysis" of his nature and happiness. Scholars argue that *Confessions* is, for Rousseau, an implicitly philosophical meditation on the conditions of his earthly happiness.[470] I argue that each of Jean-

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[466] Rousseau strays slightly from Horace's original poem. He quotes Horace as writing of a "very" little, rather than merely "little," grove of trees. He also makes a slight omission in his Latin. See, Christopher Kelly, introduction and notes to *The Confessions and Correspondence, Including the Letters to Malesherbes*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ed. Christopher Kelly, Roger D. Masters, Peter G. Stillman, trans. Christopher Kelly (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press, 1995), 626n2. I here quote Kelly's translation of Rousseau's version.

[467] Rousseau indicates that the six-year-old Jean-Jacques read *L'Astrée* (4 vols., 1607-27), with his father. Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 8-9.

[468] On the 17th- and 18th-century French pastoral traditions, and the relation of these traditions to ancient literature, see Françoise Lavocat, *Arcadies malheureuses: Aux origines du roman moderne* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1998); Annabel M. Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Richard Jenkyns, "Pastoral," in *The Legacy of Rome: A New Appraisal*, ed. R. Jenkyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[469] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 164.

[470] See Kelly, *Exemplary Life*; Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339.

Jacques's successive experiences of happiness and the loss of happiness add ideas to a growing, inductive "chain" of comparisons and causal connections between Jean-Jacques's fantasies and experiences of the good life. *Confessions*, in particular, revisits, from different vantage points, the ideal of love that animates all the competing philosophies of love and community in *L'Astrée* as a whole[471]: "a reciprocal affection with which [the beloved] receives [one's] love and services."[472] While Rousseau sometimes claims that both *Confessions* and *Rêveries* are unsystematic recollections of facts,[473] he implicitly repeats, refines, and connects his memories[474] – particularly those memories of reciprocal love. D'Urfé's sprawling, four-volume romance is uniquely suited to this refinement of pastoral analogies, because d'Urfé himself implicitly critiques the self-understanding of his characters, and their ideas of love, as partial, and often suspect.[475] Transcending the position of *L'Astrée*, Rousseau offers an image of neo-Platonic love known through a modern, empiricist epistemology.

I will develop my claim that *Confessions* and *Rêveries* are implicit forms of "nostalgic analysis" of human happiness by tracing comparisons implicit in three distinct "series" of pleasurable memories: those of *movement*, *repose*, and *reverie*. First, I claim that Rousseau

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[471] For different formulations of this ideal in competing paradigms of love and community – Neoplatonic, hedonist, and "proto-modern," respectively – see, for instance, Honoré D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, vol. 2 (Geneva: Slatkine, 1966), 13; ibid., 3: 490; ibid., 4: 41.

[472] *L'Astrée*, vol. 1 (Genève: Slatkine, 1966), 10.

[473] In *Rêveries*, for instance, he writes, "I will content myself with taking the register of my operations without looking to reduce them to a system." In Confessions, he presents himself as similarly non-argumentative. He writes, "it is not for me to judge the importance of facts; I must recount all of them, and leave the reader the care of choosing them." Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1001; *Confessions*, 1, 175.

[474] Arnoud Tripet, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: la tension and le rythme* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012), 97-98.

[475] Indeed, he treats the neo-Platonic love fantasies of the central shepherd lover, Céladon, as mad, for long stretches of the second volume of the novel. As d'Urfé puts it, in the introductory note to the second volume, "it is a strange humor [*estrange humeur*] that holds you." D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, 2, 3. More generally, Leonard Hinds writes that the characters "are condemned to live a long series of psychological mystifications and misinterpretations." Leonard Hinds, *Narrative transformations from L'Astrée to Le berger extravagant* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2002), 15. See, also, Myriam Jehenson, *The Golden World of the Pastoral: A Comparative Study of Sidney's 'New Arcadia' and d'Urfé's 'L'Astrée'* (Rayenna: Longo, 1981).

invites us, in Part One of *Confessions*, to compare his memories of the soul-expanding pleasures of travel. His analysis suggests that we glimpse lasting pleasure – or happiness – when we respond to the pleasure and affection of those whom we feel are independent others (including, ultimately, God). Second, I argue that his accompanying series of happy periods in country repose with Madame de Warens, in Part One, implies that we are happy when we come to know, through analysis, this shared pleasure and affection. Finally, I argue that Rousseau's treatment of his happy memories of reverie on St. Pierre, in *Rêveries*, reveals nostalgic reverie as an internally social means to refine and enjoy the experience of past happiness.

"The Pleasure of Going I Know Not Where": The Joy of Expansive Fullness

In his descriptions of the young Jean-Jacques's pastoral fantasies and traveling adventures in Part One of *Confessions*, Rousseau implicitly repeats and compares different, nostalgic iterations of "that short but precious moment of life in which its expansive fullness extends our being through all our sensations, so to speak, and in our eyes embellish all of nature with the charm of our existence."[476] These repetitions and comparisons – of a sentiment of expansive existence in which the world and community reflect the affection and energy of the inner soul – invite the reader to reach a particular conclusion: truly expansive happiness spontaneously responds to the (necessarily imagined) good will of independent people and to the charm of a larger, natural order, rather than merely projecting the self onto an imagined, charming world. While the self-projections that obscure the will of others (traveling from *Geneva*) or the contingency of fate (traveling to *Annecy*) prove to be illusory and self-defeating, serene acceptance of non-imaginative reality (traveling to *Chambéry*) is lacking. Instead, Jean-

[476] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 57-58.

Jacques glimpses lasting happiness when he responds to the imagined love of particular others (traveling from *Turin*), and casts himself as the lover who lives for another person (on the way to *Paris*). In five points, Rousseau implicitly and nostalgically analyzes the relation between fantasy, happiness, and the natural order.

Moreover, I claim that Rousseau draws from the adventures and fantasies of central characters in *L'Astrée* to frame his implicit analysis. Just as the love of the titular shepherdess Astrée organizes the desires and quests of Céladon, the principle shepherd lover, the love of Madame de Warens is the constant reference point for the young Jean-Jacques's wandering fantasies and travels through the Alps. Jean-Jacques at once risks his greatest self-alienation as an iteration of the shepherd who projects love and charm indiscriminately upon the world, and finds happiness as the shepherd-lover.

Let us start with what is, chronologically, a middle moment in what I will treat as a five-point series of memories. This is Jean-Jacques's nostalgic memory of his travel to Turin, after meeting Madame de Warens. It articulates most clearly the defining object of this comparative series: joyous intimacy and expansive plentitude. Jean-Jacques sees himself "as the product, student, friend, and almost the lover of Madame de Warens." He feels her love, because her gaze inspires his great affection for her. He enjoys "the obliging things she had said, the small caresses she had given [him], the so tender interest that she had seemed to take in [him], the charming looks that seemed [to him] so full of love because they inspired [him] with it."

In the refraction of *Maman*'s gaze, Jean-Jacques also projects her charm onto the natural and social world around him. His feeling of reciprocal love "nourished [his] ideas…and caused [him] to dream delightfully" of a warm reception and charming idleness of the world that echoes

the original Eden-like happiness of d'Urfé's shepherds, "who, by the goodness of the air, the fertility of the shores and their natural sweetness, live with so much good fortune."[477] Rousseau writes, "In houses I imagined rustic feasts, in fields frolicsome games, along waterways, bathing, outings, fishing, on trees delicious fruits, under the shadows voluptuous têtes-a-têtes, on the mountains tubs of milk and cream, a charming idleness, peace, simplicity, the pleasure of going I know not where."[478] Jean-Jacques longs for invigorating and circulating enjoyment that begins in perfectly reciprocal love.

As Kelly maintains, Rousseau is surely aware, in retrospect, of his projections and his dangerous dependence on fantasy. Rousseau's image is sentimental to the point of seeming irony. Kelly writes, "his awakened imagination… transforms the world to correspond with his internal feelings…He is simply incapable of seeing things as they are."[479] As Rousseau describes the process underlying Jean-Jacques's happiness, "our eyes embellish all of nature with the charm of our existence."[480] As we have seen, Rousseau is aware of the distorting effects of the imagination, in general, and the potentially illusory nature of social passions, in particular. He partly critiques Jean-Jacques's projections, because they potentially obscure reality. Rousseau's pastoral literary references support this reading. In Book Nine of *Confessions*, Rousseau names Jean-Jacques the "extravagant shepherd,"[481] a reference to Charles Sorel's satiric novel of the same name[482] – a novel that famously parodied the longings and visions of d'Urfé's characters,

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[477] D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, 1, 11-12.
[478] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 57-58.
[479] Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 123-24. For Kelly, Rousseau implies that the chief virtue of this experience – compared to his other imaginative moments of passive identification, active construction and generation, and outright creation – is that Madame de Warens limits his imagination to merely embellishing the world.
[480] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 57-58.
[481] Ibid., 427.
[482] Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 151; Charles Sorel, *Le berger extravagant* (Genève: Slatkine, 1972).

and of his readers, as mad projections. In *Julie*, the "Editor," in Rousseau's second preface, similarly suggests that Céladon and Astrée are "real madmen," in the model of Don Quixote.[483]

Rousseau's Jean-Jacques, however, follows much more closely the mold of Lysis, Sorel's parody of Céladon, in his earlier fantasies following his exile from his beloved Geneva, than in his later visions at Turin. In this earlier "Genevan" walk, Jean-Jacques similarly projects his inner sentiment and pastoral fantasies on the world. He imagines finding "feasts, treasures, adventures, friends ready to serve [him], mistresses eager to please [him] at each stop." In this earlier walk, however, he emphasizes his infinite power and promise, rather than his encounter with loving others: "I believed I could do anything and attain everything…By merely showing myself I was going to occupy the universe with me." [484] His identification with literary archetypes also obscures the reality of other people and of contingent events. Like Sorel's Lysis, who "applies himself every day to imitate the shepherd," and "make[s] discourse of love [to himself] as if he were speaking to some beautiful Lady,"[485] he acts as if he will be "a favourite of the Lord and the Lady, lover of the damsel…and protector of the innocent."[486] After singing outside the windows of likely "chateaus," he cannot believe, "after having shouted [him]self out of breath…not to see either Ladies or Damsels appear, attracted by [his] voice."[487] In this iteration of the pastoral fantasy of chivalric adventure, the shepherd lover himself is the focus, rather than the charming beloved. Jean-Jacques is another Don Quixote, lost in half-mad projections of fantasies that flatter himself.

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[483] Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 19.
[484] *Confessions*, 1, 45.
[485] Sorel, *Le berger extravagant*, 27.
[486] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 45.
[487] Ibid., 48.

Rousseau's preference for the "Turin" over the "Genevan" visions of pastoral adventure – for projections of joyous intimacy and expansive plentitude than for those of *amour propre* – is clear. Unlike the image of the walk to Turin, Rousseau presents the "Geneva" walk as a warning. Like Condillac's melancholic reader whose real-life misfortune makes her find consolation in fantasy, Jean-Jacques dreams in response to his fear for his future after he is needlessly exiled from Geneva. As Kelly notes, he later names the imaginative self-projection of his "Genevan" walk *amour propre*: "far from giving myself up to discouragement and tears, I had only to change hopes, and amour-propre lost nothing by it."[488] In the face of any threat to his vain fantasy, Jean-Jacques's imagination transforms the world again and forms "hopes based on this transformed appearance." In nostalgic retrospect, any given moment of this type of happiness is temporary and false.

By juxtaposing the two memories of pastoral happiness so closely, therefore, Rousseau illuminates the necessity of the will of other people, and of God, to subjective pleasure, and its nostalgic memory. While Madame de Warens is indeed a damsel protected by a Lord,[489] in the later memory Jean-Jacques is happy in her company to the extent that he responds to her affection. We may imply that whatever is true of happiness in the Turin walk is a response to the (albeit projected) charm of the larger world that we enjoy, but that we do not constitute or dominate.

The projection of expansive sentiment also must respond to the charm of an unpredictable fate (which is ultimately God's will), rather than to events anticipated by fantasy. In a *third* image of pastoral adventure – leaving from Turin to find Madame de Warens again at

[488] Ibid., 70; Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 123.
[489] For serving the Catholic Church, she received a pension from King Victor Amadeus, who helped her to escape from her unhappy marriage. Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 49-50.

Annecy – Jean-Jacques would like to "experience again the mountains, the fields, the woods, the streams, the villages follow[ing] each other endlessly and ceaselessly with new charms" that he experienced (and imagined) while walking to Turin. In this case, however, his enjoyment remains completely a product of his memory and imagination. He travels with a friend, Monsieur Bâcle, and the image of Madame de Warens looms "in the great distance." She is a guarantee of repeated pleasure, rather than a person whose charm inspires him to anticipate a welcoming, but unpredictable, fate. Nature is the source of "ceaseless," but already known, charms, rather than the unknown pleasures of going "I know not where."[490] As in his trip from Geneva, Jean-Jacques fantasizes about autonomy and adventure. But now he reduces real, remembered objects to props for an ongoing fantasy that "absorbs [his] entire life," rather than "throw[ing] himself" into the worlds of his literary heroes. He projects his detailed memories of pleasure onto the present world.

Once again, moreover, Jean-Jacques clearly regrets this "delirium." It causes him to lose a good position and a kind community. And he only gains a fleeting pleasure of travel, and a temporary friendship. Indeed, he shamefully distances himself from his friend when he approaches the home of Madame de Warens. His happy projections are false, because they pre-empt the experience of new iterations of the world's charm, and they reduce the charm of fate to the repetition of past pleasure. In this short, three-point series of the "Geneva," "Turin," and "Annecy" walks, Jean-Jacques feels most powerfully and resiliently the pleasures of intimacy, reciprocity, integration, and play. As an author, Rousseau is nostalgic for a time in which he felt

[490] Ibid., 99-100.

– through his fantasy – that he was an active participant within a larger whole, at once loved by others and charmed by an independent fate and world.

Such expansive and social pleasure cannot be reduced easily to concepts of immediacy, transparency, or fusion, as "psychological" and "structural" interpretations of the object of nostalgia in Rousseau suggest. Starobinski, in particular, downplays the social and reciprocal intimacy for which Jean-Jacques also longs. As he describes St. Preux's similar ecstasies in nature, in *Julie*, "boundless desire fills all the space…the external world is concentrated in the pure ecstasy of the ego."[491] In the context of *Confessions*, this description fits better the memories of egoistic expansion and travel that Rousseau rejects. He longs for intimacy and shared affection, rather than transparency and presence.[492]

The "reconstructive" argument – that Jean-Jacques's projections of love and charm onto the natural world threaten his self-sufficiency and unity – is stronger, because it highlights the agitation and delusion of imagined charms. For Kelly, in particular, Jean-Jacques's series of misadventures in Part One of *Confessions* tells the story of his slow, and often temporary and backsliding, transcendence of his alienating illusions in order to find contentment. In a *fourth* point in the expansive pleasure series, the "Chambéry" walk, during his return from Lyon to Chambéry, he "paid attention to the countryside, [he] noticed the trees, the houses, the streams, [he] deliberated at the crossroads," because he "had a serene heart." Rousseau writes, "I tasted in

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[491] Starobinski, *Transparency and Obstruction*, 82.

[492] Conversely, Jean-Jacques laments lost trust and intimacy, rather than transparency, in his periods of unhappiness. In *Rêveries*, for instance, his nostalgia appears against the backdrop of his betrayal: "That I could stay forever in that stupid but sweet confidence that for so many years rendered me the prey and the plaything of my noisy friends…I was their dupe…but I believed myself loved by them, and my heart rejoiced in the friendship that they inspired in me by treating me so much as a friend." The need for confidence, rather than transparency, motivates his nostalgic reaction. He is happy to trust the sometimes-opaque intentions of others, as long as he may assume a general framework of good intention. Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1011.

advance, but without intoxication, the pleasure of living around [Madame de Warens]."[493] He needs no embellishing imagination, because he is content. As Kelly compares this description to his happiness traveling to "Turin," "he sees houses and trees rather than festivals and tête-a-têtes."[494]

The "Chambéry" walk also seems to improve on Jean-Jacques's immediately preceding "Paris" walk (the *fifth* point of comparison in our series). On the way to Paris, he is tempted to delay his arrival at Lyon, to "see the banks of Lignon…and to go look for Dianes and Sylvandres [*sic*]," the second set of shepherd lovers, in *L'Astrée*. But his discovery that the pastoral forest and river that inspired the setting of *L'Astrée* are now replete with ironworks and blacksmiths "immediately calmed [his] romantic curiosity."[495] Rousseau seems to suggest that Jean-Jacques appropriately quiets his nostalgic imagination. He wakes up from his pastoral dreams to find contentment in real pleasures.

On closer examination of Rousseau's implicit analysis, however, he contrasts unfavourably the cold reality of this walk between Lyon and Chambéry with both his fantasies on the way to Paris, and his nostalgic memory of traveling to Turin. His contentment is defined by its lack: "I had a serene heart, but that was *all*… My ideas were peaceful and sweet, *not* celestial and ravishing." In his original description of his preceding walk to Paris, by contrast, he writes, "never have I thought so much, existed so much, lived so much, been myself so much…as in these travels I have made alone and on foot." Far from feeling "outside of himself,"

[493] *Confessions*, 1, 172.
[494] Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 125.
[495] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 164.

and unnatural, Jean-Jacques is most intensively himself when imagining and thinking in the woods.[496]

Admittedly, during this period, Jean-Jacques creates new and alienating realties by combining elements from novels and memory.[497] Traveling excitedly to Paris to begin his career in the military, for instance, he "no longer saw anything but troops, ramparts, gabions, batteries, and [him]self in the middle of the fire and smoke tranquilly giving orders." But not all powerful fantasies are alienating. Rousseau continues, "when I crossed pleasant countryside, when I saw groves and streams… I felt that my heart was not made for such uproar [of military glory], and soon, without knowing how, I found myself again in *sheepfolds*."[498] His "restless heart" is made for "wandering, dreaming, sighing" in the pastoral countryside and woods.[499] While his projection of charms often blinds him to reality and inflames his *amour propre*, the highest sentiment of own existence, and the true expression of his nature, as the extravagant shepherd.

Jean-Jacques is the shepherd *lover*, in particular. While he gives up on finding "Silvandres and Dianes" at the end of his "Paris" walk, he feels fully himself when he casts himself in the mold of Silvandre, the lover, earlier in the chapter. Eating dessert in an orchard with two young ladies, Mademoiselles Galley and Graffenried, whom he met, by chance, he climbs a cherry tree, and throws down bunches of cherries to the girls below. In another orchard picnic, depicted in the first volume of *L'Astrée*, Silvandre throws down similar bunches of cherries to Diane and other shepherds. Both events also end with a kiss to the lover's hand.[500] As

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[496] Ibid., 162; my italics.
[497] See, esp., ibid., 146-64.
[498] Ibid., 159; my italics.
[499] Ibid., 153.
[500] Ibid., 137-38; Aline Thiery, "Sur l'intertexte de 'Confessions': L'Astrée et l'episode des cerises," *Annales J.-J. Rousseau* 46 (2005): 191.

Aline Theiry notes, Rousseau alters a story of a frustrated Slivandre attempting to regain the attentions of Diane, to form – in the 18th-century style of the idyll[501] – an experience and memory of a generally pastoral atmosphere, in which a shepherd lover enjoys frivolous play. Here, elements of *L'Astrée*'s plot frame the experience, rather than dictating it, as was the case in the "Geneva" walk. As Theiry puts it, "everything serious seems banished, and only the joy matters."[502] The images and analogies of *L'Astrée* come to Jean-Jacques's "heart most frequently," because they recall that heart to itself, and to its potential for discovering reciprocal love and lasting charm.

