ABSTRACT

In dealing with the youth's entry into the world, one focuses on the adolescent at his most dramatic moment, the transition from boyhood to manhood. He assumes his social being.

Polite society, 'the world', is considered the only fit milieu for the young nobleman. Traditionally, his vocation is the world, in which he must uphold the family name, a consideration which influences the choice of the youth's career - either the Army or the Church, the traditional professions of the nobility - in which he is entered solely to further the family's honour and glory, perhaps in spite of his own personal wishes. His career is designed to supply him with the wherewithal necessary to uphold the noble life-style expected of him as a member of an ancient noble house.

The parvenu has sufficient wealth to adopt the noble way of living, but he is generally presented as an outsider in polite society in which he figures as a boor. Nonetheless, the parvenu seeks above all else to be integrated into the privileged circle of polite society. The young peasant or bourgeois who wishes to rise in life sets ennoblement and acceptance within the noble circle as his goal. He frequently achieves his aim through the attraction he holds for women of greater rank and fortune than himself.
He is allowed to succeed through women, but only if he humbly accepts the noble's supposed superiority. Woman plays an important role in the youth's education for the world, whether he is of noble or bourgeois extraction. Her traditional vocation is to help man, for she herself is of but secondary importance. And it is very rare that she revolts against the accepted pattern.

For conformity is the keynote of harmony in 18th-century polite society. The youth is cast in a stereotyped mould as a young gentleman and he is expected to conform to traditional values and ideals. Similarly, his female counterpart and the young of humbler parentage are also conditioned to accept their roles within the social structure. Those characteristics which assimilate one to one's fellows in society must be developed; those which tend to the cult of the individual must be suppressed. It is from this insistence on the necessity of accepting polite society that arises the notion of the individual. This is the adolescent's revolt against society.
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INTRODUCTION

The novels of the 18th century are primarily concerned with upper-class society. All is judged in relation to the noble way of life, even when the novelist questions its value. In concentrating on the noble class, the novelist deals with a very small minority of France's population, a class which carried with it a prestige out of all proportion to its size. It is not known what the exact composition of the reading public was, but it is fairly safe to assume that it was to a large extent composed of people 'of quality' and that a novelist could not disregard the values currently respected by such readers.

The youth born into a noble family inherited all the privileges of his class; in return, he was to uphold his ancestry, to conform to the way of life expected of him as a member of the privileged upper classes. He owed it to his family, to his class, to choose a profession deemed suitable for a nobleman; either the Church or the Army, for commerce was held to be incompatible with the noble status.1

1. Generally, commerce - although the most lucrative profession for an impoverished gentleman - was disdained by the nobility. Many treatises were produced in the 18th century on this question. The traditional view was that to enter the field of commerce was to reject one's noble status. This attitude, although widespread, was not universal. The abbé Coyer, for example, in his Noblesse Militaire et Commercante (1756), argues that the nobleman may serve his country as usefully engaged in commerce as on the battlefield. For public opinion contd. overleaf
His whole way of life was to be modelled on the pattern evolved in polite society. The poorer nobility, forced to reside in the country since their finances did not permit them to indulge in the costly mode of life exacted in the capital, were regarded by both polite society and the novelist alike with some disdain. Hence most noble youths were eager to become part of the noble élite in polite Parisian circles. Life in this milieu necessitated lavish expenditure: the noble youth would be expected to participate in all the social pleasures - gaming, the theatre, the opera - to dress splendidly, to maintain an expensive mistress, for such was life as enacted in polite society. Since society was considered right in its arrogation of privileges and prestige to the sole aristocratic environment, the lowly-born youth was not presented as in opposition to it. He, too, accepted the view that the noble was superior in every respect to his inferiors in the social hierarchy, he accepted the values of polite society. The parvenu in the tradition of the picaro, like Gil Blas, presents little psychological interest: for him, there is no moral dilemma. He adapts to the moment, is never troubled by the methods he employs to gain his ends:

Footnote contd.from page 1
was undergoing a change in its attitude to the merchant classes during the latter half of the century. But habit dies hard: the abbé Coyer's claims are refuted by the chevalier d'Arcq in his reply to the abbé's work, in his Noblesse Militaire.
he accepts the existing structure of society. So does Marivaux's 'Paysan Parvenu', Jacob (his class consciousness never causes him to doubt the noble values.). Both Gil Bias and Jacob attain nobility as the culminating point of their careers. On one occasion Jacob resists the temptation to put interest before his personal integrity and thus proves himself, to a certain extent, to be worthy of his later ennoblement. Both Gil Bias and Jacob show themselves to be capable of disinterested action, and therefore fit to enter the noble circle, for, at this early stage of the century, the nobleman is still the epitome of all virtues.

In a closed society in which conformity is all important the individual is only of importance and of interest in the context of the whole. The child figures but little in society, and hence is not treated in the novel, the reflection of society. The individual becomes a suitable subject for novelistic study only when he ventures forth into society. Both in the actuality of 18th-century polite society and in the novel of the period, the individual is born only when he emerges from the chrysalis of his childhood. Adolescence is the time of his first encounter with society; the

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1. On the occasion of his rejection of the post offered him by M. de Fécour, since it would deprive a dying man of his sole source of income.
novelist explores the field of the youth's first contacts with others of his class in the rarefied atmosphere of polite society, of his coming to terms with his milieu, for there is no question of real opposition to it, even in La Nouvelle Héloïse. The child becomes the centre of novelistic interest only in Rousseau's Émile.

The young noble of sufficient means is destined to enter the 'world', the stage of polite society, the only fit milieu for the youth of high birth. Such is his destiny as a member of the privileged classes, as a unit of a noble family. Even if he is to become integrated into the body of the Church - which would seemingly imply withdrawal from rather than entry into the world - he will still play his role as a member of the aristocracy, in polite society.¹

Polite society is a public arena where all actions are on show: to enable all to live in seeming harmony within it, a special code has been evolved, to which all must outwardly conform. The débutant in society is anxious to be integrated into polite society, to conform to its life-style, which appeals, in its apparent variety and in its amusements, to youthful senses. To be accepted into its midst, the youth must learn to behave in the accepted fashion, to model him-

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¹. To remain on a provincial estate meant almost complete identification with the peasants.
self on the set type. He is to live within a rarefied atmosphere which demands a certain way of life. He must suppress any individual traits to assume the established character of the member of polite society: his social being assimilates him to the other members of society, all fashioned in the same mould. It is the mask he wears to make himself agreeable to others; it is designed to cloak his own individuality. He should appear to have no identity save that of member of the closed circuit of polite society. The youth's ideal, in the first half of the 18th century, is still the 'honnête homme', the desirable social unit at one with polite society, thoroughly steeped in its ways and at ease within its confines. The 'honnête homme', is the refinement and the perfection of the individual, the epitome of social virtues, the urbane man, the sum total of aristocratic qualities, the quintessence of sociability. A nobleman who rejected it became a boor. Hence the youth strives to assume his second personality which will ensure him integration into polite society.¹

¹. Our field of study is concerned mainly with the period from the early 1730s - the time of composition of Marivaux's Le Paysan Parvenu - to around 1776 - the date of publication of Nétil de la Bretonne's Le Paysan Perverti. The titles of the two novels, both on the subject of a young peasant's attempt to find fortune in the city, indicate the transformation of the novelist's attitude towards society in this period. In the earlier years of the century, polite society and its unit, the 'honnête homme', was the source of all good, the centre of social virtues, the refinement of human nature. The old ecclesiastical condemnation of

Contd Overleaf
The problem facing the youth in the early years of the century is not whether he should conform to his class by entering polite society and seeking to become an 'honnête homme', but rather how best he may achieve his aim, how he may acquire perfection in the social arts. His education, in the sense of its being a preparation for later life, only begins on his entry into the 'world'. It is through experience that he learns how to behave in this community. Commerce with others already possessed of knowledge of the social graces will engender the same consciousness within him. He may call upon the renowned gentleman of fashion, frequents older women with considerable experience of life in polite society. Such are the time-honoured means whereby the inexperienced youth may be equipped for life. His mentors are older members of the society in which he seeks integration and acceptance; they received their education for the world from similar mentors in their youth. The same type is continually engendered as the youth imitates his elders: it is the pattern followed by each new generation destined to enter the world.

The young girl of noble birth is subject to as many

Footnote contd. from page 5

the world had lost its application. But by the second half of the century, entry into the 'world' entailed corruption of the individual: refinement was now synonymous with corruption, not with the ideal of sociability. It is the perversion of the basic human nature, not its perfection. But this does not mean a return to ecclesiastical ways of thinking; the new attitude is a lay one, and often, as with Rousseau, a political one.
conventions as her male counterpart: she has her own closely
defined role to play within polite society. Despite her
importance in the life of 17th- and 18th-century salons, the
influence she wields through her charms, a woman is relatively
an under-privileged member of 18th-century polite society.
Her education has been neglected, she is forced into a
marriage arranged by her parents for reasons of wealth or
prestige, regardless of her own personal feelings, she is the
suffering victim of a double code of morals, one for men,
another for women. The young noblewoman is, however, generally
resigned to her fate: she is prepared to be dominated by
the male sex, for such is her traditional destiny.

But not every woman was willing to conform to the
established pattern of life expected of her in polite society;
and, as open revolt was inconceivable in 18th-century society,
she was forced into dissimulation. Many a woman accepted
the necessity of hypocrisy, with no attempt to change the
structure of a society which compelled her to mask her true
character. The woman who was bold enough to revolt against
the system, against the inequality which subjugated woman
to the whim of man — women like MilTwood or Merteuil — had
to dissemble her true identity, her strong individuality,
beneath the façade of the fashionable woman. Yet, although
her plight as an under-privileged member of society was quite
commonly recognised in the novel, the woman who presented
any but a resigned face was portrayed as a loathsome figure. The woman who sets herself up in opposition to society, as does Merteuil, and to the treatment meted out to her within it, is the embodiment of evil in the 18th-century novel. Individualism and revolt are no more tolerated in a young girl than in her male counterpart. Traditionally, a woman may influence a man through the effects of her charms; hence she wields a certain power if she consents to utilize the traditional feminine weapons against sexual inequality. Such is the procedure in polite society: woman influences man on behalf of another male—brother, lover, husband. To succeed thanks to the help of women was the traditional path taken by the youth—whatever his station in life—who wished to find fortune. The youth reluctant to accept the convention was unlikely to meet with success. The worldly advice given to the hero of Falconet's *Le Début* by an old friend, now the mistress of a man in power and anxious to help him in life, indicates the acceptability of this path to success:

"Ne te fâche pas si je te parle aussi franchement; mais je t'assure que je n'obtiendrai jamais de grâces, par son canal. Je sais bien que ce n'est plus la mode d'être glorieux en pareil cas. Je ne suis pas à la mode. Ne fâcher, me répondit-elle, et pour quel sujet? Tu ne veux pas parvenir par le moyen des femmes; je souhaite que tu réussisses sans elles; j'en doute cependant. Comment veux-tu qu'on devine le talent si le sujet n'est porté et mis en situation de le faire valoir? Vois messieurs tels et tels; l'un doit sa fortune à sa mère, l'autre à sa femme, celui-ci à sa soeur, celui-ci à sa cousine, et un autre à sa maîtresse."

1 *Le Début, (Part II).*
To take any step away from conventional behaviour is to court disaster. The young of both sexes must accept and adapt to every branch, every facet of fashionable life.

The sense of family was generally lost on the 18th-century upper classes: their life revolved around the stage of polite society, not the home. Since the child, as yet outside the confines of polite society, played no role within it, he was of little interest to the adult world. Generally, he was the product of a marriage of interest — not of a love-match. Until the age of puberty — when he first attracted the interest of his parents since it was the epoch of his social as well as his sexual 'coming into being' — he was grossly neglected by his parents, abandoned to the household staff and left to his own devices. Even on his entry into the 'world', it was rarely his father who shouldered the responsibility of introducing him to society. Familial tenderness was considered a bourgeois and not an aristocratic characteristic. The child — boy or girl — was of importance not as an individual but as an extension of the family, who must uphold and further the glory of the family name. Hence the family selected the youth's career for him, often at far too early an age for the child to grasp the duties and responsibilities attached to his future state. They arranged the marriage of son or daughter, to the greatest possible advantage to the family. The youth in general accepted his position within the family: he did not look
for familial affection, he relied on others to take him into the 'world', he was prepared to abide by the family decision in respect of his career. The relationship between father and son barely existed and therefore was not subject to the clashes of will between the two generations.

In the 18th-century novel, little animosity is evident between father and son as was to be the case in Romantic novels: the gulf between them is too wide in the 18th century for there to exist much contact, for good or bad. When opposition does arise between them, however, it is generally on the score of love. One might speak of a 'generation gap', conflict between old and young, in the field of the emotions. The family had the right to choose a suitable partner for their offspring: should the young man or woman decide to refuse the partner selected for them by their parents, should he or she choose to bestow their affections on one deemed unsuitable - from the social or financial point of view - on one unacceptable to the family, then the paternal wrath would descend on them. For marriage was not viewed as a love-match - both partners would lead separate lives after the ceremony - but an alliance between noble houses. The family would go to any length to prevent an unsuitable match, a 'mésalliance'. In L'Amour Innocent et Persécuté, 1 Desprez contracts a secret marriage with the lovely but im-

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1. In Aventures Choisies: the title indicates the attitude adopted by the anonymous author on the question of parental authority exercised to determine the youth's fate.
poverished Mlle de l'Épine. The outraged father has his son imprisoned and spreads the rumour that his son has abandoned his bride; the shock of such news causes the bride to fall downstairs, an accident which precipitates her death. Parental cruelty is again apparent in La Nouvelle Clémentine: in this case, the lovers, Séligny and Henriette, are separated because he is too poor to aspire to her hand honourably (in the eyes of her family). Henriette grows demented by thwarted love and dies: Séligny swears that his death will follow shortly and that both their ghosts will haunt her cruel mother who prevented their match. Very positive action lay in the hands of a father who could not tolerate the notion of a 'mésalliance': the girl could be closeted away in a convent or even sent to the 'Hôpital' (La Salpêtrière), the youth imprisoned in the Bastille, or at St. Lazare. Mme de Valcy and Mlle de Terville are also made to suffer for their love by parental authority. His family objects to their union on the grounds of the immoral conduct displayed by Mlle de Terville's mother: as a result, she is whisked away to a convent, on the strength of a 'lettre de cachet', and he is thrown into the Bastille. Discrepancy between degrees of

1. ou Lettres de Henriette de Berville by Léonard.
2. Histoire de Mlle de Terville by Mme de Puisieux.
nobility is the inhibiting factor in the romance between Émilie and M. de Frémonville, who, although extremely wealthy, is not from as ancient a noble house as Émilie; her irate parents have her removed to a convent. Generally, neither of the lovers is prey to doubts on the validity of their right to act in accordance with their emotions: there is little inner moral conflict. In the event of such doubts arising, they are soon dispelled: the heroine of one of De Maucombe's novels, Histoire de Mme d'Erneville, falls in love with a commoner, the worthy M. d'Erneville; she is of noble birth. He determines her to elope with him, but she has moral qualms, for she feels she would thereby betray familial ties, the bonds of nature. She has hitherto been content to fulfil her duties but she is now confronted with the challenge of stronger emotions:

"Je vois donc prêté à oublier les liens que la nature m'avait donnés, pour en former d'autres moi-même!... quelle situation pour une jeune personne pénétrée du sentiment de ses devoirs!" 2

The struggle is, however, short-lived: they elope and marry in secret. But even after the ceremony, her family still has the power to separate her from her husband and place her in a convent. The obedient young girl of noble birth, long accustomed to her destiny in society, unquestioningly accepts

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1. *Histoire d'Émilie* in *L'École des Fées* by A. Sabatier de Castres.
2. *Histoire de Mme d'Erneville* by J.-F. Maucombe, part II.
the dictates of parental authority - until she falls in love.

Adélaïde\(^1\) is the standard product of an ancient noble house, entirely dependent on her family with no will of her own.\(^2\)

"Adélaïde était sage et bien élevée. Occupée uniquement de ses devoirs, elle se renfermait, avec le dernier scrupule, dans le cercle étroit, qui lui avait été tracé. Elle n'avait point encore songé qu'elle pût avoir une idée à elle; encore moins avait-elle soupçonné qu'il dût jamais lui être permis d'avoir une volonté. C'étaient ses parents qui faisaient naître et qui réglaient tous ses désirs. Elle n'avait de goûts que les leurs, elle ne voyait que par leurs yeux, elle ne pensait que par leur ordre."

At seventeen years of age, she meets and falls in love with a rich commoner, Éraste. Her family, horrified at the thought of an alliance with a non-noble house, forces her to take the veil, but on this occasion, the lovers triumph over parental dictatorship. Éraste enters Adélaïde's convent in the guise of a novice and persuades her to elope with him. For once, the authoritarian attitude of the older generation has been successfully challenged.

The notion of love totally irreconcilable with the social order constitutes a major theme in the abbé Prévost's work. His heroes are made unhappy through their passion: their love is of so intense a nature as to override all other

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1. Adélaïde ou l'Amour et le Repentir by Savin (1776), pp. 4-5.
considerations. It takes precedence over the social order, banishes all duties and other ties into insignificance. Hence it is dangerous to both themselves and society; sad is the lot of one enslaved to a consuming passion which brings him into conflict with society (Des Grieux, the Commander in his youth, Patrice), but he must be protected against his own passions. Tiberge, the Commander's friend, Perés, the Dean of Coleraine, - all attempt the difficult task, but the young man in the grip of a fierce passion is powerless to obey any other appeal save that of his blind instinct to worship at the shrine of his often unworthy goddess. The violence of the methods employed to wrest him from the object of his passion merely serves to ensnare him even deeper within it. It is, as Prévost recognises, the mistake committed by many a father bent on deflecting his son's passion from the unworthy object of it:

"La naissance et les grands biens ne sont pas toujours des moyens d'être heureux. On peut mener avec l'un et l'autre, une vie trés malheureuse, quand on a le coeur formé d'une certaine façon....l'amour ne nous rend point criminels, lorsque l'objet est légitime.... au lieu de maîtriser un fils qui se trouve atteint tout d'un coup d'une passion excessive, et de la vouloir guérir par la rigueur, un père devrait recourir à des remèdes plus doux, pour éviter les suites funestes que la violence produit presque toujours."

Prévost is concerned with the fatality of passion; his heroes

1. Mémoires et Aventures d'un homme de Qualité, book 1, p. 2 and p. 11.
cannot escape their destiny. Endowed with the capacity for total commitment of the self, they surrender themselves finally and irrevocably to their passion, once its object has been revealed to them. The man of quality recognises that his hour has come when, as a slave, he encounters his master's daughter, Selima:

"Il était fatal à ma famille d'aimer comme les autres adorent, c'est-à-dire, sans bornes et sans mesure. Je sentis que mon heure était venue, et qu'il fallait suivre la trace de mon père." ¹

The youth's passion, in its very intensity and frequently in its choice of object, represents a threat both to his own well-being and to that of society. There is no place for such passion within the social order; it is not conducive to his happiness - therefore, ultimately, reluctantly, it is wrong. When love is mere gallantry, when it finds its expression in the quantity, not in the depth, of relationships between the sexes, emotion of such profundity is an intrusion within society. Des Grieux is undoubtedly the Prévost hero who clashes most violently with society, through his love for Mamon Lescaut.² His passion for her transforms


². It will be noted that Des Grieux is not included in the chapter on Sentimental Education. For his sentimental education does not follow the course prescribed by polite society. His passion stems from his nature and is completely alien to the atmosphere of 18th-century polite society. His love for Mamon is the very foundation of his being, not the stylised gallantry which is the approved form of love current in polite society. He rejects the whole way of life exacted in society for the sake of his passion."
him from a model candidate for the Order of St. John, in
harmony with his family, his class and the accepted social
order, into a rebel within society who flouts all the laws of
the society within which he moves. He is the individual who
suffers from paternal authority, who is crushed by the society
whose laws he refuses to obey. If it were not for Manon, he
would be the dutiful son, at one with the life-style expected
of him as a member of an ancient noble family. The laws of
society, the social order are embodied for him in the father
figure: the lack of comprehension between himself and his
father is symbolic of the clash between passion and duty,
himself and the social order. His relationship with Manon
suscitates a series of confrontations with his father, in
which neither will, nor indeed is able to, step down from his
chosen standpoint. The opposition between love and duty,
passion and the social order, is present at his very first
encounter with Manon:

"J'avais marqué le temps de mon départ d'Amiens.
Hélas! quene le marquais-je un jour plus tôt!
J'aurais porté chez mon père toute mon innocence." 1

Des Crieux nourishes the illusion that he will be able to
reconcile his father with Manon, his passion with the social
order. Dazzled by the qualities, real and imaginary, which
he finds in Manon, he is unable to grasp that they are not
valid in the context of his position in the social hierarchy:

"Ma maîtresse était si aimable que je ne doutais-point
qu'elle ne pouût plaire, si je trouvais moyen de

1. Ibid., vol. VII, p. 23.
lui faire connaître sa sagesse, et son mérite; en un mot, je me flattaïs d'obtenir de lui la liberté de l'épouser."

Marriage to a girl of Manon's stamp would be incompatible both with his future career in the Order of St. John and with his noble status.

Des Grieux is yet bound to his father by long-standing ties of love, duty and financial necessity. He imagines that he may outwit his father, beat the social order, so that he may enjoy the financial advantages of his state without relinquishing his love for Manon. Hence, when he is taken by his father's valets, he feigns filial obedience. Although deeply fond of his son, Des Grieux's father is unable to comprehend his passion. In his eyes, it is but a youthful escapade, not uncommon in one of the age of Des Grieux. He is guilty of great insensitivity when he jovially reveals Manon's infidelity and her treachery in betraying Des Grieux's whereabouts to his father. For him, Des Grieux is but a child and therefore incapable of judging his true feelings and deciding what lies in his best interests. Yet there exists a very real bond between them: when Des Grieux faints at the news of Manon's infidelity, his father displays deep concern and tenderness for his son:

"Mon père, qui m'a toujours aimé tendrement, s'employa avec toute son affection pour me consoler."

The habit of filial affection and duty, of obedience to the social order, is deeply ingrained in Des Grieux. When he

1. Ibid., p. 36.
2. Ibid., p. 53.
resolves to starve himself to death, he yet responds to his father's command to take some nourishment:

"Il m'ordonna si absolument de manger quelque chose, que je le fis par respect pour ses ordres. Quelques jours se passèrent pendant lesquels je ne pris rien qu'en sa présence et pour lui obéir." 1

Despite such extreme behaviour on the part of Des Grieux, his father still fails to comprehend the extent of his son's passion. To him, it is but a manifestation of adolescence which marks a penchant for the opposite sex. Since he sincerely desires his son's happiness — within the confines of what is acceptable in the social order — he informs Des Grieux that he will not be forced to enter the celibate Order of St John, that he has arranged a match for him with a girl who physically resembles Manon, but who is, of course, of a suitable noble house. It lies outside his comprehension to imagine that Des Grieux could still love one for whom he could have no respect, who has betrayed him.

Passion of such depth is a manifestation of the youthful soul: it revolts against the wisdom of maturity: the two are irreconcilable. The response of the magistrate to Des Grieux's impassioned defence of Manon echoes the rift between generations:

"Amour, amour, s'écria ce grave magistrat...ne te réconcilieras-tu jamais avec la sagesse?" 2

Still Des Grieux battles to reconcile the two alien forces: he is reluctant to renounce irrevocably all former ties. He

1. Ibid., p. 65.
2. Ibid., p. 268.
long retains his filial affection, his sense of duty and familial honour, but he is powerless to combat his passion; there can be no question of an attempt to relinquish Manon. But he is still capable of a movement of shame before his father: he genuinely loves and respects him. When his father visits him in prison, he is momentarily cowed; he reverts to the situation of wilful child on trial before stern father:

"Quoique je dusse être à demi préparé à cette vue...je ne laissai pas d'en être frappé si vivement que je me serais précipité au fond de la terre, si elle s'était entr'ouverte à mes pieds. J'allais l'embrasser avec toutes les marques d'une extrême confusion."

His father comments gravely and sadly on the dishonour Des Grieux has brought upon his family: Des Grieux responds to the appeal, and there follows a brief scene of reconciliation as both forget for one moment the cause of their differences and give way to natural sentiments:

"Ahôô, mon cher père, ajoutai-je tendrement, un peu de pitié pour un fils qui a toujours été plein de respect, et d'affection pour vous, qui n'a pas renoncé comme vous pensez à l'honneur et au devoir...Un cœur de père est le chef-d'œuvre de la nature; elle y règne, pour ainsi parler, avec complaisance, et elle en règle elle-même tous les ressorts. Le mien, qui était avec cela homme d'esprit, et de bon goût, fut si touché du tour que j'avais donné à mes excuses, qu'il ne fut pas le maître de me cacher ce changement. Viens, mon pauvre Chevalier, me dit-il, viens m'embrasser, tu me fais pitié. Je l'embrassai. Il me serra d'une manière que me fit juger de ce qui se passait dans son coeur."2

It is but a brief interlude in which both step down from

1. Ibid., p. 269.
2. Ibid., pp. 271-272.
their firmly ensconced and conflicting positions to recognise the natural bond. The tragedy is that neither can betray his own guiding principle: the father, his sense of familial honour, the chief consideration in his society; the son, his profound passion. No compromise can be reached, for each party is determined to adhere to his own standpoint. In a final desperate appeal, Des Grieux begs his father to save Manon from being transported to America: it is his last attempt to reconcile the two opposing forces. He pleads with his father that he cannot survive without Manon: his father's response:

"j'aime mieux te voir sans vie que sans sagesse et sans honneur." 1

Des Grieux must finally accept that he has to make a choice; but it is not an open choice, for he must obey his passion:

"N'augmentez pas mon désespoir, lui dis-je, en me forçant à vous désobéir: il est impossible que je vous suive. Il ne l'est pas moins que je vive après la "dureté avec laquelle vous me traitez". "Tu refuses donc de me suivre, s'écria-t-il avec une vive colère? Va, cours à ta perte. Adieu fils ingrat et rebelle, Adieu, lui dis-je dans mon transport, adieu père barbare et dénaturé." 2

The breach is final and cannot be healed. Des Grieux has resolutely turned his back on his former life, he has completely rejected the social order. As if to compensate for the lack of a sympathetic parent, Des Grieux turns increasingly often to his old school-comrade, Tiberge, for aid, chiefly of a financial nature. Tiberge provides him with refuge but no threat of

1. Ibid., p. 283.
2. Ibid., p. 290.
paternal authority: significantly, he is of lower social standing than Des Grieux. Consequently, he is in all aspects a more accessible figure than Des Grieux’s father. When Tiberge visits him after his forced exit from Paris, Des Grieux is struck by the change within Tiberge. Tiberge displays paternalistic affection and concern for Des Grieux, who repays him with a new-found respect:

"Je fus surpris du transport avec lequel il m'embrassa. Je n'avais point encore eu des preuves de son affection, qui eussent pu me la faire regarder autrement que comme une simple amitié de collège, telle qu'elle se forme entre des jeunes gens qui sont à peu près du même âge. Je le trouvai si changé et si formé depuis cinq ou six mois que j'avais passés sans le voir, que sa figure et le ton de son discours n'inspirèrent quelque respect. Il me parla en conseiller sage plutôt qu'en ami d'école."

Whenever Des Grieux finds himself in serious financial straits, it is always to Tiberge that he has recourse, for Tiberge, unlike his father, lacks the power to have Des Grieux imprisoned. Finally it is Tiberge who journeys to America in search of Des Grieux. Between Des Grieux and Tiberge there is no generation gap; a greater sympathy exists between them than between father and son. Tiberge makes no demands upon Des Grieux: he does not approve of his relationship with Kanon but he is prepared to afford them aid with no provisos. His behaviour towards Des Grieux has its foundation solely in selfless love: he is in accord with the social order but lacks the years and social position which make of Des Grieux's father a formidable opponent. All
throughout, Manon and Des Grieux find greater sympathy in
others of their age-group, although they themselves are in
harmony with society, than in their elders. G.M. Jr., for
example, is far less vindicative toward them than his father,
although both have equal cause for complaint since both have
been duped by Manon and Des Grieux.

Although Des Grieux and Manon have our sympathy,
the methods they employ to combat society are dishonest:
they are destroyed by society since they are a discordant,
disruptive element within it. Sympathy is often extended by
the novelist to star-crossed lovers divided by social con-
siderations when the sole prohibitive factor is lack of
sufficient wealth or nobility, whilst the proposed partner
is otherwise endowed with noble qualities, and is likely on
every other score to contribute to the other's happiness.
But rarely are the values of a society which condones this
form of authoritarianism questioned. The question of
'mésalliance' is not explored in depth; it is not presented
as a moral drama. More often than not, the 'offending'
partner is revealed to be really of noble birth. Both lovers
are anonymous figures, modelled on the stereotype of lovers
and possessed of no psychological inner life. Basically,
both are endowed with the traditional noble qualities and
conform in every respect, save that of their illicit love,
to the social norm. The first commoner who is presented as
worthy within his own right, with no desire to conform to
the pattern of polite society, is Rousseau's Saint-Preux.

Saint-Preux is the first of a race of individualists of non-noble birth; he remains aloof from polite society and shows no desire to enter into it. It is in his relationship with Julie that Saint-Preux comes into conflict with society, for she is of noble birth whilst he is a commoner. Julie's father objects to the match on the grounds that Saint-Preux is a commoner, although he is of honest birth, son of a patriot, of sterling qualities and deeply in love with Julie. Their proposed union meets with approval from every quarter save that of the old baron, steeped in the prejudices of his class. The injustice of his attitude is pointed all the more strongly since the drama is enacted in the Pays de Vaud, where nobility carried with it no special privileges, was indeed a hindrance, since the Pays de Vaud was subject to the Swiss canton, Bern. In the context of the structure of French polite society, there could be no question of their marriage, but it is a perfectly feasible proposition in the Pays de Vaud. Julie's dilemma, torn between her duty - as she sees it - unjust as her father's dictates might be, and her love for Saint-Preux, forms the moral substance of the first half of the novel. In this case, there can be no doubt: society, i.e., the baron and the prejudices he has imbibed in society, is wrong, and the individual is right. Saint-Preux may not be of noble birth, but he cannot be measured against the criteria of French
polite society for he is completely outside the social structure, in many ways superior to it. He is an individual, not a copy of the set social type. He belongs to another society, is destined for a republic, but for the lack of the ideal republic into which he could be integrated, he remains isolated from society. He is in harmony with the natural rather than the social world.

Saint-Preux as a young man who rejects polite society as the sole solution is essentially of the latter half of the century and even he, in the latter part of the novel, is reconciled to the order established by the Wolmars, although remaining himself outside it. As the century progresses, the idea grows that all is not perfect in society as it is constituted. There is a reaction against a society which destroys all individualism, which exacts a mask of conformity from its members. On his entry into the world, the youth lacks the discernment to distinguish between the laudable and the ridiculous in social behaviour: hence, in his inexperience, he is likely to ape the less worthy social traits. The youth finds himself in a very vulnerable position, as Prévost stresses:

"Nous devons, Monsieur, surtout à notre entrée dans le monde, nous trouver dans des situations toutes nouvelles pour nous, ou tout à fait différentes de ce que nous avons éprouvé. Ceux qui ont le malheur d'ignorer comment les autres se sont conduits dans les mêmes circonstances, doivent être partagés d'un jugement, et d'une pénétration fort extraordinaires, pour ne pas tomber dans plus d'une erreur; et souvent d'une nature qui peut
avoir de fatales influences sur leur future conduite."

The youth's social training often corresponds to a loss of integrity: for as the youth becomes more aware of himself and the role he is to play in polite society, he loses his original innocence. The process of socialisation is carried to such an extent that it produces a reaction within the member who has been modelled by the system: he is raised to such a level of refinement that he turns in disgust from the society which has formed him. The product of existing society, the degeneration of polite society, is the rake, the debasement of the ideal of the 'honnête homme'. The rake is in revolt against society whilst still conforming to its lifestyle: it is to him that the novice in society often falls prey. Dazzled by the rake's superficial brilliance, the youth seeks to emulate him: in turn, he indoctrinates the following new generation, and thus the vicious circle continues.

The new image of society is reflected in the various licentious stories of, the latter half of the century particularly; these stories are often skits on the immorality and superficiality of polite society. As an easily-pierced disguise for his condemnation of polite society,

1. Lettres de Mentor à un jeune Seigneur, lettre II.
2. for example, Le Cabriolet (1755) by Mailhol.
the novelist makes use of a fairy-tale setting, or sets the scene in far-flung places — the Orient, Persia, Turkey, China. Letters purporting to be from the pen of visitors from distant lands, witnesses of the social scene, provide another outlet for novelistic criticism of polite society.

A sad point in the process of degeneration in society is that it causes the innocent to suffer. The young and inexperienced, those innocent in the workings of the social machine are doomed to fall victim to the depraved elements of society. In Les Liaisons Dangereuses, the young, (Cécile, Danceny) and the innocent (Mme de Tourvel) are destroyed by the evil of society, embodied in Mertouil and Valmont. In the earlier years of the 18th century, virtue was sure to reap its own reward — Marivaux's Marianne, Fieux de Mouhy's 'Paysanne Parvenue', Richardson's Pamela, all remain true to the path of virtue and achieve a high position in life through their adherence to it. But in the corrupt society presented later in the century, virtue is an obstacle in the race for success. The Marquis de Sade's Justine suffers every indignity known to man because she chooses to adhere to the path of virtue, whilst her sister, Juliette, who lends...
herself to every perversion and plunges to the depths of depravity, amasses a great fortune. The advantages of deviation from the path of virtue are succinctly laid out for the chevalier in *Le Début*, by an old friend of his, now a rich kept woman:

"Compare une femme honnête avec moi, et juge laquelle de nous deux réussira le plus facilement dans quelque entreprise que ce soit, auprès des magistrats, des prélats ou des grands? Depuis que je suis à Paris, j'ai fait réussir vingt affaires et placé dix jeunes gens. J'ai eu des emplois pour les uns, et des bénéfices pour les autres."

Merit will not be acknowledged for its own sake in society: one needs powerful friends, women like the chevalier's old acquaintance who are prepared to intercede on one's behalf, if one intends to succeed in life. The hero of *La Capucinade* is soon disillusioned on this score; although his father had firmly believed in merit:

"il croyait que le mérite faisait faire fortune; j'ai éprouvé, ainsi que bien des gens, que le bonhomme radotait."2

Inconstancy is second nature to the members of polite society; a marriage which endures in love, respect and fidelity is an anomaly. The 'Épitre Dédicatoire' to the Marquise de Luchet illustrates the point:

1. by Falconet (1770): *part II*.

2. by Rougaret (1769) - he was imprisoned in the Bastille for a short time because of the licentious content of the novel.

3. In the preface to *L'Ecole des Pères et des Mères* by Sabatier de Castres (1757).
"continuez à prouver, par votre exemple, que dans un siècle d'inconstance et d'infidélité, il peut se trouver des époux que le choix a réunis, et que le torrent de la perversité n'est pas capable de corrompre."

Of the twin themes of libertinage and virtue which run through the literature of the period, the portrayal of libertinage could be held to be the more exact representation of polite society in the latter half of the century. In contrast to the image of the idle debauched nobleman, devoid of marital and paternal tenderness, the bourgeois is presented, particularly in the drama, as a useful member of society, devoted to the family circle, thrifty and diligent. The society of the town is totally corrupt: hence the innocent characters are generally pictured in a rustic idyll, as in Les Liaisons Dangereuses: Merteuil and Valmont are essentially Parisian whilst the innocent figure in a country setting.

Reaction against the values of a corrupt town society takes the form of a swing towards the appreciation of nature. The country is envisaged, in the second half of the century, as the source of pure, simple and honest pleasures as opposed to the ultra-refined entertainments of polite society. The rural scene offers to the weary town-dweller a regeneration of life: true and honest sentiments

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1. The dichotomy libertinage/virtue, the struggle between the two, is epitomised in Prévost's La Grecque Moderne. The Knight wishes to possess Théopé, but at the same time he desires to instil in her the principles of virtue. She should both give herself, yet remain aloof. His complex attitude toward Théopé is the cause of his deep unhappiness.
can flower in the pastoral idyll, hence the mode to flee the town — no longer is the country gentleman a figure of fun. The libertine is reborn in the country setting: here he finds the contentment he has been vainly seeking in town society. Previously, the peasant was an uncivilised boor beside the cultivated gentleman of polite society; now the peasant is possessed of basic, honest virtues in opposition to the treachery and debauchery of the town-dweller of noble birth. Loaisel de Tréogate takes a more balanced view, in between the two extremes:

"on dit que le bonheur est loin des villes, et l'on a raison; mais ce n'est pas toujours sous un toit de chaume qu'il faut le chercher. Le paysan a tous les vices de la nature, et rien pour les réprimer. Dans beaucoup de pays, il est fourbe et méchant. Pour trouver le bonheur à la campagne, il faut aller chez un noble jouissant d'une fortune aisée...Il a assez d'éducation pour être plein de probité, plein d'honneur...mais il n'est pas assez grandement élevé, pour mettre la fausseté au rang des vertus sociales."

The return to nature forms part of a whole movement away from society: it provides an opportunity for communion with the self in solitude, within nature. The soul soars freest (particularly after Rousseau) in a mountain setting. Saint-Preux is able to express his own nature to the full when surrounded by the natural scene, and more especially by the wilder aspect of nature found in the mountains, so

1. Ainsi Finissent les Grandes Passions: Lettre XXIV au comte de P.
completely divorced from the social scene. D'Olaban rejects the insensitivity of polite society to immerse himself in the awesome natural scene. The return to nature is a reaction against the current values of society. The young man can find no satisfaction within society, hence he turns to nature in his attempt to fill the inner void, to still the inner longing. It is essentially a phenomenon of the youthful soul, which has yet to come to terms with life, which cannot find salvation in polite society constituted as it is. Later, Obermann is to turn to nature in his desperate search for fulfilment, prey as he is to an inner dissatisfaction.

The shortcomings of society are painfully evident to the critical young eye, hence the adolescent flees society, seeks solitude and communion with self within nature. In reaction to the conformity exacted in polite society, he develops his own individuality to its fullest extent. He flees the society

1. An attitude taken up later in Senancour's Obermann (letter VII): "Je vis que, malgré la lenteur des mouvements apparents, c'est dans les montagnes, sur leurs cimes paisibles, que la pensée, moins pressée, est plus véritablement active."

2. Les Dernières Aventures du Jeune D'Olaban (1777) by Ramond de Carbonnières.

3. Letter XVIII: "Il y a dans moi une inquiétude qui ne me quittera pas; c'est un besoin que je ne connais pas, qui me commande, qui m'absorbe, qui m'emporte au-delà des êtres périsposables.... Il y a l'infini entre ce que je suis et ce que j'ai besoin d'être.... Je veux un bien, un rêve, une espérance enfin qui soit toujours devant moi, au-delà de moi, plus grande que mon attente elle-même, plus grande que ce qui passe."
of his fellows to concentrate on the inner man, rather than on the sociable exterior as represented in the figure of the 'honnête homme'. The flight from society and the concentration on the individual which typify the Preromantic movement are diametrically opposed to the discipline of polite society, intent on the modelling of all its members on the set social type. There is a basic discontent within the soul of the adolescent; he is unable to accept the regimentation of society which demands his conformity to the social norm. Antagonistic to society, he attempts to flee it, in the hope of stilling his inner dissatisfaction, but the root of the trouble lies within himself, hence he can never be truly free. The youth who reacts against society is often superior to his social environment; his integration into society is an impossibility.

Already, earlier in the century, in Prévost's novels, the hero is one apart, isolated, superior to his frivolous environment in his capacity to experience deep emotion. His heroes are subject to a deep melancholy - not, as yet, the indefinable longing of the Romantic figure - which stems from an unhappy passion. The Preromantic hero is distinguished by his capacity for deep feeling, in contrast with the frivolity and superficiality accepted in polite society. Love is the guiding light of all Prévost's heroes. Later, Rousset de
Liebmarii haunts his dead mistress's tomb till he dies of a broken heart and is buried with her. Suffering becomes part of the Preromantic hero, he becomes his sorrow; as Valmore writes from his prison:

"la douleur n'a plus de prise sur mon âme, ou plutôt elle s'est naturalisée avec moi: elle est devenue une modification de mon être."

He who is capable of such deep suffering rejoices in his own capacity for emotion: he enjoys his own sorrow, as Cleveland admits early in the century:

"Ne me demandera-t'on pas quelle sorte de plaisir peut trouver un misérable à se rappeler le souvenir de ses peines, par un récit qui ne saurait manquer d'en renouveler le sentiment? Ce ne peut être qu'une personne heureuse qui me fasse cette question; car tous les infortunés savent trop bien que la plus douce consolation d'une grande douleur, est d'avoir la liberté de se plaindre de paraître affligé. Le cœur d'un malheureux est idolâtre de sa tristesse...."

Florello experiences his sorrow to the full, it is the mark of his sensibility. René finds meaning to life in his very unhappiness: it fills the void within his soul:

"je n'avais plus envie de mourir depuis que j'étais réellement malheureux. Mon chagrin était devenu une occupation qui remplissait tous mes moments: tant mon cœur est naturellement pétri d'ennui et de misère!"

In every respect, the Preromantic figure of the young man

1. In "Essais du Sentiment" vol. IV. 
2. Loaisel de Tréogate, Valmore, (1776).
who rejects the values of polite society forms a contrast with the fashionable figure — in his cult of individualism, in his capacity for feeling, in his desire to commune in solitude with nature. It is the movement of the adolescent whose youthful idealism is incensed by the spectacle of a degenerate society.

Another manifestation of revolt against the values of polite society, also apparent in the later years of the century, is the concept of the citizen. The ideal of the youth educated to fill the role of a citizen, to work for the common good and not towards the former desired concept of perfect sociability, although itself a reaction against polite society, is diametrically opposed to the Preromantic figure. Whilst the latter expresses himself in the solitude of nature, introverted, anxious to develop his own individualism, the citizen is necessarily part of a society, working with other citizens towards the common good. He is to sublimate his own desires to the welfare of the whole. Whilst the Preromantic figure is a completely spontaneous being, the citizen is a product of self-discipline, of suppression of the ego. The Preromantic wishes to be one alone and individual, the citizen lives in a society where ideally all have the same destiny and none is superior to his fellows.

The ideal of the Republic, based — to employ Montesquieu's terminology — on the principle of virtue, or love of the common good, contrasts with polite society,
ruled by the concept of personal honour. To equip the youth destined to enter society for such a radical change in emphasis, he must be prepared for his role in society by a specially adapted form of education. From the 13th to the 18th centuries, education had undergone little change in France: hence, in the 18th century the whole educational system in France had to be completely revised to cater for new needs. The concept of the education of the citizen was in the air, reaching its culmination in Rousseau's *Emile.* Rousseau considers the man who is a citizen to be the highest point on the human scale. He himself was a citizen of Geneva; he admired the citizens of ancient Rome and of contemporary Geneva. His alter-ego, Saint-Pieux, is a potential citizen, and the formation of a citizen is his goal in *Emile.* Emile is to be the new man, a new social unit, the betterment of the man of nature. Yet he has no place in society, since French polite society cannot be transformed into the ideal of the democratic republic.

The ideal of the 17th and early 18th centuries is polite society, the just environment for the wealthier elements of the nobility. Its product is the 'honnête homme', who has cultivated all the finer traits of man in the social state: he is, by definition, the perfection of sociability. It is the close-knit community of the chosen few, of the

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1. in spite of the fact that *Emile* is a book about domestic education.
noble élite, but into which many aspire to force entry. Polite society is a career in itself: its leisured members are free to cultivate the arts, conversation, the social graces: such are their 'duties', their way of life; their pleasures are their duties. But the idleness inherent in the life-style of the gentleman is the cause of its degeneration. Bored by the monotony of the social round, by the aimlessness of his existence, the member of polite society seeks satisfaction in the cultivation of less worthy pursuits. Hence the libertinage which is so common a feature in the life of polite society, which in its turn generates an even greater dissatisfaction within its members. Accustomed since his earliest years to consider polite society as the only fit milieu for the nobleman, the youth is eager to model himself upon the established pattern: there is no alternative way of life open to him as a member of his class. The realisation of the corruption of society strikes him, if it strikes him at all, too late, when he has already been exposed to it and has assimilated its life-style. Embittered by his experiences, he must yet remain within the corruptive atmosphere of polite society, for he knows no other way. But the rake's revolt against his milieu plunges polite society into still greater depths of depravity. The youth's hope for salvation is to flee society before he has truly entered into it. The alternative is to create a new society, where the
energies of all its members are directed to the common good. Such is the ideal of Rousseau. But first the old society must be destroyed before a new and better one may be founded in its stead.
Within the structure of the noble family in 18th-century France, the title and most property fell to the lot of the eldest son, whose duty was to marry and carry on the line. Cases of hardship among younger sons often resulted from this practice, particularly among the impoverished nobles, younger sons of younger sons, who eked out a meagre existence on their country estates, which were often little more than farms. Hence arises the theme, common in the 18th-century novel, of the poor gentleman and his attempts to make his way in life. Even in noble families in more fortunate financial circumstances, the younger sons were expected to select a career in order to further the glory of the family name. The choice of careers, however, was severely limited. The world of commerce and finance was held to be incompatible with the noble status; these were means whereby one attained nobility, but which ceased with ennoblement. The nobility fell into two camps, with intermarriage between the two: the nobility of the Robe, rooted in the magisterial and legal professions, and the more ancient nobility of the sword, based on the services afforded in battle by one's ancestors to the monarch. The more highly esteemed
form of aristocracy, although generally the less wealthy, was the nobility of the sword. The sons of the nobility of the Robe might inherit certain magisterial positions, but more prestige was attached to the two professions adopted by the nobility of the sword: the Army and the Church, the Red and the Black. These were the two traditional careers of the nobleman. One career spanned the two professions, seemingly so diametrically opposed - the role of Knight of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, the community being centred on the island of Malta. The 'chevalier de Malte' stood half-way between the soldier and the ecclesiastic: he was engaged in military service, yet was bound by monastic vows. It was a position which carried with it great prestige and attracted many younger sons from the most ancient noble houses. The concept of a man dedicated to God - abbé or chevalier de Malte - would seemingly imply a certain withdrawal from the world. Yet both were prominent figures in 18th-century society and the literature of the period alike.

The Order of St John had been founded in the 11th century in Jerusalem and dedicated to St John the Baptist. The objective of the order was to care for pilgrims who fell ill in the Holy Land. The order took on a more military role when its members commenced
patrolling the pilgrim routes to ensure their safety. Its members were assembled from all over Europe on the Order’s final base, the island of Malta. The order also possessed extensive lands overseas. By the 18th century, two-thirds of the Knights were French; in 1739, four hundred of every six hundred Knights belonged to one of the three French language ‘Houses’, each nationality having its own ‘House’. Of its origins as a monastic order, only the three vows – obedience, poverty and chastity – were officially retained. The main task of the Knights was to patrol sea-routes: before obtaining the spurs-and-cross of a Knight of the Order, the novice had to undertake four to eight expeditions or ‘caravans’ – depending on the number set by the reigning ‘Grand Maître’ of the Order – against infidel pirates. In fact, by the 18th century, the ‘caravans’ consisted of excursions to various ports in order to collect revenues from the Order’s lands or ‘commanderies’. Malta played a crucial role in 18th-century France’s naval and trade policy.

The island was the principal depot for French ships trading in the Mediterranean, and it was essential that the Order be largely controlled by French interests since France had commenced trading extensively with Muslim countries. The Order was considered in the light of an exclusive naval school for the younger sons of the French aristocracy: practically every French noble family had at least one son in the Order. Competition to enter the Order was keen — sons were enrolled in it at birth — and its ranks were closed to all but the most ancient noble families.

The Order was quite distinct from the Church as a choice of career. Within the same family, one son might enter the Church proper, whilst another son would assume the spurs and cross of the Knight of Malta. M. de P. sketches out the structure of the 18th-century noble family in recounting his introduction to his career:

"Comme mon père n'avait point assez de bien pour nous destiner tous pour le monde, les uns furent employés au service du roi, les autres à celui de l'Église, et à celui de la Justice; pour moi, on me fit chevalier de Malte."

1. In Mémoires et Aventures de M. de P. by Émery, p. 53.
The Order was envisaged less as an ecclesiastical than as a military establishment, which it had in fact become by the 13th century. A career in the Order was designated as service, i.e. military, as opposed to entry into the Church as an abbé. The marquis d'Argens distinguishes between the two professions in such terms when recounting the fortunes of his family:

"Je fus destiné en naissant à être de Robé, ainsi que le sont chez moi la plupart des aînés, et quatre frères que j'avais, dont trois étaient chevaliers de Malte, et l'autre abbé, à tâcher de faire leur fortune, les premiers dans le service, et le dernier dans l'Eglise."¹

Within one family it was rarely possible to equip more than one or two sons for a costly career in the Army, the chosen profession of any young noble since it offered full participation in worldly pleasures and promised a life of excitement and adventure to youthful eyes.

Younger sons had to content themselves with a career in the Church; the role of the chevalier de Malte was a form of compromise between the coveted state of soldier and a career in the Church imposed by the state of the family finances. The knight of Malta

¹ Mémoires, p.2.
was a far more romantic figure in his uniform than the
tabé in his black robes: he was invested with the
glamour of the man of action and he was permitted to
wear a sword, the hallmark of nobility. Traditionally,
the young noble was destined to serve his king on the
battlefield, as his ancestors before him. The chevalier
de Malte was forbidden by his vows to marry, but this
was the only point - in reality if not in theory - in
which his position differed from that of the soldier.
Entry into the Order thus offered a far more attractive
alternative to the young man than a career in the Church.
If not entered immediately into the Order, a young man
might solicit permission from the Pope to pass from the
Church into the less severely restricted Order of Malta.
The former tabé, then chevalier de Boufflers, for example,
quit the Church to become a chevalier de Malte. The
chevalier had been invested with the title of tabé
at the age of thirteen, when he had been awarded the
abbey of Béchamp by Stanislas, deposed king of Poland
who held his court at Lunéville, since Mme de Boufflers
was a great favourite with the king. The young man
early recognised his lack of vocation, but could not
afford to scorn the lucrative benefices Stanislas had
showered upon him. To prepare him for his career in the
Church, the young Boufflers was enrolled at the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, where he proceeded to demonstrate how ill-suited he was to his future profession. A discordant element in the seminary, Boufflers chose to abandon his studies at Saint-Sulpice, detailing the reasons for his departure in a letter to his former tutor, the abbé Porquet:

"J'étais dans la route de la fortune; les premiers pas que j'y avais faits suffisaient pour m'en assurer. Les circonstances les plus favorables semblaient rassemblées pour présenter à mon imagination l'avenir le plus brillant. Sans aucun mérite, j'aurais pu, comme tant d'autres, obtenir encore quelques bénéfices: avec un peu d'hypocrisie, je serais probablement devenu évêque; peut-être avec un peu de friponnerie, cardinal; qui sait si quelques ruses et quelques intrigues de plus ne m'auraient point mis à la tête du clergé? mais j'ai mieux aimé être aide-de-camp dans l'armée de Soubise ... La première règle de conduite n'est point de devenir riche et puissant; c'est de connaître ses véritables désirs et de les suivre ... Vous savez qu'un sang bouillant, un esprit inconsideré, une humeur indépendante, sont les trois premiers traits qui me caractérisent. Comparez ce caractère-là avec tous les devoirs de l'état que j'avais embrassé, et vous me direz si j'y étais propre. Vous n'ignorez pas de quelle nécessité il est pour un ecclésiastique de cacher

tut ce qu'il désire, de déguiser
tout ce qu'il pense, de prendre garde
à tout ce qu'il dit, et d'empêcher
qu'on ne prenne garde à tout ce qu'il
fait."

Doufflers evidently considered himself incapable both
of the discipline necessary to a man of the Church, and
of the hypocrisy otherwise indulged in by those equally
ill-suited to the profession yet anxious to make their
way within it. The Order of Malta, he felt, did not
impose such restrictions; within it, he could lead the
life suited to his temperament. Hence he chose to
pass from the Church into the Order of Malta, thereby
retaining all the revenues attached to his ecclesiastical
status, yet gaining a freedom lacking in his former
career. In a novel by Mme de Puisieux, one youth from
a noble family is permitted to exchange the one state
for the other on the death of an elder brother. The
drain on the family resources being reduced in one
quarter, the financial demands imposed by another son's
entry into the Order can be met:

"Il n'avait pas encore fait ses voces;
à peine était-il né, qu'ayant deux
ainés, on le destina à l'état ecclésiastique,
pour lequel il se sentit tant de
répugnance qu'après la mort d'un de ses
frères, sa mère lui permit de le quitter
pour prendre la croix de Malte." 1

1. Histoire de Mlle de Terville, part I.
From the points of view of personal liberty and prestige, the Order of St John undoubtedly held far greater appeal for the young man than a career in the Church.

Both careers offered considerable financial gain, although the abbé could generally count on rising more rapidly within his profession than the chevalier de Malte, since the abbé might be awarded a lucrative living immediately after his tonsure, whilst the Knight must complete the formality of a five-year residence on the island of Malta before he was considered eligible for the higher posts of the Order. The majority of young noblemen were attracted to the Army rather than to the Church, but their ambitions did not always coincide with family interests. To equip a son for the Army — buying him a regiment and ensuring him the means to support himself in a manner compatible with his rank — was an expensive proposition. The family fortunes could rarely secure equal opportunity for all sons; the lot of the younger son or sons was generally the Church or the Order of St John, by reason of the wealth and prestige assured by entry into either profession. Traditionally, the younger son of a noble family was destined for the Church: it was a family decision concerned with the family's fortunes, irrespective of
the youth's personal wishes: Bésenval's hero in Le Spleen falls into the category of younger sons entered into the Church as the natural course of events:

"Cadet d'une assez grande maison, je fus destiné, par ma famille, à l'état ecclésiastique." 1

So far removed was the family from consulting the youth in the matter of his life's work that they would enter the son into his profession at an extremely early age, when he could have no concept of the duties imposed by his future profession. The younger son was tonsured at the earliest possible opportunity, to qualify him to receive a lucrative living which might assist the family finances. The consideration that the youth might later prove ill-suited to his 'calling' was of little importance; it was held that he might later take off the frock whilst retaining the pensions awarded him in his state of abbé. 2

The comte de Vaxère in the marquis d'Argens's Le Faux Robin is brought up to accept the necessity of

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1. H. Carré, in his Noblesse de France et l'Opinion Publique au 18e Siècle, quotes the case of the young Des Cars who had a pension from an abbey which he retained when he changed his career to enter the navy: he was finally made a colonel in the cavalry.

2. Contes, p. 6.
his entry into the Church: his family cannot afford to support him in the 'world', since his elder brothers already constitute a drain on the family's resources:

"Dès la tendre enfance je fus destiné par mes parents à l'état ecclésiastique. Quoique né dans une famille noble, riche et connue dans sa province, je ne pouvais guère espérer de faire une fortune considérable dans le monde. J'étais le cadet de cinq frères qui avaient tous embrassé le parti du service; les dépenses que mon père était obligé de faire pour eux dérangeaient souvent les affaires. J'avais un oncle abbé qui possédait des bénéfices très considérables, dont il voulait disposer en ma faveur. La raison et la nécessité s'unissaient pour me déterminer à prendre le petit collet." (p. 1)

Entry into the Order was formalised even earlier; the Knight of Malta could belong to the Order when he was only a few months old. Such prestige was attached to the Order that a boy child would be enrolled in the Order almost at birth. From the age of eleven, the boy could assume the title of chevalier de Malte and wear the cross, but he could only join the Order in Malta on the completion of his studies. The Italian Marquis Spreti, who wrote a treatise on the ideal behaviour expected of the young knight, was admitted to the Order in 1743 at the age of five, but it was only at nineteen years of age that he actually took up residence in Malta, that he might undertake his caravans with the Order's
The hero of the *Faux Ravisseur* is early destined, as a younger son, to enter the Order:

"Mon père eut trois enfants ... deux garçons et une fille. Mon frère, qui était l'aîné, fut destiné à perpétuer la famille, et à succéder dans tous ses droits; et moi je devais être chevalier de Malte, sort ordinaire des cadets des anciennes familles. Peu de temps après ma naissance on me donna le nom de chevalier d'Abbeville."

The youth's career was planned for him whilst he was still too young to rebel against the dictates of his parents: he was early acquainted with his future career and grew accustomed to the idea. Franklin quotes the case of the abbé of Mailly who was beaten by his mother to force him to enter the Church, where he was certain to attain success in terms of wealth and prestige.

The abbé de Mailly obtained the post of 'aumônier' to the king and eventually rose to the position of Archbishop of Arles. In his romanticised biography of his brother-in-law, the count of Grammont, Hamilton recounts how the count's brother urged Grammont to enter the Church since it offered greater chances of financial

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2. In his *La Vie Privée du 13e au 18e siècle*, vol. 19-20, ch. II, part II.
success than a career in the Army:

"Il faut opter, mon petit cavalier. Voyez donc, si, vous en tenant à l'Église, vous voulez posséder de grands biens et ne rien faire; ou, avec une petite légitime, vous faire casser bras et jambes, pour être le Fructus Belli d'une cour insensible et parvenir sur la fin de vos jours à la dignité du maréchal de camp, avec un œil de verre, et une jambe de bois." 1

The pressure brought to bear on a younger son to enter the Church is clearly reflected in the novel: the uncle of Bésenval's hero in Le Spleen, himself a dignitary of the Church, tempts his nephew by depicting an ecclesiastical career as the surest means to achieve financial success:

"En vous faisant prêtre, ces richesses ne peuvent vous manquer, et vous obtiendrez, jeune encore, et sans peine, ce que vous n'oseriez espérer dans tout autre état, après les plus grands travaux et dans la vieillesse la plus avancée." 2

In La Place's La Laideur Aimable, the hero explains how his father (although he later renounced the Church on the death of his elder brother) was coerced into assuming the frock to spare further strain on his

2. Contes, p. 7.
family's finances:

"Il avait un frère aîné qui fut destiné de bonne heure à servir le roi; on fit prendre à mon père le parti de l'Église, et à l'aide d'un bénéfice que mon grand-père avait obtenu pour lui, il fut en état de venir faire ses études à Paris sans être à charge à sa famille."

In Le Roman du Jour, the point is made that not only does the choice of the Church as a younger son's career ease the burden of expenses entailed in the education of the sons but it also provides a welcome additional source of income to augment the family's fortunes:

"Comme cadet, je n'avais guère à choisir qu'entre l'épée et la soutane. Mon frère aîné était déjà dans le service à la tête d'un régiment d'infanterie. Le ministère qui accorde à de certaines familles des grâces qui paraissent y devenir héréditaires, n'est pas dans l'usage de les y multiplier ... Cette méthode qui ne place pas toujours les talents et le mérite, mais de laquelle la Cour s'écarte rarement, joint à l'exemple des fortunes brillantes et rapides qu'on peut espérer dans..."

2. By Sainte-Foix.

1. p. q.
l'état ecclésiastique, faisait souhaiter à mes parents que je prisse ce dernier parti, dans la vue d'assurer en moi des secours certains au reste de ma famille." (pp.1-2).

Similarly, the Order of St John was another resource for a family burdened with debts incurred in the attempt to maintain the family social status and its noble style of living. Philippe Sagnac cites the case of the brother of the marquis de Mirabeau as an example of the established pattern: the marquis spent a considerable sum of money in order to elevate his younger brother to the position of General of the galleys of Malta. The General received his recompense in the form of two rich 'commanderies' which put him in a position to support his family. In the novel, we meet with many instances of a younger son compelled to enter the Order to ameliorate family fortunes. Fanfiche overhears a conversation between a 'commandeur' of the Order and several monks, who are all her fellow passengers in a public coach. The 'commandeur' regrets that he was not permitted to enter a monastery, in accordance with his personal desires for a life withdrawn.

1. In his *Formation de la Société Française Moderne*, vol. II, p.223
2. *Fanfiche ou les Mémoires de Mlle de Bonneval* (1743),
from the tumult of the world, but was instead com-
pelled to enter the Order, that he might augment the
glory and the wealth of his family:

"Les vues d'une famille qui n'a pas voulu se prêter aux miennes, m'ont
contraint de sacrifier à l'inclination
que j'avais à rester parmi vous, à tous
les embarras d'une vie tumultueuse.
Un oncle que j'avais à Malte, et qui
occupait les premières dignités de
l'Ordre, m'a appelé auprès de lui pour
me rendre la victime de ses fantaisies
et de l'ambition de mes parents." (p. 93)

The honour of the family name was the primary consideration:
concern for the happiness of the individual member -
whether in the matter of a career or a suitable
marriage - was limited to his personal sense of grati-
fication at his participation in the glorification of
his lineage. Above all else, the 'status quo' must be
maintained: the honour of the family must be upheld,
for personal glory, as Montesquieu points out,¹ is
the mainspring of a monarchy.

Although some younger sons were not happy in
the decision taken by their families to push them into
the Church or the Order of St John, many fully concorded
in their families' wishes since they themselves were

¹. In his *Esprit des Lois*, bk. III, ch. VI-VII.
attracted by the advantages of an ecclesiastical career. By far the greater majority of candidates would never have entered the Church had it not offered great chances of advancement and the promise of a comfortable life. As Ariste in the Abbé de Bellegarde’s Modèles de Conversation remarks:

"Il y a peu de nos abbés et de nos autres prêlats qui fussent d’humeur à faire la proposition que firent à leurs diocésains St Augustin et St Chrysostome, qui voulaient remettre aux personnes du siècle la jouissance des biens temporels, qui avaient été donnés à leurs églises, en se réservant les oblations des fidèles pour leur subsistance." 1

The same consideration holds true for all levels in the ecclesiastical hierarchy: in the story of the Baron de Dorville,2 we are told of a certain shepherd’s son who chose to enter the Church — although he could not aspire to a very elevated position nor hope to amass a fortune — since he would thereby be assured of a comfortable living relative to his station in life:

"Le berger de la maison avait un fils qui voyant que son père conduisait péniblement un troupeau qui lui rapportait peu, avait pris un autre parti; c’était de vouloir être pasteur d’animaux plus sots, mais par-là même plus aisé à conduire, et

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1. Intercalated story in Part II of L’Êlève de la Nature by Beaurieu.

2. p. 302.
plus lucratifs que des moutons. 
Dans ce dessein il avait endossé la soutane."

The chevalier de Malte was also assured of
a far higher degree of fortune than he could expect
in the Army: Luc de Boyer d'Argens says of those who
enter the Order that:

"Ils sont assurés, surtout lorsqu'ils
y sont entrés dès leur tendre jeunesse,
qu'à l'âge de vingt-cinq ou trente ans
ils seront Commandeurs; c'est-à-dire
qu'ils auront plus de revenus que les
trois quarts des Brigadiers et des
Lieutenants-Colonels, qui, après
avoir servi toute leur vie, sont
placés gouverneurs de quelque fort
qui leur rend cinq ou six mille livres,
ui sont renvoyés chez eux avec mille
écus de pension ...". 1

The aim of the young knight was to attain one of the
rich commanderies scattered throughout Europe; he
aspired to a commandery in his own language which
would allow him to return to his native country, where
he would be sufficiently wealthy to appear with some
magnificence at court. The abbé or the knight was
not influenced by an inner conviction which called him
to serve God but by the promise of material gain.
Any sense of vocation was entirely lost. Roland

1. In his Réflexions Politiques sur l'État et les
Devoirs des Chevaliers de Malte, pp. 19-20.
della Platière, in his Lettres Écrites de Suisse, d'Italie et de Malte, remarks upon the fierce competition between all the knights, in their ambition to achieve a high position which would carry with it privileges and wealth. Life on Malta, he feels, revolves around the desire for advancement:

"On est sans cesse occupé; les vieillards d'arriver au suprême degré, les jeunes, des commandeurs âgés et infirmes, pour attraper quelque chose de leurs dépouilles: on n'entend autre chose, que, quel âge a-t-il? comment se porte-t-il? Quand mourra-t-il? Leur santé n'intéresse que pour qu'ils finissent, et qu'on jouisse à leur place."

An exception to the rule is Prévost's Commandeur de who presents himself as the sole knight of the Order who was not swayed by ambition in his choice of career. His original motive had been the necessity to conform to his family's wishes, but even on the death of his elder brother and his subsequent inheritance of the title, privileges and duties of an elder son, he declines to accept the title and refuses to marry in order to carry on the line. He elects, instead, to remain within the Order, although he is in a position to commence a career.


1. vol. III, p. 25.
in the world. At the age of eighteen he expressly turns his back on polite society to take his place within the community on the island of Malta, abandoning all rights as the eldest surviving son to his younger brothers. He considers himself unique in his role as a knight of the Order possessed of a sense of vocation. The abbé maintained much the same attitude as the chevalier de Malte: he entered his career with his eye to the main chance, as Ariste points out:

"Depuis qu'on a joint de grands revenus aux dignités ecclésiastiques, on ne les considère que par les avantages qu'on en retire." 1

A case in point is the abbé Loménie de Brienne, later archbishop and finally cardinal. In 1766 he was appointed as member of a commission concerned with the reform of the religious orders. He brought about the dissolution of numerous abbeys, but appropriated them to his own use. He awarded himself several abbeys, among them the abbey of Basse-Fontaine which conveniently happened to adjoin his park. When, on his recommendation, the abbey was dissolved, it served to enlarge the grounds of his castle. Louis de Bourbon-Condé, the count of Clermont, had taken orders

1. Modèles de Conversation by the abbé de Bellegarde, p. 307.
at the age of nine and had subsequently been awarded
the abbeys of Bec, Marmontières, Saint-Cloud and St
Germain-des-Prés: he had then obtained a dispensation
from the Pope to enable him to wear a sword and engage
in military service, whilst retaining the revenues from
his abbeys. It would seem that a young man, possessed
of the qualifications of high birth and influential
friends, might rise almost in spite of himself. The
abbé de Voisenon, as a younger son, was compelled to
enter the Church. In 1739, almost immediately on
entering the Church, he was made 'grand vicaire' of the
bishop of Boulogne, to whom he chanced to be related.
On the bishop's death, Cardinal Fleury offered him the
bishopric his uncle had left vacant. In an exceptional
display of disinterest, the abbé begged Fleury to find
another candidate better suited to the position than
himself. The cardinal was so impressed by his frankness
that he awarded him the Abbey du Jard, an undemanding
post which did not require the prelate's residence.
Descending the social scale, we come across further
examples of a very decided lack of vocation for the
ecclesiastical state. Imbert in his Chronique
Scandaleuse quotes the case of a certain abbé Marduel who
entered the Church and left it at will, according to the
fluctuations of his fortune:
"Ses parents le destinèrent à l'état ecclésiastique. Il prit le petit collet et le quitte bientôt pour se marier, fait du commerce, puis banqueroute et, finalement, s'embarque avec sa femme pour l'Amérique, fait naufrage, est sauvé mais croit sa femme noyée. Ses affaires allant mal en Amérique, Marduel revient en France, reprend le petit collet et se fait nommer d'abord curé de Saint-Louis-dans-l'Ile, puis de Saint-Roch."  

Further down the social scale still and turning to the literature of the period, we are presented with the character of Brigard in the Chevalier de Mouhy's La Mouche. Brigard steals money to finance his studies for the priesthood: he views the money spent as a shrewd investment. Once he has been received into the Church, he will never want again, for he is assured of a good living.  

The financial rewards of an elevated position in the Church were indeed great. An abbé might hold several lucrative benefices at one and the same time; he was not likely to be reproached with neglecting the


2. In reality, this statement did not hold good. There were many poor curés in the villages, devoted to their parishioners, who laboured for very slight financial reward and were forced to subsist on a mere pittance.
duties attached to one position for the sake of another, since he was not expected to fulfil them in any but a very perfunctory fashion. Sagnac mentions the Cardinal Dubois, Archbishop of Cambrai, who was the nominal head of seven rich abbeys in the North, the revenues from which amounted to 325,000 livres. According to Sagnac, all the great prelates were in receipt of an income worth at least 100,000, sometimes 200,000 livres. Such an estimate accords with the description by Mme de la Tour du Pin of her great-uncle's wealth in his position as Archbishop of Narbonne:

"Outre l'archevêché de Narbonne, qui valait 250,000 francs, il avait l'abbaye de Saint-Étienne de Caen, qui en valait 110,000, une autre petite encore qu'il échangea plus tard pour celle de Cigny, qui en valait 90,000. Il recevait de plus 50,000 à 60,000 francs, pour donner à dîner tous les jours pendant les États."

In the light of such astronomical incomes, one is not surprised at the anxiety of parents to guide their sons in the way to earn them.

To attain the highest ranks in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the candidate must be of a well-

established noble family. The most important posts were reserved for those of the ancient nobility. Yet nobility alone did not suffice; the secret of success lay in having powerful and influential friends. Bishoprics were inherited, passed from brother to brother, uncle to nephew. The necessity to pay court to those more advanced in one's chosen profession than oneself is stressed by Aristipe in his advice to Timagène:

"Il faut toujours tant qu'il est possible se lier avec des personnes qui soient au-dessus de nous, et de la même profession que celle que nous voulons embrasser. Il faut qu'un homme qui se destine à l'Église cherche à s'attacher aux puissantes ecclésiastiques qui servent de canal aux grâces réservées à cet état."

And in reality this was the path which led to success. It had been so in the previous century and it was equally true of the 18th century. The abbé de Mably, for example, after studying in Lyon, made his way to Paris to study at the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, at the invitation of the Cardinal Tencin, to whom his family

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2. The abbé de Chaulieu, for example, was friendly with the duke of Vendôme, who had him nominated abbé d'Aumale, prior of St George en l'île d'Oleron.
was allied. Saint-Sulpice was the seminary attended by all those destined by their birth to fill the highest ecclesiastical posts. To study with them was to count one's fortune assured. Caylus, who later became Bishop of Auxerre, was allied to the influential Mme de Maintenon – his brother married her niece – therefore he was viewed with favour at court. His first step up the ecclesiastical ladder was the position of 'aumônier' to the king. He was made bishop in 1704. Women in general exercised a considerable influence in such matters and would petition influential friends to obtain lucrative benefices for members of their family. Prior, England's Ambassador to France in the early years of the 18th century, was captivated by Mme de Tencin who put her charms to profit by begging Prior to intercede at Versailles on behalf of her brother, the abbé de Tencin, in order to secure him a rich abbey. Similarly, the chevalier de Bouffliers, or the abbé de Boufflers as he was known in his early years, stood in line to achieve the highest successes, if he had wished to remain in orders, for his mother was a great favourite with the deposed Polish king, Stanislas, at Lunéville. The youth himself was Stanislas's godson and in the king's good graces. Consequently, Stanislas was eager
to endow his godson with several lucrative livings: when the youth was barely thirteen years of age, he was awarded the abbey of Béchamp, and in 1757, at the age of twenty, he received a pension of six hundred livres on the Abbey of Sainte-Marie de Pont-à-Mousson. The Church was thus envisaged as an acceptable profession for the young nobleman in terms of status and wealth. All sense of the dedication of the self to a higher being, was missing. In the 18th century, the Church offered a lucrative career to the younger sons of the nobility. It formed part of the noble way of life, based on the privileges arrogated by the one small section of society.

Since the young candidate for the Church rarely felt spiritually drawn to his profession, his religious convictions were not always firmly rooted in the Roman Catholic dogma; his mind was therefore open to the secular ideas and philosophy of his time, the Age of Enlightenment. The twin bulwarks of society, the Church and the Monarchy, were no longer accepted without question. Reason\(^1\) was to be the great judge

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1. In the Age of Reason, reason had been applied to justify religion. In the Age of Enlightenment, reason was extended to judge and criticise all institutions and popular fields of enquiry. It was applied to religion not solely in the spirit of justification but in analytical criticism.
and the two great institutions must be subjected to its scrutiny. Science was not based on metaphysical reasoning but on fact; the great enthusiasm commanded by the new sciences exacted that the same criteria be applied to the former ruling light in human lives, religion. The dogma of the Church was put under the microscope: the Church, its medieval teachings, its basis in the Bible were all open to criticism. The Bible was no longer the absolute authority. Spinoza¹, for instance, was in effect one of the founders of Biblical criticism in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which viewed the Bible as part of creation, not as the key to it. Being but one component of nature, the Bible falls subject to the laws which regulate the other components of nature: it is therefore valid to apply the same criterion of reason to the Bible. Hence the evidence of the Biblical prophets must be discounted, since it does not accord with reason. Prophecy is emotional, therefore subjective, therefore non-rational. He likewise rejects miracles since they run contrary to the laws of nature, and it is irrational to suppose that

¹ Albeit that Spinoza lived and wrote in the 17th century, his works were so far advanced as still to be revolutionary a century after his time.
the Creator would oppose His own laws. Spinoza thus denies one of the firmest tenets of Roman Catholicism, its nature as a revealed religion. Philosophical movements joined forces to attack another basic premise of the Catholic Church, the very foundation of Christianity, the concept of original sin. The Church taught that it was necessary to fight against a corrupt nature to avoid sin and to absolve oneself from the original sin, but the Deists — and many of the 18th-century philosophers fell into this category — held that God made all perfect and hence He would not have permitted man to be the arbitrator of his own actions, therefore man was not capable of choosing between good and evil. In denying the possibility of free will, the Deists maintained the impossibility of sinning. The Philosophers' choice was a natural religion, based on the belief in man's natural goodness, on the concept of a state of nature which was neither good nor evil: such a tenet was ipso facto an attack on the Christian faith. It contradicted the very foundation of the Church, the concept of original sin. It was the negation of the dogma of man's fall from divine grace to which man could only be restored by the intervention of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church's claim to be the one true faith
was diametrically opposed to the spirit of tolerance which pervaded the whole century and manifested itself in the preponderance of literature, ostensibly Oriental, directed against fanaticism. The notion of one rigid faith which condemned all alien to its own particular dictates, which claimed to be the sole hope of salvation, was incompatible with the doctrine of tolerance. The Church as an institution was thus at variance with the newer trends in philosophy; its absolute authority was severely shaken by the men of science.

The philosophers were in opposition to the institution of the Church, but not necessarily to its members. A great number of the Church's young candidates were not emotionally committed to their profession. The 'philosophes' had their protagonists within the Church, as, for example, the abbé Coyer, who sprang to their defence, when they were attacked in Palissot's comedy,\(^1\) with his *Discours sur la Satire contre les Philosophes*, a criticism of Palissot's work. The abbé was a common figure in every branch of the 18th-century intellectual world. The intellectual world was full

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1. First performed in 1760. Coyer's retaliatory article appeared in the same year.
of bachelors unfettered by commitments and thus able to give complete concentration to intellectual pursuits. The abbé-philosopher was entirely at liberty to follow his intellectual bent, since his duties in respect of the Church were light and did not, in his eyes, impose any moral restrictions upon his intellectual activities: the Church was merely the source of the income which permitted him to indulge in his intellectual pursuits. Many abbés were intimate friends of the Encyclopaedists: the abbé de Prades, whose thesis for his doctorate caused great furore when read at the Sorbonne,¹ belonged to their circle and furnished Diderot with several articles for the Encyclopédie, notable that of Certitude. Another abbé, whose career was in certain ways parallel to that of the abbé de Prades, was Loménie de Brienne. Loménie de Brienne also caused a scandal with the thesis he submitted to the Sorbonne in 1752, for in it he propounded the doctrines of sensualism and the eternity of the world. He was closely linked with the philosophers

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¹ On November 18th, 1751—he followed the philosophical school which allowed of a state of nature peculiar to primitive man; the doctrine was in complete opposition to the Christian tenet of the Fall. In the steps of Locke and Hobbes he set out to prove that one can arrive at true religion by reason.
d'Alembert, Turgot and Morellet, himself a member of the cloth. The abbé Yvon also produced some articles for the Encyclopédie, with the view of removing from Catholicism the stigma of intolerance. In his articles for the Encyclopédie — Âme, Athée, Dieu — he makes a plea for civil tolerance. As a member of the Church, he cannot feel justified in admitting of ecclesiastical tolerance since this would be a refutation of the institution to which he belongs, but he does urge civil tolerance. It is unnecessary to communicate with those of Protestant faith, but one should not persecute them, or one is as culpable as the intolerant Muslim. Those in close contact with the leading philosophers could not but be influenced by their ideas in their works. The abbé Raynal, friend of Diderot and d'Holbach, collaborated with them on two elaborated later editions¹ of his Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Établissements et du Commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes, first published in 1770 as a history of Catholic cruelties in India: in the later editions, at the instigation of Diderot and d'Holbach, Raynal develops humanitarian considerations and his attacks against fanaticism, in

¹. 1774, 1780.
accordance with the spirit of the age. Many individuals within the institution of the Church were in direct contact with the philosophers and themselves played an active role in the intellectual life of the times. Whereas the Church itself remained solidly conservative and firmly aligned with the civic powers, king and nobility.