Taking the series of five memories of expansive pleasure in travel together – travels around Turin, Geneva, Annecy, Chambéry, and Paris – Jean-Jacques's exuberant joy on leaving Madame de Warens for Turin expresses the ideal from which the worth of the other memories derive. In the love of Madame de Warens, his feeling of ecstasy finds confirmation. In response to her love, he embellishes a world to express what of that world suits him, rather than to escape from it. Indeed, Rousseau implies that Jean-Jacques encounters ideal truth, in addition to ideal pleasure, on the way to Turin. As Jean-Jacques continues his nostalgic description of the charming Italian countryside, "the grandeur, the variety, the *real* beauty of the spectacle made it worthy of *reason*. Even vanity did not mix with it."[503] He later writes of his first meeting with Madame de Warens that he felt for her "that respect as *true* as it is tender."[504] Similarly, his nostalgic memory of the reciprocal love of the Mademoiselles Galley and Graffenried return him to "such pure and *true* pleasures" that "still give [his] heart pure voluptuousness."[505] What

[501] On the debt of *Confessions* to the 18th-century "Idylle" tradition, more generally, see Laurent Versini, "Les six premiers livres des 'Confessions,' Idylle," in *Roman et Lumières* (Paris: Eurédit, 2013).
[502] Thiery, "Episode des cerises," 191; my translation.
[503] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 58; my italics.
[504] Ibid., 74; my italics.
[505] Ibid., 137, 34-35; my italics.

remains after the "spiral" of analysis of romantic love, the charm of the natural world and fate, and companionship among travelers, is a glimpse of happiness as a reciprocal love and pleasure that echoes the joyous activity of God in the natural world. In these moments of authentic happiness, we also see Jean-Jacques as he is and as he becomes: the dreaming, constant, shepherd lover of Madame de Warens, whom he is "born" to love.[506]

Leaving for Turin, however, Jean-Jacques experiences human character and metaphysical truth only through the refracted gaze of Madame de Warens. He intuits, rather than knows, real beauty. The projection of the self into the social world also dissipates the sentiment of existence by connecting it to too many disparate objects.[507] To know and feel the lasting affection of Madame de Warens, and the ongoing agency of God, in the natural world, independent from the charming, human gaze, Jean-Jacques must find happiness in repose.

"A Very Little Grove of Trees Besides": Happiness in Pastoral Repose

I argue that, for Rousseau, the happiness of repose is the sustained experience of our free mental and physical activity enjoyed among a community of equals. It culminates in the enjoyment of the highest form of pleasure in our own activity and that of other people – the sentiment of reciprocal affection. Freedom means for Jean-Jacques what it means for Astrée, Céladon, Hylas, and d'Urfé's other "modern," characters (those who pursue love and community based on individual affection, will, and judgement, rather than on neo-Platonic metaphysics, epistemology, and their accompanying chivalric code[508]): the freedom from social duties and

[506] Ibid., 151.
[507] See, *Rêveries*, 1, 1074.
[508] On conceptions of modernity in *L'Astrée*, see, James M. Hembree, *Subjectivity and the Signs of Love: Discourse, Desire, and the Emergence of Modernity in Honeré d'Urfé's 'L'Astrée'* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).

amour propre and the freedom to express our singular nature and to pursue our individual interest. In retreat from the corrupting world, Rousseau suggests, we are happy when we identify with, and enjoy, the activity of other people, and of God, and thereby augment the pleasure of our own activity.

In this section, I will examine Rousseau's comparisons between three "communities" of repose: Jean-Jacques's sensual happiness when he first stays with Madame de Warens at Annecy (Books Two-Three); his "community of the heart" with Madame de Warens and Claude Anet at Chambéry (Book Five), and the absolute "freedom in affection" with Madame de Warens and the peasants at Les Charmettes (Book Six). I argue that he finds a happiness of perfectly reciprocal affection at Les Charmettes – a happiness that transcends the fragile happiness of sensual fantasy (at Annecy), or the ultimately suffocating unity of confidences of the heart (at Chambéry). In the conclusion to this dissertation, I will argue that this freedom of affection and overlapping activity, in the intimate sphere, is analogous to Rousseau's vision of political contentment.

Let us once again begin in the chronological middle of the series of inductive experiences. In this case, we begin in the middle to emphasize the comparative nature of Rousseau's narrative. In Book Five of *Confessions*, Rousseau contrasts his "moral" love for Madame de Warens at Chambéry with his "sensual" love for her at Annecy. He writes, "At Annecy I was intoxicated, at Chambéry I no longer was"[509]At Annecy, Jean-Jacques enjoys her physical caresses, youthful beauty, and maternal affections. During her brief absences, he also engages in the "masturbatory" dreams of men who "make the beauty who tempts them serve

[509] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 196-97.

their pleasures without needing to obtain her consent." Absence allows him to feel, and to embellish, in fantasy, the sensual pleasure of her presence. It also recalls her in all the objects that she may have touched: "How many times did I kiss the bed while thinking that she had slept in it, my curtains, all the furniture in my room while thinking that they belonged to her"?[510] Jean-Jacques projects the sentiment of Madame de Warens's charm, moreover, onto surrounding objects. Rousseau writes, "I saw her everywhere among the flowers and greenery; her charms and those of springtime mingled in my eyes."[511] Admittedly, at Annecy, Madame de Warens is more independent than the characters of Jean-Jacques's fantasies outside Geneva. He responds to her projected intentions, extrapolated from her real actions. Nevertheless, he sees these intentions everywhere. He loves her as "almost" nature itself, rather than as an independent person. For him, "[she] never sought her own pleasure but always [his] good."[512] While their relationship is non-romantic, Jean-Jacques acts the part of the "most passionate lover,"[513] and recalls Céladon at his most lovesick and half-mad.[514]

At Chambéry, by contrast, he loves her for her actual, likely good, intentions and character, because he may distinguish between actions and intentions. He continues the distinction between his love at Annecy and at Chambéry: "[at Chambéry], I loved her more for herself and less for me, or at least I looked more for my happiness than my pleasure with her."[515] He loves her true, good character, because he distinguishes it from her projects, and her own

[510] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 108.
[511] Ibid., 105.
[512] Ibid., 106.
[513] Ibid., 109.
[514] For instance, Céladon similarly "recalls the places where he had seen [Astrée], and, in memory or actuality, returns to "other places in which he thinks she remembers having seen him." See, also, Silvandre's *a posteriori* neo-Platonic defense of the effect of absence over the presence of the lover on love as contributing to reflection, fantasy, and charm. D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, 2, 196-97; ibid., 283.
[515] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 196-97.

statements. In particular, he condemns as sophistry her view that fidelity between lovers is only a social convention, a view that she uses to justify sleeping with several of her friends,[516] while perceiving that she acts from pity. Like Jean-Jacques himself, she is "too generous, too humane, too compassionate, too sensitive in character," and does not rule her character with enough "discernment."[517] While Jean-Jacques often loses himself to passions of love or embarrassment, however, she possesses a strange mix of "a sensitive character and cold temperament."[518] He perceives this difference between their temperaments in his revulsion at the disinterested pity that leads her finally to sleep with him. His evolving understanding of her, at Chambéry, is a model for the comparative self-knowledge for which he advocates in his first preface to *Confessions*.[519] In discerning the gap between character and action, he starts to articulate his own inner nature. And he may love her character – and pursue their common happiness – because he may distinguish that character from given social roles, and from her myriad statements, actions, and projects.

Jean-Jacques's evolving knowledge of different characters also allows him to achieve society with Claude Anet, Madame de Warens's steward and lover. At Annecy, other guests in the house – of which there are many – immediately threaten Jean-Jacques's mirroring relation to Madame de Warens. Rousseau writes, "without claiming the favours of a tête-à-tête, I sought it ceaselessly, and I enjoyed it with a passion that degenerated into rage if importunate people came to interrupt it. As someone arrived, man or woman, it did not matter which, I left muttering, not

[516] *L'Astrée* is partly a series of debates about variants of this position, which appears in its most developed form in the voice of Hylas. See, D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, 2, 372-91; Hembree, *Subjectivity*, Chapter 3.
[517] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 167-69.
[518] Ibid., 199.
[519] He asks, rhetorically, "for how may we determine a being well only by the relations that are in himself, and without comparing him with anything?" *Ébauches des 'Confessions'*, 1, 1148. Cf. *Confessions*, 1, 5.

being able to bear staying around her as a third."[520] During the Turin walk, he regards himself as "product, student, friend, and *almost*…the lover" of Madame de Warens, and his lack of a single, discrete social role is important. While they call each other *Maman* and *Petit*, he does not claim her intimate attention as a right. He feels general anger, rather than personal rivalry, for the other guests, who may be men or women. He cannot bear society itself – the structures of language by which he and Madame de Warens may be discussed "as a third." Such a situation would position them both as mere people, to be named, rather than as the constitutive forces of an insular, totalizing world.

By comparison, Rousseau defines Chambéry as a community of three. Jean-Jacques, Madame de Warens, and Anet, may know and love each other, because they enjoy "extreme reciprocal confidence" and commonality of "wishes, cares, and hearts." Madame de Warens commands Jean-Jacques's confidence, because she speaks to him frankly, as an equal adult, of her sentiments and views. Rousseau writes, "when we truly feel that the heart speaks, our own opens itself to receive its effusions."[521] As Rousseau's character Monsieur de Wolmar says, in *Julie*, the "language of the heart…moves and persuades," because we believe it to be sincere.[522] Counter-intuitively, this intimate confidence with *Maman* allows him to know and love, rather than compete with, Anet, because she reveals Anet's inner character to Jean-Jacques in the light of virtue, which Jean-Jacques esteems. Rousseau writes, "since she knew that I thought, felt and breathed only through her, she showed me how much she loved him so that I might love him as much, and spoke favourably less of her friendship for him than of her esteem, because that was the feeling that I could share more fully." In turn, she and Jean-Jacques seek Anet's recognition,

[520] *Confessions*, 1, 107.
[521] Ibid., 199.
[522] *Julie*, 2, 468.

as a man of virtue, and he "look[s] at [them] almost as two children worthy of indulgence."[523] Each of them relate to the common moral end of the community from different perspectives and positions. Their language is semi-public; it may always be overheard by the third member, because it speaks only sincere truth about the virtue that binds them. And it is intimate, because each person knows and loves another person by identifying with the gaze of a third person.

Jean-Jacques's idyllic society at Chambéry with Madame de Warens and Anet thus subtly transcends the imaginary pleasure of Annecy. From this point of retrospect, Jean-Jacques's love for Madame de Warens at Annecy was intense, but insular. While she once encompassed all social roles for him – mother, friend, teacher, and "almost" lover – she now transcends all merely social designations. She is "more than a sister, more than a mother, more than a friend, even more than a mistress, and it was for that reason that she [is] not a mistress."[524]

Once again, however, Rousseau's nostalgic analysis reworks his earlier imaginative associations and projections, rather than fully rejecting them. His first estimation of Madame de Warens as "the most tender of mothers who never sought her own pleasure but always his good" remains true. Re-examining his own fantasies in light of subsequent events, he only develops his judgements of the character and intellectual errors that animated her generous actions. In his first description of his intoxication with her, he writes "if the senses entered into my attachment to her, this did not change its nature, but only…intoxicated me with the charm of having a young and pretty mama whom it was delightful for me to caress."[525] Despite his disillusionment with

[523] *Confessions*, 1, 196-201.
[524] Ibid., 196-97.
[525] Ibid., 106.

their sexual affair, Jean-Jacques's memory of his sensory attraction highlights a persistent moral goodness in her that he recognizes more fully in later life.

If Jean-Jacques finds moral esteem in the intimate society at Chambéry, he finds the higher ideal of absolute mutual freedom and mutual affection in his pastoral community of Les Charmettes. After Madame de Warens nursed him back from life-threatening illness, Rousseau writes, "we began no longer to distinguish ourselves from one another, so as to put our whole existence in common in some way. We felt that we were reciprocally not only necessary but sufficient for each other." If Madame de Warens was once a *necessary* condition, along with the virtue and labour of Anet, of Jean-Jacques's happiness, she and Jean-Jacques are now "necessary and sufficient" causes of each other's being. Their love is absolute and reciprocal, an "essential possession… which [each] cannot lose without ceasing to be."[526] Jean-Jacques is now her absolute child, rather than "almost," or "more than," her son – an iteration of the constant, self-sacrificing shepherd lover, Céladon. And she is his absolute mother.

In the knowledge of her love and dependence, Jean-Jacques becomes free insofar as he may unreservedly follow both his affections and his essential, affectionate character. In Rousseau's description of their first meeting, Jean-Jacques's relationship with Madame de Warens suggests a Platonic "sympathy of souls" in which he instantly feels "so *free*, so at [his] ease…[without] a moment of embarrassment, timidity, or discomfort," because he is "sure of pleasing her."[527] At Les Charmettes, he confirms his intuition of freedom, because he now knows their love and need for each other is mutual. As Rousseau describes the memory of this relation, in *Rêveries*, "I was perfectly free and better than free, for bound only by my affections, I did only

[526] Ibid., 222.
[527] Ibid., 52.

what I wanted to do."[528] Or, as Céladon[529] says to Astrée, when they confess absolute mutual love, "having wished to *submit me* to that affection that I bear you, the Gods of Heaven have at the same time given you a similar affection, so that I can live…with all kind of…honest liberty." Jean-Jacques and Madame de Warens, like Céladon and Astrée, may respond unreservedly as their most essential selves, because they experience a love unrestrained by duties,[530] and, as Céladon puts it, "unrestrained by doubts."[531] Negatively, Jean-Jacques is free to express his inner being, and to allow it to be shaped by his responses her,[532] because he expects no criticism. Positively, her love allows him to respond in kind, and to express his character as what he has now become: her lover.[533]

Admittedly, Rousseau's formulation of their "essential possession" and fusion seems to undermine the expansive sentiment of existence that he feels while traveling to Turin. As Kelly highlights, Jean-Jacques first finds happiness at Les Charmettes, because he limits his imaginative projections. His illness convinces him that he will die soon, and he gives up all vain passions for worldly glory, and dispels his anxieties about future happiness.[534] As Rousseau writes, in language that recalls his description of the stoic "natural man" in the second *Discours*, "without great remorse of the past, delivered from the doubts of the future, the sentiment of enjoying the present dominated my soul."[535] He may enjoy activities in the company of Madame

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[528] *Rêveries*, 1, 1099.
[529] While disguised as a female shepherd and maid to Astrée, Alexis.
[530] Rousseau, *Lettres à Malesherbes*, 1, 1132.
[531] D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, 4, 43; my italics. Similarly, Astrée speaks of a "too great freedom that [her] affection gives [her]" to realize herself as a lover of a shepherd very like Céladon (she is unaware that Alexis is Céladon in disguise).
[532] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1098. As he writes, in a 1762 letter, about intimate friendship, "one follows one's heart and everything is done." *Lettres à Malesherbes*, 1, 1132.
[533] On this point, see Gauthier, *Sentiment of Existence*, 181-89.
[534] See, Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 147-56. Kelly notes that Rousseau's "quasi-naturalness" may surpass that the "natural man," because Rousseau may compare it to his previous alienation in *amour propre*.
[535] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 244.

de Warens because they have "limited [their] happiness and all [their] desire absolutely" to their mutual possession. By forming a whole, Jean-Jacques and Madame de Warens seem to exclude the rest of creation. As Gauthier distinguishes the sentiment of their bond from that of expansive pleasure, "true love is an exclusive relationship, in which the souls of the lovers merge into a single, self-sufficient whole. It does not invite the 'expansive' soul to extend 'itself' to other objects.'"[536]

Their singular love, however, motivates their free activity and pleasure, rather than circumscribing it, because they respond to each other's activity, rather than to the other's potentially limiting ideas and expectations. Here, the contrast between freedom at Chambéry and at Les Charmettes is useful. At both Chambéry and Les Charmettes, the community shares reciprocal affection that would seemingly promote the freedom of following our authentic character and desire, which Rousseau describes at Les Charmettes. In *L'Astrée*, for instance, Astrée and Céladon imagine that they might pursue their "honest liberty" and mutual affection in a place that is almost certainly the model community for the "community of confidence" at Chambéry, as well as for the similar community at Clarens, in *Julie*: the semi-mythic "covenant at Carnutes." In all four cases – Les Charmettes, Chambéry, Clarens, and Carnutes – the characters enjoy communities based on the links of inclination, mutual affection, and will, rather than social rank and convention.[537] But Chambéry, Clarens, and Carnutes possess one more

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[536] Gauthier, *Sentiment of Existence*, 187.

[537] This "honest liberty" is most clearly expressed in lack of distinction between private and public names. At Clarens, Wolmar admonishes St. Pierre to "Call [his] wife *Julie* in [his] presence, or *Madame* alone with her," because "where virtue reigns, decorum is useless." At Carnutes, "the custom of the druid girls is to never call themselves by their own names, but by others those that their mutual love makes them invent…and these new names…are called alliances, if one meant by this that one allies oneself by the strongest duties and the strongest affections." At Chambéry and Les Charmettes, Madame de Warens and Jean-Jacques call each other *Maman* and *Petit*. While Rousseau does not mention how Jean-Jacques addresses Anet, the two men are bound by affection and natural authority, rather than rank. For instance, the steward, a mere "lackey," "naturally took on the authority that his judgement gave him over" that of Jean-Jacques. Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 425; D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, 4, 45; Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 177-78. Eugene Stelzig marks a similar analogy between the happiness of Clarens and of

requirement for membership: "confessional disclosure." As Wolmar articulates the guiding law of the community at Clarens to guide St. Preux's new relation to Julie (now Madame de Wolmar), in language that could describe the implicit rule of Chambéry: "behave in the tête-à-tête [with her] as if I were present, or in front of me as if I were not."[538] Speech must both express true inner sentiments, and be able to be heard by all (albeit in different tones[539]).

For Rousseau, however, a community based on the symbiosis of expressed inner characters cannot withstand easily the introduction of new characters, and revised expressions of self. At Chambéry, as Kelly writes, "the success of the circle depends largely on chance. It requires [Madame de Warens's] ability to unite people to her, Claude Anet's skill as a supervisor and manager, and Jean-Jacques's susceptibility to such wholesome influences."[540] Most importantly, it requires Madame de Warens to unite them through her sincere confidences. Like Astrée, she speaks "frankly" by nature,[541] and is a key catalyst for the self-expression of the people around her. For instance, she mediates the exposure of Anet and Rousseau to the inner confidences of each other, because while Anet "never spoke contrary to his thought…[he] did not always express that thought."[542] In general, the community thus cannot withstand alternative

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Chambéry, but not Rousseau's implicit critique of this form of happiness in perfect mutual confidence. See, Eugene L. Stelzig, *The Romantic Subject in Autobiography: Rousseau and Goethe* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 104-05.

[538] Or, as Céladon (as "Alexis") says to Astrée, "we will live when we live in particular, with…frankness." Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 424; D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, 4, 44. In addition to the strong analogy between Carnutes and Clarens, *Julie* also transposes several scenes of *L'Astrée*, and reworks d'Urfé's neo-Platonic commitments. See Claude Labrosse, "Des bords du Lignon aux rives du Léman: 'la mise en lieu' de la scène amoureuse ('L'Astrée' et 'la Nouvelle Héloïse')," *Annales J.-J. Rousseau* 44 (2002); Jean-François Perrin, "De l'amour électif come réel absolu: Mémoire et passion dans 'la Nouvelle Héloïse' de J.-J. Rousseau," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 26, no. 2 (2013-14); Roland Derche, "'L'Astrée', source de 'L'inoculation de l'amour' dans 'la Nouvelle Héloïse'," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 66, no. 2 (1966).

[539] Wolmar says to Julie, "there are a thousand secrets that three friends need to know and can only tell each other by twos. You indeed convey the same things…but not in the same tones." Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 431.

[540] Kelly, *Exemplary Life*, 146.

[541] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 51.

[542] Ibid., 201-02.

combinations of people, because new characters would disrupt this economy of confessions. Rousseau writes, "if one of the three of us was missing at our meal or a fourth came, everything was disordered, and, in spite of our private relations, *tête-à-têtes* were less sweet to us than reunion."[543] If Jean-Jacques cannot bear to be the "third" at Annecy, he *must* be one of three at Chambéry. Their pleasure excludes strangers, because it depends on a single combination of personalities and speech acts. Indeed, when Anet dies, Jean-Jacques loses this form of community altogether.[544]

The self-opacity of each member of the community of "confidences" also limits their freedom to address particular ideas. In *L'Astrée*, Céladon ultimately cannot realize his freedom of self-expression and self-disclosure, because – due to Astrée's earlier, misguided commandment to "Céladon" to never appear in her presence again – he has courted Astrée disguised as the shepherdess "Alexis." (Originally, Astrée misinterpreted the signs of his pretend infidelity as actual infidelity, even though she helped plan the pretense as a way to distract their respective parents from their transgressive love affair[545]). To reveal his true identity is to disrupt a community based on openness and trust. In *Confessions*, the community of perfect confidence is similarly limited by Madame de Warens's misunderstanding of her own sentiments. Presumably, the characters may disagree about moral questions, and second-guess each other's self-perceptions.[546] While perceiving that the distinction between character and action (including speech) renders all three members equal, however, Rousseau and Anet dare not speak or disapprove of Madame de Warens's philosophy of non-fidelity, because this doctrine is integral

[543] Ibid., 202.
[544] Ibid., 264-65.
[545] D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, 1, Book One.
[546] While Julie is at Clarens, for instance, both Claire and Monsieur de Wolmar claim to perceive Julie's heart better than she can in moments when she is confused about her will. See, for instance, Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 407, 96.

to their community. She makes love with both of them, and feels connected to them, as part of her (for Rousseau, false) principle of sexual generosity. At the same time, Anet and Jean-Jacques are both embarrassed and disturbed by this topic.[547] Jean-Jacques does not even know if Anet knows that he and Madame de Warens made love.[548] At Chambéry, their freedom to follow, express, and discuss their reciprocal affections is limited by Madame de Warens's confidences, which also makes this community possible. Indeed, she withdraws her confidences when he later abstains from physical intimacy with her.[549] Transparency cannot found a community of mutual affection, because we often misunderstand our sentiments, and these sentiments change.

Instead, Jean-Jacques's most nostalgic memories are for a pastoral community at Les Charmettes that is based on pleasure in the activity of other people, as seen in the light of the existential truth of death, and in the light of the unity and animation of the natural order. Existential truth is most clearly illuminating. While Jean-Jacques's exposure to near-death dampens his ambition, as Kelly suggests, it also opens the world to his greater love and activity, because he recognizes that Madame de Warens depends on him. He now simply wants to "sustain her in her good resolutions, to make her feel in what the true charm of a happy life consists, to make her life happy to the extent that it depends on [him]."[550] His dependence is the condition of action, rather than its limit, because he recognizes that that dependence is mutual. For instance, he credits his first recovery both to her care, and to his continued desire to save her from financial ruin. He then agrees to convalesce in the country only if she accompanies him, in

[547] *Confessions*, 1, 196, 201, 64.
[548] Ibid., 201.
[549] Ibid., 263-66.
[550] Ibid., 223.

order to separate her from creditors and expenses.[551] For all of his absolute dependence on her, he also acts as a cause of her happiness. As a result, he no longer depends on maintaining the "charm" of her good will and confidences, and may act towards what he thinks is her good, even if she disagrees.

Jean-Jacques's freedom to follow his affection becomes more lasting when he recognizes human ideas as a partial view of, and response to, the independent movement of nature. At Les Charmettes, he learns to study the natural world through analysis. As Rousseau writes, "meditation took the place of knowledge" for him insofar as he followed the imminent logical connections within each discipline to the point where they unite. He now pursues knowledge through "seeking, reflecting, [and] comparing,"[552] and learns to see, partially and inductively, the "grandeur, the variety, the real beauty of the spectacle" of nature that he first experienced, more imaginatively, on his way to Turin. Ultimately, he prays "to the author of this lovable nature whose beauties were under [his] eyes." He responds to the activity of God with his own acts of contemplation.[553] In this study of the larger order, Madame de Warens plays a crucial but partial role. Where Jean-Jacques once felt Madame de Warens to be "almost" nature itself, he is now simply "aided by her lessons and example to make use of his leisure."[554] Identifying with her perspective continually directs him to study the natural order that eclipses that viewpoint.

Ultimately, happiness is the pleasure of feeling, and responding to, the overlapping activity – the work, play, and ideas – of other beings. Jean-Jacques first becomes "fond" of pastoral life by "making [Madame de Warens] love her garden, her poultry yard, her pigeons, her

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[551] Ibid., 222-23.
[552] Ibid., 248. Alternatively, he reasons implicitly about ideas in order to compare them more explicitly at a later point. Ibid., 238.
[553] Ibid., 236.
[554] *Rêveries*, 1, 1099.

cows." In turn, the charm of the natural world echoes and augments his pleasurable pursuit of academic study and manual labour. He writes, "two or three months passed in this way of testing the inclination of my spirit…in a place that this season renders enchanting, I enjoyed the charm of life whose value I felt so well."[555] Similarly, Jean-Jacques enjoys "dinner on the grass at Montagnole, suppers under the bower, the harvest of the fruits, the grape harvests" and other "festivals" with Madame de Warens all the more, because she "took the same pleasure as [he] did."[556] One perspective echoes and augments the pleasure of another.[557] While, at Chambéry, Jean-Jacques, Anet, and Madame de Warens enjoy the common moral project they forge through sincere confidences, at Les Charmettes, Jean-Jacques enjoys his free activity in response to the activity of his beloved, and to the joyous will of God. True happiness is the "circulation" of pleasure among a community of free beings.

This happiness between lovers also opens up the community up to other participants, because each member may respond to the pleasurable activity of the other (and of God in nature), rather than simply to their own potentially limiting interests and ideas. In *Rêveries*, Jean-Jacques argues that we cannot knowingly share a lasting happiness with most people, because "happiness has no external sign; to know it, it would be necessary to see into the heart." Jean-Jacques is thus only "happy" with Madame de Warens, whose heart he comes to know intimately. But we may recognize the sharing of a more ephemeral "contentment" among a larger community, because "contentment is read in the eyes, in the bearing, in the lilt of the

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[555] *Confessions*, 1, 235.
[556] Ibid., 244.
[557] As Julie distinguishes, from her mere confidence with Monsieur de Wolmar, the intense sentiment of existence of the sharing the joy of her children with her beloved cousin, Claire, "I doubly enjoy my little Marcellin's caresses when I see you sharing them." Ultimately, "one holds on to the last object [that one loves] by its ties to all the others." *Julie*, 2, 399-400.

voice… and seems to be transmitted to the one who perceives it." Jean-Jacques asks, "is there a sweeter enjoyment than to see a whole people give itself up to joy on a holiday?"[558]

I argue that this contentment describes the pleasure of festivals at Les Charmettes, which Jean-Jacques shares with the servants, guests, and neighbouring peasants, and with Madame de Warens. It is the same contentment that marks the civic festivals of Rousseau's idealized Geneva and his imagined Poland. As Rousseau describes the similar pleasure of holidaying workers and peasants, in *Émile*, "each prefers himself overtly to all others, while finding it good that each prefers himself in the same way."[559] While, unlike the lovers, the feasters "prefer" themselves to another person, they similarly enjoy the other's free pursuit of his or her desire. Rousseau also imagines himself literally "enjoying again [*réjoüier*]" the pleasure of a peasant with whom he shares the feast, by identifying with his perspective. In perfect contentment, each person selfishly pursues their pleasure and ideas, while also identifying with, and responding to, another person's spontaneous activity. Indeed, their "playful conflict is…a thousand times more charming than politeness, and more suited to the binding of hearts" because, as Jean-Jacques says of the animals that he befriends at Les Charmettes, they "love in freedom."[560] They are "bound" closer together by their spontaneous activity (on which all social sentiments depend, for Rousseau), rather than by their common characters, desires, or ideas.

Ultimately, Jean-Jacques's description, in *Rêveries*, of the happiness that he finds with imaginary characters in his head, also applies to his memory of happiness at Les Charmettes: "giving myself up to the inclinations that attract me…I enjoy them with the…beings who

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[558] *Rêveries*, 1, 1084.
[559] *Émile*, 4, 688.
[560] Ibid.; *Confessions*, 1, 235.ori

produce and share them."[561] He is happy when the affections of other people allow him to follow freely his own inclinations and affections. And his inclinations and affections are "doubled" by identifying with the pleasure of other independent people, who "produce and share" these emotions. Rousseauian happiness is premised on difference and free will, rather than fusion and control. I will argue that Rousseauian contentment, on the political level, shares these conditions.

Admittedly, as critics highlight, Jean-Jacques sometimes speaks of his love for Madame de Warens in terms that suggest an impossible and nostalgic desire for transparency, fusion, or presence. His nostalgic analysis never disavows his description of their love as "perfect confidence," a preordained "sympathy of souls," or, as he puts it, later in *Confessions*, the unity of "two souls in one body."[562]

Rousseau's implicit comparisons between his happiness at Annecy, Chambéry, and Les Charmettes, however, reject a fantasy of psychological oneness or transparency as insufficient grounds for love and community. Strikingly, his descriptions of the "unity" between lovers are almost all Platonic, and echo Aristophanes's image of love as a return to wholeness.[563] They suggest a feeling of love mediated by the never-complete knowledge and memory of a larger natural order. At Les Charmettes, Jean-Jacques founds the knowledge of this Platonic ideal on an empiricist epistemology. We know the metaphysical order by analyzing our sensorial experiences and memories, rather than by remembering a prior unity with the forms, or deducing

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[561] *Rêveries*, 1, 1081.
[562] *Confessions*, 1, 414.
[563] Plato, *The Symposium*, trans. W. Hamilton (New York: Penguin, 1951), 59-65. Rousseau owned and annotated heavily a copy of Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation of Plato's complete works, and did not depend on neo-Platonic sources. See, David Lay William, *Rousseau's Platonic Enlightenment* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007), 29n.

forms through dialectic. Rather than guaranteeing "presence," moreover, our knowledge of the natural world suggests a greater order always beyond us, and a will of God that we cannot comprehend.[564] While d'Urfé's *L'Astrée* opposes proto-modern communities, based on subjective self-certainty and self-expression, to an older neo-Platonic metaphysics, epistemology, and chivalric order, Rousseau understands his own memories of pastoral happiness at Les Charmettes in provisional or altered Platonic terms.[565] We transcend love based on mere fantasy and on shared self-expression by glimpsing our existential limits, and placing our projections, pleasures, and self-understandings within the context of our partial knowledge of a larger metaphysical whole. In *Confessions*, Rousseau invites the reader to follow his nostalgia, and to isolate this moment of "permanent" happiness through analysis of Jean-Jacques's pastorally-framed experiences of pleasure in repose.

The tragedy of Rousseau's life is that he never finds such felicity of reciprocity again, although he continually demands it. His subsequent lovers, friends, and fellows ultimately return his affection with love infected by *amour propre*.[566] As he ages, and feels persecuted, he comes to perceive what he takes to be their true indifference and even hatred: "[my friends] did not exactly stop loving me, I discovered only that they did not love me." His response to non-reciprocal love is to retreat into another form of happiness: the happiness of solitary reverie. For him, his intimates, friends, indeed all of humankind, ultimately take on the role of Astrée *qua*

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[564] See, esp., Rousseau, *Lettres à Malesherbes*, 1, 1141.

[565] For instance, he invokes the Platonic doctrine of a "sympathy of souls" as merely an apt explanation, in the absence of a better explanation, for his immediate feeling of confidence and intimacy with Madame de Warens: "Let those who deny the sympathy of souls explain, if they can, how from the first interview…Madame de Warens…inspired me with perfect confidence." His reading of the Platonic image, from the *Symposium*, of the original unity of lovers (which creates this primordial sympathy) as "two souls united in one body" is also singular. For instance, a Neoplatonist like Augustine speaks of "one soul united in two bodies," and emphasizes fusion, rather than "intimate society." *Confessions*, 1, 52, 414.

[566] Ibid., 424-25. Jean-Jacques repeatedly laments, "Oh this is not Les Charmettes."

lover, rather than Madame de Warens. Like Céladon, in Book two of *L'Astrée*, who retreats from all social contact in the face of Astrée's absolute rejection of him, he must "flee" his beloveds, because "he loves them."[567] While he flirts with the madness of Céladon, however, his solitary reverie ultimately is happy in "social" terms, as a response to the overlapping activity of past iterations of himself. Commentators sometimes oppose Rousseau's social and individual ideals.[568] But Jean-Jacques's solitary reverie returns him, in memory, to the happiness of intimate society, in pastoral nature. And reverie – a set of practices that includes "nostalgic analysis," as we saw in the last chapter – is a continual series of responses to the charming sentiments and ideas of his past self-iterations. It is a form of social happiness, in addition to a source of social pleasure.

The Nostalgic Shepherd: The Happiness of Reverie

In old age, Rousseau transforms himself into another iteration of the shepherd-lover, the dreaming shepherd who leisurely plays, dreams, and remembers in the woods. At first glance, the happiness of solitary dreaming and sensation eclipses all other forms of happiness. Rousseau writes to Malesherbes, for instance, that "the most voluptuous people have never known similar delights" to his solitary dreaming. He enjoys "[him]self, the whole universe, everything that is, everything that can be, everything that is beautiful in the sensible world, and this is imaginable in the intellectual world." Reality pales in the face of his solitary life in the natural world; his

[567] *Lettres à Malesherbes*, 1, 1145. Admittedly, in *L'Astrée*, the cause is more direct. Céladon flees because Astrée banishes him from her presence. But it is this "impossible" banishment that leads him to solitude, memory, and, ultimately, fantasy. As Céladon puts it, "it appears to everyone that it is a just thing…that friendship is repaid with friendship. On the contrary, Astrée judges it reasonable to hate the one who adores her…we live then for her glory…as we cannot live for our contentment." Astrée's D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, 2, 276.
[568] See, for instance, Todorov, *Frail Happiness*; Strauss, *Natural Right and History*; Shklar, *Men and Citizens*.

"desires [are] the measure of [his] pleasures."[569] But Rousseau enjoys memories of reveries more than the original mediations. He ultimately dreams most sweetly of social, rather than solitary, happiness. And his solitary reverie is another form of this social happiness. Like the revelers at Les Charmettes, he enjoys the objects of his pleasure from different, consonant perspectives. Solitary reverie – including nostalgic analysis – concentrates social, pastoral happiness, rather than competes with it.

Rousseau's implicit analysis of reverie is most precise in *Rêveries*. Commentators often point to Rousseau's description, in this text, of his "happy" solitary reverie on the island of St. Pierre as an expression of the chief object of his nostalgia: pure presence.[570] Listening to the rhythmic movement of the water, Jean-Jacques feels a perfect balance between the movements of nature and the shallow stirrings of his soul.

> If there is a state in which the soul finds a solid enough base on which to rest entirely, and gather there all of its being, without needing to recall the past or to encroach on the future…without any other sentiment – of privation or enjoyment, of pleasure or pain, of desire or fear – except that of its own existence, and in which this sentiment alone can fill it entirely.[571]

At the beginning of the Fifth Walk, Jean-Jacques clams that "of all the charming places" he has lived, "none has made [him] so genuinely happy nor left [him] with such tender regrets as the island of St. Pierre."[572] In this memory of a rhythmic moment in the boat, he is charmed by the happy succession of sensations, none of which comes into sufficient focus to remind him of his

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[569] Rousseau, *Lettres à Malesherbes*, 1, 1138-39. See, also, *Rêveries*, 1, 1040.
[570] See, for instance, Derrida, *Grammatology*, 354-55; Perrin, *Chant de l'origine*, 339, 218; Starobinski, "Happy Days."; *Transparency and Obstruction*, 258. See, also, Eugene Stelzig, who presents the happiness of both Les Charmettes and St. Pierre as that of "the timeless moment and of the plentitude of being." Stelzig, *Romantic Subject*, 106.
[571] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1046.
[572] Ibid., 1040.

regrets, desires, and fears. So long as such a reverie lasts "the one who finds himself there can call himself *happy*."[573] He is like God: fully united, self-present and self-sufficient.

As recent scholarship highlights, however, Rousseau again places this memory of "genuine happiness" in a series of unfavourable comparisons with other forms of enjoyment.[574] Most directly, the preceding two paragraphs of the Fifth Walk present his meditative reverie as mere compensation for Jean-Jacques's persecution, and for a "supreme felicity" that Jean-Jacques senses, but may only realize in Heaven.

> The happiness that my heart regrets is a simple, permanent state with nothing sharp about it, but whose duration increases its charm to the point of finding supreme felicity in it.
>
> Everything on earth is in continual flux… there is nothing solid to which the heart can attach itself….
>
> *However*, if there is a state in which the soul finds a solid enough base on which to rest entirely…so long as this state lasts the one who finds himself there can call himself happy.[575]

In the final paragraph, Rousseau's image of rest seems to offer respite from the despair of the "continual flux" that he mentions in his second paragraph. But, as Gourevitch argues, the "however" that begins his description of happy reverie, in the third paragraph, may contrast this reverie most directly with the "supreme felicity" for which his heart yearns, in the first paragraph. In this reading, the memory of reverie on the lake is another consolation for his regret that a greater happiness is possible only in Heaven.

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[573] Ibid., 1046; my italics.
[574] Eve Grace, "The Restlessness of 'Being': Rousseau's Protean Sentiment of Existence," *History of European Ideas* 27 (2001); Victor Gourevitch, "A Provisional Reading of Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*," *The Review of Politics* 74 (2012).
[575] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1046; my italics.

The final passages of the Fifth Walk support this latter interpretation of this solitary reverie as mere consolation for a greater form of happiness. As Gourevitch points out, his description there of his timeless reverie as "abstract and monotone" suggests nothing of the divine happiness of "communing in advance with the celestial intelligences" that he also anticipates.[576] As Eve Grace remarks, moreover, mere self-sufficiency and lack of privation also pale in comparison with Rousseau's other presentations of the sentiment of existence as the full engagement of the faculties.[577] Indeed, the contribution of Jean-Jacques's memory and imagination to "join…charming images that vivify" his memory highlights the insufficiency of his original reverie.[578] As Grace writes, "in each of [Rousseau's descriptions of his reverie] the internal movement increases and the imagination becomes ever more active" until he reveals the creative imagination necessary to render these ecstasies so charming.[579] Within the space of one Walk, Rousseau stages a "gap" between the passionless experiences of an aging past self, and the poetry of a nostalgic self that brings that memory to life. After "nostalgic analysis" of both his experience and his own imaginative powers that must act to reveal this experience, almost *nothing* remains of an original "genuine happiness."

Moreover, the subsequent Walks of *Réveries* implicitly contrast this solitary reverie with greater pleasures of (what I am calling) "social" happiness. Gourevitch highlights that, in contrast to the lack of "privation or enjoyment, of pleasure or pain, of desire or fear" that he feels on the boat at St. Pierre, he feels "grateful admiration" that his botanizing reveals God's agency.

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[576] Gourevitch, "Rousseau's *Reveries*," 502-03. Gourevitch also notes that Rousseau refers to his whole time on the island – which included his memories of botanizing, intimate company, and solitude – as the happiest of his life, rather than his reverie on the boat, in particular.
[577] Grace, "Restlessness of 'Being'," 148. On the highest sentiment of existence as the full engagement of the faculties, see Chapter Two of this dissertation.
[578] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1049.
[579] Grace, "Restlessness of 'Being'," 150-51. I part ways with Grace's account insofar as I argue that the charms of the imagination play an epistemological, as well as poetic, function.

Similarly, his virtuous acts contribute to "public contentment" and are the "sweetest sights apt to gratify a human heart…joy combined with innocence."[580] These social pleasures are joyous and moving, rather than "monotonous" and calm. Most markedly, *Rêveries* culminates in his memory of Les Charmettes. While he experienced a similar feeling of timelessness on St. Pierre and at Les Charmettes, on St. Pierre he "was not moved genuinely to say about his stay that he 'lived,'" as he does about his stay at Les Charmettes.[581] While the meditative reverie must minimally recall him to himself, moreover, he never describes it as happiness that allowed him to "to be fully [him]self, without admixture or obstacle."[582] While people in the correct circumstance, or with sufficiently developed imaginations, may find the meditative happiness of St. Pierre, Jean-Jacques may be the only one to find the particular love of Les Charmettes, which defines him. He once again implicitly compares his experiences of pastoral happiness to isolate the primacy of social intimacy.