The 18th century was the time of enquiry into every branch of learning - moral, political, pedagogical and scientific. Many members of the Church, in close contact with the intellectual life of the age, wrote on the topics current in the intellectual world: the abbé figures prominently in the literary output of the century. The Church was not the sole institution to suffer analytical criticism at the hands of philosophers. The State was the second symbol of authority which was to be judged in the light of new ideas and philosophies. In the late 17th century, the greatest abbé, in terms of literary achievement, was undoubtedly Fénélon, later Archbishop of Cambrai, who displayed considerable interest in political reform. His Télémaque, although an entertaining novel in its own right, contains criticism of the monarchy, further developed into a bold and vehement attack on the monarchy in Fénélon's Lettre à Louis XIV, which lays down in
very definite terms the accusation that the rule of Louis XIV had degenerated into despotism and absolutism. When Fénélon's pupil, the young duke of Burgundy, was appointed successor to Louis XIV, Fénélon took the opportunity to compose the work entitled the *Tables de Chaulnes*, which advocates the reform of the court. Criticism of the existing political situation was a refutation of the consolidated authority, cemented by centuries of tradition, of the Church and State. The pedagogical tracts which abound in the 18th century form a whole with the criticism meted out to Church and State alike. Hitherto religion had been the source of morality; with the loosening of the Church's hold, a secular morality was necessary in accordance with natural religion. The abbé de Mably was deeply concerned with moral and political questions: for him, social virtues were above monastic virtues: the humanitarian moral was preferable to the religious moral. But he would not admit of any moral system completely alien to religion. The new morality could be nurtured in the child through his education. Similarly, a new political system required a new form of political unit: the child should be early educated in the duties of his role as member of the community, to shift the centre of interest from self to other. Allied to these
motivations was the status of pedagogical theory as a traditional topic of intellectual debate. Pedagogical discussion was especially designed to absorb the ecclesiastical mind since one of the abbé's traditional occupations was his role as pedagogue or tutor.

Education, both public and private, lay largely in the hands of the Church. The abbé de St Pierre, immersed in the moral and political sciences as his eighteen volumes of Ouvrages de Politique et de Morale indicate, displayed great interest in the education of the young noble. His concept of the morally sound youth as regeneration for corrupt society is in accordance with the century's interpretation of education as the preparation of the individual for a new social body.

Yet St Pierre views the problem from the standpoint of medieval ecclesiasticism: the world is corrupt and the youth is therefore to be retained as long as possible in the care and moral protection of his ecclesiastical pedagogues. The more worldly school of thought, which viewed education as a preparation for a society which, although corrupt, afforded no alternative and which must be entered at the earliest possible opportunity,

1. 1738-41.
was represented by the abbé de Bellegarde. His prolific works fully recognise the need to educate the young man in the ways of the world and on how to succeed within it by employing the often dishonest methods adopted by others within society.\(^1\) The school of pedagogical theory characteristic of the later years of the century and concerned with the education of the young citizen, was also represented in ecclesiastical circles.\(^2\) This, despite the fact that, as presented by Montesquieu, education of the citizen presupposes equality in a democratic republic; whereas the existing education of the gentleman concords with the authority of monarchy and Church, which embraces the privileges of the nobility. It was the existing social structure which afforded to the young noble candidate for the Church position and wealth.

1. The titles of his pedagogical works reflect the nature of the content — L'Art de Connaître les Hommes; L'Art de Plaire dans la Conversation; Réflexions sur ce qui peut plaire ou déplaire dans le commerce du Monde — all published together in 1725.

2. The abbé Coyer, for example, in his Plan d'Éducation Publique (1770), presents ideas which are obviously lifted from Rousseau's Émile as his own original thoughts.
Characteristic of the Age of Enlightenment are the keen awareness of the living world, the deep interest in the forces behind nature, in observation and experimentation. The 18th century saw the evolution of the theory of interaction between race and environment. It witnessed the birth of the theory of man's evolution based on the laws of nature. The impact on society in general, and on the doctrines of the Church in particular, of the new views on man's evolution can hardly be over-estimated. Until Buffon's work on natural history, expounding general views on man's genealogy, the study of natural history had been based in religious doctrine. The abbé de Pluche's Spectacle de la Nature was a standard work, wherein he exalted the phenomena of nature as a monument to the glory of God, who created all of nature to man's advantage. But Buffon's work was in complete contradiction to the Biblical theory of man's evolution as expounded in Genesis:

1. Published 1749: 1754.
2. 1732—56.
3. Although the abbé de Pluche was not always orthodox in his views, he narrowly escaped imprisonment by his superiors for his criticism of the Pope's bull Unigenitus. It was only the intervention of Rollin which saved him.
natural history was no longer a branch of theology but in direct opposition to it. In an attempt to reconcile the diametrically opposed viewpoints of the Christian and the scientist, various ingenious theories were suggested; for instance, that there were different levels of truth, one being that of faith, the other that of reason and science. One outstanding member of the Church who helped to vulgarise the new theories in science was the abbé de Nollet, a physicist in his own right. Nollet was largely responsible for the interest in physics which took root in 18th-century France. Although his parents had compelled him to enter the Church, he was himself attracted to the study of the sciences, and spent much of his time conducting experiments in physics in his laboratory. He collaborated with Dufay in his research on the effects of electricity, and was given free reign in Réaumur's laboratory. In 1728 he was admitted into a society formed to advance the study of science under the auspices of the count of Clermont, and in 1739 he was made a member of the Academy of Sciences. He gave many lectures on physics both in Paris and in Bordeaux, with great success, and produced

1. In 1742, at the request of the physicians of the city.
numerous works on the subject. His renown brought him to the notice and into the favour of the king, who dispatched him to Italy in 1749 to report on the state of the sciences there, and in 1756 Louis XV appointed him to the Chair of Experimental Physics at the college of Navarre, a post created especially for Nollet. He attained great success as a lecturer, with students competing for a place at his lectures. Nollet was but one member of the Church famous for his interest in the sciences, but the most outstanding figure in this field must be the abbé de Condillac, brother of the abbé de Mably and author of the celebrated Traité des Sensations. Condillac was not eager to enter the Church, but concurred in his family's wishes. His own interests lay elsewhere in philosophy and the sciences, embracing all popular fields of enquiry; his works cover the topics of education, commerce, politics, history and literature. But his best-known text is the Traité des Sensations, where Condillac explores the workings of the human mind by tracing man's knowledge.

1. Leçons de Physique (1743); Recherches sur les causes particulières des Phénomènes électriques (1749); Essai sur l'Electricité des Corps (1750); Recueil des Lettres sur l'Electricité (1753); L'Art des Expériences (1770).
to its origin and attempting to determine the limits of human knowledge. Condillac shows himself to be a disciple of Locke, in his choice of sensation as the source of ideas, differing from Locke only in that he rejects reflexion as a secondary source of human ideas. For Condillac, nothing stems from within. Man at birth is but an animal with the capacity to experience sensations, and this aptitude is activated by experience, not by the development of an inner force. The theory of sensualism was greeted with great disfavour on the part of the Church since it ran contrary to the Christian concept of the inner conscience or soul.

So far, we have examined the background of actual society in the question of the abbé/philosopher.

1. Other fashionable topics were not neglected by the ecclesiastical intellectuals. The abbé de Coyer, for example, explored the much debated question of the suitability of commerce as a gentleman's career in his Noblesse Commercante. He also followed the spirit of the time in his accounts of voyages, one feature of the 18th-century's preoccupation with different peoples and customs - Voyage d'Italie et de Hollande (1775); Nouvelles Observations sur l'Angleterre (1779). History based on the critical analysis of facts also enjoyed a certain popularity in the 18th century, one notable historian being the abbé de Bos, who maintained a lengthy correspondence with many great brains of the day - Histoire Critique de la Monarchie Française (1734). The abbé Lacaille was interested in astronomy; in accordance with the 18th-century passion for precise observation, he travelled to the Cape of Good Hope (1750), in order to observe personally the stars of the Southern hemisphere.
He figures less commonly in the literature of the period, since the 18th-century novel is chiefly concerned with the nobleman and his way of life, the main occupations of which were gallantry and the pleasures of polite society. Yet the figure of the abbé absorbed in the new sciences was not entirely neglected: in Prévost's Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité, we are briefly introduced to the abbé de *, tutor to M.L. Ostensibly to satisfy his pupil's thirst for knowledge, the abbé de * has immersed himself in the study of current trends and ideas in the sciences and philosophy. He has his own laboratory and is acquainted with those interested in science, such as a certain Valras, well-versed in the science of chemistry. His extensive library contains volumes on all topics — theology, history, literature and particularly natural philosophy; in his collection are the standard works of all the great philosophers, including those of Spinoza and Hobbes. Generally, however, the philosopher plays a minor role in the novel proper. The abbé figures more prominently in the novel in the role of the worldly abbé given up to the pleasures of polite society.

The abbé was often the creator, not the created, of the written word. As many of the Church as were interested in the sciences were interested in the
arts, more particularly, in literature. In the sphere of the novel, the names immediately evoked are those of Fênelon and Prévost: Fênelon's *Télemaque* was one of the greatest books of his century, and its popularity continued in the 18th century; equally, the works of the abbé Prévost place him in the foremost ranks of the 18th-century novelists. The Church produced lesser as well as greater writers, less profound in their literary output than Fênelon or Prévost, but who reflected the spirit of the age in their works. The 17th-century salon was imbued with the spirit of Epicurism, whose adherents sought happiness in this life in the objects which surround man and did not pin all hope on a future life. Although the pleasures of the senses formed part of the goal of earthly happiness, the Epicurean philosophy did not advocate libertinage; it rather sought the golden mean, the balance between the pleasures of the senses and those of the spirit. A poet in the Epicurean tradition was the abbé de Chaulieu, who depicted this ideal of happiness on earth in his works, earning for himself the pseudonym of Anacreon of the Temple. His poetry, singing the pleasures of the table, but in modified tones, exercised a great influence over Voltaire in his Epicurean poetry. Similarly, a friend of Voltaire, the abbé de Voisenon,
applied his talents to the literary world and achieved a modicum of celebrity as a light poet and playwright in the fashion of his time. In the same light vein, the abbé Coyer commenced his literary career with a series of pamphlets, written in a somewhat frivolous style but which contained valid if not remarkably profound moral lessons, his *Bargatelles Morales*. Yet other members of the Church were attracted to the critical aspects of literature, for example, the abbé Grosier. Opposed in his views to the current philosophy and a defender of the Establishment, both religion and monarchy, the abbé Grosier displayed considerable talent as a literary critic. His first position as a noted critic was as editor of the periodical *Annae Litteraire*; he later put the experience gained thereby to good use by revitalising the *Journal des Beaux-Arts*, which was


2. Published 1754. The chevalier de Boufflers also achieved a degree of fame through his frivolous, not to say licentious, works, among them the short story he wrote whilst still in the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, the adventures of a milkmaid, Aline, (1761) and an erotic poem, *Le Coeur* (1763).

3. In 1779.
declining in popularity. The rejuvenated *Journal*, under its new title, the *Journal de la Littérature, des Sciences et des Arts*, regained its former importance under the direction of the abbé. Evidently, the Church was well represented in all spheres of the literary world, as in every branch of the sciences.

Although a certain percentage of the intellectually-orientated members of the Church expressed views in accordance with the functioning of the Establishment, Church and State, many were at variance with the twin authorities. Since they showed scant respect for the traditional views imposed by these institutions, they could expect no lenience in their attacks on the grounds that they were members of the powerful institution of the Church. Mention has already been made of the great scandal suscitated by the doctoral thesis presented at the Sorbonne by the abbé de Prades. His thesis was held to be an aggressive and open attack on the Christian faith, hitherto only attacked in clandestine works. The propositions he set forth in his thesis were felt to be diametrically opposed to the Church's doctrine, as they encompassed the tenets of current philosophy on the dogma of revelation and the origins of man.
Condemned by the Sorbonne, Trades was forced to flee to Holland: it was only on the retraction of the views expressed in his thesis that he was received back into France and the Church. Any opposition to the authority of Church or State was liable to entail incarceration in the Bastille. The abbé Méhégan's Zoroastre, the first 'philosophe' novel by name, earned him a sojourn of twenty-nine months in the Bastille, which cured him of his pretentions to social criticism. Although undoubtedly aware of the reaction his novel would evoke from the authorities, Méhégan had chosen to jeopardise his potentially most successful career for the sake of his beliefs. Loyalty to the cause of the 'philosophes' also occasioned the downfall of the abbé Morellet.

When Palissot's play, the Philosophes, sponsored by the comtesse de la Mark and the princesse de Robecq, on the anti-Encyclopaedists theme, appeared, it was greeted by a series of defensive pamphlets, among which figured the Vision de Charles Palissot by the abbé Morellet. In his Vision, Morellet extended his criticism to include Palissot's patrons, alluding also to the imminent death

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1. Published in 1751.
of the princesse de Robecq, a fact which hitherto had been kept secret from her. Her incensed admirer, the duke of Choiseul, consequently exercised his influence and brought about Morellet's imprisonment. On leaving prison, the unfortunate abbé was exiled from Paris on the king's orders. Literature judged to be pernicious to public morals was subject to the same chastisement as that which was found to be overtly sympathetic to the 'philosophes': in June 1762 the abbé du Laurens was sent to the Bastille for having written and circulated licentious poetry deemed corruptive to public morals. The abbé Laporte had chosen the printing of clandestine works as opposed to the writing of them, since the former offered prospects of a more lucrative career; he, too, was taken to the Bastille after being discovered at a secret printers. Polemical works on politics, in opposition to the current ruling powers, were also calculated to bring the State's wrath upon the writers' heads. Louis XV's acquiescence in England's request that Prince Edward be expelled from France as part of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, aroused universal indignation. Verses were published, critical of

1. 1748.
the king's decision, which resulted in numerous arrests. Among those incriminated in the affair were several members of the Church — the abbés Dujart, Gisson, Bonis, de Montagne and Si. gagne — all of whom were imprisoned in the Bastille in July 1749.

The abbé was able to devote himself to intellectual pursuits since his ecclesiastical duties occupied little of his time. His surplus energies might be channelled elsewhere: it was not at all unusual for a young man to adopt a second profession completely unconnected with his original career, once having taken orders. Many possessed a living of some sort, abbey or bishopric; others were in the service of the king, with the duty of distributing his alms (aumôniers); still others served as confessors. Such occupations were directly connected with the Church, but the field where the young man might exercise his talents, whilst yet retaining his status of man of the Church, was far wider. The traditional career open to men of the Church was education, either public or private. Poorer members of the Church, with little hope of immediate promotion or the award of a comfortable living, would commonly seek a position, preferably in a noble household, as tutor of the children. The household which
the abbé-tutor might serve covered a wide section of
the social structure, within the range of the higher
bourgeoisie throughout the various degrees of nobility.
An abbé of lesser birth and with fewer powerful allies
might find a position as tutor in the household of a
wealthy bourgeois. Those of a more elevated noble
family and with greater connections could expect an
influential position as tutor to a young noble.
Fonélon and Fleury, for example, the latter under
Fonélon's superintendence, were charged with the edu­
cation of the young duke of Burgundy, later appointed
successor to Louis XIV, on the demise of the dauphin.
Condillac was also tutor to the Royal Family, in the
person of Louis XV's grandson, the Duke of Parma, for
whom he wrote a series of textbooks. A position of
influence over a pupil destined for power offered great
opportunity for future advancement. The abbé Coyer
filled the role of governor to the Prince de Turenne,
later duke of Bouillon; the gratitude of his pupil
earned the abbé a comfortable existence for the rest of
his days. Similarly, the abbé Porquet was fortunate
enough to attain the tutorship of the young Boufflers;
it was felt that the choice of a man of the cloth was
especially fitting for the pupil destined to enter the
Church, as was the younger son of the marquise de Boufflers, favourite of Stanislas at the court of Lunéville. Porquet's treatment of his pupil secured the favour of the influential marquise de Boufflers, who subsequently procured for him the post of 'aumônier' in Stanislas's service. The role of the abbé-tutor had evolved into a convention, to the point that many tutors assumed the collar and title of abbé without ever having taken orders. Public education was traditionally in the hands of the Jesuits, the colleges therefore offered a career for the man of the cloth. Positions of influence could be acquired: the abbé Asselin was nominated principal of the famed college of Harcourt, and applied himself seriously to his task, by undertaking various useful reforms in the college's curriculum. The abbé Hiballier was another who attained a position of great influence in a principal college, when he was made 'grand maître' of the college of Mazarin.

Education was a traditional field of ecclesiastical activity, yet it was not the sole outlet for the talents of a man of the cloth. The role of educator was by no means the only secular occupation accessible to the abbé: his influence might also be detected in the political sphere. Ecclesiastical influence in
matters of States was not a novelty: one has but to recollect the power wielded in the 16th and 17th centuries by Richelieu and Mazarin. The 18th-century abbé was eligible for a post as one of the royal ambassadors. The abbé, later cardinal, de Polignac, for example, was sent to Poland as the king’s ambassador in 1693; he became firm friends with the Polish king and on his death in 1696 attempted to have the Prince of Conti elected. Since the Prince delayed his arrival, he was not popularly received and was forced to turn back. Louis XIV laid the blame, perhaps unfairly, on Polignac’s shoulders, therefore, in 1698, another ecclesiastic, the abbé de Châteauneuf, was dispatched to Poland to rectify his predecessor’s blunder. The abbé Lenglet-Dufresnay, known in the literary sphere for his prolific works, also embarked on a diplomatic career: from 1705 he filled the post of first secretary in Latin and French, at the court of the Elector of Cologne, resident at Lille. Another abbé of importance in the political sphere was the abbé Dubois: favoured by the Regent, the Duke of Orleans, he was appointed in January 1716 to the post of ‘conseiller d’État’: he figured prominently in the
negotiations with England which resulted in the Triple Alliance of 1717 between France, England and Holland. As a reward for his services he was awarded the post of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1718. Entry into the Church did not, therefore, restrict the candidate's influence to one particular sphere, namely, within the institution of the Church.

Against the factual background of the all-pervading influence of the ecclesiastic may be placed the figure of the abbé, as he is presented in the novel. The extent of the abbé's power is not stressed in the 18th-century novel; the most popular literary conception of the abbé tends to the negative rather than to the positive. Possibly as part of the literary current of anti-monastic feeling established by Rabelais, the ecclesiastic is generally represented as rapacious, worldly, disloyal to the Christian ideals. Certainly for many candidates the main attraction of the ecclesiastical state was the material advantages it offered. The immense revenues possessed by the highest ranks of the Church were of little use to one resident in a provincial abbey; therefore the possessor of such wealth contrived to spend the greater part of his time at Versailles or in Paris. His riches served
but to enable him to keep up the noble style of life. That such magnificence ran contrary to the monastic ideals was manifest, but it was accepted in 18th-century society that a young man entered the Church for the sake of his own fortune and that of his family; materialism and delight in secular pleasures were the natural outcome of such an attitude. The very magnitude of a high-ranking ecclesiastic's income was calculated to engender this frame of mind. For the majority the rents they received did not impose a rigid set of duties, or a dedication of self to the benefit of others, they rather supplied the wherewithal to maintain the cult of the self, in the projection of the ego as centre of wealth and magnificence. The ecclesiastic's revenues were of importance to him only insofar as they furthered his own personal and familial glory in the reflection of his splendour. Mme de la Tour du Pin, writing in 1820 of her great uncle, the Archbishop of Narbonne, stresses this attitude; her great-uncle possessed several extremely profitable livings, but spent as little time as possible resident in his abbeys:

1. *Journal d'une Femme de cinquante Ans.*
"Mon grand-père, l'archevêque de Narbonne, allait peu ou point dans son diocèse. Président, par son siège, des États du Languedoc, il se rendait dans cette province uniquement pour présider les États qui ne duraient que six semaines pendant les mois de novembre et d'août. Dès qu'ils étaient terminés, il revenait à Paris sous prétexte que les intérêts de sa province réclamaient impérieusement sa présence à la Cour, mais, en réalité, pour vivre en grand seigneur à Paris et en courtisan à Versailles."

In fact, it was common practice for the principals of the greatest abbeys to live the life of a prince in one of their numerous town-houses or castles. They led a life identical to that of the greatest lords in the land, spent in great dinners, concerts, balls and gambling. Their income enabled them to live on a grander scale than many who were officially 'in the world', as the men of the Church in theory were not. The abbé by definition was severed from earthly ties, but in practice he figured prominently in 18th-century polite society:¹ the sole condition of his entry was

1. The great 18th-century pastime of hunting, for example, was forbidden the clergy, yet many indulged openly in the sport. The Archbishop of Narbonne, M. de Dillon, spent much of his time engaged in hunting — a passion which ran in the blood of any nobleman — yet prohibited the priests of his diocese from doing so.
that he continue to wear his black robes. Such a restriction may have proved irksome to the wealthier prelates - although compensation for sobriety of colour could be sought in sumptuousness of cloth - but was welcomed by those of lesser means. The cassock was acceptable in all circles and cost considerably less than a fashionable suit of clothes deemed fit for polite society:

"Un homme à Paris qui est mis avec distinction, peut s'insinuer dans les cercles les plus fleuris, sans que l'on s'infore qui il est. On ne s'attache qu'à son extérieur, ... il est beaucoup de laïques qui prennent le petit collet, parce qu'on peut passer partout dans cette décoration, et il n'en coûte que peu." 1

The richer abbé was anxious to decorate his person beyond the bounds set by ecclesiastical attire, and thereby aped the 'petit maître' in his fashions:

"Les abbés parisiens ... sont d'une propreté enchantée, ils mettent de jolies manchettes, et des anneaux aux doigts; ils ont aussi des habits de soie, et quelquefois une mouche auprès de la lèvre pour la rendre vermeille." 2

1. *Les Moeurs de Paris* by La Peyre.
2. Ibid.
His wealth was utilised not merely for ornament unsuited to a man of the Church, but it also procured the abbé forbidden delights of the flesh. The abbé, according to La Peyre, was bent on secular pleasures to the detriment of his spiritual duties; the sole concession to his vocation was the Tartuffian hypocrisy he employed in his relations with women; not all ecclesiastics wished to flaunt their conquests:

"La galanterie, sous les auspices de la mode, a porté son théâtre chez les abbés parisiens. Les bénéficiaires et les riches partagent leurs revenus avec les belles, et leur donnent des équipages. Toujours frisés, poudrés, galants, ils s'étudient à leur plaire; le rabat est mis à terre fort souvent, ils endossent des habits galonnés, et vont, l'épée au côté, à la comédie et à l'opéra. Ceux, dont les facultés sont bornées, ne laissent pas encore de divertir leurs maîtresses; ils les font venir chez eux sous le nom de parents, et les régalent de colifichets, de confitures, de friandises, de vins, de liqueurs. Loin d'aller où le devoir les appelle, ils suivent de point en point toutes les maximes du siècle." 1

Some members of their Church, it might be argued, owed their position to their expertise in the corporeal rather than the spiritual sphere. The abbé Pornquet,

1. Les Moeurs de Paris by La Peyre.
tutor to the young chevalier de Boufflers, is described by Maugras as a mediocre teacher, an unlikely ecclesiastic, but as 'galant, fort galant même'.¹ In the same category one might place the abbé Leconte, tutor to the children of the count de Bercheny. Of little education but of fine appearance, the abbé was obviously a success with the female members of the household, since he was one day found in a very compromising situation with the countess's sister, Mlle de Wrett: shortly afterwards, the count obtained from Stanislas, for him, the priory of Hérvial.

A young man who had not chosen a celibate life for himself was unlikely to adhere to his vows: one example of revolt against monastic principles is given by the comte de Clermont: the count, whilst living on the 200,000 livres of rent from his abbeys, displayed a conduct which was far from the monastic ideal. The abbé de Voisenon likewise found difficulty in battling against the flesh; although a man of great charity (much of his living from the abbey du Jard was donated to secret charities), he was completely unsuited

¹. La Cour de Lunéville au 18e siècle, p.198.
to a life lived on the spiritual plane: like Clermont and many other members of the Church, he associated with actresses.¹ He formed part of the Epicurean circle which gathered around the famous actress, Mlle Quinault-Dufresne, and lived with another actress, Mlle Favart. It was common for a member of the cloth to have a pretty housekeeper or 'niece' living in his household: Mme de Rothe lived many years under the same roof as her uncle, the Archbishop of Narbonne: their parentage served as excuse for their cohabitation, but did not prevent a probably well-founded current of gossip speculating on the nature of their relationship.

Yet a certain mode of life was expected of a man of the cloth, as the author of L'Éducation Parfaite² points out:

"S'il porte la soutane, il trouvera bien des choses dans la conduite d'un homme d'épée qu'il ne doit pas suivre. Sa profession l'oblige à une plus grande modestie; à une conversation plus retenue, à une piété plus exemplaire, et à des moeurs plus réglées." (p. 95).

Many of the Church's members might lead far from exemplary

1. Clermont's mistress was the celebrated actress, Mlle Deschamps.

2. Often ascribed to the pen of the abbé de Bellegarde, (i.e. J-B. de Morvan).
lives in private - here one might recollect the special relations which existed between some 'dévotes' and their confessors, the worldly behaviour prevalent in many monasteries - but if they wished to succeed in their profession, certain conventions must be observed: flagrant disregard of ecclesiastical principles could call down the wrath of those in power. A case in point was the Epicurean poet, the abbé de Chaulieu, who had powerful allies, in the Prince of Condé and the Duke of Vendôme, for his bid to be admitted to the Académie Française. His libertine way of life was, however, brought to the attention of Louis XIV, who was therefore obliged to refuse him membership of the Academy. In practice, model behaviour was not expected of the man of the cloth, but he was nonetheless forced into a degree of hypocrisy by the divergence between the official and unofficial attitudes to the ecclesiastic's conduct.

Should the lure of the secular life prove too strong, should it impose too great a strain on the candidate, it was possible to request the Pope's permission to throw off the cassock. Since in practice the young man might still satisfy the longing to participate in polite society, the need to petition the Pope usually
arose only in cases where it was imperative for the young man to marry. Marriage was perhaps the only feature of secular life which lay outside the abbé's power to satisfy. Generally, the young man came to terms with his position as a member of the Church and evolved his own system whereby he chose either to follow his vows or contravene them at his own discretion.

In the event of the death of an elder brother with no male issue, however, he was expected to leave the Church in order that he might marry and carry on the line. It was no longer imperative that he provide his own living as he automatically inherited the family wealth and property in the stead of the defunct elder son.

In his Mémoires, Saint-Simon quotes the case of the Comte de Téssé who married his younger daughter to a certain Maulevrier who had left the Church on the death of his elder brother in battle. Engagement in order was not, therefore, an irrevocable step, but dissolution of the vows was condoned by the family only if it became necessary to provide an heir. The attitude adopted by the family indicates that no illusions were

nurtured as to the younger son's sense of vocation; the Church was a traditional convenience, to be entered or left at will, as it accorded with the family's plans.

The literary picture of the state of the Church reflects with accuracy this particular aspect; the worldly abbé, given up to the pleasures of secular life, is a literary commonplace in the 18th-century novel. Mlle de Thelis, in a letter to the marquis de Chavigny designates the abbé de P. as one of 'these young abbés more knowledgeable in love than theology', indicating that he is frequently to be met with in society. The marquis d'Argens also remarks, somewhat acidly, on the amorous nature of the man of the Church, in his Nones Galantes, when he describes the meeting between his two heroines, Dorothée and Agathe, escaped nuns both, and two handsome young abbés, in the Tuileries:

"Après s'être enivrés durant quelques moments du plaisir de les voir, ils passaient aux déclarations les plus passionnées, et les plus tendres; et on sait, si ces messieurs-là entendent le langage de l'amour."  

1. Lettres du chevalier Pantouil et de Mlle de Thelis by Godard d'Aucour, p. 6.
2. by J-C. Boyer d'Argens; edition of 1740, pp. 142-143.
As a natural conclusion to their meeting, the abbés decide to protect the two girls:

"Riches des revenus de l'Église, ils en firent l'usage, qu'en font communément ceux de leur robe. C'est-à-dire que le patrimoine des pauvres fut employé à entretenir le luxe et la mollesse de leurs jeunes amantes." ¹

Far from lessening the young man's powers of attraction over the opposite sex, his black robes would seem to have heightened them. In Galli de Bibiena's La Poupée, one man of the cloth reminisces on his youthful ardour: he chose a career in the Church not despite the restrictions he felt it imposed upon his amorous adventures, but because he felt the cassock invested his person with greater charm for the opposite sex:

"En sortant du collège ..., j'emportai des dispositions heureuses pour me distinguer dans le monde ..., On me laissa trop de liberté pour mon âge; je n'avais que dix-huit ans. Je ne m'occupai que de l'idée du plaisir; mon cœur et mes sens me firent sentir que les femmes seules pouvaient me rendre heureux. Je crus m'apercevoir qu'elles voyaient avec plaisir l'habit que je portais. Je le pris dans l'espérance de leur plaire." ²

¹ Canapé Couleur de Feu the view is expressed that the abbé may draw still other advantages from his state in the pursuit of love: his cassock guarantees him unconditional entry into all houses, and since his vows

² p. 7.
forbid him to marry, he may enter upon any number of love-intrigues with impunity:

"Mettez-vous en tête que la plupart de ceux qui embrassent cet état, n'ont en vue que de se procurer une vie tranquille et voluptueuse; exemptes de tout embarras de ce monde, ils n'en connaissent que les plaisirs, et c'est pour se les assurer, qu'ils se sont imposés la loi du célibat. À leur habit évangélique toutes les portes sont ouvertes; ils s'insinuent adroitement dans le sein des familles, et s'en rendent tôt ou tard les maîtres." 1 (pp. 43-44).

In *Le Triomphe de La Vertu*, the Comtesse de Bressol recounts the sad fate of her elder sister, Mlle de Mirieu, who was seduced by an abbé. His method was to admit his love, express a desire to leave the Church and enter the Army, but to stress the opposition he would meet with from his family who were influenced by the rich revenues he received as an abbé. Mlle de Mirieu was thus persuaded to consent to a secret marriage, which was presided over by a bogus priest. Having satisfied his appetite, the abbé abandoned her; in despair she entered a convent where she gave birth to a child and soon after died of sorrow. Such behaviour

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1. In his *Amusements des Eaux de Schwalbach*, La Pimple gives another advantage of the cloth in that mothers must be 'kind' to those well-placed in the Church, so that their sons stand a good chance of attaining a good position within the Church.
is more to be expected of a hardened rake than a man of the cloth. Yet many an abbé is portrayed in the 18th-century novel as completely unscrupulous: Poellnitz in his *La Saxe Galante*, alludes to a certain abbé who, anxious to ingratiate himself in the favour of a powerful prince, agrees to procure for him a beautiful young girl to whom he happens to be related: the abbé acts as the Prince’s agent in his least praiseworthy pleasures solely to further his own material interests.

As in society itself, the most morally degenerate abbé in the novel feels compelled to mask his true nature. The comte d’Uffai’s abbé-tutor, in *Le Soldat Harvenu*, is to all outward appearances the model abbé — but he is also young and handsome, and a true Tartuffe. On the death of the count’s father, he applies himself to the task of consoling the widow, and he succeeds to such an extent that he eventually gains control of the entire household. Once in his position of power, he destroys the family circle: the widow dies of a broken heart in the convent to which she has retired. A popular euphemism for taking a mistress was to offer a young girl protection from evil men of the world. In *L’École des Demoiselles*, Constance’s mother
suggests that she accept aid from a certain abbé in order to succour her ruined family:

"C'est un homme compatissant, qui se fait un plaisir de sauver de jeunes personnes comme toi des séductions des gens du monde. Sa fortune le met en état de nous faire un sort agréable, il possède déjà plusieurs bons bénéfices, et sa naissance lui donne des droits à quelque chose de mieux." 1

Hypocrisy is a necessary component of the abbé's make-up, if he intends to indulge in carnal pleasures; Vaxère learns this lesson when he overhears his former mistress engaged in conversation with her new lover, a wealthy abbé, who remarks:

"Étant actuellement pourvu de bénéfices considérables et songeant à parvenir aux grandes dignités ecclésiastiques, il faut que ma conduite paraîsse n'avoir plus rien que de réglé; il est bien différent de n'attendre que de simples abbayes, mon état de simple abbé n'avait rien d'incompatible avec la galanterie: elle semblait au contraire être un de ses principaux attributs." 2

Clapandrus 2 comes to grief simply because he has not been sufficiently circumspect in his behaviour. All prospects of a good living are lost for him since his

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2. Le Faux Rabineau, Marquis d'Argens, p. 196.
superiors have had the spectacle of his dissipated life continually before their eyes. Vaxère is unable to reconcile the contradictory interests of his profession and the call of the flesh: a brilliant student, he falls by the wayside after a first love affair which engenders a series of similar relationships. He finally admits to himself that he could never return to the Church having grown accustomed to secular pleasures; he is unable to renounce them, as he feels a member of the Church should do. Another may leave the Church for love of one particular woman, as in Mauvillon's Le Soldat Fervenu, where one abbé quits the Church and obtains a commission in the Army, so he may more easily pay court to the sister-in-law of whom he is enamoured. The standard family reason for leaving the Church is also frequently displayed in the novel, as in the intercalated story of the hermit in Catalde's Le Paysan Gentilhomme, where an abbé is urged to leave the Church on the death of his two elder brothers, killed on the battlefield, and on his own subsequent inheritance of the family fortune, so that he may provide an heir.

1. Le Faux Rabin by Marquis d'Argens.
Allowing for the differences between the two states, one may trace a similar pattern in the literary concept of the chevalier de Malte. Rarely having chosen his career himself, the young man was not inclined to acknowledge the vows imposed on him by his state. Gallantry was the ruling idea of 18th-century polite society; a young noble was expected to participate fully in the social whirl, to enter upon love-intrigues. Set against such a background, the monastic vows—poverty, obedience, chastity—of the Order of St John seemed outdated. A young man who had been persuaded to enter the Order for material gain felt no allegiance to its ideals; he was drawn more strongly to the gay social whirl calculated to appeal to his youthful senses. Consequently, little heed was paid to the vows of a knight of the Order. The young knights whiled away the specified period stationed on Malta prior to an appointment abroad, in gambling, drinking and philandering, as if they had been in Paris, within the confines of polite society. Life on Malta was an unceasing round of balls, concerts and banquets. It was accepted that a wealthy knight should support a mistress, often a
singer or actress. The chevalier de Sémoncour, for example, disappointed in his hope that his elder brother would die without progeny, and therefore compelled to leave for Malta, has a great weakness for the opposite sex, which, on his appointment to a rich commandery, he is able to indulge; Mme Dorval remarks of him to Dorine:

"Au reste sa religion pour récompenser sa valeur l'a honoré d'une belle et riche commanderie; pour tout dire, en un mot, c'est qu'adorant les femmes, rebuté de celles à prétention, il choisit toujours dans les divinités des coulisses ..." 2

Maintaining a mistress who made a career of purveying her charms was presumably a less complicated affair than an emotional relationship on a non-business basis with a woman of equal social standing; and a paid mistress of a lower social caste was unlikely to expect marriage

1. Fougeret de Montbron gives the following account of the life of the Order on Malta, in his Le Cosmopolite ou le Citoyen du Monde: "On s'attend sans doute que je vais parler des religieux militaires de l'Ordre de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem, de la situation de leur île, de la manière dont elle est fortifiée et de la beauté de la ville. Peut-être se flattera-t-on aussi que je dirai quelque chose des plaisirs innocents de ces pieux défenseurs de la foi; de leurs opéras, en un mot, de ces charmantes cantatrices, que les baillis, commandeurs et grandes croix entretiennent, et que les chevaliers greluchoissent." (p.35).

2. Plaisirs d'un Jour ou la Journée d'une Provinciale à Paris by Colombe, (dit Sainte-Colombe), c. p. 76.
as a recompense. Conversely, the mistress was secure insofar as the celibate knight would not end their association in order to enter upon a profitable marriage; the beautiful Helena's mother is motivated by this reasoning, as the hero realises:

"... j'avais entrevu à son langage, que les femmes galantes font bien plus de fond sur un amant forcé au célibat, que sur ceux qui peuvent leur échapper par des dispositions qui leur font rompre tôt ou tard un commerce d'amour, pour songer au mariage. Elle m'avait donc pressé de faire les voeux de la religion."  

By their length and durability, some associations took on much the same character as a marriage; the elderly Commander in Prévost's work has been involved in such a relationship with Helena's mother: for fifteen years he has lived happily with her in his commandery, away from the prying eyes of others of his Order.

As in the ranks of the Church, hypocrisy plays a necessary role in the amorous knight's life and loves. His penchant for women, his rejection of his vows, are accepted as natural. The handsome, dashing young knight figures commonly in the 18th-

century novel, as a sort of Don Juan who holds immense appeal for women, with all the glamour of the man of action. The Don Juanesque element is envisaged as an integral part of the young knight's character, whereby he is expected to pay court to the ladies, as the elderly Commander tells the novice knights:

"saves-vous qu'après le service de la religion, c'est aux dames que nous devons nos premiers soins." 1

The novice chevalier Justiniani is informed by his uncle, himself long a member of the Order, that prowess in love is a sure path to popularity and success among the other knights of the Order:

"Il ordonna qu'on me fasse embarquer pour Malte: à peine avais-je alors dix-sept ans. Il avait dans l'Ordre un frère et plusieurs anis qui me reçurent avec beaucoup de bienveillance. Après trois ou quatre mois de séjour dans cette île, mon oncle me proposa de me faire chevalier; mais persuadé que je n'étais point propre à garder le vœu de continence, je lui découvris mon âme et mes sentiments. À mon discours ce vénérable vieillard ne put tenir sa gravité. -- Justiniani, me dit-il, si tous les chevaliers étaient aussi bons soldats qu'ils sont zéliés partisans de Vénus, ils seraient tous invincibles. La chasteté parmi nous est une vertu tout à fait rare. Elle n'est observée que lorsque les forces

épuisées et la conduite peu réglée ont rendu insipide tout ce qui peut flatter les sens. Ainsi le serment solennel qu'on fait aux pieds des autels ne doit point vous faire d'ombrage. La galanterie paraît ici comme naturelle. Elle tient même souvent lieu de mérite; bien loin d'en punir les excès, on applaudit à un jeune chevalier, lorsque cet amusement ne l'empêche point de remplir ses autres devoirs."

The highest ranks of the Order all doubtless support a mistress, applaud or at least tolerate the escapades of the Order's youthful members; but all mistresses must be discreetly hidden from official eyes; the elderly Commander, for example, chose to live in his commandery with his mistress, rather than accept a more profitable post which entailed residence close to the Grand Maître on Malta itself. An emotional entanglement, of the nature which Prévost's young knight feels for Helena, was not to be encouraged. The satisfaction of purely physical needs might be condoned, but a deeper attachment was liable to distract the young knight from his duties, as is indeed the case with Prévost's hero. Prudence in his relationship with Helena is advisable on two counts: firstly, that it

might prove detrimental to his career prospects, and secondly, that no woman was safe on Malta, surrounded by idle young men eager to find distractions to compensate for the boredom of living on Malta away from the centre of polite society. Both considerations torture the young knight in the early days of his relationship with Helena:

"Je la laissai exposée, non seulement à Péres, jusqu'au jour de son départ, mais à toute la jeunesse de l'ordre, dont l'avidité est extrême pour les femmes ... Quel lieu voulais-je choisir pour la possession tranquille de mes amours? Avais-je une retraite, comme le vieux commandeur, pour en faire le séjour de deux femmes? ... Étais-je donc résolu d'abandonner ma vocation, ou me flattais-je que le temps que j'emploierais à l'amour me serait compté pour une caravane?"

The attraction the knight held for women was indubitable. Carasi, in his diatribe against the corruptions within the Order, describes how the 'fair sex of Italy counts the days in waiting for the arrival of the galleys of religion'. The knight has sufficient charms to seduce a young lady, but by his state he is unable to repair the damage to her honour by marrying her. Many a mother's heart contracted in fear lest her daughter

2. L'Ordre de Malte dévoilé (1790), pp. 133-134.
1. Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Malte, vol. I, part I.
succumb to a handsome young knight's charms: 'Mlle de Valance is warned by her mother of the inevitable consequences of falling in love with the chevalier de B.:

"Que ferez-vous donc du chevalier de B? Il ne peut être votre époux; il cherchera à vous séduire, il y réussira peut-être; vous serez à jamais perdue d'honneur et de fortune."

The vow of celibacy offered a useful escape to the philandering knight shy of matrimony: Mlle de Gueldres in Carmontelle's *Duc d'Armay* hopes that her lover, the chevalier de St Ange, will consent to marry her, since his brother has died and he has taken over the rights of the elder son, but the chevalier is not tempted by the matrimonial state and therefore leaves for Malta. Freedom from the worry of marriage was bound to encourage the young man in his adventures and helped to mould him into a rake. De La Solle cites the example of a certain knight who, having ruined one besotted woman, the Comtesse D., decides to leave his Order, not to console his penniless mistress, but to marry Mme de L.,

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2. Part II.
a rich widow; as a knight of the Order and a younger son, he feels material considerations to be of primary importance. The knight's alacrity in profiting from his physical charms indicates the absence of a sense of vocation; he himself is a composite product of his age, on the one hand the rake, on the other hand a parvenu in the sense that he is ready to barter his charms for wealth. The sole hope of one enamoured of a knight of the Order consisted in the possibility of his requesting permission of the Pope to be relieved of his vows. Since lack of fortune was the principal motive behind the entry of most young men into the Order, renunciation of the vows was only likely where either the young woman could offer a fortune (and, unless she was independent, as in the case of the young widow, her parents were unlikely to agree to a match with an impoverished knight) or the knight became the eldest surviving son of the family. Henriette, in Mme Benoît's Elisabeth, reminds her friend Elisabeth that the latter's lover, a knight of the Order, can never be hers: Elisabeth clings, however, to the hope that he will consent to leave the Order:

"Songes-tu que des voeux sacrés et la fortune mettent une éternelle barrière entre vous."
"Le chevalier n'a point prononcé ses voeux, il est absolument libre par les lois, il n'est engagé que par la démarche qu'il a faite pour complaire à sa mère, mais comme la mort vient de lui ravir son frère ainé, qui était la seule espérance de sa famille, cet événement pourrait changer sa destinée."

Just as the abbé might revert to secular life with the Pope's permission, so might the knight be relieved of his vows to permit him to marry and carry on the line.

Marriage for the sake of the family was considered the only valid reason for quitting the Order—at least by the world at large. The youth who was in the grips of a fierce emotion, however, was unable to rationalise in like fashion. In the flush of first love, the young knight decides to abandon studies, career prospects and family to elope with his beloved.

In Guichard's Mémoires de Cécile, the chevalier de Beaubourg falls in love with Cécile: he has not yet completed his studies and therefore has yet to go to Malta to take his vows. His argument is that he may abandon the cross of the Order as long as he has not yet taken his vows. His family is opposed to the match since Cécile is poor and is unsure of her parentage.

The most dedicated student could be distracted from his

1. vol. I, lettres IV and V, p.29 and p.35.
studies and his future profession by love: the most obvious example of this in 18th-century literature is Prévost's Des Grieux. Prior to his meeting with Manon, Des Grieux is a model pupil and brilliant student at Amiens, innocent of the world and the lure of the flesh. But from his very first encounter with Manon, all is lost for Des Grieux: peace of mind, sense of vocation, career and family, all pale into insignificance beside his consuming passion for Manon Lescaut. He rejects all the anchors and props of which his former existence was composed and runs off with Manon, resisting all attempts by family and friends to restore him to his former mode of life. In the Histoire de Mlle de Terville,¹ the tale of crossed lovers resolves itself in a happier fashion: the marquise de M.'s youngest son is destined for the Order but has not yet taken his vows when he falls in love with the poor but noble Mlle de Lovel. The couple elope, marry in London and escape to India; all ends happily when the elder brother dies; the chevalier assumes the title, inherits the family fortune and all is forgiven by the marquise de M. The objection by Mme de Puisieux.  

¹ Mme de Puisieux.
raised by the family in such cases, however, was a very valid one: the knight would inherit very little - if anything - from his family, he was therefore trained for a profession. If he rejected his profession, he forfeited the means whereby it was intended that he support himself.

The main theme, in novels which treat the knight and his attitude to his Order, is the young man's rejection of the Order for love, but there are instances in the 18th-century novel of its converse. We frequently read of the man who has lost his beloved and consequently all meaning to life, often through his own fault, and who therefore enters a monastery or elects to lead a hermit's life, in order to expiate his sins and consequently come to terms with his sorrow. The convent provides asylum for the wronged, abandoned mistress. In the same tradition, the chevalier Danceny,¹ disappointed in his love for Cécile, ostensibly turns his back on society to enter the Order, intending to lead the ideal celibate and austere life:

"Je pars pour Malte. J'irai y faire avec plaisir et y garder religieusement mes voeux qui me sépareront d'un monde dont, jeune encore, j'ai déjà eu tant à me plaindre. J'irai enfin chercher à perdre sous un ciel étranger, l'idée de tant d'horreurs accumulées et dont le souvenir ne pourrait qu'attrister et flétrir mon âme."

He is seeking an escape from society and from himself: for he lacks the courage to marry Cécile after the scandal suscitated by her relationship with Valmont. But he chooses to ignore the fact that life on Malta is very similar to life in polite society: he will be an anomaly among his fellow-knights in his desire to be true to his vows.

Since the man of the Church was little hampered by his professional duties, there was scant cause for refusal to obey the familial decision to enter him into the Church or the Order of St John. The noble youth's future was determined by his position in the family and conceived in terms conducive to the family's welfare. He was not viewed as an individual and therefore had little say in his own destiny. The familial decision was based on tradition, prestige and financial reward, in short, on worldly considerations. Generally, the youth concurred in his family's desires, for he was
still able to follow his bent - either in intellectual pursuits or the many amusements offered in polite society - whilst retaining his status as abbé or knight. Although indulgence in such pleasures may have been contrary to the official dictates of his profession, he was still in accordance with the maxims and ideas of his time. He was not encouraged by his family to regard his position as man of the cloth as a vocation, merely as a lucrative profession. The only true source of conflict between the youth and his family's dictates on this score lay in the impossibility of reconciling his state with the institution of marriage. The common cause of the youth's rebellion against the profession chosen by his family - and hence against his family and society in general - was love, if we are to believe the 18th-century novel. The conflict between generations in the 18th century was not on the score of ideas, but on account of the feelings of the heart: conflict, where it did exist, arose on emotional not ideological grounds.
CHAPTER 2
SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION

The young noble, if not intended for the Church, was faced with the challenge of independence, once his formal education had reached an end. He was then usually sixteen or seventeen years old. Entry into the world was no easy matter; it completed the break between boyhood and manhood. He was finally alone to face up to adult problems - a situation known to all adolescents at any point in time. He finds he must embark upon a second education, one adapted to suit this new world, where he is in all things a novice. His lack of experience is most evident in a field which is of primary importance - the emotions, the relationship between men and women. This was the knowledge the lack of which distinguished the novice from the man of the world. Hitherto, he has had little contact with polite society, and hence knows little of the nature of women, or the manner in which he must behave in their company. This is an art in which he must attain a high degree of proficiency, for the feminine half of polite society wielded a great deal of influence in 18th-century life; the man of the world was
distinguished by his ability in handling his relationships with women.

The adolescent was thus faced with a great difficulty—how to gain experience and knowledge in this field. The young girl of his social status—necessarily of his status, to associate the noble's refined feelings with those of the senses; for only those of higher birth were considered capable of such exquisite sentiments—was inaccessible to him. She was strictly brought up, often being cloistered away in a convent until the age of puberty, when she was deemed fit for marriage. She was then delivered up, at a very early age, to her husband, often many years her senior. Even were the young girl not so strictly guarded, she would in all probability have been even less knowledgeable and more timid than the young boy. The youth stood in need of instruction from a woman with some experience of the world. This instruction was willingly supplied by an older woman, widowed or still married to a husband who kept his own mistresses and showed no interest in his wife's conduct. It was rare that the woman had any love for the man her family had chosen for her. Chaste until marriage, she felt
justified in seeking her own pleasures after the ceremony. The nobleman's conduct with women of polite society was an art. In order to please the opposite sex and thereby to establish a reputation for himself as a man successful with women, the young man must learn the delicacies and subtleties of this art; the airs, the turn of phrase. To be accepted as a member of society, one must learn the language of love. The subtleties of this love are neatly defined thus by Horneft:

"La galanterie est faite de deux choses fort différentes mais qui prennent les mêmes apparences. C'est de la curiosité sentimentale, le plaisir de découvrir les 'ressorts cachés' des sentiments; c'est la recherche du 'fin du fin'... La galanterie, c'est aussi, tout au moins dans ce 18e siècle, du plaisir sensual sans pudeur; mais avec une pudeur apparente, celle des mots. Il s'agit de parler de choses basses avec élégance et de distractions grossières avec distinction." 1

This was the instruction the older woman of polite society could offer him.

The notion of a sentimental education of the young man under the tutelage of an older woman, was an

accepted practice in the 17th century. It was the completion of the young noble's instruction and aroused no murmurs of moral disapproval. A young man must know how to comport himself in the company of women, it was an essential part of his education. Young men were urged to seek the guidance of such women, who were often famed for their success. Such a case is quoted in Courtilz de Sandras's Mémoires de Chavagnac, talking of a certain famous courtisane:

"Quand quelqu'un de la Cour avait un fils qui n'était pas dégourdi, on l'envoyait à son école. Son éducation était si excellente, qu'on faisait bien la différence d'un jeune homme dressé des mains de ** d'avec un autre. Elle leur apprenait à faire l'amour, la délicatesse de l'expression, la manière jolie; si peu de peine qu'elle se donnât, pourvu qu'elle trouvât un naturel docile, en peu de temps elle le rendait honnête homme."(p.59).

It was quite in order for an older woman to initiate the young boy into the art of love; the young man lacked the polish acquired by experience, the older woman set out to supply it.

Any woman of experience who was willing to educate the young man was acceptable: this was not a match of love, it was a reciprocal service. The young man is bedazzled by the glitter of polite society life:
intoxicated by the atmosphere, he longs to taste the fruits of love, but confronted by so many women of the same type, he is unable to choose any particular one; he is grateful for any woman's attention and is ready to attach himself to any woman ready to consider him:

"Le goût que je sentais bientôt pour les femmes devint en peu de temps si vif que je n'étais pas en état de choisir un objet déterminé; elles faisaient toutes une égale impression sur mon cœur, ou plutôt sur mes sens. La première, je ne dis pas qui m'eût aimé, mais qui m'eût permis de l'aimer, eût été sûre de m' rendre amoureux d'elle."

The young hero of both Crébillon's Égarements du Coeur et de l'Esprit and the abbé Chayer's L'Amour décent et délicat (which is an exact reproduction of Crébillon's work, save for the omission of the character of the rake Versac and all pertaining to him) finds himself in much the same position. He longs to be initiated, to love, no matter who might be the object of that love:

"On s'attache souvent moins à la femme qui touche le plus, qu'à celle qu'on croit le plus toucher. J'étais dans ce cas autant que personne. Je voulais aimer, mais je n'aimais point; celle de qui j'attendais le moins de rigueur était la seule dont je me crusse."

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1. Mémoires sur les moeurs de ce siècle by Duclos, p. 9.
The woman's availability invests her with beauty in the youth's eyes; as Rinville remarks:

"Vénus même n'a jamais été si belle que nous le paraît la première femme qui nous laisse espérer des faveurs." 1

So flattered is the youth that a woman displays interest in him, that he ignores the disparity in their ages; perhaps he is fooled by her artificial aids to beauty into considering her much younger than she is in reality. Thémidore, in the abbé de Voisenon's Histoire de la Félicité, recounts his own first contacts with the opposite sex:

"Je la regardai, elle le remarqua; je rougis, elle s'approcha; je n'ai jamais été si embarrassé ni si flatté; elle... avait bien cinquante ans, mais je n'en avais que vingt, ainsi elle était jeune." 2

Who the woman is, makes little difference to the youth.

The evidence of this lies in the young man's attitude

1. Mémoires de deux amis ou les Aventures de Barniwall et Rinville by J. La Solle, vol. II, part III.
to the woman after she has succumbed to him — or rather after he has succumbed to her. Sainte-Foix's hero finds it hard to imagine why he singled out Mme de St Farre:

"Je la trouvais vieillie à n'être pas reconnaissable; et ses charmes, dont la possession m'avait paru si délicieuse semblaient s'être flétris tout-à-coup et n'avoir laissé à leur place que les traces d'un long et fréquent usage des plaisirs."

It depended on the woman, therefore, to decide for him. A little encouragement on her side concentrated all his repressed emotion on her person. The mere fact that she is a woman is sufficient attraction. All she must do is guide him to a realisation, and subsequently to a declaration of his feelings.

The young man is too timid to select one particular object for his passions: it only remains to any woman attracted to him to help him out of his quandary. This is the problem facing Meilcour:

"Je fus six mois dans cet embarras, et j'y serais sans doute resté plus longtemps, si une des dames qui m'avait plus vivement frappé, n'eût bien voulu se charger de mon éducation."
The youth is experiencing the tumultuous awakening of his sexual feelings; all women are the target of his new desires. He appreciates the general, he must seek out the particular to gain greater knowledge of the general:

"Mon sang, qui bouillait dans mes veines, me fit alors sentir le ferment d'un nouveau genre de désirs, qui m'intéressa plus que mes chevaux et mes chiens. Et quoique ces mouvements tumultueux n'eussent encore aucun objet déterminé, le vide qu'ils laissaient dans mon coeur l'occupait bien plus que les plaisirs bruyants dont mon âge me donnait le goût, la connaissance et les moyens... La nature qui me donnait ces désirs, ne tarda pas à m'en indiquer les objets; et le goût que je sentais pour tout le sexe en général, n'attendait pour se développer que l'aveu de la première femme qui voudrait bien accepter mon hommage."

Angola finds himself in this position: surrounded by so many charming women at the court of the 'Fée Lumineuse', he is at a loss as to where he might direct his attentions:

"Chacune semblait lui demander son cœur; une émotion vive, mille désirs tumultueux, s'élevaient dans son âme; né sensible et voluptueux, il éprouvait d'avance cette douce

1. Lydia ou Mémoires de Milord D* by La Place, part I.
fureur qui caractérise les premières passions de la jeunesse, il ne savait à laquelle s'arrêter; son coeur en proie à l'impulsion la plus vive se perdait dans cette incertitude aimable qui précède les passions, et peut-être n'en fait pas un des moindres agréments. Il eût voulu les posséder toutes, et cet excès de désir l'empêcha d'être subjugué par aucune."

The woman is aware of all that is happening, the youth is yet too naive to understand. In Duclos's Confessions du Comte de **, we see how the woman, in this case the marquise de Valcourt, gradually draws the boy to her:

"La marquise de Valcourt, qui n'était plus dans la première jeunesse, mais qui était encore extrêmement aimable, saisit avec vivacité les plaisanteries que l'on faisait sur moi, et sous prétexte de plaire à la maîtresse de maison qui paraissait s'y intéresser, elle voulait que je fusse toujours avec elle. Bientôt elle me déclara son petit amant; j'acceptai cette qualité et mon assiduité devint bientôt la matière de la plaisanterie générale. Je m'y prêtai de meilleure grâce que l'on n'eût dû l'attendre d'un enfant qui n'avait aucun usage du monde; cependant je commençais à sentir des désirs que je n'osais témoigner, et que je ne démêlais qu'imparfaitement. J'avais lu quelques romans, et je me crus amoureux. Le plaisir d'être caressé par une femme aimable, joint à l'impression que font sur un jeune homme du rouge, des diamants, des parfums, et surtout une gorge qu'elle

1. Angola - Histoire Indienne by La Morlière, part I.
avait admirablement belle, m'échauffait l'imagination; enfin tous les airs séduisants d'une femme à qui le monde a donné cette liberté et cette aisance que l'on retrouve rarement dans un ordre inférieur, me mettaient dans une situation toute nouvelle pour moi. Mes désirs n'échappaient pas à la marquise, elle s'en apercevait mieux que moi-même, et ce fut sur ce point qu'elle voulut entreprendre mon éducation. (pp. 7-9).

Since the youth has very little experience of life and of women, he is very vulnerable. Any woman of experience can make him believe all she wishes him to believe. The marquis de Roselle is an extreme example of this gullibility. He has been introduced by his mentor, Valville, not to a woman of polite society, but to another category of woman equally suited to the task of initiating him in the art of love - 'une fille d'opéra', Léonor. But her vast experience looks to be his undoing. For she is tired of the life she leads, so she hits upon the idea of swaying him into marrying her. She takes advantage of his youth and inexperience; her beauty appeals to his senses, and he mistakes this attraction, in its violence, for love. Because he is young and so untainted by the ways of the world, he still retains the ideal of a virtuous woman. Léonor, of course, realises this, and exploits it. She refuses to award him her favours, for she knows that by
so acting, she will sharpen his desire for her, whilst, at the same time, convincing him of her virtue. He refuses to believe all those who remind him of the many lovers she has already had. Even if he could accept the fact that she has led a disreputable life up to that point, he would insist that she had reformed in character - even although, all the while, she is being kept by a money-lender. She is able to anticipate his every action: he sends her a gift of expensive diamonds which she returns, knowing full well that he will send her another gift of still greater value. Léonor acts her part with great cunning; she writes to him:

“Avez-vous besoin d'être généreux pour être aimable? - Reprenez, je vous en conjure, des dons trop magnifiques. Vous ne me soupçonnez pas d'ingratitude; mais ne paraissez pas par de tels dons me soupçonner d'une avidité méprisable qui n'est pas dans mon coeur. Hélas, vous jugez de mes sentiments par ceux de mes semblables. Préjugé cruel, c'est à la vertu à m'en défendre. Votre estime ne le devait-elle pas aussi? Je vous renvoie l'écrin que vous mites hier sur ma toilette; je vous supplie de le reprendre et d'être sûr que ma reconnaissance égale votre générosité.”

The infatuated marquis replies in the fashion Léonor anticipated, insisting that she wrongs him, that she

carries her virtue to excess, that she should accept his gifts as a mark of his tenderness. Léonor naturally feels obliged to accept, but her acceptance of the gift provides her with yet one more opportunity to fool him, as her reply to him shows:

"Vous l'exigez, mon cher marquis; je me rends, j'accepte ce superbe présent; daignez pourtant ne vous point informer de l'usage que j'en veux faire, et permettez que je ne conserve que la bague. Que vous me rendez heureuse. Je puis donc faire du bien."

Had she not wished him to enquire the use to which his gift was put, she would not, of course, have drawn his attention to this question. Quite by coincidence — that it happened by design would not occur to the marquis — the poor family to whom Léonor gave aid arrives to thank her, in a most touching fashion, at the very hour at which the marquis is accustomed to visit her. His love for her now knows no bounds; he is fully convinced of her superiority over others of her type. It is later discovered, from her chambermaid, that very little of the money realised by the sale of the diamonds actually was donated to this family. One a little less in love, or with a little more knowledge of the world, would surely show a little suspicion. But, as all young men in their first contacts with the

world, he has yet to acquire the caution and cynicism which come with experience.

One who found himself in a similar position is the father of the comte de Mommejan, who suffered in the same fashion at the hands of a certain Mlle de Saint-Chon. He is young, innocent, new to the world, whilst she has much experience of life, hence she is able to enact the role which he, as a naive and romantic youth, would like to see her fill— that of an honest, simple, modest young woman. But her virtue is a carefully calculated affair, designed to irritate his passion and to engage him in the marital state: his feeling for her grows since she avoids any tête-â-tête with him in which he might declare himself to her:

"Tant de difficultés augmentaient mon amour: il prenait des forces par les peines qu'il essuyait; et loin que je m'aperçusse du manège de Mlle de Saint-Chon, j'attribuais à sa sagesse, et à sa retenue, les soins qu'elle employait pour que je ne lui pusse point parler en particulier." 1

He is finally brought to see the light of reason by the timely intervention of a friend, himself a former lover of the 'virtuous' young lady.

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1. Le Philosophe Amoureux ou les Mémoires du Comte de Mommejan by the Marquis d'Argens.
In many cases, the young man is so much a novice in love, that he is not conscious of the significance of his own emotions. The woman concerned becomes aware of the young man's interest before he does. The 'faux rabin' is deeply attached to the comtesse de Dorset, but he is unable to fathom his feelings for her:

"Comment pouvais-je lui apprendre que j'étais amoureux puisque je l'ignorais moi-même?" 1

She herself is far from inexperienced in the ways of the world, and hence is aware of all that passes through her youthful admirer's mind. The young man's inexperience is one cause of his timidity before a woman of polite society; another is the respect he feels obliged to treat her with. The woman is perhaps the same age as his mother; he has yet to acquire the easy manners of the man of the world, and he is aware of his own gaucheness and inexperience in comparison with the experience of the woman. His respect holds him back from declaring his feelings for the woman, for fear that she may take offence or hold him up to ridicule. Meilcour is petrified with respect for Mme de Lursay:

1. Le Faux Rabin by Marquis d'Argens, p. 7.
"J'avais si peu d'expérience qu'une déclaration d'amour me semblait une offense pour celle à qui elle s'adressait ... Loin que je susse la façon dont l'amour se menait dans le monde, je croyais malgré ce que je voyais tous les jours, qu'il fallait un mérite supérieur pour plaire aux femmes." 1

Even when Mme de Lursay has shown unmistakeable signs of interest, according him an interview in private, he is strangled with timidity and respect. He cannot make his declaration, he does not know where to begin. He forces himself to start a conversation, which, however, could never lead him to a declaration:

"Vous faites donc des noeuds, madame, lui demandai-je d'une voix tremblante? À cette intéressante et spirituelle question, Mme de Lursay me regarda avec étonnement. Quelque idée qu'elle se fût faite de ma timidité, et du peu d'usage que j'avais du monde, il lui parut inconcevable que je ne trouvasse que cela à lui dire." 2

In the Mémoires de deux Amis by De La Solle, one of the friends, Barniwell, recounts how, as an inexperienced youth, he fell in love with a worldly-wise young widow called Sophie, to whom he longed to declare himself but feared her reaction. She provides him with an excuse—

2. Ibid., pp.143-144.
studying art — for paying her frequent visits, but on each occasion he finds it impossible to broach the subject of his feelings for her. All serves as an excuse for his timidity:

"Quelque visite embarrassante excusait toujours ma timidité vis-à-vis de moi-même. Je me repentais d'avoir si mal employé le temps auprès de la belle Sophie, je me promettais de lui dire les plus jolies choses du monde, la première fois que je la verrais, et cette première fois se passait comme toutes les autres. Je trouvais tous les jours quelque nouvel obstacle, ou plutôt je ne triomphais pas du seul qui s'opposait à mon bonheur, qui était ma timidité."

The youth is too timid to grasp an opportunity: in Baculard d'Arnaud's *Le Bal de Venise*, a certain Signora Theresa invites an inexperienced young man who has caught her eye to her gondola. Theresa must make every move: she mocks the respect with which he treats her. In an attempt to outweigh his timidity and respect by his desires, she asks him to retrieve and replace her slipper, which she has purposely let fall. She thereby exposes a dainty foot and a well-formed leg; but he is still too naive to profit from the occasion. Theresa finally quits him in annoyance at his excessive timidity; the enormity of his sin is revealed to him by a friendly maid, who gives him the
following piece of advice:

"Avant que de nous quitter, j'ai
un conseil d'amie à vous donner;
si jamais il vous arrive de remettre
la mule d'une dame, songez à n'en
pas rester là ..."[1]

The young man lacks the courage to declare himself openly, although the woman has enough experience of life to judge the nature of his feelings for her. This is the case with Mme de St Farre, as the young hero realises:

"Mme de St Farre fut celle que
choisit mon cœur pour m'initier
dans les mystères de l'amour.
Mes yeux lui avaient dit cent fois
ce que ma bouche n'avait encore osé
lui avouer. Elle m'avait paru se
plaire à y lire l'effet de ses charmes,
et je croyais avoir lu dans les siens
qu'elle désirait davoir avec moi un
éclaircissement un peu suivi."[2]

The hero seeks the advice of the accomplished rake, Sertac, on the subject of his approach to Mme de St Farre. Fortified with Sertac's counsel, he obtains an audience with Mme de St Farre. But his resolution fades before the reality of her person, his bravado evaporates in her presence:

"Lorsque je me vis seul avec Mme de
St Farre, j'oubliai bientôt une partie
des leçons de Sertac. Jamais on ne

1. 1st part.]
parut plus amoureux, et jamais on ne
teut plus ridiculement; les désirs
qu'elle m'inspirait et ma fatuité
naissante, faisaient en moi un mélange
bizarre de timidité et de confiance
maladroite qui ne ressemblait à rien." 1

He grows more and more confused, stumbling from one
mistake to another:

"J'avais sans cesse les yeux sur elle,
je gardais le silence et je faisais
les fautes les plus grossières.
Elle avait elle-même les distractions;
je ne parlai que pour en faire l'imper-
tinente observation. Elle en rejeta:
la cause sur son mal de tête, je le
crus sottement et plus sottement encore,
je continuai de jouer." 2.

The youth lacks the experience to penetrate
the true significance of his 'beloved's' words. The
hero of Voisenon's Histoire de la Félicité meets the
great challenge of the first private interview with a
woman of experience in the customary fashion. His
chief concern is the establishment of his reputation as
man of the world, and he views his first tête-à-tête
with a woman of polite society in the light of a crucial
first step. Yet he is unable to react in the fashion
he would like, since he is as yet completely foreign in
polite society: he searches desperately for conversation,
but his trepidation and respect render him speechless.

Convinced that he must treat the woman with the deepest

1. Ibid., p. 22.
2. Ibid.
respect, he is completely oblivious to the irony of her words:

"Je vous distingue beaucoup, au moins en vous recevant seul. Madame, assurément, lui dis-je, je n'en abuserai pas. Je le vois bien, reprit-elle; je suis assurée qu'il n'y a pas un seul jeune homme qui à votre place n'eût déjà été impertinent, mais je dis fort impertinent; je serais bien fâché, repris-je, que cela m'arrivât."

Lacking confidence in his own powers to attract the opposite sex, and as yet unacquainted with the easy manners of women in polite society, the youth is as yet incapable of comprehending when he has pleased a woman; he fails to grasp her tacit concordance in his own desires. Zobéide, in La Morlière's skit on the manners of polite society, is as anxious as Angola to bring matters to their natural conclusion, but Angola himself has no knowledge of the workings of the female mind and therefore shows himself unnecessarily reticent:

"Peu fait à la conduite des tête-à-tête, il éprouvait à la vérité une sensation délicieuse, inconnue pour

1. Angola - Histoire Indienne. Tales set in ostensibly Chinese or Indian settings were very popular in the 18th century, illustrating the great interest in other civilisations and providing a safe vehicle for satire of the French social structure and customs.

lui jusqu'alors; mais il ne savait comment l'exprimer. Trop jeune encore et trop peu expérimenté pour croire que son aventure fut avancée, à peine se croyait-il permis de parler ouvertement de son amour; la violence de ses passions aurait pu, il est vrai, produire un de ces quarts d'heure vifs et entreprenants, où un novice devient par la vérité de ses transports, plus dangereux pour une femme du monde, que l'homme le plus manié; mais ces transports n'étant point soutenus par une façon de penser décidée sur les femmes, et formée par l'expérience, le moindre regard ou le moindre discours sérieux de Zohide, qui n'aurait fait qu'encourager quelqu'un d'expérimenté, aurait anéanti le prince de façon à lui faire perdre tous ses avantages.« (part 1) 1

Experience is the only antidote to the youth's timidity and gaucheness.

The young man with one relationship behind him is still unable to act with fashionable ease and impudence. The young chevalier de * has already had one mistress, Clarice, a girl from an inferior social background. He is timid before Mme de P*, despite having been Clarice's lover, for he feels he ought to pay her respect, a duty dispensed with in his relationship with the girl of humble birth:

"Elle était étonnée qu'ayant déjà aimé Clarice, je fusse encore aussi novice. Mais elle ignorait les différentes impressions que font sur l'esprit d'un homme une fille pour laquelle il n'a que l'amour."

1. 1751 edition, p. 89.
et une femme qu'il croit devoir respecter."

In the 19th-century study of sentimental education by Flaubert, the same timidity and respect are present in the attitude of the hero, Frédéric Moreau, before the object of his passion, Mme Arnoux. We are thereby reminded that the youth's attitude is not a phenomenon peculiar to the 18th century. It is the eternal problem of the young man anxious to learn more of life, but at a loss as to how to go about it. His problem is, how to declare his love to her:

"Il eut d'abord l'idée de se présenter souvent, pour marchander des tableaux. Puis il songea à glisser dans la boîte du journal quelques articles 'très forts', ce qui amènerait des relations. Peut-être valait-il mieux courir droit au but, déclarer son amour? Alors il composa une lettre de douze pages, pleine de mouvements lyriques et d'apostrophes; mais il la déchira, et ne fit rien, ne tenta rien — immobilisé par la peur de l'insuccès."

However, Frédéric's feelings for her are not based solely on the desire to gain experience in life, his respect forms part of the love he feels for her. The respect a young man paid to an older woman was the form

1. Mémoires du Chevalier de Marquis D'Argens, part I, p. 60.
2. "L'Education sentimentale, p. 40."
his homage for her took. This attitude toward her was a compliment, so different from the outlook of the man of the world, but it was not without difficulties for the woman.

The woman is left with the task of encouraging the young man, of bringing their relationship to a natural conclusion, whilst seeming merely to follow the young man's lead. In this way, she will not immediately lose his respect, and he will retain greater respect for his own person, if he sees himself as the one taking the initiative in the relationship. All has to be delicately manoeuvred by the woman. The Chevalier de * is on the verge of his career in society; he is but fifteen years old. The object of his attentions, Mlle Dulis, is twenty-six years old and experienced in the ways of the world. The Chevalier dare not declare himself to Mlle Dulis, who is consequently obliged to force him to a declaration of his feelings. In accordance with the established social game, she then feigns anger at his temerity, yet permits him certain liberties, for which she subsequently affects to reproach herself. Unaware that such behaviour is but a convention on the part of the woman,
the young Chevalier is confused. Zobéide finds herself in much the same position vis-à-vis Angola; she is attracted to him, but is obliged by convention to simulate virtuous reluctance:

"Il vit Zobéide ... Zobéide, flattée d'avoir subjugué un coeur neuf, et d'en avoir les agréables prémices, lui laissa voir une partie de sa sensibilité ... ne pouvant cependant renoncer au manège usité à la cour, elle lui marquait des incertitudes et des craintes, qu'un autre, plus aguerri que lui, aurait cherché à calmer par les plus tendres transports, mais qui paraissaient aux yeux du prince, encore novice, des obstacles insurmontables." 2

When she finally permits him to attend on her in a private rendezvous, she remains true to her role, leading him to believe she is battling, albeit in vain, against the force of her own desires:

"Une étincelle de vertu la porta à s'y opposer encore; il n'était plus possible de se méprendre à ses desseins. Maître de ses beautés et d'elle-même, par le genre d'attitude qu'il s'était procuré, sa timidité avait fait place à la passion la plus emportée. Cher Prince, s'écrit-elle d'une voix entrecoupée, arrêtez ... quel est votre dessein? N'abusez pas de ma tendresse ... Est-ce là cette passion respectueuse que vous m'avez jurée? ... Arrêtez, cruel ... Elle

1. Le Début ou les Premières Aventures du Chevalier de * FALCONET.*

To enable him to consummate in full their relationship, Zobéide prudently decides to faint. Such is the conventional procedure, but our hero is unacquainted with such niceties and is seriously alarmed. Zobéide is understandably furious when Angola interrupts their tête-à-tête at such an interesting juncture to call for help.

Similarly, Sainte-Foix's hero sets out to seduce Mme de St Farre: this is his first attempt to conquer a woman of the world, and he lacks finesse. It is really Mme de St Farre who seduces him. She offers him ample opportunity to declare himself, but he is too timid to grasp it. At Sertac's instigation, he pays a visit to Mme de St Farre before her usual visiting hour, determined to press matters: she encourages him by providing an excuse for their staying in together alone, telling him she does not wish to visit the opera, as she has a headache. Any man with some experience of the world would immediately comprehend the meaning behind her words: the hero takes her literally, and offers to retire, which is contrary to

her desire. He himself would be glad to leave, for he has lost all his courage. The conversation between them at the beginning of this particular interview goes as follows:

"Quoi, vous voilà, chevalier, s'écriait-elle, est-ce que vous allez à l'Opéra? J'en serais fâchée, car je compte rester chez moi: j'ai une migraine affreuse. Je ne comptais pas y aller, madame, repris-je, mais vous seriez peut-être bien aise d'être seule ... non vraiment, reprit Mme de St Farre, je suis transportée que vous soyez venu; je n'aurai vraisemblablement personne et d'ennui, j'allais me remettre dans mon lit; mais à propos, comment gouvernez-vous la comtesse de Liges? On m'a dit que vous étiez arrangé avec elle. Qui, moi, madame, m'écriai-je... Ecoutez, chevalier, reprit-elle, la discrétion est une qualité d'autant plus estimable dans un homme de votre âge, qu'elle y est plus rare; cependant il est des femmes qui exigent moins de réserve; par exemple, les succès auprès de Mme de Liges sont trop faciles pour n'en pas convenir; d'ailleurs elle s'en fait honneur dans le monde." 1

In this conversation, Mme de St Farre is offering the youth an opportunity to declare that he feels nothing for the comtesse de Liges, that the idol of his heart is none other than she, Mme de St Farre. She is also seeking to reassure herself that she may take the glory of being his very first love. She must take the upper

1 De Roman du Jour, pp. 16-17.
hand in the relationship; if she relies on the youth, their relationship will not progress very far. She is able to judge the youth's inexperience, and from this judgement she evolves her own fashion of conduct toward him:

"Mme de St Farre sentit qu'il était nécessaire d'abréger les détails, et que je n'avais pas encore assez d'usage du monde pour lui en épargner le soin." (p.28).

She attempts to retain his respect for her, whilst encouraging him, but she must pick her words carefully, lest the timid youth take fright, as is the case with Mme de St Farre's young lover:

"Ces dernières paroles me firent rasseoir. Mme de St Farre sentit judicieusement à mon air embarrassé, que ce n'était pas le moment de montrer de la sévérité, et que j'avais besoin d'être rassuré." (p.26).

A delicate balance must be struck between veiled encouragement and simulated reluctance. When the Chevalier de * has finally 'overcome' Mlle Dulis's feigned reluctance, he still retains his inhibiting respect for her: he is oblivious to her tacit encouragement of his advances. She offers him all possible encouragement, but it runs contrary to the rules of the game for her to go further:

1. Le Début by Falconet, part I.
"Je m'en tins désormais au baiser; c'était en vain qu'elle s'évanouissait dans mes bras, que son visage se colorait d'un vermillon plus décidé, que ses yeux paraissaient s'éteindre, et que je savourais sur ses lèvres ce nectar précieux, avant-coureur de la volupté, je n'osais aller plus loin. Criblé de désirs, brûlé de feux, je résistais à mes transports. J'aurais vu plus d'une fois que ma réserve ne lui faisait tant de plaisir, avec un peu plus d'expérience: j'en manquais."

Such are the disadvantages inherent in a relationship with a novice.

However, despite such inconveniences, the youth's inexperience has great appeal for the older woman, bored by the monotony of a series of relationships with lovers who all conform to the conventional pattern established in polite society. She can expect from the man of the world very little respect. Yet, on the physical plane, there is little pleasure for the women who associates with a novice. She must teach him how to please her, or any other woman. Mme de Lursay undertakes this task with the young Neillcour:

"[elle] me fit entrevoir de quelle nécessité étaient les gradations, ce mot et l'idée qu'il renfermait, m'étaient totalement inconnus; je pris la liberté de le dire à Mme de Lursay, qui en souriant de ma simplicité, voulut bien prendre la peine de m'instruire, je mettais chaque précepte en pratique à
The Marquise de B* has also to initiate the Chevalier de Faublas, who is amazingly innocent, even for a youth of sixteen years. He is aware of his extreme ignorance of certain aspects of life, as we see from his reaction to the confidences of his experienced friend, the comte de Rosambert:

"Je vais, me dit le comte, vous présenter à une jeune dame qui m'estime beaucoup; il y a deux grands mois que je lui ai juré une ardeur éternelle, et plus de six semaines que je la lui prouve." Ce langage était pour moi tout à fait énigmatique; mais déjà je commençais à rougir de mon ignorance; je souris d'un air fin, pour faire croire à Rosambert que je le comprenais."

Faublas is ashamed of his ignorance in this field; his education has yet to be completed.

His innocence is even more evident in his attitude toward the Marquise de B*; Rosambert has persuaded him to assume the costume of a young girl, a role which he plays to perfection, and to call himself Mlle Duportail. Rosambert and Faublas inform the marquise of the disguise, but she refuses - or pretends

1. Les Égarements du Coeur et de l'Esprit by Crébillon, p.22.
2. Les Amours du Chevalier de Faublas by Louvet de Couvray, p.31.
to refuse - to believe what they say. Consequently, she is at liberty to caress Faublas as much as she likes, without exposing herself to charges of indecency or lack of 'bienséances'. Faublas is fooled by the Marquise's ruse, but the more experienced Rosambert entertains suspicions as to her true motives. She invites Faublas to dine with her husband and herself, apparently still under the illusion that 'he' is really a 'she', as she emphasises in her invitation to him:

"Vous ne recommencerez pas alors ce petit conte de votre déguisement; c'est une jolie plaisanterie, mais nous l'avons épuisée; aussi loin de la répéter devant M. de B., vous voudrez bien ... lui faire quelques avances. Je demandai à la marquise ce que c'était que des avances." (vol. I, p. 36)

From his reply, we gather that the task before the Marquise is just as great as that undertaken by Mme de Lursay in her education of the equally innocent Melcourt. Naturally, Mlle de Duportail, alias Faublas, is urged to stay the night - in the marquise's bed. Faublas is still unaware of what lies ahead for him:

"Je me précipitai dans le lit, émerveillé de la singulière aventure qui m'avait conduit là, mais ne soupçonnant pas encore qu'on pût avoir, en couchant deux, d'autre désir que de causer ensemble avant de s'endormir." (vol. I, pp. 42-43).
The marquise enacts great surprise on 'discovering' Mlle de Duportail to be a man; Faublas offers to spend the night in an armchair, and attempts to leave the bed. The marquise retains him, pretexting anxiety that he might catch cold:

"Voyez comme sa main est déjà froide! et par pitié elle la posa sur son col d'ivoire. Guidée par la nature et par l'amour, cette heureuse main descendit un peu; je ne savais quelle agitation faisait bouillonner mon sang."

(Vol. I, p. 44)

The marquise aids him in his uncertainty:

"La marquise eut pitié de mon embarras qui ne pouvait lui déplaire, ... elle aida ma timide inexpérience ... Je reçus, avec autant d'étonnement que de plaisir, une charmante leçon que je répétais plus d'une fois."

(Vol. I, p. 45)

The marquise has found an excuse for her behaviour in her persistence in believing that the Chevalier de Faublas is really of her sex, for he carries off very successfully his disguise.

Being a very independent and forceful type of woman, the marquise enjoys the advantages she has over her pupil. This is one attraction for the older woman - Faublas is luckier in this respect than most youths, in that his teacher is younger and far more attractive than the usual instructress - that she is in command of the situation. The woman enjoys, for once, the privilege
of playing the dominant role. She is often subject
to the whims of the male of the species; the youth
provides her with the opportunity to take the superior
part. Yet, even whilst initiating the youth in this
fashion, she must put up a show of resistance, however
slight and false. This is the convention, the rule
of the game. In an attempt to enhance her person, to
add to the price of her conquest, in her 'conqueror's'
eyes, she wishes to be seduced, whilst appearing not to
wish it. This is an accepted part of the play between
two experienced partners which fools neither party.
The woman has, however, a slight chance of persuading
the novice that she is his reluctant victim. This is
the charade enacted by Mme de St Farre and her young
suitor:

"Je me livrai aux transports les
plus vifs. Mme de St Farre ...
ne faisait plus qu'une résistance
molle. Je levais tous les obstacles
qui s'opposaient à ma curiosité et à
mon bonheur. Que faites-vous donc,
chevalier, s'écria-t'elle, de temps
en temps ... arrêtez ... non ... Je
ne le souffrirai point ... vous abusez
... cependant ses mains demeuraient
presque immobiles, et chaque mouvement
qu'elle faisait pour se défendre devenait
pour moi une nouvelle faveur, en me
découvrant de nouveaux charmes."

The youth is only aware in retrospect of how he has been

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duped: only experience can teach him. The aim of this seeming resistance is to retain the youth's respect. This may be, in some cases, the short-term effect, but the youth, when he has satiated his sexual appetite for this woman and has acquired a little more experience, turns from the woman in disgust. This, at least, is the reaction of the majority. The youth begins to assume the airs and views of the man of the world, in whose eyes woman is an object for easy contempt. When the youth views their relationship dispassionately, he becomes aware of the ease with which the woman succumbed to him. He feels he has fallen prey to her avid embrace.

As the 18th century progressed, public opinion came to view such women with disapproval. In Yon's Femmes de Mêrite, Rachel's son relates his mother's life history: her dissolute husband, Fré scour, takes advantage of the older woman of this type:

"Sa figure, et plus que cela, la renommée qu'il s'était acquise, ne tardèrent pas à les lui rendre. Une femme au retour, connue par ses galanteries de jeunesse, et qui voulait les éterniser, le prit à sa solde. Ses charmes l'avaient enrichie, l'habitude, et l'ambition de paraître encore aimée la ruinèrent... On mérite de trouver des ingrats, quand on cesse de se respecter..."

1. Rachel, p. 177.
Whether she pays or not, the older woman has little hope of long fixing the affections of the young man just entering the world. Mme Arnoux is considerably older than Frédéric, she is married. Transported to 18th-century society, she would in all likelihood have fallen a willing victim to Frédéric's love. But Mme Arnoux is part of the bourgeoisie, where moral laxity, especially among women, was frowned upon.

Even in the 18th century, the morals of the bourgeoisie, particularly in the latter half of the century, were often held up in contrast to the ways of polite society. She struggles against her growing attachment to Frédéric. Their love is a romantic love; Frédéric ardently desires to become her lover. But they are both dreamers; they maintain the ideal of their love for each other over many years. To consummate it, would be to profane it. They both cherish the illusion.

This is perhaps why their relationship endures, for he retains his respect for her. Such a love would have died in 18th-century polite society.

Since an association between an older woman and a novice was, by its very nature, of short duration, and left the woman in a very vulnerable position, one might wonder why the relationship was ever formed in
the first place, and why, indeed, so many women were eager to establish this type of association. In fact, the hazards of any relationship were great. In the 18th century, long-standing relationships were a rarity. It was the accepted practice to pass from one lover to the next with almost as much ease as changing one costume for another. In the case of the young boy, older women would vie with each other to attract his first attentions. Hence the rivalry between Mme de St Farre and Mme de Liges, Mme de Lursay and Mme de Senanges. In the literature of every epoch, in reality throughout the centuries, the young man of about seventeen years of age, has always held a charm for the woman of thirty-five years or more. The boy's naivety is pleasing; he brings enthusiasm and freshness to the monotonous round. All is new to him, he has yet to acquire the fashionable air of boredom, which surely must blunt the pleasure for all concerned. The very young man has none of the fatuity of the man-about-town. His timidity, his shyness and respect offer a novelty to the woman, accustomed to the easy manners of the men of fashionable society. As yet, the young man is fresh, idealistic, untainted by contact with the manners
of polite society. It is for this very reason that many older women seek an association with the inexperienced youth. Bastide quotes the case of Mme de Périgny:

"Mme de Périgny avait une prédilection incroyable pour les jeunes gens; soit qu'elle y fut déterminée par le plaisir d'élever, et de disposer plus sûrement de ses victimes, soit qu'elle eût éprouvé personnellement que le monde use bientôt un homme ..." 1

The older woman may take the youth and transform him: he is to be moulded by her own hands. Sainte-Foix's hero retains this air of naivety for some time, and this is what attracts both Mme de St Farre and Mme de Dannonville. 2 The woman interprets his timidity as a tribute to her charms; she is flattered, for if he were not aware of her as a woman, he would not be troubled in her presence. This is the case of the hero of Fieux's Paris ou le Mentor À la Mode. The chevalier is taken by D'Orneville to meet the wife of a certain counsellor:

"Il n'était pas accoutumé aux regards des femmes de Paris. Cette modestie ne déplaisait point; son air nouveau, sa contenance embarrassée donnaient à la belle conseillère une secrète satisfaction. L'amour-propre y trouvait son compte; imaginer de captiver un cœur

1. Le Tribunal de l'Amour by Bastide, p.65.

2. Roman du Jour.
He is fresh and untainted by the ways of the world, she has an unique position as his first mistress: as yet, he can draw no comparisons between her and any other woman.

A woman is supposedly at the peak of her sensuality around thirty-five years of age, and best suited to a youth of seventeen years. Yet the power of her charms is declining, perhaps less suitors worship at her shrine. The youth is easily seduced by the aids adopted by women — perfume, jewellery, brilliant costume — he is grateful at first to the woman who takes him in hand, and, mistaking his first sexual feelings for a true passion, he lavishes his repressed emotions on the woman concerned. For a short while, the woman is on a pedestal, she is his goddess — and he is in her power; she may treat him as she wishes. She is in charge of their relationship. Here lies one of the greatest attractions, as Julie admits, when talking of the novice, Vépry:

"Qu'on déclame tant que l'on voudra contre ce qu'on appelle novice, ils
Another more obvious reason is that the youth pleases the woman in a physical way. Mme de St Farre is physically attracted to the youth, as she admits to him:

"Voici le plus joli compliment du monde; mais savez-vous bien que vous êtes fort aimable, et qu’il vous serait aisé de faire tourner la tête à une femme qui ne serait pas sur ses gardes à un certain point?" 2

One might note, in passing, the tone of encouragement, and almost of indulgence, in Mme de St Farre’s words; it is the gently mocking tone used by an experienced person to one of far fewer years. Both partners sought the association. Their relationship offered

1. Les Égarements de Julie by Perrin, pp. 93-94.
mutual satisfaction, even although only for a short time.

The hallmark of the novice is the intensity of all his emotions. He mistakes sensual pleasure for love, and, because he has yet to be disillusioned about life, he expects to experience a grand passion. Thus, at least in his first one or two relationships, the woman to whom he is sexually attracted is treated as the object of a great love. He believes he is deeply in love until his passion is spent, then he falls in love with the next woman who offers herself, and this continues until he reaches the stage where he is able to recognise the significance of his feelings:

"J'avais cru aimer Mme de St Farre. La vue de Mme de Liges m'avait bientôt désabusé. Je croyais avoir eu pour cette dernière la passion la plus vive; mais Mme Damonville détruisit mon erreur. Je m'étais occupé d'elle et du plaisir de la voir; tout jusqu'à ses caprices et même jusqu'à la jalousie dont elle me donnait souvent les plus grands motifs, m'enchanta à son cher. J'éprouvais cependant avec elle des instants d'ennui qui auraient pu m'éclairer sur ce qu'elle m'avait inspiré. Mais j'avais entendu vanter plusieurs fois les charmes d'un véritable amour, je désirais d'avoir ce qui s'appelle une grande passion, j'aurais été bien aise que ce fût pour Mme Damonville, et je cherchais à m'étourdir sur les obstacles qu'elle y mettait elle-même. Sertac qui nous connaissait
The novice lacks the perception that comes with experience. If he feels deeply, it must be an eternal great passion. Hence he always views his first contacts with the opposite sex in the light of a grand passion. Sensuality is synonymous with love for the inexperienced youth, as the hero of Bastide's *Le Tombeau Philosophique* recognises in retrospect when he recalls his first mistress, the comtesse de **:

"Elle avait répandu dans tous mes sens le feu contagieux de la volupté; trompé par les charmes d'un état si nouveau pour moi, je me croyais amoureux quand je n'étais que sensible ...

... j'obéisais aveuglément à mon tempérament; et voilà ce qui fait que sans pouvoir se définir les mouvements qu'on éprouve, sans avoir même de l'amour, un premier commerce est cependant toujours une passion."  

The youth's naivety is evident elsewhere.

He accepts all he is told as absolute truth; he has yet to learn that there is often a great divergence between what is said and what is meant. Certain

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2. Early in Part I.
expressions, certain emotions expressed, which are current in polite society, are often little more than empty words. Duclos's hero feels remorse when he leaves the marquise for Mme de Rumigny. Partially through credulity, partially through vanity, he accepts implicitly her assurances that she could not survive his infidelity:

"J'avais encore toutes les idées neuves, le monde ne m'avait point appris à me parjurer: j'étais occupé de l'état où j'allais réduire une femme qui m'avait dit cent fois qu'elle ne survivrait pas à mon inconstance." 1

The young man is yet unaware of the hypocrisy of polite society; he himself judges all on the standards he was brought up to acknowledge, and has yet to realise that society moves along different lines. The young chevalier de * loves Clarice, a girl from an inferior social background, who returns his love. Finally, however, she leaves him for a wealthier lover. The indignant young chevalier seeks revenge on his rival by exposing all to his rival's wife, Mme de P*, convinced she will be horrified to learn of her husband's misconduct. Mme de P* is probably aware of all her husband's doings, but they hold no interest for her; on the contrary,

they enable her to lead her own life, in a similar fashion to her husband. The chevalier is unconscious of her interest in him; he would find it difficult to believe that a woman could quite happily accept her husband's infidelity, and that she could herself take on lovers. He has yet had no dealings with a woman of this class:

"J'étais jeune et bien fait. Mme de P* avait acquis dans le monde une réputation que j'ignorais. Elle n'était guère plus sévère dans sa conduite, que son mari dans la sienne. Elle était encore assez belle, quoiqu'elle eût atteint l'âge de quarante ans ... si j'avais eu un peu plus d'expérience, je me serais aperçu d'une partie des troubles dont son cœur était agité." 1

At this early point in his career, the young man is surprised to find a woman of the world interested in him. He has arrived at the next stage when he is able to discern that a woman is attracted to him. He is flattered by each new conquest; this is where his vanity begins to flower. Sainte-Flour's hero is flattered by the rivalry of Mme de St Furre and of Mme de Liges for his attention:

"Le hasard me fit placer à table à côté de ma nouvelle conquête. Un

He sees himself in quite a new light:

"Une aventure consommée, une autre commencée, et à laquelle il ne manquait que la conclusion, me firent croire que j'étais un personnage."

Vanity is the requisite state of mind for the libertine.

But here the comparison ends. The vanity of the rake lies in the belief that no woman could resist him, that he could have any woman he chooses. The vanity of the youth with little experience of life lies in that he is chosen by several women. He succumbs to them, rather than their succumbing to him. He has yet to discover that these women choose anyone that they think likely to be ready to accept their favours.

The older woman's role in the youth's education was not solely limited to the physical plane, however. She was to instruct him in the other arts essential in polite society - in conversation, airs,
manners. The young man is educated by a woman of some experience in the ways of the heart, in the graces pleasing to women. He has also to learn how to make himself agreeable in society in general. He must know which topics of conversation arise in this society, how to express himself in a graceful manner, how to behave in a polite way. Thereby he will have gained the qualities of heart and mind which distinguish the gentleman. 1 In the series of conversations between uncle and nephew which constitutes L'École du Gentilhomme, the youth is urged to frequent the society of such women:

"Toutes les vertus douces s'acquièrent et se perfectonnent auprès du beau sexe, qui les a toutes en partage. Cherissez, mon neveu, recherchez avec expressément le commerce des dames. C'est lui qui vous donnera cette politesse ingénue et gracieuse d'où naît l'affabilité, sans laquelle un homme de condition est un rustre insupportable." 2

1. Franklin in his La Civilité, l'Étiquette, la Mode du 15e au 18e siècle, expresses neatly this concept of the gentleman and all that it entailed: "L'expression honnête homme n'avait point du tout jadis le même sens qu'aujourd'hui. Elle désignait un homme poli, bien élevé, de bonnes manières, possédant les qualités et les connaissances nécessaires pour figurer dans la haute société et pour s'y rendre agréable."

2. By J.H. Moubert de Gouvest, entretien VII, pp. 119-120.
An 'honnête femme' was well-equipped to impart the social graces to a young man new to the ways of society. This is a continuation of the 17th-century attitude, where the older woman concentrated rather on the task of transforming a gauche, perhaps timid youth into a fit member of polite society, than on the glory of captivating a youthful lover.

Not all women of polite society fell into the category of those who considered a series of different lovers essential to their position. Not all women were slavish followers of fashion, and it is the company of these women that the young man is urged to frequent. The young man is to imitate the conduct of such women, and of their acquaintances. Commerce with them will teach the young man all he must know of life in polite society, as Morelly points out in his Essai sur le cœur humain:

"Rien n'est plus capable de former un galant homme qu'une honnête femme. Les complaisances qu'on est obligé d'avoir pour elle civilisent et inspirent des moeurs douces et faciles, dont on a bien des occasions de faire usage dans la société." (Part IV)

The woman will take him to the best circles with her, or the guests in her own home will provide models for
him to copy. D’Ollllle encourages the chevalier in

Le Mentor à la Mode to visit a certain marquise of his acquaintance:

"C'est une fort aimable veuve, qui a
du talent, de l'esprit, et beaucoup
d'usage du monde; elle est aussi
très propre à polir l'éducation d'un
jeune homme." 1

A distinction is drawn between the older woman whose
charms have begun to fade and who is therefore eager
to take on an inexperienced young lover, and the woman
of feeling and charm who is prepared to impart her wide
knowledge of the manners of polite society to the novice.
The one forms a libertine, the other a gentleman. The
duchess in Crébillon’s Lettres de la Duchesse de ** au
duc de * differentiates between the two when writing to
the duke of her young cousin, who is about to embark
on his career in the world:

"Dieu veuille que quelque bolle dame
sans principes, comme on prétend qu'il
y en a, ne nous en aile pas faire un fat,
et un libertin. Pour éviter ce malheur,
il aurait une extrême envie que je voulusse
tien me charger de son éducation." 2

The one views him from the point of view of what she can
obtain from their relationship – personal glory (at
least in her own eyes), the first attentions of an
amiable young man, the adulation of an infatuated youth –

1. Paris ou Le Mentor à la mode by C. Pieux de Mouhy, p. 100.
2. Lettre XLI in the Collection complète, London, 1772, p. 351 of
   vol. VII.
the other concentrates on what she can give the young man - knowledge of the ways and views of polite society. ¹

The protection of women of higher principles and a certain degree of culture is actually seen as preventing the youth from falling into bad ways. The abbé de Bellegarde makes this point:

"Bien loin que le commerce qu'on a avec des femmes vertueuses et spirituelles puisse gâter les hommes, il peut même leur être d'un grand secours. Quand on fait un bon choix, c'est le moyen d'empêcher les jeunes gens de se plonger dans la débauche, de leur polir l'esprit." ²

Having once discovered the charms of such company, the young man is unlikely to settle for anyone of less value:

"Le commerce des honnêtes femmes est un bon remède pour retenir les jeunes gens et pour les inspirer de bons sentiments; quand on est accoutumé à voir des femmes régulières, on ne peut s'empêcher d'avoir de l'ambition et du mépris pour celles qui ne l'ont pas." ³

¹. The distinction between the two categories, however, could not always be said to be so clearly defined. A woman of polite society might be able to cultivate the heart and mind of one far removed by birth from high social circles, but solely to the view of making him acceptable in her own milieu so that she may later profit from her efforts in the material sense. The parvenu, Law, who introduced the famous 'system' into France in the early years of the 18th century, received
Such women will inspire the young man with finer views
and higher sentiments rather than with corruption:

Dorante tells his nephew, Lisilcr:

"Vous savez apparemment que rien ne
fait tant valoir un jeune homme que
l'approbation d'une femme de mérite,
et que rien n'empêche mieux les gens
de votre âge de tomber dans le
carrément que de s'attacher à
voir des personnes dont les sentiments
portent d'ordinaire à la vertu." 1

A woman of education and discernment is able to teach
the youth what life is all about. She is able to judge
society as it truly is. Knowledge of the world is what

Footnotes continued from page 159.

his sentimental education - if one is to believe
Prévost - at the hands of a certain unscrupulous
lady of high birth but little means; but it cost
Law much of his fortune:
"Il était novice en amour, quoiqu'il le fût si peu
pour les affaires. Il ne connaissait pas mieux les
manières du monde poli, ayant toujours vécu dans la
poussière d'un comptoir, et d'un bureau. Ce fut
par cet endroit qu'elle le prit d'abord. À
peine lui eut-il exprimé quelque chose de ses sentiments,
qu'elle sut lui faire entendre avec adresse, que
l'unique chose qui lui manquait pour plaire était
de mettre quelque réforme dans ses manières, pour
être un peu plus au goût du monde ... il atteignit
peu à peu au degré qu'il fallait pour être reçu
chez Mylady ... C'est la seule obligation qu'il ait
à cette dame, d'avoir ainsi contribué à le polir
et à le former pour le monde."

(Hémoires et aventures d'un Homme de Qualité,
vol. VI, b.IV, pp. io-tf).

1. L'Art de plaire dans la Conversation de
Bellegarde,
Entretien IV, pp. 41-32.
the woman can impart to the youth. She can teach him how to behave in society, and she will also warn him of the dangers which lie ahead. He will then be proof against the temptations which will cross his path.

Public opinion was undergoing a change in the 18th century, on the question of a young noble's sentimental education. In the 17th and early 18th centuries, it was generally accepted that the young man would pass into the care of an older woman, once his formal education was at an end. At the time of the publication of Crébillon's Égarements, there is no open approbation of his initiation at the hands of the older woman, but they are still regarded as providing a necessary service, for the young man must be educated in these matters. Versac, admittedly Meilcourt's mentor in corruption, but here also voicing general worldly opinion, points out to him:

"Vous êtes trop jeune ... pour ne pas avoir Mme de Senanges. Pour vous, c'est un devoir; si je la prenais, moi, ce ne serait que par politesse. Vous avez actuellement besoin d'une femme qui vous mette dans le monde, et c'est moi qui y mets toutes celles qui veulent y être célèbres." (part 1, p. 64).

But the idea begins to grow that such women offered corruption, rather than education. The older woman is
finally held responsible for the consequent moral degeneration of the youth. Toussaint takes this point of view:¹

"Ce n'est, disent-ils, pour l'ordinaire qu'entre les bras de ces femmes surannées que se perd l'innocence d'un jeune homme. La timidité naturelle à cet âge, le retrait à l'abri si ces dangereuses séductrices ne prenaient pas sur elles-mêmes le soin d'ébranler sa pudeur par des propos licencieux, et n'achevaient de les corrompre par des agaceries indécentes."

The idea grows that society in general is corrupt, the women who genuinely have the interests and advancement of the youth at heart are therefore fewer. It is felt that the woman who takes a young man into her care is bent on his corruption.

This idea is present in a novel near the end of our period, in *Le Paysan Perverti.*² The whole novel is imbued with the atmosphere of corruption. The main theme is that of the corrupting influence of the town, but woman is part of this society, and she is the instrument whereby Edmond is corrupted. Innocent

2. By Rétif de la Bretonne.
Edmond leaves the country to work in the town. His naivety provokes laughter; he dislikes the town, yet is awed by it. His lack of polish is displayed in his early letters home to his brother, Pierre:

"Oh, comme les églises sont belles! si tu voyais, si tu voyais ... oh! c'est curieux à voir. Et puis il y a une horloge bien haute, bien haute! et au cadran il y a une boule qui marque les lunes; quand il n'y en a point, elle est toute noire." (lettre 1, pp. 8-9)

Suddenly Mlle Manon grows friendlier towards him, makes little advances to him. His education and his corruption start from here. Mlle Manon is not greatly his senior in years, but she is far ahead of him in experience and corruption, and she is supported by Gaudet. At this point, Edmond's views begin to change; town-life is perhaps not altogether bad. Certainly, the polish of the town adds a charm to the women, Edmond feels. The town-dweller's preoccupation with fine clothes puzzled him on his arrival. Now he needs money from home to purchase clothes in which he is fit to accompany Mlle Manon out and about:

"Il me faudrait un habit noir outre l'habit de couleur que j'ai reçu; la décence veut qu'on se mette en noir ici en beaucoup d'occasions, comme, par exemple, la semaine dernière que la fille d'une princesse
souvraine du cercle de Suabe en
Allemagne mourut de la petite
vérole, à l'âge de trois mois;
la cour a pris le deuil pour trois
jours, et les comtes il faut d'ici
ne l'ayant su que le dernier jour,
ils l'ont pris trois heures pour
aller à la promenade de l'Arquebuse
et si j'avais eu un habit noir, j'y
aurais mené Mlle Manon. Je te
remercie de l'argent que tu m'as
envoyé pour m'acheter des boucles;
j'en ai pris de fort, propres et du
dernier goût." (Lettre XIV, pp. 67-68).

Formerly he would have found it hard to comprehend this
public extravagance, now he wishes to be part of it.
A woman of corrupt town society has thus helped to
set the innocent country lad on the path of vice.

This change in public opinion on the subject
of the youth's sentimental education can be viewed as
only one aspect of a whole movement. The female
mentor's role belongs to the town society, where all
persons of birth reside in the town, where the country
gentleman is a bumpkin, where one's country estate is
one's home for very few months of the year. But the
country, in the later years of the century, is no longer
somewhere to die of boredom. Nature comes into vogue
in every form - natural feelings, natural settings.
In the later 18th century, the town is seen as evil in
contrast with the natural goodness of the country.
The joys of nature are enthusiastically extolled. This is a favourite theme for the novelists – we have only to think of Rousseau's La Nouvelle Héloïse, and the decisive influence it had on an already popular mode. The natural setting is closely linked with the true and lasting love of Julie and Saint-Preux. Julie and Wolmar set up an ideal community in the peaceful countryside, which is a contrast in its simplicity and charm to the wearying pleasures of the Parisian society which Saint-Preux frequents for some time. Pierre, or Rétif de la Bretonne, recounts the life-history of his father and is the editor of the letters which form La Paysanne Pervertie and Le Paysan Perverti. His father emerges unscathed from his education in the capital; he is saved by his conscientious nature, and the six months of the year which he spends working on his father's farm, recuperating from the maladies of the town. It is suggested that no young man brought up solely in the town can escape the sickness of town society. Poulbelins, father of the charming Rose Edmond loves, is Rétif de la Bretonne's spokesman here:

"C'est que l'homme né à la ville n'a jamais la solidité de l'homme né à la campagne; il est futile, comparé à ce dernier, en dépit de tous les soins; il faudrait pour le rendre tel qu'il doit être, un homme, le regresser à la campagne,
The position is different with Edmond's offspring, however. Edmond and Ursula are both corrupted when they leave the country for the town. Pierre, who remains in the country and therefore retains all his natural goodness, writes of his sister, Ursula:

"Tout ce qui a perverti et vicie ma pauvre soeur, etait non dans son coeur droit et simple, mais dans vos villes, a lecteurs, dans ce séjour de perdition, où l'on n'a pu souffrir que cette belle créature conservât sa noblesse native et son excellence de coeur et d'esprit."  

Baculard D'Arnaud's Bazile is on much the same theme, but the outcome is more fortunate. Bazile is an innocent, virtuous youth brought up in the country, poor yet happy, hard-working and content in his family circle. Bazile is lured to the town, encouraged to leave his aged mother, Nicole, behind him. When he reaches the town, all around him is corruption, contrasting with his innocence. The scheme of substituting him for the marquise's dead son, in order to secure the

1. La Vie de Mon Père, p. 50.
inheritance, is corrupt; the marquise is corrupt in
her feeble acquiescence before the arch-villain, Remi,
her son's tutor, who masterminds the whole operation;
corrupt the attempt to draw Bazile from his mother's
side. Remi is presented as the typical man of the
world, of society:

"Il était souple, insinuant, adroit,
flattour, possédant parfaitement le
grand art de la société, la science
de se revêtir de toutes les formes
... Je m'aperçois qu'en faisant son
portrait, j'ai peint ce qu'on appelle
'un homme du monde'."

But Bazile's virtue withstands the test. On the brink
of marriage to a beautiful heiress whom Remi has used
as bait, he is drawn back to his mother. His natural
goodness shines through and triumphs; he leaves behind
the wicked town, and returns to virtue and true feeling
in the bosom of nature. Bazile is happy to leave the
luxurious corruption of the town to return to this:

"Je renonce pour toujours à ce
détestable Paris, à tout ce qui
l'habite; je vais reprendre mes
premiers habite ... et mon innocence
avec eux.'"

In L'Homme Moral, of 1770, we are presented with a boy
brought up entirely as a savage, or rather, merely left

3. By the Père Lévesque.
2. Ibid., p. 206.
to develop in solitude in his own fashion. He is then protected by two others who come to his island, an elderly man and his daughter. The old man instructs him in high moral principles, right in the bosom of nature, where there is no-one to belie this code. His daughter educates the young man on the subject of true love. The young man is subsequently taken to France, where he is a witness of town society; the spectacle resolves him to return to the innocence of his island, where he will attempt to found an ideal society. The message of these novels, on a theme dear to many writers of the late 18th century, is quite clear - town-life is corrupt, country-life is natural and therefore good.

The notion of the corruption of life in the town belongs more to the realm of literature than to the actuality of 18th-century society. Polite society remained centred in the town and few went to the extreme of deserting the town permanently for the country. Nevertheless, this growth in the feeling for nature remains a great characteristic of the century: interest in country life is only part of the wave. Just as life in nature is superior to the falsity and hypocrisy of life in town society, so natural feelings - feeling
for nature, for one's family, for the poor and distressed, for one's partner — are preferable to the fickle affections and disregard for others current in the polite society of the town. Virtue is the key-note for the writers, and feeling is virtue. Not every young man who came into contact with, or even immersed himself in, the corrupt society of the town (a society centred in Paris) was irretrievably lost to virtue and honour. This was now seen as a false path, which led to neither virtue nor happiness. When the novelty had worn off, the empty round continued, but without its former attraction. This was not a new idea, but the notion was gaining ground. Earlier in the century, Legendre de St-Aubain had made this point:

"Ceux qui sont persuadés que le plaisir est le partage de l'homme, et qui passent leur vie dans une recherche continue de ce qui est capable de flatter leurs sens, suivent la route qui conduit sûrement et par le chemin le plus court, à un état malheureux. Les plaisirs perdent leur goût et leur saveur pour ceux qui s'en font une habitude."  

The whole whirl of gaiety was a desperate attempt to find contentment, as Duclos remarks:

"La dissipation est moins la marque du plaisir que l'inquiétude d'un homme qui le cherche sans le trouver."¹

In the literature, more especially of the later 18th century, we are presented with libertines who have grown tired of this mode of life, and who have turned to the once despised countryside for peace and contentment. One such 'repentant sinner' writes in the preface to his memoirs:

"Pourquoi voulez-vous m'arracher à ma solitude et troubler ma tranquillité? Vous ne pouvez pas vous persuader que je sois absolument déterminé à vivre à la campagne ... Comment se peut-il faire, dites-vous, qu'après avoir été si longtemps entraîné par le torrent du monde, on y renonce absolument? ... à votre âge, et avec tous les droits que vous avez de plaire dans le monde, il serait bien difficile qu'il vous fut odieux ... Je n'ai pas encore quarante ans, et j'ai épuisé ces plaisirs que leur nouveauté vous fait croire inépuisables. J'ai usé le monde, j'ai usé l'amour même."²

In Barthé's La Jolie Femme, which deals with the extravagances and vices of the fashionable woman, Mme de Loreval and the marquise visit M. Sainval, who, once

at the very heart of town society, has now retired to the country:

"Il avait quitté depuis peu la capitale. Le dégoût, triste enfant de la satiété, l'avait surpris tout au milieu des fêtes brillantes qu'il se donnait pour réveiller son goût usé. Il avait quarante-quatre ans, craignait l'ennui plus que la mort, et ne pouvait plus s'amuser."

He went in quest of happiness and joy in the turmoil of town society; what he sought he has since found in the calm of the countryside.

Libertinage is, according to Mauzi, a normal period in a young nobleman's life, but it need not last, provided he finds something of more lasting value to replace it. A young man who enters society inevitably meets with corruption. Few would withstand the temptation; their fathers led this life, they are expected to follow in their footsteps. They feel they

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1. "Le libertinage constitue alors le principal épisode d'une éducation sentimentale et morale ... l'expérience du libertinage n'est qu'une aberration passagère et toujours corrigée, non une chute irrémédiable dans un infernal abîme. On devient libertin par 'air' ... Il suffit que le libertin rencontre quelque chose de vrai - amour ou vertu - et son libertinage miraculeusement s'évanouit. Le libertinage ... [est] un champ normal d'expérience où se déroule l'initiation du jeune mondain." (pp. 38-39). (L'Idée du Bonheur au 18e siècle).

1. p.151.
have no alternative, for this is the accepted way of life for the gentleman of sufficient means. Certainly, to pass through the stage of libertinage is the normal experience of the young nobleman entering society. He imitates those around him, for he knows no other way, and his fellows in society are steeped in this atmosphere of libertinage. But it cannot be categorically stated that the tendency to libertinage always comes to an end in every case. We have a multitude of instances in the novel where the young man meets a woman worthy of his love, or where he suddenly 'sees the light', mends the errors of his ways. However, not every young man in the novel is fortunate in this respect. And in reality, the chances of his 'redemption' were even slimmer. Few encountered love, for durable love remained out of fashion: the man of society lived a life apart from the wife selected for him by his family for reasons of birth or fortune, and the associations formed with the women of polite society were based on attraction, or even simply on vanity, not on a lasting emotion, which would have been held up to ridicule. Virtue was honoured in some circles, but these tended to be outside the normal social circuit, and hence he was unlikely to come into contact with those circles.
In literature, then, the majority of young men leave behind this stage of libertinage, but these cases were far fewer in the reality of polite society. The pattern of behaviour of the young noble is quite predictable: he will take on his first mistress, a woman of experience — an older woman of society or a 'professional' woman celebrated as the ex-mistress of many men in polite society — who is able to teach him the art of love and acquaint him with the ways of society. The attitude he eventually adopts towards the opposite sex — usually one of contempt — is not the direct result of his female-mentor's teachings. She, on the contrary, will attempt to present herself as a paragon of virtue, to be respected and admired. It is rather the teaching of the male mentor he meets along the path, and the fruits of his own experience. He is soon able to judge the true worth of these women. So it happens that the youth's mistress instructs him in more ways than she might wish. Similarly, by virtue of her nature and the nature of the relationship, the female mentor is normally powerless against the teaching of the male mentor (as is the case with Mme de Lursay and Versac), for all her behaviour only proves the truth of the male mentor's conception of the female
mind. And she is also more vulnerable by far than the male mentor, for anything he reveals of her past life will disillusion her young lover, provided he is not blinded with passion – and even if he is, it is a passion doomed to die in the end. Whilst anything she may reveal of the rake's past life will but enhance his reputation in the eyes of the youth – for it is just such a man of wide experience that the youth aims to become. The young man requires but one mentor and several mistresses. After several of these relationships the youth has gained experience, a reputation and the easy manners and cynicism of the young man-about-town. He is integrated into the polite town society.

The frivolous life led by the members of polite society has its own attractions; these are considered the main goal in life by the majority of 18th-century polite society, but the novelist, especially later in the century, attempts to present a more solid alternative to this whirl of empty pleasures. As Mauzi points out, the young man may pass through the stage of frivolous pleasures, but his happiness really lies in a more stable and settled existence. The hero of *Lydia* undergoes the normal process: he is at first enchanted with his good fortune in claiming as his
mistress the charming Lady Rivers, and he imagines he is in love with her, but disillusionment soon follows. He tires of his easy conquest, once his passion is spent, since he is bound to Lady Rivers by physical not emotional ties:

"Son excessive sensibilité, le trop facile accès que j'avais tous les jours chez elle, et mon propre penchant à l'inconstance, affaiblirent en peu de jours mes premières ardeurs. Ses charmes, en un mot, n'avaient pas assez de pouvoir contre la langueur que produit la satiété, surtout lorsque le coeur se trouve neutre dans l'aventure."

He then passes through a series of different mistresses but can find no true contentment; his true love, Lydia, is ever present in his mind and he finally comes to the conclusion that "le véritable amour seul pouvait me procurer une félicité durable." In *La Force de l'Exemple*, the young hero is, as the title of the novel indicates, drawn into the whirl of social pleasures, in the wake of his fellows, but his soul and heart remain untouched: he seeks emotional fulfilment:

"Je regrettais de m'être trop laissé entraîner par le torrent du monde. Je convenais en moi-même que j'avais été plutôt étourdi que satisfait de

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1. by La Place, part II. *Amsterdam, 1749*, vol. VII, p. 5. 
2. Ibid., part III in fine.
The temptations of the gay life are, however, very great for the young man first entering the world. Even Saint-Freux falls into the trap when he first experiences life in the capital, but he is not anxious to adopt this way of life permanently; love and virtue combat temptation, as he tells Julie:

"Ce n'est pas que cette vie bruyante et tumultueuse n'ait aussi quelque sorte d'attraits, et que la prodigieuse diversité d'objets n'offre de certains agréments à de nouveaux débarqués; mais pour les sentir il faut avoir le coeur vide et l'esprit frivole; l'amour et la raison semblent s'unir pour m'en dégoûter." 1

This is the answer for the writers of the later 18th-century novel — true feeling, real love is what is required for the young man.

The young noble is no longer expected to have several mistresses with experience of the world; he is not to become integrated in the empty round of social pleasures, instead, he shall enjoy a more natural use of his emotions, love shared with a young person of feeling and virtue. The ideal is as yet lost on Carmontelle's Duc d'Arnay:

The young man will still enter polite society to learn the ways of the world; he is not to become involved with an older woman. In this one respect, he will require no teaching, for he has something of greater worth to take its place. The young man's love for a person of merit is actually seen by the novelist as a safeguard against libertinage, in which an association with an older woman of experience generally is the first step. Émile is introduced to Sophie before he sets out into the world, that he may be prevented from falling into evil ways by the feeling he has for her:

"Quel avantage pour préserver son cœur des dangers auxquels sa personne doit être exposée, pour réprimer ses sens par son imagination, pour l'arracher surtout à ces donneuses d'éducation qui la font payer si cher, et ne forment un jeune homme à la politesse qu'en lui étant toute honnêteté." 1

Even if the object of the young man's affections does not yet return his feelings, the young man will attempt to make himself worthy of her; this in itself excludes

2. Le Duc d'Arnaud, part I.
any form of libertinage, of loose association:

"l'envie qu'on peut avoir de toucher le cœur d'une belle personne, qui a de la naissance et du mérite, peut servir d'un préservatif contre un dérèglement où les gens de votre âge ne tombent que trop souvent." 1

If the young man, having already embarked on a career in the fashion usually adopted by young men of society, meets a virtuous person with whom he falls in love, he is given the strength to abandon his life of pleasures; in this way, he is checked in mid-career before he can assume the ultimate form of the rake.

Even one as profligate as the 'fat' in Confessions d'un Fat 2 is brought back to the straight and narrow path through his love for the virtuous Mlle de Prangé, as he admits himself:

"J'aime Mlle de Prangé, l'amour m'a totalement ramené à la nature; guéri de toutes ses erreurs, mon cœur ne sent/que l'amour et les vertus qu'il inspire."

Angola has immersed himself in the empty pleasures of society, only to find that, at so early an age, he is bored with life:

"enfin peu à peu il se vit dans cet état d'indolence d'un homme qui,

1. L'Art de plaire dans la conversation ι της Bellegarde,  
2. η Bastide, p. 161.

entretien ι της , p. 274.
He falls in love with the portrait of Luzéide, princesse de Golconde, and life takes on new dimensions. He realises the futility of his former mode of life:

"Toutes les inclinations qu'il avait eues à la cour n'étaient, pour ainsi dire, que des affaires de convenance, où il avait été entraîné plus par la force de l'occasion et des avances qu'on lui faisait, que par aucun amour qu'il eût ressenti; il y avait été lui-même trompé le premier, et avait pris pour de l'amour ce qui n'était que le feu d'une jeunesse avide de plaisirs; ce qu'il ressentait à la vue de ce portrait, était tout d'un autre genre; c'était un amour timide, qui n'osait se flatter d'aucune espérance, et ce qui n'est pas moins difficile à croire, il était accompagné de beaucoup de respect."

Again, in Campan's Le Mot et la Chose, the hero is redeemed by the guidance of his wise mentor, M. D'Olmeuil, and his love for the virtuous Mlle de Clermac.

The young man may go temporarily astray, even if he is attached to a person of merit, but after the fit is over he will return to the source of virtue and love. The young count in La Jolie Femme is enticed from

2. Ibid., pp. 50-51.
his true love, Rosbelle, by the vain marquise, aided and abetted by Mme de Loreval. But he returns to Rosbelle after he has come to see reason, wiser than before and more appreciative of her simple charms. Not every young man takes happily to the life he is expected to lead in society. Some are of a more reflective nature, and they sense that there must be something more to life than the empty round. Without yet having an objective for these finer feelings, the young man feels the need for a more durable tie. Sélicourt is one such; sent to Paris for his education:

"Il réfléchissait au milieu même de l'étourdissement des plaisirs, et il avait déjà assez d'expérience pour sentir que le véritable amour est bien différent de ces engagements passagers qui sont presque toujours suivis de la langueur et du dégoût." ¹

The realisation can come suddenly, as with the Chevalier de Gonthieu:

"J'avais à peine passé trois ans au milieu de ces plaisirs et de ces parties brillantes, qu'un rien fait naître, après lesquels la jeunesse toujours légère court sans cesse, et qui par l'air de gaieté répandu sur la physionomie de ceux qui les goûtent, ont quelque chose d'attrayant, lorsque je m'aperçus que je m'étais

¹. Sélicourt by Baculard d'Arnaud, p.4.
trompé dans le choix des amusements; je cherchai des plaisirs plus solides, plus capables de me satisfaire." 1

Edmond, in *Le Paysan Perverti*, feels that Edmée could be his salvation, as he tells Mme de Parangon:

"Les périls se multiplient ici sous mes pas ... l'aimable Edmée m'en garantirait; il me le semble, du moins, à l'éloignement que j'éprouve, depuis que je l'ai revue, pour les parties du plaisir où l'on m'entraînait." 2

But he is dissuaded from the match by Gaudet, who has other designs on his pupil. To allow him to marry Edmée would be to free him from his power, for it is through the senses that he is able to rule Edmond.

A life of libertinage is not the only path the young man can take. He need not give himself up into the clutches of an older woman anxious to initiate him into the mysteries of life; instead, he is urged, in the novels of the later 18th century, to seek affections of a more durable nature. The young Paublas is an obvious example, here. Paublas is initiated into the delights of sensual pleasures by the marquise de B*: he also has another mistress, the young and charming Mme de Lignolle. But he is attached by the

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heart to Sophie, who eventually becomes his wife. Sophie provides the key to the moral Louvet wishes to point - marriage to a charming, virtuous woman is a greater prize than a series of amorous adventures with various partners. Both the marquise de B* and Mme de Lignolle are worthy of Faublas's love, but they sin in accepting a lover, no matter how understandable their actions, in view of the contrast between the charms of the young Faublas and those of their respective husbands. Sophie alone is all virtue. Faublas is aware of the great merit of his two mistresses; he shows no disgust toward them, nor indeed toward any of his less worthy partners - but Sophie is continually in his thoughts. He fell in love with her at their very first meeting, and she with him - this is true love. Despite his physical infidelities, his heart and mind remain basically true to Sophie. His excuse lies in his youth, and in the force of his newly-awakened passions:

"J'étais seul, je pensai à ma Sophie. Je ne lui avais fait dans la matinée qu'une courte visite; dans la soirée je ne donnais qu'un

1. It might be noted that the names of Sophie and Julie are almost always associated with virtue and sensibility in the latter half of the century, presumably as one result of the influence of Rousseau's works.
moment à son souvenir; mais, si le lecteur veut m'excuser, qu'il songe aux doux plaisirs que vient de m'offrir une femme charmante, voluptueuse et belle; qu'il ... se souvienne surtout que Faublas commence son noviciat et n'a guère que seize ans."  

Finally, true love and virtue, in the form of Sophie, triumph; the moral is enforced by Faublas's last words in his memoirs:

"Je jouis au sein de l'hymen d'une félicité que je n'ai jamais connue dans mes égarements."  

Louvet has thus reached a compromise between the two forms of sentimental education, and indicated the true path to happiness, as he and most of the novelists of the later 18th century see it.

Few of the novels in the early 18th century actually condone the frivolity of polite social life, although it is often represented as a fact, a state of affairs, which, because it is so, needs no commentary. Even in this period, one notes many couples who are true lovers, in contrast with the fickle tastes of fashionable society. But love, feeling, comes into its own after the middle of the century. This is the

period of the sentimental novel, as produced by Baculard d'Arnaud and Mme de Puisieux. The sentimental novel extols the joys of a true and virtuous love, in contrast to the fashionable laxity of manners. This is the ideal now presented to the young man, not the exploits of a dashing man of wide experience, even although this type continued in society right up to the Revolution. Such are the views Mme de Puisieux puts forth:

"On a beau faire l'éloge de la légèreté, elle ne vaut pas un jour de cet amour vif et délicat, qui est l'effet de la haute opinion qu'on a de son choix. Je conseille aux dames de rendre leurs conquêtes plus difficiles, et de se faire estimer des hommes par leur solidité; bien-tôt elles les verront empressés, persévérants, même tendres et fidèles, et tout le monde y gagnera."

The young man is urged to reject the casual view of love and emotion current in polite society. Mme de Beaumarchais illustrates the type of ideal love, so different from that generally found in society, in the relationship between the Comtesse d'Olnange and the Marquis de Rosebelle:

1. Mémoires d'un homme de bien, (1768), Avertissement, pp. ix-x.
"S'ils étaient seuls, elle voyait, dans les yeux de son amant, à quel point il se faisait violence pour ne pas tomber à ses genoux. Elle devenait interdite, levait sur lui des regards mal assurés, gardait le silence; et lui, dans l'ivresse de pareils moments, conservait l'effroi de lui déplaire; crainte précieuse, soumission délicate et passionnée situation plus délicieuse que ne l'imaginent les vulgaires amants, où l'on jouit des moindres faveurs, où tout est volupté, l'avenir, le présent, ce qu'on obtient, ce qu'on espère, ce qu'on se refuse; où les retours de la délicatesse sur elle-même, retours enchanteurs, paient avec usure ce qu'elle n'enlève qu'au profit de l'amour." 1

This virtuous love, reminiscent of chivalric love, is a reaction against the superficial values of polite society. It is the alternative being offered to the young man.

These two conceptions of the role the emotions play in a young man's life run side by side in the literature of the century. As the conviction grows that society is corrupt, this purer form of feeling is impressed more and more on the young man, as an alternative to the meaningless series of associations he indulges in. The novels of the latter half of the

century reject the idea of a sentimental education undertaken by an older woman of experience. In reality, of course, the matter cannot be solved as simply. The moral laxity of society appeals strongly to the young man just entering the world. Apart from this, he sees all around him behaving in this fashion, so he quite naturally bases his conduct on those of his own milieu. Since he receives his education in society, society itself must be radically altered before his education could take another form.
CHAPTER 3
THE YOUNG RAKE

Ostensibly opposed to the figure of the abbé stands the young man of quality destined to enter the world. His aim is to be integrated into the fashionable society of the time, for which he was ill-equipped by his formal education.\(^1\) The character which most appeals to the young man is that of the gentleman of fashion conversant in the ways of the world, and at ease in the company of women, who figures prominently in 18th-century polite society. The natural progression from the gentleman of fashion is the rake, a man steeped in the fads of his day and possessed of great charm directed to the conquest of the feminine half of society. The figure of the gay charming gentleman of fashion, the plague of all women and from whom no-one's wife, sweetheart, daughter or sister is safe, is a popular international literary character, often termed a Don Juan, such being the name bestowed on the first celebrated character in literary history with these attributes.\(^2\) The rake appears

1. Cf. later chapter on A New Entry into the World.

frequently in 18th-century literature since his prototype abounds in the reality of 18th-century polite society. To escape contact with the libertine element of polite society is an impossibility and indeed runs contrary to the wishes of the young man eager to experience all polite society can offer him.

The young noble's first desire is to be integrated into the whirl of pleasures which typifies life in polite society; to be accepted into its midst, he must make his presence felt. Renown within the circle might be gained by the projection of self as a young man of spirit and charm, an image secured partially by prowess on the battlefield but more particularly, in the 18th century, by the display of amatory skill, as Hamilton points out:

"La gloire dans les armes n'est tout au plus que la moitié du brillant qui distingue les héros. Il faut que l'amour mette la dernière main au relief de leur caractère, par les travaux, la témérité des entreprises et la gloire des succès." 1

He must set out to build up a reputation for himself; advertisement of this nature will ensure his entry into and acceptance in all circles calculated to appeal to a

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1. Mémoires du Chevalier de Grammont by Hamilton (1713), d. IV, p. 36.
young man on the threshold of society. Both to form him, in order that he may establish himself within polite society, and to facilitate his entry into the 'world', the young man needs a guide, one familiar with the ways of the world and of a certain standing in fashionable circles. To play his role in the polite world, the young man must have knowledge of all it entails and must adopt the values current within society.

For the marquis requires other mentors for his entry into the world:

"Vos conseils, excellents pour régler les mœurs, ne pourraient à présent servir seuls de règle à ma conduite. Il me faut des amis, des hommes au fait des usages, des guides dans le monde; souffrez que je les cherche. Les principes les plus vertueux et les plus solides ne me feraient point éviter un ridicule. Vous pardonnerez tout hors les vices, le monde pardonne tout hors les ridicules ... Je suis dans le monde, il faut que je voie le monde."

A reputation for virtue, although morally desirable, is alien to society's ways and may be a target for ridicule, the omnipotent and arbitrary ruler of 18th-

century polite society. Maugras, in his Duc de Lauzun et la Cour Intime de Louis XIV, quotes the advice given by the Duc de Guines to his two daughters on the day of their presentation at court:

"Souvenez-vous, mes enfants, que dans ce pays-ci les vices sont sans conséquence, mais qu'un ridicule tue." 1

A reputation for moral virtue is vulnerable to attack by the many within society who live by a less severe code, whilst the rake's reputation is based on his libertinage and is socially the more powerful in that his reputation has the power to tarnish the good name of those who have structured their lives upon a firm moral foundation. 2 The most spectacular and exciting form of celebrity, in the eyes of the young débutant in society, is that commanded by the rake; virtue is quiet and self-effacing. The most effective method of acquiring such a reputation, according to Versac, is to have a considerable number of well-publicised successes with women:

2. Jonval makes this point in his Erreurs Instructives, (part II) whilst talking of the rake, Blainvert: "Il avait entre autres mauvaises qualités celle d'être un raillieur impitoyable, et cela lui avait valu quelques bonnes fortunes. Cette sorte de gens se fait redouter, et dans la crainte d'être l'objet de leurs brocards, on cherche à se mettre bien avec eux ..." 3

1. d. I, pp. 4-5.
In a society where gentlemen are judged largely by their sociability, particularly in the field of relationships with the opposite sex, the young man with no experience of life is invariably attracted to those who appear most strikingly to have perfected the social arts. He lacks the discernment to distinguish between the rake's superficial charm and the value of true worth, expressed in more modest terms.

It is important for the youth that he acquire a certain reputation within his circle, but he dare not depart from the norm in social behaviour in his attempt to achieve celebrity. He does not desire originality, but rather seeks distinction in his interpretation of the accepted social practices. To become part of polite society, he must conform to the life-style of that community: the sole permissible deviation from

1. Égarements du Coeur et de l'Esprit by Crétillon, part III, p. 73.
the norm is the excess of the features which constitute the norm. The youth's enthusiastic participation in social pleasures indicates anxiety on his part lest he lag behind his contemporaries; he seeks reassurance for his own personality in the company of other young gentlemen of fashion, and admittance to their circle is determined by adherence to the pattern of life within it. Such is the case of Lord Thaley in *Fanny*: his companions are the aristocratic young bloods of 18th-century England, all, like him, dedicated to the pursuit of pleasure. To merit distinction, he must excel among his contemporaries, within the limits of their mode of life:

"Le lord Thaley entrait dans l'âge des passions: il était né avec une âme droite, et beaucoup de sensibilité, un rang élevé, de la fortune; une société de gens corrompus, c'est-à-dire, la société du grand monde, la facilité de céder à ses penchant, tous ces ennemis...étoffaient en lui la nature ... il brillait parmi ces étourdis qui vont se crever aux courses de Newmarket." 1

The desire to acquire a reputation through excessive indulgence in social pleasures has another source in the

youth's vanity, itself an extension of the self-confidence which typifies the social ideal. The youth wishes to prove his worth in terms of social behaviour: it is a matter of bravado. Rousseau points out in *Émile* that 'l'amour-propre fait plus de libertins que l'amour'. Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the role played by love - or rather, the senses - in the young man's conduct. His vanity, his sense of competition and his need to belong are all played out through his indulgence in sensual pleasures; the adolescent feels keenly his awakening desires and appreciates the opportunities offered within society to satisfy them. He is dazzled by the variety of pleasures displayed and is eager to sample them. The excess of sensual pleasures, debauchery, holds great attraction for the adolescent. These traits of the gentleman of fashion - his enslavement to the senses, his vanity and his exaggeration of social pleasures - are also characteristic of the rake. Thus each young man who enters the 'world' is a potential rake.

As his formal education is of little use as preparation for life in society, the young noble stands

in need of guidance by persons with experience of the ways of the world. He might take as his mentor the older man or the older woman;1 either can set him on the way to becoming a man of fashion. The older man of the world, who has already established himself in society, encourages the young man to follow in his footsteps. He has acquired a certain reputation which invests him with glamour in the boy's eyes; the youth therefore attempts to emulate him. In his inexperience, the youth runs the risk of being taken in hand by an unscrupulous man of fashion, who will instil in his pupil his own pernicious maxims and code. In the Voyages et Aventures du Comte de * et de son fils, the comte's friend, the baron, recounts how he made his début in Parisian society in the company of the corrupt D'Armigni:

"Il n'y avait pas encore trois mois que j'étais à Paris, que je me trouvais lié d'amitié avec un jeune étourdi, que je me proposai pour modèle, et qui dans peu de temps me fit faire bien du chemin dans le désordre. J'eus le malheur de me livrer entièrement à lui, et je lui laissai prendre un si grand ascendant sur mon esprit, que je devins bientôt l'esclave de toutes ses volontés ..."

1. Cf. chapter on Sentimental Education.
Once the young man has abandoned himself to the pleasures of the senses, he is in his mentor's power: his passions are the instrument by means of which his mentor may take control of him. The rake encourages his pupil to give himself up to the pleasures of the senses, for he is aware that the young man is thereby drawn deeper into his circle. The young man's initiation into vice is an insidious process perpetuated by those who wish to mould their pupils in their image — which is a source of pride and glory for the rake/mentor. The rake flatters and charms his chosen disciple, utilising the very weapons by means of which he is able to seduce any woman he chooses. He induces his disciple to follow the path he, the rake, intends

1. A similar process is utilised in the attempted corruption of the virtuous Bazile (Bazile - Baculard d'Arnaud) by the 'intendant', Remi:

"Le jeune homme touchait à cet âge où la moindre étincelle produit l'incendie de l'amour. L'artificieux intendant lui fait voir, comme par hasard..., une beauté naissante, ou plutôt une enchanteresse contre laquelle tout autre même qu'un cœur neuf et sans expérience n'aurait pu se défendre."

Fortunately for Bazile, the process misfires, and he remains true to his honest and virtuous nature. (Oeuvres, vol. I, p. 141).
he should take. Thus Sir Thoward in Fanny cajoles lord Thaley into doing his will. In Earthe's La Jolie Femme, the young heroine, having herself been led astray by a female mentor of doubtful morals, Mme de Loreval, determines to conquer a certain handsome young count, who has shown little interest in her since he is already enamoured of a young lady of virtue. To gain her own ends, the 'heroine' enlists the aid of the chevalier de Soudris, a celebrated rake. Soudris gains power over his pupil by tempting him with the delights of the flesh. In encouraging his pupil to take a more lenient view of vice, Soudris capitalises on the youth's inexperience and the force of his natural instincts:

"Le mauvais génie qui inspirait de Soudris, ne manqua point d'empoisonner l'esprit du jeune comte. Ajoutez-y cette pente malheureuse qui nous porte vers des vices si brillants. Il était jeune, il avait des désirs, il était ébloui de ces maximes pernicieuses, débitées d'un ton convaincant et léger." (cl-XIII, p.44)

Once emancipated from the restrictions of his formal education and set adrift into the world, the young man gives free reign to his passions. He is therefore vulnerable to the approaches of the rake: in his insecurity he welcomes the aid of the older libertine

1. By Baculard d'Arnaud.
who is willing to instruct him in the ways of the world
of which he himself is entirely ignorant.

The aim of the rake in adopting an inexperienced
young man as his disciple is to fashion another in his
own image. Vanity is an important motivating force
in the rake's conduct: to mould the character of
another is to perpetuate his own self. It is an
extension, another projection of his own being. By
his lessons and by his own example, the rake will form
his pupil to continue his own life-style: he basks
in the reflected glory of his pupil's successes with
women. Thus the count of Chester is able to write to
his mentor in France, the rake, the duke de **

"C'est à vous, mon cher duc, c'est
au soin que vous avez pris de former
ma jeunesse, à vos leçons et à vos
exemples, que je dois ma gloire et
mes succès."

The rake is able to instruct his pupil in the ways of
the world, give him the benefit of his own experience
of society - viewed from his own biased standpoint.
To participate in the life of polite society, the rake

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1. Intercalated story of Histoire Secrète du comte de
Chester in part III of Crébillon's Les Heureux
Orphelins.

( Collection complète des œuvres de Crébillon, London,
1772, vol. V, lettre I, p. 242.)
has learned, it is necessary to conform to the established pattern of life. The necessity of conformity is the first principle inculcated in the pupil by his mentor. Apparent acceptance of current social values is a necessary attitude for one who wishes to insinuate himself in the graces of other members of society, who themselves blindly accept its maxims.

This is Versac's first lesson to Meilcour, and it also constitutes Meilcour's introduction to the cynicism of the man of the world. Versac is aware that society's values and the morals instilled in the youth by his formal education do not always accord; here he invites Meilcour to take his first step away from the morality in which he has been grounded:

"Le monde et elle [la morale] ne s'accordent pas toujours, et vous éprouverez que le plus souvent on ne réussit dans l'un qu'aux dépens de l'autre. Il vaut mieux encore un coup prendre les erreurs de son siècle, ou du moins s'y plier, que d'y montrer des vertus qui y paraîtraient étrangères ou ne seraient pas du bon ton." 1

Yet complete conformity to the social norm could not earn the youth the renown he seeks, nor would it facilitate the development of the creation the rake desires to

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1. Les Égarements du cœur et de l'esprit by Crébillon, part III, p. 92.
produce. Moderation is incompatible with the notion of the libertine, as the rake/mentor would have his pupil become. To confer a distinction upon his pupil, Versac encourages him to develop his own pecadillos, which, Versac insists, are not incompatible with the necessity to conform:

"Cette souplesse d'esprit que je vous conseille, n'exclut pas la singularité que je vous ai recommandée. L'une vous est pas moins nécessaire que l'autre; sans la première, vous ne frapperez personne; sans la seconde, vous déplairiez à tout le monde." 1

One need not, as so many do, follow blindly the dictates of fashion. Versac's conformity to the social pattern does not indicate slavish imitation on his part. He has studied the often ridiculous manners of society, recognises them for what they are: he in fact despises society's mindless following of fashion. Versac attempts to awaken the same consciousness within Meilcour, and thus arouse the same contempt for society's ways in his pupil's breast as he himself feels:

"Tant qu'un ridicule plaît, il est grâce, agrément, esprit, et ce n'est que quand pour l'avoir usé on s'en lasse, qu'on lui donne le nom qu'en effet il mérite." 2

1. Ibid., p. 77.
2. Ibid., pp. 72-73.
Open scorn of society's ways, however, would prove detrimental to his pupil in his bid to be integrated into society, hence the rake advocates dissimulation. All society's members hide behind a mask, an effective disguise in that few will trouble to look beyond; it is the surest mode of defence. Meilcour is thus introduced to dissimulation: insincerity is not solely the characteristic of the member of polite society, as Versac views him, it is, more especially, an essential trait of the rake.

At the outset of Meilcour's education, Versac encourages his pupil to take a cynical view of society. Versac's advice on the balance to be achieved between conformity and singularity is fundamental to his outlook on life. For the singularity he advocates, whereby Meilcour may be distinguished from his fellows, is based on the evaluation of the fashions and values current in polite society. One may slyly ape and ridicule society by assuming its peculiarities and enlarging upon them, thereby distinguishing oneself by the chameleonic fashions which one inwardly repudiates. To surpass all others who conform to the social pattern, one must exaggerate the minutiae of which it is composed. Conversation plays an important part in the
social graces. One may gain a reputation of being a
great wit and conversationalist merely by pandering to
society's taste for slander, which carries the
additional advantage of inspiring a form of respect
in all who fear to become its victim. To succeed,
one must possess a sharper tongue than one's contem­
poraries: in his advice on this point to Neilcourt,
Versac once again displays the contempt he feels for society:

"Comme c'est à la médisance uniquement
que se rapporte aujourd'hui l'esprit
du monde, on s'est appliqué à lui
donner un ton particulier, et c'est
plus à la façon de médire qu'à toute
autre chose, que l'on reconnaît ceux
qui possèdent le bon ton. Elle ne
saurait être ni trop cruelle, ni
trop précieuse." (p. 95)

Eloquence of this nature plays a significant role in
the rake's mode of life; his ready wit and malicious
tongue are essential in his seduction of women and in
the publicising of his conquests which ensures his renown.

To cast his pupil in the desired mould, the
mentor must erase all traces of the moral code in which
the youth has hitherto been instructed, or his own
teachings will fall on barren soil. Conscious that
the youth desires integration into society, the rake
stresses the incompatability of life in society with the
youth's moral principles, as Versac explains to Melcour:

"C'est une erreur de croire que l'on puisse conserver dans le monde, cette innocence de moeurs, que l'on puisse être toujours vertueux et toujours naturel, sans risquer sa réputation ou sa fortune. Le coeur et l'esprit sont forcés de s'y gâter, tout y est mode et affectation. Les vertus, les agréments et les talents y sont purement arbitraires, et l'on n'y peut réussir qu'en se défigurant sans cesse." (part III, pp. 69-70).

The science of the 'world' must be learned and assimilated, despite its little worth, argues Versac, since it is unfortunately true that it is less dangerous in society to lack heart than good manners. By exposing the worthlessness of many of society's values whilst stressing the necessity of apparent acceptance of them, Versac achieves two aims at one and the same time. He cuts the youth adrift from the stern moral principles which are at variance with the figure he seeks to create and he also inspires in his pupil the contempt for society which is integral to the rake's character.

The rake's hostility to society is particularly directed toward the feminine half of society; his own early experiences with women have induced this attitude of mind. Lack of respect for woman in general is the characteristic of the 18th-century gentleman of
fashion, reaching its apex in the rake's treatment of women. In Crébillon's Égarements, Meilcour's education in the world falls into two parts: his sentimental education by an older woman, Mme de Lursay, and his instruction in the ways of grappling with society by an older man, the rake, Versac. The stronger party, holding more sway, is Versac; for Mme de Lursay's role in Meilcour's education merely strengthens Versac's arguments. The easy manners of the older woman gives the youth a low opinion of women in general. After his passion is spent, he judges her by his former moral standards, which were still those of young innocence. His consequent loss of respect for her corresponds to a diminished respect for women in general; this is the necessary state of mind for the young rake, rendering him all the more receptive to his mentor's exploitation of his youth and inexperience. The mentor is determined to crush any seed of respect or love which may germinate within his pupil for a member of the opposite sex, since both sentiments are alien to the character of the rake and hence run counter to the mentor's teachings. Valville\(^1\) derides the marquis de

\[1. \text{Lettres du Marquis de Roselle by Mme A.L. Élie de Beaumont (1764).}\]
Roselle's love and respect (in this case, with good reason) for the opera-girl, Léonor: he exploits the youth's sensitivity to his own inexperience. The young man must be persuaded that virtue and honour in his relationship with the opposite sex are outmoded. Valville attempts to estrange the marquis from his sister, since she is only acquainted with, as he claims, 'the virtues of our old grandmothers', which are invalid in 18th-century polite society. Love, Valville maintains, should be nothing more than an amusement in which one retains one's sense of detachment. The whole of the youth's experience with women must be envisaged as a game, in which he indulges as a challenge to his own ingenuity: this is the crux of Valville's advice to his pupil:

"C'est chez toi une frénésie que l'amour; l'amour! sache qu'il ne doit être qu'un amusement, qu'un préservatif contre l'ennui. Il faut en intrigues amoureuses, comme en toutes autres affaires, former un plan d'abord, et ne s'en point écarter, à moins que les circonstances ne varient. On prend une fille comme Léonor, on la garde tant qu'elle amuse, on l'entretient décentement; et on la quitte quand on ne l'aime plus, ou quand elle devient impertinente; cela ne demande pas plus de façons. Il faut un peu plus d'égards pour les femmes d'un certain âge, ce n'est guère qu'à mon âge qu'on en vient là." ¹ (lettre X, p.31).

¹ Lettres du marquis de Roselle à Mme Élie de Beaumont.
Pleasure, claims Valville, is the basis of all male/female relationships, exclusive of honour, respect and sentiment. He attempts to inculcate in his pupil the maxims of a certain section of society, to inspire in him the easy contempt for woman in general which characterises the man of the world: any but superficial feelings would prove detrimental to the young man's bid for social integration:

"... la raison n'est que l'expérience du monde, on ne l'a point à ton âge; c'est un aveugle mouvement qui vous entraîne ... Vous, autres grands enfants, vous êtes sujets à prendre vos premières palpitations pour l'amour. Je prévois qu'il ne sera pas aisé de te corriger de la mauvaise éducation que l'on t'a donnée. On n'a songé qu'à faire de toi un homme à grands sentiments et à beaux procédés; sottise! On ne gagne rien à valoir mieux que ceux avec qui l'on vit; et en bonne philosophie, le vrai mérite est d'avoir celui qui est généralement recherché. Je t'avais mis entre les mains de Léonor pour y prendre le ton du monde, et te mettre en réputation, et voilà que tu t'éprends de belle passion pour elle; c'est un enfantillage. Il faut que tu saches qu'il n'est question aujourd'hui que d'être aimable; et pour l'être qu'est-il besoin d'amour? ... On ne demande que de la galanterie; la galanterie est l'amour du sexe en général. Elle est dans la nature; les femmes ne se ressemblent-elles pas toutes assez pour nous faire passer légèrement de l'une à l'autre.?" 1

1. Ibid., lettre 81, p. 21.
Similarly, Blainvert mocks his pupil, the comte de *, for the remorse he feels in his treatment of Mélite, to whom the count is unfaithful. It coincides with Blainvert's interests that the young count should be involved with several women at once, since the risk of his falling in love with one woman is thereby lessened. Hence he urges his pupil to procure himself a 'petite maison' where he may entertain his mistresses in privacy; he also encourages the count to develop the hypocrisy and dissimulation which are a feature of the rake in his dealings with the opposite sex. The young count should associate with several women at once, Blainvert maintains: should one mistress discover the young count keeps another mistress, the solution is simple. The guilty party may protest with nobility and hurt indignation that, solely in the interests of his mistress's reputation, he feigns to love another, in order to draw attention away from his relationship with her. Blainvert thus makes a direct invitation to his pupil to dupe the women with whom he associates, and incidentally expresses the low opinion he himself has of women's intelligence.

1. Les Erreurs Instructives by Jonval.
Often the advice meted out by the mentor to regulate his pupil's conduct towards women is vicious to the degree that it closely approaches sadism on a mental if not a physical plane. The ruin of a virtuous woman's reputation is but a game to D'Armenville, and it is this art of seduction in which he intends to instruct the innocent Doligny:

"... je veux te servir de mentor, suis mes avis et tu réussiras. Le grand art de réduire ce qu'on appelle, dans le monde, une honnête fille, est connu de peu d'hommes; quand on le possède, ce n'est qu'un jeu."

Doligny is to derive his enjoyment from the deliberate cruelty which D'Armenville proposes as the principal attraction in a relationship with the opposite sex, as he tells Doligny:

"La vraie félicité de la vie est seule dans l'inconstance. Si tu veux être heureux, mon cher Doligny, sois, comme moi, voilà: fais-toi un jeu de tromper les femmes, amuse-toi de leurs caprices, que leur résistance pique ton amour-propre; mais que leur faiblesse ne fixe jamais ta légèreté. Une femme qui succombe à la séduction, n'est qu'une victime immolée au plaisir; il faut rire de ses chagrins, fuir l'importunité."

1. Dorval ou Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire des Moeurs du 18e siècle, 7 Jamiens de Comicourt, part II.
The rake/mentor wishes to eradicate all spontaneous, profound emotion from within his pupil's soul, for spontaneous sincere feeling is completely alien to the character of the rake. He educates his pupil in the ways of the world and in the process reverses completely all the moral values instilled in his pupil by his formal education. He consciously fosters in his pupil a hostile attitude to society which reflects his own position vis-à-vis the world.

The adolescent prey to his passions is an embryonic rake: libertinage is envisaged in the 18th century as a natural and quasi-inevitable stage in the youth's development and education in the world. He quickly assimilates the mood of the circles in which he moves, where the accent is on pleasure, rather than on

1. Dorval by Damiens de Gomicourt, vol. I, part II.
deep feeling. Sentiment is much discussed in 18th-century polite society, but in general it serves as a respectable façade to disguise the urge of natural instincts. Sentiment is paraded as the motive behind the physical aspect of love, whilst in fact it is but the veneer to disguise the primitive drive. The age-old battle of the sexes comes to the fore in 18th-century polite society: the relationship between male and female is envisaged as a game. The desire to experience emotional as well as physical involvement is outdated: to fall deeply and permanently in love runs contrary to the rules of the social game. The outward expression of feeling is permissible only insofar as it achieves its objective, conquest and possession. Confronted with this attitude, the youth attempts to suppress the longing for a profound and complete relationship. Current opinion, supported by the youth's natural instincts, urges the young man to surrender himself to the purely physical. Bastide's 'fat' is formed by this process: despite his youthful desire to undergo a deep emotional experience, he stifles this urge in order to conform to the pattern established in his particular circle:

"Il entrait beaucoup de sensibilité
dans mon caractère, toutes les femmes m'intéressaient, je brûlais d'avoir quelque engagement de coeur; mais insensiblement je découvais que l'amour n'était presque que comme un meuble de parade dans les cercles où je vivais, qu'on ne le sentait point, et cela m'effrayait. Je trouvais ma raison aux prises avec mon cœur, je redoutais le ridicule dont je me couvrirais si je me laissais entraîner à un penchant que l'usage rendait si dépravé." 1

From here it is but one step to the standpoint of the rake; that bestowal of affection on a woman is a slur on a gentleman's honour: his own personal experiences support this theory: 2

"Persuadé enfin qu'un cœur tendre était moins encore un obstacle au bonheur, qu'une tâche à la gloire d'un homme de qualité, et jugeant des femmes par celles que j'avais tant de raison de mépriser, je pris le parti de ne me fixer plus à aucune et de vivre avec toutes précisément comme si la nature ne les avait faites que pour servir à mes plaisirs."

The atmosphere of the 18th century is thus responsible for the contemptuous attitude towards woman adopted by the man with some experience of life in society.

If the circle in which the youth moves is exclusively frequented by women of easy virtue, it is

2. Ibid., pp. 35-36.
easy for him to fall into the error of believing that every woman must conform to the same pattern. The Faron de Sérange is one who has thus developed a low opinion of all womankind:

"Le peu d'attention qu'il a toujours mis dans le choix de ses maîtresses, a fortifié en lui le mépris raisonnable qu'il a pour les femmes; il croit que la vertu est étrangère à ce sexe, et qu'avec lui il faut être dupe ou tyran." 1

When the youth comes into contact with society, his youthful illusions of love and purity are dispelled. His subsequent degeneration into libertinage is the almost inevitable outcome: the enthusiasm of youth cannot strike the happy medium between the dream of an ideal love and the sacrifice of all finer feelings to the glorification of the flesh. All his energies must be directed to the satisfaction of one particular aim, to the exclusion of all else: youth is characterised by excess in one form or another. The young men's single-minded pursuit of pleasure expresses his need to belong, his search for identity. Moderation and tolerance are the virtues of the older man who has

1. Les Sacrifices de l'amour by Jacques Dorat, p. 36, lettre VIII of vol. I.
exhausted the pleasures of the senses, meaningless without love, who has come to terms with himself. With maturity, the libertine may find a truer ideal. The satiation which follows excessive indulgence of the senses produces a calmer mood when he may take stock of himself and decide to seek a less transient and more satisfactory form of happiness. In such a case, libertinage is but a stage in a man's development.

Libertinage as a component of the youth's education is not malicious in intent albeit vicious in practice. It is thoughtless indulgence in the senses and hence may be rectified in the light of calmer reflection. The rake in his most complete form - Mauzi's 'cas limite' - is a different proposition. His libertinage is a matter of principle: it constitutes a pattern of life based on design. His conduct is consciously anti-social. As a youth, he nursed his own dreams of love and purity, but he was disillusioned by contact with the world. It is his own utilisation of libertinage as a device to harm society which he

advocates to his pupil. The rake-mentor is anxious to indoctrinate his pupil with his own principles, instilled in him by another rake in his own first encounter with the world, and which have been furthered by his own experience in a life based on these principles. His code is that of a character formerly upright, embittered by contact with the corruption of his fellow creatures. He has countered by exaggerating the vices of society which he secretly despises, thus, as it were, 'beating society at its own game'. He exaggerates all the faults he has noted in society to excel within it by the very vices he inwardly repudiates. His behaviour is not based on blind obedience to the dictates of his senses; it is a carefully calculated code of conduct based on his hypersensitivity to the vices of society. He returns evil for evil, corruption for corruption. He takes revenge on society in his indoctrination of the innocent young, encouraging his pupils to follow his own anti-social behaviour. His pupils are an extension of himself in his attempt to conquer the society which he despises. He is also avenging himself on the society which destroyed his youthful illusions in the form of the individual, by corrupting a new member of society, the
adolescent. The older rake is one who did not discover an alternative to libertinage. He did not emerge from this stage, but plunged deeper into it and dedicated himself to it as a revenge upon society.