Unlike his implicit critiques of his past forms of pleasure in expansive sentiment or in intimate repose, however, Rousseau's nostalgic analysis suggests that his happiness in solitary reverie on St. Pierre is real and lasting, even if is not the highest pleasure. While in *Confessions* he is careful to differentiate the "pleasure" of, say, Chambéry, from the "happiness" of Les Charmettes, in *Rêveries* he still names a memory of solitary reverie as his closest experience of "genuine happiness" and a source of his most "tender regrets." The difference lies in the place of nostalgic memory. In *Rêveries*, he augments an original experience of happiness, in addition to analyzing it. Most clearly, the "charming" images that he needs in order to "vivify" the memory of his "monotone" reverie also increase his knowledge and enjoyment of its details. Rousseau

[580] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1093.
[581] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 225; Gourevitch, "Rousseau's *Reveries*," 517.
[582] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1098-99.

writes of his original reveries, "in my ecstasies, their objects often escaped my senses. Now the deeper my reverie is, the more intensively it depicts them to me. I am often more in the midst of them and even more pleasantly so than when I was really there."[583] Like the responses of people to each other's pleasure in social happiness, Jean-Jacques responds to past self-iterations by re-contextualizing his past pleasure and perspective.

Indeed, the pleasure of responding to and re-contextualizing past sensation defines the pleasure of the *original* experience of reverie. Jean-Jacques begins his description of his "monotonous" reverie by arguing that "these compensations cannot be felt by all souls nor in all situations," but that either criterion – a soul with a "cheerful imagination" or a situation of "uniform and moderated movement" – is sufficient to attain them. For Jean-Jacques – who could "dream pleasantly" even at the Bastille, and does not need the correct situation – his mediations are augmented by his imaginative projections onto pastoral settings:

> Upon emerging from a long and sweet reverie, upon seeing myself surrounded by greenery, flowers…and letting my eyes wander in the distance on romance-like [*romanesque*] shores…I assimilated all the lovely objects into my fictions; and finally…brought back by degrees to myself and to what surrounded me, I could not mark out the point separating the fictions from reality.[584]

The imagination at once continues the reverie and transforms it into a "fiction," which "assimilates" more articulated "lovely objects" from his daily leisure activities on the island, and from his "society of a small number of inhabitants." It is this "conjunction of everything" that makes "the absorbed and solitary life…so dear" to him, rather than dreaming or meditating

[583] Ibid., 1049.
[584] Ibid., 1048.

alone.[585] From the beginning, he enjoys the "transfer" of his pleasure from "reveries" to "fictions," which also reveal the world anew.

If his imagination "charms" and re-examines his original experience in memory, therefore, it multiplies the already "doubled" pleasure of the original reverie. Rousseau writes, "the sweetest thing I did [at St. Pierre] was to dream at my ease. In dreaming that I am there, do I not do the same thing?" In both cases, Jean-Jacques "conjoins" his sensations with new sensations and images. He repeats a similar process of assimilation to the pleasure of "assimilating objects to his fictions," rather than hallucinating the past experience of self-presence, or devaluing it through supplementation, as scholars suggest.[586] And each nostalgic memory adds new charm and perspective as it assimilates sensations and images in new terms: "I do even more [in remembering]...I join [to it] charming images."[587] Ultimately, nostalgic memory attains the play of overlapping pleasure that defines "social" happiness. It allows Jean-Jacques to "commerce in advance with the celestial intelligences." Indeed, the memory of the "monotonous" reverie approaches the "duration [of happiness that] increases its charm to the point of finding supreme felicity," even if the original experience does not. Whether Jean-Jacques dreams nostalgically of solitary reveries or of intimate society, his repeated memory mimics an internal, "social" happiness.

Jean-Jacques does not articulate the content of his early dreams at St. Pierre, because they abstract from the particularity of each object. Once again, however, he implicitly frames his experience of happiness by d'Urféian pastoral analogies. Most subtly, the lake shores that

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[585] Ibid.
[586] See, for instance, Starobinski, *Transparency and Obstruction*; Gourevitch, "Rousseau's *Reveries*." For Derrida, famously, Rousseau's supplements inevitably increase the demand for, and hallucinations of, presence, because the supplement places the original experience in the place of lack.
[587] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1049.

surround the "greenery, flowers" to which he "emerges," are *romanesque*, rather than *romantique*, a newly-transliterated English term that Rousseau's host at Ermenonville, René de Girardin, had just then defended in his *De la composition des paysages* (1777). For the late 18th-century reader, *romans* are "fictions that depict unlikely adventures…and the entire development of human passions." They connote nothing of the "tranquil and solitary setting [in the natural world], in which the soul…can surrender itself entirely to…a profound sentiment" – a setting that, for Girardin, defines the *romantique*.[588] While Rousseau refers to the same landscape as *romantique* earlier in the Fifth Walk, he chooses to revert to the older term in his description of the pleasure of reverie, despite almost certainly being aware of Girardin's distinction between them.[589] He emerges from the "romantic" reverie into objects that recall – however atmospherically, at this point – the scenes of the bizarre and sentimental "romance."

For an 18th-century readership, the *romans* to which *romanesque* most often refers are *L'Astrée* and its imitators.[590] Thiery notes that, with respect to Jean-Jacques's similar description of his life on St. Pierre, in *Confessions*, Jean-Jacques's leisurely reverie, botany, and play in the woods recall Céladon's and Silvandre's play and contemplation in the natural world.[591] In the Eighth Walk of *Rêveries*, Rousseau confirms the particularly d'Urféian charm of the natural world surrounding him when he laments that the spectacle of "the apparatus of mines" that "substitutes for that of greenery and flowers, of azure sky, of *amorous shepherds*," on the surface

[588] René de Girardin, *De la composition des paysages* (Geneva1777), 128. In a footnote, he rejects the term *Romanesque* as too invocative of frivolity and sentimentalism. Ibid., 128n. On the history of the terms *romanesque* and *romantique* in France, see Raymond Immerwahr, "Romantic before 1790," in *"Romantic" and Its Cognates: The European History of a Word*, ed. Hans Eichner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), 84-90; Maurice Z. Shroder, "France/ Roman – Romanesque – Romantique – Romanticism " ibid.
[589] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1040.
[590] Shroder, "Roman," 266. In his *Encyclopédie* entry, for instance, Louis de Jaucourt presents *L'Astrée* as the most influential, and mostly poorly imitated, modern *roman*. *Encyclopédie*, s.v. "roman."
[591] Thiery, "Episode des cerises," 195.

of the earth.[592] In *Confessions*, the discovery that Lignon is an ironworks "immediately calmed [his] romantic curiosity." In *Rêveries*, he recovers this curiosity in nostalgic memory, and in a botany that cannot sully these "pastoral images [*images champêtres*]."[593] While the solitary dreamer is alone, he dreams among the amorous shepherds of *L'Astrée*. He is happy because he increasingly understands and enjoys his past interpretations and applications of pastoral analogies of love and community.

In *Rêveries*, the happiness of reverie thus concentrates, rather than competes with, experiences of social happiness. And Rousseau's earlier texts anticipate this conclusion. While, in *Émile*, he contrasts the image of the outward-oriented activity of the child with the increasingly inward and deathly self-absorption of the old man,[594] in *Julie*, the titular character adds an important corollary: "a sensible heart resists th[e] premature death [of solipsism] with all of its strength. The more it loses, the more attached it becomes to what remains. It holds to the last object…by its ties to all the others."[595] In the end, the dreaming Jean-Jacques similarly wards off a premature death of solipsistic *amour de soi*. In the ties between his idyllic pastoral leisure, his imagination of true community, in the memories of past happiness, and – ultimately – in the love of Madame de Warens, he increases the pleasure of social happiness, and (to use Julie's word) "concentrates" its experience.

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[592] Rousseau, *Rêveries*, 1, 1067; my italics.
[593] Ibid., 1064.
[594] *Émile*, 4, 289.
[595] *Julie*, 2, 399. Like Jean-Jacques, Julie mourns embittered relationships, which she can no longer experience or remember without "tears," rather than deaths. Her response is to invite her beloved cousin, Claire, to stay with her at Clarens, in order to enjoy the same social and "overlapping" pleasure that Jean-Jacques describes at Les Charmettes. In the face of her losses, she "concentrates" her sentiments by reinforcing the connections or "ties" between people that she loves.

Conclusion

In *Confessions* and *Rêveries*, Rousseau's nostalgic analysis suggests that happiness occurs in the overlap between, and responses to, the free activity of equals. The agency of God in nature echoes and augments this active, "circulating" pleasure. And it is concentrated in the "social" happiness of nostalgic memory and projection. Indeed, Rousseau implies that nostalgic analysis is itself a form of solitary happiness.

Ultimately, Rousseau casts himself as one of Condillac's "genius" figures. He refines and extends the dominant analogies of *L'Astrée*, and its philosophical and literary sources, in order to express and analyze the conditions of his happiness. When "I am dead," he writes in a fragment, "the Poet Rousseau will be a great Poet" in the model of Homer and Virgil.[596] It could be argued that his use of *L'Astrée* is unremarkable, because d'Urfé's pastoral images are common cultural references by the middle of the 18th- century.[597] Rousseau's use of the images, plot, and ideas of *L'Astrée* in *Confessions* and *Rêveries*, however, is remarkably detailed and comprehensive. These autobiographies also grapple with the same nostalgia for a neo-Platonic order that (arguably) animates d'Urfé's text. While Condillac may have given Rousseau the ideas to draw on pastoral images for analysis, moreover, Rousseau suggests that he applied the analogies of *L'Astrée* to the people, affairs, and ideas of his life from an early age. Indeed, he first describes Jean-Jacques as a "troubled shepherd," who finds sublime happiness at Les Charmettes, in poetic, rather than analytic and comparative, form, in his pastoral idyll, *Verger de Madame de*

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[596] *Portrait*, 1, 1129.

[597] Starting with its fourth edition, for instance, the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1762) defines a "Céladon" as a general noun, denoting "a man of beautiful sentiments, with regard to gallantry." Rousseau uses this general d'Urféian sense when he writes, of his courtship of Madame de Larnage, "I have already abandoned my Céladonian remarks [*propos de Céladon*] all the ridiculousness of which I felt now that we were on our way." 4 ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, (1762)), 4, s.v. "Dictionnaire de l'Académie française" *Céladon*; *Confessions*, 1, 252.

Warens (1746), which he wrote the same year that Condillac published *Essai*.[598] Rousseau may act as the genius, because he is uniquely positioned to develop common images in order to analyze the good life in the wake of Descartes, Locke, and Newton.

For Rousseau, each subsequent revisiting of a memory ultimately dispels the charm of the previous form of reverie (even as it re-establishes charm in new terms.) For him, we constantly "awaken" or "emerge" from one state of pleasure into another to see the world more fully. Most significantly for the question of happiness, Rousseau writes, in a letter to Malesherbes, that, after assimilating his activities and surrounding objects into his superficial meditation, he "soon peopled it with beings according to [his] heart," and "became tender to the point of tears over the true pleasures of humanity." Once again, solitary happiness sets the stage for the greatest pleasures of intimate society. While "the nothingness of [his] chimeras sometimes suddenly came to sadden" his fantasy, Rousseau enjoys "a certain yearning of the heart for another sort of enjoyment," "an attractive sadness that [he] would not have wanted not to have."[599] This bittersweet pleasure of the dispelling of social charm is another iteration of the "frail happiness" of stolen pleasure in the face of flux and disruption.[600] We awaken from the charm of the dream of the "golden age" having briefly touched something real that we must find in other terms, in a newly "waking" life.

The aging Jean-Jacques's answer is to turn to God's works, and to respond to His higher activity.[601] As we shall see in the next chapter, the adult Émile has a more difficult task. He must found ideal, happy community in the face of his certain knowledge of its eventual "nothingness"

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[598] *Le verger de Madame de Warens*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 1124.
[599] *Lettres à Malesherbes*, 1, 1140.
[600] See note 349 above.
[601] Rousseau, *Lettres à Malesherbes*, 1, 1141.

and demise. He must act nostalgically. In *Confessions* and *Rêveries*, Rousseau's implicit analysis of his pastoral analogies leave his reader in a similar, "adult" position. As Rousseau writes, in a footnote to *Émile*, "I give my dreams as dreams, leaving it to the reader to find out whether they contain something useful for people who are awake."[602]

[602] *Émile*, 4, 350n.

Chapter Six

"Voluptuous Remorse": Nostalgia of the Rational Adult

In earlier chapters, I developed the systematic and cognitive nature of Rousseauian nostalgia. In this chapter, I reverse my approach. I want to show the implicitly nostalgic structure of adult judgement by drawing on my earlier treatment of the explicitly nostalgic sentiment of Jean-Jacques. In particular, I highlight the nostalgic structure of adult moral judgement (a judgement which, for Rousseau, is premised on free will). I argue that Rousseauian adults feel their moral freedom most acutely in their remorseful longing for the "voluptuous" pleasure of past, often adolescent, acts of goodness. While the charm of these acts is now (also) a punishment, it recalls their freedom in the face of present temptations and habits to which they temporarily have surrendered. And I claim that this nostalgic pleasure motivates their moral judgement, as well as moral and political action. The voice of nature – which articulates the sentiment of conscience – is the voice of a past, happier iteration of the self.

Rousseau develops his picture of the adult moral subject in three, related mid-period texts: *Émile* and its "Profession" (1762), "Lettres morales" to Sophie (1757-58), and *Julie* (1761), which features St. Preux. I will focus on the contrast between the Savoyard Vicar's self-presentation of his (ultimately compromised) capacity to act freely and virtuously, on the one hand, and Rousseau's presentation of the virtue of Émile, whose goodness is rare under modern educational and societal conditions.

Commentators highlight the strong Cartesian influence on "Profession" – particularly on the Vicar's treatment of the will, *bons sens*, and doubt.[603] I will focus on "Profession" as a simultaneous application and subversion of Descartes's ideal of "adulthood," in particular. Like Descartes's self-presentation in *Discours de la methode* and *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Rousseau's Vicar wills to withhold or withdraw his assent from his potentially false youthful beliefs and pleasures, and to develop knowledge on more solid epistemological ground. In the face of competing passions, and poor "education" by the examples of people around him, however, the Vicar often acts contrary to his will and newfound knowledge. As Buffon expresses it, in the fourth volume of his natural history – a volume, as we have seen, that Rousseau read closely[604] – the adult at once possesses the greatest mental and volitional capacity, and a strong, and long-formed habit of wasting this capacity. He lacks even the wayward youth's passion for charming illusions, and will settle for distraction from his remorse and melancholy.[605]

In Émile and St. Preux, I argue that Rousseau presents characters who remember, and are motivated by, the "voluptuous" pleasure of past, adolescent experiences of virtue. While the Vicar can only find consolation in Heaven for his missed agency, the younger characters – not so far removed from passionate adolescence – feel and recover their moral freedom in their nostalgia. And they have the potential for virtue, rather than mere goodness, because they live in

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[603] Gouhier, "Ce que le vicaire doit à Descartes."; *Les méditations métaphysiques de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1984); Arash Abizadeh, "Banishing the Particular: Rousseau on Rhetoric, *Patrie*, and the Passions," *Political Theory* 29, no. 4 (2001): 566-67; Peter Westmoreland, "Rousseau's Descartes: The Rejection of Theoretical Philosophy as First Philosophy," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21, no. 3 (2013); Yves Vargas, *Introduction à l'"Émile" de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1995); Marshall, "Epistomology and Political Perception in Rousseau," 80-91.

[604] See Chapter Two of this dissertation.

[605] Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, 4, 75.

fallen moral and political worlds, and this action is difficult. Rousseau's moral "heroes" act by means of their nostalgia, rather than despite it.

The Freedom of Refusal

In *Émile*, Rousseau's image of authentic adulthood seems anti-nostalgic, because – both in his own voice, and in the voice of the Savoyard Vicar – he defines the activity of adulthood against the passive claims of the sensations and passions, and against the influence of memories of sensations and passions. I have argued throughout this dissertation that Rousseau maintains that people at all stages of life engage in active thought, despite some of his seemingly absolute distinctions between the activity of people in different age-groups.[606] The "child," the "adolescent," and "the old man" compare ideas, evaluate these comparisons, and pursue the consequences of these evaluations, albeit in different spheres of action, and with varying degrees of self-reflexivity.[607] They each manifest, for Rousseau, the spontaneous activity of the mind that transcends the laws of mechanics. For Rousseau, and for his Vicar, "adulthood" is distinguished by another capacity: we reach our highest potential for freedom in our capacity to exercise the will, and withdraw our affirmation from ideas, judgements, and sentiments that animate nostalgic memory, and see them isolated from this context. We may then freely choose among them. At first glance, we feel our freedom most acutely in this act of refusal, rather than in nostalgic memory (as in *Confessions*).

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[606] For instance, Rousseau writes about his own stages of belief, in "Lettre à Franquières," "I believed by *authority* during my childhood, by *sentiment* during my youth; by *reason* in adulthood, and now I believe because I *always* believed." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau à Laurent Aymon De Franquières (January 15th, 1769)*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 4 (Paris: Pléiade, 1969), 1134; my italics.

[607] The child applies and alters comparisons that "authority" – his entire community – shows him. The adolescent Jean-Jacques implicitly compares the ideas that he feels. The aging Jean-Jacques retroactively compares the key ideas that he has "always" believed.

Commentators sometimes argue or imply that Rousseau maintains a doctrine of absolute free will – a doctrine that we possess the freedom to affirm or deny any idea regardless of inclination, passion, or sentiment.[608] Rousseau's use of the spontaneous movement of the body as an image of our freedom lends itself to this reading. As the Vicar says, countering the materialist idea of the world as a machine of effects, "I want to move my arm and I move it, without this movement having another immediate cause other than my will."[609] We manifest and feel our spontaneous freedom in our capacity for movement – a capacity seemingly limited only by weakness of the body.

For Rousseau, however, will is conditioned both by our character and our judgement. First, the will is limited by our basic sentiment of our "total interest": "*my freedom consists even* in this, that I can only will what suits me [*m'est convenable*], or what I consider to suit me, without anything foreign to myself determining me. Does it follow that I am not my master, because I am not the master of being other than me?"[610] A good is a good, because we feel that it suits our character and history. Second, we will a particular good that appears to be true. For the Vicar, a man "chooses the good that he has judged to be true; if he judges falsely, he chooses badly."[611] Or, as Condillac writes, "*I will* signifies…that a thing is the object of my choice…[and] I only choose among things that are at my disposal…[by means of] reflection."[612] Within the domain of our sentiment of our "total interest," we will to pursue the good on which we reflect, and which we judge to be true. Indeed, the challenge of moral life is to prevent our

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[608] See, Gouhier, "Ce que le vicaire doit à Descartes," 146; Patrick Riley, *Will and Political Legitimacy: A Critical Exposition of Social Contract Theory in Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1982), 102-04.
[609] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 574.
[610] Ibid., 586; my italics.
[611] Ibid., 586.
[612] Condillac, *Animaux*, 4, 2.10.

judgements of particular goods from falling into meaningless abstraction, and becoming divorced from our deeper sentiment. At a certain point, we risk becoming determined by something "foreign" – the projected gaze of other people to which *amour propre* exposes us – and we cease actively "willing."[613]

If the will is conditioned by character and thought, however, it is unconditioned in its negative form: we may *refuse* to judge a relation between ideas, or we may temporarily withdraw our affirmation of judgement or the sentiment of our good. For the Vicar, Condillac's argument that judgement is the cause of the will, and "freedom is derived from this power [to compare and judge], is possibly true. But he also allows that "freedom" may be "only a similar power [to judgement]," and derive from another source of activity that is common to both will and judgement.[614] While we always will the good that we know, the Vicar allows that we *may* be able to exercise this power of willing without the preceding process of understanding, because will and judgement are separate (although similar) powers.

It is this (seemingly) slight theoretical difference between the Vicar's and Condillac's respective visions of the will – rather than any dramatic tensions between different types of dualism and monism, as Rousseau scholars often claim[615] – that distinguishes the Vicar's vision of adult freedom from the Condillacian dynamics of nostalgic pleasure and analysis. By temporarily withholding present judgement, adults may judge their past ideas and judgements in

[613] As Rousseau later writes, "the active being obeys [the sentiment of nature], the passive being commands." Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 594.
[614] Ibid.
[615] See, Cassirer, *Question of Rousseau*, 112-14; Masson, Introduction, 77n4, 79n1; Perrin, "Passivité," 51; Schøsler, "Position sensualiste."; Vargas, *Introduction*, 164.

isolation from their temporal and experiential context. As the Vicar describes the discovery of the method that finally led him out of doubt,

> Going over in my mind the various opinions that had one by one drawn me along since birth, I saw that although none of them was evident enough to produce conviction immediately, they had various degrees of verisimilitude, and [the voice of nature] gave or refused inner assent to them in different measure. On the basis of this first observation, I compared all these different ideas in silence of prejudices.[616]

By withholding his will, the Vicar's complex and confusing history of competing philosophical and moral ideas, which have "drawn [him] along since birth," becomes an atemporal catalogue of complex ideas that could belong to someone else. [617] Like Descartes he then may rely on his *bons sens*, or common, everyday reason, free from the abstraction of scholarly books. Where Descartes relies on the clarity and distinctness of ideas, Rousseau's Vicar follows anew the "voice of nature," his sentiment of what "suits" him.[618] He accepts a premise or conclusion if "it makes sense and it possesses nothing repugnant to reason, nor to observation."[619]

While the "child" or "old man" act within a more Condillacian paradigm, in which we feel our freedom in retrospect,[620] the "adult" thus chooses freely, and feels his freedom, in the present. He feels absolute freedom to withhold or withdraw consent, and judges by the light of his sentiment. In the moral sphere, he may withdraw his erroneous ideas of his good, and consult his conscience, in particular, which is his particular sentiment and love of the moral order.[621] He

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[616] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 569.
[617] Similarly, at the end of Book Three, Émile develops the habit of saying "I don't know [*je ne sais*]" in the face of incomplete evidence about the true nature of physical objects, so he may gather more data. Ibid., 484-85.
[618] See, René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison et chercher la vérité dans les sciences* (Paris: C. Angot, 1668), 3-4, 16-17. On Rousseau's use of Descartes's concept of *bons sens*, see Abizadeh, "Banishing the Particular," 566-67.
[619] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 576-77.
[620] Condillac, *Traité*, 3, "Dissertation sur la liberté.
[621] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 602.

is an adult, because he may transcend the call of his past ideas, sentiments, and pleasures – the conditions of his nostalgic memory – and feel this freedom.

Nostalgia for Virtue: Remorse, Regret, and the Modern Age

But our capacity to will and feel has a developmental history and a larger historical context of its own. While, theoretically, we may withdraw our judgement to recall our true sentiment, this direct action is almost impossible in unjust modern societies. Our souls are too weighed down by habits of moral passivity that are strengthened by the examples of the passivity of others. And we cannot maintain a strong sentiment of the moral order, because we lack Émile's careful education to see and feel that moral order. At the same time, we are all "tempted" by the "voluptuous" pleasure of virtue and the moral order at least once, in adolescence, and retain the sentiment of conscience within our memory. For Rousseau, the worldly Vicar thus recovers the full scope of his potential freedom at one step removed: in his *remorse* for failing to act virtuously and enjoy virtue, and his *regret* for the injustice and emptiness of the world. We feel our full potential for freedom in nostalgic memory.

At first glance, the Vicar is nostalgic merely for the consoling feeling and ideas of pure activity and pure passivity – for what Derrida calls "presence." In "Profession," he attributes the self's simultaneous capacity to will and tendency to give way to passions and habits to an effect of a dualist metaphysics: "man is not one. I want and I do not want; I sense myself enslaved and free at the same time. I see the good, I love it, and I do the bad."[622] Echoing St. Paul,[623] the Vicar presents man in a way that, scholars note, is seemingly alien to the idea of the natural

[622] Ibid., 583.
[623] Romans 7:15.

goodness and unity of man that animates the rest of *Émile*[624]: as unavoidably divided between an active soul, and a passive body. The soul wills the good, but forgets its love for the moral order, and its freedom to consult it, during the bodily passions of day-to-day life.[625] The Vicar is nostalgic, because he longs to regain a pure will in Heaven, when the soul is free from the body.

But the Vicar implicitly presents his longing for the pure exercise of freedom, and his understanding of a body/soul dualism, more generally, as answers to his particular developmental and historical context. Let us begin with the developmental context. For the Vicar, his "bodily" passions are expressions of his entrenched, misleading sentiment and idea of the social and moral order – a misleading sentiment and idea that Émile avoids due to his education. Like the moral conscience, the vicious passions reflect our idea and sentiment of the order of the moral world. For the Vicar, "the difference is that the good [moral] man orders himself in relation to the whole, and the wicked man orders the whole in relation to himself."[626] Where Émile loves a moral order that connects the needs, actions, and justice of his fellow humans, the wicked man sees only competition from which he must defend his central position. The cause of this misreading of the order of the world is the imagination. "If the source of all passions is sensibility," Rousseau writes, more generally, "the imagination determines their inclination [*pente*]."[627] For the Vicar, the wicked man's excessive imagination "*transforms* the passions of all limited beings into vices." It circumvents the careful discernment of the true

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[624] Bloom, Introduction and Notes, 20; Vargas, *Introduction*, 172-74; Guénard, *Convenance*, 94-114.
[625] In this form, little separates the Vicar's account and similar accounts of moral failure by Locke or Charles Bonnet. Rousseau here likely draws on both accounts. The self fails to will the good it knows when it becomes distracted by immediate (Locke) or particular (Bonnet) ends from the natural law. Passions are "bodily" insofar as they respond to the attraction of particular objects in the world or in the imagination. Cf. Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding*, 1, 2.21.52-57; Charles de Bonnet, *Essai de psychologie, ou Considérations sur les opérations de l'âme, sur l'habitude et sur l'éducation* (London, 1755), Chapters 49-50.
[626] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 602.
[627] Ibid., 501.

moral relations of men that Émile's Tutor encourages Émile to undertake by helping people, and seeing their true needs and deserts.[628] The passions are wicked and encourage the "bad," because false images distort our sentiment of a suitable world.

The Vicar's poor education also disconnects the body from the soul's activity. While the body and its sensations are the "cause" of his periodic, narcissistic projections of his ego at the center of the social and moral order,[629] the way in which he cares for the body make it a source of passivity. As he puts it, "the *care for the conservation* of the body excites the soul to relate everything to itself, and gives it a contrary interest to the general order that the soul is nevertheless capable of seeing and loving."[630] The Vicar and Rousseau ostensibly disagree on this point. For Rousseau, the care for the conservation of the self directs all people – especially children – to recognize and love those who help "conserve" them.[631] Moreover, Émile's bodily exploration of the physical world develops habits of *bons sens* and sentiment that allow him eventually to discern and love the moral order.[632] By contrast, "a stupid body weakens the soul."[633] But the Vicar, like most adults, lacks Émile's careful education of the body; he lacks the development of his judgement, which builds on this *bons sens*; and he lacks the slow deployment of his pity, *amour propre*, and practical judgement to discern and love the moral whole. As Burgelin argues, more generally, the Vicar's body is effectively a source of passivity, because it is divorced from the proper operations of the soul.[634]

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[628] As Rousseau continues, "the nature of all beings must be known to them to know what relations best suit [*conviennent*] their own." Ibid.
[629] Ibid., 604.
[630] Ibid., 603; my italics.
[631] Ibid., 491-92.
[632] Rousseau writes, "he had simplicity and *bons sens* in his childhood, I am very sure that he will have soul and sensibility in his youth." Ibid., 512.
[633] Ibid., 269.
[634] Burgelin, Introduction and Notes, 1538n1.

The Vicars's implicit presentation of the body as a contingently passive and wicked force means both that (a) we are responsible for our seemingly passive reactions to objects and to people; and (b) we are vulnerable to the tyranny of habit, which makes the voice of conscience difficult to hear. The Vicar says that people who would shirk responsibility for their crimes must see that:

> The weakness of which they complain is their own work; that their first depravation comes from their will; that by willingly ceding to their temptations, they then yield to them despite themselves and make them irresistible. Without a doubt, it does not depend on them not to be wicked and weak; but it depends on them not to become so.[635]

We fail to resist our enslavement to people, objects, and habits. But once these patterns of the imagination and pleasure are established, they are "irresistible." While the Vicar sees the falseness of his previous images of happiness, for instance, he has "known them too late and [has] not been able completely to destroy them."[636] He laments the habits of unreconstructed *amour propre*, in particular: "Oh how easy it would be to remain masters of ourselves and of our passions…if when our habits were not yet acquired…we knew how to occupy the mind with objects that it ought to know."[637] The Vicar cannot overcome his passions, because he – like most modern people, for Rousseau – falls into all the traps of abstraction and alienation that Émile's education helps him avoid. He feels a *disconvenance* with the world, because he is disunited in himself.

Arguably, the same lack of education that damns the Vicar to passivity also obscures *any* knowledge of the *convenable* moral order, and the resulting sentiment of conscience. If we must

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[635] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 604.
[636] Ibid.
[637] Ibid., 604-05.

discover the idea of a moral order in order to love it, and this process of discovery is so fragile, the Vicar's claim that his conscience is universal is nonsensical. Locke, for instance, dismisses the idea of a universal conscience, because the discernment of the natural law and natural order requires time and effort that few people can or will devote to it.[638] But Rousseau's *convenable* moral order is not Locke's order. As Guénard highlights, the multi-centered character of any "convenable" order for Rousseau means that even the relation of a few elements expresses the order as a whole. In a *convenable* order, "each part is center, and miniature of the order of the world."[639] In the natural order, for instance, even a wasp and orchid are each ends in themselves, and the means to each other's good.

Even if we lack Émile's education, therefore, the fleeting experience of virtue on the smallest scale is enough to taste its sublime structure and pleasure. In short, we recall the sentiment of conscience in nostalgic memory. As the Vicar defends the universality of conscience, in a passage almost identical to one that Rousseau writes in his own voice,[640]

> Do you believe that there exists a single man in the entire world depraved enough never to have yielded in his heart to the temptation of doing good? This temptation is so natural and so sweet that it is impossible always to resist it, and the memory of this pleasure that it produced once is enough constantly to recall it.[641]

The logic of the argument is, once again, Condillacian. Conscience is universal, because our psychological makeup makes the experience of the moral order all but certain, rather than because this sentiment is innate. While our impressions of justice are partial, and cannot

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[638] Locke, *Concerning Human Understanding*, 1, 1.3.7-14.
[639] Guénard, *Convenance*, 46.
[640] Cf. Rousseau, *Lettres morales*, 4, 1115.
[641] *Émile*, 4, 601-02.

compete with the lures of habit and passion, we cannot escape the impressions of the pleasure of moral action – an action that partially reveals the moral order.

If the Vicar's dualism expresses a "nostalgia" for pure activity, he thus also laments the lost promise of adolescent pleasure and freedom. He may know and love the good, and do the bad, because his *amour de soi* and *amour d'ordre* orient him in opposing directions. He lacks Émile's education and careful harmonizing of body and soul, so his "bodily" activity – in different forms – takes him away from his ostensibly autonomous will and implicit memory of the pleasure of virtue, in any given moment. His dualism is practically, rather than metaphysically, true. Indeed, as Peter Westmoreland highlights, the Vicar implies that his metaphysical framing of his self-division into soul and body is hypothetical and consoling, because it strengthens the case for an immortal soul and Heaven. He asks, "since this presumption consoles me, and contains nothing unreasonable, why would I be afraid of yielding to it?"[642] Similarly, the Vicar says of the division between the body and soul, "as prey to pain, I withstand it with patience in remembering that it is passing and that it comes from the body that is not mine."[643] He may bear his alienating passions and the pain that they cause him by "remembering [*songeant*]" – which we could also render as "picturing" – that his body is not truly his. He yearns for Heaven and the life of pure soul, because he is too late to recover the life of the body, and to realize the promise of his adolescent soul.

For both the Vicar and Rousseau, the name of this second, non-consoling nostalgia for our missed potential for moral pleasure and freedom is *remorse*. And it is the paradigmatic experience of our freedom. In "Profession," the definite experiences of conscience are negative.

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[642] Ibid., 590; Westmoreland, "Rousseau's Descartes," 541-42.
[643] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 603.

For instance, the Vicar first defends the existence of conscience by arguing that "*remorse* always reproaches us feebly for that which well-ordered nature permits, and with the strongest reason that which nature proscribes us."[644] We feel our inner goodness when we transgress it. Similarly, we feel the freedom to follow this conscience in retrospect:

> When I abandon myself to temptations, I act according to the impulse of external objects. When I reproach myself for this weakness, I listen only to my will. I am enslaved because of my vices and free because of my *remorse*.[645]

Like conscience, remorse exceeds the chain of determined effects. It is also a form of freedom that expresses our sense of *convenance*. But we feel it after the fact. Admittedly, the Vicar sometimes listens to the voice of nature and acts. He says, "I sense perfectly in myself when I do what I wanted to do." But most of his examples speak of sovereignty over the body. Even here he has already moved to the past tense, retroactively claiming the desired act as his own.[646] If we lack the force to overcome our passions in a given moment, we recover our feeling of freedom in our remorse for failing to listen to what must have been present within us.[647] Remorse reveals our freedom.

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[644] Ibid., 566.
[645] Ibid., 411; my italics.
[646] Ibid., 585-86.
[647] In Rousseau's *oeuvre*, the paradigmatic object of remorse is a youthful memory recounted in *Confessions*: his lie about stolen ribbon that falsely condemned the servant Marion. As we saw in Chapter Three of this dissertation, Rousseau enjoys the bittersweet pleasure of his missed opportunity for virtue, even as condemns his vice. He attributes the lie that causes Marion to be dismissed to his feeling of shame before his accusers. His *amour propre* leads him astray, but his vanity reflects his own activity, and he fails to overcome this vanity. He also feels remorse for the effect of his lie on her fate after being dismissed. He writes, "if the *remorse* for having been capable of making her unhappy is unbearable, judge about that for having been capable of making her worse." Ibid., 85; my italics.

For Rousseau, remorse is particularly nostalgic, because it ultimately punishes through the loss of half-remembered pleasure of moral action. Rousseau places the most detailed description of the nostalgia of remorse in the voice of Julie, in *Julie*:

> Virtue long torments those who abandon it, and its charms, which are the delight of pure souls, are the first punishment to the wicked, who still love them and can no longer enjoy them…I consoled myself in my suffering like a wounded man who fears gangrene, and in whom the sentiment of his pain sustains the hope of recovery.[648]

The torment of remorse is the division from the pleasure of virtue. Julie feels its punishment in the vivid memory of the charms of virtue that she may no longer enjoy. The punishment is also its consolation, because sufferers know themselves to be still connected to the denied pleasure. It is still part of them, even if negatively. The true danger is unfeeling, rather than vice. As Rousseau writes to Sophie, in the sixth "Lettre morale," of the dangers of materialist doctrines, "is it not an awkward system that only knows how to remove *remorse* from *voluptuousness* by stifling both one and the other?"[649] Julie knows she is "criminal but not wicked" and thus tastes sweetness in her shame, for all its simultaneous bitterness.[650] Remorse is "voluptuous" and nostalgic, because it articulates the lost pleasure of our moral freedom.

Tellingly, the "adult" Vicar does not focus on his own nostalgic pleasure in remorse. Unlike the younger, and less "fallen" Julie, Sophie, and St. Preux, he presumably is too old to recall such a memory vividly, and too lost in habits that his education failed to disrupt. The "voluptuousness" of the Vicar's remorse is also overshadowed by another, related nostalgic emotion that reflects the second (after "developmental"), "historical" context of passivity: the

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[648] *Julie*, 2, 344.
[649] *Lettres morales*, 4, 1110.
[650] *Julie*, 2, 344.

sentiment of *regret* for the injustice of the world. For the Vicar, it is manifest that justice leads to happiness: "*sois juste, et tu seras heureux*." But this promise is immediately frustrated by the unfair nature of the world. He says, "see what indignation is kindled in us when this expectation is frustrated!" In the feeling of indignation, "conscience is aroused and complains about its Author. It cries out to Him in moaning, 'Thou hast deceived me!'" [651] We come too late, or are promised too early, but know that we feel the happiness of virtue indirectly. Like his sentiment of his freedom, the Vicar's sense of justice is indirect. In the vicious and unpunished acts of others, we feel justice in our regret for its absence.

In Rousseau's oeuvre, *regret* refers to the immorality of others, and the unjust human order that rewards the wicked and distorts the true goodness of all, rather than to individual moral failure, to which *remorse* refers. Regret is a nostalgic lament for the lack of shared pleasure and "goodness" with the surrounding world. It usually connotes a political sentiment, because – for adults at least – happiness depends on justice.[652]

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[651] *Émile*, 4, 589.

[652] Rousseau's most compelling image of regret is Jean-Jacques's youthful revulsion towards the beautiful body of a courtesan, Zulietta. At the height of his lust, his sudden sense of the "inconceivable" disjunction between her sublime beauty and her lowly social position renders her uncanny. He says to himself "Nobles, Princes ought to be her slaves…Nevertheless, there she is a wretched trollop abandoned to the public… Either my heart fools me, fascinates my senses, and makes me the dupe of a worthless slut, or some hidden flaw of which I am unaware must destroy the effect of her charms and make her odious to those who ought to contend over her." The adolescent Jean-Jacques can only explain the contradiction between Zulietta's natural and social positions as a flaw in her nature: "having persuaded myself that her malformed nipple depended on some natural vice…I saw…that, in the most charming person I could imagine, I was holding in my arms only a sort of monster." In this example, Jean-Jacques regrets his own false perception in the face of injustice, in addition to the injustice itself. The day after he had left her is spent "regretting the moments which [he] had used so poorly and which it only depended on [him] to make the sweetest of [his] life." While we have remorse for lost opportunities for virtue, we have regret for missed natural charm and pleasure. He also laments the effect of his misrecognition of her worth on her judgement of him. "My senseless regret has not left me," he writes, "I could not console myself for the fact that she carried off only a contemptuous memory of me." Both he and Zulietta misunderstand the natural worth of the other, because of the chaos of the human order. Where remorse laments the pain of missed virtue that few may see, regret articulates the disorder of an entire exchange that hides the inner worth of all. *Confessions*, 1, 321-22.

In "Profession," remorse and regret form a dialectical pair. The Vicar regrets that other people are not punished by their own remorse, which is the most fundamental form of natural justice. Earlier in Book Four of *Émile*, Rousseau cautions "we would pardon more easily the vices of the wicked, if we could know how much their own heart punishes them."[653] The Vicar similarly speaks of the "cry of the remorse which in secret punishes secret crimes."[654] For the Vicar, however, even remorse risks being overwhelmed by the distractions of urbanizing and alienated 18th-century Europe. In general, the pain of remorse is as likely to throw people into further distractions of *amour propre*, than to help them to recover the voice of conscience: "the wicked man fears and flees himself. He cheers himself up by rushing out of himself." While remorse reveals our freedom, it also inspires us to flee from feeling our missed virtue. As Buffon writes, in a passage from which Rousseau likely draws, "the soul, in leaving this lethargic sleep of the passions, hardly recognizing itself, has lost by slavery the habit of commanding…regrets even its servitude, and looks for a new master, a new object of passion."[655] The wicked man escapes to new passions to avoid his self-recriminations, in general, and his regret for his past servitude, in particular. Even prosperity keeps the threat of self-attunement at bay. As Rousseau comments in *Confessions*, "remorse sleeps during a propitious destiny."[656]

For Buffon, cycles of passion, remorse, and further distraction characterize the self-loathing of middle age, because, by middle age, we become enslaved to our habits. For the Vicar, the northern European world is deep in such enslaving habits, to the point that people only

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[653] *Émile*, 4, 535.
[654] Ibid.
[655] Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, 4, 75.
[656] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 86.

barely feel the remorse that they repress: "conscience no longer speaks to us; it no longer responds to us, and after so long with contempt for it, to recall it costs as much as to banish it."[657] Most people now no longer feel the voice of conscience. After such habits of following passions, they even risk banishing the feeling of their remorse. They remain unpunished by their own, deeper sadness as they commit acts of vice to flee further from it.