The rake in his most extreme form despises the weakness and corruption of his fellow creatures; he feels superior to other members of society. To establish his victory over society, he utilises his knowledge of mankind's failings, from which he considers himself exempt. Richardson's Lovelace is often quoted as the arch-rake and he naturally views mankind in a harsh light. Man's shortcomings are at one and the same time the source of and the excuse for the rake's anti-social behaviour. The rake has shrewdly assessed the weaknesses of other members of society. Lovelace, for example, rents all the rooms in Mrs Moore's house—at an exorbitant price—to win the landlady to his side, for hitherto Clarissa has forbidden Lovelace to lodge in the same house as herself. Lovelace enters upon such expense as an integral part of his plan to seduce Clarissa, all his contrivances being based on his knowledge of human nature: he explains to a friend:

"The offer of a bribe would not only give room for suspicion but would
startle and alarm their scrupulousness, while a high price paid for what you buy is but submitting to be cheated in the method the person makes a profession to get by. Have I not said that human nature is a rogue? and do not I know it?

The rake's main target in his revenge on society is women, firstly, since he was thus indoctrinated by his mentor on his entry into society, and secondly because his shattered dreams of purity and perfect love were essentially concerned with the opposite sex. Lovelace accentuates the spirit of retaliation underlying the rake's conduct towards women when he refers to himself as 'the plague of a sex that has been my plague'. The rake is punishing women for failing to resemble the feminine ideal he revered as an adolescent; he is taking revenge on women for his early love-affairs in which he was corrupted. He is cruel in his fickleness: he passes from one woman to another, 'punishing' as many of the opposite sex as possible. He is inconstant on principle: and therein lies much of the dangerous charm he holds for women. He constitutes a challenge for the opposite sex, for a woman would count it as a personal triumph if her attractions could fix his

2. in fine, letter C[...]V.
inconstancy. The rake is a very dashing figure, experienced in the art of pleasing women, eloquent and in the forefront of fashionable society. His attention is deemed a distinction, for he is viewed as a connoisseur of feminine beauty: to be singled out by him is proof of a woman's charms. Although notorious for his fickle character, he is irresistible to women and all succumb to his persuasive charm, despite the multiple evidence that submission engenders his indifference: Lionel, prince de Galles, is a case in point:

"Il aimait passionnément le sexe, et point du tout les femmes; avait-il obtenu leurs bonnes grâces, au peu de cas qu'il en faisait, il ne pouvait concevoir toute l'importance qu'elles y attachaient; et, malgré ce défaut, décelé par sa conduite en toute occasion, il avait jusque-là toujours réussi auprès d'elles. Il est vrai qu'il était beau, bien fait, jeune, magnifique et prince." 1

Consequently, the rake's low opinion of woman in general is reinforced by each new experience.

Flippantly, the rake claims that his inconstancy is beneficial to the victim of his infidelity, in that it enlivens the relationship and galvanises the woman

into retaliatory action. The marquis de * dismisses his cruelty on the grounds that his conduct is actually in the interests of all concerned, as he tells the chevalier de Veressei:

"Toi qui, je l'espère, nous soutiendras bientôt qu'il est monstrueux d'être infidèle, sais-tu qu'il faut l'être, pour l'intérêt même des femmes qu'on aime. Ayez une maîtresse que rien n'inquiète, que rien n'alarme, sûre de vos hommages, convaincue de votre sentiment, elle en accepte les preuves avec tranquillité, c'est-à-dire, sans reconnaissance. Une femme tranquille ne tarde pas à être froide ... Vous lui êtes cher, si vous voulez; mais vous cessez d'être piquant: elle-même ne fait plus de frais, elle est aimable, quand elle peut, pense toujours l'être assez, se repose sur votre ivresse, et finit par perdre la sienne. Donnez-lui une rivale, tout se réveille éternânt ... Pour mettre ces dames tout à fait dans leur jour, il est d'obligation de les tourmenter: leur esprit y gagne, leur âme aussi ... D'ailleurs, une femme qu'on force à faire un nouveau choix, doit conserver une reconnaissance éternelle à l'amant qui lui procure le charme inexprimable de la vengeance." 1

The marquis persuades himself that women expect such treatment; he credits them with the same attitude of mind as himself by maintaining that they are creatures whose essence is trickery, and who esteem love more.

by the ruses to which it gives rise than by the pleasures it brings'.

The rake finally has contempt for woman on all planes. Her easy manners first led him to despise her, and now he will not concede one redeeming factor in a woman's make-up. Lovelace condemns the blind vanity —ironically one of the rake's most prominent traits — which lead women to believe they may captivate a man, deluding themselves as to the extent of their own charms: it is this vanity which precipitates their fall:

"All women, from the countess to the cook-maid, are put into high good humour with themselves when a man is taken with them at first sight. Be they ever so plain (no woman can be ugly, Jack) they'll find twenty good reasons beside the great one... by the help of the glass without (and perhaps in spite of it) and conceit within, to justify the honest fellow's caption."

For Lovelace, too, woman is incapable of the finer feelings; hence he suspects the validity of the deep friendship which binds Clarissa and Clara:

"These vehement friendships are nothing but chaff and stubble, liable to be blown away by the very wind that raises them... the word is a mere word, the thing a mere thing... friendship between women never holds to

2. Ibid., pp. 189-190.
the sacrifice of capital gratifications, or to the endangering of life, limb or estate, as it often does in our nobler sex."

It is essential that the rake regard woman as a lower organism which he may manipulate at will, for otherwise he would be unable to perpetrate his deed of destruction within society, since she is the main instrument whereby he seeks to achieve his aim.

The rake constitutes a threat to society precisely in his exploitation of the emotions of others to gain control of them. Libertinage is his principal weapon in his battle against society: his immorality is a matter of principle, an ordered code of conduct, by means of which he ruins his arch-enemy, woman.

Mme de Volanges recognises the basic character of the rake in Valmont:

"Si Valmont était entrainé par des passions fougereuses, si, comme mille autres, il était séduit par les erreurs de son âge, blamant sa conduite, je plairais sa personne, et j'attendrais en silence, le temps où un retour heureux lui rendrait l'estime des gens honnêtes. Mais Valmont n'est pas cela; sa conduite est le résultat de ses principes. Il sait calculer tout ce qu'un homme peut se permettre d'horreurs sans se compromettre et pour être cruel et méchant sans danger, il a choisi les femmes pour victimes."

1. Les Liaisons Dangereuses by Laclos, p. 28, (Teatre IX).
Knowledge of society, consequent contempt for the weaknesses of human nature apparent therein - for the rake views mankind solely from a negative point of view - have induced in the rake an overwhelming sense of superiority over his fellow creatures. In his plan to conquer society, he exempts himself from the conventional morality, rejecting the hypocrisy of the compromise between libertinage and the ideal morality as adopted by the general run, he has evolved his own code of conduct, of ironical, deliberate immorality. In his own mind, the rake is above conventional morality: shame, in the usual sense of the word, is foreign to him. As Lovelace boasts to his friend, Jack:

"What other people call blame, that call I praise; I ever did; and so I very early discharged shame, that cold-water damper to an enterprising spirit." 1

Commonly endowed with a superior intelligence, the rake delights in the mental stimulus afforded by his meticulously planned seductions. He derives his pleasure from the variety and originality of the ruses employed in his conquests rather than from the eventual possession of his victims. The length of Lovelace’s

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acquaintance with Clarissa is attended by a constant flow of ruses on the one hand, and Clarissa's virtuous attempts to foil them on the other. She is tricked into fleeing the paternal roof with him; she is imprisoned under the eye of a fearsome wardress; he starts a fire under cover of which he hopes to take advantage of her, and eventually does so when she is drugged by a sleeping draught. Talbert displays an equal cunning in his plan to seduce Hélène: his schemes are carefully supervised to the last minute detail and rest entirely on the rake's comprehension of the human mechanism. All Talbert's tricks are played with a master's hand. He persuades his family to ask Hélène's haughty aunt, the Vicomtesse, for Hélène's hand in marriage, on his behalf: he is thereby placed above suspicion, since his intentions with regard to Hélène appear to be honourable. Subsequently he engineers a rupture between the two families, to ensure that no marriage may take place. He relies on his knowledge of the Vicomtesse's weakness, her pretentions to be a connoisseur of curios, for the success of his plot. A friend of Talbert, at Talbert's instigation, invites

1. La Vertu Persécutée by Mme Renéé.
the Vicomtesse to inspect some curios in a distant museum, on the very day that the marriage contract is to be signed, a ceremony which obviously requires her presence. On the return journey, as planned by Talbert, the Vicomtesse's coach overturns, miles from anywhere; consequently she arrives hours late for the ceremony. Talbert had counted, correctly, upon his family's indignation at the delay; consequently a coolness springs up between the two families and all wedding plans are cancelled. Hélène is placed in a convent because she refuses to marry her aunt's choice of an alternative husband for her, the rich but repulsive Lurzel. Talbert determines her to elope with him, on the promise of a secret marriage, and, to lull her suspicions, he arranges for her to be chaperoned by her somewhat simple cousin, Mlle Soucy, into whose graces he has already insinuated himself by exploiting the resentment she feels as a poor relation made to feel her obligations by the Vicomtesse. Just as he simulated despair at the cancellation of the projected marriage, so he skilfully feigns annoyance and frustration when the priest summoned to marry them does not materialise—all naturally being in accordance with his plan. He forges letters from his family to explain their non-
appearance, excuses the priest's continued absence on the grounds of illness, then death. He finally sows the seeds of dissent between Mlle Soucy and Hélène, through the intermediary of a talented maid in his pay. He naturally has recourse to the ultimate bluff, as utilised by Valmont in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, in Valmont's case with success — the threat that he will commit suicide if she does not take pity on his misery. Talbert exhausts his stock of tricks in vain: the virtuous Hélène will not succumb to him. He is forced to marry her, but capitulation comes too late, for Hélène dies from a fever which is the result of a fall sustained whilst attempting to escape Talbert's temerity. The seduction of a woman is a challenge to the rake's ingenuity: it is the confrontation of two intelligences, a game of skill. Lionel in Cazotte's *Oeuvres Badines* reduces his wooing of the virtuous Primrose to the terms of a game, which he is determined to win, by fair means or foul:

"J'ai joué pour elle, et peut-être trop naturellement, je l'avoue, l'attentif, l'empressé, le magnifique, l'amoureux jusqu'à l'imbécilité. En attendant que je mette sur la scène de nouveaux personnages, le seul rôle à essayer est celui du désespoir; c'en est fait, je m'y
livre, je vais tomber malade de langueur. Si l'on se montre insensible, tu me le pardonneras, ma bonne; je deviens, mais sur-le-champ, impitoyable." 1

Certain well-tried methods are the stock-in-trade of the rake, based on the weak points of the female character. He feigns profound misery at his mistress's cruelty, and can produce tears at will to reinforce his statement; the count of Chester elaborates on this facility for tears in a letter to his mentor, the duke de * de * de *.

"Vous savez avec quelle heureuse facilité je pleure; mais ce que vous ignorez, c'est que j'ai singulièrement perfectionné ce talent, et que je joins aujourd'hui aux larmes les plus abondantes, l'art des sanglots et des gémissements." 2

The promise of marriage held out to the victim is also a very effective method to achieve one's aim: the rake will often go one step further and arrange a bogus marriage in order to take possession of his mistress's charms: Blainvert, for example, attends a fake wedding with his lackey as the bogus priest conducting the

ceremony, since his mistress will not otherwise succumb to him. He subsequently abandons her. If these ruses should fail, the rake has recourse to the ultimate bluff — the threat of his suicide, or the persuasion of the certainty of his death from a broken heart, should his mistress remain adamant before his plea for mercy. Such is the procedure adopted by Lionel in his attempted seduction of Primrose:

"La belle y était attendue. Des palettes d'un sang bien brûlé sont sur un guéridon; des fioles de remèdes, des élixirs de toute espèce couvrent une table. Lionel, tout décoloré, est étendu sur son lit: deux gens de l'art sont au chevet.

1. Les Erreurs Instructives ou Mémoires du Comte de * Eynonval.
2. L'Honneur perdu et recouvré, p. 167.
3. The abbé Hélaine's detailed description of the usual procedure indicates its popularity as a mode of seduction:
"Le jeune homme, après lui avoir promis de l'épouser, après lui avoir fait mille serments pour la persuader de sa bonne foi, voyant qu'il ne gagnait rien sur son esprit, tira son épée dans un transport de désespoir, qu'il en appuya la pointe contre son cœur, en protestant que puisqu'elle doutait de sa sincérité, il allait lui donner une dernière preuve de la violence de sa passion; qu'elle, effrayée à la vue du fer meurtier, se hâta de lui arrêter le bras, en lui jurant qu'elle était convaincue de l'excès de son amour, et qu'elle était prête à lui donner toutes les preuves qu'il pourrait exiger de sa conviction; que lui, profitant de ce moment de faiblesse, en obtint le sacrifice de ce qui doit être plus cher à une honnête fille que sa propre vie; mais que, dans le même moment, il riait au fond du coeur de la folle passion de cette pauvre Miss, qui n'avait pas senti que ces démonstrations n'étaient qu'un artifice pour l'entraîner dans le piège." - Les Amants Vertueux, part I.
Les courtisans, les yeux baissés et en silence, sont à l'entrée de la chambre, et les gens de service sortent d'un air consterné.* 1

Trickery and falsity are the essence of the rake's character. Every word, every action is carefully planned, calculated to produce a certain effect. Because of the rake's lack of emotion, his command of self, he is able to simulate any character likely to achieve the desired effect. He cannot feel, but his feigned emotion appears more convincing than genuine sentiment, consequently he wins a woman's heart. Mlle de Recy describes the character of the charming Cagny to her friend, Agathe:

"C'est un volage, qui ne vise uniquement qu'à tromper toutes les femmes ... il sait si bien simuler le sentiment! Il est si doux, si tendre, si engageant, ses yeux sont si expressifs! Je vous assure que pour s'en défendre, on a besoin de s'armer de fierté, et de bien connaître son caractère." 2

Similarly, the marquis de * is able to conquer the vain and proud Mlle de Charlu: he recognises that her vanity will be flattered by the illusion that he, considerably above her in station and much sought after, has been

2. Histoire d'Agathe de St Bohaire by Frénais, vol. I.
defeated by her charms and that he has fallen violently in love with her:

"Le marquis ne tarda pas à connaître parfaitement le caractère de sa nouvelle amante. Il comprit, qu'il était intéressé à flatter son orgueil, s'il voulait trouver la route de son coeur. Ce fut par-là aussi, qu'il commença à s'insinuer dans ses bonnes grâces: il ne se lassait point de lui prodiguer les louanges qui étaient toujours accompagnées du tour le plus fin et le plus délicat ... Joignez à cela, que le marquis était un courtisan habile, et qu'il n'ignorait pas par conséquent l'art de se contrefaire; s'il n'était pas amoureux il savait prendre tous les semblants de l'amour le plus tendre et le plus passionné." 1

The rake's success depends to a large extent on his versatility and adaptability: he studies his victim and consequently plays the part best calculated to please her.2 The rake will seem to belie his very

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2. In Loaisel de Tréogate's Ainsi Finissent les Grandes Passions (Part II) a certain colonel, the marquis de R., is described by one of his lieutenants in the following manner:

"Joli comme l'amour, libertin comme quatre, aimable et scélérat comme Lovelace; avantageux ou modeste selon le besoin, ayant le coeur épuisé; mais l'esprit plein de toutes les ressources en fait de galanterie; ne supposant point de vertu aux femmes; ne traitant jamais leur défaite comme une affaire difficile; s'établissant dans leur coeur avec adresse, sans les avertir qu'il en a le dessein; les menant par la folie à l'amour, je veux dire au plaisir, car l'amour n'est pour rien dans toutes ses liaisons."
character by his actions, if he believes he will thereby gain the desired end, the defeat of one more victim. Lovelace builds up a reputation for charity among his tenants, spares the honour of an innocent young girl — actions calculated to win Clarissa's admiration. Talbert shows great generosity, succours the needy — all bound to raise him in the estimation of Hélène. Valmont, aware he is being followed by Mme de Tourvel's servant, aids a family in distress, and claims to be a reformed character, rehabilitated by his love for Mme de Tourvel. Every device is valid in the rake's drive to conquer.

The fictional figure of the rake has deep roots in 18th-century polite society. Foremost among the 18th-century libertines stands the duc de Richelieu, whose career spans almost the entire century. Born in 1696, he died at the age of 92, a philanderer to the very end. Through his amorous exploits, Richelieu became a legend in his own lifetime, the product of an age in which love and fidelity were alien to current

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1. In his romanticised biography of Richelieu, Paul Rival traces the development of Richelieu from an enchanting youth endowed with all the social graces, an eager participant in polite society and the opportunities it provides for commerce with the opposite sex, into a cynical debauchee, contemptuous of womankind, none of whom are able to resist his practised charms.
values. Weary of easy conquests, Richelieu displayed the rake's preoccupation with the woman of virtue. One of his sad victims, according to Rival, was the wife of a humble shopkeeper, a certain M. Michelin. Richelieu applies himself methodically and systematically to the destruction of Mme Michelin by wresting her from her own ordered way of life and subsequently humiliating her in her misery and downfall. Drawn to her by her beauty and virtue, he frequents the church which she assiduously attends. Having discovered the location of her husband's furniture shop, he spends considerable sums in purchasing furniture, in order to insinuate himself into the confidence of M. Michelin. To rid himself of Michelin's restricting presence, he arranges for a friend to commission fittings for a house some distance from Paris; the field is thus left free for Richelieu to seduce the wife. Piqued but far from discouraged by her obstinacy in resisting his amorous overtures, he entices her to come to him, by summoning her in a letter, supposedly from a duchess who requires her advice on furnishings in Michelin's absence. The simple Jeanne Michelin is no match for the wiles of a Richelieu, hence his plot meets with success. Once vanquished, the woman of virtue loses all charm for the
The very foundation of Jeanne's life is thereby destroyed and she is entirely at Richelieu's mercy: he cruelly humiliates her by using both her and her neighbour, Mme Renaud, in one another's presence. When he finally abandons her, Mme Michelin dies of remorse and shame, affected in much the same way as Laclos's Mme de Tourvel.

Richelieu uses women as an instrument of revenge upon society, upon those members of society who have crossed him, as in his dealings with the Regent. Enflamed by the Regent's decision to imprison him in the Bastille for his contravention of the law prohibiting duels, he takes revenge on the Regent by seducing his youngest daughter, a girl of little beauty to whom he is completely indifferent. In order to approach her, he disguises himself in rags as an ex-prisoner anxious to interest her in his life-history. The 'life-story' he presses upon her is in fact a note declaring his 'love' for her. The ruses he employs to gain access to her apartments are all methods common to the rake. He first seduces one of her women, disguises himself in girl's clothing to lull the household's suspicions when he penetrates to her quarters and finally bribes one of the kitchen staff, whose room adjoins the
princess's apartments, so that he may knock out the adjoining wall and thus have easy access to the princess. His revenge on the Regent is complete when he has spread the news of his success abroad. An additional insult to the Regent is Richelieu's successful design to steal the Regent's favourite mistress from him: he is refused access to his mistress's bed since the place is already occupied by Richelieu. Some of Richelieu's seductions approach closely to sadism, as for example, his treatment of Mme d'Alincourt. In order to obtain the virtuous Mme d'Alincourt's good graces, he feigns to be a reformed character, as does Valmont vis-à-vis Mme de Tourvel. To dispel her illusions of marital fidelity, he subjects her to the spectacle, from behind a screen, of her husband making love to his mistress in Richelieu's 'petite maison'. He then proceeds to violate her whilst she is unable to cry for help lest she be heard by her husband, still engaged before her eyes in amatory combat with his mistress. These are but a few incidents in the career of the duc de Richelieu.

Another whose character incorporates many of the rake's traits is the comte de Tilly, whose memoirs bear witness to his career of constant commerce with
the opposite sex. Although in later years Tilly grew disenchanted with, and changed his mode of life, his conduct as a young man was that generally associated with the rake: his subterfuges follow the established pattern. In his seduction of Mme de *, for example, he feigns illness, a mediocre ruse, as Tilly concedes, but which meets with success. After the seduction of a certain Présidente, he determines to conquer her sister, who at first appears to be a difficult proposition: Tilly is irritated by the resistance he encounters in one so young and inexperienced, and is consequently all the more intent on manoeuvring her submission. He decides to speak to her of the passion he nourished for her sister:

"Sachant que ce qui va le plus vite en amour est de parler aux femmes d'une ancienne tendresse, et de l'excessive sensibilité qu'on mit dans une autre liaison ..." 1

In his next interview with her, he brings the resource of tears abundantly shed into the game. Despite his apparently deeply involved and emotional state during this scene, Tilly is in fact completely removed from

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the event: he is at one and the same time actor and audience:

"... elle n'était pas préparée à l'idée d'avoir une page dans mon roman (c'est bien écrit, me dis-je à moi-même) ... Malgré cela, je pouvais m'assurer de tout ce qui serait honnête et conciliable avec ses devoirs (ses devoirs, elle n'en avait aucun, elle était veuve) et compter, malgré ses premières résolutions, sur tout ce qui serait compatible avec ses principes (voilà de grands mots! pensai-je). Je l'avais regardée presque toujours, excepté dans les intervalles où il était utile de faire place à ses yeux. Les miens étaient éteints, chargés de douleur et d'accablement. N'ayant plus grand'chose à dire qui rentrait dans mon plan, voulant d'ailleurs produire une forte émotion, je risquai un évanouissement qui eut un prodigieux succès ... La bonne fortune de quelques larmes assez abondantes, qui me vinrent de je ne sais où, complétèrent l'illusion de cette scène vraiment pathétique.

Leur source était, je crois, dans la réflexion subite de toute la peine que je me donnais; peut-être aussi était-ce une suite des idées continues dont je m'étais impressionné; à peu près comme un comédien, quand son talent est dans son ame, répand les pleurs que le poète a mis dans ses vers. Ce que j'observai avec ravissement, fut qu'elle était aussi émue que moi. Ayant couvert ses mains de baisers, je me rajustai, lui fis quelques excuses de ma profonde et légitime sensibilité et la quittai de l'air d'un homme qui part pour aller mourir." 1

The rumour of his illness — to be ascribed to his unrequited passion — is followed by the visit he pays her in a carefully contrived costume, calculated to inspire her with pity and remorse at her own heartless conduct toward him; needless to say, his suit is finally agreed and he is recompensed for his pains.

On another occasion, Tilly undertakes the delicate and challenging task of wooing two women, mother and daughter, at the same time. He courts them simultaneously, explaining his attitude to each in turn by maintaining that he must seem to repay the other's interest in him, to avoid suspicion. He takes his leave of mother and daughter at the same moment and by identical notes. In yet another of his conquests, he has recourse to the standard aid of the rake, the services of his valet, usually as immoral as his master. To obtain the favours of Mme de R., he urges his valet to seduce one of her ladies, who consequently agrees to introduce Tilly into Mme de R.'s rooms late at night. Such audacity and enterprise could not fail to reap their reward.

Another prominent figure of 18th-century polite society, whose name is often linked with those of Richelieu and Tilly, is the Duke of Lauzun. Lauzun is,
Indeed, a product of his age. Disappointed in his early relationships with women, he determines to follow the pattern of his contemporaries in indulging in as many necessarily shallow relationships as possible. Despite his reputation as a man successful with women, however, Lauzun departs from the stereotype of the rake in one essential point: as Maugras points out in Lauzun's defence, Lauzun did experience true feeling in many of his relationships. Lauzun proved himself capable of emotional involvement — witness his sorrow at the departure of his English mistress, Lady Sarah.

1. At fourteen years of age he fell in love with Mme de Stainville, who left him for the chevalier de Jaucourt, at that point a greater celebrity than the young Lauzun. His affair with Mme d'Esparbès, on whom he bestowed all his youthful sentiment and passion, met with a similar fate; she is alleged to have dismissed him with the following words, scant encouragement to a young man to engage himself in profoundly emotional relationships, nor likely to engender respect in him for womankind: "J'ai eu bien du goût pour vous, mon enfant, ce n'est pas ma faute si vous l'avez pris pour une grande passion, et si vous vous êtes persuadé que cela ne devait jamais finir ... Vous avez beaucoup d'avantages pour plaire aux femmes, profitez-en et soyez convaincu que la perte d'une peut toujours être réparée par une autre; c'est le moyen d'être heureux et aimable." (quoted in: Le Duc de Lauzun et La Cour Intime de Louis XV by G. Maugras, p. 93).

2. Le Duc de Lauzun et la Cour Intime de Louis XV by Gaston Maugras.
Bunbury, for her native shore; the platonic relationship with the countess Dillon, whose happiness with his friend Guéménée he refrained from disrupting; his love-affair with the Princess Czartoryska in which both tried to commit suicide because of the guilt both felt in betraying the princess's lover, the Prince Repnine. In numerous relationships, Lauzun demonstrated his willingness to consider the other before himself; disinterested conduct of this nature is a necessary component of the emotion of love and is invariably lacking in the character of the rake.

Since the rake's primary concern is his own personal form of reputation, he is incapable of love, which implies sublimation of the self to the other. Love normally exacts respect for the object of one's affections; the contempt of the rake for women precluded the possibility of his loving anyone of that sex. Love for a woman is a complete abnegation of the rake's personal philosophy: he and love for a woman are two incompatible factors, for the ability to pass from one

1. There are instances in 18th-century literature where a great passion endures in the absence of respect. Des Grieux in Manon Lescaut admits more than once that he can feel no respect for Manon after the fashion in which she has treated him, but his passion for her remains as strong.
woman to another with no twinge of conscience is an essential attribute of the rake. He dismisses love as a figment of the imagination; since he himself is incapable of experiencing love, it cannot exist. The marquis says as much to the Chevalier de Versenai:

"Connaiss-tu rien de plus lourd à porter, qu'une chaîne où le procédé vous retient, quand le plaisir vous appelle dans une autre? La vie est un éclair, il faut que nos goûts lui ressemblent, qu'ils soient brillants et rapides comme elle. Tu as peut-être rencontré quelquefois dans la société, de ces couples soi-disant amoureux et arrangés depuis des siècles, qui, en secret, excédés l'un de l'autre, se gardent par ostentation et pour donner un vernis de moeurs à leur commerce? Ne conviendras-tu point que ces prétendus traits d'un amour exemplaire, sont révoltants pour un homme un peu profond, et qui a réfléchi sur la portée du cœur humain?"

The rake is by nature inconstant, soon satiated but never satisfied since finally it is emotion alone which can give meaning to a physical relationship and afford true satisfaction.

The youth who encounters love after a period of libertinage finds an effective deterrent to riotous living, and experiences true satisfaction: the rake

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incapable, or reluctant to experience love, has never found true satisfaction in any association with the opposite sex. The count of Chester draws attention to the rake's primary motive - his 'gloire' rather than pleasure - in reminiscing on his innocent youth where he found deep satisfaction in a relationship, unaware as he was of being woman's dupe, whilst in his later years, he has concentrated on the establishment of his personal reputation, arrived at by the exploitation of his profound knowledge of womankind:

"Il est très beau, sans doute, de savoir parfaitement lire dans le cœur d'une femme; d'en discuter tous les mouvements avec autant de justesse que de profondeur, et d'y découvrir ceux qui y naissent, quelquefois avant qu'elle-même se soit aperçue de leur existence; mais j'ose encore soutenir qu'il y aurait pour nous beaucoup plus de plaisir à en être la dupe, qu'il n'y a de gloire à les connaître si bien."

The Don Juan figure, gentleman of the world, is refined and sophisticated, always master of himself and fully conscious of the import of his actions. As long as he remains unemotional, he retains control of his person; once he falls prey to his passions, he is

no longer master of himself nor of others. He loses the passivity which places him above others who are victims of their own emotions. The arch-rake considers himself superior to others in his emotional immunity, hence he is reluctant to recognise the possibility of his falling in love. Talbert envisages the notion with incredulity, writing to Mozingo:

"Avec trente années d'existence, dont quinze ont été exercées aux ruses de la guerre et plus encore à celles de l'amour, serait-il possible que n'ayant jamais rien aimé que toi et le plaisir, je fusse ce qu'on appelle amoureux." 1

Talbert is angry with himself for his susceptibility; he has difficulty in coping with the idea. Similarly, Valmont rejects the possibility that he might be in love with Mme de Tourvel. He is determined that she should submit to him, for he feels - as has always hitherto been the case with him - that possession will lessen her worth in his eyes and consequently he will be able to control his feelings for her. Hence he says of her to Mme de Merteuil in a flippant tone, unwilling to admit to Merteuil that he loves Mme de Tourvel:

"J'ai besoin d'avoir cette femme, pour me sauver du ridicule d'en

être amoureux; car où ne mène pas un désir contrarié.

His preoccupation with his own personal glory, fear of being ridiculed by Merteuil, force him to destroy their mutual happiness, for to love her would be to destroy his whole carefully constructed way of life. For the rake, love for a woman constitutes a slur on his own personalised code of honour:

"Le surcroît de plaisir que j'ai éprouvé dans mon triomphe, et que je ressens encore n'est que la douce impression du sentiment de la gloire. Je chéris cette façon de voir, qui me sauve l'humiliation de penser que je puisse dépendre en quelque manière de l'esclave dont je me serais asservie."

When the rake has finally to admit to himself that he is in love, he will do all within his power to satisfy this love and thus to lessen it. Lovelace tries every method, every wile, every trick he knows, to seduce Clarissa, so that he will have an excuse for not marrying her: for marriage is an impossible state for the rake. Like Lovelace, Talbert will exercise all his ingenuity, go to vast expense, to obtain Hélène's favours without recourse to marriage, for he has a deep

1. Les Liaisons Dangereuses by Laclos, lettre IV.
2. Ibid., lettre CXXV.
horror of this state, instilled in him by the women he has encountered in his earlier years. Talbert has advanced too far on the scale of libertinage to contemplate life as a husband and father: for him, the encounter with a woman of virtue, a worthy object of his affection, has come too late: he is firmly ensconced in the pattern of life of the rake, as Talbert says:

"Mon aversion pour le mariage est confirmée par les remarques que j'ai été à portée de faire sur les différentes femmes que j'ai connues. La perfidie, la puérilité, l'orgueil, l'hypocrisie, la frivolité, la malignité et la fureur de plaire, même dans celles qui répètent sans cesse qu'elles n'y tâchent pas, sont les nuances qui composent le caractère du plus grand nombre. Je sais que mon adorable n'a que de belles qualités à la place de ces défauts. Mais pourquoi ... ne l'ai-je pas connue la première? ou plutôt, pourquoi celle à qui j'adressai mes premiers voeux, ne lui ressemblait-elle pas de tout point? ... Mais la facilité des unes, la faiblesse des autres, m'ont fait condamner au néant les illustres rejetons de ma postérité."

The rake remains effective only as long as he remains a stage removed from his victims; consequently he must not become involved with any one woman. Indifference to the individual, except insofar as the individual

is the representative unit of the whole of society and therefore punishable for the faults of the whole, is integral to the rake's character; once he loses the quality of aloofness, he forfeits the identity he has fashioned for himself. Hence Valmont is destroyed by his attention to the individual in the shape of Mme de Tourvel; similarly, the rake Cagny, in the Histoire d'Agathe de St Bohaire,\(^1\) undergoes a transformation in character when he falls in love with Agathe. The charm of the rake, since it is consciously applied, is dissipated when his attention is directed elsewhere, other than upon his own image. It is said of Cagny that:

"On ne reconnaît plus Cagny. Son esprit, ses railleries n'amusent plus la conversation." (vol. I).

He loses impact when he proves to be capable of emotion, for his personal glory depends on his impassibility, which enables him to pass from one woman to another in rapid succession.

Since success with women is so important for the rake's reputation, it follows that he never knows a moment's respite. He must arrest public attention by

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\(^1\) By Frénais.
maintaining his position at the hub of society, a position which depends on a continual flow of new conquests: as Duclos remarks in his Confessions du Comte de *:

"Un jeune homme à la mode, car j'en avais déjà la réputation, se croirait déshonoré s'il demeurait quinze jours sans intrigue." (part I, pp. 116-117).

The essential was that one should never meet defeat, or another would appropriate one's place as foremost gentleman of fashion. Valmont runs the risk of losing his status in the fashionable world, for rumours are spread of his unsuccessful suit of Mme de Tourvel. The marquise de Merteuil warns him of the possible consequences, anathema to any man of fashion:

"Songez que si une fois vous laissez perdre l'idée qu'on ne vous résiste pas, vous éprouverez bientôt qu'on vous résistera plus facilement, que vos rivaux vont aussi perdre de leur respect pour vous." 1

The rake's reputation is all that is most precious to him. Even Valmont's strong (all the stronger because new to him) feelings for Mme de Tourvel must not be allowed to threaten it. He will sacrifice her to his reputation,

1. *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by Laclos, part III, lettre CXIII.
as he tells Mme de Merteuil:

"Je la montrerai, dis-je,oubliant ses devoirs et sa vertu, sacrifiant sa réputation et deux ans de sagesse pour courir après le bonheur de me plaire, pour s'enivrer de celui de m'aimer, se trouvant suffisamment dédommagée de tant de sacrifices par un mot, par un regard qu'encore elle n'obtiendra pas toujours."

Indeed the conquest of a virtuous woman bestows a distinction on the successful man. The summit of his glory is reached if he manages to seduce a woman famed for her virtue. Such an experience sets the successful man above the common run. Hence, the virtuous woman exercises a fascination for the rake. She offers a challenge to his vanity and pride; tired of the easy conquests to be made by the score, his inventiveness is stretched to its limits in the plotting to seduce a woman who has no intention of succumbing to his wiles. This is Valmont's case with Mme de Tourvel: such a woman is so much an exception to the general run of women in polite society that he falls in love with her. The same may be said of Talbert and Hélène, Lovelace and Clarissa. The aim of the marquis de * is to succeed

1. Les Liaisons Dangereuses by Laclos, lettre CxV.
in seducing the virtuous Mme de Senanges; hitherto, he has associated with the women of easy virtue in liaisons which typify the relationship experienced by the young débutant in the 'world': now he is sufficiently practised to turn his attention to women who impose a harder task upon his powers of seduction: he informs the chevalier de Versenai:

"J'ai eu, jusqu'ici, de ces femmes accommodantes, expéditives et faciles, qui donnent plus de vogue que de consistance. Ma réputation est plus brillante que solide; il est temps de la conduire à sa maturité, et d'en imposer à ces dames, qui, je ne sais pourquoi, se sont avisées de me croire superficiel. Mme de Senanges a justement ce qu'il me faut pour cette opération; plus je la vois, plus je la trouve estimable. Avec une apparence de légèreté, elle a des goûts solidas, de la supériorité dans l'esprit, de l'héroïsme dans l'âme, une noblesse vraie, répandue sur toute sa personne; c'est une femme qui mérite qu'on la distingue; et, en lui sacrifiant un mois plein, il est possible de se faire avec elle un très grand nom."

In his vanity, the rake resents the notion that any woman is capable of resisting him. Every woman is an enemy to the rake and as such must be conquered if he is to maintain his position of supremacy over the

opposite sex. As well as offering an exciting challenge to the rake's powers of seduction, the virtuous woman represents a threat to his honour, as he understands it. The greater the woman's virtue, the greater the 'glory' for the man who engineers her submission. A woman of Mme de Tourvel's stamp antagonises the rake; hence Valmont must overcome her principles, as he says to Merteuil:

"Vous connaissez la Présidente Tourvel, sa dévotion, son amour conjugal, ses principes austères. Voilà que j'attaque; voilà l'ennemi digne de moi."

Vanity and pride are the reasons why the virtuous woman both attracts and irritates the rake. The proven fact that virtuous women do exist would force him to revise his code, whereby he is sworn to despise women. And the virtuous woman must give herself freely. If the rake takes advantage of her through trickery, his triumph is considerably lessened. Her reputation is lost, her code of virtue definitively negated, only if she chooses to transgress her code of her own free will. Lord Clare makes this point in connection with Milady Bedfort:

"Quel plaisir, pourtant d'en recevoir l'aveu d'elle-même; qu'il serait flatteur! Une femme si raisonnable,

1. Les Liaisons Dangereuses, part I, lettre IV.
si honnête, qui aurait assez de
confiance pour ne pas craindre
que j'abuse du pouvoir qu'elle me
donnerait sur elle!"

Valmont is also adamant on this point, that Mme de
Tourvel should give herself as opposed to his taking
her. His code is thereby to be proved stronger than
hers. The rake does not wish to change his attitude,
nor to be proved wrong: for to admit the existence of
truly virtuous women is to reveal a flaw in his philosophy.
The virtuous woman is therefore superior to the rake's
code and to the creator of the code – a notion which
wounds the ego of the rake. Hence the rake must humble
the virtuous woman: to reassure his own pride, he must
first destroy hers, as Lovelace's attitude to Clarissa
reveals:

"But let me first, to gratify my
pride, bring down hers." 2

The rake is incensed by the pride of a woman who imagines
she may resist him; his resolve to force her into sub-
mission is thereby strengthened, as Talbert's impassioned
outburst to Mozingo, after receiving a proud letter
from Hélène, indicates:

"M'sieu, Mozingo, tu l'entenda,
lorgueilleuse. Crois-tu que

1. Lettres de Milady Bedfort, by Mme Beccary, lettre XXVII, p. 65.
la fierté de cette lettre puisse s'effacer d'un souvenir vengeur? Ah, que la terre s'ouvre sous mes pas, que la foudre me consume, si je ne punis l'orgueil de la cruelle par la honte de sa défaite. Oui, je veux me soumettre à tout jusqu'à ce que, réduite elle-même sous l'abaissement de sa faiblesse, elle implore ma pitié après avoir osé résister à mon amour.

The virtuous woman constitutes the supreme challenge which makes or breaks the rake's reputation.

The development of the rake's reputation depends on the ruin of a woman's honour. His conquests are of interest to him only insofar as they further his 'glory': he is solely concerned with the image he projects to the outside world. He lives no internal emotional life, therefore he depends for his existence on the images assembled of him by others: all his actions are for the benefit of an audience. He relies upon his audience for the admiration which is the essential nourishment of his ego. Hence the marquis de * requires the presence of the chevalier de Yersenai at the public display of his own powers of seduction:

"À propos, l'on ne te voit plus chez la belle vicomtesse: te boude-t-on? Serais-tu absolument éconduit? J'en serais désolé. Je voudrais te voir là, pour applaudir

1. La Vertu Persécutée by Mme Beanoit, vol. I, part II, lettre XXX, p. 117.
The rake is acutely aware of the public eye; he views himself much in the light of an actor, for, like an actor, his actions are directed at an audience who must reciprocate with their attention. Discretion is antipathetic to the rake's character, hence he must feel nothing for his victim, lest he feel reticent to publicise his success.

Traditionally, the figure of Don Juan has been associated with rejection not solely of moral values and established conventions, but also with rejection of the supreme arbitrator of moral actions, God and His servant, the Church. The original definition of the term 'libertine' is, after all, a free-thinker, one who rejects conventional religion. The libertine lives for the present moment without thought of an after-life. He is the degeneration of the 17th-century Epicurean, who seeks his pleasures in this life (but, in


2. By the early 18th century, the two concepts were envisaged as quite distinct, the one from the other; the free-thinker could no longer be identified with the free-liver.
his case, all pleasures are to be enjoyed to a just measure, nothing to excess). The rake rejects God because, in his supreme vanity, he considers himself to be a god among men in that he may manipulate them and bend them to his will by the pressures he brings to bear upon their emotions. He capitalises on the human weaknesses from which he considers himself to be exempt.

In the portrayal of the 18th-century rake, however, little stress is laid on the religious aspect, since religion itself played a minor role in the lives of the members of 18th-century polite society. In this respect, the 18th-century rake may be viewed once again as an extension of the conventional fashionable figure in polite society.

Product of his age, yet in revolt against it, the rake is anxious to indoctrinate the young mind in his own principles; he corrupts the young of both sexes alike. His career is that commonly taken by the young man of fashion who meets with the wrong company on his entry into society. He rebels against society in a fashion diametrically opposed to that of the pre-romantic figure, who withdraws within himself away from society to find his salvation in his inner self. Although primarily concerned with self, the rake relies
on the participation of other members of society to establish his own identity: he could not exist outside the context of society. The rake is a social man in that he is the extension of the less worthy aspects of polite society: he is ultra-refined, ultra-civilised, ultra-corrupt, at the furthest point on the human scale from natural man. Yet he is anti-social in that his very sociability is destined as a weapon to vanquish the society which he represents. His revolt is expressed in terms conducive to the happiness of neither society nor himself: in his conscious suppression of feeling, he becomes arid and cannot consequently seek regeneration either within himself or among his fellow men. Such is the result of the education afforded the youth in the 'world'. 
CHAPTER 4

THE WOMAN IN REVOLT - HÉRÉGUIL

The young man of 18th-century polite society had a choice of career, albeit somewhat limited, on his entry into the world; his education was conceived with this purpose in mind. The arguments regarding the efficiency of the form his education took were manifold, but the very existence of such contention underlines the importance wherewith his training was invested. Treatises on 18th-century feminine education also abound, but here the similarity ends. For the question of the education of the young man revolves around its suitability as vocational training, whereas that of the young girl's education is concerned with its very existence, or rather, the lack of it. As surely as her brother was destined for the Army or for the Church, the young girl was intended either for marriage, advantageous to her family in terms of rank or fortune, or for a life cloistered away in a convent. A comprehensive education, understood as a widening of the mind and a knowledge of matters calculated to exercise the intelligence, was neither necessary for such ends, nor even desirable, lest women should envisage and demand another destiny for themselves. Drawing, needlework, singing, dancing and perhaps a foreign

1. cf. ch. on "A New Entry into the World"
language or two were all that comprised the education of a young lady.

The girl was rarely allowed to plan her own future, even within the narrow confines of the choice of marriage or convent. Within an impoverished noble family, one or several of the daughters would be sacrificed to the interests of the brothers. The family fortunes would not permit of sufficiently attractive dowries for the daughters; in order to buy an army commission for one son, or to provide another son with a suitable education for his career in the Church, the father would compel his female offspring to take the veil. The male branch was thus left with a larger share of the family inheritance. Inequality of the sexes did not end here for those who were faced with the alternative of marriage. Before her marriage, unlike her brother who was expected to 'sow his wild oats' in his capacity as young gentleman of fashion, the young girl was to remain chaste and pure; in a state of complete ignorance of the relationship between man and woman, she was plucked from her convent, where she generally spent her life until the age of fifteen or sixteen,

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1. In Ducoudray's Les Pressentiments Justifiés, Sophie de Monsir is forced to enter a convent: the heroine remarks of her friend Sophie:

"sa famille mettait tout en œuvre pour la faire religieuse, que qu'elle en fût très déloignée, afin d'enrichir de sa part ses deux frères..."
merely to be married off, usually to a man many years her senior. After her marriage, she was expected to adhere to the path of duty and virtue. There is much talk in the 18th-century novel of the multitude of noblewomen who remain on perfectly amicable terms with their husbands whilst publicly flaunting themselves in the company of their current lover. This was undoubtedly the way of life chosen by those who moved in certain disreputable, if noble, circles. Yet, in other circles, such behaviour was severely frowned upon.

In a marriage contracted solely for interest, the husband might keep a mistress, but he maintained his right to have his wife whisked away to a convent, by means of a letter of authority, a 'lettre de cachet', should she retaliate by taking a lover. Here, the double code of morals comes into evidence: whilst the man had complete sexual freedom, the woman must appear to be of irreproachable conduct, she had to model herself upon the ideal of virtue and respectability exacted by man. This is the point of conflict between woman and the established social order as devised by man.

Feminism is an age-old current in society, waxing and waning according to the period through which society is passing. In the 17th century, feminism was brought to the fore by the birth of the 'salons' and the cult of 'préciosité', both phenomena being essentially concerned with the female half of society. The 'salon' was, of course, held by a woman, who gathered celebrities around her and reigned as
queen over the assemblies of her distinguished guests. In her position as hostess, she demanded and obtained greater freedom than she had hitherto enjoyed, that she might receive her company without the irksome and inhibiting presence of a chaperone. Tasting freedom in the 'salon', she demanded greater liberty within the home. In the atmosphere of her literary gatherings, she was able to exercise her intellectual powers to a greater extent than had previously been possible. Marriage, she recognised, was unfairly weighted in a man's favour; she merely represented a parcel of land, or a rung further up the social ladder, to her husband. Many 'précieuses', therefore, opted for celibacy rather than enter upon an unhappy marriage; Mlle de Scudéry, for example, retained her single status all her life. Abstention from marriage, however, did not entail renunciation of love, in their eyes. The 'précieuses' evolved an ingenious system whereby they could love solely in spirit. By virtue of the notion of platonic love, they were able to retain their single status and enjoy loving and being loved, whilst conserving their unsullied reputation in the world.

Yet few young women carried out this plan of conduct to the letter. Obviously not all women experience the same degrees or forms of emotion. Some felt the need of a physical love, and despite certain women who were bold enough to take lovers for all the world to see, such as Ninon de Lenclos, for the
majority, this was too unconventional a step. Marriage was still regarded by most, in the light of Christian teaching, as the only fit setting for love of a less ethereal nature. Convention dies hard: girls were brought up to fulfil the traditional role of woman as wife and mother. Thus, in the majority of cases, a period of anti-matrimonial feeling was followed by capitulation to convention. As we enter the 18th century, little has changed. Great ladies like the Marquise de Lambert, Mme. de Tencin, and even a bourgeoise like Mme de Geoffrin, still wield a great deal of influence within their 'salons' and among their followers, as did women like the Marquise de Rambouillet in the 17th century. Yet young girls are still forced into marriages of interest, the double code of morals is still very much in evidence. In fact, women have advanced no further since the previous century. The occasional protest is to be heard, but the majority of young girls resign themselves to their fate; rare are those who think to question their traditional role in society, in the first few decades of the 18th century.

However, one example in this period of woman reacting violently against male domination, against his abuse of the double moral code, is to be found on the English stage, in Lillo's The London Merchant. The figure of the 'révoltée' is represented in this play by Millwood, a woman

1. 1731
ill-used by man and consequently bent on revenge on the whole sex. Millwood, the young girl, on her first contacts with the world, with the company of men, was innocent and naive. Unwittingly, she allowed herself to be dragged down to depraved depths by men who preyed upon her inexperience, who scorned her and cast her aside once they had precipitated her fall. Soured into hatred of that sex by her bitter experiences, the mature Millwood swears revenge: but it is only the naive youth who will lend himself to her designs, for the mature man is far too aware of his own treachery towards women to succumb to the wiles of a Millwood. Schooled in hypocrisy and cunning by the very sex she despises, she seizes upon the innocent Barnwell and enslaves him to her will. By degrees, she works upon him, so that he first disobeys his master, then robs him for love of Millwood, and finally murders his uncle, whose fortune the adventuress Millwood covets. Here we see a pattern evolve which is closely linked with two important themes of the French 18th-century novel - the rake devoted to the corruption of the innocent young girl; the older woman, once the innocent girl, eager to undertake the youth's sentimental education. It is the savage circle engendered by the friction between male and female; the naive young of one sex falls prey to
the corrupt and mature of the other sex;¹ those once innocent, now depraved, revenge themselves on the young of the sex that wronged them in their own youth. Yet, no matter in which of the two positions the woman finds herself, ultimately it is always she who proves to be the loser. If, as a young girl, she falls prey to a rake, she forsakes her good reputation; whilst the young man who embarks upon a relationship with an older woman views the matter as part of his education for the world, and he consequently meets with no disapproval. The rake who seduces a young girl is an accepted member of society, he is feared, if secretly despised: her the older woman who takes a young man under wing is more likely to meet with ridicule from those around her and eventual scorn from her pupil. The divergence between the two cases stems once more from the double code of conduct prevalent in society: man is permitted sexual licence, while any similar moral laxity in woman is regarded with great disapproval. Millwood’s charms have been the cause of her misery, for men used and abused them: she early made acquaintance with the lesson all women must learn, that they are but play-

1. The whole process is questioned in Le Karî Sylphe (Contes Moraux by Harmontel) vol. I, p.195:
“Évitez les pièges des hommes, dit-on sans cesse à une jeune femme; évitez la séduction des femmes, dit-on sans cesse à un jeune homme. Est-ce le plan de la nature que l’on croit suivre en faisant d’un sexe l’ennemi de l’autre? Ne sont-ils faits que pour se nuire?”
things for their masters, to be taken up and dropped at leisure:

"Men, however generous or sincere to one another, are all selfish hypocrites in their affairs with us. We are not otherwise esteemed or regarded by them, but as we contribute to their satisfaction."  

Since women are not considered by the male sex of any great worth, there is no need to keep one's pledge with them — for this implies a certain degree of equality, but no man would think to honour his promise to his slave. Yet, to obtain a woman's favours, a man must persuade her that his vows will hold fast: a man will plunge into hypocrisy with no sense of shame, for is this not the attitude advocated and condoned by centuries of similar practice? The young girl will succumb to his solemn pledges, for it is only through sad experience that she learns distrust and suspicion for a suitor's fine promises. Man despises loss of virtue in a woman, it is, however, his nature to attempt to corrupt any young girl before she knows the meaning of the word.

Millwood decries the injustice of such conduct:

"It's a general maxim among the knowing part of mankind, that a woman without virtue, like a man without honour or honesty, is capable of any action tho' never so vile. And yet what pains will they not take, what arts not use, to seduce us with our innocence, and make us contemptible and wicked, even in their own opinion? Then is it not just, the villains, to their cost, should find us so?"  

The hypocrisy inherent in man's attitude to woman forces her, in her own defense, to disguise her true thoughts and feelings; to speak and act contrary to her inner convictions becomes a necessity, second nature to a woman who has suffered her apprenticeship in the hard school of life. Herein lies her sole hope of survival in a society heavily weighted in a man's favor, her only chance to revenge herself upon the predators of her sex.

Millwood's plotting and scheming are diabolical, and lead her to the hangman's noose. But even at the end she refuses to repent - she defies the merchant, Trueman, in a final terrible indictment of man's evil ways. Not only does she accuse man of his wrongs towards woman, she also exposes the hypocrisy and cruelty which form an integral part of all his dealings. She may have committed some dark deeds, but she witnessed others just as vile perpetrated by each of her many lovers, regardless of his walk of life, be he man of the Church, of law, or in business. She has merely followed the example they set: it is through witnessing this incessant round of treachery and evil that she has become what she is. She has learned that, to survive in society, one must struggle with every means within one's power. Society is a savage jungle, with man the hunter and woman his prey: this is the philosophy of life which she has learned:  

1. Act IV, sc. XVIII, p. 53.
"I hate you all, I know you, and expect no mercy; nay, I ask for none; I have done nothing that I am sorry for; I follow'd my inclinations, and that the best of you does every day. All actions are alike natural and indifferent to man and beast, who devour, or are devour'd as they meet with others weaker or stronger than themselves."

Her final speech calls upon women to rise up against male tyranny, to revolt against the injustice of the destiny afforded them by man:

"Women, by whom you are, the source of joy With cruel arts you labour to destroy: A thousand ways our ruin you pursue, Yet blame in us those arts, first taught by you. O may, from hence, each violated maid, By flatt'ring, faithless, barb'rous man betray'd; When robbed of innocence, and virgin flame, From your destruction raise a nobler name; To right their sex's wrongs devote their mind, And future Millwoods prove to plague mankind."

Lillo has allowed Millwood to voice her rage and hate for man, she nevertheless remains an odious figure. Our sympathy is not invited for her: Millwood seems an unbalanced figure, warped and twisted in her mind; she must inevitably fail in her schemings. Lillo presents us with the figure of the 'révoltée', but in such a manner as to discourage any from following the same path. Nevertheless, Millwood is permitted to speak out boldly and passionately on the English stage against the suffering meted out to the feminine half of society.

Such vehemence was apparently somewhat far advanced

1. Act IV, sc. XVIII, p. 54.
for the French public, however, even some twenty years later. Clément produced a translation of Lillo's play nearly twenty years later.\footnote{1} He remains faithful to the body of the text and includes nearly all Millwood's tirades against man. Clément does, however, suppress two important passages from Millwood's last indictment, shortly before her execution. He makes a point of excluding Millwood's denunciation of the hypocrisy of the men she has known in all walks of life: such a charge is too shocking for a French audience, as he remarks in his footnotes:

"Je supprime en cet endroit une déclamation aussi choquante que déplacée contre les ecclésiastiques, les hommes en général, les lois et la religion."\footnote{2}

Repudiation of society, as constructed by men, in such bold and venomous terms is too far advanced for French society of the mid 18th century; in the novel, the figure of the rake might speak slightingly of society, scornfully of women, but rarely in as forcible a fashion as Millwood. A direct attack of this nature was all the more shocking and unexpected, expressed as it was by a woman. Milvoud - Clément's Millwood - is permitted to accuse men of preying on women, and of seducing them only to abandon them afterwards, but her final call to action, her attempt to galvanise her fellow-sufferers into revolt, is suppressed without comment by Clément.

\footnote{1} 1748.
\footnote{2} \textit{Le Marchand de Londres}, Act IV, sc. XII, p. 122.
In his *Pour et Contre*, Prévost had already presented a translation of several scenes from the *Merchant*, along with a synopsis of the plot. But Prévost only translated those scenes which he considers of primary importance within the play. He includes a few passages where Millwood rants against male tyranny and laments her dishonour as a young, innocent girl at the hands of unscrupulous men: these scenes set forth the motivation behind Millwood's cruel treatment of Barnwell, and are therefore essential to the plot. But Prévost carries her role no further: he makes no attempt to develop the figure of the woman in revolt, as Lillo has done. For Prévost, this would not appear to be an important aspect of the play. In his synopsis of the act in which Millwood finally and damningly denounces male hypocrisy, the consequent rottenness of their society, and urges all women to rally to their common cause, Prévost does not even broach the subject. We must therefore conclude that Prévost felt the speeches of Millwood to be unacceptable, even dangerous, in the context of French 18th-century society, where women, if not satisfied with, at least appeared resigned to their fate.

1. Articles XLV, XLVI.

2. Prévost does, however, present a 'révoltée' in one of his minor characters in vol. 6 of his *Mémoires et Aventures d'un Homme de Qualité*. The leader of a fearsome band of robbers is revealed to be a woman who has adopted her way of life in order to revenge herself on the male sex. She is embittered against man after having been deceived by

Contd overleaf
Around the middle of the 18th century, several female novelists came to the fore in France, notably, among them, Mme de Riccoboni. Quite naturally, as women, they were interested in the position of woman in society. As we have mentioned earlier, feminism was by no means new in the history of mankind and his literature, but we might link this new manifestation of it to the spirit of the century. One aspect of the wave of sensibility—growing stronger in the latter half of the century—was the exercise of charity, feeling for the deprived and downtrodden. The philosophers were seeking a political and social science by means of which a just and happy society might be established. Woman is an underprivileged member of society, championed by Mme de Riccoboni and others like her. From birth, woman is made to feel inferior to man. Her natural capabilities are the equal of those of a man, but they are dulled by years of neglect. Her upbringing is designed to make her inferior in intellect to her brother, to reduce her to nothing more than a mere tool in man's hands. In La Suite de L'Abeille, Riccoboni recounts her visit to a ball, where she and the hostess witness ten distinguished men quarrelling violently on a topic of little importance. The hostess reflects on

Footnote 2 contd from page three of that sex. She is the most ferocious member of her band, intent as she is on revenge; she tells the 'homme de qualité', "Tous les hommes que j'ai tués sont autant de victimes que j'ai sacrifiées à ma fureur." (p. 25). Needless to say, she is presented as a loathsome figure.
the fashion in which a female child is brought up, that she
might look upon such men as being her lords and masters:

"En bien, me dit la maîtresse de la maison, quand
elle se vit seule avec moi, voilà pourtant les
êtres dominants dans la nature, destinés à
commander, à régir, à guider notre sexe, et à le
maîtriser; on fait tout pour eux, dix ans sont
employés à leur donner de l'esprit, de la raison,
à les rendre capables de voir, de sentir, de juger:
ils possèdent tout, jouissent de tout; le monde
semble créé pour eux seuls. Nous, négligées de
nos pères, trop souvent regardées comme des êtres
inutiles, à charge, qui viennent enlever une partie
de l'héritage d'un fils, seul objet de la vanité
d'une grande maison, on nous abandonne aux soins
d'une vieille femme de chambre...nous sortons des
 mains de cette inepte gouvernante pour entrer dans
des maisons, où des filles, qui ne connaissent
point le monde, nous enseignent à le ha...une
contenance modeste, quelques principes respectables,
etouffés par mille préjugés, sont les seuls avan-
tages que nous procurent plusieurs années perdues
chez elles. Nous rentrons dans la maison patern-
nelle, pour y perfectionner des talents frivoles
....Mouette au milieu d'un grand cercle, une fille
ne semble pas être compagnie...On nous marie
enfin, et c'est un prodige si, à trente ans, une
femme est parvenue par ses réflexions, par une
étude pénible des autres et d'elle-même à penser,
d'après les seules inspirations de son âme,
qu'elle est formée pour acquérir les connaissances
et pratiquer les vertus qui sont le partage égal
des deux sexes."

This feminism, however, lacks the fire and militancy of
Millwood’s protest, even although Riccoboni wrote her novels
some time after the publication of Lillo’s play. Riccoboni’s
heroines are oppressed by man, but the keynote of their
caracter is resignation. The young girl is educated in

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3. The bulk of her novels were written between 1757 and 1776.
this unfair system by an older woman who has had experience of its workings in society. The young girl is warned in respect of the double moral code existing in society, but she is not invited to rebel against it.

In Riccoboni’s *Histoire de Miss Jenny* the heroine is instructed by her maid, Liddy, in the wiles practised by men to trap innocent young ladies. Men may dispense with respect and honour in their relationships with women, whereas women must conduct themselves in a faultless manner towards men. Men are tyrants, but women have no choice but to bow to their oppressors:

"L'aimable ingénuité qui vous caractérise, n'est pas le partage ordinaire des hommes. Le plus vrai d'entre eux croit pouvoir nous en imposer sans crime. Une bizarre loi qu'ils se sont faite, les dispense de se montrer justes et honnêtes en traitant avec nous. Ils trompent sans rougir une moitié des créatures; mais en diminuant leurs obligations, ils étendent les nôtres, puisque l'honneur et les vertus dont la pratique nous est imposée, nous forcent à nous conduire également bien avec nos compagnes et avec nos tyrans." (pp. 151-152)

The innocent young girl, Cécile, in Mme de Charrière’s *Caliste* is similarly taken in hand by her mother. She has yet to learn that what is permitted one sex, is forbidden the other; that a man may solicit a favour from a woman which he will despise her for according. One might think, here, of the character, Viniescho, that Marivaux quotes in his *Spectateur Francais*. Viniescho will not fulfill his promise to his mistress to marry her, simply because she is pregnant by him; as he says:
"Promettre à une fille de l'épouser, si elle se fie à vous, n'est-ce pas lui promettre une impertinence? N'est-ce pas lui dire, je m'engage à vous prendre pour épouse, quand vous ne le mériterez plus?"  

Cécile has permitted the young lord to whom she is deeply attracted to kiss her hand, innocently believing that, since he was also involved in the act, there could be no harm in it. Cécile's mother realises she must be educated in the workings of the double moral code, before she comes to grief:

" Ignorez-vous, ma chère Cécile, lui dis-je, combien les hommes sont enclins à mal penser et à mal parler des femmes! Mais, dit Cécile, s'il y a ici de quoi penser et dire du mal, il ne pourrait m'accuser sans s'accuser encore plus lui-même. N'a-t-il pas baisé ma main, et n'a-t-il pas été aussi troublé que moi? — Peut-être, Cécile; mais il ne se souviendra pas de son impression comme de la vôtre. Il verra dans la vôtre une espèce de sensibilité ou de faiblesse qui peut vous entraîner fort loin, et faire votre sort."  

Even a man may be aware of the dangers which lie ahead of the young woman in society. Euphrosine's father in Les Pressentiments Justifiés/Ducoudray realises she loves Darmancy; bearing in mind the double moral code applied in society he warns his daughter:

"Les hommes sont si généralement perfides, que pour une femme qui n'a pas sujet de s'en plaindre, il en est mille qui en sont les dupes, et bientôt après les victimes. M. Darmancy est dans l'âge heureux de plaire; peut-être se sera-t-il aperçu qu'il ne vous était pas indifférent; peut-être se fait-il un amusement de ce dont vous vous faites une affaire sérieuse; s'il était assez faux pour vous en imposer, pour s'amuser de votre crédulité, ce serait un fourbe, un traître, un scélérat à vos yeux; mais ce n'en serait pas moins un honnête

1. *Céliete*, pp. 103-104.
"homme, un galant homme dans la société; et tout le ridicule de sa conduite ne tomberait que sur vous. Voilà l'injustice des hommes."

Thus the young girl on her entry into the world must be instructed on her position as woman in society.

The older Riccoboni heroine is aware of the existence of the double code which exonerates a man from all blame in seducing a young woman, yet censures the girl for succumbing to him. She is aware of the 'Don Juan clement in any man, which permits him to tell any lie, swear any vow, in order to obtain a woman's favours, and then lightly to dismiss his promises when he has succeeded in his aim; whereas he considers it a point of honour to keep his word to any man. The anguish of a woman is that she must suffer in silence; there is no way in which she may revenge herself upon her unfaithful lover. Any retaliatory act on her part will merely draw public attention to her dishonour. Fanni Butler finds herself in this position; Milord Alfred wooed her ardently, finally conquered her, only to leave her so that he might satisfy his ambition in an advantageous match with another. Fanni demands to know which natural or social law authorises such behaviour on a man's part:

"Mais quoi, tromper une femme, est-ce donc enfreindre les lois de la probité? manque-t-on à l'honneur en trahissant une maîtresse? C'est un procédé reçu; tant d'autres l'ont fait, il en est tant qui le font. Oui, milord, il en est; mais ce sont des lâches, qui, portées par leur caractère à faire le mal et n'osant offenser ceux qui peuvent les punir, se destinent et se bornent à désoler un sexe que le préjugé
réduit à ne pouvoir ni se plaindre ni se venger.

Eh! qui êtes-vous, hommes? d'où tirez-vous le droit de manquer avec une femme aux égards que vous vous imposez entre vous? Quelle loi dans la nature, quelle convention dans un État autorisa jamais cette insolente distinction? Quoi, votre parole simplement donnée vous engage avec le dernier de vos semblables, et vos serments réitérés ne vous lient point à l'amie que vous êtes choisie?"!

In another Riccoboni novel, Milady Catesby hears that a certain Sir Charles, after professing eternal love to Lady Selby, has publicly broken off their relationship. She, too, stresses the unfairness of the double moral code, and the demands men make upon women:

"Heureux hommes! combien la différence de l'éducation, les préjugés, l'usage donnent d'avantages à ce sexe hardi qui ne rougit de rien, dit et fait tout ce qu'il veut! Que de ressources il a su ménager pour son orgueil, pour ses intérêts! Il rampe sans honte à nos pieds; nos mépris ne l'avilissent point; nos dédaignes ne peuvent le rebuter; bas quand il désire; fier dès qu'il espère; ingrat lorsqu'il obtient..."

She remarks upon the irony of the situation: man treats woman as his plaything, as a being inferior to himself, yet he imposes duties upon her which he himself finds impossible to fulfil:

"Les hommes nous regardent comme des êtres placés dans l'univers pour l'amusement de leurs yeux, pour la récréation de leurs esprits, pour servir de jouet à cette espèce d'enfance où les assujettit la fougue de leurs passions, l'impétuosité de

2. Lettres de Milady Catesby, lettre IX, p.25.
1. Lettres de Fanni Butlerd, pp. 283-284.
Man is encouraged by his earliest training to give way to his natural instincts, but woman must fight with them. In the *Lettres d'Elisabeth-Sophie de Vallière*, the heroine makes this point to her friend, Louise. Elisabeth apparently subscribes to the opinion that woman is the inferior sex; whilst Lady Catesby was indignant that man dare call woman the weaker sex, Elisabeth finds that the system in society is all the more unfair in making such hard demands on woman simply because woman is the weaker sex:

"On pardonne, dites-vous, toutes les fautes que l'amour fait commettre. Malgré mon peu d'expérience, j'oserai vous assurer de la fausseté de cette maxime, au moins à l'égard des femmes. Si l'extrême violence de cette passion est l'excuse d'un sexe porté par son éducation, par sa hardiesse naturelle, à ne pas contraindre ses désirs, à sacrifier beaucoup au plaisir de les satisfaire; la retenue et la modération, partage ordinaire du nôtre, ne lui donnent point de droit à la même indulgence: c'est un combat inégal, ma chère, où l'on impose au plus timide, au plus faible, la nécessité de remporter la victoire." 2

Elisabeth and Milady Catesby have this in common, however, that, although aware of the injustice displayed in society towards women, they lay no secret plans for retribution on the male sex, they have no intention of exchanging their

1. *Lettres de Milady Catesby*, lettre XIXI, p. 94.
virtuous mode of living for the licence permitted men—and they are resigned to the position to which women are relegated in society.

The Riccoboni heroine is not merely resigned to her role; she despises any woman who attempts to escape from it. Madame de Sancerre, in the Lettres de Mme de Sancerre au Comte de Mancé, expresses her contempt for Mme de Cézannes, who revolts against the strict morality imposed on her as a woman by assuming the same sexual liberty as a man. She has, nonetheless, to safeguard her reputation, she is thus forced into hypocrisy; Madame de Sancerre is horrified at this procedure:

"Vous nommerai-je cette femme dont l'art étonnant sut ménager tant d'intérêts divers, fixer des amants heureux, enchaîner ceux qu'elle sacrifiait à sa vanité, jouir de leur estime, de la vénération d'un époux trompé, et sous le voile de la décente, de la modestie, de la religion même, se livrer à une passion effrénée, exprimée sans pudeur, et satisfaites aux dépens de l'honneur et de l'humanité?"

(Cp. 102)

Hypocrisy is a feature of the woman in revolt, who seeks revenge on the male sex, but it demands a long and arduous apprenticeship. Dissimulation, being a studied art, is in general alien to the spontaneity of youth, thus Gaillard de la Bataille's Mlle Cronel did not apply herself to it in her early years. Mlle Cronel does not present her conduct as a revenge upon man for the wrongs done her and her sex, but her philosophy is essentially that of the 'révoltée'. She has capitalised on man's weakness for woman; they fall victim to her wiles. Having studied the mechanism of the
male mind, she has grasped the male need to meet with resistance in his relationship with women. Simulated virtue, seeming reluctance, hold a great charm for a man; thus she has been driven to dissimulate in order to gain her own ends. All her apparently spontaneous acts are the result of very careful planning:

"Dans les premières années de ma jeunesse, uniquement guidée par mes penchants, je cherchais à les satisfaire, sans réfléchir sur les conséquences. Un âge plus mûr m’a éclairée sur moi-même... il m’a fait sentir la nécessité de me déguiser, afin de mettre à profit, pour ma fortune, la faiblesse que les hommes ont pour mon sexe. J’ai réussi au-delà de mes espérances. Une conduite fine et politique, une adresse artificieuse, une tendre coquetterie, un manège subtil, des larmes à propos répandues, des tristesses apparentes; tout cela, mêlé d'occasions de m'arracher des faveurs, qu'une fausse vertu ne faisait refuser; tout cela, dis-je, m'a placée dans un degré de fortune et d'élévation, où je ne devais pas me flatter de parvenir". 1

Although Cronel's motivation is primarily wealth, and not revenge, her methods are identical to those of the woman who feels called on to avenge her sex. Women are forced into dissimulation to protect their own interests.

In Bastide's Tombeau Philosophique, the Marquise de Persine seems completely indifferent to love: this is an attitude which she learned to cultivate early in her life, as she soon realised that men had a very low opinion of women who practised the same easy morality as themselves. The greatest attraction is virtue, assumed or otherwise.

Therefore she adopted an air of severe virtue, acquiring

thereby a reputation for insensibility. In this way, she has attracted many admirers and enjoyed a great deal of freedom, whilst retaining the respect of the public, duped by her apparent insensibility; she explains to Bastide's young hero:

"Sans doute, c'est s'exposer à leur faire penser qu'on veut les tromper, que de leur dire légèrement qu'on les aime; il faut donc prendre une toute autre route que celle du commun des femmes, leur faire désirer ce qu'on voudrait leur dire, les forcer à mériter les sentiments qu'ils inspirent en leur faisant craindre qu'ils ne puissent jamais les inspirer, les rendre heureux enfin, en se rendant soi-même digne de faire leur bonheur. Voilà ce que je me disais, et ce que je me hâtais de suivre. Un nouveau motif vint se joindre à l'autorité de mes réflexions. On me maria à l'homme de France le plus jaloux et le plus débauché. Forcée à devenir la victime de ses vices, ou à le détourner finement de l'exercice de ses droits, je me composai un ton impertinent, un air dédaigneux, un nouveau caractère enfin, capable de glacer la nature dans les sons de l'homme le plus brutal. Mon stratagème me réussit,... Il fallait soutenir le rôle que je jouais, parce que la jalousie de mon mari était un satellite attaché à toutes mes démarches... et je parvins ainsi à persuader au public tout ce que vous avez cru vous-même." (part I)

Fougaret de Montbrun's 'Cosmopolite' comes across many women in Portugal who, although seemingly pious and respectable, secretly lead very different lives. As one woman points out to him, they have had recourse to dissimulation only through necessity:

"On nous accuse, disait-elle un jour, d'être dissimulées; à qui en est la faute, si ce n'est aux hommes? Y a-t-il rien de plus injuste et de plus ridicule que les lois qu'ils nous imposent? Toutes ces
"règles de bienséance, cette retenue, cette modestie auxquelles ils nous assujettissent, sont-elles praticables? S'il est vrai que nous soyons pétries de même pâte qu'eux, comme nos passions et nos appétits le démontrent assez, n'est-il pas bien bizarre qu'ils veuillent nous forcer à vaincre une nature à laquelle ils sont incessamment obligés de céder? Telle est donc notre condition, que ne pouvant point obéir à nos tyrans, nous sommes contraintes d'avoir recours à la fourberie et au déguisement pour leur repos et pour le nôtre. Ils nous veulent modestes, chastes, discrètes, pieuses: nous prenons le masque de tout cela, au moyen de quoi ils sont contents et nous aussi."

In Le Doyen de Killermine, we meet Mme de S*, described by Sgard in his Prévost, Romancier as 'une sorte de Morteuil avant la lettre'. It is she who leads Patrice's wife, Julie, astray. Her attitude may be traced back to her early days, when she sacrificed the chance of a good marriage by entering upon an affair with a handsome but impoverished musketeer, as a result of which they were forced to marry. Dwelling on what might have been, she grows to despise her husband and purposely sets out to humiliate him by taking all his former rivals as lovers. This is her revenge, her way of punishing him for all her lost opportunities. At the same time, she revenges herself on man in general by taking them as her victims and ruining them. This is indeed the process utilised later by Morteuil, and it is also the

1. Le Cosmopolite ou Le citoyen du Monde, p. 150.
hallmark of the Lovelace figure. Madame de S*’s method is exposed to us:

"L'art suprême de Mme de S* et celui, dont elle s'est fait une ressource à force de l'exercer dans sa misère, est de s'emparer de l'esprit et du cœur par ses manières douces et insinuantes... Jamais on ne pénétra plus habilement le fond d'un caractère, pour en échauffer toutes les passions et pour en découvrir tous les faibles. Elle conduit ainsi ses dupes et ses victimes par des routes si pleines de charmes, qu'en se ruinant de fortune ou d'honneur, ils se croient encore redevables à son zèle." (vol. I, p. 111).

Like Merteuil, Madame de S* does not restrict herself solely to male victims; she undertakes the corruption of Julie in order to ameliorate her financial situation. The downfall of Julie is a carefully planned affair in which she enlists the aid of two former lovers, as Merteuil invites the participation of Valmont in her corruption of Cécile.

Such was the form taken by feminist protests in the French 18th-century novel until 1782¹ — sad resignation, or in a few minor characters, open revolt. One must wait until the advent of Laclos's Madame de Merteuil for a fuller treatment of the character. In his De l'Éducation des Femmes, Laclos had already demonstrated his consciousness of the injustices meted out to women in society; he admits that their education is sadly neglected, but he comes close to a warning when commenting on the possible effects a reassessment of

¹. Publication of Les Liaisons Dangereuses.
women's education could have:

"Dans le cas qui nous occupe, la femme est l'individu; l'espèce est la société. La question est donc de savoir si l'éducation qu'on donne aux femmes développe ou tend au moins à développer leurs facultés, à en diriger l'emploi, selon l'intérêt de la société, si nos lois ne s'opposent pas à ce développement et nous-mêmes à cette direction, enfin si dans l'état actuel de la société une femme telle qu'on peut la concevoir formée par une bonne éducation ne serait pas très malheureuse en se tenant à sa place et très dangereuse si elle tentait d'en sortir." (p.13).

Laclos might as well have been anticipating Merteuil, in this passage. For she has cultivated her own formidable intelligence, carrying it beyond the limits of the conventional feminine education. She has consequently abandoned the position allotted her in society, and has indeed become a very dangerous person. Merteuil cultivated her intelligence very early in her life. Normally, a young girl would be brought from the convent into the world, where she was expected to take no part in the proceedings. Her sole duty was to act the part of a decorative statue, on view for the bidders in the marriage market. But the young girl who was to become Mme de Merteuil was not content to sink into this approved form of apathy. She could not but choose to remain silent; this suited her purpose, for it enabled her to direct her energies to assimilating all that was said in the circle around her. She was curious to learn all that might be of use or interest to her; aware that any discourse
addressed to her would be a mere banality, she ignored these and concentrated all her faculties on to what she was not supposed to heed - for what was concealed from her was precisely what would be of most use to her:

"Entrée dans le monde dans le temps où, fille encore, j'étais vouée par état au silence et à l'inaction, j'ai su en profiter pour observer et réfléchir. Tandis qu'on me croyait étourdie ou distraite, écoutant peu à la vérité les discours qu'on s'empressait à me tenir, je recueillais avec soin ceux qu'on cherchait à me cacher."

Her first few years spent in polite society were to be the apprenticeship of her career in society, she consequently put them to good use. Everything new must be approached in a critical light, all must be studied in depth, assimilated and understood. The greatest mystery of all for the young girl is the physical relationship between man and woman: the young Merteuil realised that, for a girl in her position, knowledge in this matter might only be gained within the confines of marriage. Thus she approached her wedding-night in a spirit of inquiry rather than trepidation: she has already learned to don a mask, in order to disguise her true thoughts. She is two persons within one; the one is the physical being which experiences sensations, the second, far more powerful, is the intelligence which observes the mechanics of the physical being, studies them and categorises

1. P. II, L. LXXXI, Merteuil to Valmont.
the conclusions for future use, much as a scientist might study the reactions of an animal in his laboratory:

"J'attendais avec sécurité le moment qui devait m'instruire, et j'eus besoin de réflexion pour montrer de l'embarras et de la crainte. Cette première nuit, dont on se fait pour l'ordinaire une idée si cruelle ou si douce, ne ne présentait qu'une occasion d'expérience: douleur et plaisir, j'observai tout exactement, et ne voyais dans ces diverses sensations que des faits à recueillir et à méditer."

Kerteuil early trained herself to divorce her intellect from her emotions, pleasurable or painful: they are of use only in so far as they offer new material to be studied and digested by her intelligence. To observe and to reflect, even at moments which, for others, would be charged with intense emotion; to detach herself from her physical being, these are the cornerstones on which the young Kerteuil founded her future life.

Kerteuil's desire to study all surrounding her represents a departure from the character normally attributed to the young girl of noble birth. Such movements require concealment from the eyes of others lest their suspicions be aroused. The young Merteuil had hitherto shown little of the spontaneity generally associated with youth; she then set out to eradicate any vestige of this dangerous attribute which yet lingered within her. Resolutely suppressing any emotion or sensation, she cultivated a high degree of stoicism within her character. The process is explained in the letter

1. Ibid.
to Valmont in which she exposes her system and philosophy of life:

"Cette utile curiosité, en servant à m'instruire, m'apprit encore à dissimuler; forcée souvent de cacher les objets de mon attention aux yeux de ceux qui m'entouraient, j'essayai de guider les miens à mon gré; j'obtins dès lors de prendre à volonté ce regard distrait que vous avez loué si souvent. Encouragée par ce premier succès, je tâchai de régler de même les divers mouvements de ma figure. Ressentais-je quelque chagrin, je m'étudiais à prendre l'air de la sérénité, même celui de la joie; j'ai porté le zèle jusqu'à me causer des douleurs volontaires, pour chercher pendant ce temps l'expression du plaisir, je me suis travaillée avec le même soin et plus de peine, pour réprimer les symptômes d'une joie inattendue. C'est ainsi que j'ai su prendre sur ma physionomie cette puissance dont je vous ai vu quelquefois si étonné".  