This lack of signs of remorse in other people further obscures the Vicar's sentiment of conscience. Like pleasure, conscience is a social sentiment. We feel conscience and remorse in response to the virtue of others. The Vicar asks, "if some act of clemency or generosity strikes our eyes, what admiration, what love it inspires in us! Who does not say to himself, 'I would like to have done the same'?" Conversely, the repeated appearance of general injustice makes our own feeling of conscience and remorse more difficult to perceive. The Vicar says of his understanding, before he examined the metaphysical basis of natural law, "all the duties of the natural law [were] almost erased from my heart by the injustice of men."[658] Facing a bleak, materialist world of enlightened self-interest, the Vicar cannot hear the voice of conscience within him. Even with his sentiment and understanding of God and the moral law, he cannot transcend the habits of the unjust world around him, or the disharmony of his soul. He longs nostalgically for a world that would support his moral activity.

More generally, memory of our own goodness is difficult to maintain in its positive form, because present vice disconnects us from the cues that would allow us to recall it. As the Vicar puts it,

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[657] Ibid., 601.
[658] Ibid., 603.

> To enjoy doing good is the reward for having done good, and this reward is not obtained until we have merited it. Nothing is more lovable than virtue, but we must enjoy it to find it so.[659]

Virtue is enjoyable in its performance. But we only experience the love that motivates virtuous action if (a) we already practice virtue, or (b) we retain a distinct memory of its pleasure. As we have seen in Chapter Four of this dissertation, memory, for Rousseau, requires a bridge of ideas between present and past sentiments. If we are lost in *amour propre*, we have "a thousand reasons to refuse the penchant of our heart," because our vain projections also divorce us from our memory.

I would argue that the Vicar's image of Heaven is one attempt to bridge past and present pleasure. His image of justice is partly an image of pleasure that we may anticipate, and connect to our adolescent pleasure in goodness. (The sublime beauty of nature provides a similar link to this past pleasure.) His "Profession" is most fundamentally nostalgic, because it attempts to re-animate a lost pleasure that we retain within us, rather than because it is metaphysically dualist. But even he is too far gone to maintain the feeling of virtue in the face of temptations. And he can only offer the reader general examples of the pleasure of virtue, and does not appeal to the particular memories of his own virtue or that of his reader. Presumably, the Vicar and his modern readers are too corrupted by an unjust education and world to identify with lost virtue as their own, as a memory on which they may draw.

While the Vicar's remorse and regret are remedial ethical emotions, they also articulate a larger scope for our activity than any ethical act of adolescence. While virtue is the goodness of adulthood, Rousseau also distinguishes goodness and virtue. Goodness is natural, and suits us;

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[659] Ibid., 602.

virtue, in its highest sense, is the possibility for overcoming vice. For all his self-unity, Émile is ethically limited, because he only experiences and acts out of goodness.[660] As the Vicar describes the heroic action of virtue, "when we want to embrace virtue, like Proteus of the fable, it immediately takes a thousand frightening forms, and does not show itself, in its own form, to those who have released their hold on it."[661] To this point in his education, Émile has no opportunity to fight the monster of *amour propre*, because he feels the good and its pleasure easily. By contrast, the Vicar is corrupted by an unjust world and an inadequate education. But his remorse articulates the (distant) possibility of acting in the face of the strong pull of his bodily desires and modern habits. Indeed, his entire "Profession" works to show us this possibility of action, even as he laments its extreme unlikelihood and the necessity of Heaven. We feel the full scope of our freedom in our nostalgic remorse and regret.

For commentators such as Shklar, Rousseau is ultimately a pessimist rather than a nostalgic, because he despairs at achieving moral action and justice. But the Vicar does not give Rousseau's last word on ethical action in the modern world, even within *Émile*. For those younger adults, less invested in corrupting adult habits, the "company" of their younger selves may inspire the first movement to recover virtue through virtuous action in the present. The company of their past, virtuous self is a nostalgic pleasure. In his sixth "moral letter," for instance, Rousseau writes to Sophie, "think of the heart that you conserve to virtue, think of me, you will love to live with yourself…Here are the means to work in the world to please yourself in retreat: in arranging agreeable memories, in procuring there your love of yourself, and in rendering yourself sufficiently good company for yourself in order to give up on all other."[662] In

[660] At least until Book Five of *Émile*, as we shall see in the final section of this chapter.
[661] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 602.
[662] *Lettres morales*, 4, 1115-16; my italics.

this image, the younger, past iteration of Sophie is in the position of Rousseau, who, as he writes in the first moral letter, "submits to duty and reason the sentiments that [Sophie] inspires."[663] It is a position of judgement and clarification. He invites her to be worthy of her past virtue, even as she enjoys its memory. For Julie, this "voluptuous" remorse pushes her to imagine new virtue. Indeed, it is partly sweet because it is a sign that virtue is natural to her, and may be regained again. If the patient feels the disease, she may still recover on new terms.

In addition to revealing our freedom and conscience, nostalgic remorse and regret thus may recall us to virtuous action. In St. Preux and Émile, he paints robustly nostalgic heroes[664] who draw from nostalgic memory to act despite the dispelling of charm and the difficulty of goodness.

Nostalgic Remorse: St. Preux

St. Preux is a figure of nostalgic remorse. As Shklar argues, he experiences his freedom by transcending his nostalgia for his love affair with Julie. He has fallen victim to nostalgic blindness. He loses himself to memories and fantasies of his love affair with Julie to console himself for her marriage to Monsieur de Wolmar. But nostalgia ultimately highlights, rather than obscures, his freedom from all charm and goodness. He may choose virtue by following his nostalgic longing to its most radical conclusions, rather than merely giving it up.

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[663] Ibid., 1082.

[664] Like the Vicar, Sophie is not (yet) a nostalgic hero, because she does not act. In his letters, Rousseau merely describes how she, more easily than anyone, could act from her voluptuous remorse. Julie is a hero and acts to pursue virtue much more directly than St. Preux; she chooses both marriage and death. She falls outside the scope of this dissertation, however, because she acts principally from the love of God, rather than from nostalgic memory.

In *Julie*, St. Preux acts within the moral framework for "nostalgic" remorse that Rousseau articulates to Sophie, and that Julie applies to herself. Julie admonishes St. Preux to listen to the voice of conscience, and attend to the sentiments of their younger selves, prior to the perversion of these sentiments into habit and inflamed *amour propre*. She writes, "remember those happy and innocent times when the powerful and gentle flame that burned in us purified our sentiments…Reread our first letters; recall to mind those fleeting and scarcely savoured moments."[665] For her, St. Preux had become like most people of their age, and represses the simultaneous pain and pleasure of memories of past virtue. As she laments, more generally: "What length of time did it take to destroy such an enchanting memory, and efface the true sentiment of happiness in people who were once able to savor it?...My good friend, let us take away this veil. Need we see the awful precipice it hides from us in order to avoid coming too close to the edge?"[666] He must "lift the veil" to his past pleasure and feel the full pain – the "precipice" – of its natural punishment.

St. Preux's flaw is thus that he does not feel his remorse strongly enough, because he remains tied to the pleasure of his memory of shared virtue and pleasure with Julie. He writes, "I feel less guilty when reproaching myself for my faults… far from presuming to excuse them, we shall lament them together…we shall redeem them if it is possible, by being generous and good."[667] St. Preux still feels his goodness, but, unlike Julie, he feels it implicitly and negatively. He feels *less* guilty when reproaching his faults, rather than feeling voluptuous pleasure in his remorse. Moreover, his remorse is secondhand and begrudging. He writes to Julie, "you oblige me to admire you while sharing your remorse…Cruel Woman!" He feels remorse, because he

[665] Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 352. See, also, ibid., 225.
[666] Ibid., 353.
[667] Ibid., 338-39.

identifies with her present virtue, rather than with his own past goodness. He cannot dissociate his shared virtue and passion with Julie, and only feels the loss of both. With no strong memory of shared virtue from which to act, St. Preux cannot give up the memory of their vice. As he writes about their shared night of transgression, "take away from me this dangerous memory, and I am virtuous….[But] if I am to be forever miserable, yet another hour of happiness, and endless regrets!"[668] In the language of remorse and regret, he misinterprets his remorse as regret. Life with Julie as a lover has become *deconvenable*, because of the twists of fate and contradictions of an unjust social world. He feels the inadequacy of their "criminal" love affair, but sees no possible future state of *convenance* that would rival his already simplified picture of their lost pleasure.

In short, St. Preux is a "nostalgic" in the common sense of the word. He uses memory to retain the pleasure which he has lost in the present. While he gives up all hope of realizing his passionate connection with Julie in the present, he attempts to hold on to it in his nostalgic fantasy. He writes, "I shall steal away once a year, I shall secretly repair close to you…your poor lover…will imagine he already feasts his eyes on you as he sets out to go see you; the memory of his transports will enchant him on the journey back." St. Preux knows his fantasies cannot become reality. He admits that his "secret ardor" to remain living entirely for Julie is what "remorse would take away." But he is content to remain "criminal," so that "despite cruel fate, his sad years will not be utterly wasted."[669] He reanimates their connection in fantasy in order to "enchant" and charm his present existence.

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[668] Ibid., 336-37.
[669] Ibid., 339.

Once again, Rousseau criticizes merely consoling nostalgia. Indeed, Monsieur de Wolmar names the danger of St. Preux's speech to Julie as one of "nostalgic conversation [*conversation de reminiscence*]"[670] In this iteration, nostalgia is a confusion between past and present reality. Acting as the moral physician, Monsieur de Wolmar cures it by confronting the gap between the sufferer's memory and reality, past and present, in exhaustive detail: "in place of his mistress I force him to see always the spouse of an honourable man and the mother of my children: I erase one tableau with another, and cover the past with the present."[671] Most crucially, when Julie and St. Preux are left alone for a week and tack a voyage to the pastoral site of St. Preux's most powerful longing for her, when they were lovers, he must bear that the present Julie does not share these memories, and cannot, as Madame de Wolmar, enjoy them. He shows Julie the dramatic cliffs in which he – like Céladon, in his cave, continually recalling Astrée by her love letters, by her portrait, and by his own inscription of longing on the back of the portrait[672] – carved their initials "a thousand times." He says, "Oh Julie, everlasting charm of my life! Here are the sites where I once sighed for you the world's most faithful lover."[673] But she cannot share his pleasure, and each pleasurable detail becomes a punishment. For St. Preux, the death or exile of Julie would have been easier to bear. He could fantasize that "an instant of her presence would erase all of [his] sufferings." But her presence, as a woman changed, destroys all hope and the charm that depends on it. It "cast[s] [him] into fits of fury and rage that agitated him by degrees to the point of despair."[674] Monsieur de Wolmar's method at once guides

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[670] Ibid., 511.
[671] Ibid.
[672] See, D'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, 2, 273-75; Derche, "'L'Astrée', source de 'L'inoculation de l'amour' dans 'la Nouvelle Héloïse'," 307.
[673] Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 519.
[674] Ibid., 521.

St. Preux to recover the charm of the past, and to feel the full despair of its dispelling. For Rousseau, we must face the flux of our affections and circumstance, rather than hiding from it.

Rather than choosing reality in the face of his untenable nostalgia, however, St. Preux discovers his freedom beyond any goodness and *convenable* order by following his nostalgia to its radical conclusion. He writes, of the crisis point of his despair,

> I was violently tempted to hurl her with me into the waves, and there in her arms finish my life and my long torments. This horrible temptation finally become so strong that I was obliged to let go her hand brusquely and move to the bow of the boat...There my keen agitations began to take another course.[675]

For a few moments, the only answer to the punishment of loss of past charm and goodness is their shared death. But in letting go of her hand "brusquely" and gripping the bow of the boat, St. Preux, as Phillip Stewart puts it, "liberates himself from a sort of bewitchment."[676] He acts without promise of success, response, or charm, fully aware of the pain of reality.

Ultimately, St. Preux's physical act of grabbing the boat signifies the minimum excess of the will over the impulses of the passions, and over the comfort of goodness, more clearly than the free consultation of conscience, or the feeling of remorse. He writes, "this adventure has convinced me more than all the arguments, of the freedom of man and the merit of virtue. How many are slightly tempted and succumb?"[677] Like another form of the Protean hero, St. Preux "holds onto" his vain regrets until they return to their proper, empty form. His nostalgia reveals the flux of the world and his affections. It articulates the space in which he may "dispel" all charm and goodness, and act. Undoubtedly, he is a marginal hero when compared to Cato or

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[675] Ibid.
[676] Ibid., 1644n3.
[677] Ibid., 522.

Socrates, who maintain their virtue in the face of all punishment and pleasure. He also cannot follow the model of remorse and recovery of hope that Julie advises, and requires the intervention of Monsieur Wolmar to confront his crime fully. Indeed, he calls for inspiration from the example of virtue his friend, Lord Bromston, rather than his own past strength.[678] But his action is his own. He pushes his nostalgic regret to its limits to reveal his renewed potential for action and remorse. He acts through the illumination of his nostalgia, rather than despite it.

Impossible Regret: Émile

If St. Preux acts in the face of the charms of past *convenance*, Émile chooses to love and help build a *convenable* order, the inevitable loss of which he also regrets. The Tutor invites Émile to love and to help build a *convenable* and charmed community with Sophie and "country folk," despite Émile's knowledge of this order's fragility and eventual decline. He must love a nation and its ideal, even as, in anticipation, he nostalgically regrets its certain corruption.

In *Émile*, Rousseau presents his ideal of regretful, "nostalgic" action in two stages. He follows a negative ideal of stoic detachment with a positive ideal of tragic, romantic attachment. The Tutor first demands Émile's detachment from the chief objects of his developing love: from Sophie and from their imagined, pastoral happiness. He warns the newly-engaged Émile that his happiness is fleeting:

> Everything is finite, everything is fleeting in human life; and if the state which makes us happy lasted endlessly, the habit of enjoying it would take away our taste for it. If nothing changes from without, the heart changes. Happiness leaves us, or we leave it.[679]

[678] "A hundred times during his perilous day the memory of your virtue gave me back my own." Ibid.
[679] *Émile*, 4, 821.

For Rousseau, even a *convenable* human order is regrettable, because its constitutive elements are subject to change: the will and needs of its members, their mutual assistance, and their inner goodness, fall out of sync, even among people who experience mutually rewarding happiness. Émile thus may enjoy his happiness only if he exercises his freedom to reject it: "wishes without hope do not torment us."[680] He must leave Sophie.

The necessary political conditions that will support Émile and Sophie's happiness are also subject to likely political disorder. Émile desires an iteration of Rousseau's pastoral ideal, at Les Charmettes, in *Confessions*: "Sophie and my field – and I shall be rich."[681] He is raised for independence from other people, and agriculture promises him the means of earning his living with the least dependence on the whims of other people. He can always grow food. And he can enjoy the sweet company of his wife, animals, and the countryside. Even this subsistence farming, however, relies on just laws and the just actions of fellow citizens. As the Tutor asks, "if you are unlucky enough to have a man of position buy or build a house near your cottage, can you say that he will not find the means, under some pretext, to invade your inheritance…or that you will not see…all your resources absorbed into a large roadway?"[682] Émile's farm is part of a nation and subject to its often arbitrary laws. Even its just laws could allow the confiscation of private land for roadways. After learning the principles of political right – the Tutor teaches him a condensed form of Rousseau's *Contrat social* – and comparing governments through two years of travel, Émile thus can conclude that no such "happy land" exists, and that his attachment to, and hope for, pastoral life are weaknesses. As Émile puts it, "were I dependent on nothing else, I would at least depend on the land where I had settled." Even though he is raised to be "natural"

[680] Ibid., 819.
[681] Ibid., 835.
[682] Ibid.

and internally independent in society, he is vulnerable to the unjust order around him. He thus must detach himself from the conditions of his happiness: "since I do not wish to fight necessity, I do not attach myself to anything to hold me back."[683]

At the same time, Émile must love the nation in which he lives, because he enjoyed and will enjoy – both materially and affectively – its virtues. Most directly, even corrupt laws at times defended him as a child, and will defend him when he has children. The Tutor says, "your compatriots protected you as a child; you ought to love them as a man." While the "social contract" has not been observed, Émile "has lived tranquilly under a government and the simulacra of laws." When he has a family of his own, he will feel again this dependence. More indirectly, the regret of political corruption offers Émile the virtue of overcoming the pernicious influences of this corruption. As the Tutor puts it, "the mere appearance of order brings him to know order, to love it. The public good, which serves others only as a pretext, is a real motive for him alone. He learns to struggle with himself, to conquer himself, to sacrifice his interest to the common interest."[684] Once again, even a limited experience of moral order shows the sublime character of that order, and gives one a taste of it. Thus, the Tutor, says to him, of all his moral duties, "one of those duties is attachment to the place of your birth."[685] He owes his country for his protection and early education in virtue, as well as – paradoxically – the opportunity to overcome its corruption. He must detach himself from his ideal of pastoral happiness, because he cannot protect it from fate and corruption. And he must love, and work towards, this ideal, because he has experienced and may develop further its partial realization.

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[683] Ibid., 856.
[684] Ibid., 858.
[685] Ibid.

I argue that this love in the face of pessimism is a form of nostalgic regret. Émile anticipates a future stance from which he will likely lament the fleeting justice and happiness he would have achieved. It is nostalgia projected into the future. It is also the highest form of virtue, because he loves and acts in the face of the likely corruption and impermanence of the conditions of his action. "Regretful" action reveals his virtue and freedom:

> The golden age is treated as a chimera, and it will always be one for anyone whose heart and taste have been spoiled. It is not even true that people *regret* it, since those *regrets* are always vain. What, then, would be required to give it a new birth? One single but impossible thing: to love it.[686]

Other people fail to "regret" the golden age, to feel both its wonderful order and its likely loss. They are cut off from virtue, because they refuse to remember it: regret is too painful. But he *may* still love that to which he is attached, in the face of its impossibility. He may enjoy and act to realize the pastoral image of "people multiplying, the fields being fertilized, the earth taking on new adornment," even as he regrets its loss.[687]

Arguably, nostalgic regret expresses a derivative form of virtue. Surely, much better would be to realize one's political vision of happiness within a just and happy state. But if we act in the opposition to our inclinations and hope, nostalgic regret articulates a higher virtue and greater freedom than mere goodness. We see the good, and will it, in the face of the dependence of that good on fate and on the virtue of other people. In ethics, regret articulates our potential for the highest political virtue. By following this impulse, and building the ideal, we freely fulfill a duty that we acutely know will increase our dependence on other people. Dependent on mere men, we will always be betrayed. We feel a freedom from the fallen world, by knowingly

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[686] Ibid., 859; my italics.
[687] Ibid., 859.

affirming it, rather than anticipating a better world to come, as the Vicar does. Indeed, we are free from even our hopes – we affirm beauty that we know to be "nothing."

Conclusion

In the end, Rousseau demands that we be more, rather than less, nostalgic. We must overcome our nostalgia for a world that supports our inclination by following this nostalgia to its radical conclusion: the flux and corruption of all worlds and affections. To act virtuously is to affirm our agency despite our loss. On the other hand, loss reveals our freedom beyond following even the charms of past virtue. We draw from our pleasurable memory of action within a past, *convenable* order in order to forge another moral order, on new terms. Nostalgia articulates both our dependence on fate and other people, and our free will.

Admittedly, other experiences return us to the voice of conscience, such as the retreat from people and objects that inspire *amour propre*, looking to God, sublime nature, and the virtuous examples of other people. But memory is unique insofar as we must actively "arrange" our recollections and discern their goodness (which is more obvious in the structure of nature). Rousseau writes, "I am far from believing that we have no means to revive the interior sentiment in us…one must move the soul by agreeable memories which only relate to it."[688] The voice of memory also cannot be fully repressed, because it is singularly our own. It calls us to answer for our own crimes and respond to our own past virtue. This is true in the case of remorse, in particular, because both the punishment and hope of our anguish is directed entirely at us. Admittedly, Rousseau and the Vicar also advise us to look to external examples, and "stick to

[688] *Lettres morales*, 4, 1115.

doing things that you love seeing done for others."[689] As Rousseau argues in *Lettre d'Alembert*, however, such "spectacles" – whether in the theater or in the world – also invite detachment, because the viewer may enjoy virtue without being called to his action.[690] Instead, these examples are powerful insofar as they speak to our own often half-remembered memories of virtue. St. Preux and Émile require the models of other people to recapture their memory of virtue and to sustain this virtue under adverse circumstances. They both see in other people examples of virtue that connect them with examples of virtue in themselves. And they respond to the particular, rather than abstract, care of these people for themselves.

Rousseau scholars debate whether Rousseau is (a) a revolutionary demanding change; (b) a pessimist who doubts we may realize virtue and justice in this world; or (c) an esoteric writer who targets a few sensitive souls who may be moved to virtue. If nostalgia reveals our freedom to act virtuously and achieve happiness, we must read Rousseau differently: his works are nostalgic *because* they open us to our capacity for virtue and for community, rather than *despite* the impossibility of realizing these ideals. He seeks to recall the moral freedom that the adult remembers and systematically avoids.

[689] Ibid., 1111.
[690] *D'Alembert*, 5, 23-24. See, also, *Discours sur l'origine*, 3, 115.

Conclusion: Towards a Politics of Nostalgia

In this dissertation, I lay the groundwork for understanding a Rousseauian politics of nostalgia by reconstructing his philosophy of individual nostalgic memory. This philosophy of nostalgic memory highlights the rational and temporal nature of his ideal of political community, and the possible political effects of his nostalgia rhetoric.

I have argued that Rousseau draws from a Condillacian philosophy of memory to present human beings as constitutively nostalgic creatures. As we saw in Chapters Two and Three, in Rousseau's treatment of the "child" and "youth," our past activity ties us to people, communities, and nations that are – like ourselves – subject to constant change. We are nostalgic, because we understand ourselves through "chains" of past ideas, imaginative associations and sentiments; the psychological and material conditions of those past ideas, associations, and sentiments were laws, languages, and the sentiments of other people; and these conditions are subject to change and decay. As we saw in Chapter Six, moreover, modern conditions of social and political corruption frustrate our "adult" capacity to withdraw our judgement and sentiment, and transcend our past errors and fantasies in a moment. Rousseau's image of the human in *Rêveries* and *Émile* is thus someone perpetually "out-of-joint." We are caught between imprecise childish ideas and signs, adolescent fantasies, distracted adulthood, and wisdom of old age that comes too late to guide us.

At the same time, Rousseau implies that, *through* nostalgia, we can rework our past memories and pleasures. As his Condillacian model suggests, the same "chains" that hold us to our past ideas, fantasies and emotions are guides by which to re-examine and analyze these

ideas, fantasies, and emotions. As we saw in Chapter Three, Rousseau invites readers of *Confessions* and *Rêveries* to follow his pleasure in his early fantasies, ideas, and analogies, and his implicit analysis of their truth. In Chapter Four, I argued that this "nostalgic analysis" reveals the existential truth of our internal plurality and our necessary co-action with others. In Chapter Five, I argued that this analysis also highlights an image of Jean-Jacques's happiness – and intimate happiness, more generally – as the experience of diverse, but consonant, overlapping perspectives of free people within a larger vision of the metaphysical order. Finally, in Chapter Six, I argued that, in "Profession de foi," "Lettres morales," *Julie*, and the last book of *Émile*, Rousseau implies that we may draw on the similar (often garbled) memory of moral goodness. We may thus all perceive our conscience, and to act from this memory of "voluptuous" sentiment. While Rousseau tells a story of individual dislocation, he suggests we may discern new truth, and moments of freedom, by following tenaciously our nostalgic memories.

In sum, Rousseau would agree with what I have called "psychological" and "structuralist" interpretations that accuse him and his philosophy of pervasive nostalgia. But he understands himself and others as constitutively nostalgic according to a well-developed philosophy of memory. Contrary to both these interpretations and to those of "rational reconstructionists," moreover, Rousseauian nostalgia is active rather than passive. We form memories of sensations that we once evaluated and compared. We follow our pleasure and memory to evaluate, compare, and analyze our past ideas anew, and to find a model and motivation for action. Jean-Jacques's longing for happiness in social relations and for mutual freedom also challenges the dominant view that he is nostalgic for presence, fusion, transparency, or stoic self-sufficiency.

The political implications of this philosophy of nostalgia memory for understanding Rousseau's texts are twofold. First, the internal plurality of the self, and the external plurality between different perspectives of people in ideal intimate community, demands that we attend to the mediated and temporal nature of his ideal of political deliberation and happiness. In particular, his treatment of community as the condition of our activity invites us to re-examine the linguistic communities for which he longs. Second, Rousseau's close connections between memory, images, analysis, and language reframes the corruption of modern language as a corruption of our capacity to remember and judge. In this model, Rousseau's nostalgic rhetoric is a means to reclaim nostalgia and judgement in non-ideal conditions.

Nostalgia of the Citizen: Imitation, Fanaticism and the Political Ideal

Scholars fear that Rousseau's political theory lends itself to civic or ethno-cultural fanaticism, because ideal Rousseauian languages engage people's passive reactions to the speech and customs of others. In particular, languages unite a people by engaging people's passions, on the basis of which they unthinkingly identify with fellow speakers, and exclude foreign-speakers as almost inhuman.[691] Other critics focus on Rousseau's concept of general will formation, a process that depends on a people's common language and mores. In this interpretation, citizens discern the general will only insofar as they vote passively, in solitude, for laws that they are conditioned to support.[692] Our analysis of individual nostalgic memory, however, implies that

[691] See, most recently, Bryan Garsten, *Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 2006); Zev Trachtenberg, "Civic Fanaticism and the Dynamics of Pity," in *Rousseau and l'Infâme: Religion, Toleration, and Fanaticism in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Ourida Mostefai and John T. Scott (London: Rodopi, 2009).

[692] Lester G. Crocker, *Rousseau's "Social Contract": An Interpretive Essay* (Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1968); Daniel E. Cullen, *Freedom in Rousseau's Political Philosophy* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993).

Rousseau treats analogies, communities, and institutions – in which we presently live and for which we long – as the condition of activity, rather than its limit. And he longs for social happiness premised on difference and freedom.

Let us begin with his ideal of language. In Rousseau's ideal, adult citizens remain like the children of *Émile* in one important respect: they treat analogies – which connect passions to ideas and to other sensations – as background conditions for their thought and evaluation. In Chapter Three, I argued that, in *Essai sur l'origine*, Rousseau follows Condillac's *Essai* to the extent that he ultimately champions languages that are both passionate and imaginative, on the one hand, and promote precise analogies, on the other. Undoubtedly, he sometimes longs for immediate communication, and advocates preserving the xenophobic socio-political cultures of small, modern states.[693] But these political cultures are derivations from his ideal. Local languages are fundamentally the premise of individual childish and adult thought and evaluation, rather than its limit. Ideal languages and customs may well promote exclusionary policies, and even declarations of war, but will not promote unthinking unity and mass violence.

In fact, for Rousseau, people risk both fanaticism and atheism by adopting obscure words and ideas, because these words and ideas disconnect them from the conditions of their own activity. As Rousseau writes, in his discussion of omitting catechism from Sophie's education, "the faith that we give obscure ideas is the first source of fanaticism, and that which we give for

[693] Most notably, Rousseau presents his recommendation to Poland to foster an arguably fanatical nationalism as an answer to the country's uniquely weak conditions for maintaining the political integrity of the *polis*: its undisciplined military, it economic dependence on its neighbours, and its great amount of unpopulated land, which is impossible to defend. He writes, "the only means of giving the stability that escapes it…is to establish the Republic so much in the hearts of the Poles, that it subsists despite all the efforts of its oppressors." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 3 (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 959. As Arash Abizadeh writes, "the greater the territorial insecurity, the greater the consequent violence of the exclusionary sentiments that must be fostered." Abizadeh, "Banishing the Particular," 574-76.

absurd things leads to madness or to incredulity."[694] As we have seen, madness is a form of self-exile from a world in which we may act. Fanatic violence is merely to demand with violence that this "mysterious" and "absurd' world become reality. As Voltaire puts it, "he who takes dreams for realities, and his imaginings for prophesies is an enthusiast; he who supports his madness by murder is a fanatic." [695] Some scholars cite Rousseau's praise of the "language of gesture" of ancient prophets as further evidence for his ideal of an immediate, passionate language.[696] Bryan Garsten points to these examples to bring out the threat of fanaticism, in particular.[697] But Rousseau's argument against fanaticism follows the position of Warburton that prophetic symbolic action was non-fanatic, because it was "idiomatic and familiar" to those who witnessed it. As Kelly writes, "the ancient examples cited by Rousseau have a symbolic character."[698] Instead, as Warburton writes, "the fanaticism of an action consists in a fondness for unusual actions and foreign modes of speech."[699] For Rousseau, fanaticism is a form of alienation from the language whereby we may both think and feel, act and react.

Alternatively, the faith in the reality and authority of "absurd things" leads adults – as it leads children – to vanity and incredulity. Rousseau thus argues, in *Contrat social*, that Peter the Great's attempt to give Russians just laws was premature, and rendered them false "Germans"

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[694] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 721.
[695] *Dictionnaire philosophique portatif*, ed. Gabriel Grasset (Geneva, 1764), s.v. "fanaticism." On the close relationship between fanaticism, madness, enthusiasm, and melancholy in Rousseau and in the work of his contemporaries, see Le Menthéour, *Manufacture*, 105-25.
[696] Scott, "Melodious Language," 825; Derrida, *Grammatology*, 233.
[697] Garsten, *Saving Persuasion*, 59. See, also, Christopher Kelly, "'To Persuade Without Convincing': The Language of Rousseau's Legislator," *American Political Science Review* 21, no. 2 (1987): 330-32.
[698] Moreover, as Kelly puts it, "these examples inspire an active indignation against apparent injustice, rather than the passive acceptance of injustice that would result from force." I part ways with Kelly's account insofar as I argue that the "visual persuasion" of these gestures is mediated by other examples and symbols, and must be interpreted. In Rousseau's examples, the ancients used gestural symbols "often" or "not rarely," and they derived their meaning partly from their repetition and variation. "Persuade," 333, 31; Rousseau, *Origine des langues*, 5, 377.
[699] William Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1833 (1738-41)), Section 4, 35; *Hiéroglyphes*, 1, 59.

and "English." Using the same image, which we saw in Chapter Two, of the precocious child from *Émile*, a text which was published a few months earlier, he writes, "[i]t is thus that a French Preceptor forms his student to shine a moment in childhood, and then never to amount to anything."[700] For Rousseau, we may infer, Russians have become culturally vain and politically weak, because they cannot engage and extend their own guiding ideas. Like all peoples, they "submitted" to a legislator's laws. But a legislator may "persuade without convincing"[701] only through analogies by which a people may connect their experience to his ideas, and apply these ideas in new contexts. As Rousseau puts it, a common person "finds it difficult to interest himself in an image of virtue…in which he recognizes neither his passions nor his moors."[702] And Russian analogies were insufficiently developed to allow this recognition. As a result, their own laws remain foreign and meaningless – lures for *amour propre*. Ideal languages are background conditions of activity, rather than forms of immediate communication by which a legislator could shape a passive multitude into an active people.

Undoubtedly, Rousseau maintains that *more* directly imitation-inducing pictorial and musical speech is necessary at certain moments in the life of a people. While the success of the legislator depends on the analogies of a people being sufficiently developed, he first inspires his people to virtue by offering them his own character – which animates his "miraculous acts" – as an image for them to imitate: "the legislator's great soul is the *true* miracle that should prove his mission."[703] As Kelly highlights, Rousseau describes this type of "emulative" authority elsewhere as that of the artist who "offers us the whole at once," and "makes himself the judge,"

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[700] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du Contrat social*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 3 (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 386.
[701] Ibid., 383.
[702] *De l'imitation théatricale*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 5 (Paris: Pléiade, 1995), 1207.
[703] *Contrat social*, 3, 385.

rather than teach the slow analysis of the philosopher.[704] In order to form a people, the legislator must charm his people, and invite the indiscriminate connections of the imagination. Scott notes that Rousseau offers a similar description of passionate, thoughtless imitation in his recommendation that Poland revive the practice of ancient "festivals [that] recall people to the history of their ancestors, their misfortunes, their virtues, interest their hearts, and inflame them to vivid *emulation*, and attach them strongly to that fatherland with which they were kept *ceaselessly* occupied."[705] These images of virtue demand the people's constant attention and immediate emulation, rather than their response and analysis.

For Rousseau, however, immediate imitation and constant spectacle are necessary only at particular moments in a people's life: at a people's founding and in their reform under unfavourable conditions (in the case of Poland). For him, the power of the legislator's founding example survives his death only in myth and memorial. He writes, in *L'Origine de la mélodie*, of the "celestial genius," a prefiguration of the legislator in *Contrat social*, "hardly had the first sparks of [his] genius set hearts ablaze than assembled peoples saw themselves singing in a sublime tone of…the heroes *whose loss they deplored*, and of the virtues that their nascent vices made necessary."[706] Even early "musical" language responds to loss and corruption, rather than to the immediate imitation of perfect virtue. And each member of a people must apply the image of virtue differently and potentially erroneously. He writes, of another iteration of the man who inspires through "inaccessible virtues," "this character…is not a protection against…a good man deluding himself, led by the ardour of a zealous saint that he took for inspiration."[707] For a

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[704] *Imitation*, 5, 1199, 204; Kelly, "Persuade," 323-24.
[705] Rousseau, *Considérations*, 3, 958; Scott, "Melodious Language," 826.
[706] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *L'Origine de la mélodie*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 5 (Paris: Pléiade, 1995), 334; my italics.
[707] *Lettres écrites de la montagne*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 3 (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 728.

people more culturally developed and politically protected than Poland, this application draws from literary analogies. As he continues his description of ancient festivals, "it is the poetry of Homer…the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, represented often in front of the people" that inspired the Greeks to "continual emulation."[708] While the Poles require more simple myths, and direct emulation, more well-situated people, politically, emulate models of virtue in the context of precise analogies. They are virtuous because they apply in new contexts nostalgic cultural myths.

Rousseau does not articulate the psychological mechanism by which individuals internalize and re-apply nostalgic images and histories. Our reconstruction of Rousseau's philosophy of individual nostalgic memory suggests that moral identification is mediated by our "voluptuous" memories of past virtue. As we saw in Chapter Six, for Rousseau, examples of the moral virtue of others recall us to our memories of the sentiment of conscience, which directly inspire us to act virtuously in a new context. Conceivably, examples of civic virtue – whether semi-mythic or intimate – would similarly remind us of our own past civic pleasure, and inspire us to virtuous action.

In *Lettre à d'Alembert*, Rousseau describes almost precisely this mechanism when he argues that "the sweet impression made during youth" on the Genevan expatriates – the "memory of their first exercises" – "must live and be reinforced at an advanced age." Like the "secret voice"[709] of conscience, "a secret voice" with "invincible charm" must "incessantly cry out to them from the depth of their souls: Ah! Where are the games and festivals of my youth?...Where are the peace, the equity, the innocence? Let us go and seek out all that again."[710]

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[708] *Considérations*, 3, 958.
[709] *Discours sur l'origine*, 3, 116; *Julie*, 2, 356.
[710] *D'Alembert*, 5, 121.

In this example, the idealizing myth of Geneva is directed at the reader, rather than the citizen. It inspires the imagined expatriate to act virtuously – and return – by recalling the pleasure and model of youthful virtue. For Julie and expatriate alike, memory and judgement mediate imitation.

Indeed, the experience of Rousseau's imagined ideal Genevan festivals is itself based on intergenerational memory and identification. As Rousseau imagines idealized "Balls" in which young people would court and dance in festivals shared by the entire community,

> Old people…having already given Citizens to their homeland, would now see their grandchildren prepare themselves to become citizens…all the young couples [would] come…and make a deep bow [to the box in which the old people sit]...I do not doubt that this pleasurable meeting of the two stages of human life will give this gathering a certain touching aspect and that sometimes in this box tears will be seen being shed, tears of *joy* and *memory*.[711]

In this image of ideal identification, the old identify with the young through their own memories of youthful pleasure and civic virtue, while the young feel their youth to the extent that they imagine the perspective of elder. In turn, this "touching aspect" will "perhaps elicit [new] tears from a sensitive spectator" of the meeting of generations.[712] In Nancy's "structuralist" interpretation, Rousseau would present here another image of nostalgic fusion. But Rousseau imagines a "transmission" of activity – "virtues," "liberty," "peace" – between people,[713] rather than, as Nancy puts it, of a common, national essence.[714] Indeed, Rousseau's nostalgic image is at once of joy and death. As he recounts an analogous ancient festival, the elders would sing "we

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[711] Ibid., 118; my italics.
[712] Ibid., 118.
[713] Ibid., 125.
[714] Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Inoperative Community," in *The Inoperative Community*, ed. Peter Connor (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 3, 9.

were once young, valiant, and hardy," while the youths would respond to both their parents and elders with the image of both the elder's continuation and death: "and we will soon be so, we who will surpass you all."[715] For Rousseau, the festival is nostalgic even in its ideal form. Participants feel their individual temporal dislocation even as they – via their own memory and anticipation – identify with the past and future virtue of others. Individual nostalgic memory is at once the condition of interpolation into shared memory and history, and the reminder of individual historicity and death.

We may now trace more precisely the analogy between the ideal intimate happiness of Les Charmettes and the ideal public contentment of Geneva. At Les Charmettes, Jean-Jacques, Madame de Warens, their maid, and neighbouring peasants enjoy their common happiness by identifying with the overlapping perspectives of different individual positions. In Geneva, by contrast, the revelers enjoy their civic contentment by also identifying with the overlapping perspective of different generations, because (a) they share a common identification with a community existing through time, and (b) their past and present activity – as children, adults, and elders – connects them to that community in different ways (especially with regard to their relation to death). In the end, civic contentment is intimate happiness against the backdrop of a more extensive sets of identifications, and across time. Members of the ideal political community experience both the social pleasure of the present community, and the internal plurality and nostalgia that Jean-Jacques feels only in retrospect.

Admittedly, the surveillance of each member of the community by others seems to undermine the spontaneity of intimate, pastoral happiness. But Rousseau retains spontaneity by

[715] Rousseau, *D'Alembert*, 5, 124.

distributing as widely as possible positions of judgement. While the spectator at the theatre may sit in safe judgement of a play, the Genevan revelers, in Rousseau's image, are each actors and audience at the same time.[716] They are both exposed to the gaze and judgement of others, and help to define the virtues and moors of the community by their actions and judgement. They are free, because they have escaped the fantasy of one person, or a class of persons, embodying the position of the one who guarantees stable meaning – what Lacan calls the position of the "Other."[717] And they are the more united for this de-centering of cultural authority. As Rousseau puts it, "each sees and loves himself in the others so that all will be better united."[718] Some scholars posit an analogy between a perfect transparency and self-presence, for which Rousseau supposedly longs in private life, and Rousseau's apparent ideal of political community as "immediate and univocal communication" between members.[719] In both intimate and political life, however, Rousseau longs for shared pleasure and mutual identification between people acting from different positions and interests. Rather than only looking to the dominant moral example of the Legislator, each person acts as an exemplar to all the others.

In public happiness, as in intimate happiness, shared pleasure draws us to increase our concept of the (in this case, political) whole. This occurs, to some extent, at the Balls. There, the parents enjoy the "grace and address" of their children in a public setting. They allow "the inclinations of the children [to choose a husband or wife to]…be somewhat freer…and less

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[716] Ibid., 115.