Self-control on this scale, as she soon realised, places her at an advantage in a society whose members are governed principally by their emotions. The emotions, particularly that of love, unless controlled, cause one to lose one's hold on oneself. One becomes vulnerable, and therefore subject to the will of another. To lose control of oneself is to lose one's hold upon others. Merteuil therefore banished feeling from her life as alien to her plan of conduct: Valmont adheres to the same philosophy which he betrays in loving the Présidente; in losing control over himself, he loses control over people and events and this in turn brings about his downfall.

1. Part II, L. LXXI.
Since Merteuil has extinguished all emotions in order to concentrate her intelligence on understanding first herself then others, she mocks others in whose lives emotion plays an important part, and she turns this emotional susceptibility to her own advantage. It is through the emotions of others that she is able to gain control of them. Each man has his weak point, his secret shame: she gains knowledge of the secret of every lover she takes, and profits from it to commit him to silence on their relationship. In a letter to Valmont she compares herself in this respect to Delilah.\(^1\) She plays with the emotions of others; they are the strings which she pulls to work the other characters at her will. The sight of others suffering through their emotions affords great amusement to her, particularly when she is the cause of that suffering.\(^2\) She gaily recounts to Valmont the sufferings of her present lover. Love is a game to her, in which she remains an amused yet pitiless onlooker. She herself is a very sensual creature but even her sensuality lacks spontaneity and feeling. It provides her with yet other means of gaining control over a man; it is another way of experiencing her own power, it is another tool of her intelligence. Her careful plans laid to trap a

\(^1\) Part II, I, LXXXI

\(^2\) Part I, i.V
man in the web of her sensuality follow a line of conduct very similar to that utilised by a rake in his seductions. The same cold calculation is displayed. Her sensuality is all the more effective because she is able to detach herself from the scene and judge coolly which should be her next step. Like the rake, she, too, has her own 'petite maison' where she may receive her lovers in secret. She takes pride in her seductions, as she reveals to Valmont, when telling him of the reception she afforded her lover:

"Je lis un chapitre du Sopha, une lettre d'Héloïse et deux contes de La Fontaine, pour recueillir les différents tons que je voulais prendre. Je ne crois pas avoir jamais mis tant de soin à plaire, ni avoir été jamais aussi contente de moi. Après le souper, tour à tour enfant et raisonnable, folâtre et sensible, quelquefois même libertine, je me plaisais à le considérer comme un Sultan au milieu de son sérial, dont j'étais tour à tour les favorites différentes."

She has studied all that is pleasing to the male mind, and utilises this knowledge to gain control of her victim through his senses.

The stoicism which Merteuil adopted as a young girl is an unsophisticated form of the dissimulation which has become an essential part of her mature character. Dissimulation, we have seen, is the only means whereby a woman may lead a life of her choosing whilst retaining public respect. It is an art which requires a long apprenticeship and in which Merteuil is an accomplished master. Her ability to project

1. Part I, 1.X
any character which it pleases her to assume is a natural consequence leading from her youthful secrecy. The process evolved by degrees; first, she concealed all her thoughts, all her observations; from here, she attained a degree of stoicism, that her face might not betray her, and from thence she went on to assume an exterior which was entirely the work of her will and had no correspondence whatsoever with the interior. As she explains to Valmont:

"non contente de ne plus me laisser pénétrer, je m'amusais à me montrer sous des formes différentes; sûre de mes gestes, suivant les circonstances, ou même seulement suivant mes fantaisies: dès ce moment, ma façon de penser fut pour moi seule, et je ne montrai plus que celle qu'il m'était utile de laisser voir."

Her dissimulation commenced in her dealings with her husband, whom she completely fooled as to her true character. Even her disreputable conduct after her husband's death followed those a preconceived plan: her intention was to repel/who might ask for her hand, and to attract others who may have been discouraged by her reputation for frigidity and indifference, fostered in her husband's lifetime. She then set about the task of rebuilding her reputation, having successfully discouraged any prospective suitors for her hand, as marriage would have severely restricted her plans. By degrees, she

1. Part II, 1. LXXXI.
2. Part II, 1. LXXXI.
acquired a reputation for virtue and respectability, all the while indulging in a series of secret relationships with various lovers, each lover being convinced that he has been the only one to triumph over the strict principles of Mme de Merteuil. Even the severe Mme de Volanges is duped by Merteuil's pious exterior; she honours her for being, as the public has been led to believe, the sole woman able to resist Valmont.

Mme de Volanges's admiration for Merteuil, as she sees her, is carried to the extent that she constantly seeks her advice on the question of Cécile's proposed marriage to the Baron de Gercourt. Merteuil rejoices in the double role this occasion offers her. In the name of duty and honour, she counsels Mme de Volanges to show no weakness by deferring to Cécile's wishes: stressing that the Baron possesses many fine qualities, and insisting on his excellence as a husband, she determines Mme de Volanges to force Cécile into this marriage against her will. From her role as a woman of strict virtue, she turns to Cécile in the guise of an indulgent friend, urging her to take a lover, persuading her to conceal all from her mother and inspiring great hatred and fear in Cécile for her future husband. Merteuil's mastery at disguise is absolutely essential to her way of life. She has succeeded in creating another being for herself, for which she laid the foundation in her early years. She has evolved her own
laws, her own code of conduct by which she lives; as she tells Valmont:

"ils sont le fruit de mes profondes réflexions; je les ai créés, et je puis dire que je suis mon ouvrage." 1

In her code there is no place for conventional morality: she considers herself above the laws which restrict other members of society, although she must appear to abide by them in order to safeguard her position in society. Mme de Merteuil has no conscience; she cruelly plays with her fellow human beings, even with innocent children like Cécile and Danceny. She has no qualms in destroying their young lives, merely remarking quite casually to Valmont:

"Il serait honteux que nous ne fissions pas ce que nous voulons de deux enfants." 2

For those weaker than herself, Merteuil has no pity.

From her youth onwards, Merteuil has plotted to gain control of others, she has fashioned her own being. She manipulates the lives of others as if they were not of the same order as herself. Indeed, she sees herself in the light of a god, but one bent on evil, not solicitous of the welfare of his creatures. Merteuil experiences a sense of exaltation as she views herself in the midst of her little universe, pulling the strings and turning the wheels. 3

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1. Part II, l.LXXXI.
2. Part II, l.LI.
3. Part II, l.LXIII.
"N'est-il pas plaisant, en effet, de consoler pour et contre, et d'être le seul agent de deux intérêts directement contraires? Me voilà comme la divinité; recevant les voeux opposés des aveugles mortels, et ne changeant rien à mes décrets immuables."

She regards herself in the light of an avenging angel: the plot she has elaborated involving Cécile and Danceny, Mme de Volanges and Valmont, is her revenge on a lover who dared scorn her, she, the implication is, who stands above all other mortals. The Baron de Gercourt, her faithless lover, plans to marry the innocent, young Cécile, fresh from her convent. He has always displayed a taste for innocent young blondes who are acquainted only with convent life. Merteuil's monstrous seduction of Cécile is her revenge for his desertion: let Gercourt tremble, says Merteuil, before the woman he has wronged:1

"Quelle est donc en effet l'insolente sécurité de cet homme qui ose dormir tranquille, tandis qu'une femme, qui a à se plaindre de lui, ne s'est pas encore vengée?"

She represents woman revenging herself on her oppressor, man. The whole of the elaborate system she has constructed since her entry into the world is directed against man. She champions woman against man; woman has been forced into dissimulation, into artifice, to hold her own in a man's world. Stung that Valmont dare warn her against Prévan — as if any man is a match for her — she retorts to him:

1. Part I, 1. XX
"et qu'avez-vous donc fait que je n'ait surpassé mille fois? Vous avez séduit, perdu même beaucoup de femmes: mais quelles difficultés avez-vous eues à vaincre? quels obstacles à surmonter? qu'est le mérite qui soit véritablement à vous?"

Women are necessarily cleverer than men, by virtue of the double moral code and the severe limitations it places on women. In the couple Valmont/Merteuil, Valmont has the easier task in their joint mission of evil. Valmont's fame, the celebrity of any rake, rests on the publicity his conquests receive; whilst a woman must lead a double life, one with her lover, the other in society, where not the slightest hint of scandal, not a word of her secret life, must be breathed. This is the point Merteuil makes to Valmont:

"Pourtous autres hommes, les défaites, ne sont que des succès de moins. Dans cette partie si inégale, notre fortune est de ne pas perdre, et votre malheur de ne pas gagner. Quand je vous accorderais autant de talents qu'à nous, de combien encore ne devrions-nous pas vous surpasser, par la nécessité où nous sommes d'en faire un continué usage!"

Man is the enemy of woman, and she is at his mercy, the more so that he is never considered at fault if he publicises their relationship; although it is he that lacks honour in this instance, it is she who receives the blame. Merteuil comments on this:

1. Part II, LXXXI.
2. Part II, LXXXI.
"À la merci de son ennemi, elle est sans ressource, s'il est sans générosité: et comment en espérer de lui, lorsque, si quelquefois on le loue d'en avoir, jamais pourtant on ne le blâme d'en manquer?"

Prévan is celebrated for his successful ruses played on women; in one particular case, he ruined the reputation of three women by one masterly stroke, and for this he is greatly admired. Prévan is clever, but Merteuil knows she is cleverer still, for is she not a woman? Prévan is a challenge for her, and she takes the challenge up. By brilliant scheming, she has her satisfaction with Prévan, but immediately afterwards has him arrested for assault on her respectable person. As a result, Prévan loses his position in society and his commission in the army. Merteuil has revenged her sex. Yet this is only part of the question: Merteuil's ostensible motive may have been feminine revenge, but it is more especially a personal victory. Merteuil often claims her mission is to revenge her sex, but she displays a great deal of contempt for others of her sex. She ruins two women, Cécile and Mme de Volanges, in her own personal revenge on Gercourt. She despises Cécile and others like her, because they lack her strength and intelligence. She heaps scorn on the woman who enters upon a love-intrigue simply for the sake of it; for Merteuil, the pleasure and challenge of an intrigue lie in the scheming and plotting which surround

1. Ibid.
it. She had once considered making Cécile her pupil, but she lacks the intelligence to make her a worthy disciple of Merteuil; she explains to Valmont:

_"nous_

"*tandis que nous/occuperions à former cette petite fille pour l'intrigue, nous n'en ferions qu'une femme facile. Or, je ne connais rien de si plat que cette facilité de bêtise, qui se rend sans savoir ni comment ni pourquoi, uniquement parce qu'on l'attaque et qu'elle ne sait pas résister. Ces sortes de femmes ne sont absolument que des machines à plaisir..... n'oublions pas que de ces machines-là, tout le monde parvient bientôt à en connaître les ressorts et les moteurs; ainsi, que pour se servir de celle-ci sans danger, il faut se dépêcher, s'arrêter de bonne heure, et la briser ensuite."*_

Finally, it is she, rather than Valmont, who breaks Mme de Tourvel's heart. She is the murderess of Mme de Tourvel. For she goads Valmont into action: his love would perhaps have endowed him with sufficient generosity to spare the Présidente, to take pity on her. But Merteuil is relentless; if he does not vanquish the Présidente, he will not merit Merteuil's favours; they will only be awarded to him on that condition. If he does not succeed, he will be held up to ridicule, scorned for falling in love. When Mme de Tourvel finally and unwillingly capitulates, Valmont experiences true happiness for the first time in his life. Mme de

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1. Part II, 1.CVI
Tourvel is happy because the man she loves is so. But Merteuil finds the situation intolerable; she heaps ridicule on Valmont, finally needling him into breaking off his relationship with Mme de Tourvel. To ensure that the break is absolute, to destroy any chance of reconciliation, Merteuil dictates Valmont's farewell letter to the Présidente. One woman understands another woman; she knows the phrases that will strike deepest into another woman's heart. Cruelty of this magnitude is not based on dislike of the personal qualities of the Présidente, it proceeds from wounded vanity and pride. Valmont has dared prefer another to her, has dared place another above her. For this reason, Merteuil must destroy their love, must destroy them both. Merteuil mocks the unhappy Valmont:

"Ah! croyez-moi, vicomte, quand une femme frappe dans le coeur d'une autre, elle manque rarement de trouver l'endroit sensible, et la blessure est incurable. Tandis que je frappais celle-ci, je n'ai pas oublié que cette femme était ma rivale, que vous l'aviez trouvée un moment préférable à moi, et qu'enfin, vous m'aviez placée au-dessous d'elle."

Merteuil's intervention in the relationship between Valmont and the Présidente also enables her to win a great victory over Valmont. She and Valmont, both powerful figures, have negotiated a truce, formed an alliance together against society. The bond between them cannot be described as friendship, for Merteuil is incapable of experiencing that emotion;

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1. Part II, 1. CXLV.
neither would she accept the demands made upon her by such a relationship, for she is incapable of altruism: it is an uneasy peace, however, for the drive for leadership is strong in both, stronger, perhaps, in Merteuil, because she feels the need to prove that, despite being a woman, or by the very fact of being a woman, she can hold her own with any man. Valmont does not hesitate to pay her her dues, within the framework of their alliance:

"conquérir est notre destin, il faut le suivre: peut-être au bout de la carrière nous rencontrerons nous encore; car, soit dit sans vous fâcher, ma très belle marquise, vous me suivez au moins d'un pas égal; et depuis que, nous séparant pour le bonheur du monde, nous prêchons la foi chacun de son côté, il ne semble que dans cette mission d'amour, vous avez fait plus de prosélytes que moi."1

He struggles to keep abreast with her in the tide of events; this is why he follows her dictates in respect of Mme de Tourvel, even although it is contrary to his wishes. Merteuil knows she is the superior schemer: she is able to see through Valmont's flimsy excuses. She is enraged at his suggestion that he should seek reconciliation with Mme de Tourvel, keeping both as his mistresses:

"J'admire, par exemple, avec quelle finesse ou quelle gaucherie vous me proposez en douceur de vous laisser renouer avec la Présidente. Il vous conviendrait beaucoup, n'est-ce pas, de vous donner le mérite de cette rupture sans y perdre les plaisirs de la jouissance? Et comme alors cet apparent sacrifice n'en serait plus un pour

1. Part I,1.IV.
"vous, vous m'offrez de le renouveler à ma volonté! Par cet arrangement, la céleste dévote se croirait toujours l'unique choix de votre coeur, tandis que je m'engorgerais d'être la rivale préférée; nous serions trompées toutes deux, mais vous seriez content, et qu'importe le reste?"

Her triumph over Valmont is of great moment to her, all the sweeter because Valmont can be said to represent the male sex; he is the arch-schemer of his sex, but Merteuil wins victory over him by forcing him to break relations with the only woman he has ever loved. She congratulates herself on her triumph in a letter to Valmont:

"J'avoue de bonne foi que ce trômphe me flatte plus que tous ceux que j'ai pu obtenir jusqu'à présent. Vous allez trouver peut-être que j'évalue bien cette femme que naguère j'appréciais si peu; point du tout: mais c'est que ce n'est pas sur elle que j'ai remporté cet avantage; c'est sur vous: voilà le plaisant et ce qui est vraiment délicieux."2

She cannot forgive Valmont for taking her for granted: this is a cardinal sin in Merteuil's eyes. Her lover, Belleroche, is found guilty of the same crime, as she indignantly recounts to Valmont:

"je remarque surtout l'insultante confiance qu'il prend en moi, et la sécurité avec laquelle il me regarde comme à lui pour toujours. J'en suis vraiment humiliée. Il me prise donc bien peu, s'il croit valoir assez pour me fixer!"3

1. Part II,1.CXIV.
2. Ibid.
3. Part II,1.CXIII.
For Morteuil has a very high opinion of her own person. She projects an image of herself as the 'révoltée', of greater powers than any other before her, as she is careful to point out to Valmont. This is, however, but part of the formidable Mme de Merteuil. Her real aim is the projection of herself as superhuman. Her role as avenger of her sex is but the starting-point, as it were. She is a woman and therefore must prove herself and her sex superior, or at least equal, to man, before she reveals herself as superior within her own sex. Since man is generally considered the leader within society, if she proves herself superior to him, she is second to none in society. Mme de Merteuil is but incidentally a 'révoltée'; she is, more accurately, a gigantic ego master-minded by an outstanding intelligence. This is the end to which she has concentrated all her energies in her early years.

The figure of Mme de Merteuil made a devastating impact on late 18th-century society; Laclos's novel was followed by many poor imitations. One who read Laclos's masterpiece and was supposed to have modelled himself upon Valmont was the Comte de Tilly. In his Mémoires, he recalls an encounter with one woman of polite society who bears—although Tilly does not comment on it—some marked resemblances to Mme de Merteuil. He makes her acquaintance when

1. Part II, I. LXXXI.
she accosts him in the street, strangers to each other as they then are, and invites him to spend the night with her. He later questions her on their chance meeting and is shocked at her nonchalant replies:

"La première fois que je vous ai rencontrée, vous ne pouviez pas deviner que j'étais là.... Me cherchiez-vous? Je cherchais le plaisir. À qui en vouliez-vous? Au premier qui me plairait. Grands dieux! m'écriai-je, ne pouvant dissimuler une espèce d'effroi.... Il est fort plaisant, reprit-elle sans se déconcerter, que vous autres hommes vouliez que tout vous soit permis, après nous avoir presque tout défendu. Nous n'avons qu'un moyen de reconquérir nos droits, c'est de faire en secret ce que vous vous enorgueillissez de faire en public." 1

She proceeds to instruct him in her philosophy; she, like all women, has been forced into dissimulation to conserve her reputation:

"Sachez toujours réprimer un premier mouvement, soit qu'il appartienne à la surprise, à la joie, ou à la honte; celui qui n'est pas maître de son extérieur, et surtout de son visage, se trahit sans cesse quand il est le plus intéressé à se cacher." 2

Like Nerteuil she is a very strong character who has assumed the right to lead the same life as a man, but she dare not do so openly:

"vous aurez pour moi la considération que vous devez à une femme forte, qui s'est un peu faite de votre sexe mais qui ne renoncera jamais en

2. Ibid., p. 115.
"public à la décence, qui est le premier ornement du sien." (pp. 123-124).

Up to and including Merteuil, every 'révoltée' has been represented in an unfavourable light, ranging from the unpleasant to the fiendish. In Louvet's Amours du Chevalier de Faublas, barely ten years after the Liaisons, we come across a more sympathetic presentation of the figure of the woman in revolt, the Marquise de B. Any faults she may display are due simply to her feelings for the young Faublas. The Marquise loves intrigue; it is the adventures they offer, rather than the physical pleasures, which engage her in a series of extra-marital relationships. As Rosambert, himself one of her former lovers, explains to Faublas:

"elle n' est pas ce qu' on appelle volage... mais votre déguisement a tout dérangé. Un novice à instruire, un fat à corriger (il se montrait lui-même en riant) un mari presque jaloux à duper si plaisamment! des obstacles de toute espèce à surmonter!... elle n'a pu résister à ces idées-là." (vol. I, pp. 238-239).

It is the challenge, the bizarre, which attracts the marquise. She is unfaithful to her husband simply because she is not happy in her marriage. She, like so many other young girls, was rushed into marriage by her parents before she was old enough to know her own mind. This is her grievance:

"Ah! puisqu'il est vrai que pour n'être jamais malheureuse, il faut toujours remplir ses devoirs, pourquoi nous on imposer-on de si
"difficiles? Une fille qui s'ignore elle-même tombe, à quinze ans, dans les bras d'un homme qu'elle ne connaît pas. Ses parents lui ont dit: 'la naissance, le rang, et l'or constituent le bonheur...La jeune épouse, trop tôt désabusée, ne trouve que ridicules et vices où elle attendait talents agréables et qualités brillantes..."1

The marquise also speaks out against the double moral code which allows her husband to indulge in as many extra-marital relationships as he pleases, whilst he has the power to banish his wife to a convent for the rest of her days, should she retaliate in like fashion. Coming across the marquis in a compromising situation with the maid, Justine, she gives vent to her offended sense of justice:

"peu m'importe qu'un tyrannique usage interdise au sexe le plus faible cette malheureuse et dernière ressource contre les crimes du plus fort. Je ne reconnais de lois que celles qui sont justes, et de lois justes que celles qui comportent l'égalité. Il est trop affreux que les perfidies nombreuses de l'époux soient applaudies, lorsqu'une seule faiblesse de l'épouse la déshonore! Il est trop affreux que moi, qu'on eût condamnée à périr de douleur au fond de quelque retraite ignominieuse, parce que j'aurais idolâtré l'amant le plus digne de mon choix, on m'oblige à recevoir dans mes bras mon indigne mari sortant des bras d'une prostituée!... Je vivrai célibataire, mais je vivrai libre; je ne serai plus le bien

1. The marquise's grievance is not new; Bélide, for example in Le Scrupule in Contes Moraux by Marmontel emphasises how hard it is for a young girl, unwillingly forced at a very early age into an unwelcome marriage, to remain virtuous:

"se voir livrée dès l'âge de seize ans à un homme que l'on ne connaît pas; passer les plus beaux jours de sa vie dans l'ennui, la dissimulation, la servitude, être l'esclave et la victime d'un amour qu'on inspire et qu'on ne saurait partager; quelle épreuve pour la vertu!" (vol. I, p.85).
"l'esclave, le meuble de personne; je n'appartiendrais qu'à moi." (vol. V, pp. 55-56).

The marquise still has the same cause for grievance as her earlier sisters, but her case is at least viewed with a new degree of tolerance by her creator.

The last figure we shall consider in this gallery of 18th-century women in revolt actually belong to the very early years of the 19th century, but, since they are the creation of a great feminist, Mme de Staël, they deserve at least a brief mention. In Mme de Staël's Delphine, we meet with several different forms of feminism. The type closest to the 18th-century 'révoltée' in the style of Kerteuil is Mme de Vernon, who engineers the marriage between her daughter, Mathilde and Léonce, at the expense of the happiness of Léonce and Delphine. She prevents the match between Léonce and Delphine by careful plotting: she persuades Léonce that Delphine loves another, whilst she leads Delphine to believe that Léonce strongly disapproves of her disregard for the social conventions, and that because of this, neither Léonce nor his mother could contemplate alliance with her.

The dying Mme de Vernon confesses all her schemings to Delphine; her false character may be traced back to her early years: it was then that she learned the importance of

1. first published in 1802.
dissimulation for a woman. Mme de Vernon's spontaneous demonstrations of feeling as a girl were rebuffed, so she learned to stifle her emotions:

"Je m'aperçus assez vite que les sentiments que j'exprimais étaient tournés en plaisanterie, et que l'on faisait taire mon esprit, comme s'il ne convenait pas à une femme d'en avoir. Je renfermai donc en moi-même tout ce que j'éprouvais; j'acquis de bonne heure ainsi l'art de la dissimulation, et j'étouffai la sensibilité que la nature m'avait donnée. Une seule de mes qualités, la fierté, échappa à mes efforts pour la contraindre toutes; quand on me surprenait dans un mensonge, je n'en donnais aucun motif; je ne cherchais point à m'excuser, je me taisais; mais je trouvais assez injuste que ceux qui comptaient les femmes pour rien, qui ne leur accordaient aucun droit et presque aucune facilité, que ceux-là même voulussent exiger d'elles les vertus de la force et de l'indépendance, la franchise et la sincérité."2

She was forced into an unhappy marriage; from that day she viewed herself as an unfortunate slave of the tyrant, man. Her only weapon was falsity, and, in the context of her sad situation, she considered it to be a just weapon:

"J'examinai ma situation; je vis que j'étais sans force: une lutte inutile me parut la conduite d'un enfant; j'y renonçai, mais avec un sentiment de haine contre la société, qui ne prenait pas ma défense et ne me laissait d'autres ressources que

1. Woman learns dissimulation as a recompense for her loss of liberty: it is her lot as a woman in society, a fact recognised by many of Mme de Vernon's predecessors, like the Marquise de Lisban in Heureusement (Contes Moraux by Marmontel): "...les hommes ne penseront-ils jamais qu'on nous éleve à la dissimulation dès l'enfance; que nous perdons la franchise avec la liberté, et qu'il n'est plus temps d'exiger de nous que nous soyons sincères, quand on nous a fait un devoir de ne l'être pas!" (vol. I, pp.253-254).

2. Part II 1.XLI, Delphine to Mlle d'Albémar.
The dissimulation. Depuis cette époque, mon parti fut inévitablement pris d'y avoir recours chaque fois que je le jugerais nécessaire. Je crus fermement que le sort des femmes les condamnait à la fausseté; je me confirmai dans l'idée conçue dès mon enfance, que j'étais, par mon sexe, et par le peu de fortune que je possédais, une malheureuse esclave à qui toutes les ruses étaient permises avec son tyran. Je ne réfléchis point sur la morale, je ne pensais pas qu'elle put regarder les opprimés.

She has made an art of this, which in turn, has become the fundamental principle of her daily life:

"J'ai pris pendant quinze ans l'habitude de ne devoir aucun de mes plaisirs qu'à l'art de cacher mes goûts et mes penchants, et j'ai fini par me faire, pour ainsi dire, un principe de cet art même, parce que je le regardais comme le seul moyen de défense qui restât aux femmes contre l'injustice de leurs maîtres."

Emotion of any sort is incompatible with her way of life, since she would thereby lose control of her own person, and leave herself vulnerable and open to attack by her oppressor, man:

"je craignais l'empire de l'amour; je sentais qu'il ne pouvait s'allier avec la nécessité de la dissimulation; j'avais pris d'ailleurs tellement l'habitude de me contraindre, qu'aucune affection ne pouvait naître malgré moi dans mon cœur. . . . j'étais convaincue, et je le suis encore, que les femmes, étant victimes de toutes les institutions de la société, elles sont dévouées au malheur, si elles s'abandonnent le moins du monde à leurs sentiments, si elles perdent de quelque manière l'empire d'elles-mêmes."

1. Ibid.

2. Part II 1. XII, Delphine to Mlle d'Albémard.

3. Ibid.
Mme de Vernon deviates in one respect from the pattern of the 'revolte' as we have found her portrayed up to this point, in that she repents before her death, not in the religious sense, for to accept the comfort of a body in which she cannot believe would be the final hypocrisy, but she repents of her conduct towards Léonce and Delphine.

She can finally admit to herself that there is one living creature for whom she cares, Delphine.

In Delphine herself we have another aspect of feminism, closely approaching the values of Mme de Staël herself. Delphine reserves the right to indulge her intellectual tastes by participating in intelligent circles of conversation normally closed to women. The conventions of polite society mean little to her; provided she knows her own conscience to be clear, and that she has nothing to reproach herself with, she dismisses all else. When Mme de R* enters a public room, all the women flock to one end of the room, and the men follow, for as Delphine remarks to Mlle d'Albémar:

"...ils veulent, en séduisant les femmes, conserver le droit de les en punir."

Mme de R* has forfeited her reputation, by leading the same life as the majority of men, she is therefore an outcast in society. Delphine, however, approaches her and befriends.

1. 1.XX.(Part 1).
Delphine does not grasp the extent of her own vulnerability in society. When she publicly breaks off her association with Mme de Vernon, she is warned by Mme d'Artenas:

"Les hommes peuvent se brouiller avec qui ils veulent, un duel brillant répond à tout; cette magie reste encore au courage, il affranchit honorablement des liens qu'impose la société, ces liens sont les plus subtils, et cependant les plus difficiles à briser. Une jeune femme sans père ou sans mari, quelque distinguée qu'elle soit, n'a point de force réelle ni de place marquée au milieu du monde. Il faut donc se tirer d'affaire habilement, gouverner les bons sentiments avec encore plus de soin que les mauvais, renoncer à cette exaltation romanesque qui ne convient qu'à la vie solitaire et se préserver surtout de ce naturel inconscient."

Mlle d'Albémar also points out to Delphine that no matter how intelligent and capable a woman might be, without a man – husband, father or brother – to support her, she has very little defence against the pressures of society. Mlle d'Albémar has herself experienced many inconveniences as a woman alone in a man's world. She has never married, since she is completely devoid of physical charms. The only type of husband she could have hoped for, would have been one attracted by her fortune, and this opportunity she refused to grasp. She knows that, had she been a man, although

1. L. XXXVI, (Part II).
2. L. VII, (Part I).
equally ill-favoured by nature, she might have stood a chance of inspiring love by deeds of valour on the battlefields, or by some similar act worthy of distinction. But such opportunities are denied a woman, and for this reason she chose to retire from the world. Woman is important in society only in her function as ornament for man's eyes.

This very point is stressed elsewhere by Léonce's aunt, Mme de Ternan. Women are destined for but a short career in the world, since their only importance in themselves - child-bearing and rearing thus being put to one side - is their value as decoration. Beauty is short-lived, but it is woman's one resource. Mme de Ternan chose to retire to a convent, once her charms had begun to fade, as she explains to Delphine:

"Je n'étais cependant alors qu'à la moitié de la carrière que la nature nous destine, et je ne voyais plus un avenir, ni une espérance, ni un but qui pût me concerner moi-même. Un homme à l'âge que j'avais alors, aurait pu commencer une carrière nouvelle; jusqu'à la dernière année de la plus longue vie, un homme peut espérer une occasion de gloire; la gloire, c'est comme l'amour, une illusion délicieuse, un bonheur qui ne se compose pas, comme tous ceux que la simple raison nous offre, de sacrifices et d'efforts. Mais les femmes, grand Dieu! les femmes! que leur destinée est triste! à la moitié de leur vie, il ne leur reste plus que des jours insipides, pâlissant d'années en années...."

Resumed in the one novel, we have discovered several different modes of expression of woman's discontent. Through—

1. Part V, l. XI, Delphine to Mlle D'Albemar.
out the 18th century, the viewpoints might differ, but the causes for grievances were the same. Yet, no matter which stand a woman took over her position in society — indignation or resignation — all met with the same negative results.

Woman's chief grievance in 18th-century polite society stems from the two opposed standards applied in the field of relationships between male and female. Inequality of the sexes in terms of politics, property or the professions falls outside the bounds of 18th-century society. The principal concern of this closed society was gallantry, it was therefore to be expected that woman would most deeply resent injustice in this sphere. Female reaction could take one of two forms: a woman might either retreat within herself and adhere to a strict personal code of morals, thereby cheating the seducer of his satisfaction; or she might attempt to compete with him in the number of her sexual adventures. Neither method was calculated to attain ultimate success. The woman of strict virtue might deny satisfaction to her oppressor, but she was thereby depriving herself as well; she was moving away from greater emancipation, rather than towards it, by imposing still more restrictions upon herself and her sex in general. The woman who chose to follow the opposed line of conduct, attempting to surpass man in his exploits, was no nearer a solution to woman's problem. Assuming that her adventures were veiled in secrecy, she ran
the risk of betrayal by one of her partners. In addition, by adopting the same principles as men, she was responding favourably to their desires. Ironically, her conduct, once publicised, elicited the greatest and severest censure from others of her own sex. Therein lies the root of the trouble; 13th-century female revolt achieved no appreciable results since all demonstrations were individual protests; the 13th century saw no consolidated attempt by a body of women to free themselves from male domination.
CHAPTER 5

THE PARVENU

The parvenu, as he appeared in his most common form in the reality of 18th-century society, stemmed more particularly from the middle classes rather than from peasant stock, albeit that his forebears may have been of yet more humble origin. His ancestors had probably risen from the lower ranks of the bourgeoisie to the highest levels of that class, one rung below the aristocracy in the social hierarchy. The foremost members of the middle classes were divided into two camps, the business factions - farmer-generals, financiers - and those engaged in the legal professions. Superiority in the social structure weighed in favour of the professional bourgeoisie, who were often ennobled for their political and legal service to the monarchy. The validity of their comparatively recent noble status was opposed to the more ancient nobility of the sword, awarded for military service rendered to the monarchy in times past. The social distinctions between a certain faction of the middle class and the aristocracy were thus somewhat blurred.

Since the professional section of the middle class was more highly esteemed than those engaged in
commerce in one form or another, the man who wished to rise in the social hierarchy concentrated his energies on attaining a position which assimilated him into that particular section of the bourgeoisie. The most compelling motive behind the desire to move from the one section of the bourgeoisie to the other was that the parliamentary offices held by the professional bourgeoisie often carried with them automatic enoblement. By means of his wealth, the businessman could hope to climb further up the social ladder, or at least facilitate the passage of his sons from one class to another. Gimat de Bonneval's hero in Le Voyage de Montes is thus pushed

1. In his Ancien Régime vol. I, pp. 173-4, Pierre Goubert discusses the posts which either brought immediate enoblement, or enoblement over the generations; he also quotes the cost of these positions:

"Les grands offices de la couronne, les charges de secrétaires d'Etat, de conseillers d'Etat et de maîtres des requêtes donnent la noblesse au premier degré; au moins en principe, car ceux à qui le roi acceptait qu'on vendît ces charges couteuses et prestigieuses étaient presque toujours nobles avant d'en être pourvus. La charge de secrétaire du roi faisait exception, et connut une prodigieuse fortune." Goubert quotes figures and the rise in the price of these posts:

"Outre les secrétaires de 'grande chancellerie' (auprès du roi), il en fut créé des compagnies auprès des 'chancelleries' des parlements de province ...

"Le prix de la charge, et donc de la noblesse, qui atteignait 70,000 livres à Paris vers 1700, passa 100,000 livres vers 1750, frisa les 200,000 après une réforme de 1771, et même 300,000 livres vers la fin de l'Ancien Régime."
by his father to enter the professional classes of the bourgeoisie as a sop to his pride, compensation for his father's consciousness of his own lowly origins:

"Le papa résolut de m'envoyer à Paris, il espérait en me dépaysant et flattant mon amour propre d'un établissement honorable, que le travail qu'il me faudrait faire pour m'en rendre digne, écarterait entièrement les idées de dissipation qui lui paraissaient si opposées à celles qu'il avait pour mon avancement et la satisfaction de sa vanité. Les progrès de son commerce n'avaient servi qu'à lui faire sentir la prétendue bassesse de son état; il voulait se dédommager de la contrainte où l'avait réduit l'uniformité de sa situation avec ses confrères. La première charge de Judicature devait l'en venger; il me fallait mettre en état de la posséder. Les richesses aplanirent la difficulté." (p. 4.)

Wealth, in fact, was the instrument whereby the man of humble birth might hope to rise socially.

The merchant, the financier, played a dominant role in the economy of 18th-century France: his money was badly needed in the royal coffers. Hence riches was the commoner's key to the court: his money was exchanged for privileges, titles and consideration. A witness of 18th-century society, writing after the Revolution, sums up the situation in the following manner:

"Trois avantages, lorsqu’ils sont au premier degré, produisent la plus grande considération dans le monde: l’élévation du rang, un esprit supérieur, reconnu et une fortune immense. La grandeur, la gloire et la puissance ont à peu près les mêmes effets ... On a beau se moquer en arrière de celui qui a rassemblé des trésors immenses, citer la bassesse de son origine, les ministres ont besoin de lui pour secourir l’État embarrassé; les grands, pour rétablir leurs affaires. Un tel homme en impose au plus superbe, lorsqu’il songe, que sa signature peut lui procurer une existence agréable, le tirer d’un embarras pressant." 1

Wealth brought the commoner commerce with the upper classes, who themselves were often in a financial position far inferior to that of their inferiors in the social hierarchy, since, unlike the situation in England, commerce - the surest path to fortune - was held to be incompatible with nobility. The noble had thus to maintain the high level of living expected of him on the relatively slender means afforded him by the rents of his inherited lands or by a royal pension; inevitably

many of the aristocracy were heavily in debt, hence they were forced to pay court to the businessman who was well provided with the commodity of money. The bourgeois, for his part, was flattered by the attention paid him by his social superiors and willingly opened his purse to them. Mlle d'Armincourt, in *La Vertu Chancelante ou la Vie de Mlle d'Armincourt*,¹ is amused by one such:

"Je ne savais pas pour lors que son seul mérite consistait dans beaucoup de richesses; c'en était un très grand aux yeux de tous ces gens de cour, à qui il prêtait son argent sans compter, et dont ils lui payaient les intérêts en louanges fades ..."

In Domairon's *Le Libertin devenu Vertueux*, one character describes his own similar conduct as a young bourgeois with free access to his father's considerable fortune, intent on ingratiating himself with his companions of a higher social status:

"À dix-sept ans il m'envoya à Paris, avec ordre à son banquier de ne me laisser manquer de rien ... Dès le premier mois que je fus à l'Académie, je me jetai dans les connaissances brillantes, sans m'embarrasser de ce qu'elles me coûtaient; car rien de plus cher pour les gens de ma naissance que leurs liaisons avec

¹ By D'Ormoy.
The parvenu prefers to ignore the insincerity of the multitudinous compliments he receives from those who secretly despise him, yet are anxious to have their share in the riches he has amassed.

The relationship between the rich ambitious bourgeois and the impoverished nobleman is based on the conviction that the aristocrat is superior; therefore the bourgeois should be grateful in financial terms for the opportunity of consorting with him. Versorand, as a youth, allows himself to be imprisoned in this aspect of social snobbery:

"Je n'avais point d'autres amis que des gens de qualité de mon âge... Cependant nous nous divertissions bien à mes dépens, ensorte que si leur compagnie me faisait honneur, la mienne leur faisait profit." 1

But the older Versorand has the perspicacity to decipher the aristocrat's true feeling toward the bourgeois—he may appear to accept his inferior in the social structure, yet he secretly despises him: despite the

1. Mémoires de Versorand by La Solle, part 1.
bourgeois’s wealth, he remains — in the eyes of the upper and middle classes alike — below the nobleman in social standing. He is tolerated in aristocratic circles merely on account of his wealth: if the nobleman accepts one, argues Versorand, it is only just he accept the other:

"J'étais assez passablement impertinent; mais ce n'était pas ma faute. Que les gens de qualité se rendent justice. Ils se plaignent continuellement de l'arrogance des financiers, il ne tient qu'à eux de la faire cesser. Qu'ils ne souffrent pas que nous leur soyons utiles, qu'ils ne recherchent pas notre amitié et notre alliance. Si l'homme leur déplait, que son bien leur déplaise également." (part I).

Still closer contact with the nobility could be achieved by marriage into the aristocracy. It was common for a poor nobleman to 'sell' his rank, by marrying the daughter of a wealthy commoner for a handsome dowry. Each party gained what he desired — rank

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1. Law's System, in the early years of the 18th century, had enriched many of humble birth. The impoverished nobleman also profited by this system, if he was prepared to barter his rank. Lavisse quotes two such cases in his Histoire de France, vol. VIII, part II, p. 40, a) "Des gentilhommes se vendirent à des 'Mississippiens' en promettant d'épouser leurs filles. Un comte d'Evreux reçut deux millions pour se fiancer à un enfant de onze ans, fille d'un ancien laquais." b) "Un marquis d'Oise, au prix de 20,000 francs de rente, prit l'engagement d'épouser la fille d'un sieur André, bien qu'elle n'eût encore que deux ans; après le mariage, on devait lui compter quatre millions de dot."
or wealth - through the transaction. There was no sentimentality on the subject; both parties were conscious of the other's motives - desire for a title or for a fortune. In Crébillon's Lettres de la Duchesse de \textordfrais au duc de \textordfrais, the duke is offered a match with a girl of humbler birth. She seeks a title - or her ambitious parents do - and she offers wealth in return, for she has:

"cinquante mille écus de rente d'entrée de jeu, sans compter qu'un jour, elle en aurait encore autant."¹

Alternatively, a parvenu or his son might seek alliance with an impoverished noble family. Dorval is offered the hand of the marquis de Hainvilliers's niece, Mlle de Losval: she is penniless whilst Dorval is extremely wealthy, but she is of a very ancient noble family and Dorval is but a commoner. The proud marquis de Hainvilliers determines to take the step merely because he is deeply in debt to Dorval; he feels that the honour he imagines to bestow on Dorval by alliance with his family will not only cancel out his debts to Dorval but also ensure him of a share in Dorval's fortune:

"Le marquis qui devait beaucoup à Dorval, et ne se souciait pas de le payer, crut qu'un moyen honnête de s'acquitter était de l'obliger à son tour; que pour cela il suffisait...

qu'il voulût bien s'abaisser jusqu'à lui permettre d'aspirer à la main de sa nièce. Il voyait, dans ce mariage, le double avantage de procurer à sa parente un riche établissement, et de se débarrasser d'un créancier qu'il ne voulait pas satisfaire.

The validity of the noble status did not rest entirely on the possession of a title; in fact, the erstwhile bourgeois who had purchased his letters of nobility was generally greeted with scorn by those whose nobility was of long standing. Hence a comparatively recent noble might heighten the value of his newly acquired noble status by marrying into the ancient aristocracy of the sword. Such a case is quoted by Sénac de Meilhan in his Considérations sur l'esprit et les moeurs:

"Argante est d'une naissance bourgeoise; son père est le premier noble de son nom. Argante se fait appeler marquis; on s'en moque dans le monde. Il persiste, tient bon contre les railleries; dix ans se passent, on s'y habite. Il faut bien l'appeler marquis, sous peine de se brouiller avec lui, et parce que l'on est familiarisé à entendre ce titre uni avec son nom. Argante épouse une fille de qualité sans fortune; le voilà parent, cousin, neveu de gens qui le méprisent, mais avec lesquels il signe des contrats de mariage, et il ne faut pas

demander s'il se trouve exactement aux assemblées de famille. Sa femme a beau le mépriser, son écuyer est uni au sien; cela lui suffit ...

Despite the apparent marks of the acceptance of the middle classes into the midst of the aristocracy, however, the wealthy parvenu was suffered only for the sake of his fortune. He was considered by the nobleman, and indeed viewed himself as inferior to those higher up the social scale.

Since he considered himself inferior to the noble, the bourgeois sought integration into aristocratic circles by the attainment of noble status. There was no revolt on the part of the bourgeois against the injustice of a social system which stigmatised him as inferior merely through the accident of his birth; his attitude was one of complete and unquestioning acceptance of the existing social structure. Alphonse, in Les Jeux de la Fortune, has amassed considerable wealth in his stupendous rise from his first position as a

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The 'mésalliance' was equally common in the reality of 18th-century society. Mila de Ligneville, for example, contracted, in 1751, an alliance with Helvétius; he was but a rich farmer-general, she was the niece of the Prince of Craon. The social gulf between the two partners was keenly appreciated, and Helvétius's delicacy in not going into mourning on the Prince's death, although his wife naturally did so, was heartily applauded.
valet; he displays his riches in an attempt to
disguise his humble origins, but he finds it impossible
to evade his innate sense of inferiority:

"Alphonse ... avait des talents pour
l'intrigue; il les mit en usage, et
fit jouer tant de ressorts, que
bientôt il compa prima ces créatures,
des hommes qui quelques années
suparavent l'accablaient de d'énaiss .
Il se jeta dans la finance; c'est
le chemin de la fortune. Bientôt
Alphonse acheta des titres, des terres
et des flateurs. Le bonheur d'un
nouveau parvenu est toujours mâlé
d'amertume. Tout ce qu'il voit, lui
rappelle la bassesse de son origine,
et ce souvenir est aussi cruel que le
remords du crime, dans le coeur d'un
coupable. Son propre éclat importune
ses yeux; la flatterie qui chatouille
son creille, les hommages qu'on lui
rend, tout lui retrace le rôle qu'il
a joué autrefois. Il se voit dans
ces vils adorateurs dont il est
entouré; et le mépris, dont en secret
il paie tous leurs soins, retombe sur
lui-même. Pour que son bonheur ne
fut point altéré, il faudrait qu'en
changeant d'état, il prit un nouvel
être. Mais de quelque masque que
l'homme se couvre, pour éblouir les
yeux du vulgaire, il se voit, il se
sent toujours tel qu'il fut avant sa
métamorphose. C'est là son supplice.
Alphonse résolut de s'éloigner de
Madrid et de la Cour, où tant d'objets
lui retraçaient sa bassesse ... [il]
essaia en vain, à force de pompe et
d'éclat, d'effacer le souvenir de son
obscure origine, il échoua dans son
entreprise."

Instead of taking pride in his industry and in
the talents which have propelled him along the path to
fortune, the parvenu is anxious to forget his past.

As the hero of Godard d'Aucoor's Les Hérois Subalternes wryly points out:

"Il y a je ne sais combien de gens qui occupent à présent les premiers postes de la finance, qui ignorent en quel temps ils étaient petits commis à la douane, en quelle année leurs pères ont acheté les terres titrées, tombées en décret, dont ils étaient les fermiers." \( (\text{vol. I, p. 17}) \)

The bourgeoisie of the 18th century was eager to conform to the established pattern in society; few indeed were the bourgeois who willingly elected to adhere to their original social status. For the bourgeois, the goal in life was to attain nobility. A title was the crown of his success, and it was with this in mind that he threw all his energies into his business affairs. The bourgeoisie, as a class, did not attempt to usurp the position of the nobility: rather, each individual, as he attained fortune, wished to enter in the privileged class.\(^1\) Whereas the noble sold his lands to maintain his luxurious style of living in the capital, the

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1. P. Goubert discusses this question in his Ancien Régime vol. I: "Tout ce qui dans le royaume, ayant acquis richesse et compétence, voulait être respecté, a brûlé d'entrer dans ce corps mystique et passionné de la noblesse." \( (\text{p. 17}) \)
bourgeois bought up land in an attempt to emulate the
noble, for ownership of land was intimately connected
with the image of the nobleman.\(^1\) Enabled by his immense
fortune to maintain a luxurious style of life, the
parvenu attempted to vie with the aristocracy. The
afore-mentioned character\(^2\) in Domairon's *Le Libertin
devenu Vertueux* attempts to emulate the nobility by
adopting the noble life-style, throwing sumptuous
suppers and purchasing the favours of a celebrated
actress - for it was common practice to keep an actress,
the more expensive and the more sought after, the better:

"Mon père m'avait laissé des biens très considérables pour mon état:
je pris le parti de monter une maison brillante. Je trouvant
pas que la société des gens de robe me donnât un assez grand relief, je
cherchai à m'insinuer auprès des agréables de la cour et de Paris ... Je me mis sur le ton de donner presque
tous les soirs des soupers élégants, où je rassemblais l'élite des gens à
talents dans tous les genres. Je ne manquai pas aussi de faire
emplette à l'Opéra d'une de ces

\(^1\) "Au fond, ils désiraient souvent moins asseoir une
rente foncière pour nourrir leur fortune que pour
nourrir leur soif d'élévation sociale, atteindre ...
cesta demi-illusion de noblesse que pouvait leur
conférer l'adjonction du nom d'une femme à leur

\(^2\) Cf. p. 308.
divinités des autels de qui le titre
de premier sacrificateur était déjà
un honneur que l'on briguisait, et
qu'on achetait au poids de l'or."

Once enoble-nent had been achieved, not only did the
parvenu strive to bury his humble past, he even scorned
the means whereby his fortune had been amassed. The
sons of an enobled parvenu could not enter their
father's profession, for it was incompatible with their
newly-evolved noble status. The bourgeois took no
pride in his successful career, but in the final goal
of enoble-nent: thus the successful career was only the
means to the end of nobility, not an end in itself.

Wealth the parvenu certainly possessed and he
utilised it to attain enoble-nent; his sense of
inferiority, however, could not be mitigated by his
riches. The figure of the parvenu had always been a
traditional target for satire, partially through his
aspirations to noble status, and partially through the
ostentation and grossness which were considered to be
the characteristics of the parvenu. The parvenu, it
was generally held, despite all his riches, could not
buy the attributes of the gentleman - fashionable ease,
the refined manners of one brought up in the tradition.
The noble heaped scorn on the bourgeois's lack of polish,
an attitude expressed by the comte in the *Confessions* du Comte de *, 1 with reference to his intrigue with the wife of a financier:

"Ç'était un de ces nouveaux parvenus. Sorti de la bassesse, il était monté par degrés des plus vils emplois aux plus grandes affaires ... Sa femme, qui était d'une extraction aussi basse, en avait toute la grossièreté qu'on avait négligée de corriger par l'éducation."

In the first years of the century, by definition, the nobleman is considered capable of greater delicacy, higher sentiments than the commoner (the implication is, these attributes are innate in the nobleman, as we gather from the many heroes and heroïnes in the novel, ostensibly of humble birth, but who actually are of noble blood, who betray their true origin in their elevated characters). Mlle d'Armincourt's ripost to a rich parvenu who attempts to seduce her indicates the prejudices held on the subject of bourgeois characteristics:

"Vos propos audacieux et insolents me prouvent la bassesse de votre naissance: nouveau parvenu, la richesse vous tourne la tête, et vous aveugle au point de vous méconnaître: vous croyez cacher votre mince origine sous un faste

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imposant, on la reconnaît dès que vous parlez: pouvez-vous avoir de l'élévation dans l'âme? où l'auriez-vous prise?"

The heroine in Bridard de la Garde's Lettres de Thérèse attributes the same traits to an amorous financier by distinguishing between the impression given by his advances and those of a young knight:

"Dans les regards et dans les discours du premier, on n'y découvrait que les désirs d'un homme sans délicatesse, qui pense honorer beaucoup une femme, en lui apprenant qu'il la trouve assez jolie pour la regarder avec plaisir; au contraire le second cavalier par sa seule façon de me considérer, m'apprenait sans timidité, mais avec retenue, que ma présence faisait naître en lui une émotion, qui peut-être, à vous dire vrai, n'avait pas une fin plus honnête que celle de l'autre, mais qui se montrait sous une apparence si décente, que sans s'écarter du devoir le plus scrupuleux, une fille de mon âge pouvait ne s'en pas formaliser, y répondre et avouer même obscurément qu'elle en était flattée ..." (part I, pp. 65-66).

The caricature of the bourgeois parvenu, as typified in this fashion, stretched from seventeenth-century satire into that of the 18th century.

1. La Vertu Chancelante ou la Vie de Mlle d'Amincourt by D'Urmoy.

2. As found in Molière's Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, for example.
Both in the novel and drama, however, and as a reflection of the shifting class pattern, the 18th century, particularly in its latter half, witnessed a change in attitude to the parvenu. The underlying scorn of the nobleman for the rich and ennobled commoner is not inherent in all those of noble birth. In the Mémoires de Madame la Comtesse de ..., there is evidence of respect for the bourgeois in his own right, in the words of the comtesse when she declares that she would willingly give her daughter, Julie, in marriage to a businessman:

"Un homme qui par son talent sait enrichir sa patrie, et lui procurer l'abondance, et la prééminence sur ses voisins me paraît préférable à ces petits nobles sans mérite, sans talents, sujets inutiles, plus à charge que nécessaires à l'État qui daigne les nourrir." (pp. 129-130).

A new attitude towards the financier who had made his way in life begins to evolve as the century wears on. Through commerce with polite society, into which he has forced his way by dint of his wealth, the financier has acquired the necessary polish which makes him more acceptable in the polite world. A new type appears, the financier-maecenas, who appreciates the arts and is willing to further them by means of his fortune.
Damien de Gomicourt summarises the change in the traditional image of the financier/parvenu:

"Les financiers eurent alors d'autres mœurs; ils quittèrent la rudesse et la grossièreté, ils poliront, prirent le ton de la bonne compagnie, eurent l'esprit plus cultivé, des manières douces et honnêtes, aimèrent les arts et payèrent les talents; leurs maisons furent décorées avec soin, leurs équipages élégants, leurs habillements riches, leurs tables délicates." 1

His hero, Dorval, is of the new mould of financier and forms a contrast with those of the old much satirised type which still exists. Mouhy's 2 'financier' falls into the same category as Dorval: the 'financier', M. de Mononville, but follows in his father's footsteps, whom Mouhy describes in the ensuing manner:

"Un financier nommé Monchamps, aussi célèbre par ses richesses que par le bon usage qu'il en faisait. Il les avait acquises en servant le Roi et la patrie avec la plus grande distinction. Il était magnifique, mais il l'était sans faste: toute sa passion était de faire du bien."

Mononville himself devotes his time, energies and fortune to the perpetration of good deeds - such as when

1. *Dorval ou Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des mœurs du 16e siècle*, vol. I, part II.

2. *Le Financier* by Fieux de Mouhy, part I.
he disinterestedly rescues a pretty woman’s husband from the consequences of the gambling debts he has incurred, or when he protects the virtue of an innocent young lady from attack by a noted rake, who happens to be an acquaintance of Mononville - which he is anxious to cloak in secrecy. Mononville’s attitude to his charitable works contrasts with the traditional attitude adopted by the ostentatious financier who flaunts all his dealings with the aristocracy. Equally, the new image of the financier is to be found in the actuality of 18th-century polite society: Tilly, for example, in his Mémoires, sings the praises of a certain M. de Monville, who:

"n'avait d'un financier que la fortune... Il joignait la plus grande élégance de moeurs au meilleur ton: son esprit, sans être étendu, était juste." (vol. I, ch. V, p. q2).

Although to place the financier on the same level as the nobleman in the structure of 18th-century society in its later years would be an exaggeration, it may be claimed that the public attitude to the bourgeois who makes good undergoes a certain transformation. Generally, the bourgeois was still striving after enoblement, but the automatic definition of the financier/parvenu as an unpolished boor unfit to participate in the life of
polite society was slowly fading into an anachronism.

The presentation of the parvenu in the 18th-century novel — accepted or otherwise by polite society — is generally concerned with those who have already amassed their riches and who are intent on forcing their way into aristocratic circles as the culmination of their career: in such cases, the history of the parvenu's career is summarised — if at all — but briefly. Elsewhere, however, if less commonly, attention is directed onto the whole sequence of events which constitutes the parvenu's rise in fortune. The social climb is here presented as the main topic; such novels recount the youth's confrontation with society, how he adapts to it and how he is moulded by it. The hero is more often than not of still humbler origins than the bourgeois parvenu; like Marivaux's Jacob, he may be of peasant stock. The youth of lowly birth who leads a varied career, cutting across all walks of life, follows in the tradition of the 'picaro'. Gil Blas in some ways falls into this category. Born of honest but humble parents, he undertakes a variety of occupations which provide Lesage with the different settings for his depiction of society's manners.
The tale of Gil Blas's career does not attempt a psychological analysis of the hero/parvenu; rather, it provides a picture of society in general. Gil is not possessed of a burning sense of ambition: certainly he wishes to succeed, but he submits to circumstances rather than subjugating events to his own will. His chief characteristic is his ability to adapt himself to the moment: although basically honest, he is not adverse to profiting from a dishonest venture. In his earlier years, he displays the parvenu's preoccupation with his own personal interest, but he later reverts to his basically honest nature. His moral instinct is resuscitated, even refined, during the course of his career. In his inexperience but particularly as a result of his youthful vanity, he falls victim to the scoundrels who prey on the naivety of the young, as in his purchase of fine clothes at an exorbitant price. For the parvenu, fine clothes are linked with the noble status: only a gentleman may wear a sword, therefore the parvenu longs for this symbol of noble birth. Gil Blas dreams of the fine apparel and sword he may purchase with the money awarded him by the marquise de la Guardia, whom he has rescued from the robbers' den:

"Je veux porter l'épée et tâcher de faire fortune dans le monde ... Je
me résolus à prendre un habit de cavalier, persuadé que sous cette forme je ne pouvais manquer de parvenir à quelque poste honnête et lucratif."

Robbed of his fortune by an adventuress whom he has courted in his vain conviction that she is of noble birth, he is left penniless and decides upon the career often adopted by the youth of humble birth with a view to rising in the world — he elects to enter service as a lackey. As a valet of a young man of fashion, a 'petit-maitre', he assumes the airs of polite society. In the various subsequent posts he occupies, he willingly lends himself to the love-intrigues of his various masters and mistresses: whilst in the service of Aurore de Guzman, he aids and abets her in her successful plan to captivate the heart and hand of don Luis; subsequently, he serves don Luis's debauched elderly uncle, don Gonzale Pacheco, in the capacity of confidant in Pacheco's amorous adventures. From the position of lackey, he rises to the post of secretary, first to the comte Galiano, and finally to the Prime Minister of Spain, the duc de Lerme. Having insinuated himself into the good graces of the duke's principal secretary, don Valeric, who holds great sway over the

duke, he ascends to the position of favourite of the duke.

Gil's rapid rise in fortune, allowing him no time for a true appraisal of his situation, flatters his ego: all is subject to the keen sense of ambition aroused in him by the ease of his ascension. He becomes drunk with the feeling of his own power, which crushes all his finer humanitarian sentiments:

"Il est rare que la tête ne tourne pas à un gueux qui passe subitement de la misère à l'opulence. Je changeai tout à coup avec la fortune. Je n'écoute plus que mon ambition et ma vanité." ¹

He follows the usual path taken by the parvenu, in an attempt to assimilate himself to what he considers to be the noble life-style, renting luxurious apartments and decking himself out in fine clothes. His position vis-à-vis the duke carries the additional advantage that he may intercede with the duke on behalf of those who pay him handsomely for the favour, hence he amasses considerable riches and is assiduously courted by those who require his services, to the extent that his own personal court grows up about him. Raised to such giddy

¹ Ch. VII, book VIII.
heights of fortune, he becomes absorbed in his own self-importance, neglecting all former ties of loyalty to family and ancient friends, thereby earning the epithet flung at him by his former friend, Fabrice, of 'un nouveau riche qui se méconnait'. Indeed, he conforms to the traditional image of the parvenu as an ostentatious boor preoccupied with the self. Gil allows himself to be corrupted by the values prevalent at court, as he himself admits:

"Avant que je fusse à la cour, j'étais compatissant et charitable de mon naturel; mais on n'a plus là de faiblesse humaine, et j'y devins plus dur qu'un caillou." 2

Having reached the pinnacle of success in so short a space of time, his fall from favour is equally swift. A consequence of his disgrace and dismissal from the duke's service is the realisation of his past harshness, and subsequent repentance of it. He turns his back on the vain pleasures and ambitions of a life at court and retires to the country, where he leads a peaceful happy life with his family. In order to succeed in polite society, Gil has had to conform to the traditional image of the 'parvenu' as a heartless schemer intent on his social and financial betterment to the exclusion of all finer sentiments. He has assimilated the worse traits

2. Ibid., ch. X, p. 342.
of the courtier; he has become as ruthless and heartless as those around him. Only in returning to the rustic life does he regain his original honesty and his capacity for feeling. But the cult of regeneration in nature has yet to come into vogue. Polite society and the individual representative of it - the 'honnête homme' - are still considered at this point in time the source of refinement and feeling. Gil's rapid rise to success has allowed him to assume only those characteristics which are necessary to the attainment of a fortune - the very attributes traditionally ascribed to the parvenu, and which are found in any who wish to succeed, commoner and gentleman alike. Gil has not yet attained nobility either within the social structure or within himself. His downfall is beneficial to him in that his talents, formerly directed to the pursuit of money and power, are thereby deflected from vain ambition.

Gil's career has not, however, run its full course; he has yet to reach the greatest heights. His fall from grace proved to be his salvation in that, far from the corrupting forces at work at court, he has regained his original honesty. He is a wiser man as a
consequence of his rapid rise and fall in fortune, but he has yet to realise himself to the fullest extent. After his wife's death, he is persuaded to return to court, from whence he enters the employ of the new Prime Minister, the comte d'Olivarès. His position is stronger than before, his power greater, but this time he does not abuse it. He is once again surrounded by petitioners anxious for him to intercede for them with the count, but his conduct is now disinterested. Disinterestedness is an important attribute of the true gentleman. His services are gratuitous: he is concerned only with recompensing merit and succouring old friends, not with his personal fortune. No longer intent on imitation of the nobility through his wealth, his actions are now truly noble, in the finest sense of the word. But in terms of the 18th-century social structure, nobility of character alone does not suffice: the criterion of worth remains the attainment of nobility in the social context, the goal of the parvenu. On his appointment as governor to the comte d'Olivarès's natural son, Gil Blas is enabled for his services. He greets the honour with humble reluctance, but nonetheless accepts it. He is not the proud parvenu anxious to
parade his recent noble status, but views it with humility:

"Ayant toujours devant les yeux la bassesse de mon origine [duègne et écuyer], cet honneur m'humiliait au lieu de me donner de la vanité; aussi je me promis bien de renfermer mes patentes dans un tiroir, sans me vanter d'en être pourvu." (book XI, ch. VI).

Still the career of the parvenu has not run its full course: Gil's nobility is but of recent date, worthless beside the ancient nobility of the sword; hence he must contract an alliance with one of an ancient noble house. Yet to present Gil in conscious search of a noble wife would be to contradict the image projected of him as an older man, divorced of the vulgarities and ruthless ambition generally associated with the parvenu. Hence he and his noble wife, Dorothée, are allowed to fall in love; his powerful position, wealth and the production of his hidden letters of nobility facilitate their union. His career is classic in the tradition of the parvenu, he has adapted himself to society and its values; he has attained the ultimate goal of the parvenu.

The young peasant who wishes to succeed turns his steps to Paris as his Mecca, and the post he seeks,
like the young Gil Blas, is that of lackey in a noble household. A personable young man is almost certain to find a suitable position. As a handsome young lackey in a large household, he has easy access to women of high rank and wealth, and it is here that the young man's fortune commences. For the traditional path of fortune for the youth of lowly birth and little means lies in the protection and patronage of a woman of rank and fortune. If a youth is handsome and ambitious, he may go far, given the chance to display his physical charms to advantage. So common a path to fortune does the rich and noble woman offer to the handsome low-born youth, that Rousseau admits in his *Confessions* that he once contemplated a career based on his appeal to a woman's senses. He takes up a post as lackey in a household where his merit is much appreciated and where all is done to further his career, but this is not the plan the youthful Rousseau had in mind:

"Ma folle ambition ne cherchait la fortune qu'à travers les aventures, et ne voyant point de femme à tout cela, cette manière de parvenir me paraissait lente, pénible et triste, tandis que j'aurais dû la trouver d'autant plus honorable et sûre que les femmes ne s'en mêlaient pas, l'espèce de mérite qu'elles protègent ne valant assurément pas celui qu'on me supposait."  

Examples of the handsome youth who owes his fortune to a woman his superior in rank and fortune abound in 18th-century literature. Poellnitz recounts the tale of a rich widow who falls in love with the self-styled marquis de Vitri and determines to marry him. Her family dissuades her from the match by informing her that:

"[Il] avait été laquais à Paris, où il avait eu le secret de se faire aimer d'une femme de considération qui l'avait tiré de la poussière, et lui avait procuré une souslieutenence d'infanterie au régiment de B." 1

We have another instance of a valet attaining his fortune through his looks and natural charm in Drouet de Maupertius's *La Femme Faible*. Mme de M. is loved faithfully but fruitlessly by the marquis * for four years, until his death. Her heart, hand and wealth are surrendered to her lackey, La Fontaine, who is naturally delighted at his good fortune. Versorand's father owes all his riches to the patronage of his mistress, the comtesse de Dangemone: his successful career is summarised by his son:

As a valet, his youthful good looks appealed to the comtesse who took him as her lover, a position which he retained over a number of years; during this period, he rose degree by degree through the hierarchy of domestic positions within the household, until, on the death of the comte, he was awarded the post of 'Intendant' by the comtesse. Versorand explains the advantages of this position:

"Mon père trouva cette place à sa convenance, il la prit avec un beau logement, quatre mille livres d'appointements et un carrosse entretenu ... Il s'amusa à prêter de l'argent à ceux qui en avaient besoin, à des intérêts convenables à l'envie qu'il avait de s'enrichir. Cet expédient lui réussit à merveille, ayant près de cinquante mille écus d'argent comptant que feu M. Dangemone avait amassés, et dont il disposait comme il voulait." 2

Consequently, the comtesse persuades her admirer, M.D.*, Minister of Finance, to award him a post in the service of

1. Mémoires de Versorand by La Solle, part 1.
2. Ibid.
of the king, such a position carrying with it great prestige, and on the strength of which Versorand's father marries a rich farmer-general's daughter, again at the comtesse's bidding.

Often, the young man concerned is held up as one worthy of his good fortune: by mischance, he has been born of humble parents but his gifts and sentiments belie the accident of his birth. Auteville in Catalde's *Le Paysan Gentilhomme* is one such: he has natural talents which he develops by his determination to acquire the education and polish denied him by his birth. Auteville succeeds not merely through his physical charms but by more substantial qualities:

"Un jeune homme de Biscaye, nommé Auteville, né de parents pauvres, mais honnêtes gens, vint à Paris à l'âge de dix-sept ans, pour s'y mettre en condition. Il était beau, bien fait, et avec de l'esprit, il avait l'air, les manières, et les sentiments d'un homme de condition. Leucippe, dame très riche, le prit à son service. Ce jeune homme, par des soins assidus, gagna tellement l'affection de sa maîtresse, qu'elle n'employa plus que lui dans les affaires où il fallait un homme de confiance, et qu'elle lui donna souvent des marques de sa libéralité. Loin de les dissiper en folles dépenses, comme font ordinairement les jeunes gens, il ne s'en servit qu'à se tenir plus propre que ses
camarades, et à s'acquérir des talents, comme d'apprendre à danser, à faire des armes, à monter à cheval, et il devint si parfait en peu de temps dans ces exercices, que ses maîtres ne se trouvaient plus en état de lui rien montrer."

Leucippe recognises Auteville's fine qualities, worthy of a greater fortune; she esteems him highly and decides to ameliorate the position in which fate has placed him. Charmed by his wit, Leucippe affords him many interviews, that she may enjoy the pleasure of his conversation. To escape censure and lest her husband misinterpret her interest in her lackey, she arranges her meetings with Auteville by arranging to be taken to church, where she leaves her carriage and coachman, and sets off in another vehicle to meet Auteville at the house of a friend. Her conduct naturally arouses suspicion, for it is the procedure followed by a woman who wishes to see her lover in private. Although Leucippe does not follow the pattern set by many women of polite society in taking him as her lover, an element of attraction plays its part in her esteem for Auteville. She is charmed both by his mental and physical attributes.

Her conduct, however, attracts attention: word of their meetings comes to the ear of her husband and they are forced to part, but her last words to Auteville reveal the extent of her esteem for him:

"Je n'ai jamais douté ... que vous ne m'ayiez toujours été sincèrement attaché, j'en fais assez de cas, et de ce que vous valez, pour fermer les yeux sur la différence de nos conditions si j'étais libre." (p. 252)

Auteville flees to London, where, by means of the small fortune awarded him by Leucippe, he assumes the title and the way of life of a man of condition. His natural talents and the graces which he has cultivated by education enable him to sustain his imposture:

"Auteville passa en Angleterre, où il ordonna à Londres une chaise magnifique, quatre habits d'une livrée pour deux laquais et deux porteurs, prit un valet de chambre, et se fit annoncer sous le nom du Chevalier de Foix. Le roi Charles II et la reine son épouse le reçurent avec la distinction due à un homme de la première qualité. Sa bonne mine et sa politesse charmèrent toute la cour, de sorte qu'on n'y parlait que de son mérite, et il devint si agréable au roi par son esprit, que sa majesté ... ne pouvait plus se passer de lui." (p. 254).

He and a young widow, Mylady C., are mutually attracted and decide to marry. Auteville is recognised by one who was a fellow-valet in Paris and all is disclosed.
On the strength of his merit, however, he is pardoned by the king; Mylady C. is willing to overlook the differences in their conditions in favour of his natural gifts. Yet he attains nobility, the honour after which the parvenu strives, when he is awarded the title of Mylady's late husband by courtesy of the king. From his humble beginnings as a lackey, Auteville has attained both rank and fortune, passing from one end of the social scale to the other. It is implied that the women who have furthered his career have not been influenced merely by his good looks, but that they have recognised that their efforts on his behalf have but restored him to his rightful position of which he was cheated by his humble birth.

Women wielded considerable power in 18th-century polite society: it was by their intercession that many obtained important posts in the service of the king or in the Church.¹ A woman's favours might be as it were bartered in exchange for the post coveted by husband, brother or lover. This convention was equally true on all levels of society. In Toni et

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¹. Cf. Chapter on Abbé.
Clairette, for example, Dargentières, who believes Clairette to be Toni's wife, offers to further Toni's career in order to gain possession of Clairette. Toni's ambition is secondary to his love for Clairette and his sense of honour; on his refusal to concur in Dargentières' proposition, he is given a piece of advice by Dargentières which holds equally true for any young man anxious to make his way in life:

"Je suis fâché de vous le dire, mon cher chevalier; mais vous ne ferez jamais rien ... Il faut se mettre un peu plus au courant de la société. On ne s'amuse guère à être jaloux de sa femme, quand on est jaloux de faire son chemin." (part II).

'Parisien', the chief character in Les Héros Subalternes, displays fewer scruples in the question of his advancement through the effects of his wife's charms. Shortly after his marriage to Javotte, he is ordered to rejoin his regiment, but Javotte's charms persuade 'Parisien's' captain to extend his leave. Again, it is Javotte's powers of persuasion which encourage her enamoured cousin to find a comfortable and lucrative job for 'Parisien' as store-master to the regiment. 'Parisien' chooses to ignore the details of his wife's conduct which so aids him in his career; all his good fortune

1. by Bicaire de la Dixmerie.
he owes to his wife's beauty, a fact of which he is well aware: he wryly sums up his role as husband to a pretty woman with ambition for her husband:

"C'est un rôle assez doux que celui de mari d'une jolie femme; il a une foule d'amis qu'il connaît à peine, qui s'empressent à le servir; l'argent ne manque pas pour faire ses équipages; on ne lui demande que l'honneur de son absence."  

An ambitious young man might either marry a woman capable by her charms of gaining a protector in influential quarters, or he might choose to marry a woman, generally somewhat older than he, who is able in her own right to further his career. In the latter category falls Thurin; on his arrival in Martinique, penniless and devoid of prospects, he is taken under the wing of an older woman whose sentiments change, in the course of time, from pity into love:

"Enfin j'arrivai chez une dame d'un âge mur, je lui fis naïvement l'histoire de mes malheurs. Elle me plaignit, loua mon bon cœur, et promit de m'être utile. Je me fixai chez elle, et je la vis bientôt passer des sentiments de pitié à ceux de l'amitié. Je lui devenais nécessaire ... Je redoublai d'assiduité, elle s'en aperçut, et m'en marqua la joie. Il est temps, dit-elle, que je fasse la fortune d'un honnête homme ... Je vous offre

douze cents mille livres de bien..."1

The proposed marriage does not ensue since his benefactress dies, but fortune smiles even more benignly upon him, for he marries the daughter instead and thus retains the fortune.

Further up the social scale, in Le Danger des Liaisons, we are introduced to M. de Valnel, farmer-general:

"Il était marié à une femme âgée, à qui il devait en partie sa fortune, et que cette raison lui avait fait épouser il y avait cinq ou six ans." 2

Ascending to the aristocracy, we are confronted with numerous instances of a young man who desires to contract a marriage with an older woman, to his financial advantage. An alliance of this nature is the proposed match between Bélise and her young lover in La Fausse Prude: 3

"Cette veuve si réservée, si prude, et si indignée de la conduite des


2. Le Danger des Liaisons ou Mémoires de la Baronne de Blemon by Mme de Saint-Aubin, vol. III, part II.

autres, aime un jeune cavalier, charmant, bien fait, et plein d'esprit; on dit qu'il doit avoir un jour de grands biens; mais qu'ils sont si fort embarrassés par le désordre que son père a laissé dans ses affaires en mourant, que n'ayant pas le moyen de les arranger, il n'a présentement qu'un revenu très médiocre, et qu'il ménage la veuve pour l'obliger à l'épouser, et faire servir ses biens à liquider son héritage."

It is the bait whereby M. des Pesses in Le Doyen de Killerine attempts to lure George and Patrice to France, assuring them:

"qu'un homme bien fait qui était sans goût pour le jeu, pouvait encore avec moins de hasard, se procurer un établissement par le moyen des femmes: que les vieilles, les jeunes, les veuves et celles qui ne l'étaient pas, étaient également idôlatres de la bonne mine, et qu'un jeune homme avec cette sorte de mérite se voyait marié lorsqu'il y pensait le moins à la plus riche héritière de Paris."1

Irrespective of birth, the handsome young man may profit from his physical charms to further his career with the aid of an older woman.

The most celebrated and detailed account in the 18th-century novel of the young man who succeeds

through women is Marivaux's *Le Paysan Parvenu*. Like Lesage's *Gil Blas*, it is concerned wholly with the question of the young man's ascension in the social sphere, with the difference that Jacob owes his rise in fortune solely to the effect his charms have on women of greater rank and fortune than himself. One might date the commencement of Jacob's fortune from the day on which he takes his brother's place in bringing wine from the country to Paris, to his lord's town residence. Jacob is already aware of his rustic good looks and his quick wit; these qualities do not escape the eye of his master's lady. She senses that he may hope to make his fortune in Paris, for he has the attributes which spell success for the impoverished and lowly-born young man, if he is prepared to grasp the opportunities which come his way. Hence she advises him to seek fortune in Paris on the strength of his appearance and ready wit. The corrupt Marquise and Mme de Loreval give much the same advice to the handsome peasant, Jeannot, whom they encounter on a journey in the country:

"Sais-tu, M. Jeannot, qu'à Paris on fait fortune, avec une taille comme la tienne. Tourne-toi un peu... oui, la jambe bien prise, assez bien faite; il ne lui manque, en vérité,
Jeannot is too timid to react in any but an adverse fashion to such advice. Unlike Jeannot, however, Jacob is eager to profit from any such favourable circumstances. He accepts with alacrity his lady's proposition to appoint him as valet to her young nephew; she thereby sets him on the first rung of the ladder to success, for this is the traditional first post of the ambitious young man of humble parentage. Jacob is aware that the interest his lady takes in his career is motivated by her interest in him as a handsome youth of ready wit. Hence, when he thanks his benefactress, he replies with respect, yet without timidity. The power of his physical charms has already begun to take effect, but his first conquest must approach more closely to his own social status. He is destined to captivate the aristocratic female heart, but he is as yet at the very outset of his career. Nonetheless, it is clear to Jacob that there is a strong element of physical attraction in his lady's patronage of him, therefore he is not reticent in showing that his lady's physical attributes have moved him. She, in return, is amused.

1. La Jolie Femme ou La Femme du Jour by Barthe, p. 132.
and flattered by his attention, although she does not determine to alter the nature of their relationship. Her interest reassures Jacob in his ambition; he views her attitude — quite correctly — as a favourable portent of future success.

His first conquest, however, figures lower on the social scale, in the person of Geneviève, maid to his mistress. Part of Jacob's appeal is his frank appreciation of a woman, all the more effective because of the simple countryman's language in which it is expressed, for such simplicity lends an air of sincerity to his praise, in contrast with the practised flattery meted out by the man of polite society. Geneviève reacts favourably to Jacob's praise of her charms, thus he feels justified in speaking to her of love, even although he considers her at this point his social superior, for she has the airs and manners of a townswoman, and she is literate. Equally, in Geneviève's eyes, Jacob is her social inferior: hence she addresses him familiarly as 'tu' and by his Christian name, whilst he feels obliged to employ the formal form and to call her 'mademoiselle'. The gap in social status is soon glossed over, however, and Jacob becomes Geneviève's lover. In this, his first relationship in Paris, he
already draws material profit. For the besotted Geneviève agrees to favour her master in exchange for financial gain, which is immediately passed on to Jacob, who in turn employs it to gain a certain degree of education and polish. The would-be parvenu's alacrity in accepting all possible opportunities is evident in Jacob's attitude, here. Like Gil Blas, Jacob is basically honest, as he steadfastly maintains, but many of his actions are of an equivocal nature, and could be interpreted in a light unfavourable to Jacob's probity. Jacob subjects Geneviève to a moral lecture on her conduct with her master, but his own subsequent behaviour leaves much to be desired on the moral plane. Jacob trades on Geneviève's love for him; neither has the money to marry, she therefore sets out to earn her dowry by acquiescing in her master's wishes. She does so solely with a view to winning Jacob, who seemingly applauds all her actions. The older Jacob, reminiscing on his youth, assures us that it was merely in jest that he urged Geneviève to accept the money for him. Geneviève, however, believes him to be in earnest, and indeed, one wonders how Jacob could imagine that the infatuated Geneviève would not take these words seriously:
Jacob has no compunction in accepting money from Geneviève, although perfectly aware of its source, and thereby finds himself for the first time in his life in funds. The older Jacob, viewing the episode retrospectively and from a position of considerable ease and comfort, experiences certain moral qualms: he excuses his behaviour on the grounds that his moral sense was as yet undeveloped and he had yet to acquire the refinement of scruple which to him is synonymous with the noble status.

Geneviève assumes that, in return for her generosity to him, he will marry her: she is seconded in her projects by her master, who is willing to further Jacob's career provided he concords in the plan to make of him a cuckold. Married to Geneviève, Jacob would
be master of a healthy fortune, but he is not lacking in intelligence; he fully comprehends the motives behind his master's actions, and the conduct expected of him as the obliging husband of Geneviève, his master's mistress. For the first time, temptation is laid in his path in a matter where he cannot beg the issue; hence the struggle waged within him between honour and interest. His master laughs at Jacob's perplexity and proceeds to give him a lesson in the ways of the world, and on the means to attain success within it; it is the worldly wisdom commonly taught the ambitious young man possessed of a pretty wife. Marriages based on such an understanding, claims Jacob's master, are a commonplace and offer the surest path to success in a society where financial and social competency ranks higher than strict morality, for those of Jacob's mark:

"Songera-t-on à votre honneur? S'imagine-t-on seulement que vous en ayez un, benêt que vous êtes? ... Allez, mon enfant, l'honneur de vos pareils, c'est d'avoir de quoi vivre, et de quoi se retirer de la bassesse de leur condition, entendez-vous? le dernier des hommes ici-bas est celui qui n'a rien." (vol. I, pp. 40-41).

Honour, however, finally takes a painful victory within Jacob; it is the assertion of rustic, simple but honest
scruples over the flexibility which typifies the behaviour of the man of polite society. Yet Jacob's decision is not based solely on concern for his own honour; his motives are more complex. He becomes increasingly aware of the interest his mistress takes in him. The attention of Geneviève he had at first viewed as a step up in the world, in the way of a minor honour. Once he realises the extent of his mistress's goodwill for him, Geneviève loses somewhat in charms, in Jacob's eyes:

"Je continuai de cajoler Geneviève. Mais, depuis l'instant où je m'étais aperçu que je n'avais pas déplu à madame même, mon inclination pour cette fille baissa de vivacité, son coeur ne me parut plus une conquête si importante, et je n'estimai plus tant l'honneur d'être souffert d'elle." (vol. I, p. 20).

Marriage to Geneviève would not merely constitute deviation from moral scruples, it would also arrest the progress of Jacob's career. For although his master offers to lend a hand in the advancement of his career, all other avenues are thereby closed to Jacob, and he depends entirely on the sentiments his master entertains at the present moment in time for Geneviève. To curtail his career at this juncture would be unwise, for he has only just begun to realise his own potentiality.
The episode with Geneviève is terminated by the sudden demise of his master, which leaves Jacob without a post. His good fortune, however, does not desert him: as the man destined to succeed in life, he has the necessary luck on his side, as his fortuitous meeting with Mlle Habert on the Pont Neuf proves.

Jacob chooses to project himself to Mlle Habert as an innocent rustic: he has not been long in Paris, he informs her, therefore he has had little opportunity to be tainted by the corrupt ways of the capital. He realises that the view of him as the innocent country youth as yet untainted by contact with Paris appeals to the older woman. His fresh rustic personality charms by its naivety and spontaneity, but by his conscious projection of himself as the innocent country lad, Jacob destroys part of the spontaneity which constitutes much of his appeal. His admiring benefactresses are, however, unaware of the juxtaposition of calculation and

1. Albeit that Jacob's presentation of rustic innocence as opposed to the town's corruption in this instance contradicts his earlier affirmation, whilst on the topic of his acceptance of Geneviève's ill-gotten gains, that his excuse lay in the fact that he was as yet foreign to the refinement of moral principle. Jacob's definition of morality is as flexible as his personality: it may be adapted at will to suit prevailing circumstances.
spontaneity within Jacob's make-up. Mlle Habert's acceptance of his aid indicates a degree of interest and trust in him on her part, from which Jacob intuitively draws a favourable augury of future events: he has an eye to the main chance. In his role as an innocent country lad, he recounts his adventures with Geneviève to Mlle Habert, stressing the points which he senses will appeal to her and suppressing other details - such as his acceptance of Geneviève's money - which are incompatible with the image of himself as a scrupulously honest young man. He distorts the facts to present himself in the most favourable light:

"J'avais refusé d'épouser une belle fille que j'aimais, qui m'aimait et qui m'offrait ma fortune, et cela par un dégoût fier et pudique qui ne pouvait avoir frappé qu'une âme de bien et d'honneur. N'était-ce pas là un récit bien avantageux à lui faire? Et je le fis de mon mieux, d'une manière naïve, et comme on dit la vérité. Il me réussit, mon histoire lui plut tout à fait." (vol. I, pp.63-64)

On the strength of the image he projects, Mlle Habert decides to take him into her service.

It is Jacob's second nature to profit from the effect his charms have on women: he automatically cajoles every woman with whom he comes into contact. Even Catherine, Mlle Habert's elderly cook, is subjected
to such treatment: Jacob flatters her because he has a healthy country appetite, and hence wishes to remain in her good graces. As often happens in the case of an elderly woman who encounters a handsome youth, Catherine imagines Jacob to resemble a cherished lost lover, Baptiste. Of the three women of the household, Jacob has won the hearts of two: naturally Catherine sides with the younger Mlle Hubert in the battle that ensues in the household between the two sisters, of whom the elder is entirely under the sway of her 'directeur de conscience'. The ecclesiastic recognises the threat that Jacob poses to his authority and presses for his dismissal. Mlle Hubert the younger hotly defends Jacob - she persuades herself that she is protecting him solely out of charity and gratitude for the service he rendered her. Jacob's action in eavesdropping the conversation between the two sisters about him is not entirely honest: it indicates an awareness of the irregularity of his presence in the household, and a conscious desire to succeed through the younger sister's good graces. On the strength of his favourable interpretation of Mlle Hubert's actions, he permits himself slight physical intimacies with her:

"Quel bonheur pour moi! repris-je
avec un geste qui me fit un peu serrer le bras que je lui tenais." (part II, p. 29)

Jacob feels authorised by her attitude and her actions to pay her compliments. Mlle Habert is predictably flattered and has not the strength to scold him for his familiarity. Emboldened, Jacob steers the conversation to discussion of marriage, and why Mlle Habert has never entered upon that state. Jacob's objective - alliance with an older, richer woman - becomes clear. Jacob approaches as closely as he dare to a proposal of marriage: in broaching the topic, Jacob uses the same procedure as with Geneviève couched in terms more likely to kindle Mlle Habert's imagination - if he had been king, he would have made Geneviève his queen, if he were a rich farmer's son, he would propose to Mlle Habert:

"Si j'étais aussi bien le fils d'un père qui eût été l'enfant d'un gros fermier de la Beauce, et qui eût pu faire le négoce: ah! pardi, nous verrions un peu si ce minois-là passerait son chemin sans avoir affaire à moi." (Ibid., p. 33).

Jacob considers Mlle Habert to be within his reach: she is the first positive step up the social ladder. Has not a woman of rank, his former mistress, shown interest in him? Then how much more could he not expect from a bourgeoise? Jacob realises that Mlle Habert takes pleasure in the turn taken in their conversation,
that she intentionally feigns to misunderstand his words, so that she may in all decency permit him to continue on a topic which is unseemly when it transpires between mistress and servant. He grows even surer of his position in her affections when she informs him that she has taken lodgings where he shall not be known as her servant. Jacob reacts in the typical parvenu fashion to his apparent rise in fortune by desiring to metamorphise his name from the humble Jacob to the articulated M. de La Vallée, a change which Jacob authorises on the grounds that the name legitimately belongs to his family. Mlle Habert awards him the title of cousin, Jacob urges for a closer parentage: he senses that Mlle Habert is not displeased with his chatter.

1. The use of the particle in conjunction with the name conveys a certain note of distinction, although Goubert points out how little foundation there was for this assumption: (L'Ancien Régime, vol. I, p. 146): "La particule, petit mot qui joint le véritable 'nom', celui du baptême, au 'surnom' devenu le patronyme, exprime en général une origine géographique familiale. Elle est fréquente chez les roturiers, surtout paysans ... Beaucoup de nobles authentiques ne portaient plus de particule ... et les plus grands dédaignaient de l'inclure dans leur signature ... Il n'empêche que la particule faisait illusion, même sous l'Ancien Régime, et que de bons bourgeois allongeant le nom de leur père du nom de leur métairie jouaient sur cette illusion, et finissaient souvent par l'imposer. Mais, à elle seule, la particule ne prouve rien."
His new self-appropriated title of M. de la Vallée necessitates a change of image: Jacob intends to eradicate some little rusticities from his speech, which hitherto have served him well in his role as the honest country lad, Jacob, but which do not accord as well with a higher status. His earlier fashion of speech has served its purpose and may now be discarded:

"Jusqu'ici mes discours avaient toujours eu une petite tournure champêtre; mais il y avait plus d'un mois que je m'en corrigerais assez bien, quand je voulais y prendre garde, et je n'avais conservé cette tournure avec Mlle Habert que parce qu'elle me réussissait auprès d'elle, et que je lui avais dit tout ce qui n'avait plus à la faveur de ce langage rustique; mais il est certain que je parlais meilleur français quand je voulais. J'avais déjà acquis assez d'usage pour cela, et je crus devoir n'appliquer à parler mieux qu'à l'ordinaire." (part II, p. 43).

Jacob, or M. de la Vallée, is anxious to evolve a new image, in order to forge still further ahead. Jacob comes once more into contact with feminine society in the persons of landlady and daughter: he is virtually incapable of resisting the temptation to study any woman he meets, subsequently to flatter her in the way most designed to please her. The landlady and her daughter will be of use in Jacob's plan of campaign; their
interest in him, jealousy lest Jacob turn his attentions to mother or daughter, will propel Mlle Habert into exposing her sentiments and intentions with regard to Jacob. Jacob's plan meets with success: Mlle Habert summons him to her room the following morning in an appointment which Jacob is prompt to keep. He feigns for her a great passion which Mlle Habert believes to be sincere, but which leaves the reader in doubt.

Jacob is swayed by his own rhetoric; in attempting to persuade Mlle Habert of the sincerity of his feelings for her, he convinces himself as well. Jacob is free of the insincerity which typifies the fashionable man as found in the rake. He does not act according to a carefully constructed plan of conquest; he adapts to the opportunity of the moment. He relies on the inspiration of the moment and his natural eloquence. The young man who succeeds through the medium of women has need of his eloquence, of his actor's gifts. It is by such means that Jacob obtains the offer of Mlle Habert's hand.

Mortification is the lot which often falls to the parvenu, and here Jacob is no exception to the general rule. The proposed match is discovered by the
elder Mlle Habert and our hero is stripped of his new
title to become Jacob once again. The guests at the
wedding feast, honest bourgeois all, feel duty bound
to quit the scene of the proposed festivities, once
they are informed of Jacob's true origins. Jacob is
subsequently brought before a tribunal by the senior
sister to account for his temerity in aspiring to the
hand of the younger. But once again the charm he
exercises over the opposite sex stands him in good stead.
Two women who wield considerable influence, the president's
wife and the pious Mme de Berval, are present at the
hearing. Jacob brings his beguiling glances into play;
neither woman remains immune to his appeal, and by
their efforts on his behalf he is acquitted. It is
at this point that our attention is drawn to a great
source of humiliation for Jacob, the fact that he is
addressed by all and sundry by the familiar 'tu', a
mark of his lowly station. Mme de Ferval, however,
bestows on him the formal mode of address - she wishes
to please him because she is interested in his youthful
good looks. Flattered by her attention and anxious to
please her in return, Jacob allows himself to be disloyal
to his benefactress, Mlle Habert. In reply to Mme de Ferval's question as to whether he is in love with his future wife, Jacob is content merely to smile. Absence of love for his intended is thereby implied if not overtly stated: it is a weakness in Jacob that he permits his sense of ambition - here favoured by a woman of rank and influence - to override his finer feelings. It is not that he is attracted to Mme de Ferval for herself, but because she represents another rung up the ladder; he admits as much when he assures her he can only love those of a higher station than himself:

"Ce n'était donc point elle que j'aimais, c'était son rang qui était très grand par rapport à moi." (part III p. 46).

Just as Geneviève faded into insignificance, for Jacob, by comparison with her mistress, so Mlle Habert loses importance when weighed against Mme de Ferval. Mlle Habert is only a 'petite bourgeoisie' (Jacob's very words), who considers Jacob her social equal, a position which he is not loth to accept.

Having aroused the interest of a woman of rank, Jacob feels his marriage to be a match of equals: Mlle Habert contributes her wealth, he his handsome person. In the measure that the women attracted to Jacob ascend
in the social hierarchy, Jacob's sense of his own worth and self-importance expands. Elevated by his new conquests, he sets his sights ever higher up the social scale. For, as each new acquaintance raises him one degree higher, so each new mistress must be correspondingly higher in the social hierarchy. Mlle Habert can offer him no greater status in society, in Jacob's eyes, but she supplies him with the necessary means whereby he may live in the style suited to his increased importance. To set off his person to the very best advantage, he has recourse to Mlle Habert's purse, for Jacob displays the parvenu's concern with fine expensive clothes. The day after his wedding, Jacob cajoles his wife into buying him an outfit which for him is synonymous with a higher station in life - a sword and a fine suit of clothes, lined with red silk:

"Cette soie rouge me flatterait une doublure de soie, quel plaisir et quelle magnificence pour un paysan!" (part III, p. 90).

Jacob is delighted to see himself "métamorphosé en cavalier", handsomer than ever in his new guise. Once more, Jacob is M. de la Vallée. Despite his new apparel, he is still somewhat gauche of manner, but Mme de Ferval is little concerned with his lack of polish, for she
finds him still more attractive in his new clothes. His vanity flattered by the interest she does not trouble to conceal, he enters at once, as by reflex, on the topic of love. He is rewarded by a rendez-vous with Mme de Ferval at the house of a certain Mme Remy, a lady who lets rooms for meetings of a dubious nature - and by the gift of a considerable sum of money. The gift evokes in Jacob a moral struggle; he feels humbled, yet his vanity is flattered by her action. Consequently he overcomes his moral scruples and accepts the money proffered him. Mme de Ferval will also help Jacob in a more permanent way by procuring for him a good position, through M. de Pécour, a man of some importance in the field of finance. Jacob never asks for favours

1. An association with a wealthy older woman helped many a young man's fortune, however humiliating one might consider this arrangement for both parties. It was not a phenomenon limited to young men of humble birth. The chevalier de * (intercalated story of the Histoire du Comte de Mirol et de Mme de P. by the marquis d'Argens in the Mémoires du Chevalier de *) is presented with an opportunity of this nature by Mme de P., who generously supplements his allowance to permit him to figure brilliantly in polite society. The comte de Mirol, a former lover of the same lady, explains why he embarked on his association with her: "Elle est, comme vous savez, encore fort aimable. Je savais de plus qu'elle était généreuse, et pour un officier qui n'avait pas été trop heureux pendant la campagne, c'était une fortune honnête." (part I, p. 52)
or money from his elderly benefactresses: he merely accepts all gifts they are pleased to offer him.

Mme de Fécour, who, on Mme de Ferval's recommendation, is to present Jacob to her brother-in-law, M. de Fécour, is also taken by Jacob's handsome exterior. For the first time, Jacob experiences a movement of shame when Mme de Fécour is acquainted with his true identity. The higher he moves up the social scale, the more he stands to lose by the discovery of his parentage. He has acquired enough sophistication in the world to become even more aware of the lowliness of his origins. He has taken on some of the airs and attitudes of the man of polite society, he is therefore even more conscious of how polite society must view him. Fortunately for Jacob's vanity, however, Mme de Fécour seems more concerned with his natural charms than his social pedigree. She is eager to help Jacob, but, as was the case with Mme de Ferval, she does not expect her efforts on his behalf to go unrewarded. Just as Mlle Habert's cook, Catherine, explained her tenderness for Jacob by the fact that he resembles her lost lover, so Mme de Fécour informs him he is very like her first lover. Jacob has the face and figure all women like to link romantically with a lost love; consequently, Mme
Fécour proposes to treat him in the same fashion as her first lover. Thus Jacob acquires another woman of some standing as his second mistress. Fortune has smiled on Jacob: he has surged ahead at an incredible rate, with very little effort on his part. Jacob himself can hardly believe all that has happened in so short a space of time:

"Figurez-vous ce que c'est qu'un jeune rustre comme moi, qui, dans le seul espace de deux jours, est devenu le mari d'une fille riche, et l'amant de deux femmes de condition. Après cela mon changement de décoration dans mes habits, car tout y fait; ce titre de monsieur dont je m'étais vu honoré, moi qu'on appelait Jacob dix ou douze jours auparavant, les amoureuses agaceries de ces deux dames ..." (part IV, pp. 31-32).

As a result of his rapid rise, he feels that he has outgrown his acquaintances from the lower social strata, whose company he would once have deemed an honour.

The parvenu's tendency to snobbery becomes evident in his attitude to his wife, his landlady and the guests who felt obliged to leave his wedding festivities but a short time before, on the discovery that he was not what he appeared to be:

"Ce qui est de vrai, c'est que moi-même je me trouvais tout autre, et que je me disais à peu de chose."
It is the various women attracted to Jacob who have allowed him to progress so far in so short a time. Now Jacob must utilise their protection, whilst at the same time venturing further afield.

The journey to Versailles, in order to present his petition to M. de Fécour, offers a great challenge to Jacob. It is his first confrontation with society at large in his new role: hitherto, he has basked in the affection of his benefactresses, but he is about to enter a society composed of both men and women, where the handsome country lad will be granted no special privileges on the score of his good looks. He must therefore discard all trace of his former self: he is no longer the garrulous country lad whose chatter is greeted with indulgence by doting ladies of a certain age. Jacob's meteoric rise to fortune leaves him in a vulnerable position; he is now entering circles where he but shortly figured in a far humbler role. His first experience on that head arises when he keeps his tryst with Mme de Féral at Mme Remy's, where they
are interrupted by a gentleman who knew him in his capacity as valet. Addressed as 'tu' and by the humiliating epithet of 'mons Jacob', Jacob loses all countenance and beats an ignominious retreat, leaving the other master of the field.

Deprived by this encounter of the favours of Mme de Perval, who transfers her affections to the gentleman concerned, Jacob also loses the protection of Mme de Fécour, who falls dangerously ill. Despite such setbacks, however, fortune has not yet deserted Jacob. Entirely by chance, he happens upon a gentleman who is being attacked by three assailants. Jacob wears a sword, although quite unversed in its usage, and hence goes to the gentleman's rescue. Jacob's adventures at this point take another immense upward swerve, for the gentleman he has succoured proves to be the comte d'Orsan, nephew to the Prime Minister. In gratitude, d'Orsan introduces Jacob into the very highest circles, a generous action which opens many doors for Jacob but at the same time affords him many anxious moments. His first visit to the opera, in d'Orsan's company, is a great ordeal for him: he is painfully aware of his lack of polish, he has neither
sufficient education nor experience to brave such a brilliant gathering - his rapid rise in fortune has left him little time to acquire any degree of social ease. He is acutely sensitive to the ridicule levelled at him by d'Orsen's companions.\(^1\)

It would seem that Jacob's strokes of good fortune in meeting with d'Orsen have little to do with

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\(^1\) The latter two sections of the novel, Parts six and seven, which recount Jacob's encounter with and subsequent marriage to the marquise de Vambures, were not written by Marivaux himself, and one cannot but draw a comparison between the different pieces of authorship detrimental to the sequel to Marivaux's work. It could not be stated even for Marivaux's hero that he has a psychological inner life which supplies him with an ordered plan of conduct, but his actions and words, as presented by Marivaux, take interest from their equivocal nature. The earlier Jacob is not entirely honest for he has an eye continuously to the main chance - although he does display a capacity for humanitarian disinterestedness in his refusal to accept the post offered him by M. de Ferval whereby he would have deprived the dying M. d'Orville of his job, the sole means of support for himself, his wife and mother. The older Jacob holds less interest for the reader since he is entirely uniform: the metamorphosis from the parvenu, possessed of the parvenu's aims and a strong degree of vanity, into a man of sentiment, capable of true love, self-effacing in his humble consciousness of his lowly origins and whose conduct is based solely on the principle of disinterest, is not explained and does not convince the reader. Unlike Gil Blas, he has not witnessed the entire disintegration of his carefully amassed fortune and the fall from a position of considerable power, from which he might deduce the vanity and insubstantiality of worldly success. The speech of the later Jacob, on an elevated moral tone, lacks the sparkle and natural wit of Marivaux's hero.
Jacob's magnetism for women. It is, however, the outcome of help afforded him by women, for without Mlle Habert's aid, Jacob would not have been in possession of a sword. D'Orsan is the vital link in the chain of Jacob's relationships with women: it is d'Orsan who introduces him to the next woman who influences his career, Mme de Vambures. Through the efforts of the comte d'Orsan, Jacob finds himself in charge of the farms in the district of Champagne, where he was born. He has also attained a higher plateau in the emotions, for the feeling he has for Mme de Vambures, and which is reciprocated, is deeper than anything he has experienced before. Her rank and wealth are incidental - something new for Jacob - it is her person alone which attracts him to her. He is now capable of disinterested emotion. Love for the marquise de Vambures inspires in Jacob the refinement of sentiment commonly associated with the noble. In the company of d'Orsan and the marquise de Vambures, Jacob finds himself accepted in circles where he was formerly a stranger. Thus he finds himself living on two levels, the one in the company of his wife and her like, a circle of bourgeois which Jacob has now outgrown, and the other in the highest social circles.
frequented by the comte and the marquise. Mlle Habert has served her purpose, so she is permitted to die, quietly, leaving her fortune to Jacob. Jacob shows fitting sorrow over the demise of one who first set him on the path to success, but her death allows him to declare himself to the marquise de Vambures, and they marry. The parvenu's greatest objective has been achieved with the minimum of effort on Jacob's part; he is allied with the aristocracy. Life could not be kinder to Jacob: women appear and disappear in his life in accordance with the momentary need he has for them.

The full cycle Jacob has come is emphasised by several coincidences. He is able to secure a post for an impoverished young gentleman who is revealed to be Beausson, now a fine young man, nephew of his first mistress, and he whom he served as valet. Jacob rejoices wholeheartedly in the opportunity to repay his debt of gratitude to a family which first set him on the path to fortune. Jacob then accompanies his wife on a tour of the new estate she has purchased, only to find that he is thereby made lord of the village where he was born as a humble farmer's son. Jacob possesses an estate, his
wife is the widow of a nobleman, but he remains a commoner, and his children will lack the asset of nobility, generally handed down the male line. Here we are reminded that no matter how great one's fortune, nobility was the highest honour in this society, after which all strove. To attain the height of success, and as a culmination to his career, Jacob must purchase letters of nobility. Jacob displays the same reluctance as Gil Blas to take such a step: it is his wife who persuades him to it, for the sake of their children. Some years later, to neatly cap the saga of Jacob's rise from the humblest beginnings to the heights of prosperity and honour, he sees his children well settled. His daughter and Beausson fall in love and marry: his elder son marries the immensely wealthy Mlle de Fécour. Thus Jacob's offspring are on equal footing with and are allied to the very families which protected Jacob in his earlier years.

In the 13th century, the youth who wishes to succeed in society is content to conform to society's ways. The notion of revolt against society has yet to evolve at this point. Success within this society is still measured in terms of social status. To attain
greater importance within the social order, the youth who wishes to succeed must assimilate current values, adapt to the demands of polite society. He strives to become part of the aristocratic élite which is responsible for his own sense of inferiority and inadequacy. He does not question the social system which relegates him to a lower social order; he concentrates all his energies to the objective of entering the supposedly superior social class, not on the projection of himself and his class as of worth in their own right. In this, he forms a complete contrast to the following century's romantic parvenu who stands in defiant opposition to society. Julien Sorel, for example, wishes to make his way in life not from the point of view of social considerations, but in order to prove himself to himself. He is a solitary figure against a hostile society within which his only mode of defence is dissimulation of his true feelings. His is a conscious will to succeed, unlike Jacob's acceptance of events as they occur. He attempts to subjugate life to his own will, he is not content merely to wait to see what might befall him: his career is the constant exercise of self-discipline, not one of carefree acceptance. Balzac displays a
similar interest in the figure of the young man who sets out to conquer society. Vautrin is the arch-enemy of society who has succeeded in taking control of some sections of it; it is he who assures Rastignac that one must be corrupt to succeed in society (no notion of gradual refinement of sentiment, here, as in Jacob), and finally Rastignac, once a decent and honourable young man, is corrupted by his sense of ambition. Jacob, however, at one with society, emerges from the process of social betterment, a nobler man. His elevation in the social hierarchy, it is intimated, is also an elevation on the human scale, in terms of refinement of feeling and nobility of sentiment. The parvenu of the 18th century is in complete accordance with the social structure: society's values become his own personal values, for society's values, at least in the first half of the 18th century, constitute the only acceptable mode of life.
CHAPTER 6
THE PARVENU

Having examined the career of the parvenu in some depth, it would be worthwhile to take a look at his female counterpart. There are two very distinct paths open to a young girl of little means and humble birth, or of unknown origins in the 18th century. The one is very similar to that taken by the young man who wishes to succeed: this is perhaps the more common and easily accessible path—riches gained by a series of intrigues with wealthy, well-placed lovers. However, in the novel, loss of virtue in an unmarried woman is not condoned: a cult is made in the novel of virtue. Here we have the key to the second means by which she may gain success. The young woman of beauty and great virtue may secure the affections of a man of society who first sought her only in the capacity of mistress.

In the reality of 18th-century polite society, money is the passport of the parvenu, male or female, into the highest circles. Just as the wealthy financier might contract an alliance with a noble family, so his daughter might be married off to an impoverished noble on the strength of a generous dowry. Chamfort in his Maximes Politiques depicts the common process in a very graphic fashion:

1. The dowries which the 'financières' brought to such matches were needed to enable the nobility to maintain their...
Les bourgeois, par une vanité ridicule, font de leurs filles un fumier pour les terres des gens de qualité."

Wealth has the power to obscure humble origins; it is also the means whereby the woman of dubious morals may repair her damaged reputation. A woman of this class might hope to achieve respectability in marriage to an impoverished man of society eager to give his name in exchange for the riches amassed by the woman in her equivocal but lucrative career. The hope of such a marriage is held out to Aspasie in *Les Erreurs d'Une Jolie Femme ou l'Aspasie Française* by Corblin, who tries to persuade her to accept his master as her lover:

"Vous avez fait un miracle sur lui. Je ne le reconnais pas, j'ai eu l'honneur de le servir dans d'autres occasions, mais il n'était pas si discret. Je veux être damné, si vous ne venez à bout de faire tout ce que vous voudrez de cet homme-là... Il est veuf; que sait-on? et puis, quand vous ne réussissiez pas de ce côté, avec sa protection la fortune que vous pouvez faire, vous mettra à portée de choisir un mari à votre gré... Bon, bon, madame, cela ne peut vous nuire que dans l'opinion de quelque formaliste; mais je vous donne ma parole qu'il se trouvera plus de partis que vous ne voudrez, et que je gagerais mille louis avec vous, qu'il y aura plus d'une femme de qualité, qui, si elle a besoin de votre faveur, n'hésitera pas à vous donner son parent, son fils même."

Footnote 1 cont'd. from page 370.

Luxurious mode of life. In her *Bourgeoisie in 18th-century France*, Elinor G. Barber quotes a case from Barbier's *Journal*: in 1752, the vicomte de Mahon-Chabot married a certain Mlle de Vervins, daughter of a councillor in Parliament, for a vast dowry: her paternal grandfather had been a cloth merchant on the rue St. Denis. (p. 103).

The commencement of the 19th century's preoccupation with the power of money is evident in this form of transaction. The parvenu is aware that the noble secretly despises her, but he is forced to mask his true sentiments if he wishes to share in her prosperity. The lack of polish traditionally associated with the parvenu provides a target for the noble's scorn, but in reality little affects the parvenu's position in society. Thérèse comments on the wife of a certain:

"Agent de Change enrichi par le système (de Law), à laquelle un équipage, des domestiques, et tout l'attirail de la fortune, n'ont pu donner l'éducation ni les façons, que l'obscurité de sa naissance ne lui a pas même permis de connaître... elle a compris qu'un million entre les mains de son mari, la met en état de paraître tout ce qu'elle veut être, ou du moins d'être impunément tout ce qu'elle peut."

For the woman who has already amassed her wealth, a certain degree of acceptance into high circles is assured, but the ambitious young woman of low birth must find the means whereby to acquire her financial independence. The counterpart of the young man who succeeds through women is the young girl prepared to capitalise on her youth and physical charms. Few are the actresses in the 18th century who have not one generous lover, if not more. It is more important

1. Lettres de Thérèse by Bridard de la Garde, part I, pp. 62-64.
2. G. Capon and R. Yve-Flessis, for example, narrate the history of one such actress in their Fille d'Opéra, vendeuse d'amour: Histoire de Mlle Deschamps (1750-1764).
for an actress to establish her reputation, usually in the fashion adopted by Margot la Ravaudeuse, whose fame spreads and whose favours augment in value after she has caused the financial ruin of a rich business man:

"Tout dépend à l'opéra de s'établir une certaine réputation. Rien ne fait tant honneur à une actrice que d'occasionner quelques banqueroutes, et d'envoyer ses adorateurs à l'Hôpital. La chute de mon financier me mit dans un crédit étonnant."  

Often, the women who are protected by a wealthy lover have another lover to fulfil their emotional needs, for the relationship between actress (or any young and attractive woman prepared to barter her favours) and rich lover is, for her at least, solely a business proposition. The intrusion of emotion would endanger her financial calculations. Margot la Ravaudeuse passes on the following advice to all young girls who wish to follow in her footsteps, as a woman who succeeds through her physical charms:

"Toute personne du sexe qui veut parvenir, doit à l'imitation du marchand, n'avoir en vue que ses intérêts et le gain. Que son cœur soit toujours inaccessible au véritable amour. Il suffit qu'elle fasse semblant d'en avoir, et sache en inspirer aux autres." (p. 69).

Elle Cronel's story\(^2\) recounts her career of gallantry, during which all her lovers have been her dupes, favoured only

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1. by J.L. Fougeret de Montbrun, p. 68.
2. *Histoire de Mlle Cronel dite Frétillon* by G. de la Bataille.
because she desires their money. Aspasie\textsuperscript{1} takes a similar course in accepting M.de B. as her lover. Not only does she find the relationship to her advantage financially, she also gains prestige in society through it. For her lover is a man of power and great influence: Aspasie is therefore courted by many of high rank, in the hope that she will intercede with M.de B.on their behalf. Women of the highest rank will debase themselves to the most menial tasks, in an attempt to ingratiate themselves in her favour and from thence into the good graces of M.de B.;Aspasie remarks on this:

"Je voyais fréquemment à ma toilette des femmes distinguées par la naissance disputer à ma femme de chambre le soin de ma parure. L'une voulait placer mes diamants, l'autre boucler mes cheveux. La comtesse de K. porta la lâche complaisance jusqu'à s'asseoir à mes pieds sur un petit tabouret pour tenir le vase où était ma pâte pour les mains, pendant que je m'en servais...."

The comtesse soon reveals her motive in courting Aspasie - she is aware of Aspasie's power over her lover, and intends to put it to profit.

A career in gallantry is far more likely than the adherence to a pattern of strict morality to assure a life of ease. The depiction of the material advantages of vice as opposed to the deprivations attached to virtue provides the theme of Sade's \textit{Infortunes de la Vertu}. A father goes

\footnote{\textit{Les Erreurs d'une Jolie Femme}, pp. 114-115.}
bankrupt and dies, leaving his two daughters destitute. Juliette takes the easier path and in the space of fifteen years amasses a fortune. After her apprenticeship in a brothel, Juliette takes on a series of rich lovers and manages to ruin three wealthy men in four years. On the strength of her wealth, she marries the impoverished comte de Lorsanges for a title and respectability. She then proceeds to murder him:

"ce n'était plus une fille entretenue, c'était une riche veuve." (p.13).

She has a title and a fortune. The virtuous Justine, however, has suffered every form of humiliation and torture devised by man. Just as she is found by Juliette and a better life is in sight, she is struck down by lightning and killed.

The moral is clear - the path of vice is easier and more likely to lead to success, at least in this world, than that of virtue.

Since a career in gallantry is the usual path to success for the young girl of humble origins, any impoverished young woman is held to be susceptible to the lure of fine clothes, jewels and other material assets. Any wealthy man eager to possess her charms will tempt her with the bait of financial gain, his assumption being that, in her indigence, she will accept his offers and reward them with the gift of her person. Victoire is of humble birth, poor but beautiful, and inevitably she is propositioned by many taken by her
The innocent Jeannette attracts the eye of her master, who asks her to be his 'friend' promising her gifts: she eagerly acquiesces, unaware of the phrase's connotations. It is only when she has been enlightened by her mistress as to the true significance of such remarks that she fully comprehends the motives behind her master's goodwill. The aspiring seducer capitalises on the poor young girl's vanity: she is young, pretty and therefore longs for fine ornaments to compliment her person; she wishes to dress as a young lady of quality. Julie realises that the elderly libertine, the baron de Sorbec, hopes to interest her vanity as a beautiful young lady of little means who aspires to succeed in life. Her attire is simple but tasteful and therefore reveals a certain coquetry which the baron intends to flatter by the offer of jewels and fine clothes. Julie suffers in the same fashion as Victoire:

"Pourquoi cherche-t-on à me séduire par des choses qui n'ont que trop d'attrait pour moi, si ce n'est qu'on devine mon penchant pour le luxe. Sûrement ma vanité perce au travers de

1. Mémoires de Victoire by J-V. Delacroix, part I.
2. La Paysanne Parvenue by Fieux de Mouhy.
"ces habits simples, dont je tire tout le parti possible. L'art même que j'emploie à m'ajuster décelé mon goût pour la parure, et de là l'on présume qu'avec de l'or, il est facile de corrompre une personne qui a des désirs au-dessus de son état. L'opinion des hommes est qu'une femme immole volontiers sa vertu à sa vanité quand cette dernière est excessive en elle. Je ne peux donc me cacher, que la coquetterie de mes ajustements est en partie cause des criminels desseins qu'on forme sur moi."

In a similar fashion, M.de Climal addresses himself to Marianne's vanity. Marianne loves finery: it is one outward symbol of the body of the nobility to which she is convinced she belongs. M.de Climal panders to her whim, interesting her vanity by gradual degrees. He first praises her hands, for which he buys several pairs of expensive gloves, to display them to their best advantage. Marianne consistently chooses to ignore Climal's true motives, for she does not intend to fulfil her side of the bargain. She wishes to satisfy her longing for finery, whilst retaining her virtue. At his expense, she chooses a dress which flatters the image she has of herself as a girl of little means but noble birth. Climal also buys her some very fine linen of a quality worn only by those of considerable means. Marianne plays a game with Climal in which she purposely misinterprets all his words and actions: it is her compromise

1. Mes Principes ou la Vertu Raisonnée by Mme Benoît, part I.
2. La Vie de Marianne by Marivaux.
between vanity and strict moral virtue. If she ignores his pointed attentions, she may feign unawareness of the motives behind his kindness to her. As long as he does not declare himself openly, she may safely accept his presents. Marianne tries to ignore the most obvious signs of his intentions; she is playing for time: she decides to remain blind until the very last possible minute, for her finery is at stake. She purposely gives his discourses an innocuous interpretation, and even manages to pass off a kiss, planted on her ear by M.de Climal as she descends from the coach, as an accident caused by the lurch of the coach in stopping. When she can no longer conceal the truth from herself, her virtue shows her the path she must follow. It is vanity, not avarice, which underlines her reluctance to return Climal's gifts, although, as a virtuous young lady, no other course of action is open to her. This is evident in the scene where she is preparing to pack all the gifts Climal has given her, to return them:

"Je ne songeai donc plus qu'à ma robe, qu'il fallait empaqueter aussi: je dis celle que m'avait donnée M.de Climal; et comme je l'avais sur moi, et qu'apparemment je reculais à l'ôter: N'y a-t-il plus rien à mettre? disais-je; est-ce là tout? Non, il y a encore l'argent; et cet argent, je le tirai sans aucune peine: je n'étais point aveare, je n'étais que vaine; et voilà pourquoi le courage ne me manquait que sur la robe."

1. La Vie de Marianne by Marivaux, p. 193.
Indeed, vanity could often be a major factor in the young woman's choice of a career of gallantry.

While in the actuality of 18th-century society, a young woman of humble birth is more likely to succeed if she chooses to abandon her virtue, the 18th-century novel in general presents a very different picture. If a young girl remains true to her principles, she may reap her just reward: virtue is the key to success, the 18th-century novel would have us believe. 1 Virtue is the impoverished young woman's greatest treasure. In her last speech to Marianne before her death, the cure's sister exhorts her always to follow the path of virtue: as she points out, it is Marianne's main asset in life. Marianne would never succumb to M.de Climal's wiles, although she is aware that, at this point, he is her only possible means of support. Jeanette, in Le Paysanne Parvenue, 2 is also educated, by her mother, to follow the dictates of virtue. She is flattered by the attention of

1. Witness the popularity of Richardson's Pamela, and the score of novels on the same theme which followed in its wake.

2. From the point of view of subject matter, parallels may be drawn between La Vie de Marianne and La Paysanne Parvenue. Jeannette herself draws the comparison between her and Marianne, although it is doubtful whether Marianne would have recognised the similarities between them, since she is inwardly convinced of her noble birth, whilst Jeannette is well aware of her humble origins.
the courtiers whom she encounters in the forest near her village, but she is mindful of the story of Charlotte, a girl from her village, who fell in love with a lord, was seduced and then abandoned by him. The memory of her companion's fate keeps her steadfast in the path of virtue, despite her growing affection for the young marquis. If a young girl resists all attempts to seduce her, she wins the respect of her would-be seducer, who finally casts aside his pride to marry her. The baron de Prémur, for example, falls in love with the curé's beautiful niece, Lusy. Since she refuses to succumb to his wiles, he is forced to marry her. The attraction of virtue allied to beauty may be dangled as bait before the eyes of an infatuated suitor to trick him into marriage: this is the process utilised by Mlle de Ligneville and her family. Her elderly swain, Mylord N., first attempts to seduce her by presenting her with magnificent diamonds, each gift being indignantly rejected by her - on her mother's instructions - as an attack on her virtue. To spur Mylord to a proposal of marriage, Mlle de Ligneville is hidden by her family and Mylord is informed that she will be forced into marriage with another:

"cette fuite, ce billet et ce mariage prétendu n'étaient qu'une feinte qu'ils avaient concertée pour essayer si l'amour et la jalousie pouvaient déterminer le mylord à faire la folie d'épouser,

1. Histoire de Mlle de Terville by Mme de Fuisieux.
"à son âge, une fille de dix-huit ans, dont le bien et l'alliance n'étaient de nulle considération." 1

The ruse succeeds and Mlle Ligneville assumes the title of Mylady M.

Not all actresses followed the customary path, at least in the novel. In Colombé's Plaisirs d'un Jour, mention is made of a certain beautiful and consequently much sought after actress who resists all attempts to lure her from the path of virtue:

"C'est néanmoins entre tous ces dangers que cette dame n'a jamais donné prise à sa conduite, et qu'on n'a pu jusqu'ici lui reprocher aucune intrigue. Estimée et chérie de tous les honnêtes gens, sa vertu, contre toute espérance, lui a enfin procuré un établissement des plus avantageux. Un de nos plus opulents riches lui a depuis peu donné la main...."

Even after a career of gallantry, a woman who assumes a reformed mode of conduct may hope to restore her reputation and find an honourable establishment: such is the case of Aspasie, 2 who reverts to a virtuous way of life and consequently marries the vicomte. Before her marriage to the count, the comtesse Dangemone made her fortune as mistress of two men: her conduct has not been irreproachable, but she is of noble birth, a fact which facilitates her marriage to the count:

1. La Belle Aventurière in Aventures Choisies (anonymous), p.276.
2. Les Erreurs d'une Jolie Femme by Mme Benoît.
"Il l'épousa sans façons, persuadé qu'il n'y a rien de mieux que de faire la fortune d'une femme qu'on aimé, et dont on est aimé, et qu'un amour légitime règle souvent la conduite de ceux qu'une passion aveugle avait livrés à l'erreur. Il écrivit dans la province d'où sortait Mlle Deville. Le hasard voulut qu'on découvrit qu'elle était de bonne maison. Le comte ne l'en épousa pas plus volontiers quant à lui: mais par rapport au monde, il fut charmé que la naissance de sa femme ne fut pas aussi équivoque que sa réputation."

At least she is spared the humiliation suffered by the parvenue on the score of her lowly birth.

Richardson's Pamela lays much stress on her humble origins, but generally the parvenue is anxious to conceal her true social status. Shame of her lowly origins is a peculiar manifestation of the parvenue's vanity. In the Mémoires de Victoire by Delacroix, the young Victoire is taken into the care of a grand lady who is charmed by her beauty and manners. The magnificence of her new surroundings inspires horror in Victoire for her early years. She rejects the notion that Cola is her father: in her mind, she weaves fantasies which conjecture on her origins. She fancies that in actual fact she is not Cola's daughter, but of noble birth.² As one of humble parentage, she is deeply flattered.

1. Mémoires de Versorand by La Solle, part I.
2. In the 18th-century novel, there are innumerable instances of a supposedly low-born youth or girl who is finally revealed to be of noble extraction. Such a discovery is often made in time to permit a marriage between two lovers divided by social consideration. In Le Philosophe Amoureux by Boyer d'Argens, for example, Marianne, thought...
by the attention paid her by the prince and speculates in
trepidation on the reaction of his court, if her true
origins should by suspected:

"C'était à moi à qui l'on faisait tous les
honneurs; j'osais à peine croire mes yeux.
Environnée de femmes de la plus grande
distinction, je me voyais traitée comme leur
egale. Ah! me disais-je, avec quel mépris
elles regarderaient cette jeune personne
qu'elles accueillent, qu'elles caressent, si
elles pouvaient soupçonner le secret de sa
naissance!" (part 1).

On a later occasion she faints from shame when, whilst
in distinguished company, she is suddenly confronted with
her peasant father, Cola. On recovering consciousness, she
is immediately aware of the different attitude adopted
towards her by those present:

"Eh bien, ma chère, lui dit une de ces femmes
qui l'entouraient, les forces reviennent-elles?
Ma chère... quel nom! L'aurait-on appelée ainsi
une heure avant? Cette demoiselle charmante dont
les talents étaient si étonnants, dont l'air
était si noble et la figure si intéressante, n'est
plus qu'une petite personne que l'on nomme sa chère."
(part 2).

The parvenue, in the main, is a snob: all too
aware of her own lowly birth, she compensates for her own
equivocal social position by an excessive sensitivity on
questions of social prestige. Victoire is asked for her
hand in marriage; her suitor is but a humble merchant.
Although she herself is of even baser extraction, she rejects

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Footnote 2 cont'd from page 382.
to be of peasant stock, is in reality the daughter of the
Marquise de Brisac and can therefore marry her noble lover.
his offer on the grounds of his lowly social status. Marianne is convinced of her noble birth; she wishes to believe in it. Her conviction is based on the tale recounted by the curé's sister: Marianne was found, dressed as a child of quality, in the arms of a woman obviously of high birth and considerable means. Since she was the sole survivor in the coach, attacked by robbers, no-one can solve the mystery of her birth. As a child, however, she was out of the ordinary; even at this early stage, it is intimated that she is not of common birth, and throughout the novel we are reminded of this fact, thus we are prepared for her rise in fortune and are invited to view this metamorphosis in her social status as natural and just.

Marianne herself is firmly convinced of her right to a place in high society. When she is left destitute, and a position as a maid seems the most likely situation for her, she expresses her repugnance to serve to Climal. For Marianne, to establish herself in society in the capacity of servant would be a sign of acceptance on her part that this is her rightful place. She declares to Climal:

"Hélas! monsieur, lui dis-je, quoique je n'ais rien, et que je ne sache à qui je suis, il me semble que j'aimerais mieux mourir que d'être chez quelqu'un en qualité de domestique; et si j'avais mon père et ma mère, il y a toute apparence que j'en aurais moi-même, au lieu d'en servir à personne." (p. 32).

Again, when she sends all the gifts Climal has sent her to
Valville, protesting her innocence and requesting him to return the gifts to Climal, his uncle, she signs herself:

"une fille affligée, vertueuse, et peut-être votre égale."

She is so adamant on the score of her claim to noble status that she is able to persuade others of it, too: when Mme de l'hiran has heard her story, after seeing her cry in church, she assures Marianne she will never be reduced to begging for alms, for she would not allow 'a girl of such high birth' to fall so low.

Marianne is proud; humility is for one of lowly status: she is grateful for charity, yet resents it. The discussion between Climal and the priest about her situation is a source of great discomfort for her; she feels humiliated that she should find herself in this position. She is also humiliated in her association with Mme Dutour for she feels such a relationship to be beneath her dignity. She senses that she is destined to move in more elevated circles. The curé and his sister, although reduced to humble circumstances, were conversant with the ways of polite society, but Mme Dutour and her associates are vulgar, and their vulgarity offends Marianne. Her first real problem, however, arises in her encounter with Valville, who obviously imagines her to be of his own rank, for such is the image which she projects. To avow her position, she feels, would be to destroy the feeling he has for her, and which she is
anxious to encourage. She is reluctant to have him inform Mme Dutour of her whereabouts, yet if she declares herself to be her own mistress, she will raise doubts on her character, for no virtuous young lady of good family would go unchaperoned. To declare her name, or to give Mme Dutour's address would be to reveal her position, of which she is ashamed, for she desires Valville's respect. She finally plucks up sufficient courage to give him Mme Dutour's address; this has been a great effort for her, and she feels deeply humiliated thereby. But all is in vain, for Valville still fails to grasp the true situation. To envisage Marianne as anything but a girl of high birth is an effort beyond his comprehension; he decides that Mme Dutour is her messenger, and that she will inform Marianne's family of her whereabouts. Even here, Marianne's humiliations have not reached an end. M.de Climal and a lady enter; the lady offers to take her home. She, too, imagines Marianne to be of good family:

"Mais, dit la dame, il faudrait du secours... êtes-vous seule, mademoiselle? N'avez-vous personne avec vous? Pas un laquais? pas une femme? Non, madame, répondis-je, fâchée de l'honneur qu'elle me faisait, et que je reprochais à ma figure qui en était cause... Hé bien, dit-elle...nous vous remènerons. Encore! dis-je en moi-même; quelle persécution! Tout le monde a donc la fureur de me ramener... ce qui me frappa d'abord, ce fut...l'affront d'être reconduite à cette malheureuse boutique."

Marianne is aware of the image she would project in the lady's eyes, if she knew the true situation: Marianne
would be immediately relegated to the class of adventuress, in league with the hypocritical M.de Climal. Marianne is sensitive on the point of receiving charity and her proud nature resents the pity of others. In the convent where her board is paid by Mme de Miran, all the nuns and the girls staying there are aware of her situation, and therefore pity her, to Marianne's annoyance:

"Toutes ces filles m'aimèrent, surtout les religieuses, qui ne me disaient rien de ce qu'elles savaient de moi (vraiment elles n'avaient garde comme avait dit notre abbesse), mais qui, dans les discours qu'elles me tenaient et tout en se récriant sur mon air de douceur et de modestie, sur mon aimable petite personne, prenaient avec moi des tons de lamentation si touchants, que vous eussiez dit qu'elles pleuraient sur moi; et le tout à propos de ce qu'elles savaient, et de ce qui, par discrétion, elles ne faisaient pas semblant de savoir. Voyez, que cela était adroit! Quand elles m'auraient dit: Pauvre petite orpheline, que vous etes à plaindre d'être réduite à la charité des autres! elles ne se seraient pas expliquées plus clairement." (p. 111).

Marianne is certain of her nobility; Jeanette, however, knows she is of humble birth, but she, too, is extremely proud. Even in writing her memoirs, she has great difficulty in admitting her humble origins:

"Il m'en coûte infiniment d'avouer ma naissance; le rang, que je tiens aujourd'hui dans le monde en est peut-être la cause... quoique je fasse, je ne puis m'acoutumer à me ressouvenir que la marquise de L.V. qui tient aujourd'hui sa place dans le monde est, dans le vrai, Jeannette, fille de Jean B., bucheron de la forêt de Fontainebleau." 1

She learns to despise her former home ad friends; as Christophe,

1. La Paysanne parvenue by Fieux de Mouhy, pp. 11-12.
friend of her former suitor, Colin, points out to her, she has forgotten her village, family and friends, since she has taken up residence in the castle. She no longer cares for Colin, the most eligible young man in the village, after associating with aristocracy. As a parvenue, she enjoys being seen in pomp ad splendour, as when the marquis's father accompanies her home in his magnificent carriage. She is in a state of great anxiety lest the marquis's father discover her identity, yet she is distracted from this worry by the open admiration of all who see her in the marquis's magnificent carriage. She has a natural love of luxury and splendour, fostered by her rise in fortune, so that, when she returns to her village, incognito, she finds she has long outgrown its simplicity:

"Que je la trouvai petite cette maison! Que mon village, si vanté par Barbe, et que je m'étais représenté vingt fois si charmant, me sembla alors chétif et misérable! J'avais les larmes aux yeux, et malgré la raison qui me guidait, je ne pouvais m'empêcher de regretter le séjour charmant que je venais de quitter. Les préjugés de l'enfance étaient évanouis, j'étais accoutumée au grand, il est plus doux d'aller en ayant que de revenir sur ses pas; que dirais-je? J'étais assez folle pour me trouver humiliée de la simplicité qui regnait autour de moi et pourquoi cela? C'est que je ne respirais que l'ostentation. Que j'étais vaine! Et que le peu que j'avais été dans le monde m'avait gâtée!" (part II, pp. 67-68).

The parvenue is continually aware of her humble start in life: it is an awareness from which she cannot escape in a community based on social distinctions. Hence she makes
a supreme effort to efface the past by an excess of snobbishness on her part.

She is made aware of her origins by those around her. Every parvenue undergoes a degree of humiliation at the hands of those who consider themselves her superiors. Victoire suffers in this fashion when she is revealed to be the daughter of the humble peasant, Cola. Henceforth she is subjected to the raillery of the courtiers. The women of polite society are jealous of the marked preference displayed by the prince for Victoire: they take revenge by reminding Victoire on every possible occasion of her true origins:

"Plusieurs femmes qui avaient des prétentions, piquées de la préférence qu'il me donnait sur elles, se souvinrent que je n'étais que la fille du pauvre Cola, et firent plusieurs mauvaises plaisanteries sur mon origine. Une d'elles moins jolie, car ce sont toujours les plus malhonnêtes, me dit: 'Mlle Victoire, vous devriez profiter de l'amitié dont le prince semble vous honorer pour faire entrer vos frères à son service: une bonne parenté ne doit rien oublier pour faire sortir sa famille de l'indigence et de l'obscurité."

Jeannette is often humbled by Mlle d'Elbieux who hates her because of the passion her brother entertains for Jeannette, and the troubles to which his passion has given rise. She reveals Jeannette's situation in the convent and blackens her name; she has her abducted. Even when Jeannette has

1. Mémoires de Victoire by J-V. Delacroix, part I.
attained a position in society, where she is known by the name of the Comtesse de Roches, Mlle d'Elbieux still finds an opportunity to humiliate her. They meet once again when their respective carriages are involved in a crash: Mlle d'Elbieux seizes the opportunity to insult her as a 'little peasant'. Marianne suffers in her convent at the hands of a haughty young lady who is jealous of Marianne's beauty and popularity, and who continually recalls Marianne's uncertain origins. When all in the convent congratulate Marianne on the fine dress Mme de Miran has given her, the same person is present to spoil Marianne's pleasure:

"Vous avez là une belle robe, Marianne; et tout y répond; cela est cher au moins, et il faut que la dame qui a soin de vous soit très généreuse. Quel âge a-t-elle? est-elle vieille? songe-t-elle à vous assurer de quoi vivre? Elle ne sera pas éternelle, et il serait fâcheux qu'elle ne vous mit pas en état d'être toujours aussi proprement mise; on s'y accoutume, et c'est ce que je vous conseille de lui dire."

It might be noted in passing that the young lady omits to address Marianne with the polite salutation of 'mademoiselle'. Quite naturally, many members of Valmont's family are against his proposed match with Marianne. She is viewed as an adventuress, anxious to secure rank and wealth. One also expects a certain amount of discourtesy on the part of Marianne's rival, Mlle Varthon, who is not loth to remind Marianne of her uncertain parentage and the invalidity, in her humble position, of her claim on Valville's affections.

1. La Vie de Marianne, p. 116.
Anyone of humble birth must expect humiliation at the hands of those envious of the attributes which have instigated the rise in fortune.

Vanity and social snobbery are two more negative qualities generally possessed by the parvenu. Her two greatest assets are her beauty and virtue, according to the 18th-century novel, but she also merits attention on other heads. Both Marianne and Jeannette are irresistibly drawn to the polite world from the moment of first contact with it; in Marianne's case, on her journey to Paris, in the company of the curé's sister; whilst the meeting with the courtiers in the forest surrounding her village constitutes Jeannette's introduction to polite society. For Marianne, life commences when she journeys to Paris: the streets are new, but not strange to her. Instinctively, she feels at one with the ranks of polite society. Marianne has the rudiments of a young lady's education, but Jeannette is quite illiterate. This obstacle to success is, however, removed when she is taken in by Mme de G., who rescues her from the evil designs of the Chevalier d'Elbieux. Mme de G. educates Jeannette along with her own daughter; Jeannette soon becomes adept in the arts of writing and singing, the latter being an essential social grace. Her appearance becomes similarly refined: when her mother and sister come to visit her whilst she is still with Mme de G., they are
greatly impressed by the changes they remark in her. In their eyes, Jeannette has become a lady. She has left her family and village far behind her. For both Jeannette and Marianne have the gift of adaptability. They grow quickly accustomed to their changing environment. When Marianne spends a short time with Mme and Mlle de Fare, she is granted the services of a personal maid for the first time, yet she acquits herself with grace in the ceremony of undressing, assisted by the maid: it comes naturally to her. Again, she passes out with flying colours in the ordeal of her first foray into society, in the company of Mme de Miran, who has specially selected the circle, for she knows that any departures from normal polite procedure on Marianne's part will be excused and her fine qualities will shine forth.

Predictably, Marianne does not disappoint Mme de Miran. Jeannette encounters society when she attends the king's mass, and she is completely overwhelmed by the magnificence of the court, so far removed from her own humble beginnings. Yet she enjoys herself, and is not discouraged from entering this society on future occasions. She is instinctively drawn to the life of the court, almost as if she were aware of the role she would later play within it. Adaptability is an essential attribute of one who wishes to succeed, for otherwise she could not hope to make a place for herself in the polite world, which is the aim of every ambitious young woman.
Certain other qualities must be present in one who wishes to be a success in polite society. At a later stage in the century, sensibility is accepted as a feature of the comparatively virtuous middle classes, but in the earlier years of the century, the finer sentiments are considered the prerogative of the noble. Both Marianne and Jeannette shed sentimental tears in abundance. Marianne is deeply touched by the curé's sister, when she tells Marianne she wishes to take her to Paris, so that she may have the satisfaction of seeing her well-settled before she dies, and a similar scene is enacted when she is called upon to say goodbye to the curé, as it happens, for the last time. Marianne is often moved to tears in her numerous outbursts of gratitude to her benefactress, Mme de Miran; each fresh act of kindness by Mme de Miran is greeted by a flood of grateful tears on Marianne's part. Her sensibility is demonstrated to the full when she is moved to tears on the death of her former oppressor, M. de Climal. Marianne also displays great nobility of sentiment, for she will hide nothing from Mme de Miran, however much it might be in her own interests to do so; when Mme de Fare discovers her true identity - or rather, lack of it - she feels duty bound to inform her benefactress, even although Mme de Miran might now feel that the marriage between Marianne and her son is no longer possible, since Marianne's position is
now public. Marianne's openness is the only way in which she
can repay Mme de Miran's kindness. In her nobleness of
heart, she is even prepared to sacrifice her love. After
confessing she is the object of Valville's love, which
could jeopardise her position in Mme de Miran's favour,
a fact of which she is quite aware, in order not to distress
Mme de Miran, she agrees to renounce Valville and to persuade
him she wishes to take the veil: thereby she will dis-
courage his attentions. She herself is proud of her noble
act. Marianne always gains by her frankness, for Mme de
Miran is deeply impressed by such nobility of mind:

"tu es une fille étonnante, et il a raison de
t'aimer, Va, ajouta-t-elle en me rendant le
billet, si les hommes étaient raisonnables,
il n'y en a pas un quel qu'il soit, qui ne lui
enviait sa conquête. Notre orgueil est bien
petit auprès de ce que tu fais là; tu n'as
jamais été plus digne du consentement que j'ai
donné à l'amour de Valville, et je ne me
retracte point. A quelque prix que ce soit, je
te tiendrai parole; je veux que tu vives avec moi..."

We are, however, left with a little doubt in our minds as
to Marianne's motivation, for she knows from past experience
that Mme de Miran will react favourably to her truthfulness.
We have a hint of Jacob's ambivalence, here, although
Marianne protests that she acted out of purely selfless
motives - or at least believed she did, a turn of phrase
calculated to arouse suspicion:

"Et puis, me direz-vous, vous ne courriez aucun
risque à être franche: vous deviez même y avoir
"pris goût, puisque vous ne vous êtes jamais trouvée que mieux de l'avoir été avec Mme de Miran, et qu'elle avait toujours récompensé votre franchise. J'en conviens, et peut-être ce motif faisait-il beaucoup dans mon cœur; mais c'était du moins sans que je m'en aperçusse, je vous jure, et croyais là-dessus ne suivre que les purs mouvements de ma reconnaissance." (p. 20q).

Marianne also acts with nobility towards Valville, when he has transferred his affections from her person to Mlle Varthon: but Marianne has an ulterior motive here - her action will put him to shame and ensure that he will never forget her. Jeannette is also capable of noble acts: on the marquis's request, she agrees to marry his dying father - his father's last plea. She feels that her act of renunciation raises her to the same heights as her lover. She is capable of the same noble sentiments as the marquis.

The noblewoman is also distinguished by her physical delicacy. Marianne is subject to the customary fits of faintness, as when she is abducted by Valville's family to another convent. She is reduced to the same state when Mme Dutour reveals her true identity, whilst she is staying with Mme de Fare. Delicacy is part of a leisured life; Jeannette makes this point frequently:

"je ne me sentais pas le même courage dont j'avais été capable quelques années auparavant; j'étais devenue plus délicate et moins robuste; élevée en demoiselle, j'en avais contracté les inclinations et les faiblesses, et j'avais perdu peu à peu cette grossièreté qui affronte hardiment le péril." (vol. II, part III, p.10).
This is why she accepts St. Fel’s offer of help. Although, in the name of virtue, she should refuse his aid, she has grown accustomed to a life of luxury, and no longer feels capable of fending for herself. St. Fel is her only resource, if she is to maintain her high standard of living.

In the novel, the young lady who succeeds through her beauty and virtue would seem to be a person out of the common run, with all the attributes generally associated with nobility. She is the natural noblewoman who has had the misfortune to have been born out of her class, but who may quickly adapt to a higher social order, once she has received the necessary polish acquired through education and commerce with polite society. That she is endowed with qualities which run deeper than purely physical charms is made evident by the fact that she owes her rise in fortune not merely to the influence of men but also to women (Marianne to Mme de Miran, Jeannette to Mme de G.). Hence the path to success, as mapped out in the novel, through virtue, differs from the course taken by the young girl who embarks on a career of gallantry, in other respects besides that of the basic opposition between vice and virtue.

Neither Jeannette nor Marianne would describe herself as a ‘parvenue’. Marianne at first accepts gifts from M. Climal, she enjoys flaunting her charms in church – which might be interpreted as the action of one who hopes to attract a rich suitor – but such behaviour stems chiefly from her
vanity. In reality, she has eyes for no other than Valville. Many would be happy to marry her; she could hope for several advantageous matches through her beauty and gifts, but Valville is her true love. When Valville has transferred his affections elsewhere, she considers a very favourable offer of marriage from the comte de Saint-Agnes, only to reject it.¹ In the *Suite* by Mme Riccoboni, Marianne is presented with yet another suitor in the person of the Marquis de Sineri. Marianne is flattered by her new conquest: it pleases her vanity, for the marquis could be considered a very fortunate match—rich, young, handsome and independent. But Mme Riccoboni's Marianne will elect to take the veil, a proposition which revolted Marivaux's heroine. Marianne has always been sure that she is attracted to Valville solely for emotional reasons. One may recall that their first meeting, in the church, she singled him out from all her other admirers. She herself is firmly convinced that her feeling for Valville is not prompted by thoughts of gain: she does not view herself as an adventuress. She is merely following the dictates of her heart.

Jeannette does not consciously scheme to rise in life, but she is, nonetheless, not without art. She realises

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¹. significantly, it is the Marianne of the *Suite* who takes this decision. She lacks the ambivalence of Marivaux's heroine.
that she is in a very uncertain position and therefore does all within her power to stabilise her hold on Mme de G's affection, by insinuating herself into the good graces of Mme de G.'s favourite maid, who therefore encourages Mme de G. to allow Jeannette to remain with her. Like Marianne, however, she cannot be swayed into a match which does not please her heart. M. Gripart is proposed to her, but he holds no charms for Jeannette who has already given her heart to the Marquis, who is young and handsome, whilst Gripart is coarse and repulsive. M.de Saint-Fal, commissioned by the marquis's father to convey her to a convent where the marquis will not find her, is impressed by her. At first, he sees her as an adventuress and treats her accordingly, but his familiarity is rebuffed. The result is that his respect for her - as his love - grows and he proposes marriage. The marquis's father is also deeply attracted to Jeannette, by her beauty, charm and apparent nobility. She has refused St.Fal, although he would marry her and the match would meet with no opposition from an irate father. She has merely condescended to accept his financial and moral support. The elderly marquis also wishes to marry her - any adventuress would gladly seize such an opportunity. Jeannette refuses once again, deigning only to accept the pension he has procured for her at court. She is prepared to accept aid from her suitors, for she sees
no alternative, but she retains her affections, her virtue and her hand for her first and only love. It would have been easier for her to accept a match equally advantageous as an alliance with the marquis, but she elected to wait for him, even when their union seemed well nigh impossible. This is the dream she has always cherished since their first meeting, despite the disparity in their stations in life. In the novel, the one who remains true to virtue and disinterested love, it would seem, is the one who deservedly wins through.

Although in the reality of 18th-century society, the path to success was much the same for the young handsome person of either sex—that is, prestige and wealth attained through influence of physical charms—in the novel, it is not considered respectable for a young woman to attain fortune in such a fashion. The task before the parvenue is harder than that which confronts the parvenu: Jacob is wily, he uses his wits, but his manoeuvres are spontaneous, based on natural instincts. Marianne and Jeannette must subdue any feelings: they must tread carefully the path between virtue and yet some hint of encouragement to their respective lovers. The tale of the virtuous and beautiful young girl of humble birth who succeeds in life, despite her origins, is common in 18th-century fiction. Success is measured in terms of acceptance within the closed circuit of polite society. It should be noted, however, that the
heroine of such a tale is portrayed basically as a noblewoman; she has exceptional gifts and stands apart from her fellow villagers. She 'deserves' her good fortune. Jacob is a rustic, but both Marianne and Jeannette are noblewomen in disguise. In the novel, the heroine who succeeds is necessarily virtuous, or has repented of her wicked former life and has returned to the true path. Nobility of sentiment and virtue are the two qualities she must possess if she is to attain the ultimate honour of marrying into the aristocracy and taking her place in the only worthwhile sphere - in terms of the first half of the 18th-century - that of polite society. During the period in which such tales enjoyed great popularity - principally the earlier half of the century - the ideal was ultra-refinement as represented by the polite society of the town: the young girl has found success when she has been metamorphosed from her simple country self into the delicate figure of the noblewoman of polite society.
CHAPTER 7

THE MAN OF NATURE-SAINT-PREUX

The conventional hero of the 18th-century novel was the nobleman: according to literature, passion and feeling were only to be found in the aristocratic circle. Any character from a lower social sphere was an inferior figure, who strove above all to climb the social ladder. Society (meaning polite society) might be corrupt, but there was no alternative to it. Social life as enacted in this circle was the set pattern; those not born into the privileged classes endeavoured to raise themselves to these heights. One was either a nobleman, or a commoner ashamed of the fact, according to 18th-century literature. All this was true until Rousseau, who, himself very much a commoner in spirit, introduced a new type in his Nouvelle Héloïse. For his novel, he chose a hero who stood apart from polite society, not merely because of his birth, but because of his inclinations; here was one without birth or fortune who declined to force his way into polite society, one who was not inferior to the members of high society but in many ways their superior.

Rousseau's hero is of honest birth, a worthy young man of good family, in the moral sense. But an honest family

1. cf. ch. on Parvenu

2. Saint-Preux's father was a patriot who distinguished himself at the Battle of Vélerghen in 1712, when Bern and Contd. Overleaf
is not sufficient recommendation in polite society; Saint-
Preux lacks the one essential in the eyes of the world —
nobility. At the first glance, he seems to take the path
of the young commoner who wishes to succeed — he professes
love for his noble pupil, Julie d'Etanges, who is socially
his superior. It is the path taken by many an ambitious
young man, but, as Julie herself points out, with one
difference — Saint-Preux is sincere in his protestations of
love. Saint-Preux cares little for the values of polite
society; he lives his life apart and shows no desire to
enter it. He would not have come into contact with this
world and its rigid social structure, had it not been for
his love for Julie. With his love for Julie comes the
realisation that, in the eyes of the world, they are on
different sides of the great social barrier between the
noble and the commoner. Since Saint-Preux feels himself to
be the equal of any man, the notion of his social inferiority

Footnote 2 Contd from page 401
the other Protestant cantons fought against the Catholic
cantons. In l.XXIV, Saint-Fr��ux recounts the moment of his
father's glory as he snatched the enemy flag under the eyes
of his commander, the General de Bacconex. J.S. Spink in his
introduction to Emile in the Pléiade ed., vol.IV of Rousseau's
works, plausibly suggests that Rousseau, when creating the
character of Saint-Preux's father, had in mind a national
hero, Jean-Daniel-Abraham Davel, patriot and defender of his
country, the Pays de Vaud, or some other similar figure.
Saint-Preux's father was a patriot with a country to fight
for, the Pays de Vaud, but no 'patrie', since the Pays de
Vaud was subject to Bern.
would never have struck him, had he not entertained the idea of union with Julie:

"Sans toi, beauté fatale, je n'aurais jamais senti ce contraste insupportable de grandeur au fond de mon âme et de bassesse dans ma fortune; j'aurais vécu tranquille et serais mort content, sans daigner remarquer quel rang j'avais occupé sur la terre." 1

Saint-Preux comes up against prejudice, in its most acute form, personified by the proud Baron d'Etanges, who would never permit such a match for his only daughter. 2 Saint-Preux himself is aware of the baron's attitude but is unable to check his passion for Julie. The baron feels that Saint-Preux's love for Julie brings dishonour on his family; to him, a commoner's audacity in falling in love with his daughter is a greater slur on his honour than her actual seduction, as we gather from the baron's letter to Saint-Preux demanding he release her from her vow never to marry another without his permission (P.3, L.X). The baron's hostile reaction to the notion of Saint-Preux as his son-in-

2. In his footnote to Bomton's letter to Claire on the theme of social 'mésalliance' (P.II, l.II, p. 194), Rousseau decries the social system which causes such misery as the law-suit of La Bédoyère v. La Bédoyère, which seized the public imagination in 1754. Rousseau is alluding to this case in his note to Bomton's letter, as he admits in his letter to Malesherbes (Jan.1751: l, 1244 - Correspondance Complète-Institut et Musée Voltaire-Geneva 1959, Vol. VIII) In 1744, the comte de La Bédoyère's son had married an actor's daughter, Agathe Sticotti. His outraged family had the marriage annulled, against the wishes of the couple concerned, on the score of 'mésalliance'. 
law is based on two points of honour. The one is the aware­ness of his own superiority in terms of the French social structure. The second stems from his personal sense of honour: he begs Julie on his knees to marry the man he has selected for her, Wolmar. His friend Wolmar saved his life and in gratitude he offered him Julie's hand. Wolmar has since lost his fortune, hence to refuse him his daughter now would appear a base act motivated by financial consider­ations. The baron is slow to comprehend the true situation, because he cannot believe that Saint-Preux would dare raise his eyes to Julie, nor that his daughter would deign to reply in the same language. (P.I, I.XXXI). Claire is included in the secret from the very beginning, but even the thoughtless, volatile friend realises the impossibility of the baron's acceptance of a commoner into his family (P.I, I.VII). The baron would never contemplate the match, for he would not dream of accepting a son-in-law who was not of the same ancient nobility as himself.

The baron refuses to see Saint-Preux as a man, but rather as a figure on the social scale: it is the only point on which Saint-Preux stands to lose. All, except the baron - Julie's mother, Claire and her family, Bomston, the villagers and the neighbours - are in favour of the marriage. Apart from the general affection for Julie, and the concern for her happiness, all are ready to admit Saint-Preux's excellent qualities. If any man is worthy of Julie, it is Saint-
Preux, despite his lack of fortune and nobility. Fortune he can yet acquire, through the generosity of Bomston, but nobility is the insurmountable obstacle, as far as the baron is concerned, despite Bomston's insistence that Saint-Preux's fine qualities are of far greater worth than any vain title\(^1\) (P.I,1,IX). Saint-Preux is no less noble a man for want of a title. He has his own code of honour which often differs from the code upheld in polite society, but it is in no way inferior or of lesser importance to him. His code is not an honour which is based on the maxims of polite society; it is removed from the social structure. Saint-Preux differentiates between these two codes in a letter to Julie:\(^2\)

"Je distingue dans ce qu'on appelle honneur celui qui se tire de l'opinion publique, et celui qui dérive de l'estime de soi-même. Le premier consiste en vains préjugés plus mobiles qu'une onde agitée; le second a sa base dans les vérités éternelles de la morale. L'honneur du monde peut être avantageux à la fortune; mais il ne pénètre point dans l'âme, et n'influe en rien sur le vrai bonheur. L'honneur véritable au contraire en forme l'essence, parce qu'on ne

\(^1\) Bomston is prepared to assure Saint-Preux's future in financial terms. For him, the question of inequality of rank is of minor importance in a marriage, which should be based on accord of temperament and character (P.2,1,II to Claire). As an Englishman, he is less concerned than his French counterpart with the social hierarchy, based on the privilege of noble birth: "Que le rang se règle par le mérite et l'union des coeurs par leur choix, voilà le véritable ordre social; ceux qui le règlent par la naissance ou par les richesses sont les vrais perturbateurs de cet ordre." (p.194).

\(^2\) P.I,1,XXIV B de la P., II, p.34.
"trouve qu'en lui ce sentiment permanent de satisfaction intérieure qui seul peut rendre heureux un être pensant."

It is the true honour which guides him in his actions. The baron insists that Saint-Preux should either accept money for his tuition of Julie and Claire — until the baron's arrival, Saint-Preux has rebuffed all attempts by Julie's mother to reward him for his services — or absent himself from the household. For to act as tutor without payment was the privilege of a friend of the family, by society's code of honour, and to admit Saint-Preux as a friend of the family is tantamount to accepting him as an equal, which the baron does not consider Saint-Preux to be. Saint-Preux feels he cannot sell his services. In his eyes, he would degrade himself to the level of the relationship master-servant with regard to the father of his beloved Julie and if he were to accept payment he would be obliged to be loyal

1. It should be noted, however, that Rousseau accepts Montesquieu's theory that honour, the same worldly honour which Saint-Preux does not accept as his personal guiding principle, is the basis of a monarchy. In his Lettre à D'Alembert, he comments on the tribunal, formed of Marshalls of France, which arbitrates points of honour in France: he himself would prefer to call them 'courts of honour'. Such courts should be motivated solely by the consideration of personal honour:

"Ses seules armes doivent être l'honneur et l'infamie; jamais de récompense utile, jamais de punition corporelle..."

2. When Rousseau acted as instructor in the Mably household, he stressed that he wished to fill the role in the same manner as Prévost's 'homme de qualité': that is, he desired to be considered in the light of a gentleman who
to his employer - seduction of his employer's daughter would be a most disloyal and unworthy act; perhaps acceptable in the code of a young man anxious to make his way in life, but untrue to Saint-Freux's sterner code. (P.I,1.XXIV). His code is of paramount importance to him, as essential to him as the conventional code of honor to the man of polite society; if he had to choose between Julie and his honor, the latter would win, or he would not be worthy of her (P.I,1.XXIV). After he loses her, he is dead to all the world. It is his friend, Bomston, who recalls him to his duty by exploiting the other great force in his life apart from his passion, the sense of his own personal honor. To ignore Bomston's plea for help, after the true generosity that Bomston has displayed towards him, is to be an 'ingrat', a state of being contrary to his creed. He must rouse himself from his stupor to satisfy the demand made upon his honor. If he were able to forswear his own code and adopt the morals of polite society, it would be greatly to his advantage, not merely in financial matters but in affairs of the heart, as later developments prove. Despite his great passion for Julie, he could not follow the moral.

Footnote 2 contd from page 406

would be imparting to his pupils the benefit of his own education and experience, rather than as a hireling of inferior social status. It is the distinction between the 'pedant crotté' and the gentleman tutor, as drawn by Montaigne.
in entertaining the idea of adultery. Adultery was an accepted social vice in the 18th century, but Saint-Preux could not commit such an unworthy act. It would be a sin against the ideal of the true man.

If Saint-Preux wished to succeed in the worldly sense, he would be forced to forswear his personal code of honour and to adapt himself to the different standards of polite society. He makes no attempt to conform to the pattern, for to do so would be to negate his own being. He is reluctant to enter the rarefied atmosphere of Parisian high society; it is his love for Julie which obliges him to take this step. Dismissed by Julie in the name of prudence, Saint-Preux accompanies Bomston to Paris, where he is introduced into high society. He feels alone in the crowd, for there is mutual lack of understanding between Saint-Preux and social man, as understood in polite society. His first letter to Julie from Paris draws attention to his bewilderment as he stands on the threshold of the 'world':

"J'entre avec une secrète horreur dans ce vaste désert du monde. Ce chaos ne m'offre qu'une solitude affreuse où règne un morne silence.... Mon coeur voudrait parler, il sent qu'il n'est point écoute; il voudrait répondre, on ne lui dit rien qui puisse aller jusqu'à lui. Je n'entends point la langue du pays, et personne ici n'entend la mienne."

He suspects the Parisian's display of friendliness and his

manifold offers of aid to complete strangers; overwhelming generosity of this nature must be insincere. These offers are made for effect and because it is of good-tone to make them: they lack the 'touching sincerity of a frank soul', (P.2, l.XIV). In a society where effusive demonstrations of politeness are the norm of social intercourse, is it possible, wonders Saint-Péreux, to encounter true friendship and genuine charity? Falsity of manner proves insincerity of heart and soul, follows a pattern of behaviour foreign to his frank and honest being. Saint-Péreux has already pointed out to Julie in an earlier letter that an 'âme sensible' who follows his own code and rejects the corrupt principles of society based on the prejudices of nobility and fortune will be an outcast in this same society:

"Victime des préjugés, il trouvera dans d'absurdes maximes un obstacle invincible aux justes voeux de son coeur. Les hommes le puniront d'avoir des sentiments droits de chaque chose, et d'en juger par ce qui est véritable plutôt que par ce qui est de convention."