[717] See, Jacques Lacan, *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955: the Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (London: Norton, 1991), Chapter 19; "The Direction of Treatment and the Principles of its Power," in *Écrits: A Selection* (New York: Norton, 1977), 87-97; Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). In other words, no one occupies the position of Monsieur de Wolmar, the stereotypical "Freudian analyst," who claims to perceive the inner lives of everyone around him, and invites St. Preux and Julie to imitate Monsieur de Wolmar's own model of inner virtue.

[718] Rousseau, *D'Alembert*, 5, 115.

[719] See, esp., Scott, "Melodious Language," 822-27; Derrida, *Grammatology*, 142, 306; Starobinski, *Transparency and Obstruction*.

attention would be paid to those of station and fortune," because they enjoy and see their courtship. And these moments of vicarious youth would "increase good marriages, less circumscribed by rank" and "reconcile divided families." Identification with the ideas and sentiment of others slowly softens prejudice. [720] It shows, and creates the conditions for, the *convenable* political whole.

Here the intimate happiness of *Confessions* and *Émile* meets the "silent" deliberation of the *Contrat social*. Critics of Rousseau's seemingly "passive" discernment of the general will cite his celebration of Spartan unanimity of will, and complete deference to the laws (a unanimity and a deference that mirror those qualities of the reformed modern Poles). As Kelly notes, however, Rousseau ultimately champions a *polis* in partial decline from the formal ideal of unanimity and similarity, one that needs the people to critique its laws from the point of view of moral virtue: the *polis* of ancient Rome.[721] While "a Spartan loved the fatherland so tenderly that he even would have sacrificed freedom itself to save it…the Romans never imagined that the fatherland could outlive freedom or even glory."[722] They "stood out over all the peoples…for…[the government's] scrupulous attention to respecting the inviolable rights of all members of the state."[723] They were thus a people of vigorous debate. They looked to their sentiment and *bons sens* to hold the government to account.

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[720] As Rousseau writes, of a similar effect caused by the reader's accumulative exposure to the inner lives in his young heroes, through their letters, in *Julie*, "sentiment is communicated to the heart by degrees, and it alone ultimately compensates for" his character's lack of grace, eloquence, or reason. Rousseau, *Julie*, 2, 18.
[721] *Discours sur l'origine*, 3, 113; Christopher Kelly, *Rousseau as Author: Consecrating One's Life to the Truth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 123-26.
[722] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Fragments politiques*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 3 (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 543.
[723] *Discours sur économie politique*, in *Œuvre complètes*, Vol. 3 (Paris: Pléiade, 1964), 257. Similarly, in the second *Discours* he calls Romans "the model of free peoples." *Discours sur l'origine*, 3, 113.

As Kelly remarks, Rousseau partly objects to Helvétius's materialist politics in light of the Roman ideal of citizens critiquing the law in order to preserve individual rights. In response to Helvetius's claim, in *De l'esprit* that "everything becomes legitimate and even virtuous for public welfare," because it reflects the aggregate good, Rousseau responds that "public welfare is nothing unless all the particulars are safe." In response to the comment that "we may only preserve virtue…by habitually presenting public utility to the mind, and by having a profound understanding of the true interests of the public, and…of morality and politics," Rousseau writes, "to refute: in this account, there is only righteousness in philosophers."[724] For Rousseau, the corollary of a materialist psychology of thought as transformed, passive sensation is the all-knowing philosopher or legislator who calculates and promotes the aggregate pleasure. The imagined philosopher-legislator alone is active; the people react passively. By contrast, Rousseau implies that the ideal *polis* is like that of Rome: the citizen actively discerns the public good in light of his understanding of the overlapping rights of individuals. He holds the government to a moral and political ideal.

The festivals and semi-public "circles" or men's clubs of Rousseau's idealized Geneva follow this Roman model.[725] The sentiment of *patrie* developed in festivals and at home, motivated debates in the circles about virtue and justice. As Rousseau writes, "each, feeling himself attacked by all the forces of his adversary, is obliged to use all his own to defend himself; it is thus that the mind gains precision [*justesse*] and vigour."[726] In Rousseau's ideals of intimate and civic happiness, each member of the community enjoys his own activity in the activity of others. In the state, the citizens take a further step. They follow their sentiment of

[724] *Notes sur "l'esprit"*, 4, 1126; Kelly, *Author*, 124.
[725] Abizadeh, "Banishing the Particular," 572, 81n56.
[726] Rousseau, *D'Alembert*, 5, 96.

public good to defend the individual rights against government corruption. The "silent" act of voting is only an expression of this larger sociopolitical activity and pleasure.

Ultimately, Rousseau's ideal citizens are themselves nostalgic. They mourn lost Legislators and heroes whose models of virtue they interpret in new ways. They develop political sentiment by identifying across generations, and recalling their own lost childhood activity. And they discern the general will by debating the content and implications of their inner images of justice and virtue. Just as Jean-Jacques refines his childhood images and passions through the "precision and sequence [*justesse et suite*]" of analysis, (male) citizens vigorously debate their guiding images and sentiments with increasing "precision [*justesse*]." For Derrida, the festivals of Geneva are another attempt at domesticating the "change and absolute risk" that representation and differance occasions.[727] As we have seen, other commentators accuse Rousseau of expelling meaningful individual activity and cultural difference. But Rousseau's ideal political institutions engage difference rather than repressing it.[728] Pleasure and analogy draw members of the *polis* to identify with foreign positions, and slowly to perceive a larger political whole. The ideal *patrie* is like that of Rome: citizens slow the eventual death of the *polis* by applying anew, in their common life, the legislator's images of moral and political virtue.

To understand the nostalgic structure of the full arc of the nation's life falls outside the scope of this dissertation. Scholars have pointed to a larger tension between the general will as a reflection of the present will of people, and the necessarily temporal effects of its laws. For

[727] Derrida, *Grammatology*, 306-07.
[728] Rousseau's aim is to undermine divisions of class, because this sort of difference is normalizing and corrosive. For Rousseau, more generally, the vain person – prey to *amour propre* – projects his or her paranoid standards onto the others. See, *Confessions*, 1, 1148.

instance, citizens must respect the will of previous generations, and previous iterations of themselves, for laws to be respected. And each new law must have lasting effects over time in order to apply to particular effects. These scholars disagree about whether these and other tensions are symptomatic of the deconstruction of Rousseau's ideal, or may be loosened by his accompanying concept of the complex rhetoric of its magistrates and Legislator.[729] Focusing on individual memory, this dissertation traces its implications for individual political life, and does not treat the *polis* as an entity in its own right, with its own temporality. Such a project would require close readings of the two versions of *Contrat social*. I suggest that we may find resources for addressing the complex temporality of the general will in the philosophy of individual memory as it applies to citizens. This account also helps understand the potential effects of his nostalgic political rhetoric in non-ideal conditions.

The Political Rhetoric of the Artist in the Non-Ideal State

"Pessimistic" reconstructionist accounts highlight that Rousseau doubts that the large states of his 18th-century Europe may be culturally and politically redeemed.[730] The ideal of unanimous agreement on the general will, and just laws that shape completely the moral life of citizens is almost impossible to achieve. But if (a) Rousseau's *preferred* ideal is the already deteriorating, highly social and deliberative nation (i.e. in the image of Rome rather than Sparta), and (b) even corrupt citizens retain the nostalgic memory of social and moral pleasure, then he implies that moral and political reform is more plausible than he sometimes suggests. In Chapters Three, Five, and Six, I argued that people compare ideas, and discern moral sentiment,

[729] For representative views, see, de Man, *Allegories of Reading*; Neil Saccamano, "Rhetoric, Consensus, and Law in Rousseau's *Contrat social*," *MLN* 107, no. 4 (1992).
[730] For a summary of the almost insurmountable challenges that, for Rousseau, face modern politics, see esp., Melzer, *Natural Goodness*, 265-81.

by following the "voluptuous" pleasure of their nostalgic memory. I further claimed that Rousseau's nostalgic rhetoric attempts to revive this capacity for activity. His texts are nostalgic because they are political acts, rather than because they despair of true politics.

Most subtly, Rousseau invites his readers to follows his pleasure and engage in nostalgic analysis. In the middle chapters of this dissertation, I argued that *Confessions* and *Rêveries* are implicit forms of analysis. Rousseau invites his readers to follow and complete his repeated comparison and re-evaluation of his early images, analogies, and actions. In his second preface to *Confessions*, Rousseau famously prays for an adequate audience to judge him: "Eternal Being, assemble around me the countless host of my fellows: let them listen to my confessions, let them shudder at my unworthiness, let them blush at my woes."[731] I have argued that he teaches them to arrive at this judgement by nostalgic analysis. By identifying with his youthful pleasures, in addition to his "woes," Rousseau leads them to compare and re-evaluate Jean-Jacques's fantasies and actions. Ultimately he acts as a Condillacian "genius" figure. He draws on the widespread analogies of d'Urfé's *L'Astrée* in order to engage the reader's faculty of reason and judgement.

A detailed reading of the nostalgic method and rhetoric of Rousseau's other texts is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Rousseau's early note on his ideal, Condillacian method (cited in Chapter Four) suggests that he presents the second *Discours*, in particular, in similar terms.

> I would start by examining the little that we know of the human spirit taken in itself and considered for the individual…but soon abandoning this shadowy labyrinth, I would hurry myself to examine man by his relations. It is from this point that I would draw a crowd of radiant truths that would soon dispel the incertitude of my first argument, which receives new daylight by comparison.[732]

[731] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 1, 5.
[732] *Idée de la méthode*, 2, 1244-45.

As Strauss and Cassirer argue, the state of nature is precisely "what little we know of the human spirit in itself," a purely formal image of possible human life.[733] Rather than a static ideal, however, it is only the first moment in a "chain" of comparisons – a cascade of sharp binaries between nature and culture, sensation and reason, and his multiple "states" of nature – that address a particular question about the nature of social inequality. What remains in the wake of this analysis is another image of shared and circulating pleasure, which Rousseau again symbolizes as a feast. This moment – which depicts the most "happy and durable period"[734]– is the most nostalgic in the text. And it distills the nature of the *social* ideal and its corruption. In the temporal structure of Rousseau's narrative, joyous *amour de soi* turns into alienating *amour propre* almost before we perceive it. The second, critical half of the *Discours* merely develops the resulting "crowd of radiant truths" about the roots of social inequality in *amour propre*. Once again, Rousseau's nostalgia invites a form of analytical thinking. By following the nostalgia of the second *Discours* through its comparisons, we discern the strongest "link" between our social passions and their perversion.

To extend this approach to Rousseau's method and rhetoric would be to re-examine Rousseau's frequent bracketing of his nostalgic "origin" points in different texts in light of a larger analytical induction. In deconstructions of Rousseau's texts, he endlessly fails to maintain a pure "origin." He must constantly add new origin-points and other supplementary periods and concepts. But Rousseau's methodology suggests that he treats the origin as merely a first point of comparison by which to develop a particular "chain" of ideas. It will "receive new light" by the later comparisons. While these chains of ideas inevitably transcend the binary structures that

[733] See, Strauss, *Natural Right and History*; Cassirer, *Question of Rousseau*.
[734] Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine*, 3, 171.

Rousseau also deploys, his comments on *Émile* suggest that he is aware of their limitations. In Rousseau's texts, nostalgia draws the reader into nostalgic analysis rather than nostalgic repetition. He undermines the madness of attempting to return to a past – whether Sparta, Jean-Jacques's childhood and youthful happiness, St. Preux and Julie's passionate virtue and then affair – by a more persistent nostalgia. This "analytic" (rather than merely "consoling") nostalgia pursues in order to compare and re-evaluate our past experiences, fantasies, and ideas. For Rousseau, nostalgia may be an opening to critical personal and political examination, rather than a closing off from the world. We must engage nostalgia, rather than repress it.

Undoubtedly, such a Rousseauian nostalgia creates its own exclusions and omissions. In Chapter Five, I have undermined the interpretation of Jean-Jacques as nostalgic for "maternal" wholeness and social reification. But much more research is required to understand the more dynamic place of gender norms in Rousseauian longing. In particular, by focusing on Rousseau's explicit treatments of nostalgic memory, I have omitted a sustained discussion of Book Five of *Émile*, and his treatment of Émile's wife to-be, Sophie. In the second *Discours*, Rousseau also uses the slavery and rebellion of African slaves as a nostalgic image for the political slavery and freedom of Europeans.[735] While his texts neither collapse non-Europeans into his image of the primitive "natural man,"[736] nor ignore completely the chattel slavery of his

[735] Rousseau implicitly references 18th-century chattel slavery when he asks if "anyone has ever heard of a savage, living in liberty, imagining complaining about his life and killing himself." Similarly, he writes that, "the barbarous man does not bow his head for the yokes that civilized man wears without murmur. He prefers the stormiest liberty to tranquil subjection…When I see multitudes of utterly naked slaves scorn European pleasures and brave hunger, fire, sword and death, simply to preserve their independence, I sense that it is inappropriate for slaves to reason about liberty." In both cases the negative freedom (freedom *from* literal chains) of 18th-century Africans who chose pain or death over chattel slavery and suicide, serves as a metaphor for the positive political freedom (or lack thereof) of Europeans. Ibid., 152, 81-82. On Rousseau's similarly problematic use of ancient slavery images in the context of 18th-century chattel slavery, see Susan Buck-Morss, "Hegel and Haiti," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 4 (2000).
[736] On Rousseau's multiple states of nature, and his complex use of non-European examples, see Sankar Mathus, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 31-46.

time,[737] such a nostalgic analysis may be equally insidious because it still distances some people from freedom and justice, even as its seems to engage and admire them. Analogy separates as much as it connects. Much depends on what questions we look to Rousseau to help us address. Nostalgic analysis is powerful precisely because it may always be deployed again, in new terms, to make new comparisons. Old analogies may be re-contextualized to distill new truth.

For Rousseau, however, analysis alone is insufficient. It must lead back to, and develop from, our sentiment in order to avoid the *amour propre* and alienation implicit in modern language and philosophy. As we saw in Chapter Three, Rousseau argues that modern discourse has become polarized into two extremes: the vague, charming associations of modern philosophy and modern sermons, on the one hand, and the overly habitual analysis of modern language, on the other. Both extremes divorce people from their *bons sens*, which relies on forming passionate memories and refining these sentiments and ideas through further experience. In this modern context, abstract, materialist philosophy, in particular, is worse than fanaticism, because its "unintelligible" but skeptical ideas dispel even a fanatical commitment to a "world" of ideas and passions. While materialism does not inflame blind and cruel violence, it undermines the conditions for recovering evaluation and judgement. It particularly obscures the moral sentiments of regret and remorse that the Vicar feels so strongly. Materialists, as he puts it, "remove from the afflicted the last consolation of their misery, from the powerful and the rich the only break on their passions; [and] they tear from the depths of one's heart the *remorse* for

[737] For the view that Rousseau ignores chattel slavery, see Buck-Morss, "Hegel and Haiti."; Louis Sala-Molins, *Dark Side of the Light: Slavery and the French Enlightenment*, trans. John Conteh-Morgan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 49.

crime, the hope for virtue."[738] They dispel the charm of the memory of virtue, and the hope to find it again.

Rousseau thus redirects the "enthusiasm" and "passion" that he and others connected to fanaticism to recesses of individual memory. In the first two books of *Émile*, he invites the reader to recall nostalgically childhood sentiments of proto-judgement and suitability. In "Profession," *Julie*, "Lettres morales," and the fifth book of *Émile*, he invokes the reader's bittersweet memory of "voluptuous" remorse and regret. In *Confessions*, most systematically, he invites his readers to turn analysis and judgement back on themselves, and recover their memories of happiness, moral virtue, and remorse. As he continues his prayer, from the first preface (quoted above) "let each of them in his turn uncover his heart at the foot of Thy throne with the same sincerity; and then let a single one say to thee, if he dares: *I was better than that man*." This passage echoes his similar remark in his first preface that readers "enter inside themselves as [he has] done, and, from the foundation of their consciences, say to themselves, *I am better than that man*."[739]

As Trousson argues, we must not read this remark as mere bravado.[740] Many of Rousseau's biblically-literate readers would recognize his allusion to the parable of the stoning of the adulteress in Chapter Eight of John's Gospel. Indeed, we may develop the reference further. In the parable, Jesus responds to the question of the assembled punishers, when they should ask if they should follow the Hebraic law, and stone the women to death:

> Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped

[738] Rousseau, *Émile*, 4, 632; my italics.
[739] *Ébauches des 'Confessions'*, 1, 1155.
[740] Trousson, Introduction, 40.

> down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last.[741]

In John's Gospel, Jesus turns the question about punishment of adultery into a question about the potential guilt of all. In the silence of His writing, they hear His question, and their own consciences convict them. Jesus's act of tracing is suggestive: He asks listeners to trace sin within themselves, rather than to identify with, or excuse, the content of the adulteress's sin. In the prefaces to *Confessions*, Rousseau places himself in Christ's position. He asks the reader to ask if they are any better than he, engage in analysis of their own memories, and recover their own sentiment of remorse.

The full political implications of this nostalgic rhetoric would require studying the political contexts and reception histories of Rousseau's publications. Recent scholarship highlights Rousseau's attempts to cultivate *amour propre*, pity, anger, indignation, gratitude, pleasure and displeasure in his readers.[742] Some of these scholars also trace his goal of intervening, through his texts, in particular political debates.[743] If remorse orients pity, hope and pleasure, and regret precedes our indignation and anger, however, further research must trace the relationship between these passions. This thesis has developed nostalgia as an "arche" passion that structures regret, remorse, and memory. To understand fully Rousseau's attempts as salutary rhetoric would be to test this thesis in other, particularly political, contexts.

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[741] John 8: 6-9 (Authorized King James Version)
[742] Patrick Coleman, *Anger, Gratitude, and the Enlightenment Writer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Kelly, "Readers as They Are."; *Author*; Rowan Boyson, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment Idea of Pleasure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Christine Hammann, *Déplaire au public: le cas Rousseau* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2011); Karen Pagani, *Man or Citizen: Anger, Forgiveness, and Authenticity in Rousseau* (University Park, PN: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015).
[743] See, esp., Kelly, *Author*.

In his notes to the second *Discours*, Rousseau claims that his goal, in this case, is to cultivate nostalgic regret. After describing the speculative anthropology that is to follow, he addresses the species, and the reader, directly.

> There is, I feel, an age at which the individual man would want to stop: you will seek the age at which you would desire your Species had stopped. Discontented with your present state for reasons that foretell even greater discontents for your unhappy Posterity, perhaps you would want to be able to go backward in time. This sentiment must be the Eulogy of your first ancestors, the criticism of your contemporaries, and the dread of those who will have the unhappiness to live after you.[744]

Here, identifying with a lost way of living is not madness. Rather, to wish to return to an impossible state, related to a new discontent with the present, is itself a form of action: to feel nostalgic is to praise forbearers, critique contemporary politics, and to feel dread (*faire l'effroi*) for future members of one's species. The nostalgic analysis of the second *Discours*, and the sentiment of the happy age "at which you would desire your species to stop," culminates in nostalgic regret and political criticism.

Ultimately, Rousseau's nostalgic texts are all political. Shklar argues that Rousseau attempts to cultivate moral and political judgement, rather than revolution. I argue that nostalgic memory is the means to this cultivation. I also claim that Rousseau provides the means for more plausible change than such "pessimistic" interpretations allow. In Chapters One and Two, I developed the activity implicit in childhood and youthful memory-formation; in Chapters Three to Five, I argued that nostalgic recollection revisits and re-evaluates these early fantasies, analogies and ideas; in Chapter Six, I claimed that even corrupted citizens retain "voluptuous" memories of virtue and justice, which may motivate and orient their present action. In the end,

[744] Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine*, 3, 135.

Rousseau invites readers to recall nostalgically their youthful sentiments of proto-judgement and suitability. He implicitly asks them to follow their longing, and retrieve from their present habits their analogous passions and judgements as adults.

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