Rousseau himself rejected this servile conformity demanded of one who wished to succeed in society; as he points out in his first Discours (Part I), all minds in polite society seem to be cast in the same mould. However, Rousseau when he went to Paris in 1741, as his Confessions reveal, came very close to accepting the social system as it stood;

1. P.I, l.XXVI. B.de la P.II, p.89.
he was prepared to be an 'arriviste'. Mme de Warens needed money to save her from the consequences of her financial mismanagement. Rousseau set out for Paris with his new system of musical notation, with the intention of making a fortune and placing it at the disposal of 'maman'. To succeed, he would have had to conform to the pattern of false flattery and obsequious homage paid to influential members of society. In his Épître à Parisot, Rousseau reveals the change of attitude wrought in him by commerce with Mme de Warens: as a boy, the duties of the citizen were instilled in him; he was taught to respect those in high places, but he was also induced to take pride in himself as their equal, since he, too, was a citizen, with the same privileges and duties. On his first visit to Paris, despite his talents, he was not prepared to grovel before the influential members of polite society, and therefore he could not hope to succeed. His republican upbringing had taught him to regard all men as equal. Then Mme de Warens took him into her care, refined his manners, brought him round to a new way of thinking:

"J'appris à respecter une noblesse illustre
Qui même à la vertu sait ajouter du lustre.
Il ne serait pas bon dans la société
Qu'il fût entre les rangs; moins d'inégalité...
Je connus que surtout cette râdeur sauvage
Dans le monde aujourd'hui serait d'un triste usage;
La modestie alors, devint chère à mon cœur
J'aimai l'humanité; je chéris la douceur
Et respectant des grands le rang et la naissance
Je souffris leurs hauteurs avec cette espérance"
Que malgré tout l'éclat dont ils sont revêtus
Je les pourrais du moins égaler en vertus."  

Prior to his arrival in Paris, Rousseau paid a visit to all his acquaintances who might be able to provide him with useful contacts in Paris. Once in the city, after the failure of most of these recommendations, and having met with no success at the Academy with his notation of musical notes, he took the advice of Father Castel, and paid court to the ladies, for it is with them that the key to success often lies. After his experience in Paris and a spell as secretary to the French Ambassador in Venice, followed by an attempt to succeed in the financial world, the source of many an ambitious young man's rise in fortune, however, the disenchanted Rousseau reverted to his former ideas. He gave up his job to concentrate on writing and took to copying music as a means of support for Thérèse and himself, for, as he says himself:

"n'aurais-je pas bonne grâce, caissier d'un receveur général des finances, à prêcher le désintéressement et la pauvreté?"

The opera he wrote attained success, and he was offered the chance of a pension from the king when his work was performed at court. But he did not 'belong' in the courtly circle; his simple dress stood out among the brilliant attire of the courtiers, and his manners echoed the contrast in relation

1. Confessions, Book VII; Pléiade vol. I.
to the ways of court. He declined to appear before the king, although he was aware that his refusal entailed the loss of his proposed pension, which would have considerably improved his financial situation, never in a brilliant state:

"Je perdais, il est vrai, la pension qui m'était offerte en quelque sorte; mais je m'exemptais aussi du joug qu'elle allait imposer. Adieu la vérité, la liberté, le courage. Comment oser parler d'indépendance et de désintéressement? Il ne fallait plus que flatter ou me taire en recevant cette pension." 

After a false start, Rousseau was saved from submerging his personality within the conventions of society; Saint-Preux, on the other hand, resists the temptation from the very beginning. We have seen how he felt alien in Parisian society: his standpoint is that of the very young Rousseau; he is the equal of any man in society, despite his birth. He is outside aristocratic society, yet he does not feel inferior to it, he does not wish to be integrated into it. His values are not the values of society, which, to him, are corrupt. Even if he wished to succeed in French polite society, the task would be hard indeed, for he is a foreigner and of a different religion (P.2,1.XVII). And to succeed he would be forced to accept society's scale of values: he realtime, as Rousseau himself did, that merit alone is not the key to success. To gain a place in society, he must possess other talents which are alien to his frank and upright nature. If he were possessed of such wiles,

1. Ibid., book VIII, p.380.
Julie could not consent to be his; she could not love a man of this calibre:

"L'austérité républicaine n'est pas de mise en ce pays; il y faut des vertus plus flexibles, et qui sachent mieux se plier aux intérêts des amis, et des protecteurs. Le mérite est honoré, j'en conviens; mais ici les talents qui mènent à la réputation ne sont point ceux qui mènent à la fortune; et quand j'aurais le malheur de posséder ces derniers, Julie se résoudrait-elle à devenir la femme d'un parvenu?"

But even to be admitted as an observer into this society, Saint-Preux must adopt some of society's ways; consequently, he attempts to select the good from the bad and to incorporate these ideas into his personality (P.2, l.XVII). Yet he endeavours to retain as much of his former way of life as he possibly can, unlike the parvenu, who is eager to adapt himself to any rise in fortune. We have an instance of this aspect of Saint-Preux when, in his excitement at receiving a letter from Julie, he loses his way and is reluctantly forced to hire a carriage to take him back to his lodgings on the other side of Paris (P.2, l. XXII). Despite his rise in fortune, he is not in the least tempted to change his style of living. As Julie pointed out to him, the greatest pleasure in a rise in fortune is the opportunity it affords to share it with others, for:

"tant que quelqu'un manque du nécessaire, quel honnête homme a du superflu?"

2. (P.2, l.XIII). p.231.
To ape the ways of polite society is the peccadillo of the parvenu: Saint-Preux, as a true republican, wishes to help others less fortunate than himself. He despises the wealthy nobles who have evolved a special way of life to which all must conform if they are to be considered of importance in this society. The young man who wished to climb the social ladder, a 'Jacob' would exert his energies to attain this standard of living, in order to be accepted as a member of polite society, despite the inequality inherent in such a system. Saint-Preux criticises it rather than conforming to it. (P. 2, 1, XVII). His three-year voyage round the world after his term in Paris effaces any Parisian affectations he may have contracted. On his return from his world-voyage, he visits Julie, then Claire: Claire is astounded to discover no trace of the mannerisms of polite society in his behaviour, a very rare phenomenon in a young man who has spent some time in Paris at a point in his career when he is very vulnerable and impressionable (P. 4, 1, IX).

The good character of Saint-Preux is not finally corrupted by contact with Parisian manners, but he is not incorruptible. He is young and passionate and weak. He is forced to conform to the manners of polite society to a certain degree merely through the fact that he is a visitor within it; at the same time, he wishes to retain his own
personality and maxims. The middle path Saint-Preux attempts to tread is fraught with dangers, and without Julie's help it is possible, indeed probable, that Saint-Preux would have fallen into the trap of conformity to society's ways not through a desire to succeed, but through weakness. He himself is aware of being slowly sucked into the whirlpool of Parisian society; he despises the lack of true sentiment and the falsity of polite society, yet he cannot avoid being affected by the example set by all those who perform within this society. He is conscious of the process within himself; he is forced to look his own sentiments away and take on a new personality each time he sets out into society, and he is thus developing a new social being:

"insensiblement je juge et raisonne comme j'entends juger et raisonner tout le monde. Si quelquefois j'essaie de secouer les préjugés, et de dire les choses comme elles sont, à l'instant je suis écrasé d'un certain verbiage qui ressemble beaucoup à du raisonnement..."

He feels he is thus defiling the inner sanctuary of his being where Julie is enthroned, but he is powerless to interrupt this process. It is Julie's wise advice after his downfall which makes him true unto himself once more. Even before the event, Julie is troubled by the company Saint-Preux keeps in Paris: she fears that his weakness will cause him to follow the example set by his companions, the acquaintances

of Bomston. She has no worry that he will be tempted by gross pleasures of the flesh, for he is an 'âme sensible', but, she tells him:

"je crains cette force terrible que doit avoir l'exemple universel et continué du vice...."1

Julie returns to this point in a later letter, (P.3, l.XVII), telling Saint-Preux how she feared that he might be corrupted in polite society and finally become nothing more than 'un homme à bonnes fortunes'. He is weak in that he fears ridicule: this is why he consents to adapt himself to some extent to the society in which he has taken the role of observer. Fear of ridicule is the force which governs this society; and it is contagious. But fear of ridicule can lead one, albeit unwittingly, into bad ways. When Saint-Preux is taken to the house in which he is untrue both to Julie and himself, he senses the outcome of the evening on his arrival, but, as Julie points out, (P.2, l.XVII), he fears ridicule if he leaves, and therefore he stays. He has allowed himself to drift into the wrong company who are bent on his corruption, for they interpret his sterner values as a reproach to their conduct, and they therefore wish to bring him down to their level. Saint-Preux, overestimating his own powers and ignoring his own weakness, sets himself as their mentor. Julie points out, however, that he is too

young to be their teacher, and since he himself is not devoid of faults, he is therefore not qualified to attempt the reformation of others (P.2,1. XXVII). If he wishes to study society, he is frequenting a sterile milieu. He is keeping company with the very section of society he has cause to hate, whilst ignoring those of his own social standing. Yet it is in the humble homes, Julie reminds him, that naked emotions may be studied, without the mask of conformity exacted in polite society. Saint-Preux is sensitive to ridicule whether from strangers or from friends. When Bomston conducts him back to Clarens, after his vivid dream of the death-veil over Julie's face, Saint-Preux turns back without revealing his presence to Julie and Claire. He himself is proud of this effort, but Claire interprets his action as fear of ridicule (P.5, 1. X).

His fear of ridicule is the social vice 'par excellence': he has also allowed some aspects of the worldly code of honour to encroach upon his own code, as in the matter of his proposed duel with Bomston. Again, it is Julie who restores him to himself. Saint-Preux's passionate nature has triumphed over his better judgement, but, as Julie points out, if he insists on the duel, he is confirming rather than denying the suspicions voiced by Bomston; all is lost thereby and nothing gained. Besides, Bomston's speculations on the nature of their relationship are correct, Saint-Preux is
therefore ready to murder a man who is but speaking the truth, an act which would negate his own personal code, in the empty name of honour. Julie reminds him of the differentiations he himself made in an earlier letter to her between the real and apparent honour:

"Gardez-vous...de confondre le nom sacré de l'honneur avec ce préjugé féroce qui met toutes les vertus à la pointe d'une épée, et n'est propre qu'à faire de braves scélérats." 

This is the code which her father follows, and which has given him cause for life-long remorse, as he killed his best friend in a duel, in his younger days. Saint-Preux makes another displaced call on his honour when he refuses to share Julie's purse in the name of honour. Julie is aware that, since Saint-Preux is far from his own country and without fortune, his pocket will be strained by the voyage she has requested him to undertake, she therefore sends him a small sum to supplement his own purse (P.I,1.XV). Saint-Preux refuses the money in the name of his honour, 'un dépôt sacré, l'unique...qui me reste.' (P.I,1.XV I). Julie sends him a larger sum, persuading him that he is guilty of false pride in this instance. She has sacrificed her honour to him, why need he fear the loss of his honour at her hands? Besides, although it might be degrading to accept money from a woman as a reward for services rendered to her, there is to be no

false pride between two sincere lovers. All wealth is common property in love. Once again, Saint-Preux is forced to recognise that Julie is wiser than he. Saint-Preux, then, is outside aristocratic society, both of necessity and by choice; he feels he is above it. In some ways he is weak and succumbs to the corrupting influence of society, but he is basically honest and true. The person who causes him to come into contact with this society, Julie, is also the one who saves him from its corruption. Saint-Preux's education and upbringing have not prepared him for a life in polite society.

The training Saint-Preux has received, his natural talents and inclinations, fit him for a different form of society. Saint-Preux sees himself as a citizen, hence his insistence on equality. He is moulding himself into a citizen; he is a patriot - but he has no 'patrie'¹, for Saint-Preux was born in the Pays de Vaud, territory subject to Bern. It would be impossible for Saint-Preux to become a fully integrated member of any form of society other than a republic. The republic, composed of a body of citizens, is the ideal of both Rousseau and Saint-Preux. This ideal is represented for them by ancient Rome, its citizens by the Roman heroes. The influence of the Romans on Rousseau is not to be underestimated: the young Jean-Jacques, at

¹ 'presque sans patrie' - P.I,1.XXI B de la P. p.73.
the tender age of seven years, was an avid reader of Plutarch, whose writings had a great effect on his young mind:

"De ces intéressantes lectures, des entretiens qu'elles occasionnaient entre mon père et moi, se forma cet esprit libre et républicain, ce caractère indomptable et fier, impatient de joug et de servitude, qui m'a tourmenté tout le temps de ma vie.....Sans cesse occupé de Rome et d'Athènes, vivant pour ainsi dire avec leurs grands hommes, né moi-même citoyen d'une république et fils d'un père dont l'amour de la patrie était la plus forte passion, je m'en enflammais à son exemple; je me croyais Grec ou Romain."¹

Saint-Preux has the same attitude towards the Ancients; his admiration is elicited by the stern virtue and dedicated patriotism of the Roman hero. He strives to emulate those virtues; they provide a model on which to fashion his behaviour. When he seeks to justify his projected suicide to Bomston, he quotes the cases of Roman citizens who took their own lives (P.3,1.XXI). His emulation of the Roman hero provides a plane on which he can be reached; one of Julie's arguments rests on the absence of the personal battle in the life of the Roman citizen (P.2,1.LIII).

Rousseau's other ideal of the republic is represented by the cantons of Switzerland, more particularly by Geneva. Rousseau was born the son of a patriot and citizen in the republic of Geneva. His very early years were spent in Geneva, assimilating the ideals and duties of the citizen.²

¹ Confessions, Book I.B de la P. I, p.9.
² cf. L'Épitre à Parisot; Confessions, Book I.
Rousseau continually voices his admiration for the people of Geneva. It is of the ideal size — the number of citizens must be limited to permit the proper functioning of the democratic process. The citizens themselves are virtuous, free of the vices of Parisian society, they are lovers of the countryside and the family circle; the dissipations of Paris, including the theatre, where vices are held up for emulation to the audience, are foreign to their way of life, and would lead the citizen to eventual corruption. In his novel, Rousseau relies on another spokesman apart from Saint-Preux (who could not be expected, as Rousseau's alter ego and as an admirer of Republican virtues, to speak of Geneva in any but glowing terms) to voice his praise of Geneva — Claire d'Orbe. Claire visits Geneva on the occasion of her brother's wedding, there, and she is impressed by the republic and its people; it is, by implication, the equal of Rome:

"les habitants sont hospitaliers, les moeurs sont honnêtes et la liberté semble s'y être réfugiée. Plus je contemple ce petit État, plus je trouve qu'il est beau d'avoir une patrie; et Dieu garde de mal tous ceux qui pensent en avoir une, et n'ont pourtant qu'un pays. Pour moi, je sens que, si j'étais née dans celui-ci, j'aurais l'âme toute romaine... Mais pourquoi donc Rome, et toujours Rome? Restons à Genève."3

1. Contrat Social
2. Lettre à D'Alembert
3. P.6, I.V. B de la P. II, p.657
Claire admires the frank nature of the Genevan, who makes no attempt to disguise his true character. Claire finds, however, that their natural mode of expression, devoid of all spontaneity, gaiety and feeling, is not to her taste, and they are singularly attached to money. But more serious vices are creeping into their society: the citizens who return to their country after a spell abroad bring with them the vices current in other climes. For the Genevan is but too ready to denigrate his own simple and honest way of life and to adopt the corrupt manners rampant in other societies. This part, the citizen of Geneva rarely resorts to the obsequious manners of the Parisian:

"Quelque avide qu'il puisse être, on ne le voit guère aller à la fortune par des moyens serviles et bas; il n'aime point s'attacher aux grands et ramper dans les cours. L'esclavage personnel ne lui est pas moins odieux que l'esclavage civil."¹

A free man, a citizen, cannot accept the limitation imposed on his freedom by the manners of polite society. Both Rousseau and Saint-Troëx maintain this attitude before the commonplaces of polite society. Geneva remained the ideal for Rousseau despite the shabby treatment meted out to him by the government of Geneva, and despite his renouncing his citizenship in 1763. For it must be said that Rousseau comprehended but little the true political situation in

¹. Ibid. pp.662-663.
Geneva, which was far from being unity.\footnote{cf. J.-J. \textit{Rousseau et Genève} by J. S. Spink for a detailed analysis.}

Saint-Preux is the son of a patriot, and he aspires to follow in his father's footsteps. His father was not of noble birth, but he was a great patriot, his patriotism being a greater source of pride for Saint-Preux than a lengthy family tree. The Baron d'Etanges rejects Saint-Preux as a match for Julie on the grounds of his common birth, yet Saint-Preux's father has shown greater nobility, in the wider sense of the term, than the Baron. Bonston stresses this fact in his appeal to the baron to permit the match between Julie and Saint-Preux (P.I,1.LXII). Julie's father served under a foreign prince and was well-paid for his services on the battlefield. Saint-Preux's father, however, was a true patriot; he would only fight for his own country, and solely for the glory of serving his land in its time of need. For Rousseau, it was an
honour to shed one's blood for the glory of the 'patrie',
ignominy to serve a foreign prince. In Émile, he points out
to his pupil that it is his duty to serve his country when
he calls him (b.P.188) Service in the army of a foreign prince
for which a generous payment is received reduces one to the
level of a mercenary, a state of being which excludes any
sense of duty. Imbued with this notion, Saint-Preux
refuses a company in a regiment destined to serve under the
King of Sardinia; as he tells Julie:

"Je pense que chacun doit sa vie et son sang
à la patrie; qu'il n'est pas permis de s'aliéner
à des princes auxquels on ne doit rien, moins
encore de se rendre, et de faire du plus noble
métier du monde celui d'un vil mercenaire. Ces
maximes étaient celles de mon père que je serais
bien heureux d'imiter dans son amour pour
ses devoirs et pour son pays. Il ne voulut
jamais entrer au service d'aucun prince étranger;
mais, dans la guerre de 1712, il porta les
armes avec honneur pour la patrie; il se trouva
dans plusieurs combats, à l'un desquels il fut
blessé; et à la bataille de Wilmerghen il eut
le bonheur d'enlever un drapeau ennemi sous les
yeux du général de Sacconex."

The true patriot does not seek personal glory on the battle-
field, but the common good.

Footnote 1 Contd from page 424.

Julie's marriage and her acceptance of the existing social
order or set of values. Wolmar and Julie set up a new
community divorced from any of the corrupting influences
of society. In this community, Saint-Preux is but a
visitor. He figures in it as a welcome guest, yet none-
theless, remains detached from it.

l.P.I, 1.XXXIV B de la P.II p.108.
The Swiss, for Rousseau, represent virtue and the citizen; the two ideas are closely linked. The citizen, by definition, is virtuous. The citizen lives for the common good — this is virtue. With Rome and Geneva as the ideal, virtue translates itself, in terms of communal living, into a certain austerity of manner, a sternness of tone, which excludes any exuberant display of emotion. Virtue is interpreted as a negation of the weaker aspects of man; whilst passion is the spontaneous expression of nature. Saint-Preux's love for Julie consumes his whole being, thereby effacing any trace of the level-headed philosopher, who remains immune from any deep emotion, which is personal consideration possibly detrimental to the good of the whole. In his passion Saint-Preux is weak; he lacks the calm of the philosopher — the title of philosopher is awarded him by Claire (P.I, l.VII), but he has yet to acquire the cool detachment which is an essential attribute of the philosopher.¹

¹ Wolmar has the detachment of a philosopher, but he recognises the limitations imposed by such a character. He admits his incapacity to experience deep emotion, which alone brings us close to our fellow men: "peu sensible au plaisir et à la douleur, je n'éprouve même que très faiblement ce sentiment d'intérêt et d'humanité qui nous apprécie les affections d'autrui... Mon seul principe actif est le goût naturel de l'ordre..." (P.4, l.XII, p.490)

Deep emotion is also necessary, claims Wolmar, for generous action:
"Il n'y a que des âmes de feu qui sachent combattre et

Contd Overleaf
His passion is violent and sensual; the letters 'burn the paper'. Julie is aware of both his fiery temperament and his weakness; his temperament is his weakness. She neglects to tell him of her hopes of a pregnancy, for she knows he would have brought matters prematurely to a head.

"Tu as trop d'empportement pour avoir de la prudence."

In another letter (P.6, l.VIII), she notes that he is 'l'homme fragile' and not a 'méchant': his mistakes arise from his weakness, not from a deliberate design to do evil. Claire, although, outwardly at least, far from level-headed, is herself able to recognise this lack of self-mastery within Saint-Preux. It is for this reason that she warns Julie of the dangers of a confrontation between the baron and Saint-Preux, 'un jeune homme emporté qui ne sait rien endurer.' (P.I, l.LVI). Saint-Preux lacks the wisdom of a philosopher: he is often handled by the other characters as if he were a child. His passion is of the type commonly associated with the very young man. Claire refers to Saint-Preux as being their junior, in her mind; at Clarens,

Footnote 1 Contd from page 425

"vaincre. Tous les grands efforts, toutes les actions sublimes sont leur ouvrage; la froide raison n'a jamais rien fait d'illustre..." (Ibid., p.493).

Saint-Preux looks upon himself as the child of the household. (P.5,1.II). Bomston is also aware of the weakness in Saint-Preux, which stems from his passion for Julie. Saint-Preux is presented as an impetuous young man by design, for this spontaneity excludes the possibility of his being the cool, calculated corrupt young man of the world, as found in the rake who figures prominently in French polite society.

Bomston and Saint-Preux in many ways form a pair, with the same ideals and similar misfortunes in life: they understand one another. Bomston is not the calm philosopher he imagines himself to be—witness his hasty temper in his encounter with Julie's father (P.1,1.LXIII), and the proposed duel with Saint-Preux—but he is more master of his passion than is Saint-Preux, perhaps because his affections have been bestowed in two separate cases, whereas all emotion within Saint-Preux is concentrated on his sole passion. Besides, the 18th-century Englishman is a cool, stoical figure, an image which echoes that of the Roman hero. Bomston, too, is a patriot; he is proud to belong to the 'seule nation d'hommes qui reste parmi les troupeaux divers dont la terre est couverte' (P.5,1.I). He serves his country valiantly on the battlefield; he performs his civic duties in his capacity as peer of the realm. He is the friend who encourages the manly virtues
within Saint-Preux, who helps Saint-Preux to distinguish between the qualities necessary to perform his duties and his natural passions. The twin poles of Saint-Preux's existence are neatly defined in his attitude to suicide. He justifies himself to Bomston on the grounds that many Roman citizens took their own lives (P. III, l. XXI). But, as Bomston harshly reminds him, these citizens did not commit suicide out of weakness, out of disappointed love, or because they were tired of life, but for the good of their country. (P. 3, l. XXII). Bomston heaps scorn on Saint-Preux's unmanliness in an attempt to rouse him from his apathy:

"Une douleur inséparable te rend stupide et impitoyable. Tu n'es pas un homme, tu n'es rien, et, si je ne regardais à ce que tu peux être, tel que tu es, je ne vois rien dans le monde audessous de toi."

Saint-Preux considers himself of no use in society; he has no role to play in society and therefore is merely a burden to it (P. 3, l. XXI). Bomston contemptuously dismisses this argument:

"Tu parles des devoirs du magistrat et du père de famille; et, parce qu'ils ne te sont pas imposés, tu te crois affranchi de tout. Et la société à qui tu dois ta conservation, tes talents, tes lumières; la patrie à qui tu appartiens; les malheureux qui ont besoin de

Saint-Preux can succour the needy, dispose of Bomston's purse for this purpose; he has a duty to aid the unfortunate, and if he refuses to carry out the task, he is a 'méchant'. For to live without doing good is to be a useless citizen, and a vicious one.

Bomston feels that it is time that Saint-Preux conquered his passions and gave way to the reign of reason. His love must be acknowledged to be impossible, and the reign of passion supreme must come to an end. In the ten years of its duration, Saint-Preux has suffered the greatest torments and known the heights of ecstasy; he has run the gauntlet of human emotions, and must surely now be drained of emotion and immune to further passion. He has travelled the world over, and knows every clime. Such a wide experience forms the apprenticeship which an aspiring philosopher must serve; he has experienced all that falls within the scope of man. Now he must turn his eye inward and understand all he has suffered, enjoyed, seen; as Bomston says:

"À trente ans passés il est temps de songer à soi; commence donc à rentrer en toi-même,"

2. P. 5,1.I B de la P.II,p.523.
"et sois homme une fois avant la mort." (p.523).

Passion is a weakness in Saint-Preux's make-up, yet, at the same time, his love for Julie is also a source of virtue. Saint-Preux reveres Julie because of her virtue; to Saint-Preux, she is virtue incarnate. Her physical attractions could never have quickened such a passion within him without her fine inner qualities. Saint-Preux has always admitted that Julie is the stronger of the two; it is always Julie who must force Saint-Preux to make the right decision, to undertake journeys away from her. From the very beginning of their relationship, Julie has been portrayed as the stronger partner. "I cannot flee you of my own accord," declares Saint-Preux, "deign to forbid me your presence" (P.I,1.1). It is finally Julie who dismisses Saint-Preux, in the name of her virtue. She inspires Saint-Preux with the virtue with which he may combat the weakness produced in him by his passion. She is thereby providing him with the tool to master his overwhelming love for her, or at least to transform his passion into a tender emotion better suited to their new relationship. Whilst in Paris, Saint-Preux determines to copy Julie's letters into a book which will serve him as an antidote to the poisons of life, to the corruption of society. It is Julie who redeems him after his fall in Paris, who conserves in him the virtue of the citizen: Saint-Preux writes to her from Paris:
All his life will be spent in an effort to prove himself worthy of Julie; even when all hope of union with Julie has vanished. In a letter to Claire (P.5,1.IX), he declares that, having passed one half of his life nourishing an unhappy love, he will dedicate the other half to justifying this passion, by paying homage to Julie through his virtues. (P.5,11 IX). When he is by her side, he feels purified, she calms the storm in his breast stirred by thoughts of her when she is absent; he confides to Bomston;

"Sa vue apaise mon trouble, ses regards épurent mon cœur."  

Saint-Preux dreams three times in the same night of the death of Julie; terrified, he wakes Bomston, who expresses contempt at his show of unmanliness. Saint-Preux admits he is not a man if Julie dies, for;

"Tout ce que j'avais de bon venait d'elle; je ne la reverrai jamais; je ne suis plus rien."  

Bomston, too, is aware that Saint-Preux owes much of the finer side of his nature to Julie: in his opinion, they

2. P.4, l.XV p.512.  
have both raised each other to greater heights. It has been convincingly argued that Saint-Preux rather destroys Julie's nature, her virtue, than augments its power, but it might be argued that Saint-Preux brings Julie's virtue to the fore: his own love, and the love he inspires in Julie's breast for him, enables Julie to exercise her virtue, to attain a higher achievement in renunciation and obedience to her father. Saint-Preux loves virtue not merely for itself, nor mainly for itself - but because virtue is Julie, Julie is the embodiment of virtue, for him. His strength stems from his very weakness, a fact which Bomston recognises:

"Votre force même est l'ouvrage de votre faiblesse. Savez-vous ce qui vous a fait aimer toujours la vertu? Elle a pris à vos yeux la figure de cette femme adorable qui la représente si bien...Mais ne l'aimerez-vous jamais pour elle seule, et n'irez-vous point au bien par vos propres forces, comme Julie a fait par les siennes?"

Saint-Preux must love virtue completely divorced from Julie, before he can become a truly wise man, a philosopher. It must become an ideal, devoid of passion. But the climb to this goal is arduous, and Saint-Preux has yet to reach the summit. Saint-Preux cannot obey the stern rules set out by virtue where they oppose his passion for Julie. Adultery was rejected by Saint-Preux in an earlier letter to Julie, but Bomston affects to believe that

2. P.5, 1.I p.524.
Saint-Preux would succumb to temptation if Julie were not strong. Saint-Preux loves Julie because of her virtue, which inspires greater virtue in him, in his desire to emulate her. Yet it is this very virtue which compels him to renounce his passion; only in renouncing Julie is he worthy of her. Virtue—in its specialised meaning as love of the public good, the subjugation of personal interests—is a necessary attribute of the citizen: it is the citizen's guiding principle. Saint-Preux is a potential citizen; he has not yet reached the ideal of the stoic Roman. He may prove his worth, however, by mastering his personal feeling, to translate it into terms more conducive to the harmony of Julie's immediate circle. But even should Saint-Preux consolidate his claim to the honourable title of citizen, he could not find his rightful place, for his country, the Pays de Vaud, is subject to Bern, and is therefore not the necessary body of the republic. Saint-Preux is a potential citizen, but without a 'patrie'.

If Saint-Preux cannot accept life in polite society, if he is a citizen without a country, we may well ask ourselves, where does he fit? The answer is the same as for Rousseau—Saint-Preux is outside society, composed by man, but thrives in nature. Rousseau advocates a return to nature to regain the true values of life:
man has now become a social animal; the process of evolution cannot be reversed to transform him back into primitive man. But perhaps a new golden age¹ may be created, as formerly when man was close to nature and possessed of virtue, half-way between primitive man and social man, as we understand him. The sophisticated social man cannot return to his primitive state, but one may attempt to preserve the goodness of natural man in society. Man in the state of nature is good, that is, not aggressive towards his fellows, according to Rousseau; consequently, Saint-Freux, the man of nature, is basically 'good'. A life passed close to nature is the ideal of the simple, honest man; hence a life spent in the country is preferable to life in the town, as Saint-Freux remarks:

"La condition naturelle à l'homme est de cultiver la terre et de vivre de ses fruits."²

Rousseau himself was never happy living in Paris. During the time spent in Paris, he participated in the various pleasures offered in the city, experienced all the refinements created to conceal the emptiness of life in polite society. 

1. Rousseau is obviously tailoring his material to suit the taste of the reading public - French polite society. To suggest any alternative to the existing social pattern - such as a republic - would have been unacceptable to his readers.

2. P.5, l.II p.534
society. Yet, whilst in the midst of the greatest luxury and delicacy, he longed for his simple country pursuits, for communion with nature. For this reason, he sought refuge at the Ermitage, in memory of his happy time in the country:

"Depuis que je m'étais, malgré moi, jeté dans le monde, je n'avais cessé de regretter mes chères Charmettes, et la douce vie que j'y avais menée. Je me sentais fait pour la campagne et la retraite; il m'était impossible de vivre heureux ailleurs..... à Paris, dans le tourbillon de la grande société, dans la sensualité des soupers, dans l'éclat des spectacles, dans la fumée de la gloriole, toujours mes bosquets, mes ruisseaux, mes promenades solitaires, venaient, par leur souvenir, me distraire, me contrister, m'arracher des soupirs et des désirs."  

The nostalgia grew too strong, and forced him to seek refuge in nature. Rousseau never returned to the city, once he had immersed himself in the joys of country life once more.

Saint-Preuse is not happy in the town, he yearns after the simple rural delights: This is why Clarens holds such a strong attraction for him. Here, life is simple and honest; all the inhabitants work hard, and spend their leisure time together engaged in honest pursuits. They lead healthy lives in the bosom of nature, working the land and living off it. They have no desire

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for the expensive and varied diversions offered in the city; nor do they need the erotic dishes under which the tables of the wealthy groan in Paris, for their honest toil gives appetite for their plain but fresh country fare. (P.5,1.II). The countryman does not ape the artificial life created in polite society, but he lives instead as nature intended, 'de la vie de l'homme, et pour laquelle il est né.' Saint-Preux appreciates that the inhabitants of Clarens are real men, not the stereotyped copies of the fashionable figure which populate Paris. They are natural men, who have no need to hide behind the mask of conformity:

"Leur cœur ni leur esprit ne sont façonnés par l'art; ils n'ont point appris à se former sur nos modèles, et l'on n'a pas peur de trouver en eux l'homme de l'homme au lieu de celui de la nature."1

The appeal of nature for Saint-Preux lies in the freedom it offers to the individual. As a citizen, one's freedom is necessarily limited, but one is free in nature to be oneself. For Rousseau, the pastoral state was the golden age; even the growth of agriculture represented a form of decadence.2 Saint-Preux scorns the carefully-planned gardens in vogue; it is free nature which evokes

1. P.5,1. II p.554.
2. 2nd. Discours
a response from within him. He responds to the garden Julie has cultivated, her 'Elysium': its appeal lies in its apparent lack of cultivation. It appears to be in the natural state, untouched by human hand, it is recreated nature. He cannot tolerate the confinement of the free creatures of nature and is relieved to find that the birds of the 'Elysium' remain there of their own accord, and not because they are imprisoned in an aviary. (P.4,1.XI). One cannot be entirely free within a community; this is part of the social contract, one must renounce a degree of natural liberty to become part of the sovereign. If one is to benefit from the protection afforded by the laws, one must be prepared to obey them oneself. According to Rousseau, the natural state of man is isolation, where he meets with no limits to his liberty, other than those of his strength. Rousseau/Saint-Preux finds peace and fulfilment of self in communion with nature, away from other members of the human race. Saint-Preux details to Bomston his calm meditations in the solitude of nature, experienced in Julie's Elysium. (P.4,1.XI). Away from society, cut off from his fellow men, lost in nature, Saint-Preux is free to be himself. One is not allowed to play one's nature out to
the full in society; as Burgelin remarks in his interpretation of Rousseau's thought:

"Depuis que l'homme est social, il n'a plus le droit de s'enfermer en soi pour jouir de sa propre bonté, de son existence."

One is forced to play a certain role, to mask one's true identity.

Saint-Preux, however, enjoys his emotions to the full: all his being is concentrated in his passion. He is consequently oblivious to the sorrow of others. All the other characters are forced to participate in his emotions, but he is barely susceptible to their feelings. Julie emphasises that he is full of self-pity; he complains bitterly at their separation, but, as Julie points out, he must consider her sorrow too (P.2.l.VII). The moments are rare when he recollects that she suffers in her love for him, as he does in his passion for her. Julie attains sublimation of the self in her service to others. Rousseau enjoys the same egocentricity as Saint-Preux. Saint-Preux is capable of an isolated act of altruism - he dissuades Bomston from a disastrous marriage with Lauretta Pisana, although he believes this will cost him his dearest dream, that of spending the rest of his life.

1. For detailed analysis of this aspect, cf. La Philosophie de l'Existence de Rousseau by P. Burgelin, p. 39.
life at Clarens - but, in the main, like Rousseau, he plays out his character to the full, immerses himself in his own being. In this, he is natural man. His emotion is often translated in terms of nature. He attempts to prove to Dombton that suicide is a law of nature:

"chercher son bien et fuir son mal en ce qui n'offense point autrui, c'est droit de la nature. Quand notre vie est un mal pour nous, et n'est un bien pour personne, il est donc permis de s'en délivrer...En quelque lieu qu'il (Dieu) me place, soit dans un corps, soit sur la terre, c'est pour rester autant que j'y suis bien, et pour en sortir dès que j'y suis mal. Voilà la voix de la nature et la voix de Dieu."1

Passion is nature for Saint-Preux: he explores his passion to the very depths; it is his way of life. Saint-Preux does not wish to combat his love - he does so, finally, only to bow to the law of necessity and to follow the rules imposed by Julie - for him it is but a manifestation of nature in its purest form. Despite numerous assurances on his part to the contrary, he widens their relationship from the purely spiritual sphere to embrace the physical, as this to his mind obeys the laws of nature. It is nature as manifested in the passionate Saint-Preux. Saint-Preux's whole being is taken up by his passion for Julie; he is the personification of passionate love. Saint-Preux here echoes

the nature of his creator: Saint-Preux is Rousseau, not merely as he was but as he would have liked to be. Rousseau is sensitive to the depths of passion lying dormant and unused within him; he mourns the waste of this wealth of passion:

"croyant approcher du terme de ma carrière, sans avoir goûté dans sa plénitude presque aucun des plaisirs dont mon cœur était aisé, sans avoir donné l'essor aux vifs sentiments que j'y sentais en réserve, sans avoir savouré, sans avoir effleuré du moins cette enivrante volupté que je sentais dans mon âme en puissance...

Rousseau endows Saint-Preux with this store of emotion, creates Saint-Preux's very being out of his passion. We are never informed of Saint-Preux's real name; even the name awarded to him by his two pupils and employed by all, is not imparted to us until Part IV. It was common for the young lover of the 18th-century novel to have the prefix 'Saint' incorporated into his name. It is Claire who invents it - as a game - he is a 'preux chevalier'. All within Saint-Preux is dedicated to his love; he lives out his nature to the full in his love. Julie is the fountain of his being:

"N'es-tu pas la première source de toutes les affections de mon âme?"

2. F.I,1.XLVII. p.130.
Julie urges Saint-Preux to marry Claire: this would be an advantageous match for him, and he feels great affection for Claire, but he could never marry another. For Julie has become his whole being; it is she who gives him substance; in pledging his faith to another, no matter how close to Julie, he would be untrue to himself. Bomston can imagine what Julie might have been without Saint-Preux, but not what Saint-Preux would have been without her. Saint-Preux never takes on any other identity. His life can never be passed without reference to Julie. During her lifetime, the greater part of his thoughts and actions bear directly on Julie; even after her death, his life will be spent at Clarens where a sort of cult grows up to the memory of Julie.

Although her heart is still given over to Saint-Preux, Julie manages to fulfil her duties in a life apart from him; she transcends her passion and flourishes in a world she has built up without him. For Saint-Preux, the matter is simple: his passion for Julie is his life; he sees no wrong in their mutual love, for it is in accordance with the law of nature. To consummate their love is but the natural conclusion, in his eyes. Julie takes a different view of the matter. In an attempt to console the distressed Julie on her loss of virtue, and in all sincerity, he reassures her
with these words:

"N'as-tu pas suivi les plus purs lois de la nature?"1

Saint-Preux accuses the baron of flying in the face of nature in his attempt to put an end to Saint-Preux's relationship with Julie:

"la chaîne qui nous lie est la borne du pouvoir paternel... quand vous cessez réclamer la nature, c'est vous seul qui bravez ses lois."2

Saint-Preux is able to bestow all his affections on Julie, for he has neither kith nor kin to fill the gulf within his heart: Julie forms a direct contrast with Saint-Preux in this respect; she lives surrounded by those who love her, and lay claim to her affections. She recognises her obligation to her father as being the voice of nature. Saint-Preux himself draws this comparison:

"vous êtes environnée de gens que vous chériez et qui vous adorent; les soins d'une tendre mère, d'un père dont vous êtes l'unique espoir; l'amitié d'une cousine qui semble ne respirer que par vous; toute une famille dont vous faites l'ornement; une ville entière fière de vous avoir vue naître...Mais moi, Julie, hêlas! errant, sans famille et presque sans patrie, je n'ai que vous sur la terre, et l'amour seul me tient lieu de tout..."3

1. P.I,1.XXI, p.160
3. P.I,1.XXI, p.73.
Claire emphasises this point: all love Julie - parents, friends, servants, neighbours, the whole town and even the cold philosopher, Wolmar, who has never experienced such an emotion before. Julie is aware that she exists within a warm circle, where affection is showered upon her and exacted from her in return; firstly, in the family circle as a girl, and then within the community at Clarens, as wife and mother. Saint-Preux can do no more than pay homage to his father's memory. Julie on the other hand, exists within the family circle: she recounts several touching scenes of familial sensibility, such as the reunion with her father after his long absence. Unlike Saint-Preux Julie rarely refers to her love as the work of nature. Virtue is the supreme arbitrator of all Julie's actions, and virtue condemns her association with Saint-Preux, for she knows their union to be an impossibility, and their relationship encompasses her dishonour. Nature for Julie is represented by her family, her duty to her parents: this is the call of the blood, the law of nature. Saint-Preux, she insists, comes second in her affections, after her parents. His demands on her affections disturb her within the family circle: she would be a 'fille denaturée' if love made her forget her filial duty. This combat within Julie comes to the
fore time and time again. When Julie's parents set off on a week's journey to Bern, they regretfully leave her behind. Julie puts on a show of sorrow at their departure, but is inwardly ashamed of her falsity. For in fact she rejoices in their absence, as it provides her with an opportunity to meet her lover. In her shame at this involuntary surge of relief at their departure, she speaks of her 'ungrateful and unnatural heart' (P.I, I.XXVII). Her love for Saint-Preux has made her untrue to nature. After the scene in which the hasty-tempered baron beats Julie in his rage, which is immediately followed by a scene of great paternal and filial tenderness, accompanied by remorse on both sides, Julie regrets her past life in a letter to Claire. Saint-Preux has disrupted her happy family circle, where affection is showered upon her; by implication his hold on her affections has made her untrue to nature:

"Il me semble que je tourne les yeux avec plus de regret sur l'heureux temps où je vivais tranquille et contente au sein de ma famille.

The choice is clear to Julie; she must choose between love and nature, as she interprets it. As she writes to Claire (P.2, I.IV), she must follow the dictates of her heart, or submit to her father's wishes and marry

1. P.I, I.LXIII, p.177.
another—l'amour ou la nature'. Virtue comes down on the side of nature—nature meaning her duty to her family and the blood-bond. Julie is strong enough to elect to follow the path of duty; in this, she is true to her own nature. Bonston offers Julie and Saint-P ruled asylum in York, but Julie knows she could not be happy there, for she could never rid herself of her remorse in abandoning her family. How could she be happy, she asks, if she elected to leave behind her the father given her by nature, (P.2,1.61). Julie accepts the more conventional views of society. Conventionally, nature is the family, and obedience to the filial duties is to be expected. Saint-Preux follows his own nature, his passion: for him, there is no choice to be made, as he has only his heart to consult. He is not hampered by the ties which bind Julie.

At one with nature, his own nature and lover of natural beauty, Saint-Preux is in harmony with his natural surroundings. For him, it is a major force in his life and in the course of human existence in general. To his mind, nature and the political climate work hand-in-hand. Whilst on the lake with Julie, Saint-Preux projects himself as man of nature and political philosopher at one and the same time. He draws the contrast between the two countries on either
side of the lake: on the one hand is the Pays de Vaud - prosperous and well-populated. The land is fertile and well-cultivated: here the people may indulge in honest toil without the fear that the fruits of their labour will be snatched from them. On the other bank lies Chablais, an area equally well-favoured by nature, but poor and miserable because of the political situation. Nature, declares Saint-Preux, rejoices in the sight of liberty and rewards those who live in a land of the free. (P.4,l.AVII). Nature is more commonly associated by Saint-Preux with his moods, with his love for Julie. The one complements the other: without Julie, he declares, nature is lost on him (P.1,l.X). Nature provides the outward appearance of his innermost feelings; it is principally mountain scenery which is used to express Saint-Preux's state of mind, perhaps because mountains are wild and free, above the heads of man. And it is from these descriptions of mountain scenery more than any other that stems the great vogue in the 18th century for this aspect of nature.

For Saint-Preux, the spectacle of the mountain purifies and elevates his soul. Physically above the world of man whilst on the peak, above the clouds, he feels that he is also above the pettinesses of mankind:

"Ce fut là que je démêlai sensiblement dans la pureté de l'air où je me trouvais."
"la véritable cause du changement de mon humeur, et du retour de cette paix intérieure que j'avais perdue si longtemps. En effet, c'est une impression générale qu'éprouvent tous les hommes, quoi qu'ils ne l'observent pas tous, que sur les hautes montagnes, où l'air est pur et subtil, on se sent plus de facilité dans la respiration, plus de légèreté dans le corps, plus de sérénité dans l'esprit; les plaisirs y sont moins ardents, les passions plus modérées. Les méditations y prennent je ne sais quel caractère grand et sublime, proportionné aux objets qui nous frappent, je ne sais quelle volupté tranquille qui n'a rien d'âcre et de sensuel. Il semble qu'en s'élevant au-dessus du séjour des hommes, on y laisse tous les sentiments bas et terrestres, et qu'à mesure qu'on approche des régions éthérées, l'âme contracte quelque chose de leur inaltérable pureté. On y est grave sans mélancolie, paisible sans indolence, content d'être et de penser: tous les désirs trop vifs s'émoussent, ils perdent cette pointe aiguë qui les rend douloureux; ils ne laissent au fond du cœur qu'une émotion légère et douce; et c'est ainsi qu'un heureux climat fait servir à la félicité de l'homme les passions qui font ailleurs son tourment."

Rousseau communed in much the same way with nature: his Confessions and Réveries; du promeneur solitaire contain passages in which his soul is clearly in perfect harmony with nature. Saint-Preux grows calm in contemplation of natural beauty. He meditates in these pure and high regions, in solitude, as when he is in the mountains or alone in Julie's Elysium. (P.4, l.IX). The whole of nature takes on a more languid, sensual aspect, when there is the
prospect of a tryst with Julie: their love will lend the necessary spark to nature, it will animate nature, for without this emotion nature is dead.

"Portons le sentiment du plaisir dans les lieux qui n'en offrent qu'une vaine image; allons animer toute la nature: elle est morte sans les feux de l'amour."¹

During their first separation, when Saint-Preux is away attending to his affairs, despair seizes hold of him: Julie's father has expressed grave concern over the refusal of a commoner to accept payment for services rendered to the family, and Saint-Preux's days in their household appear to be numbered. Saint-Preux fears Julie will never be his: he spends all his time in the mountains, gazing in the direction of Julie's home. The scenery is wild, the season is winter and the weather is hostile - nature echoes Saint-Preux's state of mind. If he should lose Julie, this place, this season are a true reflection of his future life:

"Peut-être le séjour ou je suis contribue-t-il à cette mélancolie; il est triste et horrible; il en est plus conforme à l'état de mon âme, et je n'en habiterais pas si patiemment un plus agréable. Une file de rochers stérile borde la côte et environne mon habitation, que l'hiver rend encore plus affreuse. Ah! je le sens, ma Julie, s'il fallait renoncer à vous, il n'y aurait plus pour moi d'autre séjour ni d'autre saison."²

¹P.I.I, XXXVIII, p.117.
²P.I.I.XVI, p.90.
Every aspect of the scene inspires horror, 'the same horror that reigns within him'. Nothing blooms, 'all nature is dead to his eyes, as hope in his heart'.

Ten years later, Saint-Preux returns to the same scene, in summer and in the company of Julie; it is summer because Julie is there. Saint-Preux wishes to revisit the natural settings to his emotions with Julie, in order to show her the trees and rocks which are 'ancient monuments of a passion so constant and so unhappy' (P.4,1.XVII), for they witnessed his grief and despair. Her name is carved in many places along with the verses from Petrarch and Tasso which he felt to be relevant to his situation, ten years previously. It is as if his passion and despair have become part of the natural scene. All around them they see the face of nature - wild, splendid and awesome, composed of rocks, torrents and forests. But, in the midst of all this, they find themselves in a clearing which reflects a gentler aspect of nature, calm and peaceful, like the 'shelter of two lovers who have escaped from the turbulence of nature'. For once, Julie and Saint-Preux have been able to shed the last ten years, to recapture the essence of their love and thus escape the world and the duties it imposes upon them - even though, as Julie says, it is for the last time. Memories rush in on Saint-Preux as he revisits the scene of so
much emotion and so much despair. It is as if the years in between have never been. The realisation dawns upon him that he loves her still. Nature recalls to him the form his love took for her all those years before, and he is compelled to pour out his sufferings to Julie, to express himself in the anguished accents of the youthful Saint-Preux of ten years previously. His visit to the scene of his youthful suffering triggers off a chain of remembrances within him, old half-healed wounds re-open, and on their journey home, he has to exercise great control to combat his despair to end all their sufferings in the deep waters of the lake. Nature - his own nature and his natural surroundings - are inextricably bound up with his love for Julie.

We have already seen that Saint-Preux does not fit into polite society; he cannot conform to its false manners or its corrupt ways, it is alien to his nature. He is outside polite society, but in no way inferior to it. He cannot be measured in terms of the conventional social scale, for he is outside the whole social structure, viewed in terms of social class and fortune. If a finer society existed, if he could lay claim to membership within a republican state, then Saint-Preux might be able to fulfil himself in his duties as a citizen. But he has no 'patrie'; he is only a potential citizen. Saint-Preux
also stands outside the social unit of the family, the basis of society. He again forms a contrast in this to the other characters: for the only family he mentions is his father, who is no longer alive. Whereas Claire has her family, father and brother, albeit not unduly concerned with her welfare, her husband and her daughter. Claire could be considered a more fully integrated member of the society at Clarens than Saint-Preux, for she contributes a child to the circle, who is to marry Julie's elder son; she is also bound by blood-ties to Julie. Claire thus experiences several relationships — daughter, sister, wife and mother, as well as being friend and cousin of Julie, the central figure of the community at Clarens. Julie is surrounded by her family, and even Bomston has a sister. Saint-Preux is not destined to found his own family; he is destined to remain alone and isolated. Although he has a role to play at Clarens, he is still outside the family unit. He is the friend of the family who will teach the children of the family, the role to which he aspired in the household of Julie's father. Wolmar encourages Saint-Preux to look on Wolmar's sons as his own, but, although Saint-Preux would give his life for the two children, he is still aware that Wolmar, and not he, is their father (P.4,1.XI). Had the social barrier not existed, the match between Julie and Saint-Preux could not, or should not,
have taken place, for Saint-Preux cannot be absorbed into any social unit except a republic. It would have brought about a dissolution of his individualism, of his being as a unit of one, without replacing the natural man by the citizen.

Claire constantly impresses on Saint-Preux, after Julie's marriage, by way of consolation, that such a fierce love could never have survived the ordinary institution of marriage. Such a passion can only live on in the form of memories, memories of one another as they were at the time of their love, young and handsome. (P.3,1.VII). Julie herself attempts to persuade him that they were not suited for marriage to one another. Julie writes to Saint-Preux after her marriage to Wolmar, who is the perfect husband for her. If she had the choice of him or Saint-Preux, she declares, she would not hesitate to take Wolmar as her husband:

"Quand avec les sentiments que j'eus ci-devant pour vous, et les connaissances que j'ai maintenant, je serais libre encore et maîtresse de me choisir un mari, je prends à témoin de ma sincérité ce Dieu qui daigne m'éclairer et qui lit au fond de mon cœur, ce n'est pas vous que je choisirais, c'est M.de Wolmar."1

Julie realises that they could not make a workable marriage. Wolmar permits her to remain true to her own

nature, virtue. She has obeyed her father, and she is free within her marriage to succour the needy, and charity is a necessary exercise for her soul, for Wolmar takes up little of her time. They complement each other, rather than consume each other, as did Julie and Saint-Preux: with Wolmar, she finds a calm happiness better suited to her nature and to the business of living - the fulfilment of one's duties in life - than the fiery passion and the overwhelming sense of guilt she experiences in her relationship with Saint-Preux. Love, Julie contends, is not a necessary nor even desirable component of a happy marriage:

"Ce qui m'a longtemps abusée, et qui peut-être vous abuse encore, c'est la pensée que l'amour est nécessaire pour former un heureux mariage. Mon ami, c'est une erreur; l'honnêteté, la vertu, de certaines convenances, moins de conditions et d'âges que de caractères et d'humeurs, suffisent entre deux époux; ce qui n'empêche point qu'il ne résulte de cette union un attachement très tendre, qui, pour n'être pas précisément de l'amour, n'en est pas moins doux et n'en est que plus durable. L'amour est accompagné d'une inquiétude continue de jalousie ou de privation, peu convenable au mariage, qui est un état de jouissance et de paix. On ne s'épouse point pour penser uniquement l'un à l'autre, mais pour remplir conjointement les devoirs de la vie civile, gouverner prudentement la maison, bien élever ses enfants. Les amants ne voient jamais qu'eux, ne s'occupent incessamment que d'eux, et la seule chose qu'ils sachent faire est de s'aimer. Ce n'est pas assez pour des époux, qui ont d'autres soins à remplir."

Julie is attached to Wolmar by ties stronger than love,

1. Ibid., p. 372.
all the stronger because this feeling lacks the blindness of love (P.4, l.XV). Although Julie never loses her love for Saint-Preux, she insists, even on her death-bed, that Wolmar was the only man who could have made her happy. She could not have found contentment in union with Saint-Preux (P.6, l.XI). He is too conscious of his own ego to ever make a success of an institution like marriage, which requires a certain degree of subjugation of the self. Julie, however, has always played an important role in the family circle, and she could not exist, could not fulfil herself, outside it. Saint-Preux must of necessity be unhappy in love: his salvation does not lie here. Saint-Preux, like Rousseau, is destined to be an unit of one, to be a figure apart. For Saint-Preux, as for Rousseau, the solitary man, who is in accord with nature, is basically good: Saint-Preux relates to Bomston his meditations in Julie's Elysium:

"J'ai trouvé qu'il y a dans la méditation des pensées honnêtes, une sorte de bien-être que les méchants n'ont jamais connu; c'est celui de se plaire avec soi-même." ①

Essentially a lone being, Saint-Preux does find a friend in Bomston. Man, declares Saint-Preux, is not meant to remain alone all his life; friendship is necessary to man, love being the highest form friendship

① P.4, l.XI p.487.
can take (P.2,1.XIII). He is disappointed in love, so he turns to friendship. His nature is as passionate in friendship as in love, witness his display of feeling when he has saved Bomston from an unworthy match: 'the reign of love has passed', he declares, 'let that of friendship commence', (P.6,1.III). But friendship with Bomston does not entail the complete subjugation of the ego: in many ways, Saint-Preux and Bomston form a pair. Saint-Preux elects to follow Bomston wherever he may go: in doing so, Saint-Preux does not follow the dictates of another being, he rather serves his other self. Each retains the basic independence of his character; it is the circumstances of their situation which throw them together, their common misfortune in love. It is significant that his friendship should be formed with an English nobleman. Bomston cannot entertain the prejudices rife in the French aristocracy; he believes, like Saint-Preux, in the nobility of mind and soul rather than the nobility of lineage. The English nobleman, maintains Bomston, has a broader outlook and lives in a freer clime than other men. (P.1,1.LXII). Saint-Preux could not find such affinity of character and ideas in a nobleman of a social circle nearer home. The Englishman follows in Rousseau's admiration on the Roman and the citizen of Geneva. Saint-Preux has formed one positive relationship
which will endure, but with a person who is to a certain degree an extension of his own being, and who, more important, does not oblige him to conform to any social system.

We have ascertained that Saint-Pèreux belongs more to nature than to society, that he cannot fit into any social structure or any social unit. Even despite his sejourn in Paris, he has never truly made an entry into society. He is the man of nature with the soul of a patriot. Communion with nature, meditation within nature in solitude, is one of the facets of the preromantic figure. Saint-Pèreux's sense of superiority over the common social order also places him in this category, but Saint-Pèreux's sense of superiority is yet subdued, barely formed: he is aware of his own weakness and feels decidedly inferior to Julie. He senses within him a yearning, a striving after the ultimate good: this is the stirring of the 'ennui' of René, of Oberman. But this yearning has a distinct aim, a specific goal—Julie. He is not left with an indistinct feeling of dissatisfaction: he wanted Julie, she is lost to him. He must now fulfil himself in friendship; having experienced the deepest emotion known to man, he must draw from this a knowledge of himself, to gain knowledge of mankind in general. This friendship and the companion—
ship experienced in a voyage round the world (away from society) are the closest relationships Saint-Freux establishes with society. He has always been outside the structure of society and he shows no desire to be integrated into it; society's values, that is, the values of polite society, are not his values. He is the man alone, for lack of a suitable society of which he could feel himself to be an integral part.
The word 'education', traced back to its Latin origin, means the rearing or upbringing; it is the drawing of the young of the species from infancy into the adult world. It may be judged only in terms of its utility as preparation for life as an adult and as a member of society. One major source of contention among 18th-century pedagogical writers was the question of which form of education - private or public - was most likely to achieve its aim of preparation of the young for adult life. Many recognised that no existing form of education met with this requirement and therefore suggested various tentative reforms. Yet it is only Rousseau's Emile which offers a comprehensive and systematic form of education designed to transform pedagogical theory, from thence the individual and consequently the society which he is to enter.

Two streams of thought, in complete opposition the one to the other, ran concurrently through the educational theory of the century. The one was the product of centuries of monastic thought, based on the training afforded in the colleges, even in the Jesuit colleges.
like Louis-le-Grand. In these colleges, young men were schooled in a very strict code of morality derived from religious teachings, quite useless in the morally lax atmosphere of polite society. The incompatibility between the moral instruction received within such establishments and that propounded in the world was underlined by the anxiety on the part of the ecclesiastics to keep their pupils from the corrupting influences of society for as long as possible. The abbé de Saint-Pierre's pedagogical writings can be taken as representative of the monastic school of thought. In his Projet pour perfectionner l'Éducation, for example, the abbé proposes that the youth's attention should be drawn during his training to the evils which lie ahead to trap him in society:

"En général il faut prévenir l'écolier prêt à sortir du collège sur les mauvais exemples, sur les maximes fausses et séduisantes qu'il va trouver dans le monde corrompu, il faut lui en faire des peintures dans les dernières classes, et lui montrer ce qu'il y a d'illusoire sur la durée des plaisirs, et ce qu'il y a de réel sur les malheurs où précipitent ces sortes d'ivresses et

1. For the Jesuits in general aimed at a more worldly education.
The youth should be kept from the world as long as possible, instead of being cast out into the world at sixteen or seventeen years of age, on the completion of his general education; he should still be confined within the college whilst learning his career. He would benefit from this lengthier subjugation to college discipline in that the virtues instilled in him by his education would have more time to germinate and would be more firmly rooted within him when he finally set out into the corruptions of society. If the Christian principles were stoutly entrenched in the heart of each young man as he entered the world, corrupt society would undergo a slow but real transformation. Christian morality, a late entry into the world, and ample warning before entry of the dangers which lay ahead, were the basic points of this form of education.

A second tradition in educational theory had grown up, parallel, yet in opposition, to that propounded by the ecclesiastical pundits. This second tradition, stemming from Montaigne, hinged not on withdrawal from society, but on the earliest possible entry into it. The

\[ \text{C.I. Castel de Saint-Pierre,} \]
ideal of this second form of education was the gentleman, the 'honnête homme'. The aim was to produce a young man who could easily be integrated into polite society; polite society was, after all, the stage on which he must play out his life; it was therefore more practicable to acquaint the youth with the desirable social graces, which would serve him in his future life, rather than stuff him with - from the point of view of his career, useless - erudition. As Montaigne points out:

"Nous cherchons ici ... de former, non un grammairien ou un logicien, mais un gentilhomme." 1

The world is to be his pupil's book. The same attitude was adopted by many 18th-century pedagogical writers, particularly during the earlier years of the century. A young nobleman - since it was for the nobleman's benefit that such educational treatises were devised - was destined to pass his adult life in the closed circle of polite society ruled by a stylised code of conduct peculiar to itself. He should be able to adapt himself to the way of life prevalent in society; yet his earliest years were passed in an atmosphere entirely divorced from the

workings of polite society, acquiring an education which was unlikely to further his integration into that society. The longer he remained within this circle, it was felt, the greater the difficulties he would encounter in adapting to the social norm, for, as the abbé Baudouin maintains:

"L'homme est nô pour la société et non pour la solitude. La trop grande retraite rend l'esprit sauvage, impoli, et inhaîble au commerce de la vie civile." 1

What was required was a training better suited to the young man's role in later life; a young nobleman's education should equip him for his career, both in his chosen field and, more especially, as a member of polite society:

"Votre éducation, peut-on dire aux jeunes gens, doit être l'apprentissage de votre vie: vous devez y apprendre à devenir honnête homme, et habile homme selon la profession que vous embrasserez." 2

And what better training than that afforded by contact with the milieu in which the social graces were practised? For no precepts could be as formative as actual experience, as Dorante points out to his nephew, Lisidor: 3

1. De l'Éducation d'un jeune seigneur.
Je ne vous réponds pas que mes conseils vous soient utiles, si vous n'y mêlez l'usage du monde, et ce n'est ni par mes préceptes, ni par votre lecture que vous pouvez acquérir cet usage. Les maximes des grands maîtres ne les sauraient donner, ni former un galant homme ... l'on ne peut plaire dans la conversation qu'en accompagnant ce qu'on dit d'une action libre et aisée, d'un air ouvert, et de je ne sais quel agrément qu'on n'aquiert qu'avec les personnes qui l'ont déjà."

A young man must master the art of polite conversation if he was to succeed in the field of social contact; eloquence, it is true, was a science in which the college he attended would provide a grounding. Yet it was taught as a science, with its own rules, and not as an art relevant to living creatures. The true art of conversation, declares Maubert de Gouvest, is to be met with only in the society where it is the daily coinage:

"L'éloquence orne le héros ... mais ce n'est pas ce composé monstresux de termes et de phrases barbares, qu'on débite dans les collèges, qui en donne les principes et les règles. L'éloquence s'acquiert par la lecture des bons livres, et par le commerce du monde poli." 1

Contact with polite society constitutes the young man's second and more valuable education: it is acquaintance with the customs and values current within polite society which will mould the young man into the desired social type, the 'honnête homme':

"Le commerce des honnêtes gens est une bonne école, et ... leur entretien peut tenir lieu d'étude ... Le monde est, si l'on peut parler de la sorte, un grand livre, où les honnêtes gens apprennent tout ce qu'ils doivent savoir." 1

Even if, in the place of the current scholastic, religiously-orientated education, a more worldly form of instruction concerned with the actual values and maxims of society were substituted, the young man would benefit little thereby. For no form of instruction can replace personal experience; hence, if the young noble is to be well-versed in the social arts, he should be introduced as early as possible into polite society:

"Voulez-vous donc qu'ils apprennent à se produire avec décence, à se présenter sans embarras, à s'énoncer avec assurance, à être modestes sans fausse honte, hardis sans effronterie, civils sans cérémonies gênantes et affectées, à savoir se taire et parler,

1. Modèles de Conversation by Abbé de Bellegarde, p. 234.
entrer et sortir à propos? Ce n'est point par des leçons, ni en leur mettant entre les mains des livres qui traitent de cette manière, que vous leur apprendrez toutes ces choses. Produisez-les de bonne heure dans les bonnes compagnies: ils prendront bientôt par imitation une teinture des belles manières, qui rendent un homme aimable dans la société, qui font ce qu'on appelle le galant homme.  

The young man must cultivate taste, the prerogative and the distinguishing characteristic, as 18th-century novelists would lead us to believe, of the true nobleman. Taste may be acquired in frequenting circles where polite conversation reigns, where one has the opportunity of viewing, hearing, discussing all forms of the arts. The natural centre to which all that is best in matters of taste gravitates is Paris: Paris is thus the arena where the young man must encounter society, to ensure his metamorphosis into the perfect social specimen; as one man of the world says to a friend:

"Le ciel vous a donné deux enfants—pour perpétuer votre famille et pour devenir utiles à la société; c'est en les cultivant de bonne heure, en formant leur esprit et leur cœur par les sciences, que

1. *Essai sur le coeur humain* by Morelly, *part II*. 
vous remplirez ces vues ... hâtez-vous de les envoyer à Paris, c'est le centre de la politesse et du bon goût." 1

Not only is the young man more receptive to the finer points of polite social behaviour, if he is early brought into contact with polite society; he is also thereby conditioned against moral corruption within this very society. For the best mode of defence against the excesses of life in polite society is an awareness of its evils. This is the argument put forth by Locke:

"The only fence against the world, is a thorough knowledge of it into which a young gentleman should be entered by degrees, as he can bear it and the earlier the better." 2

Thus the school of thought which recognised polite society as the true milieu of the nobleman advocated early experience of it as the youth's most valid training for life and as his most effective protection against its excesses. The note of warning, which Rousseau was later to amplify, is hereby sounded that the ultra-refinement of polite society entails corruption of its members.

1. Mémoires du comte de Baneston by the Chevalier de Forceville, pp. 33-34.
Acceptance of the importance of integration into polite society did not necessarily imply approval of existing social values. The young noble had no alternative to life in polite society; by virtue of his rank, he was compelled to enter this closed circle. Therefore he must come to terms with life in this circle, however distant from the moral ideal as envisaged by Christian teachings. Locke does not question the necessity of a young man's entry into the world, but he stresses the dangers which lie ahead for him. Commerce with polite society will invest him with the required polish, but it is also liable to pervert his moral instincts, for the morality predominant in polite society is at variance with the principles inculcated upon the youth as the moral ideal. Montaigne had made this point, that, in dealing with fallible human beings, each intent on his own interests, a simple, direct morality was doomed to failure. A less rigid code of conduct, a more supple form of virtue, elaborate and intricate as

1. Provided, of course, he was in a financial situation which permitted him to figure in polite Parisian society. For many impoverished noblemen were forced to remain in their province, through lack of the necessary funds.
life in polite society itself, was the compromise that must be reached:

"La vertu destinée aux affaires du monde est une vertu à plusieurs plis, pleine de détours et d'artifices, non droite, simple et pure." 1

Personal honour, essentially concerned with the self, is the ruling principle in a monarchy, as Montesquieu points out: actions are not judged by the criteria of what is just and good, but by whether they are fine and impressive, whether they add to one's personal glory. Honour is the guiding force in the life of the nobleman, and it is her dictates which he must obey rather than those exacted by the ideal moral code as expounded in religion. Another important characteristic of the nobleman in a monarchy, continues Montesquieu, is his politeness. Since he must live in the company of his fellow noblemen, he and they must make a reciprocal effort to be pleasant to one another. Yet again, this 'politesse' is not based on altruistic but personal considerations: it is motivated by a sense of personal dignity and honour. To deviate from the norm of polite behaviour is to deny one's nobility, one's position in

1. Pensées by Montaigne, p. 269.
society; for 'politesse' is the hallmark of the
gentleman and the proof of good breeding. If the young
noble is to take his rightful place in society, he must
be ruled by these considerations. The finer moral
principles which have been instilled in him by his
education are of little use in his future life. He
must conform to the accepted social pattern, no matter
how corrupt it may be in certain respects, for the fact
is:

"Les enfants ne ... vivront ni en
l'air ni parmi les astres; ils
vivront sur la terre, dans ce monde
tel qu'il est aujourd'hui, et dans
cet siècle si corrompu." 1

The external parade of polite manners is a veneer which
must be acquired by the young man to make him acceptable
within the society upon which he must enter. This is a
point constantly stressed by the writers of educational
treatises, regardless of whether they express them­selves in personal agreement with the established system:

"La politesse extérieure est une
des qualités que les parents
désirent le plus dans leurs
enfants, et à laquelle ils sont

1. Traité du choix et de la méthode des études \(\text{abbé}
particularly in the earlier years of the century, many treatises on the duties and necessary qualities of the gentleman were published to fill the gap between the actual education received by the youth and what was regarded as a suitable training for his future life in polite society. The treatises take the form of manuals instructing the young noble on the comportment expected of him in society, thus preparing him for his entry into the world. Lenoble's L'École du Monde is one such manual, purporting to be the advice given by Aristipe to Timagène on the values current in polite society. Flattery, Aristipe explains, forms part of the all-important 'politesse'; generally insincere as it may be, it is a necessary component of social intercourse, and as such may be practised and turned to one's own advantage - the implication being that to scorn such insincerities would be to jeopardise

one's position in society by placing others, less scrupulous, at an advantage:

"C'est une brève expression de l'estime et de l'amitié que nous témoignons avoir pour ceux à qui nous parlons, et le but du compliment est de leur faire croire que nous ressentons dans le cœur ce que nous leur disons de bouche, pour les engager à prendre confiance en nous ... les trois quarts et demi des compliments sont des expressions extérieures de ce qu'on ne sent point du tout au dedans, mais c'est un commerce de fausses pierreries établi dans le monde, dont il faut tirer tout l'avantage qui se peut."

'Politesse' is the social virtue above all else and as such must be practised by all members of polite society, with varying degrees of sincerity. Duclos, in a point later taken up in the *Émile*, distinguishes between true social virtue - sincerely polite behaviour based on innate courtesy - and its imitation, the empty polite forms common in society. Since polite behaviour is taught as the chief requisite of social intercourse, independent of its deeper meaning as an expression of respect and affection for one's fellow men, it has all but eclipsed the very values of which it was intended to be the outward and visible expression:

"Le plus malheureux effet de la politesse d'usage est d'enseigner..."
Duclos carries his idea further by adding that not only may polite manners have replaced the true social values, but they may also mask sentiments entirely in opposition to those supposed by external behaviour. The figure ruled by the conventions of polite behaviour even comes to be cited as the antithesis of the social virtues he is supposed to represent:

"Celui qui accable de protestations d'estime et d'amitié le premier qu'il rencontre, et souvent un homme qu'il méprise ou qu'il déteste; qui vous caresse avec transport, et vous quitte pour aller vous nuire, qui vous offre son crédit et ses services, lorsqu'il est occupé de consommer votre perte; qui a su se faire un langage toujours contraire à sa pensée ... cet homme-là passe ainsi pour poli." 2

It is only by assuming the mask of hypocrisy that the young noble may hope to succeed in a society which judges solely on outward appearances. If the youth is instructed in and guided by true principles, it is claimed, he stands little chance of reaching the highest positions in society. This divergence between the real

2. L'Homme moral by Lévesque, pp. 251-262.
and the apparent was a fault that the more mature Rousseau despised in society. As Saint-Preux/Rousseau remarks of the fashionable Parisian:

"L'honnête homme d'ici n'est point celui qui fait de bonnes actions, mais celui qui dit de belles choses." ¹

Few were under the illusion that the world the young man was to enter was perfectly in accordance with the highest moral ideals. Opinion reigned supreme, and one must conform to the norm in polite society in order not to fall foul of it. The social ideal, for Montaigne, to which the young man might aspire, was one of order, modelled upon the median, maintaining equilibrium between all possibilities:

"Les plus belles vies à mon gré sont celles qui se rangent au modèle commun et humain avec ordre, sans miracle, et sans extravagance." ²

No originality was expected or desired: no matter how extravagant a fashion, all must follow it, for fear of distinguishing oneself from the crowd:

"Quand tout le monde tombe dans une faute, personne n'en doit être blâmé;"

¹ H.H., B. de la P. (« Bibliothèque de la Pléiade ed. of Rousseau's works), p. 254. (II) Part II, 1. XVII.
² Pensées by Montaigne, p. 333.
et quelque extravagante que puisse être une mode, un homme serait encore plus extravagant, s'il refusait de s'y asujettir." 1

The true path in polite society is the one that threads its way between two extremes, the golden mean. The École du Gentilhomme presents us with the chevalier instructing his nephew, the count, in the ways of the world prior to the count's entry into it. The count knows that he must seek:

"le juste milieu de toutes choses. Tout ce qui n'arrive point à ce juste milieu, tout ce qui le passe, est vice." 2

He must never draw attention to his person by deviating from the social norm, he must not scorn fashion. The young man is compelled by his birth and future standing in society to integrate himself into polite society. Integration entails conformity, the strict adherence to the desired social type, which occupies the middle path. The reigning mood, whilst critical of certain aspects of polite society, was yet one of acceptance; there was no question of opposition to the traditional entry into society by the young noble.

1. L'Art de plaire dans la conversation by J-B. Morvan, abbé de Bellesarde, p. 30
In the stead of revolt against the system which exacted the participation of the young man in the hypocrisy of polite society, the pedagogues concentrated on ways of continuing the process but with the least possible degree of corruption of the youth. The danger lies in the close confinement of the youth prior to his entry into the world. During his education, his high spirits have been suppressed and he has been thwarted in all his desires. His curbed emotions, at the time of the highest pitch of intensity they will reach, puberty, will burn all the more fiercely when they are finally released. He lacks the perception at his age to see the lasting harm indulgence of the senses will bring upon him, and hence he throws himself enthusiastically into the pernicious and illusory whirl of gaiety offered in society. Such a reaction on the part of the newly-emancipated youth is a common experience of many heroes in the 18th-century novel: Campan's hero, in Le Mot et la Chose summarizes the general feeling:

"Né à Paris, après avoir suivi la route que l'on fait prendre ordinaire aux enfants, je veux dire avoir passé dix ans dans un collège, j'en sortis dans la disposition, commune à presque tous, de me dédommager, par un usage immodéré de tous les plaisirs, de la contrainte
effroyable où m'avait retenu l'air rogue et rébarbatif de mes maîtres; je me livrai dès lors et pendant plusieurs années, à toutes les passions qui font mouvoir une tête de dix-sept ans." (p. 6-7).

The youth has received no suitable preparation for the world, he is therefore defenceless before the evils of society. He has not been warned of the traps that lie ahead of him in society, so he is sure to flounder when he is cast off into society:

"Le premier pas que fait un jeune homme dans le monde est souvent un faux pas, surtout si après avoir beaucoup étudié, tout ce qu'il a appris n'a pas été de savoir s'y conduire." 1

The youth is a stranger in the new world which he has entered, and he lacks the judgement to co-ordinate and classify all his new impressions. He grows all the more confused on discovering that the concepts and principles of this unfamiliar circle are in fact in complete opposition to those instilled in him during his education, which has absolutely no bearing on his actual situation and the life he is expected to lead:

1. Essai sur l'esprit humain by Morelly, (Part IV).
"Une foule d'objets nouveaux, qui s'offrent tout-à-coup et auxquels on ne leur a peut-être jamais fait prendre garde, cause dans leur esprit une confusion d'idées qui leur semblent, ou sont effectivement opposées à celles qu'ils ont acquises et dont ils se voient obligés de se dépouiller, s'ils ne veulent juger de tout de travers. Le peu de connaissance que ces personnages ont des usages de la vie leur fait paraître tout nouveau et extra-ordinaire et les fait ressembler eux-mêmes à des habitants d'une terre étrangère." 1

He must struggle to forget all he has learned in his early years, in order to come to terms with his present life. Every impression of his early education must be effaced if he is to be successfully integrated into polite society:

"Aucun ne fait fond sur ce que ses enfants peuvent apprendre au collège. Au contraire, le premier soin et la plus grande attention de chacun, lorsqu'il les en retire, sont de leur faire oublier ce qu'ils y ont appris, de leur faire perdre l'air et les manières qu'ils en rapportent." 2

To help the youth to resolve the bewildering contradictions which confront him, in the differences

1. Essai sur l'esprit humain by Morelly, (Part IV).
2. Le Temps perdu - considérations d'un patriote sur les écoles publiques by Maubert de Gouvest, A.I.
between the concepts instilled in him by his education and those he finds to be current in society; to assist him in judging and assessing the values of the new circle and their relevance to his own position, the youth requires a mature head, more advanced in years and experience than himself. A wise counsellor would be his most effective defence against corruption on his entry into the world, yet it is at this very juncture that the youth is generally set adrift from his tutor. At the very moment he is in greatest need of a prop, he is awarded total independence. This period is crucial as it determines his future attitude towards society; it is, however, the most neglected part of his education. The abbé Baudouin is one who censures such neglect,¹ and it is also another of Locke's criticisms of the existing form of education; Locke suggests that:

"A governor should teach his scholar to guess at and beware of the designs of men he hath to do with ... He should acquaint him with the true state of this world ... This therefore should be carefully watched, and a young man with great diligence handed over it (entry into the world); and not as now usually is done, be taken from a governor's conduct, and

¹. L'Educion d'un jeune seigneur.
all at once thrown out into the world ... not without manifest dangers of immediate spoiling; there being nothing more frequent than instances of the great looseness, extravagancy, and debauchery, which young men have run into as soon as they have been let loose from a severe and strict education.¹

The governor's presence will act as a deterrent against and an antidote to the corruptions which will lay claim to the young and inexperienced man.² The notion of the young man's sally into society under the protection of an experienced guide is a suggestion which forms a major part of Rousseau's Émile.

Another difficulty, however, was raised by the proposition that the tutor should accompany his pupil on his expedition into society, namely, that the quality of the tutors was in general very poor. Ideally, of course, the task of introducing the youth into society fell to his father. But family links were not of the strongest among the aristocracy of the 18th century. It is, indeed, the father's duty to instruct his son on his demeanour in society, as Lenoble points out:

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2. Also suggested by the abbé Gédoyn in De l'éducation des enfants.
"L'instruction pour le rendre capable de se conduire dans le monde, il dépend du père de la lui donner, et il la lui doit, afin de l'animer à la vertu et de le détourner du vice, et souvent il lui laisse par là un meilleur et plus solide héritage que ne sont toutes les successions des gens de fortune."

But few indeed were the fathers willing to shoulder the responsibility; instead, the father paid a tutor to be his substitute. Montaigne defines the ideal tutor as a man of judgement well-versed in the workings of society, rather than a 'pedant crotté', for such as he would be the most suitable to form the youth's judgement, introduce him into society and give him the full benefit of his own wide experience of the world. Yet the tutor was of very low standing within the family household. Despised by the family and servants alike, he generally received very low wages, vastly inferior to those meted out to those who served in the kitchen. For to keep a good table was part of the noble's style of living: his position in society exacted sumptuous suppers, hence the competition as to who might procure the best cook. Consequently, celebrated chefs were

able to command very high salaries. The same prestige was not attached to the position of tutor in a noble household, since his function was not regarded as another projection of the family's wealth and rank. The effects of his teaching did not show a tangible and immediate result which would reflect the family's magnificence and standing in society. As 18th-century aristocracy was more deeply concerned with the exterior social circle and outward appearances than with the domestic scene, the youth's education came low on the household list of priorities. The lack of prestige and the poor wages were not calculated to attract the best possible teachers: the position of tutor was the last possible resort taken by a man of little means and often of few qualifications. Despite the fact that he was to be charged with the difficult and delicate task - if properly executed - of preparing and moulding a young life, his vocation and

1. "Il est plus commode de se reposer sur des valets de l'éducation de ses enfants que de s'en charger soi-même. Il est plus fastueux de donner des gages exorbitants à un cuisinier qui met une table en réputation que de donner la même somme à un homme qui élèverait un enfant dans les principes de la vertu." Le Mot et la Chose, p. 59.
qualifications were rarely questioned.\footnote{1} Anxious to retain his situation, the tutor was cowed into subservience, forced into flattery. He dare not cross or check his pupil, for fear of displeasing the mother. In hopes of later reward, he would flatter all his pupil's whims, as does the baron who has in his charge the hero of Domairon's \textit{Le Libertin devenu Vertueux}. The baron has a son whose career he hopes to further by ingratiating himself into his pupil's favour. Tilly's experiences as a youth are representative of the poor quality of the educators; he tells us:

"Je fus confié à des valets et à une espèce de précepteur qui leur ressemblait à beaucoup d'égards."\footnote{2}(\textit{vol. I, p.14}).

A young noble was destined for life in polite society, yet no attempt was made to provide him with either a suitable education or a suitably qualified tutor. Not

\footnote{1} "Cet emploi, d'où dépendent les bonnes ou mauvaises moeurs, est confié d'ordinaire à un homme recommandé ou protégé, qui n'a souvent aucune des qualités nécessaires pour remplir des devoirs de la plus grande importance." (\textit{Histoire de Mlle de Terville by Mme de Puisieux}, \textit{vol. I, part 1}).

\footnote{2} \textit{Mémoires}; \textit{similarly, Duclos - Confessions du Comte de Tilly}: "\textit{Etant destiné par ma naissance à vivre à la cour, j'ai été élevé comme tous mes pareils, c'est-à-dire, fort mal. Dans mon enfance, on me donna un précepteur pour m'enseigner le latin, qu'il ne m'apprit pas: quelques années après, on me remit entre les mains d'un gouverneur pour m'instruire de l'usage du monde qu'il ignorait.}" (\textit{part I, pp.4-5}).
only was reform necessary in the orientation of the young noble's studies, a reappraisal was also required of those responsible for administering them.

The role a good tutor could and should play in a young man's education was very important. His guidance served as a preparation for and a bulwark against the corrupting influences of society. His duties could also be extended for him to act as mentor in another stage of the youth's development, his travels. It was an accepted part of the English noble's education to complete his studies by a grand tour of Europe, lasting one or two years. The purpose of travel was to acquaint the young man with the cultures of other nations, to introduce him to mankind in general, before presenting him in his own particular society. Travel was calculated to stimulate and enrich the young mind, and, as such, was proposed by many 18th-century pedagogues, as the ideal form of transmission between studies and an entry into society. The young man has learned the facts about other peoples and other ways of life, now the time has come for him to put his knowledge to the test by experience. The abbé Baudouin sums up the youth's position in the following fashion:
In addition, the young man was transported away from the possible evils of polite society at the juncture when his emotions were new, untried and consequently very powerful; when he was as yet lacking in judgement and experience, and thus most susceptible to corruption. A timely distance is put between the youth and the society where he is almost certain to flounder. In order that he may not encounter and succumb to the same dangers in other societies he discovers in the course of his travels, and to enable him to draw the maximum benefit and value from his experiences, he stands in need of a dependable and more mature mentor/companion. His companion might be his tutor; he could be a friend of the family entrusted with the care of the youth, as is the case with Prévost's "homme de qualité"; or it might be a loyal and trustworthy servant, such as the one in the Marquise de M.'s household, as described in the

1. De l'éducation d'un jeune seigneur.
Histoire de Mlle de Terville. The principal was that he should be a man of mature years, experienced in the ways of the world, and intent on the youth's welfare. This is the role Rousseau fills with regard to Émile.

Rousseau had actually been a tutor, himself, to the sons of M. de Mably, but not, as his Confessions reveal, with sparkling success. He outlined the method he would use with his pupils in a Mémoire presented to M. de Mably. As set forth in the Mémoire, Rousseau's method differs very little from that proposed by his contemporaries; it is a modification, not a reform, of the existing system of instruction. He has some new and revolutionary ideas, he confides to M. de Mably, but he dare not put them into practice on any but his own son. The object of his education, following the school of thought founded by Montaigne, is to form a child ... "en faire un cavalier poli et un honnête homme." To accomplish this aim, he draws up a table of regulated studies, which the boy must be coaxed into following.

1. Part I - "La marquise avait jugé à propos de faire voyager son fils au sortir du collège, et lui avait donné un valet de chambre, avec le titre de gouverneur, pour le conduire. Heureusement ce garçon se trouva un homme de bien, incapable de proposer ou de souffrir aucune sottise à son jeune maître." by Mme de Puisieux.

2. B. de la P., IV, p.23.
He advocates the earliest possible contacts between the
boy and society. The solitary man, Rousseau claims,
cannot know the contentment experienced by one who has
long lived in and therefore grown accustomed to the
'world'. The very variety of pleasures, sensations
and impressions within society does not allow of a con­
centration of emotion - which can only lead to discontent,
is Rousseau's implication. Early acquaintance with
these pleasures robs them of the false glamour which
surrounds them in the eyes of the uninitiated, to their
detriment. Those who have early experienced the social
pleasures are more at peace than he who has lived only
through his imagination, all the more vivid because
removed from reality. Life in society, claims Rousseau,
is a source of greater happiness than a solitary existence.
For these reasons, as well as to invest the youth with
the necessary social graces which are only gained by
frequenting those already possessed of such qualities,
the youth cannot be introduced too early into society.
On his entry into the world the young man must put
behind him his early education and set about acquiring
a grounding in the niceties of social behaviour, the
finest teacher being, Rousseau claims, the youth's first
mistress, presumably a woman with a good understanding of the ways of polite society:

"Je serais assez de l'avis de ceux qui prétendent que rien n'est si aisè à un jeune homme que de se former pour la société et de se rendre aimable même en sortant de la poussière de l'école; c'est l'effet ordinaire d'un premier attachement et il y a peu de cavaliers polis qui ne soient redevables de leur éducation à la première femme qui leur a inspiré du goût."

Thus speaks the young Rousseau, entirely in accordance with the worldly educational thought of his day. The ideal is still the 'honnête homme', the social type to which the young man must be made to conform.

By the publication of Émile, Rousseau's position has changed: his aim is no longer to produce the gentleman proper for 18th-century French polite society. For society is corrupt and corrupts those who enter it. In his first Discours, Rousseau has proved that civilisation has in fact been a degeneration and a retrogression in the history of the human race. The only solution for mankind is to retrace its steps to the primary source, nature. All that stems from nature is pure, innocent, good: it is civilisation, the work

of man, which perverts the products of nature:

"Tout est bien sortant des mains
de l'auteur des choses, tout
dégénère entre les mains de l'homme."\(^1\)

Man mistakenly believes that, in all things, he is able
to improve on nature; for that reason, he must trans­
form all nature's creation, including man himself.
Existing society stifles every manifestation of nature
within man: all within society is false and shallow,
for all natural elements have been eliminated whilst no
true principles have been substituted for them: society
is devoid of any true foundation. Since it is within
society that the youth receives his education, he is
subject to society's corroding influences. He is taught
to accept society as it is, and to conform to the social
pattern. Hence there is no end to corruption. A
new education would produce a new type; if a new social
unit is introduced, the whole may be regenerated.
Rousseau's aim is to return to the source, nature, to
recapture man's natural goodness: he will nurture this
natural goodness in his pupil, in order that he may then
sow the seed within society. Rousseau does not intend

\(^1\) Book I, B. de la P. (IV), p. 245.
to raise his pupil to become a gentleman, a young noble, member of a privileged elite. For these social distinctions are artificial classifications devised by man which have no roots within nature itself:

"Il n'y a de caractères ineffaçables que ceux qu'imprime la nature, et la nature ne fait ni princes, ni riches, ni grands seigneurs." 1

Created by man, they may as easily be destroyed by the same agent: only nature is indestructible. Hence Rousseau's pupil is destined for the simple role based on nature, stripped of all social considerations, that of man. It is the immutable, the universal, the eternal. If Rousseau succeeds, he will recreate the basic man, adaptable to all. He will not merely be a member of a certain social class or race, but he will, first and foremost, be a man:

"Il ne sera point ceci ou cela, il ne sera qu'homme; il ne sera rien, mais il sera propre à tout." 2

He is thereby equipped to fill all positions.

In order to conserve nature's creation, man, the child must be subject from birth to the natural laws.

An education based on nature nurtures the essential elements of man: the child is the embryo of the man. He is not to be considered as the miniature 'honnête homme', as worldly education would term him, but the child in essence. He must be allowed to live out his child's nature, that it may develop fully into a man's nature. It is the true nature of man that Rousseau seeks to preserve: he does not aim to recreate primitive man, but to restore natural man, that is, man brought up to be faithful to his own nature. It is the true nature of man which has been obscured, that individuals might be fitted into the social strata of which existing society is composed, founded as it is on inequality. This concentration on worldly social values, to the detriment of natural principles, is what Rousseau seeks to rectify:

"Avant la vocation des parents, la nature l'appelle à la vie humaine. Vivre est le métier que je lui veux apprendre. En sortant de mes mains ... il sera premièrement homme." 1

At the beginning of Emile, the ideal is yet the man, not the citizen: nature, not the city, is his starting point. Emile is sheltered from life in the city as

long as possible during his education, for man may be
good only as long as he has few needs and little oppor-
tunity of comparing himself with others. Society
imposes a greater number of needs and affords greater
opportunity of comparison with others; therefore, if
the child is to retain his natural goodness, he must be
raised away from town society. In addition, at the
crucial later stages of his development, prior to his
ten entry into society, he profites from separation from
society; it is impossible in town society to long retain
innocence of the passions, whilst in the country, close
to nature, the youth remains in possession of his natural
freshness and vigour, for they are not dissipated by an
early contact with the passions, a process which the
younger Rousseau had advocated.

For the child to retain his natural goodness,
he must be allowed to fulfil his own nature, to develop
his own individuality as nature intended. He will be
at one with himself, therefore content and therefore
good, because he will not need to envy others. His
education should not be a continual effort to cast him
into the conventional mould, but should follow the
child's natural talents. Rousseau was not revolutionary
in this aspect of his work; it was a fairly common current of thought. Rollin advises the study of the 'génie' of each child, and Turgot had made the same point in a letter to Mme de Graffigny in 1751:

"C'est qu'il faudrait étudier la nature et suivre à la piste le développement d'un caractère pour l'éducation que je demande." 1

Charles Bonnet expressed much the same idea in his

Essai de Psychologie:

"La sage éducation démêle ces dispositions naturelles et s'y conforme. Elle sait imaginer les expériences propres à les lui faire connaître ... Fidèle à suivre la nature, industriuse à la seconder, elle met chaque cerveau à sa place, et donne à chaque talent l'exercice qui lui convient." 2

Rousseau's *Emile* is a progression on the theme, in that Rousseau finally admits that, to allow nature to develop freely, the child must be separated from society, for it is social intercourse which perverts nature. Opinion rules supreme, and all must conform to its dictates within society. Particularly after the publication of

Emile, society—polite town society—is held to be corrupt; nature, life in the country, are the antidote to the evils of society. Education in society, for society, is false: man is less likely to fall prey to corruption if he is isolated from the social body; this is the conclusion Baculard d'Arnaud draws in his Bazile:

"La maladresse d'une fausse éducation défigure souvent la forme heureuse sortie des mains de la nature. Il y a tout lieu de croire que l'homme isolé serait susceptible de moins de dépravation que l'homme social. C'est de l'habitude de nous rapprocher et de vivre ensemble que nous tenons ces traits à peine prononcés et sans physionomie, cette manière uniforme de penser, cette impuissance d'âme et d'imagination, qui font des individus, un corps dégradé et quelquefois méprisable. Osons être par nous-mêmes, et nous ne contredirons point ces premières impressions que le ciel a tracées en nous."  

Education takes its worst possible form in the world, for it inevitably perverts man's true nature.

To advocate an education as based on the principles of nature, whereby the child is left free to develop as nature intended, is not to urge the abolition of education. The child cannot be abandoned to its own devices, in the belief that it is thereby liberated to

follow its own natural bents. For the child does not live in a natural world; it is reared within society, surrounded by the set social type. If left unguarded, it would be engulfed in society, influenced by the social pressures:

"Les préjugés, l'autorité, la nécessité, l'exemple, toutes les institutions sociales, dans lesquelles nous nous trouvons submergés, étoufferaient en lui la nature, et ne mettraient rien à sa place." 1

If the tutor wishes to develop the natural elements within his pupil, he has a hard task ahead of him, for he must ward off all outside influences. His duty is to safeguard his pupil's liberty, to enable him to develop naturally. The educator must be forever vigilant, or his pains will be lost. His form of education is an art, based on nature itself. To facilitate his task — indeed, to make it at all possible — he must isolate the child from the corrupting influences of society. Rousseau here adopts the attitude found in the colleges, that the world is corrupt, and applies the concept to private education. If Émile were raised in society,

1. Manuscrit Favre, B. de la F., IV, p.58.
he would be forced to conform to the prejudices and opinions of his time, to the conventions of French, 18th-century polite society. Hence he could no longer be qualified as the universal man. Rousseau deliberately sets Émile outside of the French social structure; he is obviously rich, but not necessarily of the most ancient nobility, since nowhere is he awarded the title of 'chevalier', the general courtesy title for a young gentleman. Émile is not to be educated as a young noble, but as a man; the ideal is reflected by the career chosen for him. He is not presented with the customary choice of Church or Army, nor destined for a career in finance, commerce or the law. These professions - the higher ranks, at least - were exclusive to one particular section of society and were as such dependent on the maintenance of the privileges of this one faction. The prejudices of Émile's class are foreign to him, hence he will not be influenced by them in his choice of a career. The sole consideration is whether it fills the qualification set by the state of man - its utility. By becoming an apprentice joiner, Émile rises above the prejudices of his class, whilst satisfying the primary condition stipulated by his education. In learning a
trade, Émile stakes his claim for independence: he can support himself by means of the work of his own hands, and others are dependent on him. If Émile had been in early and constant contact with society, he would have come to accept as the natural order the inequality on which society is based. As a member of the higher social strata, he would have considered himself superior to the greater part of society; he would have fallen prey to the passions which are not innate in natural man. To prevent Émile from contracting the habits and prejudices of his fathers, alien to the universal man, he is also removed from the family unit. We are led to believe that he is an orphan — although he does receive letters from his father and mother¹ — and at no time in his boyhood is he viewed within the family circle. His constant companion is his tutor, wise, close to nature, experienced in the ways of the world and aware of its pitfalls.

Each age has its own perfection; the pupil should be allowed to develop at his own pace, within his own limits. One great fault of the existing system of

education is the attempt to cram the pupil's head with facts which have no meaning for the child, devoid of judgement, powers of reason and experience, at his young age. In his first Discours, Rousseau had already called into question the utility of the arts and sciences, the very basis of the existing system of education. Books are banned in Émile's education - they are imbued with prejudices and false opinions: a child is not permitted to think for himself, but forced to learn the opinions of others; Rousseau warns us:

"Vous voulez qu'il soit docile étant petit; c'est vouloir qu'il soit crédule et dupe étant grand." ¹

Rousseau advocates a negative form of education, that the child may remain innocent of social prejudices. Long hours of study stifle a child's natural liberty. Émile will learn to read and write when he perceives the necessity - this is nature's way. The only book permitted Émile is Robinson Crusoe, for it is the 'plus heureux traité d'éducation naturelle'.² The natural man, as seen in Robinson Crusoe, is the ideal for Émile:

¹ Book III, p. 445.
² Ibid., p. 454.
it is this state which he must reach. It is the basic and universal from which all other states may be judged:

"Cet état n'est pas, j'en conviens, celui de l'homme social; vraisemblablement il ne doit pas être celui d'Émile; mais c'est sur ce même état qu'il doit apprécier tous les autres. Le plus sûr moyen de s'élever au-dessus des préjugés et d'ordonner ses jugements sur les vrais rapports des choses, est de se mettre à la place d'un homme isolé, et de juger de tout comme cet homme en doit juger lui-même, eu égard à sa propre utilité." 1

A formal education, as received in the world, is yet another manifestation of a corrupt society, the instrument whereby the young child is deprived of his liberty and imbued with the prejudices and opinions of his particular milieu. For Rousseau, Émille must grow as a young animal, as yet quite apart from the moral and the political, healthy and as free as his dependence on others in his child's weakness allows. Before he attains the age of reason, he is incapable of moral concepts or speculation on his relationship to his fellow men. He has no friends, as he is theoretically incapable of moral relationships. Instead of social laws which he cannot comprehend, he

obeys the natural law of necessity. He must be taught to practise charity, but he cannot grasp its significance at an early age when he has no moral concepts, so he should be encouraged to imitate those who do charitable works. For imitation is natural to man; it is only in society that it has degenerated, as have so many natural principles, into a vice, into the emulation of the corrupt elements of society and the slavish following of fashions. All his knowledge, after his very early years spent concentrating on his own physical health and growth, is gained from experience and his own perceptions, and therefore will stay with him. Like Montaigne, Rousseau declares 'point d'autre livre que le monde', but Rousseau's world is not Montaigne's world of polite society, but the natural world. Émile will learn by studying nature itself. Émile is unfettered by social conventions; he has known the highest degree of liberty a child may enjoy. He has as yet no awareness of his relationship to his fellow man, of the role he has to play as a member of society. He has grown up considering all in its connections with himself; this is the viewpoint

of the natural man, as a unit of one. He is sure of
his own position, if unacquainted with that of others.
Émile is the creation Rousseau imagines in the earlier
draft of Émile:

"Il serait curieux d'examiner un
homme élevé pour lui et de voir ce
qu'il deviendrait pour les autres.
Au moins la vérité, la solidité
seraient dans son caractère, il
serait un et se montrerait tel
qu'il est, il ne donnerait rien
à l'opinion, il ne voudrait pas
paraître heureux mais l'être." 1

Émile, at the end of his isolated education, stands on
the verge Rousseau implies between the natural and the
social state. He is independent and happy, a creation
perfect within his own personal sphere. He is the
universal man, untainted by the prejudices of society,
capable of impartial judgement, adaptable to any station
or rank. His education has been based on nature, but
it has equipped him for life in society:

"Tel est Émile ... nourri dans l'ordre
de la nature, mais élevé pour la
société." 2

When Émile progresses from infancy into ado-
lescence, the question of his entry into society comes

2. Ibid – L'Âge de Sagesse, p. 237.
to the fore. Rousseau's education has formed the universal man, moulded by nature. Society is corrupt, but Emile cannot be excluded from it – this is Rousseau's dilemma. He has systematically cut Emile off from the undesirable influences of society, he has made of Emile a truer being than current social man, but Emile must become a member of society, and the only society open to him is the same corrupt circle from which Rousseau has so vigilantly guarded his pupil up to this point. Since society is founded on class distinctions, Emile is forced to enter upon it as a member of his own social class. Rousseau has carefully avoided suggesting to Emile that he is of a privileged social category, but he can no longer shirk the issue. It is impossible for any single human being to remain in the state of nature since the advent of society. No-one may exist as an isolated, self-sufficient entity in a sphere geared to the social entity, where all talents are ostensibly exploited for the use of the whole. Where one enters upon the social pact, all must enter. To attempt to do otherwise would be contrary to nature itself, for man's primary instinct is his self-preservation, and he could not survive as a single unit in opposition to the
social body. Emile must be prepared for contact with his fellow human beings, so that he may survive within society and still retain his integrity.

Although he should live in harmony amongst his fellow men, it does not necessarily ensue that he must accept their values, so contrary to his own:

"Il y a bien de la différence entre l'homme naturel vivant dans l'état de nature, et l'homme naturel vivant dans l'état de société. Emile n'est pas un sauvage à révoluer dans les déserts, c'est un sauvage fait pour habiter les villes. Il faut qu'il sache y trouver son nécessaire, tirer parti de leurs habitants, et vivre, sinon comme eux, du moins avec eux."1

Emile's education is divided into two separate stages: the first stage, which has now reached its conclusion and during which he has learned to become a man; and the second stage, upon which he is now about to embark and which will equip him to become a member of a particular society, one section of the general humanity of which he is already part. His second education depends for its success on the outcome of the first stage of education. If the first stage has been faithful to its aim, the second stage will be based on a firm and

steadfast foundation. It is essential to choose exactly the right moment for Émile's initiation into society. If the youth is introduced too soon into the world, he will merely be caught up in the conventions of society, and will never after be tempted to rebel against them or to question their validity: his attitude will be unreflecting acquiescence to society for good or for ill.¹ Yet if his entry is too long deferred, he will lack the suppleness and adaptability of youth which would enable him to acquire the polish necessary to a life in the fashionable world:

"Mais celui qui l'apprend et qui en voit les raisons, le suit avec plus de discernement, et par conséquent avec plus de justesse et de grâce." ²

Knowledge of the world cannot be acquired until the youth is ready to put it to use, for 'his true masters are experience and feeling', and man only knows what is fitting for man when he actually finds himself in a particular situation.³

1. Voltaire compared with his earlier Mémoire, in which it is supposed that "society" is a company of 'honnêtes gens'; the recognition of the corruption of society had not yet taken place.


The child cannot be an active member of society, and as such can have no notion of the bonds which exist between him and his fellow-creatures. He has, however, experienced very simple, economic-based relationships during his infancy with those who surround him. He has not been reared in a vacuum, completely isolated from man: a certain degree of human contact has been inevitable. The only reservation has been the impossibility of forging moral relationships before Emile was capable of them. He has been taught his dependence on those who serve him in his weakness. The child is a complete egoist, he views himself as the centre of the universe. His self-love encompasses those immediately round him, who succour him, but only insofar as they are extensions of his own limited powers. His first social contacts are based entirely on self-interest. He is dependent on others and respects them for this reason. He meets village boys with whom he competes in races, but no friendship is established between them, since friendship stems from a feeling which Emile has yet to experience. In the company of others Emile encounters, the village boys are but instruments, of use in one particular branch of his education, of the experience
which constitutes his early education. The people Émile meets are a necessary part of the décor in scenes where certain principles are set into action for Émile's edification. Such is the role of the gardener; it is through the encounter with him that Émile comes to grasp the notion of property, one of the first social laws he is taught. Despite certain early forays into society, Émile is preserved from corruption by the vigilance of his educator. When Émile is invited to partake of a sumptuous meal, he is impressed by the magnificence displayed. Any seed of envy is scarcely given time to implant itself in Émile's consciousness, for his tutor distracts his attention by reminding Émile of the thousands who have toiled to produce the short-lived pleasure of so few. The question absorbs Émile and extinguishes his enthusiasm for the luxurious mode of life. These early social relationships he experiences are those natural to his age.

With the onslaught of puberty, the nature of his social contacts progresses to adapt to his new feelings. Adolescence is the second birth of the youth, when he is born for commerce with society, when the whole of life will be revealed to him. The youth stands in even greater need of his tutor's counsel at this moment.
than before; for this reason, Rousseau intends to make a detailed study of it, contrary to the usual neglect of this crucial period in a boy's growth. We have arrived at the point where the youth becomes a social creature. Hitherto, he has felt attachment for others only to the degree that they have been of use to him. Puberty is the awakening of the senses; the natural instinct to seek a mate transports the youth outside himself. He is no longer self-sufficient but feels the need of the company of others of his kind. Herein lies both man's weakness and his strength: his weakness, in that he is no longer dependent solely on himself; his strength, in that he, the solitary being, completely self-sufficient, has no need and therefore no love for others. Love is the emotion responsible for man's happiness. The sexual instinct is the motivating force behind the social drive. When the youth experiences the new feelings, he is forced from his egocentricity into sociability; his sexuality is at the base of all his other feelings. It stems directly from nature, but once again town society corrupts nature's work. Society precipitates the workings of nature, rushes the youth into sexual contact before his nascent feelings
have reached their natural term. From this day on, the true significance of the youth's feelings is permanently lost for him. Yet, in the countryside, young men, in accordance with nature's intentions, retain their innocence for a far greater length of time and are thus allowed to attain their complete maturity. The young man is consequently able to experience love at its truest and most intense pitch because he has not dissipated his body or his emotions. Émile should therefore be kept from town society as long as possible, yet his newly-awakened sociable instinct cannot and must not be stifled; it should be channelled elsewhere, instead. His sexuality could be put to profit by supplying it with a worthy outlet. As Émile begins to look beyond himself, his eyes should be directed towards spectacles capable of arousing his pity. His heart is now susceptible to emotion for others; instead of permitting him to dissipate his strength by indulging in the self-centred pursuit of pleasure, he must be guided towards a more altruistic form of sentiment. Hitherto he has felt for his immediate neighbours from a purely egocentric point of view; now his newly-awakened imagination permits him to place himself in the position of the other, to see from
the other’s point of view. Man is more inclined to feel positively for those who are suffering; he cannot commiserate with one in a more fortunate position than himself. Hence, when presented with images of suffering humanity, he is deeply moved; all his emotion is concentrated into the feeling of pity for his fellow-man. Pity is the first manifestation of his feeling for others; it is the awakening of his social conscience. This first step into the adult world marks his development into a moral being, for the bonds between men form the basis of morality. Emile is now capable of disinterested relationships.

In feeling pity, Emile experiences a sentiment of solidarity with humanity in general. In the future, his need to love, his desire for a companion, will bring him into the particular. Meanwhile he will be exercised in the particular and personal relationship in another form. If he has been brought up according to natural laws, the youth will be conscious of the feeling of friendship before that of love. He becomes aware of his position as a member of humanity in general before he is able to visualise himself as one half of a particularised unit. The pity he feels for his fellow creatures is
a generalised form of friendship, a benevolent sentiment directed towards others. He experiences a personal form of friendship in his relationship with his educator. It is significant that a friend for Émile is not introduced here, to illustrate the point, as Sophie is created to fill the role as Émile's partner in the love-relationship. One might cite many stylistic factors - the detraction of interest from the central figure, the superfluity of another male personage, the book's limited character as a novel form, Rousseau's full treatment of perfect friendship in his *Nouvelle Héloïse* of the preceding year - but the main factor for the omission might be held to be the absence of another man of nature, formed by the same education, to take the part of Émile's friend. Émile's education is unique; he, as the product, is unique and has nothing in common with others of his rank; whereas friendship is based on like ideas and shared emotions. Émile has a friend in his educator, for he is now able to recognise the extent of his debt of gratitude to his tutor for the pains he has taken to ensure his pupil's happiness. The educator no longer has any power over Émile's person, Émile would therefore appear to be independent, but now he wishes to be subject to his governor. His governor has won his confidence, affection
and trust. Yet the relationship between the two cannot be regarded as friendship in the essence, because of the disparity between their respective years and degrees of experience, because of the inequality inherent in a relationship where one is the mentor, the other his pupil. Thus, although Rousseau envisages friendship as one stage in Emile's emotional development, Emile is not shown to us from within the framework of such a relationship.

Up to this point, Emile has received no instruction in religion. Charles Bonnet had earlier deplored the practice of instilling in young children the principles of a religion of words which has no true meaning for them, and which they accept in their infancy to pay lip-service to in their adult lives. Religion is part of Emile's emotional development and its essence is sentiment. Religious knowledge may be taught only when the pupil is mature enough emotionally to comprehend

1. "J'ouvre un catéchisme à l'usage des enfants, qu'on a dit fait par un habile homme: j'y vois à la tête cette question; qu'est-ce que Dieu? La réponse est aussi sensée que la demande; Dieu est un esprit infini et tout parfait, éternel, tout puissant, présent partout. Quoi donc! ... un seul de ces attributs suffirait pour absorber le philosophe le plus profond, et vous voulez en faire entier toute la collection dans la tête d'un enfant! Sans doute, que vous ne prétendez pas qu'il comprenne ces termes?" - Essai de Psychologie: Œuvres, vol. VIII, ch. LXXII, p. 153.
Religion is part of society; Émile is now contemplating entry into society, he is therefore sufficiently mature to be initiated into the mysteries of life. He is about to experience the creation, man, he must learn of the creator, God. He will now be able to comprehend the love God feels for His creatures, the love they owe to Him. Émile is to choose his own sect of religion, in accordance with his own personal judgement. Rousseau does not compel his pupil to adopt any particular sect; he merely exposes his own religious beliefs, a natural religion based on the natural laws, in the Profession de Foi. The Savoyard Vicar's motivation for all his actions, he claims, is his conscience, the inner voice which decides the morality of his actions. The conscience is the voice of the soul, as the instinct is the voice of the body. Émile has reached the age where he may be instructed in religion because his emotional nature has developed; judgement and a sense of morality are now present within him. He is now awake to the inner voice, the word of God, by which he may judge unheeding of the words of others. He finds within himself the moral arbitrator which will keep him pure and natural within the corruption of society. Religion is part of society;
it is concerned with man's strivings toward the infinite and the true. Religion, as conceived by the Savoyard Vicar, is an integral part of man.

The final stage in the natural order of social relationships is the fulfilment of the instinct from which all passions and emotions stem— the youth's sexuality. The first experience of love, consummation of the natural instinct, is the first taste of passion, emotion in its most intense form. The love-relationship should not be entered upon lightly, as it bears great consequences on the subsequent course of the life of both partners. It is the sum total of all the new sensations which have precipitated the youth from boyhood into manhood; its importance in the young man's life warrants its consideration by those intent on the youth's education. Usually, however, it is grossly neglected; it is in the concentration that Rousseau brings to bear upon this aspect of education that he feels his greatest contribution to lie:

"On ne considère pas assez l'influence que doit avoir la première liaison d'un homme avec une femme dans le cours de la vie de l'un et de l'autre ... On nous donne dans les traités d'éducation, de grands verbiages inutiles et pédantesques sur les chimériques devoirs des enfants;"
et l'on ne nous dit pas un mot de
la partie la plus importante et la
plus difficile de toute l'éducation,
savoir, la crise qui sert de passage
de l'enfance à l'État d'homme ...
Si j'ai pu rendre ces essais utiles
par quelque endroit, ce sera surtout
pour m'y être étendu fort au long
sur cette partie essentielle omise
par tous les autres. 1

The precious gift of his sexuality must not be dissipated.
Rousseau has prolonged the innocence of Émile's senses
and imagination during the final phase of growth of his
body by keeping him from great cities where his senses
would have been assailed and would have succumbed, before
he was able to make the choice of a suitable object for
his love. Idleness could breed lascivious thoughts, hence
Rousseau makes a principle of occupying all Émile's time
and sending him to bed physically exhausted.

However, Émile must eventually enter society,
but Rousseau finds an expedient to safeguard Émile's
imagination and senses from surprise. He disposes of
Émile's heart before he introduces him into society: he
inflames Émile's senses and imagination in favour of a
predetermined type, the ideal woman, as Rousseau sees her.

Sophie is the name he gives her; Émile must seek Sophie in society; she is to be his partner in love. Thoughts of Sophie, the ideal companion for Émile, will preserve him from the snares set by the women of polite society (the very women who were to provide the youth with the social graces with Rousseau’s blessings in his earlier Mémoire):

"Quel avantage pour préserver son cœur des dangers auxquels sa personne doit être exposée, pour réprimer ses sens par son imagination, pour l'arracher surtout à ces donneuses d'éducation qui la font payer si cher, et ne forment un jeune homme à la politesse qu'en lui ôtant toute honnêteté!"

He has occupied Émile's mind with the ideal of a lasting and virtuous love, as opposed to the transient fancies which pass for love in society, and with deep respect for the institution of marriage. He inspires horror in Émile for the debauchery he sees in society and at the same time disposes him towards the virtuous love which leads to marriage by painting an idyllic picture of the joys of that state:

"En lui faisant sentir quel charme ajoute à l'attrait des sens l'union

1. Book IV, B. de la P., IV, p.657; cf. chapter on "Sentimental Education".
Within society, Émile is safe from dissipation of the senses; the repulsion he feels for adultery and debauchery protects him from both married women and prostitutes, the usual source of a young man's libertinage. And a girl of marriageable age is unlikely to enter upon a premarital relationship which will endanger her matrimonial chances. Émile seeks in vain in Paris for Sophie: this is Rousseau's intention. The ideal partner for Émile could not be found in Paris, the antithesis of innocence and purity. Skillfully but unobtrusively guided by his mentor, Émile steers his course to Sophie, the universal woman for the universal man, the woman of nature for the man of nature. In Sophie, Rousseau draws a picture of what he considers to be the ideal woman, innocent, pure, charming and untainted by contact with town society. Rousseau has not educated Émile in the social and economic pressures which are usually the uniting factor of most matches in society. Émile is to

choose a partner in accordance with natural laws, one suited to his temperament, not necessarily in conformity to the social order. The purpose of the marriage is to ensure their mutual and lasting happiness. It is in union with Sophie that Emile is to satisfy his natural instinct, the basis and the culmination of all his sociable feelings.

The aim is to develop both the young man's heart and mind to the best possible advantage. Rousseau has protected Emile's heart from corruption and ensured its true development as ordained by natural laws, but the education of his mind must not be neglected either. With the expansion of the pupil's powers of reason, he ceases to be the spontaneous product of his instincts and impulses to become a rational creature. For Rousseau, the heart must be developed before the mind, that the pupil's ideas and judgement may be built upon a solid and true foundation. Throughout his early education, Emile has been encouraged to conclude after his own experiences: he has not been permitted to accept the reasonings of others as propounded in books. Thereby he has escaped the error into which his more widely-read contemporaries have fallen: he will not accept what he has not proved to be so, hence he is immune from
the prejudices of others. He will never be enslaved to
the god of opinion, but will remain faithful to his own
convictions. When he enters society, as he must, he
will rely on his own sense of judgement, untramelled by
the prejudices of society. Rousseau defines Émile's
situation in this fashion:

"Considérez ... que, voulant former
l'homme de la nature, il ne s'agit
pas pour cela d'en faire un sauvage
et de le reléguer au fond des bois;
mais qu'enfermé dans le tourbillon
social, il suffit qu'il ne s'y laisse
entrainer ni par les passions ni par
les opinions des hommes; qu'il voie
par ses yeux, qu'il sente par son
cœur; qu'aucune autorité ne le
gouverne, hors celle de sa propre
raison." 1

By force of his natural education, Émile has been trained
to bring an impartial mind to bear on all aspects of
society; he has been taught never to accept as indubitably
right the first impression. A stranger to books and
systems, Émile will not attempt to judge by the appli-
cation of a rigid set of rules. He has attained that
impartiality of judgement advocated by Turgot as one aim
of a good education:

"Combien ne serait-il pas à propos d'apprendre aux enfants cet art de se juger eux-mêmes, de leur inspirer cette impartialité qui bannit de la société, sinon l'humeur, du moins les braileries qu'occasionne l'humeur ! Combien les hommes ne seraient-ils pas plus heureux s'ils avaient acquis, dès l'enfance, cette adresse à donner des avis, cette docilité à les recevoir et à les suivre dont j'ai parlé ! On croit que l'éducation est impuissante à donner cette attention perpétuelle sur soi-même, et surtout cette tranquille impartialité qui semble l'effet d'un don de la nature ... on connaît bien peu la force de l'éducation; et j'en dirai une des raisons, c'est qu'on se contente de donner des règles quand il faudrait faire naître des habitudes."

Yet Émile is still unprepared in Rousseau's mind for the step into society, as represented by the polite society of Paris. Émile has yet to study man, the inter-relation between men and society.

Émile must be warned before he comes into contact with social man that the hearts of others are not as innocent and pure as his own. If he judges other hearts by his own, he will be sadly disappointed. They will attempt to bend him to their own corrupt ways, manipulate him for their own ends. Émile must be instructed in the ways of social man, if he is to enter society.

But this time he may not learn by his own experience, for if he went forth unprepared into society, he would be overwhelmed by the evils perpetrated by social man, he would be engulfed in the quagmire of corruption. Émile must learn to love his fellows, but contemplation of their sins would incite hatred within his soul. Yet he must see man as he truly is, not as he may wish to appear. He must be brought to pity mankind, to realise that man is intrinsically good but has been led astray by his own prejudices, engendered in the process of civilisation. Civilisation has brought in its wake ever greater and increasing needs, foreign to man living in the state of nature. In his study of man, Émile will be taught to distinguish between the needs which are the legitimate consequence of the greater demands of society and those which are superfluous, the outcome of social prejudices. Now is the point where Émile may learn by the experience of others, now is the moment for regular instruction and for the use of books. Émile will make a study of history — for man is the eternal and the universal, incapable of learning and improving by his own mistakes. Émile must see man in action, come to understand him by his actions. Man's actions are clearly set forth in history, whereas in society they are masked.
by his contradictory speech:

"Pour connaître les hommes il faut
les voir agir. Dans le monde on
les entend parler; ils montrent
leurs discours et cachent leurs
actions."

Emile is now a spectator, an impartial onlooker, of the human comedy. The wheels and cogs of the social machine are suddenly revealed to his incredulous eyes. A further precaution must be taken, to ensure Emile's sympathy for his fellow-man and to extinguish any budding sentiment of superiority within Emile - Rousseau may permit Emile to be duped on a few selected occasions. Any sense of superiority within him regarding his fellow-man will thus be crushed. When Emile has learned all the motives and inner workings of society, he will be ready to appear upon the stage of society.

Rousseau's intention is not to make a hermit of Emile: as a member of society, he must take part in the proceedings. Through his study of history, he has an introduction to man in general, now he must acquaint himself with the individuals. His knowledge of man and society is incomplete: he knows how society functions,

but not how man lives his daily life within it. To acquire total comprehension of men, he must move among them. It is only by experience that he may learn to live with his fellow creatures. Rousseau cites the entry into the world of two young men, both cases illustrating the unsuitability of their education as preparation for later life. The one commenced by plunging into the thick of the social whirl until satiated with empty pleasures and sickened by the easy manners adopted by women in society. The second, cossetted and spoiled by family and friends alike, found great difficulty in adapting to a society where he did not meet with the same adulation, and where he was consequently subjected to many humiliations. Émile will not meet with like failures because his training has disposed him to seek other pleasures in the company of his fellow-man. His innocence, we have already ascertained, is safe from the customary debauchery of youth, as he seeks his ideal companion and will bestow his affections on no other. Nor is he plagued by the desire to shine in polite society. He knows the glamour of the fashionable man to be false and of little worth. Émile would prefer to go unnoticed; he wishes to observe not to be observed. For this reason,
he is willing to adopt the more reasonable aspects of polite social behaviour. The great challenge before the young novice in society is the necessity of conforming to the manners of polite society. This is the goal striven after by the aspiring young 'honnête homme', yet Émile naturally assumes this role with no effort. It is precisely because such mannerisms are of little consequence to him that he is able to assimilate them with ease. He is not anxiously bent upon modelling himself upon the pattern dictated by fashionable opinion. Émile will not go to extremes, for he cares little for social prejudices and current fashions; he does not fear ridicule. He adopts the polite manners which are a natural consequence of the genuine politeness as defined by Duclos. The truest form of polite manners stems from a sincere heart; hence Émile remains faithful to his own person. Émile cannot be forced into servile acquiescence, yet nor does he attempt to impose his opinion on others. He allows liberty of speech both for himself and for others. Émile follows the middle path of the natural gentleman; he will not stoop to flattery, yet nor would he attempt to singularise himself by blatant disregard of social conventions. Indifferent
to the whims of fashion and free from social prejudices, Émile is impartial in his judgements. Even within society, Émile remains faithful to natural laws, to what is true for man, whilst respecting the adherence of others to the purely social order. He himself will always choose the natural order in preference to the social order: he will, for example, respect one greater in years than himself more than one in a high position yet of his own age. Although different from others in society, Émile is respected by them for his integrity. Despite his unfavourable opinion of Parisian society, Rousseau has been compelled to bring Émile to the great metropolis in order to perfect his education by cultivating his mind to the highest degree. Rousseau is faced with the quandary that, whilst Paris is steeped in corruption, it is at the same time the mecca for the arts. If the young man's taste is to be cultivated, he must turn his steps to the capital, where he will yet find the lowest forms of taste prevalent in society:

"Il n'y a pas peut-être à présent un lieu policé sur la terre où le goût général soit plus mauvais qu'à Paris. Cependant c'est dans cette capitale que le bon goût se cultive."

He will now immerse himself in the literature which was forbidden him at an earlier stage, for he is now capable of literary appreciation. He will frequent the theatres of Paris, not to the view of studying manners, but to cultivate good taste. His capacity for feeling makes possible good aesthetic judgement. Émile's sojourn in Paris is the completion of the education of his mind, in all topics save politics.

Rousseau has made of Émile the universal man which may take on any form. Émile has acquired the veneer of polite social behaviour which forms the substance of most young men in the higher social spheres. But Rousseau does not aspire to create an 'honnête homme' but seeks a higher ideal. Émile's education is still unfinished; he has been initiated into the moral and social sciences, he yet lacks knowledge of the political. His forthcoming marriage to Sophie will invest him with the responsibilities of a member of society in the capacity of husband and father. But he is unacquainted with the duties of the citizen as formalised by Rousseau. In forming the social unit of the family, he must envisage it as one section of the great family, society in general, for the whole is based on the unit. Émile must consider
his position in relation to the whole: this is the commencement of his political education. Rousseau draws his pupil's attention to this problem:

"En aspirant à l'état d'époux et de père, en avez-vous bien médité les devoirs? En devenant chef de famille, vous allez devenir membre de l'État. Et qu'est-ce qu'être membre de l'État? le savez-vous? Vous avez étudié vos devoirs d'homme, mais ceux de citoyen, les connaissez-vous? savez-vous ce que c'est que gouvernement, lois, patrie? Savez-vous à quel prix il vous est permis de vivre, et pour qui vous devez mourir? Vous croyez avoir tant appris, et vous ne savez rien encore. Avant de prendre une place dans l'ordre civil, apprenez à le connaître et à savoir quel rang vous y convient." 1

For the man of nature can no longer exist in society. Émile has retained man's natural goodness, but this quality is valid only for man in the natural state of isolation. Man may remain 'good' only as long as he is not brought into competition with others. Within society man has no longer the right to exist solely for himself: society is based on the concept of reciprocal aid. Each profits from the toil of others and hence owes his own labour in return. For Rousseau, every idle member of society is a scoundrel; hence his insistence on Émile's apprenticeship.

in a useful trade. Since Émile must live in society, he should aspire to a higher state than that of a gentleman, he should elevate himself to the position of citizen. It is the third and final phase, the summit, of the youth's education: it is the perfection of all that has gone before. In detailing the father's duties to his son early in his book, Rousseau sets out the three stages of the ideal education:

"Un père, quand il engendre et nourrit des enfants, ne fait en cela que le tiers de sa tâche. Il doit des hommes à son espèce, il doit à la société des hommes sociables; il doit des citoyens à l'État." 1

In becoming a citizen, Émile transcends the state of nature: citizenship signifies the desirable conclusion of man's passage from the state of nature into civilisation.

The concept of education as the preparation of the citizen to fulfil his role in the State was not an innovation by Rousseau. It is one more theory which Rousseau assimilated from current pedagogical thought and developed to its natural conclusion. The new conception

of public education was concerned with instilling into the future citizen those qualities which would make of him a useful member of society, the education of the individual for the good of the whole. Utility is the keynote: the citizen will place his talents at the disposal of the State in return for the protection the State affords him:

"La première loi de toute société est qu'on lui soit utile, pour racheter par des services les avantages qu'elle procure." 1

The principles of the democratic republic, in accordance with Montesquieu's theory, is virtue, not in the moral but in the political sense; virtue being defined in this context as the love of the public good, the striving of the individual toward this goal. It was only through education that virtue might be engendered in the youth. The young man would be trained in his early years to fulfill his duty as a citizen by sublimating his own personal interests to the higher interests of society, thereby furthering his own interests as a member of the same society. Morelly cites this form of education as the saviour of the existing corrupt society. 2 It is in

1. Plan d'éducation publique by Diderot, p. 8.
2. Essai sur le coeur humain.
the interests of the nation, states La Chalotais,¹ that each new generation should receive a civil education to equip them for their future role as citizens concerned with the public good. The reason that there are few patriots and citizens, claims Helvétius,² is that the existing system of education presents the youth with a confused concept of morality which contradicts the morality adopted in reality by society. Indeed, it is only through a new concept of education that these contradictions in the social order may be resolved, remarks Legendre de St. Aubin,³ by instilling in the hearts of young citizens, the love of the country, respect for its laws, and a solid attachment to all their duties. Rousseau stresses in his article on Économie Politique in the Encyclopédie that the individual should be early accustomed to regard himself only in his relationship to the State, that he may identify himself only in this context. Thereby the sentiment which attaches him to himself in the natural order may be

1. Essai d'Éducation nationale, p. 2.
2. De l'Homme, section X, ch. VII.
extended to embrace the whole in the social order. In *Émile*, Rousseau remains faithful to the same school of thought, but he takes into consideration the point made by Montesquieu that political virtue is the principle of a democratic republic, the unit of which is the citizen, whilst the motivation within a monarchy is honour, the ideal of this form of society being the 'honnête homme'; the one is based on the public good, the other on personal glory. From these findings, Rousseau draws the conclusion which his contemporaries had carefully avoided, that the existing society is alien to the concept of public education. Society as it stands is a degeneration of man in the natural state, nor has it achieved the ideal of the democratic republic. Social man lives a lie, apparently living for others but in reality living for himself:

"Ainsi parmi nous chaque homme est un être double: la nature agit en dedans, l'esprit social se montre en dehors. Tout ce que nous faisons semble se rapporter aux autres et se rapporter toujours à nous." 1

Man has allowed himself to be submerged by the institutions of society without securing any of its advantages:

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1. Favre manuscript, B. de la P., IV, p. 57.
falls prey to his passions yet is also restricted by the laws. Social man has fallen into the abyss between the state of nature and the ideal social state; he is neither man nor citizen. The child may be raised for himself or for others; one education forms the man, the other the citizen. Social man as he exists is educated ostensibly for others, yet relates all to himself; he is ruled neither by his personal interest nor by the public good, but by the arbitrary dictates of opinion. In the existing system of education the youth is taught a morality, concerned with the welfare of others, which is in direct contradiction to the worldly morality, based on self-interest, which will enable the young man to survive within society. The only possible solution would be to transform society, as René/Rousseau points out in Mme d'Epinay's *Histoire de Mme de Montbrillant*:

"Pour faciliter votre ouvrage, reprit René, il faudrait commencer à refonder toute la société, car, sans cette condition, vous serez à tout moment dans le cas, en voulant l'avantage de votre enfant, de lui prescrire dans sa jeunesse une foule de maximes fort sages, d'après lesquelles il reculera au lieu d'avancer franchement. Jetez les yeux sur tous ceux qui ont fait un grand chemin dans le monde; croyez-vous que ce soit en se
This is the reason for the early isolation of the young Émile; he has been educated according to the laws of nature, to consider all as it relates to his own person. Rousseau was compelled to isolate Émile from contact with society. For one must choose whether to form a man or a citizen; the one is dependent entirely upon himself, whilst the citizen is but one unit of the whole and of importance only in his function as part of the whole, two concepts which are mutually exclusive.

Rousseau opted to form a man, for, as he claims:

"L'institution publique n'existe plus, et ne peut plus exister, parce qu'où il n'y a plus de patrie, il ne peut plus y avoir de citoyens." 1

In the existing corrupt society, no good form of education is possible; the possibility of the creation of a new and better society, a 'patrie' inhabited by citizens, is a mere dream. Rousseau must therefore reach a compromise: he will produce a man with a soul of a citizen,

a potential citizen who lacks a 'patrie'. This is as near as he can come to the transcendence of the contradiction over the production of a 'citizen' who would also be a 'man'.

Emile is naturally good, but he still lacks virtue, the attribute of the citizen. But, as Rousseau warns him, natural goodness may easily be effaced once brought into contact with human passions. Natural man is only good for himself, and for others insofar as 'pity' can develop into altruism. Emile's freedom up to this point has only been partial, for he is still enslaved to his own passions. If he succeeds in mastering himself, he will attain absolute and ultimate liberty; if he can sublimate his own feelings to the public good, he will become virtuous. Emile must undertake this second apprenticeship, but it is more exacting than the first, for he will no longer be following but contradicting the laws of nature. Virtue is to the social state as goodness is to the natural state. Rousseau provides Emile with the opportunity to exchange his goodness for virtue by exacting that he

1. 'Man' includes such social and moral relationships as spring from the primitive capacity for 'pity' and are described in Books IV and V.
postpone his marriage to Sophie. Émile struggles with his emotions and finally vanquishes them, agreeing to undertake a voyage around Europe which will last two years. Travel was the increasingly popular mode of rounding off the young noble's education, in the English tradition. Few are those, however, says Rousseau, who draw the maximum advantage from their travels. Émile will not waste his opportunities. During his voyage, he will study the various political systems; his travels will be his training in the political sciences.  

Émile has already considered himself in the context of both his physical and moral relationships with his fellow-men, now he must apply himself to the civil bond which exists between him and others. It is for this purpose that he must investigate the nature of government in general, and then the different forms it comprises. That Émile may profit to the greatest possible degree from his voyage, and to ensure a thorough comprehension

1. A successful application of the same theory is illustrated in the person of Saint-Cery, as guided by his tutor, Deville, in the abbé Calvel's Bélide ou les deux Cousins: "Il avait achevé de se perfectionner dans les voyages qu'il avait faits en Europe et dans lesquels Deville l'avait toujours accompagné. Ce gouverneur éclairé lui avait donné d'avance des principes du droit naturel, public et politique, et l'avait aidé à en faire l'application." (part 1).
of all he experiences, Rousseau provides Emile with a
purpose to his travels. Emile is to consider all forms
of government carefully, and all the countries he passes
through, that he may choose the place where he would
most like to dwell with Sophie after their marriage.
Rousseau thus secures Emile's interest in politics
through his emotions. When Emile has selected the spot
he considers most conducive to the happiness of his
future wife and himself, he may enter upon the social
contract; until he settles in one place, Emile is not
bound to any state. When Emile has received his grounding
in political science, he has studied all aspects of his
relationship to others within society. He has reached
the age where he is made by law master of his own goods,
hence master of his person and responsible for his own
life. He is the complete being, ready to enter life as
a husband and father, a member of society.

Emile has received the complete education,
all that remains is to measure the success of his
training once put to the test. On the completion of
his instruction, Emile marries Sophie and commences life
as his own governor. He is imbued with the civic
spirit, for he is prepared to risk his life and happiness
in the sublimation of self to the community. He would obey his country's call, in accordance with his tutor's last words of instruction:

"Si le prince ou l'État t'appelle au service de la patrie, quitte tout pour aller remplir ... l'honorable fonction du citoyen." 1

Nonetheless, Émile remains essentially outside society, for existing society is not the State in which he could fulfil his role of citizen. He has never truly made an entry into society; he has always been an observer. Even whilst actually participating in polite social life, he remained one apart. Émile was never fully integrated into this society, nor did Rousseau intend that he should be: this is how he sees Émile's position in society:

"Émile sera, si l'on veut, un aimable étranger." 2

On the advice of his tutor and on the strength of his own inclinations, Émile chooses to settle with Sophie away from society, in its narrowest sense. He does not opt for a career - Army, commerce or finance - which would involve him in society and exact a morality, necessarily

corrupt, destined to ensure his worldly success. He turns to agriculture as the art nearest nature and establishes himself in the country, away from the big cities. He is dependent on his own toil and on nature; he thereby attains the greatest degree of independence possible within society. In Rousseau's unfinished novel *Les Solitaires*, the virtual impossibility of Emile's survival as a citizen within existing society is made clear. Without the guidance and wise counsel of his tutor, Emile falls victim to the ephemeral delights of polite society from which he had earlier been protected. Neither he nor Sophie has the strength to stand firm against the corruptions of society. Emile flings himself into the thick of the social whirl, and the neglected Sophie is finally unfaithful to him. From contact with society invariably ensues corruption. Emile cannot be a citizen in a society where he is the sole being worthy of that title. Conformity to the existing social pattern results in destruction of his idyll. Political virtue has no place in 18th-century French polite society and the goodness of natural man is doomed within it.

Emile meets with greater success in his function
as a man. His early education has accustomed him to bow to the law of necessity, the natural law. Once away from society, Émile is able to reinstate himself as a man. He renounces all claims to citizenship after the destruction of the social unit he formed with Sophie and his children, and reverts to his role as man:

"En rompant les noeuds qui m'attachaient à mon pays, je l'étendais sur toute la terre, et j'en devenais d'autant plus homme en cessant d'être citoyen." 1

He resigns himself to what cannot be altered. Dependent on and responsible for his sole person, he travels from one place to another. The trade he learned in his youth stands him in good stead, and when employment as a joiner is not forthcoming, he turns his hands to other skills, for, as he tells his tutor:

"Vous m'avez fait acquérir l'instrument universel." 2

The ship he embarks on is attacked by pirates, and all on board are taken captive. Yet he finds consolation in his reflections, the result of his education based on the

1. Les Solitaires, 1. II.
2. Ibid.
law of necessity. If freedom consisted of doing all one pleased, he reasons, no man would be free: all are dependent on the law of necessity. Only he who confines his desires within the limits imposed by this law is truly free, for he is never compelled to act contrary to his own wishes. Émile has acquired the education of the universal man which will fit him for any human occupation, situation or rank. His craftsmanship is of use to his captors; he is honoured for his skill and consequently attains a high position. In contrast to his adaptability are two knights of the order of St John. Both have been raised to fill only one specific role: they have been educated to become noblemen, not men. Once removed from their particular environment, they are no longer of any use:

"Ces deux chevaliers, l'un jeune et l'autre vieux, étaient instruits et ne manquaient pas de mérite; mais ce mérite était perdu dans leur situation présente. Ils savaient le génie, la tactique, le latin, les belles lettres. Ils avaient des talents pour briller, pour commander qui n'étaient pas d'une grande ressource à des esclaves ... Je plaignais ces deux pauvres gens; ayant renoncé par leur noblesse à leur état d'hommes, à Alger ils n'étaient plus rien." 1

1. Les Solitaires, I. II.
Whereas Émile, as universal man, is at one with himself in any rank, in any land. Ultimately, however, Émile cannot be integrated into any form of society. His qualities are such that he may wander from society to society and find a certain degree of acceptance from its members. Yet he may spread no roots in any specific society: for the lack of a 'patrie', he is destined to isolation. Even the strongest of social bonds based on his primary instinct — the relationship between man and woman — is nullified within the context of society. Émile's destiny is to remain one, responsible for and unto only himself. P. Burgelin\(^1\) understands the theme of Les Solitaires to be that the source of each man's happiness lies within himself, that it is dangerous to depend on others. This must ultimately be the conclusion of Émile's education in the context of existing society. Émile will end his days isolated from man on a desert island; the only form of human contact will be the infrequent visit of a passing ship:

"Mon sort est de vieillir et de mourir seul, sans jamais revoir un visage d'homme." \(^2\)

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2. Les Solitaires, l. I.
Émile will end as he began, isolated from society, and although occasionally brought into contact with humanity, with no social ties. He remains man in the state of nature.

In Émile, the synopsis of all his theories and so much more fundamental than any other 18th-century discussion of the subject, Rousseau sets out to prove that even one of mediocre talents — Rousseau deliberately refrained from taking genius as his basic material — may become an ideal man and a citizen thanks to suitable education. The question of the practicability of such an enterprise is not at issue; it is manifestly impossible to provide all children with the same degree of intensive care that Émile receives. Émile is to represent the average — some might call him duller than average; if Rousseau succeeds in making of him a man and a citizen, it is proof of the correctness of his analysis. Rousseau fails in his bid to transcend the contradiction between 'man' and 'citizen', but through no fault of his own. It is simply that society cannot tolerate the citizen: polite society is founded instead on the concept of the gentleman. The book is a philosophical treatise, not a manual. It might be noted that, although vociferous
on the subject of social inequality, Rousseau envisages the pedagogical problem solely as it relates to the young gentleman. Even Rousseau failed to take into account (in Émile at any rate, as distinct from the Contrat Social) the fact that, in the ideal republic, composed of citizens all striving for the public good, all must be equal, all must be educated to fulfil the duties of the citizen. For even if others of Émile's class were raised in like fashion, the social contract could not be instituted until all embraced by the pact were on an equal footing.
CONCLUSION

In our study of the youth's first contacts with society, emphasis has been placed on the noble circle, on the concept of polite society. For the novelists, polite society constitutes society, the 'world', in the 18th century. The youth's education - intended for the sons of the nobility - is conceived as a stage to be completed before the all-important step of entry into the public arena of polite society. There is no alternative to life in polite society for the member of a wealthy noble family, and such is its prestige that many not destined to enter it by their birth seek above all to be integrated within it, as the golden aim of their existence.

In dealing with the theme of entry into the 'world', discussion in the novels centres mainly upon the young man rather than upon the girl since the notion of entry into society is more intimately connected with the noble youth than with his female counterpart. For he must embark upon a suitable career, make his presence felt within the polite social circle, build up a reputation as a man of the world, since such are his duties as a son of an ancient noble house. Whereas his sister
is expected to remain in the background — at home or in a convent — till a suitable match can be arranged for her.

Nonetheless, the young girl cannot be entirely ignored, for woman is an important component of polite society. The relationship between the sexes is an essential point of the youth's education. Gallantry, the commerce between the sexes, is an important feature of 18th-century polite society. The youth will be judged by his peers on his ability to converse with the opposite sex, on the number of conquests he is able to make. Hence his anxiety — quite apart from the drive of natural instincts — to make the acquaintance of the feminine half of polite society. One might claim that the attitude towards women and the idea the youth is invited to have of his relationship with them reflect the general state of society. Gallantry is part of the duty of the nobleman in his role as a member of polite society. Since the man of the cloth of noble birth is first a nobleman and only in the second place a clergyman, since he envisages his career solely in the light of its acceptability, established by long tradition, as a career for the younger son of a noble house, he often permits himself to engage in commerce with the opposite
sex, in delights of the flesh. In view of the incompatibility of 'love' and his profession, however, he often resorts to secrecy, in order not to antagonise the authorities by too flagrant a disregard of the obligations and restrictions attached to his state. The only true difference between the noble in the 'world' and his brother in the Church is that the man of the cloth may not marry. The only reason for the man of the Church desiring to enter upon marriage would be his love for his proposed partner, since prestige, position and wealth might be obtained within the Church itself. Love as opposed to 'goût' finds no place within polite society. Superficial brilliance, gay frivolity and insensible wit are the desired attributes of the member of polite society. Deep commitment is not a feature of such society; concentration is centred on the self, not on the other. The apparently altruistic form of elaborate politeness current in polite society is motivated solely by the desire to be considered worthy of the title of 'gentleman', and it exacts similar consideration in return.

The future member of polite society is expected to adopt - or to seem to adopt - the same guiding principle. Since the youth's formal education is of
little use to him on his entry into the 'world', he relies on advice and aid afforded him by one with more experience of life in polite society. Traditionally, the youth completes his education in society itself, under the tutelage of an older woman who can school him in all the social graces, including the art of gallantry. Since the youth is timid and inexperienced, it falls to the lot of the woman, or to a more worldly-wise friend, to establish their relationship. Once the association is properly under-way - and the gauche youth may long tarry to carry it to its natural conclusion - the youth throws himself enthusiastically into the enterprise, often mistaking his first foray into the realms of sensuality, in its very novelty, for a deep and lasting passion. But the fervent flame is doomed to die as quickly as it flared up. The youth tires of his faded beauty and proceeds to new conquests. The youth's relationship with an older woman is by its very nature of short duration. It is viewed in the light of a reciprocal service: for the youth, it marks his first step into the 'world', the first relationship on which he will build his desired reputation as a man of the world. From the point of view of the woman, it is a form of
rejuvenation, contact with her lost youth and innocence. For a brief interlude, she has the rare privilege of playing the dominant role in an association: she has the chance to mould a young life.

However, the older woman's role in the youth's education merely reinforces her position as a relatively underprivileged member of polite society. Few are the women who revolt against prevailing conditions; nevertheless, although generally resigned to her fate, the woman of noble birth recognises that she lacks the comparative freedom possessed by her male counterpart. When one of her sex does rise in revolt, her principal cause of grievance is the double code of morals prevalent in society which censures her indulgence in sensual pleasures whilst condoning similar moral laxity in the male member of society. Hence she must resort to dissimulation and secrecy in order to protect her reputation. Should she, as a young girl, enter upon an association with an older man, she runs a very grave risk of irretrievably losing her reputation: the noble youth, however, is encouraged to take such a step as an intrinsic part of his education in society. If she later embarks upon a series of short-lived relationships
with the opposite sex, her conduct is severely frowned upon, whilst similar behaviour on the part of the young man but serves to enhance his reputation as a man of the world. Although the young man concentrates all his energies on the seduction of as many women as possible, he is encouraged by society to feel contempt for the women who succumb to his wiles. For such is the attitude of the man of the world toward the feminine half of society. The youth's first relationship with an older woman eager to initiate him into the delights of the flesh is certain to engender this same attitude of mind within the youth, once he pauses for reflection on their relationship, when his passion for his partner is spent. The ideal of two suited partners working towards a common goal, as envisaged by Rousseau in Emile and Sophie, is alien to polite society, where the novice in society is encouraged to further the tradition of hostility between the two sexes.

The double moral code which faces the young man or girl on his or her first encounter with society, and to which both must conform from their traditionally widely differing standpoints, also affects the career of the young man or girl of humble birth who sets out to
make his or her way in life. Although the most common path to social success for the rich bourgeois is probably the purchase of a 'charge' which carries with it ennoblement, or by a marriage contract with an impoverished family of ancient nobility, viewed by both factions as purely a business transaction, novelistic interest in the parvenu, male or female, is centred on the career of a young person who rises in life by means of his or her physical charms. The youth is permitted to attain success, as does Jacob, by a series of relationships with suitably grateful rich and influential ladies, generally of a certain age. Not so his female counterpart: whilst there are instances in the novel of a young woman of humble birth who rises to the desired heights of the noble circle with the help of one or several rich and influential lovers - and one presumes that, in the reality of 18th-century polite society, this was the surest means for a beautiful but impoverished young woman to attain success - it is generally the young girl who has withstood all temptation, who has remained true to the ideal of virtue, who - deservedly, it is implied - wins through. Pamela, Marianne and Jeannette all attain the noble status and amass considerable wealth through their adherence to the dictates of virtue. In either
case, whether she finds fame and fortune through vice or virtue, she relies on the effect her charms have over the opposite sex to succeed, for no other avenue is open to her.

New concepts and ideas take root as the century progresses, in this age of intellectual ferment. Public opinion on the head of polite society and its social unit, the gentleman, undergoes a change which cannot but affect the youth who enters polite society as an aspiring 'honnête homme'. As the concept of the honest merchant develops, so the concept of the gentleman goes into a decline. Polite society - town society - is no longer the perfection of the art of living in society, it is rather the centre of libertinage and debauchery. The gentleman of fashion is no longer the incarnation of social values but a libertine. The man of the world who serves as mentor to the inexperienced youth on the threshold of society will educate him not in the social virtues but in corruption. He is the rake, scornful of the vices of polite society but who reacts in a negative fashion by his utilisation of the social vices he despises to engender further corruption. His aim is to indoctrinate the youthful mind to further his own personal
glory, as he sees it, by carrying on his own work of corruption within society. His main target in polite society is woman; he seeks to ruin as many women as possible in his revenge upon society since for him they are the principal cause of his own corruption. Hence he encourages his pupil to indulge in libertinage, an easy task in that youthful senses delight in sensual pleasures. The youth seeks to emulate his mentor, invested with the glamour of the man of the world, and in his turn indoctrinates other novices who seek success in polite society. Love is but a social grace, a game, mere satisfaction of the senses, and cannot bring true happiness.

Reaction against the values of a corrupt society finds literary expression in the concept of a new type of hero, who rejects polite society and seeks a more worthwhile mode of existence. Rousseau's Saint-Pream is an individualist, of honest but non-noble stock, who shows no desire to be accepted in polite society. He is not the stereotype gentleman, but nature's gentleman; his values are his own personal values, which owe nothing to polite society's conception of honour. He must be seen as being outside the French social structure. He is in no way inferior to the nobleman; in many ways he is
superior to the conventional image of the gentleman. He has no part in French polite society but he is destined for another, superior form of society. He follows the traditional path of the parvenu in entering upon a relationship with one his superior in the social hierarchy, Julie, but here the comparison ends. For he differs from the stereotype — gentleman or parvenu — in that he experiences a deep and true emotion. Not for him the gallantry accepted as the norm in the field of male and female relationships; his passion for Julie is his entire being. Yet it is only through his passion for Julie that he comes into contact with the social structure. He is one apart, an isolated being: he is the man of nature who lives out his own being to the full and finds solace in the natural scene. He is fired with enthusiasm for republican virtues, but, for lack of a 'patrie', he must remain the man of nature endowed with the soul of a patriot. A potential citizen, he lacks the republic into which he could be integrated as the ideal social unit. Hence he is limited to the company of those who, albeit noble (Julie, Wolmar, Claire, Domston), nevertheless remain outside the confines of polite society and respect other qualities than those
which are accepted as the norm in polite society.

Saint-Preux's love for Julie brings him into contact with polite society, but also preserves his soul from corruption during his sojourn in Paris. The notion of a true and profound passion as an antidote to the poisonous frivolities of French polite society was to gain ground in the latter half of the century. The method utilised by Rousseau in his educational work, when he introduces Emile into polite society, is based on this theory. Emile has to be separated from the corruptive influences of society, from the pressures applied by a noble house, if he is to receive the education of nature, which will enable him in later life to maintain his integrity within a degenerate society. He must be strictly guarded from birth if he is to develop in accordance with nature's laws. He must be guided from one stage to another as his physical and mental powers grow, not forced into the conventional mould. Hence he develops as the natural man, not as a stereotype member of a certain social class. He is a man, not a gentleman. But he cannot remain isolated from the rest of society all his life: he has been educated according to the law of nature in order to take his place in society.
Rousseau recognises that the sexual instinct is at the base of the social drive. No longer concentrated on self in the natural egoism of the child, the adolescent looks outside himself in the search for a mate. Rousseau will build on the natural drive to make of Emile a social man. His sexuality will first be channelled elsewhere: in the general, to compassion for his fellow man, in the particular, to individual friendships. Such is his preparation for entry into society. He will be allowed to indulge his sexuality only when the time is ripe, when he is fully developed, both mentally and physically. At the proper time, he must be introduced into society, necessarily to Parisian society since it is to Paris, although the centre of depravity, that all that is best in matters of taste gravitates. Yet he must not fall prey to the frivolous pleasures of polite society, as do many young men who enter society. To ensure his immunity from the lure of sensual pleasures, Rousseau enthuses Emile with the concept of his perfect mate, whom he will seek in vain in polite society, for the woman of nature, fit spouse for the man of nature, could not be a product of polite society. Emile is brought to see that a deep, lasting and virtuous love is
more conducive to his happiness than a multitude of superficial relationships with women of little worth; it is the deep and true expression of his being.

Emile encounters society: man cannot live isolated, in the state of nature, since the advent of society. But, although he is tolerant of others, he has been subjected to a different form of education from his peers, and has little in common with them. Emile has not been educated in order to enter polite society; he is not the social unit of a society of 'honnêtes gens'. Emile can live in society, but, like Saint-Preux, he is the social unit without the ideal society, for that society does not exist. Hence, like Saint-Preux, he must remain somewhat apart from polite society, where he, a man of nature and a potential citizen, would not be in his place.

Meanwhile noble youths continued to receive the traditional education followed by entry into polite society under the wing of an experienced mentor. The young girl reaps no benefit from the occasional cry of feminine revolt; she adheres to the traditional feminine position of resignation to her lot in society. But criticism of traditional concepts and ideals has found expression in the evolution of two new types, the individualist as
portrayed in the Preromantic figure (Florello, Liebmann) and the man who lives for the common good, the citizen. Neither has a place in the existing French social structure, but their development indicates general dissatisfaction with the values of the outmoded concept of polite society.
All traditional values were subjected to interrogation in the 18th century: the social machine was closely scrutinised. The authority of the Church found itself undermined by the challenge of the new trends in philosophy and the sciences: the very structure of society was on the brink of destruction. Hitherto, the nobility had been the undisputed elite of the population, finding its expression — in the case of those sufficiently wealthy to uphold the luxurious lifestyle expected of them — within the rigid confines of polite society. Its ruinous mode of life had necessitated the introduction of elements from a lower social class, to permit the maintenance of the same standard of lavish expenditure. Conditioned to regard polite society as the most desirable environment for social man, the youth of either noble or bourgeois stock sought integration within it. With the growing importance of the merchant classes in the later years of the century, the idea took root that polite society could no longer be regarded, in its abuse of social pleasures, in its lack of contribution to the State, as the most valid milieu for social man. Despite the growing conviction of polite
society's inadequacies, however, it retained its traditional character to the eve of the Revolution; since there was no feasible alternative to life in polite society for the wealthier factions of the aristocracy, few were those who resolved to rebel against it.

In the last days of the Old Régime, there were two principal but widely differing currents which ran in opposition to the traditional concept of entry into polite society. The concept which was more closely connected with the social machine was the ideal of the citizen, the youth educated to serve the community. The notion of a body of citizens all working towards the common good in a society in which a common destiny was assured all its members, could not readily be reconciled with the existing social structure in which all privileges fell to the lot of the noble minority. But the ideas of tolerance, freedom and equality were in the air and were imbibed by the young of the noble stratum of society: hence a number of young gentlemen, enthused by the new concepts, set off to participate in the American War of Independence, to free the colonists from English domination.¹ The philosophers' broad view of

¹ Claude Henry de Rouvray, comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), was one who served in the American War of Independence, along with many liberal-minded French aristocrats of the day.
humanity — many of them stemmed from the bourgeoisie — was to find expression in the ideals of the imminent Revolution.

Another outlet for youthful rebellion, running counter to the ideal of the citizen, was to be found in the principally literary Preromantic movement, intimately connected, in its later expression, with the mode of the country setting. The plaint of the suffering soul is first heard in Prévost's novels; his heroes experience the requisite melancholy and deep sorrow, which stem from their nature but are suscitated by a luckless passion. The temptation to commit suicide — Cleveland's flirtation with his sword — stems from the unhappy passion which they are doomed to suffer by their nature. Loaisel de Tréogate's personages are subject to the same melancholy. The unhappy passion is closely intertwined with the death wish, which finds its literary expression in the preoccupation with suicide, the sombre night and tombstones — as in Liebmann; in the man of quality's self-imposed incarceration in a specially-created shrine to his wife's memory. Later, and already in Loaisel de Tréogate, we

are presented with the young man whose melancholy arises not from unrequited love but from an inner dissatisfaction, from a surfeit of civilisation. He withdraws from society in a mood of alienation; he rejects both the corruption of society and himself as an ultra-civilised product of it. He seeks regeneration by contact with the natural scene and the natural man as embodied in the 18th-century concept of 'le bon sauvage'. René flees society to take refuge with natural man: he is the civilised man who attempts to transform himself into the savage, to eradicate the uneasiness from within his soul. The interest in such novels lies not in the youth's apprenticeship in society, in his education for and integration into polite society, but in the youth's rejection of it, in his battle with the self, in his attempt to analyse the inner man. The 18th-century philosophers condemned polite society from the point of view of humanity: the Preromantic figure is one apart and hence rejects society from his own individual point of view. He cannot be integrated into it, has no desire to be; for him, it is not wrong because it excludes so many from its ranks for purely social considerations, but because it excludes him, since no sympathy exists
between him and the social unit, between him and the values of polite society. A great gulf stretches between him as an individual and society. His revolt against society takes the form of flight from society to communion with the natural scene.

Such are the alternatives to life in polite society proffered the youth, prior to the Revolution. Casting our eyes forward to the 19th century, we note a new pattern emerging in the Post-revolutionary years. After the Revolution, a polite society composed of the decimated nobility still exists, but devoid of much of its prestige, a faded copy of the brilliant gatherings of 17th- and 18th-century polite society. The 19th century witnesses the emergence of the bourgeois capitalist, whose god and goal are money. Money fights with social prestige for pride of place; the parvenu need no longer seek integration in the aristocratic circle, for the ruling factor is now money, not noble birth.

During the Revolution, the ruling concept has been that of the citizen, submerging the idea of the individual in revolt against society. After the failure of the Revolution to found the ideal society, however, the notion of the individual at odds with society rises once more to the fore to find expression in the Romantic movement.
The youth in revolt against society takes the form of the Romantic hero, far more vociferous in the expression of his antagonism towards society than his 18th-century forerunner.

Hostility exists between the youth and society as embodied by the father-figure - the situation of both Chateaubriand and Benjamin Constant, later of Stendhal's Julien Sorel in *Le Rouge et le Noir* - not merely on the score of arranged marriages which run contrary to love and passion, but on the question of a father's right to rule his offspring's destiny. Julien questions his father's right to select a position for him. The 19th-century Romantic hero judges and condemns society; doubt is cast not on the individual but on the social machine. The 19th-century Romantic hero is essentially an individual and a passionate being; it is the interaction between the passions of the individual and his environment which provides the focal point of novelistic interest. The young would-be parvenu no longer seeks integration into society because he considers it the most desirable milieu. Dumas's Antony is a bastard; he resents the position to which society has relegated him, hence his attitude toward society is one of fierce
hostility. Julien fights for success within society not from a desire to be in accordance with it, but to prove his own worth to himself. He must satisfy his own pride, assure himself that he is not the inferior being which his social class implies that he is. The only means whereby he may hope to attain success within society is the utilisation of the weapon of hypocrisy: it is a defence mechanism calculated to protect him against a hostile society. Sorel is endowed with the Napoleonic energy which Stendhal and his heroes so much admire. From this energy arises the legend of the good criminal which supersedes the 18th-century notion of the good savage. The Romantic hero of the 19th-century drama and novel possesses a vast store of energy which his more passive 18th-century forerunner lacks. He concentrates it on his assault on society, which inevitably corrupts the youth who enters it — witness the fate of Rastignac in Balzac’s Comédie Humaine, who slowly loses all his youthful illusions under the tutelage of Vautrin, the dangerous underworld figure bent on the destruction of society. The individual who is crushed by the social machine is represented by the maltreated artist, one apart from and superior to the society which can neither

1. Sorel in Le Rouge et le Noir.
appraise nor comprehend his genius. His only escape is suicide: such is the fate of Vigny's Chatterton. Society is cruel in its destruction of the young poet who can find no place within it.

The 19th-century progression from the trends of the later years of the 18th century develops into the complete and final rejection of the 17th- and early 18th-century ideal of integration into a closed society. The 19th-century youth is convinced of the rectitude of his revolt, and he is not condemned by his creator for his attitude: he is, on the contrary, sympathetically treated by him. The youth maintains his right to choose his own destiny independent of the dictates of family and social class. The attitude of the adolescent on the threshold of life has undergone a complete reversal, from total acceptance to energetic rejection of the traditional values.
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